

Loose Id

Hunting Hawk

JADE JAMES

HUNTING HAWK

Jade James

Loose Id.[®]

Warning

This e-book contains sexually explicit scenes and adult language and may be considered offensive to some readers. Loose Id® e-books are for sale to adults ONLY, as defined by the laws of the country in which you made your purchase. Please store your files wisely, where they cannot be accessed by under-aged readers.

* * * * *

This book contains explicit sexual content, graphic language, and situations that some readers may find objectionable (blood play/feeding).

Hunting Hawk

Jade James

This e-book is a work of fiction. While reference might be made to actual historical events or existing locations, the names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Published by
Loose Id LLC
1802 N Carson Street, Suite 212-2924
Carson City NV 89701-1215
www.loose-id.com

Copyright © April 2007 by Jade James

All rights reserved. This copy is intended for the purchaser of this e-book ONLY. No part of this e-book may be reproduced or shared in any form, including, but not limited to printing, photocopying, faxing, or emailing without prior written permission from Loose Id LLC.

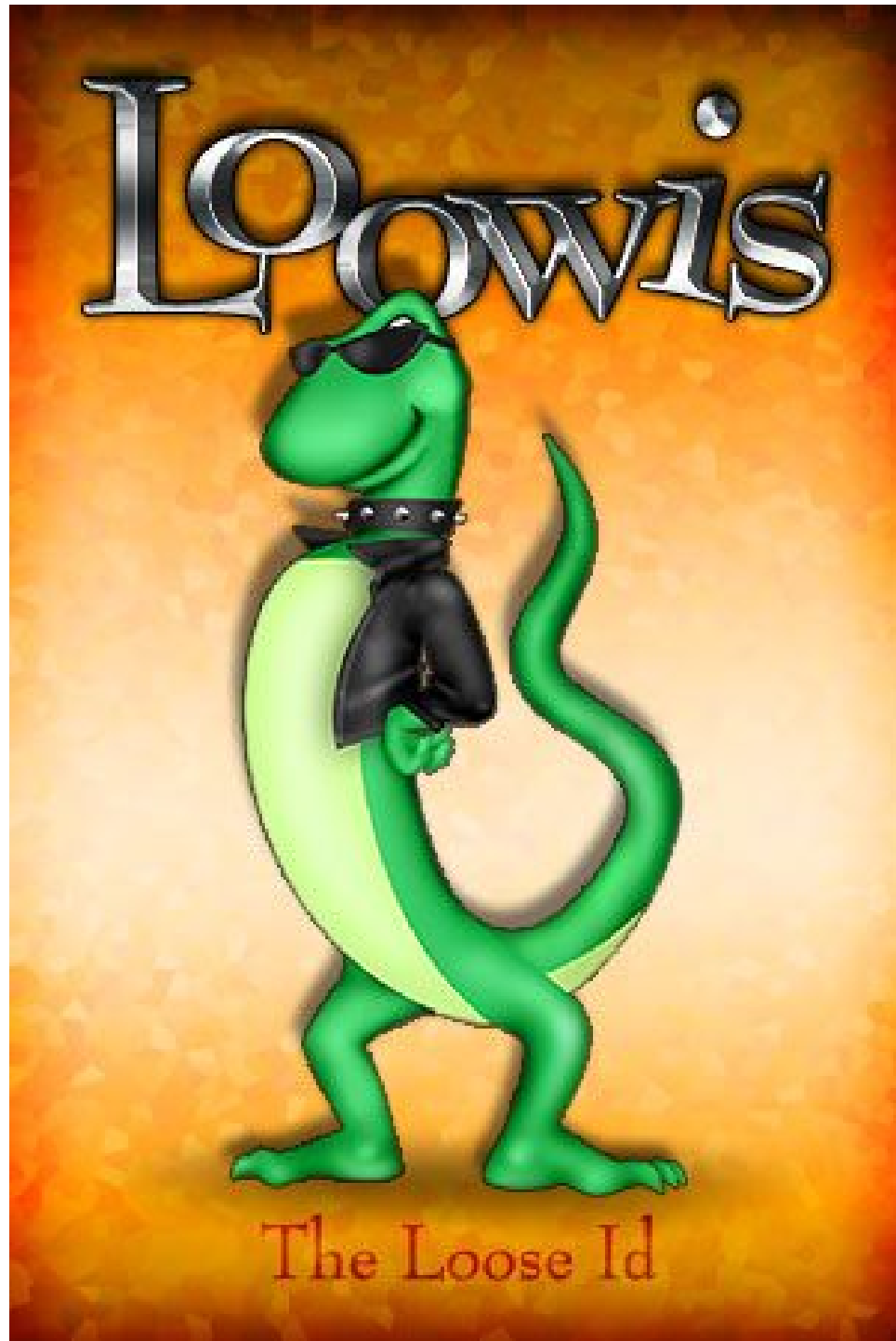
ISBN 978-1-59632-451-0

Available in Adobe PDF, HTML, MobiPocket, and MS Reader

Printed in the United States of America

Editor: Vincent Diamond

Cover Artist: Cover April Martinez



www.loose-id.com

Prologue

Year 2060

President Robert Lee opened the door, keeping it ajar as he peered through the opening. The news media surrounded the platform, tense bodies standing close as they waited anxiously, hoping to get a question answered by the President of the United States.

Robert wouldn't answer questions ... not yet. Not until everyone knew that from this day on everything would change.

"President Lee, you're on."

He adjusted his tie and took a deep breath, steadying his resolve before swinging the doors open. Robert blinked, adjusting to the camera flashes and lighting in the room. He walked to the platform, striding confidently, careful to show no doubt to any reporter. Nothing would deter him from his task.

"The treaty has been signed before Congress. Today is the first day for a new future. The law has been made official," Robert stated, speaking loud and clear. "From this day forth, vampires, werewolves, were-panthers, warlocks, shape shifters, and any other paranormal creatures are to be treated as equals."

Murmurs erupted as the Secret Service tightened their positions, moving closer to him. Robert put his hand up, silencing the room.

“They are to be treated as equals in all things,” he emphasized. “If a paranormal creature breaks the law, then they will be treated as any human would.”

“You have the capabilities to hold a vampire or werewolf in handcuffs?” a white-haired old man asked, his blue eyes bearing down, pinned on Robert.

“Before this treaty was signed, our scientists were hard at work, inventing supernatural measures of control. If a paranormal breaks the law, then they will be treated as any other human would.”

“What kind of measures?” another reporter asked.

“A full detailed report will be available tomorrow evening,” Robert replied. “I want to add that a special ops unit, consisting of paranormals and humans with exceptional abilities, is currently in the stages of being formed. Their job will be to uphold the treaty. Units will be placed throughout the states. The United States will treat everyone with kindness and compassion.”

“But the monsters are not even human,” another reporter venomously sputtered.

Robert turned, eyeing the young reporter who had shouted the derogatory remark. “Their blood is the same color as ours, and they bleed just as we do. That is enough for me. This broadcast is over. I refuse to answer questions that have no value.”

Robert turned, nodded to his staff, and exited the room quickly. The world was going to change, and until his dying breath, he would make sure everyone had a fair chance at life.

Chapter One

Hawk Taurin peered into the forest, hoping a run before work would still the rush of anger burning through his veins. The air smelled like impending rain, the ground already moist with water. It was still an hour before sundown, a perfect time to let nature take over.

The president's peace treaty had been signed over five years ago. Not much had changed for his kind in the past years. His gut tightened at the thought. The paranormal creatures were careful in many aspects. Some revealed themselves openly, confident in the president's decreed law; others chose to stay hidden, careful to trust no one.

No one could blame them. The United Nations had cut ties with the president, forming their own kind of government, headed by groups of scientists who were quickly uncovering his kind and were finding more ways to expose every paranormal creature hidden.

And still there were those who Hawk had arrested or killed, hoping the scientists would take it as a hint, backing down from their resolve. But the scientists continued capturing, torturing, and sometimes killing the paranormals. Scientists who had banded against the president and his treaty, and joined forces with other humans, their mission was to kill every paranormal creature in existence.

Leader to the paranormal ops unit based in Washington, Hawk worked the most gruesome of shifts. The night was reserved for the more experienced ops. That was when most of the creatures who delighted in torturing humans and paranormals alike made their presence known.

Hawk believed in what the president stood for, and wanted to see the world developed into a planet where unity arose among all. His dreams were idealistic, perhaps even bordering on fantasy.

But he wasn't a fool. The world wasn't the same place as when humans had ruled it. Everything had changed with the discovery of the first paranormal. Hatred filled some humans as they looked at the supernatural with fear in their eyes. Others stared with curiosity, and most simply chose to remain ignorant and continue as if the world had never changed.

Hawk felt the beast in him push out, his bones snapping, changing to his other form. His face was the last to change, the mouth forming into a long snout, the teeth growing longer and more canine.

Hawk ran in his wolf skin, trying to bleed the anger that came with his job. He felt free when he ran ... free to do anything and everything. He had no worries when the energy took over and he became beast more than man.

He ran for another half-hour, until some of the anger drained away. Returning to his cabin, he quickly changed, his bones rearranging back to human form as he walked inside. He dressed in his standard uniform, a sleek black Kevlar one-piece suit.

Hawk holstered his weapons before leaving the security of his home. There was an important meeting he had to attend at the office. He would be meeting his newest team member today.

* * * * *

Eva Long ran into the building that housed the paranormal ops offices, located in the heart of Washington DC.

She was soaking wet, the rain coming out of nowhere, pouring down in buckets. She reached around and squeezed the excess water from her hair.

Nothing seemed to be going right for her. Her nights were filled with battling a vampire who wanted her for his own. The attacks were becoming more frequent but she would rather die than give in. She was afraid to admit it, but it was taking its toll on her.

Eva pushed the thoughts behind her and tried to deal with the problem at hand. It wasn't the first impression she wanted to make, but she would have to meet her new boss drenched. Going back home and changing was not an option, since she was already late to the meeting. Seven uniforms had arrived at her apartment yesterday by special messenger, along with her new ID and a letter. The letter explained the time and place she was to meet her new superior. She handed the security guard her new ID badge and waited for the guard to scan her card. The identification cards were now encrypted with the bearer's fingerprints, a measure of security that hadn't been available sixty years earlier.

"You're new here. I'm going to have to log in your weapon," the guard said as he passed her badge to her.

Eva nodded, clipping her badge to her suit and then handing her weapon to him. Her attention was dragged away from the guard to the tall man who walked up behind him. His piercing blue eyes were a pleasant contrast to his black hair.

"My name is Cree Montero. I'm the Director of the Paranormal Ops Unit and I'm also a were-panther."

Eva shook his hand. "I'm Eva Long. A were-panther, huh? I've never met one."

"I know who you are. And were-panthers are a somewhat extinct. There only a few of us left. I'll take you upstairs to your commander's office and give you a little history on the type of work we do."

The guard handed her the weapon and she holstered it. "Lead the way."

"The unit's last assignment was a direct order from the president himself. They were ordered to assassinate a scientist who was in the process of developing a gas bomb that would wipe out an entire city in seconds. The scientist joined up with the Prophecy, a group of crazed warlocks," Cree stated as he pressed the elevator button. "The ops were sent in and succeeded in their assignment, wiping out the entire laboratory in under ten minutes."

"Impressive," Eva replied as they entered the elevator.

"Very. Our teams are the best and they've gone through extensive training."

"How many paranormals are on this particular team?"

"We have five, headed by the best commander I've ever known," Cree replied. "But sometimes the assignment calls for more ops, and that's when we get creative."

"What types of weapons are supplied to the unit?"

"Your commander will give you details on that later on. Elijah recommended you highly."

"I admit he is a very dear friend to me, but I wouldn't be here if he didn't believe I could do the job."

Cree smiled. "Elijah has given me a very detailed report on your abilities, Ms. Long."

They reached their destination and Cree waved his hand, signaling the way. "Your commander will fill you in on the new assignment."

Cree stopped on the first office. "Here it is. If you need anything, I'm in or at the last office to right."

"Thank you, Mr. Montero."

"Call me Cree, and good luck."

“Thank you.” Eva turned away from Cree and glanced at the black and white lettered sign that read *Paranormal Ops Unit*. This was where she would meet her commander. Eva took a deep breath, and knocked.

“Come in.”

The deep voice vibrated through the metal. She reached down and turned the knob.

“I’m sorry I’m late but ...” Eva said before looking at the man sitting behind his desk. A brooding gaze met her own. Her breath left her with a startling force. She lost her concept of time and her train of thought. Shock made her limbs immovable. Her mouth went dry with anxiety as memories she would rather forget came rushing forth with startling clarity.

Eva was slammed back in time ... to a point in her life she’d thought was deeply buried and forgotten. She blinked her eyes in an effort to get a hold of her emotions. But nothing would dispel the image before her.

“Hawk,” she stated loudly, forcing his name from her mouth.

His black eyes remained glued to her, his lips twisting in an angry sneer. The muscle in his jaw ticked rapidly. His shoulder-length black hair was loose, enhancing his high cheekbones. His skin reminded her of chocolate, still as tempting as it had been years before. The years had done him justice; his upper body rippled with muscles, his face looking roughly sexier now. A goatee graced his jaw and upper lip. The hair made him look more like a biker than a law enforcer.

Eva calculated his age to be thirty-three. Her eyes roved over him hungrily, ingraining everything to memory. It was an instinctive reaction she couldn’t have stopped, even if she wanted to. His nostrils were flaring, and Eva knew Hawk could scent her.

“Eva.” he growled back, his gaze roaming over her body.

Suddenly she felt naked, too exposed in her wet suit.

He had been her heart and soul, everything she needed in a man. And at eighteen, she had thought him the ideal man. Though her brother, Bram’s, friend first, Hawk had come to

her when she desperately needed someone to talk to, to explain how angry she was at the world ... at God, over her parents death.

She had treasured their relationship, never had that valuable one-on-one link with any other person. It was unique to her, to have someone she could share her entire world with.

And then it was all taken away. She had become completely alone, losing almost everyone she cared for greatly. Her life had been shredded into pieces; her heart had felt as if it had been ripped out. All because Hawk wouldn't take a stand in what he believed ... in her.

Hawk clenched his teeth, grinding the enamels together, concentrating on that little bit of pain instead of the scent of her surrounding him.

Ten fucking years had passed since he had run from what he wanted most in the world. He had gone to such desperate lengths to keep his promise to Bram, and with every step he took from her, his heart had collapsed with hurt and rage.

Hawk had left his pack, his home, and even asked to be reassigned to another unit, away from Eva and Bram. Because she was his one and only weakness, and he'd had no chance in hell of keeping his promise if he had stayed around.

And still to this day, he regretted his decision. Because no woman had ever measured up to Eva. Though he had never marked her, she was his.

It wasn't the kiss, though the contact had been earth shattering. His wolf side had screamed for him to take her, to mark her as his mate. But it had been so much more than that. It was the laughter in her eyes when she saw him. The way she had confided her hopes and dreams to him. It was the way she looked at him, as if no one else mattered in the world but them.

Back then she had been lovely, her hair short, her skin the color of caramel, the hint of her Latin heritage showing in the way she spoke ... the way she looked. But now she was exquisite. Her curly hair was wrapped in a bun, wispy loose strands curling around her face.

Her lips were drawn into an adorable pout, as if remembering their past was just as painful for her as it was him. Her eyebrows were drawn forward, giving emphasis to her honey-colored eyes. She looked as out of it as he felt, surprised that they would ever meet again.

He couldn't take his eyes off of her. Her nipples were beaded tight, pressing against the fabric of her suit. The material looked slick. The thunder showers must have caught her unaware. And now he was the one ensnared, trapped in a sexual vision of what her breasts would look and taste like.

Hawk gripped the edge of his desk hard, his nails attempting to break the steel as he willed his cock to lose its erection, as hard a feat now as it had been in their past. He had taken great measures in being careful around her, always maintaining a safe distance as friends, when all he really wanted to do was fuck her and take her as his mate.

"Close the door."

Eva jumped, then flushed a beautiful dark shade before kicking the door closed.

"You were the last person I was expecting to see." The words sounded stupid and hurried. He wanted to take them back, but didn't.

"Oh, and my heart is broken over that, Hawk," she replied, the sarcasm evident in her voice.

He let go of his desk, rising to his feet. "What are you doing here, Eva?" Hawk asked as he walked around his desk slowly.

She swallowed, her body snapping into a tense stance. He caught the telltale sign before her body stiffened further with resolve.

"I'm your new recruit."

Chapter Two

“You’re my new recruit?” Hawk scoffed, the mocking evident in his voice.

Eva’s eyes narrowed angrily at the sound of his voice. But instead of arguing with him, she simply replied, “Yes.”

“Last I heard, you had your head buried in your books.”

It took so much power not to go off on his ass. Eva breathed in, holding tight to the energy she wanted to release in anger. “Funny you should say that. I haven’t heard a fucking word from you in ten years.”

“I had my reasons for leaving.”

“I have my information on why you chose to leave. Let’s concentrate on why I’m here, Hawk.”

“What qualifications could you possibly have to join an elite team designed by the president himself?”

The arrogance in his voice set her teeth on edge.

“My file has been forwarded to your office, detailing everything.”

“Why don’t you just enlighten me? Your file hasn’t come across my desk yet.”

“I have a master’s in forensic science, a bachelor’s in police studies, and I’ve trained with Elijah Marquez. He’s ... ”

“I know exactly who he is,” Hawk replied harshly. “What do you expect to bring to the team?”

Eva crossed her arms, needing something to do with herself. All she really wanted to do was deck him for being so fucking harsh.

Why did this have to be so hard?

“If you know who Elijah is, then you should already know that he’s the best when it comes to assault training.”

“Last I heard, he wasn’t training mere humans.”

She shrugged, not allowing his snide remarks to get to her. He would find out what she truly was soon enough. Until then, she would give him nothing. “I’m good with a knife, and an expert with a gun.”

A knock on the door interrupted their conversation.

Eva hadn’t thought to move out of the way, until Hawk stood inches away, slowly reaching around her, placing his hand on the knob. She bit her bottom lip, refusing to give him any reaction to his closeness as he brushed her nipples with his chest.

She felt her chest tighten at his body heat and took a step to the left, allowing him space to open the door.

Hawk turned the knob, pulling the door open. A tall man stood on the other side, a file tucked underneath his arm, his face oddly familiar. She couldn’t help but notice how arresting his features were. She studied him as a memory buried came to the forefront of her mind.

His blue eyes were more of an aqua color, his black hair a closely cropped military style. He had a long scar on the side of his face, running from ear to chin. But the mark didn’t detract from his striking looks.

“Morning, Hawk. I was supposed to bring this in earlier.”

“It would have helped if you did, Jesse. I wouldn’t have been taken by surprise by the identity of our new recruit.”

“And let me guess ... ” Jesse assessed Eva with his startling eyes before sliding closer to her.

