



Don't Spank The Vamp

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to Pat...who is always such a major encouragement to me.

For her endless patience, her untiring help and her boundless love...

Grab a fire extinguisher and your box of Kleenex.

This one is for you

Chapter One

"Quit struggling!"

"I can't help it. I can't see anything."

"Just a minute and I'll take the blindfold off."

"This is crazy. I can't believe I let you talk me into this!"

"Stop whining! You are such a baby!"

Dawn Birmingham sighed loudly. It was her own fault. She should know better than to let her best friends have free rein like this. Both Peggy and Samantha were known for their more...exotic birthday gifts.

That's why she was walking blindfolded, down a sidewalk in the middle of the afternoon, wondering where the hell they were taking her. She folded her arms across her small breasts.

"It's my birthday and I'll cry if I want to..." she sang.

Her friends both groaned. "Please Dawn...not that! Not singing!"

She quirked her lips. Granted, she'd never put Brittney Spears out of work, but she wasn't that bad. She opened her mouth to complain but was interrupted by Peggy's husky voice.

"We're here!"

The blindfold was whipped from her eyes and she blinked at the sudden bright sunlight. When her eyes cleared, she saw they were standing in front of a small store. Her mouth dropped open when she read the sign.

"You've got to be kidding me! '*Don't Spank the Vamp*'?"

Samantha giggled beside her. Her tousled blond hair looked even messier than usual. As a writer, she was usually so caught up in her imagination she forgot to comb it. Actually, she was lucky if she remembered to put clothes on her short voluptuous figure.

"Isn't it great," she enthused. "A friend at work told me about this place. Said it's a real trip!"

Dawn glared at her. "A trip to where? Weirdsville?"

Peggy rolled her heavily mascaraed eyes. She was as dark as Sam was light. She wore her short black cropped hair all spiky, believing the Goth look was the next hottest fashion statement to hit the planet. Given her tall slender build, it did look good on her.

"Don't be such a killjoy. This is your birthday present and you need a little more excitement in your life. All you ever do is work, sleep and eat."

Dawn frowned at her friend. "So? I'm an artist. I like working."

"But honey, you need inspiration...right?" Sam batted her blue eyes at her. "My friend said this place was just chock full of...inspiration."

Looking doubtfully at the sign, Dawn shook her head. "I don't think I want to know the kind of inspiration this place can give me. What is this place?"

"It sells a special type of merchandise. To help you improve your...life."

Dawn was sure they weren't telling her everything. "I don't know..."

Peggy snorted. "I told you she'd chicken out."

"I'm not chickening out," Dawn pouted. "I just think this is silly."

Sam linked her arm with hers. "Let's go inside. Then you'll see it isn't silly at all."

Giving in to the gentle urging, Dawn followed her friends inside the small store. She had the fleeting thought once she walked over the steps; she would never be the same again.

He raised his head from the pillow when he got the scent. Ahhh, fresh blood. It never failed to make his mouth water. He listened closely, using his supernatural hearing to gather the sounds from the store below.

There were three of them, all women. One was giggling like a child; one was talking in a bored sulky voice and the third... He cocked his head, straining to hear her, but she was silent.

He swung his legs over the edge of the bed and sat up, still listening. When the third woman finally spoke, her soft voice tickled over him like a gentle breeze. His entire body reacted and he frowned. That hadn't happened to him in over a century.

Then she laughed and his whole being throbbed in sudden arousal. His cock hardened and his mouth watered. His teeth lengthened as he pressed a hand against his swollen shaft through his trousers. He caressed himself as he listened to the unknown woman's murmurs.

No woman had done this to him before. Not just from hearing her voice. This...he would investigate further. It had been a long time since he'd enjoyed the pleasures of the flesh. He smiled and sent a telepathic message to his partner below. He wanted to meet this woman...and he wanted to meet her soon.

Dawn's mouth dropped open in amazement when she walked in the small shop's door. She'd known just by seeing the name it would be weird, but this...this was over the top.

Once her eyes adjusted, she could see the shop was divided into three sections. A colorful curtain of silk scarves closed off the back. They swayed and shimmered in the air, sending rainbows of light dancing on the walls.

To her right, where Sam was standing and giggling madly, was shelf after shelf of what could politely be called sex toys. She could see adult videos that instructed the viewer on the fine art of a blowjob, as well as a number of other topics. There were dildos and vibrators of all sizes and colors, books of erotica, lubricants and body paints. There was even a section of bondage toys, complete with fuzzy handcuffs and whips.

On the left, was one large bookcase crammed full of masonry jars. When she looked closer, Dawn could see they were filled with different herbs. She walked over to where Peggy was standing, reading the label on one.

"This one claims to be a love potion," her friend read in her husky smoker's voice. "It says to sprinkle three pinches of this combination of herbs that include dried parsley, rosemary and thyme, onto the center of a square of aluminum foil. Carefully fold the foil

to keep the herbs sealed inside. Keep it against your heart to attract loving energies to yourself." She glanced at Dawn with a mocking expression. "I could get you this for your birthday present."

She shook her head with a grin. "I have to find a man to use it on first."

Sam spoke up from the other side of the store. "Once you do, I'll get you these." She held up a pair of pink furred handcuffs. "One size fits all."

Dawn laughed out loud at the thought of using handcuffs at all. She was not the adventurous one of the trio, which she was pretty sure why they had dragged her to this place. They thought she needed a little extra spice in her life.

"Or you can use this?" Sam giggled. She tossed something to Dawn, who caught it automatically.

She stared at the object for a long time before lifting bewildered eyes to her friends. "What is it?"

They both burst into laughter as she turned the small black object over repeatedly in her hands.

"God," Peggy chortled as she wiped her eyes carefully. "You are such an innocent."

Dawn blushed. So she didn't have a lot of experience. She'd had her share of sex in art school, but it never gave her the pleasure that putting her hands in clay did. So she hadn't pushed to get any more. They teased her all the time about it. She was used to her friend's good-natured ribbing.

"What is it?" she repeated.

Sam walked over, still giggling. "It is a cock ring." She took it from Dawn and slid it onto her friend's finger. "You put it on the guy and it helps him to stay hard longer."

She stared at her bubbly friend. "But the opening is so little. Why would I want a guy that small?"

Her friends busted up again. Peggy leaned back against the apothecary wall and just howled. Sam doubled up with glee.

Dawn rolled her eyes. "What did I say?"

Sam cleared her throat. "You...you...oh my God," she tried before heading off into another paroxysm of laughter.

Peggy finally controlled herself. "You put the cock ring on before he gets hard. It prolongs his erection and is supposed to make his orgasm, better too. He'll stay big...get it?"

Dawn stared doubtfully at the small black ring on her finger. She just couldn't see how it could work. What guy in his right mind would put one of those on? Especially if he had any size at all. "If you say so."

"Well..." sniffed Sam, as she brought herself back under control. "How about one of these?" She lifted a large paddle off the shelf. "Or this?" She slapped it against her thigh and winced. "Could be fun."

Dawn's eyes widened. "That's...that's a riding crop!"

Peggy snickered. "There are definite benefits to a good spanking."

"You guys are out of your mind," Dawn huffed. She stared at the sex toys in Sam's hands and couldn't help the thrill of curiosity that ran through her. Could she ever let someone do that to her? Would she have the nerve to do it to someone else? All the sudden this little expedition took on a new flavor.

Maybe her friends were right. Maybe she did need to liven up her life. Cripes...she hadn't had sex in so long, she'd almost forgotten how to do it. She took care of her basic needs sometimes in the shower or bath, but good old fashioned, sweaty-up-the-sheets sex. That...she could barely remember. Thinking about it now made her panties go damp.

She chewed on her lip. The toys were great, but first she needed to find someone to play with.

"May I help you?"

Dawn gave a little shriek as the voice spoke from right behind her. For a moment, she thought God had answered her kinky prayer, but had gotten the sex of her partner wrong. She whirled around and stared at the woman who stood before her.

She was as tall as Peggy, with jet-black hair that spilled down to her waist in a waterfall of silky curls. Her face was like a cameo, perfectly shaped with a tiny nose and full lips. Her cat-shaped eyes were as green as an emerald and they twinkled with suppressed merriment.

When she walked forward, they could hear the chiming of little bells she wore on her wrists and forehead. Her shapely body was garbed in a colorful robe of silk.

"I'm sorry," she murmured. "I didn't mean to frighten you."

Dawn pressed her hand to her heart. "That's okay."

The woman smiled and a single dimple appeared on her left cheek. "I am Aithne. One of the owners of this establishment. Blessed Be."

Dawn realized her mouth was hanging open and shut it with a snap. "Ummm...hi."

Always the more vocal, Sam stepped up and offered her hand. "Hello. You have a wonderful place here. I'm Samantha. Call me Sam."

Peggy lifted a languid hand. "I'm Peggy."

Aithne looked intently at Dawn. "And you are?"

Dawn's throat closed up tight at her steady gaze. Sam broke the uncomfortable silence. "That's Dawn. She usually can use more than one word in a sentence. Today is her birthday. We're here to pick out gifts. She's a little overwhelmed."

The dark woman smiled. "Happy birthday, Dawn. Have you found anything you like?"

Dawn looked down at the cock ring on her finger and blushed deeply. She hid it behind her back. "Uhhh, we're still looking."

Aithne glanced at the paddle Sam still held. She lifted a dark eyebrow. "You are interested in spanking?"

Sam giggled and Dawn went even redder. "I...well—"

"She's a little new at all this," Peggy drawled, her dark eyes dancing. "A virgin."

Dawn gasped. "I'm not a virgin!" She closed her eyes wondering if you could die of embarrassment. "I mean...not in the...ummm...biblical sense."

Bells jingled as Aithne nodded. "I understand. Your friends wish to give you something new to play with. Something to enhance your love play with that special man?"

"I don't have anyone special," she blurted out. Then she groaned. Why not just tell the world the closest she got to sex was a soapy washcloth. "What I'm saying is I'm not involved with anyone right now."

Aithne smiled and looked pleased. "Good," she said mysteriously. "That will make it easier."

Dawn blinked at her. "I beg your pardon?"

The cat-eyed woman ignored her question. "Allow me to present you with a birthday gift." She turned and walked to the dancing curtain of scarves. "Come with me."

"Why?"

Aithne smiled. "I will do a reading for you. Free of charge, for your birthday."

"A reading?" Dawn asked blankly.

"You know," Sam said impatiently. She grabbed Dawn by the elbow and dragged her forward. "Like palms or tarot cards, right?"

Peggy followed behind, rolling her eyes. "Oh for God's sake. Do you really believe in all that?"

"Yes," Sam said firmly. "It's how I knew I was going to be a writer. And I am. It came true."

"I'm not sure...I believe," Dawn admitted.

Aithne shrugged. "You can take or reject what the cards have to tell you. I just read them for you. The truth is there, whether you choose to believe or not."

She pushed aside the curtain and gestured inside. "Enter as you will."

Upstairs, the man paced as he listened to the conversation through his partner. His need to go downstairs was so great he literally had to force himself to stay in his darkened room. It would not do to force the meeting too quickly. Especially when he wasn't at full strength. Better, he wait until later that night, when he could fully enjoy the woman's--Dawn's--company.

He chuckled. How odd it was that he, a creature of the night, would be so taken by a woman, whose very name could signal the end of his existence.

"Sit down, Dawn." Aithne pulled back a chair from the small round table. "I will get the cards."

Dawn sat as requested. She looked around the room. It was dark, yet lit with glowing candles nestled in corners of the room.

They must go through a truckload of the things, she thought to herself. Aithne hadn't lit them when they entered. They looked as if they were always going.

The rest of the room was draped in more bright colored scarves, giving it the look of a gypsy tent. The table was covered by one as well. A faint smell of incense lingered in the air.

"Now," Aithne murmured as she sat down across from Dawn. "Have you ever had your cards read before?"

Dawn shook her head. "Nope. Never have."

The dark woman shuffled a deck of cards the color of old parchment. Her lips moved silently. She lifted emerald eyes to Dawn. "Do you have a specific question to ask?"

She pondered that then shrugged. "Not really."

Aithne nodded. "All right." She handed the deck of cards to Dawn. "Cut them for me."

Dawn froze the second she touched the cards. A shot of energy went through her whole body and she gasped out loud. She shivered and hurriedly cut the deck. Suddenly, this all seemed all too real.

Aithne smiled again when she saw Dawn's reaction. She didn't say anything, but dealt the top four cards out in a diamond pattern. "The card that is at the top of the diamond represents your romantic life. The card below card one on the right point represents finances. The third card on the lower point of the diamond represents health and happiness. The fourth card, which is placed opposite card Number two on the left diamond point, represents career."

She gazed at Dawn. "Are you with me so far?"

Dawn nodded.

"All right. The first thing we do is look at the placement. If when you look at the cards, they are all right side up, it means the cards are positive. If upside down..."

"They are negative?"

"Correct," Aithne inclined her head. "From what I can see so far, all the cards you were dealt are in the positive."

Dawn smiled nervously. "Yay for me."

"Now we go on to the specific cards you drew." She reached down and her hand hovered over the diamond before turning over the card that signified finances. Her eyebrows went up. "Excellent."

Dawn leaned closer. "What does it mean?"

"It is the Sun card. When placed in the finance area of the diamond it means victory, or accomplishment. I believe it is saying your financial situation will improve greatly. You will have great success in your money dealings."

"Does that mean she'll get a deal on any toys she wants to buy?" Peggy muttered from behind her. Sam shushed her immediately.

Throwing a glare over her shoulder, Dawn turned back to the fortuneteller with a smile. "Go on."

Aithne turned over the card across from the finance card. She nodded. "It is as I expected. What do you do for a living?"

"I'm an artist."

"This card," she tapped it with a long fingernail, "is the three of pentacles. It means you will receive a reward for your skills or abilities. You will gain approval and success through your artistic efforts."

She smiled at Dawn. "I think your career as an artist is about to take off. You will receive notoriety and fame because of your work."

Sam squealed behind her. "Cool beans!"

Dawn smiled inwardly. It would be very cool beans if that were to happen. She knew she was good, she just hadn't been discovered yet.

"Now this next card is responsible for your health and happiness." Aithne flicked it over quickly, making a surprised movement, before holding herself very still.

"What is it?" Dawn had seen the quick motion of her hostess.

"It is the Queen of Swords. In this placing, it means you will be making a decision in the near future. It will directly affect your health and your happiness." She cast a quick glance up at the ceiling. "It will be one of the most important decisions of your life."

Dawn's mouth was dry. It took her two tries before she could speak. "Wow! Really?" She glanced back at her friends. Peggy was yawning, but Sam gave her a big thumbs up. She turned back to Aithne.

"So just one card left, huh?"

"Yes...I believe it is the most important part of the pattern. It represents your romantic life."

Peggy snorted again. "If this is in any way the real thing, her card will be blank."

"Shut up, Peggy!" Dawn gritted out. She was suddenly very interested in what the next card would hold. "Ignore her, Aithne. Please...go on."

Aithne nodded. It seemed as though everyone in the room held their breath while the next card was turned over. Bells tinkled as the dark haired woman shook her head slowly in wonder.

"What is it?" Sam inched forward to stare at the card.

"It is... *The Lovers*," Aithne whispered.

Chapter Two

Dawn suddenly realized she was shaking. "What does it mean?"

The woman's eyes met her own. "To have it placed at the top of the diamond is a very powerful sign. When this card turns up in the area of romance, it means you will find love. But not just any love." She reached out and grasped Dawn's hand. "You will find the love of your life. Your destiny. You will meet your soulmate. Someone you will be with forever."

"Oh wow," Sam breathed. "How cool is that?"

"My soulmate?" Dawn squeaked. "How can that be? I don't know anyone who might fit that description."

"Maybe you should try getting out of the house on a date," Peggy snickered. "Or you can head down to The Inferno. It's a great meat market on Thursday nights."

"Peggy!" Sam snarled at her friend. "This is important. Dawn is going to find her other half, her twin flame."

"Twin flame?" Dawn was totally lost. This was not the birthday present she'd expected.

"It is a legend," Aithne said quietly.

Her voice was a little shaky and Dawn realized the reading had shaken the beautiful woman, too.

"There is usually only one twin flame soulmate for each of us. There is incredible chemistry and attraction. They '*complete*' each other and only a few lucky people are ever able to find their twin flame."

"Wow," Dawn said again. "And you think I'm one of them?"

Aithne looked again at the ceiling. "I do. And I think it will happen very quickly." Her hand shot out and grasped Dawn's again. "You must be prepared. You may have only one chance at it. You must not throw this love away."

