

Forbidden Taste

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Amberlyn walked into the private club, her gaze darting wildly round the gloomy interior. As a vampire her enhanced vision pierced the darkly easily, giving her a clear view of the immortal beings gathered there...and of what they were doing.

Vampires, werewolves, elves, fairies—and some species she couldn't even identify—all were spread throughout the large space. Each and every one of them achingly beautiful, even the males, immortal perfection in all its glory. All drawn here to experience the forbidden, to experience what immortal society deemed unacceptable.

In one corner a male werewolf was kissing an elf female, the scent of their passion like a heady caress against her skin; in a dark booth two fairy females were slowly undressing a female vampire, their eyes bright with excitement; at the back of the club a shifter male was chained to a wall, a bevy of nymphs tormenting him with both pleasure and pain.

And the most shocking sight of all? Two male vampires feeding from a werewolf female, her head thrown back in abandon while their fangs were sunk deep into her flesh, their expressions rapt, their bodies shaking with need.

Amberlyn stood frozen, unable to pull her gaze away from the sight of the two males feeding. This was utterly forbidden amongst her kind and seeing it happen so openly shocked her to her core. Her species past was riddled with war and violence, mostly caused by the lust and need for blood, and centuries ago feeding directly from another being had been outlawed on pain of death.

She shook her head. Of course she'd known the kind of things that went on here, but knowing and seeing were two very different things. Trying to keep her expression calm Amberlyn forced herself to look away and moved slowly forward.

She was searching for...well she wasn't quite sure what she was searching for this night. All Amberlyn knew was that her life felt stilted, monotonous, predictable, and something had to change. She was a vampire, a powerful immortal, a predator; who worked a boring eight to four job, who had infrequent and uninspiring sex, and who drank processed animal blood out of carton she got at the local market.

For a long time Amberlyn had been increasingly unsatisfied with her life, had felt as if there were more out there, that she should be more. This restlessness had grown until she'd been forced to explore the Internet, connecting with other immortals who felt the same; early morning chat rooms, member only websites, chat loops. You name it she'd trawled them all, venturing out to special parties where immortals met to 'experiment' with each other, which mainly consisted of sex in public with another of the same species.

Up till now it had been fairly tame and it had not given Amberlyn what she was looking for but eventually she'd met the right people, had said the right things, made the right impression, and she'd secured an invitation here. Libertas, a private club which promised to fulfill an immortal's darkest fantasies and desires. *And they weren't kidding.*

As she looked around Amberlyn tried to keep her mind open to the depraved acts that were taking place in front of her, and of what she might be expected to do in turn. The thought sent a beat of excitement through her, her stomach clenching in anticipation. Would she finally find whatever the hell it was she needed?

A waitress approached with a drinks laden tray. Amberlyn could smell the blood mixed with the champagne and gratefully took a glass. She needed something to still her trembling limbs. If her heart could beat she was sure it would be racing right now.

The club was made up of several rooms. The main club area where she currently stood, one more large space, and then several smaller, more intimate, rooms. Gathering her courage she moved into the other main area, her wide eyed gaze moving over the scantily clad immortals and what they were getting up to.

As she looked around the room she saw a group of females gathered round a towering male. His back was to her but she could see the broad spread of his shoulders and the bulk of his muscles, his size a promise of power and strength. The females all stared up at him, their expressions rapt and their gazes' hungry, blatant invitation in every line of their bodies.

Amberlyn stepped forward, stopped, took one more step, stopped again. She wanted to approach him but felt unsure. She couldn't see enough of him to see *what* he was, but clearly this male was powerful and was desired by many.

But what exactly was he? She breathed in deeply, trying to catch his scent over the myriad smells that mixed together in the enclosed space. The scent of immortal bodies, lust, desire, and aggression. As potent and addictive as a drug. Amberlyn's lips parted, her body warming in response, a rush of wet heat between her legs. Suddenly the male tensed, his body going rigid. His head whipped up and then he slowly turned to face her.

Vampire. The instant she saw his pale skin and burning eyes she knew what he was, knew that he was of her kind. Knew that he called to her like no other male ever had. Amberlyn stood routed to the floor, the sights, sounds, and noises around her fading into the background.

