

HYPERN ISN'T
A TOWN TO
MESS WITH...

CREATURES
OF HYPERN

TEDDY GUTIERREZ

Creatures of Hyfern

Teddy Gutierrez

Also, by Teddy Gutierrez

The Orcas Series

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~Ace of Hearts**

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**Yet to be Rereleased/ Yet to be Released

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This has become one of my
favourite pieces of work
since *Ace of Hearts*.

Between it having one of my
favourite characters and
one of the best responses
since *My Mate* and *I Will
Find You*, it's just perfect.

Thank you for supporting
this book.

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Introduction

I can hear it; his heart pounding and blood pumping. I can smell him; beads of sweat on his skin. The smell is intoxicating.

His fangs descend; his lips peeling back to reveal his readied teeth. With a hiss, he lunges - his teeth plunge into the monster's neck.

They warned Jakub that he may not be able to recover from the kill, the guilt might overtake him. But after more than six million lives being destroyed by the monster and his allies - Jakub decided it was worth the risk.

Slowly the life drains out of him - the monster gradually becoming limp in Jakub's arms. He tried to fight; he tried to struggle. He shot Jakub to try and defend himself but

shooting someone who is bulletproof, in a nuclear bunker, probably wasn't the best idea in the world. The bullet ricocheted off of Jakub and bounced around the room before hitting the monster's wife, killing her.

The last drop of blood leaves the monster's body - Jakub drops him. His blood-red eyes blink rapidly as he tries to hold back his hunger once more. They were right - it would be hard for him to recover. His desire has been amplified by the kill.

Jakub runs - he flees the scene in time for the soldiers to find their supreme leader partially mutilated and his wife dead beside him.

In years to come, it was said that the monster had killed his wife and himself after he'd heard about the Allied troops' victory. But this young Vampire knew different - he'd live with the knowledge that he drank Hitler dry and freed his people from the Nazis.

80 Years Later

What does a Vampire do on a night? Jake works - just like everyone else. Pouring drinks at the Oak Stake. Humans come and go - no harm done, at least not by him.

“Hey, Jake,” Shay says, giving Jake a wave as they sit down in their usual seat at the bar.

Jake walks over with a cocktail shaker in hand. “Hi, Shay. What can I get you tonight?” He smiles, his pointy canines on display. While most of the humans that come in gawk at them - jokingly calling Jake a Vampire or a Leech - Shay knows the truth. How could they not? They’ve known each other for the best part of Jake’s vampire existence.

“I’ll have a pornstar martini, please. I have a craving for passionfruit,” they giggle.

Jake nods, pouring the drink into the bottom half of the shaker before closing it up and beginning to shake.

“Also,” they say, leaning over the bar top. “How do you feel about the new name of the pub? Oak Stake, it’s a bit... Close to home?”

Jake laughs, pouring the drink into a glass and topping it with a slice of passionfruit. “Stakes only put me to sleep – I feel like humans would be okay working for a company called *the sleeping pill*.” Serving Shay their drink before moving onto another customer.

Shay chuckles and presses their lips together, watching Jake as he begins making another drink. “Silly Jakey...”

“Oi!” A man shouts as he stands at the bar. “Can I get some fucking service over here, ya Nancy?”

Jake lets out a laugh of anger, pressing his lips together as he clenches his jaw while serving a customer. His hunger heightening as his rage grows.

“C’mon! I’ve been here for about five minutes for fuck sake!”

He finishes serving the customer and heads over to the arrogant mess of a man stood at the end of the bar - too close to Shay for his liking. “If you’re going to be like that, you can leave.”

“No. I want a drink!” The man roars, leaning over the bar and getting in Jake’s face.

Jake sighs, taking his apron off as he goes to the end of the bar, lifting the hatch to leave and grabs the man. Directing him towards the door - his inhuman strength

stopping the man from being able to resist. He pushes him, the bouncer grabs the man.

“I just want a drink!” The man shouts - tears welling in his eyes.

“Should’ve thought about that before being a dick.” Jake turns, heading back to the bar.

“Hey, are you okay?” Shay asks as Jake walks back past them to get behind the bar once again.

Jake bobs his head. “I’m fine... I do need a drink though,” he says, licking his lips - feeling parched.

Shay presses their lips together. “Want me to go get you some?”

Shaking his head, he takes Shay’s hand and kisses it. “Thank you, though,” he chuckles before going back to serving customers.

Shay sighs, watching him walk away - knowing that he's in pain. But also knowing he won't accept help...

Chapter One

“Jakub!” His mother screams as she clutches his sister in her arms – blood on her hands, tears streaming down her face.

He roars as he tries to pull himself out of the hands of the Gestapo. Women lined up in the city centre – women of the rebellion – waiting for their lives to end. A Nazi officer waltz over to Jakub’s mother – a broad grin on his face. Pulling his gun out of its holster, he points it at Jakub’s mother. Looking back to Jakub, his grin widens into a smile – keeping eye contact as he pulls the trigger.

Jakub’s knees give way as he lets out a painful scream – tears running down his cheeks as he wails.

The Gestapo pushes him to the ground – letting him fall as they pay their attention to the rebels.

Shots fire – a further twelve bodies hit the ground – prompting for the Gestapo to leave. The Nazi officer going with them.

Crawling across the courtyard – he makes his way to his family – their bodies lying limp on the ground.

He kneels as he cradles them. They were all he had left; and now, he has nothing.

“Jakub?” A woman questions, making her way over to him.

Jakub peers up, his mouth gaping open as he tries to find the words to say but coming up speechless. “I don’t know what to do...”

The woman waves to the people collecting the bodies – beckoning for them to come over. She crouches down, taking Jakub’s

hand – a sombre smile on her face. “We’ll take care of them. But you need to go.”

“Go where? This is my home!” He proclaims, a pained expression on his face as his voice breaks. The women taking the bodies from him, carrying them away.

Shaking her head, the woman helps him to his feet. “I’m surprised they didn’t take you tonight. If you don’t go, they’ll come back for you...”

“They’d take me to where my father is?” Jakub questions, his eyes widening.

She sighs, “they’d take you to the mass graves... But you wouldn’t live to see them.”

He crosses his arms over his chest as he tries to console himself. “Then what do you suggest?”

The woman nods for the others to leave before looking back to Jakub, “Speak with Rabbi Barak – he's making a deal for

freedom... He's been needing someone to do it but since all the men were taken..."

"He's making a deal with the Nazis?"

Jakub growls.

"No," she says, shaking her head before pulling him to one side – closer to a building – out of the open area. "He says it's something worse..."

"There is nothing worse than the Nazis," he scoffs.

"Jakub - if you truly believe that, then you should speak with the Rabbi," she tells him. She turns, following the bodies.

Clenching his jaw and pressing his lips together, he takes a deep breath as they vanish from his sight. "They'll pay for this."

The Jewish men of the community were all taken in the early days – all that was

left were women. But, one man remained – Rabbi Barak was an elderly man. They left him behind, not because he wasn't useful but because a false sense of hope and faith kept the community in the Gestapo's palms.

“Rabbi Barak? My name is Jakub Aronoff, I'm here to speak with you.” Jakub says as he enters his home – the front door was unlocked and ajar.

The Rabbi steps out of his office into the hallway of his home. “What are you doing here?” He questions, seeing Jakub's jacket – the star of St David badge sewn into the fabric.

“I was on the outskirts of town when they took everyone... They didn't come to get me,” Jakub announces.

The hope of more survivors fades in the Rabbi's mind. Frowning, his brows pulling together, he sighs, "why are you here?"

Jakub closes the door behind him before taking a step forward. "I was told you're trying to make a deal..."

The Rabbi peers up at Jakub – a confused expression on his face. "You're here about the deal? You're willing to help?" He probes.

Jakub nods. "Tell me what I need to do."

The Rabbi gestures for Jakub to enter his office. Jakub makes his way in – the Rabbi closes the door behind them, and the pair sit down opposite each other. "The Golems are no longer able to protect us – the Nazis have found a way to disarm them."

“The Golems..?” Jakub stutters – he blinks twice as he absorbs the information. “Golems are real?”

“Yes - but as I said, the Nazis have found a way to disarm them without performing the ritual to remove the name written within the clay. So, we need something stronger,” Rabbi Barak mutters, pulling out papers from his desk. “For this war to be over soon, we need hundreds... But if we can get justice, even if it takes a while, it’s better than nothing.”

“What do you mean?” Jakub asks.

Barak slides a piece of paper over to Jakub on the desk. The document shows a woman with long, black hair and pale skin. “She’s an Estrie.”

Jakub frowns. “Estries are Vampires... It’s just folklore.”

“Are Golems also not folklore?” Barak questions, leaning back in his chair and crossing his arms.

Jakub presses his lips together – reading through the information. Iris was the last Estrie alive to be sired by Cain – the first murder. Iris was born in 1442 into the Jewish faith. “Cain was a Vampire?” He asks.

Barak nods. “According to Iris, that is the person who sired her. I’m not sure whether or not she’s telling the truth – but it was said that Cain would be punished to wander the earth for eternity. Maybe that was the punishment God gave...”

“You want her to sire an army?” Jakub mutters.

“Yes.”

“I’ll do it.”

The Rabbi sighs, “Jakub, you need to understand the consequences of this.”

“Then tell me the consequences,”
Jakub tells him.

“You will never be able to enter a synagogue again; you won’t be able to walk in daylight; your family will need to be left behind. You’ll be alone for all your years...”

“My family was murdered by the Gestapo today in the town centre,” he blurts – staring at the paperwork on the desk, not looking away from it. “Will I be able to save families as a Vampire?”

Barak takes a deep breath. The weight of the world, and the life of this young man, on his shoulders. “Yes.”

“Then there is no question about it – there’s no reason for me not to do it.” Jakub pauses. “This must be God’s will. Everything that’s happened has brought me to this moment.”

The Rabbi stands, bows his head. “I’ll go speak with her.”

If evil had a smell, it would be this. The scent of blood engulfing Jakub as he walks towards an open field along with the Rabbi. Corpses lying on the ground – all of them Nazis.

“Miss Efron,” Rabbi Barak says – announcing their arrival.

The woman stands up, slowly turning to the Rabbi and Jakub. Her pale skin covered in a thick layer of blood – some of it dried, but the blood around her mouth still fresh. “Emanuel - nice to see you.” She begins to walk over, moving slowly – keeping her actions human-looking.

“We’d like to make a deal,” Barak says, gesturing to Jakub. “You turn Jakub so he can try and defend our people. You keep

taking down the Nazis. And I'll give you what you want."

"And what is it that she wants?" Jakub questions, eyes darting between the two of them.

"I want my daughter's ashes," she announces, arms crossed over her chest.

Barak sighs, "her ashes are in plot fifty-three in the Łódź cemetery. They were moved there, upon it's opening in 1892."

"I will need someone to get her ashes for me – I can't step on holy grounds..." She mutters, looking down at the ground.

Jakub steps forward. "If you can smuggle me out of here, I can get them for you before you change me."

Iris peers up at Jakub, her mouth parted slightly as she wonders. "Why would you do that for me?"

“Family is important.”

She lets out a long sigh, “you’re not wrong there.”

The difference between a vampire and an Estrie is that Estries have wings. Cain didn’t have wings, but Iris does.

Having wings made it a lot easier to sneak Jakub out of Kielce and into Łódź.

Landing outside the cemetery, she looks through the bars of the site. “My daughter was burned alive for having an Estrie mother. But they still buried her in a Jewish Cemetery. It was their way to make sure we stayed apart,” she mutters.

“Did you choose to become an Estrie?”
Jakub questions.

Spinning on the spot, she looks at Jakub and shrugs. “I wouldn’t’ve chosen this, but it’s had its perks.”

“Like what?” He asks, looking at her blood sodden clothes. “You’re a monster.”

She rolls her eyes. “I’ve saved more people than I’ve killed. There’s been wars – soldiers that would’ve killed hundreds. I can’t seem to die, so I may as well do some good...”

“That’s why you’re killing Nazis...” Jakub mutters, clenching his jaw as he raises his hand to his chin – scratching the small amount of stubble on his face.

“It also helps with the management of this...” She pauses, gesturing to herself. “*Curse.*”

“How so?”

“I may be a monster, but it doesn’t mean I have to act like one. And it certainly doesn’t mean that I have to kill innocent

people to keep myself fed.” She stops, crossing her arms as a sombre expression crosses her face. “There’s always a war somewhere.”

Jakub sighs, pressing his lips together as he heads into the cemetery. “You’re not wrong.”

Finding plot fifty-three wasn’t difficult. The first hundred graves were different to the rest, all of them were weathered away – their names hardly visible. The only thing readable was their plot numbers – metal plaques that had been added later... Much later.

With a shovel that he’d found by a newly dug grave, he sets to work – knowing that he won’t have to go far into the ground to get to the coffin as the small casket only harbours Iris’s daughter’s ashes.

Finally, he hears the shovel hit wood – the casket splitting slightly. He pulls the box

out of the hole, cracking open the small chest and pulling the urn out. He dumps the box back in the grave, filling it in and patting it down before putting the shovel back to where he'd found it and sneakily leaving the cemetery.

“You found her?” Iris questions, seeing the urn in his hand as he exits the holy site.

He nods, presenting her the urn. “Here,” he says, passing her the pot.

Taking it, she cracks open the lid – the ashes slowly rising from the urn in a tornado-like pattern. The ashes compress, forming a stone, before landing in her open palm. “Thank you,” she mutters, putting the stone in her pocket before hiding the remains in a nearby bush.

“What do we do next?” Jakub asks, watching as Iris opens her wings again – ready to fly.

She smiles, her red-stained lips perking up, forcing dimples to appear on her cheeks. “We’re going to go to the front line – where all the monsters are gathering.”

“Where would that be?” He probes, stepping forward.

“Berlin.” She pauses, looking down at the star on his jacket. “You’ll need to get some new clothes first. Otherwise, you’ll be spotted a mile away.”

Jakub looks down at the star. “I’ll never be able to wear it again, will I?”