Dawn blinked at the woman's passion. She really believed what she was saying. "I...I'll try...I promise."

"Maybe its time to go," Peggy said uneasily.

"I'm sorry," Aithne smiled wearily. "It was a very strong reading. Never have I had one so strong before."

Dawn stood, surprised at how shaky her legs were. "Thank you for the reading. Are you sure I can't—"

Aithne held up her hand. "No...this is my gift to you." She came around the table and took her by the shoulders, planting a gentle kiss on each of her cheeks. "Blessed be, little sister."

"Ummm...yeah...to you, too." Dawn pulled gently away and followed her friends from the back room.

Sam went immediately to the sex toys and grabbed a few things off the shelf, hiding them from Dawn. "Go outside, I don't want you to see what I get."

"Okay." She turned to go, but was stopped when Aithne hailed her. The fortuneteller seemed to have recovered from her earlier melancholy.

"I almost forgot," she said. "The reading put it right out of my mind." Aithne smiled at the three friends. "My...business partner and I are having a party tonight. He is most interested in new artists. We would love for the three of you to attend."

"Really?" Dawn wondered if her mouth was hanging open again.

"Yes, please." Aithne gestured around the shop. "It will be held here. Come any time after dark."

Peggy frowned. "I don't know. We had something else—"

"We'll be here with bells on," Sam interrupted. "Maybe Dawn can find a patron and the cards will be right again."

She watched out the window as the three friends walked down the street towards their car. She rubbed her forehead. The visions had never been so strong. Aithne looked at Dawn when she laughed at Sam who was wrapping a feather boa around her neck. If she was right, it wouldn't only be the artist's life that was about to change.

"Will she come?"

She smiled when she heard the desperation in his voice. "Are you so hungry, then?"

The man stood in the doorway to the backroom. The scarves fluttered around his tall form like maddened butterflies. "For one such as her, I am starving."

Aithne walked back toward him. "You heard the reading?"

He nodded. "I did. And I longed to take her at that very moment."

She wrapped her arms around his waist, burying her face in his chest. "Everything will change if she is the one."

He hugged her to him, placing a gentle kiss on the top of her head. "I will always love you, Aithne. But I need her."

She sighed. "I know." A single tear slowly crept down her soft cheek. "I know."

"You are out of your freakin' mind!"

Sam sighed and blew out a frustrated breath. "For God's sake, Dawn. It's a damn party!"

"If we are going to go to this shindig, you can't dress like a fuckin' librarian." Peggy put in.

"I can't wear this either."

"And why not?" Sam asked, putting her hands on her hips. "What's wrong with it?"

Dawn struggled to find the words. She stared at herself in the mirror. "I look like a...a..."

"High class call girl?"

She glared at Peggy, who smirked right back at her. "Something like that."

"You look great! Stop thinking so mundanely. You need to knock their socks off. How else are you going to find your soulmate?" Sam stepped back and admired her work.

Dawn groaned. Sam was more excited about the prophecy than she was. She stared at the mirror at herself. She felt like a kid dressed up in her mommy's clothes. Turning slowly, she tried to see herself as others did.

She was of medium height, about five foot six and while she didn't have Sam's lush curves, she wasn't thin like Peggy. Her breasts were on the smallish side, but she had long pretty legs and her hips and butt were nicely shaped.

She peered at her face and frowned. No amount of makeup would cover up the myriad of freckles sprinkled across her nose. The curse of a true redhead, Dawn couldn't even claim the auburn tresses and green eyes some had. She was stuck with boring hazel eyes and carrot red hair.

What she didn't see was the smooth fine skin that was another redhead trademark. Or the high cheekbones and full pouty lips. She didn't see her eyes sparkled with curiosity and life. She didn't know her friends adored her because of her sense of humor, her joy in everything around her and her deep loyalty for those she loved.

Wrinkling her nose, she stared at the outfit Sam had stuffed her into. Three inch, fuck-me black stiletto heels and thigh high black stockings made her legs look ten miles long. Especially in the short black leather mini skirt. She sighed and turned away from the mirror, staring over her shoulder. There was no back to the silk crumb-catcher blouse she had on. It dipped so low she could see the soft curve of her rear.

Its amber color brought out the rainbow color of her eyes, but she ignored that. All she knew was she felt mighty uncomfortable in this outfit and she wanted to take it off.

"This is sooo not me!" she grumbled.

"Oh, Christ," Peggy muttered. "It should be you. You look so fuckin' hot; the guys will be all over you."

Dawn's mouth dropped open. She glanced at herself in the mirror again. "I do? I don't look like a tart?"

"Of course you look like a tart," Peggy responded. She stood and smoothed down her habitual black dress. "It's why you look hot."

"Oh dear God," Dawn groaned.

Sam giggled. "But you look like such a cute tart."

Dawn gritted her teeth. "I don't think this is funny."

"Give it up, girlfriend," Sam laughed out loud. She twirled around in her silver-blue cocktail gown. "Let's go to the party!"

"There are a lot of people here," Sam whispered to the others as they huddled in the corner of *'Don't Spank the Vamp'*. "I didn't know this place would be so popular."

Dawn sipped at her Mai Tai. "I don't think any of these people are art patrons."

Peggy laughed and chewed on the olive in her Martini. "You never know. That guy over there by the dildos could own one of the top galleries in town."

They all stared at the chubby little man who was surreptitiously fondling the flesh colored vibrators. Then their eyes met and they all burst into laughter.

"I don't think so," Dawn giggled.

"We might as well get out of here." Peggy tossed back the rest of her drink. "There is nothing going on in this place."

Sam stomped her tiny foot. "But I was so sure something good would happen tonight for Dawn."

"It's okay, Sam," Dawn smiled at her friend. "It was fun getting my fortune told. Maybe you can put it in a book some..." Her voice trailed off into nothing and her eyes widened.

"What's wrong?" Peggy questioned. They both looked where their friend was staring.

"Oh...my...God," breathed Sam.

Coming into the room was one of the most gorgeous men Dawn had ever seen. He was so tall his head almost brushed the top of the door jam. Raven black hair curled down to his broad shoulders. He wasn't built too big, more lanky than muscular, but she could see rippling muscles in his chest and forearms. His face was dark and sensual looking with carved cheekbones and firm masculine lips. He was dressed in a black suit, high-collared black silk shirt, and when he turned to greet Aithne, his tight butt pressed against his snug trousers. Her fingers itched to craft that form into clay

She groaned in disappointment when he bent and kissed their hostess gently on the mouth. His arm went around her as he held her in an intimate embrace.

Peggy swore. "It's just not fair! The best looking guy in the whole damn place and he's taken."

Dawn trembled in her high-heeled shoes. There was something about the man that made her whole body heat up like a summer bonfire. He seemed familiar to her in some way, but just the sight of him made it hard for her to breathe. She swallowed the lump in her throat as she watched him rub his hand up and down the fortuneteller's arm. God, she'd give anything to have those hands on her. She wanted to wriggle as her panties dampened. If she wasn't careful, she'd be dripping down her legs next.

She bit her lip. She needed to get out of here fast. Before she did something really stupid like go take a bite out of Aithne's boyfriend. She turned to her friends.

"Let's go."

Sam tore her eyes away from the eye candy across the room. "Are you sure? This is just getting interesting."

"Positive," Dawn said firmly.

"Don't look now," Peggy hissed. "But he's heading this way."

Dawn jerked back around, staring as the man left Aithne and walked towards them. She barely had time to register his eyes were the color of new grass when he was upon them.

He wondered if she could hear his heart pounding. His eyes moved over her, taking in the barely there clothes and take-me now shoes. She wasn't what he expected. Listening to her conversation earlier in the day, he thought she would be more...ordinary. Not this exquisite woman in front of him. She wasn't beautiful, but she reminded him of a sexy red headed elf.

He fought to keep himself from grabbing her and heading upstairs with her. From the second he'd seen her across the room, he'd been overwhelmed with emotions he thought long dead. Just being in her presence had him harder than he'd ever been before. He ran his tongue over his teeth to make sure they hadn't lengthened. No need to scare her off. He had plans for her this night. He kept his eyes on her as he stretched out his hand to the shorter woman in the pale blue dress.

"You must be Samantha," he drawled. He pressed a kiss to the top of her hand. And you are Peggy?" He repeated the gesture and the thin woman giggled like a schoolgirl.

"It's nice to meet you," they chorused. Then the two of them glared at each other. He swallowed his laughter as he turned slowly to the object of his desire.

"And you are the birthday girl." He smiled at her, allowing his eyes to drift down her body. He was charmed by the slight blush that touched her cheeks. "My night has become a sunny *Dawn* because of you," he quoted.

"Thank you," she whispered. Her multi-hued eyes met his. "Did someone famous say that?"

He lifted her hand to his lips, turning it so his lips met her palm. He allowed his tongue to tickle it slightly and her blush deepened. "A very wise man by the name of *Ibn Abbad*."

"Is...that you?"

He laughed. "Forgive me. No. My name is Aidan. I am Aithne's business partner and..." his eyes twinkled, "...her brother."

Dawn gasped, realizing almost immediately the reason he'd seemed familiar was she had seen him before...in Aithne. So much for her artist's eyes.

Peggy laughed aloud. "Hot damn."

Sam elbowed Dawn in the ribs. "Did you hear that, honey? Her *brother*." She ignored Dawn's glare. "It is very nice to meet you, Aidan."

Aidan smiled wider. "I'm glad my sister invited you all. Are you having a good time?"

Peggy snorted and jerked her head toward the sex toys. "Not as good as Mr. Horny over there."

His brows furrowed as he glanced over at the shelves. Then his laugh rolled out as he saw the small man stroking a pale blue cock. "That's just Daniel. He's harmless." He smiled again at Peggy. "But he is a very good customer."

"I'll bet," said the brunette.

Aidan hadn't yet released Dawn's hand. When she surreptitiously tried to tug it away, he just smiled and held on tighter. He wasn't about to let her go now that he had her. Besides, she was staring at him with the oddest look on her face.

"Is there something wrong?"

"I would love to get my hands on you," she muttered.

He felt his pulse spike at her words. His cock, already hard just from being near her, gave a hard throb in reaction. "I beg your pardon?"

Dawn went bright red. She groaned when she realized she'd spoken her thoughts out loud. "Uhhh..."

Sam giggled. "She wants to use you."

"Sam!"

Aidan looked back and forth between them. "I'm afraid I don't understand."

Sighing, Dawn knew she'd have to explain. "Your sister told you I was an artist?" At his nod, she went on. "I'm a sculptor. Sometimes it's easier to sculpt if you've been hands-on with the subject. To get a feel for what you want the work to look like." She looked even more embarrassed. "Sometimes I get so caught up in the process, I just say things without thinking."

A sexy smile curved his lips and he raised her hand to his lips again. "I'll bet you have wonderful hands. You are more than welcome to use them on me, any time you wish."

Dawn's mouth dropped open and she couldn't even respond. Had this gorgeous man just tried to hit on her? Apparently, her friends thought so, because they faded away into the crowd, leaving her and Aidan alone.

"I hear you had a reading today."

Dawn swallowed, hoping she could talk. All her nerves were dancing at his touch. "Ummm...yes. Your sister read Tarot cards for me."

"And did she tell you things that pleased you?"

"It was a good reading...somewhat confusing."

Aidan lifted a dark brow. "Confusing...how so?"

She blushed. "Oh, she just said some things that were impossible right now. That's all."

"Anything is possible if you want it enough." Aidan finally dropped her hand, leaving her bereft of his touch. "Life is full of possibilities."

Dawn grinned. "Well...I must say I hope her prediction about my art comes true. I could use a little help there."

"I would like to see your work. Will you show it to me?"

She blinked, surprised. "I guess. If you want to see it."

"I am interested in *you*, beautiful Dawn. Everything about you."

Staring at him, she wondered if she was dreaming. She'd never had a man like this interested in her. Ever. Yet everything about him drew her to him. It didn't make sense. She didn't act like this. She wasn't the type of woman who believed in lust at first sight. But this man made her panties wet and her breasts throb. She wanted to get to know him better, but there was a part of her that screamed she knew him already. This feeling confused the hell out of her.

Aidan saw her uncertainty and it delighted him. Confusion, he could work with. It was indifference that would have destroyed their chances together. He knew she was interested in him. He could scent her arousal and it made him go even harder in response. He wasn't sure how much longer he could take being this close to her and not take her.

"You said you were Aithne's business partner?"

He blinked and stared down at her, sensing her discomfort and need to change the subject. She obviously wasn't used to being pursued by a man. Were all the men in Monterey blind?

"Yes...we both own '*Don't Spank the Vamp*' together."

Dawn frowned. "It's an unusual name. What does it mean?"

Aidan grinned and his emerald eyes darkened. "Just what it says." He reached out and touched her cheek. "Someday, I will explain further."

The feel of his hand on her made her knees go weak. She felt all melty inside. She wavered between desire and fear. What was happening to her?

"Dance with me."

She blinked and noticed music had started in the background. Several couples already were circling slowly in the center of the floor.

"Please," he murmured. "I want to hold you in my arms."

Unable to resist his plea or the emotion that leapt inside of her at his words, she nodded mutely. Aidan's eyes flared with heat and he took her hand to lead her out to where the others were. Once there, he pulled her swiftly into his arms, molding his hard body against hers.

Dawn couldn't move...couldn't breathe. If she'd been unsure before, she wasn't any longer. Aidan's body was so close to hers, she could feel every line of his body.

Especially, the hard length of a truly impressive erection pressed against her stomach. She gulped as the full truth hit her square between the eyes.

He wanted her.

Now the question was...what was she going to do about it?

Chapter Three

Peggy and Sam watched the couple as they circled slowly, their eyes on each other. They acted as if they were the only two people in the room.

"I think she's found him," Sam whispered dreamily.

Her friend shrugged. "He seems a little worldly for our little Dawn."

"I think Dawn needs someone worldly. She's such an innocent, she can use the protection."

Peggy snorted. "Who will protect her from him?"

Sam shook her head firmly. "He won't hurt her. Couldn't you see how he looked at her? He never took his eyes away." She sighed. "He must be her twin flame. How marvelous is that."

The dark haired woman still didn't look convinced. "Things are moving kinda fast, don't you think?"

Sam moved her naked shoulders in a Gaelic shrug. "Aithne said it would happen quickly. And that Dawn shouldn't throw the chance away. What if this is it? What if Aidan is her soulmate?"

Dawn couldn't help but wonder the same thing as she moved with Aidan on the dance floor. What if these feelings racing through her, were because she had found her soulmate? Had she found the man Aithne had been talking about? Or was this just a coincidence?

Biting her lip, she daringly ran her hands up Aidan's strong back. He felt so good under her hands. Closing her eyes, she imagined her hands working the clay. Molding it into the strong muscles and sinew, she could feel just under Aidan's skin. She wished

she were brave enough to run her hands down over his tight butt, or around to the front where she could trace the lines of his chest and abdomen.

She sighed. He would be a beautiful subject. Of that, she was sure.

"Like what you feel?"

Aidan's growling voice jerked her back to awareness. She realized both her hands had left his strong back and were now cupping his hard ass. Her face heated and she pulled them back up as if she was burned.

"I...I..."

He chuckled and leaning back looked down into her reddened face. "Don't move them on my account." He slowly dropped his own hands so they traced down her naked back and settled low on her hips. Bending forward, he whispered into her ear. "I was enjoying it."

The space between Dawn's legs was abruptly drenched with dew. Her body trembled with the need to be closer to him. Suddenly, she didn't care she'd just met this man. They were connected in a way she didn't understand and she had no intention of fighting this feeling. Gone was the careful boring Dawn, in her place was a woman who chose to believe in possibilities. She wanted this man and he wanted her. And she knew exactly how to get him.

Standing on her tiptoes, she put her lips to Aidan's ear. "Will you model for me?"

Aidan went still for a long moment as he processed her request. Could she mean what he hoped she meant? Would it be that easy? He knew he needed her more than he'd ever needed a woman before. But until that moment, he hadn't truly believed the prophecy his sister had given.

But he and Dawn were already linked in a way he couldn't explain. As soon as he'd seen her, his mouth had gone dry and everything in him had known...

She was the one.

Not just to have sex with for one night or to feed on for a change of taste. This woman would stay with him forever, keeping him fed and sexually satiated. And if he was very, very lucky...

She would love him too.

He didn't give her time to change her mind. He only bent and touched his lips briefly to her forehead in a soft, gentle kiss that promised her much more. Then he took her by the hand and led her through the scarves into the back room. There he'd seen Aithne whose eyes had darkened when she saw who was with him. Then she smiled sadly and nodded her head.

