

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

DELIHAH DEVLIN



MY IMMORTAL KNIGHT

ALL HALLOWS
HEARTBREAKER

MY IMMORTAL KNIGHT

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DELILAH DEVLIN

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Edited by *BRIANA ST. JAMES*

Cover Art by *DARRELL KING*

CHAPTER ONE

"Dylan, watch your back!"

At his friend's warning, Dylan O'Hara spun on his heels and ducked beneath a sweeping claw. He feinted to the left, and then surged upward, slamming the creature into a damp brick wall. "You will heed me!"

Arms immobilized, the beast shuddered and bared its teeth, a flash of white in the scant moonlight penetrating the narrow alley.

In its most primitive form, the creature couldn't understand him. Dylan sighed. This might take some time.

Behind him, wood splintered and metal rang against rock. "Quentin, you'd better finish your end quickly," he shouted, careful not to look away from the vampire. "We've more problems waiting at The Cavern."

"I'd be happy to oblige, but this one won't release its prize." Quentin grunted in accompaniment to the thud of heavy fists pounding flesh.

Dylan's vampire renewed its struggle.

Battling his own mind-stealing anger, Dylan barely pulled his throat away from a mouthful of jagged teeth. He slammed the creature into the wall again. "I will outlast you, bitch."

Intelligence glittered in the creature's dark gaze, and then her features relaxed, morphing instantly from snarling vampire to the cotton-candy sweetness of a teenaged girl. "Mr. O'Hara, I'm so sorry. You can let me go now."

The "Mr. O'Hara" made him feel at least a couple of centuries old. Dylan glared at the dark-eyed girl whose mane of curly, brown hair framed a pale face with sweetly bowed lips. "Who made you, little girl?"

She transformed again, from sweet sixteen to seductress with a single lap of her tongue around blood red lips. "You may," she whispered.

Dylan rolled his eyes. "Your sire. Who was your sire? And how do you know my name?"

Her lips formed a moue. "Why, Nicky *made* me. And every vampire knows you."

Muffled blows continued to sound behind him, and he shouted to Quentin, "For fuck's sake. He's only a mosquito. Can't you finish him on your own?"

"Inexperience doesn't mean the bastard hasn't got a wicked right hook," Quentin replied.

A loud crash and dull thump followed – flesh met metal. Then silence.

"Quentin, have you finished?"

"Not quite," Quentin said, and then groaned.

The girl peeked over Dylan's shoulder.

He pressed a finger to her lips. "Not one word."

Her glance darted back to his, and she nodded too quickly.

He kept his finger pressed to her lips. "And you don't move an inch, or I'll dust you."

Her eyes widened. Maybe she was a virgin to the vamp lifestyle, but she knew enough to fear a Master Vampire's threat. She nodded slowly.

Dylan turned to aid his friend, he wasn't the least surprised to hear the scurry of footsteps heading toward the street. With a shrug, he realized he didn't care the girl was getting away. He could always catch her later.

Quentin had the foresight to remove his shirt before entering the fray, and he rose from the ground to stand bare-chested, facing a male vamp in full-blooded frenzy.

The vamp's face was contorted with bloodlust and his fangs formed two greedy rows, the long incisors curving over his lips. Carrying a human at his side like a bag of potatoes, he swung his free arm and connected with Quentin's jaw.

Quentin landed next to a trash bin. When Dylan approached, he smiled crookedly. "I've got him softened up."

Dylan slid a stake from the top of his boot. "I told you, Quent, we haven't time to play."

The beast lumbered from side to side, the girl under his arm flopping like a rag doll. Blood, spattered on his Linkin' Park T-shirt and blue jeans, indicated she wasn't the vamp's first victim of the night.

To fight a vampire at the peak of his bloodlust, Dylan needed an extra push. So he let his own lust take him by degrees, careful to balance waning human intelligence with increasing vampire strength. He thrilled to the heightened strength and awareness—bloodlust being a dangerously close cousin to his dark sensuality.

Skin on his cheeks and forehead stretched to accommodate rising plates of facial armor. Fangs slid from his gums, pushing shorter incisors behind them. Dylan curled his lips and snarled a warning at his opponent.

When the other male vamp threw back his head and roared, the rag doll at his side stirred, and she wriggled to free herself from the vampire's grasp. The vamp dropped its gaze to the girl, and Dylan leapt to push the stake deep into its chest.

As Dylan's face reformed and his teeth retracted, the vamp staggered, finally relinquishing its hold on the girl. With a great sigh, the creature fell to its knees. Features blurred, then reshaped.

A blond, sparse beard covered the chin and jaw of another teen. The youth's fearful gaze met Dylan's the instant the young man's body disintegrated into dust.

"Goddamn, Nicky."

Quentin stepped past him, heading for the girl. She lay on her back, eyes closed tightly. Even from a distance, Dylan heard her heart hammering. Quentin bent over her, his mouth at her throat.

Dylan shuddered, thankful his friend had taken charge of the girl, certain he wouldn't have been able to stop himself from draining her dry. He'd been too long without fresh blood...and a neck was a tender bit of flesh.

After a long moment, Quentin raised his head, blood smearing his lips. "Open your eyes, little girl."

Her lids lifted slowly, expression dazed.

"You partied too much with the boy, and he got a little carried away." His voice soothed. "You want to go home now."

"I want to go home," she said in monotone.

Quentin pushed a strand of her hair away from her forehead. "Did he drive you here, sweetheart?"

She blinked slowly. "I drove my car to The Cavern."

"How very convenient," he murmured. "Time to go home."

"I want to go home," she repeated.

Quentin helped her to her feet, and she walked to the end of the alley, staring straight ahead. His heavy hand landed on Dylan's shoulder. "We're done here, Dylan," he said quietly. "Let's make sure she gets to her car."

With one last glance at the empty, crumpled T-shirt and blue jeans, Dylan rose to his feet. "How many kids do you think Nicky had to go through to make this one?"

Quentin snatched his shirt from where he'd hung it on a nail and shrugged into it. "Why would he even want one this young?"

"Younger humans are more resilient. Teenagers stand a better chance of surviving the transformation. And they're all out tonight, it being Halloween. Easy pickings."

"Bloody hell. We should be glad he isn't turning babies in Spiderman outfits."

Dylan raked his hand through his hair. "Let's get out of here."

They left the alley and walked toward the violet neon sign marking the entrance to The Cavern.

Just as the girl passed them in a little red Civic, soft misty rain began to fall.

Dylan raised his face and inhaled, welcoming the moisture.

"Fuck me!" Quentin said. "It's raining again. Hurry along, now."

"My friend, you're too fussy. How can you not love the rain? It smells like home."

"I hated home every damned day of my life. Why the hell do you think I was in the Caymans when I was turned? London is forever dreary."

Dylan shook his head. They were poles apart in most things, but bound by their immortality. More than lifelong friends. "Seattle's as close to Ireland as I've found in the world. The weather's soft, and the rain makes everything..." He took a last deep breath. "...clean."

* * * * *

Later, Dylan surveyed the growing crush of bodies undulating to the techno beat on the dance floor below. It was Halloween, but the vamp-savvy crowd had foregone the costumes for the excitement of mingling with the real thing. "Just another Saturday night at The Cavern," he mumbled. He was growing bored with the scene beyond the one-way mirror of his soundproof room. Bored and horny.

"I wonder what young Nicky has planned for tonight," Quentin said from the black leather sofa.

Dylan shot a glance at his friend whose appearance was completely unruffled after their skirmish in the alley. "I thought he was beneath your notice."

"Just wondered." Quentin took another sip of brandy from the snifter Dylan had poured. "It being Halloween and all. Americans get so excited about that sort of thing."

Dylan checked the cuffs of his shirt. They were frayed and smudged with grime. "Just remember," he said, pinning his friend with a glare. "Nicky's mine."

Quentin lifted a single aristocratic brow. "Are you going to stake him or invite him to dinner?"

Dylan ignored the jibe and unbuttoned his shirt. At times, Quentin's British drollness grated on his nerves. "I'll talk to him—first. He's trying to take over, you know. He's building his own army."

"I'm shivering in my boots. An army of mosquitoes."

"Be afraid. He can't control immature vamps. You saw what happened."

"Wasps, then."

Dylan drew the curtain closed, shutting off the view, and then shrugged off his shirt. "They're already leaving carnage in their path. Before long, the police will be poking their noses in our business. At least Nicky doesn't have that little girl in the alley to add to his ranks."

"Should we have left her alive? What if she remembers and brings the police down on our heads?"

"She was unconscious most of the time," Dylan said. "Thanks to your persuasion, she'll think she dreamed the rest of it."

"Well, there are plenty of willing hosts here tonight. Nicky's army doesn't need to kill."

Dread lingered like stale blood. "You know damn well Nicky doesn't consider whores a suitable meal."

"It's true. He doesn't like to stop at a little nibble." Quentin's eyes narrowed. "But what about you? Are you going to end your fast?"

"We're not talking about me. I'm not a menace to human society."

"Dylan, you have to feed. As it is, you're likely to rip the head off your next host, if you don't take the edge off with a little sex first."

"I'm in control."

Quentin snorted. "Not for long, if you don't feed. There are plenty of hosts below, willing to take your cock and your bite. Why not go for it?"

Dylan lifted an eyebrow. "Are you offering to pimp for me?"

"Not bloody likely. We don't have the same tastes."

"And I'm tired of a steady diet of drugged up whores."

Quentin's grin stretched wide. "We could do a foursome."

"I'd rather go without."

Quentin's expression grew serious. "Then make yourself a mate."

A fading memory of a redheaded angel caused a dull ache in his chest. "You know I wouldn't risk a woman's life for that."

"For fuck's sake, you're a stubborn bastard. Take a human lover."

"Maybe I should. It's not like I'd have to fall in love with her. Humans are too short-lived." Dylan strode past Quentin to the coat rack next to the door and selected a black leather vest, buttoning it closed. "Let's patrol the floor. Make sure everyone plays nice tonight." He opened the door and looked back at Quentin.

"Oh, all right." His friend heaved a sigh. "You sure know how to suck the life out of a party."

Before Dylan reached the bottom step of the stairs, he sensed a change in the crowd. Every vamp in his view stiffened. Their expressions grew expectant.

Dylan lifted his nose to the air and sniffed. Beneath the usual cloud of cigarettes, perfume, and sweat, something fresh and sweet—and infinitely carnal—wafted in the air. His body tightened in anticipation. Tonight was the night.

Without looking over his shoulder, Dylan yelled, "Find her!"

* * * * *

Emmaline Harris adjusted the snug fit of her bustier and patted her breasts to make sure everything that mattered was covered. She'd ditched her shawl in the coatroom near the door and was beginning to regret the exposure.

"Damn Monica and her costume," she muttered. When Monica had lent her the Vampira outfit, she obviously hadn't taken into consideration the two-cup difference in their sizes.

Emmy took another deep gasp of air and headed toward the center of the dance floor. That's where Monica was most likely to be.

Emmy didn't recognize a soul. This West Seattle tavern, next to the waterway and Elliot Bay, wasn't the sort of place Emmy was accustomed to.

"Excuse me. Pardon me," she said, as she sidled between gyrating bodies, but soon realized no one heard her above the deafening music. And worse, she was the only person dressed for Halloween. "Monica is so dead. Why did I bother with an hour of makeup and this stupid costume when everyone else is wearing Dollar Store fangs?"

"Talking to yourself again?" Monica drawled into her ear.

Emmy whirled. "Don't do that!"

"I see you made it," Monica said, grinning. She flicked a lock of brown hair over her shoulder. "I knew the outfit would be delicious on you."

Emmy took in her friend's appearance and frowned. "Your fangs look pretty darn good, up close. But your blue jeans and tank are the scariest," Emmy grumbled. "What's with this place? Don't they know it's Spooky Night? Or did I get my days crossed?" Then she realized Monica hadn't even bothered changing what she'd worn at lunch before coming to the club. Monica must have been in a hurry. Must be a new man.

"Come," Monica said, grabbing her hand and pulling her toward a dark corner. "Now that you're finally here, I have friends I want you to meet."

Emmy tried to dig in her heels. "When you say friends, you mean guys, don't you? Monica, I don't think I'm ready for this whole getting-back-up-on-the-horse-that-kicked-you thing."

"Shut up, Emmy. My friends will love you."

"I'm sure they will, with my boobs pushed up to my chin and this tourniquet squeezing my waist to nothing. I'm sure I've lost a few brain cells already to asphyxiation."

Emmy tugged, trying to free her hand, but Monica continued to pull her toward the corner. "You should rethink this whole blind date thing. Your friends aren't going to know the real me. When they see me in daylight, they'll think I exploded!"

Monica looked over her shoulder. "Trust me. That will never happen."

Before Emmy could utter another protest, Monica halted in front of a group of young men. Emmy's heart sank. "You know I almost thought this might be the night, but Monica—" she pulled her friend close enough to hiss into her ear, "Are you out of your mind? They're teenagers! What are you going to do, introduce me as Auntie Em?"

"Not them, silly. Him!" Monica placed a hand in the middle of her back and shoved.

Startled, Emmy had only a moment to note a black leather jacket that clothed a tall, lean frame, and then she was hugging it to keep her balance. "Sorry, that was awfully clumsy of..." She looked up into a cold, harshly sculpted face, framed by dark hair that brushed the shoulders of the jacket. "...my friend."

"What have you brought me, Monica?" the man asked. The smile playing at the corner of his lips didn't relieve Emmy's sense of unease.

"An appetizer," Monica drawled, then giggled.

"You know, I'm not the least bit hungry," Emmy said, trying to lighten the atmosphere that had suddenly grown dense as mud.

"I almost always am." The man looked down at Emmy, and then leaned forward.

She screwed her eyes closed and sucked in her lips. *No way is he going to kiss me. Monica, what were you thinking?* Instead of a kiss, he licked the side of her face.

Her eyes flew open. "I think I'm coming down with a bug." Not averse to licking, but concerned they hadn't been introduced, Emmy couldn't stop her nervous prattle. "Licking me could be hazardous to your health. I might have Monkey Pox. I should go home and call the CDC."

Before she could back away, his arms wrapped around her like a vise.

"Then again," she said, pushing against his shoulders, "maybe I should just introduce myself since Monica hasn't seen fit." She strained to look behind her, but her friend was nowhere to be seen. "Typical," she muttered.

She turned back to find the man nuzzling her neck and emitting a growl that would have sounded incredibly sexy, except that it tickled the side of her neck. "Stop that!" Turning her head to close access to that particular avenue of attack, she squealed when he hoisted her high in his arms.

His mouth was now level with the exposed flesh of her breasts, and there was too much breast thanks to Monica's bustier. Her creamy flesh was a beacon for perverts to feast on.

Only this perv wasn't getting any. "Oh no. No breast-licking. I mean it. Or my boyfriend is going to—"

"Join us?" Despite the deep shadows, Emmy detected amusement in the man's expression as he gazed up into her eyes.

"Not likely," she said, lifting her chin and sniffing. "He doesn't like to share."

"Is that right?" A smile stretched across his face, his teeth flashing brightly. "Tell me about him. I'd like to know my competition."

"Well I'm sure he doesn't have nice pointy teeth like yours, but he's big as a bear and jealous." Emmy had a stray thought that she sounded like Little Red

Riding Hood. She almost laughed, but her predicament was getting less funny by the moment. The predatory gleam in her captor's eyes was making her nervous. "You don't want to upset him by being here when he arrives."

"What does he look like? So I'll be sure to call him over."

Her last boyfriend had been an unimpressive shrimp. "Well, he's big. And dark. Darker than you. His hair has a little wave, and it's...longish. And green eyes." She'd always wished for a lover with green eyes.

"Is there more?"

"That's it." She bit her lip. "D-did I tell you he's big?"

The eyes of the devil who held her narrowed above his crocodile smile. "You know, I don't think you have a boyfriend, least not one who sounds like he'll give me any trouble." His voice dropped to a sexy rasp that sent a shiver of alarm down her spine. "You're going to have to convince me you aren't just delaying the edible here."

"The inevitable, don't you mean?" Emmy blinked and almost lost the thread of the conversation when he laved his tongue along the side of her neck. "Oh I wouldn't try to delay anything—if you were my boyfriend, that is. Although I must say, if I didn't have a boyfriend," she gulped, "which I may or may not have, I'd probably still not want to date you."

"I think you would," he whispered in her ear. "You're dying for a walk on the wild side."

A shiver of awareness crept along her spine. Alarmed because she was responding to his seduction, she tried one last time to deny him. "I'd never go out with you. You're the dangerous type. And a girl knows there's no future in a relationship with a dangerous man. I may not be the best judge of men, but even I know that."

"Good God, does the chit ever come up for air?"

Emmy jerked toward the voice that sounded behind her. It belonged to a man who was gorgeous in a proper, stiff-upper-lip sort of way. A white dress

short tucked into gray slacks clothed a long, lean frame—rakish, and he was blond.

Now the man standing next to him could have been tailor-made for the role of her boyfriend, because he was everything she'd described and so much more. Tall for one. Nicely muscled, if his bare arms were any hint of the corded sinew beneath his clothing. Broader—filled out in all the manly places Emmy liked to have filled out. And more dangerous looking than the scrawny ape licking the tops of her breasts. He'd do.

She smiled brightly. "Darling!"

CHAPTER TWO

Momentarily stunned by her exuberant greeting, Dylan stared at the woman Nicky was about to ravage. With her body crushed against his nemesis, Dylan had an excellent view of the lush curve of her waist, which blended into wide hips—and an ass a man would die to pump against. To his photosensitive eyes, her hair reflected the radiance of a sun in its blonde strands. The skin of her shoulders, rosy with blushes, made his mouth water.

His cock twitched behind the fly of his blue jeans.

Quentin coughed, breaking the spell the woman's brilliant smile had cast.

"Nicky. You know the house rules," Dylan said, his voice roughened by his instant attraction to the woman. "No civilians."

"I like this one. So refreshing." Nicky nuzzled her neck and grinned lazily. "She's a meal and a half. We could share."

The woman slapped Nicky's shoulder. "Oh no. I don't go for that kinky stuff."

"Put her down. Now." Dylan glared daggers at the younger vamp, even as he wondered at his sudden urge to rip Nicky's arms off.

Nicky returned his glare, appearing nonchalant about raising Dylan's ire. "Keep your knickers on—as you Brits say."

"You damn well know—I'm Irish."

Nicky shrugged. "I was only having a bit of fun." He lowered the woman to the floor.

Unsteady, she grabbed Nicky's arm then smiled thinly at Dylan. "Well, that was entertaining. I think I'll go find my girlfriend, Monica."

As she walked past Dylan, he snaked an arm around her waist, pulling her to his side. "Are you talking about Monica with the brown hair and blue eyes?"

She tried to shrug out of his embrace, but only managed to set the fleshy tops of her luscious tits jiggling. "Are we doing this again? I'm tired of the game. And I won't be surprised if you both haven't left bruises. You guys must be doing some serious steroids."

Dylan's gaze lifted to her face. "You aren't going to find Monica."

Her wide hazel eyes met his gaze for the first time. Despite the sexy dress and the thick makeup on her eyes and mouth, there was a lively intelligence reflected in her gaze. And she was an innocent. She hadn't a clue about the smoldering fire she'd lit in his loins.

"Why?" A frown creased her brow. "Has she already left?"

Dylan resisted the urge to draw a deep breath and bathe his hypersensitive sense of smell in her scent. "Listen, Monica isn't your friend anymore."

The sound of Nicky's mocking laughter angered Dylan. To him, everything was a joke. Human life was cheap.

"Like I'm going to listen to *you*." She struggled against his embrace, then frowned when he didn't let her go. "She's been my friend forever."

"Right now, she's only thinking about her hunger." He knew—his hunger had hardened his dick to stone, and his fangs inched down from the roof of his mouth.

"You know, you're right. Why whenever we have lunch together, she doesn't go on and on about her boyfriends or her bad Brazilian wax job. No, she goes straight for the breadsticks!"

The urge to shake her until her teeth rattled warred with the need to take her to the floor. Dylan realized she was aggravating the shit out of him, but he wasn't bored. And there was only one way he could think of to make her shut up. Ignoring Nicky's avid stare, he leaned down and kissed her.

For him, the contact was electric. Her lips were soft and lush. Her breath sweet and minty. Her tongue hesitantly traced the fangs on either side of his mouth, and he thought he'd never been so hard.

He retracted his teeth. He wanted to savor her innocence.

"Nothing like broadcasting your interest to the world," Quentin mumbled.

Dylan opened his eyes to see Nicky walk away. He pulled back from the woman. "You didn't see me from the front, Quent. There's no way he missed this hard-on."

The woman's mouth gaped, and her glance fell to his groin.

"Good work shutting her up." Quentin's expression was once again irritatingly droll.

"Just make sure Nicky doesn't get up to any more mischief tonight," Dylan said. "He's already staked a claim on her."

"Righto. I suppose you're going to look after the girl?" Quentin drawled. "About bloody time."

"Sod off," Dylan snarled.

"Hello! I'm here," the woman said. "I don't know why men think they can talk over a woman's head just because she's blonde."

Quentin's gaze was alight with humor.

"You've better things to do, Quent. Get lost." To the woman, Dylan said, "You're coming with me."

"Now look here," she said, pushing against the arm that anchored her to his side, "I don't know you from Adam. I don't even know your name. Why the hell would I go anywhere with you?"

"Name's Dylan O'Hara," he said flatly, then lifted her off her feet and headed toward the stairs.

"Wait a minute. Where are you taking me?" Her legs scissored and the sharp spikes of her heels found his shin.

Exasperated, he put her down and glowered. "Dammit. I'm rescuing you."

Her hazel eyes rounded. "You think you're saving me from the bad guy?"

He stepped close, forcing her to look up at him. "I'm saving you from a *badder* guy."

"Oh!" Her eyelids dipped, lashes concealing the thoughts her eyes appeared to always betray. "You really think he would have hurt me?"

Touching a finger to her soft cheek, he said, "He wanted more than just your blood, sweetheart. You wouldn't have been able to stop him." He slid the finger to the side of her neck and felt her blood thrum as her heart beat faster.

