



Courting Calvin

Amber Kell

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Prologue

“So you know what you have to do.” The deep voice taunted from the shadows.

Calvin Sanders stood in the middle of the empty warehouse. Smells of mold and excrement permeated the air while he looked at a picture of a stunning blond man who glowed like trapped sunlight.

How had his life come to this?

“I capture him and bring him to you.” He looked towards the shadows squinting to make out the figure cloaked in darkness. “And what do you do to him?”

“None of your business.” The stranger growled. “He killed my brother. Bring him to me and I’ll see that your sister won’t be the next person to die.”

“She’ll be returned safely?” Calvin said lifting his other hand to once again look at the instant picture of his sister tied up, her eyes wide with terror. In front of her was a newspaper, held so he could see the date. Yesterday. His poor sister had been at the mercy of psychotics, since yesterday.

“She’ll be released.”

Calvin didn’t trust the man who wouldn’t tell him his name or show his face, but what choice did he have? His sweet sister had just turned twenty, who knew what the demented bastards would do to her. He had a hard time believing this innocent looking man killed anyone, but stranger things happened. And whether Anthony killed anyone or not didn’t matter in the scheme of things because he needed to get his sister back.

“She’s all right?”

“You’ll have to hope so won’t you?” Was the evil reply.

“I want to talk to her before I do this.”

“You’re under the false illusion that you have options Mr. Sanders. You only have two choices here. You can do as I say and save your sister or you can choose not to and I can have her body delivered to you in lots of little bloody pieces.”

Calvin closed his eyes as he sold his soul to the shadowy devil who had the fate of Calvin’s sister in his power. “I’ll do it.”

“I just knew we’d come to an agreement.” The man said, his rich with satisfaction. “Don’t take too long to capture him. I don’t have much patience and I can’t guarantee your sister’s safely longer than a week.”

Calvin nodded, his stomach churning as he fled the warehouse to the sound of laughter.

Chapter One

Alesandro leaned over and spoke into the beautiful blond's ear. "Do you think he's single?"

"Maybe. He's not wearing a ring and he did stare at me when we were introduced."

Alesandro snorted. "That just means he has vision."

A low tinkling laugh was his companion's response. Alesandro smiled. He liked making Anthony laugh. Over the past year of building the par-only hotel they had become good friends. Alesandro admired Anthony a great deal; he was a sweet man, the mate of the local pack alpha and a brilliant architect. The meeting tonight was to meet with the woodworker on the design for the vampire suites.

The two of them made a deal where Alesandro, the master vampire of a small group, would provide consultation in exchange for the occasional use of one of the rooms. Vampires were extremely territorial and this would make a good conciliatory gesture when an important vamp came into town that he didn't want to house at the manor.

Watching the luscious man lean over to get a good measurement he had to admit there was more than one benefit to this arrangement. He had something he'd like the handsome woodworker to measure...with his ass.

"Stop drooling, you're going to make the poor boy nervous. Not to mention he might slip in the wet spot." Anthony said with a teasing smile.

"The poor boy's name is Calvin." The carpenter said turning around and looking at the pair. "And the day I mind being stared at by two gorgeous men is the day they dig me a hole and throw me in it."

He flashed a smile showing a pair of deep dimples, his skin had an olive cast that spoke of some Spanish heritage somewhere in his family tree.

Warm brown eyes twinkling with amusement, watched them both as if he wasn't quite sure what to make of the pair of men before him.

Yummm. Alesandro wanted a bite of him and not in a need blood kind of way but more of a 'claiming him as mine' chomp.

"I guess we're not strong on subtlety." Anthony said. "By the way thanks for coming after hours. My friend here doesn't do well in the sunlight."

“Wow, you really aren’t subtle.” Alesandro said shaking his head. “My brazen friend has hung out with too many werewolves lately. But that does beg the question as to whether you’d mind dating a vampire.”

Calvin laughed. “I can tell you’re the subtle one.”

“Yeah, I just dazzle them with my smile.” Anthony said flashing his pearly whites.

Both men stood still a moment admiring the scenery.

“That would work.” The carpenter said, “but I was informed when I started this job by no less than three different people that if I did more than shake your hand someone would be by to snap my neck like a toothpick.”

Anthony rolled his eyes. “That sounds like my mate. I’m surprised it didn’t scare you off the assignment.”

“Nah, in this economy I need the job.”

“If you do good work I’ll have other jobs for you. This is just the first of many projects I have in mind. I wanted special touches for my first paranormals only hotel. But I have a lot of other places where I could use a good woodworker and you came highly recommended.”

The vampire cleared his throat. “I don’t suppose Silver is aware of your *other* projects?” He said without much hope. Anthony took great joy in keeping his big, bad mate on his toes.

“Now what fun would that be.” Anthony asked with a laugh batting his long eyelashes. “I wouldn’t want my mate to become bored.”

Cal laughed again, a sound Alesandro could get used to. It wasn’t the tinkling magic of Anthony’s laughter but it had a true happy sound that made the vampire warm inside.

Alesandro couldn’t help his eyes wandering up and down the young, hot carpenter. His body was in complete agreement about the beauty of the view. There wasn’t anything about the younger man that didn’t appeal from his strong calloused fingers to his wide shoulders and the muscled physique that came from a man used to hard work. Throw in the pretty dark hair and soulful brown eyes and the entire package was irresistible.

Yumm.

Really he was too old to drool over a young stud it was just difficult to convince his other body parts. His cock in particular was anxious for an introduction.

A wolf howl sounded in the room startling him from his thoughts.

Anthony gave a sheepish smile and lifted the tiny cell phone out of the holster on his hip.

“Hello sugarlips.” He said into the receiver.

Alesandro snorted. The various pet names the sleek blond gave his huge, buff werewolf mate were a source of constant amusement to everyone who knew the pair. But it was the love in Silver’s eyes when he looked at Anthony that kept the mocking to a minimum. It was hard to taunt someone who didn’t give a crap. Common knowledge around the para community was that Silver would do anything for his beautiful mate as long as Anthony’s safety wasn’t an issue.

A veritable fleet of bodyguards surrounded the man at all times keeping him safe from cranky hotel guests and vicious paper cuts. Those were the only dangers Alesandro ever saw attacking the stunning blond.

“Al, I’ve got to get home to Silver he’s having a minor meltdown about the time. Do you think you can show Calvin the rest of the things we discussed, especially the bar?”

The vampire could smell the arousal pulsing through Anthony after talking to his mate. His fangs slid down a fraction at the alluring scent. With force of will he pulled his teeth back into his gums before answering. Ruining the tentative relationship between his vampire group and the wolves and endangering his own life weren’t in his plans for the evening.

“Absolutely, I’d be happy to.” Images of all the things he could show the young carpenter flashed through his brain like technicolor porno.”

“Thanks, you’re a dear.” Anthony placed a soft kiss on his cheek and dashed out the door with a breezy wave goodbye to Calvin. Two weres detached themselves from the wall and followed him out.