Eva laughed at the angry look that crossed Hawk’s face. “My name is Eva Long,” she stated, holding her hand out to Jesse.

“Eva, as in the one and only lady my brother would salivate for?” Jesse took her hand and brushed a kiss across her knuckles.

“*Dios*, Jesse. It’s been a long time since I’ve seen you. You’ve definitely grown up into quite an attractive man.”

“Attractive as in you’ve forgotten all about my big brother and will perhaps consider going out with me?”

“You’ve delivered the file. Get out!” Hawk replied.

“Fine, I’m out of here. Welcome to the team. You can come to me for anything.” Jesse laughed as he walked out.

Hawk slammed the door shut and walked over to Eva. He was scenting her, his nostrils flaring while he sniffed. She couldn’t help but feel a bit nervous around him. Elijah had been thorough in providing his information, giving her an in-depth look into the paranormal world. And a wolf scented when he wanted to discover desire or deceit. Eva forced jittery nerves away.

“Does Bram know you’re here?”

“I’m twenty-eight years old, Hawk. Bram has no say so in my life.”

“I want it stated on record that I’m against this. Who sent you?”

“You take your orders directly from the president. You know who sent me.”

“He never mentioned it was you.”

“It’s all in the file, Hawk, and it isn’t my fault you didn’t have the information until now. No one knows better than you and I that our past is better left forgotten.”

He heard the pain in her voice, the loneliness of the years etched into her tone and fought the need to take her into his arms and apologize for the past. Hawk fisted his hands, fighting the need to go to her.

He had made his decision based on what he thought was best for her at the time. He was always a sure man, on point, never second guessing himself. But Eva’s reappearance changed it all.

It was too dangerous for her to be here, for so many reasons. The majority of his team were paranormals. She was just a human, a female one at that. The thought was barbaric, but he was thinking about her life more than anything else.

“I’m against this in so many ways,” Hawk repeated, tension filling his muscles.

“I heard you the first time, and what you’re against isn’t any of my concern.”

She was hiding something from him. He could see it in her eyes. The words she spoke were tough, hurt echoing her tone, but her gaze wavered nervously as if to shield something unknown to him.

“There’s a conference room, three doors to your right. The team should be arriving in fifteen minutes for details on our latest assignment. I’ll meet you there.”

Eva’s eyes rounded in surprise but she covered it up quickly, shielding her emotions. She nodded, leaving his office quickly.

Hawk turned, picked up the phone and dialed Elijah’s number. Besides being a mastermind in training recruits, the vampire and Cree were the only one two who kept a database on all members who joined the paranormal special ops.

“Elijah, speaking.”

“Hawk here. You have some explaining to do.”

“I’ve been waiting for your call.”

Hawk eased his grip on the telephone. Breaking it wasn’t going to help his situation.
“Why is she here?”

“By the word *she*, I can assume you mean Eva. She’s perfectly qualified to be assigned to your team. Her skills are far superior to any other fighter I’ve trained.”

“That doesn’t answer my question. For a human to be assigned to this team, you have to have superior skills in all areas. And still their strength does not equal a paranormals.”

“Cree assigned her to our unit. I recommended her. She’s proved herself in all areas.”

“Cut the bullshit, Elijah. We have been friends far too long for you to dance around me. What aren’t you telling me?”

“You’re right. I’m withholding information.”

“I can also assume that you know we have a history?”

“Yes. I know about the past that links the both of you.”

“What is she hiding?”

“As her friend, it isn’t my place to tell you what she’s hiding. But as a member of your team, I will speak. As you might already know, Bram is a member of the ops team based in New York.”

“You must know that we were team members back then. Bram’s parents were both human,” Hawk replied. “Did you ever find where he got this ability from?”

“No trace in the parents. We all assume he was born with his power. The New York team’s next mission was to capture or kill a rogue vampire who had kidnapped a human scientist working for our intelligence department. Her name was Katrina Hunt. Bram went in, and succeeded in capturing Derek Festus. But the bastard remained elusive, never providing Katrina’s whereabouts.”

“Go on.”

“During his transfer to a special metal penitentiary, a band of rogues rigged a bomb on a manhole. How they knew of the route we would take is still under investigation, but we do suspect we have a spy in our midst. Nevertheless, Derek escaped and, in the process, killed two of our operatives.”

“What does any of this have to do with Eva?”

“You were never a patient man, Hawk. Derek had his insane mindset on Bram. In his mind, Bram had completed a feat no one else ever had. With the help of Derek’s well-placed spy, he soon knew where Bram lived.”

Hawk took a deep breath already knowing what turn this story would take. “What happened to her?”

“Derek was waiting for Bram at his place, when Eva entered. Her brother hadn’t arrived yet, but the bastard had already decided he would pay him back by getting to her.”

“What did he do, Elijah? What the fuck did he do?” Hawk whispered. He could almost taste the burn of revenge.

“He kidnapped her and in between torturing her, he drained her to the point of death and forced her to drink his vile blood. Two days later, Bram found her in a run down home, chained in the basement. It was too late. She had already turned. Her only hope was me.”

“You saved her.”

“She survived when all chances were against her. It took me six months to set her mind straight. She was a fucking mess, trapped in a safe zone in her mind. I couldn’t blame her for not wanting to come back to reality. It was another year before she learned how to control her hunger. After that, she was focused on training.”

“He’s dead. I’ll kill him, Elijah. So help me God, he’s a dead bastard.”

“I’m glad you feel that way, Hawk. The email I sent you detailed your next assignment, but I purposely left out the name of the vampire you’ll be hunting. These are orders directly

from the president. They're sending you to hunt Derek down and bring him in, dead or alive."

"There'll be nothing left of him when I'm through."

Chapter Three

Eva entered the conference room, scanning the area. Jesse sat in one corner, deep in conversation with another man. Besides her, they were the only two in the room.

She hesitated, suddenly feeling out of place. Her life had ended completely, two years ago. Her hopes and dreams of becoming a doctor vanished, with each swallow of her blood. She had come to terms with what she was months ago, but that didn't stop the nightmares from coming. Nor did it halt the feeling that Derek would come for her sooner or later.

The battle between good and evil was really a thin line. She had lost a vital piece of herself, her control, a power she had valued so much. She had no restraint when the hunger became too much. And Eva hated the fact that she could be reduced to an animal, a creature intent on only appeasing its appetite with blood.

Eva shuddered, pushing the past behind her for now, concentrating on the moon that glowed behind the bullet proof windows. The place was rigged like a fortress with guards on duty twenty-four hours a day. No one could get in or leave without proper authorization.

This would be her first mission, and though she had trained for the past two years for this very day, Eva felt the brick walls in her mind closing in. The panic attacks threatened to

consume her. She stepped back, needing space to think, when she felt a solid muscled chest collide with her back.

“Breathe in,” Hawk whispered into her ear as he placed his hand on her stomach. Through the fabric of her thin suit, she felt the heat of his skin and heard the reassurance in his voice that he was truly there.

She took a couple of deep breaths, closing her eyes, concentrating on just him and wondering how in the hell he could be so in tune with her needs. Hawk moved, turning her around to face him. She opened her eyes, instantly wary at the anger she saw in his gaze as he dropped his arms.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” Hawk stated, keeping his voice low.

He knows.

She tensed, fear and confusion battering her at once. “It wasn’t the right time.”

“Bram knew where to find me.”

How could he still be so protective of me? “And you figure because my brother knew, he would go to you?” she replied, bitterness filling her voice. She was helpless to deny her feelings as she was the tone of her words. “You’re wrong. My life has always been my own.”

Eva bit her lip, concentrating on that bit of pain as he whispered into her ear, “Your life may have been your own, but your heart will always be mine.”

She stepped back, embarrassed at the way his words got to her. “Your arrogance hasn’t changed; neither has your inability to see what’s evident. I won’t do it, Hawk. I won’t ever trust you again.”

She saw his hands tighten into fists, the enticing little tick in his jaw start to pound as his emotions threatened to get the best of him.

“Are you going to get this show on the road, or what?”

The voice snapped her out of her reverie. Eva whirled around, finding Jesse had spoken, his grin lighting up the room.

Eva plastered a smile to her face as she walked over to him, but deep down inside she trembled, knowing this was the place she had to be, and she was only here because her life had been irreversibly altered.

Hawk wished her refusal away. In another time ... another place, they would have been as one, united through the bond of love they shared.

But life had a cruel way of changing everything.

With Elijah's words pounding at his head, his guilt for leaving grew. She had suffered greatly and he would do anything to take away her pain

Hawk shifted his gaze, forcing himself to think of something else. He turned to the vampire Jesse had been speaking to. Saber, a centuries-old paranormal, and a member of his team, acknowledged him with a slow nod before sitting down. Hawk threw a glance at Eva to see how she responded to another vampire and her gaze seemed to be riveted to Saber's.

Saber was the silent one, appraising humans and paranormals with a quiet aura. But none of them were fooled by that. He had the capability to kill anyone in seconds, draining their blood, leaving the carcass behind, like a dried-up raisin. And still that wasn't his most deadly trait. Saber could travel between the space of time, bringing his body into any destination he sought. His superb skill was deadly, insuring certain death to the evil that threatened their kind.

Hawk took his seat at the head of the conference table, assessing the occupants of the room as two more members of his team walked in.

Jalia entered the room, her green eyes centered on Saber. She was the only psychic on their team, a gift she considered a curse. Her ability to read anyone bordered on uncanny, but the paranormal aptitude exceeded all of theirs when it came to capturing prey. She could read someone's mind from afar, but in distance it only extended to the prey's current thoughts. When she got close, touching her quarry skin to skin, Jalia could merge her mind,

uncovering all of their secrets. She was a walking weapon, deadly in her own right, but she rarely unleashed her power on innocents, using steel-like mental walls to keep her powers within. Jalia nodded to Hawk, before taking a seat.

Hawk's gaze traveled from Jalia to Rico, the only feline predator member in the team. Rico was the wild card, the one Hawk always doubted on missions. It wasn't because Rico didn't throw everything he had into his assignment, but because anger ruled Rico and the danger was the beast that lurked inside of him. And Hawk had seen that beast, a black were-panther, double the size of a human, its deadly claws five inches in length, the color of ivory. His assets even surpassed Hawk's wolf form. Hawk had seen the feline reveal itself, hunting down criminals and tearing the guilty apart, shredding flesh into pieces. Rico was untamed, and until he found his mate, he would remain so, a part of him lost to the wildness.

And then there was Hawk's younger brother, Jesse, also a wolf, whom Hawk had raised since the death of their parents. Hawk had left his pack with Jesse by his side. When Jesse turned eighteen, he had gone through the necessary grueling training to enter the Paranormal Ops Hawk headed. And he'd been Hawk's second in command ever since.

Hawk turned his gaze back to Eva. The air in the room seemed to sizzle between them, and he wondered if the others could feel it to. "Now that we're all here, let's get started," he said, suddenly unsure of himself.

Chapter Four

“Everyone, this is Eva Long,” Hawk stated. “Eva, you already know Jesse. Next to him is Saber. He’s been here since the beginning of our recruitment and he’s a vampire. Jalia is the psychic and Rico is a were-panther.”

Silence descended as they all took their turns to inspect her. Eva felt her pulse race like a freight train as Hawk introduced her to the members of the team. She had never been this nervous, this disoriented before. And she was used to being alone, so working with others was something new.

“A were-panther? You are the same as Cree?” she asked. It was the first thing she could think of to break the silence.

Rico nodded.

“I thought they lived only in South America.”

“You could say I was booted out of the tribe,” Rico replied softly, a hint of warning laced in his voice.

She caught the warning. He didn’t want to delve into his past. Eva nodded, respecting his space.

She surveyed the room, all of the members still staring at her warily. The only one she felt comfortable with was Jesse. His laid-back aura charmed her as he smiled, then winked at her, putting her at ease.

She glanced at Hawk. He stared at her, with an intense look in his gaze. "Eva is the newest member to our team," he continued.

"What does she bring to us?" Jalia asked, arching a brow at Eva.

Eva was about to state her qualifications, when Saber spoke up. "She's a vampire. That should be enough."

Eva turned to Saber. She hadn't paid any real attention to him. But now that Saber had her interest, she felt like she knew him somehow. And the odd uncomfortable sensation bothered her. A tremor shot through her. She clenched her hands, digging her nails into her skin as she tried to regain some semblance of control. Eva knew she never met Saber before today, but as she stared at him a sense of déjà vu washed over her. Something about him called to her, and it was creeping her out.

Jalia didn't bother glancing at Saber. "So she sucks blood for a living," she replied scathingly.

Saber turned, hooked his arms on the sides of the chair, spinning it around, forcing Jalia to face him. "Careful where you tread, darling. I've yet to show you how hard a vamp can suck."

Bizarre. Eva didn't look away from the duo, transfixed at the sparks that seemed to shoot between them.

"Enough!" Hawk stated forcefully.

Eva turned, seeing the anger in Hawk's eyes as he looked at Saber.

Saber released the chair reluctantly, kicking the wheels, putting some space between him and Jalia.

“You are all here because our next assignment is a dangerous one. We are going after a very strong vampire and it’s going to take all of us to catch him.”

Eva held her breath, unable to ask the words as her gaze collided with Hawk’s before roaming over everyone else’s. She froze, her body tensed, awaiting the words she already knew to be voiced. There was only one vampire she knew with such enormous strength that it would take an entourage of paranormals to defeat him.

Saber broke the silence. “I can assume you’re speaking of Derek.”

Eva released the breath she had been holding. She almost laughed at the way the world revolved. Now she had to fight against two evils -- the one who’d left her as if she meant nothing to him and the one who’d changed her life forever.

“What do you know of him?” Hawk asked, the menace clear in his voice.

“Derek is --” Saber began.

“What don’t I know of him?” Eva replied snidely, cutting Saber off. She hadn’t meant the interruption, but hatred lay deep in her heart. Hawk turned his gaze from Saber to face her. “The hard part of it is, the memories-burn holes into my head. Do you know he’s murdered innocent children? I can even tell you their names.”

She hated when her emotions got the best of her. Tears formed in her eyes but she squashed her feelings back down and continued. “I wasn’t the only one tied in that basement.”

“Elijah didn’t mention that,” Hawk replied.

“I’ve gotten to know Elijah well, Hawk. And he only gives information on a need to know basis.”

“I’d say this would count as need to know.”

Eva saw the anger in his gaze, the frustration at not knowing everything. “I won’t argue over details. You can deal with Elijah later. The woman’s name was Katrina Hunt. She

is the missing scientist. When Bram found me two days later, Derek had already taken Katrina.”

“How’s this scientist linked to Derek?” Hawk asked.

“You’ve heard of the <http://world.guns.ru/handguns/hg108-e.htm>?”

“You’re discussing weapons now?”

Eva took a deep, calming breath before continuing. “It’s connected, Hawk. Now pay attention.” He threw her a look that said retribution would follow for that remark. “I am the owner of a Model 86 Beretta Cheetah.”

“I’ve never heard of a model 86. I thought the weapon stopped at 85.”

“That’s why it’s exclusive. Elijah had some great connections, so last year for my birthday he presented me with two of these. The surprising thing about this weapon is that it has a hidden chamber.” Eva slid the gun out of her holster, laid it on the conference table, and slid the piece to Hawk. “Turn the gun over and press your hand to the butt of the gun.”

Eva waited until Hawk did as she asked. The metal panel beneath the gun flipped open, forcing a smaller chamber to push forward. She basically had two guns in one, a mini artillery in a single piece. “The Cheetahs are chambered for the .380 cartridge, also called the 9mm Kurtz. Kurtz meaning short and it is just what it states ... a shorter 9mm cartridge, which is efficient because this is the only gun in the world known to have a second chamber.

“I’ve got the hand piece that can kill a wolf and a vampire simultaneously. Two types of special bullets fill up the chambers. We all know how silver kills werewolves.” Jesse groaned, while Saber laughed at her comment. Eva coughed, holding back her own laughter. “The first chamber contains silver bullets. The second chamber shoots out a special type of bullet invented by a scientist, and it’s strong enough to kill a vampire.”

Hawk’s hand tightened on the piece. “Is such a thing possible?”

“Katrina, the missing scientist, has taken us to the next step in technology. She invented the bullets to fit this type of weapon. I don’t know exactly how it’s made, but she

was able to trap concentrated sunlight and filter it into a bullet. It's been tested, and I've seen the results with my own eyes. Once the bullet hits the vampire, sunlight erupts in its bloodstream and the body disintegrates immediately. Somehow Derek got his hands on this information and Katrina."

"The son of a bitch has managed to steal a top secret weapon. A fucking valuable piece you have there," Hawk stated, sliding the metal panel back in place. The second chamber disappeared into view. "Where can I get my hands on one?"

"That's the beauty of it. Like I said before, there were only five released and I have two of them. Two that can hold enough firepower to kill both wolf and vampire. But you never know, Hawk -- if you impress me with your skills, I just might lend you my gun."

Hawk placed the gun on the table, then slid the piece back to her. "Don't hand out invitations you don't intend to keep."

"Is there a way you can find out where he is?" Saber asked. "Your brother has psychic abilities. Did you inherit the gift, too?"

"How do you know about Bram?"

Saber shrugged. "Word gets around."

Eva's eyes narrowed in annoyance. "I don't have my brother's abilities."

"That you know of. Perhaps there is a trait in you that no one's discovered."

"Saber, delving into Derek's sadistic mind isn't my first choice," Eva replied as she grabbed her gun, placing it back into her holster.

"You are the only one I know who lives and has a connection to him. Because of that link, you may be able to find his hideout."

Eva shook her head, denying the truth.

"Such a feat would get her killed, or worse trapped in his mind," Hawk replied. "And once that happens, he'll know where she lives ... where she sleeps. Get the idea out of your head, Saber, because putting her at risk is out of the question."

Hawk reeled in his emotions, masking them behind a stoic veneer. But the force behind the words had all eyes on him, guessing as to what his connection to Eva was.

In reality, it would have been the perfect setup plan. A sure fire way of knowing where Derek hid, giving them the break they needed.

But he wasn't willing to put her life at risk.

"We find another way," Hawk emphasized as he looked at each one of them.

"Fine," Saber replied, understanding showing in his gaze as he nodded his head. "I'll see what I can search up from my end."

"You do that. He was last sighted around the Seaport. It's a huge area so I'm going to need my best tracker, and that's you, Rico. I need you and Jalia to go down and see what you can find out."

The urge to hunt and make the bastard pay burned through Hawk's veins.

Rico nodded before asking, "Are we going in straight for the kill?"

Moral ethics. Funny how something you believed in so immensely could be suddenly zapped out as rage clouded your brain. Eva deserved retribution. And though Hawk had killed before, it was always done as a last resort.

Derek deserved no mercy. The beast in Hawk roared, demanding to be released. His skin itched with the desire to turn and hunt. He wanted to track Derek down and rip him to pieces. He wanted to tear his heart out and watch him die. But rationality finally won out.

