



WHO YOU ARE

STORIES OF THE GRAND HOTEL

SOMETIMES FATE TAKES OVER AND WORLDS
COLLIDE, AT THE MOST INOPPORTUNE TIME AND
FROM THE MOST UNEXPECTED OF PLACES

JOIE CUENTISTA

WHO YOU ARE

Stories of The Grand Hotel

By

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It's 3am in the morning at The Grand Hotel in 1943. The ballroom is packed with the most elegant guest for the party of the year, the staff is checking in some of the most famous and richest people of the era. Chefs from Paris to cook anything imaginable and someone to cater to your every whim at any hour of the day or night. Overall if you can afford the Grand life is good. But for the beautiful rich vampire Luke Aris as he lets himself get suckered into dancing with his yet another nameless, faceless shallow rich girl he realizes life's not all peaches and cream anymore.

On the other side of the tracks tired to the bone it's finally time for Cloris to go home after a twelve hour day. Normally she quietly accepts her lot in life but for some reason not today. So when her evil manager comes over to harass her she doesn't take it lying down this time. Read how Luke and Cloris's worlds collide in the most interesting of ways in this story of how love can happen at the most inopportune time and come from the most unexpected of places.

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Locales are purely coincidental. The characters are product ions of the author's imagination and
used

Fictitiously.

Chapter One

Luke hurried through the various stations in his rush to hear the beginning of his favorite radio show. Quickly he turned the dials on the hotel's Philco 39-55 floor model radio looking for his favorite broadcast wishing he had his Atwater but god forbid he be out of fashion... out with the 30's and in with the 40's. And here he was fiddling with this dumb thing looking for his favorite show, cause if he was going to be made to dance well then by golly it was going to be to Bing. *"Ladies and Gentlemen Live from Hollywood, California Bing Crosby Entertainment it's the Bing and Andy Show"* Bing Crosby's velvety bass rang through the radio speakers giving Luke his first smile of the night.

"Oh darling I do hope you don't think me terribly forward. It's just that...well I feel as if I've known you forever" the rich dame better known as Luke's soon to be meal drawled in what she thought was a sexy voice as they moved to the softly playing music and Crosby's voice which like always was liquid velvet to the ears in the prestigious royal suite at the Grand Hotel in Highmount, NY. Her hands slowly began to trail up his chest one stopping at the lapel of his crisp white dinner jacket the other snaking around to the nape of his neck to tangle her fingers in the soft curls found there he quickly had to suppress the instinct to pull away from her. "In such a short time you've come to mean so much to me darling. Please tell me I'm not alone" she begged him pouting her lips prettily.

Luke looked down at the irritating woman in his arms barely cutting off his growl of frustration. When he'd first met Faye two weeks ago she had to be one of the most beautiful and vibrant human women he'd ever encountered... traits that attracted an older vampire like himself loved in their prey. But then the poor girl started opening her mouth and he'd regretted his choice ever since. More importantly he was getting tired of this whole routine he seemed to continuously go through for so long he'd lost count. He was so tired of it all. The meaningless encounters, the deceptions both his and theirs, going home alone, etc... so tired he contemplated untangling from Faye and leaving. Leaving the Grand, leaving New York just leaving... well almost but as his hand slid down her back settling in at the deep arch in her lower back he nearly started purring from the combinations of the beautiful gold beaded satin gown and the stiff boning from the corset she wore underneath and the steady ache in his gums where his fangs itched to descend was his only reason for staying, he desperately needing to feed he just wished he could figure out why he suddenly felt so repulsed at the thought of doing it.

She was a beautiful woman all porcelain creamy skin and lush curves, the rouge on her lips made them look as if they were filled to capacity with delectable blood it was all he could do not to bite her... but he would soon, he'd been priming her for this moment. Pulling her closer he brought his cheek down to rest against her "oh Faye you should already know how I feel about you. But I'll tell you anyway my dear... I plan to be the last man you ever lay eyes on" he gave her the cryptic confession tucking his face into the crook of her neck when her excitement grew her aristocratic blood thrumming and flooding his sensing making his fangs descend along with another wave of nausea.

Shivering with excitement and unknowing that the smell of her desire was a clear presence in the air “Luke” she breathed his name out like a talisman. “I had no idea you were such a poet, such a romantic. Oh Luke you are the only man I have eyes for I am truly yours my darling”. Sighing she snuggled in closer as Bing and the accompanying Orchestra went into another song her body heat beginning to seep into his cold vampire one “When shall we marry darling” she asked looking up at him like a conspiratorial love sick puppy. Her voice suddenly changing taking on a calculating gleam oddly she sounded more herself then before “I think we should get married right away. It just so happens, mother’s friend George is checking into the hotel, in the morning and he’s a judge so he can marry us then. Of course we’ll have the big society wedding...” Barely controlling the urge to slit her throat he cut off her incessant babbling rather curtly “okay this has gone a bit too far my dear I’m afraid” Luke announced pulling away briefly wondering at the dizzying sense of relief he felt once out of her arms he walked to the other side of the terrace suddenly not able to take another minute of this annoyingly spoiled, pompous, creature called a woman. God he was so tired of replaying this very same scenario over and over... something needed to change.

Looking baffled “WH...what?” she stuttered moving forward to reach for him again. “Luke what’s wrong darling you’re not yourself”?

Smirking at her naïve yet on the mark words he began to laugh as he crossed back over to the other side of the terrace quicker than her human eyes could follow stopping within inches of her. Bending down his face so close to hers her face blurred the scent of her sudden raw fear calling to that predator that lived just below the beautiful veneer of each vampire “oh on the contrary my dear. I think we’re about to finally get to know each other” he said darkly his eyes turning from

their normal hunter green to a glowing burgundy red as he allowed the blood hunger to overtake him shutting off all thought.

Shivering in fear Faye was frozen unable to move, or scream as she watched his previously beautiful face turn into that of a demon. “How, ho...ho...how did...what are you?” she began babbling as he silently circled around her while she tried to make her terrified mind frantically process what was happening.