“Does he always have bodyguards?” Calvin asked coming up to Alesandro’s side as they watched Anthony leave together. That was one man who was a good view coming and going.

He nodded. “As you learned by your death threats, Silver is very protective. It’s not uncommon for one were pack to kidnap important members from another pack to get territory concessions.” He tilted his head towards Anthony’s exit. “And it isn’t exactly a secret that Silver would do anything for his mate. He’s the strongest wolf in North America and that little blond is his biggest weakness.”

Calvin gave him a strange look that Alesandro couldn't interpret.

Alone with the vamp, Cal's nerves trembled. He didn't mind Anthony watching him because he could feel it was admiring not offensive but the vampire looked at him like he was the man's next lunch.

With a vampire that was a real possibility.

"Relax handsome. I'm not going to attack you." Alesandro's voice was smoky, like good jazz. It made Cal want to wrap himself in the other man's essence. Only the knowledge that he was soon to betray the man's friend kept him from jumping the handsome vamp.

Calvin snuck another look at Alesandro and felt his body go hard all over. Fuck, he could almost come from the look in those gorgeous green eyes alone. Alesandro had the whole sexy vampire thing going with short black hair lying shiny and smooth across his well-shaped head, large mesmerizing green eyes and a tall, slim body that made everything in Calvin ache.

But it was the power pouring from the other man that engulfed the carpenter with pulsing desire, making him want to slam the vampire against the wall and grind against Alesandro until they both came. Images of different sexual positions that could be performed in an enclosed area kept him hard and aching as he worked on designs in his head and calculated time for his projects.

He hid his erection by turning his back to the other man and sketching rough estimates on his clipboard paper. He wondered briefly if vampires could really read minds.

A low chuckle drew his attention back to Alesandro.

"Is there something you're trying to hide from me?" The vampire pinned him with a scorching look that made Calvin's dick harder even as his heart twisted with guilt.

He looked back down at his work hiding his relief. If the vampire couldn't read his mind then he didn't know he was formulating a plan to grab the blond from his cadre of bodyguards.

"I'm sure there's all kinds of things I'm trying to hide from you." He confessed. "Right now it's the condition of my cock."

Alesandro laughed softly as Calvin leaned over to take a final measurement. If he wiggled a little more than necessary, neither of them

mentioned it. But the heat flaring in Alessandro's eyes when he glanced back should've set off the newly installed smoke detectors.

"I can get the rest of these started tomorrow and finished by the end of next week, now that I know what Anthony is looking for. I'll build up the bed frames so that the vampire beds will fully recess below and lock from the inside. I'll also adjust them to fit a feather top mattress so the vampires will have comfort as well as safety. Anyone looking in the room will only see an empty raised bed unless of course they have a human companion in which case the human can sleep in the upper bed without crushing the vampire below. The bed skirt will hide the lower compartment so it won't be in view and Anthony mentioned only security cleared maids will have access to make up the beds.

The custom fireplace for the lobby will take a few weeks to carve and the design he wants on the stairway could take up to a month. Do you think he'll have a problem with that?"

Alessandro shrugged. "I'll ask him tomorrow. What about the bar?"

Calvin straightened. "What about the bar?"

"Anthony wants wolves carved along the edge of the bar to represent his lover's pack."

"Cool. I can do wolves. In fact if you get me pictures I can even make it look like members of the pack." Calvin first trained as an artist before picking up his grandfather's woodworking skills. When the old man died two years ago he'd left Calvin alone with his younger sister and a rich woodcarving heritage. Unfortunately it was the only thing they inherited besides a small house and a kick ass set of carving tools. He pushed to the back of his mind that he wouldn't be there to do the project no matter how enticing.

Damn if only he could stay and work with Anthony. The thought of betraying the man who wanted to make a place for all para-kind ate at his gut. But with his sister's life on the line, blood would win over friendship every time. He was pulled out of his grim thoughts by the vampire's next words.

"Come, I'll take you to the bar so you can get an idea of the scope of the work."

Alesandro led the way to the stairs opening the door for Calvin to go through first. Other than a raised brow, the carpenter didn't ask why they weren't using the elevator. Alesandro didn't like enclosed spaces except when he slept otherwise it felt too claustrophobic. Most vampires had the same phobia, a sort of cultural fear. At home he slept in an airy room without windows and a strong padlock. But away from home he felt safer wrapped up tight, less chance for someone to attack.

The pair walked down the stairs without comment. He had no idea what Calvin was thinking but he did admire the view as they made their way up two flights to the main lobby.

They came out to a marbled hall that brought a new level to the word luxurious. Designed to appeal to the supernatural world the entry was a combination of sinful luxury and interesting additions made to appeal to different factions. A water detail started with a lion pouring water out of its mouth at one end of the lobby and flowed down a long shallow waterway to the east wall ending in a shallow pool with a small fountain decorated with mermaids and fairies. Little flashes of gold alerted guests to the tiny fishes swimming within. Elaborate blown glass lights were all set on low as most paras either had enhanced night vision or were sensitive to bright lights. Even the walls had special paint designed to have an extra layer of color to those with spectral vision. Tucked amongst the potted plants and beautiful fixtures were small statues of wolves, lions, bears and other fantastical forms so that all felt welcome.

"He's made something special here." Calvin said coming to stand beside Alesandro. "I'm not even a para and I can feel the care given to this place, the details are incredible." They tilted their heads to look at the vaulted ceiling where the moon glowed softly through specially coated windows. In the full light of day a vampire could walk safely through the lobby.

Alesandro nodded. "It's something special all right and you're here to make sure it's even more special. Come on, the bar is this way."

He led the way through an arched doorway decorated with nymphs.

* * *

Calvin barely had time to admire the bar's beautiful wooden surface before a long firm body was at his back, pressing him against the hard top.

"You are such a beautiful man." Alesandro whispered. Soft lips brushed against the fine hairs on Calvin's ear sending shivers down his spine.

Cal's back arched from the sensation. When did the vampire get so close?

"Um. Thank you." He glanced down at the bar anxious to change the subject, anything to distract the hot man behind him. Although he longed for Alesandro with a gnawing ache in his gut, he couldn't get involved with the man. They had no future and he had enough baggage right now to open a luggage store.

"I don't think I've ever seen such a large piece of wood before."

"I've got some wood for you right here." The vampire said rubbing his hard prick against Cal's ass.

So much for distraction, he tried again. "It looks like one piece."

Sighing Alesandro stepped back. "It was donated by a dying dryad. Her tree was rotting from some sort of disease so she allowed them cut it down and bring the tree here."

"Didn't that kill her?"

Alesandro shook his head then leaned over Calvin's right shoulder and rubbed his cheek against Calvin's. The rough scrape of Alesandro's whiskers sent another shiver through the carpenter. His dick was so hard he could drill a hole through the bar. Who needed tools?

