

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS



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Flame Angel

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FLAME ANGEL

Lisa Andel

Dedication

*To T.A. Chase for listening to me whenever I need someone to vent with.
Here be dragons too.*

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Chapter One

God damn it! My brother had volunteered me again to be some guy's date for a party that, to begin with, I had no intention of going to.

I'd had my fill of men at the present, having just gotten rid of the last offensive bastard a little over three months ago. Now I was supposed to make nice to one of my brother's loser friends who couldn't even get his own date?

I stomped around the backyard of our parents' house, fuming at my brother and zapping the heads off dandelions. This wasn't the first time my brother had done this to me and the worst of it was that the date was guaranteed to suck.

All the others had.

Maybe if I looked like a toad my brother would stop fixing me up.

Instead, at twenty-six years old, I stood just shy of five feet five inches, with a healthy bust, slim waist, relatively flat stomach, slightly curved abdomen, rounded backside and legs that looked like they wouldn't quit. I had waist-length brown hair with natural red and gold highlights and large green eyes. My eyes were one of my favorite features. They were a brilliant emerald green, with thick, long lashes and a natural darkening around the edges of the lids so that I never had to use eyeliner.

With an oval face, a generous mouth and straight white teeth, even I considered myself quite good-looking. Maybe even a little exotic.

And, I was a witch. Not a powerful one. More powerful than my brother, though. Maybe even more powerful than either of our parents.

Men practically threw themselves at me. The wrong men but hey, it's better than *no* men. Of course I learned quickly there were many types of men out there I didn't want to get to know better. I attracted them all.

Justin strolled onto the back porch and watched with one eye as I fried more weeds. He just rolled his shoulders, crossed his arms and leaned against the rail, waiting for my tantrum to subside.

"Feel better?" His eyes sparkled with his amusement.

"Asshole." I shot him a look. "My next target might be your crotch!" I was happy to see him flinch.

"You'd better get a move on, if you're going to be ready when Miles comes to pick you up."

"I don't want to be ready, I don't want to go." I stomped to the foot of the steps and glared at him.

Justin's lips curved in a grin. "Just go." His eyes glittered and I wondered what clairvoyant image had come to him that he was acting upon. Justin had seen something. I was sure of it. Something that was going to happen to me, tonight.

"What aren't you telling me?" I demanded.

"Me?" Justin put on a contrived look of innocence. "Not a thing."

I huffed at him, then stomped up the steps to the back door.

"You'd better hope it's something good. Otherwise, I swear I'll get you for this," I shot over my shoulder as I banged into the house.

His laugh followed me as I made my way through the kitchen.

I said goodbye to my parents, got in my ratty little Chevy and drove home cursing all men, my brother in particular.

* * * * *

I got ready, without paying too much attention to what I was doing. I didn't need makeup so I didn't bother wearing any. I bypassed the perfume, having no intention of creating the appearance that I wanted to attract my date. I did poof my hair up though, while I dried it, so that it had extra body.

The clothes were a different matter. I might not want to attract the man my brother had fixed me up with but I had a certain image I liked to project in public, so I wasn't going to wear jeans and a t-shirt to the party.

I settled for a short denim skirt and a fitted knit short-sleeved shirt that showed my cleavage off and ended a couple inches above the top of my skirt. I passed on the stockings and just magicked a subtle tan to my legs. Three-and-a-half-inch-high strappy sandals completed the outfit.

I was ready to go.

My doorbell rang and I looked through the peephole to see what kind of geek my brother had pawned me off on. There was no one there.

I'd made it halfway across the room, when the bell rang again. I checked the peephole. Still didn't see anyone, so I unlocked the door, leaving the chain on and peeked through the crack.

"Angie?"

I lowered my eyes toward the floor. *Oh my god!* The guy was a dwarf. "Miles?"

"That's me." The little guy grinned up at me and puffed out his chest. I shut the door and considered leaving it shut. No wonder my brother had laughed. He'd set me up with an honest-to-God dwarf. The testosterone-laden, mountain-dwelling, ready-for-battle kind of dwarf, that was so definitely *not* human.

With a sigh, I slipped my apartment key into the pocket in the waistband of my skirt, opened the door and stepped into the hall. I just wanted to get this evening over

with. "What tribe are you from?" I kept my voice casual, but I was praying his answer wouldn't be Swordstriker. That particular tribe was infamous for its lusty ways.

"Swordstriker." He leered at me, and I swore I'd get back at my brother for this.

The dwarf was built like a fireplug. Wide sturdy body, with the top of his head reaching the hem of my skirt. The guy would have to stand on tiptoe to kiss my ass. A handlebar mustache and curly beard covered the lower half of his face. Thankfully, he'd left his battle-axe at home.

"All set." I started down the hall toward the elevator, not bothering to shorten my stride. Miles didn't have any trouble keeping up with me and that kind of pissed me off.

We rode the elevator in silence. Glancing in the reflective surface of the metal walls, I caught him trying to look up my skirt. My brother was a dead man if he'd led the dwarf to believe he might get lucky tonight.

He didn't talk to me when he led me to his car either and I was beginning to wonder about his people skills.

Wouldn't you know, he drove a VW bug. One of the old ones before they changed the hood style. How fitting.

When he hadn't said a word five minutes into the ride, I broke down.

"So, did you want to go out with me, or didn't you want to go solo to this party?" I shifted so I could see his expression when he answered.

Keeping his eyes on the road, he scrunched his face up. "You have to know someone to get into this party. I didn't know the right people. So yeah, your brother fixed me up with you so I could get in."

"You're not planning on causing any trouble, are you?" Even though I hadn't expected to be going to this particular party, I did like to go to them often and I didn't want this stranger ruining that for me.

"No." He flipped on his blinker and took the corner faster than he should have.

"Then why?" I pressed.

He turned and stared at me until I pointed at the road, urging him to pay attention to his driving.

"You going to answer me?" This was almost fun, watching the little guy squirm, knowing he didn't want to answer the question.

"I'll tell you, if you promise not to say a word about it to anyone." He waited until I'd given him my solemn oath. He didn't know me well enough to know that I sometimes took a different view on keeping promises than others would.

