

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS



*Erin Oislinn*

**EARTHLY  
POSSESSION**

An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



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Earthly Possession

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# ***EARTHLY POSSESSION***

**Erin Aislinn**

## **Chapter One**

The club's drumbeat pulsed through misty air. Kheyra took a languid breath, hoping to decipher every one of some dozen flower scents woven into the ocean breeze. Earth smelled so rich. Even Angelinos chattered about the abundance of flowers after the record winter rainfall. The scents on Dattar were so different. Everything was different.

Kheyra looked at her clothes, smiling. It was still hard to believe she was here. No way would she be wearing anything so revealing back home. The pale blue sequined top barely reached her navel. The black leather mini-skirt molded to her ass like second skin, and the spiderweb black hose... Okay, maybe those were a bit much, but they worked. Earth's males needed so little to get interested. Her parents would probably hemorrhage if they saw her, and Morna, the planet's matriarch, would have her committed, or worse. Wearing something so cheaply provocative tarnished Kheyra's family stature and her class as an alpha female on a planet of beta males.

Kheyra waited for her latest dance partner in the alley adjoining the club. He wasn't exactly the alpha male she'd come to find but he certainly stirred her appetite. With that starved look, and the stiff erection jammed against her crotch, he all but had sex with her right on the dance floor. Kheyra reeled with the discovery. On Dattar, all males were submissive and meant to stay that way. They offered themselves to the dominant females in whatever kind of sexual or other submission the female demanded. Only Kheyra wasn't a dominant.

She'd suspected from the very beginning. Her initiation partner, hand-picked by Morna, had gone down on one knee in the offering ritual. Kheyra commanded positions, told him what, when and how much in every variation she could think of, but even though he worked hard to obey, the climax left her hollow. Nothing had changed

since. Other women so relished being dominant that Kheyra never dared confide in anyone, not even her brother Dargon. They used to be so close but something happened to Dargon. He hardly ever saw her anymore.

Then the dreams came. The things the man did... He moved her body until the lust ached and she begged like a child for the full taste of pleasure. She'd lived on those dreams for years, until Morna announced Kheyra's marriage to an appropriate male from an important family.

When you lived forever, dreams eventually faded, but forever was a long time to be sexually frustrated.

Kheyra couldn't object to the marriage, of course. She obeyed her family, law and tradition, but she was tired of pretending. A part of her hid locked up somewhere and she had to know what it was. She had to experience true passion at least once. She wanted to be seduced by an alpha and give herself all the way, in every way he asked. She could tell no one, though. From time to time, females disappeared. No one dared to ask where, but in the throng of hushed voices, the word "submissives" stood out like the threat of plague. Only on Earth, where most males were sexually dominant did Kheyra stand a chance of discovering a submissive's pleasure.

She had little time, though. The encrypted transportation logs would eventually be hacked, and the trajectory of the missing ship would point to Earth.

She swayed toward the corner to the beat of the drums and the staccato of high heels. No doubt letting her wait was a part of the game. She peeked at the entrance in case he was looking for her then strolled back into the shadows. Although the guy made all the right moves, his presumption of her readiness, even though she was more than ready, mentally anyway, gave her pause. She imagined a man who guided her from cold to explosive in slow-burning agony of desire, not a guy interested only in a quick score.

She'd play along for now to see how it went. In any case, her latest selection made a good learning sample, just like all the others in the last few days. The more she learned,

the more certain she became about exactly what she wanted. If she was going to die for it, she would at least die satisfied.

The man appeared around the corner and sauntered toward her. Kheyra approached, aware of the man's eyes on the gliding motion of her hips. She wanted to jump up and down, laughing. Being the object of a man's desire more than pumped up the volume of blood through her veins.

"There you are, gorgeous," he drawled, wrapping his arms around her waist. "I was afraid you'd changed your mind." His hand coasted to her ass and splayed on it possessively before he shoved her against his erection.

Kheyra gasped. A quiver ran between her legs. Only a dominant would do something like this.

"I've been waiting," she said. Only she didn't want him in that way and she couldn't figure out why. She only hoped that she'd run into the right guy soon. Only five days tops remained before the posse found her. No Dattaran was ever allowed to set foot on Earth although they studied it extensively as an example of what happened to a planet ruled by dominant males.

With his hand on her ass, the man led her deeper into the alley, behind a dumpster. His heartbeat punched in time with the muted drums, and Kheyra relished the telltale sign of his excitement. Even at the peak of exertion, vampire hearts beat so slowly.

He dragged her against the wall and grabbed her breasts with both hands. A bit too rough but her nipples still responded.

He kissed her neck and licked a hot trail to her ear. "Babe..." he groaned. "I can't wait..."

His hand slipped under the hem of the skirt then up over to edge of her stocking until it molded to her bare buttock.

"Sweetheart..." he groaned at the discovery she wore no panties and snaked his hand between her legs, right to the parting of her vaginal lips.

The invasive gesture shocked. It shouldn't be like this. It was too soon. She wanted... Not this.

"No..." she croaked and pushed against his shoulders.

He pinned her harder against the wall. His fingers parted her, pushed inside her. Kheyra winced at the rough intrusion. He pulled away just enough to unbutton himself and shove his pants to his mid-thighs, exposing his penis. She grabbed both his shoulders and leered into his face.

"I said 'No'!" In a lightning move, she twisted him around to trap him against the wall. He laughed, pushing back to regain the upper hand, but he couldn't move an inch against her superior strength. His face twisted, his mouth gaped open to protest, but she slapped a hand to shut him up and buried her fangs in his neck. He wiggled and strained but he was going nowhere.

When she drank her fill, she looked into his bewildered face and licked off the traces of blood from her lips.

"Sorry..." She smiled. "You are not what I'm looking for."

She released him but he stood paralyzed with fear.

She waved dismissively. "Go!"

He flinched but kept staring. Well, she had no interest in killing him. How messy! No more point to leaving bodies around than wearing unnecessary undergarments. On Dattar, vampires fed from each other for survival as well as pleasure.

Well, if he wasn't going to leave, she certainly was. Time flew and the club teamed with potentials. She moved around the dumpster when a man descended upon her victim.

Kheyra froze in her tracks. He came out of nowhere, from above. The intruder tossed the man around and plunged his fangs into the mortal's neck. Impossible.

The noise from her heart deafened her. It never beat this fast in her whole immortal life. Impossible...

Vampires didn't exist on Earth, except in myths and stories that Dattarans had planted for their amusement. But those were just stories.

Yet, this man actually plummeted from the sky to capture his prey. Kheyra wanted to run but she could only stare. While he drank, the vampire's gaze caught hers. Now she knew what ice felt like because his nutmeg eyes cut her like frozen spears. Kheyra prayed for the sudden miracle of teleportation to take her straight back to Dattar.

Too late...

The vampire shook the mortal man until their gazes locked. He held him that way for an agonizing minute then shoved him away. The mortal stumbled past her with a blank and bewildered expression as if he never even saw her. Before she had time to face the vampire again, he grabbed her from behind and lifted her into the air.

She struggled to inhale against his bone-crunching grip. "What are you doing? Release me! Right now!"

"I'd rather that you pipe down and pay attention." The gruff tone commanded obedience. She would have fought except that his tight grasp proved he was stronger than her. Much stronger. If she weren't a vampire, he could probably crush her bones. Impossible... On Dattar, females were at least three times stronger than males.

He flew high over the city where he stopped and hovered.

He unhooked one of his arms from her waist and pointed to the streets below. Kheyra gasped and reached for the sides of his thighs. Only one arm. How long could he hold her like that? Who was he? Where did he come from? Were there others? Why were Dattarans led to believe that vampires on Earth were only fiction? And he was so strong.

"Stop it and pay attention! See that intersection there?" He pointed east. "That's Franklin and Wilton." His finger skimmed southeast. "From there, past Hollywood Cemetery and the studio to Wilton and Melrose, then to Melrose and Highland, and back to Highland and Franklin. Less than two square miles and they're my hunting ground. Stay out."



He shifted into a free fall so fast that all blood rushed to Kheyra's head. She held her breath and squeezed her eyes shut. Both his arms were around her again, but she still felt the need to hold to his forearms. Muscles tightened beneath her grasp, a lot of muscles. Her hand skimmed up his arm, feeling them.

"Bugger!" he cursed, setting her to the ground with a teeth-rattling thud. "Just stay away from my territory," he bellowed, pronouncing 'territory' with such a delightful accent that Kheyra couldn't take her eyes off him. When she started learning English, she was fascinated with its multitude of accents. At some point, she could identify a good number of them, and she was certain she recognized the shaved o's and softened r's. British! Of course. Fear took an instant back seat to fascination.

"How old are you?" she uttered.

His scowling gaze traveled from her sequined top and bulging breasts, down her exposed midriff, to her mini skirt. Her body temperature must have jumped four degrees before his mocking gaze rose to meet hers. Those light brown eyes seared her breath. Even his face looked strong with high cheekbones, square lines, deep-set eyes, and they held her captive until she had to command herself to stop staring. But why should she? He was a vampire—an Earth vampire, stronger than her. The only soft thing about him was his long black hair, which enticed her to run her hand through it and find out how far down his back it reached.

He raised an eyebrow. "How old am I?" He shook his head. "Listen, I don't give a damn who in the bloody hell you are, just tell me what born-yesterday idiot sired you so I can rip out his heart and stop him from making more harebrained fools."

Sired? What did he mean?

"I..." she stammered.

He waved her off. "On second thought, I don't care to know. Just be gone." He turned away.

“Who do you think you are, talking to me in this way?” she shouted. Earth vampires may not care about manners of civilized society, but she would still not allow him to talk down to her.

Faster than a blink of an eye, he had her pinned to the wall, his eyes flaming with blood, his fangs glinting in a rabid snarl. She tested her muscles to their limits by pushing at him. Few Dattar females could match his strength. His head came down and he tore into her neck. Kheyra nearly fainted from the rush of heat. He was so savage, so in control. Instead of pushing, she grabbed and clung. His fangs were in her flesh, her blood was flowing into him. She could hear the hum and it shimmered right down to her clitoris. On top of her, the vampire exhaled in sharp bursts while drinking more, faster. Her awareness dimmed, her strength waned. No one had taken that much blood from her before. She should be terrified. Instead, she savored the most amazing arousal of her life. This was the alpha male she had traveled light years to find.

He drew away from her neck. Kheyra’s head fell forward. If he let go, she would crumple to the ground from a toxic blend of weakness and lust. But he didn’t let go. His grip tightened.

“I am Deacon Quincy,” he announced. “I talk as I please, and it would please me not to have to repeat myself. Staaayyy awaayy!”

## **Chapter Two**

Deacon flew back within the boundaries of his hunting ground. What had possessed him to drink from that strumpet? Now, the warmth of her blood edged into every part of him along with the heat of her breath and the instant response of her nipples when he held her near.

He landed in a deserted alley and traced a path back to Hollywood Boulevard. The more mortals around him, the better. Whoever that female was, he couldn't trust her, regardless of how eagerly her body reacted. Female vampires were the masters of pretense. They always had a self-serving agenda and often used a genuine full-bodied arousal as bait.

Deacon snuck into a throng of mortals who watched the outdoor rock band at the Kodak Theater. He let the cacophony of warm pumping hearts fill him with hunger and replace all hints of her blood. Right in front of him, a voluptuous blonde with the most delicious bum swayed to the frenzied music. Deacon wanted to imagine ravishing her, but his mind's eye could see only the female vampire and taste her addictive breath on his lips. Bugger!

What was she doing here? Of all the places in the city, or the country, the planet for that matter, she had to pick his part of Hollywood. No other immortal had dared trespass on his grounds for years. And now, a female, dressed like a streetwalker, decided to trap mortal men. As soon as she crossed the boundary, her heartbeat gave her away, and Deacon watched her every move.

If she were after him, she sure used a stupid plan to get his attention. He couldn't care less why she wanted to be banged by mortals. After all, one-night stands did wonders for calming the lust even though mortal sex partners never quite took all the

edge off. Some lack always remained in the background, like a blot that nothing could erase.

Something else bugged him, though. She seemed familiar. He couldn't figure out how or why, so he watched her in clubs and alleys. She had to have an agenda and he'd find out what it was. So far, she appeared to be mainly after sex. Lord save him from one of the feeble-brained fledglings who became vampires to achieve an eternity of orgasms.

Didn't she know that sex with mortal men could never satisfy her? Even the best of mortals couldn't come close to fulfilling a vampire's yearning. It ran so deep that Deacon gave up long ago. Unfortunately, as far as sex went, mortals were the only gig in town. He'd never trust a female vampire that close. Not a chance. Once was one time too many.

He scanned the mall's lower court. In the early evening hours, mortals milled through every crevice like ants. So many to choose from and so many opportunities to attack unnoticed. The chubby man in shorts, for instance, who headed for the elevators. If he could find someone with greater contrast to the long-legged, flaxen-haired pixie, he would keep looking, but the sooner he got ordinary mortal blood pumping through his veins, the sooner he'd forget. Several other shoppers packed into the elevator. Inside the metal box, each heartbeat amplified and set itself apart. He focused only on chubby's. Everyone else got off on P2. When the door closed, chubby glanced over his shoulder and smiled.

"It's busy around here," he said.

"It's Hollywood. The party never stops," Deacon answered.

"No kidding." He turned back toward the door.

Deacon grabbed him by the shoulders, dragged him against the elevator's side wall and bit. Chubby squealed in sharp bursts while groping for the emergency button. Deacon drank only a little, but each drop enhanced the drugging memory of the

female's blood. The more he drank from the mortal, the more he wished for a taste of her.

The elevator door opened on P3 but Deacon still imprisoned the man. Using a hypnotic stare, he waited for the victim's fear to dissolve into confusion. The man wouldn't remember ever seeing Deacon, yet alone being bitten. The bite marks already faded.

When Deacon let go, the man just stood there, blinking, so Deacon pointed through the open elevator door.

"P3?"

"Uhhmm. Yes. Thank you."

Well, so much for that plan. Deacon punched the street level button. Even blood offered a shallow refuge from the minx's intrusion. What the devil did she want? She neither killed nor hypnotized her victims. For that alone, he should have rubbed her out the first night. He never killed where he lived, though. Too many bodies with obscure causes of death raised too many questions from marginally insane fanatics. Anywhere else, he went all the way from time to time, but death provided no pleasure. These days, nothing did. At least he'd gotten used to the routine of a rich man's organized life. For a man who'd live forever, mortal comforts did a fine job in keeping his mind occupied.

And now, she came to interrupt the peace. If she had killed that Romeo, he would have ended her right then. But why didn't she erase his memory before she let him go? Nobody was that stupid on purpose. Unless, someone set her up to it to flush him out of hiding. Possibly several someones. Many bloodsuckers coveted this area. She could be a fledgling lover of some self-proclaimed coven leader, which hardly explained her earnest devotion for seducing mortals. On the other hand, he'd never seen her have sex with any of them.

When the elevator opened on the ground floor, Deacon ambled back into the crowds. Three teenage girls with exposed midriffs and low-riding, bum-hugging pants shrieked in a blood curdling pitch when they spotted their friends. He could shut them

up, but dragging them into a deserted corner somewhere would require more effort than it was worth. Without hunger to appease, it would be another fruitless distraction.

He stepped on the down escalator. Usually, mixing with so many mortals relaxed him. He enjoyed their antics and the soothing hum of chatter. He could stand in one place all night and hear any conversation within the mall. Some of them came back over and over until they became a kind of wallpaper that made this place distinctly his own. He loved their aimless pursuit of things, the multitude of goods in shop windows, the mixing of various cuisines from the mall restaurants.

In the concourse, a black man stood with an albino python draped over his shoulders. A giggling brunette petted the snake with two middle fingers. The man offered the snake for her to hold, but she retreated, shaking her head. Deacon bumped into her from behind for the mere spell of it. She jumped back toward the snake man, her apologetic glance darting at Deacon.

All these people belonged to him. He alone held dominion over them for years, decades really, until that bloody female intruded.

It made no sense that she came because of him. She was as shocked as if she'd never seen a vampire before. Then she became turned on, which threw him completely. How could she fake such an intense response and why would she? For three nights, Deacon watched her with the mortal men. She dressed in slut-wear, let them get all over her, encouraged them with every gesture and smile, but when a guy was ready to cash in on her enticements, she changed her mind and drank his blood instead. None of them had really touched her. Not really. Hell, Deacon touched her more than any of the mortals. And he liked what he touched.

"Bugger..." Maybe she just liked to be turned on when she fed.

He sped up west on the Walk of Stars, reading their names. Some immortality, having your name on the sidewalk and people walking all over it. Perhaps, he should go back to England for a while, ride his horses, take in some chamber music, forget that she came out of nowhere and bothered the hell out of him.

Nudging his head up, he sniffed at the air and listened for her heartbeat. Even now, she was rolling toward his border, and every micro-sense in him sharpened to glistening attention. Would she get aroused when she saw him again? Would he? He could deny it until dawn, but the enigma provoked a nagging curiosity.

What if she attacked others without hypnotizing them afterward? All he needed was a bunch of mortals running around Hollywood, screaming ‘vampire’. Not that anyone would believe them. After all, some mortals in this town called themselves vampires and gathered in covens wearing dark makeup and black leather. They’d love the hubbub. In fact, they’d probably end up on the evening news, claiming to the world that vampires really existed.

Deacon frowned. He didn’t usually make light of a situation that could turn complicated, ugly, or both. He enjoyed his penthouse and had no particular desire to move. Shoving his hands into his pockets, he glanced at the golden stars in the pavement, but he saw only her, and the sparkling in her blue eyes when she realized what he was. He could still taste her. When he pierced her skin, she stopped fighting and clung like she was desperate to be his. A surge ran through his chest. A female vampire belonging to him...

Grinding his jaws, Deacon pressed on down the lively boulevard. Even at this hour, souvenir shops burgeoned with tourists who spilled out onto the sidewalk in pockets of congestion. He hurried past them. Too many bodies. Too many thoughts competing with his own. He had to sort this out. He’d learned long ago that the only good female vampire was the one who stayed as far away from him as possible.

## **Chapter Three**

Dazed, Kheyra leaned against the wall for support. He could have sucked every last drop of her blood. And he flew! Her knees still knocked in disbelief. He drank her blood without permission and then dropped her like rotten fruit.

