



M&M PRESENTS:

**All
Hallows' Eve**

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Mandy M. Roth

**M&M Presents:
ALL HALLOWS' EVE**

A paranormal romance duet

With stories by

Michelle M. Pillow

And

Mandy M. Roth

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ISBN 1-58608-251-5

New Concepts Publishing

Lake Park, GA 31636

www.newconceptspublishing.com

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A Midnight Seduction

By

Michelle M. Pillow

Chapter One

"Tick or teat, smell my feet!" a little voice chimed. Audrey Hayes looked up from the shop counter and smiled. The round cherub face of a four year old was painted red like a demon, but the big brown eyes looked better suited to a cute little puppy dog.

"Ew," Audrey flinched, shaking her head and wrinkling her nose in mock disgust. "I don't want to smell your stinky feet. Gross!"

The child giggled and Audrey loaded his little plastic bucket down with candy. The kid's dad was a customer and he smiled kindly, urging the boy to say thank you.

"Tank you!" he chirped, before remembering he was a scary demon. He held up his hands to make claws as he growled.

Audrey jumped back and pretended to be scared. "Oh, no! Don't hurt me!"

The boy giggled and they left. Looking around her shop, she sighed. She'd owned the Dorian Greenhouse since her mother died three years before, leaving it to her. Her mother had been a witch, well a 'naturalist'. Audrey had always teased her that she was a witch. Her mother had just always smiled and said, "You never know, dear, you never know."

Audrey had been pretty close to her mother. Clara had been eighteen when she got pregnant with her by the captain of the football team. She'd never met her father.

Audrey grinned as another group of monsters and a sorely outnumbered princess ballerina came in for candy. She liked to stay open late on Halloween for her customers' children. It was, after all, her favorite holiday. The kids got a kick out of walking through her spooky haunted greenhouse out back. She'd hired a few high school students to watch over them to make sure no one and nothing was hurt--like her plant inventory. They also rattled leaves around to scare the kids. It was all in good fun.

Outside it was evening. The sun had just set and she'd be closing her doors in about an hour. Not many kids seemed to stay out past dusk trick-

or-treating anymore. She couldn't blame the parents. It wasn't like when she was little. Neighbors had known each other back then and there was no 'razor blades in the candy bar' scare to contend with. Audrey wasn't sure if that was just a myth or had actually happened to someone, but if she was a parent she'd not take chances.

Frowning, she sighed as a wave of loneliness rolled through her. She went to reload her candy bowl with tooth-decaying goodness. What was she thinking? She'd never be a parent--not unless she met a man with a ready made family or she adopted. Part of her wanted a baby desperately, but a serious infection when she was little had left her sterile, so she knew it wasn't possible. Anyway, with no prospective man in her life and no love life or sex life to speak of, the idea of a family never seemed so far away.

The door chime went off and Audrey made her way back to the counter with the candy. A man stood just behind the front display, a look of distaste on his handsome face. Brown hair spilled in gentle waves to his shoulders, framing his dark features. She felt her heart speed up. His profile was to her as he glanced around--strong European nose, bold lips, perfectly chiseled features. Her body grew hot and she had to keep her knees from buckling by leaning on the countertop for support.

Damn! He was gorgeous, like a Greek God sent down to torment mortal women with his mere presence. Her whole body came to life just looking at him. It was strange for her to react so strongly to a man, but she was instantly drawn to him.

Audrey took a deep breath trying to calm the very wanton sensations causing hot moisture to gather between her thighs. Her eyes closed and she got the strangest flash of being leaned over the countertop and fucked by him from behind. It was so real that she could practically feel his cock inside her.

She shivered. What was she doing? This man was probably out with his kids and wife! Any second now the happy family would come trotting through the door, and the wife would be a gorgeous supermodel, and they'd both speak Italian and....

Her thoughts faltered as he turned and his gaze met hers. The spark inside her continued to grow at his look and she felt the strongest urge to jump over the countertop and wrap her arms around him. He blinked, smiling slightly, his firm lips curling up at the side.

As he came from behind the front display into view, she saw he wore tight black leather pants. They molded to him like a second skin. He had tight calves and strong thighs with a large bulge in between them. His dark shirt was just as tight and Audrey wondered what it would be like to rip it off him right then and there.

What is wrong with me? Say something clever, her mind yelled, even as her throat went dry. Say something! Anything! Just stop staring at him and picturing him naked.

"You're a little old to be trick or treating aren't you?" Audrey forced a laugh, continuing to eye the handsome man. Her voice wasn't as strong as she would've liked but at least the words came out light.

"I am looking for Clara," the gorgeous man stated.

Audrey was disappointed to note his voice only held the barest trace of an accent. Damn. She'd been so sure he'd have a strong accent. Still, his voice was wickedly low and smooth enough to give her chills. Altering the fantasy playing in the back of her mind, she felt a wave of desire again assault her. Oh, yeah, his voice would do just fine.

"I'm sorry," Audrey answered, doing her best to keep up the polite smile she gave him. It was hard to talk with her heart in her throat. Her mind raced for what he'd said, and finally she answered, "Clara's not here."

The man came forward and she saw a look of desperation cross in his eyes. "I must speak with her--tonight. Please, tell me, where might I find her? She's ... expecting me."

"Listen, I'm sorry. Clara was my mother. She died three years ago in a car accident," Audrey said, keeping her voice light. How on Earth did this man know her mother? Clara had looked young, since this would've only been her thirty-ninth year.

"No," he said, more to himself and she could but wonder at it. He glanced around and then turned to study her. "You own this place?"

"Yes," Audrey answered with a small nod. The door chimed and a group of children rushed in. Audrey smiled at them and then glanced at the handsome stranger, "Excuse me one moment."

"Are ... are you like your mother?" he asked, ignoring the fact that she walked away from him.

Audrey sighed. Great. Just her luck. She'd finally feel a spark of burning desire for a man and he'd only want to talk about her mother. It wasn't the first time. Her mother had always naturally drawn attention to herself. Couldn't this one have just been married? She ignored his question, politely teasing the kids. Peeking through the corner of her eye, she saw he looked very annoyed by the interaction.

When the kids were gone, he stated, "Clara never gave out candy and dressed up for All Hallows Eve. It really isn't a time to celebrate."

Audrey blinked in surprise, looking down at her outfit. Her long sleeve black t-shirt had a skeleton on it but she'd hardly call that a costume. "How do you know that? How exactly did you know my mother? Who are you?"

His mouth opened to answer and he looked uncomfortable. He glanced away, before placing his palms flat on the counter. "I'm Porter. Are you sure it was a car accident that killed her?"

Audrey nodded. The memory of it brought her pain and she had to fight down the burning of tears. "Yes. Strangely enough it was caught by a news crew filming a local festival. She was hit by a drunk driver in broad daylight. It was very ... sudden."

"I'm sorry to hear that," Porter answered. "Very sorry."

"Thank you," Audrey nodded. The whole affair was a blur. She barely recalled the funeral, except as a bad dream. "Now, how did you say you knew my mother?"

"I didn't," Porter returned. He began walking away from her, craning his neck as he looked around the shop. "Tell me, do you know why she called this Dorian Greenhouse?"

"Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray. It was her favorite book. That's what she told me," Audrey answered. "She was eccentric like that."

"No," Porter said, laughing slightly. "She named it after your father, Dorian Risdon--Lord Dorian Risdon."

"Ah, I think you're mistaken, sir," Audrey chuckled. "My father's name was Rodger Hayes. He was an all state quarterback at her high school. Mom was a cheerleader. They dated, along came me, end of story."

"No," he said, almost absently as he stopped to look at a pattern of off colored brick on the wall. It formed a circle with a dot in the middle. A slow smile curled the side of his mouth and she again had the insane urge to kiss him. He moved to walk past her, stopping as he drew near. Leaning over, he actually sniffed at her. His lids lowered over his dark eyes and he murmured almost dreamily, "You smell very good."

"Ah...?" She was at a loss for words. Pleasure ran through her, choosing to express itself in the most primitive of forms--by building as cream in her thighs. He smelled wonderful too, very masculine, almost dizzyingly so.

A small sound started in the back of his throat and he leaned closer, breathing deeply. Audrey held very still, wide eyed, as his warmth radiated from his cheek to hers. His eyes closed, he quietly stated, "Lavender."

"Oh, ah, I have some seeds over there," she answered, too stunned by all that she was feeling to pull away. Every fiber inside her reached for him, as if she knew him. She didn't move.

Porter cleared his throat and pulled back as he continued past her to the wall. Speaking as if nothing had happened, he stated, "Your father wasn't a quarterback. He is Lord Dorian Risdon, a master vampire."

He said it so seriously and her senses still whirled with the potent force of his nearness that Audrey was stunned to momentary silence. She suddenly began to laugh. "Oh, okay then. That would explain my mother's complete obsession with hating Hollywood vampire movies for being too unrealistic of the vampire species."

"You don't believe me?" he stated more than asked.

"Ah, no. I don't." Audrey moved to where he stood. Making her tone professional in her annoyance with him and very irritated with herself for feeling such a strong attraction to him in the first place, she asked, "Would you like me to show you the lavender, sir?"

"Yes," he stated, briefly shooting a hot glance down her body to her thighs. "I'd love to taste your lavender as well."

Audrey gasped, unsure if the blood should rush to or from her face at his bold words. He turned the full force of his smile on her and she watched him reach towards the wall.

"But, unfortunately, we don't have time for that now. Perhaps a rain check?" Running his hand over the patterned brick, Porter grinned. "And you'll believe me about your father soon enough. He'll be very happy to see you again."

The wall beneath his hand began to swirl and move, blurring as the pattern began to twist around. Audrey drew back, blinking in disbelief. Her jaw dropped and still no words came out.

"Sorry," he said, not appearing to be truly apologetic. He reached to grab her hand. "But if Clara's dead, you'll just have to do."

Chapter Two

"Clara's dead? You're sure?"

Porter looked up and nodded at Lord Dorian Risdon. The old vampire had short black hair and walked with the regal aristocratic air of a long dead nobleman. His black eyes looked almost eerie in contrast with his white skin. He eternally looked no more than twenty years old, though he'd been around just as long as Porter had--since just after the dawn of time, or so it seemed.

"I spoke to Clara five years ago. She was fine," Dorian whispered.

Porter watched a flash of pain cross the vampire's features, so small a glimmer only one who knew how deeply he felt would sense it. Dorian loved Clara, more than he'd loved most. She was the only one to bear him a child in all his years. And though Dorian had wanted to raise the child as his own, Clara had persuaded him to give the girl a normal, human upbringing. Clara herself was half fairy, half human and knew the dangers of the dark realm. Dorian had reluctantly agreed. Their supernatural world was no place to raise a child.

"If she'd been killed by a supernatural, we would've been told of it, wouldn't we?" Dorian asked.

"It was a human accident," Porter answered softly, sensing his friend's sadness. He knew that the man would grieve for Clara when no one was around. He respected his old friend and didn't push the issue, didn't give his condolences. But, he also had the vague sense that Dorian was hiding something from him. They'd known each other long enough to be past the need for words. Porter had liked Clara and grieved silently for her as well. Dorian knew that.

"And the child?" Dorian asked.

"Your daughter's sleeping. She fainted coming through the portal."

Dorian nodded. They were in his study, an old part of the ancient castle--hidden just beyond that of normal mortal reach. The dark realm was filled with the supernatural, separated to keep the races from intermingling. Humans were afraid of the supernatural, and the supernatural were wary of humans. "She's here? You brought my daughter here?"

"It's All Hallows Eve in the mortal realm. If she's the last of her line then demons will be out looking for her in the mortal world. What else was I supposed to do? We need her bloodline. She needs to get pregnant tonight." Porter flashed a big grin. "I guess that'll make you a grandpa."

