**CHAPTER ONE**

**DANTE POV**

**THE PAST 1818**

Awakening hot, sweaty and trembling, I sat up erect, utterly distracted by my surroundings, and engrossed with feeling antsy for no particular reason. There was a giddiness building inside of me but yet a darkness loitering.

My fingers mauled over the dewy, bleak cement beneath them and, gaping in confusion, I stared off into the rouge lit darkness to find a dozen thick rusting iron bars standing in front of me, as if condemning me to this small confinement.

Behind me, I knew there were iron shackles built into the stone wall to hold prisoners. To the left and right of where I sat was another set of stone barriers growing muck that I could not see but the musty, tangy odour has not gone unnoticed. I sneezed, realizing that I could sensibly taste the fungus growing and that was new to me; but there was also another scent, so heavenly and sapid that I wanted to bathe myself in the fragrance.

Peering off into the opening, beyond the iron doors was where the rouge lighting was coming from, an opening from high up in the ceiling to allow some light in for the captives and/or a torturing device—however you want to look at it.

These dingy cells had no windows but the red glow outside reminded me of blood, mostly because of the essence that enraptured my physical, and for a short while I entertained my exhilarated self with the thought that the red glow was a pool of blood. How delightful that would be.

Nevertheless, rouge lighting? *Isn’t that quaint?* I wondered, feeling my hair rising on my nape, arms, legs, everywhere in which hair resides pulsing through vivacity, so intense and pure, my fingers curled into fists giving it no outlet.

My vision began to darken; I felt myself slipping and I stood up hastily which made it worse because I fell right into the hands of wooziness, stumbling into the sleety iron bars, cursing.

The cursing was followed promptly by bitter laughter as I mulled over my own situation, grasping the irony of where I was and knowing that I was most likely being punished because of her. My thoughts lingered on her swarthy pale brown face, her soft, supple lips and defiant dark brown eyes.