# A Marriage of Inconvenience

**by QueenofAreaFive**

## Summary

William T. Compton thought it would be an easy mission: procure the telepath using any means necessary without permanently tying her to him. However her husband, the Sheriff of Area 5, will make sure his task is not easily accomplished.

## Notes

Thanks to my betas Ashensunset and Ms Buffy.

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Chapter 1

“Fangtasia,” Bill sneered as he stepped out of his car. “Where the desperate come to be bitten.”

He let out a put-upon sigh as he walked across the road towards the club. Of all the things Queen Sophie-Anne asked him to do, in Bill’s opinion, this was the worst. To have to move back to the middle of nowhere, be expected to mainstream, and seduce a gullible young woman, was not something wanted to do; especially if she was like Hadley. He wanted to be back at the Queen’s palace, where the donors were of the highest quality and were willing to do anything he asked, no matter how depraved.

Many of the donors were people he procured for Sophie-Anne; their blood was richer, their sexual skills well above the average desperate fangbanger. As a reward for procuring them, Sophie-Anne would allow him to sample them whenever she, or one of her children, weren’t using them. They meant little to her, merely trinkets for her ever-growing collection, with the exception of Hadley.

Hadley quickly became Sophie-Anne’s favourite, promoted from donor to pet. Bill couldn’t hide the lascivious smirk that spread across his face as he thought of Hadley. She was dumb as a post, but she more than made up for it with her sexual skills. She was willing to do anything to keep the favour Sophie-Anne bestowed on her. Bill had seen her spread her legs for nearly every vampire that visited the palace, usually while Sophie-Anne watched. Bill had never heard Hadley refuse one of Sophie-Anne’s requests; not that it would do her any good if she did: she would just be glamoured to do it anyway.

She certainly wasn’t saying no last night when Bill was buried ball-deep inside her; then again, she might have found it a bit difficult, seeing how her head was buried between Sophie-Anne’s thighs. Bill felt his pants tighten as he recalled his farewell from the palace. Sophie-Anne gave him permission to do anything he liked to Hadley as long as she could watch. Never one to deny his queen, Bill proceeded to fuck Hadley in every way he could think of, and he’d enjoyed every minute of it.

His mind drifted to his latest mission, he wondered if Hadley’s cousin was anything like her. The thought of what the two of them could do together almost made him come in his pants. If this Sookie’s sexual skills were anything like her cousins, Bill was sure he would be having a good time very soon. He might even delay his return to New Orleans by a few days so he could sample her full talents.

He willed his erection away as he approached the club; the last thing he needed was to be sporting an erection in front of the Sheriff of Area Five, if he was claiming to mainstream. He cut straight to the front of the club and flashed his fangs at the blonde-haired vampire minding the door.

“Very nice,” Pam drawled as she examined her nails. Looking up, she smiled, letting her fangs click down into place. “But mine are bigger.”

“I’m here to see the Sheriff,” Bill growled.

“Everyone is here to see the Sheriff,” she chortled. “Do you have an appointment?”

“No,” Bill replied, nonplussed.

“Well, that’s inconsiderate of you,” she chided. “The Sheriff is a busy vampire. Do you think he just sits around all night in case someone might want to see him? Shame on you.”
“When will he be able to see me?” Bill asked through clenched teeth, not used to the blatant disrespect this vampire was showing him. “I require to see him in his official capacity.”

“He will be disappointed.” Pam snarked. “Wait inside. He’ll see you as soon as he’s ready.”

“You mean he’s inside?”

“Of course; this is his bar.” Pam replied, rolling her eyes.

“Then why have you made me wait?” Bill asked.

“Because I find you so amusing.” Pam said with a wicked smile.

“Take me to see the Sheriff!” Bill demanded.

“My Master is busy and he’s not to be disturbed,” Pam replied, the humour going out of her eyes. “You will have to wait until he is finished. Now, you can wait out here, or in the bar; the choice is yours.”

“I will wait inside.” Bill said rather stiffly.

“Good choice,” Pam sneered. “Help yourself to one of the vermin; it might remove that stick from your ass.”

“I’m mainstreaming,” Bill replied. “I don’t feed from fangbangers.”

“How very politically correct of you.” Pam mocked.

Bill sneered at Pam, but didn’t say anything. Entering the club, he was overcome with the scent of desperation, lust, and blood. He clenched his fists hard as he tried to stave off his vampire urges. The fangbangers were throwing themselves at any vampire who would have them. He could hear whispers, promises of sexual favours, and pleas to be bitten.

He spied a throne at the edge of the dance floor on the other side of the club, and he snorted at the pretension of the Area Sheriff. Gliding through the throng of fangbangers, he made his way to the bar and ordered a bottle of True Blood, maintaining his cover of mainstreaming. Taking the bottle off the bartender, he crossed the dance floor, sat down at one of the booths and waited.

He was forced to turn away numerous fangbangers as he waited, and he cursed having to pretend to mainstream. His fangs were itching to sink into the flesh of some willing blood bag, as was his cock.

“The Sheriff will see you now.” Pam said, appearing at his side suddenly. A quick look at the time told him he’d been waiting over an hour.

“Finally.” he grumbled under his breath as he stood up. Straightening his shoulders, he followed Pam through the club and down a hallway. He sneered as he saw a blonde-haired fangbanger coming out the Sheriff’s office, fixing her clothes. He could smell the scent of sex coming off her as she passed him and he scoffed; the Sheriff kept him waiting so he could fuck a blood bag. He swore the Queen would hear of that once he returned to the palace.

Bill groaned as he entered the office; the scent of sex and blood was heavy in the air and he couldn’t stop his fangs from clicking down. His eyes widened as he saw the condition of the room. It looked like a hurricane had swept through it: the computer lay broken on the floor, there were cracks in the walls, chairs were upturned and the filling cabinet looked like it had a dent in it.
“Pam tells me you wanted to see me on official business.”

“Yes, Sheriff.” Bill replied, looking at the Sheriff; he quickly averted his eyes as he saw he was still naked.

“You’re not shy, are you?” Eric said with a smirk.

“No, Sheriff.” Bill gritted out. Looking up, he was relieved to see Eric pulled on a pair of jeans.

“Right,” Eric chuckled. “My Child tells me you demanded to see me, but did not give the reason why, other than it was official business.”

“Your Child?” Bill squeaked.

“Yes, my Child, Pam,” Eric replied.

Bill cursed himself. He couldn’t believe he hadn’t realised Pam was Eric’s Child; he had heard about her—everyone knew of the Northman’s Child—but he had never met her. He had met Eric numerous times at Sophie-Anne’s, but Pam never accompanied him. He wasn’t expecting to see Pam working the front door of the club; he heard she was a spoilt bitch and incredibly lazy. He unintentionally tried to bully the Sheriff’s child, that wouldn’t sit well with Eric.

“I was not aware she was your Child,” Bill said smarmily. “If I had known, I would have been more than happy to inform her of the reason I wanted to see you.”

Eric waved off his explanation, seeing it for what it was. “What brings you to Area Five?” He asked.

“I’m here to request your permission to move the Area.” Bill answered.

“Why?”

“My last living relative recently passed away and I would like to move back to my ancestral home in Bon Temps,” Bill said, giving the explanation he and Sophie-Anne came up with.

The Queen had been adamant in her orders that the Sheriff should not be told the real reason for his return, something he was happy to go along with. Eric’s arrogance had always rubbed Bill up the wrong way, and he longed to be able to say he outmanoeuvred the Viking. Bill hated the way everyone acted around Eric; they treated him as if he was the second coming. The donors at the palace practically threw themselves at him whenever he was summoned, and he knew given the chance, Sophie-Anne would welcome Eric into her bed.

What he hated more was how Eric responded to them with indifference and detachment. Bill procured some of the finest blood and sex donors in the whole U.S. for Sophie-Anne. Kings and Queens from other states had traded Sophie-Anne for their talents, and yet the Viking held no interest in them. Bill had never even seen Eric feed from one; he always dismissed them, claiming he didn’t feed from trash.

“I helped build the house when I was human. I lived there with my wife and children before I became a vampire. Now the VRA has passed, I simply wish to return home.”

“You’re giving up life at Sophie-Anne’s court to return to a backwater hole like Bon Temps,” Eric said, sitting down behind his desk. “Not many vampires would be willing to do that.”

“Yes, I have no doubt it will be different, but I have grown tired of life at court. I wish for some peace and quiet,” Bill replied.
“I’m sure you will find that in Bon Temps,” Eric said dryly. “I have no objection to you moving into my Area, but you will follow my rules whilst here. You will present yourself at Fangtasia once a week, where you will put yourself on display for the vermin. Pam tells me you’re mainstreaming and you don’t feed on fangbangers; that is fine, but while at Fangtasia, you will put on the show they expect. You don’t have to feed or fuck them. My rule is very different from Sophie-Anne’s: what might be accepted in her Area might not be acceptable here. If you have any questions, ask them; breaking one of my rules will result in a punishment you will not like. Am I understood?”

“Yes, Sheriff.” Bill replied without hesitation.

“Good. Leave your contact information with Pam, and welcome to Area Five.”

Bill ground his teeth together in anger at Eric’s dismissal, taking the pen and piece of paper Pam offered him, he scribbled down his information, thrust it at Pam, and stormed out the door.

_How dare Eric treat me like that?_ Bill raged, _Dismissing me like I’m nobody. I’m one of Sophie-Anne’s most loyal servants. I hold a place of importance among her retinue; I’m not some common vampire he can boss around. As soon as I return to the palace I will be sure to tell Sophie-Anne how disrespectful her Sheriff is; maybe she’ll let me torture him._

He stormed back into the bar and sneered at the fangbangers who stared at him. He could scent the arousal of many of them and he considered briefly glamouring one to meet him later so he could satisfy both of his appetites. He quickly discarded the idea; he couldn’t take the risk of it getting back to Eric: he would surely ask questions if he knew Bill wasn’t really mainstreaming.

As far as Bill was concerned, the sooner he finished his mission, the better. He didn’t want to spend one night more than he had to under Eric’s control. He was making his way to the exit when he saw the blonde-haired fangbanger, he’d seen coming out of Eric’s office, behind the bar. He let his eyes fall over her and was quite impressed with what he saw. She wasn’t his usual type; he preferred slender brunettes, but she would do in a pinch. He debated with himself whether he should approach her or not. He had already claimed he was mainstreaming and didn’t feed on fangbangers, but the thought he could take away something that belonged to Eric in some way appealed to him greatly. He wasn’t fooling himself into believing Eric held any real attachment to her, but he knew Eric wouldn’t like losing anything, even something as worthless to him as the fangbanger he had just fucked. It was the principle of the matter: you shouldn’t take the fuck of another vampire until he or she had given it up. The fact that Eric’s latest fuck was his bartender told Bill she was one of his regulars and would be considered off limits, unless Eric gave his permission.

He wasn’t fooling himself into believing Eric held any real attachment to her, but he knew Eric wouldn’t like losing anything, even something as worthless to him as the fangbanger.

Spinning on his heels, Bill made his way to the bar. “True Blood.” he ordered, putting on his most charming smile.

“How particular flavour?” She asked unaffected.

“A positive.” he replied.

Bill frowned as she placed the bottle of blood on the bar and turned away from him to serve another customer. As she passed in front of him again, he reached over the bar and grabbed her wrist, halting her movements.

“How do you want to order something else?” she asked.
“No.”

“Then please let go of my wrist.” she said firmly.

“My apologies,” Bill said as he made a show of releasing her wrist. “I didn’t mean to manhandle you that way; I simply wished for your company.”

“You’ll have to excuse me, but I’m working.”

“How long have you worked here?” Bill asked, trying to keep the conversation going.

“Long enough.” she replied vaguely.

“You enjoy the bonuses you get here?” Bill sneered, not liking her disinterest in him.

“Oh, yeah,” she purred. “The bonuses are the best part of the job.”

“Would you like to get a drink with me?” Bill asked.

“Sorry, but no.” she replied.

Bill was about to push his mind against hers and glamour her into leaving with him when he felt someone behind him. Spinning around, he blanched when he came face to face with Pam.

“Harassing the bar staff,” she tutted. “You’re not very good at mainstreaming, are you, Bill?”

“I was not harassing her,” Bill denied. “I was simply inviting her to have a drink with me.”

“And she declined,” Pam replied. “Now be a good little vampire and run along and leave her alone.”

Realising he didn’t have a choice, Bill slowly moved away from the bar, seething inside at the disrespect he had been shown by the Sheriff, his Child and the fangbanger.

_Who the hell does she think she is to turn me down like that? The whore will spread her legs for Northman. She should have been honoured I chose her._

He stalked out of the club and back to his car; opening the door forcefully, he climbed inside, started the engine, and headed in the direction of Bon Temps.

Bill was calm by time he reached Bon Temps. Pulling up outside his old home, he groaned at the dilapidated state of the house. He hoped he wouldn’t have to stay long in the old place; he wasn’t sure he would survive if he did.

Much to Bill’s horror, the inside was in an even worse condition. He had gone from living in elegance and decadence to ramshackle and restrictions. His displeasure grew rapidly when he realised he would have to spend the day in the ground, as there were no light-tight spaces in the house.

Remembering the Stackhouses lived in the house across the cemetery, Bill decided to pay them a visit. If he were lucky, Sookie would be home alone; he could glamour her into leaving with him right away and be back in New Orleans, and the Queen’s palace, tomorrow night.

Bill was unprepared for the sight that greeted him as he crossed the cemetery. He was expecting a house in similar condition to his own, but instead found a pristine place; it was clear to him the house had undergone some reconstructive work. He frowned as he reached the fence that surrounded the property; from what Hadley told him, the Stackhouses didn't have much money, and in no way
could they afford the work that had gone into the house. He wondered if they had sold her home and a new family lived there. That was all he needed: to move to Bon Temps to procure Sookie Stackhouse, only for her not to live there. He should have had a private investigator look into the girl before he left the palace, but he had been overly confident in his abilities to seduce her into returning to New Orleans with him, and hadn’t wanted to waste the time.

The fence prevented him from getting any closer, but his vampire hearing told him no one was home. Deciding to check back later, Bill walked back to his house to try to secure it the best he could for the night. It was a few hours later that Bill heard a car engine coming from across the cemetery. Realising someone was home across at the Stackhouses, he quickly cleaned himself up and sped across the cemetery. Not letting the fence stop him, he walked up to the front door and knocked. Bill’s eyes widened as the door opened.

“Compton.” Eric greeted with a smirk.

“Sheriff,” Bill spluttered. “What are you doing here?”


“But I thought this was the Stackhouse property.” Bill said, confused.

“What do you know of the Stackhouses?” Eric growled.

“Nothing, Sheriff,” Bill backpedalled. “I just remember them owning this property when I was human. I was just curious if any of their descendants still resided in the town.”

“Eric, who is it?” a soft voice called out from inside the house.

“Our new neighbour, Lover.” Eric replied, smirking at Bill.

Bill couldn’t believe his eyes as the blonde-haired fangbanger from the Fangtasia appeared beside Eric. He watched as she slid her arm around his waist and rested her head against his chest. He was surprised to see Eric return her embrace by wrapping his arm around her shoulders.

“My apologies, Sheriff, I didn’t meant to disturb you and your… friend,” Bill said. “I simply wanted to introduce myself to my new neighbours.”

“I don’t think there was any need; we’ve all met. Although, I don’t believe you two have been properly introduced,” Eric said, thoroughly enjoying himself. “Allow me to fix that. Bill Compton, meet my wife, Sookie Stackhouse Northman.

“Oh, shit,” Bill whispered, as his mission became practically impossible to complete.
“Your wife?” Bill spluttered, barely recovering from the shock.

“Yes, my wife,” Eric repeated, thoroughly enjoying himself.

“Forgive me, Sheriff. I didn’t know you were married,” Bill said, eyeing Sookie. “How long have you been married?”

“Two years.” Sookie answered as she inched closer to Eric; something about Bill was making her uncomfortable.

“Congratulations.” Bill said insincerely.

“Thank you.” Sookie replied quietly.

“Funny that I’m just hearing about it.” Bill pushed.

“Is there a reason you should have known?” Eric growled. “You have no authority in our world. What I or my wife do is no concern of yours.”

“Of course not,” Bill backpedalled. “If you’ll excuse me, Sheriff, I only wanted to introduce myself to my new neighbours. I don’t wish to keep you any longer. Goodnight, Sookie, Sheriff.”

“Mrs. Northman,” Eric said with a smirk. “Sookie hasn’t given you permission to call her by her first name, so you can either call her Mrs. Northman or Mistress.”

“My apologies. Goodnight, Mrs. Northman.” Bill said as he backed away from the door.

“Well, that was weird,” Sookie said as Eric shut the front door. “Also a little creepy. Who in their right mind thinks it’s a good idea to introduce yourself to your new neighbours at almost three in the morning?”

“A vampire,” Eric replied with a smirk. “But you’re right, Compton was acting—”

“Creepy.” Sookie supplied, interrupting him.

“I was going to say suspicious, but your word is just as fitting,” Eric said, frowning.

“What’s he doing in Bon Temps anyway?” Sookie asked.

“He’s mainstreaming,” Eric answered. “Or so he claims.”

“You don’t believe him.”

“No,” Eric said, “if he’s here in Bon Temps, it is for a reason and I intend to find out why. I already have Pam looking into it. You don’t leave Sophie-Anne’s court to mainstream; you don’t leave at all unless she orders you to. No, if Bill is here, it is on her orders, but what she wants, I’m unsure of. Whatever it is, she doesn’t want me to know.”

“Why’d you think he’s here?”

“With Sophie-Anne you never can tell,” Eric said. “She could have him spying on me or someone else in my area. Whatever her reason, I will get to the bottom of it.”
“I know you will.” Sookie said with a smile.

“Mmm.” Eric’s gaze turned predatory. His fangs clicked down as he stalked Sookie. “But right now I want to get to the bottom of something else. You’ve been a very a bad girl, Mrs Northman, seducing your poor, defenceless boss,” he purred backing her up, “ barging into his office while he was hard at work, wearing your tight, revealing dress.” Caging her against the wall, Eric ran his hands down her body, his fingers toyed with the edge of her black dress, lightly caressing her legs as he inched it up. “Taking your panties off,” Eric hooked his fingers into the waistband of her panties and slowly slid them down her legs until they were tangled around her ankles, “and begging him to bend you over his desk and fuck you.”

“You’ve got it wrong,” Sookie moaned as she felt his large hands squeeze her ass. “He begged to bend me over his desk.”

“Is that right?” Eric asked, nipping at her neck.

“Yes.” Sookie breathed.

“And did you let him?”

“Of course,” Sookie panted. She watched with hooded eyes as Eric dropped to his knees in front of her. “I’m a good employee, and would never say no to the boss.”

“That’s why you’re his favourite employee.” Eric growled as he pushed her dress up her legs. Dipping his head, he took a deep breath and shuddered in ecstasy. “Fuck, Lover, I can smell myself all over and inside you. It’s been driving me crazy all night, knowing you’ve been carrying my scent for everyone to smell. I wonder if you taste like me?”

“Eric.” Sookie moaned.

“Scream for me, min kärlek,” Eric purred.

“Make me,” Sookie taunted.

“With pleasure.” Eric growled. Slipping his hands behind her, he gripped her ass firmly in his hands, holding her steady as he lowered his head. Snaking his tongue out, he flicked her clit quickly. He smirked against her dripping core as he saw her bite her lip to keep from crying out, knowing the game they were playing, made him all the more eager.

Eric ripped the bottom of her dress off, baring her to his hungry gaze, his eyes darkening as he saw her juices dripping down her legs. “So wet.” he groaned. Eric ran his finger along the length of her slit, coating his finger in her juices. He ghosted his finger over her clit, teasing and tormenting her before sucking it into his mouth.

Sookie’s breath came out in short, sharp pants as she watched Eric suck his finger clean. She ached to have his hands on her body again. She wanted him to touch her like only he could, like only he ever had. She knew what he wanted: he wanted to hear her scream for him, like she had earlier, and she knew she would. Before the sun rose, she would scream, beg and cry—but not yet. No, this was one of their favourite games: she would hold out as long as she could and he would make it worth every minute. Sookie bit her lip hard as she felt his lips on her clit. She dug her fingernails into the palms of her hands, using every trick she knew to keep from crying out.

Eric wrapped his lips around her clit, pushing his finger deep inside her as he sucked hard on her clit, making her buck against his mouth. He held her steady with his other hand as he slid his finger slowly in and out of her sex. He scraped his fangs gently over her clit as he pushed another finger
He stroked her clit with his thumb as he increased the speed of his fingers.

Sookie bit back the moans that were dying to break free. Clenching her fist, she pressed it against her mouth in a desperate attempt to hold back her cries as she rocked against Eric’s hand. She could feel the coils tightening in her stomach as she climbed higher and higher. Her body sung with the pleasure Eric gave her.

Dipping his head again, Eric fastened his lips onto her clit, sucking hard as he removed his fingers from her quivering core. Smirking at her mewl of disappointed, he ran his fingers over her drenched lips. Flicking her clit with his tongue, he pushed a single finger slowly into her ass.

“Oh God, Eric,” Sookie cried, her hands flying to his shoulders to steady herself.

“Scream for me, Sookie,” Eric ordered as he slid his other hand between them and thrust two fingers into her pussy. Hard.

“More… Please…” Sookie begged, uncaring as she thrust against his hands.

Eric was more than happy to comply and thrust the two fingers buried in her cunt harder and faster into her. The feeling of her juices spilling over his hand drove him crazy. He added a second finger to her ass, stretching the tight muscle.

His eyes never left Sookie as he fucked her with his fingers. “Come for me.” he ordered.

Sookie rocked against his hands, her body alight with desire. Her legs became weaker, her heart beating faster as her orgasm built up inside her. Sparks went off behind her eyes as she struggled to stand upright.

“Eric!” she cried as the coils snapped, sending her over the edge. She welcomingly fell into the abyss as waves of pleasure crashed over her. She slumped forward, breathing hard as her legs finally gave way.

Eric caught her in his arms. He held her close as she came down from her high, kissing her head gently. “Jag älskar dig,” he whispered.

“Jag älskar dig,” Sookie repeated, lifting her head and smiling softly at him.

“Come on, time for a shower,” Eric said, wiggling his eyebrows, making Sookie laugh.

“Will you carry me?” Sookie asked.

“Anywhere,” Eric replied, placing a soft kiss on her lips before scooping her up in his arms.

OoOoO

Across the cemetery at the old Compton place, Bill was frantically pacing as he waited for his call to connect. He had rushed home the second Eric had shut the door, and was desperately trying to get in touch with his Queen.

“This is Bill Compton. I need to speak to the Queen immediately,” he barked down the phone, not waiting to hear the greeting.

Minutes ticked by as Bill waited to be put through to Sophie-Anne. His whole night had been one disaster after another. First he had tried to intimidate Eric’s child, then he was dismissed by both the Sheriff and a woman he thought was just a fangbanger. And then to top it all off, he found out that
he woman he was sent to procure was actually married to Eric. Bill was not looking forward to hearing the Queen’s reaction.

“Compton,” Sophie-Anne said, snapping Bill out of his daze.

“Your Majesty,” Bill greeted, simpering.

“Have you procured my telepath already?” Sophie-Anne asked. “That might be your fastest work yet. When will you have her here? I have work lined up for her already.”

“I have made contact with the girl, Your Majesty,” Bill answered carefully. “I have yet to discern whether or not she is an actual telepath. The reason I am calling is, I have run into some unforeseen obstacles. The girl is married…”

“That is of no concern,” Sophie-Anne interrupted. “Just glamour the bloodbag into leaving her husband, or glamour the husband into cheating on her.”

“I’m afraid it won’t be that simple,” Bill said. He braced himself for her reaction. “The girl is married to a vampire.”


“I’m afraid so, my Queen,” Bill said, wincing at her shrill cry. “She works for him at Fangtasia, and he introduced her as his wife to me only minutes ago.”

“How dare he marry my telepath without my permission?” Sophie-Anne shouted. “How dare he try and steal a asset of my Kingdom? I’ll have him chained in silver for this!”

“The Sheriff doesn’t know the reason for my return,” Bill said. “I gave him the story we came up with. He doesn’t know of your interest in the girl.”

“That is no excuse,” Sophie-Anne raged. “He should have told me there was a telepath in his area as soon as he discovered her. He shouldn’t have married her.”

“Your Majesty, what are your orders concerning the telepath?” Bill asked. “Now the Sheriff is involved, shall I return to the palace?”

“No, you’re to stay where you are,” Sophie-Anne ordered. “I want my telepath, and you will procure her for me.”

“But what of the Sheriff? I don’t see him giving her up, especially if he knows of her talent.”

“Oh, he knows,” Sophie-Anne said angrily. “I’ll bet my Kingdom on it. He’s been very sneaky, securing her for himself. I won’t stand for it; the girl is to be mine.

“Your Majesty, what if he has bonded with her?”

“Has he?”

“I am unsure. His scent covered her. I could not distinguish how far their bond is, but why would he marry her if he hadn’t bonded to her?”

“Northman is very selfish with his blood,” Sophie-Anne said. “He may have married her to secure her to him in human eyes. Either way, it does not matter: bonds can be broken, and if he has bonded to her I will find a way to break it. No one will stand in my way of getting what I want.”
“What are your orders?” Bill asked.

“You’re to get the girl away from Northman in any way possible,” Sophie-Anne said. “She must choose to come to you, but I don’t care how you get her to do it. I will deal with Northman when the time is right.”

“How am I to get her away from him?”

“Use your imagination,” Sophie-Anne replied. “Get your blood into her; seduce her. Do whatever it takes, but get it done.”

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

“Do not fail me on this, Compton,” Sophie-Anne spat.

“I won’t, you have my word. I will get her away from the Sheriff.”

“Good.”

The line went dead before Bill had a chance to say anything else. He sank down onto the used sofa and let out a sigh of frustration. Bill swore Sophie-Anne had the ability to give a vampire a headache. How the hell am I supposed to get the Sheriff’s wife away from him? He wondered. Northman is over a thousand years old. I don’t think he’s just going to hand her over to me. What the hell am I going to do? I can’t deny my Queen. She’s ordered me to procure the telepath and her orders supersede a Sheriff’s. As long as I have Sophie-Anne on my side, Northman won’t be able to touch me. I need to think of something.

Deciding to take a walk around his property, Bill stood up and made his way out the door. His feet carried him over the cemetery without conscious thought, and he found himself standing against the fence that surrounded the Stackhouse property. Moving towards the front of the house, he climbed a tree, perched himself on a branch, and stared through one of the windows.

He could see the light on in the room, but no one was moving around. He could hear faint sounds coming from the house, but nothing he could make out. He was just about to climb down and return to his home, when he saw Eric cross in front of the window with Sookie wrapped around him. He watched, transfixed, as Eric set her on her feet beside the bed. From his vantage point he could see everything that was going on in the bedroom.

Bill felt his pants tightening as he saw Eric pull away the towel Sookie was wearing, leaving her standing naked next to the bed. Bill’s fangs clicked down as he let his eyes fall over her wet body. His fingers itched to reach out and touch her.

He watched with growing envy as Eric bent down and kissed her as his hands travelled over her body. Bill couldn’t hold back the moan as he watched the two of them locked in their embrace, their hands caressing each other. Bill couldn’t take his eyes off them as they rolled around in the bed. He rubbed his hand over his groin as he watched Sookie slide down the bed and take Eric into her mouth.

He pictured himself in Eric’s place; he could almost feel Sookie’s warm mouth surrounding his cock, her tongue swirling around his head as she sucked him down. Opening his trousers, he slid his hand inside and gripped his aching cock. He moved his hand up and down in time with Sookie, as she sucked Eric’s cock.

In his mind, Bill could see Sookie on her knees before him, his cock disappearing between her plump lips as she sucked him off, his hand tangled in her blonde locks as he forced her head up and
down, fucking her face with a speed only he could achieve. Her pert breasts bouncing as she moved. Bill felt his balls tightening and he increased his speed, pumping his cock faster. He would come in her mouth, making her drink every last drop of his release. Bill grunted as he came, spilling his seed over his hand. Panting, he tucked himself back in and zipped up his pants. His turned his eyes back to the couple on the bed, just in time to see Sookie crawl up Eric’s body and sink down onto his erection.

He curled his hands into fists as he watched Sookie ride Eric, her head thrown back in ecstasy. *That should be me. It should be my cock she is riding. Enjoy it while it lasts, Northman.*

Jumping down from the tree, Bill sped back to his house, making plans as he went. The Queen wanted Sookie for her telepathy, and Bill wanted her for her body, and he would do anything to make that happen.
Bill rose the next night with a plan slowly forming in his mind. He knew getting Sookie away from Eric wouldn’t be easy and he would require help. It was clear to him that, for all her power, Sophie-Anne wouldn’t provide much, if any, help. As much as she wanted the telepath, she couldn’t move directly against Eric. Out of everyone, she had the most to lose if it was revealed she was trying to separate a bonded pair—if they were bonded. Sophie-Anne would cause as much trouble she could for Eric, but only behind the scenes. She wouldn’t risk her Kingdom with a direct assault against him, not yet anyway.

She would protect Bill as much as she could; he was not as disposable as some of the vampires in her retinue, and he knew this. He was too important to Sophie-Anne for her to allow Eric to harm him irreparably. He would still have to be careful, but this knowledge gave Bill some leeway.

What Bill really needed was information.

He needed to know everything there was to know about Eric and Sookie. How did they meet? How long had they been together? Did Eric know Sookie was a telepath? If so, did he marry her just to secure her to him? Or does he actually love her? And what of Sookie, does she love him? Or has he glamoured her? Does she understand what it means to be a Sheriff’s wife? Is Eric faithful to her? Is Sookie faithful to him? Does he treat her like a wife, or a pet?

Bill had so many questions but no answers. From what he knew about Eric, he found it hard to believe Eric loved Sookie. The Eric he knew was a cold, heartless, ruthless bastard. He didn’t care who he hurt. Bill didn’t think Eric was capable of love. No, Bill was sure Eric was just using her for her telepathy. He had to show Sookie; if he could show her what a heartless bastard Eric was, he was convinced she would leave him. How he was going to do it though, he didn’t know. Eric managed to hide his true nature from her for over two years; she wouldn’t simply believe Bill if he told her what Eric was really like. Especially considering the bad impression he already made on her.

What Bill needed to do was get Eric to reveal his bloodthirsty side in front of her. Bill had seen Eric tear people apart with his bare hands — something he was sure Sookie never witnessed. If she saw that, she would walk away from him without looking back. What would be harder would be getting her to walk to him. He hadn’t made the best first impression, mistaking her for a fangbanger.

The sound of someone knocking on his front door drew Bill from his planning. He growled in frustration as he stomped to the door; he yanked it open, ready to let the person on the other side have it.

The words died in his throat when he saw who was standing on his porch. He put on his most charming smile. “Good evening, Miss Pumphrey,” he greeted as he let his eyes roam over her.

“Good evening, Mr Compton,” she replied. “I hope I’m not disturbing you, but I have been keeping my eyes open for some properties, as you asked, and I believe I may have found some to your liking.”

“Not at all. Please won’t you come in,” Bill said inviting her in.

“Thank you.”

Closing the door behind him, Bill showed her through into the living room and offered her a seat.

“What can you tell me about the properties? Why do you think these would interest me?” he asked as
he sat down beside her.

“It is actually a small piece of land only about an acre, but it houses three businesses,” she explained in her best professional voice. “The current owners have been trying to sell it for years, without much luck. I remember you saying you were looking for something you can invest in, and this is the best piece on the market at the moment. I don’t normally handle this kind of business; I usually specialize in family property, houses and such, but I happen to know the current owner’s family and when she mentioned it to me, I thought it sounded like something you would be interested in.”

“I think you have outdone yourself, Miss Pumphrey,” Bill replied. “This is exactly the type of investment I was looking for.”

“Please call me Selah, Mr Compton,” she said.

“Only if you will call me Bill,” he said. “I will contact my lawyer and have him handle the business of the purchase. Thank you, Selah.”

“You’re more than welcome,” Selah replied coyly. “Are you settling in okay?”

“As well as can be expected. As you can see, the house needs a lot of work. I’m going to have to find some contractors to repair the damage.”

“Well, please let me know if I can be of any assistance,” Selah said. “I will be happy to help in any capacity.”

“That is very kind of you,” Bill replied. “I must admit it pains me to see the condition my old home is in. I only hope the town has fared better over the years.”

“Have you not had a look around yet?” Selah asked.

“I’m afraid not, I was planning on doing so after I have secured the house,” Bill answered. “The furthest I have been so far is to introduce myself to my neighbours. I was pleasantly surprised to find a Stackhouse still living there. Do you know Sookie? Are the two of you friends?”

“I know Sookie, I wouldn’t say I’m friends with her though. We move in different circles,” Selah replied.

“You don’t like her.” Bill observed.

“I don’t wish to speak ill of anyone,” Selah said carefully, “but Sookie is…” she trailed off as Bill caught her eyes, she could feel herself falling into his as the room began to sway.

“Tell me the truth: what do you really think of Sookie Stackhouse?” Bill asked, forcing his glamour on her.

“She’s white trash, uneducated and poor. She might have managed to trap herself a rich husband, but it doesn’t change what she is,” Selah replied honestly.

“Do you know her husband?” Bill asked.

“No. I saw him when he visited her when she was working at Merlotte’s and I know of his reputation, but I’ve never met him.”

“Do you know how they met?”

“No.”
“Do you know when they met?” Bill huffed, not happy with the limited information she was providing.

“Yes.”

“When?” he growled.

“Three years ago.”

Bill was interrupted from his questioning by his cell phone ringing. “Hello.” he greeted.

“Be at Fangtasia in forty-five minutes,” Pam said in a bored tone.

“It takes an hour to get from Bon Temps to Shreveport.” Bill replied.

“Then you better hurry or you’ll be late.” Pam cackled.

Bill growled in frustration as the line went dead. Turning to face Selah again, he took a minute to let his eyes take in her glamoured state. Her brown hair hung loose, hitting her shoulders; the first few buttons on her white blouse were undone, showing of a hint of cleavage; her black skirt had risen up, sitting high on her thighs. Bill felt his body react to the stimuli her appearance provided. He cursed not having the time to enjoy her properly.

“Take off your skirt,” he ordered. Bill watched as Selah did as he commanded, revealing her black panties. “Sit back on the sofa and spread your legs.” Bill knelt between her splayed legs. “You want to feed me, don’t you, Selah?”

“Yes.”

“You want to please me, don’t you?”

“Yes.”

“Good girl,” Bill said as he ran a finger over the inside of her thighs. His fangs ran down as he heard the blood pumping through her veins. Lifting her right leg slightly, he bit down hard, making her cry out. He took a few mouthfuls of blood before retracting his fangs and running his tongue lightly over the wound to seal it. He groaned as he stood up, his erection pressing painfully against his trousers. A quick check of the time told him he didn’t have enough time to satisfy his other hunger.

“Put your skirt back on. You will not remember any of the questions I asked about Sookie Stackhouse tonight. You will remember offering to feed me, and you will return tomorrow and offer yourself to me again. You will not mention what happen here tonight to anyone. Is that clear?”

“Yes.”

“Good girl,” Bill sneered. He realised she could help him with the image he was trying to assume. “You will act like you’re my companion. You will only give your blood and body to me, unless I order otherwise.” Satisfied she would follow his orders, he released her from his glamour. “I’m afraid we’ll have to cut our meeting short. I have some business to attend to in Shreveport.”

“Oh,” Selah said disappointedly. ”Well, I don’t want to keep you from your business.”

“I would much rather be spending the evening in your company, Selah.” Bill said, laying it on thick.

“Another time, maybe.”
“Another time,” Bill agreed. “Now if you’ll excuse me, I have to leave right away.”

“Of course.” Selah replied as she stood up.

Bill followed Selah out, locking the door behind them. He escorted Selah to her car and watched as she climbed in before he made his way to his car. He followed Selah’s car down the driveway, before heading in a different direction as he made his way to Fangtasia.

OoOoO

“Bill will be here in forty-five minutes,” Pam said, cackling as she hung the phone up.

“Good,” Eric replied, “Now, what did you find out? Why is Bill really in my area?”

“It was like we suspected,” Pam said, sobering as the knowledge of what she discovered settled upon her. “According to Melanie, Bill was sent here to procure someone for the Queen, someone who would be a huge asset to her Kingdom.”

“Sookie.” Eric said.

“Yes. Melanie didn’t mention Sookie by name, but she said Bill was trying to procure a telepath.”

“How did they learn of her?” Eric asked. “We have done everything in our power to keep her off their radar.”

“The Queen’s favourite pet is Sookie’s cousin,” Pam said. “Apparently her mouth is as loose as her legs. She’s been telling Sophie-Anne all about her cousin who can read minds, to curry her favour.”

“She sold Sookie out so she could become Sophie-Anne’s chief cunt licker,” Eric growled. “How did we not know Hadley was related to my Sookie?”

“Different last names; she always has her head buried in Sophie-Anne’s crotch; I’ve never met her,” Pam rattled off. “Sookie never mentions her. All she said about her was she had a cousin who ran away from rehab, after stealing their grandmother’s check book. This would have been about six months before she met you. We knew we wouldn’t be able to hide Sookie forever. Have you told Sookie?”

“No. I wanted to be sure before I told her. I didn’t want to worry her if it wasn’t necessary. I will tell her tonight; I won’t hide this from her.”

“What are you going to do about Compton?” Pam asked.

“Nothing,” Eric said with a smirk. “I’m not going to let on I know about his little mission.”


“As long as he is here trying to procure Sookie, Sophie-Anne won’t send anyone else. I have no doubt by now he has told her about my relationship with Sookie, and if I know Sophie-Anne, she will be furious. She’ll want Bill to find out everything he can about us. I can monitor Bill and stay one step ahead of Sophie-Anne at the same time.”

“You know Sophie-Anne isn’t just going to let this go,” Pam warned. “You know how she is when she wants something. She thinks she’s entitled to everything she desires, and she will do whatever it takes to get Sookie.”

“She will not take my wife away from me,” Eric roared. “Sookie is mine; we are bonded by blood
“I accept that, but Sophie-Anne won’t,” Pam said carefully.

“Sophie-Anne will not have a choice once I’m finished,” Eric replied darkly. “She will never get her hands on my wife. For now, it is Compton we have to worry about; he is doing her bidding. I want to know everything he knows, everything he does; contact Lisa and have her set up the surveillance. Make sure she takes every necessary precaution, I don’t want to tip Compton off because she got sloppy with her work.”

“She’s never failed us before,” Pam said, “but I’ll be sure to make sure she understands the consequences if she fucks up.”

“Good. I don’t want Compton anywhere near Sookie, but I know that will be impossible now he lives across the cemetery from us, and he will be at the bar at least once a week. Under no circumstance is he to be left alone with her. I will fill Sookie on everything tonight so she knows what is happening.”

“I will make sure he is never alone with her.” Pam assured.

“Is there any area business I have to handle tonight?” Eric asked going through the papers on his desk.

“Nothing important, just minor issues.” Pam replied.

“Good. I’ll see to them now while I wait for Bill to arrive,” Eric said. “Make sure he is escorted straight through to see me. Why don’t you go and keep your Mistress company?”

“You mean why don’t I go and make sure Sookie isn’t helping out in the bar.” Pam retorted.

“That work is beneath her.” Eric growled.

“She likes helping.” Pam said.

“I know; doesn’t mean I have to like her doing it,” Eric grumbled. “I hire people to do that, but she refuses to listen to me.”

Pam laughed as she walked out of Eric’s office. She enjoyed watching Sookie stand up to Eric; few vampires dared stand up to her Maker, but the little telepath had never shown any fear in his presence. Even when they first met and Eric tried to intimidate her, she stood her ground and earned his respect, and eventually captured his heart.

Sookie smiled at Pam as she approached Eric’s booth. “Let me guess: Eric sent you to make sure I’m not helping out,” she said.

“He did,” Pam smirked. “I’m beginning to wonder, my telepathic little friend, if you help out just to annoy Eric.”

“I would never do that Pam,” Sookie said. “I like to be helpful.”

“You like winding Eric up,” Pam countered laughing. “You know he hates watching the vermin hitting on you; it makes him act possessively and…”

“Like a bad ass vampire, which is what the fangbangers all come to see, which makes them happy and spend more money, which makes Eric happy and Eric…”
“Stakes his claim on you by fucking you into near unconsciousness, which no doubt makes you happy.” Pam interrupted. “That’s quite devious, Sookie. I’m impressed.”

“Pam!” Sookie cried, embarrassed. “I wasn’t going to say that.”

“Not denying it though, are you?” Pam chortled. The humor vanished from Pam’s face as she spied a red-haired fangbanger approaching the booth. She sneered at the woman as the stench of fear and desire reached her sensitive nose. Pam’s eyes narrowed as she saw the disregard the fangbanger showed Sookie.

“Hi,” the redhead breathed, in what she believed was a sexy tone, as she stroked a finger along her throat, down to her cleavage. “I’m Sandy…”

“Why would I care what your name is, you filthy little whore?” Pam snarled.

“I, er, I thought you might like to drink from me.” Sandy stuttered.

“I don’t feed from trash,” Pam dismissed.

“I’m not trash!” Sandy said.

“You’re worse than trash. What is worse than trash?” Pam made a show of thinking it over. “Sewage,” she exclaimed. “You’re sewage: vile and toxic. I would never lower myself to feed from you; my tastes are much more refined. I only feed from the best.”

“Who? Her?” Sandy spat, pointing at Sookie. “She’s white trash, and everyone knows it. She’s probably been with every vampire here.”

Pam’s hand was wrapped around her throat before anyone even saw her move. “You dare insult my Mistress, you worthless bloodbag? It is only by her grace I don’t drain you dry.” Pam threw her to the floor hard. “You’re pathetic. Now get out of the bar and never return; if you do, my Master will deal with you, and you don’t want to face him after insulting his wife. Indira, make sure she leaves.”

Sandy was dragged out of the bar by a brown-haired vampire as Pam watched. “Things are never dull around you, Sookie.” she said as she sat back down.

“You’re going to blame me for that?” Sookie replied. “I didn’t even open my mouth.”

“I know, I was surprised,” Pam said. “You normally scream at us to let them go. Are you not feeling well?”

“Very funny, Pam,” Sookie said. “You know I haven’t said anything like that in years. I know you couldn’t let it go when she insulted me; it would have looked bad if you had. I may not like it, but I do understand. I promised Eric I would do my complaining in private.”

“You’re finally learning,” Pam snarked.

“Yeah, and it only took me a couple of years. How long did it take you to learn not to argue with Eric?” Sookie asked with a smirk. Her smirk turned into a frown when she saw Bill walk into the bar.

Upon seeing Sookie sitting in the booth, Bill crossed the bar and approached her. He paused briefly as his eyes flickered over Pam. “Good evening,” he greeted.

“Bill.” Pam replied in a bored tone.
“Good evening, Mr. Compton.”

“Please, call me Bill,” he said with false charm. “I would like to apologize for my behavior last night. It was unacceptable. I hope you can forgive me.”

“Apology accepted.” Sookie said gracefully.

“Thank you, Sookie,” Bill replied. “May I call you Sookie?”

“No,” Sookie answered without thought, making Pam laugh. “We are in my husband’s – your Sheriff’s – bar. All the vampires, with the exception of Eric and Pam, call me Mrs. Northman or Mistress. It’s what is expected. I’m sure you understand.”

“Of course, Mrs. Northman.” Bill gritted out, shocked she had spoken to him in such away.

“If you have finished annoying my Mistress,” Pam said, “the Sheriff wishes to see you. Follow me.”

Having no choice, Bill nodded to Sookie and followed Pam through the club to Eric’s office.

“You’re late.” Eric said as Bill walked through the door.

“My apologies, but Shreveport is an hour’s drive from Bon Temps and I was only given forty-five minutes.”

“I don’t want your excuses,” Eric replied. “I believe when you requested permission to move into my area you agree to follow my rules; that means being here on time when ordered.”

“Yes, Sheriff.”

“I also believe I informed you what is acceptable at Sophie-Anne’s court might not be acceptable here. I understand Sophie-Anne is more welcoming of certain sexual practices; she encourages the sharing of pets. She is a very giving Queen.”

“Yes,” Bill replied hesitantly, unsure of where Eric was going.

“In fact, I believe Sophie-Anne is a big fan of voyeurism; she enjoys watching and being watched. I will admit that is something I have enjoyed in the past, but since meeting my beautiful wife, I no longer partake in it. I do not watch others, and no one may watch me and Sookie, ever.”

“Sheriff…” Bill started a sense of dread settling over him.

“I explained the rules to you,” Eric continued, refusing to let him speak. “You were aware Sookie is my wife. It is not as if you are uninformed. So perhaps you would like to explain why you sat in the tree outside my house, watching me and my wife make love, whilst you pulled on your meager excuse for a dick?”

“Sheriff…”

“Shut up,” Eric roared. “I do not wish to hear your excuses or pitiful lies. You spied on something you had no right to see: you got off watching my wife ride my cock. My wife is a lady, and will be treated as such. I would end you for this, but you’re not worth the paperwork,” Eric’s eyes darkened as he glared at Bill. “But do not for one minute think you will go unpunished. Pam is very creative when it comes to coming up with suitable punishments; I was just going to cut off your hand, but Pam came up with a much more entertaining punishment. By time she is finished with you, you will wish I had simply cut off your hand.”
Bill couldn’t conceal the look of fear as Pam’s laughter filled the office. He started to regret ever agreeing to procure the telepath for Sophie-Anne, not that he had a choice in the matter. As he looked between the furious Sheriff and a cackling Pam, Bill prayed to a God he no longer believed in he would survive his latest mission.
Bill barely had the chance to school his features before Pam pounced on him, knocking him off balance. Grabbing him by the back of his shirt, Pam launched him head-first at the closed door. She let out a squeal of delight as he crashed through it, destroying the door.

“Make sure you get that door fixed.” Eric called out as he made his way back towards the bar, leaving Pam to her fun.

Pam sped over to Bill, who lay crumpled on the floor. She dug the heel of her shoe into one of his hands, piercing the skin, pressing down as hard as she could; she smiled as she heard his bones shattering.

“Oh Billy, we’re going to have so much fun together,” she cooed. She reached down and tangled her hand in his hair, her fingernails digging into his scalp painfully. “Well I’m going to have so much fun; you, not so much. But I promise to make you scream.” Yanking him forward, Pam dragged him down the corridor by his hair, ignoring his pitiful whining.

Opening the door that lead to the basement, Pam shoved Bill through, throwing him down the stairs. She followed him down the stairs at a leisurely pace, the clack of her high heels echoing off the basement walls. She stepped over Bill as she moved into the centre of the basement; a cruel smirk spread over her face as she saw Bill eye the open door.

“You’ll never make it,” she said tauntingly. “You’re welcome to try, but even if you get lucky and make it out of this basement, you’ll never make it out of the club. If you try to run, you’ll just piss Eric off more. You’ll interfere with his evening with his wife and that’ll just make him angry, so he’ll see to your punishment personally, and despite what he said, my Master is much more creative then I when it comes to discipline. Not to mention patient; he’ll make it last weeks, if not months. Eric is nothing if not thorough.”

Despite her words, Bill inched closer to the stairs, his eyes fixed on the open door. He was convinced if he could make it out of the club to contact Sophie-Anne she would protect him, or at the very least instruct Eric to not harm him. He dragged himself to his feet, his hand throbbing as the bones knitted themselves back together. He barely had a foot on the first step when a shadow fell over the stairs. Bill took a step back as a petite vampire descended; his eyes flicked over the room, looking for another way out.

Pam watched Bill with barely concealed amusement. She could smell the fear rolling off him, and they had barely even begun. She’d encountered humans who handled the threat of torture better than he did. She waited for him to realize he had no chance of escaping, and that he would have no choice but to accept his punishment. She watched his shoulders hunch in resignation as he realized there was no way out.

“Let’s get this show on the road. Bill, meet Thalia; Thalia meet… No, you don’t want to meet him.”

Bill took another step back as Thalia descended the stairs, her dark eyes locked on him. Her reputation was well known in the vampire world. Many considered her uncontrollable; she was prone to violent outbursts, attacking anyone who was foolish enough to get too close to her.

Thalia’s steps were small but deliberate. A scowl was etched firmly on her face as she backed Bill further into the basement. Bill was so focused on Thalia, he didn’t notice Pam slip on a pair of leather gloves and pick up a silver choker. He had no time to react as she fastened the choker around his
neck; his skin sizzled as the silver sliced into his throat. Blood trickled down his throat. His fingers blistered as he tried to pull it off, while whimpers of pain spilled from his mouth.

“Really, Bill,” Pam mocked. “We’ve barely started and you’re already crying like a bitch.”

“Fuck you.” Bill gritted out.

“You’re not my type, darling,” Pam replied. “Thalia, he yours?”

“I prefer men.” Thalia snarled.

“Bitch.” Bill spat, glaring at the older vampire. His head snapped back before he could even register that she’d moved; her elbow had connected with his nose, shattering it.

“Ooh,” Pam said, sucking in an unneeded breath. “I’d be careful what I say if I were you, Billy. Thalia’s not known to take being insulted lightly; she’s also not known to taking compliments nicely either. She hates everyone and loves nothing more then breaking bones. Well, actually, that’s not quite true: she hates almost everyone. There is one person she likes, tolerates, defends; can you guess who that is?”

Bill glared at Pam, hatred burning brightly in his eyes as he envisioned all the ways he would like to torture her. He ground his teeth together, refusing to answer her. His mind set on surviving his punishment so he could report back to his Queen.

“No, you can’t guess? Well, that’s not too surprising, considering you’re not very bright,” Pam belittled. “I’ll tell you anyway: Sookie. Thalia likes Sookie. She’s very protective of her. I wonder if Eric told her what you did.”

“What did he do to my Mistress?” Thalia growled.

“Guess not. Shall we tell her?” Pam chortled as she circled around him. Stopping directly behind him, she tangled her fingers in his hair and yanked his head back. “It seems Bill here is a bit of a peeping Tom, the dirty little fuck got himself off watching Eric and Sookie last night. And now he’s going to pay for it. Chain him up.”

Thalia didn’t have to be told twice. Bill didn’t have the chance to move before she dragged him to his feet. She broke his wrists as she fastened silver manacles around them, hindering his ability to heal. She pulled on the chain connected to the manacles, raising Bill up until his toes just skimmed the concrete floor, adding extra pressure to his broken wrists.

The smell of burning flesh filled the room, making Pam and Thalia’s fangs snap down. Small whimpers of pain escaped from Bill’s lips as his eyes darted between Pam and Thalia.

“I can’t help but wonder what possessed you to spy on my Master and his wife,” Pam mused as she ran her gloved fingers over a selection of silver knives. “Or what made you think you’d get away with it.” Picking up one of the knives, Pam sauntered over to Bill. She ran the tip of the blade over his shirt-covered chest. “Did you think Eric wouldn’t care? Or that he would invite you to join him?” Moving the knife down his body, Pam added a little pressure, slicing through his shirt and nipping his skin, making Bill flinch.

Taking a step back, Pam eyed the small beads of blood that had soaked through his shirt, “No, that won’t do,” she tutted as she put the knife down. “Strip him,” she ordered as she picked up a small jar and paintbrush. Pam watched with a sense of detachment as Thalia tore the clothes off Bill’s body. Taking a step forward, she showed Bill the small jar. “Do you know what this is?”
Bill stared ahead, still refusing to speak; he was determined not to give them the satisfaction. He wouldn’t beg or plead; he wouldn’t let them break him.

“This strong, silent thing is really getting annoying,” Pam said, letting out a sigh. “It’s just making me want to make you scream more. And I promise you: I will make you scream. To answer my question, this lovely little invention is liquid silver.” Pam dipped the paintbrush in the jar, coating it with the silver. “I bet you didn’t know this, but I’m quite the artist. I just love to paint. And you, you sorry excuse for a vampire, are the perfect canvas.”

Pam flicked the paintbrush over Bill’s chest, painting him with the silver. She swirled the brush around his nipples, loving the sound the silver made as it seared his skin. Handing a second brush to Thalia, the two of them painted his chest and back with the liquid silver.

Blood tears fell down Bill’s face as the pain overwhelmed him; he ground his teeth together as he struggled desperately not to make a sound.

Pam put the paintbrush down and picked up a knife; dipping it into the jar, she let the liquid silver coat the knife before placing the jar down. She ran the silver coated knife down Bill’s chest, slicing his skin open. The sound of his flesh sizzling filled the room. As the silver entered the cuts, whimpered of pain spilled from his lips, as he was unable to hold them back any longer.

Dropping the knife, Pam ran her gloved hand down his chest in a gentle caress. “Did you enjoy watching Eric fuck his wife? Did it make you hard?” She slid her hand down his chest, avoiding all the burns as she coaxed his body into arousal. Dropping her hand lower, she wrapped it around his straining erection.

“Did you stroke your cock like this?” Pam asked as she pumped his cock softly, running her thumb over the head, giving him a small taste of what his body craved as pleasure and pain meshed together. “Did you imagine it was you in Eric’s place? Your cock Sookie was sucking, riding, fucking.”

Gripping him tighter, Pam increased her speed, twisting her wrist on each downward stroke.

“Do you want to cum, Bill?” Pam purred.

“Yes,” Bill replied, moaning and bucking his hips, desperate for the release his body craved.

“Too bad,” Pam said with a smirk as she tightened her hand around his cock painfully. “Cause by time I’ve finished with you, you won’t be cumming for a long time.”

Her eyes glinted dangerously as Thalia handed her a thin glass vial filled with colloidal silver. Very carefully, she inserted the vial into Bill’s urethra, enjoying the look of horror on Bill’s face.

Pam gripped his cock harder, her hand squeezing him painfully. “This is Eric’s area, and Eric’s rule. You don’t spy on him and his wife. Sookie is off limits. She is Eric’s. You don’t look. You don’t touch. Say it with me, Bill: ‘Sookie is Eric’s.’”

“S… Sookie…”

“Say it.” Pam demanded as she gripped him even harder.

“Sookie is Eric’s.” Bill cried hopelessly.

“Good boy,” Pam said mockingly. “And just so you don’t forget it…” Pam tightened her hand even more.
Bill roared in pain as the glass vial shattered; blood and silver dripped from his body as it shook with pain. As the silver burnt him from the inside-out, the sound of his flesh sizzling filled the room. Blood tears streamed down his face and his cries of pain bounced off the basement walls as his body tried to expel the foreign materials inside him. The small shards of glass tore him apart as they were forced out of his cock.

Words spilled from his mouth as he begged for mercy; so lost in his pain, Bill had no idea what he was saying. Between pleas for mercy and threats of retribution, Bill spilled many of the details surrounding his return to Bon Temps and his mission for the Queen. His legs gave out from beneath him, and he hung limply by his wrists as he sobbed.

Anger, disgust, and blinding rage barreled through Pam at an alarming rate as she heard everything Bill said. Her hatred for him grew to new heights as she heard what he and the Queen had planned for Sookie.

Her spiking emotions drew Eric down into the basement. He surveyed the scene with a sense of pride as he looked at Bill’s broken body.

“You’ve out done yourself this time, Pam,” he said as he stepped closer to Bill. “I see those art classes really paid off.” Scanning Bill’s body, Eric winced in mock sympathy as he saw his mangled dick. “It would have hurt less to just cut it off.”

“But nowhere near as much fun,” Pam replied with a smirk. “I could always cut off his balls though.”

“N…no,” Bill stuttered, trying in futility to back away from them.

Eric grabbed Bill by the throat, careful to not touch any of Pam’s handy work. “Let this be a lesson to you. If you spy on my wife and me again, I will rip off that meager stump you call a dick and shove it up your ass.” Eric threatened.

“Why didn’t I think of that?” Pam pouted.

“Maybe next time,” Eric chuckled as he walked back towards the stairs, looking over his shoulder. “Thalia, finish up here. Do not kill him.” he ordered as he saw the dangerous glint in her eyes.

“Bill, it’s been fun.” Pam purred as she followed Eric up the stairs.

OoOoO

“What had you so angry?” Eric asked once they were back in his office.

“Compton,” Pam spat as she recalled what she had heard. “It seems his lips are as loose as Hadley’s legs. One silver hand job and he was spilling all his little secrets.”

“What did he say?”

“Some of it we already expected. He’s told Sophie-Anne about you and Sookie, and true to form, she threw a tantrum and demanded Bill come between you. For some strange reason, they actually think Bill could be a threat to you when it comes to Sookie.”

“Most of this we already knew, and none of it would entice the reaction I felt from you,” Eric said. “What else did he say?”

“Most of it was nonsense; the typical bullshit they say when they’re being tortured. You’ll pay for
this, you don’t know who you’re messing with, and I want my mommy. Compton, however, was a little more forthcoming. He…” Pam trailed off, trying to find the right words. Looking at Eric, she knew that once he heard what Bill had said, he’d want to go back down into the basement and send Bill to his final death after torturing him some more. “Sophie-Anne doesn’t just want Sookie for her telepathy, although that is her main reason. According to Compton, she wants another pet just like Hadley: a matching pair. A pair she’ll use to broker many new deals. In addition to using Sookie’s telepathy, she also plans to whore her out, as she does Hadley. Sookie would be used as a blood and sex slave.”

“Never!” Eric roared. “No one will touch my Sookie but I; I will never allow it. I will kill anyone who dares lay a hand on her. What else did he say?”

“He… he…” Pam struggled with the words, not wanting to anger Eric anymore.

“Spit it out.” Eric ordered.

“Compton was rambling on about when the Queen hears of what happened, she’ll have your fangs, and…” Pam paused and took an unneeded deep breath, “he’ll chain you in silver and make you watch while he fucks Sookie.”

Pam had barely finished speaking when Eric’s desk went flying across the room; it was reduced to kindling in seconds as Eric’s rage took over. Pam watched with a sense of fear as Eric destroyed his office. Knowing Eric as well as she did, Pam realized that the rage she was feeling from him now would be like a storm in a teacup in comparison to what she would feel from him if Sophie-Anne or Bill ever got their hands on Sookie.

“Eric, calm down.”

“Do not tell me to calm down, Child.” Eric growled as he stood up.

“If you don’t, Sookie will feel your anger,” Pam tried to reason. “Seeing you like this will only scare her.”

“Sookie has never been afraid of me, even when she probably should have,” Eric bit out. “She knows I will never hurt her.”

“Your feelings are overwhelming me; you could unintentionally hurt her through your bond.” Pam advised.

Realizing she was speaking the truth, Eric attempted to get his emotions under control. The thought of his Sookie being hurt had caused a murderous rage in him, and the last thing he wanted to do was hurt Sookie by sending that feeling through the bond to her.

Grabbing his leather jacket, Eric stalked over to the door. “Keep Compton here all day,” he ordered. “Release him after first dark; give him a bottle of True Blood, and then dump him back in that shithole he calls a house. Instruct him he is to be at Fangtasia this weekend to put in his hours. I don’t care if he’s healed or not. Be sure to tell him that he better have his urges under better control. I would hate to have to punish him again for attacking one of the vermin. In fact, tell him for the foreseeable future he is prohibited from feeding on anyone at Fangtasia, even if they offer themselves to him.”

“Okay. Where are you going?” Pam asked.

“I am going to take my wife home,” Eric replied, stopping by the door. He looked down, the events of the night resting heavily on his shoulders. “I need to tell her what we found out.”
“Is that wise?” Pam questioned.

“I won’t hide this from her; she needs to know,” Eric answered. “Keeping her in the dark just makes her vulnerable; it puts her in more danger. I wish I didn’t have to tell her. I would give anything not to, but she needs to know her cousin has betrayed her and the real reason Compton is here. I won’t lie to her and tell her everything is alright, when it’s not.”

Pam nodded her head, understanding the truth in what Eric was saying. “We’ll keep her safe, Eric.” she assured.

“I know we will,” Eric replied, his voice full of confidence. Opening the door, Eric smirked and looked over his shoulder. “Enjoy the rest of the night with Compton.”

“Oh, I will.” Pam purred as she followed him out of the office.

Heading back into the bar, Eric pushed the fangbangers out of the way as they approached him, his sights set firmly on his wife. He couldn’t hold back the smirk as he saw her face light up when she saw him again. In that moment he swore that no one and nothing would come between them. He would burn Sophie-Anne’s Kingdom down around her before he would ever let her take his wife.
“Eric, what’s wrong?” Sookie asked softly as she sat down on the edge of their bed. He hadn’t said a word since they left Fangtasia, and given the turmoil she was feeling through the bond, it was beginning to worry her.

