



Annmarie Ortega



# *Dead Girl Talking*

by

Annmarie Ortega

*Resplendence Publishing, LLC*

<http://www.resplendencepublishing.com>

Resplendence Publishing, LLC

P.O. Box 992

Edgewater, Florida, 32132

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This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and occurrences are a product of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, places or occurrences, is purely coincidental.

*For Misia,*

*Thank you for being an awesome friend, a willing proofreader, and  
teaching me about this, that, and the other...*

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## *Chapter One*

I'm not a slut. I've never been the type of woman who has a one-night stand with a man I just met. I have to know a man for a while before getting naked in front of him. So it was completely out of character for me to be lying flat on my back getting my brains screwed out by a guy I just met, but I did just that. And sleeping with that stranger changed my life forever. It just so happens that my one-night stand was with a vampire who in the throes of passion bit me making me a vampire too. I learned the hard way that love bites, and once bitten there's no going back.

I usually go to one particular nightclub to meet my roommate Veronica. This particular night she never showed up and I honestly wasn't all that surprised. She had a boyfriend that she was with all the time and she was hardly ever at our apartment anymore. I knew it was just a matter of time before she'd tell me that she was going to move out of our place and in with her boyfriend.

After waiting around for Veronica for a while I decided to go home. The club scene wasn't my thing and I'd much rather put on my favorite flannel pajamas and read the book I bought earlier that day. I was walking towards the club doors to leave when a man I was passing stopped me.

"Hey, you're not leaving now, are you?" He had an exaggerated frown on his face when he grabbed my arm. I had never seen this guy before and was positive I'd remember him if I had. He was gorgeous. While he spoke, I was baffled as to why he was even talking to me. Let's just say I'm no model. I have long brown hair, brown eyes, average height and thighs a little too large for my liking.

I laughed while nodding my head to him. "Yeah, sorry I'm about to go." I knew he was trying to pick me up, but I wasn't interested.

"My name is Jake. How about you let me buy you a drink before you go..." he trailed off waiting for me to tell him my name. He comically raised an eyebrow waiting for my response.

I looked at him and thought about my pajamas and book waiting for me at home. Then I decided one drink couldn't hurt. "My name is Janice and I'll stay for one drink, but that's it." I emphasized the word one so he'd know I had no intention of hanging around all night.

"Cool, come on." He turned to lead me back towards the bar. "Is vodka and tonic ok?"

"Yeah, sure that's fine," I answered.

We sat next to each other on stools and he ordered us drinks. We sat at the bar and talked for a while, joking and making each other laugh with silly small talk. When I finished my drink I pushed the glass away from me on the bar indicating I was finished.

"Jake, it was nice meeting you and thanks for the drink. I have to be going now." I stood up to leave.

"You're going to go? I was thinking that maybe we could dance?"

"Oh were you?" He was a smooth talker and probably the type of guy who got everything he wanted. I knew his type well; too well in fact. I had been in a relationship for a long time with someone who reminded me a lot of this guy.

"Dance with me," he pleaded as he got up and started to pull me by the hand to the dance floor. I thought he was adorable and I knew I wasn't going to say no to him. We danced to a few songs together on the overly crowded dance floor. I started to notice a lot of women staring at us. Then I realized actually they weren't staring at us, they were staring at him. He was the kind of man you'd see looking at you from the glossy pages of a magazine, not in real life. He had light brown hair that was all one length and hung past his shoulders. His eyes were a light brown with amber colored flecks in them. He wore a white t-shirt and faded jeans over his muscular frame. It was obvious to me that he worked out from the muscles I could see bulging through his shirt.

When the song we were dancing to ended, he took me by the hand leading me off the dance floor. I didn't even ask where we were going. I followed him up a tall flight of stairs to the second floor of the nightclub. There were various rooms upstairs, each one painted a different color. Some rooms had overstuffed sofas or chairs for people to sit and talk. He led me to a room painted a bright peacock blue; the only furniture was a red sofa shaped like a pair of giant lips against the wall. He led me to it, sitting down then pulled me down to sit on his lap, straddling him.

Jake had an expression that made my pulse race; there was a fire raging in his eyes. He put his hands on my face and stared at me intensely, then pulled me to him so our lips touched.

Our first kiss was gentle, but then he seemed to lose control and his kisses became harder and more intense. His tongue pushed against my lips and I opened myself to him. I knew that I should get up and leave but I let what my body was feeling control me instead of my sense of reason. I missed kissing, and I guess I simply let myself be carried away.

Jake's hands caressed my hair as I wrapped my arms around his neck. My entire body turned hot from his kisses. His mouth left mine and started to trail down my neck. I could feel his breath against my skin as he groaned low against my throat.

He took one of my hands in his and guided it to his lap and the bulge between his legs. I could feel his rock hard erection under the denim of his jeans. My head was thrown back, my mouth slightly parted as I caressed him and he continued to kiss my neck. His mouth moved from my neck to my ear. "God, I want to fuck you, Janice."

I didn't say anything back; I was completely lost in him. He could have taken me right there and I wouldn't have protested.

All of a sudden, the music stopped and the overhead lights in the club came on. It was jarring and brought us back to reality quickly.

"What time is it?" he asked.

The way he stopped kissing me was abrupt, and from the way we'd been kissing, his actions surprised me. "Well if they're turning on the lights then it must be four in the morning." I couldn't believe that time had gone by so quickly with him. We had spent almost the entire night together.

"Damn. I have to go right away." He was clearly upset because of the time.

"Oh, ok." I got up off his lap. I was disappointed he seemed in a hurry to leave all of a sudden.

Jake stood up. "Bye," he said then kissed my cheek. He turned around to leave and started to walk to the staircase we used to get to the second floor. I watched him pause, then turn around and rush back to me. He took my hands in his. "Listen, I'm so sorry I have to leave like this and I'd really love to see you again. Could you meet me here next Saturday night?" His eyes looked anxious and he seemed tightly wound, as if he was fighting the urge to run down the stairs out of the club.

"Sure, I can be here." It was obvious we were attracted to each other so hell yeah I wanted to see him again. When I had gone there that night, I hadn't planned to meet anyone but I

enjoyed him kissing me and feeling his hands on me. I hadn't made love with a man for a long time and quite honestly, the idea of having a one-night stand was appealing to me.

"Good. So I'll see you next weekend." He turned around to leave again, then once again hesitated and turned back and kissed me one last time. He rushed back to the staircase and hurried down the stairs. I walked over to the balcony that overlooked the entire dance floor. I saw him look up at me to smile and wave before he disappeared into the crowd of people leaving through the club's front doors.

I stood there for a moment with my hands on the railing, thinking about everything that had happened that night with Jake. I wondered if he would really show up next weekend. One thing I did know; I would be there to find out.

## *Chapter Two*

“I think you should wear this.” Veronica held up a shiny silver sleeveless top.

“Really? You think so?” I replied as I zipped up my jeans.

It was Saturday night and she was helping me get ready to go out.

“Absolutely. Why did you buy it if you aren’t ever going to wear it? Trust me, this is the top for tonight.”

“It looked cool in the store but I’m not sure if it’s me.” It was flashier than what I usually preferred, and I didn’t know what had possessed me to purchase it. Since I bought it, I’d never had the nerve to wear it.

“Wear it,” she said shoving the shirt in my hands.

“Alright,” I said taking the shirt from her. After I put it on, I looked at myself in the full-length mirror. I had to admit to myself, I was looking good.

“So are you nervous? Seeing this guy again?” Veronica asked me.

“Yeah. He was really gorgeous. But you know I don’t want anything serious.”

“You know someday you’re going to want serious again. Not all men are jerks.”

“Maybe so, but not yet. Now I just want some fun.” I hated having this conversation with Veronica. She knew I tried serious once and it didn’t work for me. I ended up with my heart broken and I swore it would never happen to me again. To say I was not big on commitment now was a huge understatement. “Ok, I’m ready to get going.”

I took one final look at myself in the mirror then picked up my purse and started heading towards the front door. Veronica followed me to see me to the door.

“Don’t forget, we’ll be at the club at around twelve thirty. I’ll look for you as soon as we get there.”

“Ok, cool. Hopefully you won’t find me there sitting by myself,” I joked.

“Go have fun. Don’t do anything I wouldn’t do.”

I was only in the club for a few minutes when I saw Jake through the crowd. He was leaning against the bar talking to a woman who was absolutely beautiful. She had long blonde hair and wore an outfit that was so revealing she wasn't too far from being naked. The way she was hanging on him and smiling, it was obvious to me she was anticipating her getting to know him intimately. My stomach soured and I thought there was little chance of he and I getting together. I stood staring at the two of them thinking they were the perfect looking couple. I told myself that I was a complete idiot for thinking he would really want to see me again.

Maybe Jake felt me staring at him or I sent him some sort of vibe, because he turned and looked directly at me. In fact, I thought I saw his eyes lit up when he saw me. He leaned over to speak to the woman and I watched her smile slowly fade from her face. I then saw a look of utter disappointment as he left her and started walking across the room towards me.

"Hey Jake." I fought the butterflies that were suddenly loose in my stomach. I was amazed he had left perfect model girl to come talk to me.

Jake looked at me up and down, blatantly checking me out. I could tell from his expression that he approved of what he saw. Suddenly I was glad I had Veronica help me get dressed.

"Let's go to the bar and I'll get us drinks," he told me.

"No thanks, I'm good." During the week, I convinced myself that the drink I'd consumed with Jake made our attraction seem like more than what it was. I didn't want alcohol to cloud my judgment tonight.

"Well then dance with me," he pleaded. He took my hand and started to pull me to the dance floor as he had last week. I hesitated and he nearly pulled my arm from its socket. "Come on, Janice."

As we moved to the dance floor, I watched his ass while trying not to be totally obvious. It was difficult to not reach out and give it a firm squeeze. Tonight he was wearing blue jeans with a light blue shirt and boots. He had his long brown hair pulled back in a ponytail. He turned around to face me and we started dancing. He looked at me and his eyes drew me to him and literally made me breathless. Even though the music we danced to was fast, he moved closer and wrapped an arm around me pulling him even nearer to him. I could tell the attraction I felt last week was still there with no alcohol. It was an exciting feeling.

We danced for a few songs and all the while, I could feel jealous eyes upon me. It was during the end of one song I felt hands on my shoulders that came from behind me. I spun around and saw Veronica.

“Hey!” I reached over to hug her as if I hadn’t seen her just a short while ago.

“He is gorgeous!” She yelled in my ear so I could hear her over the thumping of the music.

Veronica stepped back and gave me the thumbs up sign. I swatted her hand away because I didn’t want Jake to see her gesture. She leaned close to me to yell in my ear again.

“I’m not coming home until Monday night sometime. You can have the place to yourself.”

I nodded that I understood her then turned to Jake. “This is my roommate Veronica!” He nodded that he’d heard me and gave Veronica a casual wave.

“I’ll see you later; I’m going back over to the bar. Have a fun weekend.” She winked at me before she turned around and left.

I turned back to Jake and we started dancing again. He rubbed himself against me on the crowded dance floor as we moved to the music. I was hot from all the people pressed up against us and from the undeniable sensation of his erection against me. As we throbbed together with the music, Jake leaned down to me. His lips brushed across my temple and they were cool against my skin. I reached up and put my hands on his muscular chest. He was hard and solid under his shirt. Our eyes locked and his spoke to me. They told me that he wanted me right there on the dance floor. My eyes must have told him that I was ready and willing for whatever he wanted. The reason I think that is because the next thing I knew he took me by the hand and led me off the dance floor and out of the club.

“What are we doing?” I stopped walking and he yanked on my arm. We were standing in the parking lot across the street from the club.

“I want to be alone with you. That place is too crowded. I thought we could go somewhere just the two of us.”

Now that I knew for certain he wanted to be with me, I needed to clear some things up with him first.

“Jake, you should know I’m not looking for a boyfriend. I was in a relationship for a long time and I’m not ready to do that again. I’m not looking for anything serious.”

“That’s ok with me. I thought we could have some fun together, that’s all. I’ve been alone for a long time and I’m not looking for a commitment either,” he explained to me.

“So this is just for tonight? No strings attached?”

“No strings, just tonight,” he agreed.

I knew it was crazy agreeing to go have sex with a stranger, but I wasn’t really thinking with reason. Instead, I was thinking about how nice to it would to have sex with a real person and not an appliance that required batteries. “How about we go to my place? Veronica won’t be back until Monday night,” I suggested.

We walked to his car and I thought about what I was doing. I realized that this was only the second time I’d met him, but my not having sex for so long had finally caught up with me, and he was so god damned hot. I knew I didn’t know anything about him but honestly, I didn’t care. We didn’t have to take things slow while dating to build a relationship. The only thing building between us was the sexual tension and honestly that was all we needed.

We got in his car and I gave him my address. He pulled out of the spot and started to drive. “Do you know how to get there?”

He glanced over at me while he continued down the street. “I do, I’ve lived in the city a long time. I’m familiar with the Northwest Side.”

Jake pulled up in front of my apartment building and we both got out of his car. We went into my building and went upstairs. I opened it and walked inside kicking off my shoes. He stood in the doorway looking at me but not entering.

“Aren’t you going to invite me in?” He filled the doorway as he leaned in it both tall and wide.

“Well I didn’t plan on having sex out in the hall so I guess you better come inside,” I said sarcastically, moving closer to him.

Jake nodded and entered my apartment, then closed the door behind him. He surprised me when he scooped me up into his arms as if we were newly weds on our way to our honeymoon bed.

“I was hoping all week that you would be back at the club. You’re all I’ve been thinking about,” he told me with eyes on fire. He leaned in and kissed me softly on the lips. I felt his tongue brush my lips so I opened my mouth to him. No need for him to ask twice. He was just as good at kissing as I remembered. I heard him groan as my tongue explored his.

He pulled back from me and asked, "Which way to your room?" I directed him and once we entered, he put me down on my feet.

I went over to turn on the lamp that was on my nightstand next to my bed. Jake followed me and brushed my long brown hair back over my shoulders. Without speaking, he took my hands and lifted them up, guiding them to the buttons on his shirt. He didn't have to tell me what to do; I knew what he wanted. My nimble fingers started unbuttoning his shirt until my fingers were at the waist of his button fly jeans.

He reached down and unbuttoned his pants. I pulled his shirt out from his jeans and he shrugged it off, letting it fall to the floor. He had on a white t shirt underneath that was tight across his muscular chest. Jake pulled off the shirt, letting it fall to the floor on top of the other.

I looked at his chest and was amazed. I couldn't believe that he wasn't a famous model or actor. He was stunning. He took one of my hands and placed it on his chest.

"You can touch me anywhere you want. It's all I've been able to think about since last week when I met you."

My hand touched his smooth skin, my open palm moving over one of his nipples. I couldn't help my hand from wandering down to his abs. I've always been a sucker for good abs and his chiseled abs could have been made of stone. Jake kicked off his shoes then pulled down his jeans, stepping out of them. He lifted each foot to pull off his socks. All he wore was a pair of white briefs that hugged him in all the right places. I could see his erection bulging against the white cotton material. I swallowed and the sound was loud in my ears.

"I want to see you naked," he told me, breaking the ring of silence that surrounded us.

His words made my heart pound harder in my chest. He moved his hands to my silver top and pulled it off me revealing my breasts. I looked at him and swallowed again, nervous. His hands reached out and cupped my breasts and I could feel my nipples harden against his palms. An intense heat rolled through me, right through the center of my being. There was a sensation of a steady throb between my legs and I knew I was already wet.

I looked down and watched him play with my nipples. He was pinching and twisting them so they ached. I whimpered and he squeezed them harder as he pulled on them.

"Do you like that?"

"Yeah," I whispered as the sensation of pleasure and pain caused me to tremble.

Jake moved his hands from my breasts to unbutton my jeans. I exhaled as he slid down my zipper. He pulled down my pants then knelt in front of me to help me step out of them. Once my jeans were off, he slid off the black bikini underpants I wore. He knelt there looking at me naked and my knees weakened.

A moment passed, and then Jake touched the smooth skin between my legs. "I love a shaved pussy," he said as he started to explore me between my legs. He leaned forward and I opened my legs a little wider. I felt his tongue lick up my slit and I shuddered. He groaned as he buried his face further into me. My hips gyrated and I knew if he continued I was going to come right there. I think he sensed that I was getting close because he stopped and stood up in front of me.

"Why did you stop?" I asked him with a whine in my voice. He'd teased me, bringing me right to the edge, and then left me hanging for my release.

"Because my cock aches and I want to fuck you now."

I wanted him just as bad, but I didn't know the right thing to say to him. All I knew was that I wanted to make love to him and ease my aching pussy. Not able to find the right words I simply turned and led him over to my bed. "I don't know what you want me to do..."

"Shhh..." he hushed as his pointer finger gently touched my lips. His eyes were full of understanding. He took off his briefs so he stood naked next to me, then crawled onto my bed, allowing me to see his perfectly shaped ass.

Jake held out his hand to me, inviting me to join him on my bed. I lay next to him and he moved onto his side to look over at me. He gave me the sweetest, small smile before he moved in to kiss me.

It was a fantastic kiss, and it made me want more of him. Reaching up I pulled off the band that held his hair back, letting it fall loose. He was so beautiful.

Jake used his hand and touched my breastbone. His fingers trailed down my body, dipping into my belly button down to between my legs. I opened my legs wider for him, inviting him back into me. When his finger slid inside me and touched my core, he groaned.

"This right here is the closest I'll ever get to heaven." He leaned down and his teeth nibbled at my ear lobe. "The things I want to do to you tonight."

“What things?” As he answered in my ear, I felt myself blush from the roots of my brown hair down to my painted toes. I closed my eyes and I couldn’t believe a man this beautiful would say these types of things to me. God, I missed having sex.

I felt Jake move as he got up from my bed. I opened my eyes and looked at him disappointed. He picked up his jeans and reached into a front pocket. Finding the small wrapper he was looking for he tore it open, removing a condom. Pausing at the foot of the bed, he unrolled it onto his erection. Climbing back onto the bed, he crawled up my body again and straddled me. He eased himself on top of me, holding himself up on his forearms.

“Put me inside of you,” he commanded me.

I reached down and held his hardness, guiding him to me. As he entered me, he sighed as if just the act alone of being inside of me was pleasurable to him. I wrapped my legs around him and locked my ankles, pulling him closer and deeper inside of me.

Jake started to move his hips, sliding his cock in and out of me. His hair hung down past his face. When he leaned down to kiss me, it covered us like a sable curtain. I unhooked my ankles and planted my feet on both sides of him on the bed.

He pulled himself back up and slid out of me. “Lay on your side.”

Jake eased himself into me again reaching over while he continued fucking me to touch my clit. I hissed in the pleasure of his touch. His finger moved quickly over my sensitive nub as I writhed under him. He started slamming my pussy harder and deeper so I was panting for breath. His hand slid from my clit so he could grab my thigh.

“Am I hurting you?” he asked me.

“No, I love it. You can go harder if you want.” I reached down and started playing with my own clit as he continued to fuck me.

“Fuck, you feel so fucking amazing, Janice.”

I started whimpering after he spoke.

“Are you going to come? Tell me, are you?” he demanded me to answer.

“I’m right there,” I gasped. I was right at the precipice, breathless, ready to fall over the edge.

“Me too. I’m going to come right now.”

My body shattered into a million tiny pieces.

Jake's body shuddered as he started to come deep inside of me. He grunted then leaned down and nuzzled my exposed neck with his mouth. I felt him kiss me then I felt a strange sensation at my throat. It was like a kiss and a bite at the same time... the perfect blend of pleasure and pain.

Another whimper escaped me. The sensation at my neck burst through my entire body causing me to experience another orgasm. "Fuck," I breathed. I never had two orgasms when I was having sex, and this second orgasm was more intense than the first. I noticed the pleasure started to wane, and all I felt was pain. Jake was biting my neck. I tried to turn over to get his mouth off me, but I found that I couldn't move at all. The last thing I remembered before losing consciousness was him sucking at my neck, with his cock still buried deep inside me.

## *Chapter Three*

When I came to, I was still lying in my bed. My blanket covered me but I knew I was naked underneath.

“Hey, you’re finally awake.” Jake was lying down next to me wearing his white briefs. I tried to think of what had happened before I fell asleep. I remembered the amazing sex, and then him biting me. I tried to sit up and move away from him. There was a sharp pain in my neck and I gently touched it, trying to feel what was there.

“You bit me,” I said accusingly to him. “You bit me really hard.” I could feel two raised bumps under my fingers that were tender to my touch. “Why the hell did you bite me?” I had visions of diseases and rabies and all sorts of other terrible consequences of a human bite. I pulled off my blanket, not caring that I was nude. I thought I was going to throw up and I needed to get to my bathroom. When I sat up, I immediately felt dizzy and lightheaded. He crawled over the bed and sat by my side.

