

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

*Titania
Ladley*

CURSE of the
Black Widow

An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



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Curse of the Black Widow

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CURSE OF THE BLACK WIDOW

Titania Ladley

Dedication

For all those readers who yearned to learn more of my Chameleon witches. Thank you so very much for your many emails and words of encouragement to expand on the colorful and fascinating breed of sorcerers first introduced in my Ellora's Cave Quickie, *Spell of the Chameleon*. I hope I have created characters that will fill your hearts and souls with the wondrous magic of love and the fires of passion. Oh the Coven entities, so let it be!

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Chapter One

"One of your former colleagues at the university down in Boston referred me to you." Olivia Templeton didn't wait for an invitation. She stepped across the threshold and pushed her way into the foyer of Dr. Seth Hayden's renovated seaside Cape Cod-style house. Her heels clicked on sleek wood flooring while the scent of new carpet and fresh paint filled her nostrils.

"Huh?" Seth's mouth had been hanging open since she'd seen him gawking at her through the intricate beveled glass of the front door. No doubt about it, here stood the renowned paranormal scientist. Olivia's internet search had turned up several photos of the boyishly handsome cocoa-brown-haired researcher.

As soon as he'd opened the door, his gaze had raked her body from head to toe. While standing there on his covered, wraparound porch in the chilly October night, she'd experienced an immediate zap of sexual heat that continued to fire off in her bloodstream.

And Olivia hadn't had her daily dose of orgasms yet...

She wore her trademark platinum-blond wig and dark sunglasses, as she always did while out in public. It had been a necessity since the start of what the media called "The Black Widow Templeton Investigation". They were highly familiar with her costume by now, but so far they'd been unable to locate any photos of her true likeness. She'd never gotten her driver's license, she didn't have a passport and she'd narrowly evaded arrest, so there were no pictures or mug shots to plaster on television. For now, no one but her lawyer and a few asshole cops in the downtown precinct knew what she looked like beneath all the garb. So Olivia was safe from the paparazzi vultures...for the time being.

"You heard me, Doctor." She tipped down her glasses and regarded him over the rim. Olivia noted every detail about him, from the striking blue-green of his eyes to the navy blue satin robe and bare feet. She slid the shades back up and pushed past him. "I've got a referral and I intend to use it. Now."

Seth pivoted while still gripping the doorknob, which caused an adorable lock of brown hair to sweep across his forehead. His dark eyebrows inched slowly upward. The shocked eyes rounded like a star-struck fan's might at first sight of their idol. "Holy shit, you're the Black Widow."

Olivia gasped, theatrically slapping her palm against her chest. "Really?"

He paused with an exaggerated blink. But quickly jolted back to reality, he shook his head and cleared away the stunned expression. "Funny. Real funny."

Her fake smile faded. She gritted her teeth together. "No, this isn't funny. Not when lives are at stake."

He barked out a sardonic laugh. "So you admit it."

A swift wave of scalding ire burned up her spine. She tried her best to suppress the angry trembling of her body but it didn't work. Olivia had always had a problem controlling her intense, volatile mood swings set off by the simplest stimuli. "No, damn you, I don't admit a fucking —"

The quaint chandelier dangling from the high entryway started to swing and flicker, cutting off her retort. "Shit, here we go again."

His gaze swung upward. He leaned his head outside when the fixture finally fizzled out. "Crap, all my equipment downstairs," he mumbled. "Is there a storm coming?"

"Yeah, it just barged right through your front door, big black cloud and all." Olivia folded her arms and allowed her purse to droop from the bend of her elbow. She took a deep breath, knowing if she didn't calm herself, she wouldn't get what she wanted.

Seth Hayden.

His gaze flitted erratically from his lamp-lit front veranda, to the burned-out light bulbs, to Olivia. The probing stare made her shiver and forget her irritation. One extreme emotion morphed into another, this one being desire. And by God, it seemed her pussy had taken on all the electricity the light fixture had just lost.

"You...do you realize you've got a bright rainbow of colors in your aura?" He stroked his chin thoughtfully. "All my life and in all my years of research, yours is the first I've ever seen around anyone. Usually it's just white, an occasional black or none at all."

Yay. Chalk me up another bizarre trait.

"Really?" Back came the annoyance. She shuffled her stilettos, tapping the toe of one to illustrate her impatience. Olivia well knew by her own research that he was rumored to have some special talents as well...curses, so to speak. She hoped they weren't as ominous as hers, and she prayed they went far beyond seeing colors. "And I thought *I* was weird."

His square unshaven jaw clamped shut with a snap. She could see the muscles twitching just above the prominent bone line. Something about it made her long to reach out and stroke his handsome face, scraping the dark, thick stubble across the sensitive flesh of her palm. Her fingertips tingled. She rubbed them against the silk of her blouse to erase the temptation.

"Excuse me, but..." He held his hand in the shape of a pistol, pointed his index finger at his temple and made an explosive gunshot sound through his clenched teeth. "Despite winning a Nobel Prize years ago, it appears I'm totally clueless, so I give up. Please do enlighten a curious, albeit *weird* scientist. Why have you just barged into my home in that silly get-up unannounced on a Tuesday night?"

"Silly get-up?"

He inclined his head, his lips twitched with humor. "Yeah, the bright wig and goggles some might call sunglasses – if they weren't so bug-eyed huge."

"Don't go for blondes, huh?"

Folding his arms over his chest, he drawled, "Don't go for fake. But since you asked, no, I prefer brunettes."

"Really?"

"Really." His faint grin vanished. He blew out a weary sigh. "Now damn it, answer my question. Why did you just burst into my home unannounced like that?"

"Because...I need you." She threw her words over her shoulder as she made her way across the foyer toward the welcoming great room at the rear of the house. Her footsteps echoed as she sauntered deep into his cozy lair. She did a quick scan. To the left, a fire blazed in a stone hearth embraced by overstuffed, green-plaid sofas and pine tables. The beamed cathedral ceiling peaked above a balcony with an open bonus room and two doors she assumed led into bedrooms. To her right the airy dining room and updated kitchen looked out over a rear deck onto the moon-glittered Atlantic Ocean.

Home. The word came to her before she could halt the thought. It nearly brought her to her knees and made her want to sob.

"You...um, need me?" He gulped, trailing right on her heels. She could sense his urge to reach out and cease her flight.

But Olivia had had enough. She wasn't stopping until the lifelong mysteries that surrounded her were solved. And what better person to investigate the strange goings on than a highly respected – though sometimes scoffed at by skeptics – scientist and the owner of New England's esteemed Paranormal Investigations Unlimited? Ghosts, UFOs, vampires, witches, fairies, goblins and possession by demons. You name it, PIU supposedly did a thorough analysis using all that fascinating equipment and intelligent staff.

Oh yes, he would be using that very equipment on her if she had to seduce him into it. Because if she spiraled any further into her pit of widowhood despair, she feared for her sanity. So she intended to exhaust every one of PIU's tools and employees until she got her answers.

Since the cops seemed hungrier to use her as their scapegoat suspect than to find out the real truth – which she suspected to be paranormal-related – all she wanted was someone to at least verify she had all her marbles up top. And to tell her she hadn't somehow, in a roundabout, creepy sort of way, *really* killed all three of her husbands like the police had insisted.

"I, uh, do have an office, Miss Templeton. With *daytime* hours."

Her footsteps became muted as they hit the large area rug. Olivia weaved her way around a loveseat until she reached the fireplace flanked by massive paned windows. The black gnarled outline of thick woods against the silvery lunar-lit sky became

framed through the sleek glass to the left. Through the right window she caught a glimpse of a cove's rippling moonlit surface.

What was it about this refurbished house that made her long to release a coming-home sigh of relief?

She forced a mental shrug. There was no way she could afford to let the lure of emotional security with a man and his cozy home sway her yet again. Holding her chilled hands over the flames, she offered, "It's Olivia, or Livvy. And you can charge me whatever you like—overtime, inflated fees—it really doesn't matter to me."

Though she had her back to him, she could sense him nearing despite his silent, barefoot approach. "Okay, Olivia it is. Look," Seth forced out on a breath of exasperation, "I'm not in the mood to discuss my rates at the moment. I was just on the way to bed when—"

She whirled around. "How can you sleep?" Her tone sounded desperate to her own ears, but damn it, she *was* desperate. "How can anyone sleep knowing all my husbands have died?"

The fire spit and sputtered.

Here we go again.

Though the windows were closed, a breeze gusted in making the flames dance and lick higher. His eyes did their usual assessment, first of the fire then of her. He may as well have swiped his tongue up between her legs. It very well might be the fire, but she could have sworn when his gaze touched her flesh, her cunt sizzled just like the flames in the hearth.

Obviously he *had* been on his way to bed. He wore a dark blue paisley robe made of some slick, satiny fabric, his wide burly shoulders filling it out nicely. A faint spattering of fur peeped from the V of the neckline. The black belt had been knotted haphazardly at his slim waist, apparently in his haste to get to the door when she'd punched the bell over and over in her impatience. She wondered—no, fantasized—if he wore boxers, briefs...or nothing at all underneath.

Seth took one stride but stopped hesitantly. She thought she saw a vague bulge beneath the thin fabric. It gave her a charge and horny passion thrummed along through her veins spilling into her groin. At that precise moment a tall one-tiered sterling silver candy dish toppled over on the coffee table. Pastel mints clicked and bounced across the pine top. His stare riveted there, but he slowly lifted those volatile expressive eyes back to hers.

"That's precisely what all of Salem would like to know." He trekked closer, his well-muscled calves flexing with his deliberate steps. It made her wonder what the curly masculine hair might feel like if she glided her hands up his legs. His puzzled expression reminded her of a curious panther, one not quite sure what to do with his unexpected catch. "Why *have* all your husbands died?"

She couldn't have missed the accusing tone in his deep, New England-accented voice. The sorry fact was no one ever believed her. Everyone thought she was guilty

and it was only by the grace of God—if He existed—that she'd been spared prison time. Newly gathered damning evidence had mysteriously disappeared just when the detective was about to make his move and have her arrested.

The thought had definitely entered her mind to break in and steal that evidence, but she didn't do it—she didn't, goddamn it. She'd simply gotten on her hands and knees one night and prayed like fucking hell...which had actually, now that she thought about it, turned more into a bizarre form of chanting. But miraculously the next morning, her attorney had phoned and informed her that the police had bumbled and misplaced the evidence. They'd had no choice but to drop any impending charges—but they made it known they'd be watching her.

Of course they would. Three men were dead, men she'd truly loved. Howard's demise in an auto accident had merely given her all the support and sympathy any widow deserved. A year and another marriage later, Phillip's passing had raised a few eyebrows after he'd come down with an illness that resembled food poisoning.

Then just over seven months beyond Phillip's death, her newest husband Derek had passed on following a mishap in their home. He'd been up on a tall ladder painting their foyer ceiling. It was something Olivia had been wanting done for a long time, which had quickly been twisted by the cops into her manipulation to set him up for the fall.

So a dearly beloved husband's broken neck and another heart-wrenching funeral later, Olivia had found herself the focus of a controversial investigation that had even made it into the national news. To see herself in her wig and sunglasses recently on an evening tabloid show with "Black Widow Templeton—Has She Struck Again?" plastered across the screen, had been the final straw.

So here she was.

"I don't know why they died."

"You have to know it looks awfully suspicious." Stopping inches from her, he propped his left elbow on the engraved oak mantel and let his forearm and hand dangle. It was a cocky stance, but still it made her core engorge with a delicious heaviness.

She drew in the clean scent of freshly showered man. This close she could see his hair was slightly damp. Its mink-ish shade and glossy texture glittered by the light of the fireplace and she conjured up an image of him naked in the shower, the hair slicked back with steam swirling around his finely chiseled body.

Olivia swallowed a lump of raw longing, tightening her arms over her midriff to prevent her hands from stabbing into the collar-length tresses. Her lips itched to test the flavor of his wide mouth, while her tongue traced her own teeth, imagining they were his. She studied him for a long moment, her pulse lurching when his pupils dilated with what she hoped to be desire. Again she remembered she hadn't yet had her daily orgasms, something she'd required ever since puberty. It seemed to always revive her mood, whereas skipping a day left her feeling listless, even ill.

No, not again. No more men, no more dying in your lifetime. Masturbate. It'll be safer and give you the same end results.

Something was wrong with her. It had to be. Aside from the Black Widow dilemma, all she could ever think of was sex, or at least attaining an orgasm. It felt the very same as a thirst for water or the painful hunger for food. It went right along with all the other things about Olivia Templeton that were different from or more intense than normal people experienced.

For instance her eyes. Her adoptive parents had died in a plane crash a few years back—another retrospective eyebrow-raiser for the cops—so she'd had no one to ask about her heritage. She had no idea who her real parents were therefore it wasn't like she could hire someone to go delving into her DNA pool to find out where she'd inherited this bizarre eye-color-changing trait.

In addition to hiding from public scorn at the Black Widow fiasco, her eyes were why she used sunglasses, at least when she wasn't wearing her non-prescription, tinted contacts. As a child, it had been frightening to discover they changed color with her moods. Yellow, red, green, blue, black—she didn't think there was any shade of the spectrum her eyes hadn't yet been.

It was just like the rainbow aura Seth had mentioned not a few moments ago, though she'd yet to hear that particular observation from anyone before now. No one until now had ever claimed to see such a peculiar thing surrounding Olivia's body. It gave her the willies and made her wonder what could be next.

"Yes, I know it's suspicious. I'm not entirely a fool. It's why I'm here, to get your help."

He shook his head. "I told you it's not office hours."

"So?"

He started to protest but instead demanded to know, "Who referred you anyway—and gave you my address?"

"Professor Billings," she replied with a shrug.

Seth rolled his eyes and groaned. "Figures, the asshole. He's the bane of my existence, a real backstabbing prick. I think the jealous, Nobel-envious jerk lives just to make my life hell."

"So you're saying he sent me just to become a thorn in your side?"

"Oh yes, that's exactly what I'm saying."

"Well I'm saying he was as helpful as he could be. Besides, damn you, I didn't come here to cause you any problems."

"Yeah, right."

Olivia pursed her lips into a pouty O. She wasn't taking his moody bait and she wasn't taking no for an answer. Time to turn on the charm.

Pressing her palm against his chest, she rejoiced when heat suffused up her arm. Her flesh tickled wherever it made contact with the soft pallet of fur. Even though he

stiffened and drew in a swift breath, she couldn't help herself. Olivia's pussy drove her to explore. It pounded with lust, its end goal the achievement of at least one daily climax. She flexed her fingers and scraped her nails through the curls. Beneath all that velvety hair, she made contact with hard muscle.

She moaned. "Mmm, you work out I take it."

"I, uh, yes I do." He gripped her hand. Though the move had been intended to halt her exploration, his turquoise eyes glittered with lust. She leaned into him, delighted when the semi-hard bulk beneath the robe made contact with her belly.

"I adore that sort of dedication in a man," she purred, rising up on tiptoes. Her mouth was now a half-inch from his. She could almost taste him. Her heart raced. His breath was warm and moist against her lips.

In response to her boldness, Seth's nostrils flared. He seemed to be holding on to rigid control like a stallion about to leap out of the gates at the Kentucky Derby. "All right, what's this all about?"

She slid her free arm around his waist until her breasts pressed into his torso. Braless, her mounds felt heavy and tingly, the nipples painfully hard as they scraped over the nylon of her white blouse. Unbearable pleasure coursed through her. She forced herself to remember the utmost priority – persuade this man to help her. If that meant seduction, so be it.

"It's about you." She planted a slow, shivery kiss onto his open mouth. "And me." His lips were soft and warm against hers and they tasted of faint mint. God, she could just gobble him up.

He closed his eyes, at first seeming to indulge in the assault on his mouth. With a sigh he drew back, but his arms encircled her. The mass under his robe ground into her and she detected the unmistakable long length of his nearly full erection.

Bingo.

"You and me? There is no 'you and me'. But apparently there can be...if I'm stupid enough to allow it to happen. Which I'm not."

Olivia hitched in a breath and stumbled backward when he abruptly released her and stepped away. The sudden whoosh of air felt icy against her warmed skin while his rejection twisted at her heart. Why, she didn't know since she'd only met the man moments ago. But one way or another she was determined to win. She intended to acquire his help in whatever manner it took and to get to know every inch of him in the process...

She got her footing, licking her lips to soothe the fire his mouth had left behind. He must have just brushed his teeth because that was definitely mint she'd tasted. Her tongue watered at the fresh flavor of it.

"Stupid? On the contrary, Seth. A Nobel Prize winner in physics in recognition of an extraordinary discovery, a specially formulated infrared, spirit-detecting meter, does not constitute idiocy. Furthermore your theoretical and experimental investigations in supernatural activities, and your brilliant founding of the worldwide acclaimed

Paranormal Investigations Unlimited can only mean one thing. Your excellent, well respected reputation precedes you and cannot ever be confused with stupidity in any way...in my opinion."

He stared at her for a long moment, the firelight dancing across the planes and angles of his striking, hard face. That muscle along his jaw ticked again. "Well," he countered, crossing his arms over his wide chest. "It appears you've done your homework, Blondie. So tell me then, in that case am I supposed to be impressed and flattered enough to allow myself to be seduced and deceived by you? To sleep with the 'well respected', murderous Black Widow? I would think if you already knew my depth of intelligence you'd have figured it a lost cause to even try me."

To ease the sting of his words, she winged her purse at the sofa. It hit with a thud as she fielded the sensation of her irises shifting back to red—blood red. "You bastard."

He let out a clipped laugh. "Well, well, well, the real cat finally emerges and bares her claws. Not the sexy purring cuddly one she'd like me to believe, but the hissing evil dark one."

"I am *not* a murderer."

He merely arched a skeptical brow.

"Okay, you think cat?" Hands down at her sides, she fisted her gauzy skirt and strode toward him. "Well then, I'll show you my claws all right, you son of a—"

The fire whooshed up into the flue. Seth blinked, his gaze riveting to the hearth. The house shook, lights flickered and trinkets inside a nearby glass-encased curio cabinet tinkled on their shelves. The more her ire built, the more the floor quivered. It was as if an earthquake rumbled beneath their feet. But Olivia knew damn well it wasn't an act of Mother Nature. It was *her* somehow doing it yet she didn't know how or why. Or how to stop it.

"Holy shit, who—no, *what*—are you?" Horrified, he spun around to watch as a vase shimmied across the table behind the sofa and crashed to the rug. Water soaked the plush flooring. The full red blooms now lay scattered as if slain, dead...like all her loved ones.

Olivia took a deep breath. The activity gradually subsided as hopelessness swelled in her heart. Her eyes faded into the sensation she knew as pale blue, that of saddened, deep emotion. Tears of frustration stung her eyes. "That's what I was hoping *you* could tell me."

He appeared unaffected by the misery in her voice. In fact, he planted his hands on his narrow hips and made her think of a beefy-shouldered bull pawing in the rodeo ring. "And what makes you think *I* can tell you who or what you are? I don't even know you."

A fake smile crossed her face. "Exactly. You don't even know me."

His face reddened. He glanced away as if put in his place.

She narrowed her eyes behind the glasses, erasing all traces of humor. "Yet you insist on stereotyping me as some 'Blondie' bimbo, femme fatale. Just like everyone else, without a trial you're labeling me as a murderer—a *murderer*." She hated that word. It made her ill and the tears finally spilled over. "Although the media would have you brainwashed into believing it, I am *not* a murderer. I loved them all, every single one of them. I tell you, I did *not* kill my husbands or anyone in my family."

He shrugged and plopped into a nearby chair. "So maybe you hired someone to do it. A slice of three separate multi-million-dollar life insurance policies would be tempting motivation if you dangled them in front of anybody down on their luck. And good reason for you to forget all that 'love'."

Enough was enough. Olivia was beyond anger anymore. She was tired, just plain tired of trying to defend herself. Sometimes Olivia wished *she* were dead. "I'm so sorry, Dr. Hayden, to have barged in on you like this. I can see it was a horrible miscalculation on my part in thinking I could get someone on my side, someone who could help me to find out what's wrong with me." She bent and despondently retrieved her purse.

"Wrong with you? I don't know what you're talking about."

Had she just determined she was beyond anger? *I take it back, goddamn it.*

"Really?" She slammed her fist on her hip and leaned forward, every muscle in her body as taut as a drum. "So you're going to act as if none of those bizarre things happened as soon as I walked in your door? Well let me tell you, Dr. Nobel Big-head, it's not easy when you can't even keep a computer or microwave in your house because they smoke as soon as you touch them. It's not exactly a picnic when bad luck and death follow you, hovering over you like a black storm cloud wherever you go. Not to mention everyone you've ever loved dropping like flies around you."

She despised the note of rising hysteria in her voice but she just couldn't help herself. So she went on with her tirade. "It's not easy to be a female sex maniac trying to control the animal-like cravings that burn in your loins on a daily basis, to become sicker than death itself if you don't get it. Ah, but to be energized when that first orgasm of the day washes through you, as if some curse has been cast on you, or you've got some sort of cruel drug addiction."

His gaze remained on her, the topic of sex apparently unable to penetrate his steel-armored egotism. As she continued her diatribe, he scrutinized every inch of her body, every supposed electron and neutron firing off in that radiant field he'd spoken of. And damned if he didn't have the ability, even in his conceit, to turn her the fuck on!

"And finally," she choked out, the tears now streaming down her cheeks as she raked a hand down her body, "it's not amusing to have to live like this. I am not blonde, I do have eyes—believe it or not—behind these big dark glasses and I normally don't wear boring uncomfortable clothes like this."

He continued to sit there in that puffy chair, one ankle crossed over the opposite bare knee, speaking not a word. It didn't even matter that she now had a straight-on view of his engorged sac—Jesus H. Christ, help her.

Olivia flung the sexy sight from her mind and attempted to suppress an explosive sob. It came straight from her heart. She'd erred horribly, it seemed. When she'd heard of Seth Hayden, she thought she'd found her savior. He'd reportedly helped people to rid themselves of bad energy. He'd been featured on science and news channels worldwide, and interviewed in prominent magazines. The owner of PIU had supposedly done demon exorcisms, home ghost-cleansings and she'd heard with a bit of her own skepticism that he'd even been able to counter-effect evil spirits and alleged witchy spells before they'd been cast.

Yes, there was a portion of the community that sneered at what they termed his "deceptive" business practices. He charged outlandishly high rates to counteract occurrences some snickered at. Yet he had the impressive education, credentials, experience, expertise and honor of that Nobel to back him. She supposed he'd used the fortune he'd amassed with all that savvy intelligence to remodel this vintage beachside house. Whether he was the real deal or a fake, Olivia had had no recourse. She'd half-heartedly believed in his odd and expensive talents and had been willing to give him the benefit of the doubt.

But oh, what a fool she'd been.

She'd never watched those satellite TV channel specials that featured him capturing ghosts on film and extricating them from haunted houses. She had yet to see true evidence of his abilities, though she'd been prepared to believe in him. Conversely, he had visual proof of *hers*—although she wouldn't call her weird events "abilities"—and he continued to scoff at her.

What a fucking hypocritical pig.

"Good night, Dr. Hayden. No need to get up. I'll see myself out." Olivia spun on the spikes of her heels—God, she despised wearing these things!—and started for the door. Her footsteps changed from muted to sharp as her shoes hit hardwood in the airy entryway.

With his feet bare, she didn't hear his approach. But she felt the power in his grip as he snatched her arm halting her flight, and whirled her back around. She crashed into the wall of his chest. The swirl of dark emotions she'd just experienced quickly faded into desire. Her eyes started to tingle in preparation for the morphing of her moods.

"You say you're addicted to sex, huh?" She gasped when he dragged her up and slammed her pussy against his cock, now granite-hard. One arm hooked tightly around her waist while his free hand cupped her bottom, grinding their sexes together. Her strappy shoes felt heavy around her ankles as he held her up off the floor. "Now we're getting somewhere. *That* I think I can help you with. Tonight."

She planted her palms against the firmness of pectorals. The deodorant-soap, clean smell of his warm flesh filled her lungs making her dizzy. Her irises changed from that blend of pale blue sadness and red ire, to the unmistakable heat of bright azure passion. The craving for sex raged inside her, boiling like a cauldron deep in her womb. Whether

this man was a jerk or not, she yearned to couple with him, otherwise she'd become feverish, pale and weak, thrashing in her bed tonight.

"Y-yes, as much as I hate to admit it, I'm addicted to sex. I already told you, it's like an animal's disease, a thirst or hunger I must feed daily. But I warn you it's not your ordinary nymphomaniac condition, Doctor. I feel it in my soul, as if there's something...different about me."

"Mmm, you're different all right," he mumbled, and through the dark shade of her glasses, she watched as his eyes glittered with yearning.

Her world skidded to a halt when he captured her mouth in a voracious kiss. It seemed fireworks exploded in her head sizzling a trail down into her nipples and cunt. His tongue swiped into the cavern of her mouth and ravished every inch. He was breathing hard, dragging in her air, giving her bursts of his own. She tasted mint and wet-hot desire in his kiss. Her canal ached, dripping with cream as she slid her hands up his neck and into the damp thickness of his hair. Olivia tilted her hips closer, moaning, reaching for that much-needed release that had had her on edge all day.

No doubt he knew what she sought. Letting go of her waist, he slid his hands farther down, never taking his mouth from hers. He curled his grip under her thighs and her skirt bunched around her pelvis when he hitched her up, guiding her to wrap her legs around his waist. Her heels clicked together behind him. The position gave her instant gratification as the tip of his erection probed against the fabric of his robe, forcing her silk panties to become soaked by her honey.

"Olivia...Black Widow or not, I've got to admit I want to fuck you. *Damn* bad." He murmured it against her mouth, his tongue tracing a hot circular trail around her lips.

"Help me, help me please," she pleaded, knowing she must get a commitment out of him first before allowing him to sink his cock into her. "I want you—my body needs you like crazy," she rasped, combing her fingers through his soft hair. "But I also need your help in finding out what's wrong with me. *Please*..."

Olivia held tightly to his neck and levered her pussy up and down the length of his manhood, forcing a growl from him. Intense unbearable pleasure washed over her. Still, it irked her to have to beg and seduce, but what choice did she have? Conceited though he was, she needed him to investigate this strange energy surrounding her, and she *must* have sex or face illness tonight. A bland thought entered her mind. She supposed she could forgo it and use her less energizing vibrator—if and only if she had to.

Ah, but she didn't have to if he was willing.

"God, I could come just like this," he groaned, burying his face in the hollow of her neck.

She shivered as he nuzzled the spot where her pulse beat wildly, and she heard him draw in a delicious inhalation that could only mean surrender. Her eyelids went heavy, closing when his hands dug under her skirt and panties. He found the bare cheeks of her ass, kneading and pawing, pulling her anus and labia apart.

"Seth, please," she whispered. "Will you? Will you please take the job?" She could hardly talk. The scorching brand of his lips against her flesh, coupled with his hot hands and stiff rod grinding over her clitoris, were enough to render her speechless.

"Yeah, yeah, I think I might." He nudged her blouse over with his nose and rooted until he found the top swell of one breast. Seth nipped her skin between his teeth, sucking and flicking his tongue in such a fashion, she truly thought bliss loomed only one grind of the cock away.

"Oh thank God."

"But only under one condition."

Olivia stiffened, not liking that tone. "What...what would that be?"

He raised his head and looked intently at the glasses, his gaze somehow locking with hers through the dark thickness of them. "That you take the shades and wig off."

"Take them off?"

He nodded a slow and ominous yes.

Olivia's stomach leaped with raw nerves. She'd been with lots of men since the Black Widow Investigation had begun, fueling up her soul and feeding her addiction. But not once had she taken the wig and glasses off. She could have worn her contact lenses to at least hide her eyes, but the idea was to conceal her entire identity, so she'd had her flings while in full costume.

However, in this situation she wondered again, what choice did she have?

"You promise no pictures surrendered to the media?"

"I promise."

"No verbal descriptions or data handed over to anyone who could reveal my identity?"

"None. Not one word, not one report, no name or descriptions."

"Why so suddenly accommodating then? What's in it for you?"

He smiled and the corners of his eyes crinkled adorably. "That wet and wild thing currently soaking my cock."

For a long moment she stared at his crazed expression through the shaded lenses. Finally Olivia took the leap. She raised her hand reaching for the wig and prayed she wasn't making the mistake of a lifetime.

Chapter Two

Seth had outright lied. He ignored that little scolding angel that rode one shoulder with the baggage of guilt. Instead, he winked at the other one, the fallen angel that had always nurtured his ego and kept him thrust in the scientific limelight. Damn right he'd be recording and presenting everything to all his archrivals, which would no doubt end up in the media eventually. How could anyone blame him? How could he pass up this career-boosting opportunity?

