

# VAMPIRES AND DONUTS

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## Chapter One

Kendra stood to the full stretch of her five-foot seven-inch height and glared down at the gorgeous man lounging in the visitor chair on the far side of her desk.

"Brand, if you ever put your fangs on one of my friends again, I'm going to rip them out and make myself a pair of earrings."

He didn't flinch, didn't cower. Just smiled slightly. "What an intriguing threat."

"I'm serious."

He sighed and kicked his booted feet up onto her desk. "You know..." he said, crossing his arms onto his chest, "as a client, I should be treated with more respect than this. Do you threaten your other clients?"

"Most of my other clients don't drink blood." She stopped. "Wait. Most of my clients *do* drink blood and I can blame that on you as well."

He shrugged—and looked so damned yummy that Kendra thought she'd scream. It shouldn't be possible for one man to be so stunning. Tall and muscular with long black hair—typically tied back but left hanging around his shoulders tonight—a wicked smile and crystal blue eyes. Unfortunately, the smile came accompanied by fangs and the blue eyes turned blood-red when he was angry.

Brand was a fairly new vampire, only fifty years old, but he had the vampire persona down pat. He dressed in black, wore shades at night and had just the right mix of spooky and sexy.

If he hadn't been completely out of her league—and a vampire—Kendra definitely would have jumped him years ago. But she knew better.

Vampires and donuts. The two things in this world destined to tempt and ruin her.

"What can I say? You did such a fantastic job for me, I had to recommend you to my friends."

She steeled herself against the charming smile and waves of seductive energy radiating off him. She was immune. Really she was.

"Great. Some doctors strive to be 'surgeon to the stars'." She rubbed her soon-to-be-throbbing forehead with her fingertips. "I'm the investment advisor to the undead."

"Be happy. We didn't even blame you for that little dip in the market a few years ago."

She started to bare her teeth in a growl but stopped. When it came to dangerous incisors, Brand would win, hands down.

"Can we get back to the point of this conversation?" she asked.

"I didn't know there was a point to this conversation."

"Don't bite my friends."

"Kendra, honey, you know the two things I need to survive are blood and sex. Sharon was willing to provide both."

"Did she know about the blood?"

He had the grace to look a little sheepish. "Maybe not, but she won't miss it either."

"Brand!" Kendra tried to temper her voice, to keep it from turning into a whine, but wasn't sure she succeeded.

"Fine. I promise, no more biting your friends." He rose in a swift, fluid motion and leaned across her desk, meeting her halfway. "I make no promises about you though. Trust me. The sex will be hot. Will you feed me?"

*Yes!* her body screamed.

"No," her mind forced her lips to say. The silent wail that echoed inside her pussy at again being denied the contact it desired almost sent Kendra to her knees but she stayed strong. He was just teasing. It was something he did to torment her. No way a guy like him was interested in a woman like her. Not that she was hideous, she consoled herself. But she was common. Brown hair, green eyes, nice breasts but a little too much padding on her backside.

She looked up and saw Brand's quirky, teasing smile.

"I don't think that's appropriate," she said primly. "We're business associates, right?"

Amusement flared in those hard blue eyes. "Right."

"Why did you come by tonight?" she asked, recalling his appearance at her office door thirty minutes ago and how she'd creamed her panties at the sight of him. He'd had this effect on her from the moment they'd met seven years ago.

It had been a night much like this one. She'd been working late, trying to do a good job for the *one* client she had and Brand had walked in. He'd said he needed someone to manage his business affairs because he traveled and his schedule was erratic. She had been so stunned by the long black hair and captivating eyes that she'd agreed without thinking. He'd become her second client.

She had worked her ass off for him, doubling his considerable assets in three months. He'd recommended her to his friends and her client list grew. Four years into the relationship, she discovered Brand and all his friends were vampires. By then, she liked them all. She'd kept their secret and their business and they thanked her in many ways. Mainly by sending her more business. Two-thirds of her clients were vampires.

Through the years, she'd become friends with Brand. Beyond business, they spent hours talking and laughing.

"I want you to be extra-careful over the next few weeks."

The gray, heavy tone of Brand's words jolted her clear of her reminiscing. "What? Why?"

He hesitated and, for a moment, she thought he wasn't going to answer. It would be just like him to present a warning like that and then not explain it. But she knew how to wait him out.

"Some vampires are trying to overthrow the current leader."

"You guys have leaders? Like a president?"

"Yes, but our elections are much more bloody. The one standing at the end gets to lead."

A thought struck her and she looked at him suspiciously. "You're not this leader guy, are you?"

He laughed softly. "No. His name is Marcus and he's old and very powerful. I work for him."

"Ah...so what does this have to do with me?"

His deliberately casual shrug sent warnings through Kendra's mind.

"The guy who's trying to take over has decided to distract Marcus's lieutenants—by going after the people we know. Lovers, sisters, mothers."

Kendra chewed on her lower lip and tried to figure out where she fit into that list. She wasn't his sister or mother—and she sure as hell wasn't his lover, at least not in reality. In her dreams...that was a different issue.

"What does this have to do with me?" she asked again.

"He's noticed our, uh, friendship." For the first time in their seven-year history, Brand looked embarrassed. "And Marcus thinks he might come after you."

The breath locked in her throat like an invisible hand squeezing. "Me? What did I do?"

"Nothing. The guy's crazy. Just be extra-careful for a few days until we find him and leave his scrawny body writhing in the sunlight." He sounded so cold that shudders raced down her back.

"What do I do? Stay inside? Lock my doors? Wait! If I don't invite him in, I'm safe, right?"

Brand smiled again but this grim look didn't warm her tummy.

"That whole 'invitation only' thing is a myth. You don't get an invisible shield around your house when you buy it."

Said like that, it did sound rather silly and that didn't make her feel any safer. "How do I protect myself?"

"Stakes work. Silver bullets work. Don't suppose you have any of those around?"

"Uh no. I wasn't expecting werewolves to attack."

"It works for both species but since you don't have any, you just have to be careful. Stay in the company of others as much as possible. Do you have a cell phone?"

"Of course."

"Let me have it."

Kendra handed him her phone, pleased that her fingers didn't shake. Brand quickly keyed in a new number.

"What are you doing?" she asked looking over his shoulder. Dang, he smelled good. She took a deep breath—capturing it for later when she would need it.

"Programming in my number. I'm now on speed dial one." He handed the phone back to her.

"But...but...speed dial one is Donnie's Donut Palace." It was her favorite twenty-four hour donut emporium. She called ahead and they had her order ready when she drove up.

"You can do without donuts for a few days."

Her eyes tightened and Brand knew he was heading into dangerous territory. "Is that a dig?"

He looked down at her body—curvy, tight and perfect for his hands. His fangs exploded from his gums and his cock hardened at the thought of holding those round breasts and sipping at her nipples.

"No, you're perfect the way you are," he said, meaning it, though he knew Kendra would never believe him. "But until we get this settled, you have to choose between safety and donuts."

Her lips curled into a grimace. "I suppose survival is more important than the world's best donuts...for a few days."

