

## Bite with Height

**When Meg spots a young woman alone in the Pigalle district of Paris at night, she's intrigued. She has to know her story and find out why she looks so sad and alone. After introducing herself, Meg realizes that she and Grace have a lot in common. But when they decide to go and grab a drink together, they discover a mutual love that could bond them forever.**

Meg was hungry. Or, to be more precise, she was thirsty. Taking her usual route down the Boulevard de Clichy, she knew she'd find something suitable to drink if she waited long enough. The Pigalle area was notorious both in Paris and further afield, known for its sleazy bars, clubs, and sex shops. Most young women traveling alone would avoid it like the plague. Not Meg. For her, it was the ideal hunting ground.

At this time, just past sunset, it was always full of people, some going about their daily life, which just happened to take the crowds through one of the city's seediest areas. Others came to stare, bug-eyed, at the voluptuous women trying to entice them into lap-dancing clubs. They giggled behind their fingers as they shuffled past shop windows advertising all manner of equipment for use in the bedroom.

Then there were stag and hen parties—groups that descended on Pigalle, spent an evening causing havoc in the bars and clubs, then left, having laughed themselves hoarse and having drunk a skinful.

Most of these people were utterly harmless. The area was an attraction, a bit of fun. For others, it was much more. Attacks on working girls were not uncommon.

Or at least, they hadn't been. The crime rates had dropped dramatically since Meg had moved to the area. Nobody, much less the police, knew why. And Meg didn't intend for them to find out.

Meg thought she had a thorough measure of the area and its inhabitants, so, she was completely taken by surprise when she saw the girl. By now, Meg was much further up the boulevard, on a strip of pavement between the Moulin Rouge and the inevitable branch of Starbucks. Glancing across at the coffee house, Meg spotted her.

The girl sat at a table outside, gripping a cup of something-or-other as though her life depended on it.

She was beautiful. She was also completely out of place. At this time, the majority of people were here because they wanted to be. This girl looked as though she would rather be somewhere else. *Anywhere* else. Wondering if the girl had been coerced into coming by a boyfriend, Meg gritted her teeth and crossed the road.

As she drew closer, she realized there was no other cup on the table, no evidence at all to suggest that the girl was there with someone else. Meg headed inside and ordered a Cappuccino with an extra shot. Caffeine always did her the world of good. It warmed the blood. Taking her beverage outside, she heaved a sigh of relief as she noted both that the girl was still there, and that the seat beside her was the only one available.

Moving toward the girl, Meg smiled and asked, "Do you mind if I sit here? Everywhere else is taken."

Momentarily startled, the girl looked at Meg and smiled shyly. "Sure, no problem. There's nobody sitting there."

"Thanks. I'm Meg, by the way," she said, extending a hand.

"Grace," the girl replied, temporarily removing a hand from her cup to shake Meg's. She put it straight back on again, but not before Meg noticed a slight tremble.

The girl looked as though she was about to go back inside her own head, so Meg spoke quickly.

"So, what brings you here? I can't help but notice you're not local."

"Oh," Grace said, as if surprised that Meg was still there. "I live in Paris. I moved here with my boyfriend, but..." she looked at her hands.

Suddenly, a piece of the puzzle clicked into place.

"I'm sorry," Meg replied. "I didn't mean to pry. I'm just a little lonely, I guess.

Just making conversation."

"You?" Grace replied incredulously, studying Meg. "If you're struggling for company, then there's no hope for me!"

"Depends what kind of company you're looking for. Can't say there are many desirables 'round here, though!" She looked around, as though to prove her point.

"Say, you want to get a proper drink?"

Meg stood, hoping Grace would follow her lead. She looked down at the girl, smiled, and held out a hand. She watched Grace's posture visibly relax, and her grin grew wider as she put down her cup and took the offered hand.

"Come on," Meg said. "I know this great non-sleazy bar!"

"Sleazy? You noticed, eh?"

The girls looked up and down the seedy block and then looked back at one another and giggled.

