

NIV Yes, I know.

FADE [Niv still in his arms] Meeting here is risky. Our relationship is risky. This is why we can never go to my place and take a chance on you being followed.

NIV Phil and his buddies **are** ruthless. [pulls away slightly, looking into Fade's face] I'm torn between the fear of being discovered with you and the need to be with you. It would help if I knew more about you. I feel shut out. There has to be more to your life than you're sharing with me.

FADE It's the way I have to live, and you aren't alone in feeling shut out. But you seem to have a way of knowing things that I don't tell you. [smiles and tilts his head] Are you a witch?

NIV No. If I were a witch, I'd know where you live.

FADE Let's just say I own a building and leave it at that.

Niv reaches into her purse and takes out a bracelet. She puts it on Fade's wrist.

NIV Here. I made this for you.

FADE Your signature jewelry...red and black beads with tiny smiling skulls. It makes me feel bad. I have nothing to give you.

NIV Nothing to give me? I don't believe that. [places her head on his chest]

FADE Look, [holding her at arm's length] you scare me. If you're referring to the sought-after human state known as love, it's an elusive butterfly that will never land here. I say this for your good and mine. Mortality renders all love tragic.

NIV You don't believe in love? Or you've never experienced it?

FADE Neither. I can't afford it. The closest I've ever come to loving another living being is the affection I felt for my dog Vader...and maybe Spam. We have a brotherly relationship, no need to soft pedal anything...verbal combat at times, but we have an understanding that goes beyond our harsh words. He tries my patience with his social mingling and his nonsense, but I trust him more than anyone I know. You've seen his silliness on display at the club, but don't let it fool you. He's a fearless life-off-the-grid comrade.

NIV Uh huh. Now that piques my curiosity. Life off the grid. What do you guys do, anyway? I mean, do you have jobs? You're always dressed to the Goth nines. Are you Goth mafia?

Fade doesn't answer. His silence continues until Niv throws up her hands in exasperation.

NIV Dance with me.

FADE Here? In a cemetery? Isn't that bad luck? I hope you don't want to dance on graves.

NIV Why not? [soft giggle] Are you superstitious? But no, just here under this tree. No strobe lights. No clove cigarettes. No duct tape across my bare nipples like dancers at the club. No Wrong Islands. Just you and me.

FADE I hope you're a good witch.

NIV There are no good witches and wicked witches, no white witches and dark witches. Every witch has powers that are positive as well as powers that can do harm. I'm just like you. Your duality was apparent to me when we first met. There's conflict between your two worlds. If I am a witch, I'm a gray witch.

FADE Like I said, you scare me. Have we met in a previous life? Peering into my soul during this incarnation won't be good for either of us.

NIV [after a pause, looking at Fade with her head tilted to one side] What's this vibe? When I'm with you, there's a disturbing undercurrent...unclear whether it's fear of being caught together or dread of something else...as if a dark storm is approaching that neither of us can stop...

Niv turns on the CD player, and the song Angel plays. As they dance, the Black Rabbit appears in a soft light near the Elmwood Gatehouse.

CURTAIN