

# Dark Whispers

by

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## Chapter 1

**A**s Angel looked over the crowd gathered at Bloody Mary's this night, a deep feeling of contentment engulfed her. It was almost ten years ago that she and Jordyn had left their Northern Indiana home and traveled out west to sunny California. To say the trip had been a difficult one would be an understatement. Not only did she have to leave the one thing that mattered in this world, besides Jordyn, behind, but she had to face a new world, one with different standards, different rules.

In L.A. being strange was the norm. The twins were shocked by the unscrupulous display frequently put on by the vampires of this city. It was nothing to see a number of vampires intermingled with humans on any given night, hanging out at clubs, dancing wildly to the music, or walking along the dark city streets discussing everyday topics with anyone who would listen. It was as if they were searching for something now lost. Some of the humans knew what they were. Most did not.

But they were very protective of their territory. Jordyn and Angel found that out the hard way. The first night they were there they had run into a very vicious brute named Victor. Apparently he had declared himself the leader of all the vampires living in L.A. And when he saw the twins and Nathan nosing around his city uninvited he became very angry.

They had just arrived at the outskirts of town, with only a short time before sunrise and they were famished. They happened upon a couple of junkies hanging out in an alleyway, shooting their vile addiction into their arms. Unable to control themselves, the three of them attacked the two men ferociously.

As the last drops of blood were expelled from their victims a loud voice boomed from behind them, "Get out of my city, now!"

The twins and Nathan turned around to see the source of the command. They were struck with awe as they looked at the figure standing before them. He was a monstrous hulk, at least 7 feet tall and weighing probably 300 pounds. His hair was jet black and flowed down past his shoulders. His face was covered in a thick beard and mustache, and his demeanor made him appear like some sort of barbarian.

Quickly he walked straight toward them, shouting at them the whole way, “How dare you trespass in my city and drink the blood that belongs to me.”

Jordyn was the first to recover from the initial intimidation. “Listen freak,” she said coldly, “I don’t know who you are, or what your deal is, but the last time I checked this was a free country. We just traveled halfway across America to get here and we’re starved. So why don’t you just lighten up a little and go back into the hole you crawled out of.”

The behemoth closing in on them stopped for a moment in shock at the bravado displayed before him. But a second later rage started to rise up inside him and his eyes burned red with anger. “How dare you speak to me with such contempt? My name is Victor. I rule this city and all of the vampires in it. And I don’t like trespassers. So, if you know what’s good for you, you’ll leave now.”

But Jordyn was never one to take a threat seriously and started walking toward the creature.

*‘Careful, Jordyn,’ Angel thought to her, ‘We don’t know anything about this guy.’  
‘I know that he’s a pompous son-of-a-bitch, and that he’s ugly as hell.’*

“Listen, you worthless piece of vampire shit, I don’t give a damn who you think you are. And I don’t like being threatened. So why don’t you get the hell out of here and we’ll forget all about this little incident.”

The words had just left Jordyn’s lips when she felt a rush of wind coming toward her, and was barely able to dodge the knife blade that was hurled at her. Sure, she knew that the thing called Victor could not hurt her physically, but she had never thought about the possibilities of other methods of combat. It stood to reason then, that a stake flown through the air from another vampire could puncture its target’s heart, thus destroying that vampire; or a blade whipped from a distance could sever a head cleanly from its shoulders.

Angel and Nathan rushed over to Jordyn’s side just as Victor lifted a small car from the street and was hurling it through the air at the three of them. Although it probably wouldn’t kill them instantly, it would certainly hurt quite a bit, and probably leave them immobilized until the sun came up, frying them to crisps.

The three newcomers to this city braced for the impact that was inevitable, but

just as the huge mass of metal came bearing down on them something stirred deep inside the twins. Angel and Jordyn felt a tremendous rush of power surge through them, as if something had been awakened which had been dormant all this time. A great bolt of energy shot forward from the girls plunging the vehicle back towards its caster.