"There's this woman I want to see. I met her a couple of months ago at a party in the Cram. I've been trying to see her again since but haven't been having any luck finding her. She's supposed to be here tonight."

I grinned at him, wondering what kind of woman the dwarf might be attracted to.

"What's her name?"

"Ealinda D'Alliu," he sighed.

Man, did he have it bad. "Never heard of her. She new around here?"

"Only been in town a few months."

That kind of surprised me. You only got into parties at the Cram if you were somebody, or knew somebody.

"Who was she with at the Cram?"

"Mildred Frost." The dwarf frowned. I did too. Mildred was one nasty witch.

"How'd you get in?"

At this, he grinned. "Your brother."

I rolled my eyes. Leave it to my brother to start this mess, then expect me to help him clean it up.

Miles pulled into the driveway of our destination. There were dozens of cars already lining the drive. As we rounded the bend the view opened up to show still more vehicles parked on the apron.

The party was at Chase Quinton's. The werewolf had made a killing with his investments and had more money than God. The house was an immense multi-story structure that sat on a hundred and forty acres of wooded land.

Miles dropped me off at the front door, then pulled away to park. I leaned against a pillar and waited for him. I didn't have as long to wait as I thought I would. He moved surprisingly fast on his short, stubby legs. *Shit*. I kicked myself mentally for that thought.

With Miles at my side I approached the front door and rang the bell.

A panel in the door opened and Trevayne, the oldest living human I'd ever met, glared out at me.

"Miss Parker, a pleasure to see you this evening," Trevayne wheezed at me.

I rolled my eyes downward and to my left and Trevayne, picking up on my hint, lowered his eyes. They widened briefly when he took in Miles.

"And your companion?" Trevayne choked.

"I'd like to introduce Miles..." I didn't know his last name.

"Grimthorne," the dwarf supplied for me.

"Miles Grimthorne," I repeated.

Trevayne stared at Miles for several beats, then shut the panel. The door swung open, Miles having either passed Trevayne's inspection, or my reputation being better than I thought.

"Come in." He waved his hand in a sweeping gesture. "Most of the guests are on the rear patio."

I herded Miles toward the other side of the house.

"What was that?" Miles asked me under his breath.

"Human." I smiled at the astonished look that brought to Miles' face.

"I didn't know they could live that long," Miles muttered and shook his head.

"Chase probably forbids him to die," I muttered back. Chase was one of the most arrogant men I'd ever met. And yes, he was one of my mistakes. Fortunately we'd parted on fairly friendly terms. There might have been some screaming and abusive language on my part but Chase doesn't remember it the same way.

We breezed out into the bustle of activity of a couple of hundred people milling about the grounds. Chase did know how to throw a party. The yard was lit with thousands of fairy lights, the moon reflected off the pool. A band was set up to one side and played a casual mix of popular tunes and favored oldies. They even played some original stuff that drew people to a dance floor that was laid out in front of them.

I prayed that Miles wouldn't ask me to dance. I just couldn't picture him clinging to my knees while his face rested dangerously close to my crotch.

We made our way to one of the bars. I nodded, in passing, to those faces I recognized. I ignored the raised eyebrows when they looked between me and Miles.

I drank my first glass of wine in three swallows, then helped myself to a second. Standing off to one side of the bar, I looked down at the dwarf. "So what's your game plan?"

"I hope you don't mind but I think it would be better if I looked for her on my own. I wouldn't want her to get the wrong impression." Miles' eyes were avidly scanning the crowd.

"Fine by me." I moved away from him and lost myself in the crush of bodies around the pool.

My first goal was to find one of the circulating waiters and load up on appetizers. Then I'd find a quiet place to sit.

I caught a glimpse of one of the roving men and focused on his location, homing in on his tray of goodies. Intent on my destination, I failed to pay close enough attention to where I was walking.

"Oomph" blasted out of me, as I ran into a solid wall of muscle. Arms came around my back reflexively, or I would have ended up on my ass on the ground.

"Sorry," I mumbled. Then I looked up to see who I'd plowed into.

All the breath in my body whooshed out of me. I was looking into the dark eyes of the most lethal man I'd ever heard of. Kraid Devon, fondly referred to as the Dragon. I'd heard his eyes were colder than an arctic gale. The ones I was looking into were burning hotter than hellfire.

His arms tightened, one hand grasping the back of my head and tipping it to the side. His expression hard as granite, he lowered his lips to mine. My body went up in flames when he took my mouth. When his tongue delved into its depths, I shuddered, so close to coming I actually whimpered. His lips, in contrast to the rest of him, were

surprisingly soft and expressive. They soon turned heated and demanding as his free hand clutched my ass and pressed me hard into his body. When his erection ground against my stomach, I came. He captured my cries in his mouth and held me tight while I jerked in his arms.

"Christ." His deep voice rasped the word into my ear as he rocked his hips against me.

As soon as my body stopped trembling, he grabbed me around the waist and dragged me away from the crowd. Pulling me behind the second outbuilding from the house, he pinned me to the wall, then set to plundering my mouth again, while his hands roamed over my body.

Sliding a hand beneath my skirt, he cupped my sex. I groaned and pushed myself against him. He curled his fingers into the silky fabric of my panties and ripped them off with one sharp tug. Then his hands left me and I heard the sound of his zipper. A part of my brain screamed at me to run away. The rest of my mind was fogged with lust like I'd never known before. He grabbed my thighs and without apparent effort lifted me against the side of the building. My legs wrapped around his waist of their own accord, while he held me up with one hand on my ass, sliding his other hand between us. He stroked the length of my slit with the head of his cock, then poised it at the entrance to my vagina.

Readjusting his hands on my ass, his fingers gripping me hard, he stared into my eyes. Then he rammed himself into me. It had been a while and even though I was wet, my muscles were tight, hard to breach. His first thrust only penetrated me halfway. He continued working his cock inside with short, sharp stabs. He tipped my hips and thrust again, finally burying himself to the hilt. He groaned and I creamed over his shaft.