On a deep breath, she tilted away from the wall to test her legs. The ground still swayed, but she'd manage to crawl back to her hole, which happened to be within the boundaries Deacon laid out. How could any of this be? Yet, Deacon Quincy was real all right, so real her brain still spun from mere memory of his touch.

Kheyra propped an arm against the wall and took a deep breath. This was no time to dwell on the blood transfer that left her stiletto heels quaking. Dattaran history archives were false. She put the other arm up against the wall and dropped her head. Everything she was brought up to believe was a lie. If vampires on Earth were so elusive that even humans believed them to be fiction, then an observer from another planet would hardly consider them fact. Except that Dattarans supposedly created the vampire fiction on Earth, which meant they had to know about the vampires and had a reason to hide them from the entire Dattaran citizenry. Why?

And what a vampire. An alpha from head to toe. He picked her up without as much as an extra breath. She sighed at the instant flutter in the pit of her spine. He happened to appear just when she bit that guy. Kheyra straightened from the wall. That couldn't have been a coincidence. He'd been stalking her, possibly since the first night. He saw her with all those men.

Kheyra wrapped her arms around her bare middle and headed on. Now what? She found her alpha male and he wanted her nowhere near him. If Kheyra knew anything about dominant behavior, she knew you obeyed, or hell was paid. Only too often, she'd seen Dattaran submissive males whipped and starved when they faltered with nearly



impossible demands. It was why she escaped Dattar. Although she'd never lay a hand on a weaker person, she refused to go on living in a place where people were tortured for no other reason but to fan the arrogance of a superior gender. Kheyra glanced at the wrist transmitter countdown. Four nights, twelve hours, give or take.

She picked up the pace toward the next intersection. Her encryptions may have concealed the signal of her ship and its trajectory long enough to let her accomplish her goal, but eventually, someone would come after her. They'd know where she landed, and once on the ground, finding her would be a piece of cake. Kheyra had no illusions about what would happen once they did. If she was lucky, they'd just kill her. Worst case, they'd take her back and attempt to straighten her out. Fat chance. Meeting Deacon proved she was a submissive.

She crashed and burned the second Deacon Quincy laid a finger on her. Some of it came from shock, sure, but she was old enough to recognize a clitoral response, especially when it smacked her over the head. Actually, instant arousal shocked her more than Deacon's vampirism. She'd never responded to a man like that before. She'd never dreamed that a single glance could make her heart beat faster, one possessive move make her pussy cream. Hands down, Deacon Quincy won the top prize. And he pushed her away.

Kheyra reached another intersection. A drunk huddled against a wall, staring at her from under a black hood drawn to his eyebrows. She'd never been rejected by a man before. On Dattar, when she entered a room, males straightened to attention. When she spoke, they listened. When she asked for something, they hopped to it. Deacon Quincy actually threw her out. Her, Kheyra of the line of Baal from a planet where not a single person lived on the streets. She wanted him. The mortal men she'd considered so far already faded from memory. No wonder none of them felt right. They desired her, though. Deacon Quincy did not.

Was that it? She threw her life away for a dream of being herself. She flew light years through space to submit herself to an alpha male and experience at least one night

of ecstasy before the Dattaran posse got to her. Being seduced was not that much to ask for. She just never counted on having to work for it. All the men so far practically drooled with readiness. She only held back because something was missing. No missing parts on that Deacon, though. The fragrance of his hair alone made her swoon. Never mind that she actually lost her mind when he plunged his teeth into her neck. Why, oh why, did the only man she wanted have to be the one who detested her? What if she couldn't win his interest?

He could kill her if he wished and she could do nothing to stop him. Reason demanded that she turn around and forget he existed. If she left now, four nights would give her plenty of time to reach the other side of the planet, which would make her more difficult to track. The Earth abounded with two and half billion men. Surely, more than one of them could stir her like Deacon Quincy and actually respond in kind.

She sighed, clutching harder against her middle. What would it take to have Deacon Quincy holding her in his arms, hard and welcoming? To hear his husky whispers in her ear? Her whole body flushed. If possible at all, it would require way more effort than she counted on. She would risk everything and might wind up with nothing.

Just ahead, street signs marked the intersection of Franklin and Highland. Deacon's boundary. The 'Don't Walk' signal shone across the street. Kheyra stopped. A few men and women walked toward her, all dressed in similar layers of drab. If she wanted to get back to her place, she'd have to disobey Deacon. She rubbed her chin.

"Hey, babe, you lost?" A black man shifted from foot to foot at her side, grinning. "I know a great place to party."

She smiled, shaking her head. "No, thank you."

He advanced in front of her and leered at her breasts. "I know what you need, baby. Come to daddy."

She reversed her course to get away from the pest but he followed. "Where you going?" He grabbed her arm.

"Piss off, slimeball," a woman's deep voice interrupted. "The girl's not interested. Move on!"

Toward her marched a buxom black woman with a huge mop of hair formed into a scarf-wrapped bundle on top of her head. Flaming orange fabric flowed around her like a priestly robe. The woman perused Kheyra's attire and nudged her chin up.

"You dress like a slut, girl, you ain't gonna attract a prince."

"I was just... Uhm..." The woman was stunning.

"You ain't from around here, are you?" she queried. "My store's halfway down the block." She pointed toward Franklin and Highland. "You wanna come along?"

Kheyra hesitated. That was inside Deacon's territory, but the woman seemed to know a thing or two about dealing with men. Maybe, she could teach her something useful.

Tilting her head back a little, Kheyra sniffed. Not a trace of his scent. Surely, she could detect him in time to slip away. And besides, how would he know she was inside his boundaries? He commanded large grounds, and fast or not, even he couldn't be everywhere at once.

"Thank you," she said. "I'd like that."

Side by side, they crossed the intersection. "My name is Grace."

"I'm Kheyra."

"I knew it, girl! Fresh off the bus, ain't you? That's a catchy screen name, though, if you want to be a porn star. Get rid of the slut-wear and point your compass a few miles west." She whistled and bumped Kheyra with an elbow. "Who knows, you might catch the eye of some reality show headhunter. You have a nice face. Vulnerable, in a TV sucker kind of way."

Kheyra knew about TV, but what was a headhunter? "What's wrong with my clothes?"

The woman faced her, shaking her head. This close, she appeared even wiser.

"Where you from, girl? Ain't your mamma taught you nothin'?" She waved a hand in an eloquent gesture. "You better get that green ass back on whatever bus dumped you here."

Kheyra shrugged her shoulders. "It's too late."

"Here we are," Grace stopped in front of a barred shop window full of colorful clothes. While Grace crouched down to work the lock at the base of the door, Kheyra glanced toward the intersection of Franklin and Highland. So far, no sign of Deacon. The protective metal grate rattled when Grace rolled it up.

"Come on," she said, swinging open the inner door.

Kheyra followed into a dark shop. The overhead lights flickered on over several tables full of outfits. Suddenly, it seemed silly being here. This woman could never help her.

"I really have to go."

Grace waved off her comment. "I can't sleep anyway. Tell me, girl, what kind of a guy did you plan to trap with that getup?" She pointed a finger up and down Kheyra's body.

Deacon Quincy was not just any guy. He was... Kheyra sighed. A dream.

"He wants nothing to do with me. He told me to get out—"

"Girl, girl..." Grace smiled. "There is a fine line between easy and alluring. You gotta show you're worth the effort. Real men want top drawer. You know what I mean? Not just some pencil-dick who'll use your body to masturbate with. The real deal; champagne, jazz and all the right moves that make your hips sing." She half closed her eyes and rolled her ample waist in a slow rhythm. "Uhm, uhm, uhm, that's what I'm talkin' about."

"I thought men wanted to know when a woman was interested."

"Ahh..." Grace rolled her eyes. "I feel sorry for you, honey. The whole generation acts like they got no balls. These days, you gotta hold a man down and slap him hard

with both tits before he gets the point." She shook her head from side to side. "Shame, shame. It's not what being a woman should be about."

Kheyra's mind swam. "I don't understand."

Grace patted her shoulder. "This man of yours worth the effort?"

"Yes."

"You gotta give him a hint, but don't ever let on that he twists your panties in a knot. If you do, he'll only use you, honey. You gotta wait until you're sure he wants you more than you want him. The woman has got to be the beloved. It don't work any other way."

A heavy feeling centered in Kheyra's chest. Deacon, loving her? Now, there was an idea good for a laugh. She'd die of joy to just get him aroused. If that was the rule of Earthly possession, then she stood no chance with Deacon.

"Hey, don't look so glum. It's not the end of the world."

Not yet, anyway. Kheyra checked the countdown on her wrist monitor. Another thirty minutes gone. She could laugh at the irony of an immortal counting minutes.

"I have to go," she said. "Thanks for the advice."

"Plenty more where that came from, girl. All free! Come back any time you're ready to get rid of those clothes."

Out on the street, Kheyra slumped her shoulders and dragged her feet. She looked east into Deacon's territory where countless mortal voices mixed like morning would never come. No wonder he kept the prime hunting ground to himself. She looked west, from where she came. Reason commanded she go back, but she'd rented a basement room a few blocks east. Deacon would just have to put up with her for a few more nights. She stepped forward when she caught the scent. Too late. Again.

Deacon twisted her arm behind her back, grabbed her around the waist and shoved her against the wall.

Their bodies came together, and his face loomed a hairsbreadth away from hers. Passersby glanced over at them, whistling at what Deacon made appear like a meeting of impatient lovers.

"I thought I made myself clear," he growled. She relaxed. No point in fighting, so she closed her eyes and inhaled his scent. She might as well take the time to enjoy the feverish rise of her pulse. Deacon probably wouldn't give her another chance to get this close.

He twisted her arm harder. "I really don't want to hurt you," he said. If only her weeping arousal counted as pain.

"I live here," she said.

"I don't care."

"I don't have time to look for another hideout. I won't bother you. I swear I'll be gone in a few nights." The sooner he got his hands off her, the sooner the ground would solidify again. His grip loosened on her arm, only to be replaced with his body weight. Kheyra's breath caught. His chest pinned her breasts until they hurt. What would he feel like if they were naked? She, flat on her back, with Deacon on top? She swallowed, clamping her jaws hard.

What Deacon did next almost knocked her out. He sniffed. A long, deep inhale like he needed the effort to remember her better.

"Who sent you here?" he asked.

The accusing tone hinted at Deacon's reasons for keeping his boundaries firm. She knew nothing of vampire life on Earth. Perhaps, they battled each other, and Deacon only acted in self-defense. She shuddered. He might be stronger than her, but what if more powerful specimens threatened him so he could never let down his guard.

"Let me go," she pleaded. More than it hurt to be rejected, it hurt that he'd think she meant him harm, when all she could imagine was her body entwined with his.

"What do you want?" he hissed.

She laughed. Irony had become the curse of the day.

"What's so funny?" he bit off, jerking her so hard against the wall he forced her breath out.

"I'll get out of your way. Isn't that what you wanted?" she cut back.

"Why didn't you leave when I told you to?"

Now, he was starting to irritate her. "I don't take orders from you. Let go!"

He scowled. "Who do you take orders from?"

Even full of rage, his voice set her heart into a frenzy. Her nipples ached against the wall of his chest. As if he noticed, he pulled back.

"Who sent you?"

"No one!" she spat.

"Then what do you want?"

Suddenly, she got so tired. Why not simply tell him the truth? If Grace was right, telling him that she wanted him might just send him running faster than this stupid tug-of-war. What coming clean would actually do to her peace of mind was a whole other matter. Did it really make that much difference? She'd crossed galaxies to find him, so why was it so hard to actually tell him?

"You're testing my patience, wench," he said.

She looked down his chest. The top two buttons of his formfitting black shirt gaped undone, revealing the hair-covered flesh. Kheyra's clitoris twitched.

"Please, let me go," she said in the most collected voice she could muster.

She'd never actually counted on having to verbalize her mission. The 'slut-wear', as Grace called it, served to get the message across. She understood, though, what Grace meant. Telling Deacon that she wanted him sexually would be a huge mistake. One, he'd laugh at her, and the image of that created a dull ache in her gut. Two, he'd reject her. Again. Only this time... Enough. She had to stop.

Frowning, he eased the pressure until she actually had room to take a breath. What an imposing creature.

“Okay,” he said. “Just tell me what you want in Hollywood.”

He pierced her with a “don’t mess with me” stare. It was starting to hurt too. The pain of wanting him became real and worsened by the second. If he refused her, she had to get away from his eyes and from that body.

“You,” she uttered. The whole world collapsed around her. He didn’t laugh. He didn’t move. He only drew in labored breaths.

“I beg your pardon?”

Kheyra swallowed. Deacon’s shocked expression brought Grace’s words vividly to life. If he let her go, she would have followed the black woman’s advice, but Deacon glared at her with heat, too much heat. His sensual lips parted only inches away from hers. Wisps of his agitated breath brushed over her cheeks. Saliva filled her mouth. To hell with it...

In a free fall, Kheyra kissed him on the lips with a loud smack.

“I want you!”

In a sudden mix of emotions, he slackened his hold. Kheyra pushed for all she was worth and ran for it. Damn, damn, damn. With the blatant admission came the urge to disappear even though reason would have demanded otherwise. She’d never told a man she wanted him, but with Deacon, she had no choice. Her lusting body demanded more than words.



## **Chapter Four**

Kheyra's admission ignited a shuddering arousal. Deacon's balls throbbed to the beat of her heart, which faded with every step she took to get away from him. If she could fake all this, she'd make a fortune in Hollywood. For a millisecond, though, just before she said she wanted him, he swore he caught a glimmer of fear in her eyes. That, more than anything, elicited his violent desire.

He ran after her and yanked her off the sidewalk into the nearest alley. He trapped her from the rear, which only brought her bum flush against his erection.

She shoved and kicked. "Let me go!"

A bottle tumbled somewhere in the darkness. With the woman struggling so fiercely, they could attract attention. Right now, he had to be alone with her, without having to account for the mortals around them.

She held her breath and clutched him when he lifted off the ground. Pure instinct, nothing more, forced her to depend on him, yet her hold got under his skin. He set her down on the roof of a business building. A low wall surrounded the perimeter. An access door provided an alternate escape. Instead of jumping away when he released her, the woman just stood there.

He circled her until they stood face-to-face. Her quizzical gaze sought an explanation. The air between them electrified. Deacon took in her attire. By the look of it, she was asking to be rooted to the edge of her life, and he was more willing to oblige than his peace of mind allowed. He had to get himself under control before she robbed him of the last shred of reason.

"What is your name?"

"Kheyra," she uttered.

"Kheyra what?"

“Baal.”

Too exotic for her flaxen hair and delicate features. With a name like that, he’d have expected a Polynesian princess.

“What kind of a name is that?”

She glanced toward the access door. “It’s the name my parents gave me,” she said, stomping around him.

He didn’t bother stopping her. Even if she escaped, it wouldn’t take him long to catch up to her again. Anyway, the access door was probably locked, and he had to see if she could break it open. She pulled, grunted then kicked. So, she was weak in addition to inexperienced.

“Would you take me back, please?” she called. “I won’t bother you again.”

He let out a breath and turned toward her. “It’s too late for that.”

Kheyra’s haunted expression put fire under his heels to get close to her again. For such brazen attire, she reacted with far too much reserve.

He liked it, though, and hated that he did. “You said you wanted me. You don’t say something like that and walk away.”

She bit down and held her head high. A storm brewed in her proud blue eyes. The effect fanned Deacon’s lust.

“It’s the best you’re going to get,” she mocked. “You don’t even deserve that much.”

He had to laugh. “Honey, you may be generous with words, but I’m the skeptical sort. Actions work much better for me.”

He closed in until they stood toe-to-toe. His face loomed just over hers. Her chest rose and fell in frantic bursts. He widened his stance until his feet trapped hers from the outside. She reeled backward, but he snaked both arms around her waist and drew her in. Trembling all over, she advanced stiffly into his tight embrace. He rubbed his blatant erection against the scrap of leather standing in for a skirt. He could smell, of course,

that she wore nothing under it. The rich bouquet of female arousal tested his self-control. She was so willowy against him that he never wanted to let go. He'd have to take care of that silly impulse.

"Put your arms around my neck," he coaxed. She obeyed, panting.

God, that felt good. His hand skimmed over the bare midriff and down her behind. Her arms contracted around his neck, bringing her breath to his skin.

The mini-skirt practically seduced his hand under the hem until he groped her bare-ass cheek. Merciful god, such sweet flesh. He all but went down on his knees to kiss that gorgeous bottom all over.

Kheyra moaned, nestling against his hard-on as if their bodies were made to fit. Deacon had to have both his hands on her ass. Hell, he had to have all of her.

"Yes. Show me how much you want me, love," he cajoled.

To his shock, she pulled away, her eyes seething with desire and surrender. She went down on one knee and placed her hand, palm up, in front of his foot.

"Deacon Quincy, I am yours in every way. Use my body. Command me with yours. Take my submission, and let it give you joy. All that I have, I offer freely."

Something snapped. He shook, ready to break something. She offered herself to him like she was some kind of a slave.

He stepped away. "What in the bloody hell are you doing?"

Kheyra's head fell in shame but she remained in the submissive posture, her begging palm ripping him to pieces. He was ready to take her as it was, and now she had to go and do something like this. He practically foamed at the mouth, even though the reaction made no sense whatsoever. A woman's offering never got him in a temper before, quite the contrary.

"Have you no pride?" he bellowed. "Where is your self-respect?"

Kheyra's shoulders slumped, and her head tilted even lower to completely shade her face. Deacon tightened his fists with anger. To how many others did she offer

herself in this way? Sharp pain stabbed at his abdomen. He could kill them for being the objects of her submission, and then kick their corpses if they rejected her.

He stomped to the edge of the roof. He should leave and forget he ever laid eyes on her. No woman was going to send him into a whirlwind. Except she'd asked nothing of him. She'd surrendered, everything, and that's what bothered him the most. She trusted him and humbled herself. A part of him wanted to accept. Deep down where he buried the hope of love, Kheyra's actions unlocked possibilities he'd damned as follies of naïveté. He lost hope long ago, yet with one move, Kheyra unleashed a force that he latched onto with his very soul like his life depended on it. It had nothing to do with Kheyra's pride or self-respect. It was him, and he'd been knocked off balance because his desire for this woman invoked a sense of belonging that refused to be denied.

