



The Blood Guardian (The Rose Vampire Coven #6)

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Category: Fantasy

Description: Fate brings not only a forever love, but a forever guardian of both body and soul...

Luke Harris came to the Blood Rose looking to forget, find something to take his mind off the mess his life has become. The Blood Rose is the kind of bar that one goes to get lost and feel something, but in the end Luke finds more than he bargained for. Attacked by a patron looking for bad time, he ends up rescued by the man who will soon become his forever. The man he saw across the bar will become his beloved, his life, and his guardian. Luke just needs to figure out how get out of his own way and let himself feel and let himself love.

Rall Smith has been in a mood. Watching his brother vampires find their beloveds while he still waited was getting to him. He saw plenty of action, but nothing close to that feeling of the fated bond. He figured that was why he was assigned to security at the bar this particular night. He needed to find a warm body and good fight. What Rall didn't expect was that tonight Fate would answer his call and place in his path that forever love. A man he needed to protect and guard from the forces of the world. Rall and Luke could have it all, if Luke can survive the trials ahead.

Fate's road is never smooth.

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"L uke, come back. Don't be such a drama queen. It meant nothing. It was a one-off, no need to upend our lives over it." Luke kept walking out of the apartment and out of the building, but he didn't stop walking until he realized that he had no idea where he was going. He'd been warned about Adam and his wandering eye, but he had a way about him that made you think otherwise. He could make Luke believe he was the center of his world while simultaneously sleeping with three other guys.

Luke and Adam had been dating for over a year and eight months ago Adam raised question of monogamy and asked for exclusivity. Luke agreed touched by his desire for commitment.

All seemed well until a couple of months ago and then things started not adding up and even Luke as love struck as he was could not ignore the obvious. The late nights at work when he couldn't answer Luke's calls or texts and the repeated out of town work trips that were just ridiculous and always last minute. Then, the night came when he was called by a friend and told where he could find Adam with his new guy.

It was one of Adam's coworkers, and they were together at his apartment. He'd told Luke he had to work late and would call him tomorrow. When Luke arrived unexpectedly, Adam tried to make it look like nothing was happening, but with all the partial nudity, that excuse fell flat immediately.

The scene spoke for itself, so Adam switched tactics and tried to pretend it was nothing serious and that it only happened once. Then he tried to treat Luke like he was not seeing what he was seeing and being too sensitive. Luke wasn't that thick and without a word simply turned around and left.

He walked and walked with no destination in mind just a blinding need to wear off the rage that was boiling in his blood. Thankfully he'd never moved in with Adam even though he'd asked repeatedly throughout their relationship. Something had held him back either it was his need for independence or that trust had not been established either way it was fortunate.

Adam lived downtown and Luke had taken a cab to his apartment. Luke lived a couple of miles away in an apartment in a less affluent area. It was safe but more cost effective. If he'd headed home, he'd probably be there by now but in his rage he'd not paid attention to . . . anything. His mind had just been racing, trying to figure out why he'd been so blind or accepting. He was feeling so damned stupid.

Luke stopped, took a deep breath and looked around realizing that this was a business district and not an area he usually frequented. The places here were gritty and debauched in their entertainment not something he enjoyed as a rule. It was getting late, but he wasn't ready to go home he needed something and then The Blood Rose appeared in front of him. The Blood Rose was exactly what he needed. It actually wrote the book on gritty and debauched.

"Where is he now?" Drakon asked.

"I have him working security at the Blood Rose. I was hoping he might get laid and solve all our problems." Fane laughed. "Rall has been on edge since his friends began finding their beloveds. His attitude needs an adjustment before he inadvertently says the wrong thing to the wrong person. He's getting restless and starting fights simply for their entertainment value. We need to find him some new friends."

"He's a handful and may not be the one you want to bring home for Sunday dinner, but he's definitely the one you want by your side in battle." Drakon laughed. "He's a good, solid soldier, smart, skilled, and always ready for a fight, so do what you can to wear off his sudden angst and find him some new friends."

"I will, and he'll be fine. No one spends a night at the Blood Rose without finding a hookup. It would be unnatural." Fane assured. "A nice, spirited fuck or two, and he'll be as good as new."

Rall entered the bar and took a tentative look around it was filling up and the options were many. He knew why Fane had placed him there for the evening and he greatly appreciated the man's concern. Fane was a very considerate boss.

The number of bonds that were suddenly taking place was surprising. They went from a coven with primarily single members to nearly half of them being bonded. Well, maybe it wasn't that many, but it felt like a lot since a good share of them were Rall's friends. They were people who went from free and easy to bonded and busy in a matter of days.

Fane was known to do this to flood a coven with new connections and new blood when she saw they had heart and potential, which was a good thing for them. But still, he didn't see a beloved coming his way in the near future, so he would continue to sulk. He always got his share of action, but the thought of having a beloved, bonded lover and partner for life was an exciting thought. But he could wait; there were plenty of handsome men in town, and he had plenty of time, and with that thought, he began eyeing the room.

Rall approached the bar and ordered a tequila shot to get the night started. He was assigned to security, but he doubted there would be much, if any trouble. With so many vampires present problems just seemed to handle themselves. Rall was confident that the night would be easy and he could enjoy some drinks and some entertainment of the physical kind.

It had been at least a week since he'd taken pleasure in the hard body of a solid male or the soft curves of a little twink; he was ready for a little solace in the arms of a few good men. He laughed and downed the tequila and then ordered another. This was

going to be a very good evening.

Luke entered The Blood Rose and took a quick look around. His first instinct was to walk back out again because this was not his scene. The smell, the clientele, and the low hum of activity just struck him as being all wrong. This wasn't his sort of bar, and he was about to leave when something grabbed his attention.

He stopped and stared, unable to tear his eyes away. There, leaning against the bar, downing a shot of something, was one of the most strikingly handsome men he'd ever encountered.

He stood and just stared for the longest time, unable and unwilling to look away even as people continually blocked his view. The place was damn busy, and maintaining a view of the man at the bar was not easy. Oh, how he wished he had even half a chance with a man that looked like that.

He was tall looked to be well over six feet maybe even six foot five. His body was solid and tight looking as if he worked out regularly and took good care of himself. His hair was black, and his eyes were a vivid blue that lit up whenever he spoke to someone. The smile that graced his sensuous lips was to die for. Luke could stare at this man all night and be perfectly satisfied.

Unfortunately, he was soon jostled out of the way by the crowd and found himself up against a wall in the back. Luke craned his neck, trying to see the man at the bar, but someone was blocking his view.

He stepped to the side and attempted to move along the wall to get away from the pressure of the group of people in front of him. His instincts were telling him to just leave but the fire in his gut was telling him to watch the man at the bar and try to move closer.

The man in front of him started coming on strong, too strong. He was not someone Luke was interested in, but he seemed to have trouble taking no thank you as an answer. When he asked Luke to go to the back hall with him, Luke made himself very clear and told him, "I just want to have a beer and go home. I'm not looking for anything else." Luke tried to push away from the wall, but the man started boxing him in.

"I'll get you a beer honey and then we can go out back and get to know one another better." He wasn't ugly but wasn't Luke's type. He was older and pushy and smelled of leather polish. Luke wasn't into the daddy vibe and preferred men his own age.

"No." He said and tried pushing him away. "I am not interested please let me go." Luke made a concerted effort to move away from the wall and disentangle himself from this man. The scene was starting to upset him in that this man was not listening to him and was proceeding to try and manhandle him by grabbing his upper arm and dragging him closer.

"I'm afraid that is not the right answer, honey." He sneered with his lips near Luke's ear. "You're mine for tonight. Relax, and you might enjoy it." He was a lot larger than Luke and strong. That fact had Luke frantically searching for assistance, but no one was paying attention to anything but their own good time. He thought walking in on his boyfriend fucking another guy was the worst his night could get, but coming to the Blood Rose had certainly eclipsed that event.

"I'm here with someone." He tried to warn him off with a blatant lie.

"Who?" He snapped back with a terrible smile. He knew he was lying.

"Him." Luke pointed at the handsome man at the bar. "The one with the long hair speaking with the bartender." It was worth a try, and Luke would try anything to get out of this fuckers grip. He was bad news, and Luke knew he was in for an evening of

pain and humiliation if he didn't get away from this guy.

He started to laugh and tightened his grip on Luke's upper arm. "He works here, and trust me, honey, he doesn't do dates. He's security and is not exclusive with any man so he wouldn't mind if I take a round or two out of you first." So that had no effect at all.

"I'm sick, and I'm going to throw up." He began making gagging sounds.

"Come on, baby, let me get you to the back where you can vomit all you want while I plow your ass." Luke started to fight, making as much trouble as he could, but the man was really strong and held Luke to his side as he swept him through the crowd to the back area of the bar.

Luke was stunned by how fast he moved, and a sharp panic set in fast. He started to scream, but the guy covered his mouth, making it difficult to breathe, which just exacerbated his panic.

At the back of the bar was a wide hallway that led to the bathrooms and a darkened area beyond. Luke could hear salacious sounds coming at him from every direction in the dark and realized no one here was going to help him.

"Now, my lovely little fuck, I'm going to tell you what to do, and you are going to do it." He spoke low and menacing and dug his fingers into Luke's arms, making himself clear.

"You may finish this night in one piece, or you may not. That all depends on how well you please me." The guy was so sickening.

"I'll kill you if you touch me." Luke shot back.

“Oh, honey please try, it would make my evening so much more exciting. Fight me and see where that gets you.” He finished on a low threatening tone and then suddenly a door opened, and Luke was tossed inside.

"What the hell?" Luke stumbled backward and hit the floor. It was a small closet, and his heart sank when the door closed. Luke started to fight with everything he had, hands and feet flying, but this man simply laughed at him and backhanded him.

Luke made as much noise as he could, yelling, screaming knocking shit around in the hopes that someone would come. The strikes were hard and fast, and his body was feeling every single one.

