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***Chapter One: Affiliation***

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*I rolled over and stretched my arm out to feel for Vadim. I awoke when my hands didn't find his strong chest Kindred: Haven beside me. I raised my head and opened my eyes, to find him standing in front of the doors to our balcony, hands in his pockets. I pulled myself up on Kindred: Haven one elbow and moved the straggles of hair from my face. Can't help that evening show of fang no matter what I do. I'm told it's a sign of a young vampire, and I will be able to control it, and so many other things through the ages. I know it must be disconcerting to wake up to some afternoons, but he's dealt with it quite well.*

*"Evening, Darling."*

*His head slowly turns so he can see me out of the corner of his eye, "Evening," and his head went back to scanning the landscape outside the window.*

*"You worried about Kindred: Haven the meeting?"*

*"Not worried...cautious."*

*"You think the Brujah and the Assamites have teamed up again?"*

*"Truly," he said coming to join me on the bed, "I don't know what to think. I am glad*

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*that we have the rest of the clans on our side. If the Brujah can win favor with the Tremere, or the Torreador, we're dead in the water."*

*"Vasha, all of the clans trust you. They've approved of me from the first time we appeared together as a couple. And we Kindred: Haven both know they certainly don't want the capitol of the nation run by Brujah. It's laughable."*

*Kindred: Haven "Maybe, but if they persuade clan members the leaders will go along to keep favor with their people. And a Conclave is the proper place to voice any concern about you. Anyway, I don't want to think about this anymore."*

*"What do you want to think about?" and almost before the question passed my lips, I saw the glimmer of gold in his eyes, and a piece of tooth part his lips. As he buried his face in the nape of my neck, and began to tease and bite, "Oh that," I said.*

*"Good Evening, my love."*

*A couple of years have Kindred: Haven passed since the Assamite rebellion. A year to the day of our engagement we were mated; and I became Anna DuPree Makarkova. I followed the*

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*Russian tradition of making his last name feminine. I finally learned his lineage; Vadim Vasilevich Makarkov, I call him Vasha or Vash as a nickname, was the son of the best friend of Peter the Great and also noble born. He was embraced after being injured in battle and pleaded not to Kindred: Haven die. Apparently centuries later Lucas had been injured and Vasha had slit his own wrist to save him.*

*Our mating was a beautiful ceremony. It Kindred: Haven was almost like a mortal wedding, but instead of toasting with champagne, we did it with blood. Our blood. I know it may sound bad, but it was a magical night. So we've been ruling Kindred: Haven as a couple for a year. The next step is to choose an heir. Vadim wants someone mortal that we can mold and shape; then bring across when they are prepared for the change. It is rare to choose an heir from Kindred: Haven mortals. The risk is usually too great. If by some chance the human gets scared or another clan member gets jealous it could jeopardize the Masquerade. Lucas is against it. He wants us to choose someone who is already bound to us. He wants it to be someone Kindred: Haven who Kindred: Haven has a stake in keeping the secret. Vadim and I disagree with him. The best leaders are people who don't want to be, yet have all the skills. Clan leaders never understand about such things, they're choices usually have more to do with politics. But all of that is clan business and boring most of the time.*

*Let's talk about something infinitely more interesting...me. My vehicle for curing my own boredom has become a little tavern that Lucas and I have started. It's Kindred: Haven Kindred: Haven become quite popular; solely a restaurant by day, a dance club and bar at night. Lucas has really thrown himself into it. He loves the day to day running of it. This is good, so I can take care of the music, food, and the other entertainment. And as always mixing business with pleasure.... the Toreador have found our place just what they needed to hang out. A couple of the younger ones have even put together a band that plays twice a week. Vadim has Kindred:*

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*Haven applauded the effort as it gives all of us a Kindred: Haven place to go and relax. Of course we have human patrons, as well, but the very first rule I made was no violence. I borrowed a couple of enforcers from Vadim's' force to make sure that rule is followed. It's given me a sense of pride I never had when I was alive. I work for myself now. It's intensely personal. The three-story building has, in deep red neon, "Haven" written across the front of it. I drive around the back of the building and streak into my parking spot marked "Princess". I slink out of the black Corvette and pause a moment to let my dress fall to Kindred: Haven the ground. Floating a few steps over to the stairs that lead to the upstairs office, I enter through the back door as usual. It is barely eight, and the restaurant has been closed for Kindred: Haven an hour to Kindred: Haven prepare for the nighttime activity. However the bar stays open. Sebastian, the day manager, meets me in the office. He is a young impressionable boy, tall and lean. He is always impeccably dressed, and today is no exception. I can see him waiting for me in black slacks and a wrinkle free white shirt. The belt and shoes match. I know I've been paying him well, I don't know many other restaurant managers that wear Gucci. His black hair was a bit too long for the run of the mill yuppie, but pulling it back into a ponytail makes him not only cute, but sexy as well. I have never seen him with a woman, and that means he keeps his job separate from him private life.*

*"Evening, Kindred: Haven Sebastian."*

*"Evening Mrs. -"*

*"Now what have I told you?"*

*"I'm sorry...Anna."*

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*"That's better. Now how did we do today?"*

*Kindred: Haven "Quite well. I wish you'd let me handle the budget for the kitchen. Your special customers can't be that secretive about what they are served that I can't buy it in bulk."*

*"Oh darling I wish you could. But it's not just the customers. It's the chef. David would absolutely Kindred: Haven have a fit if we knew what was in his gumbo. Chefs are artists, they need their creative space. And as long as they keep coming back for it who cares what's in the damn stuff."*

*"I suppose you have a point."*

*"Well, of course I do. Is Lucas here yet?"*

*"Yes, he's downstairs supervising the workers putting up the stage for the band tonight."*

*"Very good. And is Graham here yet?"*

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*“He’s doing his nightly sound check. The rest of his crew was here hours ago.”*

*“Very good. Anything else I should know about?”*

*“No, but...”*

*“But?”*

*“Well, I need a couple of days Kindred: Haven off. My family is coming into town, and they want me to show them around.”*

*“Well, I’m sure we can find someone to fill in. Leave the dates for me on my desk and I’ll figure out something.”*

*“No it’s ok I don’t want to put you out or anything. I really didn’t want them to come. They insisted and I told them I may have to work for a couple of Kindred: Haven the days they were here.”*

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*I could feel it, his mind was open to me and he probably didn't even know I was in there poking around. He Kindred: Haven hated them, because they ignored him. It used to bother him, now he wanted to be ignored.*

*"Why Sebastian, I'm beginning to believe you don't like your family."*

*"No I love them. But to be truthful, they're a pain in the ass."*

*"Completely understood. Kindred: Haven How about I work on a different solution?"*

*"Like what?"*

*"Well, I could have one of Kindred: Haven my people chauffeur them around the city during the day, and they could spend their nights here at the club, or maybe impress them by sending them to a really swank restaurant."*

*"I couldn't afford that."*



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*“And who said you would be paying? Sebastian, you have done so much for me by taking care of this place during the day. Of course I would love to do you the favor of taking your family off your hands for a couple of days. Besides if you’re stressed out you might start making mistakes at work. And I can’t have that, now can I?”*

## **Kindred Haven**

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