HARBORVIEW IMMORTALS EXTRA

An *Unexpected* Addition

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An Unexpected Addition
A Harborview Immortals Story

Written by Emma Peterson

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persons—living, dead, or zombie—is completely coincidental.

This story contains adult content.

1992

“I think we should open a sex shop.”

Jacob rolled onto his right side and propped himself up on an elbow, grinning when he spotted green eyes peering skeptically at him through a curtain of black hair. After almost two hundred years together, he would have thought that Dominic was used to his random topics of post-coital conversation. At least this time he wasn’t asking about the gastrointestinal nightmare that occurred when a vampire ingested solid food, something he had

always been morbidly curious about. After hearing a disgustingly detailed account of what happened to undigested food in an undead body, he decided it was best to limit all future queries to the topic of sex.

"A sex shop." Dominic frowned as he contemplated the idea. "Like a brothel?"

"No, not a brothel." Sometimes Jacob had to remind himself that despite his partner's youthful appearance, he was actually quite old (508 years old this year, to be exact) and, like some vampires his age who were slow to adapt to the ever-changing world, ignorant of certain things. "Like a shop

that sells sex goodies," he explained. "Magazines and movies and toys—"

"Toys?"

"Dildos and vibrators," Jacob clarified. "And lube." He grabbed the bottle of lube that had been carelessly tossed aside earlier when he screamed at Dominic to hurry up and fuck him after what felt like a human lifetime of blissful finger-play. "Did you know that this stuff comes in different flavors? Just like ice cream."

"Why would there need to be different flavors?" Dominic sat upright, his long hair spilling down over his shoulders and chest and tapering to an end just above his navel. He took the

lube from Jacob and studied the container. After thinking it over, he figured it out. “Never mind. I can definitely see how that would be advantageous.”

“Yep.” Jacob smirked. “Do you remember how creative we had to be before lube was invented? I swear I can’t look at a bottle of olive oil without getting turned on.”

“Stop it.”

“It’s true!”

Dominic’s lips curved upward, his somber countenance melting into a rare smile. “I don’t know,” he said as he ran his fingers through Jacob’s wavy and disheveled brown hair. “A place like

that sounds perverted."

"I didn't know you were such a prude."

"You're accusing me of being a prude after what I just did to you?"

"I'm kidding." Jacob moved his head onto his lover's leg. Given all of the ways that Dominic had pleasured him over the past two hours—including that earth-shattering thing he did with his tongue that almost resulted in a broken neck due to Jacob's frantic jerking about—he could verify that Dominic was not shy when it came to sex. Far from it.

Jacob froze when the vampire's fingers slid through the chaos of his locks and down to his back. He tried not

to cringe as they started moving over his scars, those ghastly souvenirs of a time when the barbarity of bigoted men destroyed the fragment of happiness he had found in such an otherwise bleak existence. While it was an improvement over the days when he wouldn't even let Dominic *see* his back, Jacob still found it impossible to be completely at ease whenever Dominic touched them. But he was getting there. Maybe in another decade or two it wouldn't bother him at all.

"Jacob," Dominic said quietly, sensing his discomfort.

"I'm sorry. Old habits." Sitting up, Jacob pushed away the memory of whips

and sadistic onlookers. This was not the time to think about the past. Preferably never, but certainly not now. He untangled his legs from the nest of bundled up blankets and shed clothing that comprised their makeshift bed on the basement floor. An actual bed would have been ideal, but since Dominic was fiercely adamant about maintaining vampire traditions, they continued to use a specially made coffin for two during the daytime. No matter how many times Jacob told him that all the cool vampires were now sleeping in beds, he knew that Dominic wasn't going to budge on the issue anytime soon. "Anyway, I brought up the sex shop since you had mentioned

starting a new business. Sex sells, Dominic. *And* if we owned a place like that, we would have free flavored lube until the end of time. It's a win-win situation."

"As tempting as that sounds, I was thinking of something a little more charitable."

"I happen to think that butt plugs are extremely charitable under the right circumstances."

Dominic didn't just smile this time. He laughed. "You're as bad as Demetrio. I see why you get along with him so well."

"Your brother and I do share a certain immaturity," Jacob admitted.

“And I’ve seen him naked. Sort of.”

Dominic groaned. “He does love to remind me of that. Don’t you start.”

“That’s what you get for being a twin.” Jacob gave him a lighthearted nudge and stood up. “Let’s get cleaned up and then you can tell me all about this charitable and tragically sexless business idea.”