Staring at his wife, Eric struggled to find the right words to express what was troubling him. If it had been anyone else he would have been brutal in his explanations, not caring how his words would be taken, but Eric found himself wanting to both tell Sookie the truth, and protect her from it.

How was he supposed to tell his wife she was in danger due to the selfish, whorish behavior of her own cousin? That because of her cousin’s inability to keep her mouth or legs shut, she was now in the sights of the Queen of Louisiana.

Clasping her hands in his, Eric lifted them to his lips, placing a soft kiss on them as he dropped to his knees in front of her. “I…” he started, “your… I found out some news about your cousin.”

“My cous… Hadley?” Sookie gasped.

“Yes, I received some information tonight concerning her, where she has been for the last year and what she’s been doing.”

“Where is she?” Sookie asked.

“New Orleans. She has been there for the last year.”

“Doing what?”

“Your cousin is the favorite pet of Sophie-Anne,” Eric told her.

“Sophie-Anne, the vampire Queen?” Sookie questioned.

“Yes, it seems to gain Sophie-Anne’s favor, Hadley would tell her tales about her life in Bon Temps and her family,” Eric said.

“Why would Sophie-Anne care about Hadley’s fam…” her words trailed off as she realized what tales Hadley told the Queen. “Me.”

Eric watched as Sookie put the pieces together. He could almost see the wheels turning in her brain, as she connected all the dots. In that moment, Eric would have given anything to spare Sookie from the pain of knowing the truth.

“Hadley told the Queen about me, about what I can do, didn’t she?” She added softly.

“Yes,” Eric answered.

“That’s why Bill’s here,” Sookie deduced. “Hadley opened her big mouth, told the Queen about me, and she sent Bill here, to what, find out if Hadley’s stories were true?”

“That is what we learned tonight,” Eric replied.

“How?”

“I was suspicious of Bill’s return to my area. He has spent the last fifty years living at court and for
him to return to his ancestral home under the pretense of mainstreaming was questionable. I have a spy within Sophie-Anne’s court, who informed me of Compton’s mission, and he himself confirmed it tonight.

“He told you?”

“Pam was able to coax the information out of him,” Eric replied with a smirk.

“She tortured him.”

“Yes,” Eric admitted, seeing no reason to lie to her.

“Won’t you get in trouble for that?” Sookie asked, surprising Eric by glossing over the actual torture. “If Sophie-Anne sent him, won’t he go running to her to complain?”

“No, as Sheriff I have the right to issue punishment to anyone who breaks the rules of my area, regardless of their relationship with the Queen,” Eric explained. “Compton was punished for breaking one of my rules, not due to any mission I may, or may not be aware of. He was informed of the rules when he checked in with me last night and he chose to willingly break them. He has no right to complain.”

“So he was punished for breaking one of your rules, not because he was sent to get me.”

“The reason for his punishment was just. I would not have been able to punish him just because he was sent to procure you, despite how much I desire to. Sophie-Anne chose to bypass me in her plans, and I am not supposed to know the real reasons for his relocation to my area. But I will admit his mission did factor into the severity of his punishment.”

“I’m not sure I want to know what his punishment was,” Sookie admitted softly.

“And I do not wish to tell you,” Eric replied, his voice soft and low. “I know how much you despise the violence of my world, but sometimes it is needed and required.”

“I know,” Sookie acquiesced. “I may not like it, but I understand it. I know humans aren’t capable of punishing vampires for their crimes. Our laws were designed by men for men; community service and anger management classes ain’t going to do anything to a vampire.”

Eric chuckled as the image of a group of vampires sitting around in a circle and discussing their anger problems popped into his head. He made a mental note never to mention that to Pam; given her penchant for advice columns, he wouldn’t put it past her to organize one herself just so she could bestow the wisdom of Dear Abby on everyone.

“So what happens now?” Sookie asked. “Will Sophie-Anne give up when she realizes I’m married to you?”

“No,” Eric replied truthfully, “telepaths are a rare find, even in the supe world. Sophie-Anne won’t stop pursuing you just because we are married. I doubt she will make a direct attempt to take you; instead she will use subterfuge. I suspect she has instructed Compton to come between us using any method he can think of. I also wouldn’t be surprised if you received a visit from your cousin soon.”

“You think she’ll send Hadley to see me?”

“I do. Sophie-Anne will do whatever she deems necessary to get you into her court,” Eric replied. “She will use Hadley to do that by having Hadley sing her praises. Your cousin will inform you how great life is at Sophie-Anne’s, how great the Queen is, and if that fails to work she will probably
threaten Hadley’s life and force you to go with her to save her.”

“I won’t go with her,” Sookie said firmly. “I’m not leaving you to go play pet telepath to a vampire Queen; just because Hadley couldn’t keep her big mouth shut. If Hadley knows what’s good for her she’ll stay far away from me.”

“My little warrior,” Eric said with a smirk. Leaning forward, he placed a soft kiss on her lips before pulling back. “I think she will continue to rely on Compton for the time being. He has worked as her personal procurer for the last few decades. She is confident in his abilities to procure anyone she desires. He will be the one we will have to keep an eye on.”

“You think he’ll continue with his little mission even after he’s told you about it?” Sookie asked.

“It is unlikely he remembers,” Eric replied. “Pam was very creative with her punishments. Compton was in a tremendous amount of pain; he spoke without really knowing what he was saying. If he does remember, it won’t make a difference. It is doubtful he will inform Sophie-Anne he spilled her little secret. I think it is safe to say he will continue his mission until Sophie-Anne tells him otherwise.”

“Why wouldn’t he tell her?”

“Because it would only get him in trouble,” Eric explained. “From what I gather, he was instructed to keep me uninformed about his real reason for returning to Bon Temps. Sophie-Anne wanted me kept in the dark. So informing her he told me, even under the duress of torture, would only serve to anger her and get himself into trouble.”

“So it’s him we have to look out for,” Sookie said with a sigh. “What do you think he will do?”

“I am unsure,” Eric admitted reluctantly. “Being my wife and bonded gives you a certain amount of protection. He won’t try a direct assault. I am much older and stronger than him, and you can’t be glamoured, so we won’t have to worry about that. If I am forced to guess, I will say he will try to befriend you and try to learn all he can about you. Once he’s done that, I believe he will try to undermine our relationship, try to plant seeds of doubt in your mind about me.”

“Like that will work,” Sookie scoffed.

“Compton is unaware of that,” Eric said. “He is probably operating under the false impression you know little of the vampire I am. It would never occur to him I have told you all about my past. Honesty is a foreign concept to him. He measures everyone by his own behavior: because he is deceitful and manipulative he just assumes everyone else is as well. He will have assumed my interest in you is the same as his own and Sophie-Anne’s.”

“That you just want me because I’m a telepath,” Sookie said softly.

“Yes. It is beyond his comprehension that I want you; I am with you because I love you. I fear what he will do once he learns that, though. Once he realizes his plans won’t work, how he will be unable to make you doubt me, and my commitment to you.”

“I didn’t think you feared anything.”

“There is little I fear,” Eric replied. Raising his hand, he stroked her cheek softly. “But my biggest fear is losing you. I wouldn’t survive it.”

“You’ll never have to,” Sookie replied placing her hand over his and holding it against her cheek. “I’m not going anywhere Eric. I love you, only you, forever.”
“Forever is not long enough min söta.”

“Nothing will ever be long enough for us,” Sookie agreed.

Resting his forehead against hers, “Mitt hjärta… min själ… min fru…” he whispered, placing a soft, chaste kiss upon her lips after each word.

“My husband, my bonded,” Sookie replied.

Dropping his hands to her shoulders, Eric pushed her back gently until she was lying flat on the bed. He skimmed his lips over her face, nipping at her jaw as he settled his body over hers.

Sookie let out a sigh of pleasure as she felt the welcoming feeling of his weight holding her down, making her feel safe and secure. Opening her legs, she wiggled her hips, inviting him into the cradle of her thighs. Sookie tangled her hands in his hair, pulling his lips up to hers.

Eric kissed her softly, teasing her with gentle strokes of his tongue as he slowly drove her crazy, delighting in the soft mewing sounds she made. Holding himself up on one hand, Eric ran his other hand slowly down her body; he slipped his hand under the skirt of her dress, pushing it up her legs, exposing her lower body to his hungry gaze.

“So beautiful,” he growled.

Desperate to feel his bare skin against hers, Sookie tugged on the hem of his t-shirt, her hands shaking as she tried to pull it off. The events of the night had taken its toll. The news her own cousin betraying her, and she was now in danger because of it, had really shaken her. She didn’t know what was going to happen, or what they were going to do. As much as she didn’t want to admit it, she was scared. Sookie needed to feel safe, she needed to feel protected, and she knew the only place she could feel that was in the arms of her husband. She needed him to tell her everything was going to be okay, because if he told her that, she knew it would be true.

She wanted to forget everything for a few hours, and she was well aware she could do that in Eric’s arms. He would protect her and keep her safe, but more than that he would love her like she wanted to be loved, like she needed, and in return she would do the same.

Knowing his wife as well as he did, Eric knew exactly what she needed, and he was powerless to deny her. Climbing off the bed, Eric quickly stripped of his clothes. Reaching out, he clasped one of her ankles in his hand and lifted her foot up. Kneeling on the bed, he lowered his head and placed a single kiss on the inside of her ankle. He ran his hands up her legs, his fingers dancing over her soft skin making her shiver. He followed his hands with his lips and tongue, tasting every inch of skin he found.

Hooking his fingers into the waistband of her panties, Eric pulled them down her legs slowly. Throwing them over his shoulders, he rubbed his hands over her thighs, massaging her tense muscles, making her purr. Ducking his head, Eric placed a soft kiss on her sex, teasing her with a hint of what was to come.

“Eric,” Sookie whimpered as she raised her hips, trying to spur him into action.

“Patience, min söta,” Eric teased as he pushed her hips back down. Placing one of his arms over her stomach, Eric held her hips down as he teased her with feather-light touches, his fingers skimming over the milky white flesh of her inner thighs.

“Eric, please,” Sookie pleaded.
“Please what?”

“Touch me,” Sookie begged, uncaring of how needy she sounded. Her body was shaking with pent-up arousal and she needed the release only her husband could provide.

“I am touching you,” Eric replied.

“Eric,” Sookie growled, glaring at him as he continued to tease her.

“What, am I not touching you properly?” Eric asked innocently. “Why don’t you tell me how you want to be touched, then? Or show me.”

“Eric, touch me, taste me, fuck me,” Sookie demanded.

“Mmm, but lover I am already touching you,” Eric said stroking her belly with his thumb. “I’m afraid you are going to have to be more specific. Tell me how you want me to touch you, to taste you, to fuck you.”

“Ugh,” Sookie groaned, lifting herself up on her elbows, she stared into Eric’s eyes, “Eric, fuck me. Fuck me with your fingers, fuck me with your tongue, fuck me with your cock. I don’t care how you do it, just please, FUCK ME!”

“How can I deny you when you ask so nicely?” Eric replied, smirking devilishly. Not giving her a chance to reply, Eric ducked his head down and flicked his tongue over her clit, making her cry out. Done teasing her, Eric fastened his lips around her clit and sucked hard as he slowly pushed two fingers deep inside her.

Sookie bucked wildly as sparks of pleasure shot through her body. She twisted her hands in the bedcovers, panting heavily, her toes curling as Eric played her body like a finely tuned instrument.

“Ooh,” she moaned as Eric curled his fingers inside her, rubbing the spot that drove her crazy.

Letting his fangs slide down, Eric pierced her skin, letting a trickle of blood drip down her body, mixing with the evidence of her arousal. His eyes rolled back in his head as the taste of her blood and arousal hit his tongue. Wrapping his lips around her clit, Eric sucked hungrily, relishing in her unique taste as he thrust his fingers into her harder.

“Oh god,” Sookie cried. Letting go of the covers, she tangled her hands in Eric’s hair and pushed his face harder into her as she bucked her hips. Her body thrummed with pleasure, fireworks going off behind her closed lids. She twisted on top of the covers as Eric pushed her closer and closer to the edge.

Feeling her walls tighten around his fingers, Eric sank his fangs into her clit hard, making her cry out in pain and then pleasure as her orgasm hit her, washing away the pain in a sea of bliss.

Not giving her a chance to recover, Eric withdrew his fingers from her dripping pussy, moved up her body, and slammed into her with one hard thrust sending her into another orgasm.

“Oh, Eric!”

“Mine,” Eric growled thrusting into her hard, snapping his hips with each thrust. “No one else will ever touch you.”

“Yours,” Sookie agreed, raising her hips to meet his. Lifting her legs, she wrapped them around his waist and clung to him as he fucked her into the mattress. Her body sang with the pleasure he was
giving her. This was what she wanted, what she needed. She needed to give her body to Eric, to take the pleasure only he could provide and in return give it back to him.

Their bed banged against the wall as Eric fucked his wife into oblivion. She scratched her nails down his back, drawing blood as they fucked violently. The threat of Sophie-Anne and Bill hung over their heads; their need to assert their possession of each other fueled their frantic coupling.

“Harder,” Sookie demanded, digging her heels into Eric’s ass.

Never one to deny his wife, Eric slammed into her harder, claiming her in the most primitive of ways. With each snap of his hips, he was branding her with his mark, warning anyone who dared tried to take his mate that he would not allow it.

Coils tightened in Sookie’s stomach, her nerve endings coming alive as she soared higher. Her body shook as her orgasm built in her body, driving her crazy; she cried, begged, and pleaded as she reached out for the release her body so desperately craved.

Reaching a hand between them, Eric rubbed her clit hard. He growled as he felt her walls fluttering around his hard cock. Increasing his speed, he thrust into her at almost vampire speed, his thumb a blur over her clit.

“Oh god, yes,” Sookie cried as her body broke, her eyes rolling into the back of her head as wave after wave of indescribable pleasure slammed into her.

“Fuck,” Eric roared as he felt Sookie cum. He thrust through her orgasm as he chased his own. Running his hands up her arms, he grabbed her wrists and held them above her head, pinning her to the bed as he slammed into her.

“Feels so good,” he groaned.

Needing more, Eric pulled out of Sookie and rolled her over. “Hands and knees,” he ordered.

Happy to comply, Sookie willed her limbs into actions and shakily rose to her knees, bending over she offered herself up to Eric.

Eric growled at the picture she presented. Pushing her dress up, he gripped her hips tightly and slammed back into her, letting out a hoarse cry as her wet heat welcomed him back. Their fleshed slapped together as he fucked her hard and fast, delighting in the feel of her gripping him tight.

Sookie pushed her hips back against his as she cried out in pleasure; she could feel another orgasm building in her body. Lifting one of her arms, she slipped her hand between her legs and rubbed her clit, her fingers skimming Eric’s cock, making him shudder.

“Fuck,” Eric growled, his hips a blur as he slammed into her faster. Leaning over her body, he pushed her down onto the bed, her hand trapped underneath her. He scratched his fangs over her back, nipping the skin and making blood bubble up. He soothed the scratches with his tongue, lapping at the blood as he sealed the small wounds.

“Eric, please,” Sookie begged.

Pushing her hair out of the way, Eric licked and sucked on her neck, raising her veins. “Mine,” he growled, pushing into her hard. He felt his balls tightening as he neared his peak. He sank his fangs into her throat, her blood spilling into his mouth as his body exploded and he shot his dead, cold seed deep inside her.
The feel of his fangs sliding into her throat triggered another orgasm for Sookie. She cried out as she felt Eric drink deeply from her. Her body went limp as darkness fell over her.

Retracting his fangs, Eric lapped at the small trickle of blood that spilled from his bite. Pulling out of her, he rolled onto his back and pulled Sookie to him. He held her tight as he waited for her to come around. He hummed softly, running his hands up and down her back as he monitored the bond.

As he held her securely in his arms, he swore no one would come between them. No one but him would ever experience her passion, her love. Those were reserved solely for him.
Sookie woke late into the next afternoon, her body aching in the most delicious way from the vigorous workout she received the night before. She winced as she climbed from the bed. Grabbing Eric’s discarded shirt, she slipped it over her head. She smiled down at Eric as he lay dead to the world in their bed. It struck her how strange it was that it never bothered her to see him like that. She knew a lot of people would freak out sleeping next to a dead body. Sookie found it comforting, and proof of how much he loved her because he trusted her to be with him when he was at his most vulnerable, not that Sookie needed proof. She knew Eric loved her, long before even he did. Which was funny, because Eric knew Sookie loved him, long before she knew herself. It was a sign of just how in tune they were with each other, they knew each other’s minds and hearts, better than they knew their own.

It had been like this almost from the day they met, and nothing would change it. Bill Compton was sorely mistaken if he thought he could come between them. It wasn’t as if Sookie hadn’t become used to people trying to come between them. She had three years of it. The fangbangers at Fangtasia were always trying to tempt Eric away from her, and not just the ones there. Everywhere they went, women (and sometimes men) would shamelessly ogle her husband. She had lost count of how many times women had approached Eric, and offered themselves to him, and not just your run of the mill fangbangers. There had been high-class businesswomen, models, you name it. But Eric had turned them down every time, and often rather cruelly. Sookie knew she shouldn’t have enjoyed watching Eric treat them the way he did, but often she couldn’t help it. The women had shown no respect for her, dismissing her as unimportant and beneath them. She’d be lying if she said she didn’t feel the smallest bit of pleasure watching them skulk off, after Eric had finished telling them how disgusting he found them.

Eric loved her, she knew he did; she felt it with every being of her body. Bill would never make her doubt that.

Sookie stumbled gingerly into the bathroom, grimacing at the soreness between her legs. She turned the shower on before stripping off Eric’s borrowed shirt. She sucked in a deep breath as she caught her reflection in the mirror above the sink. She had that thoroughly-fucked look. Her hair was all tangled, her make-up was smeared all over her face, finger shaped bruises littered her hips, standing out sharply against her tanned skin, making them look worse than they actually were. Eric’s dried semen, tinged with blood, stuck to her inner thighs. Lifting her hand, she stroked the side of her neck, feeling the two small puncture wounds, the result of Eric’s bite.

When Eric rose she knew he would hate himself when he saw them. He had been extremely careful over the years not to mark her skin. She was not a fangbanger and he didn’t want anyone to think of her or treat her as one. Sookie only had one mark on her body, and that was by choice: a physical reminder of their third blood exchange and the forging of their bond. It was out of view of everyone, and only Eric would ever see it.

Realizing there was nothing she could do about it, Sookie carefully climbed into the shower. She moaned as the warm water washed over her, soothing her aching muscles. She scrubbed at her face, removing her make-up. Standing under the warm spray, she carefully washed away her night with Eric. She winced as she touched between her legs; she was still extremely sensitive from Eric’s enthusiastic lovemaking, not to mention his bite. Once she was clean, she turned the shower off and climbed out, wrapping a towel around her body. Walking back into the bedroom, Sookie frowned as she stared at her closet. She didn’t feel like getting dressed, her body was still sore in places and the last thing she wanted was to cover it in restrictive clothing.
Knowing she wasn’t expecting anyone, Sookie grabbed one of Eric’s silk shirts and slipped it on. The fabric felt heavenly against her skin and she couldn’t help running her hands over her silk covered body. She felt naughty going without underwear, but it wasn’t like anyone was around to see. She placed a gentle kiss on Eric’s forehead, before walking out the bedroom.

There were hours to go until Eric rose and for the first time Sookie found herself at a loss at what to do. Normally she would use the time to catch up on all the chores that needed doing, but since she heard the vampire Queen of Louisiana wanted her, and had sent someone to procure her, she didn’t know what to do. She didn’t know if it was safe for her to leave the house. She had no idea if Sophie-Anne had sent anyone else after her. Eric hadn’t said anything about it, believing her to be relying on Bill. Bill was only good for the night, but who was to say she hadn’t sent someone to take her during the day, when her vampires were dead to the world? Sookie realized, until they knew for sure, it wasn’t safe for her to leave her home.

Not for the first time, Sookie cursed Hadley. She couldn’t say she was shocked though. Oh, she had no reason to believe Hadley knew the Queen of Louisiana; that bit did come as a surprise, but she wasn’t shocked that Hadley had sold her out. It wasn’t the first time Hadley had used her family to further her own agenda. Hadley craved attention, she didn’t care if it was good or bad; she was just afraid of being alone. She always wanted to belong, but never realized the people around her were just using her, they didn’t care about her. The only people who did were her family, and she spat in their faces, just like she did when they were in high school. Her desperate need to belong had her falling in line with everyone else. Hadley joined in with the other kids, she had picked on Sookie for being different, but her actions were all the more cruel since she had inside information.

She knew what hurt Sookie the most and took advantage of it. Hadley had done everything to be accepted, to the point of giving herself sexually to the boys. Sookie doubted there was a boy in their class that Hadley hadn’t fucked, and that included the teacher.

Sookie wondered what she would do if Hadley did turn up on her doorstep. Would she welcome her in? Sookie wasn’t sure; she’d have to be stupid if she did. But then would Hadley actually turn up knowing Sookie could read her every thought? Then again, Hadley wasn’t the brightest bulb in the box; she had already proven that.

Sookie was more worried about Jason. Eric had said Sophie-Anne might try to harm Hadley as a way to get to her, but surely she must realize that might not work, especially if Sookie knew the real reason for her interest. But Jason, despite being a bit dumb sometimes, had never hurt or betrayed her. Going after him would be much smarter and would likely work. Sookie made a note to mention it to Eric when he rose; the last thing she wanted was for her family to get hurt because of her, and Jason was the only family she had left.

Well he’s the only blood family I have left. And Eric and Pam can take care of themselves.

With nothing better to do, Sookie decided to spend the day reading. After grabbing herself a quick bite to eat, she settled down on the couch with one of her favorite books. She lost herself in the fictional world of Jane Eyre; she had read the book so many times she could almost recite it by heart, but she still found herself gasping at the plot twists and sighing during the romance. As she read she found her eyes getting heavy, she let out a small yawn as she lay back on the couch. The words on the pages stared to blur as her eyes drooped. Unable to resist any longer, Sookie fell into a gentle slumber.

She woke a few hours later to some stroking her hair, “Mmm,” she purred, “good morning, baby.”

“Good evening, min sötta,” Eric corrected with a smile. “I do not like it when you’re not there when I rise.”
“I know, I’m sorry,” Sookie replied sleepily. “I fell asleep.”

“So I see,” Eric said, his smile turning predatory as he stared down at her. “Although I must admit, finding you the way I did more than made up for your absence.”

“Huh?” Sookie questioned, confused. Seeing Eric’s heated gaze sweep over her body, “oh,” she cried, blushing like crazy as she saw the state she was in. Eric’s shirt had ridden up her thighs, exposing her naked lower half to his hungry gaze. She moved to hastily cover herself, but Eric’s gentle hands stopped her.

Eric’s cool fingers teased the soft flesh of her upper thighs, raising goose bumps. “Is there a reason why you’re not wearing panties?” he asked. “Not that I’m complaining. I would be happy if you never wore them.”

“I was a little...” she trailed off, hissing as Eric’s fingers slid between her thighs and came into contact with her tender sex.

Eric’s eyes snapped to hers at the sound of her discomfort, “Sookie, are you injured? Did I hurt you?”

“No!” Sookie cried. “You didn’t hurt me. You would never hurt me. I’m just a little sore is all.”

“Because of me,” Eric replied downheartedly.

“No Eric, because of us.”

“I was too rough with you.”

“It’s not your fault,” Sookie said trying to get him to see sense. “I never told you to stop. In fact I begged you to go harder.”

“I should have known better.”

“Eric, you didn’t do anything wrong,” Sookie replied. “I was right there with you, I wanted it as much as you did. Don’t beat yourself up about this.”

“Let me see,” Eric said suddenly as he stood up.

“What? No, I’m not going to just spread my legs so you can examine me.”

“Take off my shirt,” Eric ordered.

Sookie sighed as she realized he wouldn’t let it go until he saw for himself she wasn’t too hurt. Sitting up she unbuttoned Eric’s shirt and let it fall open.

Eric’s eyes darkened as he saw the bruises on her body. He could tell she was trying to hide them to protect him and that only made him feel worse.

“Lover, I am so sorry,” he said his eyes downcast.

“There’s nothing to be sorry for. I’m not complaining Eric, I wasn’t last night and I’m not now.”

“How can you say that? I bruised your beautiful body.”

“Haven’t you heard the saying: sex bruises are good bruises?” Sookie said cheekily, making Eric laugh.
“I do not like seeing any type of bruise on your body.”

“I know,” Sookie said, “and things did get a little rough last night, but baby, it’s okay. I liked it. I like when you get all possessive in the bedroom. I like knowing I’m yours. We both needed that last night.”

“We did,” Eric agreed as he recalled the reasons behind his need to claim her. “Let me heal you.”

“Well, I’m not going to argue with you there.”

“Good,” Eric replied as he dropped to his knees in front of her. “Now tell me where it hurts.”

“Everywhere,” Sookie moaned as Eric pulled her to the edge of the couch and lowered his head. She whimpered as his cold lips kissed her heated flesh.

Eric licked along her folds softly, careful not to hurt her. He slipped his hands under her ass and lifted her off the couch slightly; holding her to his mouth, he kissed her tender sex. The smell of her arousal so close to his nose caused his cock to harden and fangs to slide down. He pierced his tongue with his fangs and licked along her folds coating them with his blood, before thrusting his tongue into her sex.

Sookie moaned loudly as his tongue penetrated her, her hips bucking against his mouth as her hands tangled in his hair. The soreness started to slowly dissipate being replaced by an altogether more pleasurable feeling.

Eric gripped her hips tighter as he fucked her with his tongue. He could feel the small amount of his blood moving through her, healing her overused sex. He cursed himself for forgetting to heal her last night and leaving her in any type of discomfort. It wasn’t the first time he had been rough with her, but it was the first time he had forgotten to heal her afterwards. He pierced his tongue again, letting his blood fill his mouth before wrapping her lips around her clit. He sucked on the small bundle of nerves as he bathed her in his blood.

Sookie thrashed her head from side to side as her orgasm grew quickly. She yanked on Eric’s hair, making him groan in pain as her hips bucked against his mouth. She came with a shrill cry, her body shaking wildly before going limp. She smiled hazily up at Eric as she watched him lick his lips.

“Feel better?” he asked.

“Mnnn, much,” Sookie sighed.

“Good.” Eric stroked a finger over her flushed cheek as he leaned forward and rested his forehead against hers. “Jag älskar dig,” he whispered against her lips before placing a gentle kiss upon them. His lips ghosted over her with the barest of touches. Pushing the shirt off her shoulders, he traced his fingers over her shoulders, across her collarbone. Breaking the kiss, he lifted his hand to his mouth and sliced open one of his fingers, he rubbed it over the fang marks on her neck and watched in satisfaction as they disappeared.

He let his eyes roam over the rest of her, searching for any more injures. He rubbed his thumb over the small scar over her right nipple and smiled as he remembered the night he made it, the night they had bonded. Eric placed a sweet kiss over the mark before continuing his search. He frowned as he saw the bruises on her hips, but they had already begun to fade; his blood was doing its work and they would be completely gone by tomorrow, but he wanted them gone now. He hated seeing her flesh marred in any way; it hurt even worse when he knew he was the reason for it. Sitting back on his heels, Eric raised his wrist to his mouth and tore into it.
Sookie winced at the sound of his flesh tearing; even though Eric didn’t mind, she hated the sound. It sounded painful, and she hated the thought of him hurting. Her eyes followed his every move and when he presented his bloody wrist to her she didn’t hesitate. She latched onto it without question or comment. She moaned as his blood filled her mouth. She could never hide the thrill she got from taking his blood, knowing what it meant. It was his blood, it was what kept him alive or undead; it made him hard, and he shared that with her, shared his life willingly. No one forced him to; he did it out of love and in many ways that meant more to Sookie than everything else. She treasured everything he gave her, but at the end of the day, they were just trinkets; they were lovely and she was grateful for them, but his blood was unique, it was him.

Eric groaned as he felt Sookie’s lips close over the wound, he could feel his blood entering her body. His cock throbbed painfully with each pull she took. He tried to will the wound to stay open, just so he could make the feeling last, but he knew it wasn’t possible. Too soon the wound began to close and Sookie released his wrist with a loud ’smacking’ sound. He watched with hooded eyes as Sookie licked her bloody lips, capturing every last drop of his blood. He gritted his teeth and tried to fight the urge to fuck her hard.

It was because you fucked her too hard that you had to heal her.

Standing up, he clicked his neck as he tried to regain his control. He made to take a step back, when he felt Sookie’s small hand on his hips, “Sookie,” he starting seeing the lust filled look on her face.

Sookie refused to listen; she curled her fingers in the waistband of the sleep pants and slid them over his firm ass, leaving them around his thighs.

“Oh, fuck,” he groaned as Sookie took him into her mouth. He wrapped his hand around her hair, pulling it away from her face, and watched as his hard cock slide between her plump lips. He rocked his hips in time as she sucked him off.

Sookie flicked her tongue over the head of his cock, tasting the small beads of cum. She wrapped her hand around the base of his cock and gripped him tight as she sucked him hard. She worked him like a pro, scraping her teeth on the underside of his cock before taking him deep into her mouth; she twisted her wrist on each stroke as she hollowed out her cheeks.

Eric tightened his hand on her hair as he thrust his hips faster, fucking her mouth like he wanted. Groans spilled from him at the sight of his cock disappearing between her lips. He felt his balls tighten as his release neared, but he fought it, wanting to make it last as long as possible.

Sookie smiled around his cock, feeling him trying to hold back, but she wanted no part of that. She wanted him to lose control. She moved her hands behind him and gripped his ass; she scratched her nails over the firm flesh, raising angry red welts. She dipped one finger between his cheeks and circled his puckered hole. She pressed against it hard, and thrust one finger up his ass.

The feeling on her finger slipping into his ass was enough to send Eric over the edge. He came with a roar, spilling his seed into her welcoming mouth. She drank everything he had to offer, before letting him slip from her lips. She smirked up at him, her eyes sparkling with the knowledge that she made him lose control.

Pushing his sleep pants down his legs, Eric kicked them off before reaching for Sookie; he pulled her to her feet before lifting her up, her legs wrapping around him automatically.

“You’re a bad girl,” he growled.

“I’m your bad girl,” she replied as she rocked her hips against him.
“That you are,” Eric agreed as he stalked through the house towards the bathroom. “We should get cleaned up and then talk.”

After getting clean, then dirty again, and then clean again, they finally settled down at the kitchen table to talk.

“So what’s the plan?” Sookie asked, cutting straight to the chase.

“To keep you far away from Sophie-Anne as possible.”

“Not going to argue with that,” Sookie replied, “but how are we gonna do it? Just hide away and hope she loses interest in me? ‘Cause I don’t think that’ll work.”

“No, it won’t,” Eric agreed. “At the moment our biggest threat is Compton. He is the one who has been ordered to procure you. He is the one we need to look out for.”

“About that: are we sure it’s only him?” Sookie asked, remembering her earlier worries. “He’s only a threat at night, and I’m nearly always with you or Pam. Wouldn’t it be easier to send someone during the day when you’re unable to protect me?”

“It would,” Eric admitted, feeling foolish for not considering it himself. “Although it is unlikely at the present moment, it is not out of question. I don’t believe they would try a direct assault just yet, but it is something to consider.”

“So what are we gonna do? I can’t stay locked up all day.”

“No, while it would be safest, it wouldn’t be fair to you. I will hire you a daytime guard.”

“Guard?”

“It is for your own safety Sookie.”

“I know,” Sookie sighed. “Its just, I’m used to it being just us. We’ve had no trouble up until now, it’s just a lot to take.”

“I know, and I am sorry it has to be this way, but I will not negotiate when it comes to protecting you.”

“So, a guard during the day. What about at night, when I can’t be with you or Pam?”

“On the nights neither Pam or myself can be with you, I will have Thalia guard you. You are the only person she likes, and she is more than capable of protecting you.”

“What about Jason?” Sookie asked, recalling her earlier thought.

“You wish for your brother to guard you?” Eric asked, confused. “I know he is loyal and would protect you if he had to, but I doubt he would be much help against the kind of people Sophie-Anne would send.”

“No, I didn’t mean Jason could be my guard,” Sookie said. “I was thinking earlier about how you thought she might use Hadley to get to me. Well, surely she must know if I read Hadley’s mind, I’d know the real reason she was here and less likely to help her, but with Jason…”

“You would be more maneuverable,” Eric finished.

“Jason’s the only brother I got. I’d do practically anything to help him.”
“I will arrange to have guards to watch your brother as well,” Eric said knowing the truth of her words. His wife was a caring woman, often too caring; she would do anything to protect the ones she loved.

“So that just leaves Bill for the time being.”

“Yes. It is safe to say he won’t be bothering us for a few days. It will take time for him to heal from his punishment. It will give us the time we need to plan. I have arranged to have his house bugged. We will know everything he is planning.”

“So basically, we wait and see,” Sookie said.

“Unfortunately, I cannot confront Sophie-Anne without proof. The only proof we have is the word of Compton, and he won’t sell out his Queen knowing he would get into trouble as well, his word is worth nothing. I would be tried with treason and put to final death, leaving you vulnerable.”

“And heart broken,” Sookie added, “depressed, lost, destroyed, suicidal.”

“I have no plans on leaving you, min söta,” Eric assured her. “The only other option would be to attack Sophie-Anne and take the crown. Which would also take time.”

“But you don’t want to be King,” Sookie said.

“I don’t, but I will take the crown if it is the only way to keep you safe,” Eric admitted. “Your safety is my number one priority, but it may not come to that.”

“But you’re planning for it aren’t you?”

“I will not lie to you, it is a possibility,” Eric admitted. “I don’t know what will happen for sure, but I do know I will never let Sophie-Anne get her hands on you. You are mine.”

“If I didn’t know you were mine too, I’d get mighty ticked off at your possessive crap.”

“I am yours.”

“So we wait.”

“We wait. Do not worry, Sookie.”

“I can’t help but worry honey. Our next door neighbor was sent by your boss to procure me.”

“I will not allow any harm to come to you.”

“I’m not just worried about myself, Eric,” Sookie said. “I’m worried about you and Pam, and all the other vampires in your area. You’ve all done so much to protect me, now you’re all in danger because of that. I don’t want anyone to get hurt because of me.”

“The vampires of my area protect you because they like you, because they respect you. You treat them as people, not monsters; you do not fear or hate them. You treat them with kindness. You have never, not once, asked anything of them, and it is for those reasons they have protected you, kept you hidden from those who would seek to use or hurt you. Sophie-Anne is not our Queen by choice, she just happened to be the Monarch of the state we decide to reside in. But they chose you; they choose to stay in my area knowing what it entailed. They chose to honor you as their Mistress. You are not asking them to give something they would not give freely anyway.”

Sookie had tears in her eyes by time he had finished speaking. Pushing her chair back, Sookie stood
up and walked around the table. Sitting down in Eric’s lap she threw her arms around his neck and hugged him tight.

“Do not cry, Lover,” Eric pleaded. “I cannot bear to see you cry.”

“Then you shouldn’t be so sweet,” Sookie sniffed, loosening her hold on his neck she pulled back and stared into his eyes. “How did I get so lucky to find you?”

“If memory serves me correctly, and it does, I believe you crashed into my car,” Eric replied with a smirk.

“Oh, hush,” Sookie said, blushing as she remembered how they met.
The sun was just beginning to set when Sookie returned to her car. She had spent the better part of the day shopping in Shreveport. Normally she would do her shopping closer to home, but her Gran’s birthday was coming up and Sookie wanted to buy her something special. She had been saving up for months in the hope of finding that perfect gift. She knew her Gran would be happy with anything, but Sookie wouldn’t; it was Adele’s 80th birthday and, after taking care of Sookie and Jason for so long, she deserved spoiling.

Sookie and Jason had already convinced Sam Merlotte, the owner of the local bar and the place where Sookie worked, to let them throw a small surprise party there for Adele. Not that it took much convincing; she was very much loved among the residents of Bon Temps, and it was no secret am had a crush on Sookie.

Jason, for once in his life, had decided to be selfless and agreed to cover the majority of the costs for the party. This, luckily for Sookie, meant she had extra money to spend on the present. She had looked in most of the stores in search of the perfect present – without any luck. She had seen a few nice things, but none of them screamed at her to buy them. She was about ready to give up for the day when she realized there was an old bookstore not far from where she was. Remembering Adele’s love of books, Sookie thought she might find the perfect present there. Checking the time, Sookie saw she still had a couple of hours until the stores shut. Ever since vampires came out of the coffin, as the media so wittily put it, stores had been staying open later, taking advantage of the new undead customers.

One short trip to the bookstore later and Sookie was searching through hundreds of books, looking for the perfect gift. She debated getting Adele a book on the Civil War, before her eyes settled on a limited edition of Time Machine. The price was a little on the steep side, higher than she would usually spend on a book – or anything non-essential if she was honest – but she knew her Gran would love it. With her mind set, Sookie carefully picked the book up and took it to the counter; she winced as she handed over the money, but decided that if worst came to worst she could always pick up some extra shifts at Merlotte’s. With her purchase made, Sookie quickly left the store and hurried back to her car.

Sookie was halfway back to Bon Temps, the roads becoming practically deserted the further away from Shreveport she got. Her eyes flickered to the book she had placed on the passenger seat. She could almost picture Gran’s reaction when she unwrapped her present. She smiled slightly before a flash of red caught her eyes as a car came barreling out of nowhere.

A scream tore out of Sookie’s throat as she slammed on the brakes. She lurched forward, her head hitting the steering wheel, before she was jolted back by her seatbelt. She heard the sound of the crash as her car smashed into the front of the other car. She gripped the steering wheel tightly as her vision swam. She could hear the foul-mouth tirade of the other driver as he got out of his car. Sookie slowly blinked, opening her eyes, not even aware she had closed them. Her hands shook as she undid her seatbelt and opened the door.

Sookie slowly climbed out. She placed her hand on the top of it as she got her footing. Her head ached from where she hit it on the steering wheel and she felt tears pool in her eyes as she saw the condition of the front of her car. Apparently, the worst had come to the worst already.

She turned her attention to the driver of the Corvette and felt her breath get stuck in her throat. She had never seen such a handsome man. He was well over six feet tall with long blond hair, the same shade as hers. There was a slight glow to his skin that she couldn’t explain, but then again, she didn’t
really want to. He wore a pair of dark blue jeans that clung to him almost indecently, and a light blue sweater that framed his upper body, giving her a hint of what lay beneath. He was, in a word, gorgeous. The only downside she could see was the scowl etched firmly on his face.

“If you are done eye-fucking me, do you think you can explain why you crashed into my car?” he said harshly.

Sookie’s eyes widened at his harsh words. She swallowed the lump in her throat and glared at him. “Perhaps you would like to explain why you were driving like a maniac?” she countered.

“I was not the one that caused the accident.”

“No, you weren’t,” Sookie admitted. “You were just the one who came out of nowhere, driving way too fast.”

“You are blaming me for this? You crashed into me.”

“No, I’m simply saying you played a role in it. If you hadn’t been driving so recklessly, maybe I would have been able to avoid the collision.”

“Perhaps if you would have been looking where you were going, you would have also been able to avoid crashing into my car.” Seeing her flush, Eric knew he had hit on something and pressed on. “What were you doing that was so important that you couldn’t pay the proper attention to the road, putting on your make-up?”

“How dare you!” Sookie cried indignantly. “Yes, maybe I could have been paying more attention to the road, but maybe if you learnt how to drive properly and what a speed limit is, we wouldn’t be in this mess.”

“This mess, as you so inadequately put it, is your doing,” Eric said. “Don’t try to blame me because you can’t drive properly.”

“I can drive just fine,” Sookie huffed. “You might want to look into taking some lessons though.”

Eric stared at the young woman with surprise; it had been so long since anyone stood his or her ground against him, it was a refreshing change. He was used to getting his own way all the time, he had forgotten how much fun it could be to argue with someone without it turning into a blood bath. In any other situation, he might have let it go, but this brassy blonde had crashed into his prized Corvette, and that he could not forgive.

“I am not the one who needs driving lessons,” he sneered.

Sookie ignored the sneering hunk as she inspected her car. She felt the tears welling in her eyes again as she saw how much damage had been done. It was worse than she originally thought; the front of her car had almost been completely smashed in. She wondered briefly how it was so bad. She was sure her insurance would cover it, but it was still going to be hard for her. It looked like she would need those extra shifts after all.

Moving closer to her, Eric frowned as he saw the tears in her eyes. He couldn’t understand why she would cry over such a scrap of metal. The car was hideous. If anything, she should be thanking him for the accident.

“Why are you crying?” he asked. “I would hazard a guess and say it looks better like this.”

“Are you always this infuriating or are you making a special effort for me?” Sookie snapped.
“Just you,” Eric replied with a smirk.

“Lucky me,” Sookie whispered as a tear trickled down her cheek.

Eric had to hold himself back from reaching out and wiping the tear away. He frowned as he looked at the car again. “It’s just a car,” he said, still unable to understand her reaction. “Just a twisted piece of metal. Your insurance will pay to have it fixed, if that is possible. You do have insurance don’t you?”

“Yes,” Sookie snapped before chastising herself for being rude. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath. “I’m sorry,” she added as she opened her eyes and turned to face him. “I shouldn’t have snapped at you. Yes, I have insurance, and I’m sure they’ll pay out, it’s just that I’m gonna be stuck until they do.” She was unsure why she was telling him all this, but the words were spilling from her mouth before she could stop them. “I suppose we should swap details.”

“Are you asking me for my number?” Eric leered.

“What? No, I meant for our insurance companies,” Sookie said quickly, embarrassment colouring her tone.

“Shame,” Eric purred. Reaching into his pocket, he took out a business card and handed it to her.

Taking the card, Sookie looked over the information on it. She saw it was a business card for a club in Shreveport called Fangtasia. Her eyes widened as she realized what Fangtasia was. “You’re a vampire,” she blurted out before slapping a hand over her mouth in mortification.

“I am,” Eric said chuckling at her reaction. “Does that bother you?”

Sookie shook her head, not trusting herself to speak; she couldn’t believe she had just blurted it out like that. She was so embarrassed. Ever since vampires came out of the coffin the year before, they had intrigued her. The knowledge they were real had her wondering what else was out there. She always wanted to meet one, although they way she had left a lot to be desired. It couldn’t have been worse though; one could have walked into Merlotte’s while she was working. That would have been sad. She knew all about Fangtasia, but she had never been there herself. Merlotte’s cook, Lafayette Reynolds, had visited the club and had been full of tales, but it held no interest to her. She wanted to see a vampire, not a performing seal, which was what she likened it to, due to Lafayette’s descriptions.

“I’m sorry,” Sookie mumbled. “That was rude.”

“I have heard worse,” Eric replied.

“I bet,” Sookie said as she recalled some of the reactions Lafayette had received when he revealed he had been to Fangtasia. Clutching the business card in her hand, Sookie remembered she hadn’t given him her details. “Oh, just let me get a pen and piece of paper and I’ll give you my details.”

Before she had a chance to move, Eric handed her another business card and a pen. “You can write them on the back of that.”

“Okay,” Sookie said as she took the card and pen and hastily scribbled down her details on the back before handing them back to Eric.

“Thank you, Miss Stackhouse,” Eric said as he looked over her details.

Sookie stood awkwardly in the middle of the road. This was the first time she had been in an
accident and she wasn’t sure what she was supposed to do. She eyed her car again. There was no way she would be able to drive it home, so she supposed she should call someone for a tow, but who? Or more importantly, how? She didn’t own a cell phone, she couldn’t afford one.

Eric couldn’t stand seeing her so lost. He found himself wanting to help her. He frowned at the feeling, not used to it. For reasons he couldn’t even explain, he felt drawn to the young woman. He thought he might be going soft in his old age; it was the only explanation. If anyone else had crashed into his car, he would have scared the shit out of them. But he thought there was something different about her. Most people had either one of two reactions to him when they found out he was a vampire: they either ran screaming, terrified he was going to hurt them; or they dropped to their knees and offered him anything he wanted. This woman did neither and he found himself intrigued.

“Do you know someone who can tow your car?” Eric asked.

“No,” Sookie whispered. “I’ve never needed anyone to do it before. I don’t even know who to call.”

“I can arrange to have someone pick it up, if you like.”

“Please, if it’s not too much trouble.”

“It’s no trouble.”

“Thank you,” Sookie said, suddenly feeling like an idiot. Jason had taught her the basics of looking after her car. She knew how to change a tire or the oil, but he usually took care of the rest.

“It is no problem,” Eric assured her, surprised to find he actually meant it.

Sookie listened as Eric arranged to have her car towed and repaired, thinking at least she would know what to do if she had another accident.

“They will be here in about twenty-minutes,” Eric said as he disconnected the call.

“Thank you,” Sookie said again.

“Will you be okay getting home?” Eric asked.

“I think so,” Sookie replied hesitantly. “I can call my brother from the garage. Hopefully he’ll be able to pick me up.”

“Brother? You don’t have a boyfriend who can pick you up?” Eric inquired.

“No, no boyfriend,” Sookie said.

“I find that hard to believe,” Eric said as he let his eyes rake over her. “A beautiful girl like you should have men lined up wanting her.”

“None of the guys where I live are interested in me.”

“Then they are fools,” Eric replied, meaning every word. He couldn’t understand why she hadn’t been snapped up. He thought she was absolutely stunning, with her long blonde hair and blue eyes. Her figure was just how a woman should look, with her ample chest, round hips, firm thighs, and an ass he just wanted to grab. To hear her say her say the men of her town weren’t interested in her just reinforced his belief that the men of today were stupid.

“Maybe, maybe not,” Sookie said with a shrug.
“There is no maybe about it,” Eric replied firmly, making her smile.

The two of them descended into silence as the minutes ticked by, each of them lost in their own thoughts. The sounds of the animal nightlife were the only sounds to be heard.

Sookie let her eyes fall over him again. She couldn’t believe how handsome he really was. He looked like he had just stepped out of the pages of GQ magazine. She couldn’t hold back the blush as she pictured him in various poses.

She had never had this kind of a reaction to a man before; sure, she had been attracted to other men before, but not to the point of wanting to be around them; that probably had something to do with her little quirk. Nothing turned her off quicker then hearing all their nasty thoughts. She’d lost count of how many times she heard them say one thing, and heard them thinking something completely different. She knew most people were like that to some degree, herself included, but none of the others heard it like she did. They didn’t have to hear someone tell them how pretty they looked but thought their ass was too big, or hide their disgust as they heard their married Reverend fantasize about bending them over the pulpit and fucking them hard from behind.

But Sookie couldn’t help but feel drawn to the strange vampire. Despite his earlier rude behavior, she found herself relaxing in his presence, which probably wasn’t the greatest idea, seeing how he was just that – a stranger. All she knew was his name, where he worked, and he was a vampire. He could be a serial killer for all she knew. Sookie snorted at that thought; if you believed the lore, all vampires were serial killers. As she let her eyes fall over him one more time, she asked herself if she wanted to know. Well, ideally, yes: she would want to know if she was alone with a serial killer; but at the same time she thought no, if he was planning her death she wasn’t sure she wanted to see it, because she doubted it would be pretty.

Sookie chided herself, unable to believe she was debating whether the handsome vampire was actually a serial killer. She wondered briefly if she was judging him because he was a vampire, but quickly dismissed that idea. She would be just as cautious with a regular man. Deciding she had to know, she let her flimsy shields drop, her eyes widening when she heard nothing.

“I can’t hear you,” she blurted out unthinkingly as a small smile spread across her face.

“I didn’t say anything,” Eric said, looking at her strangely.

“Oh, sorry,” Sookie stumbled. “I thought you did.”

Eric regarded her carefully. He knew a lie when he heard one, and he was sure she had just lied to him, but he decided to let it go. He wasn’t sure what to make of the blonde-haired beauty; she didn’t seem to have any sense of self-preservation. She stood on a deserted street with a known vampire and she wasn’t the least bit scared. The fangbangers that flocked to his club, in hope he would pick them for a night, always had a healthy dose of fear him of him. Even when he was buried ball-deep in, them he could still smell their fear, but this little woman showed none. Even before she knew he was a vampire, she had argued and stood her ground against him despite the fact he could have broken her in two.

Truth be told, if anyone else crashed into his car he probably would have snapped them in two, or at least scared them so much they would have soiled themselves. But she had managed to diminish his anger without him even realizing she had done it. Pam would rip the shit out of him if she could see him now; instead of yelling and scaring her, he had actually helped her out.

When did I turn into such a pussy?
Eric was pulled from his musings by the sound of the tow truck arriving. He watched with disinterest as a man climbed out the truck and ambled over. He didn’t miss the lascivious look he gave Sookie or her answering shudder. Straightening his shoulders, Eric glared at the man as he drew nearer, not liking one bit how he was staring at Sookie.

“Evening, little lady,” the man greeted, ignoring Eric. “What have you done here?”

“She crashed her car,” Eric snapped.

“I see that. How did you do that?”

“It doesn’t matter how she did it,” Eric answered before Sookie had a chance. “I called you here to tow the car to your garage and fix it. Do you think you capable of doing that?”

“I’m a qualified mechanic,” he huffed.

“Good. Then do it,” Eric ordered.

Sookie was confused as she watched them. It seemed asshole Eric had made a reappearance, although she wasn’t sure why. Curtis, as his nametag read, hadn’t crashed into his car and as far as she knew Eric, couldn’t read his mind; it might have explained it if he could. Sookie had been trying to block him out from the second he climbed out of his truck.

“Will you be needing a lift into Shreveport, little lady?” Curtis asked, licking his lips as he eye-fucked Sookie.

Sookie felt the bottom drop out of her stomach when she realized she would be needing a lift. She grimaced as she got a flash of what he was thinking invaded her mind. She felt bile rise up in her throat as she saw him picturing her sucking him off as he drove down the street. She opened her mouth to speak when Eric cut her off.

“No, she won’t,” he said firmly.

“Mr. Northman,” Sookie said hesitantly, not wanting asshole Eric to turn on her.

“Please call me Eric,” he said as he turned to face her, his features softening slightly. “I will be more than happy to see you home safely.”

“You don’t have to do that,” she said, even though she wanted him to.

“It is the least I can do,” Eric said. “After all, it was my reckless driving that caused this.”

“I’m sorry I said that,” Sookie said blushing. “I am as just as much to blame. But I don’t want you having to go out of your way. I can just as easily call my brother to fetch me.”

“Nonsense, it is no bother,” Eric said, strangely finding he meant it.

“If you’re sure?”

“I am.”

“Okay, thank you,” Sookie said, letting out a breath she didn’t know she was holding in. “Let me just grab my stuff from my car. Oh, wait, what about your car? Doesn’t it need towing as well?”

“No, I will drive my car to the garage myself,” Eric said. “It is fine to drive at the moment; the damage wasn’t as bad as yours.”
“Okay.”

“While you get your belongings, I will deal with the mechanic,” Eric said.

“Sure,” Sookie said. She wondered why she was allowing him to handle everything like she was. Normally she would have balked at someone doing everything for her, but she couldn’t find it in herself to argue with him about it. Grabbing her purse and Adele’s birthday present, she walked the few steps to Eric’s car and waited by the passenger side. She watched as Eric dealt with the mechanic. A frown marred her features as she felt Curtis mind glaze over; it was as though his thoughts just stopped. She wondered about it for a few seconds before shaking it off, as she saw Eric walking towards her.

Sookie was pleasantly surprised when Eric opened the car door for her and waited for her to climb in. She thanked him as she settled in the passenger seat, missing the smirk on his face. The low car combined with the sundress she was wearing gave Eric the perfect view of her panties.

Pale yellow, he thought, grinning as he sped around to the driver’s side. He adjusted himself before climbing in behind the wheel and gunning the engine.

“Where am I taking you, Miss Stackhouse?” Eric asked hoping she would say “anywhere you like.”

“Bon Temps?” Sookie replied questioningly, half-expecting him to change his mind.

Turning the car around, Eric headed in the direction of Bon Temps. His eyes flickered over the bag on her knee. He recognized the name of the bookstore, having purchased many books from there himself.

“What book did you buy, Miss Stackhouse?” he asked.

“Oh, Time Machine,” she replied, “and call me Sookie.”

“A fine book, and one of my favorites,” Eric said, surprised at her choice. “Have you read it before?”

“Yes,” Sookie answered. “But it’s not for me.”

“Who is it for then?”

“My Gran,” Sookie replied. “It’s her birthday on Tuesday. She’s turning eighty and I wanted to buy her something special. She’s always loved this book and I found this one at that bookstore. It’s a limited edition print and I wanted her to have it, ’cause she deserves it.”

Eric smiled as he listened to her ramble; from the way she spoke of her Gran, he could tell she meant a lot to her. “You are close to your Grandmother?” he asked as he slowed down slightly. He found himself wanting to spend more time in her presence and his usual maniac driving would only mean less.

“Yes, Gran’s my best friend,” Sookie said. “She raised me and my brother; always looked out for us and never complained.”

“What about your parents?”

“They died when I was seven.”

“I am sorry.”

“It’s okay,” Sookie said, “I don’t really remember them, and Gran was great. She was like two
parents rolled into one.”

“She sounds like a remarkable woman.”

“She is. What about you, do you have a family?” seeing the look of pain sweep across his face, “I’m sorry, that was rude,” she added hastily.

“No, it is okay,” Eric said seeking to reassure her. “It has just been a long time since anyone has asked me that question. I have not thought about them in a long time.”

“I’m sorry,” Sookie repeated. “I didn’t mean to pry. It’s none of my business.”

“I assure you, Sookie, it is okay,” Eric said. “My human family has been gone a long time.”

“How long?” she asked curiously. “How old are you?” she slapped a hand over her mouth as the words tumbled out. “Oh God, I’m sorry. I can’t believe I asked you that. It was so rude.”

“I don’t mind,” Eric said, chuckling. “And to answer your question, I am over a thousand years old.”

“Oh wow, that’s… that’s old,” Sookie stuttered. “I keep saying the wrong thing. I’m sorry.”

“Not at all,” Eric said. “I find it a refreshing change from the things I normally get asked.”

“Why, what do you normally get asked?”

“The usual questions vary from how long are your fangs to do you sleep in a coffin,” Eric said, leaving out some of the more obscene questions he was asked. Something told him she wouldn’t want to know he often got asked if dropping fangs got him hard.

“Seriously? That’s stupid,” Sookie scoffed. “Why would anyone ask those dumb questions? Vampires are like walking encyclopedias of history. I’d much rather know where you were and what you were doing during some of our greatest history than whether or not you sleep in a coffin.”

“You are in the minority,” Eric said, surprised at what she wanted to know. Since vampires had revealed themselves, they had gotten used to the dumber questions people asked. Pam had started to make a game out of it; all the vampires at Fangtasia would place a bet on which question would be asked most in one week and the winner would get the first pick of any fangbanger at Fangtasia. Pam had forbidden Eric from entering, claiming he had the first choice every other night.

“Then maybe you’re hanging out with the wrong people,” Sookie said cheekily.

“You may be right.”

“Do you like being a vampire?” Sookie asked suddenly.

“Why do you ask?”

“Just curious,” Sookie replied with a shrug. “You’re the first vampire I’ve ever met. I just wondered if you liked it.”

“I do,” Eric admitted.

“Do you ever miss being human? Being alive?”

“No,” Eric answered immediately, not even having to think about it. “Not anymore.”
“But you did once?”

“I did in the beginning. It took me a while to adapt but once I did, I never looked back. I was born for this life,” Eric said. He wasn’t sure why he was telling her this. He rarely confided in anyone and if he did, it was never about his past, or his human past. Not even Pam knew about his first days as a vampire, but here he was telling this virtual stranger how he once missed being human.

He let his eyes flicker over her again. What was it about her that made him open up? Was she some kind of witch? Had she bewitched him? He didn’t think so; he didn’t smell or sense any magic on or around her. Her scent was sweeter than most, but that didn’t mean anything. He was sure there was nothing Supernatural about her that made him open up, it was just her being her.

“I’m sorry,” Sookie repeated for who knows how many times that evening, sensing she had made him uncomfortable. “I’m just being nosy; just tell me to shut up.”

“Sookie,” Eric said, trying to interrupt her rambling.

“I’m sorry,” she said again.

“Stop apologizing,” Eric snapped.

“Did you just tell me to stop apologizing?” Sookie asked, disbelief colouring her tone. “You can’t tell someone to stop apologizing.”

“I just did.”

“Well, you can’t,” Sookie spluttered. “It’s rude. If I want to apologize, I will.”

“Damn infuriating women,” Eric growled, unable to believe they were arguing over the right to say sorry.

“I am not,” Sookie huffed.

“You most certainly are.”

“Listen, buster…”

“Buster,” Eric repeated, nonplussed. “In my thousand years I have never been called buster.”

“Yeah, well, I have a few more names you’ve probably never been called as well.” Seeing the dumbfounded look on his face, Sookie couldn’t help but laugh. Her laughter set off Eric and soon the two of them were laughing like crazy.

“If I say sorry again, will you snap at me?” Sookie asked as she wiped away a tear.

“No, this time I will allow it,” Eric said, “but it will be the last time.”

“Okay, I’m sorry I called you buster,” Sookie said, giggling.

“You are a strange woman, Sookie Stackhouse,” Eric mused.

“How so?”

“Most women in your situation would be cautious, if not fearful,” Eric said. “Knowing I’m a vampire, they wouldn’t talk back or tease me.”
“Do you want me to be scared of you?”

“No,” Eric answered truthfully. He didn’t even have to think about it. The thought of her being scared of him made his stomach twist almost painfully. He found he liked her fire and didn’t ever want to see her cower before him.

“So what’s the problem?”

“There is no problem, I just find it strange,” Eric said. “I am, for all intents and purposes, a total stranger and yet you still climbed into this car without a second thought. You have no sense of self-preservation. I am much stronger than you; I could kill you in an instant.”

“So could a bus, but I’m not afraid of those either,” Sookie said with a shrug.

“It is not the same and you know it,” Eric growled, not liking her blasé attitude.

“Yeah I do,” Sookie replied, turning in her seat slightly. “My point is, there are a lot of things out there that could kill me, even regular humans, but I can’t go around fearing everyone and everything. If I did that, I’d probably go crazy. I know there are dangers out there, Eric, I’m not stupid, despite what my climbing in this car says. Besides, I knew you wouldn’t hurt me.”

“How can you be so sure?”

“Cause I trust you.”

“How can you trust me?” Eric asked. “You don’t even know me.”

“I just do. Are you gonna hurt me?”

“No.”

“See, I told you,” Sookie said smugly.

Eric couldn’t believe what he was hearing; no one had ever trusted him as easily as she did. Sure, Pam trusted him, but that was due to years of companionship and the bond they shared. His area vampires trusted him, but again that was down to years of service; he had kept them safe. No one had ever trusted him so freely without wanting anything in return. This little slip of a woman had offered him her trust without reservation. In that moment he swore he would honor the trust she placed in him. He would make sure she never regretted it, not realizing he was planning on keeping her in his life.

“You are a strange creature, Sookie.”

“You wouldn’t be the first person to tell me that,” Sookie said with a snort. Looking out the window Sookie was surprised to see they were in Bon Temps. The journey had flown by. “If you take the next right, you’ll be on Hummingbird Lane.”

Doing as she said, Eric turned onto Hummingbird Lane. “Maybe I should have been more worried about myself,” he said, seeing nothing but trees. “Have you lured me here to do me in?”

“Dagnabbit, you got me,” Sookie said as she slapped her knee and let out an exaggerated sigh. “You’ve learned my secret: I’m Sookie the Vampire Slayer.”

Eric let out a booming laugh, startling Sookie. “If I promise to be good will you let me go?”

“Only if you mean it.”
“I do, I swear,” Eric said solemnly.

“Okay, I’m just a big softie at heart,” Sookie said, letting out a dramatic sigh.

“You are too kind.”

“And don’t you forget it,” Sookie said, wagging her finger at him in a playful manner. “I would hate to have to chase you down.”

“Then I might have to be bad after all,” Eric leered, “if it means you will chase me down.”

Sookie ducked her head as a blush spread over her cheeks. She wished she had the courage to flirt back, but she felt so far out of her league. There was something very different about Eric Northman, and she didn’t just mean that he was a vampire. He oozed sex appeal and it made her nervous.

“There’s a turn off coming up, on the right,” she said.