"Anthony felt it would be murder to take the dryad's tree and would give the hotel a bad aura so he hired a witch to transfer her to a healthy young oak before cutting this one down."

Amazing. Touching the wood, Calvin thought he could almost hear the memories of the forest vibrating through his fingertips.

Alesandro's hands gripped Calvin's hips pulling him against the vampire's hard body. One hand released him and stroked the wood next to Calvin's fingers sending images of other things Alesandro could be stroking into his mind. "You can almost feel the love the dryad had for this tree. I think Anthony made the right decision even if it did add to the cost."

“The witch charged him a lot?” He couldn’t imagine anyone taking advantage of the blond, not with his growly protector.

He felt Alesandro shrug. “The witch only asked for a few nights here in exchange. It was the cost of getting the tree cut down, shaped and installed that was so pricey. I think in the end the bar will add a lot to the hotel, I can feel its calming magic as soon as I enter and there are others who will feel it even stronger. It will soothe the troubled hearts of those who come here to take a drink. I think Anthony was thinking of his mate when he installed it. A bit of forest magic in the middle of the city will help calm the wolves.”

“That’s so sweet.” His estimation of Anthony grew in direct proportion to the hole of guilt burrowing in his gut. Anyone who went to that much trouble wasn’t a cold stone killer.

“I can show you sweet.”

Alesandro spun Calvin around and pressed him once more against the bar. The vampire had a good two inches and twenty pounds of muscle on him and the man used it to good effect as he kissed every thought out of the carpenter’s head.

A hard grip holding Calvin’s hips stopped him from rubbing against the glorious man who kissed like a god. Desire building, Calvin whimpered as the vampire held him just far enough away he could feel Alesandro’s hard cock brushing against his but not close enough he could do anything about it.

Calvin tore his mouth free. “Rub me, suck me or fuck me, I don’t care but do *something*.” He growled at the sexy vampire.

“I am doing something.” Alesandro smirked before diving in for another kiss.

Maybe he could break off a piece of the bar and impale the bastard with it. Just when he was considering various methods of killing Alesandro, deft hands unfastened his button fly denims releasing him from his clothing confinement.

“No underwear,” Alesandro said smiling, “so much easier to eat you, my dear.”

“No fangs.” Calvin said as the beautiful vamp sank to his knees in a liquid, graceful movement hotter than any wet dream. Every fantasy he’d

ever had was wrapped up in the gorgeous stud eyeing his cock like the best kind of candy.

“No fangs.” Alesandro agreed. “Besides I don’t know you well enough to bite you.”

Before he could ask how well one needed to know someone before biting the vampire swallowed him whole and sucked every thought in his mind out through his cock.

“God damn, fuck.” Calvin cursed bucking his hips. Once again those damn hands gripped his hips preventing further movement and sending burning heat through his body.

One day soon he was going to be the one pinning down the gorgeous vamp and fucking that fine ass. Calvin screamed, his brain melting as he pulsed out his release.

Alesandro stood licking his lips.

“Give me a moment and I’ll help you out with this.” Calvin said pressing his palm against the hard column bulging Alesandro’s tailored pants.

“Turn around and bend over gorgeous and I’ll take care of it myself.”

Calvin swallowed nervously. “It’s been a while.” He didn’t want to deny the vamp but it had been a few years since he last bottomed.

“Don’t worry, I’ll be gentle.”

For some reason Calvin believed him. He could feel by the man’s gentle touch as he carefully turned Calvin back around that Alesandro had no interest in causing him pain. Divested of the rest of his clothing in gentle easy movements, Calvin gave a nervous glance at the doorway.

“No one will come in, I’ve ensured our privacy.” Alesandro’s low soothing voice calmed his fears while the man’s presence enflamed his desire.

“Lean over beautiful.” The vampire’s hands pushed him gently over the bar. Calvin gave in to the careful pressure by leaning over and raising his ass in presentation.

A loud groan sounded behind him.

“Come and get me stud.” Calvin teased looking over his shoulder.

“Oh, don’t worry I will.” The look in the vampire’s gaze said that Calvin was everything he wanted in the world and aimed to have.

Turning back around, Calvin tilted his hips further to entice his lover.

Alesandro almost swallowed his tongue. It took all of his concentration to keep the deterrent spell going on the bar entrance as he admired the fine ass before him.

In his centuries of life Alesandro had had his share of sexual encounters but this was the first time he felt a compulsion to claim someone as his own. Despite his promise not to bite his lover Alesandro was having a difficult time keeping his word.

His fangs dropped despite his best efforts to keep them recessed in his gums. He didn't want to fuck Calvin, he needed to. More than food, more than water, more than blood, he needed to be inside the stunning carpenter who made works of beauty with his hands and looked at him like he was one of the wonders of the world. Something about brown soulful eyes filled with light and desire, spun Alesandro's world on its axis and like a divining rod to water, his cock led the way to the tight ass presented before him.

Pulling a packet of lube and a condom out of his pocket, he quickly ripped off his clothing not caring if he destroyed his expensive suit in the process.

Nothing was keeping him from Calvin.

Tearing the lube open he slathered it liberally on the fingers of his left hand and used the remaining lube on his prick. He took the time to loosen up his lover with one finger, then two, eventually three. Despite the shaking of his own body he wouldn't rush this moment for anything in the world.

Once he was satisfied Calvin was loose enough and he could no longer resist the soft whimpering, Alesandro lined himself up and pressed inside.

They both moaned at the contact.

So good. So fine. So hot and silky.

For a moment, Alesandro just stayed still, sunk to the hilt inside his lover knowing he would never have this again. Never have a first time with the gorgeous man beneath him.

"If you don't move I am going to beat you to death with the first thing I can find." Calvin said in a strained voice.

Chuckling Alesandro placed a gentle kiss between the man's finely sculpted shoulder blades. "I didn't want to hurt you, sugar."

“Fuck...me...now.” Was the grunted response as Calvin shoved back against Alesandro clenching his ass and sucking the will out of the vampire through his prick.

“Fuck.”

Unable to resist the siren call of his lover’s ass Alesandro held on tight and pumped in and out with controlled force careful of using his vampire strength. He wanted this man to remember him only in a good way. Reaching around, he gripped Calvin’s quickly hardening member, pumping him as his hips drilled in and out of that fine body.

“Come. I’ve got you.”

As if he was just waiting for the words, Calvin exploded, jerking fluid all over the bar. At the sight of Calvin’s release Alesandro came, filling the condom in one glorious burst. He felt a regretful moment that it wasn’t his come filling the carpenter. One day soon there would be nothing between them. Calvin would be completely his.

Alesandro quickly disposed of the condom and redressed watching in silence as Calvin slid on his clothing. The other man’s quiet was unnerving after the moans and cries from moments before.