Lips still locked with mine, he started plunging into me with long, hard thrusts. Every nerve ending in my body tingled with sensation. My nipples were so tight the crush of his chest against mine was exquisite torture. I trapped his tongue between my lips and sucked on it hard as I blew apart around his cock. Then I threw my head back, smacking it into the wood and moaned as my muscles clenched and released. He pounded faster into me, harder. I spiraled up again, my nerve endings screaming at the feel of his hard shaft, my inner muscles gripping him, sucking him in. I swore I could feel every dip and ridge, every vein on his penis as it slid in ever swifter strokes inside me.

I tightened like a fist around him, bent my head forward and grabbed his shoulder between my teeth. I felt him do the same, his sinking into my flesh.

I exploded, flashes of light bursting in my mind as my body convulsed around him.

His muscles froze. Then he slammed into me once, twice, three times and hot jets of cum blasted over my womb.

Every muscle in my body twitched, trembled. I prayed he wouldn't try to set me down, stand me up, because I knew my legs would jiggle like rubber under me.

Instead, he leaned his weight against me and the building, trapping me there, while his breathing rasped harshly in his lungs. I felt his cock jerk inside me, then felt it swell until it stretched my passage once again, with its girth.

Taking a shaky breath, I raised my head and looked into his eyes. I was sucked into an inferno of raw lust and power. I was lost and for a moment terror threatened to overwhelm me.

What had I done?

The grin that spread across his lips did nothing to calm my screaming nerves. Then those lips were on mine and his fires washed into me, turning my terror to ash, leaving in its passing only burning desire. I moaned, long and low, the vibration of it rising from my diaphragm.

He growled his pleasure at my response and began slamming himself into me again.

Sweat broke out along my hairline, across my shoulders, under my breasts, my body heating, threatening to ignite.

"Kraid," I groaned, begging him to soothe the burn.

"Your name," he rasped.

"Ah...Angie." I could barely think of what it was.

He stopped moving. He was buried deep inside me but giving no surcease to my burning pussy. I pried my eyes open and stared at him.

"Angie?" he asked, the disbelief in his voice grating on my nerves.

"Yeah, Angie." I felt my anger rising and squeezed my inner muscles to remind him he had more important things to be doing than questioning my name.

"Is Angie short for something?" His face was very close to mine, his breath hot on my lips.

I was tempted to tell him *no*. Reminding myself that this man held no compassion in his soul, I thought better of it.

"Angelina," I replied, barely above a whisper.

His eyes widened, the irises darkening to black.

"Angel," he breathed and went berserk.

He pounded ruthlessly into me, driving me hard into the side of the building. I cried out, first from pain, then from a blinding, building pleasure.

When my body tightened around his shaft, he lowered his head to my neck and sank his teeth in. He sucked on me and I exploded. Lightning bolts shot through my brain as my vagina spasmed around his cock. I screamed and kept on screaming.

I felt his body go rigid, he released my neck, tipped his head back and roared as his cum shot in searing waves into my depths.

I collapsed against his chest. If he hadn't held me to the wall again I'd have been a puddle on the ground. We remained that way for several minutes. The sound of our breathing was the only thing I could hear.

Slowly, he straightened from me and lifted me off his cock. He lowered me to the ground and steadied me until I could stand on my own.

Then he tucked himself into his pants and fastened them. Looked me over, front and back and satisfied with what he saw, he took me by the elbow and started dragging me back toward the party.

Now that he was no longer clouding my mind with lust, my common sense was returning and I was anxious to get away from him. I considered myself to be one of the few fortunate souls who had come in contact with the Dragon and was still alive to talk about it.

But I wasn't away from him yet.

He pulled me into a group of men who looked nearly as dangerous as he did. I willed myself to be invisible while I waited for him to release his hold on my arm.

He didn't.

He spoke in low tones to a couple of the men in a language I was not familiar with. The men looked at me. Their hard, assessing gazes set my nerves on end. They turned their attention back to the Dragon and said something that I was sure, had I understood it, I wouldn't have liked. The way one's lip curled as he spoke was my biggest clue.

Kraid looked down at me, examining every inch he could see without turning.

Then he spoke a short, harsh sentence to the men and turned us away from them. He dragged me toward the house, saying nothing until he had me inside the study.

The expression on his face was thunderous when he turned to me. I backed away from him, stumbling over an ottoman and sprawling unladylike onto a leather sofa. His eyes flared as he loomed over me and I figured this was it. He was going to kill me now. I vowed on all that was holy to me, to haunt my brother.

Kraid's hands went to the front of his pants and he began speaking harshly in that strange language as he unfastened them and peeled them down to his knees.

With my heart threatening to beat its way out of my chest, I watched as he shoved his way between my legs. I froze as he lowered himself over me. Then he rammed his cock in with one brutal thrust that buried it to his balls.

That was all it took. The friction of his thick, hard shaft across the nerve endings in my sheath became my world. He powered himself in and out of me with ruthless strokes that had me quickly climbing toward climax.

"Come, Angel. Come for me now!" His voice was hard, the muscles of his face tight.

The head of his penis rubbed over the bundle of nerves just before my womb and I flew over the edge. I screamed his name, my body slapping against his, as my vagina

clenched his cock brutally. His eyes darkened to black again, flaming in their depths as he continued to spear his way in.

"Angel!"

My body shuddered into another orgasm, as his cock jerked and spewed its fiery seed inside me.

Without pause he pulled out, grasped my hips and flipped me over. He hauled me up onto my knees and drove himself in, before he stilled.

"Yes," he said and it sounded to me like he'd made some decision.

I just hoped that whatever it was left me alive afterwards.

His cock swelled even further as he started powering in and out again. His fingers dug into my hips as he used his strength to slam me back against his inward strokes. The head of his penis beat repeatedly at my womb, sending sparks of pleasure so intense through me they bordered on pain.

All my muscles twitched and ticced with the overload of sensations. A constant stream of grunting, gasping sounds came out of me as my breath was forced out of my lungs with the power of his thrusts. He began twisting his hips with every stroke and my body tightened, clenched, grew rapidly closer to another shattering orgasm.

Still pounding into me, he leaned forward over my back and grasped my shoulder between his teeth. A shot of fiery pain lanced through me from that point, to my groin and I went up in flames.