“I’m the last man you’ll ever lay eyes on” Luke told her laughing bitterly at the dawning horror that appeared on her face as he opened his mouth letting her see his two inch gleaming deadly fangs. Sighing inwardly he really wasn’t into this at all as he realized even the blood hunger wasn’t enough to cover up the ever increasing sick feeling at the thought of feeding from this woman. Ignoring her ear piercing screams and his desire to recoil from her as if she was the Vampire he fisted his hands in her hair viciously twisting her neck to the side so hard it almost snapped. Growling he bent down to her neck and without any finesse at all ripping into her throat ignoring her feeble attempts to push him off...he took no satisfaction in the feeding, her blood barely providing substance as he took long greedy pulls. The only sounds in the room where her pained moans as her life slowly slipped away accompanied by the sounds of his slurps and snarls and good ole Bing singing ‘Something’s Gotta Give’ how ironic was that. Cutting off his internal dialogue Luke’s arms tightened around his victim feeling her hands weakly pushing at his chest one last time as if she had a chance against his strength.

Taking a few more pulls he gasped as he pulled off the woman’s ravaged throat just as her final heart beats thumped weakly letting her drop carelessly. The last remains of her blood pumped from the grotesque wound and flew around painting red; the outside walls, the draperies, sofa,

and walls in the suite where the glass doors had been left open. Pulling out his pocket square he calmly wiped the blood from his mouth and chin then with a wave of his hand removed all traces of Faye's blood everywhere else on him. Turning his back on the body he walked to the rot iron railing ignoring the gasping sounds as the woman took her last breath refusing to examine why this night of all nights bothered him so as he fought to keep down what he'd just drank.

Retracting his fangs and taking a moment to focus on reconstructing that box around that predator inside of him his body slowly began to calm returning to normal. His face returning to his true form, he could feel his eyes shifting from the eerie burgundy back to the hunter green... taking a few more deep breaths he turned back making his way to the terrace door giving the body a wide berth. It was odd he wasn't upset about the woman at all but he felt as if he'd betrayed something or someone...his entire being seemed to be rebelling at the new blood in his system it was wrong. Shaking his head he didn't have time for this. Pausing with each hand on the glass doors "well I must say it was a pleasure dear you were absolutely delicious" he said sarcastically stepping through and closing the glass doors after him.

Walking purposefully through the opulent room Luke grabbed his coat and draped it over his shoulders before walking out the door. He could still hear that damn song trailing behind him:

Something got to give

Something got to give

Something got to give

as he paused to lock the suite door with a wave of his hand before continuing on his way. Pausing halfway down the hallway he debated going back into the suite and leaving the hotel through the terrace but something wouldn't let him. A nagging feeling that just wouldn't go away

only dissipating the further he walked down the hallway Luke readily convincing himself it was sluggishness from his feeding even though he knew that wasn't it he decided to be lazy and take the elevator at the end of the hall the feeling going completely away once he was in front of the elevator blasting away his denial that he had a choice in the matter.

Pushing the button he waited standing unnervingly still while he stewed. As he began to hear the faint sounds of the elevator getting louder as it reached his floor sluggishly Luke snapped out of it and smoothed his dinner jacket just as the elevator lit the doors quickly opening.

Ringling softly the doors opened as the elevator boy stepped forward immediately "good evening Sir what floor?" he asked a friendly smile on his face.

Not bothering to answer Luke firmly took control of the boys mind sending a strong command, "Leave" his deep voice rumbled with power vibrating the air around them he had no desire to be around anyone right now. His body shuddered at the thought. Turning he watched as the elevator boy past him his movements unnaturally mechanical as he made his journey the few feet to the opposite wall and remained not moving. Chuckling Luke entered the elevator the boy now forgotten knowing the effects of his mind control would were off in a few hours and he'd have no memory of him or lasting effects.

"Mmm" he mused studying the unmarked buttons for a second before picking one at random and was proud when the doors actually closed. Randomly he picked another moving to the back of the elevator as it began its slow decent down. Just as Luke's mind began to wander on downturn on his life he froze looking around suspiciously he could have sworn the elevator just jerked. he walked back to the front of the elevator watching the buttons avidly for a few more minutes before letting it go after clearly nothing had happened.

Just as he turned to go to the back again the elevator began to plummet down the floors, the arrows that indicated each floor moved at an alarming rate. If he were human he would have been terrified but since he wasn't he calmly braced himself in the corner watching the floors breeze by merely curious to see what would happen as the elevator shook and rattled as it continued to drop picking up speed along the way. Okay maybe he was nervous but at least he knew this wasn't going to kill him...so much for whatever instinct told him to get in this damn thing.

Chapter Two

Sighing Cloris wearily steered her cleaning cart to the supply closet grateful that the end of her twelve hour work day was finally within sight. Wheeling her cart into the closet she locked it up and placed the keys on the nail above the doorframe and began heading to the Colored maids' quarters. Sighing again this time it was one of hopelessness and anger when she caught sight of Miss Elody the Maid's Manger walking rapidly towards her. Hoping against hope that there was a small possibility that Elody hadn't seen her yet she tried to make herself as small as possible pushing herself up against the other side of a column on the far wall praying she would walk right past and pretend she didn't exist like the other Whites did...of course she wasn't so lucky. Her clacking shows stopping abruptly as she stopped and looked around rolling her eyes when she spotted Cloris much to her chagrin. "Oh Cloris there you are" Elody greeted spitting out her name like it was poop beneath her shoe.

"Hello Miss Elody what can I do for you?" she asked thinking to herself that if she had to call one more person that was either the same age or younger than her 'miss' she would scream. Giving her an up and down look "when you punch out your time card I need you to also punch out Mr. Walters" she ordered raising one perfectly arched brow a silent gesture daring her to say anything further.

Of course she did Cloris had never been good and being a 'good little girl' and keeping her mouth shut. "Mr. Walters?" she had to ask like the ditz that she is "Saturdays are Mr. Walters's days off ma'am. You know he's not here today" she didn't like being made to do their dirty work. Voice dropping and her formally pleasant face twisting and morphing into something ugly and vicious "did I ask your opinion?" she asked moving forward into her personal space and grabbing her arm digging into the skin painfully "answer me".

Knowing better than to move back or try to extract her arm from the painful grip Cloris met Elody's gaze head on refusing to be demeaned any further by looking down at the ground. "No Miss Elody you did not" she responded in clipped tones.

Digging her nails in even further she smiled when Cloris finally whimpered only letting go when she saw tears swimming in her eyes. "So then get" she ordered meanly not moving knowing it would force Cloris to have to step carefully around her.