Victor was caught completely off guard as the vehicle landed upside down on top of him. Only his head and shoulders were sticking out from underneath. A deep howl of agony flew from his lips as he felt the weight of the car crushing him.

Nathan and the twins walked slowly toward their antagonist. Victor struggled feebly under the mountain of metal. Jordyn squatted down next to him and looked him coldly in the eyes. "I warned you to leave us alone, now, didn't I?" She then spat in his face before getting up and walking away.

She had gone only a short distance before Angel and Nathan joined her. "We can't just leave him here Jordyn," Angel stated.

"Why not?"

"Because it's not right."

"In case you didn't notice, he just tried to pulverize us."

"I know. But he's also one of us. And we can't just leave him to die. We have an obligation to protect our own. Plus we don't know anything about this city."

"She's right," Nathan interjected. "Who knows what will happen if he dies. We might find ourselves the object of a massive vampire hunt by the other vampires living here. Or he might have a bigger brother or something."

Jordyn shot him a mock hateful look. She hated giving in to her sister. She didn't mind as much giving in to Nathan. Quickly she turned and stomped back toward Victor. "Ok, you win."

Together the three of them lifted the car off the so-called vampire leader. Victor struggled to his feet, even as he felt the broken bones in his legs fusing back together. He stared back at his rescuers in bewilderment. "Why did you come back to help me?"

"You can thank my sister for that," Jordyn shot out at him.

Victor looked over at Angel, and a shameful look passed over his face. "Thank you," he said quietly.

"I hope you don't mind if I don't return a 'you're welcome' until you explain

yourself to us.”

“Fair enough,” the burly blood-drinker agreed. He thought for a moment before continuing, “You see, I was the first one in this city, about a hundred and twenty years ago, and I kind of adopted it as my own. Since then I have watched as the city changed drastically throughout the decades, and I have watched over others of my kind with a strong protective fervor. But a couple of years ago strange things started happening, and I have been very cautious of any foreigners entering here since.”

“What kind of strange things?” Nathan asked.

Victor took a deep breath. Angel could tell that his story troubled him deeply. “At first it was nothing more than a few human bodies scattered about. I thought it was one of our young ones getting careless. But then a couple of vampires were found with their throats ripped out, barely alive. The wounds wouldn’t heal and they died in my arms. One of them, Priscilla-my chosen companion...” he grew silent as he thought of her, “...she was able to utter a couple of words before disintegrating before me. She said that it was a strange vampire that did it.”

The twins exchanged questioning glances with Nathan and then with each other.

Victor saw the looks in their eyes, the looks that said ‘yeah right, tell us another one’. He grew a little impatient at that.

“Now, the three of you know that it is impossible for one vampire to harm another. But it happened, and the vampires of Los Angeles haven’t been the same since. Fortunately after a couple of weeks the attacks stopped, and we haven’t had another incident since. But the fear remains in all of us.”

Jordyn looked at her sister, *‘I don’t know about this sis. It sounds kind of hokey to me.’*

*‘Maybe. But either way, I think Hulkster here will leave us alone from now on.’*

“Listen Victor,” Jordyn said with disgust in her voice, “I don’t know if I believe you or not. But, I tell you what, we’ll make a deal with you. You leave us alone, and we’ll leave you alone. We only came out here for a change in scenery, not to lay claim to new territory.”

“I understand,” Victor said solemnly, “and I agree to your terms. But you would do well to keep a watch out for anything out of the ordinary.”

Victor then turned, and in a flash, vanished from sight. The three of them stood silent for a moment before Angel looked over at Jordyn. “Well, sis, you wanted a change, you got it.”

Nathan was the first to suggest they find shelter soon before daylight comes. They came across an old, abandoned warehouse that would work just fine...for now.

Just as they were about to close their eyes, Nathan asked a question, “How did you two move that car the way you did, anyway?”

Angel looked at Jordyn and they both shrugged their shoulders, “Hell if we know.”

Things calmed down considerably after that. The three of them decided to stay in the abandoned warehouse until the situation dictated otherwise. It had a lower level that they were able to secure pretty tight. Plus it was located in an obscure part of town. All in all, they found it cozy enough.

