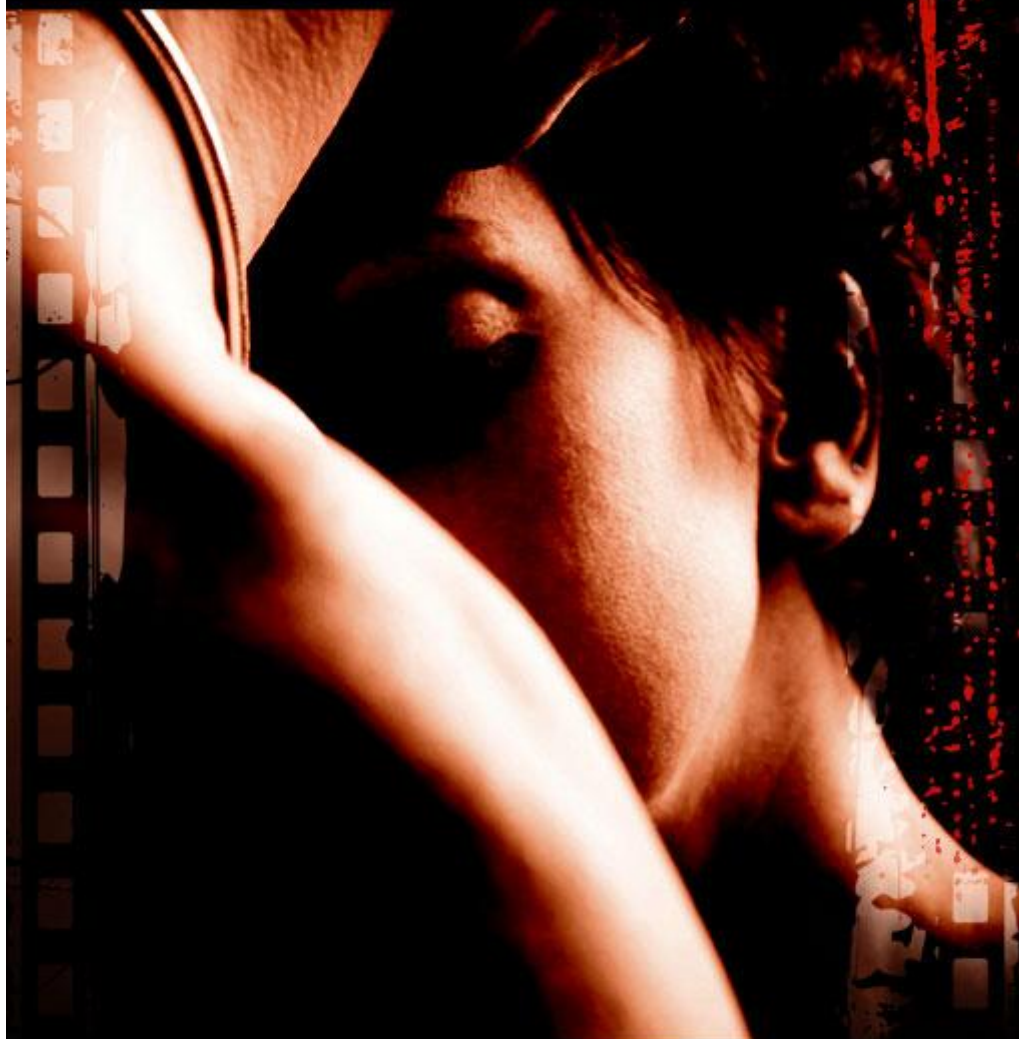


LOVEYOU DIVINE



OUT OF TIME

CLARE LONDON

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Out of Time

By

Clare London

To Jaime and for the pleasure of sharing.

It was genuine hell in the trenches. As, of course, I would know. The night shrouded me in black, ugly horror that was almost tangible. The air was thick; tumultuous; thrumming with the sound of recent gunfire. The human cries had ceased but their pain echoed on the cold wind. Rain had turned the soil to mud, sodden filth that saturated the fallen bodies.

That was where I first saw him.

I stepped down into the ditch, my boots slipping on the slick filth. The guns were only a distant echo now, an occasional, dull reverberation in my ears. Light flashed erratically on the horizon, sudden spikes of illumination, then plunged back to velvet black. Something mechanical whistled, high in the sky. I didn't expect to find any signs of human life around me, only a trail of relentless, weary conflict and the sorry detritus left behind.

Heading to the back of the trench, I saw movement out of the corner of my eye. A young soldier was huddled over by the far bank, his body shaking. Turning back, I trod a slow, careful path toward him, weaving between dead bodies and the remnants of them. A smashed rifle lay embedded in the mud: a discarded, upturned helmet rocked gently as I passed. My nose wrinkled, the stench of horror and fear particularly strong. He was facing away from me and I couldn't see much of his head past his hunched shoulders. His uniform was the same, grimy color as all the others around me, its camouflage effect both effective and depressing. He knelt in the mud, the soles of his boots facing me, wet and encrusted with dirt, and he looked to be nothing more than an ordinary foot-soldier, bent double with misery and pain.

Something made me pause a few feet away from him. I didn't make a sound but he suddenly stilled. "Who's there?"

Now I could see that he wasn't the only body there. He leaned over another fallen soldier, whose serge-clad legs were already rigid with death, whose arm stretched out along the bank as if in final protest at his fate. I could hear the living soldier's breath, heavy on the pregnant air, and underlying it, a slight wheezing, sucking noise. That was a familiar sound to me.

"Don't stop on my account," I said quietly. "It will be no good to you if you wait any longer. There'll be no spark of life left in him at all. Nothing... fresh."

The soldier straightened, his bare head jerking up. He didn't turn around. "Declare yourself."

I coughed gently. "There's little point. I'm passing through and had not intended to disturb you. Let us leave it at that, shall we?"

He whirled around. Wide, shocked eyes. No scars on his face; his skin lined only from what he'd seen, not from age. So very young! My heart ached, though I questioned exactly what for. For the death of the soldiers on the ground? For the pain in the living one's gaze? He was covered in filth but he was a fine-looking man, nonetheless. A pale, long neck and broad shoulders. Full lips; a fine, straight nose. An emotion stirred inside me that had been dormant for a long time and it startled me. He was confident in confronting me; graceful in his movements. That would

develop even further, in time, of course.

"Are you a Jerry? You bastard, creeping up on me. Filthy, sodding coward!" He spat the words at me and I saw him glance swiftly at the ground either side of him, looking for a serviceable weapon. Unable to find anything, he glared back at me, confusion tangled in with his fear. "You don't dress like one." He frowned. "Where's your rifle? You don't dress right at all."

His accent was coarse, his fright making him clumsy with speech. I concentrated more carefully, strengthening my image, making sure he would notice the points of similarity between us and not the anomalies. "I am not your enemy."