“Easy, easy, don’t try to move too fast,” he cautioned me as he put an arm around me. “I am so sorry I did this to you. I didn’t mean to do it. I got carried away and I know I should have stopped. I’m so sorry.”

I tried to jerk away from him when the overwhelming desire to vomit hit me again. I closed my eyes and waited for the nausea to pass. He placed his hand on the small of my back and I pulled away from him again. I didn’t want him touching me at all. He had fucking bitten me while we were making love.

“Wow, I feel really dizzy. I think I have to throw up.” My stomach started to cramp and I doubled over from the pain. Something was seriously wrong with me.

“You’ll feel better once you feed. Everyone feels that way until the first time they’ve fed, it’s normal after you’ve been changed.”

I looked over at him and gave him a look. “Once I feed?” Who talked like that, seriously? He seemed so normal before, but now he had more than began to creep me out. It was the first

time I slept with a guy for months, and I'd picked crazy guy. "I ate before I went out last night," I told him matter of fact. As I sat doubled over I was starting to think that he might be right. The pain I was feeling could very well be from hunger.

"Not tonight, two days ago."

This time I looked at him as if he were insane. "Two days ago? What the hell are you talking about?" I looked out my bedroom window and I could see that it was dark outside. He was confusing me and I wasn't sure what day it was now.

"You've been sleeping for two days, Janice. The last time you ate was days ago. But now that you've changed, your hunger is different, stronger. It won't be able to be ignored for long."

"I've been asleep for two days? Get out of here. There's no way I was that out of it for two days." He was insane, that was all there was to it. If I slept for that long, I would have missed work today. Somebody would have called me to see where I was. I would have heard my phone ringing.

"Here, let me prove it to you." He went to where my answering machine sat on one of my nightstands and pushed the play button.

"Hey, Janice, this is Mike... I just wanted to make sure you were all right since you didn't make it in today. Call me when you can to let me know you're ok. Thanks, bye."

Jake pressed the stop button on the answering machine. "Veronica left a message too. She said she won't be back until Wednesday night instead of today."

"Today is really Monday." He was telling me the truth; I'd been passed out for days. Everything was weird with me, I felt strange from the inside out. "What did you mean about feeling different after the change? I feel different. How have I changed?" Inside my stomach twisted and turned and I was starting to panic. I was convinced whatever I was experiencing was because of his bite on my neck. "What did you do to me?"

Jake walked over and knelt on the floor in front of me, putting my hands in his. "Before I explain everything to you I want you to understand that I'm really sorry for what I did to you. I didn't mean to bite you; I got carried away when I came. It's been a long time since I've been with anyone. I wasn't thinking about what I was actually doing to you."

"And what the hell did you do to me? Why do I feel so weird?" I felt so different, like I didn't even belong in my own skin anymore. I wanted answers from him right away.

“I know this is going to be hard to believe, but when I bit you I turned you into a vampire.”

“What?” My voice was louder now, almost shouting. I pulled my hands out from his hold. I was right before, Jake was completely out of his mind. “That’s it; get the fuck out of my apartment!” I needed to get him out of my place immediately. I stood up to show him the way out, but I fell to the floor instead in excruciating pain. Pulling my knees up to my chest I curled up into the fetal position squeezing my eyes shut. “God. What the fuck.”

“I can make the pain go away if you let me.” His voice was calm and he didn’t appear to be concerned I was in such agony.

“Get out of here... but call 911 for me before you go,” I told him between gasps. There was no way I could get to my phone and call for help myself. The pain was growing worse by the second. Plus I was incredibly panicked which couldn’t be helping the situation.

Jake knelt down on the floor next to me, brushing back my hair. “Janice, I’m telling you I can help you if you let me. Paramedics can’t do anything for you now, just me. If you don’t let me help you, you’re going to die. Watch this if you don’t believe me.”

I looked at him, waiting for his proof. While I watched him, he took his wrist into his mouth and started biting. I started crying uncontrollably, terrified. I was trapped in my apartment with a fucking maniac. The sound was terrible, and the sight horrifying. Blood dripped from his mouth and wrist onto my honey oak hardwood floor. I stared at him unable to move and despite feeling repulsion by what I saw in front of me, I couldn’t tear my eyes away.

“You need to feed from me. I made you a vampire and now you need my blood.” His lips were glistening ruby red.

When he spoke, I could see his canine teeth were long and pointed. I was quite sure they weren’t like that before. It was a sight I would have most certainly noticed. He moved his open wrist down to my mouth. I pressed my lips firmly together refusing to open them to what he was offering me. I shook my head fiercely in protest and tried to push his wrist away. I wasn’t about to drink this crazy ass guy’s blood.

He went ahead and placed his open wrist to my mouth. I could feel his blood wet on my lips. There was an odor from his blood, like nothing I’d ever smelled before. It was the most tantalizing smell and I moved my lips to taste the tiniest amount. The taste was delicious, succulent. Even though my mind told me what I tasted was disgusting, I couldn’t fight my

body's desire to consume more. I opened my mouth to the wound on his wrist, swallowing his life's blood.

Jake hissed as I drank from him. It sounded as if he was enjoying the experience as much as I was. Now instead of pushing his wrist away from me, I clawed at it with both hands sucking furiously. His blood couldn't get into my mouth fast enough.

"Easy, slower. Just let my blood flow inside of you." With his free hand, he patted my tangled hair.

After a few moments, more of my mouth attached to his wrist he started pulling his arm away from me. I whimpered in protest, wanting more than what I'd consumed.

"Ok Janice, time to stop now," he told me.

I didn't want to stop drinking and I continued sucking pretending I never heard him.

Jake took his hand that had been stroking my hair and pried my mouth from him. He clamped his other hand tightly over his wrist to stop the bleeding.

I sat up from the floor wiping my mouth with the back of my hand leaving a red mark there. It was amazing that I felt so much better. The pain I'd experienced was gone and I felt better than I had in a long time. I moved my tongue across my teeth and felt my canines were longer and sharp to the touch.

I stood up no longer dizzy and walked into the bathroom to look at myself in the mirror. There I was naked, my face smeared with Jake's blood. I smiled and saw the pointy teeth, the same I'd seen in Jake's mouth. It was a scary smile, the kind of nightmares.

I turned to look at him. He was standing in the doorway watching me.

"Why did you do this to me?" He made me a vampire. He changed me forever and I wanted to know why.

Jake walked into the room, closer to me and touched my hair, then my cheek. His touch was tender and gentle. "I told you I didn't mean to do this to you. I lost control of myself when I came. It's been such a long time since I've been with a woman and you were amazing. I wasn't thinking about what I was doing."

I was about to respond back to him but I didn't have the chance because there was a sudden pain deep in my belly. The sensation was as if someone was trying to gut me like a fish. I reached for Jake as I collapsed to my knees, gasping in pain. He grabbed me and guided me with weak legs to the toilet, where I leaned over the bowl. The coolness of the water below caressed

my face. Jake held my hair back to prevent it from going into the toilet water. I started gagging as I held the sides of the seat. It was obvious to me that I was about to throw up, and I knew what was about to leave my body was not going to be pretty.

I fought the sensation to expel what I had just consumed, but my body quickly won the fight. I opened my mouth and the blood I recently drank from Jake sprayed like an unstoppable fountain out of my mouth. He reached over and flushed the tank so I wouldn't have to look at the bloody mess. I spit into the bowl over and over again until another maddening cramp told me that my body wasn't finished yet. Another wave of Jake's blood shot out of my open mouth again. I whimpered and cried as I vomited. I always hated throwing up when I was sick, but seeing the fresh blood made it all the worse. He continued to hold my hair with one hand while he rubbed my back with the other. It reminded me of how my mother would try to comfort me when I was sick as a child. I spit a few more times, and then sat up letting go of the porcelain bowl.

"Do you feel any better?" He looked at me genuinely concerned.

"I feel a lot better." I slowly stood up to my feet with his help. It was true. All of the pain I'd experienced was gone and I felt a million times better.

He went to the sink, brought me back a glass of water and carried a damp washcloth as well. "Drink a little of this." As I sipped the lukewarm tap water, he washed his blood from my face. "I'm sorry that happened to you. It happens sometimes to people after they've had their first feeding, but it shouldn't happen again. I think it depends on how easily your body can accept the change it's gone through. The only thing is that now-,"

"Now I'm hungry again," I said, cutting him off mid sentence. "It's strange. I feel hungry for something, but I'm not sure for what."

He nodded as he took the cup of water from me and brought it to the sink along with the washcloth.

"Plus, there's something else too." I was embarrassed with what I wanted to tell him. I hugged myself, not sure if I should say how I felt.

"I know what you're feeling," he said with a gleam in his eye. "I can feel it radiating from you. I know you're hungry for my blood again, but now you feel you need to have my cock deep inside you again too, right? Right now, I bet your pussy is throbbing for me to be as deep in you as I can be. Am I right?" He walked over to me.

I looked down and saw Jake had an erection straining against his white briefs. My eyes drifted down to my own legs where there was the tiniest of trickles meandering down my legs. My juices were running down my thighs I was so wet for him. Even though I was incredibly pissed at him for turning me into a vampire, I had the urge to have him naked on top of me. It was as if I had no control over the desires of my own body. I reached down and touched the wetness on my leg; bring my fingers up to my lips, tasting myself. Our eyes locked and I knew my actions made him even hotter for me.

“Damn,” he whispered as he scooped me up in his arms and carried me to my bed with a newfound determination in his eyes. He put me on the bed laying me on my back, then removed his briefs. He climbed on my bed and parted my legs, settling between them. I felt his tongue part my folds, licking at my cream as if he were the one starving and not me. He used his fingers to separate my folds more, allowing his tongue deeper inside me. I wiggled my ass and moved my hips up to his face. Within seconds, he had me at the edge of an orgasm.

“I’m going to come.” I panted and writhed in pleasure loving the intense feeling of the orgasm swelling inside of me.

“Come in my mouth,” he told me quickly before he continued to use his tongue against my clit.

I looked down and saw he had his eyes open so he could watch me as he made me come. I stared him directly in the eyes as I orgasmed. As I cried out his tongue entered me prolonging my climax.

My orgasm was just starting to subside when he climbed up over me. He paused to kiss my breasts, taking one pink hardened nipple in his mouth, letting his tongue flick at it then continued up my body until we were face to face. Holding himself up over me by his forearms, I could feel his hard as steel erection pressing against my mound. My body yearned to connect to his as the same time my stomach growled, begging him to feed me again.

“I want to fuck you hard.” His eyes let me know he was serious. He rubbed his cock against me, teasing me with its being so close to where I wanted it to be.

“Then do it. Fuck me hard.” It made absolutely no sense that I wanted to have sex with Jake again after everything that happened... yet I did. It didn’t matter that he turned me into a vampire. I only knew I wanted him.

We both looked at each other before his face met mine as he gave me a hard kiss. His tongue immediately demanded entrance to my mouth. As our tongues touched, I felt Jake shift himself to one arm so he could use his other hand to guide himself into me. This time there was no going slow like the first time we made love. This time he slid himself into me with one swift stroke, driving himself as deep into me as he could. He filled my body completely. He started moving his hips and I raised mine to meet his.

His movements became faster as he drove in and out of me with a frenzied intensity. Every time he cock slid in and out, he rubbed my clit, bringing me closer to an orgasm each time. His mouth found my neck and I felt his sharp teeth graze me. I remembered how incredible the orgasm was when he had bitten me, and I knew I wanted to experience that kind of orgasm again.

He rolled us over so now I was on top of him. I moved my legs so that I could straddle him. I pushed myself down as hard as I could on him, impaling myself on his cock. Reaching up he touched my breasts, palming my nipples that were fully erect. His fingers pinched them before he moved his hands down my body, placing his hands on my waist.

“How hungry are you?”

“Starving.” I reached down to touch his chest and abs. My fingers played with his nipples, squeezing them the way he had squeezed mine. They were hard little nubs between my fingers and from the way he looked at me I could tell that he enjoyed my pinching them. I ran my fingertips up his neck, stroking the vein I could see under his pale skin. He filled my body but my hunger for more cried from deep within me. It screamed in my ears letting me know I could not ignore it any longer. I groaned in desperation not knowing what to do.

Jake turned his head to the side, exposing his throat to me. “Drink from me.”

“I’m not going to drink your blood again.” Even though I knew drinking from him would be an amazing experience, my vomiting up all I drank from him earlier was too vivid a memory. I didn’t want to go through that again.

“That’s the thing you’re craving that you can’t identify. You need my blood. You shouldn’t get sick again if that’s what you’re worried about.” He swallowed and turned his head exposing his throat to me. When I looked at the smooth skin, I noticed the blue of a vein running down his neck. My stomach growled and churned in hunger.

Leaning down, I trailed my tongue down the length of his neck. I heard him groan as my incisors lightly skimmed his throat. I trailed my tongue back up finding the perfect spot. Inhaling his scent, I opened my mouth and pierced his flesh with my teeth. As soon as his blood started to enter my mouth, I closed my eyes, lost in the exquisite sensation.

Jake moaned aloud. "Ride my cock. Grind yourself into me hard," he commanded.

I started moving my hips and pressing myself down on him as hard as I could while I drank from him. I moved my ass from side to side to get him into me as deep as I could. I could feel his hands grabbing me helping me find the right rhythm to ride him.

Suddenly I knew that I was close to another orgasm. His cock and blood had brought me to release quickly and I knew he was close too from the noises he was making. He hissed into my ear. "I'm going to come."

Hearing him say that to me when I was so close to my own release pushed me right over the edge. My body tensed just as his did, and we both climaxed at the same time. While I came, I stopped sucking at his neck so only a small amount of blood entered my mouth. I whimpered but never removed my teeth from his throat. He sighed and stroked my hair with one hand. "Keep drinking, you haven't had enough yet."

I didn't answer him; I simply started sucking at his neck again taking from him what my body needed to survive. He lay under me as I drank from him, tenderly stroking my hair and caressing my back. It was tranquil moment between the two of us. After a few more minutes of drinking from him, I noticed that my hunger left and I felt satisfied. I slowly pulled my teeth from his neck and saw the two puncture wounds I'd left on him. I pulled myself up and brushed my hair back as I looked down at Jake. He gave me a small smile.

"Do you feel alright? You've been through a lot the past few days."

Damn fucking right I'd been through a lot. I was a vampire now. I just finished drinking the blood of another person. Because of my burning desire to have sex with a hot man that I didn't even know I was now a vampire. I'd always been cautious about catching some kind of disease from a one-night stand, but had I ever worried about being turned into a vampire? Not so much. "I can't believe you turned me into a vampire. I thought we were just going to sleep together."

"I know. I didn't plan to change you at all. It was a big mistake. I wish I could make it up to you somehow." He got up and found his briefs and put them on then sat back on my bed.

“Do you do this with everyone you sleep with? Or was I just lucky the other night?” My voice dripped with sarcasm.

“No, I don’t change everyone I sleep with. I changed one other person a very long time ago, but we were in love. I haven’t changed anyone since then.”

“Well here’s a tip for you. Before you take someone and turn them into a vampire, you might want to discuss it with the person first.” I knew I sounded like a bitch but at this point, I felt I was entitled.

We both sat on my bed in silence each lost in their own private thoughts. Finally Jake spoke.

“Look, I can’t change you back. The only thing I can do is teach you everything you need to know about being a vampire. There’s things you’ll need to know in order to survive. There’s the basics like you won’t be able to go outside during the day ever again, but that’s when you’ll be sleeping anyways.”

“Do you sleep in a coffin? Will I have to?”

“Nope, I sleep on my bed. Just no sunlight can come into the room, or you’ll be a pile of dust like in the movies. Let’s see...you can eat food, but you don’t need to for survival. Now you only need blood. I still like to eat regular food. It helps me feel more human. Plus you can eat whatever you want and you won’t gain weight. You’ll stay the same looking as when you changed.”

“So I won’t gain weight, but I can’t lose any either?” I questioned him.

“No, you’ll stay exactly the way you are now for as long as you exist.”

Damn, I thought, I knew I should have gotten around to losing those fifteen pounds when I had the chance. I always hated going down to the gym but I guess I wouldn’t have to worry about that anymore.

“One of the most important things you need to know is how to stay away from slayers.” When he mentioned slayers, his tone changed and his facial expressions became very serious.

“Slayers? Like vampire slayers? You mean they’re really real? I thought they were something made up for the movies.” It made me nervous thinking slayers were real now that I was a vampire. In movies, they seemed pretty badass.

“I wish they were made up. Vampire slayers are real and they are deadly to us. And it doesn’t help that the most dangerous slayers alive happen to live here in Chicago. Their family

has been slayers for centuries, even before I was changed. Their family name is Raintree and they're legendary to vampires. The only good thing is that they usually focus more on the big groups of vampires, they really don't go after individuals too much," he explained. "They're a group of brothers, and a few months ago one of them was killed when he was out slaying. Since then they've all be coming down on all of us kind of hard. I've been trying to lay low... One of them spotted me not too long ago at a nightclub, but I was able to get away before he got too close. I was lucky too, because it was the oldest brother, kind of like the leader right now. Rumor has it he took his brother's death the hardest."

"Well, can you tell someone is a slayer by looking at them?" The idea of people out on the streets looking to kill me wasn't a happy thought.

"No, slayers are regular people, so there's no way to tell just by looking at them."

"That's just great," I muttered sarcastically. I wondered what other surprises were waiting for me.

"You'll be fine. The good thing about being a newly turned vampire is it's harder for the slayers to tell you're a vampire. The longer you're around the easier it is for them to identify you. It has something to do with your blood, I don't know, I never understood it. But look, I've been around a long time and I haven't gotten killed yet."

"How long have you been a vampire?" He looked to be in his mid thirties to me.

"I was turned the year I came to Chicago back in 1835."

"So you've been a vampire over a hundred and ..." I trailed off. I was never any good at math. Clearly becoming a vampire hadn't improved my math skills.

"Over a hundred and seventy three years."

"Besides slayers what else do I need to know? And am I supposed to go around killing people and drinking their blood? I don't think I can do that."

Jake stopped as if to think. "You don't have to worry about finding people to feed from. I'll let you drink from me until you're ready to go out on your own. And before you say no I understand we're not talking about a major commitment here. This will be a temporary arrangement until you figure something else out."

"Is feeding from the neck always so...sexual? That was pretty intense what just happened." It was true. I had gone from wanting to kill him to wanting to fuck him in a matter of seconds.

“Feeding that way can be sexual. You have to get close to them and if you allow the sexual feelings loose, they will overcome you. And the orgasms during feeding are incredible too. But if that makes you uneasy, you can feed from my wrist as we did the first time. We don’t have to have sex. I’m not saying it wouldn’t be nice, but we don’t have to if you don’t want to.”

I sat and considered what he offered me. The idea of finding people and drinking their blood made me sick and I’d already done it two times with him. “How often do I have to feed?”

“Once every couple days. If you had to you could go a little over a week, but I wouldn’t advise it. When you wait too long you’ll feel sick and the thirst is almost uncontrollable.”

“And you were serious about the no sex and no commitments? This would be only temporary like you said.” It would be convenient to feed from him until I figured out what the hell I was going to do.

Jake sat up smiling. “Absolutely. I’d feel better after everything I did to be able to help you.”

“You don’t have any more weird surprises, do you? You’re not going to sprout fur and turn into a werewolf at the next full moon or anything, are you?” I knew I didn’t have it in me for any more surprises. Becoming a vampire was my limit.

Jake laughed at my questions to him. “No, no other surprises, I promise.”

“Ok, I’m going to go take a quick shower and then we’ll talk some more, ok?”

“Sure, of course. I actually took a shower while you were out of it. I hope you don’t mind.”

“Hey, use my shower, drink my blood... no biggie,” I quipped as I stood up and walked into the bathroom. I went to the sink and turned on the water so I could splash some water on my face. While looking at myself in the mirror I determined I looked exactly the same as I had a few nights ago on the outside. But on the inside, I knew I was very different. How did I get myself into this situation, I thought. All I wanted was a simple one-night stand and some awesome sex. Instead, I found myself turned into a vampire. I had gotten the fantastic sex I’d wanted but I had also gotten much, much more than I intended.

## *Chapter Four*

“So this is where you live?” I was standing in Jake’s dimly lit living room. He had an incredible condo right on the lakefront. It was decorated very modern, not what you’d expect from someone who lived in the eighteen hundreds.

I was there because I needed to feed again. A few days had passed since Jake changed me and I could tell my body wanted blood again. There was a craving deep in my gut that I couldn’t satisfy. I had eaten food as he told me I could; it just didn’t do anything for the hunger deep inside me. I needed Jake and I needed his blood.

