



# The Virgin and the Vampire

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**Category:** Romance, Adult, Paranormal, Vampires

**Description:** She tastes of innocence and forever...

Kade

A favor for the woman I often feed from, which I grant in a moment of weakness – show up at her little sister's door with a bottle of champagne and let her gush over my fangs. But my arrival shocks us both and when I seal Gianna's cut from the broken wine glass I also seal both our fates because one taste and I'm determined to make her mine. Until the end of time...

Gianna

A real live vampire! For my birthday? I'm so excited I can hardly stand it. But before I can come down to earth he's kidnapped me, locked a diamond collar around my neck, and says he's claiming me as his fated mate for eternity.

I'm not saying I'm complaining exactly. But I can't work in the lab decked out in diamonds like a Vegas show girl. Surely even a centuries-old vampire understands the importance of compromise?

**Total Pages (Source):** 12

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Carina's carefully painted red lips are currently wrapped around her dom's dick and I feel nothing. Except perhaps a mild longing for the old days, when a vamp could swoop in on someone unawares, feed, and be about his business in no time. It's true there's less screaming and flaming pitchforks these days, but I never thought I'd have to be this close to another man's junk just to get dinner.

I sigh and sink my teeth into the side of Carina's neck. Her wrist was an option, I suppose, but the neck will be faster. I can feel the tremor of excitement vibrate through her body. Her dom groans while I roll my eyes. I can't remember the guy's name, she changes doms like most women change handbags. I'm probably the most consistent part of her participation at The Sanctuary.

Having fed, I step back only to find Carina's eyes on me, assessing. For what, I'm unsure. Her mouth is free once again, but I'm still surprised when she speaks.

"Kade? Can I talk to you? Privately?"

I frown. The subs and vamps don't really have too much interaction here. Subs are free to request a particular vamp if they're cleared for the inner sanctum, but it depends on who's on the roster for that evening to feed. Beyond that, there aren't too many things to talk about.

"Sure. I can meet you in the bar in, say, fifteen minutes?" I cast a glance towards her dom.

Carina smiles and shakes her head. “Don’t worry about Jimmy. He’s on a test run tonight. Although he did very well.” The cat-ate-the-cream smile she aims at her current lover is at odds with the roles they’re playing, but I try to stay out of those relationships. Asking will only pull me in. Jimmy frowns. “We’ll be talking about that attitude next time, missy.”

Carina gives a mock shiver and smiles even more brightly as she hops off the table where she was splayed. “Excellent.”

Fifteen minutes later she struts towards me in the bar area, her Sanctuary sub uniform of the short sheer white toga having been replaced by skin-tight jeans and a forest green sweater that slides off one shoulder.

“Thanks for meeting me, Kade. I know you’re a busy guy, so I appreciate it.”

I stay silent, waiting for the real topic of conversation. Carina casts her eyes down.

“It’s about my sister. Gianna. She’s eight years younger than me and, well, we’re total opposites. Gianna’s very shy and very smart. She’s spent her whole life buried in schoolbooks. And the lab. She’s been obsessed with vampires ever since she learned you guys are real and not only a legend.

Anyway, the one thing she wants most is to meet one. I think she’d be over the moon to be bitten, but I realize that’s asking a lot outside of the club. Her twenty-first birthday is this weekend and well...” She raises practiced, pleading green eyes.

“Why not just invite her to the club? She can watch several vamps from the window in the main playroom.” I shrug, like that answer was obvious.

Carina chokes on her astonishment. “Kade! You don’t understand. When I said she’s shy, I meant it. I’m fairly certain Gianna’s still a virgin. And she doesn’t want to even

go out for drinks on her birthday. She said she'd rather stay in and study." The bemusement on Carina's face is almost comical.

"So you're asking me to do what, exactly?"

"Could you stop by her place, maybe with a bottle of champagne I can give you and let her admire your fangs?"

I snort in disbelief. "Admirethem?"

Carina nods enthusiastically. "She still has Hollywood ideas mixed in with the academics. You fit her image of the ideal vamp to a T. Please, Kade?"

Her sister sounds innocent and naïve, which, while different, doesn't exactly promise entertainment. But Carina has been a pliant and cooperative blood source for the last few years, and I feel like I owe her. "Fine. Give me her address and a time. After sunset," I add dryly. It's a myth that vamps can't go out in daylight. It just makes our eyes water and our skin itch, so we generally try to avoid it. And if her sister is that into vamps, I'd hate to ruin her fantasy by showing up mid afternoon.

Carina practically radiates with excitement. "Oh! She's going to be so excited! I can't wait to hear about it."

"I take it that means she doesn't know you've been feeding me?"

She slowly shakes her head. "No. And please don't tell her. She'll feel like she's missing out again. She's really sweet and bubbly, Kade. But when she's with strangers, she freezes up. Gianna missed out on a lot of social events growing up. When it's just the family, she's the life of the party."

I nod, not sure what to say, and take the slip of paper Carina hands me. Gianna lives

all the way out in Cedar Valley. I sigh, half wishing I hadn't already committed. But it's one evening that will bring me out of my routine, so how bad can it be?

I glance around my small cottage on the outskirts of Cedar Valley with pride. Earlier this week I washed all the leaves on my houseplants so now they're gleaming with health and vitality. It's my twenty-first birthday today and despite my older sister's whining, I did things my way. I met some friends from grad school at a small bakery for coffee and cake earlier and now I'm going to have a long, soaky bath with a new vampire romance I've been saving for tonight. It's going to be delicious.

Tightening the sash of the silky robe my mom got me as a present, I pick up my celebratory glass of white wine and pad towards the bathroom in my bare feet. The doorbell rings and I nearly jump out of my skin. I think I've heard it precisely twice in the three years that I've lived here.

I carefully check the peephole and am even more surprised to see it's a man standing on the mat holding a bottle of champagne and a bouquet of baby pink roses. Despite the voice of caution in my head, I open the door partway and peer around it.

"Yes?"

"Gianna Coletti?"

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*Source Creation Date: May 21, 2025, 2:49 am*

I nod, still confused. He holds out the objects in his hands and smiles, or maybe that's more of a grimace. In any event, it exposes the tips of two white fangs and I lose my shit. And in my excitement I drop the wineglass that naturally shatters on the tile floor.

The man moves faster than lightning to push open the door and pick me up. Before I can utter a word, I'm sitting on the kitchen counter having my feet inspected. I gape in astonishment when he places his mouth over a small gash on my instep. The cut doesn't hurt, but his hot suction on my skin? It's mind-blowingly good.

"Um, who are you?"