Iris shakes her head, a sombre expression on her face. “Maybe one day, our people will accept us for who we are. But for the time being, we’re just going to have to save them.”

They stole clothes from a laundry line and had Jakub change swiftly before setting off to Berlin.

Arriving, the pair make their way into a heavily guarded hotel. “Who are these people?” Jakub questions, readjusting his jacket – wearing clothes worth more than all of his belongings combined – he feels extremely out of place.

“They’re freedom fighters – or at least most of them are. Some of them are just hiding from the Nazis,” she tells him as they head up the grand staircase in the main hallway of the hotel.

“Are any of them like you?” He asks.

She stops abruptly and slowly turns, looking down at him as he stands several steps below her on the staircase. Tears welling in her eyes, Iris shakes her head. “I wouldn’t wish this upon anyone... And I’m so sorry that

the deal was done, Jakub. I truly am.” She continues walking up the stairs.

Jakub stands still for a moment, in shock, before following Iris to her quarters.

“Ma’am, he’s the one to be changed?” A man gestures to Jakub as they approach her apartment.

She nods. “We’ll be starting soon. Can you make sure that nobody can come in? And, of course, don’t let either of us out until I say it’s clear...”

The guard nods, opening the door for her and allowing her to enter with Jakub.

“We’re not going to be allowed to leave?” Jakub frowns, hearing the door shut and lock behind him - bolted from the outside.

Iris shrugs, turning to him as she sits in the armchair in the centre of the room.

“You’re not going to be able to control your

hunger for a while... We can't let you do anything until that's under control."

Jakub takes a deep breath. "And how long is that going to take?"

Iris looks to the left, looking out of the window – watching as lights begin to turn off in the distance. "That depends on how long you're rabid for."

Upon turning, Vampires end up in a rabid state – all they're interested in is drinking blood – and for most newborns, killing people is their favourite activity.

Between knockouts by Iris, Jakub wakes up – his throat dry and his mouth feeling like sandpaper. His body burning, and his bones grinding. She drips a few drops of blood in her mouth – allowing him to be fed enough to survive the transition but be deprived sufficient to not crave it.

He doesn't get to speak – his mouth is so dry, and his chest hurts so much that every time he tries to – all he can do is scream. After the first three times, Iris finally decided to gag him.

Days, maybe weeks, later he's finally allowed out of his chair – walking around the apartment – his hunger not driving him entirely mad but knowing that if a human steps into the room, they're most likely going to be his first kill.

“How did you get used to this?” He questions, his mouth feeling dry and his throat burning as he feels for the fangs in his upper jaw.

Iris smiles up at him, sat in her chair as she reads the newspaper. “With great difficulty. It took me years...”

“I’m going to be in here for years?” He gasps, a confused and concerned expression on his face.

Iris laughs, “of course not. It took me years because I killed someone straight after turning. I didn’t have anyone to stop me. You, however, have me. And I’m going to train you in the way Cain should’ve trained me.”

“Does Cain kill people like you do?” Jakub probes, stepping forward as he looks down at her.

She shrugs. “Maybe? I never got to know him.” She pauses. “I was one of his meals, he just didn’t quite kill me...”

“How did you know it was him, in that case?” He asks, crossing his arms over his chest.

“I spoke to him, before it happened. He followed me out of a tavern, down the alleyway which lead to my house and killed me there.

He was spouting nonsense about being Cain and the first murderer. I didn't believe him, which is most likely why he decided to *prove* it to me."

Jakub sighs as he spins on the spot and walks to the other side of the room – knowing that he's moving unnaturally – too fast for his own good as he walks into a table and breaks off one of the legs. "I'm sorry for what he did to you," he says as he fixes the table leg.

Iris slumps into her seat. "I wish I could've watched my child grow... I wish I could've lived with her and died in her arms at an old age... But I'm happy that I'm here."

Further weeks go by – Jakub is finally accustomed with his new abilities. It's time for his first mission.

“Jakub is going to go into the Barn Quarter to find Damian Mazza – he's an Obersturmführer, or Senior Assault Leader. He's known for going into the quarter to attack children. We need to put an end to him if we want to be able to free the children held within the Scheunenviertel,” Iris explains.

“Why can't you go, Miss? Surely he's not ready...” One of the human guards says, gesturing to Jakub who's been circling the room during the entire conversation.

“Whether you think he's ready or not, he has to be the one to go. Damian is already aware of me. And I can't risk triggering him before getting a chase to rip his head off,” she announces, crossing her arms as she looks over to Jakub. “You're ready, right?”

He pauses in his tracks, taking a deep breath through his nose – the smell of human blood hurting his throat as he breaths but knowing he can refrain. “I'm ready.”

Sneaking into the Barn Quarter was easy enough – giving a quick bribe to a Nazi, he got in quickly and without suspicion. It's not uncommon for people to enter the quarter to kill people – though, Jakub isn't going to be killing the people that the Nazi thought.

The team had received a tip-off that Mazza often goes to the same housing estate – one where mothers and fathers have been taken – leaving the children alone.

Jakub spots him banging on a door – the three-story house is run down – most windows have been put through.

“No!” A young girl screams, seemingly from behind the door as she tries to keep it shut while he endeavours to open it.

“Let me in, Lucy,” Mazza says, a smirk on his face.

The alleyway is empty, only Mazza out with it being passed curfew. Slowly, Jakub makes his way over – coming up behind the monster. “Damian Mazza?” He asks – practically asking for the monster’s attention.

He turns, the smirk still on his face. “Are you here to help me, kind sir?” He asks, noticing that Jakub isn’t wearing a star and has a different accent to the others in the area. He knows he’s an outsider.

“Something like that,” he says, before swiftly grabbing each side of Mazza’s head and twisting – snapping his neck before pulling it off and dropping it to the ground as his body falls limp.

He can smell the blood, his fangs descend as he looks down at the pool of red liquid. He takes a deep breath, his fangs retract and he looks up from the pool to see the young girl – long brown hair, a yellow star

on her dress. She can't be much older than thirteen. "You're Lucy?" He questions.

Lucy nods, stepping out of the house as she looks down at the corpse. "You saved us."

"I'm trying to." Jakub pauses. "You're going to be smuggled out of here soon, you know that – right?"

Lucy smiles as she looks up at Jakub. "I know. Thank you, mister." She stops. "What should we do with the body?"

Jakub smiles, looking to his right – seeing an animal pen. It was almost as if the Nazi's had a sick sense of humour – a pig pen in a Jewish ghetto... "We could feed him to our little friends over there," he says, gesturing to the pigpen.

Her eyes widen, her eyebrows raise. "Will they eat a human?"

He nods. “Pigs each all scum.” Picking up the body, Jakub carries it over to the pen – throwing it into the middle – mud splashing and coating the body before the hungry pigs descend upon it – ripping it apart. Jakub makes his way back to Lucy, picking up the head to take back to the team. “Do you have water to try and flush the blood away?” He questions.

Lucy shakes her head. “But we do have a bucket or urine... That should do the trick,” she giggles.

Jakub chuckles, a broad smile on his face. “Take care, Lucy. We’ll come for you as soon as we can.”

Arriving back at the hotel with the head, the rebels flock to the lobby – watching him entering the building as Iris makes her way down.

Jakub drops the head on the ground.
“We won’t be having a problem from him
again.”

“Where’s the body?” One of the guards
questions, walking up to Jakub in an
aggressive manner.

“The Nazis put a pig pen in the barn
quarter... So I fed the poor animals a meal,” he
announces, pushing past the man and
heading over to Iris. “When will we be getting
the children out of there? They’re starving and
alone...”

Iris takes Jakub’s hand, pulling him
upstairs – to her room. “We can’t get them
out,” she says, turning back to Jakub as the
doors shut behind them.

“What?” He questions, his brows
pulling together – creasing his forehead – as
he frowns. “Why the hell not?”

“For us to get them out, we need allies... But the three other buildings we had have been raided... We don’t have the forces to barge in and rescue the kids,” she mutters, a sombre expression on her face as she bites down on her bottom lip. “Jakub, I’m so sorry.”

Tears rolling down his cheeks, Jakub turns away from her – leaning his head against the wall next to the door. “I told them we’d go for them as soon as we can...”

“I know... And instead of it being in two weeks, it’s possible to be two months, or longer now... But we’ll go and get them when we have the forces.” Iris puts her hand on his back, but he moves swiftly.

“That’s not quick enough...” He grunts, turning to look at her as he moves across the room. “They are starving.”

“I know.”

“No,” Jakub barks. “I don’t think you do. If you knew, maybe you’d try harder!” He stops, taking a deep breath as he tries to calm himself – his shouting likely to draw attention.

“I’m trying as hard as I can,” Iris says, speaking calmly.

He shakes his head. “Not hard enough.”

Standing on the roof of the hotel, he can see everything that’s happening on the street. Germans going about their business, without a care in the world, while a mile up the road an entire community is cordoned off for being who they are.

“What are you thinking?” Iris questions, walking over to where he’s stood on the roof.

“I need to get those kids out of there...”
He mutters.

She puts her hand on his shoulder, standing next to him on the roof – looking down at the street. “I know you want to, but there isn’t a way of doing it without destroying what we have already.”

“We can get them,” he tells her, crossing his arms and clenching his jaw.

“Yeah? How?”

Jakub turns to look at her. “You fly in, you take me, and we use the sewers to escape.”

Iris laughs, “you don’t think we would’ve thought of the sewers?”

He shrugs, a pained expression on his face. “I know you’d’ve thought about it before I was turned. But hey, I’m here now... We can do this.”

Frowning, Iris shakes her head – pacing the roof. “What makes you so sure?”

“The Nazi guard that let me in wanted me to know that there are now only two guards at the sewers and if I want to avoid being spotted, I can ask them to get me in,” he announces.

Iris’ mouth drops open. “I didn’t know they’d decreased their guards on the sewers...”

“They decreased them because they blocked most of the sewer entrances up,” he mutters. “We did the same thing in Kielce...”

Iris presses her lips together. “We’ll head in Sunday night, then.”

Looking back at the Berlin skyline – seeing fires burning throughout the city. Knowing that thousands of books, filled with knowledge and wisdom, are being burnt as he watches. The thought leaves a sour taste in his mouth and a rough, harsh feeling in his throat. The dark blue night sky filling with reds and oranges as the fires rage on.

Chapter Two

They can't strike right away – otherwise, they'll have another face to look for, and it'll be Jakub's.

“Ma'am, we can't do that... If you get caught-” a human guard mutters, being interrupted by Iris.

“We won't get caught. And even if we do, it'll be fine – you know what you need to do now. You don't need me to hold your hand. You can do this, Joseph,” she tells him.

He sighs and continues to pace in Iris' room. “And what do we do with the children after that?” Joseph questions.

Iris shrugs. “You'll need to take them to the nearest meet point that you have with

the other rebel parties – whoever can get them out of Germany and into France. That’s your job as normal.”

“We’re going to be stripping these children of their German heritage!” He growls.

“The Nazi’s did that when they decided they’re no longer German for being Jewish,” Jakub roars. “They’re going to have much better lives in a country that isn’t planning on killing them.”

The man frowns, his brows pulling together and creasing his forehead. He draws on the sleeves of his tailored jacket – taking out some of the creases in the sleeves. “This country isn’t killing Jews.”

“Are you fucking blind?” Jakub barks, facing up to Joseph – an angered expression on his face. “I’m Jewish – my mother and sister were gunned down weeks ago for being Jewish. Do you honestly think that they’re just doing this to random people? Why do you

think they're wearing stars on their fucking clothes?"

Joseph steps back, shocked by Jakub's words. "But they told us they were just lowlives..."

"To the Nazis, they are. But, they're just Jewish, or Gay, or Roma, or Disabled... When was the last time that you were inside the Barn Quarter?" Jakub probes, watching the man's facial expressions.

"Before the walls were put up," Joseph admits.

Jakub scoffs, "before the horror began. I'm not surprised..."

"The Barn Quarter is the largest Jewish community in the whole of Berlin. It's why they cordoned it off. It keeps the Jews in, and the public *safe*." Iris sits down in her large armchair, taking a deep breath as she smokes her cigarette. "Considering how long

you've been helping us, I thought you would've known this by now..."

"I didn't know they were Jews," he mutters.

Jakub frowns, the way he'd said it – *I didn't know they were Jews* – something about it just rubbed him the wrong way. "Are you no longer going to help us now that you know they're Jews?"

Joseph hesitates. "Of course, I'm going to help..."

"Good." Jakub gestures to the door. "Go get ready."

Joseph exits the room, leaving Iris and Jakub alone.

After shutting the door behind Joseph, Jakub probes, "do you trust him?"

Iris takes another drag, letting out a large puff of white smoke. "I don't trust him."

She pauses. “I’ll get someone I do trust to trail him, make sure he doesn’t do anything stupid,” she says, getting up from her chair and heading to the door.

He grabs her, stopping her in her tracks. Their faces inches away from each other. “I won’t let you die,” he says, a sombre expression on his face.

She smiles, stroking Jakub’s face – the small amount of stubble on his chin prickling her hand. “Dear, don’t worry about me. I can take care of myself.”

He sighs, pressing his forehead against hers – their noses touching.

Leaning up, she presses her lips against his – giving him a quick peck before continuing her way.

Their relationship wasn’t like anything they’d seen before. It was companionship, non-sexual lust, and different levels of

intimacy that they'd never had with another person before. They shared this, and it was their experience.

Iris believes it to be a part of their sired bond – the fact she'd turned him into a Vampire. It would explain the connection and their feelings, and why she'd never felt anything like it before – having never sired a Vampire until Jakub.

She leaves the room, leaving Jakub to his thoughts. *I can't live without her. We need her to fight this plague.* He paces around the room, arms crossed as he looks around. *What if I die?* He stops, thinking of the possibility that he may be the one to be ended – they know it's risky, going back in so soon – especially after Mazza going *missing*. They need to hope that the Nazis aren't aware of Estries and Vampires... They need to hope that there are no supernatural beings in the Nazis ranks. *God, if you can hear me – please,*

I know what I've done was wrong, but it's the only way we're going to save our people... I can't just let them all die. Please, God, give me the strength to save those children. I will do your work for the rest of my days... Please...