I cried out, then moaned as my body came apart beneath his. He shouted, then blasted thick streams of cum into me until he'd filled me and overflowed from my core.

We collapsed in a pile on the sofa, his cock still embedded, my mind no longer able to function.

I don't know how long we lay like that, before rational thought began to filter back. I noticed that he was heavy and that parts of my body were numb. The rest of me felt like I'd been run over by a truck.

A really exceptional truck.

He lifted himself off and righted his clothing. Then he helped me to my feet, keeping an arm around my back to keep me upright. He propelled me to the bathroom, then watched as I did what I could to clean up. I fixed my hair, then looked at him.

"Everything look okay?"

He slid a glance down my body to my feet, then returned to my face.

With a nod, he crossed the room and reached for the door. Turning partially, he looked at me over his shoulder and narrowed his eyes.

"Thanks for the fuck."

Then he opened the door and walked quickly away.

I stood rooted to the spot for several moments. Then myriad thoughts raced through my mind, not the least of which was that I was still alive. Shaking myself out of my paralysis, I headed toward the back patio, thinking I would check for someone who would give me a lift home.

I was beyond ready to leave.

As luck would have it, I ran into Chase. He took the opportunity to wrap his arms around me and kiss me.

I was getting ready to shove him off, when he released me and stepped back, looking at me like I was contagious.

"You've been fucking a dragon." His eyes snapped fury at me.

"What business is it of yours?" I fired back at him.

He moved closer to me again, using his bulk in an effort to intimidate me, forgetting how well I knew him.

"Just because things didn't work out between us doesn't mean I want to see you get fried."

Fried? What the hell was he talking about? "Do I look fried?"

He studied me for a minute. Then his expression darkened. "Take my word for it. If you keep this up, you will be."

I rolled my eyes, wanting to tell him to cut the dramatics. "Look, I just need a lift home. Is there someone around here who could do that?"

"I'll drive you."

"Chase, it's your party."

"So?" He grabbed my elbow and started leading me toward the outbuildings.

I surreptitiously scanned the crowd, not wanting to run into Kraid. We'd reached, of all things, the second outbuilding, when I spotted the Dragon. Chills raced down my spine at the expression on his face.

Chase opened the large outer door of the building, then tugged on my arm to get me moving inside. Even from this distance, I could see Kraid narrowing his eyes, before starting to walk in our direction.

"We'd better get out of here." My voice cracked as I spun toward Chase.

He led me to a Porsche and I scrambled inside.

"What's the problem?" He inserted the key in the ignition but didn't start the vehicle.

"The Dragon spotted us and he's headed this way."

"The dragon. *The* Dragon? As in Kraid Devon?"

"Of course that's the one, what other Dragon is there?"

In three moves, he had the car started, backed out of the garage and rocketing down the driveway.

My eyes met Kraid's briefly as he thundered to a stop next to the garage.
I wished I hadn't looked.

"Have you lost your mind?" Chase yelled at me as he drove recklessly down the street.

"It's not like I planned it." I slid into the door as he took a corner too fast.

"You *accidentally* had sex with him?"

"Yes." I slammed into the center console.

"How?"

"I bumped into him in your backyard. It just sort of took off from there."

"You might want to think about leaving town for a while."

When I glanced at Chase, I saw he was serious.

"That bad?" I braced my feet just in time to keep from shooting off the seat onto the floor.

"Worse."

Chase pulled into my parking lot, put the vehicle in park but didn't shut off the engine.

"Angie." He twisted in his seat so that he was facing me and I was startled to see that his eyes had changed, were showing his wolf. "I know I can be a pompous ass but I'm serious about Devon. He really is as dangerous as his reputation makes him out to be."

"Chase, it's not like I chose to get involved with him and I have no intention of ever seeing him again." I popped open my door with every intention of escaping Chase's lecture.

He grabbed my wrist and held me back. "Then why don't you go out with me again?"

I slumped back into the seat, remembering the main reason Chase and I broke up. Not something I wanted to get into again. "We tried, Chase. It didn't work."

His fingers traced circles on the inside of my wrist, annoyingly sparking interest between my legs.

"Maybe I've come to see you in a new light."

Christ, he wanted me back because the Dragon had fucked me.

"You did see Devon stalking your car as we were leaving?"

His fingers tightened as he pulled my upper body over the center console. He trapped my head with his hand and brushed his lips over mine. Fire flared in my belly—a familiar desire, one that Chase could always arouse in me. The problem was Chase aroused that desire with every female he met. Not just aroused but pretty much fulfilled those desires with every single one of them. He'd bedded an exceptional

number of women when we were dating. But hey, he's rich, great-looking and a wolf. What did I expect?

When he slipped his tongue next to mine and I felt my nipples harden, I knew it was time to escape.

He broke the kiss and the sleepy, sexy look in his eyes nearly made me forget. Nearly.

"Thanks for the ride." My voice was embarrassingly husky.

"Aren't you going to invite me in?" His voice was dangerously sexy.

"Not tonight. But keep working on it, you never know."

Before I lost my resolve, I jumped out the door and ran into my building.

* * * * *

The first thing I did after entering my apartment was head for the phone.

"When I get my hands on you I'm going to make you wish you'd never been born!" I screamed at my brother's answering machine. I couldn't believe the rat had *seen* me having sex with the Dragon and set me up for it. I'd pre-cog his ass, for sure.

Of course the bastard knew that he'd fucked me royally and wasn't going to answer. I stomped around my kitchen for a while, thinking up ways to pay my brother back for this stunt. Not that I could do a whole lot of damage to him, even if he did deserve it. He was, after all, my brother.

When I finally ran out of steam, I became uncomfortably aware of the stickiness between my thighs. *Yerch*.

I got a grip on myself in the shower. Even allowed myself to remember exactly how good it had felt fucking Devon. By the time I got out, I'd come to a sort of peace with the evening. I'd had some great sex with a lethally attractive man, who I'd never see again.

I toweled off, then crawled into my bed, feeling better than I had in a long time.

Chapter Two

I woke up feeling sore in all the places a woman should feel sore if she's living right. Rolling out of bed, I stretched, then wandered into the kitchen in search of food.