Grinding her teeth Cloris recited the lord's prayer in her mind her beacon of light during times like this as she brushed past the witch and continued on her way. Stopping at the Colored maid's quarters she was grateful no one was there as the first angry tear fell from her burning eyes.

Heading straight for her cubby she quickly changed her shoes and placed the hotel issued ones into her cubby for the next day. Grabbing her scarf she wrapped it around her neck then smiling carefully extracted her new red coat from her hook along with her purse and headed over to the secondhand vanity while taking out her red lipstick and brush. Sitting down to mirror she quickly brushed out her curly hair and put on her lipstick taking a second to wipe her face with her handkerchief. Jumping back up she went again to the small cubby to grab her rose locker hat not

needing a mirror as she expertly placed it on her head adjusting the wired headband adjuster slightly to suit her hair and she was out the door with her head held high.

Making her way to the time punch machine she waited patiently getting in at the end of the line stewing over the confrontation with Elody as she waited for the line to move. Noticing the sudden quiet she realized the line had cleared and everyone was gone while she'd been stewing. Tucking her purse in her arm she stepped up to the time machine and grabbed her card promptly punching it smiling at the loud clicking sound the machine made. After checking to make sure her card was right she set it back in its proper spot... twiddling her fingers her eyes moving up and down as she looked for Mr. Walters's card. Pulling the out she held it for long minutes thinking about Miss Elody her arm stinging still with pain.

Making up her mind she looked left and right to be sure the hallway was still empty with trembling hands she placed Mr. Walters's time card back into his slot un-punched and walked away heading down the hall to the elevator.

Pushing the up button she jumped back making a startled sound when she immediately heard an offensively loud noise she couldn't begin to describe followed by a sudden bang so loud and strong it threw her off balance. She looked back and forth between the hallway astonished that people weren't running from every direction to see what was going on 'how could I be the only one that heard that?' she mumbled wondering if she should run for help. Her mind reeling she wondered if she was losing it finally or maybe no one else was around all these thoughts were furiously running through her head as the loud rumbling started again. As she furiously tried to come up with something suddenly the doors opened.

Chapter Three

Luke stood braced in the corner of the elevator shaking like a leaf his knees bent for fear they couldn't hold his weight and his hands gripping the railing with a white-knuckle grip to keep from being thrashed around. Though somewhere in the back of his mind he knew that he was a vampire and he had nothing to fear he wouldn't die...for the first time in hundreds of years he'd forgotten completely what he was and was convinced he was going to meet his maker. His palms were sweating he had red beads of sweat on his brow and upper lip and not to mention his stomach decided to pack its bags and take up residence in his throat.

Suddenly the possessed elevator from hell finished its mad decent stopping with bone jarring force clearly reaching the bottom floor. Wide-eyed Luke's eyes darted back and forth between the numbers and the doors and the buttons as he gathered his wits caught his breath and restored his dignity.

Deciding he couldn't live through another Grand Hotel elevator ride he willed the doors open after straightening himself up and started to walk up fully intending to take this up with management. Anything that put the fear of god in him deserved to be reprimanded then burned at

the stake. Stopping cold in between the doors he barely remembered to keep them open with his will...it wouldn't do to embarrass himself in front of such an exquisite creature.

And exquisite she was tall for a woman at five foot nine inches her skin was the beautiful color of an Italian latte and was so silky smooth you ached to touch it. She had an oval shaped face and while most women he'd noticed possessed features that were delicate or graceful giving them all the same conventional beauty that made one indistinguishable from the other, her strong, striking features blessed her with an exotic and unconventional beauty that was all her own. Her large almond shaped eyes took up a good part of her face and were a beautiful and odd mixture of coffee and muddy brown framed with perfectly curled lashes. Her large pointed nose had the most charming bump on the bridge giving away the Native American ancestor in her family tree. Her lips were worth writing poetry about they were full, wide and pouty with a deep cupid's bow to accent them. The red lipstick she wore made them look absolutely delectable and he wanted nothing more than to take her in his arms and nibble and bite on them until she begged him for mercy. He even found himself fascinated by the mole on her left cheek and the sparse sprinkling of freckles under her eyes he counted four under the right and three under the left. They made him want to explore her see what else he could find. He could see just a peak of her neck where her scarf fell open and he found it irresistible. The two birthmarks under the right side of her chin by her fluttering pulse one light brown the other dark both looked like splotches of paint...he'd never in his life found a birthmark enticing. Looking down he could see even through her coat that she was a curvy woman. Not by any means a large woman but way too shapely to be considered slim she was a walking Venus de Milo and his hands itched to wrap around her slim waist and explore her beautifully rounded hips the things he could do to that body. His fangs

itched to descend blood hunger with a different edge hit him as if he hadn't fed just a half hour ago as well as his claws his desire to have to possess her was so strong it was instinctual...he'd never reacted this way to anyone. And he was shocked to realize that unlike earlier he wasn't sickened or recoiling from her in anyway his semi erect cock was proof of that.

Wrangling control of his baser instincts "bonjour mademoiselle" he greeted her with an exaggerated bow the desire to impress her strong. Stepping to the side the fiasco with the elevator completely forgotten "going up?" he asked praying she would say yes. Praying she wouldn't hear the eagerness in his voice.

Cloris stood there gaping like a fish at the beautiful mysterious man standing in front of her battling with herself over whether she was afraid of him because he was White or because he was so devastating she almost wanted to damn the consequences. Suddenly realizing he'd been speaking she gave him her full attention not wanting to appear stupid and have him stop looking at her like that. "Hello" she greeted back secretly charmed by his bow. Looking down at her feet feeling fearful as the confrontation with Elody flashed back into her mind she stepped back a little too fast blushing at his confused expression. Stepping another step further away from him slower this time she shook her head no to his second question trying to ignore the sudden sadness that enveloped her, "no I'll take the stairs thank you" she stated turning away.

Jumping forward to catch her "please!" Luke reached out and lightly touched her arm to stop her not liking the scent of fear that promptly emitted from her and wanting to do everything in his power to fix whatever caused it. Stepping back so as not to frighten her he stood completely still

waiting with baited breath for her to turn around. He had this unbelievable sense that he needed to stop her cause if she left he would never see her again...he'd never cared about that before but looking at her back he knew he couldn't let her leave.

His fingers itching to cup her shoulders he breathed a sigh of relief when she turned finally to face him. Fascinated by the emotions written on her face he could do nothing but stare into her beautiful eyes completely robbed of speech something about this woman completely drew him in. Swallowing the lump in his throat he took in her scent as he breathed deeply then took another breath completely intoxicated by her scent it was heady, feminine and something else that gave him pause.