The male was blindingly handsome, with strong masculine features which complemented his rugged frame so perfectly, that even a room full of gorgeous immortal males he stood out. He was quite simply the most mesmerizing male she had ever seen.

His eyes widened when he saw her, his expression betraying his surprise, but as he slowly ran his gaze down and then back up her body, the shock quickly faded to be replaced with undisguised desire.

Deep at her core Amberlyn felt a near overwhelming pulse of lust, so strong it made her exhale sharply. Her fists clenched with want, her body aching. She began to move toward him, not caring about the other females swarming round him, when a dark shadow blocked her path.

Amberlyn stopped so abruptly she almost staggered back, her head jerking round to look up at the male that had suddenly stepped in front of her. She breathed in, scenting him. *Werewolf.*

She was angry at herself for being taken unaware. She'd been so lost in ogling the vampire that she hadn't noticed the male approaching her. The werewolf was tall and thickset, with a wild mane of dark hair falling down to his shoulders. He wasn't unattractive, but next to her vampire—Amberlyn shook her head—next to *the* vampire, he was nothing special. Yet he was clearly interested in her, his expression approving as he looked down at her.

"You're new here, aren't you?" His voice was deep, guttural. Typical werewolf.

"Yes" she replied. There was no need to be rude.

The male inched closer. "Thought so, haven't...scented you before." The innuendo in his voice left no doubt as to what he scented and she felt a flush of heat in her cheeks. Her body was aroused and every male in the club would know it.

"Well nice to meet you but there's someone I want to see." She tried to step around him but he blocked her with his body, his large hand coming out to grip her upper arm. Amberlyn bit back a hiss, forcing herself to keep calm. She was strong but would be no match for a male werewolf.

"And what's wrong with me beautiful vampire. You're here to play aren't you? So come play with me."

Amberlyn stared up at him. *Is he for real?* As she saw the obvious desire in his hooded eyes she knew he was. *Crap!* What was she going to do? She didn't want to make a scene and really she had no excuse to not go with him. But it wasn't him she wanted.

As if he heard her thoughts the male vampire suddenly appeared beside them. His hand settled on the werewolf's shoulder, his fingers flexing the tiniest degree, but from the way the werewolf flinched Amberlyn knew his grip must have been like iron.

"Go play with someone else Dart. There's a good wolf." The vampire's voice was rich, his timbre deep, and so incredibly sexy she felt her body soften in response, though his words

made Amberlyn's jaw drop. No one ever spoke to a werewolf like that and walked away in one piece, but the male took one look at the vampire, nodded and left them. She watched in astonishment as he moved to another group of females and then she dragged her gaze back to the vampire. This close she could see every perfect detail of his face, could feel the power emanating off his body, could see the possessive need in his eyes.

She swallowed and then managed to speak. "Thank you. I wasn't sure how I was going to get out of that."

His expression tightened for an instance, blazing with fury, but just as quickly his features smoothed, his lips curling up into a sultry grin. "Dart means well, but like all werewolves he doesn't always think with his head."

She laughed, relaxing for the first time since she'd entered the club, though she was acutely aware of him. "I'm surprised he backed off so easily."

He arched a brow at her. "Well this is my club. I'm the dominant male here. None of the other males in here would dare challenge me."

There was an undisguised edge of menace in his tone and Amberlyn thought his dominance had jack to do with him being the owner. He was dangerous, was a true predator—and it was as exciting as hell.

She held out her hand. "My name is Amberlyn."

"Thorne," he replied and then grasped her hand. She jumped at his touch; his skin was surprisingly hot for a vampire, a sharp contrast to the coolness of her own. Heat seemed to radiate through her body from the contact.

Thorne drew her hand up to his lips and Amberlyn gave a surprised gasp as he flipped it over, exposing the delicate skin of her wrist. He brushed the lightest kiss over her sensitive flesh and then breathed in deeply, as if drawing her scent into him.

Her lids dropped, her body swaying in response, a low moan escaping her. When she opened her eyes again Thorne was staring at her intently. She felt lost in his gaze, felt an almost overwhelming urge to wrap herself round him and let him do whatever he wanted to her.

"I know why you're here little Amberlyn. You hunger for something more than your boring life can give you. You know what you are and you want to experience the power, the strength, the lust."