"That's an odd way to put it. Can I stop you?" she asked, her breath shallow and rapid.

"Anytime you want. But you have to tell me you don't want me."

Her gaze lifted to his face. Fear and excitement warred in her expression. "I'm Emmaline Harris. Emmy, if you like."

His hand slid behind her head, combing through her hair, and then he tugged to tilt her face back. "Tell me to stop, Emmy."

"This is crazy. I just swore off men," she whispered. "I didn't want this."

His lips hovered an inch above hers, giving her time to change her mind. "Didn't want what, Emmy?"

The heat of a blush stained her cheeks. "To fuck."

"Bloody hell." Dylan clenched his jaw and willed himself not to pounce. His cock had been painfully hard before—now his balls felt ready to burst. And he'd thought she would be safer with him!

"Was I wrong?" she asked. The uncertainty in her voice produced a slight quaver. "I thought you wanted me too. It's like I conjured you. You're everything I ever wanted, and there you were. Just for me."

"What a coincidence. I thought you'd been made for me." Dylan's hand fisted in her hair. "I may hurt you."

A seductive smile tilted the corners of her mouth. "I'm counting on it. In fact, if what's pushing against my belly now is any indication, I think you're going to ruin me for any other man."

"Come upstairs with me." He released her hair and moved away. "It's your choice."

With a slow rub of her hip against his cock, she stepped past him and climbed the stairs.

He was right behind her—the sway of her hips, from side to side, the sole focus of his attention. Black velvet hugged her bottom as she climbed, revealing the faint indentation of her panties. Each step produced a tiny jiggle of her ass, sending a jolt of awareness right to his groin.

Before they reached the top of the stairs, Dylan adjusted himself to let his cock rise along the zipper of his jeans, popping the snap at the top for relief.

Thankfully, his leather vest covered the head of his penis. He brushed by her to unlock the door, welcoming the darkness inside the room. He became aware of her clutching the back of his vest, so he reached for the blinds and rolled them, letting in the light from the dance floor.

When the door closed behind them, silence fell over the room. Emmy walked to the window. “Can they see us?”

“No. It’s one-way glass.”

She pulled up the blinds, exposing the window. “I didn’t realize there were so many people here. Can they hear us?”

“No more than you can hear them. The room’s soundproof.”

She looked over her shoulder and her skin pinkened. “Dylan, lock the door.”

With his heart pounding in anticipation, he complied. When he turned back, he found her standing in front of the window, peeling down the top of her bustier. Her breasts sprang from their confinement, milky-white globes, crowned by large rosy areolas. As he walked toward her, he noted the large circles were dimpled and her nipples pouted.

Emmy leaned forward and pressed her breasts to the glass, then raised her arms and flattened the rest of her upper torso against it. “Oh, it’s so deliciously cool. You’re sure no one can see me?”

Dylan closed in, standing just behind her. With his nose pressed to her apple-scented hair, he widened his legs and pressed his cock to her backside. "No one can see us. Is this how you want it?"

"My skin aches. Could you untie the laces of my bustier?"

Hunger clawing at his belly and groin, Dylan's hands shook while he plucked the silk laces along her back to loosen the corset. Finally, it fell to the floor leaving her creamy back bare. He smoothed his hands around her shoulders and down her spine, achingly aware of her fragile body and the warm, fragrant blood just beneath her skin.

She moaned and pushed her velvet-covered bottom against his cock. "The button. There's a button and a zipper. Open them."

Dylan found them easily and pushed the skirt past her hips to the floor. He'd been right about her ass. Round and pink—he gave it a little slap and watched its delicious jiggle. His body screamed with the need to ram deep inside her.

Now, the only thing between his cock and her ass were red silk panties. He shoved them down her legs, then knelt to pull them off, lifting one foot at a time. When he rose, he licked the back of her thigh, the crease where her legs and buttocks met, then the dimples above her heart-shaped ass. He skimmed his hands over her from shoulders to her round buttocks and squeezed.

She shuddered. "Dylan, I'm feeling things."

He smiled, and dipped to kiss her shoulder and the tender corner of her neck. "You bloody well better be."

"Strange things," she said, her voice ending on a whimper when his hands circled her hips to play with her pussy. "It's not like I'm a virgin, but...I've never felt like this."

"Tell me what you feel," he said, and deliberately licked away Nicky's scent from her neck.

"Tingly, hot—like something's going to explode. I'm scared."

He scraped his teeth against her neck and groaned. The blood was just beneath the surface. Not yet. "Sounds like the buildup to an orgasm, love. Haven't you ever had one before?" To remove himself from temptation, he knelt behind her and nudged her legs apart with his hands.

Her buttocks rose and she gasped. "I thought so. At least, my heart raced and I felt wet...down there." A tremor ran down her legs.

With both hands, he parted her buttocks and leaned forward to lap at her down-covered pussy. Her seam oozed a fragrant gift of excitement. "You're certainly wet now." Dylan licked between her labia, tasting the salty-sweet cream.

She jerked, and then pushed her hips back and higher, giving him greater access to her soaking cunt. "Ooh! Keep doing whatever it is you're doing. Don't stop."

Two fingers parted her outer lips, and he fluttered his tongue against the thin, tender folds inside. He drew them between his teeth and sucked.

Instantly, Emmy shrieked and bucked. "I'm gonna die. Ohmygod, I'm gonna die."

Her body shook with her sobs, but Dylan didn't stop. He slid his tongue inside her juicy cunt and speared in and out while his thumb rubbed in circles over her hooded clit. When her breath came in rhythmic pants, and her thighs stiffened against his cheeks, he sensed she hurtled toward her climax.

Teeth slid from the roof of his mouth a moment before he turned his head and sank his incisors into her quivering pussy, piercing her clit and inner lips.

Emmy screamed a long ragged howl. Her cunt throbbed with pleasure.

Small capillaries burst and spilled a trickle of blood into Dylan's mouth. As he sucked, he continued to mouth her tender flesh—until long after the pulses tightening her vagina slowed. Retracting his teeth, he healed the tiny wounds he'd made with the lazy lap of his tongue. He turned his head and kissed her inner thigh.

"Did you just bite me?" she asked, her tone incredulous.

"Yes." He leaned away from her. "Did you like it?"

"I didn't know you could do such a thing. And it hurt! But..." Still pressed to the glass, she glanced over her shoulder. "...is that what an orgasm's really like?"

Not knowing which issue he should address first, Dylan rose painfully to his feet. One need had been partially slaked, but by now his cock had to be turning blue from constriction. He unbuttoned his vest and shrugged it off, not caring where it landed on the floor. Gritting his teeth, he willed his shaft to relax, and then he reached for his zipper.

"Good lord! You're not wearing underwear. Should you be doing that?"

His hand hesitated and he opened his eyes, hoping she wasn't asking him to end their interlude.

Emmy had stopped hugging the window and was staring at his groin.

From the front, she was proving lethal to his self-control. He's always been partial to blondes – and she was the real thing. "Should I be doing what, Emmy? Do you want me to keep my pants on?" He grimaced against the pain. "I'll stop now, if you tell me."

"That's not what I meant. But your zipper." She pointed at his groin and blushed a deeper rose. "Won't you hurt yourself with the zipper?"

"Stop talking about it, and I might be able to get him down a bit." He closed his eyes against the sight of her and took a deep breath.

"Oh. Can I help?"

"No!" Taking another deep breath, he eased the zipper down slowly, wincing as the metal teeth scraped his cock.

He heard her gasp. "Holy shit! Now I'm not sure which will hurt worse, your bite or your dick."

Dylan jerked, and the zipper pinched his cock. "For fuck's sake!" He ripped the zipper down the rest of the way, then doubled over in pain. Air left his lungs in a single strangled gust.

"Oh, I'm sorry." Emmy's hand patted his head. "What can I do? Can I help?" Still clutching his groin, he raised his head and stared at her.

Her eyes were wide with concern. "Your face is bright red. Are you all right? Can you breathe? I know the Heimlich."

"What the fuck?" He shook his head in confusion. "Just sit!"

When she sank onto the edge of the leather sofa, Dylan felt it safe enough to turn his back. He reached for the edge of his desk to steady himself. Gradually, the pain ebbed, and he straightened.

Nervous laughter bubbled. "Oh! I meant CPR, not the Heimlich. No wonder you looked at me like I'd grown two heads."

Dylan shook his head, and then surprised himself with a single bark of laughter. He turned back to the sofa. Emmy still hugged the edge, her skin ghostly pale against the dark leather.

She bit her lip and raised her arm to cover her breasts. "I suppose the mood's gone, huh? What with you injured and all. I'll just get dressed."

His gaze swept over her breasts, rounded belly, and the nest of pale hair between her legs. "If you give me a minute to recover —"

Emmy chewed on her lips, and then bounced from the sofa and walked toward him, stopping just in front of him.

With eyes on her breasts, he pushed his jeans down his hips and struggled to free a leg.

"I could..." Emmy's gaze fell to his cock, widened, and she licked her lips.

Dylan hopped on one foot and pulled a leg from the jeans.

"...could kiss it better."

He landed on the carpeted floor on his backside, and then laid back, his arms stretched wide. "You are a menace! I give up. Sex with you may be the death of

me." He felt a tug on his calf and looked down the length of his body, eyebrows raised.

Emmy was pulling his pants the rest of the way down his second leg. She blurted, "Well you don't think after seeing that dick that I could just walk away?"

CHAPTER THREE

Emmy pulled off his pants, relieved that finally they were on equal ground. He was flat on his back. Naked as she was. Although, equal wasn't exactly the right word for him. His dick was extraordinarily above equal. Stellar and mythic were better words that came to mind.

Redder than the rest of his skin, his cock rose from a nest of straight black hair. Hair that appeared the same color and texture as the fur on his chest. Something she'd noticed as soon as he'd taken off his leather vest.

On closer inspection, she noted his penis was thicker than her wrist, and long with deep veins running down the side. It was crowned by a smooth, round head and as beautiful as the rest of him.

While she was naked and ordinary. Only ordinary wasn't the right word, either. *Über*-ordinary, maybe. No, ridiculous—that's what she was. Her ass was enormous. Her breasts were flabby. And she hadn't shaved her bikini line. Perhaps she'd better get dressed.

Her gaze fell again to his mighty sword.

"Don't get shy now," he said. "Or are you forgetting the part about kissing it better?"

How had she ever had the nerve to say that? Of course, she was always saying the first thing that came to mind. Then again, he sounded a little worried. Like he was afraid she might not go through with it.

A dick of mythic proportions didn't come by twice in a lifetime. She bit the edge of her lip and knelt beside him. "You'll have to show me what you like. My ex-boyfriend said I do it all wrong."

"He was a bloody idiot." Dylan reached for her hand and pulled it toward his cock. "Start like this." With his hand over hers, he moved her up and down on him.

The skin that slid over the rigid shaft was velvety-soft and hot. "I've done this before." She increased the speed.

His eyes closed tight. "If you use some spit, you can move faster and squeeze while you do that."

Seeing his eyes closed, she felt slightly less self-conscious. Ready to try something new. Cupping her free palm to her mouth, she spit, then slid both hands around his cock. "Squeezing is good?"

"Oh yeah. A little twisting too." His hips lifted off the floor at her first sideways caress. But his eyes stayed closed.

She must be doing it right. Relieved, she twisted her hands in opposite directions as she pushed and pulled. "What about the other thing?"

"Other thing?" he gasped, and opened his eyes.

"A blow job. I'm not very good at that either."

"God help me." Dylan sighed and put an arm behind his head. With his head raised, his green eyes could see everything she did.

Her hands slowed and she waited for his next instructions, determined to get it right.

"Stop moving your hands," he said, his face taut.

Startled, she stopped instantly. Maybe, she'd hurt him.

"You were doing it right, Emmy." He raised his hand to comb his fingers through her hair. "Too right."

She let out a relieved sigh. "Would you like me to do the other thing now?"

"Just put your mouth wherever you want," he said, his voice gruff and low.

The "wherever you want" confused and excited her. Her ex had always insisted on her swallowing his cock right away.

She leaned over him and tried to decide where to start first. Head, shaft, or the sac below?

She kissed his balls, smoothing her lips over them. Only, it wasn't enough. She stuck her tongue out and laved one, but it rolled away. Determined to hold it still for a licking, she sucked one into her mouth and caressed it with her tongue.

A deep moan and lift of his hips told her she was on the right track. She opened her mouth wide and sucked the other into her mouth.

"Emmy," he said, his voice strained. "Straddle my face."

"Huh?" So surprised by his request, she let him pull her around, until her pussy hovered above his mouth and his penis tickled her collarbone.

The now familiar stroke of his tongue had her back curling like a cat to press her pussy into his face. His mouth closed over her labia, and he sucked and stroked, making her forget her purpose until the shaft of his dick nudged her chin.

She tilted his penis and lowered her mouth over the silky-smooth head. When his teeth sank into her tender flesh, she squirmed and moaned—and bit into his dick.

With a single, deafening roar, he lifted her from his body and pushed her to the side. "What the hell do you think you're doing?"

"What you did to me." Tears filled her eyes. She'd done it all wrong, again. Her hands covered her breasts. *I'm so stupid.*

With his hand fisted around his cock, Dylan cursed. "Son of a—" His gaze met hers, and he grew still, his face tight with a grimace. "It's my fault. I should have explained. There's a difference between you and me."

"Right. The man-woman thing." She sniffed. "Yeah, you Tarzan. Me Jane."

"No." He let go of his dick and combed his fingers through her hair again.

By now his petting calmed her. She turned to his hand like a cat seeking an ear rub. "I just did it wrong."

"No, dear. I can bite—you can't. At least not hard."

She glanced down. Angry red teeth marks marred the shaft. "I'm sorry." Then she realized he was still engorged, fully erect. "Does it hurt much? Can I try it again?"

"No!"

Deflated, her shoulders sank and her heart slowed to a dismal thump.

His finger lifted her chin. "Emmy, let's just fuck."

Emmy searched his eyes for any sign of pity for her inept performance, but saw only raw desire. Once again encouraged, she said eagerly, "Show me what you want. Contrary to my previous error—I really am a quick learner."

Kneeling in front of her, he helped her into position, her legs spread wide over his lap. "You're in charge. Take as much of me as you want."

Accustomed to being commanded by a more experienced partner, Emmy awkwardly planted her legs on either side of him and rose high enough for him to place his cock against the opening of her vagina. With her hands on his shoulders, she lowered herself a few inches, letting gravity pull her down his shaft.

"That's it," he said, and his hands on her ass helped her rise.

She sank again, slowly, making sure she savored every sensation as his cock drove upward, past her labia, into her channel, stretching her, then up she rose again.

Soon her breath came in little pants, sweat breaking over her skin. When she noticed moisture collecting on Dylan's upper lip, she stopped worrying about it. Instead, she slid her moist breasts against his chest, swirling her nipples in his hair.

Up and down. Down and grinding—her swollen clit seeking the friction of the hair covering his groin. She needed him deeper and harder. She wanted another orgasm. "Ooh!" Her voice rose as she bounced faster. "Oooh!"

Dylan's strong arms closed around her, stopping her movement.

She slapped his shoulders. "I'm losing it! Let me move."

His arms tightened. "You're not losing it. Sometimes pausing makes your orgasm more powerful."

"Really?" She stopped struggling and found her face was level with his. Staring into his eyes, she noted flecks of brown and gold, the colors of the forest at the start of autumn. His irises weren't entirely green.

Dylan blinked and pulled back his head. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing. I'm just catching my breath." Then something occurred to her. "Do you realize we've never kissed? Here you are with your dick all the way up me, and we haven't kissed."

His eyebrows drew together in a frown. "I beg your pardon. I kissed you. Remember? Downstairs, in front of Nicky."

Dylan's nipples were flat, brown circles with tiny nubs in the center. She wondered if they'd dimple like hers when kissed. "Who?"

"The *badder* guy." One of his hands closed over hers, halting her exploration. "The one licking your neck. Do you remember now?"

"I remember. It seems so long ago." Satisfied Dylan hadn't bypassed a rule of modern lovemaking, Emmy laid her head on his shoulder. "So are you going to show me that more powerful orgasm?"

His hand stroked her head. "Have you caught your breath?"

She peeked at his face, thrilled at the lusty look in his eyes. "Will I be needing it?"

"Oh yes." He smacked her ass. "Now get off me."

She groaned noisily and closed her legs around his back. "I don't want to."

"Emmy, do you like the feel of me inside you?" he asked, his voice a sexy growl next to her ear.

"Mmmm-hmmm. That's why I'm not moving."

"And if I tell you I can be deeper inside you?"

Emmy's belly tightened like a spring. This was something else she knew about. She unwound her legs and pushed off his lap, his cock sliding from inside

her with a pop. In an instant, she turned and went down on her hands and knees. "Doggie style, right?"

He coughed. It sounded suspiciously like a laugh. Then hands closed over her buttocks, parting them. A single slide of his cock between her cheeks had her arms trembling. Then he slid his long shaft inside her soaking pussy, pushing inexorably inside. A long stroke out, and he drove back inside – *hard*.

Emmy started the climb, jerking and whimpering softly as he pounded into her, until her arms collapsed beneath her, and her head sank to the floor. But his hands anchored her hips as he continued to slam against her ass, faster and faster.

Suddenly, her breath caught, and her world tilted. "Ohmygod! Ohmygod!" she chanted, slanting her hips upward to take him deeper still. Another stroke, and then the tension in her belly snapped, and her cunt began to milk his cock, throbbing and claspings.

Still he moved inside her. At the same maddening pace.

As the pulsing inside her slowed, a nagging thought stopped her cold. Perhaps, she wasn't woman enough to get him off?

Again, she rose and pushed back to meet his strokes. When his hands squeezed her ass, she was reassured. The sound of flesh slapping flesh resounded each time his belly met her ass, warming her skin and her heart.

Excitement coiled in her belly, and she arched her back. "It's happening again!"

* * * * *

Dylan's hips pistoned faster, Emmy's soft bottom cushioning his belly at the end of each sharp stroke. Her moans tightened his balls until he had to come or they would explode.

An itchy tingle in his gums announced the downward glide of his teeth. He halted instantly and prayed for restraint. He'd already scared her once.

"No, don't stop now," Emmy wailed and pushed back, trying to take him deeper inside.

With a curse, he stopped the movement of her hips.

"Is this another pause to make it stronger?" she asked, her breath gasping.

Dylan raised his gaze to the ceiling, willing himself to resist the dark lust that swept over him. Instead, it centered between his thighs.

Emmy bucked, her head flung back. "Please, do something. Move!" Her hair settled, strands of her blond hair clinging to the sweat on her back.

He wanted nothing more than to wrap her hair in his fist. "Hold still, Emmy. I'll hurt you."

A shudder wracked her shoulders and her head sank to the floor again. "Do you want to bite me again?" she asked, and then peeked over her shoulder.

He clenched his jaw, his long teeth spearing the inside of his upper lip.

"It's okay," she said softly. "Weird, but okay. Besides, it didn't hurt that bad." A smile lifted the corners of her lips. "And I came."

He shook his head, trying to deny the quickening that pushed at the skin of his cheeks and forehead. "Don't look at me, Emmy."

"Just do it." With a shrug that he felt pull at his groin, she faced away. "Whatever gets you moving again. Fuck me, Dylan."

"Come here," he said, guiding her buttocks down as he knelt behind her. Still connected, he pulled her into his arms. Her back leaned into his chest, and her buttocks were cradled by his groin.

As his hands settled over her belly, he commanded, "Give me your neck," and he nuzzled through her hair to find the corner of her shoulder, drowning in the scent of apple blossoms and her desire. Goosebumps rose beneath his palms.

Emmy tilted her head to the side. "Tell me what you want."

Dylan lapped the side of her neck, his tongue preparing her fragile skin. "Trust me to make this good for you."

A little gust of laughter jerked her rounded belly. "You've already given me better than my boyfriend ever did in over four years."

Primitive, surging anger instantly reshaped his face, and the muscles of his body hardened to steel. He thrust upward.

"Ohmygod!" she cried. Her hands raised behind her head to twist in his hair.

Dylan slid his hands beneath her to cup her buttocks and he squeezed. His voice almost a snarl, he said, "Move on me, baby."

Her knees on either side of him, she lifted up then sank back down on his cock. Her sigh of relief ending on a moan.

Dylan glided his tongue over her skin one last time, then sank his teeth into her neck, just breaking into the skin.

She struggled against him. "I'm not sure—"

His hands rose to her breasts and he fondled them, tugging at the nipples until she eased back once again.

"There's more?" she asked, her breath hitching when he deepened the bite. "It's incredible."

His teeth slid into her until blood rushed into his mouth.

"Ohmygod!" she repeated, rotating her hips on his cock, grinding down. She writhed, her buttocks sliding on his thighs. Then, with his mouth still upon her neck, she bounced against his lap in short jerks.

When her shudders grew deep, starting in her thighs and rising to her belly, Dylan's humanity was nearly lost. A rumbling started deep in his throat that increased with the volume of her moans. He flexed his thighs, lifting them both as he pumped into her. Faster and faster, the blood screaming through his veins, and then his cock burst with a stream of come.

He groaned against her neck.

"Please," she said, gasping.

Dylan withdrew his teeth immediately and realized that he, too, was trembling. At once, he licked the punctures on her neck until they closed. Then he dropped a hand to the curls between her legs.

She widened the space between her legs and continued to rock against him.

As he twisted a nipple between the fingers of one hand, fingers of the other combed through the fine hair until they found the slick button of her clitoris.

He glided his fingers down to where his dick was embedded in her pussy. Capturing cream from their combined come, he returned to her clit and circled on it, the pad of his finger rubbing harder and harder. When she began to keen, he plucked her clit, squeezing in rhythm with the rough treatment of nipple.

"Dylan!" she cried, a moment before she collapsed against him, panting.

Long strokes over her belly and thighs calmed her breathing. Her head lolled on his shoulder, and she looked up. "If I make it home, I'm staying in bed for a week."