Or no-strings sex with a gorgeous woman...

Looking at her now, he couldn't stop if he tried. His shaft ached and his hormones raced through his bloodstream as the mass of midnight hair slowly tumbled from its hiding place beneath the wig. They stood in the now darkened foyer where earlier the light fixture had fizzled out. But the soft muted firelight spilled out from the great room. Its orange glow bathed the creamy flesh of her delicate features and darkened the valley between her breasts. Seth's libido kicked in to overdrive when the silky strands spilled down her slim back and framed her pale face. Even though his hands remained on her tight ass, he could swear he could already feel the tresses trailing through his fingers.

"Incredible." His scrutiny caressed her from the mysterious movie-star-styled sunglasses, down over the nose with its faint bump on the bridge to the full red lips. He hungered to taste her again, to feed on the flavor of cinnamon and some sweet dessert she must have just eaten before arriving on his doorstep. "I wasn't expecting such raven-black hair."

"I *told* you I'm not a blonde. I don't like having to wear this damn thing all the time." Still clinging to him with her legs clamped around his waist, she tossed the hairpiece over her shoulder. It skidded across the glossy wood floor and settled near the front door in a platinum heap. For a wealthy widow, appropriately the pile resembled one of those poofy toy dogs spoiled movie stars carried around in huge handbags.

But it definitely looked better on the floor than it did concealing all that dark satin of hers.

In a dreamy state he didn't care to name, Seth's gaze floated back to her, to the stark awareness of her heat and energy. Strangely her rainbow aura appeared to be overridden by extra amber. He longed to learn why, to examine everything there was about this creature to analyze. His eyes, along with that sixth sense of unusual energy detection he'd been born with, seemed to be on overload. He'd never seen or felt such power, not during an exorcism and not while ridding a cemetery of an overly pesky ghost. Not even, he suddenly realized, that time he'd been burned by the radiation field while standing on ground recently vacated by a UFO.

Just as all his studies did, this woman totally fascinated him. But she did things to his senses way beyond his usual studies, stuff he couldn't explain. Exciting things he didn't want to label and knew he shouldn't indulge in.

Seth licked his lips and nodded, doing his best to ignore the hot sensation of her panty-covered pussy pressed against his throbbing hard-on. "And I like you much better without it. Now how about the glasses?"

Her warm breath fanned his cheek when she sighed. "Are you sure you're ready for this?" Olivia had a faint widow's peak which Seth found to be an ironically endearing trait, given her famous media nickname. It became even more prominent when she arched her brows, wrinkling her forehead.

"I'm ready for a lot of things," he insisted, grinding his rod into her V to illustrate. "And seeing the passion in your eyes when I finally slide into your wetness would be tops on that list right now."

The whimper his seductive move elicited from her pursed lips was nearly enough to have him ramming himself into her now—screw waiting for her to remove the glasses. Besides, he mused, it might be kind of erotic and mysterious to make it with her while she hid behind the dark lenses.

"If I take them off you've got to remember that I did give you the opportunity to keep this interlude anonymous."

"Point well taken, as is my 'point'." He wedged himself deeper between her legs to indicate what he really referred to as the main point. His cock finally cleared the opening of his robe. Seth sucked in a surprised breath when her sopping-wet panties bathed his bare penis. "Jesus."

That did it. On a hiss, he commanded, "Off with the shades. Now."

"All right, Doctor, you asked for it." Olivia slowly pulled them from her face, but she kept her lids tightly closed.

"Sweetheart, it doesn't do me a damn bit of good if you take them off but don't open your eyes."

Her face was a gorgeous interesting tapestry of points and soft curves. The inky-black eyebrows reminded him of the wings of a bat soaring over almond-shaped sockets. But it wasn't until the lids fluttered open that he got his first real look at the stunning orbs. He stared into tortured pools of deep blue—no, make that bright green. Seth started to speak but he cut himself off when a blaze of yellow washed through the irises before turning back into rich gems of blue.

"What the..." Wait. Red? He could swear just after he'd spoken that one confused phrase, the eyes had darkened to crimson.

"Exactly. 'What the' is right. It's the very same gawking reaction I've always gotten—that is, the few times I've been stupid enough to reveal them without wearing the glasses or my tinted contact lenses to cover them." She narrowed her gaze and started to shove the shades back on, wriggling to be free of his hold on her. "Now let me down. I should have known this was a mistake."

He hiked her back up and snatched the sunglasses between his teeth before she could don them again. "Oh no you don't. You're not going anywhere," he mumbled around the bulk. Seth turned his head to the side and spat the shades over his shoulder. They hit the floor with a clatter.

She stared at him openmouthed, fearful.

He stared back, stunned, speechless.

The impact of those unusual eyes had struck him hard, just as the many emotions in them did now. It felt as if he'd just run right into an invisible wall of concrete—that glorious hidden one he'd been seeking for decades, the one he'd always longed to climb and conquer, to stand on top beating his chest and shouting revenge to all his skeptical colleagues who stood firm on the other side. That wall was the discovery of the one gem those in the non-supernatural fields jeered at and those in the paranormal field sought proof of—Chameleons.

Could it be? He swallowed a lump of excitement. Was Olivia Templeton really a Chameleon witch? For years he'd heard the rumors in the alternative scientific community claiming that a coven of that particular breed of witches and warlocks resided in the Salem area. Then recently he'd gotten a particular journal donated to PIU by the sister of one of the area's late paranormal scientists. It promised to be a very telling journal Seth hadn't had time to indulge too much in. But he would very soon.

It was said in his close circles that these Chameleons not only possessed powers to cast spells, but one of their many distinctive markings were bizarre eyes that changed color with their volatile moods. He'd also heard they were an insatiable breed needing sex often.

Very often.

It's not easy to be a female sex maniac trying to control the animal-like cravings that burn in your loins on a daily basis, to become sicker than death itself if you don't get it.

A quickening stirred in his loins at the memory of her words. Could she truly be a real flesh-and-blood Chameleon?

He forced himself to give the thought a mental shrug even though he longed to grill her with questions while tossing her into his paranormal meter booth in the laboratory downstairs. It was possible she was a witch, but not at all likely, he decided, erring on the side of scientific caution even as he stared into the swirling eyes and watched her aura flame brighter. He had to remember that in all his experiences he'd yet to see evidence—possibly until now—of this particular class of sorcerers. However, not one to give up easily, the naturally curious researcher in him had continued to watch for proof of this fascinating witch breed to emerge somewhere in his many supernatural encounters.

Excitement at even the slightest prospect that he'd finally come across a Chameleon did odd things to his hormones. If he didn't know better he'd think she'd already cast a constant-erection spell on him. He'd been studying her unusual radiance ever since she'd arrived. Though he'd been able to barely detect it on the television screen all those

times he'd seen her in the news – so vague as to make him question its existence – there was nothing more confirming than seeing it in the flesh.

He was drawn to her in every way, though sexual attraction seemed to take precedence at the moment. Her morphing moods fascinated him, not just because they were an alleged Chameleon trait, but because they seemed to shift with the change of her eye color. But as far as her swinging moods went, all women were temperamental to an extent, so that alone wasn't cause for positive paranormal or Chameleon determination. In addition, though hers was his first spectral aura, he'd seen lots of human energy fields in his time. Most, as far as he had been able to determine, were not indicative in and of themselves of a notable supernatural phenomenon in progress.

Upon first sight of her he'd felt it necessary to project a skeptical attitude before sacrificing his precious time and opening his prized laboratory doors to just anyone... And before his penis started to cloud his brain and possibly cause him career suicide. Still he'd known as soon as he'd peered at her through the glass of the front door that there was something different about her, whether it was paranormal-related or not. Then again there *had* been the lights extinguishing shortly thereafter. And the floor shaking. And the fire going haywire in the hearth...

His heart raced. *Holy ghosts alive, could she truly be a witch? No wait, slow it down and remember your training. Shift into neutral here, Seth, my good man.*

His science was different, much more exciting and arbitrary than your typical biology or chemistry – therefore it required caution. Once he'd delved deeper into his chosen specialty, he'd learned things didn't always go the standard way of those more humdrum disciplines. This was clearly one of those times, he decided as he absorbed her vivacity and held her pussy pressed firmly against his cock. He'd be a fool to pass up this opportunity, both for PIU and in the bedroom.

Mesmerized, Seth stared into those amazing orbs and thought of the kaleidoscope he'd had as a child. He'd loved peering inside its secret enclosed world, studying all the many patterns and getting lost in the ever-changing configurations, much as he was now. The more he perused her eyes the harder he got, and he knew making it with a Chameleon was rumored to be like flying high on euphoric drugs. Merely considering that bit of data made his balls pound with urgent need.

Almost as much as he desired her pussy wrapped tightly around his shaft he longed to lure her down to his basement laboratory and hook her up to every infrared device, paranormal meter, electron camera, spirit recorder or specter thermometer. But that would be foolish and premature to drag her straight to the lab.

He needed to tread lightly. If he frightened her or got a bit too zealous, it could prompt her to seek out his cynical adversaries in the field instead. He could just hear them sniggering when she rushed into their office begging for their help, hysterical at how Seth had used her like an experimental lab rat. It would dredge that dreaded buzz back up about the "unconventional" scientific methods he used in his "hokey" specialty.

As he inhaled her intoxicating scent, his thoughts rewound going over the events since she'd arrived. Strange but she appeared to be in the dark about what or who she was. Seth cocked a mental brow. If she really was a Chameleon witch, why did she appear not to know? Why did she think there was something wrong with her?

At least that's what she'd *like* him to believe. Either way it warranted being very careful. If she wasn't a Chameleon witch, then she could be what the media had already labeled her.

The Black Widow on the prowl for her next victim. Which he refused to be.

He kneaded her soft yet firm ass, loving the way she mewled in response. But even as his cock got stiffer, he forced himself to keep his head. He wasn't stupid enough to let the prospect of phenomenal lovemaking with a beautiful, obviously horny woman pass him by either. As far as he knew, he'd never had sex with a real witch before, and he was more than eager to experience it. The prospect of it worked on his libido like an aphrodisiac. It thrummed through his bloodstream making every cell in his body zing into wakefulness.

"Your eyes, they're...beautiful."

The emotional raspy tone in his voice took him by surprise. Suspicion reared its head. He wondered again if she'd cast some sort of spell on him—if she was in fact what he hoped she was. In his line of work, long-term interest in women had always proven to be problematical, so he really shouldn't allow good sex to get confused with relationship-type emotions. The last several years he'd been through half a dozen affairs and two broken engagements. Women wanted more from him than he seemed to have time to offer. Marlene had left him months ago...and now that he thought about it, she'd also taken with her his last memory of that satisfying plunge between a woman's legs.

It must be his lucky night. This stunning, exciting woman embraced him with strong thighs that refreshed his memory twofold. Not to mention there were lots of bonuses with her, the prospect of intellectual stimulation in the lab, the excitement of viewing all that energy surrounding her, the way she fired up all six of his senses. Fate, fortune, luck, chance, whatever the hell it was, it had found him tonight by one simple buzz of the doorbell.

"T-thank you." She made a face and leaned closer, her arms tightening around his neck. The colorful pools burned into his own, holding his gaze while her breath warmed his mouth as she spoke. "Then you're not scared of them, or of me?"

"Scared? Uh-uh." Seth held her close and shuffled forward through the arched entrance leading into the hallway. He had to get to the master bedroom before he lost all control, embarrassing himself by coming before he'd even gotten inside her. "Fascinated and curious maybe, but not afraid in the least."

Her colorful irises rolled up into their sockets and she let out a sound that strangely resembled a panther's meow. "Ah, that feels so good."

"What feels good?" God, he loved the sound of her husky, lust-laced voice.

"When you walk. It makes my clitoris slide up and down your cock."

At her frank language, a liquid wave of fire poured into his loins. He turned down the corridor and stumbled toward the bedroom. "You get right to the point, don't you? Is that always part of your Black Widow's seduction?"

She closed her sweet mouth over his and reached down between their bodies as he made his way toward the bedroom door. God, would he ever get there?

Olivia fumbled, searching until she found his swollen manhood. He lurched, almost losing his hold on her when her hand closed around his throbbing girth. Her hot fingers grazed the sensitive corona forcing Seth to draw in a hiss of ecstasy.

"The point is, Doctor, I need —" She bit her bottom lip, shifted her hips and nudged the head of his shaft against the crotch of her panties. Pushing the obstacle aside, she found her target with a sigh. Immediate moist heat scalded the tender flesh at the tip of his rod. Before he realized she'd meant to sacrifice foreplay for immediate gratification, Olivia had already tightened her legs and plunged herself down on him.

Her next word came out on a throaty growl as her head fell back. "*This.*"

Seth had to stop walking before his legs buckled. He was almost to his destination, but he couldn't wait any longer. "Jesus."

Never in his life had he been so close to bliss in such a short time. Her tight sheath gloved him in warm slickness all the way to the base of his sex. Sweat trickled down his back as he staggered to the wall right outside the bedroom door. Disoriented, he missed a step causing Olivia's back to slam against the doorjamb. Near their shoulders, framed artwork crashed onto hardwood. The sconce light fixtures in the hall blinked while her aura deepened to a shade of blue that made him think of midnight velvet.

He buried his face in the crook of her neck where her pulse beat strong and vital. His mouth nibbled, his nostrils flared, drawing in her bewitching scent. "Sorry. Are you okay?"

She didn't so much as gasp at the jarring movement. Instead, she used the doorway for leverage, reaching up and behind her to assist in pumping herself up and down on him. "No, n-nothing...nothing at all to be sorry about. Just give me—" Her voice became a hoarse whisper. It seduced his ears so adroitly he thought he could come just listening to the seductive tone. Behind him her high heels clicked rhythmically together as she rode him, and he'd be damned if that wasn't the sexiest noise he'd ever heard.

"Mmm, don't stop, please don't stop fucking me like that."

He levered up, plunging deeper, harder. Her back scraped against wood but she seemed immune to any pain, hungry to be manhandled. Hot milky cream bathed his cock while her inner muscles clamped around him so tightly, it almost hurt.

"You...ah, you keep this up, I'm going to have to...to do you right here before I even get to the bed."

"Bed? Who needs a bed?" She thrust out her chest and threaded her fingers through his hair. Olivia guided his head down and pulled aside her blouse. She bared one pale,

pink-tipped breast for him. His mouth watered and he felt a quick spurt of cum ooze from his slit. "Mmm, yeah, suck my nipple. Suck it hard until I come all over your cock."

Her request made Seth's mind whirl with lust like he'd never experienced before. He obliged her, shuffling to his right where a narrow side table hugged the corridor wall just outside the master suite. He plunked her ass onto the edge causing a vase full of wildflowers to topple and spill across the wooden surface. Ignoring the puddle, he started licking his way downward over silky, faintly salty flesh. His long shaft remained inside her as he bent and moved lower. He couldn't pull out if he wanted to. He needed desperately to fill her, while at the same time he yearned to have access to both breasts, to feast on the perfection of those luscious globes.

Seth drew her scent into his lungs as his hands fumbled at the buttons of her blouse. She smelled of spicy female arousal and some alluring perfume he'd never encountered before.

Bewitching. You're utterly bewitching and irresistible.

She gripped the front edge of the table and screamed, "Yes!" when he yanked aside her blouse sending buttons clattering across the floor.

Braless. God, he loved it when a woman went braless beneath conservative clothing. He'd have to talk to her about ditching the panties in the future...

Seth slapped one hand on the wood surface and filled his other palm with her left mound. It was heavy, smooth, way more than a handful. He caressed her breast, all the while continuing to pound into her slick, fiery channel. His fingers started to explore, to stroke, to pinch and roll the areola. It reminded him of an unyielding yet delicate pearl, and he thought how erotic its small bulk was going to feel when he finally dragged his wet tongue over it. Lifting the soft mass to his mouth, he sucked it between his lips. Hungrier now than he could ever recall being during sex, he claimed the puckered jewel, finally clamping his teeth around it.

In shocked response, Olivia clunked her head against the wall, her siren's song of moans more seductive than any he'd ever heard in his life. "Holy hell..."

With his cock holding her in place, her ass partially hung off the table's edge. Reassured he had her situated safely, he let go of the table and palmed one ass cheek through the slick fabric of the panties she still wore. The elastic edge of the undergarment's crotch abraded over the left side of his rod as he pumped in and out, but he welcomed the pained pleasure of it.

She did an amazing undulation with her hips, causing the table to rock and her head to knock rhythmically near several small photos. Olivia moved in speeds and mesmeric motions he'd never encountered before. It drew his orgasm nearer, making his mouth water and some untouched area deep inside his ass tingle uncontrollably.

It seemed everything about her rose to lusty extremes, and it reflected upon him mirroring the same in him. He couldn't get enough of her. It was, he suddenly realized, just like he'd heard Chameleon sex to be, drug-induced, wild and intense, animal-like.

She bucked, fucking faster, harder, wetter, branding him with her scalding female honey. It dribbled onto his balls and soaked the edges of his robe. He went mad with her roused scent, the flavor of her skin and the satiny feel of it against his tongue and lips. The way she clung to him in desperation, how her rippled passage stroked his shaft, it was almost too much to bear. Hell, could heaven be anymore blissful than a frantic mating with this mysterious woman?

Seth didn't think so. He'd had his share of one-night-stands, but never had he been this rabid to get inside a woman and get off so quickly. Now. He had to have all of her now. His palm tightened around the half-moon mass of her breast. Starved for more, he opened his mouth wider, taking in as much as he could, sucking the taut areola into the back of his mouth while he bathed her soft flesh with his tongue.

Olivia sucked in a breath and stilled her dance. "Ah, yes."

The slightly salty pebble brushed over the deeper surface of his tongue firing off sensitive taste buds. Still he needed more, craved all of her. He broke loose and buried his face in the crook of her neck. Her passionate scent intoxicated him, her silky skin begged to be touched and tasted. Pounding into her, he nipped at her earlobe, her jaw, her collarbone.

"Holy shit, you're so sweet, so addictive." He devoured her bottom lip, imbibing her addictive flavor.

"I'm about to—God, you're turning me on so much," she mumbled around his lips. Panting now, Olivia broke the seal of the kiss and shoved his robe off his shoulders. "Get this thing off. Please, so I can touch you."

Her impatient words and hot caress gave him a head rush—or could it be a Chameleon's spell being cast on him? The idea itself made his head spin more.

If so, bring it on.

He shifted his arms behind him and shoved the garment off until it slithered to the floor. Chilly air blanketed his backside, cooling the perspiration that now drenched his body. Seth gently bit down on her lip and their mouths melded into one. She growled her satisfaction, reaching up to grasp his shoulders with her small hands while her tongue delved in and out of his mouth, chasing his tongue with ardor to rival his own.

"You really want it right here...on this table...while getting knocked against the wall?" He demanded an answer with his mouth still pressed against her lips, knowing he asked the question only to hear her seductive voice as he reached for paradise.

"Oh yeah, don't you *even* stop," she warned, panting. "It's coming right this—" Olivia shuddered. She dragged in air and held it. Her glowing eyes fluttered shut and she let out a high-pitched cry that echoed throughout the house. She clutched at him raking her fingernails down his back. The stinging pain only pushed him closer to paradise making him wonder what sort of masochistic magic she'd used on him.

Frantic now, her arms drew him down to her, while her slim legs trembled around his hips. The inner walls of her vagina convulsed, encasing his shaft like a hot cream-filled mitten stroking him to release.

Her climax brought on more volatile events. She opened her eyes and locked her vibrant gaze on his as additional waves overtook her. He stood there while in the pre-stages of his own orgasm, hunkered over her and the table, watching in stunned silence as her irises altered from deep blue to myriad colors at once. Olivia sighed and smiled in relief as if someone had just given her a taste of succulent food after weeks of starvation.

But apparently that wasn't the end of the energy forces when having sex with the Black Widow...or a possible Chameleon witch. He thought he heard the start of eerie yet upbeat Wiccan-like music somewhere in the distance. The powerful sizzle of burning flames filled his ears and it seemed the roar of warm winds cycloned around him. He could taste every decadent sinful flavor imaginable bursting in his mouth while the sensation of drug-induced euphoria suddenly coursed through his veins. The naughty perfume of pussy filled his lungs, further elevating the excruciating exhilaration.

The sounds of burning flames gradually blended into the tempo of their hearts thumping in rhythm together, her pulse joining with his, a cadence that echoed in his head and seemed to bounce off the walls. Doors and windows throughout the house opened and slammed shut surrounding him with the thrash of power and the might of the very world he fought to prove—the supernatural.

The remaining picture frames popped off their hooks, flew across the space of the hall and crashed into the opposite wall in a shatter of glass. On the other end of the side table, the overturned wildflowers and vase trembled and clattered to the floor. Water spilled over the edge and dribbled onto the stark red bouquet. Hall sconces flickered faster, popping and fizzling until the lovers were plunged into total darkness.

Staggered by her exhilarating satisfaction and his own ecstasy now upon him, Seth finally let go, growling when the first waves of pleasure burst in his loins in a pyrotechnic display. In that suspended point in time, he felt a need to look into her soul, so he framed her face and locked his gaze with her spectral one, wondering what each color meant.

Later. He'd worry about that later in his research. But for now, he just wanted this sexual delirium to go on forever and ever. And it seemed it did—it was no doubt the longest, most intense climax he'd ever ridden out. In that captivating instant, he spilled himself into her still-spasming pussy while he watched her eyes morph into glittering sapphires edged with a thin rim of icy pink. The hot-bright sensations of orgasm stayed with him for long moments, tearing through his system and making his toes and fingers tingle.

His breath caught in his throat as the last blissful surge washed through him. "Son of a bitch." Seth held her essence inside his lungs, savoring every nuance of her warm, perspiring body.

With one last plunge into her depths, he concentrated on her soft post-orgasm whimpers. She was the purest form of addiction, her siren's song frightening yet

drawing him irresistibly to her. Already a goner, he covered her mouth with his and surrendered to the magic.

It was too late. The Black Widow, he silently conceded, had completely and irreversibly bewitched him.

Chapter Three

Seth held her tight against his chest carrying her in darkness down the short hall with her hypersensitive nipples abrading over his. He kicked open the bedroom door and upon entry into the master suite she saw that moonlight spilled through paned floor-to-ceiling windows. The glass of French doors gleamed by the lunar light, the edges muted by frost. She noted with a sense of pleasure the doors led onto the same rear cedar deck that wrapped around from the living and kitchen areas. When she tilted her head just right, Olivia could hear the rush and ebb of the surf. It made her ache to curl up and fall into cozy slumber.

"You have a beautiful home." She murmured it while her arms were wrapped around his neck and her head rested on his muscled shoulder.

"Thanks," he replied, planting a kiss on her forehead as he made his way to a huge bed. It was tucked into the rounded tower-like cone she'd spied when the cab had pulled up to his house. That one feature jutting up from the side of the inviting Cape-Cod-style home had made her think of a majestic castle. She'd wondered what lay within its octagonal walls but now she knew. It was his lair...yet strangely it felt like her lair too.

Her gaze swept the pedestal bed with its thick white comforter and many fluffy black throw pillows. The romantic sense she'd felt upon first sight of the house's unusual attributes had been dead on. Now the knowledge she'd make love with him right here, as if a sacrifice on a seaside shrine, made her pussy throb with renewed need.

"The six-acre plot and the home both have history dating back to the seventeenth century," he explained, laying her gently upon the bed. "It's why I bought it and invested all that money in refurbishing it. Because I'm a sucker for anything to do with that controversial period."

She sank into cool downy softness. The clean, fresh scent of newly washed linens filled her nostrils. Reaching up she drew him down and skimmed her palms along his rippled arms. "You mean the witch trials?" God, he had a nice, tight body. Her hands skated up through the crisp dark hair on his chest, until she reached the smooth tightness of the sculpted shoulders.

"Yes, it's great paranormal research. The Northeast is rich with it...and so it seems, are you." He drew up a thick blanket from the foot of the bed, tucked it around them and stretched out beside her. He'd already stripped her remaining clothes and heels off after that phenomenal sex in the hallway. Now his body heat filled the space beneath the soft cotton cover and permeated her chilled naked skin.

She rolled onto her right side facing him, and arched her pelvis toward his. Her thigh made contact with his enormous erection, so she shifted until it pressed against her V and lower abdomen.

"So now you agree?" Olivia trailed her fingers down his side until she reached his right hip.

He made a sound of blatant approval when her hand encircled his cock. "Agree? How can I even think when you're distracting me that way?"

She swiped some of her own juices onto her palm and returned to his shaft. He groaned and filled his hand with her breast. The flames rekindled with each tweak and pinch. Olivia went hard, her areolas, her clitoris, every muscle and zone of her body responded to his talented touch. Still she wanted more, needed the rejuvenation that always came with sex.

"You know what I mean." Salt burst on her tongue when she kissed and licked his neck. Her breathing became more of an animal's panting, and she drew in his manly scent while her sticky hand stroked him. "You agree there's something wrong with me, don't you?"

He rolled on top of her, breaking her hold on his cock. Wedging his hips between her thighs, he loomed over her, his big body bathed in silver moonlight. "Do we have to discuss it right now?"

Olivia rocked her hips up and down so her damp pussy slid along his rod just as her hand had. His bulk spread her damp lips apart while her drenched opening lubed the length of him.

He groaned, but she ignored his tortured response, determined to get his promise signed and sealed. "Yes we do. Now damn it, will you take my case or not?"

He drew back as if the spell of sensuality had been broken. His eyes glittered like two turquoise pools in the dark of a stormy night. They were so much more brilliant even by muted moonlight than they were when she peered into their depths through her sunglasses.

"I'm thinking about it."

Again Olivia danced her cunt up and down the length of him. "Think harder."

"I, uh...I'm already hard." He grinned and she caught the white glimmer of straight teeth.

"I know that. And if you don't give me an answer now you're going to stay that way until your balls turn blue and burst."

"Ouch. Such a wickedly descriptive visual." He wedged deeper, aligning the head of his rod with her soaked hole. It was his silent way of saying she wasn't going anywhere no matter what agreement they came to. And he was right. She was starved for more sex, so she knew he truly held all the power. But she wasn't going to admit it and give up her fight until she had his word of agreement.

"Please, I'm begging you. Take my case. You saw it all—felt it all—my eyes, the floor trembling, the power of the fire, things flying across the hall. I need your help. Something's going on with me and I need you to find out what causes all this. I must know what's wrong with me before someone else dies...before I lose my mind."

He ducked his head and closed his mouth over hers. His kisses were pure intoxication and dangerously distracting at a time when she needed to focus. The liquid heat of his soft lips and flickering tongue melted into her heart and diffused throughout her body seducing every cell. But she must stop him for the time being.

With heavy regret, Olivia tore her mouth from his. "Seth, I—"

"God, you taste so damn good, feel so damn good. I can't seem to get enough of you," he rasped, kissing her chin, her cheeks, her neck. "What are you, some sort of spell-wielding witch or something?"

She ignored the delight of goose bumps prickling across her flesh and pushed against his chest. "How should I know? Isn't that *your* forte?"

He blinked. "Well, yes, but..."

"See? By your own admission you have the experience and the talent to help me. Please, *please* say you'll take my case."

Seth shook his head shrugging as he spoke. "I don't understand. Why don't you know more about yourself? Why do you need to hire someone to figure out what you should already know?"

Olivia knew this was the pivotal point of his decision. She couldn't hold anything back or she might risk her only chance at answers. So she blurted it out. "Because I was adopted as a newborn. I don't have a clue who my real parents are or where I got these bizarre eyes. Or what it is within me that causes all this bad energy to follow me."

He simply stared at her as if he hadn't expected that sort of response.

"Understand now?"

He narrowed his eyes and shook his head. "They're not bizarre—they're gorgeous."

"Are you listening to me, for heaven's sake? I said—" Olivia cut herself off when his words finally penetrated her brain. She'd been about to retort, wrongly foreseeing more pigheadedness, not anticipating his flattering response. It was the second time within an hour's space he'd complimented her on her eyes. Though deeply attracted to her in other ways, every one of her husbands had been spooked by them. She'd been forced to cover them during every sex session so the use of sunglasses or contacts had become a habit to shield the men in her life from her moods.

Therefore she needed Seth to repeat himself. "What did you just say?"

"I said your eyes are gorgeous." He dragged his mouth back and forth over hers in a sweet and sexy display of seduction. "And yes I do understand, and I'm sorry to hear you've been deprived of your heritage, whatever it might be."