He gazed over his shoulder at her kneeling form. Tears welled in his eyes. God, if he was all out of sorts because of how she affected him, how much courage did she summon to offer herself so humbly after the way he'd treated her? He'd heard the proof of her eagerness in her heartbeat, felt the force of her arousal in her body. She could not have submitted lightly unless she meant it.

Deacon's shoes made a dull echo on the tar roof when he moved toward her. Kheyra remained slumped, but that only reinforced the ache in his chest. She seemed like a mirage. If he reached out, she would disappear. With every step that brought him closer, excitement built, but he dared not go faster. He had to watch his step and play this just right or he'd fall at her mercy like a boy during his first time.

When he finally closed the distance, she trembled, staring at his feet, her head level with his waist.

"Look at me," he commanded.

Her head tilted upward. She paused to gape at his straining arousal before her fascinated gaze finally found his.

An impatient ache nearly brought him down, but he forced a controlled breath. From this angle, he could see inside her top. She'd asked for it. She'd get it.

"Unbutton me," he issued.

Her gaze skimmed down then up again as if she needed confirmation.

"You heard me."

She swallowed. Her arms moved in slow motion. Delicate fingers tucked into the waist band with hesitation. She fumbled with it as if she'd never undressed a man before. The button popped. She emitted a pent-up breath and looked up dutifully.

"Unzip me," he said. He wished he wore one of his button-down pants so he could feel her trembling hand against his erection.

The zipper slid down.

"Easy," he warned.

Kheyra slowed. He could hear the opening of each set of zipper teeth. At least the pressure of confinement eased a bit. The need, however, soared when Kheyra stared at what little of him was exposed. Did she expect he'd be wearing briefs?

The scent of female arousal thickened. God lord, she got turned on from the mere speck of exposed cock flesh. Easy. Easy. It would do no good to reveal her desire drove him insane.

"Lower my pants," he bit off.

Breathing heavier, she hooked both thumbs under the waistband and dragged down the fabric. When his cock sprang free, she reeled back and fell on her haunches. Her gaze sought his as if to ask *Is this for me?* Immediately though, she resumed staring like she'd never seen one before. Now, that just couldn't be real.

"Take me in your hand," he said.

She rose on her knees and reached, trembling again. She grasped slowly, closed her palm around him one finger at a time. More of her scent wafted around him. Breath hissed between his clenched teeth. He stepped a few inches closer.

"Squeeze harder."

She obeyed, and Deacon's eyes rolled back in his head. Time to finish this before he lost control.

"Take me in your mouth," he commanded.

She gave him a bewildered look. "What?" she uttered.

"Suck me off!" he barked.

Fear edged into her saucer eyes. She pulled away.

"You said 'use my body'. This is what you asked for. Now, I want to see you wrap those lips around my cock and make me come." Bloody females always twisted everything around. They offered submission but they only wanted to submit on their terms. It never meant the guy could get anything he asked for.

Defeat shadowed Kheyra's face when she looked down like she'd been beaten. Deacon swore under his breath. Why did he give a damn about how she felt? She started this.

He pulled up his pants and lowered to one knee, mirroring her earlier position. She seemed so fragile, somehow, and every instinct inside him rushed to reassure her. Hooking a finger under her chin, he tilted up her face and froze. Blood tears smeared her cheeks. The sight of her torment grabbed and squeezed at his chest, cutting off his air.

"Don't tell me you've never gone down on a guy before."

She blinked. More tears leaked out.

"Kheyra?"

She managed a nod. Did she mean yes, she'd never given a blowjob before, or yes, she had and something else was wrong.

"Speak up," he urged.

Her heartbeat leapt. His responded.

"Your, uhm, cock is beautiful," she whispered. "I want to do what you ask. I don't know how."

Beautiful? She used the word beautiful to refer to his cock? And the rest of it was utter nonsense. She must take him for a total fool. Maybe, she was mentally challenged, and whoever made her even more so. On the other hand, she said she wanted to go down on him, and that erased every other concern. Later, after she satisfied him, he'd make a judgment about her wits.

He stood up, pushed down his pants, grabbed his cock, and brought it to her lips. "So, what are you waiting for? Open up."

She obeyed like a child being told what to do. Deacon hesitated. She meant it. She had really never done this before. A blowjob virgin, for heaven's sake.

His balls ached with an even more urgent need, yet at the same time, he wanted to be so very gentle with her. Most females didn't care for blow-jobs that much. They performed them as a means to an end, usually just to get the guy off as quickly as possible and be done with it. It shouldn't matter to him one way or another, but he hoped against hope that Kheyra, if initiated properly, might actually enjoy giving him pleasure.

"Put your hand where mine is. Squeeze hard while you slide your mouth over."

When she reached for his cock, he let go and let her replace his hold with her own, but instead of pulling his length into her mouth, she gaped at him, hungry and fascinated. Then, she licked him, tasting. That tentative touch of her tongue sent a surge through his loins.

She lapped around and over the top. His head fell back. His whole body coiled up, ready to snap.

Then, her lips closed around him and slid down.

"Sweetheart..." he moaned, placing his palm behind her head for support. By the time he realized he'd uttered an endearment, she'd lifted away and sucked him in again. He looked down to watch, his fingers massaging her nape.

She stopped to look at him. His mouth fell open at the sight of her face. She was beaming. If he were a mortal man, he would have probably cried at the sight of her heart in her eyes.

"Is that how you like it?" she asked.

His mind blanked out. No other vampire female ever intoned such a genuine offer, yet alone followed through with the delivery.

"Suck harder when you take me in," he instructed. "Roll your tongue around."

"Ohhh," he moaned when she followed the instruction to perfection.

"Tell me more," she said.

"Just go with it," he issued. He was too far out of his mind to give her instructions now. It didn't matter what she did from this point on. Anything would do, as long as she kept that mouth on him.

He watched her work him, felt her tongue toy with him. She pressed it right between his balls and licked all the way up to the top of his cock before she swallowed him again.

An odd series of grunts emitted from the back of her throat when she pumped up the pace. Her free arm latched to the back of his thigh for better leverage. She breathed in excited bursts, the air searing his skin. It was as if she could feel how close he was, and it turned her on that much more. He smelled himself on her breath and something inside let go.

"Kheyra!" he gasped, and came into her mouth in blood-hot spasms.

She flinched at the outburst, lifted her mouth to pull away. He figured as much. Most females hated this part, but just when he expected her to separate, Kheyra sucked down on him with renewed pressure. He could feel the vibration of her throat when she swallowed every single drop like she starved for it.



He sighed and caressed the line of her jaw. Slowly, so slowly, she dragged her mouth away. Like an afterthought, she dropped a peck on the head of the penis. Deacon held back a breath to still the stirring in his chest. She was far too delightful.

As if she suddenly remembered how hard she was holding on to the back of his thigh, she let go and sat down on her heels. The bright, wide-eyed stare filled with anticipation.

A man wouldn't have to be a mind reader to know what that look meant. Kheyra waited to hear how much he liked it. The earnest need for approval in her face filled him with shame. Even though he was the lucky recipient of Kheyra's first blowjob, even though she sent him to heaven and back with her mouth and he'd beg her to do it again, telling her so was out of the question. She was a vampire. Female vampires were not to be trusted, no matter what, not ever.

"Deacon?" she queried.

The fragile tone squeezed at his heart, but he forced a grin.

"You took to it like a hound after a fox, honey. You were made for sucking cock. I'll be sure to look you up when I'm in need."

The light went out of her bright-eyed stare. She looked down at the tar roof surface, sat perfectly still without even taking a breath before she propped herself up with both arms and stood.

She walked to the access door. Her shoulders shook but she pushed them back straight.

"Open this." She managed a stern tone, but he could hear the suppressed pain. Still, he didn't move. He wasn't ready to see her go quite yet. It had something to do with the way she put her heart into pleasuring him. The longer he thought about it, the more clearly he could feel that she held nothing back. In return, he shamed and rejected her.

"Open this, damn it, and let me go."

"Come back here," he called.

"Go to hell!"

"Come back here. I'm not done with you yet."

She huffed and stomped against the metal door. "Let me out of here."

At the sound of his footsteps, she wrapped her arms around herself as if to ward off a chill. Deacon came to stand so close that when he lowered his head toward her neck, he could hear the panicked rush of blood. The top of her head reached to just under his chin.

"Don't fear me," he stated. "Turn around."

She let out a desperate breath. "Please, just let me go. I need to find another hideout before dawn. I'm not going to be in your way anymore."

He got the urge to reassure her that she'd never have to worry about her safety again.

"You can stay on my grounds provided that you heal the wound and hypnotize your victims after you feed. Didn't your sire teach you that?"

She ignored him.

"If you don't turn around now, you'll leave me no choice," he threatened, smiling. He figured out a perfect solution to their little standoff.

"What else do you want from me, blood?" she snipped.

Deacon grabbed her around the waist. She jerked in shock, gasping when he pulled her against him. Her sweet bum rested just where he wanted it.

He kissed her neck and pressed the tip of his tongue against the vein to feel its inviting flow. "Among other things," he whispered. Kheyra shivered in his grip like a virgin, anxious for what would happen next. It wasn't all fear by a long shot. He'd know that much even if he didn't smell her arousal.

His arm coursed lower, to the hem of her short leather skirt, then just slightly under, teasing the bare flesh there.

She held her breath. "Then take it and leave me alone," she hissed through her teeth.

His palm inched higher under her skirt, snuck toward the inner thigh. Anticipating what he'd do next, she spread her legs apart just a little and leaned against him. Good.

His hand stilled under her skirt. Instead, he trailed kisses up her neck toward her ear. The arm that held her against him shifted higher, reached under the scrap of sequined fabric to brush the underside of her breast. Her whole body responded in a delicious shudder.

"I want you to know something," he whispered, laying kisses just under her earlobe. Her trembling arms covered his, holding on.

He sucked in her earlobe, let it go, nibbled on it. "That was the best blowjob I've ever had."

On her thigh, he moved higher and deeper inside, almost within reach of her pubic hair.

"Ohh..." she moaned.

Beneath her breast, his thumb caressed the silky flesh. Gently, he pressed her harder against him so she could feel his erection.

"I'd love it if you did it again," he said, cupping her breast.

She struggled to turn around but he held her in check.

"Not now," he corrected. "Now, I want you to tell me what you want. Tell me what turns you on."

His fingers teased a hairsbreadth from her pussy.

"Your hands, ohh," she moaned.

"Here?" he ran two fingers along her pubic hair. She jerked against him, panting.

"How about here?" He cupped her breast, aroused the nipple to rigidity.

"Yesss."

On her neck, he coursed a trail of wet kisses, tasting her delicious skin. It will be so great to sink his teeth into her. Not yet, though. He'd let her simmer for a while.

"What else?" he asked.

"Your cock..." Her bum rotated against his hard-on, sending a pulse through his balls.

"What about it?"

"I love the way it feels against my ass," she purred.

That was it. He couldn't take any more. If she was playing him in the most masterful way he'd ever encountered, so be it. He picked her up and flew to the roof wall.

With one hand, he hiked up her skirt, pushed down his pants, and pressed his cock between her legs, right under those tight, creamy buns.

"Yes... Oh, yes..." she sighed.

He pushed in and out between her thighs in a mating rhythm.

"Tell me you want me inside you," he bit off.

She emitted a strangled sound. "Yes..."

"Tell me you want me to fuck you."

"Fuck me. Please, fuck me."

He grasped her shoulder. "Bend over. Grab onto the wall."

When she did, Deacon gaped. In those high heels, her ass stuck straight up in a vision that could drive a man over the edge.

He guided himself to her opening. Her body jerked.

"Deacon!" she called impatiently.

"You're so wet, love. You really want me." With his cock he rubbed her juices all the way up and down her slit.

"Please," she broke.

A flash of white light burst behind his closed eyelids when he plunged into her. She cried out, pushing against him for a tighter fit, enveloping him with her welcoming warmth. It was like coming home.

He grabbed onto her hips and buried himself to the hilt. Kheyra's high-pitched strangled moan urged him on. A rhythm came over him and took control. With each thrust, he reached for some indescribable pinnacle and drew out Kheyra's moan. Her loud passion sounded so familiar. He wanted to absorb it, drown in it, consume it until there was nothing left. For her sake, he hoped he could last that long. Every plunge into her depths took him higher and higher. This time, he had to satisfy her.

"Come for me, love," he uttered, reaching under her hips and placing two fingers on her clitoris.

Her cries deepened and turned huskier. He stroked her nub in time with his thrusts. Around his cock, her folds throbbed in unison.

He thrust deeper, driving for that elusive brilliance at the end of the world.

"Deacon!" she screamed.

Kheyra's first spasm hit.

"Oh, god," he let out. Her pulses triggered his own release. With an iron grip, he held on to Kheyra's hips because the roof seemed to cave under his feet.

As if from a distance, he heard Kheyra's cries before the world turned normal again.

"I can't stand any more," she panted, folded to her knees, and lay flat on her back.

Seeing the woman exhausted with passion and prostrated at his feet stirred a primal possessive instinct. Only then, he heard his own ragged breath.

She lay with her eyes closed. One of her legs bent at the knee. Her hand rested on her breast. The face appeared so serene, as if someone had sprinkled it with fairy dust.

Deacon trembled. He wanted more. From Kheyra, he wanted blood and bones, and every single breath. His cock was way ahead of him. It never went down. With a few

quick moves, he did away with his shoes and pants. The rustling attracted Kheyra's attention. Their gazes met. Hers coasted to his erection and widened.

Like a predator, he went down on his knees and stalked toward her on all fours. He kissed the inside of her bent knee, her thigh, the apex of her legs. Capturing her beneath him, he kissed her navel and reached for the zipper at the side of her skirt.

She inhaled and held her breath while he pulled the leather from under her and tossed it away. Back on all fours, he loomed over her, eye to eye, giving her time to notice the dire urgency of his hunger.

"Please, tell me you can take me again," he pleaded.

She caressed his cheeks and smiled. "Yes."

His erection homed in between her folds. Female musk filled his nostrils. The neck artery pulsed so close. In response, his fangs throbbed. With urgent efficiency, he swiped a finger between her vaginal lips.

"God, I want you," he gasped when he found her soaking wet.

She moaned. With one move, he lowered on top of her and impaled her on his cock, surging in all the way. Her legs wrapped around his waist. The wonder of coming together left them both panting in motionless limbo.

Finally, Deacon moved against her. Through his shirt and her top, her raw nipples left him aching for total nudity. No time, though. He couldn't stop. Didn't want to. It was so perfect. She was. They were.

Kheyra cried out and fluttered apart around him in a long series of spasms. Only then, he let himself go.

He stayed inside her until she slackened under his weight like a sleeping child. Her eyes were closed, but a hint of a smile upturned the corners of her mouth. He'd seen that expression before, on the *Mona Lisa*. At least now, he had no doubt he'd satisfied her even though he remained hard inside her. He could bang her all night without

taking the edge off. Still, after what just happened, he had to lie still and hold her in total possession for a little while longer.

When Kheyra gave him butterfly kiss on the neck, he had to smile. She shyly rubbed her forehead into the crook of his neck.

“Unbutton my shirt,” he whispered, raising up to look at her. Deacon swallowed. Her skin glowed, her pupils dilated in renewed desire. For him.

Kheyra’s hands explored up and down his chest before she started working on the buttons. With each button undone, she rewarded herself with a kiss and a caress of the skin she’d uncovered. Before she reached the last one, her hands and lips worked up such magic, that he began gentle thrusting. She sighed, embracing him. How could it possibly be this sweet? Without the frenzied need, their bodies came together like whispers. Deacon moved slowly so he could absorb every precious nuance of the warmth enveloping his cock.

“Let me feel your breasts,” he begged.

She swept her top over her head, closed her eyes, and gave it all. She made deep whimpering noises while kissing all over his neck and brushing through his hair.

He worked faster. “Kheyra,” he begged. “Give me your mouth.”

Her head jerked up, harboring disbelief. “Please, love...” he said, “kiss me.” Tenderness escalated to urgency.

When her lips closed tentatively around his, urgency became desperation. In feverish invasion, lips battered and breaths folded. His hips pumped against her with new vigor. His tongue forged inside her mouth with such possessive determination that she climaxed again.

Deacon’s body went on a rampage. He couldn’t stop himself if he tried, but thank god, Kheyra signaled submission by holding on to him with a death grip. Every climax he gave her demanded another, and another until it became a battle of power that he had to win. The woman’s hunger burned up his mind. He would show her what it meant to be possessed by Deacon Quincy. She’d surrendered to him, after all. “*I am*

*yours in every way...*" The words drove him like a divine prophesy that only he could fulfill. She belonged to him.

He lay on his back on the hard tar roof and positioned her on top of him. Once more, she got that surprised look like she'd not been familiar with the position, but then, she gave in with such abandon that when her orgasm hit, she seized a deep, secret part of him that he feared to give up.

Holding back his completion, Deacon watched Kheyra's face when she climaxed one last time. When she collapsed, his arms waited for her. Their heartbeats mellowed in unison. He listened until Kheyra's nearly stilled. She fell asleep. He lay, relishing the wisp of her breath over his collarbone and the splay of her hand over his chest. As if he watched from outside his body, he could hardly believe the vision they made. He was still hard, still as eager as when they started. Well, he'd exhausted her and proved himself in control, but it rang hollow in the sweetness of her sleeping on top of him.

In truth, Kheyra won, by offering everything and asking for nothing in return. He still knew nothing about her, yet he gave her orgasm after orgasm. How could he resist, when she responded so well. Her eagerness was so uncharacteristic of a female vampire that he let down his guard. That was over now. He could not afford to be careless and fall into some elaborate trap. Female vampires did not behave like lovesick teenagers without a reason. He still had no idea where Kheyra came from and why she chose Hollywood. Or him. His maker might have decided to use Kheyra for another sordid amusement. If so, Kheyra might not have a choice in the matter.

Gently, he rolled her over until she lay on her back, but when it was time to separate their bodies, he hesitated. They'd been joined for hours. It almost hurt to pull out of her warmth. Her eyebrows drew in slightly but she stayed asleep. Deacon lost balance and plopped on his ass. For a long time, he watched her sleep, resisting the urge to gather her up and carry her to his place. It was just sex, nothing else. The novelty of her being a vampire and being able to surrender unconditionally took him



for a spin, but that was all. He still couldn't trust her, not until he knew exactly what she was after.