He waits to answer me until he's laved my cut with his tongue three times. To my disappointment, his fangs don't come anywhere close to piercing my flesh.

"I'm Kade and you are not to walk around with glass in bare feet again, understand?"

I stare into his dark eyes. "No. I don't understand. What business is it of yours?"

He straightens to his full and rather intimidating height. "Now that I've tasted you, Ms. Coletti, everything about you is my business."

Frowning, I meet his dark blue gaze directly. "You didn't bite me, so I don't believe you."

His lips twitch. "If that was a challenge in an attempt to manipulate me, be very, very careful, little one." His head lowers to mine, not touching, but so close I can feel the

heat of his skin. He rumbles in my ear, “I will bite you, over and over and over again, my sweet little thrall, but only after you complete the paperwork and wear my collar. Put some shoes on and we’ll take care of the jewelry tonight.” He pauses thoughtfully, as if admiring the efficiency of his plan.

I’m less convinced. “I’m not going anywhere with you. I don’t know you! Maybe you tell really bad jokes. I’m not stupid enough to sign up for a few hundred years of that without thinking it through first.”

Thralls are the bonded blood donors for vampires. Not all vamps have them or ever did. Keeping a woman chained in the basement doesn’t count, and I think that was all Hollywood, anyway. But according to the small amount of research I’ve been able to find, a fully bonded thrall (meaning the vamp has drunk her blood and had sex with her) will live either her natural lifespan if the vamp dies first or, and here’s the kicker, die only when the vamp does. Assuming that’s decades or centuries beyond when she might have naturally passed. It’s strange, but the thought of living for a few or even several hundred years beyond my natural lifespan doesn’t throw me off as much as you might think. I’d never considered it as an option except maybe in my fantasies, but I’m smart enough to know not to go down that road with someone I’m not compatible with.

Kade frowns, as if he’s used to people following his orders without question.

“The collar is not a lifetime commitment, little one. That comes with... other things. It’s simply there to keep other vamps away and mark you as claimed.”

I roll my eyes. Is he afraid to say sex in front of me? Did someone tell him I’m a shy little virgin? My eyes narrow. “Carina put you up to this, didn’t she? I’m fully aware that the full bonding requires both biting and sex. You can say the words, Kade. But the very fact that you thought you couldn’t proves my point. You don’t really know me.”

He rubs his tongue over the tips of his fangs. “I don’t know the minor details, but your blood told me everything important. You are mine, Gianna. You can take some time getting used to the idea, but you’ll wear my collar while you do it.”

The arrogant grumpiness in his voice has my pussy clenching with excitement. Kade could be one of my romance novels come to life. Only better because his attention is completely focused on me. Just to see what he’ll do, I tilt my head to one side and, uncharacteristically sass, “Make me.”

When he unceremoniously picks me up and tosses me over his shoulder, I remember why I stick to conversations that keep me in the background. Kade quickly carries me out to his car. When he turns me right side up in order to set me on the seat, he growls, “Don’t move out of this seat or I will tie you to my bed for a week.” The threat slides right over me and down to my eager clit, which throbs in response. For some strange reason, I’m not afraid of Kade or his threats. It’s not completely rational that I’m not. I should be. Everything in me recognizes that he’s dangerous and yet... I can’t help feeling that he’s sweet deep down on the inside.

He locks up and returns to his vehicle, handing me my purse and keys that I’d left on the sideboard just inside the entry.

“Why are you kidnapping me?” I ask, remarkably calm.

He looks startled. “I’m not. I’m simply bringing you back to my place so I can collar you. I wasn’t expecting to find such a delicious treat this evening, angel, or I’d have come prepared.”

His strong hands rest lightly on the steering wheel as he drives competently down the narrow country roads towards Snowberry. There’s minimal traffic and yet he won’t answer any of the questions I pester him with. He doesn’t argue. It’s more like he’s unaware I’m even with him. It’s annoying as fuck.



And yet... I find myself yearning to snuggle into his side. To have those elegant fingers currently curled around the steering wheel grip my flesh instead. And there's also a strange kind of knowing. Like maybe my soul recognized him and this was the moment I was waiting for, a reason to be brave and take a monumental risk. Even if my sister would say I'm wet in the head and need a keeper instead of a vampire lover.

## 2

The sweet flavor of Gianna lingers on my tongue. I'm dying to taste the rest of her, too. I don't know if vamps are eligible for fated mates, but what I am sure of is when you're as old and bored with life as I am, and then you start feeling completely alive and excited, you take notice. And you claim the sunshine making it happen before some other vamp tries to soak it up too.

I let Gianna purge herself of questions. They are all things that are better answered with experience. Words will only scare her. That said, I delight in hearing her voice, her infectious enthusiasm for all things vampire. I amuse myself picturing what Etienne will make of her. I want her weighed down with my claiming jewels before that happens. He's old and bored enough he just might attempt to steal her for his own amusement, and a taste of that sunshine I mentioned. He'll have to register the thrall contract, though, so there's no avoiding it forever.

Pushing the button on the dash to open the gates, I wait for them to open. Gianna stopped talking a few miles back, but her eyes are everywhere, curious and bright. She gasps a little when I pull through the gates and my home is revealed. It's on the smaller side as mansions go, but it has plenty of room for just the two of us. Thankfully, I keep a housekeeper, so there should be some food in the kitchen for her.

I forgot to fetch Gianna some shoes when I locked up her little house, so I pick her up in my arms again. This time I cradle her to my chest so I can watch her reaction. "I can walk, you know," she grumbles. I raise an eyebrow and incline my head towards

the gravel in the drive.

“Why would you want to? I’ll find some slippers for you inside. After you’re properly dressed.”

She frowns at that. I carry her inside and up through my bedroom to the walk-in closet. The closet alone is the size of the house I grew up in, but things have certainly changed over the centuries. I set Gianna down on one of the bureaus so I can rummage in one of the lower built-in drawers. Every vamp I know keeps a collar and cuff set on hand just in case a miracle should happen. Mine have never been used, so they’re a bit antique in style, I suppose. Gianna and I have more in common than she realizes. I too was terrified of being linked with a woman whose inane chatter would drive me to put a stake in my own heart. We’re human, not truly immortal, so a bullet would be more efficient, but it lacks the romantic element.

Without a word, I take the intricate diamond necklace out of the case and wrap it around Gianna’s slim throat.

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“What are you doing?” she asks huskily as I sweep her dark curls out of the way in order to seal the clasp.

“Claiming you,” I remind her huskily. The sight of her wearing my collar incites my cock to claim her in other ways too.