He sighs, hearing Iris come back into the room.

“Were you praying?” She asks, gesturing to his hands being in the prayer position.

Jakub shrugs. “Worth a try...”

Iris walks over, taking his hands in hers and kissing his knuckles. “No, dear. I’m sorry... God can’t hear you anymore...”

“How do you know?” Jakub frowns, looking down at Iris.

Iris inhales deeply, tears welling in her eyes. “If they could still hear me, then why didn’t they give me my only wish?”

“Which is?”

Iris smiles, the expression-filled with both happiness and sadness. “To die.”

Jakub frees his hands, cupping her face. “There are ways for us to die... If you really wanted to die, why haven’t you done it?”

She looks down at the space between their feet. “I may be an abomination in the eyes of our lord, but I refuse to go against my faith further by killing myself.”

Jakub chuckles sarcastically before letting go of her. “How Orthodox of you.”

“What do you expect from me? Do you expect me to just abandon my faith?” She growls.

“No, I expect you to allow yourself the one thing you want.” Jakub pauses. His soft eyes filled with sadness, knowing that she wants to die but forcing herself through life. “You didn’t choose to be an Estrie, yet God will

always disown you for it. Ending your own suffering will not make you any worse in their eyes.”

“How do you know that?” Iris scoffs, a pained expression on her face as her eyes begin to well with tears.

“Look out the window,” he shouts, pointing to at the skyline of Berlin – fires blazing as Jews are thrown into the Ghetto pits. “If God really cared about their people and us, maybe they’d stop what’s happening.”

Iris falls to the ground, kneeling as she buries her face in her hands, wailing as she rocks. Jakub still looking out the window.

“God gave humanity freedom. They won’t stop what’s happening because it’s part of our free will. If they can kill each other, then we can also end our own suffering without further judgement.”

“Cain was punished for his murder...
They will be punished, too,” she cries.

Jakub turns, kneeling down in front of her. Cupping her face once more, wiping away her tears. “He was punished because it was wrong, it was before we were set free. Have you ever seen any of these people punished by God for what they’re doing?”

She slowly shakes her head.

“The only people punishing them is us. And God didn’t ask us to do this. If you want to end your suffering, you’re allowed to.”

Iris lunges forward, wrapping her arms around Jakub’s waist as she cries. Jakub returning the hug, holding her close. “It’s going to be okay,” he whispers as he brushes her hair back before kissing her head as he cradles her.

Midnight has arrived, the sun has vanished, but the night sky is still alight with the fires of Berlin. The pair make their way to the sewer entrance, wearing their trench coats to hide their equipment. Better to go in sneakily than fly through the air as initially planned. Especially with the Nazi's starting more fires, lighting the skies.

Standing above the entrance, the guards at the tunnel sitting on either side.

"Dinner time," Iris whispers, before they both drop – sinking their teeth into the guards' necks, ripping their heads off as they end their lives.

Dropping the body, Iris steps into the sewer. "We need to get moving."

"I need to hide the bodies – we can't let anyone see them, we won't get out if an alarm is raised," Jakub explains, picking the two men up and putting them over his shoulder.

Iris nods. "I'll scout ahead."

Jakub slowly makes his way over to a nearby fire, throwing the two corpses into the pit. A shot is fired as he does.

He swiftly ducks – the bullet can't hurt him, but he needs to find the sniper and terminate him. He looks around, seeing a glint of light on top of a large abandoned building. He sneaks his way around the open area – hiding in the dark. Getting to the base of the building, he climbs swiftly – effortlessly – sneaking up on his new prey.

"What did you shoot at, you silly man?" A German officer questions, standing behind the sniper.

The sniper sighs. "I'm sorry, I thought I saw someone by the fire pit..."

The officer rolls his eyes, turning around to find Jakub sneaking up on him.

Jakub pounces, covering the officer's mouth swiftly as he tears out the officer's vocal box – not drinking this time, the kill would've been too slow and caused alarms for the sniper.

He slowly puts the body down, the officer still alive – gargling on his own blood.

Tiptoeing across the roof, he swiftly snaps the sniper's neck. Keeping the body in place, making him look as if he's still keeping watch.

He drags the officer's body to the edge, throwing it off the building. Leaving no trace of him being killed on the roof in case another watch looks over.

Jakub jumps off the five-story building, landing quietly – like a cat – before heading back over to the sewer entrance to catch up with Iris.

“What took you so long?” She asks as he rounds the corner to where she’s been waiting.

“A sniper saw me, had to take him out,” he says, crouching next to her as they peer up through the grate. “Have you seen anything we need to worry about?” He questions.

Iris shakes her head, sighing as she keeps her focus on the events happening above them. “I’ve not seen a single officer... Which isn’t right,” she mutters.

He bobs his head, being in there several days earlier, he knows it’s wrong. “There should be at least twelve on patrol in the entire area.”

Looking at him, she frowns. “I don’t think we’re getting out of this as cleanly as we wanted to...”

Jakub presses his lips together, staring up through the grate. “I think you’re right.”

The pair sneak out, heading to house harbouring the children. “Lucy?” He says, knocking on the door – trying not to draw attention to themselves.

Lucy slowly opens the door. “Are you here for us?” She asks, wide-eyed.

He nods. “We need to get you out of here quickly,” Jakub says, gesturing to the open sewer grate.

She runs back in, gathering the children up before heading out – the first group of children heading down the tunnel with Iris.

Jakub steps into the house as the sewer grate is put back, making sure not to draw suspicion.

“Are you going to save us, sir?” A little boy asks, tugging on Jakub’s trench coat as he guards the door – looking through the peephole.

Jakub looks down at the small child, a soft smile on his face as he scruffs the boy’s hair in a playful motion. “Yes, we are.”

The boy smiles – his two front teeth missing, a common sight in the ghetto with so many having their teeth pulled for the Nazis.

Iris is back with Lucy. Jakub opens the door – allowing the rest of the children to flee with Lucy.

“Stop them!” A Nazi patrol guard shouts, another raising the alarm and the sirens setting off.

“Children, hurry!” Jakub shouts, putting himself between the kids and the guards – taking the Nazi fire with Iris while the children escape.

Once the Sewer grate is back down, Iris warps the sewer cover – making it impossible to pull out. “Run,” Iris yells as the Nazis gather and follow the pair.

With Jakub being in the quarter just days prior, he knows where he’s going. Iris follows, trying to keep up but being somewhat slower.

“Release the dog,” the senior office laughs. A cage on the back of a truck is opened, the guards stand back as a large, black dog exits.

“Jakub, they have a lycanthrope!” Iris screams, the pair now running for their lives.

Jakub picks up speed, bracing himself for impact as he runs against the barn quarter wall – the wooden wall giving in to his body – breaking through. “Iris hurry,” he says, holding his hand out for her.

She grabs his hand, allowing him to pull her along.

The wolf is now free in the streets of Berlin. Following the pair. It can smell Iris – a downfall to being an Estrie.

“It’s never going to stop,” she cries, looking over her shoulder as the beast catches up.

“Iris, we need to go,” he growls, pulling her along.

She looks up, the moon not full meaning the wolf will *never* stop. It’s not human anymore. “Go,” she mutters, letting go of his hand.

He stops, a few feet away from her. “Iris...”

She smiles, “it’s my time.” She turns to look at the wolf, the metres between them closing. “Save the children, Jakub.” With one

last glance over her shoulder, she looks at him. “Save our people.”

The wolf pounces – it’s found the scent it cannot resist.

She screams as the beast bites – her neck being ripped open. She tries to fight it, wanting to go out in a blaze of glory.

Jakub yells, tears streaming down his cheeks. His bond with her being shredded as her soul leaves this realm. His heart being torn out as the wolf continues to devour her.

He turns his back on them, continuing down the street. *I need to get to the sewer entrance...*

As he runs, he rounds the corner – onto the road where headquarters are based – the hotel in flames and all survivors arrested. Jakub growls under his breath, trying to keep himself calm. Running his fingers through his

hair, he takes a deep breath before ducking down a side street – heading to the sewers.

Joseph is nowhere to be seen when he gets to the meetup point. The children are huddled, trying to stay warm as rain pelts down. “Lucy?” He says, trying to find her.

She stands up from the middle of the huddle, the children looking up at him. “The man came...” She mutters. “He refused to take any of us wearing a star.”

Fury engulfs him, letting out a howling cry. His hands clenched into fists, his jaw snapped shut as his fangs descend. He takes a deep breath, his eyes turning red as he picks up the scent of Joseph. He looks at the children. “Follow me.”

They run, keeping to the shadows as they make their way to Tegal – where a group

of British and French nationals were hiding – waiting to help the children escape.

Finding the meeting point, Joseph handed off the children and started walking back until he sees Jakub. “You survived?” Joseph scoffs.

Jakub roars, running and grabbing the pathetic excuse of a human being, ripping his vocal cords out – allowing him to die by suffocating on his own blood. The same treatment he gives to the Nazis.

The rescue party step back – scared by the ravenous man – while the children remain unfazed.

The large group that Jakub had come with runs to their friends, checking that everyone is okay while Jakub watches Joseph gurgle his own blood before his soul moves on.

“He left them behind...” One of the rescue party says, walking over to Jakub.
“Why?”

“He refused to take Jewish children...”
Jakub stops, taking his handkerchief out of his pocket and wiping the blood off his face.
“He ratted us out. The Berlin Rebels have fallen.”

The person flinches, brows narrowing and causing creases on their forehead. “Iris is gone, then?”

“You knew her?” Jakub questions.

“My name is Shay,” they say, offering their hand to shake. “Iris was a friend of mine... I assume you’re Jakub?”

He nods.

Shay sighs. “I’m sorry for your loss... But we need to get moving. These kids are heading for Scotland.”

“Okay,” he mutters. “And where are you heading after that?”

“Paris. I work with the French resistance,” they comment.

“You’re not French,” Jakub comments.

Shay nods their head, gesturing for Jakub to walk with them as the group begin to move. “I’m from Malta. But I speak French, English, and German.”

“The perfect spy.” Jakub keeps walking, looking around to make sure that there isn’t anyone to stop them.

“You’re not wrong.” Shay pauses. “Even better that I’m not human.”

“Vampire?” Jakub stops walking.

Shay shakes their head. “No, I’m a *Gremlin*. A fairy.”

Jakub frowns and starts walking again, the uneven ground beneath them

causing the pair to use each other to balance.

“Do you age like Humans?”

“Nope,” Shay chuckles. “I haven’t aged for over two hundred years. And I certainly don’t plan on picking that back up anytime soon.”

Jakub laughs quietly, knowing that after all this – if the pair are still alive, he’ll at least have one friend for the rest of his days.

“Good to know.”

Chapter Three

“Jakub?” Shay asks, entering Jakub’s quarters. “Are you okay, friend?”

Jakub sighs, lying on his bed as he stares at the ceiling. His humanity feeling different since the death of Iris. “Do you know what’s wrong with me?”

Shay tilts their head to one side with a curious expression on their face. “I don’t understand.”

Jakub bolts upright and stares at Shay – an emotionless expression on his face. “Iris died, and I should feel something... My parents died... I should feel something about that, too. But I have nothing.”

Running their fingers through their long white hair, Shay closes the door behind them. They walk across the room and sits on the edge of the bed. “Jakub, I’ve never met someone who has lost their sire... I’m so sorry, but I don’t know how to help.”

Fury boiling his blood; closing his eyes as he tries to stop himself from ripping Shay’s head off. *It’s not their fault... This is all the Nazis...* “I don’t know what to do,” Jakub mutters.

The door creaks open, revealing a woman stood in the doorway. “How about killing Hitler?”

Shay swiftly stands up. A protective move, ready to take on the intruder is. “Who are you?”

“Aibell,” she announces, sending a smile Jakub’s way. “I know you can smell me...”

“What are you?” He growls, the smell of her blood invading his every thought. In an attempt to curb his new craving he stops his breathing covering his nose and mouth.

“I’m a Banshee,” she advises. “Don’t worry – I’m here to help.”

“Here to help by getting yourself killed? For some reason, that doesn’t sound like a smart idea...” Shay scoffs – putting himself between Jakub and Aibell. Shay’s been around long enough to know what effect Banshees have on Vampires.

“You’ve lost your humanity in the weeks since losing your sire, am I right?” Aibell questions, stepping into the room.

With his hands still trapping his airways, Jakub nods.

“Yes,” Shay answers for him.

“Let me help.” Aibell walks past Shay and goes to the side of the bed to offer Jakub her hand. “I can help you.”

Jakub takes his hand away from his mouth, allowing him to speak. “How?” He grunts – his fangs descending against his will.

“I’m the original Banshee – I have magic – we can fix you,” she says before looking over to Shay. “I’ll need your help.”

Shay bobs their head. “Okay.”

~

Months went by and Aibell soon became the only person keeping Jakub sane. “Let’s see what knowledge you have of our world...” Aibell mutters as she takes a seat on a tree trunk. The Vampire strapped to a tree trunk in the middle of the German Black Forest.

Jakub had lost himself while they were fighting the Nazi forces in the region. He found a woman living in a cottage, the Nazis kept visiting there. He went against his own code; *don't kill civilians.*

He ripped her to shreds, leaving her in a bloody pool. It would've been okay; it was just a Nazi sympathiser... But then he saw *her*, a small girl cowering in a cupboard, a St David's star on her coat...

He begged Aibell to put him down, but when she refused, he took matters into his own hands.

The reality is that a stake to the heart doesn't cut it. It can immobilise him for a time, as long as the stake is made of Oak or Maple, and has a witch's engraving on it. Otherwise, it just bounces off like bullets.

“What are we doing here?” Jakub tugs on the chains holding him to the tree, each metal link engraved with witch magic.

“We’re here because your humanity snapped and you killed an ally in disguise” Aibell mutters, taking a newspaper out of her bag. “We need your humanity back.”

