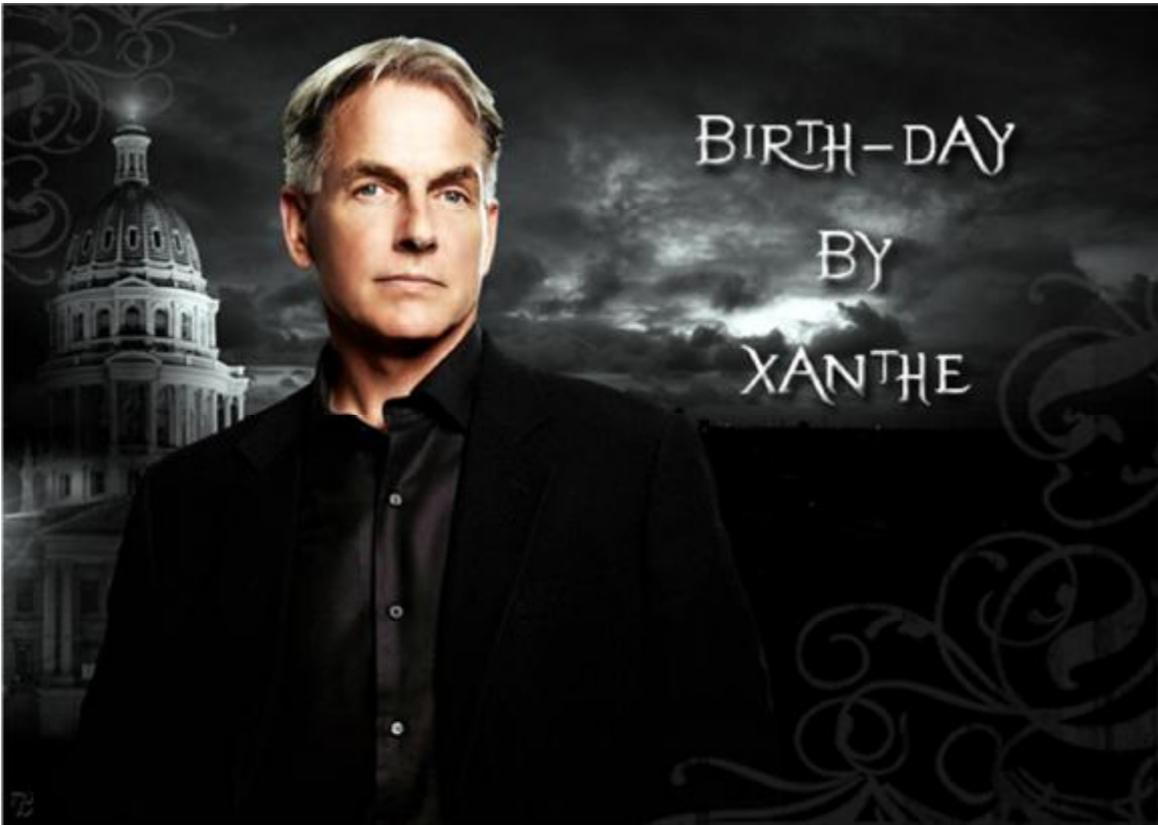


## Birth-Day by Xanthe



Story archived: <http://www.xanthe.org/birth-day/>  
Story Notes:

Warning: Blood-play, rough sex.

This is my first ever vampire fic! I make no excuses for inventing my own vampire mythology  
\*g\*

Many thanks to: [taylor gibbs](#) for beta, and [nikitariddick](#) and [bluespirit\\_star](#) for audiencing. All mistakes are mine.

Tony ran as fast as he could, his boots crunching on the thick snow underfoot and his breath clouding the air in front of him. The man he was chasing veered off the path, scaled a wall into a cemetery, and disappeared from sight.

"Great...just the way I wanted to spend New Year's Eve - with dead people," Tony muttered, throwing himself over the wall in pursuit. He landed beside a tall, leaning gravestone, covered in green moss, and immediately crouched down behind it for cover.

"Jeremiah Bailey", the faded carving on the gravestone read. "Beloved husband and father. Departed this world December 31st, 1857."

"Sorry for walking on your grave, Jeremiah," Tony whispered. "But hey – happy birthday...uh...deathday. Or whatever."

He looked around the cemetery for the suspect he'd been chasing for the past ten minutes, but all he could see were the dark, looming shapes of the gravestones, illuminated eerily by the bright light of the full moon overhead.

"Spooky." Tony clenched his frozen fingers tightly around his gun. "If this was a movie, there'd be creepy music and something bad would be about to happen."

He wondered where Gibbs was – he'd called for backup the minute Frain had run out of the warehouse, but after that all he'd been able to hear was the sound of his own heart beating in his chest as he ran after him. Frain was one fast son of a bitch, but Tony had been determined not to lose him. This guy had killed three marines – and one of them had been an old friend of his boss. Gibbs was terrifyingly focused on catching Frain, and Tony didn't want to have to tell him that he'd let the bastard get away.

Tony scanned the cemetery again, looking for some sign of Frain, but the place seemed completely deserted.

"Silent as the grave," Tony muttered, grinning to himself at his own lame joke.

With so many gravestones to hide behind, finding Frain was going to be a game of cat and mouse. And knowing that Frain had a gun, Tony wasn't entirely sure who the cat was in this scenario.

Somewhere in the distance he could hear the sounds of partying as regular people celebrated the impending New Year.

"Yeah...regular people – not NCIS agents," Tony complained under his breath. "Or at least not this one."

Ziva and McGee had been tracking down clues in Frain's hometown, hundreds of miles away, when they'd been caught in a blizzard that had effectively grounded them in their hotel.

“Lucky bastards,” Tony muttered, imagining them spending their New Year’s Eve in front of a roaring fire with the contents of the hotel mini-bar at their disposal. “Leaving me and Gibbs to do all the hard work. As usual,” he grumbled.

He glanced at his watch: it was two minutes to midnight, and he was stuck out here, in a cemetery, with a guy who had already murdered three marines and wouldn’t think twice about taking out an NCIS agent if he got the chance.

Tony saw movement out of the corner of his eye and reacted fast, turning and bringing up his gun...only to stop on the brink of firing as Gibbs's familiar face came into view.

“Don't do that to me, Boss!” Tony muttered, clutching his heart theatrically. At least he wasn’t alone out here now, among the dead, and having Gibbs around always made him feel better, regardless of the situation. Gibbs just did that to him.

Gibbs crouched down behind another gravestone, just across from Tony.

“Beginning to think you weren’t coming, Boss,” Tony whispered.

Gibbs rolled his eyes – and then he stiffened, as if he’d heard something. He motioned with his hand towards a black marble tomb, several feet away, guarded by a tall, stone angel. Her hands were clasped together in prayer, and her wings rose high behind her. She looked sad.

Tony nodded and began inching his way towards the tomb. He saw Gibbs moving too, and not for the first time Tony envied him his trick of being able to move with such stealth. He wished it was a trick he could master; he was trying to be quiet, but he felt like an elephant beside Gibbs.