"Erotic supermarkets, a bar for your cat—whatever next?" Meg said, linking her arm through Grace's. "Let's find somewhere a little more upmarket."

Meg led her companion toward the much nicer area of Montmartre. A little while later, as they climbed the hill, Meg had to remember to be more human, so she huffed and puffed a little, slowing her pace to match that of her companion.

"Almost—there . . ."

"This had better be worth it," gasped Grace. "I think my heart is going to pound right out of my chest."

Meg closed her eyes to try to erase the thought of Grace's heart—or anything even remotely connected to her circulatory system—from her mind. Seconds later, they arrived at a quaint bar on the street corner and she pushed open the door.

Holding it open to wait for her new friend, Meg glanced up at the beautiful building at the top of the hill. It never failed to take her breath away. Or at least, it wouldn't if she had any breath to begin with.

"Stunning, isn't it?" said Grace, noticing Meg's interest in the building. "I love the Sacré-Coeur. There's just something so peaceful and romantic about it, isn't there?"

Meg glanced at Grace, who was still looking at the basilica, the stunning white structure—all curves and arches—that occupied the highest point in Paris. The girl was gazing at the building with something close to adoration in her eyes, an adoration that mirrored Meg's own love of the edifice. She'd never met anyone who seemed to care about the Sacred Heart as much as she did.

"Yes," replied Meg. "It's my favorite place in the whole of Paris. Probably in the whole world."

"Wow," Grace said, reluctantly pulling her eyes from the magnificent, white arches and cupolas to head into the bar ahead of Meg. "That's a strong statement.

The whole world?"

"Sure. I've seen enough of the world to know."

"Really? You don't look old enough."

Meg laughed, signaling the barman. "I'm much older than I look."

"Seriously? You must tell me your secret."

"I may just do that," said Meg, quite seriously. "But first, what would you like to drink?"

"Ah, what the hell," she said. "Something alcoholic. Make it a double."

The barman was quick to whip up two drinks, after which Meg indicated some open patio seating out front of the bar.

Outside, Meg and Grace sipped their drinks in companionable silence, admiring the view. The basilica was lit up, making it look even more striking against the inky sky. It was a clear night and the stars were out. The scene looked like something from a postcard.

Grace sighed contentedly, slurping her drink.

Meg decided now was as good a time as any. "So," she began, still unsure whether she'd get an answer or not. "Precisely why were you lurking around Pigalle alone at this time of night? You didn't exactly look as though you were enjoying yourself."

Grace appeared less reluctant than she had at the coffee shop, whether because of the drink, or because she trusted her, Meg wasn't sure.

Looking around as though to check if anyone was in earshot—there was nobody—Grace began her story, "My boyfriend dumped me."

Another piece of the jigsaw clicked into place.

"You know, the one that I moved to Paris for? He got some once-in-a-lifetime job offer, so we moved here. I thought we were happy. Well I was. But after a couple of months here, he ditched me. Told me I was boring. Now he's stepping out with some French slut."

Grace avoided eye contact as she spoke, and Meg's intuition told her that the other woman's eyes were probably welling up.

Meg resolved to snap the neck of the idiot who had hurt Grace.

"He sounds like a moron. You're not boring, Grace. Far from it, in fact."

"He . . ." Grace looked up for a moment, then back down at her hands. She grabbed her straw and threw it on the table. Then she downed the rest of her drink, and set the empty glass down. Huffing loudly, she met Meg's eyes. "He said I was boring *in the bedroom*."

Meg's eyebrows shot up almost into her hair. "He said *what*!?"

A tear trickling down her face, Grace continued, "He said I was never up for anything, y'know, different. He wanted to do . . . stuff. And I just wasn't into it."

The jigsaw was considerably less of a puzzle now. More of a depressing picture.

"So you thought you'd spend some time in the sex district of Paris, and what, pick up some tips?"

Grace looked up, shrugged. "I dunno. I just figured that people coming 'round here would be adventurous, that I might get some ideas. Be less boring, I guess."

