



Arielle
Immortal Resolve
The Immortal Rapture Series

LILIAN
ROBERTS

Arielle Immortal Resolve

*The Immortal
Rapture Series
Volume 8*

Lilian Roberts



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Contents

Cover	
Title Page	
Copyright	
Acknowledgments	
Dedication	
Chapter 1	
Chapter 2	
Chapter 3	
Chapter 4	
Chapter 5	
Chapter 6	
Chapter 7	
Chapter 8	
Chapter 9	
Chapter 10	
Chapter 11	
Chapter 12	
Chapter 13	
Chapter 14	
Chapter 15	
Chapter 16	
Chapter 17	
Chapter 18	
Chapter 19	
Chapter 20	
Chapter 21	
Chapter 22	
Chapter 23	
Note to the Readers	
About the Author	
More from Lilian Roberts & Booktrope	

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Chapter 1

SEBASTIAN PULLED ARIELLE into his arms, gave her a soft peck on the lips, and whispered in her ear, “I’ll be right back baby, miss me...” Following Annabel’s scent, he darted toward the corner of the country club.

Sebastian tracked Annabel carefully, trying to remain calm while anger and loathing filled his lungs. Tonight he was determined to kill her; he was committed to ending this part of his life and ridding Arielle of Annabel’s relentless terror. He was willing to die if that’s what it took to make sure Arielle was safe. He was responsible for pulling her into this frightening world of immortality. He was responsible for making her live in constant fear of a crazy immortal woman’s unwavering desire to kill her for vengeance. Sebastian was ready to end it all, one way or another.

The skies were clear and the moon illuminated the night. Sebastian made his way across several miles of the club grounds at an inconceivable speed and when he reached the end of the property line his sharp immortal eyes caught a glimpse of two people in the distance. One of them was Annabel. The other was a man, but Sebastian couldn’t see his face. His sense of smell became stronger as he drew closer to them; his nostrils filled with their immortal scent. They ran next to each other and paused for a moment, looking back, scanning the darkness. Sebastian crouched behind the wall that surrounded the property line and watched them intently. They seemed to be satisfied that they weren’t being followed as they turned their heads and started to run at a slower pace.

They ran for quite a long time through the dark streets of Brighton and Sebastian followed at a safe distance, guzzling fresh air to help his thoughts remain on the right path. He wanted desperately to end this tonight; he didn’t want her to slip away like she did back at the cemetery in St Jean De Lu. Suddenly they stopped and remained motionless. They’d reached the edge of a park that stretched for a couple of miles ahead and ended in a large square surrounded by beautiful homes. They scanned the surroundings again and then crossed the manicured lawns of the park toward the square in slow strides. When they arrived at the other side of the park, they stopped again, and seemed to carry on a short dialogue. Then the man turned and darted in the opposite direction. Sebastian never had a chance to get a good look at him, but he wasn’t interested in the guy right now. Annabel was poised to step into the square when suddenly she paused at the curb and looked back, gaze piercing through the darkness.

Sebastian held his breath, consumed by the uneasy feeling that Annabel knew she was being followed. He hid behind a large tree trunk on the other side of the park with teeth gritted, filled with resentment and loathing for this woman who had created total chaos in his life.

He waited patiently, in high hopes that tonight this part of Arielle’s nightmare would be over. He wasn’t going to let his anger guide his actions this time around. He needed to find out who she was working with and what they were plotting.

Annabel stood motionless for a moment, as if contemplating whether to move forward or about reaching her destination. Sebastian took a long breath of relief when he saw her finally cross the square, take a little side street for a couple of blocks, and stop in front of a small house.

She again scanned the area around her carefully before she reached up and pressed the button on the gate twice. The lights came on and Sebastian’s immortal hearing picked up a young female voice

on the intercom asking the person's name. Annabel gave her name and immediately a tall, young girl came running out the door and across the garden, taking the padlock off the gate. Sebastian could hear their conversation while they were still outside.

"Are they here yet?" Annabel asked.

"No, not just yet, but I'm sure they'll be here shortly. They wouldn't break an agreement with you; they know better than that," the young girl replied, chuckling.

"Jane, I'll have to run out again for a short time. If I'm not back when they arrive, tell them to wait for me."

Together they walked up the few steps and crossed the threshold, shutting the door behind them. Sebastian moved swiftly and soundlessly across the cobblestoned square, reaching the corner of the dark street in a few strides. The street sign displayed the name York Street.

The house that Annabel had entered looked a bit run down and tall hedges surrounded the walls, preventing access or a view from the outside. Sebastian looked at the large metal chain and padlock that held the iron gate secure and chuckled under his breath. His immortal strength could crush the deadbolt to soft powder, but he chose to hurdle the tall fence and move quietly. He pushed carefully through the hedges and stood behind them, avoiding any unnecessary racket.

The night sky was dark and thick shadows surrounded the house. He stood in that darkness behind the hedges, right by a huge window that would give him a perfect view of the front room. The room was dark, so he waited patiently. Suddenly the light came on and his breath rushed through his lungs so fast that it made him a bit lightheaded.

He took a few deep breaths and inched closer. Peeking carefully through the sheer curtains, he saw Annabel and the girl she'd called Jane engaged in an animated conversation. Annabel was giving her directions about the people who were arriving to meet with her. Then she turned, walked toward the stairs that led to the upper floor, and started to scale the steps two at a time. She was almost at the top landing when Sebastian heard Jane's voice one more time.

"We installed the secret path you requested. Do you want to see it?" Jane inquired.

Annabel paused and, looking down at Jane, followed her finger that was pointing at the opposite wall. Sebastian saw Annabel's eyebrows narrow as a short smile crept across her ghastly face. She leaped down the stairs and dashed swiftly toward that wall. Sebastian saw Jane blink with a shocked look on her face, unable to follow Annabel's immortal speed. Jane crossed the floor in fast strides to keep up. Annabel had already reached the wall at the far end of the room and waited impatiently for Jane to catch up. Jane lifted her hand, and with her palm, pushed against an invisible spot on the wall. Sebastian watched, astonished, as the wall parted, revealing a secret entrance.

It wasn't so much the secret entrance that surprised Sebastian, but its location. This was a rundown, dilapidated house, not quite where anyone would expect to find secret passages. Annabel seemed to hesitate and then moved quickly through the gap in the wall with Jane by her side. They disappeared behind it, leaving no signs that would disclose what Sebastian had just witnessed. The opening had closed instantaneously, leaving what now seemed to be a normal wall.