He rubbed his cheek against the soft skin on her shoulder, assuring himself his face had returned to its human mask. "I'll see you home."

"You don't have to," she said quickly. "I won't make this into anything more than what it is."

"And what is it?" he asked.

"Wonderful. But just a fuck." Her gaze darted away.

Her blunt words knocked the breath out of him. He wondered why. He'd gotten exactly what he'd set out to find tonight. Uncomplicated sex. Still, he couldn't stop the sudden surge of anger. "Whether you want to see me again or not, you're stuck with me whenever the sun goes down."

"Only in the dark?" One blonde brow arched. "What are you, a vampire?"

CHAPTER FOUR

Dylan gave her heated stare.

Disappointed he hadn't returned a smart-ass comment, Emmy wondered if her blunt words had shocked him. She'd only said "it was just a fuck" to let him know she had no expectations. If he knew he'd rocked her world, he'd probably run screaming into the night.

Not that Dylan appeared to be a screamer, but most men got butterflies when a woman appeared too enthusiastic in their company.

No, Emmy wasn't going to cling. If their interlude was all she'd get from this unusual man, then she'd walk away proud she'd earned her first orgasm. She'd certainly worked hard for it!

Emmy giggled, then looked up into his face again. "Is there any particular reason we're stuck with each other at night?" Her heart pitter-patted, hoping he hadn't said it in the heat of passion. Perhaps he'd finally seen her without his passion-lenses and decided not to be seen in public with her huge butt.

Dylan sighed, then said, "Love, would you mind getting up now? We need to talk."

Here it comes, she thought. *I won't cry. I won't let him see how disappointed I am.* She rose from his lap and bent to pick up her clothes from the floor.

"Not yet," he said, his strong fingers wrapping around her arm.

All that glorious muscle had been hers—at least for a while.

He guided her to the sofa. "Take a seat. We'll talk."

After she had settled onto the cool seat, she wished she had her skirt to cover her thighs, which spread like butter over the leather.

He knelt beside the sofa, his eyes level with hers, the gold flecks glowing in the sea of deep green. His finger tapped her nose. "Emmy, pay attention."

Hoping to forestall some awful 'I'm letting you down easy speech,' Emmy blurted, "You really don't have to do this." Her hands wrung in her lap. "I'm a grown-up girl. This was great, but I can make my own way home now."

His brows drew together. "Emmy, you're not going anywhere without me."

Her heart lurched, wanting to soar, but she kept hold of the tethers. "Dylan, you don't have to say that. I'm not expecting anything to come of this. Can't we just say we had a grand ole time and I can leave?"

"Don't you want to see me again?" he asked softly.

"Of course I do," she admitted, feeling as awkward as a teenager waiting to be kissed. "I was just trying to make this easy for you, in case you wanted an out."

"I want to see you again, too."

She released the tether and smiled as her heart lifted toward a clear blue sky.

"But there's something else." His voice was deep and serious.

The traces tied to her heart tangled in the trees. "You've already got a girlfriend?"

He blinked. "No, Emmy, I don't have a girlfriend."

"Your bi! Was that your boyfriend I saw you with earlier? I can see why you'd be attracted—he's very handsome."

His finger pressed against her lips. "I'm not bi. I'm not trying to brush you off. I just need for you to listen to what I say."

He glared and kept his finger mashed to her lips until she nodded. When he took the finger away, Emmy tightened her lips and slid her hands beneath her thighs.

He rose to his feet. "Your life is in danger." Dragging a hand through his hair, he paced in front of her. "Your friend Monica is working for Nicky now. And Nicky's very dangerous. In fact, he's a murderer."

His cock swayed between his legs in the most amazing way, and then she realized what he'd said. Alarmed, she said, "Then we have to help Monica."

He halted. "Monica can't be saved. It's too late for her, Emmy. And you must never see her again."

She waved his hand in dismissal of the foolish thought. "Why should I believe you? She sells housewares in the same store where I'm the bookkeeper. Saleswomen don't become murderer's groupies."

"While I'm sure there was a speck of logic somewhere in all that, I'm telling you the truth."

"I don't believe you. She's my friend."

"For the love of..." Dylan's hands clenched at his sides. "She's not the same girl. Nicky's changed her."

Emmy felt her lower lip push out, and sucked it back in quickly. How would he ever see it her way, if she acted like a child? "Even if it were true, Monica would never hurt me."

Dylan threw his hands up. "Fine. Have it your way."

Emmy was a little disappointed Dylan had conceded so quickly. "Great." At least he'd quit ragging on Monica.

"Get dressed," he said, his tone brooking no dissent.

Ruffled by his curt tone, Emmy lifted her chin and knelt to retrieve her clothing. After patting the ground without results, she relented and looked at the floor. She gathered her clothing, then glanced at Dylan.

His arms were crossed over his chest and he was completely dressed. "Do you need help?"

She wondered how he'd dressed so quickly. "I've been putting my own clothes on for twenty-odd years now. I think I can manage." Only she was so irritated, she put her panties on inside out.

A single raised eyebrow mocked her.

"I did that on purpose." She slid her skirt over her hips and sucked her breath in to close the zipper at her waist, then she lifted her bustier and let it

dangle from the end of her finger. When he didn't take the hint, she cleared her throat. "It would go faster if you laced it up for me."

Dylan cupped a hand to his ear. "I didn't quite hear you. Were you asking for my help?"

"You might be God's gift in the fucking department, but I can see why there's no girlfriend lurking in the shadows—you are a Grade A asshole!" She threw the black velvet bustier at his head and stomped toward the door, hand outstretched to the brass knob.

He slammed into her back, pinning her to the door. "You're completely mad," he said, his voice tickling her ear. "And what a temper. There's not a woman in this building who would brave my wrath."

"Of course, I'm mad." His body enveloped hers, making her feel incredibly small and helpless. "You'd drive a saint to commit murder. Besides, I'm not afraid of you."

Something warm and wet glided over the top of one shoulder.

"No fair," she complained, but she turned her head away to bare her neck. He had the most amazing tongue, slightly rough like a cat's.

"I know," he said, his tongue flickering over her skin to slide toward her ear. "You're having a perfectly good pout, and I'm ruining it."

"Yes, you a—" Her breath caught when his hands caressed the sides of her breasts where they were mashed against the door.

He shifted slightly away, and his hands moved around to cup them fully. "We could just stay here." His voice dropped to a low purr. "I could play with your breasts, since I didn't really have a chance to do them justice before."

Emmy moaned and rubbed her ass against his groin. "I'd love to, but I have to work in the morning. I should head home."

"Then I'll make sure you get home safely." He removed his hands and lifted his body away from hers.

Immediately, Emmy missed his weight. She turned to face him and leaned back to let the door support her wobbly legs. "Because of Monica?"

"And her boyfriend—Nicky." He lifted his hands, his palms framing her face. "I'm not asking you to put your faith in me. I'm just asking you to allow the possibility they mean you harm."

Reluctant to even conceive her friend would betray her, Emmy nodded and accepted his help donning her bustier.

"Did you drive here?"

"No, I took a taxi."

"Good. We'll take my car. When we leave here, I want your vigilance. Tell me if you see anything suspicious."

Numbed by great sex and the depressing feeling her perception of her life was about to change forever, Emmy followed Dylan from the club. Except for her directions, the drive was quiet, and sooner than she wished, Dylan parked his BMW a block from her apartment building.

"Stay inside. I'll get your door." He let himself out, and walked around the car.

But he didn't immediately open her door. His head lifted, and his nostrils flared like a dog catching a scent in the wind.

The door latch popped with soft click and he eased the door open, offering his hand to assist. "Stay behind me," he said, then led the way down the deserted street. They walked on the side of the street opposite the streetlights, careful to keep in the shadows.

Emmy's nerves crackled with unease. Although she was sure Dylan was dead wrong about her friend, and not at all convinced Monica even had a steady boyfriend, she clutched the back of his vest. Monica told her every down and dirty detail of her life—how could she miss telling her best friend she was dating a serial killer?

When they were thirty yards from her front steps, Dylan stopped cold, drawing her deeper into the shadow of a shop doorway.

Emmy looked both ways along the street, but didn't see a thing wrong. "Really," she whispered, "aren't you being just a little paranoid?"

"Quiet." His arm circled her waist, and he held her to his side. "Look to the left of the steps."

Emmy stared, but still didn't see anything except shadows. Until one shadow moved. A dark figure crept out of the darkness and into the light of the streetlamp. Then another stood from behind a car.

Emmy gasped. One was Monica—but the other wasn't Nicky. Still, Emmy thought she recognized the man from The Cavern. He'd been among the young men in the group surrounding Nicky. "I don't understand," she said, trying to read Dylan's expression in the dark. "What would they be doing here—hiding in the dark? They're a little old to be egging my place. Halloween's over."

Dylan didn't reply, he turned and walked back the way they'd come, pulling her behind him. Emmy heard shouts, and without knowing why, she and Dylan broke into a run. The car loomed forever in the distance. With her sides aching, she gasped for breath, struggling to keep up with him.

Using the remote, he unlocked the doors and they both dove inside. The ignition revved to life, and he pulled out onto the street, executing a sharp U-turn. As the headlights swept the street before them, several men were illuminated. Something about their appearance didn't look quite right to Emmy.

Then she saw Monica, her glossy brown hair framing a face that looked like something out of a nightmare. Her cheeks and forehead protruded. Her brow was heavy and deeply furrowed. She bared her teeth and a jagged line of white appeared, framed by long incisors that glistened when she threw her head back. The howl that followed Dylan and Emmy down the street wasn't human.

Emmy welcomed the familiar roar of the engine and muted sounds within the car. The glare from an oncoming car startled her. She blurted, "That wasn't a goddamned mask! Was it?"

"No Emmy, it wasn't," Dylan said.

His calm reply wrapped a cold blanket around her shoulders. A shiver lifted the hairs on the back of her neck, and then the trembling began in earnest, shaking her shoulders.

Dylan's hand landed on her arm and she jumped.

"Easy now," he crooned. "I'm taking you to my place. They'll know where you are, but they won't be able to touch you there."

"How...how did you know they would be there?" she asked, the chill causing her to stammer. "Why do they...want me?"

His jaw tensed. His gaze slid toward her then away. "Because I want you."

Slowed by shock, her response came several moments later. "Then why...didn't you stay away from me?"

When Dylan glanced at her, his expression was stark. "I couldn't help myself."

"I don't understand. What's wrong with their faces?"

"They're vampires."

Despite her quaking unease, Emmy found that comment amusing. "Like 'I want to trink you're blahd' vampires? No kidding, what was wrong with them?"

"I'm telling you the truth. They're changed. Not human." He swallowed, then said, "They feed on human blood."

Emmy remembered Dylan's fetish for biting, and all her senses clamored "danger". She licked her suddenly dry lips. "You're like them, aren't you?"

His eyes narrowed, but his gaze never left the road. "Leave it alone, Emmy."

She couldn't. She had to know. "You're one of *them*, aren't you?"

"Fuck!" His fist slammed against the steering wheel. "Yes, Emmy. I'm a vampire." He shot her an angry glance. "Satisfied?"

"Let me out of the car," Emmy demanded, her hands scraping the door panel in search of the handle.

"I can't let you out of my sight, Emmy. It's not safe."

"And I'm safe with you? Let me out of the car!" her voice rose, hysteria making it shrill. "Let me out of the goddamned car!"

Dylan's face hardened, and his hands tightened on the steering wheel. "Settle down, Emmy. It'll be all right."

"I want out," she screamed. She yanked on the door handle and pushed. The door swung outwards and she prepared to jump.

Dylan pulled the steering wheel to the right, and the door slammed closed. Before she could open it again, he'd engaged the safety lock. He had her trapped inside the car.

Emmy flew at him, raining blows at his head. "Let me out! Let me out!"

With the arm nearest her raised to protect his face, he shouted, "For fuck's sake! Cut it out!"

Emmy was beyond hearing. What she'd seen had frightened her so badly all she wanted to do was run. One of her blows reached beyond his arm, hitting his face.

In an instant, Dylan's features blurred and stretched, the upper part of his face pushing outward, his teeth lengthening as she watched, finally mute with horror. She shrank against the door.

Dylan roared, his hands still clutching the wheel, but no longer controlling the direction of the vehicle. The car swerved to the left, throwing Emmy hard against the passenger door, and then back to the right, bumping up onto the curb. They hurtled toward a streetlight pole, and Emmy braced herself, closing her eyes.

A loud, animal roar preceded the sickening crunch of metal, shards of glass tinkling against the metal pole. Slowly, Emmy realized they'd come to a halt and

Dylan's upper body was draped across her. His face—his “normal” face—rested on her shoulder. He was breathing.

She shoved him away, determined to slide out of the car while he was unconscious. But the door handle didn't budge, so she punched the button for the automatic windows.

He stirred, straightening away from her. “Ballocks!” he said, and then groaned, clutching his head.

A whimper escaped her when the window slid down. She reached for her seatbelt latch—

His hand covered her fingers, stopping her from releasing it.

Her gaze darted to his face, dreading the possibility he'd changed again and was ready to rip out her throat.

Instead, a lopsided grin broke across his face. “Hell of ride, sweetheart.”

CHAPTER FIVE

"Are you all right?" Dylan asked, his hand reaching for her face.

She jerked away.

"Still skittish I see." He looked around them and cursed. "Looks like you have your wish. You'll have to walk."

He tried his door, but it too, was impossible to open. Instead, he lowered his window and levered himself out of the car.

As was his habit, he immediately lifted his nose to the breeze, checking for danger. Finding nothing strange in the rain-scented breeze beyond the acrid aroma of burnt rubber, he knelt beside Emmy's door. "Sweetheart, are you hurt?"

Bathed in the fluorescent light of the streetlamp, Emmy's expression grew more alarmed as he visually inspected her for injury.

She must have thought he was envisioning a menu. She drew away from him, fumbling with her latch. "Don't you touch me!"

"Perhaps you shouldn't be moving so quickly."

Stubborn to the bone, Emmy knelt in her seat and climbed over the console to his, then crawled out the driver's window. She landed in a heap on the far side of the car, letting loose an impressive string of curses.

Dylan sighed and got to his feet, eyeing Emmy as she stood, afraid to spook her into further acts of recklessness.

As it was, her hands lifted as though she were poised for flight.

He eased his hands into the pockets of his jeans. "You have a few choices here."

The headlights from an approaching car drew her attention from his face. Her shoulders lifted with her indrawn breath.

"You might want to rethink flagging them down for help. You don't know who's in the car."

"I'll take my chances," she said, stepping from the curb into the street.

Dylan raised his gaze to the streetlamp and planted his hands on his hips—rather than around her stubborn neck. "Emmy, will you stop to think? If I'd wanted to hurt you, I could have done so when we were still at the Cavern."

Her frown reflected her indecision.

As the car drew closer, Dylan took the choice away from her. With one bound he landed on top of the car. Before she could finish gasping his name, he landed beside her and dragged her into the shadows, his hand covering her mouth.

The car passed slowly as the driver peered out at the wreckage of Dylan's BMW.

Dylan held his breath, but didn't recognize the face of the driver. Then he heaved a sigh when he saw a child in the back seat, still dressed in his Spiderman costume. He was dozing with his face pressed to the window glass.

Not Nicky's crew. Not yet, anyway.

The car drove by and turned at the next corner.

Emmy's elbow dug into Dylan's waist and he released her, stepping back with his hands raised.

She scampered several steps away, putting distance between them before swinging back to level a blistering glare. "What is it with you vampires? Can't you take no for an answer?"

He fought a smile. She couldn't still be afraid if she was back to scolding him.

Frustration pushed her lips into a pout he wanted to kiss away.

He cocked one eyebrow, intentionally pushing another button. "Did I ask you a question?"

Angry red circles blossomed on her cheeks. "That's not the point, and you know it." She looked back at where he had held her in the shadow. "You move

pretty fast. I didn't see you coming." Her eyes narrowed. "Is that another vampire talent?"

"Of course." he said, his voice pitched low.

"Don't you give me that sexy voice," she replied. "You're just trying to work your vampire hoo-doo on me, again."

This time he couldn't stop the smile from stretching across his mouth. "Vampire hoo-doo?"

"You know damn well what I'm talking about. You worked some kind of spell on me. I wasn't looking for a man tonight. Nope. I was minding my own business when you and Nicky-boy started arguing over me like two dogs over a bone. And bam! Not ten minutes later you've got me naked and panting —"

"Like a dog?" Dylan's smile grew wider and he took a step toward her.

She took a step back. "What do you think you're doing?"

"I'm going to kiss you."

"Are you nuts?" Her eyes grew round, but she didn't give another inch. "Didn't you hear a word I just said?"

His hands circled her waist, and he pulled her close, his hips pressing between her thighs.

"No biting," she said, her breath catching when her chest flattened against his. "Biting me is strictly verboten."

He lowered his head. "Is kissing?"

"Kissing is...just kissing, right?" Her hands crept up his chest then around his neck, her fingers sliding into his hair.

Dylan touched her bottom lip with his tongue, then licked along the seam of her lips. He felt her sigh as she opened her mouth, letting him inside.

Her surrender emboldened him, and he reached for her buttocks, his fingers squeezing the plump velvet-covered pillows of flesh as his clothed cock prodded her lower belly.

Her hands pulled on his hair, and she stuck her tongue into his mouth, sliding it over his teeth. When her legs widened to accommodate him, Dylan pushed against her, centering his cock on her pussy and rubbing, in and out. He had to get inside her.

What was it about her? He stroked her tongue, and her belly curved into him. His hand sought the small of her back and pressed her so close they aligned. She was a perfect fit.

But still a human. Dylan pulled back.

She followed his hips, moaning as she ground her crotch against him.

He ended the kiss, resting his forehead on hers. Needing space to put her back in the box that kept his heart safe. "We should wait until we reach my place."

"Too damn late," she muttered. "You did it, again."

"Did what?" he asked, willing his body back into submission.

"Your vampire hoo-doo. My pussy's so hot, I'll die if you don't fuck me now."

Blood pooled in his groin, making him hard as oak. "You do have a way with words, Emmy." Not a man to leave a girl hurting, Dylan drew a fistful of her skirt up her long legs.

Emmy's hands dropped to his waist. She unbuttoned the opening of his jeans and slid the zipper down. Eager hands shoved the pants down his hips, just far enough to free his cock.

One part of him was amused at her ardor, the other part was desperate to be inside her, and so he lifted her up by the buttocks.

Her legs rose and wrapped around his waist.

The head of his dick bumped against the soft hair covering her mons, then slid along her moist cleft.

Emmy groaned and flexed her hips, and finally, he was gliding inside her, swallowed from tip to root, enveloped in warm, wet heat.

His cock swelled, the skin stretching tighter, his balls aching for release.

"Move, you gotta move." Her voice, thick and plaintive, spurred him. Walking with her in his arms, he stepped toward his car and pressed her back against the passenger door.

With her anchored, he bent his knees and pulled out of her, relishing in the moan of protest that rose from her throat, before he slammed back inside her.

Her legs constricted around his waist, but Dylan pulled out again, and then rubbed the head of his penis along her drenched slit.

"Please," she begged, then pushed her hands between them. Before he understood what she was doing, the top of her bustier was pushed beneath her breasts and she'd opened his vest.

When the tips of her soft, naked breasts, rubbed against his chest, he felt his face tighten with the shifting of bones. He tried to lower his forehead to her shoulder, but she was pressing wet kisses to the side of his mouth.

"I need more," she said. "Hurry. Just give it to me hard." She slid her lips along his jaw and nipped the underside of his chin.

Unable to wait a second longer, he gripped her hips hard and pulled her down as he rammed upward into her. Then he lifted and lowered, nothing gentle left in the sweet pounding he delivered to her pussy.

The car creaked, her breath gusted, and he hammered faster. Emmy's arms tightened around his neck, her eyes closed tight. "Harder. Oooh! Please, harder."

Along with his face, his body hardened and his cock lengthened. Mustn't drink, he reminded himself, the last vestige of his human mind relenting to primal instinct.

Instead, his teeth sank into his bottom lip and his thrusts deepened, shortened, and finally hammered. Reaching so far inside he battered against the mouth of her womb.

Aware she writhed and moaned and pleaded, but unable to think beyond the tight, warm hole that gloved him, he continued to move. Faster. Harder. Deeper.

Until the warm place tightened like a fist, and she let loose a long, keening howl.

He thrust again, and then again, before flinging back his head to roar. His sex erupted deep inside the woman's belly. Marking her with his seed.

When sperm pumped inside, he lowered his head to her shoulder, shuddering as he dragged air into his starved lungs.

With the last pulse of his orgasm, Dylan's face realigned and the curtain of his bloodlust lifted.

Emmy's legs trembled as they unclasped his waist and lowered to the ground. Dylan lifted his head, wary of what he might see in her gaze.

Emmy's eyes opened and her gaze met his. Distress wrinkled her forehead, and her lips quivered.

She was afraid again.

Dylan cursed and lifted her off his cock, then wiped the blood trickling from his mouth with the back of his hand.

After she pulled down her skirt, he smoothed her hair back from her forehead. "Did I bite?"

"No. You also haven't come yet."

"What makes you think that?"

"You're man-thing is still hard as a rock."

He grinned. "Well, I didn't bite. And I won't. I promised."

Her face tilted to the side. "Can't you come without, um, a transfusion?"

"Of course I can. But it's a lot of work, and we can't stay here any longer."

"That was all for me?"

"Do you trust I won't hurt you?"

"Hell no! You're a man. You're into...pausing!"

Dylan was satisfied with that. She saw him as a man. "Will you at least stick with me until we can get to a safe place, tonight?"

Her eyes narrowed, and then she remembered her breasts were bared because her hands flew up to cover them and she turned away to adjust her top. "Trust me, he says. When every chance he gets, he has me flashing the world."

Dylan shook his head. Never mind he'd already had her luscious tits inside his mouth, or that she'd been the one to bare them in the first place.

She turned back to him, her chin jutting. "I'll go with you—for now. Until I can find a taxi, that is. I have work in the morning."

