



# In the Dark

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**Category:** Romance, M-m Romance, Paranormal, Vampires

**Description:** Jax 'Key' Thorpe knew he had a stalker but was strangely unfazed by that knowledge. If anything, he found it reassuring until his stalker made a sudden appearance in his life. Vampire Kelvin Standing watched his mate from afar. His human mate. The one vampire law stated he could never be with. When Key is attacked Kelvin jumps in to save him and changes both their lives.

With laws broken, and threats around every corner, can Key and Kelvin make their mating work, or will an enemy from the past destroy their chance of happiness?

**Total Pages (Source):** 40

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## Chapter One

Jax 'Key' Thorpe adjusted the bag on his shoulder as he left Cyberlink Corp and walked down the sidewalk. Another boring day at work, dealing with assholes who thought they knew more than he did because they could fucking type.

Yeah, right.

Here he was building websites and data analysis tools and making sure their malware and firewalls were impenetrable, but hey, he was just a grunt. The 'I pay your salary' comments got old fucking fast, and if it wasn't for the fact the job paid a decent wage, Key would have fucked off a long time ago.

As he was walking out the door, he'd been tasked with giving a presentation on a new security system that had to be completed within two days. Two fucking days! The guys wanted a presentation? He'd give them one. Maybe a two-hour PowerPoint one would get his message across.

Stepping around a puddle of water, Key exhaled heavily. At least it was Friday, so he could go home and get drunk. He had plans to go out Saturday and meet friends, but tonight he wanted to get home, shower, and relax with a movie and beer.

His steps slowed as he felt a familiar itch between his shoulder blades. Someone was watching him. It was virtually every night when he left work that he had this feeling. At first, he'd been concerned, spinning around to search the sidewalk behind him, but no one had been there.

He'd shrugged it off as his overactive imagination, but when he'd felt it the following night and the next, he knew someone was watching him. That had been over a month ago, and even though he had the feeling whenever he went outside, no one had approached him.

Maybe it was his imagination, after all.

Seeing his car ahead, Key sped up, and when he reached it, he unlocked it and climbed in quickly. Throwing his bag on the passenger seat, he sat back and closed his eyes, sighing deeply. He could feel the beginnings of a headache forming, the dull ache behind his eyes building.

Opening his eyes, he swung his head to the right when he saw a shadow out of the corner of his eye. As he leaned forward and searched the area, Key made sure to lock his car. If someone was out there, they'd have to smash his window to get to him.

"What the fuck?" Key muttered, jumping when his phone rang. Chuckling softly to himself, he picked it up and smiled when he saw his dad's name on the screen.

"Hi Dad."

"Son. What time are you coming over Sunday? I was thinking beef."

Key smiled even though he knew his dad, Charles, couldn't see it. "Beef sounds good. I'm out with friends Saturday, so maybe one-ish."

"Don't get too drunk, son."

"Dad," Key stressed the word. He loved his dad, but he was an adult. "I'm old enough to know not to get drunk."

“Really? Who was it last month who called me up at three in the morning to sing ‘I love you’ down the line?”

“I don’t know, Dad. I have no idea what you’re talking about.” Key winced. He still didn’t remember calling Charles, and if it wasn’t for his call log, Key would have denied it.

“I love you too, son. So one, then, and will you be bringing anyone along with you?”

“Is this your way of asking if I’m seeing anyone? I’m not, so no, I won’t be bringing anyone.”

Key heard the sigh and rolled his eyes. Seriously. What was it with Charles trying to get him a man? He should be happy his son was happy and doing well, but no, he wanted to see Key married and with kids.

Maybe he didn’t want kids. Key hadn’t decided either way yet. He wasn’t in a relationship and wasn’t searching for one, either. He was twenty-eight and still had plenty of time, so why rush things? He had a good job, a nice apartment, and great friends. He was happy where his life was, even if the job did suck ass some days.

“You should look for a man. You’re not getting any younger, son.”

“Gee thanks, Dad. ‘Son, you’re getting old, so grab a man while you can.’”

Charles chuckled softly. “I want to see my only son happy. Is that such a bad thing?”

“No it isn’t,” Key murmured. “I’ll find someone when I’m ready. Maybe you should take some of your own advice. Mom has been gone a few years now, maybe you should consider dating someone.”

“I will when I’m ready...” Charles paused, then laughed. “Okay, I hear you, but your mom is a pretty hard act to follow.”

“She is, but there are many beautiful, talented women out there who deserve a great man like you. So maybe you should get out there.”

“I’ll think about it. Beef then.”

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Not changing the subject at all! “Yeah, beef sounds good. I’ll see you at one.”

“Bye son, and don’t get too wasted.”

“I won’t.”

“And pack condoms.”

“Gee Dad. That would have never occurred to me. Thanks for the reminder.”

“Brat. Love you.”

Key smiled. “You too, Dad.”

Hanging up, Key dropped his phone on the passenger seat and stared out of the window, watching the rain. The trails snaked down the windshield and he smiled wistfully. Maybe Charles had a point. He wasn’t getting any younger, but Key figured he had a few years left before finding someone. Or he was meant to be alone. Some men and women preferred that.

Starting the engine, Key glanced around and pulled out. As he drove away, he glanced in the rearview mirror and saw someone watching him but couldn’t see the details. Maybe it was his mysterious stalker or it could be some stranger who just happened to be there.

One day, he’d find out who his mysterious stalker was. The person who watched him but didn’t approach him. One day.

Watching the black car drive away had Kelvin Standing lowering his head. Taking a deep breath, he closed his eyes. He could only watch over his mate. He couldn't interact with him. Kelvin was a vampire and Key was human and they had laws in place so they couldn't mate.

"Are you going to watch him live his life then die?"

Kelvin wanted to ignore Minho Lee, but murmured, "I don't know what you mean."

"He's your mate."

"And? We have laws in place, so what can I do? I break those laws and they'll kill both of us. I'd rather he lived a long, happy life than have a brief one with me."

"Some laws are meant to be broken."

"Some laws are in place because of how we treated our mates."

"Centuries ago." Minho stepped forward, the light illuminating his features. His dark piercing eyes met Kelvin's, then moved away. His tanned skin glowed, and he crouched down to move a cat sliding around his legs. "Go on," he murmured.

The cat moved away and Minho stood. "You have a way with animals."

Shrugging, Minho turned and watched Kelvin. "There is a way to have your mate."

"And what is that? Challenge the laws we've had in place for centuries?"

"What was needed then isn't needed now. We've evolved. The old ones are long dead."

“Because we killed them.” The civil war between vampires had been brutal and bloody, leaving thousands dead. “Speaking of mates—”

“Don’t. Our situations are different.”

Kelvin heard the thread of acceptance in Minho’s voice and wanted to challenge him, but he knew he would get nowhere. Minho’s situation was different. Kelvin sighed softly and shoved his hands in the pockets of his coat. “I need to go.”

“You need to make sure he arrives home safe.”

“That too.” Kelvin shrugged, then turned to leave, but was stopped by Minho’s hand on his shoulder. “What?”

“Don’t wait too long to act. Challenges to laws have been made in the past when the laws became obsolete. This one can be challenged as well.”

“Why don’t you do it then?” Kelvin lifted his chin and stared into Minho’s dark eyes.

Minho stared back, then curled one side of his mouth up. “I’m not going to mate, so why would I challenge that particular law? You have a human mate. One you watch every day. One you follow to ensure his safety. You’re the one who is in the best position to challenge the archaic law we’ve obeyed for centuries. You, not I.”



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“Only because you’re too afraid to do what you should.”

“Say what you want, Kelvin. Your mate is there in front of you. He senses your presence. He knows when you are watching him. Go to him before it’s too late. Unless you want to watch him find a human to live his life with, watch him grow old, then visit his grave when he’s dead. Your decision, not mine.” Minho shrugged Kelvin’s hand from his shoulder, his eyes narrowing. “Can you do that, Kelvin? Watch your mate live his life with another man? Watch him have a family? Will you spy through the window as he fucks his partner?”

Minho walked away and Kelvin let him. Minho’s words were loud in his head, bouncing around until Kelvin closed his eyes. Watch Key marry someone else, have a family, grow old and die. Was Kelvin prepared for that? Could he live through that?

Staring at where Key had been, Kelvin stepped to the edge of the building and then off. He dropped to the ground, and when his feet landed, his body vibrated, the impact absorbed then dissipating as if he’d jumped one foot instead of thirty.

Walking over to where Key had parked, Kelvin inhaled deeply, his lungs taking in his mate’s unique scent, one he would never forget. Minho had made several valid points, and Kelvin didn’t want to accept them, but he knew he had to. Did he want to visit his mate’s grave because he’d been too afraid to take what had been given to him? Placing flowers on the ground above his mate’s rotting corpse? Fuck. That image alone had Kelvin’s chest constricting, his breath catching.

The laws were in place for a reason. Vampires had been too dangerous back when they were put into effect. They’d taken any human they’d wanted, fed

indiscriminately, fucked whoever they wanted, killed without mercy. The civil war had only worsened the atrocities committed against both human and vampire until they had split into two factions and an uneasy truce had come into existence.

Vampire families split in two. Mates separated; families destroyed.

Then, the laws had been needed, both factions agreeing to them. Both sides somehow coming together to create them and follow them. There were vampires who didn't follow them, who didn't agree with them, and they were held accountable, punished harshly, even put to death.

Vampire population had been virtually destroyed, and only now was it gradually increasing. One thing both sides had agreed to was that no human would know of their existence and no human would be mated to a vampire under any circumstances.

It was needed then. Vampires had seen humans as nothing more than cattle to do with as they wanted. If vampires had suffered through the civil war, it was nothing compared to what humans had endured, so the laws regarding humans and how they were treated had been necessary.

And it was those laws that had put Kelvin in the position he was now in.

A human mate. One, according to the laws, he could never be with.

Was he vampire enough to challenge the law regarding human mates? Was he the one to throw caution to the wind and take his mate? Was he the one who would face the punishment? And what about Key? What would happen to him if Kelvin did cross that line and mate him? Would Key be punished as well?

Too many questions and no answers.

Kelvin closed his eyes and lifted his head, feeling the rain run over his skin. It felt like it was washing away his sins, his indecisions. He lowered his head and opened his eyes, then ran. He had a mate, and he needed to make sure said mate arrived home safe.

## Chapter Two

Arriving home, Key parked and got out of his car, groaning softly when his lower back ached. He'd spent far too much time bent over his computer, figuring out a problem in a string of code, and now he was paying the price. He needed to work out more, but not tonight.

Locking his car, Key entered his apartment block and wearily trudged up the stairs to the top floor. Fortunately, there were only three levels, so it didn't take him long. Opening his front door, he kicked it shut behind him and dropped his bag to the floor, then shrugged his jacket off.

He took a step, then paused, glancing over to the window. He could feel it. The sensation that someone was watching him, which was strange because he was nowhere near work, so how could he be feeling it? Yet he did, and it was the same as always. The same feeling, the same strange quiet that made his body both settle and rev up in excitement.

It confused him. How could he feel both at the same time? Walking over to the window, Key stared out into the dark wet night, seeing nothing, but he knew. He knew the person who watched him was there. Key smirked, then waved before reaching to close the blinds but stopping short.

Maybe his mystery admirer would like a show. Chuckling softly, Key reached up and undid the top button of his shirt, then the next. He closed his eyes and reached out a hand, placing his palm on the window as his other hand undid another button.

Key wasn't sure what had come over him. He never did anything like this. He undid another button and slid his hand inside, biting the corner of his lip as he rubbed his finger over his nipple. His body lit up, and he knew. He just knew what he was doing was affecting his stalker.

Opening his eyes, he stepped back from the window and smiled widely as he closed the blinds. He was being a shit, and he didn't care. That surprised him. He had no idea who his stalker was, obviously, and here he was taunting him.

Turning away, Key walked over to the kitchen area and opened the fridge, grabbing a bottle of beer. Opening it, he drank some, then slammed the fridge door shut and walked over to the sofa. Sitting, he took another mouthful of beer, then cradled the bottle between his thighs as he closed his eyes.

With them closed, it seemed like his other senses came alive. His body tingled, and he rolled his head toward the window. He knew his admirer, or stalker, whoever he was, was still out there. It seemed as if his body was hyperaware of the other individual, and that both excited and scared Key.

Some random person stood out there watching him and Key liked it...kinda. The way his body tightened up at the thought of this strange man. Yes, Key knew it was a man. Reaching out for him had Key biting back a moan. That was what made him pause and made him question his own reactions.

A strange man stalked him and Key found it arousing. That scared him. The way his body reacted, the way he seemed to know when the stranger appeared and when he disappeared. It was at times when Key would be more vulnerable. When he was alone. Like now, the feeling of being watched was slowly disappearing, leaving his body humming in disappointment.

He was safe at home, so his watcher didn't need to stay. Whoever it was appeared to

have Key's best interests in mind. His safety. Key had to find out who it was that watched him, stalked him, whichever it was.

Sitting up, Key opened his eyes and grabbed his phone. A security camera. That's what he needed to install, so he could see who was out there watching him. A camera that Key could move around so he could locate this man. As soon as he had the feeling his watcher was there, Key could find him and then he would finally see what this man looked like.

Scrolling through various websites, Key found the perfect one and placed his order. Now he had to wait for it to arrive and then he would install it. Then he waited. Considering his watcher was there every night, Key knew he wouldn't have to wait long, and once he had a face, he could track the man down.

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Smiling to himself, Key put the phone down and finished his beer, his foot drumming the floor. He was eager to find out who the watcher man was, who followed him what seemed like every day. Why spend that much time watching over someone but not approaching them?

Key had been feeling this way for weeks now and yet the man hadn't come to him, hadn't approached him. Why do the same thing every day and night and never even say hello? Key had toyed with the idea that he had met this man, but he was certain his body would react. Considering it reacted when the man was simply nearby, he was certain it would go haywire when the man came to him.

Frustrating, but Key knew he had to bide his time. Whoever this person was, they didn't appear to want to harm him unless they were lulling him into a false sense of security. Key snorted. About right for him. Here he was crushing on a stalker, because that was what this man was, and his stalker turns out to be some mass murderer or something.

He needed to go out and get laid.

When was the last time he'd had sex? Key paused and tilted his head, running through his memory to find the last time he'd met a man. A month ago? Really? It had been a month since the blow job he'd had? The fact the guy he'd met didn't do anal had been slightly disappointing, but the blow job more than made up for it. That man sure knew how to suck dick, and Key had enjoyed every second of it, including giving the man one in return.

He'd have liked to have met him again, but anal was something Key wasn't willing to

give up. He enjoyed fucking and being fucked, and even if the man he'd met had been fun and sexy, it wasn't enough to give up something he truly loved.

Sighing softly, Key walked to the bathroom and turned the shower on, stripping as he waited for the water to heat up. Sticking his hand under the spray, Key stepped inside and closed the door, tilting his head up as he closed his eyes and let the water rain over his face.

He stood like that for a few minutes, letting the warm water relax his shoulders. He tended to hold tension there, so they always ached after a long day in the office dealing with dickheads who thought they knew better than him because they could turn a computer on. Oh, and connect a couple of cables. That was a good one.

Grabbing the shampoo, he poured some in his hand and washed his hair, then rinsed and scrubbed his body too. Once he was clean, he again stood under the shower and let the water wash away the day. He went back over the presentation he had to give on Monday and exhaled heavily.

“Idiots.”

Turning the shower off, he grabbed a towel and quickly dried, then went to his bedroom and lay on his bed. Time to have some fun. Opening his top drawer, he pulled out his dildo and lube and lay them on the towel he'd spread out. He let his legs fall open and closed his eyes as he grabbed his dick and slowly stroked it.

He shuddered as he tightened his hand, the sensations making his skin pebble. Letting go of his dick, Key grabbed the lube and opened it, then poured some on his fingers. Dropping the bottle, he stroked his dick again with one hand, then reached down and ran his lubed fingers over his hole. He shuddered again, his body briefly tensing as he ran his fingers over the puckered entrance.

Biting his lip, Key pressed a finger inside, moaning softly. In and out, in and out until he pushed a second finger inside. Soon a third joined it and he dropped his dick and stopped when he felt the telltale signs he was getting close to coming.

He wanted to come, but only when he was fucking himself with his dildo. Nothing better than coming with something thick and long in his ass. He grabbed the dildo and coated it in lube, then placed the head on his hole and teased himself with it. Running it around the edge then pushing the tip inside and pulling it out. Sweat broke out over his skin as he only used the tip until he had to feel the full length inside.

Pushing the dildo inside, Key moaned and fisted his dick, squeezing the base until he calmed down. Fuck, he was so close, but he wanted this to last longer. He fucked his ass slowly, taking his time to slide the dildo in and out as he pumped his dick.

He couldn't stop the sounds spilling from his lips and wouldn't try to, anyway. There was nothing better than what he was feeling right then. His ass stretched and full, his dick in a tight grip as he stroked it. His balls pulling up tight as they got ready to unload.

Key stroked faster, fucked his ass with the dildo quicker, his moans growing louder and louder. He shuddered and jerked, his body rushing towards his impending orgasm. His legs quivered, and he arched up. The tingling in his body erupted outward, spreading through his limbs and over his body as his dick jerked in his hand.

Ropes of pearly white come erupted from the tip, coating Key's hand and abs. He kept stroking, his body trembling until he slumped on the bed, gasping for breath. His sweat damp skin was burning hot, the come cooling as he slowly eased the dildo from his ass and placed it on the towel. He lay like that for a few minutes, ignoring the drying come, until he opened his eyes and stared up at the ceiling.

Sitting up, he scrunched his nose as the come on his abs moved, and he grabbed a



handful of wipes to clean it up. Standing slowly, he grabbed the dildo and cleaned it before having another quick shower to clean the come and sweat from his skin.