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"There's a problem in back." The bartender spoke to Rall. "People are reporting screams from a closet." The bartender smiled.

"Yeah, probably someone getting fucked into next week, and I get to walk in on it." Rall pushed away from the bar and took a leisurely look around the room. Speaking of being fucked into next week, he really needed to find a willing body soon.

Maybe the guy in the closet will be up for round two when he gets there. He laughed at the thought. So far, he'd had plenty of offers, but no one had piqued his interest. For some reason, he was suddenly becoming picky, and even the sweet, tender twinkles weren't turning him on.

The moment he entered the back of the bar he noticed the heaviness in the air. It was not right, something was off, and it was affecting him in a way that left him suddenly anxious. It wasn't just someone getting reamed in the closet there was something devastating going on here and Rall took immediate notice of the silence. He moved quickly toward the closet.

There were no sounds from inside. There was blood on the floor, and the scent was familiar. It turned his world upside down. His previous humor over what was happening in the closet vanished in an instant, and it was replaced by a cold and focused awareness.

He was almost afraid to open the door and lay eyes on what was beyond. His heart was beating in his ears, and his vision narrowed to the door in front of him and nothing else. Grabbing the handle, he jerked it open, and there on the floor with clothes torn and his body bleeding was a man.

Recognition hit him at once, but he had to keep it under control. Too much was happening, and too much needed to be done; he had no time to flip out. The smell of blood filled the air and filled his mind as a heated red rage engulfed him.

His vampire was thundering beneath his skin in response to the vision before him. This man, who looked to be in his early twenties, was struggling to wrap his clothes around him and to get up.

"It's okay, you're okay," Rall said softly while reaching out to him. He wasn't one to coddle or soothe. It wasn't in his wheelhouse, but the man needed a gentle hand, a soft voice, and he was going to do his damn best to deliver. "Here, take my jacket."

Rall blocked the doorway so no one could see the poor man hoping to give him a modicum of privacy. He helped him pull on the jacket and adjust his clothing so that he was covered. The man did not look at him and did not speak. Rall gave him a visual once over and he appeared to be physically okay although there were plenty of cuts and bruises.

The bleeding had stopped, and his wounds were surface, the physical wounds. He most certainly had other wounds that went deep, and their seriousness was reflected in his gaze, his expression, and his stance.

Rall reached out to steady him, but the man reared back panicked and afraid. "I'm not going to hurt you." There were tears in the man's eyes which he tried to hide by wiping his face with the back of hand. Rall reached into his pocket and gave him his handkerchief.

"Please let me help you." The man finally nodded and stared at the floor but did not speak. Every stupid fucking comment he'd ever made about the easy ass attainable in this establishment came back to shame him. Assaults made such comments so unfunny.

Rall just wanted to take him into his arms and bundle him up, keeping him safe from all the pain and threats that were circling him. He didn't know his name, and his heart was screaming for something more, either contact or acknowledgment or simply a glance so that his man would see him.

“How is he?” Trent a fellow soldier came up behind him startling him since he was so focused on the man in the closet.

“He’ll be fine I got him.” Rall blocked Trent’s view of the room not wanting the man to be on display. “Clear the area and I’ll take him to the surveillance room to relax and compose himself.” It wasn’t long and the back area was vacant. Trent got everyone out and gave Rall the all clear.

Rall stepped closer to the man who was bent over cowering in the corner of the closet. He carefully placed his hand on the guys shoulder and although he flinched, he did not pull away. “Come with me. You can stay in the surveillance room relax and tell me what happened.” The guy shivered and then nodded his head. “Everyone is gone there’s no one out there. You’re safe with me.”

The man was short enough that he fit under Rall’s arm and seemed to be okay at this point with being held. Rall relished the touch and closeness of the man and guided him out of the closet and across the hall to the surveillance room. They entered and Rall quickly closed the door. The room was empty. Trent had cleared it for him. It was quiet and subdued only lighting was the glow of the monitors on the wall.

Rall brought him over to the small couch against the wall and sat him down. Rall crouched down in front of him. "Is there anyone you want me to call?" He asked and tentatively reached out to take his hand. He was surprised when the man did not balk, so he took his hand and held it like a lifeline. The grip was fierce and frightened. Rall’s heart went out to him, and he wished he had some way of making him feel better.

There was so much Rall wanted to say, and so much he wanted to do, but it would have further frightened the poor man, and he couldn't do that. He would not knowingly add to the man's stress. After several minutes of silence, he finally looked at Rall, and their gazes were linked. It was then that Rall felt the full meaning of the word beloved. It was radiating through that connection and through their clasped hands. Every minute he spent with this lovely man brought them closer and sealed their bond tighter.

"Don't call the police, please. I couldn't deal with anyone knowing." It was the first time he spoke, and he was pleading. It broke Rall's heart all over again.

"I won't call the police. You're in control here and you call the shots." He tried to reassure him. "What's your name?"

"Luke Harris."

"My name is Rall Smith, and I work security here." He paused and then asked. "Do you live around here?" Luke shook his head and gripped Rall's hand with both of his. He was seeking comfort but didn't realize it. Their connection was growing, and the pull was affecting him. Rall channeled peace and stillness to him as best he could, considering they'd just met, and their connection, although growing, was still slight.

"I've never been to the Blood Rose before. I thought it might be fun, and it would help me clear my mind." He dropped his head and started to cry very softly, and Rall instantly sat beside him and put his arm around him. The tears were devastating. Rall had over-emotional hookups cry before, but those tears were greedy, controlling emotions, and they never touched Rall. But Luke's tears were like fire to his nerves and his needs.

"It's a good place to forget things and live a little, and people who come here usually have fun. I'm sorry you were treated so badly. We don't condone such behavior at the

Blood Rose, and I wish I'd been alerted to your situation a little sooner." Rall still had so little to draw on to try and comfort his beloved. He was feeling so inadequate.

All his years of taking things as they came and never over thinking did not prepare him for any true depth of feelings. He held Luke and could feel the shame and despair coursing through him, and it was devastating.

"Tell me what happened . . . if you can." He knew enough to try and get him talking to get the pain out of his head and put it into words that could be dealt with. Suppressing the memory was tempting but not healthy in the long run. He wanted his beloved whole and happy and healthy.

Rall with a very tentative touch pushed the dark blonde hair away from Luke's eyes. "Talk to me Luke." He urged gently. Luke swallowed and then glanced away. Rall missed the touch of those hazel eyes and wanted them back, but he controlled himself and waited. Luke was in control, and he wouldn't take that from him. Within a few minutes Luke began his voice soft and hesitant.

"I started this evening with a visit to my boyfriend's apartment that's about a mile from here." He spoke haltingly pulling his words together like it was a struggle. "I was warned that Adam was cheating on me and that he was with the other guy." Luke stopped and took a couple of deep breaths. Rall was not thrilled to hear about a boyfriend, but he would deal with that guy when the time came but for now he would listen.

"Was he with the other guy?" Rall prompted.

"Yes, it was pretty awful." Another deep breath and then he squeezed Rall's hand. "I left and started walking and then I found myself here." It was becoming clear that his man had endured a hellish evening.

"I'm sorry," Rall whispered and hugged him close.

"I just wanted to have a few drinks and then go home and wallow in the betrayal. I didn't want to be bothered." After another pause, Rall reached over, grabbed a bottle of water, and handed it to him. Luke took his time removing the cap and taking a drink.

"He forced me into the back hallway. I fought him, and he didn't get what he wanted. He was so strong, but I made as much noise as I could, and there was someone who heard, and there were voices in the hall. It scared him, and he took off." He stopped and took a long drink of his water and then put the cap back on and set it aside.

There came a knock to the door and Rall got up and answered. It was Trent with a blanket for Luke. "I thought he might be cold." He said and Rall thanked him. "We caught the guy he was a shifter. He won't be bothering anyone ever again." With that he closed the door and brought the blanket over to Luke.

"They caught the guy who did this." He said as he wrapped the blanket around Luke and sat back down beside him.

"I won't press charges. I won't talk about this." Luke started to panic, shaking his head and trembling. Rall again put his arm around him and slowly settled him down.

"We took care of it. The police are not involved." Rall told him, hoping to settle his mind.

"Is he dead?" Luke sounded stricken.

"No, not that he didn't deserve it. We convinced him of the error of his ways, and he won't be bothering you or anyone else again." Luke nodded and seemed to understand. Rall wasn't sure if the guy was dead or not, but obviously, he wasn't

going to share that with Luke.

Luke took a long, cleansing breath and then dropped his head to Rall's shoulder. "You're the best thing that's happened to me this evening, maybe even this whole year." He laughed, but there was no humor in it. "I saw you at the bar, and I thought how handsome you were, and then that creep got in my face and wouldn't go away. What a night, what a fucking awful night."

"You handled yourself well under the circumstances." Rall just held him and let him draw strength from him. "How are you feeling?"

"A little sore but better. I should go home." Rall was not on board with his beloved leaving.

"I have someone getting you a change of clothes so just relax there is no hurry. You can stay here as long as you like." Rall gently urged.

"I shouldn't impose on you," Luke mumbled. "I watched you and wished that I could meet you, but I didn't want to meet you like this."

"We were meant to be," Rall whispered. "I was there for you in your darkest hour, just as Fate designed."

"That sounds romantic." Luke chuckled, and it was real and light.

"It is romantic." Rall stated. Luke was getting stronger but emotionally he still a way to go. The wounds were healing having reacted to their close proximity. Beloveds have the power to heal one another but Luke simply believed that his injuries were not as bad as he first thought.

"I think I'll stay at a hotel tonight. I have a nosey roommate, and he's going to ride me

all night with questions. He's friends with my now ex-boyfriend, so he knows all about that fiasco."

"Is he the one who told you the guy was cheating on you?"

"No, he probably knew, but he never said anything. I wouldn't doubt that he finds the whole thing hilarious. If he finds out I was assaulted at the Blood Rose, it will be all over town before morning."