His face went pale under the dirt. "You're not my friend, neither. I'm not a fucking idiot, you know."

I nodded. "You are far from that. I can help you, too -"

"Piss off!" He scrambled to his feet, panting. "It was you! Was it you?" He struggled to stay upright, his legs weak. "Damn you, *damn you*, make it stop..." The breath he sucked in didn't seem enough for him - his chest dipped up and down, the movements desperate and shallow. His pupils were dilated, I could see that very clearly as he stared at me. He was alert, but barely coherent. Barely *there*.

"It wasn't me." I stared back at him, my gaze fierce, determined that he should understand that, if nothing else. It mattered to me - strangely, suddenly - that he should know I cared. "Calm down, or things will feel even worse. I was not the one who did this to you."

He shook his head, rocking on his heels. His hands fisted then opened again, the palms lifted toward me, the gesture pitiful. "Look at me! Look at *you*." He peered at me, searching my face, my form, his expression becoming even more confused. There were tears in his eyes, now. "Fucking cowards... What are you? You are... you're not..."

It was pitiful, both to see and hear him in this transitory state. I had no idea who might have passed through here before me, but this job had been ill done, and someone should pay for that. "It does not matter what I am. Do you remember who did this? Do you remember him?"

The young soldier flushed and I knew I had been correct in my assumption that it was a man. "No. *Yes*. He was... He came in the night, when I was caught under fire, over by the ridge. It was dark. He didn't listen to me... touched me." He frowned, anguished at the memory of what would have been his utter helplessness. "I can't remember his name or how he looked. I tried not to want it... But then I did. I wasn't fucking scared, you know? No one's ever going to say I was scared." His eyes rolled up in his head and I thought he would pass out, but his gaze came back to me, steady again. His pupils glittered with a new slyness. "You know, don't you? Tell me. What's happened to me?"

I took a step forward. I wanted to touch him and draw him far closer than was necessary, compared to the other men I took. The stark ferocity of my desire shocked me. How long had it been since I felt that way? It led to vulnerability and pain, I knew that too well. And what was I thinking I'd gain? He was a beautiful young man but he was unregulated and out of control here. I ran my eyes up and down his body. I didn't mistake the gentle swell of cock beneath the coarse fabric of his uniform. Blood pumped faster in my veins.

"You are responding to me, it's natural you should. It can feel good – it *will* feel good. Believe me." I lifted my arms up slightly from my sides, displaying myself. "Do you want me?" With more concentration, I showed myself to him, shifting the image, making him realize what I was offering. Ecstasy; passion; the best of its kind. The gentle tang of arousal lifted from him like morning dew. Excitement rose in me, thick and thrilling. Yes, he would be willing. I would welcome his body, and I would create joy in return that he couldn't possibly imagine. I could raise light in this unholy darkness; I could deafen him to the distant gunfire; I could overwhelm the stench of rot in his nostrils with the thick, rich aroma of something that would give him life, not death...

When he laughed, it startled me. It was a harsh, unhappy sound, and a response I hadn't expected. "You're fucking mad, mate." He glared at me. "You want to get me shot?"

"No," I said quietly. "But that's what *you* want, isn't it?"

He grimaced. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Whatever is in you, it's new and it hurts," I continued. I took another step toward him. "It disgusts. It terrifies. It has been growing inside you like a parasite. And it *demand*s things of you. Up until now, you haven't thought of any way to escape it, except to die." I glanced at the body at his feet. Its head was thrown back, the pale neck exposed. There was a single trail of liquid running from under the jaw – in the dim light, it showed black against the marble-like white of a corpse's skin; glinting against the dull husk of lifeless flesh. "You wish you had been hit instead of him."

His eyes went wide, the whites gleaming around the irises. "How the hell do you know that?"

I shrugged. He would understand his inherited abilities, one day soon. "You can come with me, if you want. I will ease it for you. I will show you what pleasure you can find; what compensation there can be." I was only a foot away from him and I could smell the sweat on him: see it glinting in the hollow of his throat where he'd opened the top button of his jacket. He was fresh; aching. Truly gorgeous. When I reached out and touched his face, he didn't pull away but he flinched. "I don't offer to everyone," I murmured, piqued. It had been a long time since I'd been resisted, yet an even longer time since I'd been interested enough in a man to offer him companionship. Sex was far easier; far less intimate. The young soldier's gaze was fixed on my face and I could hear his heart beating very fast. A beautiful, sincere, passionate heart – now darkened beyond rescue. When the lights flared briefly on the horizon behind him, they lit a corona around his head – a momentary, mocking halo. "You want me," I persisted. My tone held a plea, something I hadn't utilized for many ages. "You want to be with me. It will be glorious."

"Yes, I know," he whispered, his eyes closing. When I ran my fingers along his top lip, he shuddered. I slipped my thumb into his mouth and let him suck at the stray drop of thick, viscous blood I had wiped from his own mouth. He had been clumsy with the fresh corpse; too greedy with his victim. New travellers so often were. Desperation and disgust, I could feel them both in the beat of his pulse. I

would teach him how he should deal with his new life.

"But I won't go with you," he said, so softly that I had to lean over to hear. His eyes lifted to meet my gaze and he must have seen the shock in my eyes. His expression was grim. "I won't be one of *you*." I felt him tense, trying to hold himself in place, to find the courage to deny me. He nodded his head at his fallen comrade. "He was my sergeant. A mate. I'll stay with him."

I hadn't been denied for a long time, either. It was a strangely poignant feeling, even as I admitted respect for it. "You cannot stay here," I said, sharply.

"I can do what the hell I –"

I grasped his arm, letting some of my strength flow freely. He groaned with the pain. His eyes glistened, a flash of red against the monochrome that surrounded us. "You are no longer free," I growled. "You cannot live here as a man with them, nor can you feed off the dead as they grow cold. You have to find your own way now. And one more thing you must surely know. You cannot die."

With a gasp of exhaled breath, his body fell limp and he crumpled against me. He was strongly built but thin from malnourishment. His skin was clammy and his thick, ill-cut hair brushed my neck in a clumsy caress. I held him for a few moments, his weight no burden in my arms, but his shock was deep and he did not show signs of regaining consciousness for some time. I laid him gently on the ground beside his sergeant and turned his head against the dead man's neck. Let him rest beside his handiwork. Beside his *need*. My hand trailed for a while longer, tracing the line of his jaw and down his pale throat. My fingers were reluctant to leave him alone. I wanted to slide my hand inside his uniform jacket, to touch his skin, but I knew it would still be cold. And – at least for the moment – he wouldn't welcome it.

Before I straightened up, I placed a soft, pursed kiss on his lips and whispered into his ear. The words would simmer in his subconscious for as long as he remembered me.

"You cannot die."