“Yep this is my place. I bought the entire floor so I have awesome views of the city.”

We stood next to each other looking out towards Lake Michigan. There were lights twinkling on the water, boats out for a last sail before the end of summer. Looking down we could see the cars below us snaking down Lake Shore Drive, an endless display of headlights. .

“So how have you been doing?” Jake asked me.

Since the night he’d bitten me last weekend he’d pretty much left me alone. He called once to see if I needed anything, but for the most part, he had backed off and given me my space. I appreciated his leaving me alone while I adjusted to my new life, or death, or whatever it was I had now.

“I’m okay I guess. It’s strange knowing I’ll never stand in the sunshine again, but I never tanned anyhow. It’s the Irish in me. There are still a couple things I’m trying to figure out, but for the most part I’m okay,” I explained to him.

“Janice I know I apologized last week, but I am sorry I did this to you. I screwed up your life and I had no right to. I hope someday you’ll be able to forgive me for what I did to you.”

“Jake, you don’t have to keep apologizing. I shouldn’t have brought home a total stranger to my place. When you came over I didn’t even know your last name.” I knew his last name now though, Manahan.

‘Well, I still feel terrible so I have something I want to give you. Just to show you I’m sorry.’

Jake went across the room to his desk then came back with a piece of folded white paper. He offered it to me so I took it from him.

“What is this?” I asked as I unfolded it and saw the name of a bank on the letterhead.

“I know this doesn’t change what I did, but I wanted to do something to help you.”

“It’s from a bank,” I commented as I scanned the page in my hand. Even though I scanned the letter, I had no idea what it meant. It was all official and legal looking.

“It’s the information you need to access the accounts I set up for you. You’ll start getting statements in a few weeks.”

I read the bottom of the paper and my eyes widened when I saw the account balance.

“You gave me fifty million dollars?” It was strange even saying the dollar amount aloud.

“I know it won’t give you your old life back, but I wanted to make sure you were set for a long time. I actually set up a trust so constant deposits would go into that account. You never have to worry about money again. I thought it was the least I could do for you.”

“Wow, I wasn’t expecting this at all. Thank you Jake.” I leaned over to give him a hug squeezing him tight. Actually, money was one of those “things” I’d mentioned a few minutes ago that I was still trying to figure out. I was considering getting a new job working a nightshift somewhere. I ended up having to quit my day job because I couldn’t go in to work anymore during the day. His giving me money solved that problem quite nicely and now I didn’t have to worry anymore.

“I’m glad to be able to help. I can’t stop feeling terrible about what I did to you. And I promise I’ll stop apologizing to you right now this minute.”

“Good. Thank you for this. This will help me out a lot.” There was a huge weight lifted off my shoulders now that I didn’t have to worry about next months rent.

“Come on, let’s sit down.” He took my hand and led me over to the sofa.

We sat down next to each other and I put the bank paper in my purse that was on the floor. I was a little nervous about drinking from him again, because last time had been so sexual. I was glad we agreed I’d drink from his wrist from now on because I didn’t want it to be awkward between us.

“I feel weird,” I finally confessed to him. “Last time we were together it was so sexual, and we agreed this time it wasn’t going to be like that. I’m really nervous I guess.”

“Just relax Janice. I know you don’t want anything sexual from me and that’s fine. We’re friends now so don’t feel weird.” He unbuttoned the wrist buttons on the sleeve of his shirt and rolled it up a few times. “I think drinking from my wrist will be fine.”

He extended his arm out to me and I took it in both my hands. “I don’t want this to hurt you,” I told him.

“No, don’t worry about it. You’re not going to hurt me, trust me. Go ahead and drink.”

“Ok.” I put my mouth on his wrist and closed my eyes. I could literally feel my incisors extend in my mouth, as if my body knew food was on the way. I opened my mouth and bit down slowly with my eyes tightly squeezed shut. The sound of my teeth breaking through his skin made me wince, but he didn’t pull back or make a sound the entire time.

Jake’s blood started flowing into my mouth as I started to suck on his wrist. After a few minutes of drinking from him passed, I removed my mouth from his wrist and opened my eyes. He looked fine to me, not at all like someone who had their blood drained from them for the past few minutes.

“Are you alright?” I asked him even though he appeared to be okay.

“Yeah, I’m fine.” He inspected the two small marks on his wrist. “Look, they’ve already stopped bleeding.” He rolled his sleeve back down and buttoned it up at the wrist. “How do you feel? Are you feeling pukey?” he joked.

“No, I don’t feel sick at all.” The hunger feelings were gone. I was also relieved I didn’t have those sexual urges for Jake as I had last time I drank from him. Drinking from the wrist was not as sexual as drinking from someone’s neck.

“Well, it’s still early, want to go to dinner? I don’t have any other plans for tonight.”

“Yeah, we can do that. I don’t have any other plans either,” I admitted. I gathered up my purse and jacket and followed him to the elevator to leave his condo. He was turning out to be a good friend, which surprised me almost as much as when I found out he was a vampire.

## *Chapter Five*

It was late at night and I was walking through the park that is close to my apartment. I'd gone out to dinner with some old friends that night and I didn't feel like going home yet. I wanted to be out in the night air to try to clear my head. I was still slowly coming to terms with my new life, and some parts were easier than others.

It was nice that Jake set me up financially so I didn't have to work. Not having to worry about money was a huge relief. When I knew I didn't have to work anymore I thought it would be great not having to deal with the nine to five grind. After a few weeks, I learned it wasn't actually all that fantastic. I was bored. I read a lot of books, hit all the nightclubs, and went shopping whenever I wanted but it all got old fast. That's why I agreed to go out to dinner with some old friends of mine that night, out of boredom. Our lives were so different I didn't have much to add to their conversations. We simply didn't have anything in common anymore.

I also had to deal with the fact that I would never have any children. Even though I'd never had the burning desire to have a baby, coming to terms with the fact it would be impossible bothered me a little. Not having one had always been my choice, and now that choice had been taken away from me. On the plus side I didn't have to worry about my period anymore, which was nice. No more suffering through cramps and headaches that used to come every month.

My mother was another problem I had yet to deal with. We always met once a month for Sunday morning breakfast at the Golden Nugget restaurant. I hadn't found the right way to tell her that if I tried to meet her there next month I'd be a pile of ash at my front door. I didn't want to lie to her and tell her I was sick because that would cause her to visit and check up on me in person. The last thing I needed was for her to get so worried about me that she stop by my apartment during the day. If she found me while I was in my death like sleep there would be no explaining that to her.

I reached a part of the park where the path was exceptionally dark. The tree branches above blocked the lamp light and there were shadows everywhere. I never noticed the man who came out from behind a tree and snatched my purse as he continued running down the path.

“Hey!” I yelled weakly after him, as if that was going to stop him. I immediately considered my bag gone. The guy was running fast and I knew there no way in hell I could ever catch him. Just because I was immortal didn’t mean I could run any faster now than before I was changed.

“Stay here, I’ll get your bag,” another man yelled to me as he ran by following my purse thief down the path.

I had no idea where either of these men had come from; it was as if they had just appeared out of the shadows. I didn’t get a good look at my would-be hero; he was off chasing my purse at full speed ahead. The only thing I knew for certain was he was big and wore a backpack on his back. I watched him disappear into the underground tunnel that connected the two halves of the park that was divided by a street above.

I started to run after the men, curious to see what was going to happen. As I exited the other side of the tunnel, my legs went from a run to a dead halt. Up ahead of me I could see the man who had stolen my purse lying on his back on the path. My purse lie next to him, its contents scattered on the ground around him. The man who chased him knelt over him straddling the thief. I could see them clearly, since they had stopped right next to one of the park lamps that lined the path. My hero reached back into his backpack and pulled out a long, thin object that he held firmly in one hand over the thief’s chest.

“No, no,” the thief pleaded as he shook his head violently from side to side and tried to frantically get out from under the man, clawing at the ground.

Taking a step back into the shadows I watched with horrified curiosity. It felt surreal to me, as if I was watching a movie and not real life unfolding in front of me.

“May God have mercy on your damned soul,” the man grimaced to the thief before plunging the object he held directly into the thief’s chest. There was a noise like I never heard before, and then the thief was gone, instantly disintegrated to dust. I realized the object the man was holding was a wooden stake. I watched him reach back and shove the stake back into his backpack. He turned and started picking up my loose items that were still on the ground and putting them back into my purse.

I felt sick, as if I might vomit from what I just witnessed. My hero was no hero: he was a vampire slayer. I must have made some kind of noise without realizing it, because he quickly looked up at me while I was still in the shadows. He crouched as if he was ready to attack, and I stepped forward so he could see that it was me. I silently prayed that he wouldn't be able to tell what I was simply from looking at me.

"I'm sorry, that guy who stole your bag is... gone," the man told me as he stood up with my purse.

"Yeah he is," I replied. I didn't let on I'd seen what had just happened. Better to let him think I thought the man had escaped. I stepped closer to get my purse with caution. Once I was up close, I was able to get a better look at the slayer.

He was tall, at least six foot two, and built like a stone wall. His shoulders were wide his thighs were thick. He had on a pair of camouflage pants and a dark olive green sweater and combat boots. His hair was short and dark, cut close to his head, military style. He had very distinctive eyebrows and eyes that were dark. I thought maybe they were brown. His nose was a little crooked as if it had been broken at least once in his life. When he reached to hand me my purse, I noticed his hands were large too. This guy was manly with a capital M. I took my bag from him and slung it over my shoulder.

"Thank you so much for getting this back for me. I thought it was gone for good." I was nervous talking with him because I'd never seen a slayer before in person, much less spoken to one. I wasn't sure how I should act around him. Back when Jake first changed me he'd said that slayers couldn't recognize a vampire if they were newly changed. Standing there, I hoped Jake knew what he was talking about because I didn't want to meet the same fate as my purse thief.

"You know someone like you shouldn't be walking alone in the park this late."

"Someone like me?" I instantly thought I was a goner and I watched him to see if he was going to reach into his bag to get his stake for me.

"You know, a woman by herself... a beautiful woman by herself." He was trying to look me in the eye and I wasn't making it easy for him.

"Oh..." Relief washed over me because he wasn't about to kill me in the park after all. It took a few seconds for it to sink in that he had called me beautiful and I felt my cheeks get hot. I don't think I'll ever be able to take compliments well, no matter how long I exist. They always make me feel uneasy and like I'm undeserving.

“Well, where are you headed now? I could walk with you to wherever it is you’re going. No sense in tempting fate twice in one night. You never know who you’ll find wandering around Marquette Park this late.”

How right you are, I thought. It was sweet that he was trying to keep me safe from whatever was lurking out in the dark night. The ironic thing was he was the most dangerous thing alive to me. Under any other circumstances, I would have taken him up on his offer without the slightest hesitation, but I knew I was going to have to refuse him. I wasn’t sure if he would eventually be able to tell what I was and I wasn’t in the mood to die... again.

“Listen, ummm... I’m sorry, what’s your name?” I asked him.

“Oh, right, sorry. Hunter, my name is Hunter.” He reached out his hand to me with a grin.

“Hunter?” I repeated. Of course his name would be Hunter, I thought to myself. I hesitated for a moment unsure if I should let him touch me before I reached out to shake his hand. Then I reasoned that at that point, we were so close if he wanted to do me in, I wouldn’t have a chance anyway. I placed my small hand in his. “I’m Janice,” I told him as we shook hands. As we let go of each other’s hands he gave me a strange look. My stomach turned in a knot and I wondered if he had figured me out. Maybe I shouldn’t have let him touch me. “What?” I waited for him to reach back into his bag for the wooden stake I knew was there.

He pursed his lips together and quickly shook his head. “Oh, nothing, forget about it.”

“Well, Hunter thanks again for coming to my rescue. There’s no way I would have ever caught that...guy. I’m actually just going home and its pretty close, so you don’t have to walk me. I’ll be fine.” I told him the truth, my apartment was only two blocks away from where we stood.

“I would feel better knowing that you made it home safely. Two blocks will only take a couple of minutes.”

I could tell from the tone of his voice that he wasn’t going to let me walk those two blocks by myself. He was determined on escorting me home.

“Ok,” I reluctantly agreed. As we walked side by side, I thought of how ironic it was that he was walking me home to make sure I got there safely. The vampire hunter was walking the vampire home. There were many times I often said my life was stranger than fiction, and this was definitely one of those times. I thought that if he knew the truth about me, he would kill me

in a second. The thought made me shiver so badly I couldn't hide it. Hunter noticed and mistook my fear as me being cold.

"Are you cold? Come here," he instructed me as he wrapped an arm around me so we were closer walking down the path.

But there he was wrong. Dead wrong. Walking next to him, being that close to him made me feel warmer than I had since I'd become a vampire. I turned my head towards him so I was able to breathe in his scent. It was masculine and wonderfully unique just to him. As we approached my building, we walked together like lovers, not like mortal enemies. I knew it was wrong to feel attracted to him, but I couldn't help myself. He was so big and strong and I couldn't help but feel safe next to him. We didn't even have to talk to each other; we simply walked in silence.

We reached my building and I stopped. I hated to break the comfortable quiet between us. "This is me here," I announced to him. He looked at the building and I knew he was checking it out, accessing the security level of where I lived. "Thanks again for everything... getting back my bag, walking me home."

Hunter looked down at me smiling and it made me weak in the knees. He was an incredibly gorgeous man.

"Ummm... I know we just met, and you don't know me, but I was wondering if maybe I could take you out to dinner tomorrow night. If you don't already have any plans or anything?" He wrinkled his brow as if thinking about what he had just asked me. "You probably have plans already though."

Even though the idea of going out on a date with a vampire slayer was totally insane, I wanted to see him again. There was something about him I really liked, and he was incredibly sexy. I still wasn't interested in a serious relationship and I knew that because of our individual circumstances, nothing too serious could ever happen. Plus, he'd only suggested dinner and not marriage. If he did figure out what I was, what was the worse that could happen? I could die? Been there, done that.

"Tomorrow night sounds great, actually. I don't have any plans at all." It was true. Tomorrow I planned on popping popcorn and renting movies. I was probably the most pathetic vampire on the planet.

“Really?” He sounded completely surprised with the notion that I had nothing to do the next night and was accepting his invitation. “Well how about I pick you up here at seven? Will that work?”

I nodded in agreement. “Sounds great.” I glanced over at my building’s front door. “Well, I’m going to go inside now...” I turned to walk to my front door but stopped and opened my bag to find my keys first.

“Hey.” He leaned towards me and grabbed me by the arm, startling me. “I’m glad that I ran into you tonight,” he told me. His voice was soft and gentle, and he didn’t seem like the type of man who did soft and gentle that often.

“Yeah, me too,” I confessed.

Hunter hesitated for second, then leaned in and placed a kiss on my cheek. His lips were warm and soft against my skin. It took me everything I had to fight the urge to grab him and kiss him squarely on the lips. He paused for the slightest moment so our cheeks touched. Closing my eyes and swallowing, I heard his heart racing and could feel his blood pumping through his veins. There was an attraction between us that I could easily feel. It made me want to touch him, kiss him, and taste him.

“You better get inside because you’re still shivering.” His words brought me back to reality. “I’ll see you tomorrow,” he promised me as he turned to walk to the sidewalk.

“See you tomorrow,” I answered back. I entered the foyer of my apartment building and I could feel his eyes on my back. I knew he wouldn’t walk away until he saw me enter thru the other door into the hall. My fingers trembled as I put my key in the lock. I couldn’t help but think the last time I had been so excited to see a man again, my life had changed dramatically. I had the feeling that after tomorrow night, my life would be changing dramatically again.

## *Chapter Six*

When I entered my apartment, I threw my purse and keys on the kitchen table and slid off my shoes. I looked across the room and saw the red light flashing on my answering machine. I figured the message would be my mom calling to confirm breakfast for next Sunday.

I had been avoiding talking to her since I became a vampire. I knew I was going to have to talk to her eventually; I was simply going for the latter. I wasn't looking forward to telling her I was going to have to miss breakfast with her Sunday. We met for breakfast once a month for years; we started after my dad had passed away. In the past, we would only miss our breakfast if we were deathly ill or had some serious issue that needed to be resolved. When I told her I wasn't going to be able to make it, I knew she was going to give me the third degree questioning why. Whatever excuse I gave her was going to have to be a good one. I really didn't want to think about lying to my mom right then, so I decided to think about Hunter instead.

I decided I could never tell Jake about Hunter. I knew he would freak out if I told him I went on a date with a slayer. Hunter would be my very own secret.

As I lay down on my bed, I mentally went through my closet, wondering what I should wear on my date with him. I wished Veronica still lived in the apartment with me. She was always better at picking out clothes. She had finally moved in with her boyfriend a few days after I changed. It was better being alone because then I didn't have to explain to her why I always slept during the day. It was while wondering if I would wake up early enough for a quick run to the mall to get myself something new to wear that my death like sleep finally overtook me.

When I woke up at dusk the first thing I did was call my mom. While I was sleeping, she had called me again and I knew I had put off the inevitable long enough. If I didn't return her call, she might be worried about me and come over. The phone rang and I silently prayed she wouldn't answer. It would be much easier to leave a vague message canceling next week than actually talking to her. Of course, I was not so lucky.

“Hello?”

As soon as I heard my mom’s voice, I felt a lump in my throat. I hadn’t talked to her since I became a vampire and that realization got me choked up.

“Hello?” she asked again sounding annoyed.

“Mom, hey, it’s me, Janice.” I don’t know why I always feel the need to say my name to her. I was the only one on the planet who called her Mom since I was an only child.

“Janice, how are you?”

“I’m good. I saw that you called me. Were you calling me about next week?” I figured I might as well get it over with and tell her I wasn’t going to be able to meet her.

“Yeah, listen... I know we meet every month, but I was wondering if it would be ok with you if we skipped this month. I’ve been meaning to call you but I’ve been so busy.”

I didn’t say anything at first because I was so surprised she was canceling on me. I didn’t see this coming at all. “You want to cancel?”

“Yeah, I’m going to be going out of town for the weekend so I won’t be able to make it,” she explained.

My mother never goes anywhere so I knew something was going on. All of a sudden, I found myself giving her the third degree. “Who are you going with? Where are you going?”

“I’m going to be driving up to Wisconsin with my neighbor for the weekend.”

“Oh, with Mrs. Contella? That’s cool mom. I think it’s great for the two of you to get away.” Mrs. Contella was a widow too and lived next door to my mom. They had been friends for years and they got along great. I noticed my mom hadn’t said anything back to me yet. “Mom? You still there?”

“Yeah. I’m not going with Mrs. Contella, Janice. I’m going with Joe, my other neighbor.”

“Oh,” I replied surprised. My mom was going away for the weekend with a man. While I’ll admit I was totally shocked my mom was going with Joe, it didn’t upset me at all. My dad had been gone for a long time and she’d been alone many years. I often told her she needed to get out and meet someone. I guess all she really had to do was go next door.

“Are you angry? I hope you aren’t. If you want me to cancel, just tell me and I will. I was a little nervous to tell you because I didn’t want to get you upset.”

“No, mom, I think it’s great that you’re going with Joe. He’s a really nice guy. I hope you go and have some fun, you deserve it.”

“I promise I’ll make breakfast next month,” she told me.

“It’s fine, really. Let’s play it by ear and see how it goes.”

“Ok, well I’ll let you go then. Joe and I are going to barbeque and he should be here any minute. I’ll call you when I get back.”

“That sounds good. Thanks mom. Bye.” I hung up the phone relieved I was off the hook for next week. I glanced at the clock and noticed the time. I still had time to take a quick shower and run to the mall if I hurried. I was so excited about seeing Hunter again, but at the same time, I was extremely nervous. I knew going out with him was playing with fire but I was willing to risk getting burned.

## *Chapter Seven*

It was seven pm and I was ready to go outside to see if Hunter was here yet for our date. While I was getting dressed, I reminded myself the last time I was excited seeing a guy again, he turned me into a vampire. I needed to be cautious with him. He seemed like the perfect guy: tall, dark and handsome. The only negative was that he'd kill me in a heartbeat if he knew I was a vampire.

When I got to the foyer and looked outside, I saw Hunter standing on the sidewalk waiting for me. It wasn't that surprising to me that he'd be on time, he seemed the prompt type. He was looking down the street and didn't see me yet, so I was able to give him a good once over. He had on jeans and a black long sleeved shirt. I noticed he wasn't wearing his backpack and thought that as a good sign. Maybe he was able to feel me staring at him because he turned and looked right at me. He smiled and made his way to the apartment foyer where I stood.

I opened the door for him so we were both standing together in the small foyer.

"Wow, you look fantastic," he told me as his eyes danced over me. In the light of the foyer, I could see his eyes were brown, as I had guessed they were last night.