Dylan had no doubt she wouldn't be reporting to work in the morning. But her agreement was going to take some special persuasion. First things first. They needed to find shelter and fast.

He held out his hand. "Come on, sweetheart. We have to start walking."

Emmy stared at his hand like it was a snarling dog. If she touched it, he'd work his magic again and she'd be powerless to resist.

Now that she knew what he was, she understood why she'd surrendered so easily in the first place. His superpowers made him irresistible to women. Even to bookkeepers! She just had to resist his snake oil charm and the electric current that flowed from his body to hers every time they touched.

She'd resist or she'd be dead. Emmy hadn't missed his transformation from man to monster. And she'd seen the blood dripping from his mouth.

She hadn't cared at the time, because his body had grown a tensile strength that had made her weak with excitement as she held him between her thighs. And his mythic dick had attained a Titan's proportions. She'd lost her fears in an orgasm to end all orgasms.

Once she'd returned to herself, she'd been horrified at her abandon. Bookkeepers did not do it in broad...streetlight...with vampires. And they definitely didn't bare their tits every time a vampire used his bedroom voice.

"Are you coming?" he asked.

"It's still dripping down my legs," she muttered.

"Pardon me?"

"Never mind. Just lead on. And no tricks. I'm on to you now."

Dylan turned to walk down the sidewalk, keeping to the dark shadows next to the walls.

Emmy followed, too tired to question where they were going. Head down, she put one sandaled foot in front of the other.

A vampire. Wouldn't you know? Emmy Harris couldn't find herself a nice used car salesman. She had to go and find a sweet-talking vampire.

Dylan halted in front of her, and she bumped into his back. They'd left the shop fronts behind and were passing tall, abandoned tenements whose windows were dark mouths, many boarded up on the ground floor.

When Dylan turned onto the staircase leading into one such building, Emmy tugged on the back of his vest. "Dylan, this doesn't feel like a good idea," she said in a whisper.

He grabbed her hand and pulled her up the stairs. Just when she was sure he'd brought her here to ravage her so no one would hear her screams—and unsure whether that thought excited her or not—she heard the muted sound of music and laughter.

Past the wooden doors at the entry, her shoes clicked dully on the dirty tiled floor. Unable to see very far into the murky interior, she clung to Dylan's vest as he walked sure-footed toward the end of the foyer.

The music, a relentless techno beat, grew louder, echoing in the darkness. At the end of the hall, a sliver of light pierced the gloom.

Emmy wondered whether a homeless person had found shelter in the abandoned building, but then Dylan opened a door, and light spilled out, and Emmy encountered horror beyond her imagination.

CHAPTER SIX

Dylan tugged her inside, and the door closed, locking her in with monsters.

Lit only by flickering candlelight, the creatures in the room undulated. Not one of the many occupants looked their way. Engaged in sex and feeding, vampires and human lovers writhed against each other in an orgy of dance and sex. The pungent aromas of cheap perfume, cigarettes and come were so thick she nearly gagged.

Emmy stumbled over the foot of naked vampire as he pumped into a groaning woman where they lay, stretched across a shiny vinyl-covered couch. His back and buttocks rippling, brawny muscle flexing with each thrust. Emmy realized Dylan must look much the same when he wore his demon skin.

Others fornicated on the floor. One group consisted of a female and two males—one male pounding into the ass of the woman who was in turn going down on the other male.

On a chair, a woman straddled the lap of a vampire, whose mouth fed at her neck, blood dripping onto her breasts.

Dylan's arm slipped around her shoulders, and he brought her close.

Her gaze broke from the couple in the chair and rose to his face. She noted the taut set of his chin and the grim tightness of his mouth.

"Don't leave my side," he said. "This is a dangerous place for you, Emmy. If I had a choice, I'd never bring you here."

Too frightened to speak, she nodded, then followed as he led her through the people dancing in the center of the floor. Deeper into the smoke-filled apartment.

They passed through the living room and into another hallway where a couple fucked against the wall. When Emmy sidled past the female vampire, she

hissed at her and then laughed when Emmy jumped. Aware the creature's gaze followed her down the hall, every hair on Emmy's body rose.

Dylan pushed into a room lit by moonlight, where a man and two women stretched across a large, bare mattress.

From the lax expressions on the women's faces, it was evident they'd just finished having sex. The male vampire was feeding from the wrist of a blonde woman, while a female vampire sucked blood from the top of her breasts. Based on the moans coming from the blonde, Emmy surmised blood-giving was a pleasurable thing.

Emmy's hand crept inside Dylan's, and he squeezed it.

"Viper," Dylan said.

The vampire on the bed raised his head and bared his teeth in a gruesome smile. Instantly, his ferocious mask collapsed. A handsome Hispanic man replied, "Dylan. Imagine how embarrassed I am. I've fed and not offered you a drink."

Dylan's hand tightened around hers. Emmy's fear raised a notch.

"I'm not here for a feeding," Dylan replied, his voice quiet and casual. "I need your car."

Viper's gaze sharpened and fell upon Emmy. "Don't tell me you picked up a snack in this neighborhood. Your little host isn't known to me."

Emmy pressed her body into Dylan's side, wishing she could hide. Viper's face might be handsome now, but it was alight with a malevolent curiosity.

"My car broke down. I'll have yours returned tomorrow with interest."

Viper smiled and slapped the thigh of the woman nearest him. "Leave us."

The women stretched, their nipples pointed and red. When the female vampire sidled past Emmy, she rubbed her breasts against Emmy's arm and leaned close to sniff.

Emmy forgot to breathe. Dylan reached around her and shoved the vampire away. Only when the door closed behind them, did Emmy dare relax.

Viper padded naked to the opposite corner of the room. He bent, exposing a round, hard ass, as he rifled through a backpack lying on the floor.

When he turned, Emmy couldn't drag her gaze from his cock. Were all vampires well hung?

Metal glinted in an arc when he tossed the keys to Dylan, and Emmy wondered how long she'd stared.

The wry grin that tilted the corners of Viper's mouth told her he'd noticed her interest. Then the dark rivulets at the side of his mouth reminded Emmy of what she'd just witnessed, and her stomach turned. She'd given herself to a bloodsucker, too. What did that make her?

Dylan pulled her from the room. He didn't release her hand until the doors of the apartment building closed behind them.

Immediately, she missed his comfort and rubbed her palm against her skirt. She was reading things into his actions—again. He hadn't intended to comfort her. He was just marking his territory.

They rounded the corner of the building to find a low-slung Jaguar parked in the alley.

The headlights blinked, and the doors unlocked with a soft click. Emmy crawled inside and laid her cheek against the leather seat. Her eyes closed and the hum of the engine swept her into sleep.

* * * * *

Dylan gently rolled Emmy to her side and unlaced the ribbon holding her top together.

She murmured a protest, but didn't wake. Just like she hadn't wakened when he'd hoisted her into his arms to carry her inside his house.

He swept away the last of her clothing and pulled up the bedding to cover her. Her blonde hair fanned around her pale face, a burning halo against the

navy silk pillow cover. The creamy tops of her shoulders begged a kiss, but the purple half-moons beneath her eyes attested to her fatigue.

Still, he wished he could wake her to bury himself inside her one more time before he slept. Emmy's innocence was becoming a drug.

A soft chirrup from the intercom announced Quentin's arrival at the back gate. He closed the bedroom door and headed to the living room.

Quentin let himself into the room and flashed a triumphant smile. "You look bloody exhausted. Well done!"

"It's been a trying evening – and not for the reasons you think."

Quentin's eyebrows rose. "You didn't bed the girl?"

"I've yet to take her *in* a bed...but aye," Dylan said, "I've slaked that thirst."

"Oh ho! Better and better. Tell me, did she stop her chatter while doing the dirty deed?"

Dylan grinned. "She was relentless." He padded to the bar and poured whisky into two tumblers.

Quentin's face was alight with curiosity. "A spirited girl, then?"

"A passionate one." Dylan wished his friend would take his twenty questions to the devil. Something delightful awaited him in bed.

"She did appear made to pillow a man's thighs." Quentin collapsed elegantly into one of the brown leather chairs that flanked the fireplace. "There's a bit of chill in the air."

Dylan took the hint and ignited the gas flame in the fireplace. The large room was cold as a mausoleum. And vampires didn't retain heat.

Quentin raised a hand before the fire. "I didn't see the Beamer in the garage when I parked. Car trouble?"

Dylan took the chair opposite. "Of a sort," he murmured.

Quentin's gaze swung back. "Nicky's crew?"

"They were lurking near her apartment," Dylan said, letting the anger he'd banked roll over him. "Lying in wait for her to come home."

"No casualties?"

Dylan's jaw tensed. "I didn't let them get near enough."

"Nicky's gone too far," Quentin said, his voice tight with fury. "The Masters' Council has to act now."

"Most of them are too passive. Too damned comfortable to do what's right. They'll never act."

"Or worse," Quentin said. "They'll try to negotiate a holiday from death. As if one could talk Nicky into stopping."

"The council will wait, hoping one of us takes matters into our own hands."

"So they don't have to dirty their consciences with a dusting?"

"Exactly," said Dylan. He no longer had any qualms about taking the younger Master's life. Nicky had to die to spare Emmy's life.

"At least we've discovered for certain that she's in danger. We can take appropriate precautions in the coming nights."

"Unfortunately," Dylan said, "she knows what we are now."

"Well, shit. I'm sorry about that." Quentin's gaze sharpened. "I take it, the fact we're night owls didn't go over well?"

"Like a rock." Dylan glanced away. "She tried to escape me and the car kissed a light pole near Viper's."

"That's a tough neighborhood for a stroll after dark. So where'd you get the Jaguar?"

"It's Viper's."

"You took her to the Den?" Quentin's lips curled in disgust. "Were you mad? A girl like her?"

"I know. It wasn't as though I had a better choice."

"You need to join the cellular age. You could have called a cab."

Dylan threw back the drink and savored the burning trail it left on its way to his stomach.

"So how did she take it?"

Dylan closed his eyes. He'd felt her horror. "Wide-eyed as a school girl."
Does she think I'm like the hungry vamps at Viper's?

"She didn't run screaming?"

"She was probably too frightened." Dylan wondered if demons plagued her dreams. "Tell me about Nicky."

"A priest couldn't have been more circumspect," Quentin said with disgust. "He snacked on a blood host, fucked a college student, and then went home."

"I'm surprised he cares enough to hide what he's doing."

"How certain are you that he's behind the vamps who were at your girlfriend's house?"

"His newest paramour, Monica, was among those waiting for Emmy at her apartment. Monica's her former best friend."

"Bugger. So she's already a killer. She'll feast on her friends first."

"What are friends for? They're so easy to lure away from their doors."

"You know you haven't done the girl any favors."

Dylan didn't need to be told. Instead, he changed the subject. "Her name's Emmy."

"Emmy? A sweet name."

"Yes. She's a bookkeeper."

Quentin grinned. "You're kinkier than I thought. So are you going to share this one?" he asked, with a sly tone.

"Fuck no." Jealousy niggled. "You try to seduce her, and I'll kill you."

Quentin sipped the last of the whiskey from his cup. "Sweet Emmy inspires so much violence."

"She will never see it," Dylan swore.

"Has she not seen your tender violence?" Quentin asked, his tone sly.

"I'm not sure."

"You hide your face? I'd not be doing that one in the dark. She'll glow like candlelight."

"That's too insignificant a flame."

Quentin's eyebrows rose. "A scorcher, is she? Best have a care that you don't go up in a blaze."

"My fingers are already singed."

"Braggart."

Dylan yawned. Dawn was approaching.

"I'll let the dogs into the yard," Quentin said. "Don't mind if I stay the day, do you?"

"Just keep to the other side of the house."

"Not planning to rest? Fuck. Don't say as I blame you."

Dylan rose from his chair. "I'll see you at dusk, friend."

"Lucky sod. I'm having another drink."

Dylan returned to the bedroom and slipped inside. He stripped in the moonlight and slid beneath the comforter, already warm with her body heat.

Emmy murmured in her sleep, but didn't wake when he pulled her on top of him like a blanket.

He intended only to hold her, but her hips rolled and her legs widened. Her warm thighs gloved his cock. She murmured, a soft feminine sound that filled the empty place in his heart as it swelled his cock.

The tip of his penis nudged her portal.

Liquid heat seeped out to bathe his head.

He gritted his teeth and forced his arms to relax around her. *Let her sleep, you horny bastard.*

Emmy's face rolled into the corner of his shoulder, and he lifted a hand to smooth her hair. He meant to soothe, but her mouth opened over his throat and sucked delicately against his skin.

Blood rushed from his extremities to his cock in an instant. And he waited, not sure if she'd simply kissed him in her sleep.

Then her hand slipped between their bodies and wrapped around him.

"Thank God, you're awake." Relieved she was the one taking advantage of his weakened resolve, Dylan glided a hand over her back, down to her buttocks and cupped a cheek. He slipped a finger into the crease between her buttocks and fingered the rose guarding her rear entrance.

Her gasp betrayed yet another point of innocence. He rubbed harder.

Her hands rose to his chest and she pushed away to look into his face. "Should you do...that?" she asked.

"Do you like it?" He dipped the tip of one finger past the tightly furled mouth.

Her eyes closed and her mouth formed an "O". It pleased him when her legs quivered around his hips.

"Shall I stop?" he asked, fully aware she was too far gone to permit him to stop.

Her reply didn't disappoint. She flung back her head, arching her hips, and pushed her ass against his hand to deepen the penetration.

He placed his other hand on her ripening breast and squeezed.

"Oooh," she groaned. Her hips lifted ever so slightly, pressing against the head of his cock, until it slipped inside her vagina. She ground down until she was fully seated—her soft bush grinding lightly against the base of his cock. In the darkness, her face strained, and her mouth opened wide around a gasp.

He reached for another pillow and placed it behind his head. The better to watch Emmy slowly fall apart. He'd help her lose her way.

Leaning forward, he sucked her breast deep into the cavern of his mouth and rubbed his tongue on the hard tip.

Emmy's hips flexed once, and she whimpered. She adjusted, straddling his hips, her knees fitted tightly to his torso. Then she levered herself up and down on his cock.

Dylan switched to the other breast, and her hand closed around the one he'd left. Still, she pumped up and down.

His finger swirled inside her ass, poking deeper and pulling out, and then pushed back inside.

Her hands sought his shoulders and she leaned forward, moving faster, shallow bounces jiggling her breasts and belly.

Dylan felt the first ripple along her inner walls, caressing him, pulling him deeper. Her hips slowed and rotated, as she pressed her clit against the base of his cock.

With spit on the tip of his finger he slid his hand between them and rubbed the slippery nubbin.

Her movements grew jerky before stopping altogether. "Please," she said. "Take over. I can't move."

Before she could blink, he rolled her to her back and hooked his arms beneath her knees, pressing them up and outward, spreading her wide. He planted his hands on either side of her and pumped his hips, cramming his cock as deep as he could get, then pulling out with a circling motions of his hips, before driving straight back inside.

Emmy's head thrashed on the pillow. Her moans strangled behind gritted teeth.

Dylan leaned down to kiss her and her eyes flew open. She returned the kiss, enthusiasm making her kiss wet and sloppy.

He laughed and lowered his head again to lap at her lips. When he withdrew, her hands gripped his hair to pull him back. This time her mouth sealed over his, and her tongue stabbed inside his mouth.

Now muted by their joined mouths, moans sounded from deep inside her throat and came with each panted breath.

He ended the kiss and leaned back. "Scream for me, Emmy."

CHAPTER SEVEN

At his urging, Emmy couldn't hold back another second. "Come with me," she said.

He shook his head and continued the deep thrusts that pounded against the gate of her womb. Buried to the hilt, he ground his pubic hair against her clitoris until she was so sensitive to the scrape, she thought she might come out of her skin.

But she wanted him with her. This one last time, she needed the whole enchilada. "Baby, bite me."

He stopped. His arms grew rigid and his nostrils flared. "Don't move," he said, his voice holding a tone of desperation.

"I want you, Dylan. All of you."

"Ballocks! Emmy, do you even know what you're asking?"

"For you to trust me to be strong?" She lifted her hands to his cheeks. "Do you think I haven't seen your other face?"

Dylan's eyes closed. "Then watch." His eyes opened—not the dark orbs she knew were green—but glowing golden circles that reflected the waning moonlight, like an animal's. *The better to see me.*

His cheekbones lifted, popping and cracking as his face reassembled into the monster mask, his skin stretched tight around it.

His lips curved above teeth that slid over his human set, long and razor sharp, the longest at the four corners of his smile. *The better to eat me.*

The most miraculous part of the transformation was the muscle that grew rigid and strained beneath his skin, stretching him outward, turning the arms that held her knees to stone. And his cock was one of those muscles, pushing deeper without a flex of his hips. *The better to fuck me.*

A low growl rattled in his throat, and Emmy doubted for a moment that she was really ready for this. His tongue, longer, rougher, swiped her throat. It numbed her skin. She relaxed. He'd considered her comfort—there was still part of the man inside the monster.

His teeth sank slowly into her neck, burning at first, then he drew, sucking her blood, and pure sensual heat spread from her neck, tightening her breasts and belly.

His hard body pushed inside her, pulled out, and pushed again. His thrusts were so powerful her buttocks left the bed with each stroke. Still he kept a steady rhythm that soon had her wishing for him to move faster, harder, rougher. And she told him so.

He growled in response—the Big Bad Wolf buried between her legs, and she reveled in the power to make him lose control and be the beast for her.

That she could inspire the beast in any man was a revelation.

Her hands sought his long hair, and she pulled, knowing the ache intensified the thrill. His cock stretched her, cramming inside her, hurting—wonderfully.

Then the low rumble in his throat grew louder, vibrating against her throat, and come shot into her, hot and messy.

“Dylan!” she screamed, her release rolling over her in scorching waves.

He released her legs, and she wound them around his waist, holding him tight while her pussy milked him. When the last contraction shook her, her hands fell to the pillow beside her head. She couldn't move a muscle. His passion had devoured her.

* * * * *

Emmy woke to find herself draped over Dylan like a quilt, his breath lifting the hair next to her ear.

She raised her head. Gone was her beast. Dylan's handsome face, slack with pleasant dreams, reflected the light of dawn creeping around the edge of the thick curtains.

She fitted her lips to his and kissed him, but he didn't move. If not for his shallow breath, she would have worried. Vampires, it seemed, really did sleep like the dead.

Too bad. Smashed against his chest, her tits ached for a little play. A definite downside to vampire boyfriends.

With a sigh, Emmy got out of bed and turned to draw the covers over him. Slowly, of course. She was allowed one last peek. He'd never know how hard she fought the urge to crawl back beneath the covers. But she was realistic enough to know that this had been a one-night stand. The longer she lingered, the harder it would be for her to leave with any grace. Dylan wasn't for the likes of her. He was gorgeous—she was ordinary. *And he's a vampire.*

She knew he'd object to her leaving because he was a gallant man and saw himself as her protector, but she had to face her problems on her own. If she stayed, she risked her heart.

Gathering her clothes, she dressed in the bathroom, and then called a taxi from the phone next to the light switch. She washed her teeth with a glob of toothpaste on her finger and did her best to smooth her bed-hair. She leaned into the bathroom mirror to check her neck. Miraculously, he hadn't left a mark.

She wished she could have lingered to bathe in the large whirlpool tub. Navy tile, chrome fixtures, and green plants in front of an ice block exterior wall inspired long leisurely bubble baths.

She could easily picture the two of them making love among the bubbles.

"Get a grip." Chiding herself for longing for something she could never have, Emmy left the bathroom and headed down the stairs to the front door.

Her hand was on the doorknob, ready to pull it open, when the patter of multiple feet skittered across the threshold outside. She peeked out one of the narrow windows flanking the front door.

Dogs pressed their noses to the glass. Big macho dogs with drooling jowls. One smashed his face to the glass and barked so loud it rattled the pane. She jumped and flattened her back to the door.

A honk sounded in the distance, and Emmy realized the taxi had arrived. "Shit!" At this rate she'd never make it to work.

"I see you met the pets," a familiar laconic voice startled her. The blonde man—Dylan's friend—sat in the shadows of the cavernous living room. And he was stirring. Must not be a vampire.

"Um," she said, kicking herself for how witty that had *not* sounded. "Do you know what to do with them? Will they bite me if I go outside?"

"Little girl, they will ravage you." Only the way he'd said "ravage" didn't increase her fear of the dogs.

"Are you one, too?" she asked, ready to risk dismemberment outside. After all, she had only assumed Dylan and he were friends.

"One?" he asked, with a lift of one finely arched brow.

"A bloodsucker." She rolled her eyes. "Of course you are. You're all arrogant as hell." Curiosity, spurred her to ask, "How is it that you're awake? Dylan's sleeping so soundly, I didn't wake him when I left."

White teeth and lips curved into a devilish grin. "Did you exhaust our Dylan?"

Emmy blushed, and then frowned at him to show her irritation at his lack of tact.

He shrugged. "I haven't slept yet. When I do, I'll fall into a deep, dreamless state, same as Dylan."

He spoiled the bored dilettante act with a long yawn.

"Are you going to let me out of here?" she asked, sure her taxi would leave her.

The dogs moved from the porch to the gate by the distant sound of their barks.

Quentin walked toward her on bare feet. Taller than Dylan by an inch or two, he was too pretty for Emmy's newly acquired taste. She wondered if her theory about their "proportions" would hold true, but didn't dare drop her gaze down the sharp-eyed man's body.

"You know," he said, stopping in front of her, "you'd be better off far away from here."

"Well, thanks for the advice, but I have a job," she said, raising her chin to show she wasn't the least bit intimidated. "And I like Seattle. You know, green, mossy, rain-every-fucking-day Seattle."

His grin was gleeful. "A like-spirited girl. Does Dylan know you hate this place?"

"I don't exactly hate it—it makes my hair frizz. And no, we never discussed it." And they never would. She was leaving. If Damian here would cooperate a little.

He grimaced and hunched his shoulders to stretch first one side, then the other. "Damn, I shouldn't have stayed so long in that chair."