Dorian frowned at that. "This does change things. I was expecting Clara. But, I can't very well impregnate my own daughter. Someone else will have to do it. If she doesn't conceive...."

"I know," Porter said, nodding his head and turning serious.

"Is she pretty?" Dorian asked. "Does she look like Clara?"

"She is beautiful--reddish brown hair and dark blue eyes like her mother. She's taller though than I remember Clara being and her face is different." Porter nodded. Clara had been petite like the rest of the fairy kind. "You'll be proud."

Dorian turned his dark eyes on him. "Her baby must be part human, part supernatural."

"I know," Porter repeated. He lounged in a thick red chair, lightly tapping his fingers along the chair's arm. Slowly, his eyes roamed over the large marble fireplace to where a giant portrait of Dorian and Clara hung. "Who did you have in mind?"

"The supernatural blood must be pure, born into power not brought," Dorian insisted.

Porter's face fell, not liking the way his old friend was looking at him. This time when he asked, the words were short, spoken through tight lips. "Who did you have in mind?"

"You did say she was beautiful," Dorian said. "And you're a pure blooded lycan."

"No, absolutely not!" Porter denied. "There is no way I'm sleeping with a human."

"She's half my blood. All I have to do is awaken her powers," Dorian said. "Then, she'll not be all human. She's already a quarter fairy from her mother."

"No," Porter stood, shaking his head. "I'm not going to sleep with a human. They're ... fragile. I'd kill her. What about Evan or Lucien?"

"Evan's lifemated and Lucien is a two foot troll," Dorian answered dryly.

"Ah, but he's a pure blooded troll," Porter said, almost desperately.

"I will not give my daughter to a troll," Dorian stated, glaring at the very idea.

"My kind do not mate with fairies," Porter insisted.

"But she's only a quarter and you yourself said that she's not like Clara physically." Dorian smiled. "We are old friends. I trust you with my life and my daughter."

"Don't worry, I'll find someone for your daughter. It ... it just can't be me," Porter said quietly.

"There was nothing between you?" Dorian asked. "Did my eyes lie to me when I saw the spark in you for her?"

Porter sighed. Yes, he'd felt a spark, a hot liquid spark he didn't like one bit. Her desire had smelled like lavender, with the faintest trace of mint. A lycan would kill armies, conquer worlds, just to bury his face within her thighs. He was a pure blood, born a lycan. With a smell like that, he'd tear her body apart before he sated his desires. And there was more. He'd

felt his body being pulled towards her. It saw something in her and wanted to mate. The idea scared him. "Don't ask this of me."

"We only have four and a half hours until midnight. That doesn't give us much time for anything else," Dorian said.

"Well, then I suppose you'd better get up there and say hello to your daughter," Porter returned. "I'd imagine she's going to be pretty upset when she wakes up."

"Yes, I suppose it's not every day you're told you have to carry the future savior of mankind," Dorian said.

"Ah, she was raised human, my lord. It's not everyday they realize creatures like us exist. I'd start with that little fact first and work my way up to the whole baby thing." Porter stood to go. "Show her the truth of her past. It might help."

"Wait, where are you going?" Dorian demanded.

"To find your daughter a lover," Porter returned, "because it isn't going to be me."

* * * *

Audrey took a deep breath, looking around the stone chamber. Her reddish brown hair tumbled around her shoulders in soft waves as she moved. The room was barren except for a locked trunk in the corner, a fireplace, and the large bed covered with satin sheets and a thick embroidered red comforter on which she now sat. Her blue jeans and skeleton t-shirt looked severely out of place.

Somehow, she wasn't exactly scared so much as she was worried. It was the same feeling she used to get when she was a child. Whenever she felt the bogeyman was outside her door, she'd never be frightened of him but have the strangest urge to invite him in.

Her mother had spoken of such a room as this when she was little. Audrey had thought they were fairy tales with medieval castles. Come to think of it, didn't the hero of Clara's tales have the name of Risdon?

"Dorian Risdon," she whispered.

A soft knock sounded and Audrey quickly stood from the bed. She expected to see the handsome stranger from the greenhouse, hoped to see him. Instead, it was a young gentleman, seeming to be about her age, with stark black hair. Audrey shivered, mentally backing away from the man's dark eyes.

"I've seen you," she whispered. "In dreams when I was a young girl. You ... you were holding me down. My mother said they were just nightmares."

"I was binding your abilities," the man answered. "I'm glad to see it worked otherwise you'd have been showing signs of magic in a world of humans."

"But, you ... you look the same. Who are you? Where am I?" Audrey demanded.

"You do have your mother's eyes, don't you?" he mused. "But you have my strength. I'm glad to see you aren't swooning."

Swooning? Audrey thought. Who uses the word swooning?

The man began to laugh, "Who indeed? Sorry, I must be showing my age."

"I didn't say anything," Audrey said, her words trembling slightly as she backed away.

You're my blood, she heard his voice clearly in her head. She gasped in surprise. Did she say she wasn't scared? Oh, yeah, that was wrong. She was defiantly starting to get a little freaked out. Aloud, she whispered, "Dorian?"

"You remember me?" he inquired, smiling at the thought.

"That ... man, Porter," Audrey hesitated, stopping short of saying incredibly handsome weirdo. "He said my father was named Dorian. You say I'm you're blood. But, you're too young to be my father."

"So you think Porter is handsome? He said as much about you," Dorian stated, grinning.

"He did?" Audrey gasped in pleasure, before catching herself. "Hey, stay out of my head!"

Dorian laughed. "Then quit letting me in."

I'm not letting you in, she thought with a grumble. Dorian laughed harder. She grimaced.

"I like your spirit. Defiant like your mother." Dorian nodded in approval. "She made me court her for thirty years before she'd see me."

"Yeah, all right. I think you got the wrong child. My mother was only eighteen when she had me," Audrey said.

"Try adding eight hundred to that," Dorian put forth.

"All right, then," she whispered in disbelief. "Now, this whole family reunion has been fun and all, but I'm ready to go home. If you would be so kind--" His expression turned pained, cutting off her words. "What?"

"You can't go," Dorian stated. "I am your father and I loved your mother."

"Oh, so that's why I remember you with us at Sunday barbeques," she said.

"It was Clara's wish to raise you in the human world. I couldn't leave my duties in this one and the human sun isn't necessarily good for my kind. I wanted you here with me, both of you, but knew she was right. Tonight, you were both to come home to me."

Audrey felt the sincerity in his words.

"Do you remember coming here as a baby? Sitting on my knee when you were two? When you were older, I'd stand outside your door and sense your presence within," he stated.

"That was you?" she whispered.

Dorian nodded. "Don't you wonder why you're not scared of this place? It's because you know it. In your heart, you know it. You spent the night in this very room when you were a baby. As you grew older, it became too dangerous for Clara to bring you back. Her sisters were murdered and the people responsible sought to come after her. For her safety, for yours, we never told you who you were and you never came back here. We bound your powers and tonight...."

His words broke off and he turned away, stiffening.

"Tonight you were both to come home to me," he whispered.

Audrey felt the truth of his words inside her. Those hadn't been fairytales about a castle, they really happened. Slowly, she walked over to the trunk. It was locked.

"Inside is a doll, its face is cracked," she whispered. "I tried to hide it from you. I hid it in here and I put the key...."

Audrey stood and looked around. As if in a daze, she went to the fireplace and reached towards the flames. They were hot against her hand, but didn't burn. Feeling under the ledge, she pulled the key out. Then, walking back to the trunk, she opened it. Inside was the doll, porcelain face cracked. Her hands shook and she couldn't touch it.

"You remember. You were so young, I wasn't sure you would," he said.

"My mother she ... she made the memories into stories." Audrey stood. "So, what now?"

"Now, daughter," Dorian said, looking so young it was nearly impossible for her to see him as her father. "Now I wish for you to marry."

Chapter Three

"Excuse me?" Audrey stated, a little louder than she intended.

"Now, you must marry. You're the last of your line. Clare was supposed to come back so that we could fulfill the prophecy by conceiving a son who...."

"Wait! Stop! Slow down." Audrey lifted her hands up to stop him from talking. "Prophecy? Let's just take a little step back here, Dad. I'm not going to get married. I don't even have a boyfriend. In fact, I don't even have a sex life. So really, there is no one for me to marry."

"Really?" Dorian shot, surprised. "But, with fairy blood you must have the urge to copulate like...."

Audrey paled. Had she just said that to the man who was technically her father? It didn't help that he looked to be her peer. "Ew, no. Stop. I can't discuss this with you."

"But--"

"No, I'm not talking sex with you. It's ... wrong." Audrey wrinkled her face.

"Very well," her father said.

Her father? Audrey never wanted a drink so badly in her life.

"Here, I'll have one delivered," Dorian said, kindly. He walked to the door and called out a short command for a drink. When he again closed the door, he smiled.

"Get out of my head," she grumbled.

"We'll work on thought control, but don't worry, I can read you so well because you are my blood," Dorian said.

"I can't stay here. I've got a business to run," Audrey placed her hands on her hips. "In fact, they're probably worried about me."

"Porter has taken care of it." Dorian smiled. "He really isn't a bad man. I've known him for many, many--"

"That's who you want me to marry, isn't it?" she demanded.

"You read me!" Dorian said, pleased. "I opened the thought and you read it. See, I told you we were connected."

* * * *

Porter frowned, sighing as he looked up into the tree limbs of the forest outside Dorian's castle home. The wind whistled gently through the large leaves, quiet and peaceful in the moonlight. All around him, the forest was dense--too dense to see through. Twigs and natural debris littered the ground. Little spots of blue light danced along the forest floor, shining through the high tree limbs. Being lycan, he didn't need his eyes to sense

if anything was around. He could easily smell or hear anything that came too near.

He looked down the path he was heading, only to turn back around and stare at the castle. Logic told him to find Audrey another, but every time he thought it his stomach lurched with possessive anger and he felt like shifting. His hands shook and he couldn't force himself to continue on.

He knew how important this night was. He knew that if Audrey didn't conceive a child at midnight, the whole realm could be lost. It had been foreseen by the elves that one of her line must give birth to the future King who would save them from the evil demons who threatened the realm. Once the demons flooded his world and destroyed it, they'd move on to the mortals.

Porter knew this, and yet he couldn't move on to find her another lover. The thought of someone else's seed planted inside her drove him to distraction. She was a stranger but then not really. He'd known her when she was a clever child. He felt the goodness in her heart, saw her with the human children. He'd heard of her endlessly through her father. And her smell, oh her smell, it called out to him. His kind had long ago learned to trust instinct in such matters as these.

But if he was honest with himself, there was more to it than that. When he had stood close to her, the smell of her in his head, he'd felt almost whole--like she was a part of him he'd never known was missing. He had a glimpse of what could be when he looked into her dark blue eyes for the first time--of a future, of a family, of centuries of bliss. Was it wishful thinking? Was it destiny? Even as the feelings called to him, they scared the hell out of him.

"Ah! Shit!" Porter growled. His cock was hard just thinking about bedding her. Damn he'd bet her wet pussy would feel good tightened around him. Why in the hell did she have to smell like lavender? He loved the smell of lavender. Storming back to the castle he knew what he had to do.

* * * *

"Well?" Dorian demanded.

"I've come to ask for your ... blessing," Porter said, though he didn't appear too happy with his decision. "To woo your daughter to my bed."

"There was no one else willing?" Dorian asked.

"No, no one," Porter lied. "How is she?"

"Well. I told her of her destiny," Dorian said. "She's, ah, locked me out of the room. Whatever seal her mother put on her fairy magic is gone. She actually used it to throw me out."

"Great," Porter mumbled sarcastically, looking up towards the spiral staircase leading to her room. "This should be real fun."