"Oh, Grace. Fuck what he says! A sex life is only boring if you let it get that way. So, if it was—as your dickwad of an ex says—boring, then he's as much to blame as you. Did it occur to you that he might be a less than perfect lover?"

"Well, I haven't really got very much to compare it to. He was okay, I guess."

"But he didn't rock your world? Make you see stars, all that jazz?"

Grace looked at Meg, the hint of a smile on her face. "Not exactly. He never . . .

. ." Here she looked completely embarrassed. "He never even gave me an orgasm."

"Are you *serious*!?" Meg said a little too loudly, causing people sitting at the other end of the patio to glance in their direction. She lowered her voice. "I mean, *really*? And you still thought it was your fault! He

sounds like a selfish, inadequate loser. You're better off without him. Seriously. The French tart is welcome to him."

"I know that. I'm not bothered about him anymore. It was more what he said about me. I just didn't want to end up getting with someone else, and them thinking I was boring too."

"You. Are. Not. Boring. You just haven't met the right person. Trust me, sex with someone you're totally hot for is amazing."

Grace giggled, her melancholy drifting away.

"Come on, I want to show you something."

"What?"

"Something amazing. Something you'll never forget."

"Well, how can I refuse an offer like that?"

They stood up, and Grace followed Meg in the direction of the Butte, the great hill upon which the Sacré-Coeur perched. It was late, so the steps leading up the hill were quiet, with just the occasional canoodling couple and hardened beggars left behind. Meg jogged lightly up the steep steps, remembering again to slow it down to human speed.

Near the top, she turned and watched Grace finish her ascent. Her superior vision meant that even in the dim light, she could pick out the color in Grace's cheeks and the sparkle in her eyes. She really was gorgeous.

"Come on," she said, not giving Grace the chance to catch her breath, "we're almost there." After the few final steps to the mighty doors of the basilica, Meg waited.

"Huh," Grace grunted, tired now. "What's going on? The place is closed at this time of night. Plus there's nothing in there I haven't seen already."

"Trust me, you haven't seen this. Come on." Meg grabbed her hand and all but dragged her friend around to the side of the basilica and down some steps sign-posted 'Crypt.'

"Whoa," said Grace, pulling out of Meg's grasp. "Where are you taking me?"

The crypt will be closed too. Plus, there's no way I'm going down there at this time of night. Creepy!"

"We're not going down there," Meg replied, tugging Grace along.  
"We're going up there."

Grace followed Meg's gaze with her own, up the side of the building where the towers and dome lay just out of sight.

"Don't be ridiculous. It closes at five-thirty or something. Are you drunk?"

"Do you trust me?"

"You *are* drunk!"

"I most certainly am not. I've only had one drink, and mine was a single. I said, do you trust me?"

"I guess . . . ."

"Close your eyes."

"What?!"

"Just do it," Meg ordered, impatient now. "It'll be totally worth it, I promise."

After rolling them, Grace closed her eyes and stood with her arms folded like some stroppy teenager. Like lightning, Meg's arms went around Grace, gripping tightly around her back. She jumped.

Glancing down at Grace, Meg smiled as she noted how tightly shut her friend's eyes were. Just as well, really. She'd have freaked if she'd seen the roof of the Sacré-Coeur coming into focus.

Meg brought them safely to the roof and set Grace down. She laughed out loud as she watched Grace open her eyes then close them again. Peeking for a second time, an incredulous expression washed over Grace's face.

She glanced across at Meg, who resolved to try to be gentle. This may be old hat to her, but for a human it was mind-blowing.

"Okay, what just happened?"

"Well, we jumped onto the roof of the basilica."

"Okay. *How?!*"

"Ah, that's a little trickier to explain. Perhaps I'd better just show you."

Meg stepped in front of her friend and said, "I'm sorry, there's no easy way to say or do this. So here goes."

She flipped out her fangs.

Grace, all due respect to her, didn't scream. She just gasped and covered her mouth with her hands, still staring with wide eyes at Meg's face.

"They're—they're not fake, are they?" she mumbled from behind her fingers.