Tony’s foot slipped on the icy terrain, and he skidded and rolled sideways behind the nearest gravestone, in case he’d been seen. He lay there for a moment, hoping he hadn’t given their position away with his clumsiness. The thudding sound of his heart beating in his chest seemed unnaturally loud, but everything else remained quiet.

He pulled himself up and peered around the side of the gravestone, looking in the direction of the tomb. Maybe Gibbs was wrong. Maybe Frain wasn't there after all. Maybe he was long gone.

Gibbs was turning back towards him, his attention distracted by Tony’s fall...and behind him, Tony saw the stone angel move. No, not the angel – something behind the angel. Someone behind the angel. Frain. His gun was raised, and he was pointing it straight at Gibbs.

Tony didn't even remember moving. One moment he was crouched behind the gravestone, and the next he was yelling a warning and running to shove Gibbs out of the way.

He heard the loud, cracking sound of gunfire, felt a deep, sharp, shocking pain, and then he was falling through the air with a slow, surprising grace. He landed on his back at the foot of the praying angel and looked up at her in surprise.

Tears were falling down her face – tears of blood. He blinked, trying to make sense of it, and then he realized that the blood on her stone face was his own. His blood was everywhere, gushing out from a hole in his chest like a fountain pumping water.

He saw Frain running off into the distance, and Gibbs...Gibbs was just standing there. Why wasn't Gibbs chasing after the guy? Frain had killed his friend – why wasn't Gibbs running after him?

"Why...?" Tony began, and then he knew why. The sound of his own voice faded in his throat, surprising him. He didn't sound like himself.

Gibbs moved out of the shadow cast by the stone angel and knelt down beside him, and Tony knew from the expression on his face that something bad had happened. Damn it, he'd \*known\* something bad was going to happen – he'd seen enough movies to know the signs. You couldn't expect to creep around in a graveyard at nearly midnight on New Year's Eve, with snow underfoot and a full moon overhead, and not expect something bad to happen. He'd been such an idiot.

"Tony? Damn it, Tony!"

Gibbs put his hands on Tony's chest, trying in vain to stem the bleeding.

"That bullet was meant for me, Tony," Gibbs growled, his face pale as the moon overhead.

"Yeah...I know," Tony whispered. "Sorry, Boss." Blood gurgled in his throat, silencing him. He coughed hoarsely, spitting out bright red blood onto the snow.

"Ssh...ssh..." Gibbs leaned over him and gently stroked his hair. His eyes were dark and sad – and that was when Tony realized he wasn't coming out of this one.

"Cold," Tony whispered. "So cold, Boss."

"Hang on, Tony." Gibbs took off his jacket and gently covered him with it. He looked old, and tired, and grey, as if his world had just ended. He wasn't even pretending to stem the flow of blood now. "You're gonna be fine, DiNozzo," he said softly.

"Liar," Tony gasped. "This is...this is where it ends, Boss. Weird. Thought it'd be dif'rent..."

He could barely feel his body – all he could feel was a cold so intense that it hurt. He couldn't move. He could only lie here, looking up at Gibbs and the stone angel as they both looked down on him.

"No." Gibbs shook his head. "Damn it, no. Can't lose you, Tony. Won't."

"Can't obey you this time, Boss," Tony said, with a faint smile, remembering when he'd had the plague, and Gibbs had ordered him to live. That wasn't going to work this time. He was

too badly injured, and he'd lost too much blood.

A massive stabbing pain made his body convulse, and the intensity of it sent him upwards, out of himself. He looked down in surprise and saw himself lying below on snow stained red with his blood. He wondered if he was dead now, but he could still see a faint misting of breath on the air in front of his face. It was calm and peaceful up here and nothing hurt. Soon it would be over, and he could float away forever.

A cacophony of loud cheers broke out in the distance, and then the joyful, inebriated tones of 'Auld Lang Syne' began to echo around the cold, lonely cemetery.

"Should old acquaintance be forgot and never brought to mind..."

"Tony! Stay with me!"

He watched Gibbs slapping his face, ordering him to return, and all of a sudden he was back in his body. The pain hit him immediately – he was cold, so cold that he was shaking, and it hurt so much – in his chest, in his heart, everywhere. Damn it, it hurt! Gibbs should have just let him go. He didn't want to be back here, in this body that was so near to death.

Gibbs was still looking down on him, his face framed against the dark sky above. His skin seemed unnaturally pale, as if it he'd been chiseled out of white marble. The moon was casting silver light over his hair, and the expression on his face was one of intense anger and sorrow. He looked like some lonely, vengeful god, unsure whether to howl in grief, or unleash his fury on the world. Tony watched him struggle with himself, and then he seemed to come to some kind of a decision.

Gibbs leaned forward and spoke directly into Tony's ear. "Doesn't have to end this way, Tony."

Tony blinked.

"D'you hear me? You don't have to die like this. Do you want to die, Tony?"

Tony didn't understand. He wasn't even sure what he was being asked.

"Nobody wants to die, Boss," he said faintly.

"Some people do," Gibbs told him, with an impatient jerk of his head. "But not you, Tony. You've always been too full of life. That's one of the things I've always loved about you." He caressed Tony's cold cheek with gently stroking fingers. "So many things to love about you, Tony."

Tony struggled to concentrate. Gibbs's eyes were an unnaturally intense shade of blue. They glowed in the moonlight, and he looked so much older now. Tony had a sense of great power being kept tightly leashed.

"I've known so many mortals over the years." Gibbs sounded weary to his bones, and Tony couldn't make sense of his words. "But it's been a long time since I last loved one the way I love you. You made me smile again, Tony – and I didn't think anyone could do that."

His lips quirked upwards, in a sad parody of a smile. He put his blood-stained hands on either side of Tony's head and lifted Tony's face towards him. Those intense blue eyes were so close now. Tony gazed at him, transfixed.

"I'm being selfish, I know," Gibbs told him. "I said I'd never do this again, but I can't help it. I'm not ready to lose you. I've been lonely for too long. I'm sorry, Tony."

"Sorry...?" Tony whispered. "Never ap...apolo...gise. Sign of..." He couldn't say the rest. He was fading away, his cold body becoming one with the frozen earth beneath.

"Not between friends – never between friends," Gibbs said softly. "Forgive me, Tony."

Gibbs leaned over him, his face coming closer and closer. He opened his mouth and his teeth looked more like fangs, gleaming in the moonlight. As Tony watched, they extended, growing longer and longer. They weren't the little pointy teeth of a domestic cat – they were more like the impressive fangs of a sabre-toothed tiger; long, curved, and wildly beautiful. They reached down almost to Gibbs's jaw.

"Ssh...trust me," Gibbs said, and then he sank those sharp, beautiful teeth into Tony's neck.

It should have hurt, but it didn't. Maybe he was too far gone to feel the pain. Gibbs held him close and stroked Tony's hair gently as he sucked the remaining blood from Tony's depleted body.