He had to work at not smiling in return. "I'll try to work quickly." He wanted to grab her and shake her so she understood how serious this was—but he also didn't want to panic her. He would find Trevor. He had no doubt about that. And then Brand would finally make his move on Kendra. He'd waited seven years, assuming the urge to fuck her would go away. It hadn't. It had grown worse and with this latest threat, he realized he couldn't wait anymore. He had to have her—at least once. "Keep your phone with you. If anything out of the ordinary happens, call me."

"Out of the ordinary? I work for a bunch of vampires. What do you consider normal?"

He stared down at her, not letting her see the smile that threatened.

"Fine," she sighed. "I'll keep the phone on me and if anything strange happens, I'll think donuts." He raised his eyebrows. "Trust me. I'm never going to remember speed dial one as anything but Donnie's."

He took a deep breath, letting some of the tension leave his body. The long inhalation brought in a new wave of her sensual perfume—nothing added, pure woman. Pure aroused woman. He'd noticed it shortly after he'd entered. She wanted him. Her body reacted the same way every time he came near her but she'd never responded to any of his subtle hints that he wanted more.

Maybe he needed to be a little less subtle. But not until Trevor was caught.

"I've got some things to do. Lock the door and call me when you're ready to leave. I'll come back and walk you home."

She nodded.

"You'd better get going," she said, retreating behind her façade. She lifted her chin and glared at him. "And no more biting my friends."

"I promised," he said, walking to the door. "No more biting or fucking your friends." He stopped in the doorway and looked back. He couldn't have her tonight but he might as well make it known he planned to. "I have a new treat in mind."

A warm wave of need flowed out of her center, sending the delicate fragrance toward him. Brand smiled. *Good. Give her something to think about.*

At ten o'clock, Kendra pushed back from her computer and stretched her arms up. It had taken some concentration but she'd managed to get some work done. After Brand's strange seductive farewell, her mind had wanted to focus on him, not on reviewing stocks. Normally she could resist the general charm he emitted but tonight it had been different. It wasn't a generic flirtation that would have been directed at any woman—this had been focused on her.

She rolled her shoulders and sighed. It was late but her day was only halfway done. She'd shifted her work schedule to match the majority of her client list—late nights, early mornings.

In mid-yawn, she watched her office door swing open and tensed. She'd locked the front door. A tall blond man entered. Kendra immediately recognized the crystal eyes of a vampire. Not one of her clients. She stood. Brand often sent her clients but he always warned her first.

"Can I help you?"

"You're the investment guru all the vamps are using these days."

The slow, lazy drawl had the feel of slime as it oozed from his mouth. The smarmy smile didn't help the image.

"Who are you?"

"I'm a friend of Brand's."

Triggers went off in Kendra's head. None of the other vampires ever claimed to be Brand's "friend". They claimed to "know" Brand or that Brand had sent them but never made the more intimate connection. She placed her hands on the desktop, covering her cell phone with her right hand. Her eyes locked on the stranger, she surreptitiously hit the first key and held it down. Brand had said out of the ordinary and she wasn't taking any chances. She might feel silly later but for now, she was taking the cautious approach.

"Brand usually tells me when he's sending someone new."

"He must have forgotten." He stepped closer.

Kendra risked a glance down. The call had connected.

"Kendra?" Brand's tinny voice reached her ears.

Her visitor's head snapped up and his eyes turned red. Before she could blink, he flew through the air, landing beside her desk. He slammed his fist down on the phone, killing the connection.

"Calling your friend?" His hand snapped out and fingers wrapped around her throat. His grip bit into her skin and cut off her air. A mangled choking sound was her only protest. "Won't make any difference. You'll be dead by the time he gets here. It's amazing how fast a human bleeds out."

The excruciating pain clouded her hearing, muffling his words. Keeping the tight grip on her neck, he grabbed her wrist. White flashed before her eyes as he opened his mouth and she saw the deadly fangs. Pain lanced her arm. She peered around his strangling hold and saw blood pouring from open slashes across her wrist. Matching pain struck on her other arm.

Her knees collapsed as he released her neck. She gulped in desperate air, trying to think beyond the spots forming in her eyes. Freed, she swung her arm out and slugged him in the chest. He slapped her hand away and grabbed the back of her hair.

"Brand must like them feisty. Me? I like a human who knows her place." He bent her head over and drove his fangs into her neck. Kendra screamed. Fire ripped through her skin and poured into her body. It was like he was inside her, filling her with his hatred. She hung in suspended animation, frozen but feeling the deadly pull of his mouth on her skin, sickened by the sensation. Blackness rose behind her eyelids, covering her mind. She was dying. She knew it. Abruptly the pain stopped and hope flickered inside her chest. *Brand? Had he come to save her?* "Your hero will never make it," the vampire sneered, as if he could hear the hope inside her head. "Perfect. You'll be dying as he arrives."

She heard the voice in the dark and felt a thump as she hit the floor.

*Brand.* The silent cry lingered as her mind faded to black.

## Chapter Two

Kendra's hands shook as she poured coffee into her cup. Was she even able to drink coffee now? Surely Brand wouldn't have made it if she couldn't drink it.

The events of last night had crashed down on her from the moment she'd woken in Brand's bed. The stranger, the attack and...the healing. The memories were hazy but she could still feel the darkness and cold invading her body. Death had been near. Then the warmth came, filling her mouth. Brand's voice filling her head, ordering her to drink. She'd become aware long enough to realize she was sucking on Brand's...wrist. *Ugh*. Of all the things she'd ever imagined sucking on Brand, his blood had been nowhere on the list.

She turned her hands over and stared at her wrists. The bloody tears were gone and all that remained of the gouging bite at her neck was a little pink scar.

"How are you feeling?"

She looked up at Brand's soft question.

"I'm fine," she said again. He'd asked her that five times since she'd woken in his bed. She could hear the lingering guilt in his voice every time he spoke. He blamed himself for her attack. "I feel good actually. Like it never happened."

"The vampire blood gave you the ability to heal."

So it hadn't been a dream. She *had* drunk his blood. "Uh, am I a vampire?"

His lips kicked up into a sad smile and he shook his head.

"But I drank your blood. Doesn't that turn me into a vampire? That's how they do it in the movies."

"Another myth." He brushed her hair back away from her face. "It takes a blood exchange but it also takes a more concentrated effort to Turn someone. All my blood did was give you the ability to heal." He picked up her hand and stroked his fingers across her skin. The cool touch sent new delicious shivers down her spine. Her eyes tracked his fingers along her arm, leaving whispers of need behind. The heat in the center of her stomach exploded. Such a light touch but it was more than she'd ever imagined. She squirmed, her pussy turning wet, the ache billowing out of the center of her body. It was incredible. It was like she was on fire – melting from the inside, ignited by the power of his touch.

"To turn into a vampire, you have to trust the person so much that you'll give them your soul to protect while you make the change." He leaned down and placed a whisper kiss below her ear.

She concentrated on forcing her lungs to breathe – the light brush of his lips was sapping the strength in her legs. "Is your blood causing this?"



"Causing what?" Another kiss followed his question.

"This desire." It had to be something because nothing had ever felt this good. "This pleasure." All he'd done was kiss her and she was melting with need.

"No, baby, that's all you."

Air rushed out of her lungs at his whispered statement. His lips moved in a random pattern across her skin, tasting and teasing the taut line of her throat. She felt his mouth open and the gentle scrape of his teeth across her pulse. The memory of her attack barreled into her mind.