“That little girl...” He winces as he remembers the little girl that had hid from him – thinking he was a Nazi, but later finding out he was just another kind of monster.

“She’s fine. Scarred for life, I assume. But other than that, she’s fine.” Reading the paper and circling clips of articles. “It looks like we’re going to be going to Berlin.”

“I can’t go back there...” He sobs.

Aibell shakes her head. “Funny how you think you have a say in the matter...”

“Aibell, please... Just kill me...”

She looks up from her paper, a frown on her petite, pale face. “You don’t get to die. You get to wallow in self-pity for the rest of your days... But I need to know what you know.” She pauses. Aibell stands up, walking over to him. “How can Vampires die?”

“We can be killed by werewolves.”

“Werewolves is just one way. You can also be killed by Vampires, Fairies, and Witches. But the difference with you being killed by a Witch or a Werewolf is the pain.” She stops and turns, sitting back down on the stump. “How long does it take for you to die?”

“I don’t know...”

Aibell sighs, “if killed by a Witch or a Vampire, you will die almost instantly. Fairy magic takes a day to set in. Werewolf kills take a week at least.”

“Iris was alive for a week after she was attacked?” He cries, pain setting into his body

and his stomach churning. The first step taken toward humanity.

Aibell looks over to him, her eyes watering. “She was a good girl...” She sighs, her bottom lip trembling. Iris was only a hundred years younger than Aibell. Upon Cain turning Iris, Aibell helped her with the cravings. “But yes, she would’ve been alive for at least another week after the attack... Werewolves are one of the most painful Vampire deaths.”

“I could’ve saved her...” He whimpers.

Pressing her lips together, Aibell shakes her head - her long white hair being blown around by the wind. “No... Once a Vampire has been bitten by a Werewolf, it’s too late. There’s no way to stop the decay.”

“She would’ve been that monster’s chew toy for a week...” He grunts as he clenches his teeth.

“That’s the best you can hope for.”

Jakub’s mouth hangs open. “How could that be the *best*?”

Aibell turns away from him, knowing the ultimate truth about the death of a Vampire. “Being killed by a Werewolf is one thing, but being burnt alive for a week.”

Jakub roars, the pain engulfing him as the thought of Iris’ demise takes over. This was the only way to get his humanity back in full... He needed to know, so he could feel. But with all and every emotion flooding back rapidly – he's dangerous.

The chains begin to weaken. Aibell stands up swiftly, watching as her number one predator tries to break free from his shackles. “Jakub, I need you to calm down and stop. You’ve not fed in days.”

Jakub’s pain overwhelms him, the shackles snap and his eyes go from their

usual yellow hue to a deep, dark red. His fangs descend and he leaps to his feet. His humanity losing control as his conscious turns its back in shame.

“Jakub, don’t make me do this...” She mutters, raising her hands towards him. He takes a single step, the act of doing so being enough. She aims all of her power at him – she knows it won’t be lethal, but it’s the best option she has without drawing Nazi attention to their location. Fire shoots from her palms – using it to smelt his skin and slow him down. He lets out a single roar – the pain taking over – immobilising him. She stops, panting. The fight taking more out of her than usual; he’s stronger than she thought. “I’m so sorry, Jakub.”

“What did you do?” Shay asks with urgency, entering the non-religious crypt in

which Aibell wishes to store the currently staked Vampire.

“His humanity turned back on but his emotions were too extreme... I don’t know how he learnt to deal with them before so I don’t know how to keep them in check right now...” Aibell mutters. “We’re going to have to leave him here for a while.”

“How long?” Shay crosses their arms over their chest.

Aibell sighs and presses her lips together. “A year... Maybe two.”

Shay frowns, a sorrowful expression on their face. “And what happens when you wake him up?”

“He’s still awake... Just suspended. He can’t move or hear, but he can think,” she tells them, looking down at the temporary corpse. “Hopefully, after a few years of

contemplation when we wake him up he'll realise what he needs to do.”

“Which is what?”

“Kill Hitler.”

Each year, Aibell goes back. Smuggling herself into Berlin and waking Jakob up, allowing him to drink before questioning his motives... “What are you here to do?”

And every time, he answered, “drink!”

But something changed. Four years after being staked, it's the third time he'll be taken out of his entombed state...

A man opens Jakob's casket. “We can't live in this world for much longer,” he says. He grasps the large splinter. “Here we go.” Removing the stake, Jakob wakes up – gasping for air. His face not like it was on the

other occasions he'd woken him up with Aibell. "Jakub?"

"Nathaniel? Old friend... How's the war?" Jakub questions. This being the first time he'd said anything without needing a drink to prompt him.

Nathaniel smiles, a sombre smile being the only answer Jakub needs. "I'm sorry, Jakub... The war is still growing..."

Jakub nods, tears welling in his eyes. "What's the date?"

"March 20th 1945," Nathaniel announces. He places his hand on Jakub's shoulder. "Jakub, what are you here to do?"

"I'm here to save my people." Jakub looks around the crypt. The empty stone walled box worrying him. "Where is Aibell?"

The mention of her name makes Nathaniel wince. "I'll explain all of that when we get to our base," he sighs as he smiles,

knowing that he's finally allowed to free Jakub after years of waiting. "Let's get you a drink."

Nathaniel helps the weakened Jakub out of the casket, getting him into his car before heading towards the France/German border.

"So, what's happened while I was away?" Jakub asks as he enters the main tent of the base.

"We were discovered in Berlin, we had to leave... But Aibell didn't make it out," Nathaniel mumbles.

Jakub looks at the mapped table in the middle of the tent. "What happened to her?" Jakub questions.

"They have these things called *Concentration Camps*, anyone that they didn't like were taken there. Including my rebel

mother,” Nathaniel says, sitting down in the corner of the tent.

“I’m sorry,” Jakub mutters.

Nathaniel shrugs, biting down on his bottom lip. “It’s fine... I doubt she’s dead. She’s almost six hundred years old, she’s lived through a lot, I doubt this is what kills her.”

Jakub smiles, Nathaniel’s optimism giving him spirit. “Good to know.”

“Are you ready to kill Hitler?” Shay questions, entering the tent with other allies – all of them wanting to know if Jakub is ready to do it.

Jakub turns to look at Shay. “Nice to see you, old friend.”

“Hello, Jakub.” Shay smiles. “Before you answer, I need you to understand – this man has killed millions of your people among others... I don’t know if we’ll be able to restore your humanity after this. It was hard enough

after the Black Forest kill... It's taken you three years in hibernation to get it back..."

Jakub looks around the room. People of all different races, abilities, faiths, and cultures standing to attention – waiting for his word. He looks back to Shay, a sombre grin on his face as he smiles at his friend. "How could I say no to all of this? The head of the snake needs to be removed in order to save our people... I can't abandon them now – no matter what it does to me."

The crowd claps.

Jakub looks to Nathaniel. "Do you have the witch gene from your mother?"

Nathaniel nods. "I do, indeed."

"Good." Jakub pauses. "Because if I don't survive this mentally, I need you to put me down."

Nathaniel winces, clenching his fists. "I'll do all I can before it gets to that..."

Jakub smiles. “Thank you.”

Three Months Later

They’d cornered Jakub in the black forest. He’d been missing for so long; they didn’t know what had happened to him. They knew he’d killed Hitler. But other than that, he’d been radio silent for over a month afterwards.

Nathaniel and Shay walk through the forest. Their hands emitting a soft, UV light as they wander through the woodland – the moon beaming down on them, the pair drawing further strength from the rock in the sky. Although Jakub will be stronger during the night –they will be, too.

Nathaniel stops as he hears a hissing noise. He steps to the side of a large tree – finding a feral vampire cowering from the UV glow.

The vampire hisses – his skin flaking as he tries to hide from the light.

Jakub. Nathaniel sighs, stepping closer to him. “Jakub, I’m so sorry...”

Continuing to growl, Jakub’s eyes turn red. Clenching and showing his teeth, as if about to attack.

“Jakub, I’m here to help...” Nathaniel tells him, tilting his head to the side as he looks at the wild vampire. “Shay, he’s over here.”

Within seconds, Shay is by Nathaniel’s side – more UV light focused on Jakub – both keeping him tame and keeping him still. “Jake?” Shay questions.

Showing no signs of recognising either of them, Nathaniel sighs. “I think we’ve lost him.”

Shay shakes their head. “We’ll get him back,” they say, taking the stake out of their

jacket pocket and offering it to Nathaniel. “I’m sorry.”

Nathaniel nods, a sombre smile on his face as he looks back to Jakub, swiftly twisting his free hand – the UV light going from a soft amber beam to a deep red.

Jakub screams, his skin flaking and setting on fire. Making him weak enough, and disorientated enough, to be staked.

Nathaniel lunges forward, the enchanted stake plunging through his chest.

Jakub falls to the ground, his eyes going back to normal as he drifts off to sleep.

“I’ll see you soon, Jakub,” Nathaniel says, kneeling next to the immobilised vampire.

As the decades past, Nathaniel kept watch over the coffin – keeping it in the

bedroom of his apartment in Paris while Shay continued to work in London. Monthly letters between the two showing that they'd kept in contact and planned on releasing Jakub. Neither of them could stand seeing Jakub's torturous nightmares as Nathaniel dived into Jakub's subconscious to try and help him.

The year is 1976, and Nathaniel can't take it anymore. *I have to do it.* He heads into the spare room – Jakub lying there, in his open casket. “Please be okay...” He mutters, grasping the stake in Jakub's chest. Groaning as he yanks it out – it being harder to remove it this time due to it being decades... The longer the stake is in the vampire, the harder it is to remove.

Jakub's eyes fly open – gasping for air, his hands claw at his chest. He looks up at Nathaniel, his eyes wide open. “Nathan?” He mutters as he pants.

Nathan smiles, using his right hand to cup Jakob's face. "Hey, Jake."

"I was staked this entire time?" He questions, his eyes wandering around the room – a confused expression on his face.

Nathan had projected into Jake's mind – giving him the freedom to enjoy his time in Paris, while still being staked – keeping everyone safe, including Jake. "I didn't know whether you'd be the same if we unstaked you, so I left you under and made you think I'd unstaked you so I could watch you. I'm so sorry for leaving you under for so long."

Jake looks at the ceiling, tears welling in his eyes as he lays in his coffin. His breathing uneven. "Was it all a lie?"

"No," Nathan blurts, withdrawing his hand as he steps back - as if Jake's question offended him. "How could you say that?"

“You left me under for years... I thought we’d had years together...” Jake cries, clenching his teeth – his hands grasping the top of either side of the coffin, his hunger coming back with a vengeance as he gets upset. He takes a deep breath. “You need to leave the room.”

“I’m not leaving you,” Nathan tells him.

Jake sits up, his eyes red and his fangs descended. “YOU NEED TO LEAVE,” he roars.

Nathan steps back, slowly making his way to door. “I’m sorry, sweetheart,” he says, swiftly closing and locking the door before warding it – making it invisible to Jake so that he doesn’t know how to get out.

Casting another spell, stopping anyone outside of the apartment from being able to hear Jake’s screams.

After hours of howling, Jake finally goes quiet.

Nathan calls Shay on the landline. “He’s awake.”

Shay is silent for a moment. “Is he okay?”

Sighing, Nathan answers, “he’s hurt that we, *I*, left him under for so long...”

“I’m sorry, Nathan,” Shay mutters down the phone. “You’ll get him back to normal; I know you will.”

Nathan scoffs, “I’m happy someone has faith in me.”

“He’s going to be an arse for the first part of this because of the projection. But it was for the best, we know this. And someday, he’ll know it too...” Shay tells him, their voice trailing off.

“I hope you’re right,” Nathan says. “I’ll let you get back to work.”

“Talk soon, Nathan.” Shay hangs up.

Nathan takes a deep breath, pressing his lips together as he tries to decide what to do next.

“Nathan?” Jake shouts calmly.

Nathan heads over to the room, standing outside the door. “I’m here,” he tells him.

Sitting on the floor in the middle of the room, Jake frowns – his eyebrows pulling together and causing his signature frown lines. “Did you actually love me?”

Nathan shakes his head, turning away from the door – sliding down the door and sitting with his back leaning against it. “You actually have to ask that?”

Jake shrugs. “I was in my own mind for how long? I could’ve easily fantasied that I was in a relationship with my crush.”

Letting out a soft chuckle, Nathan smiles. “I was your crush?”

Lying down on the floor, Jake sighs, “yes...”

“That’s cute,” Nathan laughs. “Everything that happened in your head was real. I was there, with you, the entire time.”

“So, we *were* in a relationship?” Jake asks, seemingly wanting further confirmation.

Hanging his head, Nathan looks down at his hands. “Our relationship is not past tense.”

Another frown sets on Jake’s face. “If we’re in a relationship, why did you leave me under?”

Nathan takes a breath, keeping himself calm as his hands begin to shake. “I tried releasing you in 1955. We thought ten years would’ve been enough and you were calm in your mind – as long as you weren’t asleep of course.” He pauses, closing his eyes. “You didn’t wake up the same way as you did this time... You never even realised that you’d been staked, you just woke up and tried feeding.”

Jake bolts upright, his eyes wide. “Who did I hurt?” When there was no answer, Jake repeats his question with urgency. “Who did I hurt, Nathan?”

“Me,” Nathan blurts – looking down at his left wrist. A scar of a bite wound. His black banshee magic healed him but left his pale skin with a dark, black scar. “Your venom knocked me out – if it wasn’t for Shay coming in, we’d probably both be dead at this point.”

“Why did you wake me up, on your own, if nothing had changed in my mind? I

could've killed you!" Jake roars, the pain of knowing he'd hurt Nathan causing aches in his chest.

Nathan sighs, "In your mind, I saw the feral you when blood present. I didn't see that this year... It was the one change that I needed to see." He pauses. "And, if I'm honest, if you'd killed me – at least I'd died at the hands of someone I cared about."

