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Passionate Writer



Vampire, silently spoken under my breath in astonishment. I was familiar with the legend and the folklore; however, I didn't believe in the undead. Until now!

“Now let us go into the night, into the moonlight, and discover the world through your vampire eyes.”

Mynea took hold of me, and we swiftly moved through the house into the cool night air. This time my eyes weren't closed. We were traveling faster than I'd ever thought possible. In Mynea's arms, we seemed to defy gravity as we glided across the lake without touching it. The water was still. At night, the lake was a dark mirror reflecting the night sky. I looked into the heavens. It was

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spectacularly brilliant and filled with hundreds, no, thousands of stars. I couldn't remember a time that I saw so many stars in one night. The moon was brighter than ever. It seemed to illuminate the darkness with a soft and soothing blanket of light. It somehow seemed larger, closer than normal.

I looked away and noticed Mynea's curly hair pressed against my face by the force of the wind. Her hair smelled like the essence of the room where I had my first proper meal. Her silk gown was flailing and opened from her breast down to her feet. She appeared naked. I couldn't help but take note of her darkened nipples, revealed slightly by a pearl necklace that seemed to hang purposefully to protect them from sight. I held her close as she tightened her grip on my waist. I peered through the curly elegant locks to see our surroundings. The land drew nearer rapidly; I was sure we'd stumble and fall upon our arrival. However, we didn't. Instead, we came to an abrupt pause in our momentum which would have surely caused any human to topple over. It seemed gravity had forgotten us. We were on solid earth.

I still didn't know where we were or how far we had travelled. I turned around and was amazed at the vastness of the lake we crossed. The castle looked to be but a small rock in the distance. I turned to Mynea, who was staring at me with a smile. I instantly noticed her beautiful eyes. Her eyes were glowing like that of a cat. She seemed even more beautiful now than before.

"Look, my love. Look through your vampire eyes and see the world as you've never seen it before."

Indeed, she was right. Everything was in vivid color. It was as if my eyes were opened for the very first time. I was again a child. I could hear insects and tiny vermin scurry about. Mice were stomping like elephants running around looking for food. The gentle breeze whispered through the trees and brush that seemed to completely surround the area in an infinite blanket of

brilliant dark greens. Yes. Even in the moonlight I could see vibrant colors. The moonlight seemed to make inanimate objects come to life, all of these sensations and sounds filling my head at once. It became more and more difficult to distinguish one sound from the next, one scent from another. My vision began to blur, too many objects moving. I closed my eyes for just a moment when I felt a cold hand gently caress my cheek.

“Try to open your mind and take in nature’s beauty. The vampire blood in your veins has awakened your once human senses and made them sharp. In time they’ll guide you.”

I tried to open my mind, but I must admit, I didn’t know what she meant at the time. Nevertheless, the noises became distinct once more. I was able to focus.

“You, my love, now walk between life and death. We’re God’s perfect predator, and we remain children of the Devil. Even though we can be as gentle as angels, we possess strength beyond measure.”

Mynea turned and looked at me, her eyes studying me from head to toe. Then suddenly her gaze turned into a staunch stare. She was now looking at me as if she could see through me.

The thought of being a vampire plagued my mind. “Am I dead?”

“No, my love. We’re indeed alive. But merely being alive is not why I’ve brought you here. I’ll teach you how to live. Our way of life is not what You’re accustomed to. We’re beautiful, alluring creatures that must use all of our abilities to maintain our immortal gift.”

Abilities, I thought. Yes, abilities, she replied without moving her lips. “Let me show you.”

We began to move swiftly through the trees, traveling like the cheetah without making the slightest sounds, save the whistling winds. In the distance were candles burning. In an instant we were upon them.

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“We move as fast as the wind, Aleron. Stealth is our cloak, for under its cover you’ll survive for millennia and beyond. Without it, you’ll surely perish. We’re stronger, faster, and smarter than mortals; however, our numbers are few and the mortals are many, thus we fear their intentions lest they ever discover us and our true natures. We don’t live amongst them. We do, however interact with them as they’re our finest and most pleasurable delicacy. You see, my love, we survive by drinking blood. We thrive by drinking blood. We replenish ourselves by consuming it. Therefore, we become better predators as our prey remains constant.”

Delicacy implies that we can survive on other things, I thought.

“Yes, we can, but to deprive yourself of human blood is to be but alive. As I said before, I’m here to teach you to live. To live is to do exactly what I’m going to show you.”