Following her directions again, Eric took the next right. He grimaced as he drove up the driveway and he heard small rocks hitting the underside of his car. As they reached the house, it became clear the old farmhouse had seen better days. The paint was peeling and the porch needed fixing, and that was just what he could see from the car. He wasn’t sure why, but he didn’t like the idea of Sookie living in such a rundown house. Pulling up outside the house, Eric turned the engine off and waited.

“Thank you for the ride,” Sookie said.

“It was my pleasure,” Eric replied, briefly thinking about the ride he would have liked to give her. As he chased the crude thought away, he found he meant what he said. He had had more fun in the short time he spent with her than he had in the last month with the fangbangers of Fangtasia, even if they did spend part of it arguing. Climbing out the car, Eric sped around the car before Sookie even realized he had moved. Opening her door, he offered her his hand.

Taking his outstretched hand, Sookie climbed out of the car as gracefully as she could, remembering to pick up her purse and book. She was surprised when he didn’t let go of her hand as he walked the few short steps to the front door.

“It has been an interesting night,” Eric said. “I would like to see you again, if that is okay with you?”

Sookie couldn’t believe what she was hearing. Was he asking her out? She thought about it for all of two seconds. “I would like that,” she readily agreed.

“When are you free?” Eric asked.

“I’m working tomorrow, but I’m free on Sunday.”

“Sunday will be fine,” Eric said. “Where do you work?”

“Merlotte’s Bar and Grill,” Sookie answered.

Recognizing the name due to the owner, Eric wondered what Sookie would think if she knew just what Sam Merlotte was, but said nothing. “I will pick you up at eight o’clock.”

“Okay. Wait, where are we going?”

“That is a surprise.”

“Well, how will I know what to wear?”
“Anything you wear will be fine,” Eric said, “but if you must know, something similar to what you are wearing now would be fine.”

“You’re really not going to tell me we’re going?”

“No,” Eric said with a smirk. Lifting her hand, Eric brought it to his lips and placed a soft, sweet kiss on the back of it. His eyes flashed with hunger. “Until Sunday, Miss Stackhouse.”

Sookie watched in a daze as Eric strolled back to his car. She rested her head against the wooden support column on the porch as he climbed in behind the steering wheel and drove away. A smile spread across her face as she thought about her upcoming date. Spinning on her heels, she skipped into the house and searched out her Gran. She couldn’t wait to tell her about her encounter and the date she had coming up with her vampire.
Bill’s body screamed in pain as he was dumped unceremoniously on the front porch of his Bon Temps home. The sound of Pam’s mad cackling laughter grated on his nerves as he listened to her jump in her car and speed away. Dragging himself to his feet, Bill stumbled into the house, each step more painful than the one before. He groaned in agony as he shuffled into the living room. He eyed the sofa with trepidation, both longing to lay his tortured body down and fearful of how it would agitate his still raw wounds.

There wasn’t a part of his body that hadn’t been brutalized by the pair of sadistic bitches: Pam and Thalia. The slightest touch caused crippling pain to sweep through him, rendering him practically helpless. Pam and Thalia worked on him until moments before sunrise, tearing, whipping, shredding, and gouging his flesh. They only stopped long enough to fuck each other in front of him, before continuing with his punishment. By the time the sun had rose, the three of them had been covered in his blood, but unlike Pam and Thalia, he hadn’t been able to wash it off.

Dragging himself over to the sofa, Bill winced as he lowered himself slowly onto it. He hissed in discomfort as the rough fabric pressed against his raw wounds. Bill cursed Eric, Pam, and Thalia for their treatment of him; in his mind he hadn’t done anything wrong. They had no reason to treat him in such a deplorable way, just because he spied on Northman fucking his wife. The Queen hadn’t ever minded when he watched; in fact she actively encouraged it. Sophie-Anne often held parties where voyeurism was the main attraction; she loved to be watched, and she certainly loved watching others fuck. One of Sophie-Anne’s favorite things to do was tie Hadley to a bed and watch while her chosen vampires fucked her. As far as Bill was concerned, he had been following Sophie-Anne’s rule when he sat in the tree outside Northman and Sookie’s house and watched them fuck; he shouldn’t have been punished for it.

Bill was tempted to inform Sophie-Anne of what Eric had done to him. He was sure she would punish Eric for it; Bill was after all, one of her most faithful servants. She might even let Bill take part in the torture himself. A cruel smile spread across Bill’s face as he thought of all the things he would do to Eric. He would make him beg and plead before Bill was through with him. Bill would chain Eric in silver and make him watch while he fucked Sookie. He would take her in everyway imaginable. He would turn her into a whore. He would fill her with his seed and cover her with his scent. Bill would make Eric suffer. The only thing stopping him from telling the Queen was that he couldn’t be sure he would come out of it unscathed himself. If Sophie-Anne thought for one minute he had compromised his mission to procure the telepath with his voyeuristic tendencies, she wouldn’t hesitate to punish him herself. It didn’t help that Bill couldn’t remember if he had compromised the mission. He only had minimal recollection of what he had said. The pain that they had inflicted on him had been worse than anything he had experienced before, and he wasn’t sure what he had told them. He couldn’t risk Sophie-Anne finding out if he had told them anything. He thought he was safe as, relatively speaking, he was still in one-piece. He was sure if Eric knew he was there to procure his wife that he wouldn’t have made it out of that basement; he would have met the true death.

Letting out an unneeded breath, Bill groaned at the trouble he found himself in. He was quite literally stuck between a rock and a hard place; if he failed in his mission to procure the telepath, Sophie-Anne would undoubtedly have his head, and if he succeeded, Northman would. His only hope was that Sophie-Anne would protect him from any retribution Eric would try to rein down on him. He knew he would have no protection against Sophie-Anne. No, Bill realized, if he was going to walk away from this at all, he would have to deliver Sookie to the Queen. He just wasn’t sure how.
“I hope you’re not decent,” Pam called out as she strode through the front door. Pausing in the living room, she took a deep breath, scenting the air. “ Seems I’m too late,” she pouted as she continued into the kitchen where she found Sookie still perched on Eric’s lap at the table. “I hope I’m not interrupting anything.”

Lifting her head of Eric shoulder, Sookie stared at Pam. “You need to learn how to knock.”

“Now why would I want to do that?” Pam asked, grinning as she sat down opposite them.

“Because if you don’t, you’ll soon find your invitation rescinded,” Sookie retorted.

“A vampire lives here,” Pam replied waving off Sookie’s threat. “I don’t need an invitation.”

“The house is in my name,” Sookie countered. “You do. I mean it Pam, start knocking before you enter my home.”

A small smile spread across Eric’s face as he watched his wife lay down the law to his child. It wasn’t the first time the two of them had butted heads; in fact at the start of his relationship with Sookie it was a regular occurrence. Pam pushed the boundaries many times with her willful and often spoilt behavior, challenging Sookie and her position, and as the fiery southern belle she was, Sookie always pushed back. She stood her ground and refused to back down. Each time Eric had seen her standing toe-to-toe with Pam, a vampire much older and stronger than her, he had fallen a little more in love with her, until the very thought of her had consumed him. He gave her his heart completely and had taken hers in return. Often in the beginning, Eric had stepped in when needed and put Pam in her place, but he soon realized by doing so he was doing Sookie a disservice. He needed to let Sookie assert her own authority. She wasn’t his pet, and she never had been. She had been his companion, then his bonded, before finally becoming his wife and pledged. Sookie was Pam’s and the vampires of his area’s Mistress. Pam soon realized Sookie wasn’t a passing fancy, as she had put it, and accepted her. The two of them had developed a strong friendship, and Eric knew his child loved Sookie and would do anything for her without having to be ordered, but that didn’t mean she still didn’t push her boundaries at times . . . like now.

Pam knew better than to just barge into their house like she did. While in the past Eric hadn’t cared whether Pam entered his house uninvited, things were different now; he was married for one, to a woman he loved more than anything. Pam’s behavior was, he didn’t want to say disrespectful, but it was bordering on the edge of it. Eric was well aware what Pam was doing; she still held onto the hope that Eric would one-day share Sookie with her, something that would never happen. Sookie was his and his alone, just like he was hers. Pam was hoping she would one-night walk in on them fucking and be asked to join them. In a way Eric couldn’t blame her; in the past, before he met Sookie, Pam had walked in on him fucking countless women, and he had invited her to join him. As long as the women were willing, Eric hadn’t cared whether Pam joined them or not. If he was honest, he had to admit he spent many enjoyable nights watching various women fuck his child before he fucked them. He and Pam hadn’t had sex in close to ninety-years, but that didn’t mean they hadn’t enjoyed others together. He used to love watching nameless women eat Pam out while he fucked them from behind, but it was different with Sookie. He would never consent to another touching her, not even his child. The thought of anyone, even Pam, touching her caused rage to build within him.

As he stared at his child, Eric had to wonder at her temerity. Just last night he punished someone for spying on him and Sookie as they made love, and Pam was aware of this. She had been the one to dish out the punishment, and yet one night later she was hoping to walk in on the same thing. If she thought she was beyond punishment she would soon learn she was wrong.
“Eric,” Pam huffed, “tell your wife I’m allowed to enter your house whenever I want.”

“Pam, stop being a brat and do as your Mistress says,” Eric replied firmly staring Pam down as he made his position clear. He was firmly in Sookie’s corner.

“But Eric…” Pam whined.

“Enough,” Eric growled in no mood for any of Pam’s childishness. The Queen was conspiring to take his love away; it wasn’t the time for Pam to start acting like a brat. “Sookie has told you more than once to knock before entering our home, and you continue to ignore her. So now I am telling you. Disobey me and I will command you. Do you understand?”

“Yes,” Pam replied sullenly, lowering her gaze as she realized she had pushed Eric too far. She knew Eric would never share Sookie with her; he made that clear in the beginning when she had asked, but she continued to push it. She enjoyed teasing them both, but as she thought about it she realized it was the wrong time. They were both on edge due to Compton and the Queen, and the last thing they needed was her adding to it. Lifting her head, Pam met Eric’s gaze. “Compton is back at his house,” she reported making amends. “Lisa did as requested and the place is under surveillance. We will know everything he says and does. We will be prepared for anything he tries.”

“Good,” Eric replied slipping into Sheriff mode. “I want someone monitoring the feed constantly,” he ordered. “I want to know when he feeds, when he rests, even when he blinks. I will have my spy in Sophie-Anne’s court keep a closer eye on her. At the moment I am sure she is confident that Compton will be able to accomplish his mission, but as has shown in the past she is ruthless when it comes to getting what she wants. She…”

“She’s a spoilt brat who thinks the world revolves around her,” Pam interrupted.

“True,” Eric admitted. “She is petty and childish, but she is also ruthless and clever.”

“You’re twice the vampire she is,” Pam replied dismissively. “You could have had her head and throne years ago if you wanted.”

“Do not underestimate her, Pam,” Eric warned. “She has held the crown of Louisiana for nearly two-hundred years now, and despite what you are about to claim,” he hastened to add when he saw Pam open her mouth to speak, “it is not entirely down to me. Sophie-Anne ruled Louisiana for over a hundred years before I took on the role of Sheriff. I merely strengthen her Queendom. Louisiana was already strong.”

“I still say you could take her head,” Pam replied.

“I am not saying I couldn’t,” Eric conceded, “but I won’t do anything without checking all my options first. If I have to, I will kill her. I will burn her Queendom to the ground, but I will not attack a Queen without provocation or proof of her crimes. If I did, I would be brought before the council before I could blink and be charged with treason. When the time is right I will deal with Sophie-Anne. She will not come between me and Sookie, that I swear.”

“So you’re going to do nothing,” Pam said in disbelief. “You’re going to sit back and let her plot to take your bonded from you.”

Eric glared at Pam, not appreciating her questioning, “I am going to plan for every contingency; if and when Sophie-Anne attacks, I will be ready for her. But I will not do as you seem to be suggesting and act rashly and without plan.”

“I’m not suggesting you act rashly,” Pam defended. “I’m merely suggesting you should…”
“Take out Sophie-Anne without any concrete proof that she has done wrong,” Eric cut her off forcibly. He knew Pam was only trying to help; her undying faith that he could do anything he wanted was, while appreciated, short sighted. Despite the many times he had told he wasn’t, Pam still believed Eric was above and better than the law. As much as Eric would have loved to just kill Sophie-Anne, he knew it wasn’t feasible. Without provocation, a direct attack, or council backing, Eric couldn’t just kill Sophie-Anne. He had sworn fealty to her; his sword was hers, and he was duty-bound to protect her. It would have been different if he belonged to another state; he could have staged a takeover and no one could have said a thing, but as one of her Sheriff’s that road wasn’t open to him yet. The rules were very different for him as a Sheriff, something he currently loathed.

“Sophie-Anne will not get near Sookie, that I promise,” Eric swore. “Sookie will be guarded around the clock. Either myself, you, or Thalia will guard her at night, and I am arranging for Were to guard her during the day. I will also be having Jason guarded. As Sookie theorized, Sophie-Anne might target him to force her to whatever the Queen wants. I am not sitting back and doing nothing, Pam. I am protecting my family. Now shall we go to Fangtasia like planned, or would you like to question me some more?”

Sensing she had pushed him too far for one night, Pam wisely remained quiet as she watched Sookie climb off Eric’s lap. She smiled slightly as she saw how a single touch from Sookie could soothe Eric’s agitated state. Pam hadn’t always approved of their relationship, believing in the beginning it was wrong for a vampire to become so attached to a human. For the first few months of their courtship, Pam had resented Sookie and the hold she had over Eric, believing Sookie to be beneath her maker, but was woman enough to admit that her initial resentment was due to jealousy and nothing more. She had been used to having all of Eric’s affection and attention, and she didn’t want to share him. It had only taken her a couple of months to realize and admit she was wrong. Once she had gotten over her jealousy, she had come to love Sookie herself. She had began to see what her Maker saw in the small blonde, and gave Sookie her friendship and loyalty without being asked to by Eric. As she watched the two of them flitter around the kitchen, Pam was glad Eric had found the telepath. Sookie had given Eric a new lease of life; it was clear to anyone who saw them they were in love. Pam had been fearful some of the vampires in the area would try to use Sookie against Eric, but instead she had been surprised when they had practically adopted her as one of their own. Sookie had treated the vampires with respect and courtesy, and in return they had done the same.

A true testimony to how loyal the vampires of area five were to Eric and Sookie was the fact that none of them had spoken about their marriage or Sookie’s gift. They had all kept it a secret for two years. The vampires of the area knew of their marriage, many of them were present at the ceremony, but none of them had reported it to the Queen. Although, Pam believed part of that was due to fear, fear of what would happen to them if they did, and it wasn’t just fear of Eric. No, most of them feared what Thalia would do to them. The angry, ancient vampire had been one of the first vampires Sookie had befriended. The vampire who hated everyone, loved Sookie.

No, Pam thought as she watched Eric wrap his arms around Sookie from behind. That bitch won’t be getting anywhere near Sookie; like my Maker I will protect my family.
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Warning: This chapter contains a rape like situation. Rape by glamour. It is nothing overly explicit, but the warning is still there.

Bill groaned as he heard someone knocking on his front door. A quick look at the antique clock on his mantel told him it was too early for Selah; she wasn’t due for another half-hour. Bill rested his head against the back of the sofa. He was in no condition to answer the door, and his body still burning with pain. He let out a pitiful whimper as he heard the door open; the last thing he wanted was company.

“Well what do we have here,” a familiar voice called out. “Have you been a naughty boy, Bill?”

“Diane,” Bill groaned as he watched his former nest mates enter the house. “What are you doing here?”

“We heard you were in the area and thought we’d drop by and welcome you,” Malcolm said as he flicked his eyes over Bill, “but it looks like someone has given you a much more personal greeting.”

“This was all just a misunderstanding,” Bill gritted out.

“Uh huh, it looks like you pissed off the Sheriff,” Diane remarked. “Everyone here knows this,” she ran her finger over one of the many marks littering Bill’s chest, smirking at the hiss of pain he gave, “is the signature mark of his child. That bitch just loves to paint. So what did you do to piss off the Sheriff?”

“Nothing, he simply overreacted,” Bill replied.

“Northman doesn’t overreact,” Malcolm said. “We hate the bastard and his bitch child, but even we know he’s a fair Sheriff. If he did this, it’s because you broke one of his rules.”

“I was unaware that certain practices are not allowed here,” Bill said choosing his words carefully. “The rules of Area Five are very different than the rules at court.”

“Practices?” Malcolm questioned.

“The Queen is a fan of voyeurism, something it seems the Sheriff isn’t,” Bill explained.

“Voyeurism,” Diane repeated shaking her head as what Bill meant hit her. “You spied on Northman and his wife. How fucking stupid are you?”

“You know about Sookie?” Bill said ignoring her question/insult.

“Everyone knows of that little ball of sunshine,” Malcolm leered.

“And we all know not to fuck with her,” Diane added. “Last person who tried…well the vampire before you lived long enough to regret it.”
“Northman killed a vampire because of a human?” Bill asked, his lips curling into a small smile. If Eric killed a vampire for Sookie, a human, Bill could have him brought before the Queen. Killing a vampire was always a serious thing, and killing one for a human was a punishable offense. He could have Eric punished and take Sookie from him in one swoop.

“No, Northman killed the vampire because he was stealing from him,” Diane explained. “He just made him sorry for touching Sookie first.”

“How is it you know so much about this? About Sookie?” Bill asked deflating.

“Every vampire in the Area knows about her,” Diane answered with a shrug. “A vampire as old and with the reputation of Northman’s marries a human and vampires talk.”

“No one outside of Area Five seems to know,” Bill said confused. News of Eric and Sookie’s marriage seemed to be common knowledge among the vampires of Area Five. He didn’t understand how the no one at court had heard about it.

“We don’t discuss it with outsiders,” Malcolm sneered.

“I am an outsider? The Queen is an outsider?” Bill snarled his fangs snapping down.

“Oh baby put them away before you get hurt,” Diane said dismissively. “You’ve been at court too long, Bill. You’ve gone soft and forgotten how things work in the real world. That uppity bitch you call your majesty doesn’t run shit round here; Northman does. The vampires don’t talk about his blood bag out of respect and loyalty to Northman. We,” she moved her finger in a circle indicating herself, Malcolm, and Liam, “don’t say shit cause we know what’ll happen if we do.”

“The Queen would have protected you,” Bill said, “if you were loyal to her.”

“That bitch would sell out her own child if she had to. And she sure as hell ain’t a match for Northman,” Diane scoffed. “It ain’t got nothing to do with loyalty; it’s about survival. Betray Northman you die. It’s as simple as that.”

“Why are you so curious about Northman’s wife?” Malcolm asked.

“I’m not, I just find it curious that he would marry a human,” Bill said. “Northman isn’t the kind of I would expect to marry. His reputation precedes him whether ever he goes. He’s not the settling kind.”

“Whatever you’re planning, don’t,” Diane replied seeing Bill’s words for what they were.

“I’m not planning anything,” Bill lied.

“Sure, you’re just curious,” Diane replied. “Just remember, curiosity killed the cat. Don’t do anything foolish, Bill. You won’t survive if you do.”

Bill stared at Diane, and her warning ringing in his ears. He knew she was right, but he was too far involved to back out now. His simple mission had turned into a nightmare, and it was one he wasn’t sure he would wake-up from. He needed to make plans – solid plans to procure Sookie for Sophie-Anne. Anything less than completing his goal would mean almost certain final death. He considered briefly confiding in Malcolm, Liam, and Diane to seek their help, but quickly dismissed that idea. Those three were only loyal to themselves and couldn’t be trusted. They would sell him out at the first sign of danger.

No, Bill realized. He would have to do this on his own. But how? How was he going to get Sookie
away from Eric? Her husband and his Sheriff. First thing he would have to do was heal. He was in no condition to do anything at the moment. Luckily, Selah could help with that. He could feed on her; he would glamour her into bringing some of her friends around for him to feed on as well. The more fresh blood he got, the quicker he would heal.

Bill’s lips curled into a small smile as a thought popped into his head. Blood. Or more specifically, vampire blood.

*If I can get my blood into Sookie, I might be able to drive a wedge between her and Eric. But how? She’s not just going to take it, and Eric wouldn’t allow her to. I’m going to have to get her in a situation where she can’t refuse and make sure Eric’s not around to stop me. Maybe Sophie-Anne can help me with getting Eric out of the way.*

With a rough plan in mind, Bill turned his attention back to his guests. “I don’t intend to do anything stupid,” he said. “I was simply curious as to why Eric is so protective of her. Although now that I’m aware of the lengths he will go to protect her, I shall endeavor to stay away.”

Any reply any of them might have had was cut off by a knock on the front door. Raising an eyebrow, Diane smirked at Bill, “Expecting company?” she asked as she crossed the room and headed towards the front door. “What do we have here?” Bill heard her croon; he grimaced as he heard Selah’s soft voice asking about him.

He masked his face as he watched Diane lead Selah into the living room. He could smell the slight fear wafting off Selah and he knew the others could as well, and like him, they were enjoying it too.

“A friend of yours, Bill?” Malcolm asked, eyeing Selah hungrily.

“She is my companion,” Bill replied choosing his words carefully, still hoping to be able to use Selah as part of his mainstreaming cover. “I’m afraid now is not a good time, Selah,” he added hoping to get her to leave. “I’m unable to honor our plans for this evening. We will have to reschedule.”

“Of course, Bill,” Selah said her voice breaking slightly as she flicked her eyes over the other three. “We can easily rearrange our plans. I can see you’re busy, so I’ll come back another time.”

Selah barely took two steps towards the door before Diane blocked her path, preventing her from leaving. “Not so fast sugar,” Diane drawled. “We haven’t been properly introduced.”

“Diane, let her go,” Bill ordered with no real force behind his words.

“I don’t think so,” Diane replied with a smirk. “She looks so fresh, and you used to love sharing your toys.”

“She’s not a fangbanger,” Bill argued weakly.

“They’re all fangbangers,” Diane scoffed. “This bitch is just like the rest, and I want a taste.”

“Me too,” Liam added as he rubbed a hand over the front of his jeans.

Bill eyed them all carefully. He was in no condition to fight any of them, and even if he was he wouldn’t, not for a human anyway. He could deny them, but they would take her anyway he realized. He flicked his eyes to Selah and smiled slightly as he saw the fear in her eyes. Fear was always such a turn on. She knew what they wanted to do to her and was rightfully scared.

*I really don’t need this now,* Bill groused internally. He needed Selah for his cover. She was well known and respected in the area, things that would only benefit him. If he let Malcolm, Liam, and
Diane do as they wanted he could lose that, but then again he couldn’t really stop them.

Realizing he had no choice, “Selah, come here,” Bill ordered as he held out his hand. A deceitful smile spreading across as his face as he watched her rush to his side, seeking his protection. Pulling her down beside him, Bill captured her eyes and pushed his mind against hers and slipped in easily, “These are my friends, they want to get to know you better,” he added his voice low and hypnotic. “You want that, don’t you?”

“Yes,” Selah responded emotionlessly lost to Bill’s glamour.

“You want to please me,” Bill added.

“Yes,” Selah said.

“Good girl,” Bill crooned softly. “You will do anything they say. Do you understand?”

“Yes.”

“Glamour, Bill?” Diane snorted. “You never used to be so noble.”

“She’s not a fangbanger,” Bill said repeating his earlier words. “I’m responsible for her well being. I won’t have her hurt unnecessarily.”

“We will be sure to be gentle with her,” Malcolm chortled before turning his attention to the still glamoured brunette. “Woman stand up,” he ordered grinning as she did as she was told. “Let’s play.”

Bill watched with barely concealed arousal as Malcolm ordered Selah to strip in the middle of the room. Not for the first time, he cursed Eric and Pam for the torture they bestowed upon him. The silver and glass preventing him from joining in on the fun. He groaned with a mixture of pleasure and pain as he watched Selah being forced to go down on Diane while Liam fucked her from behind at vampire speed. Closing his eyes, Bill rested his head against the back of the sofa and listened to the sounds around him. He could hear Selah’s small mewls of pain as Malcolm, Liam, and Diane took her any way they wanted. Behind his closed lids, he pictured another scene. He imagined Sookie in Selah’s place and him, Sophie-Anne, and André in Malcolm, Diane, and Liam’s.

His lips curled into a smile as he thought about the day they would make that a reality. Eric would be chained in silver in the corner and forced to watch while they violated his wife in anyway they wanted. They would turn her into a whore, just like they had Hadley. It would be the ultimate torture for Eric, being made to watch while one vampire after another fucked Sookie while he was powerless to stop them. The thoughts soothed Bill, and he slipped into downtime with the sounds of Selah’s pleasure-laced-pain cries ringing in his ears.

OoOoO

Arriving at Fangtasia, Eric led Sookie into his office, her small hand encased securely in his as he cast his eyes over the vampires who were waiting for him in his office. Satisfied they were the ones most loyal to him and Sookie, he offered Sookie his chair behind the desk and turned to face them.

“As most of you are no doubt aware, Bill Compton has moved into my Area,” Eric said addressing his vampires, his tone firm. “Last night he was punished for breaking one of my rules. He spied on an intimate moment between myself and my wife…”

Murmurs spread through Eric’s office as the reason for Bill’s punishment became known. Eric could almost feel the anger coming off his area vampires as they realized how Bill had violated their Mistress. He smirked as he realized just how unpopular Bill had just become.
“Under the hands of Pam and Thalia,” Eric continued, “Bill let slip his real reason for returning to the Area. It seems that through her pet, Sophie-Anne has learned of Sookie and her ability…”

Growls could be heard coming from the vampires in front of Eric as the news the Queen knowing about their Mistress. They all knew what that meant.

“As you have no doubt guessed,” Eric pressed on restraining his own anger, “Bill Compton has been sent to procure my wife, your Mistress, for the Queen. Sophie-Anne is now aware of my marriage to Sookie, but deems it unimportant. She wants my wife for herself. She wishes to use Sookie’s abilities to better herself. I don’t have to tell you that is never going to happen. Sookie is mine and not even the Queen will take her from me. As far as we know, Bill is unaware that he spilled the beans so to speak on his mission. Like the sniveling little idiot he is, he intends to try and follow through with his mission. He will fail. We have the advantage here in that they are unaware that we know of their plans. So we can plan accordingly. Do not let Bill or anyone else know or suspect that we know about his real reasoning for being here.

“I have Bill’s house under surveillance. We will know everything he says and does. I will know what he plans even before he has finished finalizing them. Maxwell,” Eric said addressing a bookish vampire, “I want you to monitor the surveillance at all times during the night. I want to know everything Bill does. Indira, my wife is concerned Sophie-Anne might target her brother, Jason, in an attempt to force her to cooperate. I want you to guard him. It would hurt Sookie if anything happened to Jason.”

“I will protect him to the best of my ability,” Indira swore. “I promise you, Mistress, no harm will come to your kin.”

“Thank you, Indira,” Sookie said softly.

“Thalia, I want you to guard Sookie in the event Pam and I are unavailable,” Eric said looking at the ancient vampire. Seeing Thalia nod in agreement, Eric continued. “I am arranging for Weres to guard both Sookie and Jason during the day. Pam, contact the wolf and inform him I am calling in his debt. The rest of you stay alert; never leave your Mistress alone with Bill or any other supe you do not know.”

Nods of agreement followed Eric’s orders as the vampires of Area Five swore to protect Sookie at all costs, even from their own Queen. Sophie-Anne showed them no loyalty so in return they showed her the same. The Area Five vampires were loyal to Eric and Sookie because they were loyal to them. As they filed out of Eric’s office, each of them promised the same thing. Sophie-Anne would not get her hands on their Mistress.

“That went well,” Pam remarked as she closed the door behind the last vampire. “Sookie will be well protected. Compton won’t get anywhere near her. What do we do now?”

“You, contact the wolf and then prepare for the opening of the bar,” Eric said. “As far as anyone is concerned it is business as usual.”

“What are you going to do?” Pam questioned knowing her Maker was planning something.

“I am going to stack the deck even higher against Sophie-Anne,” Eric replied as he reached into one of his draws and pulled out an untraceable cell phone.

“How?” Pam asked genuinely curious. A few short hours ago he seemed to be in a wait-and-see mindset, and now he was taking an offensive stance against Sophie-Anne. It didn’t make sense to her, and she couldn’t help but wonder what had changed his mind.
Sensing Pam’s confusion and realizing why, Eric smiled at his child as he sat on the edge of his desk. “I am not attacking the Queen. I am just going to make it harder for her to move forward with her plans.”

“But how?” Pam asked again.

Eric said nothing as he dialed a seldom-used number, his fingers tapping on his leg as he waited for someone to answer.

“Hello,” a soft voice greeted.

“This is Eric Northman, the Sheriff of Area Five in Louisiana. I wish to speak to the Guardian.”

Pam’s head snapped up as she heard Eric’s words, a smile forming on her lips as she realized what he was planning on doing.

“One moment please,” the voice on the other end said. The words had barely reached Eric’s ear before heard the telltale sound of clicking signally the call had been transferred.

“Is this a secure line,” a voice asked making Eric pause briefly as emotions swelled up in him. He felt Sookie place her hand on his knee and squeeze gently, offering him her support. He smiled down at his wife and sent a burst of love through their bond as a thank you.

“It is,” Eric replied.

“Good. I have been expecting you call. Hello child.”

“Godric,” Eric whispered in reverence.
“It is good to hear your voice, Eric,” Godric said, his tone low and calm in a way that always soothed Eric’s frayed nerves. “But I suspect, as the humans say, that this is not a social call.”

“I am afraid not,” Eric admitted. “Sophie-Anne has…”

“Learned of your Sookie’s existence,” Godric cut him off. “I am aware of the Queen’s interest in our young Sookie.”

“How do you know?” Eric asked genuinely curious. He couldn’t believe Godric would know of Sophie-Anne’s desire for his wife and say nothing. During the times they had met, Godric and Sookie had gotten along wonderfully. Eric couldn’t think of a single reason why Godric would know and not say anything. Eric knew his role as Guardian meant he couldn’t tell him everything, but there was no way Godric would allow a threat to Eric’s wife go by without warning him.

“She saw it,” Godric said as that explained it all and to Eric it did. His eyes had widened slightly; since when did She ever see and allow intervention in the life of a random human. He glanced quickly at his wife as Godric continued. “I planned on alerting you to the threat of Sophie-Anne myself, but by time I learned the full details, your queen had already sent the vampire Compton into your Area, and you had discovered his real reason yourself. I am impressed child; I am not sure even I would have learned his reason for being there as quickly as you have.”

“Pam can be very persuasive,” Eric replied casting a look at his child who was sitting proudly in the chair in front of his desk. “Bill spilled the real reason for being in my Area while he was in her and Thalia’s capable hands.”

“I would almost feel sorry for Compton if I did not know what he was really like,” Godric remarked. “I cannot think of a more deserving vampire to suffer the torment of Pam and Thalia. If I had my way, he would have been staked many years ago, but he has friends in high places. Well that is a lie; he has people who know how easy he is to manipulate in high places, and I am not just referring to Sophie-Anne. In the grand scheme of things she is unimportant, but unfortunately she does pose a threat to you and Sookie.”

“As we both know Sophie-Anne is single-minded when it comes to getting something she wants, something she believes is rightfully hers,” Eric said his tone taking on a concerned timber. He never had to hide what he really felt when he was taking to Godric. His Maker would have seen right through it anyway. “She won’t allow my marriage to Sookie detract her from her goal. She will do and say anything to claim Sookie for her own…”

“And you want to eliminate any legal roads she may have,” Godric finished, realizing where Eric was going and why he had contacted him. His role of Guardian would certainly aid Eric, even if few knew of their real relationship. The two of them had gone to great pains to hide their true relationship, not out of shame or disgust, but to protect the other. “Take anyway any legal means she might have and you will leave her with only the illegal. If she moves against you and Sookie then you will have the rights to move against your Queen without the risk of being charged with treason.”

“I do not wish to place Sookie in any danger,” Eric said as he ran his eyes over his wife who was still sitting in his chair. Her recent ingestion of vampire blood making it possible for her to hear everything that was being said. The thought of her in any kind of danger felt like a stake to the heart, and he reached for her hand, needing to touch her in someway. He relaxed slightly as he felt Sookie slip her hand into his and squeeze it gently.
“But you know that as long as Sophie-Anne is interested in your wife, Sookie will be in danger,” Godric said after a pause. “There is no way to avoid that. You currently cannot move against Sophie-Anne, which you no doubt know. But if she makes a move against you, you can defend yourself and yours. You wish to take the fight to Sophie-Anne, but make her believe she is bringing the fight to you.”

“I do,” Eric admitted. “I can’t launch a direct assault against the Queen, but I can manipulate her.”

“Mind games with a deranged Queen,” Godric mused. “It is risky.”

“It is for Sookie,” Eric replied simply. For him, the risk was worth the reward. He would walk through the gates of hell to protect his wife. There was no price he wasn’t willing to pay for her. His thumb traced circles on the back of the hand he still held.

“The road you propose to take could prove to be dangerous,” Godric warned. “What are you prepared to do?”

“Anything it takes,” Eric answered truthfully. “There is nothing I won’t do for Sookie.”

“Good,” Godric said, and Eric could almost hear the smile in his voice. “I take it you want me to un-lose the papers you submitted when you and Sookie married?”

“I do,” Eric replied. “I don’t want Sophie-Anne to be able to legally challenge my marriage in any way. I have no doubt she will try soon, but those papers will prove I not only had permission, but it was approved and is recognized by our governing body. I don’t want her to be able to attack us that way.”

“I can see to that easily,” Godric promised. “The papers will be readily accessible to all who wish to see them. I am sure you will have to explain to Sophie-Anne how you were able to get permission to marry without her knowing, but I am sure that is something you are looking forward to. Contact the demon lawyer and inform him of what is going on. He will be able to handle things from his end.”

“That was to be my next call,” Eric admitted.

“I would not be surprised if you receive some flowers soon,” Godric said with a small laugh. “They will prove to be better security than the Weres that I am sure you have or are arranging for Sookie.”

“Vampires at night, Weres during the day,” Eric informed him.

“Good; protect our girl, Eric,” Godric said, his voice taking on a serious tone. “The more time that passes, the more desperate Sophie-Anne will become. She will become reckless and more dangerous. Do not ever leave Sookie unprotected. You know who you can trust, so use them. They are loyal to you and Sookie, and they will not betray you.”

“I will protect her, you know I will,” Eric replied not taking any umbrage at Godric referring to Sookie as ‘our girl.’ Eric knew Godric wasn’t trying to claim her as his own; the relationship between the two was almost that of father and daughter, full of paternal care. In many ways it reminded Eric of the relationship Sookie had with her Gran before she died. Godric adored Sookie. He thought of her as the daughter he never had, and to Sookie, Godric was like the father she couldn’t remember. There was and never had been anything sexual between them. They were family.

“I have a message for you from Her,” Godric said suddenly. “She says the girl cannot be saved. She is too lost. Sophie-Anne’s hold on her is too great to break. If she is given the chance, she will continue to betray Sookie. Sophie-Anne will try to use her against Sookie. You must be prepared for
“We suspected as such,” Eric admitted, wishing it was different. Sookie had already lost so much of her family, and he didn’t want to tell her that her cousin was beyond saving. But knowing his wife like he did, he was sure she already knew as much.

“She did give me a piece of advice to pass onto you,” Godric said, and Eric could hear clearly the amusement in his voice. “She said, if Compton proves to be a bigger nuisance than he is worth, remind him there is someone higher than his Queen he is forced to answer to.”

Eric furrowed his brow as he pondered Her advice. Surely she couldn’t mean what he thought she did. “She means for me to contact…”

“If needs be,” Godric replied. “She can control Compton, and we control her now. She knows the price if she disobeys us. Despite her many problems, stupidity is not one. It is not something She suggests you do now. She says you will know when the time is right.”

“She knows what I am going to do before even I do, doesn’t she?” Eric asked with exasperation.

“She knows what we are all going to do before we do it,” Godric replied with a chuckle. “Now let me talk to my datter.”

Eric chuckled as he handed the phone to Sookie. “He wishes to speak to his datter.”

“Hej, Godric,” Sookie greeted, a smile spreading across her face as she spoke to her husband’s Maker.

“Hej, my datter,” Godric replied. “It seems you are in trouble again.”

“What do you mean again?” Sookie huffed in mock exasperation. “It isn’t my fault if some crazy ass Queen has her fangs set on me. I was minding my own business this time,” she added quite haughtily making Godric laugh.

“You are fully aware of what is going on?” Godric asked.

“I am,” Sookie replied scooting the chair closer to Eric, who had relaxed back against his desk, seeking his comfort. “Eric has told me everything. I know it was Hadley who told the Queen about me…” She trailed off and let out a breath. “She can’t be saved can she?” She felt Eric squeeze her hand supportively, and she smiled up at him.

“No child she can’t,” Godric admitted softly. “She will continue to betray you if she is given the chance. I know this must be hard for you to hear; she is your family after all…”

“She stopped being my family along time ago,” Sookie cut in rather roughly. Her anger at every slight Hadley had ever put against her and their family bubbling to the surface. “She stopped being my family when she robbed her dying mother just so she could get her next fix, and that was before she stole from Gran. The drugs never made Hadley do the things she did; they were just an excuse for her. My family is Eric, Pam, you, Jason, and the vampires of Area Five.”

“I am happy you think of me as family,” Godric said, her words warming his dead heart.

“Of course I do, oh wise and powerful Guardian,” Sookie replied, a mischievous look entering her eyes as her voice took on a playfully tone. “I mean you’re practically my father-in-law.”

Pam’s laughter filled the office at Sookie’s words, and the somber mood that was settling over them
with Sookie’s angry outburst was washing away with her gentle humor.

“Does that mean you’re my mummy?” Pam asked, her eyes sparkling with humor as she rose from her chair and moved closer to her family.

“Only if I can send you to bed with no supper,” Sookie retorted with a tinkling laugh.

“You’re no fun, Mummy,” Pam pouted playfully.

“I assure you, Pam. Mummy is extremely fun,” Eric said while leering at his wife and making her blush.

“You hush,” Sookie chided wagging a finger at Eric playfully, listening to Godric snicker quietly on his end. “Will we be seeing you soon, Godric?” she added, asking the question she knew Eric wanted to know the answer for, but wouldn’t voice himself.

“That just depends on whose definition of soon you use,” Godric answered cryptically.

“There’s a different definition of soon?” Sookie replied before she understood. “Of course,” she shook her head as what he meant hit in. “Vampires’ and humans’ version. How about by the family version? Will your datter be seeing you soon?”

“Very sly, Sookie. Appealing to my fondness for you,” Godric said his voice filled with pride. “You really are the perfect match to my child. I couldn’t have picked a better mate for him myself. I will see you all before the final act has played out. For now my true connection to Eric must remain unknown, but I will stand with you all soon; I promise.”

“I look forward to seeing you again,” Sookie replied not bothering to hide the happiness in her voice.

“And I all of you,” Godric said. “But for now keep safe, and do not hesitate to contact me if you need me in anyway.”

“We will,” Sookie promised as she stood up from the chair and stepped closer to Eric, leaning her side gently against him.

“I will be seeing you soon enough,” Godric said knowing Eric could hear him.

“Goodbye,” Sookie whispered as Godric ended the call. “One of these days I’m gonna teach him proper phone etiquette.”

Handing the phone back to Eric, Sookie smiled at him as she pressed her lips to his in a soft kiss. “The family will be all together soon.”

“Only you could make a family out of vampires,” Eric said as he wrapped his arms around her and pulled her into his embrace. The warmth of her body soothed him like only she could.

“Haven’t you got to ring Desmond?” Sookie asked even as she burrowed her face into his shoulder.

“I have, Lover,” Eric replied but made no move to let her go to do so. He was quite content just to hold her and pretend the rest of the world and the threats they faced didn’t exist.

“You two are disgusting,” Pam jested, lightening the mood once again.

“Right, that’s it. No new shoes for a month for you young lady,” Sookie said sternly, the small quiver of her lip the only sign of her amusement.
“Very funny, Mummy,” Pam snarked.

“And while we are at it, you’re grounded as well,” Sookie added barely able to hold back her laughter as she felt Eric’s amusement through their bond.

“Pam, go and open up the bar before Sookie bans you from seeing any of your girlfriends as well,” Eric said thoroughly enjoying the banter between his wife and child. He was happy to see their earlier disagreement had been put behind them and they were back to normal.

“Yes, Daddy,” Pam groused playfully as she made her way to the door.

“Maybe we should make her wear a pink tracksuit from Wal-Mart every night for a month,” Eric mused. “What do you think, Lover?”

“Ooh,” Sookie purred, her eyes dancing with happiness.

“You wouldn’t dare,” Pam said aghast.

“Wouldn’t we?” Eric replied.

“Okay, okay; I’m going,” Pam grumbled, seeing the threat for what it really was, just a bit of playful banter.

Kissing Eric quickly on the lips, Sookie jumped out his arms and followed Pam to the door. “Don’t worry, Pam. If Eric buys you one, I’ll buy him a matching tracksuit.”

“Where are you going, Sookie?” Eric asked.

“To help Pam make sure everything is ready for opening,” Sookie answered.

“But I wanted you to stay in here with me tonight,” Eric pouted sticking his bottom lip out in a pitiful manner.

“You, my darling, have work to do, and me being in here with you will only mean you won’t get it done,” Sookie returned, not letting his pout affect her. “Call Desmond and get everything sorted.”

“And then will you come and sit with me?”

“If you’re good,” Sookie promised.

“Lover, I am always good,” Eric replied, grinning wolfishly.

“You’re terrible,” Sookie said with a giggle.

“But you still love me.”

“Forever,” Sookie said softly.

“It will never be long enough for us, Lover.”

“But it’s a start,” Sookie replied as she noticed Pam quietly slip out the door and give them their privacy. “Once you’ve got everything sorted with Desmond, come and get me. I’ll be in the bar.”

“One hour.”

“I’ll be waiting,” Sookie swore. “I’m not going anywhere.”
“You promise?” Eric asked, even though he knew the answer. He just needed her reassurance.

“I promise,” Sookie whispered with a small tugging on her lips as she understood what he was really asking. He wasn’t asking if she would be waiting for him in an hour, but if she would stay with him forever. “I gave you my word, Eric, and I will never break it. But more importantly, I gave you my heart. You own my very soul.”

“As you own mine,” Eric replied, his eyes rimming with red as he stared at the woman who owned him completely. He couldn’t survive without her. It was how he knew they would survive anything Sophie-Anne threw at them. Because the alterative meant living without Sookie, and that wasn’t an option.

“Jag älskar dig,” Sookie said, staring into his eyes as she flooded the bond with her love.

“Jag älskar dig,” Eric repeated, meaning the words every bit as much as she did. Hearing her say those words in his language was one of the greatest feelings he had ever felt. “One hour.”

“I’ll be waiting,” Sookie said with a smile before opening the door and chasing after Pam.

Datter = daughter.
Chapter 11

Settling down in his chair, Eric grabbed another untraceable phone and kicked his feet up on his desk before dialling the number for the demon lawyer.

“I’ve been expecting your call,” Desmond greeted, not surprising Eric in the slightest with the manner in which he answered his phone. From the moment Godric told him to call Desmond, Eric knew the demon lawyer would have been expecting his call. Little got by Desmond, and Eric had no doubt he already knew of Sophie-Anne’s plans for Sookie.

“You know what is going on,” Eric remarked. It wasn’t a question.

“I am aware,” Desmond admitted. “The cousin has betrayed Sookie and the spoilt Queen wants her for herself.”

“I have had the Guardian submit the papers of my marriage,” Eric replied cutting straight to the heart of the matter. “They won’t be a deterrent to Sophie-Anne…”

“No they won’t be,” Desmond agreed interrupting Eric. “Sophie-Anne is arrogant as well as spoilt. She believes the rules – the laws – don’t apply to her, and that she is above them. She doesn’t even honour the contracts she herself makes.”

“But they will give me the right to defend Sookie from anyone, regardless of their position,” Eric said finishing his earlier sentence. “You know Sophie-Anne will contact you as soon as she learns of the papers. She will want to know if you can void them in anyway.”

“Which I won’t be able to,” Desmond replied. “I personally saw to your wedding contract. They’re unbreakable by any authority. The fact that Sophie-Anne herself approved them will only work in your favour. Her signature is on the papers; the Queen sanctioned your marriage to Sookie, even if she doesn’t remember doing it. She has no legal recourse. Your marriage is binding and unbreakable by foreign parties.”

“That is not going to make her majesty happy,” Eric said with a chuckle as he remembered the magic they wielded to get Sophie-Anne to sign the papers without realising what she was doing. “You could find yourself in her sights if you can void them in anyway.”

“I’m not worried about any slight she might perceive,” Desmond said dismissively. “She won’t risk attacking me while I still have the ear of The Supernatural Council. It would not bode well for her if she did. Besides she currently needs me to broker a contract between her and Arkansas.”

“Sophie-Anne plans to pledge to Arkansas?” Eric queried barely concealing his shock. It was the first time he heard of it, and pledging contracts usually caused vampires to gossip like old women.

“Yes. The contract is almost complete, just small details still to iron out,” Desmond replied. “I believe the proposed pledging might be a factor into Sophie-Anne’s insistent interest in Sookie. Having a telepath in her retinue would strength her Queendom and give her the upper hand over the King of Arkansas.”

“That makes sense,” Eric agreed. “Having a telepath to read all of Arkansas’ humans would benefit Sophie-Anne greatly. Of course it would never occur to The Queen to simple ask Sookie if she would like to work for her and offer her a contract.”

“In Sophie-Anne’s mind, Sookie is beneath her and should be honoured to be owned by her,”
Desmond said. “Offering Sookie a contract or paying her wouldn’t even enter her mind.”

“So, Sophie-Anne is plotting to procure my wife and pledge to Arkansas,” Eric mused. “She is keeping busy.”

“I wouldn’t be surprised if you didn’t receive an invitation to the pledging. It would be the perfect opportunity to get Sookie within her reach,” Desmond warned.

“Do you know when the pledging is set for?” Eric asked, seeing the truth of Desmond’s warning. Inviting Eric and Sookie to her pledging would be the perfect way to get Sookie before her without tipping her hand and revealing what she really wanted. If Eric hadn’t been aware of the Queen’s interest in his wife, he might not have suspected anything amiss with such an invitation. It would be natural for a Queen to invite her Sheriff and his partner to her pledging.

“Rhodes,” Desmond answered.

“She never did like to do things by half, did she?” Eric said, letting out an unneeded breath. “I am starting to think Sophie-Anne really is crazy. What in the hell possessed her to want to pledge at Rhodes? Is she aware half if not all the Council will be there?”

“She said she wanted an audience,” Desmond hinted. “She wants everyone to witness their union…”

“So no one can question it if anything should happen to Arkansas,” Eric said as realisation swept over him. “She plans to kill Threadgill and claim Arkansas.”

“That would be my guess,” Desmond agreed. “Although I have no proof, I fear that Peter Threadgill will not survive long after the pledging. I suspect he will be finally dead within the year.”

“Knowing Threadgill, he is no doubt planning the same,” Eric replied. “None of this is surprising really, but I fear it puts Sookie in more danger.”

“I will send Diantha to you,” Desmond said. “She will be there first thing in the morning. She will keep Sookie safe during the day. I’m sure you will be guarding her at night.”

Eric chuckled as he heard Desmond say he would send Diantha, realising that, as usual, Godric was right. “Sookie is well guarded at night,” Eric admitted. “I was arranging for Were to guard her during the day.”

“I suggest you still do that,” Desmond recommended. “I have full faith in my niece and her ability to keep Sookie safe, but it’s always wise to have back-ups just in case. I will keep a close eye on Sophie-Anne and alert you to anything she might be planning.”

“I appreciate that,” Eric acknowledged readily.

“I will do anything to keep Sookie safe,” Desmond replied. “I’m her sponsor, her Supernatural Godfather. It’s my duty to protect her.”

And it is my life, Eric thought.

“Tell Diantha to test the mettle of the Were guarding Sookie,” Eric ordered slipping back into Sheriff mode. “I want to know if they are capable of protecting my wife and if they are going to take the job seriously.”

“I will,” Desmond assured. “I will tell Diantha to see how close she can get to Sookie before any of
the Weres can discover her presence.”

“I will inform Sookie of the test so she is not scared,” Eric replied.

“Good; if you need anything you know you can contact me and I will help,” Desmond said. “If that is all?”

“It is,” Eric replied. The words had barely left his lips when he heard the call disconnect. “I am starting to see why Sookie thinks that is annoying.”

Tossing the phone of his desk, Eric rested his head on the back of his chair and closed his eyes, the events of the last forty-eight hours weighing heavy on him. He knew he couldn’t keep Sookie hidden from the vampire hierarchy forever. He was well aware that one day Sookie and her ability would become widely known. He had known it would come since the day she told him she was a telepath, which would have been just weeks after they had first met. From the second he had learned of her abilities, Eric had been planning ways to keep her safe. He hadn’t even been aware he was doing it in the beginning; it had been his natural reaction to an unseen threat. He hadn’t even realised the threat wasn’t directed directly at him and that if he wanted he could walk away.

Walking away had never crossed Eric’s mind. From the moment he and Sookie had shared their first kiss on their first date, he had been lost to her. Eric had fallen fast and had fallen hard, and he had not once tried to fight it. It had surprised even him how welcoming he had been of the feelings Sookie evoked in him. He had foolishly believed they would have more time before Sookie was discovered. Sophie-Anne’s unexpected and unwanted attention to his wife had thrown all their plans for Sookie’s eventual introduction into the Supernatural World into disarray. Now because of his own arrogance, his wife was in danger. But one thing Eric swore was that he would watch the world burn before he let Sookie fall into Sophie-Anne’s clutches.

Sookie was his.

OoOoO

Bill eyed the crumpled form of Selah lying on the floor in front of the open fire. Her small whimpers were grating on his nerves, and from his vantage point he could see bruises forming over her body. Semen coated the inside of her thighs and blood still trickled lightly from the unhealed bite marks.

Malcolm, Liam, and Diane had left over an hour ago, having used Selah to the point of unconsciousness. They had taken her in every way they could think, not giving her a single second of rest. Bill could still hear Selah’s cries of pain ringing in his ears as Liam and Malcolm had taken her at the same time. Bill was only sorry he wasn’t fit enough to join in.

Maybe once I’m healed we can all have some fun, he thought as he eyed Selah hungrily. I wonder how she’d like three cocks in her at once.

Licking his lips, Bill smirked; at least Diane had dragged Selah over to him so he could feed on her. The fresh blood had aided in his healing and restored a little bit of his strength. Pulling himself to his feet, Bill winced as small stabs of pain hit him. Crossing to where the naked Selah still lay whimpering, he nudged her lightly with his foot, turning her to her back. “Do shut up,” he growled. Bending down, Bill grabbed Selah by her hair and yanked her to her feet. Gripping her chin painfully, Bill stared into her eyes, pushing his mind against hers and taking control of her once again. “You enjoyed everything that happened here tonight. You wanted it. You wanted to please Malcolm, Liam, Diane, and me. You begged Malcolm to fuck you up the ass. You never once said no. You will never speak of what happened here to anyone. If you
are told to you will do it again. Do you understand?"

“Yes,” Selah whimpered, her mind under his control.

“Good girl,” Bill replied condescendingly. “From now on out, you’re mine. You belong to me. You will come when I call. You will do as I say without argument. You will take care of yourself and keep yourself healthy. You will take vitamins daily and eat suitably. You will return tomorrow and bring a friend with you, a female friend. Is that clear?”

“Yes,” Selah said automatically.

“Good, now go and clean yourself up,” Bill ordered as he let go of her chin. “You have fifteen minutes.”

Bill watched with a sense of detachment as Selah shuffled painfully out of the living room. Once he was satisfied she was out of hearing distance, Bill grabbed his phone and dialled the number for the Queen’s palace. “This is Bill Compton, I wish to speak to the Queen,” he offered in lieu of a greeting when the call was answered.

“One moment please.”

“Bill, please tell me you have secured my telepath,” Sophie-Anne said, her tone soft and breezy.

“Unfortunately, not yet,” Bill replied as he crossed the room and sat down again. “Northman, as you can imagine is proving to be a problem. He is possessive when it comes to the telepath, almost controlling you could say. He refuses to let anyone but his child anywhere near her.”

“That is not good to hear, but not unexpected,” Sophie-Anne huffed.

“I’m confident if I could speak to Sookie without the Sheriff around I could make leeway,” Bill continued hoping Sophie-Anne could see where he was going. “Northman treats her little better than a fangbanger,” he added lying. “He parades her around his bar covered in his scent for all to smell. I believe it would be easy to convince her to come with me. She doesn’t seem too bright. She is currently hesitant around me because Northman has no doubt told her she can’t trust anyone but him and his child. If I had the opportunity I’m positive I could gain her trust and get her to leave Northman willingly.”

“I see,” Sophie-Anne mused as she thought over what Bill was telling her. If Sookie was anything like Hadley, she would be easy to manipulate, Sophie-Anne believed, and Bill was certainly adept at that. It was why he was her favourite procurer. He had never failed her yet, and she had faith he wouldn’t now. Although annoying at times, Bill was loyal and skilled in what he did, and she had no reason not to trust him. “I suppose I can demand the presence of my Sheriff for a few nights. I would like to know why he thought he could get married without informing me or asking for my permission.”

“Thank you, my Queen,” Bill replied, adding the right amount of respect to his voice.

“I shall demand his presences in court this weekend,” Sophie-Anne said as she cast her eyes over the donors milling around in her sunroom. Clicking her fingers at Hadley who was sitting by her feet, Sophie-Anne spread her legs wide and ordered her favourite pet to take care of her while everyone watched. “You will have two nights to gain the telepath’s trust,” Sophie-Anne moaned alerting Bill to what was going on. “Do not fail me.”

“I won’t my Queen,” Bill promised. “The telepath will be yours.”
“You get her to leave Northman willingly and I might be inclined to let you have the first taste of her,” Sophie-Anne said, offering him an extra incentive.

“The Queen is too kind,” Bill replied practically panting at the thought of having the first taste of Sookie.

“Make it happen, Bill,” Sophie-Anne ordered before hanging up.

Bill smiled as he leaned back on the sofa, his plans slowly taking form. He had a couple of days to recover from his unjust punishment. Selah would bring him fresh donors every night and this weekend Northman would be out of his way and he would have a chance to get closer to Sookie. He believed things were beginning to look up for him.
Chapter 12

Eric was just about to go and find Sookie when a knock on his office door interrupted his plans. Letting out a string of curses, he glared balefully in the direction of the door. “Come in,” he barked harshly.

“Sheriff,” Maxwell greeted somewhat timidly, not wishing to be on the receiving end of his Sheriff’s temper.

Seeing the dark skinned vampire, Eric schooled his features. ”What is it Maxwell?” he asked, his tone returning too normal.

“I have been watching the surveillance footage like you requested, Sheriff,” Maxwell replied picking up confidence as he spoke. “And I believe there is something you should see and hear,” he added as he held up a small memory card. Maxwell hesitated as he went to hand the card over. “Sheriff, if I may…” he waited for Eric to give him permission to continue, “please don’t let my Mistress watch this…”

“You are asking me to hide this from my wife?” Eric said disbelief clear in his tone. It was common knowledge he kept little from his wife, and for Maxwell to ask him to keep something from Sookie caused concern to swell within him.

“No, Sheriff,” Maxwell answered as he straightened his shoulders. “I’m not asking you to hide it from my Mistress. She deserves to know what is happening, but she doesn’t need to witness what is on this card. I believe it will distress her, and I don’t want that.”

Eric regarded Maxwell carefully as his mind whirled through the possibilities of what could be on the memory card. What could Bill possibly done or said that could distress Sookie? His wife was many things but a wilting flower was not one of them. She was stronger than some vampires in some ways.

Deciding to see for himself first, Eric took the memory card of Maxwell and slotted it into his computer. A few seconds later, the footage started playing and the sight of Bill’s living room greeted Eric; he smirked as he saw the battered condition Bill was in. Eric watched as Malcolm, Liam, and Diane entered Bill’s house, a snort escaping him at how transparent Bill was. Why the Queen thought Bill could ever steal Sookie away was beyond him. Eric shook his head as he heard the disco triplets, as Pam had taken to calling them, advise Bill to stay away from Sookie. Even those three idiots knew better than to fuck with his wife. As he watched the footage, Eric had no idea why Maxwell was so against Sookie watching it.

Sookie knew all about Malcolm, Liam, and Diane. In fact, she had met them. Eric grinned as he remembered how that meeting went. Liam had made a crude remark, so Sookie had hit him and broke his nose before Thalia had ripped his arm off. After that the three of them knew if they upset Sookie in anyway, they would have to answer to Thalia.

Eric was just about to ask Maxwell what was so bad that he didn’t want Sookie to see when he saw a dark-haired woman enter the scene. Eric groaned as he began to put it together. He swore if they did what he thought they did, he would feed them to Thalia personally. Eric stared at the woman, her face seeming familiar to him. He knew it wasn’t anyone he had ever been with, but there was something about her that was familiar. He made a note to ask Pam if she recognised her. Pam never forgot a face.

Running a hand over his face, Eric cursed as he saw and heard Bill glamour the woman he called
Selah, and that name did sound familiar, to do anything Malcolm, Liam, and Diane wanted. Eric swore he would rip the four of them apart himself. Eric was by no means innocent, but he had never abused a woman like those four were doing on screen. The word depraved came to mind as the footage played over the screen. Hitting fast forward, Eric flicked through the remaining footage, only hitting play again when Malcolm, Liam, and Diane had apparently had their fill of Selah and left. Sitting forward in his chair, Eric watched as Bill glamoured Selah again and sent her to clean up.

Eric was just about to hit stop, believing he had seen what Maxwell was referring to, when Bill picked up his phone and called the Queen. His anger spiked as he heard the cavalier way Bill spoke about Sookie.

Like that fool knows the first thing about my wife.

Eric snorted as he listened to the phone call play out. If Bill thought Sookie would believe and befriend him, Bill was a bigger fool than he had even thought. Turning off his computer, Eric sat back in his chair, his mind processing all the new detail he had learned.

So Sophie-Anne is going go call me to court and question me about my marriage. That is not unexpected and can easily be dealt with. I don’t like the idea of leaving Sookie alone, even if she will have my Area vampires here to protect her. I always feel better when she is with me. But I can’t take her with me. As plans go, it is not that bad, Eric conceded. It is just a shame you have no idea who you are dealing with, Billy. My Sookie is anything but stupid, and she sees right through you.

Turning his attention back to Maxwell, “You are right,” Eric said. “Sookie doesn’t need to see this footage. It will only distress her. You have served your Mistress well tonight, Maxwell,” he added offering the younger vampire well-deserved praise. “You have served me well.”

“Thank you, Sheriff,” Maxwell replied with a nod. “I will continue to observe Compton and inform you of any of his plans.”

“Tell Thalia I want to see her,” Eric said his lips curling into a smile as he thought about how he was going to deal with Malcolm, Liam, and Diane.

“Sheriff,” Maxwell acknowledged as he back out of the office.

It was barely a minute later when Thalia came stomping into the office, a scowl etched firmly on her face.

“I want you to take Clancy and pick up Malcolm, Liam, and Diane,” Eric said getting straight to the heart of the matter. “I want them chained up in the basement within in the next two hours. I don’t care what condition they are in when you bring them in, as long as they are alive, relatively speaking. They think they can flaunt my rules; I want you to show them they are wrong.”

“Yes, Sheriff,” Thalia growled, a frightening smile spreading over her face.

“Go,” Eric ordered.

Thalia was out the door and collecting Clancy before Eric even had a chance to stand up. He chuckled as he rose from his chair and walked to the door. At least something makes her happy, he thought as he made his way through the bar towards his wife who was sitting in his booth speaking on the phone. He nodded at Pam as he slipped in beside Sookie, catching the tale end of her conversation.

“Okay, Jason,” Sookie said as she shuffled closer to Eric. “Yeah, come round for lunch tomorrow. I really need to talk to you. Yep… Bye.”
“Lover,” Eric said softly pressing his lips to her head.

“You’re late,” Sookie scolded playfully.

“A thousand apologies, my Lover,” Eric replied contritely, his eyes sparkling with amusement.

“Mmm, I’ll forgive you this time,” Sookie said after pretending to think it over.

“You are too kind, Lover,” Eric replied with a small laugh. Signalling a waitress, Eric called her over and ordered a True Blood and gin and tonic for Sookie. “What did Jason want?”

