

Blood That Binds Ep 13 - Memory of a Vampire

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Dolan fiddles around at the back of the store, debating whether it will eat up more time reorganizing the small bookshelf by genre or alphabetically by author's last name. He hears Asim sauntering towards him, but does not turn around. He forces his shoulders to remain relaxed, his gaze focused on the two books in his hands, until the moment Asim's hand rests on his shoulder.

Then he jumps as though startled and turns his head sharply towards the big man before letting out a shaky laugh.

"Sorry, you scared me." Dolan pushes the messy forelock of hair back from his face.

Asim smiles with shining, kind eyes, "My bad, I shouldn't have snuck up on you." He holds up a jingling ring of keys, "I just locked up. Going to head out soon."

"Oh, right." Dolan sets the books back on the shelf and lowers his eyes, "Guess I better head out too."

Asim ducks his head, trying to catch Dolan's expression, "Do you... have somewhere to go tonight?" He quickly amends his question with another, "With friends, I mean."

Dolan shuffles a slight step back closer to the larger man and shrugs, "I didn't have any plans. Actually, I don't know many people. Just my roommate and she... well, she has a study group at the apartment tonight..."

Dolan grinds his toe against a streak of rubber on the linoleum, letting the sentence fall into a heavy silence.

"Well..." Asim says after a while, "I was just going to go out for a drink or two, maybe a bite to eat... if you wanted to come..."

Dolan raises wide, impish eyes to meet Asim's, shuffling closer again until their chests are nearly brushing. "Drinks with the boss. Is that allowed?"

A blush rises quickly up Asim's neck and face, "I... well... that is... I'm assuming you're old enough to drink but... I don't want to make you uncomfortable, I just thought..."

Dolan tosses his head, flipping his hair back, "I'm a lot older than I look." He spins on his heels away from Asim and, hands stuck in his jacket pockets, and strides away. "Well, let's go then."

Asim lets out a short laugh and ambles after the jaunty, energetic figure, shaking his head.

The bar is only a few blocks over, and the two walk in the fading evening light. Both are quiet during the walk, taking in the gleam of streetlights. When they reach the bar, Asim opens the door for Dolan and gallantly gestures him in. Dolan flashes his teeth and ducks his head, the neon glinting off his hair, blue glowing on copper.

Once inside, Dolan heads directly for the bar and takes a seat, Asim joining beside him. The bartender recognizes the bearish man and doesn't ask for their IDs before pouring them each a simple cocktail. Asim chatters meaninglessly through the first drink, but on the second one tentatively attempts to get to know Dolan in return.

"So, what brings you to the city?"

Dolan takes a long drink, maintaining eye contact with the much larger man. He then swirls his swizzle stick in the nearly empty glass, contemplating what to tell this man. Slowly and firmly, with some decision, he places the glass back on its napkin.

"I lost someone. I lost...my wife."

Asim nods with sympathy, "I'm sorry....and so young."

"Yes, she was."

Dolan pulls absentmindedly at his lower lip.

"Her family didn't like me much, actually. Except for her...a cousin. That's why I'm here." His eyes glisten and his mouth forms into a calculated somber pout, "She's the only family I have left, really." He lowers his hand to rest on his knee, fingers dangling not far from Asim's leg. With the other hand he gestures for another round of drinks.

"I can't imagine what you're feeling," Asim rests his own hand at his side, and their fingers brush for a brief moment.

"Oh it's..." Dolan slowly laces his fingers into Asim's, "So incredibly lonely." With a tug he pulls the larger man's hand onto his own lap.

Several hours later, the rideshare driver tries desperately to focus on the road and not the tangle of limbs and moaning in his back seat. When he pulls up to Asim's apartment complex, it takes honking the horn three times for the two men to break physical contact and climb out into the cool night air. They stumble, laughing, into the complex. They giggle and kiss through the foyer. In the elevator they hold hands and smile through a few awkward chuckles.

Five minutes later, Dolan cries out Linda's name, bringing a halt to all humor. Moments after that, he sits on Asim's lap, half naked and sobbing, still trying to kiss the larger man who strokes his ginger hair.

Half an hour later, post-coital, Dolan insists on more drinks against Asim's protest. He raises the shot glass high in the air and for a moment the way it glistens reminds him of the fluid bag hanging above Linda's head in the hospital the last night she was alive. He takes two more shots trying to get the image out of his head.

When he stumbles into Maeve's apartment a little while later to see all of her friends still present, thoughts of Linda's pale skin under grim hospital lights are only a fuzzy, distant annoyance in his mind.