"Capture first, but I highly doubt Derek would make the same mistake twice. We're not dealing with a human here. We're not even dealing with a rational mind. So by all means, use excessive force."

"Jesse, you contact every available man we have on patrol. I want all of them to know about Derek. Give the order for extreme measures. Derek's profile is already in the database. Call all media outlets. I want his face on everything by tonight's news. Saber, see what the

word on the street is about Derek. Find out as much information as you can. I want no stone uncovered.”

“I shall do my best,” Saber replied, a hint of menace in his voice.

Hawk turned to the last member of his special ops team. Her gaze didn’t waver under his stare, which was a good thing. Eva survived what was considered the most brutal crime, and though it terrified him that she was here, Hawk knew it was because she had fought against the odds and had become the best.

“And what will I be doing?” Eva asked softly, almost too softly, as if she were afraid of what his answer might be.

Hawk smiled, feeling a little smug inside, knowing that having her close would be a plus for him. “You’re with me.”

Chapter Five

Eva shouldn't have been surprised by his answer. She never thought for one second that Hawk would let her out of his sight. His protective actions were a couple of years too late, and the sentiment annoyed her more than anything else.

The team members quickly exited the room, each of them delving into their assignments.

Eva fiddled with the pencil in front of her, twirling it through her fingers, readying herself for the words that Hawk would surely take as a challenge. "You could have let me go with Jesse."

His jaw tightened. She could picture him grinding his teeth before speaking. It was truly his worst habit. "Could have, probably should have, but no deal."

Her gaze dropped to his soft lips, wondering how powerful his kiss would be after all these years. She had to fight back the brief temptation to find out. Her hands tightened on the wood pencil. "I can see I'm going to have to prove myself to you."

"Everyone has to establish themselves when they join my team. But then you know that don't you, Eva? You know how I love to push and see how much a person can take."

He was pushing her. Her hand flexed, then tightened as she snapped the pencil in half. "Be careful of how hard you shove."

"Is that a threat, darling?"

Eva dropped the pencil and stood. She walked around the table, bending down when she reached where Hawk sat. She leaned in close, her anger momentarily forgotten as enticement settled in. He looked absolutely delicious, all male, sprawled on the leather chair. She felt his pull, her body reacting to the enticing sight he made. But she fought it ... fought the urge to give in and inhale his masculine scent. She couldn't give into the weakness.

"Call it a warning. What's our next stop?" she asked, rising once more and walking around his chair.

Eva turned as Hawk stood. He walked slowly, closing the gap between them.

"The basement below this building houses a five thousand square foot arena. It's our play area."

"Boys and their toys. I should have known you'd want to show me your playthings."

"Boy?" Hawk repeated, his eyebrow rising up as he questioned her.

Eva laughed at the incredulous look on his face. "Would you prefer dog?"

"I was thinking more along the lines of alpha leader," Hawk replied, an adorable smirk lacing his lips.

"In your dreams."

* * * * *

Hawk wasn't kidding when he described the basement as an arena. Eva couldn't help but stare at the massive room. On one side stood a glass-enclosed case. Its length reached from corner to corner and inside were numerous impressive weapons. Shiny black mats were placed on the floor, leaving nothing uncovered.

"What's the glass made out of?"

“Plexiglas. It’s four inches thick and unbreakable. It’s a safety precaution. The training around here can sometimes get a little rough.”

Eva placed her hand on the pane, tossing a look over her shoulder. “How do you open it?”

Hawk sauntered forward, stopping just a few inches behind her. He slid his arm forward, placing his hand flat over hers. His skin felt hot against hers. It was an odd sensation, since most of the time she chose not to let anyone touch her. She pulled, wanting to get away from the intimacy. It had been way too long since anyone besides Bram had held her. Hawk pressed forward, his strength evident as he intertwined their fingers together.

Eva gasped, leaning her forehead against the cool feeling his body heat close to her.

“I want to get this out of the way,” Hawk whispered close to her ear. “You’re here now, and I want there to be nothing but honesty between us.” His warm breath hit her ear, causing her to shiver in reaction.

She felt her stomach drop in nervousness. *Why is he doing this now?* “I’ve always been honest with you.”

“I know you have. And this is about me being honest with you. I shouldn’t have left without telling you goodbye, or the very least, I owed you an explanation.”

“Bram told me why you’d left. He told me that he warned you to stay away from me.”

“I’m surprised he told you what happened.”

“My brother has never withheld anything from me. In fact, at times he can be brutally honest.”

“Why didn’t you say anything?” Hawk asked as he removed his hand from hers, only to place them on her shoulders and spin her around, forcing her to face him. He placed his hands on the case, caging her in.

“What could I have said, Hawk? You made your decision and that didn’t include having me be a part of your life. Did it cause me pain? I’m not going to lie to you and say that it didn’t. Your leaving me tore a hole in my heart.”

“I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have denied what was between us back then. It was idiotic and I’d give anything to turn back the clock and change it.”

The words were clichéd, and she would have laughed if she hadn’t caught a glimpse of remorsefulness in his eyes. Eva closed her eyes, hiding his gaze.

“*Mi Hermosa*, open up your eyes.”

She opened them, recognition settling in at the Spanish words he whispered to her. “You remembered the words?”

Hawk smiled. “I remember the words you taught me. I remember the way you used to look at me with a mixture of curious lust in your gaze. I remember it all.”

What in the world did this mean? Don’t analyze it. Just accept his apology.

She swallowed, then wet her dry lips. “Apology accepted,” Eva replied, blurting the first thing that came to mind as she hunched her body, dipping under his arms, moving quickly to the side as she distanced herself from him.

Hawk arched his brow. “It’s that easy, huh?”

Eva shrugged. “Why make it complicated? We’ve both done things we regret at one point or another. Moving on is the only way to deal with the past.”

“I agree. Moving on is the best way. But I wanted to let you know that there’s never been a day that I haven’t thought about you. I’ve always kept up with you.”

Oh, how she seriously hoped that didn’t mean what she thought it did. *It couldn’t mean that he cared even a little.* Eva bit her tongue and asked, “What does that mean?”

“I kept tabs on you for the first couple of years. It wasn’t a difficult thing to do. I have my resources. Plus, money does talk.”

“You sure like having your cake and eating it too, Hawk. I was too young for you and yet you still kept tabs on me, as if you truly cared,” Eva laughed. “Tell it to someone who gives a fuck. Because I sure as hell don’t.”

She was lying to herself. She did give a fuck. But he’d be the last person she’d tell that to.

“You’re holding a nasty grudge.” Hawk replied

“It’s my grudge to hold,” Eva stated, defensiveness making her tone of voice sound bitter. “And in the grand scheme of things, it’s a small one compared to the hatred I have against Derek.”

“You don’t have to be on the defensive with me. We’re going to be working together on this.”

“You never did say how you opened the case,” Eva said, hoping to change the subject.

She watched as Hawk walked to the middle, sliding his hand underneath the case. Instantly, the doors parted, sliding quickly to the sides, revealing state of the art weaponry.

“As you can see the case opens at the bottom. Each member of the team has their fingerprint stored in the computer for identification purposes. Yours was put in this morning.”

Eva nodded, fascinated with the various artillery. She knew her personal obsession bordered on freaky when it came to weaponry. But it was something she collected. She even had her own cherrywood closet at home, filled with all kinds of weapons, some dating back to the 1800s. So it didn’t come as any surprise that she would be lured to this fascinating display case.

“Choose your weapon,” Hawk said, walking beside her and picking up a silver sword. “For obvious reasons, I hope you won’t choose any of the guns. Getting shot at is just isn’t on my agenda today.”

“Oh, stop being a wimp,” Eva replied as she turned to face him. Though he wore the suit, she had no intentions of shooting at him. At least not tonight.

Chapter Six

Hawk stared at her, totally enraptured at the liveliness that came to her eyes when she laughed. She had become even more beautiful since he had seen her last and he couldn't help but eat her up with his eyes. He would give anything to do so much more, but Hawk knew she didn't trust easily.

He couldn't blame her. She had been hurt so many times in life, and had never deserved anything but pure joy. Truthfully, he couldn't imagine what she had been through, and the fact that she'd survived amazed him.

He smiled at her joy. She seemed enthusiastic in her obsession with guns. "Is that a challenge?"

Eva shrugged. "It's whatever you want it to be."

"Then we'll keep it fun with a little wager. If I win, you'll take me to your place, and you could show me your private stack of *weapons*," Hawk said, putting emphasis on the weapons part. Her cute little brow zoomed right up in an adorable arch at his word play.

"And if I win, you'll let me have my choice of weapons in this room."

“Come on, you can do better than that, Eva.” He didn’t know why he was pushing her. It could’ve have been for so many reasons, but he took delight in watching her eyes narrow in reaction to his banter.

Her hands flew to her hips. “Fine. If I win, no more rehashing of the past. It’s over and done with. Neither of us can change any of it.”

Hawk nodded once. “Fair enough. Now choose your weapon.”

Eva turned from him, her attention focused on the display case. He had a fabulous view of her backside, the uniform stretching over her skin tightly, cupping her luscious ass. Her scent called to him and he wanted to taste every square inch of her body. He felt the temptation her body gave him and had the strongest urge to come up behind her, and grind his cock against her ass. The wolf wanted to be released and the urge to claim her rose from deep within.

But she’d probably wound him with the sword she was in the process of picking up. Still the threat didn’t stop him from taking that final step and placing his hands on her hips. Just when he was inches away from giving into the enticement of her succulent backside, Eva turned to face him, the sword gripped tightly in the palm of her hand as she tugged it slowly mid-waist beside her.

“What do you think you’re doing?” Eva asked, her brow zinging into that adorable arch again.

There were so many ways he could answer that, like *I’m checking out the ass I want to fuck so desperately* or *I’m picturing myself on my knees with my tongue shoved up inside of you so deep*.

But he chose the smart-ass safe route. “Just checking out things from the rear.” The beast in him itched to claim her as his and for once, he wanted to let nature take over. He would give anything if he were able to thrust his shaft into her now. And the thought of

sinking his teeth into her shoulder, marking her while he fucked her from behind made his cock rise to attention .

It should have bothered him that he felt so fiercely about her, when it hadn't even been a full day since she re-entered into his life. But if there was one thing he learned with the untimely death of his parents: take life as it comes and never let the important chances slip by.

Eva trembled slightly, lowering the sword point down to the ground. "We have got to be professional about this."

He saw the way her nipples tightened against the suit, the way her tongue peeked out to moisten her lips as she released a shallow breath of warm air.

"Your words would have had more of an impact if your nipples weren't pressed against your suit as if they were dying to get into my mouth." He was quickly growing accustomed to baiting her.

"Arrogant ass," Eva replied, sidestepping him.

As a comeback, it was as truthful as it could get. Fate had brought her to him and he was just arrogant enough to believe they had a chance in getting back together.

Eva slowed her breathing. She almost groaned out loud when Hawk placed his calloused hands on her hips. She felt his body heat and she was inches away from giving into his allure. She was tempted to lay her head back and just let him have his way with her.

The rush of his heated blood called to her and it wasn't because she needed to feed. She had a strong craving for him and while picking out her weapon, she flirted with a minute fantasy of sinking her teeth into his flesh, tasting his true essence. Eva knew it would be decadent to give in and relish the sexual side of it.

But there were too many things that needed to be worked out. Eva only trusted two people. Elijah and Bram. Elijah because he saved her life ... Bram because he forced her to live it. *Time to see if I can change this subject.* “Tell me about the sword I picked out.”

She was genuinely interested. The piece looked to be very old, the handle tightly woven with fiber. As she hoped, Hawk took the change of subject with ease.

“This weapon is called Katana. It comes from Japan. I haven’t been able to find much information on this particular piece. It was used in WWII. The blade is solid silver and it’s twenty inches long. Are you sure you can handle a weapon like that?”

Hawk was apparently arrogant when it came to weapons, too. “With ease,” Eva replied. “Choose yours.”

Hawk picked up the exact replica of the Katana. “If you’re going to practice with a weapon that size, then I’m going have to take you on with its equal.”

“Nervous already?”

Hawk laughed. “You’re confident. I like that.”

“Confidence has nothing to do with skill,” Eva replied, walking to the center of the room.

“I disagree,” Hawk stated as he followed behind her. “When using your skill to take down an enemy, the ability to believe and know you can do it plays a huge factor.”

“Your opinion has some merit, but it still comes down to skill and the knowledge you possess.” Eva stopped walking and turned to face him. “Shall we proceed with your test of my ability?” She brought the sword around and clasped both hands on the handle.

“I’m not singling you out. This is merely a requirement I ask of each member of my team when they first join. After all, how am I supposed to know if your skill is up to par?”

Eva jumped mid-air, then thrust her right leg out, kicking Hawk right in the chest. She hadn’t warned him. And it was definitely unprofessional. Still, the irritation his words had caused evaporated quickly as he stumbled back three steps. She couldn’t help the smirk that

crossed her lips as a sense of satisfaction at surprising him settled within her. “How’s that for being up to par?”

Hawk placed his hand on his chest and slowly rubbed. “I think I need to see how you handle something like this,” he replied, before running towards her. He jumped then swung his sword forward.

She was ready and she was thankful to Elijah for making it so.

Eva braced herself, widening her stance as she deflected his sword with her own. His strength behind the blow forced her to take a step back, but still she was able to block him.

“Not bad,” Hawk acknowledged.

She didn’t use words to respond to his praise.

Instead, Eva ran forward, swinging her weapon toward his legs in a fast swipe. It was a move meant to surprise the enemy and destined to take down any opponent. And deep down inside, Eva wouldn’t have used it if she didn’t have faith in his ability.

The four-legged beast that lurked within worked to his advantage. He leapt into the air, missing her swipe entirely, landing behind her.

Eva tried to turn, to take him straight on but he was faster than she realized. Hawk snaked his arm around her waist, lifting her off her feet, holding her prisoner against his chest. She struggled, dropped her sword and dug her nail into his arm. He relented slightly by setting her on her feet. But she wasn’t done with him yet. She stomped on his foot with her heel, taking satisfaction in the growl that erupted from his lips. He grunted and loosened his arms as she fitted her hand to the back of his neck. Bending down quickly, Eva summoned all of her strength forward. She used the momentum she gained and flipped him over. But Hawk was agile and landed on his feet.

The sword Hawk had held landed by hers. But she had no time to give the weapons another thought. She had a second to appreciate his stance before his claws lengthened. Eva went for her sword just as Hawk lunged forward. She was inches away from reaching her

weapon when he wrapped his arm around her and hauled her against his chest. His chest felt like steel, but it was the hardness between his legs that stunned her. She froze as his hips ground into her from behind, the move forcing her hormones to the surface. She felt every inch of him rubbing against her. Her gums ached with the desire to taste his blood and sex. She felt his heat searing into her, burning her defenses into one big puddle of wetness.

“Nothing turns me on more than a feisty woman.” His hot breath hit her ear as he whispered the words seductively.

She shivered. Temptation set in as her pussy tingled with need, and once again she wondered what it would feel like to give into him. *Dios!* Where the hell was her self control? Eva closed her eyes as she tightened her legs together in an attempt to calm the lusty part of her. But her mind kept wondering to the rock solid shaft branding her from behind.

Fight!

The word came into her mind like a vicious kick. Fighting had become an instantaneous reaction. Fighting her past ... fighting for a future. It was a reaction destined to keep her from happiness, but it was the only thing she knew how to do well.

Her willpower kicked into gear and she pulled her arm around his neck and threw her weight forward. She flipped him over with the grace of a panther on the prowl, and this time he landed flat on his back. She turned and straddled him.

Eva realized that there was probably a ninety-nine percent chance he was temporarily allowing her to take the lead. Because Hawk was far from playing the submissive role in anything.

Her stomach clenched in nervousness as she gazed into his eyes and what she saw there was what she feared the most. His gaze was blazing with a fierce hungry desire, making her tremble deep down inside. It was the way he used to look at her, like she was the only thing that mattered in the world, back when their relationship mattered to her more than

anything. But he wasn't good enough for her back then. Why was he staring at her like she would be any better at present, as a vampire of all things?

He apparently had no problems holding back now as he gripped her thighs, lifting her slightly, only to place her right over his rigid cock.

Eva bit her lip. He lifted his hips, forcing his penis to dig between her legs. She moaned, tingles shooting throughout her body. The sensation in her pussy magnified and she had the strongest urge to rub herself on him like a cat in heat. She breathed deeply, hoping it would calm the fire in her.

"I think this makes me the winner," Eva stated, before placing her hands on his chest and attempting to rise.

She gasped as Hawk tightened his hands around her waist, and flipped her over on her back. She landed on the mats with a soft thud and he positioned himself between her legs. She fought against the urge to struggle as he locked her wrists together, holding them upward with his hands.

Awareness of how close he was sent a shard of need racing throughout her body.

He settled fully between her thighs as his lips descended on hers. It was a hungry claiming and she moaned as he pushed his tongue inside, softly stroking hers. She tasted his essence, his rich spicy scent. Her hips lifted off the mat and she rubbed her cloth-covered pussy against his cock. Her juices spilled and the wetness between her legs heightened her need. The friction sent sparks throughout her body and she was on the verge of begging him to fuck her. Just one well placed rub from him would send her over the edge.

Dios, she could get lost in this ... in him. If her hands were free, she could unzip his suit and touch him.

Hawk broke the kiss and she moaned, feeling desperate at the loss of him. He leaned in, nipping her bottom lip, then soothing it with a flick of his tongue. "I disagree. I think this position definitely makes us both winners."

He rose to his feet and held out his hand. She grabbed it and he helped lift her. Her heart beat quickly and Eva licked at her lips, trying to get a hold of her racing hormones. Her eyes drifted below to where his cock was still hard, the vivid outline clear on his suit. Her gums tingled with the urge to taste. She squashed it down and lifted her gaze back to his. His expression was blank and other than the hard-on he was sporting, she didn't know what he was thinking.

Hawk released her hand. "Come on. Your shift for today is over. I'm taking you home."

Chapter Seven

Eva grabbed the passenger side belt of Hawk's Expedition and secured it around her as he pushed the key into the ignition. She could have argued against his insistence that he had won the fight. But she gave in ... a little too easily. And now she sat in close confinement with him, his nearness driving her to the point of anxiety.

She turned her head and watched him. His lips were full and she couldn't pull her gaze from his mouth. They had shared two kisses and as the years went by, she would wonder what would have happened if he had given into the fierce attraction between them. She had always wondered how his mouth would feel against her skin, on her breasts, between her legs. She would close her eyes and fantasize how his tongue would circle her clit, teasing her to the point of madness. She clenched her thighs at the vision of his mouth on her pussy.

She had to be truthful to herself. Though they never slept together, she still hungered for him. His spicy male scent drifted to her, awakening her sexual appetite and her clit began to throb. His scent was an aphrodisiac and her mouth watered because she wanted to lick, taste and drink him in.