"Thanks," I said trying to sound casual even though I felt uncomfortable with his compliment. The reality was I had spent almost an hour at the mall trying on clothes before I decided on purchasing a long denim skirt and olive green sweater. Even though I was now the walking dead, I still had issues over the size of my thighs. Some things never change.

Hunter must have noticed my uneasiness with his earlier compliment to me. "No, really, I mean it, you look great."

"You don't have to say that." I had to look away, I couldn't even look him in the eye I was so uncomfortable. It didn't help the foyer we were in was small and so we were standing very close, almost touching.

"I know I don't have to say that," he said to me as he lifted my chin with his pointer finger to lift my head so we locked eyes. "I wanted to say it. You are absolutely beautiful."

I was speechless; there was nothing I could say back to him. He took a small step closer to me so that we now touched. There was electricity in the air between us and I knew he was going to kiss me. When he leaned down to me, my lips were ready for his. Our first kiss was gentle and sweet, lips brushing each other tenderly. As we kissed, I reached up and placed my hands on his chest. I could feel he was solid muscle under his clothes. Hunter moaned and put his hands on my ass pulling me to him so our bodies pressed together. I slid my hands from his chest to up around his neck. He moved his lips from my mouth across my cheek to my neck and ear.

“You really do something to me, I can’t explain it,” he murmured in my ear.

He didn’t have to explain anything to me; I felt it. I felt it in his passionate kisses and the way he held me. I felt it in his hard as steel erection that was pressing against me making my panties wet with desire.

Hunter stopped kissing me and pulled my head back by my hair so that we were staring at each other. “There’s something about you I can’t figure out. I feel so drawn to you, as if we need to be together, but I feel there’s something else about you. I’ve never been like this with someone I just met, ever, I don’t understand it.”

All reason told me I should say good-bye and never see him again since I knew he was a slayer. Deep down inside I knew I wasn’t going to do the reasonable thing. I leaned up to him and placed another kiss on his lips, then turned and opened the door to the stairs.

“Come on,” I said as I started up the stairs to go back to my apartment. He followed me up the two flights of stairs to my apartment door. As I put the key in the lock he put his hand over mine, preventing me from turning the key.

“Are you sure you want to do this?” he asked me. His eyes gave him away. Even though he sounded concerned, I could see the excitement and desire flickering in those intense brown eyes.

“I’m sure,” I said back and watched him remove his hand from mine, and the key I still held. I opened the door and we both entered my apartment, Hunter closing the door behind him. We didn’t even make it out of the hallway. He rushed up to me and gathered me in his arms pulling me close, so we stumbled back against the hallway wall. He rubbed himself against me and I reached down to touch his erection through his pants. He moaned deep in his throat then pulled himself away from me.

“I don’t know what I’m doing here,” he told me. He ran his hand over his brown hair and seemed to be thinking. “This isn’t like me. I don’t do things like this. I almost never date and I never get involved with women. My job is pretty dangerous so I try to keep to myself. I don’t want to lead you on thinking I can give you something I can’t,” he tried to explain. “I don’t know when I’ll be able to see you again and I don’t want you doing anything you don’t want to do.”

I’m sure most women would tell him to take a hike, but to me his not wanting to commit made him even more attractive. Before I had stayed away from relationships out of personal choice, now I felt it was out of necessity.

I moved closer to him and unbuttoned his blue jeans, lowering the zipper. He stood there watching me without saying a word. I reached into his pants and briefs so I could touch him. His gaze moved from his pants to my eyes.

“I’m not doing anything I don’t want to do, Hunter,” I said. I removed my hand from his pants and unbuttoned my skirt so I could step out of it. I kicked it to the side out of my way and stepped back so I was leaning against the wall again. “Come here,” I beckoned him. He came up to me and I could tell I had his undivided attention. I took his hand in mine and guided it between my legs so he touched my pink panties. I separated my legs a little more, then pulled the elastic back on one of the legs. “Touch me Hunter,” I told him. He looked at me for second before sliding his hand inside the material. He groaned when he discovered that I was clean-shaven between my legs. I could tell he approved as he cupped my sex with his hand. “No, touch me,” I said again hoping he understood what I wanted him to do. As he slowly slid a finger inside of me, I knew he understood what I had meant that time. He moved his finger in and out of me, deliciously rubbing my clit with every stroke.

I leaned in to him, stretching up to whisper in his ear. I was so close to his throat I could hear his blood pounding through his veins. “Take off you pants,” I told him between the little shudders of pleasure I felt. He reluctantly removed his hand from my panties. As I watched him, he took off his boots and peeled off his jeans and briefs. His erection was large and straining against him. I couldn’t wait to have him inside of me and my pussy throbbed in anticipation. Not wanting to waste another minute, I peeled off my panties and threw them down on top of my skirt. Hunter walked up to me and picked me up off the floor. I squealed with surprise and without even thinking, I wrapped my arms around his neck and my legs around his waist. “Put me down, I’m too heavy,” I cried out to him.

“Don’t be silly, no you’re not.” He bent down and started to kiss my neck fiercely.

I closed my eyes as he held me up against the wall. All I could think about was having his hard sex inside of me.

“Put me in you,” he growled as if reading my mind. I let go of his neck with one arm and reached down to take his throbbing cock in my hand. Guiding him to me, he shifted his weight so I was able to slide onto him. He pressed his hips up to me so that he filled me completely.

“Damn, you feel so good,” he said as his hips started to move in a constant rhythm. He closed his eyes and turned his head away from me, lost with the feeling of being inside of me. His hands continually squeezed my ass.

Hunter stopped moving and paused turning to look at me for a moment. His sudden stopping of his hips made me frown.

“Kiss me,” he simply said.

I leaned down to kiss him and pushed myself down on his swollen cock letting him know I wanted him to start moving again. He must have understood, because he started pumping into me again, as we kissed each other so hard our lips were going to be sore later.

Hunter’s cock was making me crazy, rubbing my swollen clit over and over. Deep inside I could feel my orgasm blossoming inside of me. It began small, but with each stroke of his sex within me, I could feel it blooming and growing larger and larger from my core outward. I tightened my hold of him around his neck.

“God,” I muttered as the first wave of my orgasm crashed over me like a rushing wave. It was a good thing he was holding me, my orgasm was so intense it would have knocked me over. I closed my eyes and cried out as I came. Hunter continued to pound into me faster and harder until I could tell from his moans that he was coming as well. When we were finished, he still held me up, his face buried in my neck and hair. He was panting, trying to catch his breath. The hair on the back of his neck was damp with perspiration.

“Janice,” he said kissing my neck. He pulled back to look at me. “That was fantastic, but it wasn’t how I imagined it would be the first time between us.”

His words brought a smile to my lips. “You mean you thought about us doing this when I only met you last night?” I teased him. It was nice knowing he was as attracted to me as I was to him.

“Yeah, I’ll admit it, when I left here last night I thought about you... and maybe this morning when I woke up for a little while...” I could see he was starting to blush admitting he had been thinking about me. “But I thought of making love to you slowly, taking our time exploring each other’s bodies, not...” he trailed off not finishing his sentence. He looked like he was trying to find the right words to say.

“Not doing it in my hall like a couple of wild animals?” I said bluntly, describing exactly what had happened between us.

Hunter shook his head and laughed at what I had said. “Wow, ummmm... yeah, I guess that’s what I meant. But hearing you say it out loud sounds terrible.”

“Well, if it’s any consolation, what just happened didn’t feel terrible,” I said with a laugh.

“I still feel bad we didn’t get to go slow the way I imagined,” he said seriously.

“Hunter, can you put me down?” I thought he sounded a little let down and I knew I had to change that right away.

“Oh, yeah, sorry,” he apologized as he slid out of me and set me gently to my feet.

“Don’t apologize, just follow me,” I said as I took his hand and led him down the hallway towards my bedroom.

“Can I ask where we’re going?”

“To my room. We’re going to do a little exploring.”

## *Chapter Eight*

“You look beautiful tonight,” Hunter said to me as we walked down the street.

I’d gone out with him a few times, maybe once a month, nothing too intense. He still didn’t know the truth about me and what I really was. We’d go out or hang out at either of our apartments, then finish off the night with some mind-blowing sex. No commitments or expectations. It was perfect.

We were on another date tonight, going to the movies. We didn’t know what movie we were going to see, we decided spur of the moment while having dinner that we’d walk down to the theatre. There were a few people in line ahead of us purchasing their tickets. While we were waiting for our turn, we both tried to read the marquee and times for which movie we could pick. As luck would have it, there was only one film we could see. Everything else had already started or didn’t start for another hour or more. When I read the title of the only movie available, my stomach lurched.

Hunter turned to look at me since we were next in line. “Are you ok with seeing ‘Curse of the Vampire’?” he asked me. From the sound of his voice he didn’t seem thrilled with the title either, but it was literally our only choice.

“Ahh... sure, that sounds fine,” I answered back as we stepped up to the ticket counter. I stepped aside as he purchased our tickets.

We walked through the theater lobby and found the auditorium where our movie would play. I let Hunter pick our seats, and sat down next to him. He slid his arm around me and I put my head back on him without even thinking about what I was doing. It was just the natural thing to do with him. The lights slowly dimmed and the previews started. It was after an endless stream of coming attractions that the actual movie finally started to play.

‘Curse of the Vampire’ was a terrible horror film; none of it had any sort of redeeming quality what so ever. There was a scene in the movie when a vampire slayer was fighting one of the vampires. It was a pivotal scene in the story, close to the end of the film. It was a bloody fight

scene and the slayer was getting his ass kicked in front of us. I could feel Hunter getting tense next to me and he kept fidgeting in his seat. When the main vampire killed the slayer on screen, I thought he was going to jump out of his seat and storm out of the theater. It was only a few minutes later that the movie ended and the house lights came back up. I knew he wasn't happy with what we had just seen.

We stood up to leave and he took my hand in his as we left the theater. He walked quickly down the street obviously upset and it was difficult for me to keep up with his long strides.

"Well that wasn't the best movie I ever saw," I quipped, trying to keep my tone light.

"That was one of the most stupid fucking movies I've ever seen," Hunter said angrily at me. "I can't believe they made it seem like the vampires were the good guys. Everyone knows all vampires deserve to die. And the way that slayer got killed was bullshit, I mean I would've-," he stopped abruptly. "That is, if vampires and slayers really existed," he said, trying to cover what he had said.

I didn't say anything, gave no indication that I noticed his slip up. I hoped he would be as forgiving with me if I ever slipped up in front of him. "Well, you know maybe if vampires did exist, they all wouldn't be bad. I mean, like the ones who became vampires against their will. It wouldn't be their fault, they could still be a good person," I challenged him.

Hunter stopped walking and let go of my hand. He shook his head while frowning, letting me know he disagreed.

"If they did exist, it wouldn't matter how they were before they were changed. They'd be soulless creatures that are damned and needed to be destroyed," he told me firmly. "They kill people by drinking their blood. There's nothing good about that."

"Wow. It sounds like you've really got an opinion about something that doesn't even exist," I said sarcastically. Part of me always hoped that there would come a day that I could tell Hunter the truth about me. Now after seeing how he felt it didn't seem that was going to be possible.

Hunter came closer to me and put his arm around me. We started walking down the street again this time slower than before. My heart hurt that he hated vampires so much. His hating them also meant that he unknowingly hated me as well. He could never know the truth about me, ever.

“Babe, you feel cold,” Hunter commented to me as he pulled me closer to him.

This time he was right, but not the way he meant. I felt cold on the inside knowing how much he hated vampires... and me. I was cold and alone.

## *Chapter Nine*

The doorbell rang and as I walked to push the buzzer, I glanced at the clock hanging in my kitchen. Hunter was twenty minutes early picking me up to go to dinner. We had been seeing more of other, almost once a week for the past two months. It was amazing how well we got along with each other. Of course, the fantastic sex helped. I was starting to have some really strong feelings for him and that frightened me a bit. When I first went out with him, I was aware that we could never get very serious. And that first night in my apartment, he explained he wasn't looking for any sort of commitment. For two people not wanting a relationship we were seeing an awful lot of each other. Sure, I felt bad that I wasn't being entirely honest with him by not telling him the truth about me, but I felt I had no choice. I was afraid of what his reaction would be if he found out that I was a vampire.

I reached my front door and opened it. "You're early to-," I stopped abruptly. Jake was standing at my door instead of Hunter. He never showed up at my place unannounced so I was surprised to see him there. "What are you doing here?" I needed to get rid of him fast. The last thing I needed was Hunter finding Jake at my place. I was pretty confident Hunter would have no problem identifying Jake as a vampire.

"I know I don't come over without calling first, but I wanted to talk to you. Do you have a few minutes?"

I didn't want to turn him away since he must have something important to talk to me about if he didn't call me first.

"Sure I'm actually getting ready to go out, but we could talk for a couple minutes." I stepped aside so he could come into my apartment then closed the door behind him.

"You're going out? I'll only be a minute then. I wanted to talk to you about something. I don't want to freak you out or anything, but I'm going to going away for a few months."

"What? Where are you going? What am I going to do when you're gone?"

“I’m going to London for some business. I don’t want you to be worried about feeding when I’m gone. I talked to a friend of mine and he said he’d help you while I’m gone.”

“I never thought that you would leave the city. Are you sure you’re friend will be okay with it? Can I meet him first before you go?” I was full of questions. The idea of getting blood from someone else was strange. I knew that my arrangement with Jake was supposed to be temporary but it had grown so relaxed and natural. Honestly, I never thought to have a back up feeding source.

“I just wanted to let you know now because all my plans were finalized today. I didn’t want to mention anything until I knew for certain that I would go. I’ll set it up so you can meet him while I’m still here, no problem,” Jake explained.

“Thank you for finding someone for me while you’re gone.”

“Of course. Hey, you’re looking dressed up tonight. Who are you going out with? Wait a minute, are you going out on a date?” he teased me. “It must be someone special if you’re getting dressed up. You’ve never worn that dress out with me. I would have remembered that for sure. So are you sleeping with him?” he asked me as he crossed his arms over his chest.

“That’s personal; I’m not telling you anything.” I brushed away imaginary lint off my dress so I wouldn’t have to look him in the eye.

“Yep, you’re sleeping with him,” Jake laughed. “Hey, you’re blushing. I don’t think I’ve ever seen you blush. So who is he? Anyone I know? And what happened to not wanting to commit to anyone? Could it be you’ve changed your mind? Are you ditching your rules about not getting serious with anyone?”

“I don’t know what I’m going to do. I really like this guy a lot, but it’s complicated.” Complicated was putting the situation mildly, but I didn’t want to get into details at that moment. Hunter would be there any minute.

“Is he married?” he asked me.

“No, that’s not it. There’s a lot to it and -,” I started to explain, but there was a sudden knock on the door. I instantly recognized Hunter’s knock. Jake must have left the foyer door open downstairs so Hunter was able to walk to my apartment door without ringing the buzzer. If Jake wasn’t already dead, I might have tried to kill him. This was going to be bad; I could feel it in my bones

“Is that him?” Jake asked as he started to go towards my door as if he intended on answering it.

I grabbed him by the arm to stop him. There was no way I was going to let him open the door to Hunter. “You have got to go,” I whispered. I started to pull him down the hall in the other direction towards the back door. “You can go out the back.”

Jake dug in his heels. I couldn’t budge him, and he pulled his arm away from me. “No, I want to meet him,” he said to me. “I’ve got to see the guy you’re all dressed up for. I’ll let you know if I approve,” he said grinning.

Hunter started knocking on the door again, this time harder.

“No, Jake, please, go now and we’ll talk tomorrow,” I tried pleading with him. Jake was smiling from teasing me but he had no idea his death could be standing on the other side of the door.

Hunter started pounding on my door again. “Janice, are you alright?” he asked as he knocked. I could hear the concern in his voice and I knew if I didn’t answer soon he’d start knocking the entire door down.

“Yeah, I’m coming,” I shouted back to him through the door. “Jake, please go out the back. If he sees you here he’s going to be really upset.”

“Why do you want me to sneak out the back? You don’t want me to meet him? Do you think he’ll think something is going on? We’ll tell him we’re friends, it’s no big deal.”

Jake was determined to stay and I knew I had run out of time making Hunter wait for me at the door. I never was clear on how old a vampire had to be for a slayer to immediately recognize them. I guess I would find out soon enough. I turned to look at Jake one last time. He didn’t say a word to me; he simply leaned against my hallway wall waiting for me to answer the door. I sighed and opened the door.

“I’m sorry Hunter, a friend of mine stopped by and we were talking,” I said to him trying to smile and look as casual as I could. My smile felt more like a grimace on my face. He looked over my head and saw Jake.

When Jake saw Hunter, he stood up from leaning against the wall. Then things happened so fast everything was literally an out of focus blur. I heard Jake swearing a string of profanities behind me. Hunter pushed me to the side as he reached back into the backpack he wore on his back. I didn’t have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that Hunter knew Jake was a vampire.

Hunter had Jake pressed against the wall with one arm twisted behind his back while he held a wooden stake firmly in his other hand.

“Janice, you’re dating Hunter Raintree? Are you crazy? Why didn’t you tell me?” Jake asked me.

“What?” I asked him back dazed. I didn’t know how Jake knew who Hunter was. “How do you know Hunter?” Clearly they didn’t know each other because of their being friends.

“Remember when I told you about that family of slayers? Hunter is the older brother. Don’t you remember?”

My mind was racing with what Jake had just told me. Of course, I’d remembered everything he had said about the famous slayer family. Jake never told me their name though, so I had no idea Hunter was one of the slayers he’d warned me about that night.

I thought about the night we had seen the vampire movie, and how upset Hunter was after. The scene with the slayer getting killed must have been terrible for him to watch, considering a vampire had killed his own brother. No wonder he was so pissed off when we had left the movie theater. What we watched was exceptionally close to home for him, something not created by Hollywood, but very real to him. And I had stood up for vampires then, telling him that they all couldn’t be that bad and his reaction had been so angry. Now I knew why. When I fucked up, I fucked up big, no denying it.

Hunter looked over at me. “What are you two talking about? Janice can you explain to me how do you know this guy and why the hell you let a vampire in your apartment?” he demanded of me. He looked pissed off more than the night after the movie when we argued.

“We’re just friends,” Jake said to Hunter.

“Shut the fuck up,” Hunter told Jake as he bounced Jake’s head off the wall with a thud.

“Don’t hurt him. Hunter, it’s true, we’re friends. Please let him go,” I pleaded. I tried to pry Hunter’s hand from the back of Jake’s neck, but it wouldn’t budge.

“You’re just friends? That’s it? You’re telling me there’s never been anything between the two of you?” he asked me. “Tell me Janice, I need to know.”

“Can you let him go and then we’ll talk?” I wanted to get Jake out of my apartment before he got hurt.

“No, answer the question. Has there ever been anything between the two of you?” Hunter’s eyes pierced through me with anger.

“Once there was,” I admitted.

“Did you ever sleep with him?”

“I did. It was only one time Hunter and believe me it was the biggest mistake of my life. No offense Jake.”

“None taken,” he replied back with his face pressed against the wall.

“You slept with him. You had sex with a fucking vampire?” he asked with utter disgust. “I can’t believe you’d do that.”

“One time, before I even met you,” I said stressing the word one. I hoped that if I made it sound like it happened long ago, it wouldn't sound so bad to him.

“I can’t believe you’d fuck a vampire,” he said with the look of disbelief on his face.

“Ok, first of all I was with Jake once, that’s it. And in my defense I didn’t know he was a vampire when I met him,” I started, trying to defend my past actions.

“That’s still disgusting. You should have known there was something wrong with him. He needs to be destroyed you know.” Hunter’s knuckles were white he gripped his stake so tightly.

“You never seemed disgusted when were together,” I whispered as tears started to roll down my cheeks. I knew there was no way I was going to get out of this unscathed. I hoped that Hunter would understand what I was about to tell him. This was the moment I had hoped would never come; the time I would have to tell him the truth about me.

“He’s not disgusting. He’s my best friend. And if you have to kill him then you’re going to have to kill me too,” I told him.

“What? What do you mean?” he asked me. “Why would I have to kill you too?”

I shook my head hating how I had gotten myself into this situation. Hunter was the first man I had let myself get close to in a long time, and now I was going to lose him forever.

“Because that’s what you do...kill vampires. I’m so sorry, Hunter. I didn’t mean for you to find out like this. When I met you, I told myself that there could never be anything serious between us because we’re so different. I didn’t mean to get so close to you. I like you so much and there wasn’t an easy way to tell you... I’m a vampire,” I confessed.

He let go of Jake and took a step towards me. “What?” he asked in total disbelief. He took a step towards me. “No,” he muttered as he walked closer, “You can’t be.”