He strolled to the access door and snapped the padlock open with one yank. Otherwise, she'd be trapped on the roof at sunrise.

He should have used the stairs and given himself time to think, but he had to feel her one last time so he returned to Kheyra's side. Going down on his knees and elbows, he kissed her cheek.

## **Chapter Five**

When the wispy edges of passion cleared, Kheyra thanked the stars for the solid roof beneath her. Even after she reminded herself, several times, that her body actually lay on the ground against cold tar, she still felt like she was floating in midair. Bottles rattled in the alley below followed by a string of curses. How long had she been here? She laughed and ran her hand over her breast, down the side to her hip, and to her pussy. Her clitoris still throbbed. A trickle ran down the inside of her thigh. Kheyra rubbed some of it off and laughed from deep in her throat.

So this was what it felt like to be satisfied. Her whole life until now had passed in a kind of cryogenic sleep, and she finally woke up and knew what it meant to be truly alive. How could she have lived without this for one hundred and sixty-seven years? Deacon fucked her until every trace of thought flew right out of her head. He was all over her, all inside her. She couldn't have enough of the strength of his arms, the smell of his breath, the taste of his cock. Sweet heavens, the taste of his cock...

No one on Dattar would believe that she actually got aroused from—what did he call it? Oh, yes. A blowjob. He came on hard and commanding, humiliated her at first, only to more than make up for it later. And she loved it. Somehow, and she wondered how, she trusted Deacon completely. None of the mortals, who were weaker than she and posed no threat, gave her such a strong sense of trust, but the vampire who could have killed her without a blot on his conscience made her all teary-eyed with a sense of safety. How was this possible?

Hunger for sex reignited, so she toyed with her clit. She'd never dreamed it would be like this. Forget the dream. Forget everything. The real thing defied the most elaborate fantasy, and it sure as hell was worth the risk.

Kheyra peeled from the ground, but her wobbly legs rebelled, so she rested on her back while she checked the transmitter. Their four hours together disappeared like four minutes.

A car engine disturbed the predawn silence. The eastern horizon was hidden from view by the taller building next door, but the approaching dawn already cracked the thick darkness. Kheyra had to move and go to her hideout, but she stayed put. Fucked and happy. The longer she stayed on this roof, the longer her body tingled with memory of Deacon's possession, the longer she could be certain that it all happened. Four hours... On Dattar, sex bored her after an hour. That was how long it took a vampire to execute all the things she asked of him to get her to a climax.

With Deacon, she came so fast. Did women always respond so easily to a dominant male? Deacon denigrated her for it. Still, he kept fucking her, even harder as if her orgasm had given him some unspoken command to let loose. When she came the second time, he actually cried out and pumped at her so hard that she had to use all of her strength not to have her breasts bruised against his chest. After that, she stopped counting orgasms. It was all a mix of limbs and hands and tongues. Who did what to whom blurred in the oblivion of pleasure. At some point, Deacon's tortured expression nearly made her cry with joy.

Kheyra breathed in long and hard as if that would somehow recapture every detail. Deacon left so fast it was obvious how he felt. Ironical. As a dominant, she'd done the same thing, practically throwing her lovers out of her dwelling before they even had a chance to regain their bearings. They, or sex with them, meant nothing. She'd used them for the momentary pleasure and discarded them when she got what she wanted. Deacon did the same thing. But, how she loved the way he used her body. If being used meant getting a taste of heaven, then she'd let him use her again.

Through lazy eyelids, Kheyra peered east. The air already warmed from the approaching dawn. Sunrise affected her more violently on Earth. She sensed it early, long before the darkness started to fade.

Remembering the locked access door, Kheyra leapt to her feet and scrambled to gather her clothes. Without Deacon, she had no way of getting off the roof. In desperate haste, she got the clothes back on. Holding her breath, she minced toward the hatch. The busted padlock, however, lay on the ground. With a shaking hand, she picked it up and held it to her chest. Deacon could have gotten rid of her so easily. Instead, he ensured her safe escape.

She gunned down the stairs and through the empty streets, drunk on the implications. At least, being forced into hiding because of her hypersensitivity would allow her to mull over the sensations. After all this, she yearned only to lie down, close her eyes, and relive every nuance of Deacon's possession until sleep came.

\* \* \* \* \*

An argument in a foreign language drifted from the courtyard. Too drowsy to move, Kheyra rolled over on her stomach, but that kindled a full body-throbbing vision of Deacon moving on her from behind. The problem with mind-blowing, once-in-a-lifetime sex, was that once wasn't nearly enough. She turned to her side and hugged a pillow. Eternity with Deacon would probably not be enough, but she had only three nights left. Enthusiastic steps up and down the building stairs suggested this evening was already in full swing. People weren't so light on their feet when they went to work, but a night of fun and... She squirmed, smiling against the pillow. If any of them anticipated sex a fraction as satisfying as she got last night, she could hardly blame them for rushing out so eagerly.

Where was Deacon right now? She inhaled deeply, imagining his scent. Her fangs distended in response and she flicked her tongue over them. Last night, she tried to take some of Deacon's blood, but he didn't let her, which proved he only used her for the pleasure she freely offered. No dominant allowed himself to be fed on unless... She shook her head. Deacon would never let her feed on him. It would mean that he cared when she knew he didn't. He'd depleted her blood, however and now, hunger, if nothing else, would force her to get up.

Kheyra shuddered at the prospect of hunting mortals when mere drops of Deacon's blood could restore and nurture her to full strength. Deacon would have to make the offering, though, and he'd never consent.

She glanced at the transmitter. The number three glowed ominously. No doubt a female on the inner circle of Morna's trust would be sent to catch her. If only they didn't harm Dargon. She had buried an encrypted message in the auxiliary service module and programmed it to reach Dargon two months from now. By then, Morna's investigators would have finished the questioning, and her brother would not be placed in a position to hide any information. If only she could have confided in him. More than anything, she regretted leaving Dargon behind, but something had changed him and he could no longer be trusted. It seemed so long ago when they shared their secrets.

Dargon should have waited to be sexually initiated. He had ten years before it was required. She hadn't known he'd gone through it until she mentioned his odd behavior to their mother, who immediately warned her in hushed tones that, for her brother's safety, it was best to leave him alone. Some males didn't take well to the initiation, and she worried about Dargon. He should have waited, damn it. Now, she doubted whether his youth at the time of initiation had anything to do with his drastic change.

What if Dargon was a dominant? The fluke that made her a submissive could surely occur in the opposite sex. Her chest tightened. It must be hell for her baby brother to be used as a sex slave if he really needed to be as wild with a woman as Deacon was with her. If her message got to him, he would at least get an idea of escaping Dattar, and if he were truly a dominant, he would find a way. For now, she had bigger problems to solve, like what to wear and where to hunt.

Grace was right, about the clothes anyway. Maybe even about men. After all, Kheyra threw herself at Deacon. She rather enjoyed it, but he cut her to shreds about it. Now that she had time to digest it with more clarity, his initial rejection stung in all the vulnerable crevices she never knew she had. If he'd done that to her on Dattar, he'd be

dead by now. Thank God she wasn't on Dattar. Even if Deacon hated her and she never saw him again, a world without him would be wrong.

She dragged her legs over the edge of the bed and propped herself up. She would do anything to see Deacon again. If she had guts, she'd start feeding on people until he showed up and then ask him for the three remaining nights of sex. Cool efficiency that garnered her accolades on Dattar had its uses. So what if begging for three nights of hot sex with Deacon would put a whole new spin on the definition of "cool". A part of her mission was to learn to be herself, to have the courage to grasp what she wanted.

She walked to the hole in the wall that served as a closet and tugged aside the purple fabric she hung to give it some modicum of style. When she first set foot into this "studio" as they called it, she wanted to puke. The single diamond she brought to pawn made enough money for five nights in a decent hotel room, but in the basement room, she only had to board up one manhole-sized window. She had no time to be choosy, and in a few nights, it wouldn't matter anyway.

One after another, she pulled outfits off hangers. What would Deacon like? What would turn his head and make her so irresistible that he had to show it? What if he rejected her regardless of what she wore? She'd discovered last night that his cruelty wounded her. Despite her willingness to obey Deacon's every sexual whim, she was proud, and she couldn't subject herself to his insults again. They cut too deep, down to something fragile that needed protecting.

In the closet, most of the outfits matched what she wore last night. She held up a black top designed like a bra. How odd that she actually enjoyed wearing that. She must have been going through rebellion against the strict Dattaran dress code that made her look completely shapeless. She needed to feel her body move in tight clothes. The large mirror hung on the outside of the bathroom door, so Kheyra surveyed her naked reflection.

Would it be obvious to others how well pleased she'd been? A few pink spots around her nipples betrayed Deacon's ardor, but no other evidence showed. On the

inside, though, she felt like the first woman born to pleasure. She gleamed with secret joys only a woman could know.

She came to Earth to be true to herself. Didn't that imply all aspects and not only sexuality? If so, what did it matter what types of clothes Deacon would find attractive on her? Pleasing him in bed was one thing. Deacon's dominion over her extended no further, or at least not unless it made her happy. Only a light blue satin dress remained in the closet. It was so different from the provocative skirts and tops, but she loved the sensuous frivolity of the long dress with a tapered waist. It reminded her of mythical fairy creatures in mortal folk tales, and right now, she felt exactly like one.

She showered, put on the dress, ruffled her short hair into a pixie do, and almost hopped out on the street. If she headed left, she'd enter the heart of Deacon's grounds, but as much as she'd love to see his face again, it was too early for his scowling rejections. She had to at least make an effort of following Grace's advice and play a little hard to get. If Deacon had some way of tracking her, either through smell or hearing, he ought to know quickly enough when she distanced herself beyond his range.

A city bus approached, signaling toward the curb. A few people waited at the small bus stop, but the bus was stuck behind a line of cars, which had to clear before it could pull up. How antiquated. If she had a future on this planet, she'd find a way of sharing some of the transportation designs she oversaw on Dattar. For now, she only cared that the bus would take her away from Deacon because she doubted her legs could do the same.

No such luck, though. The driver refused a twenty-dollar bill and without exact change, she was back on the sidewalk faster than disbelief could set it. Being evicted from the conveyance shocked less than the demand for payment. The city government should understand that free public transportation served public interest because citizenry with easy movement traded more freely. Whether vampires or Earthlings, people followed their natural inclination to acquire material comforts, and trade

ensured social vitality. In a part of town known as a tourist attraction, one would expect more forward thinking.

Kheyra headed out on foot, but every shop window provided some bait that brought her to a halt, and every time she stopped, she looked back from where she came. She had to get herself together. They fucked. That's all. Okay, it might have been mind-blowing, multiorgasmic sex better than her wildest dream, but that didn't mean that she was head over heels in love with the guy. Addicted to his body, most definitely. Deacon had been the most delicious, most exciting, most true thing that happened to her in her entire life. Naturally, she wanted more of the same, but to him it was just an interlude. Otherwise, he wouldn't have left her on that roof. How many times had she brought guys to her place, fucked them within an inch of their lives, and felt absolutely nothing afterward? She would react no differently than Deacon if one of them had started stalking her and begging for more?

Focusing straight ahead, she marched down the street. Deacon looked so disgusted last night when she went down on her knee in the Dattaran custom of submission. It was meant as total surrender. If a dominant accepted, he was responsible for his partner's safety as well as pleasure, not that she could fault Deacon on either score. He pleased her beyond wildest expectations, but he almost appeared to hate himself for it.

The shopping area dwindled into a busy thoroughfare, which trailed through a business section. One block melted into another. She had to keep moving. It made no difference when a reasonable amount of time passed before she returned to Deacon's neighborhood. She was a lady after all, and a lady knew when she wasn't wanted. Besides, she should be grateful for what she got. Deacon gave her what she came to find, and more. Last night, if death had come after the very first orgasm, she would have died a happy woman. Deacon had nothing else for her. Not even that dumpsy room should dictate her movement. So many places could shelter her from the sun.



Hours thinned like traffic. After a while, the headlights of a bedraggled car flashed over her path. A breeze carried a stronger ocean scent, colored with even more flowery hues. She'd seen the Pacific only briefly after she landed. A hunger pang caused a tremor in her hand, but she ignored it. She could go hungry for a long time yet.

Then she saw him. Deacon stood ten feet away, with legs slightly parted and arms locked behind his back. His brooding stare swept over her, stealing her breath. How did he keep finding her? She left his grounds long ago. Sticking up her chin, she headed toward him. She might lose her wits, but she'd be damned if she showed it.

"Hi, Deacon," she rang out like she would to a kind neighbor and walked right past him. He caught her arm, spun her around, and pulled her against him.

"Where do you think you're going?"

His gaze coursed to her breasts. Her heart ran away, but she managed to give him a pestered stare.

"Don't pretend," he warned. "I know how you feel."

She let out an amused breath. "I thought you were good with directions. Since we are outside your 'territory'," she gave her best imitation of his accent, "I hardly care."

He lifted her wrist and glared at it. "Really?" He pressed a finger into her rapid pulse. She snatched her hand away. He laughed. "I can hear you, Kheyra. I can hear your heartbeat from miles away. It beats as fast now as it did last night."

She feigned flustered shock and put her hand over her mouth even as she let her gaze roam to his crotch. "My, my, Mr. Quincy, you do overwhelm a girl." Just as quickly, she forced her expression back to stone solemnity. "Get out of my way. You can't tell me what to do."

He shrugged. "Have it your way."

He threw her over his shoulder so fast that she yelped. "What are you doing? Put me down!"

Deacon ducked into a desolate alley and picked up pace. "Hold on," he said, taking to the air.

Right. If she knew how, she might work on slowing down her heart to keep it from beating itself apart. How embarrassing. All this time, he'd heard it, which meant she could hide nothing from him, not from the first moment they met. What else could he do—read her thoughts? What kind of powers did Earth vampires possess exactly?

"Easy," he soothed. "We're almost there."

When he landed, he stood in place for a long moment before he set her down. They were in a lush garden, on a roof of the tallest building around, which provided a royal viewpoint on the rest of the Hollywood neighborhood beneath them.

"Where are we?"

"My place," he said and walked to a glass door. He opened a small panel at the side, placed his hand on it then punched a string of keys on the pad beneath it. With a slow hum, the door opened. Deacon passed through it without another glance in her direction.

Kheyra stared into the shadows that swallowed him. His place? Why would he bring her here?

"We're in my territory now. Here, what I say goes." She heard his voice from somewhere inside before the light came on.

Kheyra took a hesitant step to the door. The room was gorgeous. Thick carpets, shiny fabrics, old English furniture like she'd seen in old movies from Earth, even abundant arrangements of English roses exuded the welcoming warmth of a true home. She sighed. She never felt at home anywhere before. It must be the hunger that made her this sentimental.

"Is this treated glass?"

"No."

"That's a lot of glass for a vampire's dwelling. Where do you sleep?"

He grinned. "I like how your mind works, but I doubt much sleeping will be involved."

Blood rushed to her face. She'd never blushed before. The sensation tickled the submissive teenager in her that Dattar did not allow her to experience.

"Come in, I won't bite." He grinned. "For now."

She took off her shoes and crossed onto the carpet. It felt wonderful on her feet. Deacon leaned against the side of a sofa like a perfect host. Kheyra wasn't sure what to make of it. He was up to something.

He stalked toward her. Breath stalled in her throat. Deacon placed a hand on her waist, dipped his head toward her shoulder. She heard him take a sniff. *Relax. Relax.* She had to stop letting her body carry on like this as soon as he glanced in her direction.

"The dress becomes you," he confessed.

"What do you want?" she said.

"That's my line."

He pulled her a little closer. She stiffened, her chest nearly at a bursting point. To hell with it. He could hear her excited heartbeat, after all, which defeated all purpose of pretense. She let out a breath, and another. When Deacon was close, she could never quite get enough air.

"Why are you in Hollywood, Kheyra? Who sent you?"

She sprang back. Maybe, someone was after him. No wonder he considered her a threat. Yet, he brought her to his dwelling, or so he said. "What are you insinuating?"

"LA is a city of millions. Why here, on my grounds?"

"Maybe if you hung a placard on every intersection saying '*Do not enter. Vampire will bite*', I might have picked a different spot."

"Come here," he demanded.

"What little I have to say, I can do so from where I stand."

His expression turned raw. "It isn't talking I had in mind. Come here."

His tone commanded her feet to move. Her heart leapt to her throat. He placed one hand on her waist like he did before. Her eyes closed, and her head lowered. Otherwise, he'd see how much her body wanted him. Her heartbeat betrayed her enough. Deacon hooked a finger under her chin, bringing her face up to meet his.

## **Chapter Six**

When he cupped her cheek, she shuddered. Her expansive blue eyes focused on his with defenseless anticipation that stole his breath. He'd never intended to bring her here except that she looked so vulnerable.

"Kheyra..." He brushed through her short flaxen strands like they were filaments of silk.

Last night, he let himself lose control. He only intended to put her in her place. When he saw her with that man behind the club, he was jealous. She deserved to be punished for having the power to make him jealous. If only she hadn't come apart around him with such delirious flamboyance that his mind checked out. Already, he was hard again and needing her under him, her pussy wrapped tight around his cock, her body clinging to him while she cried out his name. No female before Kheyra, mortal or otherwise, had turned him into a brainless, tireless sex maniac.

"What were you doing with those men at the clubs?"

"None of your business."

"Aside from the obvious, I mean."

She pushed him away and went toward the open garden, but she stopped at the threshold. He came up behind her and put his arm on her shoulder. The low-cut dress did wonders for her beautiful long neck. Deacon peeked over her shoulder to admire the plunge of the bodice. Kheyra's chest heaved in nervous bursts. The fabric molded to her voluptuous breasts, which lifted the edge of the dress from her skin. He could see inside. No bra.

"That's a beautiful garden," she said on an indrawn breath as if she sensed his tension.

She was trying to distract him. He kissed her neck, and the instant shot of hunger roiled through his blood, demanding a bite. Pulling apart from him, she stepped outside.

"You shouldn't have brought me here," she confessed.