"She thinks you're cute," Dorian offered. "She's attracted to you."

Porter grunted, but didn't say a word.

* * * *

Audrey sat on the bed. She was determined not to freak out over the blast of light that came from the tips of her fingertips, throwing her father out of the bedroom. Considering all she was expected to adjust to, that was nothing. She'd always envisioned a father doing things with her, like trying to play catch with a baseball. But, not her father it would seem. Hers wanted her to have sex with and get pregnant by a werewolf, so that her son may grow up to save the world--oh, and because the elves told him it would be so.

Audrey snorted with laughter, not completely convinced she wasn't just insane and this was some sort of lunatic's dream.

She sighed heavily, trying to reason. Something happened when the light came to her. She'd sensed her mother inside her, speaking to her. She sensed the truth of Dorian's words. Audrey shook her head. Everything about her life started to make sense--the stories her mom told her, the dreams she'd always had and just assumed were normal, the strong feelings of intuition that never steered her wrong.

When she'd told her father she couldn't have children, he'd just laughed. Apparently she could, just not human children. The news did give her a sense of pleasure. She'd always hoped for a baby--under different circumstances. Then there was Porter. Her father finally admitted that she didn't technically have to marry him, but he'd be pleased if she did.

Porter was handsome and he definitely made her wet with desire just thinking about him. She'd had lovers but none that made her blood boil

like he had with just one look. Always in the past after sex, she'd been left feeling somewhat unfulfilled. It was like a void was still empty. She'd assumed it was because she didn't love the man in her bed. She looked down at her outfit and mumbled, "I wish I had a beautiful dress, something other than this stupid shirt."

Audrey gasped to see her outfit change into a shimmering gown. The sleeves were puffed and the waist tight--so tight, in fact, that she couldn't breathe. This would never do.

"I wish it was off," she said in a rush to be free from the tight waist. The gown disappeared and she sat on the bed naked. Biting her lip, she said, "Give me something sexy."

Black lingerie appeared on her body and she blushed. She hadn't meant that. She'd meant like a nice blouse or something. It was a very neat trick though. She smiled, thinking of the money she'd save on clothes. Her mouth opened to change her outfit when the door suddenly opened.

Porter walked in, his mouth falling open to see her. "Uh, whoa."

"No," Audrey gasped.

Porter grinned. "I haven't even offered up my services and already you say no? At least give me a chance."

"Ah, no, I ... spoke this ... dress...." Audrey motioned to her outfit, or rather lack of outfit, and blushed. She grabbed the comforter and pulled it over to hide her body. His eyes narrowed in disappointment.

"Should I leave the door open?" Porter asked, his dark brown eyes warm. "If you're going to throw me out with magic, I'd just as soon not go crashing through it."

Audrey paled and looked at her hands. "I don't know how I did that. Is he all right?"

"It will take a lot more than a little fairy magic to kill a vampire. Your mother used to toss him around like that all the time when he made her mad," Porter said, running his hand through his hair.

Audrey hugged the comforter closer to her chest. Her eyes dipped over him, taking in his tight pants. She saw the bulge of his cock and shivered. Her mouth went dry and she felt a flicker of electricity work through her,

nearly pushing her forward with the desire to go to him and take him between her lips.

Porter cleared his throat, and Audrey was mortified to discover she was staring at his crotch. Her mouth opened but no words came out. He reached out and with a gentle shove closed the door behind him.

Porter made a move towards her and Audrey tensed. Saying the first thing that came to mind, she asked, "So, you're really a werewolf?"

Porter grimaced. "Lycan."

"Oh, sorry. I didn't realize there was a difference," Audrey said, glancing down. She noticed the comforter had fallen to show an indecent amount of cleavage. With a quick tug she pulled it back up.

Porter made a small sound of disappointment. "Why do you hide? We both know I'll be tasting all of you soon enough."

"Tasting me?" Audrey gulped. "Do you mean you're going to eat me?"

"Yes," Porter grinned mischievously, but the look was lost on Audrey as she paled.

"Are ... you're going to change?" she stuttered.

"You wish for me to shift?" he asked, letting his dark eyes glimmer with gold and blue promise. "Would you prefer me as a wolf?"

"Ah, oh, I, ah," she managed, very stunned by the offer. He said it like it was a reasonable question.

"Normally I do not bed fairies, being as they are so fragile and can't handle my kind. However, vampires tend to favor the wolf and you're half vampire blood." Porter began walking towards her, letting his eyes glimmer again.

"I ... we can't do this," she whispered. Light began to build around her hand. She glanced at the door, trembling. "You need to go. Now."

Chapter Four

Porter's whole body was stiff as he looked down at Audrey on the bed. Her cheeks were flushed to a pretty pink and he could smell the heady scent of lavender in her desire for him. Her weak words took him by surprise, especially when she so obviously wanted this to happen between them. When he looked into her eyes, he sensed she felt it too--their fiery connection.

Seducing her into his bed would be simple. Convincing her that there was more between them than physical animalistic lust would be the hard part. Porter again looked over her form, hidden from view, and hated the way she tried to hide herself from his eyes.

He felt, as well as saw, the fairy magic building in her hand. She was contemplating throwing him out. With lightning quick reflexes, he grabbed her fingers and brought them instantly to his hard arousal. She gasped in surprise and let go of her energy. Pleasure shot through him as she filled him up. It was as intense as any orgasm he'd ever had. He leaned his head back and a loud groan escaped his parted lips. His hips jerked and he came slightly in his pants, releasing a bit of seed.

The wolf inside him wanted to come out and play. He felt his skin tingle with a shift. His teeth grew inside his mouth, sharp and deadly. His eyes shifted, and soon the groan turned into a full howl.

* * * *

Audrey sat frozen on the bed, watching Porter change in amazement. Dark brown fur covered his skin and long teeth grew from his mouth until he was every inch the werewolf--well, lycan. The scene should have scared her but she found it did quite the opposite. It aroused her further. His cock lengthened and grew beneath her hand as the wolf came over him.

She jerked her hand away, gripping once more to the comforter pulling it close. His golden blue eyes focused in on her. He was breathing hard, panting as if he was moments away from pouncing on top of her. Audrey held still, frozen.

A long, moment passed and slowly Porter regained control. His breathing slowed and his body gradually made the transformation back from the

wolf. When he looked human once more, except for his dangerously lit eyes, he pulled his tight shirt over his head and tossed it aside.

Without speaking, he crawled forward on the bed, forcing Audrey onto her back as he came over her. Strong muscles worked beneath his tan chest. A knee pressed between her thighs, trapping her legs beneath the red comforter. His arms moved to either side of her shoulders, not touching her.

She was stunned, unable to move as his mouth drew close to her cheek. His breath hit upon her neck and ear, coming in hard pants as he held himself back from her body. When he didn't move, she slowly drew her hands out and placed them on his chest. He was hot against her cooler fingers.

Not pushing him away, and not pulling him closer, she asked, "Porter? Are you all right?"

"You put yourself into me," he whispered, not moving.

"I'm ... sorry?" Audrey tried to move her face to look him in the eye and ended up with her lips near his chin.

"Mm, no," he said, his whisper nearing a growl. Porter's tongue darted forward to playfully lick her lips. "Don't be. I wish to return the favor."

"What do you mean?" Audrey asked, confused.

Again he licked her lips, slipping his long, warm tongue between them. "I'm going to put myself deep inside you."

Audrey felt a blush creep over her features at his bold statement even as moisture ran in a hot torrent down her thighs. His mouth crushed down on top of hers, stifling her breath as he kissed her deep and long. Before she thought to stop them, her hands were gliding over his chest, moving up into the soft locks of his hair. Porter moaned as she accepted his kiss.

His mouth felt good against hers, so firm, bold, and passionate. She ignored the little thought in the back of her mind telling her to stop. There was something about Porter, something inside her that called to him, filling a void she never realized she carried. It was as if her body knew him before her mind ever could. She felt him all the way to her curling toes.

When his mouth left hers, she was panting as wildly as he. His mouth moved over her neck, licking a hot trail down her skin. His hands tugged at the comforter, pulling it down so he could see the black lingerie she wore underneath. A masculine smile, full of promise and desire, spread over his face as he looked at her breasts.

Sitting up, he straddled her legs. His hands went to the sheer material at her chest and tore it apart, freeing her breasts completely. A low sound came from the back of his throat and he leaned down to kiss her skin. He sucked a ripe nipple between his teeth and rolled his tongue back and forth over it until she was squirming for more.

Audrey worked her legs against the covers, slowly freeing the rest of her body to him. When she was free, she rubbed her legs up and down over the tight leather of his pants. Gasping, she arched as he drove his clothed cock along her hip. The sheer material of the panties was no match for the hard rub of leather and he slipped against the hot cream of her body.

"I want to taste," he growled. Audrey's body was already heated to a fevered pitch and she could barely protest as Porter worked his mouth between her parted thighs. He breathed deeply, taking in her smell. "Mm, I love the smell of lavender."

His firm lips moved lightly over the black panties, licking at her through the barrier. He growled, quickly reaching with his hands to tear the material off her body. When she was naked he made a small sound of satisfaction and began licking and nibbling her wet slit, finding the sensitive bud hidden in the folds.

Audrey bucked up off the bed, arching into him. He pulled her leg up over his shoulder, keeping her open to his searching mouth. His tongue dipped inside her, flicking back and forth in a way that made her nerve endings jump from her skin.

"Ah!" she screamed, jerking so hard she smacked him in the side of his head.

Porter laughed. With a deft movement, he grabbed her hips and flipped her over on the bed so her thighs straddled his face. Audrey tried to pull herself down his body, but his hand captured her hips and held her firmly above him. He chuckled, a low sound that vibrated her clit and made her spasm for more.

"Come for me," he whispered, urging her as he worked his lips up into her. "Just like this. Ride my tongue."

Audrey could hardly refuse as she knelt on all fours over him. His hands grasped her hips, moving her in shallow thrusts over his mouth as he fucked her with his tongue and lips. Her body began to shake. Her breasts grazed the bed, teasing her already swollen nipples.

"Oh, yeah, just like that," he groaned in approval. He sucked harder and Audrey began to shake, convulsing against his mouth. She felt a white heat along her thigh but ignored it. The sensations racking through her were too good to fight. A weak noise escaped her, but she couldn't speak, couldn't cry out. His hands gripped into her flesh, spreading the cheeks of her ass slightly as she peaked against him. "Mm, yeah, you taste so good."

Audrey climaxed against his firm lips and he drank in her taste, moaning the whole time. He kept kissing her until the tremors slowed. His hands ran up over her hips and down the backs of her thighs, only to leave her. She looked down, seeing his hands on his fly, freeing his large cock. When he unzipped the tight leather, his massive erection sprung free, unhampered by underwear. Her legs weakened and she nearly fell over to see the hard, thick length of him. She didn't think it possible, but she began heating anew.

He glanced up at her, a ravenous smile on his handsome features. His eyes glistened with the threat of his lycan side. A smudge of blood was on his lips, matching the bite on her thigh. That is what the white heat was against her leg as she climaxed. He'd bitten her! Audrey tensed, unsure whether she wanted to run or beg for more. His hand drifted down over his flat stomach to stroke his erection.

"I want," he said, his voice gravelly, primal, raw. His hand stroked harder and faster over his shaft as he continued, "to come in your sweet mouth. I want to watch you suck me."

Audrey heard his words and all thoughts of running fled. She knew this is what she wanted. Somehow, she wanted to be his, all his. She wanted to be claimed by him and she wanted to lay claim to him. She wanted to be controlled and to control. She wanted him--all of him--forever.