Sebastian's thoughts whirled, trying to make sound decisions in a matter of milliseconds. His loathing for Annabel increased by the minute, but he decided to do the right thing. He pulled his mobile phone out of his pant pocket and pressed Troy's number. Troy picked up on the first ring.

"Troy," Sebastian said, his voice dropping to a whisper. "Where are you?"

"I'm on my way," Troy said. "Give me the exact location."

Sebastian gave him the address and added, "Listen, Troy, I'm going in. I want to deal with Annabel in a swift and conclusive way. Come find me in case I need help. There's something very

peculiar about this run-down house. I saw Annabel and a human friend of hers go through a secret passage. The house is very small, so I'm thinking that this opening leads to some kind of secret cellar. The location of the switch is on the wall approximately one-point-five meters from the northeast corner and two-point-one meters high."

"I'll be right there."

"Thanks, Troy," he said, but didn't wait for his friend's reply. He ended the conversation and slipped his mobile back into his pocket.

The door was locked, but that wasn't an issue for Sebastian. He soon found himself standing in the middle of the front room, which was poorly furnished and silent as a tomb. Quickly he scaled the staircase to the upper floor. He was going to clear any obstacles and leave Annabel as his last and most revolting elimination. This was the best and most shrewd way to approach this attempt on Annabel's miserable life.

Four fully furnished bedrooms graced the upper floor and they all looked lived in. He was not sure that more people were in this house besides Annabel and Jane. Sebastian was standing in the last bedroom, one filled with Annabel's scent, ready to walk out, when he heard footsteps and froze. It was but a few minutes before Jane walked in carrying a laundry basket. Sebastian was standing behind the open door; he didn't want to hurt her, but he'd do what it took to carry out his mission.

Jane set the basket on the bed, started to take clothes out, and put them carefully in the dresser drawers. She was nearly done when Sebastian's phone went off and she spun around to face the angry immortal. Her jaw dropped and her eyes reflected intense fright.

Sebastian was stunned for a moment as silence stretched and he forgot about the phone when she suddenly darted toward the door. Her mouth opened as she prepared to scream. Sebastian moved with unfathomable speed, grabbed Jane by the throat, muting her scream forever. His strength broke her neck, and when he let her go, she dropped lifeless to the floor. Sebastian pulled her body into the small closet and shut the door. He felt dreadful for killing a human, but didn't regret his choice. She'd been ready to alert the other occupants that something was wrong and he couldn't allow that.

Leaving the room, he moved like a ghost along the upstairs corridor and descended the staircase carefully. He crossed the room on the main floor, walked down a small hallway, and noticed two doors, one on either side. He went into the door on his left and found himself in a small study full of books, boxes, and a foul odor that had to be a combination of several things. He backed off and shut the door behind him, shaking his head to rid his nostrils of that awful odor. He moved down the hallway and opened the second door. Again, he was struck with the most god-awful smell. It was a sitting room connected to the kitchen area. Both rooms were poorly lit, giving Sebastian's perfect immortal eyes a sharp view of a disgustingly dirty area.

The smell came from the kitchen floor that was clogged with garbage bags, animal food, and feces, making the odor intolerable. Sebastian held his breath, moved quickly out into the hall, and shut the door behind him, shaking his head again in pure disgust. He headed back to the front room, where he stood in front of the wall through which he'd watched Annabel and Jane disappear. He looked for a noticeable gap, but there was none. He ran his palm across the wall, feeling every little bump and scrape until he encountered a small rise.

He pressed, holding his breath, and was delighted to see the wall part, exposing the opening. He listened for any sounds, contemplating his next move. Sebastian knew that Annabel was there, but was she alone? And if not, how many immortals would he be facing? Pulling his mobile from his pocket, he glanced at the screen. A smile spread across his face when he saw Arielle's text. *I'm worried about your death. I love you more than life, please be careful.* His arms ached for her, but he had a serious issue

deal with, so he set the phone to vibrate and slipped it back in his pocket. Troy had to be getting close so he decided to go for it.

Quickly he crossed the opening and forgot to breathe, consumed by total shock. He found himself on the landing of a steel staircase that spiraled down to a dark corridor. Taking a deep breath, he filled his lungs with the stale air and descended cautiously, one step at a time, until he reached a damp floor. His immortal vision gave him a well-defined view of the place and he gasped in astonishment. How could a small house like this conceal such a large cellar? Sebastian scanned the area and noticed several doors on either side of the long corridor, but they all appeared dark and soundless except for the last two on the right. A thin streak of light escaped from a tiny crack at the first door.

Sebastian moved slowly, listening for any noise, but all he heard was his own footsteps. He exhaled as he reached the door, pausing to listen. Men's muted voices and low laughter reached him. Sebastian set his eyes on the crack and saw three men sitting around a small table playing cards. They seemed completely engrossed in their game, totally unaware of his presence.

Sebastian moved away quietly and approached the last door. His breath caught in his throat as the air thickened with Annabel's scent. He waited, motionless, while his mind assessed his position and his desperate wish to rid the world of Annabel for good. His nerves jumped and his breathing quickened as he turned the knob and pushed the door wide open.

Sebastian focused his startled eyes on Annabel, who was sitting in a large chair, watching him intently, a smug look on her face. She crossed her legs and clasped her hands in undisguised amusement.

"Welcome to your prison, my love," she said. Her laughter rang with clear pleasure. "I've been waiting patiently," she continued.

Sebastian was thunderstruck; her enthusiasm didn't surprise him, but the fact that she'd known he was coming was a complete shock. His stomach muscles tightened and his teeth clenched.

"Did you really think that I was that stupid?" she asked while Sebastian tried to regain his composure. "I wanted you to follow me; that was my plan all along and you fell in my trap like a amateur." Annabel laughed with disdain.

Sebastian looked straight ahead, avoiding her gaze and swallowed hard. His mind was spinning trying to find a solution to a bad turn of events. He scanned the room, felt his skin crawl and his fingers creep up his spine, when he realized that he was standing in the middle of a torture chamber.

He drew enough breath to utter in sheer revulsion: "What is it exactly that you want from me, Annabel?"

"Sebastian, why do you keep asking the same question over and over?" She studied him intently waiting for an answer.

"I keep asking the same question because you seem to have a hard time understanding that you and I are never going to happen. I didn't want you in my life then and I don't want you now," he replied, grinding his teeth. "So again, what is it that you want from me?" Sebastian gave her a look full of venom.