"Please, don't bite me," she said. Her voice quivered.

He paused and she knew he heard her fear.

"I won't. I promise."

She relaxed. He kept his promises. She was safe with him.

"But I have to taste you, baby. I've been dreaming about this for seven years." His lips tickled her ear as his words caressed the very depth of her sex. "Dreamed about tasting your sweet cunt, the hot spicy flavor of your pussy." He sucked lightly on her earlobe. "It's taken all my control to not throw you across your desk and fuck you senseless."

"Why didn't you?" she groaned. She knew there was a reason this was a bad idea but she couldn't think of it.

"Because I was stupid," he growled a second before he covered her lips with his own. This was no gentle, introductory kiss. He thrust his tongue deep into her mouth, capturing and captivating. Kendra groaned as his masculine flavor enveloped her. She couldn't think, couldn't worry—all she could do was feel the hot seductive lure of his lips and his tongue. A long time later—moments before she was desperate for breath—he lifted his head. "And because I didn't know you'd taste this sweet. May I taste you?"

Without waiting for an answer—which would have been a resounding "yes"—he pulled her robe open, baring her naked skin. He pressed one knee forward, slipping between her thighs. The brush of his trousers against her sensitized skin magnified all the other cravings inside her. He skimmed his fingers across the top of her knee. Kendra heard the silent request and spread her legs just a little, giving him more access, opening herself to him.

His fingers accepted the invitation, swirling across her skin to the apex of her thighs. If it had been difficult to breathe before, it was impossible now. Brand, making love to her. It was too much for her tired mind to comprehend so she shut down the voices in her head and just let herself feel.

Brand watched his hand move across her skin, fascinated by the sight of his fingers entwined with the pale brown hair that covered her sex. Damn but he wanted her. He'd never fully appreciated his vampire senses until this moment, when he could smell her arousal, smell the sweet desire that flooded her pussy.

He knew it was wrong to take advantage of her vulnerable state but since the moment he'd seen her lying in his bed, he couldn't find the noble side to his soul. He had to have her.

He smoothed his hand down the inside of her thigh, feeling the human warmth invade his skin. He knew his hands were cool but they would heat as he touched her. As they fucked, his blood would flow and his heart would pound. *This* was why vampires needed sex—to be human. To reconnect with their human roots. It was when a vampire stopped fucking that he became dangerous, or suicidal.

"Brand?" The low groan wrapped around his already hard cock and squeezed. His fangs plunged downward, demanding penetration. Her pulse rattled just beneath the surface of her skin. But he'd promised he wouldn't bite her. Holding himself back, he whispered kisses along her neck, feeling the temptation so close.

"Shall I stop?" He weighted the answer in his favor by slipping one finger up, easing it slowly, gently into her warm, wet slit. Her chest pushed up, adding a delightful shimmy to her breasts. He drove a little deeper, finding her clit, feeling the tight, already aroused bud reach for him. "I've dreamed for seven years about touching you like this, about sliding into your tight little pussy." He swept his finger around her clit, teasing the right side with extra pressure. The sweet catch at the back of her throat made him groan—she was just as hot, just as wild as he'd imagined.

His hand left the peak of her thighs and began to draw lazy swirls across her thighs, painting her skin with the hot liquid that flowed from inside her. He wanted her blood—to feel her life flowing within him. She'd declared that intimacy beyond the limits but he had to taste her.

He sank to his knees and found the banquet of her sex open for him. Under the soft urging of his hand, she lifted her leg over his shoulder. He traced the dark pink entrance of her cunt with the tip of his tongue and felt her shudder. The flavor of her arousal drifted into his mouth and seeped into the core of his body.

"Brand?"

The sensual fear beneath his name spurred him on. She wanted this but was frightened of the sensation. He would teach her to crave it, the way he did. He kept his touch deliberately light, learning her flesh, welcoming her audible cues. The delicate gasps led quickly to low-throated groans as he circled her clit, gently sucking it into his mouth. Her hips rocked in restless need. Brand reached up and held her still, keeping her in place as he tasted her sweet flesh.

His cock throbbed inside his trousers, demanding its turn at the treasure of her pussy. But there was no way he was going to give up his treat just yet. He lost himself in her—lapping at her sex, learning and loving her. Her cries filled the room, echoing through the quiet kitchen and into his head. He had to have more of her.

He thrust his tongue into her cunt, flicking the tip against the inside walls. Her hips pumped hard against his face, as if she wanted him deeper.

She was ready to be fucked.

He stood up. Her eyes snapped open.

"Wha—?" Panic fluttered at him through her gaze.

"Don't worry, baby, I won't leave you hanging." He cupped his hand around the back of her neck and pulled her to him for a long, hot kiss, sharing her flavor with her. "Don't you taste delicious?" he asked against her skin. She laved her tongue across his lips. Her eyes clouded for a moment and he'd never seen anything more sexual. "I want more of your hot pussy juice." He felt her shiver beneath his words. "I want to spend hours with my mouth between your legs, licking your sweet cunt, feeling you come against my lips." She whimpered and clung to him. "But now, I need to have you. I've dreamed of this for too many years."

She nodded with the desperation of a woman who needed to be fucked.

The vampire inside him screamed its triumph. Brand flicked his tongue across the points of his fangs, teasing the sensitive spikes. They ached with the need to plunge into her. He stared down into her trusting green eyes. He couldn't betray that trust.

He placed his hands on her shoulders and spun her around, pushing her forward until she leaned against the counter.

"Let me have you this way," he said, hoping for some level of control. She pushed her ass back, offering herself to him. The hunger flowing through her reached out to him and drew him forward.

Brand placed the thick head of his cock against her opening and began to slide in. She was wet and hot and tight. She arched into him, begging for his penetration. He pushed halfway in, stopping when she gasped.

"Too much?" Damn but she was tight. It had obviously been a long time since she'd fucked. He felt his lips bend upward. If he had his way, she'd never go without again.

She took shallow panting breaths that eased the heavy grip of her cunt. Unable to stop himself, he pushed in just a little deeper. Again she tensed.

"Kendra?" His fangs were fully extended and his body was demanding he fuck her. But if she asked him to pull back, he would. A silent howl erupted in his head.

"When you became a vampire did you grow four or five inches?" she panted.

He bit back a groan. "No, we stay exactly as we were when we were Turned."

"So you were always hung like a horse?"

"Don't make me laugh, sweet," he said, gritting his teeth. "Not when I'm finally inside you. Tell me if it's too much." She dropped her head forward and nodded, giving him the permission he was seeking.

He gripped her hips and held her still as he pushed forward. He kept his penetration slow and steady until he filled her, until every inch was buried deep in her flesh.

Heat flowed through her into his body, bringing him alive, compelling his heart to beat. Did she realize what it meant? How powerful it was to have her give herself so openly?

He held himself deep inside her, taking a breath and savoring the warmth of her pussy surrounding him.

"Oh baby, your sweet cunt holds me so tight." He thrust forward, trying to get just a little deeper.

She groaned softly and thrust against him. His body screamed at him to pound inside her, to ride her hard and deep, but he went slow, letting her adjust to his size.