Audrey slowly crawled down his body. His mouth shot up to suck playfully at a nipple as it dangled past. An ancient power awakened inside her, making her understand herself, answering the lingering

questions she'd had all her life until she understood this is what she wanted--what she needed. With a strength she didn't know she possessed, she pulled him beneath his arms and lifted him further up on the bed until he sat against the headboard. With another deft movement, she stripped him of his clothes.

The heady mix of desire and power filled her as she stayed on all fours in front of him. Slowly, she opened her mouth, licking her lips in invitation. Crawling to him, she flicked her tongue over the mushroom shaped tip of his cock. He tasted good and she couldn't stop herself from sucking him deep into the back of her throat. He was too big to take in and she was forced to use her hands to stroke his fiery length. Her hand cupped his balls, squeezing them as she worked her mouth up and down over his thick shaft. Her tongue rolled over the stiff sides, teasing and caressing at the same time.

Porter groaned, grabbing her hair as he tried to work her mouth at a faster pace. His hips thrust up into her mouth. Knowing what he wanted, she sucked him hard, urging the salty sweet flavor of his seed from his body. A power built in her hands and she released it into him, marking him as hers. His hips jerked as he came into her silken mouth, shooting a hot stream of cum down her throat.

Audrey swallowed and pulled back. "You mark me, I mark you."

"How ... how did you know I marked you?" he asked, his eyes widening, even as he panted for breath.

"How could I not know it? I felt you," she whispered.

"You're not mad?" Porter asked. "I didn't ask for permission."

"I should be but I'm not. It's strange," she said, moving up his tight body to kiss him.

"No, its destiny," Porter whispered. "I don't know how, but you were meant for me. Can't you feel it? You belong to me, only me. No other will ever touch you again."

Audrey nodded, knowing it was the truth.

"We still have about forty-five minutes," he groaned, and Audrey followed his eyes down to where his cock was again tight and ready for more. A weak sound left her. This man was insatiable. "Before it's time."

"Mm, no," Audrey pouted, leaning forward to rub her breasts along his chest. "Does that mean we have to wait? I want you inside me now."

"Mm, I want to be inside you," Porter said, "but we must wait. Just a little bit. You should back away so we're not tempted."

"No," Audrey pouted, feeling heady with her new sense of being. She reached down and stroked his cock. "I want you to be tempted."

Chapter Five

"Our daughter is strong," Dorian said, not turning around in his chair, as he stared into the flames of his study fireplace. He felt a cool hand slide over his shoulder. "You did well in raising her, Clara."

"We did well in creating her," Clara answered, coming around to sit on Dorian's lap. He smiled at her, leaning over to kiss her face as he had almost every night for three years since she'd come to live with him. He hugged her close to his body. Clara sighed, running her fingers through his hair as she continued, "Porter is stubborn. When he left here, I was afraid he'd run from his destiny and all would be lost."

"It's the very reason I didn't tell him the whole truth. When the elves told us what must happen I thought they were crazy. However, when I saw the look on their faces when they each spoke of the other I knew the elfin council was right. It is their shared destiny to join and we'll be grandparents to a King. We did what we had to. I didn't want Porter to have a choice not to go to her tonight, for he wouldn't have had he known his fate. We needed him to see Audrey on his own, to go to her the same. I didn't want to pressure them to be together only to have them resent us for it. Porter has always been stubborn and won't be forced." Dorian kissed his wife's lips. "You look worried."

"I faked my own death and hurt our daughter," Clara said. "How can she be expected to forgive that?"

"You did what you had to. She needed time to grieve and you needed to be dead for both of their sakes. Audrey needed to do this on her own, just like Porter. If you were alive he'd have no reason to bring her back. We did what we must and they'll do the same. When it's all over they'll both understand and forgive us."

"I hope so, my love, I truly hope so," Clara said, resting her head on Dorian's shoulder.

* * * *

Audrey couldn't stop herself. She wanted Porter too much. She'd turned around on top of him, letting his hot mouth pleasure her from beneath as she returned the favor from on top at the same time, licking and taking his strong erection in her mouth. They came together, but the pleasure only seemed to intensify what they wanted.

"How much time?" Audrey panted, sounding desperate as she came down from her climax only to feel the need to be with him become more urgent. She turned around and straddled his rigid stomach, unable to stop as she began rubbing her wet slit up and down on his rock hard abs.

"Half hour," he groaned, sounding just as tormented.

"How do you know?" she asked. "There's no clock in here."

"I'm lycan. I've got an internal clock."

"Oh, this feels good," she moaned, rocking harder along his strong stomach. She felt him rise behind her and was amazed. "Is your kind usually this virile? I mean, it's been two times for you already."

"Mm, it's been three." he panted, grabbing her hips and urging her to continue with his hands. "Stop rubbing like that."

"I can't," she whispered. "It feels too good. Your skin is so hot. What do you mean three?"

His hands found her breasts, massaging them and pinching her nipples. The red-brown locks of her hair fell over her shoulders as she leaned forward. Her fingers dug into his chest as she began to quiver on top of him. It was a small release and only added gasoline to the flames of her desire, tormenting her more. "When you put your power in me and I shifted that was once, and then twice by your beautiful mouth."

"Ah," she panted weakly. "This is pure torture. We should try talking about something else."

"Ah, yeah, I know," Porter grabbed her hips and drew her body back so the cleft of her ass was against his aroused heat. He worked his hips up into her, growling in the back of his throat as his shaft thrust along her backside. "I want to fuck you so bad."

"Maybe we can," she said, rubbing back into his cock. "You could pull out."

"Mm, sorry, but I don't think I'd be able to. We can't risk conceiving early."

"I could really care less about conceiving right now," she groaned, rocking faster in her need. "Oh, yeah, oh."

"You do not wish for my child?" Porter asked, suddenly stopping. She looked down at him and he appeared hurt by her words.

Her hand reached out to him touching his cheek. "Yes, I wish for it. I just wish for you more right at this moment and meant to say that I'm not thinking of conception so much as feeling you inside me."

His expression instantly changed into a pleased grin. His dark brown eyes softened. Audrey loved looking at him. He was so handsome. She doubted she'd ever get tired of seeing his face.

"How much time?" she demanded.

"Twenty minutes," he groaned.

"That's too long."

"I know."

"We should try to think of something to talk about," Audrey said. She bit her lip, clawing his chest as desire coursed over her in a hot wave. "Tell me about yourself."

"I'm heir to lead a lycan pack," he answered, running his hands all over her body. "And I love you."

Audrey froze, stunned by the admission. "How...?"

"I saw you and it just happened. I didn't want it, even tried to deny it, but there it is," Porter said. "I've lived too long not to know fate when I see it. You were born for me and I've waited for you. It's our destiny."

Audrey stopped moving, her heart full with his admission. It was so raw, so honest. His dark eyes stared up into hers, truthful. She began to shiver.

"I know it's different for humans and fairies, even vampires. Lycans are born with the sense that when they see their lifemate they just know. But, do you think you could love me?" he asked. "In time?"

"I love you now," Audrey answered, smiling even as she was unsure and nervous. Her lips trembled and she shook her head in confusion. "But, this makes no sense. This morning--hell, a few hours ago--I never knew you existed. I never knew any of this."

"Inside you knew, as did I," Porter answered. "When I first looked at you, I felt connected to you. I felt myself thrusting inside you. I felt you taking me. I felt us begin to join. For whatever reason, destiny has chosen us for each other."

"But, what now? I have a life, my business...." Audrey shrugged weakly. "What will happen?"

"Whatever we want to happen," Porter said. His hands began roaming her naked body straddling him, drawing her attention back to the feelings that stirred between them. He flipped her over so his weight was pressing into her. He began to rub himself along her hip, searing her with his heat. "I'd like for you to stay here, in my world, with me. It's as much your world as the human one is, if not more. Our baby should be raised here, with magic, if he is to rule."

"But, what of the dangers? Will they just go away?" she asked.

Porter leaned down, kissing her mouth tenderly until she was moaning softly. When he pulled back, her lids were lazy over her blue eyes and she was smiling. "No, not gone, but I swear to protect you both with my life. You have your father and his clan, my kind, your mother's kind. The elves predicted the child's coming. You will be safe, I promise."

Audrey saw the truth of his words and nodded, completely trusting. Here she had what she'd been missing for a long time--a true family. She'd had her mother, but the last three years had been so lonely. Now, here with Porter, she felt the void being filled.

His hips began working along her and soon he was rubbing his cock along her wet slit. He groaned, dipping the smooth tip just inside her tight, wet pussy. Audrey cried out in need.

Finally, she thought, moving to pull him closer. Finally.

His body worked forward in shallow, slow thrusts, stretching her to fit him. It was bittersweet torture. Leaning forward, he kissed her briefly. "You feel so good. I'll try to be gentle. I don't want to hurt you."

"Don't you dare hold back. I want all of you. Now!" Her legs wrapped around his waist, forcing him to go deep.

Porter groaned, unable to hold back as she offered her body to him fully. He delved forward, wild and strong, embedding his cock completely into her moist depths.

"Argh!" he called out, so loud it echoed outside the room.

Their bodies met, moving together in a perfect rhythm as they joined completely. Fate. Destiny. Whatever it was, they didn't try to fight it. The tension built and left Audrey panting eagerly for more. Porter thrust harder and faster, letting the beast inside him take over. She cried out, screaming his name in absolute pleasure. A warm glow started in her stomach, emitting a protective light around them. It was time.

Porter became almost desperate as he drove them over the edge. Their cries filled the room as they raced towards a torturous climax. Tremors as hard as an earthquake hit them at the same time, joining them further, sealing their union.

Audrey's body clamped down on his, urging his release and he gave it to her gladly, spilling his seed into her womb. The light around them grew stronger before fading back into her body. Porter fell down, rolling to the side so he didn't crush her with his weight. They both felt completely sated for the first time since laying eyes on each other.

"It's done," he whispered, touching her stomach lightly and pulling her into his arms. "We are forever."

Audrey smiled, liking the sound of that. She was tired and let the peacefulness of sleep overtake her as she whispered, "Yes, forever."

Epilogue

Audrey placed a hand on her rounded stomach and smiled as Porter came into her father's study. He grinned mischievously, instantly going to her side to give her a kiss. It was amazing to her how her life had changed, but it was so much better. Her mother was alive, and after a suitable amount of yelling and crying directed at both her parents Audrey was able to forgive their deception. It did bring her Porter and for that she was grateful.

She was learning to control her fairy magic. Unfortunately, changing her clothing on a whim and throwing objects magically about a room when she was mad--or overly hormonal--was about the extent of that power. Her mother was a little disappointed that she hadn't inherited more from her, but there was nothing to be done about it.

Her father released her vampiric powers, much to her dismay. It was bad enough being pregnant, without adding more pressure. However, she was learning to handle her new vampiric gifts, all except for the odd craving of salty foods--namely blood, which she refused to drink. Well, maybe once or twice she bit her husband during sex, but that didn't count. Audrey giggled.

"What's so funny?" Porter asked, coming up from kissing her rounded belly.

"Nothing," she grinned. It was amazing how much closer they'd gotten with time. At first, there had been some adjusting, but their stubborn ways finally did catch up to what their hearts and brains already knew. "Just thinking."

"Of?"

"Us," she giggled again.

"Care to share why thinking of us is so funny?" Porter asked, moving to tickle her sides.

"No." Audrey giggled again and the baby kicked her in protest. She flinched, rubbing her stomach. "Ow. Your son is beating me today."

"He doesn't like you teasing his father," Porter laughed, rubbing his face against her stomach. "Do you, boy?"

The baby kicked the side of his face and they both started laughing.

"He's strong," Porter said with a measure of pride.

"Just like his father," Audrey sighed dreamily, leaning in to accept her husband's kisses.

"Mm," he agreed, adding, "Just like his mother."

"Oh, really!"