Meg shook her head.

Grace seemed to be processing something. She dropped her hands back to her sides—with clenched fists, Meg noted—and asked, "So, um, we flew up here then?"

"Sort of. I grabbed you and jumped. I don't have wings or anything; it was the power of my jump that got us this high. It's incredible, right?"

"You're very arrogant, even for a vampire." Grace grinned at her.

"I meant the view, dummy."

"Ahh. . . ."

"Want to go higher?"

"Umm—"

"Come on. I won't hurt you; I promise. I wouldn't kill you on my doorstep, would I?"

"You *live* here?"

"Got it in one. Smart girl. I knew there was a reason I liked you."

Meg grabbed Grace again and seconds later, the pair of them stood inside the great dome. With no towers and sloping roofs to obscure the view, their vista across the city was incredible. The lights of the Eiffel Tower were visible, as was the Arc de Triomphe. The rest of the city was a maze of shimmering lights set against the beautiful starry sky.

The pair was silent for some time, taking in the view. Then Grace seemed to shake herself and turned to Meg.

"This is incredible. Why did you bring *me* up here? Why not some hot guy you could bite and make into a vampire? Wait . . . is there a 'Mr. Meg'?" Grace looked around as if expecting Dracula to appear from the shadows.

Rolling her eyes, Meg replied, "No, and there never will be. I brought you up here because I saw earlier how much you revere this building, just like I do. That's a rare thing in someone as young as you."

"Young? How old *are* you?" Her eyes widened as she awaited the response.

"193. I died when I was thirty."

"That would explain how you've had time to see the world. And the Sacré-

Coeur is really your favorite place?"

"Really."

"Wow. Guess I can't argue with that." Suddenly, something must have occurred to her. "What were *you* doing hanging around the Pigalle, anyway?"

Meg, seeing no reason to lie, replied, "Hunting."

"So you *are* going to drink my blood!" she exclaimed.

"Not if you don't want me to. I brought you here because I like you."

"Gee, thanks."

Meg looked her friend in the eye. "Grace. I mean *really* like you."

Grace frowned, "Ohh . . ."

Then her eyes widened, "Ahh . . ."

"Very articulate of you. But then I guess you've a lot to take in."

"No kidding. I'm at the second highest point in Paris, at night, with a lesbian vampire. Sounds like some kind of weird dream."

"Oh, thanks! You try and do something nice . . ." Her shoulders drooped.

"I don't mean you're weird. Come on—this situation isn't exactly an everyday occurrence, is it?!"

"No, you're right. I'm sorry."

"No, I'm sorry. Thank you for bringing me up here, this is great. More than great. Sure beat my plans for the evening, anyway!"

"Mm-hmm." Meg didn't want to think about what could have happened to Grace if some scumbag had tried to pick her up outside that coffee shop.

"So, what happens if you don't feed? Will you die? Who do you hunt, anyway? Do you kill people?" Her voice grew louder and higher with undisguised fear.

"Bloody hell, Grace! One question at a time! No, I won't die. I'll just be a little weaker than usual. As for who I hunt, and whether I kill—I'm not sure I should be telling you."

"Well, I'm not going to say anything—as if anyone would believe me, anyway."

"True enough." Meg considered how she could word what she was about to say without freaking Grace out.

"I hunt scum, Grace—the men that visit the clubs and bars in Pigalle. The bad ones, I mean. The kind that lurk around the back doors of clubs at closing time, hoping to 'bump into' a girl. Those girls are usually never seen again. I grab the blokes before they get chance to do anything."

"So you're like a vigilante vampire? Like *Blade*!?" Grace stepped forward ever so slightly and viewed Meg with eyes widened by what might have been curiosity

and awe. Meg snorted. "I suppose I am. I never really looked at it like that. From my perspective, I have to have human blood, and it makes no difference to me whose it is. But I'm a nice person, so I take it from those that don't deserve to be walking around."

"Awesome." Grace breathed. Then, with an impish grin, she asked, "So do you know any other vampires?"

