

Night Walker, Parts 1 & 2

by Wrestlr

[M/M, vampire, MC, hypno]

Disclaimer: There's sexual vampirism, sodomy, and maybe a few other minor perversions in this. If you don't like that sort of thing, read something else.

Everybody in the story is legal age. Parts of this story may be autobiographical, or it might be all fiction--who can say?

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Night Walker

1.

I put my drink down on the polished black table. It chimed politely, and a message lit up next to my empty glass: "Want another? Yes/No/New Order".

I touched the spot that said "Yes" and ran my cash card through the slot on the side of the table. Mentally, I deducted another nine dollars from my rapidly dwindling bank balance.

The hotel waiter came over with another glass of iced decaf mocha.

"Sure I can't get you a glass of wine, maybe a beer or something?" he asked,

smiling.

"Not just now," I said.

"Clean living, huh?" he said, still smiling. He had wavy black hair, slightly pronounced canines, and brilliant green eyes. Of course, so did half the other kids his age. It was the clone look among the tragically hip this year.

Usually, I hated it.

"Um. Yeah. Sort of," I muttered, grinning stupidly. I have an annoyingly trigger-happy blush reflex. My last lover used to think it was cute.

"Well, my name's Gregor," the waiter said, leaning over, a little too close. "Let

me know if there's anything else you need."

We exchanged a glance that went on a little too long to be entirely proper, but stopped half a second before the eye contact lasted too long. Then he left. Well, I'm a sucker for friendly service. I slipped my cash card back into the table and was punching up his tip when I saw *her*.

Oh, great. Like I needed *this* kind of trouble.

My client had just walked in through the hotel's big front doors. She was wearing a trenchcoat and dark sunglasses, a look that practically screamed, "*Please! I'm trying not to be recognized!*" The ensemble was

topped off by a huge, floppy hat, which did succeed in covering half her face but was so damn enormous that it called even more attention to her, especially when the revolving door nearly knocked it off her head on the way in. Apparently her mother never taught her how to accessorize for a stakeout in July.

I had chosen my table because it had a clear view of both the main entrance and the elevators, without being too close to either. Damage control time. I stood up and waved to her. The lobby of the DC Hilton is huge, so it took her a few seconds to spot me. When she did, she walked over, briskly.

"How nice to see you, Ms. Church," I lied,

keeping my voice bland and conversational. "Why the hell are you here?"

"I would appreciate you not using that word in jest."

"My apologies, ma'am." I had forgotten how uptight Southern Baptists can be about the H-word. "Why the *heck* are you here?"

She took the seat next to mine. The table chimed and asked if she would like to order. She ignored it.

"I decided to watch," she said.

Ms. Church was in her late thirties, tall for a woman, and always spoke in the

confident manner of someone who expects to be taken seriously. Not the sort of woman that anyone would ever call "pretty." Possibly "striking." Maybe even "attractive," if she were smiling at them. But I wouldn't know. She had never smiled at me.

"No," I said firmly.

"No, what?" she asked.

"No, this is not part of the deal. No, you are not going to stay here. No, we are not going to run the risk that he will walk in that door, spot you, and blow our whole operation. Go back to your hotel. I'll bring you a full report and pictures when it's done."

She raised an eyebrow, then responded without bothering to look directly at me. Did she know the effect prolonged eye contact with me can have? No, I decided, she was just giving me attitude.

"I believe," she said icily, "that *I* am the one paying for *your* services, Mr. Walker. I will go where I please."

"Then you can go find yourself another detective."

That got her attention. She paused, trying to decide if I was bluffing. I needed the money, badly. She needed me. No breeder PI could handle a case like this one. And no other queer detective would go anywhere near it.

Finally, she spoke. "What's the problem? So I watch for myself. Afraid I might see something that you wouldn't have included in your report?"

Ms. Church had no tact. That was the one thing I liked about her.

"No. But this is *not* the way these things are done," I explained.

When my partner Jen and I started our investigations firm several months ago, I had drilled three rules into her head. The first was: Never take a client on a stakeout. No matter how much they plead. No matter how quiet they promise to be. No matter how much money they offer. You don't do it. I had broken that rule

once, way back in 2019. It had nearly gotten both me and my client killed. Fortunately, I'm not that easy to kill.

We sat there for a second or two, neither of us willing to blink.

"Pictures," she said slowly, "are not good enough."

"Why not?"

"Because they're too easy to fake. Because I have to be *sure*."

She took off her dark glasses, looking ready to stare me down. It was a contest she was sure to lose. Her eyes were brown. Not brilliant green, not vivid blue, not stunning violet, not lustrous gold.

None of the designer colors. Brown. She was the first to look away. When she finally spoke, her voice had lost its assertive bite.

"I don't know how it is with ... your kind," she began, and then stopped. Which kind did she mean? Did she just mean queer, or did she know about my other hunger?

She was staring down at her purse, clutching it as if it was some sort of talisman. I wondered what was so special about it. Had he bought it for her? Or was there something inside? A picture of them together? A love note? It didn't matter. I needed to make her go.

"Joseph and I, we ..." she started, and then

trailed off again.

I waited for her to go on, but she never did. I didn't know what to say either, so we sat there in silence. When this was all over, she would go back to her Christian neighborhood in North Georgia, back to the Baptist News Network and *Revelations* magazine. I would go back to the gay ghetto of Midtown Atlanta, back to hanging out in coffee shops and hunting for my meals in the night-lit bars. The only thing we had in common was that we didn't like each other.

But she was right about one thing: *I* would never trust a picture on something as important as this. Images are too easy to play with. An overlay here, a deletion

there, and *voilà*, you can make an incriminating photo of anyone. I know more than a few private detectives who have found it cheaper to invest in a good graphics program than in good legwork.

This was all wrong. I should make her leave. Or get up and leave myself. Just get up and walk away from this lousy case and back to my office. I would just have to tell Jen that she'd have to sell her other kidney to pay our bills this month.

Ms. Church doesn't like homosexuals. I'm not much keener on Southern Baptists. But then, my client and I had never pretended to like each other, and I guess even honest hatred is at least an honest connection between two people. I studied her face,

trying to figure out what was going on behind her eyes. This would have been easier if I made eye contact with her and held it just a little longer, enough to let me scan her thoughts, but that was a luxury I couldn't risk. I was already distracted enough.

She looked away from me, out into the lobby. Scanning the crowd, she did a momentary double-take, then stared intently at a kid in his early twenties who was hanging out by the glass elevators.

"That's Eric, isn't it?" she said, pointing.

"Yes," I answered, gently taking her outstretched hand and placing it back on the table. I was surprised that she could

recognize him. The one time she'd seen Eric had been in my office, a week ago. He'd had curly black hair then, and dark eyes, and beautiful bronze skin. I never did find out what sort of gig that was for; somebody wanting a Mediterranean look, I guess. Greek slave-boy or some such fantasy. In a matter of hours, Eric can transform himself, and the results are always impressive. Now he was back to blond hair and blue eyes, which makes him look even more like a kid. I don't know if those are his real colors or not--he never sticks with the same look more than a couple of weeks--but it was the way he'd looked when I first met him. And blond suits him. Like a collie. Cute and playful and ... *Damn it, he was smiling at me again.*

I frowned, hoping he would take the hint and buzz off. He didn't. He knew the hunger must be eating at me, and he was teasing me. He had been playing this game with me all afternoon, and it was wearing thin. Thompson, the guy we were going after, was both smart and perceptive, and any little thing might tip him off that he was being set up. So I didn't need my temporary operative making faces at me from across the lobby. Still not making eye contact with Eric, I mouthed the word, "Stop!" The bastard winked at me.

Finally, I glared at him, trying to shake him off without drawing more attention to the two of us. Eric feigned a hurt look and went back to watching the glass elevators go up and down. I prayed that no one had been watching our little melodrama.

That matter settled, I turned back to my client. Ms. Church was staring at Eric, her face a mixture of contempt and curiosity.

"You shouldn't look directly at him," I told her. "It calls attention to both of you." The hat gave her some cover, but it was still damned risky having her here. If Thompson spotted her, the whole operation would go up in smoke.

"Why in the world is he wearing that shirt?" she asked, ignoring my advice about staring. Eric was wearing his usual work clothes: ripped jeans and a snug white tank top that showed off the sleek muscles he'd gotten from two years of militia service. The tank top was printed with a disturbingly realistic crucifix.

Christ's final agonies, captured in vivid color and full anatomical detail, over the slogan, "And You Think *You've* Had a Bad Day?"

She continued staring. "Isn't it a bit ..."

"Trust me," I said. "Eric's a pro, and he knows exactly what signals he's sending. The crucifix is part of his advertising."

"*Advertising?*"

"Yeah. If he were older, he'd probably wear a rainbow flag or a pink triangle on his tee-shirt. But since most gay men under 23 are Roman Catholic, the kids have all adopted Catholic regalia as a sort of uniform."

"Roman Catholic?" She looked at me skeptically, as if I were making the whole thing up just to test her gullibility. "Why on earth would they be converting to that?"

I was rather surprised that she didn't know. But then, I guess outsiders don't follow demographic trends in the gay community too closely.

"They don't convert," I said. "They're just born that way. It's one of the side effects of the test." She continued to stare at me as if I was out of my mind. Well, at least she wasn't staring at Eric any more.

"Think of it this way," I said. "What will you do if the test comes back saying that

your child is gay?"

She looked down at her belly. She wasn't showing yet, and it would be another month before they could do amniocentesis safely. She didn't say anything, but we both knew what would happen if the genetic test came back positive. The Southern Baptist Convention doesn't like abortions. But it *really* doesn't like homosexuals.

"That's why there haven't been a lot of gay Baptists born in the last twenty-three years," I said. "Or Methodists. Or Mormons. Or Lutherans. You all make a lot of noise about being pro-life, but in a crunch, you make ... 'exceptions.' Not the Catholics, though. You gotta love the

Pope--she may be a reactionary old cow, but at least she's consistent."

Ms. Church turned her cold stare back to Eric. I don't know why I kept baiting her like that. I hated the case, but that wasn't her fault. Well, not entirely.

"He's practically a child," she said. "How do you know he's even Joseph's type?"

"I know because I did my job," I said flatly. For the past two weeks I had been shadowing Joseph Thompson, and I knew things about him no straight detective--maybe even no human detective--would have picked up on. I knew which people got that second glance when he passed them in the street. I knew which people he

talked to when he shared an elevator ride with them. I even knew which waiters he over-tipped at his favorite restaurants. I'd even managed, once when he was waiting for a traffic light to change so he could cross the street, to make eye contact and get a good read on his surface thoughts.

I had also been into his financial records, and I knew that Thompson was in the habit of withdrawing several hundred dollars in cash every few weeks, usually right before one of his business trips. No one uses cash anymore. Not unless they're trying to hide something. Like hiring a private detective. Or a hustler. I had a feeling that Thompson knew exactly what boys like Eric were for.

I sensed Ms. Church stiffen beside me. Speak of the devil. Thompson had just come through the Hilton's big revolving doors. He was still dressed for his job: tailored jacket, bright tie, expensive shoes. He worked for a Southern Baptist advertising firm, doing PR work for one of their senators. He was 34, a little too attractive, and still not married. I bet the gossip around the office was already becoming a problem.

Of course, I could be wrong about Thompson. Maybe he really was just another thirty-four-year-old who had decided it was time to settle down and start a family. Maybe he was getting married to Ms. Church for all the right reasons. He did trip my gaydar, but that

doesn't necessarily mean anything; evangelicals have been known to scramble my sixth sense about men. It's just that they do all the same things as a guy who's trying to pick you up. They stand too close. They smile too much. They look into your eyes with feigned sincerity and pretend to hang on your every word. All setting you up for the sales pitch.

Eric intercepted Thompson while the man was waiting for an elevator. I wasn't close enough to make out their conversation, but Thompson looked at his watch, so I guessed Eric must have asked him the time. I watched Thompson's eyes drift from his watch to Eric's shoes, up Eric's very pleasant physique, and finally come

to rest on the saint medallion around Eric's neck. I could tell by Thompson's smile that he knew precisely what it meant.

In adopting the Catholic pantheon of saints, the gay subculture has added a few of its own. There's Saint Marilyn, patron of blondes and the blond-at-heart. Saint Judy, the patron of drag queens and 12-Step programs. Saint Liz, patron of marriage and other hopeless causes. Saint Dolly, patron of big dreams and silicon. Eric was wearing a medallion depicting the Madonna--not the holy virgin, but the like-a-virgin. She who is the patron saint and protector of all sex workers. Or, as Eric likes to consider himself, "pleasure activists."

Beside me, Ms. Church was staring straight at them. Fortunately, Thompson's attention seemed to be completely focused on Eric, with none left over to notice us. I looked at my client. There were a lot of good reasons for her to be anywhere but here right now. Even if Thompson didn't spot her, there was always the risk that she would snap and blow everything. I tried to read her expression. How much of what she was seeing did she understand? The way that Thompson stepped into Eric's space, so close that they were almost touching. The way that Eric laughed a little too hard at some joke of Thompson's, and steadied himself on Thompson's shoulder. Soon, Eric would ask some inane question about the man's family. Ask to see a picture of his sister,

or something else that would give Thompson an excuse to pull out his wallet. An excuse to show that he was carrying cash.