“I was changed a few months before we met. I am so sorry,” I said again. My voice quivered and my body trembled. Being so close to him all I wanted was to feel his arms around me, safe and warm. I longed to hear him tell me that everything would be ok and we would work everything out. Nothing went the way I wanted.

Hunter suddenly grabbed me by the front of my dress and slammed me up against the wall behind me. I closed my eyes and squealed, terrified at his actions.

“How long have you known I’m a slayer?” he asked me through clenched teeth.

“Since that night we met in the park. I saw you with the guy who stole my purse,” I explained.

“You knew from the night we met and you still went out with me? You must be fucking crazy.”

I opened my eyes and looked directly into his. “I guess I am,” I agreed. There was no other explanation for me dating a man I knew was a vampire slayer. I had to be out of my mind.

Hunter held up his wooden stake so that it was directly in my face. “I should kill you,” he spat at me. He moved his hand so the stake hovered over my heart.

“Hunter,” I cried as tears rolled down my cheeks and I reached up to touch his face.

“Don’t say my name and don’t fucking touch me,” he commanded. He looked away from me and shook his head while his jaw clenched. “All those times I thought there was something different about you, it was because you’re a vampire. I just didn’t recognize it though because you’re so new. How could I have not seen it?” he muttered to himself. Finally, he looked at me as he licked his lips. “I don’t ever want to see you again,” he told me, “ever.”

I didn’t respond back to him, I simply squeezed my eyes shut again and cried. My entire body shook as I sobbed. Hunter let go of me and I slumped down against the wall into a heap on the floor. I heard him turn around and walk out my front door. My heart ached so badly I wish he’d used his stake on me so I wouldn’t feel all the pain I now felt. I heard Jake come over and sit down next to me.

“Wow. That was pretty amazing. I can’t believe we’re still here,” Jake said. “How the hell did you ever end up with Hunter Raintree? It’s amazing he didn’t figure out you’re a vampire and kill you” he told me.

“You told me slayers can’t identify new vampires,” I reminded him.

“Yeah, but that was Hunter Raintree. That’s different. I’m surprised he couldn’t tell right away. So how did you ever hook up with him?”

“It’s a long story and I know getting involved with him was stupid. That was one of the reasons I never told you about him. I knew you would tell me I was insane for seeing him. But I was really attracted to him, and I thought he felt the same about me,” I said back to him. “I can’t believe I thought it could go on without him finding out,” I murmured.

“That guy’s a vampire’s worst nightmare.” Jake shook his head before he started to speak again. “I can’t believe you were dating the guy. Damn, do you realize if his family finds out about you, they’ll probably kill him?”

“Do you think so? God I hope not,” I told Jake. When he left, I knew he was extremely pissed off at me for hiding the truth from him. I never even thought of how his family would react if they found out about us. They might never forgive him for being with me if they discovered how close we had been. Even though he was furious with me and told me he never wanted to see me again, I felt the need to protect him. “Jake, do me a favor, please. Don’t tell anyone about me and Hunter, ok? No one,” I said. I also thought that if there was any chance of reconciliation between Hunter and I the last thing I needed was Jake going around ruining Hunter’s reputation as a brutal slayer.

“I promise I won’t say a word to anyone.” He looked at me closely, then put his arm around me. “You know, I’m going to say something and I want you to promise not to freak out on me, ok?”

“What is it?” I asked looking at him.

“I think you don’t just like Hunter, I think you really love him.”

I nodded. “I do. I didn’t want to admit it, but I love him more than anything. I wish there was a way I could try to get him back, but now he hates me,” I said with a shaking voice.

“You know, I think Hunter is an asshole for walking out of here on you no matter what you are. He doesn’t deserve your love.” Jake replied. His voice sounded angry.

“Thanks Jake. It’s really sweet of you to say that.” I wiped my eyes on the skirt section of my dress. I was way beyond worrying about being lady like.

“You know, the next time you tell me to sneak out the back door, I’m out of here, no questions asked,” he joked.

“I don’t think that’s going to be happening again,” I told him.

“Do you think he’ll come back at all tonight? Do you want me to stay here with you? I don’t mind.”

“No, he’s not coming back, I’m sure of it. You don’t have to stay either. I’ll be fine. In fact I think I’m going to go to bed now,” I told him. I was suddenly exhausted. Drama can take a lot out of a person.

“Well if you don’t want me to stay then I’ll just let myself out,” he said. He leaned down quickly to give me a quick kiss on the cheek. “I’ll come by in a day or two to check up on you and you know...” he trailed off, not having to finish his sentence. I knew he was referring to me feeding again.

“Ok, thanks Jake,” I told him with a small smile. “You are such a good friend.”

He nodded to me and left my apartment closing the door behind him. I sat with my head against the wall, trying to think of what I could possibly say to Hunter to make things right between us, but I couldn’t think of a thing. I got up off the floor and went to my bedroom to lie down since I felt an immense headache coming on.

## *Chapter Ten*

Bang. Bang. Bang. The pounding in my head wouldn't stop. It hadn't since Hunter found out the truth about me. After Jake left, I put on a pair of pajamas and went to bed. That was two days ago. Bang. Bang. Bang. I tried to massage my temples to ease my headache. Bang. Bang. Bang. The pounding was faster now and louder.

"Janice! Are you in there?"

I opened my eyes and listened.

"Are you going to make me break down the door? I'll do it you know!"

I sighed. The pounding I heard wasn't from my headache; it was Jake at my front door. People really needed to start making sure that foyer door was locked, I thought to myself as I sat up in bed.

"Whoa," I said to myself, "Stop the room from spinning, I want to get off." I sat for a few seconds until the spinning slowed down. I got up, stumbled to my bedroom door and clutched the doorframe.

"Ok, I'm going to break down the door now," Jake yelled from the other side of the door.

"I'm coming, I'm coming," I mumbled to myself. I held the walls of my hallway as I made my way to the door.

Thud.

"Damn," I heard Jake curse.

I opened the door to find Jake rubbing his shoulder with a scowl on his face.

"What Jake? What do you want?" I asked him.

"It's about time you answered," he said as he continued to rub his shoulder. "I came because it's past time for you to feed. I've come here the past few days and you never answer the door."

"What do you mean past time? You said you'd come back in a day or two."

“Yeah, that was four days ago. Every time I come, you don’t answer the door. You haven’t answered your phone either.”

“Oh, I didn’t realize so many...” That was the last thing I said before I hit the floor, passed out cold.

When I woke up in my bed, my mouth was on Jake’s wrist. I could taste his blood but I couldn’t remember drinking a drop from him. He moved his wrist away from my mouth and I sat up in bed. My headache was gone and I was no longer dizzy.

“Did I pass out?” I asked Jake. I remembered talking to him at my front door, and then it was a blank.

“Yeah you did. I guess I got here just in time. In another few days, you would have woken up ready to drink from the first person you saw. I don’t think your neighbors would have appreciated that too much.”

“No, that would not go over too well. Thanks for coming here and saving me. I’ve been in bed thinking about Hunter and everything that happened the other day. I was an idiot thinking that he was never going to find out the truth. I feel so stupid. I never should have let myself get so close to him.” I felt myself start to cry and I got up to get myself a tissue.

“Ok, that’s it,” Jake said to me as he got up and went to my closet. He rummaged through my clothes picking out a skirt and sweater.

“That’s what?” I asked then blew my running nose again. I had no idea what he was thinking.

“You can’t sit here anymore being all depressed for yourself. I’m going to be leaving on my trip soon and I can’t go if I know you’re all holed up in here feeling sorry for yourself.”

“I’m not going out. I don’t feel like it. I’d much rather stay here and feel sorry for myself.”

“No Janice, you’re going to shower and get dressed and I’m going to take you out dancing. I’m not accepting no for an answer either.” He went into my bathroom and I heard the water for the shower. “Now are you going to go yourself or do I have to carry you in?” he asked me.

“Alright, I’m going, but you know I hate you for making me do this,” I complained as I walked past him.

“No you don’t,” he teased me as I started to close the bathroom door.

He was right. I didn't hate him. I hated the fact I knew he was right and I needed to get on with things. The idea of life without Hunter in it wasn't very appealing. When I wasn't looking I had somehow fallen in love, and now I was heartbroken. I couldn't catch a break, even when I was dead.

Jake selected a club packed with people. Loud music pulsed through the place. He held my hand and started to lead me to the dance floor. I wasn't in the dancing mood so I tried to pull my hand away from him.

"Come on, Janice, dance with me," he pleaded.

"No, you go dance. I'm going to go sit at the bar and get a drink," I told him. He was lucky I was even there. Many times on the way to the club, I was tempted to turn around and go home to wallow in sorrow. Jake made his way to the dance floor and I elbowed my way up to the bar. I ordered myself a diet soda and settled on a barstool. A man sat down on the empty stool to my left and as soon as we made eye contact, I knew there was going to be trouble. The man had blonde hair and was very tan, obviously an outdoors during the day guy. Not my type at all. He had his body turned towards me as if he planned on us having a conversation.

"Can I buy you a drink?" he asked me with a Cheshire cat grin.

"No thanks," I replied holding up my diet soda so he could see I didn't need one.

"Do you want to go dance?" he asked me as he nodded to the dance floor.

"No thanks." I looked for Jake and saw him bobbing in the sea of dancers out on the floor. I got up to work my way to Jake when the guy next to me grabbed my arm,

"Where are you going?" he asked me. "I just got here."

"Let go of me," I told him. His grip was tight and it hurt. I looked for Jake again but he wasn't even facing my direction. I pulled my arm but I couldn't get out of his vice like grip. "Let me go. What is your deal?"

"Is there a problem here?"

I looked up and saw Hunter standing in front of us. He looked a little haggard, worn around the edges. There was stubble on his face and dark circles under his eyes. He looked like crap and I wondered if I looked as bad as he did. I hoped I didn't.

"Mind your own fucking business," the guy said to Hunter as he tightened the grip on my arm. Big mistake.

“It seems to me she wants you to let her go. Janice, do you want him to let you go?” Hunter asked me.

“You know her?” the guy asked Hunter, loosening his grip on me slightly.

“Yeah, I do, so you see this is my fucking business. And if you don’t let her go right now, I will beat the crap out of you right here in front of everyone. So what’s it going to be?”

The guy let go of my arm. “Hey man, we’re cool. No need to get all violent. I didn’t know she was with anyone,” he said as he walked away from us.

“Thanks, he was a total asshole,” I told Hunter as I rubbed my arm. I was trying not to stare at him but I couldn’t help myself. Even though he looked haggard, I still thought he was sexy. “So how have you been?”

Hunter rubbed his chin before he answered me. “I’ve been ok. My brothers keep me busy. How about you?”

I wanted to tell him I was miserable and that I missed him terribly, but I couldn’t say the words. “I’m alright thanks,” I answered instead. I noticed he had on his backpack. “So are you working? You’re wearing the thingy tonight,” I said motioning to his back.

“Yeah, in fact I’m supposed to be meeting my brothers here in around half an hour. You might want to go get Jake and leave here while you can. My brothers won’t be able to notice you, but they’ll recognize Jake right away. He’ll never make it out of here in one piece.”

“You saw Jake was here?” I thought it was interesting he’d seen Jake but hadn’t gone after him himself or done anything about it.

“I spotted him right away on the dance floor. That’s why I was walking around looking for you. I thought you might be out together and I wanted to tell you that you should go,” he explained.

My stomach did a little flip knowing that Hunter was worried about my well-being. Maybe, just maybe, not everything between us was completely destroyed. It wasn’t much, but I’d take what little glimmer of hope I could get.

“Well thanks for looking for me. I should get Jake and leave while we can,” I said even though I didn’t want to leave Hunter. I could have stood there all night looking at him.

He glanced at his watch then looked back at me. “Yeah, it’s getting late and they’re going to be here soon.”

I nodded. “Thanks again Hunter. I know you didn’t have to help me or warn me about your brothers... So thanks.” I left him to get Jake from the dance floor. As I walked away from him, I could feel his eyes on me the entire time. It took me a minute to get Jake to stop dancing so I could tell him we had to go. While I explained why we had to leave I motioned over to where Hunter had been standing, but he was already gone.

## *Chapter Eleven*

The buzzer kept going off in my apartment, letting me know someone wanted me to let them in from the foyer. I sat up in my bed and looked at the time noting it well past sunset. I walked over to the intercom trying to think of who would be down stairs. “Who is it?” I asked into the microphone on the wall.

“It’s Hunter, Janice. I need to talk to you right away.”

I immediately pressed the button giving him access to the stairs to come up. I opened the door and waited for Hunter to get to my door. When I saw him he looked terrible, as if someone had beat the hell out of him. He looked much worse than the night I’d seen him in the club last week. He had a split lip and a swollen eyelid. There were cuts and scratches on his face, and one sleeve of his shirt was torn at the shoulder.

“What happened to you? What are you doing here?” I asked him. He hadn’t been to my apartment since the night he walked out. The only time I’d seen him was last week at the club. There were many times I was tempted to call him since I saw him, but I thought it’d be better for him to make the next move.

Hunter didn’t even answer me. He rushed past me into my apartment down the hallway towards my bedroom.

“What’s going on?” I asked again, this time louder than before. “Who did that to you?”

He looked back at me as if he just remembered why he was there. “Come on, you have to get dressed,” he told me as he went into my bedroom. I sighed and closed my apartment door following him to my room. He was already at my closet, where he pulled a pair of my jeans off a hanger and threw them on my bed. “I said get dressed,” he commanded to me, “Come on, and hurry up.”

I crossed my arms and stood defiantly not moving. While I appreciated his saving Jake and me the other night, he couldn’t just barge in my place and start ordering me around. “I don’t care what you said. I’m not doing anything until you tell me why you’re here.”

“It’s Jake,” he said as he went into one of my dresser drawers and pulled out a sweater, throwing it on my bed on top of the jeans.

“What about Jake?” I asked taking a step closer to him. Now he had my attention. Jake was supposed to be getting ready to go to London since he was leaving in a few days. I’d just seen him earlier the night before when I fed from him.

Hunter closed the dresser drawer and opened another, moving clothes aside as if searching for something. “Look, Jake is hurt really bad. I know the two of you are best friends so I’m here to take you to him.” He looked down again in the drawer not finding what he wanted. “Where did you move your underwear? It was always right here.”

I went to the other dresser in a daze and opened the drawer. “They’re here now,” I said, shocked at what he’d said about Jake. He rushed over and started going through my bras and panties pulling out one of each and throwing them on the bed with the other clothes. “What did you do to him? What did you do to Jake?” I accused.

“Nothing, I didn’t do anything. Do you think I’d do something to him after I told you the other day you were in danger?” He pointed to his face. “Besides you think I fought him and he did this to me? Trust me, I didn’t fight Jake and I didn’t do anything to him.”

“Just because you saved Jake and me one time doesn’t necessarily mean I can trust you. I trusted you before and look what it got me.”

Hunter grabbed me by the arms. “Janice, we don’t have time to argue now. Hurry up; I don’t know how long he has.”

The urgency in his voice frightened me and I started stripping off my pajamas in front of him. When I was naked, I moved to the bed to pick up the underwear he had thrown there. I looked over and saw him staring at me.

“What?” I asked.

He turned red and turned away from me, then opened another of my drawers and took out a pair of socks. “Nothing. I’ll leave your socks here for you and wait in the living room while you get dressed,” he told me without looking back at me. He walked out of the room looking straight ahead, as if wearing blinders so he couldn’t see me.

As I quickly dressed, I wondered what had happened to Jake. I just saw him the day before when I had fed. He must be seriously hurt if Hunter decided to come to my place and

bring me to him, I rationalized. As I pulled my sweater over my head, my hands shook. I pulled on my socks and boots and rushed into the living room.

“Ready,” I announced as I grabbed my keys off the hall table. Hunter stood up and went to my front door opening it for us.

“I’m parked out in front,” he said as he started down the stairs and I followed him close on his heels.

## *Chapter Twelve*

Hunter pulled up in front of an abandoned warehouse just west of downtown and turned off his truck. We both got out and when he started running towards a gray metal door, I followed him as fast as I could. When we stepped inside, I could see we were inside an abandoned factory. The place was full of old rusty machinery long forgotten.

“This way,” he instructed as he started weaving between the machines and I went after him. He started up some metal stairs and I climbed up quickly behind him. He obviously knew exactly where he was going. We reached a closed door and he stopped. “He’s in here Janice. Are you ready? I’m warning you he’s in bad shape,” he said not elaborating at all on Jake’s condition.

I nodded to him. “Let me in. I have to see him.”

Hunter opened the door and we walked into the room. The space was small and empty with a single flickering florescent bulb overhead. There was blood all over the room, splattered on the dirty gray blue walls and floor. In the middle of the floor there was a body covered in blood. The face was so mangled I would have never recognized it was Jake. I cried out and ran to the body then knelt on the floor. I was in the blood but I didn’t care in the slightest that my clothes were going to be ruined. As I looked at the man’s body sprawled out in front of me I recognized Jake’s clothes and stifled a heart-wrenching sob. I reached out a trembling hand to touch his bloody chest.

“Janice,” Jake whispered, causing me to jump from fright. He was such a mess I didn’t think that he was even conscious. Everyone knows that a stake can disintegrate a vampire, but not everyone knows that if you cut them, they could suffer a long agonizing death as they bleed to death. Someone had made mincemeat of him slashing and cutting him so badly he was now unrecognizable.

“Oh my god, Jake,” I cried as I carefully brushed back his hair. It was thick and matted covered with blood and who knows what else. His beautiful face was destroyed. It took all I had

not to gag at the sight of him. "I'm here, I'm here," I murmured to him as continued to stroke his head. I turned back to Hunter who stood next to us not saying a word. "Who did this to him?" I demanded.

Hunter looked away from me without answering. He wouldn't look at me.

"It's ok Janice," Jake gasped at me, "it doesn't matter who it was."

"No, it does matter. Hunter, answer me. Who did this to him? I know you have to know." I was going to make him answer me if I had to get up and beat it out of him.

Hunter continued to stand with his arms folded against his chest shaking his head. I could see his jaw clenching. He still wasn't talking though.

"Hunter, tell me!" I shouted at him. I was losing my cool and started to cry. "If you ever had any feelings for me you'll tell me who did this to him."

"Fuck," he muttered as he started to pace back and forth in front of us. He paused before he spoke. "My brothers, ok? It was my brothers who did this to him!" He took a few steps closer to Jake and me then he stopped. "I tried to stop them, but I wasn't able to."

I never heard him sound the way he did right now. His voice sounded full of anguish and he looked like he had tears in his eyes.

"Get out, Hunter," I said as I looked down at Jake's mangled face. There was no trace of the beautiful man who had seduced me months ago. He was gone.

"Janice, I'm so sorry this happened. I really tried to stop them I swear I did."

His voice trembled as he spoke and I knew he was upset, but I couldn't handle him or his apologies right then. His brothers had done this to Jake. I didn't want to see him or hear his words. I could feel myself coming undone. "I said get out! Get the fuck out of here!"

"I'm sorry," Hunter said one last time before he turned around and left the room, leaving Jake and I together alone.

"Jake, I'm going to help you. Let me try to figure out what I can do." There had to be a way to save him I thought. If I could get him to survive through the night then maybe there would be a chance he could start to heal from all his wounds.

"No Janice, I'm done. There's no way I'm going to recover from this," he whispered. "But it's ok because I got to see you again first. Well, kind of see you," he tried to joke about his almost swollen-shut eyes.

I winced at his poor attempt at humor even on the brink of death. “No Jake. I’ll have you drink from me and you’ll be able to get better,” I said as I started to roll up the sleeve of my sweater. I’d have him drink my blood from my wrist.

“No, that won’t help. Look around Janice, look at all the blood I lost. If I drained you dry it wouldn’t be enough,” he told me through swollen lips. “This is it for me.”

“I swear to God I’m going to kill Hunter for not saving you.” My hands shook because I was so distraught.

“He tried to help me Janice, like he said. There were some other vampires here and he helped them escape. His brothers got pissed and they beat the crap out of him. I tried to help but they closed the door and locked him out of the room while they did this to me. He kept pounding on the door trying to get in but he couldn’t. I could hear him screaming at them to open the door.” Jake started coughing and he reached out a hand for me. “They let him in when they were done and they left. He told me he’d go get you and bring you here for me. And he did...”

“Jake, I’m so sorry this happened to you,” I said as I leaned down and cried on him. It felt terrible knowing I was losing my best friend.

“Janice, can you do me a favor? Please?”

“Yeah, anything,” I told him as I wiped my tears.

“Get that stake over there on the floor and finish me,” he requested as he pointed over at one of the corners in the room.