* * * *

I moved easily among the partygoers, riding their alcoholic abandon, buffeted by their laughter. It was pitched too high and too brittle for anyone's comfort. The band were enthusiastic, the singer's fixed smile more memorable than her reedy voice. People milled around on the parquet floor of the hotel ballroom, their movements erratic and disorganized. I moved among them, my nostrils full of the sweet aroma of their desperation and desire. Fear trickled like an underground stream beneath it all. They were still cautious of their right to party in public, yet their bodies craved it. Human confusion had always been a good place for me to travel.

"What are you celebrating, sweetheart?" I leaned into a young girl, smelling the nervousness on her breath, the decay simmering within her skin. Her cream-colored dress was made of a fabric that pretended to be silk yet could never afford to be. It clung to her boyish frame, accentuating her slim hips and long legs. She turned blue, startled eyes on me. For a moment, her astonishment was tinged with suspicion. I

concentrated and smiled, making my image exactly what her mind wanted to see. She flushed and smiled back at me.

"Repeal, of course. That's why we're all here, isn't it? We're dancing and singing until the hotel throws us out. The speakeasy has closed. As of midnight last night, we're free."

Free. I smiled more broadly. "Of course."

"Want a cocktail?" She couldn't tear her gaze from me, her pale gaze fixed on my face, her pupils already dilating with need. She thrust a half filled glass into my hand. It was shallow, the liquid inside it coloured pink and strongly scented. "Take it."

I shook my head. "No thank you. It's yours, isn't it?"

"You're sweet." She giggled. "There's plenty more at the bar. Cade's family has bought liquor for us all." She glanced over my body, as if checking the suitability of my clothes. "Didn't you read your invitation?"

"I must have missed that. I am not a heavy drinker, you see." With my free hand, I stroked her cheek, down to the smooth skin of her throat. Pinker than the cocktail; warmer, too. I knew instinctively it would be more delicious.

Someone pushed past us. I never moved, but the girl was nudged to one side and she frowned with irritation. She looked too young in that moment: too young to be drinking, at least. Nervousness, lust and guilt, they were all there inside her slender frame.

"Come out to the garden with me," I murmured. "It is quieter there. No one will challenge us."

She gazed up at me, her mouth slightly open.

"Ambrus," I said, softly. I let compassion and the promise of comfort flow toward her. "What's yours?"

She started. "I didn't ask..." Then she relaxed and nuzzled her cheek into my palm. "I'm Cherry."

"Yes." I smiled. "Of course you are."

The band burst into another number, far louder than before and with a swinging dance beat. Cherry's eyes flickered away from me for a second. It was enough to break the connection and I found I had little motivation to draw her back. My curiosity was assuaged for the moment. Instead, I gently pushed at her, encouraging her to go and meet whomever it was she really wanted to dance with.

She turned back briefly. "Will I see you later, Ambrus?"

I smiled and nodded. "If that's what you'd like, be sure of it." She gave me a shining smile and slipped back into the throng of dancing bodies.

I drew back against the wall, not that anyone would disturb me physically. But from there, I had a better view of the festivities. The guests were of all ages, all costumes, but they shared the same frenetic excitement. They danced and they drank and they let it gradually but inexorably rob them of their senses. Understand this; I didn't despise them for it. I had every sympathy. This was a time of change; an age of escape. Everyone needed this night, or one such like it. Everyone needed to shake off past miseries and the restrictions of the era. The room stank of debauched

carelessness – the absence of responsibility. There would be consequences, but for tonight the party-goers believed those would be minor.

And then I saw him.

He caught my eye from across the room. Couples skittered across the floor between us but his gaze never lost contact with me. My breath quickened. I didn't forget how he had taken me unawares before, and I tried to keep my gaze steady in return. He was so different from that first time, yet still the same beautiful young man. *Of course he was.* He was clean-shaven now and his hair was longer, styled elegantly and slicked back behind his ears. His skin was still pale but this time I knew it would be clean and smell of fresh cologne. Standing at the side of the dance floor, he appeared the epitome of health and assured well-being. Different, and yet the same. *Beautiful.* His clothes mattered very little, of course, because they were just an illusion, but I admired the cut of his precisely fashionable suit. Many people passed him, but none stood by him. I raised my senses, smelling for his trail, but there was little evidence. The music faded into the background as I waited to hear him.

"Ambrus. That's what they call you." The whole tone of his voice had changed. "They know you, lots of them do. Think highly of you."

"You have me at a disadvantage," I said, quietly. He would never have heard the actual words across the floor, above the screech of human excitement and the labouring music, but we talked nonetheless. "We have not been properly introduced."

He appeared next to me: it took only that second. No one noticed the movement or remarked upon us. His shoulder nudged mine and I shivered with instinctive pleasure. *Careful.*

"My name's Edward," he said. He wasn't shy, but there was some hesitancy in his voice. Then he grinned, crimson eyes glittering with mischief. "It wasn't much of a social call that day, was it?"

I smiled with genuine pleasure at his impudence. His accent was smoother than before, though he looked no older. I was right about the cologne but there was a sultry, sweet smell to him that attracted me more. And I wanted to touch him. Of course, I always had, but that night I realized just how consumed I was by that need. *Too late to be careful?* The air tightened around me, the flavour of it both blossoming and burning. "You have come a long way since then, Edward."

He frowned slightly and his fingertips brushed the hem of my jacket. I could have dispensed with it at once – to have him touch my skin – but I couldn't risk someone in the room being attuned to my reality rather than their own. Edward knew that, too. But then, I'd always liked a man who could tease.

"I've grown more...accustomed to it, Ambrus. I've had to." His eyes met mine again, shining with a dark yet wary delight. "Is that what you see?"

I inclined my head. His breath was warm on my neck. "I see a lot of things." I glanced at his clothing. "You have the skills to clothe yourself appropriately. You are well fed. You've mastered the art of moving through the years. Where have you learned all this, Edward? From whom?"

He laughed then, a loud and musical sound, though no one's head turned but mine. "Are you jealous, Ambrus? Don't worry, I've never met him again. The man

who took my life. Who *turned* me."

"I am just concerned that you have the right guidance."

Edward snorted. "I've asked and I've watched and I've worked. That's how I've got where I am today. No master, no mentor, just my own fucking hard work."

I was disturbed by his harshness. When I took his arm, he didn't pull away. His expression remained calm but I could feel the pulse running through him, fast and angry. "And tonight?" I ran my hand down to his wrist, gripping it. "Why have you come here?"

He looked at me as if I were simple. "The same reason you have. To feed. To survive."

I shook my head. "There are less conspicuous places, better for the newly turned. Individuals you can find on the streets; quiet clubs where you can find social outcasts and refugees."

Edward shifted uneasily. "I can't do that," he said, his voice suddenly hoarse. For a second, I heard the underlying fear of the aggressive, scared young soldier, fighting his fate. "I can't face a person on their own. Here..." He nodded back to the room and the people dancing behind us. "Here they don't know what the hell they're doing, where they're going in life. For them, it's just a night, a mess of pain and pleasure. They won't remember tomorrow what they did, they won't recall me or what I do to them."