They started mingling a little with the local vampires and were shocked to discover that they were not all that different than the three of them. Most of them carried a small portion of their humanity with them when they crossed over into this dark, undead world. Sure, a few of those turned became nothing more than lustful, evil creatures. But that was the exception, not the norm. To most of them, the longing to recapture their human essence-the dream of seeing the sun again, the desire to feel the power of love flowing through them once more-this became as much a curse to them as the hunger ever was.

This fact comforted Angel greatly as she started to feel a little less alone and a little more accepted. Slowly she came to grips with who she was, not just what she was. It certainly helped having Jordyn there.

Angel watched as each day brought Jordyn and Nathan closer together. Angel had carried her love for Adam beyond hell and the grave, but Jordyn actually found her love in the dark realm of the night, and was even starting to act like a giddy little schoolgirl. After a while, she even started calling him cute little pet names like ‘pumpkin’ and ‘sweetie pie’. Now there is nothing more unnatural than to hear a vampire, a creature of the night, to use words like that, but if you don’t believe that love works in strange ways, then you have never been in love.

## Chapter 2

The screeching sound of an electric guitar snapped Angel back to the present. This was accompanied by a ferocious pounding on the drums, as well as an ear-splitting cry from a trumpet. Then an icy voice erupted through the microphone, sending shocks through the speakers located around the club. Angel smiled as she watched Jordyn on stage, rocking back and forth as the music flew from her lips.

Jordyn had always had a good singing voice. Even as a mortal she had been involved in a couple of bands throughout the years. But, as is usually the case, her demeanor and lack of responsibility had prevented her from taking it any farther than a hobby. Now, things were different. They were different. The world was different.

Angel listened for a while as the dark lyrics seemed to jump out of Jordyn's mouth:

*'upon the wings of darkness ride, the angel of death to take a bride;  
piercing fangs rip out the flesh, leaving only a dying wish;  
cut me, kill me, make me bleed;  
pierce my heart deep, spill my seed;  
humans will fall, angels will cry;  
but the song of the night will never die.'*

After a few moments Angel turned her attention back to the crowd. It was an unbelievable, unnatural sight, and that brought a smile to her lips. Everywhere you looked vampires and humans interacted freely. Humans embraced each other passionately while a vampire would bite them on the arm, careful to only take a little of the red nectar. Vampires were seen embracing humans, as if trying to retrieve that part of them that was now lost. Some vampires were seen embracing other vampires, strengthening the night bond that was shared between them. And of course, everyone was rocking to the sound of Jordyn's music.

All in all, it was quite a spectacle. Angel even saw Victor sitting at a booth in the corner, moving to the music. A slight chuckle escaped Angel's mouth. Victor turned toward Angel with a smile, showing her that he had heard her; showing her that he was

pleased.

They had formed a very strong bond after that initial ‘confrontation’. Almost like a brother-sister sort of closeness. He was actually the one responsible for creating this dark sanctuary...sort of.

After another wave of destruction crashed down upon the city and its vampires, he thought it might be a good idea to create some sort of refuge that would help protect them from their unknown foe; a place where strength in numbers would keep them safe. He decided that Angel would be the perfect one to run it, and after a little coaxing, she agreed.

So, with the help of a few human contacts that Victor had, and the confiscation of a large sum of money from a drug deal that she and Jordyn had very rudely interrupted, the club that is aptly named ‘Bloody Mary’s’ was born.

Initially it was just to be a gathering place for the undead, but then something unexpected happened. Word spread throughout the streets, and humans started showing up, wanting to experience just a little taste of the vampire’s dark world.

Unfortunately, things got out of hand a couple of times at first and vampire indiscretions led to dead bodies lining the floor of the club. So strict rules were put in place, and anyone entering the club, vampire or human, followed the rules without exception, or they paid the price.