I hadn’t even noticed the lone bloody stake lying on the floor. “Jake no,” I said shaking my head. “I can’t do that.”

“Janice, please just do it so this will be over. If you knew how much I hurt right now you’d do it for me. Please,” he begged me. “Please.”

I looked at the stake again, then got up and went over to the corner and picked it up. I brought it back to Jake and knelt back on the floor next to him. My hand shook holding the thin piece of wood in my hand. “I really don’t want to do this,” I said to him as tears streamed down my face. I couldn’t believe I was going to kill Jake.

“Janice I just want to tell you I’m sorry I made you a vampire. I hope someday you’ll be able to forgive me.”

“I do, Jake, I forgive you. I forgave you a long time ago.”

“Then I’m ready,” he said and sighed.

I took the stake and held it up over his heart. My whole body trembled, out of control. I paused for a second before I thrust the stake into him. He instantly disappeared into ash, and then the ash was gone as well. I dropped the stake in the pool of blood that was the only proof Jake had existed at all. Lowering my head, I sobbed while my shoulders heaved up and down.

Wiping my face with my hands, I stood up and walked out of the room. When I stepped out the door Hunter was there leaning against the wall. I was sure he heard everything said between Jake and me. I paused for the slightest moment, then started walking back the way I'd come with Hunter when we'd arrived. I was going home.

"Janice, please let me talk to you," he pleaded. He was walking behind me as we went down the stairs we had come up earlier.

Ignoring him, I continued walking and found the door I wanted. I walked outside into the moonlit night and started heading towards my apartment.

"Please Janice, will you listen to me. We need to talk. I need to talk to you. Please don't walk away from me."

I spun around to confront him. "As I recall you're the one who's good at walking away. We don't need to talk. I appreciated that night at the club when you told me to leave when your brothers were coming. And I appreciate that you tried to save Jake, but I can't change the fact that it was your brothers who did this to him. Don't you realize that if I was here they would have done the same thing to me?" I started walking again. I wanted to home, take a shower and get the smell of Jake's blood off me.

Hunter walked next to me and took a hold of my arm, stopping me. I pulled away from him, not wanting him to touch me. "Get away from me," I told him through gritted teeth. I'd had enough for one night. "I'll tell you what...Why don't you go find your brothers and go kill some more innocent vampires? Isn't that what you guys do? Oh, wait, that's right, there's no such thing as an innocent vampire, is there? We're all damned to hell and soulless creatures, right? I remember you saying that to me once."

"Listen I did what I could for Jake to try to save him, honestly I did. My brothers had a group of vampires, and when I saw what they were doing, I tried to stop them. They were too much for me though. I hate that this happened. Janice would you at least let me drive you home? You don't even have to say a word to me, I promise. The sun is going to be up soon and you

shouldn't be walking around like that," Hunter said as he pointed to my clothes that were covered with blood.

"Thanks but I'll take my chances," I spat at him and turned around and walked away. As I went down the street tears slid down my face. He might have tried to save Jake, which certainly did mean something to me, but he was a slayer by birth. My heart hurt so badly I almost couldn't bear it. It hurt from losing my best friend and it hurt from seeing the man I loved but knew I would never be able to have again.

## *Chapter Thirteen*

As soon as I got home, I stripped off my clothes and threw them into the garbage. There was no way I was ever going to wear them again. Every time I looked at them I'd remember I wore them the night Jake died. I turned on the shower and stood under the water as hot as I could stand. Taking a washcloth and body wash, I scrubbed Jake's dried blood from my hands until it was gone. Afterwards I put on a pair of flannel pajamas and lay down on my bed. Even though it wasn't sunrise, I fell into a fitful sleep. I didn't want to be awake anymore because then I would think about everything that had happened that night. All I wanted to do was forget everything that had happened. I stayed in bed until sunrise and I had no choice but to sleep away the day.

The next sunset I woke up, but made no attempt to move. I couldn't think of anything but Jake, and how much I would miss him. I also thought about what Hunter had said, and in the back of my mind, I thought maybe I had been too harsh with him. Maybe I should have stayed and listened to what he wanted to say to me. But I couldn't forget that his own flesh and blood had killed Jake. Hunter was always a slayer and I had tried to ignore that fact, but it was a huge part of him, too big to ignore. The way he'd looked at me the night he found out the truth about me being a vampire was horrible. He looked at me then as if I was the most disgusting thing he'd ever seen. I'd never felt so terrible in my entire life. I'd brought it all upon myself. I tried mixing two worlds that couldn't coexist together. No matter how much I wanted it to happen, oil and water wouldn't mix.

As I lay on my bed, I heard a noise. I rolled over onto my stomach and lifted myself up to listen. There it was again, a rapping on my front door. The door outside must have been open for someone to get into the hallway again. I knew that it wasn't Hunter, he had a very unique knock that said open the door or I'll knock it down. This knock was quiet and gentle. I went to my front door and looked through the peek hole. There was a woman at my door, a stranger I had never seen before. She looked down and shifted from foot to another as if she were anxious waiting for

my door to open. I really wasn't in the mood for company, but I opened the door anyway to see what she wanted.

"Hi," I said wondering what the woman wanted from me.

"Hi," she replied finally looking up at me. She had a black eye and cuts on her face. Someone had beaten the daylights out of this woman recently. "You're Janice, right? I'm friends with Jake and he's talked to me about you."

Since she knew Jake and looked beat up I thought maybe she was there last night.

"Yeah, I know Jake. Were you there yesterday? Did you see what happened?" I was interested in hearing her take on what had happened last night.

The woman took a step closer to me and spoke in a whisper even though there was no one else to hear her. "Yes, I was there yesterday, at the warehouse with Jake and the others. Some of the Raintrees captured us. They had us in a room at that warehouse to kill us, they told us right to our faces. Then the leader Hunter showed up and he told his brothers to let us all go. His brothers all went nuts on him, and they had a huge fight. We all stood there, not sure what was going on. Then they started hitting each other. They were all against Hunter and Jake actually jumped in and started fighting them to help him. I was amazed. I've never seen a vampire and slayer on the same side before. At one point, Hunter yelled at the rest of us to run and we did. I tried to call Jake's apartment but he doesn't answer. No one has seen him since last night and I was wondering if he was here?"

I felt my throat tighten as I thought about Jake. "He, um... he didn't make it last night. Jake's gone." I felt tears sting my eyes and I knew I was a few seconds away from breaking down. "Thank you for telling me what happened. If you could let any of his friends know he didn't make it? I'm sorry I can't talk anymore right now, I'm going to have to go."

The woman had tears in her eyes, and her surprise at Jake's death was clear. She didn't say anything else to me, she simply nodded and turned around and walked away. I closed the door and walked back to my bedroom thinking about what she had told me. The two men in my life who were archenemies ended up coming together for once. Hunter tried to save Jake and Jake tried to help Hunter fight his brothers. It impressed me that Jake had stepped up to help Hunter, but at the same time, it broke my heart because I knew he did that because of me. He knew how much I loved Hunter despite our not talking anymore.

And I was confused thinking about Hunter. It certainly was out of character for him to be saving the same creatures he had spent his entire life destroying.

I looked at the clock on my dresser. The sun had recently set, so that woman must have raced to my apartment to talk to me. I had the entire long evening ahead of me to be alone with my thoughts of the previous night. It was going to be a terrible night. I crawled back onto my bed and pulled my comforter over me wishing I could go back to sleep but knowing that wasn't going to be possible. Squeezing my eyes shut I tried to get the pictures of Jake lying on the ground bleeding in front of me out of my head.

My thoughts were making me crazy so I got up and went to take a shower thinking it might make me feel better. When I was done, I dried myself off and dressed in my favorite jeans and sweater. I lay down on my sofa and turned on the television. It didn't matter what was on, all I could see were the images from last night replaying over and over in my mind. I closed my eyes but they were still there, just as vivid as when they occurred last night.

## *Chapter Fourteen*

I was dreaming about Jake again. He came to me every night in my dreams. This time we sat on my sofa next to each other and my head rested on his shoulder. He had his arm wrapped around me and I held his hand with our fingers entwined. It was strange because even though I knew he was gone and I was dreaming, it felt like he was really there with me.

“You have to go find someone to feed from Janice. It’s been a long time since you’ve had any blood. If you don’t you’re going to die.”

“I can’t believe you came to nag me in a dream. I don’t care if I ever drink any blood again,” I tell him, “besides I’m already dead.”

“You know what I mean,” he said back sounding annoyed with me. “You need to drink soon. I’m sure you’ve started to notice that every day you are getting weaker and the hunger is getting stronger. You can’t keep ignoring it. It’s going to overpower you at some point. I wish I would have introduced you to my friend so you’d have someone to go to for help.”

“Jake, I don’t care, I really don’t.” It was true. I had no desire to go out and feed. I wasn’t friends with any other vampires as I was with him. And I certainly wasn’t going to go out and drink from a stranger just so I could survive. I had planned to just stay in my apartment and see what happened to me. You could say I had lost my will to live... or exist since Jake died. My mom was all involved with her new neighbor boy friend and Veronica was always at her new place. The prospect of eternal life was looking pretty dim to me. I’d much rather starve it out and take my chances.

“Janice, go answer your door,” Jake told me.

“What?” I didn’t know what he was talking about. The buzzer never rang.

“Go answer the door before he leaves.”

“There’s no one at the door Jake. Who are you talking about?”

He moved his arm from around me and stood up abruptly glaring down at me.

“Go. Answer. The. Door.”

Bang, bang, bang. I opened my eyes and saw the ceiling of my living room. Bang, bang, bang. Someone was pounding on my front door just as he said in my dream. I got up and started walking to my front door. Why the hell did we even have a buzzer if no one ever used it?

“Janice!” I would recognize that demanding voice for the rest of my days.

I opened my apartment door and saw Hunter filling my doorway.

“What do you want?” I leaned against my door because I felt a little light headed and my stomach rumbled. Jake had been right in my dream, I was growing weaker and hungrier each day.

“I came to see how you were doing. I was worried about you,” Hunter explained.

“Oh, now all of a sudden you’re worried about me? Spare me.” I couldn’t help but roll my eyes.

“Not all of a sudden. I worry about you all the time.”

I snickered. “Yeah, right. Go home Hunter.” I went to close the door in his face but the dizzy feeling returned but this time it was so intense I stumbled and fell into the door jam. I barely caught myself. Hunter lunged at me and caught me just before my legs went out from under me. I felt him lift me in his arms, close my door and carry me down the hall, into my bedroom.

“When was the last time you fed Janice?” he asked me.

I didn’t feel like answering Hunter so I didn’t. I wanted him to go away. Of course, he wouldn’t leave me alone.

“Janice, when’s the last time you fed? You’re not looking too good.” He brushed the hair off my face and felt my forehead as if I was child with a fever.

“Did you come all the way over here to insult me?” I didn’t even open my eyes when I spoke to him. I was working that whole “out of sight, out of mind” thing. It wasn’t working for me though.

“You know what I mean. Stop joking around and answer me,” he demanded.

I could tell from the sound of his voice he was becoming annoyed with me, which for some reason made me smile.

“Janice,” he said as he tried shaking me this time by the shoulders.

I sighed because I knew he wasn’t going to stop asking me or leave until I answered him. “The night before Jake died. He was here the night before everything happened.”

There was a pause and I figured Hunter was calculating how many days ago Jake died.

“Jesus, Janice, you need to get some blood. I’m surprised you’re not starving by now. It’s been too long.”

“Yeah, Jake told me the same thing,” I told him. I didn’t bother to explain Jake was visiting me in my dreams.

“Jake told you? Janice you realize that Jake is gone now, right?”

I could hear the confusion in his voice.

“I’ll tell you the same thing I told him. I don’t care. Don’t worry about me.”

“Don’t you know anyone else that you can ask? Any other friend who’s a vampire or something?” he asked me.

“No Hunter, there’s no one else I can ask. I’m pretty much on my own as far as this is concerned. Don’t worry about it. I’m not.”

I opened my eyes and I could see him kneeling next to me. If I didn’t know any better I’d say there was genuine concern in his eyes.

“Ok then, you’re just going to have to take some of my blood. How do we do this? I’ve never done this before.”

“I’m not drinking from you. You’re insane.” I thought for a minute that maybe this whole conversation with him was a dream, just like my dreams with Jake. It was the only way I could explain why he was offering me his blood.

“If you don’t get blood you’re going to end up dying or the hunger will force you to feed from some innocent person. Have you thought about that at all?”

“If it gets too bad I can always go to sleep outside at sunrise. And if I die, I die. What do you care? I’d just be one less vampire you and your brothers have to kill. I can remember you telling me that all vampires deserved to die. That was you, right? Cuz that guy looked a lot like you.”

“Yeah, that was me. But maybe I was wrong. Maybe I was wrong about a lot of things.”

I was about to tell him to tell him to spare me and go home when out of no where I had the feeling my stomach was turning inside out. I screamed and sat up clutching my stomach. I could hear him talking to me but I couldn’t understand him through the pain.

Hunter picked me up, and then sat down placing me in his lap. He turned my head so my face was against his soft skin. I could smell his blood pulsing through his veins. My tongue ran

along my teeth and I felt my incisors sticking out. I kissed the soft skin on his neck and my mouth involuntarily opened. My teeth gently scraped his throat. I could almost taste the sweetness of his blood running freely through my lips.

“Let me go Hunter. You don’t want to do this. You need to leave.” I fought him trying to get loose, but he easily overpowered me.

“No way, I’m not going. You need my blood,” he told me.

“That’s not going to happen. You hate vampires, remember?”

Hunter took my face in his hands so I had no choice but to look at him. “Janice, I’m not leaving you. I don’t want to argue with you now. Just take what you need from me and after if you still want me to go I will.”

“Why are you doing this? Why are you helping me?” The way he stared at me at that moment reminded me of how he looked at me before he knew I was a vampire. He used to look at me as if he really cared about me.

He tilted his head so our foreheads touched. He looked me right in the eyes as he spoke to me softly.

“I’m helping you because I love you. I never stopped, even when I stormed out of here and told you I never wanted to see you again. But we can talk about all that later. Let’s get you fed first, baby.”

I felt tears in my eyes and when I tried to blink them away, all it did was cause them to roll down my cheeks. I never stopped loving him when he left that night, but I never expected him to tell me he felt the same way.

“You’re sure you are okay with doing this? I don’t want to hurt you.”

“You can’t hurt steel baby,” he said in a joking macho voice. “Come on, give me what ya got,” he said pulling his shirt and exposing his neck to me.

“So bad,” I groaned as I moved my mouth onto his neck. I closed my eyes and inhaled his scent. I never thought I’d be this close to him again. I could feel the pain deep in me and I knew it was about to return. I didn’t want to feel that again and I needed to start drinking. I opened my mouth and hesitated before I sunk my teeth into him.

When my fangs pierced his skin, I heard him gasp and his fists clenched. As his blood flowed into my mouth and I began to swallow, I could feel his body start to relax. I placed my

hands on his chest my fingers touching his familiar muscles and contours. The combination of touching him and drinking from him was amazing.

He moaned as I drank from him. "Damn that feels so incredible. I had no idea..."

I pulled back and wiped my mouth with the back of my hand. I knew I had taken enough from him and I wanted to stop before I took too much.

"Does it always feel like that? Is that what you felt with Jake?" he asked me as he gently touched his neck then looked at his fingers for signs of blood.

"It's a pretty sexual thing, drinking blood from someone, but it's more intense when you're really attracted to the other person. And when both people are vampires, it's like a thousand times more intense. Does your neck hurt? I tried to be as gentle as I could. I think it will heal fine and no one will ever know what happened."

I was never one to be too subtle. I was changing the subject as fast as I could. I didn't want to talk about what I'd done with Jake.

"It feels fine. It didn't really hurt at all. So when you did that with Jake was it that intense?"

I chose my words carefully because I knew it was difficult for Hunter to accept I'd ever been intimate with Jake.

"Not really. I only slept with him one time after he changed me. After that, I told him there was never going to be anything between us. He understood I wasn't looking for a relationship with him. When I fed from him we used his wrist because there's less contact that way and it's not sexual." I felt incredibly tired and I looked at my alarm clock. The sunrise was only a few minutes away and soon I would literally be dead to the world. I had to lie down; I could barely keep my eyes open. "Hunter, I have to lie down. It's almost sunrise."

He looked at the clock and swore. "I lost track of time. I'm going to go out to take care of a couple things but I want to be here when you wake up. Do you mind if I take your keys so I can let myself back in? Would you trust me with them?"

"I trust you, go ahead and take them. You know where they are," I told him.

He leaned down and kissed me right on the lips. "I meant what I said before. I do love you."

I smiled. Those were the last words I heard before I fell into a deep sleep until the next sunset.

## *Chapter Fifteen*

When I woke up Hunter was lying in bed with me asleep. I didn't move because I was scared I would wake him. I watched him as he slept and thought he looked incredibly peaceful. He had a small smile on his lips that made me wonder what he was dreaming about. I hoped it was about me.

I eased myself out of bed to go take a shower. It had been a few days since I'd had one and having him there motivated me to get my ass out of bed. I walked quietly to the bathroom and turned on the water. I got undressed and into the streaming hot water. It felt good to work the shampoo through my hair.

"When you're done would it be okay if I took a shower too?" Hunter asked me from the other side of the shower curtain.

I almost jumped out of my skin because I didn't know he was awake yet. I pulled the curtain back to look at him.

"Are you trying to see if it's possible for me to have a heart attack?" I asked him. "You just scared the shit out of me."

"Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you. I was out all day then I hurried back here so I didn't get a chance to go back to my place."

I pulled the curtain closed again so water wouldn't get all over the floor.

"You can come in now so you don't have to wait," I offered. I paused to hear his answer then I started to laugh. I could hear him taking off his clothes on the other side of the curtain before he even said yes.

I was rinsing the shampoo out of my hair when he came into the shower with me. We didn't even talk. He opened his arms, I slid right into them and he held me tight. When I looked up to him, his lips touched mine. We started out kissing slow and gentle, but then his tongue began to explore and probe my eager mouth. I could feel his hardness pressing against me and my pussy throbbed I wanted him so badly.

I pulled back and took the bottle of body wash from the shower ledge. I poured some on my hands, and then started rubbing it on his chest, working my way down to his waist.

“Turn around,” I told him and he did as I instructed so his back was facing me. My soapy hands moved over the muscles of his back, than caressed his perfect ass. I knelt down behind him and worked my way down the backs of his legs.

He turned around to face me and his erection was in front of my face. I used my right hand to take hold of him and stroked his cock. As I moved forward, I rubbed his erection against my lips and used my other hand to cup his balls. I kissed his hardness and ran my tongue along the length of him before I slid his cock into my mouth. When I closed my lips around him, I heard him moan.

I moved my head so his erection slid in and out of my mouth. Once in a while, I would suck on the tip or run my tongue over the slit. I could tell he was getting close to coming so I relaxed my throat and took in as much of him as I could. His body tensed and he came in spurts in my mouth, warm and salty. When I knew his orgasm was finished I stood up with his assistance. He hugged me so tight he lifted me off the shower floor for a second.

“You’re amazing,” he said in my ear then squeezed my ass.

“I don’t know about amazing, but I’m definitely pruning,” I said back showing him my hands. “I’m going to get out and you finish your shower.”

“Ok, I’ll just be a minute.”

“No rush, I’ve got all night.” I got out and grabbed a towel to dry off. I was putting on my pajamas when he came out of my bathroom. He had a towel wrapped around his waist and another around his neck. I watched him sit on my bed and put on his boxers then I went and sat next to him. “So I guess your opinion of vampires has changed somewhat since you met me?” I asked him.

“Yeah, ever since that night I was a total asshole and walked out on you. You’re all I thought about for weeks. After I found out the truth about you, I was so pissed off. It changed everything I believed in for my entire life. It changed how I was a slayer. And I was partly angry with myself too. The night we met at the park, I thought there was something different about you. I had my suspicions but I didn’t want to believe them. Then I started thinking about other vampires before they were changed, that they had lives and people they loved and that they have emotions just like me.”

I never dreamed he'd be talking to me this way. "But if you felt all that then why didn't you ever call me or come over?"

"Because I was scared of what my family would think when they found out. I grew up with the belief that all vampires deserve to die. My brothers and I were trained our whole lives to kill them. A vampire killed one of my younger brothers. If anyone would have told me that I was going to fall in love with a vampire I would have told them they needed to be committed.

When I saw you at the club that night when that guy was bothering you, I wanted to hurt him for touching you. I wanted to tell you how I felt then, but I knew my brothers were on their way there. You don't know how many times I picked up the phone to call you, or how many times I went past your house wishing I had the balls to see you and apologize to you. Then when everything happened with Jake, I didn't give a shit anymore what my brothers thought. What they do is wrong and if something happened to you, it would kill me. I would protect you with my own life I love you so much, and I'm never going to be able to slay another vampire ever."

