

The music seems to consume me – filling my body with an overwhelming sense of energy and direction. I'm out of control in all of the best ways. Industrial, goth, remixes, all of the hits. I chant lyrics at the ceiling in a lost rhythm as my body moves of its own accord. This moment is everything I've needed for the last month and a half. Bills, work, stress, family, it's all just adding up and I can't handle it – but having a moment of release is all that I could possibly ask for.

As the night goes on, people filter in and out of the dance room, but I refuse to stop. DJs swap and sets change but I'm the only one who stays for every last one.

*We're here to dance, aren't we?* I think to myself. *Why spend so much time outside smoking? Loitering in the kitchen?* It's frustrating when people are just so distant from each other. But that's not a problem for me, it's just more space that I can take up on the floor.

It's when I'm taking a moment to myself to rehydrate – between the movement and substances in me, I'm bordering on dead without it – that I see the most beautiful girl walk into the kitchen. A stride so confident it could kill me, a face so sharp it could cut me, and a costume so *tight* it does things to me I didn't think were possible. A vampire costume with realistic blood on her neck, teeth sharp enough they look like medical implants, and she *must* have painted her body white to look *that* pale all over. She seemed disoriented though but that wasn't something that mattered to me. We both were at this point – so it's fine, right? She fills a plastic cup with water at the sink, seemingly mesmerized by the flow of it streaming into the cup. She drinks as much as she can from it, but immediately coughs it back up. *She must be in a really bad way for her to be rejecting water like that.* I think.

I saunter over and swipe the cup from her and take a sip.

"Water not agreeing with you tonight, sweetheart?" I asked.

"Not much is right now." She said after a minute, looking me up and down. "What's your name?"

"Kyle." I say with a smile, returning her look. "I think I've seen you around – you come to these events often?"

“As often as I can.” She says, her voice smooth and apathetic. It’s intoxicating. “But not often enough – do you know anywhere around here a bit more...private?”

The way she says that excites every neuron in my body and I know exactly what to do. I take her by her uncomfortably cold hand and lead her through the small groupings of people to an isolated balcony, bathed in moonlight. I touch her waist and she places a hand on my shoulder with an electrifying touch. We inch closer, closer, and closer until -

My fangs cut through skin and flesh like a freshly sharpened knife, revealing the fountain of warm red ichor it was hiding. A calm wave rushes over me as I take in ounce after ounce of the intoxicating metallic sweetness. For a moment I’m lost to consumption, giving in to this new nature, and letting my body take control. I feel like I can’t stop – I don’t want to stop. The more I drink, the more powerful, alive, and satisfied I feel.

And then there’s nothing – no more ichor, no more blood. I find myself crouched over his body, blood dripping from my mouth. His pale face frozen in a permanent state of shock. I knew him from before tonight – if only from a distance. An accountant, newly married, played football on the weekends, polite to his friends but nasty to anyone that he felt wasn’t worth his time. Those thoughts had long drifted away from me though – all I could see now was a disgusting rat better suited for the gutters, like most of the flesh at this party. Hot, loud, sweaty, repulsive, but most importantly – *food*.

I return to the party in a euphoric daze and find my sisters back on the dance floor, enjoying themselves. I catch their eye and they look at me with a knowing smile, gesturing for me to join them. As we lose ourselves to the music and take in the moment, I notice a woman across the dance floor glaring at me, and I make a note in my mind of the next rat that will be my prey.