Shocked he quickly covered it up and took in her scent again tasting it on his palate just to be sure that he was correct "You don't have to do that. Share the elevator with me, please?" he asked her nervously suddenly feeling raw. He was a man that prided himself on his confidence and taking whatever he wanted and fifteen minutes with his mate and she had already turned him inside out and she didn't even know it yet. But did he do the same for her? Even though their obvious differences didn't matter to one such as him he couldn't fail to wonder if they would to her.

Chewing her lip Cloris searched her stranger's eyes, she felt this strong pull to him she didn't understand, the air of danger around him was apparent but when she looked in his eyes...silently she walked past him and into the elevator. She couldn't put into words exactly what she was feeling but she felt as if they'd known each other before, like...feeling silly she stood in the furthest corner away from him and made herself as small as possible.

Following behind her into the elevator Luke pressed the button he remembered from before all the while his whole being was completely focused on the exotic creature beside him. Not liking that she was clearly so uncomfortable her body language doing such a great job of broadcasting her feelings at the moment he had no need to enter her mind “I’m Luke, Luke Aris can I have the pleasure of knowing your name?” he purred out trying to put her at ease and desperately needing to find out everything he could about her.

Looking up Cloris made the mistake of meeting his eyes and became instantly lost repeating his name on a little breathy gasp, with a feeling of great loss she broke the spell looking up at the ceiling her face hot as it blushed furiously. “My name is Cloris” looking at him once more but not quite meeting his eyes she answered shyly but also reluctant to give him even that much of herself afraid of what it would cost her.

She watched his long beautiful hands as he lifted an elegant finger and pushed a button making the doors close with a clang of finality that startled her... her fingers twisted together itching with the sudden urge to run back through the doors before it was too late somewhere deep down she instinctually sensed the danger that this man presented to her. He seemed to fill up every available ounce of space he was even leaking into her, it was stifling and titillating all at once her body began to thrum with the first bloom of arousal.

Flashing Cloris a dazzling smile his heart literally stopped as her scent seemed to smack him in the face “you...” voice cracking he cleared his throat “you’re going to the lobby I assume” he stated pushing the correct button when she said yes. He could sense that she was untouched and every primal instinct he possessed was scratching and clawing to get to the surface something about the fact that she wanted and would only know him settled something deep within him.

They were both quiet as the elevator began to move neither paying attention that it was running too loud. Both being too busy passing sly glances at the other When one would sense the other's gaze they would turn to look only to see the others head turning back to face front. Then suddenly the lights flickered off and on so rapidly it distorted the vision followed by the elevator suddenly rocking back and forth so violently it knocked both Luke and Cloris off balance and into each other's arms.

Chapter Four

Luke tightened his arms around the his curvy mate relishing this first contact with her as he soothingly rubbed her back while she clutched the lapels of his coat with an iron grip and whimpered. “Sshh it’s okay my darling” he told her with more confidence then he felt as the elevator continued to go crazy. He was at a complete loss on what to do, but as suddenly as it all started, it stopped.

The lights stopped flickering plunging them into total darkness and the elevator went completely still shutting down completely in between floors as the emergency lighting flickered on though it was still extremely dark. Looking down at Cloris he could see with his supernatural vision that she was terrified and every protective instinct he had come blazing to life. Cupping her face he heard her release a shaky exhale as well as the slight increase of her heart and when her lips parted just slightly he knew he was going for sainthood in this moment for not leaning down and taking that luscious mouth.

Licking her suddenly dry lips “what happened? Where stuck aren’t we?” Cloris asked him her voice shaking as she looked up at him through her lashes. A few more of the emergency lights came on illuminating the elevator in soft almost romantic lighting allowing her to finally see. She became aware that she was still wrapped in his arms and of how her soft body felt against his hard one. Every line, and every curve she possessed molded perfectly to him, his hand still

cupping her face felt scalding hot and the arm he had wrapped around her waist tightened when he felt her pull away sending tingles to places that had never experienced any before.

“Yes my darling I think it’s safe to say we’re stuck” he answered stroking her soft cheek she could hear the laughter he was holding back in his voice. “I wish I could say that it’s a bad thing” he said smiling down at her those amazing eyes once more burning into hers.

Blushing yet again “that’s pretty Luke” she laughed her soft husky voice ringing through the small space. Moving away from him completely aware that he let her, she walked to the other side of the elevator trying not to think of why she suddenly felt so cold, so alone. “Do you think they’ll come for us soon?” she asked him abruptly feeling as though if she didn’t get away from him now she never would. Why did she feel such sadness at that thought?

Sensing the change in her Luke unashamedly entered her mind and lightly riffled through her thoughts not liking what he found but not sure what to do, his current situation he didn’t have many options. At the same time with his superior hearing he could hear workers coming to check on the elevator and an idea popped in his mind.

Not caring how much energy it cost him he entered the minds of the six workers he sensed above them, planting the suggestions that nothing was wrong and it was a false alarm. Blinking back the slight drain that had on him knowing he would need to feed soon he grunted with satisfaction when he immediately heard them turn and leave talking loudly between themselves about prank calls. Smiling he knew he would be able to start the elevator again himself but in the meanwhile sometime alone stuck in the elevator together may give him the time need to tie his mate to him. “Don’t worry Cloris I’m sure they’ll come along soon. In the meantime how about we talk?” he asked holding his breath for her answer this whole plan would only work with her cooperation.

Surprising himself with the realization that he wouldn't keep her here if she became adamant about leaving, as much as it would kill him. Sometimes the other mate didn't feel the pull it wasn't unheard of.

"Okay but let's sit".

"Sure" he agreed taking off his coat and draping it on the floor for her to sit on before helping her out of her own coat and to the ground. Taking off his dinner jacket he folded it in half and lying on the railing on the wall before sitting across from her on the opposite wall sensing that she needed space. Watching her as she fiddled with her dress making sure she was covered he smiled indulgently, she was so graceful and unaware. Noting that she wore an apron "why do you have an apron on?" he asked out of curiosity and no more.