"Not a friend?" Rall asked sarcastically, and Luke shook his head vigorously.

"Definitely not a friend and never has been."

"I work for Conall Rose, and all of the people working here at Blood Rose do. The warehouse situated behind and off the alley is not what it appears." Rall was working his way up to asking Luke to come stay with him. He needed more time to work out their relationship, and having him spend the night together would be ideal. It all depended upon the strength of their burgeoning bond and how much trust he had in Rall.

"I have an apartment there. It's nice and comfortable, and I'd like for you to come home with me. I understand that you do not know me, but I think you have a sense of who I am. Everyone who works for Conall Rose lives there, and it's nice."

"Why?" The one word was spoken so softly that Rall barely heard it, but the meaning was huge. Rall turned fully toward him and cupped his face in the palms of his hands staring at those beautiful hazel eyes. This was forever here in his arms looking at him with eyes that pleaded for understanding searched for acceptance. He wanted this to be real but there remained a shadow of fear.

"I won't ever hurt you, Luke. I'm not asking for anything except the opportunity to let

you rest in peace and to get to know you better." Rall moved his hands and tightened the blanket around Luke's shoulders. "It's a short walk, just a few hundred yards, and you won't have to worry about anyone staring at you or asking you questions you don't want to answer."

Luke didn't answer right away taking time to think. So much had happened this night he was fearful of making a decision, but his heart was urging him to accept this man. When he noticed him at the bar he thought it would be pleasant to watch him and dream of knowing him, having him, planning a relationship where there was none.

Rall was here sitting with him taking care of him and offering him a place to rest for the night. There was a knock at the door and Rall brought him a change of clothes. He turned his back while Luke changed out of the torn, bloody clothes.

It felt good to change but he put Rall's jacket back on. It was giving him a source of comfort he did not understand and wasn't going to question. He wanted this man ever since he laid eyes on him and now he was asking him to go home with him. It was Luke's dream come true but now it seemed sad rather than exciting and expectant.

"You don't owe me anything. I'm not your responsibility even though it may look that way." He forced a half smile, but Rall did not smile.

"Come and stay with me until morning at least and then I'll give you a ride home if you wish." It was strange but the offer felt different it was not a suggestion it actually sounded like he wanted more than just one night. But Luke discarded the assumption immediately because that was crazy. He was being a kind man and Luke was going to take him up on his offer.

Rall was no danger to him if he wanted to take advantage; he had plenty of opportunities already. He was attentive and thoughtful, and Luke was not ready to be on his own or to return to his apartment. "Okay, I would appreciate the chance to rest

and prepare myself for another day. Hopefully, it will be a better day than today."

"Today was unfortunate in many ways, but it was not all bad." Rall finished with a wink and stood while helping Luke to his feet. "Do you feel well enough to walk? If not, I can easily carry you." The offer was touching, but Luke assured him that he could walk.

"It's not far, just across the alley." He explained.

"Thank you for being so considerate."

"Not a problem at all." Rall pulled him closer to his side as they left through the back and headed across the alley. They approached a set of double doors that looked decidedly nondescript, but as soon as they opened, his assessment changed.

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The interior was cut, crisp, high end and sophisticated. They walked to an elevator and took it to the second floor. He checked to make sure Luke was doing okay before stepping out. The place was huge with what appeared to be many apartments lining both sides of the wide hallway. He would never have guessed what the inside looked like based on the exterior.

“This is really a surprise.” He said as he looked around.

“The Master likes to keep a low profile.” Rall commented without detail. Luke got the impression that the Master was someone who kept all his business low profile. It didn’t matter it wasn’t Luke’s business and besides who was he to point fingers.

It wasn’t as if he were on the total up and up either. He worked part time for a florist, and he was pretty sure it was a money laundering operation. Again, it wasn’t his business. Luke sold flowers and designed arrangements and made deliveries and whatever else was going on was none of his business.

Rall brought him to one of the black doors situated down a long hallway and quickly opened the door and ushered him inside. It was a large apartment and was upscale like the rest of the place. It made his small apartment look like a closet.

“This is very nice Rall.” He was compelled to compliment since the place was quite impressive and not what he’d expected. He’d expected it to be a little more lived in looking just based on Rall’s laid back demeanor but it wasn’t. The place was polished and proper but also welcoming. Working security for Conall Rose must pay very well.

“I’m glad you like it.” Rall took him through the living area with the large kitchen off to the left and then down a short hall to a bedroom. The room felt soft and comfortable, and the bed was calling to him.

Rall led him over to the bed and slipped the blanket off of his shoulders and folded it and set it aside. It was then he remembered he was still wearing Rall’s suit jacket, and he was reluctant to take it off. It was his security blanket, and the warmth gave him a sense of wellness. It smelled like Rall and Rall smelled like heaven.

So much had happened that evening, and yet here he was, feeling safe and secure in the arms and home of a veritable stranger. Yet he wasn't a stranger; he was the handsome man from the bar, the one who had captivated his attention. Rall was not a stranger. Nothing about him was odd or unfamiliar. He was a friend, and from the first moment of contact, he was Luke's friend in all the ways that mattered.

“May I keep this on?” he asked when Rall was about to help him off with the jacket.

“Of course.” He said immediately.

"I like the feel of this around me, and I like the smell. You smell really good, Rall."

“Thank you. You smell good too sweetheart.” Rall called him sweetheart, and Luke was suddenly feeling butterflies in his stomach. The endearment was unexpected and went right to his heart. He wanted to be Rall’s sweetheart. He wanted someone like Rall in his life caring about him, loving him but that was probably the trauma talking so he tried to tone down the excitement that was prickling through him.

“Am I your sweetheart, Rall?” So much for toning it down. He wanted to hear more.

"You are my sweetheart, my love, and my darling." Rall did not hesitate in his response.

"I like you, Rall." Luke smiled and gathered the lapels of the jacket close snuggling into the fabric and breathing deep the heady scent.

"I'm glad to hear that." Rall pulled him close and kissed his forehead. It was a soft, brief touch, but Luke felt it to his toes. "Now, why don't you lie down and try to rest. I'll be in the living room, so if you need anything, just call out, and I will hear you." Luke was tired, and the thought of lying down was attractive, but he also didn't want Rall to leave. There was no way for him to ask Rall to stay without it sounding weird, so he simply nodded.

"Okay." He said half heartedly.

"Make yourself at home. There is an attached bath and extra linen in the closet. I can bring you some pajamas if you'd like." Rall was a perfect host, but what Luke wanted was more than that. He wanted contact with heart and meaning, but considering the circumstances, Rall probably would not believe that he was sincere.

"I'll be fine. Thank you." Luke struggled to sound normal and okay.

"You're welcome." He kissed his forehead again and then stepped back. It looked like he was having trouble leaving, but Luke was most likely just reading his own needs into it. "If you need me, I'm not far away."

"I'll be fine," Luke repeated, but everything in him wanted to beg Rall to stay, to hold him, to make love to him, and wash away every terrible thing that had happened to him that day.

Rall's eyes traveled over Luke's body, head to toe, several times before he suddenly turned around with a curt. "Good night," he said, leaving the room and closing the door behind him.

Luke stood there staring at the door willing him to come back. He had to get hold of himself his emotions were all over the place and he didn't want to scare Rall away. His sudden obsession with his savior was really not the healthiest of choices. Luke berated and forced himself to move over to the bed and sit down.

He slipped off his shoes and socks and took off the jeans that Rall had given him. He left on the t-shirt and Rall's jacket and turned out the lights and got into bed. He probably should have washed up, but he was just too exhausted and the bed looked so welcoming. As soon as his body began to relax he started tensing up with the memories of the evening flooding back through his mind.

The room, the bed, and the silence started to wear on him, and he sat up, pulling Rall's jacket tight around him. He took a few deep breaths and felt the calming effect of the scent that infused the fabric. Whatever that was, he wanted to bottle it, but nothing had ever had such an instant effect before.

Listening, he heard Rall quietly moving around, and then the lights went out, and he heard him walk past his door and down the hall. Luke assumed he was going to his bedroom since it was late. He had to stop himself from calling out to him. The man deserved some rest, but Luke needed to get himself settled down. The thought of having to go back to his apartment in the morning was not a pleasant one, but it kept forcing itself to the front of Luke's mind.

His roommate Dale loved riding his last nerve and would take the incident with Adam to new heights of humiliation. They were most likely on the phone now, discussing it in detail. The more the scene played out in front of him, the more his heart began to race. He tried to lay back down and push everything unpleasant from his thoughts, but the minute he tried, the bastard from the bar popped up, and his face would not go away.

Was he so weak and pathetic looking that he was targeted? The guy assaulted him in

the middle of a busy bar. He dragged him to the back and pummeled him with his fists, and then he was gone, and Rall was there. The vision of Rall busting into the room and blocking him from the view of others came to him, and relief washed over him.

Rall had helped him, protected him, and took care of him. Rall was his champion, and being near him made him feel grounded and safe. Luke looked down at his body, remembering the battering he'd endured, and was surprised to see no marks remaining. He'd bled on the floor and on his clothing, but he saw no wounds.

Luke got up, stepped into the bathroom, and looked in the mirror. His face showed no evidence of the beating he'd taken. No cuts or bruises or even redness. He checked the rest of his body, and it, too, was clear. He had no sign of injury whatsoever.

Luke kept staring, trying to figure out how he could have healed so quickly. There was still blood on his chin but no sign of where it had come from. He decided to let it go and just be happy that he wouldn't have to meet Dale looking like he'd had the shit kicked out of him. If all went well, he could possibly keep the whole Blood Rose beat down under wraps. He washed up, getting rid of the last of the blood traces, and then headed back to bed.

Once again, he lay there, unable to turn off his thoughts. Adam was still blowing up his phone, asking to meet, and trying to explain himself in ways that did not explain anything. Luke finally took his phone and blocked him from everything, and then things quieted down.