"What are you going to do now? When your family finds out aren't they going to freak out on you?" I was really concerned what their reaction would be.

"Yeah, my brothers are going to go nuts. They're already pissed about what I did that night with Jake and the others, but I had to do it."

I could tell from looking at him that he seemed troubled once we started talking about his family. I didn't like being the cause of his unhappiness.

"Are you sure we're doing the right thing? Us being together? I don't want to ruin your life," I told him.

He put his arm around me and pulled me closer to him.

"You're not ruining my life, babe. You've helped me see that I haven't been living."

"So really, what you're saying is it took a dead girl to show you how to live, right?"

He thought about what I'd just said, then starting laughing. "You're one hundred percent right. So tonight I can stay for a little while, but then I want to go find my brothers and talk to them. I have to tell them I'm done with the slaying." He leaned in and kissed me.

I kissed him back filled with mixed emotions. I was thrilled to know he loved me, but I was scared as well. His brothers weren't going to be happy when he told them he was officially done with the slaying. I didn't even want to think of what their reaction would be when if told them he was in love with a vampire.

## *Chapter Sixteen*

I was pacing my apartment waiting for Hunter to come back. It was already nine pm and I hadn't heard from him since he left yesterday. I thought he would be there when I woke up, but no such luck. I was worried about him terribly since I knew he was going to see his brothers. Walking around my apartment was making me crazy. There was suddenly the sound of a key in my front door and I knew that he had returned. I almost ran to the door to greet him. When I saw him, though, I stopped dead in my tracks. He looked bad that night after trying to save Jake, but now he looked incredibly worse. One of his eyes was swollen shut, his upper lip more swollen than I thought possible. Looking at his hands, I saw cuts and bruises on both his knuckles. I could only imagine the condition of the rest of his body.

"Don't worry, it's not as bad as it looks," he said as he closed the door behind him.

"Good, because it looks like you got your ass kicked. Is this from your brothers?" My previous thoughts of them not taking too well to their big brother loving a vampire had been correct. I reached over to touch his eye and he winced in pain.

"Sorry, sorry," I apologized as I quickly withdrew my hand.

"It's okay. As you can imagine my brothers didn't take what I had to tell them too well. And for the record, they're not looking too pretty right now either. But I'm glad you're up and dressed. We really have to talk. It's important."

"What is it?"

"I wanted to let you know I'm leaving the city tonight. My car is packed and I'm leaving right now... and you have to come with me," he stated matter of fact.

"What? Why do we have to leave? What happened with your brothers?" He wasn't the type to easily run away so I knew something bad happened that night.

"We have to go because of what happened with my brothers. I started out telling them that I'm done with the slaying. I tried to explain to them that not all vampires are bad, that a lot were made vampires against their will."

“Your brothers must have gone crazy on you,” I mumbled, thinking of his reaction to my saying the same thing not that long ago.

“They went crazy when I told them what I thought, and then when I told them I was in love with a vampire, all hell broke loose. We started fighting and I was doing all right for a while against the three of them. I got to kick all their asses pretty good,” he said with a painful laugh. “But three against one odds are never really too good...So before we all killed each other we made a deal. I leave the city now and we never see each other again. And if I stay, they say they’ll kill me. I don’t want to hurt them or fight with them again, so I have to go,” he told me.

“Oh,” I murmured surprised with what he said. I knew they were going to be angry when he told them he was finished slaying. I had no idea he was going to tell them he was in love with a vampire. I was a little speechless, and that doesn’t happen all too often.

“And so you have to come with me for two reasons.”

“What are the reasons?” I asked.

“One, because I am so in love with you and I can’t imagine living without you.”

I smiled as he spoke because it was so incredible hearing him tell me how he felt about me. I didn’t think I’d ever get tired of hearing him tell me that he loved me.

“And two, because if you stay my brothers will hunt you down and kill you.”

“What?” I exclaimed surprised. “Why would they want to kill me?”

“Because you’re the one I’m in love with. They told me if you didn’t leave with me they’d find out who you were and hunt you down to destroy you.”

“So if I stay I’ll have three slayers trying to find me to kill me? That’s just great,” I said sarcastically while shaking my head.

“I love you with my whole heart Janice,” he said, “and I would die if anything happened to you.” He leaned down and gently brushed his lips against mine.

The kiss was exquisite but ended much too quickly for my liking. He pulled back from me so our faces were only a few inches apart.

“Say you’ll come with me,” he whispered as he stared into my eyes.

Mentally I started packing my bags, thinking that he and I would be able to be together after all. I would go with him even if my life weren’t in danger. I loved him. But then, I thought of something that would prevent me from ever leaving the city.

“I want to go with you, but I can’t just leave my mom. What if they find me gone and they kill her instead?” I would have to stay and try to protect my mom from his brothers.

“No Janice, your mom will be fine. They won’t hurt her because she’s human. They won’t do anything to her because of you. It’s only you they’ll want. Will you come with me?” he asked me.

“Of course I’m going to leave with you. I love you so much.”

We kissed gently so his lips wouldn’t hurt more, then he gathered me in his arms and stroked my hair.

“Are you sure they’ll even come after me?” I was trying to be optimistic despite his telling me I was about to be hunted and destroyed. He let me go and looked at me.

“Janice, think about it. I told them I’m in love with a vampire. I know my brothers and I can tell you exactly what they’ll do. They’ll find out who you are, track you down wherever you are in the city and turn you to dust. You’re the reason they think they lost me,” he explained.

“Do you think they’ll try to follow me out of the city to kill me?” I asked. I didn’t like the idea of living our life together on the run from his slayer brothers. It sounded like a prime time television series that was destined to be cancelled its first season.

“They’re not going to leave the city, but if you stay they’ll find you for sure,” he said.

Standing there, I thought about what he said and it made sense. His brothers would most definitely want me dead. “Can I at least call my mom and let her know that I’m going?”

“I’d actually feel a lot better if we left as soon as we can. I’d like to get as far away from the city as possible because I know they’ll be out looking for you soon,” he said as he started walking down my hall towards my bedroom. He opened my closet and brought out the one suitcase I owned. Eyeing it lying on my bed, I realized I was going to have to leave almost all my clothes behind. I went into the closet, grabbed my backpack and went to the bathroom to pack my shampoo, deodorant and other necessities. When I was finished, I went back to my bedroom and found him closing my suitcase.

“You packed my clothes?” I asked him. It made me nervous that he was in such a hurry to get us out of my apartment. He was scared his brothers would find us before we could leave. I could tell.

“Yep, you’re all packed,” he confirmed. “I tried to pack your favorite stuff.”

“Did you remember underwear?” I asked him.

“Yep,” he said back.

“Socks?” Hunter shot me a look that told me I had better stop questioning him. “Come on, let’s go,” he told me as he took my backpack, putting it on through one arm then lifting my suitcase off the bed. He walked out of my room and I could hear him stop by my front door waiting for me. I looked around my room thinking this is where I lived and died this past year. I heard him clear his throat and I knew he was impatient waiting for me. I turned and walked out of my room for the last time and went to him and my new future.

## *Chapter Seventeen*

We drove in Hunter's SUV on I-55 heading south towards New Orleans. He insisted that he drive as we left the city, worried his brothers might find us before we were able to leave. After we had driven a couple of hours away from the city I asked him if he'd let me drive for a while. While we drove, I would look at him and I could tell he was hurting. Besides the fact that he looked drawn and tired, the remnants of his fight with his brothers were obvious. The bruises on his face had bloomed to dark shades of blue and purple and his one eye remained swollen.

"Hunter, why don't you pull over and let me drive," I said to him after not being able to stand how miserable he looked.

"No, I'm fine," he'd said never taking his eyes from the road.

"Why don't you let me drive now that I can? I'm not tired at all and it's not going to be dark for too much longer. Why don't you rest because I won't be able to drive at all once the sun comes up," I told him. He didn't say anything but pulled off to the side of the road. "What are you doing?"

"Pulling over so you can drive, babe. What you just said makes sense," he told me as he reached to unbuckle his seat belt and open his door. He started walking around the front of the car towards my side.

"Oh," I said back surprised he was actually going to allow me to drive. I unbuckled my seat belt and got out of the car running around the back and getting into the drivers seat. He was already in the passenger seat rolling up his jacket to use as a pillow against the passenger window. He put his head down on his makeshift pillow and I heard him sigh as he closed his eyes.

I pulled back onto the highway and set the cruise control, settling back in the seat. I heard a snore and looked over to see he was already asleep. I reached over and briefly touched his arm. He mumbled in his sleep and I although I couldn't make out all the words he said I distinctly

heard the words “love” and “vampire.” I smiled at him and turned back to the road ahead of us that held our future.

It was an hour before sunrise when I pulled over to wake up Hunter. He had slept for a couple hours while I drove us closer to New Orleans. I leaned over and grabbed him by the shoulder, shaking him gently. “Hunter,” I said softly, “Hunter, it’s time to get up.”

He moved his head and groaned at my words.

“Hunter, the sun will be up soon so I can’t drive anymore.” I didn’t want to disturb his sleep, but I would hate for him to wake up in an hour at the side of the road with a pile of dust on the driver’s seat. I shook him again and he started to wake.

Hunter looked around us out the windows of the SUV. “What time is it?” he asked as he sat up in his seat. He winced and touched his side gently.

“It’s around three thirty in the morning. Are you feeling ok? Can you drive now?”

He nodded his head. “I’m fine, just a few bruised ribs,” he said nonchalantly. “We should have what, half an hour or so before the sun comes up.”

The look in his eyes made me want to be close to him. I’d never had a man look at me with such love. I unbuckled my seat belt and climbed out of my seat, over the console and onto his lap so that I sat straddling him. I leaned over and kissed him, lightly touching his lips. My body trembled as I sat on him, I couldn’t control myself. He wrapped his arms around me and noticed how I shook.

“What is it?” he asked me his eyes full of concern.

I felt tears well in my eyes and I bit my lower lip. “This has all been so much. I never intended to become a vampire. I didn’t think we’d ever be together again, and losing Jake was so hard. And now leaving my mom and Chicago—a lot has happened in a short amount of time,” I confessed to him as I melted into him. He winced as I wrapped my arms around him. “I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” I quickly apologized to him for hurting him.

“It’s ok,” he told me, “I just want to hold you in my arms again,” he said before he kissed my hair the way he used to. He held me in his arms for a moment before I heard him murmur, “Kiss me again,” into my ear.

My mouth eagerly found his, opening up to him, finding his tongue. His hands ran up my sides over my breasts, caressing them. Even though he was touching me over my clothes, I could feel the heat of his hands on me. I moaned into his mouth and rubbed myself against him, feeling

his hard sex through our clothes. I wished our clothes would disappear so I could feel his cock slide inside of me again.

“God I want you,” I breathed. My words caused a moan to escape him. I knew he felt the same way as me, his erection felt like steel through his pants.

“We can’t do this now. Even though I want you right here and now we can’t do it.” My rubbing against him had fully aroused him and he held a handful of my hair, pulling my head back so I had to look at him.

“Sure we can,” I argued, “there isn’t anyone around.” When I left the highway, I’d chosen a deserted stretch of road. Since we parked, not one car had driven past.

Hunter let go of my hair and stopped kissing me. “No, we really can’t Janice. Look outside; it’s going to be sunrise soon. We have to get you in back.”

“Oh,” I said back disappointed. I looked outside and could tell he was right. “So I’m going to sleep in the back?” We never discussed what I was going to do when the sun came up. I was glad that he’d planned ahead.

“Yeah, the back windows are darkened and you’ll be safe there until sunset,” he told me. He opened his door and I climbed off him exiting the car. We walked around to the back of the SUV and he opened the back door.

He was right: the back windows were blackened. He climbed in and pulled up a black partition that separated the back of the SUV with the seats in front. It was custom to the car, and when I realized that this was done specifically to transport vampires during the day, my stomach hurt.

“Did you used to transport vampires in here?” I wondered how many like me had been in the back and taken somewhere to be interrogated and later killed by Hunter and his brothers.

“Yeah,” he admitted as he looked at the ground. “But don’t think about that. Think that you’ll be safe here during the day. And as soon as the sun sets, I’ll pull over and let you out, okay?”

I looked at the back again, not at all pleased with my sleeping arrangements.

Hunter climbed out of the back and came up to me, stroking my cheek. “Janice, this is the only way, I’m sorry,” he said.

I nodded, knowing he was right. It made me realize that even though we were going to be together, there were still so many obstacles we were going to have to overcome. “We’re always

going to be different,” I said to him with tears in my eyes. It seemed I spent half of my time awake crying lately.

“What darlin’?” he asked me as he wiped away a tear that escaped my eyes. “Why are you so upset?”

“You’re always going to be the slayer and I’m always going to be the vampire. Look at how different we are. We’re acting like everything will be normal for us, but it won’t be.” My voice trembled and the tears flowed. I never thought that being with him was going to be so painful.

Hunter grabbed me by the shoulders. “Look at me Janice, please,” he pleaded.

I looked at him through blurry eyes.

“We’re going to work this out. You and I are going to be together no matter what, so don’t worry. We belong together,” he said then leaned down and kissed me on my lips.

I pulled back from him and attempted a smile. “God, I love you Hunter,” I told him as I touched his face. I turned and climbed into the back of the SUV. I lay down on my side with my arm under my head as a pillow. It was far from comfortable, but it would do.

“I’ll see you at sunset,” Hunter said. “Remember I love you.”

“I’ll never forget,” I responded and closed my eyes, overcome with the desire to sleep. It was just as well; that way I didn’t have to see him close the door.

## *Chapter Eighteen*

At sunset, I woke up rubbing my eyes. I was lying in the back of Hunter's SUV, the back door open wide. I could see him standing with his back to me a few feet away. Slowly I sat up and got out from the back of the car. I stretched my arms over my head before I noiselessly walked up next to him so we stood side by side.

"So what exactly are we looking at?" I asked as I folded my arms over my chest.

Hunter jumped as if he had no idea I was standing next to him. He put a hand over his heart in an exaggerated gesture. "What, is it your turn to try to give me a heart attack?" he asked me.

"Did I scare you?" I asked back mocking him. "How could I sneak up on the big, bad vampire slayer?" I teased him while laughing.

"I was just standing here thinking," he said. He looked serious with his brow furrowed.

"What were you thinking about?" It bothered me that he looked so solemn. I wondered if maybe he wasn't starting to regret all of his recent life changing decisions. What he was doing with me went against everything he'd ever known.

"I was thinking about us," he said as he turned to look down at me.

"Oh," I said and swallowed hard. There was a pit deep in my stomach I couldn't ignore if I tried. I braced myself for what was going to come next. "I know, it's just too weird, too complicated between us to ever work," I started, thinking it would make the break easier if I initiated it before he had the chance. There were too many things different about us. We were from two totally different worlds. His world was bright and full of sunshine mine was dark and full of shadows.

"What?" he asked me, sounding confused. His eyes squinted and his brow furrowed even more than before. "Do you think I was standing here thinking that we weren't going to stay together? No darlin', I was standing here thinking that everything was going to work out fine. I happen to have a plan," he said smugly with a grin. He leaned down and kissed me on the

forehead before going back to the driver's seat of the SUV. "You coming?" he asked back to me with a smile before getting into his seat.

"Yeah," I said back nodding as I closed the back of the truck and hopped back into the passenger seat. "So do I get to hear about this big plan?" I asked him as I buckled my seatbelt.

"As soon as I find us a hotel and get us checked in. We're around twenty minutes away from New Orleans. So have you ever been to the French Quarter?" he asked me as he pulled away, back onto the highway.

## *Chapter Nineteen*

We pulled up in front of The Chateau Dupre Hotel on Bourbon Street and Hunter parked the SUV. While we got out of the car and went inside a bellman took our bags out of the back seat. I could feel Hunter was tense when we checked in. He kept his arm protectively around me after we got our room key and we went up to our room with the bellman that brought our bags. As he tipped the bellman, I walked across our room and opened a door that led to a small balcony that overlooked Bourbon Street. People were walking up and down the neon lit street and there was the sound of jazz music floating in the air. As I leaned against the railing, taking it all in, Hunter came up behind me and wrapped his arms around me. Without even thinking, I rubbed my ass against him, feeling his arousal behind me automatically turning me on.

He moved his hands up my body cupping my breasts in both his hands. "I want you so much," he murmured in my ear then turned me around leading me to the bed in our room. He peeled off my sweater and unhooked my bra letting my clothes fall in a pile on the floor. First, he brushed back my hair off my shoulders then leaned down and started to kiss my breasts. I grabbed his head and sighed reveling in the feel of his mouth on my skin. He sucked one of my erect nipples, then let his tongue circle it before his mouth moved to my other breast. As he sucked my breast, I felt him unzipping my pants so he could slide his hand past my panties. He slid a finger inside of me and I moaned. He had the ability to make me swoon. He moved his finger in and out of me slowly, deliberately taking his time while making me crazy. When he took his hand from me, I was silent as he finished undressing me.

Hunter sat on the bed and removed his shoes and socks, then stood up and unzipped his pants.

"Let me," I said, breaking my silence. I pulled down his jeans and briefs and he stepped out of them for me. He pulled off his shirt so he was naked before me. My eyes danced over his body, my own excitement was difficult to contain. I actually throbbed in anticipation of the two

of us being together again. I moved closer to him and placed an open hand on his pectoral over his beating heart.

“I don’t ever want to be apart from you again,” he said as he took my hand and led me onto the bed with him.

I lay down next to him on my back, stretching out beside him. He climbed over me and I parted my legs so he could settle between them. He looked down at me, his eyes so serious I was scared with what could be on his mind, making him appear so grave.

“What is it? You’re scaring me.” I had no idea what was happening between us but there was definitely something else happening besides sex. I could feel a vibe from him that was electric.

“Nothing bad... I’m thinking of how serious I was when I said I never want to be apart again. I really mean it Janice.”

Hunter leaned down and gently kissed my lips. The kiss reverberated through my entire body, snaking through me like a long fuse that finally ignited deep in my core. With one kiss, he had set me ablaze. I raised my hips and rubbed myself against him longing to feel him deep inside of me again. His kisses became harder and his tongue brushed across my partially closed lips. I was concerned with hurting his swollen lips, but he didn’t seem to care. I opened my mouth to him so our tongues could rub and caress each other. I could feel him gather up fistfuls of my hair that he pulled playfully.

While we kissed, I felt something strange and I pulled back away from him and stood up. “Hold on a sec,” I said then ran my tongue over my teeth. Damn, my incisors had come down again.

“What’s the matter?” Is it time for you to get more blood?” he asked me.

It shouldn’t have surprised me that he would know what was wrong; he knew more about vampires than some vampires knew about themselves. I nodded to answer him.

“Good, I’m glad it’s time.”

“Good?” I asked back. I didn’t understand how my craving to drink his blood was a positive thing. “How is my wanting to drink your blood a good thing?”

“You feeding is part of my plan,” he told me. “Come on,” he said as reached out his hand and led me back to the bed.

I went to him reluctantly, not sure what his plan was. Something told me I wasn't going to like it. I stood in front of him.

He sat on the bed and took hold of his rock hard erection in one hand. I could see the tip glistening where the pre-cum had escaped him. "Janice I want you so badly. Look at this," he told me, nodding down towards his cock.

As I stood there, watching him stroke himself, my pussy clenched and I could feel wetness trickle down the inside of my thighs. I wanted him with an ache that was as intense as the hunger in my belly. I moved closer to him and straddled his legs as I placed my hands on his shoulders. As I lowered myself down onto his lap, he guided his cock to my glistening swollen sex. As I felt him enter me, I held my breath until I'd completely lowered myself onto him. He filled me completely. Hunter put his hands on my waist and leaned in to kiss my neck.

"God, you feel so fucking incredible," he murmured between kisses. I tilted my head back exposing my neck to him. After a few moments of raining hot kisses on me, he grabbed a fistful of my hair pulling my head back. "Kiss me," he commanded me.

"Hunter," I started to say, but then the look he gave told me it was pointless to argue with him. I leaned in towards him and he let go of my hair. As my lips moved in closer to his I pushed myself down further on him, grinding myself against him.

"Yeah," he breathed the moment before our lips met. His arms moved around me hugging me close to him so my breasts pressed up against his chest. As we kissed he brushed his tongue against my lips, but this time I didn't open my mouth to him. "Open your mouth for me," he whispered.

"I can't, my teeth are down," I told him. Being this close to him was starting to affect me. The sound of his blood was rushing in my ears, my desire to taste him again fierce. My fingernails started to dig into his shoulders. I felt tears start to sting my eyes again as I fought my body's urge to feed.