Back in his bedroom, Key put everything away, then picked up the TV remote and switched on the TV. One of the Marvel movies was on so, grabbing a beer from the kitchen, Key settled into bed to watch it. Nothing better than a beer and some action to watch. It did help that the men looked amazing in their outfits.

Yawning, Key pulled the covers up and sipped his beer. A nice relaxing night in was what he needed, with beer and takeout, because tomorrow he would be out partying and looking to get laid.

Kelvin gasped as he came, his come splattering on the ground by his feet. Fuck, Key needed to make sure his bedroom curtains were fully closed before he did stuff like that. Not that Kelvin was complaining, but watching his mate fuck his ass was too much, and he'd grabbed his own rock hard dick.

It had taken him seconds to come, watching his mate as he writhed on the bed. He wanted to be the one to make him move like that. He wanted to be the one to make him come like that. The sounds Kelvin could hear from Key, muted from this distance, had him questioning his reasons for staying away.

Fuck the laws.

Cleaning his hand, Kelvin shoved his dick back inside his jeans and zipped up. With one final glance at his mate, Kelvin turned and walked away. Minho was right. Some laws needed to change, but Kelvin wasn't sure if he was the vampire to do it.

### Chapter Three

“Dad!”

“Well?”

“I’m not going to answer that question.”

“So that’s a no, then.”

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Closing his eyes slowly, Key counted to ten, then shot them open when Charles chuckled. “What?”

“Did you reach ten?”

Sighing, Key smiled. “I didn’t meet anyone worth spending time with. I did have a good night with my friends and got drunk.”

“You’re not getting any younger, but I’m not going to give you that speech.” Charles meant the grandkids speech. Once was enough. “I want you to be happy and find someone who makes you laugh.”

“I want that too, but I’m not rushing to find it, either. If it happens, it happens.” Key shrugged and sipped his coffee, watching Charles as he moved around his kitchen preparing their meal.

Yep, Saturday night had been a bust, even though Key had seen plenty of great looking men. He hadn’t felt it, if that made sense. He’d gone out with friends with the intent of having fun, getting drunk, and finding a guy to fuck around with, and when they’d arrived at a club, he’d done the fun and drunk part, but the fucking around had fizzled out.

Sure, hot guys were everywhere and several had shown their interest in him, but he’d smiled and shook his head. Even now, he was puzzled by his own behavior. He’d wanted to fuck. He’d wanted to drink, and laugh, and fuck, and here he was now with a hangover and no orgasm, sitting at Charles’ kitchen table.

Licking his lips, Key stared at the table, his fingers following a grain in the wood. Maybe it was that man's fault. His stalker. The one he'd decided to put a little show on for and then left him hanging. Maybe he should do more than touch his nipples in front of the window. Next time he should strip and let him see the goods, and... what the hell was he doing thinking this way?

This man was someone Key didn't know, who followed him practically every night. He watched Key in his apartment, watched him as he moved around, and Key liked it. Maybe he had a wire loose in his brain. That could explain why he had this strange urge to tease his stalker. Tease and torment.

Did he want his stalker to snap and turn up outside his apartment one day? What if he did that? What if Key got home one night and as he was entering his home, the man who followed him came in after him and... Key squirmed in his seat. Fuck, maybe there was something wrong with him.

The idea of letting the man, this stranger, touch him and do things to him had him hard. In his dad's kitchen. Not the place to be having these strange fantasies, but his mind begged to differ. Different scenarios rushed through his mind, all dirty, all filthy.

Key bound and gagged on his bed while this mystery stalker made Key's body his plaything. Touching and licking and biting and fucking. Or stripping Key naked by the door as soon as they entered and fucking him against it, making Key beg for more.

Damn, he really should have gotten laid last night. He needed a fuck, and he didn't care who did what. As long as he was with another man, tasting their sweat on his tongue...

"Son."

Key lifted his head and blinked at Charles. "Sorry, what did you say?"

"I asked if you wanted green beans as well, but your head is in the clouds." Charles put the beef on the table in front of Key, who grimaced as his stomach rolled. He'd done it to himself and Charles had cooked, so he was going to eat even if he didn't want to.

"Thinking about what you said." Key shrugged. "When the right man comes along, then who knows what will happen, but I'm not settling because I've reached a certain age and it's expected."

"I met your mother when we were teenagers. I knew the moment I saw her, and she felt the same way, and that is why I find it hard to move on." Charles gave Key a pointed look. "She's a hard act to follow. I still miss her."

"I miss Mom, too." Key felt her absence every day, but looking at Charles, he knew he would find love again if he went looking for it. He didn't want his dad to live the rest of his life alone when he deserved to be with someone. Charles was a great man, a pain in the ass husband, according to Janet, his mom, and a fantastic dad.

Key knew why Charles wanted him to find someone who made him happy. He'd had that for years with Janet until she'd passed away and he wanted the same for his son.

The table was soon filled with bowls of vegetables, enough to feed several people, and Key piled his plate. It smelled delicious, but his stomach still wasn't quite on board, so he took his time eating. Charles tucked in and Key wasn't even halfway through his food by the time Charles was adding more.

"Dad," Key whined as he watched Charles add more meat. "I've got enough."

"You need feeding up and there's plenty here."

“Why is there so much?”

“I’m going to do a couple of plates for the Jeffersons down the road. They don’t have much money after the stunt their kid pulled, so I’ll do them a plate each and at least I know they’ve eaten today.”

Their kid, Eric, had taken all their savings and run, leaving them with debts Eric had built up and nothing to pay them with. The Jeffersons were lucky, though. They had great neighbors who had been there to provide advice and help and food when needed.

“Have they found Eric?”

“No. The bastard has dropped off the radar. When I get my hands on him...” Charles shook his head, his jaw hard. “How could he do that to them after everything they’d done for him? Got him into one of the top universities with the money they saved up, bought him that stupid car he’d begged for, helped him get that job he didn’t deserve. I hope they find him and bang him up. Bastard needs to be punished and I want to be there to see it.”

“Are things still that bad for them?”

“No, things are getting better, but every cent they make, they use to pay off the debts he’s left them with. Imagine retiring and planning your life and then having to find work again. Bastard needs his neck wrung. Apologizing isn’t enough for what he’s put them through.”

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And that was another reason Key loved Charles so much. His loyalty and the way he made sure his friends were taken care of. Key also knew for a fact if Charles got hold of Eric, he wouldn't walk for a very long time and he knew many of the neighbors around here would help Charles as well. The Jeffersons were well thought of.

Key pushed his plate away and smiled ruefully at Charles. "Doggy bag?" Charles snorted and carried on eating, but nodded. Key knew Charles would send him home with a plate as well. "Mine next Sunday?"

"You learned to cook, then?"

"I'm not that bad."

"You could burn water. Not sure how you're still alive."

"I've progressed. Water survives now."

"How many times has the smoke alarm gone off this week?"

"Only three." Key smiled smugly. "Three is a huge improvement."

"Three." Charles shook his head, then grinned. "That first week, though."

"It was only every meal I cooked." They both stared at each other, then chuckled.

"Three is better. I don't even burn toast now."

"You have no idea what a disappointment it was to your mother that she couldn't

teach you to cook.”

“I do know. She told me repeatedly. Usually after she’d had to open all the windows and doors. Who knew getting food poisoning several times would help me figure out how to cook?”

“I wouldn’t say you could cook, but at least you don’t threaten anyone’s lives now when they eat your food.”

“Thanks, Dad.”

“It’s only the truth.”

“I know. That’s what makes it worse. I’m never going to be a chef.”

“Something we both agree on. You need to find a man who can do the cooking, then.”

“Does one exist?” Key stared at his plate, then picked up the fork to push a piece of broccoli around.

A slap on the hand had him dropping the fork and sucking his lips in. “Behave.”

“Yes, Dad.”

“I’ll have a coffee if you’ve finished playing with your food.”

Key looked at his dad, then laughed. Charles had a huge grin on his face. “I’ll make us both one.”

Key made the drinks, then began to clear the table, leaving the food on the counter so



Charles could make the plates for the Jeffersons. Loading the dishwasher took the hassle of washing and drying them away, and once the kitchen was clean, they both went into the living room to watch some reruns on the TV.

It was a nice way to spend the day, but Key knew he would have to leave to finish that fucking presentation he'd been given. He'd managed a huge chunk of it the day before, but he wanted to go over it and add the final pieces. Oh yeah, they would regret thrusting that thing on him by the end of Monday. By Key's estimates, the presentation would last almost two hours. He'd gone into every single teeny tiny piece of information and detail that he knew they knew, but fuck it. They wanted a presentation; they would get a presentation.

Smirking, Key eventually said goodbye to Charles, took the food thrust into his hands and drove home.

No sooner had he entered his apartment and turned the lights on, than that familiar feeling crept over him. His stalker, watcher, follower, whatever the hell he was, was there again. Key was tempted to tease again, but who was he really teasing and what would the repercussions be? Did he care?

Licking his lips, Key stood by the window, staring out into the dark night. He couldn't see much, but it was the feeling, the sensation that told him what he needed to know. He placed a hand on the window, feeling the cold seep into his skin. What would he do if another hand appeared?

Well, he'd freak the fuck out considering he was on the top floor.

Maybe he should leave one open and... what the fuck was going on with him that he was standing there thinking about leaving a window open?

Ignoring his hard dick, no, fuck that. He ran a hand over his bulge, licking his lips

again, and gave in to the feelings coursing through him. He tilted his head to one side, exposing his neck. Why, he didn't know. He lifted his hand from the window and ran his fingers down it.

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He squeezed his dick, gasping, then rubbed it with the heel of his hand. He could feel the man still there, still watching, and he suddenly grabbed the hem of his T-shirt and pulled it off, letting it slide from his fingers and hit the floor with a dull sound.

His nipples were hard, and he lifted a finger to his mouth, letting his tongue slide out and sucked one inside. Slipping it out, he rubbed his nipple with it, then grinned and shut the curtains. Maybe he had a kink for voyeurism because he shouldn't feel this way, shouldn't be taunting the man who watched him.

But he wanted to, because he liked it and that could lead to trouble. Which Key wanted.

### Chapter Four

“That little shit.”

Kelvin fidgeted on the spot, watching Key suck on his finger before rubbing his nipple with it. When he closed the curtains, Kelvin groaned. He wanted to watch more. After seeing Key fuck his ass, Kelvin had been aroused to the point of pain and no man would do except his mate. The one he couldn't have.

It didn't matter how many times he'd come. Kelvin was hard again within minutes. His body telling him what it wanted. Who it wanted, but Kelvin couldn't give in. Not with the way things were. He would stand here watching his mate until eternity, and do nothing.

Minho was right.

He was pathetic.

Was he willing to give up the one person who was truly meant to be his because of some laws put into effect centuries ago? Laws that should be checked to see if they are still relevant in this day and age? It would seem Kelvin was a true vampire. Still holding to laws and rules and regulations doing his species more harm than good.

He stared at the window, the curtains blocking his view, then spun on his heel and stormed away. He hated being that vampire. The one too afraid to go against the rules, the one afraid to break them and face the consequences. Would the harm his mate could potentially suffer be worth a few days of happiness? The council would find out. They always do and they would find out about Key and who knew what would happen.

No, Kelvin knew. They would banish him and punish his mate. Key would be the one to suffer more than Kelvin. He'd heard tales from when the laws had first been enacted, a time when vampires had human mates. He'd heard about the fallout, families ripped apart, lives ended.

Closing his eyes, Kelvin thought of Gray and ported to him. One second, he had been standing on the roof of a building, and the next, he was in Gray's office.

"We need to have a bell that rings every time one of you appears," Gray muttered. "Every time one of you pops in, I feel ten years of my life disappear."

"You do it all the time." Shrugging, Kelvin dragged a chair over to Gray and sat next to him, watching him search through a website that had cartoon pictures of vampires. "What's that?"

"That is a website dedicated to revealing the existence of vampires. It's a crank. Not many people believe what they post. They actually managed to photograph Minh."

Gray tapped a few buttons and a picture of Minho appeared. The fucker was posing.

“He let them take a picture?”

“Yeah, the daft bastard then told him his fangs were fake.”

Kelvin snorted. “Of course he did. He gets off on shit like that.”

“What’s been going on with you? You’ve become distracted.”

Shrugging, Kelvin pointed to the screen. “What do the comments say?” Yeah, he was avoiding the question, but he knew Gray wouldn’t let him get away with it.

“Have a look?”

‘Vampire or not, I’d let him fuck me any day of the week.’

‘Hot Damn! He can take a bite out of me anytime he wants!’

Kelvin cleared his throat. “Vamp is so hot my pussy—”

Gray clicked off the comments. “The humans love Minho.”

“Clearly. That one was talking about how wet her—”

“And we don’t need to hear or read about it.” Gray swirled around in his chair and stared at Kelvin. “Talk to me.”

“What’s there to say? You probably know already.” The vampire knew everyone’s secrets or was close to knowing them all. He seemed to have some extrasensory perception where he knew your deepest, darkest secret without you having to utter a

single word.

“Key.”

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“See. Told you that you knew.”

“He’s human.”

“Which is why I’m here and he is there.”

“We have laws in place regarding that.” Gray watched Kelvin, and he began to feel like he was under a microscope with the other vampire’s intense stare laser focused on him.

“I know and again that’s why he is there and I am here. Alone.”

“Minho has spoken to you.”

Inhaling deeply, Kelvin held it, then slowly released it. “How do you know everything?”

Smiling, Gray turned back to his computer and went back to searching the website ‘vampiresrreal.com’ “Such an original name. A lot of thought went into that. I can smell the burning from here.” Shaking his head slowly, Gray murmured, “Humans.”

“I still think about us revealing ourselves to the humans and the potential outcomes.”

“Some will fetishize us; others will want to hunt us.” Shrugging, Gray closed the webpage down and leaned back in his chair. “I too have considered it.”

There was only one problem, well, several, but they were all the same thing. “The

laws.”

“Are there to protect both us and them, even if we sacrifice what is important to us?”

“I’m not so sure about that. Those laws came into effect during a turbulent phase of our history.”

“‘Turbulent phase’ is a nice way to put the near annihilation of our species. One which we still haven’t completely healed from.” Gray tapped away on the keyboard, then asked, “How is Maxim?”

“If anyone would know, it’s you.” Kelvin watched Gray run a search for Maxim as he spoke.

“He’s good at disappearing. I haven’t seen anything of him in decades. Whispers, yes, mutterings of where he could be, but nothing has panned out. He went dark and has remained that way for close to sixty years. Last whisper I heard was about a son. No name, or age, just that he had one.”

Maxim was one of the descendants that caused the civil war that spilled out to include humans. He still believed they should be in power, that all vampires should be ruled by one and not a council of ‘pussies’ as he had called them. Humans were to be considered game. To be hunted, fed on, killed. Vampires fewer in numbers but far more dominant, and they should rule all considered beneath them.

“I wonder if becoming a father has mellowed him?”

Gray’s eyes widened. “Maxim? The vampire who believes he is the ultimate authority over all species? That Maxim?”

“I’ll take that as a no, then.” No, Maxim wouldn’t have mellowed. If anything,



Kelvin suspected that he would be far worse now, wanting to hand all vampires and humans over to his son. The one good thing about the civil war was that it brought the truth to the surface about many vampires and what they really thought of their fellow vampires and humans. People Kelvin's family had called friend had shown their true colors, and it had devastated him, like it had many of the vampires.

Almost two centuries later and the ripples from that event could still be felt, hence the laws that were now in place. And the reason Kelvin would remain mateless. He would watch from a distance and ensure his mate had a good happy life and the family he deserved.

Fuck, it was like a dagger to the heart. The thought of another creating a life with his mate, making him laugh, making him moan; but Kelvin didn't think he was in any position to question the laws. He would have to approach the council and request Key, and it would all fall apart. No vampire had been able to alter the laws, so why did Kelvin think he would be successful?

"Speak to him."

"To who?" Kelvin watched Gray flicker through the city's CCTV, bringing up one camera after another. Until he stopped.

"Key. Now look who we have here."

Kelvin leaned closer to the screen, then groaned. "Speak of the devil and he shall appear."

"Maxim." Gray tapped a few keys and the picture quality improved. "Looking good in his old age."

Kelvin snorted. "We age well."

“That we do. I’m only three hundred. Still plenty of years left.” Maxim was closer to three hundred and in those years had caused nothing but problems. His father was one of the original ringleaders to have caused the civil war, and even though the vampire had been executed for his crimes, Maxim still believed completely in what his father had wanted. With a son, the cycle would begin again and nothing would be resolved.

“No son?” Kelvin searched the screen but couldn’t see anyone who appeared to be with Maxim.

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“No, but I’ll track him as he moves. He knows we’ll be watching him, so let’s play.”

Kelvin sat back and watched Gray track Maxim as he moved from street to street. Watching Maxim made Kelvin think about Key and what he couldn’t have because of this vampire’s family. He’d studied their history at school and he knew what was recorded barely scratched the surface of the atrocities Maxim’s family had caused.

Maxim Hutch. A name no one was likely to forget, but he’d somehow had a son that they knew very little about. How old was he? What was his name? Where did he live? Did he work or did he do what his father wanted?

Did it matter?

Kelvin wasn’t sure if it did. They kept an eye on them and no doubt they watched, too. The Hutch Regime, as it became known. An almost separate entity with their own rules. They still hunted humans, or tried to. Their patrols put a stop to that, but still, they couldn’t save everyone, and they did have to clean up and put cover stories in place.

The council had created a division to deal with the Hutch’s once it became clear that they might disappear, but they would never be gone. The council anticipated a time when they might return, and so they watched and waited, trained men and women to be capable of defense if it was needed.

They were needed, but not as the council had originally thought. They rarely encountered any of Hutch’s people – Maxim Hutch or the families who sided with him. Now they dealt with the aftermath or tried to intercept before it happened. They

were the hunters who did clean up. And Kelvin was good at his job.