Did he regret their lovemaking? The thought that Calvin might not want anything more to do with him tore a hole in Alesandro’s heart. Calvin found a cloth and wiped down the bar careful to get every drop.

“I’d love to take you out some time. Or even stay in.” He said cautiously. Alesandro slid one cool finger down the side of Cal’s face.

Calvin looked at the sincere expression in the vampire’s eyes and felt like crap. This gorgeous man truly wanted him. When was the last time a man made him feel special? He couldn’t remember, maybe never.

At Alesandro’s touch desire racked Calvin’s body. It was like a line of fire went from his cheek to his balls. He swallowed audibly his dry throat clicking like he was in the Sahara.

“I don’t date my boss.”

That was a reasonable excuse, wasn’t it?

“Excellent. Anthony is your boss. I’m more of a consultant. And I can guarantee you won’t be dating Anthony.”

Before Cal could voice his opinion on dating consultants Alesandro’s lips covered his and all thoughts flew out of his brain. Base needs filled

his mind, carnal images of heat and naked flesh. How he wanted this man, vamp, whatever.

When he was finally released he handed his business card over to the vamp in a daze. “My personal number is on the back.”

Without another word he rushed through the doorway not daring to look back.

Chapter Two

Calvin left the hotel like the hounds of hell were nipping at his heels. He didn't even remember the drive home as he pulled into his garage, and barely remembered to collect his clipboard, before going through the door to the house.

The phone started ringing as soon as he entered the house. Anxiety gripped him when he saw the name on caller id read blocked.

Shit.

“Hello.”

“When are you going to deliver Anthony?” The familiar voice came across the line, chilling like winter frost.

“I don't know. They have him surrounded at all times with bodyguards.”

“Then get rid of the guards. Drug them, shoot them, I don't care. You have until Friday to deliver him or your sister is dead. Check your mail.”

The connection ended.

Calvin flew out of the house and down to the sidewalk to his mail box. It took him a few tries to pull it open with his shaking hands. Finally he yanked it open and pulled out his mail. He didn't look at the contents as he slammed close the mail box and ran back up the stairs.

It wasn't until the safety of the door was at his back that he dared to look at the mail in his hand.

Bill. Bill. Ad. White envelope with no address.

The rest fell from nerveless fingers.

From the stiffness of the envelope he could tell it held a photo, but what kind? Would they be of his sister injured, tortured... dead?

With his mind tumbling with fear he ripped open the envelope with too much force. A picture flew out of its paper hold and slid across the wooden floor. Falling to his knees, Calvin grabbed the photo. His sister looked up at him with a brand new bruise spread across one cheek. Written on the white part of the instant picture in black permanent marker were the words.

This is just the beginning.

The things a group of thugs could do to a young girl froze his soul. He barely made it to the toilet before everything came up. Several minutes of retching passed before there was nothing left but dry heaves.

Any doubt that the man was bluffing flew out of his head. Silent tears slid from his eyes in a quiet fountain of despair.

How could he trade one life for another?

How he not save the little girl he's loved his entire life?

The phone rang again. Unable to walk he crawled back to the receiver. Not checking caller id he pressed the connect button and screamed into the receiver. "I got the photo you bastard." He couldn't stop the sobs but he didn't give a flying fuck what the other man thought of him. They were going to torture his baby sister.

Silence came over the line. Then Alesandro's voice tinged with anger.

"I didn't send you any pictures, baby. Why don't you tell me what the hell is going on."

Calvin hung up.

Shit.

Why didn't he check the caller id? He always checked the caller id.

The phone rang again.

Calvin looked at it like it was a viper about to strike. Caller id flashed unknown. Worried it could be the man from the warehouse he reluctantly picked it up again.

"You have two seconds to tell me what the devil is going on or I'm going to become very angry." Alesandro hissed over the line.

Fuck.

"Alesandro, I can't deal with you right now. I've got my own problems." Betrayal...death...the usual.

"Your problems are my problems, sugar. Stay there I'll be right over."

"No." Calvin sighed as a loud click came through the phone. "I wonder if it's true that vampires have to be invited in."

"Nope." Said Alesandro.

Calvin jumped to his feet. "Shit you scared the crap out of me."

Alesandro's green eyes examined him intently. "No, someone else already did that."

Before he could retort, two strong arms wrapped around him in a comforting embrace. For just a moment he closed his eyes and pretended

he had someone that cared. Sighing he sank into the vampire's hug, letting those big shoulders carry his burden if only for a little while.

"They have my sister." He confessed against the vampire's chest, tears welling in his eyes once more. For a moment he didn't think the vampire heard him but then those strong arms tightened.

"What do they want?" No wasting time on shock or horror just a simple request for information.

"Anthony." Calvin choked out, tears filling his eyes. "They want Anthony."

"Shh. Don't cry, sugar." Alesandro's hands stroked his back in long soothing pets like he was someone precious. "We'll figure something out."

"They're going to kill her." Calvin picked up the picture from the floor and handed it over.

"This her?" Alesandro's green eyes searched his.

Calvin nodded.

"She's almost as pretty as you."

"Cindy's much prettier than me." Calvin said blinking back more tears. Shit he cried more than a girl. Cindy would kick him in the balls for acting like a baby. Hell if the situations were reversed she'd be looking for grenades and make the kidnapping bastards afraid of the dark.

"Tomorrow after we rest we'll go to the pack and tell them what's going on. Silver will know how to get her returned. Until then you need to know that I will always be there for you baby. You are mine."

A flicker of flame glowed in the vampire's eyes. It should've unsettled him or made him run in fear. Instead the possessiveness gave him a warm feeling that spread throughout his heart. It felt good to let go of his control and give his burden to someone else.

Buttons flew as Calvin gave in to passion and impatience. How had it happened within a day? This need built for a man who wasn't even a man. Giving into instinct he bit Alesandro on the neck.

Alesandro went wild. He lifted Calvin into the air with the strength of his powerful arms.

"Hold onto me." The vampire demanded.

Instinctively Cal wrapped his long legs around Alesandro's waist and his arms around the vampire's neck. But there weren't enough forces in

the universe to stop his body from humping against the other man's hard abs as if his life depended on it.

The world blurred for a moment and then he was airborne. Calvin bounced on his bed of unmade cotton sheets and pillow topped comfort.

Before he could make any smart ass comment about Alesandro not knowing his own strength, the vampire's hot mouth consumed him. How a cold vampire could have such burning lips, he didn't know. But for the first time he understood a person being swept away in the heat of passion. Something he scoffed at before when friends cried on his shoulder after a regrettable night.

Maybe he'd been dating the wrong guys.

The rasp of calloused fingers scraping against his skin was almost Calvin's undoing. He lifted his hips to increase contact only to have them pinned with strong hands. Again.

"Easy, gorgeous. I'm right here." Long, drugging caresses swept up and down his sides. Calvin moaned at the sensation.

Alessandro slid down placing kisses and nips down Cal's body as he swept across his skin.

