

**Eyes of the Leopard 3:
Cat On A Hot New York Roof
Isabella Jordan**

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Chapter 1

"You'll never forgive him, will you, Misha?" Nadia Turgenev asked. Kicking the small block of wood holding the door open out of her way, she closed the door leading to the roof of their hotel behind her.

Mikhail Turgenev didn't turn from where he stood, keeping his back to her. The tense lines of his long muscular body alone answered her question. His black shirt stretched across the wide expanse of his back and his long legs were encased in tight faded jeans. Mikhail was staring in the direction of her brother Vitali's apartment building.

Just when Nadia thought he didn't mean to answer her question, he did.

"Nyet," Mikhail said quietly.

The summer night in New York City was as hot as a Serbian day. But unlike the quiet tranquility of their country, the city that stretched out with its shimmering lights all around them never rested. The ceaseless activity of cars and people was the life blood of the city, pumping through its veins with a force that made Nadia Turgenev nervous and excited in turns. It was her first visit to America and a day of celebration. Independence Day, Mikhail had called it.

Independence was a fine thing to celebrate in Nadia's mind after spending two nightmarish years of her life under Bartok's control. The cruel leader of a small militia back in Serbia had held her son hostage, made her life hell on earth and endangered the rest of her family until she and Mikhail finally managed to stop him.

But that was all over now. Bartok was dead. Vitali, Nicole and the baby they were expecting were safe. Nadia looked forward to being an aunt even though she didn't know how often she'd be able to see the child, considering the bitterness between her brother and her husband.

None of them had any idea where Ilia was now. Nadia prayed that wherever her twin brother was that he was safe too. Her heart ached whenever she thought about Ilia, hurt and alone somewhere in the world.

Most importantly to Nadia, she had the man she loved and their son, Luca, back in her life. That's all she'd ever wanted, to love Mikhail and to have him love her back. He *did* love her -- and he loved Luca. Mikhail had married her while they were still in Serbia and made them a family.

The sun dipped below the horizon, its fading rays shining off the tawny waves of Mikhail's hair as they stood on the roof hundreds of feet above the city. Nadia could physically touch him from where she stood. But a hundred miles might as well separate them as distant as Mikhail seemed to her in this moment.

Mikhail wasn't totally available to her, even though they shared a home and bed. There was a tiny piece of himself that Mikhail was keeping from Nadia and his son. And she sensed that part of him was consumed with revenge. Every day since Mikhail had come back into her life his thirst for vengeance had insinuated itself between them. Instead of the warm happiness Nadia had anticipated feeling when they wed, she felt empty at times, and more alone than she'd ever been.

When Mikhail had suggested the journey to America to start a new life as a family, Nadia supported him. She'd never questioned the decision to go, even knowing that Vitali and Nicole had returned there. No, it had been quite the opposite. Nadia had welcomed the chance to escape her homeland, which held nothing but unhappy memories for her now.

But each day since they'd arrived in America, Mikhail grew more distant and she knew very well why.

Enough already. Nadia wanted *all* of his heart for herself and their family and she wanted it *now*. Including the part that wanted revenge against her brothers for holding him captive in a cage in his leopard form for two years.

Like Nadia and her brothers, Mikhail was a descendant from the victims of a barbaric cult that once occupied lands in their native Serbia. They'd inherited the

demon blood which had the power to transform them into the black leopard when emotions ran high or they were threatened in any way. Sex with those who didn't share their curse would also bring on the transformation and only spilling blood could restore them to their human form. It was a bleak, lonely existence for those who didn't have mates and that was common for there weren't many of them left now. Those who were foolish enough to fall in love with someone not of their kind were doomed to a life of pain and loneliness.

But Nadia and Mikhail had each other. Together they could live happily in human form and never be touched again by the darkness that was part of them. Couldn't Mikhail see that?

"What are you doing up here?" Mikhail's voice was low. "Where is Luca?"

Nadia had tucked their son into bed before she sought Mikhail out. "Luca's asleep. He was exhausted after chasing you around the city all day to see the sights," Nadia pointed out, grinning at him. "Neva's with him."

Mikhail nodded. Nadia was pleased at how easily he'd allowed her to bring one of the other two victims of Bartok's cruelty with them to America. Neva, like them, was of pure demon blood.

Unlike Nadia, Bartok had broken Neva. Bartok had only been able to find three women of childbearing age of their kind for his evil plot to produce pure-blood sons. Nadia and Neva were two of them. Their cruel captor had started abusing Neva at nineteen and now she was a young woman of twenty-three and afraid of men.

Mikhail had been extremely patient with Neva on their travels. Still she jumped at the sound of his voice, turned pale when he entered the same room she was in. Nadia hoped that Bartok was frying in the deepest pit of hell for what he'd done to Neva. Just as fervently she hoped that the young woman would survive and find happiness one day. Neva deserved a man who'd love her for who she really was no matter what.

Like Mikhail loves you? Yes, damn it. But they couldn't continue on this way. Nadia couldn't go on this way.

It was time to talk.

"What are you doing up here?" Nadia wanted to know.

"I need time to myself."

Nice try. I'm not going to make this easy, Misha.

"To think about our new life in America?" Nadia asked.

The subtle sarcasm of her tone had Mikhail slowly turning to face her just as she'd hoped it would. He was so damned gorgeous that Nadia momentarily forgot why she'd wanted him to look at her. Mikhail's beauty was cruel, as fascinating to Nadia as the writhing golden flames of a roaring fire. Like a flame, he had heat and passion, but he also had the ability to consume, destroy. Mikhail's amber eyes glittered in a fiery gaze and his sensual lips were set in a grim line. His muscular arms folded across the wide expanse of his chest pulling the black shirt he wore tight against his magnificent upper body. Nadia ached to run her hands inside that shirt and over the solid wall of muscle beneath it and --

Stay in your head, Nadia.

"What do you want?" Mikhail's expression darkened as he took a step toward her. "I'll warn you now, that I am not in a good mood."

"That is often the case, Misha," Nadia pointed out, holding her ground. "Your moods run dark often. Why do you think that is?"

The muscles of Mikhail's jaw twitched as his amber eyes bored into her. "I will not discuss this again, Nadia."