## Chapter Five

Leaving his office, Key sighed, letting his shoulders droop. Another long, boring and frustrating week. It started off well, especially the presentation the bosses had asked him to create. The fact that it went on for over an hour and a couple of the men kept dropping off had Key hiding a smile. Data wasn't exciting unless you love IT and graphic design like Key did.

That was Monday, and today was Friday, and he needed to go home and relax. Maybe order some takeout, open the bottle of wine Dad had given him, then relax in the bath and let the stress of the week melt away. That sounded like bliss, and Key couldn't wait.

Of course, his ever present stalker/stranger/follower or whatever – because he still wasn't sure which it was – was behind him. Key could feel the man's intense stare between his shoulder blades and he shrugged his shoulders back, shivering slightly at the cold damp chill in the night air.

It was later than normal, the street lamps on, casting a muted glow on the sidewalk below them. Shadows seemed to lurk in every doorway, and around every corner, and maybe Key should become a writer. Or a hacker. Get into some rich person's account, take their money and run away to some far-flung place where he could lie on some beach with nearly naked men serving him.

Or maybe not.

The feeling of being watched intensified till it was no longer pleasant, no longer a feeling Key associated with his 'whatever'. Someone else was watching him, and this time it did feel like a stalker. Key didn't feel safe at all, and wanted to be in his car as

soon as possible.

His pace quickened, and he somehow managed to not look over his shoulder. He didn't want the person following him to know he was aware of their presence. He saw his car up ahead and sighed in relief. Not long now and he would be in relative safety.

Pulling his car keys from his coat pocket, Key made sure to have them ready so he could get in his car straight away. Once he reached the car, he pressed the fob, seeing the lights flicker. He quickened his pace again, practically running, and when he reached his car, he grabbed the handle just as someone grabbed the back of his head and slammed it into the car.

Key cried out, dropping to the ground, stunned and in pain. His head bounced, the pain ricocheting throughout, and he could do nothing to stop the hands from grabbing him under his arms and dragging him up. He hit the car again and was spun around, but Key was only half aware of what was happening.

His head rang, his eyes bouncing around as whoever had assaulted him grabbed his hair, and pulled his head to one side, exposing his neck. Key's eyes shot open, and he tried to push the man away. Yeah, he could tell it was a man, and as he tried to free himself, he was suddenly released.

Falling back to the ground, Key managed to stop his face from impacting the sidewalk. His head spun, and he swallowed, trying not to vomit as sounds of a fight reached him. He lifted his head slowly, trying to focus on the two men fighting each other in front of him, but it hurt.

Closing his eyes, he attempted to crawl away, even though he couldn't see where he was going. He only knew he had to move away from danger. He was in danger. He knew he was, and he also knew he had to get himself out of there somehow.

A heavy grunt reached him, followed by cursing, and suddenly it was silent. Except for heavy breathing. When the sounds of running footfalls reached him, Key whimpered. He had no idea if it was his assailant running away or the man who'd tried to help him.

Opening his eyes, Key groaned as everything spun and he fell forward, his cheek hitting the sidewalk. The spinning continued as he heard the sounds of someone approaching, and he barely managed to lift his head when he heard a whispered, "I won't hurt you," before finally falling into darkness.

The lights hurt his eyes.

His head pounded.

His body ached.

Carried. He was being carried.

Couldn't open his eyes to see. It hurt too much.

"Shh. I've got you. You're safe." Low, deep. Nice.

"I..."

"You're safe. No one will hurt you."

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Trying to open his eyes, Key moaned. Then there was nothing but darkness again.

Blinking his eyes open, Key swallowed, his head throbbing with a dull ache, his stomach unsettled. He heard movement and blinked again, realizing he was in his own apartment and he wasn't alone. Whoever had saved him had brought him here.

Gingerly, Key sat up with one hand on his stomach, groaning when his stomach and head protested. Swallowing, Key tried to find who was making the sounds and slowly scanned his apartment until he settled on a shadow in the corner of the room.

"Who..." Key licked his dry lips, swallowed again. "What happened?"

The shadow moved and stepped into the light that spilled from the window. It was then Key noticed the curtains were open and the light coming through the window was the only light in the apartment. He almost whimpered, but slammed his lips closed, then instantly regretted it as his cheek screamed in pain.

"Kelvin."

"Kelvin happened to me?" Key went to tilt his head as he asked, but thought better of it. Leaning it back on the sofa, slowly, he focused on the man who stood in from of his window.

"My name is Kelvin, and you were attacked. I helped you."

"Who are you?" Kelvin could feel who this man was. The one who followed him. His stalker and now potential saver... unless he'd planned it.

His eyes moved over the other man, taking in the dark clothing he wore. It was hard to tell the exact color due to the poor light, but Key had a feeling it was black. Focusing on Kelvin's face, Key had to admit the guy was attractive.

Trimmed beard and mustache, eyes that Key couldn't tell the color of, a sharp nose and what he could only guess was a strong jaw. Those eyes watched in closely and Key held himself still, waiting for this Kelvin to answer. When he didn't, Key murmured, "You're him. The man who follows me."

One single nod. "I am."

"Why?"

Kelvin didn't answer. He shoved his hands into the front pockets of his jeans and continued to watch Key. "I have my reasons," he whispered.

"And what are they? Shouldn't I know about them?"

It looked like Kelvin smiled, but Key wasn't sure. "You might not like the reasons."

That sentence chilled Key to his core. What the fuck did he mean by that? The guy sounded unhinged, and Key glanced at the front door to his apartment, then back at Kelvin. "Tell me anyway."

"What would you do with the information?"

Why was he being so evasive? "Tell me. You follow me. You track me. Why? We're strangers. Why do you do that?"

"Do you believe there is more to this world than what you see?"



“Er...what?” Key lifted his hand and gently touched his cheek, wincing when it flared with pain. He felt a bandaid and stared at Kelvin. “My cheek.”

“I’ve treated your injuries.”

“Why?”

“Because I wanted to.”

Key was done. He’s had enough of the stupid, almost cryptic answers. “Who the fuck are you?”

The voice that answered was calm and quiet. “Kelvin.”

“And? I know there’s more.”

“You want the truth?”

“No, I mean, why else would I keep asking for it?”

“I’m a vampire and you’re mine.”

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“Okkkaaayyyy. I’d like some of whatever you’re taking.” Holy fuck, the guy was nuts and in Key’s apartment. Shit.

“I knew that’s how you would react, which was why I wasn’t going to tell you.”

“You expect me to believe you?”

“No, but you asked for the truth, so I gave it to you.”

Key inched forward on the sofa, eyeing the front door again. He readied himself, gave Kelvin the nut job one more look, then shot up off the sofa, running to the front door. And instantly regretted it.

His head pounded and Key dropped to his knees and moaned, his hands cradling his head. He barely had any strength to fight Kelvin off when he felt him pick him up. He buried his head in Kelvin’s shoulder, instinct telling him he was safe. Something Key didn’t understand.

His mind was saying one thing and his body another.

Keeping his eyes closed, he refused to open them when Kelvin lay him on the sofa again. “Please stay still. You took a hard knock to the head.”

“I should go to the hospital.”

“Can you afford it?”

Key nodded and instantly regretted it. “Yes,” he muttered through gritted teeth.

“Let me check your eyes.”

Key shook his head and moaned. He needed to stay still. His eyes snapped open when he felt the sofa dip and grunted when a light was shined in his eyes. Pushing the hand away, he muttered, “fuck off.”

“I can’t. I need to keep an eye on you for another couple of hours.”

“I can take care of myself.”

“You can barely make it to your front door without collapsing.”

“Er, because my head was used as a battering ram.” Closing his eyes, Key pointed to where he thought the front door was. “Get out.”

“I’ll leave when I know you have fully recovered.”

“I can look after myself.” Why was he repeating himself?

“I have to stay.”

Key opened his eyes and stared into Kelvin’s, noticing how blue they were. Such a dark shade they almost appeared black. He blinked rapidly, the light from the flashlight stabbing into his eyes. “Turn the light off, please.” The light disappeared and Key opened his eyes again. “You need to go.”

Kelvin leaned back on his feet and shook his head, his black hair moving gently. “I can’t. I have to stay and make sure you’re safe.”

“Why? Do you know who that man is? The one who attacked me?”

“I know of him. He has a reputation with my kind.”

“Your kind.” Key murmured the words, watching Kelvin, feelings sliding through him. He knew this man, his follower, stalker, savior.

“I told you what I am.”

“Vampire.” Key saw the slight smile curl across Kelvin’s lips as he nodded. “You expect me to believe you?”

“No. Who would? I hope to prove it to you when you’re fully recovered.”

“I read paranormal shit.” He loved a good paranormal romance where two hot men came together and fucked each other’s brains out.

“So do I. I like to read how much they got right and wrong.”

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“Mpreg?”

“Not for me, but if you like reading that, then go for it. I’m not going to say to one person they shouldn’t read something because I don’t. We all have our likes and dislikes.”

“This is a strange conversation.” Key closed his eyes and relaxed on the sofa, his body growing heavy. “Maybe I have a concussion and this is all my imagination playing a trick on me. Maybe I’ll wake up in the morning and realize I got so drunk I imagined it all.”

“Maybe you’ll wake up and know this is true.”

“Vampire.”

“Human.”

Key yawned, then grimaced with pain. “Tired.”

“Sleep. I’ll keep you safe from him.”

“Who will keep me safe from you?” Key mumbled, sleep taking over before he could hear Kelvin’s reply.

## Chapter Six

“Who will keep me safe from you?”

Kelvin didn't answer, and he didn't need to as Key fell asleep. No one would hurt his mate, including him. He would die to protect Key.

Reaching out, Kelvin stroked the brown hair from Key's forehead, pushing it back and staring at his mate's beauty. The bruising was already evident on Key's pale skin, and Kelvin fisted his hands. Breathing deeply, he slowly unclenched his fists and watched his mate sleep. He would deal with Maxim when the time was right, but here and now, his mate needed him.

Sitting on the floor next to the sofa, Kelvin sighed heavily. He wasn't entirely sure how the conversation about him being a vampire went. He sensed Key didn't believe, or a part of Key didn't. Just because you read about a mythical paranormal entity didn't mean they actually existed. Mythical being the key word.

Key murmured something and Kelvin turned to watch him, noticing how his brow furrowed. A dream or his pain, he didn't know which, and checking the time, Kelvin realized Key was due more medication for his injuries. He loathed to wake him up, so decided to wait.

His mate wouldn't be suffering like this if Kelvin had approached him sooner. They could have been mated already, and Key would have developed some of Kelvin's abilities, healing being one of them. They were stronger, faster, healed quicker than humans, but there was always a trade-off.

Vampires couldn't reproduce like humans. They tended to only have one or two children and their pregnancies were longer. Almost double that of a human female, which was understandable considering what they gained. Kelvin was glad to be a male. He wasn't sure if he could do the whole pregnancy and giving birth thing. Vampires were strong and their females were stronger still.

He needed to call Gray and have him check the area around Key's apartment to see

what time Maxim appeared. How long had Maxim been tracking Key? When did he first show up? How long had he known of Kelvin's interest in Key and when did he figure out who Key was to Kelvin?

He'd put his mate in the firing line, and now Kelvin had to keep him safe.

Grabbing his phone, Kelvin called Gray and quickly told him what had happened as soon as he answered.

"Not good, but it does tell us something. He's either watching you or he has someone watching you."

"He knows who I am. He could be keeping an eye on those of us who police the vampires."

"True, but now he knows you have a mate. That puts him in danger. Have you told him who and what you are?"

Kelvin turned to Key and softly stroked his fingers over Key's cheek. "I tried, but he'd taken a knock to the head, so I'm not sure he believed me."

Gray grunted. "Might not even remember the conversation." Key heard Gray tapping away. "I'm in. I'll go back thru the CCTV footage and... Got him."

"Is he still here?"

"No, he left after your altercation. He arrived around ten minutes before your mate, so he knew what time to expect him. What's security like where he lives?"

"You can't tell?" Kelvin continued to watch his mate sleep, chuckling softly when Gray snorted.

“I can, but you’re there, so confirm it for me.”

“He has the usual security in his apartment and its key access to enter the main block.”



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Gray hummed. “We could beef that up for his apartment. Extra locks on the doors and window and motion sensors inside, or you could say fuck it to the laws and mate him.”

“And where would that get us?” Kelvin thought about mating Key. Of course he had. This man was the one person meant for him and he wanted Key in his life for as long as possible, but to break the laws? He couldn’t risk what would happen to Key if he did that. He would rather die than lose Key.

“I know, but some laws are meant to be broken and some are out of date and need to be removed all together. Mating being one of them. We aren’t those vampires anymore, and most of us weren’t those to begin with. A subset of vampires forced us to make those laws to protect humans, and here we are now. How many vampires have walked away from their mate because they’re human? How many have had to watch their mate grow old and die? How many mourn someone none of us know about because they can’t reveal their mate was human?”

“Gray,” Kelvin murmured.

“Not me personally, but someone I knew. She isn’t with us now.”

“I’m sorry.”

“It was a long time ago, and I wasn’t surprised when she did what she did. She suffered after her mate passed. She loved him and watched him die, knowing he would be alive if it wasn’t for the law. I don’t want you to go through that.”

“I’ll think about it.” Gray rarely spoke about his private life, so for him to reveal this meant it was personal and had deeply affected him.

“Do that. Now, I can arrange all the extra security to be installed, but he has to agree to it or it won’t happen. I won’t do something if Key doesn’t agree.”

“Understood. I’ll ask him when I wake him up. He needs his pain meds soon, and I have to check him for a concussion.”

“Maxim is crawling out of the dark. If he’s willing to attack a mate, then there is something happening we don’t know about.”

“You think he might be preparing an attack of some sort?”

“When it comes to Maxim, I like to keep all options open. You never know what that fucker is up to or what he’s planning. He was always a devious little shit. Got that from his dad before the bastard was removed.”

“And he’s just like his dad. Wonder if the son will turn out the same way.”

“How does the saying go? The apple never falls far from the tree, or something similar.”

Kelvin grunted in agreement, watching a grimace flash across Key’s face before he settled. He needed to wake him and check him out. “I have to go and wake Key. Let me know if you see anything else.”

“Will do.”

Kelvin hung up and stood, getting a glass from the kitchen and filling it with water. He grabbed the pain meds and walked back to Key, seeing his face screw up in pain

again. He sat next to the sofa, placing the items on the floor next to him, and gently shook Key. Key grumbled and turned away.

“Key. Wake up.”

“Don’t wanna. Hurt.”

“I know you do. I have some pain meds for you.”

Key blinked his cobalt blue eyes open and then squeezed them shut. “You.”

“Do you remember what we talked about?” Kelvin wasn’t entirely sure if he wanted Key to remember or not. When Key didn’t respond, Kelvin shook him again and waited.

“No, and stop shaking me.”

“I need you to take these pills and let me check you over.”

“Why?” Key went to turn away and hissed. “Shit.”

“Yeah, it hurts, which is why you need to take these.”

“Who was he? I remember someone hitting me. Was it you?” Key tried to sit up and Kelvin reached out to offer support, but Key reeled away, his eyes wide. “No. I chased him away.”

Key didn’t relax or take his eyes off Kelvin, even when he winced in pain. Kelvin lifted the glass of water up and held the pills in his hand. Key looked at them and took them off Kelvin, checking the pills before swallowing them. He grimaced, then handed the glass back to Kelvin.

“Did you see who it was? Do you know him?”

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“He’s gone, but you might want to improve your security in case he comes back.”

Key winced as he lay back down on the sofa. “Who are you?” he whispered.

“Kelvin.” Kelvin smiled. “We had this conversation earlier.”

“I remember your face, but not your name. You saved me?”

“I managed to chase him away, and I brought you here.”

“How did you know where I lived?”

Kelvin paused. He wasn’t about to tell Key the truth while he was like this. “You mumbled it when I asked.”

“I did?” Key frowned, then winced again. “I feel like shit.”

“The meds will kick in soon, and you can get some more sleep.”

“With you here? A stranger?”

“Do I feel like a stranger to you? Trust your instincts about me.”

“What?” Key groaned and touched his cheek, wincing. “I can barely speak and you want me to trust my instincts?” Key’s eyelids fluttered closed, then snapped open.

“You can go now.”

“I need to wake you up again in a couple of hours. You took a hard hit to the head.”

Key’s eyelids fluttered again, and Kelvin could see him fighting off sleep. “I want you to go.” The words came out softer and again Key closed his eyes.

“I will later. I promise. Let me make sure you’re safe first.”

“Why?” Key didn’t open his eyes when he asked, his breathing slowing.

“I need to.”

Key hummed but didn’t say anything and Kelvin watched him fall asleep. His body needed to heal, and sleep was the best way to do that. Even with Key fighting it, his body took over and did what it needed to do.

Once Kelvin was certain Key was asleep, he pulled the blanket over him and watched Key sleep.

Not stalkerish at all.

Running a hand through his hair, Kelvin glanced away, then twisted around so he was leaning back on the sofa. Key had forgotten that Kelvin had told him he was a vampire. Not surprising really, but now he had to tell him again if he wanted a future with his mate.

“Damn,” Kelvin murmured. Though, now he could plan how to tell Key in a way that he would believe, rather than simply blurting it out. Would telling his mate after sex be good? Sighing, Kelvin closed his eyes. He knew if he got close to Key like that, then he would mate him, and that could fuck them both up.

He had too many things going on when all he wanted was a quiet life with Key.

Doing things that mates did together and forgetting about laws and Maxim and different vampire factions. What he wouldn't give to come home to his mate after a hard day at work and be able to relax, talk, fuck. The normal things, but no. He had Maxim and his band of merry conspirators to deal with.

Life sucked.

Key snored, and Kelvin couldn't stop the small smile that crossed his lips. Being close to his mate was far better than watching him through a window. He could scent him, he could touch him. He just couldn't mate him.

"Fuck."