“Why don’t I show you instead?” Dominic’s gaze traveled up the length of Jacob’s naked body, lingering on the areas that bore the slick evidence of their lovemaking. He was smiling again, but this time there was a hungry, almost predatory quality to it. “Later,” he added before grabbing Jacob by the hand and

pulling him back down to the floor for another round.

* * *

It was a warm June weeknight so the couple decided to leave their cars at home. They took to the sky instead, steering clear of the many streetlights that would give them away. Although there were a select number of humans who knew about the existence of vampires, namely ones in positions of authority who were richly compensated for a variety of services that benefitted both parties, most of the general public didn't know about them, and Dominic and Jacob preferred to keep it that way.

They moved up and over the few cars that were out and about in the middle of the night, past all of the downtown Harborview stores and medical buildings and restaurants that lined the roads, past one of the city's numerous universities—Mercymore College—and the rows of nearby streets that were filled with off-campus housing. They skirted along the tranquil waters of Lake Erie, then over an adjoining section of million dollar lakefront homes. Dominic had occasionally mentioned purchasing one of those insanely oversized and overpriced houses for the two of them, but Jacob, being low maintenance when

it came to shelter, was more than content with the spacious home they shared now.

Within minutes, they reached another cluster of buildings that were significantly shabbier in location and appearance, and they landed on the roof of a recently closed hotel that was in urgent need of renovation. From a block or two away, most likely at one of the city's even more numerous bars, came the sound of loud rock music and even louder profanity. Then police sirens.

"Here we are." Dominic gestured at the building beneath their feet.

"You want to open a hotel?" Jacob asked doubtfully.

"I was thinking more along the lines

of lodging for those who have none."

"You mean a homeless shelter?"

"Yes." Dominic walked over to an air conditioning unit and leaned against it. "We would provide a place to stay for those who need it in exchange for donations."

Jacob inclined his head. "I assume you're not talking about monetary donations."

"No, I'm not," Dominic replied. "The shelter would serve as… well, a farm, of sorts. We'll sell a percentage of the donations we receive to our associates and keep the rest for club stock and private distribution. We're doing well enough now, but this way we

won't have to rely on outside sources to acquire blood."

"I'm guessing that no one would remember making these donations?"

"We won't alter their memories more than we have to," Dominic promised. "Consider the alternative, Jacob. The homeless have always been easy targets. If we do this, people will be safe. And we will make a lot of money."

"We already *have* a lot of money." Jacob stared out into the night. The noise had died down and all was quiet for now. He didn't necessarily like the practice of influencing human minds, something he had only ever done himself

over the years as a last resort. But Dominic's plan was not a bad one. Quite the opposite, if they could pull it off. "How would we do this?" he wanted to know. "Keeping the club private is one thing, but people are going to notice if a bunch of homeless folks start shacking up here."

"It would have to be a public endeavor. No secret gathering of vampires gyrating on a dance floor this time. I don't imagine it will be too difficult to persuade one of our daytime acquaintances to play the part of philanthropist." Dominic stared at his lover, trying to gauge his reaction. "Do you think it's a bad idea?"

“Not at all.” Jacob hesitated, debating the right way to phrase what he wanted to say next so that it was more observation than accusation. “You care about them, don’t you? Humans, I mean.”

Dominic considered the vampire’s statement. “Care is a strong word. I don’t hate them. I’ve never hated them. But I have learned that it is much easier not to be around them.”

Jacob knew the reason for that, had known for some time now. Dominic, being just over three full centuries older, had a life long before Jacob was even born, and a human had been a part of that life. The pain of loss was hard enough for a normal lifespan, but when that pain

stretched out over the ages… He could understand why Dominic went out of his way to distance himself from people.

"Let's do it," Jacob concluded. He walked over to Dominic and brought his arms around the vampire's neck, twirling and teasing his silky hair. "We'll make some money and save some lives *and* piss off Vincenzo, which is reason enough for me."

Dominic's brow furrowed at the mention of his maker. "Agitating him does delight me," he acknowledged. "All right. Tomorrow night I will talk to Elliot and start the process."

"Tomorrow? We're not stopping by the club tonight?"

“No.” Dominic swept back Jacob’s hair, which had become even more tousled than usual from flying. There was affection in his eyes, affection that was just as strong as it was one long ago night when two lost vampires found each other under the very same moon that shone down on them now. “There are other things I would rather do tonight.”

Jacob pinned him against the A/C unit and kissed him deeply, his tongue exploring Dominic’s mouth while Dominic’s hands rubbed and cupped and groped everything they could reach. “Okay,” he whispered after they parted, both of them gasping and half-hard. “But we need to stop somewhere first.”

