



*Immortal
Obsession*

A NOVEL

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Part One
New York - Present Day
Chapter One

The vampire closed his eyes and bit into the fleshy neck of the waif. He waited for the rush as the red plasma trickled down his throat, engorging him and bringing him to life. He heard the young man moaning in ecstasy, his voice echoing through him, drowning out the loud club music surrounding them both. Blood flowed through his body like fire as Lucien instinctively wrapped the trembling stray tighter in his strong arms. The boy's muscles tightened, his heart beating faster. He was afraid. Lucien felt stronger as the urchin's blood coursed through his veins, inflating him, making him dizzy with power.

Strangely, he felt mortal again; his sight became even clearer and the surrounding sounds intensified, almost to the point of pain. The youth's heartbeat pounded in his ears like native drums, and between his legs an erection bulged as blood filled every inch of his body. For a moment Lucien thought he might die. Not like his mortal death, but in bliss like a star, blazing so bright he would explode, shattering the dark universe with fragments of energy and light.

The blood gave him incredible sustenance and power. It pulled at his own thoughts seductively and slowly, like a vampire tugging at his victim's life force. It felt as if the blood had a life of its own, a vampiric power. Lucien concentrated harder as images from the young man's life ran through his own body: a tiny house, his bedroom, school, friends, putting a needle in his veins. The images moved like a film in fast forward. The face of a dark-haired woman with emerald eyes surfaced. Once a child, now a seductively beautiful woman. Was she a lover? No.

A sister, perhaps? She reminded him of someone he had known in Paris, but who? Reluctantly, Lucien released himself from the youthful flesh of his prey, still holding him close. The boy stared up at him with glazed eyes.

So the rumors had been true.

"Why'd you stop?" The boy rubbed his neck, feeling the two raised bumps.

"Too much of a good thing." Lucien smiled and licked his pouty lips. He brushed the mortal's warm cheek. Yes, if he were not careful, he would drain the boy. Instead, he studied him carefully, now that he had satisfied his lust for blood. He brushed a strand of dirty dark hair from the boy's sunken face. He was beautiful underneath his drug-induced haze.

"I'll do whatever you want as long as you pay me."

Lucien reached into the pocket of his leather coat for the wad of cash and felt nothing.

“Later I can get you all the money you could want, young man.”

“It’s Ryan,” he quipped, his eyes glazed over from the blood loss. “I’m always available.”

“Very well, Ryan. Who is the woman with the emerald eyes?”

“My sister Amanda.” He chuckled nervously, knowing a vampire could gather information from a mortal’s blood.

“She’s beautiful.”

“Yeah, and real smart. She got it all, beauty and brains.”

Lucien had seen the facade of a large building with columns and banners waving in the breeze. He had seen a fountain with a beautiful angel on top, while running water and sunlight cascaded under her feet. The dark haired woman sat at a desk in a tiny office, surrounded by books and coffee cups, staring at a computer screen.

“She works in a museum.” Ryan volunteered. “She loves antiques and anything French.”

“Good taste.” Lucien smiled as he caught a glimpse of Michel moving through the crowd coming toward them.

“Later, Ryan,” he whispered in a dismissive tone.

Ryan nodded and ducked into the shadows. Lucien guessed this was the usual crowd of mostly young women, overly made up, dressed all in black, pretending to be one of the undead. Only in America, he thought, feeling suddenly homesick for the City of Lights. This was his first weekend in the New World, and already he missed Paris.

He watched Michel move through the crowd. Despite the passing centuries, Lucien had never forgotten Michel’s grace and beauty, now adorned in haute couture such as Armani and Versace. Well over six feet tall, with catlike dark eyes, shoulder-length black hair, and high cheekbones, Michel was still one of the most beautiful men he had ever seen. He had been the talk of Paris centuries ago, and judging by the way women stared at him, Lucien assumed nothing had changed for the ethereal vampire. His beauty was arresting, his attraction to both sexes universal. He moved like a tiger through jungle palms, silent and deadly. Lucien felt his heart racing as Michel approached him.

“I thought it was just talk, but no.” Michel gave Lucien the once-over. He had never trusted the younger vampire. “What brings you to our little corner of the world?”

“Quelling rumors.” Lucien smiled carefully. There was no use lying.

“And how are our Parisian friends, Lucien?” Michel leaned up against the bar, scanning the crowd for Christian. Lucien’s presence was an omen. “What

are their panties in a bunch about now?” He grabbed a plastic drink straw from the bar and began to chew on it.

Lucien shrugged. He had come to New York to gather information. He had not asked for permission, nor would it have been granted to him. He was depending on the reputed good manners of the New York vampires, especially Christian Du Mauré, Michel’s best friend. In fact, he was praying for it.

“I mean no harm, Michel.” Lucien put his hands up in a gesture of humbleness. “It has been too long since we have seen each other.” He noticed that Michel had only a trace of the French accent that Lucien remembered mixed with what must be a New York twang. He had heard that Christian and Michel had been here since the early 1900s.

“1790 to be exact.” Michel spoke, twirling the straw. “If I remember correctly, you sided with Gaétan and Gabrielle against us, but then, that was over two hundred years ago. My memory may be failing.” He watched Lucien carefully, guessing that he wanted no trouble, at least not in public.

“Things change, Michel. That is one of the advantages to being immortal. Your perspective on history alters at some point, don’t you think?”

“Vampires tend to hold grudges. You should know that, Lucien.”

Lucien shrugged, leaning against the bar.

“Well, my eyes deceive me.” A deep, soothing voice pierced the darkness.

Lucien turned and found himself face-to-face with the flowing blond hair and dark eyes that could only belong to one immortal: Christian Du Mauré. Dressed in satin trousers and a lace shirt, he could almost pass for the eighteenth-century dandy Lucien remembered so well. He wore a long black leather overcoat and his once shoulder-length hair now fell down his back.

“Hello, Christian.”

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