When Gianna’s hand goes to her throat to finger the delicate metalwork, I swiftly wrap a matching bracelet around her wrist. It’s considered overkill these days to wrap a thrall at all five pulse points, but something in me demands the tradition where Gianna is concerned. I tug her other hand from under her hip and band that, too. The metal is infused with my saliva and since it’s semi-organic will respond only to me. There is no traditional clasp. Instead, the metalwork fits neatly together and is fused by licking it with my tongue. Only the same procedure will release the jewels from Gianna’s body. The metal also gives off my scent, detectable to other vampires and alerting them that this woman is permanently off limits.

Gianna gasps as she looks down at her arms. While she’s preoccupied, I seal the anklets in place. “Kade! I can’t wear these. That’s an absolute fortune in diamonds. These are diamonds, right? They look too old for cubic zirconia.”

I growl. “Of course they’re diamonds. It would be rude to offer a thrall anything less. Claiming jewels are a mark of respect and gratitude, not mere decoration.”

“Well, they’re beautiful, but hardly practical. I can’t work in a lab blinged out like Miss Las Vegas.”

I sit back on my heels. She has a point. And I hardly want to keep her from her

career, just as long as it doesn't involve first-hand research with any other vamps. "We can have a more practical set made later and save these for special occasions." A wave of possessiveness washes over me as I regard her graceful neck and limbs twinkling in the light.

"You can't mean me to sleep in these, surely. They'll get damaged."

I snort. "No, they won't. And yes, those stay on until I can replace them with a more modern design. You can try to take them off, Gianna. You won't hurt them."

Her arch look says she doesn't believe me, but she gives one of the bracelets a gentle tug and when that doesn't work, a more serious yank. The bracelet stays just as it was. She brings it up to her face to examine it.

"Where does it fasten? I can't see the clasp."

"There isn't one. Or rather, there is a natural split in the design, but only my saliva can seal and unseal it. The metal is organic in a sense and will respond only to me."

Her eyes widen. "I thought that was just a legend."

I shake my head. "It's not. Now, are we returning to your little house tonight, or do you want to stay here?"

I place a pair of too large felt slippers on her dainty feet before she decides to attempt to walk home.

"Where is there a mirror? I want to see how ridiculous this looks."

Picking her up, I carry her through to the master bath and set her gently on her feet. She gapes at her reflection and I dare to unfasten the tie of her robe. Easing it off her

shoulders, I toss it away before murmuring, “This is how you are meant to be seen, Gianna. You are magnificent, and it’s an honor to become your protector.”

Her eyes meet mine in the mirror. She’s looking overwhelmed. I suppose this has all been a bit much for her in just a few hours. I turn and move back into the closet. Finding and retrieving a white dress shirt, I hand it to her. “Here. If you aren’t ready to sleep with me naked, you can wear this.”

“Does that mean I get to sleep in the guestroom?” she asks hopefully.

I shake my head. “No, baby. You’ll be sleeping in my arms from here on out. I knew the moment you opened the door that you belong in my bed. Do you need anything to eat before we retire? I’m not sure what Doris has on hand, but there’s bound to be something.”

She shakes her head. “Who’s Doris?”

“My housekeeper. She lives with her husband, Ed, in a cottage at the back of the property. He takes care of the gardens, but she usually has her lunch and snacks here, so there are supplies in the kitchen. I don’t have guests, so it’s limited until I can have her shop for you.”

Gianna frowns. “You seem awfully sure. What if I’m not?”

I shrug. “You will be. I’m not forcing anything but the jewelry on you, baby. And from the way you were admiring your reflection, I know you love the pieces.”

“Who wouldn’t? It’s a king’s ransom in diamonds, Kade. But that doesn’t mean you aren’t off your rocker. When was the last time you fed? Is that it? Are you out of your mind with hunger?”

I gaze down at her innocent face with amusement. “No, sweetness. I fed three days ago. And I’m old enough to go a few weeks between feeding without side effects. I’m fine.”

“Oh,” she sounds slightly deflated at that news.

Talk about birthday surprises! In the space of a few hours, I went from alone with a book and a glass of wine to bedecked in diamonds in a gorgeous (although crazy) vampire’s mansion. I really need to talk to my sister to confirm she’s behind this and what else she knows. But Kade doesn’t seem to want me out of his sight.

I don’t mean that in a menacing way though, he keeps reaching out to touch me, trail a finger down my arm, place his hand in the small of my back, things like that. Finally he leaves me alone to brush my teeth, having dug out a new toothbrush from some stash or other. I’m debating whether to break the spell with a call to my sister or not when I hear my cell erupt from the other room.

I meander in to find my phone, toothbrush still in my mouth. It’s Carina. I roll my eyes and answer the video call. “Hey, big sister.”

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: May 21, 2025, 2:49 am*

“Happy Birthday, Gianna! Are you out celebrating? I tried your house phone that you insist on having, but there wasn’t any answer.”

So she didn’t expect me to be kidnapped by a vampire? “Nooo. Do you know a vampire named Kade?”

She’s silent while guiltily nibbling her lower lip. “A little? Why?”

“Because he’s claiming I’m his eternal something or other and he basically kidnapped me and showered me in diamonds,” I inform her dryly.

“He what? He can’t do that. He was just supposed to hand you some champagne and let you look at his fangs.”

“I figured as much. But he got other ideas. Said he could taste it in my blood.”

“Hebityou!” she screeches.

“No. I dropped a glass since somebody didn’t warn me to expect a real live vampire on my doorstep. He took it upon himself to lick the cut on my foot.”

“Oh, shit. I’m sorry, kid. I meant it as an exciting surprise. There’s someone I can call that will talk Kade off the ledge. Just hold on and I’ll get you out of there pronto.”

She hangs up before I can tell her I can handle this myself. I mean, it is kind of fun having a gorgeous older man practically worshipping my kneecaps. And I’m not quite done with this novel experience. Of course, we haven’t gotten to the biting and

the sex yet, but I'd kind of like to decide on my own how far to take this.

I set my phone back in my purse, wondering if Kade happens to have a matching charger, and then return to the bathroom to finish my bedtime preparations.

That is until not five minutes later, I hear two low male voices coming from the first floor. Neither man is raising his voice except I can hear the anger in both. Or maybe annoyed frustration would be a better description.

Cautiously, I edge out into the hallway and closer to the stairs so I can eavesdrop.

“What the fuck are you playing at, Kade? You can't go around pulling barely legal civilians in off the street and expect to get away with it. Tell me you haven't enthralled her, please.”

“Not yet. But I will. I have most certainly claimed her. I figured the paperwork could wait a day or two, or am I missing something?”

“Protocol. You're damn well missing that, you ass.” The other man sounds like he's beginning to calm down.