The candles were burning outside a theatre. The marquee displayed Ozymandias, Pharaoh of the Exodus. Ozimandius referred to Ramses III, King of Egypt in the nineteenth dynasty. We dared not attempt the front doors, for they would surely open into a great room full of people. Instead, Mynea led us to a rear door situated in the center of a dark and lifeless alleyway. The smell of unattended mildew and filth filled my nostrils, the unmistakable scent of decaying flesh nearby buried under some trash. This alleyway was only penetrated by street vermin and homeless mortals on occasions.

I turned my attention to the door. I could tell this door wasn’t frequented for the rust on the hinges and the debris scattered about the base told its true history. Mynea opened the door with ease, tearing apart the rusted hinges, door frame, and the three steel locks that kept it secure from normal entry. The sound was muffled by the sheer speed. She told me to be silent without uttering a sound. The side door used to be an exit from the back of the

staging area. I could hear the performers entertaining the crowd. There were several oohs and aahs, interrupted occasionally by applause. I began to listen to the performers, for I'm well versed in Egyptian history, especially Ramses I, II, and III.

Mynea was searching. She looked past the curtains just slightly and surveyed the crowd. She then eased her head back into the darkness and smiled at me. "I've chosen, and she'll make a worthy meal!"

Mynea was hunting!

"What do you look for? How do you come to choose? Are there any rules?" I asked.

"I was taught to hunt the wicked! The murderers, cheats, and violators of society; however, I no longer subscribe to that lesson. I choose my meals indiscriminately, as God would choose who would live or die. I don't care what one has done in life, nor do I concern myself with whom they may have wronged. I simply let my will and their unfortunate fate guide me to them. There's no method. They're all my prey. Good and perceived evil alike! The young, old, strong, weak, they all will die soon enough."

The thought of draining the life from a child disgusted me. "This is not what God would sanction! How could you kill an innocent child?"

"Doesn't God allow the perfect child to be trampled by a horse? Do you not know of doctors and priests falling victim to petty crime? Do you not hear of the church condemning non-believers to death through some horrific means? Don't think or reason as if your human. You didn't question the innocence or lifestyle of the young woman whom you so clumsily and mercifully decided her morbid fate."

She was right. I was confused as to what I'm to do. All of my life I've been a servant of God and of my fellow man. Now it seems I'm supposed to be the self-appointed executioner of any poor soul I condemn to

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death. *I'm not sure I can do this! What is the price? What have I done? What have I allowed Mynea to do?*

"Nothing, my dear," she replied. "You haven't allowed me to do anything. You had no choice in the matter. I chose your fate for you and for that I'm your master. You'll learn from me. You'll watch me as I show you how to live with your new immortal life."

Again she was right, I had no choice. Even if I'd, I still wanted her. She's my master, my teacher, my mother, my love. She's mine.

"Sorry, my love," I said to her. "Forgive me."

"I already have, Aleron. It's only natural that you question what I do; what you'll do. It's not necessary for any apologies. Kings don't apologize for anything! And you, my dear strong Aleron, will be King!"

This time I took her in my arms. She looked and felt cold, though her eyes were inviting. I pressed her rigid body against mine and began to kiss her lips. Passionate and deeply we embraced each other. For the first time, I clearly realized that nothing shall ever come between us. I'll love her until life ceases to exist on Earth. She's indeed mine.

She lifted her head and nose into the air, then inhaled. "It's time."

Mynea peered through the red velvet curtains once more. I followed her lead. The crowd was captivated by the performance, and not a single sound filled the theatre, save the voices of the actors and actresses. Suddenly a woman sitting toward the center aisle arose and made her way to the center walkway. Various people in the crowd began to chatter about while looking in amazement at this woman's desire to leave the performance during what seemed to be one of the most compelling parts of the play. This seemed quite odd to me also.

"Follow swiftly," Mynea whispered to me.

And so I did, and in an instant we were through the crowd, in the lobby and in the stairwell leading up to the

balcony. Members in the crowd didn't even see a blur as we scurried past their eyes, defying their senses. We waited in the shadows of the stairwell when suddenly a door opened.

The lobby light immediately shined through while outlining the woman who removed herself from the performance. Mynea stepped into the light, while I stayed hidden in the shadows. The woman looked at Mynea with a familiar calmness.

"Hello, my dear," Mynea said to the woman.

She didn't respond. She just stood there in a daze.

"Come closer."