* * *

“I can’t believe I let you talk me into this.”

Smiling triumphantly, Jacob kicked an empty soda can out of his way with a black loafer as they walked down the sidewalk. “I’ve talked you into far worse.”

Dominic’s face was serious as always, but his eyes gleamed with amusement. “And you will continue to do so, I’m sure.”

“It’s really your fault, when you think about it. This is what happens when you decide to start a business five blocks away from Coxen Things.”

“That name…”

“Clever, isn’t it?” Jacob’s smile widened. “But hey, if you’re so offended that you’d rather not try out some flavored lube tonight—”

“We’re already close so we might as well stop by,” Dominic said with mock resignation.

“What a generous soul you are.”

The conversation turned to their existing business, as it often did once they were fully clothed. They opened the Rising Sun a decade ago, soon after they made the move from Georgia to Pennsylvania for good. From the outside, it was merely an old, boarded up textile mill that had fallen victim to a harsh

economy. After the sun went down, it became a place where vampires could lose themselves in blood, alcohol, music, and each other, all without interruption from the living. A true den of iniquity, as Jacob frequently called it. And an immensely profitable one at that.

"The Old Man thinks that we should tone things down on the lower level," Dominic said as they crossed an intersection. "Because, as he puts it, not everyone goes there for the sole purpose of humping the nearest available leg."

Jacob nodded. He could imagine their mutual friend, an elderly-looking vampire who was actually close to his own age, saying such a thing in his gruff

Irish accent. “He’s got a point. How is he doing, anyway? I haven’t seen him in a while.”

“He’s as ornery and foul-mouthed as ever.”

“Is he still going on about selling his house and traveling the world?”

“He is, but I highly doubt that he’ll do it, especially now that Luca is moving back to Harborview.”

This was news to Jacob. “So he finally found him. I wasn’t sure that he ever would.”

Dominic pushed back the hair that had blown in his face during a surprise gust of wind. “We’ve been asked to find employment for him. Luca, that is.”

“What can he do?” Jacob asked.

“I’m not sure. The Old Man says that he is extremely smart for someone so young. And rather imposing as well.”

“How old is he?”

“Seventeen.”

“Wow, he’s still a kid.” Jacob pondered for a few paces. “Well, we’ve always tossed around the idea of having someone watch over the house during the day.”

“Someone we *know*,” Dominic corrected.

“That’s a pretty short list when it comes to humans,” Jacob reminded him. “But you’re right. As much as we trust the Old Man, we shouldn’t automatically

assume that—”

He stopped abruptly, his head cocked to one side. A vampire’s hearing was remarkably sharp, but he still wanted to be certain of what he thought he just heard.

“Did you hear that?”

There it was again, cutting off Dominic’s response. Every muscle in Jacob’s body tensed, and the first stirrings of dread formed deep within him. Suddenly, buying lube—flavored or otherwise—was the last thing on his mind.

Somewhere, somewhere *close*, a baby was crying.

Pinpointing the general location of

the noise, Jacob turned toward the street, his brown eyes scanning the dark storefronts on the other side, hoping that one of the buildings had an upstairs apartment that might have been home to a little one who was simply having trouble sleeping. None of them did.

What he *did* see was a shallow and poorly lit alley tucked between a pawn shop and a title loan business. And in that alley, a dark blue dumpster with a black lid, property of the same company that picked up the couple's garbage on Tuesday nights.

Then came another cry, loud but somewhat muffled. This time there was no mistaking where it came from. Jacob

didn’t even realize that he had started shaking.

Dominic did. “Jacob, wait—”

But he was already gone, across the street in the blink of an eye. Jacob approached the dumpster, his dread gradually giving way to anger. Reading about this sort of thing or seeing it on the news was nothing compared to the unfolding horror of experiencing it firsthand. He was reminded of his own grim beginnings, having been sold into slavery by his own deceitful mother, and with each step his anger steadily swelled into full-blown rage.

“Jacob, listen to me.” Dominic was behind him now, his voice understanding

but firm. “This is a terrible thing, but it doesn’t concern us. We need to call the authorities immediately and let them handle it.”

The vampire paused with one hand on the dumpster lid. Dominic was right, and deep in his heart, Jacob knew it. Human interaction for business was one thing, and they tolerated it out of necessity. Anything more than that, anything *personal*, was unwise. And he could think of nothing else right now that was more personal to him than a child who was abandoned and left to die.