Kade says something I can't quite make out and then laughs.

The other man grumbles. “Fine. Bring her by my office tomorrow morning and I will assess the situation for myself.”

The door shuts, and I quickly beat a retreat back to Kade's elegant bedroom.

He joins me there shortly, acting like nothing has happened. I bite my lip. “Who was that? At the door?” I prompt him.



He arches a brow. “An ancient vampire who’s overly fond of paperwork. Don’t worry about it. Hop into bed, little one, and I’ll join you in a minute.”

I eye the big bed with trepidation. It’s plenty big enough for six people, but something tells me I’m not going to be sticking to my side with a gulf between us. I crawl under the covers and curl on my side, facing the wall.

A moment later, Kade flicks off the light and I feel the bed dip as he joins me. Strong arms pull me towards him like tractorbeams. He rests his chin on the top of my head. “There, that’s better. You warm enough, baby?”

It was chilly, but now Kade’s body heat is enveloping me. “I’m fine,” I mutter.

One hand smooths down my thigh, then rests on my knee. “What’s bothering you, Gianna?”

I ponder that innocent question. “I’m waiting to wake up. This is all too fantastical to be real,” I finally admit.

Kade chuckles into my curls. “Well, if it’s all a dream, what can I do to make it even better?” His hand moves slowly and softly between my thighs and up. Anticipation has me opening for him but he doesn’t dive in.

“Tell me, Gianna. What would make it even better?”

“Your hand,” I confess.

“My hand where?”

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: May 21, 2025, 2:49 am*

“In my pussy,” I whimper as the need for his touch starts to grow to painful proportions.

“And what is my hand doing in your pussy?” he whispers as his fingers stroke ever upwards. He pauses briefly when he encounters my slick folds. “So sweet, baby. I told you this was meant to be. See how wet you are for me already? What is my hand doing in your dream, Gianna?”

“Pushing into me, stroking my clit. Everything.” I pant, my channel beginning to ache with the emptiness.

“Hmm,” Kade murmurs as he pushes one thick digit into me. It’s not enough and I tell him so. “Patience, little one. One day soon you’ll have not only my cock in your sweet innocent pussy but my fangs in your neck. Do you want that, Gianna? To be twice speared by me, pinning you to the bed, taking your blood while I give you my cum?”

God, yes. Yes, I do. I cry out as he inches a second finger in to join the first. The jewels he locked into place on me seem to glow with comforting heat, adding to my overall arousal. When Kade pinches my clit ever so lightly, I shatter into a million pieces. His fingers continue to stroke in and out, soothing me down from that new found high.

“Sleep, Gianna. We’ll make everything official in the morning.”

I wake to the sounds of birds trilling outside the window and the steady breathing of Kade. I study his elegant face. Except for the fangs, he looks like a wealthy executive, somewhere in his late thirties. But I know from what he's already told me that he's closing in on four hundred. He's on his side, facing me with one arm flung over my hips. I'm not ready to wake him yet, so I raise my arm and study the design of the bracelet he placed there. It's beautiful, almost like lace made of diamonds. There are evenly spaced openings in the design that intrigue me. It's almost like something is supposed to go there. A ribbon, maybe?

When I lower my arm, it's to find Kade's dark blue eyes regarding me steadily. He doesn't speak, but his arm tightens around me, almost like he's afraid I'll vanish with the morning light. "What are these holes for?" I ask, pointing with my other hand at the openings down the center of the bracelet.

The banked heat in Kade's eyes flares to life. "My fangs," he growls. My whole body flushes with awareness. I bite my lip in consternation.

"Every vamp has a slightly different placement of the fangs. It might be only micromillimeters, but it was a fashion a while back to emphasize that only he had the right to bite his thrall by building it into the design."

I trace the necklace around my neck. "Here too?"

Kade nods, his gaze fastened with hunger on my moving finger.

"You don't want to bite me now?" I query because if ever a man looked hungry...

"I do, but it will have to wait. I don't need to feed if that's what you're asking, but you're far too tempting a morsel to resist for long."

He swings his long legs out of bed and stands up. I'm suddenly aware that he came to

bed naked. I don't know how I missed that last night, and I'm a little miffed that I didn't know.

"I'm going to find you something to wear," Kade mutters as he heads out the door.

After a thorough search of the house, if the banging and cursing are anything to go by, he returns with a chagrined expression, a pair of sweatpants and another white dress shirt. I eye the clothing dubiously.

"These will have to do until after we meet with Etienne. We'll head back to your house this afternoon so you can pack up."

"Hey! I didn't agree to move in with you!"

Kade raises a sardonic eyebrow. "You want me to move in with you? I'm not sure you understand how this works, sweetness. I can't protect you from a distance and you sure as hell can't see to my needs from there either."

I bite my lip. "But I thought... I thought it was like a casual when you need it thing. You said you only need to feed every few weeks, right?"

Kade shakes his head slowly. "That's the necessary for survival stuff, which is what the club is for. You are so much more than that, baby. I need to keep you close to protect you, to sip from you when the mood is right, like when I'm plundering your sweet pussy."

My eyes grow wide. Here I was expecting a broken down Toyota and Kade is talking custom Italian sports cars.

"And you're positive you won't get bored with me?" I quaver.

Kade sends me a wry smile. “I’m sure, baby. I’m going to locate Doris, so I can find you some breakfast while you get dressed. Come downstairs when you’re ready.”

I venture down the stairs a few minutes later. I look absolutely ridiculous — like a little kid playing dress up. Doris turns out to be a motherly woman with kind eyes that widen when she spots me. I roll my eyes. “The diamonds were not my idea,” I point out defensively by way of an introduction.

Doris smiles but doesn’t say anything, maybe because Kade is glowering while leaning against the counter. “You look thoroughly claimed by an old and wealthy vampire who should not be messed with. Which is pretty much the point.”

His housekeeper rolls her eyes with a gentle smile behind his back which has me choking back giggles.

“So, who’s this Etienne guy we have to meet?”

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: May 21, 2025, 2:49 am*

I'm back to mourning the old days when there wasn't any paperwork. Gianna's eyes widen as I drive onto Etienne's estate and approach The Sanctuary. She starts bouncing in her seat. "Oh. My. God. We're going to The Sanctuary!"

"What do you know about The Sanctuary?" I growl in disbelief.

"Well, not as much as I'd like to," she pouts. "A few friends and I tried to get in to see if we could spot some vampires. Okay, that was my reason. They wanted to see a sex club. But we were all turned away for being underage. So not fair. We weren't going to do anything."

