

Sneak Peak of Midnight Savior

Book 5 of the Bonded By Blood Vampire Chronicles

By Arial Burnz © 2015

Davina's scream raked through Broderick's soul like rabid claws, tearing at the fibers of his heart. He sprinted through a dark alley, the red brick faded by the layers of soot clinging to the stone, following her weeping pleas for help, now muffled as if she were gagged. Broderick's cheeks flamed with anger and the narrow passage dimmed to a red hue through his rage. When he rounded the corner at the T-junction, he gasped and staggered to a halt. Davina's hands were tied overhead and secured to a drain pipe. Her head slumped forward while she moaned. Legs spread wide where she sat, her dress was hiked to her waist and her undergarments torn and bloody.

Broderick dashed to her side, sliding across the cobblestones, ignoring the scrapes and tears at his knees. He fumbled to untie the rope at her wrists while trying not to irritate her already chafed skin. She flopped into his arms. One-handed, he loosened the gag in her mouth then crushed her to his chest. "God's blood, Blossom! I'm here. I'm here."

Davina pushed against Rick's chest. "No...no...please, let me be," she whimpered.

"It's me, Blossom," Broderick soothed. "I'll take care of you."

"No, I can take care of myself. I'm not your responsibility." In spite of her protests, she buried her face in his chest and sobbed.

Rick clenched his jaw and squeezed his eyes shut against the familiar words—Celina's mantra almost their entire marriage.

"Davina, let me—"

Broderick opened his eyes to find her laying in a hospital bed, staring at the white wall, her sweet mouth drawn into a frown, her brow creased. A handsome young man with dark brown hair and full mustache sat in a chair beside her, holding her hand.

"You can't continue living like this," the young man whispered.

Davina's frown deepened, but she kept her eyes riveted to the empty wall.

"Please...marry me. Let me take you away from all this."

Broderick hitched his breath and stalked to the foot of the bed where he clutched the iron frame.

Davina turned sorrowful eyes toward Broderick, then dragged them from his face to gaze at the man at her side. The corner of her mouth twitched, a weak attempt at a smile. She nodded. "I will marry you."

Rick inhaled a slow, shuddering breath and closed his eyes against the stinging tears. When he opened them, Davina's lush curves were gone. She was frail and thin...so gaunt and almost starved. Her plump, pink cheeks were now sunken, and gray shadows smudged under her eyes. The shining red hair was washed out to a dull, blonde that lay frazzled as it hung around her skeletal shoulders.

She turned her sapphire blue eyes toward Broderick. "You're just a dream," her whisper echoed.

Sep 20, 1888 - London

"No!" Broderick sat up in his cabin, gasping for air, sweat trickling down his chest. His eyes darted around the cabin, his immortal vision highlighting the familiar objects around his private chamber on *Knightly's Refuge VI*. Celina's runic friendship charm dangled from the bed post, swaying gently as the ship rocked and creaked on the water. Monika's *Book of Shadows* lay closed on his bedside table with the Solar Eclipse and Lunar Eclipse rings atop it. The pocket watch Celina gave him as a birthday gift.

He swung his legs over the side of the bed and raked his fingers through his hair, cradling his head in his hands. She's in London? The fact that he'd had any dream was a surprise. He only dreamt when he was close to Davina's soul. He and his crew had moored in the Victoria Docks with the intention of stopping for a short visit to catch up with Peter on business, then stocking up and turning around...away from Davina's spirit luring him. He had started following the call, for his own selfish purposes, but realized being in her life would bring her more pain. She was better off without him. However, now that he was here, now that he knew she was in trouble, he couldn't turn away. He clenched his jaw when he recalled the way he'd found her—tied to a drain pipe, beaten and... Gods, had she been raped? He had to find her. According to the dream, she was in hospital. But where?

"The proverbial needle in a haystack," he grumbled.

London was huge and overcrowded. The emotions and thoughts of the townspeople would be overwhelming to his immortal senses. He eyed the Lunar Eclipse ring—at least that would prevent him from being bombarded by their thoughts. While the sun ring gave him the ability to walk around during the day, the moon ring gave him immunity to silver and blocked the thoughts of mortal humans. Day or night, he had the luxury of taking off the Lunar ring to hear thoughts when he needed to. Of course he always had the ability to feed for even more information, as any Vamsyrian feeding from a mortal learned their whole life's experience up until that feeding.

Broderick dressed in his merchant attire, subtle enough for him to blend in and search where he may. He fastened his watch to his vest and slipped the timepiece into the small outer pocket.

For now, Broderick would stay on his ship, calling on Peter and Cordelia Lund after he'd located Davina and rescued her from whatever trouble she was in. Since Peter and Cordelia were doing such a great job at running the office, he felt comfortable enough to leave the running of the London offices for MacDougal Shipping Co. to them, while he occupied himself with opening up new offices around the world. Such offices gave him a hold at other ports, closer to where he obtained some of the riches his upper-class clientele sought—paintings and furniture from Italy and France, silks and exotic artwork from India and China and whatever else fancied his clients. As such, there was no reason for him to stay in London.

The Lunds would most likely see his ship and know he was in town. His immediate goal, however, was to search the hospitals around London and try and locate Davina, to pay for any medical bills she may have. Then he would get her settled with enough money to live a normal, peaceful life. She would need for nothing and he would spare her the dangers of being his wife...and suffer this lifetime without her.

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