“I called him. I want him to come over so I can warn him about what’s going on,” Sookie explained. “If he spots a strange woman following him, he’s probably….”

“Going to try and fuck her,” Pam interrupted.

“That wasn’t exactly what I was gonna say,” Sookie countered glaring at Pam without any real heat. She knew Pam was speaking the truth, even if it was a crude way of saying it.

“But accurate,” Pam said as her lips curled into a smirk. “Your brother is a manwhore, Sookie. He’ll fuck anything in a skirt.”

“Not quite anything,” Eric cut in as he eyed Pam with amusement. “I seem to remember him turning you down repeatedly when you tried to fuck him when you first met.”

Glaring at Eric, “Because you glamoured him to,” Pam snarled. She hadn’t forgotten the embarrassment she felt when Jason had refused her advances only to find him fucking some brunette whore an hour later.

“You keep telling yourself that,” Eric retorted as he twisted a lock of Sookie’s hair around his finger.

Truth was he hadn’t glamoured Jason to refuse Pam’s advances; he had done that all on his own. It might have had something to do with the way Sookie had explained vampire relationships to Jason. Sookie had spun it in a way that made Jason think he would soon be related to Pam when Sookie married Eric. It had been underhanded and some would say a little cruel to make him think that, but at the time both Eric and Sookie were well aware that Pam held no real affection for Jason, or Sookie at that point. She simply wanted to fuck Jason so she could fuck with Sookie. Neither Eric nor Sookie were willing to let Pam or Jason cause trouble simply because Jason couldn’t keep his dick in his pants and Pam wanted to be a spiteful bitch. That’s not to say they didn’t get some amusement out of watching Jason turn Pam down; they still laughed over Jason telling her, “This might be the south, ma’am, but there’s some things even I don’t do,” before walking away.

“You glamoured him,” Pam replied sulkily. “It’s the one way he would refuse me.”

“Eric’s only ever glamoured Jason once,” Sookie said, joining the conversation again as she snuggled into Eric’s side. “And that was to get him to stop seeing Dawn Green.”

“That whore,” Pam said, wrinkling her nose distastefully. “You should have killed her.”

“She was hardly worth it,” Eric replied dismissively. “The intellectually challenged whore foolishly believed she could use Jason to get closer to me in her pathetic attempt to seduce me. Like I would ever look twice at her when I had my lovely Sookie beside me,” Eric added as he pressed his lips to Sookie’s head.

“Smooth talker,” Sookie giggled.
“I only speak the truth, Lover,” Eric replied as he teased his fingers over her bare arm, delighting in the small shivers she gave. “Pam, I have sent Thalia and Clancy to collect some troublemakers,” he added as he continued to tease Sookie. “Make sure the basement is ready for them when they arrive.”

“Who are they bringing in?” Pam asked as she slowly rose to her feet.

“The disco triplets,” Eric replied with a smirked feeling Sookie shiver as his fingers ghosted over the side of her breast. “Inform me when they arrive and I will let you play with them.”

“Yes, Master,” Pam purred, a shot of anticipation spreading through her at the thought of getting her hands on those three. She sped off without another word.

“Eric,” Sookie whispered as she squirmed under his attentions, arousal flooding her body.

“Yes, Lover?” Eric questioned innocently.

“Stop it,” Sookie scolded without any heat.

“Stop what?” Eric replied as he dropped his hand to her leg and started to rub circles over the inside of her thigh.

“You know what,” Sookie gritted out, her breath becoming ragged as she unconsciously parted her legs.

“You don’t mean that,” Eric said as he slipped a hand between her legs. “You like it when I touch you,” he added as he teased his fingers over her panties. He let out a groan as he felt just how turned on she was. Lowering his mouth to her ear, “You like it when I slip my fingers inside you,” he whispered low in her ear, his tongue darting out and flicking the shell of her ear. “You make such delightful noises when I fuck you with my fingers.” Eric tapped his fingers over her panties.

“Eric, please,” Sookie whimpered as she started rocking her hips slightly, moving against his hand.

Moving his hand from between her legs, Eric wrapped it around her waist and pulled her into his arms and quickly stood up. Moving at vampire speed, Eric raced from the club with Sookie in his arms and into his office. Slamming the door behind him, Eric pushed Sookie against the door and crashed his lips to hers in a bruising kiss. His tongue duelled with hers as his hands slipped under her dress and ripped her panties off.

“Fuck, Lover,” Eric groaned as his fingers stroked over her wet sex, his fingers slick with her juices as he rubbed them over her clit making her mewl in pleasure. “No one will ever get to see you like this but me.”

“Only you,” Sookie assured as she bucked against his hand. Despite his teasing in the bar, Sookie knew he wouldn’t have gone anything further. They teased each other all the time, but they never went any further than some heavy petting while in public. They would work each other up and then Eric would drag her into his soundproofed office and finish it away from the eyes of others.

“Mine,” Eric growled as he grabbed Sookie’s thighs and lifted her up. Pinning her against the door, Eric reached between them and ripped open his jeans. Wrapping his hand around his cock, Eric rubbed the head over Sookie’s swollen lips before pressing against her opening. “Look at me, Lover,” he ordered, his eyes crinkling as a smile spread across his face as Sookie stared into his eyes.

A cry of pleasure was torn from Sookie’s throat as Eric pushed forward and buried himself deep inside her with one hard thrust. Pleasure sparked through her body as she dug her nails into his back, her head slamming backwards against the door as her toes curled.
Eric held her against the door as he thrust into her hard, the sound of their fucking filling the office. He scraped his fangs over her throat as he snapped his hips, driving into her hard.

“Eric!” Sookie screamed as white-hot pleasure sparked through her. She clung to Eric desperately as she moved to meet his thrusts. Her entire body just one giant live wire of pleasure.

“Mine…Sookie….” Eric growled as he picked up his speed. The feeling of her gripping him so tight was driving him crazy. He lapped at the small bubbles of blood that his fangs had drawn to the surface.

“Do it!” Sookie screamed as she flew higher, her body humming as she clawed for her release.

Not needing to be told twice, Eric sank his fangs into her neck, his eyes rolling into the back of his head as her blood spilled into his mouth. He slammed into her hard as her delicious blood filled him.

The feeling of Eric’s fangs sliding into her neck sent Sookie flying over the edge. Sparks flashed behind her eyes as her body convulsed. “Eric!” she yelled as she came. Burying her face in Eric’s neck, Sookie opened her mouth and bit down on his flesh. Her blunt teeth tearing into his throat made Eric roar in pleasure as he came, filling her with his dead seed as his blood flooded her mouth.

Eric held Sookie against the door as they both came down from their highs. He licked at his bite mark lazily, healing her even though he knew the blood she had just taken would do it.

“Mmm,” Eric purred as he carefully set Sookie down on her feet, steadying her as she swayed slightly.

“Hey,” Sookie said goofily as she stared up at him.

Sensing her exhaustion, Eric pressed a soft kiss to Sookie’s forehead before moving them to the sofa and laying her down on it. Crouching down beside her, Eric brushed his fingers through her hair as he stared at her, a small smile curling his lips. Refastening his jeans, Eric watched as Sookie dozed softly. He reached for the blanket on the back of his sofa and smoothed down her dress before carefully covering her in the soft blanket.

It was almost twenty-minutes later when the sound of a scuffle in the hallway drew his attention away from his sleeping wife. Pressing a kiss to her head, he quickly stood up, crossed to the door, and pulled it open. He smirked darkly as he saw Thalia and Clancy dragging Malcolm, Liam, and Diane down the small hallway towards the basement.

Calling one of his vampires to him, Eric ordered the small, brown-haired vampire to guard the door to his office and make sure Sookie wasn’t disturbed. Then he followed them all down the stairs to the basement. Eric watched from the bottom step as Pam, Thalia, and Clancy chained the disco triplets in silver and hung them from the middle of the room.

“You three have been very naughty,” Eric said as he strolled towards them. “I can’t help but wonder why you think you can disregard my laws and not think I will learn of it.”

“We haven’t done anything wrong,” Malcolm snarled as he struggled weakly against the silver biting into his skin.

“No?” Eric questioned. “That is not what I heard. In fact from what I heard you have broken one of my biggest laws.”

“You heard wrong,” Diane spoke up grimacing in pain. “Whoever told you we disobeyed your rule was lying to you Sheriff.”
“Really?” Eric said as he circled the three of them. “I suppose I may have been misinformed,” he added pretending to think about it. “You would have to be stupid – or maybe a more fitting word would be suicidal – to do what I heard you three did earlier.” Stopping in front of them, Eric regarded them carefully, his eyes stripping them bare and making them shift uncomfortably. “Are any of you suicidal?”

“No, Sheriff,” they said, each of them speaking over the over.

“So all of this is just a misunderstanding?” Eric remarked flicking his eyes to Pam, signalling her to get ready.

“Yes, Sheriff,” Diane said pitifully.

“So earlier this evening,” Eric started his eyes boring into them, “the three of you didn’t rape a young woman? You didn’t degrade and abuse her?”

The three of them blanched under his anger, fear overwhelming them as they began to understand just how screwed they were.

“Sheriff, we didn’t…” Malcolm started, intending to lie his ass off.

“But do not lie to me,” Eric growled his voice eerily calm, frightening them more than his anger. “I am aware of everything you did. I know every sick twisted thing you did to that young woman…”

“She never said no,” Liam interrupted foolishly.

“She was glamoured you poor excuse for a vampire,” Eric retorted, hardly believing his argument. “She couldn’t say no; that choice was taken away from her. If she was given the choice, she would have screamed no.”

“We never glamoured her,” Malcolm argued pathetically.

“No you didn’t,” Eric agreed. “You three were just the three who raped her. I warned you when you moved into my Area, taking the unwilling is prohibited and glamouring them to agree is also not allowed. You all knew this, and you all know the price for breaking one of my rules. So really it stands to reason that you all must be suicidal.”

“Sheriff, please,” Malcolm begged, seeing his end imminent.

“We have information for you about Bill Compton,” Diane added as she desperately sought to save her worthless life. She had loyalty to no one but herself, and she had no problem throwing Bill under a bus, believing he was the one who had told Eric about their fun with Selah. She couldn’t think of any other way the Sheriff would know. Selah certainly wasn’t in any condition to spill the beans, and even if she was, she wouldn’t know of the vampire hierarchy. It had to be Compton as far as she was concerned. Sookie intrigued Bill, and Diane believed he had told Eric what they had done to curry his favour and get closer to his wife.

“Let me guess,” Eric said as he moved in front of the dark-skinned vampire. “You are going to tell me that Compton is obsessively fixated on my wife. Maybe you are even going to tell me that he was sent by the Queen of Louisiana to procure her for what she can do.”

Eric grinned as he saw Diane’s eyes widen in shock, a amused chuckle escaping his parted lips. “But you see, I am already aware of all that, something it seems you weren’t.” Gripping her jaw hard, Eric sneered at her. “Nothing happens in my Area without me knowing about it. I know the real reason Bill is here, I know what you three did, and I know you would sell each other out in a second if you
thought I would let you go.”

Taking a step back, Eric stared at them all. “You have broken my rules for the last time. Your Maker is not a concern, having met the true death decades ago. As Sheriff of Area Five, it is my decision that you all meet the true death…” Eric trailed off as he seemingly thought it over before continuing, “After you have enjoyed the hospitality of Thalia for the next two nights.” Turning to the old vampire he said, “They are all yours.”

The sounds of their screams brought a smile to Eric’s face as he ascended the stairs. He paused briefly on the top step and listened to Thalia, Clancy, and Pam ripping into the three of them before opening the door and continuing back to his office. Eric dismissed the vampire watching the door and quietly snuck in and made his way over to the still slumbering Sookie.

Stroking a finger over her cheek softly, Eric roused her from her sleep. “Lover, it is time to go home,” he said, his voice low and soothing.

“Carry me?” Sookie asked tiredly.

Getting his arms beneath her, Eric carefully lifted her into his arms. “Anywhere,” he said as he made his way out of the office and Fangtasia.
Bill watched with barely concealed glee from his hiding spot in the trees around Sookie and Eric’s property as Eric drove away in his car. The Queen having come through for him and calling the Sheriff away, left Sookie free for his manipulations. He grinned as he saw a sullen looking Sookie shuffle back into the house.

“Soon,” Bill whispered as he backed away quickly and sped back to his house.

He would give her a little bit of time to herself before he would take a steady stroll over to her house and disturb her under the guise of needing to see the Sheriff. Bill was well aware that he had to play this just right. He needed to give Eric enough time to get far enough away, and he had to make sure Sookie did not get the impression that he was lurking and spying on her from the woods surrounding their houses.

Bill paced back and forth, his injured having almost all healed from Pam’s torture session thanks to the fangbanger he had found at the local bar, Merlotte’s. The donor Selah brought to him the next night hadn’t been suitable at all. She had been practically decrepit and wouldn’t have survived him feeding off her. Bill had briefly considered feeding on her regardless, but Selah had informed him she was her bosses mother and Bill had realised the old lady was someone who would most definitely be missed. Selah hadn’t been in any condition to feed him, so Bill had been forced to venture out into the town.

He had been pleasantly surprised to find a well used fangbanger working at Merlotte’s and hadn’t wasted anytime in taking her himself, feeding from her the first time in the parking lot of the bar. With his strength slowly returning, Bill hadn’t been happy when Selah had informed him she was going out of town for a week; her boss had sign her up for a conference in Chicago and she hadn’t been able to get out of it. Bill had forced her to try, but her boss was unwavering. As much as he hated it, Bill knew he couldn’t prevent her from going if he wanted to maintain his cover, so he had reluctantly allowed her to go. He had been lucky in finding the fangbanger at Merlotte’s and had arranged for her to visit him nightly and for her to bring her friends, all willing fangbangers as well. Bill had fed well for the last three nights, taking his fill of at least half a dozen donors. He still hadn’t been able to become sexually aroused due to the silver and glass that had embedded in his penis, so he hadn’t been able to sate his other hungers, but that hadn’t stopped him enjoying them in other ways.

A smile spread across his face as he recalled the sight of the brown haired fangbanging waitress from Merlotte’s tied to his bed, her legs spread wide while a pretty little blonde ate her out. He hadn’t even had to glamour the brunette to do anything, she had been more than willing, and had done everything Bill had asked of her. Bill groaned as memories played out through his mind, the brunette, Dawn, he remembered, had been even more willing to please than Hadley. She would strip naked as soon as she entered his house and do anything he asked and often offering suggestions herself. She loved sitting down on his lap, her legs thrown over his knees, spreading herself wide for whoever he ordered to kneel between them and eat her out while she offered him her neck. She would place his hands on his breasts and beg him to pinch her nipples to the point of pain.

Over the course of the few nights, Bill had learned Dawn knew Sookie, used to work with her, and also had dated Sookie’s brother, Jason. He could sense the bitterness in her tone whenever she spoke about Sookie. She resented the blonde telepath for having what she wanted, Eric. Dawn had tried to seduced the Viking vampire but without any success back when Eric and Sookie had first met. Dawn spoke harshly about Sookie, happy to tell Bill anything he wanted to know about her. Bill
considered briefly making her his companion instead of Selah; she had a history with both Sookie and Eric. It might make Sookie uncomfortable seeing her so close to Eric again, and he could definitely use that to his advantage. The only thing that stopped him was how crass and uncouth she was. Bill wouldn’t be able to maintain his mainstreaming cover if his companion was the local vampires’ bike. While Selah wasn’t as pleasing as Dawn, she was more refined and would benefit him. No, for the time being, Selah would be his companion and Dawn would be his whore. His very willing whore.

Checking the time, Bill smiled; enough time had passed for him to make his first move. Heading towards the door, Bill slipped out into the night and crossed the cemetery towards the old Stackhouse property. Climbing onto the porch, Bill raised his hand and knocked on the door. He ran a hand through his hair, straightening it as he waited for Sookie to answer. He already had his excuse for calling on her on the tip of his tongue, his need to see his Sheriff was as good as excuse and any and he doubted Sookie was bright enough to know he was lying. Bill frowned as the minutes ticked by without any answer, knocking again louder, he took a step back and cast his eyes over the house and for the first time noticed how quiet it was. Reaching forward, he tried the door and discovered it was locked. Bill groaned in frustration as he hoped off the porch and circled the house. He peered through the living room window and swore as he realised Sookie wasn’t there and the house was empty. Taking a quick look around the property, Bill cursed as he saw Sookie’s car gone.

“Inconsiderate bitch,” Bill mumbled under his breath as he stomped back to his house and climbed into his own car. Starting the engine, Bill paused as he wondered where she would have gone. From what he had learned from Dawn, Sookie didn’t spend much time hanging around Bon Temps. She rarely ventured out to Merlotte’s, having had an argument with her former boss years ago, and was only really ever there when she was meeting with her brother. Given that Eric was out of town for a couple of nights, he could have made plans to meet up with Jason, Bill theorised.

Heading his car in the direction of Merlotte’s, Bill decided to start his search there and hope for the best. Pulling into the parking lot of the bar, Bill was disappointed to realise neither Sookie’s nor Jason’s vehicles were there. He turned his car around and headed towards Jason’s house, deciding to see if Sookie was visiting her brother. He struck out again when he found Jason’s house empty as well. Realising he only had one place left to try, Bill turned his car and headed towards Shreveport, secretly hoping he wouldn’t find her at Fangtasia, where he had no doubt Pam was.

Bill groaned as he pulled into Fangtasia’s parking lot and saw both Sookie’s car and Jason’s truck. *She would have to be here,* Bill cursed silently as he climbed out his car and headed towards the door; he nodded at the unfamiliar vampire manning the door before slipping inside. He flicked his eyes over the inside of the club, looking for Sookie. He spied her straight away sitting in what he knew to be, Eric’s booth. He was surprised to see only Jason with her, half expecting to see Pam glued to her side while her Master was away. Heading towards the bar, Bill stayed at the edge of it, away from the hustle of activity, and he ordered a True Blood. Keeping Sookie in his line of sight, Bill sat down on the barstool; there was too much noise in the bar for him to overhear what Sookie and Jason were talking about, much to his chagrin. So lost in his observation of Sookie and Jason, Bill failed to see the other vampires in the bar watching him carefully.

“Is he for real?” Jason asked as he slammed his empty glass back on the table. “He’s about as subtle as a marching band.”

“He’s not aware we know the real reason he is here,” Sookie replied with a shrug as she flicked her eyes over the bar in a seemingly dismissive manner. She smiled softly as she saw Thalia mould herself against the wall behind Bill without him realising.

“So he’s stupid as well,” Jason snorted.
“Uninformed and overconfident,” Sookie said as she turned her gaze back to her brother.

“Stupid,” Jason countered. “Even if I didn’t know what’s going on, I’d still find that suspicious. He’s staring at you like he’s a starving dog and you’re a juicy slab of meat.”

“He does kinda stick out like a sore thumb,” Sookie replied chuckling slightly at how very obvious Bill was acting. “I guess he wasn’t as informed as he thought.”

“Fucking Hadley,” Jason growled as he signalled a waitress for another beer. “I swear Sook, if that tattling little bitch shows up like you suspect I’m gonna put her over my knee and spank her until she can’t sit down for a week.”

“From what I’ve heard about our dear ol’ cousin, she might like that,” Sookie said waving off the waitress as she returned with Jason’s beer. “She’s always been a jealous, spiteful brat, Jas. It’s not like she’s changed.”

“You’re not telling me you’re not mad at her?” Jason scoffed. “She sold you out, Sook. It’s her fault we’re stuck with the Civil War reject in Bon Temps.”

“Oh, I’m plenty mad,” Sookie admitted as she took a sip of her drink. “I’m just not that surprised. It’s not like the first time Hadley has sold us out, and I doubt it’ll be the last. The only person Hadley cares about is Hadley. She showed that when she stole Aunt Linda’s silver when she was dying. She can’t blame the drugs for everything she did. She was a selfish bitch long before she got her first fix.”

“Still think she deserves a good lashing,” Jason replied. “Hell she’s deserved one for years.”

“If she shows up I’ll guarantee she’ll get one,” Sookie promised darkly. “She ain’t getting away with this Jas.”

“Just make sure I’m around to see it,” Jason replied frowning as he saw Bill inch around the bar and closer to them. “Can he hear us?”

“No,” Sookie said as she shook her head.

“How can you be so sure?” Jason asked curiously.

“Look at him, he’s practically falling off his seat trying to get closer so he can listen in to what we are saying.” Sookie replied her lips curling into a smile as she explained it to Jason. “He’s becoming frustrated that he can’t hear what we are saying. There’re too many people in here for him to filter out everyone else, and if he knew what we were talking about he would have made a move by now. Plus, Eric had a privacy spell placed around this booth. He often uses it for business. He’d have to stand right next to it to actually overhear what we are saying.”

“You could have started with that,” Jason snorted.

“My way was more fun,” Sookie replied with a laugh.

“How long before he approaches you, do you reckon?” Jason asked as he saw Bill practically fidget in his chair.

“I’ll give him another fifteen minutes before he finds an excuse to come over here,” Sookie guessed. “He’ll probably make up some excuse about wanting to see Eric.”

“Ten minutes and his excuse will be bringing you another drink,” Jason countered. He tapped his fingers against the table as they counted off the seconds, “I don’t get it. Why’d they think you’d be
attracted to that? Why’d they think anyone would be attracted to that?”

“Damned if I know,” Sookie snorted. “He’s definitely not my type.”

“Word round Merlotte’s is he’s Dawn’s though,” Jason said. “According to Lafayette, she’s been seeing him for the last few nights. She’s been practically bragging to Laf about her nights with Vampire Bill.”

“Explains why he looks so healed,” Sookie mused, “if he’s feeding off her. At least we got Selah away from him.”

“Bastard deserves a stake up the ass for what he did to her,” Jason spat in disgust. Sookie had told Jason everything, wanting him to be aware of what was going on and the lengths Bill was willing to go. “Does he know Selah’s not coming back yet?”

“I doubt it,” Sookie replied. “He has no idea that Eric was behind her being sent to the conference in Chicago and that she’s being offered a high paying job while there. She’s beyond his reach now.”

“Seems like he’s replaced her with Dawn,” Jason growled.

“Not quite,” Sookie said sadly. “From what Maxwell says Dawn is with him willingly. He hasn’t glamoured her to do or tell him anything. In fact, he says she’s enjoying herself. I’m sorry, Jason. I know you cared about her.”

“She was only using me, Sook,” Jason replied dejectedly. “I know that. She wanted Eric. It’s why I asked him to glamour me to stay away from her. I knew I wasn’t strong enough at the time and I wasn’t gonna let her hurt you like that.”

“You’re stronger than you know, Jason,” Sookie said truthfully. “She was never a threat to my relationship to Eric, but you still wanted to protect me.”

“Thanks,” Jason said sheepishly.

“Here we go,” Sookie whispered, her eyes briefly flicking to the side as Bill slowly approached their table.

“Nine minutes, I win,” Jason crooned proudly. “You owe me dinner.”

“Like I wasn’t gonna cook for you anyway,” Sookie groused playfully as Bill reached their table. Sookie bit back a smile as she saw Thalia and Clancy move closer to her.

“I saw you had finished your drink,” Bill said as he placed a gin and tonic on the table in front of Sookie, “so I had the bartender make you another.”

“Thank you,” Sookie replied as she pushed the drink to the side; there was no way she was ever going to drink anything he ever gave her.

“Told you,” Jason sang nearly bouncing in his seat. “Predictable.”

“Hush,” Sookie scolded lightly, fighting the urge to wag a finger at him in a playful manner. “What brings you to Fangtasia tonight, Mr. Compton?”

“Bill, as I have told you, call me Bill,” Bill replied smiling in what he thought was a soothing manner. “I’m hoping to see the Sheriff. I have something I would like to discuss with him.”

“Damn,” Jason groused under his breath.
“My husband is not here tonight,” Sookie replied smoothly. As you well know you lying, two-faced, snake in the grass, she added silently. “He was called out of town on a business matter.”

“Oh that is unfortunate,” Bill lied as he slinked closer ready to lay on the charm. “He didn’t invite you to join him?”

“There was no reason for him too,” Sookie said simply, barely restraining herself from rolling her eyes and knowing full well where Bill was heading with it.

“Still a beautiful lady like you should not be left alone,” Bill replied smarmily. “Forgive me for speaking ill of my Sheriff, but he is a fool for leaving you behind. You should be shown off for all to see, not hidden away in the shadows of a place like this.”

“I’ll forgive you for speaking ill of your Sheriff,” Sookie said, as she angled her head to stare at Bill. She grinned at the smug look that spread across his face; oh how she was gonna enjoy washing that look off. “I won’t however,” she continued her eyes narrowing into slits, “forgive you for speaking ill of my husband.”

“Sookie…” Bill started taken aback by the venom in her voice.

“Mrs. Northman or Mistress,” Sookie spat as she prepared to tear a strip of him. “I haven’t given you the permission to address me in such an informal and familiar manner. My husband, your Sheriff, might not be here this evening, but that doesn’t mean you can take liberties that you wouldn’t dare take if he was. Well not unless you wish to receive another punishment,” Sookie smirked as she saw Bill’s eye widened as he realised she knew all about his punishment and why. “Yes, Mr. Compton, I’m aware that you were punished, and I also know why; and I find your actions disgusting. You pretend to be a gentleman, but I believe it’s clear to us all that you’re not. Now if that is all, please leave.”

Bill stood by the table, shocked by her words. Never in all his life as a vampire had a human ever talked to him in such a way. He could feel the sting of humiliation creeping up on him as the sounds around him penetrated his little bubble. She had embarrassed him in the middle of the bar in front of other vampires. If it wasn’t for his mission he would have demanded retribution from her Master and made Eric punish her in front of him. But there was no way he could do that and still gain her trust. He flexed his fingers as he fought the urge to snap her neck.

“My apologise, Mrs. Northman,” Bill said, trying his best to seem contrite. “I didn’t mean to offend you or your husband. I was merely…”

“Trying to hit on my sister while her husband is away,” Jason supplied helpfully, thoroughly enjoying watching his sister tear strips off him.

“I was doing no such thing,” Bill replied feigning offense.

“Yeah right,” Jason snorted. “You’ve been staring at her since the minute you walked in.”

“Your sister is a very beautiful woman,” Bill said casting his eyes towards Sookie. “You cannot blame a man for staring.”

“She’s also a very married one,” Jason countered, “and I guarantee her husband will rip your eyes out if he catches you.”

“The Sheriff is not here,” Bill replied arrogantly.

“No, but his Child is,” Pam said as smoothly joined the conversation making Bill take a step back.
“You’re looking awfully pink, Bill,” she remarked as she slid in the booth beside Sookie, telling Bill she saw him as no threat. “Have you fallen off the mainstreaming wagon?”

Bill glared at Pam but said nothing. He cursed himself for not hearing her approach until she was beside him. Clenching his fist, Bill try to rein in his anger, his big plan to befriend Sookie slowly unravelling before his very eyes.

“Can vampires re-grow their eyeballs?” Jason asked suddenly making Sookie bite back a laugh as she saw Bill flinch slightly.

“It’s very painful and takes quite a long time, but yes,” Pam answered turning her attention to Jason. “Why do you ask?”

“I was just wondering if the Civil War reject would be able to re-grow his eyeballs if Eric ripped them out,” Jason replied with a shrug.

“Why would Eric rip Bill’s eyes out?” Pam asked nonplussed.

“For staring at Sookie like a dog in heat,” Jason answered, grinning as he watched Pam’s eyes narrow in anger.

“Have you been spying on my Mistress again?” Pam growled. “Maybe you would like another art lesson.”

“It was a simple misunderstanding,” Bill said as he backed up. “I meant her no harm or disrespect.”

“What are you doing here Compton?” Pam spat.

“He said he wants to see the Sheriff,” Sookie said before he had a chance to answer. “I explained Eric is away on business, and then he kinda insulted him. And now he’s leaving. Isn’t that right, Mr Compton?”

“Yes,” Bill said quickly as he continued to back up. “I will return and visit the Sheriff another night,” spinning on his heels he practically ran from the club.

“Follow him,” Sookie ordered as she called Clancy over. “I want to know if he’s heading back to Bon Temps or is heading elsewhere.”

“Yes, Mistress,” Clancy said before speeding after the retreating Bill.

“Did he really think that’d work?” Jason asked.

“Apparently,” Sookie replied, a frown marring her features as she stared at the empty throne on the dais.

“Sookie?” Jason said softly.

“He will be fine,” Pam said as she saw where Sookie was staring. “The Queen won’t be foolish enough to try anything tonight.”

“I still worry,” Sookie admitted with a sad little smile.

“Just like he is no doubt worrying about you,” Pam replied. “He will be home tomorrow night and you both will be safe.”

“I hope so,” Sookie whispered.
“Sook,” Jason said softly as he reached for her hand, “Eric will fuck up anyone who tries to stand in his way.”

“Jason!” Sookie chastised.

“What? You married a badass, sis,” Jason replied unapologetically. “That bitch won’t know what hit her if she tries anything. I’m more worried about you. You have that jackass living next door to you. He might try something when you get home.”

“I have Pam and Thalia staying with me tonight,” Sookie assured him. “Diantha and the Weres are on guard in the morning. I’m well protected.”

“You sure?” Jason asked. “Cause I can go shove a broom up his ass now for you, if you like?”

“Ooh, I want to see that,” Pam cut in giddily. “Let’s do that.”

“No,” Sookie said giggling as she pulled Pam back into the booth. “You can’t do that without Eric. He’d pout if he missed it.”

“You sure you’ll be all right, Sook?” Jason asked happy to hear her laugh.

Looking around the bar, Sookie smiled as she saw all her vampires milling around keeping an eye on her. “Yeah,” she said softly. “I’ll be fine.”
Chapter 14

“The Queen will see you now,” a feminine voice purred from the doorway in the waiting room.

Barely restraining from rolling his eyes, Eric stood up and walked towards the door, ignoring the young brunette who was eye-fucking him as he passed her. An hour after arriving in New Orleans, under the summons of his Queen, Sophie-Anne had finally decided to stop playing her silly power plays and see him. It was one of her usual ploys to make herself feel important. She loved making people wait for her; she was under the false impression it made her seem important. Everyone else thought it made her look childish and pathetic.

Strutting into the Queen’s poolroom, Eric sneered at the donors who were littered around the room. He blanked his face as he approached the Queen and inclined his head, offering her a respectful nod. Even though usual protocol dictated he should bow before his Monarch, Eric had never done more than nod at her since he took the position of Sheriff, something Sophie-Anne had never been pleased about. She had wanted him to bow to her; she had wanted him on his knees before her, but a command from his Maker had prevented Eric from bowing before anyone unworthy. Of course Eric had never actually told Sophie-Anne that; he had simply explained it away as his Maker (whose identity she wasn’t aware of) had commanded him to never bow before anyone but him. Unable to argue with a Maker’s command, Sophie-Anne had no choice but to accept it.

“Your majesty,” Eric greeted.

“Eric,” Sophie-Anne purred as she ran her eyes over him in a lascivious manner. Propping her leg up on the chaise, she let the thin white dress she was wearing part, revealing her see-through panties to Eric’s uninterested gaze. It was no secret that Sophie-Anne lusted after her oldest Sheriff. From the moment Eric accepted the position of Sheriff of Area Five, Sophie-Anne had been trying to entice him into her bed. She couldn’t stand the air of indifference Eric portrayed around her. She was used to men and women falling over themselves to be with her, and yet Eric, much to her chagrin and anger, never batted so much as an eyelash at her. “I have been hearing some unusual and troubling reports about you of late.”

“Troubling in what way, my Queen?” Eric asked, playing along with her silly games. Oh how he wished he could rip her head off and throw it in the swimming pool. He wished she would finally get a clue and realise he wasn’t interested in her in the slightest. Her constant throwing herself at him was beginning to become an embarrassment, not only to him, but to her as well. Eric had refused every one of her pathetic advances, and yet she still tried. Eric was sure her continued attempts to get him into her bed were more of a pride thing than any real desire or feeling for him. She preferred the touch of a woman, but craved the protection of a man. With Eric at her side, Sophie-Anne would be practically untouchable. It was a shame she insisted on playing her foolish games; if she hadn’t, she would have had his full loyalty.

“Most troubling indeed.” Sophie-Anne tutted as she drew out the suspense, or so she thought. She ran her hand up her thigh, letting out a small moan as she stared at Eric. Her eyes narrowed in anger as she saw just how unaffected he was by her. She shifted on the chaise lounger, letting her dress slip off her shoulders. “It has been brought to my attention, by someone other than my Sheriff…”

Obviously as I am your Sheriff, you pathetic, idiotic cunt, Eric thought derisively. And speaking of cunts, I don’t want to see yours. So please close your legs and spare me the nightmare.

“That you have gotten married,” Sophie-Anne continued, unaware of what Eric was thinking.
“Now, I told my most faithful servant…”

_The cocksucker Compton_, Eric supplied helpfully.

“That he must be mistaken. My Sheriff would never get married without seeking the approval of his Queen first,” Sophie-Anne simpered. She tilted her head to the side and pursed her lips. “It could almost be considered treason to do such a thing.”

_Only someone as self-involved and pathetic as you would consider getting married without your permission treason_, Eric thought. Oh how he was going to love wiping that smug look of her face. _You are so far out of your league and you don’t even know it._

“I am not sure I understand, your majesty,” Eric replied, feigning confusion.

“You’re a smart vampire, Eric,” Sophie-Anne said, her eyes fixed on him intently. “It’s simple really. Are you married?”

“Yes,” Eric answered truthfully. There was no point in lying at that point. The papers had been submitted and approved by the council. Soon everyone would know he was married, so lying would only cause more trouble than it was worth.

“And you didn’t think to notify your Queen or seek my permission?” Sophie-Anne asked shrilly as she dropped her seductive tone.

“I am afraid that is what I don’t understand,” Eric answered carefully, his face showing a confusion he didn’t feel. “I informed you of my decision to wed before I married my wife. I sought your blessing.”

“Don’t lie to me,” Sophie-Anne shouted as she rose to her feet. She growled at Eric as she stalked towards him. “You had no right to marry my… You had no right to marry without asking my permission,” she added quickly hoping Eric had noticed her slip up. “You’re my Sheriff. My word is law, and I didn’t give you permission to marry. I demand you end this unapproved union this instant.”

“I am afraid that is not possible,” Eric said firmly, making it clear he wouldn’t end his marriage. He had heard her unintentional slip, and was well aware she was going to say her telepath. _She will never be yours_, he swore as he refused to cower under her angry gaze.

“I can have you chained in silver for this,” Sophie-Anne threatened, her eyes blazing with fury. It was bad enough he rebuffed her advances; he also refused her demands to break his ridiculous union with her telepath. “Is the pathetic little blood bag really worth the pain of spending years in silver?”

“Do not refer to my wife like that,” Eric growled, showing Sophie-Anne he wasn’t playing. “As I was saying it is impossible to break my marriage to my wife. I informed you that I was marrying a human over two years ago. You not only approved, you signed the contract I submitted to the council to make my marriage legal in our world as well as hers…”

“I did no such thing,” Sophie-Anne yelled, all pretence of a calm demeanour gone in her anger. “I would’ve never given you permission…” she trailed off as the rest of Eric’s words registered with her. “Council,” she uttered in a terror filled tone. “You submitted the papers with the Supernatural Council?”

“I did,” Eric replied biting back a smile at the look of horror on her face. “I submitted them the night after we married. The Council was most gracious in approving them.”
“I never approved them, you, it,” Sophie-Anne screeched. “I will bring you before the Council for this. I’ll have you charged with perjury.”

*Pam was right. She is an idiot. Perjury is the crime of lying in court under oath, you brain dead cretin.*

“Your majesty, you signed the papers yourself just over two years ago when the matter was brought to your attention,” Eric replied smoothly. “The demon lawyer, Cataliades drew the papers up personally as I was to be the first vampire and oldest Sheriff in the state to marry.”

“Cataliades?” Sophie-Anne repeated, her tone lowering at the news.

“Yes, your majesty,” Eric said.

“Andre,” Sophie-Anne said, calling to her oldest and favourite child. “Contact Cataliades. I want to know what he knows about this. If I signed these papers as Northman is suggesting he will have a copy. This should be easily fixed.”

“Yes, my Queen,” Andre replied bowing before her. He sent a glare in Eric’s direction before speeding out of the poolroom.

*Srivelling little prick.* Eric thought as he watched him Andre race out the room.

“You’re not leaving until we get this sorted,” Sophie-Anne growled as she threw herself back down on the chaise lounger. “You might as well get comfortable,” she added as she parted her legs in invitation.

*I would rather fuck a silver glove.*

Taking a seat on one of the other chairs, Eric stretched his legs out and waited. He was internally counting down the seconds until Andre returned with the news that Sophie-Anne had signed the papers. He could already see her reaction to the news and the tantrum she would no doubt throw. Sophie-Anne was already so far out of her depths, and he hadn’t even told her about the bond he and Sookie shared yet.

In was nearly an hour later when Andre returned; Eric knew full well it would have only taken him fifteen minutes at the most to confirm the truth of his words with Mr. Cataliades.

*The snivelling little prick was probably hiding knowing that his Maker is about to throw one of her temper tantrums.*

“My Queen,” Andre said as he approached Sophie-Anne, his voice hitching as he prepared to tell her the news. He clutched some papers in his hand tight, the paper crinkling under his firm hold. “I have spoken to the demon…”

“And?” Sophie-Anne interrupted impatiently.

“He…he,” Andre started. He swallowed hard as he held out the papers, “he confirmed Northman’s story. He claims he drew up the papers personally and was present when you signed them…”

“I never signed them,” Sophie-Anne screamed as she jumped to her feet and flew at Andre. “I would have never consented to him marrying.”

“Your signature is on the contract, Sophie,” Andre said as he handed her the papers he held. “I had Cataliades fax a copy of the contract over. It’s your signature. It also has your royal seal on it.”
Snatching the papers out of Andre’s hand, Sophie-Anne looked them over. Her eyes narrowed into slits as she saw not only her signature on them, but her royal seal as well. Checking the date on the papers, Sophie-Anne racked her brain as she tried to recall signing them. She had a vague recollection of the month in question. It had been a busy time for her; she had been meeting with Cataliades almost nightly as she had been under investigation by the human authorities for tax evasion of all things. She remembered signing a lot of papers that month.

Did I sign the papers without realising? She asked herself, her brow furrowing. There was no doubt it was her signature, and no one but her could use the royal seal. It was spelled to only recognise the reigning monarch. I let my Sheriff marry my telepath without even realising.

“I suppose congratulations are in order, Eric,” Sophie-Anne said through gritted teeth as she handed the papers back to Andre. “I must say I’m surprised that you of all vampires have married. We all know of your reputation. You’re not thought to be the settling type.”

“We all change, your majesty,” Eric replied smoothly. “And if you knew my wife, you would realise why I have.”

“I’m sure I would,” Sophie-Anne said barely hiding the hostility in her voice. “She must be quite the woman to have gotten you to settle down.”

“She is one of a kind,” Eric admitted with a smirk. “My Sookie is a cut above the rest.”

“Well this calls for a celebration,” Sophie-Anne said suddenly, a twinkle entering her eyes as she stared at Eric. “It’s a shame your wife can’t be here to celebrate with us.”

“It is,” Eric replied as he regarded her carefully. He could see she was up to something. He saw her congratulations for what they were: hollow and insincere. She still wanted Sookie that much was obvious, even if she didn’t know he was aware of her real goal.

“I believe the humans have a tradition of toasting to the happy couple,” Sophie-Anne said. “Now champagne is of no use to us. But fortunately we do have plenty of high quality donors present. We will toast using them.”

“Your majesty that is a kind sentiment. However…” Eric started.

“It isn’t a sentiment, Sheriff,” Sophie-Anne cut him off, her lips curling into a wicked smile. “As Queen I insist you toast your marriage with me.”

“Of course my Queen,” Eric acquiesced. As much as he hated it, he still had to follow Sophie-Anne’s orders, and fighting over sharing a donor with her was pointless, and would only lead to him being in trouble. Although he preferred to feed on Sookie only, they both knew there were times when that were not possible. Sookie had never begrudged him feeding on others; she saw it for what it was, just a means of sustenance. Donors to him were like steak to her, just food. Still, he didn’t like Sophie-Anne forcing him to feed when he did not want to.

“Good,” Sophie-Anne simpered as she clapped her hands in delight. “I have had some new donors delivered since you last visit to the palace. I’m sure we can find one who will wet your appetite.” Strolling towards the pool, Sophie-Anne cast her eyes over the donors; “No, no, no,” she added dismissing half of them with a flick of her finger. “Aha, you,” she pointed to a dark-haired woman who was floating on her back, “come here,” she ordered as she wrapped her hand around a brunette’s wrist and dragged her towards the chaise lounger.

Pushing the brunette down on the lounger, Sophie-Anne turned to face Eric and the donor, “Eric,
this is Yvetta,” she introduced. “She is from Estonia and her blood is so spicy, it tastes like fire. I’m sure you will find her to your satisfaction.”

Realising he had no choice, Eric crooked a finger at Yvetta and beckoned her forward. He ignored the hungry look she gave him as he cast his eyes over her. Shaking his head, Eric ordered her to turn around and stepped closer to her. Placing one hand on her upper arm, he held her still as he brushed her hair away from her neck. Flicking his tongue over her neck, he grimaced as her sour taste before sinking his fangs into her. Eric drew deep on the wound, her blood was as spicy as Sophie-Anne claimed and Eric didn’t find it altogether displeasing, but it was no match on the flavour of his wife. Sookie’s blood tasting like a gift from the God’s themselves, and no common whore would ever measure up to it or her.

Yvetta moaned loudly as she felt Eric pull on her wound. Heat spread though her and she found herself panting with desire as she tried desperately to wiggle against him. She felt Eric tighten his hold on her, holding her still and preventing her from grinding against him, as she wanted. She, like all the donors at the palace had heard of Eric. The older donors spoke of him like he was some kind of God, and it was clear from the tone in their voices they all desired him. They wanted to be his, but he had never shown an interest in any of them, refusing their offers and advances. But as she felt him continue to drink from her, she was sure she was different. She was different from all the rest. She had quickly climbed the ranks within the donor pool and was considered one of the favourites. Hadley was still the number one donor, or pet as she preferred, but Yvetta was most definitely the second most favourite. She pleased the Queen’s children regularly and was always willing to do as she was asked without question.

Taking one last mouthful of her blood, Eric retracted his fangs and sealed his bite mark before pushing Yvetta away. Turning towards the Queen, Eric didn’t even bother to roll his eyes as he saw the Queen with her fangs buried between the other donor’s splayed thighs. She is nothing if not predictable.

“Delicious,” Sophie-Anne purred as she pulled back from her donor. Her lips were stained red with blood. “I trust yours was equally as pleasing?”

“She was…satisfactory,” Eric replied choosing his words carefully. He didn’t think “I’ve had much better” would be a suitable reply, even if though it was a true sentiment.

“Mmm, that she is,” Sophie-Anne said as she ran her gaze over Yvetta. “Her blood and…” She trailed off with a giggle as she tilted her head to the side. “Andre,” she called as she caught his eye, “escort Yvetta back to her quarters. She’s looking a little peaked.”

“Yes, my Queen,” Andre replied. He nodded at Sophie-Anne as he took Yvetta by the arm and pulled her out the room.

Eric frowned as he watched Andre escort Yvetta out. As far as he could tell she was fine. He would have known if he would have taken too much, and the way she was moaning like a porn star during a big scene told him she had no objections.

“So Eric,” Sophie-Anne said cutting into his musings. “Tell me about your wife?”

Eric groaned at her question. The last thing he wanted was to tell Sophie-Anne anything about his wife. She already knew too much as it was. “What would you like to know?”

“How did you meet? What was your wedding like?” Sophie-Anne counted off the questions on her fingers. “Or, tell me if it’s true she is a telepath?”
Well that was one question I wasn’t expecting her to come right out and ask. Eric thought, but then subtlety never was your strong point.

“You’re probably wondering how I know?” Sophie-Anne continued, mistaking his silence for shock and guilt.

No, I know how you know. Your favourite cunt licker told you.

“I have spies everywhere, Sheriff. Even within my own Queendom. Nothing happens in Louisiana without my knowledge.”

Except me marrying said telepath two years ago without you knowing. But apparently we are going to overlook that.

“So tell me Sheriff. Is young Sookie Stackhouse a telepath?”

You have no idea you just referred to Sookie by her maiden name, do you?

“She is,” Eric admitted, seeing no point in lying. By now the papers would be nestled securely with the Council, acknowledging not only their marriage but Sookie’s abilities as well.

“And you did not think to bring to my attention that I had a valuable asset living in my Area?” Sophie-Anne asked.

“You will have to forgive me your majesty, but I assumed you were aware,” Eric replied. “I revealed her abilities at the same time I requested your approval for my marriage. I submitted the papers to the Council two years ago. Sookie has been on the books, if you will, as Louisiana’s telepath for two years now.”

Sophie-Anne clenched her fists as she listened to Eric explain. If the Council was notified of Sookie being a telepath two years ago, she must have been as well, she realised. She cursed not being able to remember that time clearly. She wanted to punish Eric for keeping a valuable asset from her, but it seemed she was unable to. She couldn’t even demand Sookie be moved to New Orleans due to the fact that she and Eric were married. She had no power to dissolve their marriage. She glared at Eric, hatred burning bright in her eyes. She swore he wouldn’t keep her telepath from her, and that was what Sookie was, hers, as far as she was concerned.

“It seems you have an answer for everything,” Sophie-Anne remarked with a grimace. Grabbing her donor by the hair, Sophie-Anne threw her off the chaise lounger and onto the floor.

She looked up as Andre re-entered the room, she smiled at her child before turning her attention back to Eric. “It also seems it’s too late for you to return to your area and wife tonight. You will never make it before sunrise. You will stay here,” she ordered as she flopped down on the lounger. Undoing the ties on the side of her dress, Sophie-Anne let it fall open as she spread her legs wide.

“The Sheriff quarters are prepared for you,” she added as she reached between her legs and ripped her own panties off, “you’re free to retire.” She crooked a finger at the donor, smirking as the girl crawled towards her. “Unless you want to stay and play with us.”

“I will respectfully decline,” Eric replied, ignoring the donor who now had her head buried between Sophie-Anne thighs.

“Fine,” Sophie-Anne moaned loudly as she tangled her hand in the donor’s hair. “You’re dismissed.”

Sophie-Anne watched as Eric nodded and walked away. Her fingers tightened in the donor’s hair as
she pushed her closer to her dripping sex. “Is everything set?” she asked, turning her gaze to Andre. “It is,” Andre assured her, rubbing a hand over his hardening cock as he watched the donor please his Queen.

“Good. Join us, my love,” Sophie-Anne said. She smiled as she saw Andre free himself from his trousers and move behind the donor. She heard the rip of fabric as Andre tore off the donor’s bottoms. The small sound of pain mixed with pleasure telling her he had entered the brunette hard.

“Soon this will be the telepath between us, my Queen,” Andre swore as he thrust hard into the donor.

“Soon,” Sophie-Anne agreed.

OoOoO

Eric let out a sigh of relief as he escaped the poolroom. He knew things weren’t okay, but for now Sophie-Anne was accepting his claims that he informed her of his marriage. He wasn’t fooling himself that she would accept that Sookie was his and beyond her reach, but like he had told Pam, he had made it more difficult for her. She could have fought his claims that he had told her, even if he did have the papers to back them up, but it seemed she was, for now at least, using her brains.

Approaching the Sheriff’s quarters, Eric keyed in the security numbers and pushed open the door and strolled inside. The hairs on the back of his neck stood up as he sensed someone else in the room. Moving with the stealth of a cat, he moved through the rooms towards the intruder. Eric groaned as he entered the bedroom and saw a naked Yvetta lying on the bed, her hand moving fervently between her legs as she played with herself. He could smell her arousal from the doorway, and he shook his head.

“What are you doing here?” Eric growled.

“I’m here for you, Master,” Yvetta purred, her accent thick with arousal. “I am, how do you say, a wedding present from the Queen.”

Eric rolled his eyes as he realised why Sophie-Anne had Andre usher Yvetta out of the room like she did. It was for this very reason. He had been given a toy to fuck. Sophie-Anne really was foolish if she thought this would work. He had no doubt this room was under surveillance; everything he did was being recorded. Sophie-Anne was expecting him to fuck the whore on his bed, especially after feeding on her earlier. And he was sure Sophie-Anne would arrange it so Sookie would see the footage of him betraying her and would leave her cheating husband. Sophie-Anne then would sweep in and claim Sookie for herself. As plans go, it was quite pathetic, Eric thought.

Rising to her knees, Yvetta crawled along the bed towards Eric, mistaking his silence for desire. Reaching out, she ran her hand down his chest. “I’m yours do as you please,” she whispered. “I won’t say no. My body is yours.” She dragged her hand lower. “I will show you pleasure like you have never known before. I will do all the things your wife won’t. I will please you better than her…”

Striking out, Eric wrapped his hand around Yvetta’s throat. “You dare speak of my wife,” he growled as he glared at her.

“You want it rough,” Yvetta whimpered, her arousal coating her thighs. “That is fine.” “I want nothing from you,” Eric snarled. “My wife, unlike you, is a lady. She is my lady. I have no use for disgusting whores like you. Have you no shame?” Pulling her off the bed, Eric tossed Yvetta
to the floor. “You know I am married, and yet you still throw yourself at me like a common whore.”

Climbing to her knees, Yvetta stared up at Eric, fear and arousal warring in her eyes. “I’m a gift to you,” she said her voice shaky. She remembered Andre’s orders. She was supposed to seduce Eric. She was supposed to please the Sheriff in anyway he desired. She was his reward, for what she didn’t know or care; all she knew was that the Queen and Andre wanted her to fuck Eric and make a show of it, and that was what she was going to do.

Crawling towards Eric, Yvetta lifted her hand and reached for his zipper. “I can suck your cock for you. I’m good with my mouth,” she offered. She smiled as she felt Eric’s hand in her hair, thinking she finally had him. Her smile turned into a grimace as she felt his hand pull on her hair roughly.

Grabbing a hold of her hair painfully, Eric dragged Yvetta towards the door. Pulling it open, he threw her into the corridor, uncaring that she was still naked.

“I don’t fuck whores,” Eric growled before slamming the door closed and locking it, leaving a humiliated Yvetta lying naked in the hallway.

_Fucking Sophie-Anne_, Eric cursed as he stalked through the room. Pulling his phone out of his pocket, Eric sent a quick text message to Pam, before hitting one on his speed dial.

“Hello.”

Eric smiled as he heard the sleepy voice of his wife. “Hello Lover,” he greeted as he stripped the bed and collapsed on top of it.

“Eric?” Sookie questioned. “What’s wrong?”

“Nothing, Lover; I am just getting ready to retire for the night and wanted to hear your voice,” Eric said.

“Sweet talker,” Sookie replied with a giggle.

“Only for Sookie,” Eric said with a chuckle. “Sleep darling. I will see you tomorrow.”

“Okay, love you,” Sookie whispered.

“Jag älskar dig,” Eric said before disconnecting the call. Closing his eyes, Eric let the image of his wife fill his mind as the sun claimed him for the day.
Chapter 15

Eric rose the next evening thankfully to silence; he was half expecting to rise to another one of Sophie-Anne’s surprises. He didn’t trust her not to put another donor in his room with him. He had locked the door, but that didn’t mean she couldn’t override the lock. It was her palace; she could practically do anything she wanted, something she made sure everyone knew on a nightly basis. For whatever reason she didn’t, Eric was grateful. He knew Sookie would never believe anything Sophie-Anne would tell or show her; his wife was smarter than the childish Queen, and their bond would show he was being truthful, but it would add unnecessary strain on their relationship.

Grabbing his phone, Eric sent a quick message to both Sookie and Pam informing them that he was okay and should be home that evening, before heading out of the room and towards the poolroom where he knew the Queen would be waiting. Pushing the doors open, Eric strutted in like he owned the place. He flicked his eyes over the room, searching out any hidden threats as he made his way to the Queen.

“Your majesty,” Eric greeted with a small nod.

“Eric,” Sophie-Anne replied sweetly, hiding her anger behind a false mask. She was incensed that her little ploy didn’t work.

Having sampled Yvetta’s bountiful talents herself, Sophie-Anne was sure the Estonian whore would have been able to entice Eric into a little fun. Sophie-Anne had the bedroom under surveillance and she couldn’t wait to get it all on film so she could show Sookie. She had her act all planned out: she would have played the sympathetic Queen, feigning concern and remorse that the betrayal happened under her roof. She would have offered Sookie a way out and heartbroken, and a grateful Sookie would have jumped at the chance while Eric would have learned never to cross his Queen. Only the little whore had failed, and Eric had resisted her advances.

“I trust you had a pleasant night,” Sophie-Anne added, her lips curling into a small smile as she planned how to make them both sorry for messing up her scheme. Not giving him a chance to reply, she continued, “I won’t keep you long tonight. I’m sure you want to get back to your little wife. We just have a small bit of business to deal with first.”

From the calculating look in Sophie-Anne’s eyes, Eric knew she was up to something. Even though he believed he would leave that night, he was expecting her to play her silly games to keep him there until the last possible moment. Whatever this little bit of business was, Eric wasn’t sure he wanted to be present when it was handled. But realising he had no choice, Eric said nothing and simply waited.

He didn’t have to wait long before Yvetta was marched into the poolroom, a collar fastened securely around her neck. Dragging her towards Sophie-Anne, Andre ordered Yvetta to kneel before her Queen as he moved to stand behind Sophie-Anne.

Eric groaned softly as he realised what was about to happen. Of course Sophie-Anne wouldn’t let Yvetta’s failed seduction attempt go unpunished.

“Yvetta, I’m very disappointed in you,” Sophie-Anne began as she rose to her feet. “I offered you a chance to rise above your station. I invited you into my home, bought you pretty things, and this is how you repay me? By running through my corridors after trying to seduce one of my Sheriff’s, poorly at that?”

“My Queen…” Yvetta said meekly.
“Silence,” Sophie-Anne shouted, cutting her off. “You owe us all an apology for your disgraceful behaviour last night.”

“I’m sorry,” Yvetta whimpered.

“Sorry is not good enough,” Sophie-Anne replied. “You have left me no choice but to punish you for your shameful actions.”

Eric watched silently as Sophie-Anne circled the kneeling Yvetta slowly. He recognised Sophie-Anne’s words for what they were. She wasn’t punishing Yvetta for her disgraceful behaviour as she put it; she was punishing her for failing to seduce him like she had been ordered. As he listened to Sophie-Anne talk, Eric didn’t miss the little looks she kept casting him, and he wondered if she was expecting him to speak up and defend Yvetta. If she was, she would be waiting a long time. He held no sympathy for the kneeling whore; she knew Eric was married, and she still tried to fuck him. She was willing to play Sophie-Anne idiotic game and now she was suffering for it.

Reaching for the small chain that was fastened to the collar, Sophie-Anne tugged on it and dragged the kneeling woman with her as she sauntered back to the chaise lounger. Sitting down, she pulled Yvetta over her knee. “As Queen it is my right and duty to punish those who disgrace me and disobey my rules. Yvetta did both of those things last night, and as Queen I’m sentencing her ten slaps on her bare ass every night for the next two weeks. Does anyone object or wish to challenge my ruling?” Silence met her question, making Sophie-Anne smile. “Eric, do you object?” she added as her eyes fell on her oldest Sheriff.

“No, your majesty,” Eric replied, curious as to why she asked him directly.

“Good,” Sophie-Anne purred. Lifting up the skirt of the lace mini dress Yvetta was wearing, Sophie-Anne ripped off her panties and bared Yvetta’s lower half to the whole room. Running her hand over Yvetta’s ass, Sophie-Anne squeezed her cheeks hard before raising her hand and bringing it down swiftly with power. The sound of the her hand hitting Yvetta’s flesh reverberated through the room, making more than one vampire groan. Rubbing Yvetta’s ass, Sophie-Anne soothed the sting of her slap before bringing her hand down again, three times in quick succession.

Yvetta whimpered as she felt Sophie-Anne’s hand connect with her ass. The pain of the slaps sent a thrill through her, and she felt her body reacting to it. Arousal flooded her as Sophie-Anne brought her hand down again. The Estonian had always liked a bit of pain to go with her pleasure, and it wasn’t the first time she had been spanked, nor was it the first time Sophie-Anne had spanked her. Although the other times were always in relative privacy and weren’t a punishment.

Sophie-Anne grinned as the scent of Yvetta’s arousal reached her nose. She dipped her hand between Yvetta’s legs and teased the opening of her sex. “Andre,” she called as she pushed two fingers inside Yvetta.

“Yes, my Queen?” Andre said as he stepped forward, his fangs clicking down as he got a better look at Yvetta’s bright red ass; her blood had rushed to the surface of her skin, trying to heal the damage the slaps had caused.

“Finish the punishment for me,” Sophie-Anne ordered. “She has four left tonight.” Pushing her fingers deeper inside Yvetta, Sophie-Anne pressed her thumb to her clit as she kept her eyes on Andre. “Use your belt,” she added as a afterthought. She didn’t want Yvetta to enjoy it too much.

Unbuckling his belt, Andre slid it off and folded it; snapping the leather he moved behind Yvetta. “Raise your ass,” he ordered.
Doing as ordered, Yvetta lifted her hips as a moan of pleasure spilled from her lips. She clenched her pussy around Sophie-Anne’s fingers, trying to pull them deeper inside her. A cry of pain was torn from Yvetta’s throat as the leather of Andre’s belt came down hard against her ass.

“Again,” Sophie-Anne ordered as she pushed Yvetta’s head down. Pulling her fingers out of Yvetta, Sophie-Anne laid both her arms over the whimpering whores back and held her still as she denied her any more pleasure.

“Ahh!” Yvetta cried out as Andre hit her with the belt again. Tears sprang to her eyes as she breathed heavily; she bit down on her lip as she prepared for the next strike.

Raising the belt again, Andre brought it down hard across her ass, smiling as he saw the skin break and welts rise to the surface. He could see her muscles coil and clench as the pain of the slap hit her. He wanted to lash her back as well, but Sophie-Anne had already issued her punishment and he couldn’t go against his Queen.

Catching Andre’s eyes, Sophie-Anne smiled as she saw the enjoyment her child was getting out of it. “Harder,” she instructed as she held the struggling woman tighter.

Pain was now the only thing Yvetta felt; any pleasure washed away with the crack of the leather of her ass. Tears streamed down her face as she bit through her lip. Her ass felt like it was on fire, and she tried desperately to move to avoid the final blow.

Gripping the belt tighter, Andre swung it again, angling it so the buckle connected with her abused flesh as well. The crack of the leather hitting Yvetta’s already welted ass echoed through the room as she screamed out in pain. Fixing the belt back around his waist, Andre took a step back and observed his work. He felt his pants tighten as he looked at Yvetta’s red ass; he could tell it would bruise badly and hurt her for quite a while.

The vampires present groaned and panted as lust spread through them; they eyed the Queen’s donors with hunger and waited for her permission to sate their growing hungers.

Pushing the crying Yvetta off her knee and to the floor, Sophie-Anne smirked at the whimper she gave as she landed on her sore ass. Rising to her feet, Sophie-Anne stared down at the young woman and frowned as she wondered if she had been too lenient with her punishment.

I should have had Andre fuck her up the ass after he finished hitting her with his belt.

Shaking it off, she lifted her head and addressed the room. “With that little bit of unpleasantness out of the way you’re all free to leave and go sate your hungers,” she said sweetly as she stepped over Yvetta. Sophie-Anne watched as all her vampires started to filter out the poolroom.

Nodding to his Queen, Eric spun on his heels and made his way to the door; he was just about to step through it when Sophie-Anne’s sickly sweet voice called him back. Biting back a groan, Eric turned to face her; “Yes, your majesty?”

“Aren’t you forgetting something?” Sophie-Anne said as she practically bounced on her feet in amusement.

“Your majesty?” Eric questioned confusedly as he wondered what the Queen was up to now.

Flicking her fingers towards Yvetta, Sophie-Anne smirked. “Your wedding present. I gave her to you last night. She is yours now.”

“I don’t keep pets,” Eric replied simply.
“Then give her a job and put her to work in your little bar,” Sophie-Anne said, her eyes lighting up with amusement. “She is a talented dancer. I’m sure you can find a position for her.”

“I do not…”

“Are you refusing a present from your Queen?” Sophie-Anne asked, cutting him off. “I am still your ruler, Sheriff. Would you disgrace me and my rule by refusing my generous present?”