"Not around here. That's why I'm here. I like to keep myself to myself. I find that the more vampires that are around, the more likely we are to be discovered. If someone is careless, or there are too many suspicious deaths, people start asking questions."

"So that's why you're lonely."

"Guess so. It's better than being dead. Just."

Meg looked up and met Grace's eyes. She looked sad, yet understanding.

In an attempt to shake the depressing tone the conversation had taken on, Meg joked, "You ever kissed a girl?"

A shocked expression crossed Grace's face. "What? Didn't you hear me say that I didn't have much to compare my ex to? That includes the opposite sex."

"Want to try it?"

"What?"

"Kissing a girl." Meg moved closer to Grace, looking her in the eye.

"I don't know. I've never really thought about it."

"Well, maybe now's the time to think about it. Perhaps the reason lover boy didn't float your boat was because he had the wrong equipment. Perhaps you've liked girls all along, but never realized it."

"How is that possible?" Grace's eyes took on a faraway look, as though thinking about what Meg had said.

"I don't know, but it could be. Look, in all seriousness Grace, I like you. I like you a lot. If you just want to be friends, I'll be disappointed, but I'll live with it. If you want to take things further, then great. I'm not pushing you either way."

Grace looked at Meg, and their eyes met. A tense moment passed. Meg's gaze dropped to Grace's lips, but she was too scared to make a move for fear of alienating her for good. Seconds later, it appeared Grace had made her choice.

Moving quickly enough to startle even Meg, Grace leaned forward and kissed her friend. It was chaste to begin with, but soon Grace pressed her lips harder to the other girl's soft mouth.

Meg thought all her birthdays had come at once, and for a vamp who was almost two hundred years old, that was a lot of birthdays. Slipping her arms around Grace, she pulled her closer and returned the kiss. The other girl didn't resist, so she took the plunge and coaxed her tongue into Grace's mouth, willing her fangs to stay hidden. Grace would be freaked enough already without her going all vamp-tastic.

Just as the lust factor was really ramping up, Meg felt some resistance from Grace.

She loosened her grip and pulled away. "What's the matter?"

Grace, flushed of face, blurted "Are you going to turn me?!" She backed up further.

"What?! What makes you say that?" Meg didn't move, not wanting to risk Grace panicking.

"You said you were lonely. Then it turns out you like me. *Really* like me. Were you planning on turning me just so you'd have someone to spend time with?"

Mistrust crossed her face, which to Meg felt like a stake through the heart.

"I'm shocked that you would even think that. Hurt, actually. No, I wasn't planning on turning you. I wasn't 'planning' on anything. You just caught my eye in Starbucks, and I felt like I had to know you, know your story."

She stepped toward Grace, who shrunk away the tiniest amount.

"You looked so out of place and uncomfortable. There was no ulterior motive, Grace, I promise. I would never do anything without your consent. I'm not the bad guy, remember?"

Grace had the good sense to look abashed. "I'm sorry. I'm just paranoid, I guess."

"Glad to see you were so into our kiss that you were thinking of anything *but*."

She quirked an eyebrow wryly.

"It wasn't like that. I was into it. The thought popped into my head, and I just panicked. This is all new, and weird, and scary, and . . . ." She covered her face with her hands, sniffing loudly.

Meg took Grace's wrists and pulled them away from her face, then pulled her in for a hug. "Come on Grace, don't get upset. I'm here for you, whatever you decide."

All I know is that I want to be with you. It's cheesy, but I feel like we were meant to be."

"What makes you say that?" Grace asked, nuzzling into the crook of Meg's neck and shoulder.

"I wasn't going to go out tonight. I was going to skip a feed. But something made me go out, and I believe that something was you."

"You know," murmured Grace, shifting so she faced the vampire once more.

"I think you might be right. I don't know where this came from, or where it's going.

But I do know that it feels right. And it feels *good*. "

"You ain't seen nothin' yet!" Meg laughed, tugging Grace in for another kiss.

This time, both girls were on the same page, and the kiss was toe-curlingly sensual.