A sign was hung on the entrance door outside, as well as above the bar and a couple of other places throughout:

1. DISCRETION IS TO BE USED AT ALL TIMES
2. YOU MUST CLEAN UP YOUR OWN MESS
3. NO KILLING ALLOWED

Sure, everyone thought they were silly, but they added a kind of humorous touch to an otherwise forbidding establishment. It wasn’t that she condemned the act of killing, it was who and what they were. Angel and Jordyn still found themselves regularly scouring the streets at night, looking for a tasty snack, they just made sure they did it outside the club. The last thing they wanted was the authorities snooping around and destroying the sanctuary they had built. Everyone followed the rules very closely-at least they did now.

Marcus was one of the younger, untamed vampires that roamed the streets of L. A. at night. He had come into the club a couple of times before without any incident. But one night he had gotten carried away with a little blond girl named Christy.

He took her into the back of the club, where a number of private rooms were available for more 'intimate pleasures'. After savagely ripping her clothes off, they embraced for what she thought was going to be a moment of pure bliss. But the fire started burning too hot inside Marcus and his lust became uncontrollable. He plunged his fangs deep into her soft pink flesh and drank feverishly. In a matter of moments, her thread of life had disintegrated. The blindness of his hunger had prevented him from stopping before it went too far. Christy was dead.

After a minute or two, Marcus regained his composure and started to leave, hoping he could sneak out the back of the club without anyone noticing. But it was too late. Angel and Victor were standing outside as he opened the door. They had smelled the aroma of death floating through the air. Behind them stood a very angry crowd of vampires, their snarls revealing their collective displeasure.

Marcus had a brief thought of fleeing, but knew that it would only make matters worse. Instead he pleaded for mercy. "I'm so sorry, Angel. Forgive me. I didn't mean to. You have to believe me. I just couldn't control myself."

Angel looked at Marcus with an icy stare. "You know the rules Marcus. No killing, period. If you can't control yourself, then you have no business being here."

Victor's booming voice made Marcus cringe. "Now, we can do this the easy way, or we can do this the hard way. It's up to you."

But Marcus had turned into a quivering idiot. "No, please, no. I beg you. I'll do anything. Please."

His words fell on deaf ears as Victor and Angel grabbed him by the arms and dragged him to a steel door at the end of the hall. Angel punched in a code on the panel beside the door. The door slid open, revealing a set of stairs that descended into a dark abyss.

Angel and Victor started down the stairs with their prisoner in tow. It was like the prison guards leading a death-row inmate into the gas chamber. The bottom of the stairs led into a long corridor with a number of large metal doors scattered on each side.

The group stopped in front of one of these doors and Marcus' eyes looked like those of a frightened rabbit caught in a trap. Angel pressed another code into a panel located on the door. A loud click was heard as she turned the handle and opened the door. A small ten-by-ten room lay beyond the door. The room was completely empty except for a sign on the opposite wall showing the 'house rules'.

The two captors pushed Marcus hard into the room. "See you in a month," Angel said coldly as she closed the door with a loud thud.

And so the punishment was handed out: one month locked up in an airtight room made completely of lead. Escape was impossible, the lead neutralizing their supernatural powers.

For the first week, the prisoner is ok. Sure, the hunger is agonizing, but it is manageable. It can be compared to a human going on a fast for medicinal or religious reasons.

By the end of the second week things start to get a little tougher. The hunger becomes excruciating, until it starts to gnaw at you internally, wracking your body with intense pain.

By the end of the third week, your sanity is completely gone, as you began to rock back and forth against the wall, while trying to eat your own hand off in an attempt to subdue the hunger.

And by the fourth week all you can do is lay in a stupor against the wall, the weakness making it impossible to move even the slightest muscle.

Then you hear a click as the handle is turned and the door swings open. You realize then that you cannot even turn to see who your rescuer is.

Gently Angel puts a glass of warm, red liquid to Marcus' lips and helps him sip slowly. After a short while he feels the warmth returning to his veins. He looks up at Angel through sorrowful eyes. "I'm so sorry. It won't happen again."

Angel returns the look with a slight smile to comfort him. "I know."