Kendra kept a firm grip on the counter, holding herself steady for his thrusts. All her strength, all her energy was centered in her sex. Her body rang with pure sensation. She'd never felt anything like this. He was hard and heavy inside her. Her pussy felt stretched and filled and so alive she wanted to scream her pleasure. Her world was focused on the long, hot slide of his cock into her body.

"God, baby, you feel so good. I want to fuck you forever." His voice spiraled through her chest, sinking into the core of her body. He pulled slowly out, inch by inch slipping from her body until she felt empty without him.

"Brand!" Sensual panic flowed through her.

"I'm here, sweet. I won't leave you." He pushed back in, slower but determined as if he wanted to feel every bit of her. She rocked her hips back but he gripped them, holding her still. He wouldn't let her move. He moved inside her, rubbing pressure points deep inside her sex until she was begging for release.

He rode her slow and deep, taking her heart and giving her his flesh in return.

The deep, pulsing massage touched a place that had never been reached before. She panted, trying to capture enough breath to survive, her body screaming for the orgasm just out of reach. As if he heard the silent pleas in her whimpers, he sped up. And the scream inside her broke free. The hollow center of her sex vibrated—the contractions seemed to flow from her cunt, driving through her body, building in strength until she couldn't contain the feeling. Her knees collapsed and she dropped against the counter. Brand's hands held her as he continued to thrust inside her. He pulled out and drove back in, giving her a full ride of his cock.

"More, give me more," he said, taking her harder.

Hearing the need in his voice, she struggled to stay upright and pushed back against him, finding strength where she had none. She pumped hard, throwing her ass back in time to his forward thrusts, driving him deeper.

"Please, Brand, come inside me." She couldn't take much more.

"Soon. Let me have more. Come for me again." He reached around her and slipped his finger into her slit, sliding over her tight clit. The subtle pressure brought a new kind of release. "That's it. You feel so good coming around my cock." He kept his hand cupped on her pussy, claiming it as he continued to thrust into her.

His mouth brushed along her neck. Unable to resist, she tilted her head to the side, baring her throat. The fiery swipe of his tongue across her skin sent the warmth into her body. He opened his mouth across her neck. She tensed, preparing for his bite but it

never came. His teeth scraped her skin—not biting but a gentle nip, tempting her. “I keep my promises,” he whispered, pulling back and driving hard into her again.

The sweet temptation of her throat drove him to the edge. Her heart pounded a frantic rhythm that urged him to move faster, to fill her with every part of him. His fangs ached. The need to plunge them into her throat was almost more than he could take. Red heat burned from the inside of his chest, demanding her blood.

He wanted to be gentle, to love her slowly, but there was no way—not with the vampire in him screaming to be free.

And she didn’t seem to want a slow, gentle fuck. She pushed her ass back, impaling herself on his shaft. The sweet pulses helped him cling to his sanity. He stared down to where their bodies were connected, his cock sunk deep into her cunt. The warm pink of her flesh penetrated by the hard line of his cock.

He dropped his head back and released the primal scream that clawed at his throat. His woman, his pussy. He was inside it where he belonged. It belonged to him now.

The urge to fuck—to possess and conquer—tore at him and he couldn’t fight it. He held her steady for his strokes, giving her everything, taking every inch of her cunt and claiming it as his own. The soft cries breaking from her lips pulled him back into himself. He ground his teeth together—hoping to heaven he wasn’t hurting her or frightening her.

Her body was pulled taut, stretched out and straining across the counter and the kittenish cries were for more. He needed to feel her come one more time. He slipped his fingers between the folds of her cunt, teasing her clit.

“Yes! Oh my God, Brand!”

Her scream came seconds before she did. The tiny contractions of her pussy clamped around his cock, holding him as he drove into her, needing to be just a little deeper. He continued rubbing her clit, loving the shocked sighs that followed. Finally it was too much. He sank deep inside and let the climax take him.

Kendra leaned forward on the counter, reading the newspaper spread out before her. Her eyes were moving across the words but her mind was on the man upstairs. Her body ached with delicious overuse. She’d lost track of how many times they’d come together. Even now thinking about him made her eager for more.

What was wrong with her? She enjoyed sex as much as the next woman...okay, well, maybe not *as much* as the next woman but some of the time she enjoyed sex. Most of the time it seemed more trouble than it was worth and she felt vaguely dissatisfied with the result.

She’d felt none of those things in Brand’s arms. She’d been alive and hungry, loving his body inside hers. She smiled. Her pussy. Her cunt. That’s what Brand called it and she found she liked the words. Just a little bit nasty, a bit on the edge.

She felt a flutter inside her pussy and groaned. She couldn't truly be craving another orgasm. *God, baby, you feel so good. I want to fuck you forever.* Liquid pooled at the base of her sex. Maybe she was. Maybe if Brand came downstairs, all fresh from his shower, she would...

"You have the most incredible ass." The hot, molten words sent her thoughts flying. Two days ago, she knew she would have spun around and tugged on the bottom of her robe, blushing at such a compliment. Now, her body immersed in the sensual world of Brand's creating, she wiggled her butt and pushed it out.

"Glad you like it," she said, glancing over her shoulder.

Brand stood in the kitchen, his eyes focused directly on her ass. He was dressed, again wearing one of the deep gray suits he seemed to favor. His hair was damp and brushed away from his face. The crystal blue eyes glittered with renewed lust.

"I've been staring at it for years." Brand came up behind her. His hands gripped her hips and he pushed forward, trapping her between his body and the counter. Kendra turned away, letting her other senses take over. "Wanting to feel you like this while I fucked you."

She shivered at his words, feeling them deep inside. It was as if her body was filled with thousands of sparklers, each igniting and exploding with his touch. She rolled her hips back, feeling his clothed erection slip between her cheeks.

"Now that I have—I need it again. You're a sweet addiction." His mouth closed on the nape of her neck. She held her breath, waiting for the scrape of his teeth, but it never came. He straightened and stepped away.

"It's almost sunrise. I have to go to ground." The regret in his voice soothed her disappointment. "Will you stay here?" he asked, kissing her cheek.

Kendra shook her head. *I can't spend the day with a dead body in the house.* She didn't say that aloud. It seemed a little insensitive since it wasn't something he could change and she *had* been willing to have sex with him all night. "I'll be fine at my place. It will be daylight."

Brand nodded but he didn't look happy. "Trevor's still around but—"

"I was attacked by a guy named Trevor? Don't you guys have to change your names when you become vampires? Take a creepy or scary name?"

That earned her a half-smile. "I did, but Trevor, despite his pansy name, is a vicious killer." His eyes turned dark. He carried her hand to his mouth, placing a soft kiss on the inside of her wrist. "He wants to hurt me and he'll use you to do it." His tongue flickered out and whipped across the sensitive skin. The center of her stomach fell away at the delicate caress. He turned her palm and slowly sucked her fingers into his mouth one at a time, lovingly stroking the pads with his tongue.

"I sh-should be okay, uhm, during the daylight, uh, right?" She inhaled, trying to slow the rapid pounding of her heart. "You know, it's really hard to think when you're doing that."

"Good." His smile turned into a grimace.

"What's wrong?"

"Sun's rising."

"Go. I'll be fine."