It wasn't as big of a surprise as he thought it was when he walked in on Adam with that other man. The signs were there for weeks maybe months, but it was easier to ignore them and just carry on with life. Change was so trying and time consuming and Luke just wanted to pretend that things were not as bad as they obviously were.

He should have broken it off with him long ago back when stinging sarcasm became his go to form of endearment and when constant criticism became the norm. To be honest, Luke hadn't been happy for a long time and this wake up call was long overdue. He wasn't going to fight or cry about it he'd simply lick his wounds and move on.

With that thought suddenly on the forefront of his mind he again brought up the handsome, vibrant vision of Rall Smith. He held him and even kissed his forehead and, it was probably terrible for him to feel this way but, he wanted so much more from that amazing man. He fought with himself for several minutes and then he decided he had to go see him.

He wasn't sure what he was going to say but he had to see him, have him stand close and tell him everything was going to be okay. Rall's assurances were solid and filled Luke with a certainty he had never gotten from anyone else. He believed Rall when he spoke, and he trusted everything his said. It was probably a big mistake, but he'd made bigger ones, like Adam.

Quietly he walked down the hall to the bedroom on the left. The door was partially open and the light on. As he approached his nerves started to abandon him and he almost turned back but his desire to see Rall was too strong. Luke stood at the door and slowly pushed it the rest of the way open revealing the interior of the bedroom.

Luke stood there transfixed, unable to move or speak as his eyes took in the site of Rall standing by the side of the bed completely naked. His body was beautiful, sculpted, and tanned, with muscles in all the right places; it was perfection. He let his eyes travel from the floor to the top of his head, processing every gorgeous inch.

Rall was smiling and he turned to give Luke a more complete picture, not upset or concerned that he was standing there like that, and Luke could not stop staring. Luke tried to speak but nothing, but odd sounds escaped his lips which just made Rall's

smile widen.

“Do you like it?” Rall asked in a deep drawl that caused a sharp thrill to chase up Luke's spine. Luke moaned and could not verbalize his thoughts in any other way. He liked everything, and the realization that Rall was pleased and comfortable with his ogling caused a special tingle to race through him. Rall winked and told him to come closer.

He held up his hand, beckoning him forward, but it was impossible to move. There was a disconnect between the part of his mind that locked on to this beautiful body and the part that made his feet move.

"Come closer, sweetheart." Rall's deep voice flowed over him, and finally, Luke snapped out of his lustful trance and began to move slowly, one step at a time. Rall's hand was still reaching for him, and his smile deepened. Somewhere in his mind, he feared that this was a delusion or a misunderstanding. Rall wasn't really offering what he thought he was offering. . . was he?

After a moment of consideration Luke made his statement. “Is it okay if I stay here with you?” He’d found his voice. As he moved closer he bit by bit took his clothes off making his desires clear.

“I’d love to have you stay, Luke.” Rall held him enthralled with those vivid dark blue eyes. Rall was open and accepting, stepping closer and gradually pulling Luke into his arms. Luke felt his breath catching in his throat and excitement spiking in his blood.

It was obvious that Rall wanted this as much as Luke. If this were a dream, he hoped never to wake up.

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Rall heard him approaching and did not bother to cover himself. It was his bedroom if Luke came in then he would see what he saw. The second Luke's eyes fell upon him it became clear that he wanted more from Rall than just kindness and support.

His need was reflected in his eyes as they traveled Rall's body. Rall had never felt so desired in his life, and he soaked up the pleasure and satisfaction it gave him. He didn't scare Luke or make him uncomfortable. Luke could leave. No one was stopping him, but he didn't. After a brief back and forth, Luke found his strength and approached.

Rall was rewarded for his calm patience with a stimulating strip tease. Luke wasn't acting, and he wasn't going to pretend he didn't want what he wanted. The first thing Rall notices is that all of his wounds have healed, leaving behind beautiful, flawless flesh.

His body was just right firm yet full, not too short and not too tall, masculine and yet vulnerable. Luke was the total package as far as Rall was concerned. Then throw in those lovely hazel eyes and the rounded cheeks, and Rall was all in.

Luke was a very attractive man and Rall would have been trying to get with him even if he weren't his beloved. But being his beloved made every thought and every feeling intense and sharp this man was his one and only for ever after and Rall was excited to get things started.

Rall eagerly clutched him by the upper arms and pulled him close as soon as he was within reach. Having Luke come to him made it clear that he wanted this, and there was no undo pressure or perceived expectations. He wanted Luke free and willing in

every way.

"You're beautiful." Rall let the word fall from his lips while running his hands down Luke's arms to grasp his hands. He could see that Luke's desire was building just as his own was making this hard and throbbing. "Do you want me, sweetheart?"

"I want you Rall." He did not hold back or hesitate, and Rall heard the anxious tone in his voice.

"I want you too, baby." Luke gently ran his fingertips down Rall's hard length, eliciting a deep guttural moan from Rall. Nothing had ever felt as good as his beloved's touch, and that was a fact. He kept exploring and touching, sending thrills up and down Rall's back. Then he took Rall's pulsating cock into his gentle grip and began to stroke slowly at first and then with more fervor building a rhythm that was intoxicating.

Rall took Luke's face between his palms and drew him close, first a light kiss, and then as the stroking intensified, the kiss went deep and hungry. Several groans escaped Luke's lips, but he never made any move or indications that he wasn't completely enjoying himself. Rall made a few shallow thrusts into Luke's grip, loving the sensations rushing through him and needing to increase the delicious friction.

He pulled his lips away, panting with excitement. "I'm going to take you," Rall stated, and Luke nodded his head rapidly. Luke then started grinding his hardening cock against Rall's muscled thigh and laid his head on Rall's chest.

"Take me, please." He said breathlessly. "I wanted you the moment I saw you there leaning against the bar. I want you a hundred times more now that I met you and know who you are." That struck Rall and he stilled for a second taking in the sincerity of his words and the depth of his meaning.

“You know me?” Rall questioned softly and lowered his hand to cup Luke’s round ass kneading the ample flesh.

"You're a decent person. You will always help if you can, and you will never hurt me purposely. That's all I need to know. You make me feel safe and seen." The declaration just kept getting more expressive as he continued his explanation.

"I know you too," Rall interjected. "I was attracted to you the minute I laid eyes on you. Your strength, your courage, your ability to look beyond and see yourself there. Not to be drawn in and crippled by the pain." Rall paused and took Luke's lips once more before continuing. Luke kept stroking Rall's cock, bringing him ever closer to the edge.

"Fate brought us together," Luke repeated Rall's off-handed comment from earlier, but now he seemed to understand it. The awakening was taking hold, and the truth of the world was coming clear to him.

"She surely did," Rall said, quickly picking Luke up and tossing him onto the bed. He bounced once with a soft giggle, and then Rall was on top of him, pressing him into the mattress and grinding his hard cock in Luke's. The moans and whimpers were lovely.

He buried his face against Luke's throat and took a small taste of his beloved, just a single bead of the exquisiteness. It hit softly and then entered his system like a freight train roaring through him and setting fires along the way. It was mind-blowing. More than he'd anticipated, and he'd anticipated a lot. Stars and colors filled his vision, and love filled his heart.

Rall retrieved a tube of lube from the side table and covered his fingers liberally before thrusting them into the crevasse in search of Luke's tight hole. The need to claim and make this man his forever was overwhelming him. His vampire was on the

edge of taking control.

Rall slathered Luke's entrance with the slippery substance and then started to press and stretch, going slowly and gently at first, and then built it to a hard thrust and an eager stretch, forcing his fingers inside. The tight embrace, so moist and hot, was making his head absolutely spin with the need to be inside his gorgeous beloved. He began a rapid thrust, pushing as deep as possible, filling him full, and getting him prepared as quickly as possible.

Rall was usually a slow-burn sort of guy who liked to take his time and pleasure his partner as they worked toward their gratification, building a climax that could shatter and wreck. With Luke, he had no control and no thoughts beyond completing the bond and making sure Luke never left him. His throbbing need and reckless craving were swallowing every precaution and every hesitation. He was taking Luke, and he was doing it now.

Luke held him and pressed his cheek against Rall's shoulder. He was in it and not ready to stop. Rall pulled his hand free and then jerked Luke's legs apart before suddenly adjusting his hips and thrusting inside the well-prepared, velvety entrance that lay before him. Nothing had ever felt like this. It was a goal and a journey all in one. He knew what it meant and where it would take him, and he was eager.

"Harder, Rall," Luke spoke through gritted teeth, and Rall immediately started pounding his hips, speeding up and hitting hard.

"Whatever you need, I'm here, baby," Rall whispered into his ear.

"Just you, Rall. I think all I need is you." He chuckled lightly, and Rall abruptly rammed inside, stretching and forcing to new levels. Luke caught his breath and then tightened his grip on Rall.

He was reaching his peak, and he could tell the moment his vampire made his appearance based on Luke's expression. The awareness was touching him, so he was somewhat prepared for what he saw but his eyes still blew wide with wonder. "Wow, look at you." He said hesitantly and took it all in.

"It's who I am, baby," Rall said and quickly regained the shattering level of excitement that pushed him and his beautiful lover over the edge. His breathing stopped, and his heart was beating in his throat when the climax hit him, and Rall sunk his teeth into Luke's shoulder, drinking deeply of the sweetness that was inherently his beloved.

It was a flavor he would forever recognize and forever cherish. The blood filled him with a sense of power and vitality that shook him to the core. The bond was falling into place, and his life was taking on a meaning and filling purpose that went beyond the ordinary.

Luke came when Rall bit his shoulder the explosion of sensation ripped through him, and he exploded with an intensity that was heart stopping. The bite solidified the experience opening his eyes and showing him a reality that was both shocking and exciting. The visions that erupted filling his thoughts and his mind with a world that was so much bigger than the one he had live in.