Annabel crossed her arms looking totally unruffled and leaning back on the chair, smiled with clear amusement. "You...You are what I want and nobody else will ever have you in this century or any other. You're mine and you'll be mine for eternity." She smiled as she stood and approached him with a wanton smile. "You look scrumptious in that beautiful suit. Any special occasion?" she laughed spitefully.

"I hate you, Annabel, I've never been yours and I'd rather die, so let's end this right here, right now."

“What do you mean?” she asked smugly as she walked back toward the chair.

“I’m going to kill you, Annabel; I want you out of my life for good.” He hoped his expression painted a clear picture of determination.

“Sebastian...let me bring up a few things that you might’ve overlooked.” She was still smiling. “You came here alone with no weapons, and I know that you already saw the men in the next room who are awaiting my signal to take you down. I know that you’re strong, but one against four? How are you planning on killing me?” She seemed to be enjoying herself.

“I don’t need weapons, Annabel, you know that, I’m a lot stronger than you and a better fighter too.” Sebastian shot toward her, catching Annabel off guard. He grabbed her by the throat and threw her across the room. She crashed against the far wall face first and buckled to the ground where she remained unmoving for several seconds. She finally regained her strength and stood slowly, a startled look on her bloody face. She shook her head, leaning against the wall for a moment. Sebastian was now fully alert; he knew she wouldn’t give up that easy. He was still pondering her next move when she launched into the air and threw herself against him with so much force that they crashed to the hard floor with a loud thud and skidded across the room until the wall stopped them.

Annabel jumped to her feet and tried to run, but Sebastian was much faster. He reached up and grabbed the back of her jacket with one hand, making a hard fist with the other. Annabel spun around to free her arms from her jacket and Sebastian’s fist landed right between her eyes, sending her flying across the room to crash on the ground in a daze.

Sebastian crossed the room in a slow stride and looked down on Annabel’s bloody face with satisfaction. He bent down, picked her up by the throat, and steadied her upright in front of him long enough to land another punch to her face that sent her crashing into the far wall with a loud bang. The sound of crushing bones was loud when Annabel’s body came in contact with the wall, giving Sebastian pleasure. She let out a growl and crumpled to the floor.

Sebastian turned his attention to the door and stilled, listening carefully, his body tensed, but he didn’t hear any footsteps and the door remained closed. Annabel stirred and moaned across the room. Sebastian turned to look at her. She was trying to shake off the confusion and clear her dazed head. She coughed and spat the blood that was dripping from her mouth onto the floor. She moaned again. She raised her hands slowly and touched her bloody face. She cursed with clenched teeth and, bringing her hands down, stared at the blood. She stood slowly, leaning against the wall and steadied herself. Sebastian knew she was going to heal extremely fast so he had to take advantage of her confusion and keep her in a state of haze.

He closed the distance between them watching her with fury in his heart and punched her one more time in the pit of her stomach. Blood gushed out of her nose and mouth and she crumpled to the ground with a snarl. She tried to grip his arm but he jerked free.

“I hate you, Annabel, more than you’ll ever know.” Sebastian’s voice was full of venom. Annabel lifted her eyes to his.

“There’s a thin line between love and hate, Sebastian, and that’s exactly where you stand with me. You’re right on that line.” Her voice was barely audible, her face bruised, reflecting shock and repulsion and she closed her eyes, grinding her teeth.

“I want you out of my life,” he whispered, voice full of revolt.

Annabel opened her eyes and stared at him in defiance, her voice scarcely audible. “I still love you,” she sighed, grimacing.

Sebastian shoved her down one more time and walked over to sit on the chair, watching her intently and waiting to hear from Troy. He turned his head away from Annabel and closed his eyes.

hoping to have this over with in a short time.

~~He was lost in his thoughts gazing at his feet when he was startled by a noise. He tried to keep the shock off his face when he saw Annabel leap toward the door and he reacted instantly. He practically ejected himself from the chair and dashed after her, catching her wrist and yanking her back. She swayed wildly back and forth and as her body turned toward Sebastian he lifted his free hand and slugged her between the eyes over and over again, dropping her to the floor, as she let out a blood-curdling scream. She was now a bloody mess and moaned in sheer agony.~~

“I want you to be looking at me when I kill you,” he growled.

The next few minutes were a complete frenzy that drove a cold chill up Sebastian’s spine. He felt the barrel of a gun pressing painfully into his back and several strong arms pulling him off Annabel, throwing him face down on the ground. Sebastian broke from the restraint, spun around and hit the man with the gun hard, sending him flying against the opposite wall. The gun flew out of the man’s hand, slid across the floor and landed in the corner on the opposite side of the room.

Sebastian took a quick scan and realized that he was in a lot of trouble. He was facing two more of Annabel’s friends, or hired thugs, who were large, hard-muscled immortals. Soon Annabel and the third guy would be healed and back on their feet. He watched the anticipation cross their faces and knew they were ready to tear him apart. He pressed his lips together and hurled himself toward them and in that millisecond he saw a balled fist coming fast toward him. He dodged the blow and taking careful aim, landed a rapid kick to the guy’s midsection, sending him cursing to the ground.

Three down, one to go. From the corner of his eye he caught the flash of a blade swinging very close to his body. He spun and struck upward, throwing another vicious blow to the last guy, but not before the blade sliced through his shirt and into his chest. Sebastian gritted his teeth as his muscles clenched painfully and that was the last thing he remembered before a heavy object whacked him hard on the back of the head and he crumpled unconscious to the floor.

Annabel was still a bloody mess, but completely aware of her surroundings. Her face flaunted a strange mixture of emotions, victory and defeat simultaneously. Two of the three men dragged Sebastian’s unconscious body across the floor and propped him upright against the wall. They stretched his arms and legs apart and secured his wrists and ankles with wide metal hooks that’d been drilled deep into the concrete wall. Sebastian was extremely strong but there would be absolutely no way to bust free unless he took the whole wall down. The hooks had been drilled twenty feet deep into the concrete. This was their world and they had complete knowledge of their extraordinary gifts.

“Paolo, get off the floor.” Annabel’s voice rang harsh in the quiet of the room.

Paolo flinched, shook his head and gave her a dry smile. He gathered himself and stumbled to his feet. He shook his head again and stiffened when his eyes fell on Sebastian’s unconscious body. He sprinted to his gun on the other side of the room and headed toward Sebastian, seeking revenge. Annabel was remarkably fast despite her wounds; she hurled herself forward, grabbed Paolo’s arm and pulled it back just before he thrashed Sebastian’s head. Paolo spun in sheer astonishment to face Annabel with eyebrows raised. A cold warning flashed at him from her eyes.