My client startled me when she spoke. "Doesn't it bother you to exploit Eric like this?" She had not taken her eyes off of them.

"Eric is a twenty-two-year-old with a public high school education and two years of militia service," I told her. "He's bright, so he taught himself to read, a little at least. What exactly do you expect him to do for a living? Become a journalist? How about a computer programmer? A quantum physicist? Do people even *do* quantum physics anymore? Eric does what

Eric has to. And who's really exploiting Eric anyway? The guy who is willing to pay him \$300 an hour for sex, or the guy who'll pay him \$9.75 an hour for standing next to a burger-flipping machine?"

I should have stopped there. I didn't. "And if I were in your shoes right now, I would not complain about *other people* exploiting Eric."

She turned. The look she shot me would have made a cobra curl up and whimper. I admitted defeat and looked away.

Ms. Church had never pretended to like me, but she did need me. For now, at least. My firm has three listings in the videophone directory. There's a number

for "Nightwatch Security," which we use to solicit corporate clients. Then there's "Jennifer Gray, licensed psychic detective," which Jen uses to pull in the new-age crowd. Ms. Church had known what skills this particular job required. She had called our third line, the one for "Night Walker, PI--proudly serving the gay and lesbian community."

When I turned back to Ms. Church, she was staring at Eric and Thompson again, staring as if she could control the situation through sheer force of will.

"You don't have to be here," I said quietly. "I will tell you what happens. I have no reason to lie to you."

"No." Her voice was surprisingly soft. "I have to be sure."

Right on schedule, Thompson pulled out his wallet and showed a picture to Eric. I could feel the tension building in my client. Screw the bonus.

I told her, "Forget this. Go home. Ask him for a blood test before the wedding. It's a little embarrassing, but other people have done it."

She turned to me, eyes flashing. For a moment, I thought she was going to scream at me, but she spoke very slowly, picking each word with care. "Mr. Walker, you may not understand this, but I am very much in love with Joseph, and I wouldn't

care even if he did test positive for the gay gene. So what if he has the gay gene? We all have a propensity to some form of evil. Our own demon. But not all of us act on it. I don't care what's in Joseph's DNA. I care about what's in his heart. I have to know whether he loves me, or he's just using me."

I knew I shouldn't have said it, but I did. "With men, it's always a little of both."

We looked back in time to see Eric and Thompson get on an elevator together. The doors closed. I watched Mr. Church's expression slowly crumble. Her mouth go slack. Her lips tremble. Her eyes grow damp.

When she snatched up her purse and started for the elevator, I grabbed her arm. She jerked it free, angrily.

"Look," I started, "if you've seen enough, go home. I'll make a full report. You'll have your answer. But if we do this, we do this right. No unresolved questions, no doubts, and no ambiguous situations that he can talk his way out of. And that means we give them a head start. Fifteen minutes. To let things ... develop."

For a moment, I thought she might actually take my advice and leave. Go to the airport. Fly home to Atlanta. Wait for my call. Instead, she gave me an icy "*Fine*" and flopped back down on her chair.

While she sat there thinking about ... No--skip it. I don't even want to guess at what she was thinking about. I flipped on the throat mike under my tie. I had some final preparations to make.

"Sherman," I said, under my breath.

There was a slight buzz as the speaker in my left ear came to life, and then Sherman's sullen voice.

"Yeah, boss, what is it this time?"

The company that I purchased Sherman from claims that the program is supposed to adapt its word choice and inflection to suit its user. I'm not sure what it says about me, but my particular copy seems to

be evolving into an insolent manic-depressive.

I pulled the palm display out of my pocket. "Sherman, pull up the photos that I shot this morning."

"Yeah, boss, whatever you say."

Sherman displayed the first shot: a hotel maid about to clean a room. The angle wasn't right.

"Next."

Sherman obliged and produced an image I had shot a couple of seconds later. Still not the one I was looking for.

"Next."

Sherman pulled up a third.

Bingo. I touched a spot on the display and said, "Enlarge on this."

Sherman zeroed in on the maid's pass key. I pulled a piece of cardboard and a hole punch out of my pocket and went to work on a duplicate. I glanced at Ms. Church but she wasn't looking at me. I couldn't read her expression at all. She had put her dark glasses back on, and whatever was going on behind them would stay a mystery to me.

I checked my watch. Five minutes. Upstairs, it would be starting. Eric and Thompson. A first kiss. Eric would taste like that wintergreen gum he's always

chewing. Thompson would run his fingers through Eric's curls. Clothed bodies moving against each other.

I had never even seen Thompson until two weeks ago. He had never crossed me. Never wronged me. Never given me any reason to hate him. But I was about to destroy his life. Oh, he would probably get over losing Ms. Church. But his secret would be out. He'd be finished at his job. They'd never let him in a Southern Baptist church again. He'd lose his friends, his family. Maybe he'd be able to start over again. Get a job in a gay firm, move into the gay subculture, build a new life. It might even be good for him, in the long run. But I wasn't giving him the choice.

Eight minutes. Eric would be loosening the man's tie. Thompson would be lifting Eric's tank top up, sliding a hand over the supple, ridged muscles of Eric's stomach. Eric's arms around his waist. Eric's jeans pressed up against Thompson's tailored slacks.

I had not wanted to take this case. When Ms. Church called, I had turned her down. Then I turned her down again. And again. She was relentless. She just kept saying it over and over again: "But I have a right to know." Then she'd told me what Thompson does for a living, and who he does it for. The Reverend Senator Zachariah Stonewall. Just the sort of hellfire-and-damnation-spouting asshole my father would have loved. If my father

hadn't been dead for over four hundred years, that is.

Ten minutes. Their clothes would be in piles on the floor, thrown over the backs of chairs, lying on the bed. They would be learning each other's secrets. Does Thompson like to kiss, or to be kissed? Does Eric like to have his ears nibbled on? His neck? His fingers?

I hoped that Thompson was a jerk. I hoped that this woman beside me meant nothing to him, that she was just a convenient bit of camouflage he had acquired so that he could go on working at his wonderful job and fucking his beautiful men. I didn't want it to mean anything more complicated.

But then, I would never know. I would never know what he really felt for her. On bad days, did he think of her and smile? Were there special things he had never told to anyone else in the world but her? Moments they had shared? Did he daydream about the children they would have? Kicking a soccer ball with their daughter? Reading a bedtime story to their son?

Twelve minutes. By now they would know each other's private sounds. The little gasps, or moans, or growls a man makes when he forgets himself in sex. His intimate sounds, as unique as fingerprints. I wonder if the FBI keeps a file of them. They seem to know everything else about us. Well, maybe not about *me*.

"I have a right to know." She had said that over and over again. And damn it, she was right.

Fifteen minutes. I stood up. Ms. Church grabbed her purse and followed me into an elevator. I pressed the button for the 47th floor. She leaned her face against the glass, watching the world drop away beneath us.

"Have you ever been in love, Mr. Walker?"

Her question, hanging in the elevator air, surprised me. She had not looked up. The trees grew smaller in the distance.

"Yes," I said.

"With Eric?"

I laughed. "Lord, no. Whatever gave you that idea?"

"I've seen the way he acts around you."

Maybe she understood more than I had given her credit for.

"I just pulled him out of a bar fight once"-- a minor fib--"and he's been following me around ever since."

"Are you two sleeping together?"

Ah. I could see where this was going now. She was hurt, and looking for some way to get under my skin.

"No. Eric's too ... cheerful. I mean, *all the time*. It would be like having sex with a cocker spaniel."

She thought about that answer for a while.

"Don't you worry about him?"

"Eric's a smart boy. The militia trained him to fight, and he carries a taser when he works."

"That's not what I meant."

Another elevator passed us going down. A man and a woman, dressed for a party. Our own glass cage raced silently upward.

"You two aren't ... ?"

"No," I said again. Lord, wasn't this elevator ever going to arrive?

For the first time since we got on the elevator, she looked at me. "Why not?"

I almost took the easy way out and said that Eric was too young for me. But that wasn't quite it. The truth was complicated, and I didn't know how to make her understand it. Hell, I couldn't even make Eric understand it. Eric is just too ... innocent? No, that's not right. Eric has slept with more men than Mata Hari. And yet, somehow, he has never managed to fall in love."

And I don't want to be the first. I don't want to be the one who ruins the fantasy

for him. I don't want to be the one who can't live up to all his impossible twenty-two-year-old expectations of love.

Eric had once told me that while his body might have racked up the mileage, his heart was still virgin territory. But I don't want a virgin. I want someone who has been through the whole show before. Someone who has been hurt, and stepped on, and had every last illusion shattered. Someone who comes to me cautiously, knowing that falling in love is easy, and staying in love is hard, that passion dies, and most relationships are doomed before they start. Someone I can love as an equal, not as a student.

Someone ... like Ms. Church, actually.

Maybe that's why I had taken the case.

The elevator stopped. Our floor. We walked down the hall to 4717.

Thompson's room. I got the optic snake out of my pocket, unlooped it, and slid the strand under the door.

"What's that?" asked Ms. Church.

"It's a camera on a fiber-optic cable," I explained as I plugged the free end into my palm display. Then I whispered, "Sherman, record."

She grabbed my wrist. "I told you. With my own eyes. I have to see it with my own eyes."

I glanced into those eyes and wanted to

say something, but anything I could say would be stupid. So I just shrugged, and then I glanced down at the image on my palm display anyway: I don't go into a room blind, and I wasn't going in unless I was sure something was going on that Ms. Church needed to see. She was certainly going to get an eyeful. I put the palm display down on the floor and slid my duplicate pass key into the lock. The indicator light flashed from red to green.

The door opened quietly. Well, quietly enough. Eric and Thompson were making more than enough noise to cover our movements. From the doorway, I could see a pair of feet hanging over the edge of the bed: Thompson's. I stepped forward into the room and saw the whole picture.

Eric, on his back, a look of ecstasy smeared across his face. Thompson, his back to us, his face buried in Eric's neck, his hips grinding into Eric. I stood there, looking at them, reminding myself that I'm not a jealous person. Looking at Eric's beautiful muscles, tensing and relaxing in time to Thompson's hips. Looking at the expression on Eric's face, how it changed with every twinge of pleasure. How he bites his lip; how he opens his mouth; how he arches his back. I wondered if it was an act, or if he really enjoyed his work this much. If Thompson was really this good.

I must have gawked at Eric a little too long, because when I glanced back at Ms. Church, she already had the gun out.

2.

It was a 9mm. The sort of small gun that would fit in a lady's handbag, but is still capable of punching a nice-sized hole in someone. At the moment, this particular 9mm was about to blow a nice-sized hole in the back of Mr. Thompson. And from the angle she was shooting, it stood a good chance of blowing a nice-sized hole in Eric as well.

I lunged.

The gun went off and then I knocked her arm back. Or maybe I knocked her arm back and then the gun went off. For all my faster-than-human reflexes, my brain

wasn't working quite quickly enough to tell which happened first. She hadn't been ready for the gun's recoil, and my shove threw her further off-balance. Ms. Church caught herself on the wall and glared up at me, eyes like cold fire. For once I had no trouble reading her expression. She brought the gun back around toward me.

I caught her full in the jaw with an uppercut. It didn't knock her out, but it did knock her back and took her mind off shooting me for a few seconds. While she was disoriented, I risked a quick glance at the bed. Just in time to see Thompson barreling up at me.

I grabbed his arm and tried to roll him into one of those fancy aikido throws that

would have sent him flying across the room and smashing into the wall. You know, it's a real shame that I never had a chance to finish those aikido lessons. I keep meaning to, but something always comes up. Anyway, my feet got tangled and I wound up on my back with a hundred and eighty-odd pounds of fully aroused, naked Southern Baptist on top of me with his hands around my neck. It might have been fun under better circumstances.

"What the hell are you doing here?" he screamed at me, slamming my head into the floor for emphasis.

Even if I'd had a good explanation, I couldn't have said it while he was

throttling me. So when he lifted me up for another slam, I settled for a good head-butt to his face. I was rewarded with the satisfying crunch of my forehead impacting his nose. Unfortunately, all it made him do was grunt and start strangling me even harder.

I have *got* to start charging more for cases like this.

There was no room to throw a punch, and it felt like Thompson was going to rip my head off my shoulders by brute strength. I needed a few seconds of sustained eye contact to establish the mental link, but I wasn't getting those seconds. So I tried to get my hands at his face, but the blood from his nose was dripping into my eyes,

and I couldn't see what I was doing. *Too bad I'm not the blood-drinking kind*, I thought. I'm roughly twice as strong as your average human, but just as I found a grip on what I think was his shoulder, he smashed my head against the floor again, and the world exploded into reds and yellows.

I heard the shot and felt his weight shift. This time my brain was working quickly enough to pick up the small delay between the two events. It even knew what the delay meant. Thompson hadn't been hit; he was only turning to look in the direction of the shot. It wasn't much, but it did give me an opening.