Mouth gone dry Amberlyn couldn't answer, could only nod and Thorne's eyes flashed in response. "Come with me then and I'll give you what you need."

Again she could only nod her agreement and without hesitation Thorne drew her into his arms, the strong feel of his body sparking an even stronger rush of arousal within her. His arm circled her shoulders and he guided her through the throng of immortals.

Pulling her gaze from him she noticed the curious looks of the males and the jealous looks of the females, but she paid them no notice. All she could think about was the feel of Thorne's body so close to hers, his scent, his heat, his power.

They moved to the back of the room, to a door guarded by an enormous shifter bouncer. He moved swiftly at Thorne's approach, opening the door for them with a respectful bow. Thorne nodded and they passed through into a small bare room.

Amberlyn looked round, her attention immediately falling on another door on the other side of the small space. Leading her forward Thorne opened the door to reveal an opulent bedroom.

The large space was furnished in blood red silk and jet black velvet, the materials and colors a sensory feast that unexpectedly made her hungry. Amberlyn stepped through, eyeing the rich fabric and the king sized bed with a wary expression. She knew she should be disgusted, should be appalled that Thorne had brought her here, but she only felt excitement, a giddy sense of anticipation at what was about to happen.

A click behind made her spin round. Thorne stood by the door, his expression unreadable, though his body was tense. She could see the rigid flex of his arms, the clench of his fists, the tension in his shoulders; all hinting at the incredible strength he contained.

Her whole body was thrumming, aching, needy, but she wasn't going to let herself be intimidated by him or this situation. Raising her chin she met his gaze. "So what exactly have you got planned?"

His eyes widened, his lips parting to reveal fangs, which were much sharper than they had been before. He stepped toward her, circling her, his movement graceful yet edged with menace. As if he were eyeing her up for a kill.

Amberlyn kept her attention on him, a shiver of fear running up her spine, a shiver Thorne noticed because his lips twisted into a harsh smile. "So, not as brave as you make out are you, little vampire?"

His condescending tone made her angry. "Look I didn't come here to play silly games or be insulted. And if that's all you've got planned..." she stepped forward, heading for the door, but before she could even react Thorne was on her, his strong hands grabbing her arms, his body like steel against hers. He spun her round in a dizzying movement and slammed her

none too gently against the wall. The air left her lungs in a sharp rush and she struggled against him but he was far too strong.

"What the hell do you think you're doing?" She cried out around gasping breaths.

"I'm showing you what you really are, what you are capable of being, if you're brave enough to seize it. Our world controls us, tames us, forces us to suppress our true nature. I refuse to be bound like that. I *know* what I am."

As he spoke, his voice was filled with such passion, such intensity, Amberlyn had stopped struggling, had become lost in his voice and the feel of him against her. In a whisper she asked. "And what are you?"

His head tilted to the side, his gaze fixing on her neck. "I am a vampire...and I will feed."

Numbness filled her as his meaning became clear; he was going to drink from her! Earlier, when she'd seen the two vampires feeding off the werewolf, Amberlyn had been horrified, determined that she would never be that perverted. But now Thorne was expecting her to allow that very thing? *Good God, he might even expect me to drink from him in return.* Even as her mind rebelled, her gaze lighted on the smooth skin at his neck, but she shook her head. She could never do that.

"That is wrong, forbidden. I will not do that."

An angry snarl rippled out of Thorne, his lips curling back off those razor sharp fangs. "Too late for that. In coming here you've crossed a line and there's no going back."

For the first time since she'd entered the club Amberlyn began to feel really afraid. Had she made a terrible mistake this night? She tried to push down her fear, knowing he would scent it. "You wouldn't do that. You wouldn't dare."

His arched brow and the cruel twist of his lips gave her all the answer she needed. With fear slamming into her Amberlyn started to fight him, struggling to break free of his hold with all her strength, hissing and snapping at him. It was useless.

With barely any effort Thorne soon had her wrists pinned to the wall, his lower body pressed tight to her, his erection pressing against her intimately, causing an involuntary shudder to run through her. A sharp gasp left Thorne in response, his lids growing heavy with lust and hunger.

"I will do whatever I want with you; there is nothing you can do to stop me. I am going to sink my fangs into your pretty little neck and..." he paused, leaning closer until his face was only inches away, his glowing eyes seeming to drill down into hers, "...you will love every moment of it."