"So does that mean..."

He stared down at her for a long moment combing one hand through her hair while the moon-dappled light emphasized his male beauty. Her heart did a little skitter and she thought she'd never seen a more handsome, virile man in all her life. Olivia didn't know what it was about him that drew her despite his sometimes-arrogant attitude. But she knew something different and unique had formed between them, something she'd yet to experience before this night.

Then again, maybe it was his intelligence. Or simply the fact that he had a lot of experience in such odd goings on. It would consequently take a lot more to shock and scare him than it had any other man before now.

She gazed into his eyes displaying her most convincing damsel-in-distress expression. Her bottom lip went out in a pout. "Pretty please?"

It must have worked. Finally, he heaved out a sigh. "All right, I'll do it. But remember I can't promise miracles and I can't assure you I can keep you from future arrest. Shit, honestly I don't know why I'm doing this. You must be *some* Black Widow."

Despite the reference to that name she abhorred, relief washed through her like an autumn rain. "Really?" she screeched, throwing her arms around his neck and hooking her ankles behind his back. The move forced his cock an inch inside her. Together they gasped at the throbbing pleasure of it. But foremost in Olivia's core bloomed the sheer joy and relief at the prospect of finally figuring out who and what she was.

"Yes," he replied, his voice strained.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you!" She caught his mouth with hers, sucking and smacking her lips against his. Delving her tongue in, she thrust upward taking all of him inside her in one single motion.

"Christ..." he bit out, his body shuddering.

"Take me to that special place again. Please. Take me to your amazing plateau." She drew back far enough to keep the head of his rod barely inside her before she bucked upward once again taking all of him in.

He filled her up and then some, the tip of his manhood finding nerves and nooks she didn't know she had. He plunged in and pulled out, his palms grazing her from her tingling breasts, up her inner arms until he laced his fingers in hers. Holding her hands above her head and pressing them into the mattress, he drove into her with a force so hungry, Olivia felt as if they'd burst through the windows lining the head of the bed. She wanted to soar over the sea, to celebrate the hope he'd just gifted her with. And though she knew her own greed ruled, she needed to rejoice in the fueling gratification this man could easily give her libido. She'd been with many men in her twenty-nine years of life, but never one who took an interest in her not only sexually but spiritually and supernaturally as well.

Most importantly and for the first time in her life, it appeared to be without fear or prejudice.

She recognized the tingly sensation of her eyes changing, and though she couldn't see it as he claimed to, she knew her aura mirrored them in color. Multihued energy

shot off from her center and she thought of the city's fireworks display on the Fourth of July. Every chamber and cell of her heart, every sensory neuron in her body felt as if it was on overload. Her pulse rushed in her ears – or could that be the muffled song of the surf carrying through the glass of the windows?

Whatever it was, Olivia knew a moment of giddy madness when Seth released one of her wrists, quickly securing both of them with a tight, almost painful one-fisted grip. With his free hand, he reached down and clutched the cheek of her buttocks.

"Got to have it," he breathed out, pounding into her, making the bed squeak and the windows rattle. "Got to have your ass. Ah, Livvy, you make me crazy, you make me crave things I've only dreamed of until now."

At the sound of her nickname rolling off his tongue in a sexy endearment, her world shifted in some permanent way she couldn't define. "Do it, do it all to me – anything. Just make me come, make me explode however you can. I-I don't know why, but I have to have more. Always."

He growled, finding her mouth with voracity, a hungry wolf not to be stopped. She tasted mint and a zest of desire she'd never sampled before now. The heat of his muscled body warmed her nude flesh, the soft hairs on his chest tickling her already sensitive nipples. She groaned, opening wider to him, smelling the perfume of their combined desires. It worked on her senses as if she were his she-wolf mate in the full stages of heat.

She wasn't expecting the route of his exploration to move higher from her ass cheek to her lower back. He neared that forbidden area and she braced herself, prepared to yank her hands free of his hold and snatch his grip away. Olivia had always kept men's hands and eyes away from that strange triangular spot at the base of her spine. As a child, she could recall her adoptive mother refusing to talk about it and calling it a "cancer". She didn't know what it was, but she wasn't about to endure the embarrassment of him finding it during such phenomenal sex.

Thankfully his searching touch made another detour and went lower still. To prevent his return to her triangle deformity, she allowed his finger to circle the ring of her asshole. No man had ever touched her there before. Her eyes flew open. Intense lust burned in their depths. She saw the very same emotion reflected back in his irises. Their mouths never left the wet, tongue-chasing kiss, but their gazes remained locked there in that intimate moment with the clouds passing over the moon.

She instinctively tightened her rear muscles, but it didn't help. Her vaginal juices had already soaked her anus, dribbling out to slick the hole, so he gained entry with little effort. Olivia cried out, the fierce sound of it muffled by his mouth.

He grunted his satisfaction at providing her such bliss, but he wasn't done with her yet. His finger penetrated her rectum, slowly sinking to the knuckle.

Olivia thought she'd already been screaming, but the noise that resonated from her vocal cords and filled the room was like none she'd ever heard before. Even with her mouth still sealed to Seth's she sounded like a feral jungle animal gathering up all the

mating calls that had come before it in her lifetime, wiping them out and replacing them with this. With this man.

Desire didn't even come close to describing the unbearably euphoric sensations that filled her soul. That huge cock buried deep inside her, his tongue chasing hers and his finger fucking her ass, it drove her to madness. It was as if a clitoris of sorts contained within her rectum had been inside her all this time, like some hidden treasure she hadn't known was there.

Relentless, he drove into her, into every orifice. The unstoppable orgasm barreled over her, and with her body pinned to the bed she could swear a steam engine raced up the tracks, nearing her bound body, promising to take her to heaven.

Stars exploded behind her eyes filling her brain with so much color, it nearly blinded her. "Seth..." She whispered it against his mouth. Her body bowed up with her hands still secured by his strong grip.

"Mmm, I know, I know." He let out one final grunt and the heat of his ejaculation filled her womb. Gradually, his body relaxed and his breathing returned to normal. He withdrew and rolled to the side. Cold disappointment assailed her, but not for long. He turned and yanked her toward him so her body curled into his, spoon-fashion. "Sleep, go to sleep, you charming little witch you. We'll talk about the other...stuff in the morning."

In the morning. Olivia had missed the sound of that, of feeling the contentment throughout the night of a man's warm body next to hers and waking to see his face in the light of dawn. God, how she'd loved every one of her husbands. The ache at their loss and the void that had yet to be filled burned like a never-healing, raw wound.

Somehow she now sensed the commencement of healing. That is, until she slept and fell into the clutches of the nightmares once again.

* * * * *

Olivia. Olivia.

She clawed her way out of the pit of terrifying darkness, away from the ghouls and zombies and evil spirits of her nightmares, into Seth's lunar-bathed bedroom. He breathed deeply, relaxed behind her, yet every nerve in her system screamed danger just like before. Just like those days and hours prior to Howard, Phillip and Derek's passing—and her parents' plane crash. And now that she thought about it, she'd even experienced the very same sense of doom hours before the onset of two miscarriages during her marriage to Howard.

God please, not again. But she knew it with every cell of her being. Death had returned. With her eyes still shut, she spiraled into that pit of despair. Would it be Seth this time? And if so, why so soon?

She'd been in school working toward her Masters degree in chemistry when she'd gotten news of her parents' plane crash, the first of many tragic events. After

graduation, and almost two years into their marriage, there had been Howard's auto accident. A year later had brought Phillip's death by food poisoning, and seven months beyond that Derek's horrible fall from the ladder and a lethal broken neck. It seemed the timeframes between deaths were getting shorter and shorter. Here she was not even a full eight hours after meeting and sleeping with Seth and already that impending sense of doom filled her soul just as it always had right before each tragedy.

"Hello, Olivia."

Her eyes flew open and her body stiffened at the unfamiliar voice. Olivia bolted upright in bed with a shriek. Strangely Seth didn't stir yet she could still hear his even breathing. Even through the closed window Olivia had detected the breathy, nasally tone in those two words, and she'd felt the unmistakable hate emanating from the intruder.

"W-who are you?" Olivia's heart surged upward and thudded in her throat, choking her as she studied the misty apparition standing just outside the closed windows. An ominous shiver went up her spine.

The woman's hair hung to her narrow hips, its silver ropes tossed on the night sea breeze and fluttering around her bony body. Far behind her across the sloping yard, the ocean churned angrily. It seemed to spew a cloud of mist around her sharp-featured face. Her skin glowed sallow in the moonlight and she wore a long flowing gown the very same shade as her flesh. But the eyes were what drew Olivia's reluctant gaze and made her wheeze in fear. They were cesspools of fiery red with stark flecks of black floating in them. If not for the black, Olivia would have described the woman as an albino.

Am I dreaming?

"No, you're not dreaming," the woman answered, even though Olivia was certain she hadn't spoken her question out loud.

"W-what do you want? Who are you?"

"You can call me Edwina."

"Edwina?" Uncaring of her naked state, Olivia swung her legs over the edge of the bed. She had to get up, to prepare for...what, she didn't know. "I don't know anyone by that name."

Edwina shrugged with a cackle. She leaned forward, pressing her gnarly hands against the outside of the window as she peered inside. "Ah, but I know you. I know all about you, the infamous Black Widow."

At the slanderous slur, Olivia's hands fisted. She could feel her own eyes swirling into the scarlet of fury. "What do you want? Have your say and get the hell out of my dream."

The red-black gaze shifted to Seth where he lay slumbering in oblivion. She caressed him with her evil stare. "I want...him."

Olivia shot to her feet. "What?"

Edwina flicked her eyes back to Olivia. Her voice hardened. "You heard me. I said I want him."

She snorted. "Well you're not getting him."

"Oh yes, my dear, I will. If you take advantage of his knowledge and continue to use and sleep with him, I assure you I *will* take him, just like..."

Olivia took one step toward the window. "Finish your damn sentence. Just like what?"

"Just like your adoptive parents, and Howard and Phillip and Derek."

The import of her words plunged into Olivia's chest and twisted, the sharp-edged knife sensation seeming to shred her heart into ribbons. Rage and fear such as she'd never felt before, boiled in her blood. She took two more steps toward the woman, her legs trembling so violently, she feared she'd crumple to the floor. "This had better be a dream, or else I'll—"

Edwina flicked her wrist and a ball of fire shot through the glass, barreling into Olivia's abdomen. It hurled her to the floor with a blazing painful thud.

She dragged herself up, her long tresses trailing over her breasts. "You bitch!"

This has to be another nightmare. It has to!

"I'm warning you Olivia, get away from him. Leave and never come back. If you don't, you'll be very sorry."

"No one tells me what to do and no one threatens me, y-you...you ugly old hag."

Edwina flung out another sphere of energy and sent Olivia whooshing across the room. She crashed into the dresser and screamed when her head snapped back, making violent contact with wood. Sharp pain exploded in her skull making her stomach churn with nausea. Her vision blurred and stars swam in her head. She fought against the power of unconsciousness, propping herself up on one shaky elbow attempting to focus.

Seth stirred, mumbling in his sleep. Panic seized Olivia's nerves and she longed to cry out to him to remain quiet and not draw attention to himself. But the words wouldn't dislodge from her throat.

"I'm telling you, you're going to be sorry, sorry for everything," Edwina warned, her figure floating backward toward the ocean.

"I-I don't know what the hell you mean, damn you. I have nothing to be sorry for."

Suddenly Edwina's head—just her head—zipped through the glass bending but not cracking the clear surface. She thrust her pasty face a fraction of an inch from Olivia's. Her hot, foul breath suffocated Olivia, even through the glass, while her evil gaze burned into Olivia's stare. Fear skittered up her spine but she held onto every ounce of bravery she could muster.

"You have everything to be sorry for. *Everything*," Edwina snarled.

"Get away from me." She hated the shaky, cowardly sound to her voice.

Edwina's irises flamed hotter, deeper. "You're so lucky I didn't do away with you when you were born, you ungrateful little bitch."

Olivia couldn't believe her ears. She didn't even know this person or spirit or whatever it was. How could she be unappreciative toward someone she'd not even met until now? "Ungrateful? Ungrateful for—"

One of those bony hands appeared out of nowhere and slapped Olivia across the face. It stung, but it didn't hurt nearly as much as her head cracking the dresser again. Pain burst in her brain, pain so sharp she wondered how this could truly be a nightmare rather than reality. She let out another scream and with it came Seth's name.

"Huh? What..."

From her place on the floor she could see Seth's head pop up, outlined by the light of night shining behind him in the window. Regret churned in her belly. She should never have drawn attention to him.

But the ghostly apparition vanished into thin air. Relief flooded her system soothing her nerves. Still her head hurt like a son of bitch and fury roiled through her bloodstream in such a raging speed, she couldn't breathe. She fought to keep her eyes on him, struggled to remain conscious.

"Seth..." Slumping to the floor, Olivia finally welcomed the calm of blackness.

She must have been out for only a few seconds because when she opened her eyes, she saw Seth fly out of bed naked and glorious, bathed in silver lunar light. Shadows along every firm muscle emphasized his fit form. Even in all the turmoil, one thought prevailed in her mind. *God, he's one beautiful male specimen.*

He rushed to her side, his voice deep and quivering. "What the hell are you doing out of bed and on the floor?"

"I-I don't know. I must have been sleepwalking." Yes, that was it. She'd been sleepwalking during a nightmare. The most frightening one she'd ever had.

He scooped her up and carried her back to the bed. "Goddamn it, you're freezing." Seth climbed in next to her and gathered her close, tucking the blankets all around her.

She always woke up as cold as ice with the dreams, but never this chilled. Her teeth chattered as she spoke. "I-I know." She sighed as his body heat embraced her. "Seth, I don't want to wait."

His big hand stroked her back. With his cock pressed against her thigh, she could feel the beginning traces of desire, but something else had to take precedence.

"Mmm, neither do I." He kissed her neck sending goose flesh prickling down her side. Her nipples hardened instantly.

"No." Olivia cupped his face in her hands. Her breath caught at the rakish look of him, the dark hair all askew, the brawny shoulders, the lust in his eyes glittering by the waning moonlight. "I mean your experiments or whatever you need to do with me."

"The paranormal studies? Finding out what's 'wrong' with you?"

She inhaled, attempting to keep her patience in check. Deep inside, her body continued to quake at the memory of that horrid woman. "You know that's what I mean."

He drew back, his dark brows arched in surprise. "Right now?"

"Yes, right now."

"But it's—" his gaze shifted, locking on the digital clock on the satellite receiver above the television. "It's not even five-thirty in the morning."

She didn't care if it was two at night. The more that vile face flashed in her mind, the more urgent the need was. Olivia shoved the covers aside and leaped from the bed. "In my chemistry studies in school, I always did my best work late at night or very early in the morning. So get up. I need you. Now."

Olivia turned away to go fetch her clothes from the hall, but he snatched her hand, holding her back. "You really mean it? You want to waste this raging hard-on?"

Her gaze searched out his form in the faint light. Indeed, she detected the tenting of his desire beneath the blankets. Lust hit her like that ball of fire had in her dream, only with pleasant, aching need. A swift rush of passion swept through her loins making her clit throb and her slit ooze cream onto her inner thighs. She wanted nothing more than to crawl back into that bed, climb on top of him and fuck his brains out.

I'm warning you, Olivia, get away from him. Leave and never come back. If you don't, you'll be very sorry.

Edwina's words haunted her thoughts. It hadn't been real. It had been part of her usual nightmares that always foreshadowed death. But the difference now was she had someone who could help her figure the puzzle out. He could possibly prevent more tragedy from befalling the people in her life.

She had to get this ball rolling now in case Seth himself might be the next victim.

No, because Seth probably *would* be the next one.

"Let's go. Show me your lab or wherever it is you do your magic."

Olivia yanked her hand free and sauntered from the room. Seth didn't know it, but he just might be saving his own life.

Chapter Four

“Amazing.” In his basement lab, Seth sat at a computerized panel that reminded her of the spaceship controls she’d seen in science fiction movies as a girl. He turned knobs, punched buttons and studied readouts.

To obtain preliminary baselines, he had Olivia walking on the treadmill. He’d placed a blood pressure cuff on her arm, electrodes up and down her body and some weird pinching thing on her finger. She wore one of his T-shirts tied in a knot above her belly button and a pair of his smaller sweat pants with the waistband rolled down. Though she’d balked at donning them, he’d also found a pair of sneakers and socks that he’d grudgingly admitted had been left behind by a former lover. They were about a size too big, but she’d tightened the strings enough to make them work. Olivia would do whatever she had to in order to uncover the mysteries surrounding her.

“What? What’s so amazing?”

He peered over his wire-rimmed glasses at her, the aqua of his eyes taking her breath away as the brilliant light of dawn slanted in through the French doors. The lab’s single walk-out exit looked out onto a large concrete patio set below the deck. She’d noted a hot tub off to the left and the placement of a single glider swing facing toward the sea. When her eyes had first spied it, she’d longed to sit there with him and rock while they watched the sun rise. But there were more pressing things to do at the moment.

“This might sound like a strange question, but have you ever been to a doctor before?”

She thought back to her childhood though nothing came to her. “Uh, no. I can’t remember ever going to a doctor. I never had a need to—can’t recall ever being sick one day in my life. Even after hitting my head on the dresser last night I feel no residual pain.”

“Interesting...” His forehead scrunched into an adorable wrinkle that made her itch to rub his brow. “So your mother didn’t take you in for childhood check-ups?”

She thought of Myra Templeton, a somewhat eccentric woman who claimed not to believe in modern medicine or sciences. Olivia had loved her adoptive mother deeply, although there had definitely been a strange underlying vibe there. Clearly her mom had been spooked by Olivia and all the bizarre events that followed her. Maybe the anti-medical talk had all been a farce to avoid taking Olivia to the pediatrician for fear they might discover Olivia was a misfit?

“If she did it was only when I was a baby. But it ended there.”

“Then you have no medical records to speak of?”

She continued to stroll, swinging her arms as she moved. "Not that I'm aware of."

He clicked around and saved a document on the computer, twisted more dials. "So if I told you your vital signs are totally off the charts that would be the first you've ever heard of it?"

She walked a bit faster when the treadmill picked up speed. "Off the charts?"

"Yeah." He crossed his arms over his chest, slanting her a perplexed look. His chair squeaked when he leaned back and rocked. "Your core temperature is registering as one hundred twenty-two—normal, mind you, is in the ninety-eight degree range—yet you're not exhibiting an illness of any sort or even breaking out into a diaphoretic sweat. I can attest to the fact your skin felt warm to the touch, but not nearly *that* warm. Do you feel ill at all, feverish?"

One hundred twenty-two? Unnerved, she tried to appear calm, shrugging her shoulders as she strolled. "Not in the least. I feel just fine."

"Okay, well that's good. But hmm." He stroked his chin. "Your EKG, it's transmitting an extremely bizarre inverted cardiac rhythm. There's an exceptionally wide QRS complex as well as a quadruple T wave—normally there should only be one. I swear in all my years of research and studies, I've never seen such a thing before...and still have the person walking and talking."

A little flutter of apprehension's yellow flickered in her eyes. "Okay. So why aren't I having a heart attack then?"

He held up a finger and arched his brows. "Precisely one of my many burning questions. Another thing, your blood pressure—the systolic and diastolic readings seem to be flipped, and even so the readings aren't at all within normal limits when singled out. Are you sure you're feeling all right?"

"I've never felt better." *Especially after all that energizing sex.* At that thought she welcomed the distraction of the deep blue of passion along with a nice stirring in her loins. "So what's considered normal?"

"Well, typically the top number is higher. It indicates your blood pressure during ventricular contraction. The bottom one should be lower since it denotes the pressure on the vessels during cardiac relaxation. An average reading within normal healthy limits might be, say one hundred ten over sixty-five or thereabouts. Your reading on the other hand, is consistently around thirty-eight over one hundred thirty. It's opposite, almost as if your heart is pumping backward...or something."

"Figures." Olivia gripped the handrails to keep herself steady from the sudden dizziness. She wasn't sure if she wanted to hear anymore. Maybe she should abort this Frankenstein operation and just go find some remote cabin in the mountains to wither away in.

"And your pulse?" He blew out a breath. "Wow. I've never seen anything like it. It's running at about ten to fifteen."

The numbers he threw at her meant nothing unless he elaborated, but the drawn expression of concern and incredulity made her heart pound with alarm. "Ten to fifteen what?"

"Beats per minute. Normal is sixty to one hundred at rest, higher with activity...such as walking at a brisk pace on a treadmill." He slid a look at the monitor when it beeped. "Well, now there you just shot up to twenty. But that's still off-the-charts low."

Her eyes swirled into the orange of embarrassment. "So what are you trying to tell me, that I'm a freak?"

"A phenomenon maybe—a big one." He shook his head in disbelief as he studied the ongoing readouts on the screen. "Ah, and then there's your oxygen saturation, a number that basically indicates how much oxygen your blood is carrying. Yours is at two hundred seventy-five." He shoved a hand through his hair making it stand on end. She could swear his voice quivered when he spoke. "The highest ever possible is one hundred. I didn't even know the monitor could read higher than that."

"Maybe...maybe your machines are broken?"

"No, I'm sorry to say they're not broken. Before hooking you up I tried them all on me as a control, remember? And my stats were normal." He rose and stepped over to the treadmill. With an arm propped on the railing, he held her gaze, his voice low and ominous. "Olivia, the one normal vital sign is your respiratory rate. But only people who are crashing or half dead exhibit a pulse that low. And no one—*no* one—that I've heard of has ever had blood pressure, temperature, EKG or oxygen analyses like this before. It's...it's just unheard of."

She tried to ignore the tingling as her eyes morphed again. Yellow, they were now the color of trepidation. The electronic panel on the treadmill started to blink and the tread belt beneath her feet alternated stopping and starting. "Y-you're scaring me."

"I'm sorry. I'm not trying to frighten you." He touched her arm reassuringly and she experienced the wavering shift of deep emotional blue in her irises. "Look, how about you just get off that thing for now and—"

The treadmill's electrical cord crackled. She shrieked and jumped off the machine when the wall's outlet made a small explosive popping sound and started to smoke. The sudden move and her distance from the treadmill caused the EKG leads to pop off and alarms to sound over at the monitoring station. The treadmill died.

"Well." She threw out her hands in self-disgust. "See? I'm a freak. And I've killed again."

"It's just a machine, easily replaceable. And you're not a freak." He moved toward her but she held up a halting hand.

"Stop. Stop right there." Damn her eyes. Their tear-filled pools altered into the pale-blue of sadness mixed with the orange of mortification. She covered her eyes and the deformity of them as she spoke. "I'm sorry but this was a horrible mistake for me to

come here. I can't risk burning down your house or killing you just to appease a little bit of curiosity. I really should go."

She spun away from him. He had his hand clamped around her elbow before she could get a full step away.

"No, please...please don't go."

The gentle tone of his voice made the tears bulge in the corners of her eyes. She stood there, her gaze trapped by his, knowing he saw the odd colors yet he didn't seem to recoil in the least. The acrid scent of the electrical smoke burned her nostrils reminding her of all the collective damage she'd caused over the years. Accidents, fires, pain, chaos and worst of all death. She had to find out why yet she didn't want to continue wreaking havoc wherever she went, and especially upon this man she'd grown so fond of in such a short time. It was at emotional times like this she just wished she were dead in order to stop it all.

"I-I'm afraid," she whispered.

He brought her into the circle of his arms and she could have sworn her soul melted into his. The sobs tore from her stinging throat without warning. She mourned it, the way she felt so safe and calm in his embrace knowing it was only temporary. Why couldn't she feel this way all the time? Why couldn't fate or the supernatural spirits or whatever it was that plagued her just leave her alone and let her be happy?

"No, don't be afraid." His penetrating stare touched her face, first one eye then the other, her nose, her lips. "I'm here with you. I'll protect you."

Olivia inhaled smelling earthy man and the fresh aroma of soap from their morning shower. She fisted his lab coat in her hands and nuzzled his warm chest, wishing to God they could get back in that steamy shower they'd indulged in only an hour before. This time she'd devour him instead of allowing the urge of getting to the lab to take priority.

"B-but it's happening again."

"Shh, shh, it's going to be okay," he soothed, rubbing a hand between her shoulder blades, loosening that knot of tension that never seemed to go away. She shivered with delight sensing the amber of calm and relaxation glowing in her eyes. "Now tell me what it is you mean. What exactly is happening again?"

"Not counting almost catching your lab on fire, it's the dreams." A fluorescent light bulb directly above them flickered and burned out. She rolled her eyes and groaned. "See? I think it's time for me to go before your house comes crashing down around us."

"Uh-uh." He held her upper arms forcing her to look into his determined gaze. His eyes were stunning pools of turquoise magnified by his reading glasses. Something about his studious look revved her libido and made her pussy gush with cream. "You're not going anywhere, at least not until you tell me about the dreams."

She disengaged her arms and turned her back on him. If she didn't get a hold of herself and break the irresistible spell of his charms, she'd be all over him again, pathetically begging him for more sex. "All right, you want to hear the awful truth?"

"That's why we're here, why you came to see me in the first place, remember?" His voice was a deep comforting hum in her ears. He moved up behind her, blanketing her backside with his warmth. Drawing her against him so that her ass nestled his manhood, he skimmed his palms up her arms and settled them on her shoulders. She shivered when he started kneading the tight muscles there, chasing away the anxiety and dread.

"Yes, yes I know." She rested the back of her head on his shoulder and gazed out at the ocean waves as they lashed the shore in an angry tempo. "But I'm torn now between finding out the truth and just going into total seclusion. For one thing, I'm worried I might cause you harm. For another, you're verifying some very odd things about me and frankly, it's scaring the shit out of me."

She sighed out loud when he pinched and rubbed away the rigidity in her muscles.

"I understand but you've got to remember I'm a *paranormal* scientist. I've seen a lot of rarities in my time. It's old school to me." His arms came around her and held her close, rocking her from side to side. "Granted I've never recorded that particular kind of data from any human being before now, but it goes hand in hand with my field of study. Anything is possible in this universe, a fact most of my colleagues in the non-supernatural division of science refuse to believe."

His tone of resentment didn't go unnoticed. A warning flag went up. "Wait a minute." She spun around to face him. "D-do you intend to use my data to prove them wrong?"

When he only blinked in answer, she shrieked, "You promised me there would be no pictures surrendered to the media, no verbal descriptions or information handed over to *anyone*."

Anger clouded his eyes. He jammed his hands onto his hips. "Goddamn it, I never said I was surrendering your pictures or personal information to anyone, including the media or my associates."

"I heard it in your tone."

He let out a heavy breath and shoved a hand through his hair. "Okay, I'll admit I do resent their scoffing attitude toward my work, but I promise you they'll never know who you are."

She crossed her arms. "Maybe not now that you've been caught."

"That's not true."

"You planned to reveal my identity all along, didn't you? The infamous Black Widow—I bet that would net you a tidy sum from the TV tabloids."

He leaned back against the treadmill handrail looking so intellectual and ruggedly handsome it seemed he'd injected her with some sort of sexual hormone. Swiping off his glasses, he wagged them at her with a scowl.

"For one thing, do I look like I'm hurting for money? And another, there's this thing called ethics in my field of work, and believe me I'm the first to adhere to them." He

snorted. "But I can think of a few assholes who don't always follow that code, one being your Professor Billings, the man who referred you to me."

A faint rumble started beneath their feet but they both ignored it. "Whatever. But I'll have you know even though this may not go anywhere in the end, I'm still indebted to him for getting me in touch with you."

"Indebted or not, he shouldn't have given you my home address. And by the way, did you go to him anonymously or in your media costume?"

"Contact was by phone."

"Did you give him a false name? Because if you didn't, I wouldn't put it past him to make a connection between one Olivia Templeton and any identity-protected data I might release in any of my findings in the future. Believe me, the man's a shark. It would be *him* who would out you, babe, not me."

"Okay, I get it."

He let out a resigned almost apologetic sigh. "Look Olivia, I have to tell you there's something very unconventional and exciting going on here. I have my suspicions but I hope you'll understand my need to explore it further and allow me to present my findings to the sciences. With your confidentiality fully intact, that is."

She walked the few steps to his station and dropped into his desk chair. "All right, I can respect that as long as you respect my privacy."

"Done."

She stared at the crisscross of the drop ceiling panels and the many laboratory florescent lights suspended from the frame. "You mentioned suspicions. What did you mean by that?"

"I'll get into it with you very soon. But first I want to perform a few more preliminary experiments, that is, after we eat. I'm starved, how about you?"