"Rall." He said his name with respect and awe, completely amazed at the truth that was set before him. He thought his life was destined to pass without note or significance, not that he was opposed to mediocrity, which can be very comfortable, but he had hopes of excitement.

Now he lay here in the arms of a drop fucking dead gorgeous vampire, and they're bonded. The amazing and mysterious man claimed him full-on and completely without uncertainty, with no qualms or faltering. He knew what he wanted, and he took it. Rall ran his tongue over the slight wound, bringing sensations that were

intense and pointed. Luke had a full body shiver, and his skin prickled from head to toe.

"Oh," He moaned soft and low. Rall slid out of him, leaving a sense of loss that was remedied when he took him into his arms and kissed him like it was a matter of life or death. Luke had never felt so wanted and needed and extraordinary. The vampire was his beloved, and although he wasn't completely sure what that entailed, he did know that it was wonderful and forever. That truth came through clearly.

"You're mine now Luke." Rall told him and pushed the hair back from Luke's face. He stared down at him still laying half on top of him and Luke loved every minute of it. The contact left him feeling amazing and complete in so many ways.

Rall explained their connection and the Fated bond that they now shared. He also told him about the awakening that would gradually open his mind to the new reality of the supernatural.

The vampire reality came steadily clearer to him as did Rall's position with Conall Rose within the Rose Coven. The company was a string of businesses some legit and some not, and Master Conall Rose owned them. Rall was a member of security which entailed many things. It was actually pretty easy to follow but it was hard for Luke to believe that he was being brought into something so secret and that Rall had claimed him.

"You're my beloved Luke Fate brought us together she brought you to me when you need your beloved the most. That's how she works making sure that the chosen couple are in a head space to accept and bond." That made sense but again the fact that Fate had given Luke to a man like Rall did not make sense.

"Why would she give you a beloved like me. I work part-time at a florist on Levering, and I do odd jobs to make up the difference. I have no real direction as of

yet, and my decision-making and choices don't indicate a real critical thinker here." He paused and then quickly added while glancing away from Rall's penetrating blue eyes. "I've been told by many, mostly relatives, that if I don't get my shit together soon, I won't amount to anything in life."

"All I ask for is your love and your loyalty. I don't care what you do with your shit, and you don't ever have to get it together if you don't want to. Stay by my side and be mine, and nothing else matters." Rall shifted to the side. "You suit me perfectly, Luke. You're everything I want and everything I need. You're honest and strong, and those are two things that are sadly missing in most people these days."

"The opening of my mind, which came in quite a fantastic rush, showed me so much, including the fact that there is no going back. You claimed me right out of the gate, knowing that it was for life." Luke understood that he was essentially repeating himself, but he needed to make sure that Rall was clear about what he did and who he did it with.

"Why do you think so little of yourself, Luke?" That statement came at him blunt and sharp, and he didn't have a quick answer. Rall sat up, leaning against the pillows, and pulled Luke into his arms and onto his lap, holding him like he was precious. "Feel it, Luke, feel how my heart, my mind, and my body react to you. Sense the connection that binds us together, and please feel what I feel for you." Luke opened up and was swamped with a rush of sensations and feelings so deep they brought tears to his eyes.

This man was not deluded or misguided he was devoted to this union, and he was very quickly falling in love. The love was the surprise, but it was a welcome surprise. It was honest not just a word to placate Luke could see to his soul and his words, all of them, were the truth.

"We've only just begun baby we have a glorious lifetime ahead of us and I am

excited. I'd like for you to move in here with me and if possible the florist job might not work out. The Rose Coven has a certain reputation and if an enemy discovered that you were a beloved they could try to cause you harm." That was a twist he hadn't expected.

"I need my job." Luke pressed and looked up at Rall.

"Do you enjoy working with flower arrangements?"

"Not particularly, but I'm pretty good at it."

"Would you be open to working within the Rose structure if I can find you something suitable?" Rall was sitting there with his hard cock pressing into Luke's ass and asking him questions about desired vocations. Luke couldn't keep his mind on the conversation.

"I would definitely be open to riding your hard cock. That is something I know for sure." Luke moved to straddle Rall's lap, stretching his cheeks apart and opening his channel to welcome that hot, throbbing cock. Rall chuckled wantonly, taking him by the waist and helping to position him for entry.

Luke wiggled his hips, touching his hole to the tip of Rall's cock several times before settling himself and taking him completely into his body. The sensations were wild, sitting there with his huge cock deep inside him throbbing and twitching, setting Luke's nerves on fire.

He looked into Rall's blue eyes and held them as he slid up the hard pole and then slammed back down, taking him deep and to the root. Rall closed his eyes briefly and gave a few shallow thrusts. "You feel so good, Rall." Luke moaned and placed his hands on Rall's shoulders to steady himself just as he began a punishing rhythm, riding him hard and fast.

Rall kept thrusting, increasing the pressure and speed, and both of them stared at one another breathlessly as they raced each other to the climax. The speed and the friction were incredible, and Luke was sure he could feel that thick cock in every inch of his body. He thought his heart would beat right out of his chest when suddenly Rall gripped him hard and thrust forcefully inside, exploding in a glorious fashion, filling him full.

Stream after stream filled him, covering them both with the sweet scent of love and sex and excitement. Luke sat down, fully engulfing Rall's still-hard cock, and wrapped his arms around him.

"You make me so happy, Rall. The worst day of my life turned into the best day because of you. I'll keep your secret. I understand the dangers of such a thing becoming public knowledge. Thank you for letting me see you and your world." Luke couldn't help himself and placed a loving kiss on Rall's plump lips. "I promise to try to be everything that you think that I am." That comment had Rall laughing and rolling Luke to his back.

"You're all I need just as you are, baby." They held each other for a while, and then Rall arranged the bed for sleeping, pulling Luke close into his arms and covering them both with the thick, silky comforter. Luke was in heaven.

Rall told him more about the coven and other supernatural species such as shifter. Luke wasn't looking forward to seeing shifters the very idea gave him the creeps, but he vowed to himself that he would keep an open mind. The information that kept forming and flooding his awareness was trippy, but it was like a cloud shifted and suddenly he could see people for who they really were.

Vampires, covens, packs, shifters and many others all through the city and beyond according to Rall. It was a lot but what a thrill and what a gift to be brought in on something so momentous. The world tripled in size in just a few hours and now it

was his responsibility to keep the secret.

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Rall was amazed at Luke, his resilience, and his acceptance. The fantastic things that suddenly became real and the supernatural world that he now lived in did not scare him. He'd looked right at him while Rall's vampire was clear and showing itself, and he looked enthralled. The sweet expression of amazement and adoration was something that was now seared into his heart. He couldn't love this little human more if he tried. It was meant to be Fate and chosen wisely and with discernment, giving him someone strong and vulnerable, sharp and naive, and most of all, open to extraordinary change.

He snuggled into Rall's side with his head on Rall's shoulder. "I have so much to learn." He muttered.

"You have a lifetime. There is no hurry, my love." Rall turned and kissed his forehead. "Rest, and we'll talk more in the morning." Life was getting pretty damn near perfect as far as Rall was concerned.

Rall got Luke another change of clothes and gave him one of his jackets to wear. He really loved the one from last night commenting on the scent and how it gave him comfort and security. He kept it near him leaving it draped over his lap during breakfast and periodically brought it up to his face and smelled it looking pleased every time.

It touched Rall to see that Luke was easing into the life and asking questions but wasn't frightened or confused. The awakening was marvelous and saved the long and drawn out act of trying to explain the existence of the supernatural to someone who had only ever experienced the natural, the human existence. Shifters were not blessed with such a magical element to their bonding so when a human was involved it got

damned messy.

"I'd like for you to move in as soon as possible." Rall brought it up again, having not gotten a clear answer from Luke earlier.

"I will have to speak with Dale and get my things. I'm not on the lease so I don't have to deal with that." He finished his breakfast and pushed the plate away and pulled his coffee mug closer. His concentration indicated that his mind was elsewhere.

"I'll handle this for you and help you move. Dale is not a factor in your decision." Rall tried to tone down a harsh retort, but it still came out with an edge. It aggravated him to hear Luke coaching his decisions based on Dale's comfort. "Fuck him, Luke. You have a new life, and that man has no part in it." He was blessed with a cute smile and a soft chuckle. His beloved was a treasure, but his soft heart was a liability when it came to his user friends.

He heard a phone go off, and Luke pulled out his cell phone and looked at it. His face fell immediately, and the previous agitation returned. "What's wrong?" Rall asked, concerned, and at first, Luke simply shook his head, but Rall persisted.

"It's Adam; he's been calling and messaging all night and all morning." That was a name that Rall definitely did not want to hear.

"Block him, ignore him; he doesn't matter anymore," Rall responded.

"He's making veiled threats."

"Like what?" Rall wanted to kill him and put the matter behind them immediately, but it was obvious that Luke was not on board yet.

"My reputation, my friends, family. He's already starting to lie about the breakup. He doesn't scare me, Rall, and he no longer has power over me. This isn't me trying to placate him or persuade him to stop calling me names." Rall listened closely, not sure where this was headed. "He left me in pieces last night, but then there was you, and my life lit up in ways that I could not have imagined. He means nothing now and . . ."

His words trailed off, and Rall cut in.

"And now you want to face him and finish this." It was understandable, and there was probably value in confronting him, but it did not set well with Rall. His vampire instincts were restless. This didn't strike him as a good idea, but he did not want to be perceived as trying to control his newly bonded beloved.

"Yes, exactly." He burst and then added. "I'll arrange it so that we meet in a public place like the park."

"Mid-City Park is just a few blocks away. It's usually well populated, and there are places for you to go if things take a turn." Rall was trying to say the right things while, in his mind, he was planning to follow and keep watch. His beloved would not need to seek help if things went south; Rall would be there to handle it.