"But you will remember."

He scowled. His gaze was fierce; pleading. "You're the same as me, Ambrus."

"Not quite." I couldn't resist the desire any longer. I reached forward and kissed him on the lips. His flesh was firm, the taste was tantalizing. It was like a sip of addiction. He hesitated but then relaxed, accepting it. I felt a stutter in his heart beat, the vein of his wrist pumping beneath my hand. *He wants me.* "I will take them, too, Edward, but I will care for them when I do it. Will you do that?"

He stared at me, his expression pained. The red glimmered in his pupils. He was still so new; still untutored.

"How many?" I asked.

He grimaced. "Tonight? Few. I... can't manage it so well and I'm scared of..." He growled in the back of his throat. "I've messed up a few times."

"And you?" When he stared at me dumbly, I explained further. "Has anyone fed from *you* in return?"

The shock in his eyes was so vivid, I drew back a step. "Never! Not since... the first time. They won't have any more of me, you know?"

They...

"Edward." I sighed his name and pressed myself against his mind, wanting him, and hoping he would respond. He was strong in spirit, I might have guessed that and it thrilled me. But he was that mess of pain and pleasure, too, just as he'd described the humans. For a few moments he resisted me, his thoughts darting like startled rabbits, his hostility a small but fierce flame at the core. Then the scattering emotions gathered their courage and met me head-on.

"Not scared at all," I said, encouragingly. "You will be magnificent." *With me.*

When I leaned forward again, his mouth opened in welcome. I took his head in my hands and kissed him deeply. He moaned into me and his hands slipped around my waist, pulling me to him. His tongue was fast and hungry, and for something other than food.

"I've thought of you since that night." He whispered into my mouth, seemingly unwilling to move away, even to talk. "Who you were; why you stopped by me. What you meant by helping me."

I laughed softly. "And I thought you were just drawn to my good looks." I slid my hand down his back, tracing his spine, caressing the taut skin. When my finger pressed down between his buttocks, he shivered.

"They'll see."

"They won't. You have learned enough to know they only see what we want them to." The music played louder, the bodies sweating and swinging in an ebb and flow, yet never touching us. Over by the bar, someone shrieked with the advent of another drinking game. In my mind's eye, I saw Cherry with an equally nervous and lustful young man, embracing by the fountain in the garden. I kissed Edward more fiercely, tasting him, my tongue skimming over his sharp little teeth. *So sweet*. My cock was hardening fast, heavy and hot against my thigh. I was lustful too, of course, but this was something more. I concentrated on keeping the illusion around us, so that no one would interfere – but I was surprisingly distracted.

He laughed again, breathless, his mouth firm and wet on mine. He sounded younger and happier than before. "You asked that night, did I want you."

"Can you remember everything I said?" Why did my voice sound so hoarse? *Needy?* "I meant every word."

"I remember," he whispered. "Take me with you." He pressed his leg between my thighs. His voice got rougher. "Do it."

I didn't hesitate. I took him to the garden, into the dark, barely moonlit night, beyond where Cherry and her young man celebrated with clumsy, drunken fucking, their hair tousled and their Sunday-best clothes creased, their lips swollen around smiles of triumph. The flow of blood in their veins echoed in my ears like the frenzied hammering on a door, and yet I passed by without even a taste. I wanted only Edward – I wanted his body under mine.

Our clothes were easily gone and the location hidden from prying eyes, in case I lost control of the illusion at any time. We lay on a triangle of lush grass, bordered by smooth-stoned paving and ridiculously sweet-smelling flowers. Edward's skin was as warm as I'd known it would be, his young muscles limber, the hair on his chest soft and sparse, tangling with my heavier growth. I licked and kissed my way down to his belly, wanting to make it good for him, wanting to make it last. The hairs around his cock tickled my lips but when I laughed he just tightened his fingers in my hair and pushed me on. He never spoke while I sucked him, except to gasp. I had to admit it wasn't the romantic seduction I'd hoped for, yet I was so eager for him that I tolerated it. His flesh was thick and hot in my mouth, the sheath tugging as I moved up and down, his musky smell so heady, my senses swam. *He wants me*. There was no doubt of that, and I clung to the fact like a real lover's token. I nudged at his thigh when I thought he was ready and moved back up his body. Obediently, he opened his legs wide around my hips.

"Edward..."

"Do it, I said."

It wasn't his first time, I could tell, but he was tight and his eyes widened sharply when I thrust into his ass. The sensations were inevitably sharper, the pleasure more poignant. Hadn't anyone ever told him it would be like that, now and forever? The smell of freshly cut grass teased at my nostrils; I tasted tart saliva on the rim of my lips. The waves of lust and argument and sickness and satisfaction washed over us from the party indoors, as it worked slowly toward its close. Edward arched up against me, pulling me closer, moaning with pleasure. Tears sprang up in the corner of his eyes as I moved inside him, both of us racing swiftly toward climax. I licked the tears away then kissed along his jaw and down his throat. My teeth pressed tentatively against his skin.

"Not that." He grunted and wrenched his head away. "You hear? Never. Not me." It distressed me, though not for reasons of hunger: I was sated from earlier in the day. But I held him tighter. Did I fear he'd escape?

I didn't last long: I wanted him too much to be patient. When I came, he gave a shocked cry, an angry, ugly, exciting sound. He gripped me tightly and ground against me so that he came, too, shortly afterwards. His seed spilled out, hot and sticky on my belly like a brand, the sensation raising goose bumps on my skin. As our heart beats slowed, he pushed me off but he was just being practical: I was heavy on top of him.

We lay on the grass for a long time, silent except for our panting, until the lights from the hotel had dimmed and the noises had almost ceased. The guests had long gone. I felt him shiver beside me, though I knew he couldn't feel the cold.

"Was that what you wanted?" His voice was low, as if someone might overhear us.

I bit back a sigh. "Yes."

It was a long moment before he spoke again. "Me, too."

Delight washed over me, warming my limbs, flooding me with hope. I rolled back over and we fucked again, no longer any worry about stamina, our desires rich and easily inflamed. I was slower and more tender this time, and he responded to me as if something had worked loose inside his emotions at last. His belly rippled with his laughter as I teased his cock, and his hand tightened again in my hair. He pulled me toward him as a lover rather than for service, and that thrilled me even more. We kissed and laughed softly into each other's mouths and whispered 'please'. I turned him and fucked him from behind, leaning on him, our knees flattening the lawn beneath us. The climax was slow and deep and made us both shudder. Afterward, we lay down again on the smooth pathway, side by side. There was no imprint on the grass from our weight, as if we'd never been there at all, but the satisfied thrumming of blood in my veins told me different.

"You should feed," I said. I stretched my arm out to him. "There is no one else here for you now. Feed from me."

He tensed up. "I'm fine."