He wanted to go to his sister and hold her close, but he couldn't without telling Dawn what was happening. And it was too early in their relationship for that. The bond between his sister and himself was not something easily explained.

"Aidan?"

He turned and met Dawn's questioning eyes. "Just saying good night, love." He smiled and touched her cheek, then led her up the stairs.

He and Aithne had separate apartments over the store. Each was identical, with a living room, kitchen area with dining nook and a bedroom. Other than the decorations, which in Aidan's were darkly masculine, the only difference was the fact there were no windows where he lived. He hoped Dawn wouldn't notice that little fact.

But he'd forgotten she was an artist and had an artist's eyes for detail. The first words out of her mouth were...

"Why aren't there any windows?"

Aidan groaned, but luckily, he had a good cover story. "I have a...a sensitivity to light, so I had them boarded up."

"Oh," she flushed. "I'm sorry."

He chuckled. "It's not your fault."

She laughed. "I know. I just can't imagine not being able to see the light. Without natural light, my sculptures wouldn't look the same."

Aidan's heart fell. She was a child of the day. An artist who needed the light. How would she ever be able to love a creature of the night?

"Does you bringing me up here mean you are going to model for me?"

He grinned and deliberately shook off the feeling of worry. "It does indeed. He stood in front of her. "What do I do first?"

Dawn smiled as she looked at the handsome man in front of her. Her nerves were dancing, but for the first time in her life, she knew she was exactly where she was supposed to be. For the next few hours at least, this man was all hers.

She reached up and pushed his dinner jacket off his shoulders. "I think we can lose this."

"Whatever you want, love," he murmured. "Should I take off the shirt?"

Dawn shook her head. "No." She lifted sultry eyes to his. "Do you know how the blind read?"

He frowned for a moment before his face cleared and his own eyes darkened. "They use their fingers and feel the little bumps on the page."

"Yes," she nodded. "And artists do much the same thing." She lifted her hands and slowly unbuttoned the black silk shirt. "I need to experience what it is I'm going to sculpt. That way I can imprint on my fingers what you feel like. Then I can craft that into the clay." When the shirt was unbuttoned, she stepped closer and smoothed her hands up his naked chest.

She'd been right in thinking he was more lanky than muscular. But he still had an impressive set of pectoral muscles and his abdomen was nicely carved with a set of ridges she couldn't wait to run her fingers over.

She started out by pushing the shirt out of the way, so she could have free access to the flesh in front of her. Cocking her head, she closed her eyes, gently running her fingers across Aidan's upper shoulders and across the ridge of his collarbones. Moving downward, she traced her way across his muscular chest, finding the small masculine nipples that stabbed at her palms as she smoothed her hands over him. Carefully, she stored away in her memory, every bump...every line.

Dawn hummed in reaction. Her whole body heated in an instant. She could smell the clean masculine aroma of him and when he shuddered under her hands, she knew she wasn't the only one affected by what she was doing.

Aidan clenched his hands into fists. Nothing in his long life prepared him for the erotic touch this woman was treating him to. His cock, already hard, stiffened even more

in response. If she kept this up, he'd take her right here, on the living room floor. When she touched his nipples, he groaned and vibrated beneath her fingers.

She went still for a moment, but then continued on, her hands moving over him with a surety that surprised him even as she cataloged his body with her senses. Then she moved around behind him and pulled the shirt from his arms. She smoothed her hands up his back to his strong shoulder blades and over his arms. She finished up by running her fingers over each of his hands. She traced each digit gently and he shivered again.

"You are truly beautiful," she whispered as she came around in front of him. "I can't wait to begin work on you." She ran a finger down his naked chest, following the thin line of hair to his belly button. "I think I'll do you in wood. You are much too hard of a man to do in just clay."

He had to agree. She'd made him as hard as a tree trunk. He was fast losing control of himself. "Do you always do this to your subjects?" he asked in a hoarse voice.

Dawn's hands stilled and she raised thoughtful eyes to his. "Actually, no," she answered softly. "But then I've never wanted to touch anyone like this."

He lifted his hands and covered hers where they rested on his chest. His green eyes glowed.

"I'm glad," he said simply. Lifting her hands, he pressed kisses to each of her palms. Then he gave her another one of those sexy smiles. "So...are you going to do a head and torso...or a whole body sculpture?"

Unable to help herself, Dawn blushed. Girding up her courage, she freed her hands from his and let them run down his chest to rest at his belt. She took a deep breath.

"That's up to you."

His smile widened. Again, he covered her hands with his own, this time dragging them down to where his full erection tented out his trousers. "Then I choose the whole body."

Her breath caught in her throat. He felt huge to her and so very alive, throbbing beneath her fingers. She wondered how he would feel inside of her. Instinctively she wrapped her fingers around him and squeezed.

He let out his breath in a loud hiss. His eyes flared a hot green as the need in his body spiraled higher. With a loud groan, he lifted her and carried her into his bedroom. He set her down, none to gently, on his large bed.

"Tell me you want this," he growled as he bent over her.

Dawn swallowed hard at the look of naked passion on his face. She'd never been wanted so fiercely before. She had the fleeting notion she should be frightened, but instead, the thought of being needed so much thrilled her. She lifted her arms to him.

"I want this. I want...you."

Aidan went very still as he fought to keep command of himself. Her surrender fanned his desire till he burned red hot. He thought of all the things he'd planned to do to her and knew immediately it was not to be. He wouldn't last that long.

Instead, he kicked off his shoes and stripped down to his boxer briefs before climbing onto the bed and taking her into his arms.

"You won't be sorry, love," he whispered. "I will take good care of you." And for the first time he bent and kissed her.

His lips moved over hers in a sensuous caress that shocked him with its intensity. It was like being hit by a bolt of lightning. Any thought he'd had of taking it slow disappeared in a ball of white heat. He groaned and slanted his mouth over hers, taking hers in a hungry deep kiss that fused them together.

Greedily he drank of her mouth, wanting to be closer to her than he was already. Her shoes were tugged from her feet before he made short work of her blouse and tight fitting skirt. Before long, she lay before him, naked except for the sheer thigh high stockings.

Dawn was bombarded by sensations she'd never felt before. He was moving so fast, touching her, kissing her, bringing her to a peak of excitement she'd only dreamed about. There was no slow seduction. No playing or testing of the waters. The heat between them needed none. They wanted each other, hard, fast and now.

When his mouth came down on one of her breasts, she cried out and arched against him. He suckled her, making her writhe beneath him in an agony of desire. His hand ran down her side until he teased the curls between her legs. He slipped a finger

between the damp folds testing her readiness for him and the feel of his rough skin against her sensitive clit made her moan in his ear.

He shuddered above her, lifting his head suddenly so he could look directly at her. He was panting heavily and his eyes were like twin emeralds. His finger moved within her and she clamped her legs together around his wrist, aching for him. Her hips moved of their own volition.

Aidan was in a firestorm of passion. He knew if he didn't slow down, he would hurt her, so he buried his face against her soft throat and took deep breaths to control himself. He groaned out loud when he realized what a mistake that was. He could smell the scent of her sweet blood as it raced through her veins and his mouth watered with a hunger of another kind.

He fought it, knowing that to drink from her now might end any chance they would have of a future together. He growled low in his throat. His lust flared as his hunger for blood was denied and channeled into a growing need to be deep inside the woman beneath him.

"I can't wait any longer," he gasped. "I'm sorry. I need you too much." With one hand, he reached down and stripped off his boxers before fitting himself between her thighs.

Dawn had no intention of stopping him. She ached to have him inside her, to feel his cock move within her. She spread her legs apart as he came down between them and gave a little moan as she felt the hot head of his cock press against her nether lips.

"Aidan," she gasped as he slid inside of her. He was even bigger than she thought and it had been a long time for her, so the pleasure was tinged with pain. He stretched her unmercifully as he eased himself inside.

"It's all right, love," he murmured, kissing her gently. "Relax. It will be fine. Just relax." He shifted his hips and slid in deeper.

She wriggled under him, uncomfortable, yet not wanting him to pull out. Instead, she lifted her silk covered legs and wrapped them around his hips, pulling him deeper inside her.

They both gasped as he was driven completely inside her, the tip of his penis, touching her womb.

"Are you all right?" he asked roughly. He pushed back the strands of fiery hair that had come loose from the intricate French braid she'd been wearing. "Love, are you all right?"

Dawn felt so full of him she couldn't speak, so she just nodded. He stared at her, not moving, allowing her to get used to the feeling of him inside of her. For several long moments, he fought his own need so she wouldn't be hurt. Then, as he felt her relax around him, he began to move.

He tried to control himself, but the feel of her clinging silken heat was too much for him. After a few slow thrusts, the fire in his blood took over and he pounded against her, driving his cock deeper inside her than ever before. He had just enough command of himself to make sure she was with him with every stroke.

Her head swam with passion as his body moved against hers. This wasn't love making, but a lusty mating between two people whose need for each other had overwhelmed them. Dawn gloried in the feeling of him inside her. She loved it. Sensation after sensation shot through her like fiery darts. Her toes tingled and colors danced behind her eyelids.

She felt him move faster and faster, his balls slapping against her butt. She gasped out his name when she felt him swell even bigger inside her. At the same time, he reached down between their bodies and his fingers encircled her clit, rubbing together in time with the movements of his body.

All the sensations that had been streaking through her body changed direction and headed straight to her groin. She screamed and exploded, her orgasm surging through her with the force of a tidal wave.

Aidan cried out as her yoni clamped down on his cock. She convulsed around him drawing him even deeper into the fire. He was able to thrust in one more time, before he too erupted in climax. He shuddered over her, pouring his seed deep within her body. When he was done, he collapsed on top of her, gasping for breath.

Neither of them was aware of how much time had past when Aidan finally lifted himself and carefully disengaged their bodies. He rolled over on his side, pulling her limp body against him. He smoothed the hair out of her face before leaning down and kissing her gently.

"Are you all right?"

Dawn blinked up at him. Then a satisfied smile lit her face. "I'm more than all right. I'm fantastic."

Aidan grinned. "I would have to agree with you there."

She blushed. "What I meant was...you made me *feel* fantastic."

His eyes were calmer, but they still carried a bit of fire in them. "What I felt for you was pretty overwhelming."

She blushed. "I don't usually sleep with a guy when I've known him for..." she glanced at a clock, "less than two hours."

He kissed her again. "Don't you think I know that? For a moment, I thought you were a virgin."

Dawn frowned. "Just because I have more experience with my washcloth than a real guy, doesn't mean I'm a virgin."

Aidan raised a dark eyebrow. "Washcloth?"

She rolled her eyes, wishing she would get out of the habit of speaking her thoughts aloud. "Never mind."

He let it go, knowing he could pluck it from her thoughts later if he needed to. Instead, he traced her lips with his index finger. "I knew from the moment I saw you we would be good together."

"You did?"

"Oh yes...I took one look at you and knew I'd do everything in my power to make sure you wound up in this bed with me."

Dawn grinned. "It didn't take much, did it? I made it pretty easy for you."

He shook his head. "You felt the same way I did and because of that, we made it easy on each other." His eyes darkened. "Though the Braille you did on my body earlier made it difficult for me to think at all."

She giggled and traced her finger across the ridges of muscle on his abdomen. "You are definitely a fun subject to work on."

"I did enjoy it."

Suddenly, Dawn gasped and tried to sit up. "Oh my God! I forgot about Sam and Peggy."

"Hush, love." He pulled her back into his arms. "I'm sure Aithne told them you were with me. They won't be worried about you."

She relaxed a little, but still worried her lip. "Maybe I should let them know I'm okay. I should get dressed and—"

"You aren't going anywhere," Aidan growled. He rolled her over on her back so he was on top of her again. "I'm not done with you yet."

"You aren't?" The thought made her smile. Her yoni throbbed once in sudden need. Then she gasped when she felt his cock twitch against her thigh.

"I didn't get to do half of what I wanted to do," he complained as he nibbled on her chin. "I was too hot for you. I want to try again and this time I plan on doing it right."

"Well, I don't think you did it wrong before," Dawn said laughingly. "But far be it for me to stop you if you want to improve on a good thing."

He chuckled. "This time I want to make you scream."

She raised an eyebrow. "You did that last time."

His eyes smoldered. "Yes, but this time I'm going to do things to you no one has ever done before."

Dawn's mouth went dry. "Like what?"

Aidan bent and nibbled at her mouth. "I own some of the best sex toys on the market. And I am going to show you exactly how much fun it is to play with them."

Chapter Four

"Sex toys?" Dawn squeaked. She teetered between shock and excitement at the thought.

"Yes, love." He nibbled up her chin to her already kiss swollen mouth. "I have much to show you."

She thrilled to his words. She still couldn't believe she was the one laying here with this gorgeous sexy man. This was like a dream come true.

"Why do you find it so hard to believe I would want you?"

Blinking in shock, she stared up at him. Had he read her mind?

"No, love," he chuckled as if he heard her. "I'm not reading your mind. You do have the unfortunate tendency to say what you think."

She went red. "I...I..." She blew out a frustrated breath. "It's just someone like you would usually be out of my league. You wouldn't even see me."

Aidan laughed and made a trail of wet kisses down her throat. "Do not compare me to the other men you have known. They are all blind idiots." He kissed the smattering of freckles that dotted one of her shoulders. "You are beautiful and sexy and smart." He moved over to the second shoulder. "You are exciting, yet have this innocence about you that is very arousing. I would be a fool not to want you."

He moved back up and nibbled on the corner of her mouth. "I may be many things, beautiful Dawn...but I am no fool."

Moaning, she gave herself over to his ministrations. She didn't care anymore why he'd chosen her. She was just thankful, he had. Wrapping her arms back around him, she kissed him for all she was worth.

Their tongues danced together, tasting and touching. They hadn't had the chance to really kiss before. Everything had been too intense for any slow lovemaking.

His kisses were the hottest she'd ever felt. Now, as he took his time with her, he touched every corner of her mouth, teasing her by stroking nerve endings she didn't even know she had.

Moaning, she sucked on his tongue, feeling his whole body tighten in response. He growled, low in his throat and his kisses became fiercer and hungrier. Suddenly, he tore his mouth away from hers.

"No, no," he muttered. He leaned up on one elbow. "If we continue like this, it will be over all too soon again. You will not make me lose control."

Dawn smiled and traced a finger down his hard chest. "And the downside to that is?"

He chuckled. "I have plans for you, remember?" He levered himself up off her and walked naked across the room to the dresser where he rummaged in one of the top drawers.

She sat up and admired him. She really couldn't wait to get her hands on the clay. He had the body of a God and her hands itched to craft it into a piece of wood. She would have to find the perfect piece, one that already had a long sleek look to it. Then she would start by carving out the hard lines of his body. She would have to dig deep into the clay there. Shallower here. And his butt wouldn't be... Oh yeah...she really couldn't wait.

He turned back towards her, grinning widely. "I must admit. In the past it would have angered me to have a woman dissect my body the way you do." He walked to the bed, a handful of ties in one hand. "But when you do it, I find it very arousing...as you can see." He reached down and slowly caressed his cock which stood tall and proud, jutting out from a nest of dark curls.

Dawn's mouth watered. She realized by his words she'd spoken aloud again, but it was hard to think when she looked at him. Then her attention was caught by what he held in his free hand.

She swallowed. "What are those for?"

He gave her a sexy smile and climbed onto the bed. "Lesson one." He pushed her onto her back and kissed her lightly. "Do you trust me, Dawn?"

She began to tremble. "I think so." She searched his dark face. "I want to."

"That is a good beginning," he said gently. He took one of her wrists and tied one of the colorful ties to it. Then, keeping his eyes on hers, he carefully tied her wrist to one of the bedposts.

Dawn's heart pounded in a mixture of dread and excitement. She'd never done anything like this before. She wasn't sure how to respond. But she did know her yoni was throbbing and the thought of being tied up wasn't nearly as frightening as she thought it would be.

"Obviously, this is something new to you, so let me tell you how it works." Aidan spoke quietly as he gently tied her other wrist to the post by the headboard. "After I tie you up, I am going to do things to you that will make you scream with pleasure. I will not hurt you, but some of the things will be different and some may even be frightening to you at first."

He continued to look at her as he moved down the bed and carefully spread her legs apart. He wrapped a tie around one ankle and tied it securely to the post at the foot of the bed.

"But you will always be the one in control, even tied up. I want you to choose a safe word. If you use it, I promise I will stop what ever I am doing to you."

Dawn's nerves were jumping, but the very care he was taking gave her the feeling of security she needed. She thought quickly. Could she do this?