Maybe he should do it, anyway. A mate only came once. Was he willing to let him go? For some archaic law? Was he willing to do what so many had done before and walk away? Kelvin wanted to say yes, that he was a vampire that followed their laws, but being here next to Key made him question it.

Like Gray had said, some rules, some laws were made to be broken, but was he the vampire to break them?

## Chapter Seven

Blinking his tired, gritty eyes open, Key winced when he moved his head, pain pounding inside. "Fuck," he mumbled, then coughed. His throat was dry and sore, his voice rough.

“Here.”

Key’s eyes snapped toward the voice and he saw the man from the previous night holding out a glass of water. “You.”

“Yeah. Me.”

Trying to remember the events of the previous night had Key wincing again. He knew something had happened, something had been said, but it was like smoke in the air. Every time he tried to reach for it, it disappeared.

Taking the glass, Key sniffed it, which earned an arched eyebrow from the man who had handed it to him. He sipped it and closed his eyes as the water cooled his throat. He swallowed, ignoring the pain, and watched the other person.

This was his watcher, stalker, whatever. He knew by the way he reacted to him. This man had told him something, and Key couldn’t remember what it was, but he knew it had been something important. Taking another mouthful of water, Key watched the man watch him.

“Who are you?”

The man snorted and gave him a quick smile. “You took a hard knock to your head, so I’m not surprised you can’t remember. I’m Kelvin.”

“You watch me.”



“We are going to have this conversation again,” Kelvin murmured. In a louder voice, he added, “I do.”

“Why?” Key didn’t take his eyes off Kelvin, if that was his real name. What Key was aware of was the fact that this man was in his apartment.

“You are special to me.”

Key continued to stare as he thought about what Kelvin had said. “How?”

“You just are.” Kelvin moved over to the window and stared outside. It was dark now. How long had he slept for? He asked, and Kelvin responded, “Almost twenty-four hours.”

“Shit. Work.”

“Dealt with. They know you’re ill.”

“Ill? I was attacked! I need to call the police.”

“And tell them what, exactly?” Kelvin turned away from the window and watched Key.

“That I was attacked outside my apartment. We have cameras, so it will be on them.”

“No, it won’t.”

“What?” Key’s eyes widened, and he glanced at the front door. Something was going on here and he didn’t like it at all. “Why not? Are the cameras out of action?”

“No, but the footage has been removed for our security.”

Swallowing, Key carefully placed the glass on the floor and swung his legs down off the sofa. “Who needs security?”

“We do.”

Kelvin’s face remained blank, and Key tried to figure out if he could beat him to the front door. “And who is we?”

“Me and my kind.”

There was a flash of something that crossed Kelvin’s face, but it was gone as quickly as it had appeared. “Your kind?” What the fuck was going on? This guy had a screw loose or something?

“Yeah. I’ve been thinking of ways to tell you, but maybe I should just rip the bandaid off.”

“Huh? What?” This conversation made no sense to Key, but he knew he had to find a way out.

“I’m a vampire and you’re my mate.”

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Okay. Dude was not right in the head, and Key was all alone with him in his apartment, and he needed to get the fuck out of there. “Vampire, you say. That’s... interesting.”

Kelvin shook his head, a small smile on his face. “Interesting.”

“Show me your fangs.”

Now Kelvin laughed and one second he was by the window and the next he was crouched next to Key, hissing in his face and yes, there were fangs. Key screamed. Literally screamed and pushed Kelvin away. Kelvin fell back as Key jumped up, ignoring the way his head pounded, and ran to the front door.

He vaguely heard, ‘not this again,’ behind him, but didn’t care. He was leaving captain fruitcake and his whatever the fuck was going on with his mouth behind. Only he didn’t. He actually ran straight into him and screamed again.

“How the fuck... How? You were there...” He screamed again and again until Kelvin’s hand slammed over his mouth and his eyes glowed red. He hissed again, white gleaming fangs on show and Key somehow managed to not piss himself.

Pushing away, Key stumbled, then righted himself. He stared at Kelvin, who appeared far too relaxed for Key’s liking. Who did shit like that and stood there acting like it was nothing? This guy wasn’t just screwed in the head. He was so far over the fucking edge that Key was scared. Kelvin stood slightly taller than Key’s own six feet but was broader across the shoulders and clearly more powerful. Yep, Key was scared.

“Don’t be.”

“Huh?” Had he spoken out loud?

“No, but we’re mates, and even though we haven’t mated, some of your thoughts are loud and I can hear them. Strange.”

“Loud,” Key mumbled. Holy shit. What the fuck had he gotten himself into, and how the hell did he get himself out of whatever it was? He placed a shaky hand on his chest, feeling his heart beating a million miles an hour.

“You need to calm down.”

“You don’t say.” Key swallowed and glanced around the living area, searching for his phone or a weapon. A weapon would be nice. How the fuck did this guy know what he was thinking and feeling? Did that mean he knew about the knife thoughts?

Key looked at Kelvin, who nodded once. Key stumbled back, then ran to his bathroom, locking the door behind him. He leaned against it, dropping his forehead so it rested on the cold wood.

“Nice bathroom.”

Key screamed and spun around, seeing Kelvin standing behind him. Spinning around again, he scrambled to open the door, then shot out of the room and ran straight to the front door, skidding to a halt when Kelvin just appeared in front of him. Just popped there out of nowhere.

Key dropped to his knees and bent over, spots appearing in front of his eyes, his arms and legs tingling, his heart beating so fast he thought he might pass out. He couldn’t breathe, and when a hand gripped the back of his neck, Key fell back so he was

laying on the ground, staring up at Kelvin who was leaning over him.

“I will never hurt you, Key. You are my mate. I would rather die than do anything to cause you pain.”

“I really need to wake the fuck up.” That was it. This was a nightmare, and he needed to wake up. Now. This shit wasn’t real. You read about it in books and comics or watched movies with hissing vamps in it. It didn’t happen in your own fucking home.

“You are awake.”

“Nope. Seriously not awake and you aren’t talking to me.” Key closed his eyes and pinched himself. Hard. He heard the sigh and pinched again, then snuck a quick look, then slammed his eyelids down tight. “Not real. I hit my head, and I suffered a concussion and now I’m hallucinating.”

His eyes snapped open when a hand gripped his jaw and lips slid over his. He stared into Kelvin’s eyes, seeing the pupils expand, then shuffled back away from him. “Not a concussion. Not a hallucination.”

Key wiped his lips and sneered when Kelvin chuckled. “Get the fuck out of here.”

“I can’t. The man who attacked you is also a vampire.”

That was... great. Just great. “Don’t I have to invite you in or some shit? Do I need to throw rice at you or holy water or... or eat garlic?”

“I like garlic. Holy water will only get me wet, and rice?” Kelvin appeared confused when he said the word rice.

“I read that if you throw rice, then it makes a vampire stop to count it or something.”

“Huh.” Kelvin squatted and rubbed his beard. “That is a new one.”

Key licked his lips, then furrowed his brow. Why did he think that was sexy? No, no thoughts about the sexy but deranged pretend vampire man? He stood and pointed to his door. “Leave before I call the police and report a lunatic is on the loose.”

“They’ll only arrest you.” Kelvin also stood. “Vampires don’t exist.”

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Key ground his teeth together, closing his eyes and counted to ten. He heard Kelvin chuckle again and growled. "Get out."

"You didn't reach ten."

Standing, Key stormed over to Kelvin and jabbed a finger into his chest. "How the fuck do you know what I'm thinking?"

"Now that I'm not too sure about. When a vampire finds his or her mate, they don't normally have this ability, so I don't know. Maybe it's because you're human. I am curious to know if you can hear mine. Close your eyes and concentrate."

"No fucking chance. You want to bite me." Key gritted his teeth. Was he really believing this shit?

"Seems like it to me."

"Stay out of my head," he snapped, then growled.

"Once. Try it once."

"Fine. Will you leave if I do?"

Kelvin snorted. "Not with Maxim hanging around, and not until you have improved security."

"And I guess you know someone who can do security," Key sneered.

“Why yes, I do.” Kelvin grinned.

“I’m gonna smack that smile off your face,” Key muttered.

“I’m not sure I’m into BDSM, but we can give it a go.”

“I want to die. Once, then you go.”

Shrugging, Kelvin grinned. “I’ll think super hard now.”

Key exhaled heavily and closed his eyes. Nothing, there was absolutely nothing except that he wanted to lick his neck and bite and taste... “No fucking chance.” He stepped back, rubbing his neck. “You’re fucked in the head.”

“I’m a vampire who has found his mate, and I want to fuck and bite and make you mine.” Kelvin’s eyes glowed again and Key whimpered turned on the spot and ran. “Where are you going?”

“Away from you, loony tunes!” Key screamed and ran straight into Kelvin, who grabbed him by the arms, steadying him.

“I won’t do anything unless you give me permission, but I am a vampire and you are my mate, I can’t walk away from you.” The words were spoken quietly and made Key pause.

“Why?”

“We only get one. I guess the paranormal shit got that right. One mate. One chance of true happiness. One person who makes you feel complete, who you know you can rely on, who has your back. The one person you will love and adore for as long as you both live. That’s you, Key. You’re that one person meant for me, and I can’t



walk away, even though I should.”

“You’re scaring me,” Key murmured.

“I know, and I’m sorry. I never wanted to scare you or hurt you, but it isn’t something that you bring up in everyday conversation, is it? Oh, by the way, I’m a vampire. It goes over so well.”

Key smiled briefly, then wiped it away. He was not ready to smile with a nut job here who was doing a good job of convincing Key he was in fact, a vampire. “Show me.”

Kelvin stared at him, then opened his mouth, revealing fangs. Key moved closer, trying to see if they were fake, but if they were, they were some of the best fakes he’d ever seen. Kelvin closed his mouth and watched Key, making him squirm.

Stepping back, he ran a hand over his head and slowly rocked. He honestly didn’t know what to do. “Trust your instincts.” Key glanced at Kelvin, who had spoken, and then looked away. He stopped moving and closed his eyes and listened to what his body was telling him, but it seemed quiet. Nothing was racing.

“Your body knows what I am and who I am.”

Key opened his eyes and walked over to his bed, sitting on the end. “I don’t know...”

“I know and I’m sorry.”

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“Are you?” Key watched Kelvin, seeing the way he dropped his head.

“I am, because there is more I need to tell you, and it’s worse than the fact I’m a vampire and you’re my mate.”

“How can there be worse than that?”

“We have a law that forbids matings between vampires and humans and if one is found out, then they both usually suffer.”

“That’s just great. Peachy even. Please do tell me more. Now my life is fucked. Why not tell me everything so I can have the meltdown in one go?”

“The man who attacked you will come after you again.”

“I lied. I don’t need to know more and you can go.” Yep. He’d had enough. Fruit loop had to go, or he was leaving and he didn’t care that it was his apartment, either.

### Chapter Eight

Peachy.

Kelvin liked that one. Better than nut job and fruitcake. He wasn’t sure why he was reacting this way to Key. He didn’t normally behave this way, but there was something about his mate that made him want to have a little fun, even if it made Key annoyed.

Key paced the floor in front of him, glancing at him. Well, glaring at him, really. “Why are you still here?”

“I can’t leave.” Not now that he knew Key was being watched and more. Maxim or one of his vampires would come for Key again at some point. They had to have figured out who or what he was to Kelvin, and even if they didn’t know for sure, they knew Kelvin had an interest in him. Kelvin had painted a target on Key’s back.

“Maxim. Tell me about him.”

Kelvin arched an eyebrow at Key’s question. So he wanted to know now? “Centuries ago –”

“I don’t need a history lesson. Just tell me who he is.”

Kelvin breathed deeply. His mate was fiery, and he liked it, but not right then. “You need to know about the history to understand who Maxim is.”

“Nope. Not interested.”

“Fine. Vampires have split into two factions, and he leads one. They don’t agree with vampire or human laws and consider humans beneath them. They hunt, feed, fuck, and kill any human they want. You are playthings to them.”

“That’s just lovely. Made my day. Thanks. I can sleep easy at night knowing I’m a burger for some hungry vamp.”

“You’re more than that. They might not know what you are to me, but they know I’m interested in you. They’ll come for you again.”

“Thanks. Maybe you should have gone all stalker mode on someone else and left me

alone.”

“You’re my mate. There is no one else for me.”

“Buy toys then,” Key snapped. “They work fine.”

Kelvin smiled. “I know. I’ve seen you use them.”

Key spluttered, his eyes almost bulging. “You’ve spied on me? You’ve watched me in bed? Who the fuck do you think you are? You fucking perverted bastard.”

Kelvin moved and Key squeaked. One second he had been standing near the door and the next he was in front of Key, staring down at him. “You are mine,” he growled before grabbing Key’s arms and kissing him.

Key tried to twist away, but Kelvin wasn’t having any of that. He was tired of explaining to Key and he wanted his mate. Months of watching him, waiting, knowing he couldn’t have him, had him at boiling point, and Key had just tipped him over the edge.

Key tried to move his head away, but Kelvin followed, keeping their lips together. After a few seconds, Key’s body began to relax, and he slowly returned the kiss. Kelvin moaned softly, loosening his grip as he slanted his mouth across Key’s.

He licked Key’s lips and Key let Kelvin’s tongue inside. When they touched, Kelvin felt Key shudder and he knew he was as affected as Key was. Their tongues danced together as Kelvin pulled Key closer so their bodies touched. He moaned again, feeling Key against him for the first time, and knew he wanted more.

Key moaned deeply, his hands tangling in Kelvin’s hair, then he suddenly pulled away, staring at Kelvin as he panted. “What?”

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“We’re mates,” Kelvin answered as calmly as he could. “This is how it will be with us. The need to be near one another. To kiss. To touch. To fuck.”

He saw Key swallow and Kelvin reached out to him, but Key knocked his hand away. Kelvin could pick up some of his thoughts and he needed to look into it because when vampires mated, this didn’t happen. Key was worried, scared of how his body reacted, but he liked it too, and wanted it again.

Kelvin pulled Key toward him and waited. Key swallowed again, but this time didn’t pull away. Kissing him softly, Kelvin paused and when Key did nothing, he kissed him again.

“I don’t know you,” he captured the murmured words with his lips.

“Your body does. It knows I won’t hurt you unless you ask me to. We’re mates.”

“Mates.” Key kissed him back and sighed. “I should kick you out.”

“You won’t.”

“So sure.” Key pulled his head back and stared at him.

“Sure of you. Of us.” He slid his lips over Key’s again. “One night.”

“One night? I get the feeling that one night wouldn’t be enough.”

“Probably not, but let’s have one night and see where it goes.”

“No biting.” Key stopped moving and shook his head. “Can’t believe I said that.”

“No biting. Promise.” He wanted to, but that would complete their mating and he couldn’t do that. Not with the laws in place. He wouldn’t risk Key that way, and Key was already on Maxim’s radar.

Kelvin’s phone rang, and he was tempted to ignore it, but the ringtone was Gray’s. He moved away from Key, who groaned in frustration, and picked it up. “What?”

“Disturbing you?”

Kelvin looked out of the window to see a shadow on the roof of the building opposite. “Yes, as you can no doubt see.”

“Maxim was here again, so I came out to have a look. The building is tagged.”

“I didn’t see anything.”

“You weren’t meant to. It’s one of those tags that only reacts to a certain type of light. Not sure how long it’s been there, but Key is being monitored, and after the attack, I believe they will come for him. They know what your position is, what you do. A mate is a weakness they will exploit. How much does Key know?”

“Not enough.”

“Tell him everything. He needs to know it all.”

Kelvin glanced at Key over his shoulder, then back at the shadow. “He’s not too responsive.”

“He seemed very responsive a minute ago.”

“And then you called.”

Kelvin heard the chuckle before the call ended and stared as the figure disappeared. Fucking Gray. Turning to face Key, Kelvin ran a hand through his hair. “We should talk.”

“I don’t want to talk.”

“I need to tell you about mates and vampires and—”

“Go on then. Ruin the buzz I had going.” Key sat on the sofa and crossed his arms over his chest. “And here I was trying to kick you out. Oh, maybe I should go back to that.” Key pointed to the front door. “Fuck off.”

“Key, just hear me out and then I’ll leave if you want me to.”

“Really? You’d go? Just like that? Let me count up how many times I have already asked you to go and yet here you are. Still in my apartment, having not left.”

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Kelvin managed to keep his laughter inside. He loved this side of his mate. “We’re mates –”

“Tell me something you haven’t said a hundred times already.”

“I would if you stopped interrupting me.” Key pursed his lips, then waved him on. “Thank you. We’re mates. You are it for me.”

“Are you it for me too?”

“I... no. You could find a man and have a life with him.”

“But you can’t.” Key smiled widely. “I hold all those cards.”

“Mates never cheat. Mates don’t go looking elsewhere for satisfaction because they get it from the one person they have mated to. As your mate, it would be my honor to take care of you as I have been. You’ve felt my presence because of who we are to each other. Even now, when I’m telling you this, you know deep down that I’m speaking the truth. You can feel it. Take earlier when we kissed. You pushed me away before kissing me back because your body knows who I am to you. I would never hurt you, cheat on you, leave you. You are the most important person in my life. Always. That’s why I’m here night after night, making sure you get home safely.”

“Didn’t work out so well last night, did it?” Key touched his bruised cheek.

“I got here in time and saved you, but yes, I was delayed by my job.”



“What is your job?”

“I guess you would call it security, but I’m an enforcer of sorts. I enforce the laws and make sure no one breaks them, but I watch Maxim’s lot as well and try to keep humans safe from harm. It was how I found you. I was following a vampire and saw you, and I knew.”

“Just like that.”

“Pretty much, yeah.”

Key nodded. “How did that make you feel? I’m human and you said you have laws that say we can’t do what you want to.”

“I was ecstatic to have found you,” Kelvin murmured. He sat next to Key on the sofa, pleased when Key didn’t move away. “Then I realized what it meant, but I vowed to always make sure you were happy and safe. Even if that meant that it was with someone other than me.”