I rolled over on to my side to stare at him. His face was still flushed from sex. He

trailed his hand down my hip, then snatched it back as if startled by his indulgence.

"Edward, you have no choice. You cannot fight it." Was he still in denial?

"What does it matter?"

The pain clenched in my gut like a fist. "If you don't feed, you will decay. We can feed from each other and do no harm, just keep ourselves stable." I tried to keep the tremor from my voice. "If you are still seeking escape, starvation is a particularly hideous way to go."

He turned away: his body slid away from mine. The withdrawal was far more than physical. "Why do you care?"

"I care for you," I said. The words spilled from me before I'd even thought about them. *But it is the truth.*

He laughed – a harsh, jagged bite of sound – and sat up, his bare back toward me. The muscles across his shoulders tightened. "You don't know me at all. I didn't choose this life, Ambrus. I don't *want* it, I never have." His voice broke on a sob.

"How the hell do you bear it?"

I sat up, reaching for him. "I offered before, let me help you..."

He twisted around, glaring at me. "You want to train me? To make me like you? Why the fuck should I want *that*?"

His scorn was as painful as a physical blow. "You must learn to accept what you are. We have to keep moving on. We cannot belong anywhere – any *time* – for long."

"*We*. You mean I'm already like you. *Forever*. I never had the option." He stared at me. By the time I blinked, he was already half-clothed again. His mouth was set; his eyes narrowed.

Wait! "Edward, you asked me to take you with me..."

I was talking to the empty, dew-laden air. He had gone.

* * * *

I was tired of travelling and yet I had no other purpose, I knew that. I wandered and I searched and I remained alone. That's what I'd chosen, I knew that. But some ages – such as this one – made it particularly hard to bear. The noise in the current place was both stimulating and debilitating. Music throbbed through the building, thudding along its floor, the beat rippling through the dancers. The walls were painted psychedelic colours; bright lights pulsed through all shades of neon. The room was at the top of the building – a deserted warehouse – and was full of people, laughing, smoking, drinking, swaying. Their clothing was loose, their hair long, their faces painted. The night had passed into the small hours after midnight, and still they partied.

A young man brushed clumsily past me, dressed in a caftan and small wire-rimmed dark glasses. "Sorry, man." He didn't sound particularly apologetic but I knew he was high and there was no offence meant. This was, after all, the swinging sixties. The smell of weed pervaded everything. Everyone smiled; everyone saw beauty and colours. It seemed that some of them even saw *me*. However, none of it caused a problem, for which I was grateful.

Yet when someone took my arm, I knew it wasn't one of the party people. My nerves shuddered; my heart began to beat faster, following the rhythm of the music. *Edward!* At last.

"Hi Ambrus," he murmured in my ear. "This place is really cool, isn't it?"

I turned, already smiling at the sound of his voice. To my delight, he met me with a kiss. His mouth was open and eager, his skin flushed and warm against mine. *Beautiful as always.* I let his tongue taste inside my mouth, returning the affection warmly. I wanted – so much! – for it to be sincere. When we pulled back from each other, I searched for evidence of his well-being. He looked very healthy, very happy. Bright pants and a patterned shirt open at the neck: his long hair curled attractively on his shoulders. Better still, his eyes were bright and his body relaxed in my arms.

"Far out. I mean, finding you again." I could hardly hear him over the noise of the party, but every word was clear in my mind. "I wasn't sure...you know, whether you'd want to see me." His voice shook slightly. "Look, I was a prick last time, I know. It was just about... you know, adjusting. But I was a fucking idiot, when you were just trying to help me. Not cool at all."

I smiled. I barely registered the words, just his hesitant, hopeful expression. "You have the language of this time. You look the part."

He shrugged and grinned. "That's what it's all about, right? Travelling; finding novelty and pleasure. Blending in, drawing strength, taking the ride to the full. Enjoying a privilege, not complaining all the time it's a curse. I'm learning, Ambrus."

I raised my eyebrows. "It's acceptance and tolerance as you say. And yes, there are great benefits." I touched his face, watching how he nuzzled against my palm. It felt so good to touch him again. I'd forgotten how perfect he was... and yet, of course, I hadn't. "There's great pleasure, too."

"So fuck me. Now." He was still grinning but his pupils dilated as he challenged me. A neon reflection blinked across his lids and his eyes turned slowly red under my gaze, mirroring my own. "It was fabulous last time. You know you want to, man." He waved an arm across the room full of frenetic bodies, doped and dreaming, doing whatever they liked. "Plenty of places here."

I sniffed gently. "You've fed many times tonight. Fucked, too."

He frowned, his mood suddenly volatile. "Piss off, Ambrus. You wanted me to get used to this life, right? I'm making the most of it. They're willing, and I'm getting stronger by the day. What's wrong with that?"

"Nothing." *Sometimes everything.* "You still need to control yourself."

He stepped forward and slid his arms around my torso. His breath was hot on my neck, as vividly sensual as if it were the only thing in the room to touch me. "Not with you."

He was right, of course. The desire flared inside me like a real flame, a heat I hadn't experienced so strongly for such a long time that it frightened me. We stumbled across the floor, clutched in each other's arms and weaving in our own dance, no other bodies touching us but the occasional indulgent smile turning on our progress.

"Eddie!" A young man in a turban called after us, his arm waving in welcome,

the movement making a hazy refraction through the pulsing light. A girl on his arm swayed with the music, swathed in crinkled fabric and glittering, ethnically-patterned scarves, smiling at us as well. Her eyes were unfocussed but her affection toward Edward seemed undoubted, so I smiled back. Her pale, naïve gaze reminded me of the girl called Cherry I'd once met. The night I'd first fucked Edward. First *made love* to him. But Cherry had been on another continent, of another generation. As if he were tuning into my memories, Edward's hand tightened fiercely on mine.

We tumbled into a small, deserted cloakroom, his kisses enthusiastic and very greedy, especially for someone who'd been feeding indiscriminately all night. Our clothes were dispensed with, his skin pressed against mine, slightly sweaty and warm. I tried not to grip him too tightly, but he urged me on, laughing softly, twisting in my hungry grip and nuzzling my neck. He knew I couldn't really hurt him. He pushed me down on my back on some fabric matting and knelt between my outstretched knees. I saw mischief dancing in his eyes just before he dipped his head and slid his mouth over my straining cock.

"Edward." I groaned aloud and heard him laugh, the vibration tantalizing me as he sucked and licked. By the time he crawled back up to crouch over me, I was aching for him in a way I'd never known. He balanced himself with a hand on my hip and stretched up above me, guiding his ass over my erection, teasing us both. So uninhibited, so unrestrained - and so unlike the terrified young man I first met.

"Want you, Ambrus," he whispered. "Only you."

I gazed up into his eyes. He looked eager, excited yet startlingly vulnerable. And his expression was soft toward me in a way it never had been before. "Please," I whispered back. I had never begged anyone before. He lowered himself and I thrust up into him.