“What?” he asked, trying to hold back his rage.

“Don’t you dare touch him!” she screamed. “He’s mine and I’ll deal with him my way.” Annabel

glared at him to be sure he understood and he immediately backed off. She then turned and looked at Sebastian's bloody, limp body for a moment. Venom filled her eyes and averting her gaze to her good eye she growled, "Get out!"

They instantly turned and walked out, shutting the door behind them. Annabel approached Sebastian's unconscious body with a wild look in her eyes and ran her fingers across his lips.

"Don't go anywhere pretty boy, I'll be right back." She turned and walked out, closing the door behind her.

Sebastian opened his eyes sluggishly and his gaze swept the room carefully. He shut his eyes again, thinking that he was hallucinating, overwhelmed with mixed emotions his mind couldn't separate them individually. His thoughts were muddled and exhaustion grasped him like a vise. He tried hard to remember and his immortal intuition told him that he was in some kind of trouble, but nothing tangible. His mouth was dry, his face tight and an unease crept over him. Shearing pain spread across his skin like waves of fire, burning every single muscle and ripping every fiber in his body. He trusted his insight to search through unknown paths in his mind and find the conscious awareness in his head that would clear his thoughts.

He opened his eyes again and suddenly the smell of dust, mildew, and blood drifted up his nostrils, setting his nerves on edge. He remembered immediately where he was and tried to move, astonished when he realized he was shackled to the wall. He tried to pull away to no avail. He looked over and noticed the thick metal staples that were driven into the concrete and cursed aloud in rage. Sebastian licked his dry lips and stared for what seemed to be eternity at the dry blood covering the front of his shirt. He tried to remember how he got hurt but was unable to recall.

The room was empty and his mind swirled wildly wondering, *Where's Annabel? And where's Troy?* He shook his head in anger and ran his tongue over his dried lips once again.

He was startled when his mobile vibrated in his pocket, but he had no way of answering. He cursed aloud, pulling hard at the shackles trying to get loose. He closed his eyes, despondent. His mind filled with dread. If he could cry he'd be crying right now, because he'd failed her again. If anything he'd succeeded in losing Arielle forever. He let out a deep sigh and slumped back against the wall.

He was startled to hear the door flung open. Annabel stepped in then let it slam shut behind her. He hoped his expression was a blank. He could see disaster racing toward him, but he wasn't going to give her the satisfaction to gloat.

"Darling...I'm happy to see that you're still here," she chuckled. Her disgusting laughter drove a dagger in his heart.

"Did you miss me?" she asked with clear gratification, as she closed the distance between them. Their faces were now only millimeters apart. Sebastian could see that she'd healed and had changed her bloody clothes.

"You...are...now...completely...mine," she said, pleasure accentuating each word.

"I'll never be yours, Annabel, my heart belongs to someone else," he replied with clenched teeth.

"I don't care about your heart, Sebastian," she said. She laughed again as she moved even closer, a seductive look in her eyes. She cupped his face in her hands, making him gaze in her eyes.

"I've always loved you, Sebastian," she whispered. She wrapped her arms around his neck and

pressed her lips to his with pure hunger. Sebastian felt nausea settling in the pit of his stomach. He closed his eyes and remained completely still. Her touch didn't sear him; it just engulfed him with unbelievable fury. It didn't stimulate him; it triggered a suffocating feeling that was choking him, making it difficult to breathe.

"I hate you, Annabel," he snarled in a ragged voice. "You're the most ghastly woman I've ever met."

Where's Troy? He should be here by now.

"I am going to have you one way, or another, Sebastian, so try to enjoy yourself." She laughed again, reveling in her dominance over him. "You've been my life's long desire and I finally have you where I want you."

Her voice was making him sick; he closed his eyes, trying to endure. She leaned against him, pressing him against the wall, laughing with amusement. Sebastian tried to pull away but the shackles wouldn't budge. She lifted her hand and brushed her fingers over his lips and down his cheeks, moaning with desire.

"What does this miserable, breakable human have, that I don't," she asked. Her eyes searched his face for an answer and, leaning in, her lips brushed his ear.

Sebastian recoiled, and lifting his head glared at her with repugnance. "Arielle is everything you're not. She's perfect," he said, his words choked with passion.

Rage flashed in Annabel's eyes. Jealousy shot across her face. "You're never going to see her again!" she shrieked. Her jaw stiffened, her eyes filled with anger. She pulled out a knife, grabbed his jacket and shredded it, laughing wildly. Next she gripped his shirt and tore it wide open, sending the buttons tumbling in every direction. She ran her hands over the planes of his chest, moaning, her eyes slit in passion.

The contact sent a repulsive jolt through his body. He sucked in a deep breath and looked in her eyes with pure loathing. "Listen Annabel and listen to me very carefully," Sebastian hissed, clenching his teeth.

"You can do whatever you want with me, because I don't care. My heart and my love will always belong to Arielle. She's my life, the girl who gave meaning to my miserable existence. You, on the other hand, will always be the most despicable nightmare I've ever come across during my 600 years on this earth. I despise you with every single fiber in my body and in case you didn't hear me before your touch...makes my skin...crawl," he emphasized his last words.

Her next move left Sebastian speechless, but he quickly regained his composure. She pulled out a dagger, her eyes wild. She lifted the blade and held it close to his face. If she was trying to evoke terror, she failed miserably. Sebastian was calm. He wasn't going to give her the satisfaction of his fear.

She ripped his shirt completely away from his body and threw it to the floor. Her eyes roved over his muscular body. "Mmmm..." she snarled, "let's see if I can make your skin crawl with this touch."

In a lightning move, she slashed his bare chest with the blade. Sebastian moaned in agony as blood oozed out of the deep gash. Annabel laughed manically and raised the blade one more time, coming down harder this time, slicing his chest even deeper. Sebastian let out a low growl of anguish as he felt his body crumpling, unable to stand. His arms strained in their bonds on the metal hooks that kept him from crashing to the floor. She moved with unbelievable speed and gashed deeper wounds on his upper arms. Annabel seemed to get a sick thrill from watching Sebastian suffering in a bloody mess.

She leaned close to his ear and whispered voice full of mockery, "Don't worry, Sebastian. I'm not

going to let you die. I'm going to make you feel pain. I want you to suffer like I've suffered from your cruel rejections over the centuries." She ran her tongue over his earlobe and groaned in silent enjoyment.