His thought exactly, but that was before she slipped off his radar screen earlier in the evening. Even then, he never intended them to end up here, but when he found her on that sidewalk, ambling like she was lost in despair, he had to have her close and safe, with nothing else to distract their attention.

From behind, he massaged her shoulder. "What's wrong with being in my place?"

She unhooked his hand, grunting with far more effort than the move required. "Just show me how to get out of here."

He grabbed both her shoulders and pinned her back to the front of his body. When his cock pressed against her behind, she moaned.

"Tell me why," he whispered, kissing the bare skin above her collarbone.

"I can't do this." She struggled against his hold in a feeble effort that only proved her capitulation.

"You can. Stay the night." He heard the words as if they came from someone else. He'd never brought a woman here. Not to his inner sanctum. He had to be out of his mind.

Kheyra trembled and tugged to get away but he forced her around to face him. She shut her eyes but blood tears already streaked her cheeks. She shook her head against his touch. "Don't. After last night... I can't."

He licked a tear, savoring it like honey from a rare flower. "You wanted me last night."

His hand skimmed across the rigid peak of her breast. Her whole body tensed to hide the reaction.

"You want me now," he whispered and licked a blood tear from the other side of her face. "Take me, Kheyra."

Her lips set. "So you can walk away when you're done? Once was enough. Let me go, please."

Kheyra's tormented grimace forced him to give in, but instead of withdrawing toward the garden, she sought refuge in the room.

"I'm not likely to walk away from my own place," he encouraged.

Various furniture attracted Kheyra's incredulous gaze. "Right," she huffed, "You'll ask me to leave. I'll spare you the trouble. Just show me the door now."

He sighed. She behaved too uncharacteristically for a female vamp, yet he sensed she was wounded by his rejection. Nonetheless, it would be stupid to play into the lure of submission.

"I won't apologize for last night. You asked for it."

She stood behind the sofa and grasped onto it, avoiding his gaze. "And I got it, didn't I?" she mocked.

"Five times." He was still amazed that she could climax so violently and that he drove her to it. She made him so potent, but he didn't fool himself for a second. It was all her. In total submission to his passion, she managed to bring together the pieces of himself scattered over the last three centuries. He was whole again, and he loved being whole while she clung to him with that gorgeous body, and her sweet pussy cried out around him. It was like getting a glimpse of a dream he swore could never come true.

"Come out from behind there," he ordered. Impatience cut into his tone, which caused an interesting hike in Kheyra's heartbeat.

"What for?" she goaded.

"I like that dress on you. I want to see you better. Do it!" he commanded. She jolted to obey, but the corners of her lips upturned into a saucy grin. Bloody hell! It turned her

on to be told what to do. It turned him on more to realize it. No wonder she drove him over the edge last night.

Before he even touched her, hardened nipples showed clearly through the satin dress. With the sofa right next to her, he barely held back from wrestling her down. He had to keep his cool and figure her out, little by little. As soon as he got her body wrapped around his in desperation, her innermost secrets would be exposed.

He dimmed the lights and turned off the single lamp. Behind him, the rising moon cast pearly shadows over the room. In her light blue dress, Kheyra resembled a fairy. Deacon headed past her to the chaise sectional of the wraparound sofa. He sprawled on it and tapped between his legs.

“Sit here!”

In a mesmerized daze, Kheyra approached until she stood in front of him. Her gaze darted to his crotch and held in amazement. Good lord. If he let her look at him that way for long, he’d be done in.

Deacon swung one of his legs over to give her room. “Turn around and sit. I want to feel you right here.” He tapped on his chest, where warmth leapt to the surface.

In slow motion, Kheyra turned her back to him. The dress hid too much of the tight behind he’d seen in the mini skirt, but knowing what hid under all the shiny fabric left his balls aching. With both arms, he trapped her waist and pulled her down.

“Scoot up,” he groaned, lifting her clear off until her behind nestled tightly between his thighs. She wiggled for a better fit. Deacon embraced her around the middle. “Lean back.”

When her body rested in full contact against his, she shuddered. His hand skimmed down her thigh and up, torturing her into a series of gasps.

“Relax. Look at the moon.”

He grabbed a bunch of fabric and hiked it up.

“It’s—it’s beautiful,” she stammered.



He roamed over her exposed leg, drawing circles on it.

"When was the last time you saw a moon like that?"

"Ahhm... I don't remember."

He teased the edges of her pubic hair. No panties. She gasped and clamped her legs shut.

"Shhh," he coaxed, undoing the ribbon ties down the front of her dress. "Be a pet, and let me pet you."

His palm snuck inside her gown and molded to her breast. Fingers of the other hand teased at the bottom of her belly, just above the pubic line.

"Put my hand where you want it," he issued.

Her trembling hand found his. She caressed the length of his fingers, but she hesitated to move beyond that. To urge her on, he toyed with her nipple. She moaned, arching into his hold. A slight echo resonated between her legs. Deacon swallowed. This would be tougher to bear than he imagined.

"Show me what you want."

"Touch me," she bit off.

"Do you think you're ready for me?"

"Yes!"

"Prove it. Put my hand on your pussy. Show me how wet you are."

Grasping his hand, she guided it lower until his fingers rested against her slit. He dabbed into the ready moisture.

"Oh." Her sharp gasps echoed through the moonlit shadows while her head rolled from side to side on his chest.

Her cream already coated his fingers, and the scent of woman bathed him like spilled perfume. He spread her juices up and down her pussy. He'd fantasized about finger-fucking a lady with a long dress on for some three hundred years. Only now, it seemed perfect.

"Throw your dress down over my arm," he panted, biting on her shoulder while working her nipple.

She obeyed and the fabric finally concealed his hand.

With two fingers set in a V, Deacon brushed around her clitoris, and all the way down to her creamy opening. Her hips tilted back, enticing him to penetrate. Not yet.

"Show me, sweetheart. Show me how much you want it."

He tasted her skin and watched his fingers move against her nipple under the fabric. In this debauched appearance, with laces and satin hanging every which way, Deacon barely resisted Kheyra's pleas for release. She was completely at his mercy. The power to satisfy her, or not, belonged to him alone. He thrust his hips to rub his cock along her butt crack. Kheyra grabbed his lower arm through the fabric and pushed it down.

"Please..." she moaned.

"Not yet." He pulled back to carelessly brush her pubic curls. "Let it build."

How long he could push her before he forced himself over the edge, he couldn't tell. Somehow, when he wasn't paying attention, the need to bang her turned into a kind of thirst that no amount of drinking could sate.

Tonight, he'd torture her with pleasure until she begged to die of it. He was driven to possessing her completely, partly because he believed it wasn't possible. No vampire female could be possessed like that. His maker proved it to him over and over. The more domination he used, the more she cut him down to size, mocking him that he'd never be man enough. So far, Kheyra fanned his pride with her unconditional surrender. Still, he'd be a fool to let that deceive him. He had to find her out before he became the victim of whatever game she played. If he was right, she'd walk away as soon as she'd had enough.

So, he'd make her wait. He would use a hundred different strokes on her breasts, and as many licks on her neck, and at her pussy, he'd drive her to the edge and back

until she lost her mind. And all this, without ever moving from this position, or taking her dress off.

"Deacon..." she cried. "I need it now."

He lifted away his hand. She gasped in protest.

"I'm going to tell you what you need and when you need it. Do you understand?"

She nodded, licking her lips, shoving up her hips.

Deacon resisted, partly because he too needed to take a breath.

"Touch yourself," he said.

Her hips rotated over his cock in a claiming gesture, but Deacon guided her hand to her opening, keeping his on top to feel her motion.

"Rub yourself."

Her delicate digits dipped between her vaginal lips. She stilled, held her breath.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Please, don't make me do this."

"Why not? Don't you like to touch yourself?"

"No..."

"I don't believe you. Feel how wet you are." His hand slipped beneath hers to collect some of the moisture. "Feel it."

"Don't stop!" she uttered.

Holding her hand, he positioned her fingers where his had been and began to move.

"Let me feel you pleasure yourself. Prove to me how much you need me."

She let out a helpless breath of objection, but Deacon persisted in guiding the probing motion of her fingers. At first, she only responded because he moved her, but little by little, she took charge.

"Yes," he urged. "Keep going."

While she stimulated her clitoris, he had the freedom to claim both of her breasts. What a way to love. The hard nubs pressed into his palm and he worked them in a rhythm that matched her gasps.

"Deacon... Please, I need you. Don't leave me alone now. Don't."

He kissed her shoulder, her neck, her ear. "I'm here, love. Tell me what you want."

"Put your fingers inside of me," she groaned.

God, he wanted to. He could give her anything right now, but she wasn't ready yet. As long as she had the willpower to beg, even in that raggedly yielding tone, it meant that she hadn't entirely given up control. More than anything, he had to see that she could let go completely.

"Not yet."

She writhed, straining to get her pussy closer to his fingers.

"Inside..." she cracked, rubbing her clitoris. "Please, inside."

The edge in her voice challenged his authority. If she coaxed him much more, he might forget this whole plan, turn her over, and take her deep and hard. He lowered one hand to cup her heat. For a moment, he just held her, molding his palm to her mound. His heart surged with new warmth. If only he could claim her forever.

Her whole body shuddered. Every muscle in her body tightened. "I need you so much," she uttered in a hoarse whisper. "Oh, Deacon...Deacon..."

He plunged two fingers inside her. She arched her upper body while bearing down with her hips.

"Yes!" she hissed.

"Easy, easy," he whispered, breathing hard against her ear before he sucked the earlobe into his mouth.

He moved the fingers inside while working the heel of his palm against her clit. Nice and slow. The breath hitched deeper in her throat. Bloody hell, she went straight for it. Her neck craned so that a streak of moonlight reflected on the skin where the vein

carried her blood in a visible palpitation. Deacon lowered his lips there, pressed his tongue against the flow so that it echoed through him until his own heartbeat synchronized. Not yet. He would bite her when she came. He'd dreamed of it all day. Now, she was turned inside out in passion, ready to give him everything he asked for.

While he watched the woman writhing under his command, a lump formed in his throat. She was the most beautiful thing he'd ever seen.

"Deacon... Please..."

"Tell me what you want, love," he crooned.

"Let me have you." She grappled with one arm behind her, searching for his cheek. With the other, she pushed against his thigh, begging access to his cock. "Let me feel you inside me."

He ached to watch her devour him, but when he became all dizzy and mindless at her mercy, how much more than pleasure would she demand? Last night, he'd watched her for a long time on that roof. Exhausted by ecstasy, she seemed vulnerable enough to trust. If he could see her like that again, he just might let himself go completely.

Only Kheyra's guttural panting broke the silent night. The sound was so intoxicating that it might have echoed across the entire planet. Nothing compared to the sounds of a woman's passion when she truly submitted and trusted the man to take her all the way.

"Uhhmm," she moaned, grinding her teeth and straining against his hold.

Sweat broke out between her breasts. Her buttocks clenched.

Now! He changed the rhythm, shifted the emphasis, timed his breathing to hers until heat bloomed inside her.

She cried out.

He bit.

They soared into the moonlight.

## **Chapter Seven**

Moonlight still streamed into the room when Kheyra's heavy eyelids cracked open. She must have lost consciousness because it took a second to identify the soft hum at her throat.

Deacon was sucking her blood. No wonder she lost it. Little by little, she regained awareness of her head against Deacon's beating heart, her limbs sprawled listlessly between his, her arms resting on top of his. He'd undone her and put her together all at the same time, and they hadn't even had sex yet.

Pulling out his fangs, Deacon let out a satisfied sigh and kissed the bite mark. Semidazed from blood loss, she had no way of gauging how weak she'd become, nor did she care. As long as Deacon remained unsatisfied, he'd let her stay. He squirmed against her ass with a blatant erection.

His lips at her ear and down her neck signaled his readiness to continue, but Kheyra only sighed and relaxed. He'd pushed her way past the point of readiness, and the aftermath demanded respite. He'd surprised her by taking so long to make her climax. She'd have expected him to rush through it so he could get to his needs. Hell, she'd expected him not to care about her climax at all. Alphas never did.

She closed her eyes. Just for a moment. It was so sweet right here. If only she could hover in this moonlit bliss, halfway between wakefulness and sleep, she'd remember forever what it felt like.

"Kheyra?"

"Hmmm..."

"I wish I could take a picture of you right now..."

He sighed and squeezed her against him before he relaxed.

She awakened when he picked her up. Hours must have passed because the moon was no longer framed in the glass doorway. Deacon approached the door. Her heart clenched. He must have gotten bored and was taking her home. However, he only pushed the button, which closed the door, and retraced his steps past the sofa to the back of the room.

"Where are you taking me?"

"Hi, Sleeping Beauty."

He walked down a spiral staircase.

"Deacon?"

"You wanted to know where I slept."

The husky innuendo in his tone aroused her out of the haze faster than she could blink. Too fast. "I really should be going. It's late."

"Hours left until dawn, and you left me hanging. I'm nowhere near done with you."

He laid her on a soft bed next to a wall-to-wall window. They must have crossed to the other side of the building because the moon was visible again. Its light filled the whole room. She had no time to look around before Deacon sat on his knees next to her. His hungry gaze skimmed down her body like he was getting ready to tear her apart. Against her will, she panted out loud.

She lifted on her elbows. "Deacon, I have to go."

He scowled, holding her down. "Why?"

Because she didn't want to wait for him to ask her to leave. Because if she stayed, she'd never want to leave, but mostly because she was terrified. One hungry gaze was enough to bring her body back to a complete state of blind submission. And then... She couldn't deny him anything anymore. She knew that. She would beg him now for every kiss, and every perfect move he made with those fingers. If she stayed, she'd belong to

him, body, heart and soul. She never counted on emotions getting involved. She only wanted great sex but this was too much to give to a dominant vampire.

She trembled. "I just... I'm sorry. I can't stay."

He loomed over her. "Where are you going? Who with? Don't lie to me."

She gaped. Did she hear him right? Did he think she was leaving him to be with someone else? Had he no idea what being with him meant to her?

"There is no one else," she said, lifting a hand to smooth the crease out of his brow. He jerked his head away.

"Then why do you want to leave?"

With all her might, she pushed against his hold to sit up and found courage to look into his eyes. She gasped at the storm that brewed in them. What else did she expect? He wasn't done with her, and she dared to reject him. She'd be mad as hell if her submissive dared such a thing. He could be capable of any violence.

"Please, don't hurt me. I can't explain, but I have to go."

He grabbed her upper arm, dragged her close until he leered at her with a bloodshot stare. "Hurt you! Hurt you?"

When she flinched, he thrust her away and went to stand by the window. "Get out!"

Clamping a hand to her mouth to keep from crying out, Kheyra scrambled off the bed. It hurt to move. He'd taken too much blood. Still, she ran up the stairs and through the sitting room until the closed glass door barred her way. Tears leaked down her cheeks. She had to get out of here. Her skin already burned. It couldn't have been much past three at night, hours yet before daylight, but Deacon had taken too much of her blood and increased her sensitivity. If she didn't get into a pitch-black room soon, she had no idea what could happen. She'd never been this hungry and weak and a total emotional wreck. Did Deacon intend to punish her? No, he couldn't have known that she started to burn in the dead of night.



Just when she turned to look for the darkest corner of the room and huddle there, the door slid open. Of course, Deacon had a remote control downstairs, and he could probably hear every move she made. The fresh night air should have been cool on her skin, but it burned even more. Besides, how was she supposed to get off the roof? Did he expect her to jump down? Stupid. He probably didn't care if she fell to her death.

Her knees buckled. A sharp pain seized her breath. Under her skin, fire melted her flesh. Kheyra retreated inside. She whirled, looking for some place to hide, then leapt behind the sofa, right under the lounge where Deacon pleased her. She slid down to the floor, pulled her knees under her chin, and hugged them. The burning eased enough for her to breathe, but it still threatened to incinerate every joint. She tensed against waves of pain to keep from crying out, but she finally let out muffled whimpers against her knees.

"Kheyra?" Deacon's arm fell on her shoulder, aggravating the pain. She rocked against it, gritting her teeth.

"What's the matter?"

"Burns... Ohh..."

In a whirlwind of motion, Deacon carried her down the stairs back into the bedroom, but being so close to the windows worsened everything.

"It burns..." She crawled over the bed to get off it. Under it would have been best, but the slightest movement hurt too much.

A rattling noise cut the silence, then Deacon held her again, on the bed, tucked into his side with his arm around her shoulder.

"It's okay now. I closed the shutters."

The burning dissolved. Kheyra checked the window, which was sealed with a metal grate of some sort.

"I tried to leave. I couldn't," she apologized.

He flicked on the bedside lamp. A million questions reflected in his assessing glance, but Kheyra noticed only concern.

"It's only 3.00 a.m.," he stated in a loaded tone.

She shrugged her shoulders. "I haven't fed." At least she had some sensible excuse. She couldn't tell him that being on Earth did something to alter her rhythms.

"Who sired you?" he asked.

The intent reflected in his eyes would not be swayed this time. "Why does that matter?" she said.

"How old are you?"

She let out a slow breath of relief. At least, she could answer that much without lying. "One hundred and sixty-seven"

Deacon's eyes narrowed with suspicion. "Bollocks. Tell me the truth."

"I am!"

"If you were that old, you wouldn't be this sensitive. Only fledglings created by weak morons could be that sensitive."

"How would you know? Who created you?"

Deacon's jaw tightened. His eyes blazed.

She stared straight at him. "Touchy subject, isn't it?" she pressed into counter-offensive. "Like I said, I didn't feed last night."

He held her stare, challenging her to look away. She didn't as much as blink, until Deacon's gaze dropped to her bosom. A line formed between his eyebrows.

He shuddered. "And I took more from you. Why didn't you ask for my blood?"

If he'd demanded all of her blood, she hardly could have objected. With all the burning gone, her awareness glommed on to the single overriding sensation of Deacon's presence. He was holding her in his bed. It would have taken another minute to fly her home and be rid of her, but instead, he brought her back into his sanctuary.

He must have regretted the decision because he let out an irritated sigh.

"It's still early. You could go out. Lock me in here. I won't steal anything," she babbled. With the two of them cooped up until next nightfall, she dared not consider the possibilities.

"Drink from me."

She froze. "What?"

"You heard me."

And she had to hear him again. Deacon Quincy had just offered his blood to a submissive female, in his bedroom, while holding her in his arms.

"Are you sure?"