I braced an arm under his ribcage and

heaved him up and off of me. I couldn't see anything, and my head felt like a piñata after a birthday party. I scrambled in the opposite direction until I found a wall. Steadying myself against it with one hand, I tried to wipe the blood out of my eyes with the other. Standing up, I saw ...

The Last Supper. I knew it was the Last Supper because it was just like the painting. You know, Leonardo Da Vinci and all. Except Jesus was a kid, and Judas and Matthew were fighting over the bill. And everything had a red tint to it, as if the painting itself was bleeding. Then St. Peter stood up and walked over to me.

Great. There's a loaded gun and at least two crazy people in the room, and my

mind has decided to fly south for the winter. Well, crazy or not, I'm not stupid. When I saw St. Peter about to deck me with a hay-maker, I ducked. There was the sound of breaking plaster.

When I looked back, it was Thompson, cursing, his fist stuck in the wall. He screamed at me, something incomprehensible. I grinned back at him. I hit him once in the solar plexus, which took most of the fight out of him. A second blow to the nerve center in the small of his back pretty much stopped his misbehaving. I should have hit him more, just to make sure, but my heart wasn't in it anymore.

Turning to take in the rest of the room, I

noticed that Ms. Church seemed to be suffering the after-effects of a taser dart. Eric had relieved her of the 9mm, which must have gone off when he zapped her. Still naked, he looked indecently pleased with himself. "Gee," he said, grinning, "and you complain about *my* line of work being dangerous."

I ignored him and picked my client up in a fireman's carry. Eric grabbed his clothes in one hand and my optical cable in the other and caught up with us as I was loading Ms. Church into one of the glass elevators. We started down. A couple of floors up from the lobby, I pressed the Emergency Stop button to give her a few more minutes to come around. I could have just carried her through the lobby and

out to a cab, but I didn't feel like trying to explain the whole situation to the hotel's concierge.

A group of women in an ascending elevator passed us. A couple of them pointed at Eric and started giggling. He grinned back, flexing his arms in a muscle-man pose.

I frowned at him. "Put your clothes on. And stop flirting." Eric pouted as he got dressed. He has raised pouting into an art form.

"You fucking bastard."

Ah, my client had regained consciousness.

"How nice to see you again, Ms. Church,"

I said. "I believe our business together has been successfully completed." I handed her the bill. "Payment of the agreed-upon bonus may be wired to this account number or delivered in cash to my place of business no later than--"

She tore up the bill and screamed at me some more. Something generic about damnation and burning in hell.

"People often have that reaction to my fees. Sherman, print another copy of the bill, please."

While my wallet printed out another copy of the document, I held the palm display in front of her. "Before you tear up this copy, you might like to take a look at the video

feed from the snake. Sherman, play the last recording."

She stared at the tiny screen, watching as the whole affair played out again. The camera's position wasn't very good, and even with a wide-angle lens it had missed some of the action. Still, there was enough there to warrant a couple of charges of attempted murder. And the whole situation would take a long, long time to explain to her family and friends. She glared at me when I handed her the second bill. But she didn't tear it up.

I started the elevator again, and Eric and I left her in the lobby. On the cab ride to the train station, I called Jen to let her know that the case had been resolved and we'd

be able to pay the office rent this month.

A couple of hours later, Eric and I caught the evening train back to Atlanta. My hunger would have to wait until we were safely home.

When we boarded the train, the monitor at the front of the car was turned to the Baptist News Network, playing the Reverend Senator Zachariah Stonewall's weekly talk show. The Reverend Senator was in good form tonight, from the looks of it, winding up some tear about how the Democrats and Republicans were selling out the country to "foreign powers," though he never seemed to get around to specifying just who those were. Stonewall's role on his show is to rant.

But even I had to admit he does it well. Stonewall does not whine. Stonewall does not complain. Stonewall orates. I wondered if the Reverend Senator would use this orating tone when he found out that a certain Joseph Thompson of his respectable Southern Baptist PR firm was one of "the enemy," a homosexual.

The Reverend Senator closed with a plea for the viewing audience to call the number on the screen, call now, with their generous donations to support the Christian Alliance Party's Young American Defense Militia program. Cut to scenes of fresh-faced teenagers and young adults camping, reading scripture, learning to shoot. It all looked frighteningly normal, like the Boy Scouts. Well, Boy

Scouts with assault rifles and body armor.

Eric sat next to me. On the monitor, the happy campers were using assault weapons to blow apart silhouettes of people with horns and tails. Eric ignored the screen. He settled his head on my shoulder and fell asleep less than five minutes after we left the station. I watched him as the train raced silently through the night, gliding over its single rail, with only the sound of the wind to remind us that we were moving at a hundred and fifty miles an hour. Eric sleeps so easily.

Life is strange. You do all the right things. You expose the villain. You save the damsel in distress. You beat up the bad guy, and you take some knocks doing it.

And somehow, when the day is over, you still can't sleep.

[Continue to Parts 3 & 4](#)

Night Walker, Parts 3 & 4

by Wrestlr

[M/M, vampire, MC, hypno]

Disclaimer: There's sexual vampirism, sodomy, and maybe a few other minor perversions in this. If you don't like that sort of thing, read something else.

Everybody in the story is legal age. Parts of this story may be autobiographical, or it might be all fiction--who can say?

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-

Night Walker

3.

It was one of those days, turning into one of those nights. And by that I do not mean a cute "one of those days," like when you find out those high heels you made your trick wear to bed last night have made your waterbed spring a leak, find out the hard way that your ex-boyfriend still has one of your credit cards, and learn from the vet that your small dog is actually a South American rodent that's about to enter its breeding cycle. No, I mean "one of those days" in the sense of a giant asteroid hitting the earth two blocks from your home, frogs raining from the sky, and some crazed promoter thawing out Boy George's frozen head and sending it out on

a comeback tour. One of *those* "one of those days."

A couple of hours after night fell, I decided to head over to the Inquisition to find my nightly "meal." I don't really have any sort of organized plan when I head out on the hunt; I like to vary my routines.

I call a cab, tell the driver to where to take me. He dictates the address into the auto-pilot, and we're off. It's past dark, and the cab weaves and darts through the bits of traffic.

As the cab heads uptown, the storefronts get trendier. The cabbie's got the radio on and some aggressively upbeat song bursts out of the backseat speakers. With my

keener-than-human hearing, it's excessive. "Can you turn that down?" I ask. He looks at me in the rearview mirror. I avert my eyes out the window. After a few moments, he twists the volume knob lower.

Down streets flanked with stores and coffee shops. Traffic thins to next to nothing. One vehicle, a van, seems to be dogging us. My throat tightens. *Is it Ms. Christian?* I feel the old dread. It can't be. I've painstakingly covered my tracks since our last encounter a couple of months ago--even moved halfway across the country here to lose myself in Atlanta's sprawl--but I know better than to underestimate her. I wait a couple of blocks before I dare sneak another glance out the back

window. The street is deserted, and I let myself relax a bit.

I can see little more than the back of the cabbie's head: greased-back black hair, thick neck, muscular arms resting on the steering wheel. The eyes that glance at me in the rearview mirror are brown. I scan his ID on the dashboard. Eastern European name. Hungarian? Polish? The smell of male-ness flowing from him is almost intoxicating.

A hundred years before Freud, there was Mesmer, who thought human bodies contained an invisible power, almost a liquid, which he called "animal magnetism." This force was more physical than the mental parlor tricks we today call

"hypnosis." Control the flow of the magnetism and you control the mind. Maybe that force is my food. Maybe Mesmer was right.

I'm a vampire, but not the bloodsucking kind; what I feed on isn't blood--or even semen. The one who turned me called it "soul force," in his quaint, religion-tinged way, but I think "life force" is more accurate. I'm not a scientist or a priest, so I don't know for certain. All I know is men have it, and I need it, and orgasm releases it, and sucking their cocks is the easiest way to get it. I never take more than I need, or more than they can spare. I stop before I take too much, before the point of no return.

I toy with the taste of the cabbie's hot fluids flooding into my mouth, how they would taste as I swallowed his energy. But he's driving, so I don't maintain eye contact long enough to hypnotize him. *Let it go, I think, there are plenty of others.*

The cabbie drops me off at the entrance of the Inquisition. As I pay him, I look him directly in the face, taking in the strong brow, the sensuous mouth, the well-formed chin. I hold his gaze as I pull out my cash. Habit. After a few seconds, his eyes glaze and his mouth falls open. The hunger roars through me.

But we're on a public street. Cars are moving here and there. I see pedestrians half a block away. My hunger is tempting

me to take dangerous risks. I break the contact. "Here," I say sharply as I throw the bills into the front seat. His body jerks. He blinks. I turn away and head into the Inquisition without looking back.

The Inquisition is a bar, all glitz and black metal and low lighting and dramatic angles. I'm not one to let aesthetics stand in the way. From the doorway, my eyes take a slow sweep of the place. No blondes in sunglasses. No sign of anyone resembling Ms. Christian or my pursuers. The air inside here rushes up my nostrils, heavy with the stink of cigarette smoke, beer, and bodies. My mouth waters.

I stroll into the bar. It's hopping. Dark, noisy, crowded--an "anything goes" kind

of place. The Inquisition has, as they say, a reputation. Deserves it, too. The kind of dive where things happen and everyone turns a blind eye. A really mixed clientele, if you want to glorify the regulars with that term, and tonight's crowd--and it's dense--is typically varied. The rough crowd looking to get drunk and raise hell. Upscalers slumming. Gay, straight, or some combination--no one at the Inquisition much cares. A few retro-Goths, arty bohemians, and college students looking for atmosphere, cheap booze, and free sex. Hustlers, hookers, the lonely, and the strange. These are my people, and I am happy to be among them.

I've been here a few times before. Not enough so they know me, but enough to

know them. I've never had any trouble here, though I don't always have the luxury of being picky. But I'm not looking for a long-term thing. One night is fine.

I survey the crowd, looking for dark glasses. The crowd is so thick, no one will notice me, which suits me just fine. I've picked up a dislike for witnesses. If I wanted to make a bad joke, I'd say that there are people who don't appreciate me very much and want to show it with a stake dinner--through my heart.

There--against the wall to my left. A quick glimpse as the crowd ebbs and flows, a human tide. Was that a young blond man in sunglasses? My pursuers wear a special type of sunglasses--it blocks my mental

connection and keeps me from taking control of them. Robs me of my major weapon. Unlike the bloodsuckers, my kind can't turn into bats or a mist or what-not. Sure, we aren't as vulnerable to sunlight, but we're just as vulnerable to beheading or a stake through the heart. Our mental trick is stronger, and that's our major edge. Those sunglasses cancel it. That's one reason I hunt in dark places like the Inquisition. A man in sunglasses stands out.

I move. I don't know if I've been seen, so I need to be somewhere else, just in case. I know an emergency exit through the back storeroom. I drill deeper into the crowd, bee-lining for it.

At the back of the bar, I finally catch sight of the man again when the crowd parts momentarily like the Red Sea. He's blond, yes, but no trace of the sunglasses. He's young--maybe 20. Cute but and he doesn't match the usual muscle-bound goon type that Ms. Christian favors. Blondy is almost angelic, working that college-boy look. Looks vaguely familiar in a generic way, but I can't place the where or why. He's talking to some chick; not the usual modus operandi. He catches me staring and smiles confidently. This is the fundamental happiness of youth in America: the world is theirs and they will conquer it.

There's one way to tell. I ride the eye contact into his head and give his pleasure

centers a good, swift kick. I hit him hard. When the mental orgasm starbursts through his body, he quakes. His knees nearly buckle. If he's with the people pursuing me, this is the part where he'll call in his backup and they'll move in for the kill. Or try to, anyway. But Blondy just blinks. When he can make his eyes point in the same direction again, he looks back at me, surprised, then grins again, like he's In Love or something. Which is good--those are the reactions of a regular man, not one of Ms. Christian's steroidal goons. I break the contact quickly. Maybe I was just jumpy, but I'm thinking I should still hunt elsewhere tonight. Maybe it's time to be moving on again.

He looks for me for a few moments after I

disappear. Hell, who wouldn't after what he just felt? He's probably thinking it's puppy-love at first sight. Yeah, well, we shared a moment, Blondy. When he doesn't catch sight of me again, Blondy gives up and goes back to hitting on his chick friend.

By telling myself it was just nerves, I calm myself down. By the time I'm sliding along the back wall of the bar, I'm practically laughing at myself for mistaking Blondy for one of Ms. Christian's thugs.

My belly growls--that snaps me back to reality. No time to be maudlin. I've got to take care of business; I've got to feed. I push my way through the shoulder-to-shoulder crowd, edging toward the back.

From the tiered platform to the side of the dance floor, I can observe. Okay, I'll be direct: not observe. Hunt.

The Inquisition is an old-fashioned bar, meaning it doesn't have those automated order-taking tables. No, you have to order the old-fashioned way: by yelling yourself silly over the deafening music in hopes that the bartender can make out what you're saying.

The guy behind the bar wears a monk's robe with the hood pulled back and a big rip from the collar all the way down to his solar plexus. A golden crucifix gleams against his smooth, tanned chest. His name is John. Or Jim. Or ... maybe Joe. One of those really common *J* names that I can

never keep straight. He smiles at me as I lean forward over the bar.

