



DARK MIGRATION

EXCERPT

The young couple we found on the beach had just finished their dinner and ventured out for a romantic stroll in the moonlight. Mimicking the couple's actions, Val played his part well by holding and sometimes kissing my hand, but we often let go to race up around them. A few times we even reached out to touch their skin or to lift their hair as if by the cool breeze off the ocean. Never once were they aware of the predators about to attack. Their ignorance to the danger that surrounded them drained some of my excitement, allowing their thoughts to become clear.

The man fidgeted with a diamond ring in his pocket, wondering if now was the right time to pop the question, while the woman had been slightly disappointed that a ring had not appeared in the bottom of her champagne glass when he toasted her at dinner. There was nothing criminal or immoral about them. Having just graduated from law school, the young man had valiant but unattainable aspirations to make a difference in a corrupt legal system. His long-time girlfriend worked long days as a waitress while attending night school, all her money going to her family to help her ailing mother. All of this knowledge made it harder for the human in me to sit back and watch. They weren't like the surfer. They didn't deserve what was about to happen to them.

I can't do this. I can't kill these innocent people.

I'd been so caught up in their thoughts and my own personal inner struggle that I missed Val's stealthy advance. He greeted the couple with a kind smile, one that didn't expose him for the monster he was. In the dim light, Val appeared completely normal. I, on the other hand, wouldn't. My eyes burned hot white and would be abnormally bright. Staring off at the ocean, I waited as he lured them over by asking if they would take our picture. As I watched the small flags atop the distant shark nets flapping against the breeze, I recalled more of my first kill, Alphonse. The attack happened here, on this beach.

Just as the man and woman approached, laughing at something Val had said, I turned. Behind them a familiar beacon gleamed over the cliffs above.

The woman let out a bloodcurdling scream at the sight of me. Val ripped her from her lover's hand and bit her neck, blood spurting from around his fangs. A delicious sweetness filled the night air. My mouth watered. The man did the only thing he could do. He ran. I ran too, but not after him. I would leave that for Val. Surely he loved the thrill of the chase. Oddly enough, my need to do the right thing overpowered my desire to kill.

My humanity isn't going down without a fight. I have to save Kendrick. I have to get to the house before Val realizes I didn't go after the man. He'll hunt him down so there are no witnesses, and then he'll come after me. Twenty minutes, maybe less.

The front door was locked and bolted. I ripped it off the hinges. Kendrick froze when he saw me. He was in a defensive stance with a baseball bat in his hands. He looked strange dressed in several layers of oversized clothing, obviously borrowed from Samuel's closet. I took several calming breaths before addressing him.

"Kendrick, let's go. We need to get you out of here before Val comes back."

"Seanna, thank God you're okay." He dropped his arms. "We can't leave. There's someone here you have to meet." Seeming to forget about the violent entry I'd just made, Kendrick waved me into the next room.

I got quite a shock as I rounded the corner to the library. Tied to a wooden arm chair was a familiar corpse, now looking only a few days dead. Her black hair appeared thicker, her grey complexion lighter. Bluish-black veins traced a map under her skin, which happened to be the

same odd color of her full lips. Bianca was also wearing one of my designer sundresses with a complimenting red ball strapped in her mouth. Her fully intact brown eyes grew wide at the sight of me as she pulled against her restraints.

“After what she did to that cop, I was afraid she would try to bite me and turn me into a zombie. Seanna, she agreed to let me tie her up. I still don’t trust her, but you have to listen to what she has to say.” Cautiously, Kendrick walked behind her to remove the ball gag.

“We really don’t have time for this. We have to get to the airport.” I wasn’t sure I wanted to hear a single word out of this woman’s putrid mouth. She was Samuel’s first love and she had just eaten a friend, which seemed to revive her own decaying flesh. Plus, she wanted me dead. Surely she’d say anything to make me think otherwise.

“It will only take a minute,” Kendrick said, dangling the red ball from a string in his hand. “Go ahead, tell her.” Smiling, he poked Bianca in the shoulder with the tip of his bat.