Jake presses his lips together, tears rolling down his cheeks. "I don't want to be the one to kill you..."

Standing up and opening the bedroom door – the ward disabling. Nathan looks at Jake sitting on the floor. "And I don't want to be the one to kill you... But let's be honest, one of us is going to kill the other."

Jake shakes his head as he quickly climbs to his feet. "I'm not going to kill you."

Nathan walks into the room, standing just inches away from Jake. He reaches up, cupping his face in his hands. A soft smile on Nathan's face. "Sweetheart, we're two polar opposites. Without you staked, we have a much higher chance of dying because of one another."

"Then why did you wake me up?" Jake questions, looking up at the tall man.

Leaning forward, Nathan rests his forehead against Jake's. "Because I'd rather have a couple years of realness with you than have you hidden away forever." He smiles, leaning down and pressing his lips against Jake's.

For a moment, the world stopped. Everything was perfect. Neither of them wanted to leave this moment... But nothing truly lasts forever.

Chapter Four

Ten Years Later

“How are you adjusting?” Shay asks, sitting down next to their old friend in the coffee shop. Finally, being back in Paris for the first time in a while.

Jakub relaxes in his seat, holding his coffee cup up to his mouth – blowing the warm drink to try and cool it down. “I’ve not seen sunlight without burning in it for almost four decades. So, it’s quite strange. But I enjoy feeling the warmth of the sun, again.”

Shay grins, leaning on the table – their suit tight on the shoulders, showing their strong frame. “And how is Nathan dealing with it?”

Biting his upper lip as he looks around the street, Jakub says, “honestly, I’m not sure. We don’t do much talking...”

Eyebrows rise as a smirk erupts onto Shay’s face. “Is that right?”

Jakub lets out a soft chuckle, shaking his head as his cheeks flush lightly. “Shush, you.”

Rolling their eyes, Shay sits back in their chair. The light spring breeze sending a bready kiss – the scent of freshly baked goods surrounding them. “I *really* want a baguette.”

“Go get one then,” Jakub says, taking a sip of his coffee. “While you’re at it, can you get me a poppy seeded bagel?”

Shay stands up, holding their hand out. “Get your wad out, then.”

Jakub laughs, “as if you’re pestering me for money for a bagel, when you haven’t even checked if they have them yet.”

Once again, with a roll of the eyes,
Shay offer's their hand – waiting for money.

Reaching in his pocket, he pulls out a
couple bob, putting it in Shay's hand.

Shay nods, picking up their cup and
finishing off the warm, smooth drink. The
earthy taste lingering on their breath. "I'll be
right back."

Jakub hasn't been alone in public
since getting released. It's for the obvious
reason that humans smell and taste so bloody
good. Taking another sip of his coffee, he
slouches in his chair – watching as men and
women stroll up and down the street. Paris
thriving with the spring weather coming in
and the winter glooms leaving.

A little girl runs forward – in front of
her parents – before suddenly falling.
Screaming, the little girl stays on the ground.

Sitting up in his chair, Jakub is alerted. *Is she hurt?* He watches as her parents catch up to her – checking her over.

“Ah dear, you’ve cracked your head...”
The little girl’s father says as he rubs it, her mother checking her legs. “You grazed your knee again, you silly billy.”

Holding his breath, Jakub looks away. Tilting his hat down to trying and cast a shadow on his eyes. *Please leave...*

The parents pick the little girl up – the girl clambering onto her dad’s back before the trio continue wandering down the busy street.

The burning hunger in his throat driving Jakub round the bend. The cup in his hand shaking.

“Jake?” Shay questions, seeing him in distress.

Jakub shakes his head, his hand involuntarily clenching and crushing the small mug in his hand.

Shay bobs their head. “Time to go.”

They were lucky this time, they got home without an incident. Walking through the door to Nathan and Jakub’s flat, Nathan is instantly alerted.

“Why are your eyes black?” Nathan says, approaching the pair as they enter the flat.

Jakub holds his hands up, as if to calm him. “It’s fine, there was a little girl. She tripped and cut her knee. She was fine, no one got hurt.” He keeps his eyes low – looking at the floor, avoiding contact with Nathan’s eyes or neck... “I’m going to get a drink,” he announces, heading over to the fridge, picking

up a pint glass and pouring out a glass of animal blood.

“Someone could’ve been hurt,” Nathan mutters.

Shay rolls their eyes. “But no one was hurt, it’s fine.” Shay puts their bag on the kitchen counter and removes their jacket before heading to the living room area of the studio flat.

Frowning as he crosses his arms, Nathan sighs, “are you okay?”

Jakub finishes the pint of blood, cringing and twinging – the taste of cold animal blood disgusting him. “I’m fine,” he says, wiping the residue of blood from his lips. “Are you okay?”

Nathan walks over, his arms wrapping around Jakub’s waist. Burying his face in the nape of Jakub’s neck. “I’m okay, just always worried.”

Placing his now cold hands on top of Nathan's, sending a shiver up Nathan's arms – Jakub chuckles, “I understand. One day, you won't need to worry.”

“I hope so.” Nathan mutters. Withdrawing his arms, he steps back, leaning against kitchen's island. “I'm going to go have a sleep.”

Jakub smiles, looking over his shoulder at him. “Okay, enjoy your nap.”

Nathan grins before heading around the island and into their bedroom – the door closing behind him.

“You'll be fine,” Shay comments, putting a new record on – turning the volume down.

“I know that, you know that, but I'm not sure if he does.” Jakub rinses the glass clean, placing it on the drainer to drip dry

before heading into the living room to join Shay.

“Maybe he knows something we don’t?” Shay mumbles, running their hand through their long, white hair before taking their sunglasses off – revealing their red iris’.

“I don’t understand,” Jakub says, sitting in the armchair opposite Shay.

Shay looks up at him, a serious expression on their face. “Banshee’s can sometimes feel when something bad is about to happen...”

Jakub leans forward, his elbows on his knees – cupping his face with his hands. “He thinks the bad happening is going to be because of me?”

Shay shrugs, raising their left hand – using their magic to pour a whiskey and bring it to themselves. “Honestly? I wouldn’t be able to

blame him if he did. You were made into a monster...”

Jakub presses his lips together, sitting back and slouching in his chair. “Yeah... It would be me.”

Letting out a sigh, Shay takes a sip of their newly poured drink. “It’s okay.”

Crossing his arms behind his head, Jakub frowns. “How accurate is the senses that Banshee’s have?”

Shay puts their drink down on the table next to the couch. “Very.”

Jakub looks out of the window – watching as the sun begins to set over Paris. “Fuck.”

With Shay asleep on the couch, Jakub decides to finally join Nathan in bed. Heading into the bedroom, he finds Nathan awake –

reading a book with the lamp on. “Hey,” he says, taking his tie off and starting to unbutton his shirt.

“Hi there.” A smirk erupts onto Nathan’s face as he watches Jakub beginning to undress. “Coming to bed finally?”

“You’ve been waiting for me?” Jakub laughs, putting his tie and shirt in the laundry basket. Kicking his shoes off before pushing them under the bed, then clambering onto the bed – straddling Nathan.

“Maybe,” he says, putting the bookmark back in between the pages of his book – placing it on the bedside unit next to the lamp. “I love you.”

Jakub smiles. A soft, happy expression on his face as he slowly unbuttons Nathan’s nightshirt, leaning forward – their noses touching – their lips just centimetres apart. “I know.”

Nathan moves forward – pressing his lips to Jakub’s. His hands on Jakub’s waist – pulling him closer.

Finishing the buttons, Jakub pushes the shirt off Nathan’s shoulders – forcing Nathan to retract his arms so that the shirt can be removed entirely.

Free from his shirt, Nathan’s hands swiftly make their way back to Jakub’s waist. Hands slowly wandering down to his buttocks, pulling him slower.

The sudden movement surprising Jakub – a moan parting his lips.

Smiling into the kiss, Nathan tugs on Jakub’s bottom lip – his hands squeezing as he does.

Jakub presses his lips harder again Nathan’s, getting aroused by Nathan’s eagerness.

He breaths in through his nose – the scent of blood instantly turning his eyes black. He pulls away, staring down at his lover. Nathan has already realised the problem. A newly bust bottom lip, spilling a single drop of blood down his chin.

Most vampires at this point would be thrown into a frenzy – Nathan would've been dead in seconds. But Jakub was having an internal battle. He opens his mouth, his fangs on show, as he tries to speak. "Kill me." He whispers.

Tears welling in his eyes, Nathan shakes his head. "No."

"KILL ME!" Jakub roars – his hands gripping Nathan's shoulders.

Nathan takes a deep breath, seeing Jakub's eyes turn from black to red – the frenzy setting in. "I love you," he sobs, a sombre smile on his face as he closes his eyes.

Jakub lunges, his teeth sinking into Nathan's left carotid artery.

Keeping his eyes shut, with his last drop of energy, he hugs Jakub. Wrapping his arms around him, pressing his lips together to hold his screams. He'd known it was coming. It was the sad truth of their relationship. At least he died in the arms of someone he loved...

Within minutes, the ordeal was over for Nathan. He lies limp in Jakub's arms. The blood clearing from Jakub's mind, allowing him to realise what had happened. He begins to sob – letting out a roar as he cradles the love of his life.

The wards on the room had broken with the death of Nathan – allowing Shay to hear the commotion. They rush in, finding Nathan dead and Jakub crying.

“Bollocks,” they shout, running over.
“Move!” They say, pushing him off the body.
“Jakub, move!” They scream.

Jakub doesn't listen.

Shay shakes their head, pressing their lips together. “I'm sorry...” They wave their hand over him, removing his sunlight protection before hitting him with a beam.

Jakub roars, dropping Nathan's body and falling off the bed. Cowering with arms raised above his head.

Shay steps closer to the bed, still using the beam on Jakub as they use their other hand to try and heal Nathan. “C'mon... Please, Nate...” After a few minutes, Shay gives up, looking at the wound – no progress, no change at all. They shake their head, looking down at Jakub. “What happened?” They howl at him.

Letting out a hiss, he doesn't respond.

Shay takes a deep breath before putting their spare hand on Jakub's shoulder – accessing the memory. *He knew it was his time...* Shay sighs, letting go of Jakub and removing the beam – but not restoring the sunlight protection. “I'm sorry he didn't kill you... He should've.”

Jakub cries, rocking as he kneels on the floor. “I know...”

“At least we already had a coffin...” Shay comments, standing over the coffin in the crypt. Looking down at Nathan's dead body tucked away inside.

Jakub, kneeling by the side of the casket, looks up at Shay. “How can you make jokes? He's dead...”

Shay sighs, keeping their eyes on Nathan rather than giving in and looking at Jakub. They reach into their coat, taking a

note out of their inside chest pocket. “This is how.” They offer the note to him, still not looking at the sad and angry vampire.

Jakub takes the note, opening it quickly – the scent of Nathan erupting from within the envelope. He takes the letter out. Shay had already read it – it was addressed to the pair of them...

Dear Jake and Shay,

If you’re reading this, then I’m gone. I hope I went out in a blaze of glory... And not by tripping over a brick.

I don’t know how long I have; I just know that Jake is the one to do it. I knew it was going to happen, from the first time I crossed his path in 1931.

The problem is, I already knew the face of the person that was going to kill me. All Banshees do, deep down. Seeing him, so

young, scared me. I thought I'd only have a decade left...

Then I sent Aibell to help after Iris passed. Jake was a vampire and I knew that I'd be safe a little longer. Aibell needed me around to help, I didn't expect to fall for you Jake. I'm sorry that I did this to you, knowing that it was going to hurt you so much. I was selfish... But I'm happy we got so many years together. Whether they were in your mind or in the real world. They were perfect.

Shay, I need you to take care of him. It's not his fault, it was fate for this to happen.

And Sweetheart – my darling Jakub – I love you, so much. It was never my destiny to outlive you. It was always my destiny to make you grow. Don't feel bad about this, just grow from it. Learn to control your instincts.

We may have made you into a monster, but we all know that deep down, you're still human.

Take care of each other – you may be the only company the pair of you have for the rest of eternity.

Forever yours,

Nathaniel

The pain in his chest strikes again – aching as Jakub tries to hold back the tears. “He fucking knew...”

“Of course, he knew,” Shay laughs, tears running down their cheeks. “It’s Nate we’re talking about – he was a *huge* control freak.”

Jakub let’s out a laugh in between sobs, a sombre smile on his face. He holds the letter up to his lips. Kissing the paper. “I love you, too.” Swiftly he puts the paper in the coffin; losing the lid and securing the bolts – as if ripping off a plaster. He stands up, moving to the end of the casket while Shay

goes for the head. The pair nod to each other, as if counting to three before lifting the box and putting him on the shelf where he's destined to rest forever.

The pair stand, looking at the box for several minutes before exiting the crypt where Aibell and Nate had stored Jakub all those years ago. Locking the door behind them, they sit on the step outside.

"Is it only Jewish cemeteries you can't enter?" Shay asks, taking a sip from their flask before passing it to Jakub.

"I haven't tried entering a Jewish cemetery since changing, I'm not sure if that's actually a thing..." He mutters, taking a quick drink. "I know Estries can't."

"Why is that?" Shay questions, a confused expression on their face.

Jakub shrugs. “I think it’s just because they’re Jewish of origin?” He pauses. “Not sure whether it happens for men of the species.”

Shay slouches – practically lying down on the entrance to the crypt. “Fair enough.”

Letting out a soft sigh, he looks over to Shay. “Do you think I should change my name to Jake instead of Jakub?”

Frowning at him, Shay raises an eyebrow and asks, “why would you want to do that?”

“Nate liked calling me Jake,” Jakub says, taking another drink from the flask before handing it back.

Shay takes a quick sip. “Jake and Nate, the devilishly handsome duo.” They laugh, taking another – very long – drink. “You don’t know how many times I’ve imagined myself in that sandwich.”

Jakub lets out a roar of laughter, his hands on his stomach as he giggles. “Christ...”