There was a strange kind of peace to it, Tony thought, gazing up blearily into the night sky. If this was death, it wasn't so bad. It definitely wasn't as bad as the pain of the bullet wound. This was a gentler kind of death. There was something almost seductive about having your blood sucked from your body in this way. Okay, so he probably should be at least a little freaked out to find out that his boss was a vampire, but this close to death it was hard to be freaked out by anything.

All he knew was that Gibbs was holding him tenderly and sucking his life from his body so very gently, and Tony felt peaceful and happy as his mortal body slowly died.

Gibbs pulled away and placed Tony's body gently back on the snow. Tony was aware that he was dead – his eyes were open, his body was unmoving, and he could tell he wasn't breathing any more. Yet he was aware of his surroundings, and he could still see. It was the strangest sensation.

He gazed in fascination at the droplets of his own blood running down Gibbs's fine white fangs. Gibbs raised his arm and sank his fangs into his own wrist, making the blood flow. Then he placed his wrist over Tony's lips and squeezed out his blood onto Tony's tongue. Tony lay there, unable to move, wondering what the hell was happening. Should blood taste

this good? It was warm and delicious, sweet and spicy – like a combination of hot chocolate and mulled wine.

"Drink," Gibbs urged.

The blood warmed his frozen body, returning it to life, and he was surprised to find that he could move his lips and tongue. He sucked down on Gibbs's wrist – feebly at first, and then with more gusto. The blood flowed freely into his belly and out into his veins. It filled him, and he felt his strength slowly starting to return. Now he sucked down hard, like an infant on his mother's breast. He felt greedy, giddy, and desperate to suck as much of this intoxicating liquid into his body as he could.

"Ssh...there's plenty...ssh..." Gibbs crooned to him, stroking his hair as he drank.

Tony couldn't stop drinking. He held onto Gibbs's arm as tight as he could and drank like a man drowning of thirst, feeling stronger by the second.

Then, eventually, Gibbs pulled away. Tony growled in anger and tried to grab his arm back, but Gibbs slapped the back of his head.

"Enough. I know you want more, but that's all I can spare for now."

Tony gazed at him, spellbound. "What just happened? What did you do? What the hell are you?" He traced a hand over the wound on his chest to find that it was no longer gushing blood. He slipped his finger into the hole where the bullet had pierced his heart. "What am I?" he asked in wonder.

"You'll find out soon enough," Gibbs replied. He seemed taller, and his eyes were blazing an unnaturally vivid shade of blue. His hair seemed longer, softer, and silkier, rippling in several different hues of silver. Tony didn't know if Gibbs had changed or his perception of Gibbs had changed.

He leaned forward, and Tony gasped as he slid his finger into the hole in Tony's chest. Gibbs flicked out the spent bullet that had killed Tony, and handed it to him.

"Some like to keep what killed them. It's a superstition; supposed to protect you from dying again." Gibbs shrugged. "Load of crap if you ask me, but it's up to you."

Tony wrapped his fingers around the blood-stained bullet and then slipped it into his pocket; he wasn't ready to part with it yet. Gibbs jerked his head impatiently.

"Come with me. We need to find you a nice hot meal."

He grinned and his teeth gleamed in the darkness. His fangs were still extended, and he looked both beautiful and dangerous. Tony felt his cock harden, and he glanced down, mortified. Gibbs laughed.

"Yeah – that's a common side effect. Sex and blood – they're pretty much all you'll think about for awhile. Newborns are always the same."

He reached out, grabbed Tony's arms, and pulled him effortlessly to his feet. Tony was surprised by how light his own body felt. He jumped into the air and easily cleared one of the gravestones.

"Look at me, Boss!" he laughed. "Look at me – I can fly!"

He couldn't – but it felt damn close to it as he ran across the snow. He was moving as fast and silently as Gibbs always moved. It felt so easy – like floating. His feet were barely touching the ground.

Blood was pounding in his veins, in his cock, making him want to run, and feed, and fuck, and...

He ran headfirst into Gibbs and fell down onto his back in the snow. How the hell had Gibbs got in front of him?

"Ssh, boy," Gibbs growled, towering over him. "You're not yet fully changed, and the blood I gave you won't feed you for long – don't use it all up."

Tony gazed up at him, awe-struck; Gibbs looked dark, and brooding, and scary, and...

"You're damn sexy, Boss," Tony blurted. "How come I never realized just how sexy before? You're \*hot\*." He was on his feet in an instant, nuzzling at Gibbs's neck. Gibbs had blood on him – Tony's own blood – and the scent of that, combined with Gibbs's own scent, was driving Tony wild.

Gibbs rolled his eyes and shoved him away. "Like I said, blood and sex – it's all the newborn think about. You'll get over it. In time. Now come with me – and be quiet."

"Don't wanna get over it, Boss," Tony muttered, trailing along behind Gibbs as ordered.

He knew that he should be shocked by what had just happened, but somehow he wasn't. Maybe it was his new state making him giddy, but he felt as carefree and innocent as a child. He had lots of questions, but they could wait – right now there was an exciting new world to be explored. Gibbs was leaving footprints in the snow, and Tony made a game of jumping into them with each step he took.

The world was painted in such vivid colours. The darkness of the night sky was a deeper, more profound shade of black than he'd ever noticed before, and the stars brighter, like the most dazzlingly clear diamonds, sparkling in the sky.

Snow started to fall, and Tony leaped upwards, trying to catch the flakes in his mouth as they fell to earth. He could hear each and every snowflake he missed as they landed with a wet plop on the snowy ground. Tony danced in the air, catching snowflakes on his tongue.

He was alive! He was beautifully, gloriously, insanely alive. He had died here, in this cemetery, and a stone angel had shed tears of blood over his body. But now he was reborn – and he felt wild, invincible, and full of life.

He boogied among the snowflakes, laughing as they melted on his eyelashes. Ahead of him Gibbs turned, and smiled at him fondly, like a proud parent.

"Are you a vampire?" Tony asked, leaping into the air and chasing down a whole row of snowflakes, savouring the taste of them, crisp and cold on his tongue.

"Yes, Tony. I'm a vampire," Gibbs replied, with a roll of his eyes. His teeth had retracted, but he still looked dangerously beautiful, full of dark, predatory intent.

"And me? Am I vampire too?" Tony asked, still dancing.

"Not yet," Gibbs replied. "But you will be soon if we can complete the transformation successfully – and I damn well intend to make that happen."

"How long?" Tony asked, fascinated. "For you? How long have you been a vampire?"

"A long time," Gibbs replied. "I'll tell you all about it one day, but we don't have time right now. Your body is going through a massive change. We need to do two more things if you're going to complete and become..." He paused, and he looked both sad and determined at the same time. "Become what I am. First, we need to get you fed."

"Fed?" Tony's stomach clenched hungrily, and he longed to taste the warm, sweet tang of blood again. "Where?" he asked. Then, more tremulously, "Or should that be who?"

"Well – that bastard who killed you can't have got too far," Gibbs said, and his lips quirked upwards in a grim kind of smile. He resumed tramping through the snow.

"Sounds good." Tony grinned, rushing through the snow after him. "And the second thing?" he asked.