Aidan tied the last knot and then leaned back on his heels. He stared down at her spread-eagled body and his own tightened dramatically. Her swollen nether lips were exposed to his gaze and his mouth watered at the sight. A mixture of his seed and her own juices dribbled down her thigh. He took a deep breath. He wanted her again, as much, if not more, than he had before.

"Give me your safe word, Dawn...if you want to continue."

The look of desire in his eyes decided her. "Palette," she whispered. She trembled with the enormity of her actions. "My safe word is palette."

He smiled. "Perfect. If at any time you want to end what we are doing, just say the word. But understand, once you do...everything we are doing will stop."

"Everything?"

Aidan chuckled. "I will release you from your bonds and we can continue if you wish...with a more accepted form of love making."

Dawn gave her hands an experimental tug. She couldn't move. "I thought you said we were going to use some of your toys. I didn't see these downstairs."

Surprisingly, the big man's cheeks reddened. "Ahhh... It has been a long time for me. And you are the first woman I have wanted to play with in a very long time." He bent and dropped a kiss on her flat stomach. "I don't usually keep handcuffs up here, so I had to improvise."

She giggled at his embarrassment. It was endearing. "So you don't have any toys, huh?" she teased. "All smoke and no fire?"

His eyes darkened. "I didn't say I don't have toys. Just not handcuffs. I always keep a selection up here to show to buyers. I won't disappoint you. That...I can easily promise."

She wriggled in nervous excitement. "Then get on with it."

Aidan laughed. "So curious. All right, love. We will start with this." Leaning over, he took the last tie and gently placed it over her eyes.

Dawn's mouth went dry. He was going to blindfold her? Her heart pounded faster at the thought. She said nothing as he tied it securely over her eyes.

"Too tight?"

She shook her head. She didn't know if she could speak. She felt him leave the bed and she could hear a rustling sound.

Then the bed sagged again. She held her breath, waiting... What would he do to her? It felt like forever before she felt a gentle touch on her breasts. It was fleeting at first, but it made her whole body tighten in reaction. Then she felt it again, a longer more erotic touch as it circled her nipples and traced across her breasts.

She moaned and arched her body upwards. The touch was so soft, so erotically sexy, she couldn't help herself. Over and over again, it traced around her nipples, sensitizing her breasts, before finally flicking across the tips themselves. She cried out, the feeling shooting through her like a tiny bolt of lightning.

He moved then, tickling down her stomach and then up her sides. He touched under her arms and then up her neck. It fleetingly touched her lips and when she instinctively licked at it, she realized he was teasing her with a feather.

She moaned again as the feather moved back down her body. It made one more stop at her breasts, before tracing down past her belly button, to the hair between her

legs. Dawn cried out in surprise when the feather flicked gently through the curls and touched her moist lips. When it teased her clit, heat began to coil in her stomach.

"Aidan..." she moaned.

"I'm here, love." He swallowed hard as he watched her wriggle on the tangled sheets. Touching her this way made him want to explode, and he was very glad they'd already made love once. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been able to handle this.

He carefully drew the feather through her exposed lips, seeing it gather the wetness pooled there. Unable to help himself, he bent and replaced the feather with his tongue.

She cried out and lifted her hips instinctively. He groaned aloud. She tasted of woman and heat, along with his own essence. It was the most delicious thing he'd ever had in his life. He sucked and nibbled until her movements signaled her climax was close. Abruptly, he lifted his head.

"Not yet."

Dawn groaned. "Aidan...please." Her whole body throbbed with the need to come.

He chuckled. "There is more."

She whimpered. "But..."

"Shhh..." he whispered. He dropped a kiss on her pouting lips. "Just enjoy."

She felt him move again and she stiffened as his hand traced down the cleft of her rear to the small wrinkled hole of her backside. Gently, he massaged it, as he carefully covered it with an oil of some kind.

"Aidan..." she said uneasily.

"Give it a chance, love," he urged. "Remember, you always have your safe word."

She nodded and took a deep breath. He'd promised he wouldn't hurt her. She felt something pressing against the rim of her anus. It was cool and smooth and felt about the size of a man's thumb. It went in easily at first, the lotion he'd massaged into her easing the way, but then she could feel it spreading her, as whatever he'd inserted in her rectum, widened at the bottom.

"This is a butt plug, sweetheart," he said hoarsely. "It will add to your pleasure, this I promise you."

What he was doing was exciting to him, she could tell by the sound of his voice. All at once, she relaxed again. She loved knowing she could do that to him.

"What does it do?" she panted out. The feeling of fullness took a little bit to get used to, but it wasn't unpleasant."

"Wait."

All of a sudden, there was a light vibration that started inside her butt. She gasped.

"Feel it?" he asked silkily.

"Yes," she moaned. She writhed against the sheets. It felt wonderful. Her yoni vibrated along with the plug. Okay...she liked this toy.

"You enjoy that...good. But it's just the beginning."

Dawn wasn't sure what he meant. But if everything else felt as good as the butt plug, she would be a very eager student.

"Please, Aidan," she gasped. "I need more."

He gave a little groan at her words. "Love...you are going to kill me. Already I want to be inside you, feeling that plug vibrate against me."

Her yoni wept at the thought. She arched herself towards him. "Aidan..."

"Not yet...as I said...this is just the beginning."

She heard the rustling again and waited, wondering what pleasurable torture he'd come up with this time. It wasn't long before she felt his hands on her breasts. His fingers tickled at her nipples and they hardened even more.

"Perfect," he muttered. His finger grazed over an erect tip and then something clamped down on it, making Dawn jump in surprise. It was a pleasure-pain and her breasts began to tingle with feeling. She felt him move to the other breast and the same clamping sensation made her cry out.

"Easy, love," came his soothing voice. "I've put some nipple jewelry on you." He gave one of the devices a gentle tug and she felt heat shoot right down to her groin. When he bent and licked around the small piece of jewelry, she moaned.

He teased her with his mouth for a moment. She was heavily aroused. He could see the desire on her face, as well as smell her need. His own body throbbed. He controlled himself with an effort. As he'd said, he wasn't done with her yet.

He looked down at the jewelry he'd attached to her. Each turgid nipple sported a tiny pink clamp. Each clamp had two chains with a pearlescent, pink butterfly hanging

from each one. Lying against her flushed skin, the butterflies danced with each breath she took.

"You are so beautiful," he growled.

His words, the pressure on her nipples, as well as the erotic vibration in her rear made Dawn moan in frustrated desire. She wanted him in her so badly, she could taste it. "Please Aidan," she moaned again. "I want you."

His jaw clenched. "Soon, my love...very soon. I have one last toy to show you." He bent down and picked up the last of his tools. A thought crossed his mind and he grinned. He scooted closer to her, raising himself up on his knees.

"Are you hungry, Dawn?"

She moaned, almost mindless with need. Carefully, he leaned over the top of her, so his cock grazed her lips. He gritted his teeth. He wasn't sure how much more he could take himself, but he wanted her lips on him. "Open your mouth, love."

She did so, turning her head blindly when she felt his cock touch her. Her tongue snaked out and touched the tip, tasting the bead of pre-cum that dripped from the tip. She gave a little moan and leaned forward, taking the head of his cock in her mouth. Her tongue swirled over it and then she sucked...hard.

Aidan jumped. He hadn't expected her to be so enthusiastic and the feel of her hot mouth on him made his balls tighten dangerously. Breathing heavily, he jerked away from her, making her moan in disappointment. But he wasn't done yet.

"Try this," he gritted. He lifted his hand and ran the object he was holding down her cheek. She jumped and swiftly turned her head, her tongue searching frantically for him. He groaned and allowed her to touch it briefly, before pulling it away from her. She wriggled and moved her head, searching for what was denied her. Aidan used his finger to wipe some of his own pre-cum on the head of the vibrator in his hand. It looked and felt like the real thing. Now it tasted like it, too.

"Open your mouth."

Dawn did without hesitation. She wanted him. Wanted to taste him again. She moaned when the head of a cock pushed through her lips. She could taste him and she used her tongue to lap off all the wonderful juices. It wasn't until she was finished that

she realized it wasn't him she held in her mouth. The thought made her go still, but then he began moving the fake cock in and out of her mouth.

"This is what I want to do to you," he growled. "But, if I was in your mouth, I'd explode and it would be all over." He reached down and pulled on the shimmering butterflies, making Dawn cry out around the dildo. "But someday I will fuck your mouth...just like this."

Her yoni clenched, hard at the thought. She continued to suck on the cock in her mouth, uncaring of what it was. He wanted her to do it, so she would. She may be blindfolded, but she could tell he was as aroused as she was.

Her whole body was on fire. Her plug in her butt made her clit vibrate and every time he pulled on the nipple clamps, her yoni would throb in time with his movements. Add to this, the erotic feel of a cock in her mouth and she was ready to burst with passion.

When he removed the dildo from her mouth, it felt empty. She licked her lips, wanting to suck on it again, but instead he traced it down between her breasts, past her belly button and rested it on the mound of curls between her legs.

"Are you ready for this?" he whispered. When she nodded and tried to spread her legs farther apart, he growled deeply. "God, what you do to me."

He didn't waste any more time. Running the dildo down her hot lips, he separated them easily and with a smooth motion buried the fake cock deep in her yoni.

Dawn cried out his name. The dildo wasn't as big as he was, but she was tender from his earlier possession and it felt huge. When he began to move it in and out, she writhed on the bed. The sensation of the cock in her at the same time as the butt plug was almost more than she could stand.

"Aidan!" she groaned again as she pulled on the restraints. "Please!"

He clenched his jaw. His own desire was as great as hers and she hadn't even had to touch him. "Soon," he managed to say. "I have one more surprise for you."

She pulled again at the ties around her wrists. "I can't wait...please."

He chuckled deeply. "Ahhh, but you are learning the lesson of delayed gratification." He laughed out loud when a curse erupted from her soft mouth. She was close to losing control.

Dawn was dying. Couldn't he tell? Her whole body was being bombarded by so much feeling she knew if she didn't come soon, she would die. Aidan kept pulling on the nipple clamps, as well as moving the cock in and out of her and she felt that same feeling of heat starting low in her belly.

Suddenly the cock buried in her began to pulse. Her breath caught in surprise before it left her all together. It moved at a different rhythm than the one in her ass and it was unbearably erotic. Her yoni wept in reaction and she instinctively pumped her hips against it.

She felt Aidan lay down next to her. His voice was rough and almost angry when he spoke.

"Do you like this, love? Do you like the feeling inside you?"

"Yes," she moaned again, her hips undulating in rhythm with the pulses within her.

"Perhaps you will like this better."

Dawn cried out as the pulses within her changed to waves of vibrations. Aidan moved the cock so it rubbed against her clit as it went in and out of her. The feelings inside her doubled in strength. She cried out again when his mouth came down on her breasts. His tongue flicked at her and then he gently tugged at the jewelry with his lips.

The heat inside of her flared out of control when he switched the setting on the vibrator yet again. This one was stronger, the pulsation making her whole body move under its power.

She couldn't take any more. She screamed out his name as she climaxed. The convulsions were so hard she bucked against his hand on the bed. Fireworks of sensation exploded in her brain as the orgasm raced through her leaving her limp on the sheets.

Aidan panted heavily as he watched her. His own cock was ready to explode as well, but he wanted more. "Oh no," he murmured. "Again." His mouth came down on hers and he continued to pump the vibrator in and out of her body.

She moaned against his mouth. "I can't."

"You can," he insisted. "Please love, once more. For me."

Dawn turned her head back and forth on the pillow. Incredibly, she felt the passion in her rise again. Lights sparkled behind her eyelids as she jerked her hips in rhythm to Aidan's hand.

He could tell she was close and more than anything, he wanted to be inside her when she came this time. He was close himself, his cock weeping with his need for her. Suddenly, he couldn't take anymore. Pulling the dildo out of Dawn's body, he quickly moved on top of her and with a single thrust buried himself deep within her.

They both screamed at the heat that speared between them. With a jerky movement, he pulled the blindfold from her eyes so they could watch each other come.

He reached down, grabbed her butt and ground her against him. It was all it took to put both of them over the edge. With a shout of satisfaction, he poured himself inside of her, feeling her dissolve around him. The orgasm went on and on, till they both were limp.

But once it was all over, he couldn't relax and truly enjoy himself. He had one more thing to do. Quickly, he enthralled Dawn, putting her into a deep trance. He must bind her to him and the easiest way to do that was to feed from her. She would think she'd fainted and would have no memory of it.

Her body relaxed and he lifted up on his elbows above her. Her eyes were closed and she breathed lightly, deep under his spell. Gently he moved her hair away from her long neck. His mouth watered and his teeth lengthened in his mouth. He bent and licked the spot where he would put his mark on her.

"You will be mine," he whispered. "Ever-after." In his heart, he prayed it would be so. Then with a single movement of his head, he buried his teeth in her neck and sucked down the life giving blood, changing both of their lives...forever.

Chapter Five

When Dawn finally awoke, it was much later. Her hands and feet were untied and she was lying on Aidan's chest, as he cuddled her against him. She took a deep breath, inhaling his masculine fragrance. She waited to see if she felt any embarrassment over what she'd done, but the only thing other than a sleepy feeling of satisfaction, was a slight ache between her thighs and a tingling at her throat.

She lifted a hand to her neck, but Aidan caught it and brought it to his lips.

"Welcome back."

She lifted her head and met his amused eyes. They were a dark green and brimmed with male satisfaction. She stretched up and kissed him. "Hi."

He combed his hand through her tousled hair. "Are you all right? Seems like your body decided to take a little nap."

Now she did blush. "I'm fine. But...I gotta say...wow!"

Aidan grinned. "Thanks, but you gave as good as you got."

She gave an unladylike snort. "I don't see how. I didn't do anything."

"Ah, love," he chuckled. "You did plenty. Watching you wiggle around on the sheets was more than enough to send me in to orbit."

"Still..." her blush grew deeper. "I didn't make you faint!"

He felt guilt stab him, but he brushed it away and bent to kiss her. "I like the fact I gave you so much pleasure you passed out."

"Hmmm." Dawn quirked her lips. "Let's just not make a habit of it, okay?"

Aidan sighed inwardly. He'd fed fully, his body instinctively recognizing the one female who could fulfill all his needs. He felt energized and strong and he'd been careful not to take too much from her. Sleepy from blood loss was one thing, weak was another entirely. He'd been careful to hide the mark on her throat, so he was the only one who could see it. But as for her fainting? Until she knew what he was and accepted it, he would have to enthrall her.

Her hand moved gently up and down his broad chest as she sighed. "I enjoyed what you did to me. I wasn't sure I would, but I loved it."

Rolling over on one elbow, so he could look down into her sleepy face, he smiled. "I'm glad you enjoyed your first playtime with my toys. I hope it will be the beginning of many more nights together."

Dawn went still and her hazel eyes searched his face. She was shocked at the tremendous feeling of relief she felt. She'd gone into this with her eyes opened. It could have been just a one night stand. But after they'd made love, she knew she wanted more from him. Knowing he wanted the same filled her with happiness.

Her expression must have given her away, because he shook his head in mock anger. "You thought it was a one time thing? That once I'd had you, I'd be done?" He bent and swept his tongue over her lips before pressing inside for a long deep kiss.

When he raised his head, his eyes were darker still. "I knew I wanted you from the moment I heard your voice. From the moment I saw you. But it was just as important for me to get to know you, too."

"I think I fell in lust with you the second I saw you," she confessed. "I've never felt that way before. I just don't do this type of thing."

"I know, love. And unless you want it to be, this is no one night stand." He cursed inwardly, knowing even if she did, he wouldn't be able to let her go. She'd become too important to him.

He gave a sigh of relief when her smile lit up her face. He drew in his breath at her beauty. She put her arms around him and held him tightly.

"I want more, too," she whispered.

He slanted his mouth over hers and the heat rose again between them. "Then you shall have more, love," he muttered against her mouth. "You shall have everything."

The next few weeks were the most exciting of Dawn's life. She and Aidan spent every free moment together. She would work during the day, but as soon as the sun went down, she was in his arms. The second night they were together, he took her to a

special restaurant, one of the most expensive in town. He wined and dined her as if she was a queen. Afterwards, they went for a walk on old Cannery Row and he bought her a painting from one of the street artists.

Another night he surprised her with tickets to the Monterey Bay Aquarium. It was a special dinner to benefit the homeless and so they were able to stroll along the exhibits and enjoy the outside view of the ocean under starry skies.

He took her to art museums and to the theatre. Then just to switch gears on her, he showed her how to play pool and enjoy good micro-brewed beer.