She pauses briefly before continuing with obvious excitement. "So, are you really taking me to a sex club? At ten in the morning? I thought for sure they only operated at night."

I grind my teeth. "I am not taking you to a sex club. Not now or ever. What I'm doing is bringing you to a meeting with Etienne. The fact that his office happens to be located inside a sex club is purely coincidental."

Gianna laughs.

I had been planning to blindfold her between the parking lot and Etienne's office to preserve her innocence, but it's obvious now she's not going to let that happen. So inside I drag her by the elbow in and up the stairs as fast as I can manage. Her feet are practically flying out behind her as I knock briefly on the door and then enter.

Etienne sits behind his massive desk, looking like he has the world completely under

control. He eyes Gianna, who is gasping for breath, with curiosity, but nothing more.

“What exactly is so earth-shattering about her that you had to break the rules, Kade? I don’t see a line of competing vamps behind you,” he says dryly. I can feel Gianna stiffen next to me and place a hand on her shoulder before she does something dangerously stupid.

“All the more reason to act quickly,” I respond genially. “This way, they never know what they’re missing.”

Etienne’s lips twitch ever so slightly. “The sheer amount of jewelry might be a hint. You couldn’t keep it to just the collar?”

Glancing down at Gianna with pride, I shake my head. “She is a jewel beyond measure.”

Both Gianna and Etienne roll their eyes at that, lightening my mood as perhaps they can get along after all.

Etienne sighs. “Well, her sister had some valid concerns, and I dislike having my evening interrupted by having to chase you down.”

Gianna startles and then blurts, “How do you know Carina?”

The head vampire eyes her with bemusement. “Are you going to tell her, Kade, or shall I?”

I eye the door with a sudden yearning, then sigh. “The Sanctuary exists so that vampires can feed, baby.”

Gianna glares. “I know that. What does that have to do with my sister?”

I open my mouth, but I can't find the words. Etienne finally ends the agony. "Your sister is a member of the club, little one. She frequently requests Kade."

I'm so busy glaring at Etienne for making that sound worse than it is that I almost miss Gianna turning white.

"You fucked my sister and now you want to fuck me?" she whispers in horror.

"No! Goddammit, Etienne! Gianna, baby, I never fucked Carina. Hell, I haven't fucked anyone in over a hundred years. Vamps only drink at the club, sweetness. Nothing more."

She looks to Etienne for reassurance, which only annoys me further. He shrugs. "Those are the rules." The implication being that if I broke others, I probably broke those too.

Finally Gianna turns to me. "Are you being completely truthful with me? Because if you are, then why didn't she tell me?"

4

Kade holds out his hands in placation. "I don't know, baby. She seemed very protective of you. The longest conversation I ever had with her was this week when she asked me to be your birthday surprise. I don't think she kept it from you to be mean."

I stare into his blue eyes, trying to assess if I can read him well enough to trust his word or not.

"Perhaps, Ms. Coletti, this is a prudent wake up call for you. May I suggest slowing things down before you make such a big decision? Despite what Kade may have told



you in his, er, enthusiasm to claim you, there's no reason you can't take a month or two — or six— to think things over, get to know him a little better before you decide.”

I swivel my attention to the man Kade refers to as Etienne. It seems entirely too simple a name for someone who radiates with power and confidence.

“Mr...?” I wait for him to fill in the blank.

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“Etienne will do, little one.”

“Etienne, then, have you ever draped a woman in jewels like this?”

He pauses, looking surprised, as if that was the last question he ever expected. “No,” he finally admits, “I have not.”

“Correct me if I’m wrong, but if I decide to slow things down, then Kade will need to feed again before that, right?”

Etienne inclines his head a mere smidge in agreement, but only after an agonizing wait. My stomach roils at the thought of Kade sinking those gorgeous fangs into another woman’s neck. But I can’t decide if a stranger would be better or worse than my own sister. All I know is that I can’t stand for it to be anyone else but me.

“From here on out, Kade feeds only from me,” I announce, with more authority than my quaking knees would indicate. Both Kade and Etienne straighten in response. “And if he’s biting me and only me, then I don’t think sex is that big an issue, is it, gentlemen?” Nevermind that I shouldn’t have to discuss it in a group setting like this.

Kade’s eyes glow like twin blue flames. Etienne merely looks resigned. “Fine. If that’s your decision, I need you to sign some forms.” He gestures to a round table in the corner and I take a seat, marveling at how such a prosaic office table can stand to exist in a sex club.

I swear the stack of papers that Etienne slides in front of me is at least six inches high. He hands me a pen and returns to his desk. Kade glowers from where he’s

leaning in the corner.

Sighing, I start in at the top. Much of it is warnings and legal protections. The health and behavior of vampires is largely familiar to me thanks to my research hobby, but some of it has been modernized. I sign and initial as I go. Then I land on the limit list. I've read about these but never seen one. I glance up. "Why am I filling this out?" I ask suspiciously.

Etienne's lips twitch while Kade only glowers before answering. "You don't have to. There's no reason to. Is there, Etienne?"

"It's optional, Ms. Coletti. Many couples choose to explore another aspect of their relationship that way. Particularly when they're likely to be together for considerably longer than a human marriage. Discussing these things together will help form a tighter bond."

I scan the page before tossing it unmarked on the pile. "Nope. I don't know what half those things are and I don't want to. Kade can negotiate for what he wants in the bedroom the old-fashioned way."

Kade snorts behind me, like he's trying not to laugh. This time it's Etienne's turn to glower. Then something occurs to me. "Did Carina fill one of those out? To join the club?"

Etienne nods but cautions, "She did, but it's only available to potential doms, not family or the public. Maybe you should ask her directly what you want to know."

I nod. That's a perfectly reasonable suggestion, but I don't expect to be ready for that conversation for years. Except to tell her Kade is off the market for blood sucking. That should be entertaining.

I'm so damn proud of her. Gianna handled herself like a duchess with Etienne. It made me doubly glad she was wearing my collar. In theory, I'm supposed to work at the club this week in my role as Etienne's second in command, but he let me know with merely a gesture that I could consider myself on vacation for the next few weeks. I'm tempted to take Gianna directly home, but that will mean eventually having to leave again to retrieve her things. I'd rather get them now and then not have to go anywhere for a couple of months.

Gianna sighs happily as we emerge into the dappled shade of the parking lot. "I'm going to call Carina and tell her your fangs are private property from here on out."

I grimace as I reverse the car and pull out onto the private road that sees very little traffic. Focusing my attention on the road, I try not to listen to the sibling squabble but it makes me glad I won't be passing Carina in the hallway for a while.

There's screeching loud enough to hear Carina's side through the speaker. Including, "But you're a virgin! You can't lose your V-card to a vampire! It's just not done!"

