

PROLOGUE

“You wished to speak with me, sir?”

“Have a seat, Roland. Drink?”

Roland sat down and cautiously gripped the crystal goblet placed before him. His master never offered a drink unless there was business to attend to, and from the look in his eye, tonight’s business was urgent.

“Thank you,” Roland said, wiping his mouth on his silver and black sleeve before the sweet liquid dribbled down his chin. The drink was an appetizer. A symbolic gesture offered just before blood was to be spilled. He waited patiently for direction.

“We found them.”

“Sir?”

“Ten years we’ve searched, and we’ve found them.”

“Are you sure?” Roland instantly knew the importance of his job. This was no menial task. He was about to be given the honor of his life!

“Certain. And it’s important that you leave tonight. There must be no chance of word spreading.”

“What are my orders?”

“I think you know, Roland.”

“You want me to kill them.”

“Yes.”

“All of them?”

“All of them.”

Roland took another sip from his goblet and nervously looked around. “Even the child?” he whispered.

His master leaned in so close that the smell of his foul breath permeated through Roland’s lungs.

“Especially the child.”