So vampires could have backaches. That cheered her.

"He wants you to stay here, you know. It's safer."

Emmy shrugged. "It doesn't look like you guys can get around very well in the daytime. I think I'm pretty safe."

He nodded. "All right, then. I'll bring the dogs into the garage until you leave."

"Thank you."

His gaze bored into hers. "Just remember to be inside, behind a locked door tonight. Better yet, come back here before dusk."

"Sure," she said, knowing she'd never be back to let herself in for that kind of heartache.

"I mean it." He touched her cheek. "Be somewhere safe when darkness falls."

"I will," she promised, her mouth dry.

He walked past her on bare feet and disappeared down a hallway. Soon, she heard the dogs whine excitedly and run toward the side of the house.

She let herself out of the front door, sorry she hadn't had a chance to tell Dylan goodbye.

* * * * *

After returning home to change, Emmy was late for work. And the day only got worse.

Work dragged. The lack of sleep the night before left her muzzy-headed. Numbers blurred. She snapped at a co-worker. Her fingers hit the wrong keys. Errors inside errors appeared in much of what she entered all day.

Frustrated after reentering a long column of numbers, she decided to close down her computer and leave.

Worse than putting in a rotten day's work, she'd been grumpy all day. Mad at herself for not having the courage to grab for the gusto. She'd gone back and forth, trying to decide whether she should risk her heart and go after her bad boy vampire, or save herself the heartache and run now.

Leaving her office in the back of the store, she walked through Ladies Garments, where a cloud of warring perfume made her head ache. In Housewares, a saleswoman who normally staffed the children's section looked bored as she helped a customer choose a blender.

Emmy waited patiently. She'd been worried all day about Monica. She hadn't shown up for her shift, and she hadn't answered her calls. Ever an optimist, Emmy hoped Dylan was wrong about her friend.

The saleswoman finished with her customer and walked toward her. "Still haven't heard a thing. Are you going over to her place to make sure everything's okay?"

"I'm headed there now."

Emmy drove the short distance to Monica's apartment, noting with a healthy dose of worry that the sun was already slipping behind the horizon. Dylan had to be wrong about Monica. Even if Monica were a bloodsucker, she wouldn't harm her best friend.

Emmy had to know for sure what had happened to her friend. For all she knew, Monica might be injured and in need of help. Emmy's eyes could have been playing tricks on her the previous evening. Maybe Monica had played a joke, dressed in a vampire mask. It was something free-spirited Monica would do.

Besides, everything about last night seemed like a dream. Too frightening to believe. Perhaps, she'd been caught up in some sort of mass hysteria.

Hell, if weren't for the pleasant ache between her legs, she might have convinced herself that Dylan had been a dream.

She let herself into the apartment with a spare key. Nothing looked out of place. Or at least nothing more than usual. Monica was a slob. "Monica?" she called out.

No response. She walked deeper into the apartment and headed down the hallway to the bedroom.

A part of Emmy was relieved to see Monica stretched across the bed, her hair in disarray, still wearing the same tank and jeans she'd worn the previous evening.

Remembering Dylan's warning, Emmy picked up a red spiked heel from the floor and walked toward the bed. "Monica?"

Monica's head lifted from the mattress. "Em? That you?" Her voice sounded raspy. But normal. A red line marked her face—an imprint from the wrinkled

sheet. Monica's gaze dropped to the shoe in Emmy's hand. "Are you here to borrow my heels?"

That bit of normalcy eased Emmy's apprehension. She stepped closer. "Are you all right? I was worried when you didn't come to work today."

Monica rubbed a hand across her face and murmured, "I should have called in. After you left, the Halloween party was hellacious. I didn't get in until the wee hours."

Emmy plopped down on the bed beside her, relieved to talk to her friend. "You're not kidding. You wouldn't believe the things that happened to me last night."

"You mean tall, dark and horny?" Monica's gaze brimmed with mischief. "I saw him carry you away. You didn't put up much of a fight, so I left you to it."

Emmy blushed and gave her friend a sideways glance. "What about you and Nicky?"

Monica moaned. "There's something about vampire cock."

"You know?"

"I had the bites to show it."

Emmy chewed on the inside of her lip, before blurting, "Dylan said Nicky's dangerous."

Monica's expression grew sly. "Yeah. He is. And he's an amazing fuck."

Determined to set her friend straight, but floundering for a way not to make him more appealing to Monica's adrenaline addiction, Emmy asked, "How did you meet him?"

"I stopped for gas on my way home from work, yesterday. When I went into the store, he had a little shop girl up against the wall."

"Screwing?"

"No. Killing," she said matter-of-factly.

Heart in her throat, Emmy jerked to her feet, but Monica's hand wrapped around her wrist, tight as a manacle. "Monica?" she asked, very afraid she'd made a terrible mistake.

Monica's grip tightened as she slid off the bed. "Sorry, Em. Nicky wants to see you, again."

Emmy winced against the pain and tried to pull her hand free. "Let me go."

"No can do. He'll be here shortly." Her voice roughened and her face transformed. She flung her head back, shaking out her long brown hair. "Oh, much better. Nicky's smart. He knew you'd come looking for me."

Emmy raised the shoe with her free hand. "Monica, you don't want to do this. We're friends."

"But what are friends for, Emmaline?" She grinned revealing a row of shiny jagged teeth. "What are you going to do? Stab me in the heart with my Manolo Blahnik pumps? Don't make me angry."

Emmy swung the spiked heel at Monica's face.

With a howl, Monica released her wrist and raised her arms to cover her head.

Emmy pummeled her with the shoe, driving her back, until Monica's legs met the edge of the mattress and she fell. Emmy threw the shoe at her and bolted for the hallway, making it to the living room before Monica barreled into her back. The wind whooshed from her lungs and she struggled, breathless, to flip the heavy weight off her.

Monica climbed up her body until she lay draped over Emmy. Her nose snuffled against Emmy's neck. "Do you think he'll mind if I take a little bite?"

With her face pressed to the carpet, Emmy thought fast. Monica was growing heavier and stronger. Emmy feared what that meant. "What does Nicky do to people who disobey his commands?"

"Dust them." Her tongue laved the corner of Emmy's shoulder, nosing away the collar of her blouse.

"Think Monica. Did he want me whole? What did he say?"

Monica groaned. "Can't remember."

Knowing Dylan's mental faculties were impaired in his vampire state, Emmy injected a calm she wasn't feeling into her voice. "Will Nicky be angry with you, Monica?"

"Maybe."

"Monica, let me up. Let's talk about Nicky."

Monica licked her neck again. "Hungry."

"I could make you breakfast."

"Need blood. You have it."

Good going, Em. You just reminded her you're food. "Remember, Nicky? Your new boyfriend? The fabulous fuck?"

Monica stretched like a cat on top of her. "Nicky here soon."

"Yes, Monica. Nicky here soon. And Nicky won't be happy."

"Nicky mad?" she asked, her voice frighteningly deep.

"Yes. Get off, Monica. You're not thinking straight."

Monica rolled off her with a petulant sigh. And Emmy turned and sat on the floor, her eyes never leaving Monica's monstrous face.

Emmy looked over Monica's shoulder. "Is that Nicky coming now?"

Triumph suffused Monica's face, and she whirled toward the door.

Emmy jumped on her back. She had to subdue Monica long enough to get out of the apartment. If Nicky arrived before she could escape, she was a dead woman.

With Emmy holding on with all she had, Monica crashed into a wall, trying to dislodge her. Her hands reached behind her and she clawed at Emmy's clothes, snarling and howling.

Monica slammed back into another wall and bits of drywall crumbled around them. With the next slam, pictures slid from the wall, the glass

shattering. Finding it difficult to draw a breath, Emmy released her grip on Monica's shoulders and slid to the floor.

Monica pounced, but Emmy was ready for her. She wrapped her thighs around Monica's neck and squeezed. Monica's hands clawed at Emmy's legs, shredding her khaki slacks and raising rivulets of blood on her thighs, but Emmy didn't let go.

Then Emmy realized she'd left two major arteries running down the inside of her thighs vulnerable to Monica's powerful jaws and teeth. Hoping Monica wouldn't figure it out too soon, Emmy decided to psych out her opponent with a little bravado.

"You may as well stop fighting me. These thighs are 'sommersized'."

Monica's head continued to thrash.

"I can crack a walnut between them. You be careful, or I'll break your neck." Emmy squeezed tighter, growing more worried by the moment that Monica would ravage her with her mouth. She pulled hard on Monica's hair. "I'll snatch you bald if you don't stop moving."

Monica held her head perfectly still.

If Emmy hadn't been so frightened, she would have crowed over that little moment of victory. Monica might be a mighty vampire, but she was still not the sharpest tool in the shed. Emmy wondered how long her bluff would last. Monica should know her hair would grow back like a Beautiful Chrissie doll.

"What do you think she'll threaten her with next?" Quentin's amused voice drawled.

Emmy's head whirled toward the front door. Dylan and his stuffy friend stood in the entrance.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Monica's body stiffened between Emmy's legs.

"You can let go of her now, love," Dylan said.

Too shaken by the battle, Emmy realized her fingers were frozen in Monica's hair. "If it's all right with you, I'll just stay here for a minute or two."

Dylan approached and squatted next to the women. "Monica, tell Emmy you'll behave now."

Monica panted, then her body changed, softening. Her face reformed. Her round cheeks reddened with the pressure Emmy continued to apply. "You can let me go, Emmy. I won't hurt you."

Emmy drew a deep breath and let her thighs loosen their iron grip. "Am I ever glad to see you," she said to Dylan.

Dylan helped her to her feet, and she looked up, prepared to thank him, but his face was a tight mask of fury. She stepped back.

"Quentin, get her to the car." Dylan's voice was taut and hard.

Quentin grabbed her upper arm to lead her out, but Emmy resisted. "You aren't going to hurt her."

Monica rested on her elbows on the floor and smirked.

Emmy wished she still had an extra shoe to throw at her. Didn't she know better than to piss off Dylan?

"Get up," Dylan commanded.

Monica rose slowly, dusting plaster off her clothing, mocking Dylan with her nonchalance.

Dylan grabbed her by the neck and backed her up to the wall.

Monica's eyes rounded, and her hands pulled at his, but she couldn't dislodge his grip.

Emmy stepped toward them, but was stopped by Quentin's long-fingered shackle.

Quentin pulled her to him and slipped an arm around her waist, anchoring her to his side. "Wait," he whispered in her ear.

"I'll spare you tonight," Dylan said, his voice low and deadly calm. "You were Emmy's friend, but you'll stay clear of her now or I'll kill you. Do you understand?"

Monica nodded, her eyes wild.

"And take a message to your boyfriend."

"Yes," she replied, sounding breathless. "What shall I tell him?"

"Run."

* * * * *

As she followed Dylan into his house, Emmy still trembled from the aftermath of her battle. She'd actually had the nerve to attack a vampire with a shoe!

Quentin followed close behind and drew her into the living room, pressing her down into one of the sumptuous leather chairs on either side of a large, pale marble fireplace. He flipped on a wrought iron floor lamp and golden light spilled into the dark corners of the room.

Feeling measurably safer, Emmy waited quietly while Quentin lit the fire.

"You have nothing to fear from Dylan," he said quietly.

"I'm not afraid," she said, and then realized she truly wasn't.

"Would you like a drink?" he asked.

Emmy shook her head. She raised her hands toward the fire to warm them and saw they still shook.

A tumbler was held in front her eyes, a finger of brown liquid sloshing in the glass. Rather than remind him she'd said no, she took it, but held it with both hands. She stared into the whiskey. She hated whiskey.

"It's scotch," he said, taking the seat opposite her.

"Smells like paint thinner," she mumbled.

"Be a good girl and throw it back—in your throat that is."

She glanced up.

He offered her a silent toast with his own glass, a small smile curving the corners of his mouth.

What the hell, she thought. Perhaps it would chase away the chilling fear she'd felt since leaving Monica's place. Or deaden the sting of the deep scratches on her thighs.

The liquor burned all the way to her belly, and she gasped. "That was awful."

He laughed softly. "You'll feel better in a moment."

Emmy's hands clamped harder around the empty glass and her lips trembled, so she pressed them tightly together. But the sob she'd held inside erupted, and she set aside the glass to cover her face. "I can't believe I attacked a vampire with a Manolo Blahnik pump."

She sobbed a second time. "I'm not usually such a wimp."

"You're not a wimp," Dylan's voice broke in.

Great! He'd think she was a crybaby too. She rubbed her hands over her face to quickly wipe away the tears and then looked at him.

He was kneeling beside her chair. His dark eyes filled with concern.

"I think this is where I find something better to do," Quentin murmured and left the room.

"Headstrong, stubborn—" Dylan said, his brows pulled together in a frown. "Lacking in common sense, perhaps, but not a wimp, my dear."

Emmy wanted to argue with him over a few of those adjectives, but realized what she wanted more was for him to hold her. She bit the inside of her lip, and wondered whether he'd offer his shoulder. If he didn't, she wasn't going to ask. Besides, going *there* was only going to lead to heartbreak.

"Emmy, you're thinking too much."

Her chin lifted. "Are you also saying my intellect is puny?"

"I'm saying, come here," he said, his voice firm.

"And I'm supposed to just fall into your arms?" A little resistance might convince him she wasn't desperate for his attentions.

"It's your choice, love." Something in his voice jangled her alarms.

"What am I choosing between?"

"Coming into my arms...or being dragged there."

Her body reacted instantly to the caveman vision that came to mind. "Oh."

"Emmy?" his voice held an edge of warning.

She didn't know where the courage came from, but she licked her lips, a slow circle that his gaze followed. There was more than one way to get his two arms around her. "Come and get me."

"Witch," he whispered, and then leaned forward to take her lips. His tongue swirled inside her mouth. "Mmmm. My favorite flavors."

"What? Tooth scum and paint thinner?"

His lips smiled against hers. "Whiskey and woman."

Her fingers combed through his hair and she pulled to seal their mouths. He kissed her, and then pushed her back.

Disappointed, she tried to follow.

He took her hands and placed them on the arms of the chair. "First, let me take care of your legs." He reached for the button at her waistband and slipped it open, then tugged down the zipper.

Emmy winced when he peeled the fabric from her thighs. How had she forgotten about the claw marks Monica had left in her flesh? Drying blood stuck in places, but Dylan was relentless.

Whimpering by the time he'd finished, Emmy dug her fingers into the chair.

His head lowered to the first set of wounds, and he licked them. Long wet strokes that soothed her flesh along the angry red scores. As she watched, the pain receded, and the scratches healed, and then disappeared altogether.

"Your tongue could earn millions," she said around a moan when his head bent over her other thigh.

He healed the last of Monica's scratches. Then his hands circled Emmy's hips and pulled her to the edge of the chair. She widened her legs, and he pulled her groin flush with his.

Emmy wrapped her thighs around his hips and rubbed her pussy along the long ridge of his desire. "Too many clothes," she complained.

Dylan grabbed her collar and pulled her shirt apart, popping buttons. A few clattered on the tile hearth.

Desperate to free her breasts, Emmy reached between them for the clasp of her bra and unhooked it.

His mouth descended on hers, and he skimmed her blouse and bra from her shoulders and let them fall. Her nipples pebbled instantly, and she scraped them over the fabric of his shirt.

Clumsy with frenzy, they ripped at the rest of their clothing until they knelt naked before the fire.

"I sure hope you have something my size in your closet," Emmy said, as Dylan's mouth skimmed over her collarbone and descended to her breast.

"When are you going to need clothes?" He tongued her nipple, and then sucked it between his teeth.

Emmy pressed his face harder against her breast. "Right, tomorrow's Sunday. No work. Play?"

He raised his head and took a breath, "Not play, loving you is a death sport." He pushed her back onto the carpet and lay over her body.

Her hands gripped his ears. "You should know all about it." Directing his mouth to the neglected nipple she contemplated a night and day of lovemaking. "Do you have real food in your fridge?"

"You mean," he said, his voice sounding somewhat garbled, "something other than organ meat or pig's blood?"

Emmy made a face. "Something vegetarian?"

"And if I say no?"

"The only organ meat I want is yours." To make sure he got the hint, she lifted her hips to nudge her bush against his...organ. "We'll order pizza. They deliver."

"So do I." His cock pressed into the entrance of her vagina.

Emmy winced, still sore from the previous night. "Perhaps, we should try a smorgasbord, instead. Cafeteria-style. No sausage. Little edibles."

"Emmy."

"Mmmm?"

"Stop talking."

"Ahem." The sound of someone clearing his throat sounded loudly in the room. She glanced toward the foyer and saw Quentin standing in the shadows with a bundle under his arm.

Emmy squealed and became aware that Dylan was lifting off her body. She wrapped her legs around him. "Where do you think you're going? I'm naked." Her hands rose to cover her breasts.

"Before you get too deeply into the pepperoni," Quentin said, with wry humor in his voice, "may I have a word with you, Dylan?" His gaze flickered over Emmy, assessing, almost clinical. "Doesn't she put you in mind of a Boticelli?"

Emmy removed her hands from her breasts and let her arms fall to her side on the floor. He was the one interrupting coitus. She didn't have a thing to feel ashamed of. Besides, if she was honest she enjoyed his perusal.

Dylan scowled. One of his sexiest looks, Emmy thought. As worthy as any Calvin Klein pout. "Quentin, is there a purpose to this interruption?" he said, his teeth gritted.

"I just wanted to remind you that you have a meeting to attend later." Quentin's smile fell short of innocent. "And to bring you pillows." He indicated to the bundle beneath his arm.

Dylan raised a hand and caught the pillows as they were tossed. "Now, get lost."

Quentin winked, then turned on his heels and left.

"Where were we?" Dylan asked, urging her with a hand to lift her hips.

Unclasping her thighs, she put her feet flat on the floor and pushed up. "Swallowing sausage?" she asked, grinning.

He slid one of the pillows beneath her hips. "No, going vegetarian." He pressed her knees apart.

Feeling overexposed, Emmy placed a hand over her pussy. "I'll take cucumber."

He raised a pointed finger. "I'm bringing the carrot."

She rolled her eyes. "I think this analogy is getting tired."

"I agree. Too much roughage." His gaze dropped to her open thighs. "I'm up for something...creamier."

"Potatoes?"

He lifted one eyebrow.

"All right, I promise to shut up. If you put your tongue to better use as well."

Dylan bent and kissed her inner thigh, nipping gently toward her core.

Emmy groaned, eager for the lash of his rough tongue.

He didn't disappoint. He stroked long laps over her outer lips, alternating with short darts between that fluttered against her clitoris.

Liquid seeped from inside her, bathing her vagina, and her legs turned to jelly, falling farther apart.

He dipped inside. "Ambrosia." He moaned, and the sound vibrated on her sensitive flesh. His tongue delved deeper.

Her hips rose. "I like carrots. Diced, sliced, puréed." His finger pushed inside and swirled.

"Raw. Whole. I love them whole!" She reached between her legs and spread her labia, pulling up to expose her clit. "Did I mention cucumbers?"

His lifted his head, his gaze spearing her. "I thought you were going to be quiet."

"It's not something I can help. I get excited and my mouth can't stop. Oh!" Emmy arched her back when a second finger joined the first. She squeezed her inner muscles. Nothing like a little girly calisthenics to entice a man to do the dirty.

Her hips pumped, shallow pulses as she concentrated on the sensation of his fingers deep inside. "You know a little tongue action would go a long way here."

"You've no patience, dear. Good things come —"

"To she who waits. I know, I know. But I was thinking of a new Confucianism."

He nipped her inner thigh again. "Is that even a word?"

"Pay attention. I think 'A good cum comes to she who does it herself!'" She reached with her other hand and touched a finger to her clit.

"Uh uh." His hand closed over hers and pushed it away. "No cheating. You see, I think three carrots beat a cucumber any day." He slid three fingers into her.

Her eyes closed and her mouth rounded around a breathless 'O'. "Are you raising me?" she asked, her voice held a plaintive note.

"Are we switching from vegetables to poker?"

She raised and rested on her elbows. "I'm just hoping for more poke." She raised an eyebrow. A direct challenge.

"To hell with vegetables." He withdrew his fingers. "Just turn over."

Emmy's heart pounded in her chest. Now! He'd cram every incredibly edible inch of himself inside her now. She turned onto her stomach, and then rose up on her hands and knees.

"Hold onto the edge of the fireplace."

She braced herself, gripping the marble hard.

Dylan slid his cock inside her.

A twinge of soreness gave way to pleasure so intense she clamped her jaw closed rather than cry out. Why give his immense ego a boost? Keep him humble.

"Breathe, Emmy," he whispered next to her ear.

His hips drove forward, stretching her, filling her. Her bottom wriggled as she accommodated his push through her tight channel.

Finally, sheathing him to the hilt, Emmy's back arched. "Fuck me, Dylan. Fuck me—hard."

Dylan had been right about her ass the first time he saw her. A man could die pumping against her soft, fleshy bottom. His palms curved around the milky-white globes and he spread them. He dropped spit into the crease.

"I don't think—" Emmy squirmed.

"That's right. Don't." He traced a finger between her cheeks, gliding lower until he touched the soft, puckered lips.

Emmy gave a cry, half-dismay, half-delight, and bucked.

Dylan pumped his hips and drove deeper, at the same time sliding a finger inside her ass.

"Dylan?" she asked, her voice sounding thin. She rocked, her cunt pushing and pulling on his cock.

"Emmy, slow down," he said. He wanted this time to be for her, but he could already feel the change coming over him, stretching his skin, expanding him.

Her warm, moist heat beckoned him deeper, and he slammed his hips into her, pounding so hard her buttocks jiggled. Her soft, round buttocks. Buttocks he'd die to pump against the way he wanted, hard and deep.

"Dylan, harder. Give it to me, harder."

"Damn," he muttered, feeling the tingle in his gums a second before his teeth slid into place. He growled, low in his throat. The muscles of his thighs and ass hardened like steel, driving harder, faster.

Her breath came in harsh grunts as he pummeled her hips, keeping rhythm with the slap of his balls and belly against her flesh.

Emmy stiffened, and cried out.