Eric gritted his teeth as he stared at Sophie-Anne; the urge to rip her heart out of her chest was growing stronger within him. He knew this was just another one of her silly little games. What she thought she would get out of him taking Yvetta back to his area, he didn’t know. He already showed he wasn’t interested in her, and he couldn’t believe Sophie-Anne would think he was going to fuck Yvetta in his own area where his wife resided if he wouldn’t fuck her while he was in the palace and far away from Sookie.

“I could always make you both stay here,” Sophie-Anne added. “I’m sure your wife would be happy for you to relocate here so you could be nearer to your new pet. You could all stay here at the palace, just one big happy family. You could both join in playtime. I’m have no doubt your wife could find much pleasure here. Now, Sheriff, what is it going to be? Are you going to accept my generous present in the spirit it was given? Or are you going to disrespect me and refuse it?”

Realising he didn’t have any real choice, Eric pasted on a fake smile. “I will be happy to accept your wedding present,” he said. He cursed out Sophie-Anne as he watched her clap her hands like a demented seal. He didn’t want Yvetta anywhere near him or his area; the whore would be nothing but trouble. He knew that, but also he knew full well if he refused, Sophie-Anne would make him sorry for it. He didn’t doubt her threat that she would relocate him to Area One, and that was something he most certainly didn’t want.

“Good,” Sophie-Anne cooed. Bending down, she grabbed the chain attached to Yvetta’s collar and yanked her up; she dragged her over to Eric and offered him the chain. “I transfer ownership of Yvetta over to you Sheriff.”

Taking the chain, Eric nodded. “I accept,” he gritted out.

“Enjoy your new pet,” Sophie-Anne said. Spinning around Sophie-Anne skipped back to her lounger and threw herself on it. “There is one more bit of business before I forget,” she added as she got herself comfortable. “It is not widely known, but I have been in contract negotiations with the King of Arkansas; we have finally come to terms and we are to pledge at Rhodes. As one of my Sheriffs, I’m demanding your presence.”

“It would be my honour,” Eric replied.

“And, Eric, bring your pretty little wife as well,” Sophie-Anne said with a grin. “I think it’s time I meet Louisiana’s telepath.”

“Of course,” Eric said, hiding his feelings about Sophie-Anne being anywhere near Sookie. If he had to take Sookie to Rhodes with him, he would make sure she was well protected first.

“I look forward to it.” Waving her hand in his direction, “that will be all,” she dismissed. She waited for him to reach the door again when she called out to him once more. “Oh, and Eric. Don’t forget Yvetta’s punishment. As my Sheriff and her new Master it’s your responsibility to see she is properly punished per your Queen’s orders. Ten slaps on her bare ass each night for two weeks. And I want her out of my palace right away.”
“Yes, my Queen,” Eric replied with fake sincerity. Dragging Yvetta out the room, he headed out of the palace and towards his car. Not for the first time he cursed Sophie-Anne. She could have at least given them time so Yvetta could get changed. The dress she wore left nothing to the imagination and after Sophie-Anne had ripped off her panties, she also wasn’t wearing any underwear; although he realised that was probably why Sophie-Anne didn’t give him time. She wanted him to sit next to the half naked woman who had tried to seduced for the next few hours.

Opening the passenger’s side door, “Get in,” he ordered, paying her no attention as she climbed in the car. Speeding round to the driver’s side, Eric climbed in the car and gunned the engine.

“Where are we going?” Yvetta asked as she fidgeted in her seat. Her ass burning from the spanking.

“Shreveport,” Eric replied shortly, in no mood for small talk with her.

Yvetta let her eyes fall over Eric as he drove. She didn’t think she had ever seen a more handsome man. She wanted him for herself; he could give her all the things she desired, and she was sure the sex would be phenomenal. She felt her body reacting to just the thought of it. She had failed in her seduction last night, but she wouldn’t fail again. She belonged to him now. He was her Master and that meant something in the vampire world. She didn’t care about the wife that the Queen and Andre told her about; she might have to befriend her like they ordered, but that didn’t mean she actually had to like her. No, as far as Yvetta was concerned, Sookie was just in her way. She wanted Eric, and by hell or high water she would have him.

“You’re my new Master,” Yvetta said, exaggerating her accent in the way she had learned men liked.

“Unfortunately,” Eric griped.

“Will I live with you?” Yvetta asked, adding her purr to her voice.

“Not even if your life depended on it,” Eric retorted. “You can live with one of the waitress at my bar where you will work. Sophie-Anne said you can dance.”

“Yes. Would you like me to dance for you?”

“No. You can work as a dancer at my bar.”

“What would you like me to do?” Yvetta asked as she shifted in the seat so her back was against the door; she crossed her legs exposing herself to him.

“Nothing,” Eric replied, showing her no interest. “You will dance at my bar and that is it. I will not feed from you and I certainly won’t fuck you. So you can stop right now.”

“But I’m yours,” Yvetta said, feigning confusion. “My blood and body are yours. I can be whatever you want.”

“I only want my wife and you could never be her,” Eric growled.

“I could,” Yvetta said, her voice filled with lust. Undoing her seat belt, she rose up on her knees, and, slipping the straps of her dress down, she flashed her breasts at Eric. “I will never say no to you.”

“Put your dress back on and sit down,” Eric ordered, shaking his head at her shameful behaviour. Before he met Sookie he would have probably taken her up on her offer, but since the day Sookie ran her car into his he had been lost to her. No other woman held interest to him now. He loved his
wife with everything he was and would never risk her for a whore like Yvetta.

*She’s worse than the fangbangers who visit Fangtasia.*

Ignoring him, Yvetta dipped her hand between her legs and touched herself. She pushed two fingers inside her sex and pleasured herself. She smiled as she saw his hands tighten on the steering wheel, believing she was getting to him. She let out exaggerated moans of pleasure as she twisted her fingers.

“Put your dress back on, sit down, and shut up, or I am going to lock you in the trunk,” Eric threatened.

Yvetta giggled as she removed her fingers from her dripping sex. Bringing them to her mouth, she sucked them into her mouth, tasting herself. Crouching down, she leaned forward and ran her hand over Eric’s thigh, reaching for his zipper. She pulled it down slowly. She was just about to slip her hand inside in his jeans when she felt herself being pushed back. She let out a cry of pain as she landed on her still hurting ass. She felt a whoosh of air as her door was pulled open and she was pulled out of the car.

Grabbing her by the arm, Eric dragged her to the back of the car. Opening the trunk, Eric shoved her in, smirking at her surprised look. “Never touch me,” he growled before slamming the trunk and strolling back to the driver’s side.

A sharp pain hit him out of nowhere and Eric dropped to his knees; his vision blurred as pain racked his body. He pressed a hand against his stomach where the pain seemed to be centred. The bond between him and Sookie sprang to life and he realised with horror that it was her pain he was feeling.

“Sookie,” Eric whimpered.

Pulling himself to his feet, Eric threw himself in the driver’s seat and slammed on the gas pedal. The car tore down the road, breaking every speed limit.

“I’m coming Sookie; I’m coming,” Eric whispered as he tried to send her strength through the bond. He could practically hear Sookie screaming in his head.

*Eric!*
Chapter 16

Eric had only driven a few hundred yards down the road when he felt Sookie’s pain spark. Cursing the slowness of the car, he pulled over again and jumped out. Taking to the air, Eric flew as fast as he could, not caring about the expensive car he left on the side of the road or the woman locked in the trunk. Focusing on Sookie, Eric let the bond guide him; pain was still coming through it strong and he both rejoiced in and cursed it. As long as he could feel the pain, he knew she was fighting and still with him. He took on as much pain as he could as he headed towards Bon Temps. He pushed his body harder than he had ever done before as he soared through the air. Eric could feel a shift in the bond, something foreign entering it, and he growled low in his throat as he realised another vampire had given Sookie their blood. Eric swore if it was Bill, he would end him where he stood. Eric could feel Sookie’s suffering slowly easing, but it offered him no comfort. She was still in a considerable amount of pain, and it cut him to the core. He had been stuck playfully foolish games with a childish Queen while his wife was in danger and hurting.

It was nearly thirty minutes later when he neared the Bon Temps border. Honing in on Sookie, Eric streaked across the sky. He could feel her more strongly as he grew closer to her. Her pain had receded quite a bit, but she was still hurting badly, and Eric wondered what the hell had happened to her. If she had been given vampire blood like he suspected, she should have been healed and not in any pain.

It was just minutes later when he landed in the parking lot of Merlotte’s. Taking a deep breath and scenting the area, Eric let out a growl, as he smelled Sookie’s blood in the area behind the bar. Following the bond, Eric stalked into the bar in search of his wife. Seeing her propped up in one of the booths, Eric crossed the short distance and went to her.

“Eric,” Sookie whimpered weakly, her face deathly pale as she struggled to keep her eyes open.

“Lover,” Eric greeted as he reached her. Anger bubbled up in him as he got his first good look at her. Her blood soaked the front of her top, dirt caked her arms, and scratches covered her face, the pale colouring making them stand out.

Holding up her arms, Sookie reached for Eric weakly, needing to feel his arms around her. Pain bloomed in her stomach as she did, and she let out a small whimper. Tears sprang to her eyes as she stifled a sob.

Sliding into the booth beside her, Eric carefully wrapped an arm around her shoulders. “Ssshh, I’m here, Sookie,” he murmured. He pressed a soft kiss to her head before dropping his fangs.

Lifting his hand to his mouth, Eric tore into his wrist and pressed it to Sookie’s lips. He smiled down at her as she fastened her lips around his bleeding wrist and drank deeply. He could feel his blood entering her system and healing all her wounds. He watched the scratches on her face fade as it went to work. Once he was satisfied she was fine, he pulled his wrist away from her lips and pulled her into his lap.

Holding her close, Eric turned his attention to the rest of the bar. He cast his eyes over all those who were gathered, not surprised in the slightest to see Compton present. This had his name written all over it. Eric raised an eyebrow as he spied Jason clutching a broomstick and glaring daggers at Bill. Eric ignored the sullen looking Sam Merlotte who was standing behind the bar, and he settled his gaze on Pam.

“What happened here?” Eric asked as he shifted Sookie in his lap.
“Forgive me, Master,” Pam said dropping to her knees in front of the booth. “This is all my fault.”

“You are responsible for your Mistress being injured?” Eric asked. He could feel Pam’s guilt through their bond and was confused. Despite her bratty behaviour in the beginning, Pam had never harmed Sookie physically, and he was unsure how this could be her fault.

“Not her fault,” Sookie mumbled sleepily against Eric’s chest.

“It was,” Pam argued. “I was supposed to have been watching her. I got distracted.”

“How did you get distracted?” Eric asked.

Pam lowered her head and said nothing. She didn’t want to see the disappointment in her Maker’s eyes when he realised how badly she had screwed up. Sookie had been hurt because she was too busy messing around with a blood bag.

“Somebody explain what happened this instant,” Eric demanded. “I want to know how my wife was hurt, I want to know why she was hurt, and I definitely want to know who hurt her.”

“Why don’t you ask fucknuts here?” Jason said interjecting himself into the conversation as he pointed at Bill. Taking a step forward, Jason slowly approached the booth and stared down at Sookie. “Is she okay?”

“She will be,” Eric assured. “Why should I ask Bill what happened to my wife?”

“Cause he was the first one of the scene,” Jason said as he slid in the booth opposite Eric and the now sleeping Sookie. “He would have seen it all.”

“Is that true, Bill?” Eric asked turning his attention to the younger vampire. “Did you witness the incident?”

“I did, Sheriff,” Bill said as he stepped closer to the booth. None of them missed the hungry look he cast Sookie. “I was visiting my friend at Merlotte’s here tonight and witnessed the entire misunderstanding.”

“Ya’ll call my sister being stabbed a misunderstanding?” Jason scoffed. “Should shove this broom up yer ass and see if that’s a misunderstanding.”

“Stabbed,” Eric growled flicking his eyes from the fuming Jason to the unsettled Bill. “I want an explanation right now.”

“I spent today with Sookie so…” Jason started.

Flashback
Several hours earlier

“Mornin’, sis,” Jason greeted with a yawn as he stumbled into the kitchen.

“Good afternoon,” Sookie replied with a small smile as she turned to face her brother. She raised an eyebrow as she took in his dishevelled look. Letting out a chuckle, Sookie shook her head. “I thought it was over between you and Thalia.”

“It was; it is,” Jason said seeing no point in lying and pretending he didn’t know what she was on about. “We’re just fuc…”

“Friends with benefits,” Sookie cut him off, using a politer phrase.
“Yeah,” Jason agreed with a chuckle.

“Are you okay with that?” Sookie asked, concerned about her brother.

“I am,” Jason answered truthfully. “Thalia’s a great girl... Or a great ancient powerful vampire,” he amended, seeing Sookie’s raised eyebrow. “But we both know what’s between us is just physical. As much as I’d love a relationship like yours and Eric, I know Thalia’s not the one to give me it, and I’m fine with that. Besides, I’m young, healthy, and a sexy motherfucker; I should be living it up.”

“Now that’s the Jason I know and love,” Sookie said with a laugh.

“I am pretty lovable,” Jason replied with a nod. Crossing the kitchen to the fridge, Jason pulled it open and grabbed a can of soda; “You get anymore trouble from the Civil War reject last night?”

“No,” Sookie replied as she took a seat at the kitchen table. “Clancy reported he went straight home, and from what Maxwell said, he was there until sun up. Apparently he threw a little tantrum, but he never left the house.”

“You think he’ll ever realise he’s out of his league and give up?” Jason asked as he took a seat at the table opposite Sookie.

“I think he’s too stupid to realise that,” Sookie snorted. “From what Eric’s told me, Bill’s always had a high opinion of himself, and he attaches himself to those in power believing they can protect him. His Maker is said to be a total nut case but she’s a lot smarter than him. And at least she knows how to survive, something she never really taught Bill. He thinks the Queen will protect him from any repercussions.”

“Will she?” Jason asked.

“The only person Sophie-Anne will protect is Sophie-Anne,” Sookie replied truthfully. “She’s has no loyalty to anyone, not even her own children. If it came down to it she’d throw them under the bus as well.”

“Doesn’t bode well for Hadley then,” Jason remarked.

“It doesn’t, but I can’t find it in me to care, Jase,” Sookie said. “She made her choice; she’s gonna have to live with the consequences.”

“If Gran were alive she’d probably tan our hides for writing Hadley like we are,” Jason said.

“If Gran was still alive she’d probably march down to New Orleans and tan Hadley’s ass in front of everyone and then tell Sophie-Anne to leave her grandbabies alone.”

Jason laughed as he listened to Sookie’s words, seeing the truth in them. He could just imagine their Gran marching into Sophie-Anne’s palace, grabbing Hadley by the ear, and dragging her out.

“What’d ya think he’s gonna try next?” Jason asked.

“I honestly don’t know, Jase,” Sookie replied as she twisted her fingers. “I don’t think he has an actual plan, which is scary on its own. He seems to be making it up as he goes.”

“We’ll all protect you, Sook,” Jason assured as he reached for her hands. “He won’t get near you.”

“Thanks,” Sookie replied softly. “I just wish Eric was here. No offense to you or my vampires, but I feel safer when he’s with me.”
Turning his head, Jason stared out the kitchen window. “Sun’s still up and will be for another couple of hours yet. You want me to go break into his house and stake him?” Jason offered sincerely.

Shaking her head, “No,” Sookie replied. “As much as I think he deserves to be staked, at the moment it’ll only cause more trouble than he’s worth. At least we know why he’s here.”

“If you change your mind just let me know,” Jason said as he leaned back in his chair.

“Thank you, Jason.”

“Anytime sis,” Jason replied with a crooked smile. “Now, what’s for lunch?”

“What do you feel like?” Sookie asked.

“Burger Lafayette,” Jason answered with a grin. “Wanna go to Merlotte’s?”

“Yes,” Sookie replied with a shrug. She didn’t really feel like cooking, and it had been a while since she had a burger Lafayette. She didn’t spend as much time at Merlotte’s as she used to. Sam didn’t approve of her marriage and never hesitated to let her know it. He still held the ridiculous idea that she would one day see him more than just her former boss.

After alerting the guards that they were going to Merlotte’s, Sookie and Jason hopped into his truck and drove off.

“Are they following us?” Jason asked as he checked his mirrors.

“Yes,” Sookie answered. “Diantha wouldn’t have let me leave the house otherwise.”

The drive to Merlotte’s passed in silence, and before Sookie knew it they were pulling into the parking lot. Hopping out of the truck, Sookie waited for Jason before entering the bar.

Jason nudged Sookie playfully as he saw Sam staring at her from behind the bar. “Who’d ya think is more clueless? Him or the Civil War reject?”

“I’d say it’s a tie,” Sookie replied in a whisper.

“Well as I live and breathe, Sookie Stackhouse,” Arlene said as she approached Sookie and Jason. “Ya finally remembered about the little people you left behind when you went and married that big shot?”

“Who’d ya thinks more bitter her or Dawn?” Jason asked, uncaring of the glare Arlene sent his way.

“It’s a tie,” Sookie answered her brother with a shrug. “I never forgot about my friends, Arlene,” she added as she faced the bottled redhead. “In fact I see them often.”

“I haven’t seen you in months,” Arlene replied with a sneer.

“I said I hadn’t forgot my friends, Arlene. The emphasis on friends,” Sookie clarified. “I haven’t got time for those who just used me as a free babysitter. Now if you’ll excuse us.”

“I’ve never been so insulted,” Arlene huffed as Sookie brushed passed her and headed towards a table.
“The amount of times you’ve been married, I highly doubt that,” Jason snorted as he pushed past her and followed Sookie.

“Did you hear from Eric last night?” Jason asked once they had both given their order to Holly.

“I did,” Sookie replied, smiling softly as she remembered the call that woke her up. “He’s fine, a little frustrated, but fine.”

“Good,” Jason said with a nod. He had come to like his brother-in-law a great deal.

He had been hesitant of their relationship when it first began. The night Sookie introduced Eric to him and their Gran, Jason could tell his sister was falling fast and hard, and he hadn’t wanted her to get hurt. He had been happy that she had met someone who seemed to care about her, but at the same time he hadn’t liked it, as she was his little sister. He had been standoffish with Eric during their first few encounters, and, despite what many thought, it had nothing to do with him being a vampire. It was simply because he was a man who was interested in his sister. But the more time he spent with Eric the more he realised Eric was not only good for his sister, he loved her, and Jason wanted that for Sookie more than anything. He had given them both his blessing and even walked Sookie down the aisle when she married Eric.

“Is he still coming home tonight?” he added.

“Yes,” Sookie answered. “And I can’t wait.”

The two of them made idle talk as they ate their dinner, neither of them willing to discuss anything of importance in Merlotte’s. Sookie hadn’t missed the occasional glances she received, nor had she missed the thoughts of many of the customers. She smiled ruefully at the awful things many of her ‘old friends’ were thinking about her. As she looked around the old bar, Sookie wondered why she put up with many of them for so long. Many of them damned her for consorting with vampires and labelled her a freak, while the very vampires who they denounced as devils were more supportive and tolerant than those who considered themselves men and women of God.

“Oh hell,” Jason said suddenly, getting her attention. Pushing his plate away, he added, “Here comes stalker number two.”

Looking up, Sookie bit back a smirk as she saw Sam making his way over to them. “It wouldn’t be a trip to Merlotte’s without the usual ‘you’ve got to get away from those bloodsuckers’ spiel from him.”

“Although, would he be stalker number one?” Jason asked, frowning as he thought about it. “He was technically here before the reject.”

“Jason, Sookie,” Sam greeted as he stopped in front of their table.

“’Lo, Sam,” Sookie replied.

“I’m surprised to see you here, Sookie,” Sam said.

“And why is that?” Sookie asked, even though she already knew what he was going to say.

“I thought Northman had banned you from coming to my bar,” Sam replied. “It was why you stopped working here.”

“No, Sam. I stopped working here because my boss was a small minded bigot who thought he had the right to tell me what to do,” Sookie retorted, not bothering to pull any punches. “My husband
doesn’t tell me what to do or try and forbid me from going where I want. Now if that is all?”

“Why can’t you see he just using you, Sookie?” Sam argued. “He doesn’t care about you. He isn’t capable of caring about anyone.”

“My husband loves me,” Sookie growled, not appreciating him talking about Eric the way he was. “Just because you can’t accept it, doesn’t mean it isn’t true.”

“Northman can’t love,” Sam spat as he tried to make her see sense. He couldn’t understand how she was so blinded by Eric. Why couldn’t she see he would be so much better for her? They would be happy together.

“Eric loves a great deal,” Sookie replied softly as she thought about her husband. “I can feel how much he loves me.”

“Can you feel when he fucks other women as well?” Sam sneered.

“Oh fuck off, Sam,” Jason snarled interjecting himself into their disagreement. “You’re talking out of your ass as usual and embarrassing yourself.”

“I’m the only one talking sense,” Sam argued. “He’ll end up killing her.”

“Eric would kill for her,” Jason countered. “Now be a good little boy and scamper along.”

Sam snapped his gaze to Sookie as he heard Jason’s little dig. “You told him?” he snarled.

“I told him a few days after I found out your little secret,” Sookie replied with a smile. “Unlike you Sam, I don’t keep secrets from those I claim to care about. Jason has known about you for years and hasn’t said a word. Now do as he says and run along.”

Jason chuckled as he watched Sam storm off. “He’s like a dog with a bone when it comes to you.”

“Nice, Jase,” Sookie said. A smile lit up her face as she felt a warmth enter her.

“Sook?” Jason questioned curiously.

“Eric’s awake,” Sookie whispered as she reached for her phone. She pulled it out of her purse just as it chimed telling her she had a message.

“Eric?”

“Yes,” Sookie replied. “He says he’ll be home tonight.”

“I never even noticed the sun had set,” Jason said as he craned his head towards the door. “You can feel him when he rises?”

“I can,” Sookie answered with a small nod of her head. “Pam’s on her way here now.”

“You can feel that too?” Jason asked, surprised.

“No,” Sookie replied with a chuckle. “She just texted me.

Slipping her phone back in her purse, she sat back in her chair and waited for Pam. It was only ten minutes later when she entered the bar, and Sookie giggled as she saw Pam sneer at Sam as she made her way to them.
“It smells like wet dog and old spice in here,” Pam said as a greeting after she dismissed the day guards. “Has Lassie been giving you trouble?” she asked as she took a seat at the table next to Sookie.

“No more than usual,” Sookie replied truthfully.

“I wish Eric would let me neuter the dog,” Pam said making Jason grimace and cross his legs. “Just the dog, Jason.”

“You’re one freaky bitch, Pam,” Jason chortled as he called over one of the waitresses and ordered a beer.

“Speaking of freaky bitches,” Pam said with a smirk as she saw Dawn enter the bar. She glared at her hard when it looked like she was going to approach them.

“Stop intimidating my staff,” Sam growled seeing what Pam had done.

“Go dig up a bone in the backyard,” Pam sniggered. “Or roll over in a muddy puddle.”

“He can shift into any animal, right?” Jason asked suddenly.

“Yes,” Pam answered.

“So do you think we can get him to shift in a bear and find out if bears really do shit in the woods?” Jason said with a grin.

“Oh God!” Sookie said with a small laugh. “Jason stop picturing it.”

“Sorry, Sook,” Jason replied chuckling.

“Have you heard from Eric?” Sookie asked, flicking her eyes to Pam. She knew Pam was just as worried about Eric as she was.

“I have,” Pam answered. “I received a message before he went to rest and another when he rose this evening.”

“Same here,” Sookie said.

“Oh hello,” Pam purred as she saw a stunning redhead enter Merlotte’s. Straightening up, Pam ran her eyes over the young woman in a leering manner and smirked as she saw the redhead flush. “Excuse me, Sookie,” she said as she stood up and sauntered over to the woman.

Shaking her head, Sookie took a quick dip into the girl’s mind to make sure she was safe. Satisfied that she was, Sookie pulled back and smiled at Jason, “Upset that you didn’t spot her first?” she asked as she saw the frown on his face.

“Yes,” Jason answered truthfully. The redhead was a knockout, but looking at how she was reacting to Pam, he doubted she would be interested in what he had to offer.

Moving into Pam’s abandoned chair, Jason and Sookie watched as Pam chatted up the redhead. Neither of them could hear what she was saying, but given the given how receptive the woman was being, they both assumed it was working.

Jason’s eyes widened slightly as he saw Pam slip her hand under the booth where they were sitting, and the redhead let out a gasp, “Er, did she just...?”
“She did,” Sookie replied turning her eyes away from them. She really didn’t want to see her friend finger the redhead under the table.

“Damn,” Jason said, chuckling.

“I’m going to go to the restroom,” Sookie said as she stood up and excused herself. Slipping into the bar’s restroom, Sookie did her business before washing her hands. She was just drying them when Dawn came barging into the restroom.

“Decided to slum it for the day,” Dawn sniffed.

“Only when I’m in your company, Dawn,” Sookie replied sweetly.

“You think you’re better than me?” Dawn spat as she stepped towards an unfazed Sookie.

“I don’t say this often, but I know I am better than you,” Sookie retorted.

“Why? Because you got a rich husband?” Dawn snarled. “What he sees in a fat bitch like you, I’ll never know. He could have any woman he wanted, women that are so much better than you.”

“Like you?” Sookie scoffed. “In case you forgot honey, you tried. You threw yourself at my husband, and he wasn’t interested.”

“That’s only want he told you,” Dawn taunted. “But he showed me he was very interested. We had some much fun together behind your back…” she trailed off as Sookie started laughing. “What are you laughing at you freak?”

“I’m laughing at your pathetic ass,” Sookie replied as she moved towards Dawn and got in her face. “If you think I would believe your feeble lies, than you’re even stupider than I first thought.”

“They’re not lies.”

“Yes, they are, Dawn. I know they’re lies,” Sookie snarled angrily. “I know no one around Bon Temps likes to talk about it. It makes you all feel uncomfortable. But you all know I’m different.” Lifting a finger, Sookie tapped it against Dawn’s forehead. “I see that you’re making all this up. Why? I don’t know, nor do I care. But spread lies about my husband again and you will be sorry.”

“Are you threatening me?”

“Yes. Sookie said before pushing past her and heading towards the door.

She closed her hand around the handle when she felt Dawn slam into her from behind, and her head hit the door hard.

Grabbing Sookie by the hair, Dawn dragged her backwards and threw her against the sinks. “It should have been me, and he should have been mine” she spat as she lunged at Sookie.

Taking a step to the side, Sookie avoided the charging Dawn. Grabbing Dawn by the arm, Sookie raised her knee and drove it into the other woman’s stomach hard, making her bend over and wheeze. Lifting her knee once more, Sookie kneed Dawn in the face and knocked her to the floor.

“Eric is mine, bitch,” Sookie growled before storming out the restroom. Taking a deep breath, she moved towards the old employees’ entrance and exit, needing to get some fresh air. Stepping outside, Sookie closed her eyes and centred herself.
“Are you okay?” a soft voice said startling her.

“I’m fine,” Sookie replied as she opened her eyes and looked at the familiar young blonde woman before her. She racked her mind as she tried to place her, but without any luck.

“Are you sure? You’re bleeding,” the blonde said.

Lifting her hand, Sookie gingerly touched her head, grimaced as she felt the cut from where she had hit the door. “It’s fine,” Sookie assured her.

“If you’re sure. I’m Candy by the way,” the woman introduced.

“Sookie Northman,” Sookie replied.

“Northman,” Candy repeated. She let out a gasp as her eyes widened; “You’re the Master’s wife.”

“Oh hell,” Sookie mumbled as she realised Candy was a fangbanger. “I’m married to Eric, yes.”

“You’re the reason he won’t play with us,” Candy said with a pout.

“If you’re waiting for me to say sorry, you will be waiting a long time,” Sookie replied.

“You should let him play with us,” Candy snarled, showing her true nature. “I could please him better than you ever could. You’re being selfish keeping him all to yourself.”

“He is my husband,” Sookie said as she wondered where all the crazies were coming from tonight. “I don’t share, and he’s not even interested in you.”

“He would be if you let him,” Candy argued. “The Master wants to play with us. He wants to feed on us. He wants the pleasure we can give him.”

“You’re delusional,” Sookie replied as she moved back towards the bar.

“No!” Candy screamed as she threw herself at Sookie. She tackled her to the floor and straddled her waist. “He told us it was because of you, that you’re in the way. Have to get rid of you for the Master,” Candy added as she scratched at Sookie’s face.

“Get off me,” Sookie growled as she bucked her hips trying to throw Candy off her. Getting her off her, Sookie climbed hastily to her feet.

Scrambling up, Candy reached behind her and pulled a knife from her jeans’ back pocket.

Sookie barely saw the blade before she felt blinding pain in her stomach. She stared down in horror as her blood soaked through her shirt. She fell to the dirt lot, her head bouncing of it. She screamed out for Eric in her head as she saw Candy coming for her again. Sookie saw a blur of movement as Candy suddenly went flying through the air. She struggled to keep her eyes open as she watched someone approach her.


“I’m afraid your husband is not here, Mrs. Northman,” Bill said as he crouched down beside her. He smiled slightly as he saw the damage done to her. He flicked his eyes briefly over to the now dead Candy.

It was a shame she had to die, he thought. She was very pleasing, but I can’t let any of this get back
to me. Lifting his hand, Bill bit into his wrist and pressed it to Sookie’s mouth.

“No,” Sookie cried as she turned her head, refusing to take his blood.

“Sookie, you’re dying,” Bill said bluntly. He gritted his teeth as the wound on his wrist healed, and he lifted it to his mouth again and rebroke the skin. Holding her head with one hand, he went to press his wrist to her lips once more, but before he was able to, he went sailing through the air and landed hard against a tree. He let out a sound of discomfort as he crumbled to the ground.

“Sookie!” Pam cried as she kneeled over her friend. She assessed Sookie’s injuries quickly and realised, with horror, that she was bleeding out. Having no choice, Pam dropped her fangs, tore into her wrist, and placed it against Sookie’s lips. She sighed in relief as Sookie latched onto her wrist and drank. She gave Sookie enough blood to get her out of danger before pulling back. She wanted to heal her completely, but she knew neither Sookie nor Eric would want that. They had both told her if she ever had to, she was to feed Sookie enough to get her out of danger, and Eric would heal her the rest of the way. They didn’t want anyone interfering with their bond.

“What the hell’s going on?” Jason snarled as he came barging out the door.

“Your sister was attacked,” Pam replied as she glared at the slowly rising Bill. “Compton, what are you doing here?”

“I was planning on visiting my friend,” Bill answered as he walked towards them. He cursed Pam for her interference. Thirty seconds later and he would have had his blood in Sookie. He would have been able to start manipulating her.

When he saw Sookie exit the bar on her own he couldn’t believe Dawn had actually managed it. He instructed Candy to go and stood back and watched. He instructed Candy to do as he glamoured while he stood back and watched. It had all been going to plan until Pam threw him away from Sookie. However, he didn’t think about the wetness of Candy’s orgasm that had dried on his fingers.

“And you just happened to chance upon my Mistress bleeding to death in the parking lot?” Pam scoffed.

“I saw the woman attack Soo—Mrs. Northman,” Bill quickly amended, seeing the murderous look Pam sent his way. “And moved to intercept her. Unfortunately, I wasn’t quick enough to prevent her from stabbing Mrs. Northman.”

“A likely story,” Pam spat as she slowly lifted Sookie into her arms and carried her into the bar. Propping Sookie up in one of the booths, she ordered everyone out, knocking Sam out with a quick punch when he objected. Pam ordered Bill to wait for his Sheriff while she attended to Sookie. When Sam came to and started raving, she threatened to tie him to a chair and gag him if he didn’t shut up. She allowed herself a small smile as she saw Jason snatch up a wooden broom and stand a few feet away from Bill. Grabbing her phone, Pam called Thalia and instructed her to come to Merlotte’s immediately to collect Candy’s body.

She could feel Eric coming near, and Pam found herself fearful of what he might do. She knew she had fucked up. While her Mistress was being stabbed, she was guiding the redhead’s hand between her legs. Pam moved away from Sookie as she felt Eric practically on top of them. She watched as he raced to her and healed her the rest of the way.

“What happened here?” Eric asked.

“You have had quite the eventful day, Lover,” Eric said as he dropped a kiss on Sookie’s head.
“Want to go home,” Sookie mumbled, still half asleep, as she burrowed her face against Eric’s chest. His blood had healed her, but she still felt exhausted and she just wanted to rest with her husband.

“Okay, Lover,” Eric replied softly as he slowly stood with Sookie still in his arms. “Pam meet us at the house,” he ordered, casting a disappointed look at his child. “Compton, I want you at Fangtasia an hour before opening tomorrow evening. We are going to have a nice little chat.”

“Yes, Sheriff,” Bill gulped, suspecting he would have some tough questions to answer.

After ignoring Sam and saying goodbye to Jason, Eric carried Sookie out the bar and took to the sky. He flew them home and entered the house, heading straight for their bedroom. He laid Sookie down on the bed and slowly stripped off her torn and bloody clothes. Racing to the bathroom, Eric wet a washcloth and returned quickly back to her side. Sitting on the edge of the bed, he ran the washcloth over Sookie’s arms, cleaning off the dirt, before gently moving it over stomach. Once she was clean, he threw the cloth in the direction of the bathroom. Leaning down, Eric placed a soft kiss on her stomach where the knife had penetrated.

“Not how I wanted to spend our evening,” Sookie said softly.

“Me neither, Lover,” Eric replied as he rested his hand on her stomach.

“I missed you,” Sookie whispered sleepily as she tried to stifle a yawn.

“I missed you too,” Eric said, as he stroked his thumb back and forth. “Sleep, Lover,” he added as he heard Pam enter the house. “I will be right back.” Pulling the covers up over Sookie, Eric dropped a kiss on her head before he went to see his child.

“Master, I’m so sorry,” Pam said, dropping to her knees as Eric entered the living room.

“I do not want to hear it,” Eric growled. He could smell the sex on her and he didn’t think he had ever been more disappointed. “Not now. I am still too angry. You knew Sophie-Anne had called me away so Bill could get closer to Sookie. I told you to stay close to her, but you were too busy getting your cunt fingered to realise your Mistress had not only left the bar, but had been attacked.”

“I’m sorry; I failed you both” Pam said. Lifting her head, she met Eric’s disappointed gaze. “I will accept any punishment you hand down.”

“I will deal with you tomorrow,” Eric replied. “But right now I have a job for you. I left my car on route 190. I want you to go and collect it.”

“Yes, Master,” Pam said contritely.

“In the trunk is Sophie-Anne’s wedding present,” Eric informed her. “Another one of her silly games.”

“Master?” Pam questioned.

“The Queen gifted me, or saddled me as the more accurate description might be, with one of her pets,” Eric replied.

“Why would she do that?” Pam asked. She shook her head as she realised the answer herself. “She expects you to fuck her.”

“Yes,” Eric snorted. “The whore has already tried to entice me twice, which is how she ended up in the trunk. Take the car to Fangtasia, and the whore as well. She can stay with one of the other
waitresses and work in the bar.”

“Yes, Master.”

“Pam, stop with the Master bullshit,” Eric groaned. “I will see you at Fangtasia tomorrow,” he dismissed.

“Goodnight, Eric,” Pam said softly before rising to her feet and speeding out the door.

After locking up the house, Eric walked back into the bedroom and stripped his clothes off. Climbing into bed beside the sleeping Sookie, he pulled her into his arms and held her tight.

“I love you,” Eric whispered as he watched her sleep.
Chapter 17

Eric was not surprised to find Sookie tucked securely into his side when he rose the next night. The events of the previous night had done a real number on her, and Eric knew from experience that when Sookie was hurt in anyway she longed for him. She needed him to soothe her pain away, and it didn’t matter if he was dead for the day his presence alone could soothe her. Wrapping his arms around her, he pulled her closer to him as he buried his face in her hair. He breathed in her scent and let the fear that overcame him when he felt her pain finally drift away. Eric didn’t think he had ever been as scared as he was last night when he sensed her pain, knowing she had been stabbed while he was with stuck in that car with Yvetta had almost killed him. He swore then and there that he was never leaving her alone for the night again.

“Mmm,” Sookie mumbled sleepily as she slowly woke up.

“Good evening, Lover,” Eric greeted as he pressed his lips to her head. “How are you feeling?”

“Fine,” Sookie sighed as she snuggled into his embrace. “Pam got to me before any damage was done.”

“Sookie, you were stabbed,” Eric replied; he choked on the words as the truth of how close he came to losing her hit him.

“I meant she got to me before Bill gave me any of his blood,” Sookie said.

“He tried to give you his blood?” Eric growled.

“Yes,” Sookie said softly. Feeling Eric’s anger, Sookie rolled onto her back and tried to pull him to her.

Knowing what she wanted, Eric rolled to his side and placed his head on her chest; he purred in contentment as he felt her fingers start to stroke through his hair. He could feel his anger leaving him; he rubbed his stubble-covered cheek against her breast, making her giggle.

“Have you been in bed all day?” Eric asked as she rubbed his thumb over her stomach.

“No,” Sookie replied as she scratched his scalp. “I woke up around lunch time, got something to eat, and took a shower. But then I missed you and wanted to be near you.”

“I missed you too, Lover,” Eric said, knowing she was referring to the last few nights as well.

“Did you want to be near me too?” Sookie asked, her voice taking on a playful tone.

“I always want to be near you,” Eric told her as he angled his head so he could see her face. “Around you, on you.” He leered up at her as he added, “in you.”

“Eric,” Sookie said, giggling. She could feel lust rising in the bond and tugged on his hair lightly.

“Lover,” Eric groaned. He rubbed his cheek against her breast before turning his head and capturing her right nipple between his lips. He yanked the sheets off them, exposing their bodies to the cooling night air. Sliding his hand over her belly, he dipped between her thighs. He smiled against her nipple as he felt her legs part for him. He circled her clit lightly with his fingers as he sucked her nipple into his mouth.
“Oh, Eric,” Sookie sighed softly as she pressed his head to her chest. Flames of desire were growing inside her as her body responded to him.

Releasing her nipple, Eric smirked up at her before kissing his way down her body. Moving between her parted thighs, he placed his hand on her stomach and stroked his fingers over her healed flesh.

“I’m all healed baby,” Sookie assured him as she placed her hand over his. “I’m fine.”

“I could have lost you,” Eric choked, his voice filled with emotion.

“But you didn’t,” Sookie said softly. “I’m still here, and I’m not going anywhere.”

“You promise?” Eric asked.

“I promise.”

Laying his hand at her sides, Eric rested his head on her belly and closed his eyes. He could feel her fingers stroking through his hair offering him comfort as she whispered soft words of reassurance to him. He groaned at the absurdity of it; she was the one who was stabbed, yet she was reassuring him, the thousand-year-old vampire.

Eric pressed his lips gently to Sookie’s stomach before lifting his head. He smirked up at her and moved lower. Breathing in her scent, he flicked his tongue out to taste her. He groaned at her sweetness as he lifted her legs over his shoulders. Burying his face between her legs, Eric fastened his lips around her clit and sucked hard; he growled against her sex, sending vibrations through her. He delighted in the small mewls of pleasure she gave as he drew patterns on her clit with the tip of his tongue. Her arousal grew with each swipe of his tongue until she was bucking wildly against his mouth. He gripped her hips hard as he feasted.

Sookie arched her back as she twisted her hands in the sheets; sweat glistened on her skin as her body shook. She cried out, her pleasure spiking as Eric scrapped his fangs over her sensitive folds.

“Eric!” Sookie screamed as she felt him turn his head and sink his fangs into her femoral artery.

Eric took a mouthful of her blood before pulling back, not wanting to take too much; he sealed the wound before placing a kiss to her sex. The taste of her blood mixed with her cum made him painfully hard. Putting her legs back on the bed, Eric crawled back up her body and settled over her.

“Hi,” Sookie said dopily as she smiled up at him.

“Hi,” Eric repeated as he dipped his head and brushed his lips over hers. He pushed into her slowly, savouring the feeling of her stretching around him as he sunk into her. Resting his forehead against hers, Eric locked eyes with Sookie as he slowly pulled back and thrust back into her. He flooded the bond with his love as he worshipped her body with his.

Sookie let out small sighs of pleasure as she clung to her husband. Her body sung with pleasure as Eric took her to the edge over and over again before finally letting her fall over. She came with a gentle cry as she shuddered beneath him.

Wrapping his arms around his wife, Eric rolled them over. He moved his hands to her hips and helped guide her movement as she rocked against him. He raised his hips, thrusting up into her as he sought his own release. He whispered words of love to her as he came, filling her with his dead seed.

Collapsing on top of him, Sookie rested her head over Eric’s chest as she got her breathing under control. “Love you,” she sighed as she felt Eric’s lips brush over her hair.
“I love you too,” Eric replied as he held her tight.

OoOoO

“So she just gave her to you,” Sookie said as she sat in the passenger’s seat of her car as Eric drove them to Fangtasia.

“Yes, she was our wedding present,” Eric replied as he flicked his eyes to her briefly. After their love making, the two of them had showered quickly before jumping into Sookie’s car and heading to the bar. Eric had just finished telling Sookie about his visit with the Queen and the ‘gift’ she had bestowed on them.

“I don’t remember putting that on our wedding list,” Sookie snorted. “So what, is the Queen expecting you to have sex with this woman and for me to throw a fit or something?”

“I think that was her plan,” Eric said. “She arranged for the whore to be waiting naked for me in my quarters. I have no doubt she expected me to fuck her, and of course Sophie-Anne would have recorded the whole thing and would have no doubt arranged for you to see the footage…”

“And I would’ve been so heartbroken, I would’ve accepted the Queen’s help when she offered,” Sookie finished for him. “As plans go that’s quite pathetic.”

“My thoughts exactly,” Eric agreed.

“Did she really think that would work?” Sookie questioned as she shook her head.

“Apparently. I don’t think Sophie-Anne really had a plan; she wasn’t expecting for there to be a contract, and she believed she had the right to demand for me to end our marriage,” Eric said as he turned into the Fangtasia parking lot. “When I informed her she approved our marriage and it was also accepted by the Council, her only plan was lost, so she came up with a new one of the spot.”

“And this was the best she could come up with?” Sookie scoffed. “Eric, your Queen is an idiot.”

“You will get no argument from me, Lover,” Eric replied with a chuckle.

“So what are we going to do with your new pet?” Sookie asked. “Do we have to keep her or can we give her away?”

“We are stuck with her for the time being I’m afraid,” Eric replied as he turned off the engine. “Sophie-Anne threatened to have me reassigned to her court if I refused her gift. I fear she would still do that if I threw the whore out of my area, and I do not want Sophie-Anne anywhere near you. The whore can work at the bar and stay with one of the waitresses. I will put one of my vampires in charge of her; I was going to give her to Pam, but I believe Pam would like that too much, and I am in no mood to reward her.”

“You’re going to punish her, aren’t you?” Sookie said softly as she undid her seatbelt and turned to face him.

“I am, Lover,” Eric replied truthfully. “I know she is your friend, and you don’t want to see her hurt, but she failed both me and you last night. She was aware of the situation with Compton and the Queen. She knew I had been called away so he could get near you, and she was more concerned about chatting up some woman than watching you like she was ordered.”

“I shouldn’t have gone outside without telling anyone,” Sookie said.
“Pam should have been at your side, so you shouldn’t have had to tell her,” Eric countered. “You were attacked twice Lover, and Pam needs to answer for that.”

“Okay,” Sookie replied. She knew better to argue with Eric when it came to things like that. He respected her opinions and encouraged her to speak up, but when it came down to it, it was his responsibility as both Pam’s Maker and her Sheriff to deal with her. Pam had messed up, and she would have to deal with the consequences.

“I take no pleasure in punishing her,” Eric said as he reached for Sookie’s hand, “and Pam will be expecting a punishment. As I said, she was aware of the situation. I have no doubt Compton set up the entire circumstances so he could get his blood into you, even if I can’t prove it yet.”

“You think he made that woman attack me?” Sookie asked as she linked her fingers with Eric’s. She suspected it herself, the way Candy was raving at her was slightly different from the way the other fangbangers thought of her. They all thought Sookie was standing in the way of them and the Master, but the way Candy was expressed it was different.

“He told us it was because of you, that you’re in the way. Have to get rid of you for the Master,” Sookie repeated.

“Sookie, I never said that,” Eric said as he heard her words. Lifting their hands to his lips, he placed a kiss on the back of hers. “I would never say that.”

“I know you wouldn’t baby,” Sookie assured him softly. “But that’s what she said before she stabbed me. He told us, not the Master told us. He told us.”

“It sounds like something Bill would do and say,” Eric mused. “Glamour her to attack you, come to your rescue, and then kill the fangbanger so no one can question her and find out his involvement in it.”

“I really don’t like him,” Sookie grumbled.

“No one does,” Eric replied with a chuckle. “His own Maker can’t stand him anymore.” Eric smiled at Sookie as he leaned towards her and brushed his lips lightly over hers. “Ready, Lover?”

“As I’m ever gonna be,” Sookie said as she stole another kiss.

Climbing out the car, Eric sped around to Sookie’s side and opened the door for her. Offering her his hand, he helped her out of the car and escorted her towards the bar.

Neither of them was surprised to see their vampires waiting for them when they entered the bar. Word of Sookie’s attack had spread, and her vampires were all there to make sure she was okay. Sookie offered them a small smile before her eyes settled on the humans present, or more specifically the Queen’s gift.

Sookie ran her eyes over Yvetta as the other woman openly stared at her. Sookie didn’t even have to dip into her mind to know she was sizing her up. She had seen that look on many of the women’s face at Fangtasia before. Yvetta was sizing up her competition. Sookie was actually looking forward to putting the other woman in her place.

“Pam, Thalia, my office now,” Eric ordered as he nodded at the other vampires. Linking his fingers with Sookie, Eric guided her to his office and to the sofa. He dropped a kiss on her head before walking to his desk. He faced the two females as they stepped in front of his desk. “Thalia, from now on you are in charge of protecting your Mistress when I am not able…”
“Eric…” Pam interrupted foolishly; the knowledge that he no longer trusted her to protect Sookie in his absence unsettled her.

“Silence,” Eric growled cutting her off. “This is not up for debate. You failed both me and your Mistress last night. I am not giving you the chance to do it again.”

Pam lowered her head, remorse washing over her. She knew she messed up the night before, but she wouldn’t do it again. She just needed to make Eric see that.

“The Queen is also playing her childish games; she ‘gifted’ me with one of her donors last night,” Eric continued. “For the time being we are stuck with her. Sophie-Anne also ordered the donor punished for failing in her mission to seduce me, although the Queen claims it is for other reasons. She is to receive ten slaps on the bare ass for the next thirteen nights. Thalia, I am also putting you in charge of meting out her punishment. She is to work in the bar as a dancer, but be sure to spread the word about why she is really here. I do not want any of our vampires to become entangled in whatever web Sophie-Anne is spinning. Treat her like a spy and reveal nothing to her.”

“Yes, Sheriff,” Thalia replied with a small nod. Her lips curled into a small smile as she thought about meting out the woman’s punishment. She would show the whore what happens when someone tries to come between her Mistress and her Sheriff.

Turning his attention to Pam, Eric stared her down as he let his disappointment reach her. He couldn’t believe she had been so foolish the night before. “Do you realise how badly you fucked up last night?” he asked.

“I do,” Pam replied, her voice barely above a whisper.

“I am not sure you do,” Eric growled. “Your Mistress, my wife, could have been killed because you were too busy fingering some worthless whore. Anything could have happened to her, Pam. Bill could have kidnapped her; he could have drained and turned her while you should have been watching her. I have never been more disappointed in you than I am right now. Do you realise that if Sookie had died, I would have followed after her?”

“No!” Pam cried, a look of horror on her face as she heard his words. He couldn’t mean what she thought he did. There was no way Eric would ever meet the sun, Pam thought.

“Yes,” Eric replied, his tone deceptively calm. “Forever means nothing to me if I don’t have Sookie by my side.”

“Eric, please,” Pam begged. She couldn’t face the thought of a world without her Maker in it.

“Silence,” Eric ordered. “You will be punished for this Pam. It is time you grew up. You are nearly three hundred years old; it is time you took responsibility for your own life and actions. I am cancelling all your credit cards; from now on if you want something you will use your own money to buy it. I will no longer fund your lifestyle. In addition, for the next month you will only drink synthetic blood. You will also abstain from sex; you will not give or receive pleasure. Is that understood?”

“Yes, Master,” Pam replied somewhat sulkily. She couldn’t believe he would cut her off like that. Eric had taken her credit cards from her in the past, but he had always given them back after a few weeks.

“Watch your tone, Child,” Eric growled as he eyed Pam with exasperation. He had enough of her acting like a child.
“Eric,” Sookie said softly. She offered him a small smile as he looked at her. She hated to see Eric and Pam like that, but she knew it had to be done. And Pam wasn’t making any easier by acting like a brat.

“Yes, Lover.”

“T’m just going to get a drink,” Sookie said.

“I will have one brought in for you,” Eric replied.

“No, that’s okay,” Sookie said as she stood. “Thalia can come with me, and I kinda want to have a chat with the new dancer…”

“Why would you want to talk to her?” Eric asked genuinely curious.

“She was basically sent by Sophie-Anne; I just want to see if she’s been giving any orders,” Sookie explained as she tapped a finger to her head.

“Of course,” Eric replied, slightly put out that he hadn’t suspected that himself. He saw Sookie flick her eyes to Pam briefly and then back to him, and he smiled at her. He realised she was giving him a chance to speak with his child in private. “Come straight back when you have finished.”

“I will,” Sookie promised as she headed out the door, Thalia a step behind her.

Turning his attention back to the still sulking Pam, Eric let out a sigh; “Grow up, Pam,” he growled.

“Will that be all, Master?” Pam asked with mock sweetness.

Shaking his head, Eric moved towards the cabinet in the corner of his office. “No, child that will not be all,” he pulled out a pair of gloves from a drawer in the cabinet, before opening one of the doors. He removed a thin silver rod and turned to face Pam. “If you insist on acting like a child, then I shall treat you one.”

“Eric,” Pam said as she eyed the rod hesitantly.

“Do you know how much pain Sookie was in last night, Pam?” Eric asked as he walked towards her. “I do; I felt it. It brought me to my knees. I have never disciplined you for the hell of it, and when it has been deserved I have always been fair. I was fair tonight, and yet you still act like an ungrateful child, throwing a tantrum because she’s lost her favourite toy.”

“Eric, I’m sorry,” Pam said as she backed up. She knew he was being truthful. He hadn’t ever abused her, and his punishments had always been fair. Although, she still wasn’t convinced taking her credit cards away permanently was warranted.

“You are still thinking about what you lost and not what you did,” Eric said, seemingly knowing what she was thinking about. “Why don’t you think about what I almost lost because of your carelessness? I almost lost my wife. I think, out of the two of us, I would have lost more. Now hold out your hand.”

“Eric, please,” Pam replied.

“Do not make me command you,” Eric said.

Holding her hand out palm up, Pam stared at Eric as he lifted the silver rod in the air. She let out a small cry as she felt into sear into her hand as he quickly laid the rod on her hand and also brought it
up, and the smell of her flesh burning filling the room. Wrapping her other hand around her burnt hand, she cradled it to her chest as she met Eric’s eyes. She blinked back blood tears as she saw the pain in them; she knew he hadn’t gotten any pleasure in punishing her. He had actually hurt himself as well.

“Go and get ready for work,” Eric ordered softly as he put the rod away and peeled off the gloves.


“I know you are Child,” Eric said as he kept his back to her. Once he heard Pam leave, he turned around, his eyes rimmed with blood tears as he dropped his head. He heard his door open again and felt a small pair of arms slip around his waist. Burying his head in Sookie’s hair, Eric wrapped his arms around her and held her close.

Lifting her head up, Sookie raised herself onto her tiptoes and pressed a kiss to his cheek before taking his hand and leading him over to the sofa. Pushing him down onto it, Sookie climbed into his lap and snuggled against him, offering him comfort.
"What did you learn from the whore?" Eric asked as he stroked his fingers through his wife’s hair. Her very presence was soothing him.

"The usual crap," Sookie replied as she angled her head up so she could look at his face. "She thinks she’s prettier than me, thinner, sexier, and could please you better. She’s determined to claim you for her own, and she doesn’t care about the fat wife."

"Ignorant whore," Eric snarled. Brushing his lips over Sookie’s, he added, "I should have left her in the trunk of my car on the highway. I could have bought a new car."

"She ain’t worth it," Sookie said with a shrug. "She plans to try to befriend me so she can get closer to you. And I got all that without even speaking to her."

"You didn’t speak with her?"

"No," Sookie replied with a shake of her head. "I knew that after punishing Pam you’d need me, and I didn’t want to be stuck with her when you did."

"Thank you, Lover," Eric said sincerely. It still amazed him that she knew what he needed so well. She knew he needed to talk to Pam alone, and then she knew he would need her after he was done.

"Oh, and she’s not really from Estonia," Sookie said suddenly. "Yvetta," she clarified seeing his puzzled look.

"How do you know?" Eric asked. He chuckled as she raised an eyebrow. "I know, stupid question."

"She thinks in English," Sookie told him with a giggle. "She was thinking how men like accents."

"I’m partial to the Bon Temps accent myself," Eric said wagging his eyebrows, making Sookie roll her eyes at him. "Did Sophie-Anne give her any orders?"

"She encouraged her to try and seduce you, but she hasn’t been glamoured to do so," Sookie replied as she explained what she got from Yvetta’s head. "She was told she’d be rewarded if she did, but she hasn’t been given specific orders. Anything she does is all down to her."

"Do you think she will be a problem?" Eric asked. He had gotten used to asking Sookie what she thought when it came to humans. He trusted her judgement and often let her deal with the workers at the bar. It wasn’t just because of her telepathy, although that was a huge benefit, he wouldn’t lie, but she was better dealing with people than he or Pam.

"Not really," Sookie answered with a shrug. "She’ll just be like the rest of the fangbangers. Just think of her as Dawn mark two. We dealt with her okay, and Yvetta hasn’t got any reason to hang around like Dawn did; she’s not dating my brother."

"True," Eric agreed. "I put Thalia in charge of her, and she should keep her in line."

"I almost feel sorry for Yvetta," Sookie replied with a mock shudder. Turning on his lap so she was straddling him, she stroked a finger over his cheek as she asked, "Did you get everything sorted with Pam?"

"As much as I could," Eric answered as he grabbed her hand and brought it to his lips. He kissed her
“fingers softly as he smiled at her. “Pam is acting like a brat. She’s sulking because I took her credit cards off her.”

“Well baby, Pam’s almost three hundred, it’s about time she started supporting herself,” Sookie said. Although she didn’t like seeing her friend punished, Sookie wasn’t too upset about Eric cutting Pam off financially. She knew a Maker had a responsibility to his or her child, but Pam was just spoiled, and it wasn’t like she didn’t have her own money. Pam owned a stake in Fangtasia, and she was quite wealthy on her own; she just chose to spend Eric’s hard-earned money.

“I know,” Eric agreed. “I should have cut her off years ago.”

“She should be fun to be around for the next few nights,” Sookie remarked. Every time Eric had taken her credit cards away from her in the past, Pam had sulked like a spoiled child.

Whatever Eric was going to say was cut off by a knock to the door. “Master,” Pam said as she pushed the door open, a contrite look on her face. “Compton is here like you ordered.”

“Send him in,” Eric replied. He made no move to get up; he was quite content where he was. Eric moved Sookie so she was once again sitting on his lap. He knew it would unnerve Bill to see Sookie in the office with them.

“Good evening, Sheriff,” Bill greeted as he entered the office. He stumbled slightly as he saw Sookie sitting on Eric’s knee. “Mrs. Northman,” he added. “I wasn’t expecting to see you here tonight.”

“Where else would I be but by my husband’s side?” Sookie questioned.

“Given the unfortunate events of last night I thought the Sheriff would have permitted you to stay at home,” Bill replied in what he thought was a smooth manner.

“I don’t tell my wife where she can and can’t go, Bill,” Eric said as he smirked up at the younger vampire.

“She should be resting,” Bill argued as he tried to manipulate Sookie into believing he was concerned about her, while insinuating that Eric wasn’t. “She was stabbed not twenty-four hours ago. You shouldn’t have dragged her here.”

“No one dragged me anywhere,” Sookie interjected before Eric had a chance to reply. “I wanted to spend time with my husband. And for the record I am completely healed, Eric saw to that. Now would you like to argue with your Sheriff on anything else that doesn’t concern you?”

“I was simply concerned about you,” Bill replied stiffly, once again not appreciating the way she was talking to him. He was so tempted to demand that Eric punish her for speaking to her betters in such away.

“No you weren’t,” Sookie snorted, not bothering to hide her contempt. “Just like the other night when you were trying to discredit my husband in my eyes. I don’t know what your game is,” she added feigning ignorance, “or what you’re hoping to achieve, but I will tell you now, it won’t work. I love my husband, Mr. Compton; I trust him and nothing you say will ever change that.”

Eric sat back and watched as Sookie took Bill to task, a smirk etched firmly on his face. He kept his eyes on Bill as Sookie laid down the law to him; he could see the anger on his face, and Eric knew Bill wanted to demand that he punish her for speaking to him as she did.

“Are you going to let your pet speak to me like that?” Bill growled his anger slowly clouding his mind. His lips curled into a cruel smile as he imagined her stripped bare in the middle of the bar
while Eric took a belt to her. Her cries of pain filling the room as her husband whipped her over and over, before he forced her to apologise to Bill.

“I will let my wife speak to you anyway she sees fit,” Eric replied. “I will not permit you to address my wife in such a degrading manner, however. You will address your Mistress with the respect she deserves.”

“She’s only human,” Bill argued foolishly. “She isn’t entitled to the title of Mistress.”

“She is my wife,” Eric growled. “And I am your Sheriff; that makes her your Mistress.” Lifting Sookie off his knee, Eric placed her on the sofa beside him and placed a soft kiss on her head before standing up. “Now, instead of questioning my commitment to my wife and her rightful title, how about we get down to the real reason you are here?”

“Yes, Sheriff,” Bill gritted out as he straightened his shoulders.

Moving behind his desk, Eric sat down in his chair and stared up at Bill. “Explain what happened last night,” Eric ordered.

“As I explicated last night, I was visiting a friend at Merlotte’s where I witnessed the entire encounter,” Bill replied as he recounted his version of things.

“Who was the friend you were visiting?” Eric asked, even though he already knew the answer.

“Dawn Green,” Bill answered, his lips tugging into a smile as he hoped to get a reaction out of Eric and Sookie. “I believe you’re familiar with Miss Green.”

“Unfortunately. Although luckily not as much as half the vampires in my area,” Eric admitted with a nod, wiping the smile of his face. “Are you aware that your friend attacked my wife in the bathroom of Merlotte’s?”

“No, Sheriff, I was not,” Bill said stumbling slightly over the words as he lied to his Sheriff.

If Dawn’s screwed this up I will take my belt to her, Bill swore. The stupid whore; I told her to get Sookie outside, not to attack her herself.

“I see…” Eric trailed off as he pretended to think it over. “I find it curious that my wife was attacked twice in the same night, and really within minutes of each other.”

“Sheriff, what are saying?” Bill asked fear leaking into his voice.

“I am wondering if the two attacks were linked,” Eric replied as he toyed with Bill. “Your friend attacked my wife, and then a few minutes later Sookie was attacked again. I think I should question Miss Green; at the very least I should impress upon her how unwise it is to attack my Sookie.”

“I don’t think that will be necessary, Sheriff,” Bill said hesitantly. “I can make sure Dawn knows never do anything like that again.”

“I wasn’t asking you if it was wise, Bill,” Eric growled. “I was telling you. You are to bring Miss Green here tonight after closing.”

“Yes, Sheriff,” Bill said, realising it was pointless to argue with Eric. The last thing he wanted was for Eric to interrogate Dawn. Bill didn’t really even want to acknowledge his association with her, but after the events of the night before he had no choice. As he thought about it, Bill wondered if he could turn it into his advantage. One thing he did know was he was going to have to glamour Dawn
first. He couldn’t have her telling Eric he told her to call him if she ever saw Sookie without Eric.

“Dismissed,” Eric said as he flicked his finger at Bill. He watched as Bill scurried out of his office. “What do you think, Lover?”

“I think he was lying though his teeth,” Sookie replied as she stood up and walked towards him. She perched herself on the edge of his desk. “You know he’ll glamour her into saying whatever he wants, right?”