Eva turned to the window, forcing herself to break the connection between them. She heard him sigh before pulling the car out of the parking lot.

“Do you want to grab something to eat?” Hawk asked.

She suspected his question was an attempt to ease the tension between them because Hawk knew vampires couldn’t eat. The only thing that could sustain her kind was blood and since her conversion, Eva had used only one partner. Blood sharing was considered an intimate occasion. It brought on sexual feelings between the feeder and the donor. It didn’t matter if the donor was human or not, the awareness of each other was still there, heightened by the feeding. “And where do you suppose we go to enjoy a glass of blood?”

“I was attempting to break this weird silence between us.”

“It’s broken.”

“Where are you staying?”

“Not where do you live?”

“I’ve read the file. You list your past address as Elijah’s home. And you made it a point of leaving your current address blank.”

She turned to face him. There was a mixture of curiousness etched in his tone. “I’ve had too much on my mind to look for a permanent residence. Renting was the quick and easy thing to do. And since Elijah owns the building, I had no problem with my rental application.”

“Elijah owns the building?”

There was surprise in his voice. Her gaze strayed to the tightening of his hands wrapped around the steering wheel. *Interesting.* She glimpsed at his fingers, the dark skin there now white. “He does. And by the way, you’re choking the steering wheel, I take it you don’t like the idea. But before you go off on me, I want you to know it was safer this way. My life isn’t the same anymore, and Elijah has this place rigged better than your own office building. And the fact that Bram’s office had a spy who knew our address ... it’s safer this way. He’s been there for me, Hawk.”

“As opposed to me?”

“I wasn’t implying anything. I just wanted to let you know that there isn’t anything between us other than a strong friendship.”

She watched as Hawk loosened his hands, allowing the blood to rush back through his fingers. But there was a little devil inside her that wanted to see him jealous. And if he ever felt even a quarter of the pain she had gone through at his departure, then that would be enough for her.

“Well, other than friendship, he’s also the man I feed from.”

She was expecting his hands to tense up again, or for him to give her an arrogant reply. But she wasn’t expecting him to swing the steering wheel to the right and then press the brakes so harshly that she had to tighten her legs so she wouldn’t end up plastered to the dashboard.

“What in god’s name possessed you to tell me that when I’m in the middle of trying to maintain some semblance of control?”

Eva glanced around, noticing the familiar area and realizing that they were just two blocks from her loft. She unbuckled her seatbelt and placed her hand on the door. “Your lack of control isn’t my problem.” She opened the passenger door and slid out of her seat.

* * * * *

Hawk watched her walk away, effectively giving him no chance to respond. He double parked the vehicle, quickly turning it off and opened the door.

The night air was humid, the soft breeze flowing moist with impending rain. It was only an hour before sunrise. And as much as he tried to focus on something as mundane as the weather, he couldn’t.

Well, other than friendship, he’s also the man I feed from.

She baited him on purpose. He knew that ... and even though he knew, it didn’t lessen the impact of her words. He had suppressed the urge to ask how she fed. Because he had a

feeling he wouldn't like the answer. The image of her feeding off another man was stamped into his brain. The burn of jealousy began in the pit of his stomach, rising slowly, and it threatened to turn into a full blown rage

Hawk walked after her. She was only a block ahead of him and his gaze dropped to her hips, swaying seductively from side to side. He doubted she knew she walked with such a sexy gait. His cock hardened as he imagined his hands grabbing her hips, pounding her from behind, savoring the feel of her wet heat surrounding him.

She was a luscious, sensuous creature, and he didn't deserve her. Not after the way he had left her. But his mistakes could only be changed if she would give him a chance at a future. Hawk was going to try his hardest to make sure he got that chance.

His gaze traveled over her as she froze, her hand flying to the gun at her hip. Hawk walked to the edge of the building, the shadows providing extra cover for him as he pushed his wolf senses forward. He sniffed, the warm breeze revealing the scent of vampires in the air.

Hawk pushed the beast forward. His muscles swelled as his clothes ripped, unable to contain his brute force. His bones snapped, then shifted, rearranging into his other half. Eva was in trouble and there was definitely more than the scent of one vampire in the air.

* * * * *

She was being followed, and she knew it wasn't just one creature tailing her. Eva stopped, her hand flying to the gun at her hip, her fingers slipping to the handle.

This wasn't the first time she'd been followed by Derek's men. The pattern was already set. He would send a couple of vampires to request her attendance at some random location. He was convinced that one day she would give in, to be by his side forever. Eva would send one of the vampires back, usually with a bloody message attached to his or her body. The others she took pleasure in killing.

Dios! She'd give anything in the world to confront Derek now and bury her past for good. But he was one sick fuck. And in his deluded mind, he wanted her for himself.

It didn't matter. If her life were to end by his hand, she would go down viciously fighting.

The silence of the night calmed her as she honed her senses for the kill. Adrenaline pumped through her veins and her gums itched as her fangs dropped. She waited until the creatures following her were close enough, then gripped the gun tightly and turned around.

Three vampires stood in a row. Her gaze fell on each of them, assessing the danger. Their faces were twisted in ugly sneers and she saw the one in the middle whip a knife out. The long silver blade glinted in the moonlight. "We have a message from Derek," the vampire to her right yelled.

"I'll allow you to speak your final words." It was a statement meant to put fear into the trio. And Eva meant to kill each and every one of them.

The vampire in the center stepped forward, hissing like a snake before speaking. "Derek is offering you the power to stand by his side. He has requested a meeting with you."

Eva laughed, the sound far from joyous. "You can let Derek know that his asinine attempts are useless. I would rather die a torturous death than to join with him. But then the point of this conversation is all useless. You won't be getting back in one piece to let him know anything."

"We do not fear you. You were created by our leader for a purpose," the middle vampire continued as he stepped closer to her.

"Your leader is one sick bastard," Eva replied, dislodging her gun from the holster. She touched the panel, releasing the second chamber. She raised it, pointing the weapon at the vampire who dared venture close.

Her gaze clashed with his as her finger tightened on the trigger. The vampire noticed the movement, jumping high, seconds before she released the bullet. She ran towards the

wall as the other two vampires lunged forward. The warm air whipped around her as she used the rapid momentum she gained and forced her right leg onto the brick wall. Her body twisted sideways, flying in the air, landing right behind the two vampires.

She turned her gun to the one on the left, discharging the bullet. It buried into his back as the vampire turned to face her. His eyes rounded in shock and rage, seconds before the bullet erupted in his blood stream. It ripped his body into pieces, then dissolved into dust.

Eva swung her gun to the vampire on the right. She fired just as he turned to run from her. The bullet whizzed out of the gun, slamming into his arm, exploding into his body with a fierce force. His body disbanded leaving behind only dirt.

Eva attempted to turn, her senses telling her the final vampire was behind her. But she didn't get around in time. A quick lightning burn hit her arm, forcing her to drop her weapon. She stared at the blood erupting from the wound as the handle of the knife stuck out of her flesh.

Dios! The pain was blinding. She lost her momentum to retaliate, giving the monster an opportunity to attack further. The vampire's arms banded around her in a fierce grip, forcing the knife in deeper. She could feel every bit of the metal digging in deep. She bit back the scream that dwelled in her mind.

Suddenly, the weight in her back lifted and with the abrupt movement her body fell forward. She winced as she reached out with her palms to avoid injury. The concrete scraped her hands and the pressure of her fall jolted the knife, sending another wave of agony through her.

There was a hellish growling sound behind her. Someone screamed and she scrambled for her gun. She grabbed the weapon with her injured arm and a spasm of fire rose within, followed by the rise of nausea. Eva squelched it down. It took all of her power to concentrate on what was going on.

Eva rose and faced the chaotic scene. She gasped and lifted the gun as she tried to simultaneously get a hold of the throbbing and the fearsome sight before her. The vampire who stabbed her was now lying on the ground, gripping his arm ... or what used to be his arm. Eva let her gaze travel to the other half of his appendage which was now in the mouth of the wolf that saved her.

Hawk. She couldn't help but feel shock at the beautiful but alarming creature he made. His fur was all black, the color riveting at night. The wolf spit out the arm and continued to snarl at the vampire.

Eva grimaced in agony as she aimed the gun at the vampire's face and shot. She hoped to hell it hurt more in that particular area. It wasn't what she usually aimed for, but this sucker deserved special treatment for the gift he left her. The vampire screamed as sunlight erupted in its blood stream. Eva didn't remove her eyes from him until he dissolved into tiny pieces.

She dropped her gaze to the wolf as she forced herself to bend her elbow. Eva slid the second chamber of her gun close and holstered the weapon. Hawk paced before her, his gaze trapped with hers. She caught a glimpse of so many emotions in his stare, but she didn't have the strength to deal with any of it, at least not right now.

Time to get rid of this knife. She swung her left hand to the handle of the knife and shut her eyes. She garnered strength from within, knowing the removal was going to hurt like hell until she fed.

She heard the cracking sound of Hawk's bones shifting. She concentrated on that noise as she removed the knife slowly. The pain was agonizing and she had to bite her bottom lip from crying out. Her stomach heaved as she finally removed the weapon from her body. She dropped the knife to the floor and opened her eyes, only to find Hawk standing naked before her with a dangerous glint in his eyes.

Chapter Eight

Hawk didn't have the opportunity to admire the way she fit in his arms. Nor did he have time to lavish his fantasies with more ideas on ways he was going to take her. There were too many emotions running through him, the primary one being anger. He hadn't intended to kill the vampire who had grabbed Eva. His first option would have been to question the creature about its motives, though he suspected Derek was behind the attack.

But then he had sniffed the air and the scent of her blood drew the rage forward, pushing his animalistic half to the surface. Hawk had grabbed the vampire's arm ... the same arm he used to stab Eva ... and ripped it out of the vampire's body.

Adrenaline burned through him as he watched the vampire squirm on the ground like a snake, screaming his pain. He intended to rip his throat out and finish the job, but Eva had shot her assailant, squashing his need for a full retribution.

And as he sifted through his feelings, right behind the heels of rage was his worry for her, this sudden undying need to never let her go.

Hawk lifted her into his arms. It was probably the last thing she expected him to do and her body tensed immediately. Maybe the fact that he was nude bothered her. Tough shit. She'd have to deal with that aspect.

“I can walk.”

He dropped his gaze to her arm, the blood still oozing out pretty rapidly. “Let me do this.” It didn’t matter to him that she was no longer human. Her ability to heal rapidly was there. But he needed to take care of her, wanted to make sure she was okay.

She nodded her head once. He walked to her loft quickly. As soon as he reached the door, she leaned forward, her fingertips grazing a small black box, hanging discreetly by the flower pot. She flipped the top open and keyed in three numbers. His sharp memory stored the information.

He stepped inside. “Where is your apartment?”

“The top floor,” she replied. “The two below belong to some of Elijah’s students.”

He saved that information, too. He would definitely be questioning her later on who lived below. Hawk entered the elevator and pressed the third floor button.

On arrival, he found himself staring at an identical security system. Eva leaned forward, flipping the box open. She held her thumb out to the screen and a quick flash of red light scanned her print.

“Tight security.”

He entered and the door slid closed. Hawk quickly glanced around. The place was massive but dark. There were several lamps lit, but Hawk assumed the dark steel panels hanging in front of the window were because Eva couldn’t be near any sunlight. For vampires, it meant death. He spotted a sofa, placed her on it, then knelt in front of her. She held her arm to her chest. The look she wore on her face was wary, and it told him he had a ways to go before she could trust him. That was fine. He wasn’t going anywhere.

“You need to feed to heal this wound.” He didn’t word it as a question. The fact was she did require blood to repair her injured arm.

Eva shook her head no. “I’ll wait for Elijah.”

He shut his eyes, refusing to show her how angry her words made him. He had heard of the effects of a vampire's bite. And that's what angered him the most. "You will feed from me. You no longer need Elijah for this." Hawk's jaw clenched tightly.

"You can't order me to do that. The only one I've ever fed from was him. I trust him."

"I'm not going anywhere, Eva. You'll have to learn how to trust me again."

"It's too soon. I don't know if I ever can," she replied, disbelief in her gaze.

"You call not seeing you in years too soon? God, if I had a choice, I'd eat you up now and never let you go. But we'll take this slowly. Because there is no other alternative."

She laughed nervously. "Your arrogance really knows no bounds. The world is filled with alternatives."

"I'm not letting you up from this sofa until you're healed. You mentioned Elijah was to arrive today?" At her nod, Hawk continued. "Well, if you don't want to see this wolf go head to head with him, then you'll feed from me."

Her eyes narrowed, the atmosphere filling with more tension. "That's dirty pool."

"Whatever works to get you to agree."

"Fine! Let's get this over and done with before Elijah arrives."

"I don't give a shit if he watches as long as your teeth are in me."

"Don't give me any ideas on where to sink sharp objects," she replied, leaning forward.

Hawk offered his arm up to her.

Her eyebrow zinged up, a questioning look crossing her face. "I take it your neck is out of the question?"

"I want to see you sucking my blood."

She blushed. "I'm assuming by your words you know of the sexual effect?" Eva replied, grabbing a hold of his arm.

"I know all about it."

She nodded, raising his arm to her mouth. He reached out and pushed her hair to the other side of her face, wanting nothing to hinder his view of her. Relaxing his arm, Hawk focused all of his senses into the moment. Eva swiped her tongue across her lips before licking his skin. His cock rose, standing at attention, awareness at that one lick shooting throughout his body. He watched as her fangs distended and moaned as she bit into his skin.

Fire, white and hot, shot through and over him. His balls drew up tight as she sucked his blood, drawing it into her body. He instinctively reached out, placing his hand on her breast, curving his fingers around the soft flesh, craving a deeper connection to her. She moaned, moving her injured arm to give him unencumbered access.

His eyes strayed for a minute to the wound on her flesh. She was already healing, the skin in the process of adhering itself.

Eva shifted, sinking her teeth further. The result was a nearly explosive charge. Not wanting to break the electric contact, Hawk stretched his arm lightly, and used his other hand to spread her knees further apart. He moved closer, aligning his dick with her heat. The hotness seared him through his skin and he couldn't stop from moving his hips, grinding himself against her. She moaned, pushing her body to the edge of the sofa in an attempt to get as close as possible and pumped her hips in time with his. The atmosphere in the air heated and he fought the need to rip the suit from her body, fucking her like there was no tomorrow.

Hawk's skin felt tight, passion igniting the animalistic side of him. His mouth watered as he imagined what her sweetness would taste like. He clenched his teeth and the urge to bite her, marking her as his, raced through him.

His mind was suddenly lifted from the sexual haze as he realized she had stopped curving her body to his. Eva removed her teeth from his skin, slowly licking the pinprick bite closed, before raising her head.

Her breath came out in rapid pulses of warm air. "I've never felt anything like that before."

He had no words for the feelings that overcame him. Instead, he raised his hand to the back of her neck and pulled her down to meet his lips.

He felt an electric shock travel through him before tasting her warm lips. He ran his tongue into her mouth, tasting his copper blood. But instead of repulsing him, he sought a deeper connection, swirling his tongue around hers. She tasted hot and when she met his tongue with her own, he almost came on the spot. He didn't think anything could be more scorching than the feel of her against him. He was wrong.

Eva reached between them and placed her hand on his shaft, stroking it slowly from base to tip. His hips moved, seeking a closer connection, wishing that he were inside of her pussy.

"I do believe I have interrupted at the best of times."

Hawk reached for Eva's gun just as she attempted to get to it. He managed to pull it out of her holster, aim it at the intruder and shield her body with his at the same time. The sound of Elijah's voice flitted through the air, and Hawk had to fight back the need to put a bullet into him. Jealousy still raged through him, and the thought of Elijah sharing more than Eva's blood made him want to tear the vampire into little tiny pieces.

* * * * *

Her resistance melted into nothing as soon as she came close to him.

Eva had intended the bite to be quick and after a couple of swallows of Hawk's blood, she would have stop. That was her initial plan, before it all fell apart and went straight to hell.

His flavor burst through her senses, effectively breaking down all of her barriers. He tasted like dark rich coffee with a strong hint of fiery spice, his essence hitting her in the pit

of her stomach and setting fire to her pussy. There was a low tone of sexual feeling when she fed from Elijah and he had explained to her that it was normal. Eva was expecting to feel the same thing with Hawk and it was a total miscalculation on her part.

She couldn't stop from sucking him, and her hand had drifted below, grabbing on to his iron hard stiffness. She wanted to go on her knees and taste his semen. And then she wanted to lay him back and ride him hard. She felt tingly all over with a strong sexual urge, and was at the brink of carrying out some of her dirtiest fantasies, when Elijah interrupted them.

She cursed her self control as she untangled her hand from his cock. Hawk rose from his kneeling position, his cock standing about eight inches out. Her gaze flew to his as he handed her his gun.

Eva felt the heat of embarrassment burn her face. She holstered her weapon, her gaze straying down to his cock.

Elijah laughed.

Eva dropped her gaze from Hawk's cock and lift her eyes to Elijah. "I didn't expect you for another half hour," Eva stated softly.

"I'm glad I arrived early to catch the show," Elijah replied, a smirk crossing his lips.

Hawk took a step forward. Eva grabbed his forearm. He stilled, the muscle underneath her hand turning hard. "Let me give you some healthy advice that will probably aid in keeping you alive," Hawk replied, his voice hard. "If I were you, I'd watch what I say."

Eva heard the menace in Hawk's voice, and she was hoping Elijah heard it too. Though she took pleasure in pushing Hawk's buttons, the last thing she needed was a confrontation between the two men.

She stared at the blond vampire. His shoulder length hair and aqua eyes made him stand out among other men. From the women coming in and out of his home, Eva knew he never had a problem in the sex department. And though their feedings had a sexual

undertone in them, Eva never felt anything more for Elijah other than friendship. She cared a great deal about him. He had saved her when she thought she wasn't worth saving. And though she still had problems dealing with this new side of herself, Eva was eternally grateful to him.

"I always knew you were a tight ass, Hawk. Maybe Eva can help you loosen up," Elijah replied as he sat down on her black recliner.

Eva ignored him and turned to face Hawk. "My bedroom's over there." Eva pointed to the door with her finger. "In the bottom drawer of my dresser, there's a pair of sweat pants. Bram left them when he last stayed over. They should fit you fine."

Hawk nodded, then slowly walked to her bedroom. She didn't stop looking at his delicious ass until he disappeared from her view.

"You are hopelessly in lust, my dear."

Eva turned to the sound of Elijah's voice. There was a hint of playfulness in his tone.

"You should stop baiting him like that," Eva replied as she sat back down on the sofa.

"It's fun messing with his head." Elijah shrugged. "I can't stop staring at you. Your eyes have a brilliant shine to them. I don't think I've ever seen you this alive before."