Then he was hurtling, crashing his hips into hers, following her over the precipice.

CHAPTER NINE

"That thing you did..." Emmy began.

"Thing?" Dylan stirred beside her on the carpet, still trying to catch his breath. Spooned together, Dylan realized this position was perfect for him to toy with both her breasts. So he squeezed them.

"Pay attention."

"You're a bossy, wench." His open palms circled on her distended nipples, round and hard as pencil erasers.

"I liked it."

Something he should pay attention to. "Which thing?"

"When your finger was inside me," she said, her voice small.

Male pride burst in his chest. "You mean, when I fingered you asshole?"

"Dylan!" She slapped his thigh.

He smiled against her hair. Bossy as hell when they were in the middle of a coupling, she was still a prissy little thing. "Well, I did."

"Never mind." Her breath huffed.

"Did you like it well enough to try something like it, again?"

She sucked in a breath and her blood thrummed in her veins.

Her body betrayed her every time.

Another thing he liked about Emmy Harris. *So she wants me to do it again.*

"Seems like you're full of firsts, love. I thought you had a boyfriend."

A soft snort was her reply.

He squeezed her breasts, while nuzzling her delectable neck. "Must not have been much of a boyfriend, if he didn't take the time to discover what puts the kink in your hair."

"No. He wasn't much of a boyfriend. He was just convenient."

"Convenient? That's a bloody sorry excuse."

"Well. I didn't know it at the time."

"When did you discover this?"

No reply, but her heart beat faster.

"Emmy?"

"When you fucked me the first time," she said softly.

Fucked? Made love! He almost blurted that out. Dylan wanted to shake her. For whatever reason, Emmy was determined to keep a wall around her heart. *Is it because I'm a vampire?*

He smoothed a hand down her belly. *I'll bind her to me, somehow.* His fingers combed through her short, silky curls until he found the round button of her clitoris. He rubbed the pad of his thumb over the slippery nub.

Emmy hissed between her teeth, but widened her legs. "You came before. Without biting me."

"I told you it could be done. A lot of work, but an immensely satisfying job." He increased the pressure of his thumb as he rubbed in slow circles.

Emmy's ass pressed against his groin. "Does your company offer any perks?"

"Generous fucks." He drew the delicate lobe of her ear between his teeth.

"I'll have to apply." Her leg inched atop his, widening the gap between her thighs, allowing just enough room for his cock.

His cock glided into the well-oiled passage. "I can put in a good word for you," he said.

"Dylan?"

"Yes, Emmy?"

"Did anyone ever tell you that you talk too much?"

Dylan smiled. "You're the first."

"Shall we get *down* to business?" Her hand crept between her legs, and her fingers lightly grasped his balls.

Lying side by side was not conducive to the energetic thrusting he intended to give her. "Would you be terribly bored if we did this much the same fashion as the last time?"

"If it gets you deeper into the merger, I'm game."

They arranged themselves before the fire, her hands once again braced on the warm marble hearth.

Dylan spent long moments pleasuring her breasts and clitoris while he glided in and out, to an ever-increasing tempo.

Emmy was nearing completion, perspiring lightly, her hair sticking to her shoulders, her back arching, dipping, and rearing back to meet his thrusts. From her guttural moans, he determined she was "well-tenderized" for another initiation.

He nipped the back of her neck. "Emmy?" He slammed forward as far as he could go.

"Huh?"

"I think you're ready." He halted the motion of his hips and withdrew his cock.

"Don't stop, now!" she wailed.

He rubbed spit on the head of his penis. "We're going to do a little exploration. A little drilling, love."

"Just get back inside me quick. The mother lode is ready to gush."

Dylan parted her buttocks and guided his cock to her anus. He pressed the round head against it and met tight resistance.

Emmy whimpered, but didn't ask him to stop.

Slowly, the tight mouth gave way and he slid the crown of his cock inside.

"Ooooh," Emmy said, and her shoulders dipped to the hearth, her head lolling on folded arms.

He pulled out a little way, and then pressed inside, until the tip was buried. "What do you think, Emmy? Does it hurt too much?"

"I don't know. You're stretching me. Just don't go changing to the masked man in the middle of this—I won't be able to take it."

"I'll go slow." He dropped more spit and spread it around his cock, then pressed a little deeper.

Emmy's legs trembled, but still she didn't ask him to stop.

In, out—he fought his need to push deeper inside. Her rear entrance was a tight, hot, ring of torture that squeezed his cock like a fist. He increased the tempo of his shallow thrusts.

Emmy emitted a sob. "More. It's happening, give me more."

Dylan deepened the glides, carefully gauging the little murmurs and groans she made to ensure he didn't cause her pain. Then he wet his fingertips and reached around to bury his fingers in her cunt.

Emmy screamed and bucked, shoving backward to take his cock deeper into her ass.

"Come on, baby," he whispered in to her ear. "Come with me."

With his fingers drenched in her pussy juice, he noted the moment her vagina began to pulse with her orgasm.

Emmy keened, loud and long. "Ohmygod!"

Dylan closed his eyes and savored the ever-constricting band that circled his shaft, and controlled his transformation, halting before his body expanded. It was enough. He flung back his head and roared as a long stream of come exploded from his cock.

After carefully withdrawing, Dylan pulled up Emmy to sit, cradled by his thighs. He kissed her shoulders and neck. Smoothed his hands over her breasts and belly as her shudders quieted.

With a deep sigh, she rested her head on his shoulder. He pressed a kiss to her forehead, and Emmy looked up. His head descended and their tongues entangled, lapping without their mouths pressing together.

Their tongues parted and they stared into each other's eyes.

Emmy wrinkled her nose. "I think we need baths."

"Love is in the air."

She grimaced. "If you break into the Love Boat song, I'll lose all respect for you. I've created a monster."

"You didn't think vampires had a sense of humor? You inspire the comedic monster in me." He kissed her lips. "We'll shower. Then I'll have to leave for a little while."

Her eyelids dropped. "Can I come with you?"

"No, but you'll be safe. Quentin will be here."

"And your demon dogs. Maybe, I'll take a nap. Promise to wake me up when you come home?"

"I promise." He slapped her thigh lightly. "Now get up."

Together, they rose. Emmy's hands curled into little fists at her sides, and she didn't look at him. She knelt to pick up her ruined blouse.

"Emmy, are you embarrassed?"

"Um, is there anything for me to wear?"

"Into the shower?"

Her blush colored the tops of her breasts. "Well, I'm not like you."

"Not like me how?"

"Perfect. Do you always answer a question with a question?"

"You're deliberately changing the subject. Emmy, don't you know you're beautiful?"

She looked disappointed in his answer. "You don't have to say that. I know what I am."

"And what might that be?"

This time she glared at him, but he wanted to know what was in her mind.

"Fat," she said, and her chin raised a notch, daring him to declare otherwise.

"Come with me." He walked past her, his hand snagging hers to pull her into the foyer and up the stairs.

Emmy hoped Quentin stayed wherever Quentin was, or he'd get an eyeful of her ass as she jogged upstairs.

Dylan led her straight into his bathroom and halted them in front of his counter-to-ceiling mirror.

She took a deep breath and looked around the room—at the towel rack, the silver toilet paper dispenser—anywhere, but at her own reflection.

His hand gripped the top of her head and pointed her face toward the mirror. "Emmy, what do you see when you look at yourself in the mirror?"

He wasn't going to let her off. So she started at the top. "I see frizzy blonde hair."

He shook his head. "A golden halo of wavy hair."

"Fat boobs."

"Lush, firm breasts with rosy areolas, and nipples like eraser-tips."

She wrinkled her nose at him.

Dylan shrugged. "Only the truth, however unpoetic. I like erasers. Go on."

"A poochy tummy."

"I see a rounded, womanly belly. Soft, where a woman should be soft."

Moisture gathered at the edges of her eyes, and she batted her lids to keep the tears at bay. "A wide, J-Lo ass."

He slid his hand over her hips to close over a generous cheek. "An ass that cushions a man's belly."

Scarlet stained her cheeks. *He's going to make me cry. Time for a joke.* "You probably need glasses. You're what? Older than Methuselah. They say the eyes go first."

Dylan pulled her in front of him and ran his hands from her shoulders, down her belly, and then between her thighs. "You're soft where a man is hard to complement him. You're not fat—you're voluptuous, womanly. Incredibly sexy." His finger found her clit and he rubbed. "Do you believe me?" His gaze bored into hers.

"I believe you see me that way."

"Does anybody's else opinion matter?"

Her smile started slowly, then spread to warm her heart. Dylan found her ass sexy. "No."

"Now, wash my back."

* * * * *

Dylan pulled the covers over her nude body. She smelled of talcum and fresh sex.

"This has been wonderful," she murmured, her eyes already drifting shut. "Beyond my dreams."

He sat on the edge of the bed. "You sound as though you don't think it will last."

"I don't know what 'it' is, yet. But I can't stay here forever." She yawned and rolled on her side. "I do have a job."

"You could stay here. I could take care of you." Not usually given to impulse in his dealings with the opposite sex, nevertheless his offer felt right.

"As in live together?"

"Yes." More sure by the second.

"Let's wait and see what happens. I don't want to make a mistake." She grinned. "And we've only known each other for twenty-four hours. You don't even know whether I snore or not."

"Fair enough. The offer is on the table. Get some sleep."

Dylan leaned down to kiss her, expecting to give her lips a quick buss, but Emmy's tongue sneaked out to lick his lower lip. He crushed his mouth to hers for another of their tongue-dueling matches.

Finally, he pulled back, disengaging her hands, which were twisting in his hair. He rose from the bed.

"Promise you'll wake me," she said.

"I will."

* * * * *

As he drove to the estate of the council member he'd petitioned, Dylan held the pleasant thought of waking Emmy from her sleep. Would he wake her slowly with gentle kisses and soothing glides of his hands, or would he come inside her, fast and hard? Both choices offered delicious possibilities.

Navarro's estate wasn't far from Dylan's place. As Dylan's rented car climbed the slopes of the exclusive neighborhood roads, the lights of the city below flickered like a thousand stars.

Dylan stopped at the tall brick and wrought iron gate and typed the password into the keypad. While the gates swung open on quiet hinges, he girded himself for a frustrating evening.

Navarro met him at the front steps and led him through his house to the study. Navarro had always had money—ever since his human boyhood in Spain. And he was a collector. His furnishings—heavy dark oak furniture, plush Middle Eastern carpets, Italian and Dutch paintings—had taken centuries to accumulate.

Candlelight illuminated the dark-paneled study. One of Navarro's many eccentricities was an aversion to the harsh glare of electrical lighting. He invited Dylan to have a seat before the fire and poured them drinks.

While Navarro swirled his brandy, Dylan watched his narrow, European features for any sense of where the conversation might lead. Navarro was typically cryptic in his communication, giving away nothing.

Of course, he'd had centuries longer than Dylan to cloak his emotions.

Finally, Navarro glanced up. "Son, what is it you wish to speak to me about?" His hand passed through the air in a diffident wave, granting permission for their conversation to begin.

Dylan shifted in his seat. "Father," he replied, addressing his sire formally. "I believe one of our inner circle is siring an army."

Navarro's thin lips curved only slightly at the corners. "Is there to be a war?"

Dylan simmered with resentment at Navarro's subtle mockery. "Nicky is turning young people at a frightening rate. Our human friends in the police force can't keep up the fiction they're gang-related killings for long."

"Nicky has acted imprudently. My emissary will speak to him." Navarro's words were measured and spoken in an even tone.

Irritated, Dylan bit back his temper. "It's not enough. He won't stop."

"Is the situation truly unsalvageable, Dylan?" Navarro's sloe-shaped brown eyes met his gaze directly. "This wouldn't have anything to do with the woman you harbor in your home?"

Of course, Navarro would know he had a houseguest.

Dylan drew in a deep breath. "I've marked her as mine." Once proclaimed, there was no going back. "Nicky isn't honoring my right of possession."

Navarro nodded. "Congratulations. It has been long since you've mated."

"I won't let her be harmed."

"Has he attacked you or your woman directly?"

Dylan's back stiffened. "No."

"Then how are you certain his children aren't taking matters into their own hands? The newly reborn are often over-zealous in their devotion," he said, his chiding words reminding Dylan of an episode in his own "apprenticeship".

An episode Dylan would sooner forget. It was another stain on his soul. "They're not acting on impulse. They're acting on orders."

Navarro raised a single brow.

"I know it to be true." Dylan's chest expanded with anger.

"I will not go to the council without proof. We are after all talking about sanctioning the death of one of our own."

Dylan had come on a fool's errand. There would be no support from the council. "I won't wait for her to die to give you your proof."

“Which is why we permit the extinction of newborns without consequence to the Master responsible.” Navarro pinned him with stare. “You’ve been busy lately, amassing your own statistics.”

Rankled his dustings had been questioned, Dylan replied, “Every killing was needed. Newborns can’t turn a human until they’ve learned to rein in their lust.”

The older Master waved his hand. “We are not concerned with your nightly patrols. I have every confidence your purges have been warranted.”

Fighting his rising frustration, Dylan gripped the arms of his chair. “Can we come back to the issue of Nicky’s activities?”

“We will not interfere with your right to protect your possession.”

Dylan relaxed. He had permission to kill Nicky himself.

CHAPTER TEN

To his disappointment, Emmy wasn't asleep when he returned. Instead, Dylan followed the sound of muffled laughter to the kitchen. Quentin and Emmy were inside, seated at the table.

She was dressed in his robe, the dark blue a foil for her rosy cheeks and sunshine-colored hair. Her gaze swung to the door and her eyes lit up like Christmas lights when she saw Dylan. His heart swelled in his chest—grateful he could produce such a look of joy.

Quentin raised a slice of pizza, loaded with pepperoni and sausage from the savory aroma, and waved it at Dylan. "Join us. Emmy was just telling me she has a distinct preference for organ meats."

Dylan's gaze narrowed as he stared at the gap at the top of *his* robe. It exposed more cleavage than he wanted to share, even with his best friend. "Only mine, I hope."

"That's not what I said." Emmy blushed scarlet. "And for your information, Dylan, *that* wasn't what we were discussing."

"Better not be," he growled, feeling grumpy. How many ways could he say 'get lost' to his buddy? Dylan strode past the counter littered with open pizza boxes to the table, and hooked his foot around the leg of chair, pulling it close to Emmy. He straddled it backwards.

"Didn't go well, hmmm?" Quentin asked.

Dylan's gaze didn't leave Emmys' face. "About what we thought."

"Damn. We're on our own then."

Emmy took a bite of pizza and darted a glance at Dylan. "Do I have tomato sauce on my nose?"

"No, love. And it's not your fight, Quentin."

"And leave me out of the party?" Quentin drawled. "This little intrigue is more fun than I've had in a long time."

Emmy set her pizza on her plate. "Okay, I'm just a little bit tired of being left out of the conversation, when I feel like I *am* the topic of the conversation."

Gratified he'd brought her temper to peak, if not her body, Dylan clutched the back of her head and brought her forward for a kiss.

She shoved at his chest. "I have pizza breath," she warned.

"My favorite."

"Thought it was whiskey and woman," she murmured, her eyes drifting closed.

"It was." He kissed her full on the lips. He hoped Quentin took notes.

Emmy pushed him away. "You changed the subject. I hate when you do that."

"Because it's so easy to do?" he asked, teasing her into a temper.

She rolled her eyes. "I swear I'm going to scream."

"Not again, my ears are still ringing," Quentin drawled.

Dylan leveled a killing glare at his former best friend. "So what was this about organ meats?"

Emmy's blush deepened. "Dylan! Drop the subject."

"I thought *that* wasn't what you were talking about," he said, feeling the tension in his shoulders roll away. Teasing Emmy was fast becoming his favorite pastime.

"Organ meats on pizza," Quentin said with a smirk. "Will you get your mind out of Emmy's gutter?"

"Quentin!" Emmy's frown was seriously shy of ominous. She turned to Dylan. "I just wondered why they never make pizza with liver or hearts. There'd probably be a market for it with so many vampires walking the streets—now that I know you guys eat things other than pig's blood." She drew a deep breath. "I'm rambling again, aren't I?"

"Yes!" he and Quentin responded, sharing a look of male commiseration.

"So why do you need blood, if you can eat real food?" Emmy asked, her eyes wide and curious as a child's.

"We need the nutrients," Dylan replied. "Our stomachs don't digest other foods well."

"So you still need calories? Or what? You get skinny? Lose your gorgeous hair?"

"Our skin dries like a mummy's," Quentin said.

Dylan pressed his lips together to prevent a bark of laughter. Emmy looked so appalled, he took pity on her. "I experience hunger the same way you do. If I don't feed, my stomach feels like it's gnawing on itself. Makes me grumpy."

"I can so relate," Emmy said, taking another bite of pizza. "And I'm relieved about the mummy thing."

"Regular food is like roughage." Dylan couldn't resist another oblique reminder of their previous conversation about vegetables. "Passes right through."

"I say," Quentin said. "That was rather indelicate in mixed company."

"No, no," Emmy broke in. "It explains a lot. So is it just human blood and body parts?"

Dylan wished the conversation would come to an unnatural end. "No. Human blood is the tastiest, but any mammal's will do in a pinch."

"You'd better eat some pizza, or I won't kiss you again," Emmy said.

Dylan grabbed her hand and directed her slice to his mouth. He took a large bite all the way to her fingers, making sure he brushed her with his lips before biting.

Emmy drew her bottom lip between her teeth and set the remainder of the slice on her plate. "I think I'm full."

"Clean up the kitchen, will you Quentin?" Dylan drew Emmy from her chair.

"What else am I here for?" Quentin grumbled.

* * * * *

Dylan's heart slowed its pounding and he stretched, careful not to dislodge Emmy. The fading pleasure of a moment ago was already giving away to a slow reawakening. He'd have her once more before the sun rose.

"So, how does one become a vampire?" Emmy asked, her chin rested on his chest and her gaze was fastened on his face.

Dylan knew she'd be relentless until he satisfied her with an answer. Emmy's curiosity was proving as insatiable as her sex drive. "By your expression, you expect something ghoulish?"

"Is it?" she asked, excitement making her eyes shine. "I mean, I've watched vampire movies. In some, you get bit on three consecutive nights. On the third, you die. By the time you wake up in the morgue you're a bloodsucker. Sometimes, you get partially eaten and come back the next night looking like you've been partially eaten. And then there was this one movie with a voodoo priestess —"

"Em! One must be drained nigh unto death, then fed a vampire's blood to replace it."

"Oh." She looked disappointed. "Sounds simple enough."

"Well, it's not," he replied curtly. "More often than not, the person dies before she can be turned."

"She?"

He didn't answer.

Emmy laid her cheek flat on his chest and smoothed her hands over his chest. "I'm glad you didn't die."

Dylan waited.

"Are you very old?"

With a wry smile, he replied, "I'm one hundred and eighty-six."

"Wow! That's old enough to be my great, great, great —"

"Old enough. Let's leave it at that."

"How did it happen for you, Dylan?" she asked quietly.

Miss Twenty Questions would drive him mad. But he supposed he'd have to tell his story sooner or later.

"My wife and I were starving to death," Dylan began.

Emmy raised her head, her eyes full of questions.

Dylan plucked a strand of hair from her cheek and rubbed it between his fingers. "First we lost the potatoes—the only crop we were permitted to keep. Then our rent was increased. When I couldn't pay it, we were forced out of our home by the magistrate, our cottage burned to the ground.

I looked for work, but there were so many people who were displaced—just like we were. Everyone starving. I stole food when I could find it. Took charity when it was offered.

Then we heard the Brits were offering free passage to America—a chance for a new start. Breda's health was already failing. She was a wraith. But we had to try."

Dylan closed his eyes. The picture he'd carried in heart for so long was finally fading. Red hair, soft brown eyes. "She suffered terribly from seasickness. Many did. We were housed in the hold of the ship. Bunks four-deep. Stacked like cords of wood. The smell of vomit and the dying was often more than I could bear. At night, I'd escape to the deck. The captain didn't mind, because his paying passengers were usually in their cabins."

Emmy touched his face. "You don't have to go on, if you don't want to."

Dylan opened his eyes and shook his head. "One night, I met a man walking near the railing. A storm was picking up, the sea was battering against the hull. I could barely keep my footing and had decided to go below. Then I saw his face. He was staring at me. His eyes were glowing in the dark. I thought I was seeing things. He introduced himself. His name was Navarro.

He asked me if my woman was dying. I wondered how he knew. I'd never seen him before. How could he know my circumstance? He said he could smell her on me.

Then he told me there was a way to save her. But there must be a sacrifice. I told him, whatever it was, I'd gladly pay."

"He was a vampire," Emmy breathed.

"Yes. I gave him my life's blood. When I awoke, I lay on the deck. I felt powerful, strong. I could see in the dark. Every darkened shadow was bright as daylight. My sense of smell placed every deckhand. But my hunger was incredible.

Navarro warned me not to act on it. That he would guide me, but first I must bring him my wife.

I carried her to his cabin. She was delirious, but I followed his instructions. While I drank from her, sating my hunger, I felt her life passing, ebbing like a wave away from me. When it was time to feed her with my blood, she was too weak to drink." Dylan paused, his voice feeling rusty, his tongue thick. "She died in my arms. I killed her."

Emmy's arms spread across his chest, hugging him tightly.

Dylan drew her up, his arms encircling her, and he pressed his face into the corner of her shoulder. "I'll not attempt to turn another," he said, his words muffled against her neck.

Emmy's shoulders shook. Her tears wet his chest. She cried while he couldn't. "I don't think you killed her, Dylan. She was already gone. You acted with love." Her head raised and her eyes were bright with tears. "So tell me how you came to have a Brit for a best friend."

Dylan laughed, a joyous, freeing laugh, and he rolled Emmy beneath him. "That is a tale for another day. For now, let me come inside you."

Immediately, Emmy's legs parted, her knees rising to either side of his hips. Her tentative smile turned to a gasp as he pushed deep inside.

“Stay with me, Emmy.” He drove into her, long powerful thrusts, bathing his cock in her creamy channel, seeking absolution for his sins in the goodness of her human soul. “Be mine, Emmy.”

