

## Humans

‘You’re living a lie – and an unconvincing one at that. You think you pass as a human.’ Matthew’s tone was matter-of-fact, almost clinical. ‘You don’t fool anyone except yourself. I’ve seen them watching you. They know you’re different.’

‘That’s nonsense.’

‘Every time you look at Sean, you reduce him to speechlessness.’

‘He had a crush on me when I was a graduate student,’ I said dismissively.

‘Sean still has a crush on you – that’s not the point. Is Mr Johnson one of your admirers, too? He’s nearly as bad as Sean, trembling at your slightest change of mood and worrying because you might have to sit in a different seat. And it’s not just the humans. You frightened Dom Berno nearly to death when you turned and glared at him.’

‘That monk in the library?’ My tone was disbelieving. ‘*You* frightened him, not *me*!’

‘I’ve known Dom Berno since 1718,’ Matthew said drily. ‘He knows me far too well to fear me. We met at the Duke of Chandos’s house party, where he was singing the role of Damon in Handel’s *Acis and Galatea*. I assure you, it was your power and not mine that startled him.’

‘This is a human world, Matthew, not a fairy tale. Humans outnumber and fear us. And there’s nothing more powerful than human fear – not magic, not vampire strength. Nothing.’

‘Fear and denial are what humans do best, Diana...’