The scent of her shame as is suddenly hit the air was bitter and sharp as she mumbled incoherently she was clearly uncomfortable and he didn't like it. Crawling across the short to distance to sit beside her making sure their legs touched he took her hand quickly finding himself utterly fascinated with it as he fiddled with her fingers. Pleased she hadn't pulled away with his other hand he began to undo his bowtie "don't you hate these things? Rather ridiculous if you ask me I feel like a penguin with that white jacket and this black bowtie" he joked wanting to make her laugh.

Throwing her head back she laughed a revealing single dimple in her left cheek and the most charming gap in her teeth. "I've never heard anyone say that before you're funny" she continued to chuckle lightly. Sighing her laughter abruptly ended making him sad to see her beautiful smile go "I'm wearing the apron because I'm one of the maids here at the Grand Hotel" she confessed sure that he would back away from her and back across the elevator as she twisted the trimming

of her apron in nervousness yet lifting her head up high she wouldn't show him any emotion if this went bad. Never let them know there're getting to you.

Luke was shocked speechless but also proud at how tough she was, his little mate was full of surprises he would have never thought that was her profession, but above all he was shocked that she would think he'd care about something of so little consequence. He knew more than anyone that a person was most often more than they seemed it was usually the other parties fault and problem for underestimating them.

Looking at his exotic mate he was saddened that there was no one to give her the things that she deserved. Then he felt pure rage as image of what her life must be like popped in his head, he was not oblivious to the way Blacks were treated especially maids. Snapping out of it he could feel the anxiety coming off of her in waves and knew that his reaction to this revelation would be the defining moment for their future. Lifting their joined hands he kissed her knuckles "well I've never seen one more beautiful" he said with sincerity letting her see the truth of his words in her eyes. He ignored the niggling of hurt that she thought him her mate so shallow.

"That's all you have to say?" she asked so stunned her voice rose uncharacteristically. Mouth hanging open it couldn't be that simple either that or he didn't understand what she was...

Tapping her chin Luke laughed he couldn't help it, he could literally see her thoughts running through her head laughing again when she blushed and closed her mouth. "My darling I'm interested in who you are not what you are" he stated simply and softly leaning in closer with each word. Still holding her chin he tilted her head gently to the side as he brought his lips down softly on hers.

Luke felt like he'd finally come home as Cloris immediately melted into him her lips were soft and plush under his as he gently nudged them apart. Licking the seam of her mouth his hand slid around to cup the back of her head, groaning when her arms came up tentatively to wrap around his neck. "that's it my darling open for me" he commanded enticingly against her moist lips drawing out the moment he nibbled on the plump bottom lip not bothering to conceal his fangs as they lengthened just a bit...she would know about him soon anyway.

Releasing a breathy moan that went straight to Luke's groin Cloris's eyelids felt too heavy to keep open, as he coaxed her body into a slow steady burn she revealed in his attentions. The second his mouth touched hers she felt connected, right as if this man was made for her. This was who she'd been waiting for...the reason why she'd previously thought herself cold. Tilting her head further to the side she opened to him her hands moving down to dig into his shoulders needing to ground herself when his tongue thrust into her mouth.

Invading, tasting her as if he had all the time in the world. He explored every inch of her mouth making her shiver with desire as her body grew wet and panties dampened for the first time.

Pulling her in tighter he groaned at the feel of her soft breast crushed against his chest wanting desperately to remove the layers but knowing she wasn't ready. His hand reached up and snatched the hat from her head so he could fill his hands with her soft curls shivering at the eroticism of the moment. Sucking her tongue into his mouth he coaxed her to explore him groaning when her tongue began a shy duel with his own feeding into both their excitement.

Luke made the quick decision to not conceal his fangs as they descended completely pulsating to the same rhythm as his almost painful erection wanting to hide nothing from his mate from the very beginning. Shuddering he fought for control when her little tongue ran along his fangs

wanting nothing more than to spread her out wide and plunge into her until they were both sated and unable to move. But her gasp of shock as she reluctantly pulled away was what allowed him to regain his composure.

“Your teeth?” she gasped trembling as she reached up to his mouth quickly pulling back once she realized what she was about to do. Blushing she backed away from him embarrassed that she would do something so low class in front of someone of his obvious wealth, it’s not like she hadn’t seen someone with dental problems but she somehow knew this was completely different. Having been in her mind the entire time Luke’s boisterous laugh startled Cloris out of her musing unable to keep it in any longer. Her scowls making him laugh even harder as he clutched his side to keep it from hurting. As the laughs subsided “please my darling don’t fret I’m not offended” he smiled fangs gleaming in the soft lighting.

Seeing his fangs clearly this time Cloris blurted out without thought “what are you?” closing her hand over her mouth as soon as the words were out of her mouth. Oddly she found she wasn’t alarmed.

Luke held absolutely still allowing Cloris to nudge his mouth open so she could look at the teeth in question which had now grown long enough to touch his bottom lip. He moaned his eyes drifting shut as her index finger did a slow stroke up and down the length of his fang petting it like a cat poking the pad of her finger when she reached the end. He sensed the tiny bead of blood before it welled up titillating his senses.

Trapping her hand when her face scrunched up and she would have pulled back he wrapped his lips around the dainty digit and sucked strongly the scent of her arousal rose strongly. Looking into her eyes and she moaned and shifted around not knowing what to do with her desire,

growling possessively as her taste burst onto his tongue, sweet with just a bit of spice...he could tell just by this small taste he would never be able to have enough of her and he'd kill anyone who thought to take her from him. Licking the prick mark closed he got up on his hands and knees and began to crawl over to her his lithe body moving like an predator stalking its prey. Unblinking he continued to crawl over her forcing her flat on her back. Shifting so his legs where on the outside on either side of hers he lowered his body down on hers giving her just enough of his weight while holding himself up with a hand on either side of her head effectively trapping her under him.

Lowering his face to hers he tilted his head at the last moment stopping just short of kissing her, ignoring her whimper the renewed scent of her arousal coupled with the sound of the increased blood flow to her heart was almost enough to make him loose control.

Forcing himself to concentrate "I'm yours my darling" he finally answered her question opening his mind up to her, telling her everything he didn't words for everything he knew he'd be too afraid to say out loud. About who he was, what he was, the good and the bad of him, things he suddenly wasn't proud of, he told her that she was his mate the one destiny made just for him. He told her how he was falling deeper in love with her with every second he spent in her presence. And then suddenly something miraculous happened as they lay there gazing at each other Cloris opened her mind to him as well.