"Discuss what?" Foolish to provoke his anger, Nadia knew, but she had little choice. "Discuss the fact that ever since we arrived in America you have barely spoken to me? That you avoid me and Luca at every opportunity?"

Mikhail took another step closer, his jaw clenched. Nadia's first impulse was to step back, but she forced herself to remain where she was. Awareness of Mikhail and the anger he held in check sent tingles of alarm and desire coursing through her body. There was nothing like sex with Mikhail when his passions had been aroused, but his anger was dangerous. Nadia knew he'd never hurt her, but that wasn't necessarily the

only consequence of rousing his ire. If Mikhail were loose in this city in his leopard form with all the men in their uniforms and guns...

"Nadia, since we arrived in this country I've spent nearly every waking hour with you and my son." Mikhail's voice was tight. "Don't think to lecture me again about my feelings toward your brothers."

"But it is more than that and you know it, Misha." Nadia wouldn't back down. "It is not just your feelings toward my brothers. It is the impact it's having on you. On *us*."

"My hatred of your brothers has nothing to do with you, Nadia. I've told you that over and over again. I don't blame you for what they did."

Nadia shook her head. "Nyet. I have *never* worried that you blamed me for what happened, Mikhail. You know that, but I won't let you use this anymore to avoid the real problem here."

Mikhail moved closer until he towered over Nadia and she was forced to look up at him. It was intended to intimidate her, Nadia realized. *Mikhail should know better than that.*

The only thing it *did* accomplish was to draw her attention to the heat of his body. His cock was a noticeable bulge straining the front of his snug jeans. Nadia had to fight the urge to reach for the zipper of those jeans and free his erection. She wanted to caress it with her hands and mouth...

"And what *is* the real problem as you see it, little Nadia?"

Mikhail's hands dropped to his sides. His long fingers clenched and unclenched slowly, making Nadia wonder if their confrontation was exciting him too.

Did Mikhail want to fuck her right now as much as she wanted him to? Did he realize that Nadia would much rather have his cock filling her pussy, already aching and wet for him, than explain to him that his obsession with retribution was poisoning their love? Did he?

The hunger was there in his amber eyes for her to see. *Oh, yes. He knows. He wants me too.*

Taking a deep breath, Nadia shoved her desire aside for the moment. She had to. They had to deal with this.

"Mikhail, I accept that you may never forgive Vitali and Ilia for what they did to you. I also accept that I am to blame too." Nadia lightly gripped his wrists in her hands, unable to keep from touching him. Her fingers slid up to smooth over the coarse hair of his forearms. "But it is time to forget now. That darkness is in our past. Let it go. Be with us, me and Luca, here and now."

"I *am* here, Nadia. I am with you and Luca. What else would you have me do? What is it that I am not doing for you?" Roughly he yanked his arms free of her hands but he didn't move out of her personal space. No, Mikhail stayed there, towering over her. "You think I am the key to your happiness? You think I can erase the memories of that bastard? I can't, Nadia. Those are your demons to battle. *Yours*. And I have mine. You of all people should understand that."

It was obvious Mikhail thought he'd ended the conversation, marching back to the edge of the roof to resume his original stance. He stood still and as rigid as a statue with his feet apart, his arms crossing his chest.

Nadia wasn't giving up. This didn't have a damn thing to do with *her* memories and what she'd experienced and he damn well knew it. Just like a man to bring up something to make you pause, to make you doubt yourself. To just make you want to give up.

Surrender was the last thing Nadia intended to do.

Marching after him, Nadia stopped at his side. Peering over the edge of the building Nadia was momentarily dazed at the view from that great height. It took her a moment to recover enough to start the next round with Mikhail. And the anger flashing in his amber eyes hinted that she might not enjoy it.

Chapter 2

“You arrogant bastard.” Nadia’s face flushed in anger with a speed that impressed Mikhail. “Yes, I am happy with you. I love you. But I don’t expect you to make me happy. No matter how much I love you, you can’t make me happy. To think otherwise would be foolish.”

“Then why is this conversation continuing?” Mikhail deliberately taunted her.

He’d done his damndest to make her walk away, to end this fight before it truly got started. But Nadia was still there, her deep brown eyes searching his. It would only get worse before it got better because Nadia wouldn’t relent. Nadia never relented.

It didn’t help matters that he wanted nothing more at the moment than to fuck Nadia in every way imaginable right on the rooftop where they stood regardless of anyone watching from nearby buildings. Her little nipples were as hard as jewels under the sheer white blouse and bra that she wore. Mikhail could smell her unique fragrance, the telling scent of the juices that gathered between her thighs, and it damn near took over his senses, made him feel light-headed. Mikhail wanted to taste her nectar, to taste her...

Why couldn’t they just do that? Make love here and now? Why did Nadia feel the need to taunt him over and over again with the issue of her brothers? As much as he once loved Vitali like his own brother, he hated him now. He hated Ilia just as much. That wasn’t likely to change. The sooner Nadia accepted that, the better things would go for her.

And now, he was back at the scene of their crime. Hell, he could see the Central Park Zoo from where they stood. Thousands of people gathered there in Central Park. From a great height they looked like colorful ants, waiting for the annual fireworks show.

"This conversation is continuing because I can't live like this, Mikhail." Nadia threw her arms wide as angry color seeped up the slim white column of her throat. "You say you are with me, but in your mind you are not. Nyet, you are always thinking about what happened to you, what you suffered. How you will make my brothers pay. You know I would not have had Vitali and Ilia do that to you. I only sought to protect all three of you from Bartok. If I'd told any of you that it was Bartok who beat me..."

The word *raped* hung between them, unspoken. The slightest tremor passed through Nadia's body as he watched her. Inside, Mikhail cringed. He needed no reminder of what she'd suffered during those two years. And honestly, he wasn't sure he could talk about what she'd endured. Mikhail struggled with just the knowledge of what had happened to the woman he loved.

"I love all three of you." Nadia's voice was thick with pleading. "Do you understand that rips me apart?"

"Yes," Mikhail answered honestly. "And I've told you that I would not keep you from your brothers. I meant that, Nadia. I still don't understand the problem here."