Luke stared for a few seconds and then nodded. "That's a good idea." Luke messaged Adam and set up the meeting to take place in an hour. It seemed rather rushed, but it was probably better to get it over with. As soon as the time was set, Luke started to appear nervous, which didn't sit well with Rall.

"You don't have to do this." He reminded him.

"I want him out of my head and out of my life permanently." He was adamant, so Rall left it there.

"Do you want me to drive you?"

“No, I’ll walk. I need to handle this on my own.”

“Understood, baby.” Rall nodded curtly.

Rall put in a call to Drakon while Luke prepared himself mentally for the meet up. Rall was dead set against it but there was nothing he could do except be there if needed. The thought of that prick Adam threatening his beloved set his blood boiling and if he so much as looked at Luke wrong, Raff would gladly end him.

“Well, I was hoping you’d wear off some pent-up energy but never thought you'd find your beloved in the process. Now you can stop being jealous and start enjoying your own Fated bond. Maybe you'll be more focused on the job now and less fucking mean.” Drakon laughed. Drakon was death on two feet, so for him to call someone mean was significant.

“I wasn’t mean, and I was definitely not jealous.” Rall tried to defend himself, but it was useless. He knew in his heart that he was mean, vicious even and so jealous he could hardly see straight in regard to the number of bonds that were taking place while he sat on the sidelines. “Okay maybe I had a mood thing going but I was handling it.” He laughed.

"You were not handling it, but it appears all is as it should be now," Drakon responded sharply, and Rall did not make any further denials. He changed the subject giving Drakon the run down on what had taken place.

“Is the fucker dead?” Drakon barked.

“Yes, Trent tracked him down while I was dealing with Luke.” Rall was touched by his concern.

“Good.” He stated. “We don’t need that sort of bullshit happening at the Rose.”

"Agreed." Rall then explained the pending situation with the ex and asked permission to kill if necessary. It was a human, so death measures in such cases required authorization.

"You have permission to do whatever you deem necessary to keep your beloved safe and well."

"Thank you."

"Keep me posted."

"Yes, sir."

Luke understood Rall's reluctance to support his meeting with his Adam. He was making it clear that there was nothing between them and Luke could feel that Rall knew that to be true. The bond that they struck last night brought their emotions and forward for one another and truth between them became a natural state of being.

With that said, he still felt awkward meeting Adam, but in his heart, he needed this closure to look him in the eyes and tell him to get fucked. He was ready and went to find Rall who had excused himself to make a phone call. He found him in the kitchen leaning on the cupboard, looking drawn and pensive.

"I can handle myself, Rall. I'll be back shortly, but I need to face this bastard."

"I know." Rall straightened and walked over and took Luke into his arms squeezing him close to his chest wrapping him in the security of his arms. Luke felt the peace and calm melt into him. Rall's presence was a balm that cured all.

"Be safe, baby." He said and then released him. Luke nodded not as sure as he had been about following through with this meet up. He paused briefly and then Rall

walked him out of the warehouse to the main street.

No further words were shared but the tension was thick. Luke wondered if he was doing the right thing and kept looking back at Rall as he continued down the street to the park. His heart was telling him to go back but he'd made such an issue about going that he would feel ridiculous turning around now.

He kept his eyes forward and tried to suppress the growing desire to abandon this meeting. He'd been so adamant about setting the record straight and making it clear to that cheating bastard that they were done and over that he failed to consider what it might feel like to see him again. Nerves began stirring and growing tight in his stomach, and if he had an ounce of sense, he'd turn around.

Suddenly he was at the entrance of the park and knew he had to follow through he wasn't so fragile or vulnerable that he needed to run. He would not be that person. Rall his sexy vampire lover deserved better he deserved a partner that was whole and stable and possessed no unsettled emotional business.

Luke pressed on toward the stone bench under the oak that Adam had spoken of and pushed everything from his mind except to end this mess and free himself. Adam was already there sitting on the bench when Luke arrived. Seeing him sent a jolt of revulsion through him and he stopped for a second before continuing on.

Adam turned to look at him with that familiar sneer and didn't stand until Luke was a few feet from the bench. Luke stopped and crossed his arms, waiting for whatever Adam was going to use as an opener to this discussion.

Adam stood and took a couple of steps toward him. "Don't make this a bigger issue than it needs to be. You knew I was seeing other people so why all the indignant outrage? You're being ridiculous." He took another step toward Luke who abruptly stepped back.

“I only came here to tell you we’re over no second chances no lets work this out, we’re done.” Luke was proud of how calm and forceful the words came to him.

“Don’t fucking think so Luke. Nothing ends until I say so.” That was unexpected but Luke held his ground feeling safe in the public park.

"That's awfully tough talk for such a lame-ass loser." Luke didn't feel anything for this guy except revulsion. Looking at him now, he found it hard to believe he'd ever cared for this piece of shit. It was then that Luke realized they were in a section of the park that was somewhat isolating. He looked around quickly, noticing they were mostly surrounded by tall, thick hedges. Of course, that bastard would choose this spot to meet.

"No one is going to save you bitch." Adam snarled. He turned a crimson red and lunged at Luke, who tried to turn and run. Adam clutched his forearm and jerked him backward. "On your knees." He ground out the words between clenched teeth and dug his fingers into Luke's flesh.

Panic was starting to set in because Luke knew he wasn't strong enough to defeat him. That was followed by a wash of regret for not taking Rall up on his offer to come along, and then the scene changed.

There was a blur of something moving fast and then Adam flew backward onto the concrete walkway with Rall on top of him he had a hand on Adam's throat and a knee in the middle of his chest. Luke stood there immobile, suffering from both shock and awe. Where did he come from and how did he know? Rall was a man of wonder and style.

"Get off me, you freak." Adam sputtered, but to no avail.

"Do you want him dead or just out of your life?" Rall asked Luke in a tone so flat and

formal that it caused Adam to explode in panic. He thrashed around hopelessly and tried frantically to get away, but there was no getting away from Rall.

“I want him out of my life. I want him to forget he ever met me, and I want him to suffer for what he has done.” Luke was very clear and succinct with his request, knowing in his heart that Rall was deadly serious. If he'd asked for death, Rall would have given it to him. He could feel it in his heart and in his bones.

Rall was glad he followed. After he got a good look at that fucker Adam, he recognized him from the Blood Rose. The man had frequented the place for years and it was clear that he had been cheating on Luke for the whole of their time together. Then, he had the nerve to stand there and try to intimidate Luke into not ending the relationship. The guy really needed to die, but this one had to be Luke's choice.

Rall placed his hand on the side of Adam's head and began a mind sweep, eliminating all memories of Luke and their time together. He then added a nugget of despair that would haunt him forever. He bent down and whispered into his ear. "You will never know love or trust for the remainder of your life." Rall then stood up and walked over to Luke.

“He is no longer your problem sweetheart.” Rall put his arm around Luke and pulled him close to his side. They watched as Adam struggled to get to his feet looking utterly lost and alone. His eyes darted around frantically only briefly landing on Rall and Luke and then stumbled away.

“What did you do?” Luke asked.

“I took his memories.”

“Thank you, Rall.” Luke moved up to stand tightly to his side. “And thank you for saving me . . . again.”

“No problem.” Rall dropped a quick peck on the top of his head and then turned him toward the path leading out of the small grotto.

"I didn't expect him to get physical, not in the park. I thought I could tell him we were over, and then, well, we would be over." Luke's voice was small and weak.

“It’s over baby he will never be back.” Rall walked him out of the park and back down the street toward the warehouse. His vampire needed to get Luke out of danger and back where he was safe and protected. Adam was no longer a threat, but the incident had left some lingering uneasiness chief among his concerns was Luke’s inability to sense the presence of danger.

“I can’t even say that I hate him because I don’t. I feel nothing at all for him he’s like a stranger now and that feels so good.” Rall smiled and pulled him close once again. As they were entering the warehouse Luke asked if it would be possible to go to his apartment so he could pack some things.

"Sure." Rall saw it as an opportunity to get all of Luke's things and end his lease. But this time, he wasn't going to let him go alone. "I'm going with you." Luke smiled shyly at his statement.

"I'd appreciate it if you would, but I'd like to talk with Dale alone. He's a pain in the ass, and I don't want him talking shit about you."

“I don’t care what he has to say if he bothers me, I’ll kill him.” Rall stated matter of fact and Luke barked a laugh.

"He's unpleasant but probably doesn't deserve to die," Luke responded just as casually. Rall loved this guy more and more every minute. "I just want to get my stuff and get out."

That sounded easy enough, but Rall was beginning to discover that the way something looked was not always the way it was when dealing with Luke and his associates. Adam was clearly an angry, volatile bully, yet Luke saw him as somehow reasonable enough to have a discussion.

Rall shook his head at the memory of Adam going at his beloved. He wished Luke had given him permission to end him. People like Adam weren't good for anyone. Rall wasn't sure what sort of man Dale was but his hopes for reasonable were not high. Rall took one of the SUV's that had plenty of cargo space and they headed off to Luke's apartment.

"How long have you shared a place with Dale?" He asked.

"I had my own place but lost my job and got on part-time at the Winsome florists, so I couldn't afford rent on my own. Dale had an ad, and I answered, and that was two years ago."

"Where did you work before Winsome?" Rall was just curious and wanted to know all he could about his beloved.

"I was a real estate agent but not a good one according to my broker. I have a lot of difficulty lying to people I just can't do it, even bending the truth is hard so I didn't work out and they cut me loose." He sounded sad.

"Is it something you would still like to try?" Rall asked.

"Yes, someday when I learn how to mesh both marketing and truth." Luke smiled.

"They're not all liars, baby." He reached over and squeezed Luke's knee. "Let's look into it later. Is your license still current?"

"Yes, I have it in escrow." Rall loved the look of hopefulness that blossomed across Luke's face. He would do anything necessary to hold onto that expression. They pulled up out front of Luke's apartment building and got out.