“That must have been hard to accept,” Key murmured.

“It’s the way things have been for a long time now. We had to do it so humans could be safe.”

“But we’re not, are we? You said this Maxim and his gang still hunt us.”

“And when caught face they punishment for it.”

“What’s the punishment? Can’t be too bad if they still do it.”

Kelvin leaned back on the sofa and looked at Key. “The punishment is usually a long

prison sentence or in severe cases, death.”

Key’s eyebrows shot up, causing Kelvin to give him a small smile. “Death?”

“Yeah, and they still do it. They don’t care about you, or the laws, or anything. They are a law to themselves and do whatever they want. Some days... it’s hard to keep going out.”

“Trying to stop them? You do it every night?”

“It’s a job like yours. I have days off.” Kelvin watched as Key looked away and sat up. He slowly reached out and touched the back of Key’s hand, and was surprised when Key turned his hand over and twined their fingers together.

“Don’t read anything into it. Still don’t want you to drop fang on me.”

Snorting, Kelvin asked, “Can we have sex, though?”

“Oh yeah. Sex is okay.”

“Good to know. Now?”

Key chuckled and gripped Kelvin’s hand. “In a rush?”

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“I’ve been protecting you for months and the other night you got that dildo out and –”

“And we’re not going to talk about you spying on me, are we?”

“I enjoyed it.”

“Hmm. Did you now?” Twisting around, Key asked, “Which part?”

“I thought we weren’t going to talk about it.”

“I changed my mind. I’m human. I can do that.”

Laughing, Kelvin nodded. “All of it, but I wanted to be fucking you, not the dildo.”

“I like the dildo.” Key fluttered his eyelashes, then smirked. “It’s nice and long and thick. You might be small and thin and it won’t be a good fuck. I don’t know how you vampires are built.”

“I have no problem showing you.” Kelvin loved this about his mate. This playful jokey side, along with his sass and sarcasm. He was yet to find something he didn’t like. Well, maybe the running away from him, but even that was understandable.

“Here or the bedroom?”

“So sure of yourself,” Key murmured.

“We were interrupted earlier.” Kelvin stood and moved so he was standing in front of Key, then leaned over him, stopping when his lips were mere inches from Key’s.

“Should we continue?”

“Hmm. Let me think about it.” Key closed the distance between them and licked across Kelvin’s lips. “You taste nice.” Key moved back. “Maxim.”

Kelvin groaned. “Don’t ruin the mood.”

Giggling, Key stood, forcing Kelvin to take a step back. “The bedroom’s this way, but you already know that, don’t you, Mr. ‘I watch my mate fuck his ass with a dildo.’”

“But you looked so hot. You can’t blame me.”

Key arched an eyebrow. “I can. Easily, but I want you to fuck me as well, so I’ll shelf it for a later conversation.”

Key walked off, leaving Kelvin staring at him, and Kelvin was sure Key put an extra swing in his hips. And he was powerless to resist him. Grinning, Kelvin followed his mate into the bedroom.

## Chapter Nine

Key knew Kelvin was following him. He could feel him behind him. That didn’t surprise him. What did surprise him was how his feelings had changed toward Kelvin. At some point, he’d realized Kelvin hadn’t lied to him. That feeling of knowing was there, and he decided to trust those instincts Kelvin kept telling him to trust.

When they’d kissed... holy hell, Key had blown up. Sure, he’d tried to resist, but then he stopped. He wanted the kiss, and he wanted more, and now he was going to get it. But that kiss. Short and sweet and perfect. The way Kelvin tasted, the way he

smelled, all had Key's dick hard and ready. He hadn't gone down since, and knowing they were about to fuck had him ready to blow.

He walked to the bed and stopped, turning slowly to watch Kelvin approach. He had this look on his face that made Key gasp. Kelvin wasn't hiding the fact he wanted Key. His eyes were hooded, his fangs peeking out from his mouth—and that somehow turned Key on even more. He wasn't quite right in the head, but he would look at that later. Right now, a hot guy was going to rock his world.

Key pulled his shirt off and lifted his head when Kelvin reached him, moaning as soon as their lips touched. Kelvin's hands gripped Key's waist and Key leaned into the larger man, er, vampire. Whatever he was, Key was leaning into him and he wanted them both naked.

Kelvin chuckled into their kiss, then grabbed Key's pants and undid them, pushing them down over his hips. Key heard the dull thud they made when they hit the floor and stepped out of them, kicking them away. He pushed his boxers down as well, so he was completely naked.

Kelvin broke the kiss and stared at Key's body, then picked him up and placed him on the bed. Key watched, eyes wide as Kelvin stripped, and holy fuck Key couldn't wait to get his hands, lips, and tongue on him. The man was chiseled to perfection and his dick made Key whimper in need. He had to feel it in his ass. Now.

Kelvin crawled over him, looking like the predator he no doubt was, and Key reached up, tangling his fingers in Kelvin's hair as he pulled him down into a hungry kiss. Kelvin lay on top of him and Key spread his legs, whimpering when their dicks rubbed together. Fuck, he needed Kelvin to make him feel so fucking good.

"I will. I'll make us both feel good," Kelvin whispered against Key's lips. Key shivered and arched up as Kelvin's tongue tangled with his. "So good."

“Yes. Fuck me hard. Make me feel you.”

“Gonna stretch you wide open. Fuck you hard and deep.”

“Yeah. Give it to me like we both want.” Key shuddered at the dirty words, his body demanding in its needs.

“I want to do so much first. I want to taste and tease you and make you come, then fuck you.”

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“Oh, fuck yeah.” Key closed his eyes, arching up again, rubbing their dicks together, feeling the long hard thick length of Kelvin’s dick along his own.

It had been so long since Key had felt another man’s body above his own, rubbing and touching, and he was pushed to the edge. Opening his eyes, he stared into Kelvin’s, noticing a faint red glow emanating from them. He gasped, and Kelvin smiled.

“Strong emotions make them glow.”

“I like them.”

Kelvin kissed him and Key closed his eyes, arching up again and whimpering with need. Their tongues dueled as Key sank into the kiss, needing more. Kelvin moaned deeply and Key gasped when he felt Kelvin’s fangs scrape his lips. For a brief second, he wanted to know what it would feel like to have them pierce his skin, but Kelvin licked across his lips and the thought disappeared.

Moving down his neck, Kelvin kissed and licked then paused. Key could hear him breathing deeply and waited. Was Kelvin thinking about biting him? Kelvin moved down and sucked a nipple into his mouth and Key’s mouth fell open, a loud gasp filling the air.

When Kelvin moved to his other nipple, Key almost came. Shoving a hand between them, he grabbed the base of his dick and panted. Kelvin moved down again and gently moved Key’s hand away, then licked up the hard length of Key’s dick, making Key shudder in pleasure.

“Fuck,” he murmured.

“Soon.” Key shuddered again when Kelvin’s tongue circled the head of his dick. “You taste so fucking good.”

“Thanks?”

Kelvin chuckled softly. “I guess it is a compliment.”

Before Key could respond, Kelvin sucked the head of his dick and all Key could do was feel. When Kelvin’s fingers circled his hole, Key trembled with need. Kelvin didn’t push them inside, he just kept running them around and over Key’s hole as he took more and more of Key’s dick into his mouth.

Suddenly, he sat up. “Lube?”

Key blinked up at Kelvin in confusion until he spoke again. “Oh. Top drawer, along with the condoms.”

Kelvin paused, then nodded. “We can’t pass anything on, but if you want me to wear a condom, I will.”

“I do.” He’d never not worn a condom, and he wasn’t going to take Kelvin’s word for it just yet.

The condom was dropped on the bed and Key watched Kelvin pour some lube on his fingers before dropping that on the bed as well. He spread his legs wider and watched, his eyes hooded as Kelvin settled back between his legs. The first touch of Kelvin’s lube covered fingers in his ass had him gasping, then moaning when Kelvin pushed one inside.



He clamped around it, his eyes fluttering closed as Kelvin pulled it out, then pushed it back inside. It felt good, but he needed more, so when a second finger slid in along with the first, Key whimpered, his body arching up. Two fingers in his ass were great, but feeling Kelvin's hot, wet mouth on his dick had Key crying out in pleasure.

"Fuck me," he begged.

"Wait a little longer."

Groaning, Key's body tightened when Kelvin rubbed his prostate. He was about to unload, and he wanted Kelvin in his ass before then. "Please. I'm so close."

Kelvin pushed a third finger inside and sucked Key's dick, causing Key to see stars. He shuddered and jerked, sweat covering his hot skin, and when Kelvin pulled his fingers out of Key's ass, he opened his eyes. Watching Kelvin open the condom packet and roll it on had Key on edge, desperate to feel him inside, but he was taking too much time.

"Come on."

Kelvin paused and arched an eyebrow at Key. "You want me to wear a condom, so let me get it on and lube it up."

"I know, I know. Just do it quickly."

"Someone's impatient."

"Someone will be replaced by my big fat dildo..." Key stared at Kelvin, who was looking at the drawer Key's dildo was kept in.

"Maybe I should use that now."

“Later,” Key snapped, beginning to lose patience.

Kelvin grinned and moved back between Key’s legs, pushing them up and staring at his hole. “I’m going to rim you and make you come later.”

“Oh, fuck yeah.”

Key closed his eyes when he felt the head of Kelvin’s dick over his hole, then bit his lip when he pushed inside. Kelvin paused, as did Key. He was used to his dildo, but Kelvin felt very different from that, and he could feel the burn as he stretched around the fat head of Kelvin’s dick.

A few seconds later Kelvin moved inside and Key held his breath, waiting to have all of Kelvin’s dick in his ass. When that happened, he opened his eyes and watched Kelvin watching him. He waited for the burn to pass and then nodded to Kelvin, who grinned widely.

“Ready for me to fuck you?”

“I’ve been ready for several minutes.”

“Cheeky.” Kelvin pulled out and slammed back inside, making Key gasp and arch up. “Yeah, gonna fuck you now.”

“Yes, fuck me. Hard. I want it hard.”

Kelvin grunted and moved. Key’s eyes widened as Kelvin fucked him hard and deep, and he lifted his legs, wrapping them around Kelvin’s waist. Kelvin leaned over and took Key’s lips in a hard kiss, and Key surrendered to him, letting the larger man own his body.

The hard fucking made the bed move, and Key held on to Kelvin, his body overtaken

by sensation. Kelvin knew how to fuck and Key couldn't and wouldn't stop the sounds he was making. Every move Kelvin made had his body awash with pleasure and Key wanted it to last forever.

Kelvin's lips nibbled Key's, then moved down over his jaw to his neck where they stopped. Key noticed, but didn't pay any attention until he felt Kelvin's fangs scrape over the skin. He froze, as did Kelvin, and held his breath.

Kelvin lifted his head, his eyes completely red, and licked his lips. Key stared up at him and knew what he wanted, but he couldn't do it. He shook his head and his body surged with disappointment that took him by surprise. Kelvin fucked him again, burying his face in the pillow next to Key.

Key shuddered when Kelvin changed the angle and he grabbed the hair on Kelvin's head, pulling him up. "Kiss me." Kelvin took his lips in a demanding kiss, one that was almost too much but was just on the right side of what Key loved. He would be bruised later, but he didn't care. Kelvin's fangs kept catching him, and every time that happened, Key's pleasure soared.

Breaking the kiss, Key tilted his head to the side. "Do it."

He heard the swift indrawn breath and before he could utter another word, he felt those fangs pierce his neck. There was a brief second of pain that soon disappeared, as his body was swamped with pleasure. He arched up and came, his body jerking as he cried out.

It went on and on, and Key was lost in sensation, lost in pleasure that took over his body. Everything disappeared, and he became a creature of ecstasy only, that nothing could penetrate. When he finally lay still on the bed, he became aware of Kelvin licking his neck, then slowly sliding free from Key's ass.

Lying next to him, Key panted, then rolled his head on the pillow to watch Kelvin. Kelvin opened his eyes and stared up at the ceiling. Key didn't feel any different after Kelvin had bitten him and said as much.

"I wore a condom."

"So we're not mated?"

"Not fully, no."

Key furrowed his brow at Kelvin. "Not fully?" What the hell did that mean? They were or what?

Kelvin looked away, a flush on his skin that Key didn't think was due to the sex. "We kinda started the process, and before you get angry with me, you told me to bite you."

"I did, but you were fucking me and I really wanted it." Sitting up, Key twisted on the bed. "Why did I want you to bite me during sex?"

Shrugging, Kelvin also sat up and removed the condom, wrapping it in some tissues that were next to the bed. "The need to bite or to be bitten increases during sex. It's part of being mates, plus it makes us both feel really good."

"Well yeah. I came because you bit me." And boy, had he come. He was covered, as was Kelvin, but the amount he'd come wasn't the only thing. Key couldn't remember the last time he'd had such an intense orgasm.

"Sex between mates is intense," Kelvin murmured.

Key tapped the side of his head. "Stay out."

“I’m trying, but that thought was... loud.”

“Well pretend you’re deaf.”

“I’ll try.” The smile on Kelvin’s face said something different, and Key furrowed his brow. “I said I’ll try, but it’s hard.”

“If you want sex again, you’ll try really, really hard.”

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“I promise, and can we have sex again soon?”

“Can you get hard in the next five minutes?”

Kelvin lay back on the bed and fisted his hard dick. “I’m with you. I stay hard all the time when I’m around you.”

Licking his lips, Key grinned. Now it was his turn.

### Chapter Ten

Kelvin shuddered. Key’s mouth was wrapped around his dick, and Kelvin had his fingers tangled in Key’s hair, urging the other man on. His mate. He never thought he’d be in this position and now he was he wasn’t taking it for granted. If he only had one night, then he would make the most of it.

He had no idea what the morning would bring. Maxim, their stupid laws, could all stop this from continuing, so Kelvin was going to remember every single second of it. Those thoughts disappeared when Key hummed around his dick, causing Kelvin to tremble. Fuck, that felt good, and when Key did it again, Kelvin arched up.

Key moaned as he swallowed around Kelvin’s dick, and Kelvin watched his mate take him all, his head dropping lower and lower until his lips kissed the skin at the base of Kelvin’s dick. His mate sure knew how to deep throat, and when he hummed again as he pulled off, Kelvin’s head dropped back.

He moved his hands so he was cradling Key’s head between them. “Fuck my mouth.”

Kelvin gritted his teeth and grabbed Key's head as he moved his hips. He knew Key could take him, and it wasn't long before they were both moaning.

Suddenly, Kelvin pushed Key off and sat up, picking Key up and placing him on his front on the bed. He pushed Key's legs apart and licked across his hole, feeling the wrinkled flesh on his tongue. Key groaned and pushed back, moving up onto his knees and spreading his legs wider apart.

Kelvin held them and buried his face in Kelvin's ass, licking and sucking, his tongue sliding in deep, then retreating so he could tease Key with the tip before plunging deep inside again. Key kept moving, his body rocking on Kelvin's tongue.

When Kelvin pulled back, Key moaned. But not for long. Kelvin grabbed Key's hips, lined his dick up with Key's pulsing hole, and slammed inside. Before Key could respond, Kelvin kneeled back, pulling Key into a sitting position on his thighs. He fucked up into his mate's ass, then grabbed his hair, pulling his neck to one side.

He bit hard and deep and, at the same time, grabbed Key's dick, stroking it as they fucked. Key's body exploded, come shooting up and covering Kelvin's hand. Kelvin kept fucking him as he pulled his teeth free and licked the wound closed.

Moving them, Kelvin lay over Key's sweat coated body, fucking him hard. Key moaned softly, his hand reaching back to grip Kelvin's ass. Kelvin could feel Key's pleasure building again and kept fucking him until Key was close. Then he bit him again, drawing his sweet blood into his mouth. Key fell apart beneath him and Kelvin followed, his body shaking as he came.

He wasn't sure how long he lay on top of Key, but eventually Kelvin moved back and eased himself from Key's ass, then realized what he'd done.

No condom and he'd bitten Key.



Closing his eyes, he concentrated on his mate and picked up... nothing? Which was strange. He rolled Key over and stared at him. Key glared up at him then snapped, “You fucking mated me!”

“What? How do you know?”

“Because I can hear you!” Key shouted. He sat up and swung his legs over the side of the bed, then stood and stormed into the bathroom, slamming the door behind him.

Wincing, Kelvin also stood and gingerly walked over to the bathroom door, knocking on it. “Key?”

He ‘heard’ Key before he heard him. “Fuck off.”

Wincing again, Kelvin ran a hand through his hair. “I’m sorry. I got carried away.”

The door swung open and Key pushed past him. “Got carried away?” Spinning around, Key jabbed Kelvin in the chest. “How do you get carried away? What? You couldn’t stop to glove up? I said no to us mating. NO! Which part of that didn’t you understand?”

“I’m sorry.”

“Fuck you and your ‘sorry’ and get the fuck out.” Key paced in front of Kelvin. “Get dressed and go.”

“Please let me explain.”

Key stopped pacing and stared at Kelvin. “Go on. Explain it to me like I’m a five-year-old. How does a grownass man suddenly forget to glove up? Oh, and bites his mate, the same mate who said no to all of that literally minutes earlier? What?

Getting your dick wet made you forget everything? Some fucking mate you are.”

“Key –”

“Seeing some hole made you lose it? Fuck me.” Key laughed, but there was no humor in it. “Well, you did that and look where we are, and don’t think I’m the bottom bitch here. I switch.”

“So do I and you can fuck me now if that makes you feel better?” Kelvin tried to smile, but it slid from his face when Key glared at him.

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“I can fuck you now? Oh goody. I’m so excited about that. I always wanted to be mated against my will, then have my mate offer his ass to me as compensation.”