Porter and Audrey parted to see Clara hovering in the doorway. Audrey had been a little stunned to see her mother's wings for the first time, but now she was used to it.

Clara shook her head. "Every time I turn around I find you two--lip locked!"

"We really should get our own place," Audrey said, nuzzling Porter's cheek.

"We have our own place," Porter answered, well aware they were talking solely for Clara's benefit. "I'm just not done torturing Dorian and your mother."

"Oh!" Clara huffed, flying away.

Audrey giggled and no more words were needed between them as Porter lifted his wife into his arms and carried her off towards their room.

The End

FATE OF THE HEART

By

Mandy M. Roth

Dedication:

Michelle, not only do you not mind the frantic late night emergency calls you seem to encourage them. Thanks for always being there to help verify that I'm well on my way to creating another bizarre tale, and thanks for adding your own weirdness to the mix.

Prologue

France, 1754

Jean-Pierre ran forward, unable to make sense of the carnage around him. The smell of blood was thick in the air and the demon within him wanted to rise up.

Who could have done such a thing? Why would they want to tear his home apart?

"Elise Marie, ma sucré?" Panic ripped through him as he searched through the destruction. The walls had been torched and the smell of death clung to the air. Running full force through his home, he stumbled over the something. He gasped as he looked down to find Elise Marie's limp body lying on the cold floor.

Pulling her into his arms, he held her tight. "Why?" he cried out as he rocked his wife of one night in his arms. She'd agreed to the turning and he'd been prepared to bring her over to an eternal life of youth and

strength. But it had all been ripped away from him. Stolen, in just the blink of an eye.

"I swear that I will avenge your death. All who did this will feel my wrath."

Jean-Pierre let his fangs extend and felt his eyes shifting colors. There would be no mercy for the ones who had slain his wife, his sweet Elise Marie. It mattered not that they had most likely come to slay him--the great vampire who had lived among them in peace for so many years. His own foolish heart had led him out amongst the living. When he'd seen Elise Marie's sweet face, he'd known that she was the one for him. The one that would be his wife--his life mate.

The townspeople were suspicious of his affection for one of their own and had come to put an end to him.

"I will find you again, my love. I promise you that, ma amour."

* * * *

Jean-Pierre stood near the edge of the large black cauldron. The three hag sisters cackled as they tossed the last of the ingredients into the mixture. He watched as the lock of hair he'd cut from Elise was absorbed into their potion.

"Tell me what you see, sisters." He didn't want to wait around for their magic to take hold. He needed an answer. He needed the power of the seers regardless of how touched in the head they were.

Unlike his kind, the hags never went to the surface, not unless they were forced. They lived in caves and underground dwellings, rarely venturing out, and almost never coming into contact with humans. It was bound to drive them insane being cooped up like that for centuries. They were destined to be twisted in some demented way, but he couldn't think about that now. No. Now, he had to find out when he would see his love again.

"Be silent, vampire," they answered in unison, as they always did. Each sister was as blind and as ugly as the next one. If it wasn't for their supernatural expertise, he'd have never called upon them for help. He needed their guidance, regardless of how he felt about them.

The cauldron bubbled and the greenish-brown brew let off a pungent gas. Jean-Pierre coughed and covered his mouth. "Do it! Assure me that she will return."

"We warn you that you risk the wrath of the powers that be. Your loved one died and it is not wise to go against fate."

"I do not care about fate or the powers that be. Elise was stolen from me, and I will not rest until she is in my arms again. My heart is weak without her."

The cauldron rocked and its contents spilled onto the floor. The sisters backed away quickly and grabbed one another. "You have angered the gods. You will have your love back. Two hundred and fifty years from now, when you have learned to control the demon within you, she will return. But be warned ... your weakened heart is no longer your own to bear, and the misconceptions of humans will never change."

Their laughter filled the room as Jean-Pierre turned to storm out.

"I do not care, so long as I have her returned to me."

"Then so shall it be, vampire." They laughed in union. "Where do you go now?"

"I go to kill every last man and woman that took part in her death. They thought me to be a monster before, ha! Now, they will see what pure evil is."

Chapter One

America, present day

"Are you sure that you want to go to this party?"

Elise looped her arm through her grandmother's and smiled. "I've never been more sure of anything in my life. Dubois Manor has been empty for ages. I don't recall a time that I haven't been fascinated by it. The new owner's idea of throwing a Halloween Party for the entire town is genius! He'll win them over in no time flat." She took a deep breath in and

savored the smell of the fresh, October air. "I need this, Grandma. I need to be someone else for a bit."

"I understand, dear," her grandmother said, patting her hand. "Well then, let's find you a costume. Do you think they're still open? It's late, you know."

Elise knew that her grandmother worried about her. Hell, everyone in the town worried about her. That's why she'd decided to wait until sunset to go find a costume. Broad daylight meant that the entire town was out and about, and she wanted no part of that.

"What do you want to go as? How about a genie? That would look sexy on that tiny body of yours. I have a sneaky suspicion that you'll be meeting the man of your dreams soon, my dear, and it'd be nice if you could blow his socks off--both literally and figuratively."

"Grandma!" Elise said, laughing. Reaching to open the costume shop's door, she collided with someone else. "Ouch!"

"Excusez-moi," a deep, heavily accented voice said. She glanced up to find a tall man with chin-length black hair standing before her. Light blue eyes stared down at her and her heart beat faster. His large, muscular frame blocked the rest of the sidewalk and for a moment, she could have sworn that she knew him.

Steady, think happy, calming thoughts, she thought to herself. The last thing she needed was her heart rate to skyrocket. Her grandmother would call an ambulance and she'd spend Halloween in the hospital--again.

The breathtaking stranger before her was dressed head to toe in black. With his pale skin, blue eyes, and dark hair, he commanded her attention. His full lips formed a smile and she could see the muscles in his thick neck working. He pulled the shop door open and bowed his head slightly. "S'il vous plait."

"Oh, devilishly good looking and French ... you can hardly beat that, can you, dear? See, I told you Mr. Right would appear soon," Grandmother said with a hint of mischief in her voice.

"Umm, thanks," Elise said, as she entered the shop. She didn't want to look away from the man. There was something so familiar about him, yet he was a perfect stranger to her. She'd never been to France. Hell, she'd never been outside of Pisqualla.

Jean-Pierre watched the woman as she did her best to avoid looking at him. He could hardly contain his excitement, being this close to her. She was even more beautiful than he remembered. He'd spent over two hundred and fifty years searching for her, knowing that she'd return to him at some point in time. Now, he'd finally found her and it took everything in him to not grab her and hold her close.

He'd sensed her presence almost twenty years earlier. He'd purchased a home, long ago, on a whim, and found it odd that he'd sense Elise Marie in the same small town. Venturing to Piquilla, he'd found no sign of Elise Marie, but had felt her near. It wasn't until a month ago, when he'd decided to stop in to check on his property, that he'd finally seen her. Jean-Pierre couldn't believe his eyes. She'd been sitting on a bench in the park with the woman who accompanied her now, a woman that had paid him a visit once, long ago. His Elise Marie was back and standing right before him.

Elise chanced a quick look over her shoulder and found the handsome stranger looking at her. Her face reddened and she quickly looked away. "Margaret," she shouted, with a bit too much enthusiasm.

The shop owner turned and flashed a large smile. "Elise, how are you doing tonight?"

"Good, Margaret, thanks. So, what do you have that can transform me into something beautiful?" Elise asked, softly. No part of her wanted the sexy stranger to overhear her.

"Oh, sweetie, I've got nothing here that can even compare to you, but I'll give it shot," Margaret said, chomping on her bubble gum. For a woman in her early sixties, she acted more like a teenager than she should. There had always been something odd about her that Elise couldn't put her finger on. Margaret narrowed her eyes on Elise. "You aren't planning on going to that big ol' shindig up at the Dubois place, are you?"

Elise nodded, sure that a lecture was to follow. Everyone seemed to have an opinion on what she should and should not do. Sure, her heart was bad and she'd already exceeded the time the doctors thought she had, but she was still breathing and that was all that mattered. They treated her like a porcelain doll--always had.

From the moment she'd been born, she'd been treated with kid gloves. Her heart had given out on her a few days after birth, but miraculously, she'd survived. Now, with twenty-five years under her belt, she'd

outlived what the experts had told her family. As much as she wanted to celebrate, Elise knew that her heart wouldn't hold out forever. In fact, she'd been going through pills at an alarming rate and knew that the end was approaching quickly.

The announcement of a Halloween party at Dubois Manor had been the ray of sunshine in her otherwise dismal existence. She'd been forced to move in with her grandmother when it became apparent that she'd not be able to work full time any longer. But none of that mattered now. What mattered was finding a costume to wear to the party.

"Elise, you can't be serious about traipsing up to that old place with a bunch of drunks and sinners. Lord only knows what kind of man bought that place. Who comes into town and throws a party like that before he even introduces himself? I've heard that he's the devil himself. That whole line of Dubois is, you know. Come straight from hell they did ... mmmhmmm," Margaret said. "Betty Sue, you going to let her go?"

Elise glanced over at her grandmother and laughed when she saw her doing her best to ignore Margaret. Zealots seemed to flock to the tiny town and for some reason they'd elected Margaret as their leader. It was odd that she ran a costume shop, but then again, everything about Margaret tended to be odd.

Elise was about to comment on her rather rude remarks when the sexy stranger walked up. He laid a long black dress with what looked to be a spider web pattern all over it on the counter. It was sheer and had a creepy yet erotic flare to it. "I think this would look stunning on you. It would bring out your green eyes."

"Nonsense! Elise wouldn't be caught dead...." Margaret stopped instantly and looked around nervously.

"It's okay, Margaret, I know what you meant." She looked up at the stranger and laughed. "So, you do speak English."

"Oui, I speak many languages." He put his hand out. Elise was immediately struck by how pale and smooth his skin was. "I am Jean-Pierre."

Taking his hand gently, Elise gasped as a surge of energy ran up her arm. He felt so familiar, so right. "Elise."

"Elise. That is a beautiful name."

"Thank you. It was my mother's idea. She said that I visited her dreams before I was born and told her what to call me." She had no idea why she'd blurted out something so personal and so insane to a complete stranger. Elise attempted to pull her hand from his, but he held tight.

"I am pleased that your mother listened to her dreams," he said, bringing her hand to his cool lips.

Elise's knees weakened as Jean-Pierre kissed her hand. He flickered his tongue out and over the back of her hand and her heart fluttered. Dizziness swept in and, for a minute, she saw two of Jean-Pierre standing before her--not that it was a bad thing.

Reaching out to steady herself, she felt Jean-Pierre's other hand move around her waist. "Are you well?"

"I'm ... I'm..." His blue eyes held her attention and she lost her train of thought.

"Take your hands off our Elise this instant, you hooligan!" Margaret shouted.

"Elise, dear, are you okay?" Elise heard her grandmother talking to her, but couldn't seem to look away from Jean-Pierre. Something about him held her attention. "Elise Marie Wiseman, answer me this minute or I will call an ambulance."

"I'm fine, Grandma. I promise."

An ambulance? Jean-Pierre thought to himself. Why would one as young as Elise need an ambulance? His vampire senses allowed him to sense death and sickness and both times that he'd seen Elise with the other woman he'd assumed that the sickness that he sensed was that of the old woman's. Now, as he noted the concerned looks of the sales clerk and elderly woman, he realized that the sickness he sensed was that of Elise.

His throat tightened and he fought the demon inside him down. He'd never dreamt that she'd be ill. Looking at her skin, he saw that it was as pale as his own. Her green eyes looked tired and it hit him just how tiny she truly was. "You are ill."

She looked away, as if she was ashamed of this fact. "I'm fine. They worry too much. They're always going on and on about me and treating me like a child. It's really rather silly. I'll probably out live them."