"Stay inside. Stay with people. If we have any luck, Trevor will think you're dead." He hissed through his teeth and Kendra watched the pain rack his body.

"Just go," she said, stepping away, hating to see him hurting. "I'll see myself out."

He didn't move and she realized what was missing. She moved in, pressing up on her tiptoes and placed her mouth against his. The light connection of their lips quickly deepened. Brand drove his tongue into her mouth as if he was trying to carry her flavor with him.

He groaned but she knew it wasn't passion causing the sound. She stepped away, pushing him back when he would have followed.

"I'll see you tonight," he promised. He turned and opened a door near the front entrance. Kendra had thought it was a closet but she saw the dark stairs that led down into Stygian blackness. The door snapped shut as the first rays of sunlight cut through the open window.

## Chapter Three

Kendra paced the length of her kitchen, reaching the end of the counter, spinning around and walking back.

She'd been stood up by a vampire. After she'd left Brand's house, she'd gotten a gun and silver bullets—which had been harder to find than she'd expected. She'd bought stakes and garlic cloves. She didn't know if garlic actually repelled vampires but she wasn't taking any chances.

And she'd waited, sleeping during the day and staying awake all night, expecting Brand to show up at any moment. But he hadn't. That was three nights ago.

Feminist sensibilities railed against waiting at home for a man to call but she really couldn't do much more. It didn't seem wise to wander the streets looking for Brand—not when a killer vampire was after him. And her.

*Maybe he's just not into you*, she thought, trying to penetrate the raging desire. It was probably a one-night thing. After all, what did she have to offer a man who had spent sixty years fucking women? He probably bored easily and had moved on to the next woman.

*Damn it, this was why I stayed away from him. I knew this would happen. I'm going to lose a friend and a client over sex. Phenomenal sex but still, it wasn't worth it.*

There was no way she could work with him now. Not after that night together. She wasn't that kind of woman. She had never managed to maintain a friendly relationship with a former lover. The memories were too strong. When she finally saw Brand, and she was sure she would eventually, she would be a bitch. There was little she could do about it. It was just her nature.

It was easier to cling to the anger. Anger did a wonderful job of suppressing the pain. A twinge still flickered in her chest. Damn it, they'd only spent one night together but they'd been friends for seven years. She took a deep breath, feeling the emotions well up beneath the lid of anger. She brushed away the tears.

Her heart wasn't broken, she told herself. She *would not* let herself become attached to Brand.

*Too late.*

She ignored the officious voice inside her head, whipped around and retraced her path.

She snagged the last donut out of the box and took a deep bite while she talked to herself. It was just a one-night stand. He'd needed the sex to survive and she wanted it as well. It was no big deal that he hadn't called.



It sounded very sophisticated inside her head but she knew none of it was true. The painful ache in her chest refuted her own words.

A knock on the door snapped her out of her thoughts and sent her spine straight. Her house was rarely tidy enough to have people just drop in, so her friends had learned to call before coming by.

Pushing her shoulders back, Kendra picked up one of the stakes and walked to the door. She put her eye up to the peephole. Micah, one of the vamp clients Brand had recommended her to, waited in the hall. She backed away from the door, fingering the sharp stick in her hand.

"Kendra, open up." Micah's voice was soft through the closed door. "I know you're there. I can hear your heart beating."

That was probably true. It was thudding in her chest.

"Brand needs you."

A band squeezed around her heart and she wavered toward the door before jerking to a stop. It could be a trick. Micah could be working with Trevor.

"Kendra, come on. They sent me because you know me. Brand's been hurt."

She leaned against the door, her mind resonating with the need to open it and vibrating with the fear of doing the same thing.

"Trevor attacked him three nights ago. Brand's barely hanging on and he needs you."

Kendra chewed her lower lip. Damn it. She didn't know what to do. But if Brand was hurt, she had to take the chance.

*I'll see you tonight.* He'd said it with such sincerity, with a hunger that still made her knees weak. Hell, he'd almost gotten burned by the sun because he'd wanted one more kiss.

"Kendra?"

"I'm coming," she called through the door. Not knowing what else to do, she grabbed the gun, which she'd learned to shoot in the past few days, checked that the safety was on, and put it in her pocket. That would be her secret weapon. Her blatant one was the stake she held in her right hand. She opened the door. Micah stepped back, as if trying to give her some safety room. It was something Brand would have done.

"Where is he?" she asked.

"At Marcus's."

"What's wrong with him?" Her voice was cold and demanding. She wouldn't let emotion sway her right now. She needed a clear mind.

"He was attacked, leaving his house." Micah stayed back and held up his hands as if to show he was unarmed. "Brand and I were supposed to meet three nights ago—the night after you and he finally..." He let the words fade away.

Micah knew that she and Brand had made love? What? Did vampires have some sort of sexual sixth sense?

"We all know that Brand's feelings for you go deeper than just a client relationship," he said as if reading her mind. Before she could open her mouth to ask how he knew that when *she* didn't even know that, he shrugged and explained. "Brand recommended you as an investment advisor and then threatened anyone who came near you. If anyone showed any interest in you beyond your business advice, Brand carried out his threats quite efficiently."

Kendra felt her eyes widen. That hadn't been the confession she was expecting.

"Let's go," she said, feeling slightly better toward Micah. If he were leading her to her doom, he could have grabbed her already or told her an extensive sob story. She followed him to his car and allowed herself to be seated inside, keeping her stake firmly in her grip and clearly visible.

The drive across town was silent. When they finally arrived, it was in an expensive neighborhood with large houses and security perimeters. Whoever Marcus was, he had money.

Micah waited as she climbed out of the car, then led her up the walk and opened the door.

She stepped into the house and was struck by the weak lighting. She knew about the sensitivity of vampire eyes and had redesigned the lighting in her office to accommodate them—but this was definitely on the dark side. Voices in the other room rumbled low, quiet...and male. She strained to listen. She didn't recognize Brand's voice among the others. His tones were distinctive and she felt sure she'd be able to pick him out.

The talking stopped.

Kendra tensed, hearing the shuffle of feet across a hard wood floor. She started to back away. Micah moved behind her, blocking her exit. Gripping the stake in one hand and the gun in the other, she mentally braced for an attack.

"So this is Brand's little accountant. Quite lovely."

Kendra faced the arrogant voice and gasped. It was better than laughing. *This* was so *not* what she'd expected from a Master Vampire, but from the way the three vampires—two of whom were clients of hers—flanked him, she was pretty sure he was their leader. He was short and balding. His eyes were the same piercing blue as Brand's but the rest of his features were average. No one would look at him and think "vampire" let alone "leader of the vampire world".

But his eyes held a wicked intelligence that warned Kendra not to underestimate him. He didn't fit the image but she had no doubt he'd clawed his way to the top of the vampire pile with every nail and tooth sharpened.

"How do you do, Kendra? I'm Marcus." His voice was laden with deep sensuality and Kendra could easily imagine that he didn't need stunning good looks to get women. All he needed was that voice and those captivating eyes.

Not sure she was willing to trust him—at least not until she'd seen Brand and was convinced this wasn't some sort of trap for them—she nodded and raised the stake a little higher, making sure he saw it.

"Ah, a woman and her arsenal. I admire bravery in humans..." His voice trailed away but she knew there was more. She raised her chin and dared him to finish his sentence. "...it makes them so much more entertaining to kill."