“I do,” Eric replied as he reached out and placed his hand on Sookie’s exposed legs. “Of course, he is not aware that you can tell when a mind’s been glamoured. I want to know what he wants us to think. I also wanted to make sure the whore knows that if she attacks you again she will lose both her hands.”

“Now that’s the Viking I know and love,” Sookie said with a giggle. Eric threatening to maim someone no longer bothered her as it once did. Oh she knew he was being completely serious, but she also knew it was part of him, and she accepted it a long time ago. “What’s the betting Bill glamour Dawn to throw herself at you?”

“It’s a play straight out of the Queen’s playbook, so I say it is good,” Eric replied as he pulled Sookie forward until she was straddling him. “They are quite uninventive when it comes down to it.”

“I suppose you could do better,” Sookie said as she slowly began to rock her hips against Eric.

“Of course,” Eric grunted as he gripped her hips and pulled her against him more firmly. “I claimed you once, didn’t I?”

“Aww, honey, you think you claimed me?” Sookie replied with a mock pout. “Everyone knows it was the other way around. I claimed you.”

“Oh yes, how silly of me,” Eric said with a chuckle. “I was powerless to resist you. You seduced me.”

“And don’t you forget it,” Sookie mock scolded.

“Perhaps you should remind me,” Eric challenged, a twinkle entering his eyes as he played with his wife.

“Maybe I should,” Sookie replied.

Lowering her head, Sookie brushed her lips over his, giving him a chaste kiss before climbing off his lap and dropping to her knees in front of him. She smiled up at Eric as she lifted her hands and popped the button on his jeans, Sookie kept her eyes locked on his as she slowly lowered his zipper. Reaching into his jeans, she wrapped her hand around his cock as she carefully removed him from his pants. Sookie stroked him slowly, loving the feel of him in her hands. Ducking her head, she placed a soft kiss on the head before sucking it into her mouth. She swirled her tongue around the head, gathering the precum that had pooled there, as she wrapped her hand around the base and stroked him. Sookie moaned around his cock, sending vibrations through him and causing Eric to buck his hips.

Eric tangled his hand in Sookie’s hair and pulled it away from her face, he watched as his cock disappeared into her warm mouth. He loved it when she used her mouth on him; no one could ever please him like she did. He guided her movements as he had learnt she liked and pushed her down on his cock a little further.
Sookie moaned around his cock again; the feeling of him forcing her further down on his cock turned her on more. She relaxed her throat as he had taught and swallowed around him.

“Oh fuck!” Eric cursed as he felt his cock hit the back of her throat. He lifted his hips, thrusting into her mouth as she looked up at him, her eyes filled with arousal. He could feel his orgasm building, and he tightened his hold on her hair and held her against him as he came, shooting his cum into her mouth. He watched as she swallowed all he had to offer before he yanked her up and back into his lap.

Crashing his lips to hers, he swept his tongue into her mouth, uncaring about tasting himself. Pushing her dress up her legs, Eric twisted his fingers in the waistband of Sookie’s panties and tore them off. Sliding his hand between her legs, Eric toyed with her wet sex, his thumb ghosting over her clit as he pressed his fingers against her opening. Lifting his other hand, Eric yanked on the front of her dress, tearing it open, and revealed her lace-covered breasts to his eager mouth. He sucked one of her nipples into his mouth as he pushed his fingers deep inside her.

Sookie moaned as she felt his fingers enter her; she rocked her hips as she held his head to her breast. Her juices covered his fingers as he twisted them inside her.

Eric pressed his thumb to her clit as he crooked his fingers within her, searching for the spot that drove her wild. He smirked as he heard her take a ragged breath, her body coiling ready to explode in pleasure.

“Cum for me Sookie,” Eric growled as he played her body like only he knew how.

Sookie gripped the arms of his chair as she flew apart at the edges, her back arching as pleasure swept over her. “Eric!” she screamed.

Removing his fingers, Eric wrapped his arm around Sookie’s waist and lifted her up as he stood. Spinning her around, her bent over his desk and lifted up the skirt of her dress. He slapped her ass playfully as he pushed his jeans down. Grabbing his cock, Eric pressed it against her sex and slammed into her hard, burying himself inside her in one thrust.

“Oh!” Sookie cried out as she felt his forceful entry, her nails clawing at his desk. She arched her back as she pushed back against him, silently asking for more.

Knowing what she wanted, Eric pulled back and slammed into her again hard; he set an almost an almost brutal pace as he pounded into her. He tore at her dress as he snapped his hips.

“Oh God! Eric…” Sookie screamed, her body on fire with the pleasure he was giving her.

“Touch yourself, Lover,” Eric growled as he slapped her ass playfully.

Slipping a hand between her legs, Sookie rubbed her clit as Eric continued to drive into her. She sobbed out her pleasure as her body climbed towards its release. She could feel it building, growing stronger with every thrust of Eric’s hips.

“Mine,” Eric growled as he looked down and watched his cock, covered in her juices, disappear inside her.

“My yours,” Sookie agreed as she cried out. A white heat spread over as she broke apart; his name was screamed from her lips as her body convulsed in bliss.

Gripping her hips tighter, Eric pushed into her hard as he chased his own release, his hips slapping into hers as he pulled her back against him. A tingle spread through his body as he moved faster.
“Sookie!” Eric roared as he came, filling her with his dead seed.

Flopping back into his chair, Eric pulled Sookie with him, settling her onto his lap. “I remember now. You seduced me,” he said as he pressed his lips to her head.

“Damn tooting,” Sookie breathed out as she rested against him. “You ripped my dress,” she added as she looked down.

“Sorry, Lover,” Eric replied with a chuckle. “You have got another here though.”

“For reasons like what happened tonight,” Sookie said with a giggle. It wasn’t the first time Eric had destroyed their clothes while they were at Fangtasia, so they both had taken to keeping extras at the bar.

“You love it,” Eric growled as he nipped at her ear playfully. “Come on, Lover, let’s get cleaned up before Compton and his whore returns.”

“Carry me?” Sookie said, repeating the words she had said a thousand times to him.

“Anywhere,” Eric replied, giving his usual response.

An hour later after having got clean, dirty again, and finally clean, Sookie stood in front of the small wardrobe that stored their spare clothes. Grabbing a pair of red lace panties, she slipped them on before taking out the matching bra. “Eric,” she called out as she fastened the bra.

“Yes, Lover?” Eric asked as he pulled on his jeans.

“Can I wear one of your dress shirts?” Sookie asked as she turned to face him.

“Of course you can,” Eric replied. “You don’t have to ask that. But are you sure that’s all you want to wear?”

“They’re comfy…” Sookie said with a shrug as she pulled a black silk shirt out of the wardrobe.

“And it will get a reaction from our unwanted guests,” Eric finished, knowing his wife all too well. She was marking her territory so to speak, showing that she was Eric’s: his wife, his lover, his everything.

“And I’ve no doubt it’ll tick Bill off as well,” Sookie admitted with a smile. Grabbing one of his leather belts, Sookie fastened it around her waist before slipping on a pair of black-heeled sandals. “What do you think?” she asked as she spun around.

“Gorgeous,” Eric growled as he took in his wife. He had never seen anyone more beautiful than his wife, and he thanked the Gods every night that they had brought her to him.

Smoothing down the shirt, Sookie made sure it covered her completely before stepping towards Eric; she pushed herself up onto her tiptoes and brushed her lips over his lightly. “Love you,” she whispered.

“Jag älskar dig,” Eric replied, linking his fingers with hers before guiding her out the office and into the main bar. Leading her towards his booth, Eric let her slide in before sitting down beside her. His arm went around her shoulders as they waited for Bill to present Dawn to them.
As soon as Bill returned to Bon Temps he called Dawn and ordered her to meet him at his house. Always one to please, Dawn had shown up not twenty minutes later having made up an excuse to Sam so she could get out of work. Welcoming her into his house, Bill informed her that Eric had requested her presence at Fangtasia; Bill hadn’t missed the lustful look in her eyes as he had mentioned Eric, and the younger vampire had cursed his Sheriff.

Leading her to the sofa, Bill pushed her down onto it and took a seat next to her. “Eric is not happy with you, Dawn,” Bill informed her. “You attacked his wife.”

“That bitch hit me,” Dawn spat, “and she insulted me. She thinks she’s better than me just because she snagged a rich husband.”

“I don’t care,” Bill growled. “You can’t attack her, at least not physically. In the vampire world she is better than you. Eric could punish you for attacking his wife.”

“He wouldn’t do that,” Dawn replied foolishly, showing just how clueless she was.

“He could, and if you’re not careful, he will,” Bill told her. “He wants you to explain yourself to him tonight, and if he’s not happy he will punish you. And I guarantee you won’t like it.”

“What should I do?” Dawn asked, a touch of fear entering her voice. As much as she would like to say different, she didn’t actually know Eric that well. She honestly didn’t know if he would punish her or not. The last time she had seen her was a few months after he and Sookie had married. She had tried to seduce him, believing she could offer him more than Sookie ever could. Eric had been pretty brutal in his rejection of her, embarrassing her in front of practically the whole town. Even after Eric did that to her, Dawn still hadn’t given up the foolish notion that Eric desired her. She was convinced his rejection was only a ploy on his part to hide his attraction to her from Sookie and her family.

“You’re going to be nice,” Bill answered as he began to put his latest plan into action. “You will apologise to Sookie and accept any punishment Eric sees fit to give you. Do you understand?”

“Yes,” Dawn replied as she nodded her head.

“You will be charming,” Bill commanded. “You will flirt with Eric, offering him coy looks and girlish giggles. You will do anything he asks of you.”

“Oh yes,” Dawn practically purred.

Bill shook his head at her eagerness, “Whore,” he growled. Lifting his hand, he gripped her chin and turned her head so she was looking into her eyes; he began his glamour. “You will not speak of what I have told you to do,” he commanded as he pushed his mind against hers. “You will say nothing but good things about me in front of Sookie. Is that understood?”

“Yes,” Dawn replied mindlessly, her psyche firmly under his control.

Releasing her from his glamour, Bill stared at her. “Now, perhaps you would like to tell me why you attacked Sookie. I told you to get her outside. Why did you disobey me?”

“She provoked me,” Dawn replied petulantly. “She thinks she’s better than me. I just wanted to knock her off her high horse.”
“Your stupid actions could’ve ruined all my plans,” Bill chided. “Regardless of what Eric decides you will be punished for this.”

“Bill?” Dawn questioned as she eyed him nervously.

“The extent of your punishment will depend on how well you do tonight,” Bill warned her. “But I will definitely punish you. In fact, we have a few hours until we have to be at Fangtasia, I think I will start now. Stand up.”

Dawn rose to her feet as she obeyed his order. She stood in front of him, her hands shaking slightly as she waited for Bill to punish her. Having been with her fair share of vampires, Dawn was familiar with the kind of punishments they dished out and had suffered more than one kind of it. As she stared at Bill, she wondered what kind of punishment he would serve.

“Take off your clothes,” Bill ordered. He watched as Dawn stripped in front of him, a smile tugging at his lips as her creamy flesh was revealed to him. Reaching out, Bill grabbed her arm and pulled her over his knee. He positioned her so her ass was raised up in the air as he held her head down with one of his hands. “I don’t have time to punish you as I would like,” he added as he grabbed her ass roughly, his fingers digging into her soft flesh painfully. Lifting his hand, he brought it down repeatedly each time harder than the last, not stopping until her ass was bright red and tears were streaming down her face. Bill smirked as he felt his body respond for the first time since Pam’s punishment.

Pushing Dawn off his knee, he watched her tumble to the floor as he pulled open his trousers and freed his cock. Leaning forward, Bill fisted his hand in Dawn’s hair and yanked her up before pushing her head into his crotch. “Suck me,” he ordered as he rested his head on the back of the sofa, his eyes closing as he felt Dawn’s lips close around him.

Things are finally starting to look up, he thought.

OoOoO

“Sheriff,” Maxwell greeted as he approached Eric’s booth. He offered a Sookie a small nod of respect as he added, “It is good to see you well Mistress.”

“Thank you, Maxwell,” Sookie replied as she looked up at the dark vampire.

“What is it, Maxwell?” Eric asked as he twirled a strand of Sookie’s hair around his finger.

“I have something I think you might want to see,” Maxwell replied wasting no time with idly chatter. “After my Mistress’s attack last night I went over all of the footage from Compton’s house again, and I found something of interest.”

“What did you find?” Eric asked.

“This,” Maxwell replied as he handed Eric a computer tablet, “this is footage of Compton house from last night.”

Taking the tablet, Eric played the footage, he didn’t see anything out of the ordinary, just Bill feeding on some pathetic fangbanger. He watched as a phone call interrupted them and Bill practically dragged the woman out of the house.

“That’s the woman who stabbed me,” Sookie said as she reached for the tablet; she played the footage over again. “When was this filmed? What time?” she asked not seeing a time stamp on the
footage.

“Roughly thirty minutes before you were stabbed, Mistress,” Maxwell told her, anger leaking into his tone as he thought about her being hurt.

Taking the tablet back off Sookie, Eric smirked as he paused the footage of Bill feeding on the woman, “Compton is in for a rude awakening,” he said, before turning his attention back to Maxwell. “You have done well. I want you to make copies of all the surveillance we have of Compton as well as any written notes you might have made.”

“Eric, what are you going to do?” Sookie asked softly.

“I am going to put a stop to Compton’s fun and games,” Eric told her. “He will not hurt you again.”

“How?” Sookie questioned.

“Rhodes is in three weeks; I intend to have him brought up on charges,” Eric replied with a smirk. “Tonight, I shall let him hang himself as the humans say,” he added as he tapped the tablet still paused on Bill and Candy. Snapping his fingers, Eric called Pam over. “Have a coffin prepared in the basement for Bill; he will be staying here until Rhodes,” he ordered, not giving her a chance to say anything.

“Yes, Master,” Pam replied before speeding off to prepare the basement for Bill.

“She’s still sulking,” Sookie remarked as she saw Eric shake his head.

“Let her,” Eric replied. “I have more important things to worry about than her childish tantrums.”

A few hours later the club was almost empty; the only people who remained were the area vampires, the cleaning staff, and Yvetta who had been ordered to remain behind by Eric.

“She thinks you asked her to stay because you want to play with her,” Sookie whispered with a small laugh as she dipped into the dancer’s head. “She’s looking forward to her punishment.”

“She won’t be when Thalia finishes with her,” Eric snorted as he flicked his eyes over to one of the cleaners who were mopping the floor. “I only told her to stay so she can see first hand what happens to people who try to come between us.”

“They’re here,” Sookie said, putting on a spooky voice as she saw Bill and Dawn enter the club; she sounded all too close to the little girl from Poltergeist. She bit back a laugh as she got a good look at Dawn. “I think that’s for your benefit,” she added, referring to the black mesh halter-top dress Dawn was wearing. “I bet she bends over and falls out of it.”

“I’m not taking that bet, Lover,” Eric replied.

“Sheriff, Mrs. Northman,” Bill greeted as he stopped beside their table.

“Eric,” Dawn purred as she ran her eyes over him. He was even better looking than she remembered, and she was desperate to touch him. She knew she could please him better than Sookie; she had far more experience after all. She knew how to please a man, and Bill was proof of that; she had done everything he asked of her and still offered more.

“Oh for God’s sake; he’s not interested, Dawn. So stop embarrassing yourself already,” Sookie said, shaking her head at Dawn’s pitiful thoughts.
“I was only saying hello,” Dawn sniped, shooting Sookie a nasty look before turning her gaze back to Eric and smiling coyly at him.

“Oh this is going to be so much fun,” Sookie snorted, realising already what Bill had instructed Dawn to do.

Bill hid a smile as he heard Sookie’s words, thinking his plan was working already. “As requested, Miss Dawn Green,” he said as he placed his hand on the small of Dawn’s back and pushed her forward. He thought it was a stroke of genius that he had instructed her to change into something more revealing before they arrived, believing it was bound to make Sookie feel uncomfortable.

“Sit,” Eric ordered as he flicked his eyes from Dawn to Bill; he could hardly wait to wipe the smug look off Bill’s face.

Sliding into the booth, Dawn made a show of leaning forward and flashing Eric her breasts. “Oops,” she said as she straightened the small pieces of fabric that covered her breasts.

“No one here wants to see your breasts,” Eric growled, already annoyed with her pathetic behaviour. “In fact, you are only here for one reason.”

“What would that be?” Dawn asked, slightly disgruntled. Most men fell over themselves to see her breasts.

“I simply want to know why you attacked my wife last night?” Eric asked, his eyes glinting dangerously as he thought how Dawn had hurt his wife.

“I…I…” Dawn stuttered as she looked down, feigning contrition. “I was jealous,” she admitted through gritted teeth as she said what Bill had instructed her to. “I know I shouldn’t have, but she’s the reason Jason broke up with me; and I was hurt and seeing him at the bar last night made all that hurt come back,” she lifted her head and let them see the tears that were trickling down her cheeks. “And I acted without thinking. I’m sorry,” she cried as she fidgeted in her seat, “I’m so sorry…”

“Cheese and rice, are we supposed to believe this?” Sookie asked as she huffed out a breath.

“It’s true!” Dawn cried.

“You attacked me ‘cause of Jason?” Sookie questioned, disbelief clear in her voice.

“Yes,” Dawn admitted as she wiped away her tears. “I loved him; I love him, and you made him break up with me. I was angry at you last and lashed out.”

“So all that, Eric really wants me, and we were running around behind your back, was what, a diversion? So I didn’t realise it was Jason you wanted,” Sookie scoffed.

“She said what?” Eric snarled. “You dare claim I cheated on my wife with you?”

“I was just lashing out,” Dawn protested as she looked to Bill for guidance. She was saying everything he told her too, but it was clear neither Eric nor Sookie believed her. She told him they wouldn’t, but he had refused to listen to her. “I was trying to hurt Sookie like it hurt me when Jason dumped me.”

“Jason dumped you because you kept trying to seduce his sister’s husband,” Eric growled. “Now cease your ridiculous lying and tell us the truth.”

“I’m telling the truth,” Dawn whimpered as she slunk down in her chair.
“So all this was about Jason?” Sookie asked. “It was never about you wanting Eric?”

“Yes,” Dawn replied with a nod of her head. “It’s Jason I want, not Eric.”


(“This is so pathetic it’s laughable. They don’t even realise her actions negate her words. She’s been trying to flirt with you since she walked in.”)

“Jag vet älskare,” Eric replied. “Han får faktiskt drottningen att se ut som ett geni”

(“I know, Lover. He actually makes the Queen look like a genius.”)

Shaking her head, Sookie turned to face Dawn again, “You know, your whole I want Jason not Eric spiel would work a lot better if you hadn’t been imagining Eric fucking you on this table since you walked in,” she said. “Did you seriously think this would work?”

“Stay out of my head,” Dawn spat, forgetting she was supposed to play nice with Sookie.

“No,” Sookie replied, “you have thrown yourself at my husband every chance you have got. So you can be damned sure when you walk into my bar, I’m going to go digging around in your mind.”

“This isn’t you bar,” Dawn returned as she sat up straighter.

“I think you’ll find it is,” Sookie told her with a smile. “Eric gave me shares in the bar when we married.”

“It that why you married him? For his money?” Dawn sneered.

“No, honey, that’s why you chase him,” Sookie retorted, refusing to take any of Dawn’s crap. “You’re the gold-digger here.”

“I am not,” Dawn said insulted.

“I think things are getting out of hand,” Bill cut in, as he pursed his lips in annoyance. Things were not going as he expected, and he wasn’t happy. “I think…”

“Oh shut up,” Sookie snapped, cutting him off as she flicked her eyes to where he still stood. “No one asked you what you thought. So be quiet.”

Bill glared at Sookie as he snapped his mouth shut. He couldn’t believe Eric was allowing her to talk to her superior in such away. As soon as he got her to the Queen’s court, he swore he would make her pay for her disrespect.

“I’m not a gold-digger,” Dawn huffed, still hung up on the insult.

“Would you prefer the term whore?” Eric asked with a smirk.

“I’m not a whore,” Dawn gasped.

“No? You throw yourself at a married man. You also offer yourself to every vampire you meet,” Eric replied counting off the things he believed made her a whore. “No, that’s not quite right; you offer yourself to every man you meet. You have no honour or dignity. You attack my wife, a true lady, out of jealousy and then lie about it.”
“A lady,” Dawn scoffed glaring hatefully at Sookie. “Everyone knows she’s nothing but trash. She’s a freak…”

“DAWN!” Bill shouted as he watched his plan disintegrate before his very eyes. She was supposed to be nice to Sookie, not insult her in front of Eric.

“You dare speak of my wife like that? You worthless bloodbag…”

Sookie placed a hand on Eric’s arm, restraining him before he had a chance to attack Dawn. “It’s okay, Eric,” she said as she stroked her fingers back and forth. Once she was satisfied he wasn’t going to attack, she turned her attention back to Dawn and smiled. “Unlike you Dawn, I am a lady. I was raised properly,” she added as she continued to sooth Eric. “But Gran always said there comes a time in a lady’s life when she’s got to hitch up her skirt, kick off her heels and take the trash out…”

Before any of them realised what was happening, Sookie launched herself over the table and grabbed a hold of Dawn by her hair. Dragging her out of the booth, Sookie threw her to the floor.

“Eric is mine,” Sookie growled. “He doesn’t want you, he never has and never will. Get that through your thick skull.”

“I could please him better than you,” Dawn spat as she climbed to her feet.

“You keep telling yourself that honey,” Sookie replied her voice taking on a mocking tone as she stalked forward. “You will never have Eric, no one but me will,” she added as she turned her head to the side and looked at Yvetta who was watching from behind the bar. “You can all throw yourselves at him, fantasise about him, pretend he really wants you, but it’ll never be true. Eric loves me. He is his mine.”

“He’ll get tired of your fat ass soon,” Dawn said cruelly. “He’s probably already fucking around behind your back. There’s no way you could keep him satisfied.”

Raising her hand, Sookie lashed out and slapped Dawn across the face, the sound of her hand connecting with Dawn’s cheek making a loud cracking sound.

Eric leaned back in the booth as Sookie slapped Dawn. He let out a growl as he saw Bill go to separate them. Sookie was asserting her power and making her position known to everyone in the bar. She was claiming her vampire in front of those who wished to take him from her and Eric refused to allow anyone to interfere in that. Just like he hadn’t interfered when she had put Pam in her place when they started their relationship. To interfere would only give the likes of Dawn and Yvetta false hope. And that was something he wouldn’t do.

Fisting her hands in Dawn’s hair again, Sookie lifted her knee and kneed Dawn in the stomach making her double over. “Eric screams my name every night,” she said as she dragged her across the club’s floor. “Who screams yours Dawn, whomever you served at Merlotte’s?”

“Fuck you,” Dawn cried as she struggled in Sookie’s hold.

“You’ve got a nasty mouth,” Sookie tutted. “We should wash it out,” she chuckled as she dragged Dawn to where the cleaner had left the mop bucket.

“No!” Dawn shouted as she realised what Sookie was planning.

Knocking her to the floor again, Sookie moved behind Dawn and dunked her head in the dirty water in the mop bucket.
Eric watched as Sookie ‘took out the trash’ a smile etched firmly on his face. Flicking his eyes to Yvetta who was still watching from behind the bar, he chuckled at the frightful look on her face. He was clear to him that she was getting the message that Sookie was putting out. A message he would reinforce when he would hand her over to Thalia.

While Eric was enjoying the show, Bill watched aghast as Sookie pulled Dawn up and then dunked her again. It was finally dawning on him that all the information Hadley had given him was years out of date. Sookie wasn’t the innocent little flower she had led him to believe; she was a strong capable woman who didn’t back down from anyone. As he watched her put Dawn in her place, he realised he would have to change his tactics; trying to make her jealous and question her relationship wasn’t going to work.

Yanking Dawn’s head out of the dirty water again, Sookie dropped her to the floor and took a step back. “Clancy,” she said softly, her tone a stark contrast to the fire that was burning in her eyes.

“Yes, Mistress,” Clancy said as he stepped forward. He smirked at the drowned rat coughing on the floor by his feet.

“Would you please get that,” Sookie pointed at Dawn, “out of my club please.”

“I would be my pleasure, Mistress,” Clancy replied as he bent down, yanked Dawn up and bustled her out of the club.

Turning to face the bar, Sookie glared at Yvetta. “Try to seduce my husband again and you will receive the same treatment. Do you understand?”

“Yes,” Yvetta whimpered as she cast her gaze down.

“Good,” Sookie said before making her way back towards Eric. She offered her husband a satisfied smile before climbing over him and settling back in her seat.

“Would you like to offer an explanation for your friend’s actions here tonight?” Eric asked as he turned his attention back to Bill.

“I have no explanation for her uncouth behaviour,” Bill replied as he fidgeted slightly. He was at a loss of what to say or do. All his plans had been destroyed and he honestly didn’t know what to do. “I don’t know why she acted the way she did this evening.”

“That’s not exactly true, is it?” Sookie said as she stared up Bill, her lips quirking into a smile.

“I’m not sure I understand,” Bill replied uneasily.

“Dawn, well she acted that way because you told her too,” Sookie said. “You told her to flirt with Eric.”

“I would never do such a thing,” Bill denied, feigning indignation.

“I got it straight from her head, Mr. Compton,” Sookie replied enjoying watching him dig a hole for himself. “I think by now we all know I’m a telepath. You told her to wear that dress and flirt with Eric in attempt to make me uncomfortable.”

“Is that true, Bill?” Eric asked with a smirk.

“Of course not,” Bill huffed.
“So you are calling my wife a liar?”

“What? No, of course not,” Bill replied as he tried to think of away to get out of the trouble he found himself in. “She’s just mistaken.”

“I suppose it is possible,” Eric said as he pretended to think about it. “I do not feel like calling her back her and asking her herself. Which is unfortunate as I didn’t get to question her about the woman who stabbed my wife.”

“Very unfortunate,” Bill repeated barely hiding a smile.

“You are close to Miss Green, so maybe you can answer some of my questions,” Eric said, making it seem like the idea just came to him.

“Of course, Sheriff. It would be my pleasure,” Bill replied, relaxing slightly as he thought he had sidestepped Sookie’s accusations. He had no idea Sookie could see through glamour and was suddenly grateful that she had thrown Dawn out like she did.

“You saw the woman who stabbed Sookie; do you know if she was a friend of Miss Green’s?” Eric asked as he began to lay his trap.

“Not to my knowledge, Sheriff,” Bill lied. Dawn had in fact introduced him to Candy. Candy had been the blonde who had eaten Dawn out when Bill tied her to his bed.

“I see,” Eric replied. “And what of you, Bill? Did you recognise her?”

“No, Sheriff. Last night was the first time I had ever seen her,” Bill said.

“So you didn’t know her?” Eric asked seeking clarifications.

“No,” Bill lied again.

“I see,” Eric replied as he pretended to muse it over. “Then perhaps…” he reached for the computer tablet and turned it to show Bill, “you can explain this…”

“Sheriff…” Bill stammered as he saw the unmistakeable image of him feeding from Candy.

“This was taken just thirty minutes before she stabbed my wife,” Eric said, his voice deceptively calm. Hitting play, he played the footage of Bill feeding from Candy and then dragging her out of his house after he received a phone call. “You seem quite friendly with someone you had never met just before she attacked my wife.”

“I…I…” Bill stuttered as he struggled for something to say.

“Nothing to say. Then again I don’t suppose there is much need,” Eric said as he tapped the image on the screen “They say a picture says a thousand words, and this one most certainly does. You arranged for my wife to be attacked.”

“No!” Bill shouted as he continued to lie through his teeth. “I followed Candy to Merlotte’s and witnessed her attacking Sookie.”

“Mrs. Northman,” Eric growled as he placed the tablet on the table and stood up. “You dragged her out of your house. You left together, you arrived together, and you stood back and watched while that whore stabbed my wife, and then you tried to give her your blood. Why?”

Bill glared at Eric but said nothing. He couldn’t admit he did it without revealing why he was really
in Bon Temps, and he wouldn’t betray his Queen. He was still convinced she would protect him.

“Still got nothing to say? Well if you won’t tell me, maybe you will tell the Council,” Eric said with a smirk.

“The Council?” Bill asked, believing he had heard wrong. Why would Eric report him to the Council and not deal with it himself?

“Billy, Billy, Billy,” Eric mocked. “You arranged for your Sheriff’s bonded wife to be stabbed so you could give her your blood. Even you know how much that is frowned upon. Bonded mates are sacred in our world, and you have been trying to come between a pair for weeks.”

“Bonded?” Bill repeated weakly. He had smelled Eric’s blood on Sookie, but he hadn’t actually realised they were bonded. As he flicked his eyes between Eric and Sookie, it was just starting to dawn on him how screwed he was.

“Yes, bonded in the vampire way and married in the human,” Sookie said. “I think it’s safe to say you’re screwed.”

“I’m bringing you up on charges in front of the Council at Rhodes,” Eric explained. Signalling to Thalia, he added, “but until then, you will be enjoying our hospitality.”

“What?” Bill said, struggling as Thalia grabbed him from behind him.

“Lock him up in the basement,” Eric ordered, “and return and deal with her,” he added as he jerked his head in Yvetta’s direction.

“Yes, Sheriff,” Thalia replied with a fangy smile.

Sliding back into the booth, Eric pulled Sookie into his side as he watched Thalia drag Bill out of view. “What do you think, Lover?” he asked.

“I think he’s foolish enough to believe that Sophie-Anne will still protect him,” Sookie replied as she snuggled against him. “I also think Yvetta’s is terrified of what I might do to her if she tries to come on to you again.”

“Good,” Eric purred as he dropped a kiss on top of her head. “Although I might like seeing you dunk her head in a mop bucket as well.”

“Oh God, I can’t believe I did that,” Sookie replied as a blush spread across her cheeks. “I just had enough of hearing Dawn was thinking.”

“It was very hot,” Eric growled. “I enjoyed watching you take out the trash.”

“You would,” Sookie said with a giggle, before turning back to the more serious matter. “What do you think will happen next?”

“I think Bill will continue to foolishly believe Sophie-Anne will still protect him, and Sophie-Anne will discard him and find someone to take his place,” Eric confessed.

“He won’t give her up. He won’t admit she sent him to Bon Temps to procure me,” Sookie replied.

“No, Lover, he won’t. He won’t speak out against his Queen, unless…” Eric trailed off as he put a plan into motion in his head.

“Unless?” Sookie questioned as Eric went silent.
“Unless he has no choice.”

“How’re you gonna do that?” Sookie asked, confusion tingeing her tone.

“It is quite simple, Lover,” Eric told her as he fished his phone out of his pocket. Searching through his contacts, Eric smirked as he found the one he was looking for and dialled the number.

“Hello.”

“Lorena…”
Running her hand over Eric’s travel coffin, Sookie let out a sigh as she cast her eyes over the spacious hotel room; dread filled her as she thought about what was going to happen. The last three weeks had flown by and the Rhodes conference was upon them. As soon as Eric rose they would have to go and see the Queen of Louisiana. It was something Sookie didn’t want to do, but she knew she had no choice. For now Sophie-Anne was still the Queen. Whether she would be by the time the conference ended remained to be seen.

The case against Bill, and by extension Sophie-Anne, had grown stronger by the day. Maxwell had been thorough in his reports and had amassed quite a lot of evidence. There was both audio and video footage, as well as written transcripts.

The case against Bill was pretty much ironclad. There was almost no way he was getting away with it, regardless of who his friends were. The real problem would be linking Sophie-Anne to Bill’s actions. Although she was recorded audibly ordering Bill to separate Eric and Sookie, there was no actual video footage of her. It would be easy for her to claim the recordings were doctored or she was being set up.

As Eric suspected, Sophie-Anne hadn’t done anything to try to help Bill out. After making a half-hearted appeal to Eric to let Bill go, she had been content to let Eric deal with him in any way he saw fit. Although, Eric doubted she would have been so willing if she would have known he was well aware of her role in everything that happened. In her arrogance, Sophie-Anne believed no one could touch her. She foolishly believed she was smarter and more cunning than everyone else.

The sound of the latches on Eric’s travel coffin being opened drew Sookie’s attention, and she took a small step towards it and waited for her husband to rise.

“I hate that you have to sleep in that,” Sookie said in greeting, as she watched Eric climb out of the travel coffin.

“So do I,” Eric admitted, as he pulled Sookie to him and wrapped his arms around her. “I much prefer rising next to you.” Content to just hold his wife for a few minutes, Eric breathed in her scent and allowed the concern he was feeling drift away.

Sensing he needed a few moments of peace, Sookie wrapped her arms around his waist and rested her head on his chest. She would have time to tell him what transpired earlier before they meet the Queen, but for now, like her husband, Sookie was content to just be held by him.

Dropping a kiss to the top of Sookie’s head, “Have you had any trouble so far?” Eric asked, making no move to let her go.

“A little,” Sookie admitted, her voice muffled by Eric’s chest. She let out a small whimper as she felt Eric pull back from her.

“What happened?” Eric asked, as he ran his hands down her arms, seeking to assure himself she was okay.

“There was a problem with the hotel booking,” Sookie told him.

“What kind of problem?”

“The kind that would’ve separated us,” Sookie replied with a small smile.
“I arranged our rooms personally,” Eric said. “I booked a light tight room for us.”

“I know,” Sookie said, as she took him by the hand and lead towards the couch. Pushing him down onto the couch, Sookie took a seat next to him as she continued, “But it seems that was some kind of the mix up. ‘Cause when I went to check-in, I was told you would be sharing a room with one of the other sheriffs and I will be sharing with one of the other pets… One of the Queen’s pets.”

“One of the Queen’s pets?” Eric repeated.

“The concierge was quite a broadcaster; he was being paid handsomely to change our booking. You were to be sharing a room with the sheriff of the area three and I was to be sharing a room with the Queen’s pet. He kept repeating that part. That was supposed to be three floors between us, and the Queen and entourage in the middle.”

“I should have expected her to try and do something like that,” Eric said. He cursed himself for not thinking of it sooner. He knew Sophie-Anne wanted his wife; of course she would try and separate them. He had been so focused on Bill and the trial that he had overlooked the fact that Sookie would be in Sophie-Anne’s range for at least one night. Bill’s trial was set for 10 o’clock the following evening. Godric had arranged it so it would be the first bit of business taken care of, even before Sophie-Anne’s pledging ceremony to Arkansas.

Feeling Eric’s guilt, Sookie climbed into his lap and wrapped her arms around his neck. “It’s not your fault, Eric,” she said softly. “You didn’t know she was going to try and do this.”

“I should have known…” Eric started, but was cut off when Sookie pressed her lips forcibly to his.

“We should have suspected she would try something,” Sookie said, as she broke the kiss. “But after everything she’s tried already, doesn’t this seem a little lame? She must’ve known this wouldn’t work. I read the concierge’s mind. She had to know there was no way you would consent to us being separated.”

Eric thought about her words as he wrapped his arms around Sookie’s waist; he could see her point. Sophie-Anne, despite everything, wasn’t a fool, or at least an obvious fool. She knew how protective he was of his wife, so she would know full well that he would never agree to be separated from Sookie.

“She could be trying to distract us,” Eric said. “She knows I’m aware that she wants you for herself. She would assume I would expect her to make a play, to claim you for herself. This is an obvious attempt on her part; she may be trying to divert our attention, make us focus on this so she can slip in the back way, so to speak.”

“You think she’s planning something else,” Sookie deduced.

“I do,” Eric admitted. “Sophie-Anne wants you desperately. In her mind, you belong to her. She no longer respects our laws and rules. She will try to claim you for herself during the conference, of that I am sure.”

“So we keep our eyes and ears open and wait and see what she tries next,” Sookie replied.

Eric nodded as he pulled Sookie closer; he knew the next few nights would be trying for both of them, and he wanted a few moments just to hold his wife close.

But all too soon their moment was interrupted when a knock came at the door; with a groan of reluctance Eric set Sookie on the seat beside him and rose to his feet. Crossing the floor to the door, Eric pulled it open and stared at the young woman who interrupted them. Casting his eyes over her,
Eric barely held back the growl that was rumbling in his chest as he took in the familiar looking features of the blonde at the door.

“Eric, who is it?” Sookie asked, as she felt his anger.

“I’m not sure, Lover,” Eric replied, feigning confusion, as he took a step to the side to let Sookie see who was at the door.

“Sookie!” Hadley gasped, as she rushed into the room. Throwing her arms around Sookie, Hadley hugged her cousin and pretended to be shocked at seeing her. “What’re you doing here?”

Sookie stiffened in Hadley’s arms as she looked over her cousin’s shoulder at Eric. She fought the urge to lash out and shake Hadley off her. She couldn’t believe how Hadley was acting like nothing had happened, like she hadn’t betrayed her and sold her out to Sophie-Anne. Sookie could ‘see it’ all in Hadley’s mind. It was foggy like someone had tried to erase the memories, or rather glamour them away, but after three years around vampires, Sookie knew her way around a glamoured mind. She could tell what was real and what was implanted.

Hadley’s surface memories were all false. Sophie-Anne had planted them the memories herself, Sookie could see that; she could barely wait for Hadley to spin her tale. But no matter what Hadley said, Sookie already knew the truth. Hadley had told Sophie-Anne all about her because she had lost her favor. Sophie-Anne had a new pet, and Hadley had been jealous. She had told the Queen all about her freakish cousin just so she could find her way back between her legs.

“I’m here with my husband,” Sookie answered finally, as she gently pushed Hadley away.

“Your husband!” Hadley exclaimed feigning shock. “You’re married? To who? When do I get to meet him?”

Sookie couldn’t restrain from rolling her eyes at Hadley’s dumb questions, “Yes, Hadley, I’m married,” she said, and she flashed her wedding rings at a cousin. She didn’t miss the flash of jealousy in Hadley eyes. Crossing the room, Sookie wrapped her arm around Eric’s waist. “I believe you’ve already met my husband,” she added, her lips curling into a smirk as she waited for whatever dumb thing her cousin was going to say next.

“But he’s a vampire,” Hadley blurted out like it was a shock, as she gaped at them.

“Jason was right, he is smarter than her,” Eric chuckled, as he placed his arm over Sookie’s shoulders.

“Yes, Hadley, Eric is a vampire,” Sookie replied slowly as if she was talking to a child.

“But he’s… they’re…” Hadley stuttered.

“I swear to God, Hadley, if you say evil, I will throw you out of here on your ass after I remind you that you have fresh bite marks on your neck,” Sookie growled.

Tears welled in Hadley’s eyes as she looked down. She wasn't expecting Sookie to be so protective of Eric. She knew they were married, Sophie-Anne had told her that, but she hadn’t told her what their relationship was like. Sophie-Anne had told Hadley to sow seeds of doubt in Sookie’s mind about Eric. Sophie-Anne wanted Sookie away from Eric at any cost, and Hadley had promised to make it happen. The Queen had promised to turn her if she delivered Sookie to her before the summit was over, and Hadley didn’t intend to disappoint her.

“I’m sorry,” Hadley whimpered. “I know they’re not. I just wish I could’ve been there.”
Eric and Sookie exchange looks as Hadley played the ‘we are family’ card. Neither of them believed a word that came out of her lying lips. The two of them had a silent conversation as Hadley rattled on about the importance of family. Their eyes flicked from each other to Hadley and then back again. They knew what ever Sophie-Anne was up to: Hadley was in the middle of it.

Realizing that they were going to have to play dumb for a while, Sookie pasted on her ‘Crazy Sookie’ smile. She frowned briefly as she realized she hadn’t had to use that smile in quite a while; her vampires accepted her for what she was and she didn’t have to hide anymore. She quickly wiped the frown off her face before Hadley had the chance to see it. Not that she would, she was so consumed with reciting the importance of family that she wouldn’t have even noticed if Sookie and Eric left the room.

“And I know Gran would’ve…”

“I know,” Sookie interrupted, refusing to let Hadley tell her what their Gran would’ve wanted. Adele would’ve wanted a granddaughter who wasn’t planning on selling her cousin out for a pair of fangs. “Gran would’ve wanted to see all of her grandchildren before she died,” Sookie added, before she could stop herself. She couldn’t believe that after three years without a word Hadley had the nerve to try and lecture her on what Adele would’ve wanted.

“Gran’s dead?” Hadley said, showing the first sign of real emotion all night.

“Yes,” Sookie replied, not unkindly, but made no move to try and comfort her cousin. “She died a little over eighteen months ago.”

“Why didn’t anyone tell me?” Hadley cried.

“Are you looking for a reason other than we didn’t know where you were?” Sookie asked. “You ran away, Hadley. You robbed Gran and then took off. We didn’t know where you were to tell you.”

Hadley bit her tongue and swallowed her retort. She wanted to lash out at Sookie and blame her for everything that went wrong, but she couldn’t. She had a job to do. Pushing down her anger and hatred, she stared at Sookie. “I’m sorry,” she said insincerely. “I know I did wrong, but I just want a chance to make it up to you.”

“What are you even doing here?” Sookie asked, seeing Hadley’s apology for what it was.

“I work here,” Hadley replied with a beaming smile.

“Really? For how long?” Sookie questioned feigning interest as she tried to discover what Sophie-Anne’s plan was.

“Almost a year now,” Hadley lied, as she broke into her cover story of how she ended up at the hotel.

“That’s great, Hadley,” Sookie interrupted, “but I actually meant what are you doing here, in this room?”

“Oh,” Hadley giggled nervously, as she twirled a strand of hair around her finger. “I…erm…I… a vampire called for a donor,” she added in a rush, as she lowered in faux embarrassment.

“You’re mistaken,” Sookie said, as she shook her head. “No one in this room called for a donor.”

Lifting her head, Hadley met Sookie’s eyes, “They did,” she replied almost apologetically, as she flicked her eyes to Eric briefly before returning her attention to Sookie. “The request came for a well
endowed blonde about twenty minutes ago.

“Hadley, I have been in this room with my resting husband all day. I was here when he rose fifteen minutes ago, no one called for room services,” Sookie said firmly. “You must have the room numbers mixed up.”

“That must be it,” Hadley replied tightly, unhappy that she couldn’t claim anything else. She had been told to go to the room by Andre himself to get started her little mission. “But now that I’m here, can I…”

“Do not even think about asking my husband if he wants to feed off you,” Sookie growled, interrupting Hadley before she had a chance to finish.

“I wasn’t,” Hadley denied, her eyes darting around the room wildly. “I was just gonna ask if you would like to get something to eat,” she added after a moment’s thought.

“I can’t at the moment,” Sookie replied, anger still leaking through into her tone. Despite the best efforts of Sophie-Anne and her children, Hadley’s mind was wide open to her, and she fought the urge to shake her head in disgust. “Me and Eric have an important meeting to attend.”

“Oh,” Hadley said dejectedly. “Can’t you cancel it?”

“No,” Sookie answered firmly. “It is far too important to miss.”

“Even more important than catching up with your cousin,” Hadley challenged, trying to guilt Sookie into staying with her and making it seem like Eric couldn’t control his pet.

“Yes,” Sookie stated plainly. “I’m sure we’ll have plenty of time to catch up later, but for now I must attend the meeting.”

Hadley glared at Sookie but said nothing in reply. She couldn’t demand that Sookie spend time with her without revealing more of her hand. As she stared at her cousin, a feeling of hate rose up inside her. She despised Sookie for having the kind of life she had always dreamed about. It was clear from looking at them, that Eric and Sookie were very much in love. Hadley doubted that Sookie had to spread her legs to every vampire that Eric told her to, unlike her. Sophie-Anne enjoyed pimping Hadley out to almost every vampire who visited the palace. Hadley doubted there was a vampire who lived at court whom she hadn’t fucked. Hadley adored her mistress and would do anything for her, and if that meant fucking all four of her children at the same time then that was what she would do.

Not that she minded. Sophie-Anne never had to ask her twice or use glamour on her to get Hadley to do as she pleased. All it took was a snap of her fingers and Hadley would strip down naked and let anyone Sophie-Anne chose fuck her in any way her mistress desired. Sophie-Anne’s wants and desires were all that mattered, and her mistress wanted Sookie, so she would do anything in her power to make it happen. She didn’t care what Sookie felt or wanted. Before the summit was over Sookie would be Sophie-Anne’s newest pet and the palace’s newest whore. She only hoped Sophie-Anne would let her watch. She wanted to see her sweet little cousin broken down like the whore she knew Sookie really was.

“What about tomorrow?” Hadley asked, adopting a sweet tone.

“Sure,” Sookie replied somewhat stiffly, the images she was getting from Hadley’s head turning her stomach. “We can meet in the hotel restaurant, say around 1pm?”

“I look forward to it,” Hadley said almost giddily at the thought she’d get Sookie to herself for a few
hours. It would give her the time she needed to start planting seeds of doubt in her cousin’s mind.

“I’ll see you then,” Sookie replied, dismissing Hadley as Eric opened the hotel room’s door. He arched a brow at his wife’s backstabbing cousin, silently telling her to get out.

Realizing she didn’t have a choice, Hadley let out a huff as she stomped to the door, she threw a sullen “Goodbye,” over her shoulder as she left.

“She is unbelievable,” Sookie growled, once she was sure Hadley was gone.

“What did you hear?” Eric asked, as he closed the small distance between them and pulled his angry wife into his arms.

"She's complicit in it all," Sookie informed him before taking a deep breath. "She's been working here for almost three weeks now. Sophie-Anne thought we'd be less suspicious if we thought Hadley was just one of the donors at the hotel and not tied to her directly. Apparently the Queen knows the owner of this hotel, and he agreed to 'employee' Hadley on a temporary basis..."

"What did he want in return?" Eric asked, interrupting her knowing no one in the vampire world did anything for free.

"Sex," Sookie answered, lifting her head slightly. "I saw it all in Hadley's head. The owner of this place, Christian Baruch, agreed to hire Hadley if both Sophie-Anne and Hadley would have sex with him. Hadley 'thanks him' for the job every night after he rises and before he goes to rest." Sookie shook her head in disgust as images of how Hadley thanked him played over in her mind.

Every night for the past three weeks Hadley would start the night on her knees sucking Baruch off and end it on all fours taking it from behind.

"From what I can gather Hadley is supposed to plant some seeds of doubts in my mind. She's going to tell me how untrustworthy vampires are, how dangerous and sexual you all are."

"Sophie-Anne can't honestly expect that to work," Eric remarked as he rubbed his hands over Sookie's arms. Even though she already knew about Hadley's betrayal, he could still feel pain coming from her.

"Who knows," Sookie shrugged. "Given how she gifted you Yvetta, she could think I was already suspicious of you."

"I suspect we will learn more after we meet with Sophie-Anne," Eric said before dropping a soft kiss on top of Sookie's head. "She is almost transparent in her actions. She thinks she is smarter than everyone around her."

"Considering Hadley is usually glued to her side, I'd believe it as well," Sookie snorted.

"Your cousin isn't the sharpest tool in the shed," Eric replied with a chuckle. "But we shouldn't underestimate her; she is working for the Queen after all. I am not sure I like the idea of you meeting her for lunch on your own tomorrow."

"Don't worry," Sookie said. "I had no intention of meeting Hadley alone. I'm sure Jason is just as eager to catch up with our cousin as well," she added with a devious smile. "And of course the dae flowers will be having lunch at the next table."

"Very good," Eric praised. "Make sure you are not left alone with her at any time."
"I will," Sookie promised.

Noticing the time, Eric let out an unneeded breath as he gazed down at his wife. "Well, Lover, are you ready to meet the Queen?"

"If I say no can we go home?" Sookie asked hopefully.

"Unfortunately not," Eric replied.

"Well, I guess I'm as ready as I'll ever be then," Sookie said with a shrug. "Lead the way..."
Ten minutes later found Eric and Sookie standing outside the door of the Queen's hotel room waiting for entrance. Eric tucked Sookie into his side as they waited. Sophie-Anne was playing one of her usual games and making her Sheriff wait to see her even though she had demanded the meeting. Eric could hear Sophie-Anne and Andre behind the closed door, enjoying a donor, and he squeezed Sookie's waist as he moved his head slightly silently warning her.

Understanding the message, Sookie dropped her shields and scanned the room. She counted four voids, the Queen and she guessed her three children. Sookie rolled her eyes as her mind landed on the human in the room. A quick surface scan told her all she needed to know. The Queen really was a juvenile bitch.

Leaning against Eric, Sookie let her mind wander further, scanning the rest of the floor. She barely held back a snort as she registered Hadley's mind several doors down. Her cousin was waiting to report their little surprise meeting to her Queen and was most anxious about it.

The Queen made them wait ten more minutes before she instructed one of her party to invite them in.

Sookie barely restrained from shaking her head as she entered the room on Eric's arm and saw the donor lying naked on the couch. She could see fresh bite marks on the young woman's inner thigh and both her breasts as well as the evidence of her recent sexual encounters. Sophie-Anne was certainly going out of her way to try and make her uncomfortable. Sookie wondered briefly what the juvenile queen was thinking. Humiliating the girl and trying to embarrass Sookie wasn't going to score Sophie-Anne any brownie points. In fact, it just made her dislike the queen more.

"Your majesty," Eric greeted with a small nod.

"Eric, darling," Sophie-Anne purred, as ran her eyes over in him in a lascivious manner, her eyes lingering on his crotch as she licked her lips making Sookie bristle beside him. "You just missed dinner," she added, as she flicked a finger at the still naked donor. Bringing her fingers to her lips, Sophie-Anne darted her tongue out and wrapped it around her middle finger before sucking into her mouth indecently. "She was quite tasty," she said, rubbing her finger over her lips. "Not as nice as Yvetta. She was delicious everywhere. But then, I don't have to tell you that do I? You enjoyed her thoroughly..."

At the mention of Yvetta, Eric felt a wave of anger shoot through the bond he shared with his wife and he wondered what had caused it. Seeing the expectant look on Sophie-Anne's face, Eric realized the queen was behind whatever was causing Sookie's anger.

Sookie silently seethed as she was bombarded with images of Eric fucking and feeding from Yvetta. The images played out like a movie on fast forward, and Sookie forced herself not to react as she watched Yvetta suck Eric off before he ordered her onto all fours and fucked her from behind.

Sookie had to give it to Sophie-Anne; the glamour job was good. It was certainly better than the half-assed job they'd done on Hadley, but Sookie could still tell the memories were implanted and not real. And even if she couldn't tell the difference she trusted Eric completely. She knew him inside and out just like he knew her.

Sophie-Anne was practically giddy as she watched Sookie. She was sure that by now Yvetta would have planted seeds of doubt in her telepath's mind, and Sophie-Anne intended to capitalize on it. She'd instructed Andre to glamour one of her donors, who was posing as a pet, to remember Eric's
last trip to her palace. Andre had been thorough in his duty, and, whenever asked, the girl would tell them all how she had watched with the others while Eric fucked Yvetta. Before the meeting with Eric and Sookie, Andre had planted the command in the donor’s mind that the moment she heard someone say "Yvetta," she would start to think about it.

A scowl began to overtake Sophie-Anne’s face as she realized that Sookie wasn’t reacting the way she was expecting. She was expecting tears and anger. She was expecting to see Sookie scream and shout at Eric and accuse him of betraying her. Things were not going like she planned, and Sophie-Anne didn’t like it one bit.

“So this is the telepath,” Sophie-Anne said finally. A smile began to curl her lips as she let her eyes fall over Sookie, lingering briefly on her ample bosom. She had to admit Sookie was certainly built in all the right ways. She had curves she just couldn’t wait to explore. She felt her fangs press painfully against her gums as she imagined sinking them into Sookie’s breasts.

Sophie-Anne felt her body reacting as her mind conjured up all the ways she would enjoy Sookie once she was hers. If she closed her eyes, she could almost picture Sookie on her knees before her. She would make the young telepath please her with her hands and mouth for hours before she would invite her children to play. Sophie-Anne felt wetness pool between her legs, and she didn’t even try to hold back her moan as she pictured Andre, Seigbert, and Wybert fucking Sookie in any way they wanted while she watched. And once they had had their fill, she would let Hadley have a turn as a reward for telling her about her cousin. Sophie-Anne knew Sookie would be disgusted at having her cousin fuck her, and it would go a long way into breaking her. Before long, Sookie would be as devoted to her as Hadley was.

“No, your majesty,” Eric said, interrupting her little daydream. “This is my wife.” His tone was firm and had no room for argument. He could smell Sophie-Anne’s arousal, and had a good idea what caused it. And he swore once again that the childish queen would never get her hands on his wife.

“Hmph,” Sophie-Anne snorted, crossing her arms over her chest. “Frankly, I don’t see what all the fuss is about.”

Sookie bit back a snort as she pasted on a smile. She’d heard enough about Sophie-Anne to know not to rise to attempts to bait her. As Sophie-Anne took in Sookie, Sookie took the opportunity to observe the Queen. She had to admit Sophie-Anne was pretty with her flaming red hair and pale skin. Sookie thought she looked like something out of the 1940s movie, but Sookie realized that was all she did: look like. Sophie-Anne had none of the poise or class of the 1940s Hollywood starlets. Sophie-Anne’s beauty was only skin; the rest of her was a very ugly.

“… She smells nice,” Sophie-Anne continued. She furrowed her brows as she tilted her head slightly to the left and tapped a finger to her lips trying to give the impression that she was trying to solve a puzzle. “But her looks are only average,” she pressed on, trying to provoke either Eric or Sookie. “She’s nothing special in that department. Maybe she’s a good fuck,” she mused aloud, her eyes lighting up at the thought. “Andre,” she called to her eldest child. “What do you think? Do you think Ms. Stackhouse here is a good fuck?”

Andre made a show of running his eyes over Sookie, he darted his tongue out and licked his lips as they landed on her breasts. “That must be it, my Queen,” he said finally as he lifted his eyes and met Sookie’s gaze. He grinned once he saw the disgust in Sookie’s eyes. He couldn't wait until he got his hands on her. He would enjoy extinguishing that fire and breaking her.

Sookie silently fumed as Sophie-Anne and Andre continue to talk about her like she wasn't there. Her anger grew hotter as they questioned her sexual abilities. She knew they were just trying to provoke a reaction out of her. They wanted her to act out, to throw a tantrum and insult them in some
way so they could demand Eric punish her. Sookie knew it was just another one of their attempts to drive a wedge between her and Eric. But they would be sorely disappointed. They may think she was ignorant of the supe world, of the vampire way, but their information was lacking. Sookie was well aware of the way the supernatural world worked. She knew better than to throw a tantrum in front of the Queen. She wouldn’t disrespect Eric by acting like a child.

The longer she went without reacting, the angrier Sophie-Anne got. Try as she might, Sophie-Anne couldn’t provoke Sookie into speaking out. Sophie-Anne desperately wanted Sookie to scream at Eric to defend her. She wanted Sookie to verbally attack her so she could demand Eric punish her. As his queen, Sophie-Anne had the right to demand that Eric punished his wife if she wanted, and she did want that. She wanted to drive a wedge between them by ordering Eric to strip his wife and take his belt to her, but she couldn’t do it without reason.

“It is Mrs. Northman, your majesty,” Eric said. He would have liked nothing more than to rip the Queen’s and Andre’s heads off for disrespecting his wife, but he had to play it smart. He couldn’t make a move against them… Yet.

“Of course, Mrs. Northman,” Andre sneered. The Queen’s second despised Eric more than anyone else. Andre was well aware that, given the chance, Sophie-Anne would replace him as her second with the Viking. Sophie-Anne had desired Eric for decades; she wanted the protection he could provide her. If she had Eric at her side she would be virtually unstoppable. “So tell us, Sheriff, is Mrs. Northman a good fuck?” Andre asked, hiding none of his contempt.

“My wife is a lady,” Eric replied, barely concealing his anger. “I know that is something you have never had any experience with,” he added, pulling no punches and insulting the Queen in the same sentence. Eric grinned as he saw the look of anger flash over Sophie-Anne’s face. “But you will treat her as such if you want to keep your head.”

“Don’t threaten my child,” Sophie-Anne snarled, quickly stepping forward to defend her child from the threat.

“Then do not disrespect my wife,” Eric growled. He might have had to temper his reactions, but he’d be damned if he would let anyone disrespect his wife in such a way. Eric stared at Sophie-Anne, his eyes boring into hers, showing her the seriousness of his threat.

Sophie-Anne shivered as she felt a trickle of fear washed over her at the look in Eric’s eyes. She could tell his threat was serious, and if she pushed any further, he would take Andre’s head off without a second thought. As the knowledge seeped in, a plan began to form in her mind. She realized Eric wouldn’t willingly give up the girl. And even if they managed to poison Sookie against Eric, the Viking still wouldn’t let her go. He was just as possessive over her as Bill claimed. No, they would need a way to eliminate Eric that couldn’t be tied to them. And Eric might have just inadvertently provided them with one.

“Of course; forgive Andre, Sheriff,” Sophie-Anne replied through gritted teeth, directing the apology at Eric and not at the woman both she and Andre had actually insulted. Apologizing even when it wasn’t sincere wasn’t something Sophie-Anne ever liked to do. In her twisted mind she believed herself to be above everyone, and she shouldn’t ever have to lower herself to apologize. “I’m sure Andre didn’t mean any disrespect. He was merely curious about the appeal of your wife.”

“My wife’s appeal is of no concern to Andre,” Eric said firmly, seeing the Queen’s apology for what it was. Meaningless. “Or anyone else for that matter,” he added, fixing his gaze firmly on Sophie. “Sookie is mine…”

“Does Mrs. Northman…” Andre sneered her name, contempt clear in his tone. He couldn’t believe
Eric had lowered himself to marry a human. As far as Andre was concerned, humans were good for nothing but fucking and feeding. Not even Sookie telepathy exempted her from that. All that meant was that they shouldn’t drain her. Telepath or not, in Andre’s mind, she was still just a bloodbag, and she was only there for his pleasure. “Agree with that?” He asked finally. “Does Mrs. Northman accept your claim? Did she accept it without coercion?” Andre didn’t care if she did or didn't, before he cared Eric could’ve kidnapped her and be holding her against her will.

“That is a fine question, my dear,” Sophie-Anne twittered, as she gave Andre a look of approval. Like Andre, she didn’t care, but believed it would give Sookie the illusion of caring. “Did you take Ms. Stackhouse against her will, Sheriff?”

“No,” Eric growled insulted at the mere mention of doing something so disgusting. He knew Sophie-Anne didn’t care either way; she was just playing one of her silly little games. “I have never taken anyone without their consent. I have more honor than that.” Eric didn’t miss the anger that flashed through Sophie-Anne’s eyes at his jab at her. It was common knowledge that Sophie-Anne had no honor; she believed the rules didn’t apply to her. Eric couldn’t way to show her how wrong she was.

“Is that true, Ms. Stackhouse?” Sophie-Anne asked, turning her attention back to Sookie. “Are you with Sheriff Northman of your own free will?”

“It is Mrs. Northman, your majesty,” Sookie replied, her tone calm. “And yes, I am. I am Eric’s.”

“Hmph,” Sophie-Anne snorted before she could stop herself. “Of course she would say that in front of her master,” she added, as she pasted on a sweet smile.

“Your majesty…” Eric began, a feeling of dread growing in his stomach. He had a good idea where Sophie-Anne was going with it, and he didn’t like it one bit.

“Come now, Eric,” Sophie-Anne purred, “you know as well as I do that pets rarely, if ever, speak out against their masters while in their presence.”

“Sookie is my wife, not my pet,” Eric countered.

“She is human, you’re a vampire, therefore she’s a pet, regardless of what silly title you give her,” Sophie-Anne replied dismissively. “You’re her master, just like I am your master…”

“You are my queen, not my master,” Eric interrupted, his voice taking on a hard quality.

“I am your queen,” Sophie-Anne amended stiffly, her eyes blazing with anger. “And as queen it’s my duty to ensure all my subjects are acting appropriately. It would reflect poorly on me if I didn’t. And none of us would want that, would we?”

“Of course not, my Queen.” Andre was quick to agree.

Sophie-Anne smiled at her child before continuing, “Then for my own peace of mind, I demand… Sorry request,” she amended with a small laugh, “to speak to Ms. Stackhouse alone. That will not be a problem, will it, Sheriff?”

Eric wanted to growl that it would. As Sookie’s bonded, he could refuse the Queen permission to speak to Sookie alone, but unfortunately that would do more harm than good. As at that moment, Sophie-Anne and her pathetic children were unaware that Eric and Sookie knew about their real agenda. Eric couldn't risk to tipping their hand. Compton’s trial was set for the following evening, and Eric couldn’t make a move until Sophie-Anne’s scheming was laid bare for all to see.

