

### Chapter Three

Melanie Sands, Mick's twenty-eight year old vampish ex-girlfriend, groaned when rudely awakened from a deep sleep.

"This better be important!" she slurred, the sheet slipping from her naked body as she moved closer to the phone.

"Sorry, Mel," Mick said, with genuine remorse, "did I interrupt your morning romp?"

"What do you want, Mick?"

"I need to talk to you."

"It's seven-thirty ... you know I like to sleep late on Saturdays."

"It's important, Mel and you're the only one who'd understand."

"Who is that?" her bedmate asked, with an angry tone.

"A friend," she whispered, with her hand covering the mouthpiece.

"Mel, still there?" Mick asked, pleadingly.

"OK, Mick," she said, while thinking, you always seem to know which buttons to push, "what did you have in mind?"

"Breakfast."

"Where and what time?"

"The diner, in one hour."

\*\*\*

Mick was already seated in a booth when the five foot nine inch Melanie entered, newspaper in hand. She hastily approached, her red ponytail swinging as she walked and dropped the paper on the table while sliding into the booth.

"Is this why you're all upset?" she asked, pointing at the front page headline.

"I just spent the past thirty minutes trying to explain to a detective that I didn't know anything," he said, while staring at the New York Post headline that said, *Prominent Publishing Industry Mogul found Murdered*.

"But it happened in your building?"

"Yeah, not far from my door, so what? Dead bodies are always turnin' up in that drugged out old dump."

"You mean you actually saw it?" she asked, excitedly, while shaking her head from side to side, her ponytail threatening to strike the side of her face.

"C'mon, Mel, that's not why we're here. OK, if you must know, I saw the body ... looked like any other dead man only better dressed than most."

"Had you seen him in the building before?"

"Can't say, he was lying face down but gimme a fuckin' break, I didn't come here for your law school third degree."

"You've changed, Mick, you would never have treated death so nonchalantly in the past."

"Yeah, guess I have."

"Alright, then what was so important that you had to drag me out of bed at this hour?"

"I had one of those terrifying dreams."

"When?"

"Last night."

"Which one was it?"

"The one where I'm running from some disgusting, too horrible to look at creature ..."

"Oh yeah," she interrupted, "that's the one with the foul smelling, long clawed animal that jumps on your back."

"Yeah, that's the one but now, I think it's tryin' to stop me from gettin' away."