Nadia blinked, shook her head incredulously at him. "You say you wouldn't keep me from my brothers and yet I'd be afraid to go anywhere near them. For all I know you are planning your next move against them, Mikhail. What you will do to them. You don't talk to me so I must guess."

That pissed him off. "You claim to love me but you think I'm that much of a black-hearted bastard? That I'd marry you, make you and Luca my family and then murder your brothers when I know it would hurt you? Hurt my son by taking his uncles away?"

Raising his voice caused the color in those pretty cheeks to fade. *Good*. "Believe me, Nadia. Some days I would love to do just that. If not for *you*, it would be done. They would be dead. No question. But because I love you, they live. And yet, you question me."

The breeze freed a long dark strand from the neat upswept style of her hair. Nadia didn't put her hair up very often and he admired the long, elegant column of her

neck. Damn, but he wanted to taste the white flesh of her throat, the white flesh of her thighs. Her scent was driving him crazy and his cock was so hard it ached and throbbed.

"If you would take no action against them, Mikhail, then what good is it to hold onto your hatred for them?"

It was one hell of a question and one he'd posed to himself more than once. Mikhail knew in his heart that he wouldn't make a move against Nadia's brothers unless he needed to defend himself against them. And that would always be a possibility in his mind. The bastards had imprisoned him once, tried to kill him. What would stop them from trying again?

But Mikhail's desire for revenge was an addiction. It was something that crossed his mind every day and he didn't stop to question it very often. Mikhail had hated Vitali and Ilia all the while he was trapped in the cage. They'd made him a freak show, an attraction in a zoo of all damned things, and he'd thought of nothing but the day when he would have his revenge for the two years of his life that they'd taken from him. Even though Mikhail knew now why Nadia's brothers held him captive, he couldn't seem to move past it.

Nadia moved in closer, only inches away now, and his cock jerked anxiously in response. That cage that her brothers guarded for so long had been his world then, but the dark haired beauty before him was his life *now*. As he gazed into her chocolate brown eyes, the darkening sky casting shadows across her beautiful face, he knew he didn't want to be without her again. Mikhail loved Nadia more than he had anything or anyone and always had. Being separated from her, though he blamed her too for his captivity at the time, had ripped at his heart more than anything. How many long lonely nights had he dreamed of Nadia in that cage?

"My hatred is familiar," Mikhail explained slowly. "It comforted me when I was in the cage. It is as much a habit to me now as cigarettes are to a man who has smoked them for years. It is something I'm not always consciously aware of, Nadia."

Taking her slight hand in his, he pressed her palm to his heart. Mikhail wanted her to feel the strong, steady beat. Steady as his love for her. He wanted Nadia to know how much he needed her. But she was asking for the impossible. Not feel something he was justified in feeling?

"I love you, Nadia." Mikhail watched her eyes glitter with unshed tears. "I realize that my moods, that my dwelling on the past takes me away from you sometimes. But I can't just turn off my feelings. I can't just forget what happened."

"Why not?" Nadia asked gently. "I did, Misha. I had to. I was just as much a prisoner as you were for those two years. I don't belittle what you went through at all, but believe me when I tell you that I would have loved to have been in a cage instead of where I was. I hope my brothers didn't beat you, humiliate you?"

Mikhail shook his head. Now he felt like a selfish bastard. Outside of Ilia's pathetic taunts, they'd treated him well. Well for an animal, but well just the same.

"I don't want to think about those two years, Misha. It's over now. It's gone. But we're here now, together. We're free to be happy. We have a son."

Nadia wrapped her arms around his waist and pressed her plump little breasts against his body. It was all Mikhail could do to keep from falling on her and fucking her like a beast, but he *would* finish this conversation, damn it. It would be very easy to tell Nadia what she wanted to hear so he could bury his cock inside her because he was dying to. But he knew Nadia wouldn't let it go. If they didn't resolve this now, she would only bring it up again until the matter was settled.

"Nadia, Bartok is dead," Mikhail reminded her. "You *had* your revenge. And if you hadn't killed the bastard I would have. Your anger died with him."

Blinking back tears, Nadia shook her head. "My anger didn't die, Misha. It will always be there. *Always*. Killing him didn't erase my memories of what he did to me. But I have a choice. I can choose to give it life and importance. Or I can choose to cast it behind me and focus on what really matters. *You*."

Mikhail's heart squeezed as he watched a single tear race down her cheek. "Just because I struggle with the past doesn't mean I love you less," Mikhail whispered, wrapping his arms around her slight form.

"If you let go of the past you might love me more."

Nadia's lips were so close. Mikhail pulled her tightly against his body, wanting her to feel every inch of his desire. And she did. Nadia trembled, pressed closer to him. Her pelvis ground against the hard ridge of his cock in an intoxicating rhythm. "I couldn't love you more, Nadia. I love you more than life. You have to believe that."

"Make me believe." Nadia's gaze met his squarely, the pleading in them unmistakable. "Let go of your hate for my brothers and be with me."

Mikhail nodded. For her he'd try. It wouldn't be fucking easy.

He leaned down to possess her lips in a kiss that let her know he meant business. Mikhail would make her believe. He would have her submission, here and now. No way in hell he was going to wait until they could get back to their room and politely get past skittish little Neva. Mikhail wanted to possess her, to fill her with his cock until her screams of passion rang out over the city that waited for the fireworks to begin.

When Mikhail was done, Nadia would never doubt his love for her ever again.

Chapter 3

Nadia had barely recovered from what she took as Mikhail's silent agreement when he took hold of her. Mikhail was hot, powerful and undeniably sexy as his hands gripped her waist, forcibly holding her against the hard ridge of his arousal. His lips possessed hers with a sensual force that had her thighs trembling.

Mikhail was done talking now. Nadia had asked him to make her believe that he loved her as much as he claimed to and by God, he would. Mikhail's fingers tangled in her hair, holding her in place for his masterful kiss. He pressed her lips open with his and ecstasy coursed through her veins like a river in flood. Intense pleasure burst open in the pit of her stomach, spreading through her body in captivating waves of bliss.

God, Mikhail knew how to kiss.