Emmy’s hand clutched his hips, her fingers digging into his buttocks, encouraging him to propel faster, deeper. “I’ll stay,” she said. “I’ll stay.”

Dylan slowed his pace and leaned back to hook his hands beneath her knees, lifting her buttocks off the bed. “I won’t let you change your mind.”

He pumped into her, controlling the depth, pressing deep, then short, deep, short—until she writhed on the bed, her hands on her breasts, twisting her nipples, begging for release.

“Say it. Say you won’t leave.” He swirled his hips to rub the crisp hairs at the base of his cock against her clitoris.

Emmy’s head thrashed upon the pillow. “I promise. I won’t leave you. Just fuck me, Dylan. Fuck me!”

Dylan slammed into her, faster and faster, until his hips jackhammered into her tender flesh.

Emmy bucked, her legs straightening, rising higher, sobs erupting from her throat the closer she rose to the summit. Then her body stiffened, and she cried out.

Dylan continued to pound into her, and then his teeth glided down. He quickly withdrew and draped her knees over his shoulders and sank his teeth into her dripping cunt. Her orgasm pulsed against his mouth, around his teeth, trickling blood onto his tongue, and he roared as his cock pressed into the bedding beneath them and exploded.

Afterward, he drew her into his arms, her back to his chest. Their bodies slid together, slick with sweat. Lying on their sides, he drew her upper thigh over his and pressed his cock into her vagina to glove him while they slept.

Emmy murmured sleepily, “What will I do if I wake up horny, and you’re sleeping like the dead?”

"Whatever your heart desires. Have you ever heard of morning wood?"

Emmy snickered. "Then you'll have a stake between your legs, just for me?"

Dylan grimaced. "A stake anywhere near my person doesn't engender pleasant thoughts."

"Even when you are the stake?" She looked over her shoulder and circled her lips with her tongue in a slow tease. "Then how about a pole?"

"I've got a bloody pole for you now, witch."

"But I want to have my wicked way with you while you sleep. I bet you won't even know it."

"I will. It'll be a wet dream."

* * * * *

Emmy woke well past noon. Her inner clock was quickly aligning with Dylan's, she mused. Stretching like a cat, she rubbed her buttocks against Dylan's groin. Sure enough, his cock had plenty of starch. She made a space between her thighs and tightened around him, flexing her hips to make him slide along her cunt.

Liquid pooled between her thighs. Her very own anatomically amazing Dyl-do. Emmy rolled over. Dylan laid on his side, fast asleep, his dark hair spilling across his face.

Her fingers smoothed the locks away, and she leaned close to kiss his lips. Not an eyelash fluttered. She sighed. It was so much more fun when he participated.

She pushed him on his back, and he rolled easily, settling with his legs spread wide.

"How convenient." He was all hers to explore. She reached for the lamp on the bedside table and flicked it on, tilting the shade to bathe his body in the golden glow.

She straddled his hips, teasing her cunt with a glide over his rigid pole and leaned down to begin her exploration.

The flat, brown disks on his chest drew her like a magnet. She tongued them, savoring the velvet skin, then drew the tips between her teeth. As she sucked, they hardened to tiny, beaded points. She wet her fingertips and glided them over the tips of her own breasts, tugging the nipples until they grew rigid, then she guided her breasts to rub her nipples against his.

Her breath quickened and her pussy moistened. She drew her bottom lip between her teeth, and flexed her hips for another, wetter glide over his cock.

Combing her fingers through the hair on his chest, she raked through it, enjoying its soft, silky texture. She followed the dark arrow of hair down his belly and scooted further down his hips. His cock sprang skyward, fuller, redder than before.

She tapped the swollen head. "You'd better be dreaming of me."

Wrapping her hand around him, she was thrilled her fingers didn't meet. Then both hands encircled him and she squeezed, pushing down. Lowering her head, she licked down the length of him, then up the other side. His flesh was satiny-smooth and invited a more thorough examination.

Dylan's head rolled on the pillow, and he murmured. But still he slept.

"Oh Dylan," she whispered. "I'm going to be a very naughty girl."

And she'd give Dylan the sexiest, wettest dream he ever had.

Emmy spit into her hand and rubbed it over the head of his cock. Then she rose on her knees, and with one hand guiding him to her asshole, and the other spreading her cheeks, she sank down on him, gasping when the blunt round head breached her tight ring, and he glided inside.

At first, her tender, inner flesh resisted the intrusion, then she pushed down and levered up, then down again, reveling in the painful fullness. She wet her fingertips again and sought her clitoris, already swelling with arousal, and

swirled her fingers over it, rubbing harder as she picked up the pace, pumping her ass on his cock.

Her climax built gradually, and she closed her eyes, arching her back as it burst over her. She groaned loudly, her hips jerking until she couldn't move again.

She collapsed onto his chest and rubbed her face in his hair. "Baby, if you only knew how bad I really am."

Emmy eased off him and retrieved a washcloth from the bathroom. As she cleansed his body, she admitted a possessive streak she'd never known. He was hers. Every sexy, rigid inch of him.

She reached to pull up the sheets. When she reached Dylan's shoulders, she realized his eyes were slitted. He was watching her.

"You are a naughty girl," he whispered.

"You were awake? The whole time?"

"Mmm-hmmm." He smiled—a wicked self-satisfied smirk. "A man would have to be dead to not notice when a beautiful girl is enthralled with his cock." He patted the bed beside him.

Emmy crawled over him, mortification heating her cheeks. Spooned together, Emmy waited for his breathing to quiet. Her heart finally stopped thumping in her chest. He'd never let her live this down. Her stomach growled loudly and she decided to go in search of leftovers. But first things first.

After showering, she found his robe lying in a heap on the floor and put it on, cinching it around her waist. Tonight, she'd have to make a trip to her apartment for some of her own clothing. It was positively decadent to walk around naked all the time.

Letting herself out of the bedroom, she closed the door and turned toward the stairs. She heard a creak on the staircase below and stiffened. Had one of the dogs gotten into the house? Come to think of it, she hadn't heard a single bark.

Surely, she would have wakened earlier if she had. Senses on the alert, she walked slowly to the head of the stairs.

From the corner of her eye she saw a movement and gasped, but before she could call out, a hand closed over her mouth and she was drawn back against a long, tall body. Her head bumped against the hard shell of a helmet.

“Not a word...” a voice whispered in her ear, “...or I’ll see Dylan dies before he clears the bed? Do you understand?”

She nodded, her heart pounding with fear.

“We’re leaving now. Do as I say, and you won’t be harmed.”

Not believing a word Nicky spoke, nevertheless Emmy let herself be dragged down the stairs and out the front door.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

"There were two vamps," Dylan said, as he surveyed the bodies of his dogs, lying in a heap next to the side gate. Indentions from boot prints in the mud next to the dogs told the story.

"Nicky's doing?" Quentin asked.

"Of course, it was his doing." Dylan ran a hand through his hair. He had to keep it together. He could only imagine how frightened she must be now.

"He's mad. Surely, he realizes he's courting death."

"I have to hope that's exactly why he's doing it," Dylan said, stony resolve making his voice hard.

"To use her for leverage? And if he isn't?"

"Then we need to find her fast. He'll kill her." Dylan fought the panic that rose in his throat. Calm. He must be deliberate and calm.

The moment Dylan had woken at dusk, he'd known she was gone. He smelled engine oil and leather inside the house—but so far outside, only the dogs' blood.

"But where?" Quentin asked, raising his stark gaze to Dylan's.

"I know where. To hell."

* * * * *

Emmy fought the rising terror that threatened to choke her. Flickering candlelight distorted the shadows the vampires cast as they moved around the cramped room, making them appear larger, darker. She already knew they were dangerous as hell—and crazy to be fucking with her boyfriend.

Nicky had tossed her robe to dark corner of the room as soon as they'd entered, and she was naked.

Naked and spread-eagle on the soiled mattress—in the back room of the Viper's Den.

The smell of stale sex, urine, and a few unidentifiable odors emanated from the mattress. The cockroaches and mice she heard skittering from the room were the least of her worries.

Nicky's gleaming gaze sent warning signals clambering to her brain. He'd prepared well. Spikes had been driven into the floor and walls, to which chains fitted with manacles were attached.

Emmy struggled against the chains to free herself, but only managed to further injure the tender flesh around her wrists and ankles. She gave up hope of rescuing herself. Instead, she prayed for Dylan to find her soon.

"Leave us," Nicky said to the male vamp that had remained silent throughout Emmy's kidnapping.

He'd driven the second motorcycle, while Emmy had clung to the back of Nicky's, sitting on the edges of her robe to keep it from flapping away. Her stomach had tightened to a knot when she'd recognized their destination. Nicky didn't intend to ever let her go. She'd die in hell.

After one last covetous stare, the male vamp shuffled from the room.

Relieved his unblinking stare was no longer on her skin, all her attention focused on Nicky.

The apartment outside the small, stifling room was quiet. Emptied at Nicky's order, no doubt. Still dressed in the leather biker gear, he had removed his helmet and gloves. His long, tousled dark hair framed a symmetrically perfect face that was marred with a twisted sneer.

He bent to pull one of her chains, stretching her legs wider. "Now you look—perfect." His hand skimmed over her calf and up her thigh, pausing inches from her core. "This will be the first thing he sees," he said, and then cupped her mound. "I can see why your flesh fascinates him. You're so responsive. I've raised gooseflesh, even here."

Emmy fought the urge to cringe from his hand. She refused to give him the satisfaction of her fear.

"Never doubt. You'll be mine, tonight."

Emmy glared, for once at a loss for a snappy comeback. She hoped like hell rape wasn't part of his agenda.

"All this lovely white skin," he said, smoothing over her belly, and then up to cup one breast. "Very pretty. Monica didn't do you justice. Said you were a lumpy little thing." He twisted her nipple.

She fought the urge to cry out, knowing any response would incite a reprisal. Time was her friend. Dylan was on the way. She knew it. She could feel him drawing closer.

"What will Dylan say when he sees you like this?" he said, echoing her own thoughts. "Will he care?"

Of course he'll care. He'll kill you, asshole! Unable to stop herself, she jerked when he knelt on the mattress and then climbed onto her, straddling her hips. "You know, I'd be very worried if I were you. Very worried, indeed."

"Speaking of Monica. I'm surprised she isn't here for this," Emmy said, trying to prolong the conversation. "After all, she introduced us."

Nicky's hand caressed her jaw, and then turned her head to the side, exposing her neck. "Monica suffered a severe case of sunburn. She won't be joining us—ever."

Emmy closed her eyes. The Monica who had been her friend had died days ago. "So this little party's just for me? I mean, it seems you went to an awful lot of trouble for one lumpy girl."

"You're just the appetizer, sweetheart. And the bait. Sweet bait." With a low growl, Nicky bared his teeth.

As she watched his fangs slide over his teeth, her heart beat so loudly she could hear its pounding in her ears.

He stepped his knees between her legs and ground his leather-clad crotch against her pussy. "He's coming," Nicky said. "But he'll be too late." Planting his hands on either side of her chest, he leaned forward and sank his teeth into her neck.

Emmy cried out against the pain—he hadn't prepared her tender skin as Dylan always did. And he bit deeply into her. Blood left her face and mind, racing to the two small wounds in her neck as he suctioned.

She had a fleeting thought that perhaps it would be better for Dylan if she were never found.

* * * * *

Dylan turned the door handle to the entrance of The Viper's Den, and let it creak open a couple of inches. What he already knew was confirmed. A single vamp lurked inside the living room.

He drew back and flattened himself against the wall.

To Quentin, flanking the other side of the door, he raised one finger and pointed at him.

Quentin nodded, then stood in front of the door. With a powerful thrust, he kicked the door the rest of the way open, making it bounce against the wall loudly and charged into the room.

Already in full bloodlust, the vamp within roared and leaped at Quentin. Quentin feinted to the side and the vamp hit the wall. Hunkering on his haunches, he sprang at Quentin, taking him to the floor.

Now that Quentin had one of them well in hand, Dylan took advantage of the vamp's preoccupation and skirted around the combatants and into the hallway beyond. His heart pounded heavy in his chest as he approached the small dreary bedroom at the end.

The door swung open and Nicky stepped into the opening, clothed only in leather pants, the snap at the top open, and the zipper halfway down. Dylan

smelled Emmy's blood on him, along with her perfume—and Emmy's own musk.

Dylan roared his agony, his face reforming, and his teeth sliding down, ready to take Nicky apart. He raised his hands, letting the bloodlust transform his hands into claws to swipe the self-satisfied gloat from his enemy's face.

Then he heard a soft mewling like a weakened kitten from within the room.

"What will you do, Dylan?" Nicky taunted him. "You have only a few moments to save her—if you can. Or are you so far gone you have to take me?"

Fighting the bloodlust, Dylan bellowed again and stepped inside the room.

Emmy lay on the bed, her pale skin nearly translucent, blue-tinged. A dark crimson ribbon of blood stained her neck and the tops of her breasts. But Dylan could hear her thready pulse and see her chest struggle to rise.

Brushing past Nicky, his armor melted away as he hurried to the mattress. Nicky's mocking laughter trailed down the hallway, but Dylan cared only that Emmy still lived, still had a chance. But there wasn't much time.

He knelt on the mattress beside her. "Em. It's Dylan. I'm here."

Her lids fluttered, but didn't open.

"I'll turn you, love. You can stay with me, if that's what you want."

"Dylan..." she whispered.

He leaned closer, his ear to her lips.

"Will I have...this ass for eternity?" she asked, a feeble smile lifting the corners of her lips.

"Yes, love."

"Then do it. Don't want to leave you. Promised."

Dylan's jaw clenched. "First, I have to take more of your blood."

"I know..."

Dylan closed his eyes and murmured a quick prayer, and then bit into the unmarked side of her throat. Her blood entered his mouth, sluggish and cooling by the moment.

When her breath rattled one last time in her chest, he stopped and tore his wrist with his teeth, then held it to her mouth, trickling blood onto her tongue. "Drink, Emmy. For God's sake, drink."

Her throat didn't move to swallow. He leaned back and massaged her neck, until he felt a feeble gulp, and then pressed his wrist to her mouth again. This time, she latched onto it, her tongue working against the edges of his flesh. She inhaled, her lungs gasping for air.

Tears streaked down Dylan's face. Emmy would make it.

"Dylan, Nicky set a fire," Quentin yelled from down the hallway.

"Bastard!" Dylan continued to let Emmy feed, needing the extra minutes to make sure she was strong before he moved her.

Behind him, Quentin closed the door. "We'll have to take her through the window." Quentin shoved aside the curtain and cursed. "He installed bars. We're trapped."

"We haven't a choice, then. We have to go through the fire. Help me with the chains." Dylan pulled his wrist away from Emmy.

Her eyes, hollow but shining in the dark, offered him her trust.

Together, he and Quentin wrapped the chains in the floor around their wrists and pulled with all their might, working the stakes free. They lost precious minutes tugging on the chains in the wall, breaking chunks of plaster to free Emmy's arms.

Dylan helped her to her feet, and then dipped down to drape her over his shoulder. "Get the mattress. We'll use it as a shield to walk through the fire."

With Quentin in the lead, Dylan followed down the hallway, which was filled with a roiling cloud of black smoke. When they reached the entrance to the living room, Quentin laid the mattress on the floor, and then lifted it, damping down the next few feet of flames that ate at the wood flooring.

"We'll have to run for it," Quentin shouted over his shoulder, then with a roar, he held the mattress in front of them and charged toward the door.

Without breaking stride, Quentin pushed the mattress through the door, splintering the wood. Dylan, gripping Emmy tightly, was at his back and the two men stumbled through, landing on the smoldering mattress in the hallway beyond the apartment.

The flames had traveled through the ceiling and cinders rained down on them from above. "Run!" Quentin shouted and pushed Dylan in front of him.

Filled with smoke and the crackling roar of the fire above, the hallway seemed to stretch endlessly in front of Dylan. Unable to see beyond a few inches in front of his face, he rushed forward, praying he had the strength and breath to make it to the door.

Hold on, Emmy. Almost there. He slammed into the wooden door at the entrance, and wasn't the least surprised to discover that the door handle had been removed. "Quentin!" he shouted above the roar of the fire.

Quentin shoved him aside and rammed his shoulder into the door. It didn't budge. He backed up and hammered into it again. A crack in the center sucked air into the foyer. Another blow, and the doorway gave, and the fire roared toward them, fed by oxygen sucked through the gaping hole.

Dylan leapt through the gap and cleared the steps beyond. Quentin slammed into his back, and together with Emmy, they rolled clear of the ball of flame that followed them toward the street.

Coughing, Dylan crawled, dragging Emmy across the grassy weeds to the sidewalk. He rose on his knees to strip the shirt from his back and draped it across Emmy's naked body.

"Emmy? Are you alright?" he asked, afraid of her pallor and her stillness.

Her chest raised and she expelled a ragged breath that caught. She curled on her side as a series of coughs racked her body. Dylan lay down beside her, stroking her hair, kissing her shoulders, knowing that she'd recover soon. She was a vampire now and the injury to her lungs would heal in moments.

"I'll bring the car around," Quentin said, standing over the couple. His soot-covered face cast a worried glance at Emmy before he walked away.

As her coughing quieted, Dylan crooned into her ear and wrapped his arms around her. The danger was past. Now he was left to wonder whether her soul was intact.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Emmy sat quietly in the leather armchair as the locksmith sawed at the remaining cuff on her ankle with a thin, wire blade. She shivered at the chill the fire was slow to dispel. Her hair, still wet from her shower, dampened the shoulders of her robe.

She leaned toward the locksmith, alert to the aroma of his cheap aftershave – and the resonant thrum of his heart pushing blood through his veins. The beats were as clear as the crackle of the fire, the ticking of the clock above the mantle, and the metallic scrape of his saw.

She rimmed her mouth with her tongue, which was already tingling with anticipation of a meal.

The man looked up at her, his gaze falling to her wet lips, and he stiffened. He darted a glance over his shoulder at Dylan and Quentin, before continuing the seesaw movement of the wire blade beneath her cuff.

Emmy smiled when he adjusted his thigh alongside her foot. *He thinks I want to fuck him.* That would never happen. The duo who stood watch to ensure her good behavior would prevent any playing with her food. *Spoilsports!*

Not that she truly wanted to fuck him, but she'd give him better – a bite to send his heart fluttering and his dick gushing in his pants.

Instinctively, she knew she had the power to orchestrate the man's response, physically and mentally. The only problem was she wasn't sure once she tasted him, she'd be able to stop – drinking and pleasuring, that is.

The urge to experiment with this man was fast becoming impossible to ignore. Her breasts tingled, the nipples sharpening to hard peaks against Dylan's silver, silk robe. And her tongue massaged her gums and the roof of her mouth,

which itched unbearably. Her body was slowly changing, and it thrilled her, awakening hunger that made her teeth ache and power that tensed her muscles.

What would Dylan do, if I drew this man between my hard thighs and pressed my breasts against his chest while I drink?

Emmy gripped the armchair tighter.

The man's forehead glistened with sweat, and the crotch of his coverall tented over his erection.

Can he smell my arousal just as I can smell his?

One last scrape, and the blade passed the rest of the way through the metal cuff. The locksmith set aside the blade and reached for another tool with handles and a vice-like snout.

Murmuring a husky apology, he carefully placed her foot between his thighs, so that her toes touched his erection, and then slipped the nose of the tool around one edge of the break in the cuff. He twisted upward, bending the metal—and sliding her foot along his cock. Doing the same to the other side of the break, he finally removed her last restraint.

Emmy patted him with her toes, before sliding her foot to the ground. "Thanks," she said her voice a husky purr.

"Next time, make sure you have the key," he said, his gaze conveying a message, that no doubt meant, "I'm available for a fuck, anytime."

"Emmy..." Dylan's voice growled a warning.

Emmy's gaze left the locksmith, and she scowled at Dylan.

But Dylan's face remained implacable.

"Dylan, she does need to feed," Quentin said.

"Perhaps," she said, "I could offer this kind man a kiss?"

"That's not necessary," the locksmith said, looking a little uneasy now that his flirtation was acknowledged.

"A kiss," Dylan said. "But it ends when I say."

Emmy smiled at Dylan, and then grabbed the locksmith's collar in both hands, bringing his kneeling frame in alignment with her thighs. "I'll be the best kiss you ever had."

Her lips covered his, and his tongue shoved inside hers with a groan. Peppermint and cigarettes flavored his tongue. Nice, but not what she wanted to taste. Emmy traced her lips along his jaw and nudged him with her nose to raise his chin. The tanned column of his throat was bared, his skin growing steamy – hot with lust.

Her fingers touched the vein at the side of his throat and gasped when his warm blood – millimeters beneath his skin – beckoned her closer.

"Remember to prepare him, love," Dylan said, nearer to her now.

She licked the man's throat, alternately laving the skin and suctioning with her lips.

His cock scraped against her thigh, and Emmy gave him what he needed, caressing him with her inner thigh.

"Now, Emmy," Dylan said.

Emmy positioned her mouth over the pulsing vein and her vampire's fangs automatically slid down to pierce his neck.

The man gasped, but Emmy continued to massage his cock, until he surrendered to her tender attack, his arms circling her waist to clutch her tightly.

Emmy's mouth filled with blood, setting fire to her senses. Rich, warm, pulsing – it glided past her tongue and down her throat. Her body warmed, her pussy moistened.

And then it wasn't enough that his blood spilled into her mouth, she wanted to bathe in his blood, be filled with his sex.

"Enough, Emmy," Dylan broke through the haze of desire that clouded her mind. He was squeezing her shoulders.

She disengaged her teeth and licked closed the wounds she'd made. She rubbed her face on the back of her hand, ensuring her face was its human form again, then raised her head to smile at the locksmith.

"You've done a fine job tonight," she intoned. "We paid you well, but you can't recall much about the evening. You need a beer."

"I need a beer," he repeated.

Quentin helped him to his feet and shoved his toolbox into his arms. "Time to head home."