The woman took a few more steps toward Mynea, further into the stairwell. She then took the woman into her arms and embraced her as a mother would embrace a child she's hasn't seen in ages. Mynea then took the woman's neck into her mouth and punctured her skin just above the clavicle. The woman helplessly let out a sigh of pleasure mixed with pain. Her eyes shifted and found mine.

She looked at me as the life was being drawn from her body. I could see the reflection of my eyes in her dying gaze. Mynea continued to drink until the woman's body went limp. Mynea dropped her to the floor, turned toward me, and smiled, her mouth and teeth still covered in blood. The woman's blood resembled dark paint now dripping from Mynea's mouth. She took me into her arms again and began to kiss me. This kiss was unlike any other we shared, for the life force from the woman was still ripe in her mouth, and so, filled me with feelings of ecstasy.

She pressed her body against mine and for the first time felt warmth emanating from her. She felt softer than normal, still too hard for human skin, yet softer than her previous touch. I felt lost in her grasp once more. I began to see dynamic visions that weren't mine, memories and excerpts from a story unknown to me. I didn't let them distract me. I never wanted this embrace to end. But it did.

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“You must learn to lure your prey. Avoid detection by allowing them to seek you while persuading them silently from your mind to theirs. We’re superior to them in every way. Know this and know it well, for once you forget who you are, it will be the end of you.”

We left the stairwell as swiftly as we arrived, returning to the shadows of the alleyway. We walked into the moonlight and Mynea looked more radiant than ever.

“Aleron, our appearance changes slightly after each meal. I look and feel a little more human, though I’m more powerful than I was before I drank. This allows us to mingle amongst them for a short period of time without drawing too much attention to ourselves. Make no mistake, the mortals see us and don’t. Their ignorance also allows us to remain with them for centuries.

Now the time has come for you to feed again.”

“So we must take more than one a night to survive?”

“No. You must now because you’re but a fledgling. I myself won’t need another meal for months. However, I enjoy the hunt and thus will hunt again tomorrow and every day thereafter.”

Where do I begin? Who should I choose? Should I choose a male or female? Is there a difference? All of these questions could have been answered by Mynea, for I know she could read my thoughts; however she chose not to appease my queries. She wanted me to learn this basic step on my own. And so I shall.

I took Mynea’s hand, and we stepped out of the alleyway and began walking down the cobblestone road toward the sound of congregating. The night air was refreshing in my lungs, seasoned by a stale aroma. I purposely led Mynea with a slower, more humanly pace in an effort to mimic the motions and movements I’ve known all of my life. We passed several groups of people chatting about various insignificant topics until we came upon a local watering hole called the Peasant’s Dungeon. I’d heard

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of this place before, yet I couldn't recall from whom and where. I began to recall visions of this place's exterior and interior as if I'd been here before; the broken wooden doors, the smell of leather and mold covering the seats. I could remember the barkeep and his daughter, who served the gentlemen more than just drinks. We approached the door, and a tall burly man stood in our way.

"Strangers aren't welcomed. Find another tap," he said.

Until now I made sure no one whom we passed saw my eyes nor my face. I looked at him and grinned. *We'll enter and you will show us a clean seat*, I said to his thoughts. He did so. The place was exactly how I'd envisioned it, even though I was sure I had never been. How could this be?

"What you're remembering are not your memories, Aleron. They're the memories of the woman I just killed."

Of course, once we kissed, the blood transferred from Mynea to me, and thus the memories from this woman passed onto me. How fascinating! This was indeed how I found this place. I didn't realize until then that I was coming here with a definite purpose.

There was a familiar scent coming from the barkeep. It was the scent of the woman from whence these memories came. They were acquainted in some manner of which I didn't know. Nevertheless, I'm here for a purpose and that purpose will be realized.

There were several small groups of people scattered about, mostly men, however, some groups contained one or two women, there for entertainment purposes only. I began to observe. I could easily take any one of the lot. Was there a method or logic to this skill? Do I kill as Mynea described, like God indiscriminately and without remorse; or is there some grand scheme that may not be realized until the last soul is separated from his body? I looked around the room. As I looked, I realized everyone was looking directly at us. All chatter ceased. I could sense the

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heavy breathing coming from some of the men as they undoubtedly noticed the way Mynea was dressed. The lust in their thoughts and intentions made her smile. She, of course, had noticed long before I had.