"Hey, Night," he yells. I notice he'd had to glance down, probably at a hidden display set to do face-pattern recognition on the regulars. Someone probably told him the regulars like it when he pretends to remember their names. He yells, "The usual?"

Hm, I wonder, exactly how much information has the bar got stored in that database about me?

I smile back. "Hey, cutie," I yell. "Just out of curiosity, you wearing anything under that robe?"

He winks. "You'll just have to find out for yourself."

John or Jim or Joe and I have been flirting ever since he started working here, but we've never managed to connect for-- well, you know what I mean. We were now at that awkward stage where we'd asked all the easy questions--"So what's your name? Where are you from? Where'd you go to school?"--and forgotten all of the answers. So we were kind of running out of things to say. I keep thinking I should take notes when I flirt, to avoid situations like this.

The Inquisition is on the verge of becoming the "in" bar this season. I watch some stripper in manacles and chains

dancing on the other end of the bar--I think he is supposed to be one of the heretics being imprisoned. I keep expecting to see the chains swing up and smack him in the face, but I guess he's had a lot of practice avoiding them.

The Inquisition went to this theme six months ago, and it already feels tired to me. Before this, it had been the Colosseum, and the theme had been Roman gladiators. I had actually found that one kind of amusing, if only because the centurion outfits they had for the staff had been so cute. Before that, it had been the Cruiser, and the staff had all been in Baptist Navy uniforms. Well, at least the music is interesting this time around--I had no idea there were so many rock groups

doing dance covers of Gregorian chants.

I take the drink that John/Jim/Joe hands me with another wink. He is already heading off to the other end of the bar where someone is waving a cash card, so I turn around to survey the crowd again as I take a sip. I can't shake that nervous feeling. I had kind of been hoping to run into Eric-- he can usually bug me out of this mood-- but he's nowhere to be seen. No one in sunglasses either, so I'm safe.

A disco clone slides up next to me at the bar. He keeps staring at me while he waits for his drink. Which is odd, because most of the clones won't give me the time of day. And I mean that literally--I asked one a couple of days ago, and he just sneered

at me. I take a careful look at this one, trying to figure out what he wants and what he has that I might want.

Like most of them, this kid is a walking advertisement for better living through chemistry. He has that sort of hyper-muscular build that you can only get through steroids, and that dizzy-happy look that comes with doing Bliss. I had tried Bliss once, just to see what it was like. Didn't much care for it. It was sort of like Ecstasy, only more so. It made me horny, and affectionate. And not particularly discriminating.

Still, you have to hand it to the pharmaceutical wizards. Where would gay men be without them? They came up

with steroids to make guys muscular, and Bliss to make them affectionate. Now if someone could only invent a drug that would also make them considerate, funny, and pleasant to be around. They could market it as a "personality pill."

I can't help but notice that my attentive friend is also sporting a hard-on. That's when I recognize him. "Hello, Lance."

"Hey, Night. Wow! The workouts must be going well--you're putting on some muscle there."

Lance uses that remark as an excuse to put his hand on my chest. Lance is not particularly subtle. Or well-informed. His sudden interest in me started a couple of

weeks ago, when he saw how much time Eric was spending around me and jumped to the conclusion that I must be rolling in money. I hadn't bothered to correct him on this point yet. After all, someone needs to teach the boy about the dangers of not doing his market research.

Lance lets his hand slide down my chest, and finally withdraws it about the time it reaches my navel. My brain knows that I don't want to sleep with Lance or feed on him--Bliss does weird things to the life force, and the last time I fed on a Bliss-head I was nauseous for three days afterward--but some other parts of my anatomy are starting to respond to his come-on. I find myself doing a visual inventory of his body, starting with his

legs and working my way up. Lance looks to be in his mid-twenties, and the boy certainly does have some very nice parts. By the time I get to his shoulders, my brain has come to the party as well, speculating on what he likes to do in bed, what positions we'd find ourselves in, what his life force would taste like. Then I get to the smile. Those slightly sharpened canines. Then those weird, unnaturally green eyes. That Bliss-coated expression. Somehow, I know sex with Lance wouldn't be nearly as much fun as the flirting. As is all too often the case.

I manage to extricate myself from Lance and push away from the bar, into the crowd. I tag the throat mike inside my collar and check in with Sherman: no

messages. Enough preliminaries--it's time to get on with the hunt.

I'm pushing my way through body after body. This time of night, pickings are easy. This man here, so fashionably dressed, bumps a gym-built shoulder into me as he tries to dance. "Sorry," he slurs drunkenly, not looking at me. I grin, savoring the feel of the energy inside him, like a housewife tests the flesh of a tomato before adding it to the dinner menu. Yeah, he's a good candidate. I might come back for him after I check out the rest of the buffet.

I move on. Pickings are good tonight. There's an urgency in the air that feels almost like sex itself. People are looking

to get laid. I can use that.

As if on cue, a dozen slumming young stockbroker-types bound into the bar, heading my way, loosening ties and taking off suit jackets. The men are tall, an array of blondes. One of the fine, thirty-ish women is stockingless in black Gucci sandals. She smiles at me. Suddenly, I picture her ten years younger. She becomes a humming, happy beanpole girl with suntanned legs and a cowlicky blond tomboy close-crop. The men lose years with her, turn into wide-shoulder soccerheads in plaid baggy shorts and gold hoop earrings and knotted sweaty rawhide necklaces. Yum.

Shoulder to shoulder, the brokers pass

without a backward glance. I sigh. Now would be the cool moment for my dinner *de jour* to appear. *Man of my dreams*, I say to myself, *come to Daddy*.

I settle on two young executive-wannabes leaning against the bar, talking. I size them up as I approach. Both are handsome twenty-somethings. Their suits are so much alike they could be clones: expensive jackets, power ties in the right colors, white dress shirts, crisply pressed slacks, shoes that practically shout "pricey Italian designer." One is short and dark, with a muscular body and angry eyes that dart around the bar as he drinks his beer. He's a firecracker. His buddy is taller, leaner, with sandy hair and a mild expression. They are unlikely companions.

When I'm beside them, I motion to John/Jim/Joe behind the bar. "Give me another hit of the usual," I say. "And fresh drinks for my two friends, too."

The businessmen turn and look at me. The shorter one is suspicious; the taller, merely curious. After a beat, they give their orders to John/Jim/Joe. By this point in my life, I've mastered the art of small talk with strangers. Sure, I know nothing about them except their names when I slide in beside them, but I know how to get them talking. I know how to shift the attention away from myself. For a moment, I'm afraid they're going to launch their business cards at me, but instead they offer their hands and we shake. The sandy-haired man is Beau. His angry

friend is Nick. By the second round, they start warming up to me. By the third, we're best buddies. I focus my thoughts as we talk, gently probing into their minds, setting things up to hypnotize them, if that's what I have to do to get them out of here.

Let's try this the old-fashioned way--the buddy approach, I decide. They're in town for a conference. I smile, feign interest while they fill me in on corporate life, how golf compares to tennis for schmoozing the boss, which cities have the best restaurants and airports, the stories behind their latest bonuses. Over their shoulders a couple of times as they talk, I catch sight of Blondy, the young blond guy I saw earlier in the crowd. He's hovering around the periphery as if he's

watching me. *Too late, Blondy, I think, catch me next time and you'll get your chance.*

I pay more attention to these businessmen. Subtly at first, then with increasing blatancy, I nudge their heads and the conversation toward sex. They're both only too willing to follow that thread, and soon there's a tension crackling among us, like ozone before a lightning strike.

Beau, I notice, is not paying much attention to me. He's trying to look around me at something. Or someone.

I ease over beside him, follow his line of sight. The crowd parts. A few yards away, Miranda perches on a stool, legs elegantly

crossed. Beautiful. Like me, she's predator, but of a different sort. She's wearing a Little Black Dress, her trademark, the equivalent of a tactical nuclear weapons strike on the straight male libido. Back erect, slightly arched to show off her proud tits. Aloof but sensuous--she has perfected this look, and I admit she looks damn good. In this low light, she looks completely convincing. She sips her drink, eyes cutting seductively right at us. No--right at Beau.

He downs the rest of his beer in a hurry. He's trying not to leer--he's so eager he's almost panting. I know what his flushed expression means. The drinks here aren't stiff, but I know what is.

The crowd closes, blocks her from view. I lean forward and practically yell so he can hear me. "That's Miranda."

Now he notices me. "You *know* her?"

"You could say that."

"She's hot!"

Which was true, if you like the type. "I didn't know you were into that."

"Huh? What'd'ya mean? She's *hot*."

The crowd parts, like a curtain. Miranda onstage.

"Her dick," I yell. "She hasn't had the surgery yet."

His eyes bug. "Her *dick*? That's a *he*?"

Whether I'm telling him the truth or not, whether Miranda is a real woman or not, isn't the issue. The issue is, I'm not losing this without a fight. Nothing personal, Miranda. To Beau, I yell, "You got it, ace."

"How do you know?"

I say, "I know a lot of the regulars. Her trick is to get straight men to pick her up. She gets them home, gets them so horny they don't care when they discover something unexpected in her crotch. Most of them stick around and fuck her ass anyway. She has an amazing kill ratio."

"Oh ... my ... *God!*" Beau yowls. Miranda tilts her head back and shakes her hair slightly. When she looks back at us, Beau's eyes are bulging and his jaw has dropped. She knows I've told him something, and she glowers at me before turning her back to us in a snit.

The crowd closes. When it parts a second later, Miranda is gone. She has yielded this hunt to me.

I grab Beau by the arm and the scruff of his neck and shake him gently. "Don't worry, dude--there's plenty of women here. *Real* women." Though I don't add that tonight I'll fight to the death before I let him go home with one. "You need to de-stress, big guy." Nick is watching us

closely. I let go of Beau's arm but keep my grip on his neck. I massage it gently but firmly, giving it a friendly squeeze and pressing up when he breathes in, then relaxing my hand and stroking down when he exhales.

"Ummm ... feels good," he says, letting his head fall forward a little.

"Like that?" By timing my strokes to the swell and fall of his chest, I'm hoping he'll come to associate the rhythm of his breathing with the rhythm of my hand on his neck. It's an old trick.

I slow my rhythm down, nearly imperceptibly, then a little more, and his breathing slows too. His eyes are shut.

His body language is relaxing. It's not a trance--he's starting to pass out on me.

Okay, so he's too drunk for anything subtle, like my ability to influence his mind. "Hey," I shout into his ear over the pounding music. I slap his jaw with my free hand. "Wake up. Don't pass out on me. The night's not over yet."

I can't hear what he says, but I think his lip form the phrase, "I'm awake," or some slurred version of it.

Time to get my agenda moving. "Must be tough on you guys," I say, "being on the road so much. By the time you get home, I bet you're ready for whatever it takes to get your rocks off."

Nick shoots me a hard look. They both sense that we've crossed a line, that we're not just making idle conversation any longer. "Yeah," Nick says calmly. "It gets to be a big problem sometimes."

I let the silence hang in the air for a moment. "I can take care of your problem," I say carefully. My eyes dart to Beau's face and probe at his head, then back to Nick's for a little of the same. "For both of you," I add.

They're both feeling the rush from my influence playing in their heads. They're horny. Beau already has a hard-on. Nick is at least half-hard and rising.

They exchange glances. Nick raises one

eyebrow. Two seconds later, Beau gives a small nod. They both turn their eyes on me again. Nick is the firecracker; if I control him, I control the situation--and his friend Beau too. I stare directly into Nick's eyes, a long, intense moment that results in his face going slack as the hypnotic effect of my gaze overwhelms him. I jerk my head toward the back door beyond the pool tables without breaking the eye contact. Into Nick's head I send the command [*follow*], and for Beau's benefit I say aloud, "Follow me." My tone is calm, authoritative, but the hunger pounds inside me like a wrecking ball.

I lead them out the back door into the alley behind the bar. I don't waste time on preliminaries. I drop to my knees in front

of the two businessmen. I reach for and unbuckle Beau's alligator belt, then Nick's, unzip their flies, tug down their slacks and their designer underwear. Both of them watch me: Nick's dark eyes are narrowed, Beau's more calm and steady. Nick's dick hangs heavily between his muscular thighs--thick, dark, uncut. Beau's is pinker, blue-veined, with a fleshy red head and balls hanging low and ripe. Dinner is served.

Beau first. I bury my face in his balls. Pungent odor of musk and sweat. His hairs tickle my nose. I open my mouth, slide his dick in, slowly bobbing my head up and down. Beau's dick swells to full hardness, filling my mouth impressively. Beau sighs and begins humping my face, fucking my

mouth with slow, easy strokes. I tug his balls with one hand, reach up to tweak his nipple with the other. He groans; his dick gives a sharp throb in my mouth.

I spit in my other hand and start beating Nick off, sliding his silky foreskin up and down the shaft. His dick is thick, and I can barely get my fingers around it. I pull Beau's rod out of my mouth and beat off both men together, a dick in each hand. Beau's low-hangers swing heavily between his legs. Nick's are pulled up tighter, hugging the base of his shaft. I look up at the two businessmen, then focus on Nick. This eye contact is all I need, and I ride it right into his head, probing at the pleasure centers in his mind and giving them a little tickle as I stroke their cocks.