Kelvin pursed his lips and watched Key pace the floor again. He didn’t need Key to say a word. The thoughts in his head were enough. Kelvin was being called every name Key could think of and he grimaced at some of the more lurid descriptions of dick removal Key was coming up with.

Covering his dick in honey, then letting bees and wasps have him was one he didn’t need to know about, or using bottle openers on it. Just thinking about that had Kelvin covering his junk, which Key noticed.

“Stay out of my head!” he shouted.

“I can’t. You’re screaming at me right now.”

“I’m doing both because I’m fucking pissed off, fang boy. No. Not fang boy. Fang dog or mutt. Yeah fang mutt. Oh! Do rats have fangs? I’m going with yes, so you’re now fang rat. Oh, it has a nice ring to it.”

“No it doesn’t.” Kelvin was actually offended at being compared to a rat.

Storming up to Kelvin, Key jabbed him in the chest again. “I get to decide, not you, fang rat.”

Taking a deep breath in to calm down, Kelvin said, “Key. I’m trying here, but if you keep pushing my buttons –”

“What? You’ll mate me against my will? Been there done that, so what now? Oh right. There’s some psycho dude out there who will come after me, and how many of your precious laws have we broken? Am I going to be executed now? Great! Just fucking great. Thanks. I always wanted to be mated, hunted down like a rabid dog, then executed. What a fantastic day or night or whatever the fuck it is.”

A sinking sensation filled Kelvin, and he sucked in a lungful of air. Fuck. Oh fucking fuck. He’d fucked up. Oh fuck, he’d really messed up. Key slowly turned and faced him, his face pale. “Key.”

“Oh shit. We really are in trouble. I’m going with the ‘I had no idea about any of this’ defense, and then leaving the country. You can die on your own.”

“You die too,” Kelvin murmured.

Key blinked, his mouth opening and closing. Kelvin braced for impact. “What the actual fuck! You die and I die? Where was that in the non-existent memo I never fucking got?”

“You said no, so I didn’t think—”

“Of course you didn’t think!” Key screamed at him. “Little brain in your dick was thinking. What have you done? What the fuck?” Key grabbed his hair as he stared at Kelvin. “Jesus fucking Christ. What have you done to me? Tell me everything. Now. Mate.”

“Well, er, the thing is—”

“Just spit it out.”

“Our lives are tied together. If I die, you die and vice versa.”

“That’s just awesome. I’m overwhelmed at how awesome that is.” Key staggered over to the bed and sat on the edge, and when Kelvin went to offer support, he stopped. Key raised his eyes and glared at him as he slowly lifted his head, his eyes remaining locked on Kelvin’s. Kelvin took a hasty step back. His mate looked like he was about to rip Kelvin’s face off.

“Don’t tempt me,” Key muttered.

“I’m sorry.” Kelvin didn’t know what to say to help, and going by the look on Key’s face, sorry wasn’t it.

“You’re sorry.”

“Well, yeah?”

“We’re mated. Right? For life and all that shit?” Kelvin nodded and Key exhaled heavily. “No cheating, right?”

“No cheating, or straying, or doing anything to hurt you...” Trailing off, Kelvin closed his eyes as he felt Key’s anger explode inside him. It was a strange sensation, but he didn’t have time to ponder it.

“Hurt you? HURT YOU!” Key launched up and pushed Kelvin. “What do you think you just did?” Key pointed to his neck. “You stabbed those things in my neck without my permission.”

“You did say I could the first time—”

“The first time! Not the second. I definitely recall not giving you permission to drop fang on me the second time around. I was too busy being fucked the way I wanted, and then I discovered no condom and mated. Me, mated, when I’d said no.”

“I really think you need to calm down.”

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“Ya do, do ya? Good thing I don’t give a fuck what you think. And calm down? When do you think I’m going to calm down over this? When I’m running for my life because you fucked up while fucking me and mated us and your stupid fangy friends want to kill me because—I repeat—you dropped fang and mated us!” By the time Key had stopped he was shouting and Kelvin was reconsidering his life choices.

“What can I say to help?”

“You can get dressed and leave me the hell alone.” Key grabbed Kelvin’s jeans off the floor and flung them at him. “I want to forget you exist, get drunk, and find a human to fuck.”

Kelvin’s head snapped up, and he hissed. “No one touches what’s mine.”

Key blinked, then tilted his head. “What’s yours? Hello!! Which century do you think we live in? I don’t belong to you. I will never belong to you. Now get dressed and go. I need a long, hot shower to wash you off me, and I want it now.”

Kelvin shoved his legs in his jeans and pulled them up. Grabbing the rest of his clothing and his boots, he left and reappeared in Gray’s office. Gray looked him up and down, then snorted. “You reek of sex. Why are you here and not fucking him?”

“I mated him and he threw me out.”

Gray paused, his fingers hovering over the keyboard. “You did what?”

“I know. I’ve messed everything up.”

“By law, I have to report this.” Gray leaned back in his chair and spun around until he was facing Kelvin. “The law states if you know of someone, male or female, who mates a human, you must report it and who both individuals are so enforcement can detain them.”

“I’m enforcement.”

“That isn’t going to help you.” Gray rubbed his face and sighed heavily. “You fucked up, Kelvin. I can smell him on you.”

“I’ll shower.” Standing, Kelvin was about to leave when Gray stopped him.

“No. It’s like your scents are mixed together.” Gray frowned, closed his eyes, and inhaled. “They’re wrapped around each other, mingled in a way that makes them one, but I can scent both.” Opening his eyes, Gray stared at him. “Everyone who comes close to you will know.”

“This doesn’t happen when two vampires mate.”

“I know, and it’s been such a long time since a vampire and human mated, that we may have forgotten about this. It’s probably a way to stop the human being fed on or a mark to let others know who he or she belongs to.”

“I... shit.”

“Has his scent changed?”

“I don’t know. He wasn’t happy with me when he kicked me out.”

“You need to go back to him. If Maxim gets close enough to scent him...”



Gray didn't need to finish what he was saying. It was clear enough already. His mate was in danger. More danger, and Key was going to be so pissed with him.

## Chapter Eleven

"Bastard," Key muttered to himself as he scrubbed at his skin, trying to wash every tiny trace of Kelvin away. The man knew how to fuck, knew how to make Key have the best orgasms in his life, but beyond that, he was a bastard. And worse? Key missed him already.

"Bastard," Key muttered again.

Once he was clean, Key switched the shower off and stepped out, grabbing a towel and scrubbing his body dry. He went back into his bedroom and saw the rumpled state of his bed and set about stripping it. Wasn't having those sheets on with his scent all over them. Nope. He was having nothing to remind him of what had happened.

One problem.

He could feel Kelvin. There was no other way to describe it. It was like a sensation at the back of his head, a low murmuring in his ears but not his ears but also in his head. It was confusing and felt like some form of violation, knowing Kelvin could probably hear his thoughts.

You fucking bastard!

That will teach him. Key chuckled to himself and, grabbing the sheets, stormed into the kitchen, shoving them straight into the washing machine. Out of sight and all that. He went back to the bedroom and grabbed some sweats, pulling them on, then realized something.

The time and the date.

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“Fuck.” He should be at work, and he had no idea what Kelvin had told them. Gritting his teeth, he turned to get his phone when Kelvin appeared. Screaming, Key almost fell back on the floor. “Wear a fucking bell next time. No, no next time. Fuck off!”

“They can scent we’ve mated.” Kelvin held his hand out for Key but he knocked it away and stood.

“What?”

“Our scents have merged together, so any vampire will know.”

“And this didn’t occur to you before you did the unwanted mating part?” What the fuck? What was it with this guy, er, vampire? Whatever.

“I didn’t know,” Kelvin mumbled.

Key stared at him. “What?”

“I said I didn’t. It doesn’t happen when two vampires mate, so it never occurred to me it would happen now.”

Could this already shitty situation get any worse? Knowing his luck, yes, it could. “Why me?”

“I’m truly sorry.”

Key glared at him, then looked away because he could feel that Kelvin meant what he said. He was sorry, and Key wanted to be angry with him, but feeling Kelvin's emotions diffused his own. Sighing heavily, Key sat on the bed and stared at the floor.

He ignored Kelvin when he sat next to him. He probably didn't have to speak. Kelvin would know already. This situation was so fucked up. Key rubbed his chest, feeling his heart rate pick up. He swallowed hard and closed his eyes, breathing deeply.

When Kelvin rubbed his back, Key let him, then stood and turned to face him. Being angry wasn't going to fix this. He needed to accept what had happened and deal with it. He could be pissed at Kelvin later. "What now?"

Kelvin's eyes flickered over his and he nodded. "I need to find a safe place for you."

No, he was staying right where he was. "Here. This is my home and I'm not leaving it. Do what you need to do to beef up security, but I'm not leaving."

"Key—"

"No." Key wasn't leaving at all, and the sooner Kelvin understood that, the quicker this conversation could move along to the next issue. "My home and I'm staying."

Kelvin exhaled heavily and Key resisted the urge to say something, but going by the look on Kelvin's face, he'd 'heard' him. "I can have Gray come over and improve security here. We're talking about sensors and CCTV in the apartment."

"Fine. Not the bedroom or bathroom, though. I want some privacy." Kelvin nodded and pulled out his phone. Key listened to the conversation and when Kelvin hung up, he asked, "Tonight?"

“Yeah, he isn’t working, so he can come over and sort security out.”

“He knows?”

“He scented the changes and told me.”

Key froze, his body stilling. “Will he tell anyone?”

“No. I trust him.”

“You might, but I don’t know him, so why should I trust him with my life?”

“What more do you want? You won’t leave, so I’m doing the next best thing. He’s the go-to guy for anything like this, and I know he won’t say anything. He’s known about you for some time and kept quiet. He won’t tell anyone.”

That made Key stop talking. Kelvin was right. He was demanding, and Kelvin was doing his best to meet those demands. Didn’t mean Key had to like the man. Vampire. Fuck, his head hurt and he wanted to sleep this all away. Why couldn’t this be some strange dream he could wake up from? Why did this have to happen to him, and what will Dad say when he tells him?

“You can’t,” Kelvin murmured.

Key slowly looked at Kelvin. “I will tell him and you can’t stop me. He’s my dad and I won’t lie to him.”

“He can’t know.”

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“Why? Come on. Tell me why I can’t tell my dad?”

“You know we live longer than humans. Centuries to your decades. Now we’ve mated, you have enhanced longevity. You won’t age and he’ll notice. You have to disappear from his life.”

“And you can get fucked.” Key surged up and paced the floor. “I’m not going to grow old? That’s great, but I have to leave my dad and never see him again? No chance that’s happening. I will tell him. I’m not going to leave him and watch him grow older and then die on his own, thinking he’s lost his only child. We watched Mom die and I won’t do that to him, so you need to figure this out or I walk.” Key moved closer to Kelvin and held his thumb and finger an inch apart. “I’m this close to bailing now, so stop with this bullshit.”

“I can’t change the laws,” Kelvin practically shouted.

“You’ve already broken a pretty fucking important one. What’s one more going to do?”

Kelvin glared at him, then dropped his face into his hands. Key felt a split second of guilt, then trampled the emotion down. Kelvin lifted his head and stared at him. “We will be arrested. I will be placed in solitary confinement as punishment and you will disappear. They won’t kill you, since I would also die, unless they decide what I’ve done merits our execution, and from what I know of our history in dealing with this, that is what they did. If they find out, we’re both dead.”

“I’m so happy to know that. Gee, thanks for telling me. I kinda guessed it would be

something like that, but having it spelled out to me is like all my dreams coming true. Thank you. I really mean it. Thanks for letting me know... I'm going to be fucking executed because you couldn't keep your fangs to yourself!" Key shouted the last part, then spun on the spot, his hands tugging at his hair. "This is fucking fantastic! I'm overwhelmed at how great this is."

"I'm sorry."

"Will you stop apologizing?" Key hissed, pointing a finger at him. "It's done and we're screwed."

"Well, you know we could—"

"Do you want a kick in the nuts? Are you for real, suggesting sex right now?"

"We could work out our aggression?" Kelvin grunted when Key punched him. "I take it that's a no?"

"You know what? Why don't we? Drop your jeans and let me fuck you."

Kelvin stood and did what Key asked, and within seconds, Key was staring at Kelvin's bare ass. He shook his head and took a step back, but could feel his body reacting to what he could see. "What the...?"

"If it will make you feel better, then use me."

Key almost choked. "Why would I do that?"

Standing, Kelvin pulled his jeans and boxers up and faced Key. "I put us in this position. I will do whatever I need to do to make it up to you."

“But this?” Key waved a hand at Kelvin. “This isn’t it... shit...” Key closed his eyes, breathing deeply. Yes, this was a bad situation, but Kelvin also faced the same reality if they were found out. “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t apologize. I did get us into this, so I am the one to blame. You have a right to be angry.”

Sitting on the bed, Key didn’t resist the urge to lean into Kelvin when he sat next to him. This was what he wanted to do, and he wasn’t going to fight that feeling then. He needed it. “So, Gray will come and take care of things here. Make it safer.”

“He will, but I’m not sure how long we can stay.”

“What will happen when you go back? Will you have to avoid everyone?”

“I could, or I could challenge the law. No one has done that in so long I can’t even remember.”

“Scary place to be.”

“For both of us.” Kelvin chuckled softly. “I wasn’t going to come to you, but the thought of watching you find someone else, start a life with them, hurt. You’re my mate, the most important person in my life, and I couldn’t have you. I struggled to accept that.”

“And here we are.”

“We are. I thought I could be near you and resist the urge to mate, but I was wrong. Clearly.” Kelvin gave Key a soft smile once he returned. Now that his anger was dissipating, he could feel the bond between them. It was a strange sensation, like a murmur in the back of his head, a presence that wasn’t just him.



He could almost detect Kelvin's emotions, but they were like whispers in the woods and Key couldn't quite feel them. He closed his eyes and sighed. When Kelvin put his arm around his shoulders, Key didn't push it away. For a moment, he needed Kelvin to take his weight while he adjusted.

“What now?”

“Like I said, Gray will come and work his magic and then somehow I need to come up with a plan that allows us both to live and deal with Maxim.”

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“Not much then. Only a day’s work.”

Key smiled when Kelvin chuckled. “Easy peasy.”

Yawning, Key slumped back on the bed and closed his eyes. “I’m tired and I haven’t figured out what I’m going to do with work yet.”

“You don’t need to be back until tomorrow. Head injuries need time.”

“Can I still work in the human world, and wow, that sounds really weird to say?” Key opened his eyes and glanced at Kelvin, who was frowning at him. “That’s a no, isn’t it?”

“I think over time they would realize you weren’t aging and question it.”

“I like my job. I like working with IT and fixing code.”

“You could work with Gray. He could always do with another pair of hands.”

“The security guy?” Why would Key work security?

“Security covers many areas, and Gray is in charge of it all. Cyber security, CCTV, patrols, tracing rogue vampires.”

“All by himself?”

“He has a team. I’m part of enforcement, so I deal with the rogues and those who

break the laws, including myself.”

“You’re gonna arrest yourself and hand yourself in?” Key smiled. “Interesting.”

“Maybe. I haven’t decided, but I know at some point either I deal with this or someone else will. Maxim knows about you, which means he knows who you are to me.”

“You could tell them you mated me to keep me safe or something like that.” Yawning again, Key rolled on to his side and curled up. “Tired.”

“Sleep. I’ll make sure we’re safe.”

“And who will keep you safe?”

Kelvin stood and tugged the covers over Key. “Don’t worry about me. This is what I’m trained for. Sleep.”

Key didn’t argue. He was already asleep.

## Chapter Twelve

Watching his mate sleep, knowing he was safe and secure for now, eased some of the tension Kelvin carried. Looking into the living room, he rolled his shoulders, wincing at the ache he felt. A few seconds later, Gray appeared and came over to stand next to him.

“CCTV is already hacked into. I’ll put sensors on the doors and windows and update the alarm he has. The one he never uses.” Gray arched an eyebrow at Kelvin. “A couple of cameras like we discussed.” Glancing into the bedroom, he asked, “How is he?”

“He isn’t threatening to kill me, so much better.”

“You have irrevocably altered his life. There is no going back for him.”

“I know. I thought I could control it,” Kelvin snorted and shook his head. “How wrong was I?”

“The urge to mate is strong. I’ve heard it overrides almost all of our senses.”

“Yeah, I always thought that was an over-exaggeration, but it isn’t. Not at all.” Kelvin rocked on his feet. “I managed it the first time well enough, but the second—”

“I don’t need to know the details.” Gray placed his duffel on the floor, crouched down and unzipped it. Kelvin watched him take out the sensors, alarm, and cameras, plus wiring. Lots of wiring, and a drill. “I won’t start the drilling until later. I can do plenty that’s quiet while he’s sleeping.”

“He wants to tell his dad about us.”

“He’s close with Charles.”

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“You know his name?” Kelvin shouldn’t be surprised at how much Gray knew, but he was this time.

“He’s your mate. Of course, I ran a background check. Nice guy too. Loves his son. Loves his wife and visits her grave every week to place fresh flowers.”

“That’s love.”

“It is. One that transcends death.” Gray picked up a sensor and stood. “We believe humans can’t feel love the way we can because we mate, but we’re wrong. I’ve seen it many times. Humans can and do love just as deeply as we do.” Walking over to one of the windows, Gray looked outside. “You can be seen from the rooftop opposite, which you know all about.”

Coughing, Kelvin agreed. “Weak spot.”

“It is. I’ll place a camera here so we can keep an eye on it and wait for Maxim to appear, which we both know he will. He has both your scents now and can use that against you by threatening your mate. It could place you in a position where you are forced to become his spy.”

“He’s always wanted to find a way inside our security.”

“Now he may believe he has one. An enforcer with a human mate? He knows the laws better than anyone. He knows how to tread a fine line when he needs to or jump straight over it when he wants something, but he’s careful. We can never pin anything on him with a degree of certainty.”

“He knows what he’s doing, but look where he comes from? His family is responsible for where we are now.”