Chapter Five

Looking into her beautiful vampire's eyes in wonderment Cloris gave him a dazzling smile her eyes swimming with tears as his presence began to slowly resend from her mind and she followed suit reluctantly pulling away from his. She had no words for what she'd just experienced as more tears whelled up as she reached to caress his face "I love you too" she whispered knowing most would say that was impossible but she knew that wasn't true. It just felt right, Luke felt right she knew they belonged to each other simple as that.

Luke looked down in awe wanting nothing more than to kiss her senseless but too afraid to ruin the moment. Then in a move that shocked the hell out of him Cloris roughly grabbed him by his long hair pulling him down to her in a heated kiss rendering them both breathless. The kiss quickly moved from heated to desperate as they both began to claw at each other's clothes unsuccessfully but uncaring their topmost need for an unobstructed connection with the other overriding all coordination for the moment.

"I can't wait another minute to make you mine" Luke whispered into her ear as he sucked the delicate lobe into his mouth letting his fang draw another bead of blood. Kissing his way down her neck slowly he undid her uniform button by button moving at a snail's pace revealing her to his hot gaze like a gift.

He grazed his knuckles lightly against every inch of beautiful brown skin he revealed fascinated by the stark contrast of his pale skin against her shoulders and chest. Reaching down he pulled her apron off "lift up a bit my darling" he mumbled helping her out of the dress completely.

Looking down at her laid out shivering with nervousness and arousal under him in just her bra,

corset and panties he was overcome with feelings of possessiveness his rock hard erection straining against his pants and digging into her soft thighs.

His eyes never leaving hers he reached behind her unsnapping the corset and tossing it to the side her bra quickly going next. Cupping her face tenderly in his hands when she started to shiver the scent of her nervousness now overpowering her arousal he blindly led her back to the floor while softly placing his lips on hers trying to convey all his feelings into the kiss willing her to believe. Pulling back when he felt her tears he slowly kissed and nibbled each one away her shivers and moans giving him a deep feeling of satisfaction that he'd never experienced before. Kissing his way down her neck to her delicate collarbone he nipped it following the sting behind with a soothing lick before he lifted up to take in his first look of his mate.

His mouth going immediately dry "I am stunned beyond words. You please me beyond measure my darling you're so exquisite" he voice was deep with arousal his words sounded like rumbles and growls but he knew she understood when her arousal grew even stronger. The thought entered his mind on how wet she must be and he almost lost all semblance of control but quickly wrangled it in but was still unable to stop himself from descending down on her like a man possessed.

"Luke!" Cloris gasped in shock her hands going to clutch his head to her breast as she arched unconsciously into his mouth. Moaning she pushed her sensitive breast deeper into the hot wet cavern of his mouth as he obligingly sucked it into the roof his other hand going up to the other one not wanting it to be abandoned his large hand engulfing almost her entire breast. She moaned even louder her mind trying unsuccessfully to process the double sensations when he took his

thumb and index finger and began to pluck and pinch and tugged on her rock hard nipple making it even more sensitive as she watched it turn from its normal brown to a flushed red.

Growling as his hunger for her reached a fever pitch he briefly moved to her other breast giving the beautifully brown nipple a stinging nip before moving down. Stopping to nibble and suck on the underside of her breast purposely leaving his mark behind he began to suck, kiss and bite his way down her body leaving love bites and marks of his possession along the way. Something in him, that primitive side he supposed feeling proud and satisfied even settling as seeing the marks of his possession on her beautiful body.

Dipping his tongue in her cute little belly button he stopped and chuckled when gasped and laughed at the same time like she wasn't sure which to do. Holding onto her wiggling hips to keep her still he did it a few more times both of them laughing enjoying having fun in the bed for the first time in his life with a woman.

Moving down he shifted spreading her legs and moving between them finally lying down on his stomach wanting nothing more than to rip her panties off and devour her she was so wet he could see it through the cute little lacy things. Sensing her nervousness again he dipped down to kiss spot where her hip and thigh meet looking up at her "what are you thinking my darling you seem nervous?" he asked his tongue tracing idle patterns.

Gulping hard Cloris shivered with arousal and fighting the need to close her legs understandably being embarrassed having a man staring at her panties which she was sure he could see how wet they were. "I, I..." her face flaming red she covered her face unable to look at him another moan escaping when he sucked up yet another mark this time on the spot on her hip he'd been kissing.

“take your time darling you don’t need to be embarrassed you can tell me anything you know”

Luke said patiently secretly charmed by this whole conversation.

Gathering her courage she took a few deep breaths before she was able to put her hands down her face however was still flaming red. “Well it’s just that I don’t think you should be down there like that. It doesn’t seem right” she admitted not that she knew anything about sex that thing just wasn’t talked about at home.

Biting off his laugh Luke was unable to stop his smile “Cloris do you trust me darling?” he asked her simply.

Startled by the question she answered without giving thought “yes” and she was surprised to realize that she’d meant it she did.

The smile he gave her made her heart melt and her body once more go up in flames “and I’m honored to have that trust. I trust you as well” he told her pleased when she smiled back. “We however have to make our own rules in life. I like to be adventurous even try new things and because of that I may push you but you have to trust me enough to know that I would never do anything that would hurt, humiliate, or that you expressly don’t want. Can you trust that?”

She thought about it for a moment from what she saw in Luke’s mind earlier they would be together for a long time. Things could get real old and tense if she wasn’t willing to try new things or compromise “yes that’s fair Luke” and it was she thought. She knew in her heart if she ever truly didn’t want something he would never make her feel bad about it.

He didn’t say anything else he simply went back down to her hip licking a line all the way down to her inner thigh. Watching her carefully he kissed and sucked at her plump thigh moving closer and closer to her pussy but making no move towards it. By the time he moved to the opposite

thigh her hips where arching up to meet his mouth her panties where now soaked her scent making him drunk with need.

Still looking up at Cloris through his lashes her eyes fluttered closed he made his move giving her plump labia a good suck through her panties following it behind with a blow of air which he knew was hot with his passion for him.

Screaming Cloris almost shot off the floor the feeling was so intense, but was held down with a strong hand on her stomach. She didn't even bat an eyelash when she felt her panties being ripped off another rush of moisture flooding her pussy at the caveman maneuver. Then she felt his hands on her again and almost lost it.