"Hmm?" Gibbs turned to frown at him.

"You said we had to do two things to help me complete the transformation?"

Gibbs gave him an inscrutable look and shook his head. "You'll find out soon enough."

Tony only half heard him. He danced up to catch another snowflake and then fell back down again. He felt suddenly tired and very weak. He went down onto his knees, gasping for air. Gibbs was by his side in seconds.

"I told you to take it easy," he growled.

"Sorry, Boss," Tony said contritely.

Gibbs hauled him to his feet effortlessly, as if he was a child. He pulled one of Tony's arms around his own shoulders and supported him as they walked. Tony leaned in close and nuzzled at his jaw and then along to his hair. He found Gibbs's ear lobe and sucked down on it.

"Later," Gibbs told him, flicking his face to push Tony's questing lips away.

"Promise?" Tony asked, wondering how he'd never noticed how incredibly good Gibbs smelled before now.

"Yeah." Gibbs grinned at him, and his teeth extruded momentarily, giving him a wolfish look. Then they retracted, sliding back into his gums in an instant. "Should be careful what you wish for though, Tony. First rut is...intense."

Tony gazed at him solemnly. "Don't care. Want you...hey, this is weird. Am I gay? Are you gay? Are all vampires gay, Boss?" he asked.

Gibbs laughed. "Nah – we just like to fuck. It's a vampire thing. Took me awhile to get used to it too, but vampires don't give a damn about gender. We just like the thrill of the rut. There's an old saying that vampires will fuck anything and suck anything." He paused, looking thoughtful. "But I don't think that's true. I don't give a damn what sex they are, but I prefer to at least like the people I fuck."

"And the sucking?" Tony asked.

Gibbs's expression darkened. "Blood always tastes good – but I only feed from the willing or the bad."

"That why you became an NCIS agent? So you'd have access to a database full of the bad?"

Gibbs gave a little grunt. "It helps narrow it down a little, yeah." He glanced sideways at Tony as they walked. "Maybe now's a good time to tell you the rules."

"There are rules?" Tony sighed. "What am I saying? Of course there are rules! There are always rules with you, Boss."

Gibbs grinned again – Tony liked the way his teeth gleamed in the moonlight. They still looked sharp and deadly, even retracted.

"First rule – don't kill unless it's justified. You can feed, but don't kill. It's hard to stop when you're hungry, but if you kill anyone other than a killer I'll drive a stake through your heart myself."

Tony gazed at him, wide-eyed. "A stake? What about the other stuff? You know, garlic, silver bullets, crucifixes – oh, hey, I \*know\* you can go out in the sun, Boss!"

Gibbs laughed out loud. Gibbs didn't laugh much, and Tony had always loved the sound. He loved it even more now – it had a deep, sensual resonance and was full of amused affection.

"Most of what you've heard about vampires is a load of crap. I love the taste of garlic, crucifixes don't do a damn thing, and while most vampires prefer the night, that's more 'cause we're naturally nocturnal – the sun doesn't actually hurt us. Now a silver bullet would hurt, sure, but it wouldn't kill me. No kind of bullet could."

"So I threw myself in front of that bullet for nothing back there," Tony said sadly, gesturing over his shoulder in the direction of the stone angel behind them. "I died for nothing?"

Gibbs turned his face and looked directly at him. "No, Tony. Not for nothing."

"That why you turned me into this?" Tony asked, leaning more heavily on Gibbs. His legs felt like they wouldn't hold him up for much longer. "'Cause you felt guilty that I'd died saving your life when it didn't need saving?"

Gibbs stopped and hauled Tony into a more upright position.

"No," Gibbs said softly. "That's not why. Wish I coulda told you what I am, Tony, but it's a blood law among my people, not to be broken on pain of everlasting death. No vampire is allowed to tell the mortals the truth about our kind."

"I guess if people knew then they'd hunt you down and kill you, huh?"

"Ya think, DiNozzo?" Gibbs grunted, walking Tony forwards again. Tony was so tired that he could barely stand, let alone walk, and Gibbs was virtually dragging him through the snow now.

"First rule of fight club," Tony murmured. "So how can you – we – be killed, Boss?"

"Only two ways to kill a vampire are to completely take out the heart – stake's a good way of doing it, if you know how to wield one properly, but a knife works just as well. Or cut off the head."

"Movies got it wrong then," Tony mused. "Just like with the teeth. Those little pointy things they grow in the movies are nothing like as impressive as the real thing. Show me your teeth again, Boss!"

He glanced at Gibbs, wanting another glimpse of those long, elegant, curving fangs, but Gibbs just gazed back at him sternly, his teeth remaining firmly retracted.

"Right. Don't talk about the teeth. Okay. So, what are the other rules, Boss?"

"I'm your maker – that means you have to obey me," Gibbs told him firmly.

It was Tony's turn to laugh now. "Well, that's no different to always!"

"Yeah – didn't think you'd have any trouble with that one," Gibbs said, and then he dropped Tony suddenly and unexpectedly onto the ground. Tony lay there, winded.

"Wha...?"

"Ssh." Gibbs motioned with his head. "I can smell our prey." Tony raised his head in the air, but he couldn't smell anything. "Follow me. Do not make a sound," Gibbs warned.

Tony struggled to get to his feet. His body was heavy and weak. He felt as if he had lead in his veins instead of blood. Blood...his stomach clenched again, and he felt a burning need to feed. Damn it, he was so hungry.

He trailed along behind Gibbs, unable to think about anything but what it would feel like to taste blood warming the back of his throat again. Gibbs paused behind another gravestone, right on the furthest, loneliest, darkest edge of the cemetery.

"He's there," he said, and now Tony understood how Gibbs had known their prey was behind the tomb with the stone angel, back where he'd died. Gibbs's senses were far more finely honed than any human ones – or his own newly forming vampire senses.

Gibbs turned to him. "Stay here. I'll call you over when I have him. I'll feed first, and then you can finish him off."

"Why do you get to go first?" Tony pouted. Gibbs slapped the back of his head.

"I'm your maker – I always get to go first. Besides, your teeth haven't come in yet."

Tony was startled to realize that was true. He pressed them cautiously with his finger, but Gibbs was right – they weren't remotely pointy.

"Why?" he asked. Gibbs looked irritated by his constant questions, but answered him anyway.

"They don't come in until after your first kill," he explained. "And you can't make the kill without them – that's why you need your maker to help you complete your transition."

"Sounds stupid."

Gibbs shrugged. "My guess is it's a failsafe, for those makers who regret their impulse to bring a new vampire into the world. If they don't help their offspring complete the transition, they die within twenty-four hours of being birthed."

"Why would they regret...?" Tony began.

"Because you're my responsibility for the next twenty years!" Gibbs growled. "Bound to me by the laws of blood. If you transgress, I answer for you. That's why you have to obey me."

"Twenty years?" Tony frowned.

"Don't worry, DiNozzo – when you're a vampire time passes very quickly." Gibbs peered around the side of the gravestone, gazing intently at the trees in the distance.