“And now they live in the shadows because of it and they know we watch them, which is why they stay under the radar as much as possible.” Gray approached the window and began cleaning it. “Go and sleep. You’re as tired as your mate.”

Kelvin nodded and left Gray to do the job he was more than capable of doing. In the bedroom, he paused to watch his mate sleep, then quietly stripped and crawled into bed behind him, spooning him. Inhaling his mate’s scent, Kelvin felt his body ease and closed his eyes. He could sleep a little better knowing they would be safe.

Hearing faint murmurs roused Kelvin from sleep, and when he rolled over, he found the bed empty and the sheets cold. Throwing the covers back, Kelvin pulled his jeans on and walked into the living room, finding Key and Gray sitting and talking.

Key watched him, then pursed his lips. “Morning.”

“Morning?” Had he slept that long?

“I need to leave, but I’ll use the alarm you’ve installed. You can poof your way home.”

“Wait.” Kelvin reached over and took Key’s arm. “You can’t go to work.”

“I never said I was leaving for work, but I was leaving to pick up some groceries. It turns out I’ve been fired, so I have lots of free time.” Shrugging Kelvin’s hand off, Key grabbed his keys and left.

Kelvin glanced between the closed front door and Gray. “He’s been fired?”

“Told him not to bother coming back, and they’d mail his stuff to him.”

“Shit.”

“Offered him a job with me. You know Key isn’t his real name, right?”

“It isn’t?” Gray knew more about his mate than Kelvin did.

“It’s Jax, but he’s called Key because there is no IT system he can’t crack. Why he’s working where he is, or was, is beyond me. A guy with his skills will be a huge benefit to me and our team. And that is what you are going to run with when you get hauled in front of the council for breaking our laws.”

Standing, Gray put his laptop away in his duffel bag, something Kelvin hadn’t even noticed was there, and then stretched. “Long night, but the apartment is secure. Not sure how you slept through me drilling, but you did.”

“I was tired.” Kelvin scanned the room, noticing everything he’d failed to notice when he’d first walked in from the bedroom. There were sensors on the windows, a nice up-to-date alarm by the door, and a camera blinking away in the corner of the living room. There was probably more hidden away that Kelvin couldn’t see.

Gray packed away his belongings, then stretched again. “Speak later.” With those words, he disappeared, leaving Kelvin alone in his mate’s apartment, but with no mate to speak of.

While he had the time, Kelvin took a shower and remade the bed, then looked inside Key’s fridge. It was empty except for some bottles of beer and a half-eaten apple. Grimacing, Kelvin threw the apple in the trash and closed the fridge door. As he rummaged through the pantry, Key came back.

“Hey.” Kelvin rocked on his feet, watching Key unpack several bags of food. “Sorry about your job.” Having him as a mate hadn’t done Key any good so far, and Kelvin was going to do everything he could to change that.

“You can eat normal food, so I’m making vegetable soup. We can have it with some warm rolls.”

“Soup from scratch?” Kelvin couldn’t remember the last time he’d eaten anything made from scratch.



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“I can cook... now. My mom thought I’d never learn, but it’s amazing what having food poisoning can do for you.”

“I’m sure it is?” Kelvin was sure Key had been angry at him when he left, but now he appeared calm.

“I was angry, but where will that get me?” Key continued to put items away. “It wastes time and energy and I want to live my life, so yeah. Not angry now.”

“That’s good to hear.”

Key finished putting everything away, then pointed to the bedroom. “I want sex.”

“That’s direct.”

Grinning, Key sauntered over to Kelvin and put his arms over his neck. “I’m not angry, but I am horny and I have a mate who knows how to fuck me. So, let’s fuck.”

“I see romance isn’t dead.” Chuckling, Key walked backwards, leading Kelvin to the bedroom, and he was more than happy to follow, if a little bemused at the change in Key’s attitude toward him.

Once in the bedroom, Kelvin stood and watched Key strip until he was naked, then lay back on the bed. He crooked a finger at Kelvin, then pointed over to where he lay. “Come here.”

Kelvin quickly stripped and crawled over his mate and kissed him. Key moaned

softly and Kelvin licked across his lips before sliding inside. He moaned when he tasted his mate, their tongues sliding together in an erotic dance. Key's hands grabbed Kelvin's ass and Kelvin arched into him, rubbing their hard leaking lengths together.

"I don't want to wait. I want you to fuck me. I know that's what you want to do." Key tapped the side of his head. "I can tell."

Kelvin kissed him again, then leaned back and flipped Key over onto his front. He moved between his legs and spread Key's asscheeks, then licked across his wrinkled hole. Key moaned loudly and pushed back. "Yeah. Like that." Kelvin did it again, Key's intense flavor bursting over his tongue. Hardening his tongue, he stabbed at Key's hole, sliding it in and out as he spread Key's cheeks wider.

Key rocked back onto Kelvin's tongue as Kelvin slid a finger in alongside it, causing Key to moan again. He pulled his tongue free and pushed another finger inside, then glanced up when he heard a dull thud next to him. Lube. Just what he needed.

Pouring it on three fingers, Kelvin pushed them in and scissored them, then pulled them out. He lubed his dick, then lay over Key and whispered into his ear, "Ready?"

"Fuck me now."

Kelvin groaned and pushed inside, pausing as a tight heat enveloped him and pushed him to the edge. Too soon. He wasn't going to come just yet. He wanted to feel his mate explode beneath him first. He pulled out, then pushed inside again, setting a steady rhythm until Key urged for more.

"Harder. I want to feel you."

Planting soft kisses across Key's back, Kelvin fucked him like he wanted. He felt Key shudder beneath him, then pulled out and flipped him over so they were face to

face. Sliding back inside, Kelvin kissed Key, their tongues tangling as Kelvin took Key hard and fast.

Key moaned, his body arching up into every thrust, his hands tugging on Kelvin's hair, pulling his head any way he wanted. Kelvin loved it. Loved seeing his mate unrestrained. Loved feeling him inside and out, knowing he was pushing his mate closer to the edge.

Key bit his lip and Kelvin growled low and deep. Key's eyes widened, and he turned his face to one side, exposing his neck. "Bite me. I can feel you want to."

Groaning, Kelvin pounced, his fangs sliding in easily. He moaned at the first taste of Key on his tongue and shuddered when Key clenched around his dick, Key's body exploding in ecstasy beneath him. Kelvin held on, feeling Key and knowing how to move to prolong Key's pleasure.

The connection between them was intense, and Key's pleasure became Kelvin's own as he arched back, crying out as he came. He shuddered and trembled, his orgasm riding over him, making him see stars until it left him weak and shaky, sweat coating his hot skin.

It wasn't long before Kelvin came to his senses and licked across Key's neck, closing the wound. Key rolled his head to the side so they could see each other, then smiled. "My turn next."

Chuckling, Kelvin nodded, then winced slightly when he slipped free from Key's body. "It is. Take it easy with me. It's been a while."

"And for me, but someone helped me out." Key wagged his eyebrows, and Kelvin laughed again before rolling onto his back. His heart rate slowed as he closed his eyes, feeling Key's emotions. Key was happy but scared, and Kelvin understood why.

He felt the same way, too. Unsure what the future would bring and how Kelvin could gain the best outcome for them. He had no choice but to challenge the laws if he wanted to have Key in his life.

“We’ll figure it out.”

Kelvin nodded. “We will.”

“You need to research why it came into effect and if it’s been challenged before and have good enough reason why the law should be revoked now.”

Exhaling heavily, Kelvin murmured, “A lot of research needed.”

“I’m sure Gray is already on it.”

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Snorting, Kelvin agreed. “He’ll have it all figured out in no time. There are a number of laws he doesn’t agree with.”

Sitting up, Key winced. “I need to go to the bathroom.”

“Sorry?”

“Pfft. Don’t apologize for something you’re not sorry about, and I’m not sorry either, but clean up isn’t the best.”

“No, it isn’t, but remember, I’m the one who will be doing it next.”

Grinning, Key stood and stretched, and Kelvin’s eyes roamed over his body, his dick twitching in anticipation.

Key stared down at him. “Give me a minute and I’ll see to you.”

Yeah. Kelvin could give his hot mate a minute.

### Chapter Thirteen

Naked and sweaty, Key lay on the bed, his chest heaving. Kelvin was no better as he lay next to him. They’d been having sex all day, and if this was what he had to look forward to being mated, then Key would need to start working out. Or not. The sex alone was a workout.

In between rounds of sex, they’d talked about anything and everything, and Key had

learned that Kelvin was over one hundred years old. How? The man looked like he was in his twenties and he was over a century old? And Key would benefit from that longevity too, now that they were mated. The only downside was Charles. His dad would continue to age and would at some point notice that Key wasn't.

Kelvin had told him several times that he couldn't tell Charles the truth, but fuck that. Charles was his dad and Key was telling him, damn the consequences. He wasn't going to have any secrets from Charles. He deserved to know the truth about his son and the man he was going to be spending the rest of his very long life with.

Key suspected Kelvin knew what he would do, but had given up attempting to convince him otherwise. They had that weird mind connection going on, so Kelvin would know the very second Key told Charles the truth. Speaking of connections...

Can you hear me?

Yes.

Key screamed and sat up, staring down at Kelvin. "How long have you been listening in?"

"It's not like I do it all the time. I don't get my diary out and pencil in 'at two I must listen to Key's thoughts'."

"Fuck off." Key struggled to hide his smile, so he stood instead and pulled his boxer briefs on. It was a good comeback, and now Kelvin knew what he thought.

"No, I don't."

Key burst out laughing and flipped Kelvin off, who reacted by laughing himself. "Beer?"

“Would be nice after I’ve been to the bathroom to, er, clean-up.”

“Yeah, clean-up’s a pain in the ass.” Key grinned as Kelvin moaned.

“No, that wasn’t funny.”

“What do you mean? I’m a funny guy.” He didn’t hear anything other than the bathroom door shutting. Grabbing two beers out of the fridge, Key turned and screamed. Only nothing came out. One second he was in his living room, and the next he was in some dark, dank cell being thrown against the wall. “So much for all the security they installed,” he grumbled as he lay slumped on the floor.

A man, or vampire going by the fangs, crouched next to him and stared. Key swallowed hard. “Er, hi?”

He grabbed Key’s hair and dragged him up, causing Key to grab the man’s wrist. Fuck, it hurt. The man slammed him against the wall and leaned in so close their noses almost touched.

“So you’re his mate.” Key watched the man’s nostrils flare as he inhaled. “And now you’re mine.”

“Maxim?”

“Jax. Now we know each other. I’m going to torture you until you tell me everything you know.”

“I don’t know anything!” Fuck, torture? No. Just no. “He mated me against my will. I said no, and he did it anyway.”

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“You’re covered in his scent, so I know you’re lying to me.” Maxim grinned, his eyes glowing red. “I’m going to have so much fun breaking you.”

“Gee, that sounds great, but I’m gonna have to pass.”

Key grunted as the air rushed out of him. He fell to the floor, his arms wrapping around his waist where Maxim had punched him. He lay there for a few seconds until Maxim grabbed him by the hair again and dragged him up.

“Who runs their security?”

“I only know of someone called Gray.”

“Hmm, I know him very well. Who else?”

“I guess Kelvin?” Kelvin. Oh! Mind linky thing.

Oh! You! Get out of the bathroom and rescue me!

Rescue you from what? My dick?

Haha not funny. Maxim has me and has threatened to torture me. I mean it Kelvin. You need to fucking save me.

Shit! Where are you?

I don’t know. It’s dark and smelly.



“Who else works with them?”

“I don’t know anyone else. I’m new to this whole vampire world.”

“And now you’re lying to me.” Maxim hissed then bit Key’s neck. Hard. Key cried out, the pain almost too much. When Kelvin bit him, it felt good, really good, but this felt like being stabbed with hot poker. Maxim threw him to the ground and glared at him as he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. “Your blood tastes like shit.”

“Sorry?” Key clamped his lips shut when Maxim dragged him up again, then backhanded him across the face, knocking Key back to the ground.

The left side of his face erupted in pain and he gritted his teeth, refusing to cry out. He wasn’t going to give Maxim the satisfaction of hearing his cries.

Hurry up. He’s beating the shit out of me.

Gray’s zeroing in on your location now. He’s been watching Maxim and his group since he made an appearance a few days ago. Stay strong. We’ll be there soon.

Key closed his eyes and held back his whimper. He hurt, and he knew Maxim would enjoy hearing it. The look on Maxim’s face said as much. The leer he had as he stared at Key, who was practically naked. He only had on boxer briefs, so Maxim could easily see what he wanted to, and that was Key’s fear.

He was almost naked, so there would hardly be a fight if Maxim wanted to do more than hit him and throw him around.

Curling up, Key stayed still, watching Maxim pace the floor, muttering words Key didn’t understand. Not that he was sure he wanted to. Maxim could be discussing all the ways he would torture and kill him, and who wanted to know that? Key didn’t,

that was for sure.

Gotcha.

Key somehow kept his face blank. That was quick. Not that I'm being ungrateful, but I thought it would take longer.

Gray's just that good and Maxim is just that stupid. He's taken you to an abandoned manor house, and I bet you're in the basement.

Why yes, I am, so poof your butt over here and save me.

Five minutes then the team will be in place.

Okay. I can hold out for five more minutes.

Maxim frowned and grabbed his phone, growling when he stared at the screen. Oh, this was not good. It wasn't good at all. "How?" he screamed at Key. "How did the mother fucker find you so quickly?"

"How should I know? It's not like I have a hotline to everything they do? I'm new here."

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Maxim screamed up to the ceiling, then grabbed Key by the hair again and dragged him out of the room. Key tried to get up onto his feet, but Maxim saw and kicked him in the side. Grunting, Key gritted his teeth, wincing as Maxim somehow managed to hit him with every object as he dragged Key along.

He knows you're here.

Figured he would. We're inside now.

Why didn't you just poof inside?

Don't know the layout.

Oh, okay. That did make sense. Wouldn't want to poof inside a wall or a chair.

Suddenly Maxim released him and disappeared, and a split second later, the door Maxim had been dragging Key towards banged open. Key held his hands up, lowering his head, shouting, "Don't shoot or bite me or whatever you do to people you hate!"

"Key."

Key looked up to see Kelvin coming towards him, and slumped to the floor. "Fuck."

Kelvin hauled him up, holding him so tightly Key thought the vampire would crack his ribs. "Key."

“I’m good. A bit battered, but fine.”

“Where is he?”

“He poofed away before you came in.”

“Poofed? Interesting way of putting transportation.”

Key looked over at who had spoken, recognizing Gray, and realized he was in a room with several people he didn’t know. Kelvin slowly released him and gently touched his face. Key winced, knowing he was going to be several lovely shades in no time. Fuckers could hit hard.

“This is your human mate.”

Key felt Kelvin’s body still and held his breath, waiting. “He is.” Kelvin moved Key behind him as he faced the vampire who’d spoken. “He’s mine.”

“You have broken one of our most important laws.”

“I have.”

The one speaking looked at Key, who was peeking over Kelvin’s shoulder. His dark eyes narrowed. “You and your mate will be punished.”

“I request an audience with the council.”

Dark eyes arched an eyebrow. “You do, do you?” he murmured. He shook his head, his long, thick blond hair flowing around him. “And you think they’ll grant it?”

“They will.” Gray walked over and stood next to Kelvin. “The laws worked when we

needed them, but we've moved past those times now. We're not those vampires anymore."

"No, we're not, but they weren't put in place for our benefit, as you are aware."

"I know. My grandfather was one of the original vampires who created the laws and he would also be one of the first ones to agree all laws need to be re-examined as times change."

"You may be correct, but for now, Kelvin has broken the law and must face his punishment."

Key shrank back behind Kelvin. What's going on?

I'm trying to speak to the council direct so I can put my case across to them and hopefully have them examine our laws. Gray is right. We needed the laws back then, but things are different now.

Will you still be punished and what about me?

I'm going to see what I can do about that, but if they want to punish us, I'll ask that they don't do anything to you. You never asked for this and shouldn't be penalized because of something I did.

What happens to you then?

I don't know. Guess we'll see what the council has to say.

You know I'm kinda scared

Me too.

Key found Kelvin's hand and squeezed it, finding some small relief when Kelvin squeezed his in return. They were in trouble, and Key didn't want to know exactly how much trouble they were in, but he could easily guess from what Kelvin had said previously. Something he'd tried unsuccessfully to block from his mind.

Death.

Yeah, death, and Key didn't want to get to know death just yet. He was young and had plenty of years ahead of him, and once this was over and done with, he was going to remind Kelvin how much he'd fucked up.

After they'd had sex.

Priorities.

"Some laws are meant to be broken," Gray argued. "Some laws served us well then, but only hinder us now. How many of our kind have walked away from their mate because of the laws we have in place? How many have suffered in silence? How many have taken their own lives rather than watch their mate move on with theirs? Is this

who we have become as a species? One that forces its own to wither away and die inside because we adhered to the laws set in place decades before we were born?”

“I understand where you’re coming from, but for now, the laws stand, and Kelvin has broken one of our most important ones.” Gray appeared to want to argue, but nodded instead. Key wanted him to argue more. It was his neck on the chopping block. “Arrest them.” The way the blond spoke those two words sounded tired to Key, and a little spark of hope came to light inside.

“Can my mate dress? As you can see, Maxim took him in his underwear.”

“We’ll find something to cover him.” Blond waved at two other vampires in the room, a male and female who came over to them. Kelvin held his arms out, and he was quickly cuffed.

Key took a step back, but the female vampire gave him a soft smile. “I won’t put them on too tight.”

Key looked at Kelvin, who nodded and raised his hands, grimacing when the cold metal touched his skin. The woman, the female—as Key had been informed to call them—smiled again and stepped back.

“Let’s go and see what the council has to say.”