Jean-Pierre knew that she lied. He could smell it on her. She knew how near the end she was but she hid it from the others. She would not slip away from him again. No, he'd waited too long for her to return. She was his everything and his blood alone could save her--make her whole, healthy, and immortal.

"You should be home, resting," Jean-Pierre said, softly, not wanting to let go of her.

You should be in my home where you belong, he thought to himself.

She looked up at him with wide eyes. "I said I'm fine and I meant it. I just need a minute, that's all. Sometimes things just get away from me. I'll be fine in a minute." Sweat beaded on her forehead. He could sense how her heart struggled to keep up its frantic pace. It was so weak, so tired, and so stubborn to have held on as long as it had. She had suffered much in her life and he hadn't been there to ease her pain. Guilt washed over him as he thought of what he could have done to help her all these years. A few drops of his blood could have eased her suffering, strengthened her heart, at least temporarily.

"Had I only found you sooner, you would not have suffered so." He stroked her hand and was pleased to find it so warm and inviting.

Elise smiled softly and reached her hand up slowly to his face. Running her thumb over his bottom lip, she sighed. "Why would you say such a thing?"

It hit him then that he'd spoken aloud. Telling her that she was his reincarnated wife seemed a bit much so he opted for a different reply. Leaning down to her he let his lips hover dangerously close to her own. Warm, welcoming breath greeted him as she moved in to meet his advance. Fire shot through his groin, as her sweet mouth pressed to his. When she parted her lips and allowed his tongue to slide in, he thought that he would melt into a puddle on the floor or come in his pants. The idea of peaking before the act itself shamed him. He was conditioned to be patient, not to almost lose it the moment he touched Elise's sweet lips once again.

It had been too long without the feel of her kiss. Too long without the touch of her hands, the feel of her warm pussy wrapped round his cock, and too long without hearing the soft cries of ecstasy fall from her lips. She'd been a fierce lover who gave as good as she got. The best part of it all was that she'd been his and his alone. The need to claim her again was

strong and he had to focus on something, anything, to keep from doing it in the middle of the shop.

The shopkeeper's voice boomed in around them, but Jean-Pierre used his supernatural gifts to block her out. Her disapproval was evident, but he didn't care. Still, there was something about the woman that bothered him. Now wasn't the time to worry about that though. No, now he had his Elise back.

Wrapping his arms around Elise, he held her tight. Their kiss turned fiery and he sensed her heart rate increasing rapidly. Not wanting to jeopardize her health before he did a full blood exchange with her, he let his fangs descend and raked his tongue across them. Blood pooled quickly in his mouth and he thrust his tongue deeper. Sucking softly on it, Elise swallowed his blood--his power.

When he pulled away he noticed her sleepy eyes. It was normal for a human to react this way, or so he'd been told. He'd never actually given blood to anyone before. He'd saved himself for two hundred and fifty years in every way imaginable.

Elise touched her swollen lips and stared at him. She shook her head slightly before turning to the elderly woman she'd arrived with. "I have to go, Grandma."

"After that kiss ... hmm, I think we should check your heart rate, sweetie."

"I'm fine." Elise said, pushing past Jean-Pierre and running through the door.

Chapter Two

"Come, ma amour. Let me see all of you."

Elise turned slowly, looking through the mist for the source of the voice. "Jean-Pierre?"

A soft laugh answered her. She moved down the dark corridor quickly and did her best to see through the rising fog. "Jean-Pierre, is that you?"

"You are so certain that it is I, yet I am but a stranger to you." He sounded so close, yet she could not find him.

He was right though, he was a stranger but she just knew it was him. She also knew that she was dreaming. There was no way she could move this fast in real life without stopping to take a break. "This is my dream and if I say it's you, then it's you. Let a girl have her erotic dream about the hot French man in peace, will ya?"

He chuckled. "You are even more amusing than you once were. No longer are you meek and accepting. You are strong now and I admire that."

"Everything but my heart's strong, you mean."

Elise came to a stop outside a large mahogany door. "Jean-Pierre?" Something wasn't right. She could sense evil near her. "Jean-Pierre!"

Strong hands grabbed hold of her shoulders and she screamed out. "Shh, it is I, ma amour." Liquid pooled between her legs as his cool touch ran over her. She'd never desired a man this way before. Her heart was too weak to afford her the pleasures of sex, but now, in her dream, she could live freely. "You desire me, do you not?"

"I do," Elise said boldly.

Jean-Pierre moved around and stood before her. No longer did he wear black from head to toe. No. Now, he wore dark pants that laced up the front and a white shirt that reminded her of something a pirate would wear. He looked a bit disheveled and it was sexy as hell.

Aching to touch and be touched by him, she grabbed hold of his shoulders and pulled him down to her. He felt so real. Each swipe of his tongue sent shivers down her spine and only served to add to the dampness between her legs. Elise yanked at his shirt, needing to get her hands on his chest, and to feel his muscles beneath her fingertips.

"You are so different now, Elise," he whispered.

"Different?"

"I will dwell no more on our past so long as you promise that we have a future--together."

Jean-Pierre's words sounded so sweet, so sincere that she wanted to shout out 'yes', but held back. Something warned her that once she said the word, she would be forever committed to this man, dream or not. In the shop, he'd seemed so peaceful, so beautiful, but here, in her dream, she sensed darkness in him.

Jean-Pierre lifted her shirt slowly, and worked it over her head. "I have wanted to make love to you for so long. I have gone without, waiting for you, always waiting for you, Elise." His cool mouth encircled her nipple before she had time to register what was going on. The feel of his tongue grazing over her erect nipple was too much. She cried out and pulled at the sides of his face. Something sharp nicked her breast. At first it was painful, but the pain was quickly replaced by pleasure.

He suckled gently from her breast, as she tipped her head back further. Never before had she felt so sexy, erotic, so in control and lost all at the same time. "I need to feel you, Jean-Pierre."

He pulled back slowly, releasing her nipple, and allowing the cool air around them to hit her wet breast. "Oh, ma amour, I promise that you will feel every inch of me tomorrow night."

"Why tomorrow?"

"Because tomorrow is All Hallows Eve, the night that I reclaim what is rightfully mine. Sleep now, ma amour, and we shall be together for all eternity soon enough."

Chapter Three

Elise woke with a start and looked around her bedroom. The dream had felt so real that for a moment she was sure that Jean-Pierre had been suckling from her breast. Glancing down, she saw that her silky pajama top was unbuttoned. She moved her fingers down slowly and pulled the material back, revealing her breast. Tiny drops of blood ran down it and when she saw the bite mark, her eyes widened.

"How?"

This didn't make any sense. An erotic dream about a sexy man shouldn't have left her bleeding. But the reality of it all stared back at her as a drop of blood fell to her leg. She should have screamed, kicked, anything that would have indicated that she was scared shitless, but she did none of them. A part of her wanted the dream to be real. She wanted to believe that a man like Jean-Pierre would vow to love her for all eternity, even though she had but a few months to live.

She stood slowly and hoped that the dizziness she felt would pass. Tonight was the Halloween party to end all parties. Dubois Manor had fascinated her since birth and she wasn't about to miss the chance to go inside it. She'd toss something together and call it a costume. There would be so many people there that no one would notice or care what she wore.

Elise headed slowly into the bathroom and prayed for the strength she'd need to make it through one more night.

* * * *

Jean-Pierre moved around his large home inspecting every small detail to assure that it would be perfect for Elise's arrival. He'd commissioned the restoration of the manor one hundred years ago when he'd first felt the pull of the area. Some unknown force had guided him to the place where he would one day be reunited with his long lost love.

It had been hard at first. The locals here in America were as suspicious of him as the ones in France had been. They noticed that he only came out at night and that he never seemed to age. He'd been forced to fake his own death more times than he cared to remember, and constantly reinvent himself as the son of Jean-Pierre Dubois. He wasn't even sure what number he was, at least according to the locals anymore. Last count he was Jean-Pierre Dubois IV.

He walked down the long hallway making sure that every candle was lit and that every room held the old world charm that he'd originally selected the site for. Elise had loved his home in France. Had her life not been cut so terribly short, they would have filled it with children and love. Now, two hundred and fifty years later, they could recreate the magic they'd once shared, here in America.

He smiled to himself as he thought of her opening his present right about now. She'd had to leave the costume shop so early that she didn't have time to select one, not that it mattered. He'd had one made for her from

the moment he planned the party. It was beautiful and elegant, just as Elise was. Sure, the black spider dress he'd pulled out had been exotic, but it would never do for his love. It had served its purpose though, it had allowed him an in to speak with her. Everything would be perfect for him when he reclaimed his wife. He'd waited too long to let anything get in his way.

Chapter Four

Elise smoothed the front of her gown down and adjusted her mask. She'd been shocked to find that boxes had arrived for her, and when she'd opened them she'd had to take a heart pill. The dress inside was the most beautiful thing she'd ever seen. Done all in soft shades of peach and cream, the silky creation hung to the floor and made her feel like a princess. She'd been reluctant to accept the gift until her grandmother had handed her a note from Jean-Pierre.

He'd insisted that, if her health permitted, she join him at the All Hallows Eve party this evening. It mattered little to her that the entire town had been invited, the fact that Jean-Pierre had asked her to attend with him was special. She didn't care if her heart did pick today to give out. She'd just leave instructions for her body to be dressed in the gown and dropped off at Dubois Manor. The paramedics would most likely protest, but she didn't care. Death wouldn't stop her from visiting the Manor.

Elise made her way through the large iron gates of Dubois Manor. For years they'd remained locked, forcing her to admire the estate from a distance. She'd lost count of the number of times she'd pretended that her one true love resided there--waiting for her to join him. It was a romantic and foolish notion, but one she'd had for as long as she could remember.

"Why, Elise Marie, is that you?"

She turned and found Margaret standing with several other people from the town. Margaret was dressed as a nun. It suited her. She did like to preach. Elise gave her a polite nod and smiled at the two men dressed as monks behind her. "I like the theme you have going. I didn't notice those costumes the other day. Holding all the neat ones back for yourselves?"

"Oh, you know me and my sons. Always love a party."

"Funny, I didn't think you'd come. Well, not after the way you blew up about Mr. Dubois and the way he went about planning this."

Margaret waved her hand, dismissing Elise's claims. "Oh, nonsense. I was just tired. I love a good party as much as the next person." She walked up to the door. "You be careful now, Elise. There are all kinds of strange creatures out tonight."

"Uhh, thanks, Margaret. I'll be sure to be on the lookout for rogue trick-or-treaters."

"Oh, if it were only that innocent, child," Margaret said as she and her guests closed the door.

Elise shook off the weird vibe and looked up at the old manor one more time. It was so beautiful, with its stone exterior and stained glass windows. This night was like a fairy tale and she never once thought that her dreams could come true. Now, if only the man of her dreams would pop out and claim that he'd always been there waiting for her, her fantasy would be complete.

Grow up, Elise. You're too old for fairy tales and happily ever afters.

A slight breeze blew past her as she stepped up to the front door. Several of her long ringlets came loose from her upswept style. They fell into her face and she went to lift her mask to adjust them when someone touched her shoulder. She jumped and grabbed her chest, fearing that the slightest thing could set her off tonight with as excited as she was.

"Mademoiselle, I have come to escort you into your new home."

Her breath caught as she turned to find Jean-Pierre standing behind her. His black hair was tied back at the base of his neck and he wore a mask similar to her own. The deep navy jacket he wore looked so old, so regal that it demanded attention, and yet seemed to be at home on his tall, muscular frame.

"Nice tights," she said, glancing down at his legs.

"Ahh, they are pants, ma dame, not tights." His lips curved into a luscious smile that she wanted to lick off his face. "Do you not like them?"