He angled his head for a deeper taste, his tongue meeting with hers and his hands exploring her body with an urgency that left her breathless. Mikhail's rough fingers slid beneath her blouse, easily yanking down the cups of her bra to pull at the hard, aching tips of her breasts.

Somehow reason crept into her passion fogged mind, an awareness of where they were and what they were about to do. "Misha!" Nadia swatted at his hands, pulled them out of her blouse. "We're on the roof of the hotel where anyone could see us."

"Most of the buildings around us are not so tall." Avoiding her half-hearted attempts to stop him, Mikhail plucked at the buttons of her blouse. "The people in the buildings tall enough *could* possibly see us, but won't. They will be watching the fireworks."

Once he had her blouse open, Mikhail hooked the right strap of her bra with a finger and pulled it down to expose her breast. Diving for her nipple with his mouth, he

laved the sensitive peak with his tongue until her pussy convulsed in frustrated need and Nadia cried out his name.

It was all Nadia could do to remain on her feet as she focused on each touch, each sensual delight his hands and mouth bestowed. Mikhail cupped the full mound of her breast with his large hand while his mouth suckled her, pulling deep and destroying her sanity. He meant to drive her crazy, she realized, with his teasing mouth, pleasuring one nipple, the fingers of his other hand playing with the other peak.

"But what if someone sees?" Nadia wondered where she found the breath to speak, much less think.

Mikhail spoke around her nipple, his breath a hot blast against her skin. "Then they can enjoy *our* fireworks."

Nadia hung on to him, her fingers clutched in the silky waves of his hair as his lips moved to her other breast and the storm of sensation she was caught up in continued. Distant as Mikhail had been out of their bed in the past few weeks, he'd been anything but distant *in* it. But as extraordinary a lover as Mikhail was, tonight under the darkening New York sky, on the roof of their hotel of all places, he captured Nadia's senses with a wild passion unlike anything she'd ever known. Every touch of his hands, his mouth, melted her worries, blew away anything but him and the exquisite pleasure he used to overtake her.

A loud whistle ripped through the air as Mikhail's hand slid down her hip to her thigh, just below where her short, black skirt ended. A flash of light caught her eye as it sailed into the sky then exploded into a bloom of shimmering red light.

Nadia gasped as he dropped to his knees. His fingers skimmed along her inner thigh until they reached the crotch of her panties and slid inside.

Mikhail pulled his mouth away from her breast to gaze up at her with darkened eyes. "Have you ever seen fireworks before, Nadia?"

Nadia shook her head, unable to speak. Tension built in her pussy as a rough finger slid along her shaven outer lips before deftly pressing into the wet heat between them. Another rocket launched into the air filling the sky with blue and white sparkles

and that finger slid forward to trace slow circles around her throbbing clit, teasing her relentlessly. Touching her everywhere except where she craved it most. Pushing herself into his hand, Nadia gripped his shoulders hard as his lips returned to her nipple, unbearably sensitive now. A tingle of pleasure raced up her spine at the first flick of his tongue and he felt it; the fingers of his other hand tightened on her hip. Mikhail growled in victory as he pulled the aching tip deep into his mouth.

More colorful lights lit up the night, green, gold and purple, each exploding as she hoped to explode very soon. But Nadia knew that Mikhail would make her wait, make her senseless with desire for him before he'd ever allow her to come. She pushed herself at his mouth, into his hand. All in vain. Mikhail would not be rushed.

"You are so wet for me, Nadia." Mikhail dipped his head to inhale her scent, his nose barely brushing her through the front of her panties. Now his finger traced the entrance to her pussy, sliding easily on her juices. "You want me very badly, don't you, Nadia?"

"Yes." It came out a desperate plea as the sky lit up again with more lights, with more colors.

But Nadia was oblivious now to everything except the stroke of his finger as it slid into her cunt. Mikhail found just the right spot inside her, pressed on it just the right way, sending currents of pure ecstasy racing through her body until Nadia was clawing at Mikhail's back with her nails, crying out as the fireworks continued above them.

Nadia worked herself on his hand as another finger slid inside her. Holding onto Mikhail's broad shoulders for leverage, she raised herself to her toes then back down again, working into a delicious rhythm that mimicked what she hoped he would do soon -- fuck her until she couldn't move any more.

Mikhail didn't allow her to pleasure herself on his hand for long.

"Not yet, little Nadia." His voice was rough. "Not yet."

Nadia clenched around his fingers but he withdrew them as she did. He was killing her. Perspiration gathered across her forehead, between her breasts. Every nerve in her body braced and tightened in anticipation as Mikhail sat back on his heels.

Green lights reflected off his hair, in his amber eyes that locked with hers.

“Ready for *real* fireworks, Nadia?” Mikhail’s half smile was devilish. “I want you to come now. Come against my mouth.”

Nadia couldn’t hear the rip as Mikhail tore her panties. She felt Mikhail impatiently push her skirt up. Wetness from her pussy bathed her shaven lips as she leaned toward him, a warm drop sliding down the inside of her thigh.

The hot city air all around them fanned between Nadia’s legs as Mikhail’s fingers spread her open. His mouth was much hotter than that air when he pressed it against her. Nadia’s knees began to wobble as Mikhail’s tongue traced slow, devastating circles around her aching clit.

Nadia let her head fall back, staring sightlessly at the sky with its festive lights, whimpering as his lips closed around her aching clit. Everything else faded away, the people who could be watching them from anywhere, as his tongue rasped against her sensitive tissue. Mikhail hummed against her pussy, his tongue lapping at her clit as she hung on for dear life, her nails digging into his shirt and the hard muscle beneath. Bursts of sensation, powerful as the explosions above them, shot through her body, singed her nerve endings in the most pleasurable way.

Mikhail teased her clit with infuriatingly light laps, then sucked her clit until the intensity of the feeling had her womb tightening, her thighs clenching around his face. But Mikhail held her open, pulling one of her legs over his shoulder to give him better access to her pussy, and he knew just what to do with it.

