



*deepdarkandintense. It was a great little act, I admit. I fell for it, hook, line, and sinker. I never had the chance to ask, but how long had you been watching me? Was that the very first time? Or had your eyes followed me on the way to school, the supermarket, the Laundromat? What was it about me that sparked that instinct in you? The one that said you needed to Covet? To Possess? To Want?*

Part of me knew this was not normal. It was not normal to look at someone and feel so strong a connection. But I *did* read those books--the ones about Everlasting Love and The One and Love at First Sight (--and occasionally vampires). And while it wasn't normal in those books either, when the characters locked eyes it was always like that, wasn't it? That searing brand on their soul, like a steaming prod to cattle flesh? It only happened once. It was always forever.

*It never occurred to me that it always began one-sided, that deep-rooted 'love'. That the male character could look at the girl with his soulful eyes and then, only then, did she feel something, too. Neat little trick, I suppose. It was always he that Wanted and if it was she it was never quite to the same sweltering degree. But by then she's stuck with all this Want and nowhere to put it but inside of her, convincing herself that his Want is more than the sun and more than freedom and more than holding her own soul in her own hands and keeping it just because she goddamn wants to...*

*...But he Wants her, and that's all that matters--never mind that blood never quite tastes as good as it seems.*

Without breaking eye contact with you, I spoke to Maggie and Lucy. I hoarsely proclaimed I was heading to the bathroom and jackknifed up and away from them. I probably didn't have to lie. I knew they watched me walk away, towards you and your bright teeth and your Wanting eyes. When I reached you, we stood face to face, smiling softly at each other. *I don't do things like this*, my mind supplied with a whisper. But it shouted that I should play it cool and so I flipped my hair as you opened your mouth to speak.

*I remember this moment with such clarity, even now. This is the moment right before you tell me that I'm special. And more than that, this is the moment where you make me believe it. And I'm going to smile and roll my eyes and call you corny and you're going to say that you spoke the truth, then--touch my arm, just slightly, as if I make you nervous. That touch is going to spread like wildfire through my system, blinding me to the fact that being consumed by fire is often more terrifying than it is enjoyable. You will suggest leaving--just to talk, only to talk, I'm not that kind of guy, you say--and I will go. I will not think of my friends, watching with puzzled frowns adorning their faces. I will not think of my family, waiting for me to come home. I will not think of that moment I felt you watching and my hair stood on edge. No, I will look into your eyes and I will fall hard, down to where it's just so deepanddarkandintense. And just like you planned, I will fall, try to get out, but never quite succeed...*