I'm going to get that bitch and perhaps make her my personal slave, were the thoughts of one man in particular. He seemed to command respect from the other lesser men in his group, for they immediately moved out of his way as he stood and approached us near the entrance of the bar. He looked at me, naturally thinking Mynea was my concubine, and stood between she and I.

Stay calm, my love, she whispered to my mind. Men, it seemed, didn't need to be lured using any unnatural persuasion, for they're creatures of habit and, alas, predictable.

Before the man opened his mouth, I could smell his rotting teeth swimming in a sea of ale. A drunken fool he was. "Hello my lady", he murmured. "I'm Rathmon and I would like to employ your services."

"Of course, my dear Rathmon," Mynea replied. "Many men have wanted me and no matter how much they offered, they must first seek the approval from my keep."

"Your keep?" he bellowed.

"Yes, my handsome brut. He stands behind you." The man turned around and looked me up and down, until finally affixed on my eyes. "How much?" he inquired.

"Let us walk and discuss this business in private quarters, shall we." I goaded. I led the man out of the bar into a corridor leading to a room revealed to me by the girl whose blood memories led me here. I could almost taste his anticipation for pleasure, for this room was the very room in which many women's services were employed or stolen. I opened the door and he entered the room behind me. Mynea entered last and closed the door without touching it. Fascinating, I thought, after witnessing yet another power that our kind possessed.

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“Now that you have me here, how much for the woman?”

“Make me a fair offer, my good man, and don’t insult she of whom you desire.” He turned around and considered Mynea from head to toe once more. She made this glance unforgettable by allowing one of her breasts to be slightly exposed from behind her silk gown.

“I’ll give you three pieces of gold for the pleasure of knowing her,” he said while completely bewitched by the allure of her exposed nipple.

“Surely you can do better than that, for she’s young and unspoiled.”

“Five pieces!” he retorted as saliva disgustingly flew from the sewage of his mouth.

“That’s more like it, my good man.” The man approached Mynea with a bestial lust.

“Gold! Before the girl’s intimate touch,” I said.

“I’ll pay you once I’m done with your wench, now leave us lest I have you once I finish with her!”

She allowed him to grab both of her arms and, in an instant, and to my surprise, ultimately fueled by covetousness and spite, my hand penetrated his back with such ferocious fury. I ripped out his heart! He turned around in shock and stared at his heart, still beating in my bloody grasp. The sight of the blood was too much for me to resist. Had this occurred but a day earlier, I would have surely quivered as I fought back the urge to expel my lunch and breakfast.

I marveled at it! His body collapsed to the floor, eyes wide open as he witnessed me drinking his life’s nectar directly from the source. Mynea said nothing. She stood and watched in amazement at the veracity of my meal preparation. Indeed, I didn’t realize my new strength.

I began to hear hurried and clumsy footsteps coming closer. I was astonished by my ability to isolate the sounds of the footsteps entirely, allowing me to determine there were three men and a woman! Oh, how wonderful it

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would be if I could have all of them! All of it, I thought. Obsessed with bloodlust, my once human desire for life was utterly devoured by a new compulsion for death! For a moment, I began to imagine myself killing them all and draining them to the point of oblivion. Yes! This was what I wanted. I must have more!

We must go now, Aleron, Mynea said to my thoughts. *You weren't quiet in your attack, and others will come if he doesn't return.*

"Then let them come and face his fate!" I retorted aloud. I felt invincible at this moment! The feeling would prove to be an illusion.

"No, my love remember, they're many, and though we're strong, we're few. To jeopardize yourself is to expose us all. That must never happen if we're to continue living." Mynea grabbed my blood-soaked hand. "Now make haste, for I can sense curiosity from his comrades."

Just as the door flew open, we were off into the night.

We returned to the castle with the same speed and stealth which brought us to land. We entered the great room, and Mynea took my hand into hers and kissed it. She continued to kiss it until the kissing became tiny licks and suckling. I looked down and noticed some of the brute's blood still smeared between my fingers. Mynea also found this hidden delicacy, for even though I wanted to imagine she was kissing my hand from her sheer attraction and desire for me, it was her lust for the freshly squeezed ambrosia that called out to her. I began kissing her lips, for I, too, needed to taste it once more. Kissing her was a tender succulent platter in which dessert was served. We were embracing each other as only unnatural beings could, an inseparable and impenetrable embrace that defied even air's request for passage. She looked at me with a mother's concern coupled with a lover's desire.