And always, afterwards they would go back to his small apartment and make love. Aidan taught her things she blushed thinking about. He played her like a musician plays a favorite instrument. He showed her different toys and they would try them out, laughing like children, before their passions would take over and he would pull her beneath him and love her into oblivion.

He'd even gotten her to okay a night of spanking, something she figured she'd never do, but when he pulled the wide faced paddle out from under his pillow, everything in her had melted with excitement. He'd showed her exactly how to use it, even though to her amusement, he refused to let her try it out on him. Several swats and two rosy cheeks later, she was begging him to take her, which he did...hard and fast.

Every night she would be so caught up in the emotions of the lovemaking she would go limp in his arms. He would always kiss her awake and then the loving would start all over again.

Every day, she fell further and further under his spell. Being with him became as necessary as breathing. When they were apart, she worked on his sculpture. It was almost finished and she knew without being vain it was the best work she had ever done. She'd found a dark piece of mahogany that was long and sleek looking. The moment she'd laid eyes on it, she knew it would be perfect.

She'd labored long and hard, putting all her emotions, every bit of feeling she had for him into it. Bit by bit Aidan's form had been pulled from the wood. First his face, then his torso and now all she had left to do was the rest of him. When she was working on the sculpture, she didn't feel so lonely.

About the only downside to their time together was Aidan's weird problem with light. He was very careful not to be anywhere the sun could get to him. She often wondered what exactly was wrong with him. Their dates would always end at his place since there were no windows or daylight to worry about.

Because of that, she hadn't been able to show him her art, even though he constantly asked about it. And she wasn't able to share with him some of her favorite things. A picnic on the beach, or a bit of touristy window shopping on the streets of nearby Carmel, were out of reach.

But even with the irritation of not being able to be with him in the sunlight, Dawn was happier than she'd ever been. The way Aidan looked at her...the gentle touch of his hands, even the way he teased her showed her she was important to him. And when they loved together, whether it was hard and fast or slow and sweet, she realized she had found her soulmate. And she knew one other thing as well.

She knew she had fallen in love with him.

Aidan paced back and forth in the small living room of his apartment. He caught himself staring at the clock on the wall and cursed. It was almost 3 a.m. Intolerable. Dawn had been gone for three days, but for him it had felt like three years. He cursed again.

She had gone out of town to talk to an agent interested in her work. She'd been so excited, hoping this was the break she was looking for. He couldn't tell her not to go, though he'd wanted to. He wouldn't do that to her. Even if being separated from his food source would weaken him dramatically.

At least she had shyly asked him if he wanted to go with her. He had wanted to say yes so badly he felt the words dripping from his tongue, but he knew it was a risk he couldn't take. Without her knowing what he was, it would be too difficult to protect himself and not reveal his true nature.

So he had let her go, making sure he'd made love to her unceasingly the night before, as if trying to imprint himself on her. He'd fed fully as well, but he knew three days was a long time for a vampire like himself to go without food.

She'd been due back earlier in the evening, but then she had called from a distant airport saying her plane would be delayed. So now he paced, waiting for a phone call that would say she was on her way home to him. His stomach growled and clenched impatiently and his cock was as stiff as a spike. He wasn't sure which hunger he would have to satisfy first.

The phone rang with a suddenness that startled him. He turned and snatched up the receiver from the cradle.

"Dawn?"

"Aidan, it's me." Her voice sounded exhausted.

"Where are you?" he growled. His teeth lengthened and his cock twitched just at the sound of her voice.

"I'm at my loft." He heard her yawn. "The plane was delayed twice, but finally they let us go. It was so late, I just came home."

Aidan swore aloud. "I want you here!"

"I know," she said softly. "I just wasn't sure you'd be up."

He glanced down at the hard-on that threatened to rip out of his pants. "I'm up."

She sighed and then yawned again. "I'm sorry. I wouldn't be awake enough for anything. I'm going to jump in the shower and fall into bed. I'll see you tomorrow night, all right?"

His jaw tightened. Did she really think he was going to be satisfied with that? An idea came to him. "I'm going to send something over to help you sleep."

"You don't have to—"

"I know I don't have to," he returned. "But I want to."

"You're sweet."

Aidan laughed and his eyes glowed. "If you think so."

Twenty minutes later Dawn wrapped her long hair in a towel and slid into her silk robe. God, it felt good to be home. Even though the trip had gone well and the agent had been very interested in her portfolio, she ached to be back in Monterey...with Aidan.

She'd been as disappointed as he, when it had gotten too late to go to him. But even as close as they were becoming, she wasn't comfortable showing up at his apartment at all hours. She didn't want to force a commitment she wasn't sure he felt. Oh, she knew he wanted her. Of that, she had no doubt. But was there anything more? She didn't know.

She wandered into the kitchen and grabbed a glass of water. Then she walked into her workroom and uncovered the sculpture of Aidan. It was finished, all except the lower legs and feet. She had been putting it off, feeling an almost superstitious fear if she completed the statue, Aidan would be done with her as well. She knew it was foolish, but she just couldn't help it.

She was pondering that when the doorbell rang. She frowned, wondering what he'd sent her that would help her sleep. And what delivery service worked at close to four in the morning. The second she opened the door, she got her answer.

Without even stopping to say hello, a very aroused Aidan stepped in and swept her off her feet. He turned and slammed the door shut, leaning her against it as he covered her mouth in a voracious kiss. Dawn moaned in delight and surprise.

He held her against the door with his body as his hands whipped the towel off her head before tunneling his fingers through her wet hair. His mouth moved over hers with barely controlled passion. They were both shaking when he finally came up for air.

"Aidan," she whispered. Her eyes eagerly drank in his drawn features. Maybe this trip had been as hard on him as it had been on her.

"I couldn't stay away," he groaned. One of his hands slipped from her hair and pulled at the sash of her robe. "I need you."

As tired as she was, her body responded to his words. When his hand massaged her breast, she moaned and arched herself against him. That small movement told him all he needed to know.

Desperately, he pulled the robe off her shoulders and tossed it across the room. The desire to be inside of her was so strong his hand shook as he undid his pants. He didn't hesitate. When his cock was free, he single-mindedly spread her legs and thrust himself inside of her.

She cried out and then they both were still as they enjoyed the special feeling of their bodies joined together.

"Love me," she moaned. "I want you so much."

"I do," he groaned not even realizing what he was saying. "I will."

Cupping her ass with his big hands, Aidan began pumping in and out of her. It wasn't slow or sweet or careful, but hard and hot and raunchy. All they could think of was that delicious climb to ecstasy.

He pounded into her, grinding his cock against her clit. She moaned and writhed as she was pummeled with his desperate motions.

Aidan fought a losing battle. His body was already out of control and he could barely hold himself back from burying his long teeth in her neck. As his orgasm grew nearer, he fought the need to gorge himself on her blood. If he didn't stay in control, he might hurt her or worse yet kill the woman he had come to realize was more important to him than his own life.

He took her mouth again as he brought them ever closer to a climax. Her legs suddenly wrapped around his waist and squeezed and his mind went blank. He gave a shout as his body exploded within hers. His orgasm catapulted her into her own and she screamed his name in joy as she dissolved around him.

It was a long time later before Aidan was able to take a deep enough breath to say anything. His legs shook so badly, he could barely stand, yet he couldn't help but groan in disbelief over his actions. He had taken her like a drunken sailor on leave. Against the back of a door. At least he'd kissed her first.

"Dawn," he murmured. "Love, are you all right?"

She snuggled against him with a sigh. She loved it when was so fierce. He'd only done so one other time. The first time they'd made love. Any other time he was always in perfect command of himself.

"Ummm."

He hoped that meant, yes. Her movements against his chest and her breathy little sounds made him want her all over again. He licked his lips knowing that soon he would have to feed, but his cock was slowly swelling inside of her again. As a vampire, he had extra stamina, but she could make him go harder than any woman ever had before.

Pushing away from the door, he toed off his shoes and stepped out of his pants. He held their bodies tightly together as he moved across the room.

"Where is the bedroom?"

Dawn blinked then smiled shyly at him. "To your left."

He had them on her bed moments later. He shrugged out of his shirt, then began thrusting into her with the same purposeful moves he'd done before. "I'm going to make you scream again," he grunted. "You should have come straight to me."

She tried to move with him, but he held her so he controlled every movement. He adjusted himself so the head of his cock rubbed against her with every thrust of his body. Tendrils of feeling began to coil up inside of her again. She moaned, wondering fleetingly how he alone could make her feel this way.

When her climax hit her, she did scream, but he didn't stop. He continued to move deeply and firmly, his breathing sounding harsh in the quiet of the night. She didn't have time to relax before he took her back up the cliff again. This time, he groaned as she tightened around him. Feelings hotter and fiercer than a firestorm raged through them both as she bucked against him. Her yoni milked his cock so tightly he couldn't pull back this time. As he poured himself into her, he automatically enthralled her.

He barely gave the spell time to finish before he swept her hair back and bit deeply into her neck, the mark showing she was his, glowing in the dark.

He sucked down the life giving blood, so hungry for her he forgot everything else around him. His body, starving before, relaxed and he growled in pleasure. He loved the taste of her. The feel of her silken heat surrounding him. He knew in that moment he couldn't let her leave him again. If she did, he would surely die.

Aidan had to fight not to take too much blood from Dawn. Being connected to her felt so good to him, he prolonged the feeding, but he barely took any blood from her. It was enough just to have his fangs buried in her neck and his cock sunk deep in her warmth.

He didn't realize he had fallen asleep until he was awoken by a faint itching on his right hand. His fangs were still in Dawn's throat as he lay half on top of her. They had been so exhausted they had dozed off in the same position as they had made love in.

Aidan nuzzled her neck not wanting to remove his teeth. He stretched his tired body. The itching on his hand turned abruptly to a burning sensation. Curious, he lifted his head from Dawn and looked down at it.

His eyes went wide when he saw the faint wisp of smoke curling from his knuckles. He jerked his head around and stared in horror at the window. Daylight poured in through the glass, as the morning sun crept into the room.

Realization flowed through him. He'd been so relaxed, so pleased to be back with Dawn again, he'd literally forgotten where he was. Now, because of that stupidity, he could die.

He gave a shout of anger and pain as his whole body began to burn. Rolling off Dawn's soft body, he slid to the floor, protecting himself from the sun's deadly rays. Sweat rolled into his eyes as he pulled himself half way under the bed. There was nowhere to go. Nowhere to hide.

Dawn's studio had been built to let in the light. An artist needed it to work. The windows he hadn't given thought to last night were huge and they all faced to the east so they could let in the morning sun. It was only because his hand had been hanging off the bed and caught the first rays that he'd been warned.

His stomach clenched. If he'd been any slower, he would have been fried to a crisp, as he lay still connected to his lover's body.

"Aidan?"

Her sleepy voice made him go still. This wasn't something he could explain away. He had finally run out of time.

Dawn rolled over and looked over the side of the bed. Aidan lay huddled against the side of it as if it were a shield protecting him. "What are you doing?"

He looked up at her and something in his eyes frightened her. "I need you to cover the windows Dawn. Please, do it quickly."

She frowned then remembered his sensitivity to light. She sprang from the bed, grabbing the blanket and hoisting it over the window so the light was totally blocked out.

"The other ones as well, love. Do them all."

Obeying, she covered the other two large windows. Now the room was as dark as a cave. "Is that better?"

Aidan sighed and slowly stood. "Yes, thank you."

She came to him. "You really should see a doctor about this, Aidan. This is nuts." Her eyes narrowed and she grabbed his hand. "My God, you're burned!" She lifted confused eyes to his. "The sunlight burned you?"

He just stood there as still as a statue. The same emotion in his eyes that had scared her before...was back.

Suddenly she felt the dripping of something cold and sticky. Even more confused, she wiped at her chest, her face going bone white when she saw her fingers were covered in blood. Turning, she looked in the mirror over her dresser. There on her throat were two puncture marks, tiny trails of blood oozing down onto her breasts.

Dawn gasped and looked at Aidan in the mirror. She blinked when she didn't see him. Whirling around, she cried out when she saw him standing in the exact same place behind her. Yet, when she turned back to the mirror, there was no one there.

Suddenly all the pieces fell together. The so-called sensitivity to light, the nighttime only hours, his odd eating habits where he would only pick at the food he would order. Now she saw sunlight actually burned him...and...she had puncture marks on her neck. She turned back around and faced him, feeling her insides freeze in fear and pain. For the first time she noticed the faint traces of blood on his lips.

The truth hit her so hard she staggered. Her stomach churned and her heart raced. She thought of all the nights they'd shared together and her eyes filled with tears.

Aidan...the wonderful gorgeous man she thought she knew and had fallen in love with...was a vampire.

Chapter Six

As he looked at her face, Aidan knew by keeping the truth from her, he might have lost her. She was looking at him with such horror and pain his heart broke. "Dawn, please...let me explain."

She ignored him. "You're a vampire."

He nodded, taking a step closer to her. His eyes burned when she retreated from him. "I wanted to tell you—"

"You fed off me," she interrupted. "You drank my blood."

"It is how I live, but—"

"How long?" she asked in an accusing voice. "How many times have you done this?"

Guilt colored his cheeks. He knew he was talking himself into a hole, but he wouldn't lie to her any more. "From the first night," he said quietly.

"Every night?" Her tone was outraged.

"Yes," he answered. "Except for the nights you were gone. I didn't eat anything then."

Dawn's hands flew to her cheeks. "I can't believe this is happening."

"Please, listen to me," Aidan begged. He might have only one chance at this and at least she wasn't screaming and running for the door. "I knew from the moment I saw you, you would be special to me. I was afraid if I told you what I was, you would walk away before I could make you see that."

"You lied to me from the beginning. You never wanted me. Just my blood."

"How can you say that?" he snapped back at her. "I've shown you in every way I could, I wanted you."

She blushed. "You weren't honest with me. If you'd cared a fig for me, you would have told me the truth!"

"How?" Aidan paced away from her uncaring of his nakedness. He ran a frustrated hand through his tousled hair. "Was I supposed to walk up to you at the party that first

night and tell you?" He laughed. "Right...you'd have dashed away so fast your shadow would have run out of breath."

"Don't try to excuse yourself," Dawn spat angrily. "We've been...together for almost a month."

His shoulders sagged. "I know. I should have said something. But I could never find the right time. I didn't want to lose you."

She stared at him as if seeing him for the first time. "I don't know you at all. My God, you're a story right out of the movies. What do you do when I'm not around? Swoop down on unsuspecting women in the park? Wait in the shadows until some homeless person comes along and then kill them?"

"Don't be ridiculous!" he snapped, his temper rising. "Those are all tales out of horror books. I don't hunt or kill anybody. I don't need to."

She took a step back and her face whitened. "No. I don't suppose you do. A man like you can seduce anyone. Make them think you care. Then it's easy to get what you want."

Aidan swore aloud. "It didn't happen that way. And that's not what I meant."

"Are you telling me you didn't seduce me so you could make a meal off of me?" Now there was more hurt in her voice than anger.

He growled in frustration. She was twisting everything around. "I seduced you because I wanted you, because I needed you. Yes, feeding from you is part of it, but there is much more."

"Right," she scoffed. "I'll bet you tell all your victims that."

"There are no victims!" he roared. "I have only fed from one other."

That stopped Dawn in her tracks. "What?"

"That's right," he growled. He paced back to her. "I am not a monster out of a faerie tale. I don't sneak up on unsuspecting people and bleed them dry." His green eyes glowed with emotion. "Until I met you I fed from only one other source and it wasn't any girlfriend."

She stared at him for a long moment and then her eyes widened in sudden understanding. "Aithne."

He nodded. "Yes...when I was changed, I swore I wouldn't hunt. It was the one part of being a vampire I hated. So Aithne became my familiar. She has given herself to me to feed from since the beginning."

Dawn rubbed at the goose bumps on her arms. The whole concept of him feeding off his sister made her slightly ill. "How long?"

"I am young for a vampire," he answered. "I just passed my first century mark."

She sat down abruptly as her legs gave way. "You are one hundred years old?"

"Actually, I'm a hundred and two."

"But...but..." She tried to gather her scattered thoughts. "Aithne looks so young. I don't understand."

He stepped closer to her. "One of the benefits of being a familiar is longevity. Aithne stopped aging when I began feeding from her. She stayed at the age of twenty-four. It was my way of thanking her for giving me life."

She frowned. "But you stopped when you started to use me. Is she going to get old? Could she die?"

Aidan smiled. "No, love. She won't grow suddenly old, but as soon as I stopped feeding from her, she began to age at a normal rate."