"You should have told me how starved you were. I wouldn't have taken so much. I couldn't resist."

"You're offering me your blood?"

"Not good enough for you?" He started to move away, but she clutched his arm.

"No!"

"Then shut up and drink, wench."

He lay back and pulled her up on top of him, smiling. He cupped her cheek then positioned his palm behind her neck and tugged gently. The tenderness sent shock waves through her whole body.

"Feed from me, Kheyra," he urged, turning his head to the side.

Relentless hunger urged her on. Her fangs distended. Impatient gasps shot between her lips. Deacon sighed, and cradled her head as she lunged for him. Skin tore like paper. Dear God...The blood tasted unlike any other, and she'd tasted many. She gulped, never wanting to taste another.

Deacon's arms pinned her bones until they creaked. At her pelvis, his erection returned in full glory. Already, he worked the folds of her dress out of the way.

"I gotta get inside you," he groaned. When she moved to withdraw, he pressed the back of her neck. "Don't stop. Drink... Drink..."

Lifting her hips a little, he snuck a hand between them, shuffled with his zipper and pants. Her thighs opened around him, the arches of her feet pressed into the mattress. Arousal throbbed in her clitoris. She shifted her hips as close to his cock as she could without stopping the feast.

"Kheyra..." he chanted, and made them one.

"Ohh..."

Whole... That's what it felt like when Deacon was inside her. She wished she could tell him to stand still just for a moment longer, but his shuddering hand still held her in the feeding position.

"Don't stop," he bit off.

Somehow he knew though, or perhaps he felt it too because he stayed still and molded them into a togetherness that brought tears to her eyes. She'd underestimated him. He dominated and controlled her every move from the moment they met, and yet, he was the giver. He'd offered his life force and his passion.

Why did women refer to sex as "being taken"? Right now, she was the one taking everything he could offer. If he'd cared only about his pleasure, he would have pumped against her until he came, and this moment would have ended before she had time to notice it ever began.

Deacon's whole body shuddered. The weight of his hips pressed down harder, but that caused another ripple through his muscles. His body was clear on what it wanted, and even so, he held back.

Kheyra pulled away from his neck and kissed the bite wound the way he had kissed hers after he finished feeding. He swung her under him and rose up against his elbows, leering at her.

"Tell me you want this!" he barked. "Tell me now."

"Til the day I die."

He lowered his lips to hers and possessed her mouth until she panted for breath. Then he moved. With slow deliberation, he glided almost all the way out of her. She clamped both arms around him to keep him from separating. Before she could beg him to plunge inside again, his eyes closed, and his cock found her depth.

Kheyra's body recognized its master and gave in. Even if she could possibly think of something else to ask for, she could never form the words.

Deacon's eyes opened and found hers. Even if she wanted to hide the joy in her heart, her eyes probably gave it away. She didn't have to worry, though. The depths of Deacon's gaze filled with a plea of such desperation that the air turned raw.

"I can't wait," he burst out. "I need it now. Come with me!"

Kheyra hooked her feet around his ankles and pressed both hands to his ass. A shadow came over his face before he catapulted into a madman's possession.

The wooden headboard banged against the wall. Flesh beat on flesh. Their gazes locked, and everything disappeared, except the rising thrill.

"Deacon!"

"Ahh..."

He fucked her harder, forcing her higher, closer to the edge.

"Deacon?" She needed him. She was so close to the melting point and he was too far away. He collapsed on top of her in a spasm of his climax, while she dug her nails into his flesh to keep him close. She could weep for hours like some precious thing had been stolen from her, and she had no idea where to look or who to turn to.

Her pelvis vibrated with unfulfilled need. She squirmed beneath his weight, pushing up on his shoulders. She was so close to the climax. Surely, he wouldn't stop and leave her like this, would he? Not now.

"Deacon?" she mewled.

He kissed her chest, her neck. "I know, sweetheart."

His hips moved, stirring the still rigid cock inside her depths. He lifted up and took her nipple into his mouth, sucked on it hard then let it pop out.

“Did you think I was done with you?” He helped himself to the other nipple, dropped it, and lifted up to look at her. “Did you?”

Kheyra ran both hands through his hair and pulled to bring his mouth back down on her breast. Of course, she couldn’t move him if he didn’t want her to. While he grinned, his cock eased out.

“Did you?” he repeated, holding himself at the edge of her opening, threatening to pull all the way out.

“Yes!”

“You were wrong.”

Once more, he became one with her. This time, though, while his cock filled her pussy, his lips found hers and claimed them with a passion of a man who cherished his possession.

“I want to feel all of you,” he issued. “Give me your tongue. Show me how it feels to have me inside you.”

The strangest noise emitted from the back of her throat when she pushed her tongue into the depths of his mouth and began to match the rhythm of his thrusting cock. Being with him while he possessed her with such power and tenderness erased everything from her mind. She even forgot about the orgasm, until it hit her head-on.

She tore away from the kiss. “Deacon!” It was so powerful this time, so total. She held on to him to stay in one piece.

“Yes, love. I’ve got you. Just let go. Let me feel it.”

With her arms around him, she let the pleasure take over. It was safe now to show Deacon that she belonged to him. Whether he wanted her or not, she’d always belong to him.

They held each other while panting breaths counted their way back into time. Kheyra kept her eyes shut as she convinced herself over and over that what just happened wasn't a dream. This amazing male made her feel loved all over. Loved. Not possessed, or taken, or used. Loved.

With one final deep breath, Deacon pushed up on his arms and peered down at her.

Before he could rise all the way, she locked her arms around his waist and held. "No. Stay."

He gave her a token kiss and relaxed on top of her. Their genitals were still connected. His lips moved against her collarbone and up to her neck. He licked at her mellow vein.

"May I have another taste? Just a few drops. I promise."

She smiled at his tender solicitation. "However much you want. I know where to replenish it."

His fangs cut her faster than she anticipated, sending renewed arousal between her legs. His hips moved, testing, suggesting. She answered in a move of her own. Whatever he wanted, he could have from now on, even if he eventually asked her to leave. This was the stuff that eternity was made of, and she would not bemoan something like a broken heart over being here and now, one in all.

His mouth moved lower, toward her breast. Kheyra could hardly wait for his lips to possess her there, but Deacon simply stared. With a hesitant finger, he traced around her nipple.

"Fairy love," he uttered in faint awe before he descended on the rigid peak.

Their bodies began another dance, mellow and sweet, yet fraught with such longing that she could hear the music of their hearts in the background. She touched his face, his hair, down his back. God, she loved his ass. Pulling down on him with each thrust gave her a whole new rush. Before long, though, Deacon shifted and crossed one of her legs over his shoulder.

This brought him deeper inside her, at an angle that fired up a set of nerve endings she didn't even know she had. She grasped onto his hips. His thumbs brushed over her clit, teasing it with whisper moves.

"Ohh..." She began to climb toward that familiar edge, but Deacon's slow pace held her back until he repositioned her leg against his side and lowered over her.

"Give me your mouth when you come," he demanded breathlessly.

She grabbed onto the sheets, readying herself for Deacon's frenzied fucking, but this time, it was so slow that it brought her to wit's end. Begging moans echoed from so deep in her throat that she couldn't recognize herself.

"Kiss me now!"

Their lips joined when the orgasm washed over her. It rolled and rolled, while Deacon's tongue penetrated her mouth and mated with hers. His movements slowed until the whole room seemed to undulate. The kiss muted the grunt of Deacon's climax, but she could feel its force nonetheless. Total surrender flitted across his features.

Eventually, he rolled against her side and draped a thigh over her leg, locking her tightly in his embrace. She turned to face him. Their fingers enlaced. He brushed lazily over her pubic curls as if he needed a distraction and her private parts were the only plaything around. While her eyelids sagged, she kissed his lips.

"It's daylight," he said.

The heaviness already came over her.

"Ahh-huh."

He caressed her cheek. "Now, you can't leave."

Smiling, she lifted their joined hands to her lips and kissed his fingers. "I never wanted to."

"Then why did you fight so hard to get away?"

A twitch tingled in her chest, a reminder of the earlier pain of being rejected.

"Tell me, or I won't make love to you again."



"You can't make love to me until nightfall anyway."

He circled a finger around her nipple, awakening it. "I wouldn't be so sure about that."

She shoved his hand away playfully. He cupped her cheek.

"Tell me..."

"I was...afraid," she whispered.

He traced over her lips. "Of?"

She swallowed. So what if she told him. This had to end eventually. Why be afraid of her own feelings? If ever, now was the time to embrace them. She searched his gaze for a hint of emotion, but if he had any at all, it remained hidden.

In the long silence, he repeated, "Of?"

"Of never wanting to leave, of thinking I'd die when you tired of me," she blathered out.

He traced her lips. "It will be worth it," he promised and tucked her against him so close that his breath laced her cheek. He kissed the tip of her nose. "Rest quickly. I barely got started with you."

## **Chapter Eight**

A warm body was wrapped around him. A slow and full heart beat next to his. Female scent stirred his loins. His arm contracted around her waist before he opened his eyes to check on her. He could feel the heaviness of noon, but Kheyra slept firmly. This close, he noticed a faint speckling of freckles over her nose. In sleep, with her face so relaxed, she looked truly like a fairy.

Deacon let the impression of her body against his fill every memory bank. They fit as well in this innocent pose as in passion. When he brought her home last night, he'd hoped that hours of sex would leave him so sated that he could forget about her, but when Kheyra was forced to stay, he could have leapt for joy.

Her sensitivity to sunlight was strange, though. He'd never heard of such a thing, not even with newbies, but if she was sired by a weakling, one could never anticipate how blood would translate from one generation to another. By now, he should have found out who made her, where and when? Hell, he should have known what made her tick within an hour. Instead, he learned only that when she turned those fairy eyes on him and parted her lips with unmistakable desire, his lower body took charge, and hours melted away.

Already, his erection had recovered with a deep, unsatisfied ache. With her trapped in his fold, and his leg over hers, he relished the galloping arousal. No better turn-on than a sleeping beauty whose serenity stirred a deep need to keep her hot and eager to please.

The more he studied her, the more unforgiving that need grew. Bugger! He'd hoped to be so spent that he couldn't care less never to see her again. Instead, he wanted to wake her up with his tongue lapping at her pussy. And what was to stop him? The sooner he got every urge out of the way, the more likely he'd tire of her.

Besides, he loved doing things to her while she still had that dress on. A throwback to centuries past, perhaps, or maybe even to a version of himself that he forgot. Once upon a time, he'd wanted a woman like Kheyra—someone he could claim completely, someone gentle and so crazy about him that she couldn't resist letting him under her long skirt. It was naughty, but being naughty with Kheyra triggered a rather enjoyable spark. He should root her senseless all day and the following night. By then, reality might set back in and prove once and for all that some dreams were too costly to chase.

He unwrapped her arm from his waist and pulled his leg from over hers. Gently, he rolled her on her back, listening to her heartbeat for a signal of waking. She didn't budge.

He spread one of her legs open and settled between her knees. Holding up the hem of her dress with both hands, he lifted it past her hips and folded it over her belly. What a gorgeous female! Only now did he see her pussy exposed to full view. He'd been too impatient for it before. It was alarming really. If he stacked a bunch of photos of female genitalia depicting this exact pose, he'd hardly notice the difference between one or the other. Anatomically speaking, nothing set Kheyra apart from any of the women he'd had, except that while he observed her sleeping womanhood, a persistent mantra infected his mind. *Mine. Mine. Mine.*

Taking a deep breath, Deacon reeled back. Even asleep, the woman bedeviled his reason. If only she hadn't done that stupid thing of going down on her knee. That took his breath away with an urge to pull her up into his arms and tell her she was his forever. What was that anyway? Who taught her that, and why would she do it? No mortal woman would do such a thing unless she'd been so beaten down she'd do anything to survive. Kheyra was a vampire, with the world at her disposal. She could have any man, any thing, and she chose him.

Doubt crept in. She'd come out of nowhere, straight into his two square miles. Within two nights, she was in his bedroom, where no other had been before. He was overanalyzing again. What was she going to do, smother him in his sleep? She was

much weaker, and right now, as good as dead to the world. She'd done nothing but give him freedom with her body in whatever way his pleasure demanded. So what was his problem? He loved giving her orgasm after orgasm. He loved that her touch and kiss and cries erased the pain of past betrayal. Just because one female vampire ripped his heart to pieces didn't mean that Kheyra would do the same. With Kheyra, life began anew.

Saliva ran down the sides of his mouth when he brushed the outside of his fingers over her pubic hair. He reached deeper into the space between the vaginal lips. Insinuating himself millimeter by millimeter into her opening, he collected some of the feminine moisture and licked it off. Its flavor made him hard again. So much for the thought that he couldn't possibly want more pussy. Except that this was Kheyra's pussy. Any thought of it only spelled the beginning of another painful need.

Deacon settled between Kheyra's legs and followed the silky folds with his tongue. Even in sleep, her body responded to his ministrations by releasing its musk. He licked then rolled gently around her clit, avoiding it at first.

Kheyra moaned. Her hips arched, shoving her pussy into his face. Her heart rate leapt. He hooked his arms under her thighs, and pressed his whole mouth against her.

"Deacon?" her husky voice called. He swept the tip of his tongue over her nub.

"Ohhh..." she cried out, her hands sweeping through his long hair and pulling it up on top of his head to keep it out of the way.

He wanted this to go long and slow. He wanted to hear her screaming for an orgasm, but something came over him. His plan thrown to the wind, his tongue went on a rampage. Wild spasms rocked through her, undoing the last of his control. He buried two fingers into her slick folds while his tongue sucked and worked against her clit. With every sense, he tuned into her body's climb toward the peak.

Her fingers contracted in his hair, pulling hard. Her hips bucked against his face until he held her down. Only then, he lifted over her and guided his cock to her

opening. For a second, their gazes met, long enough for absolute emotion to sweep over her face.

Shouting out, Deacon dove. The world disappeared. Kheyra's arms came around his neck while her legs locked behind his back. Nothing felt like this. Never. They breathed and swayed like they were predestined for this moment.

"Open your eyes, fairy love."

When she did, they were bathed in tears. With each plunge of his body, a blood tear streaked down her face. The expression in her eyes could have stolen the heart of a dead man. It sent him over the edge in time with the first pulse of her release. She cried aloud, clinging to him, while their bodies rocked in reverence that even left him misty-eyed.

He lowered all the way on top of her and held her while she wept against his chest. She cried for a long time. He could never assume to understand fully why, but he was glad because in a way, she cried for both of them. All doubts, all fears, all the unanswered questions that could keep them apart washed away in her tears.

Later, he rolled on his back and held her on top of him, listening to the beat of her heart against his chest. Their two hearts beat as one. Their breaths matched too. Only this mattered now. The questions and answers would inevitably come, but now belonged to him. So did Kheyra.

Brushing a finger through her hair, he hoped to induce her back to sleep. How sweet to feel her go under sprawled on top of him while their bodies were still joined. He smiled at his persistent erection. If he were still inside her at sundown, they could brush off the cobwebs of sleep with lazy lovemaking. Deacon closed his eyes, clutching Kheyra to his chest. What a thing to look forward to.

\* \* \* \* \*

Strange emptiness drew him to the surface. Weight lifted off his chest, but with it departed a hidden joy he'd never admit to holding on to. He reached out and caught

empty air. His eyes opened, his heart leapt in panic. He looked around and found Kheyra standing by the bed, watching him. With blood streaked face and the ripped bodice ties barely keeping the dress on her, she resembled a ghost. She swallowed when their gazes met and averted her pained eyes to the floor.

“What are you doing out of bed? It’s not night yet.”

Her mouth opened, and her lips moved, but no sound emerged. A longing so fierce set into her expression that Deacon prayed it was only the trick of shadows in the darkened room. Terror shook him. Kheyra’s wounded expression could drive a stake right through his heart.

He extended a hand. “Come back here.”

She shook her head as if she fought herself. “I can’t take any more. You have to stop.”

He kept his arm up and smiled. He knew just the thing to get her back under his spell. “You don’t have to take any more,” he professed.

Her eyebrow rose quizzically.

“It’s time for you to give.”

He could hear her breath catch, her eyes dart to his crotch. That alone brought his erection back to life.

With one move, he slipped to the edge of the bed and put his feet on the floor right in front of her. His head was level with her breasts.

Kheyra’s hanging fabric revealed flesh between two creamy globes. Encircling her waist, he kissed her there, then coursed up her spine and over her shoulders, hooking his thumbs under the cloth and dragging it down.

She shivered while the dress peeled off. Deacon held his breath. They’d gone up in flames countless times, and he hadn’t even seen her completely naked yet. He rolled the fabric down her arms, but it snagged over her wristwatch. He freed the cloth then lifted

her hand to take off the watch. With her, every minute counted, and he wanted to forget how fast they ticked by. She snatched her hand away, though.

"Take it off," he said.

"No." She wrapped her hand around the watch.

Annoyed, Deacon took her arm and yanked it toward him hard enough to break her protective hold. He gazed at the watch face on the inside of her wrist. He couldn't read it. Strange squiggles and symbols moved around in a circle.

"What is this?"

At first glance, it looked like hieroglyphics, but he knew he'd never seen anything like it before.

"Deacon, let go of my hand." Kheyra tugged against his hold, her face a frightened grimace.

He stared at the moving shapes. "What is this?" he asked.

"It has nothing to do with you."

Everything about her had everything to do with him. He had to know to whom he'd exposed his most secret longings, and what would happen to this ache at the thought of losing her. "Who are you, and where did you come from?"

"It won't matter tomorrow, so just drop it."

Outside, the night settled in. It was dark enough for Kheyra to leave but he hoped she'd ask to stay. If only she'd trust him enough to come clean.

Beeping sounded. Startled, they both turned toward the window. The shutters were operated by a timer, which was triggered by daylight sensors installed in the glass. The shutters closed and opened automatically depending on the depth of darkness that Deacon required.

Kheyra held up her dress and skipped toward the door. Even in darkness, a shade of the tattoo on the outside of her shoulder caught his attention. He leapt after her and pinned her against the wall before he flipped the light switch.

"What the hell..." The flaming red sun. He thought he'd never see it again. Everything came to standstill. The one who made him, toyed with him, promised him everything then broke him to pieces, had the same marking.

"Who are you? Where is she?"