## Chapter Fourteen

Kelvin could feel Key’s fear through their connection and tried to remain positive, but he, too, was a little afraid. He knew what the law demanded if broken, and here he was about to try to reason with their council as to why the law should be struck down.

At least Key had some clothes on now, and had gotten his wounds treated. Seeing the bruises on Key's face had Kelvin seething and wanting to track Maxim down to give him a taste of his own medicine. Gray was tracing his whereabouts, and Kelvin knew Maxim wouldn't remain hidden for long.

He was up to something, or he would never have come out in the open to take Key.

Outside the council chambers, Kelvin paced the floor, ignoring the chairs placed outside. The hallway was long and had many large windows on one side. The cream color gave it the appearance of glowing, but it did nothing for Kelvin.

His life and his mates' hung on how he performed in the very chamber he stood outside. He was hoping the emergence of Maxim would sway the council to his side, but they could easily blame his mating as the reason for Maxim returning. He had no idea how they would look at it, and second guessing and creating scenarios in his mind only added to the tension he could feel strangling his body.

Rolling his shoulders back, Kelvin moved his neck from side to side, then cracked his knuckles. Shaking his arms, he continued to pace, trying to loosen up, but all the moving he did had little effect. He was stiff, tight, coiled like a spring ready to go off.

At least Key wasn't here. Kelvin had managed to convince Peter—Blond to Key—to let his mate stay away. It was daunting enough when you knew the people and the process, but it would have been far worse for Key. Peter had agreed without arguing, giving Kelvin a glimmer of hope that he might be on his side when it came to him challenging the law.

“Kelvin. The council will see you now.”

Kelvin spun on the spot and stared at the open doorway. He inhaled, his chest expanding, then slowly released it before walking towards the chamber. He nodded to



the male standing at the door, one of the council guards, and stepped into the wide circular room.

A large, semi-circular podium stood at one end of the room where the council members sat. Thirteen members. It had been arranged that way so there would never be a deadlock, and so far it had worked out well.

The room was once again decorated in cream shades. Only the podium stood out with its dark wood; the same with the chairs. Everything about the room was meant to highlight the council members who were already seated, waiting for him.

Taking a deep breath, Kelvin approached and stood next to the desk and chair placed in front of the podium, waiting for one of the members to tell him to sit or stay as he was. This was their show, and he was a participant waiting for them to speak.

“Please sit, Kelvin.” Kelvin nodded and sat, placing his hands on the desk in front of him. “You know why you’re here?”

Kelvin once again nodded. "I do, Councilwoman Alma."

"Please inform the council." She smiled at him as she spoke, and Kelvin decided to take that as a positive.

"I mated a human, breaking one of our fundamental laws."

He heard the creak of someone moving on a chair and turned his head toward the sound. An older vampire watched him, his eyes narrowed. "You broke one of our most important laws. You know the penalty is usually death."

"I did and I do, Sir." Councilman Jenkins preferred to be addressed as Sir. "I had my reasons, Sir."

"Speak."

"Maxim attacked him." He heard several indrawn breaths when he mentioned Maxim's name. "He became aware of my interest in him. It hadn't been my intent to mate him due to our laws, but I did want to see him. He's my mate. It was difficult to stay away."

"I understand the need to be close to one's mate. I am also mated." Oskar, another council member, folded his hands in front of him, frowning deeply. "The need to be close is overwhelming. I sympathize with you in this, however we do have laws in place to protect humans, including the one that forbids us from mating them."

"I'm aware, and I was intent on watching over him and ensuring he lived a happy,

healthy life, but when Maxim attacked and I intervened to save him..." Kelvin paused, choosing his words carefully. "Being in such close proximity to him, I struggled to stay away when his safety was at risk. I couldn't watch him be attacked, or worse."

"Maxim." Councilwoman Therri sighed deeply. "He has been a thorn in our side for decades. Why has he made an appearance now, and to kidnap a mate?"

"He may not have been aware they had mated," another council member said, one Kelvin didn't know.

"He would have known the moment he scented Key. Our scents are interwoven together now we've mated."

An older councilwoman nodded. "I'd heard of that happening between vampire and humans. Strange as it doesn't happen between vampire mates. Maybe a warning system of some sort. Still, you broke the law even though you had legitimate reasons to do so."

"I challenge the law." The moment the words left his lips, Kelvin wanted to claw them back. All the council members stared at him and he wanted to hide behind the desk, but if he wanted a life with Key, then he needed to be strong.

What's going on? You 'feel' tense.

I've challenged the law and let's say I'm a little nervous now

Little?

"Pardon?" Councilwoman Alma watched Kelvin intently. "Please repeat yourself for the record."

Swallowing hard, Kelvin inhaled swiftly, then slowly released it. “I challenge the law regarding vampires not mating humans.”

“Are you sure this is the path you want to travel?”

Kelvin nodded. “It is. The law has served its purpose. We needed it then, but we don’t need it now.”

“I agree. The law needs updating, but certain elements need to remain.” Alma nodded. “Both vampire and human should be required to appear before this council prior to mating, to ensure the safety of our species.”

“You’re agreeing with him?” Jenkins spluttered.

“I am. Part of why we’re here is to ensure how laws are adhered to, but also to ensure they are up to date. This one has served its purpose and is no longer needed in its current form. I’m not saying to remove it altogether, but it needs updating for this modern era we’re in now.” Alma paused, her face dropping. “As you know, my brother’s mate was also human, and he stayed away from her. It cost him everything, and he is no longer with us. I don’t wish to inflict that pain on others.”

“I also agree that our laws need to be updated, and this one in particular requires closer scrutiny.” Oskar flattened his hands. “However, you have broken the law as it stands right now and must face punishment for that.”

Kelvin nodded. “I’ll face whatever the Council decides, but request that I face that punishment alone. Key is innocent in this.”

“I agree.” The councilwoman sitting in the center, Joanne, who was in charge, looked at all the other members then nodded. “You will be removed from enforcement and moved to sanitation until further notice.” Joanne stood, as did all the other members.

Kelvin followed suit and waited for her to leave, and when she did, he watched the others leave, except for Alma, who came down from the podium and walked over to him.

“Come with me, Kelvin.”

He followed her out of the council chambers, aware a guard was following behind them. “We knew about your mating, of course. News has traveled fast. Most of the council didn’t anticipate you challenging the law, but myself and a couple of others who know of you, expected it and came up with the punishment. It could have been a much worse punishment, and we did consider several others but chose this. One would have kept you away from your mate for extended periods of time, and that wouldn’t have been fair to him.” Sighing, Alma took a few more steps, and Kelvin waited, sensing there was more she had to say. “Some laws do need to be reassessed, and this is one that should have been removed a long time ago. Many have suffered because of it.”

Alma slowed and turned to face Kelvin, her dark chestnut hair curling around her face. Her dark eyes watched him, causing Kelvin to lower his own. “What was needed then is no longer needed now. I wish you good luck in your mating.”

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Kelvin nodded as she walked away, her guard walking next to her. Once she was out of sight, he closed his eyes and leaned against the wall, taking several deep breaths. Opening them, he almost shouted when he saw Gray standing in front of him.

“Sanitation. Sounds... pleasant. I’ve already petitioned for you to be moved back to enforcement, so I doubt you’ll be there long.”

“How did you know?” It did surprise him that Gray knew already. The decision had been made moments ago, so how did he know already?

Gray pointed up and Kelvin saw the camera. Of course. “You’re one of my best enforcers. I’ll have you back with us in no time.” With a wink, Gray disappeared, leaving Kelvin staring at an empty spot.

I’m coming home

We’re not going to die?

Not today

That sounds all kinds of reassuring

I’m working sanitation so you might die from the smell when I come home from work

Lovely. Also I told my dad. Deal with it.

Kelvin slowly closed his eyes and exhaled heavily. There went another law. How many were he and his mate going to break?

Fine.

Just fine?

Can't change it now, can I?

Nope and he wants to meet you and see what materials you can cut through with your fangs

He wants me to what now?

Deal with it. I've had to deal with it all my life.

Charles is your dad.

And now he's your father-in-law. Have fun getting to know him.

Great. Just great. When?

When what?

Concentrating, Kelvin appeared in Key's living room, grinning when both Key and Charles jumped up. Key pointed at him. "You need a cow bell around your neck."

"Now that is an interesting way to travel," Charles mused.

"No, it isn't. I thought I was going to hurl when Maxim did it to me."

“You must be Kelvin. Nice to meet you. Of course, if you hurt my son, I’ll hunt you down with my shotgun and shoot you.”

“I have no intentions of hurting your son.” Shotgun? What family had he mated into?

“You say that now, but I’ll keep it loaded just to make sure.” Standing, Charles hugged Key. “I’ll get going. I need to get some flowers on the way home.”

Even though the words were whispered, Kelvin still heard them. “Say hi to Mom for me.”

Charles shook Kelvin’s hand—tightly—then left, leaving Kelvin alone with his mate. “I’m surprised they let you come home.”

“Me too, but I’m not complaining.”



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Taking his mate in his arms, Kelvin kissed him slowly but thoroughly, leaving Key panting. “What should we do now?”

“Sex. I want sex, but not in here.” Key waved at the camera. “I’m not into voyeurism. Maybe next week.”

“Nice to know you have it planned out.”

“You gotta sort these things out.” Taking Kelvin’s hand, Key led him to the bedroom, and Kelvin grinned when Key immediately stripped naked and lay on the bed. “What are you waiting for? An engraved invitation?” Grabbing his hard dick, Key wagged it, making Kelvin chuckle. “Does this count?”

“Yeah, I think it does.”

### Chapter Fifteen

Watching Kelvin strip naked had Key’s hard cock growing harder, if that was possible. The man was perfection as far as Key was concerned, and he needed to feel his mate’s body on top of him. Mate. Yeah, okay, he said it. Moving on to the sweaty sexy times now.

Crawling back on the bed, Key opened his arms and Kelvin laid down in them, kissing him. Key moaned, tangling their tongues together, his hands moving over Kelvin’s back. Kelvin pressed into Key and Key could feel how hard he was. How hard they both were.

“Going to ride you,” Kelvin murmured between kisses.

Key’s only response was a long, deep moan as he arched up. He wanted to feel Kelvin sink on his dick, feel the hot, tight heat as he rode Key’s dick. There was no better feeling than being inside Kelvin or having Kelvin inside him. He loved it both ways.

Kelvin moved down Key’s body and licked across the head of his cock, then suckled it, causing Key to jerk. It didn’t take long before Kelvin grabbed the lube and coated Key’s dick. “I need you.”

Key nodded and gripped Kelvin’s dick as he rose over him, then closed his eyes, gritting his teeth as Kelvin slowly sank on his dick. He was tight. So tight, and Key opened his eyes.

I’m good. I want it like this.

Kelvin knew without Key having to say a word, and once he was fully inside, Kelvin lifted then sank down again. Key’s grip on Kelvin’s hips tightened, and he gasped when Kelvin dropped over him and tangled his fingers in Key’s hair, pulling his head to one side.

“Do it.”

Kelvin groaned then bit, and Key shivered as fangs punctured his skin and bliss radiated throughout his body. He arched back, coming hard, then lay panting as Kelvin licked his neck then nuzzled him.

“That was quick.”

“Sorry. I had to... after everything, I needed to, I guess, reinforce our bond.”

“I think I understand, but I wanted more than a very quick fuck.”

Sliding free, Kelvin winced, then disappeared into the bathroom. Key grabbed some wipes and cleaned up, then watched Kelvin walk back into the bedroom, hard again. Now this he liked. A vampire with the ability to rebound within minutes.

Kelvin smirked, then knelt between Key's legs, pushing them up and back. Key grabbed his thighs, holding them wide so Kelvin could see everything. With a grin, Kelvin leaned down and licked over Key's hole, eliciting a deep moan from him.

Kelvin's tongue should be illegal. Not right now, but when he was dead, so no one else got to experience it. He heard Kelvin's chuckle and Key bit his lip. The vibrations against his ass were so good. Kelvin licked again, then circled the edge with his tongue, causing Key to groan.

He loved Kelvin eating him out, loved feeling his lips and tongue on his asshole. The man knew what he was doing, and Key had this for the rest of his very long life. Now that was something to look forward to. Kelvin licked and sucked, his tongue and fingers touching and probing and making Key tremble with pleasure.

When a finger slid in his ass, Key moaned and pushed back, eager to feel more. Kelvin pulled it out and replaced it with his tongue, causing Key to groan and arch. Sweat broke over his flushed skin, and when Kelvin used his tongue to fuck his ass, Key's eyes rolled back. “Kelvin,” he mumbled, his mind short circuiting.

Kelvin hummed, his tongue doing all sorts of wicked things to Key's ass. It flicked, then licked, then slid in deep, twisting and turning and making Key shiver with the need to be fucked hard and deep with something thicker, longer.

“Wait.”

Key groaned, his body sagging, then tightening when Kelvin's fingers slid inside his ass and tapped his prostate. They rubbed and tapped, then were replaced by Kelvin's tongue again. All of it driving Key higher and higher until he was about to beg Kelvin to fuck him.

"I haven't finished playing yet."

"We have years to play," Key whimpered when Kelvin pulled free and sat up, his hands running up and down Key's thighs.

"We do, but maybe I want to play now, or I could bend you over and fuck you hard and deep like you keep screaming at me to do."

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“This mind linky thing does have its uses.”

Kelvin grinned as he grabbed the lube, and coated his dick. “It does.” He dropped the bottle and bent over Key, causing him to be bent practically in half. Not that he minded when all he could do was feel. Kelvin’s soft spongy head rubbing across his hole, sliding in a little then disappearing again.

It was torturous, but Key knew he would get what he wanted, if Kelvin knew what was good for him. Kelvin chuckled then slammed in deep, making Key gasp and close his eyes, arching back as his ass stretched. He groaned and trembled, the pain morphing into bliss as Kelvin slid out, then slammed back in again.

“Fuck me.”

“Going to, oh, demanding one.”

Key wanted to say more, but as he opened his mouth to speak, Kelvin hit him just right and all he could do was moan as pleasure radiated throughout his body. Kelvin was relentless. The thrusts, the kisses, the touches, all made to push Key higher and higher until his balls pulled up.

Close.

I can feel it. Come for me.

Kelvin!

Key wasn't even aware he was using their connection, his mind and body all over the place as he exploded in ecstasy. Kelvin grabbed his hair and pulled his head to one side and struck, his fangs sinking into his neck. Key shuddered and jerked, his orgasm going on and on until he collapsed on the bed, all sweaty and hot and exhausted.

Kelvin trembled above him, his head turned into Key's neck, his tongue licking and kissing Key there. Key. I love you.

I love you too and yeah, I am the demanding one. I'm demanding that again as soon as I've recovered.

He felt Kelvin shiver, then stared into red eyes, glowing brightly in the dark room. "Recover soon, mate. I plan on us fucking for a very long time."

"Promises, promises."

Kelvin growled, pulled out of Key's ass and flipped Key over, then slid back inside. "Now, Key. I'm ready now," and he moved, leaving Key in no doubt how their night was going to be.

He had no problem with that at all.

Epilogue

One Year later...

"Your mate's quick, but I'm just a little bit quicker."

Kelvin ignored Gray as he emptied the trash bin. Sanitation was goddamn awful, and he'd rather be on the streets keeping vampires and humans safe. Only another four

years to go. Being sentenced to five years of sanitation work was better than a death sentence, though there were days when Kelvin wasn't so sure.

Like the day he got the call to check the pipes outside a house, only to find it blocked with shit. Actual shit. How did someone shit that much that they blocked up the pipes? Key had refused to let Kelvin into the apartment until he was fresh smelling, and at that point Kelvin had had three showers already and he still stank.

“Not going to ask?”

“If it gets me away from here, then please do tell me.”

“It does, in fact, get you away from here.”

Kelvin stopped what he was doing and looked up at Gray, who was rocking on his feet with a smug smile on his face. “How?”

“Someone was spying on our council and your mate figured out who it was and helped lay a trap to catch them. As a reward, the council agreed that you can move back to enforcement.”

“Thank fuck for that.” Kelvin shoved the lid back on the trash bin and moved to lean on the side of the truck. “I wasn't sure how much longer I could do this for.”

“Neither was Key. I hear on a daily basis how bad you smell. I thought he was joking, but turns out he isn't.” Gray wrinkled his nose. “You really do stink.”

“You're not the one doing this.”

“I'm not the one who broke our laws and suffered the consequences.”

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“It’s thanks to me the law has now been amended, and you told me you’d get me out of this.” The council had decided to keep the law but change its current format. They wanted to have some form of protection for humans in place, but accepted that vampires did have human mates, and keeping them separated was a form of torture no one should endure.

Now the council had to be informed first to ensure the vampire wasn’t taking advantage of the law and the human mate in question. One such mating had already been stopped when it turned out the human had been forced by the vampire to agree to mate.

“And I did. You need to finish your shift, then come back to me tomorrow. I have you working Key’s section, but no stopping at your place for extra activities.” Gray smirked, then disappeared.

I’m free!

I know, but you still need to be smelling all fruity fresh before you come anywhere near me.

Come on. We both know you like me a little dirty.

Not that type of dirty and you know it. Bondage between mates is fine but when both smell nice. You stank like vomit when you came home and then tried to have sex. No chance, and if you like your nuts attached to your body, you’ll remember that.

Kelvin resisted the urge to cover his junk. I’ll make sure to shower before coming



home and fucking you into a coma.

My turn tonight, so you can ride me into said coma. My dick's getting hard thinking about you sinking down on it.

So was Kelvin, who discreetly adjusted himself. Thanks. I have five hours to go.

So do I. Welcome to the never-ending horny club. The club where I sit for hours with a raging hard on and no mate to see to it. Mating is great.

Grinning Kelvin, jumped into the truck and switched it on. I love you.

I love you too, only five hours to go and then I can watch you ride my dick.

Laughing, Kelvin drove away, the timer on his phone already counting down the minutes.

The End