"Time to go home."

As Quentin lead the locksmith away, Emmy leaned back in the chair and breathed deeply. "That was the most amazing thing."

Dylan grunted and walked toward the bar. He poured a drink and knocked it back. When he turned to look at her, the scowl he'd worn froze.

Emmy had opened the robe and raised both thighs to drape over the arms of the chair. Her smile widened when she saw his gaze dip to her cunt, open and swollen with unrequited desire.

"I'm not sure I'm flattered," he bit out.

His jealous anger fueled her fire. "C'mon, Dylan. I was only hot because you watched." She wet the tip of two fingers in her mouth and lowered her hand to her pussy. Finding the hard kernel of nerve endings, she rubbed her fingers in circles on her clit, and deliberately squeezed and released the walls of her vagina to tease him.

His chest rose sharply. "I'll not watch you fuck another man," he said. "That I won't share."

She raised a single eyebrow, mocking his anger. "It's our nature to answer our bloodlust with sexual lust," she said.

"Baby, you're such an expert," he scoffed. "You've been a vampire for all of two hours."

"Some things you're just born knowing." *Like pushing your sexual buttons.*

"In the future, you'll let the lust build while you feed, but save the fucking for me."

"Will you always be there when I'm done with a meal?" she said, with a lazy glide of her fingers inside her juicy cunt.

"Always," he ground out the words.

"There's so much you didn't tell me. About how powerful this hunger is. Have you taken men as well as women?"

The corners of his lips curled. "Already asking questions, Emmy?"

"I haven't changed all that much." She let her head fall back against the cushion and arched her back, lifting the taut points of her breasts. Anything to entice him to take her.

Dylan stepped towards her. "I've taken men as well as women." His hands pushed his pants down his thighs and he stepped out of them. Proof of his desire for her rising straight and engorged between his legs, a pearl of cream glistening at the tip. He knelt before her chair.

She scooted her rear to the edge of the seat. "Did you...do it...with them?"

"Sometimes," he answered honestly. His tongue stabbed into her vagina, coating his tongue with her cream, then circling to spread the moisture on the thin lips that framed her opening. "The lust can be overpowering, without a partner to hold you in check."

"Or a fuck-buddy to take the edge off?" she asked, knowing her coarse words would incite him to lose his restraint. She needed his violence.

"You do have a way with words, love," he said, his breath gusting against her pussy.

He tongued her clitoris—sharp, quick jabs that left her gasping. Her hands gripped his head, but he resisted coming closer, delivering a long swipe of his tongue along her quivering flesh. Then he licked lower, tonguing her nether mouth. Dipping the tip of his tongue inside then fluttering lightly around her asshole.

Emmy wanted to kill him for teasing her, instead she shrieked, bucking her hips to encourage him deeper.

His palms cupped her buttocks and held her still for his plundering, and he alternated stabbing into her cunt and her asshole.

Emmy's belly tightened, her pussy releasing a gush of cream. Dylan groaned against her core, the vibration engorging her clitoris, so taut that each teasing flutter was exquisitely painful. Abruptly, he sat back on his heels.

Left gasping, Emmy stared at him. Willing him with her gaze to take her.

"What do you want, Emmy?"

"You," she breathed.

His jaw tensed. "Tell me."

"Your cock in my cunt," she said between gritted teeth.

His face grimaced as he pushed his engorged penis down to press at her opening. "Not good enough, Em."

"Fuck me, Dylan."

His mouth opened, about to say something. Inexplicably, he looked disappointed. Then shook his head and slammed into her—all the way to the mouth of her womb.

Emmy let loose another shriek, and drew back her knees to her chest, giving him greater access to move unimpeded.

Dylan pulled out, and then rammed forward again. "Promise, I'll be the only man you invite inside you, Em."

"You're all I need. All I want."

"Promise."

"I promise. Only you. Just move, Dylan. I'll die if you don't move."

Dylan leaned over, ramming into her, pressing her deeper into the chair with each hard thrust.

Then he halted, buried so deeply, Emmy could swear he'd feel her heartbeat against the head of his dick. She hadn't thought about it before, but she was glad

she had a heartbeat—and then she couldn't think because his hands cupped her buttocks and moved her up and down on his cock, grinding her pussy against his pubic hair. His dick was a hard steel shaft, shoved so deep inside its thickness expanded the walls of her vagina.

And he was changing—which triggered Emmy's metamorphosis. The plates rose beneath her cheeks and forehead, her teeth slid from the roof of her mouth, and her body filled with power. She shoved him to his back on the floor and leapt on top of him, securing his hands on the ground next to his head.

He snarled, a signal of his approval.

She reached between their bodies and clasped his cock in her hand, pushing it toward the mouth of her pussy.

The round, blunt head slipped into her. And she shoved her hips down hard to take him all the way inside her. His hands pushed on her hips to make her rise, and soon she bounced on his cock, a rigorous contest of wills as she forced down and he pushed back.

Faster, and faster, her thighs smacking his hips, levering, forcing, pounding.

His hands rose to her breasts and he squeezed hard, twisting. The harder he squeezed the more exquisite the pain. She leaned into his hands to encourage him.

Then he caressed her cheek, and her nose nuzzled his wrist. Too tempting to ignore, she bit into him, sucking deeply, her belly drawing taut, as she flexed her thighs a final time and drove downward, cramming her cunt over his dick as hard and deep as she could.

She felt as though her head exploded. Her body was wracked with shudders of completion. Finally, she went slack, folding over him like blanket.

Her head rested over his heart. Its rapid beat, a reassuring measure that they both lived and breathed. They'd come too close to losing each other in the fire.

Slowly, she became aware that he changed, relaxing into his human self. She rather liked the beast and smiled at the thought of coaxing him out of hiding again. She turned her face to lick his salty skin.

"Are you preparing to make another meal of me?" he asked. "I'll have to replenish my blood soon, or I'll be sucked dry as a mummy."

"Would you like that?" she asked. "For me to suck you dry?"

His arms tightened around her. "Are you ready for round two, so soon?"

"It is a vampire's blessing—this rapid recovery." She flexed her hips producing a slurpy sound that made her giggle. "I think we're probably soaking the carpet beneath us," she said.

"You did blow a geyser."

"Me? And none of this dripping goo is yours?"

"What can I say? You inspire me."

She licked around one flat, brown areole. "Your daytime staff will think we peed on the rug."

"And how do you know I have any staff?"

Emmy lifted her nose to the air and inhaled. "Because I can smell them here."

His hands glided over her sweat-slicked back, and she rose up to let her nipples graze his chest. They had an eternity of loving to explore, but she wanted it all, now.

"You're a greedy witch." His hands swept lower to close over the globes of her ass, pressing down, driving his cock deeper.

"Aren't you glad?" she asked.

"Anybody for pizza?" Quentin said from the foyer. Then he blew out a loud breath. "I say. I see what you meant when you said she had an ass to die for."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

"Now that you embarrassed her half to death—" Dylan began, hands on his hips.

"Embarrassed? Em?" Quentin raised both brows. "I'm half-certain the girl likes being caught in *flagrante dilecto*. It happens too often for mere circumstance."

Dylan scowled, shoving his feet into his pants. "Man, you sound pompous!"

"I practice," Quentin said, with a Cheshire grin, picking up the silver robe.

Dylan grabbed the robe and rolled it in a ball. Emmy had forgotten it during her long screech and lope up the stairs. "Care for a drink, before you leave?" he asked, pointedly.

"A scotch, please."

Dylan poured their drinks, and then joined Quentin, seated before the fire. "All right, there was a point to your interruption?"

"Yes. I spoke with Navarro while you two were playing hide the sausage."

Dylan narrowed his eyes. "And?"

"Navarro's seeking a sanction against Nicky from the council. He's to be killed on sight."

Grim satisfaction filled Dylan. "Now, we only have to find him."

Quentin's face grew uncharacteristically serious. "Dylan, don't you think Em has had enough excitement for a while?"

"I'm not taking her with us. But I can't let him get away. He must be hunted. Emmy won't be safe until he's dead."

"He almost killed me, too," Quentin said. "It's personal now."

"You mean, let you go on your own?" The thought would never have occurred to Dylan. They were a team.

"You need time with her to tutor her properly in our ways. Not that she isn't a quick study—a natural, actually. And you need time by yourselves. You haven't known each other that long."

Dylan contemplated the wet spot on the rug. It really did look like one of them had peed.

"You aren't worried about her, are you?" Quentin said.

"No." Dylan answered too quickly.

"What is it?"

Dylan sighed. "Would she have stopped in time with the locksmith, if I hadn't intervened? Or would she have killed him?"

"She was just overcome with the bloodlust. It was her first time. Are you worried that she's lost her soul?"

Dylan lifted his glass and let the whiskey slide down his throat. "Wouldn't be the first time. But I'm about to find out." He set the glass on the fireplace ledge. "Where will you start looking? I know you, you've already got a lead or two."

"I'm thinking of catching a few waves. He has a vamp brother in Florida."

"Florida? So far? You'll be in unknown territory. We haven't developed council ties that far south. Don't go and get yourself dusted."

"Just keep that girl out of her clothes—and out of mischief. Oh, and you can sleep easy. The council's providing watchers until Nicky's found."

Dylan walked with him to the front door. They shared a glance up the stairs.

"You're one lucky Paddy."

"Bleedin' toff." Dylan smiled crookedly.

They shared an awkward embrace, before Quentin turned and let himself out the door.

* * * * *

Dylan slipped beneath covers that held a wintry chill. Emmy hugged the far side of the bed, her back to him, her shoulders stiff. "Emmy, we have to talk."

"You don't have to say a thing. I lied. You were right," Emmy said, her voice quiet. "I wanted to fuck that locksmith to death. Wanted to bathe in his blood."

Dylan held his breath. He'd let her speak. He needed to know the state of her soul—and whether he'd lost her forever. And if she wasn't whole, she was his responsibility—although ending her new life would likely kill him.

"Thanks for stopping me." She turned towards him, tears on her cheeks. "I couldn't have lived with myself, if I'd taken his life."

Dylan closed his eyes, relieved beyond words. Remorse was only possible if one still cared about human life.

Emmy's breath caught on a jagged sob, and she pushed back the covers to get up. Dylan couldn't bear to look at her.

"Where do you think you're going?" he asked.

Her gaze met his, but his face was closed, remote.

"Ho—ome," she wailed, her face and what was left of her composure, crumpling.

"Aren't you forgetting something?"

"I don't have anything to wear. I'll send back your robe," she paused to sniff. "Wherever it is." She hated when she cried. Her face puffed up like a blowfish. And she needed a Kleenex. Dylan's last sight of her would be of an enormous, snotty nose and eyes nearly swelled shut.

"I wasn't talking about my robe. Come here, Emmy."

That didn't sound like a goodbye. She squinted to see his face, but he still looked imposing. Afraid to read too much into his invitation, she figured he just wanted to offer her a little manly comfort—before he let her down easy.

"I know men hate tears. But I can't help it," she said, wiping her cheeks with the back of her hand. "I just keep thinking about it. He was there. His blood was such a temptation, and I just wanted a little bite—"

"Em," his voice lowered in warning. "Don't remind me."

Emmy's heart leapt. That particular tone in his voice usually preceded an intense sexual experience. He was jealous! "Ooooh!" She started crying a fresh spate of tears.

"For fuck's sake." Dylan's hand clamped over her arm and he jerked her toward him.

Emmy fell against him and buried her face in the soft fur of his chest.

Dylan stretched his arm to slide the drawer of the nightstand open and drew out a packet of tissues. "There," he said. "You've twenty of them to mop up the mess."

She hiccupped and plucked at the plastic, but she couldn't open it.

Dylan cursed and took the packet from her. After a moment, he shoved a tissue into her hands. "You'll stop crying this instant."

Emmy took the tissue and blew her nose loudly. "I can't stop, just because you order it, you know. Once it starts," she shrugged, "I'm pretty much at its mercy...k-kinda like the that po-poor man."

"Then how do you stop crying?"

"I think happy thoughts." Emmy blew again. When she finished she handed him the tissue.

Dylan tossed it on the floor and handed her another. "Happy thoughts?"

"Yes, like ice cream and pepperoni pizza thoughts."

"There's freshly cut steak in the refrigerator."

Emmy perked up at that thought. At least they wouldn't starve tonight. Although she had no intention of leaving the house any time in the near future to hunt. She couldn't trust herself. Her face crumpled again.

"I thought steak was a happy thought."

"It is." Her shoulders shook with the next bout of crying.

Dylan pushed her down onto the bed. Before she guessed his purpose, he was hovering over her, his cock pressed against her entrance. "Want a happy thought?"

"Is this a pity fuck?"

Dylan rolled his eyes. "Are you quite through feeling sorry for yourself? We've only an hour of darkness left and I'd intended to ride you all the way to dawn. And this isn't fucking." He pushed his hips forward, spearing into her.

Emmy's hands closed over his buttocks, "Then what is it?"

"Did you just stick your tissue to my ass?"

"Oh!" Emmy quickly pulled it off his skin and tossed it over the side of the bed. "You changed the subject again."

He drew all the way out of her, and then placed the head of his cock at her entrance again. "Tell me what you want, Emmy."

"I want you, Dylan."

He gritted his teeth against the urge to surge inside. "Be more specific."

"I want your cock inside me?" She was in pain and he wanted to play semantics?

He shook his head.

"I want you to fuck my brains out!" she shouted at him. What else did he want?

"Not fuck!"

Emmy's heart stilled. He wanted the truth. "I want you to...make love to me."

His breath gusted out. "Was that so hard to say?"

She nodded. "Yeah. It has certain connotations, you know."

Dylan circled the head of his penis around her opening. "Tell me more, Emmy. What connotations?"

Emmy's forehead scrunched into a frown. He wasn't going to leave her any pride left. "Such as, you must be in love to make love."

The head penetrated her opening, and she wriggled her hips to caress him with her inner muscles.

"And are you?" he asked. His face was taut. Heat stained his cheeks. But his eyes staked her to the bed.

"You're going to make me cry again."

"Oh no, you're not." He pushed deeper inside her. "Only happy thoughts. Fucking is a happy thing, right?"

"I thought you said we were making love?" she wailed. "Are you taking it back?"

Dylan flexed his hips, driving his cock inward until he was fully gloved. Then he lowered his body over hers and rested on his elbows. "Am I taking what back, Emmy?"

"That you love me."

He raised a hand to brush her hair back from her face, while his gaze held hers. "And do I?"

"You must love me."

"Why's that?"

"You're looking at my blowfish face, and you aren't throwing up."

His gaze narrowed. "No jokes now, Em. This is just you and I. Only the truth between our skins. Do you think I love you?"

She was afraid to say it, in case she wasn't right. And she said so. "I mean, you might just be obligated to love me. You sired me, right? You have to love your children."

His face grimaced. "You make it sound like incest."

"I like this kind of incest. Will you fuck me, now?"

"Only if you say the magic words."

Emmy held perfectly still.

"Em?"

"I'm thinking. If I say it, you'll feel obligated to say it back. And then I'll never know the truth until you're packing a suitcase to run away with the maid."

"Bloody hell. Just say you love me."

She drew in a deep, ragged breath. "I love you," she blurted.

He nodded. "Fine. That's all I asked." He pulled back and drilled back inside her.

Emmy couldn't help rolling her hips in response to his deepening plunges. But she really wished he'd stop, so she could think. "Well? Aren't you supposed to say something?"

"What?" he asked, closing his eyes and groaning as he picked up the pace.

Emmy's hips slammed upward to meet his thrusts, even as her face screwed up, ready to wail.

His eyes opened. "Not again. I love you, Em. I wasn't going to give it to you so easily. You don't deserve it. I've loved you longer, and frankly, you've put me through hell."

"Dylan..." she said, her voice lowered in warning.

"What?"

"Shut up and fuck me. You're starting to sound like me."

"Good God!" He leaned back, and hooked his arms beneath her legs. "I know one way to make certain neither of us has the strength left to talk."

Emmy's hands fisted in the bedding. He was as good as his word. In minutes, she was breathless and grunting with each hard stroke he delivered. His glorious face, red and glistening with sweat. His body was taut as bowstring as he pounded at her cunt.

And looking down her body, she saw what he saw for the first time, her body cushioned his thrusts, her belly shivering and rolling, her nipples peaking — beckoning him to suckle.

The parts of them that moved together were wet and lightly furred. His cock a strong, straight sword speared into her warm, wet scabbard.

They were made for each other. Beautiful together.

"You're getting that look again," Dylan said, his breaths coming in short pants.

Emmy sniffed. "I'm not going to cry. I'm going to come."

"Then hurry it along," he said. "I won't last another minute."

"But you haven't changed."

"I told you. It's not required. I simply...have to be...completely..." His arms jerked her hips up, snug against his groin. Shorter, sharper thrusts, faster than before.

Emmy's back arched off the bed, her shoulders grinding into the mattress to press her hips higher. Then she was flying, screaming as she hurtled toward the stars.

When she grew aware of herself again, she looked up to find Dylan staring at her. And no wonder, she'd thrown her ankles around his neck, and her body was suspended on his cock.

Feeling a little sheepish, she unwrapped her ankles, but Dylan continued to hold her hips flush against his groin. "Sorry. Did I put off your orgasm?"

Dylan slid out of her slowly and dropped her hips on the mattress. His cock was bathed in come.

"Is that you?"

"It's us, Em."

"But you're still—"

"Hard as stake?"

She shivered. "A pole. Stakes anywhere near my person—"

"Yeah, gives me the willies too." He grinned sat back on his haunches. "Do you think we can do that thing, again?"

Emmy's eyelids lowered and she drew her bottom lip between her teeth.
"What thing, Dylan?"

His hand closed around his cock and he caressed it. "You know."

Emmy's hand slipped between her legs. "Drill for a gusher? Come on, Dylan. Say it."

"Turn over and get on you knees."

Emmy was there in under a second, her ass pushing back to meet his cock. Her chest on the mattress, she reached back to spread her cheeks. "Come to mama."

He pushed inside, hard and straight, driving forward without pausing to let her tender flesh adjust.

Emmy groaned and pressed her cheeks together to give him as much friction and resistance as her body could bear.

"Bloody hell! You've no idea what your ass does to me." He leaned over his back, his teeth scraping the top of her shoulders.

Emmy pushed up from the mattress and shoved her hips back to take him the rest of the way inside. "It's an ass to die for, isn't it love?"

Dylan licked her shoulder, then bit her to hold her still.

Emmy wiggled her ass from side to side, grinning. Dylan wouldn't be able to resist for long.

"Witch!" He licked her neck, then pulled her up so that she sat on his thighs, impaled on his cock. "Now, I get to touch all of you. Who do you think will come first—and loudest?" His hands closed over her breasts and squeezed.

Emmy giggled, then pushed one of his hands down her belly, to her sopping pussy. "I planned this. I get all the attention, now."

His fingers plucked her clitoris and a nipple. "Think you're smart? I can make this last forever."

"You'll last a minute at most." She bounced on his lap, intending to show him he couldn't possibly resist. "Oh!" She hadn't expected that to feel so good.

His fingers pushed inside her cunt, and he swirled and dug, and swirled and pressed three of his long fingers as far as they could reach.

"Ohmygod!" She bounced faster, her ass stretched and impossibly full, her pussy dripping with another wash of cream.

"Say it again, Em," he whispered into her ear.

"I love you, Dylan."

He withdrew his fingers and flattened his hand over her belly, holding her still. "Say it again."

"I love you," she groaned. "Now finish it."

"Bossy little witch." Another hand joined the one pressing into her belly. "Tell me what you want."

"Bastard! You know damn well, I want your cock fucking my ass."

He tsked in her ear. "Such language. And I thought you were a shy little thing."

"You created this monster," she reminded him and struggled to move on his cock, but he held her firm. "I was minding my own business, wasn't looking for any vampire-man—"

"Aren't you glad I whisked you off your feet and had my way with you?" He kissed her shoulder, and Emmy's head fell to the side to let him stroke her neck with his rough tongue.

Her hands rose to her breasts and she rolled her nipples between her fingers, tugging them hard. "Bite me, baby," she begged.

Fingers combed through the hair of her mons, then pulled back the hood of flesh to expose her clitoris. "Pleasure yourself, Emmy."

Her head fell back to let him watch over her shoulder. She rubbed her clit, gasping as the hypersensitive nub swelled beneath her fingertips.

His hands gripped her ass and lifted her, and she sobbed because her climax swept over her breasts, tightened her belly, and centered on her clit as he levered her hips on his cock.

"This is incredibly happy thoughts," she said. "Cataclysmic, orgasmic—"

Her vagina convulsed, and the deep pulses shuddered around his dick. She felt his thighs tense before an endless stream of come shot into her.

"Promise me, you'll love me forever," she said, when she'd finally found her breath again.

"I will," he said, his voice roughened, his monster face rubbing on her shoulder. His arms hugged her tight to his body.

"Promise me, we'll go after Quentin."

Dylan stilled.

"I know he's gone after Nicky, alone. I don't have a good feeling about that."

"I won't let you anywhere near Nicky again. We're staying here."

Emmy pulled away from Dylan and turned to face him. "Nicky touched me, Dylan. He stripped me, shamed me, and then tried to kill me."

Dylan bared his teeth, his fearsome face contorted with rage.

Emmy reached up to smooth her a hand over his forehead. "He marked me. But you made me a part of this. I have to be there."

Dylan shook his head, beyond words.

"Promise me?" she asked.

His face reformed slowly, his breath evening. "I promise. But you will rest and gain strength before we leave."

Emmy blinked away the moisture that pooled in her eyes. "All right. We'll leave when the time is right." Feeling very tired all of sudden, Emmy stretched out on the bed. "Can we sleep now?"

Dylan crawled over her and laid his head on her breast. "I'll wake you with kisses."

Emmy combed her fingers through his hair, soothing him to sleep. Her dark, immortal knight had saved her life and her soul. As she held him, she made a final vow to keep his heart safe.

When the dawn's light peeked around the edges of the curtains, Emmy's arms wound tightly around Dylan's shoulders, and she held him to her heart.

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