Had it been someone older, Jacob might have been able to force himself to step away, despite his fury. As cruel as it

seemed, he knew from Dominic's silent suffering the importance of avoiding any situation in which an attachment to a mortal could be formed. But when the sound of yet another cry hit his ears, this one the loudest and most desperate of all, his emotions took over and he flung open the lid. This time Dominic didn't try to stop him.

Jacob ignored the overwhelming stench of refuse and peered inside the dumpster. What he saw tore at his heart and renewed his resolve to murder those responsible. There, partially concealed by random pieces of trash, beer bottles, and garbage bags full of waste, were two tiny legs and a right arm, all of

which were twitching and shivering helplessly. A human baby boy.

"Oh my God." Jacob started uncovering his nude little body, working carefully in case of broken glass or other sharp objects that could harm him. When he was finished, he reached inside and lifted him out, holding him at arm's length while checking him over for injuries.

"I changed my mind," Dominic said, his voice filled with contempt. "I hate some humans after all."

Jacob was hardly an expert on babies. Most of the slave infants from his human days—including the ones with suspiciously light brown skin like his

own—had been sold right after being born, and he had managed to avoid most children completely after being turned. If he had to guess, this one wasn't fresh out of the womb, but close enough. One week old, or possibly two, and even more possibly premature, if his scrawny form was any indication. Jacob couldn't believe that so much noise had come from such a tiny, fragile thing.

The area that would become his belly button was caked with dried blood and pus, and there was a deep and nasty gash across his left cheek that came to an end dangerously close to his eye, presumably the result of something poking through one of the bags that had

been pressed against his head. That was all Jacob could see as far as external injuries, but as for internal damage, it was hard to say. Surely the child was hungry at the very least. He wasn't able to do anything about that yet, but for now, he would do what he could.

Jacob gingerly balanced him in the crook of his left arm and opened his mouth to reveal sharp fangs. As Dominic looked on in concern, he punctured the tip of his right thumb against one of the pointed teeth and held the bleeding digit over the boy's mouth, allowing drops of blood to trickle inside. The baby lurched and sputtered and coughed but eventually swallowed. Shortly after that, the cut on

his face and his infected belly both started to heal.

Afterwards, he pulled him close, shielding his cold body against the night air. The baby's chest hitched a few times, and then he exhaled with a small whimper and a shuddering sigh.

And Jacob fell in love.

"Dominic…"

Dominic looked from the child's face to his partner's. "I know," he said softly. "Let's take him home."

* * *

For a couple of vampires who had learned, sometimes begrudgingly, to make use of all the modern conveniences

that the world now had to offer, Dominic and Jacob were quickly discovering that diapers were one of the most frustrating modern conveniences of all.

"You need to pull it up in the back," Jacob instructed as Dominic fumbled a diaper around the fidgeting infant. He inspected the package that his lover had purchased from the all night drug store down the street along with a bunch of other baby-related items (much to the confusion of the clerk who usually rang up their lubricant) and then glanced down at the freshly bathed child as he wriggled and writhed on the living room floor. "And then tuck the front part down and pull out the sticky things—"

“I don’t see any sticky things,” Dominic grunted.

“They’re right there on the… oops.” Jacob tugged on the front end of the diaper. “It’s backwards,” he said apologetically. “You’ll have to turn it around.”

With an exasperated sigh, Dominic took the child by the legs and gently lifted his rump. He pulled out the diaper and turned it around, then placed it into position once again. “I see the sticky things now,” he announced. “I think I can figure it out from here.”

Once the diaper dilemma was resolved, Jacob slid one of his old white T-shirts over the baby’s head and tied it

off at the sleeves and bottom so that his arms and legs could move freely. It wasn't much, but it would work for now.

"There we go." He picked up the baby and offered him a bottle of formula, the second one that night. Having no idea how much or how often infants fed, Jacob figured it wouldn't hurt to keep at it every couple of hours or until he fell asleep.

Dominic watched the boy suck away at the bottle. He tentatively reached out and touched the smooth bottom of a miniature foot, which caused the baby's entire leg to jolt in reaction.

"He's ticklish," Jacob observed. "Just like you."

“…You swore you would never speak of that again.”

“No, I didn’t.”

“Well, you should.”

Jacob snickered at Dominic’s indignation. “I promise not to mention one of your cutest qualities.”

“Thank you.”

“For the rest of the night,” Jacob amended under his breath. He stared at the child in his arms, his expression softening. “This is crazy, isn’t it?”