The smirk on his lips was mirrored on the faces of the other vampires. Kendra felt her eyes tighten.

"I'm sorry," Marcus said with a chuckle. "I'm teasing. You just looked so fierce standing there with your stake." He waved his arm toward the living room. "Please come in."

"Where's Brand?" she asked, not moving.

"That's exactly what I want to talk to you about."

He continued to hold out his arm, expecting her to precede him into the living room. Well, polite or not, she wasn't turning her back on him. She waited, tilting her head slightly toward the open doorway.

For a moment, she thought she could outwait him. Marcus looked beyond her and lifted his chin. Massive arms wrapped around her torso, trapping her hands at her sides. She'd forgotten Micah was behind her. He lifted her and started walking forward. She briefly considered struggling but had the distinct feeling it would do no good—and quite possibly injure her pride beyond repair. Instead she hung limply in Micah's grip. He placed her in the middle of the living room and stepped back.

She flipped her hair away from her eyes and glared up at him. "I have two words for you—blue chips."

A flicker of true fear ran across his face. She knew Micah's abhorrence of conservative investments. Ignoring him, she turned her attention to Marcus.

"I don't even want to understand how you've made one of my toughest warriors shudder in fear," the vampire leader said, looking supremely disgusted at his lieutenant. "But shall we sit? We'll give you a quick explanation and then let you go downstairs and get on with your business."

Business? Kendra had no idea what he was talking about but she sat down and tried to look serene. Serenity wasn't a façade she maintained well. Irritated, pissed, really, really annoyed—those came naturally to her but serene was a pretty foreign emotion. She curved the edges of her mouth upward in a minor, arrogant tilt the way she'd seen society ladies do and looked at Marcus.

"What business is that?" she asked calmly.

"Fucking."

"What?!" Serenity went out the window.

Marcus held up his hands in the universal symbol of "calm down and I'll explain, you idiot". She calmed down.

"Brand was attacked three nights ago. Micah found him and brought him here. We've given him blood but he's barely hanging on."

"What's wrong with him?" she asked. Worry once again spiked through her irritation.

Micah sat down and took up the story. "Vampires need two things to survive."

"Blood and sex," she said. Brand had told her as much on several occasions. She figured it was the way all men "needed" sex to survive, but maybe not.

"Right. He's taken all the blood he can but his soul is still in limbo. He needs a good, hard fuck to bring it back, rebind it to his body."

She blinked. *Wow. Sex could do all that?*

"Well, I don't mean to be rude, but if that's all it takes for him to recover, why has this taken three days?"

"We tried, but none of the women we brought in appealed to him."

"So you thought you'd dig to the bottom of the barrel and bring me?" She was more than a little offended that she was their last choice to help Brand.

Marcus laughed softly. "No, you actually were the first woman we suggested but Brand wouldn't hear of it." She choked on her own saliva. Brand didn't want her? She'd never been a sex goddess but she didn't think she was that bad of a lay. He'd rather die that fuck her again? Not a good sign. "Not because of the reasons I can see circulating through that insecure human mind," Marcus continued. "Trevor is having my house watched. Brand was afraid that if you came here, Trevor would know you were alive and you'd be in danger again. Brand thought, as we all did, that with a little time he could recover." He shook his head. "It's not working. We need you."

"I'm supposed to have sex with him."

"Yes."

"That's it?"

"Basically."

She had so many questions but Micah stood up and she realized they expected her to go with them. To see Brand.

*Fuck Brand.*

*Wasn't a bad way to save a life.*

"You'll want to leave your weapons."

Kendra lifted her chin in defiance. No way she was going in unprotected.

"There's a chance Brand could use them against you," Marcus explained in that dark, serious voice that reminded her he was the leader of a group of vampires. Micah held out his hand. Reluctantly she handed him the stake. He didn't move. He was waiting for the gun. She pulled it out of her pocket and slapped it into his palm.

"Thanks."

"Bite me," she snarled back.

"And have Brand come after me? Never."

"Enough," Marcus said. "Let's go."

Marcus led the way down the stairs. His lieutenants followed. Kendra brought up the rear—the caboose in a rather morbid train. She had no idea what they would find at the end of the track. She assumed Marcus kept a room in his basement, sealed from sunlight and protected from intruders and fire. Brand had such a room though she'd never seen it. She stepped into a broad open area. Marcus and Micah walked ahead, stopping near a door before turning to face her. The other vampires stood to the side, giving her a place in the middle of the room.

"What?" she finally asked when no one spoke.

Marcus hit a button on a small keypad on the wall. The wall panel dropped to the ground revealing a window into a room. Brand was the other side, pacing a short path in the nearly empty room. Even through the glass, fury radiated from his body.

"I thought you said he was hurt. He looks fine...just pissed."

"He's being overcome by evil."

"What?" She stepped forward. "You didn't say anything about that."

"We didn't think you'd help if you knew," Micah answered honestly.

She glared at Micah and immediately began plans to sell off any of his stocks that were making money. She moved closer to the window. Brand stabbed the fingers of one hand furiously into his hair. From his scattered appearance, it looked like he'd repeated that same action a number of times. He lifted his eyes. Red glowed from their depths instead of the blue she was used to. His eyes were cloudy, shaded. Nothing like the clarity of the other vampires.

"He doesn't appear to be in the mood for sex," she said, pointing out the obvious.

"We're hoping you will change that." Marcus looked directly at her. "Blood keeps vampires alive, but it's the sex—the contact, the pleasure—that keeps us sane. Stops us from turning into the demons that you see in the movies. For lack of a better description, Brand almost died and his soul was ripped from his body. We're hoping that the feelings he has for you—combined with the sex—will rebind it to his body. That it will make him the man he was."

*Sex with a furious man who is turning into a demon.*

"We'll watch from here and if you appear to be in any danger, we'll pull you out."

"Watch?" These men were going to watch her fuck Brand?

"It's the only safe way."

Strange shivers of arousal raced down her back. *Great, a perfect time for latent exhibitionist tendencies to appear.*

"Any suggestions?" she asked as Micah reached for the door.

"He might not recognize you. Try to jog his memory. If there was something special he liked, bring that up."

Kendra thought back to the night they'd spent together. He'd liked fucking her from behind, and from the front, and with her on top. Hell, he'd pretty much liked everything. But he'd especially seemed to like going down on her. Taking a deep breath, she nodded and walked inside.

Brand turned as the door opened. His eyes glowed red as he stared at her. Micah gave her a slight shove, pushing her inside. The door snapped shut behind her. Brand growled and stalked toward the door. He stopped short and Kendra saw the chain wrapped around his ankle, connecting him to the wall. His hands stretched out but he couldn't reach her. With the length given him, he could sit on the bed or pace a four-foot path.

"Brand?"

He tilted his head to the side as if he didn't understand.

She was here to have sex with him. She could do this. She had to believe Brand — her friend and her lover — was somewhere inside those hate-filled eyes. Taking a deep breath, she unbuttoned her blouse and dropped it on the floor. His eyes widened.

"See anything you like?"