When did he lose his clothes?

Buck naked he lay on the soft sheets and let the vampire have his way as worries and pressure spilled away under Alesandro's skilled touches.

"Ohh." A nip on the curve of his hip made his back bow with pleasure. His ass clenched and he felt empty. He needed to be filled more than he needed his next breath.

"Please, baby please. Fuck me."

"Baby?" The vampire stopped what he was doing to laugh. "I'm several hundred years older than you. I'm hardly a baby."

Cal forced his eyes open. "If you don't fuck me soon I'm going to stab you through the heart and then you won't care what I call you."

Alesandro made a tsking sound and shook his head. "We need to talk about your violent tendencies. Threatening your lover is never a good plan. Not when he can hold you down with one hand and lift a car with the other."

Cal laughed. "I don't see any cars here so I'll have to take your word for that."

"You do that." Alesandro rubbed noses with Cal like a big cat.

Kisses were something Cal usually did for his lovers to excite them and get them ready for the main event. Alesandro's kisses were an experience in themselves. Desire raced through him like a wildfire at the brief contact.

"Kiss me." He whispered against the vampire's lips.

With a wide smile the vampire kissed Cal's neck. "Let me show you what a man who doesn't need to breathe can do."

Cal whimpered as nips and licks followed his lover's path down his stomach until he reached Calvin's hard cock. In one swallow the vampire took him to the root sending ripples of sensation echoing up his spine.

"Shit." Cal screamed. Wet heat surrounded his cock and the suction made his eyes roll back into his head. Hell, once with a vamp he may never be suited to dating mortal men again. "You have the mouth of a god." He moaned, reaching down to stroke the silky head sliding up and down his cock. Familiar tension built up along his spine. "I'm going to come."

"No you will not." The vampire tugged on his balls. "You will wait for me."

In the darkened room he heard the shushed sound of a drawer opening and the snick of a cap. Telling him the vampire had found his stash. Slick fingers slid inside his body, one, two, by the third he was begging in soft, whimpering tones.

"Please, please, please." He chanted.

"Shhh, I'll give you everything you need my gorgeous man."

Alesandro's eyes could see perfectly in the dark. Watching the beautiful creature thrashing below him excited him more than any encounter he could remember. Something about the slim young carpenter with tough muscles and a torn heart pulled at him like a beacon.

He could be the one.

Unable to stand the separation any longer, Alesandro slid into the tight warm hole of his lover letting out a groan at the sensation.

All lovers before Calvin faded out of existence. Right here and now there were only the two of them in the entire world wrapped in a cocoon of heat, darkness and passion.

He reached down and took Calvin's hard prick in his hand, pumping it at counterpoint to each thrust. The two men groaned together. Damn he felt good.

"Harder, baby harder." Calvin said, in between soft moans.

"You're a demanding thing aren't you?"

"Shut up and fuck me like you mean it."

Well, he couldn't let that challenge stand, now could he? With renewed vigor Alesandro pounded into the young human until he felt Calvin's release pulsing in his hand. Unable to stop himself, Alesandro pressed his body all along his handsome lover's and bit into the juncture between Calvin's shoulder and neck. The human beneath him gave a strangled shout before hardening again.

Sweet. The way a human tastes is a reflection of their soul. Calvin tasted sweet and rich with a little bit of spice.

Alesandro continued to suck until Calvin found his second release. Then he carefully disengaged his fangs, licking the spot to close the wound and heal the marks left behind. One day soon he would leave behind a scar to mark this human as his own, but not today. Today his beautiful man had too many worries and when he marked Calvin forever he wanted to be the only thing on his lover's mind.

"Fuck, you're amazing." Calvin said in a dazed voice. "If I knew it would be this good I'd have had a vamp in my bed years ago."

Alesandro felt a growl building in his throat. "You don't need any other vampires, pretty man. All you need is me."

A cold chill filled the vampire's chest as he realized he meant that. He didn't like the idea of the gorgeous dark-haired man seeking others out. In any capacity.

He was so screwed.

For the first time in his life Alesandro was in love and the thought of a delicate mortal holding his heart in such fragile, easily broken hands scared the usually unflappable vamp.

Alesandro licked his lips savoring the taste of his lover. The downside was, after biting the younger man he now knew his secrets.

"You can't kidnap Anthony." He said into the stillness of the room. "I'll call a counsel meeting. We'll find a way to save your sister."

Alesandro tried to infuse as much confidence as he could but Silver was just as likely to kill the gorgeous carpenter, than help him.

Chapter Three

They crowded around the boardroom: Anthony, vampires, wolves and the one human. Cal felt shame flush his cheeks as Anthony watched him with concern instead of the disdain he knew he deserved. It was odd that the most sympathetic person in the room was the one he'd planned to betray. Mikel and Darian, vampires in Alesandro's group, made no attempt to hide their disgust. They alternated between glaring at him or Alesandro. And the look from Silver should've killed him on the spot.

He didn't seek disapproval but it made him feel a little less guilty than the unflinching understanding from the slim blond.

Calvin was convinced it was only the gentle restraint of that fine-boned hand that prevented the Moon pack alpha from leaping over the table and ripping out his throat.

"Tell us again about this person and how he got your sister. Why you?" Anthony asked.

"And why we should care." Another wolf spoke up. Cal vaguely identified the tall dark-haired man as Dillon one of the landscape designers. They were looked at him with about as much favor as the pack alpha, Silver. He wasn't sure how everyone fit in the hierarchy but he knew he was currently the least favorite person in the room.

Taking a deep breath he told his story. "My parents died when we were young. It's just me and my sister Cindy. She's living with me while she goes to school to save money. The only thing I can figure out is she must have told someone I was working with Anthony. She's the only one I told before I starting working there and haven't mentioned to anyone else. She works part time for Vault Construction while she goes to school."

"I never work with Vault." Anthony said wrinkling his nose. "They do crap work. What's your sister studying?" Anthony asked.

"What the fuck do we care what she's studying?" Silver growled, his grey eyes glowing with anger. "I want to know why this asshole wants to kidnap my mate and why the hell I shouldn't just rip out his throat."

"Because then we won't know who sent him, will we?" Anthony said in such a reasonable tone it was amazing his mercurial mate didn't strangle him. "What happened next?"

Cal swallowed the lump in his throat, he was certain every pack member there could scent his fear.

“A few nights ago someone broke into our house and drugged us. By the time I woke up Cindy was gone. They left a note taped to my bedroom door. It said that if I wanted to see my sister I was to go to an address they wrote in the note. It led me to a warehouse where the man I met there said I had to bring him Anthony or he would have my sister killed. He had a picture of her tied up so I knew he was serious.”

“Why didn’t you call the police?” Mikel asked his eyes narrowed suspiciously. Cal could see the other vamp didn’t like how close Alesandro sat to him from the constant glares.