“It is,” Dominic agreed, running his hand over a crown of fuzzy yellow hair. “If we were thinking clearly, we wouldn’t even be considering this.”

“Are you saying that because he’s

human or because you truly think that he would be better off with Child Protective Services?”

Dominic moved behind Jacob, his long legs stretched out on either side of him. He rested his chin on the vampire’s shoulder so that he could have a better view of the feeding. “Both,” he admitted. “How in the world are we supposed to take care of him, Jacob? We don’t know the first thing about babies.”

“Most new parents don’t. We’ll figure it out as we go along.”

“What about when the sun comes up? Do we just keep him locked in the basement with us because we can’t go anywhere?”

Jacob had to think about that one. “We’ll get one of those nanny-sitters. If this Luca turns out not to be some psycho pedophile, maybe we can hire him for the job.”

“What about food? We can’t feed him blood.”

“Formula and baby food.”

“And when he’s older?”

The nanny-sitter can cook for him, too. Unless you plan on doing that yourself.”

“Not likely,” Dominic responded coolly. “Education?”

“Homeschooling.”

“Friends?”

“Our friends will be his friends. I

bet Becky is going to love him."

"Suppose she gets the urge to bite him?" Dominic asked. "What if we get that urge ourselves? We may not feed on humans anymore, but you know the impulse never disappears completely."

"Were you frequently overcome with the desire to bite the last human being you cared about?"

"Of course not."

"And it won't happen this time, to either of us. We're vampires, Dominic. Not monsters. We don't hurt children." Jacob leaned back and turned his head so that Dominic could nuzzle his neck. "I know this is insane, but I can't help but feel like we were meant to find him.

Think about how many things had to fall right into place for us to find that exact dumpster on this exact night. Let's give it a day or two. After that, if you honestly believe that he would be better off with a human family—assuming he even gets adopted by one—then we'll turn him over."

"I never knew you wanted to be a father so badly."

Jacob shrugged. "I had no reason to think it would ever happen so I kept it to myself."

"Is there anything else you haven't told me that I should know?"

"Sometimes I braid your hair while you're asleep."

Dominic had already smiled more that night than he had in weeks. And there he was, doing it again. “What happens when he grows up?” he asked, becoming serious again. “When he grows *old*? Every single day of a human’s life brings them one step closer to an inevitable end. I know how it feels to lose someone. No vampire should have to live with that kind of pain. Especially you.”

The baby finished his meal and Jacob set the bottle on the floor. He raised the infant to his shoulder and rubbed his back, something he remembered seeing on television, being the avid watcher that he was (unlike

Dominic, whose own television preference began and ended with reruns of *Dark Shadows*). “You’re right. I don’t know how much it must hurt to lose someone the way you did. But I *do* know what it’s like to be abandoned. Someone literally threw him away like he was garbage, Dominic.” He pressed his nose against the baby’s skin and breathed him in. It wasn’t quite the new baby smell that the mothers on TV raved about but, having done the best he could using the kitchen sink, it was far better than the smell of trash and rotten food. “I want to make it up to him by giving him the best life possible. I know it’s not our place to do it, but I want to.”

Dominic took the child and mimicked Jacob's burping motions. "So you think this is fate?"

"Yeah, I do." Jacob turned around and faced them. "Getting thrown in a dumpster is a pretty shitty way to start living, but we found him, the same way we found each other." He beamed at the boy, who was cooing steadily into Dominic's neck. "How is that not meant to be?"

The lovers regarded each other. After a minute, Dominic relented. "We'll give it one day."

"One day," Jacob agreed. "Maybe two. Or three."

"All right."

A loud burp caught them both off guard. Jacob was once again amazed that such a small body could produce such a big noise. “The sun will be up soon,” he said, glancing at his watch. “We should head down to the basement.”

Dominic gave the baby a few pats on the back. “We saved your life, and now you get to sleep in a coffin like the dead. What do you think about that?”

The baby opened his mouth and let Dominic know precisely what he thought. All over his shoulder.

“It’s running down my back. I think it’s in my hair.” Dominic closed his eyes, his face twisted in disgust. “Please do something. Please do something

now."

"Calm down," a laughing Jacob told him as he reached for a box of powder-scented wipes. "You think this is bad, just wait until we get to deal with what comes out of the other end."

* * *

One day led to two, and then, unsurprisingly, two to three. After a week, Dominic and Jacob stopped pretending that contacting Child Protective Services was even an option anymore. They postponed opening the homeless shelter and temporarily left club matters to their trusted associate, Elliot, who was more than capable of

running the place without them. They eagerly embraced their new roles as fathers and spent every waking moment bonding with the infant who had thrown their lives into such unexpectedly joyous upheaval.