His rough, wet tongue began to thrust into her hungry sheath. Nadia went wild above him, crying out and grabbing the tawny locks of his hair. She was so close to orgasm now, working frantically against his mouth. Stretching up on her toes while she balanced on one leg, Nadia worked for that release, wanting it desperately when he slid a large finger into her aching wetness. The slick inner muscles of her pussy clenched

around that finger as it worked maddeningly in and out of her with rapid strokes. His teasing mouth resumed its devastation of her sanity, closing around her clit until release claimed her, setting off an explosion that rocked her body. The colors behind her eyelids were brighter than anything in the sky and the sparks of ecstasy shooting through her blood, the most exquisitely sensual experience of her life.

Chapter 4

Nadia stood before him, a beautiful, wanton woman. Even in the dark with the colorful lights reflecting off the silk of her hair, he could see that her white skin was flushed in passion. Nadia's hair had fallen from its elegant style to hang in wild disarray about her shoulders and her eyes were dark as the night sky now, dark with lust as they raked over him.

Mikhail gave her no time to recover. Gently he pulled her leg from his shoulder and rose to his full height before her. Before her slender hands could reach the top of his jeans, Mikhail grabbed her. Filling his hands with the soft globes of her ass, he lifted her from the ground and carried her to the door they'd both used to come out on the roof. Her heated flesh trembled and flexed in his hands.

"Misha, what --"

Mikhail halted her protests with a hungry kiss, devouring her soft lips. He had no intention of going back down into the hotel now. But the door would be quite useful, he decided.

Nadia's breath was coming fast, her breasts brushing his chest with each deep breath that she took. Her full lips were parted slightly, swollen from his kisses. Mikhail leaned down to taste the sweetness of her mouth again. Her lips opened so easily for him. Her tongue entwined with his, warm silky strokes as he reached behind her to test the strength of the door. It had locked when she let it close behind her, but they'd deal with that later. Nadia's hands sank into his hair as he pressed her back against the door, pushed his hips between her thighs. Nadia moaned into his mouth as he ground his aching cock up against her.

Damn. Mikhail's balls knotted hard at the damp heat he could feel even through the thick denim of his jeans.

All Mikhail wanted at the moment was to be inside Nadia, to feel her heated wetness clenching around his cock as he filled her again and again. His fingers pressed between her thighs and he groaned as they slid on her juices over the hot, bare folds of her pussy. Nadia squirmed in his arms as his finger traced a circle around the small entrance to her cunt. He simply loved her pussy. Mikhail slid a single finger inside and she sucked him in, her passage hot and greedy. Nadia was ready for him. More than ready. And so was he.

"Do you like that, Nadia?" Mikhail leaned in to taste the delicate skin of her throat. Just below her ear, he teased the sensitive flesh with his lips and tongue. All the while his finger teased deep inside her. "Do you want more?"

"Misha, please."

Mikhail loved how frantic her voice sounded, the way she arched her back and her little pussy walls fought to wrap around his finger. More of her cream soaked his finger until he withdrew it, anxious and hungry to thrust his cock in that soft wet passage.

"I'll give you what you want, little Nadia," Mikhail said against her throat. *What he wanted.* Furiously he pulled at his jeans, tearing open the zipper and shoving them down his hips until his dick was free. Nadia cried out when the head of his penis pushed at the weeping entrance of her pussy. "You want this, don't you? My cock inside you, fucking you?"

"Yes!" Nadia's hands fisted in his shirt as she pushed her body down on him. Mikhail nearly came undone as the head of his cock entered her, began to stretch her.

"Do it, Mikhail!" Nadia demanded. "Do it now!"

Mikhail chuckled as he pulled his head back to watch her. Her desperation grew every second and he enjoyed it, fed on it. He pushed his cock a little further into her pussy, his movements slow and barely controlled. Nadia's little pink tongue flicked over her lips and she moaned as Mikhail flexed his hips, retreating and pushing just a little further into her tight, wet entrance. He teased her, taunted her, working his way into her cunt with slow, firm strokes.

Nadia yelled out his name, her cries quickly becoming screams but Mikhail made her wait, though it was damn near killing him to do it. He felt the perspiration beading on his forehead, running down his face and neck as he fought to hold onto his lusty little devil. The hard tips of her breasts pressed into the soaked front of his shirt, hot little points against his chest. The muscles of her vagina tightened around him as she frantically tried to work herself on him, tried to pleasure herself as he relentlessly continued to push his cock inside her at a maddeningly slow pace.

“Fuck me, Misha!” Nadia’s voice was hoarse. “Fuck me hard! Don’t tease me this way.”

Nadia’s head was thrashing back and forth as he retreated again and then pushed more of his aching width into her. The sky was alive with lights and explosions high above him, but he was oblivious to everything but the fist-tight grip of her pussy around his cock and the feel of her soft writhing body, tormented by pleasure in his arms. The smell of her arousal floated on the heat from their bodies, permeating his senses until he thought he would lose his mind. Hunger for her clawed at him, made him give in to the primal urge to give her the fuck of a lifetime.

Nadia was *his*. She had always been his. And Mikhail would make her understand that, claim her as she had never been claimed.

Pressing his face against her hair and neck, Mikhail hoisted her up higher against the door until her toes left the ground and then he thrust into her hard and deep. A moan ripped from his throat as he began to fuck Nadia with powerful strokes, stretching her and filling her. Instinctively, her long, slender legs wrapped around him and his cock slid deeper inside her. Nadia screamed with every thrust, her pussy tightening and weeping around his cock with more hot juices. Mikhail thrust into her wildly, reveling in the way her hot, tight channel fluttered around him when she came. Her nails raked across his back in her frenzy as she screamed his name, nearly incoherent from her release.

Some of the tension faded from Nadia’s body and Mikhail took advantage of it. The abundance of her cream made it easy for him to work his cock into her pussy with

abandon while desire raced through his body like fire in his blood. Gasping cries erupted from her throat as the tension returned to her limbs and she was arching against him, her thighs tightening around his waist like a vice. Mikhail loved being held so tightly inside her, the wet heat surrounding him, driving him mad as he fought back his own release with each powerful thrust.

“Misha,” Nadia pleaded in a voice harsh with passion. “I can’t take much more.”

Mikhail growled, unable to fight the firestorm of release that was fast approaching. He flexed his hips harder, his penetration of her body deep. Release was coming. Mikhail could feel it pulsing in his veins. He fucked Nadia with a speed and force that left her clinging to him, sobbing his name as she came again for him.