"I can't explain it, Elijah. It's only been a couple of hours since Hawk's been back into my life and I have no control when it comes to him. And that's what probably scares me the most."

"As old as this advice is, I'm going to give it to you anyway. Follow your heart, Eva. I care about you deeply, and I wouldn't steer you wrong."

Eva nodded once before changing the subject. It made her a bit uncomfortable talking about her heart which she equated with love. "Derek attacked again tonight."

Elijah closed his eyes, taking a deep breath before opening them. She could feel the anger radiating off of him. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine. Hawk was there. His presence helped greatly."

“I saw that when I walked in. And I’m glad he was here to help you. We should have bagged this bastard a long time ago, sweetheart.”

“That’s one hell of an understatement,” Eva replied. “And tracking him isn’t going to be easy. Hawk hasn’t heard anything about Derek yet. He’s got the team looking out for him.”

“I’m a fountain of information, darling. And I still can’t find out where the bastard is hiding. I just wish he’d seek a confrontation with us, instead of playing these foolish games.”

“Derek isn’t playing with us, Elijah. He’s setting us up for something big.”

Eva forced herself to remain still as she felt Hawk’s hands on her shoulders. His hands moved, digging his fingers softly into her tense skin. She knew who it was and she had to stop herself from laying her head back and giving in to the support and comfort he provided.

“This cat and mouse game ends soon,” Hawk stated.

Eva closed her eyes. She silently wished he spoke the truth. But deep down inside, where she learned a long time ago to listen to that little voice, Eva knew it was far from over.

Chapter Nine

“Where is she?”

Derek watched Sergio Finn’s trembling form. By the way he was quivering, he knew Sergio’s mission was a failure and the urge to rip him apart was strong. The temptation to bleed him and watch him die momentarily clouded Derek’s judgment. His fangs dropped and he ran his tongue against the curve of the blood filled wine glass he held.

Derek continued to assess him, feeding off the fear that dripped from him. “Stop shaking like a snake and tell me where she is!”

“The others have failed,” Sergio sputtered.

Derek slammed the wine glass onto the side of his armchair, the broken glass digging into his fingers as the blood spilled over his hand. The red haired girl kneeling at his feet jumped in nervousness. “This is the third time. And you mean to tell me that three of your top clan couldn’t bring her to me? I’m getting tired of this sport. Tell me why I should let you live, Sergio.”

Derek rose from his chair. The girl quickly scurried to the side. Sergio twitched his eye slowly, a sure indication to Derek of his nervousness.

“She wasn’t alone.”

Derek held the anger within, his body snapping ramrod still as he walked closer to Sergio. Violence filled him and Derek circled Sergio, deciding what to do. Should he kill him on the spot, or was Sergio useful to him alive? “That’s your useless excuse, Sergio? A mere woman who wasn’t alone?”

“It’s no excuse, your highness,” Sergio replied nervously. “There was a wolf with her and Pedro stabbed her and ...”

“Stop your fucking sniveling!” The desire to kill was strong. But Derek conceded that Sergio might still be useful. “What use could I possibly have for you now? I could do a fucking better job grabbing her myself.”

Derek stopped circling and placed himself directly behind Sergio. He reached over and grabbed Sergio by the neck. His fingers dug into skin, the nails burrowing deep. Derek hauled Sergio in front of his body and leaned in, licking at the side of his neck. He could taste Sergio’s sweat mixed with fear.

“Derek, please give me another chance,” Sergio pleaded just as the tip of Derek’s teeth sank into his skin. “There is a piece of information I’ve withheld that can be valuable in capturing Eva.”

Derek pulled his teeth out, but his hand remained on Sergio’s neck, squeezing his airways. Fuck, he was tempted but he couldn’t deny that his curiosity was peaked. “You only have one chance to remedy this. Tell me what you know.”

* * * * *

There was still an hour before sundown and another two hours before Eva had to head in for work. And still she couldn’t sleep. By all counts, with the battle she experienced yesterday, she should have been dead tired. But all she could think about was Hawk and the fact that he was sleeping right outside her bedroom door.

Eva had given him the option of leaving with Elijah. Instead, Hawk had parked his SUV and retrieved an overnight bag he kept in the trunk, reasoning someone should be on watch duty.

Watch duty, my ass. He was trying to get closer to her. And with each hour that passed, Eva found her resolve breaking down bit by tiny bit. She wasn't ready to let him into her heart ... she wasn't ready give into him.

The buzzing of her cellular brought her out of her thoughts. Eva grabbed her cell and flipped it open.

"Eva speaking."

"I could hear you thinking all the way from here."

Eva laughed at the sound of Bram's voice. "You were probably just eavesdropping."

"How you been, sis? Elijah watching out for you okay?"

"He is ... he has been."

"Something's wrong. You answered that a little too nervously."

It was times like this she wished Bram wasn't so in tune with her emotions. Eva sighed. "Derek attacked yesterday."

"I'm flying down today."

"You don't have to. Elijah stopped by as he always does. And Hawk was there."

"Where did this take place?"

"A block away from my apartment. I don't know how Derek found me so quickly. This isn't the first time he's tried to convince me to go with him."

"First time? Go with him? What the hell are you talking about, Eva?"

Dios, this fight was going to be a big one. She had purposely kept Bram out of the loop. He'd been too involved last time with Derek and she wanted nothing to happen to the only

family she had left. But she hated the fact that Bram's protectiveness managed to reduce her to a quivering state of emotions.

"Don't blow your top, Bram, but this wasn't the first time Derek has attacked. Each time, I've managed to fight back. He never got a hit on me, until tonight. One of the vampires stabbed my arm, but Hawk was there. And ... "

"And you expect me not to blow my top! Why could you not tell me this before? I knew you were joining the team in Washington and the dangers involved ... but this?" Bram asked, cutting her words off. "I'm thanking God Hawk was around you. And for the first time, it makes me think that sending him away was truly a fucked up thing to do. Why do you refuse my help, *hermana*? We have only each other in this world. I'm taking the next flight down."

Placating Bram was similar to talking to a brick wall and expecting a response. Both were impossible. "When will you arrive?"

"You're not going to question the fact that I sent Hawk away?"

"Why would I? I'm not mad at you for voicing your protectiveness," Eva stated softly, her voice dropping to a mere whisper as her emotions threatened to get the best of her. "I heard everything that night. And overbearing as it was, your intentions have always been to protect me. No matter what, it's Hawk who should have made the decision to stay."

"I'm sorry, Eva."

"Sorry for what?"

"Sorry because I couldn't see that the right thing to do was in front of our faces all along."

For the first time in forever, Eva cried, the tears spilling from her eyes in a blinding rush. She sighed, the sound coming out like a watery quiver. "When will you be here?"

"I'll book a flight for eight. I'll be there around nine tonight. Are you on duty?"

"Yes."

"Then it will give me an excuse to tour the facility in Washington."

"I'm sure that'll be fine. Be careful, Bram. I love you."

"Same here, *hermana*."

Eva flipped the phone close and rose from the bed. It was time to feed before she headed out and she had a feeling Elijah wouldn't be providing her meal.

* * * * *

Hawk swallowed the last bite of roast beef. Eva didn't have too much in her fridge in the way of food, but he managed to scrape up a sandwich. He guessed she'd kept the minimal for her guests. He was sure she felt bad about that, along with everything else that had occurred in her life.

He scented the air, her rosy aroma drifting to him as soon as she entered the living room. He had yet to spot her, but her perfume told him she was right behind him. "I see you made yourself at home."

He rose from the chair and walked to the dishwasher, placing the glass and plate inside, before turning it on. "I've eaten, if that's what you mean. "

He turned and was instantly frozen to the spot as a flush of heat washed over him. He resisted the urge to pant like a dog. She stood in the living room area, dressed in a white tank top and black lounge pants. He suddenly felt too hot, his clothes uncomfortable against his skin. God, how he wanted to take her from behind completely, and make her his. "You're killing me, Eva. There's only so much I can take."

Eva smiled, displaying a row of brilliant white teeth. "Perhaps I want you to lose control. I'm confronting the fact there's this chemistry between us."

"Resigned? I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad one."

"I wouldn't call it a bad one," Eva replied as Hawk walked towards the living room. "I have to feed again, Hawk." Her gaze strayed to his feet.

She was nervous asking him, and he almost told her how silly it was. But he liked this shyness side to her. It was a softness he hadn't seen in years. He had the sudden urge to take her in his arms and assure her that he would always be there for her no matter what.

He tilted her chin up so her gaze met his. "I'm here for you, Eva. But I am curious about one thing." And curiosity was a dangerous thing, but he still wanted to ask how close Elijah and she truly were.

"What's that?"

"Did you ever have sex with Elijah? I know the day I walked out on you gave me no rights when it came to questions. But I want to know if the relationship you share is more than friendship."

"No, Hawk. Elijah and I have never been together that way. There has only been one other guy in my life ... and he fouled everything up."

"How?"

"How what?" Her gaze darted to the ceiling and then to him.

"How did he foul it up? He didn't hurt you, did he?"

"No ... no," Eva stated loudly as she blushed. Hawk didn't think he had ever seen her turn such a beautiful shade of red.

Hawk nodded and decided to drop the subject.

Her own gaze dropped to the ground. "Where do you want to do this?" she asked nervously.

His first option would have been in her bed. But that would probably be a little too much, too soon. "Let's go on the sofa."

Eva moved to sit down but Hawk closed the distance between them and wrapped his hands around her waist. She gasped and he took advantage of her surprise by sitting down. Her upper body leaned towards him and she placed her hands on his shoulders. He quickly maneuvered her so she was now straddling him.

“Like this?” Eva whispered.

He felt her thighs tense and he groaned in response, words momentarily lost at the feel of his rigid cock pressed so close to her. She was aroused, her heat seeping through her pants. He struggled against the need to take his cock out and rub it against her pussy as she squirmed. Eva’s writhing was an imitation of the way he wanted her to ride him.

Hawk growled as he tilted his neck to the side, “Eva, feed.”

Chapter Ten

She'd never been this hungry in her life. And it wasn't for his blood. *Dios*, but she was tempted to reach into his sweats and pull his cock out. This was the moment she had dreamed of all of her life. The point where she could be one with the man she had always loved. But could she let go of the pain and move forward? Could she trust him again?

Eva doubted herself ... doubted him, but that didn't still the hunger burning inside her. She braced herself, holding her hands on his hard shoulders and voiced her doubt. It took all of her concentration to ignore the pulsing cock beneath her. "I'm not sure about this, Hawk."

Hawk stared at her, his dark gaze giving her the urge to tremble in despair.

"What are you not sure of?" he asked.

"Feeding from you and the connection between us. It's never going to work. Why would you think that it could?"

Hawk slid his hands to her thighs, distracting her from her thoughts with the way he was touching her skin, drawing tiny little circles.

"Eva, there has always been this fire between us ... a rare burst of raw appeal. It's what attracted me to you in the first place. I've made mistakes when it came to you. But I know you inside and out and you know me the same way. I've always held back when it came to

what I've truly felt for you, *hermosa*, and I don't intend to do it again. As far as you're concerned, I'm an open book. You can ask me anything."

"Will you leave again?" Eva looked him straight in the eye, placing it all on the line in that one question.

He stared into her eyes, his hands stopping and tightening around her thighs as if he knew their happiness hung in his answer. "No matter what comes our way, I will be by your side, always. It is up to you, Eva if it is as friends or something more. But I'm not above praying here that it's definitely something more. And perhaps using a more hands-on technique as a way of convincing you."

Her hands began to sweat and her stomach trembled with butterflies. He was asking for a lot, way more than what she could give him. And how could she move forward with him, if she wasn't sure she was ready? Still, she needed to be honest with herself. There was no doubt in her mind that she needed Hawk sexually. She couldn't control her thoughts or impulses around him. But was that enough to begin a relationship and more importantly how would it end for them?

She licked her dry lips. "I'm not promising anything. This is something new to me ... to us. If we begin this, what makes you think we'll end up together?"

"I know it's hard for you to even consider that there can be a happy ending for us," Hawk said, low and husky. "All I'm asking is that you give us a try. We're good together and that's something."

"Hawk, just because the sex is good, doesn't mean that everything else will flow smoothly."

"The basis for all relationships is attraction. But we've been through more than that. I want you Eva, and I'm willing to fight for you if I have to. I'm not leaving this time. You can count on me staying with you. I'm not going to force you. It's up to you if it's more than just

friendship, but even if we remain just friends, nothing short of death would ever pull me from you.”

He seemed so sincere. She had everything to lose if she said yes and it didn’t work out between them. But she also had everything to gain if they ended up together. She was tired of being alone, tired of feeling so lost. Seeing him again gave her hope. Eva steadied herself, gripping his shoulders hard as if he were her lifeline. “We’ll see where this heads.”

He groaned deeply before he responded. “That’s all I ask, *hermosa*.”

For a second, Eva thought he was going to say something else. But he tilted his head to the side, offering his throat once more.

She closed her eyes and allowed herself to concentrate. She heard his heart beat race and her mouth watered at the temptation to taste. Her clit began to throb and the violent need to have him inside of her consumed all thoughts. She leaned in, flicking her tongue against his skin, the vein beneath throbbing with his blood. His cock pulsed between her legs and Eva rubbed herself against him, anticipating the moment when they would unite.

She jumped up, slipping her pants down and kicking them off her feet. She watched him as she straddled him once more, his gaze zeroing in at her hairless mound. She raised herself up, holding her weight on her knees, and reached a hand below, dipping into his sweats, taking out his engorged length. Eva ran her fingers up and down, taking delight that he was the perfect size.

She flicked her tongue against his skin once more as she tightened her fist around his shaft before sinking her teeth into his neck. The piercing was brief, his blood rushed into her mouth immediately, the taste filled with copper and heat as she began to stroke him in an up and down motion.

The taste of him filled her, surrounded her in a way that pushed her temperature higher. Eva aligned his cock to the front of her pussy. She was uncontrollable in her lust and

she couldn't stop herself from rocking against his velvet steel. Her moisture spilled, coating his shaft, tempting her to seek a closer connection to him.

But Eva waited, the hunger to feed battling with the need for sex, the dual forces stoking a fire within her. She rubbed herself against him, and she could only close her eyes and relish it further as she felt him reach below and stroke her clit. The throbbing was heavy and her thighs were slick with cream. The stroking was heavenly, drawing her higher and higher, winding her body tight with the anticipation of release as his thumb rasped back and forth.

Her hips moved faster, her clit in direct contact to his shaft, the sensitive bundle stroking against steel. She released his neck, one hunger sated but the other taking over fully. Hawk whipped his head around. He pushed the straps of her tank top down, taking a nipple into her mouth, biting lightly at the tip as he took control of her hips, grinding his cock against her.

How he had so much control as not to fuck her was beyond her. But she had no restraint when it came to him.

The tension built heavily in the pit of her stomach and Eva screamed his name, her orgasm flooding his cock just as the bite of pain was unleashed. She felt a warm sticky sensation hit her stomach, along with a hot jolt and Eva knew that he had just come, too.

Dios, this was an consuming need a first for her, like a raging fire burning hotly and she wanted more ... need more.

As the sensation dwindled, she realized she was involved way she could not have imagined. And she was calling herself ten times foolish. Because deep down in her heart, Hawk had always remained.

* * * * *

Grinding melting sex. That's the name he was going to give this particular meltdown between them. And it was such a hot in your face meltdown, that he had zilch control as he

spurted his seed all over her stomach. He was that in tune with her. He felt her release and it zapped his own.

What would it feel like to have his cock in there? The thought had his shaft stirring. The result could only be an explosion of enormous proportions. And he craved the sexual act that would make them one.

The bed. That's what they needed. A king-size bed to make love in all night long. It would take more than a night to ease the lusty edge off but it was a good place to start.

Hawk brought his hands to her waist and stood with her. The movement forced her legs to wrap around his waist. The position brought his cock to the entrance of her pussy.

Her mouth parted and she released a sexy moan. She was turned on, revved up for more. He brought his mouth to hers and he kissed her with a fierce desperation. He didn't think they would make it to the bedroom. His shaft began to enter her wet cunt as he gave into the need to be inside her.

The tightness of her sheath gripped him as her hotness threatened to take him under and he almost shot his load at the taut pressure.

"Hawk, please fuck me," she moaned.

Her plea was desperate and he knew how she felt. He wouldn't tease them any longer. He pushed further in, the walls of her pussy closing deliciously tightly. He reached and brought a hand to her hair, tangling his fingers in the strands. He was finally going to mate with her, marking her as his. He bent, brushing his lips on her shoulders as he fed her two more inches of his cock.

He heard a piercing ring as his tongue tasted her flesh. He groaned and gave her skin one last lick. "I have to answer that."

"Don't," she whispered, arching her hips higher.

"It could be information on Derek."

With a tight arm around her waist so she wouldn't think of getting off, he bent his knees to pick up the phone. He grabbed it and rose. The movement forced his dick in deeper and he clenched his teeth hard to concentrate on not sinking all the way in.

He flipped the phone open.

"It better be good," Hawk growled into the mouthpiece.

"I need to speak with you. It's urgent. How long will it take you to get to the office? Or would you rather have me travel to where you are now?" Saber asked.

"What's the information?"

"Not over the phone."

"I'll be at the office in twenty minutes." Hawk flipped his phone shut. He eased Eva down slowly, groaning as her tight pussy released his cock in slow degrees. Regret filled every part of his bones. "Get dressed. We're heading in a little early."

"Who called you to come in early?" she asked, hoping that the change of subject would be like pouring cold water on her horniness.

"Saber needs to talk to me. He said it was urgent."

"What could be so vital that he couldn't tell it to you over the phone?" She was still more than a little ticked off that they had been interrupted.

"I don't know. Saber wanted to meet face to face."

Chapter Eleven

The main building which held the Paranormal Ops Unit offices was twenty stories tall. Armed security guards were stationed inside and out. They flashed their ID badges to the guard at front, before entering the elevator. Hawk pressed the fifth floor button. The button flashed red before the doors closed and Eva found her gaze colliding with Hawk's. She was still a mess, her body running on a continuous sexual overdrive. Her pussy was wet with anticipation and she had to bear it, walking behind Hawk stiffly while her hormones wreaked havoc.

"This isn't over," Hawk stated. Even though his tone of voice was plain, Eva read the desire behind those three words. And she had to agree with him. She could give it any name she wanted, but whatever was between them would never be over.

Eva nodded, ripping her gaze away from his as the elevator jolted to a sudden stop. The lights went out, sending a wave of nervousness through her, reminding her of the time she spent in Derek's dungeon. The darkness sent a wave of trepidation through her. Her mouth felt like cotton. "What's going on?" she asked, forcing the words out.

"I don't know," Hawk replied as he picked up the emergency handset. "What happened to the elevator?" he asked the person on the receiving end.

