The bead curtain to the Chamber of Horrors parted with a flourish, and Aiden slouched into the room, the veil of obfuscate which had hidden his journey through the warrens to this point left behind at the doorway. The mask of normalcy melted away as he crossed the expansive chamber to a large couch, one of a good number of furnishings taken from the sides of streets during moving season or from the back of the Salvation Army Center. Aiden arranged himself on the couch and started leafing through his journal, his steady hand periodically shifting through manic scrawling and rough lettering marking his fluctuating moods.

The journal was rough, train of thought writing, but it still helped Aiden connect his actions during his mood shifts, he ran over the last few pages with his long pale fingertip, *good,* he thought, *no lost time.* Aiden exhaled, forcing all the air from his lungs, and did not replace it. He closed his eyes and lay still, thinking about the amusement park. It was his first time walking among mortals again, after he perfected the perception-bending mask of obfuscate, the first trip he took among the living was to Eden Park, the grand opening marked a kind of rebirth for him.

The smells assailing the senses, the flashing lights and the sound of joyous cheers and carnival games, it had been so long since Aiden had been part of the greater world. He had lived the better part of eighty years before that night underground and apart from mankind, and he still remembered every detail of that first night. Even the sad moment when he looked at the mirror on the merry-go-round and saw his companions reflected without him. Eden Park made him feel alive.

A sentimental tear of blood ran down his cheek as his memory of the park shifted to the decaying and forgotten husk that he had found upon his return from the Drift, it was dead, like him. Even now work crews were renovating the park, fixing the attractions, and rebuilding the wonders, but it still wasn’t enough. A second tear rolled from Aiden’s closed eyes, the Fae play games of life and twist mortals, and the mortals don’t appreciate what they have, the small things, the parks, the sunlight, they have so much that they just squander. How could they let such a wondrous and vibrant place fall in to squalor?

Aiden would fix that, he sketched out plans, Eden Park will rise from the ashes and he will walk among the mortals again, see them enjoying the life that was denied to him. They would see the magic in each moment, each breath, and each sensation. More tears welled up and out of Aiden’s eyes, why had he had to pay so great a price for family? He had endured a week of agony, and faced eternity deformed, reviled, and hidden, spending the rest of time hiding his face from the world. When others can so easily traipse around with blood pumping in their veins, family around them, and light in their eyes. To have a family Aiden had had to die.

*Emmet doesn’t get it*, Aiden thought again, *he is so cold now, more animal than man. What happened?* The memory of Emmet telling him that he was slipping further to the beast gnawed at Aiden, all Aiden had ever done wasfor his brother. Since they left the old country on a crummy little boat bound for America at the age of nine. Emmet was a special case, withdrawn, finding more pleasure in animals than humans; he needed Aiden to get by. Emmet had connections, but often just left notes or listened at sewer grates, he didn’t talk to people. Aiden wasn’t sure when he’d last seen Emmet talk to a mortal man ernestly, and that scared him. Even their sire had talked about the importance of not losing touch, the importance of being part of the world, and Aiden was resolved to stay part of the world, and keep Emmet safe, and it all starts with the Park.

This is who he is now, the Project manager for Fae Relations, and supporter of the whimsical. He hadn’t tried to reach out to his sire; he’ll wait a while for that. A small fit of laughter overtook Aiden for a moment as he pocketed his journal; of all people he was the patron of fun in the city. Between the Funhouse and the Park Aiden was on the fast track to having his fingers in all the silliest and most interesting pies. Not many vampires would understand, not many at all. They were so caught up in their own games, devices, and schemes to smell the flowers.

A clanking sound echoes from down a conjoining tunnel, Aiden hastily wiped away the streak of blood from his eyes, wrapped himself in a cloak of obfuscate, and stalked off into the darkness, maybe this time it was just an animal lost in the sewers…