Her stomach growled in good timing. "Famished."

"Wait right here and I'll go fetch us some breakfast. Then we'll get things under way again."

"Sounds good."

He started to turn then added, "Oh, about your dream. Can you give me a quick summary?"

Olivia debated telling him but she was certain it was somehow related to all this weird data he'd uncovered so far. So she blurted it out. "Quickest I can give is that I've always had dreams that foreshadowed my loved ones' deaths. In the past they weren't clear enough to allow me to do anything to prevent it. But last night's was very clear..."

"Really? How clear?"

"Clear enough to give you an out. There was this creepy albino-like witch who claimed that if I don't give up this search for answers and leave here at once, you..." She fiddled with a pen he'd left sitting on top of his stack of printouts.

"Yes? Me what?"

"Y-you'll be the next to die."

His lips thinned as he nodded. "I see."

She bolted from her seat and ran to him. Planting her palms on his hard chest, she looked up into his handsome face. "No you don't see. Just like all my husbands, my family, everybody, it could happen again." With each word her voice became louder, more hysterical. "At first I thought it was just a dream last night, but after all your bizarre findings I'm not so sure. Now that I look back on it she was so *real* and I truly think she meant what she said. You're possibly in danger and it's selfish of me to remain here to find out one way or the other."

He slid his arms around her, pressing her cheek against him so that she could hear his soothing steady heartbeat. He petted her hair tenderly streaming his fingers through its thickness. Warmth and a sense of genuine caring seized her. It made her feel protected in his embrace when she really had no right to allow it.

"Olivia, do you realize how many times I've been in danger on the job? As farfetched as it might sound to you I've gone head to head with Satan himself, wrathful spirits, aliens set on destroying the Earth, just to name a few. It's part of PIU's legacy and it's written into my job description no matter who I'm studying or what I'm investigating. I have all sorts of anti-this and anti-that equipment designed to detect and dispel these evil entities." He chuckled and the comforting vibration moved through her cheek and settled in her womb. "So bring on the albino witch."

She couldn't help laughing. Tipping her face up to his, her heart went into overdrive. She might only have an average pulse rate of twenty, but at the moment, it had to be exceeding two hundred. "Are you sure?"

"Positive." He kissed her forehead and released her. "There's no way you're leaving even if said albino holds a gun to my head. Now you go on over there and sit down like a good little girl while I go and get us some breakfast."

"But—"

"Go, shoo," he teased, waving a hand at her as he shuffled backward toward the stairs. "Wait for me out on the patio."

He slipped through the door and she stood there for a long moment staring after him. Starved, he'd said. She slid her hand down to rub herself through the sweat pants and replied under her breath, "Honey, you have no idea what starved is."

* * * * *

"Have you ever heard of a Chameleon?" He plopped a spoonful of strawberries onto the steaming-hot crepe, squirted a dollop of whipped cream on top and rolled it all up like a burrito.

The Atlantic breeze blew in misty and cool carrying with it the thick scent of salt. Olivia tucked her wind-tossed hair behind her ears and snuggled deeper under the

blanket he'd brought her. She opened wide for a bite of her own paper-thin, fruit-filled wrap, grateful he'd thought to include the small warmer to keep them fresh.

"Sure," she mumbled around a mouthful of peach and crepe, "the color-changing slimy lizards that've taken over the South."

He washed down the bite with a sip of his orange juice then tilted his head to the side. "Correction. They're not slimy, they're more like smooth leather. And they can also be found in Africa, Hawaii, Asia and other places besides in the southern parts of the United States. But that's not the kind of Chameleon I'm referring to."

He'd prepared their breakfast on a tray and had set it upon a small outdoor patio table just far enough in front of the glider to allow them to gently swing as they ate. She gazed out at the view with a wistful sigh, certain she could sit here forever. The sloping yard met the strip of sandy beach and she marveled at Seth's good fortune to have access to such powerful beauty whenever he chose to indulge in it. It was the most serene breathtaking meal she'd ever partaken of with the rising orange sun bobbing on the distant surface of the dark sea.

She popped the last bite in her mouth and picked up her steaming cup of black coffee. Sated, she glided with Seth back and forth, back and forth. A blooming sense of gratitude overpowered her at being given the opportunity to finally relax and watch the waves crashing below.

Sitting here as she was next to him while hugging her warm mug and listening to the seagulls, it touched something deep inside her, something so poignant she didn't know how to describe it. Every one of her senses sparked on overload and yet strangely, she didn't feel the usual chaotic energy electrocuting the space around her. The ground didn't rumble beneath her feet and the windows behind her didn't rattle. She could hear—even feel—the lulling power and ebb of the ocean. It and all that surrounded her caused her to experience a rare spiritual peace.

Her eyes had stayed amber for some time now, and again that consuming sensation of coming home seized her. Not wishing to let her sappy emotions rule her, she ignored it and replied, "Oh? I didn't know there was any other kind than a lizard."

He nodded, sliding his plate onto the low table. "There's rumored to be a breed of witches and warlocks in the Salem area called Chameleons." He swung his gaze to her and the hue of his eyes deepened with intensity as he stared at her. "It's reported one very notable trait is that they have stunning eyes that...that change color with their moods."

Olivia choked on her coffee. The sudden movement caused the hot liquid to slosh onto the blanket spread across her lap. "What?"

"Let me have that before you burn yourself." Seth took the cup from her and set it on the table next to the can of whipped cream. He settled back and shifted so he faced her. "Are you okay?"

Okay? No, she couldn't freaking breathe. Her heart thumped erratically out of control, echoing in her ears while she struggled for every respiration. "How many beats

per minute did you say my heart rate runs? Because right about now I've got to be around a thousand. Care to repeat that thing you just said, you know, about eyes and Chameleons?"

He took her trembling hands in his and rubbed them chasing away the sudden chill. "Want to go inside?"

"No. Just tell me now, damn it. Tell me everything."

He lifted her hands to his mouth and kissed both of her knuckles. Damn her nymphomaniac's libido. Her pussy ached with a fiery unquenchable need. A need that would have to take a backseat for the moment.

"You sure?"

"Totally." She yanked her hands from his. "Now spill it."

He drew in a deep breath, blew out an even longer one. Throwing his arm over the back of the glider he absently rubbed her shoulder with his thumb. "There's only been one paranormal scientist to reportedly come into contact with one. This was about three decades ago, but he's since passed on. During his time though, he was a highly respected scientist in my field of study, a man to be believed."

"Okay, okay, go on."

"Anyway, there'd been some sort of talk stirred up about this small town you may or may not have heard of. Perish, Massachusetts. It was a thriving settlement outside Salem around the time of the witch trials. Suddenly over three hundred years ago it was abandoned by its people and left as a ghost town. Around thirty years ago a distant relative of one of the townspeople had tried to find the site, but it seemed no one could ever locate it, or rather it was as if there was an invisible shield around it."

Fascinated, Olivia gawked, "You mean no one could get in?"

He nodded, kneading her shoulder as he relayed his story. Goose bumps prickled across her flesh and she snuggled closer to him, drawing the blanket up tighter around her. "Not only could they not get in, they couldn't find it. These relatives of former Perish residents kept going around and around in the woods at the reported location only to continually find themselves back at the place where they'd started. There were strange incidents, reports of these relatives experiencing bizarre supernatural activities as they tried to find Perish. After repeated failings and becoming irreversibly spooked they finally sought out the paranormal researcher I spoke of. Leo Millstein was his name."

"So what's this town have to do with Chameleon witches?"

Seth drew her closer tucking her head beneath his chin. She listened to his voice over the surf, like a child fascinated by a fairytale. "Well, Leo went out to the site alone to investigate. He ran into a beautiful brunette woman—a witch he soon discovered—whose intent seemed to be to deter him from his snooping. In the process he saw things, magical things as her temper grew."

"Like what?"

"Streaks of fire shooting from her fingertips, volatile mood swings...the earth quivering beneath his feet."

"Oh. My. God."

He squeezed her tight. "You okay, you want me to go on?"

"Yes, yes."

"All right. So it seems she used her witchy wiles on him and went about seducing him until he dropped his investigation. It was the start of an affair that lasted several months, and let's just say she kept him so busy he never returned to Perish...or maybe she cast a spell on him preventing him from returning?"

She supposed he stopped for dramatic affect, but when she sat there staring at him speechless, he went on.

"Nonetheless he passed away about ten months into the relationship. But in his journal documentations—which I was lucky enough to recently get my hands on—he reported that her eyes turned colors, for instance a deep glittering blue with passion. And her sexual appetite was insatiable. She needed it at least daily...just like you."

She tipped her head back and looked up into his guarded gaze. The rising sunlight caused the striking pools to sparkle making her think of sultry tropical waters. Hot, she suddenly felt so hot. Even with the implications of his eerie story she couldn't seem to control her raging hormones. Throwing the blanket off, she bolted to her feet and turned. The move forced the glider into motion and the backs of her knees bumped the table.

"No."

He held her stare and slowly, hesitantly took one of her hands. It felt large and warm as he threaded his fingers into hers. "Yes."

"You can't be serious." She laughed nervously. "You really think I'm a *witch*?"

"I...I don't know for sure. But I'd really like the chance to explore and find out."

His intent hit her like a fat fist. She tore her hand from his. The winds whipped up, blasting inland, making the coffee mugs rattle on the table, courting her rising mood. Though the morning sun shone bright and there wasn't a cloud in the sky, thunder rumbled above.

"So all you really care about is me being your guinea pig, your lab rat?" God, why had she come here? This wasn't what she'd been expecting. A spirit haunting her and causing havoc in her wake maybe, but never the possibility she was a freaking witch!

He furrowed his brow and got to his feet. "No, no, that's not true."

Her eyes morphed into sunny, anxious yellow. She pressed an unsteady hand to her chest. "Oh Jesus, I'm a freak, a lab experiment."

"You're not an experiment, damn it. This possibility of you being a Chameleon witch is *incredible*. I don't see you as a freak at all—I see you as amazing, a gift of supernatural nature." He reached out a hand to draw her near. "Come here and let's—"

"No! Don't touch me." She retreated two steps and her eyes swirled—from yellow to a reluctant deep blue passion, then to the red of anger. The moods rippled through her making her body tremble with the power of it. She tipped her head back and stared up at the azure sky, praying for relief as hot tears stung her cheeks. Throwing her arms wide, she shouted, "*Please* someone just put me out of my cursed misery."

An underlying shimmer of electricity moved from that strange triangular thing at the small of her back, up her torso and into her arms. She gasped, her eyes widening when lightning streaks to match the colors of her irises shot upward from her fingertips and disappeared into nothingness. The force of it brought her to her knees and she screamed, not in pain but with the euphoria of it.

The orgasm racked her body contorting it as she pulled in a ragged lungful of air. Her gaze slowly rose to snare Seth's astonished gaze. "I...oh wow."

He stooped down and cupped her face. "A-are you all right?"

"I-I-I've never felt better."

"You sure?"

"I'm sure, except..."

His eyes rounded and he went pale. "What? Should I call the paramedics?"

Though her heart did a little hitch at his concern, desire took over boiling in her blood. It was as if the sudden sexual climax had only been the start, just a taste of what was to come. She wanted—needed—him inside her as soon as humanly possible.

Her irises swirled to blue. "No, but I'd love it if you'd give me mouth-to-mouth."

She launched herself at his crouched form, her mouth sealing hungrily to his. He broke their fall against the glider and welcomed her into his arms. His mouth tore into hers as he stood then fell backward onto the swing with her limbs locked around him. Wiggling her legs out from behind to straddle him, she ripped her mouth from his and reached down to fumble with his belt.

"Undo this thing, quickly. I need you. I need you inside me."

Seth brushed aside her hands and took over the task. "Here? Outside?"

"Yes, right here. I'm so ready, so turned on there's no way I could wait long enough to get in the house."

At her assent he released himself—an enormous cock even in its half-hard state. Her mouth watered as she looked down in the V of her spread thighs and studied his long thickness. It was slightly curved in its rising state of arousal and the rounded head with its glistening slit made her yearn to devour him.

"Mmm, I need to taste you."

He sucked in a breath when she closed her hand around his girth and shifted so she knelt in front of him. She flicked her tongue out tasting the salty, slightly bitter flavor of his pre-cum. Slowly Olivia took all of him into her mouth.

"Jesus!" he hissed through clenched teeth anchoring his fingers in her hair. His leg muscles went taut beneath her breasts making the areolas pucker against the cotton of her shirt.

Olivia swirled her tongue along his shaft, marveling at how it seemed to go from spongy to hard in seconds. She wrapped her hand around the base and slid her mouth up and down, circling him, tasting his desire for her. Pulling back, she grazed her tongue up along the veiny flesh, entranced by the satiny smoothness of his penis. It wasn't long before he went fully hard. Relaxing and opening her throat, she took as much of him in as she could.

He groaned, slowly, regretfully pulling her head up and away from his full erection. Cupping her jaw while he panted, he held her gaze, trapping her eyes by the glittering lust in his own. "You said you wanted me inside you. That's not happening if you keep this up."

Seth scooted forward and yanked her up to a standing position. "Take off your shoes."

Her fingers dug into his deltoids as she toed off the sneakers and kicked them to the side. She planted the soles of her stockinged feet flat against the cool concrete, waiting, anticipating. Her blood roared in her ears at the mental image of the two of them nude while outdoors. Beneath the stark blue sky, they would make love while the threat of boats or beachcombers heightened the excitement. Her loins quickened, eager for her first outdoor, penetrating invasion.

"Look at you, so sexy and beautiful out here in the sunlight," he rasped, drawing her pants down and tugging them off. Still sitting, he guided her so she stood between his knees. He studied the nakedness of her lower half, from the knot of the shirt down to her feet. Her cunt throbbed when he paused at her labia, licking his lips and visually examining her swollen sex-lips. "Mmm, and such a pretty, moist pussy."

His large hands spanned her hips digging into her flesh as his perusal continued to caress her. Her ass faced the sea and she wondered with a gallop in her chest if there was anyone watching—or rather, she hoped they watched.

At that thought she shivered and he asked, "Cold?" His hands reached around and kneaded the globes of her rear, stretching her holes for anyone to see.

Cool October air tickled her anus and blew up and across her damp slit, but she let out a welcoming sigh. "No, I'm hot, so hot."

He nodded, growling, "That you are."

Seth dragged the T-shirt up exposing her breasts. The winds tossed her hair and whistled around the eaves of the house, the chill of it making her nipples go hard. But intent on soothing away any of her discomfort, he ducked his head to her breasts, the heat of his mouth warming one slope while a hand closed protectively over the other.

Her eyelids grew heavy and she could swear her muscles went to liquid beneath his touch. It was so liberating and empowering to stand here like a shrine before him, before the whole world. She gave herself up to him, her breath catching on a sob when

he moved lower still and flicked his tongue into her navel, then around the bud of her clitoris.

Stretching her lips apart, he drew back and studied her engorged pearl and creamy tunnel. "Ah, you've totally bewitched me. I don't think I've ever seen a body as gorgeous as yours."

"Now," she whispered, pulling his head up before he could return to her pussy. "I can't wait. I need you inside me right this minute."

He reached around her, he snatched up the can of whipped cream and squirted a swell of white on each of her breasts. Looking up at her with a wicked twinkle in his eyes, he replied, "Sure. But after I have dessert."

With that he added a large mound of fluffy cream to her cunt. It was cold and sticky against her nipples and mons. But it didn't stay that way for long. He tugged her closer and stretched upward, swiping the cream off first one breast, then the other. Fire coursed through her veins and shot straight to her womb. Above thunder rumbled again, and she could hear the waves lashing against the shore, faster, louder with each inch he descended. He reached her pussy and opened his mouth taking in the entire swirl of topping. His tongue circled around and around, first cleaning off her lips, then homing in on her clitoris.

"Christ, that feels so good." She moaned and her head fell back, her long hair brushing her bare ass. With heavy lids, she gazed up at the pristine sky realizing a moment of sheer insanity.

His tongue probed through her slit finding first her cleft, next her sensitive bead. When her knees buckled at the sudden wave of lust heating deep inside her loins, he caught her at the hips and held her V tight against his face. His tongue did wicked, wicked things to her, circling, fluttering, pressing, sucking.

She finally gave herself up to the incinerating fire of it, digging her hands into the meat of his shoulder muscles. The orgasm whipped through her system like a constant, never-ending bolt of lightning. She screamed out her release, aware the ground shook beneath her feet and the tide roared behind her as if a typhoon had just rushed to shore.

Bending forward, her lower body moved away from the tender aftermath kisses he showered over her pussy. Her head went limp, falling to his shoulder. She breathed in, attempting to catch her breath. "I...I doubt that oxygen level...in my blood is still at two hundred seventy-five. I-I can't breathe."

He chuckled and took her hands in his, drawing her onto his lap so that she straddled him again. When she shuddered he murmured, "Come closer. I want to get you warm." He pulled her near so her swollen wet labia pressed against the tip of his granite-hard erection. When he wrapped the thick blanket around her and burrowed into her cocoon, she knew a moment of vulnerability that seemed to melt the deep-rooted fear and pain away from her heart.

Without warning he thrust upward, plunging into her depths. Complete. She felt so complete and fulfilled. It was almost too intense to bear so she squeezed her eyes shut

and dropped her head forward onto his shoulder. But there was no rest for the nymphs of the world, she mused in her sex-clouded state of mind. Instead she gave herself up to the sudden onslaught of renewed desire letting out a feral mewl of satisfaction.

With the surrender, emotion overtook her. She gasped when her irises shifted into a color she hadn't experienced in a long, long while.

Pink. The shade of love.

She'd adored all three of her husbands but the shade had always been an icy pink with them, almost as if she'd withheld some of the hue of her love. But this—ah, this time it was hot pink, so scorching it nearly singed her eyeballs and made them water. The realization of it—of what the color might mean—shocked her, almost distracting her from the sensual act.

No, she couldn't think of even the remotest possibility of such a thing. At the moment she needed her sexual fuel, and the hours and days to come were important in discovering what was wrong with her.

If she truly was a Chameleon witch or just a freak of nature.

Olivia shook the troubling thought from her mind and wound her arms around his neck. Their combined heat within the circle of the blanket quickly warmed her flesh and chased away the chill. She began to move on him, lifting up and down, impaling herself time and time again on his shaft.

Intimacy, she wanted more of it. Her mouth found his and she tasted the sweetness of berries along with her own honeyed spice. Chasing his tongue, she sucked him into her, voracious and wild. He gave back what she took, hungry too it seemed for something deeper, something more powerful.

"Olivia..." He tasted the column of her neck, moving lower until he could fill his mouth with one breast. His hands were everywhere, momentarily caressing the sensitive flesh of her anus, kneading her rear, dragging up and down the sides of her spine. When one fingertip briefly skimmed that strange triangular spot at the base of her spine, she stiffened.

But he seemed not to notice the deformity and instead splayed his fingers over her hips. Lifting her, he slammed her down on his cock. She whimpered, jolting when the tip of him grazed her G-spot. The ripples started deep inside her, faint at first, like flutters of a feather. She leaned away arching backward in capitulation, for once rejoicing in the strength of her coming passion.

Come to me. Fill me with the power, the power, the power...

She didn't know where the words came from. They echoed in her head in a chant, in a voice that was yet wasn't her own. With the mantra came a gradual sense of suction behind her breastbone and down into her tailbone. It was as if her heart drew from somewhere, from something.

Her thoughts scattered into shards of color finally coming together with one thought, one goal. Empowerment. She was so empowered by desire, by Seth, by

making love outdoors in the open, that there was no possible way of analyzing what was happening to her.

He thrust into her in one long final stroke and she welcomed the climax, drinking it in with her sexual thirst. It lashed through her like the force of the sea behind her, drawing and ebbing, rising and flowing along the abyss, into space. Thunder crashed above them, and it wasn't until the orgasm reached its final summit that the jagged bolt of lightning surged downward from the clear sky and struck her in the chest.

A stunned cry tore from her bowed throat. She drowned in the complete bliss of it, in pleasure so severe it almost hurt. There were no words to describe the extreme euphoria that seized her. Blazing energy filled every vessel in her taut body while Seth penetrated her to her very core. It was as if she had been reaching for this plateau all of her adult life, climbing, scaling, grasping, but never quite arriving at that nameless place she sought.

At long last it had come—*she* had come. And while she didn't comprehend the meaning of it yet, she rejoiced in it.

She'd been reborn.

It was with that poignant thought that Olivia heard Seth's groan of release. She welcomed the burn of his hot seed deep within her womb only seconds before the force sent her spiraling into blackness.

Chapter Five

He scooped her up and rushed inside cradling her unconscious form against his chest. Shock and heavy emotions he refused to identify drove him in a panicked sprint to the back of the laboratory. The room he took her to consisted of nothing more than four walls, a double-sized bed, a dresser and a high basement window. It was his place of solace following those manic episodes of all-night research. He'd collapsed many a time on this bed, he mused, but never had he welcomed a woman into it.

When he laid her gently upon the bedspread, she smiled sleepily and turned onto her side with a contented sigh.

"So much for calling 9-1-1," he muttered.

"Huh?" She kept her eyes closed but propped herself up on an elbow.

He set his hand on her shoulder to urge her to lie down. Her skin felt so soft, like the texture of rose petals in his palm. "You okay?"

She nodded, settling back into the fluffy pillow and murmured, "Yeah, I feel like a new person. But I'm so, so tired. Can I nap for a bit?"

"Sure, sure you can."

At her lucid response his muscles had come unwound as if he'd been pulling back on a tightly drawn bowstring and had bit by bit let it loose. Worry had plagued him over her safety, but now that he was assured she was all right, he indulged himself in studying her exquisiteness instead.

Seth stood there looking down at her as she fell back into a deep, relaxed sleep. He had never in all of his thirty-six years seen a woman so breathtakingly stunning. Nor had he experienced the extreme levels of passion he did when her limbs were wrapped around him and her slick passage gloving him. He marveled at the renewed stirring in his loins even now. Christ, he had but to look at her and she got his blood boiling, as if lava flowed in his veins.

And son of a bitch, what had that fiery bolt of lightning been about? While the wind whipped up and the sea thrashed, he'd first opened his eyes to see her arching backward, almost as if she taunted the energy above to strike her directly in the heart. Once he'd concluded she must simply be in a state of euphoria, his first instinct had been to run and fetch his anemometer. He would have been able to measure the volatile air velocity she seemed to be stirring up, as well as the fluctuating temperatures and highly charged air pressure just prior to the strike.

But that impulse had quickly gone by the wayside, not only due to the fevered state of excitement she'd had him in, but because of what had come next. Her lips had been curved into a witchy sort of smile and her voice had gone all husky.

Come to me. Fill me with the power, the power, the power...

He'd heard it echoing around him, in him. It had been her voice all right, but her mouth hadn't moved. Energy had crackled in the space between them immediately following that breathy song. There had been the astonishing phenomena of crashing thunder in a clear sky and that electric shock of lightning.

At first her scream had chilled him to the bone yet her cry had quickly slid into carnal gratification in its melody. God help him, he'd thought her dead initially and had come damn near to losing his erection—until he'd seen that look of complete empowerment and fulfilled lust on her face. That was when the force of it had passed into him and brought him to an untold level of euphoria.

It was all too obvious anyone directly assaulted by that many volts for that length of time would have been fried to death.

But not perhaps a Chameleon.

Looking at her now he wondered at the bright pink aura that seemed to smolder around her. Before this last round of lovemaking, he'd yet to detect that particular color. He'd first noticed its gradual emergence minutes ago toward the end of their extraordinary joining. Maybe it was related to the streak of lightning or perhaps her current contented slumber? To start testing the waters he'd have to set up some equipment capable of detecting excessive ions and electromagnetic fields emitted from objects. One way or another, he would uncover everything about her if it killed him.

She turned onto her back. The edge of the blanket just barely covered her upturned nipples and the swell of each mound hugged a most delectable deep cleavage. Her skin was the shade of cream, so very stark against the midnight black of her streaming tresses. With her full lips pursed and the dark fan of lashes across her high cheekbones, he thought of Sleeping Beauty.

He longed to remove the stress the Black Widow media circus had caused her. He wanted to be her prince, to go to her and kiss her to wakefulness, to bring her to the height of lustful pleasure time and time again. Ah, but she looked so peaceful lying there he hesitated to disturb her. With the nightmares of only hours ago and the exhaustion brought on by all that strenuous lovemaking, he decided she needed her rest.

And he needed to do some nosing around.

Seth reached out to draw up one of her eyelids, curious to see if her irises matched her aura as they'd seemed to earlier, but she turned again and he jerked his hand back. This time she curled into a ball with her bare back to him. That was when he saw the strange triangular spot above the crease of her buttocks.

He would have missed it if he hadn't been drawn to the silky texture of her skin and those bombshell curves. His eyes widened and his heart beat erratically at every pulse point in his body. He knelt at the bedside examining the small of her back. The nearly indiscernible skin-like center with a three-sided outline was set flush with and

just above her tailbone. It was about the size of a plum and it appeared to have its own discreet compartment merged to her spine.

Like a battery cavity inside one of his spirit gauges, he mused.

What was this unique feature of hers and where would he even begin to research such an extraordinary finding?

His gaze snapped upward unseeing. "That's it, Leo's journal," he whispered. "How could I forget?"

Seth got to his feet and tucked the blanket around her curvy body. He squelched the urge to climb into bed with her. "No, there's a lot of work I can do while she sleeps," he muttered under his breath as he spun away from her.

The journal called to his curiosity so much so that he came very near to abandoning his other data-gathering plans. He had a burning urge to dive right into the book's pages, but instead he used it as a reward. He'd indulge himself in Leo's chronicles once he had all his paranormal equipment set up.

First, he dialed PIU and informed his crew they'd need to function without him for the next two days. They had several important contracted jobs lined up for the week including a de-haunting in an old eighteenth-century farmhouse outside Boston, reports of UFOs in rural New Jersey and the investigation of what a young couple insisted was their three-year-old daughter's demonic possession.

While all of those events were as interesting as hell to him, he'd be damned if he'd give up an opportunity to investigate a possible Chameleon. He could just see his article in the *Journal of Exceptional Science* disproving all his skeptics. Ah, and he couldn't wait to perch his Science Breakthrough Award statue on his fireplace mantel in the living room.

With the mental image of himself walking across that stage to receive that much-sought-after icon of success, he went about first reactivating the wireless infrared monitor system throughout the laboratory. He turned dials, punched buttons, setting it to Fahrenheit and upping the emissivity. The laser temperature assessment apparatus worked well out in the field detecting spirits. There was no reason to believe it wouldn't come in just as handy indoors.

Next he fired up the motion detector system complete with a chiming alarm and remote control. He engaged the computer-operated sound recorder and opened the software that would pick up and record activity sent to it by the motion detector locations. The video recorder he planned to place at Olivia's bedside would also transmit recordings of any activity or ordinary—make that extraordinary—energy fields as they occurred.

With the software now running in monitor mode on one computer, he moved to the next station and instructed the environment gauge to upload any data for light, sound and changes in humidity and temperature in the lab and its surrounding areas. Once he had that program operating smoothly, he rummaged through storage drawers for an

extra hand-held electromagnetic field meter. Finding one of many, he slid it into his pocket for later use.

Finally, he rolled the electron video camera setup into the bedroom. It took him several minutes, but he quietly succeeded in synchronizing it to record and communicate with the main station while positioned at the foot of the bed.

Drawing the EMF device from his pants pocket, he slid the switch to the on position, watched the dial spin and the digital LED readout flicker. His curiosity had gotten the better of him. What, he wondered, would electrical and magnetic sensitivity levels be on her body and in her aura when taking into account her ability to blow light bulbs and having survived that astounding zap by lightning?

Well, he intended to find out. Holding it over her body with the sensor pointed directly at her, he waited for the gauges to home in and read her energy level or any paranormal “hot spots”. He’d been born with a similar sixth sense in being able to detect human and animal auras, but this device would scientifically quantify any electrical and magnetic energies he might not be able to pick up with his naked eye.

“Holy crap,” he muttered under his breath. He watched as the dial went haywire then proceeded to bury itself beyond the highest number on the panel. It quivered as if it attempted to move farther off the face. It made him think of his speedometer in his old dragster he’d had as a teen. At breakneck speeds he’d whooped out shouts of victory watching that small bar disappear as the wind tore through his hair and the motor screamed.

Since meeting Olivia last night it felt as if he’d climbed right back into that speeding vehicle and raced straight to the moon.

The digital window suddenly drew his eye. He shook his head in disbelief as the numbers went up and down, over and over, finally settling at the high end before blinking. The EMF device spat and sputtered in his hand warming to an almost too hot temperature before gradually flickering out.