Nick gives a startled gasp. I do the same thing to Beau, and his knees buckle. They stare down at me, astonished, and I grin back at them.

I alternate my attention on the two dicks in front of me, sucking on Nick's for a while, teasing him, teasing at his head, bringing him to the brink, then switching back to Beau's. I slide my hand under Nick's shirt, feeling the hard bands of his abs, the smoothness of his skin under my fingertips, the rough little nubs of his stiffened nipples. My other hand squeezes the muscles of Beau's ass, feeling them clench and relax, as his dick slides in and out of my mouth. I've got these two men wound tighter than a top, and their cocks twitch in front of me, wet from my spit,

arcing up, as hard as cocks get. Every time my mouth sweeps down on their cocks, I stare up into their eyes and enter their minds, nudging their pleasure centers with increasing intensity. Beau gives a little whimper with each downward stroke of my mouth. Nick groans loudly when I switch my attentions to him. I'm drawing music out of these two instruments of flesh in front of me. I'm a virtuoso.

Their excitement ripples into my mind. I sense it, feel it pulse in my brain, ratcheting up my hunger to higher levels. It's almost hell for me as well, teasing them like this, bringing them to the brink of shooting, only to draw them back again. But this self-torture excites me, whips me into a frenzy of expectation. Nick pumps

his hips frantically. His moans bounce off the alley's brick walls. When I switch back to Beau, Nick whimpers in frustration. Soon, Beau is moaning again, tremors shaking through his body as I work his dick ravenously while Nick watches us with feverish eyes.

I can't take the torment of my hunger any longer. I slide my mouth down Beau's shaft as I push into his mind with the command [*release*]. Beau gives a mighty groan, and his body spasms. His dick throbs in my mouth, and his hot load gushes into my throat. I suckle at his dick like a baby on its mother's tit, savoring the taste of his energy as it floods into me. I close my eyes in sheer pleasure. His strength flows into my body as Beau

crumples to his knees, dropping deeply into my thrall.

Nick is next. I skin back his dick and run my tongue around the flared head. My other hand glides under his shirt, squeezes the hard muscles of his torso. I leave his dick full in my mouth, my node buried in his pubes. My finger tease his balls, the heavy balls that hold that sweet, sweet load of his that will soon be gushing down my throat. "Yeah," he croons, "that's right. Work on those balls." I reach behind and run my hands over his ass, pull his cheeks apart, worm a finger around his asshole at the same moment my mouth slides over his dick. My eyes hammer up into his, and I send a mental orgasm through him, triggering his physical orgasm. His body

shudders and he cries out as his sperm jets out to join Beau's. His energy gushes into me, and I gulp it greedily.

I'm taking the last of it when the door leading to the bar flings open, silhouetting four people crowded in the doorway. I recognize Ms. Christian and her gang immediately--and behind them, Blondy. *Shit!* I think, and I'm already on my feet and running down the alley.

"Grab that cocksucker!" Ms. Christian shouts, and I hear them in pursuit.

I yank garbage cans down behind me; I hear someone crash into them, but I don't look back. The alley entrance is ahead. It seems impossibly far, and the footsteps

are gaining. I'm still groggy from my feeding, my coordination is off, and I stumble and fall. Someone lunges toward me. I kick out, landing my foot in his belly. He grunts, doubles over. I'm on my feet, lurching forward, thinking, *I'll never get away.*

Since my kind aren't as formidable as bloodsuckers in a fight, I need an equalizer. This one, which I'm clumsily trying to pull out as I run, was made by Smith & Wesson.

Garlic, stakes, crosses--we all know the list of things that hurt the bloodsuckers. Tasers aren't on the list because they weren't invented yet. Someone hits me with one from behind, and my body

explodes in pain, and I collapse, and my gun clatters away into the shadows.

Hands grab my arms and yank me back. Three men descend on me. I'm trying to struggle but I'm pinned down on the sidewalk. Manacles click around my wrists and ankles. The men roll me onto my back, frisking me, relieving me of my throat mike and palm display. I try to stare into my attackers' eyes, but their sunglasses block me.

The woman, Ms. Christian, walks up to me and squats down. "Hello, Night," she says. "That *is* what you're calling yourself these days, isn't it?"

I look into her face, but like the others, her

sunglasses prevent contact. My throat tightens with an emotion I haven't felt for a while: dread. Lucky for me, I hide it well. "Long time, no see, Ms. Van Helsing," I say, purposefully using her maiden name. "You're not still mad about your husband, are you?"

I can't see her eyes through her dark glasses, but her back stiffens. I've definitely hit a nerve.

Christian straightens up, just as an unmarked van screeches up to the curb nearby, a little too rapidly. "Put him in the van," she says carefully.

"Look," I say, "just make it quick." Across the street, in a group of dark-haired disco

clones heading for the Inquisition's entrance, I see a familiar shock of gold hair. Eric and his friends gawk as Christian's goons yank me to my feet and hustle me toward the van.

Christian chuckles--an evil sound, even for her. Her voice is soft. "Night, my friend, I've invested far too much time and energy on you to finish you off so quickly. We're going to drag this out as long as possible."

4.

I'm squeezed in the back of Christian's van, between two of her thugs. One is dark--Greek perhaps, or maybe Sicilian, with a thick mustache and curly black hair. The other is a red-haired giant of a man with muscles that squirm under his tee-shirt like rats in a canvas sack. A redhead, a Greek, and an angelic blond kid--these aren't Christian's typical Aryan goons; no wonder I didn't spot them immediately. Still, Red wears a crucifix around his neck, and on his left biceps there's a tattoo of Jesus' head bleeding from a crown of thorns. Another crucifix dangles from the rearview mirror. All that's missing is a dashboard Jesus. Ms. Christian knows

these things don't affect my kind, but she used to hunt bloodsuckers, so I guess some old habits die harder than others.

The dashboard clocks says it's a little past 2 in the morning. Ms. Christian drives, Blondy up front with her. She careens through the city, past factories and tire yards. Twenty minutes later, she pulls up in front of a ramshackle brick building, cuts the engine. Red opens the door and pulls me out after him. I'm tall but both thugs still tower over me. They remove the manacles from my ankles so I can walk, then Red and the Greek half-drag me into the building. Christian and Blondy are close behind.

A long, narrow corridor, flanked on both

sides by closed doors. I neither know nor care what this building used to be, but it looks abandoned now. From the looks of it, it has been deserted for quite some time. Funny--I thought the Baptist Militia had better resources than this. Ms. Christian stops before a door no different than any of the others. She punches numbers into the keypad that controls the door lock: *1776*. Figures. Right-wingnuts like the Reverend Senator Stonewall's Christian Alliance Party can be pretty predictable sometimes.

If I'm ever going to get a chance, this is it. I jab Red sharply with my elbow. His sunglasses mean I can't waste time trying to hypnotize him, but even with the wrist manacles, I'm strong enough to yank my

arms away while I've got surprise on my side.

I dash back down the hallway. Footsteps rumble behind me, but I stay focused on the stretch of floor before me, running as hard as I can. I wish the myths about vampires were true, that I could change into a bat and just tear out into the night, but that's just the bloodsuckers. As is, I can barely keep ahead of these bastards.

The door is directly ahead, like the gate to heaven. I fling myself against it. It bursts open, and suddenly I'm outside again, air rushing against me like a kiss from God Himself. I bolt down across the parking lot, around the corner of the neighboring building--and directly into a pile of

broken lumber. I plow right into it, legs flying, boards in the air. I barely hit the ground before Christian's men pile on top of me, cursing me, pelting me with their fists and feet, snarling like wolves. I give the fight everything I'm worth, snarling along with them, kicking and thrashing savagely. It's a lost cause, though--there are too many of them and I'm hampered by the manacles. It only takes a few minutes before they've got me face down on the ground. Ms. Christian has caught up and stands in front of me, her eyes wild with rage. She's yelling at Red: "You stupid asshole! You almost let him get away!" Red's face darkens, but he says nothing.

There's no fight left in me. The thugs drag me back to the door where I staged my

escape, and Christian opens it this time without incident. Surprisingly, the room is empty and completely ordinary. I don't know what I was expecting--maybe a stone dungeon straight out of a grade-B horror flick. Instead, it's just some windowless storage room. Concrete floor. Empty metal shelves lining the walls. Pipes rise from the floor at the far end, run up the wall, and exit through the ceiling. Red and the Greek unlock the manacles, pull my arms around one of the six-inch pipes, and fasten them back.

Ms. Christian is finally regaining some of her composure. She's grinning grimly. I still can't read her eyes through the sunglasses. "We're going to leave you now," she says. I know she's not doing me

any favors. She continues, "For a long time, actually. Typically, a vampire starves within four days if he doesn't feed. But some of them, the strong ones, can drag on for over a week." Her gaze roams down my body. "What do you say, Night? Feel like trying for the record?"

I laugh. "All this because your husband developed a taste for cock?" I shake my head. "You're so pathetic."

Christian clamps her jaw shut. Yeah, I scored a direct hit--lucky me. She forces a smile; when she speaks again, her voice is tight. "I've got one last surprise for you, Night." She turns to Red and the Greek, snaps, "You know what to do." She stalks out, Blondy trailing after her.

Red and the Greek step forward. I slide to the floor and coil myself. I'm expecting another beating, and I'm ready to lash out with my legs. To my surprise, though, they stop a few feet out of my reach. In unison, they undo their pants, let them slide down their legs. They start getting their dicks hard, start jacking. Their faces are blank; even through their sunglasses, I can tell their eyes are closed, their minds focused on whatever fantasies they need to get themselves off. Another time, I might have enjoyed the show. Red's dick lives up to the promise on his giant's body; it's a club-thick, scarlet, uncut, its head flaring out into a meaty little fist. The Greek's dick is proportionate to his tight, compact body: dark and roped with veins. His balls swing low between his thighs with every

stroke. I can just imagine the tasty energy in each man and, despite myself, my mouth waters.

Red's hand slides under his shirt and across his powerful abs. His hips pump--quick, savage thrusts--and his dick head winks in and out of his fist. The Greek's strokes are slower, more sensual. He spits in his hand and slides it passionately down the shaft of his cock, letting the sweet sensations sweep over him.

I glance at the door. Christian stands in the partially opened doorway. She's staring at her men's naked asses. I sneer at her, "Why don't you come over here and sit by me, Ms. Van Helsing? You'd get a much better view." Her face goes hard again.

Red is the first to shoot. Groaning, he arches his back as his load pulses out and splatters against the floor a few feet away from me. His body spasms with each spurt. When he's finished, he shakes the remaining cum off his fingers onto the floor. The Greek quickens his strokes. Sweat on his forehead. His balls pulling up tight. He whimpers when he cums, his load jetting out and joining Red's on the floor in front of me.

Both men silently pull up their pants. Without looking at me, they stalk out of the room.

"Sweet dreams, Night," Ms. Christian sneers.

"Bite me," I snarl back. It's a lame comeback, but the circumstances aren't exactly conducive to sparkling wit.

Ms. Christian turns off the light, closes and locks the door. I sit in the darkness. The scent of the two sperm-loads the men left behind wafts up to me, rich, tantalizing. My belly cramps with hunger. I tug on the pipe as hard as I can. It doesn't budge. The smell of their jizz is getting stronger. Now I understand why Ms. Christian had her men jerk off. I can't block out the sex odor. I close my eyes and think about how the one who turned me had died. Of all the ways for a vampire to die, starvation is the worst.

[Continue to Parts 5, 6, & 7](#)

Night Walker, Parts 5, 6, & 7

by Wrestlr

[M/M, vampire, MC, hypno]

Disclaimer: There's sexual vampirism, sodomy, and maybe a few other minor perversions in this. If you don't like that sort of thing, read something else.

Everybody in the story is legal age. Parts of this story may be autobiographical, or it might be all fiction--who can say?

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-

Night Walker

5.

There's no light. The room is nearly soundproof, and there's no sound from outside except the occasional shuffling of someone standing guard. I hear muffled talk when one comes to relieve another, but I have no idea how many shifts have passed or how long I've been here.

My mind wanders. If I were as strong as a bloodsucker, I'd be free by now. If I could turn into a bat or a mist, I'd be free. But those are not the gifts of my kind. We're a little stronger than normal men, but our mental trick is our main gift. Ms. Christian knows exactly what she's doing.

She used to hunt bloodsuckers. She's Van Helsing's descendant. Yes, *that* Van Helsing--the legendary vampire-hunter. Ms. Christian carried on his work.

"Christian" is her married surname. When she married, her husband joined her crusade. For a while, at least.

The Christians and their men were a fierce team; and when they hooked up with the Reverend Senator Stonewall's Baptist Militia, they got access to resources that made them even more formidable. They went after the bloodsuckers. My kind are fewer; being less powerful and more vulnerable than bloodsuckers also makes us less flamboyant. We're experts in stealth.

Still, one day the Christians ran across one of my kind. They ran across the one who turned me. This was before the Christians developed their "sunglasses," which filter out our hypnotic mental influence. Back then, the Christians believed religious icons would terrorize any vampire. They were cocky. Then Mr. Christian and two of his men hunted down and confronted the one who made me. I can only imagine their surprise seconds before his mental gift took their wills.

