

CARMEN

Birth of a Vampire

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Dana Alink

Into blackness he sank as he tried to remember who he was and why he was so hungry.

He remembered the waltz taking off, the waves of color moving as one. One, two, three. One, two, three. He saw a woman with dark eyes looking intently at him, standing out in her just as dark, lace gown amidst the bright colors of the social dance. Her eyes filled with rage.

In an instant, shattered fragments of blood came to mind. A doe-eyed childlike vampire dropped dead by his specially crafted, silver-plated Colt. The dark seemingly gentle eyes forever fixed onto nothingness. He stood in a den amongst the bodies of a coven. Too late he noticed a hint of black lace, dissolving in the shadows.

The scene transformed, and green, like fir trees colored eyes met his when Carmen looked at him and smiled a smile he knew by heart, her hair seemed to glow as it caught the last rays of the setting sun. Next to her, reaching his tiny hands up to him, ready to be swept off his feet stood little Tommen. His chest tightened, he wanted to reach out and touch them, to hold them.

So hungry, he thought, drifting off once more into oblivion.

He woke up, but the only thing he saw was the pitch of black. He could not move, nor breathe. There was nothing but the deafening sound of silence. A freezing cold rose in his stomach. His tongue felt astringent as though someone had made him eat soil. He tried to move his legs but couldn't. A cold and heavy texture weighed his chest down. He gasped for air, but instead, dirt rolled in as gravity demanded. He jerked his arms.

Uncontrollably he threw up both his arms and legs again, but they wouldn't move, and he let out a smothered cry, filling his mouth further with the gravelly taste of darkness. He spat and yanked and squirmed but he remained locked in place. Suppressed by the weight of his

earthly grave.

Again without warning, he remembered a whisper of black lace and a pair of razor sharp fangs sinking deeper into flesh. He felt his life being drained rapidly, and just as fast the sensation stopped. Leaving him on the verge of death, desperately he tried to cling to life.

No. This can't be, he thought.

Desperate for air, he really needed to get out. He moved, first his hands, up and down, up and down. He created a rhythm, gaining ground inch by inch. Then his feet, slowly but surely loosening up the suffocating earth that was oppressing him.

Once more he remembered the woman in black, she stood in the rain, barefoot on the cold forest floor, her gown torn. There was something familiar about her, with those large, dark, doe-eyes. She snarled and her fangs glistened.

The memory shattered and waves of blind panic crashed over him. The thought of Carmen's warm smile, and Tommen's tiny hands reaching out to him washing over him instead.

He gasped for air, ignoring the dirt, as he tried using all of his weight to move the surrounding earth, bashing his arms as hard as he could, slamming his shoulders up and down trying to lift his back off from the ground, kicking his feet as far as they would go. When suddenly, he felt the earth soften up, allowing him to move ever so slightly.

He pushed on, kicking and clawing his way towards freedom, fighting for oxygen, he could almost taste the air above. He kept going, opening up the never ending blanket of dirt, creating pockets of space at his chest, hands, and feet. Now he could grab handfuls of loam and push them away stretching out as far as he could, at once the ground around him started caving in and an avalanche of dirt filled up the little holes of momentum he so desperately had created. Locking him into place, once more.

As the blackness washed over him again, realization hit him. This is it, he thought. This is where I die.

He regretted he couldn't watch Tommen grow up. He saw the young boy's smile as clear as day. He thought of Carmen, and that smile he knew by heart, her sun-kissed hair, her warm

embrace; holding him ever so close. Her soft breasts pressing against him gently, her laying down beside him in the dim candlelight, her slender neck... His lover.

A wicked sense of hunger overwhelmed him as he thought about how translucent skin was at the neck. He could see the artery pumping the rich reds of life. Again the scornful woman in black infiltrated his private thoughts. She called out to him beckoning him, no, demanding him, to rise. He could not resist her call.

“Arise, and greet your hell.” She laughed viciously.

A feral roar escaped his throat as he grabbed and pushed and clawed until finally, he burst out of his supposed resting place. The air hugged him tightly as he felt the delicate introduction of the damp, inviting coolness of the evening. Renewed he came into this world. His hair moist, by greeting of twilight. He licked his lips and tasted for the first time, the scent of green. In a trance, he observed the orchestra of life surrounding him. The branches of the pine trees swayed in the wind. The soft ticking of the pine needles falling down and hitting the earth, carefully heralded the harmonic minor of the night. He was reborn.

A quiet snap of a twig broke through the melodic ensemble and he turned around. Bathing in moonlight, encircled by the pine trees that matched her eyes so well, she stood. He felt his newly obtained fangs, as his canines throbbed at the thought of her.

“Carmen,” he breathed.

There was no smile, as silent tears streamed down her face when she raised the small silver gun and without hesitation pulled the trigger.