Dawn didn't say anything. Now she understood the sadness she often associated with Aithne. Even though she seemed to like Dawn, there was always that look in her eyes when she saw her with Aidan.

"Don't worry about Aithne." He stood looking down at her pale face. "She has always known when I found the one to sustain me; she would have to step aside. She doesn't begrudge me my happiness."

Dawn shot off the bed like a rocket. She paced over to the covered window. "You haven't found anybody!"

"You can't hide from what has happened between us." He stared at her and his eyes were angry. "She spoke the truth when she read your cards. I am your soulmate. You are my other half. We belong together."

Her heart pounded. One part of her believed him, but the other was just so angry he'd lied and used her she didn't know what to think. "I know she said I would have to make a decision."

"You made the decision the moment you gave yourself to me."

"The decision I made was to have sex with you," she said, anger in every word. "And then I chose to get to know you better." She gave a short laugh. "You can see how that turned out."

"Dawn—"

"But I didn't make," she interrupted him; "any decision that said you could drink my blood or make me your familiar. That you made all on your own."

Guilt stirred again. "I'm sorry. Forgive me. Please you have to believe me. I know I made a mistake in not telling you everything."

She nodded. "Yes, you did." Turning, she walked over to her closet and grabbing a dress off a hanger, she jerked it on.

Aidan frowned. "What are you doing?"

"I'd ask you to leave, but you'd die in the sunlight...wouldn't you?"

His jaw clenched. "Yes...but we are not finished discussing this yet."

She gave a little snort as she slid into her shoes. "You might not be, but I am." She faced him. "You lied to me, Aidan. You used me. How can I forgive that?"

Panic crawled up his spine. "You can't just walk away from me." Two long strides brought him to her. He grabbed her by the arms. "We are connected. I've marked you as my own."

She pushed at his hard chest, but it was like trying to move a mountain. "Let go. I belong to myself and I don't want to be around you anymore."

Swearing, he pulled her hard against him. "I will not let you go." He gave her a little shake in frustration. "I love you, Dawn."

She gave a sob. How she wished she could believe him. "Sure you do. How convenient. You love me so much you have deceived me with who and what you are."

His lips tightened. "I have never said I love you to any woman before. Don't you dare throw it back at me."

Her heart was breaking. She could hear the pieces falling to the ground around her. She couldn't believe him. She wouldn't put herself through it again. "If you had told me the truth, we might have salvaged something. You being a vampire is weird, no doubt,

but..." She bit her lip and forced her eyes to meet his. "I...I loved you and I would have done anything to be with you."

His hands tightened at her words. She loved him, too! "Then we can make it work. You love me and I love you."

She shook her head sadly. "*If* you loved me, maybe...but I don't believe you do. You don't lie to someone you love."

Aidan groaned. "Damn it. You have to believe me. I do love you. So much that I refused to feed while you were gone." He gave her another shake. "Aithne offered, but I couldn't stomach the thought of touching anyone else but you."

Something in her thrilled at his words, but then her heart hardened. "It's too late. I can't trust you"

"It's not too late!" he growled. "I told you, I won't let you go!" With that, his mouth swooped down on hers in a kiss that was totally possessive. He held her tightly against him, so she could feel every aroused inch of his naked body through her thin summer dress. She struggled, as much against her feelings, as against his grasp.

Finally, she tore her mouth away. "Please Adian," she begged. "Don't do this. I want to leave."

He gave a throaty laugh and with one hand he palmed her breast, feeling her hardened nipple beneath his fingers. "No you don't...not really."

Dawn couldn't move, she was caught so tightly against him. Tears welled in her eyes and trickled down her cheeks. She had to get away quickly, or he would be able to seduce her all over again. Suddenly she remembered.

"Palette," she whispered.

He froze in the process of unbuttoning her dress. His jaw clenched as he stared down at the woman in his arms.

"Palette," she sobbed. "You said it was my safe word. You promised you would stop what you were doing if I said it. So I am. Palette. Palette. Palette."

Aidan didn't trust himself to move. He'd never been so angry before in his long lifetime. He just looked at Dawn with incredulous eyes.

"You promised," she whispered. She began to tremble in his arms, torn between wishing he would fight her and wanting him to let her go.

Suddenly, Aidan saw it was over. Either way he would lose. If he forced her, he'd break any trust he might have left. If he let her go, she'd walk away from him, forever. There was no way to win.

He forced his body to relax. Then he dropped his arms and took a deliberate step backwards. He knew he'd die if she walked out the door, but he had to keep his word. He couldn't lie to her again.

"I love you, Dawn," he whispered. He lifted his hand and traced a finger down her cheek. "Forever."

More tears spilled down her cheeks. She muffled the sobs with the backside of her hand as she backed toward the door. When she got there, she swallowed once.

"I want you gone with the dark. Don't come back. Just leave me alone." With that final ultimatum, she turned and hurried out the door.

It was much later when Aidan finally moved from the frozen position she had left him in. It was as if all the life in him had fled with Dawn. Slowly, he moved around the loft, looking for the clothes he'd discarded the night before.

As he pulled on his pants, he happened to glance into the workroom where Dawn kept her sculptures. In a daze, he walked into the room, glad the curtains were thick enough to keep most of the light out. He could feel it, but it didn't burn him.

He moved among the art pieces, awed by her talent. Again, guilt stabbed at him. She asked him so often to come see her work, but he'd been afraid something would happen to expose him, so he'd made excuses. She'd been unable to share the most important part of her life with him, because of his fear and selfishness.

He touched the bust of a pelican, its mouth open wide for a fisherman's treat. For the first time he realized what he had done. He couldn't blame her for walking away from him. He'd justified it to himself, but he had lied and deceived her, just as she had accused him.

His attention was caught by a half-covered piece that stood nearest the window. Gingerly he made his way to it and pulled the soft cloth from the wood. His breath caught in his throat as he saw his likeness carved in the wood.

Was that the way she saw him? He looked like a God, his arms stretched to the sky, his face so noble and proud. Every line of his body was lovingly carved, the detail extraordinary.

He gave a bitter laugh. No wonder she was disappointed in him. She'd thought he was a hero. A man she could be proud of. Instead she had discovered not only did he have feet of clay...he wasn't a man at all.

Dawn entered the loft half hoping Aidan would have ignored her demand and stayed there waiting for her. But as soon as she walked in, she knew he was gone. His presence, that bit of excitement she always felt with him, had disappeared.

She went straight to the bathroom and pulling off the dress, jumped immediately into the shower. She'd done nothing but walk all day on the beach, staring out at the sea. As she washed the sand and the salt from her body, she still couldn't grasp exactly what had happened.

After her shower, as she toweled off, she stared at her neck in the mirror. The marks she'd seen that morning were completely gone...part of the spell he'd placed on her. Her heart broke again. She didn't care so much he was a vampire. What she did care about was she couldn't trust him. If only he'd told her...then everything could have been different.

She closed her mind off to those thoughts and made her way to the kitchen. She was starving and she knew she needed to eat. As she passed her workroom, she noticed Aidan's statue was uncovered. She frowned. Hadn't she covered it up before he arrived last night?

As she went to it, she wondered if she should destroy it. It was her best work, but it was based on a lie. Could she handle seeing it, knowing what it represented? Would she ever be able to sell it, knowing how she felt about the man it was modeled after?

Her hand froze in the process of picking up the cloth cover. Slowly she picked up instead, the handwritten note that leaned against the statue.

Dearest Dawn,

I wish I could be holding you now, telling you of my love, instead of writing it. When I came into your workroom and saw your talent, I finally realized how wrong I was in what I did to you.

I didn't think about anyone but myself when I enthralled you and marked you as my own. Not because I loved you, though I do with my whole heart, but because I was so afraid you would think me some sort of freak or monster. I didn't give you credit enough. Maybe if I had known you loved me too...but that is beside the point.

I didn't trust you and so I deceived you. I'm sorry. What I did was inexcusable. I took away your right to decide and did it for you.

I don't blame you for sending me away. I do deserve to be damned for what I did. But know this. For as long as I have breath, I will love you. Whether I ever see your beautiful face again, or touch your sweet lips, I will remember you. And if you can ever forgive me my foolishness, I will be waiting.

Yours always,

Aidan

Dawn stood for a long time staring at the statue, the note crumpled in her hand. She didn't have any idea what she should do.

Ten long days later, she stood in front of 'Don't Spank the Vamp'. She stared up at the storefront remembering the day she had first walked through the door. She had thought then her life would change...and she'd been right.

She was in love with Aidan. And Aidan was a vampire. Neither of those facts bothered her much. The ten days away from him had made her realize she loved him

enough to forgive the deception of the past. As long as she had a future with him, it was all she wanted.

And... if letting him drink her blood gave her a kind of eternal life...then that was just the cherry on top.

She hitched the large backpack over one shoulder. She would forgive him all right, but it would be on her terms.

Taking a deep breath, she pushed through the door and into the shop. Her heart speeded up. Soon she would be with the man she loved and everything would be okay.

As her eyes adjusted to the gloom, she noticed immediately something was wrong. The bright cheery displays of stock were all knocked down and the jars of herbs were open and spilled onto the counter. Dawn looked around in alarm. Had the store been broken into?

She heard the tinkling of bells in the back room. Quickly she pushed through the scarves. "Hello?"

"What do you want?" Aithne's cold voice gave notice she wasn't happy to see her.

Dawn looked at her. Aithne was disheveled and tired looking with red-rimmed eyes and a pale drawn look to her.

"I've come to see Aidan."

"Why?"

She thought about telling her it wasn't any of her business. She even pondered the idea of telling Aithne to leave, but she knew she couldn't. This was Aidan's sister and the one who had kept him alive all those years he had been waiting for her. In the end, she just told her the truth.

"Because I love him."

Aithne closed her eyes. Relief bloomed on her tired face. "Thank the Goddess. You almost left it till too late."

Dawn's heart stopped in her chest. "What are you talking about?"

The dark woman shook her head wearily. "He has refused to eat. He wouldn't take any nourishment from me or anything else. He's running out of time."

"I don't understand."

Aithne touched her hand. "He hasn't eaten since you left him. He's starving. If you don't go to him soon...he will die."

Chapter Seven

Dawn's hand flew to her mouth. "Oh God...no!" This couldn't be happening. "I swear...I didn't know he'd starve himself. I thought he'd go back to you."

Aithne shrugged. "When he told me what had happened, I did offer. But he refused." She stared at Dawn with dark tortured eyes. "I think he was trying to punish himself for deceiving you."

"It can't be too late," Dawn cried. She grabbed Aithne's hand. "Is he upstairs?"

"Yes. Go to him." She smiled and put her hand on Dawn's. "I know you love him. And I know you've made the right decision. He does love you."

Dawn blinked away tears. "I know. I think I always did. I just had to think things through."

Aithne chuckled. "You are both too stubborn for your own good." She leaned over and kissed Dawn on the cheeks, the same way she'd done the first day they'd met. "Blessed be, little sister. Take good care of him."

"I will," she promised. Her heart and mind were already on the man upstairs. "I promise."

"Then go. And be happy."

Dawn didn't need a second invitation. She grabbed the bag and ran up to Aidan's apartment. She didn't even knock but entered immediately. The room smelled musty, as if it hadn't been used in a long while. It had the odor of dead leaves in the fall.

Her heart pounded in sudden fear. Was she too late? Dropping the bag, she ran into Aidan's bedroom.

There he lay, sprawled out naked on the bed. Tears filled her eyes. He was noticeably thinner. He was so limp for a moment Dawn thought she hadn't arrived in time.

Then he moaned and she heard him call her name. Wiping away the tears, she climbed onto the bed and lay down beside him.

"I'm here, Aidan," she whispered to him. "I've come back to you."

There was no response and she bit her lip in sudden fear. She grabbed his shoulders and shook him. "Aidan..." she called. Wake up."

Another groan shook him. "Don't leave me, Dawn. Please.... I love you."

Dawn laid her head on his chest. Had her absence done this? Was he was delirious from hunger? She thought for a minute and an idea popped into her head.

Lying back down, she tugged at him so he was lying partially on top of her, his face buried in her neck. Pulling her hair out of the way, she bared her neck to him, moving his mouth so it rested right on her pulsing vein. "I'm here," she said again. She rubbed her neck against his mouth and prayed nature would take its course.

He groaned again and after a few long moments, she felt his tongue snake out and touch her warm flesh. "Yes," she encouraged. She pulled his head closer. "Drink. I know you need me."

When nothing happened, she began to weep. "Please, Aidan. Feed. You'll die if you don't. Please." She rubbed herself against him again. "I love you, Aidan. I love you."

It was as if those final words broke through his consciousness. He groaned again and she felt his teeth lengthen against her. "Yes," she cried in excitement. "That's it. Feed."

Without warning, he bit down, piercing her throat. She cried out in agony, but she didn't push him away. On the contrary, she pulled him even closer, exulting in the fact he was finally doing what was needed. "I love you," she whispered again.

Aidan wondered if he was dreaming. He had wanted Dawn so many times before only to be disappointed, he didn't quite believe she was here now. He'd been so low, so sunk in misery he was barely conscious. Oh, he wasn't really trying to kill himself, but the thought of touching anyone else, even Aithne, made him sick.

So he put it off as long as he could, hoping beyond hope Dawn would forgive him and come back. It wasn't until he actually felt her next to him that he realized how far gone he really was.

He tried to control the bite, but he was too weak to even take away her pain. His tears mingled with hers as he sucked down the life giving blood.

She crooned to him as he felt himself gaining strength. It would be many days before he was back to full health, but it didn't matter. His weakened arms shakily encircled her. All he needed was right here.

They held each other even after he finished feeding. He fell asleep in her arms, the first natural rest he'd gotten in ten days. Dawn smiled as she held him. Finally, all was right with her world.

They stayed that way all that night and the next day. Dawn gave herself fully to him, allowing him to feed as he needed to. She didn't care if it weakened her. All she wanted was him to get back to the old Aidan she knew and...loved.

But he was very careful with her, refusing to take too much. He instinctively seemed to know the amount of blood he needed to gain his strength back. As he grew stronger, he began to give back to her what he'd been given. Not blood...but love.

As he fed, he would touch her, loving her with long strokes of his hands. He wanted to show her just how much he cared for her, for the fact she loved him enough, trusted him enough to give herself into his hands.

Finally, he was satiated enough to roll onto his back. He pulled her against his chest. "I missed you."

She kissed his shoulder. "You stubborn idiot. Why wouldn't you let Aithne feed you?"

His arms tightened around her and he sighed. "I couldn't bear the thought. But I would have...eventually." He sighed again. "I think."

She rolled her eyes at him. "Idiot."

He grinned and rolled her over so he was over the top of her. Then his face changed and he looked almost...vulnerable. "I wasn't sure you would come to me. What I did..."

She shushed him by putting a finger over his mouth. "I forgive you. If I didn't, I wouldn't be here now."

His eyes were suspiciously bright. "I love you."

She reached up and kissed him. "And I love you. Enough to be with you for as long as you want me."

Aidan's eyes flared a hot green. "How does forever sound?"

A single tear trickled down her cheek. "Only perfect."

"It will be forever," he warned. "You won't grow old. As long as we are together, you will stay this age."

She giggled. "Great perks. A gorgeous hunk to love and eternal youth. What more could a girl want?"

Laughing, he lifted her into his arms. He barely noticed the weight, even though he wasn't at full strength. "After two days of sleeping with a man who hasn't taken a bath in a week, how about a shower?"

She looped her arms around his neck. "I could go for that." Her eyes were filled with mischief as she sniffed delicately. "You do smell a little gamey."

He chuckled. "How I missed that quick wit." He set her down in front of the shower and his eyes darkened. "Among other things."

Dawn grinned up at him. "You must be feeling better."

"Oh, I think I can hold my own," he drawled as he pulled her tank top over her head. At the sight of her naked breasts, his own body reacted predictably. She gave a hum of appreciation and reaching out wrapped her fingers around his erect shaft.

He swallowed, hard. "Easy, love. I don't have the control, I'd like."

"I'd like it if you were out of control." She moved her hand, stroking his hard length up and down. "Then I'd know it's real."

"It's real," he said hoarsely. He cupped her breasts in his hands, then bent and kissed each tip. "I want you more than anything else in this world."

Dawn squeezed him gently. A drop of pre-cum appeared on the tip of his cock and he groaned. "Then show me, Aidan." She used her thumb to smear the droplet over the mushroom shaped head. "It's been forever since you touched me."

The touch of her hand almost sent him over the edge. Swallowing, he reached in and turned the shower on before he finished stripping her. Then he lifted her naked body inside.