My kind--we can suck men and be fucked by them. We can let them suck us and we can fuck them, but we cannot casually cum in their bodies. That's what turns them, makes them into beings like us. The one who made me--he must have thought it

was ironic to make the Mr. Christian into a cum-eater like us. He fucked Christian, and he turned him. Then he sent Christian back to his loving wife. Who quickly found out about her husband's new hungers.

Ms. Christian, née Van Helsing, killed her own husband.

That's when she put her crusade against the bloodsuckers on hiatus for a while, so that she could hunt down the one who made me and others like him, like me. She learned quite a bit about us very quickly. Developed a whole new set of tools and strategies in her quest.

When her team developed the filtering

"sunglasses"--that's when the battle turned against us. My kind is used to running, using our mental trick to evade capture and slip away. Suddenly, that trick was useless. Ms. Christian's team found we weren't as tough in a fight. And they found that we can starve.

The one who made me--he suffered a fate like this too, and not more than a year ago, and for the first time in four hundred years I was alone.

Back then, my family were farmers. We worked a small parcel of land, part of larger estate belonging to a landlord whom we never saw. His father had left the estate many years before and made the long journey to the New World, and our

landlord had been born there. His father had died there. I had been to the estate house once on an errand with my own father, and I had seen the painted portrait of the old lord, a striking image of a man who looked ten years younger than my own father. One of the maids told me the young lord was himself the old lord's mirror image.

When I was sixteen, a man and expected to marry soon, the news came that the young landlord was coming to the estate for a visit, his first. He, like his father before him, was said to be a good man; his father had been well-liked. The servants, my family and the other tenants--everyone busied themselves preparing for his arrival.

I didn't want to marry. Even then, I knew what I really wanted. I had my friend in the small township neighboring the estate, though we both knew we would have to put aside our furtive puppy squirmings soon and marry women, begin our own families. I and the other boys like me bumbled into the awareness of our bodies without a name for what we were. Our words were different then--we had only "sodomite" and "sinner." It never occurred to us that what went on between us had any possible bearing on the ultimate likelihood of our marrying women and procreating. But those duties had seemed far away until now. At the banquet for the lord's arrival, which was to be attended by people from across the countryside, the surrounding villages, even the imperial

court itself, I was expected to find a suitable lass, and our parents would negotiate the marriage.

The day before our landlord's expected arrival, I took a pack and a knife and went into the forest to walk the line of traps. We supplemented our meager farm's output by selling furs. As I walked the ridge overlooking the road leading into the estate, I saw a small group of men on horseback. Messengers, no doubt, or guests from the court arriving early? Horses for riding were a luxury few in our region could afford, so I crept to the edge of the embankment to see them better.

One of them, seeing me, raised his hand, and I waved back. The mossy precipice

edge crumbled and I tumbled forward down the embankment, landing in a heap beside the road. The men laughed. My fall had been short--only my pride was injured.

One of them, more elegantly arraigned than his fellows, reined his horse up in front of me. "Are you hurt?" he asked.

The cloak that enveloped his head and shoulders alone cost more than my family saw in a year, and I stared, stunned by its opulence. I disentangled my limbs and stood up, shook my head, speechless.

He nodded at the knife in my belt. "Are you a highwayman, then? Come to rob an innocent traveler?" His tone said he found

humor here.

"No, sir," I said, finding my tongue. "I'm but a farmer here, on this estate."

The horse bobbed its head and snorted, impatient and wanting its stable for the night.

"A farmer here?" The man surveyed me for a moment. He lifted his hands and pulled back the hood of his cloak. The face from the portrait regarded me, more handsome and strong and majestic in real life than I had imagined. I blinked, fearing him a vision. His eyes were luminescent silver, as were the long nails of the hand he offered me. Those eyes spoke of power, of control, lessons my eyes would

come to learn well. Even then, I think I knew he was more than human. He said, "Then, you know my name."

In the sagas, the gods have every power except one: they could not say their own names. For this reason, they invented men.

I took the silver-nailed hand in my own and knew I was not dreaming. "M'lord," I said, bowing.

"Leave us," he said to his fellows, dismissing them. "We shall catch up to you shortly."

"M'lord?" one of them asked.

"Leave us," he said firmly, and they did.

To me, he said, "Do you ride?"

I nodded. He helped me onto his horse. He turned the stallion into the woods. I held on carefully because, though I knew how to ride, it wasn't something I had the opportunity to do often, and I was more than a little awed.

He took us to a hunter's shelter deep in the woods, almost an hour's ride. How did a lord, just visiting this estate for the first time, know of a place that I, who had been there my whole life, had only seen once long ago?

"You are very beautiful," he said to me as he led me into the single-room hut. I knew nothing of seduction. I knew little of love-

making. I knew plenty about rutting, though, and I knew this was to be different. All I knew was that his eyes kept swallowing me, every time I looked into them, and I would have done anything he asked.

All he asked was that I remove my clothes--hardly more than rags--and let him touch me, taste me. And immediately he surpassed everything I knew from my juvenile fumbings with my friend from the township. My body responded to him with need, urgency like I had never known before. It responded to the hunger in him with intense arousal.

What I knew of sodomy was that sex between men is like no other sex. Strength

and aggression lead men to violently attack each other's bodies as they struggle to become closer. They fight against the fundamental erotic dilemma--the desire of two singular beings to become one. This was different. There was no fighting, only me sliding deep into the pits of his eyes, and me yielding up my strength as he touched me in undiscovered ways, drew my body deep into unmapped territories of desire. I could not refuse anything he asked of me.

When he presented me with his own sex, I became absorbed in the miracle of him, of his cock. It was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen, and also the most frightening. In it, I saw wars fought, kings murdered, and spears thrown. But to be

honest, the symbolism may have come later--right then, the real thing was there in front of me, and it stunned me. When soon he slaked his thirst on me, all I knew was euphoria.

Later, after I had awakened and he smiled at me, in that first flush of emotion that would grow between us, he mounted and helped me onto the horse behind him. He rode us into the estate. The other vassals and the townspeople were gathering for the welcoming feast, about to begin. They lined the road into the estate when news of our approach spread.

The stallion trotted us along the noisy crowd lining the road, undeterred by their cheers and shouted greetings. Children,

caught up in the spectacle of one so highborn and respected among them, ran after us. I could barely see the blond heads of the children in a blur as they raced along. It would make a nice painting, I thought. This was before the invention of the photograph, so capturing memories was an art as inexact as memories themselves. To be most effective, the faces of the children would need to be painted in a blur, the way all children's faces truly are. That is something I only came to understand later, a little later in our time together, after he turned me into something like himself. The faces of mortals, these children--they blur as they run; they blur as they grow and change so quickly; and they blur to keep those like myself from loving them too

deeply, for their protection, and also for
ours.

6.

Noise shakes at me. I'm only dimly aware of it, dwarfed by the hunger raging through me. I hear voices. I try to raise my head but can't quite manage it. Open my eyes. The lights are still out--I have no clue how much time has passed since I was put here.

In the hallway, one man is saying he doesn't know if he should do this, that Ms. Christian wouldn't approve. Another voice, younger, says he doesn't care, that he knows what he's doing. I curl myself. If I'm to be getting another beating, I want to give as well as I get; with my hands cuffed around the pipe, I coil for leverage.

The door opens. Light spills in. I squint against it. Outside, a dark-haired guard, hanging back. Blondy in the doorway. The room explodes when he flicks on the overhead lights, and my eyes cramp. I won't let myself turn away--I'm not giving them the satisfaction.

Blondy closes the door behind himself, leaving the guard in the hallway. Just Blondy and me. Behind his sunglasses, his eyes are unreadable, and unreachable.

Some part of me expects the cavalry to come charging in to save the day. You, reading this, must be expecting the climax soon too. You must be expecting a happy ending.

This is the point where the Greek poets would offer up the handy intervention of the gods to get things moving forward. *Deus ex machina*--"god from the machine." The gods appear, tell the mortals how to solve their problems, and the story advances to its happy conclusion.

This is the point in my little drama where Apollo would be lowered from the rafters on pulleys. From the wings, an earthly voice--mine--is supposed to utter the great promises, as if they came from the mouth of the understudy who dangles uncomfortably a few feet off the floor. Greater singers than I, having to get the essential story moving past minor obstacles such as being shackled to a six-inch pipe in an abandoned warehouse,

have resorted to Apollo. No other way out of these manacles. Apollo must order them to open. And promise an escape.

Here is what is missing: no one has mentioned an escape, other than death. I would be supposed to obey, unthinkingly, the command from the deity. My manacles would mysteriously snap open, and I would leap out of this storeroom and disappear into the night, to safety. I would disappear into the embrace of those like myself, who would see that I was fed, and clean my wounds, and nurse me back to health.

But I've never promised a happy ending. Especially not after what Ms. Christian did to the one who turned me and the

others like me. She's a killer. I never promised an escape. I said I would get us to where we are. Even if I believed in Apollo, or gods--even if I thought this blond youth standing before me would believe him--I cannot do it. This blond young man, standing uncertainly before me in those dark sunglasses, is not my cavalry. Though beautiful, he is not Apollo. Apollo does not appear; we are what we are. If I owe nothing else to the dead, I can at least refrain from wheeling out Apollo.

"So, Mr. ..." I say. My voice, unused to being used lately, is raspy.

"Christian," he says. "Taylor Christian."

I keep my expression carefully blank.

"Her son," he says helpfully.

Yeah, I can see the family resemblance now--that's why Blondy looked so familiar when I first saw him. Aware of what I'm confronting, I say nothing, reveal nothing.

"I wanted to see you for myself, one last time," Blondy--er, Taylor--says. "Hunting you down ... It's become--I dunno--I've never seen my mother so obsessed."

He pauses as if he expects me to say something. I don't. Maybe I'm finally learning to keep my mouth shut.

"Did you know she and Reverend

Stonewall got into an argument over you? He wanted her to keep going after the real vampires, the ones that suck blood."

Okay, *that* hurt.

"He was televising her kills," he says. "All those good people watching the Baptist News Network love a good spectacle. A weekly segment on hunting down and killing one of Satan's undead was doing wonders for his fundraising. Reenactments, mostly, but sometimes they'd send a camera crew along and get it live. He got mad when she started hunting your kind. He didn't want to hear about your kind and your unholy lusts."

I think to myself, "*Unholy lusts*"? Hell,

kid, who writes your dialog?

"His audiences wanted blood and gore--"

"*Real* entertainment," I insert helpfully, though he doesn't seem to notice my sarcasm. I'm wondering why he's telling me all of this, wondering what he's trying to tell me and what he wants from me.

"Yeah. They had a fight and he cut off her funding." Well, at least that explains the low-rent digs where I'm currently ensconced. "But she kept right on anyway. She's been obsessed with getting revenge ever since you turned my father--"

"No, that was someone else. She killed him a year ago."

"But you were his--what's the word? Lover'? Can something like you even love?"

My expression betrays nothing. "Yes," I say carefully, "on both counts. We can and do love." I can't help looking around me at the empty room. "Pity I can't say the same for you--seems to me, my kind are a lot more human than you are right now."

Taylor's face hardens. He hasn't been vampire-hunting long, certainly not long enough to be able to conceal his emotions. But then, anger is a hard emotion to hide. Like hatred, anger is too pure.

"You're going to die," he says flatly.

No shit, I think, allowing myself to sneer a bit.

"It's been four days, and you're going to die soon. She's amazed you've held out this long."

"Just stubborn, I guess."

I can't see his eyes though the dark glasses, but the rest of his face looks uncomfortable. "Listen," he says.

"I'm listening."

"That mental trick, that thing you did to me in the bar ..."

I stare hard at the dark lenses.

"I want you to do it to me again." When I don't react, he says, "But don't get any ideas. I don't have the key to your chains, and neither does the guard outside the door. Besides ..." Taylor turns in profile and eases the glasses up an inch, holding them there with his index finger on the nosepiece. Blue eyes, I notice. He pulls his finger away, and the glasses drop back into place on his nose. I get the idea. "So," he says, turning my way again, "no funny stuff."

He eases the glasses up again. I meet his baby-blues, and ignore the hunger that twists my guts, and ride the contact into his head, probing at the pleasure centers in his mind, hitting them hard, sending a pulse of pure pleasure ricocheting through

his entire body as I whisper the word [*horny*] into his thoughts.

Taylor gasps, so startled by the intensity of what's racking throughout his nerves that he nearly chokes. He stumbles back several steps, almost falling, and during that production his glasses drop back into place. Damn. That breaks our contact, and moments before I would have had him, too.

He leans, panting, against the wall. "Oh, hell," he gasps. "Oh--fucking--*hell!*" Then he stands, walks back over to me, stopping just a few feet out of reach, and says, "Again."

I say, "Huh?"

He's got an erection in his pants, a nice one from the lump it's making, and the smell of his energy and his arousal this close makes my mouth water.

"Again," he orders helpfully, pushing the glasses back up with one finger. I meet his eyes, slide into his thoughts; but this time, I don't do anything. He waits. "Well? C'mon!"