Soon, Meg pulled away, only to trail her lips down the other girl's throat and begin planting soft kisses, trailing her tongue across the delicate skin there. Grace gasped, and tangled her fingers in Meg's hair.

"Trust me," Meg said softly, fearing Grace might think she was going to bite.

"I will never do anything you don't want me to."

"I know. It just feels damn good, that's all. Don't stop."

"Oh, I have no intention of stopping."

When Grace didn't reply, Meg began to undo the buttons of her shirt, eventually parting the sides to reveal Grace's body. She was so pale; she could almost be a vampire herself. She had pert breasts, not overly large, nor small.

*Just right in fact,* thought Meg as she cupped them together and trailed her tongue up the deep cleavage she'd created.

By now, Grace had shrugged off her shirt and let it fall to the floor. Pushing her so the back of her knees hit the bench behind, Meg maneuvered Grace into a sitting position. Kissing down her stomach, she began to undo her jeans then smiled into the girl's flesh as Grace's hips pushed toward her. From innocent to rampant in a matter of minutes. Meg loved Grace more every second.

"Shall we get these off then?" she asked, tugging at Grace's jeans. The response came by way of some mad wriggling. The jeans joined the shirt on the floor. Grace was now clad only in her underwear—her shoes having been kicked off along with the jeans. And by God, she was stunning.

With pale skin and black bra and panties, she looked quite the vamp. For a non-vamp, that is.

Meg slipped her fingers into the waistband of Grace's panties and tugged them down, the other girl once more assisting with some jiggling around. Looking up at Grace, Meg assessed her facial expression, as if looking for permission to continue. Grace nodded, almost imperceptibly.

Meg needed no more prompting.

Using her thumbs to part Grace's swollen pussy lips, Meg grinned as her girlfriend's pink slit was revealed. It glistened with juices. Her clit was peeking from beneath its hood, desperate for attention. Never one to deny a lady, Meg bent her head and delved her tongue into Grace's folds, feeling her own pussy moisten as she did so.

Grace gasped and bucked, tangling her hands into Meg's hair.

Holding the other girl's thighs firmly apart, Meg licked, sucked, and nibbled Grace's pussy and clit until she felt the girl's body start to stiffen.

"You know," Meg said, lifting her head from Grace's juicy haven. "It's well-known that the human orgasm can be amplified tenfold if bitten by a vampire at the same time."

Glancing down at Meg's upturned face, Grace said, "But how would you do—

that—and bite my neck at the same time?"

"It wouldn't be your neck I'd bite, darling." She bent and licked the skin covering the artery in her groin that she'd drink from, given permission. "I'd sink my fangs in right *there* as your orgasm hit."

"Really? And it won't hurt, or . . . turn me?"

"There might be a little sting as my fangs penetrate, but not for long. And you certainly won't be turned. That I can promise you. Well, that and the climax of your life."

"Well, when you put it like that . . ." By way of a response, Grace smiled coquettishly and pulled Meg's head back between her thighs, grinding up against her face.

Flicking her tongue across Grace's clit in earnest now, she felt the little nub of flesh swell further still. The trembling from Grace's abdomen

signaled the beginning of her orgasm. Once she was sure it was on its way, Meg trailed her tongue across Grace's tender flesh and sunk her teeth as gently as she could into her skin, piercing the artery. She pressed her thumb to Grace's clit, tipping her over the edge.

As the coppery blood filled her mouth, Meg felt like she was in heaven. She felt energy flowing into her, and as Grace bucked and trembled in ecstasy on the stone bench, she felt love. Pure and simple. She knew that Grace might take some further persuading, but Meg believed she'd found her soulmate.

Withdrawing her fangs and licking the tiny wounds to help them heal, Meg breathed a sigh, then looked up at Grace, now spent and slumped against the wall, breathing heavily.

Grace returned her gaze, a lazy grin tugging the corners of her mouth, and said, "That was incredible."

Quick as a flash, Meg returned, "I told you sex was amazing with someone you're totally hot for!"