He held her against him as the warm water beat down on them. His hands massaged through her hair and she moaned in appreciation. She purred under his ministrations as her own temperature rose higher.

Her hands smoothed up and down his hard back. He was still a little thin, but she could still feel his muscles ripple as he moved. She kissed his chest, letting her tongue swirl around his masculine nipples. His body hardened under her touch and his hands tightened in her hair.

Pulling her head back, he fastened his mouth over hers as he plundered her lips. They both groaned. Their tongues danced and played, teasing and tasting. Then he lifted his head and nibbled. Her lips, her chin, then down her neck to the wet tips of her breasts.

He leaned her back over his arm and covered a breast with his mouth, sucking on it until she cried out his name. Her knees went weak and he switched breasts, treating the other side to the same arousing sensations as he braced her back against the wall of the shower.

Steam rose around them, swirling into curls around their heads as they panted in the heat. Dawn put her hands on his shoulders and when he hitched her up to his waist, she moaned as his hard cock pressed against her soft nether lips.

"I can't wait," he gritted out. His green eyes burned into hers. "I need you every way I can get you."

She reached down and bit his bottom lip. "Then do it," she murmured. "But I get to play my way later."

He growled his acquiescence. He would have agreed to anything she wanted just to get inside of her. He spread her legs wide and guided the head of his penis into her heat. They both groaned at the feeling.

He bent and covered her mouth with his as he slowly pushed inside her. The memory of him inside her made the reality that much better and her yoni tightened around him.

Aidan hissed, gritting his teeth at the movement of her body. His cock throbbed as he began to move in and out of her. A sensuous, loving dance that made their bodies

tingle and their hearts pound in harmony. His need for her grew too great for him to master and soon he pounded against her in a frenzy of need.

Dawn cried out again, wrapping herself around him. Her clit rubbed against his thrusting cock and it wasn't long before the familiar feeling of heat rippled through her. She moved with him, letting herself go completely as the first waves of her climax poured through her.

He felt the convulsions start. Felt her begin to dissolve around them. He kissed her hard and then pushed the hair off her neck. He licked his mark that glowed like the sun in the soft light of the bathroom. "I'm hungry, love," he whispered. "Will you give all to me?"

Dawn could barely talk she was so close to coming apart. But what she saw in his eyes showed her everything she needed to see. He loved her and she wanted to be his in every way. Closing her eyes, she tilted her head so he could have easy access to her throat.

His eyes glowed at her surrender. He waited until he felt the heat in his cock burn out of control. His orgasm merged with hers as they both screamed in ecstasy. At the last moment, Aidan bent his head to his lover's neck and gently speared his fangs into the pulsing vein.

She cried out, used to the slight pain now but this time he used his power to numb it. This time he wanted her to get the full feeling of what they could have together.

As their climax peaked, he sucked hard at her throat, sharing the erotic feel of her blood moving to him, with his lover. She moaned as her excitement increased and she pulled him even closer to her, giving him free rein to take anything from her he wanted.

They peaked a second time, their groans mingling in the steamy shower. When they were done, Aidan's strong legs were shaking and Dawn could barely move. Her head leaned weakly against his shoulder and he chuckled as he staggered out of the shower.

"I think I need a little bit more rest before we try that again." He wrapped a towel around Dawn and snatched another one for himself.

"It was wonderful," she sighed. Her legs were still so weak she couldn't walk.

"I can see the headlines now," he muttered as they both lurched toward the bed. "Man saved from starvation. Killed by sex. News at eleven."

Dawn giggled. "Yeah... but what a way to go!"

They fell on the bed, laughing madly. Aidan rolled with her so she was lying on his chest. He gently touched the wound on her neck. "Could you feel it this time?"

She smiled slowly. "I felt your pleasure. It was so arousing."

He grinned. "As it was for me."

"Will it always be like that?"

He pulled her against him and kissed her gently. "If you wish it to be. We are bonded now. When we love, we can feel each other's pleasure. All we have to do is open ourselves up."

Dawn yawned. "I wonder if we will tire each other out as we did this time."

Aidan arranged himself on the pillow, his eyes already heavy with sleep. "We are both weak from lack of blood and hunger. When we are fully recovered, we will not even notice any fatigue."

She snuggled herself even closer. "Good. Because next time we make love, it's my turn to pick the toys."

Aidan's eyes popped open and he stared in surprise at the woman in his arms. She was already asleep and sighing, he relaxed and closed his own again. Fleetinglly, he thought of the promise he'd made in the shower. He shrugged and pressed a good night kiss to the top of her wet hair.

He wasn't worried. He could handle anything she came up with.

The slight *snick* of handcuffs closing made Aidan jolt awake. His bleary eyes looked over at the pink fur handcuff around his left wrist and then up at the amused face of the woman who sat next to him.

"Good evening," she smiled. Dawn trailed a hand down his naked chest to the waistband of the gray silk boxers he'd put on while she was gone. She'd left him sleeping that morning and headed back to her loft to work for a while. Full of energy after their time together, she completed the statue of Aidan and started on another work

inspired by him. Two figures, tangled together in the throes of passion...appropriately entitled *Lover's Embrace*...she knew it was another winner.

Then, as the sun began to disappear, she headed back to Aidan's apartment. She had plans for him tonight. Now, her mouth watered as she looked down at her lover. He made her juices flow and he didn't even have to touch her.

"Where were you?" His sleep-roughened voice stroked over her and made her shiver.

"I did some work," she replied. She reached around to the side table and uncovered the statue she'd brought back with her. "What do you think?"

Aidan stared at the figure. It was completed and if he had thought it beautiful work before, now she had totally surpassed herself. His features were so detailed and finely carved he expected to see himself take a breath. The mahogany was polished to a high gleam and it made the statue look as if it was glowing with life and health.

His eyebrow rose as he looked at the figure's well-endowed genitals. "I think you flatter me, love."

Dawn traced her finger down the statue's body, lingering on the upright cock. "I don't think so. After all, I have first hand knowledge of how it feels and looks."

He felt his face heat. "And what do you plan to do with this?"

She grinned at his discomfiture. "I did have a buyer." When his eyebrows lifted even further, she laughed aloud. "But I told him no." She leaned down and kissed him lingeringly. "This was a private commission."

He cupped her face in one large hand. "As pleased as I am you are beginning to be noticed in the art world, I'm glad this particular piece will stay in my private collection." He looked again at the figure's carved shaft. "I find it slightly...intimidating."

Dawn giggled. "No need for that, my darling. I have everything in perfect proportion." She cupped him through the silk boxers. "I know exactly what I'm doing."

Aidan's eyes darkened at her bold touch. He reached up to pull her down but his attention was caught by the forgotten handcuffs. Amused eyes met hers. "Just what *are* you doing, love?"

Dawn giggled. "Making sure you keep your promise. My turn to choose our play toys. Remember?"

He groaned as he remembered his hastily made promise of the night before. "You took advantage of me in a vulnerable moment," he accused jokingly.

She nodded. "Yup...and I fully intend on making you keep it." She leaned over him until the tips of her covered breasts touched his naked chest. "Do you trust me, Aidan?"

His mouth went dry at what he saw in her eyes. Desire, need and for the first time he recognized...love. It was a potent combination. He swallowed, hard. His already erect cock went even harder.

"Yes," he whispered. "I love you."

Her smile was slow and full of sultry promise when she kissed him. "Then sit up and let the games begin."

Chuckling, Aidan did so. Dawn took his handcuffed arm and raised it over his head, latching the other cuff to one of the ropes that hung from the top of the four-poster bed. Then she took a second pair of the fluffy cuffs and imprisoned his other wrist, fastening it to the other side of the four-poster.

He tested them carefully. It was slightly uncomfortable sitting down, so Aidan moved so he was kneeling on his haunches. He faced the footboard, about two-thirds of the way down the bed.

"I knew those ropes would come in handy," he quipped. She blushed. He'd tied her up on more than one occasion. He watched her with eyes that burned, already aroused and she hadn't done anything yet.

"I have a few things to try," she murmured. "Some of the presents Sam bought me that first day. I never had a chance to try them out."

"I am a most willing guinea pig," he teased.

Dawn rummaged in a bag that sat next to the bed. When she pulled out her first treasure, she giggled like a schoolgirl. She shook her head. "I don't think you will need this." She held up the banded cock ring her friends had teased her with. She looked down at the erection that tented out his boxers. "I think it's too late." She reached down, encircling his cock with her hand through the silk. "And unnecessary."

Giggling, she tossed the ring over her shoulder. It landed on the statue of Aidan, circling his wooden cock like a ring on a carnival game.

They both laughed. "That's as close to me as you'll ever get one of those things," he growled. He pulled on the ropes. "I don't need the extra stamina."

"That's true...you don't," she grinned. She moved her hand up and down his silk covered penis. "You are more than enough for me."

Heat shot through him. "Dawn..."

"Oh...we're just getting started." She reached down and separated the silk fly of his shorts so his erection thrust proudly through. Then she reached down into the bag again, this time pulling out a small vial of liquid.

"What's that?"

She poured a small amount into her hands. "Oh...you'll like this. I guarantee it" She reached down and enveloped his thrusting cock in her hands, smearing the fluid from the tip of his head to the hard turgid sack that tightened even more at her touch.

He groaned, just at the touch of her hands. Then, as she massaged the fragrant oil into his shaft, he felt a tingling sensation. It built steadily, until his whole cock was on fire. He throbbed with the need to come and come hard.

"What the hell is that?" he gritted out. He thrust himself hard against her hands.

Dawn smiled. "It's a cinnamon cock rub. Stimulates the senses." She bent and licked the head of his shaft and he groaned louder. "And it's flavored, too!"

Aidan pulled hard on one of the ropes. He wanted to sweep her under him and plunge his hot cock into her. He desperately needed to feel her around him. "Dawn, please."

She crawled up onto the bed in front of him and ran her hands down his hard chest. Leftover heat from the lotion touched his skin. She pressed her body against his, feeling him throb around her. Taking his earlobe between her teeth, she nibbled gently. "I'm going to do to you, what you did to me. I want you to come so many times...you won't be able to stand up afterwards."

Chapter Eight

Desire shot through Aidan at her words. He pulled hard on the ropes again. "Dawn, we don't have to do this."

"My love," she giggled as she kissed down his body to his masculine nipples. "You are just learning the lesson of delayed gratification."

He narrowed his eyes as she threw his own words back at him. "I will get you for this."

"I can only hope," she purred. She continued to lick and kiss his chest until he was groaning her name. Then she licked down his front to the indentation in his belly. There, she stopped and bit down gently. His cock jumped and bumped her on the chin.

"Sweet Jesus," he bit out. "You're going to kill me."

She bit down hard and then licked it in apology. "You need a safe word, Aidan."

He froze. "I need a safe word?"

She grinned and bit him again. "You taught me that. If I go too far, you will have your safe word and I'll stop."

He chuckled. What could she do to him that would require a safe word? But she was so earnest he didn't hesitate. "Statue," he said glancing at his likeness beside the bed.

Dawn nodded. "All right. Statue it is. If at anytime you can't handle what I'm doing, say the safe word and I'll stop."

Aidan laughed. He forgot the word immediately...sure he'd never say it. "Get on with it, woman. I want to see you make me scream."

She raised her eyebrow. He wouldn't be so arrogant when she was finished with him. She leaned down and took him in her mouth in a rapid movement that had him hissing in surprise. Remembering he had wanted to fuck her mouth, she let him thrust in and out of her lips, controlling him with an instinctive skill that surprised them both.

The heat from her mouth combined with the fire from the oil, brought Aidan to the edge very quickly. His balls tightened and he thrust deep into her mouth. He groaned and swore at her when she rolled away from him. His cock throbbed with unspent need.

"Dawn," he growled. He jerked at the handcuffs. "I want you, now."

She laughed, low in her throat. "Now, now Aidan. Where is that perfect control you always have? I swear, sometimes you are so controlled I could shoot you. All I want to do is scream at how you make me feel and you just sit there and laugh." She stepped away and stood in front of him at the foot of the bed.

Her eyes looked at him where he knelt, his arms cuffed to the wood at the top of his bed, his cock thrusting out of his boxer shorts. "So now, it's my turn. I want to make you lose control."

His heart beat faster at her words. "Me, losing control is not a good thing, love. I won't allow it."

She smiled. "We'll see." Her hands went to her waist and she slowly untied the waistband to the coat she was wearing. Holding his eyes, she licked her lips and then in one movement, she opened the coat and let it fall to the floor.

Aidan jerked hard on the cuffs as he instinctively tried to reach out to her. He moaned low in his throat. She just might succeed in killing him.

She was dressed in a maroon and black bustier that hugged her breasts, pushing them up so well he could just see a hint of the rosy nipples at the bodice. The sheer lace of the garment gave him an enticing peek at the flesh beneath. The edges were touched with tiny black bows and attached to a silky black stocking with a maroon and black lace garter.

"Like what you see?" she purred. She turned, allowing him to see the matching thong panties. When he groaned again, she smiled. Slowly, she ran her hands over her body; cupping her breasts before smoothing down her hips to her silky thighs. Facing partially away from him, she bent over, spreading her legs so he could see that the thong was crotchless. Her shaved lips glistened with wetness, showing him her need for him.

"Let me go," he growled, jerking on the ropes. "I want to touch you."

Dawn crawled up over the foot of the bed, her breasts spilling enticingly from the bustier. "What If I touched myself for you?"

His mouth dried up and his eyes widened as she cupped her exposed breasts and rubbed her thumbs over the hardened tips. When she threw back her head and moaned, his cock throbbed with desire so hot he could barely stand it.

She moved forward, coming so close to him, he could smell her heat and arousal. He pulled on the cuffs again, thinking for the first time that just maybe, he'd outsmarted himself.

His tongue almost fell out of his mouth when she ran her hand down her body and parted her nether lips. She inserted a finger into her moist yoni, working it in and out several times, before pulling it out and then extending it to him.

"Want to taste?" she inquired throatily.

Aidan's entire body reacted. He leaned towards her as far as his bonds would allow. Opening his mouth, he sucked the extended fingers into his mouth, nibbling and tasting her heat and essence. He longed to be free. To press his face into her and suck up the juices he knew were there. His teeth even tried to lengthen.

Dawn knew he was aroused. His cock was bigger and harder than she'd ever seen it and his eyes were glowing in the low light of the room. She was as aroused as he. To see him kneeling there in an agony of desire was so hot she didn't want it to end.

Sighing, she knew it couldn't continue forever. Neither of them could stand it. But she still had a promise to keep. She had promised to make him scream and come over and over again. And she knew just how to do it.

Coming up next to him, she hooked her thumbs into his boxers and eased them off his hips. She could tell he thought she was done with him and struggled not to laugh. Once the shorts were off, she pressed her body to his and ran her hands over him.

"You are so beautiful," she breathed. "I love to see you this way. Hard, naked and mine." She reached down, pulled something else out of the bag, and set it behind him.

"I think you will like this." She fondled his naked ass, running her fingers up and down the crease, until he shuddered beneath her touch. Then gently, she separated his cheeks and found the small puckered hole.

"Dawn? What are you about?" he asked hoarsely. He didn't pull away, but helped her by leaning forward.

"I read about this toy," she murmured. "I know I loved it when you used the plug on me. I thought you might like this."

He felt the gentle touch of her fingers around the hole. He groaned as the now familiar scent and feel of the cinnamon rub coated his opening. Then he jumped when he felt a small circular object push inside. She gave him a moment to get used to the feeling, before inserting a second one.

His lust flared hotter when he recognized what she was doing. "Anal beads?" he moaned. She nodded against his chest as she carefully put in a couple more.

"Give them a minute," she whispered. "With the cock rub, you should be heating up pretty fast."

Aidan shook his head dizzily. He was so hard, he ached. The tendrils of sensation from the rub along with the feeling of the balls in his ass were close to driving him crazy. His cock throbbed and jerked and he could feel trails of pre cum slide down his stomach.

"Please, Dawn," he groaned. He tried to rub his cock against her, against the bed, against anything, but he couldn't move. He felt the beginnings of a climax start low in his balls and he growled.

She smiled. She moved so she could reach where she needed. She leaned her face against his neck and bit down gently. "Do you want to come, Aidan?"

He pushed his body against hers demandingly. "Let me come, damn it. I'm going to explode."

She grinned against his neck and bit him again. Reaching down, she took his cock in one hand and the string of beads in the other. Moving in a careful rhythm, she began to stroke him at the same time she twisted and pulled on the beads.