Taylor waits a second more, too long, and then his face starts to go slack as the hypnotic effect spreads through his mind. I send the command [*freeze*] into him, and his finger stays put. The glasses stay put. I have him. I direct him [*remove*] and he pulls the glasses away from his face, drops them.

That's perfect. As long as I can keep eye contact with him, even as weak as I am, I can keep control of him. I can do this.

I can feel him trying to fight me, but he can't. His cock is hard, body flushed with his arousal, and my hunger fills the small room like the sound of a jackhammer. The smell of him makes me salivate.

Taylor obeys the commands I send into his head. He can't help himself. The command [*closer*] makes him walk up to me. The command [*unzip*] makes him free his hard-on from his pants. With my wrists still manacled around the pipe, I can't use my hands, but I manage. I make him extract his rigid rod from the folds of his boxers. The smell of his arousal has my hunger

singing in my head, just as the need for release is singing harmony through his. He's got a nice dick--circumcised, slight upward curve. I push my head toward the head of it. I lick it, kiss it. I'd love to run my gaze along his sleek torso--I put him at about age 20, 5'10", 155 pounds--but I have to stay locked onto his eyes, onto his mind, while I slide my mouth over his meat and suck him. Tomorrow, he will remember nothing more than the sensation.

I suck him, teasing at the meal inside him until my hunger demands satisfaction. I don't have time to enjoy this. I hit his pleasure centers again, and I push deep into his mind with the word [*release*]. Taylor groans and his whole body spasms, and his dick throbs and spits his load into

my throat. At the moment of his orgasm, I tap into the liquid strength within him and suck it out along with his cum, to sate the hunger inside me. His dick is a straw, and I drink deeply.

Taylor's force floods into me. Guys his age are at their sexual peak, and he has nearly enough to slack my desire. His is sweet, rich, vibrant. Filling. I break the connection reluctantly. His body has gone limp. Draining his life force has left him unconscious, in a tractable state resembling a deep sleep or a trance, and it will last several hours, until his body has time to recharge and replace what I've taken.

With his mind in this receptive state, I

don't need eye contact. I can send my instructions directly into his quiescent mind, and he will follow them. Easy enough to have him stuff his limp cock back into his pants and zip them. Easy enough to have him retrieve his sunglasses and put them on. What comes next, though, will be trickier, and I'll need additional energy to pull it off.

Taylor acts on my instructions. "Guard!" he yells--or rather, his body yells. "Hey, guard!"

After a moment, the door opens. A head eases around the edge. "Yeah?"

"I think he's dead," I make Taylor announce. I for my part am curled on the

floor, motionless.

The guard isn't the brightest bulb in the scoreboard, and I'm counting on that. If he detects anything amiss here, anything unusual about Taylor's behavior or that slight flatness to his voice as he mouths the words I send into his head, the game is lost. The guard is bright enough to be skeptical, though. He says, "How do you know?"

"He hasn't moved since I came in, and he's not breathing."

The guard says, "We should call Ms. Christian."

Taylor says, "We need to make sure first."

You know how pissed she'll get if this is a false alarm. Come see if you think he's dead too."

I hear the guard sigh. I can smell his life energy, stronger as he walks over to me. I can hear the fabric of his pants crinkle as he kneels down. How close?

"I can't see a damn thing in these glasses," the guard grouses. His voice sounds very close to my face.

"Do you think he's breathing?" Taylor says. "Try holding your glasses in front of his nose. If he's breathing, it'll steam up the lenses."

"I dunno about this," the guard mumbles.

Still, I hear the click of an ear-piece as he takes his sunglasses off.

The guard isn't particularly graceful either; he pokes my nose in the septum with his glasses almost hard enough to make me jump.

I can sense his face directly in front of me, inches away. I officially "wake up" and open my eyes. The guard gasps and yanks himself back from me, but my eyes have already locked onto his. Pale green, I note, with a little ring of gold around the pupils.

He crab-scrambles backward until his shoulder hits Taylor's leg, but he can't break our eye contact. I give his pleasure centers a good, swift jolt, and he gasps

again. The mental orgasm engulfing him throws off his coordination, and he falters to the floor. I keep up the contact, and a few seconds later his expression turns vacuous as the hypnotic effect overtakes his mind.

Guard's name is Billy; it's no problem to pull that out of his surface thoughts. He's very handsome--Ms. Christian certainly knows how to pick them--and his clothes bulge with muscles in all the best places. I'd love to get him naked, get a look at his body, but I don't have time for that kind of luxury. I send the order [*approach*] into his head. His eyes stay fixed on mine as he crawls over to me. I have him unzip and pull out his erection. It's a beauty.

I don't have time for niceties--we could be discovered at any moment. Still, when I take his cock in my mouth, I suck on it gently, savoring the feel of his silky foreskin against my tongue, the sweet pre-cum that slides out of the hole.

The smell and taste of him--the promise of the meal inside him--intoxicate me. I suck more eagerly, opening the back of my throat to swallow as much of his sizeable cock as I can. Billy's swollen meat rubs my tonsils and I nearly choke. I can't pull away to breathe. The moment is now, and I send the command [*release*] into Billy's head. The first spurt of his load hits the back of my throat, and I start to drain his life energy to sate my hunger. I swallow hungrily.

Time to get things moving. I'm still chained to the pipe, but that don't mean I helpless. First things first--I order Billy to put his clothes back in order and resume his post outside the door. I have other plans for Taylor, though.

I lock my eyes on Taylor's. His mind is still quiet, receptive. What it's receiving from me now is a stronger kind of connection. I can send not only my orders but also part of myself into his head. If you have a religious bent, you could consider it a kind of possession; I prefer to consider it more like what it seems to me: hitching a ride.

Now I'm looking out through Taylor's eyes at the husk on the floor, my body,

temporarily empty. Hm--looks like four days shackled to that pipe have not been kind to me. I control Taylor's body like a marionette. It--*he*--turns and walks to the door. Past Billy. Out into the hallway beyond.

Oh, sure, I could probably walk right out of the building now. But I can't hold on to Taylor's mind for very long. Sooner or later, I'd snap back into my body, and then I'd be right back where I started. If my body is still alive, that is. So I've got to get the keys to those damned manacles and get my body out of there. And I'm on a deadline.

Taylor's memories tell me I should head this way. At the end of the hall is a locked

door with a keypad. Fishing through Taylor's memories doesn't turn up anything useful--I don't do this often enough, so my access is pretty hit-and-miss--so I try the same number that Ms. Christian used to unlock the storage room door: *1776*. The red light on the lock turns green, and the lock clacks open.

I'm heading through the part of the building where Ms. Christian and her thugs have set up shop. I pass by some kind of break room. There's a TV blaring. Red and the Greek sit at a table with two other men, playing cards and drinking beer. I guess waiting for me to die has gotten a little tedious for them too.

I don't have much more time to waste.

Another door into another hallway. Who designed this labyrinth, and where is its minotaur? Never mind--I'm walking past Ms. Christian's war room. She has her back to the door, intent on the blinking red lights and accompanying notes on a wall-mounted map. I don't recognize the city, but it's not this one. Probably planning her next hunt.

Without turning away from the map she says, "Taylor? That you?"

"Yeah," I say, fishing desperately through Taylor's memories. Does he call her "Mom" or "Mother"? Is he polite to her?

I could rush in there. I could try to kill her with my--Taylor's--bare hands before her

goons can come storming in. I might even manage it. I could end her campaign right now. But I don't have that good a grip on Taylor's mind, and I have things I need to do instead before my time runs out.

Ms. Christian doesn't say anything else, and she doesn't turn away from the map. Whatever relationship she has with her son, clearly the hunt comes first.

I move on. Taylor's memories tell me that's the door. It's unlocked. Another storeroom. Cabinets. I open a drawer. A throat mike, palm display, and fiber optic snake: Sherman's peripherals. I pocket them quickly. From another drawer, I haul out a small ring of keys. The spare set. One of them fits the manacles.

I hear an explosion. Down the block or right next door--who can tell through these thick walls? I hear Ms. Christian snapping orders. That's when something jolts me. Not Taylor--nothing here. Something's happening back at my body. That breaks my concentration, and I lose my grip on Taylor.

I snap back into my own body. Someone is shaking my shoulder. "Night? Night, wake up--we've got to go."

I turn my head. Eric hovers over me, looking anxious.

"Huh?" I say. Okay, so I'm too disoriented for eloquence.

Eric glanced worriedly at the door. "Your partner Jen, she set off an explosion on the other side of the complex as a distraction. Won't keep them busy for long. They'll be here any minute," he whispers urgently. He disappears around the pipe. I hear something snap, and the chain no longer holds me. "We have to get out of here. Can you get up?"

I nod. My legs are stiff from disuse, shaky, but somehow they work. Eric drops the bolt cutters and helps me to my feet; he wraps my arm across his shoulder, and we stagger out into the hallway. Billy lies crumpled on the floor. Apparently Eric thought he was just napping and decided not to take chances.

I'm hearing people running in other parts of the building. They know something's up and they're heading our way.

Eric and I hit the door, and we're out in the night air. It cuts through my grogginess; I take a deep breath and sigh happily. Eric dumps me into the passenger seat of the car parked outside.

"How did you find me?" I ask as he starts the engine.

He gives me a big grin as the car jumps forward past deserted buildings. "Your partner. Remember Jen? Jennifer Gray, licensed psychic detective.' Actually, it was Sherman. When they tried to access your files, Sherman notified Jen about

someone trying to hack in and tracked the connection back here."

Jen. Yeah, I knew there was a reason I took her on as a partner when I started the agency. She's a resourceful woman; she'll be fine.

"So, where are we going?"

Eric glances at me. "How does the Gulf coast sound?"

"Fine by me," I say. "But what about Ms. Christian? Eventually, she'll catch up with me again."

"Maybe, but not for a long time. We'll deal with that when it happens."

I settle back into the seat and stare out the window. "Okay," I say. I'm still weak and a little dazed, and I'm quite willing to let Eric make the decisions for the time being.

"Look in the glove compartment," Eric says.

I open the compartment and pull out a sheath of papers. It's a list of rest stops, parks, and public toilets. Places men go for sex when they don't want anyone to know. I look at Eric, and he grins.

"I downloaded that this afternoon. It's a list of all the gay cruising spots between here and the Gulf. Don't worry, Night. We'll make lots of stops. You'll feed like a king."

I shake my head and laugh. "You're fucking amazing, Eric."

"And don't you forget it," he says. He's grinning, and his eyes have that spark I've seen many times before. He sets the autopilot and sits back to let the car drive itself. "There's just one catch," he says.

"What's that?" I ask.

"Me first. Okay?"

He spreads his knees. He's got a hard-on already, and I have days of feeding to catch up on. Even by Eric's standards, this is a pretty blatant invitation to party. Me--well, this is one party I'm definitely going to attend. I reach over and squeeze the

back of his neck. "You talked me into it," I say, boring my gaze into his head. He gives a little gasp as I run a ripple of joy through him.

Eric swallows hard, trying to grin seductively through his eagerness. The way he bites his lower lip, anticipating, charms me. He unsnaps his pants. Works them down a little off his hips. Boxer shorts, emblazoned with cartoon-pictures of Marvin the Martian. I've opened more than my share of boxer flies, so I manage his easily, and I haul out his sizeable erection. His cock stands up and salutes me, an old friend. I give it a few strokes, and Eric shudders from how good I'm making him feel.

He's the guest of honor. My face bends toward his and we kiss briefly. I detour downward and tag his nipple through his shirt with my tongue, tweaking its partner between my finger and thumb. He moans, an encouragement. So I tug up his shirt and lick my way down his tight belly, pausing to swab around his navel. "Tickles," he giggles, which reminds me how young this man is.

I push his cock out of the way (for now) and nuzzle his balls, lapping at them. Massage his thighs. My tongue slides up his balls, up his shaft, then down. I can feel him tensing in anticipation. It's time for the main event. I look up at him and smile, and he grins back for a few seconds before sustained eye contact dulls his

thoughts and eases him into that sweet mental fugue state. Everything is lost in an impenetrable haze of sex. From there, it's short work to finish him off and feast on what he feeds me.

I sit back, sated for the moment. "Thanks," I whisper and kiss his passive face on the cheek.

I turn on the radio, and the car tears down the highway into the night.

7.

Eric has gone out for the evening. Here in this new city on the Gulf coast, where we've been holed up for nearly three weeks, he makes his living the same way he always has. We had to have a way to make ends meet. Tonight, he's out working his trade in some bar, and I'm hanging around his apartment.

At first, we stayed in a lot, in his new apartment, where I fed on him every night. Over there is the bed, where I fed on him that first night. Over there is the couch where I fed on him last night. But I need more than just Eric can provide, so I still hunt.

Earlier tonight, I went down to the beach. It's quiet here--not a lot of tourists this far away from the hotels--so most of the men are locals. The moon was up, turning to low waves to quicksilver. About a half-mile down the beach, there's the remains of a hurricane-ravaged pier, and close by are several abandoned fishing shacks. Abandoned except for the kids who sneak down there sometimes to drink and brag and make out. And except for the occasional person out for a walk on the beach.