"Despite everything you've said, I still love you," she moaned. "I'm going to finally have you and I don't care who you love, or who has your heart. I have you now." She moved her lips over his mouth and kissed him with passion. "I know you're going to heal fast," she said, utterly possessed, running her hands over his lacerations, holding the tip of the knife against his breastbone, as he was unable to defend himself.

"I'm going to drain some of this delicious blood from your gorgeous body until you surrender to me." She pressed the knife deep one more time and Sebastian's beautiful face twisted as he growled in pain. Annabel took a step back and threw her head back, letting out wild laughter with a face illuminated by thrilling satisfaction.

"How could you be so stupid? Here you are with no one to help you and no way to fight back!" She broke out again into a hardy laugh, as she moved closer and ran her hand over his bare skin. Sebastian was barely breathing as blood gushed out of the deep cuts. His jeans were soaked and he could now see a small puddle shaping around his feet. His face was a clear mask of agony and even though he was getting weaker by the moment, deep in his gut he could still feel utter revulsion for the woman.

Weakness gripped him like a vise and he succumbed to his destiny as his heart sank and his last hope for rescue disappeared. His weak mind told him that something must've happened to Troia, otherwise he'd have been here by now. His breath weak and ragged, he tried to speak but the words faded on his lips. He looked straight in her eyes, summoned every bit of strength he had left, and spoke on her face.

Annabel recoiled and screamed, as she raised her hand and wiped her face, consumed by fury and unmitigated rage. The door flew open and Annabel's thugs came running in. She spun around, her eyes glaring wildly. "Get out!" she screamed at them, pointing at the door. When the door closed behind them she glared back at Sebastian with clenched teeth.

"Are you willing to die for her?" she screeched.

"She's worth dying for," he whispered with a faint smile. He knew that he was on the brink of collapse when he felt Annabel's warm breath against his ear and her words drove the dagger deep into his heart.

"Do you remember Gaston, my love? He was your best friend. He's here with one desire and one desire only; to conquer Arielle's heart with or without her consent."

Sebastian winced just before he was consumed by darkness and fell unconscious.

Annabel's frown deepened, hatred for Arielle clenched her chest with unbelievable pressure. She swallowed hard the lump forming in her throat and bit her lip in frustration. Arielle had taken the only man Annabel had ever truly wanted. Sebastian had been her sole quest for 600 years now. All she ever wanted was for him to love and desire her like no other. She closed her eyes, distressed at knowing that it was a futile attempt, but she wanted him all to herself and was determined to keep him prisoner until she decided otherwise.

She retreated to the chair and sat intently watching this stunning man. Even in his unconscious state he made Annabel's blood boil and stirred up every craving she'd ever possessed. Annabel knew how the immortal body worked. Sebastian would be able to satisfy her sexually even in his unconscious state. She darted out of the chair and shed her clothes, dropping them to the floor. With the dagger, she quickly shredded Sebastian's pants away from his body. She was determined to satisfy every single desire even though Sebastian was unconscious and unable to fight back.

If he were cognizant, the moments that followed would've been the worst nightmare of his immortal life. Annabel violated his body in every way possible. She finally pulled back, satisfied and staring at his naked, gorgeous body, laughed wildly.

"I told you I was going to have you one way or another, but you didn't believe me," she screamed and laughed again. She picked up her clothes and walked backward until she reached the wall behind the chair. She put her hand up and pressed against it, exposing a second secret passage.

"I'll be back, my love, so don't go anywhere," she promised, as she crossed the passage and let the door close behind her.



Chapter 2

WHEN TROY ANSWERED the phone he could sense in Sebastian's voice the excitement and resolve to end Annabel's life. Sebastian's zeal gripped Troy's attention, giving him a surge of commitment to run to his side. Troy slipped the mobile back in his pocket and paused for a moment to smile. He ran his tongue over his lips, savoring Gabrielle's kiss, and darted into the night after Sebastian.

He tracked his scent and soon arrived at the edge of the park Sebastian mentioned on the phone. He scanned each direction carefully before he crossed it in large strides. He reached the cobblestone square, which was surrounded by average size homes. It was the typical European roundabout with five exits. He stood motionless before walking quietly in the night like a ghost until he located York St. He was to look for the second house on the left off of York St. The quiet was deafening as he stood behind a huge tree across from the two-story house.

His immortal gift gave him a clear view of the small rundown house and its tall fence with the large padlock at the gate. This wasn't going to be an issue for Troy and his immortal strength. The house appeared deserted but Sebastian was already in there. He paused again and after scanning the area in the dark he approached the house in slow, calculated movements like a panther after its prey, and hurdled the fence without any difficulty, landing inside the garden. He darted toward the tall hedge growing against the house and disappeared behind it. He noticed that the light was on in one of the rooms so he crept along the wall and stood underneath the window. He peeked inside but the room was empty. *Where's Sebastian; where is anybody in this house?* Troy's thoughts whirled like a windmill in a storm.

He decided to move but just before he emerged from the hedges he heard footsteps approaching from the far side of the dark street and caught a clear view of three men emerge from the shadows and stop short of the gate. Troy examined their faces and immediately knew that he was dealing with immortals. Their lips were moving but their conversation was soundless to a human ear; however Troy could hear every word. He paused and pulled back behind the hedges, waiting for their next move. The man who seemed to be the leader of the trio looked around as if he was waiting for someone.

"We must wait for Clair before we meet with Annabel," he said. His voice was loud and quiet, intense startling Troy.

"Jon, what if the price is ridiculously low?" one of the guys asked the man who wanted to wait for Clair.

"We don't have to take the job," he replied. "She did, however, promise that it'll be a hefty amount. I guess we have to wait and see." He continued looking around nervously.

A weird silence fell between them again, as Troy's body tensed. Sebastian was in there with Annabel and maybe a few more thugs and now there were three more guys and a woman who would be joining them shortly. The odds were stacking against him, how was he ever going to overcome this kind of obstacle? With jaw tightened and breath held in his throat his thoughts pulsed wildly, realizing that he needed more help.

He cursed silently, knowing that Ian and Eva had left for their honeymoon. He didn't have

Loren's number but he could call Christian and Isabella as well as Nathan. Lost in thought, he started when he felt his phone vibrate.

He pulled it out of his pocket and upon gazing at the screen, his jaw dropped. How could that be possible? Antonius' name flashed across the screen like a rescue vessel throwing out a lifeline. He found himself smiling and a spurt of exuberance rushed through his body like lightning in the night. He answered the call with a text message.

I can't talk, but I need your help.

I'm heading your way with friends. Don't try to do anything stupid alone.

But how did you know?