“Shit.” He rapped it against his leg, flipped the switch off, on, off, on. But it had been fried in her company, just like the lights.

He thought of all his precious equipment in the lab and prayed to whatever gods there might be out there to keep them all safe from harm. It wasn’t a monetary concern—he had plenty of state grants to utilize as well as his own fortune—it was the worry over losing good solid recorded evidence to support his theories. He really should look into getting a generator, he decided as he turned and left the bedroom.

Well, for now he had plenty of backup EMF gadgets in addition to lots of other equipment he could utilize if and when the time came. He strode to the panel station and tossed the dead device in the trashcan before flipping switches and engaging more computer monitors. Stepping back he stroked his jaw until the screens blipped on and focused on Olivia still slumbering in bed.

His heart fluttered at what he saw on the screen. Even though he knew her multicolored changing aura had indicated something unprecedented, this confirmed it.

Yes, she was definitely more than human. Even now from the paranormal meter to the station her body heat transmitted an infrareddish tone surrounding the pink he'd just noted. Exactly what sort of creature she was would take time to narrow down though more and more, he suspected her to be a true Chameleon witch.

Elated at his newest data and satisfied he could keep an eye on her while he worked, he crossed to his desk and settled into his leather chair. He yanked on the desk-lamp chain, slid on his reading glasses and tried to tame the excitement that pumped through his system at what more he might find in Leo's journal. Eager for answers he speed-read as he flipped through the yellowed pages of the old book and found the spot where he'd left off after first receiving the journal.

He'd been at it for a good half hour when his gaze at last located the one word that had been evading his memory.

Trifed.

"Ah, here we go." He moved his finger along the page and read Leo's scrawled notation about his lover.

Her skin is like alabaster yet she possesses one notable defect at the base of her spine. A triangular-shaped outline almost so flush with the surrounding skin as to be undetectable. I inquired as to what its purpose was. Her response was rather curious... "It's my powers' source, a Chameleon trifed. And don't you ever touch it."

He gnawed on a pen as he stared across the space of the lab at Olivia's still form on the screens. "Hmm, a power source. A Chameleon's battery of sorts to fuel their magic, maybe?" He shook his head. "Amazing."

Seth had come into the journal practically by accident days ago when Leo's sister had suddenly donated her brother's research documents to PIU. It was almost an omen or fate that it had fallen into his lap with such good timing. Now here Seth was with a gorgeous woman out cold in the bedroom. She had those amazing hue-changing eyes and an anomaly that appeared to match the *trifed's* description on Leo's lover from decades ago.

Getting more curious by the second, he thumbed through more pages. Something—a name—caught his attention.

Mia Foxe.

Leo's witch had been named Mia Foxe. If Olivia truly was a Chameleon as he strongly suspected, could Leo's lover of almost thirty years ago be one of Olivia's blood kin? He recalled Olivia mentioning the fact she'd been adopted and knew nothing of her heritage. Perhaps this was a start to alleviating her distress and confusion over her "talents". Even if this Mia was a distant relative within the same race, she just might be able to provide Olivia answers to the mysteries that surrounded her birthright and "talents".

That is, if Seth could locate Ms. Foxe. And if she still lived.

He fired up his desktop computer and went right to the search engine. Nothing could have surprised him more than to get an instant hit on her. He clicked on the link

and studied the page, his stomach doing flips and his jaw falling open when he read a listing of her previous addresses.

One Mia Foxe—now Mia Warwick who had recently married a man by the name of Abraham Warwick—had owned and lived in Seth’s house around the time of her affair with Leo!

Seth let out a low whistle. “Holy shit.”

He opened more links and studied them all, saving the relevant ones in his favorites file and printing off the listing of Mia Warwick’s current address.

But Olivia called to him like a siren of the sea. His gaze kept drifting to her, to the voluptuous figure on the station’s screens. He longed to go and stretch out next to her, to take her in his arms and protect her from whatever ailed her. And he needed to bury himself inside her tight sopping sheath again. He groaned in bliss as his cock tingled, slowly hardening in anticipation at another mind-boggling round of sex with her.

Finally he gave in to the urge and closed down his desktop computer. As it went through the shut-down process he slipped upstairs and quickly gathered some lunchmeat, bread, cheese and wine. She would be starved by the time she awakened—probably for sex more than anything—so he’d have food ready to supply them both with energy.

Just as he returned and set his foot on the bottom step, the motion detector alarm let out its first beep. It gradually escalated into a chaotic tune. He rushed to the station and almost simultaneously he saw the movement on the monitors. Olivia started to thrash and kick off the blanket in her sleep leaving herself naked and vulnerable. Over the station’s speaker system he heard her moan. It intensified into a close-mouthed shriek that sounded so eerie it curdled Seth’s blood and had him dumping their lunch onto the counter.

The screams grew louder, deeper and more terror-filled. As she started to fling her arms and legs haphazardly, Seth noticed the faint outline of another infrareddish apparition at Olivia’s bedside. Suddenly the bedroom portal slammed shut and Seth bounded around his desk. He sprinted toward the back of the lab, unsure and terrified at what he might find when he got to her.

It wasn’t until he reached the door and found it as cold as ice and the doorknob frozen in place that he admitted Olivia was in grave danger. The extreme temperature change told him he was up against an evil entity, and he hadn’t thought to account for the possibility before leaving her alone.

* * * * *

Olivia’s eyes shot open. She stared into red and black pits of raw rage surrounded by cold white marble. She would have gasped if it wasn’t for the gnarly hands choking her. Lying naked in the bed, her body was soaked with the suffocating perspiration of fear yet the room felt as frigid as a freezer, so very cold her nipples were like peaks of ice. She looked up into the face from her previous nightmare, that evil woman with

sunken cheeks and a pale complexion. Edwina's long silver hair hung down framing the sallow face and spilling onto Olivia's chest. The woman's hot breath engulfed Olivia and she detected the unmistakable nauseating odor of dead fish.

"Didn't I tell you to leave?" Edwina's demanding voice made Olivia think of a hissing viper. "To get away from him?"

"Stop," she managed to squeak out, but that would be the extent of her fight. Though she could spatially feel her body, something shadowy blanketed her, holding her captive. Olivia longed to kick, to scream, to slap this vile creature away from her but she couldn't move. Her strength had somehow been drained.

"Well you can bet now he's as good as dead," Edwina growled, squeezing tighter.

Olivia saw stars and knew the clutches of unconsciousness—or perhaps death itself—drew nearer.

"Dead, you hear me?" Edwina shook her by the throat so violently Olivia's teeth rattled. "If you don't leave today, I'll—"

At the crashing of the door Edwina's gaze snapped up. She kept her fingers curled around Olivia's neck but she pivoted her head and snarled like a satanic fiend. "Get back, you bastard. Get back I tell you or you will regret it!"

Olivia drew in a burst of air when Edwina's grip loosened momentarily. Though her head was still held in place, she was able to track her stare to the right to search out the other object of Edwina's wrath. Terror had Olivia's pulse beating out of control when she saw Seth standing there framed by the doorway. She let out a raspy cry of warning but Edwina cut the words off with a sharp press of her thumbs over Olivia's Adam's apple.

No! Get out of here, leave before she kills you!

She was terrified for his safety yet she couldn't help feeling relieved and giddy, almost like her hero had come to save her in her dream. He wore his glasses and the same jeans and shirt he'd had on outside when they'd made love in the glider. His dark hair stood boyishly on end as if he'd been shoving his hands through it while concentrating on some frustrating research project in his lab. His wide chest rose and fell with his anger while his breath came out in huge white plumes in the coldness of the room. He held his hands fisted at his sides. The look of murder in the stunning pools of his eyes made the last traces of alarm slowly dissipate.

So handsome and sexy. Even in her dream-induced state of confinement her heart did a little stutter and pitter-patter.

Edwina chanted something indiscernible and nodded her head toward the door. Fire shot from her eyes, striking Seth in the chest. It was then Olivia realized this wasn't a dream. She was wide awake, being held immobile by an unknown force with some devil woman's crushing grip around her neck. And it seemed Edwina would be carrying out her threat of murder this very moment if Olivia didn't break free very soon.

No, no, no! She screamed it inwardly when Seth's big body went airborne flying backward and crashing into a cabinet just outside the door. The sickening thud it made seemed to incite a power in Olivia she didn't know she had. The room started to tremble and she could feel her body tensing, gradually being released from the invisible bonds.

She came up with a growl and flung her fist around in an arc catching Edwina along her bony jaw. Her head snapped back and the force caused Edwina to release Olivia's neck. Edwina quickly returned her volatile gaze to lock onto Olivia's. Her eyes swirled into total blackness and winds started to whip around her tossing her long white locks and thin gown.

"You bitch."

"*You're* the bitch," Olivia bit out, leaping from the bed. "What is *wrong* with you anyway? What the fuck do you want from me?"

"I want you gone from here. I want you to move to the other side of the world and never come back, or by Gorgon, I'll kill you too." She seemed to zip toward Olivia, her voice a seething snarl of hatred. From this close Olivia could feel the rage vibrating off Edwina's form.

Edwina reached around Olivia's nude body and fumbled at that triangular deformity she'd always hidden from her lovers and kept covered as a child due to her mother's aversion to it. Olivia tried to step out of reach but Edwina's skeletal fingers scratched the surface of her anomaly.

"Don't you even touch her *trifed* or I'll use this thing on you without mercy. I'll gladly tan your leathery hide and send you back to hell where you came from."

Both Olivia and Edwina's heads pivoted toward the door. Seth stood there holding a gun—a clear toy squirt gun with some glowing green liquid in it—aimed right at Edwina. Olivia would have laughed if it wasn't for the genuine look of horror on Edwina's face and the ghastly realization that Olivia's Prince Charming had gone mad and wouldn't be rescuing her after all.

"That's right. I know what you are." He waved the pistol as if to indicate it held all the power, therefore she'd best heed his warning or else. Olivia heard the liquid slosh inside the toy. She tried to keep from sobbing at the ludicrousness of it, to keep the faith that the gun held more capability than she could fathom. Still, despite her wavering trust, she knew he had to be aware this wasn't a childhood game of cops and robbers.

It was life or death.

"You get your hands off her *right* now or I'll shoot you with it." Seth took one long stride into the room. "Every last fucking drop."

Horror lit Edwina's dark eyes. She slowly dragged her sharp nails across Olivia's arms and dropped her hands away. Starting to tremble, Edwina backed toward the high window, never once taking her wild-eyed gaze from the gun as she spoke. "You're going to regret threatening me with your damn rue."

"Rue?" Olivia's stare bounced between Edwina's gradually fading form and Seth who continued to look ridiculous holding the fake weapon aimed right at Edwina.

"Yeah, witch and ghost repellent mixture inside the gun," Seth explained, never taking his eyes from Edwina. "Douse these kinds of annoying entities with enough of it and it can seriously fuck up their powers, not to mention burning their flesh—or their apparition ions in the case of a ghost—and leaving them looking like prunes."

The catchy lyrics and tune from an old ghost-chasing movie played over and over in Olivia's head as she stood there staring at this amazing man and his toy firearm.

"You bastard, I'll kill you for this." Edwina spat.

He jutted the gun at her. "Get the hell out of here and don't you ever come back or I'll kill *you*."

She flinched and let out an angry feline's mewl. In the blink of an eye she vanished.

"Oh my God." Olivia collapsed to the floor. Her entire body quaked with relief. "Will someone please tell me what the *hell* is going on here?"

Chapter Six

"Come here." Seth squatted on his haunches, set the gun aside and gathered her trembling body into his warm embrace.

Panic had taken the place of Edwina's crooked fingers. It tightened around her bruised neck keeping her from breathing. She finally dragged in air, clutched Seth's shirt and held his concerned gaze captive with her wide stare. "Please, please tell me what that was all about before I crack up on you."

"Shh, shh." He stroked her hair and it was like a sedative calming her nerves. The pleasant sensation of prickly goose bumps rippling down her body from scalp to legs made her sigh.

"What...who is that Edwina woman?"

His voice hardened and he held her tight. "I don't know but I'm damn well going to find out."

She leaned back and looked into his tight-lipped expression. "You threatened her with that rue water or whatever, the stuff in the toy gun. You said it was a witch or ghost repellent. So does that mean..."

"Yes, it means." He tucked a lock of her hair behind her ear, his gaze touching her face so tenderly she could almost feel its caressing warmth. "I set up lots of equipment while you were napping. The paranormal motion detectors at her point of entry transmitted back data that sent all kinds of alarms into overdrive. This Edwina is definitely an entity of some sort, and since she took the threat of the rue water seriously, that narrows it down to either a witch or a ghostly spirit of some sort."

"How did you know to use it?"

"After she sent me on that fireball ride I took a wild, somewhat educated stab at it." He stood, dragging her up with him. "Thank God the crash didn't render me unconscious. I had enough time to run to the supply cabinet, and it's a damn good thing I chose the rue water instead of the holy water. No telling what would have happened if I hadn't."

"I don't understand. What does she want from me?" She laid her cheek on his chest, closing her eyes at the sheer relief of his heat and strength. Safe, she felt so safe with him.

His arms closed around her and he tucked her head beneath his chin. She could hear the strong thud of his heart and the clear breaths of oxygen passing through his lungs. He smelled so fresh, so...Seth-like. Something about it gave her an instant sense of security. Suddenly she became aware of her state of undress. The length of her naked body pressed against his clothed one and there was something so very erotic about it.

He held her for such a long time without answering her she almost forgot she'd asked a question. But he broke the reverie and the rising sexual need inside her when he reached for her hand and drew her out into the laboratory.

"First let me ask, have you ever heard of this woman?" He snatched a sheet of paper off the printer adjacent to his desk and thrust it at her.

Olivia's hands trembled as she reached for the paper. Her eyes focused. She noted a woman's name and address. "Mia Warwick? No, I've never heard of her. Why?"

Seth crossed, perched on the corner of the station and quickly slapped together lunch for each of them. By the intent stare when he handed over the thick ham sandwich, Olivia knew it was serious. She couldn't look away. Her stomach did flips.

"What?" She bit off a corner of the sandwich. With all the nerves bouncing around in her belly, it seemed to taste like sandpaper yet her stomach growled in protest for nourishment. She chewed, swallowed. "What is it?"

He glanced down at an open journal on his desk, back up at her as he bit into his own sandwich. "How about a *trifed*?" he asked around a mouthful of ham and wheat bread. "Ever heard of one of those?"

"A what?" Olivia moved behind the chair and set the paper on top of the open book. Abruptly feeling exposed and vulnerable, she crossed one arm over her bare chest and gnawed on her food. It seemed her libido had hastily put its brakes on. And the last thing she wanted to do was eat, but she knew she should while she had the chance. She had a feeling something was about to pop.

"A *trifed*." He pushed away from the desk and walked around the chair, popping the last of the sandwich in his mouth. He brushed his hands together ridding himself of the crumbs and stopped right in front of her. She was in his arms in a flash but his hand went low, lower still until he pressed his hot palm against her deformity.

As sensitive as her clitoris, to have it touched by someone other than herself brought her immense pleasure. But she recoiled, reaching behind her to remove his hand. Too late. He was already tracing the triangular area, massaging it while he stared into her eyes.

"This. I think this thing on your lower back is what's called a *trifed*. A Chameleon's *trifed*."

The pleasure died out. She tossed what was left of her sandwich on the station's long counter, her face flaming with the heat of mortification. Olivia did not want to be a freak—a witch as he'd implied earlier.

"No." She slid his hand up.

When his pupils dilated she once again felt desire flicker deep inside her belly. "Yes, and I think it's sexy as hell."

"You can't possibly think..."

"Olivia, it's okay." He slid his palm back down to that spot that started throbbing again just like her groin. "You're not a misfit. You're a wondrous miracle to my science, what I believe is one of the first proof positives that Chameleon witches do exist."

"What makes you think this—" she gestured behind her, silently ordering the tears not to fall, "this weird defect of mine is related to Chameleons?"

She quivered when he slowly skimmed his fingers up her spine, over her shoulders and framed her face. The move was so tender, almost loving, it made her heart melt.

"The book there on my desk. Remember I told you about Leo the researcher and his journal, the one where I'd read about the color-changing eyes in the woman who—"

"I know, I remember." She pulled back inhaling deeply to slow down her respirations. She needed to focus, to really hear what he was trying to relay to her. "So what else then? Let's get it all out on the table. You're saying you also read about this *trifed* thing, now you think it's what I have on my back? And you think that makes me a Chameleon?"

He shifted his stance and hauled her body closer to his. Fire smoldered jump-starting her libido when her pussy came into contact with the mass in his pants. But she ignored it determined to hear all of his tale before she let herself loose again.

Seth went on, his words pouring out. She could detect the underlying note of excitement in his voice.

"It's the very same marking described on this Mia Warwick's back—if you recall Leo had been her lover and would know about it—as well as the eyes, the mood changes, the volatile activity. I'm hypothesizing that the *trifed* could be a Chameleon's battery of sorts, the fuel source for their powers. Maybe if this is a *trifed*," he murmured caressing the malformation, "it's possible yours is just surging, causing lights to blow for instance, because you haven't been channeling your powers correctly through it. Something you wouldn't know how to do yet if you were adopted into a normal mortal household."

Mortal? Was he implying she might be *immortal*? The very thought of it made her head spin. No, no...

He pressed a warm kiss to her forehead as if to slow himself down while calming her fears. His hands traveled over her back and she forced herself not to flinch with lust when he repeatedly touched her there.

"Olivia, I'm sorry, this is probably too much for you to take in at once. But I truly want to help you. You came here to find out what was wrong with you—as you put it—and you're curious about your heritage. I think the pieces are starting to emerge and I believe this Mia Warwick might help us to put the puzzle together. She could know your real parents and be a wealth of information regarding these phenomenal paranormal-type incidents that surround you."

She disengaged his hands and turned her back on him, no longer caring if he could see her deformity in full view. Though afternoon sunlight streamed in through several

high basement windows, she shivered, not sure if it was caused by her nakedness or the eeriness of what he implied she could be.

A witch.

Yet everything he proposed did seem to fit. It would explain a lot but she just wasn't quite ready to accept it so soon. The whole idea that she could be a witch—a Chameleon witch at that—was just too much to process in too short a timeframe.

Zombie-like she crossed to the door and stared out at the glider where they'd made love that morning. Right there in that very spot, streaks of light had shot from her fingertips bringing her to her knees with the euphoria of it. It was one thing for trinkets to fly across the room or the ground to shake beneath her feet. She was very accustomed to those bizarre events even though she'd been spooked by them and had never known what they meant. But possessing and wielding lightning? Power so strong it seemed to charge up that spot on her back—a *trifed* as Seth suspected—and empower her?

Lord help her, a witch's "battery" is what he'd likened it to!

No. This was just too much to sort through, too much to accept all at once. She simply wanted to retreat into hiding and never come out. Moving her gaze hungrily around the room, she located a large jacket hanging on a peg near the door. She hurried to it and slipped it on covering her nakedness. There was an instant rush of scent—his unmistakable manly scent—and Olivia closed her eyes as it wafted up and teased her nostrils. She ignored the instant throbbing in her loins and leaned against the doorjamb staring pensively out at a sunny New England day.

"So does this mean you believe I didn't kill my husbands?"

There was a long silence, a shift of feet. He slipped up behind her and laced his fingers below her breasts. Heat engulfed her backside, so sweet, so comforting, and his male essence filled her lungs overpowering that of the jacket.

He kissed the back of her head. "Yes."

She imagined that one word of trust reaching inside her and untwisting the knot of apprehension. It had settled in her gut like a tumor ever since she'd been accused of murder. Letting out a sigh, she relaxed against him and murmured, "Thank heaven."

"I think I knew it from the first moment I saw you on TV. Even behind the big dark glasses and that bleached-blond wig, I think I saw something pure and unique, but I couldn't quite put my finger on it until I got you in my arms."

She snorted. "You've put your finger on a lot of things since then."

"Mmm," he replied, his tone deep and sensual as it hummed in her ear, "and I'd like to continue to put a lot of things on you—in you."

She grinned resting her head back against his firm shoulder. They stared together through the paned glass at the lash of glittering surf against sand. "If I'm really a witch, I don't think you have a choice in the matter."

He kissed the side of her neck and she tilted her head to give him more access. Tremors of lust moved down her body making her nipples pucker and her womb go warm and heavy.

"No matter what we find out you *are* a witch to me. I've been utterly bewitched by you, Olivia." He reached inside the jacket and skimmed a palm up her bare abdomen. His hot hand closed over one breast and he rolled the areola between his thumb and forefinger. She gasped at the flames it ignited, struggling to concentrate on his next words. "I think no matter if we locate Mia Warwick or not, it's already been established that I'm under your spell."

His tender words and the fire his touch ignited filled her with a need so strong she could barely speak. But there were other things yet to discuss before she could give herself up to him again.

"So this...this Edwina. Y-you think she could be a witch too?"

"Her eyes changed," he said as his hands continued their thorough, lazy exploration of her body. Her knees went weak but he held her up snugly against his growing arousal. "Only a mixture of red and black in the irises but they changed nonetheless, a trait I've only heard to be inherent in Chameleons. In all my encounters I've never seen it in any other breed of witches or sorcerers. Or any other entity for that matter. So yes, I think she could be Chameleon though I'm guessing a different, darker form."

At that word darker and its implication, her heavy eyelids popped open. "You think she could be a demon or something creepy like that?"

"I don't know, baby, but I do know you need to stay here with me until we get it all sorted out. It's the safest place for you. I have the equipment and the experience to deal with these types of entities and evil forces."

She whirled around to face him. "B-but she's threatened your life. I can't be responsible for that."

He framed her face in his hands and tipped her jaw up so his mouth hovered a mere inch from hers. When he spoke his warm breath fanned her mouth. "She's scared of me because she knows I have the ability to hurt her. Being the coward that she is I don't think she'll try me again. However, who she really wants is you for some reason—and the bitch isn't getting you."

At his impassioned declaration to protect her and the look of deep affection in his eyes, her heart seemed to beat in an erratic tempo of fear mixed with something...something new. What was it? Was it...was it love?

Oh Christ help her. That was it! Her love had killed them all. She scanned her memory recalling clearly those profound moments when her emotions had morphed into deep love for each of them.

Howard's auto accident. He'd been killed on his way to the liquor store to purchase a bottle of champagne only minutes after she'd declared she loved him. She'd already voiced empty declarations of love for him well before that—it was why she'd married

him in the first place, because she *thought* she loved him. But it wasn't until that romantic night that she'd truly given her heart to him and verbalized it.

Then there'd been Phillip's food poisoning illness and Derek's tumble off the ladder. All of them had died mysteriously only *after* she'd spoken the words "I love you" following the realization that she'd truly fallen for them. Perhaps saying the words out loud when they weren't sincerely in her heart was harmless. But once she'd given her soul over to the men she'd loved and voiced it, she just might have given them a death sentence.

Panic seemed to close around her windpipe. No, she couldn't go through that again. Seth might have the ability to fight off this curse that hung over her like a storm cloud but he couldn't defy death if Edwina chose to eliminate him too.

Therefore she would never declare her love out loud to him.

"The first time Edwina came to me in that dream last night, she claimed responsibility for my husbands' deaths. Only at the time I didn't think she was real. But she is – isn't she?"

His lips thinned and he nodded. "Yes, she's definitely real. The paranormal sensors recorded her ions and energy field. When I crashed into the cabinet I felt the force of her power shocking my system. Can't get any more real than that."

"I-I'm so sorry."

He shrugged and his mouth curved into a boyish smirk. "Hey, this is what I chose to do with my life. Getting zapped by an alien's photon gun or nearly getting frostbite when drawn into an angry spirit's plane. I love it, walking on the edge of excitement like that."

"Okay so you're freaking crazy, you get off on looking danger in the face. But why does she keep wreaking deadly havoc on my loved ones? And what could Edwina possibly want from me of all people?"

"I...I'm not sure but we'll find out, I guarantee you. And we're going to start with this Mia woman."

"But what if she's just as vile and evil as Edwina?" Suddenly panicked, she fisted his shirt in her hands and held his gaze. This man she possibly had gone and fallen madly in love with was her only hope and yet fear for his well being plagued her making her demand to know, "What then?"

He tightened his hold pulling her closer so that her cheek rested on his chest again. "Shh, it's okay." He added a chuckle as he petted her hair and sent a pleasant shudder down her spine. "Remember you're under the protection of the world-famous Dr. Seth Hayden, Nobel Prize winner, Paranormal Investigations Unlimited guru, talented creature-hunter and overall astounding scientist."

His words entwined with light humor helped her to relax. She couldn't suppress the grin that curved her lips. Looking up into his glittering eyes, she replied, "You're an arrogant scoundrel, you know that?"

"Mmm, perhaps, but you're a wily vixen and I can't seem to get enough of you." He ducked his head and dragged his pursed lips around the circle of her mouth. Rapid need had her opening for him, welcoming the slow invasion of his tongue. He tasted vaguely of strawberries and cream and it sped up her appetite urging her to wind her arms around his neck and devour him.

She pressed nearer, intense affection overriding the sudden sexual need simmering in her system. She'd had plenty of orgasms since arriving here last night, so Olivia was aware what drove her now was something more, something on an entirely different level.

Lord help her, it had to be love. Her eyes didn't lie—pink meant love though they were definitely a newer, deeper shade of hot pink that she'd yet to experience. And that meant for Seth's sake she would have to leave him very soon whether she wanted to or not. At that thought her eyes switched back and forth between the gray-blue of sadness and pink.

"I need you so badly," she whispered against his mouth, her hands exploring the firm muscles along his spine. "Please. Please make love to me one more time."

"One more time? Uh-uh. This is the beginning of *many* more times."

He lifted her into his arms, carried her into the bedroom and laid her on the mattress. Never taking his gaze from hers he drew his shirt over his head. Sun slanted in through the high basement window casting gold light and dark shadows across his tall frame.

She itched to get her hands on him but Olivia knew the wait would make it all the sweeter. Instead of demanding he come to her now she slid her finger through her damp slit and found her hard pearl, teasing herself, enjoying the build-up of sexual tension. As scorching liquid flames licked at her pussy she let her hungry gaze explore his wide shoulders and fit torso. She watched, her pulse racing as he unzipped his pants and stepped out of them, leaving the half-erect sunbathed arch of his cock jutting out below a flat rippled abdomen.

She licked her lips recalling the faintly salty taste of his pre-cum, the feel of that stiff rod and smooth flesh skimming her tongue, her palm stroking the warm unyielding hardness. The man was a wicked sorcerer she decided on a deep inspiration, a wizard and master of seduction, pure male prowess in its most elemental form. Something about the blend of intellect with ruggedness really made her hormones rage. She couldn't think of any husband, any past lover who had made her feel more womanly than Seth did.

"God you look so sexy lying there playing with your juicy pussy." He palmed his shaft and slid one knee onto the bed near her thigh. Reaching across her, he planted his free hand next to her head and looked down into her face, holding her gaze as he brought his manhood to life. "So fucking sexy."

She pulled in a breath and caught the faint aroma of men's soap. Riding an urge to get closer to him she thrust her hips upward and stimulated her clit harder, faster.

"Kiss me." The impulse to touch his face suddenly overrode her drive to masturbate. She released herself and reached up to cup his freshly shaven jaw. "Kiss me and make me forget all these frightening...things you're uncovering."

He smiled down at her with such a tender gleam in his eyes it made her want to weep with joy. Turning his lips into her hand, he kissed her palm and rasped, "Honey, you stay with me you'll live among ghosts and ghouls and all kinds of menacing things. But you'll get used to it and hopefully enjoy it as much as I do," he added with a wink.

At that tender moment she knew it was true. She loved this man. In a matter of a day's time she'd fallen hard like a young, naïve fool. Her heart galloped at the confirmed thought, but she would never voice it to him. Declaring it out loud could be the one thing that could cost him his life.

Stay with me. Those three words of his stood out echoing in her head. If only she could stay here with him in this safe haven and in his bed. But it wasn't in her cards. For some reason she was cursed to live out her life without love. She could have all the sex she wanted but love, she was starting to understand, was forbidden.

"Yes, I could get used to this. If only..."

* * * * *

She pulled him down to her, spreading her thighs in welcome. Her husky voice seeped into his ears and slowly, seductively warmed his blood making his cock tingle. Her heavy-lidded gaze told him all he needed to know.

She was ready again.

The woman was a voracious vixen but he wasn't complaining. He'd be forever willing to oblige her.