“No, Lucifer,” Shay chuckles, sending a wink towards Jakub as they take yet another drink. Stopping, they the flask away from their lips – holding it upside down. “Fuck.”

Jakub laughs, lying down on the large step. Tears welling in his eyes. “It’s never going to be the same between us, is it?”

Shay pauses their fretting over the lack of alcohol, lying down next to Jakub, rolling onto their side to look at him. “What’s going to change?”

Jakub turns his head to look at him. “I knew him through you... And I *killed* him.”

Shay presses their lips together. “He knew you were going to kill him, he met me to get to you... I cared about him, of course. He was one of my best friends... But you’re my other best friend. You’re all I have now. And

he wanted me to take care of you. So, I will,” they say drunkenly – slurring most of their words. They lean down, kissing the top of Jakub’s head. “Now, I think we need to get going...”

Letting out a sigh, Jake nods. “I think you’re right... You’re drunk.”

“I am not!” Shay objects.

Jake climbs to his feet, offering Shay a hand. “Let’s go home.”

Shay frowns. “Where’s home now?”

Jake shrugs. “For me? It’s wherever you want it to be.”

Taking his hand, Shay is pulled from the ground smiling. “Good to hear, Jakey boy! Let’s go.”

“Where is home going to be?” Jake asks as he follows Shay out of the cemetery.

“East London for the next five years. West London for ten years after that,” they say. “Then somewhere else in England, I suspect.”

“Sounds perfect...”

Ten Years Later

“Happy New Year!” The crowd roars – drinks flying into the air, liquids spilling all over the floor of the pub. People kissing, friends hugging, drunks asleep in booths.

Jake laughs – continuing to serve drinks as everyone celebrates.

“Hey, Jake.” Erika smiles, sitting at the bar. Her drunken state evident to him.

“Erika, I think it’s time for you to stop drinking, dear,” he chuckles, pouring a glass of water and passing it to her.

“Oh, come on. It’s a new century. We’re never going to see this again – not in our life times!” She erupts, a wide smile on her face.

You may not, but I probably will... He shakes his head. “Sober up, it’s time for you to go home.” He looks at the other bartender. “I’m just going to take her outside and get her a cab,” he shouts.

The other bartender nods.

Heading out, Erika in hand, taxis queuing around the corner for business from the club.

“Why do I have to go home?” She mutters, head resting on Jake’s shoulder.

Jake frowns. “Well, it’s possibly because you’re so tired that you’re having to lean on me. You need to go home, I’d rather see you safe out of here before idiots start leaving...”

“I can’t go home,” she mumbles, lifting her hand up to cover her mouth as she burps.

Jake looks down at the petite girl. Glitter on the tip of her nose and her golden-brown cheekbones. “Why not?”

She tilts her head back, looking up at him. “I left Frank.”

Jake rolls his eyes, lifting his left hand to his head and running his fingers through his thick brown hair. “Why the hell did you do that?”

Erika tightens her grip on his hand, snuggling up to him. “I’d be much better off with you,” she giggles.

Letting out a frustrated sigh, Jake pulls his phone out of his pocket. “I’m calling him.”

“Why?” She cries. “I thought you loved me...”

Jake looks down at her. “When did I ever say that? I like you, you’re my *friend*. But that’s it – this is not the first time I’ve pointed this out...”

She groans, pouting as she steps forward – hailing a taxi. As the cab pulls up at the front of the bar, she turns to Jake. “I’m leaving – don’t bother talking to Frank. He won’t want to speak with the person I left him for.” She spins on the spot, stumbling toward the taxi and gets in.

Before being able to find out where she’s going to go, the taxi speeds off. Jake presses his lips together, clenching his jaw as he calls Frank.

“Hello?”

“Frank, it’s Jake,” he says.

“What do you want?”

“Erika has just told me she left you – man, I’m sorry,” he tells him, taking a deep

breath. “She just got in a cab and left... After I told her I wasn’t interested – still.”

Frank sighs, “I knew you wouldn’t be. You never really seem interested in anyone.” Frank pauses. “Any idea where she’s going?”

“Unfortunately, not. The taxi left before I got the chance to ask,” he explains.

Frank takes a deep breath – his frustration audible. “It’s fine, I’ll call her mum and let her know what’s happening. She’ll probably head there.”

“Okidok – if you need me, you know where I am. Talk soon,” Jake says.

“Talk later.” Frank hangs up.

Jake returns his phone to his pocket, heading back inside for the final lot of orders.

“My head is banging,” Jake says, taking his coat off as he enters the apartment.

“Is it the fireworks, the music, or the fact you’ve been awake 24 hours?” Shay questions, lying on the sofa with a blanket over them.

Jake pauses, thinking about it before continuing to take his shoes off. “I think it’s all three,” he mutters, scratching the top of his head as he walks into the living room. Shay’s expression is one of upset as Jake approaches the living room. “What’s wrong?” He questions.

Shay doesn’t say anything, just gesturing to the TV.

Turning, Jake looks at the big monitor. A breaking news story showing that a young, twenty-nine-year-old woman had been raped and killed in a bar in the early hours of the morning.

“Erika Brook was a loving wife, friend, and daughter. She will be greatly missed,” the news reader says, pausing. “Unfortunately, the perpetrator of the incident seems to have

gotten away. Although, there are eyewitnesses to the crime who believe they should be able to identify the man.”

Taking his phone out of his pocket, he finds several missed calls from Frank. Calling him back, he heads into the kitchen. “Frank?”

“She’s fucking dead,” he cries down the phone.

Jake presses his lips together, his eyes welling with tears. “I’m so sorry. I should’ve made sure she was going home...”

Frank snuffles. “No, you couldn’t’ve stopped her... She would’ve changed her destination half way through the journey, knowing her...” He says, his voice uneven. “Jake, the police haven’t found *any* DNA on her...”

“You’re joking? The guy *raped* and killed her, and they haven’t found *any* DNA? How the fuck does that work?” Jake growls.

Frank scoffs, “fuck if I know... But it doesn’t sound like they’re going to be able to get the guy. None of the cameras were working at the bar...”

Jake’s hand flies up – hitting his forehead as he tries to hold back the rage. “Do they know anything about the guy that did it?”

“They know he was six foot, white, blond hair, brown eyes, and was wearing a leather jacket. He’s apparently done this before but wasn’t found,” Frank cries.

Done this before but wasn’t found?
“How many times before?”

Frank puts the phone down for a second before coming back. “Around eight or so times... All at the same three bars.”

“What bars?”

“Valentines, Lazarus, and Dracula,” he announces.

Jake steps back, leaning against the fridge as Shay enters the kitchen. "I'll see what I can do." He hangs up, looking over to Shay. "How would you feel about killing a Vampire?"

"You think it was a Vampire that did this?" Shay questions, gesturing to the TV in the living room.

Jake nods, pressing his lips together as he tries to keep a grip of his anger.

"Why?"

"None of the cameras were working in the bars where he's attacked – I have the same issue at Little Panda's – the cameras fizzle and die if they focus on me for too long..." He mumbles. He's also using a hunting ground of bars named after vampires..."

"Seriously?" Shay scoffs. "How cliché."

"You're telling me..." He mutters. "I need to find him."

Shay bobs their head. “I’ll help you.”

With the patterns of deaths, Jake estimated that the vampire will be in Lazarus – a Horror themed bar in West London. “Seen any one yet?” He asks Shay. While Jake can tell what people are – whether Shifter, Werewolf, or Púca, he can’t sense other Vampires... They just smell like him.

“I think so?” They say, looking at the bar – seeing one of the bartenders taking off his leather jacket – a red aura around him, indicating his vampirism. “Bartender, ten o’clock.”

Jake looks, seeing three bartenders – a blond girl, a brown haired man, and the blond suspect. “I’ll be right back.” He wanders over to the bar, standing in front of the blond man’s station. The description being perfect for him. Six foot, blond, brown eyed. Shame the eyewitnesses didn’t catch a glimpse of the

large tribal tattoo on his left forearm... *Highly doubt you're a tribesman...* "Hey," he says, catching the guys attention.

The vampire looks up, taking a big sniff – he realises that Jake is like him. A large grin spreads across his face. "Hey – how can I help a fellow brother of the dead?"

Jake leans on the bar, a fake yet sinister smile on his face. "How did it feel ripping that girl apart last night?"

Smiling – showing his fangs – he leans forward, making sure that Jake can hear him but no one else can. "She was fantastic... I do love a little bit of ebony – don't you?"

The comment makes Jake's stomach turn. "How about we take one together?"

The Vamp raises his eyebrow, a happy expression on his face. "Find one, take her out back. I'll be out in a couple minutes." He

grins, heading over to another bartender – as if to say that he’ll be back soon.

Jake heads to the back door, gesturing for Shay to follow him.

Waiting outside, Shay sits behind a bin – their long white hair down instead of in a bun. Making them look more feminine than usual.

Exiting the club, the Vamp smiles at Jake. “What do we have here?” He asks, looking down at Shay. “Ain’t you a pretty, young thing,” he says, crouching in front of them.

Shay quickly looks up – their red eyes shining through their white, thick hair. In the creepiest voice possible they say, “Shalom.” They aim a beam of light at him, burning his face.

He groans in agony, falling to the ground.

Blackened eyes, Jake smiles down at the squealing man as he takes a stake out of his jacket's inner pocket. "Time to sleep!" He cheers, plunging the stake into his chest.

The Vamp's skin turning grey and crackly.

"Sorry about your hand," Shay says – knowing that their light beam had heated it up while staking the now corpse.

Jake shrugs. "It's fine, don't worry about it."

"I could just make you immune again..." Shay mumbles.

"Two things: one, I don't want to be immune again – it was a nightmare and I'm not confident enough to be around humans constantly yet; and two, why did you say your name?" He chuckles.

Shay smiles as they put their hair back up in a bun. "I know Shalom is a salutation

that means Peace, but a lot of white people get scared by the word. It's why I started going by Shay in 1935."

"Londoners, am I right?" Jake laughs, crossing his arms over his chest as he looks down at the body. "What will we do with it?"

Kneeling, Shay rummages through the pockets of the monster. "I'm going to loot the twat, then set him on fire."

"Won't he just continue burning?"

Shay looks up at him. "No, he won't. I'm a fairy. My magic fire will kill him within minutes. I could make it quicker..." Shay pauses. "But who wants this cockhead to have a quick death?"

Jake laughs, "after the pain he's inflicted here – he doesn't deserve it. After all, we don't know how old he is..."

Shay pulls the wallet out of the man's pocket, passing it to Jake before swiftly setting

the corpse on fire – removing the stake to make sure that it's not captured when the police are called. "We'll search the guy up when we get home, see who he was supposed to be... See if he's actually real or whether it's just new IDs."

Jake nods, offering Shay his hand. Taking it, the pair swiftly walk down the street and leaving the premises. "How long do you think it will take for them to find him?"

Shay shrugs. "Fingers crossed, they never will. Or, if they do, they might find where he was living and find some clothes with Erika's DNA..."

"Where did the cunt live?" Jake asks, taking the wallet out of his pocket – checking the address. "We might need to check it out – just to make sure that there's nothing there which could show him as what he was..."

Shay bobs their head in agreement. “No touching though, don’t want to leave prints.”

The pair attended the apartment block, using the fire escape of the old building to look in the windows of the apartment. “Nothing terrible here,” Shay comments.

“We need to check his fridge...” Jake mutters.

“Agreed. Stay here,” they say, opening the window wearing gloves, before shrinking down to their natural size.

“You’re almost as small as a can of cola,” Jake jokes.

Shay frowns. “If you try to stuff me in a can or a jar, I will stake you.”

Jake holds his hands up, surrendering. “Yes, sir.”

Shay turns away, entering the apartment – scurrying across the floor and using their magic to open the fridge. Before climbing in, checking each self and closing it up again.

Hearing a noise coming from the door – Shay decides to use their wings to fly across the room. Swiftly changing back and closing the window behind them before jumping off the fire escape – Jake in tow.

“Anything?” He asks – holding Shay’s hand as the pair walk down the street.

They shake their head. “Nothing unusual. Looks like all the feeds were done away from his home...”

A sigh of relief comes from Jake as he lets go of Shay’s hand, instead wrapping his arm around their shoulders as he smiles. “That’s the supernatural world in the clear then... Let’s go home and sleep for a week.”

Chapter Five

Twenty Years Later

“Happy New Year!” The crowd cheers on the TV.

Jake rolls his eyes, seeing too many years go by too quickly. *This is getting boring...*

“Hey, I was wondering. How about we move to Ireland?” Shay asks, walking into the living room and sitting next to Jake. Sitting cross-legged on the sofa, newspaper in hand.

“Why?” Jake questions, looking at the headlines of the newspaper. Finding an article detailing *Animal Attacks*. “You want to move to Ireland to hunt?”

Shay peers up at him. “I didn’t say that... But we could help. I know a couple hunters there, they’re in deep shit...”

“Are they going to try and kill me?”
Jake raises an eyebrow, knowing that the last *friendly hunter* they helped tried to kill him.

Shay presses their lips together, looking down at the newspaper again. “Maybe? But we won’t know until we go to find out...”

“Hey, Jake. Can we move to a country you’ve never been to, to help hunters that will most likely try to kill you?” Jake says, sarcastically. Standing up from the sofa and heading into the kitchen.

“Jake, we need to move. We’ve been to most of England, and I can’t go back to Scotland for another few years...” Shay mutters.

Turning back and standing in the doorway of the kitchen. “And who’s fault is that?”

“Shut up...” Shay mumbles. “It’s the only option we have.”

“We could live in Wales...” Jake mentions before heading back into the kitchen.

“Do you want to get hunted by werewolves?” Shay shouts, turning the channel over on the TV. Watching a TV show instead of the news.

Bowl in hand, drying it with a towel, Jake enters the living room. “Are there a lot of werewolves in Wales?”

Shay nods. “A lot in Barry, Cardiff, and Penarth...”

Jake sighs, “I suppose that would be a bad idea then...”

“So, we’re going to Ireland?” Shay questions.