Gingerly Luke spread her swollen tender folds opening her up to his heated gaze the sweet scent of her arousal mixed with blood he could smell pumping through that extra special vein by her clit intoxicated his senses. Slowly moving forward he gave her a slow lick up the length of her pussy curling his tongue around her clit at the end. Moaning at her taste he wanted to savor her take it slow he'd never tasted anything like her, she was like ambrosia to the gods but he couldn't.

With a furious passion he attacked her pussy loving how responsive she was as her confusion steadily drained away and her body's needs took over. Lapping at her over and over again holding her open to his unrelentless attack as she withered and screamed under him her orgasm pushing closer and closer to the surface.

Growling when her legs broke free and she tried to clamp down on his head he simply pried them apart and resumed his attack with renewed force finally sucking the swollen bundle of nerves into his mouth and piercing it with his fangs at the same time tightening his grip as she

bucked and withered with the force of her release. Latching on with a strong suction he moaned as lights exploded behind his eyes at the combined taste of his mate's release and life essence. Taking on a couple of pulls he licked the wound closed her body languid and ready for him as she lay sprawled out and uncaring a satisfied smile on her face.

Chapter Six

Her swollen pink pussy was glistening and fluttering with the last traces of her earlier orgasm, sheen of sweat covered her beautiful brown skin giving it a youthful glow as her perfectly round breast jiggled enticingly as she tried to catch her breath. Her rouge painted lips which amazingly hadn't smudged one bit were swollen and wet from Luke's kisses and she had love bites all over her lush body.

As he removed his clothes standing naked before her for the first time his erection jumping and filling even more at her hot gaze he thought again how lucky he was to have such a beautiful mate both inside and out going back to her happily when she opened her arms to him.

Lightly he ran his hand along her slightly rounded stomach making a path up to her chest both of them watching his path mesmerized and aroused by the stark contrast of their skins. "You're stunning" he finally broke the comfortable silence but she barely heard him as her eyes followed the path of his hands as they made their way up her chest then her throat moving to caress the pulse there.

Cloris lay there looking up at him as he stroked away the last remaining tension in her body that she didn't even know she had. Tilting her head she reached up and pulled him down to her roughly, the kiss they shared had absolutely had no finesse their only goal was to devour.

She moaned clutching to his back like a lifeline as he slowed the kiss down taking back control and changing it to a slow seduction exploring every part of her mouth as if it was their first kiss all over again. Her back arched into him as his hips shifted and he began to tease them both

rubbing his thick heavy erection through her wetness the thick bulbous head rubbing over her clit enflaming it once more drawing another heated groan from them both.

“Wrap your legs around my waist my darling” Luke’s voice was gruff and even deeper as he issued the command making her produce another gush of honey that he felt when his cock slid through her folds one last time coating himself in her juices.

Gently he shifted his hips lining up at just the right angle and slowly began to enter her inch by excruciating inch using an attack and retreat motion. Bending to suck and nibble on her plump bottom lip which was quickly becoming his favorite thing to do he groaned as her long nails dug painfully into his back as he made more progress his thick cock stretching her unbelievably wide making her feel owned.

Pressing openmouthed kisses down her jaw to the slim column of her neck he shuddered memorizing every whimper, shudder, murmur, moan, and rake to his back as he let his fangs descend again and dragged them along her jugular vein detouring at her fluttering pulse. Snarling he pulled away from her suddenly his head falling back on his shoulders as he finally reached her maidenhead her tight pussy clamping around him lick a vice the pleasure and pain of it almost making him spill himself before they’d even got started.

Looking down at her his eyes changed glowing red and slightly elongated “mine!” he snarled his power filling up the space around them making the lights flicker again as he snapped his hips forward making her his. Unable to keep away from her long he came back down crushing his mouth to hers and swallowing her cries as he stayed perfectly still allowing her time to adjust snarling when she turned away gasping for air. Running his fingers through her hair he felt a new

wave of tenderness for her hating that he'd caused he even a moments pain "it's okay my darling the bad parts over now I promise" he told her laughing at her doubtful look.

Still laughing he bent to her jumping pulse unable to help himself and sucked at it leaving behind a mark groaning when she clamped down on him again and fresh wetness coated his cock.

Slowly he began to move beads of blood popping up on his brow as he fought against the vice grip of her pussy and the desire to plow into her unrelentlessly. Her rising moans egging him on he began to speed up using long strokes leaving her wet heat almost completely before gliding back in grinding his pelvis down on her clit. Grabbing her left leg he threw it over his shoulder angling his hips slightly giving her a crooked smile at the shocked expression on her face when he hit her g-spot but quickly lost all amusement when she began clawing at his back hard enough to draw blood making him loose the last shred of his control. "Mine!" he snarled his hips snapping as slammed his aching cock into her willing flesh the sounds of their bodies slapping together making his balls draw up tight.

Cloris screamed the beginnings of another orgasm the moment Luke snaked a hand between their slick bodies finding the swollen bundle of nerves and tugging on it to the same rhythm as his frantic strokes. Cloris whimpered She still felt as if there was one thing missing one thing keeping them apart and from making this moment perfect...acting strictly on instinct she tilted her head to the side submissively baring her neck, baring her all to her mate. "Luke" she moaned his name not sure what she was asking for but sighing in relief when his hand came up to wrap around her throat right before he struck.

He fed from her greedily as he solidified their bond each pull he took could be felt as if it was on her clit drawing out her orgasm and he sucked and thrust into her in an alternating rhythm. When

he knew he'd taking enough to establish the bond he disengaged his fangs licking the pinpricks closed taking a moment to admire her mating mark the symbol to everyone that she belonged to him.

Wanting the same for her he lifted one finger and watched it elongate into a razor sharp talon and sliced into his jugular vein ignoring her gasp of shock when her eyes zeroed in on the blood trickling down his throat. Lifting her head he brought her mouth to the wound with no resistance grunting with satisfaction when she latched on her arousal unmistakable.

His cock swelling and pulsing with each pull his mate took from his vein he moaned and shivered unashamedly the reality of his mate feeding from him for the first time was the most potent aphrodisiac imaginable he filled will his release wanting her to have all of him inside of her. As she fed he kissed every part of her he could reach her cheeks, jaws, forehead, and shoulders in his need to be connected to every part of her.