Cal shrugged helplessly. “It said not to contact the authorities if I wanted Cindy alive. Frankly at first I thought it was some sort of college prank. I mean who really does that kind of stuff?” He looked around the table but a sea of glares made him hurry on with his tale. “I whoever Cindy told about my contract thought it would be the perfect opportunity to get close to Anthony.” He gave the architect a small smile. “Sorry.”

Anthony shrugged. “If I had any siblings I’d trade my ass for them too.”

As if needing further reassurance Silver pulled Anthony onto his lap and rubbed his cheek along his mate’s, spreading his scent across the other man. Calvin watched in awe to see if Silver would pee a circle around the blond next.

“Why is someone after Anthony?” Alesandro asked.

“The man said you killed his brother.” Cal remembered, replaying the discussion in his head.

“Ned.” The red-haired wolf growled, jumping to his feet. “This must be about Ned.”

“Sit down Ben.” Silver ordered. “At least we have some idea what this is about. Now we need to make a plan. We’ll get your sister back Calvin but we can’t rush into this and put Anthony into danger. Sorry.”

He didn’t look particularly sorry as he sat there cradling his mate. He looked pretty damn content.

Anger coursed through Calvin. “Well I can’t just let them keep my sister. She’s only twenty and she’s in the hands of psychos who don’t mind harming women. What do you think they’re going to do to her if

they think I've changed the rules on them? Killing her would be a mercy when they're done."

Shit, his eyes were welling up.

He gave a yelp as Alesandro pulled him onto the vampire's lap. Giving into temptation he let the other man cuddle him while he pondered the best plan to get his sister back. It might undermine his manliness to discuss war strategy while cuddled up to the vamp but damn it if he didn't like the care and concern oozing from Alesandro.

Sighing, Calvin snuggled into the embrace and turned his head to Anthony when he spoke.

"So what if we let him kidnap me so I can find out what his plans are. Someone can follow and rescue me in time."

"No." The shout rang throughout the room from multiple voices.

"Absolutely not." The large alpha growled.

"But it would make the most sense. If he wants me then let's give him me. It's not like I can't defend myself."

Silver shook his smaller mate. "But what if he has a gun?" I can't chance it, sweetness."

"No. It's a good idea." Ben said. "Except I'll go in your place. We're about the same build and I can wear a wig."

"Forget it mate." Dillon said in a tone reminiscent of the alpha. "Besides Thomas would have puppies if you did that."

Cal idly wondered who Thomas was as Anthony spoke again. "So it's settled. I'll go and the others can follow. We'll nail this guy."

Silver sighed and nuzzled his mate's neck. "All right but if anything happens to you I'll never forgive you."

"Understood."

Alesandro spoke up. "I'll go with Anthony. I can make myself invisible so they won't know I'm accompanying him."

Cal could almost feel the relief in the alpha's stance. "That would be much appreciated Alesandro." Silver said.

"We'll go too." Mikel said, Darian nodded beside him.

"No." Alesandro said with a head shake. If the guy is a para he'll sense it if too many of us go in. As it is he might smell me but if I mark Calvin first they might just think it's my scent on him.

The other vampires reluctantly agreed. The group sat around and made a plan until everyone was satisfied except Silver.

“I don’t like this,” he sulked.

“You’ll be close enough to save me if I get into trouble, sweetie. Don’t worry so much.”

Cal thought Silver was like a dog worrying a bone but he was smart enough not to say anything. If anything happened to Anthony he might as well let the blackmailer kill him. It would probably be a more humane way to go than a werewolf mauling.

Chapter Four

“This is so exciting.” Anthony beamed up at Calvin. “I don’t mean the sister portion because I’m sure you’re worried but I’ve never got to be part of a sting before.”

He bounced alongside Calvin with Alesandro drifting invisibly beside them. Calvin could feel the force of the vampire even if he couldn’t see him. Taking a deep breathe to steady his nerves he tried to focus on where they were going. He didn’t care what the others said he had a feeling this wasn’t going to be as easy as everyone thought.

Tension tightened his back like a hard board. The man who went to all the effort to have Anthony kidnapped, wasn’t going to just hand over his sister. Not even if he served Anthony on a platter. There were so many holes in this plan they drive a semi through it.

The warehouse looked just as old and abandoned as it had the first time. He felt a chill race down his back as he pushed open the creaking metal door.

“Hello.” He called. For appearances he pulled out a gun and held it to Anthony’s head.

Easy beautiful. No shooting Anthony. Alesandro’s voice whispered into his mind.

He tried to send reassuring messages back but he doubted they left his own head. Talking telepathically wasn’t one of his abilities. Hell, he didn’t have any abilities, except getting into trouble.

“There you are. I was beginning to think you’d gotten lost.” A familiar cold voice wafted across the empty expanse.

With careful steps they crossed the vacant warehouse, keeping the gun trained on Anthony as they walked. A small whimper jerked his attention ahead. Cindy sat tied to a chair, a bandana wrapped across her mouth. Her eyes were wide and terrified. Calvin didn’t know if she was scared of her psycho kidnapper or her formerly gentle brother holding a gun to a guy’s head.

“You’ll never get away with this Calvin.” Anthony hissed. “Silver will hunt you down and rip out your heart.”

The blond said it with such vicious enthusiasm Calvin felt his blood freeze in his veins.

“Your mate will be dead.” The cold voice stated in emotionless tones. “And since he’s convinced you’re lifemates he will fade at your death and the pack will disband.” He finished with such glee in his voice that Calvin knew this was the ultimate goal. Anthony wasn’t the target, Silver was.

“I thought this was about revenge on Anthony?” Calvin said. “You said he killed your brother.”

“He did.” For the first time the man stepped from the shadows. Horror filled Calvin as he got a look at the creature before him. The man wasn’t man nor beast but a scary combination of the two. A long snout formed out of the man’s face and long fangs curved outwards like the teeth of a boar, while mean yellow eyes watched him with malicious glee. “But we were only half brothers and I hated the bastard anyway. I want Silver dead and his pretty mate is the perfect way to do it.”

“What are you?”

“I’m the next generation of wolves.” The creature said walking forward. “The ones who don’t need to hide what we are in puny human shells.” He leaned forward, saliva dripping from his fangs. “We’re the ones who will take over when we get rid of all you pesky humans and the wolves masquerading as you. That’s why all the strongest wolves have to go. Starting with Silver.”

Panic ripped through Calvin. This wasn’t a simple kidnapping, this was war. What the hell did he get in the middle of?

A low snickering came from the creature, a hideous sound between a snarl and a chuckle. “As you can see I’ve kept my end of the bargain. A wolf is only as good as his word.” He nodded towards Cindy. “You’ll both have to die of course. I never agreed that you would survive our deal. But your sister will of course be released. We won’t even start hunting her until the next full moon. For ambience you know.” He gave a long nasty laugh that raised Calvin’s distaste of the man to an unbearable fury.