"Ambrus. *Fuck*. So good." He gasped and started to rock on me, tight around my cock, drawing response from me. I reached up and grasped his hips, moving with him, following his fervent rhythm. When I felt my climax closing in, I moved a hand to his belly and wrapped my palm around his cock. Thick and damp, it slicked up and down inside my fist in the same way he rode me. The smell of him was raw: hot, rich and sweetly sour, like his leaking seed. I came suddenly, shockingly, my body jerking and nearly unseating him.

He groaned as he climaxed, seconds later, leaning forward over me. He was chanting under his breath and it sounded like 'only you', as he said before, repeated again and again. But the blood was hammering in my head and I couldn't hear him clearly, either aurally or mentally. His come spat out, splattering on my chin, the excess trickling down between my fisted fingers on to my chest. As he sat back on his heels, panting, I met his triumphant gaze with my own. I scooped up some of the come on my face and licked it into my mouth.

He flushed heavily, his eyes widening. "That was good. *Fun*."

I laughed and nodded, then helped him balance himself as he clambered back off me. Both of us were shaky from the intensity of it. He lay down beside me, relaxing, his body slowly cooling. We could hear the music and voices outside in the dance room, but they were muted and I concentrated on making sure nothing or no one would bother us.

I didn't want it to end, holding him close, feeling his heart beating in rhythm with

mine, still tasting his come on my lips. There had been countless lovers in my time, and yet none of them had ever meant so much to me. They were fleeting, fractured shadows compared to the reality of Edward's damp flesh against mine. There was an irony in there somewhere. We lay there, so much more than men together, and yet so much less. *I'm in love*. It had never happened to me before - it might be considered ridiculous for a creature like me, who'd travelled for so long, for whom the word was just an echo of humans' futility and frailty. And yet I knew it was true. The realization brought pain, laced in with the throb of shocked delight. Why did it feel more like thrall than thrill? I didn't know how to tell Edward - or even whether I should.

"Ambrus?" He shifted awkwardly against me. His voice was low, no mischief now. "Stay here with me."

I was startled. "You want me to?"

He coughed self-consciously. "Only if it suits you. Look, I want you. I missed you."

My heart skipped a couple of beats. "I want you, too, though I have never made a secret of that. But I have to move on. So do you."

"Why the hell should we? We can choose a place we like, where there's always fun, like here."

I shook my head. My body was cooling, too, and the chill was stealing through to my heart. "No. It will pall, eventually. We need to keep moving on, to have purpose."

"To prove something?" He sounded fierce and his body had tensed up beside me.

"To find something." I slipped my arm around him and pulled him closer, but he was still resisting. "To find what we need."

"There's a guy." He sounded so forlorn. "Someone I met. Some girls. There have been friends, as well. I don't want to leave them. Ambrus, you know?"

I did. "Yes."

He turned his head to me and I saw the naked sorrow in his eyes. "They love it, sharing, being with me. They want me here. They'll want you, too. We can have years of it. You're saying that's nothing?"

"No, of course not. But it's transitory. That is all it can ever be, they cannot come with us." He shook his head and made as if to move away from me again, but I gripped him by the shoulders and leaned over him. "I do not want you hurt, Edward. I know what you need."

He glared at me, the deep eyes full of misery and stirring resentment. "Why the hell do you bother with me, Ambrus? Why the fuck do you care? I just don't want to know, to need, to suffer..."

I drew him closer and bared my neck to him. This time, he fed. His lips were dry again and his mouth opened only enough to let the edges of his teeth emerge, as if he were still reluctant. But it was enough. He punctured me firmly and he drank for a long, slow, smooth time. He had, indeed, learned well. I lay chest to chest with him, my hands holding tight to his arms, and the blood racing around in my veins, reaching for him, mingling with his. We breathed together, we moaned softly

together. He sucked and sighed and his lips grew moist against my throat. My cock stirred and swelled again on my thigh and I felt his doing the same. It was something less athletic than physical sex and yet it was even more intimate. When he finally slid away from me, I felt exhausted in a completely different - and delicious - way.

"Ambrus." He whispered my name, his voice now thick with satiation. "There can never be any attachments, can there?"

I took a deep breath. "No. Not for us. Not with them." In the distance, the music had faded to nothing but a dull, relentless beat.

Edward didn't fight me this time. He sighed and pressed against me as if seeking my support. "I'll never get it right."

"You will. Of course you will."

"Is that why I keep finding you? Why *you* keep finding *me*?" He hitched up on one elbow, staring into my face. "You're some kind of teacher."

I smiled back at him, but my chest was tight and my eyes itched with unshed tears. "Maybe that's what I can do for you, but that is not why I'm here. Why I *want* to be here."

He reached out his free hand and cupped my face. He looked shocked, much as he had the day we first met, and yet his gaze was soft, not fearful. "I don't want to lose you. What does that mean?"

"Edward..."

"You care. You're the one thing in my life I can rely on. You haven't given up on me, in all this time."

"It is only human time, Edward. For me - for us - it's not so long. Not relatively."

He shook his head and a spasm of pain crossed his face. "Idiot. That means even more to me, not less."

I leaned into him and kissed him, slowly and firmly, my tongue caressing his. "Will you come with me now?"

He frowned, and I saw the youthfulness in him, his emotions very close to the surface. "Dammit, can't we have some fun first?"

I laughed. "Yes of course. I'm not talking about now, this minute. Your friends are still here, the adventures are still to be had."

"Then yes. Please!" He flushed and laughed with embarrassment at his eagerness, though he must have known he looked adorable to me. My own emotions weren't hard to read where he was concerned. "Look... I'll come because you, of all people, know how I need you."

I smiled, but sadly this time. "It's far more than that, Edward." I stroked his hair back off his sweaty forehead. "You must know that *I* need *you*."

* * * *

We stood alone on the top of the high rise building. Above us, a bird wheeled as a speck of black against the dark, midnight-blue sky: around us, the wind buffeted our smart business suits. There was no need for us to wear the clothing, but we kept it, as we often did. Edward liked to feel connected to the time - wherever and whenever

we were – and to be part of its unique fashion. It was a source of delight for him, to find a new outfit each time we moved. A new community, a new setting. A new image. Some of the times amazed us, some of them disgusted us; some of them we'd never understand, even though we two had already come from such different backgrounds.

The wind whistled tunelessly around the air vents and scuffed the surface of the tarmac beneath our feet. If I could have seriously felt the cold, I would have been chilled through, but not just because of the weather. Sadness seeped through me: compassion clutched my heart with a fierce and familiar grip. I looked across the city but all I could see was the expanse of night-time sky, blurred by the shadow of clouds, blanketing the silhouettes of stark industrial buildings. Far in the distance, I could hear the wailing sirens of emergency response vehicles.

