

define them to us, while the other elements are relegated to—what's the perfumer's term—notes?"

Daisy wondered how he knew any words perfumers used, but sighed and told him. "You're a mix of leather, probably from your coat, some gamey scent like musk, likely because you haven't bathed in a while, a blend of black pepper and ash, and a sweeter note of almond oil. There's more, but as you implied, these are the notes that are strongest for me."

Surprisingly, he didn't laugh but considered her words. "I think the first part you're right about, this leather duster has been a part of my life—or unlife—for a long while. The 'gamey' scent as you call it is from helping hide the deer's body the other night, my personal hygiene has nothing to do with it, *thankyouverymuch*. As for the almond oil and spices, that's my allure. We each have it, you know. Some scent to drive the humans to distraction." He flicked the collar of his coat as if to show how hot he was.

Nathaniel leaned in close, and whispered, "Rather like yours. Strawberries and a warm summer day." He twirled a finger around her hair. "They help mask the lingering odor of grave dust and mint liniment."

Daisy kept her face stony, which as a vampire, was far easier for her than as a mother. "You were going to tell me about the woman from whom you stole the sock?"

"Oh, I didn't steal it. She just didn't need it anymore."

Her eyes narrowed as she looked at him. "What do you mean 'didn't need it?'"

His finger trailed the line of her jaw, as he ignored the stiffness of her spine. "At the end there, why did you run around and stop before coming back?"

There was a growing sense of sickness in the pit of Daisy's gut. "Because her trail went ... dead."

Before Nathaniel could consciously register what happened, Daisy held him high in the air above her, holding him by his throat. Her fingers pressed into his neck, gouging