### Chapter 3

Joshua leaned forward on the leather couch in his study. His elbows were supported by his knees, while his chin rested on his fists in a deep, thoughtful manner. Soft candlelight flickered throughout the room, adding to the meditative aura surrounding the ancient vampire.

Like a gypsy fortune-teller gazing into a crystal ball, Joshua stared intently at the fire crackling before him. It almost seemed as if he was looking for something in the brilliant glow of the flames.

Actually, he was trying to hear something. At first it had seemed almost unrecognizable, barely audible, like a gentle breeze swaying through the grass in the distant fields. But the last couple of days it had grown in its intensity, until it resembled more of a murmur than just a drifting wind.

He had heard the sound before, countless ages ago. And he knew, before anyone else, what was coming.

Joshua pressed the button on the intercom located on the end table next to the couch. Daniel's voice answered almost immediately. "Good evening, sir. What can I do for you?"

"I need to speak with our dear friend Ice. Can you bring him to me?"

"Right away sir."

Joshua then resumed his meditation in front of the fire, listening intently as the dark whispers from the other world grew louder. It would not be long now. And he prayed that they had the power to stop the oncoming doom.

Ice's irreverent voice cut through the silence. "You rang, boss?"

Joshua looked at him with a little irritation in his eyes. He hated the way slang had entwined its way into the English language. He hadn't rung any kind of bell, and he wasn't Ice's boss. He let out a slight sigh and motioned to the couch next to him. "Please, have a seat. Something pressing has come up, and I need your help."

Ice looked eager. "Sure boss. What's up? Do you want me to cut somebody's head off? Or maybe you need a nice, scrumptious female for a snack?"

"No, no. Nothing like that. And please quit calling me boss. It makes me

uncomfortable.” He grew quiet for a second, thinking about his words carefully, “Something big is about to happen that will threaten to destroy all life on this planet, including our own. And if we don’t act quickly, I’m afraid it will be too late.”

Ice’s eyes filled with shock. “What on earth could happen that would be that horrible?”

“Close your eyes, my young one. Clear your thoughts, and listen. Listen closely. What do you hear?”

Ice did as instructed, his unnatural ears straining to hear every sound that permeated the air. His mind processed the signals it captured instantly. And then, as he sorted through the different impulses, he heard something unfamiliar, a soft rustling sound coming from everywhere at once. He tried harder to make it out more clearly, but couldn’t. He opened his eyes and looked at Joshua questioningly.

Joshua returned his gaze with a bitter smile. “The sound you just heard, my friend, is the sound of death and destruction waiting to spread its vile wings across this land. It is the collective voice of a legion of dark creatures waiting behind a thin curtain to ravage and destroy our world. Their hunger is unquenchable and their fury unbridled, but if we act quickly, we may be able to stop it.”

Ice looked at Joshua in disbelief. Finding out that the world might end wasn’t something that you heard everyday. He had never been one to think things through on a large scale, but the idea that everything on this planet was in danger posed a very serious problem to Ice and his future.

It was almost a minute before he spoke again, “What do you want me to do?”

“I need you to bring someone to me.”

## Chapter 4

**A**dam woke up in a cold sweat. The god of nightmares had paid him another visit. This time he had been standing in front of a large window looking out at a dark and twisted, barren land. It was quite similar to his world, only eerily different.

Nothing moved except for a few leaves that still remained on the menacing trees that lined the landscape. But as his eyes adjusted to the darkness around him, he could see a number of undefined mists, actually darker than the night around them, floating in the air outside. They were almost like shadows that moved on their own, but didn't belong to anything solid.

As he stared intently at the black shapes on the other side of the glass, a low, raspy sound started to emerge. It sounded almost like a whisper. Adam strained to make out the dark sound, pressing his ear to the glass. He heard it grow in volume, not in terms of loudness, but in terms of numbers. It quickly became a chorus of dark whispers descending upon him, filling him with fear.