The bond irrevocably in place he stopped her from feeding and closed the wound the moment to special for words they starred at each other in awe. Both could almost see the invisible threads binding and weaving them together for all eternity creating a bond so intense it was beyond words even though Luke had spent his whole life knowing about mates he would have never been prepared for this moment. Neither would ever be able to recall who kissed who in that moment but it didn't matter the kiss was one full of passion and promise. He began to thrust into her again his slow unhurried pace bringing them both closer and closer.

Gasping Cloris realized she could feel him it was a very disconcerting feeling but arousing at the same time. They both moaned he tucked his face into her neck shuddering as his pace became erratic. She lifted her hips awkwardly to meet his strokes the wondrous dual sensations they were

experiencing making her mindless. She'd never know if it was her impulse she'd felt or his but unable to help herself she turned her face into his neck and bit hard enough to break skin.

Her subconscious mind recalling at the vicious move but ashamed that she was aroused all the same she was surprised when Luke growled his hips slamming into her even harder as he moaned holding her head to his neck when she would have pulled away. Giving herself up to the moment Cloris closed her eyes and began to suck groaning at his taste and tightening her arms around him as her orgasm slammed into her so hard she forced him with her both screaming out their release.

Gently Luke pulled out snarling when she hissed instinctively wincing a little in pain not liking the discomfort he felt through their bond. Biting his tongue he moved between her legs gently inserting his tongue into her swollen passage letting his blood heal her while he soothingly licked away the evidence of her innocence. Coming back up he laid out beside her tucking her into his side a feeling of contentment falling over him that was so foreign to him it scared him but liked none the less.

“We really are mates huh?” Cloris’s soft voice finally broke the comfortable silence.

Lifting up from where he'd been nuzzling her mating mark...she smelled divine of lilacs and woman and him, that part of him earlier that felt unsettled and restless finally felt like he belonged. At that realization as his arm tightened around her possessively. “What do you feel?” he asked needing to hear it from her even the most confident people needed confirmation from time to time.

Turning on her side to face him Cloris bent down and placed a chaste kiss on his lips caressing his beautiful face with her hand, how did she get so lucky. Smiling broadly tears began

swimming in her eyes a few escaping “where mates” her voice were definite despite her tears as she confirmed what she felt in her soul and knew in her heart. Pulling back she looked around seeming to remember that they were still in the elevator “I do however have just one question”. “Anything my darling”.

“You think we can get out of this elevator now?” she asked giving him a knowing look.

Laughing Luke had the grace to look sheepish just barely... as he helped them up they quickly got dressed both suddenly eager to leave the little world they’d lived in for what seemed like forever.

Taking her hand and threading their fingers together he started the elevator keeping control of it the entire time as they reached the lobby both letting out a sigh of relief. Luke even debating kissing the floor for good measure the meeting of his mate aside he wasn’t sure if he had it in him to ever get in an elevator again.

Cloris took a deep breath as they stepped out of the elevator looking up at the clock in the lobby she was shocked to see that only five hours passed since they’d been in the elevator, it had felt like years. She clutched Luke’s hand in hers hard as they made their way through the lobby feeling suddenly insecure the stares and disapproving looks and mumbling from the hotel patrons and employees driving up her anxiety as well.

“Mr. Aris you’re leaving?” the front desk clerk whom Cloris didn’t really know yelled out as he passed her a rather disapproving look his eye pausing at their joined hands. “Please come to the Grand Hotel again soon you it’s always a pleasure to have you here” he said the practiced line that she was positive didn’t include her.

Luke simply nodded his head barely giving the man his attention “sure” he answered looking down at Cloris eyes only for her and he could tell something was wrong. Finally reaching the exit he led her to the revolving doors letting go of her hand to place it on her lower back meaning to lead her through but she stopped dead looking through to the outside as if it was a murderer holding a knife to her throat. “Darling what is it?” he asked alarmed that maybe someone was after her. Cupping her shoulders he turned her around to face him paying no attention to the close minded idiots around him as he waited for his mate to speak.

Cloris stared straight ahead at Luke’s chest for long minutes before she got up the courage to meet his eyes thankful for his quiet patience as she gathered her thoughts. “I’m afraid that when we walk out this door” she gestured between the two of them “this will all be over” she confessed her voice was barely a whisper but she knew he heard her. Looking around the lobby wildness in her eyes that worried Luke she took in the ever increasing sneers and disapproving looks directed her their way and knew it would always be that way for them. “When we were in that elevator we forgot what things are like in the real world? Someone as great as you doesn’t get to belong to someone like me” her lips quivered with the effort to hold in her tears.

Luke eyes turned stormy with his rage as he listened to his silly mate, cupping her chin uncaring of the shocked gasps and derogatory slurs “fate would deem otherwise” he told her simply his voice surprisingly tender. Because to him it was that simple he couldn’t believe she felt this way if anything she was way too good for the likes of him. The woman he’d been with earlier in the night whose name he couldn’t even remember now flashed in his mind and he felt nothing but shame a feeling that he wasn’t familiar with...she made him want to be better he couldn’t, wouldn’t lose her. “Darling you remember what I told you earlier?” he searched her eyes for a

moment she looked so lost right now he ached to make it better. “I told you I want who you are not what. I’m not saying things won’t be hard as times because they will but these people” he gestured around the lobby “they don’t matter only you and me. Don’t be afraid my darling take a chance”.

Tears streaming down her face Cloris clutched his wrist needing the skin to skin connection to anchor her “what happens after we walk out this door” she smiled up at him shyly.

Thinking in this moment she had to be the most beautiful, brave woman and he was beyond lucky to have her for a mate he pulled out his pocket square and wiped her tears. Bending down the short distance he kissed her right there in the lobby uncaring of who was around. Pulling back he took her hand again and led her to the door “we make our own world. We don’t need an elevator for that my darling”.

This time it was Cloris that led the way through the doors not even giving a backwards thought to her old life as she walked arm and arm with her mate to his waiting car. Her other hand going up to graze her fresh mating mark as she sent up a special thanks to whoever forgot to fix that elevator as they drove off.

THE END

About The Author

Joie Cuentista has been a writer since she was able to pick up a pen. Her earliest stories were always required to have a happy ending as well as a heroine named Jill. She lives in Maryland and has the best roomie ever, her mother whom is her greatest fan as all great mothers are. She's a sucker for a good steamy romance, a happy ending, and all things fantasy. After all stories and novels should take you to another world for as long as your engaged and she loves nothing more creating worlds in which every person can find at least one that calls to them.

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