Giggling, Grace pushed Meg playfully with her foot. On her feet in an instant, Meg reached down and tickled Grace, then took advantage of her reactive movement to slip onto the bench beside her.

Meg slipped her arm around Grace and pulled her close. Snuggling into the crook of her Meg's arm, Grace put hers around her new lover.

Meg listened as Grace's breathing changed, signaling her lapse into unconsciousness. She savored the feel of Grace's body nestled against her for a little

while longer. Then, confident she was fully asleep, Meg picked her up and took her inside the building to the room she occupied when the sun was up.

It wasn't what you'd expect from a typical vampire lair. But then, Meg had never been typical. The small room was full of the things you'd expect a young woman to possess, including a bed.

Tucking Grace up beneath the covers, Meg dropped a kiss on her head before moving to the door. There was something she had to do.

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Back on the boulevard de Clichy, things were heating up. The bars and clubs were starting to kick out, and there were people on the streets in varying states of inebriation, starting their journeys home.

Meg wasn't interested in them. They were harmless, though she did have to restrain herself from punching a guy who leered at her and grabbed her ass. She just gave him a dirty look and carried on walking. He wasn't worth it. Being a drunken pervert did not warrant death.

Moving off the main street and slipping up one of the back alleys, Meg made her way quietly to one of her regular hunting spots. Many of the strip clubs were close together, and so too were their rear entrances. The buildings stood nearly back-to-back creating a long, dim corridor of sorts. There was an entrance at either end, but otherwise, there was no escape. Just how the scumbags liked it.

It just happened to be how Meg liked it, too. She'd preyed on many an unsuspecting lowlife in this dark alley, silencing them forever before they could harm an innocent. Their blood was drained and the body removed within minutes, and nobody was any the wiser. The victims weren't missed, so the authorities were never alerted. Meg got dinner, girls got saved—albeit without their knowledge—it was a win-win situation.

Reflecting on what Grace had said earlier that evening, Meg smiled. She'd called her a 'vigilante vampire,' like that black guy from the movies. Actually, it was a pretty good assessment. Meg liked to think she was a little more subtle in her

approach, though. For example, she didn't need weapons; she already had them—

strength, speed, and feminine whiles—worked every time.

Entering the alley, Meg knew almost instantly that she'd hit the jackpot.

Though she couldn't see anyone yet, she knew she wasn't alone. Her heightened senses told her everything she needed to know. She could smell him. Her nostrils caught the whiff of sweat, excitement, and—ugh—arousal. This bastard got off on the mere thought of what he was planning.

Creeping closer, Meg could see him now. He was leaning against the wall between two club doors. He appeared casual, as though he was

waiting for someone. Meg clenched her fists. This guy was good. Experienced. Sick.

He deserved everything he got.

Reining in her rage, Meg sauntered toward the guy. He turned at the sound of her approach, though he'd only heard her because she wanted him to. Usually they were dead before they knew what hit them. This pig was going to suffer.

She forced a smile onto her face as she got closer to him. He straightened, and smiled back.

"Hi," she said. "Waiting for someone?"

He hesitated, clearly wondering the best course of action. Obviously saying he was waiting for a woman wasn't going to do him any favors. But by the same token, she'd think he was weird if he was loitering in an alleyway for no reason.

"Umm, yeah. A buddy of mine."

Meg drew closer to him, her body language giving him the come-on. She hated this part, but it was necessary if her true identity was to be protected. She had to get close and do the deed with a minimum of fuss. The last thing she needed was for the authorities to come sniffing around. Or worse, other vampires.

"B-but I can come back and see him another time. If you like."

"That would be great," Meg said, curving her lips into what she hoped was a sultry smile. The fresh stench of arousal wafting over her told her that it was.

Steeling her revulsion, she reminded herself why she was doing this. For vulnerable, innocent girls. Girls like Grace.

The very thought of a scumbag like this going anywhere near Grace had Meg's blood boiling. She wanted to get this over with and go home. Where she'd left Grace sleeping in her bed.