Her eyes went wide, her lips parting in outrage at his overwhelming arrogance, yet Amberlyn couldn't deny the flutter his words caused in her stomach, the pleased ache between her legs. *I can't really want this, can I?*

She did not want to believe it of herself but when Thorne dropped his head to her neck and she felt the heat of his breath and the press of his fangs against her skin, she knew that she did want this. Wanted this utterly forbidden act to take place. Her body jerked against him, an involuntary buck of movement that brought them closer together. Thorne tensed, his hands tightening on her wrists, which only added to the excitement coursing through her.

With a groan Thorne pressed his body even harder to hers and then bit down. Dizzying pleasure slammed into her and her body arched against his, grinding her hot core against his solid erection. Somehow she loved the sharp sting of his fangs in her neck, the pressure where he sucked, the shudders running through his body as he drew her blood into him. Loved the guttural groans that rumbled out of his chest, vibrating through her.

Her head fell to the side, her body melting against Thorne's. This was like nothing she'd ever experienced—it felt so right, so good—that soon she was lost to everything except Thorne feeding from her. Amberlyn struggled to remember why she'd been resisting. All she wanted was for this to never end.

Thorne took long draws and soon she began to feel light headed, her knees buckling beneath her. Thorne pulled away and Amberlyn had the strongest urge to press his head back to her neck. She looked up at him through half closed eyes, almost in a swoon. His eyes were shot through with red and she could hear a strange noise.

"Your heart." Realization pulled her into awareness. Thorne's heart was beating. She raised her hand, her fingers sliding underneath his shirt to press against his chest. Thorne's heart was beating a rapid rhythm that was unmistakable. She was scarcely able to believe it. "How is this possible?"

"Drinking blood from the flesh beings our hearts to life. Makes us stronger."

Her lips parted, her head shaking a denial, but a wave of dizziness hit her and she swayed in his arms. He'd taken too much blood. Catching her in one arm Thorne tore at his shirt till the fabric ripped, revealing his perfectly sculpted chest. Then he grasped the back of her head and drew her to him, until her lips were pressed against his flesh. Unable to help herself her tongue flicked out to taste the sweet salt of his skin.

"Drink Amberlyn, take from me."

"No." She struggled feebly in his arms, tried to push herself away, but his hold was like steel and he wouldn't let her move.

"Do it, I can feel your hunger. I can give you what you need."

Thorne was absolutely right. Hunger wracked her now, and though she tried to resist, she could smell his male scent, could hear the blood rushing through his veins. Once again her tongue flicked out to taste him and her fangs sharpened in her mouth, instincts she'd never felt before roaring to life. *Take, feed, drink.*

Urges she couldn't ignore, couldn't deny, couldn't fight. Her hands moved round to Thorne's back, her nails digging in to hold him in place. She wanted his neck and had to stand on her toes to reach. Thorne's hand moved down to her butt, half lifting her against him. Amberlyn tilted her head slightly and pressed a single kiss to his skin. He moaned in response and then her lips parted and she slowly sank her fangs into him.

His body tensed against her, his grip tightening into a crushing embrace but she didn't care. Hot, sweet blood rushed into her mouth and down her throat and she almost came with the sensation. The blood she drank from a carton was like drinking scummy pond water compared to champagne.

This was phenomenal, the taste of Thorne's blood indescribable. Amberlyn could feel the life in it, could feel Thorne's essence in every drop, filling her entire body, branding her with him. She knew she would never get enough of this.

Claws digging in deep enough to cut Amberlyn held Thorne to her, taking deep greedy pulls, a desperate moan escaping her as she sucked and Thorne groaned in response. The blood raced through her like liquid fire, heating every inch of her, replacing the hunger in her stomach with a deeper hunger in her very core. Her body tingled with arousal and an overpowering sense of lust.

Suddenly she felt movement. Thorne carrying her to the bed, a rough tearing of clothes, a tumble down onto cool silk that felt like ice against her heated skin, Thorne's body pressing down on hers.

Amberlyn didn't release her hold of him, continued to drink, even as he covered her and shoved her legs apart with his, wedging himself between her hips. With one powerful thrust he filled her, the force jarring her bite loose. Filled with a new sense of pleasure Amberlyn rocked against him, a breathy gasp escaping her at the feel of him inside her.