"Wasn't worried. Sounds good." Tony smiled happily. The thought of spending the next twenty years with Gibbs wasn't a problem for him at all.

Gibbs flashed him an unexpected smile and then turned back. "Stay here," he ordered over his shoulder. "Do not come out until I tell you," and then he was gone.

Tony watched, his mouth hanging open in stunned surprise, as Gibbs flew through the air like a demon. His boss – his \*maker\* – moved with incredible speed and grace, honing in on their prey with utter precision.

He landed among the trees, and Tony heard a startled scream. Then something was thrown out of the trees and landed with a heavy thud several feet away from him. He saw Lucas Frain, the man who had killed him, lying there, winded, and looking up into the air in horrified surprise.

Gibbs flew out of the trees and descended on Frain, his teeth fully extended and razor sharp. He grabbed Frain's hair, pulled back his head, and sank his fangs into his neck without pausing. Frain gave another little cry and then fell back against Gibbs, panting, like a deer being savaged by a lion. He didn't struggle again – Tony knew instinctively that some secretion in Gibbs's saliva was calming him, and he remembered how good it had felt when Gibbs had sucked his blood when he'd lain dying back there.

Tony grew even hungrier as he watched Gibbs feed. He was so close that he could smell the blood, and his stomach cramped again. He wanted to creep out from his hiding place and share the kill, but Gibbs had ordered him to remain here, and he was acutely aware of the obedience he owed to his maker. This wasn't like being his boss's subordinate at NCIS. This went deeper. Gibbs had \*made\* him. Gibbs \*owned\* him. It was an allegiance of blood – and that wasn't something any human could understand. Now he had an inkling of what 'blood laws' were. They weren't like human laws, to be obeyed or cast aside at will. They went much deeper.

So he waited, impatiently, smelling the blood, needing the blood, wanting to bite and suck and feed until it was all he could think about. And then, at last, Gibbs raised his head and called him over. His weariness forgotten, Tony was by his maker's side in an instant. Gibbs had blood running down his jaw, and he looked utterly and beautifully depraved.

"Feed," Gibbs ordered, releasing his grip on their prey. The man who had killed Tony gazed up at him from dreamy, befuddled eyes. Tony knew, instinctively, that Gibbs had taken about a quarter of their prey's blood; his maker had been generous and left Tony with plenty.

Tony lowered his head and lapped at the blood on the man's neck, then took hold of him, held him in place, and sucked down hard. The blood of his first kill was more delicious than anything he'd tasted during his years as a mortal. He could sense the beating of his prey's heart and feel it pumping more and more of that ambrosial substance into his mouth. He was lost in the sensation, completely seduced by the pleasure of tasting all that thick, dark, sticky sweetness as it flowed down his throat.

He felt his prey's heart begin to slow, and he had to work harder now to suck the remains of his blood from his body. The part of him that had been so recently human thought that maybe he should be disgusted by this, but he wasn't. This man had killed him; he'd destroyed the only life Tony had known, taking it from him in the blink of an eye. If it wasn't for Gibbs he'd be dead by now, and his body would be lying cold and still beneath that stone angel.

His prey was going through his death throes, gurgling and convulsing under him, and Tony growled and fastened on even harder, determined to suck every last piece of life from his victim.

Then there was nothing; no beating heart, no fresh blood...nothing. His prey was dead.

Tony drew back, aware that he had blood all over his chin. It was dripping down his jaw and onto his already blood-stained shirt. He felt full, sated, and dizzy. His body was tingling all over, like he was shedding one skin and growing another.

He got up and staggered backwards. There was a roaring sound in his head, his heart was beating too fast, and he was so hot he felt like he was ablaze. He could feel every single drop of blood coursing through his veins, burning him from the inside out as it pounded around his body.

Gibbs was gazing at him intently.

"What's happening to me?" Tony cried. "Gibbs! What the hell is happening to me?"

"You're going through the next part of the transformation."

"I feel like I'm dying!"

"You are, in a way," Gibbs told him impassively.

Tony scrambled to release the tightness of his shirt collar and then yanked off his jacket and threw it on the ground.

"I'm on fire! Help me!" he panted. "Please!"

But Gibbs just stood there, his eyes clear and knowing – and a little bit amused. "You'll be fine," he said. "It's all normal." He glanced around the graveyard, scanning it warily, as if searching for something.

"You went through this too?" Tony sank to his knees, gasping for air.

"Yes – every vampire does. First you have the little birth, when you take your maker's blood – that's what starts the change. You feel so alive – as if you can walk on water – but it doesn't last. Then, after your first kill, that's when the real birth happens. That's when your entire body chemistry changes."

"That's what's happening to me now?" Tony wanted to tear his skin from his body. It felt so oppressive, as if his own flesh was smothering him.

"Yes." Gibbs leaned over him and wrapped his hand in Tony's hair. "But there's one more thing that has to happen to complete the change," he whispered in Tony's ear. "One more thing you have to do if you want this new life I've given you."

Tony barely heard him. He was going to explode, he was sure of it. Gibbs must have got this all wrong. This wasn't birth – this was death – and a far worse death than the one he'd endured when that bullet had slammed into his chest.

"What? What must I do? Oh God it hurts!" Gibbs pulled him close and held him tight as he screamed in agony. "Please...please...make it stop! Tell me what I have to do to make it stop!" He writhed in Gibbs's grasp – the pain was unspeakable. Gibbs spoke directly into his ear again.

"You have to go through your first rut," he said, in a low, throaty voice. "That's my other duty as your maker. First I provide you with food, and then I take you through your first rut."

Tony stared at him, wild-eyed. "Are you talking about sex?"

Gibbs laughed. "Hell no! Rutting isn't anything like the games you played with those sweet little girlfriends of yours and those stupid furry handcuffs you like so much, DiNozzo." He gave Tony a little shake, and Tony tried to ignore the fire consuming his body and concentrate on what he was being told. "The blood you drank is exploding in your veins, and you need to learn to master it. That's why the newborn remain with their makers for their first twenty years. The rut will bind you to my side like an invisible leash. As you grow older, the leash becomes longer until eventually you can go free, but for now you need your maker's hands on your body like you need blood in your belly. Nothing else will ease the pain you're going through right now."

"Then do it!" Tony yelled, his body convulsing in one fiery spasm after another. "Do it, Gibbs! Please! Do what the hell you want to me – just make it stop!"

"Not yet." Gibbs hauled Tony up, held him close, and flew up into the sky with him. Tony gasped as the cool air caressed his burning body. He could feel the beating of his maker's heart against his own chest and found that if he really concentrated and listened to it, the rhythm soothed away some of the pain. Gibbs took him higher and higher, and now he really was flying.

"Before I do this, I have to ask you one more time – d'you really want this life, Tony?" Gibbs demanded.

Tony was shaking, unable to control the turbulence of the blood pounding through his veins. "Bit late to ask me that now," he ground out, from between gritted teeth.

"Wish I had time to explain it all to you, but there never is any time for that during an unplanned birthing." Gibbs shook his head regretfully. He held Tony tight, one arm wrapped around his aching body as they soared through the air, far above the ground.