"I don't know who you mean. Please, stop this."

"Where did you get this tattoo?" He swung her around. She looked terrified.

"Talk, or I swear to God, I'll drain you to the last drop."

"I told you, none of this has anything to do with you. Just let me go."

"Like hell. Did she send you? Is she your maker?"

She cried. "I swear, no one sent me. I swear."

If there was a logical explanation for this, she better give it to him soon. "When did you get that tattoo?"

"When I was born."

Born? Vampires weren't born. What was going on here?

"Where is she? Where is Morna?" he barked.

Kheyra gasped with shock. It ripped over her face, contorting her with terror that left his guts churning.

"Morna?" she uttered brokenly. "You know her?"

Her frantic glance darted to the watch, but her hand shook so violently that she had to hold it with the other one. She faded several shades when she lifted her gaze to his. It was filled with agony.

"Who is she to you?" he insisted.

She let out an anguished breath. "You have to let me go. There is still time."

"How do you know Morna?"

"She is—" Kheyra's eyes rolled. "Deacon, you don't understand. I have to go."

"You set me up!"



"No!"

She placed both hands on his chest, sobbing. "You have to get as far away from me as possible. You don't have a minute to lose. Take me away now. Please."

Never would he trust the words of Morna's fledgling. Kheyra was merely a pawn doing Morna's bidding.

He snatched her wrist. "What does this mean?"

She swayed. He had to hold her up. "Tell me!"

"It's a timer. I have two nights left. Maybe less."

"Then what?"

"They'll come after me."

He should have known. Only Morna would perpetrate a trick like this, and he fell for it like a lad for a housemaid. When he first fell under Morna's spell, he couldn't have known better, but now, he should have been prepared for anything. His instincts told him not to trust Kheyra, not for a second. Idiot! Two nights! Enough time to spring a trap, pay Morna back for all the pain. Perhaps he could still turn this around.

"Who will come after you?"

"I don't know. The hunters probably."

"Morna?"

Kheyra shuddered. "She is the matriarch, the most powerful among us. You must get away from me. It's the only way you'll be safe."

This made no sense. He'd practically searched the planet to exact his vengeance on Morna. If she'd become the matriarch of some vampire clan, he would have found her. She was too arrogant to live in secret for too long.

"Why should I believe you?"

Her eyes pooled with blood tears. "Because..." Her head drooped in sudden weakness. "Please, Deacon. Save yourself."

"Where did you come from?"

“Dattar.”

“Never heard of it. Try again.” It could be a made up name. Some of the covens did that to assign themselves mystical importance.

She grasped onto his shoulders as if to shake sense into him, but she barely managed to keep herself propped up. “You don’t have time for this. If she finds you...”

If she got close enough, Morna could smell him. If he stood any chance, he had to know exactly where she’d be and when.

“Are you being tracked?” Stupid question. How else could she be so certain they’d find her? “Where is the tracker?”

“In the pit of my spine. It was injected when I was born. It fused with my bones. It can’t be removed.”

Again with the “being born” business. “Nonsense. That kind of technology doesn’t exist.”

Kheyra pushed back against the wall and slapped him. “Wake up and understand,” she shouted. “I escaped from planet Dattar, and they’re going to come after me. If you’re anywhere near me when they do, they’ll find you and kill you.”

Morna came from another planet? That would explain how she disappeared without a trace. And Kheyra’s watch. He picked up her hand and examined the watch again. He should have noticed before that the metal differed from anything he’d ever seen.

“What happens to you?” he asked.

She shook her head. “It doesn’t matter, as long as you’re safe.” She kissed his lips. “You were right. It was worth every second. Now, you have to go. Please. I never meant to put you in danger. You have to believe me.”

Believing her should have made him feel better. It meant he had a chance to escape. It also meant he’d have to leave Kheyra, possibly never see her again. If Morna had her claws in this, Kheyra could even be killed. He wasn’t ready to lose her.

“Bugger!” If he didn’t do as Kheyra asked, he’d have no chance of defending either himself or her.

He snatched Kheyra’s arm and dragged her out of the room and up the staircase. She held the dress in place as best as she could. He waited for the door to slide open then stomped through the garden to the low roof wall. Kheyra pulled back against his grasp, but he stepped on the ledge, and yanked her right over with him. She screamed, flailing, until he tugged her into his arms, where her heart beat once more next to his. For the second time, Morna was about to rob him of everything he held dear. God damn her.

He flew to the corner of Franklin and Highland. While he hovered, searching for a deserted alley, Kheyra clutched at his neck and cried against his chest. When he set her down, she crumpled to her knees, covering her face with both palms.

He wished he could tell her that everything would be fine, but he knew what he was up against. He gave her only a brief glance. Watching her pain cut him to the quick, so he walked away. For a long while, he heard her cries. Each ripped something soft and fragile out of him until he was as hard as a rock. To confront Morna and finish this, he needed the rock strength. It was the only thing he could rely on.

## **Chapter Nine**

Long after Deacon's footsteps faded, Kheyra pretended she still heard them. Deacon... Everything she'd come to know on Dattar was a lie. How many others had been forced to live a role contrary to their nature? She'd existed in a shadow for so long, and now, when she escaped from its clutch for a taste of something true, the lies caught up like homing curses.

She wiped the tears with the edge of her dress. There was a small blessing in all this. By finding out now that Deacon had some connection with Morna, Kheyra at least had a choice of not risking his life as well as her own. Two nights was plenty of time to get lost. The tracking device would eventually reveal her location to the posse, but if she got far enough away from Deacon, they would not discover him. She had no time to grieve. She would grieve in the afterlife, if there was such a thing. Now, she had to make sure he was safe by getting as far away from him as possible.

Her body still throbbed from Deacon's pleasuring, bringing only more heartache, but she forced her wobbly knees to hold and ran to Hollywood Boulevard. She could do without blood for a little while, if Grace knew a quick route out of town.

The woman's clothing shop was open. Kheyra stormed to the back counter while another woman gaped in shock.

"Where is Grace? I need to talk to her now!"

Grace's voice called from the rear. "What's going on?"

"Grace?" Kheyra dashed toward the woman's voice.

"What on earth happened to you, girl?" Grace perused Kheyra's disheveled clothing.

"I need to get out of town. The farther, the better. Which bus do I take?"

Grace raised her arm. "Hold on. What's the hurry?"

Tears threatened, so Kheyra wiped her eyes, oblivious to the blood smears on her cuff. In semi-shock, Grace ambled forward and raised Kheyra's arm to expose the blood stains.

"What in the Lord's name is going on with you?"

"Please, Grace. I can't explain. Can you give me money for the bus?"

Grace gave her a penetrating stare, shook her head, and shrugged her shoulder. "Wait here." She hurried to the front of the store, leaving Kheyra standing by a small desk covered with papers. If Deacon ever wondered, he might come here. He had to know that she was sorry. Kheyra took a plain sheet of paper. While she wrote, two blood drops dotted the farewell.

"Here," Grace said, holding clothes folded over her arm. "Put these on. You can't leave town in that."

Kheyra folded the note. "Uhm, there is a man..."

Grace smiled and put an arm over her shoulder. "Honey, there always is."

Kheyra's throat tightened. "Handsome, long black hair tied in the back, British accent, soft brown eyes. His name is Deacon. If he comes here, would you give him this?" She handed the note to Grace.

Grace's eyebrows bunched. Her eyes tinged with a kind of pain that forced Kheyra to whisk the clothes from the other woman's arms and dash behind a rack. While she tugged the dress off, the touch of Deacon's hands coursed through her skin. Her hand trembled. Her eyes misted. God, she loved him. If only she could tell him...what? That she came to Hollywood because of the movies? That she was sorry, that she had no idea about Morna having visited Earth.

But if Deacon knew Morna, then Morna was aware that vampires really existed on Earth. She was a Dattar matriarch. Why hadn't she corrected the historical archives? What purpose did it serve to keep Deacon and his kind a secret? He was so strong, so

beautiful, so dominant, yet so giving. She'd never dreamed of a partner so generous with her pleasure while demanding his own. Not once did he satisfy himself before he satisfied her.

She put on a pair of loose black pants and a tight T-shirt and rejoined Grace, who held the note in her hand. Grace smiled sadly. "You look good for a fugitive. Just an average girl on a bus. Take this. The coins are for the Metro." She put a wad of bills in Kheyra's palm. Twenties and a bunch of coins.

"That's too much. I just need enough to get out of town. I can't pay you back."

Grace closed Kheyra's fingers around the money and nodded heavily. "If you find a way back, I sure would like to know what happened. And that Deacon of yours? You didn't listen to me, did you?"

Kheyra thrust her arms around Grace and hugged her before she started to cry again. "It's not his fault. Thank you."

Grace still held Kheyra's forearms when she pulled away. "Take the Hollywood Boulevard line east all the way. Ask the driver to drop you off at the downtown line. That should take you to the Greyhound station. They have buses leaving town all night. You sure you can't work this out?"

Kheyra shook her head. Grace closed her eyes and took a deep breath. "Good luck, girl."

"Thank you for being so kind," Kheyra said and stole away, shoving a wad of bills into the pocket of her pants.

On the street, she stood in the middle of the sidewalk while people milled east and west on the Walk of Stars. She took a deep breath of the flowery air and listened to the hum of street life. *Goodbye, my love.*

She blended with the crowd and kept her head down, even when she crossed the street to the bus station. As long as she got far enough away, Deacon would be safe. Her chances of survival were dismal from the start, but Deacon told her being with him would be worth it. If he only knew how right he was.

Swaying from foot to foot, she spotted the orange conveyance rolling in from the west.

"Well, well, look who it is?" the mocking female voice cut. Morna. She came herself. The bus slowed toward the curb.

Kheyra turned toward the Dattar matriarch. The bus brakes squealed. Morna, sauntered closer in a tight black one-piece suit and a leather coat. Long black hair draped over her shoulders.

The bus door opened. Kheyra jumped onboard.

"Hold up!" Morna's voice echoed, and she got in.

"Hey, you gotta pay," the driver yelled at Morna.

Morna returned to the front, stood at the driver's side, staring at him. The bus door closed and the vehicle moved.

Kheyra defied Morna's triumphant glare with every fiber of courage she could muster. As long as they were on the bus, heading out of Hollywood, Morna might not know that Deacon was close.

"Your fiancé will be overjoyed to see you," Morna mocked. "I hand-picked him for you myself. He likes a firm hand. The more you ask of him, the better he'll feel."

Kheyra scoffed. "I'm not going back."

Morna laughed. "But of course you are, darling. After you've confessed to every sordid detail of this derailed excursion, your memory will be erased. You won't remember you were here. It will be like it never happened."

Bile rose to Kheyra's throat. She'd rather be dead than forget Deacon.

"Come, come," Morna offered. "Earth is the pits. You should be happy to forget it. And don't worry about this other thing either. We'll fix you up, and keep you fixed as a part of your yearly checkup. You'll love being dominant again."

"I never was. I never will be. Try to fix me all you want."

Morna examined her nails and brushed them against her leg. "Five minutes on Earth, and I'm already filthy," she complained. "You know, darling, this illusion you have about being a submissive? There is no such thing for a female. You know why? Because an alpha male doesn't exist. Deep down, they want us to use them. They thrive on pleasing us. To be a true alpha, a man would have to be immune to seduction. Only a monster is immune to seduction. Trust me, you don't want to know men like that."

Morna lectured with fanatical conviction. How did such an imposingly beautiful woman construct such a twisted reality? Kheyra used to be jealous of Morna's long, jet-black hair, luminous dark eyes and thick sensual lips. Every male on Dattar drooled in her presence, but that wasn't enough for her. She had to have complete control, except that whatever "fix" she used to make females dominant and males submissive failed to work on everyone. No wonder Kheyra's brother's behavior changed so drastically after the sexual initiation. He must have been so heartsick and humiliated when his dominant inclinations were denied that he couldn't even face his sister. How many others had Morna destroyed?

"Why?" Kheyra asked. "Why did you do this to us?"

"Don't be so dramatic. I saved you from a lifetime of torture. Lucky for you that you don't know what I'm talking about. Oh, here is our stop. Nice and quiet now. I don't want to hurt you yet."

Kheyra hardly cared about getting hurt. If it meant Deacon's safety, she would do anything. Anything. She got off the bus with Morna on her heels. They stood on an overpass, strangely deserted for a city the size of LA. Morna pressed a finger to her wrist command module. The rush of air blew a circle of dust, but except for a low hum, the approaching shuttle made no noise.

Kheyra turned back toward Hollywood. Her whole life had been worth living for one sliver of time in Deacon's arms. He'd shown her what it meant to be a woman and submit to her deepest yearning. As if only he held the secret key to her pleasure, he



wove every gesture into a feast. Even at the end, when he could have let her fall off the roof, he brought her close to his heart one more time and let her cling to him.

Kheyra inched toward the world she'd never see again, not even in memory, but Morna grabbed her elbow and yanked her toward the landed shuttle.

"Come along."

She struggled against the hold. One more second. Just one more moment to envision Deacon's passionate exhale.

"Wait!" Kheyra cried. "Wait!"

"Stupid girl!"

"Let her go!" Deacon's voice thundered from behind them.

Morna gave Kheyra an astonished look before her lips spread into a grin. With a hand on her hip, she turned.

"My, my, Deacon Quincy. As I live and breathe. You still around, old chap?" She spoke in an accent equivalent to Deacon's.

Kheyra's heart thundered. She leapt in front of Morna to block her access to Deacon. "No! Deacon, get away!"

"I said, let her go," Deacon warned coolly.

Kheyra swung to face Deacon, who advanced toward them oblivious of danger. He didn't know how powerful Morna was, what she could do.

"No. No." She whirled and fell at Morna's feet. "Please. I'll do anything you say. Just let him go."

Morna kicked her, gazing from Kheyra to Deacon and back. "Isn't this intriguing? I'll be sure to leave you with one memory, my dear. You'll watch him die slowly and painfully."

Kheyra scrambled to her feet. Distance between Deacon and Morna shortened as both advanced toward one another.

"I didn't think you'd make it this long, old fella," Morna mocked. "Revenge is a potent fuel, isn't it? I should have killed you as soon as I realized you would never be a submissive." She chuckled. "I couldn't resist, though. Watching you break to pieces was far more entertaining. But it's gotten boring, and it's time to put you out of your misery."

Kheyra ran between them and slugged Morna with all her might. Aside from a nosebleed, Morna showed only irritation. Kheyra swung again, but Morna deflected the punch like a pesky fly. With both arms, she trapped Kheyra's shoulders and dragged her closer. She swung her around so Kheyra faced Deacon.

"Watch, darling. Watch him die." The fangs cutting into her skin hurt less than watching Deacon fly into a death trap.

"Stop!" Deacon bellowed.

"You stupid fool," Morna said, raising her arm.

"Don't!" Kheyra bit off.

Blue light flashed from the tips of Morna's fingers. It struck Deacon out of the air. He writhed on the ground in a fetal position, screaming. The agony on his face awakened Kheyra rage. She heaved, even as her energy drained. With all her strength, she elbowed Morna in the gut, which loosened the grip long enough to give Kheyra the chance to trip her. Grasping Morna's neck, she fell on top of her and buried her fangs into Morna's throat. Just a few drops would revive what Morna took.

"Kheyra..." Deacon called out brokenly.

With one move, Morna swatted Kheyra three feet down the pavement. Somehow, Deacon dragged himself back on his feet, but he was locked in place by energetic shackles more powerful than any steel.

Morna laughed, swaying toward Deacon. This could not be happening. Kheyra got on her feet and attacked again, aiming for Morna's back. The vampire matriarch extended a hand and picked Kheyra off the ground by the neck. She glared from one to

the other. Deacon's eyes were on Kheyra, his face twisted in a struggle to free himself from the bonds. Blood tears marred his face. Kheyra reached out to him.

"You know," Morna mocked, "I'm not entirely heartless. I might let you both die. What do you say, sweetheart?" she faced Kheyra. "I can even arrange it so you die at the same moment. A perfect soap opera ending. We might even turn it into a story some day, long after everyone's memory of you had been erased. They'll love it. Even Dargon. He is so delicious, thinking he is a dominant. Great diversion, watching him struggle with it every time I bring him down. You knew, didn't you, that I initiated him?" She rolled her eyes like she was bored. Kheyra choked for breath.

"Why are you doing this?"

"Why? Why? Why?" Morna mocked. "You think you could possibly understand my motives, you ungrateful little brat? You are only alive because of me. You and your brother and all others like you who were born on the wrong side of the dominant gene."

She turned toward Deacon, who pummeled the energetic walls of his prison. "I'm going to tear you apart," Deacon swore. If only he'd stop fighting so hard and preserve his strength.

"Let Deacon go," Kheyra choked. "He's done nothing to hurt you."

Morna gave her the strangest glare and set her back to the ground. Kheyra gasped for air. "What do you know about getting hurt? How much do you think you'd enjoy your precious submissiveness if you had to live your whole life as a man's slave?"

Her face twisted into a grimace. "Please, Morna, please, let him go," she imitated Kheyra's voice. "Don't you cry to me! You've never been raped, never been whipped for no reason at all, never been worked nearly to death, never had to beg to be fucked for a drop of blood to survive. You disgust me. You think you'd be walking around in silk robes if males still ruled Dattar? Think again, missy. A few of us managed to turn it around. We'd do anything to prevent it from happening again."

"By forcing everyone to live a lie?"

“Forcing a few for the benefit of millions? What do you think?”

“What does this have to do with Deacon, and why do you have to hide the existence of Earth vampires?”

Morna laughed. “When I was your age, a question like that would have gotten you drained. Wait a minute. A question like that will get you drained, you ungrateful little slut.”

“Stop!” Deacon yelled.

“Oh, isn’t he sweet? Giving his last breath to save a damsel in distress. I gather that means we are all ready for the grand finale duet?”

“Wait! At least tell me why,” Deacon yelled.

Morna released Kheyra and walked closer to Deacon. Kheyra stumbled to the ground, rubbing her neck.

Morna sneered at Deacon. “Don’t think you can buy yourself time, my boy. You’ve always been so predictable.”

Kheyra peeked toward the shuttle. If she could get onboard, she might be able to use the laser. They were programmed to respond only to the ship’s commander, but Kheyra could bypass the encryptions and change the priority codes into imminent threat mode. Then, the laser would operate under any command, as long as it was confirmed by a Dattaran palm print.