"Why not?" Gianna asks with relative calm.

"Because, because..." Carina sputters. "Fine! Well, you have to tell Mom and Dad that you're bringing home a vampire for Thanksgiving. That ought to go over well." Gianna sighs and hangs up. I wait impatiently for her to fill me in on her thoughts. Instead, she stares out the window.

"Everything okay?" I finally ask.

"It will be," she responds with a soft sigh. Then her lips twitch. "I think Carina feels you're too old for me."

I smirk. "I am. But you're stuck with me and my bad jokes now."

We gather the bulk of her clothes and personal items, leaving the books and furniture for a moving company that I call on the way back into town. I'm eager to taste Gianna, but good manners demand I feed her first.

We pull into the grocery store. I can't say as I've ever been inside one. Gianna gives me some strange looks before bursting into giggles when my eyes widen at the bread aisle.

"Do you miss eating?" she finally asks gently.

I stare at the dizzying array of foodstuffs. "Not really. Maybe if this had been my life, but I was stricken with rabies abroad some years after signing on with the East India Company. The food was terrible. And not having been born wealthy, it was pretty shitty back at home, too."

"So you've traveled around the world?" she inquires with wide eyes while setting a jar of red jam in the cart.

I shrug. "Most of it. I haven't been to Antarctica. Mostly because there's no reason to, and too few people to bite." I wink at her and she flushes.

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“Well, maybe we should go.”

I contemplate having Gianna all to myself somewhere cold where she'd be wont to snuggle up close and decide I like the idea. I pay for the groceries and we return to the car. Gianna gets increasingly quiet as we enter my neighborhood.

“Kade?” she finally inquires quietly.

“Hmm?”

“Will you walk me through everything? Before you do it, so I know what to expect?”

I glance at her in surprise and I can see her eyes wide with anxiety.

“Baby, I will where it will help. But some things are better not anticipated. I promise you're perfect in every way and I won't be disappointed.”

She nods, but I don't think she's convinced.

I carry the groceries into the house — two bags in each hand — and let Gianna put them away so she'll know where to find everything when she needs it. When she's done, I pull her into my arms and lower my mouth to hers.

“Perfect, Gianna. Absolutely perfect.” I lift her up in my arms and carry her upstairs. The time for waiting has ended.

When Kade sets me on my feet by the edge of the bed, I wasn't expecting him to gather both my hands in his and raise them to his lips.

"You do me the greatest honor, my sweet Gianna. Don't ever let my impatience lead you to believe I'm ungrateful." His wry smile has me blushing in confusion.

Slowly, painfully so, he undresses me, pausing to murmur in appreciation even though he's seen me naked before.

"You shine more brightly than the diamonds, little one," he rasps in my ear, his fangs ever so slightly scraping across my neck. I shiver in anticipation.

Kade nudges me down on the bed, but I sit with a straight spine, uncertain of what's coming. He undresses himself far more swiftly and I pout in annoyance. The ridges of his abdomen are lightly pronounced and my fingers itch to trace them. When his cock springs free of its confines, I swallow nervously. But at the same time, my pussy warms with interest. I clench my thighs together to ease the ache.

My sweet vampire gracefully lowers himself to the bed and gathers me in his embrace. "Are you ready to be claimed, baby?"

"I guess so?"

He smiles gently. "I can't wait to taste you again, Gianna."

But first he soothes my nerves with soft kisses while his right hand moves between my thighs. Instinctively, my body knows relief is at hand and opens for him. "Good girl," he murmurs in my ear.

His fingers stroke up and out, finding every nerve ending I knew about and a handful I had no idea were simply waiting to be awakened. I'm panting when he claims my

mouth with his just as he inserts two fingers deep in my channel. I squeak into his mouth and his fingers still, then press forward. He strokes them in and out, gathering my juices each time and sliding in further and faster.

When Kade stretches his thumb out to find my clit, my body jerks in shock. “Kade!”

“Shhh, just let it take you, Gianna. You’re fine. In fact, you’re better than fine, you’re perfect.”

I don’t feel perfect. My body is coming apart at the seams. My brain can’t make sense of how he can be touching me there, but it’s my nipples that are burning. As if he can read my mind, Kade rearranges himself to take one stiff point into his mouth. I moan long and loud.

He laves it with his tongue before gently sucking and releasing it to tend to the other. All the while, his thumb is teasing my clit.

“Just a little taste first, love,” he says softly, raising my wrist to his mouth. His fangs line up with the openings in my wide bracelet. My eyes widen as I watch him delicately pierce my flesh. A hot flash of pain and pleasure washes over me and I shatter. Kade releases my wrist to gather me close against his chest. His hands soothe me down from that impossible high.

He licks his lips. “You taste like pure sunshine, Gianna.”

I eye him skeptically and try to see the puncture marks on my wrist. But either they’re hidden by the bracelet or have already sealed.

Kade rolls me to my back. “You’re as ready for me as you’ll ever be, baby. I’m going to wedge my cock into that delightfully tight pussy and have you cum on it one more time. Then I’ll cum and bite your neck at the same time, understand?”



I nod, excited beyond measure to revisit those earlier sensations. Kade drops kisses on my eyelids, then guides his cock to my entrance. I try to spread my legs as wide as I can, but it doesn't help much. "Just relax, baby," he grunts, and I sigh with frustration.

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Then he has the bright idea to rub my clit again and suddenly the head of his cock sinks in past the tight muscles of my entrance. “There’s my good girl,” he practically growls as he pushes in another inch. I feel impossibly full, split in two already, and I know he’s not completely inside me yet.

My clit begins to pound in time with my heartbeat and Kade’s. With a grunt of satisfaction, he surges forward and buries himself to the hilt. I shift my hips, trying to make more room somehow, and he groans. “You are so freaking tight, sweetness. I may not be able to last,” he confesses.

My tentative smile is part pain and part amazement that I have any power over him whatsoever. He pulls out and suddenly my body wants him back, right where he was. And then he is, but it’s all pleasure now, the pain of his breaching me fading to the background. Kade guides my knees up and behind him. The angle changes things and suddenly the energy is building fast in my core. I shift my head restlessly, but I have no purchase to release the tension except to grab onto Kade’s shoulder. So I do.

The first spasms erupt out of nowhere. I can feel myself clenching down on his cock, but I’m powerless to stop it. Kade doesn’t seem to mind, just pounding into me even harder in response. He erupts inside of me with a long, low cry that’s quickly cut off when he sinks his teeth into my neck. The pleasure is so exquisite my mouth opens in a silent cry. The pulse of my blood and his cum in my pussy are perfectly synchronized. It must be the heartbeat of the universe as loud as it sounds.