When Mikhail exploded, the orgasm ripped through him with an intensity that he’d never experienced before, that terrified him as he lost control. It was all he could do to hang on to Nadia, his love, just as she clung to him. Her body was limp and sated, the locked door holding them both up.

Pleasure faded, blended with something else. Mikhail knew alarm in that moment. His body tensed as another powerful force threatened to overcome him.

Nadia pulled just far enough away from him to look into his eyes. Mikhail knew she sensed what was happening.

“Misha --”

Pressing his fingers to her lips, Mikhail shook his head. The signals of change were coursing through his body at the speed of the rockets that still shot into the air and burst to fill the sky all around them with colorful light. It was rare that such a powerful sexual experience with his own kind could set him off. And he was with his *mate* now. *What the hell was happening?* But as hard as he tried to fight it, the transformation was coming.

“It is all right,” Mikhail said quickly, while he still could. With his fingers, he lightly caressed Nadia’s beautiful face. “I know this city. I will take care. The door to the hotel is locked behind you. I’ll change back quickly, find clothing and come to get you.”

“But the men with guns --”

“The police,” Mikhail offered, knowing she didn’t know the word for those who kept the law in this country.

“They could --”

“Nyet. They won’t.” Pressing his lips to hers with as much gentleness as he could manage with his limbs beginning to convulse, Mikhail kissed her tenderly. This woman was his entire world. For her, he’d overcome any obstacle, any threat. Even those from the past. “I love you, Nadia. Never doubt that.”

“I love you,” Nadia whispered, her big brown eyes filled with worry.

And only a moment later the curse of their blood took him.

Chapter 5

Nadia managed to adjust her own clothing before weakly scooping up the shredded remnants of Mikhail's as she watched him, now in the demon form of the sleek, black leopard, spring from the roof of their hotel toward a shorter building and then disappear into the darkness. Her heart found the strength to pound again as she stared into the night after him in worried silence. Sure he knew the city, but if anything happened to him -- if she lost him *now*...

No, Nadia wasn't going to think that way. Mikhail *would* be back before she knew it, unlocking the door and leading her back down into the hotel for a good night's sleep. Damn, she needed that.

Nadia had asked Mikhail to show her how much he loved her and he *had*. Nadia's thighs still trembled from his loving, her body delicately sore from his claiming. Mikhail had agreed to try putting revenge against her family behind him. Nadia had to support him, to believe that he'd do just as he said. Family reunions would certainly be tense and she'd try to minimize Mikhail's exposure to her family as much as she could.

Her heart skipped a beat as an image of his face flashed in her mind. Nadia loved Mikhail more than anything. Even if she had to give up seeing her brothers and their families for the rest of her life to make Mikhail happy, she'd do it. But he'd never asked that of her. Never would. Nadia believed with all of her heart he'd try to get past his anger at them.

That alone was a testament to how much he loved Nadia.

In a grand finale of the fireworks show, several rockets launched into the sky over her head at one time, each blooming into a bouquet of light as Nadia turned to watch them, waiting for Mikhail.

Nadia had been tired from spending the day touring the city with Mikhail and their son, exhausted now from her interlude with Mikhail on the roof where she waited. But she couldn't relax. Nervous tension flooded her body. Nadia paced for several moments in the summer heat, something she rarely did. Once she realized she was doing it, she stopped to lean against the frame of the door she was waiting for her husband to walk through. It was an unbelievable struggle to stand still.

At first she thought it was all the unfamiliar light and sound combined with her fear for Mikhail that made her feel tense and on edge. Then she considered that it might be the transformation of her mate stirring her own demon blood...

But after several moments, even after the sky went dark and the normal sounds of the city resumed, Nadia knew that there was something else making her feel so restless. *Someone else.*

Mikhail was at a distance now. And Nadia knew the presence she felt wasn't her mate. All the same it was just as familiar, only in a different way.

Nadia's heart raced with excitement when she realized who that someone was. It was her brother. Her twin in *this* city.

Ilia.

Reaching out with her senses, Nadia focused on Ilia. Her feelings grew stronger as she ran to the other side of the roof. Ilia was very close, maybe even on the street far below her.

Relief coursed through her in a warm rush, knowing that her twin was alive and in the same city as her and their brother Vitali. Like Mikhail, he had returned to the familiar, what he'd once known. Had Ilia been here the last several months?

Had Ilia found any measure of happiness?

Somehow Nadia didn't think so. Even from a distance she could pick up the emotions of her twin. Despair, loneliness... pain.

To her horror Nadia suddenly realized that her twin was currently in his leopard form, just as Mikhail was at the moment. Like Mikhail, he was roaming the city, sticking to the shadows.

Ilia, what have you done? Why are you transformed?

Closing her eyes, Nadia really concentrated on him in a way she hadn't since their childhood. Ilia had always been the adventurous one and Nadia had always waited for him to come home. She'd never been quick or clever enough to keep up with him in those days, but she'd been able to go with him in her mind. Nadia had been able to share his wild experiences to a small degree anyway.

To her surprise, the trick still worked and she was able to link her mind to his. Nadia wrapped her arms about herself with her eyes squeezed shut, but in her mind she was running. Ilia was running. In quick, broken flashes she saw the dark empty streets he raced through. Nadia didn't sense that he was being chased or was in any danger because he didn't and surely with his animal senses he'd have known of any danger. No, Ilia was on his way to hunt. To kill, Nadia realized, so he could return to his human form.

Mingled with his view of the night were images of a beautiful woman with creamy brown skin and long, dark hair. Ilia was thinking about the woman's smile, making love to her. Her twin's memories of the woman spread beneath him, his worship of her body...

Ilia's in love with her. And she's human.

Oh, Ilia.

Nadia broke off her link with him. Even now he was on the hunt, having transformed after making love to the woman. Nadia's heart squeezed in her chest. Her twin had been so hurt when the intimate relationship he shared with their older brother and his wife Nicole had ended. More pain would be the only possible result from his relationship with the woman Nadia saw in his mind. Loving those not of their kind was forbidden to them, forcing the transformation into the black leopard. Only killing could change them back. Ilia had to know he couldn't take a life each time he made love to that woman. Did she even know what Ilia was? Did he think he could conceal it?