"You don't have to come upstairs with me. I can grab my things. I don't have a lot; it's just my personal stuff. The rest belongs to Dale or the landlord." Luke tried to assure him, but in Rall's mind, he was already planning how he was going to watch over his beloved.

"I'll come up, but I won't go in that way. I can help you carry your things." He didn't wait for permission and headed inside the building with Luke hurrying beside him. At the door, he stepped to the side and leaned his back against the wall, crossing his arms on his chest.

"I'll hurry." He said and Rall nodded. He closed the door behind him but he could hear clearly everything from inside the apartment.

Luke entered, thinking that the encounter would be smooth since Dale had wanted him to move out for months. He had another friend that he was keen to room with and Luke was in the way. Unfortunately, Dale was like Adam in that they wanted to make the decisions and not have the decisions made for them.

"You can't leave." Dale burst and ran into the living room to stand forcefully in front of Luke.

"Yes, I can." Luke made to push past him to gather more of his things from his bedroom, but Dale kept grabbing at him, demanding that he explain himself.

"I have another place, and I can move in today. You've been trying to get me to leave you said that you have a friend you want to room with so why are you trying to give me grief. I already paid for this month so you're fine financially until your friend

moves in.” Luke stopped and turned on Dale. “What the fuck is your problem?”

"Adam wants you to stay here, and he's going to make my life hell if I let you leave," Dale admitted with little to no shame.

“You were working for Adam the entire time that Adam and I were together.” Luke stated the obvious.

"Of course, he's an old friend, and he's useful, whereas you're usually just in the way." Damn, he's bold. Luke shook his head in disbelief.

“I’ve already dealt with Adam, and he is no longer my problem or yours apparently.” Luke gave a half smile and disappeared into his room and finished packing with Dale still on his heels demanding that he stay until Adam says that he can leave.

“You’re delusional if you think I’m hanging around here until I get the all-clear from that idiot.” Luke pushed past him and set his things by the door. Dale rushed him and tried pulling him back from the door and back into the living room.

"What the hell, Dale. Let me go."

"I can't let you leave. Adam will kill me." He muttered while desperately trying to drag Luke away from the door. Luke didn't have to guess about what was going to happen next.

A sharp kick and the door swung open bouncing off the opposite wall and standing there was Rall looking as angry as he had the last time. His dark eyes hit Dale and he was on him in an instant. Dale fell backward to the carpeted floor trying to evade Rall’s grip, but he didn’t have a chance. Rall had him by the back of his neck and lifted him off the floor before tossing him hard across the room.

“Do you have all your things?” Rall asked as he turned to look back over his shoulder at Luke.

"Yes, it's all here." Luke pointed at the two bags by the door. Rall turned back to Dale, who remained sprawled out on the floor and bent over him.

"You fucking touch Luke again, and I will kill you. You won't be the first, and you won't be the last, so keep that in mind." Rall stared at him for a moment and then placed his hand on the side of his head like he had with Adam. He then straightened and walked back to where Luke was standing.

“I cleared his mind of you apart from the fact you were a roommate for a short period of time and now he needed to find another. I then put him to sleep and when he wakes up, he will not remember you. He will not bother you again.” Rall paused and looked back at Dale who remained crumpled on the floor. “Damn Luke, you really need to find some new friends.” He grabbed the two bags and headed out with Luke beside him.

Luke could not argue with that statement. He thought Adam was his friend he thought he was his boyfriend but that fell apart so fast that it couldn't have ever been real. As far as Dale, he never considered him a close friend, but he thought they were friendly again he'd misjudged grossly and paid for that mistake. “I think Fate gave me you so that I would have at least one person in my life that was honest and true.”

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Rall tossed the bags into the backseat and pulled Luke into his arms, backing up to lean against the passenger side door. "You have such a big, pure heart. You're a good man, Luke, and I do not deserve you, but I will fight to the death anyone who tries to take you from me." Rall took his lips in a sensuous kiss, thrusting his tongue inside, tasting and mapping the moist interior, learning everything about his man.

Rall would gladly fight all of Luke's fights for him from now until the end of time. His life and safety were Rall's responsibility now, and he would keep him out of harm's way. A sweet innocent like Luke deserved nothing but sunshine and happiness, and Rall would do his absolute best to deliver.

It was just past two in the afternoon when they returned to Rall's apartment, and he was hoping for some time alone with his beloved. The morning had been eventful and now he needed the touch of his sweet love. His vampire was aching to secure their bond once again. But duty intruded on his plans.

"The guy who assaulted your beloved had accomplices," Trent called and captured Rall's attention immediately. "They worked together isolating a target and then played look out for one another. That's why the piece of shit was able to get away at first."

"Do you know where they are?" Rall was curt in his response, eager for more information.

"We already caught one of them, and he gave up the others before we killed him." Trent paused and then added. "I thought you might want to come with us. There are two more, and the fuckers were spotted at that strip joint next to the bowling alley on

Kimball."

"I'm going with you."

"Meet me in the garage in ten." With that, he closed the call. When he turned around, he saw Luke standing there, silent and expectant. He reached out and pulled him into his arms.

"There was a gang of them?" Luke sputtered out the sentence and pressed his face to Rall's chest and trembled.

"They're no danger to you, sweetheart," Rall assured.

"I know," Luke responded. "I'm safe with you. I'm always safe with you."

"Always." Rall kissed him and hugged him tight.

"You're going with Trent."

"Yes."

"Okay, but be safe please. I can't lose you Rall you're the only honest thing I know."

"Wait here, and I'll be back. Then we can get you settled into your new home, and I can show you how soft my bed is." Rall teased, and Luke chuckled.

"I quite enjoyed the softness last night, but I look forward to another demonstration."

"I won't be long." Rall dropped another kiss, and then he was gone.

Luke started to unpack his two bags but wasn't sure what to do with his things, so he

stopped and went to the kitchen for a glass of water. He was surprised by how at home he felt in Rall's space; it was as if he'd always lived there. Luke was awkward by nature, so it was difficult for him to get comfortable anywhere new, but this was different.

This place and Rall felt like home to him when no place had ever felt like home, not even home. His family were cold, not abusive but distant so home never really felt like a safe space. The apartments he lived in just felt like a temporary shelter, they weren't ever overly warm or welcoming.

He loved Rall, he loved everything about him. The man was magnificent. The supernatural aspect was a hill to climb but he'd get there. Having a sexy vampire as his one and only would never get old or boring. Rall was the answer to every prayer that had ever crossed his consciousness.

Rall had ask that he resign from his job at the florist and told him that he'd help him explore real estate again. Luke wasn't sure if he was cut out for real estate, but he wasn't against giving it another try. He glanced at his watch a figured his boss Sidney was in until five so he could meet with him and let him know that he would not be returning to work.

The florist was only a few blocks away to the north. It was a decent part of town, and the business was considered respectable apart from the suspected money laundering. They'd treated him well, and he wanted to meet with Sidney personally. He could get there and back before Rall knew he had left.

He called a taxi and headed out to the main street. The ride was short just three blocks to the north from the Blood Rose, but it spanned two very different neighborhoods. Stepping inside he saw Ross at the counter looking uncharacteristically stressed. Ross was a laid back take life as easy as possible kind of guy but today he looked ready to burst.

“What’s wrong.” Luke enquired softly while looking around. Ross glanced up at him and gave a tight shake of his head.

“You should leave.” Ross whispered and Luke wasn’t going to question. He quickly turned on his heels and headed for the door. A shot rang out in the back room then another and Ross dove for the floor as did Luke. Two more shots and then a man came rushing out of the back and grabbed Ross.

Luke was trying to quickly crawl to the door, but he was caught and hauled to the back room along with Ross. The place was a mess of flowers and pots and supplies broken and strewn around the room along with broken tables and several gashes in the walls.

Some serious shit had gone down before the gunplay, and Luke was panic-stricken. He could not breathe, and his heart was beating so fast that he thought he would die of a heart attack before any of these men had the chance to kill him. His brain was not accepting that, once again, he was in such a position.

This day had been a nightmare. Nothing in his life apart from Rall, the most amazing man in the fucking world, was what he thought it was. Had he been so damn blind that he didn't see the hate, the pain, the cheap, and the lies. One of the shooters hit Luke across the side of his head with his pistol, knocking him to the cold, concrete floor. "Stay down there." The guy shouted and then turned on Ross.

"Where's the money, Ross?" He said and pressed the gun barrel to Ross's cheek. Luke could see the floor beyond the workbench from his vantage point on the floor, and lying there were Sidney, the manager, and Willard, the owner, and they weren't moving. Blood pooled between them, and Luke's heart slammed into his ribs. His chances of survival were slim.

Regret swallowed him whole. All he had to do was wait like Rall had asked, and none

of this would happen to him now. Every stupid assed decision he made today was disastrous, and now this one was probably going to kill him.

He was going to give his life for a fucking part-time job at a floral shop, and it wasn't even a good floral shop. He knew they were probably doing illegal things, but he thought since he wasn't involved, he was in the clear. Luke minded his own business, but he was going to end up paying for this lapse in judgment.

Rall and Trent found the cougar shifters at the strip bar. Fortunately, the bar was owned by a wolf pack, so they had no qualms with Rall and Trent dealing with the cougars as they saw fit. They tried to make a run for it when confronted, which was exactly what Rall and Trent had hoped.

They admitted to helping to snatch Luke at the Blood Rose along with many others during the last few months. They were cocky and unremorseful, thinking it was funny and that the humans deserved to be brutalized. They tried to take off out the back when they realized they were in trouble, but they didn't get far. Rall and Trent easily caught them before they made it to the back door. They wouldn't be a problem for anyone going forward.

The scene was cleaned up, and they were heading out when Rall was struck with a familiar feeling of panic. It was Luke, and the level of fear that spiked through Rall made him run for the SUV. Trent followed and managed to dive into the passenger seat as Rall tore away from the curb and raced through traffic.

“What happened?” Trent asked while closing his door and buckling his seatbelt.