He pushed between her legs grunting when the tip of his penis settled at her warm wet apex. His first urge was to plunge his cock into her sheath but apparently she had different plans. She caught his mouth with hers and pressed against his shoulder so that he rolled onto his back. Rising over the top of him, she straddled his hips while she continued to suck the life from his mouth.

She tasted of the honeyed meat she'd just devoured, so delicious and irresistible. As he continued to drink of her he pushed the jacket off her shoulders, tore it from her arms and tossed it on the floor. His hands returned to explore the silky flesh of her arms, her back, her luscious breasts. She danced over him dragging her drenching cunt up and down his hard-on even as her tongue continued to duel with his.

When she ripped her mouth from his with a pop and stared down into his face, his breath became clogged in his throat. Her eyes were the sapphire of what he now understood to be a mood of passion, but there was also the swirl of bright sparkling pink that matched her aura perfectly. He'd seen that color in her energy field earlier but he'd yet to detect it in her eyes. Its probable meanings filled him with a scientist's

curiosity. But taking precedence was a lover's intense interest and something he fully intended to explore.

She sat upright, the crescent underside of her ample mounds filling his vision. He wasted no time reaching up to lift the heavy weight of them in his cupped palms. She threw back her head and moaned when he pinched both peaks, bringing the pink buds to a distended state of arousal. Sexually agitated she rocked her body, impatiently shoving her hair from her eyes. It was then his gaze caught sight of the video camera. They lay diagonal across the bed while the equipment had been set up at the foot. It had a full-on side view of every move they made.

Which made his cock throb and his blood race with wicked desire.

"Ah, we're being watched," he murmured.

Her sleepy eyelids slowly rose. Confusion glazed the dual-colored depths. "Huh?"

"The camera, it's still on. Are you okay with that?"

She blinked and glanced to her right. At first her eyes widened but then they returned to that soft squint that indicated raging passion. "Only if you promise me you'll keep it private. And watch it sometime by yourself when I'm gone."

Her easy consent and wish for him to view it alone was the sexiest request he'd ever gotten from a woman. It would be like watching a porno movie only this time he wouldn't have to imagine what it was like to sink his cock into that beautiful pussy. He'd know firsthand.

"Are you kidding? You're all mine. There's no way I'd want to share you with anyone else. And you can bet I'll watch it a thousand times over. Only you'll be there too enjoying it with me."

For a brief moment the deep blue in the multihued pools lightened to a pale smoky shade. He thought he saw a tiny glimmer of a tear emerge in the corner of one eye. She reached down and traced his lips with a fingertip, her voice almost forlorn when she spoke. "I think that's the sweetest thing a man's ever said to me."

"What, that I'd watch it over and over?"

"All of it...every word." Her midnight silky locks fanned around them when she bent and pressed the sweetest kiss to his lips. The floral fragrance of her tresses mingled with the musky scent of her arousal.

He dragged his hands from the round globes of her ass, up past her triangular marking and along her spine. He kept exploring every inch of her as the kiss deepened and his cock hardened. Her shoulders looked fragile yet were strong, her breasts were like plump half-melons in his hands. She groaned when he tweaked each peak before skimming his hands down her sides and sliding one between them to seek out her mons. Olivia cried into the kiss and started rocking her hips when he found her clitoris. It was a damp little nub beneath his fingertip and he circled it adding pressure, soft then hard, slow then fast.

She came undone, her entire body twitching above him. But he wasn't stopping there.

"You're so insatiable, Livvy, so hot," he whispered against her mouth as he pushed his index finger into her tight sopping-wet hole. She whimpered but he ignored her silent plea for release and said, "Ah, such a lucky blessing for me from the moment you rang my bell."

"Mmm..." The long sound came out guttural and deep. Impatient, she bucked up and down on his finger as if it were the only thing available to give her pleasure. Sticky cream dribbled down onto his knuckles and into his palm. He could smell her woman's elixir and he wanted nothing more than to taste it, to feel her soft folds on his tongue.

He withdrew the finger from her depths and chuckled when she let out a groan of protest. "Easy, filly. I promise I'm going to let you ride my cock. But first," he said huskily as he guided her up his torso and directed her to position her pussy over his mouth, "you're going to ride my face."

From this glorious angle with her knees on either side of his head her smooth inner thighs seemed to lead upward pointing the way to the junction of her glistening cunt. Her curvy body towered above him, the flair of hips, the narrowness of waist, the roundness of breasts and pink-tipped nipples. His hungry perusal finally fell upon her stunning face and pride and affection washed over him almost orgasmically. The body would have been more than enough for a man to rejoice in but the woman had to have a killer face to go with it.

Goddamn you're a lucky bastard, he told himself.

She peered down at him, desire clouding her gaze and furrowing her pretty brow. "Eat me. Eat me alive and make me come all over you."

How could a man deny a goddess such a request? With their eyes still locked he took one tongue-swipe of her slit. The flavor of her sweet cream burst in his mouth teasing his taste buds.

"Ahh yes." Olivia clamped her eyes shut and rolled her head back. She cupped her breasts and pinched her nipples, the sight of which caused a pearl of pre-cum to ooze from Seth's cock. His groin was on fire with an aching heat and his balls felt tight enough to burst. With his lungs completely saturated by her fragrant lusty aroma, he didn't think he could last through an entire pussy-eating session.

But he did his best wanting her pleasure more than his own. His tongue pushed through the satiny-damp folds and found her soaking hole. He reached around her upper thigh and stimulated her clit with one finger while his tongue fucked her, in and out, around and around the tight little entrance. Her sweet savory cum poured out dribbling over his lips and chin.

With his free hand he explored, massaging her tight ass, filling his palm with a full breast, combing his fingers through her long silky hair. She mewled and panted, her breath catching then expelling on long moans. He barely noticed the bed trembling or

the windows rattling. He could only hope and pray that in her sexual frenzy she wouldn't cause the video recorder to short out and erase this incredible moment.

Hazards or not, magic, he was beginning to see, would always be a part of an exciting sex life with Olivia Templeton.

And he wasn't ever going to give that risky privilege up to anyone else. She was his, he suddenly decided lifting his head to dive deeper into that smooth-lipped pussy. His forever.

Normally the idea of commitment coming so soon between him and some hot sex would have him scrambling from the bed. Not so this time. Instead he wrapped his arms around her hips and held her cunt captive against his ravenous mouth. He increased the pressure on her rock-hard little nub fluttering his tongue in quick strokes. She growled reaching down to hold his face in her hands.

"Seth," she whispered.

He opened his eyes to look up and find her staring down at him, her irises glowing neon pink. It was at that poignant moment that she reached her climax and her aura blazed outward in a surge of power.

"Seth...oh Seth, I'm coming, I'm coming all *over* your face." Her whole body twitched and he felt the contractions of her vagina against his drenched chin. He heard the rattle of laboratory equipment in the cabinet just outside the door, and sudden gale force winds lashed against the window rattling the glass.

When she went limp after the last wave of pleasure washed over her, she fell facedown on the bed. He rolled over on top of her luscious round ass and shoved her legs apart with his knees. His cock was going to implode if he didn't get inside her soon. He jammed an arm beneath her hips and hauled her pelvis up just enough to tip her rear at an angle for easier entry.

Clenching his teeth against the sheer bliss of it Seth slid into her tight sizzling heat and sheathed his cock to the hilt. "You drive me wild," he growled in her ear nipping the lobe between his teeth. He rose up and drew back driving into her, this time hard, forceful.

Gasping, Olivia managed to pull herself up just enough to plant her palms on the mattress for leverage. She fisted the comforter and met his thrusts time and time again, propelling herself backward to welcome the brutal force of his passion. His hands spanned her hips. He used them to guide her hips so he could fuck himself with her drenching canal. Their skin slapped together echoing in the small space of the room.

It was when he reached around and found her soaked clitoris, the lips stretched from the girth of his cock that he arrived at the very perimeters of ecstasy. Along with it came her cry of bliss and the involuntary contractions of her inner walls around his rod. His vision went blurry so he closed his eyes tightly, holding onto her waist as the euphoria of sex with a hot wicked witch barreled over him and nearly stole his pounding heart from his chest. On one final groan he spilled his hot semen into her pussy and finally filled his lungs with sweet air.

"Wow." Olivia collapsed on her belly and fought for oxygen. "Now *that* was magical."

He grinned and slipped from inside her warmth. Already the room was feeling cool so he lay on his side facing her and snuggled up throwing the blanket over them. Her perspiring hot flesh merged with his and he wondered how he'd gone all his adult life without this woman next to him in bed every night.

"Mmm, agreed." He closed his eyes and massaged her back. "How about an afternoon nap?"

She purred folding her arms beneath her head. "Yeah, I can't think of anything in this whole world I'd rather do right now."

There was a long silence in which the winds outside died down and the ground finally settled. She spoke again, this time her voice all sleepy and muffled. "Why is it that I feel so much more energized when I make love with you than I have with any other man in my life? I mean, as long as I'm having sex with you I really think my body could go longer between sessions. Mind you I don't want to but somehow I know I require less—I just don't *want* less."

He scraped his short nails up her back making her shiver. "Could be you just never happened to have sex with anyone higher than a Level Five."

Her head popped up. "A Level Five?"

"Sure, the five senses." He shrugged and squeezed one cheek of her ass. "Touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing. The majority of people possess no more than those five. But some select few are born with an extra sensory perception or two. The gift of foresight or seeing into the future for instance, or the ability to read minds or maybe the power to heal by touch."

She plopped her head back down and curled into him. "And you think you're one of those people?"

"I know I am. Remember my ability to see and sense color around you? That's my sixth sense." He tugged the blanket and pulled her closer. "It's the detection of energy fields that most people's eyesight doesn't pick up on. For me if you have one it's there just as plain as your nice breasts." To emphasize what part of the human body he referred to he closed his palm around the side of one overflowing mound. He marveled that desire pounded anew in his loins.

"I think that puts me above this invisible sort of line of demarcation with witches and other extra-human or even non-human entities. I figure it's almost like I have a superfluous untouchable energy or power that you can feed off, that gives you that energy your libido drives you to seek and store up."

"So it's kind of like all this time I've been picking up every chocolate in the box and taking a less than satisfying nibble out of each one, and then putting each of them back in the box? Until I found you, the yummiest truffle of all truffles," she added, kissing his neck. After that last effort her body went limp with exhaustion.

"Hmm, that sounds like a good analogy. Now go to sleep. When we wake up I want to watch the video of us and all that magical sex we just had."

The words weren't out of his mouth for five seconds and he heard her even breathing.

"Olivia?" he whispered.

She didn't stir. His gorgeous witch had finally reached the end of her rope. She needed her rest. He would be doing more testing on her, and the trip to visit Mia Warwick was still ahead of her. So Seth settled into the cocoon of warmth and drifted off with her. Consumed by his own exhaustion and welling up of emotions for her, he never thought to bring the toy gun filled with rue water to bed with them.

Chapter Seven

She came awake with a start. Her heart thumped against her breastbone, the rate far faster than Seth had claimed. The room was dark except for gray muted moonlight slanting through the high basement window and the occasional flicker of lightning. Off in the distance she could hear the roar of the surf and the hoot of an owl drowned out only by the periodic rumble of thunder.

Behind her, Seth breathed in and out slowly, contented. He had his arm thrown over her waist and his groin pressed snugly into her ass. If it weren't for the sixth sense of danger that had yanked her out of slumber she'd be turning toward him and bringing him to sexual wakefulness. But something wasn't right. There was the lingering scent of warm arousal in the air yet other odors overrode it.

She sniffed. Was that smoke she smelled?

Olivia leaped from the bed. Seth didn't stir, his arm falling away from her body like deadweight. "Seth?"

She shook him. Still nothing. He just slept on like a baby.

Olivia.

She gasped, whipping her head around toward the voice—Edwina's vile tone.

Come here, come to me.

"All right Edwina, I'm getting really sick of your shit. What the *hell* do you want this time?"

Go to the door and look out. You will see...

Olivia debated. Should she obey or should she just drag Seth from the bed and run? She sucked in air detecting the acrid smell of burning brush. It was faint but no doubt something smoldered nearby. Locating the shirt and sweatpants Seth had loaned her, she hopped along as she donned them and rushed out into the lab.

Olivia, Olivia, come here now or else.

"Shut up," she snapped, padding up the stairs to the main level. With her breath burning in her windpipe she raced barefoot from dark room to loft to shadowy space checking for fire. But it seemed nothing was ablaze. The flames had long since died out in the hearth and none of the candles scattered as knickknacks throughout the living room were burning.

Passing through the open kitchen, she screeched when lightning cracked, illuminating that spot in the living room where she'd first kissed Seth. Crossing to the arched doorway leading into the foyer, she stopped. In the intermittent light of the coming storm, her gaze located her purse, wig and sunglasses scattered on the

entryway floor right where she'd left them. Her emotions twisted around her heart. It was the beginning of the trail of their passion, she thought, and quite possibly the end.

No more of that putrid passion. He's as good as dead if you don't come to me at once.

"What the fuck do you want from me, for Christ's sake?" Olivia spun around, her eyes darting from wall to corner to ceiling. "You're really starting to annoy me."

Don't you want to find out who you are, where you came from?

"Yes, of course, that's why I'm here. But what does that —"

Then you come down to the beach now. I won't say it again or he dies. All it will take is a second for me to breach those lame alarms and pop into the room where he sleeps like a drugged little brat. Then poof! Dead. She added a cackle that grated on Olivia's nerves and had her ire rising to the occasion.

"You bitch. You so much as touch him, I swear I'll..." She ground her teeth together and bounded back down the stairs. Oh, she'd go out there all right, but not without a fight. Olivia might not totally comprehend who or what she was at this point but she'd heard and seen and felt enough since meeting Seth to know she trusted him.

If he thought she was a damn Chameleon witch, she decided, fuming as she raced back to his bedside, then she was a damn Chameleon witch!

She didn't know the first thing about spells or how to wield magic but now that she thought about it, there were many times in her life that things had happened that she couldn't explain. She'd spoken her wishes out loud on a few occasions...

I wish I had a nice shiny new bicycle. Oh yeah, she remembered the glee of that one. Not a day later she won a new ten-speed bike in a drawing at the county fair.

I wish for straight As all the way through school. She carried a 4.0 from that moment on and became valedictorian of her high school graduating class.

Then there'd been the time recently when she'd gotten on her knees to pray that she didn't get sent to prison for murder. The praying had turned to a kind of innate chanting. She could remember how good she'd felt afterwards, almost the very same relief and release of power she experienced with sex. The babbling had seemed to come from her soul and the following day, miracle of miracles the damning evidence the police had claimed to have against her had been "misplaced".

Now that she factored all that in with what she'd learned from Seth's suspicions and the events since arriving here at his house, she was truly leaning toward the unbelievable.

She *was* a witch.

"A witch maybe," she mumbled as she worked her way around tables and lab equipment, "but not a murderer."

She made it to the bedroom door and gazed in at Seth where he still slumbered in bed, clouded moonlight and the flicker of the coming storm lighting his handsome face.

"No, I did *not* kill my husbands," she said softly.

Edwina did. That has to be it. Edwina had insinuated as much in that first dream she appeared in—now she was threatening to murder Seth. Something was motivating her to knock off the people Olivia loved, but what?

She started across the room speaking to herself in soft undertones. “Well I don’t know what her beef is with me but I will *not* allow her to kill Seth or any—” Olivia stopped in her tracks.

You’re so lucky I didn’t do away with you when you were born, you ungrateful little bitch. Edwina’s hateful words from that dream came back to Olivia like a slap, words that hadn’t clicked in her brain until now.

Ah, okay, it was starting to make sense. Edwina had apparently been there at Olivia’s birthing. She would therefore know who Olivia’s real mother is.

And might be privy to the circumstances of her secret heritage and adoption.

In any case Olivia would certainly get to the bottom of it as soon as she was assured Seth was safe.

She scurried to the bed and looked down at him. Thunder rumbled overhead. She stood there feeling like a fool wondering what words, what actions she needed to implement to put a protective spell over him...if there was such a thing. His warm manly scent wafted up to tease her nostrils. She stood and listened to his even breathing, a swell of love overpowering her. There was an aching need to crawl under the warm covers with him and never come out, but she resisted. There was a matter at hand to take care of—two in fact—before she could indulge in a blissful life with yet another man.

With Seth.

She bent and combed her fingers through the longish chocolate-brown locks. The strands were a soft full mass, and she could well remember the feel of thrusting her hands into its thickness at the nape of his neck while his cock penetrated her to her very soul.

“Hurry, Olivia,” she murmured to herself.

Closing her eyes she concentrated on that spot on her back that Seth had referred to as possibly being her witch’s “battery”, her *trifed*. She tried to decide the most logical way of going about this and suppressed a flare of awkwardness. Nothing like fumbling to be a witch based only on the Wicked Witch of the East and a broomstick-flying Halloween being.

She cleared her throat. *Here goes.*

“I call upon you, ruler of witches’ magic—uh, Chameleon maybe?” Her lower-back deformity tingled and a tremor went up her spine. She forced herself to concentrate, closing her eyes as she touched the crown of his head lightly with her palm. “Protect this man from all evil forces, from all untoward spells cast upon him.”

When heat sizzled at her fingertips Olivia opened her eyes. She sucked in a breath blinking to bring into focus what she at first thought to be an illusion. But the glow of

her hand was as real as the pleasure Seth had brought her earlier that day and the night before. It lit the dim room and Seth's sleeping form with a misty neon green while power surged through her system as if she'd touched a live wire. Yet there was nothing shocking or painful about the experience—quite the contrary. She felt refreshed and energized much as she did after a double espresso. Joy burst in her heart chasing away any lingering doubts along with the final traces of her widow's grief.

Olivia had finally been born. She had come home without even realizing she'd been gone. The emotion of it made her smile and she threw her head back and stifled a deep laugh. It was as if she finally knew what to do, what to say. Confident now, she swiped both hands over Seth.

"By the powers of the Chameleons I call upon the higher beings." It was starting to come to her almost as if inborn knowledge had surfaced and flowed through her. Empowered, she raised her arms above Seth. A sweet-scented wind swiveled around her body tossing her hair. "Shield him that he may live, vanquish any heinousness or villainy cast upon this man I love, oh the Coven entities hear my decree!"

The last came out in a growl. Electricity seemed to jerk through her from deep inside her *trifed* out to her fingertips and toes. She nearly giggled with glee when bliss filled her womb and amber stardust appeared in her palms. Flicking her hands outward, she scattered the sparkly dust about. It made a soft tinkling tune as it settled over Seth's form.

No, no, no! Edwina's voice reverberated through the house.

Seth moaned weakly thrashing from side to side as if restrained. But still he didn't awaken.

"Yes goddamn you, Edwina, *yes*," Olivia hissed, whirling toward the door. Assured that Seth hadn't been roused from sleep, she sprinted out into the lab and threw open the French doors. Wild winds blasted in, tossing her hair and taking her breath away. "Oh yeah, you're done, you bitch."

She marched out into the chilly night. Rain soaked her long tresses and pelted the bare flesh of her face and arms. But she didn't care, didn't feel the discomfort. Her gaze caught sight of the fire down on the beach just below the edge of the woods. Of course this was the smoke she had smelled and she knew somehow instinctively it was Edwina's doing, it was where Edwina called her from.

Rage drove her barefoot across the cool wet grass, down to where foliage met sand. All she wanted to do was to get her magic hands around that she-devil's neck and squeeze the life out of her for what she'd done to Phillip, Derek, Howard and Olivia's parents—and no telling who else.

As she neared she noticed the large circle drawn around a pentagram in the sand. It flashed beneath the amethyst strobe light of the angry sky, its outline close to fifty feet in diameter and deep red in color...the shade of blood.

She half expected to see a bubbling cauldron and a wart-nosed Edwina standing there in the center cackling, stirring a brew while a black cat slithered around her

skinny legs. But all Edwina had placed within the circle was some sort of metal platform stretched over an enormous pile of burning brush.

"Come out come out wherever you are."

It seemed Edwina was to be a coward. Olivia could sense her presence yet she was nowhere to be seen.

Electricity seemed to crackle in the atmosphere. The scent of rain and pungent smoke filled Olivia's nostrils. She scanned the beach up and down, her hands clenched into fists. Lightning flickered illuminating the white-tipped rushing tide and the thick storm clouds rolling inland. Thunder rumbled out to sea gradually picking up momentum until it exploded directly above the beach.

She felt the booming power of the storm in her chest, in every cell of her body. It was liberating she decided, to understand what it was, what she was, to finally embrace the energy rather than cowering from it. No one—no sorceress mentors or well-honed wizards—would have to assure her that the days of blown light bulbs and disasters in her wake were over. Somehow she knew now it was as Seth had theorized, merely a matter of learning to channel her powers through her *trifed* rather than letting them surge through her, untamed without control.

There had been so many days and sleepless nights growing up that she'd been ashamed of that thing on her back and had felt like such a misfit. But now standing there on the edge of the pentagram with the storm thrashing around her and acceptance of who she was, all the insecurities vanished. Pride poured into her heart.

She spread her arms wide and tipped her face up to the volatile sky. "By the powers of the Chameleons, I surrender to my birthright. Impart in me the strength to conquer my foe."

Jagged azure beams of light crackled out of her fingertips and shot into the sky, merging with the storm. It connected with a bolt of the storm's lightning and brought Olivia to her knees. Her breath caught in her lungs and tears of elation glistened in her eyes. The fiery orgasm rippled unendingly through her body. She screamed into the storm as the pain-pleasure of it racked her soul and charged her *trifed* with such power and bliss, she was certain she would die if it didn't end soon.

She collapsed falling forward and pressed her cheek to the wet sand as the ecstasy ebbed. Her breath came in short pants. Never in her life had she felt so complete and serene. So strong.

Rain soaked her shirt. She raised her head and gazed at the brushfire encircled by the red pentagram. At that moment she knew what it was for.

Her burning death.

"Edwina, you just try me now." She rose up on her haunches and spoke between clenched teeth. Anger made her *trifed* throb. "Come on, I'm ready for you, you hellion."

"Ah, are you really?" Edwina snarled in her ear, adding a cackle.

Before Olivia realized what was happening, Edwina's gnarly fingers reached beneath her sopped shirt. Her sharp nails dug in around the edge of Olivia's *trifed*. She heard a snap as if a bone had broken and dizziness assailed her. Darkness closed in around her and she crumpled to the beach, her short-lived powers drained. Edwina had removed her Chameleon battery.

Too late. Olivia never knew the triangle was removable until now.

* * * * *

Seth fought his way out of what felt like a drug-induced almost paralyzed state of consciousness. Dazed for a long moment, he sat up and tried to remember why he was in the downstairs bedroom.

And where Olivia had gone.

He rubbed his temples foggily recalling how he'd come to be here. Having risen well before dawn, they'd both been weary so they'd taken a nap following the experiments, data-gathering and delving into research of Chameleons. Not to mention the exhaustion of yet another exhilarating round of lovemaking.

He could now remember lying in bed with her warm supple body curled into his as she slept on in contentment. Suddenly Edwina had appeared at the bedside and had quickly cast some sort of immobilizing spell on him. He didn't even have time to leap out of bed and snatch the rue water gun off the floor where he'd left it near the door.

"Damn you," Edwina had scowled, "if it weren't for you being a Level Six with that extra little seeing-auras crap of yours blocking my death spell—not to mention Olivia's sickening love for you—I'd have seen you dead a long time ago. Just like all her pathetic husbands and family."

He'd lain there unable to move watching helplessly as Edwina vanished into thin air and Olivia had started to stir to wakefulness. She'd tried to awaken him to no avail. His pulse had beat threadily when she'd fled the room and he'd heard her footsteps racing through the upstairs.

Then she'd returned and he'd heaved an inward sigh of relief. In some sort of out-of-body sense he'd been able to watch her every move—even with his eyes closed—as she'd called upon the Chameleon entities and grappled her way through a spell of protection for him.

And said she loved him.

Christ, how that had overjoyed him! But more astounding events had quickly occurred taking his mind from her declaration. Glowing streaks of green light had radiated throughout the room, winds had come from nowhere hurling her glorious hair around her shoulders and gold dust had twinkled like stars in the night sky. He'd never forget that feeling of invincibility when her magic had settled over his body. Then there'd been the sense of elation and confirmation that she was in fact a witch.

A Chameleon witch.

He'd experienced such an overwhelming need to reach out to her and yet Edwina's spell had continued to hold him immobile. He'd lain there listening to Olivia vow her innocence of murder with convincing conviction, and with panic he couldn't alleviate he'd heard her growl, "Oh yeah, you're done, you bitch," and had known a moment of total terror for her when he'd realized she intended to seek revenge.

Gradually Olivia's magic had overtaken Edwina's, apparently canceling out the spell of immobilization. But not before Olivia had stalked out into the dangerous storm.

Seth dragged his weakened legs over to the edge of the bed. He'd just been about to stand when he heard her scream. The chilling, shrill note of it propelled him to his feet. He snatched up his pants and the rue gun, jamming his legs in the trousers and shoving the paranormal weapon into his back waistband even as he raced to the basement door. The double doors stood ajar and icy rain blew in under the overhead deck pelting the aluminum threshold of the frame. Violent winds blew inside and he held his arm up to shield his eyes from the sand-tossed currents.

He detected the pungent odor of smoke just before his vision latched onto the bonfire down on the beach. Pushing against the strong gales, he stumbled closer and spotted Olivia lying on a huge metal rack. She lay unconscious on the contraption suspended over the fire, her complexion pale against the dark streaming locks of hair.

His heart stopped, utterly ceased beating. "*Olivia!*"

She didn't stir.

Edwina stood inside a red-cast pentagram as close to the fire as she could get. With hands upraised she pivoted her silver head toward him. When her glittering black and red gaze fell upon him she yanked her arms down and shook a skeletal fist at him, baring her teeth and baying like a banshee.

"Get back, you pain-in-the-ass son of a bitch!"

"I'm not going anywhere, not when some haggish shrew has the woman I love strung up like a roast at a barbeque. Now get her down," he said calmly as he sauntered across the sand toward the pentagram. He pulled out the rue water gun and aimed it at her. "Or else."

Edwina flinched just for a second. But then she threw her head back and cackled, her white stringy hair brushing her flat ass.

"I said get her down."

She dropped to her knees, her white gown soaked by the rain, so much so that he could see the spikes of her dark nipples tenting the thin gauzy fabric.

He suppressed a gag. "Now, damn you."

"Oh please don't shoot me," she whined, her voice dripping with sarcasm as she held her hands up. "I'll do anything you say, mister, if you just don't shoot me."

He wagged the gun at her. Thunder roared. "Then get her the fuck down. Now."

Her thin smile faded and her eyes tipped closer to red. He now knew that to be the color of ire. "Go right ahead. I dare you..."

Seth strode forward stopping a mere three feet from the circle, knowing fully well it was a crapshoot as to whether he could permeate its defense. He aimed right at Edwina's sallow face and pumped the trigger. Liquid squirted out one rivulet after another. But the streams hit the air just outside the pentagram as if an invisible wall extended upward from the circle's edge.

Edwina screeched her glee and tossed another rotten limb on the fire. Embers floated up swirling around Olivia. The billowing smoke and ashes seemed to awaken her. She moaned and lifted her head. Her eyes flared into saucers when she saw the ropes binding her and the evidence of fire below her body.

She jerked against the restraints and arched her back off the heating metal platform. Apparently the structure wasn't of the best construction. It squeaked and swayed.

Olivia gasped. "What —"

"Good evening, Sleeping Beauty," Edwina snickered.

"Olivia, don't move. You might cause the platform to fall."

"Seth, you're here." She said on a sigh and it made his heart swell when her eyes morphed from the yellow of apprehension into the light brown of relief.

"It's okay. You're going to be fine." He gripped the gun tighter praying it would go with him into the circle. "I'm going to get you off that thing and away from her."

"Aw, ain't that *so* sweet? Prince Charming's come to rescue his damsel in distress." Edwina crossed her arms and grinned revealing a row of sparkling white teeth. If she weren't so evil and emaciated Seth thought fleetingly, she'd have the potential to be an attractive woman.

As if a window shade had been raised, her cold smile faded, she narrowed her eyes. Any remnants of attractiveness vanished. "Go ahead. I dare you to step inside the circle."

In all his experience Seth had never been this close to a witch-cast pentagram before, especially with a true witch inside it and actively performing magic. He knew, depending on the spell and the entity's powers, that he could be either blocked from entering it or seriously hurt—perhaps killed—once he stepped over the line.