But the misery Nadia had felt coming from Ilia led her to know that her twin suffered for the relationship already. He'd been so absorbed by it all that Nadia didn't think he'd even sensed her presence.

Nadia's thoughts lingered on her twin brother and his dilemma for a long time. There was no need to mention any of it to Mikhail. Nadia was just anxious for him to return to her. The comfort of his presence was the thing she wanted most at the moment.

She was drowsy when the door she guarded finally opened and the tawny head of her husband emerged in the darkness.

"Misha." Nadia was happy to see him on so many levels. "Are you all right?"

"Yes." His voice was impatient. "I'm sorry I was gone for so long. Come, let's go to bed."

Taking the hand he offered, Nadia let Mikhail pull her through the door. Her husband was magnificently naked from the waist up, the artificial light reflecting off his bronzed skin as he pulled her along behind him.

"How did you..." Nadia knew she shouldn't ask how he'd changed back but she couldn't stop herself in time.

Mikhail threw an amused glance over his shoulder at her but he didn't stop as he led her down the long hallway toward the elevator. "Don't ask."

The elevator door slid open the instant Mikhail pushed the button. "Are you tired, Nadia?"

She nodded. "Exhausted."

"That tired? I'll try to help Neva watch Luca tomorrow so you can get some sleep."

There was no mistaking the predatory expression on Mikhail's face as he pulled Nadia into the elevator and into his arms. The doors slid closed and Nadia's stomach lurched along with the elevator as it descended. But the way Mikhail's eyes darkened, glittering in a purely carnal way, wiped Nadia's mind clean of everything but him.

Chapter 6

Neva was fast asleep on the sofa of their hotel suite, or so Nadia thought. She only had a split second to glance at her friend as Mikhail pulled her urgently in the direction of the bedroom they shared. Nadia pulled away from him before he could yank her inside.

"Luca?" Nadia wanted to look in on their son.

"I looked at him before I came to get you." Mikhail's voice was rough with desire. "He's fine. But I'm not. I need you *now*, Nadia."

Nadia's response as she allowed him to pull her into the bedroom was immediate. Her breasts became swollen again the instant he closed and locked the door, her nipples rasping against the soft cotton bra. Her pussy heated quickly as he stopped within inches of her, staring down at her.

Faster than she could blink, Mikhail pulled Nadia against his hard body and her nerve endings howled in response to his dominance.

"We'd only gotten started on the roof." Mikhail licked at her lips, a tiny, teasing hint of the pleasure that was to come. "There is much of the night left. I'm not certain that I've completely convinced you of how much I love you, Nadia."

Her arousal was building with each breath she took, her nipples tightening in need as his fingers plucked at the buttons of her blouse.

"Perhaps not." Nadia fought for breath as he eased the blouse off her shoulders and down her arms.

Mikhail had her bra off in an instant. Her skirt went a second later as he pushed it down her thighs to her ankles. She stepped out of it for him and kicked off her dressy black heels. His hot breath wafted across her tingling flesh as he stood, making Nadia shiver with desire.

"Did you know, Nadia, that every night while I was in this city I thought of you?" Mikhail whispered as he pushed Nadia gently back toward the bed. "I hated you, I loved you. I wanted to ram my cock inside you until we both fell lifeless. Every night you consumed my thoughts. Then, when sleep came, you haunted my dreams."

The comforter with its green leafy pattern felt cool against her ass and thighs as Mikhail urged her back. The soft light from the lamp on the bedside table showed off the ripple of muscle in his powerful upper body as he climbed on the bed after her, stalking Nadia as she moved up the mattress toward the fluffy pillows.

"I --"

Mikhail silenced her with gentle fingers pressed to her lips. Nadia smelled the delicate traces of blood on his fingers, mingled with her own faint scent. It awakened the animal in her, had her own blood racing through her veins. Nadia's thighs clenched against the sharp pang of lust that shot through her pussy like a bolt of lightning, hot and electric, but completely irresistible.

"Lie back," he ordered. "I want to look at you, Nadia. I want to gaze at you in this city as I couldn't all those nights before."

Nadia did as he asked, feeling wild and wanton, wanting him to see what was *his*. Stretching out on her back, she lifted her arms over her head, knowing it would lift her breasts and show them to their best advantage. Nadia pulled her knees up and spread her thighs wide for him, showing him the most private part of her.

And it was wet, aching and in need of another fuck.

Mikhail's eyes were dark as they moved over her with maddening leisure. He crouched over her on the bed, his amber eyes glittering. The primal scent and heat of his body captured her senses, had her blood boiling now.

"Didn't you want to do more than look at me those nights?" Nadia lowered her hand to her throbbing clit more in need than to be provocative, but the slide of her fingers on her own juices met both purposes.

His glowing eyes darted after the movement, the eyes of a leopard watching his prey. Her fingers circled her engorged clit, teased it just the way she liked. Shamelessly Nadia began to buck to her own touch, waiting for him to pounce. Wanting him to...

And pounce Mikhail did. His mouth went for her center before she had time to remove her hand and when he started licking her cream from her own fingers, she left them there. His tongue was a teasing, wet demon as it licked around her fingers, wanting to taste what they had pleased. Such a wicked delight to feel his tongue insistently pushing between her fingers to get to the hard little nub that was burning with arousal.

"Oh, I wanted to do much more than look," Mikhail admitted. "Hold yourself open for me if you are going to leave your hand there."

Nadia's eyes nearly crossed in lust as he lowered his head once more and he settled his large body between her thighs. His mouth felt so damned good on her, his tongue tracing the delicately tender flesh that he had pounded with his cock earlier. Nadia enjoyed the light stings from his loving on the rooftop, luxuriating in the way his mouth soothed each one, while at the same time sending her body up in carnal flames.

Nadia's thighs pressed about his head but it slowed him not at all. Her nipples were so tight and hard that they ached and her blood was a river of lava rushing beneath her skin. Nadia felt alive, carnal. And how could she not with Mikhail's tongue darting in and out of her sheath with marvelously stiff little jabs? Nadia moaned as blood rushed through her lower body, pushing her closer and closer toward orgasm.