When she moved, every joint in her body tore with pain. Her vision blurred. As hard as she pushed, her muscles refused to move. From the effort, her chin quivered. She laid her forehead to the cool pavement and sucked in a few long breaths.

“How many others are there like me?” Deacon asked.

“Like you, my boy? Imagine our thrill to discover a planet peopled by puny mortals far inferior to our powers. We were just going to fatten up and live out the eternity in peace.”

Morna turned her back toward Kheyra. Taking a breath, Kheyra crawled toward the shuttle. If Morna kept talking a little longer, she just might make it.

“Then you came along,” Morna said, “full of yourself in your dominance. You were the first experiment. A failed one, unfortunately. We couldn’t repress your dominant gene when we turned you into a vampire. I should have killed you then, but keeping you alive kept me going. Eventually, we learned how to make females dominant and males submissive. I should thank you, actually. You inspired the liberation of a planet.”

Kheyra heard Deacon’s ebbing growl. His struggle gave her the strength to move, but she only managed a few inches before she had to take another series of breaths. Morna’s snicker drove her forward.

## Chapter Ten

Morna's trap burned like the sun, but Deacon's conscience hurt more. He deserved to burn for doubting Kheyra. Even though she behaved like Morna's accomplice, she offered her life to save his, for heaven's sake. She must have cared all along and he never allowed himself to accept it.

He ground his teeth hard, feeling the fangs. Let it burn. The more it burned, the more readily he suffered for a chance to see her escape. If anything happened to her, he might as well be dead.

He focused on Morna to distract her attention from Kheyra. *Oh, please, let her reach that ship and get out of here.*

"How long do you think you can keep the sham going?" he mocked.

Morna winked. "Oh, for-e-ver. Most take to the manipulation. Those who don't are tagged. Even then it takes a while before they do anything drastic. Kheyra was such a conformist that we underestimated her. No one ever escaped before."

He punched and pushed against the energetic shield until sweat broke out on his forehead.

"Deacon, Deacon." Morna shook her head. "You can't get out of there. The shield feeds on your emotional vibration. The more you fight to get out, the stronger it becomes."

"Bollocks," he spat. She played with the power of suggestion to weaken him into believing that he couldn't get out. She played mind games like that after she made him. If he believed the barrier wasn't there, he could get out. He threw his full body weight at it but he bounced back. The burning worsened. He checked on Kheyra from the corner of his eyes. She progressed too bloody slowly.

“Go ahead! Fight it! Every time you do, your energy drains. You’re going to die in a lot of pain, and your girlfriend there is going to see it all.”

“Not on your life!” he swore.

She pointed a finger at him and winked. “You always did keep the drama going. I’ll give you that.”

Deacon took a breath. If what she said was true, if the shield really fed on his energy, then the only way to fight it would be not to fight it at all. If he just stood without resistance, the shield might weaken.

Before he could test his theory, Morna glanced over her shoulder and spotted Kheyra’s advance toward the shuttle. In one leap, she reached Kheyra and dragged her up.

Deacon punched into the barrier. More pain tore through him in instant retaliation. “Let her go! This started with you and me, let’s finish it that way.”

“Deacon, my boy, this was never about you. You just had to believe you mattered that much. You are nothing.”

When she lunged for Kheyra’s neck, the pain cut him off at the knees. He fell. Kheyra reached for him, her head swaying back as Morna consumed her vitality. It was his fault. All of this. If he hadn’t followed her, Morna would have taken her back to wherever the hell Dattar was. Eventually, he would have searched for her, and when he found every trace of her gone from the face of the earth, the pain would have caught up with him.

“Damn yoooo!” he cried, belting out a series of punches. Even on his knees, he’d never give up, not until fighting meant nothing anymore. Kheyra’s eyes were still on him. She managed a smile, so tender and fragile that it wrapped around him like the touch of fairy wings. Kheyra was his fairy. For one night and one day, she made the dream come true. The dream of belonging, so pure and strong that nothing could deny their mutual possession.

Holding his eyes on her, he went back to the moments they shared. He had no time for guilt, nor rage, nor anger. It was time to let everything go and remember only what counted the most. He'd denied the truth long enough. All the while he and Kheyra were together, loving each other with their bodies, he denied that such grace was possible. After so many years of mistrust, he knew no better. She was right there, giving herself with all her body and soul, and he pushed her away. The truest blessing he'd ever been given, the only blessing, and he couldn't let it in.

Morna stopped the feeding. "Come on, Deacon. I promised the gal you'd die together. You wouldn't want her to fly off into oblivion without you, would you?"

He was going nowhere without Kheyra, not even to his death.

"Kheyra!"

Her eyes opened and spilled out emotion. His heart melted. The burning eased. As long as she looked at him like that, he had hope. Hope was a good thing even when a breath away from death. It filled him with new air. He could soar and hold her against his heart and tell her that nothing was lost. Even now, they could be happy that they found each other. It was never too late to be happy. It couldn't be.

Such intense joy overcame him that he surged to his feet. New strength revived him.

"That's my boy. I could always count on your temper."

"Kheyra, listen to me..." The emotion choked him.

"Listen to him, honey. It's the last thing you'll hear," Morna added.

Deacon laughed. What he had to tell Kheyra, he'd say for her ears alone. Such things should be confessed in private, or the magic would be stolen. He'd whisper in her ear how much more he wanted her now than before. The need to offer his heart made his feet so light that he thought he just might lift up and fly. She could use him for her pleasure any time of the day or night. He belonged to her in every way, and nothing could hold him back anymore. With eyes only on Kheyra, he stepped toward her. This



time, nothing blocked his way. The lightness in his heart broke down all barriers and melted away all pain.

Morna huffed and fired another energy shock, but Deacon kept his gaze on Kheyra, and the blue light dissolved around him like mist. Morna dropped Kheyra and rushed him.

He laughed, leaping into the air to meet her head-on. She swung, but he caught and immobilized both her arms. Although Morna's strength far exceeded his when she made him, he'd grown stronger in her absence, and without her energetic tricks, her strength could not match his by a long shot.

"I'd say you do a bit too much underestimating, old gal. For one thing, people on Earth change—even vampires."

"You're going to pay for this!"

"For this? I'd be glad to." He twisted her neck and bit deep into her throat. Her blood spilled into him with euphoric regeneration. After all, this was the blood that made him. Once long ago, when Morna meant the world to him, he'd hungered for such nectar, and she denied him. Now, he'd take it all.

Morna squirmed in his hold, but the effort only fueled his need for Kheyra. She too needed Morna's blood. Later, he'd let her feast on him until she could drink no more.

With Morna imprisoned in his steel embrace, he carried her to Kheyra's motionless form.

"Kheyra? Kheyra!"

"I'll tear you apart," he grunted at Morna when Kheyra made no movement. "Get down on your knees." When she did not comply, he kicked her feet out and shoved her to the ground, dragging her neck to the pavement next to Kheyra's face. He straddled Morna's back to keep her pinned while he positioned Kheyra's head close to Morna's neck.

"Drink," he commanded. "I know you can hear me."

Kheyra moaned, sniffed then bit down.

He could almost feel the power rushing into her. It was like watching someone being born, only this was Kheyra, being delivered to him. He'd never let her go again. Beneath him, Morna's struggle faded.

"Don't stop," he instructed. While holding Kheyra, he prostrated himself over Morna's back and bit on the other side of her neck. They had to drain her almost completely before they'd be safe.

Kheyra's arm wrapped around his waist. He could have screamed. Being alive meant nothing unless he could feel her caress. Somehow, he'd prove to her that he deserved her love, but first, they had to take care of Morna. When the matriarch's heartbeat weakened, Deacon faced Kheyra. Her love-filled eyes stopped his breath.

"You okay?" he asked, trembling. He came so close to losing her, and it wasn't over yet. He didn't trust Morna for a second, even to loosen his grip. She could easily fake a slow pulse.

He nodded toward the shuttle. "Can you rig that thing to self-destruct in the atmosphere?"

"They'll come looking for her. They'll send others."

"Better than her going back and returning with reinforcements. We'll have to take the risk."

Kheyra leapt to her feet. "I'd have to use the anti-override command encryption. It could be tricky."

"Hurry. Anyone could happen by."

Kheyra ran up the shuttle ramp. He picked up Morna and dragged her into the ship. The interior walls were made of light panels of swirling designs. One flowed into another as if energy, not matter, held together the construction. He found his way to the control module where Kheyra typed onto a light panel. Her fingers spread wide and fluttered in midair. Only Morna's labored breathing disturbed the silence. Kheyra's

fingers moved faster while her hypnotic stare focused on the light panel straight ahead. At last, she let out a breath.

"Done! The liftoff countdown has begun. We gotta get out of here."

"And she won't be able to override it if she comes to."

"Not without the decryption key," she said. "Let's go."

He dropped Morna and ran after Kheyra to a safe distance from the shuttle. She checked her wristwatch.

"Three, two, one."

The hatch closed, and the shuttle lifted off. Deacon grasped Kheyra's hand. The shuttle gained height, and when it hovered far above them no bigger than a star, it disappeared in a streak of blue light.

"Wait!" Kheyra said, still looking at the sky.

The firmament came ablaze with the fireworks of blue shooting stars.

Kheyra sighed. "She's gone." She continued to stare at the sky, though, as if she didn't know what else to do.

In the sudden stillness, a kind of non-reality set in. Nothing seemed what it was, except for one thing.

Deacon pulled on Kheyra's arm until she turned toward him. He kissed her hand and cupped her cheek. She was really here. He ran his fingers through her short flaxen strands, a part of him still in disbelief that this amazing woman stood within his reach with that love-struck look in her eyes.

"Who are you, lady?" he uttered.

She smiled. "Kheyra Baal, vampire, planet Dattar."

His chest swelled. "I love you, Kheyra Baal."

Her eyebrows drew together in doubt, but when he opened his mouth to speak more, she crossed a finger over his lips.

"Hmmm." She rubbed her chin. "I'm not sure I believe you."

"Come home with me, and I'll prove it."

She shoved at his shoulder, feigning resistance. "No, sir. You'll just have your way with me again."

God, he wanted to scream in delight at the sound of her mirth. He'd never given her a chance to be playful because he was too terrified at how easily her passion stripped him of control. He'd been afraid for his heart, his mind, his sanity, but he had nothing to fear anymore.

Deacon went down on one knee. All mirth fled her face. Her chin quivered. Her shoulders shook. He placed his hand, palm up in front of her feet, like she once did.

"Kheyra Baal, I am yours in every way. Use my body. Command me with yours. Take my submission, and let it give you joy. All that I have, I offer freely."

"Ohh," she let out, pulling on his shoulders until he rose. She threw her arms around him and stretched on tiptoe to kiss his cheeks, his eyes, his lips.

"I love you, Deacon. I love you so." She trembled all over, and he hugged her so hard that every last tremor became his own.

"I've got you. You're all mine now, fairy love. I'm never letting you go. Do you hear? Never."

If he held her any tighter, he might break a bone but he was in a hurry to prove he meant every word of his vow. All shadows of suspicion about her place in his life had to be forever wiped out of Kheyra's body and heart. She had to know that he was hers as much as she was his.

As soon as he lifted off the ground, her legs wrapped around his back. She stirred only when his feet touched the roof of the penthouse. Undrapping herself off him, Kheyra stood, her vulnerable gaze drifting to the perimeter wall.

"Don't think about what happened here before," he offered.

She gave him a girl's blushing smile. "How could I forget? You said it was my turn to give."

"You're right." He swung her into his arms like a bridegroom. "It's time for you to give me leave to love you. All of you."

He carried her to the threshold and punched in the codes that opened the door. He did the same only last night, yet the whole world had changed since then. Every step, Kheyra's gaze held his in astonished disbelief. Last night, he expected her to prove herself. This time, he would show her he was for real.

He sat her on the bed. The shutters rattled closed. All around the room, he lit candles, at least two dozen of them. Shimmering golden flames danced over the walls but Kheyra's eyes never left him. When he approached, she stood, her hands clasped stiffly in front of her.

Deacon put his arms on her shoulders. "You're shivering. Why?"

Blushing, she averted her eyes.

"Fairy love, tell me."

"It feels like the first time," she whispered as if afraid that someone would hear.

He cupped both sides of her chin and kissed her cheek. "It is the first time you're going to feel how much I love you."

She shivered again. "Deacon, don't you think—"

He put a finger over her lips and shook his head. "You don't have to think now. Just feel that I am yours."

Although she swallowed and nodded in agreement, questions and doubts still lingered on her face.

"Kiss me," he said.

Her lips shivered over his before she summoned the boldness to claim him. When she did, Deacon moaned, opening his mouth in invitation. Kheyra's body pressed against his with the intent to possess. His lips moved over hers in slow exploration. He never managed to be slow and gentle with her before because lust drove him out of

control as soon as Kheyra touched him. Not this time. This had to be so much more than lust.

Breaking away, he brought one of her hands to his heart and held it there with both of his. "I am yours. I am yours," he vowed.

A slow, triumphant grin sent a twinkle into her eye. "Prove it!"

Oh, he intended to, only not in the way she expected.

He compliantly lifted his arms to let her pull his shirt over his head. With a greedy sigh, she ran both hands down his chest, kissing along the way. When she snapped open his pants, he sucked in a breath. Before he could release it, she lowered to her knees to free his legs from the confines of the fabric. Her tongue brushed over the tip of his penis. She grasped it snugly in her hand only to let it go. She straightened and stood watching, her eyes as wide as a kid's in a candy store, unsure of what to taste first.

Deacon's mouth watered, but he let her watch. After all, he was trying to make a point.

Suddenly impatient, Kheyra tugged the hem of her shirt but Deacon stopped her. He'd be the one doing the undressing, only not yet. With the back of his hand, he caressed the hard nipple that protruded against the fabric. Kheyra mimicked the move against the tip of his cock. The light touch heated his insides so he pulled her close to nestle himself against the apex of her legs. She gasped at the unexpected contact.

Deacon got rid of her shirt. She wore nothing under it. She didn't need to. Her breasts stood firm with no support, especially now that she was aroused. Before he had the chance to do anything else, she wrapped her arms around his waist and pressed her nipples to his skin. He ground his teeth in a battle of willpower. He had to remain patient. This was their first time together in body, heart and soul, and he would make love to her body, heart and soul.

Kheyra misinterpreted his pause as impatience, so she separated enough to give him room to remove her pants. When he did, he took his turn admiring her body.

The curves of her hips pulled his gaze to her mound before he lurked up at the darkening shade of her rigid nipples. They glistened in candlelight, waiting to be sucked.

He hoisted her up until her pussy rode just above his cock, ready to be impaled at his command.

"Ohhh!" Kheyra gasped, wrapping her legs around him. He took her to the bed, got on top and laid her in the middle. Her legs tightened around him when he took her mouth. His cock rubbed her clit. She tore away from the kiss so she could suck in urgent breaths of air. Deacon shifted lower until Kheyra's nipples arched up at him in offering. Her whole body was his for the taking. Nothing stood between them anymore. He had all the time in the world to do with her exactly as he pleased, and pleased she certainly would be.

Her hands roped through his hair, beckoning him to feast upon her flesh. He licked the ridge of the areola, right where the pearly flesh turned into a raw nub that could drive a man insane. Lower, his cock teased a different nub. He could feel it swell, and along with it, Kheyra's whole body tightened like a violin string.

He sucked in the nipple then let it go. "Relax, love." He sucked in the other one, toying with it before he left it alone to snare Kheyra's gasp right into his mouth.

"Relax," he coaxed again, kissing her neck. He had to kiss every dimple and shade. With the tenderest touch, he caressed the small hairs on her upper arm, making her squirm.

"Deacon... I can't."

"You can't what?"

"Relax," she bit off, lifting her pussy for a tighter contact with his cock.

She was right. Getting her overstimulated would only force him to take her. He had to slow this down, so he separated his genitals from hers completely.

"No! Come back!" She reached for his hardness so desperately he let her grasp it for a second before he took her hand away. She writhed like a feral cat.

"Shhh." He kissed her belly. "I'll give you everything you want, I promise. Relax for me, darling. Let go completely. Let me make sweet, slow love to you."

He kissed the bottom of her rib cage. Her arms dropped down to her sides. "Good. That's it." On all fours, Deacon made a path up her body. His heavy cock hung above her pussy, eager to be a part of her, but if he let her feel it now, they'd both go crazy. He wanted her like putty in his hands before he penetrated her.

Her wide bedroom eyes held his gaze when she let out a sigh and the lustful tension in her body gave way. Heavy with submission, her eyelids drooped closed and a satisfied smile drifted across her face.

His hand covered her breast when his mouth enveloped hers. Kheyra's responsive kiss simmered with desire, yet she stayed relaxed. For the first time, she'd truly surrendered without going through a tug of lust between two out-of-control bodies. Kheyra was soft, pliant and totally his.

He lowered his hips to hers, joining their bodies waists to toes. A deep moan issued from Kheyra as her feet hooked to his and her thighs fell open. Deacon lowered to his elbows so that her nipples scraped the hair on his chest.

"Ahhh," she emitted, locking her arms around his waist. She looked up at him with tear-filled eyes.

He shifted his hips to slide his cock to her opening. Kheyra's mouth gaped in a silent scream.

"I love you," Deacon vowed and sank inside her all the way.

A glimmer he'd never seen before reflected in Kheyra's gaze. Tears welled in his eyes. At last, she realized the truth about his surrender.

"You're mine," she declared.

He moved against her in an eternal duet of possession and belonging. "Forever."



## About the Author

Erin Aislinn was raised in Croatia by a single mother who loved to travel. On her first trip abroad, at the age of 10, Erin visited New York City. She so fell in love with America that on the last day of the trip, she locked herself in the hotel's lobby restroom and refused to get on the airport bus. During the hour it took Erin's mother to convince her to come out, Erin vowed she'd be back some day. Nine years later, she was accepted to a small college in Iowa, where she majored in literature and graduated Summa Cum Laude, Valedictorian.

Ever since she had first dreamed of America, Erin has also been fascinated by vampires. In writing *The Night of Maya*, she has finally realized the dream of creating a vampire world of her own.

Erin now lives in Southern California with her husband.

Erin welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at [www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com).

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The Night of Maya



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