“Luke, something is wrong. His heart is racing, and his panic is choking me.” Rall stared straight ahead focusing on following the call of his beloved. This day had been terrible for Luke and Rall should never have left him. The chances of further chaos were high and Rall should have been with him.

“He’ll be okay Rall. Fate will get you there in time.” Trent’s words gave him fleeting comfort as a fresh wave of terror washed over Rall. So many emotions debilitating heartbreaking emotions were tearing at him, and they all belonged to Luke.

"It's a florist," Trent exclaimed. "Didn't you say he worked at a florist shop?"

“He wouldn’t have gone into work.” Rall was filled with disbelief. “What the hell could happen to him at a flower shop?” He parked haphazardly and they both jumped from the car and raced inside.

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The minute he entered the air was thick with terror and alarm. The smell of blood was present, but it wasn't Luke's they quietly made their way to the back where voices could be heard. Rall glanced at Trent, and he moved to the left and Rall moved to the right. They were double doors with no windows so once they entered they had to be prepared to act quick and decisive.

Someone was making threats and demanding their money, so that painted a familiar picture, and the smell of blood in the room indicated that someone was probably dead. There was a sharp scream, and Rall and Trent burst into the room, moving at incredible speed. Rall leaped on the man looming over Luke and, without pause, tore out the man's throat.

Trent attacked the other two. The first went down like a rock and didn't get up again, and the other tried to run. Trent caught him easily and ended him like his friend with a slice to the throat. Luke got up and jumped into Rall's arms, wrapping himself around the man, still desperate and afraid. Rall held him, soothing and calming him with his touch and his words.

"You go ahead and take Luke home and I'll clean this up." Rall looked over at the man by the table who had been the one to scream and Luke informed him that his name was Ross.

"He just works here," Luke told him. "He isn't involved." Rall nodded his head and did not correct his beloved, but he could read the man and knew that he was very much involved. But unlike the others, he wasn't a killer. Trent looked at Rall and nodded his head, indicating he'd clear the man's mind and leave it there.

Rall swung Luke up into his arms and headed out to the SUV. They didn't speak until Luke was buckled in, and they were on their way home, and it was Luke who broke the silence.

"I'm sorry, I should have waited." Luke was contrite, but Rall was still feeling the effects of the terror that Luke had gone through and stayed silent, not wanting to say anything he would regret later. He nodded but kept his eyes on the road. Luke stared at him with those sad eyes and continued.

"I won't be so stupid again. I know that I've been nothing but stupid today and I know it will be hard for you to trust my judgement going forward." Luke said and took a deep breath and then shifted his gaze to stare out the side window. "This was my job and I thought I should face them when I told them I was quitting. I should have called but thinking ahead doesn't seem to be something I'm very good at."

"I'm glad you're out of there, but I need you to make me a promise." Rall began.

"Absolutely anything." Luke leaned in eager to make amends. He didn't need to make amends he was just being the pure heart that he was, and Rall was going to have make it his life's duty to protect him from all the evil in the world. Rall pulled into the garage and parked he then turned to Luke giving him his full attention.

"I need you to always tell me where you are going. It won't be forever just until we get the shit cleared out of your life. You are precious, and you are kind, and it's too bad that so many have taken advantage of that and taken advantage of you." He took Luke's hand and held it.

Luke nodded and raked his left hand roughly through his hair. The man was so beautiful, and he didn't even realize it. "The owner of the floral shop was hooked up with some bad people, and when he didn't do as they asked, things went bad for him." Rall was trying to convey the situation in a way that did not escalate Luke's fear, but he was also being truthful. "Were you aware that he was a criminal?"

"I had a hunch that something was going on, but I thought Sidney and Wilfred were victims, not real participants, so I kept my head down and minded my own business. I assumed they would work it out."

"Wilfred Some the owner was in it up to his eyeballs he was not a nice person thankfully he didn't pull you in."

"What about Ross?" Luke started to question, and that was a good sign.

"He's in it as deep as the others." Luke looked pained and looked away.

"I will always let you know where I'm going and until I get a handle on the truth and the lies in my life, I'd appreciate it if you would accompany me. I would prefer to have you there when the shit goes down rather than playing catch up." That statement brought a smile to Rall and a self deprecating chuckle from Luke.

"I'm by your side, baby, always." He leaned forward and took Luke's lips in a kiss that cured everything. He plunged deep, tasting and renewing their connection and glorying in the taste that was his beloved. The sweet, subtle flavor of sunshine and warmth infused the air around them, and Rall swept Luke up into his arms and carried him to the elevator.

"I love you, Rall." Luke said the words plain and clear and they hit Rall's heart melting it instantly. No one had ever said those words to him before and he was unprepared for the power that they held especially when they were spoken by his beloved. He forced back the emotion that came roaring to the surface and hugged Luke flush to his chest.

"I love you too Luke. I can't imagine my life without you now. You've become my heart, my center, and I ache for you." Every shield had dropped and all hesitation was gone he showed Luke who he was and held nothing back.

They stared at one another letting everything show and Rall quickly carried him to their apartment before setting him on his feet in their living room. Rall never broke eye contact as all secrets and every emotion were shared the awareness had opened every door and their bond was complete.

He kept Luke in the circle of his arms and Luke had his hands placed lightly on Rall's hips. "You're perfect Rall and I love every inch of you. Thank you for accepting me into your heart and your life. I will live and strive every day to make you not regret it." Rall smiled a soft smile that was something he only used with Luke. It was a smile of love and peace and a happiness he thought he'd never know.

Luke took one short step toward him and lifted his face up for another kiss and Rall was not going to deny. He took his lips in another hungry, possessive embrace and casually walked him backward to the back hall and to their bedroom. He didn't release his lips until they stood inside the bedroom and Rall began removing Luke's clothes.

"I want to mark you and claim you again." He said. "I want to love you completely."

"I am all yours Rall. Now and forever just yours." Those were the precise words for this moment. Luke was a handful and it was going to take work and attention along with lots of love to keep him safe and well but Rall was more than up to the challenge.

"And I am all yours, Luke." He responded, and suddenly, Luke pulled at Rall's clothing.

"I need you, Rall, right now." Luke gushed.

Rall stripped fast and effortlessly and then removed Luke's remaining clothes. His beloved needed him now, and Rall wasn't going to disappoint. "You're gorgeous, baby." Rall swept his eyes over Luke, worshiping every inch of his body, and then he

locked on those eyes, soulful and innocent. He took Luke's hand and placed it on his cock, and Luke took it from there.

The strokes were long and tight and brought Rall instantly to the edge of release, but he pulled back, intent on enjoying the touch of his beloved a little longer. To his surprise, Luke dropped to his knees and took Rall's thick length into his mouth and down his throat. The sensations that tore through him were intense and urgent and took him headlong, right over the cliff.

Rall came hard, filling Luke's mouth and throat with stream after stream of his essence as the force and beauty tore through him, leaving him with the absolute certainty that this man was his world. Luke sucked him dry greedy, and thorough, making Rall ache for more and scream for relief. He took Luke under the arms and lifted him to his feet.

"I need you now." He repeated Luke's words from earlier. He was primed and ready for another round. Rall backed Luke up to the bed and helped him to lie down and get settled. He massaged his hips and thighs before getting up onto the bed.

Luke slid his legs apart, beckoning him forward with a look that melted everything inside Rall. "I am never happier than when I am with you," Rall told him and stretched out, rubbing his hard length against Luke's throbbing cock. "You ready?" He cocked a half smile and winked, and Luke instantly wrapped his legs around Rall's waist and started eagerly reaching for him.

Luke had begun stretching and getting himself ready while pleasuring Rall, so he slathered up his fingers, and it took very little time to have him ready and wanting. Rall slid his hips to the side and slowly thrust inside, taking his time stretching and filling him gradually. Luke was panting, his chest rising and falling rapidly while he waited for Rall to be completely seated.

Rall thrust to the base and started a tantalizing rhythm of circular motions that

brought the animal out in Luke. He gripped Rall's shoulders and growled a deep gravel sound that rose from the depth of his throat. His eye narrowed, and he lifted his hips sharply, driving Rall's cock deeper. He followed that with more thrusts, rapid and sharp, pushing all he had into the connection and lighting up their needs and desires.

The scent of sex and want filled the room, heavy and demanding both men, giving everything they had and everything they felt. Rall hammered his hips, forcing himself deep, and Luke took every inch. He lost himself in the glorious embrace, closing his eyes and opening his entire being to this one man who welcomed the love of his life.

The climax hit him fast like a bolt of lightning, and he exploded, filling his beloved full once again, marking him inside, and then he struck, biting down on the little scar. He sunk his teeth inside the tender flesh and drank, absorbing the energy and feeling rejuvenated. He loved this man, and every part of his body burned for him. The presence of this man, this little human in his life, filled him with a level of love and pride he'd never known.

He pulled his teeth free and licked the scar, healing it instantly. The lovely moan and tremble were a bonus to the warm wave of pure ecstasy that washed through him. Luke was one in a million, maybe a billion. There would never be anyone else for him. This man was his life.

"I love you, sweetheart, and I will always be with you. I will always protect you." He stretched out beside Luke and took him into his arms, snuggling him tight to his body.

"I am so happy right now finally something good has come my way." Luke held him and pressed his face into his chest. "I probably should tell you that you haven't met the worst of my relations yet. My family is the original toxic family. They are a unpleasant and I see them rarely but . . ." Luke trailed off.

“But they know how to push your buttons.” Rall finished the sentence for him and rolled his eyes.

“Every time.” Luke chimed in with a sad smile.

"You have me now, Luke, and you have the perks of being the beloved of a vampire. Soon, you will be able to see through manipulation, and you will learn to stand strong in defense of yourself. They are no match for the new Luke Harris. You have my promise on that." Rall assured and kissed his forehead. "And if all else fails, call me, and I will kill them for you." Luke laughed as if Rall were kidding . . . he was not kidding.

THE END