## **Chapter Four**

He stared at the woman as she stripped away her clothes until she stood naked before him. The cold inside him—impenetrable and deep—sank low into his body. She was nothing to him. The blood that ran through her body would feed him. He would drain her then toss the carcass aside.

She stepped forward, her eyes watching him. All the others had pulled away but she came closer. She stopped just out of reach, beyond his touch. Her legs moved inches apart. Slowly her hands drifted down her stomach and he found himself captivated by the movement. As he watched she pushed her hand between her thighs. Her pale fingers slipped into the dark of her slit. The warm, heady fragrance of her arousal surrounded him, filtering into his body through every pore. He breathed it in. It only increased his hunger. He licked his lips, wanted that scent on his mouth, wanted to taste the spicy liquid he knew crept from inside her.

Heat radiated out of her body, centered at the peak of her thighs—heat that he suddenly wanted, needed. He roared and stretched the limits of his chain, trying to grab her. She flinched but didn't stop her seductive strokes. She dipped her fingers into her cunt, rubbing slow circles. The liquid sounds of her self-caress rang through his ears. Brand felt his chest rise and fall in long, unneeded breaths. With the air came her fire, tiny molecules floating inside him, turning the smooth edges of the cold jagged.

She pulled her hand from between her legs. The perfume of her cunt flooded the room. Eyes wide, she stretched her hand toward him.

"Want a taste?"

The desire to grab and tear the life from her body was countered by the temptation she offered. Crushing the screams inside his head that told him to destroy the weak life before him, he held out his hand, moving as slowly as he could. She stepped forward. He wrapped his hands around her wrists and pulled her closer. Her rapid pulse vibrated through his palms, inspiring his own heart to beat. It would be simple to kill her but the lure of her cunt was too great. He pulled her fingers to his mouth and closed his lips around them.

The flavor exploded on his tongue. He licked each finger clean, consuming the delicate combination of her pussy and the subtle spice of her skin. She was delicious.

"Want more?"

He raised his head and looked into her eyes. Something about her was familiar...he'd tasted her before. Eaten her pussy.

He hooked his hand around her waist and jerked her forward. A sharp cry rang through the air but he couldn't stop. He had to taste her, needed the heat hovering just

inside her. The warmth of her arousal drew him. He dropped to one knee and buried his face between her thighs, delving his tongue into the wicked heat that called him. She cried out again but this time he recognized the noise as pleasure. The sound warmed a different part of his body – settling into his chest.

Spinning around, he pushed her onto the bed, spread her legs and covered her sex with his lips. He licked inside her wet opening – the warmth, the moisture was incredible. She wanted him. Desperate hunger drove him on.

She writhed in his grip and whispered his name. “Brand, please.” He closed his lips around her clit and sucked, wanting the sweet juices that flowed from her cunt. She curled her legs around his back, smashing her pussy against his mouth. Drawing her clit between his lips he rubbed his tongue around the side.

Her scream echoed in his head and heat billowed down into his groin. Memories returned with the fire – the attack, Micah’s rescue and the last three days of pain. *Kendra? Here?* He wanted to push her away, afraid he would hurt her, but the desire to have more of her was too strong.

He pushed his tongue back into her cunt, lapping the heady liquid flowing from her. The cold inside him retreated, pushed back by flames and hunger and human love. She groaned in response. There was no time for long, leisurely strokes, he needed more. He tilted her hips, pushing his tongue deeper, loving her with his mouth and hands. Sweetly, she came again and again. He felt alive, warm and hungry as her cries turned to whimpers. He looked up.

“Fuck me, Brand. Damn it, fuck me.”

Still fully dressed and chained the wall, he pulled her legs from around his neck and climbed over her. He jerked his fly open and his cock sprang free. There was no preliminary – she was wet and open. He plunged inside, feeling the sweet saving grip of her cunt.

“Yes,” he growled, riding her hard, releasing the pain and the frustration of the past three days, giving her the hard fuck he knew she loved. He didn’t stop – even when she came, he kept on. He needed one more thing – one final kiss to bind his soul forever. “Kendra?” he whispered, asking her permission.

She placed her hand on the back of his head and drew him down, turning her head and baring her neck to him. “Take from me, my love,” she whispered.

The final traces of cold evaporated as he placed his mouth gently against her skin.

Kendra tensed, preparing for the dark invasion. She held her breath as his fangs pierced her flesh – but there was no pain. A brief pop and he was inside her. In all ways he filled her – cleaning out the remnants of Trevor’s attack, filling her mind and body with his presence. The steady pull of his mouth was sweet and tender, heightening the intense pleasure of his cock riding inside her pussy.

*Come for me, baby.*

With his voice in her mind, she sighed and let the final layers of tension slip from her body. It was a sweet climax flowing in rolling waves through her body, vibrating



through her chest and sparking bright lights in her heart. Brand drew his hips back and penetrated her one final time. She wrapped her arms around his back and held him as he came inside her.

Hours later, when Brand finally seemed done with her body, he pulled out of her and rolled to the side. The chain binding him to the wall clinked against the bedframe. After the first time, when he'd returned to himself, Brand had shredded his pants to remove them but hadn't had the strength to free himself completely from the chain.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Uh, making love to you?"

The answer seemed obvious to her and earned her a smile. "I meant how did you get here?"

"Micah came for me. Said you'd been hurt."

"I could have hurt you."

"You'd never hurt me," she said, feeling the truth of her words as she spoke them. "You promised."

Joy flared in his eyes. He leaned forward, Kendra stretched up to meet him.

The door burst open and slammed hard against the wall. Kendra yelped and grabbed the sheet. She didn't know who was coming in but no way in hell was anyone else going to see her naked. Vampires or not, she still had that five—no, ten—extra pounds to lose.

Trevor stepped through the door, Kendra's wooden stake clutched in his right hand. Blood dripped from the tip. Kendra promptly forgot about her body issues.

"Hello, brother," he said.

"Brother?" she asked.

"We're all brothers of the blood."

"I'm not your brother in any manner," Brand said, disdain saturating his words.

Trevor shrugged but there was an evil glee in his eyes. "Then you'll be dead. Those are your choices. I gave the same choice to the others. They seemed to think death was preferable. I have no preference, of course." He pointed the stake at Brand. "You first and then I get to see why this woman is so enjoyable."

"Leave her the hell alone."

Trevor laughed and Kendra felt the sound deep inside her. It made her sick that she was connected to him in some way, that he'd actually placed his teeth on her.

Brand stood, his right leg still chained the wall, his naked body loose and limber as he prepared for Trevor's attack. He didn't have to wait long. Trevor lunged forward, stake held high. Brand caught the downswing of Trevor's arm but couldn't halt his momentum. Both men slammed into the wall. They slid to the ground and began to struggle.

A vampire fight, she discovered, wasn't much different than a human one, just more vicious. Fists and feet were aided by claws and fangs. Brand seemed to be keeping Trevor close, not giving him a chance to use the stake for its intended purpose. Streaks of red appeared on both men's throats. Brand's chest was dotted with blood. The sight jolted her from her immobility. She jumped off the bed—the sheet clutched around her body—and searched for a weapon, some way to help Brand.

She ran to the door. Micah lay flat on his back in the outer room, a gaping hole in his chest. Her stomach turned in a sick roll. She heard noises of a fight upstairs but didn't know who would be the victor and didn't dare call out for help.