Even with knowing all that, Eric still didn't want to let Sophie-Anne speak to his wife privately. He
wasn't worried about what Sookie might say; he trusted his wife completely. It was the immature
Queen, who caused him to worry. Eric knew Sophie-Anne would try to poison Sookie’s mind
against him and sway her to her side, not that it would work. Eric was still loathed expose his wife to
Sophie-Anne’s cruel and spiteful nature.

Tapping into the bond he shared with his wife, Eric sent a burst of caution to Sookie, and barely
contained his grin when he received a sudden jolt of disgust followed by determination.
Understanding the message, Eric straightened his shoulders and the stare down his queen. “Of course
not, your majesty,” he said. “My wife would be happy to speak with you.”

“Is that right?” Sophie-Anne simpered, her painted red lips curling into a smile, believing she had
gotten the upper hand. “Is that right, girl? Are you happy to speak with me alone?”

“I am, your majesty,” Sookie answered, hiding all her disgust. In the three years she had been
involved with Eric and vampires in general, she had never met one who disgusted her more than
Sophie-Anne, and that included the disco triplets. At least with Malcolm, Diane, and Liam they
never pretended to be something that they weren’t. They were the bottom of the barrel vampires and
they knew it. But Sophie-Anne was a wolf in sheep’s clothing, just like Bill. That was probably why
the two of them got on so well. They saw a likeness in each other. “Although I don’t see why it’s
needed; my answer won’t ever change,” she couldn’t help from adding.

We’ll see about that, Sophie-Anne thought. “Now, Sheriff, if you’ll excuse us, I will speak to your
pet.”

“No,” Eric said bluntly, making no attempt to leave.

“No?” Sophie-Anne repeated shrilly.

“Yes, your majesty, no,” Eric reiterated. “I am not leaving, I agreed to let you speak to my wife
alone. Just you. No one else,” Eric eyed Andre as he spoke the last part. “I will not leave Sookie in a
room full of vampires she’s unfamiliar with.”

“I could order you to leave,” Sophie-Anne threatened. ”And I could take my wife with me,” Eric
countered.

Sophie-Anne let out a huff as she crossed arms over her chest. Her eyes bore into Eric’s showing
him her displeasure. She tapped her foot against the floor as she waited for Eric to back down and do
what his queen ordered. Eric simply arched a brow in reply.

“Fine,” Sophie-Anne huffed. “You can stay in here, and I will take your pet in to the other room.
Girl, come with me,” she ordered, as she spun on her heels and stormed towards the separate
bedroom.

Sookie sent a burst of exasperation through the bond to Eric before following Sophie-Anne.

This should be fun, she thought as she entered the hotel room’s bedroom.
“Close the door,” Sophie-Anne ordered, as she turned to face Sookie. Crossing her arms, Sophie-Anne took a minute to let her eyes fall over Sookie again. She couldn’t wait to add to her collection. Sookie and Hadley together would make her a lot of money; the two of them could pass for sisters, and Sophie-Anne knew quite a few people, vampires as well as humans, who would pay a lot of money for that. “Tell me about yourself, girl,” Sophie-Anne said, as she perched herself on the edge of the bed.

“Well, for starters, your majesty, my name is Sookie Northman, not girl,” Sookie replied, her tone containing just a hint of the fire she possessed. “What else would you like to know?” She added sweetly.

Sophie-Anne smirked at Sookie, her eyes and assessing her carefully. The girl had fire, and Sophie-Anne liked that; it meant she would fight back, and that meant breaking her would be all the sweeter.

“How long have you and my sheriff been married?” she asked, even though she already knew the answer.

“Two years,” Sookie answered truthfully.

“A blink of an eye to vampires,” Sophie-Anne replied dismissively. “It’s curious that Eric has kept you to himself until recently,” she mused, tapping a finger to her lips. “One would almost think that he was trying to hide you. I wonder why that could be? Shame, or maybe fear.”

“I’m not sure I understand, your majesty,” Sookie said, feigning confusion, as she barely restrain from rolling her eyes. Sophie-Anne was even stupider than Pam claimed if she thought her little digs were going to work. “You should ask my husband.”

“It’s of no matter,” Sophie-Anne said, waving off her own question. “I know of you now; that is all that matters.” Leaning back on her hands, Sophie-Anne crossed her legs, allowing her dress to rise up her thighs. “They tell me you’re a telepath,” she said, as she tilted her head to the side.

“I am,” Sookie admitted. It wasn’t a secret any longer, and Sophie-Anne herself had already referred to her as such.

“Fascinating,” Sophie-Anne purred. “Tell me, what am I thinking?”

“You’re brain dead to me,” Sookie blurted out. Seeing the look of fury in Sophie-Anne’s eyes, she quickly added, “Vampires. I meant vampires are brain dead to me. I can’t read them.”

“That’s unfortunate,” Sophie-Anne huffed.

”Not from where I’m standing,” Sookie snorted.

“Tell me, Sookie,” Sophie-Anne began, as she rose to her feet and stepped closer to the blonde telepath. “Are you with Eric of your own free will?”

“I am,” Sookie answered.

“Are you sure?” Sophie-Anne pressed, as she moved in even closer to Sookie.

Sookie swallowed down her disgust as Sophie-Anne all but pressed her body against hers. She could
feel a faint tickle against her mind, and she knew Sophie-Anne was trying to glamour her.

“Positive,” Sookie replied, her tone firm.

Pushing her mind more firmly against Sookie’s, Sophie-Anne pressed the young telepath against the wall with her body, caging her in. “No, Eric took you against your will,” she said. Darting her tongue out, Sophie-Anne licked her lips and added, “You want to come and live with me at my palace in New Orleans. You want to be with your queen. You want to please me, don’t you?”


Sophie-Anne startled at Sookie’s reply, a frown creasing her forehead as she stared at the young blonde. Pushing her mind even harder against Sookie’s, she tried once again to get her under her control. “You will renounce Eric’s claim on you,” she ordered.

“No,” Sookie replied simply.

Backing up slightly, Sophie-Anne glared at Sookie, her anger taking her over. “What are you?”

“A telepath. And Eric’s wife.” Sookie couldn’t help adding the last part. She bit back a grin at the look of fury on the queen’s face. “Will that be all, your majesty?”

“Yes, that will be all,” Sophie-Anne hissed, adding on a “for now,” silently in her mind. Realizing she couldn’t push it any further, Sophie-Anne made no attempt to hide the anger at her failure in front of Sookie, openly glaring at her. She was furious that her glamour didn’t work, especially when it worked on Hadley. Her little pet was easy to glamour when the need arose, which admittedly wasn’t often. As she stared at Sookie, Sophie-Anne swore she would make her pay, her and Eric.

OoOoO

Andre sneered at Eric as the older vampire watched his wife disappear into the other room with their queen. It didn’t take a fool to see that the Viking loved his wife. And that was something Andre believed he could use against them.

Unlike his maker and Queen, Andre did believe in love. He believed that vampires were capable of it. Sophie-Anne dismissed the notion completely; in her mind vampires didn’t – couldn’t – love. But Andre knew differently; he knew better, not that he would ever tell Sophie-Anne that. Andre knew vampires could love, as he had loved himself. Andre loved his maker and Queen, but that love was out of necessity. He was hardwired to love her. She had saved him the night she had turned him. He owed her his loyalty and love, but Andre was never in love with her. Sophie-Anne was never his love. His love had died over two hundred years ago, killed by his own hands at the command of his maker.

For a while Andre had hated Sophie-Anne for it. For many years, Andre had truly despised his maker for making him kill the woman he loved. The woman he had planned to turn. Andre had sworn on the grave of his lover, he would never forgive his maker for her cruelty. But it had only taken twenty-two years for Andre to see the truth. To understand the lesson Sophie-Anne had been trying to teach him.

Love was a weakness that should be eliminated.

In loving Catherine, Andre had made himself vulnerable; he made himself weak. And a weak vampire never survives. It was a hard and painful lesson to learn, but he had learnt it. When Sophie-Anne had ordered him to destroy Catherine, she was protecting him like a maker should. For a very
brief time, Andre had placed Catherine above Sophie-Anne; he had honored and cherished her more, and that could never be allowed. It was vampires first. A vampire’s first priority should always be to their maker first. A maker’s wants and needs were far more important than their own. Once Andre had realized that, he offered his heartfelt thanks to his beloved maker, thanking her for saving him from what he believed was almost certain death.

As Andre stared at Eric, he realized the Viking hadn’t learned that lesson, not that he cared. A weak and in love Eric would be far easier to defeat. And Andre looked forward to that night and hoped it would come soon.

He just hoped he could draw the Viking’s death out first. Eric didn't deserve a quick and merciful death. He deserved to suffer first. And Andre desperately wanted that to happen. He wanted to break Eric, and given the way he looked at Sookie, Andre had a good idea of how to do it.

Andre felt his cock hardening in his pants as he imagined all the ways he would make Eric suffer.

*I’ll chain you to the walls in the dungeon and make you watch everything I do you whore of a wife. I’ll make her scream like you never did, Viking. I’ll drag the whore into the cell with you and strip her naked in front of you. I’ll take my belt off and lash all that pretty skin of hers. I’ll tear her flesh up and listen to her scream and beg me to stop. But I won’t stop, Viking. I’ll never stop. I’ll punish her for your sins. I’ll force the little cunt to her knees and hold her head still as one by one all my queen’s guards enter the room and fuck her pretty little mouth. I bet she sucks cock really well. And when the last one is done, I’ll push her to the floor and fuck her hard. I think I’ll take her ass first. I’m sure she’ll love my cock stretching her sweet little ass. I’ll go in dry and make her scream, taking her hard and fast until I cum, filling her with my seed. Then I’ll flip her over and fuck her pussy. I’ll spend hours buried inside her, fucking her in any way I want, and I’ll make you watch it all.*

Andre let out a groan, the images his mind was conjuring up, making him even harder. A cruel smirk curled his lips as he stared up at Eric, “Tell me, Northman,” he said that he started to rub a hand over his pants-covered erection, “does your whore like getting fucked up the ass? I’m sure she begs for it…”

Before the words had left his mouth, Andre found himself off the ground and slammed into the wall with Eric's large hand wrapped tightly around his throat.

Digging his fingers into Andre’s neck painfully, Eric leaned in closer, the promise of death was clear in his eyes and Andre felt the first shiver of fear.

“Talk about my wife like that again and I will rip your fucking head off,” Eric threatened. Seeing Andre trying to open his mouth, Eric tightened his grip on his throat. “I do not care who your maker is,” he added, guessing what pathetic thing Andre was going to say. “I am more than twice her age and she could not stop me even if she tried. No power on this earth could stop me. This is your last warning, boy. Next time I will just take your fucking head off. Understand?”

Andre nodded the best that he could, fear and humiliation overtaking him.

“Good. But in case you think I am bluffing…” Eric stopped abruptly, as he released his hold on Andre, but before the younger vampire could retreat, Eric grabbed his head in both hands and twisted violently, breaking his neck.

Eric grinned in satisfaction as he watched Andre crumpled to the floor in a heap. “Snivelling little prick.”

Hearing the bedroom door open, Eric looked up just in time to see Sookie and a furious looking
Sophie-Anne come walking out. “I trust my wife’s answers were to your satisfaction, your majesty?” He said, making no attempt to hide his smile. Despite his little altercation with Andre, Eric had heard everything that had gone on in the bedroom. He had monitored the bond he shared with his wife closely to make sure she was fine. Eric had felt disgust and exasperation, but never any fear from Sookie. If anything, his bonded had been simply annoyed by it all.

Sophie-Anne glared at Eric in reply, her anger still burning bright. Seeing the crumpled form of her child on the floor, her eyes narrowed into slits. “What did you do to my child?” she screeched, as she crossed the room and kneeled by Andre. “How dare you attack my child!” she spat.

Pulling Sookie to his side, Eric stared down at Sophie-Anne, his face devoid of all emotion. “Your child, despite my warnings, insulted and disrespected my wife,” Eric replied.

“You injured him over a human,” Sophie-Anne hissed. She couldn’t believe how bad her night was going. First the telepath haven't taken her bait about Yvetta, then she had resisted her glamour and chosen Eric, and then Eric had attacked her beloved child. As she glared at Eric, Sophie-Anne swore she would make him pay for everything that happened that night. He would pay dearly for crossing his queen. She would break him and then she would send him to his final death.

Sophie-Anne brushed her fingers through Andre’s hair as she schooled her features. She couldn’t show her hand just yet, but at the same time she couldn’t let Eric think it was okay to harm her child. Rising to her feet, she stared him down as she crossed her arms over her chest. “I will forgive you for your disrespect this once, Sheriff,” she said. “But if you ever attack my child again, I will have you chained in silver for years. Understand?”

“Perfectly,” Eric replied, straightening his shoulders. “Will that be all, your majesty?”

“No,” Sophie-Anne said, a devious look entering her eyes as she flicked them from Eric to Sookie and then back again. “I require your pet’s service,” she added, as she thoroughly eyefucked Sookie in front of Eric. “Her telepathic services,” she amended with a giggle, as she heard Eric let out a growl. “That is the whole point of her being here after all. I want the telepath by my side so she can read the pets of the other monarchs.”

“If that is your wish,” Eric replied, trying to hide his unhappiness at the order. He knew Sophie-Anne would want to use Sookie’s telepathy at the conference, but he still didn’t like it. “We will be happy to accompany you.”

“That won’t be necessary,” Sophie-Anne dismissed with a wave of her hand. “I don’t require your presence.”

“Whether you require my presence or not is irrelevant, your majesty. I will be accompanying my wife as is my right,” Eric stated, his tone brokering no argument.

Sophie-Anne let out an unneeded breath. “Really, Sheriff, your constant disobedience and disrespect is growing tiresome. But if you don’t trust your queen to keep your pet safe, fine. Join us.”

“Thank you, your majesty,” Eric replied, ignoring the contempt dripping off her words. It was clear to everyone but Sophie-Anne that no one except her own children trusted her. “We await your departure.”

Sophie-Anne’s face scrunched up in annoyance and she let out a small cry of frustration before stomping back into the bedroom to change.
“That went well,” Sookie snorted, as she nestled herself into Eric’s side.

“Unfortunately, it is only the beginning,” Eric replied in a whisper, as he watched Andre start to come around. As he wrapped his arm around Sookie’s shoulders, Eric wondered what Sophie-Anne and Andre would try next. They were becoming almost desperate in their attempts, and that didn’t bode well. One thing was for sure: the conference was going to be a wild ride.
Chapter 23

It was late into the afternoon when Sookie finally met up with Hadley. After spending the night in the company of Sophie-Anne and Andre, Sookie wasn't looking forward to even spending five seconds in her cousin’s presence, but she knew she didn't have any choice. Eric and Sookie couldn't let them know that they were on to them. They needed to keep Sophie-Anne and company in the dark. But that didn't mean Sookie was going to meet Hadley unprepared and unprotected. Sookie had invited Jason, who was staying at the hotel with Thalia, to join her at lunch to reconnect with Hadley as well. And Eric had arranged for Gladiola and Diantha to be having lunch at the same time. Eric may not have been able to be there personally, but he was making sure his wife was well protected.

Arriving in the hotel dining room a few minutes early, Sookie grinned as she saw Diantha and Gladiola sitting at a table by the window. Tapping Jason on the arm, Sookie led him over to the table in front of her demon friends and took a seat. Sookie and Jason exchanged small talk as they waited for Hadley to show up. Jason snorted as he saw their cousin arrive. True to Hadley fashion, she was nearly forty minutes late and looked like she had just climbed out of bed. A quick dip inside her head told Sookie that was exactly what had happened. Sookie shook her head as she dug further into her cousin’s mind.

Her mind was hazy with glamour, but Sookie could easily see through it. Lowering her voice, Sookie leaned into Jason and whispered, “She's late because she was up late pleasing her mistress.”

“Oh gross, Sook. I didn’t need to know that,” Jason complained, as he leaned back in his chair. Casting his eyes over their cousin, Jason took a minute to take her in. She certainly looked better than the last time he had seen her, but then again, she would have had to have been dead, probably dead not vampire dead, to have looked worse. Despite how well she looked, Jason could still see the ugliness in her. Jason had received a crash course in reading people when he was introduced into the supernatural world; a pretty face in a large rack no longer blinded him. Thalia had schooled him in seeing behind the appearance, something he was grateful for seeing how many women have tried to use him to get closer to his sister’s husband.

After what happened with Dawn, Jason swore no one else would use him to try to hurt his sister. And one look at Hadley told Jason that was exactly what she wanted to do. The Queen might have wanted Sookie for her telepathy, but Hadley wanted to hurt her. It was written all over her face; Jason could read it as plain as day.

Jason smirked as he saw Hadley falter as she laid eyes on him. *Surprise, bitch.*

“Hadley Hale, you get your butt over here right now and hug your cousin,” he said, as he rose from his seat.

“Jason!” Hardly cried, feigning excitement after a brief pause. She threw herself in his arms, hugging him tight. “What are you doing here?” she asked as she pulled back.

“What kind of question is that?” Jason replied as he reclaimed his seat next to Sookie and waited for Hadley to sit down opposite him. “Once Sook told me she’d seen ya, I had to come and see ya myself.”

“That’s real sweet of you, Jason,” Hadley said, as she rested her arms on the table. “But you didn’t have to fly out just to see me.”
“I didn’t,” Jason snorted without thought. Feeling Sookie kick him softly under the table, “I mean… “ He faked a cough to hide his hesitation. “I was already here in the city at the hotel;” the words came out rushed as he tried to explain. “Sook invited me. I think she wanted her big brother with her.”

A calculating smile spread across Hadley’s as she flicked her eyes between the siblings. “You two look a lot closer than you were last time I saw you both,” she commented fishing for information.

“We are,” Jason admitted. “I finally understand how precious having a baby sister is. We couldn’t be closer.”

“That’s great,” Hadley replied. “How’d that happen?”

Sookie barely restrained from rolling her eyes as she realized what Hadley was doing. She couldn’t believe it, but her cousin was actually stupider than she remembered. Despite selling her out because of her telepathy, Hadley actually seemed to have forgotten that Sookie was a telepath. Sookie could see all playing out in the blonde backstabber’s mind. Hadley didn’t care how Jason and Sookie became closer; what she did care about was how they – Sophie-Anne – could use Jason against her. Hadley was already planning on how she would tell Sophie-Anne and how she could get Jason alone so Andre could take him.

“We understand the importance of family,” Sookie answered, her tone unflinching. “Family above all else. But that’s a simple and quick answer. The other would be that we grew closer when I was planning my wedding to Eric. Jason actually gave me away…”

“You should’ve seen it Hadley. Sookie was the prettiest bride I’ve ever seen,” Jason interjected, taking a small jab at Hadley, knowing how much she hated it when anyone complimented Sookie’s looks over hers. He grinned as he saw the look of anger flash in her eyes.

“As a thank you, I introduced Jason to his vampire,” Sookie continued, as if she hadn’t been interrupted.

“Jason’s vampire?” Hadley questioned.

“Yes. Thalia was quite taken with Jason,” she replied, fighting a grin as the color drained from Hadley’s face. Oh good, you’ve heard of her. “You’ve been together for what now? About 18 months,” she added, directing the question to Jason, embellishing the relationship between her brother and the ancient vampire in front of their cousin. “It’s really because of Thalia that Jason is here. He’s here with her.”

Hadley blanched as she heard the name of Jason's vampire. While she'd never met Thalia personally, her reputation was well known around the palace, and both Sophie-Anne and Andre feared the ancient vampire. Knowing that Jason belonged to Thalia changed everything. They wouldn’t be able to use him to coerce Sookie. The ancient vampire would kill them all without question. Thalia wasn’t like Eric; she held no respect for the throne or the power of her monarch.

“That’s great,” Hadley said, forcing the words out of her lips and she seethed internally. “Gran must’ve been so proud that her favorite grandchildren became vampire pets,” she sneered after a moment's pause unable to help herself.

“It beats being a buffet to any vampire who knows how to use the phone,” Jason retorted biting. He snorted as he saw tears pool in Hadley’s eyes. “Spare me the tears, Hadley,” he added, as he leaned forwards and rested his arms on the top of the table. “Those don’t work on me any more. Neither do your nasty little words. But to answer your question, yes, our grandmother was extremely
proud of Sook and me. Before she died, she was happy to know that two of her grandchildren had found partners that loved them and made them happy. It wasn't perfect happiness cos' her other grandchild was too selfish to pick up the phone and let her know she was alive. If your life sucks so much, that’s your fault, don’t try to hurt Sook or me cos’ of it. Grow up, little girl.”

Hadley stared at Jason in shock. He had never spoken to her like that before, and she didn't like it. Growing up, it used to be her and Jason that was the close ones, and Sookie was the outsider; she was the freak.

“My life doesn’t suck,” Hadley cried, her voice rising slightly. “I have a good job and Soph… Friends,” she amended quickly, but neither Jason nor Sookie missed her slip up.


“I’m not turning tricks,” Hadley argued insulted. “I work as a donor.”

“You get paid to provide blood and sex to vampires,” Jason countered no longer able to even pretend to play nice with his cousin. “Ya can put a different name on it, but it’s still prostitution.”

“Why’re you being so mean to me?” Hadley pouted as she crossed her arms over her chest.

"I'm not being mean, I'm being truthful,” Jason replied. “You just don’t know what that is. So you can’t tell the difference.”

“No, you’re being mean,” Hadley argued, refusing to concede that Jason had any kind of point. “You're blaming me for things that weren’t my fault. I didn’t have…”

“I swear on Gran’s grave, if you say you didn’t have a choice, I will take a switch to you and spank you like the brat you’re acting like,” Jason cut her off, furious that Hadley was still the same brat she always was. He shook his head as he stared at her, she was nearly thirty and she was still acting like the jealous, selfish brat that she was as a teenager. “Everything that happened was your fault, and your choice. You chose to steal your momma’s silver when she was dying. You decided to only think of yourself when your momma needed you more than anything and run away. You decided to rob Gran of the little she had, the little she would’ve given you willingly to help you, and take off again. You choose to act like a selfish, jealous brat because both me and Sook are happy now…” With his eyes focused intently on Hadley, Jason pushed his chair back, stood up, and leaned over the table. “Grow the fuck up, Hadley,” he said before straightening up and storming out of the hotel dining room.

Sookie fought a smile as she watched Jason storm away. Things hadn't gone the way they had planned, but it but she couldn't fault Jason for speaking his mind. She just wished she could do the same. Feigning a shocked look, Sookie turned her gaze back to Hadley and gave her cousin what she hoped was a sympathetic look.

“Well, that was unexpected,” she said finally not sure what else you could say. Pushing her chair back, she held up her hand. “I'll be back in a minute,” she added quickly chasing after Jason before Hadley had a chance to say anything.

“Jason!” Sookie called out, as she saw him storm out the front entrance of the hotel. “Jason, wait,” she added, as she picked up her pace. “Jason,” she repeated as she grabbed his arm and stopped him several feet away from the hotel. Turning around to face his sister, Jason let out a breath of air as he tried to calm himself down. “I’m sorry, Sook,” he said after a few minutes, brushing a hand through his hair. “I just can’t sit at the same table as her and pretend that everything is okay knowing what she’s done. I wanted to hit her, and I’ve never hit a woman. But damn it, Sookie, she deserves it.”
“I know,” Sookie replied, as she reached out her hands and grasped Jason by his arms. “It took everything I had not to slap her round the face last night when she showed up,” she admitted. “She is fully complicit in all this, Jas. She’s actually looking forward to it. So believe me, I know how you feel. I hate having to play nice with her, but it won’t be for much longer. The trial is set for tonight, and once it’s over and everything is done, I’ll hit her for you.”

Jason lowered with his head as he let out a laugh, his sister’s words soothing the anger inside him. “Okay, but I want ringside seats.”

“Deal,” Sookie agreed with a smile. “Now I better get back before she throws a tantrum. Jas, just do me a favor?”

“What?” Jason asked curiously.

“Don’t leave Thalia’s side,” Sookie replied. “I heard Hadley thinking about telling them you’re here and how they could use you to get to me. It’s unlikely they’ll try anything knowing you’re with Thalia and given her reputation, but I’d rather be safe than sorry.”

“Okay,” Jason agreed, seeing how serious his sister was. He had come to understand just how devious and selfish vampires could be over the last several years, and he trusted Sookie’s and Eric’s judgement. If Sookie wanted him to stay close to Thalia he would. Not that it would be a hardship; Jason really did like the tiny vampire.

After sharing with a hug with her brother, Sookie took another minute to compose herself before pasting on a smile and venturing back inside. As she approached the table where Hadley was still seated, she caught the tail end of a conversation her cousin was having with the daytime manager.

“… Sunset is at 6:04 PM, be ready,” he said before giving Hadley a nod and walking away.

“Where’s Jason?” Hadley asked before Sookie had a chance to say anything.

“He’s gone to cool off,” Sookie answered, as she retook her seat. “He’s a little wound up,” she added with a tense smile as she saw Hadley roll her eyes. She didn’t even have to dip into her mind to know her cousin thought Jason had been in the wrong. As far as Sookie was concerned, the only thing Jason had done wrong was that he hadn’t continued with his well-deserved telling off. The more time she spent in Hadley’s presence, the more she realized that Hadley had only gotten worse. Thanks to Sophie-Anne, her cousin now had a sense of entitlement. She thought they all owed her something and should worship her.

Silence descended over the table as Sookie and Hadley stared at each other. For all of Hadley’s talk of catching up, it was obvious that she really didn’t care about what had happened in the last three and a half years. And Sookie wasn’t in a hurry to fill the silence either. Sitting in silence was one of the few ways Sookie could tolerate her cousin.

“So…” Hadley began once the silence had grown too uncomfortable for her. “You still living in Bon Temps?”

“Yes,” Sookie answered, biting back a snort. You know full well I am. She had to hand it to Hadley; she was certainly playing the part of the clueless cousin well. It was good that she already knew about Hadley’s part in Sophie-Anne’s little plan or she might’ve believed her. Well, she would’ve believed her until she read her mind. You really don’t have any shame, do you, Hadley?

“Eric and I live in the old farm house,” she added, seeing no point in hiding it. She figured Bill had told Sophie-Anne where she lived by now. “Gran left it to me in her will on the condition I sold my
“What?” Hadley spat, greed flashing in her eyes. “What about me? Why didn’t she leave it to me? Didn’t she care about me? You always were her favorite.”

“Probably because we all thought you were dead,” Sookie replied, her tone taking on a hard edge. “Like Jason said, you took off after robbing Gran. We didn't know where you were on whether you were even alive. Honestly, Hadley, you didn't deserve anything. Gran loved you despite everything she never stopped. For once in your life don't be selfish and complain that you didn’t get anything from the woman who loved you with her last breath.”

Hadley crossed her arms over her chest and sulked. She couldn’t believe Gran had left the house to Sookie. It was just like when they were children and Sookie had stolen Gran’s love and attention away from her. And now as adults she had stolen her inheritance. The house should’ve been hers. She deserved it, not Sookie. As she stared at Sookie, Hadley swore she would make her pay for stealing everything away from her. Once she belonged to the queen, Hadley would get Sophie-Anne to forced Sookie to sign the house over to her. In fact, she would get Sophie-Anne to force her to sign everything over to her. She would own everything.

“If you’re just gonna sit there and sulk, I’m gonna leave,” Sookie said fed up with Hadley’s attitude already.

“I'm not sulking,” Hadley pouted. “It's just…” She trailed off as tears trickled down her cheek. “I didn’t get to say goodbye to Gran.” She wiped the tears away with the back of the hand as she took a shaky breath. “I know I wasn’t always the best granddaughter; I’ve made a lot of mistakes, but I did love her. Gran was the only one who loved me unconditionally. Momma loved me, but she always blamed me for daddy leaving. But Gran never blamed me for anything, even when she probably should’ve. She just loved me.”

As she watched Hadley, Sookie realized for the first time her cousin was being honest. Despite everything Hadley did love their Gran. She was the only one she did love though. And she only loved her because, like Hadley said, Gran loved her unconditionally, not that that was a bad thing. Adele was a wonderful woman, but one of her flaws was she only saw the good in her grandchildren. She made excuses for all three of them. Adele was blinded by her love for her grandchildren. If she would’ve been alive, she would’ve been furious that Sophie-Anne was targeting Sookie, but she would’ve overlooked Hadley’s part in it. She would’ve been disappointed, but she would’ve placed the blame solely on Sophie-Anne.

“She didn't suffer… Gran; it was peaceful,” Sookie he said, her tone becoming softer. She might not like her cousin, but she wouldn't use their gran’s death against her as a weapon. “She passed away in her sleep. She was happy… Before she died. Eric fixed up the house for her, restored it to how it was… She was happy,” she repeated. “Gran danced at my wedding. She told off a vampire for cursing.” Sookie laughed as she recalled watching her Gran telling Pam off for using the f word at the wedding reception.

“That sounds like Gran,” Hadley said with a smile. “She always did hate it when she heard someone cursing.”

“Or gossiping,” Sookie replied with a laugh. “Even though her and Maxine Fortenberry were the biggest gossips in Bon Temps.”

“They knew everything that was going on,” Hadley remembered. “No secrets survived in Bon Temps with them. Is Maxine still around?”
“Oh yeah.” Sookie nodded. “She’s still about, tightening the apron strings on Hoyt every month.”

With the ice somewhat thawed, Sookie and Hadley spent next several hours catching up. Sookie was careful as to what she shared with her cousin she didn’t give Hadley any information that she could use against her or Eric. But she didn’t think mentioning how Arlene had married and divorced again would hurt. Sookie smiled as she shared how Arlene had been caught with her kids’ principal at a sleazy hotel.

The two of them were laughing over some silly tale when Hadley recently noticed the time. “I’ve gotta go, Hadley said suddenly. “I’ve gotta get ready for work. Maybe we can meet up again tomorrow,” she added, as she quickly stood up.

“Maybe,” Sookie replied a frown marring her face as she noticed Hadley’s eyes darting around the dining room. “Are you looking for someone?” she asked suspiciously.

“My boss,” Hadley answered without hesitation. “I need to know if I’m working the rooms or the lounge tonight.”

A quick dip into Hadley’s mind told Sookie she was telling the truth. All she was thinking was finding her boss Cameron and getting it over with.

“Are you leaving now?” Hadley asked eagerly with a fake smile.

“No,” Sookie replied carefully, her eyes flickering over the dining room quickly before returning to Hadley. Although her mind gave nothing away, Sookie thought Hadley wanted her to leave at that moment. She was almost anticipating it. “I’m going to finish my drink first.” A quick look outside told her she had maybe thirty minutes before sunset. She would stay in view of everyone until she felt Eric rise and then she would go to him. He would be able to feel if anything happened to her. “I’ll go to my room after.”

“Okay,” Hadley said disappointment coloring her tone. “Well, I’ll see you later.”

“Yeah,” Sookie replied, smiling tightly.

Hadley gave Sookie a smile and wave before she practically skipped away, a devious smile spreading across her lips.
Chapter 24

It was just a few minutes later when Hadley let herself into Cameron’s office, having realized that’s where he would be. She smiled as she saw him leaning on the edge of his desk, obviously waiting for her.

“Do you have it?” she asked, not wasting any time. ”I do,” Cameron replied, as it picked up an envelope off his desk and held it out. “Everything you asked for is in here.”

“Good,” Hadley purred, her eyes lighting up as she reached for the envelope.

“Ah-ah,” Cameron chided, as he pulled his hand back and move the envelope out of her reach. “Not so fast,” he added with a smirk. “I’m risking a lot by doing this. I could lose my job and I have a family to feed.”

“Christian okayed this,” Hadley huffed out. “He’s the one who told you to give it to me. He’s not gonna fire you for it.”

“Vampires are devious by nature,” Cameron replied. “I doubt Christian would have any problem going back on his word and killing me. I’m not stupid, Hadley; I know how vampires operate.”

“So you’ll also know he’ll kill you if you don’t give me that envelope like ordered,” Hadley threatened. “You're being paid a lot to give me it and look the other way.”

“I am,” Cameron agreed. “But,” he added as ran his eyes over Hadley in leering manner. “I think I want part of my payment upfront.”

“What are…” Hadley started, but trailed off as she saw a familiar look glint in his eyes. “Fine,” she sighed, as she stepped closer to him and slowly lowered herself to her knees. Hadley had to admit he wasn’t hard on the eyes with his chiselled good looks, dark hair, and green eyes. She had certainly pleased worse men. The King of Colorado sprang to mind. He was a horrid vampire; he was turned late in life, late fifties, and was portly and short. Sophie-Anne had no love for the king herself, and she usually denied his request, but on his last visit he had brought Sophie-Anne a present, an exotic looking woman who had a body made for sin. The woman, Camilla, had danced for the queen, removing her clothes as she went, and when she had finished, she had crawled on her hands and knees without prompting and pleased her. Sophie-Anne had been quite taken with Camilla, and as a thank you to the King of Colorado, she had gifted him with Hadley for his short stay. It was Camilla’s arrival at the palace that had led to Hadley telling Sophie-Anne all about Sookie. Hadley had grown jealous of the amount of attention the queen was showing to the newcomer and had spilled the beans about Sookie to regain her favor.

Staring up at Cameron, Hadley gave him a stiff smile before raising her hands and undoing his pants. She took a deep breath before going about paying him in advance. Hadley used all her years of experience to bring Cameron to a quick release, swallowing once done.

“Mmm,” Cameron moaned, as he tucked his softening cock back in his pants. “I can see why Christian likes having you around. No one has ever sucked my dick that good before.”

“You’re welcome,” Hadley said, as she rose to her feet. Crossing the room, she opened the door on the cabinet that stood against the wall and pulled out a bottle of mouthwash that she knew Christian kept in there for his girls. She took a mouthful and swirled it around before splitting it into the bin next to the cabinet.
“Can I have the envelope now?” she asked, as she popped in a stick of gum. She only had just less than twenty-five minutes to get everything sorted.

“Of course,” Cameron replied with a smirk, as he reached for the envelope and handed it to her. As Hadley’s fingers closed on the envelope, Cameron suddenly yanked her to him and wrapped one arm around her and held her tightly, preventing her from moving. “But next time,” he added, thrusting his hand between her legs. He raised an eyebrow as he realized she wasn’t wearing any panties, as he cupped her sex he continued, “I want this wrapped around my cock.”

 Hadley whimpered as she felt his fingers rub her clit, her arousal beginning to grow. Raising her eyes to meet his, Hadley placed her hand over his and pushed it more firmly against her sex, as she clutched the envelope in her other hand. “If everything goes to plan tonight, I’ll come back and let you fuck me tonight,” she said, as she reluctantly stepped away from him before making her way to the door.

A quick look at the time told her she had just over fifteen minutes left, and she quickly hurried through the hotel to the elevator. She pushed people out of the way as she jumped into the carriage and pressed the number to the floor she wanted. As she waited for the elevator to reach the required floor, she quickly looked into the envelope, pulling out the two items before discarding it. Reaching the floor, Hadley peeked her head out of the doors, making sure no one was around before darting out and hurrying down the hallway. She found the room she was looking for easily and let herself in. A smile curled her lips as she had a quick look around before moving towards the large double doors that separated the bedroom from the rest of the suite.

Hadley’s eyes sparkled with cruel intent as she let herself into the bedroom and saw the blond haired vampire lying on his back in the middle of the bed, still dead for the day. As she stood at the end of the bed, Hadley let her eyes fall over him. “It’s a shame you’re in the way of my Mistress,” she said, as she tangled her fingers in the sheet covering him and slowly pulled it down his body. She pouted as she saw that he was wearing boxers. “I would’ve loved to have shown you all I can offer,” she added as she quickly removed her dress. “I could please you better than my little cousin ever could. I bet Sookie is still quite the prude and doesn’t let you do any of the things you like.” Seeing Sookie’s discarded nightgown laying over a nearby chair, Hadley smirked as she picked it up and slipped it on, attempting to mask her own scent with her cousins. She frowned as she realized the nightgown was too big in the chest for her.

As she stared down at Eric, Hadley briefly considered breaking a chair and driving a stake deep into his chest. It would solve all of Sophie-Anne’s problems. But as much as she wanted to, Hadley knew she couldn’t. Killing Eric in the middle of the summit would mean almost certain death for her. There would be no way she would get away with it. And neither Sophie-Anne nor Christian would be able to hide her involvement or protect her from the consequences.

“I guess it’s your lucky day after all,” Hadley sighed, as she climbed onto the bed and crawled up his body and straddled his hips. Another look at the time told her it was almost show time, and she set about setting the stage.

Moving her hands up her body, Hadley cupped her breasts as she started to rock her hips slowly back and forth. She was already worked up thanks to Cameron and she would only need the slightest touch to get her into the state she desired. History had shown her this plan worked; Sophie-Anne had had her do it before with a visiting diplomat from France. The visiting vampire, Marcel De Villiers, had actually been an old friend of Sophie-Anne’s and had simply come to Louisiana to visit her, but he had made the mistake of bringing a companion with him – a stunningly beautiful brunette called Amber. Sophie-Anne had taken one look at the young woman and decided she wanted her for herself. Marcel had refused Sophie-Anne’s request so the queen had employed more underhanded
tactics. She had ordered Hadley to go into the room she had arranged for him minutes before sunset. Hadley had done everything Sophie-Anne had instructed; she played her part perfectly and before Marcel had even realized what was happening, he had woken, had Hadley on her back, and was buried balls deep inside her just as Amber had entered the room. Hadley had taken no satisfaction in hurting Amber like that, but as she stared down at Eric, she knew she would enjoy Sookie’s pain. She couldn’t wait for her little cousin to walk in on her fucking her husband. As she rocked her hips more forcefully, Hadley swore she would put on the show to end all shows. She would scream so loud the whole hotel would hear her once she had Eric’s cock inside her.

“Come on, baby, wake up,” Hadley purred, as she slipped the straps of the nightgown off her shoulders and pulled the top down, exposing her chest to the rooms cool temperature. “I want to feel your big, hard cock inside me,” she moaned, pinching her nipples. “I bet you’ll feel so good inside me.”

Reaching for the other item that was in the envelope, Hadley lifted it to her neck and let the small blade nick her flesh. A small trickle of blood slid down her throat and Hadley threw the blade to the floor before running her finger over the small cut and collecting the blood. She smeared the blood over Eric’s lips before pushing her hand between her thighs and rubbing her fingers over her clit. She could feel her juices sliding down her legs and grinned.

“I bet you’d love to taste me, wouldn’t you? I’d make you so hard.”

Blood and sex were the two things that could override a vampire’s senses, and she knew how to use them well. When Eric rose all he would be able to smell would be her blood and arousal. She was counting Sookie’s scent on the nightgown to fool him long enough into believing it was his wife in the room with him. By the time he realized she wasn’t, it would be too late. He would already be buried deep inside Hadley, and poor little Sookie would’ve caught them. Sophie-Anne’s glamour would hide Hadley’s true involvement and Eric would get all the blame.

“I bet Sookie never made you feel this good,” Hadley moaned, as she threw her head back. Hadley closed her eyes as she continued to masturbate on top of her cousin’s husband, her fingers moving faster as she neared her release. So lost in her success, Hadley never noticed when Eric stiffened beneath her, nor did she hear the door to the hotel room open.

“Oh God! Yes!” Hadley cried out. She was on the cusp of her release when she felt a hand wrap painfully around her throat.

“What the fuck?”
Chapter 25

Hadley’s eyes snapped open and widened in fright as they landed on a very awake, very pissed off, and very in control Eric.

Hadley fought back the wave of fear as she stared at a furious looking Eric. A squeak escaped her lips as Eric tightened his hold on her throat. For once in her life, Hadley was at a loss of what to say, and one look at Eric told her even if she wasn’t, he wouldn’t want to hear it. As she sat above him, she wondered where her plan went wrong. It worked in the past. What was it about Eric that made him immune to it? What made Eric immune to her charms?

Swallowing as best she could with Eric’s hand still wrapped around her throat, Hadley parted her lips and darted her tongue out to wet them. “I…” she began, but before she had a chance to say anything else, she felt a hand tangle in her hair and yank her back hard.

“Get the fuck away from my husband, you bitch,” Sookie snarled, as she dragged her cousin out of the bedroom.

Hadley stumbled as Sookie dragged her out of the bedroom, her knees scraping along the carpets painfully, but Sookie didn’t care. She wanted her out of the bedroom and away from her husband. Anger like she had never felt before welled up in Sookie as she threw Hadley to the floor. She knew her cousin was up to something the minute she left the dining room, but she never expected this.

When Sookie had felt Eric’s confusion and then anger, Sookie knew Hadley was somehow behind it, and she realized that Eric was the target this time and not her. But she still wasn’t prepared for what she had walked in on. It was clear to her what her cousin was up to the second she entered the room, what she had hoped to achieve, and Sookie was furious.

“Looks like I’ve gotta take some more trash out,” Sookie spat, as she glared down at Hadley. As she stared at Hadley, Sookie didn’t think she had ever been so angry before. She was used to people throwing themselves at her husband, it came with the territory, but none of them ever tried to assault Eric in such a way and none of them had been her cousin.

“Sookie, please,” Hadley begged truly scared, as she stared up at her cousin. “I can explain.”

“This? You can explain this?” Sookie hissed, as she waved her hand around. “Oh this I’ve gotta hear.”

“I didn’t mean… I didn’t want…” Hadley paused, as she took a deep breath. Tears welled in her eyes and she let them fall, hoping to play on Sookie’s sympathies. “It wasn’t my choice. I didn’t want to… He…”

“I swear to God, if you try to say Eric forced you against your will, I will kick your ass,” Sookie threatened, cutting Hadley off. “My husband is not a rapist. And I will not allow you to accuse him of something so despicable.”

“I wasn’t going to say that,” Hadley reply shakily, realizing she had to come up with a good story and quick. “I… I… just meant I didn’t set out to do this. It wasn’t my choice and that I was the donor requested for this.”

“Are you really trying to claim that Eric ordered a donor and specifically asked for you?” Sookie snorted. She swore Hadley got stupider by the minute.

“It’s the truth!” Hadley cried feigning sincerity. “I’m sorry, Sookie, but he asked for me by name. He
says he has a thing for big-breasted blondes. I didn’t want to betray you, but this is my job. I can’t risk turning down a request.”

“Can you believe this?” Sookie asked, directing the question to Eric, who had just walked out of the bedroom, having gotten dressed.

”The story is just like your cousin, pathetic,” Eric said, as he moved to stand beside his wife.

“Hey!” Hadley screeched indignantly, as she lifted herself to her feet and pulled the front of Sookie’s nightgown up, covering herself up. “I’m not pathetic.”

“I beg to differ,” Eric snorted. “You are even more pathetic than the vermin that visit our bar.”

”Do you honestly expect me to believe that?” Sookie asked, cutting Hadley off before she even had a chance to reply.

”It's the truth,” Hadley replied. “I wouldn’t lie to you.”

“No, Hadley, you wouldn’t tell the truth,” Sookie countered, her tone taking on a hard quality. “I can't believe you’re actually going to stand there and claim my husband requested your services. Eric is right, you are pathetic.”

“Pathetic?” Hadley repeated it, as a sneer curled her lips. “I’m so pathetic that your husband was begging me to fuck him. He said he wanted some good pussy for a change. Someone who knew what they were doing and didn’t just lay there like a limp doll. It’s not my fault your husband prefers me to you.”

“And there’s the Hadley I know and hate,” Sookie snorted. “The one who thinks the whole world wants her and couldn't tell the truth if her life depended on it. Eric wanted you?” Sookie laughed, “Oh, that’s a good one. I suppose he even told you to wear my nightgown as well. Do you even hear the words that come out of your mouth? Do you even believe them?”

Hadley bit her lip as she looked down, trying to come up with a reasonable explanation as to why she was wearing Sookie’s nightgown. One look at her cousin told Hadley that she wasn't believing a word she was saying, but she wasn't ready to give up yet. If she could talk her way out of the hotel room, she could go to Sophie-Anne and her mistress would get her out of the hotel to safety.

“I… Eric…”

“No!” Sookie shouted before Hadley could continue. “No more. For God’s sake, Hadley, stop lying. Don’t deny it,” she added quickly as she saw Hadley open her mouth to speak. “I know you are lying; for once in your life tell the truth.”

“I am,” Hadley lied, still refusing to give up. “Eric wanted me. He requested me.”

“Cheese and rice,” Sookie cried, as she took a step towards her cousin and got in her face. “I know you’re lying, Hadley. I can see it all,” she pressed her finger into the middle of Hadley’s forehead, “here.” Seeing the look of fright spread across Hadley’s face, Sookie chuckled. “You just remembering I’m a telepath, cousin?”

“That’s not possible, they glamoured me…” Hadley trailed off as she realized she had said too much. She took a step back as her eyes darted around the room.

Old hatred welled up in Hadley as she stared at her cousin. Everything that was wrong in her life was Sookie’s fault. Everyone loved Sookie more than her. Her mother Linda would’ve preferred
Sookie to be her daughter; she was Adele’s favorite grandchild, and Jason always protected her. None of them cared about her. It was all Sookie, Sookie, Sookie. Why couldn’t they all see that Sookie was a freak?

“Stay outta my head, you freak,” she shouted. Acting without thinking, Hadley threw herself forward, intending to attack her cousin. But before she had the chance to hit her, she found herself pinned to the ground by homicidal looking Eric.

“Touch my wife and I will kill you,” Eric growled, his words a promise and not a threat. He had been content to let Sookie handle the situation, even if he did want to snap her neck for her actions and lies. Eric had been disgusted when he rose to feel Hadley on top of him. Despite her attempts to mask her scent by wearing Sookie’s nightgown and filling the room with the smell of sex and blood, Eric hadn’t been fooled for a minute. Eric would never mistake someone else for his wife; he knew every part of her. Sookie smelled like home to him. Hadley would never have been able to pass off as her. She smelled used.

“Eric, baby, let her up,” Sookie said, coaxing him as she put a hand on his shoulder and rubbed it. “She’s not worth it.”

“You owe your life to my wife,” Eric snarled in Hadley’s face before releasing his hold on her and rising to his feet.

Hadley sucked in a deep breath as she felt Eric's weight lift off her. “Thank you,” she whispered shakily, as she pulled herself to her feet again. The fear on her face was clear for both of them to see.

“Don’t thank me,” Sookie replied before rearing back and punching Hadley hard in the face. She grinned as she heard Hadley cry out in pain.

Hadley started at Sookie in shock as she held a hand to her nose. Blood oozed from between her fingers, and she wondered if Sookie had broken it. She couldn’t believe Sookie had hit her. In all the years growing up together, Sookie had never once raised a hand to her; she never fought back, even when she should have. Sookie had always turned the other cheek. As she stared at her cousin, Hadley began to realize she didn’t know this woman. Sookie wasn’t the same person she once knew.

“You hit me!” Hadley cried, stating the obvious. “Gran would’ve…” before she had a chance to finish, Hadley found herself flat on her back again, only this time she had an irate Sookie on top of her.

“Don’t you dare bring Gran into this,” Sookie screamed, as she grabbed Hadley by the throat. “Don’t you dare try to tell me what Gran would’ve wanted. You don’t know anything you spoiled bitch.”

“Sookie, please,” Hadley begged, trying to protect herself from her cousin’s assault. She had never seen Sookie so furious before, and she was truly scared.

Sookie felt years of suppressed anger and pain rise up inside her and she unleashed it all on her cousin. As she let her hand fly she remembered every cruel, spiteful thing her cousin had done. She remembered the nasty words she would throw at her and the beatings she took as Hadley and her friends bullied her. Sookie remembered how as soon as she would show interest in a boy Hadley would come on to him and have sex with him just to spite her.

“Lover, do not do something you will regret,” Eric said, pulling Sookie off a crying and bloodied Hadley. He held his wife to his chest as he stared down at Hadley, almost daring her to move.
It was a few minutes later when a knock came at the ending their silent standoff. With Sookie tucked into his side, Eric moved towards the door and opened it, revealing the hotel’s head of security.

“Mr. Northman, I’m Todd Donati, head of hotel security. You reported that you had a breach of security.”

“I did,” Eric replied, as he took a step back and invited the man to enter. “It seems Ms. Dellahousey here decided to let herself into the room I am sharing with my wife and molest me in my daytime rest. When I booked our room here, I was assured security was included and was second to none.”

“I didn’t,” Hadley shouted, having regained her voice. “He rang for a donor and requested me personally,” she lied, as she dragged herself to her feet again. “He’s only saying this because his wife, my cousin, caught us.”

“This is a serious accusation, sir,” Donati said, as he looked between them. It was clear something had gone on there. But it wouldn’t be the first time a husband had been caught playing away by the wife. Although it was the first time a vampire had been involved he believed. “Do you have any proof?” he asked.

“Mr. Donati,” Sookie said softly, as she lifted her face from Eric’s chest and faced him. She smiled as she felt Eric’s arms wrap around her. “What time do the donors start work?” she asked.

“They don’t have a specific timetable, but their shifts start fifteen minutes after sunset each night,” Donati answered unsure why she wanted to know.

“And according to the leaflet in our room, you don’t accept overnight donor bookings. If a vampire wants a donor, they have to book him or her once the kitchen is open so to speak,” Sookie said.

“That is true,” Donati nodded. “It’s hotel policy. While non-vampires can order room service the night before, the hotel doesn’t allow donors to be booked in advance. It saves for disappointment if one donor becomes unavailable,” he added delicately. “It’s also a security measure for the donors. We have a fifteen minute waiting period so the vampires can rise safely and become…alert.”

“I see,” Sookie replied, seeing the truth behind his words. They waited so no vampire rose hungry to a fresh donor and drained them. “What time was sunset today?”

“6.04pm,” Donati answered automatically still not seeing where she was going.

“And what time is it now?” Sookie asked finally.

“6.12pm,” Donati replied, looking at his watch.

“I believe there is your proof,” Eric said, smiling proudly at his wife.

“I believe you’re right,” Donati agreed.


“She really is stupid, isn’t she?” Eric snorted.

Donati shook his head as Hadley tried to once again claim her innocence and blame Eric. It was obvious to him now that she was lying. “I offer my sincerest apologies for the breach in security, Mr. and Mrs. Northman. I assure you it won’t happen again.”
“I wanna know how it happened this time,” Sookie said, even though she already knew. “How did she manage to let herself into our hotel room when I had the only key, and I used it to let myself in.”

“I will get to the bottom of it,” Donati promised. “I assume you want to press charges?”

“We do,” Eric replied, as Sookie nodded in agreement.

“Sookie, no!” Hadley pleaded, unable to believe her plan had gone so horribly wrong. Sookie was supposed to be running to Sophie-Anne right about then, she wasn’t supposed to be facing arrest. She just hoped Christian would be able to help her before Donati called the police.

“Get her out of my sight,” Sookie said, as she moved to stand beside Eric.

“Of course, Mrs. Northman,” Donati replied, as he grabbed the still protesting Hadley by the arm and pulled her to the door. “Again, my apologies.”

Donati froze as he opened the door and saw a vampire with his hand-raised ready to knock.

“It seems I arrived just in time.”

“Roman!” Eric said, as he stepped forward and offered a respectful nod. “What are you doing here?”

“I bring greetings from the Ancient One as well as a message,” Roman replied, as his lips pulled back into a smile. “The trial has been brought forward and will now take place this evening at 7 o’clock. It’s the first bit of business that will be addressed. The Ancient One has also declared due to the actions here tonight and the consequences they could have caused, Ms. Hadley Dellahousey will be taken into vampire custody and she will also face trial.”

“What? No!” Hadley shouted, as she heard his words. This couldn’t be happening. They couldn’t interfere like this. “You can’t do that. I’m human.”

“A human who not only got involved with vampires, but accepted and agreed to honor our ways,” Roman informed her with a sneer. “I will personally escort Ms. Dellahousey to a holding cell where she will be prohibited from having any visitor except her legal council until the trial begins. Mr. Donati, please hand her over to me.” Seeing Donati hesitate, Roman offered him a smile as he sought to assure him. “She will receive a fair trial, but I’m afraid I can’t allow you to take her. As I’m sure you have already guessed, she had help with her actions here this evening.”

Donati nodded his head as he handed Hadley over. Roman was right; he had suspected she had help. It was the only way she could have gotten the hotel room key.

“Thank you,” Roman said, as he took possession of Hadley, his hand gripping her arm painfully. “Mr. and Mrs. Northman, both of your presences are required at the trial. But you already knew that,” he added with a smirk.

“We will both be there,” Eric promised.

“No!” Hadley cried, her eyes darting from Sookie to Roman and then back again. “Sookie, please help me.”

Sookie laughed as she took a step forward. “Help you?” she said, as she placed a hand on the door. “How do you expect me to do that? I mean, who do you think I am, the Queen of Louisiana?”

Hadley froze at Sookie’s words, a sense of dread filling her. She couldn’t know. It was impossible. They were so much smarter than her. But one look at Sookie told Hadley she was wrong. They
knew everything. The last thing Hadley saw was Sookie’s smiling face before she slammed the door in her face.
Chapter 26

As soon as the door was closed, Eric pulled Sookie into his arms, buried his face in her hair and breathed in her scent. Although the entire encounter had taken less than thirty minutes, Eric could tell it had taken its toll on his wife. It was obvious to him now that even though she knew of Hadley’s involvement and accepted it, she still wasn’t prepared to witness it first hand. Eric wished he could have taken Sookie out of there and back home to Bon Temps. He would have liked nothing more than to have been able to take his wife home, but he knew he couldn’t. They couldn’t leave yet. His wife would have to be strong for a few more hours.

“Are you okay, lover?” Eric asked. It was a stupid question, and Eric knew that, but at the moment he was at a loss of what to say. Even though she knew the truth and never doubted him, it couldn’t have been easy for her having to witness her cousin straddling him.

“No,” Sookie admitted, tightening her arms around his waist. “But I will be.”

“You will,” Eric agreed, brushing his lips over the top of her head. Pulling back a little, Eric cupped her face in his hands and tilted her head up so he could stare into her eyes. “This ends tonight. I promise you,” he swore, his tone unbending. “Regardless of what the council decides, Sophie-Anne will never hurt you again. I will not allow it.”

“The only way she could hurt me is by taking you away from me,” Sookie replied, smiling up at him. “And I know you’d never allow that.”

“Never,” Eric growled in agreement before crushing his lips to hers in a breath-stealing kiss. He pulled Sookie tightly against him and fisted his hands in her hair. He felt his cock harden in his pants, and he moaned against her lips and pressed himself more firmly to her.

His desire for her felt like a living, breathing thing. He craved her like nothing he had ever known. Every part of him was screaming at him to lay her down on the bed and make love to her until the sun came up. But time was not on their side. A reluctant groan tore from his lips as he broke the kiss and rested his forehead against hers.

“Lover, as much as I would like to continue this, and believe me, I do,” he ground his hips into her in proof. “I’m afraid we don’t have the time.”

Sookie pouted playfully as she stared up at him, her lips swollen from his kiss. “You’ll have to make it up to me later,” she purred.

“You can count on it,” Eric replied before swooping down and stealing her lips once again. “I hate politics,” he groaned, as he broke the kiss.

“Me too,” Sookie moaned, her lip jutting out. She let out a small laugh as she looked down at herself. “I suppose I should go shower,” she snorted, noticing she was covered in Hadley’s blood. “Care to join me?”

“Don’t tempt me,” Eric growled playfully, pinching her ass before letting her go. He grinned as he watched her disappear into the bathroom. As Sookie showered, Eric called down to room service and requested/demanded they come and change the sheets in the room. He would be damned if he would rest with his wife in the bed that smelt like Hadley. Once that was done, he grabbed his phone from the bedside cabinet and fired off a message to Thalia. He informed her of all that had transpired and advised her to be ready. Eric had been serious when he told Sookie it would all end tonight.
Sophie-Anne had finally pushed him too far with her childish behavior. He no longer cared about the trial or the outcome. Sophie-Anne wouldn’t be leaving Rhodes in one piece.

OoOoO

It was ten minutes before the trial was scheduled to begin when Eric and Sookie made that entrance into the large banquet room was housing the trial. They were both dressed in their finest, giving them an almost royal appearance, something more than one person noticed.

Placing his hand on the small of her back, Eric guided Sookie into the room, his eyes taking in all those present, assessing any possible threats. He offered nods of respect to the Kings of Texas and Mississippi as he escorted Sookie to the front of the room. Normally he would have stopped to talk to them, having known both of them for many years, but his only concern at that moment was his wife. Eric was surprised to see so many vampires in attendance. But as he thought about it, he realized he shouldn’t have been. The change in the timetable would have made many of them curious. A vampire pledging had been pushed back and the trial brought forward, and they would all be wondering why. Vampires, in addition to being vicious and devious, were also nosy. They thrived on gossip.

Seeing Mr. Cataliades standing by one of the tables assigned to the lawyers, Eric guided Sookie towards him. “Desmond,” he greeted.

“Eric,” Desmond replied with a nod. His eyes softened and a smile spread across his face as he saw Sookie standing beside her husband. “Hello, my dear. I trust you’re well and unhurt after tonight’s unfortunate incident?”

“Good evening, Desmond,” Sookie said, giving him a small smile. “I’m fine, thank you.”

“I’m happy to hear that,” Desmond told her sincerely. He had been furious when he heard what Hadley had done. He knew without a shadow of a doubt that Sophie-Anne had been behind it. And he had been extremely tempted to kill the Queen himself. It was only the knowledge that she wouldn’t get away with it that had stopped him. The demon lawyer was incredibly fond of his goddaughter, and he refused to let some childish queen hurt her anymore.

“Are you all set for the trial?” Eric asked, as he flicked his eyes over the papers had set out on the table.

“I am,” Desmond replied with a nod of his head. He was more than ready. He could hardly wait to state his case. He was looking forward to helping take Compton and Sophie-Anne down. “After tonight’s incident, I will more than likely have to call both of you to testify as witnesses,” he warned them. “Are you both prepared for that?”

“We are,” Eric answered, as Sookie nodded in agreement.

“Good.”

“Eric!” Sophie-Anne’s shrill voice cut across the room, making more than one vampire look at her. Turning to face the Queen, Eric blanked his face as he watched her stomp across the room like a child throwing a tantrum. “Yes?” He asked, showing her no respect.

“What are you doing here?” Sophie-Anne asked, shooting him a dirty look as she reached him.

“Waiting for the trial to begin,” Eric answered plainly. “The same as everyone else.”
“As a subject of Louisiana you had no right to come here on your own,” Sophie-Anne spat. “You should have waited for your queen and arrived with her party like a loyal subject. And you certainly didn’t have the right to bring my telepath without my permission. You’re getting too big for your boots. I think it’s time you remembered your place, Sheriff. I will not put up with your disrespect any longer.”

Sophie-Anne had been beside herself when she heard the trial had been brought forward. Not that she cared about the legal issues of Rhodes; they held no importance to her. But she hadn’t liked them bringing the trial forward, as her wedding had been put back. Tonight was supposed to have been her night. And what was worse, she hadn’t heard from Hadley. From the looks of things, their latest plan hadn’t succeeded, but Sophie-Anne wasn’t sure if that was because Hadley had failed or if she hadn’t had the chance to even try. Given how calm both Eric and Sookie looked, how at ease they were with each other, Sophie-Anne believed Hadley hadn’t had the chance to try yet. If she had, she was sure Eric would still be fucking her now, leaving his little wife crying all alone. No one had ever been able to resist her Hadley. Given the chance, she was positive Eric would have jumped at the opportunity to fuck her. Hadley was far more experienced than the telepath. Hadley could easily please him better.

*Maybe I should offer him a trade.* Sophie-Anne pondered. *I’ll give him Hadley in exchange for Sookie. It would be a good deal. Hadley is getting a little too clingy. Eric might like that.*

But first she would have to remind him of his place. She was the Queen, and he was only her Sheriff.

“Now, I will require the telepath’s services tonight,” she continued, once again announcing Sookie’s abilities to everyone present without thinking. “Andre will provide security for her, and you’re not needed. Girl, come here now.”

“No,” Sookie replied before Eric had a chance. She was fed up at the way Sophie-Anne was interfering with her life and treating her. She knew she should’ve probably still played nice, but she was done. Hadley’s actions had been the last straw. They had basically conspired to rape her husband just to come between them and claim her for themselves. So she would be damned if she would even feign respect for someone who didn’t deserve it. They could send pathetic vampires to procure her or gift Eric with a woman who they hoped he would fuck, and she would deal with that. She would play their silly little games, but the moment they tried to sexually assault her husband the rules changed. The gloves would come off and she would fight dirty. “As I already told you, my name is not girl. It’s Sookie. But you can call me Mrs. Northman.”