"We'll need to get him a crib," Dominic said on the seventh night. He paced around the kitchen with the child in his arms and a towel wisely draped over his left shoulder. In place of an old shirt, the baby was now wearing a mint green onesie. It was one of the dozens that the vampire had purchased for him during an awkward nighttime shopping spree at Teensy Totz, the local baby store, where almost every single woman

in the place had ogled him in fascination while he shopped. “And I suppose it’s time we gave him a name. We can’t call him ‘the baby’ forever.”

After hand-washing the last of the bottles, Jacob turned away from the sink and leaned against it. Although he had thought of a name the first night they brought the boy home, he hadn’t wanted to suggest anything until he knew for sure that Dominic was equally passionate about keeping him. His mind turned to a young woman living down in Georgia with wavy brown hair like his own, a girl named Alexandra who would never know of the distant half-uncle who had secretly watched over her for a good

portion of her life.

There was only one name it could be. One that served as a reminder of the family he was never allowed to know because his father's skin had been the wrong color.

"Alexander."

Their eyes met. Dominic nodded approvingly. "That's a good name."

"He needs a nickname."

"Why? Are four syllables too taxing for you?"

"Very funny." Jacob dried off his hands. "Alex? Al? Um… Xander? What do you think?"

Dominic looked at the small human, who had a lock of his hair clutched in a

tiny fist. “Xan.”

“Xan,” Jacob repeated, testing the sound of the name. “I like it.”

They moved into the living room and relaxed on the sofa with a yawning baby on the cushion between them. Seven days later and they still couldn’t make heads or tails of Xan’s sleep pattern; as far as they could tell, he slept just as much during the day as he did at night.

Jacob watched him for a few minutes and tried to resist playing with his adorable little appendages. How had he come to love someone—especially a *human* someone—so much in such a short period of time? There wasn’t anything in the world he wouldn’t do for

this child, no sacrifice or risk too great in order to protect him. So this was what fatherhood felt like. Jacob found it both scary and exhilarating.

"He'll need a middle and last name, too," he suddenly remembered. "I'd rather not use either of ours." He glanced at the muted game show where one family was competing against another for money. It was one of his favorite programs, formerly hosted by a handsome and charming man who had a penchant for kissing all of the female guests. Jacob had often fantasized about being on the receiving end of one of those kisses. "I think I got it."

Dominic looked from Jacob to the

television and back to Jacob again. “You can’t be serious.”

Jacob’s smile was wicked. “Oh, but I am.”

“I’m sure he will be pleased to learn that he was partially named for a man you once wanted to screw,” Dominic muttered, pressing a hand to his forehead.

“Not screw, just smooch.” Jacob leaned over and kissed Xan on top of the head. “Welcome to the world, Alexander Richard Dawson.”

* * *

Over the months that followed, life changed a great deal for the new family.

After much debate and an eventual acceptance of what would likely be a futile search effort, Dominic and Jacob chose not to worry themselves with the question of Xan's origin. They would confront the subject again when Xan was old enough to understand what had happened to him, but for now they left it alone and focused instead on being thankful that they had found him at all. One of the unused bedrooms on the first floor was turned into a nursery and Luca Melani, who was luckily neither psycho nor pedophile, began watching over Xan so that the couple could get a full day's rest. Xan had taken an instant shine to the muscular young man and almost never

cried when he was around—something his parents noticed with a hint of jealousy. Their dearest friend, Becky, became so infatuated with the child that she was constantly visiting just to spend time with her “little Xanadu.” Even Dominic’s brother, Demetrio, was slightly less annoying while doting on Xan. Incidentally, that was just about the nicest thing that Dominic had said about him in years.

As time went by, the lovers discovered that they now preferred peaceful nights at home instead of in a factory full of horny vampires and loud music. They still checked in once or twice a week, but Elliot was managing

just fine without them. Plans for the new homeless shelter were still on hold, but Jacob already knew what they were going to call it: the Dawson House. Each passing day with Xan was one that they would never have again, and they wanted to spend as much time with him as possible, before he reached the age when he felt that there were better things to do than hang out with his dads.

When news of their human adoptee spread throughout Harborview, some vampires made it known that they didn't care for the couple's decision. To them, humans were only good for food and fucking, and taking one in as family was disgraceful. But after what Jacob did to

the poor vampire who had foolishly hinted that Xan would make a good appetizer, no one was stupid enough to say anything else that even remotely resembled a threat. Dominic and Jacob were intimidating enough as vampires. As fathers, they were downright frightening.