Gabrielle called. She said you needed help.

Troy chuckled softly, relief engulfing him.

I have a strong feeling that Sebastian is in deep trouble. He's not picking up his phone or texting back.

Where are you?

Troy gave him the address, put away his mobile with a sigh of relief, and waited for his friends to show up.

With no clue as to where Antonius was coming from, he pulled further back into the hedges and waited. His eyes were locked on the three men, hoping they'd make their move soon; he needed to make sure that Sebastian was safe. Just as his patience was wearing thin, he caught a movement in his periphery. He spun around and was shocked to see four men creeping in the shadows across the street.

It couldn't have been more than a couple of minutes since he'd spoken with Antonius, but as he scanned their faces he recognized Antonius, Gerard, Giani, and Arturo. His friends seemed to be aware of the three thugs standing at the gate as well because they were watching them intently. He let out a deep breath of relief and his eyes turned back toward the gate. Troy studied the men again and frowned, his worry over Sebastian increasing; every minute that ticked away could bring Sebastian closer to disaster. He sought revenge in such a brutal way that he would've moved the Alps to get to Annabel and that could land him in deep trouble. Troy pursed his lips. Worrying wasn't helpful at the moment. He glanced again inside the room but it was still deserted.

"Clair, there you are..." An amused voice made Troy jump and turn his gaze back toward the gate. A young woman had approached the three men and they were exchanging friendly greetings. They pressed the button on the wall and the faint sound of a bell was heard from somewhere inside the house. At first there was silence and it was long enough to make Troy anxious but finally the door flew open and a large-built man stepped over the threshold. He glared at the gate with an assessing look and finally walked across the garden and unlocked the padlock. He didn't seem to know any of the newcomers but introduced himself as Raffaele with a dry smile. The woman stepped in front of the three men and her voice came out cold and firm.

"I'm Clair," and pointing at the others she continued. "These are Jon, Liam, and Oliver. We're here to meet Annabel at her request."

Raffaele nodded, moved aside, and let them in. He secured the padlock and headed back toward the house. There was no further dialog between them as they crossed the threshold and disappeared behind the front door.

As soon as the door closed behind them Troy's friends ran across the street, scaled the fence and crossed the garden in large strides. They shook hands quietly, Troy's relief quite palpable. Words formed on their lips but no audible sounds were heard. They peeked through the window and watched the man who called himself Raffaele pause for a moment, then advance across the room. He stopped

in front of the wall directly opposite the front door.

~~The newcomers looked around and finally rested their gaze on Raffaele. They watched him intently as Raffaele placed his hand flat on the wall, leaned in, and pressed. The wall gave in, revealing a secret passage. He stepped aside and, looking back at them, motioned for them to enter first. He followed at their heels, pressed his palm against the wall on the inside, and the opening disappeared.~~

Troy cursed with clenched fists and eyes narrowed to slits. His mind was whirling with wild thoughts.

“What is it?” Antonius asked.

“I’m worried about Sebastian and wondering how many immortals we have to face behind that wall.” Troy’s voice was full of concern.

“It doesn’t matter how many they are. We can handle them.” Antonius smiled wide and patted Troy on the back. The front door wasn’t a challenge and soon enough they stood in the middle of the room.

Giani and Arturo climbed the steps soundlessly to eliminate any thugs on the upper floor while Gerard and Antonius moved down the hall to search the rooms on the main floor. Troy remained on guard to prevent any surprises from the outside or the secret passage. The upstairs rooms seemed to be empty and so were the filthy rooms on the first floor. They all assembled again in the front room and walked over to the wall to find the secret passage.

“Where in the hell is everybody?” Giani whispered. “Are they all behind that wall?”

“Most likely,” Troy replied, glancing around the room.

Their eyes honed in on the wall that concealed the invisible door.

Girard crept up to that wall and, leaning forward, placed his hand flat on the surface. His fingers traced around the area they’d seen the goon pressing a few minutes earlier. It wasn’t long before he felt the small bump on the wall and, pressing it impatiently, exposed the opening. A faint smile of satisfaction crossed his face as he looked back at his friends and motioned them to follow.

They stepped inside the opening and came to a halt, adjusting to the intensified darkness, as the door closed behind them. They scanned the area, eyes darting from side-to-side. They were shocked to find themselves standing at the top landing of a long spiral metal staircase, leading down into a dark cellar. They could feel the coolness of the stone and the dampness of the air around them. A thick, musty odor filled their nostrils, making it hard to breathe.

They exchanged brief glances, as anger intensified and silence filled the air. They made their way quietly down the spiral staircase, trying to pick up Sebastian’s scent. That wasn’t an easy task as the scent of immortality was everywhere. Their eyes focused on the dark corridor as they stepped down on the wet cold floor. They could clearly see slithers of light coming from two rooms at the very end of the corridor. As they moved further down the passageway they heard muffled sounds coming out of the room closest to them. They moved closer and peering through the cracks of the door, observed a small room dimly lit and poorly furnished. There was a large dirty sofa pushed against the concrete wall, a small fridge stained with mold and dirt and several chairs around a large old table. There were six men in that room and that included the man who called himself Raffaele; three were the newcomers Jon, Liam, and Oliver. The other two scums seemed to answer to Raffaele. To their surprise the female who called herself Clair seemed to be in her late teens. They were all seated around the table.

“Where in bloody hell is Annabel?” the man who called himself Jon asked with clear frustration.

“She had to run an errand that couldn’t wait but should be back shortly,” Raffaele replied.

The newcomer cursed in disapproval. "I told Annabel that I don't like to be kept waiting." The anger in his eyes deepened.

"Well you can either wait or just leave," said Raffaele, in a firm tone. "Annabel calls the shots," he explained.

Jon raised an eyebrow at Raffaele and, leaning back in his chair crossed his arms, a displeased look on his face.

Silence felt. Clair stood and started to pace anxiously.

"Sit down!" Jon growled looking up at her. "You're utterly annoying."

She looked stunned. Rage stained her face and she shot him a look full of anger. Jon's expression was cold and unruffled, so Clair slumped down on the dirty sofa.

"Is there anything to drink in this sticky place?" she spit at Raffaele.

"You don't have to stay if you don't like it here," Raffaele replied, his tone pissed. "There's Salve and beer in the fridge. If you want something to drink you can get up and get it yourself, there's nobody here to cater to you," Raffaele replied stiffly, glaring at Clair in annoyance. "Take it or leave it." His voice was harsh and icy.

"Thanks," she replied, seemingly undaunted by his rudeness.