Thorne looked down at her, his expression fierce and determined, as he thrust inside her again, his movement powerful and savage, giving no quarter, showing no mercy. She matched his movement, lost to everything but the most basic, primal needs and sensations that flooded her.

Thorne's body was magnificent above hers, his appearance both terrifying and exciting. A true vampire taking what he wanted. She locked her legs around his waist and drew him in even deeper, their movements becoming faster and faster. The only sounds were their sharp breaths and moans, the slap of their slick skin, the creak of the bed as they moved.

Amberlyn ran her hands up Thorne's back, tangling in his hair to pull him down for a kiss. His tongue plunged into her mouth and she could taste her blood mixed with his. Their tongues twisted and dueled, their mouths as locked together as their lower bodies. Thorne drove into her over and over, each glide of his cock inside her increasing her arousal, pushing her ever closer to the inevitable explosion. She felt a tightening inside her, like a coil winding up until it was on the edge of splintering apart.

Instinct once again taking over she pressed her tongue to his fang and caught his tongue with hers, gifting them both with another spike of blood. With the taste of each other in their mouths and their bodies moving as one, they both reached the edge. She felt Thorne tense, felt his cock begin to pulse inside her, and then they both fell into a shattering climax. Heads thrown back, backs arched, lower bodies locked together they came, Thorne's hot seed filling her tight, grasping sex. Amberlyn screamed and Thorne roared, the unearthly sound filling the room.

They teetered on the edge for what seemed like an eternity and then the pleasure started to ebb. Thorne collapsed against her, his body shaking, his chest panting. Amberlyn's legs dropped from his waist, her body gone limp underneath him and she looked up at the ceiling in a daze. For the first time in her life her heart was racing.

After a few moments Thorne lifted his weight from her and moved to lie beside her. Amberlyn rolled towards him, her hand settling on his chest so that she could feel the rhythmic movement of his heart.

"I like that," she murmured in a husky tone, but abruptly Thorne pulled away and stood. She jerked back and watched as he began to pace up and down, his expression tight with something she couldn't even begin to comprehend. Her stomach knotted with dread as she watched him but she somehow forced herself to speak. "What...what's the matter. Wasn't that any good?"

He stopped and faced her, his expression frightening in its intensity. "Good? Good? That wasn't bloody good. That was life altering, as you well know."

Relief filled her that he'd found that as incredible as her. But she didn't understand his apparent agitation. "So, what's the matter? You look like the world's falling in on you."

He shook his head and dragged his hand through his hair. "You don't understand." He let out a heavy sigh. "Drinking blood from the flesh wasn't outlawed because of the blood lust it caused; it was outlawed because of the possession that could come when a vampire found and drank from his mate."

"Mate? As in a true soul mate? I thought that was just a romantic story?"

Thorne shook his head. "No mates are real, but they are only found when blood is shared. And when it is it pushes everything else out. The battles and violence of our past was due to mates being stolen or killed. Without the blood sharing we don't bond as strongly but with it..." he trailed off.

A chill ran through her. "With it you would kill for your mate." He nodded before he began pacing again.

"But nowadays that wouldn't happen. No one would steal or kill someone's mate would they?"

"No, but all this..." he gestured towards the door, indicating the club "...demands absolute discretion and impartially. No possessiveness, no bonding. Casual, harmless encounters that are left behind the minute you leave. The beings out there all return to their normal lives the rest of the time, coming here only when the need to revel in their true nature becomes too much."

She looked down, weighing what he said. "So, you and I can't take this any further? Can't act on what we are feeling?" She looked up at him from under her lashes, wincing at the agonized look on his face.

"No. I of all people cannot break these rules. I cannot belong to one female alone, nor can I possess only one."

The image of him surrounded by fawning females jumped into her mind and her fangs sharpened, her nails cutting into the sheets. "I'll kill them," she hissed.

"That's exactly the problem. That irrational rage and jealousy. That is what we cannot afford."

She met his gaze. "Do you think we can be apart now after what we just shared?"

"Yes, if we take this no further, if we keep away from each other, then I think we can control it."

"I cannot go back to what I was before. I will want this again; will want to feed again."