Eva closed her eyes and concentrated on Hawk's heartbeat. The steady pulse brought her panic down. She focused on the rush of blood running through his veins. Her teeth lengthened and the strongest desire to taste him flowed through her. He looked delicious, dressed in his uniform, his raging hard pressed against the fabric.

Hawk slammed the phone back in its cradle before she felt his hand on her hip, tugging her closer to him. She went willingly, wanting to feel the welcome heat of his body.

"You okay?"

"I'll be fine," she replied. "The lack of light bothers me more than the elevator stopping. Did they say what the problem was?"

"I called security. They're headed to the basement now. That's where the voltage panels are, along with the elevator control box."

Hawk stepped away from her. She missed the heat of his skin, and was about to mention it when she heard a creaking sound at the same time light flooded beneath her eyelids. She opened her eyes. Hawk managed to open the doors. The concrete wall between the entrance and floor was about two inches wide. They were stuck but she was grateful for the slight glow shining through the wedge. "Thanks."

"No problem. It'll probably be a few minutes before they fix it." It wasn't the words that caught her attention. It was the way he said them, with a hint of sexuality beneath his tone. He gave her a dark burning look and it lit the fire of desire deep within her. Her fear and nervousness evaporated and in its place was a slow simmering heat that began in the pit of her stomach.

Her nipples were beaded tightly against the fabric of her uniform. Eva licked her lips, her clit throbbing heavily.

Hawk's gaze darkened as he unbuttoned the top of his uniform, removing his arms from the sleeves. He made a show of slowly pulling the zipper down, pausing when a hint of cock was displayed. The sight of his cock peeking out almost made her beg.

Her gaze lifted to his rippled chest, the muscles bunching as he finished undressing. He was all lean power, smooth bare skin and he incited hot need inside of her. She trembled, her tongue tingling with the urge to lick him.

She smiled a little deviously as her hands moved to her own zipper. She wanted to torture him and torment herself in the process, but she was sure the outcome would worth it. She lowered the zipper and he growled, low and harsh. She pulled her arms out of the sleeves, revealing her naked breasts.

“Eva,” he stated in a sensual tone.

She practically ripped off her suit with the need to have him inside of her. Her clothes fell to the floor, the loud clank of her gun heard clearly in the confined space. Eva toed her boots off, and finished undressing just as he did.

Hawk closed the gap between them and plunged his tongue into her mouth. She sucked it, loving the growl that came deep from his throat. He wrapped an arm around her waist, the other hand traveled low to her pussy and his fingers played with her clit. She moaned against his mouth as he swirled her cream with his fingertips, teasing her, drawing her pleasure higher. Eva desired more and she was to the point where she didn’t care if the elevator started working anytime soon.

She ripped her mouth from his and wrapped both arms around his neck, hoisting herself up. She enveloped her legs around his waist. His heated skin connected with hers and she moaned, her yearning climbing higher. He slid his cock on the outer surface of her pussy, coating it with her cream. The head of his cock slowly entered her as he grabbed a hold of her hair, roughly tugging her head back so she could watch him.

“I’ve wanted to do this ever since I met you, Eva,” Hawk growled against her lips. “I want you to know this means the world to me.”

Dios, it meant the world to her too. And she had every intention of mentioning that to him, but the words were lost. She was on the verge of having a super meltdown as he thrust

his dick all the way in, the hardness of his plunge forcing a scream from her mouth. The sensation went beyond pleasure and she felt every throbbing inch of him deep inside of her. She could only concentrate on this, on the way he was fucking her.

Her back was against the cool metal wall of the elevator, her front against his fiery body and she took each and every sensation in. It heightened her desire for him. Hawk's hand was still wrapped in her hair as her fangs distended. She licked her lips, anticipating the call of his blood. But his cock overrode it all.

The man fucked like a god, shoving in and out of her with a slowness that had her clit rubbing against the top of his dick. It was all too much and still not enough. She tightened her legs around him, moving her hips, hoping the friction would get her closer to him. She wanted to eat him inside and out and it scared her that her desire was that intense.

Eva stared into his eyes before dropping her gaze to his mouth. Two of his teeth were longer than the rest and it was definitely something she hadn't noticed before. It must be another trait of a wolf, she thought, but Eva filed that away in her head to question him later.

Hawk used his grip on her hair to turn her neck to the side. His thrusts became harder, the motion rubbing her clit firmly. She closed her eyes against the explosion building in the pit of her stomach, the kaleidoscope of sensations assaulting her all at once. Her orgasm was inches away from exploding. She could almost taste it. And then Hawk did something she never expected.

He sank his teeth into her neck as he gave her one particularly hard thrust, sending her into a euphoria so deep, she saw stars in her eyes. She screamed his name as he drank from her neck and felt his dick throb once, before spilling his hot seed deep inside. Eva moaned as she felt him pull his teeth out of her neck.

* * * * *

Hawk groaned as he slowly pulled his cock from the heat of her pussy.

Love. That was what he felt for her and the emotion knew no bounds. Hawk leaned in and placed a hot kiss against her neck as he drew the scent of her deep into his lungs. “Eva, you were remarkable,” he whispered, wanting to shout his love for her. But he didn’t think she was ready for that.

She reached out and stroked his jaw lightly with her fingertips. “It’s what I always dreamed of,” she whispered into his ear.

He lifted his face and gazed into her eyes, regret for the past still raw. “*Hermosa*, if I could only change the hands of time, it would have all been done differently.”

“Hawk, let’s not talk about it. From now, we move forward,” she replied, unwrapping her legs from his waist.

She slid down his body in a slow motion and the feel of her soft skin and breasts had his cock stirring for attention. He was seriously contemplating taking her once more, but the elevator’s engine sprang to life, jolting it up. “Get dressed,” Hawk stated as he reached for his suit.

They were dressed in thirty seconds and at the building in fifteen minutes.

Eva looked delicious in her ravished state, her lips red and puffy from the kisses they’d just shared. His gaze fell to the red mating mark at her neck. The beast in him roared its approval and Hawk couldn’t help but be pleased at the sight. But he needed to tell her what it meant, that the mark was irreversible and that she was his forever.

The elevator movement jolted him out of his thoughts.

Hawk walked to his office with Eva right by his side. He entered first, not surprised to see Saber already sitting on a chair. He was more than curious as to the discussion Saber deemed urgent.

“Do you know what’s going on with the elevators?” Hawk asked Saber. His gaze shifted to Eva as she entered the room.

“That’s what took you so long. I haven’t heard a word. There are things we need to discuss privately.” Saber watched Eva guardedly.

Hawk narrowed his eyes, instantly irritated at Saber’s suspicious stare. “Stop looking at her as if she is poses a problem. She stays. Now tell me what’s on your mind.”

“I’ll give you one last warning,” Saber stated. “It would be best for all if she waited outside while I spoke with you.”

“Why don’t you stop speaking as if I weren’t here?” Eva grabbed a chair and sat, a certain indication to all that she wasn’t leaving the office.

Saber’s words caused a suspicious feeling in Hawk’s gut. But there would be no more secrets when it came to their relationship. And even if they weren’t mated, Eva was now a part of the team. “She stays and that’s final.”

“Fine. There are some things about Derek’s and my past that I’ve purposely kept hidden because of my own agendas,” Saber replied. “And with the continual senseless murder of innocents, it’s time for the truth to come to light.”

Hawk tensed, his body snapping rigid at the words. “Don’t fine tune it, Saber. What the hell do you need to tell me?”

* * * * *

Jalia Finn parked the motorcycle in her usual spot. Her work shift was at night and she preferred it that way. During the day, she tended to stay indoors, avoiding all humans. When she had mastered the art of using brick walls to stop the bombardment of thoughts ramming her psyche, Jalia had thought she was ready for the outdoors. But when a trip to the grocery store turned into a nightmare, Jalia realized she needed much more training. An accidental brush of her hand would cause her psychic half to reach out and she would instantly know a human’s true thoughts and intentions. On rare occasions, she would get lucky and touch an innocent girl or boy. But the majority of time, her youth was spent in pain.

She was able to control it now and only seek out who she wanted to read. But still, she kept to herself and only used her powers on assignments.

She scanned the garage. The garage was well lit for security purposes, and the usual protocol was to have a couple of guards on duty. Strangely enough there weren't any uniforms patrolling the area.

She took her helmet off and as soon as she was free from the barrier, her senses screamed out. Someone was watching her and he was hiding behind the pillar. She swung her leg over the bike and placed her helmet on the rear. She reached for the handle of her gun.

She didn't remove her gaze from the pillar. A tall man, pale as a ghost, walked forward. Recognition flashed in her mind, but the trust between her and Sergio, her twin brother, had crumbled long ago. "What do you want, Sergio?" The fact that she hadn't sensed him immediately worried her. The blood bond between them was permanent and she had always been able to feel him, even from afar.

"I'm looking for a woman named Eva," Sergio stated softly.

Something was terribly off. She pushed her psyche forward and focused her strength on Sergio. The mental vibrations she received were filled with evil. If she could get close enough to him, she could read what her brother's intentions were.

"What the hell do you want with her?" Jalia paced her steps.

"Is that how you greet your brother?"

"As far as I'm concerned, you are no longer my brother."

Sergio hissed. "I have information pertaining to the whereabouts of a vampire named Derek. It is important I get a hold of her immediately."

She lifted her gun, aiming it straight for his heart. She already sensed what he was and she wasn't surprised that he had turned vampire. All she needed to figure out was what he truly wanted. She reached over, her hand grabbing his arm.

Derek. Capture her.

It was all a trick. Her mind assessed the full danger too late. Sergio's thoughts leapt into her mind as she felt a burning pinch at her neck. She dropped her gun as her muscles locked into a paralyzed state and her eyes grew heavy. A wave of dread washed through her and she couldn't stop herself from falling towards the darkness.

Chapter Twelve

Eva rose from the office chair, shifted her body to the side and leaned against the wall. She waited silently for Saber to continue, though her body was filled with anticipation.

“Let me start from the beginning,” Saber replied. “In the early eighteen hundreds, two twin boys were born to the parents of one of the first humans ever turned into vampires. It was no surprise when the twins were born with tainted blood, and showed signs of needing the liquid to live. The boys were the exact opposites of each other. Even their looks were different, one physically resembling the mother and the other favoring the father.”

It should have taken Eva longer to add up the end results to Saber’s words. But the answers were instantly clear. The eerie connection when Eva had first met Saber, her blood calling to him and a strong suspicion that she knew him all equaled Saber and Derek being brothers. “Which one did you favor?” Eva asked.

Saber pinned her with his gaze. “You catch on quick.”

“For god’s sake, tell me this isn’t heading where I think it is?” Hawk stated, his hands already curled into tight fists.

Eva could feel the anger bouncing off him in strong vibes. She walked over to stand beside Hawk, and placed one hand on his arm, the tense muscles rippling beneath her touch.

Hawk had figured it out, too and it should have been harder on her, but it wasn't. Having the same blood didn't make you a monster. If that were the case, Saber and she would be just as evil as Derek.

"For the first twenty years of our lives, Derek and I were as close as brothers can be," Saber continued. "Then greed began to fester in Derek's mind as our father tried to decipher who would take over the family business worth billions of dollars. We were only born a minute apart, Derek being older, but father had already decided that I was the one with the savvy business mind. To make a long story short, I awoke one morning to find my mother and father drained dry of their blood, their arms cut off their bodies. Derek was standing over them, blood dripping from his fangs and an ax clutched to his hand. And it was all done in the name of money."

"I'm so sorry, Saber," Eva whispered, feeling his loss deeply. "I know how it feels to lose someone you truly love."

Saber watched her, his eyes darkening at her words. "You are not at all what I expected."

"I'm sure you thought I wouldn't have turned out this way. For a second there, I wasn't too sure of it myself," Eva acknowledged.

"What possessed you to keep this a fucking secret from the team? Do you realize that you should have mentioned this as soon as you knew what our next assignment was? You have endangered lives by withholding pertinent information!" Hawk slammed his fist down, the table creaking under the weight.

Eva silently acknowledged Hawk's point. It would have helped if Saber had told them from the beginning.

Saber rose from his seat, like a sleek cat ready to jump his prey. "For your information, Hawk, I cut ties with Derek the day he ripped my parents' throats out. I've been stalking him since that very day for retribution. But the slippery bastard has always gotten away."

“Shit, Saber. It doesn’t matter. You should have told ... ” Hawk replied before Eva cut him off with a tightening of her hand on his arm.

“Let it go, Hawk,” Eva replied. “It would be no help to us if you beat this to the ground.”

“Why are you telling us this now? What’s happened?”

Saber narrowed his eyes in anger. “I’ve done some research on the vampire name Sergio. Besides being Derek’s lackey, he is connected to Jalia. She knows the rest. Speak with her when she gets in.” He walked over to the exit of the office.

“I won’t have any lies from here on out. How is Jalia connected? This isn’t over, Saber,” Hawk stated as he took a step towards the vampire.

Saber turned, a smirk crossing his lips. “Ever hear of the saying, don’t throw stones at a glass house? Maybe you want to explain to Eva what that mark on her neck means?”

The shifting of subjects worked pretty well. Saber took the advantage of the surprised look etched into Hawk’s face and departed. Eva felt her cheeks heat up as she concentrated on the bite mark at her neck. The bite throbbed, reminding her of the way he sank his teeth into her skin. She wasn’t an idiot and since Saber brought up the subject, now was the perfect time to question him about this particular wolf trait.

Eva turned to Hawk. “So let’s hear it.”

“Diverting bastard,” Hawk cursed before giving her his full attention. “We’re mated.”

Eva tightened her lips. He said the words as if he hadn’t just made a major decision by himself. “You dare speak about doing things differently and at first shot, you take control? Did it ever occur to you to ask if I wanted to spend the rest of my life with you?”

“It occurred in the heat of the moment and it’s too late to take it back,” he growled. “But in no way am I sorry that it happened.”

His explanation didn’t calm the burning anger settling in her stomach. “You should have asked. It would have been the right thing to do.”

“And when would it have been the *right time* to ask? When I had my cock shoved balls deep into you?”

The words evoked an erotic image in her mind. She pushed it away. She didn’t need to be thinking about sex right now. “Now you’re being an ass. What are the repercussions of mating?”

“Mating is for life,” he replied as he walked over to her slowly.

“So you’re saying I can never be with another man?” His eyes narrowed at her question. She was purposely trying to tick him off and he deserved every bit of the hard time she was giving him.

He put his hands around her waist, hauling her against him. Leaning down, he whispered into her ear, “I’ve always wanted to be with you this way. It’s always been the basis for my fantasies. Mating with you was a result of the unbreakable bond we share, Eva, and that connection was at its strongest when my cock was snuggled deep inside your hot little pussy, and I felt like my very soul was spilling into yours. We will belong to each other always.”

Her anger melted at his words. He touched her in a way that threatened to bring her emotions forward. Her life still seemed like a dream and trusting was still so damn hard. “I don’t see us as a permanent thing right now, but anything is possible.”

Hawk brushed his lips against her cheek. “We’re going day by day on this, and I’ll be damned if I lose you because we didn’t have the courage to give it a try.”

Eva leaned her head against his chest. She was afraid to feel anything more for him than she already did. And it all came down to trust. Hawk claimed he was here to stay, but she didn’t trust that he would never leave her again.

A coughing sound alerted them to another presence in the room and Eva lifted her head, surprised to see Rico watching them. “They’ve taken Jalia.”

* * * * *

The conference room was filled with anger, the vibes rushing out in a strong wave. All of the team members sat awaiting Hawk's instruction.

Hawk directed his question to Rico. "Report."

The were-panther reached for the remote control and turned on the flat screen TV embedded into the wall. "These are security tapes of the parking garage. Keep your eyes on Jalia as she parks her motorcycle."

Saber jumped from his seat. "God dammit!"

Hawk turned to the monitor.

Onscreen, Jalia parked the bike and whipped her helmet off. She swung her leg from the bike and turned in the direction of the camera, as if she sensed someone. A man walked up to her gesturing to her with his hands. "Can we get a voice print on this?" Hawk asked without removing his eyes from the screen.

"They were positioned too far from the camera for any sound," Rico replied as he pressed a button and enlarged the picture.

Jalia never saw it coming. Derek came from behind and struck Jalia with a syringe in the neck. Her body fell to the floor and Derek smiled into the camera before picking her up. The sight of all three leaving the garage left a burning anger in the pit of Hawk's stomach.

Rico turned off the monitor.

"I want updates now," Hawk ordered. "We'll begin with you, Rico. What do you know about Jalia's disappearance?"

"The elevator breakdown was just a planned distraction. Derek knew what time we would meet tonight. We've got a fucking snitch in our ranks," Rico replied. "And it's time we find it and get rid of it."

Hawk nodded. "Find out who opened their mouth. Use whatever means necessary. Any confirmed sightings on the seaport?"

Rico slid a piece of paper to Hawk. "I dropped by and besides metal storage containers and dumpsters, the only thing I found were a couple of bums and teenagers strolling around. I dropped the word, but they've heard nothing. I believe Derek instilled fear in these people, because the fucking place practically looked like a desert. On an upside, a note was left on my doorstep when I stopped by my apartment. Whoever wrote it heard I was asking questions about Derek and the writer of the note requested a meeting for tonight at midnight on seaport pier."

"I'll send backup." Hawk replied. "Do you have any idea who wrote the note?"

Rico's gaze darkened, his body tensing up at Hawk's question. "The only thing I got off the letter was a scent. And before you ask, I've never smelled anything like it in my life. The letter stated I was to arrive alone."

Hawk watched Rico and the way his body suddenly went rigid. He slid the note back to him. "I don't think that's such a wise idea. Jalia's missing and Derek could have written that letter."

Rico reached for paper, his fingers absently stroking the piece. "Derek's stench is vile. My gut tells me a woman wrote that letter. And if we want a good chance of finding Jalia, we need to do this properly."

"I don't like it. But you've never failed me on one of your hunches," Hawk acknowledged. "You'll meet with her alone. But Jesse will be in the area, in case you need him. "

Rico grunted his assent.

Hawk turned to Eva. He had a lovely view of her profile as she watched Saber, but a frown contorted her lips. "Eva, what's wrong?"

Eva licked her lips. “Saber, now is the time to tell us what Jalia knows about you that made her a target with Derek?”

“You are surprisingly on point,” Saber responded. “It isn’t necessarily what she knows about me. It’s more like how she’s connected to Sergio, Derek’s lackey. He’s Jalia’s twin brother. I confronted Jalia about him a few months back, but she swore that their bond was severed years ago and that she knew nothing that would help anyone capture Sergio or Derek. She seemed surprised that he would have taken up with an asshole like Derek.”

Hawk rubbed his forehead. Too many lies were being uncovered in his own unit and the need to yell his frustration was high. “Did you discover anything else?”

Saber shook his head. “Jalia refused to speak about Sergio.”