Troy and the guys needed to locate Sebastian immediately. Dealing with Annabel's thugs came last. They were six immortals in that room almost equal to Troy and his friends. They could use the element of surprise, but the fact that Sebastian was in trouble was shifting the scale to the other side. To their relief the men decided to play cards to pass the time waiting for Annabel. Soon enough they were all involved in a lively game, including the girl. Their laughter and conversations became louder as Salve and beer were consumed. They were being energized and inebriated in equal measure, and that seemed to be a plus for the guys.

Troy turned his attention to the faint sliver of light coming from the cracks in the door at the end of the corridor. He crept closer and put his ear against the door, but all he could hear was silence. He peeked through the crack and his body stiffened as he gasped in shock.

"What is it?" Girard asked in a low voice, grabbing everyone's attention. Troy raised his hand for silence, turned the knob and threw the door wide. Sebastian's appearance made the guys gasp in horror, curses leaving their clenched teeth. Utter disbelief was their first reaction. The room was equipped with torture contraptions that included binds, metal frames designed to clamp over a body, metal cables with shackles at the end to restrain and hoist bodies on the concrete walls. Silence fell among the men as they looked in horror at Sebastian's naked body. Troy shut the door behind them and moved toward the wall.

Large metal shackles protruded from the concrete wall, restraining Sebastian's arms and legs. His body was slumped forward, the metal cuffs cutting off his circulation. Troy's lips twisted with rage as he gazed at the agony and excruciating pain filling Sebastian's face.

His eyes were closed but Troy was sure that Sebastian had focused all of his energy in resisting the pain. His torso had been sliced in three different places with a large blade leaving deep gashes across his bare chest. Thick globs of dried blood covered the wounds while his shirt and what used to be a suit were on the floor ripped to shreds and blood-drenched. The smell of blood was so thick in that room that they could actually taste the nauseating, rusty stench.

It wasn't surprising that he was still unconscious and looking extremely weak, as a fair amount of blood pooled the floor around him. Sebastian's naked body convinced the guys that something very strange had taken place in this room. They were sure that his body would heal fast, however he was going to regain his energy without Salve after losing all that blood.

Moving fast, Giani and Gerard broke the shackles and lowered Sebastian's body to the floor.

~~"It sounds like Annabel will be returning shortly," Troy said with anxiety in his voice and clenched teeth.~~

"Sebastian's already healing, but he'll remain weak until we get some Salve into his veins," Antonius said tightly.

"I think the best thing to do will be to take Sebastian outside and make sure he's safe," Troy said with a voice firm, face hard.

"I agree." Antonius nodded at Troy's suggestion.

"If we can get out of here without a fight it'll be great, but if they try to prevent our escape it'll make things a little more difficult. Let's take Sebastian out so he doesn't become a victim who's unable to defend himself."

"Giani, go ahead and take him outside," Troy insisted.

"But...I should stay in case something goes wrong. There are seven thugs in there, not to mention the girl, and if Annabel returns that'll make it eight against five," Giani argued. "Not very good odds."

"True, but our priority is to make sure Sebastian is safe." Troy remained persistent.

"He's right, Giani. We need to protect Sebastian, so get going," Antonius said in a firm voice.

Giani shrugged, and lugging Sebastian over his shoulder in a fireman's carry, opened the door and darted like a tiger toward the staircase, scaling the steps two at a time. When he reached the top of the landing he pressed the lever on the wall and opened the secret passage. He never looked back; he dashed across the room and out the front door in a matter of seconds.

Troy picked up Sebastian's shredded clothes from the floor and dashed out the door like a cheetah after prey, Gerard, Arturo, and Antonius right on his heels. They reached the spiral staircase that was now illuminated by light that was spilling down from the front room through the passage opening.

They were getting ready to mount the steps when a door swung open with a loud noise and a bottle shattered on the stone floor. They spun around and their eyes locked on the man who stepped out into the corridor, clutching something in his hand. Shock crossed his face at the sight of the four men; he tilted his head in disbelief and backed off toward the door, staring at them in horror. His harsh voice made them brace for the unexpected.

"Hey! Who are you? What are you doing here?" he roared, alerting the rest of the thugs to their presence. They hadn't time to mute his scream. For a moment it looked as if they would have to defend themselves right then and there but Troy made a decision to take the fight upstairs. They spun around and started climbing the steps, while a powerful voice bellowed, "STOP!" But they didn't stop until they crossed the wall and into the front room. They could hear the heavy footsteps of their pursuers climbing the metal staircase. Troy motioned for the other guys to step to either side of the opening to get out of their enemy's immediate line of sight. That would give them the element of surprise. They didn't have to wait long and six guys stormed out of the passage with the girl right behind them.

Giani heard a large commotion inside the house but he didn't stop. He lowered Sebastian's weak body to the ground and made sure he was safe behind the hedges. He immediately turned and headed back inside.

He stopped as soon as he crossed the threshold and assessed the situation. Seven thugs were in the middle of the room with their backs to him, facing his four friends who were standing on either side of the opening with their backs to the wall. Giani scanned the faces of his friends and saw their determination to get this over quickly. They paused for a moment and then jumped into action and the fight started.

The man who called himself Raffaele was the first to jump on Antonius and with a tight fist lashed for Antonius' face. Antonius jerked back avoiding the hit and with lips drawn back, hurtled on Raffaele, knocking him flat to the ground. Raffaele sprang up with supernatural speed and jumped on Antonius attempting to slug him again right between the eyes. Antonius ducked, avoiding the hit and caught Raffaele by the throat, twisting hard, separating Raffaele's head from his body with an awful sound.

There were hard hits and painful moans coming from each direction.

Troy grabbed one of Annabel's thugs by the throat and with a swift kick sent him flying across the room to land against the wall with a loud impact. He growled in agony as his body collapsed to the floor. Troy didn't give him time to recover as he launched toward the goon and, bending, pulled him up, grabbed his head between his hands like a clamp and twisted hard, severing it from his body in a matter of seconds.

He immediately turned to avoid the girl who was sprinting toward him screaming in anger. She flung her full weight on him. Making contact with him was like hitting a concrete wall; Troy moved slightly but never budged. He stared as she spun around, a dagger gleaming in her hand. She sank the knife deep into Troy's chest. He collapsed to the floor and she was on him like a wild animal. Antonius was right behind her. He leaned down, and putting his arms around her throat, lifted her completely off of Troy and threw her across the room into Arturo's strong headlock. She let out a stifled cry and it was over within milliseconds. Antonius reached over Troy and grabbing the hilt of the dagger yanked it out of his chest. Troy was alert and they both knew that he would heal fast.