The light on my answering machine was blinking and since I was curious, I punched the button.

"Pick up, Ange. You know if I'd known it was Devon, I wouldn't have done that to you." Silence then, while he waited to see if I'd pick up. "Well, I guess I'll talk to you later."

I had to settle for a bowl of cereal without milk, since I'd neglected to go to the store. That was something I could take care of today. I threw on some jeans, a cropped t-shirt and some tennies, oddly aware of the rasp of fabric over my flesh. The soft caress of the t-shirt over my nipples caused them to bead, the seam of my jeans rubbed my clit, sending little bursts of arousal through my clit. I took a deep breath, then tried to ignore the sensations, while I raided my stash for the grocery money.

Oh, I had plenty of cash. We may not be a powerful family of witches but some of our ancestors had been and they had been wise investors. I also helped out an elderly witch friend of ours with her shop a couple of days a week. While it didn't pay a lot, it kept my coffee can full of ready change.

My Chevy – piece of shit – groaned and balked but finally sputtered to life. Though it coughed and shimmied, I made it to the store in one piece.

I just wasn't going to make it home.

I'd loaded several bags of groceries into both the trunk and backseat of the car, feeling immensely pleased with myself for having bought enough supplies to last me for a month. I inserted the key into the ignition and turned it. Heard some clicking sounds, then nothing. I tried again. This time I didn't even get the clicking. I shot a burst of magic at the engine and smoke billowed out from under the hood.

Black, roiling clouds of smoke.

Pulling the release, I jumped out of the car and slung the hood open. Flames shot into the sky. I stumbled back from it and a loud *whoosh* filled the air as the entire vehicle was consumed in a fireball. The heat was so intense I felt the hair around my face and on my arms crinkling. Staggering back another couple of feet, I stared in awe as the car burned. I screamed when first one, then the other tires exploded. Sparks bursting into the air like fireworks.

When it finally sputtered and died, all that remained was a blackened metallic husk. It was still too hot to get any closer to, still smoldering, but there was no doubt in my mind that my groceries hadn't made it.

Neither had my purse.

Scrounging around in my pockets, I found enough change for the pay phone on the corner.

"Pick up. I don't have enough change to make another call," I yelled.

"Ange? What's up?"

Sirens filled the air as the fire trucks finally made it to the scene.

"Do I hear sirens? Ange, are you all right?"

"Yeah, Justin. I'm at the grocery store. Can you come pick me up?"

"What are the sirens about?" At least he sounded worried.

"That would be why I need a ride."

I ran my finger on the odd metal cord that hooked the handset to the phone.

"You gonna tell me?"

"My car sort of burned up."

I could hear Justin laughing on the other end and I wanted to wrap the metal cord around his neck.

"Your ride is on the way," he said, then hung up.

I'd make Justin buy me some groceries to make up for him being an ass.

* * * * *

Half an hour had passed and there was still no sign of my brother. The firemen had finished declaring my Chevy dead and a tow truck was in the process of hooking up to its remains.

Even I had to admit that it could no longer be repaired.

I'd planted my ass on one of those concrete things they use in parking lots so you know you've pulled all the way into your space. My butt had fallen asleep long ago and the numbness had now worked its way down to my feet. I would have stood up and walked around but I hated those pins and needles you get when body parts wake up and I figured I would just be sitting down again. Why go through it twice?

I watched as another car rolled into the parking lot. I didn't need to look at the driver to know it wasn't my brother. The car was a black sedan and my brother drove a red sports car.

I returned to contemplating my feet, wondering if I'd even be able to stand up at this point, when a pair of dark brown boots entered my field of vision.

Thinking it was one of the tow truck operators, I slanted a smile across my lips before I tipped my head back to speak to him. The smile became real as I tracked up lean, well muscled legs sheathed in faded denim. The snug t-shirt he wore showcased a flat stomach that veed upward toward broad shoulders. I nearly choked when my gaze made it to his face and Kraid Devon looked back at me.

His dark hair was mussed about his head, the lines of his face harsh in the bright sunlight. He was wearing a pair of very dark sunglasses that concealed his eyes from sight.

Then his lip curled in a grin, which made me shiver. "The girl who likes to play with fire."

Shit. I was lost at the sound of his voice. My nipples tightened painfully and warm moisture pooled between my legs. If my feet hadn't been asleep I would have launched myself at him.

"Kraid." I tried to sound casual, uninterested. I think I pulled it off.

The other side of his mouth curved into a grin and I wasn't so sure.

"So." He moved closer to me, planting a foot on either side of my ankles. "You need a ride."

"Actually, my brother is coming to pick me up." I think.

"No, I assured him I would handle it."

My mouth dropped open. Justin was a dead man.

Kraid stuck out his hand and I reluctantly grasped it, a thrill coursing through me, that alternately stoked my desire and pissed me off. He hauled me to my feet but my legs refused to hold. Hell, I couldn't even feel them.

"Sorry, my legs are asleep," I told him as I started slumping back toward the ground.

"Fuck," he growled, bent over and slung me up into his arms.

Feeling like a sack of feed, I was toted over to his car and deposited in the passenger seat. Being in his arms hadn't woken up my legs but I figured it wouldn't be long with the way my heart was now pounding in my chest, forcing blood through my system.

After he slid into the driver's seat, he took a long leisurely look down my body. Other parts of me sparked to life under his examination. I was concentrating on this phenomenon when he reached across the seat toward me. I didn't have time to react as he dragged me across to his side and captured my mouth.

A surge of hot desire raced straight to my crotch as his tongue languidly pushed mine around. His fingers traced their way up under my shirt, my breath catching in my throat, when he cupped my breast. With a grunt, he deepened the kiss, his tongue aggressively stroking mine as he pinched and teased my nipple.

An insistent rap on his window drew him away from me, though he kept his hand on my boob.

"Sorry, Mr. Devon, I didn't realize it was you." A young police officer stood beside the car. "You're, uh, blocking traffic though, sir."

Devon rolled my nipple between his fingers and I saw the cop flash a look in that direction, taking note of the movement.

"We were just leaving," Devon assured him.