"I love you ... err ... I mean them. I love them and I love this costume. Thank you so much for it. Please let me know what I owe you. I called Margaret at the costume shop but she claimed that she didn't know anything about it." Her face had to be at least seven shades of red. She was so embarrassed by her Freudian slip that she wanted to run from him and never look back. Why had she blurted out that she loved him? What could have caused that?

Because I do love him. The voice in her head that she normally listened to now seemed insane. She couldn't love him. She hardly knew him.

Jean-Pierre touched her lips lightly, thus ending her rambling thoughts. "Shh, do not chastise yourself for expressing your true feelings to me, ma sucré."

Ma sucré, my sweet? She knew that from somewhere. But where? Flashes of Jean-Pierre standing before her, dressed as he was now came to her mind. The love on his face was clear and directed at her. Elise watched as the images showed her erotic flashes of his hands all over, and his body wedged between her legs, as he moved his hips, sliding himself in and out of her.

"Mari du seigneur, je t'aime," she whispered, as she reached out to move Jean-Pierre's mask from his face.

His blue eyes widened and as he pulled her into his arms. "What did you just call me?"

Elise shook her head, in an attempt to shake the images from her mind. "I don't know ... I just ... the words fell out. I don't know that they mean. I don't speak French."

"You called me your Lord Husband and told me that you love me."

She tried to break free of his hold. She wanted to be anywhere but before him. Humiliated and confused, she hung her head and let unshed tears build in her eyes. "I should go."

Jean-Pierre grabbed hold of her arm and pulled her with him as he stormed around to the side of the Manor. "What? Where are we going?"

"I am doing what I should have done the moment I saw you, I am taking you to my bed."

"Your bed?" she asked, puzzled. "But, Jean-Pierre, the person who's throwing this party isn't going to like us running around making ourselves comfortable in his home."

He laughed. "I have it on good authority that he wants me to make love to you."

"Make love to me?" She almost choked on the words. Her mouth was suddenly dry and her hands shook uncontrollably. It was a heck of a time for her nerves to get the better of her. She was being offered a chance to make love to a gorgeous man before her crappy ticker gave out and she died a virgin. Now wasn't the time for cold sweats and mini-freak outs. No, now was a time to give in to her carnal desires and allow Jean-Pierre to show her pleasures she'd only dreamt of.

"Am I correct in believing that is what husbands and wives do?"

Elise's ears perked up. "Husbands and wives ... what? No, I don't know why I said that before. I think that my medicine is going to my head. I should get home and," she stumbled slightly and he caught her. "Oh, umm ... what was I saying?"

The feel of his hard body pressed against hers was too much. She had to have him, had to feel all of him. Rational thought left her and all she could do was run her hands under his navy jacket. The lace on his shirt was stiff, so she pulled it up, freeing his shirt from his pants in the process.

Jean-Pierre moaned as Elise bit his lower lip. The passion she possessed was addictive. The feel of her lush body under his fingertips made his cock go hard. He needed to be buried in her and soon.

Without thought, he scooped her up in his arms and pressed his mouth tightly to hers. While her mouth was occupied with his, he defied gravity, as all vampires could, and carried her to the upper level balcony. His vampiric senses told him that the party goers were enjoying themselves as he'd hoped they would. He wanted them occupied while he ravished his wife's body. For two hundred and fifty years he'd waited for this moment, and nothing would stop him from taking her. Claiming her. Turning her.

With his mind, he pushed the French doors behind them closed. Elise was still succumbing to his seduction and he couldn't wait another moment. "Je veux faire l'amour avec toi."

"I want to make love to you too, mari."

Hearing her again refer to him as her husband made his heart beat faster. How he'd longed to hear that all these years. The demon within him tried to surface but he held it down. There would be no supernatural interruptions this evening, not if he could help it.

Gently, he laid Elise down on the bed. She pulled her mask off slowly, and he did the same. The sight of her spread out before him almost made him ejaculate. He'd been celibate for so long that he wasn't sure he could hold it a moment more. "I have to take you. I cannot wait and I fear that I cannot be gentle with you. It has been far too long for me, and you are so beautiful, so amazing that I do not believe I can be all that I can be."

Her gaze was heavy with desire and her lips were swollen from their passion. "This isn't the army. You can be whatever you like." Her statement baffled him. He was not as up on his pop culture references as he should be and his guess was that she'd made a joke. When she ran her fingers down and over her ample cleavage, he forgot everything else but her. "Then don't be gentle. Take me now, Jean-Pierre. Take me and fuck me. I've dreamt of this, of you."

With that, he ripped her gown from her body, freeing her creamy globes of flesh and catching a pink nipple in his mouth. He already knew how sweet they tasted. He'd cheated and entered her dreams, needing to taste of her flesh, and her blood. She was the sweetest nectar he'd ever known. He'd never have enough of her--never. Elise was a welcome addiction--one that he'd forfeit his life to have just one more taste of.

"Please," she panted. What she begged for he was not sure, but he planned on giving her everything and so much more.

Yanking fiercely on his shirt and jacket, he freed his upper body. Elise drew in a sharp breath and he was pleased to smell her desire for him. It was important that she want him too. He would never take her without her consent. Leaning forward, he ripped the tiny thong that covered her sex from her body. A neatly trimmed patch of dark curls greeted him. The pink bud that lay tucked between her legs beckoned him. He was powerless but to answer. Pushing her velvety folds apart with his long fingers, he lapped her pussy with his tongue before taking her clit into his mouth. In his opinion, heaven had been found between her legs. A paradise of cream and desire encompassed his senses and he never wanted to let it go.

He could hear the beating of her blood as it rushed to her sex. Her engorged nub throbbed before him, tempting him to sink his fangs into her inner thigh and drink of her warm blood. Sex and blood was a mix that even he, a centuries old vampire, could not resist--especially when it was a heady mix that originated from a mate. That is what Elise was to him, his mate, his wife.

Jean-Pierre rubbed his fingers over her clit and thrust his long tongue into her entrance. Elise's tight sheath clamped down on him and as he drew his tongue out slowly, leaving his cock pounding with desire. If he wasn't careful, he'd come in his pants. Rubbing harder, he pushed his tongue in again and made love to her with his mouth, savoring her taste and tiny counter thrusts. He ran his cream slicked fingers down her sex and found the tiny taboo rosette of her ass just waiting for him to pluck. Temptation got the better of him and he slid his juiced finger over it, watching as it clamped down in an effort to keep him out. Gliding his tongue down her body, he rimmed the edges of her rosette.

Elise grabbed hold of the sides of his head and pulled him up a bit. He grinned into her wet pussy. She tasted so sweet, like berries and cream. The smell of her was intoxicating and he needed more. Sucking. Pulling. Rubbing. His chin was covered in her cream as she screamed out and wiggled beneath him. He held her in place as he drank down her sweet sex.

"I need more. I want to feel you in me," she cried out.

Always one to oblige, Jean-Pierre moved up and over her. He supported his weight with one hand and freed his massive cock with the other. It seemed to know instantly where her wet, warm hole was. He pressed the head of his cock into her tight opening and saw the look of strain pass over her face.

"Elise, do you wish me to stop?"

"God, no! Not now. Not ever!"

Jean-Pierre eased himself into her. Her body held tight and refused to allow him further access. Her bottom lip quivered and he knew that he was causing her pain. Unable to bear the look on her face, he bent his down and took her mouth with his. His cock mirrored his tongue as it inched its way in, only his tongue did not run into the same thin barrier that his cock did.

Elise was a virgin? She'd waited for him too.

The mere thought of her saving herself for him set him into an uncontrolled sexual frenzy. He slammed his cock into her, tearing through her maidenhood and claiming her body with his own. She screamed out beneath him and clawed at the backs of his arms. Elise's channel eased somewhat, allowing him full access to her pussy, and he took advantage of it, thrusting deeper and faster into her. He rode her body with a fire and passion that could only come from a man who'd waited so very long to love again. The wait had been more than worth it. He didn't even think it possible, but she was even more exquisite than she'd once been.

To top perfection was quite a feat and he hoped that he could love her as she deserved to be loved. He would give her the moon if she but asked for it.

"Je t'aime--I love you," he whispered in her ear.

Wrapping her legs around his waist, she bit at his neck lightly. "I love you, too."

The need to claim her was great. Each time his cock sunk into her silky depths he wanted to let his demon out and taste her sweet coopery blood running down his throat. The thought of fucking her while he fed made it even harder to skive off his orgasm. It would carry a couple hundreds years worth of seed and he wasn't sure how long it would last.

Elise's pussy tightened around his cock and he gritted his teeth in an attempt to stop his fangs from lowering. He couldn't. The clenching of her channel proved to be too much. As his shaft exploded, sending seed deep within her womb, his fangs descended. In a flash he was on her, striking the sensitive vein in her neck, drinking her down as his cock continued to spit come into her. His orgasm seemed to last forever. His bite was orgasmic, so Elise continued to clench down on his cock as it spit more and more come into her. The milking process only served to prolong his already insane orgasm.

Over the centuries, he'd learned how to feed from a human without killing them. It was a well-crafted art that all vampires had to learn if they wanted a warm meal without a trail of corpses in their wake. Normal humans could fill his needs for days without showing wear. Elise wasn't normal. She was sick and he'd forgotten about that. He sensed her heart stopping a fraction of a second before it did.

"NON!" he cried out.

Pulling back from her limp body, he cried out again when he saw the glassy look in her green eyes. It was then that he felt her life slipping away. He bit his wrist quickly, gashing it open, and allowing his vampire blood to flow freely. Pressing it to her mouth, he tried to will her to drink, but in her weakened state, she did not respond. Blood ran out of the corners of her mouth. Each drop signified her death. He put his wrist to her mouth again, silently praying that she'd drink it before his wound closed up. He'd have to feed again if he was to open another vein for her and she would be past the point of siring if he left her for that long a period.

"Drink, Elise, drink of my blood. Accept my dark gift, join me, now and forever." She didn't respond.

Fear gripped him and he put his mouth over hers. Using his tongue, he forced blood down her throat. She jerked beneath him, no doubt from the change occurring. It was then that he realized his cock was still buried in her body. He began to pull out of her, but stopped when her tongue caressed his back. The feel of her body swaying gently under his was too much. Seed shot out of his shaft hard and faster than he wanted.

Elise raked her nails down his back and screamed out in French, "Plus fort!"

Giving into her wish for it to be harder, he slammed his body down onto hers. Her green eyes rolled into the back of her head as she panted beneath him. A knock of the bedroom door startled him, but he didn't move to answer it. Whoever it was could wait. Elise's change would be nearing completion and he'd not leave her to go through it alone.

"Open this door, demon!" a woman shouted.

Visions of the townsfolk rebelling against him two hundred and fifty years ago flooded back to him, and once again he saw his beloved Elise dead before his eyes. For a moment, he felt as helpless now as he had then. It was only when he realized that he could save her this time that he snapped out of his funk.

"NO!" He pulled off her and moved towards the door, just in time to see it burst open.

Margaret, the costume shop owner stood there dressed as a nun with a large wooden cross in her hand. "I have the faith to back this up, demon. Don't you worry none 'bout that. We'll see you turn to dust before we let you take Elise from us. Go, go back to the hell hole from which you spawned, demon!"

Jean-Pierre shielded his eyes from the white light that began to emanate from the holy object. He hissed as Margaret moved closer to him. Her gaze went to the bed and she cried out, "Elise! Oh Lord have mercy, what has he done to you?"

"I saved her life, you old fool." He batted at her, but she held tight to her protection. As long as the cross still glowed, he was powerless to stop her. His body weakened quickly and it took all his might just to remain standing. Margaret walked to the bed and put the cross near Elise. When Elise didn't respond she turned her narrow gaze back to Jean-Pierre.