But he didn't have a choice. The flames were licking higher and it wouldn't be much longer before either Olivia's body became engulfed or the metal rack fried her pretty backside.

He'd take his chances. He moved forward and stopped, his toes positioned just outside the red arc. "Before I cross over and kick your ass, tell me...who the hell are you anyway?"

Edwina grinned again. This time her smile had an almost genuine glow. Lightning crackled above illuminating her face and making her eyes gleam. The winds fluttered her gown and her long silver tresses plastering them to her thin form. "I'm Mia's twin sister."

"Mia Foxe-Warwick?" Olivia asked raising her head to latch her confused gaze onto Seth's. "Seth, that's the woman you suspect is a Chameleon witch. She's the one who had the affair with your colleague Leo—"

"Shut up!" Edwina snarled it out. She leaped upward and hovered over Olivia's body. The move reminded him of the flying humanoids he'd once seen in a documentary. "I don't want to hear that man's name out of your lips ever again."

Seth's body tensed. He warred with the timing of when he should attempt the crossover. If he did it too soon it could mean Olivia's death for sure...and possibly his own. If he waited, he might be able to negotiate with Edwina.

The hag started to raise her hand to strike Olivia.

Olivia flinched and Seth quickly tried to distract Edwina. "Edwina!"

She slid her malevolent gaze toward Seth, slowly lowered her hand and arched a brow, clearly enjoying her power and dominance. "What are you waiting for, Seth? Go ahead and cross the line."

He ignored her taunt. "What does Olivia have to do with any of this, with Mia or you for that matter?"

Edwina soared across the space landing just inside the circle. She hissed and narrowed her gaze pushing her face within inches of Seth's. When she spoke, her putrid breath engulfed him sending his stomach into a roiling fit of protest.

"What does she *not* have to do with us?" She grinded her teeth together. "Okay, you really want to know? Here's what I plan to do. *Disconnect* her from the family tree."

Ah, now we're getting somewhere.

He nodded. "So you're all related."

"Don't act so smug. It shouldn't take a genius to figure it out—something a Nobel-Prize-winning paranormal scientist," she sneered, "normally would have uncovered by now. She's Mia's daughter, you meddling prick. My goddamn niece who tried to take it all from me, the fucking little bitch."

His pulse leaped into overdrive and he fought the urge to reach across the invisible plane that separated them and choke the life from her. If he were a Chameleon his eyes would be as red as the bonfire's flames.

And she would be dead.

"What could she possibly have taken from you? She didn't even learn of Chameleons until this morning."

She didn't answer, only stood there boring her crimson-flamed eyes into his, so he continued his interrogation while keeping close tabs on the status of the fire. Every nerve and fiber in his body drew taut like a rubber band. If anything happened to Olivia it would be *he* who'd be under suspicion for murder. Edwina's murder.

"No, no..." Olivia mumbled. "*She* took something from *me*. My *trifed*. So weak, I'm so weak now."

"Aha, so she even knows what it's called. Looks like you've been doing your homework after all, Einstein."

Alarm galloped through his system trampling his heart and threatening his love for Olivia. He knew little about Chameleon *trifeds* but apparently his theory they could be similar to a battery proved correct if Olivia's listlessness indicated anything at all. Could she eventually die without it?

"What do you want, Edwina?" He spoke fast, desperately. "Whatever it is, just say it. We'll work with you. We'll do what we can to give you what you want. If she took something from you we'll give it back. If she somehow infringed on you in any way I'll see to it that she apologizes and makes restitution. Just let her go and give her the *trifed* back."

"Seth, I didn't do anything, she— Shit it's getting hotter. I can't... Oh God." Olivia coughed violently when a puff of smoke whirled up and filled her lungs. "Seth, please! I can't take this anymore."

Her plea and the painful urgency in her voice tore at his gut. He didn't think, only reacted. With a growl he shot across the circle surprised when he breached the outer ring. But the water pistol was yanked from his hand when it made contact with the transparent wall. It tumbled across the sand, beyond the plane and out of his reach. He was inside the spell though, and he was still alive. He could now keep Olivia from suffering any further.

"Damn you and your Level Six powers!" Edwina hissed, her words confirming his suspicions.

He'd always thought he might also have another extra-sensory ability in addition to his aura detections. Penetrating some levels of witchly magic due to his sixth sense was a talent he'd never had the opportunity to test until now.

He leaped toward the platform and scaled its height seemingly impervious to the threat of the fire or the warmed metal against his palms. He choked on the rising smoke, his breath catching in his lungs when he saw that Olivia had passed out again.

"Olivia, oh God, Olivia!" His fingers fumbled with the knots of the rope. "Rain, please rain harder," he shouted to the stormy sky.

Droplets of drizzle turned to huge pellets of water. The ocean thrashed and churned flinging massive waves onto the beach and spraying the site with mist. The fire sizzled and popped below them and the smoke rose thicker, darker. Seth held his breath fighting the dizziness swimming in his head as he continued to grapple with the restraints.

"No!" Edwina threw up her hands. "Oh my dark forces, I call upon you!"

Seth ignored the thunder as its volume increased to a deafening rumble. He succeeded in releasing the rope that held her shoulders down. "Hold on, baby, hold on," he whispered to her as the cool raindrops soaked her unconscious form and poured down his bare back.

Edwina howled to the wind stirring its might so that the forest trees whipped and bent. Several toppled over, uprooted.

"Wizards of dark, all my demons of lore, keep the fires burning for two days and more. Gift me the deity, my right to be woven into the future that awaits me the High Priestess of the Coven," Edwina shouted to the rumbling sky, her palms facing upward. Lightning flickered faster, bluer, more jagged. A streak shot down and reignited the flames of the fire. "Now gather us up minus the man, divine pentagram and fire and witch to be burned. Send us to the sacred ground of our kin where the fallen gave their lives by man's unholy sin."

He bristled at the sudden energy prickling around him. The ground trembled and the platform shook nearly toppling Olivia's upper body off its dais. His fingers wouldn't work fast enough. They'd become numb and clumsy in the chilly rain and he recognized it to be part of Edwina's newly cast spell.

"Olivia, Olivia, wake up, love." He almost had the last rope loosened. Just another thirty seconds and he'd have her safe in his arms. "Open your eyes. We have to get outside the penta—"

"Now be it!" Edwina roared, and she intersected her arms sweeping them across her body.

Within the space of a blink Seth tumbled and hit the sand, his breath knocked from his lungs. He looked around gawking. The red pentagram and its circle were gone. With it Edwina had taken the fire, the platform...and Olivia.

Chapter Eight

“Abe?”

“Hmm?” He dragged a finger down her spine and caressed her *trifed*. It made her quiver and her pussy engorge.

They’d dozed off earlier in the evening following their second sex-fueling of the day. Sometime later Mia Foxe-Warwick had come awake with a pulse-exploding jolt and the immediate sense something was horribly wrong. Of course her husband had been able to soothe her with his magic hands and convince her it was nothing more than the raging storm outside that had caused her impressions of impending doom.

Unable to make sense of it, especially with Abe’s talented mouth devouring her swollen folds, she’d given in to his logic and forced the unease aside. Now sated with her third sex-fueling of the day, she lay atop his bare chest and twirled a fingertip around his hard nipple. Outside, the storm continued to wield its violent temper, such a cozy feeling to be safe inside with the man she loved while Mother Nature seethed with her wrath.

Mia stared at the news report on the bedroom television, her entire body prickling with the afterglow of his intense lovemaking. The commentary recapped the Black Widow Templeton Investigation again, emphasizing her uncanny ability to evade the law. “Why do you suppose I’m so obsessed with watching all the stories on this Black Widow woman?”

“Mmm.” Abe stretched, snatched her hand and planted a kiss in the palm. As always his tender care with her took her breath away and gave her Chameleon heart a little lurch. “Probably because in her aloofness you see something mysterious and witchy about her—” he made a face, “even though she keeps wearing that blinding blonde wig and bug-eyed glasses. As the Coven Priestess it’s your way and your responsibility to make sure every person in Salem is checked for heritage. You’ll do a verification on her one day in your own time, I’m sure.”

The report ended. Mia rolled onto her back and thrust her breasts up lazily exploring her own mounds. “Did I ever tell you she came into the museum one day?”

“No, you never told me.”

Since joining with Abraham in a special mating to make him her High Priest they had become curators of their own paranormal museum in Salem. In all her centuries of life she never felt more gratified than she did educating the public on otherworldly beings and spirits. In addition to allowing her to express a daily dedication to those fallen comrades of the Salem Witch Trials, the historical Victorian home she’d restored contained a secret dungeon perfect for holding Chameleon Coven meetings.

"I didn't speak to her, just watched as she lingered over the witch displays and all that rich history. She comes off as a very troubled, introspective person."

Abe chuckled and threw his legs over the edge of the bed. He rose and looked down at Mia. Ah, she would never in all of her endless life get tired of looking at his gorgeous brown eyes and muscle-packed body.

"Maybe she's a witch wannabe?" He crossed the bedroom and turned off the television.

"Maybe." She frowned. "Or maybe she *is* a murderer?"

He shrugged. "It's not too hard for you to find out, you know."

"Yes I know. Someday if things remain unanswered I just may do that. Abe?"

"Hmm?" He sauntered naked to the door and flipped the switch, extinguishing the lights. In the darkness she could hear his predator-like movements as he returned to the bed.

"Why do you always do that?"

"Do what, my love?" He climbed back under the covers and gathered her close. Heat and indescribable adoration warmed her witch's soul.

"Get up to turn things off. As High Priest of the Chameleon Coven you now have all the powers you could ever want in the flick of a wrist."

"Mia," he drawled hooking his hand behind her neck and drawing her lips to his, "if you'd been trapped inside a solitary-confinement spell in Perish for over three hundred years without ever learning of television or electricity as I did, you'd consider flipping switches and buttons just as magical as the movement of a wrist."

She groaned. "Oh no, please tell me we aren't going to go there again."

"No." He chuckled, his breath warm against her lips. His tongue flickered out to swipe her open mouth. She felt the tingly shifting of her eyes as they went from pink to passionate blue. His hand slid down her flat belly and closed over her swollen wet apex. "We're going to go *here* instead."

"Gorgon alive, you never fail to turn me on, Mr. Warwick," she replied huskily, her body arching toward his probing touch.

He sank a long finger inside her soaking passage. "Ah, and you never fail to—" Abe jerked halting his movements. "What the hell was that?"

Mia sat bolt upright. "Holy Hazel, it sounds like someone's trying to break our fucking door down!"

Still naked they leaped from the bed, rushed down the corridor and descended the stairs. That sense of foreboding returned hanging over Mia's head like a black storm cloud. She could hear the thunder rumbling in the distance and gasped when lightning cracked, illuminating the outline of a very large man through the glass insert of their front door.

"What the fuck?" Abe yanked open the door.

Flashes of the storm's power lit up the handsome face though the aqua eyes were round with crazed panic and the face as pale as a ghostly spirit. His words came out breathy as if he'd run ten miles to get here. "Mia Foxe-Warwick. I'm looking for her. Does she live here?"

Abe shifted his stance instinctively blocking the man's view of Mia's naked body. "Who's asking?"

The man's gaze only briefly seemed to make note of the nudity before him. "I-I'm Seth Hayden from—"

Mia stepped around Abe, uncaring of her state of undress. "*The* Seth Hayden? From Paranormal Investigations Unlimited?"

Seth's eyes widened. He zipped his stare to Mia. "Yes, *that* Seth Hayden."

"How the hell do you know my wife?"

"Later, I'll explain later. Goddamn it are you Mia Foxe or not?"

Something wasn't right. Mia sensed it with every cell in her body. She should never have ignored her intuition. "Yes, yes I am."

"You have to come now. It's your sister Edwina. She's going to kill Olivia."

Mia slid a glance at Abe as if to say, *Who is this nut?* Maybe her instincts had been off the mark after all. Maybe she'd been overly paranoid. "That's ridiculous. Edwina wouldn't hurt a toad. And who in the hell is Olivia?"

"Olivia Templeton."

"The...you mean the Black Widow?"

His lips thinned. He let out a sigh and replied, "She's no Black Widow. She's your daughter, ma'am, and if you don't come quickly she's going to be your *dead* daughter." He swung around and bounded off the steps, out into the torrential storm.

Mia swayed reeling with dizziness. She groped for Abe trying to keep herself in a vertical position.

"Your daughter?" Abe's gaze snapped down to snare hers even as he slipped his arms around her and held her up against the warm length of his tall nude frame. His mouth hung open while lightning flickered across his stunned face.

"I-I...I never told you about my daughter. She was stillborn...over twenty-nine years ago."

Memories of that night started flashing in her brain almost in time with the storm. The difficult endless birth, the searing pain, drifting in and out of consciousness. Edwina had been at her side the entire time soothing her, coaching and helping her birth the child princess who would one day become the heir to the Chameleon Coven priestesshood. As any loving sister would Edwina had wiped her brow, cried and screamed with her, held her hand and cleansed her as the blood and waters had spilled forth. She'd given Mia witch-concocted anti-pain potions. She'd...

Mia gasped. "No, no..."

"Darling, what is it? What's going on here?"

"Edwina, she—" Nausea pitched through Mia's stomach. Her mind spun with long-forgotten foggy memories. "She said my baby was dead and...and she said she burned her."

"Burned her? The baby?"

Mia nodded, her trembling arms clutching Abe's strong body. She had to keep her eyes fixed on his chest or she feared she'd faint. "I know you're still learning but it's normal to burn a stillborn infant. Immortal Chameleons are rarely born dead yet when the fluke of nature decrees it so the child is always supposed to be burned. It's to ward off evil spirits eternally, to preserve its sorcerer's soul for possible reincarnation. Spells alive, Abe, I mourned that baby for the longest time. But I'd finally accepted it, even forgotten it. But now..." Her head came up. She speared him with her pained witch's gaze. "We have to go after that man. We have to see if he speaks the truth."

This time Abe didn't waste time doing things the mortal way. With the flick of a hand they were both clothed and racing after the famous scientist.

* * * * *

Edwina had recast the circle and pentagram on the most sacred of all witch sites, whose history few knew. Deep in the woods, upshore from Seth's home, remained a clearing where many of her Chameleon ancestors had met their demise by two days' burning just prior to the Salem Witch Trials in the 1690s. Following the hush-hush of this Chameleon mass capital punishment—an event one would be hard pressed to unearth in history books—there had been the hangings of non-Chameleon mortals on Gallows Hill. There had also been those who had passed on while imprisoned, not to mention the many who had endured days and weeks of horrendous torture.

But Edwina hadn't given a toad's ass about the latter. To hell with them all as far as she'd been concerned.

Too bad some of those hanged, tortured and imprisoned had been completely innocent of witchcraft. Hell, they hadn't even been able to weave a rug, much less an intricate spell. Such a pity for those wannabe sorcerers too she thought with a snide tsk as she studied Olivia's semi-conscious form. As non-Chameleon humans they'd had no immortality protection and had died by their executors' hands.

Such was the life of a weak mortal.

But those bona fide *immortal* witches brought here—her beloved Chameleon kin—had somehow been stripped of their *trifeds* by some hypocritical deceitful cleric. In so doing he'd rendered them powerless and listless. He'd then transported them here to this consecrated burial site, tied them up and set them aflame for two solid days.

The only way a Chameleon could die.

The way Olivia would die.

"Edwina," Olivia whispered weakly. "Please, my *trifed*. Give it back. I-I need it."

"Not a chance." No, Edwina couldn't risk giving Olivia back her strength and powers. Her *trifed* would remain in the pocket of Edwina's gown for now. What she'd do with it after the execution she didn't know. She'd thought about tossing it in the flames but there was that niggling brainstorm that she might be able to use it to somehow compound her own *trifed's* supremacy.

Olivia rolled her head from side to side and tugged feebly against the ropes Edwina had refastened. "If you're really my aunt why are you doing this to me? Why?"

The storm had ebbed somewhat and within the copse of trees they were shielded from the misty rain. Through the crisscross of overhead branches the sky seemed to churn darker, more angrily, and lightning flickered in the distance. In the air was the scent of smoke mingling with rain.

Ah, just the way she liked it. Nice and bone-chillingly dank.

Edwina flung out her hand and an orange ball of fire shot from her palm. It fed the low fire making the flames rise higher, closer to her nemesis. "Because as Mia Foxe's twin sister, the line of the throne succession leading to the priestesshood should have rightfully come to me, damn you. But it will be mine once again after I bake you for two days. Something I should have done long ago after Mia birthed you, you brat."

"Why...why didn't you?"

Edwina knew Olivia attempted to stall with conversation. But little did Olivia know the burning clock had already started ticking. A Chameleon could withstand fire's intense heat as Olivia was right now, without feeling much pain or even having a full perception of the flames' damage to the soul. Skin will remain mostly intact. Hair will burn but not until the last hour of the final stage. Throughout the course mild heat discomfort might occur along with some sweating. Finally upon the completion of the last hour the Chameleon will experience the excruciating extraction of their immortal soul from their body. Irreversible death.

For now it was merely a matter of keeping the subject above the heat and flames for a full forty-eight hours to achieve that blessed goal of fatality.

So knowing she had a long wait while Olivia cooked, Edwina levitated just out of reach of the flames and sat Indian-style looking down upon her niece. She was a stunning brunette witch with clear smooth skin and a curvaceous body—the fucking bitch—but not for long. Relieved that retribution had at last arrived within her grasp, Edwina was more than happy to pass the time away with chatter.

She played with her long silvery tresses twisting the straight strands around her bony fingers. "Simple." Edwina shrugged. "Laws as written in the *Chameleon Coventry* can be intricate, sometimes even deceitful to its own kind."

"*Chameleon Coventry*?"

"Eh, I forget you have a lot to learn in such a short time." She glanced at her jeweled watch and sighed gustily. "Well I suppose there's enough time to explain that it's the ancient jack-of-all-trades Chameleon bible. Spells, laws, rules of authority, divine sexual empowerment, even stupid shit like cauldron pot roast recipes aimed at good

Chameleon soul nutrition." She snorted. "And if you can believe it the dang thing updates on its own like some kind of modern-day computer software or something."

"But I don't understand. Where does the deceitfulness of this book come into play with your choosing to spare me until now?" As she spoke Olivia picked weakly at a knot near her fingertips.

Edwina raised a disinterested brow not the least bit worried her prisoner would escape. A late-season fly buzzed around her head. She swatted at it flicking it into the flames, empowered by the concept of death at her fingertips.

Her hand trembled ever so slightly at the thought of her next words. "Every now and then a Chameleon can encounter a dangerous hex the *Chameleon Coventry* cites and implements usually through approval by the High Priestess and our panel of Coven entities. The offending Chameleon might be unaware of this spell but the threat of one cropping up at any time is supposed to act as a deterrent kind of like humans' laws and their publicized news of punishments. So you see back then I was being cautious keeping that in mind. You never know, to burn the only birthed blood descendant of the High Priestess could mean..." She shuddered. "Never mind. Let's just say I decided at least at the time not to take the chance. Instead I placed you in an adoptive home and hoped Mia never found out."

"Did she find out?"

"Ha, that lame-brained cunt? Uh, no."

"Then why? Why did you kill my parents if no one knew who I was anyway?"

Edwina frowned leaning back on her elbows as her mind churned back to that unnerving period of the past. She crossed one bony ankle over an updrawn knee causing her gown to slide down and bare her thin loose-skinned thighs.

"There at the end your adoptive mother and father got too inquisitive. They were a nuisance delving a little too deep into your heritage. I couldn't take the chance of them running upon Mia and alerting her to the fact her daughter lived. So I cast the death spell on them and took down their plane. Pretty clever curse, wouldn't you say?"

Olivia's eyes morphed back and forth between red and the pale blue of sadness. "I know very little of spells but I do know you don't deserve the privilege of magic. I loved them. And you took a whole aircraft of innocent lives. Ooh, you're such an evil, vile demon."

Edwina leaned down into Olivia's face. Stopping just short of the toxic heat, she snarled, "Much better than being a wimpy, spoiled Black Widow rich bitch. Gorgon alive, what I wouldn't have paid to see you behind bars and living the hard life."

Edwina had to hand it to her, as *trifed*-deprived weak and tied up as she was Olivia still managed to gather some strength. She wriggled and thrashed against the bindings. "You're nothing but a pathetic murderer. If you're an example of what I come from I'd much rather be behind bars than be a part of your fucking Coven."

"You won't have to worry about that. You'll be dead within forty-seven hours. Dead like your parents, your real father, your husbands and all your babies."

At Olivia's astonished blink Edwina went on in a gloating tone. "That's right. I induced all those miscarriages in you to prevent you from birthing another heir I'd be forced to deal with getting rid of. Much easier just to head it off early. Which is what I should have done to Mia when she screwed around and got knocked up with you."

Olivia's eyes glittered with tears. "I hate you with all of my soul."

"Ha, *touché*. But you see," she appealed holding up a finger, "you have to understand where I'm coming from. Once a priestess-to-be vows her love for a mate and he reciprocates—and then they go through the correct mating and marriage ritual—the man will become her immortal future High Priest, or in your case, Prince. Well, at least until that fucking Abraham the current High Priest serves his term."

She scowled. "Ah, then guess what comes next? The damn baby carriage. More brats to contend with on the priestess ladder—a ladder that should rightfully be mine once Mia's term is up and she retires. With you out of the picture well before her retirement—and barring Mia and her husband have no brats of their own—I finally get what should have been mine all along."

"You did this all just so you could be the queen?"

"Hmm, queen." Edwina stroked her pointy chin. "I kind of like that. But yeah, I did it so I could become Chameleon queen." Her own eyes shifted to the sensation of scarlet and sudden rage flared. "Something that should have been mine by right if you'd never been born."

"But why weren't you the one to inherit the position before Mia?"

Ire went hotter, scalding her eye sockets. "I'm an albino Chameleon which is rare, and being born a twin Chameleon is even rarer. To aright the DNA errors the Coven set forth that an albino twin isn't allowed to accede to the Chameleon priestesshood until her reigning priestess twin serves a full five-century tenure first—as long as that twin has no direct blood descendants as you are, goddamn it."

"But how did putting me up for adoption fix the problem?" Olivia's voice was getting weaker, softer. Joy surged through Edwina's icy blood. The plan was working. Olivia had gone way too long without her *trifed* and soon the fire would complete the final stages of the task. "I...I still existed."

Edwina was starting to tire of all this education. Why waste any more of her time on someone who'd be dead soon anyway? She shrugged and lounged back with her fingers laced behind her head, the smell of smoke sweet perfume to her lungs. Staring up at the rumbling black clouds and starless sky, she murmured, "It kept Mia from placing the fucking crown on you. What she didn't know didn't hurt her. Now shut the fuck up, or I'll—"

"Yes it did hurt me."

Edwina scrambled up and moved behind the platform. "Mia..." She stared over the rising heat waves at her twin sister emerging from the woods. She was flanked on one side by Abe and the other by that meddling doctor, Seth Hayden. Rage simmered in her gut along with a vague wave of apprehension.

"Mia?" Olivia raised her head, her gaze searching. "My real mother?"

"That's right," Seth replied rushing toward the circle. "The mother Edwina stole you from."

"Get back!" Edwina snarled flinging a black ball of energy at him.

Seth dodged it and leaped into the circle.

"By the powers of the Chameleons' Coven, you will pay for your revolting derelictions!" Mia chanted as she leaped up and levitated just outside the circle. The storm picked up in velocity and crackled with wrath. Her eyes were a conglomerate of emotions and her fury overtook each shade. Edwina had never seen Mia's eyes so large and glowing with such full crimson in all her centuries of life. Something about it sent a shiver up her spine and had her cowering behind Olivia.

"No, I can explain all —"

Suddenly Abe was behind her, his brawny arm choking her. In a deep foreboding voice, he growled in her ear, "You will die for this. As soon as Seth has Olivia free you will rightfully take her place on the altar of death."

Seth was already up on the dais unknotting the ropes. He hissed and snatched his hands back periodically as the metal grew hotter against his probing fingers. "And you can bet I'll be the first to tie Edwina's skinny ass down and watch her fry."

"Seth..." Olivia could barely speak now. Her lips were cracked, her complexion as pale as Edwina's gown. She attempted to lift her freed hand to touch him but weakness overtook her. It plopped back to the platform with a thud. "My...she...she has m-my tri..."

"Goddamn it," Seth swore when she passed out. He finally got her free and clutched her against his chest. "Olivia, oh God, Olivia." He kissed her cheeks, her unmoving lips, her neck. The whole display made Edwina want to hurl her seafood dinner.

"I swear if anything happens to you I'm going to kill that bitch with my bare hands." Seth stood holding Olivia close, and leaped to the ground.

Edwina ignored the nausea roiling in her stomach and instead concentrated on Abe's hold. She called upon and recited a silent spell of escape. Power surged through her and she shot upward and out of Abe's grip.

Abe growled flying after her, but no Chameleon could work faster than the High Priestess herself.

Mia reached behind her head and drew a flaming gold arrow out of nowhere. She aimed and threw it like a dart. It zipped through space with a zing. "I command you to halt in the name of the high authority of the Coven and all that have served before me!"

Edwina was just turning away to blink herself into nothingness when the arrow struck her, jerking her down to the platform and canceling out her spell. She screeched at the unexpected pain that racked her side where the fiery point had embedded. In the flash of a hex, Edwina lay bound in the very spot where she'd tied up Olivia. Being an

albino her flesh was much more sensitive to fire than other Chameleons. She writhed against the sizzling heat that scorched her backside.

Mia suddenly appeared above her, her eyes flames of smoldering ire. "You killed Leo, didn't you? You not only took my baby from me, but you killed her father! *Why?*"

"The meddling scientist was getting too close to the truth, to outing me and discovering Olivia still lived. But he didn't have the protection of Level Six as that damn Seth does, making spells against him more difficult. Leo was much easier prey, simple to eliminate."

"Ooh, how *could* you do such evil things? I loved him—loved *you*. I trusted you, I sympathized in your outcast plight and saw to it that you were well taken care of. And look what thanks you gave me!"

"Love?" Edwina spat at her sister, the sister who'd been born with everything, dark witchy beauty, natural spell power talents, charisma and charm irresistible enough to bewitch any man or woman. She'd been handed everything—uppermost the priestesshood—while Edwina slunk around as a misfit.

Grrr, just to think of it made her blood boil. Or could that be the flames blazing beneath her?

She wriggled as the fire indeed got hotter burning higher and more intensely. Son of bitch her ass stung like hell. "If you loved me you would have seen to it that I rightfully got a turn at High Priestess regardless of any brats you brought into this cruel world."

Seth turned back still holding Olivia's unconscious form in his arms. "Abe, she needs her *trifed*. Now."

Abe appeared at Edwina's side. "Excuse the interruption, babe," he said to Mia, "but before you go any further we need to get Olivia's power source from this pathetic...creature."

Mia narrowed her eyes and orange beams shot from them. Unbearable pain jolted through Edwina everywhere Mia's x-ray gaze scanned her body. "It's in her pocket. Hurry, get it out and replace it before Olivia goes into a coma."

Abe nodded easily locating the *trifed* before rushing across the clearing. *Off the pussy-whipped asshole goes doing the bitch's bidding.*

"Now where were we?" Mia asked folding her arms and narrowing her eyes.

"Fuck you. We're nowhere anymore, you and I. Release me now or I swear I'll call upon Satan."

"You know very well to seek out the dark side in witchcraft will mean your excommunication from the Coven forever."

Edwina jerked against the restraints. Gorgon alive, how she longed to choke that pretty neck and watch the blood ooze from those condemning eyes!

"That might be much more preferable to your dictatorship. Besides, I've already summoned him."

Mia sighed pacing through the air. Her gaze shifted to her sister.

"Do you realize per section eleven ninety-five *mon-leigh* of the *Chameleon Coventry* that by an heir's mere existence and life—in this case, Olivia—that whether I knew of her or not you would never have been able to attain the priestesshood?"

Edwina's narrow world went narrower, closing in on her. "No..."

"Yes. And furthermore—also per an ancient law set forth in the *Coventry*—did you know that burning a Chameleon and most especially a priestess heir to the full stage of death automatically kills the executioner too?"

She gasped. The import of Mia's words made Edwina dizzy. She groaned as her stomach churned and she longed to hurl in her sister's face. *I swear I will never eat dolphin again.*

"Mmm-hmm, it's why the cleric who lit the fire here on this very spot centuries ago also died soon afterwards. It's a protective spell initiated thousands of years ago to shield our breed and the Coven's royal blood. And something you would have known long ago if you'd just done your studying, dear sis."