"Thank you, sir. Ma'am." His lips twitched as he tried to keep from smiling.

Devon dropped his hand to my crotch and shoved it tight against my sex as he put the car into gear and drove out of the parking lot.

Just then my legs and feet started waking up.

"Shit," I hissed as the tiny flares of pain assailed me.

Devon glanced away from the road to see what my problem was.

"Ow, ow, ow, ow."

"What is wrong with you?" He looked at me like I was mental.

"They're waking up." I squirmed, attempting to squelch the discomfort, only to find myself writhing against his hand.

He had the nerve to chuckle at me. This turned into full-blown laughter, when he pulled into my parking lot and saw the stricken look that bloomed across my face. I knew I hadn't told him where I lived, meaning my brother would have to die twice.

I attempted to scramble out of the car before Devon made it around to my side but my legs still weren't cooperating. He didn't even bother trying to hold me up while I walked, he just swung me into his arms and carried me inside.

Old lady Pearson met us outside her door. Age had shrunk her to about four foot seven, her wrinkled skin making her look around a hundred years old. She took one glance at Devon and me and winked. "About time you got yourself laid."

Devon grinned wickedly at me and toted me upstairs.

"My keys were in the car." I struggled to get down. "I have to get my spare from Mr. Junker, next door."

He raised an eyebrow at me, then carried me down the hallway, thumping on Mr. Junker's door when we got there.

My neighbor, wearing nothing more than a pair of boxer shorts, dulled with age and a t-shirt that proclaimed "Iowa is a Four Letter Word", stood there blinking at us.

"Could I get my spare key from you?"

"Spare key?" He blinked some more.

"I lost mine." I wasn't telling Junker about the car.

Mr. Junker produced my spare, which Devon snagged. Then he hauled me back to my apartment and hustled inside.

Straight to my bedroom.

He tossed me on the bed, which was still unmade from that morning.

"Get your clothes off." He drew his shirt over his head and pitched it aside. "Now!" He glared at me while he worked the fastenings on the front of his jeans.

I shed my clothes, afraid of what he'd do to me if I wasn't quick about it. Another hot wash of arousal soaked out of my vagina when I looked back at him and noticed what I'd missed last night since he'd kept most of his clothes on.

His body was a work of art. Long, lean muscles, full of definition. A light scattering of hair across his chest. A dark arrow of it below his navel, pointing downward. Dense muscles in his thighs that bunched and flexed as he stepped out of his jeans.

Naked, he stalked across the bed toward me, spreading my legs wide as he moved between them. I watched the muscles in his chest flex as he lowered himself over me.

I almost wished he'd left his sunglasses on, his eyes burned with such intensity, such raw lust, that it took my breath away. While he lowered himself to his elbows, he angled his head, then trapped my mouth. His lips hard and aggressive, his teeth nipping my lower lip until I opened to him.

"Wrap your legs around my waist," he commanded between attacks on my mouth.

Then the broad head of his penis was pressing against my opening. My hips jerked, trying to ensnare the thick shaft. I could barely keep my eyes open as I sucked on his tongue, the rich, spicy taste of him drugging me into a heightened state of sensual awareness.

He flexed his hips and drove himself home. I cried out as my muscles stretched to accommodate his width. He growled, then started pounding, grinding into me. I arched my back, tightened my legs and slammed my hips back to meet his. The hot, wet sounds of our bodies slapping together drove me higher. Bending down, he lowered his mouth to my neck and grasped my flesh between his teeth. He began sucking on it in time with the drive of his hips. The muscles in my groin coiled, tightened, my sheath rippled in a precursor of the coming orgasm. His thrusts became wild, erratic and I shattered. I jerked and twitched, my vagina squeezing his cock, pulling on it. His head reared back and he screamed out my name, the name he liked to call me. Then I felt the pulse of his cock as he shot his completion inside.

Dropping his head down, he stared into my eyes. He scowled at me, pulled out, then yanked me over onto my stomach.

"Kneel." He slapped my hip when I didn't respond quickly enough.

Groaning, I propped my butt up in the air and braced my upper body on my elbows, my fists clenched in the sheet.

I felt the hair on his thighs tickle the backs of my legs, then he grabbed my hips and impaled me. He fucked me like a man possessed. My orgasm blasted over me without warning, raging through me in accompaniment with his grunts as I vised down on his cock. He speared through my clenching muscles, boring his way into my very center. When my second climax claimed me, it wrenched wave after wave of pleasure from my core to my limbs. My magic bloomed in a tidal wave inside me and threatened to ignite. Kraid grated out something in that strange language of his, then he was coming, his cock throbbing as he shot his seed.

He slammed himself deep one last time, held himself still, then dragged me with him onto our sides. I thought to move away from him but he wrapped his arm around me and held me tightly to his chest.

I felt my magic simmer lower, settling, and I was able to relax. He began tracing circles on my stomach that relieved the rest of my nervous energy. Soon I was drifting on the edge of sleep.

"*Somm.*" He continued stroking. "*Dormi.*"

* * * * *

The cold woke me. I was lying naked on top of my bed and it took me a moment to remember what had happened. Groaning, I rolled over and came face-to-face with Devon. *Shit.*

He even looked dangerous when he was asleep, with his arm thrown above his head. His features were still chiseled, his muscular body taut. A glance at the clock on the nightstand next to him informed me that it was two o'clock in the morning. I thought about getting up, then decided it wasn't worth it. I sat up to find the comforter and an arm snaked around my waist, pulling me back down to the mattress.

Devon rolled and threw his other arm and a leg over me, his body heat warmer than any comforter I'd ever owned. I peeked at him, just to make sure he still slept and found him watching me.

Caught, I just stared.

He flashed me the first soft smile I'd ever seen on his face. His entire countenance lost some of its hardened edge.

I smiled back, snuggled closer and let myself fall back to sleep.

* * * * *

Devon was gone the next time I awoke and so was my spare key. I didn't know if that meant he was coming right back, or if he just intended to keep it so that he could come in whenever it suited him.

That thought didn't disturb me as much as it should have.

I showered and dressed, then stripped the bed, piling the sheets by the door. Grabbing the phone, I punched in my brother's number while I scrounged for something to eat. I was down to flavored instant oatmeal.