Whispers spread through the room as Sookie announced that in addition to being a telepath, she was also Eric’s wife, but she didn’t care. The news was bound to come out during the trial so there was no point hiding it. Soon the entire supernatural world would know it, know about her.

Anger flashed in Sophie-Anne’s eyes as she glared at Sookie. She couldn't believe that Sookie had disrespected in front of everyone. It looked like in addition to Eric needing to learn his place, so did his wife. And Sophie-Anne would be happy to remind them both.

“Sheriff, control your pet,” Sophie-Anne snarled, as she straightened her shoulders and attempted to stare them down. “This is the last time I will remind you. I will not tolerate her disrespect, or yours. Now, as your Queen I demand you give me my telepath”.

“As my wife said, no,” Eric replied, towering over the small queen. “And I will remind you, I will not tolerate *anyone* disrespecting my wife. My wife is a lady, and she will be treated as such.”

“You…” Sophie-Anne spluttered, embarrassment rising up in her as she noticed the audience they
were gathering. “I’m your queen,” she spat. “I’m ordering you to stand aside. The telepath is mine; she’s an asset of Louisiana, and I demand her services as is my right.” Reaching forward, Sophie-Anne grabbed Sookie by the wrist and attempted to pull her to her. But before she could, she felt Eric’s hand grip hers and pry her fingers off Sookie.

“Never touch my wife,” Eric growled, anger clearing in his voice. The second Sophie-Anne had touched Sookie he had seen red. No one ever touched his wife. He wouldn’t allow it.

Sophie-Anne let out a whimper as she felt Eric tighten his hand on her wrist. She could hear the bones cracking as he increased the pressure, and she let out a mewl of discomfort. Looking up into his eyes, Sophie-Anne felt a shred of fear spear through her at the anger reflected in them. “Let me go,” she squeaked, her voice holding none of its usual bravado as she saw Desmond pull Sookie to the side and out of the way.

“Unhand your queen,” Andre demanded, pulling the blade he always wore from his sheath and preparing to attack Eric. Andre was furious that Eric dared put his hands on his queen. He swore he would have his head for this.

Before he had a chance to act, Andre felt a hand wrap around his throat from behind and he was lifted into the air, the blade falling from his fingers.

Sophie-Anne’s eyes widened as she saw Thalia appear behind Andre and easily subdue him. “Berts,” she whimpered, calling for her other two children. But a quick look to her left told her they would be of no use either as they were surrounded by vampires, some she recognized from Eric’s area, others from her own.

Sookie smiled as she saw her vampires, Eric’s vampires, move into place and neutralize the Queen’s children. Despite her apprehension she had to admit she was very proud of their vampires; their loyalty was plain to see.

“Enough!” A loud voice boomed over the room, drawing everyone’s attention. “Viking, release the Louisiana Queen.”
Eric growled at Sophie-Anne before releasing his grip on her arm and pushing her away. He nodded to his vampires, instructing them to release her children.

“Next time I will take your head,” Thalia snarled in Andre’s ear before she threw him across the room.

Stumbling backwards, Sophie-Anne stared in shock as, one by one, the vampires of Louisiana surrounded Eric and Sookie, who stood side-by-side, and turned their backs to her. She felt her stomach twist at the implications. In a roomful of powerful monarchs, the vampires in her Queendom had shown their backs and denounced her.

Eric stood tall in the center of the vampires, his wife standing proudly by his side. He wasn’t expecting the vampires of Louisiana to react they way they had. He knew they were on his side, their loyalty had never been a question, but he wasn’t expecting them to show it so soon.

Roman overlooked the room from the raised platform that would soon seat the council members who had been chosen to hear the case against Bill. He fought back a smirk as he noticed the look on Sophie-Anne’s face. As much as he would have liked to have allowed Eric to break her arm and rip her head off, he had to obey the rules of the council. Until Sophie-Anne was found guilty by the council in a roomful of her peers, he couldn’t allow Eric to hurt her.

“Tiger,” Roman said, calling out to John Quinn, who was overseeing the ceremonies. “Bring out the accused.”

Quinn nodded to Roman before moving toward a side entrance and opening the door. He held the door open while two Were escorted out a sickly looking Bill Compton.

“Due to the serious nature of the crime the vampire William T. Compton is accused of, the vampire council had decided to intercede and sit as the judges themselves,” Roman said, grinning as he heard the murmurs of shock that went around the room.

Bill’s head snapped up when he heard the council was hearing his case personally. In all his years as a vampire, he had only ever known of one case where the vampire council heard a case instead of allowing monarchs from random states to sit in judgement. It was very uncommon, and it made him even more nervous.

A hush descended over the room as Dieter Braun, Salome Agrippa, and Roman himself took seats behind the large table that stood on the platform.

“All rise for the Ancient Pythoness,” Quinn’s voice boomed over the room.

As one everyone rose to their feet before dropping to one knee, the Ancient One was led to the platform. They all remained kneeling until she took her seat in the middle of the table, showing everyone who was in charge.

The Ancient Pythoness cast her milky white eyes over the room, a smile tugging at her wrinkled lips as she ‘saw’ the shock on the vampire’s faces. “I am not getting any younger, Tiger,” she croaked, as she banged a gavel on the table. “Read the charges.”

“If I may, Your Grace,” Sophie-Anne interrupted foolishly as she stepped forward and made a show of brushing down her wrinkled dress. “Before this trial begins I demand Eric Northman be taken into
custody and punished for attacking his Queen…”

“You demand nothing of us,” Dieter said, cutting her off.

“But…”

“But nothing!” Dieter snapped, cutting her off again. “Now be quiet while we continue. Quinn, read the charges.”

Sophie-Anne snapped her mouth shut as she retook her seat. She was furious at the dismissive way she had been treated. Her fury only grew when she noticed all the Louisiana vampires had seated themselves away from her but with Eric.

Quinn nodded. “The vampire William T. Compton is charged with orchestrating the attack on the wife of the Sheriff of Area Five, Louisiana in an attempt to force his blood on her. Mrs. Northman was seriously wounded in the attack. The accusation and charges are brought by Eric the Norseman. Are the judges ready to hear this case?”

“We are,” Roman answered for them all.

“The case of Eric the Norseman versus William T. Compton has now begun,” The Ancient Pythoness said as she banged the gavel on the desk. “Proceed.”

Rising to his feet, Mr. Cataliades bowed to the judges, “Desmond Cataliades representing Eric the Norseman.”

“I will be representing myself,” Bill said, as he shakily rose to his feet, the effects of his weeks in silver making him weak.

“Acknowledged,” Roman nodded. “The floor is yours, Mr. Compton.”

Bill nodded as he placed his hands on the table in front of him to steady himself. “This whole thing was a simple misunderstanding,” Bill began, adopting a contrite look. He had put little thought in his defense, still believing that Sophie-Anne would protect him. He was loyal to his queen, and she would reward him for it. “I had no knowledge of the girl’s plan to attack Sookie… Mrs. Northman,” he amended quickly when he heard Eric growl out a warning. “It was just luck that I happened upon the scene. I was simply visiting a friend at her place of work, and when I arrived, I noticed the woman attacking Mrs. Northman. The Sheriff’s wife had been seriously injured, and if I hadn’t intervened like I did, I have no doubt Mrs. Northman would have died. When I realized just how bad of a condition Mrs. Northman was in, I attempted to give her my blood when the Sheriff’s child interfered, stopping me. I was simply being…”

The Ancient Pythoness banged her gavel on the table cutting Bill off before he could continue. “No,” she croaked, her weathered lips curling into a frown. “I am in no mood to sit here and witness this song and dance…”

“Your Grace…” Salome started.

“Do not interrupt me!” The Ancient Pythoness snapped, shooting the old vampire a withering look. “We have much business to handle at this summit; I will not waste my precious time going through the pointlessness of this trial when I already know the truth. Tiger, bring the rest of the accused out. We will deal with all of this now.”

Quinn bowed to the Ancient One before stepping off the platform and exiting the room. Whispers spread through the room as they all waited. Many of the vampires present wondered what was going
on and why the Ancient Pythoness was in such a bad mood.

Bill frowned as he waited. He thought he was making a good opening statement, and for the Ancient Pythoness to cut him off like she did was highly unprofessional. He was just getting started and was quite put out that she interrupted him like she had.

It was several minutes later when the side doors to the room opened again and Quinn stepped out of them. The vampires present craned their necks trying to see who were the others accused.

Eric’s lips quirked into a small smile as he saw Godric walk through the door, but he resisted the urge to go to his maker and waited like everyone else as Godric led out Christian Baruch, Cameron, and Hadley. He didn’t miss the gasp of shock coming from Sophie-Anne, and he squeezed Sookie’s hand before linking their fingers.

“Your Grace,” Godric said respectfully before taking a place at the side of the platform. He wasn’t a part of the trial, at least, not legally. He had excused himself as a sitting judge to eliminate any accusations of favouritism if his relationship with Eric and Sookie got out.

Hadley fidgeted as she stood in front of the platform and faced the vampire judges. She still had dried blood on her face from where Sookie had broken her nose. One of the vampires who had been watching her had given her blood to heal, with the permission of Roman, but they hadn’t cleaned her up properly. She was thankful they had provided her with some clothes, even if it was an unflattering sack-like dress. She was just grateful she was no longer wearing Sookie’s nightgown.

“Now, instead of performing the song and dance that was in no doubt going to play out here tonight, we are going to get straight to the facts,” The Ancient Pythoness said. “Roman,” she prompted before falling silent.

Roman fought a smile as he rose to his feet. The Ancient One always knew how to cut out the bullshit and get straight to it. “Earlier this evening this woman here, Hadley Dellahousey,” he began, pointing at her, “with the help of Christian Baruch and one of his managers, Cameron Michaels, let herself into the Norseman’s hotel room.” Hisses filled the room at the blatant breach of security and more than one set of fangs snapped down. “When asked about it, she claimed the Norseman had requested her personally…”

“I’m afraid I don’t see what this has to do with the trial of William Compton,” Salome said curiously, “or why it’s a matter for us at all. If the Norseman wants to play away from home that is not a crime. It’s just him being a vampire,” she added, making a few vampires laugh.

“You don’t see why a woman letting herself into a vampire’s hotel before sunset without invitation is a matter for us?” Roman questioned with a raised eyebrow. “Ms. Dellahousey let herself into the Norseman’s hotel room before sunset, using a key she attained from Cameron Michaels who was ordered to do this by Christian Baruch.”

“I will concede it’s a matter for us,” Salome amended. “But I still fail to see how this has any bearing on the trial we are here to rule upon.”

“There is a connection between Mr. Compton and Ms. Dellahousey,” Roman replied. “Ms. Dellahousey’s actions here tonight are linked to Mr. Compton’s.”

“And what link would that be?” Salome asked.

“Mrs. Northman,” Roman answered simply.

Sookie tightened her grip on Eric’s hand as Roman announced she was the link. She knew what was
about to come and took a deep breath in preparation.

“Ms. Dellahousey is the cousin of Mrs. Northman,” Roman continued.

“So we’ve stumbled onto a family feud,” Salome snorted.

“We have stumbled onto something much more troubling than that,” Roman countered.

“Enough!” The Ancient Pythoness interrupted, banging her gavel again. “I said I did not want a song and dance. Mrs. Northman, come here, child.”

Sookie pasted on her crazy smile as she rose to her feet. She gave Eric a reassuring smile when she felt him send a burst of strength through the bond. Sookie walked towards the platform and stopped just in front of it. She offered the Ancient Pythoness a small bow before straightening her spine and folding her hands behind her.

“Mrs. Northman can provide us with all the answers we require,” The Ancient Pythoness said as she beckoned Godric to forward to stand beside Sookie for her protection.

“And how, if I may ask, can she do that?” Salome asked skepticism clear in her front.

“Because in addition to being the Norseman’s wife, Mrs. Northman is also a telepath,” The Ancient Pythoness said, revealing Sookie’s ability to everyone who might not have heard Sophie-Anne when she shouted it.

Eric grit his teeth as he heard the Ancient One announce his wife’s ability. He didn’t miss the whispers of interest from some of the vampires present.

“Your Grace, you’re not suggesting that Mrs. Northman reads the minds of those accused, are you?” Salome questioned.

“I am suggesting Mrs. Northman read the minds of her cousin and Mr. Michaels,” The Ancient Pythoness replied. “It will be the quickest way to get to the truth.”

“With all due respect, she is the wife of the Norseman,” Salome argued. “She will no doubt back him up.”

“And Ms. Dellahousey is her cousin,” The Ancient Pythoness countered. “I am sure Mrs. Northman has enough honor not to wish to see innocent parties punished.”

“How do we know the Norseman hasn’t glamoured her to support his claims?” Salome questioned.

“I can’t be glamoured,” Sookie said, interrupting their little back and forth. She hated it when people talked about her as if she wasn’t there.

“Every human can be glamoured,” Salome replied dismissively.

“Not me,” Sookie shrugged. “You’re willing to try if ya don’t believe me.”

“If your master doesn’t object I would like to test your claim,” Salome said with a smirk.

“Husband,” Sookie corrected, her tone containing bite.

“Husband,” Salome amended tightly.

“I have no objections,” Eric said, smirking as he watched his wife refuse to back down.
“Fine,” Salome grinned as she rose to her feet and walked around the table; she moved to stand in front of Sookie and stared into her eyes. She pushed her mind against hers, sending her a silent command to cluck like a chicken.

Sookie tilted her head to the side as she felt Salome’s mind brush against hers. “That tickles,” she said with a giggle, surprising the old vampire.

“Remarkable,” Salome murmured, her eyes taking on an appreciative look as she looked at Sookie. “Taken,” Sookie replied cheekily.

“It’s true, Mrs. Northman can’t be glamoured,” Salome said, as she returned to her seat. “I withdraw my objection to her reading them.”

“Mrs. Northman, if you will,” The Ancient Pythoness requested, flicking a wrinkled finger in the direction of Hadley and Cameron.

Sookie smiled tightly as she moved towards her cousin and the hotel manager. She was grateful for Godric being at her side as she noticed some of the looks she was getting. Stopping in front of Cameron, she reached out and took his hand, grimacing as the wave of thoughts hit her. Pushing them aside, she focused on what she wanted to know.

“Cameron, did you give Hadley the key to mine and Eric’s hotel room?” she asked.

“I did,” Cameron answered truthfully. He had no idea what he had gotten himself into; he just knew it was bad and he wasn’t about to lie and make it worse.

“Why did you give her the key?”

“I was ordered to give her it by my boss, Christian Baruch,” he answered. “He just told me to give her an envelope with the key and a small blade in it.”

“What did you get in reward?” Sookie asked.

“Money and…”

“Ah, damn it, Hadley!” Sookie blurted out, interrupting him as she saw just what his reward was. She shook her head. “Can’t you go one day without getting on your knees?”

A smattering of laughter filled the room as they all realized what Sookie was talking about.

Letting go of his hand, Sookie took a step back and turned to face the judges again. “He was telling the truth. Christian Baruch ordered him to give Hadley the key to mine and Eric’s hotel room. He paid him a lot of money and Hadley… paid him as well. He had no idea why they wanted the key and he didn’t care. He hasn’t been glamoured.”

“You can tell when a person has been glamoured?” Salome questioned.

“Yes,” Sookie answered with a nod.

Sophie-Anne stiffened as she heard Sookie say she could tell when a mind had been glamoured. Was that why she didn’t believe us about Yvetta? She wondered.

“Truly remarkable,” Salome gushed.

“Still taken.”
Salome laughed. “What about your cousin? What does her mind tell you?”

“That I’m gonna need a bath later,” Sookie mumbled before turning back to face Hadley.

Hadley pulled her hand back when Sookie went to grab it. “Don’t touch me, you freak!” she spat.

“Do you want me to hit you again?” Sookie threatened, as she heard Eric growl. “Your nose looks like it has healed nicely; I can break it again.”

Hadley glared at Sookie but said nothing. She wanted to scream and shout at her cousin, but one look around told her that wasn’t a good idea. She would just have to trust that Sophie-Anne would get her out of this. Despite what Sookie had said to her before she slammed the door in her face, Hadley was sure she couldn’t know that much. If she did they would’ve acted on it already.

Grabbing Hadley’s hand, Sookie shuddered as she got bombarded with her cousin’s memories. Half the things she saw disgusted her. It wasn’t just her that Hadley had helped Sophie-Anne procure, or in this case attempted.

“What do you see?” Salome asked. She was fascinated by Sookie’s ability. In her two thousand years as a vampire, she had never encountered a telepath.

“Everything,” Sookie replied with a grimace. “Hadley let herself into Eric’s and my hotel room because she was trying to break us apart. She was hoping that I would walk in on them while they were having sex. Apparently it worked before on some French diplomat and his companion…”

Sophie-Anne’s eyes widened as she listened with everyone else. There was no way Sookie could know that. Her mind kicked into overdrive as she tried to think up a way to stop this. They couldn’t learn of her part in all of it.

“Why would she want to break you and your husband up?” Salome asked curiously.

Taking a step to the side, Sookie released her Hadley’s hand and turned her head and looked up at the judges, “She’s a jealous, selfish brat, and she always has been. I’m used to it by now,” Sookie said. She grinned as she saw Sophie-Anne relax out of the corner of her eye and she knew the queen thought she was in the clear. Not so fast, your majesty. “Although it seems this time is a little different,” she continued. “Hadley was following the orders of her mistress…” turning her head, Sookie stared at Sophie-Anne, “the Queen of Louisiana…”
Chapter 28

Hushed whispers broke out in the room at Sookie’s accusation. Many of the Supes present craned their heads to get a better look at Sophie-Anne to see how she was going to react to Sookie’s claim.

Sophie-Anne stared at Sookie with wide-eyed shock. Her thoughts were a panicked jumble as she struggled to calm herself. *This can’t be happening.*

“How dare you accuse your Queen of such a thing?” she shouted, deciding to go on the offensive. She was a Queen, their Queen, and she’d be damned if she would cower before a lowly human and her Sheriff. “I demand an apology right this minute,” she added in a huff as she rose to her feet. “No…” she continued, holding up her hand. “An apology won’t make this right. You have disrespected and insulted your Queen. I won’t stay here and listen to more of your petty lies and accusations.”

“Louisiana Queen, you are not going anywhere,” The Ancient Pythoness said, rejoining the proceedings. “This trial is not over yet; no one is permitted to leave until the truth has been uncovered, and the verdict delivered. Retake your seat.”

Sophie-Anne bristled as she reluctantly took her seat. As much as she would have liked to have stormed out, she knew she couldn’t. No one who disobeyed the Ancient One had lived to tell the tale.

“Mrs. Northman, are you positive that the orders came from the Queen of Louisiana?” Roman asked. He had no doubt they did, but they had to cover all bases and present the case.

“I am,” Sookie answered, her tone firm. “She received them before sunrise this morning in the Queen’s hotel room. The Queen and her second, Andre, were present…”

“She’s lying,” Hadley interrupted, trying to protect her mistress. “No one ordered me to go into her hotel room. Eric wanted me. He wanted a good fuck for a change…”

“Shut the fuck up, Hadley!” Sookie snapped, rounding on her cousin. “Every word that comes outta your mouth is a lie. Eric didn’t and doesn’t want you. Why would he want what half the vampires in the US have already had?”

“Hey!” Hadley cried indignantly. “That’s not true. You’re just jealous…”

“Jealous?” Sookie scoffed, interrupting Hadley delusion ranting. “What have I gotta be jealous about? I have a vampire, a *man* who loves me. What have you got? A vampire who pimps you out and uses you to get what she wants.”

Sophie-Anne seethed with anger as she listened to Sookie insult her. It took all her restraint to not to stand up and put the little blood bag in her place. Sophie-Anne swore she would make Sookie sorry for her words. No one talked about her that way.

Tears pricked Hadley’s eyes as Sookie revealed a few home truths. Anger, shame, and hatred welled inside her. She wanted to lash out and hurt Sookie, but there was nothing she could say to hurt her now. She didn’t think telling Sookie that she fucked the guy who had asked her to the prom, senior year of high school only to stand her up would hurt her now. Sookie was right; she did have a vampire who loved her. Hadley would’ve liked nothing more than to fuck him, but that was unlikely. He had turned her down and seemed to hate her.
“I hate you!” Hadley screamed.

Reacting on instinct, Sookie curled her hand into a fist and lashed out, punching Hadley on her healed nose. Hisses spread through the room as the scent of her blood hit the air, and Hadley fell to the floor. Before anyone had a chance to react, Eric was across the room, pulling Sookie to him, a growl tearing from his throat as he issued a warning to any vampire who was even thinking about acting on the smell of blood.

“I believe things have gotten a little out of hand,” Dieter said with a smirk, enjoying himself for once.

“She attacked me,” Hadley mumbled as she held a hand to her rebroken nose. “I want her punished as the…”

“Queen’s pet?” Sookie supplied helpfully, moving to stand beside Eric in a show of strength. She wanted to show everyone there, she wasn’t a pet. She was his wife, his partner; she wouldn’t cower in his arms.

“I’m not the Queen’s pet!” Hadley hissed, biting back her words.

“Oh really?” Sookie snorted.

“Perhaps we should ask the Queen if Ms. Delahoussey is her pet.” Roman suggested, as he leaned back in his chair. “She has yet to deny or confirm it.”

“Louisiana Queen, step forward,” The Ancient Pythoness ordered, turning her milky white eyes to Sophie-Anne.

Rising to her feet, Sophie-Anne took small steps towards the platform, her head held high as Andre flanked her. She bowed before the judges before straightening her back and waited.

“Queen Leclerq, is Ms. Delahoussey your pet?” Roman asked, cutting straight to the chase. But even as he waited for her answer he already knew the truth and that she would lie. Sophie-Anne wouldn’t admit any wrongdoing. She would hang both Hadley and Bill out to dry to save her own ass.

“No, she is not,” Sophie-Anne answered with a small smile. “While she is no doubt agreeable to the eyes, I have no claim on her.”

“No, she is not,” Sophie-Anne answered with a small smile. “While she is no doubt agreeable to the eyes, I have no claim on her.”

“Okay,” Sookie said with a shake of her head before anyone else had a chance to say anything. Turning to face the vampires who were all eagerly watching the proceedings, “How many vampires here present have visited the Queen’s residence in Louisiana and seen my dumb cousin there?”

Godric bit back a laugh as he watched his datter take charge of the trial. As he watched her he had to admit his child could not have picked a better mate.

“Now there’s no need to be shy,” she continued. “Although I’m not sure shy and vampires go together. Raise your hands…” Sookie grinned as she saw a few vampires begin to raise their hands, and then more. By the time they were finished over a third of the vampires had raised their hands.

“You were saying?”

Sophie-Anne grit her teeth as Sookie challenged her. She couldn’t believe the judges, the Council, were allowing a human to speak to her in such a way. “I was saying I have no claim to her now,” Sophie-Anne corrected with a stiff smile. “It’s true that for a while Hadley was my pet, but that relationship ended over a year ago when your cousin decided she wanted to leave. I’m not in the habit of keeping people against their wishes. So when Hadley told me she wished to leave, although I was sad to see her go, I didn’t stop her.”
“And Mrs. Northman’s claim that Ms. Delahoussey was in your hotel room before sunrise this morning?” Roman asked. He had to hand it to Sophie-Anne; she was certainly thinking on her feet. If he didn’t know she was lying, he might have been inclined to believe her.

“I’m afraid she’s mistaken. I haven’t seen Hadley since she left my palace in New Orleans,” Sophie-Anne lied quite convincingly. “In fact, I wasn’t even aware she was working here at the hotel.”

“I see,” Roman replied with a nod. “Ms. Delahoussey, how long have you been working at the hotel?”

“Nearly a year,” Hadley answered, her voice croaky.

“Mrs. Northman?” Roman prompted.

“Three weeks,” Sookie answered.

“She’s lying!” Hadley cried. “Cause she hates me.”

“Perhaps Mr. Baruch will be kind enough to clear up the confusion,” Dieter suggested. “Tell us, Mr. Baruch, how long has Ms. Delahoussey been working for your hotel?”

Christian Baruch eyes flicked from the judges to Sophie-Anne as he wondered what the hell he had gotten himself into. When he agreed to employ Hadley at the hotel, he had done so in an attempt to get closer to Sophie-Anne. He held no real affection for her, but she was a queen, and it could only benefit him. But now he had to wonder if that was actually true. It seemed to him all it had done was bring him trouble. He had breached the security of his hotel when he ordered Cameron to give Hadley the hotel key to Eric and Sookie’s room, all for the satisfaction of a few hours between the legs of Sophie-Anne and Hadley? But admitting that would only bring him more trouble than he could handle. To save his own skin, he would have to continue to back the Queen up. He couldn’t reveal that he was aiding Sophie-Anne in her schemes.

“Hadley has been working for me for just over eleven months now,” he lied.

Sophie-Anne smiled smugly as Christian backed her up. It was now Sookie's word against theirs, and no one would believe a blood bag over a vampire. And a vampire queen at that. The whole thing would soon be over and she could continue with her plan to claim Sookie for herself. After the humiliation she suffered that night, Sophie-Anne swore she would make Sookie sorry. She would start with a public apology. Sookie embarrassed her in front of everyone so it would only be fair that she should suffer the same fate.

Sookie rolled her eyes at the arrogance rolling off Sophie-Anne. It was clear to her that the Queen thought she was in the clear, and Sookie couldn't wait to wipe the smile off her face.

"I see," Roman said after a moment's pause. He wasn't surprised that Christian had backed up Sophie-Anne. He was a weasel of a vampire, always trying to attain power he had no idea how to wield. "So just to be clear, Mr. Baruch, you're stating before this trial and its judges that Ms. Delahoussey has been working for you for just over eleven months now?"

"I am," Christian replied with a nod.

"And Queen Leclerq, you're stating that Ms. Delahoussey left your side and residence a year ago? And that, unlike Mrs. Northman claims, you haven't had any contact with her in that year, and she wasn't in your hotel room just before sunrise today?"

"That is exactly what I'm saying," Sophie-Anne purred. "The Sheriff's pet is mistaken. Or perhaps I
should rephrase that into saying she's just plain lying," she added, casting Sookie and Eric a withering look as she crossed her arms over her chest.

Eric growled at the accusation against his wife, his fangs clicking down as he stared at Sophie-Anne. "Sookie, as you have been told repeatedly, is my wife, not my pet," he said, his tone unyielding.

"A wife I didn't give you permission to take," Sophie-Anne retorted smartly, thinking she had once again gained the upper hand. "You married her without my permission."

"Is that true?" Salome asked, a calculating look entering her eyes as she ran them over the couple.

"No," Eric answered, wrapping his arm around Sookie's waist as he saw the look in Salome's eyes. "As I told Sophie-Anne the night she demanded my presence in New Orleans, I sought her permission to marry, and Sophie-Anne approved it before I submitted the paperwork with the council."

"And the council approved them," Godric interjected, stepping forward again. "I personally approved the paperwork, and I can attest to the fact that not only was Queen Sophie-Anne's signature on the papers, so was her royal seal. The marriage between Eric the Norseman and Sookie Northman is binding."

He, like Eric, had also noticed the calculating look in Salome's eyes and Godric didn't like it one bit. He wouldn't let Salome interfere in their relationship. And if she thought she could, she would soon find out how wrong she was.

"I never signed them," Sophie-Anne argued petulantly. "I would never consent to him marrying my telepath."

"The proof of your royal seal says otherwise," Roman countered. "But that holds no bearing on the situation here..."

"If I may," Desmond interjected, rejoining the proceedings. He had been content to sit back and let Sookie handle it, but Roman had presented him with an opening and he intended to take it.

"Of course, Mr. Cataliades," Roman said with a wave of his hand offering the demon lawyer the floor.

Desmond stepped around the table as he tugged on the bottom of his jacket. “Queen Sophie-Anne’s continued ignorance of the marriage of her Sheriff and Mrs. Northman does play a factor in the proceedings here this evening," he said. “In fact, she is just as responsible for the attack on Mrs. Northman as the vampire Compton...”

“Lies!” Sophie-Anne spat, rounding on the demon lawyer. “How dare you accuse me of such a thing? I am a Queen and I demand respect.”

“Respect is earned, not demanded,” Desmond informed her coolly. “And I dare accuse you because it’s the truth.”

“Do you have proof of your accusations?” Salome asked.

“I do,” Desmond replied, as he flicked through the papers on the table that had been provided for him. Picking up the typed reports of the various phone calls Eric had transcribed of Sophie-Anne and Bill discussing procuring the telepath, he handed them to the trial judges as well as the USB drive containing the original recordings. “The evidence I have just handed you was collected by Eric the Norseman by placing the house of Bill Compton under surveillance...”
“What?” Bill shouted, rejoining the proceedings as he jumped to his feet. “Northman had no right to bug my house. It’s an invasion of my privacy.”

“As your Sheriff, the Norseman had every right to place your house under surveillance if he suspected your presence in his area could prove to be trouble,” Desmond countered. “The first night you moved into his area you broke his rules. It was clear you couldn’t be trusted, so he took the necessary precautions.”

Bill snarled, but said nothing in reply. He shot a glare in Eric’s direction before retaking his seat. So lost in his hatred of Eric, Bill never realized the full implications of what he had just discovered. He had never really thought about how Eric got the footage of him and Candy. If he had, he might have realized just how screwed he was.

Roman, Dieter, and Salome read through the written transcripts as they waited for Quinn to fetch them a laptop so they could hear the recordings. It was just a few minutes later when Quinn returned with the laptop. He placed it in of front of Roman before stepping back.

Picking up the USB drive, Roman powered the laptop up and plugged in the small memory device. A silence descended over the room before the unmistakable voices of Sophie-Anne and Bill were heard coming from the computer.

“Bill, please tell me you have secured my telepath,” Sophie-Anne said, her tone soft and breezy.

“Unfortunately, not yet,” Bill replied. “Northman, as you can imagine, is proving to be a problem. He is possessive when it comes to the telepath, almost controlling you could say. He refuses to let anyone but his child anywhere near her.”

“That is not good to hear, but not unexpected,” Sophie-Anne huffed.

“I’m confident if I could speak to Sookie without the Sheriff around I could make leeway,” Bill continued. “Northman treats her little better than a fangbanger,” he added, lying. “He parades her around his bar covered in his scent for all to smell. She doesn’t seem too bright. She is currently hesitant around me because Northman has no doubt told her she can’t trust anyone but him and his child. If I had the opportunity I’m positive I could gain her trust and get her to leave Northman willingly.”

“I see,” Sophie-Anne mused. “I suppose I can demand the presence of my Sheriff for a few nights. I would like to know why he thought he could get married without informing me or asking for my permission.”

“Thank you, my Queen,” Bill replied.

“I shall demand his presence in court this weekend,” Sophie-Anne said. “You will have two nights to gain the telepath’s trust. Do not fail me.”


“You get her to leave Northman willingly and I might be inclined to let you have the first taste of her,” Sophie-Anne said.

“The Queen is too kind,” Bill replied.

“Make it happen, Bill,” Sophie-Anne ordered.

Anger-filled growls flowed through the room as the recording ended. The vampires of Louisiana
were letting both Sophie-Anne and Bill know just how unhappy they were at the treatment of the Sheriff’s wife and their Mistress.

“She is not fit to be a queen,” Thalia growled, her voice carrying over the crowd. She knew of the plan to steal her mistress away, but it was the first she had actually heard the audio footage. She was furious that they would talk about her mistress in such a way. Sookie was the first friend she ever remembered having, and she swore to the Greek Gods of old, she would deal with it herself if the trial didn’t go in the favor of her Sheriff and Mistress.

Sophie-Anne blanched under the piercing glare of Thalia. She couldn’t believe she hadn’t ever considered that Bill’s phone might have been tapped. It was clear to everyone present that she had tried to steal Sookie for herself, but Sophie-Anne still held on to the foolish belief she could get out of it somehow.

While Sophie-Anne was holding onto foolish hope, Bill knew he was well and truly screwed. He knew there was little chance of him getting away with any of it. His only hope was for Sophie-Anne to admit that she ordered him to procure the telepath by any means necessary. One look at the queen told him she would never do that. She would sacrifice him to save herself. Even knowing that, Bill still couldn’t find it in himself to speak against her. To do so would be considered an act of treason in the eyes of the other vampires. He just hoped that she would be able to get out of the mess she found herself in and somehow find a way to get Sookie away from Eric. He wanted them both to suffer.

“I think it’s safe to say the accusations are not without merit,” Roman said as he turned off the laptop. “The evidence against both Mr. Compton and Queen Leclerq is plain for us all to see, or in this case, hear. Do you have anything to say in your defense, Mr. Compton?” he asked, giving Bill the chance to implicate Sophie-Anne further.

“No,” Bill mumbled, his head low as he avoided eye contact with the Council.

Godric shook his head at the pathetic sight Bill made. He had been aware of everything already, but he still found it disturbing to hear Sophie-Anne and Bill talk about his *datter* in such a way. Sookie wasn’t a trinket to be collected or currency to barter with. She was a beautiful young woman who his child loved more than anything.

“The real issue here is the Louisiana Queens’ involvement in the attempted procurement of Mrs. Northman,” Roman said, turning his gaze to Sophie-Anne. “As you are all aware the procurement of humans is against vampire law. The practice, while regrettably permitted in the past, was outlawed many years ago. The Council has no tolerance for those who are found guilty of such disgusting behavior. The penalty for those who are found guilty of such practice is grave. In the interest of fairness, we will give Sophie-Anne Leclerq the chance to defend herself. Louisiana Queen,” Roman added, his voice rising above room. “You have heard accusations made against you. And you as well as the rest of us have listened to the audio footage Eric the Norseman gained by placing the house of the vampire Compton under surveillance. You’re aware of the accusations against you. What do you have to say for yourself?”
Lifting her head, Sophie-Anne placed a hand to her chest as she feigned distress. “I’m shocked and outraged to be accused of such underhanded and illegal things,” she lied, putting on one of her best performances. “I would never, never, do such a thing to Ms. Stackhouse…”

“Mrs. Northman,” Roman corrected, cutting her off. He had to hand it to Sophie-Anne; she was quite the show woman. If he didn’t already know she was lying through her teeth, he might have been tempted to believe her. But being Godric’s right-hand-man had many benefits. Roman had earned Godric’s trust, and he was well aware of the truth about Sookie.

“Sorry, Mrs. Northman,” Sophie-Anne amended, forcing the words out. “As I was saying, Mrs. Northman is an asset of my state. She has been married to one of my Sheriffs for years; therefore, I would have no reason to try something so underhanded.”

“And yet just a few short moments ago, you were claiming you were unaware of their marriage as you did not give them permission to marry,” Roman replied. “Although I suppose at the moment this is the least of your concerns. The evidence against you is incriminating to say the least.”

“I’ll admit, given the evidence presented here tonight makes things appear to look otherwise,” Sophie-Anne conceded. “I’ll also admit it explains the disrespect shown to me by both my Sheriff and his wife, so I will forgive them for that. Let me assure you that although it sounds like me, it’s definitely not me on those recordings. If…if I was going to disregard the laws our honored Council put forth, I would never be as stupid to reveal my plans or give orders over a phone line that I didn’t know was secure. I have been around many centuries; I wouldn’t make such a juvenile mistake.”

As she spoke, Sophie-Anne seethed internally. She couldn’t believe she had made such a rookie mistake. She never even considered that Eric would bug Bill’s house. Why would she? She wasn’t aware that Eric had caught Bill peeking in on him and Sookie. “I fear I’m being set up,” she continued. “Whoever is behind this is trying to come between me and my Sheriff. They’re attempting to weaken my state.”

Sookie barely restrained from snorting out loud as she listened to Sophie-Anne spin her little tale. It was just as she and Eric suspected. Sophie-Anne was attempting to play the victim. She was actually trying to make it appear as if she was being set up for a possible takeover.

“The Louisiana Queen makes an adequate argument,” Salome said, a thoughtful look on her face. “There is no way to be a hundred percent certain the voice on the recording is truly that of Sophie-Anne’s. While it undoubtedly sounds like her, it could have as easily been an imposter. Queen Leclerq just may be the target of a set-up. There’s no video footage of her instructing Compton to procure Mrs. Northman.”

“While that is a possibility,” Desmond replied, stepping forward once again. “I would like to replay an audio recording that was recorded a few nights prior to the attack on Mrs. Northman.” Seeing the judges nod in permission, Desmond replayed a short part of the message, and, once again, everyone present heard Bill report he couldn’t get close to Sookie due to Eric’s continued presence, and the Queen’s reply that she would order Eric to court so Bill could get closer to Sookie. “I would like to remind everyone of the night Mr. Compton arranged for Mrs. Northman to be attacked so he could get his blood into her. Eric the Norseman was not present. The Queen had summoned him to New Orleans for the previous night. The Queen, in fact, questioned the Norseman about his marriage to Mrs. Northman and detained him overnight, just as she said she would on the recording. Do you still
claim you’re innocent in all of this, Your Majesty?”

Sophie-Anne glared at the demon lawyer as he backed her into a corner. It was clear now that he was on Eric and Sookie’s side. “I am innocent,” she lied, still refusing to concede defeat. “I don’t care what it is on that recording. For all I know you’re a part of the conspiracy against me. That recording could’ve been tampered with to fit your case against me. I have done nothing wrong.”

“Cheese and rice! Now I understand why she and Hadley get on so well,” Sookie mumbled, not really caring who overheard.

“Why don’t we ask Mr. Compton?” Salome suggested. “I believe regardless of whether Sophie-Anne was involved, he was. It’s clear to all of us that he is guilty of the crimes of which he is accused. Perhaps he will be willing to shed some light on Sophie-Anne’s alleged involvement.”

“Very well,” Roman said, fixing his gaze on the younger vampire. “William Compton, from the evidence presented here tonight it is clear that you are, in fact, guilty of all that of which you have been accused. There is no doubting this. Before we pass judgement on you, perhaps you would like to enlighten us on Sophie-Anne Leclerq’s role in all of this. Mr. Compton, I ask you now in front of this trial and all its witnesses: were you following the orders of your Queen in your attempts to come between Eric the Norseman and his bonded wife in order to procure Mrs. Northman?”

Rising to his feet, Bill straightened his shoulders and stared at the Council. Admitting he was following the orders of Sophie-Anne wouldn’t do him any good. The procuring of humans was illegal. The moment Sophie-Anne ordered him to do it, he should’ve reported her to the Council. It didn’t matter that all monarchs did it or that Bill had knowledge of two Council members who were fond of the practice themselves, as he had procured a human or two for them in the past. That, of course, was all hush-hush. No one was to know of this. If you were ever caught in the act of procurement, you said nothing. You were on your own. Bill wouldn’t get leniency by telling the truth. His sentence would still be just as severe. On the slim possibility that he would escape with his life, Bill would need all the contacts he had made and being declared a traitor would do him no good. With that decided there was only one answer.

“No, I wasn’t,” Bill lied, pleasing his queen and earning her favor. “At no time did I receive orders from Queen Leclerq. She didn’t order me to procure the telepath. She’s innocent in this.”

Sophie-Anne beamed as she listened to Bill deny her involvement. As far as she was concerned, Bill was the only one who could implicate her, and he had honored his queen, defending her from the charges.

“Thank you, Mr. Compton,” Salome said, taking the lead again. A small smile curled her lips as she added, “Given Mr. Compton’s statement, I do not believe we can in all good faith hold Queen Sophie-Anne accountable for something we cannot prove she had knowledge of. I believe it’s more than likely that she is being set up to look guilty…”

“If I may,” Desmond interrupted, trying to appear polite, even as he cut her off. “It has already been proven that Mr. Compton is a liar. To trust his words now would be unwise given the seriousness of the accusations against both him and the Queen of Louisiana…”

“Are you accusing me of being a liar?” Sophie-Anne shrilled loudly, her fangs snapped down as she snarled at the demon lawyer.

“With all due respect, Your Majesty, it wouldn’t be the first time a monarch lied to protect themselves,” Desmond countered.
“How dare you?” Sophie-Anne hissed.

“How dare you?” The Ancient Pythoness said, banging a gavel on the table. “There is one simple way to solve this,” she added, once the room had quieted down. “Tiger,” she called, addressing Quinn once again. “Bring her in.”

Heads turned as Quinn walked over to the side door and opened it. The vampires craned their necks to see who ‘her’ was. A hiss tore from Bill’s throat as he watched Quinn escort his Maker into the room. Fear rose in him as he laid eyes on Lorena for the first time in over fifty years. One look at Sophie-Anne told Bill she was as equally as shocked to see Lorena.

“No!” Sophie-Anne snarled, eyeing Lorena. “She has no right to be here. This doesn’t concern her. I demand she leave.”

“Ms. Ball is here as our guest,” Roman informed her, his tone taking on a steely quality. “Given her connection to Mr. Compton, I would say she has every right to be here. And you have no right to demand anything of us.”

“I won’t stand here in the presence of that,” Sophie-Anne replied, distaste dripping off her words, as she pointed a finger at Lorena. “I won’t subject myself to it any longer. Andre, Berts, come. We’re leaving,” she added, as she spun on her heels and stormed down the small aisle between the chairs.

“Guards, stop her,” Roman ordered, as he watched Sophie-Anne throw one of her tantrums. He had been expecting her to try and leave the moment she saw Lorena, and he was prepared for it.

The guards reacted instinctively to Roman’s order. They quickly descended on Sophie-Anne and her children, blocking her path and preventing her from leaving. Neither Sophie-Anne nor her children were prepared for a fight and they knew they wouldn’t stand a chance against the Council guards. They reluctantly returned to the front of the room.

“Thank you,” Roman said with a smirk before turning his attention to Lorena. “Ms. Ball, if you will.”

Lorena smirked as she stared at Bill. She had been waiting for this moment for a very long time. The last time she’d seen Bill had been just before Sophie-Anne threw her out of Louisiana. That was only before Sophie-Anne, her children, and Bill had spent a week torturing her. Lorena had sworn, as she left Louisiana a broken, bloody mess, that she would one day get her revenge on her child and his bitch queen. It had taken her fifty years, but she was finally ready to make good on her promise.

“William, as your Maker, I command you to tell the truth,” Lorena ordered. Turning back to the judges, she bowed before them as she added, “Ask your questions. He will answer you honestly now.”

“Thank you, Ms. Ball,” Roman replied. “Now, Mr. Compton, why did you move into Area Five in Louisiana?”

“I was ordered to return to my hometown to assess whether or not the story of a telepath living there was true,” Bill answered truthfully. He cursed Lorena for her interference and robbing him of the ability to lie. “And if they were true, I was to procure the telepath by any means necessary.”

“I see. Who ordered you?” Roman asked.

“My Queen, Sophie-Anne Leclerq,” Bill replied, shooting Lorena a glare.

Murmurs spread through the room as Bill revealed his and Sophie-Anne’s guilt to all. By the time he
was done, Bill had revealed everything: Sophie-Anne’s orders, her reaction to Eric and Sookie’s marriage, and how he had arranged for Sookie to be attacked. There was no piece of information left hidden. Once he was done, Bill fell back in his chair. He knew he was finished. No one could save him now. By the looks of it so was Sophie-Anne.

“When was the last time you saw Hadley?” Sookie asked, speaking up before anyone had a chance to ask anything else.

“The night before I returned to Bon Temps,” Bill answered, unable to stop himself. “The Queen let me play with her as a going away present.”

“That hole just keeps getting bigger,” Sookie said with a smile, as she leaned into Eric.

“Indeed it does, Mrs. Northman,” Roman agreed. Turning his gaze to Sophie-Anne, Roman grinned as he saw the look of anger on her face. “Do you still deny your involvement of this, Ms. Leclerq?” he asked. No one missed that he had referred to her as ‘Ms.’ and not ‘Queen.’ Not one of them had to hazard a guess as to what it meant.

“What does it matter?” Sophie-Anne replied, dropping any pretense of innocence. “This whole thing is ridiculous. She’s human, just a blood bag. Who cares if I tried to procure her? She’s a telepath for fuck’s sake. She should be chained up and used for our benefit and pleasure. I only did what the rest of you would have…”

“I think you will find Mrs. Northman is more than just a human,” Godric said, his voice chillingly calm, a stark contrast to the rage flowing through him. “Telepathy is not a human trait. Your actions could have had far reaching consequences. You have disgraced yourself, your state, and this very Council. You do not deserve the position of Queen…”

“No!” Sophie-Anne snarled, cutting him off. Anger shot through her body as the meaning of Godric’s words hit her. “I won’t allow it. I’m the Queen. I denounce this trial and the Council. I won’t listen to you any longer,” she ranted, her eyes wild. “You’re no one. You’re nothing… This is entirely your fault,” she shouted, as her eyes landed on Sookie.

As she stared at Sookie, hatred bubbled up in her. It was all the telepath’s fault. If she had only done as she was told and come with her, none of this would have happened. “The telepath is mine!” Sophie-Anne hissed, as she shot forward and grabbed Sookie by her arms. Her nails dug into Sookie’s arms, drawing her blood as she lunged at her neck intending to sink her fangs into her and drain her.

The second Eric saw Sophie-Anne touch his wife a red mist descended over him. Instinct took over and he launched himself at the Queen. His desperate need to protect his wife over-rid everything else. Grabbing Sophie-Anne by her red hair, Eric threw her backwards and away from Sookie before attacking her with everything he had. Sophie-Anne’s screams filled the room as Eric tore her apart, limb-by-limb. By the time he was done there was nothing left of Sophie-Anne but a pile of bloody goo and the blood that soaked his clothes.

“Eric,” Sookie whimpered, drawing his attention back into the now. Looking over at her, Eric bared his teeth and snarled as he noticed a few vampires creeping closer to her, his little display of violence having riled them up. Speeding to her side, Eric growled at them, warning them to back off or face the same fate as Sophie-Anne. As he pulled Sookie into his arms, uncaring of the blood on him, he surveyed the room. It seemed while he was tearing apart Sophie-Anne; Thalia and the other Louisiana vampires had torn apart Andre and the Berts. Only Bill remained, and one look at him, told Eric that he knew he was screwed.
Sookie clung to Eric, her fingers curling into his blood-drenched shirt. She didn’t care that the blood was soaking into her dress. She just needed Eric’s protection. Her fear was still high from Sophie-Anne’s attack, and having some of the other vampire try to crowd her hadn’t helped. She knew Eric’s attack on Sophie-Anne had aroused their bloodlust, and she had fresh, open wounds on her arms from Sophie-Anne grabbing her. She must have looked like an all-you-can-eat buffet to the vampires. Despite it all, she had no fear of Eric. Even after watching him tear Sophie-Anne apart, she knew he would never hurt her.

“It appears we are in need of a new monarch,” the Ancient Pythoness said dryly.
"Your Grace, if I may?" A voice interrupted before anyone had a chance to reply.

All eyes turned to the vampire who spoke. Eric let out a small groan when he recognized the vampire who had interrupted. He pulled Sookie closer to him as Peter Threadgill, King of Arkansas, stepped forward.

Sookie frowned as she watched the young-looking vampire stand before the panel of judges. To Sookie's eyes he looked like a child dressing up in his father's clothes with his ill-fitting suit practically hanging off him, but Sookie knew all too well that when it came to the supernatural, looks could be very deceiving.

"It's no secret that before the trial of the vampire Compton was brought forward, the now-deposed Queen of Louisiana was to pledge to myself, King of Arkansas," Peter said, in his haughty voice. "All parties were in agreement and the contract was finalized. I respectfully request this trial and the council honor that contract and appoint me the new King of Louisiana. I'll be only too happy to honor all of Louisiana's outstanding contracts and claim all assets for myself and both of my Kingdoms."

A growl ripped from Eric's throat as Peter spoke the last words. The Viking hadn't missed the way Peter's eyes flicked to Sookie as he mentioned Louisiana's assets. His body coiled in preparation; one wrong move on Arkansas' part and another state would need a new monarch.

"Your request is denied," the Ancient Pythoness replied, refusing to even consider his request.

"What?" Peter said, his cool exterior crumbling under the Ancient One's refusal. "You can't do that. Louisiana should be mine. You've got no right to deny me!"

"I have every right," the Ancient Pythoness informed him, her tone deathly calm.

"With all due respect, Ancient One," Salome cut in before Peter had a chance to say anything else. She kept her tone respectful as she continued, "Arkansas does have a strong case to claim Louisiana. There is a contract in place. On what grounds do you refuse his claim?"

"Roman," the Ancient Pythoness prompted in no mood to answer the question herself.

"While there was a contract between Arkansas and the former Queen of Louisiana, it hadn't been honored as the pledging ceremony hadn't taken place. They hadn't exchanged blood, nor had the marriage between consummated. Arkansas has no claim to Louisiana."

"This is outrageous!" Peter raged after listening to Roman's explanation. "Louisiana and its assets should be mine!"

"You claim has been denied," Roman growled, staring the much younger vampire down. "Now if you don't want to lose your state as well as your head, sit down and shut the fuck up!"

Peter snapped his mouth shut at the threat of losing his state and life. Returning to his seat, Peter sat down and glared at anyone who dared look at him. He seethed internally. Louisiana and its telepath should have been his, and he swore they both would be one day.

"Louisiana is still in need of a new monarch," Salome said, stating the obvious. "I suggest the council meet in private to decide on a suitable replacement for the late Sophie-Anne."
"That will not be necessary," the Ancient Pythoness replied dismissively. The Ancient One already knew who the new monarch would be. She had known before she even stepped into the hotel. She just hoped the Viking and his Fairy were ready for the outcome. "Norseman, step forward."

Placing a hand on Sookie's lower back, Eric guided his wife to where Thalia stood before moving to stand in front of the Ancient Pythoness. Eric had a good idea what was about to happen. He couldn't say he was happy, but it was expected. From the moment the Ancient One had announced that Sookie was a telepath, he knew there was only one outcome. He would have to take the mantle of King. It would be the only way to keep his lover safe. He had already noticed the looks Sookie was getting from various monarchs, and Threadgill himself had announced his desire to claim his wife for his kingdoms when he had referred to her as an asset.

Flicking her eyes between Eric and the Ancient One, Salome let out a small huff of displeasure as the realization of what the Ancient Pythoness was preparing to formalize. "Surely you don't intend to reward him for killing his Queen?" she asked, her tone argumentative. "He should be punished."

"The Norseman defended his bonded mate from an unprovoked attack. The deceased Sophie-Anne was guilty of committing a blood offense when she spilled the blood of the Norseman's bonded," the Ancient Pythoness said, her tone firm. "It was the right of the Norseman to extract retribution. Sophie-Anne Leclerq conspired to come between the Norseman and his bonded wife. She disregarded our laws and lied to us when confronted. Sophie-Anne would have met the true death for her crimes regardless of the Norseman's actions. However, in killing the ruling monarch of Louisiana, the Norseman has earned the right to claim the throne as a spoil of war. So I ask this of you, Eric the Norseman, do you claim the state of Louisiana as your own?"

"I do, Your Grace," Eric answered without a second's hesitation.

"The vampire council accepts your claim. In witness of the Council members present, I declare Eric the Norseman the new King of Louisiana," the Ancient Pythoness decreed. "Louisiana and its wealth now belong to you."

"Thank you, Your Grace," Eric replied. He bowed respectfully to the Ancient Pythoness before stepping back and pulling Sookie to his side again, wanting her close. He could tell his bonded was curious but she had the sense not to ask any questions. There would be time for that later once they were alone, which Eric hoped was soon. His bloodlust was still high after killing Sophie-Anne and he wanted nothing more than to tear the dress of his wife's body and claim her for his own.

"Christian Baruch, Cameron Michaels, and Hadley Delahoussaye, step forward," Roman ordered, taking the lead once more and setting the proceedings back on track. He watched with barely concealed amusement as the three of them shuffled forward. "The three of you are just as guilty as Sophie-Anne and the vampire Compton. Although in Cameron Michaels case I will say his guilt is down to poor judgement and bad taste..."

"Hey!" Hadley interrupted, realizing it was a dig against her.

"Be quiet, you foolish girl!" Roman snapped. "I think it's clear to all present that Mr. Michaels had no idea of the web in which he found himself entangled. While Christian Baruch and Hadley Delahoussaye were not only aware, they were complicit."

"The actions of Christian Baruch and Hadley Delahoussaye could have had far reaching consequences," Roman continued. Despite not being the eldest, nor most powerful vampire present at the trial, Roman had quite the reputation for judging numerous guilty vampires. "Greed, jealousy, and hatred caused their actions and they will be punished accordingly. Christian Baruch, for your actions here tonight, I fine you two hundred and fifty thousand dollars and sentence you to five years
Christian's eyes widened as he heard the sentence, and he once again cursed getting involved with Sophie-Anne but he had the good sense to not to speak out.

"Cameron Michaels, you were the only one who had the wisdom to tell the truth and admit your guilt," Roman added. "For that I will show leniency. All events that transpired here tonight shall be glamoured from your mind, and then you will be free to go." Roman smirked as his eyes fell on Hadley. "And as for you, Ms. Delahoussaye, I shall leave your fate up to the Ancient One."

The Ancient One turned her milky white eyes to Hadley and stared at the bitter and twisted young woman. The Ancient Pythoness didn't have to be able to see, to notice the ugliness in Hadley. It was clear to her that Hadley had no remorse for what she had done. She was only sorry that she had been caught. Greed and childhood jealousy were mostly to blame for Hadley's actions. She blamed Sookie for things that were not her fault.

"Hadley Delahoussaye, your role in the events of the last several months is most egregious. You betrayed your cousin for financial and personal gain. You conspired to come between a bonded pair, and you knowingly and willingly put those plans into action. At no point were you coerced or glamoured. You took pleasure in trying to cause your cousin pain, and when the schemes of Sophie-Anne Leclerq were discovered, you stood before this council and lied.

"It is my decision that you suffer the fate you intended for your cousin. For the next year you will be the slave to a vampire of my choosing. You will suffer as you intended for Sookie Northman. You will have no voice, no rights, and you will be no one. Once the year is up, you will be tossed out into the street where you belong." The Ancient Pythoness turned her gaze to the vampires present as she continued, "All vampires are prohibited from having anything to do with Hadley Delahoussaye. She is to be considered an enemy to us all. If any vampire is discovered aiding or using her in any way, they will be sentenced to fifty years in silver. Once they are released they will meet the true death. This is my decision. This is law."

"What? No!" Hadley cried, hearing her sentence. They couldn't do this to her. She wasn't a nobody. She was a Queen's favorite pet! Tears pooled in her eyes as the thought of losing all that she had schemed to get. "Sookie, please!" she begged, turning to face her cousin. "Help me! Don't let them do this to me. Let me come and live with you. I'll be good. I swear."

"Are you kidding?" Sookie said, a look of disbelief spreading across her face at Hadley's plea. "After everything you've done, you want me to help you?"

"Please, we're family!" Hadley pleaded. She didn't care what she had to say or do. She would offer up her body to Lucifer himself if it meant she could stay on top.

"Family?" Sookie snarled, disgust dripping off her words. "You don't know the meaning of the word. You sold me out so you could be Sophie-Anne's favorite pet. You don't give a damn about me and the feeling is more than mutual. You're no family of mine."

"Think of what Gran would say," Hadley said, trying to guilt Sookie into helping her.

Red-hot fury rose in Sookie as Hadley once again pushed her past her limit. Lunging forward, she tackled Hadley to the ground and rained down a number of blows on her before she felt an arm around her waist lifting her off her cousin.

"Relax, Lover," Eric said as he pulled her into his body. He wrapped his arms around her, holding her against him as he turned his head to face the panel of judges. "I suggest you get that," he jerked
his head in the direction of Hadley, "out of here before my wife kills her."

"Tiger, remove her from the room and lock her in one of the cells," Roman ordered.

Hadley screamed and pleaded with Sookie to help her as Quinn hoisted her over his shoulder and carried her out of the room.

"Now for the final sentence," Roman said once the room had quieted after Hadley's little outburst. "William T. Compton, stand and face your judgement."

For the first time since he was turned Bill felt his age as he rose slowly to his feet. He had trouble believing it was all real. Sophie-Anne was supposed to have saved him. She was supposed to have rewarded him. She wasn't supposed to have been a bloody mess on the floor. As he stood before the Council awaiting his sentence, Bill cursed Eric and Sookie. His predicament was entirely their fault. Why couldn't Eric have been a loyal and respectful subject to Sophie-Anne and just handed the telepathic blood bag over?

"William T. Compton," the Ancient Pythoness began, preparing to finish the trial. "You have been found guilty of all charges. You are a disgrace to all vampires. Do not ask for leniency for I will show none. As the Head of the Vampire Council, I sentence you to the true death. As your crimes are against Eric the Norseman and his bonded mate, I will allow him to carry out your sentence."

Eric dropped a kiss to the top of Sookie's head before guiding her to Thalia and stepping forward again. He ignored the stake offered him by the Council guards as he approached Bill. Eric sneered at the younger vampire as he wrapped his hand around his throat and yanked him forward. His fingers dug into the pale flesh of Bill's throat, and Eric could feel the blood trickling down his hand as his grip tightened around Bill's neck. Memories of the attack Bill orchestrated on Sookie flicked through Eric's mind as he recalled the pain his wife suffered due to the Civil War vampire, and Eric wanted Bill to suffer the same fate.

"You won't keep her," Bill gurgled as he struggled in Eric's grasp. "Everyone knows about your whore now. Someone will take her."

Before Eric had a chance to reply, Godric stepped onto the platform and called for everyone's attention. He, just as everyone present, had heard Bill's words and he wanted to send Bill a final message before his child sent him to his true death.

"Before you send him to his death, Compton should hear this," Godric said, facing the whole room, but speaking to Eric. "The events here tonight could have been avoided if those who have perished and are about to would have followed the laws put in place by the Council. Humans, no matter their blood type, appearance, or special abilities are not trinkets to collect, nor toys with which to be played. In the past, the practice of procurement was accepted but no more. When we revealed our existence, we all agreed to move forward.

"As I look out among you, I can see the same hunger in many of your eyes as you gaze upon Mrs. Northman as I saw in Sophie-Anne's. I will remind you all that Sophie-Anne Leclerq lost her life because she tried to procure a woman who is bonded and married to Eric the Norseman. I would hate for that to be the fate of anyone else, but I warn you now, any attempt to remove Mrs. Northman from her husband's side or the state of Louisiana will be considered an act of treason against the Council. Eric the Norseman and Sookie Stackhouse Northman are bonded by blood, married by human laws, and pledged by the knife. Their bond is accepted and approved by the Council. Do not make the same mistake as Sophie-Anne. Do not make the mistake William T. Compton made."

Silence descended upon the room as Godric finished his speech. He could tell most vampires had
taken his words to heart. They knew trying to take Sookie would be a suicide mission, but he could also tell there were those who chose to ignore him. He could see it in their eyes. They had the same mentality as Sophie-Anne, and those would be the ones Eric had to watch.

Turning his gaze back to Bill, Eric grinned as he saw the look of horror in the younger vampires’ face. "Sookie is mine!" he growled. "No one will ever take her from me. I will spend forever with her by my side, while you will be nothing but a forgotten memory."

Not giving Bill a chance to reply, Eric lifted his other hand and gripped Bill's head tightly. He let out a vicious roar as he twisted Bill's head violently, tearing his head clean off his shoulders and throwing it to the floor.

"The sentence is complete. This trial is over," the Ancient Pythoness said, banging a gavel on the table. Rising to her feet, she turned her milky eyes to Eric and added in Old Norse, "There is blood in the water and the sharks will soon be circling. Prepare yourself, Viking," before calling for one of her handmaidens to help her out of the room.

Eric felt a shiver go down his spine at her warning. Despite Godric's words he knew that some vampires would still try to take his wife from him. He would have to put on a good showing at the rest of the Summit. For now that could wait. He had more pressing things to take care of then play games with a few greedy monarchs. No one would make a move against him while the summit was still going on. To do so would be suicide. So that gave him time.

Reaching for Sookie, Eric pulled her into his arms and raced out of the room, ignoring the vampires who were approaching him to offer congratulations or searching for a weakness. He held Sookie tightly to him as he sped through the hotel toward their room. Eric knew there was still a much to deal with: Arkansas wouldn't give up without a fight, Hadley, although punished, was still alive, and he had a new Kingdom to run. At the moment, none of it mattered. All that mattered was the woman in his arms. As long as he had Sookie by his side, Eric knew he could deal with anything.

The End

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