"He was ruined, you see." Edward was talking half to me, half to himself. His voice was hoarse and he hugged his arms around his torso, as if trying to keep his emotions in check. He gazed fixedly at the edge of the building, only a few feet away from us. "He was young; aggressive. That was all he'd ever wanted, all he pursued. Wealth and possessions and success. When he lost all that, there was no point left in anything. In *life*."

I wanted to take his hand or draw him close, but I knew by now how to read the tension in his body. He would let me comfort him in the end, but not yet. He wanted me close, but not to touch. That was usually enough for me.

"We spent months together: we were very close. But he was so... fragile. They have so few years – are so easily gone. I'm helpless here, Ambrus."

I swallowed carefully. "Did you love him?"

Edward frowned, his eyes still on the ground. "Don't be a jealous dickhead. He was just... a friend."

I had never made friends the way that Edward did. I liked to think it was because I avoided emotional contact with humans whom I knew I would outlive. But perhaps it was because I struggled with building any relationship. Instead, I watched Edward charm and attract people, and not only to feed or have fun. They liked and loved him, though not in the way I did. And he responded to them, letting these friends carry him through the ages. But it meant that he suffered every time he had to leave them – or they left him.

"To have lived in this time – that's what killed him." Edward's voice was sharp, though I knew this anger wasn't directed at me. "Not the jump from this roof. This is a decade of greed and selfishness. Making money that should be spent on human aid – trading goods that don't even exist, except on paper. No idea of worth or value. What the fuck's that all about?"

"I do not know. Just another side of human nature." I took a deeper breath and moved toward him. "But there have been great developments, too. Humanitarian initiatives; organized opposition to discrimination; the invention of amazing technological items you and I would never have dreamed of."

Edward tilted his head, listening to me, but not yet meeting my gaze. "What did my mates die for in the Great War? A future like *this*. Debt and depression. Spiraling

drug use. Radiation cancer. War, and more war."

"Edward." I took hold of his shoulder. "We will see as bad again. And as good. That's what human life is about."

He turned to me then, staring into my eyes with angry pain. A tear glimmered in the corner of his eye. "Ambrus, you've had so much longer than I have. How often have you been through this?"

I hesitated before answering, though I owed him – both of us – brutal honesty. "Many times." *Many, and many more.*

He stared for a few more seconds then nodded, because of course he'd known that already. I saw the flicker of aggression in his eyes fade to desolation. "Forever."

"Yes," I murmured. There was no other answer that would help him, except to stand by and wait for him to allow me closer.

"Look at me," he whispered. He took a step away from me, nearer the edge, then paused. Holding his hands out in front of him, he stared at them, turning them back and forth to look at the palms and then the smooth knuckles. His pale skin shone in the shreds of moonlight. "I'm the same as the day I...didn't die. And yet I did. You know what I mean. Seventy years ago or more. I lose count when we travel."

"You'll always look like that." I spoke gently and concentrated on sending him my comfort. "You're beautiful."

He sighed, but his shoulders relaxed slightly. "That's not the point, but you know that. That's what you're always trying to tell me, to teach me."

"You're a good pupil, too."

He laughed, bitterly. His head dropped back and he stared up at the sky. He was frowning again and his hair lifted in the air, the ends of it blowing across his face. "Time passes and I stay the same. Again and again, losing friends. No change, no progress."

"That's not true." I know he heard me, but he didn't acknowledge it. "I have never said that – never sought to *teach* you that. Do you think I like breaking your heart like this, every time we travel? I have to tell you the truth – that we move on while others do not – but I also abhor every moment of hurt that you suffer."

He sighed and his head dropped back down. Without a word, he stretched out his hand and grasped mine, drawing me back beside him.

"There can be progress," I said, urgently. "Listen to me. There is purpose, too." Of course, he was right – this time had been particularly demoralising. His friends had seemed bright, blessed and wealthy: for a long while we had enjoyed their company and they ours. But for so many of them, it had all been a sham. Aggressive ambition and brittle status snapped like twigs, as soon as they faced serious opposition. Their selfishness bought them no support, and many of the more shallow companions had dropped away.

"What purpose?"

"We can enjoy what we have." I slipped my arms around him and kissed his neck, my tongue lapping at the fierce pulse. He leaned against me, but he was still tense; still questioning; still challenging. I felt it in every nerve of his body and my groin tightened at the stimulation. His energy and his angry indignation would never cease to excite me, even while I sought to soothe his protests for his own peace of mind.

"Not enough," he whispered hoarsely.

"Then we can help others, as you'd like. Maybe not humans, but our own kind. We can help them transition; help them adapt." I began to caress him, to run my hands down his arms, to press my body against his. It was not explicitly sexual, just the need I had to be close to him, to join with him. "We can guard against those who go rogue."

"Like the... one who turned me?"

I nodded. One day, there would be retribution for that creature. I would see to that.

"Like *me*," Edward whispered, horror in his voice.

"Never you!" I was vehement. "You struggle, but you do not take others down with you."

"Maybe I'd feel better if I did." His body was gentling again, the muscles relaxing. I had no fear for him up here on the roof, but I still drew him back away from the edge. "I suffer, Ambrus, and maybe I think it's fair others should join me."

"Don't be that person," I whispered into his ear.

He laughed softly and turned his face to kiss me. For a moment we were silent, tasting each other, our tongues hot and greedy despite the cold air, our arms entwined. It was always the most tender moment for me, when he melded into me, accepting my love and returning his own without hesitation. His cock was half hard, nudging at his thigh and rubbing between us. We had grown used to each other's bodies, but the familiarity never spoiled the pleasure.

"I'm not, am I? That person."

"No." I smiled against his lips as we held each other close. "Some are taken against their will, as you were. They find it difficult to come over, unless they have a good master. They can be dangerous, to themselves and to others, unless..."

"They find some purpose," he murmured. "You're saying I might have gone that way."

I nodded and kissed him slowly, feeling the shape of his lips with mine, tracing the sharp points of his teeth with my tongue. I felt the muscles of his belly tighten with anticipation. I could wait, but he would feed from me before this day was over. Neither of us was eager for any other company.

"What about those who *do* choose this life? Surely there are plenty of them?"

He was still restless. The suicide of his friend had unsettled him, far more than it did me. I wanted to answer him truthfully but carefully, too. "Yes, some choose this route, whether it is a result of their disillusion with human life, or their desperation to prolong it." I had turned many who came to me, begging for it. I would challenge them on their reasons, but it was difficult, when their blood smelled sweet and seductive and their body was offered eagerly. It had taken me many years to learn how to balance that control.

"But that's not how it is, is it?" He peered at me: understanding dawned in his eyes.

"It's not necessarily easier for them, if that is what you mean, no. They can also be... *lost*." I caressed his face with my fingertips, following the strong line of his jaw.

"We can – and should – help them, too."

"Is that what you did before you met me?"