In an instant, it’s over. Kade pulls his head back, his eyes dazed with pleasure, and then he slowly withdraws his cock.

“Gianna? You okay, baby?”

I nod, still incapable of words.

“Let me get you cleaned up and then you should rest.” His voice comes from a distance and I close my eyes, replete with all the new sensations and the love I felt from him. He hasn’t said those words, but I realize I don’t need them. He gave them to me with his body.

Gianna sleeps until early evening. I nearly called Etienne three times to have the vamp doctor come, but she had no obvious symptoms beyond that, so I waited. The full sealing of the thrall relationship can go many ways, although it rarely results in any true harm. But I still sit anxiously at her side, phone at the ready waiting for her to wake.

Her eyes blink open in confusion and then a slow smile spreads when she sees me sitting next to her. “What’s the matter?” she asks, her voice soft with sleep.

“Nothing, baby. Just worried about you and any changes you might experience.”

“Oh, that.” She waves a dismissive hand and sits up. “There’s absolutely no research to prove that those effects didn’t previously exist and were simply unexplored.”

I stare at her in astonishment. “Umm,” I comment cautiously, not wanting to panic her unduly. Only time will tell if she acquires any new talents or awarenesses and they can take months to develop fully. Equally, she may stay exactly as she is today, which I would vastly prefer. Having a wife that can hear you a mile away would take some getting used to.

“Are you hungry? Should I bring you something?”

She waves me away. "I'll get up. I need to stretch my legs, anyway. Are you going to give me the full tour of your house anytime soon?"

"Our house, Gianna," I correct her as I watch in astonishment as she glides gracefully and unconsciously towards the bathroom clad only in her diamonds. She's glorious, but I still hold her robe for her when she returns.

Her lips quirk. "I thought nobody could touch me if I'm wearing all your jewelry," she teases.

"There's no point in tempting them, sweetness."

We head down to the kitchen, where Gianna places one slice of cold pizza on a plate, and I add two more. "You have to eat to feed me, baby. I only took a sip tonight, but if you were serious about being my sole source of blood, you need to eat more."

Her eyes round, but she quickly pops the plate in the microwave to heat.

I watch her eat one slice with satisfaction, then her gaze turns to me. "You realize I have classes and work on Monday, right?"

Nodding. I hand her another slice of pizza. "I'll place an order for a less ostentatious set on Monday. Sol is old and no longer works on the weekends. It should take about two weeks, I think." I shrug, not in a rush to have her take off the diamonds even if I know they look out of place in today's more conservative society.

"Yes, but what am I going to tell people in the meantime?" she asks dryly.

"Tell them you're working on your Mardi Gras costume or, better yet, wear a concealing jumpsuit."

She rolls her eyes. “Like that wouldn’t invite awkward questions. I don’t see you having any fashion dilemmas in this.”

I leer at her. “Fangs go with everything.”

She giggles and sets the pizza aside to come climb in my lap. “I liked your bite, Kade.” She snuggles into my chest, wrapping her slim arms around my waist.

“I’m glad,” I murmur into her curls and hold her close.

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Despite my earlier assurances to Kade, I’m beyond curious to see if I’ll develop any supernatural talents. You have to admit, it would be pretty cool. But nothing shows up that day or the next.

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Kade is almost too gentle with me, touching me plenty, but with the delicate finesse required by a fragile doll, not a healthy twenty-one-year-old. I must say this year has gotten off with a bang. And he hasn't fucked or bitten me again either, telling me, "You need to build up your strength. We'll do both again mid-week, I promise."

Ha! I fume to myself as I head into the first of the labs I'm supervising as part of my grad school work study. The whispers start as soon as the first girl catches sight of the diamonds. In the end I gave up on hiding them. I'm one of those people constantly pushing her sleeves up to her elbows so to suddenly show up dressed like a nun would invite just as many questions.

The amount of side eye I'm receiving makes my own face ache in sympathy. I make it clear with my steely gaze that any questions had better be concerning the assignment.

Then, to top it off, my sister has the nerve to invite herself over for dinner. She said that since Kade obviously won't be joining me, she'll keep me company and then take the opportunity to make sure I'm safe and looked after.

"Carina! I'm now old enough to drink legally and unattended. You do not need to come over here!"

"I'll be there at six, sweetie," she replies like she didn't hear a word I said. Knowing Carina, she probably didn't.

I get back to Kade's house from my classes at 4:30. I must say my day is more efficient, living so much closer to the college. But I'm still swearing to myself as I

rummage in the refrigerator for something that will convince Carina I'm not going to starve living with a vampire.

Kade wanders in around five and gives me a quick kiss.

"You know, I never did ask what you do with all your time when you're not biting people. Clearly it's lucrative..." I cast my gaze around the well-appointed kitchen which he never, ever uses.

"The money comes from four hundred years of investments. It's amazing what compound interest can do in that amount of time. Mostly I assist Etienne with vampire matters at the club, but I'm inclined to become more domestic." He nuzzles my neck, scraping my skin seductively with one fang.

"Doesn't Etienne have a girlfriend?"

Kade snorts. "Him? He's far too cynical. Besides, he's arrogant enough to insist on only the best. And the best girl is already taken." He lowers his mouth to mine, but before our lips can touch, he's startled by Carina.

"Oh, my god. I had no idea you were so cheesy, Kade."

She waltzes into the kitchen, holding a bottle of champagne aloft. "We might as well celebrate your birthday now, kid. Since my present sort of went sideways." Her eye roll has Kade glaring, and any lingering jealousy fades into the distance.

Rather than disappearing as I'm sure my sister intended, Kade pulls up a chair between us while we eat.

Carina peppers him with questions, proving how little she knows about him in particular, or vampires in general.

“You are seriously only going to bite Gianna from now on? You aren’t going to visit the club at all?” She sounds beyond skeptical, but Kade nods firmly. “That’s how it’s done, Carina. A thrall isn’t a submissive or a servant. She’s a life mate.”

“You aren’t going to miss the flavors of other women?” Her tone implies Kade had better tread carefully. He winces, but responds quickly. “Do you wish that you had other suns shining down on you?”

He leans down to kiss my forehead. “Thank you for sending me to her.”

Carina grinds her teeth. “Did you tell Mom and Dad yet?” she asks.

I shake my head. “No, I thought we might drive over there in a week or two. It will be easier to explain in person.”

My sister grumbles but gives me a tight hug goodbye when she decides she’s seen enough and grilled Kade sufficiently about taking care of me. It’s kind of funny because she pretty much left me to my own devices when I moved out of the college dorms when I graduated at eighteen. Maybe because there wasn’t a man involved then...