"Lo?"

"You are a dead man."

"I would have been."

"How could you?"

"He insisted."

Knowing Devon, my brother really didn't have a chance. I sighed loudly enough for him to hear. "I need a ride."

"Where to?"

"I need to get a car so I don't have to ever again ask you for another ride."

"Ha, ha. When do you want me to pick you up?"

"Half an hour?"

"See you then."

Before he could hang up, I thought of something to add. "Make sure it's *you* that picks me up this time."

The teakettle whistled, so I fixed my oatmeal, then shoveled it down. It reminded me of school paste. Apple-cinnamon school paste.

I rolled the sheets into a manageable bundle, then waited for my brother to show.

Thank God, he didn't keep me waiting. He snagged the bundle of sheets from me and even refrained from making any comments about my need to wash them.

He might just live yet.

We headed to the basement first and started them washing. After a stop by the superintendent's office for another copy of my key, we were on our way.

* * * * *

It was a beautiful, sunny day and I was happy I'd chosen to wear a lightweight sundress. Justin had the top down on his convertible and I had an irresistible urge to leap over the door to get into the car. Since I'm a clod, I opened the door and slid onto the seat. It wouldn't brighten my day to end up with my ass in the air and my face mashed into the leather had I tried the other method.

With the wind whipping through our hair and the sun beating down on us, we headed over to Bucky's. I'd gone to high school with Bucky, whose real name was Hertherford Adolphus Buckram, hence the nickname. We'd remained friends ever since. He owned a garage in town and fixed up cars on the side. He had a lot out behind his business where he stored them.

The best part about it was that Bucky was honest. At least with Justin and me. He also did great work.

Justin swung into a parking spot in front of the garage, the bustle of activity in the bays a testament to Bucky's popularity.

We found him elbow-deep in the guts of a 1984 Ford.

"Hey, Bucky." I leaned against the side of the car he was working on.

He lifted his head, smiled, then removed his hands from inside the vehicle.

"Hey, Angie. That Chevy of yours acting up again?"

"Naw, she fried the Chevy." Justin rocked back on his heels, his thumbs hooked into the top of his jeans.

Bucky looked at me with one sandy eyebrow raised.

"It sort of caught fire." I shrugged, like maybe it was an act of God. "It was reduced to a shell."

His eyes glistened as he barked out a laugh. Everyone who knew me knew I had an affinity to fire. I'd never burned an automobile before though but I'd set plenty on fire when I was still learning to control it. I was also partial to electricity. Just ask my brother.

"Guess you're looking for another set of wheels then."

Justin wandered off to watch one of Bucky's men work on a sleek, low-slung sports car.

"You got time now?"

"For you? Sure. Just let me clean up a bit."

I watched him as he ambled off, admiring the strong line of his broad shoulders. The way his back tapered to his hips. As he walked back toward me from the bathroom, a shaft of light caught his hair and made it sparkle. I'm not sure I'd realized before what a handsome man he was. He was just under six feet tall, with sandy blond hair, straight even features and dimples on either side of his mouth when he smiled, like he was doing now. His body was composed of well-earned muscles, his biceps and chest especially impressive.

"Come on." He motioned me over to the back door that led into his lot.

I took the opportunity to check out his well honed ass and thighs, when he turned away from me to open the door. *Why had I never slept with this man?*

Out in the lot, I saw he had a little bit of everything. There was a Cadillac that had a jacked-up suspension system, a green station wagon with the fake wood panels on the sides, even an old ambulance.

What I wanted most was inexpensive, reliable transportation. Call me a tightwad but I hated to part with money. I ended up buying a puke green Volvo that had rolled off the conveyer some years before I'd been born. I had no doubt the paint job was a new addition. I was certain that Bucky had not chosen the color.

When I settled my bill with him, his eyes took a slow trip down my body, then back up again. His expression was heated when he met my gaze.

"There's something different about you. I can't place it but I like it." He flashed his teeth in a wolf's grin.

I felt myself leaning closer to him, my breath coming faster. "Thanks."

He bent, lowering his face toward mine. "Go out with me tomorrow night."

I took a breath to answer and inhaled his scent. Clean, masculine sweat, oil and under that a hint of loam and spice. "Sure."

"I'll pick you up at six." He closed the distance between us, his lips pressing against mine, then melting, moving over mine with a building hunger.

There was a sharp whistle and it wasn't until Bucky stepped back from me that I realized we were still standing in the middle of his garage, in the glass-walled office. Several of his mechanics were watching us, stupid grins plastered on their faces.

Bucky smiled lazily at me, a totally pleased male expression.

"Tomorrow then." I couldn't help but grin back at him.

He tipped his head to me. "Tomorrow."

Chapter Three

My first stop was the grocery store where I reenacted my previous buying frenzy. My new old car laden with supplies, I sat for a moment in the driver's seat, almost afraid to turn the key in the ignition.

I breathed a sigh of relief when it turned over on the first try, no smoke or flames in evidence.

Back at my apartment, I ran downstairs to the laundry room and threw my bedding into the dryer, then hurried back to my car to start lugging the groceries inside.

Chase was leaning against the door of his SUV when I came out for the second load. The smile that lit his face when he saw me made my heart stutter in my chest.

I headed to the Volvo and could almost hear Chase's smile widen.

"Yours?" His voice was surprisingly close to my back, his breath warm against my neck.

I spun around, then cursed myself for doing so when I nearly plowed into his chest. Tipping my head back, I looked up into his face. Our eyes met and held. His pupils dilated, his eyelids sliding partway down, giving him a sexy, sleepy look. His cheekbones flushed with slashes of color.

I was held in his spell as he lowered his lips to mine, desire flaring through me when they met. He moved his mouth in a sensual dance as his arms came around me, drawing me tightly to his chest. His lips turned demanding, his tongue slicking over the seam of my mouth, probing, seeking entrance. I let him in.

He swept inside, wedging his thigh between my legs as he did so. His erection pressed hot and hard against my hip. I dug my fingers into his hair, hanging on, riding his leg while he grasped the back of my head with one hand, the other one moving over my rib cage to cup my breast.