"Yes." Not as much as I should have done; not as little as I could have justified. I travelled and I searched, and yet I never really knew what for. "Whether they arrived in this life through desire or deceit, there are many like you." He raised his eyebrows and I laughed aloud. The sound was strong even though the edges of it were whipped away in the crosswind. "No, of course, I must correct myself, mustn't I? There are *none* like you, beloved Edward. But there are creatures who have been in the same situation. They need guidance, too."

Suddenly, he was very still. My hands held him physically but he had withdrawn his emotional connection from me. His voice trickled from him as nothing but a thread of sound, and I had to concentrate to catch the words. "Do I disgust you, Ambrus?"

"No, of course not!"

His pupils were dilated, and not just from our proximity. "Because I'm the same as you now?"

"No," I murmured. "Because you're *not*. And never will be. That's part of your beauty." I pulled him back to me, fiercely now. I brushed my teeth against his throat and breathed my heat on to his skin. "Can you feel me? Feel my need and love for you? Is *this* disgust?"

He shivered and thankfully, I felt the tension ease between us. "Ambrus, I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. You said... *beloved*. You startled me."

I laughed softly, but he didn't join in.

"You're the only one," he murmured. His tone was both wistful and fearful. "Your patience and your devotion – they're the only kinds of love I've known since my parents. *Real* love. A constant. A selflessness." He dropped his head to my shoulder, perhaps afraid to meet my eyes. "I break your heart in return, Ambrus, don't I? All the fucking time. All through the years and the places and the other, passing people. I never realized before...how important that was."

I shook my head, unable to reply. My fingers clutched him with something like desperation.

"You said once there couldn't be any attachments for us. But what *about* us? You and me?"

"That's different," I said. My voice sounded thick and awkward. *It's possible*. Of course it was. It was the stuff of my dreams.

"Do you want that?" he persisted. He looked up and surprised me. Instead of tears or confusion, I saw a fierce determination in his eyes. "Do you want *me*? Everything I have, everything I am? The pair of us, joined in every way. Forever?"

I tried to keep my voice steady but he would have heard my plea in his head – would have felt the sudden hammering of my heart against his chest. I had few secrets from him by now. "You know what I want. But the concept of *forever* has caused you much pain, I know that. I respect that. You have to reach the decision yourself."

"Yes, I know. Dammit, it's taken me long enough, hasn't it?" He sighed and took my head in his hands. Reaching up the couple of inches to reach my height, he kissed me. But it was a gentle kiss, no tongue, no teeth. He pulled back, his face flushed.

"I've already made that decision, it seems." Still holding my gaze, he dropped his head to the side. With one hand he loosened his collar and wrenched it open, exposing his pale, slender throat. There was one small, glistening bead of sweat in its hollow.

"Feed from me, Ambrus. *Please.*"

I couldn't have refused him even if I'd wanted to try. My whole body shook with instinctive delight, my desire overwhelming me in a fierce, agonizing wave. I could smell his blood, pulsing beneath the surface of his skin. My throat tightened and my fangs stretched greedily. I gripped him much too strongly, clumsy in my shock and possessiveness, yet he didn't resist or complain. As I bit into him, all he did was sigh with pleasure. My heart skipped then settled into the same rhythm as his. My cock was hard already, and I could feel his arousal just as swollen, our bodies pressed together. The sex would follow soon. But for now, I fed from him, every drop precious, every taste exquisite, every breath from his mouth a caress on my cheek.

To give himself to me like that was something far more than his sexual love. We both knew the significance of it. I drank for a long, long time, not taking a lot of his blood, but savouring the touch for as long as he'd let me.

"Only you," he whispered.

"I love you," I replied, hoarsely. Those words had never passed my lips before, but none had ever been more sincere.

* * * *

The fireworks were dying away by now. From where we sat, up on the deserted hill, we could see the final spray of glittering gold and fire-red sparkles as they fell beneath the river's reflection. The celebratory cheering from the crowd along the embankment reached our ears as a dull throbbing roar, their flags and banners flickering as bursts of bright colour in amongst the throng of warmly-wrapped, human bodies.

"Another century passes," Edward murmured in my ear. "I was only a baby when the last one turned. You've been following me ever since I turned adult, Ambrus. Constant love, or dirty old man?"

I smiled, far from offended. "Are you so sure *I* have been following *you*? Perhaps it is the other way about."

He chuckled. "This is it, isn't it? How it'll always be."

I nodded. The dying lights of the distant display were twinkling like fireflies in his pupils. As I watched him, happy just to enjoy the sight, he flung himself back on the grass, cradling his hands behind his head.

"We can go anywhere," he said. "Any time. And together."

For ever. I didn't say it aloud. I didn't need to. He was beginning to gain comfort from that now, rather than distress.

"Say it again, Ambrus." His eyes were on the darkening sky but I knew he was

fully aware of me.

I pretended to protest. "You will wear it out. So many years ahead of us..."

"Please."

I leaned over him and kissed his forehead. "*Beloved.*"

He sighed and then laughed as if embarrassed at his sentimentality. We both knew it was only affectation.

"So where will we go?" I asked. "A new century – a new adventure."

"Let's go back." He spoke abruptly, tensing up beside me.

Did he think I'd refuse him anything? But he confused me. "Back?"

"To the start. When you found me... where I was." He was struggling to express himself; his cheeks were flushed. He was more beautiful than ever. "There'll be other soldiers like me, won't there?"

I was tense, too, feeling my heart beat race. "It was a hideous place, Edward."

"Won't there?" he repeated, his voice stronger.

I nodded, slowly. "Of course. Especially if there was a rogue creature passing through. And the misery and pain and confusion of that time..." It was a prime feeding ground.

"Then we'll go. We'll be needed."

We were both silent for a few moments. I did not want him to be hurt or upset, yet I was proud of him, too. Would love always be such a painful, mysterious contradiction to me?

"But later," he added, suddenly. His gaze flickered back to me, the mischief alight in the red irises like a new firework of its own. The flattened grass framed his dark hair, the smell of the earth mixed with the sweet tang of his flesh and blood. Stretching out his legs, he wriggled his hips. He was hard, as he so often was. "First, we need to have more fun. Right?"

Laughing, I let him pull me over on top of him, though I never had any intention of resisting.

I needed more practise in love, that was all.

About the Author

Clare took the pen name London from the city where she lives, loves, and writes. A lone, brave female in a frenetic, testosterone-fuelled family home, she juggles her writing with the weekly wash, waiting for the far distant day when she can afford to give up her day job as an accountant. She's written in many genres and across many settings, with novels and short stories published both online and in print. She says she likes variety in her writing while friends say she's just fickle, but as long as both theories spawn good fiction, she's happy. Most of her work features male/male romance and drama with a healthy serving of physical passion, as she enjoys both reading and writing about strong, sympathetic and sexy characters.

Website: <http://www.clarelondon.co.uk>

Blog: <http://clarelondon.livejournal.com/>

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