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I tore Mynea's gown completely off her and exposed her completely naked body to my touch. She answered by throwing me across the room while holding my clothing, using my body's own momentum to rip the clothing right off me in one motion. As I landed on my feet, she was instantly on me like a lioness pouncing on her prey. I wasn't nearly as strong as she, so to take command was impossible. She knew this. She held me down, breaking the stone floor below the fur we were now smothering. This excited her even more. She mounted me with such fury, I felt pain and pleasure the likes of which I've never felt before, and can scarcely describe in words you'll be able to understand. Just know that heaven's bliss is often captured solely by hell's instruments. We were one.

We laid afterwards in each other's arms, staring into oblivion, absolutely numb and in total stillness. Mynea then broke the silence. "It's time, my love, for you to rest."

"I want to lie here with you until the sun rises, my Queen."

"This you cannot do. Listen carefully to what I'm about to tell you. Don't forget these words for if you challenge them, your immortality will be forgotten and replaced with non-existence. You'll absolutely die if you greet the morning sun. You're a neophyte, utterly unaware of what lies beyond the nest. And though you feel strong, as you rest, you'll become stronger. This will also allow your immortal mind to arrange your ill-gotten memories of those who were slain. This is only achieved by a deep vampiric sleep."

I started to feel strange. My body instantly felt weak. "You see, Aleron. The sun is awakening, and your body senses its arrival. Your limbs will stiffen and your mind will no longer be as sharp as it was this past evening. You will be vulnerable and weakened. As you age, the sun's effects will begin to subside. This will take centuries."

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I felt a sleep befalling me that was all-embracing. There was no way to deny this slumber. “Will you be here when I awake, my love?”

“Of course,” she said. “Of course.”

And before she finished her words to me, I drifted into complete darkness. No more sight, no more sound, complete nothingness. Undeniable slumber took me. Helpless, like an infant, I lay under the complete dependence of my mother, Mynea.





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A glimmer of life returned to me. My mind gradually grew sharper as I began slipping back into consciousness. The hunger from the previous dawn returned. I wasn't quite awake yet, however, I could feel my body preparing for reanimation. I began to hear my own heartbeat as it progressed from a faint sound to a pronounced symphonic bass, acoustic, followed by contrabass, until the solo tuba erupted with such fury and determination that ignoring it would be simply impossible!

As I listened, I noticed something strange about the rhythm of my pulsating heart. Faintly in the background, I could hear a steady, slow beat, constantly filling in where silence should reside. I used what I had learned the

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previous night and isolated the sound completely. It was indeed a pulse, a living pulse. But this constant drum wasn't mine. My bass rushed back into my head with the realization that I wasn't alone. My eyes sprung open to find her.

Mynea was standing several feet from me, staring out into the distance. She stood completely naked in the obscurity of the dying sunlight, defeated by the rising of the moon. The shadow she cast was intriguing. My eyes widened in awe as the silhouette came to life preceding the movement of her body. She turned around and looked directly into my eyes.

"You slept well, my love." She held out her arms, signaling me to come. I stood and began to walk toward her. With the paling light of the moon now surrounding her frame, I saw the reflection of her feline eyes with each step. With a nurturing calmness she took me into her arms. Unlike our first embrace, to my surprise, she was humanly warm. I could feel her skin adjust to the coldness of my touch. She began to kiss my neck and chin. I smelled the recent meal she must have had before I awoke. This aroma instantly rekindled the undeniable hunger! At that very moment I could no longer think of anything else. Her kisses became a memory. Everything I've become was forgotten. Life itself was an afterthought. I could only think of blood. My eyes opened wider than ever to see Mynea tilting her neck and inviting me to bite her!

"The hunger will consume you entirely if you don't feed soon after you awake, my love. Drink." Without as much as aforesight, I opened my mouth, and with crushing strength, my teeth punctured Mynea's neck.

The feeling of her warm blood flowing from her body into my mouth was indescribable. It's like trying to describe an orgasm to someone who has never had it before, simply something one must experience for himself. It was the cure for all that was aching within me, the answer for any lingering question my body had. The

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absolute meaning and purpose of my very existence was all satisfied by the blood meal she gave me. If love is, then I was certain, blood is.

As I continued to drink, incoherent memories of a female rushed into my mind, walking swiftly, alone at dusk. She kept looking back, feeling a presence drawing nearer, never knowing what true fate awaited as she stopped abruptly in front of an angel. My angel. My Mynea.

