

## *Forever David's*

By Shannon Bailey

As Develyn's dark eyes brazenly raked me over, his full red lips pulled back into a grin, revealing perfect white teeth, and he said, "Why, from our mutual friend, Cara, of course. In fact, she's told me a great deal about you, *Emily Rose Perkins*. And I must admit my *interest* in a woman hasn't been this *aroused* for some time now."

There was no mistaking what Develyn was really referring to and I was on the verge of breaking down. "I don't know what she's told you, but I want no part of this."

"Part of what, Emily?" he toyed viciously.

"Wh, whatever is happening here tonight. Please, please, just let me go," I begged, noting how his grin widened with pleasure.

With dramatic tisking, he shook his dark head and leaned in to whisper at my ear, "What? No bargains? No promises to keep mum. Not to contact the authorities. Or tell anyone about this night."

Now, I hadn't said those things or made such promises because the truth was, I was going to call the police the first chance I got and he knew it.

Snickering softly, he said, "I thought as much. I'm sorry, but you should have listened to Robbie and left while you had the chance, Emily. It's simply too late now," he muttered and spun me around so that I was back down the stairs . . . Facing David, who seemed to be frozen where he stood on the stairs.

The moment our eyes met, David pulled me into another trance and all I was conscious of was Develyn's hot hands at my shoulders. I could feel them burning through the thin fabric of the uniform and as they traveled downward along my bared skin, they scorched a trail behind them.

With his fingers, he gently turned my wrists, revealing the soft pale undersides of my arms. Keeping our right arms extended, he brought our left arms, his shadowing mine, up to wrap around my waist and he pulled me close against his burning body. I felt his hot breath at my temple, his pounding heart between my shoulder blades and his engorged groin against the small of my back.

I knew something horrible was going to happen to me, but I was completely defenseless against it. I was screaming on the inside, 'Oh God! What were they going to do? Perform a bloodletting ceremony on me too? Rape? Both? Worse? Oh God, please help me!'

When David's coldly uttered, "Don't touch her," broke the trance, I heard, between my gasps for air,

Develyn say, "What's this? You're just *now* intervening?"

"Yes," David hissed back as he advanced on us.

"But, *dear brother*, you and your man already had your chance with her. Losing your touch are we," he taunted.

And that is when I felt it. A sharp, burning sensation at the crease of my right arm.

With a cry, I looked over and saw that Develyn had been wearing some sort of device over his thumb.

It was an intricately carved silver talon, inlaid with rubies and diamonds that had been sharpened to a fine point. A point that had pierced into my flesh and vein, bringing forth a trickle of bright red blood.

At seeing this, I wailed in agony and fear.

"Sshh," Develyn whispered at my ear. "You needn't worry about your mortal diseases, Emily. I assure you this stryker has never touched another. You are the first it has pricked. Isn't that right, *dear brother*," he said, his voice dropping low.

Through the tears that sprang to my eyes, I saw David's eyes narrow dangerously and I heard him mutter, "Damn you, Develyn."

With another dramatic tisking, he replied. "Now, now. You know very well that has already been said and done, *dear brother*. After all, isn't that precisely how and why we've arrived at this very point," he

said, accentuating his words by cruelly pressing the talon further into my arm.

Grimacing in pain, I looked in horror from my bleeding arm back to David, finally screaming aloud at what I saw.

His handsome face had transformed into a frightening mask of rage and hunger. His eyes appeared black, as if the pupils dilated until there was no longer an iris. His nostrils were flared and his jaw clenched tightly, as if he were fighting the urge to attack me.

With a chuckle, Develyn tightened his hold on me until I thought my ribs would crack and he offered my bleeding arm to his brother, saying, "Take her. *Mark* her, if that's all you can bear to do. But whatever you decide, *dear brother*, do it now! Or I promise, this night I will take her and make her mine in every possible way."

With an anguished growl, David gave in at last and declared aloud, "She's mine!"

At first, his fingertips felt as cold as ice and his lips were freezing. But as he drank, forcibly pulling the blood through my veins and drawing it into his mouth, he began to warm. And my last coherent thought was that his lips and tongue were burning me.

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