He shrugs, going back into the kitchen. “We’re going to Ireland.”

They got lucky – finding a monster-infested village under the protection of a pair of hunters who don’t seem bothered that a Vampire and a Fairy has moved in...

“Where are the damn hunters?” Jake scoffs, an angered tone to his voice.

“You didn’t want hunters, now you want hunters... Make your mind up,” Shay says, going up the stairs at the back of the pub. Heading to their new sleeping quarters above the pub Jake’ll be running.

“It’s not that I want them, it just that they should be dealing with the problems in the damn town. Vampires are running around,

killing and feeding on people for Christ's sake."

Shay laughs, dropping their bags in the middle of the studio apartment. "Fantastic, because you certainly don't sound like a self-hating Vampire..."

Jake rolls his eyes as he puts his bags on the double bed. "Can we just ignore the fact that I'm a Vampire, please?"

Shay shakes their head. "Nope, that's not how any of this works."

"Fuck..." Jake sits on the edge of the bed. "Have you spoken with the hunters?"

Shay presses their lips together, crossing their arms over their chest as they stand in the middle of the apartment. "I spoke with Dara... Four days ago. But I haven't heard anything else from him..."

"You think he's in danger," Jake blurts.

Shay bobs their head. “He was dealing with a Vampire coven when I called him.”

Jake runs his hands through his thick, dark brown hair. “Any idea on the location?” He looks up, his typically hazel eyes having hints of yellow – indicating his hunger.

“I’ll get my map out and find where he said they were,” Shay says, heading back down the stairs.

Jake looks out the window by his bed, the sun streaming in. The warmth is inviting and almost makes Jake sad that he’ll be saying goodbye to the feeling again shortly.

Shay comes bouncing up the stairs, map in hand. Sitting next to Jake on the bed, they point to a farmhouse just outside of town. “He said they were there...”

“How many?” He questions, turning and looking at the map.

“Twelve?”

Jake sighs, not liking the uncertainty.
“We *think* there’s twelve?”

“At least...”

Jake closes his eyes, thinking of a way to deal with this. “We’re going to need to find a way debilitate them...”

“Shame we don’t have a Banshee...”
Shay mumbles, taking a deep breath as they realise what they’ve just said. “I’m sorry...”

Jake pats them on the back, standing up and turning back to the bed. Unpacking. “It’s okay, don’t worry about it,” he says. “I think we’re going to need to do it during the day so that they’re weaker.”

“Unless they have the same protection as you.” Shay looks up at him, a concerned expression on their face. Their long white hair wrapped around the back of their neck – hanging down their left shoulder as they play with the ends.

“How would they get that?”

Shay shrugs. “Dara’s a witch... If he’s being tortured, I’m not sure whether he’d give in or not.”

Jake turns away, pacing a little. Hands locked at the back of his head as he thinks. “We definitely need something else then. Do we have any werewolf blood?”

Pressing their lips together, Shay shakes their head. “We used it all on our last hunt...”

“Fuck...” Jake mutters, continuing to pace. “How about-” He stops, a smell interrupting him. Familiar but years since he’d last smelt it. “Shay, I can smell a Banshee.”

There’s a bag on the door to their apartment swiftly after Jake’s comment. Shay heads downstairs, opening the door. “Bree?”

“Shay, I need your help,” the young woman says, panicking. “Dad went hunting,

but he didn't come back, and he didn't tell me where he was going or what he was hunting..."

Shay gestures for the girl to enter, the pair heading upstairs. Sitting the girl down on Jake's bed – situated by the stairs – Shay kneels down in front of her. "It's okay, we're working on getting him back. I think I know why he wanted you out of range for this one," Shay mutters. They look up at Jake, seeing the flecks of red in his eyes. "Are you okay?"

Jake smiles and bobs his head. "I'm fine." He's lying – hiding the burning sensation in the back of his throat.

"What do you mean?" The woman questions, her eyes wide as she looks down at Shay. "I don't understand."

"You're a Banshee – which you weren't last time I saw you."

“I came of age, I suppose,” Bree mutters. “But why should that change anything?”

“Because if a nest of Vampires smell you, you’ll be dead very quickly,” Jake blurts before going back to holding his breath.

“Why?”

Shay stands up and steps back, a confused expression on their face. “Dara didn’t tell you?”

“Tell me what?” Bree scoffs. “Shay, what are you talking about?”

Jake’s eyes turn red as he stares down at the young woman. “Shay...” He whispers.

“He’s a Vampire,” Bree shouts, taking a stake out of her bag.

Shay swiftly steps in front of him – blocking the pair from attacking each other.

“You don’t stake him, and you’re not eating her.”

“Blank me,” he whispers, trying to keep his hunger under control.

Shay snaps their fingers; his eyes slowly go back to normal. Hazel with small yellow flecks.

Allowing him to breathe again. He can hear, he can see, but he can’t smell or taste. “Thank you.”

“No problem...” Shay looks over their shoulder at him before looking back to Bree. “Now, you need to put that away. He cannot help wanting to kill you, he’s never met you before, and you’re basically his catnip.”

Bree steps back, confusion on her face. Slowly putting the stake back in her bag. “Why am I his catnip?”

“Banshee blood is powerful in smell. If we smell you, we can be thrown into a frenzy

within seconds... I smelt you before you even knocked on the door,” Jake explains.

“So, Dad left me behind so that the Vampires didn’t come after me?”

Jake nods. “Essentially.” He pauses. “But now we’re going to need your help to get him back.”

“What do you need?” Bree asks.

“We need your blood to make a bomb, and we’ll need you to come with us. You’re a Banshee, your scream will debilitate them.”

Jake heads over to Shay’s pile of bags, grabbing a round, ball-like vial and passing it to her. “This needs half-filling.”

She takes the vile, getting a knife out of her bag and going to prick her finger.

“Wait,” Shay blurts. “Not here... He’s a Vampire. Do it anywhere but here.”

Bree bobs her head. "I'll go home and get it done. When are we going to get him back?"

"Tonight," Jake tells her.

"Thank you."

Jake turns and goes into the bathroom, locking the door behind him. *She shouldn't smell that familiar.* Voices fade, and the smell leaves.

A knock at the bathroom door startles him. "Jake, are you okay?"

"Do all Banshee's smell the same?" He questions.

"I suppose so?" Shay mutters, using their powers to unlock the door. The door swings open slowly, Shay standing in the doorway. "She smelt like Nathaniel?"

"She smelt like Aibell... Nathaniel had a similar smell but not entirely the same."

Jake pauses. "I suppose it makes sense... Aibell was the first Banshee; theoretically, they'll all smell like her."

Shay bobs their head. "Yeah, she really did spread her seed..."

Jake laughs, "that's gross."

Shrugging, Shay smiles. "I know. C'mon, we need to get everything sorted before tonight."

A mile down the road, the pair park up, climbing out of their car as Bree arrives. "You need to stay here," Jake tells her, taking the small bomb vial. "They'll smell you immediately, and we can't deal with that and the blood."

"But you need me to scream," Bree blurts, her eyes darting from Jake to Shay. "If I'm down here, they're not going to hear me."

Shay smiles, taking the top of a cardboard cup out of their pocket and handing it to her. “Did you ever play with cups on a string as a kid? Playing as if it was a working phone?”

“Of course,” Bree mutters.

“Well, this is the real thing. I’ve cut the top of the cup off – which you’ll scream into. And I’ll aim the other half at the Vamps.” They say, taking the other half out of their pocket.

Bree’s brows up together – creases forming on her forehead. “Is that actually going to work?”

Jake laughs, “you clearly have no faith in Shay.”

“That’s not true,” Bree announces, crossing her arms over her chest.

“Oh, really?” Jake scoffs. “If you had faith, you wouldn’t be asking the question...”

“If it doesn’t work, then we’ll die, and you won’t see smoke coming from the house on the hill. If you do see smoke, then it worked,” Shay says. “Ready to go?” They ask Jake, looking up at him.

He nods. “Here we go,” he mutters, heading up the road. “If this doesn’t work and they try to kill us, please kill me...”

“You want me to kill you instead of a Vampire doing the honour?” Shay probes, a confused expression on their face.

“I’d prefer to die by the hands of someone I care about,” he states, continuing to walk.

Shay pauses in their tracks, their cheeks turning red. *He cares about me...*

Outside the house, they can see into the windows – the Vampires walking around as if everything is normal. Shay stays put,

outside the house, while Jake approaches. Walking up the stairs to the porch, he knocks on the front door.

A Vamp comes to the front door, a disgusting grin on his face. “How can I help you?” He asks, an Alabama accent indicating he’s not from the area.

“I’m looking for a friend of mine. He’s called Dara, he’s around this tall.” Jake says, gesturing to his height. “And he’s a Vampire Hunter.”

The Vamp’s eyes turn red – getting into offensive positions immediately.

Jake smiles, laughing slightly as he takes the vial out of his pocket as he steps back. “It’s okay, I have something for you.” He smashes the vial. The Vampires flock out of the house, smelling the blood. Their eyes turning black while Jake’s remain red – still in control.

“Scream!” Shay shouts down the cup, instantly a deafening and debilitating scream erupts from the magic cup.

The Vampires collapse – Jake falling with them. “Fire them,” he shouts. A pained expression on his face as he covers his ears, the veins in his temples popping out as he screams.

Shay drops the cup – it still aiming at the Vampires and Jake. They cast their spell, setting the Vamps on fire and lighting the house before swiftly making their way around to the back of the property – finding Dara tied up in the basement. “Dara?”

“Shay? Who’s scream is that? It’s not Bree’s right?” He says, a worried tone in his voice.

“It is, but she’s safe,” they say, untying the old man. “Let’s get out before the place burns down.”

Getting out, they find the Vamps dead, and Jake setting alight. “No!” Shay screams, using their power to drop a day’s worth of rain directly on Jake. Putting him out and destroying the paper cup. “Are you okay?”

Jake slowly gets up, his entire body feeling crushed from the water. His clothes waterlogged, his head pounding and his leg burning. “I’m fine...” He coughs.

“You’re one of them?” Dara growls, taking the stake out of Shay’s back pocket – ready for a fight.

“Species wise, yes. Coven wise, certainly not,” he scoffs, clearing his throat. “Your daughter is safe by the cars, about a mile down the road.” He pauses. “You’re injured... Do you need help walking?”

“You’re injured?” Shay questions, looking over Dara.

“My leg is bleeding – the leeches were feeding off me,” he mutters. “Why aren’t you like them?”

Jake shrugs, a sad but smug expression on his face as he starts walking down the road. “I choose not to be the monster I was created to be.”

Chapter Six

Waiting by the cars, Bree sees her Dad and Shay first – Jake tagging along behind. “Dad!” Bree squeals as she runs towards the old man leaning on Shay – hugging him before checking him over. “Are you hurt?”

“He’s been bitten, but he’s going to be okay,” Jake mutters. Continuing to walk, heading to Shay’s car and getting in the passenger seat.

Watching as Jake gets into the car, shutting the door. Bree frowns, her brows pulling together and creasing the bridge of her nose. “What’s wrong with him?”

Jake takes a deep breath as he tries to keep himself calm, sitting in the car. The smell

of blood still lingering and still able to hear what they're saying outside the vehicle.

“He’s a Vampire – *everything* is wrong with him,” Dara roars.

Losing his temper and using his speed, Jake gets out the car and squares up to Dara. “I have saved more lives than I’ve fucking taken – and that’s saying something considering I lived through World War Two. So, please, tell me how much of a monster I am for being a species you don’t fucking like.”

The anger on Dara’s face melts away, staring at the *young* man. No wrinkles in sight – his tanned skin seeing no damage over the last eight decades. “I didn’t realise you were that old...”

Jake steps back, his lips pressed together as he looks down. A feeling of shame taking over after the outburst. “Nobody ever realises... It’s not like I age.”

“Why not?” Dara mutters.

Jake looks up, a confused expression on his face, his big brown brows pulling together. “Why not what? How could I age? I’m a Vampire...”

Shay turns their attention to Jake. “Remember that Vamp who killed Erika?”

“What about him?” Jake asks.

“How old did he look when we killed him?” They question, peering up at him.

“Maybe late thirties?”

“He was 18 years old when he was turned,” Shay explains. “Vampires don’t actually live forever... Not with how watered down the bloodline is. They age six months for every year they live. Their lives are doubled, but not infinite.”

Jake frowns. “Twilight lied...”

Bree scoffs, covering her mouth as she tries to hold the laughter in.

“So why am I not ageing?” He questions.

“Because you were turned by an Estrie. Iris wasn’t just a Vampire, she was a creation of Cain,” Shay clarifies. “Your life will be forever, because you’re a creation of Cain, too. These guys are contaminated with other Vampire breeds.”

“There’s breeds of Vampire...” Dara mutters. “I’ve only seen this type,” he says, gesturing back to the house down the road.

Shay bobs their head. “I know, they’re the most common. While God made Cain a Vampire, Lucifer made Abel a Vampire, too. One who aged and died all over again... The two breeds merged after centuries of existing.”

“Abel... Is a Vampire...” Jake stares into the distance, his eyes flickering as he

tries to process the news. “Why did Lucifer make Abel a Vampire..?”

“Because Abel was the first Victim. He wanted to give Abel a longer life, but also wanted to inflict pain. How else would you do it other than causing someone to age to dust and having to kill to survive?” Shay mumbles.

Jake laughs, “well, I suppose quite a lot of the Torah was wrong, then.”

Taking a deep breath, Shay steps forward – placing their hand on Jake’s shoulder. “You can never trust a book written by Humans.”

“You’re right. I should never have trusted Twilight...” He mutters jokingly.

Shay rolls their eyes. “Let’s go...”

“Wait,” Dara blurts. “How do I kill this kind of Vampire?” He asks Shay, gesturing to Jake.

“I can be killed by Fairies, Vampires, Witches, and Werewolves. Werewolves are the slowest, Fairies and Witches can kill me instantly. Vampires take a few minutes,” Jake says before heading back to the car, pausing and turning back to look at Dara. “If you have any further questions, I’ll assume you’re planning to kill me.” He climbs into the car as Dara and Bree get into hers.