Since they didn't know when Xan was actually born, they determined that the night they found him—June 10—was as good a date of birth as any. A few days shy of a year from that night, Jacob brought up the idea of throwing him a birthday party.

"A birthday party?" Dominic asked with a raised brow.

“Yes, Dominic. A birthday party.” Jacob smiled sweetly at the toddler staggering around the living room. “I know birthdays don’t mean as much when you’ve had hundreds of them, but this is Xan’s first one. It’s important.”

“I’m not disagreeing… but do we have to invite my brother?”

“Yes,” Jacob insisted. “You’ll just have to suck it up for one night.”

Xan swayed to and fro before plopping down to the floor on his diaper-padded butt. Bright blue eyes blinked questioningly at the two vampires in an effort to understand how such a thing might have happened.

“I suppose I can do that,” Dominic

relented with a heavy sigh. He looked at Xan. “Do you see the torture I’m willing to go through just for you?”

For reasons known only to himself, Xan considered Dominic’s question to be the most hilarious thing ever, and he cackled merrily, showing off his new teeth. There were eight of them now, four up top and four below. A few months ago, when there were only six, he had developed a strangely endearing habit of gnawing on his parents. Hands, arms, feet—whatever body parts he could get to that weren’t concealed by clothing. “And I was worried that *we* were the ones who would do the biting,” Dominic had said then, presenting Jacob

with a finger that was covered with bite marks and drool.

"He's making the face," he warned now after noticing Xan's troubled scowl. "I do believe it's your turn to change him."

"It's always my turn."

"I've noticed that."

Jacob rolled his eyes and rose from the sofa. "Fine, I'll deal with the poop and you can call your brother."

Dominic reconsidered. "On second thought, I think that I would much rather deal with a loaded diaper."

* * *

Xan's first birthday party went off

with only one hitch. Halfway through the celebration, an overly enthusiastic Demetrio started telling stories about Dominic as a child, which resulted in Dominic telling off his twin in Italian, which resulted in a heated exchange expressed entirely in bared fangs and a foreign language. Jacob had had no idea what they were saying to each other as he could only make out Demetrio's use of Dominic's given name, Domenico. However, the comically mortified look on Luca's face was hardly a good sign. (When asked later to translate, the teenager flushed and explained that most of the conversation revolved around an invitation to perform an illicit act on a

goat and speculation over which sibling would best perform said act.) Everyone had a good time aside from the brotherly squabble, especially the birthday boy, who had no clue what was going on but babbled and cooed through it all.

A few hours before dawn, Demetrio and Becky said their farewells. As Luca and Xan disappeared into the nursery to play with all of the child's new toys, Dominic and Jacob remained in the living room to clean up. When they were finished, they went into the nursery and found Luca and Xan in a chair, both of them fast asleep.

"Should we wake them?" Dominic asked. "Or at least put Alexander to

bed?”

Jacob stared at the two of them, noting with fondness the way that Luca was slouched down in the seat and how Xan was sprawled across his massive torso with a strong, protective arm holding him in place. “No. They’ll be fine.”

Dominic went to the closet and grabbed a multi-colored blanket that Becky had knitted for Xan. He spread it over the sleeping pair as Jacob stepped out of the room.

“Haven’t you already taken enough pictures tonight?” he asked when the vampire returned with a camera.

“I want to take as many pictures of

him as I can while he's just a baby."

So he did, forever capturing one of the many tender moments of Xan's childhood that would be gone too soon.

They left the room and, after locking up and turning out all the lights, went down to the basement. Jacob switched on a lamp and fell down on the sofa with a thud and a sigh while Dominic went over to the refrigerator where they kept an emergency supply of blood in case they wanted some while the sun was up.

"Are you hungry?" he asked, holding up a bag of A Positive.

"No, thank you."

Dominic returned the blood to the fridge and reached for the bottle of

Macallan on the neighboring countertop. “Thirsty?” he offered.

“Yes, please. Don’t bother with a glass.”

“How refined,” Dominic commented sarcastically.

“Hush.”

Dominic joined him on the sofa and handed him the bottle. After taking a long drink of the expensive whiskey, Jacob offered it to Dominic, who was hesitant to engage in such an act of considerable crudeness.

“Go on, live a little.”

“Strange thing to say to a dead person,” Dominic replied as he accepted the bottle. After much inner turmoil, he

consented to a sip.