And just as he was about to understand what they were saying, a heavy thud banged on the glass in front of his face. The impact knocked him backwards, and he stumbled to the ground. After a moment, he realized that the whispering had stopped. He swallowed hard as he summoned up his courage and slowly stood up. His head had just reached the middle of the window, when a hideous face appeared outside. Large yellow eyes topped the misshapen green face, while a long and twisted nose jutted out just above a mouth filled with long, sharp fangs. It looked straight at Adam and hissed, "You will die."

A shriek of terror escaped from Adam's mouth as he jolted out of sleep. The figure lying next to him woke up startled at the cry she had heard. "Are you all right dear?" she asked in a very worried voice.

"I'm fine," he replied. That was a lie. He was terrified.

"Was it another one of those nightmares again?"

"Yeah, no big deal. I'll be ok in a minute."

She snuggled up beside him and put her arm around his shoulders. "Do you want

to tell me about it?"

"I don't really remember any of the details, just that something was after me." That was another lie. He remembered everything perfectly and had already replayed the whole event in his mind. "I think I just need to splash my face and get a drink of water."

"Is there anything I can get for you?"

"No. I'll be fine. Try to go back to sleep, Hun."

Julie watched as her husband stumbled out of bed and headed for the bathroom. It wasn't until after she heard him throwing up in the toilet, that she heard the water running, followed by the familiar splashing sound she had grown accustomed to. He was far from all right, and she knew it.

After a few minutes, Adam returned from the bathroom and was just about to climb back into bed, when a cry interrupted the night. "Since I'm already up, I'll go see what she needs. It'll help calm me down."

The nursery was in the next room, so Adam didn't have to go far to find out what the problem was. One step inside, and he knew immediately. Their sixteen-month old baby girl, Jasmine, had exploded inside her diaper...and it was nasty. "Maybe I should have let mommy get it," he said as he carefully picked her up and held her at arms length while he walked over to the changing table.

After a couple of minutes of agony, he had the situation corrected, and held the bundle of joy close to his chest while he rocked back and forth trying to call the angel of sleep back to her.

While he held her close, the thought of almost losing her crept back into his mind. Although Julie had carried her to full term, she was born very under-weight. The doctors were stumped. They said it was almost as if she had been starving while she lay in the womb, waiting to be born. She was in the hospital for almost a month before she was stabilized enough for them to take her home.

But that didn't last very long. She became very sick, very quickly. Nothing they gave her seemed to work. The doctors switched her to a number of different formulas, with no results. It was only after one of the nurses had given her the wrong formula did they figure out what was wrong. The nurse had grabbed the wrong can off the shelf by mistake, and instead of putting soy formula in the bottle, she put in an advanced formula

with an iron supplement made for older infants. Jasmine began sucking on the bottle greedily. The doctors performed some more blood tests and discovered that her whole problem was that she had an iron deficiency. But the problem wasn't a simple one, it was a major deficiency of iron. The doctors had never seen anything like it.

And shortly after that they put her on whole milk, normally only given to children after they were a year old, and they supplemented it with an iron additive. Within a couple of weeks Jasmine was fine, and Adam and Julie were able to breathe a big sigh of relief.

Adam turned his head to look through the dark hair of the little girl on his shoulder. He could just make out the eyelids that were closed tight on her face. Gently he kissed her on the forehead and laid her back in her crib. She moved slightly for a second before sinking back into sleep.

Quietly Adam closed the door to the nursery and headed back to bed. He was pleasantly surprised when he lifted the covers to see Julie's naked body underneath. "Oh. My god, Julie, somebody stole your clothes!"

Julie put her finger to her mouth to try to quiet him down a little. "You're the detective. Can't you figure out what happened?"

"First I'll have to inspect the crime scene."

Immediately he buried his head under the covers. His tongue worked its way down the soft contours of her body and then up her long legs. He popped his head up for a moment, "Why Mrs. Clancey, I'm beginning to think that I've been set up."

A moan of pleasure issued from Julie as he buried his face into her. After he brought her to an intense orgasm, he climbed on top of her. Their lovemaking hit a fevered pitch, and after a while, Adam felt as if he was going to explode. He looked down at Julie's face, her red lips pursed in ecstasy. "Oh, Angel," he said suddenly, as he burst inside her, without hearing his own words.