"Janice, please," he said and gave me a look that almost broke my heart in two. He leaned in to kiss me again and I opened my mouth for him as he had asked me. Our tongues brushed, and I felt one of my teeth scrape his tongue. I immediately pulled back from him. My fingers went to his lips to touch them.

"I'm so sorry," I apologized. "It's my teeth," I tried to explain. "You must think I look like a monster with them this way."

Hunter cupped my face with his hands. “No, you’re beautiful Janice. I could never think of you as a monster, you’re the love of my life. I want to be with you forever so this time when you feed from me I don’t want you to stop.”

“What?” What he was saying to me was absolutely insane.

“It’s okay because it’s part of my plan,” he explained.

“My not stopping is part of your plan? That’s a crazy fucking plan. Why would you want me to change you?” I asked.

“Because I meant it when I told you I wanted to be with you forever.” He ran his hands up my sides as his hips moved to push his cock even further inside of me. He was distracting me on purpose, as I was trying to think.

“You really want me to change you?” I asked in disbelief. He was telling me he wanted me to change him into the very thing he had stalked and killed most of his life.

“Yes I really want you to change me. I don’t want you to stay the same while I get old and end up dying. I want to spend eternity with you. And I want to be the one you rely on for feeding, like how you did with Jake. Let me into your world. Make me like you and we’ll have forever,” he said.

I didn’t know what to say back to him. His words to me were so incredibly beautiful. I wanted him with all my heart and now he was offering himself to me.

“You’re certain you want to do this?” I asked him. I put my hands on his chest, running them over his nipples, down his abs. He would look this way forever and never grow old or get sick and die. “Forever with me is a long time, Hunter. It might be too long for you.”

Hunter leaned forward and kissed me softly on the lips. His mouth moved to my cheek, where he placed another kiss, then to my ear. “Impossible. Forever with you is all I want.”

I closed my eyes and let his words sink in, already knowing what I was going to do. I was going to give him what he wanted because it was exactly what I wanted too. All I wanted was forever with him.

“Kiss me again, Hunter,” I whispered with a quivering voice.

He moved and kissed me again, more passionately than his last kiss. I kissed him back as I moved my hands from his chest to around his neck. I started moving my body up and down riding his cock that was deep inside of me. My mouth trailed to his neck and my tongue licked at his delicious skin. The roar of his blood in his veins was completely overpowering, my hunger

now no longer able to be controlled. I kissed his neck once before I sank my teeth into his flesh. As I tasted his blood flow into my mouth, he groaned.

It was intoxicating drinking from him with his erection still moving within me. My senses were overwhelmed and I sucked harder from his neck as I rode his cock even harder at the same time. As it rubbed against my swollen clit I knew the orgasm I was going to experience was like nothing I'd ever felt before. I drank and drank from him and he slowly moved to lie on his back on the bed. I knew I had consumed a large amount of his blood and he was starting to feel the effects of blood loss.

"God that feels..." he trailed off, "so good," he breathed. "Fuck," he said as his hips moved with mine and his arms wrapped around me tightly.

I felt myself reaching my climax, and when he swore again, I knew that he was going to come, too. We both came at the exact same time, him gasping and shuddering hard under me. I continued drinking from him as my own climax rolled over me. I felt his arms loosen their hold on me and I realized he was unconscious. I continued drinking from him until the moment his heart stopped beating.

Sitting up I looked at him. His eyes were closed and he appeared completely peaceful. I never dreamed I would ever have such an amazing man in my life. I would never let him regret the dark path he had chosen to take with me. I knew I would love him for all time.

I eased myself off him and pulled at the comforter to cover his naked body. After he was covered, I went to the bathroom to take a much-needed shower. If his turning was anything like mine was, I knew I'd have some time to wait before he woke again.

## *Chapter Twenty*

Two days later, I was standing on the balcony of our hotel room when I heard Hunter call my name. I turned and went back inside, happy that he was finally waking up. The days had dragged by as I stood watch over him, waiting for him to awaken. He was sitting at the foot of the bed and cautiously touching where I had bitten him. There were two raised, red marks on his neck. I sat on the bed next to him wearing a fuzzy white robe that I had found in the hotel bathroom.

“How do you feel?” I asked him. I remembered how sick I had felt when I changed. “Does the bite hurt a lot?”

“It hurts a little,” he admitted to me. “I feel a little lightheaded too, kind of like hung over.”

“Yeah, that’s all normal. I felt the same thing when I changed. You were out for two days just like me too,” I explained to him.

“I’ve been laying here for two days?” he asked me with disbelief. “Really?”

“Yep,” I said, “I’ve watched way too much cable television because of you,” I joked. “So how do you feel? I never changed anyone before so I only know what I felt and what Jake told me,” I explained.

“I don’t know...” Hunter tailed off. “I feel like I have a pain in stomach, but at the same time I feel kind of hungry. Did you feel like that too?”

“When I changed the pain was terrible, like I had a knife in my stomach. The more time passed the worse it got. And the hunger got unbearable too.”

“Yeah, I can feel it getting worse,” he agreed with me. “And there’s something else too,” he said, looking a little embarrassed. It was a look I rarely saw on his face, and I already knew what he was feeling.

I stood up from where I had been sitting next to him on the bed and untied my robe. “I felt what you’re feeling after the first time I fed,” I said as I let the white terry cloth robe fall to

the floor. He looked at me with a ravenous passion that heated me from the inside out. Yes, I knew exactly what he wanted from me... warm blood and hot sex. I was ready and willing to give him exactly what he wanted.

“I need you now,” he murmured to me as he reached out his hand to me.

I took his hand and knelt in front of him on the bed. He moved so he was kneeling as well and our bodies pressed against each other. When I looked at him, I saw that he was no longer injured. His bruises and swollen eye were back to normal. He was perfect and would stay perfect forever.

“I don’t know what I’m supposed to do next. Help me,” he said quietly. His erection was pressing hard against me and when he spoke, I saw his incisors had lowered.

“I’ll tell you what to do baby,” I told him. “First kiss me,” I instructed as I stared into his eyes. I didn’t have to tell him twice.

Hunter leaned in and kissed me softly on the lips. We kissed a few more times before I told him to kiss my neck. As his lips moved down my throat I reached down to touch his ever-hardening erection. I stroked him and rubbed him against my mound. He licked and nibbled at my neck groaning.

“God I want you,” Hunter gasped. “I want all of you. I can’t stand it much longer,” he said as his teeth scraped my throat.

I let go of his hardened shaft and moved to lie down. “Come here,” I said to him with open arms.

Hunter climbed over me and I opened my legs wider for him. “Make love to me Hunter,” I instructed him. His mouth found one of my breasts, his tongue circling the erect pink nipple. He moved over me, positioning his body over mine then guided his erection to my waiting sex. As he slowly slid inside of me, he laid himself over me. We were touching chests as he held himself over me on his forearms.

I lifted my hips up to meet his, causing him to moan. He started to slide in and out of me, each stroke better than the one before. Hunter started to kiss me again as we made love. I reached up to touch his hair and caress his neck. I nudged his face away from my lips towards my throat. I turned my face so he could kiss the entire length of my neck.

“I can hear your blood... I can smell it,” he told me. His cock was still moving in and out of me as he spoke.

“Drink from me Hunter,” I instructed him.

“I don’t want to hurt you,” he said with heated breath against my neck.

“It won’t hurt me and you need my blood,” I explained. The hunger in his belly must have been excruciating by now. His self-control was impressive to me. “Just do what feels natural,” I told him.

Hunter started kissing my neck, licking my skin. He paused for a moment before I felt his incisors pierce through my skin. As my blood started flowing into his mouth, I gasped and Hunter groaned.

I reached around and grabbed his ass pulling him closer to me. Making love while he drank from me was unbelievable. He was sucking on my neck when my first orgasm rolled over me. My pussy clenched around him as I came. I held my breath overwhelmed with the intensity of the orgasm. He moaned into my throat as I felt him tense and I knew he was coming inside of me.

He continued to drink from me and I started to feel a little light headed from all of the blood he had taken. Finally, he pulled away from my neck and looked down at me. My blood was fresh on his lips making them bright red. He slid himself out of me but stayed where he was over me.

“Babe, are you okay? I didn’t hurt you, did I?” he asked me with concern in his voice. “Did I take too much? I didn’t mean to if I did. That was so amazing, the sex and the blood, it was incredible” he tried to explain to me. “I love you Janice.”

I reached up and touched his face while smiling at him. “I know. I love you too.”

“Will it always be like that? That intense?”

“If you make love while feeding, yeah it’s like that,” I told him. I looked at him with my blood still on his lips and I felt like I was in a dream. I was concerned that he’d think about his new life and hate me for changing him. “I hope you don’t ever end up regretting what we’ve done.”

“Never,” he told me with a firm resolve in his voice. “All I ever want is you,” he said then leaned down to kiss my lips again. “I’m afraid you’re stuck with me forever.”

Suddenly I thought of something.

“You don’t feel sick at all, like nauseous? Do you?” I asked him.

“No, I feel great, why?” he questioned back to me.

“Oh, no reason, forget it,” I replied with relief. I snuggled closer to Hunter thinking that I was the luckiest vampire in the world.

And I was.

## ***About the Author***

Annmarie Ortega is a lifelong resident of Chicago. She is a member of the Romance Writers of America and the RWA Chicago North Chapter. Annmarie is known to have a weakness for sizzling hot romance and heroes with great abs. Her work is available in both e book and print. You can visit her MySpace page at [www.myspace.com/annmarieortega](http://www.myspace.com/annmarieortega). Her blog can be viewed at [www.annmarieauthor.blogspot.com](http://www.annmarieauthor.blogspot.com)

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Will Dante and Angelina be successful in their quest? Or will the blood spilled be their own?

***Blood Red Rose***

With the threat of danger high, Eli's world is on the verge of being destroyed. The *Elixir of Life* is needed by the Others now more than ever. Their assassin has Eli in his sights. Eli is ready for this threat, but he finds an unexpected, yet intriguing distraction.

Rose is a beautiful female vampire on the run and doesn't realize how much she will need Eli. Yet, in the end, will she need to save him?

*Also Available from*  
***Resplendence Publishing***

***Nuit Aux Trois* by Melinda Barron**

Quinn's two roommates, lovers Fletcher Covair and Devlin St. Giles, have the perfect idea: Quinn will accompany them on a Halloween ghost hunt at a haunted plantation. Quinn agrees, knowing there's no such thing as ghosts and thinking the time away will give her time to assess her future job prospects, and if nothing else, a chance to relax.

But the plantation's resident ghost, Alison, has other ideas. She wants help in righting a long-time wrong, and it seems that the ghost has chosen Quinn, Dev, and Fletch to assist her. While Quinn's mind is reeling from the knowledge that there are really ghosts, she comes to another shocking realization: Dev and Fletch have more on their minds than ghost hunting, and Alison isn't the only restless spirit who wants to make contact.

***The Resurrection of Josephine* by Melinda Barron**

Martin Vandreen avoids graveside funerals at all costs—for good reason. As a spiritual medium with the ability to communicate with the dead, cemeteries tend to be filled with restless souls that want to chat with him. But when Martin makes an exception and attends the burial ceremony of his dear friend's departed father, he encounters a powerful entity that nearly kills him.

Rumer Rousseau and her lover Noah Hopper will do anything to stop the resurrection of Josephine, including forcibly enlisting the help of Martin. Martin reluctantly agrees to help find a way to destroy Josephine before the evil witch gains enough power to overturn the spell binding her spirit to her crypt, thus allowing her to return to the world of flesh and blood.

Suddenly, Martin's orderly, somewhat private lifestyle is turned upside down. But within the arms of Rumer and Noah, he's finds that he no longer desires the solitude he once treasured, and longs to have a relationship that can stand the test of time. But will the bond they forged together be strong enough to survive the resurrection of Josephine?

***Beyond Death* by Jinger Jackson**

Allana Simpson is cursed. Love only brings death to everyone around her. She longs for a normal life with one man that she can give her heart to without killing him.

Tom Haugan never believed in curses until he met Allana. She opens up a world for him that he never knew existed. A world he never wished to learn about.

Tom wants to protect Allana, to heal her heart and take away her pain. The closer he gets, the more “accidents” occur. He’s not willing to give up on what they could have. Allana’s longing for Tom and the dream of a future filled with happiness weakens her resolve to remain alone. She trusts him and decides to let him in. Now death stalks them both...

### ***Rules of Darkness* by Tia Fanning**

They tell me that I am special, that my ability to heal is a “gift” that should be treasured and appreciated. As far as I’m concerned, I’m not gifted...I’m cursed. Nothing in this life is free, not even gifts. There is always a price to be paid somewhere, somehow.

My healing gift came with twelve Rules of Darkness, rules that I must follow at all times, until the day I die. The rules are ingrained in who I am. They dictate how I live my life when I am awake, and they haunt me when I’m asleep. *Don’t look into a graveyard, Katia. Don’t touch the dead, Katia. Never seek out the lost, Katia...* It’s enough to drive a person mad.

And perhaps that’s where I find myself now. A victim of a disease I can cure in others, but not in myself. It’s madness to break the rules, and yet, I don’t care. I’m tired of living my life this way. I’m tired of the rules. I won’t do it anymore, and if that means I suffer the consequences, then so be it.

### ***Their Lady Liberty* by Ann Cory**

There’s nothing Liberty likes better than to spend her time with the two men who ignite her body and show her pleasures like no others. She belongs to them both, and doesn’t want it any other way.

Brandon and Neil can focus on little else but thoughts of Liberty’s hot body and carefree ways, both always dreaming of the next time they’ll be together. As Brandon and Neil see it, there are worse things to be than at the mercy of a sex goddess.

Behind the steamed up windows of Brandon’s van, the threesome meet up for an afternoon rendezvous. Here they can love freely, and live out their most decadent fantasies with... *Their Lady Liberty*.

### ***Breakfast at Tiffany’s* by Ann Cory**

*Cool smoothies and hot sex...*

Tiffany has dreamed of opening her very own smoothie bar. Creating fun and tasty concoctions is her specialty. But first she needs to sell her idea, and that will require bringing samples of her

best recipes. She calls on Marcus and Shane, her hot and handsome best friends, to help her decide which ones to choose.

Marcus and Shane have worshipped Tiffany for years and would do anything in the world for her, even share her if her heart so desires. In support of her opening her own smoothie bar, they agree to be her guinea pigs. However, a morning of taste testing quickly becomes more about pleasure than business.

## **Red Garters, Snow and Mistletoe Tales Available at Resplendence Publishing**

### ***Unwrap Me, I'm Yours* by Demi Alex**

Hope Verdetti lies to her mother about having a phenomenal fiancé who surprises her on a trip to Vegas. Now her family expects him to come home with her for the holidays. She needs a man that fits the bill—and fast!

After seven interviews with hired, handsome applicants in three days, she finds her solution in the neighborhood coffee shop. Sexy and irresistible Jon Edwards volunteers for the task, having an agenda of his own.

With their holiday agreement set, Jon turns up the heat and gives Hope the present of her life...himself.

### ***Red Ribbons and Blue Balls* by Tia Fanning**

After Nicolas punishes her for being naughty, the usually nice but now sexually-frustrated Winter arrives at their secluded mountain cabin bearing gifts—special gifts that will ensure his submission and her revenge.

With only seven days left until Christmas, Nicolas expects to spend the night decorating the house for the approaching holiday, but Winter has other plans...

Christmas might be coming, but if Winter gets her way, Nicolas won't be.

### ***Nice and Naughty* by Mia Jae**

Cassie Franklin has to prove herself. After all, she's the first female head of the English department at the university. But that doesn't mean she has to prove herself sexually to Eric Marsh, a fellow professor in the English department, does it?

Then there is Ryan. Strong and sexy, with hands that can ease away the tension of most any job, he almost makes her forget her risky escapades with Eric.

Until Cassie realizes that Ryan and Eric have a closer connection than she ever could have imagined, and they have very specific plans for her...

## ***Eight Erotic Nights* by Catrina Calloway**

The holiday season is a time for joy, but Laney Taylor couldn't be more depressed. She's selling the last piece of her grandmother's exquisite antique china to feed the hordes of 'new' homeless living in their cars in an abandoned parking lot on the outskirts of town. But on the way to the shop, an accident lands her in the hospital—and into the arms of the two hot, hunky Samaritans who saved her life.

Josh Goldman and Zach Brenner share a successful construction business, and a secret longing. They can't believe their good fortune when they save Laney Taylor from a freezing to death. Both men have desired Laney since high school, and made a pact that if they ever had the chance to have a relationship with the sexy, full-figured woman of their dreams, they wouldn't mind sharing.

When a winter storm gives Josh and Zach an opportunity to share the pleasures of the 'festival of lights' with Laney, and a chance to fulfill their long-held erotic fantasies, they can hardly believe the good fortune the Hanukkah holiday has brought them. While fate and circumstance may require their eventual separation, all three are determined that they will not waste a moment of their...

*Eight Erotic Nights.*

## *Handcuffs and Lace*

### **Resplendence Publishing's Erotic Romance Line of Law Enforcement Themed Stories**

#### ***Ticket Me More* by Tia Fanning**

Hailed by the bridal flower world as an artistic genius, Meli works long nights making bouquets for women lucky enough to find love, while she herself lives a life of solitude. She yearns to share her heart and body with someone other than Bob, her *Battery Operated Boyfriend*, but acute shyness keeps her from engaging the “living” world.

However, Meli’s quiet and predictable existence takes an unexpected turn when she is pulled over and ticketed by the most gorgeous cop she has ever encountered—Officer Michael Johnson. Though he doesn’t seem to notice her as anything more than a traffic violation, Meli makes plans to overcome her timid nature and seize the police officer’s attention...using any speed necessary.

#### ***Cuff Me Lacy* by Demi Alex**

Three months is way too long to wait for some simple, low-down, straight forward sex. It’s not like Officer Chrissie Hansen is asking for prince charming to offer her the love of a lifetime. All she wants is a good orgasm that she doesn’t have to work for alone.

At least with “The Bull” she knows what to expect. But when Patrick MacClick returns to her life and tempts her with new options, she discovers that lace can imprison a heart better than handcuffs can.

#### ***Search Me Baby, One More Time* by Melinda Barron**

Wren Thornberry’s life isn’t going according to plan. She let her father talk her out of marrying Bryan Stockard, the man she loves, and moved halfway around the world. Now she’s back home in Texas, babysitting her grandmother while grandma and her boy-toy work through their list of sexual exploits, making themselves the talk of the town.

But what Wren doesn’t know is that things in her hometown are about to heat up even more, and it will have nothing to do with her grandmother. It seems that Bryan Stockard is still around, he wants to get back into Wren’s life—by any means necessary, and now he has just the tools to do it: A police uniform, handcuffs, and the authority to make Wren *assume the position*.

### ***What the Cuff?* By Celia Kyle**

God really should have reconsidered making werewolves. That, or Lyssa needed to get better taste in men and stay away from those with wandering eyes—and other things. Drunk as a wolf, she stumbles to her best friend's house to sleep off her whiskey induced haze and wakes to... *cuffs?*

Caleb sees his chance and takes it. His buddies on the force ribbed him but good for buying silver plated cuffs. But with a werewolf in his bed, the woman he's yearned for since they were teens, he wasn't taking any chances. Lyssa was his. She just didn't know it yet.

### ***Going Commando* by Catherine Chernow**

Bounty hunter Shyra Lawrence listens to her favorite radio station one morning where the DJ's are discussing "going commando" —*a.k.a* wearing no undies. Captivated by their conversation, she decides to shed her panties in favor of the freedom that wearing no underwear brings.

Enthusiastic, Shyra sends an email to her best friend, Donna, detailing the delights of panty-freedom, but unbeknownst to Shyra, she's hit the send key...to the wrong email addy!

When Derek Grayson opens his emails that morning, he discovers that his #1 employee and top bounty hunter, Shyra Lawrence, has sent him an erotic, enticing message about going commando. Derek has always been polite, professional, and so damned attracted to Shyra that it's almost painful. Working day in and day out with voluptuous woman has sent Derek's hormones into overdrive on more than one occasion.

Now, Shyra's shed her panties and Derek's got all he can do to contain his lust when she announces that she's... GOING COMMANDO.

### ***Handcuffs and Lies* by Bronwyn Green**

Sometimes promises to friends are the hardest to keep. Undercover police officer, Michael Tanner, promised his dying partner that he'd take care of the man's little sister. Trouble is, after her brother's death, Doctor Tori Spinelli wants nothing to do with Michael—or any other cop for that matter.

Tori has always fought against overprotective men and deception. Forced into protective custody with Michael, she's now faced with both in the same package. Despite their differences, Tori falls in love with him, but how can she trust a man who lies for a living?

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