"Way to go, rebel," Jacob said with a wink. He took the bottle back and turned sideways, bringing his legs down across Dominic's thighs. "Don't worry. Your indecency will remain our secret."

"Thank you."

Jacob grinned and took another drink, his free hand squeezing the one that rested on his knee. "One year," he said, his eyes hazed over in reflection. "It went by fast."

"Time tends to do that where humans are concerned."

"Was it the same for you back then?"

"Yes. One day Giovanni and I were both young together. Before I knew it…"

Dominic paused, his jaw tightly clenched and his eyes filled with the pain of a memory untold. Then, with a shake of the head, he continued as if nothing had happened. “Before I knew it, I was still young and he was an old man.”

Jacob hurt to think of the same thing happening to their son. “Xan might choose to be turned,” he said hopefully.

“And he might not,” Dominic countered. “We need to be prepared for that possibility. Some humans aren’t tempted by immortality.”

Jacob knew the truth of those words. “I wasn’t tempted,” he admitted. “But I wasn’t given a choice.”

“I hate that you were forced into becoming a vampire.” Dominic raised Jacob’s hand to his lips and kissed it. “But I’m also grateful because it brought us together.”

Jacob ran a thumb along Dominic’s cheek. He, too, was grateful that his stolen life had led him to this. Everything that he had endured—the abandonment, the slavery, the betrayal, and the scars—seemed ultimately a small price to pay for all the things he now enjoyed. “I love you, Dominic.”

“I love you,” Dominic said as he leaned into the fingers that were weaving through his hair. “And I have a present for you.”

“You do?” Jacob asked, perking up.

Dominic slid from beneath Jacob’s legs. He crossed the basement and grabbed a brown paper bag that was hidden inside of the coffin.

Jacob pulled up his legs so Dominic could sit down again. “What is this?” he asked as he accepted the bag.

“Open it and see.”

Setting the whiskey aside, Jacob opened the bag and looked inside. What he saw made him laugh.

“Do you like it?” Dominic asked.

Jacob reached into the bag and took out a bottle of strawberry-flavored lube. After looking it over, he gazed slyly at his partner. “I like it. *Very* much.”

“I thought you would.”

“How did you decide on strawberry?”

Dominic cleared his throat and took a sudden interest in a random spot on the far wall, facing away from his lover. “I tasted them all,” he mumbled.

Jacob tried to imagine a vampire like Dominic walking through Coxen Things, making his way up and down rows of dildos and cock rings and porn (and, of course, those charitable butt plugs). When he pictured him taste-testing dozens of flavors of lube to find one that was to his exact liking, all he could do was laugh some more.

“It isn’t that funny,” a sullen Dominic

insisted.

“Yes, it is.” Jacob swept him into a fierce embrace. “You’re adorable, you know.”

“Don’t tell anyone.”

Jacob didn’t have the heart to tell him that their family and friends already suspected as much. Playful pecks on the cheek turned into a trail of slow, sensual kisses along Dominic’s neck. “Shall we use it now?” he murmured into his ear, punctuating the question with a lick and a nibble.

Dominic rocked against the hand that had found its way between his legs. “That depends. Do you think you’ll be able to keep your voice down?”

Out of all the struggles that parenthood presented, being quiet while making love was one of the hardest for Jacob. He had gotten better over time, but there were still some occasions when his orgasms got the best of him. Although he didn't fret too much over it now since Xan was still a baby (and Luca was a pro at pretending to be deaf), he knew that he would have to improve before the boy was old enough to know what was going on. Jacob had heard stories about parents who mentally terrorized their kids by being too open about their bedroom activities. He was confident that he would *never* embarrass his own son in such a shameful way.

“I’ll do my best,” he assured Dominic, leaning back and pulling the vampire on top of him.

* * *

The strawberry lube was a resounding success. And Jacob *did* keep quiet. Mostly.

Later, the lovers retired to their coffin. With a satisfied sigh, Jacob pressed his cheek against the cool satin lining and draped an arm over the one that was curled possessively around his chest. “Everything is so perfect,” he said dreamily.

Dominic nudged past his hair and kissed him on the shoulder. “I’d like to

think so."

"There's only *one thing* I can think of that would make our lives even more perfect."

"We're not getting a bed."

Jacob chuckled heartily and reached for the coffin lid. "It was worth a shot," he said, pulling it closed.

Thank you so much for reading *An Unexpected Addition*. For more information about the *Harborview Immortals* series, future projects, and random geekery, please follow me at www.emmapetersonwrites.com.