Tony looked down on the cemetery below. The world seemed so small and inconsequential somehow. He could see the stone angel and the bright patch of blood-stained snow beneath her. His blood. The place where he'd died.

"If you don't go through the rut then you'll burn up and die," Gibbs explained. "If you do surrender to the rut and come out the other side, then you'll live forever – or until someone takes a stake to your heart. So answer me, Tony: Do you want that?"

"Is this a trick question?" Tony blinked back the sweat that was falling into his eyes, trying to clear his vision. He had so little understanding of this new life Gibbs was offering him and right now the pain was getting in the way of making any kind of rational decision.

"Immortality has its drawbacks," Gibbs said softly, and he brushed a gentle hand over Tony's cheek. "You might fall in love with a mortal, and mortals always die – unless you turn them."

"That what happened to you?" Tony asked. "You fall in love with a mortal?" He wondered just how old Gibbs really was, and how any of this fitted with what he knew of the man.

"I'll tell you about me, one day, if you choose to go through with this. Now answer the damn question!"

"D'you want me?" Tony asked, surprising himself. "Twenty years with a newbie hanging around, cramping your style – you want that?"

Gibbs tightened his grasp around Tony's waist and used his free hand to slap the back of his head. "I made you, DiNozzo. 'Course I damn well want you. But it isn't an easy life."

Another wave of searing heat flooded through Tony's body, so intense that he couldn't bear it. Gibbs held him close, stroking his back, comforting him through the excruciating convulsions, and Tony's cock became ramrod hard at the proximity of his maker's body. He clung on to Gibbs, trying to press their bodies as close as possible. God he wanted him! His mind was flooded with images of the most depraved sex acts it could conjure up, and Gibbs was a constant presence in all of them; towering over him, fucking him, biting him, sucking him, straddling him, holding him down and taking him hard. He keened and bucked his hips pathetically against Gibbs's groin.

"I don't care. Just fuck me. Please, fuck me," he whimpered.

"I know it's hard to think straight. I know your mind is full of sex and pain right now, but you need to decide, DiNozzo," Gibbs told him urgently. "You don't have much longer."

Tony looked down on the world below, and in a sudden moment of clarity he knew, without a shadow of doubt, that he did want this – all of it – with a hunger that went deeper than blood.

"Yes," he whispered. "I want it. I want this life. I want you. Do it, Gibbs. Please."

"Remember – I told you that you should be careful what you wish for," Gibbs said softly, and he looked almost wistful. They hung there for one small, quiet moment, looking at each other, and then the peace of that moment passed, and all hell broke loose.

Gibbs swooped back down to the ground and landed in the cemetery. He threw Tony down onto the snow and tore his clothes from his body, stripping him in seconds. Tony didn't care about how cold the night air felt on his exposed skin – all he cared about was finally getting to feel his maker's hands caressing his fevered flesh. Gibbs shed his own clothes in the blink of an eye, and then he pounced.

Tony lay on his bed of snow, looking up helplessly as Gibbs loomed over him. Gibbs's teeth were fully extended, and he didn't hesitate. He grabbed Tony's hair, pulled his head back so that his neck was bared, and sank his fangs into Tony's skin. Tony cried out and struggled against the savagery of the bite, but he didn't stand a chance. Gibbs bit down hard, keeping Tony pinned beneath him, and sucked on his neck with devastating force. Tony felt his blood start to flow freely, and he gasped with befuddled pleasure as whatever drug was in Gibbs's saliva began to take effect, calming him.

Gibbs pulled out his fangs and turned his attention to the rest of Tony's body, surging over it in a frenzy of activity. He was relentless, his hands and mouth covering every inch of Tony's bare skin, pinching, biting, sucking and stroking.

Tony arched up to meet his maker's brutal caresses, feeling the burning in his body start to recede with each hard kiss and forceful bite. His skin was punctured in a dozen different places, oozing blood, and Gibbs dipped his fingers in the sticky substance and held them against Tony's lips, urging him to taste it. Tony licked his own blood off Gibbs's fingers greedily, never once taking his eyes off his maker. Gibbs was looking at him as if he was prey, with a dark, predatory intent in his eyes.

Gibbs removed his fingers from Tony's mouth, pushed Tony's legs open, and dipped his fingers in the blood pooling on Tony's belly.

"Not my lube of choice, but it's traditional for a first rut. It'll hurt, but vampires enjoy a little pain, and you'll heal quickly. Vampires do."

He grinned, his teeth dripping with Tony's blood. He looked insanelly beautiful, and Tony

moaned and opened his legs wide, desperate to take his maker's hard, pulsing cock inside his body.

Gibbs sank his bloodied fingers into Tony's hole, stretching him, and Tony cried out. The combined scents of blood and sex were driving him crazy, and he convulsed, screaming helplessly as the changes taking place inside his body consumed him.

He wanted more. He needed more. He was going insane. He had to have Gibbs, had to have him inside his body – now. Right now. It was more than a need; it was a compulsion. He tried to pull Gibbs down, onto him and into him, but Gibbs slapped him hard across the jaw.

"Let go," he hissed, and through the haze of the rut, Tony heard his maker's order and released him. Gibbs grabbed his head and forced him to look up at him, straight into his eyes. "Surrender to the rut, Tony. It's quicker and easier – just give in to it, don't try and control it."

Tony blinked up at him, not understanding. He felt Gibbs's hands on his buttocks, wrenching them apart, and then, without warning, Gibbs entered him. He drove into Tony without pause or hesitation, sinking deep into his body with one powerful thrust.

Tony threw back his head and howled like a wolf. The pain, the pleasure, and the sheer intensity overwhelmed him. He hit out, striking Gibbs with his fists in a wild frenzy as he writhed and flailed beneath him. Gibbs bared his teeth and then sank them into Tony's neck again, holding him in place like a lion with a troublesome cub, pinning Tony down beneath him.

The feel of his maker's teeth piercing his skin penetrated Tony's consciousness, and he calmed down. Now he understood. He had to give in to the sensations coursing through his body; he couldn't ride them out, or control them. He couldn't expect to retain any sense of himself – he had to lose himself if he was ever to complete this transformation and come out the other side.

Gibbs began to thrust, fast and hard, his teeth still embedded in Tony's neck. Tony could feel the blood pounding in Gibbs's cock as it sank deep into his body with each inward thrust. It was as if they had one heart, one body, one source of blood joining them together as one being, merging them completely.

Now he was lost. All he could feel was Gibbs's hard cock ramming into his ass, and Gibbs's sharp teeth sunk deep in his neck. The excruciating pain of his transformation began to recede, being replaced instead by wave after wave of intense pleasure. He relaxed, and Gibbs released his hold on his neck and licked the blood oozing from the wound.

"Stay still," he ordered, in a thick, guttural tone of voice. He moved his hips back and then powered in again, and Tony cried out once more, welcoming each forceful thrust.

Gibbs wrapped his hand around Tony's cock, and Tony found himself rutting into it, keening like a wild animal as Gibbs fucked him ruthlessly.