His fists clenched, his whole body tensing with brutal aggression, his breathtaking features twisting into a mask of fury. Through gritted teeth he spoke. "I know and I will not prevent it. You will always be welcome here."

Pain and anger pierced her. Deep down she didn't want Thorne to agree to that, she wanted him to throw her to the bed and lay claim to her. From the look on his face she knew that wouldn't happen. Swallowing the sob that was threatening to escape Amberlyn nodded.

"I'll go and get changed. There are clothes you can choose from in there." He nodded to the wardrobe. Hers had been shredded as he'd stripped her, though at the time she'd barely noticed.

Amberlyn nodded again and then watched Thorne walk away, aching with longing for him. Forcing herself to stand she moved to the wardrobe. Opening the door she looked through the clothes, trying not to think about how many other females had chosen clothes from here, and picked out a short black skirt and silver halter top.

Dressing quickly she moved to the mirror, freezing when she saw herself. Her eyes were tinged with red, her skin flushed, her fangs sharp. She looked dangerous.

"Takes some getting used to doesn't it?" She turned towards Thorne. He was dressed in a black shirt and dark trousers, cut perfectly to fit him. All she wanted to do was run to him and tear the clothes away but she held back.

"I don't know that I'll ever get used to this."

He gave a small smile. "You will, but you must remember discretion. You must never let anyone know that you feed. For all our sakes."

"I know the risks and I wouldn't do anything that would bring you harm."

He sucked in a sharp breath at the intensity of her words and then moved to the door. Before he reached it she closed the distance between them, catching his arm. Thorne paused and looked down at her. Amberlyn could see the need in his expression, and wanting one last taste she pressed herself against him, her hand moving to his back, her lips finding his.

He hesitated for a fraction of second and then took her in his arms, returning her kiss with equal force. She pressed her tongue forward and he allowed her entry. Their tongues twined for a moment and then she pressed her tongue to her fang, giving him one last forbidden taste. Thorne groaned in the back of his throat and then did the same, so that the sweet tang of his blood hit her tongue.

As they started to shake Thorne pulled away, his face strained, his chest rising and falling in a frantic motion. "Amberlyn..." his voice was deep with agony.

"I know, I'm sorry, but I just wanted one last taste of you."

His face was twisted with anguish, his eyes burning. "Me too. But we can't do this."

With a shaky sigh Amberlyn nodded, and with more strength than she'd known she possessed, she stepped away from him. They looked at each other for a moment in silence. There were no words that could be said. Their desire and pain was summed up in the expressions.

With one last meaningful look Thorne left. Amberlyn stared at the back of the door, forcing the despair away. She would not allow herself to succumb to the sorrow and anguish that threatened to overwhelm her. She felt strong, powerful, and she was not going to show any weakness.

Taking one last breath Amberlyn left the room and headed back to the club. The bouncer opened the door for her, giving her a respectful nod, and when she stepped through she was almost knocked back by the wave of energy that crashed against her. Her senses were sharper now and she could feel the immortals around her, the energy of their bodies calling to her.

With a shake of her head Amberlyn forced herself to be steady and looked round, her gaze moving straight to Thorne. He stood with his back to her like before, once again surrounded by females. A voluptuous nymph ran her hand up his arm, her head tipped to one side to expose her neck. Amberlyn had to fight the near overwhelming urge to rip the nymph's throat out and she knew Thorne was right. This was too dangerous. These feelings were too strong for the society they lived in. It would bring them both to ruin if they gave into it.

Forcing herself to look away Amberlyn began sizing up the other males in the club. She would not be with another vampire; she knew that would feel wrong, but there were plenty of other males here that she could enjoy. As her gaze roamed across the room her attention settled on Dart, the werewolf who Thorne had rescued her from earlier. She looked him over, this time admiring what she saw; the strong lines of his back, the flexed muscles of his arms, his rugged features, that wild hair she could tangle her fingers through as she held his neck to her mouth.

As if feeling her gaze burning into him Dart looked round, his lips curling up into an inviting smile when he saw her. Her own lips curled, her fangs feeling sharp in her mouth, and with a sensual swagger she moved towards him.

Though she could never again have the male she wanted, could never again taste him, thanks to Thorne she now knew what she was. She was a vampire, a predator, a hunter. And tonight she was going to feed.