Antonius turned to face Raffaele, who was much taller and quite husky. Raffaele's face was dark and his eyes narrowed to slits watching Antonius carefully. He gave Antonius a cold smile that said he would crash Antonius to dust. He obviously didn't know Antonius' reputation among immortals as an accomplished warrior who enjoyed a good fight.

Raffaele threw the first blow, hitting Antonius in the middle of his chest, sending him back a few feet. Antonius stumbled but kept his balance. He launched across the room and caught Raffaele with his open fist right in the middle of the face. Blood sputtered from the guy's nose and mouth, hitting Antonius in the face, but that didn't stop him.

His next blow caught Raffaele again in the middle of his face, blinding him. Raffaele shook his head and put his hands up, trying to brush the blood away from his eyes, but it was too late. Antonius flung himself with amazing speed, landing simultaneously one fist into the middle of Raffaele's face and the other into his throat.

Raffaele sank to his knees, choking and moaning with rage, grasping his chest, trying frantically to take a breath.

Antonius didn't give him any time to recover. He reached down and, lifting this huge man, slammed his fist repeatedly into his face and chest with enormous force. Raffaele groaned with every blow and finally he crumpled to the ground coughing mouthfuls of blood, unable to breathe. Antonius finally had enough; he pulled Raffaele into a tight grip and finished him off.

Giani and Gerard stood back-to-back taking on two thugs, teamwork and technique allowing them to immobilize and finish their opponents. They stood and assessed the damage; five guys and the girl all dead.

Arturo was fighting the one remaining thug, but it didn't look like he needed any help. He decked the guy right between the eyes, sending him flying across the floor, stunned. The thug moaned in pain when his body crashed against the wall. Since he landed by Gerard's feet, Gerard bent down and finished him off.

The guys looked around the room; it looked like a war zone. Troy was already healed. He pulled himself upright and rubbed his temples, mumbling to himself.

Antonius walked over and put his hand on Troy's shoulder. "What is it Troy?"

"What happened to Annabel? She was to meet with these thugs." Rage flickered through Troy's eyes.

Antonius shrugged his shoulders and cursed aloud. "There has to be another secret passage," he said. "I've a feeling the bitch saw what was going on. The odds were against her, so she chose to disappear."

Troy shook his head in disappointment and thanked Antonius for saving his life.

"I think we better get to Sebastian," he said. Giani ran out the front door and through the hedge, motioning the others to follow.

Sebastian was sitting up, leaning against the wall. He seemed to be completely healed but extremely sluggish and disoriented. The lacerations were almost closed and a few, faint lines remained across his chest. His whole body was a bloody mess, but they knew those wounds would disappear as well.

Sebastian's eyelids blinked as he struggled to clear his vision. His eyes were filled with confusion as he scanned around him with intensity trying to adjust to his surroundings, still very weak, moving in and out of consciousness. His gaze fell on the guys and he smiled as he recognized his friends.

"What happened?" he muttered.

Troy kneeled next to him. "Let's get you back to normal and then we can talk."

"Troy," Arturo called out. "I'm going down to the cellar to get the Salve out of the fridge."

Without waiting for a reply he turned and sprinted back into the house.

"Wait...wait...I'm coming with you," Giani called, darting after Arturo. They were gone but a few seconds, when they returned with two large containers of Salve.

Antonius put his arm around Sebastian's shoulders and held him up, while Troy forced the Salve down Sebastian's throat slowly, making sure he ingested a large amount.

They stood in silence, waiting patiently for the Salve to surge through Sebastian's veins and revitalize him.



Chapter 3

THE AIR WAS COOL. Sebastian took a deep breath and with extra effort drew himself upright. Scorching pain blasted through the back of his head and his face twisted in anguish. His hand moved fast to touch the back of his head. He leaned against the wall, pursing his lips while an excruciating look crossed his eyes. He looked at Troy incredulously and his face hardened.

Troy reached out and put his hand on Sebastian's shoulder. "What is it?"

"All I can remember is a hard blow on the back of my head sending me to the floor," Sebastian replied, through clenched teeth. Hesitating, he stared out somewhere in the dark, and finally gazed down at his body in utter disbelief.

"What in bloody hell happened to me?" he asked in shock. "Where are my clothes?"

"It looks like someone cut you really bad," Antonius grinned ruefully.

Troy gazed at Sebastian with a smile, motioned toward his naked body. "I think you better manifested a pair of jeans for yourself," he said. "We don't want to have to look at your ugly naked self for much longer," he added, chuckling.

Sebastian gave a faint smile and soon enough he was standing there in a new pair of jeans. He took his last sip of Salve in gloomy silence, his mind in turmoil. He drifted away again, trying to recall the details of his awful experience. Suddenly his body went rigid, his mind overwhelmed by the icy grip of realism. He rubbed his wrists forcefully, agonizing over the uncertainty of what took place in that room. Sebastian took a deep breath and stared at Troy, perplexed and alarmed.

"What is it?" Troy asked.

"I remember being alone with Annabel in that awful room," Sebastian murmured. He shook his head in frustration, voice strained, lips quivering. "I can't remember what happened, but I have this strange feeling that my life changed utterly and irreversibly," he murmured.

His face reflected the emptiness, as awareness swept over him recalling the torture chamber. He cursed aloud and pursed his lips again, visualizing the failure of his attempt to get rid of Annabel. He gazed down at his partly naked body now and swallowed hard, face shuddered by mixed emotions.

"How did you end up in that room? Do you remember?" Troy asked.

"It was a trap, Annabel had it all planned out. I walked right into her trap like a two-year-old. I saw the men in the next room, but didn't bother with them. I wanted to find Annabel, deal with her quickly and get out before her thugs were alerted. It turned out to be a trap. She was waiting for me. How stupid could I be?" he pursed his lips and cursed. "God! I hate that bitch so much! She makes my skin crawl..." his frustration showed and he took a few steps away from the wall.

Sebastian's mind was now swirling wildly and his body tensed, remembering that his eagerness to kill Annabel had nearly destroyed him this time around. He couldn't remember any other occasion in his long immortal life that'd brought him so close to what could've been the end of his life. He ran his hand through his hair as a cold shiver went up his spine. He was so weak he slid back down to lean against the wall.

"Do you want to head home?" Troy asked, watching Sebastian intently. He was sure that he would need a couple of hours to get back to his normal self. In the meantime he would need a lot of help.

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