Sweat beaded on Edwina's brow. Mia's words echoed in her head with abhorrence and yet they rang of truth. "No, no, no..."

"Yes. Now call off your demon dogs and send them back to Hades or you will be given to them as a prize."

Panic closed around her throat. This couldn't be! All those years of following her sister around and preventing prior pregnancies were all for nothing. Then all that work to try and abort Olivia—who never would terminate no matter how strong of a spell Edwina cast on pregnant Mia—and then going to all the trouble to keep Mia and Olivia separated all those years. Damn it, all her efforts for naught.

"Please, please, I'm sorry, so sorry! I-I really didn't call him up. I recited a dark-side-summoning spell but not correctly. Mia—your High Priestess highness—please spare me. I-I-I'll do any—"

"Shut up, Edwina. Just shut up."

"I-I just wanted a turn is all. I see now it was wrong of me, so wrong and yes very evil." She bucked and pulled against the restraints. The ropes bit into her tender flesh causing her Chameleon blood to ooze. "Please, I repent, I—"

Mia sighed with pity. "As I see it you have one of two choices."

"What, what? Say it and I'll do it, I'll do anything." Holy Medusa, had someone turned up the flame's dial several notches?

Mia glanced over and saw that Olivia had come to. Seth held her close swaying with her as if he'd never let her go. It agitated Edwina's stomach. Why couldn't she have ever had a love like that?

She moved her stare to Mia's husband. Abe—mother fucker, she should have gotten rid of him before he'd been converted to Chameleon—floated up to stand at Mia's side. "Olivia's reconnected. Anything else I can do for you, love?"

Anything else I can do for you, love? Edwina mimicked it in her head. She hated them! She hated them all!

"Got it handled, babe. Although maybe you could help Edwina decide her fate."

The High Priest's hands fisted at his sides. His deep chocolate eyes bored into Edwina while the wind whipped at his long flaxen hair. She tried to ignore the trepidation that bubbled deep in her gut like a cauldronful of some putrid potion but it wouldn't let go. It just kept getting hotter, more fetid. Queasiness seized her so violently it took all her focus not to vomit.

"How about I just decide it for her?" Abe suggested.

Mia winked and something passed between them that made Edwina's eyes boil red.

"Don't tempt me."

"Gawd," Edwina snarled. "You two make me—never mind."

"Smart. Keeping your hatred to yourself is the first intelligent thing I've seen you do in a long while. So anyway, as I was saying...if you opt for suicide I'll simply leave you here to burn and die over two days' time."

"No!"

"Okay, then your only other alternative is to live but be stripped of your powers. You will then become mortal."

No, please no. "You bitch."

"It's your choice, Edwina. I know which one I'd pick for you but well, I'm not evil-hearted like you."

Yeah, sure.

"All right, all right. Untie me. Turn me into a pathetic mortal."

The winds started to calm. The rain slowed to a faint mist and the moon started to peek through the clouds even as the chill in the air waned and left behind a soothing warmth. Edwina watched with seething hatred in her heart as Seth led Olivia from the copse of woods and her sister raised her arms to invoke a final spell.

This won't be the last of it, Edwina vowed silently.

"Reverse this curse of death and harm, send Edwina's black magic away with the storm. No more Black Widow of Salem's fame, Olivia's life and her love is hers to name. Oh the Coven entities, so let it be!"

Chapter Nine

"Every Chameleon gets a copy of the *Coventry*," Mia said, snapping her fingers. A four-inch-thick leather-bound brick of a book with gold-edged pages suddenly appeared in her hands. She chuckled and plopped it into Olivia's arms. "And it sounds like—based on all the blown light bulbs in this house—that you needed your copy ages ago. But everything's in there, information about your *trifed*, step-by-step spell instructions, Chameleon history, brew recipes, you name it. And of course you've got me now to consult with. We'll work together and get you up to snuff. In no time you'll be zipping around on your broomstick and casting spells on all of Salem."

Abe stood on Seth's front porch and gazed up at the clear night sky. The storm had since passed and a scatter of diamond-like stars filled the space where not an hour before the angry storm had raged. "Darling, I haven't once seen you ride a broomstick," he retorted.

Her mother had strong features with a heart-shaped face, straight nose and full red lips. She really made quite a striking witch, Olivia thought with pride.

Mia shrugged with a snort as the cool night breeze ruffled her long sable hair. "I could ride one if I wanted to. It'd take nothing but a flick of the wrist."

"Mmm, true," Abe agreed.

Standing in the doorway, Olivia stared down at the heavy book cradled in her arms. She studied the sparkling gold script on the cover, the rich leather. Of all the extraordinary things she'd seen and experienced in the last two days this topped them all.

Her real mother being here and giving her access to a rite of passage she should have had from birth.

She skimmed her trembling hand across the cool surface, her fingertips tracing the intricate lettering. "Wow. I guess this solidifies it. I really am a witch—and a Chameleon witch at that."

Mia's eyes glistened a warm shade of pink. She cupped Olivia's jaw. Her palm radiated with energy and subtle heat. In that one tender touch it was almost as if she'd sealed their long-lost mother-child bond and healed all their aches and pains. "And you really are my daughter." She shook her head. "I'm so sorry for what Edwina put you through."

Emotion welled up stinging her throat. She clutched the huge book to her chest. "You're not to blame. What's important is we finally found each other. Not to mention I've vindicated myself... I was beginning to wonder if I'd truly killed them all without knowing it and deserved to be labeled the Black Widow."

Seth wrapped his arms around her from behind. "I admit I was cautious and slightly skeptical at the onset," he rasped, "but it didn't take long for me to see through to your heart. You might be a beguiling irresistible witch but you're no more a murderer than an angel could be."

His voice simmered thick and sweet like hot honey in her ear. His body was a pillar of strength to her during this highly poignant time of her life. Olivia inhaled shakily. There it was again, that welling up of love so strong she wasn't sure what to do with it.

Abe shoved his hands in his jeans pockets and turned toward them. Her stepfather was a handsome man in a rugged old-world sort of way. A gust of wind blew in ruffling his shoulder-length sun-streaked hair, making her think of some pirate on a ship centuries ago. He narrowed his dark brown gaze, homing in on Seth. "Does that mean you'll be keeping all your Chameleon research to yourself, Mr. Hayden?"

She felt Seth stiffen behind her. "Why do you ask?"

Mia chimed in. "We're well aware you've been collecting data to out the Chameleons to your colleagues in hopes of collecting yet another award. Running our own paranormal museum, we totally respect your causes for the supernatural, but this sort of disloyalty we just can't allow."

Olivia whirled around. She couldn't believe her ears. Mia's words seemed to stab at her soul, Seth's betrayal cutting to the bone. "*What?* You promised me you wouldn't reveal anything about me to the media—or anyone. You said you'd at least keep it anonymous."

Seth shuffled his feet, crossed his arms. A boyish lock of brown hair fell over his brow. He glowered and Olivia thought if he were a Chameleon his irises would be blazing red at the moment. "And I meant it, damn it. But I've had a change of heart."

"Why you liver-bellied toad, you," Mia growled, her beautiful face contorted in fury and her eyes a bright shade to match. "For the love of Medusa I ought to turn you into a frog with warts as big as your..."

Abe curled his fingers into fists and started forward. "You son of a—"

"Stop right there." Seth held up a hand. "Holy shit, you Chameleons are a hot-wired bunch. Would you just let me fucking finish before you go and toss me into your bubbling cauldron?"

"Seth, how could you? I loved you. I can't believe you'd...oh God." Olivia tried to swallow the lump of deceit but it remained wedged in her throat choking the love right out of her.

At her emotional tone Seth's gaze softened. He reached up and traced a finger along Olivia's jaw. She started to flinch despite the soothing feel of it but his next statement held her spellbound.

"I've decided I'm not going to say a thing, not anonymously, not data-wise, not in any way. The secret of your Chameleon breed will always be safe with me. I don't even plan to submit anything while maintaining your anonymity. Screw the awards and the

vast recognition it would give me among my colleagues and the sciences. There's something...someone far more rewarding to me."

Mia glanced over her shoulder at Abe. "Hold on, Hercules."

Abe relaxed his tensed shoulders and blinked. "Care to repeat yourself, man?"

"I said the secret of your Chameleon breed will always be safe with me. I won't even be submitting any subject-anonymous reports. After all, one of you—I hope," he added, sliding a glance at Olivia, "will someday become my wife and partner in PIU. Therefore it would be self-destructive of me to out the woman I love to the public."

Giddy euphoria assailed Olivia. She gripped Seth's toned arm. "What? Y-you care to repeat that last part?"

"I said I love you. And one day after we get to know each other even better," he added with a roguish grin, "I hope to see you walk down the aisle in a pointed witch's hat. But I do hope there won't be any warts or that your complexion won't be all green and nasty."

"Seth!" Mia gasped suppressing a husky laugh. "We don't wear pointy black hats *or* have warts and green skin."

"Holy Gorgon alive, I think it's time for us to leave," Abe groaned reaching for Mia's hand.

Seth drew Olivia into the circle of his arms and held her gaze. She couldn't breathe, couldn't talk.

"It's going to be so cool having Livvy here with me. Being an entity-chaser with a witch as my partner helping me scare away ghosts. Now *that's* a paranormal scientist's dream come true," Seth declared, leaning down to press a feather-soft kiss to Olivia's parted lips.

"Oh Olivia... To think he's inviting you to work *here* in this house with him." Mia retreated with her husband, her tear-filled gaze scanning the outside of the Cape Cod home. "Did you know this is where you were born...and where you were taken from me?"

Her mother's declaration seemed to be like slipping that final piece of a huge puzzle into its place. Olivia didn't think her heart could swell anymore. "I knew something as soon as I walked inside this door. It was as if I had a sense of home."

Mia choked on her next words. "Nothing makes me happier than to know you'll be spending time here, working on your craft and assisting this renowned man in his critical paranormal causes. It's just so exciting."

"Yes it's very exciting." So much so her pulse leaped at a far greater rate than a Chameleon's should. She wrapped her arms around Seth's torso and held her ear to his chest. His heart beat as rapidly as hers did. It sounded like a bongo drum and she thought there could be nothing more soothing than being hypnotized by his life force.

"If the time ever comes for you, you'll find the instructions for taking an eternal mate in the *Coventry*." Tears streamed down Mia's sculpted cheeks. She sniffed. "Hazel

on high, I'm going to bawl my Chameleon eyes out if we don't get the hell out of here. Olivia, Seth knows where we live. We'll see you soon. Abe, let's go home before I totally lose it."

"Consider it done, my love." Abe laced his fingers in Mia's and waved good-bye before sweeping his hand across their joined bodies. They were gone in the blink of an eye.

Seth took the book from her and set it on a foyer side table. He slid his palms down Olivia's back and squeezed her ass cheeks. "You know, I could have really done some research on their colorful auras. And I bet if I'd have tested them, their vital signs would have been remarkably similar to yours. But God I'm so glad they're gone and this is all over. I can't wait to get my hands on your bare silky skin again, and to hold you all night long."

She rose on tip-toe and dragged her lips over his. They were warm and wet against her mouth, so familiar and comforting. It sent a jolt of electricity through her system making her pussy all achy and damp. "Mmm, and my *trifed* needs to be recharged. Care to oblige a wanton witch?"

"You're so wicked," he growled lifting her into his arms. He kicked the front door shut behind him and carried her into the living room where moonbeams peeped in through the paned windows and firelight danced on the walls. As the four of them had sat here earlier and spent time becoming more acquainted, Mia had started the flames with a short mantra and a flick of the hand. It continued to blaze and crackle inviting them to imbibe in its ambiance.

Home.

Olivia couldn't believe she was home, the very place where her life had begun, only to take a perplexing detour. But she'd circled back around and things were making sense now. She knew who she was and she knew who she wanted to be with. Only this time there would be no threat of the man she loved dying mysteriously. The spell had been broken and her life given back to her.

She wasn't a murderer.

Gently, lovingly, Seth laid her on the Oriental rug before the fire. He brushed his lips over her forehead. "Wait here. I'll be right back."

"Where are you going?"

"To fetch some things to make us more comfortable."

"Hurry." She slid her hand into her pants and pushed a finger through her wet folds. Desire thrummed in her loins. "I need you now — *right now*."

He chuckled and combed his fingers through her hair. It seemed to make her very core shimmer in response. His aqua eyes glittered with adoration. "I need you forever."

His cryptic comment stunned her into silence. She watched him leave the room then busied herself with disrobing. Arranging several of the sofa pillows on the floor, she lay back and stared up at the vaulted ceiling waiting, thinking.

It's going to be so cool having Livvy here with me. Being an entity-chaser with a witch as my partner helping me scare away ghosts. Now that's a paranormal scientist's dream come true.

Her stomach fluttered at the memory of his candid words. Did he mean... No, he couldn't possibly.

"Ah, now that's what I like to see," Seth murmured kneeling on the rug next to her. He tossed a stack of quilts nearby and set a picnic basket between them. He opened the lid and reached in drawing out a video tape. "A naked goddess awaiting my lead."

She grinned. "A naked horny goddess."

"Well as much as I think a dip out in the hot tub would do the trick, I've got an even better remedy to cure that curse of yours." He crossed to a large pine entertainment center perpendicular to the hearth. He snatched up the remote, slid the tape into the VCR and pressed a button so the television popped on.

"What's that?"

"Remember the video camera in the bedroom downstairs?"

"Yes, I...oh."

"That's right." Seth angled his head and winked as he sauntered back to their makeshift bed. He opened the basket, drew out cheese and crackers, a bottle of wine and stemware. "Caught on tape doing the deed with the electron energy-field video camera recording every kiss, every touch. And now we're going to watch ourselves making earth-shattering love—and I do literally mean earth-shattering."

At the realization of his words there was an erotic pull of energy deep in her loins. Moisture spilled out onto her labia at the knowledge that she'd soon be a voyeur to their fiery lovemaking. Her libido simmered while she reached for the snacks.

"Hmm, a nerd of a scientist with a naughty dark side as a porno movie producer." She munched, the sharp flavor of cheddar and salt bursting in her mouth. "I think I like the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in you."

"I guarantee you there's no movie on the market that'll turn us on more than this one." He poured merlot, pressed a glass in her hand and reached for a cracker and a cube of cheese. He popped them in his mouth and chewed, then sipped regarding her over the rim. "No woman more sexy, for sure."

Her face warmed. There was nothing, she mused as her pulse pounded, like a compliment such as that coming with such conviction from a virile, handsome lover. She tipped back her head and took a long swallow. The tart wine slid down her throat and made her head spin. "You're not so bad yourself, Doctor."

A slow grin spread across his face. He drained the last of his wine and stood up setting aside his glass. Quickly disrobing he tossed his clothes onto the sofa. A glitter of lust lit his stunning eyes. "Hard and ready for you, that's for damn sure."

A thrill shuddered through her. The long column of his sex stood erect against his flat abs, the head swollen and faintly purple. By firelight its sleek texture reminded her of an impressive sword, the sac its stalwart hilt.

She set her wine on the coffee table. Lying back Olivia settled into the soft pillows and reached up welcoming him to her. "Come to me."

He punched a button on the remote and the movie started to play. In it he kneeled beside her just as he did now. "Get up. Up on all fours so I can sink my cock into your heat while we make love and watch ourselves at the same time."

At his command it was as if he'd lit a torch between her legs. She did as he asked gazing at the screen, watching herself kissing the life from him while pushing him onto his back to straddle him.

Seth let out a low whistle and moved behind her skimming his hot palms up and down her back and ass.

"Look at you, so hot." He rubbed her buttocks pulling the globes apart. Heat from the fireplace licked at her wetness. Her nipples went taut and tingled sending an ache to her pussy. "Damn, I can't wait to get inside you."

He tore off her jacket in the movie and her large breasts sprang free. She studied their profiles, every nuance and move they'd made. "The color. Look at the color surrounding me on the TV," she whispered when he scooted closer.

"Yes, your aura almost always matches your eyes and mood. Tell me, Livvy, what does pink mean?"

She glanced over her shoulder and took in the sexy sight of him gripping his shaft while circling her hole with the tip of his rod. Her inner muscles spasmed involuntarily and her channel released more cream lubricating the head.

"It...it means..." No, she couldn't admit it. True, there wasn't the Black Widow curse in force any longer. But to admit her love too soon might mean peril for their young relationship. He'd already professed his love for her yet there really was no hurry for her to do the same. She could wait. They'd only known each other for all of two days.

He clutched her hips and slid into her wetness from behind. "Tell me, tell me exactly what it means," he demanded, his voice strained with passion.

She tossed her head back and howled with the unexpected invasion. Heat from the fire dewed her skin. Her arms and legs trembled but he held her body firmly, preventing her from buckling. She lowered her gaze studying their movie, overwhelmed by the sensation of being filled to the core in real life while the anticipation of bliss loomed ahead on the television.

On the screen, with her body glowing a neon pink edged by an infrareddish coloring, he guided her up so that she perched atop his face. Remembering the sensation of his wet hot tongue probing her aching folds made her inner walls clench around his rod.

He hissed. "It means love, doesn't it, Olivia?"

"N-no."

Seth drew back and plunged into her with such force she nearly tumbled forward. "Doesn't it?"

"No, no, please don't make me..."

"You may not realize it but I already heard you say it once when I was in bed and under Edwina's spell. I want to hear you say it again. Now while I'm buried inside your tight cunt."

He planted a hand next to hers. With the other he reached around and found her swollen clitoris, fluttering, circling, driving her mad. The tempo increased. He pounded into her time and time again. On the screen she watched herself shudder, heard her own cry of ecstasy as she straddled his head and he ate her pussy with expertise.

With her own moans and sighs from the movie playing in the background, he thrust into her, desire building to an almost unbearable level. The ground started to quake beneath her. She heard the fire crackle and spark, whooshing up into the flue. The scent of smoke and her own arousal filled her lungs.

She watched herself on the television, a replay of that moment of utter fulfillment, collapsing facedown on the bed only to be taken by him yet again before she could even catch her breath. In the movie his hard, sculpted body tensed, the muscles well defined. He tore into her from behind just as he did now, his erect cock penetrating her to her very soul.

"Tell me," he rasped in her ear making her shiver. "Tell me the pink aura means you're feeling the emotion of love."

She should have known the scientist in him would have figured it out by now. But it was the lover in him that felt it, sensed it, had heard it professed from her own lips at that vulnerable moment of worry for his safety. How could she deny it in the face of such demanding blatancy with her womb being bathed by his hot pre-cum?

"I-I..."

He skimmed a hand up her belly and closed his palm over one breast. A sweet ache radiated from her areola when he pinched and rolled the puckered bud between his fingers. The languid pull of lust traveled to her groin where slow heat flooded her pussy and coated his stone-hard cock.

"Please, Livvy. Talk to me."

She still couldn't speak. Olivia was unsure what kept her from revealing what bloomed in her heart. Was it the idea of becoming emotionally defenseless to another man and the threat of being left alone again in her grief? Did traces of fear remain that the death spell might still be in force? Under Edwina's spell, to speak her love out loud would surely result in Seth's demise yet she'd already done so. Or maybe it was simply the distraction of all the Chameleon sexual power building in her?

Seth stilled his movements, his voice husky and breathless. She tightened her pussy muscles around his cock holding him close.

"Babe...I know it's only been two days but you know as well as I do there was something special between us from the first moment we met. Something we can't ignore." He caressed her breasts, abdomen and thighs. Tension she wasn't aware remained in her muscles seemed to melt away leaving behind a languid sensation in her blood. In the distance she could hear the gentle swish and ebb of the ocean and could perceive the pull of the moon in the crackle of energy in the air.

He nipped her shoulder, suckled at the sensitive flesh of her neck. Pulling back, Seth drove into her causing a conglomerate of explosions to detonate in her drenching passage. "Tell me what I want to hear, what I sense is in your heart and see in your aura and your eyes. Pink means love, doesn't it?"

"Yes, damn you," she finally blurted out. "But it's never been this bright before, so intense it's almost frightening."

He slid a hand along her jaw and turned her head so that his lips could meet hers. Tracing her mouth with his warm wet tongue, he murmured, "I understand. I feel the same overwhelming emotions. But we'll take it slowly. We have forever. I just need to know you feel it too."

The fire blazed hotter roaring in the hearth. Beneath the flame she could see the bright pink at the base. It simmered and glowed as did her heart. His impassioned words couldn't have meant any more to her than the actual declaration of love itself.

"Yes, yes, slowly. I'd like that very much." His soft kisses tasted of tart wine and salt. "Now don't make me wait anymore. Make me come."

He started to move inside her stroking the inner walls and stimulating her G-spot. "Look at the TV when you come. Watch the glow of arousal on your gorgeous face, the way your body undulates and arches, the slope of those luscious breasts...mmm, such a provocative witch you are."

Her warm honey oozed out onto his balls. She listened to her own cries of ecstasy coming from the speakers and a swift wave of passion whipped through her. She thrust backward rocking her hips, stroking him, taking all of him in. The walls shook, windows rattled, trinkets jingled.

"Concentrate on your *trifed*, take control of it," Seth whispered in her ear. "Try and channel the power through it, through me."

Olivia listened to his soothing words and focused on the rising power. Slowly it was if some intangible threads reached out from her *trifed* and reined in the volatile energy. The rattling and shaking gradually stopped. It must have been as if being out of control caused a Chameleon to lose some of the pleasure of sex because now that she held it within her, she'd never seen such rapture. She came like never before, the light shattering through her and into Seth.

He moaned in waves, each undulation louder, more intense than the last. Together they jolted in bliss twitching against each other. Olivia glanced up at the television at that very moment and saw they had timed their bliss with the movie. Echoes of

pleasure blared out from the speakers sending her into a final climax that rocked her to the very core of her soul.

Minutes later Olivia lay spent in his arms listening to the rush of the surf, the melancholy cry of an owl. The scent of sex mixed with wine and cheese filled her lungs making her hungry for more. She kneaded the hard curves of his chest, skimmed her hands over the tickly hairs there. It felt so good to be basking in the lazy afterglow of unhurried love, to know they had an exciting future ahead of them without the threats Edwina had cursed her with. The thought of the incident in the woods, of Mia and all that had come to light made her suddenly curious.

The *Chameleon Coventry*.

"Seth?"

"Mmm?"

"Would it disturb you if I flipped through the book Mia gave me?"

"The *Coventry*? No, of course not." The husky tone of his voice combined with the tender way he dragged his fingers up and down her back made her bones and muscles go to liquid. "I think it's long overdue. In fact if you don't mind, I'd like to take a peek myself."

Excitement rippled through her belly. "Sure. I'll go get it." She started to rise when his arm tightened around her waist.

"Hey, I was thinking, why not try your hand at summoning it to you?"

She lifted an eyebrow. "Are you serious?"

The corners of his mouth twitched. "Dead."

"Okay..." She sat up and folded her legs. It was, she thought silently, a lot like being a kid at Halloween wishing for powers to come to her so she could play the part of witch to the hilt.

But in this case there was no part to play. It was real.

"You can do it." He remained lying on his side and trailed lazy circles up and down her back with his fingernails. "Relax. Concentrate."

Olivia drew in a cleansing breath and looked intently through the archway leading out into the foyer where Seth had placed the book near the door. Closing her eyes, she focused on that spot in the small of her back, the anatomical location of her Chameleons' energy.

Exhaling, she murmured, "Okay, here goes."

Seth's touch looped around her *trifed* soothing her, giving her the courage to continue.

She pictured the book in her mind's eye and struggled for just the right words to recite. The fire behind her emitted a small explosion when she lifted her arms and chanted, "*Chameleon Coventry*, I call upon you now to give me access to your laws and your power, as the moon shines bright during this electrifying hour. With inexperience as a witch of your staff, come to me now to test my craft." Instantly she recalled Mia's

final words in one of her spells. With a breath's hesitation she added it just as her mother had. "Oh the Coven entities, so let it be!"

Her *trifed* tingled and electricity sizzled up her spine. Rapture engulfed her, so pure and loving she could barely withstand it. Tantalizing flavors and scents bombarded her senses, her hair fluttered behind her as if a wind had blown in. Her arms were pulled downward so that her hands were drawn magnetically toward the door. It was then she saw it. The book sailed through the air and headed directly toward her.

She gasped. "Seth...do you see what I see?"

"Oh yeah, can't miss it." She felt Seth shift and sit up behind her. "Goddamn, that's so fucking amazing."

Olivia started to duck as the *Coventry* neared but just before it crashed into her face it plopped to the floor and fell open somewhere near the middle. She leaned closer to scan the golden script and read the first thing her gaze zipped to. She recited it aloud and a shiver went up her spine. It was apparent the *Coventry* had a mind of its own and attempted to send her a message.

"Let it be known our immortal High Priestess, or any priestess princess in line to inherit the Coven, may take any number of mates to energize her craft. She shall when she so chooses however, take an eternal single mate in monogamy. At which time she shall unite with her chosen mate and rise into the Coven realm to ordain the joining. Consequently, her mate will become an irreversible part of the Coven as an immortal Chameleon wizard. Oh the Coven entities have spoken, so let it be!"

"Whoa." Olivia's heart galloped in her chest. Was this a sign?

Seth gathered her close from behind staring over her shoulder at the passage in the book. "I, um...I think your Coven is trying to tell us something."

She couldn't stop gawking at the evocative message. Her future expectations stared her right in the face and yet she'd only known Seth for two days. "I-I'm sorry." She twisted around surprised to see him grinning rather than pale with panic. "Seth, please don't think I'm trapping you into — This doesn't have to mean —"

He crushed his mouth hungrily to hers making her swallow her words. Passion burst in her blood, bright and ravenous.

She tore her mouth from his and stared into eyes full of so much love it scared her nearly to death. "What...why did you do that?"

"Because I'm one happy guy."

"Happy? To see that I'm to take a permanent mate someday?"

"To know that I will be that mate one day."

"B-but we've only known each other for —"

He pressed a finger to her lips. "Shh. That's irrelevant. We have something special here that I refuse to give up. Besides, we have an eternity to get to know each other so that excuse is moot."

"But you would become a Chameleon, an immortal. Are you sure you want to..."

He dragged her down with him and moved over her wedging his hips between her spread legs. Her loins burned a firestorm of desire but there was the love there too that she couldn't deny.

She gazed into his eyes and nearly came when he unexpectedly plunged into her. Arousal glittered in their aqua pools. Gilded firelight danced across his handsome features and she couldn't deny the love in her own heart.

"Are you kidding?" he rasped, already on the edge of bliss. "To continue my work into eternity and to learn your Chameleon magic would be every paranormal scientist's dream come true. We'll take the relationship at our leisure, very slowly. Just like this." She let out a moan when he moved inside her in long gentle strokes. Hidden neurons fired off in her core and made her *trifed* tingle.

"Are you sure?"

"Positive." He kissed her just as unhurriedly as he fucked her. "Besides, there's no way I could be without you. I'm completely bewitched."

Olivia bowed up arching against him, taking all of him in. He reached down and gathered her up cupping her ass cheeks. His finger swirled around her anus and she nearly shot right up into the Coven realm at the naughty pleasure of it.

"No, *I'm* the one who's spellbound. Which means you'll make an excellent wizard." She wound her arms around his neck and locked herself around his hips. "So how about you make me climax and use your magic to reverse the last traces of that curse you cast on me the moment I saw your handsome picture on the internet?"

"Now we're talking." He drew back so just the tip of his cock probed her hole. With a possessive force that stole the air from her lungs, he drove into her soaking wet pussy. They flew on the wings of passion, and just when she was starting to float back down to Earth he whispered in her ear, "No more Black Widow. Oh the Coven entities, so let it be."

About the Author

Titania Ladley knew it was necessary to hang up her stethoscope forever and write fulltime when her characters started coming to work with her on the graveyard shift. A pretty scary prospect when a nurse is unable to tell the difference between patients, spirits and her over-active imagination. So for the benefit of mankind, Titania clocked out one morning after working a grueling twelve-hour night shift and dragged her persistent characters home with her. She marched in the door, tossed her bag of medical paraphernalia into the spare bedroom and put her trembling, tired hands to the keyboard. You bet she was scared out of her booty! But there was just no other way for Titania to live—nor was there for her patients. ;)

Happily, Titania's never looked back. Residing in Minnesota with her very own hunky hero, one child remaining at home and twins in college, Titania devotes her spare time to family, reading erotic romances, walking, weightlifting, crocheting and baking fattening desserts. And arguing with her stubborn alpha males and kick-ass heroines.

Titania welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at www.ellorascave.com.

Tell Us What You Think

We appreciate hearing reader opinions about our books. You can email us at Comments@EllorasCave.com.

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