Aidan jerked at the wave of heat and sensation that flowed through him. The low pulse of need in his balls flared into a lightning ball of red-hot lust. He pulled at the bonds that held him, but she wouldn't release him. He fought it, but suddenly he erupted. He arched against her as her mouth bit down hard on his shoulder, adding to his climax. His seed shot over the side of the bed as he shuddered again and again.

Finally, he drooped against his bonds, his head hanging low on his chest. He drew in deep breaths of air, trying to get rid of the dizziness he felt. He felt her move away and not long after, a warm cloth cleansed his loins.

He shivered with left over need, but wasn't prepared when Dawn took his semi-swollen shaft into her mouth. She sucked on him, circling his cock with her tongue and he moaned.

"Dawn," he muttered. "Let me love you."

She shook her head, drawing him deeper into her mouth. It was clear she wasn't done torturing him just yet. His shaft hardened again quickly. His vampire stamina was coming in handy now.

She sucked and nibbled enjoying the taste and feel of him in her mouth. When he was thrusting against her again and moaning deep in his throat, she pulled away enough to ask hoarsely. "Do you want to come in my mouth?"

Aidan gritted his teeth as another shot of heat went straight to his loins. "I want to, yes. But I want to be inside you even more."

Smiling up at him, she bent and licked his cock. "We have all night for that. And I have one more toy to use on you." She licked at him again. "So let me taste you. Let me taste all of you."

He could no more have said no, then walk in the daylight. When she took him in again, he let go and did what he'd always wanted to do. He fucked her mouth, deep and long. He drove himself as far in as she would allow and then pulled out, feeling the suction of her mouth and the teasing flick of her tongue.

It wasn't long before his balls tightened and that thrill of pain-pleasure raced up the underside of his cock. He groaned loudly. She didn't pull away, but held him tighter as she sucked and swirled and tasted him. One hand reached down and gently squeezed the turgid sacks of his balls.

That was all it took. Shouting her name, he thrust his groin against her. His cock touched the back of her throat as he came again, pouring himself into her mouth.

Dawn swallowed frantically. Even though he'd come before, he filled her mouth with the salty liquid as he shuddered against her. She sat before him taking it all in, before she gently pulled off him, licking away the last of the jism on her lips.

"Come here," he panted roughly. When she came to him, he covered her lips with his own, giving her a kiss that told her exactly how much he loved her and loved what she was doing to him. He could taste himself on her lips and that aroused him all over again.

He stared down at his twitching member in fascinated wonder. "Aren't you done yet?"

Dawn giggled. "I hope it's not, 'cause there is still more to come."

He groaned. "Love, you are going to kill me. Vampires have stamina, yes...but more?"

"I want more," she whispered wrapping her arms around his bound body. "I have that other toy I told you about." She kissed him again, starting at his mouth and working her way down his body. His cock reacted immediately. She moved around behind him, gently kissing down his strong back to where she could nip at his hips and bare butt.

She pulled the last of the beads from his behind, causing him to shudder in reaction. She tossed them onto the floor then bent to grab the last toy from the bag.

He shuddered again as he felt her drag something cool and heavy down his back and across his buttocks. At the same time, she dropped heated kisses on his shoulders and back, nipping at the soft flesh of his underarms.

"Dawn..." he growled, arching his back at her. His cock was again twitching in need. "Let me go, so I can love you properly."

The cool object caressed his butt. "You *are* loving me properly. You're letting me have my way with you."

He gave another halfhearted tug on the ropes. Damn it, Dawn."

Her eyes flashed and her yoni wept in need of him. But she wasn't done yet. She wanted him to lose complete control, just once. She bent close to whisper in his ear. "Are you ready?"

His heart pounded. Not knowing what she would do next was just as arousing as when he did it to her. Not trusting his voice, he just nodded.

Dawn smiled. She lifted the oblong paddle she'd been teasing him with and ran it gently between his butt cheeks. "Lean forward."

When he did so, she bent and kissed each cheek as if in forgiveness for what she would do next. The she pulled back her arm and with a controlled move, swatted Aidan hard on the ass.

Aidan jerked against the ropes. His shock at what was happening was so great, he didn't say anything. Again, the paddle came down on him, this time leaving a red welt on his cheek. It shocked him out of his silence.

"Dawn!" he roared. He glared back over his shoulder. "What are you doing?"

She grinned at him, fully enjoying his reaction. "You spanked me. Now I'm spanking you." She let him have it with another hard swat.

Lights danced behind Aidan's eyes. His cock went from hard flesh to stone in seconds. Lust swept through him with the strength of a tornado. His teeth lengthened and his muscles bulged. She had no idea what she was doing to him.

She ran her hand down his back to where she'd marked him. She leaned up close and whispered in his ear.

"I want you to fuck me when I'm done spanking you. But I want to make you scream my name first."

"Dawn," he warned in a guttural voice. He tried desperately to remember his safe word. Not for his sake, but for hers. He shook his head. Had he known what she was thinking, he would have been more careful. Damn it...what was the word?

He jerked and growled when another smack came his way. His whole body throbbed in reaction and he struggled to maintain control of himself, but it was almost gone.

When she spanked him one last time, down low across his lower butt, he lost it. Roaring her name, he gave a mighty heave on the restraints that held him. The ropes and cuffs held, but the wood above the bed, splintered like matchsticks, falling all around them. Just like that... he was free.

He turned on her, his eyes glowing like emerald suns as he stalked her across the bed. His cock was red and hungry as he pushed her down on the bed.

"Aidan?" Her eyes were wide with awe and a little fear.

With one sweep of his hand, he ripped the bustier and panties from her heated body. He didn't speak when he flipped her over on her stomach, growling fiercely when

she tried to wriggle away. With a single desperate motion, he kneed her legs open and thrust his cock deep inside of her.

She screamed. In joy, need, and lust. He didn't respond, just held her down with his big body and began plunging into her, his command over himself completely and totally gone.

Dawn caught her breath. It looked like she had finally got her wish. Aidan was out of control.

He thrust against her, grinding his cock into her yoni. She was so wet and so sensitive she dissolved immediately, her climax overwhelming her on just the first few moves of his body. But he didn't stop there. He thrust again and again, his cock swelling so large she thought he would split her open.

Dawn wept, going from orgasm to orgasm without any break in between. Aidan finally groaned and plunged deep inside her one last time. She felt his seed spurt all the way to her womb.

At the last moment, he grabbed her by the hair and jerked her head to the side. Her eyes widened when she saw his teeth had lengthened even longer than normal. He growled again and buried them deep in her neck.

She screamed and was amazed to realize it didn't hurt as much as aroused. She gasped when she felt him harden in her again, the taste of her blood turning him on even more. She knew something different had happened, but she didn't care. All she wanted was for him to make love to her.

When he removed his teeth from her neck, she twisted her body beneath him so they were face to face. Wrapping her legs around him, she surrendered to his ownership. His growl was deeper and even more possessive as he accepted her offering. This time their mating was slower, but the thrill of him moving inside her was just as explosive. Her climax curled in her stomach, before shooting through her so she screamed his name out.

Her climax triggered his own and he shuddered in feeling as he exploded deep within her again. He groaned and shook as he collapsed on top of her.

Afterwards, they just lay there together, feeling like human train wrecks.

"What just happened?" she whispered in a shaking voice.

Aidan stiffened, wondering if he'd frightened her right out of his life. He rolled carefully off her, pulling her into the curve of his arm.

"Remember when I told you I didn't want you to spank me that night I did you?"

Dawn nodded. "I remember."

"I didn't make myself clear that night. It wasn't that I didn't want you to spank me. It was you couldn't."

She frowned and hitched herself up on an elbow. "But why?"

"Dawn..." he said. "There is a reason the store is named '*Don't Spank the Vamp*'. Spanking isn't something that goes over well with vampires, especially male vampires. We...lose all control."

She gave an unladylike snort. "That I could see." She grinned and took his wrist where the pick cuffs and rope still hung. "You are very strong."

He frowned fiercely. "This bed is very strong and we destroyed it in less the ten minutes."

Tears filled her eyes. "I'm sorry."

"No, no." That's not what I meant. It can be easily repaired." He took her face in his hands. "What I couldn't bear was the thought of hurting you. You can't be replaced. God, Dawn...I could have killed you."

Suddenly, she understood his fear. It wasn't for himself, or even the stupid bed. He had been worried about her.

Her heart melted and she threw herself into his arms. "I'm sorry. I didn't know. I remember you said you'd tell me how the store got its name, but I didn't think about it. And that night you spanked me...I thought you were just worrying about my pleasure." She kissed him. "I promised myself that night I'd return the favor someday. I didn't know it was a bad thing."

"It's not your fault, love." He kissed her. "I should have explained."

"Then explain now...so I understand. Does spanking hurt you in a different way so that you instinctively fight against it?"

Red touched his rough hewed cheekbones. "Not exactly."

"Then what...exactly?"

He turned even redder. "I don't know if this is necessary—"

"Aidan!"

He sighed and gave in. "When a vampire is spanked, it doesn't hurt him more...it excites him more. In fact, the feelings are so pleasurable he can't think, can't act. All he can do is revert to his most primitive state. When I am like that, I have only one thing on my mind. All I want to do is fuck you."

Dawn stared at him with her mouth open. "So you're telling me it hurts so good you go primal on me?"

His lips twitched. "That's about right."

"And this should worry me...why?"

He rolled over and stared at her. "Dawn, I'm preternaturally strong. I could hurt you. When I'm in that state, I'm not in control of myself." He ran his hand through his tousled hair. "The fact is...most vampires try and stay away from toys of any kind. Too much stimulation."

"But...you don't. You own a store full of them."

He looked sheepish. "I've always enjoyed walking on the edge."

She shook her head. "You really are an idiot."

He blinked. "I beg your pardon?"

She rolled so she was leaning on his hard chest. "One of the biggest worries I've had since we were first together is you were always in such perfect control when we made love. Whenever *you* touched *me*, I went crazy."

He gave her a hard kiss. "And I love that about you. That my touch makes you wild."

"Then can't you understand I'd want the same?" She nodded as understanding dawned in his eyes. "Exactly. If it's a turn on for you...knowing I can make you go crazy is a turn on for me. But you were always in such command of yourself, that I felt...inadequate."

"The last thing you are is inadequate."

"Seeing you lose control after being spanked was so arousing for me. And for the first time, I knew you really wanted me."

Aidan shook his head in mock disgust. "Are you telling me I have to destroy furniture every time I want to convince you how much I want you?"

Dawn giggled. "Of course not. But I don't want you to be afraid to let go with me, either." She smoothed back his hair. "I love you and I enjoy every bit of our lovemaking together. I love trying new things with you."

His hand smoothed down her back. "And I love that you have become so adventurous. This evening's play was everything I hoped for with my mate. But as far as spanking goes...I don't know."

"Promise me, you'll give it a chance. You won't hurt me. You were a bit rough tonight, but it didn't hurt."

With a sweep of his arm, he pulled her back beneath him. "I love you, Dawn. The thought of hurting you, terrifies me."

"And the thought of exciting you out of control is so arousing, I get wet thinking about it."

Aidan's cock twitched and he swore in disbelief. "I can't believe it wants to play again."

"We have the rest of our lives to play together, Aidan. And if it wants another round, I can get the paddle."

He roared with laughter. Bending his head, he kissed her, lingering over her lips as if they were the tastiest dessert. "Then we will try again...but another day. Now I think I would prefer to love you slowly...carefully. I have put my mark on your body. Now let me imprint myself on your heart."

Her eyes caressed him. "I already belong to you, Aidan. I love you. Now and forever."

They kissed...each giving their heart into the other's keeping. As he moved to make her his one more time, she nibbled lightly on his ear. "But I have to tell you. I want to change the name of the store. The phrase '*Don't Spank the Vamp*' is going to go out of fashion very soon."

Epilogue

"Are you sure Aithne?" Aidan stared at his sister. "It doesn't have to be this way."

"He's right," Dawn whispered. Tears stood in her eyes. "This is your home. You don't have to leave it."

Aithne smiled gently at her brother and his new mate. She'd helped bring them together and knowing they were happy made her heart sing with joy. "I'm not leaving because I think you want me to go. I know you would be pleased if I were to make my home here with you two."

"We would," Aidan insisted. He touched his sister's cheek as his jaw worked fighting the emotion that threatened him. "I don't want you to go."

Dawn looked between the two of them. They were the opposite sides of the same dark coin. Anyone who looked at them would know they were brother and sister. "I don't want you to go either."

Aithne pulled the smaller woman into her embrace. "Little sister...I knew this time would come." She leaned back and looked into Dawn's hazel eyes. "After all this time my brother has found his twin flame. And that is a wonderful thing. But now..." she looked up at her brother's grim face. "Now it is time I found mine."

Aidan jerked as if he'd been struck. He hadn't thought of that. "Can't you find him here?"

"No...I knew as soon as I met Dawn my time here was coming to an end." She smiled at her sister-in-law without rancor. "You wouldn't need me any more and I would be able to find my own destiny."

"You are my only family," he whispered as he cupped her face in loving hands. She reached up and took him by the wrists.

"You have another family now. One you will be able to spend eternity with. Don't begrudge me the same."

Aidan blinked rapidly and then drew her against his chest. His emerald eyes gleamed with suppressed tears. "I don't. I know it's selfish of me to want you to stay."

"You will come back?" Dawn knew nothing they could say would keep Aithne here.

"Someday, I hope to. When I have found what I am searching for."

"You will always have a place here."

Aithne frowned. "No I won't. The first thing I want you to do is knock out the walls between the two apartments and make it into one big one. That way, Dawn can have her studio here and not have to drive across town."

Dawn's eyes gleamed in interest but then she immediately felt guilty. "I couldn't do that."

"You can," Aithne insisted. "In fact if you don't, I will never come back to visit. So there!"

Aidan rumbled out a laugh. "Little sister, you always know how to win an argument."

She smiled. "This one is easy. You two belong together. Making this apartment into a suitable home for both of you will be important. And you both are creative enough to do it."

Dawn laughed. "And you are stubborn enough to stay away until we do."

They all laughed. Then Aithne hugged each of them again. "I will miss you both. I have my cell, so I promise to call often."

"Everyday," Aidan insisted. He went red at the look his sister gave him. "At least for a while."

She chuckled. "All right." A honk of a taxi's horn was heard. "That's me." She hugged them both again. "Blessed be, my brother. Blessed be, little sister."

"To you, too," Dawn murmured, tears streaking down her cheeks. Aidan pulled her hard against him. They both watched as Aithne grabbed the single suitcase and carried it out to the taxi. A second later, she was gone.

"Oh Aidan...I feel so guilty." Dawn rubbed at teary eyes. "If I had never come—"

"Don't even think that," he interrupted hugging her close to him. "I know what you are going to say but...you are my destiny. You had to come. I needed you."

"And I needed you." She shook her head. "I'm just sorry her life had to change."

"Perhaps she wanted it to," Aidan mused.

"What do you mean?"

"She was my familiar for over a century. Her life was on hold because of mine. We had to be careful who we got close to. People look at you a little funny if you haven't aged in twenty years."

"I don't think I understand."

"Aithne never had a chance to get to know anyone. She was never able to fall in love. Maybe knowing I found my love, has freed her up to do the same."

Dawn's face cleared. She wrapped her arms around him. "She's going to have an adventure, isn't she? Now she can enjoy life because she doesn't have to worry about big brother any more."

Aidan pouted down at her, but his eyes twinkled. "You don't think being around me is enjoyable?"

Dawn put her finger to her chin as if in deep thought. "Hmmm, maybe we need to find out."

"And how do we do that?" the vampire growled. He pushed the worry for his sister to the back of his mind.

Darting away from him, she snatched up a wooden paddle that leaned against a display of BDSM toys. "Come on over here and I'll show you," she invited saucily.

Aidan's eyes heated. "So you want to play rough, eh?" He lunged at her and Dawn squealed. He caught her up and slung her over his shoulder as she giggled madly.

"You can paddle me first if you want," she offered. She caressed his butt with the paddle as he started up the stairs. "But I get to spank the vamp at least once tonight."

His only answer was a heart felt groan as he fell with her onto their bed. He loved her for trying to take his mind off his sister. She knew him well enough to realize losing Aithne was one of the toughest things he would ever have to go through.

But Aithne was right. Dawn was his family now and though he would always love his sister and treasure the memories they'd made together, Dawn was who he needed to be thinking about now. He never wanted her to feel guilty for coming into his life.

She'd changed it for the better and they had their whole lives ahead of them. He smiled as he took her sweet lips and showed her exactly how important she was to him.

So...the rest of the night the only worry they had was how to extend the pleasure they could wring from each other's body...with a paddle, or without it.