“Is there anyone else thinking what I’m thinking?” Hawk turned, casting a quick glance at Eva before continuing. “Almost everyone in this room has had a history with Derek. I bet if we looked really deeply, we would find the source who connected all of us together like a fucking jigsaw puzzle.”

“Elijah?” Eva asked.

Hawk heard the surprise tone in her voice. And he had to admit to being more than shocked himself. “That’s what I’m betting. I’m going to have to give our fountain of information a call.”

“That can wait,” Saber replied as he jumped to his feet. “We need to find a way to help Jalia. I will try and find my brother tonight.”

“Telepathically?” Jesse questioned curiously.

“I have tried before with no success,” Saber murmured. “But it won’t hurt to try again.”

“I’ll do it,” Eva whispered. “I’ll try to reach Derek.”

Hawk turned to look at her. Every nerve ending tightened with those words and he clenched his teeth hard. “Like hell!”

Saber placed his hands on the table and leaned forward. "Wait, Hawk. This might work. The fact that Derek wants Eva will probably work to our advantage. She could probably contact him more easily than even I could."

"I won't say it again. Eva will not be putting herself on the line for anyone." Hawk swallowed tightly. His hands were already covered with fur, his nails lengthening into claws and he had to force the need to change into wolf down. He wanted to howl at the thought of Eva in pain or worse -- dead.

It took a few seconds before his appearance was back to normal. But it didn't change what Hawk felt inside. He would face the devil himself before she would ever be hurt again.

* * * * *

The door to the conference room burst open. Eva watched as her brother, Bram Long, settled his gaze on her. She rose from her seat and walked over to him. Eva wrapped her arms around him. His body was stiff. She knew her brother and he was angry. "Took you long enough to get here."

"I was taking a tour of the facilities," Bram replied as he surveyed the room. "What's this I hear about you going up against Derek?"

Eva arched a brow at her brother's tone. He was already going into over-protective mode. "It was my suggestion. One of our team members was kidnapped. And we need to find out where Derek took her."

"Eva, this is not going to happen," Bram replied. "How do you know she's not dead already?"

Saber growled at the remark. Hawk walked to Eva and stood by her side.

"Derek's pattern with women is torture. There are chances that Jalia is still alive," Hawk answered. "But I agree with your brother, Eva. This is a very bad idea."

"The both of you can answer this then. If I were the one Derek had ... "

“But you weren’t,” Bram interrupted.

“Let me finish. If I were the one Derek had captured, you and Hawk would have done anything to get me back. The only thing I ask is that you extend that same hope to Jalia.”

Hawk turned to her. “What you’re planning is dangerous.”

“Eva’s right,” Saber acknowledge heatedly. “If we want to find Jalia quickly, we must act soon.”

“Who the hell is this guy?” Bram shouted.

“This is Saber and that’s Jessie,” Eva replied, pointing out who was who with her finger. “Bram, we don’t need any of your macho overprotective bullshit right now. And frankly, I have too much on my mind to deal with it. I’m not a kid anymore. I’m not even human anymore. You need to start realizing that.”

Bram grunted, a distinctive male response, as Hawk spoke. “She’s right, Bram. Eva’s not a child anymore and we’re going to be there to back her up. I’ll be with her at all times.”

Bram shook his head. “What the hell is the plan?”

“I’ll feel more comfortable making contact with Derek at my place. And I need to feed to gain more strength,” Eva replied. “Give me a couple of hours and then we hunt.”

Chapter Thirteen

Eva entered her apartment with Hawk behind her. It was the worst time to be thinking about sex, but she couldn't help her emotions. Sex was apart of feeding, especially if you connected with someone on a deeper level.

She was already wet with desire for him and she didn't struggle when Hawk led her to her bedroom. Though the thought of struggling and Hawk subduing her turned her on even more and it was something they would definitely have to play out later on.

"I want you," Hawk growled as he gave her an intense burning look that she felt all the way to her throbbing clit.

He unzipped her suit, making sure the metal was far from her skin. Hawk pushed the material as far down as he could and then kneeled as he continued to pull the material downward. She steadied herself on his shoulder. She lifted her leg, thinking he was going to take off her boots. But apparently the hungry animal was really starving tonight because Hawk didn't bother with her boots. He ripped her panties, causing Eva to gasp as her body arched towards his mouth. He placed his hands in the inside of her thighs and parted her legs. Her suit acted as a restraint, only allowing her legs to part a few inches. But the hungry look Hawk gave her told her he wasn't going to let that deter him.

Her legs shook and she didn't think she had the strength to keep standing. But Hawk moved his hands to her hips and held her tight. He dove in, going for the most sensitive part of her. His tongue went straight for her clit, and Eva screamed as he sucked voraciously. Eva's hands flew to his hair, her fingers gripping the strands. She felt every inch of his tongue as it swirled around her clit. He teased her as he licked the outside, before plunging his tongue into her pussy. It sent another spike of heat throughout her body. The sensations were intense and she had to clench her teeth as she felt the need to come, start way deep in her womb.

He traced his tongue around her clit, before flattening it, rubbing it against her in a back and forth motion. The friction caused Eva to arch her pussy as close as she could against his mouth. Her cunt was a dripping faucet of cream and the lapping noises coming from Hawk's mouth sent her closer to her peak. She moaned as all of the sensations suddenly stopped. She glanced down at Hawk. He licked his lips.

"Eva, watch as I fuck you with my tongue. I've dreamed of you like this, open and ripe, your cream spilling into my mouth. You taste like heaven, love."

The words escalated her desire. She felt Hawk tighten his hands to the point of bruising her flesh as he shoved his tongue into her. He licked her cream, and then pursed his lips around her clit, sucking with such vivid hunger.

"Hawk!" Eva screamed as her orgasm slammed into her. Her muscles instinctively tightened and she grabbed hold of Hawk's head as her hips bowed towards him. It was like being caught between heaven and hell, the heat of the moment shooting through her like fire.

It took her minutes before she could even force herself to let go of his hair and even longer before she could stop the trembling in her legs.

Hawk wrapped one arm around her waist as he unzipped her boot before tossing it aside, and doing the same to the other. He stripped her completely before rising. She

watched him as he got rid of his clothing in seconds, practically ripping the material apart in his eagerness.

She couldn't blame him. He wasn't the only one who was eager. Eva was still hungry for him. He stood tall and hard before her, his naked body dark with arousal. She needed to taste him ... wanted to see what his flavor was like.

Eva reached out to touch him and ran her hands along his hot body. The fact that his physical skin was human amazed her, because she knew the beast that lay inside. Both sides combined were a mixture of raw hardness.

Eva slid her body down and grabbed his cock. She ran her fingers over the hot velvet steel skin and she heard him growl in response. She shivered as he grabbed her hair, forcing her closer to his dick. Her mouth watered, his male scent sending her hormones into overdrive. "I've always wanted to see what you tasted like," Eva murmured, before slipping her tongue over the head.

She tasted him, his pre-cum falling into her mouth and melting like hot thick butter. His flavor was spicy, kicking her desire up a notch.

"You don't know how many times I've dreamed about you in this position," Hawk stated.

"You don't know how many times I've dreamed of drinking it all up," she replied in a teasing tone.

Hawk's response was to tug on her hair, inching her mouth right on top of the head. The superb sex in the elevator hadn't given Eva time to get to know him on this level, so close up and personal.

She opened her mouth and took his cock inside. She tasted him, licking the shaft as far as she could go down her throat without choking. Eva kept up the blow job, acquainting herself with his hard heat.

Hawk took control, his fingers grabbing the back of her scalp. His aggressiveness turned her on. Eva relaxed her throat, breathing through her nose, and took him as far as she could go. More of his pre-cum spilled into her mouth, the salty semen going straight down her throat.

Her clit throbbed heavily and her cream spilled down to her thighs. She continued to suck him, her desire etching higher each time she tasted more of him. She wanted him to come in her mouth but Hawk reached down and pulled her off him. He wrapped his arms around her waist and picked her up. He walked over to her bed and placed her on it.

“I need to be inside of you right now.”

* * * * *

There were so many ways he wanted to come inside her. In her mouth, in her pussy and the animal side of him even dreamed of them getting around to anal sex. But two out of three were going to have to wait.

Her hot little mouth just took him to a whole other level, where he needed to be inside her right then and there.

White hot lust streaked through him at the pleasure she gave him. Hawk wanted to be on his knees for hours, making her come with just his tongue. He wanted to shift between man and wolf, and mate with her in every way possible. She brought out the beast in him and he needed her for life ... for eternity. She had always been his, and he was determined to prove that to her.

Hawk climbed onto the bed, and lined his cock against her pussy. She wrapped her legs around him as he rubbed his shaft, coating it with her cream. Fired up, Hawk plunged into her as he bent and took her mouth in a kiss that shot straight to his groin. He ran his tongue over her vampire teeth; when she nicked him, he felt it all the way to his cock. Her cunt gripped his shaft tightly and he continued to plunge into her, balls deep. His thrusts slowed down and she tightened her legs around him. Hawk broke off the kiss, the taste of blood

filling his mouth. He wanted this to be different for them and he needed to tell her how he truly felt.

Hawk held Eva's face with his hands as he told her what he felt pounding through his blood, through his body. "I would die for you and die a thousand times before I ever hurt you again. That's how far deeply embedded you are to my very soul. I will never walk away from the love you have chosen to give me in return. I love you Eva, all the way to my very soul."

"Hawk, I'll say it because I don't know what tomorrow will bring. None of us do. My soul has always been yours, ever since I first laid eyes on you. You mean more to me than anyone. *Te amo*."

The tears spilled from her eyes and he bent down, licking the salty liquid away. He swooped down for a quick kiss, and then wiped her tears with his tongue, all without stopping from shafting into her tight sweet body.

He fucked her deep and hard. Her cunt gripped his rod tightly and he felt every impression, every ripple pulsing around him. He was caught in an inferno so hot, his body was literally on fire. Hawk bent taking a hard nipple into his mouth, claspings the tip with his teeth. He couldn't get enough of her breasts, her nipples elongated, the color a lovely shade of mocha. Eva writhed beneath him as he sucked her long and hard. She screamed his name as he continued to torment her with his tongue and her pussy tightened on him as she came. Her cream spilled, coating his cock, triggering his own climax.

The urge to come intensified. She pushed all of his buttons and he could feel his canine teeth emerge with the urge to taste her once more.

"Feed from me," Hawk growled as he turned his head slightly, presenting her with the side of his throat.

As soon as he felt her teeth sink into his skin, he came with a roaring pulse of fire. Hawk sank his own teeth into her shoulder, tasting her blood, marking her once more. He would never get tired of making her his over and over again.

Chapter Fourteen

"I know what I said before, but this is foolish. I hate the fact that you're being put in any danger," Hawk murmured as he turned to gather her close and drape her body over his. Her breasts were crushed against his chest and her pussy was inches from his stirring cock.

Eva lifted her head to stare at him. "Is it foolish to save someone's life? This needs to be done, Hawk."

"Give me the details."

"I've never done this before ... at least not with me initiating any contact. Derek has my blood within him and vice versa."

"Don't fucking remind me."

She dropped a kiss on his chest. "I'm going to try and call out to Derek in my sleep. Maybe I can find where Jalia's being held."

"You're going to do it now?"

She nodded. "I'd prefer to get it over with as soon as possible and I definitely favor being dressed for this."

"Being dressed is a definite." Hawk replied as she rose from the bed and walked over to the closet.

Eva pulled out a black robe. She dressed quickly and returned to Hawk's side.

It was dangerous what she was attempting. But with Hawk by her side, she wouldn't be in any harm.

"I need you to do something for me," she stated as she laid back down. She turned sideways as Hawk wrapped his arm around her waist. "I need you to wake me as soon as you sense any discomfort coming from me. The times that Derek tried to contact me within my dreams, I sensed the danger immediately. But I don't know how this is going to play out, with me making the first step."

Hawk dropped a soft kiss on her lips, skimming his tongue along the inner recesses of her mouth. He pulled back from her.

"I love you, Eva. Now close your eyes, and let's kick some ass."

* * * * *

Rico prowled through the night, walking with the grace of a sleek panther at home in the jungle. It was nights like this that he missed his home and the humid weather that always clung in the atmosphere.

Jesse was waiting outside, making sure no one entered the building. Rico's skin tingled as he neared the designated meeting place. He scented the air as a warm breeze flowed toward him and Rico recognized the scent as the same one on the letter.

He had no idea who she was but only a woman could smell so sweet. He only knew that her rose scent was like a trigger mechanism for his shaft, which grew into a full blazing hard-on.

Rico lengthened his claws and broke through the wooden barrier that blocked the entrance. His vision was perfect at night but he lost her scent. There was garbage strewn everywhere and rats ran to their hiding places. Why she chose this place to meet was beyond him.

And Rico didn't like it one bit. He considered it a disadvantage not knowing who she was and not knowing why she sought him out. It was all a mystery, one he intended to unravel.

Through the rotten smell of litter, Rico picked her scent up again and he followed the trail around the corner. He entered a room. The close quarters were dark but it was no hindrance to his sight. His gaze clashed with her own and the space of the room suddenly seemed a bit too small. She stood by a wide window and it was like being kicked in the gut.

Her hair was the color of fire, a unique mixture of red and blond. The moonlight shining through the window emphasized its tones, giving the color a surreal quality to it.

His gaze dropped to her lips. Their shape was full, the bottom lip slightly bigger than the top. And the erotic visions that blasted through him just then over a mere thing as her lips left his cock a throbbing mass of hardness.

She wore a white sequined halter top that stretch across her breasts and he suddenly wished he were closer so he could store every detail into his memory. His gaze dropped to the black leather pants, molded to her body like a second layer of skin. She was a vision, hot enough to make him want to drop to his knees and eat her out right then and there.

He lifted his eyes.

She tapped her booted foot on the floor. "Are you done getting me naked yet?"

His lips curved into a smile. There was nothing sexier than a feisty woman ready to burn under the slightest provocation.

"Trust me, when I do get you naked, I'll definitely be using my hands." His words were intended as a promise.

She narrowed her eyes before turning away from him. "Get your mind out of the gutter. Don't make me regret I ever contacted you."

Rico leaned on the door. "What's your name?"

"Violet."

“Just Violet?”

“It is for you.”

She apparently had no idea who he truly was. Getting her personal information would be a piece of cake for him. “Why contact me?”

She turned to face him and his gaze quickly dropped to the knife strapped at her thigh. She was prepared for anything and he had to admire that.

“This is how it’s going to work,” Violet murmured. “I will tell you what I know. You will take that information and I hope do some good with it. You don’t get to ask me any questions and you sure as hell don’t get to follow me once I leave here.”

Just as he thought, she had no fucking clue as to who exactly was in the room with her. Her hand dropped to the knife on her thigh and she began to stroke the handle. Rico wondered if she did it without realizing or if she wanted to appear tough. She was waiting for his assent and Rico nodded once.

“I know where Derek Festus is. He is in an underground train station between Canal and Fox Street. It hasn’t been used since the first tunnels were built. He only has a few vampires there with him at night. Others go around roaming the city causing chaos or whatever the hell it is that vampires do.”

Rico walked over to her. She watched him warily and he caught the telltale shiver that ran throughout her body.

“One question?” he asked as he closed the distance between them. Only inches separated them. Her scent now filled the entire room and he had to fight back the need to drop to his knees and beg her for a drink. He willed his body to remain still but there was nothing he could do about his hard dick, which clearly tented the black jeans he wore.

“That was not part of our bargain,” Violet replied as she stepped to the side and tried to go around him.

He reached out and wrapped his hand around her upper arm, using slight force to halt her exit. Rico jerked her sideways and her soft body banged into his. She didn't struggle or utter a word.

"Why tell me this? Why not leave the note for someone else?"

She laughed, a little too bitterly. "Because there is no one else I can turn to."

He froze, transfixed as Violet bit her bottom lip as her eyes flooded with tears. He let her go and he knew he was making a mistake, but he did it all the same. Perhaps it was her watery gaze or the cynical tone to her voice. But there wasn't any way he was going to deny her anything. And once Derek was out of the way, Rico intended to uncover all of Violet's secrets.

* * * * *

The dark and moldy cell stank of old blood mixed with dirt. Jalia closed her mind to the atrocities that happened here. But if she really tried hard to concentrate, it would be too much. She wasn't only a psychic of the future but she was also a seer of the past. No one knew about the gift because she rarely used it. And she wasn't intending to unleash that part of her now. She'd go insane if she did.

She wrapped her hands around the metal chains that dangled from the cuffs on her wrists. Jalia tugged, knowing it was a waste of time. Her ankles were also bound to the floor.

There was one tiny window in the cell and even if she managed to escape her chains, she would still have to open the large steel door in front of her. And that would be an impossible feat.

Jalia held back the anger threatening to consume her. Sergio hadn't been the one to drug her but her own brother was a part of this. He had delivered her right into the arms of Derek. This was the ultimate betrayal and the pain of it caused her heart to beat heavily.

She was jerked out of her thoughts as the cell opened, the metal scraping heavily against the floor. Derek entered wearing a black robe. His lips were twisted into an evil sneer as he walked over to her slowly.

She managed not to cringe as he reached out and touched her cheek.

“You are a beautiful woman. It’s too bad you’re related to Sergio. He works for me, but having you by my side would be a hundred times better.”

Jalia turned her cheek, revolted at the feel of his cold skin. “I’d rather serve the devil than join with you.”

He smacked her cheek hard and her head bounced against the stone wall. Stars exploded beneath her eyes as Jalia struggled to remain conscious. She should have seen that coming, but she was too busy trying not to throw up at his touch.

“That’s what you fucking women need nowadays. A whole lot of pain to show your place in life and I’m just the man to give it to you.”

She made no sound as he fisted his hand, ready to land another blow. But she couldn’t stop from cringing as his fangs elongated. Was he going to beat her first, then drain her dry?

She watched in fear as Derek lifted his fist, arching his arm high. She steeled herself to deal with each and every blow he gave her, but suddenly Derek froze. He cocked his head to the side, then gave her a scathing look before dropping his arm and exiting the room.

Jalia pushed her senses forward. An odd essence clung to the air and Jalia closed her eyes, concentrating on the slight trail. A woman with dark hair turned and Jalia saw Eva, the person who just saved her life.

* * * * *

Eva only needed to think of Derek and he appeared. Just like that. It seemed too easy and yet she knew the monster relished confrontations and that he would’ve never denied her this.

Her subconscious pulled at her, reminding her that she was confronting him for a reason. The monster stood before her, leering at her from head to toe. It had a surreal quality to it and Eva had to fight the need to call out so she could wake up.

“You have changed your mind then?” Derek asked as he stood inches from her, dressed in just a black robe.

“I have. Where shall we meet?”

“Just like that. Give me a reason why you chose of your own accord to come back to me?”

