

Eli moved closer until only a hint of space separated their bodies. "Liberty?" His raspy voice was like a caress over her flesh. A breeze wafted over her bare back, and she shivered. She waited breathlessly for his next words, his next move. "You find me irresistible," he whispered, his gaze never leaving hers. "You're helpless to deny me anything. Your knees are weak." He stroked his finger over her shoulder, letting them trail down to the center of her chest, just above her breasts. "Your heart is pounding for me right now. All you can think about is what it would feel like to kiss me."

She licked her lips, wishing her glass wasn't empty. Her mouth was so dry, she couldn't speak. But oh wow...was he ever right. She didn't even mind his aggressive, unusual approach. Something about the atmosphere, about leaving behind the trappings of home. The memories of what Cam and Alyssa had done made her reckless. She took his glass from his hand without breaking eye contact. His eyebrows rose as he watched her take a sip of the strong liquor, whatever it was. It burned her throat and eyes, but she resisted the urge to cough. It had done the trick, and she was able to whisper, "Yes."

The corner of his mouth quirked. He moved closer, brushed his lips along hers, just a tease. That was it? That was the kiss? She bit back a groan of frustration. Her body ached with disappointment. But he moved toward her again, his eyes searching, his lips a hairsbreadth from hers. He stroked a hand down the side of her neck. His touch sent a flash of fire through her veins. She nearly moaned in anticipation, in yearning to feel his mouth, firm and hot against hers. She braced herself. Something primitive deep within told her this would be the kiss to rival any other. She swayed, her lids drifting shut, every nerve in her body tingling...

A scream tore through the night, breaking the spell. Liberty's eyes flew open, and she gasped.

Eli stepped back. "Dammit," he bit out. He cupped her cheek in his hand. "Don't forget where we were."

Then he was gone. She could barely feel her legs. Were they still supporting her? What the hell had just happened?

She shook her head, then followed the sound of excited voices where the scream had originated.

A group of people had gathered around a gazebo at the back of the house.

Liberty pushed her way through the crowd. Ryan knelt in the center of the gazebo next to a bench where a girl lay still. Her skin was as white as the moon, blank eyes staring at the midnight sky.

Liberty was afraid to look, but somehow couldn't help herself. She scanned the girl's body from head to toe. No blood. Good, that was a good sign, right? But the girl looked so...dead.

"Son of a bitch," a male voice shouted. "She's been drained."