"You killed her. You didn't turn her. You killed her. You're a murdering demon and you're going back to hell. Didn't they warn you? Didn't they tell you that there'd be a price?"

Jean-Pierre tried to make sense of Margaret's words. Didn't who tell him what? The more it thought about it, the more he remembered the hag sisters who'd assured him that he would indeed see Elise Marie again. They warned him not to tempt fate, not to fight what had been predetermined, but still he did. Now, they were at the mercy of a religious madwoman who somehow knew about the warnings a set of equally insane sisters gave him over two hundred years ago.

"You should have listened to them. I did, right before I sent them to hell, too!" Margaret shouted.

The idea of Margaret, a seemingly mild-mannered shop owner being able to kill three hag sisters actually alarmed him. If she could kill three seers then she might very well be able to kill a newly formed vampire--Elise. He wasn't concerned about himself. It would take quite a bit more than Margaret to destroy him. Sure, she could inflict pain on him, but killing him was an entirely different matter altogether.

"Come on in, boys, and get her body out of here. We need to cleanse her with holy water before we cut her heart out and bury her," Margaret yelled.

Two large men burst through the door, wearing robes, and carrying ropes and burlap bags. They looked a good deal like Margaret so he assumed they were relations. One of the men looked down at Elise's body and Jean-Pierre could smell the man's arousal as he stared at her naked, blood-stained body. The need to tear the man's head from his shoulders was great--too great for the demon within him to resist.

The French doors to his bedroom blew open, and the cold October wind blew into the room. All around him, candles flickered and screams sounded. The screams hadn't come from anyone in the room, but rather some unseen force. Margaret's little helpers cowered in the corner as shadows appeared out of nowhere, trying to grab them--taunting them.

The sound of soft songs rode over the screams and Jean-Pierre knew that the supernatural community had gathered their strength to aid him on this night--All Hallows Eve. The power of the paranormal was ten fold and with the help of his brethren he would not lose Elise to crazed townspeople again. No. It was time that an end came to those who would persecute others simply for being different.

The light from the cross faded and the woman behind was revealed to him. In one moment, he saw all the sins of her past. All the murders she'd committed over the years, claiming to be working for God. She'd murdered women, children, anyone who she deemed evil. All the lost souls, but his and the three seers, had been ordinary people that her twisted mind had perceived as evil.

Margaret looked to the men she'd come with for help, but Jean-Pierre knew that she'd find none there. The men, if not dead yet, would be locked in insanity, prisoners of their own minds. The spirits of their victims now had their vengeance. "No! I will not be harmed by you, devil!"

Jean-Pierre tipped his head back and laughed wickedly as the wind around him brought about the sound of thunder. "I am not the devil, old woman. I am much worse." He leapt at her and flung her back against the wall. A sharp pain in his gut made him glance down. It was then that he saw she'd used the wooden cross as a stake. White-hot pain lanced through his body as he slid to the floor.

Margaret's eyes gleamed. "I told you he'd protect me. I told you...."

As Jean-Pierre gave into the darkness, he saw a blur that looked slightly like Elise standing before him. "Femme de la dame, Je t'aime."

Chapter Five

Domme, France--near Dordogne Valley

Jean-Pierre glanced over at Elise and wondered when, if ever, she'd speak to him again. They'd been in France for a month now, and she'd barely spoken to him. He'd thought that she'd accepted what she was when he'd woken to find that she'd killed Margaret, but she hadn't. Elise seemed to hate her very existence now and she blamed him for it.

The blank look on her face as she stared out at the black river spoke volumes. She'd been prepared to die. She'd accepted that her heart would not last much longer and she'd been ready for the inevitable. He'd changed all that without first speaking to her about it, and he would regret that for all eternity.

"I did it because I love you," he said, hoping that this time she would answer him.

Elise dropped her head against the window and moonlight spilled over her long dark hair. She was a vixen, a raven of the night, and she had no idea what kind of control she had over him. He would do anything for her. Hell, he had waited hundreds of years for her to return and would wait a hundred more for her to be ready to accept him once more. After all, they had an infinite amount of time.

"Jean-Pierre," she whispered.

At first, he thought that his mind was playing tricks on him, but when she turned and looked directly at him he realized that this was no trick. "Yes."

"I'm pregnant."

His breath caught in his throat. Paralyzed by both shock and joy, he didn't move. He'd never intended to fully turn her, at least not until they were able to have children, but it had happened anyway. His original plan had been to shift her enough that her weak heart would heal, but she would not be a full vampire. He'd only ever heard of partial vampires

being able to have a child. This was new, exciting, and he wanted to run and hold her in his arms. The sad, faraway look on her pale face kept him at bay.

"I am pleased. Are you not?"

A tear ran down her cheek and he felt as though his heart would shatter. "Are we evil? I mean ... I know that you give me blood from a cup, but where do you get it from? Do you kill people for it?"

"Not innocent people, no."

Her eyes widened. "But you still murder people to feed me."

"Vampires kill only the ones who deserve to die--murders, rapists, child molesters ... that is all. We do not take blood from the innocent. It goes against our very code. It is common for us to purchase supplies of blood from blood banks now as well. It is easy to pay a doctor to claim that you have a certain blood disorder that requires infusions." He'd been paying for blood shipments for over twenty years. The advent of modern blood banks had been the equivalent of fast food restaurants to his kind.

"Will our child be evil?"

"We are not evil. Not in the way you think of the word. Tell me how a creature that rids the world of evildoers is evil himself. Would he not be considered a hero?"

She shrugged. "I guess, but then can't we go into churches or be around holy objects."

"Ahh, I do not know the answer to these questions, but I can tell you that we are not evil and that I cannot see how a God that hates us would allow us to conceive a child."

"My heart would have never allowed me to carry a child. At least, not before you made it strong." Elise stepped away from the window and took a tentative step towards him. He didn't move, afraid that she'd shrink away if he dared to touch her. As she approached, he couldn't keep his eyes off her slender waist. Their child grew within her. Against all odds, they'd managed to create a life.

She reached out and laid her hand on his shoulders. He drew in a sharp breath and waited to see what Elise would do next. Cupping his face in her hands, she leaned down to him. "I remember everything."

He was a bit confused by her statement. "You remember me siring you? I swear to you that I did it only to save your life."

She touched his lip. "Shhh, not that. Well, I do remember that, but that's not all I remember. I remember us, here in France long ago. I remember our wedding, and how gentle you were with me when we made love that night. And," she looked away from him. "I can remember what happened after you'd gone out to feed, that night--the night I died."

Jean-Pierre tried to stand. He needed to move, to do anything other than sit there. The thought of Elise reliving those last few horrifying moments threatened to destroy him. Elise pushed him down in the wingback chair and stared down at him.

"Jean-Pierre, it's okay. I'm not afraid. I wasn't afraid then either. They came for you ... the villagers came with torches and swords. They claimed that I'd married a demon, a monster that sucked the lives from their children and killed indiscriminately." She turned his face to meet hers and positioned her body on his lap, just so. "They thought that I didn't know what I'd married. They were wrong. I knew that you were a vampire from the moment I met you. I can't explain how, I just knew, and I refused to leave with them. They offered me the chance to live if I left with them, but I couldn't do it. I couldn't leave you. I loved you--I still love you, Jean-Pierre."

"You love me even though I turned you into ... into what I am."

She pressed her soft lips to his and silenced any of his questions. He could feel her love for him radiating from her. The time she'd spent in silence had apparently allowed her time to reflect on who and what she now was. There was still one other matter he needed to deal with. "Elise Marie."

"Mmm, yes?"

"I am the Dubois who owns the manor in your hometown."

"You own it?" She tipped her head back and laughed. He didn't understand what was so funny. "Oh, Jean-Pierre, that house called to me,

and I dreamed that my one true love resided in it--just waiting until the time was right to whisk me away for all eternity."

He smiled as he played her fantasy through his mind. The irony of it all was not lost on him. He had indeed been waiting in the manor for her, with every intention of whisking her away for all eternity. Kissing her lips softly, he brushed her long hair over her shoulders. "One day, when it is safe again, we shall return to the manor to live."

"That would be nice. I kind of miss my grandmother."

"I figured as much, that is why I sent for her. She will be arriving by plane sometime next week." The look on Elise's face told him that she was afraid of what her grandmother would think of what she was now. "Do not worry, ma amour, she knew what I was long ago. She paid me a visit when she was young, and told me that she had a premonition that one day I would find my true love and that she would have in hand in it all. She passed her gifts on to your mother. That is how she heard you call to her from the spirit realm to tell your name."

She tossed her arms around his neck and covered him with kisses. Each kiss was more tender than the last. This was how he'd envisioned their life together. The addition of the baby would bring them even more joy. "Femme de la dame, Je t'aime."

"And I love you too, husband." Elise wiggled her nose. "I'd prefer to stop using the title of Lord before it though. It is about time you came around to the present day." Pushing her hand between them, she grabbed hold of his cock through his pants and laughed. "I see that you're ready. Are you always like this?"

"Only around you, only around you."

"Good, keep it that way. I'm dead, pregnant, and craving blood. You really don't want to see what I look like when I'm jealous too." She rubbed her hand over his erection and purred softly. The sound nearly drove him out of his mind. "See, honey, I can be gentle too, and I'd like to be the one calling the shots this time. I've waited a month to feel you in me again and I'm horny as hell. Yikes, you really did create a monster."

Jean-Pierre laughed from the gut as he pulled his wife around to face him. "I need to be in you, now. I cannot wait another moment. Besides, I need

to spend as much time as I can with you before the baby comes. I will have to learn to share you then."

"Then by all means, my love, take me to bed and fuck me until you can't fuck anymore."

"Beware, young one. I have the stamina of a vampire."

She touched the tip of his nose and smiled. "As do I, my love, as do I."

Epilogue

"Elise?"

Jean-Pierre laughed as he heard his granddaughter entering the manor. She had a bad habit of knocking and assuming that she needed to announce her presence. "Your grandmother is downstairs painting. She'll sense your presence soon enough. Come, Adeline, tell me how life at the university is treating you."

He watched as Adeline entered his study. Her long jet black hair was twisted into a bun and she wore her signature faded jeans and sweatshirt. She smiled when she saw him and her blue eyes twinkled. "Ah, you are beautiful, young one."

She rolled her eyes. "Stop it, Jean-Pierre. I hate it when you two walk around and call yourselves grandma and grandpa. You don't look a day over thirty and Elise looks even younger than that. Only mom looks her age."

Jean-Pierre grew quiet at the mention of his daughter, Marie. "She decided that she did not want to be immortal. It is her life to do with as she pleases."

"Yeah, umm ... try to sound like you mean it. I know if you had your way you'd have turned her, but mom is as stubborn as you."

"Thanks, I think," Jean-Pierre said. "You do know that now that you are a young woman, you can choose our way and live forever."

She smiled at him and it warmed his heart. "I know. Mom tells me all the time to do what I want, but I'd like a little bit more time to decide. Is that okay?"

"Oui," Jean-Pierre said, proud of how strong his granddaughter seemed to be.

"Gee, now that you bring French into the mix, I've got a favor to ask of you."

"Adeline, you have but to ask and it is yours."

"Can I borrow your guys' house in France, just for a few months? I've decided to spend my last semester abroad and I just thought...."

Jean-Pierre put his hand up and nodded. "What we have is yours, young one. Of course you can." He smiled, as he thought about how destiny was unfolding again before his eyes. Elise had dreamed that Adeline would go to France and that she too would find her mate--and in the process find immortality. If his granddaughter had the opportunity to have even an ounce of the happiness he'd had with Elise then he would do anything to help her.

THE END

To read more excerpts from Mandy M. Roth please visit her website www.mandyroth.com and be sure to sign up for her newsletter to hear about her new releases.