I continued to see strange visions foretelling a life of this poor woman in the first person until she was simply forgotten, and the memoirs suddenly changed. The woman was no longer the protagonist in these visions. A feeling of despair came over me. It was sudden. Absolutely without warning, I felt hopeless. It was similar to the feeling one would get when he realizes he is alone and in complete darkness, hands outstretched to feel something, but grasping only air. A feeling I didn't like.

Then a vivid picture came into focus. I saw a castle nestled deep within a vast mountainous region. My curiosity was increasing, thus I began sucking harder. I tried to focus in a futile effort to understand these visions. I saw an entrance near the base surrounded by a moat. Dark and deep were the waters denying safe passage to any and inviting only the invited. The castle had a menacing quality. For the first time, the blood memories offered yet a new dimension in interpretation, sound.

“Mynea!” the voice said. In that very instant I saw eyes without a pupil, without an iris, the absence of all color. They were simply an abyss surrounded by flesh. Old flesh. Almost ancient. These eyes were menacingly huge. Black. Larger than that of any human I could remember. Almost animal. Beastly! Eyebrows thick and dark. Eyelashes unusually long. Eyes that foretold a knowledge far beyond my understanding. They seemed to be looking directly at me. No. Through me. I realized they were

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looking at Mynea! And as quickly as it came, the vision faded.

More! I thought as I continued to draw blood from my Queen. More! Suddenly, I felt Mynea's powerful grip, clasping the back of my hair, pulling me away from her neck.

"That's enough, my dear Aleron. In time, my love," she said while releasing me to my feet. "You don't have to rush. Our bloodlust will last an eternity."

I had completely forgotten about the insignificant life of the woman Mynea condemned. I was intrigued by something far more mysterious. I couldn't see the face, but those eyes! Mynea slowly turned away from me and focused over the horizon once more.

"You have questions, Aleron. As I said before, I will answer them. Just know that these things that bewilder you have no meaning to you as a fledgling vampire." Her voice was stern and undeniably chilling. Her shadow remained still, though her body moved. She turned towards me and I knew then, my Queen was indeed my Queen, and I, one of her subjects. She would only reveal to me what was necessary, what she thought to be necessary. I truly believed the visions I saw would be explained in the future, or so I wanted to believe. Just know that those eyes would begin to haunt me from that moment on. The revelation would eventually be told to me, but not from the lips of my Queen. Just who revealed these answers to me will be unearthed later.

The brat in me wanted answers immediately! She knew this. She knew my curiosity would culminate if I drank her blood long enough. Ah, her blood. The mere thought of it returned me to a state of calmness. I was a baby in the bosom of his mother, positively safe. Mynea must have sensed this, for she turned toward me and returned me to her arms. I embraced her cooling body. I must have stolen some of the mortal warmth she stole from the woman in the visions. Stole. The thought of it makes

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me smile. We are thieves, are we not? We steal the hopes and dreams of each and every victim we condemn to a fate that was once left for their God to decide. We steal the passions of the loved and replace this absolute emotion with absolute despair. We steal the joy of a mother or the security of a father, and for what? In the name of our survival. Thieves!

The mortal radiance began to subside, and the only evidence of the woman in the vision that remained were minute droplets of blood smudged along the right side of Mynea's lips. I must have it! I kissed the very spot and Mynea smiled as if she purposely left them there for me. Either way, I was thoroughly satisfied.

She placed her head on my bare chest. I now took the masculine role and she my subject. I rubbed my nostrils on top of her hair, for her essence was pleasantly soothing to the senses. How sweet she smelled! How deliciously sweet! A bath of flowers must have preceded my awakening. Lilacs, orchids, samba, and my favorite of them all, the blue iris. The unmistakable aroma of the blue iris. It was said that the blue iris only grew in the southernmost mountainous region of eastern Europe. Nearly impossible to find and even more difficult to acquire, this exotic flower was to be respected and never forgotten. To harness its fragrance is no easy task. One would have to use a mortar and pestle to crush its petals into a fine powder. Heating the powder under faint candlelight turned the powder into a paste. Women would apply this precious gum upon their fingertips and massage it on certain areas of their bodies, anywhere the fragrance would be enjoyed. I loved this intoxicating aroma.

I looked into Mynea's eyes, the eyes of a lioness. How long did she watch me? It was but a second of passing time that I found myself completely in love with her. I don't know if she used her gifts to lure me into the concubine hall of the Promethium. However, it matters not. I was physically drawn to her at first sight. Try to imagine