He stood with his back to me, looking out over the water. He was lost in thought, unaware I watched from less than ten yards away. His back was broad, muscular. His legs and arms and the V-

shape of his torso told me he led an athletic life. He wore a pair of baggy shorts, nothing else, and his ass filled them nicely. A gentle breeze rustled his hair, which looked blond in the moonlight. At first, I thought of Taylor, and my gut knotted in fear. But no, this man just resembled him--same blond hair, similar height and weight.

I hungered, and there was no one else around to see. This man would be an easy mark.

The sand hid the sound of my footsteps as I came up behind him. "Hi," I said, to get his attention.

When he turned around, I nearly gasped

out loud. He looked amazingly like Taylor. Taller, more muscular of build, not as blond, probably more what I'd call "handsome" than "cute," but quite a bit like Ms. Christian's fair-haired son. For a moment, I almost panicked. But no, he was just a handsome stranger named Luke.

There are wrecks of shacks around the remains of the pier, abandoned now except for the occasional groups of teenagers who come down here to get drunk or fuck. When my gaze entranced Luke a few seconds later, I took him into one of those. When I got him out of his shorts, his cock had already risen to meet me like an old friend. After that, I drained him, and he came, and his mind slipped into that fugue state. I left him there to

sleep off his trance.

So for now, my hunger is at bay. Now, while Eric is out at some bar, I'm hanging around his apartment. The TV is turned to a movie channel: some action-horror movie. I've seen it before. The hero is blond and for a second I mistake him for Taylor too, before I shake my head and notice his really bad bleach job and tell myself, *Get a grip.*

The hero onscreen runs into a pitch-black subway tunnel after the trenchcoated vampire. I'm thinking, *What self-respecting bloodsucker would wear something as cumbersome as a trenchcoat into a subway?*

Don't worry. The cowardly vampire sneaks off under cover of darkness, trenchcoat and all. The hero emerges empty-handed but unhurt. *Sheesh!*--is a little realism too much to ask? Anyway, the hero is upset about the bloodsucker's escape, knowing the vampire is going to keep killing until he's stopped. The leading lady consoles him. Which for some reason involves taking off her clothes and seducing him. Not that the hero puts up much resistance. I guess saving lives can wait until after he gets laid.

I stroll into the kitchen, grab a coke out of Eric's refrigerator, then walk back to the big main room of his apartment. He's over on the bed, giggling underneath some

dark-haired, nearly naked Italian kid who's chewing Eric's neck. How did he get back in here without me hearing him? I watch them for a little while, sipping my coke, until Eric finally realizes I'm there.

"Oh--hey, Night!" he says, trying to sit up. That doesn't work, so he switches tactics and rolls over on top of the Italian kid. He gives him a kiss, and then turns to me. "This is Vincent, my new boyfriend. Vince, this is Night."

I look Vincent over. Dark hair and the same unnatural green eyes that all the disco clones have. There's a tattoo, some kind of retro-Celtic pattern, on his left shoulder. He's wearing a saint medallion and boxers. Marvin the Martian boxers.

Probably a gift from Eric. I nod my head, by way of a hello.

Vince looks me over in return. "Hey, old man."

They go back to kissing. I feel my gut tighten, but I remind myself that I am not the jealous type, and that it's a good thing that Eric has stopped mooning over me and found someone his own age. But that doesn't make it any easier.

I turn away from them. I don't know why this should bother me. I have always known it will end this way.

And that seems strange, so I stop and think about it. Because somehow, I know that

all of this hasn't happened yet. If I still believed in the future, maybe this might be some kind of precognitive flash; but when you're immortal, belief in the future is the first thing to die. Still, somehow I know that, right now, Eric is at a bar, meeting a well-built Italian boy named Vincent; right now, Eric is in the process of falling in love, *really* falling in love, for the first time. What I'm seeing here hasn't quite happened yet. But it all will. Right down to the details: a boy named Vincent, green eyes, and a gift of Marvin the Martian boxers.

I finish my coke in a long swallow. When I look back at them, Eric and Vincent have moved to the couch, where they're eating pizza and watching TV. And giggling.

Vincent looks up at me with his strange green eyes. "You're still here? Why?"

He's right of course. I have no business here. It will end this way, and there is nothing I can do to change it.

I'm literally saved by the bell. The doorbell, which someone is ringing now. Okay, now *this* distraction I can handle.

I open the door. It's a blonde man, and I'm ready for the inevitable hallucination that it's Taylor. In fact, I've been standing there for a couple of seconds waiting for my mind to shake off the illusion when I realize: this really *is* Taylor. Standing on our front steps. No sunglasses, but definitely Ms. Christian's boy.

"Hi," he says, then stops, as if uncertain what to say next.

My pulse goes through the roof. I'm tensed for a fight, waiting for Ms. Christian and her goon squad to come crashing through the door, or the back door, or the window. But--nothing happens.

"Uhm," he says, "I realize you have no reason to trust me and we didn't part on the best of terms, but ... can I come in?"

"No," I say, firmly. "What do you want?"

"I'm ... not sure." He looks uncomfortable, nervous. He's looking down. "I guess I wanted to apologize. And to give you this."

I recoil from his outstretched hand as if from a grenade. But kamikaze runs are not Ms. Christian's style, especially since her falling-out with the Baptist Militia. After a moment, I recognize what he's holding out. A palm display. A throat microphone. A fiber optic snake.

"You, uh, left these," he says, helpfully.

I say, "Thanks," curtly, and scoop the items from his hand.

"Don't worry. Mom doesn't know I'm here."

I ignore him as I plug in the cables.

"Sherman?" I say into the mike.

A moment of static, and Sherman's voice

comes back with, "Yeah, boss?" Jesus, he's been offline for three weeks and he already sounds bored to hell with me. I make a mental note to look into the equivalent of Bliss for electronic assistants.

"She threw me out," says Taylor, and I suddenly have a burning desire to figure out why he's here. "She found out about me and guys, and she thinks I'm tainted now."

I don't say a word.

"She's gone back to hunting the blood-drinking kind--better ratings and more funding. And she doesn't know I'm here, either. I went to St. Louis and took some

random trains to throw her off the track, just in case she was having me followed."

Much as I'd love to hear more about the country's fascinating mass transit system, I decide to cut to the bottom line. "Why *are* you here?"

"Uhm, would you believe me if I said I can't get you out of my head?" Pouty puppy-dog eyes. Oh, sweet Jesus, not the pouty eyes.

I say, "No," firmly.

"Every since you did that--well, whatever it was you did--it's like there's a piece of you still inside me. That's how I found you; it's like we're connected."

Which might explain why I've been seeing him in other people for days now. Still, I can tell from his expression: he's telling the truth.

"You can end this right now," he says. For a second, I think he's proposing something that involves disposing of the body afterward, but he continues helpfully.

"You could turn me into a vampire like you, and then the whole Van Helsing line comes to an end. My mother will be the last vampire hunter."

I've been around long enough to know that's probably a pleasant fantasy, especially as long as the Reverend Senator Stonewall can milk the hunt for ratings and donations. The original Van

Helsing wasn't the first of his kind either.

Most people make this proposition in terms of, "Oh, Night, please make me immortal," or, "Please, Night, initiate me into the dark, secret mysteries of your kind," or some other romantic fantasy that tells me they have no clue what is really involved. I have to admit, this is the first time I've heard it pitched quite like this. Still, my expression must tell Taylor I'm not buying it. He looks hurt, as if he's taking my lack of trust personally. Imagine that.

"Besides," Taylor says, plowing gamely forward, "these past couple of weeks, I've been thinking about you a lot. I think we could be good for each other."

Which surprises me, especially when my gut reaction says he might be right. "I beg your pardon?" I say. He's giving me those same lovesick-puppy eyes he gave me at the Inquisition the first time I saw him. I glance over at the couch, where Eric is stretched out face down, hands happily stacked under his chin. Vincent straddles Eric's hips and massages his shoulders with confident, strong strokes. Taylor doesn't seem to notice them, probably because they're not really there, and I'm still seeing things that haven't happened quite yet. This seems like it can't be happening either.

"Dammit, Night, what I'm trying to say is, I'm in love with you."

Well, that's a show-stopper, as far as I'm concerned, but Taylor seems to think the festivities are just beginning. He moves in close and kisses me, slipping his tongue into my mouth like a wedge of ripe melon. At first, I'm too surprised to kiss back, but I get over that. This kid is a good kisser: his tongue twists in my mouth like a Congo eel. His hands roam over my body, which I have to admit feels mighty fine. I can smell the desire in him, and that lump he's pressing into my thigh can only be an erection. My cock is rising too, eager to join this little hoe-down. Taylor's hand finds it through my pants and gives it a gentle squeeze.

Part of me is yelling, *What are you doing?* The rest of me is yelling back,

Shut up and do it some more. I have to admit Taylor may be right about our connected-ness; this has a very *right* feel to it.

Don't ask me why I'm going along with it. Pretty soon, we're in the bedroom. Naked. Taylor on his back, looking up at me with love in those happy-puppy eyes. Me kneeling between his spread knees, leaning over to claim a condom from the nightstand. He grabs my wrist, whispers, "No."

"But--" It's not my snappiest comeback, but right now a conversation deeper than moans and the occasional "oh, baby" is the last thing on my mind.

"I know," he says, and, "It's okay. It's what I want."

"I'm a little rusty at this making vampires' stuff," I say. "It's been a while."

"You'll do fine," he says, and pulls himself up to kiss me.

I nuzzle against his neck, gently nipping it, aping my blood-drinking cousins. My mouth slides down his chest. I flick my tongue lightly over his nipples and then suck on them. Taylor combs his fingers through my hair.

I push his knees further apart and hoist his legs up around my torso. After I squirt some lubricant over my fingers, I run them

down the crack of his ass, probing for the pucker of his asshole. When I find it, I push in, first one finger, then two.

He pulls my head to his and kisses me again. Slowly, inch by inch, I push my cock inside him. When I'm fully in, I stay there, motionless, staring into his eyes. Taylor looks back at me, lips parted, his eyes bright with excitement. I tickle at his pleasure centers, then bend down to kiss him again. I start pumping my hips, and Taylor moves in response, matching me thrust for thrust. His hands slide down my back and squeeze my ass cheeks, pushing me deeper inside him.

We're fucking face-to-face. Taylor squeezes his ass each time I pull out, and

ripples of pleasure wash over me. "You're good," I laugh. My dick feels like it's encased in tight velvet. "Really good." Taylor laughs and kisses me, pushing his tongue deep inside my mouth. I increase the tempo of my thrusts, pumping into his ass with deep, hard strokes. He reaches down and tugs on my balls. In response, I bend down and suck hard on his lips, growling, and Taylor wraps his arms around me in a tight bear hug. I feel the wildness surge through me. Taylor's dick is hard, pressing up against his belly.

I'm getting close. I give another thrust and feel myself taken to the edge. I gasp, "I'm ready to shoot. We can still stop before--"

"No," he growls. "Give it to me." He pulls

at my nipples, staring me right in the eye. I shove myself into his head, and I shove my dick hard up his ass, as deep as I can penetrate. My body spasms and my orgasm rushes over me. I cry out as my load shoots deeply into the velvety darkness inside Taylor. He holds on to me tightly, legs clamped securely around my hips. I thrash around until the wave drops me crashing on the shore. I collapse on top of him, panting, my dick still full up his ass.

We lay like that without talking, or even moving, except for the rise and fall of Taylor's chest against mine. His body is already beginning to turn. His stomach knots, and his body cramps. Taylor has his eyes clamped shut. "Something is

happening to me," he says. "I can feel it."

If I remember from my own experience, he's feeling something that could be extreme pain or extreme pleasure, and he's having trouble telling them apart. I hold him close, feeling him tremble in my arms. "Shh," I whisper, though he's not saying anything, "I'm here. You'll be all right in a little while." I hold him for the next couple of hours as his body works through the transformation.

It's time to get moving, and moving on. I get up, get my clothes on. I help Taylor get dressed too. Already his tremors are quieter.

I reach for the phone and call a cab, trying

not to stare at Eric and Vincent kissing on the couch. Looks like Eric is about to start getting on with his life. Good to know I'm so easy to get over.

It's been a while since I had someone to look after. Maybe this will be good for me. And anyway, it's time I moved on. The cab arrives in minutes, and I put my arm around Taylor to help him stagger out to it. I dump him in the back seat. "He's a little drunk," I say to the cabbie, who watches us in the rearview mirror.

I head back to close Eric's front door. Inside, Eric and Vincent are slipping off their boxers. They're kissing, and Eric is stretching himself back on the couch, drawing Vincent down on top of him.

They're both hard, and I note that Vincent is generously endowed.

I could stay and watch, but instead I side with discretion, for once. I back out, closing Eric's door behind me. The memory of their erections stays with me like a painting, even though this technically hasn't happened yet. My past is a huge museum filled with images of the men I've known, and I bury the portrait of Eric and Vincent together inside it, among images of Taylor, Luke, Eric, the guard from Ms. Christian's base, the men from the Inquisition, and others going way back. I decide, glancing over my stash of memories, that I've had a pretty full life so far--but not so full that this door can't be shut tight.