Tony gazed up at the bright moon hanging in the cold night sky overhead, bathing them both in its silvery light. He was alive! He had died, but now he was alive; beautifully, gloriously alive!

He came with a feral howl, screaming at the top of his lungs as he was birthed into the vampire world, and his body completed its transformation. Gibbs thrust a few more times, and then he came too, roaring out his climax into the night. Then there was silence.

Tony whimpered as Gibbs withdrew from his slick, aching hole, missing the feel of his maker's cock immediately.

"We'll do it again soon," Gibbs promised him with a smile. His long, pointed teeth receded, and he leaned over and bestowed a kiss on Tony's lips. It was such a gentle kiss, so very different to the brutal frenzy of what they'd just shared.

"We're kin now, young one – I made you, and you are mine," Gibbs told him softly. His voice sounded completely different, tinged with an accent that Tony had never heard before. It was an ancient accent, lost to time, and carrying with it a hint of arcane power.

Gibbs got up and glanced warily around the snowy cemetery as he pulled on his clothes. "Come on. We gotta hurry, DiNozzo," he said urgently, sounding just like Gibbs again now.

"Why?" Tony tried to sit up. He ached all over, and he was as weak as a kitten, but he felt so good. The warm blood was thrumming through his newly birthed vampire body, soothing the aches and pains of his transformation.

"Because..." Gibbs froze. "Too late. Stay there. Don't move."

Tony saw the hazy figures moving in the distance. They came slowly, gliding soundlessly over the snow, their long teeth gleaming in the moonlight. There were dozens of them.

"Boss?" he whispered, wishing he had his gun. "What the hell do they want?"

"You," Gibbs said quietly. "They sensed you being made. Newborns are vulnerable – they thought there might be easy pickings here."

"They want to feed on me?" Tony tried to reach for his clothes, but his body didn't seem able to obey his commands, and he found he could barely move.

"Yeah. Vampires grow stronger on other vampires' blood – it's how some of 'em like to increase their status within our society. And you're too weak to defend yourself right now."

"Like hell I am," Tony growled, forcing his leaden body into action. He found his shirt and dragged it towards him, but his movements were clumsy and uncoordinated, and it slipped out of his grasp.

“Quiet!” Gibbs snapped. “Let me handle this, child.”

He stood in front of Tony, placing himself between Tony and the horde of vampires gliding so silently towards them. The vampires came to a halt several feet away, eyeing Gibbs nervously.

“You’ve spawned I see, Gibbs,” one of them said, casting a curious glance at Tony. He was a tall, thin creature, with short, spiky white hair.

Gibbs shrugged. “It’s my right. I haven’t broken any blood laws, Silas.”

“That’s true. But word will get out,” Silas snapped, his fangs gleaming threateningly.

“And people will wonder why.” A well-dressed male vampire, with long, blond hair stepped forward. “What was your purpose, Gibbs? What did you mean by birthing this new creature?”

“Maybe I was lonely,” Gibbs replied.

Silas laughed out loud. “Aw. He was lonely.” His laugh turned into a sneer. “Next you’ll be telling us that you fell in love with this mortal and couldn’t live without him.”

A tiny, rueful smile tugged at the corners of Gibbs’s mouth. “Well, maybe that’s the truth,” he said softly. “And he’s not mortal anymore, Silas. He’s fully birthed now.”

Silas bared his teeth in an ugly gesture, like a silent hiss. Tony felt very aware of his own nakedness and wished that he was at least dressed if they were going to have to fight their way out of this.

“He is pretty, this newborn, I’ll give him that,” a dark-haired woman said, edging closer, leering at Tony. She was exquisitely beautiful, but that just made the expression on her face all the more ugly. “Was the rut good for you, Gibbs? Is that why you turned him - so you could rut with him? You could have just fucked him, like any other mortal, but maybe that wasn’t enough for you. Was that it? Did you want him to feel the heat of the rut in his veins when you slammed your thick, hard cock into his tight hole?” She gave a wild, high-pitched laugh. Gibbs gazed at her stonily.

“Be careful what you say, Miranda, and keep away from him. I won’t warn you twice.”

“You won’t share?” Her bright eyes held a hint of insanity. “But he smells so tasty. If he was mine, I’d share him. He’d make such a pretty pet for us all. That’s how I was birthed – I spent my first ten years as my maker’s devoted pet, rutting with all he gave me to.”

“Yeah, I know, Miranda,” Gibbs said, and there was a note of sadness in his voice. Tony understood the reason for her madness now, and he shivered. He wondered if he'd live to regret the decision he'd made to give up his mortality and join these strange, disturbing people.

Miranda gave a little hiss and turned to the man beside her, the one with the long, blond hair. "He's refusing to share, Earl," she said sulkily. "He's always been like this. He keeps himself apart. He doesn't like our company."

"You ever wonder why?" Gibbs raised an eyebrow.

"She does have a point," Silas said. "You seem to like mortals more than your own kind, Gibbs. We know you patrol this city at night, killing any vampires who cross your path."

"Just the ones who kill mortals," Gibbs replied with a shrug. "Killing's unnecessary – plenty of mortals will let you feed off 'em for the thrill of it, especially those who hang out in certain clubs in the city." He gave a grim little smile. "You can feed without killing. No need to take an innocent life – it just draws attention to our kind. We should all be aware of the first and most important of the blood laws – now more than ever."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Silas demanded.

"It's not like the old days, Silas," Gibbs said impatiently. "The mortals have cell phones and there are security cameras all over the place now. We can't afford to be careless."

"I still want to taste the little one," Miranda whined, clearly bored by the turn the conversation had taken. She grinned at Tony, and her teeth began to extrude. She nudged the blond man beside her. "You want him too, Earl, I can smell it. Let's steal him from Gibbs. You can rut with him while I suck on his pretty neck."

"Back off," Gibbs growled. "All of you. I won't warn you again."

There were several of them, and Tony didn't see how Gibbs could fight them all by himself. He broke out in a cold sweat – he was naked and vulnerable right now, too weak following his transformation to be of much help to Gibbs in a fight. Yet the thought of being some fuck toy to a band of rampaging vampires for the next ten or twenty years made him want to throw up.

Earl moved closer, eyeing Gibbs coldly. He wasn't insane like Miranda, but he was all the more deadly for that. There was a detached, ruthless quality to this vampire, and Tony felt seriously threatened by him.

"You shouldn't have made this child, Gibbs. You know the implications. You must be aware of the message it will send out. I will make you a deal – surrender him to us, and we'll allow you to live."

Gibbs laughed out loud. "You clearly don't know me very well, Earl."

Earl's eyes narrowed. "I've heard the stories, but they are likely exaggerated. You're just one vampire, and we are many. Now give us the child, and we'll leave you in peace. Miranda is right - he's pretty. We'll take our turns with him. We'll rear him to know his place and

respect his elders. He'll forget who made him in time."