A look of shock overtook Julie's face. "What did you just say?"

Adam was confused. "What do you mean?"

"Just a second ago, what did you say?"

"I think I said you're an Angel. I don't remember the exact words."

Julie gave him a doubtful look. She decided not to push the issue right now.

Adam was in a very fragile state mentally and she didn't want to make matters worse.  
But she knew what she heard.

## Chapter 5

A loud screech reverberated through the amplifier and the music came to an abrupt stop as the door to the club burst open and a lone figure stumbled through, dropping to the floor at the foot of the stage. His pale skin showed the crowd that gathered around that he wasn't human, while the wound in his neck spoke of a savage attack. All the vampires there cringed in horror at the thought of the unknown terror ravaging through the city streets again. Jordyn gasped in fear when she realized that the figure dying on the floor in front of her was Nathan.

Jordyn leapt off the stage in a panic and rushed over to Nathan. He looked at her with a glassy stare, his skin was starting to crack like leather exposed to the heat of the sun too long, while his lips moved slightly as if he were trying to say something important before his life slipped away.

Quickly Jordyn sliced her wrist open and held it above Nathan's mouth so the red drops could land on his lips, hoping that her blood could prevent his destruction. "Don't leave me!" she yelled in frenzy.

After a long moment she was able to see a change, his skin started to smoothen ever so slightly, the cloudiness of his eyes cleared up, bringing back their rich blueness. She pressed her wrist to Nathan's mouth and he suck hard on her flesh. A strong sigh of relief rushed out of her.

Suddenly she was aware of the hundreds of eyes that surrounded them, watching intently to see the outcome. Gently she picked up Nathan and carried him toward the back of the club to her own room.

Angel shouted above the noise of the crowd, "Ok, people, show's over. Everyone back to your business." She and Victor then followed Jordyn. Deep worry still filled Jordyn's eyes as she looked at her sister, *'He'll be alright, won't he?'*

But Angel wasn't so sure. *'He's strong. I'm sure he'll be fine. He just lost a lot of blood.'*

*'Can you get me a vessel? My blood will only keep alive for so long. He needs the blood of a human.'* A vessel was a human volunteer who was willing to donate a portion

of their blood to a vampire in exchange for the rapture they felt during the act. Vampire blood helps another vampire grow in strength, but it eventually mixes with their own dark blood and in turns just becomes a part of their essence. Nathan needed human blood for his body to heal.

Angel walked back out to the stage and yelled in a booming voice. “Listen up, everyone! Nathan’s in pretty bad shape, and if we don’t get him some fresh blood soon he’s going to die. I need a volunteer.”

A hush fell over the crowd as each person looked at each other. Most of the humans there had given blood before, but only in small amounts, and they knew they were never in any real danger. But this was different, and everyone realized that death was a very strong possibility.

But one voice spoke up, “I’ll do it.”

Angel turned around to see the source of the voice. It was Amber, the drummer and only human in the band. She was a petite redhead with bright green eyes and a cute smile. But she was also a hellion when she wanted to be. She and Jordyn had become very close, probably because they were a lot alike. And she had asked Jordyn a number of times to make her one of them. But Jordyn had refused each time, not wanting her to experience the power of the curse.

Angel looked into those green eyes and saw undaunted conviction, “Are you sure you want to do this?”

“Positive.”

“You understand the danger?”

“Absolutely.”

“Ok, then. Follow me.”

Jarek crouched in the shadows outside. His long, green nose was turned upward and he sniffed deeply. He could smell them inside, lots and lots of them: blood-drinkers from this world.

He sorted through the scents until he found the one he was looking for, the one that somehow had escaped his clutches, and had found his way here. Jarek hoped that the smell of death would be mixed with his aroma, but he was very disappointed to find that

it wasn't. In fact he could smell the vitality returning. Silently he cursed himself. This was the first blood-drinker that had gotten away. He had proven to be stronger than expected. And Jarek knew that The Master would be very displeased.