“You were honest,” Shay mumbles.
“Why did you answer him?”

Closing the car door, he fastens his belt. “Because how else am I going to get him to trust me?”

Sneaking in the back door of the pub, Dara heads upstairs with a stake. Finding the bed near the entrance – window above it. He takes a deep breath before rapidly pulling back the blackout curtains.

Jake's skin begins to burn, steam coming off his form as he hisses – waking up and rushing off the bed – standing out of the light, in the darkness of the room.

“Jake?” Shay questions, coming out of their bedroom – fairy blade in hand. “Dara, what the fuck are you doing?”

“I needed to know if he was immune to the sunlight...” He mutters.

Jake looks over at Shay, a disgusted expression on his face. “Why the hell did we help this twat?” Jake pauses, a new scent alerting him. He turns back to Dara. “You brought Bree with you to kill me?”

“Bree isn't here,” he mutters, as footsteps come up the stairs.

“Dad, what are you doing here?” She questions, a small woven basket in hand.

Dara spins on the spot, hiding the stake behind him. “I was just talking to Jake and Shay.”

“Dad...” Bree steps up, looking at Jake cowering in the dark – away from the beam of sunlight, turning and looking into her Dad’s eyes. “Tell me the truth,” she says – her eyes shining blue.

Dara tries to keep it in, but his daughter’s power forces him to announce his plan. “I was going to stake him and take him to the vault,” he blurts.

“Vault?” Jake probes. “There’s a Vault? When did Fallout happen?”

“Dad... Why? They fucking saved you,” Bree growls, walking past him and placing the basket on a table by the railing of the stairs. She approaches Jake, a sombre expression on her face. “I’m sorry about him, he’s a complete asshole to anyone he doesn’t understand.”

Jake steps back slightly, not wanting to be too close to her. “No problem. But why do you have a Vault?”

“Certain creatures are addicted to other creatures... Vampires and Banshees; Werewolves and Fairies... We need to keep some *in stock* in case we need bait,” she mutters, shame on her face.

“You were going to use me as a supply of Werewolf bait?” Crossing his arms, Jake smiles. “You could’ve just asked.”

Dara turns to look at Jake. “You’d’ve done it if I’d asked?”

Jake bobs his head. “Why not? I used your daughter as bait to get you back... I wouldn’t risk Shay, but me – yeah, no problem with that.”

“I’m more important than Bree?” Shay questions, their cheeks filling with blood as they blush.

“I’ve known you for almost eighty years now. No offence to Bree-”

“None taken,” Bree interrupts.

“But I *really* need you around.”

“Awww,” Shay giggles before running over and hugging him. “Thanks, Jakey.”

“Never call me Jakey, ever again,” Jake laughs, hugging them back.

“What did you bring in the basket?” Shay asks as they pull away from Jake.

“Oh.” Bree heads over to the table, taking the cover off the basket and revealing blood bags. “I got you these,” she says – turning to Jake and offering them to him.

A shocked expression crosses his face as the blood bags are placed into his hands. “Thank you... But you didn’t need to do this,” he tells her. “I don’t really drink human.”

She shrugs. “Let’s call it an emergency stash, then. If it’s refrigerated, you’ll be able to keep it for a while.”

He bobs his head. “Thank you.” He hands it to Shay so that they can put it in the fridge behind Bree.

“I’ll leave you be,” she says. “C’mon, asshole.”

“Language,” Dara growls.

“Don’t language me. You don’t kill people who save you...” Bree mutters as the pair go downstairs and leave the building. Allowing Jake to breathe again.

“Want me to close the curtain for you?” Shay questions.

Jake nods. “I would appreciate it. I’d like to go back to sleep at some point.”

“Or I could just make you immune...” Shay winks.

“Just so I can close the curtains instead? That’s lazy,” Jake jokes.

Shay rolls their eyes, using magic to close the curtains as they make their way back to their room. “Don’t you think it was nice that she got you food? It’s like saving someone from a fire and getting a bouquet of chocolate bars as praise.”

“A *bouquet* of chocolate bars?” Jake questions as he wanders over to his bed. “That’s a thing?”

“Not the point – but yes.” Shay pauses, standing in the doorway of their room. “How long has it been since you’ve actually drunk human blood?”

“It’s been forty-four years almost. Last time I drank human was when Nate woke me up in 1976,” he mutters, lying down on his bed. “It’s been so long.”

“That’s a good amount of time...” Shay murmurs.

Jake sighs, “so you can appreciate why I don’t want to use it again?”

Shay bobs their head, walking over to Jake’s bed and sitting on the edge. “Maybe we can use it in an emergency? Or use it when we hunt?”

“Maybe,” Jake whispers. “Are you okay?”

“He could’ve staked and kidnapped you without me knowing... And I wouldn’t’ve known...” Shay stares into the distance – seemingly in distress as their hands begin to shake.

“Hey,” he says, sitting up – wrapping an arm around Shay’s waist and pulling them close. “It’s okay, it worked out fine.”

Shay pulls out of Jake’s embrace, turning and kneeling on the bed next to him.

“If it wasn’t for me bringing you here, he’d never have known about you.”

Jake takes a deep breath as he cups Shay’s face. “Don’t do this to yourself. It’s okay.” He pulls them into a hug, Shay practically sitting on his lap. “Now, stop being a fool and go back to being your fairy-self. I need to go back to sleep,” he jokes, releasing them from his grasp.

Rolling their eyes as they get off the bed. “Fine.” They pause. “Sleep well.”

After several days pouring pints at the Oak Stake, newly named thanks to the werewolf owner wanting to be funny. “The Oak Stake...” Bree mutters, sitting next to Shay at the bar. “I don’t like it.”

“Neither do I, but that’s what we get for having a lycanthrope as a boss...” Shay sighs, watching Jake pull pints at the other end of

the bar. “I wonder why Kevin isn’t highly attracted to Jake...”

“You mean because Werewolves are addicted to Vampires? Or because he’s gay?” Bree questions, a confused expression on her face as she slowly turns to look at Shay.

Shay’s eyes widen. “Firstly, I didn’t know Kevin was Gay. Secondly, yes, because he’s a Werewolf, I thought they were addicted to Vampires no matter the species.”

“Actually,” Jake says, approaching the pair. “I’m made from an Estrie – but it’s only Estries that produce pheromones that cause Werewolves to go crazy. He can barely smell me.”

Shay thinks for a moment, pondering over the attack almost eighty years ago, their eyes flickering. “That’s why Iris was killed but not you...” They pause. “The Werewolf couldn’t track you because he couldn’t smell you.”

“If he’d paid more attention to me, he would’ve been able to track me. But Iris’ smell was too powerful for him...” Jake mumbles, a sombre expression on his face as he reminisces of moments with Iris. “I bloody loved that woman...”

Shay bobs their head. “You do love a cougar.”

“Excuse me?” Bree blurts, mouth hanging open – her glass raised to her mouth.

“All of the people he’s been with have been older than him by at least a century,” Shay explains. “Iris was how old?”

“Iris was 497 when I met her, I was with her for two or three years.” Jake pauses, thinking of Nate. “Nathaniel was 131...”

“Who is Iris and Nathaniel?” Bree asks, looking between the pair.

“Iris was my creator. She was an Estrie, made by Cain, who turned me.” Jake

keeps his head down, looking at the glass he's cleaning as he stands in front of them – hoping for someone to call him away so that he can hide the fact that he was with a Banshee, who he also killed.

“Nathaniel was a friend of ours,” Shay tells her.

Jake walking away to serve a customer – being saved by the *another one here, pal!*

“He was a Banshee, the son of Aibell, who Jake fell in love with. Unfortunately, it didn't end well for them...” Shay mutters.

“He was my brother?” Bree frowns, putting her drink down on the bar.

“Your mother is Aibell?” Shay questions. “I thought she was dead...”

“Clearly not,” Bree says, looking up at Shay. “Jake killed my brother, didn't he?”

Shay takes a deep breath, pressing their lips together as they nod. “It was an accident, and Nate wouldn’t kill him...”

Bree looks over to Jake, seeing the tears in Jake’s eyes as he works – being able to hear everything they’d been saying. “Jake, it’s okay.”

Jake gives the beer to the customer, taking the money and putting it in the till before walking over to the pair. “It was never okay, and it will never be okay. I loved him.” He storms off, getting out from behind the bar to collect glasses empty glasses.

“Nate was 176 when he died, we put him in the crypt where we kept Jake during the war,” Shay explains. “It’s a small cemetery outside of Berlin – Aibell will know where it is.”

“I haven’t seen my mum in a while...” She mutters. “But I’ll keep that in mind.”

“When did you last see her?” Jake asks going back behind the bar with a hand full of glasses – putting them in the wash bucket.

“I was five.” Bree smiles. “1998, she almost killed me.”

“And you’re smiling?” Jake scoffs. “Why did she do that?”

Bree shrugs. “Dad said she had postnatal depression. It slowly got worse.” She pauses, biting down on her bottom lip. “Did she abandon Nate?”

Jake steps back, leaning against the counter behind him. His mouth agape.

“Yes,” Shay mutters. “She only got back in touch with him when I met him.”

“She’s just bad mother...” Bree looks down at her glass, twirling it.

Jake shakes his head. “She suffered from a medical condition. She loved you, she

just couldn't show you." He looks at her, a cold expression on his face – his jaw set like stone. "She loved him, too."

Bree glances up, tears forming in her eyes. "Thank you."

He bobs his head before going to the other side of the bar again – escaping the sad atmosphere.

"Are you upset that Twilight lied about you sparkling?" Bree giggles, helping clean the bar now that the customers have left, and Jake has locked up.

Jake laughs. "I'm just sad that I was portrayed as a Werewolf – how dare they!" He jokes, smiling as he wipes down the table she's picked the glasses up from.

"Your fangs look super sharp," she says, staring at them.

Jake allows them to descend further – the points getting sharper, looking like tiny daggers.

“Oh my...” Bree blurts.

“They’re very sharp. I cut my own tongue on them all the time,” he chuckles, moving on to the next table.

Bree tilts her head to one side. “A Vampire can bite their own tongue?”

“Of course.” Jake smiles, his dimples showing on his cheeks. “I do it often, the amount of times I’ve woken up in the night to blood everywhere because I’ve bitten my tongue is ridiculous. It stings like a bitch, too.”

Letting out a laugh, Bree shakes her head. “I suppose there are downfalls to being a Vampire, then.”

“Quite a few.” He bobs his head, going back behind the bar and rinsing his cloth

before ringing it out and going to the next table.

Shay rolls their eyes as they enter the room from the back of the bar. “Let’s not forget he can’t go out in sunlight, he wants to eat literally everything with blood in its veins. He doesn’t sparkle. He killed Hitler but got no credit-”

“You killed Hitler?” Bree interrupts, stopping in her tracks.

Jake stands up straight, letting out a long sigh. “Yeah... I was turned specifically for it.”

A confused and upset expression appears on Bree’s face. “Why?”

Taking a couple steps towards her, he looks down at her. “My name is Jakub Aronoff. I was a Jewish man in Kielce, Poland. I lived there with my Mother, Father, and

Sister. In 1939, the Germans invaded and took my Father to a camp.

Soon after, my Mother and Sister were killed by the Gestapo in the city centre for fighting back. I was the only one left, and our Rabbi wanted to make a deal with Iris – the Estrie who sired me.” He pauses. “I would help fight the Nazis and kill Hitler, and I would give her the ashes of her daughter.”

Tears begin to form in Bree’s eyes. “You lost everything, then they made you into a monster...”

“I volunteered to be this.” He gestures to himself. “I left my faith behind to save my people.”

A lump forms in her throat as she tries to hold back the tears. “That’s not fair.”

“Life isn’t fair. If it was, Nate would still be here. And eleven million innocent people wouldn’t’ve been murdered for being

undesirable,” he stutters. “It’s okay. I saved people, and that was my main goal.”

“And you continued to save people,” Shay says. “Most people would’ve given up by now.”

Jake beams. “Would you let me give up? Because I’m only doing this for you,” he laughs.

Bree chuckles softly, tears falling down her face – wiping them away quickly. “I’m happy that you didn’t give up.”

Putting his hand on her shoulder, a soft smile on his face. “Me, too.”

The sun begins to rise as Jake starts closing the curtains in the apartment. Heading into Shay’s room – finding them laid in bed, naked with a thin blanket over them. He walks past the bed, closing the curtains. Looking back, over his shoulder, as he goes to exit the

room. He sees their back, scars on their shoulder blades from where their wings sprout.

“Like what you see?” They whisper, eyes still closed and arms tucked under their pillow.

Jake quickly turns toward the door of the room, his eyes wide open. “Sorry!”

Shay giggles, rolling over – freeing their chest from being pressed into their firm mattress. “It’s fine,” they say, sitting up and wrapping the blanket around them. “Are you okay?”

He peers over his shoulder, pressing his lips together as he frowns. “I didn’t know that you had your wings removed.”

Lying back down on the bed, staring at the ceiling, Shay lets out a long sigh, “I had the option of staying a Fairy or having a

Human form... I chose to have a Human form.”

Jake looks away as he winces, knowing how painful it would've been for them. “You had your wings removed to blend in with Humans?”

“I didn't choose to blend in with them. I chose to help them,” they mutter. Taking a deep breath, moving their hair away from their face. “I do care about them.”

“I know you do...” He says. “I just didn't realise that you were so invested in them. Let alone willing to remove a part of yourself to be with them.”

“To be with you, you mean...” They blurt. “You may be a Vampire, but you're still Human in origin. I wouldn't've met you if it wasn't for my sacrifice.”

“I'm sorry for judging. I didn't think of it that way,” Jake sighs. Turning to look at

them. Fascinated by their long, white hair as it's sprawled across their pillows. "I'll leave you to get more sleep."

They roll over, bobbing their head.
"Goodnight, Jake."

"Goodnight, Shalom."

Chapter Seven

Coming Soon