He moved forward with arrogant disdain, reaching out his hands to seize Tony – and was dead before he even got close. Gibbs moved so fast that Tony only caught a glimpse of his knife as it sliced through the air, severing Earl's head in an instant. Gibbs held the head by its long blond hair as the body fell to the ground, blood pumping out onto the snow.

The vampires made hissing sounds in unison, like a mass of angry snakes, and drew back a couple of steps. Miranda gave a wild, howling scream and flew up into the air in fright.

"Anyone else who tries to lay a finger on him dies too," Gibbs said, in an icy tone. Silas glared at him.

"Our king will not be happy."

"I don't give a damn – and you might like to remind \*your\* 'king' how he came by his title in the first place," Gibbs retorted. "And who lets him keep it."

Silas let out a low, angry growl, and Tony tensed, wondering what the hell they were talking about.

"Do you really want to fight me, Silas?" Gibbs demanded. "I've recently fed, and I have a newborn to protect. The bloodlust is burning in my veins right now. D'you think any of you stand a chance against me? Earl didn't know me, but you do, Silas. You know I could kill the whole damn lot of you without spilling a single drop of my own blood. Here." He flung the severed head towards Silas, who caught it, awkwardly. "Take this to 'his majesty' and tell him to leave us the hell alone, because I promise I will kill anyone who threatens me or the child I made here tonight."

He didn't raise his voice, but there was no doubting the truth of his words. It was a cold, hard statement of intent, and Tony felt the hairs on the back of his neck stand on end; Gibbs was clearly one bad-ass vampire.

The vampires moved backwards, looking genuinely scared. Silas glared at Gibbs some more, but Tony could see his heart wasn't in it. The vampires began to disperse, disappearing into the night as silently as they had come, until only Silas was left.

"Give the king a message from me," Gibbs told Silas. "Tell him that if he leaves me alone, I won't give him any trouble."

Silas gazed at him for a moment, and then, much to Tony's surprise, he swept a low bow in Gibbs's direction.

"You are what you are and some of us can never forget that, Gibbs," he said softly. "I rue the day you turned your back on your people. Many of us would still follow you if returned and became who you really are."

Gibbs made no reply. Silas gave a loud sigh, and then he turned and left, still clutching Earl's severed head, the long, blond hair trailing on the ground behind him.

Gibbs stood there, watching until he'd disappeared, and then he turned back to Tony.

"You okay?"

"Yeah. Freezing my balls off though," Tony admitted, shivering in the cold night air. He was already aware that this new body was tougher than the old one, and the cold wasn't freezing him the way it should have done in his current naked state, but all the same, it was damn cold.

Gibbs quietly gathered Tony's clothes and began dressing him.

"Can do it myself," Tony muttered, trying to fasten his fly, his fingers fumbling pathetically with the zipper.

"Yeah, I can see that." Gibbs batted his hand away. "Forget it, DiNozzo. You're too weak right now. You need to rest."

"What was that all about?" Tony dared to ask as Gibbs helped him into his shirt. "Why were they so worried about you turning me into a vampire?"

Gibbs sighed and sat back on his haunches. "Vampire society is pretty simple. Whoever is the strongest vampire is the king. You get to be the new king by killing the old one – which is what I did once. By mistake."

"You killed the king of the vampires by mistake?" Tony asked incredulously.

"He was a bastard," Gibbs replied dourly, as if that explained everything.

"If you killed the old king, doesn't that make you the new king?"

Gibbs glared at him. "Why the hell would I want to be the damn king of anything?" he growled. "I told them to stick it – but vampires are very hierarchical, and they wanted a king. So they appointed one."

"And he doesn't feel very safe having you around – knowing you're the real king. Or whatever," Tony added hurriedly, seeing Gibbs's expression darken again.

"Something like that." Gibbs helped Tony into his jacket. "And creating you could be viewed as an act of aggression on my part, or a statement of intent."

"How?" Tony frowned.

"They might think I intend to stage a coup, and that I made you so I had someone to fight beside me. A vampire takes part of his strength from his maker – so you should turn out

pretty strong." Gibbs grinned at him.

"I don't feel very strong at the moment," Tony sighed.

"You'll be fine. You just need to rest. Now stay here while I hide the bodies."

He disappeared into the night, leaving Tony to mull over all he'd learned. It had been one hell of a night, and he couldn't take it all in. He wished he didn't feel so tired and weak right now. His mind was full of the night's events, all jumbled up, vivid and intense. He knew that he had been birthed into a dangerous, complex, bloody world – but he also knew that he'd made the right choice. He wanted this life, and he wanted to spend it with Gibbs.

He felt something hard in his pocket and reached into it to find out what it was. His hand was shaking as he held up the bullet that had killed him just a few short hours ago. He slid his fingers under his shirt, searching for the hole in his chest – only to find that it was completely gone. His body had healed as quickly as Gibbs had promised.

He gazed at the bullet for a long while and then returned it to his pocket. He'd keep it – not out of superstition, but as a reminder of what he'd once been. He didn't want to end up like any of the vampires he'd just met; the bullet would help him remember who he was at heart, the way Gibbs seemed to have remembered.

At that moment Gibbs returned. "I've hidden them as best I can for now. We'll have to come back tomorrow and do the job properly. You ready to go?"

"Yeah. Not sure I can walk though," Tony said apologetically.

"No problem." Gibbs leaned down, swung Tony up in his arms, and began walking out of the cemetery with him as if he weighed nothing at all.

Tony gazed at his maker blearily, through exhausted, heavy-lidded eyes.

"Where're you taking me, Boss?"

"Home," Gibbs replied. "With me. That's where you live now."

"Good." Tony rested his head on Gibbs's shoulder. "How's it gonna work? At NCIS, with feeding...and everythin' else...?" Tony asked tiredly.

"I'll explain in the morning – along with a lot of other stuff," Gibbs told him, dropping a gentle kiss onto Tony's lips as he walked.

"Do we get to do that again?" Tony asked. "The sex thing. Rutting. Whatever you call it. Was good."

"Yeah, Tony. We get to do that again. A lot," Gibbs replied. "Slower next time, so I can savour it and really taste you. But for now, you're beat. It's been one hell of a night, and

your body has been through a massive change. You need rest – and tomorrow night you'll need to feed again, and you'll need to rut again...that's just how it goes for awhile."

"You've done this before, haven't you?" Tony asked, reaching up to touch his maker's face. "You've made a new vampire before."

Gibbs looked down on him, and Tony almost wished he hadn't asked; there was a look of such aching sadness in his eyes.

"Yes, Tony. I've done this before. Just once."

"What happened?"

"I'll tell you one day. Maybe." Gibbs leaned down and kissed him again, and Tony moaned softly and opened up, inviting Gibbs in deeper. "Hmm." Gibbs drew back, a little droplet of blood welling up on his lip.

"What?" Tony licked the droplet away.

"Looks like your teeth are coming in," Gibbs said with a grin.

Tony reached up and touched a hesitant finger to the long points of his sharp new teeth. He looked at Gibbs with a sense of wonder.

Gibbs laughed. "Happy birth-day, Tony," he said softly. "Welcome to your new life."

**The End**

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