The next night I convince Kade to feed from me properly. Naturally, he insists on fucking me first and who am I to contradict him? My body lights up in recognition when his hand slides between my legs. I’m more tired than usual the following morning, so I take heed of his advice to eat more than I would normally. I can see that being the primary source of nutrition for a vamp is more complicated than I’d imagined. Still, I feel fine and like I made the right decision.

I’m no longer a bored bachelor and Etienne appears slightly annoyed by that fact.

“I’ll be here when Gianna is at the college but otherwise consider me on call,” I



inform him, pushing up from the chair opposite his desk.

His aristocratic eyebrows gather together over his nose. “The girl seemed sweet, but she can’t be that fascinating a conversationalist.”

I stare at him, letting him know that I won’t be drawn into discussing her in any capacity except her health.

“Fine,” he sighs. Etienne hides it well, but he’s got a protective streak a mile wide. It’s why he started The Sanctuary in the first place.

“Good,” I echo back. “I’ll be back in an hour. I need to pick up Gianna’s new collar.”

“What was wrong with the old one?”

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“Too many diamonds,” I shrug. We both come from an era where absolutely nobody but the holiest of monks would make that statement.

Etienne rolls his eyes but waves me off.

Thankfully, Sol has the items ready and neatly boxed in a black velvet case. They’re starkly simple by my estimation, but instinct says Gianna will love them. The collar is a simple band of silver metal about a quarter inch wide with oval cutoutsstrung through with faceted ruby beads. My fangs would never fit through those holes, but it’s a nice nod to tradition and symbolic, if nothing else. The bracelets and anklets match, but the overall shape is more oval, so they can’t slide off.

I’m whistling as I return to the club to finish up for the day. There’s always paperwork and a roster of vamps that need scheduling to feed in the inner sanctum. Come to think of it, I’ve never seen Etienne put himself on the schedule, but he must eat at some point, right?

Not brave enough to ask the man in charge about his personal habits, I stack the papers neatly on my desk and head home.

Gianna is there waiting for me, nibbling on a sandwich.

“Finish that and come here, baby.”

She eyes the box in my hand suspiciously. “What’s that?”

“Your new collar and cuffs.”

“Oooh! Can I see?”

I shake my head. “No, not until they’re on, so finish eating.”

She gobbles down the sandwich so fast it has me frowning in concern that she’s going to choke. Gianna bounces over to stand in front of me. I extract a length of black silk from my pocket and set the box down on the coffee table. Wrapping the silk around her eyes, I make sure she can’t peek and then unseal the diamonds from her with a sigh of regret. I can feel Gianna rolling her eyes behind the blindfold.

The new collar seals into place in an instant. It does look lighter and more appropriate with her plaid shirt and jeans. I roll up her sleeves to repeat the same process on her wrists and lastly her ankles, although that takes longer because her socks have become tangled with the prongs holding the stones.

“I still don’t know why you insist on all five pieces,” Gianna mutters.

“Because,” I curse quietly as I bend down to the ground to seal the anklet with my tongue, “it’s a symbol of my ultimate love and respect. Anything less would indicate I still had more to give.”

“Oh,” I glance up to see Gianna smiling broadly. “In that case, I guess I don’t mind so much.”

“Good.” I rise smoothly to my feet and slide the silk over her curls. “Now take a look.”

She glances down at her arm first instead of running to a mirror. “Oooh! That’s gorgeous, Kade! It looks so expensive!”

“More than diamonds?” I query.

“Oh, definitely. Those belong in a museum somewhere. This looks like it came straight from Cartier.” She rushes over to a mirror in the corner to swivel in front of it and admire the collar.

“Well, I still like you in diamonds,” I’m pouting and I know it.

Gianna dances back to give me a swift kiss on the side of my mouth. “I’ll wear those for very special occasions, okay?” She’s placating me and I’m not too proud to take advantage of it.

“Then I think we should redo the claiming ceremony with these.”

Gianna rolls her eyes. “Which consists of fucking and biting me, am I correct?”

I nod. What else would it involve?

“Can I be on top this time?”

I stare at her. “No. Nothing has changed in that department, little thrall. You’ll cum when I tell you to and not before,” I growl.

Gianna’s smirk of satisfaction alerts me to the fact she was baiting me to elicit precisely that reaction. I pick her up by the waist and toss her over my shoulder so she understands the modern veneer only goes so far.

## EPILOGUE

Three years later

## Page 12

*Source Creation Date: May 21, 2025, 2:49 am*

I'm pouting while I fix myself a spaghetti dinner. I add a glass of red wine to show my displeasure. Although I don't think Kade is paying close enough attention to pick up that little detail. He still won't take me to The Sanctuary, not even for a tour in the daylight, when the place is empty. My one and only visit was to Etienne's office and Kade whisked me through so fast I didn't get a chance to see anything. And now he's just being mean.

"I don't understand what could be so scandalous I can't even see it. It's not like there isn't plenty of information on the internet."

"That's different. You have no need to know more about the kinkier side of humanity. I'm not about to let you get bored."

I grimace in agreement. He won't, it's true. Kade is an inventive and enthusiastic lover. Maybe a little too into control and making me wait for an impending orgasm, but overall I can't complain.

"Well, what about Etienne's birthday party? Surely I can go to that?"

"How do you know about that?" He scowls in annoyance.

The lightbulb goes off and we both say instantaneously, "Carina."

I nod with a smirk of satisfaction.

Kade grimaces. "Yes, I'll take you to the party, but only for an hour or so. If it starts to get wild, we're out of there."

My eyes widen. “Is it likely to get wild? I thought the vamps didn’t, uh, participate in the extracurricular activities.”

My darling mate scowls. “They’re not supposed to. But given the opportunity to relax the rules, I’m sure there’s a few that would seize it. The submissives know what to do and how to handle them. You don’t.”

I let the topic drop. I got an agreement out of him that he’ll take me and I’m sure I’ll find a way to stay and observe without him realizing how long we’ve been there. The party isn’t for another couple of months, but Carina says it’s all anyone at the club can talk about. I was feeling a little miffed that Kade hadn’t mentioned it, but now I know why.

I eat while Kade changes out of his suit and then I wrap myself around him on the couch in front of the TV. Dropping little kisses on his face, I whisper, “I love you, my big bad vampire.”

He turns his head to stare into my eyes. Whatever he sees there must reassure him, because I can feel the muscles in his shoulders relax. “You are my very heart, Gianna. And I will protect you with everything I have.” He kisses me by way of apology. And I accept it.