A strange crackling filled the air. Calvin stepped away from Anthony as a snap of electricity slapped his skin.

The creature’s head turned towards Anthony. “Say hello to Silver in hell.”

As Anthony lifted his hand, the creature’s pistol cracked. A red spot bloomed on Anthony’s chest.

“Nooo.” Calvin screamed reaching for the beautiful blond as he fell. Anthony’s eyes were open but unseeing; his sleek body still, an instantaneous death.

A scream pierced the air ending in a bubbly gurgle. He’d forgotten about Alesandro. The vampire removed his invisibility, grabbed the wolf creature and ripped him apart.

Calvin didn’t even look. He didn’t have to. The wolf was dead but then so was sweet, gentle Anthony who always treated him like a friend even when he knew of his betrayal. He didn’t even look up when he felt Cindy stroke his head. Alesandro must have released her.

“I’m sorry about your friend,” he heard her say like she was at the end of a long tunnel.

He felt numb.

Beautiful, loving, Anthony....gone.

“Shhh, my sweet.” Alesandro’s arms wrapped around him, cradling him in a gentle embrace. “It’s not your fault. None of this is your fault.”

“It’s all my fault, and now Anthony is gone.” He could barely talk through the hard knot in his throat.

A mournful howl filled the air. Tracking his lover’s failing heartbeat an enormous silver wolf burst through the warehouse seconds ahead of the rest of the wolf pack. En masse they filled streamed in forming a large circle around Anthony and Calvin.

Silver morphed into his human form, a large broken man falling to his knees in despair. Snatching Anthony from Calvin the big, tough alpha clutched his love, tears dripping down his face.

Calvin blinked back his own tears as he watched Silver tenderly brush back Anthony’s hair from his beautiful face.

His voice was little more than a shattered whisper. “Come on demigod it’s time to stop pretending. I know how you love attention but this is over the top even for you.”

A low hum followed by a pulsing white light filled the room. Calvin watched as the brilliant glow formed a doorway. Two people, a man and a woman, stepped through the door, the light vanishing behind them.

The woman was petite with deep red hair and a tiny figure. She barely came up to the shoulder of the huge guy behind her. The man was all

golden skin, muscles and silvery hair. They both wore simple white robes like Grecian throwbacks.

“What happened to my son?” The woman said in a voice that made dozens of goosebumps chase themselves up Calvin’s arms. The man might look threatening but there was pure magic in the woman’s voice.

Silver looked up, tears still streaming from his eyes.

“He was shot. Can you save him?”

“No.” The man spoke. His voice had shadows of power that pulsed across the room with each syllable.

“What do you mean no?” Screamed Silver, he clutched Anthony’s still body tighter. You could almost hear his heart break.

Anthony’s mother elbowed his father in the stomach. From the man’s flinch it wasn’t a loving nudge either.

“What my insensitive mate is trying to say is that we don’t need to heal Anthony. An hour after his birth, my father-in-law gave Anthony a vial of essence. Anthony is immortal. He can’t be killed, especially with something as primitive as a gun. By the way I’m Hallea and this is my mate and Anthony’s father Gallien.” Anthony’s mother spoke with perfect serenity like they were meeting over tea. The fact that the alpha didn’t rip out her throat probably had more to do with the calming magic she was sending out in waves than the alpha’s temperament.

“If he can’t die why isn’t he waking up?” Silver demanded completely ignoring the niceties. All respect Calvin ever had for the alpha just tripled over the balls Silver had to have to stand up to the powerful couple before him.

Galleon stepped forward and damned if every single wolf didn’t step back a pace. That man was so scary powerful it pulsed off his body in waves. Unlike Anthony this man could never pass for human.

The man kneeled on the other side of Anthony and tilted his head towards him. Anthony’s lifeless eyes looked back.

“My father has taken him away. For the brief moment Anthony was mortally injured Odin has the ability to call his soul. Even if my son can’t technically stay dead, he will die briefly from a mortal wound before bouncing back to life.” Galleon smiled. “Anthony’s always been my father’s favorite.”

Silver snarled. “Are you saying that while my heart is shattering he’s having a chat with his grandfather?”

Hallea sighed, stepping forward. More than one wolf snuck a sniff at her as she walked past. Calvin surmised that she had the same scent the wolves talked about Anthony having. “My son is powerful but even he can’t escape the clutches of a god. He can’t return without Odin’s permission. To even try would be a terrible breach of etiquette.” Her forest green eyes met Silver’s. “Trust me when I tell you insulting a god is never a good idea.”

Galleon looked at his son for a moment. “But neither is staying in ones presence for too long. Odin is very fond of Anthony, because my son looks almost exactly like him even if he is a bit shorter. I have a feeling my father would be more than happy to keep Anthony with him for a while.” Galleon looked up at Silver. “For a while, in god time, could be centuries.” With those words the demigod pressed his hands on either side of Anthony’s head. “Father, release my son so he can come back to his mate. You know it is against the rules for mates to be parted.”

“This will be a good test to see if you’re true mates.” Hallea said.

“We’re true mates.” Silver said his eyes lighting with a feral intensity.

Anthony’s body convulsed as light seeped from his pores and streamed out of his mouth like some horrific science fiction movie. Calvin turned his head away when the light flashed out in blinding brilliance.

When he looked back it was to see the slim blond hugging his mate with such intensity and adoration it was almost painful to witness.

That was what he wanted. Meeting Alesandro’s green eyes he knew he wanted more from the vamp than his lover was willing to give. There was no way this gorgeous immortal vampire could want a pitiful human for his mate. He didn’t hold it against Alesandro, they never exchanged vows of love but it was time to try and move on.

With effort he wrenched his eyes away from the vampire.

“Come on Cindy. Let’s get you home.”

In the rush of people clamoring around Anthony, Calvin made his escape not bothering to look at his lover again. Some scabs were better to rip off before they started to itch.

* * *

In the end talking to Cindy didn't help. She knew little about her kidnappers. They left her alone when they weren't hitting her and they didn't conveniently tell her where they put the rest of their group. The only thing she was certain of was that there were four people that kept her captive but they spoke as if there were more.

Shit.

With no other clues the wolves were on the alert and holding the pack in tight.

Chapter Five

Alesandro sat at the beautifully carved bar in the new hotel, resting his chin on one hand, his body slumped over the fine grained wood.

A hand slid up his back, patting him in sympathy.

“What’s wrong sweetie.” Anthony’s brilliant blond head appeared beside him. He longed for a darker one beside his own at night.

“Calvin is avoiding me.”

Sparkling gold eyes watched him with concern. “What makes you think that?”

“He won’t return my calls, he doesn’t answer the door. Oh and he avoids me in person.”

“I thought the two of you looked pretty close at the warehouse. He’s fond of you sweetheart, I could tell.”

“Well your dazzling instincts are wrong. Ever since that night he’s not contacted me. It’s been two weeks. I’m beginning to think I was just a means to get his sister.”