"Misha!" Her cry rang out through the room.

Climax broke over Nadia with the force of a thunderstorm, heat sweeping up her body from her pussy to her face. Her vision grew dark from the power of it and the room spun all around her. Mikhail teased her with tormenting licks until the tremors subsided. When he rose over her, Nadia reached for him, clinging to his powerful body.

"This is what I wanted, Nadia." Mikhail's voice was rough in his passion as he stripped out of his pants. He kissed her, claiming her mouth with such possession that

it took her breath away. "To have you helpless beneath me, wanting nothing and no one as you want me, screaming my name."

"I've never w-wanted anyone else," Nadia gasped as he used his large body to pin her to the mattress.

Nadia's hands desperately roamed his body as Mikhail pushed her trembling thighs apart with his own. His cock was poised at the weeping entrance of her pussy, the mushroomed head sliding back and forth on her wet flesh in a rhythm that ruined her sanity. He began to push into her, slowly stretching and filling her with his hot, hard cock.

"I love you, Nadia." Mikhail's kiss was gentle, so sweet as he slid to the hilt inside of her. "I will love you until the day I die. Even then, in death, my love for you will go on."

"I love you, Misha." Nadia's heart ached with love for him even as she fought for breath. "I always have."

Mikhail's cock slid in and out of her, his thrusts slow and deep. Wrapping her legs around his waist, Nadia hooked her ankles at the small of his back and ran her hands through the tawny locks of his hair. Back and forth they rocked against each other, the pleasure exquisite. Mikhail took her cries in his mouth as they held each other, writhing on the bed.

When Nadia was close to coming again, Mikhail's thrusts quickened, grew harder. Nadia's body bucked beneath his. She smothered her cries of pure ecstasy against the damp, hot flesh of his shoulder. Her climax came an instant before his. Mikhail's body went taut inside of her as he threw back his head and growled. Her pussy clenched around his cock, milking it of all his seed.

Rolling to his side on the bed, Mikhail gathered her in his arms and held her against his chest. His heart pounded powerful and fast, just as her own did. Their breathing was the only sound in the room as they held each other.

The moon shone bright through the clear glass door leading out to a small balcony. "We didn't even close the curtain," Nadia pointed out.

Mikhail's deep chuckle echoed through her entire body. "We fucked on the roof for anyone to see and you are concerned about the curtain?"

Nadia laughed with him though where she got the breath she couldn't say.

Mikhail pressed a warm kiss into her hair. "I love you."

Nadia sighed contentedly in the arms of her mate. "I love you too, Misha."

"I want you to be happy and so I will try to tolerate your family."

Smiling against the hard muscled plane of his chest, Nadia squeezed him in her arms. "Thank you."

"I promise nothing," he added gruffly.

God, she loved him. Just the fact that Mikhail was willing to *try* had her heart swelling with love for him.

"Nadia," Mikhail began, but stopped.

Something about the hesitant way he said her name got her attention. Hesitation simply wasn't in her mate's character. Unless there was something he thought could hurt her or Luca in some way.

Pulling out of his embrace, Nadia sat up on the bed and gazed down into Mikhail's amber eyes. "What?"

"About Ilia --"

"I know," Nadia cut him off, relieved. "I sensed him when I was waiting for you on the roof. He's here in the city. But he was transformed and... well, I'm concerned for him."

Nadia's relief died a quick death as she took in the unusually grim set of her husband's beautiful features.

"You should be." Mikhail's gaze locked with hers, unwavering. "I saw men in a car, waiting in the dark. They watched him and they didn't seem surprised at what they saw."

Nadia's heart lurched in alarm. "But he was -- in demon form. The leopard. Could they know, Misha?"

"It is possible." Mikhail blew out an exhale and scrubbed a hand through his disheveled hair. "Anything is possible with modern science, forensics. They could know very well what he is. What we are."

"He's in danger." Nadia's heart was pounding out a terrible rhythm as she thought of her twin, thought of Vitali, Nicole and their baby too. If someone was watching Ilia, couldn't they also be watching their older brother?

"We may be also," Mikhail pointed out. "I don't like it. We're taking Luca and leaving tomorrow."

Nadia started to protest. Her twin brother could be in grave danger, watched by men who could strike at any time. She loved Ilia, she didn't want him to be hurt or to lose him.

But they had their small son to think about. And Neva.

Mikhail watched her face expectantly as if he knew exactly what she was thinking. But finally she nodded her agreement.

He was right. As much as Nadia wanted to protect her brother, it was a losing battle. It could take a long time to find him in this city, even for their kind. And honestly, Ilia didn't want to be found, didn't want contact with them. The distance he imposed between himself and his family was more aimed at Vitali and Nicole, she knew. But he'd only fight her if she tried to get involved in his new life, would have nothing to do with Mikhail at all.

And if anything happened to Luca, Nadia would never forgive herself. Her first priority was her child. They had no idea who or what the threat was. She couldn't place her little boy in harm's way.

"Ilia's strong." Mikhail's voice was low as he pulled her back into his arms. "He hasn't my strength but he is more than a match for the humans. His animal senses will serve him well. He will survive."

Nadia would have laughed at Mikhail's half-hearted attempt to comfort her if she hadn't been in worry's grip. "Where will *we* go?"

Mikhail didn't immediately answer her and she looked up into his face. Love for her shone in his eyes and his features were softened as he smiled at her gently. "To the country." Mikhail cupped her cheek with a large hand. "A wide open space where I can walk without running into someone, where I can breathe the fresh air. And where I can make love to you wherever I want to."

Nadia smiled, her worry for Ilia distant for the moment as she gazed into her mate's eyes.

"I'll protect our family, Nadia. You and Luca." Leaning down, Mikhail claimed her mouth in a kiss that impossibly stirred her blood, had her nerve endings singing. "I love you."

"And I love you, always," Nadia said into his mouth as his arms closed around her and pulled her tighter against his chest and the strong steady rhythm of his heart.

Isabella Jordan

Isabella Jordan is a lucky lady who spends her days with her family, doing volunteer work and writing. She loves creating new stories of all kinds and chatting with readers and friends.

Isabella would love to hear from readers! Visit her on the web at www.isabellajordan.com.