"Your place or mine?" Meg purred.

The answer didn't matter. He wouldn't be alive long enough to get there. The man moved into her personal space, and she slipped her arms around his neck, looking and listening for any other signs of life. There were none.

Just before the man could put his disgusting hands on her, Meg grabbed a handful of his hair and tugged his head back. Obviously thinking she liked to play rough, the man laughed.

The sound morphed from a laugh to a gurgle almost immediately as Meg's fangs sank into his throat. She drank until there was nothing left. He was dead before he hit the floor, his face frozen into an expression of surprise. Meg looked at him without a shred of remorse. The thoughts she'd seen in his head while drinking his blood were evidence enough of his guilt.

Now to get rid of the corpse.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Meg got back to the Sacré-Coeur, Grace was awake. And she was pissed.

"Where have you been? I was worried sick!"

"You don't have to worry about me," Meg replied. She almost smiled, until she saw that Grace was being deadly serious.

"I'm sorry," she said, sitting on the bed next to her. "I didn't think you would wake up. You were pretty out of it when I left."

"Where have you been?"

"Hunting."

"I—I thought you didn't need to feed every night."

"I don't, but—" Meg wondered how she was going to explain this one.

"But what?"

"It's my own fault. Drinking a little from you awakened the bloodlust. A vampire's metabolism is similar to a human's in a way."

"How so?"

"Well, with many humans, eating breakfast kick-starts their metabolism. Then they're hungry at lunchtime and again at dinnertime. But if they don't eat in the morning, they can often go for hours without a meal. It's kind of like that with me."

"Oh." Grace fell silent, fiddling with the bed sheets. "So did you, uh, get a drink?"

Meg bit back a grin at her delicate wording and nodded.

Grace's eyes widened, curiosity piqued again.

"What happened? Did you kill someone? What did you do with the body?"

Meg related the story of what had happened, editing out the most macabre parts, particularly of what she'd seen inside the man's head. She wasn't sure why, but she wanted to protect Grace from all of that.

"Ugh, he definitely deserved it. What a disgusting piece of work." She snuggled into Meg, twining their fingers together. "Know what? You're my hero."

Meg sat up straight, looking at Grace. "What?"

"When I woke up and you weren't here, I kind of figured where you'd gone. I got to thinking about what we said earlier, about you being like a vigilante. And it's awesome. You could go around biting anyone you like to survive, but you don't."

You just pick off those that deserve it."

"But—"

Grace raised a finger. "Let me finish. If you've got to drink blood, then I can think of no better way to do it."

"I don't have a choice!"

"Of course you do. You could be your typical evil vampire, but you're not."

You made a lifestyle choice, and you stick to it. You've retained your humanity. You appreciate beauty and embrace life. Or un-life, whatever you call it. I want to be like you."

"Y—you do? Are you sure?" Meg couldn't believe what she was hearing.

"Perfectly. Earlier, when we . . . y'know"—Grace blushed and looked down at her hands, still unwilling to say the words—"I felt something. All that stuff you were talking about, about the earth moving and orgasms, I never got it before. But I do now. Because of you. You've opened my mind and my body, and I want to thank you."

"Thank me? What for?"

"For wanting to be with me. Putting your heart on your sleeve. Taking a risk."

For once, Meg was lost for words. Looking into Grace's eyes, her heart lurched. She thought she knew where Grace was going with her speech, but she didn't want to get her hopes up and get it wrong. She couldn't bear that.

"Do you understand what I'm saying to you?" Grace said, grabbing Meg's hands. When Meg didn't answer, she continued. "I love you, you idiot! I want to be with you . . . forever."

"Forever?"

"Forever. I'll do whatever it takes. Just be gentle."

"Are you saying . . . ?"

"Are you always this dumb? Just do it already, before I change my mind."

As they fell back onto the bed, a mass of limbs, wandering hands, and hungry mouths, Meg said, "It's heroine."

"What?"

"Men are heroes. Women are heroines."

"Whatever. Just bite me."