“Hmmm.”

He waited but nothing else was forthcoming.

“That’s all you’ve got?” Alesandro couldn’t stop the bitter laugh coming from his chest even as his heart broke a little. He was hoping Anthony would have some brilliant insight to his problems.

“Maybe your man needs a little wooing.”

“Wooing? And I thought I was the old one.”

Anthony gave one of his famous laughs. “Just because it’s an old-fashioned word doesn’t mean it doesn’t work.”

Alesandro nodded. It helped to unburden his troubles to a friend. His vampire associates weren’t much help. Hell most of them wondered why he was mooning over a pure human. The rest were of the grab him and make him be yours mindset. But Calvin was a gentle soul in the body of a god. You treated a treasure like that with the care he deserved.

Ideas bubbled through Alesandro’s mind. Yes, he could do that.

“Maybe you’re right, my friend. I’ll work on the wooing.”

Anthony laughed again. “You do that sweet. You do that.”

Disturbing images haunted Calvin's dreams. Nightmares where Anthony and Alesandro weren't healthy, happy and living, but dead on the floor.

It was maddening.

He stumbled to the kitchen to get a drink only to find his sister sitting at the kitchen table looking blankly into space.

"Can't sleep?"

The hollows under her eyes told the true story.

She shook her head. "They took me while I was sleeping. Every time my eyes close I wonder where I'll wake up."

Calvin leaned over and gave her a hug. "I know. I worry every time I wake that you'll be gone and if I do fall asleep I dream about Anthony being dead. Want some tea?"

Cindy shook her head. "Do we have any more of that cider?"

Opening the fridge, Calvin took a look inside. "Some." He picked up the jug and shook it. "Enough for two." Within minutes he pulled two steaming mugs from the microwave and sat down across from his sister.

"We're quite the pair." He gave a strangled laugh, despair crushing his chest.

"Tell me about Alesandro."

"What?"

Cindy gave him a sad smile. "I could tell there was something between you. Besides he calls every other day and you always pretend you're not here. Is he some creep I should keep an eye out for or did he just break your heart."

Calvin shrugged. He'd successfully avoided the topic of Anthony for weeks now but if anyone deserved the truth it was his sister. So between sips of cider he told her everything.

Setting her cup down with a snap Cindy stared at her brother. "So this vampire puts his life on the line after claiming you as his and now you've been avoiding him ever since."

Calvin stared at her in shock. "That's what you got out of this story? What about the werewolf and Anthony?"

Cindy shrugged. "You all survived but it isn't every day your big brother falls in love."

“I’m not in love.” Calvin firmed his chin stubbornly and turned away from his sister’s inquiring eyes. “Besides Alesandro is a sophisticated vampire, how could he love a man who is stupid enough to get put in a situation where he gets someone almost killed. If Anthony wasn’t immortal he would’ve been dead.”

“He survived and the vampire is obviously still interested. Is it the vampire thing?” Cindy’s brown eyes filled with concern

Calvin shrugged. “I don’t mind the vampire thing but I don’t want him feeling sorry for the poor human who can’t save himself.”

“Hell, Calvin you’re more of a girl than I am.”

Calvin gasped. “You take that back.”

“No.” Cindy smiled. “Calvin’s in love.” She said in a sing-song voice.

He did the only thing a mature older brother could do in this situation. He pounced, knocking her to the ground and knuckled her hair giving her a noogie.

Cindy screamed with laughter.

After a few minutes he let her up and stomped from the room.

With a smile, Cindy retrieved her brother’s phone from its charger on the counter. After a lifetime of looking out for her, it was her turn to look out for him. Scrolling down his call list she picked the one listed with the most incoming calls, but not returned.

She pressed redial.

It was picked up immediately.

“Hello baby, decided to talk to me did you?” A gorgeous voice said on the other end.

Cindy cleared her throat. This definitely didn’t sound like someone who felt sorry for his lover. “This isn’t Calvin, this is Cindy.”

“Where’s Calvin. Is he in trouble?” The seductive voice of a moment ago was now crisp and hard.

“No. No. Nothing like that. He thinks you only like him out of pity and I wanted to talk to the man my brother’s in love with.”

“He’s in love with me?” Alesandro’s laughter came across the phone. “Don’t worry about anything Cindy. I’ll make sure I get my man back. Thank you. Thank you so much.”

The line went dead. Cindy returned the phone to its charger and went to sleep for the first time since her capture with a smile on her face.

Chapter Six

The ringing doorbell woke Calvin out of his uneasy sleep.

Blinking, he barely remembered to slide on a pair of pants before stumbling to the door.

A glance at his alarm clock told him it was barely eight in the morning.

Looking through the peephole showed a mass of flowers standing on his doorstep.

He opened the door. A strange man stood there holding an enormous bouquet of red tulips with the words Flowers by Zeke emblazoned on his chest.

“Can I help you?”

“Are you Calvin Sanders?”

“Yes.”

“Sign here for your flowers.”

Still sleep befuddled Calvin signed and accepted the flowers looking at the arrangement.

“Do you know the language of flowers?” The driver asked.

“What?”

Blinking he looked at the delivery driver again. The man was handsome in that perfect pretty boy style.

“The language of flowers. I’m guessing the guy who sent these knew his stuff. He was very specific. We had to look pretty hard to find them this time of year.”

Calvin tucked the vase in the crook of his elbow so he could rip open the small florist card.

May the flowers tell the secrets of my heart.

Yours,

Alesandro

“What does this bouquet say?” He demanded.

The driver gave him a smirk. “So now you’re interested.”

“You read the card didn’t you?” He asked with suspicion.

Shrugging the driver gave him a wide smile. “Someone has to put them in those little white envelopes.”

“So tell me what do red tulips say?”

“Red tulips are for perfect love and the white carnations are for pure love and good luck and these buttery yellow flowers are primroses they mean ‘I can’t live without you’. From your bouquet I’d say your guy is trying to tell you he loves you and can’t live without you.”

A glow of warmth filled Calvin. He couldn’t stop the wide smile from spreading across his face. “You think so?”

The driver nodded. “I do. You have a nice day now.”

“Wait. I want to give you a tip.” Calvin pulled his wallet out of his jeans. He’d forgotten to remove it last night when he’d staggered home, exhausted from work. Sometimes laziness came in handy. He pulled out a ten and handed it over.

Laughing the driver took the money and put it in his pocket. “I’m thinking you should go call your boy now and tell him it’s reciprocal.”

Cal smiled. “I think you’re right.”

He went back inside to make the call that would change his life. He didn’t know how they would work out their issues about vampire/human relations, but he was confident they loved each other enough to find a way.

Coming Soon

Denying Dare

Amber Kell lives in Washington with her husband, children and cats. A lifelong daydreamer she enjoys thinking of ways hot men can get together and make beautiful love together. She can be reached at amberkellwrites@gmail.com.