She raced back into the room, determined to help Brand, even if she had to claw at Trevor herself. Even as she thought the words, Brand snarled like a wild beast and flung Trevor across the room. The other vampire hit window hard—cracking the safety glass before sinking to the floor.

Her relief lasted only a moment before he was back on his feet. He turned from Brand and grabbed her. Trevor wrapped one arm around her neck and jerked her to his side. Brand lunged forward but the chain held him back.

Trevor laughed but the sound was forced. He wasn't as confident as he wanted to appear.

"Let's have a look at your little morsel." He grabbed the sheet and stripped it down. A cold shiver that had nothing to do with room temperature ran down her back. "Nice—and is she a good fuck?" He smirked as he stroked the base of her throat. "Does it just fry you that I had her first? And that I'll have her last?"

Brand's growl shook the broken window. His eyes were blood-red. He bared his teeth and stepped forward. The chain stopped him again. Trevor laughed. Brand didn't stop. He pulled. The links of the chain stretched. The slow creak of metal breaking filled the room. With a sharp snap, he was free.

Trevor dropped Kendra and jumped clear but Brand was on him, nailing him to the floor.

The hollow clank of wood hitting cement shocked Kendra into moving. Trevor had dropped the stake. Not giving herself time to think, she grabbed the wooden pole. The two men struggled and rolled until Trevor was on top. He lifted his head, baring his fangs, and started downward toward Brand's throat. She raised her hand and buried the stake in Trevor's back.

He shuddered, his body convulsing as he screamed—the mournful sound of a soul dying. Brand pushed the flailing vampire away and dragged himself up to standing. Kendra sensed him beside her but couldn't pull her eyes away from Trevor's body as it twitched one final time. Her stomach did a slow, steady roll and she knew she was going to lose her dinner. The long wooden stake stuck out of Trevor's back. She couldn't stand to look at it.

Without thinking, she reached out, ready to pull it out.

"Don't." Brand's fingers wrapped around her wrist with enough force to make her wince. "First rule of vampire killing, leave the stake in. It's the only way to make sure they really stay dead."

She nodded. "Hopefully, I won't have to ever do that again."

"If ever there was a vampire who deserved it...it was Trevor."

"Yeah, besides, he saw me naked." She grimaced and glared at Brand. "For that alone I would have had to kill him."

"Does that mean we're all at risk?"

Kendra spun around. Marcus waited with a smile, blood smeared across his white shirt. He looked dangerous. Deadly. And she had no doubts that this man was the vampire leader. Suddenly feeling very vulnerable, she reached down and dragged the sheet up, covering her breasts.

"Is Micah dead?" she asked, remembering his body in the hall, the huge hole in his chest. Admittedly she'd planned to screw up his investments but she didn't want him hurt.

"Yes. Has been for some two hundred years."

Kendra glared at the vampire leader. He seemed to find that amusing.

"But from this most recent wound, he should recover. He just needs some blood...and a little sex to help him heal." Marcus raised his eyebrows. "Willing to offer your assistance to him as well?"

"Eww, no."

"Micah can find his own woman. This one belongs to me." Though there was laughter in Brand's voice, she heard the conviction as well and a delicate shudder ran down her spine. Belonging to Brand. What did that entail?

Marcus nodded and began to pick blood from beneath his fingernails. "Are you going to Turn her?"

"Turn? As in make me a vampire?" She whipped around, almost dropping her sheet. Brand stared back at her with a bright light in his clear eyes.

"You don't have to, baby." He put his hand on her shoulder. "We'll talk about it. Give you a chance to get used to the idea."

"Yes, but —"

Brand grabbed her close and kissed her, further scattering her mangled thoughts. She was vaguely aware of being guided backward and the soft mattress catching their weight as they fell. When Brand finally let her up for air, her head was spinning and she was flat on her back. The sheet had disappeared and Brand was kneeling between her legs, his cock pressed against her sex. She didn't quite know how she came to this position but she heartily approved of it.

"Don't worry about the future right now," he whispered as he slipped inside her.

"Marcus?" She struggled to sit up, afraid the other vampire was still watching them.

"Long gone. It's just you and me."

She looked at the floor. Trevor's body was gone as well. That eased one bit of tension. She glared at the two-way mirror. "There'd better not be anyone watching through that window," she growled.

Brand rocked his hips, shallow penetrations that rubbed the inside of her pussy with deep intensity, and her worries disappeared. It didn't matter who the hell was watching, as long as Brand kept doing that.

Their loving was slow and long. Each time she came close to orgasm, Brand would back off. The rise and fall pattern drove her insane, her body was screaming for release and exhaustion was threatening.

"Brand please, let me come." She opened her eyes and saw the sweat on his forehead. How much sex did it take to make a vampire sweat?

"Soon."

"No, now." She grabbed his face and forced him to look at her. "We might have a future together and I'm pretty sure I love you, but if you don't let me come, I'm going to stake you."

The threat added a sparkle of laughter to his eyes.

"Well, we can't have that."

As if he knew she was verging on being too sore to fuck, he reached between their bodies and tickled her clit with his finger as he slowly pumped inside her. The gentle touch triggered massive waves of tension bursting from inside her pussy. Brand's groan quickly followed as he came.

What seemed like hours later, the universe righted itself and Kendra lifted her head off Brand's chest.

"About this whole becoming a vampire thing."

"I wouldn't have brought it up but Marcus did."

Her heart dropped like stone. "You don't want me to become a vampire?"

"No, I do." The sincerity in his voice and eyes was unmistakable and her blood began to flow normally again. "But you've had a few shocks in the past few days, I didn't think you were ready for this as well."

She considered the idea. "And I'd stay exactly the way I am?"

"Yes."

"Well then, we definitely need to wait because if I'm going to stay this way, I need to lose five pounds, no, ten would be better. I don't want to go through eternity with this much extra cushion on my ass."

Brand laughed. "I happen to like the extra cushion on your ass."

"Right." Men just said that. Then Brand squeezed her butt in his big hands and she thought that maybe he wasn't kidding.

"But it's definitely something you need to think about. It's a major decision. There's no going back. Besides..." He paused and there was a wicked tone to the silence. "You'd have to give up donuts."

She pushed up, using his chest for leverage. "Give up donuts? All donuts? Even Donnie's?" He nodded. She snagged her lower lip between her teeth and stared at him.

"You're actually considering it." Brand wrapped his arms around her and rolled her under him. "If you're willing to give up donuts for me—it must be love."

Kendra smiled. "Must be."

## About the author

Tielle (pronounced “teal”) St. Clare has had lifelong love of romance novels. She began reading romances in the 7th grade when she discovered Victoria Holt novels and began writing romances at the age of 16 (during Trigonometry, if the truth be told). During her senior year in high school, the class dressed up as what they would be in twenty years—Tielle dressed as a romance writer. When not writing romances, Tielle has worked in public relations and video production for the past twenty years. She moved to Alaska when she was seven years old in 1972 when her father was transferred with the military. Tielle believes romances should be hot and sexy with a great story and fun characters.

Tielle welcomes mail from readers. You can write to her c/o Ellora’s Cave Publishing at 1337 Commerce Drive, #13, Stow, Ohio 44224.

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