Apparently Derek wasn't a total idiot. “I'm tired of fighting and joining you will assure me that I won't have to dirty my fingers as much.” It sounded stupid, but Eva couldn't think of anything else. Who knew the bastard would be on his toes, instead of acting ecstatic.

“Prove it,” Derek replied as he moved his hands to the knot on his robe.

Eva tried not to shudder. “I'd like to, in person.”

“Wouldn't that be a little too convenient for you,” Derek sneered.

Eva shrugged, hoping that she appeared nonchalant. “I was thinking to prove it hands on. All you have to do is name a time and a place.”

“Meet me at the corner of Fox and Burke Street at midnight. One of my men will meet you there. You are to follow him alone and unarmed.”

She forced herself to awaken, grimacing at how close she had come to contact with the monster from her nightmares.

Chapter Fifteen

Hawk flipped open his cell phone after the first ring. "Hawk here."

"We know where he is," Rico stated. "Meet us at the corner of Canal and Fox in twenty minutes."

"I'll be there. Round up everyone else."

"Done."

He closed the cell phone and watched as Eva dressed quickly. His own clothes were already on.

Eva turned to him as she zipped up her suit. "Who was it?"

"Rico. Apparently he already knows where Derek is and it happens to be the same location you were going to meet with him."

"How could Rico know that?"

"It probably has something to do with the person he was meeting tonight," Hawk replied. "We're going to have to get the drop on Derek by going in an hour earlier than what you've agreed to. Are you ready?"

Eva smiled widely. "I'm more than ready to end this. Just one second. I have to grab my guns."

Hawk watched as she exited the bedroom, heading for her cabinet filled with weapons. He had put her in more danger than he had intended and the thought of anything happening to her set his insides on fire. But she had done this for Jalia and there was no way he could even suggest she not be a part of this. She meant more to him now than ever and he was going to have her back. Not to mention that he owed Derek some payback. And Hawk intended to give it to him good.

Eva re-entered the bedroom with one of her favorite guns strapped to her thigh, the other in her hand. She tossed him its twin and he reached up to grab it.

“You’re giving me your best weapon?”

“I’m entrusting you with my other half.” He deciphered the cryptic words quickly. She was entrusting him with more than just her gun ... with her entire life. And for a moment he was more than speechless. The trust she had just handed over to him meant more than anything.

Hawk walked over to her and wrapped an arm around her waist. After all was said and done, he was going to spend a lot of time making up for the past.

* * * * *

Eva spotted Rico, Jesse, Saber, Bram, and Elijah in front of an abandoned tunnel as Hawk pulled his car into a parking spot. He turned off the car and Eva quickly exited the vehicle with Hawk behind.

She gave a quick hug to Bram and then Elijah. “Why are you guys here?”

“Cree thought the team would need backup,” Elijah replied.

“Everyone ready?” Hawk asked the group.

He received several nods and grunts.

“Has anyone checked for a back door exit on this thing?” Eva asked.

"I have," Elijah replied. "There's an exit. It's boarded up with cheap plywood. I suggest Saber enter from the back, since it would be no obstacle for him to travel in from that area."

Hawk nodded. "I agree. It would make too much noise if anyone else entered from the back. Saber, your first priority will be to find Jalia."

"I had nothing else on my mind," Saber answered as he turned from them. Eva watched as he walked to the rear of the tunnel.

"We don't know how many paranormals Derek has fighting with him. Use whatever means necessary to make this a swift rescue. But Derek must be stopped. No matter what," Hawk ordered.

With the orders issued, the team turned to face the door. Heavy chains twisted around the front entrance with a huge lock. Eva watched as Hawk's right hand swelled into a huge claw. He raked his nails over the metal, breaking it in half. The claws retracted into his hand and the swelling was down in seconds. His supernatural strength amazed her. He was the strongest man she had ever met. And it felt good that he was by her side, knowing he would protect her.

Hawk removed the chains and the metal gate creaked noisily. Eva turned as Bram walked up beside her. "You be careful, sis."

"I will, Bram. Watch your back, too."

"You got it."

Eva wrapped an arm around his waist, giving him a quick hug. She released him as Hawk grabbed her hand. They entered the building. A couple of dim lights hung on the ceiling, the bulbs flickering in and out. Mold clung to the walls, puddles of water winked on the floor and the stench would have been unbearable to a human. Rats scurried into their holes.

Eva couldn't help but admit the nervousness plaguing her stomach. She tightened her hand around Hawk's and he gave her a reassuring squeeze.

The team continued to walk stealthily until they entered a small room. There were two more tunnels on opposite ends of each other and Eva tried to sense which way was the right way to take.

She turned to Hawk. "What do you think?"

Hawk sniffed the air. "Vampires and humans from both areas. Bram, you, Rico and Jesse, take the right tunnel. Elijah, Eva, and I will take the left."

The team separated quickly. Eva walked into the left tunnel and it was clearly worse than the one they had come in through. Roaches, spiders, every horrible bug she could imagine and probably some she couldn't dangled from the walls and floor.

She sensed Elijah behind her, but he never said a word. None of them did. The only way to go was straight ahead and she had a feeling they would reach the end anytime now.

They passed a drain pipe sticking out from the wall and the dirt filled water gushed out more rapidly. Eva slipped, and she had to release Hawk's hand as she lost her footing. She landed on her knees, her hands scraping against the stones.

She realized too late that the pipe on the wall looked out of place. The bottom edging of the pipe was cut off. It was a set up. She landed on a huge stone which suddenly moved down, and she was falling with it. Warm air swirled faster as she landed on her side a whole level below. She groaned as she lifted her weight off her hips and shifted to her knees. Momentarily stunned, Eva didn't see the button Derek pressed to seal the hole she had just fallen through.

* * * * *

"What the fuck just happened?" Hawk yelled to Elijah.

One minute she had been gripping his hand tightly and he was savoring the skin on skin contact. But then he felt her pull her hand from him and just as he turned around, Eva had vanished through the stone floor.

Worry and anger assaulted him at once. Hawk growled, his skin itching to turn into the beast that would kill Derek. He fisted his hands, his gut tightening as Elijah bent. Hawk watched as he knocked on the piece of metal that sealed the hole. "It's hollow."

That's all Hawk needed to hear. He whipped his shirt over his head and undressed quickly. He handed his gun over to Elijah, then closed his eyes and let the change overtake him. His bones extended and reshaped themselves, snapping into place. His hair grew longer, covering his body entirely and his canines distended as his hands shifted into deadly weapons. Now was the time to hunt.

* * * * *

Eva rose to her feet, sensing Derek near. The damp room was large and nothing like the disgusting tunnel she had been walking through. The floor was actually clean and the space was decorated with throne chairs and tables.

She raised her gaze to the throne at the center of the room. Derek sat on it, sipping blood from a wine glass. Two vampires stood on either side of him. She surveyed the room, assessing the danger around her.

A naked young woman knelt in the corner, her skin stained with dirt and blood, her hair covering her face in a cloud of tangles. She was human and the tortures this bastard must have put her through made Eva sick. There were a total of six vampires in the room, including Derek. The odds were that she wouldn't get out of this alive in time for Hawk and Elijah to save her. But she wouldn't go down without a fight.

Eva's teeth lengthened as she jerked her gun from its holster. She unlocked the safety and felt the vibration of the concentrated sunlight bullet as it loaded into the chamber. It was a high-tech weapon, built for speed and she hoped it wouldn't fail her now.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," Derek sneered, before taking another sip of blood.

She truly hated him. "You mean put a bullet between your eyes? Of course that's what I intend to do."

“It is clear to me that you refuse to join me.”

“Oh, what gave you that clue, genius? Perhaps it’s the army I brought along with me?”

Derek narrowed his eyes at her barb and jumped to his feet. He flexed his hands into fists and she tightened her own around her gun. The vampires in front of her took a step toward her. And Eva sensed the ones at her back doing the same.

She heard a slight scraping sound above her, but she wouldn’t take her eyes off Derek.

“Sergio, bring her in.”

Eva patiently waited for the right time to attack. Sergio walked in with a blonde in his arms. Eva recognized her from a photograph Elijah had shown her. She was the missing scientist, Katrina Hunt. Sergio never released his hold on Katrina and Eva noticed that she looked pale, gaunt, as if Derek had been starving her. Her thin body trembled as if she were fighting something.

“We have a surprise for you,” Derek replied. “Katrina, show Eva what you’ve been working on for me.”

Sergio dragged Katrina to the center of the room. Eva watched as Katrina lifted her hand, pointing a gun right at her. The last thing Eva wanted to do was shoot her. Katrina’s eyes looked glazed, as if she had been drugged.

“You don’t want to do this,” Eva warned as she tightened her hand on her gun. There was that slight sound again and Eva fought not to look. She hoped to hell that was Hawk trying to get in from above.

The chances of shooting both Derek and Katrina were slim. So Eva raised her gun and aimed it at the one person she wanted to see dead.

She heard a rumbling noise from above and then a wolf landed beside her. She knew instinctively it was Hawk so Eva took advantage of the disruption and shot.

* * * * *

Hawk didn't think he could ever feel such hatred flowing through his veins as he watched the woman he loved face off with the bastard who had changed her life forever. He wanted to jump down and shove his claw into Derek's chest, tearing his heart out. And it was a hard thing, not to heed the call of retribution as he tried to still the animal from fully taking over. He waited, observing from the hole Eva had fallen through, knowing that if he made a move too soon, it could mean her life. And he was betting on the fact that Derek knew little about him and the powers that made him alpha.

One of Derek's men entered the room, dragging a lithe blond behind him. He growled as the blond lifted her gun at Eva. His heart thudded against him in fear and he wanted to howl in desperation. The thought of her dying was too much for him.

He jumped through the hole, the warm air ruffling his wolf hair as he landed beside Eva. Her gun was aimed at Derek and before he knew it, she shot. Derek jumped in the air, leaping high as the bullet pierced the chair.

Elijah jumped down and lunged for the woman holding the gun as Bram and Rico joined the fight. But Hawk was too caught up in the moment and he could only spare them a glance. And in that very second Hawk spared, Derek struck.

Derek lunged for Eva, grabbing her by the waist and flipping her to the floor. Hawk took advantage of the anger pounding through his veins and rammed his two hundred sixty pound wolf body into Derek's side. He extended his claws in midair, hooking them into Derek's skin and taking the bastard with him, pulling him off of Eva.

Derek screamed as they both landed against the cold floor. Hawk pulled his claws out of the vampire slowly and attached his teeth to the wound. Derek roared in pain as Hawk sank his jaws deeper. He lifted Derek off of the ground and swung his body from side to side. His only thought was to kill this son of a bitch who had destroyed so many lives. Hawk threw Derek's body against the stone wall, and he heard the cracking of bones.

Hawk watched through the animalistic rage as blood dripped from the wound like a river, covering the ground in red thickness. Derek lay on the ground looking sickly pale. Hawk advanced once more, refusing to end this until he ripped Derek's heart out.

At the familiar touch of Eva's hand on his fur, Hawk paused. He didn't remove his gaze from Derek. She bent on her knees and touched his cheek.

"Vengeance is mine."

Her words were whispered and he understood the meaning behind it all. Eva wouldn't rest until she slaughtered her demons. Hawk turned to her and rubbed his face against her hand, silently giving her the go ahead to end this nightmare.

* * * * *

Eva watched as Hawk sank his massive jaws into Derek's body. He shook their enemy like a rag doll, before throwing him against the wall.

She stepped up to Hawk and bent down, rubbing her hand along his jowl. He was breathing rapidly, his body tense, ready to attack.

Vengeance is mine.

Eva whispered the words to him and she meant every single one of them. She had been taught by her parents to have compassion for others. But that was probably the last thing she felt for Derek.

Hawk leaned his face into her cheek. And that was all the approval she needed. Eva rose to her feet, and aimed her gun at Derek's heart.

"Even though you never showed me any mercy, I'll give you the opportunity for last words."

"This isn't over. This is far from over," Derek screamed, blood pouring like a fountain from his wound.

On the contrary, it was over. A monster like this, deserved no second chances. Eva pulled the trigger, taking delight in seeing the bullet swoosh out and lodge itself in Derek's heart. His face contorted with pain, his muscles locking rigidly as he let out a painful scream. The concentrated sunlight erupted into his blood stream. Several holes appeared on his neck and face, the light spreading fast and breaking through his flesh. Derek screamed viciously, his entire skin eaten up. She saw his bones, and the black heart in his chest before he disintegrated into nothing.

Eva released a sigh of relief. Her nightmare was over. She could now lay her past to rest and plan her future.

* * * * *

Rico lengthened his claws, plunging the razor sharp tips into the vampire's heart. He pulled the heart out, flinging it aside as the vampire's body collapsed on the floor. He had eliminated almost all of Derek's men and was on the verge of releasing his panther, but because the alpha wolf looked like he had everything under control, he held back.

Rico retracted his claws as he turned. A flash of red caught his attention and Rico whipped out his gun. The naked female who had cowered in the corner was now hiding under the desk. She smelled human, but he wasn't taking any chances. He bent and lifted his weapon but froze when he saw the color of her hair. Close up like this, the color was so vivid it reminded him of Violet.

Tears streamed down her face and lashes of blood streaked her skin. Her eyes appeared dazed and he paused, not knowing exactly what to do with her. And that's when a familiar scent filled the air. Violet.

Before he could even act Rico felt the cold metal of a gun behind his neck. Slowly, he rose to his feet and turned to the one woman he couldn't ever forget.

"Don't do it. Don't hurt her. She's my sister," Violet stated, turning his whole world upside down.

Chapter Sixteen

Life. That one word that held such importance and had a tendency to throw her so many curveballs. Eva sometimes didn't know if she were going up or down or if the rollercoaster ride would ever halt so she could take a breather.

But she had so many things to be grateful for; the fact that she was still alive and sharing her love with her brother and Hawk were just two. But as Eva remembered the pain Elijah was going through, she couldn't help but feel the sadness trying to drag her under.

Elijah had been shot in the stomach with a bullet invented by the genius, Katrina. It was a special type of pellet that ate at vampires' insides, slowly rotting away their organs. It had been meant for her and it was purely designed for torture.

At least Eva had the decency of giving Derek a quick death. But this, what he forced Katrina to invent, was torment in its purest form. Bit by bit, the pellet dissolved, eating away like a cancer at the intended victim's insides.

Eva closed her eyes, suddenly weary with all that happened. But there was still hope for Elijah. He was still alive, and with life always came hope. Katrina was on the verge of a formula that would break this, literally hours away, or so she said. The jury was still out on whether Katrina could be trusted.

And Hawk was due home soon. She couldn't live without him and her love for Hawk was eternal. She had taken the leap and had asked him to move in with her. He had accepted quickly.

But there were still so many complications.

Bram guarded Katrina in the complex Eva lived in, while the scientist formulated an antidote that would heal Elijah, who was currently under Saber's protection. Rico was convinced Violet was knee deep in crime and Jesse had appointed himself to care for the girl who had been ravaged by Derek. Jalia was being watched by the team because Sergio had escaped. And there was still a spy to catch.

Too many lives would have to be repaired before they found the strength to continue.

Eva entered her apartment, suddenly tired. She undressed and headed to the bathroom. Turning on the water, she poured scented foam and waited till the tub filled.

Once it was full, she reached over and turned the water off. She stepped into the tub, and lay back, the heated water flowing deliciously over her skin. Eva closed her eyes and allowed her body to relax. If only it could always be just this peaceful and one could luxuriate in the simple things of life.

Hawk.

Just thinking about him set her nerve endings on fire. But would it last? She had taken a leap for love and there was no going back.

"Am I interrupting?"

Eva opened her eyes and her stomach dropped at the sight of him. She smiled. Hawk stood before her without a stitch of clothing on, displaying his gloriously hard, naked body. He neared the giant claw foot tub, and Eva shifted, making space for him.

He entered the tub and maneuvered their bodies so she was between his legs. The temperature in the room got hotter as she felt his massive cock against her back. She was

tempted to turn around, but stayed facing away, momentarily content at drawing watery circles on his hard thigh.

She laid her head on his chest. "Have you been here long?"

"About five minutes," Hawk replied as he palmed her breasts, tugging on her nipples slowly. She felt the lazy pull all the way to her pussy.

"I didn't hear you walk in."

Hawk shrugged. "You looked lost in your thoughts, so I decided to surprise you with my nakedness."

She laughed. "It worked. I'm pleasantly surprised."

Eva lifted herself off him and turned around. She straddled him as she reached down and gripped the base of his shaft with her hand. Slowly stroking him up and down, she bent and placed a soft kiss on his lips.

She moved away from Hawk just as his mouth opened to deepen the kiss. Her hand tightened on his shaft as she continued to stroke. "I'm so glad you're here with me," Eva whispered. "I've always loved you and just having you with me makes my life worth living."

Hawk pulled her hand from his cock and moved his hands to her waist. He lifted her onto his dick and Eva moaned as he thrust into her forcefully. The sensations bordered on pain, but the pleasure overrode anything else.

Her hands gripped his shoulders tightly, her fingernails digging into his skin as her hips moved to a sensual beat. She felt him deeply and she shivered at the fierce sensations running through her. It was a bond in its purest form and Eva hungered for his blood to complete the union.

* * * * *

Her words flowed through him and his heart rejoiced in knowing that she loved him as much as he loved her. He wanted to say the words, but her very essence called to him and he

needed to feel her surrounding him immediately. He thrust his cock into her in an intense push and his heart leapt at the wet suction of her pussy claspng him so tightly.

She rode him slowly and he felt it all, from the way she dug her nails into his shoulders to the way her long hair tickled his thighs. His hands took control of her hips and he kept the pace soft and slow, savoring everything.

Hawk looked into her eyes and then leaned in closely. Her nipples brushed his chests and the warm water swirled around them. "Your forgiveness of the past is humbling, my love and I'm grateful for your precious gift. I've always loved you. You complete me in all ways."

Her eyes misted with tears, the unbreakable bond between them, clearly written on her face. He leaned in and licked her tears away as his hands tightened around her hips. She moved faster, setting an urgency of demand to the sexy friction between them.

He brought his knees up and the slight movement brought her closer and higher to his body. His balls tightened and he watched as her fangs lengthened, turning the fire inside of him higher. Hawk bent and licked her nipple as he felt her warm breath against his neck. She scraped her teeth alongside his skin and he nipped with his own at her breasts.

It was a silent hot communication between them. Eva's fangs pierced his skin, sending a shot of white heat through his shaft. She pulled at his blood and he turned it up by fucking her harder. He thrust into her and it jolted her body against his. Water splashed over the rim of the tub and onto the floor. His hands dug into her hip and he bit her breasts with a tiny love bite. Her pussy clamped down on his cock, engulfing him in a tight heat. She moaned as she came and Hawk followed her over the edge of bliss.

 THE END 

Jade James

I was born and raised in New York City, and I'll probably live here for the rest of my life. I'm 30 years old and have been married to my husband for seven years, and I'm a mother to two adorable children.