He squeezed and I ground my crotch against his thigh, moaning.

"You go, girl!" shot out across the parking lot.

Chase backed off enough that I could see Mrs. Pearson grinning at us as she tottered her way out to the dumpster.

"I'll help you with the groceries." He blinked slowly, once, as he spoke. It caused something low in my belly to flip over.

"I'd appreciate that," I breathed.

"This one's prettier than the other one." Mrs. Pearson sounded very pleased as she passed us on her way back to the building.

"Prettier," I said, trying not to laugh.

"I've been called a lot of things but pretty has never been one of them." Chase did laugh. Shaking his head, he opened the door, then loaded his arms with shopping bags.

I followed and before I knew it we were bringing the last of the items into the kitchen. I hit the replay button on the answering machine, as I put away the last of the groceries.

There were four messages. All from my brother. By the time he'd recorded the last one, he was sounding desperate.

I grabbed the phone, Justin answering after the first ring. "What's wrong?"

"No one's seen Miles since you took him to the party."

I let my breath out in a whoosh. "Maybe he hooked up with that woman." I couldn't remember her name.

"That's what's got me worried, Ange. I ran into Ealinda at Lonnie's. She said she'd agreed to go out with Miles last night but he stood her up."

I didn't know Miles very well but I remembered the look that he got when he was talking about her. There was no way he'd be a no-show for a date with her. "When's the last time she saw him?"

"He walked her to her car and firmed up the details of the date."

"I can't think of anything to add, Justin, she saw him after I did."

"I've got a few other people to talk to yet. If I don't get anything from them I might need you for a focus."

I'd been with Miles and I'd been at the party. Sometimes Justin could trigger a vision by touching something or someone associated with what he was looking for.

"Just let me know."

He said he would and hung up.

Chase was resting his shoulder against the doorframe, watching me.

"The guy who brought me to your party seems to be missing."

The side of his mouth curved in a grin. "The only man I remember your being with was Devon."

"Miles Grimthorne. A dwarf," I told him.

He raised his eyebrow at me. Straightened away from the jamb and moved toward me with a loose stride. "You went out with a dwarf?"

I had trouble tearing my gaze away from his hips. "Justin set me up."

"Let me guess, a Swordstriker." I nodded at his crotch. "Your brother has no class." He tipped my chin up with one of his fingers. We looked into each other's eyes for a long moment. His face drew closer to mine, slowly. Then he froze a breath away from me.

"I want you," he said, just before he closed the distance between us, wrapping his arms around me, pulling me tightly to his chest.

Heat flared in my groin, my nipples, my face. I sucked on his tongue, grinding against his leg as he rubbed his erection into my stomach. My hands were heading for the button on his jeans, when reality slammed into my head.

I placed my palms flat on his chest and pushed, instead.

He kept stroking me, his lips working their way down my neck.

I shoved harder. "Stop, Chase." It came out breathy. Not sounding very convincing even to my own ears.

"What?" He narrowed his eyes at me, the heat of desire showing in the tightness of the skin around them.

"This is a really bad idea," I told him, trying to extricate myself from his arms.

The side of his mouth curved in a wicked grin. "I think it's a very good idea." He tightened his hold, rubbing his hardened shaft against me for emphasis.

"Chase." That sounded better. "We've been here before. It didn't work out then, what makes you think it will work out now?"

"Because we're so good together." He brushed his hands down my back, splayed them over the cheeks of my ass and squeezed me against his groin.

"Oh please." I tried wriggling my way out of his arms.

"All right." He raised his hands and took a step back from me. "Don't think this is going to stop me from trying." A grin curved the side of his mouth and I almost caved.

Smiling back at him, I shook my head. "I don't know what I'm going to do with you."

* * * * *

I finally managed to get Chase out of my apartment. After I'd retrieved my linens and made my bed, I was beginning to wonder what I had against sleeping with the wolf. I could always just use him for sex. The more I thought about it, the more I liked the idea, my body did too. It's not like I had to let him into my heart again.

I'd just fixed myself an early supper and was looking forward to eating it, when the phone rang.

"Hello?" I grabbed a glass and filled it with ice.

"Hey, Ange, still no word on Miles turning up anywhere," Justin sighed.

"You want me to come over?" Grabbing the tea out of the fridge, I filled my glass.

"Not yet. I still haven't heard from his cousin. I did hear something that might interest you though."

I waited but he didn't continue. "What?"

"There's rumors that the Dragon's bachelor days are numbered."

My heart took a dive. Why did I care, the man scared the hell out of me, I should be happy that he wouldn't be coming around anymore. *Yeah right.* My mind knew I

shouldn't mess with the man but my body was addicted to him. "Who's the lucky lady?"

"Nobody seems to know." Caught up as I was, thinking about the incredible sex I'd had with Devon, I brushed off the implication in my brother's voice.

"Anything else?" I asked him, not really paying attention.

"I'll let you know," he said and hung up.

I should take Chase up on his offer. Hell, I came from a long line of very liberal witches. They'd be appalled at me if I gave up great sex over a little thing like infidelity.

* * * * *

I stared into my closet, wondering what I should wear for my date with Bucky. I couldn't remember if he'd told me where we were going. Finally giving up, I put nothing on, deciding to wait and see what Bucky was wearing.

I did my hair and makeup, threw on my stockings, then put on a short silk robe and got myself a glass of wine.

Just before six, there was a knock at my door and I opened it to find Bucky looking exceptional in tailored pants and a sweater.

He took in my robe, his expression tightening. "We did have a date, didn't we?"

I grabbed his arm and hauled him inside. "Of course we did but you didn't tell me where we were going and I wanted to be dressed right." The muscles under my fingers flexed and a wave of heat crashed over me.

"You'd better sit down." I shoved him in the direction of the couch, as a glint sparked to life in his eyes.

I handed him my glass. "Finish this for me while I dress." I escaped to my room, certain if I didn't get away from him we'd never make it out of my apartment. *What the hell was coming over me?* I couldn't ever remember being this horny before.

He was dressed in navy, with dark gray trousers, so I grabbed a skimpy blue dress a couple of shades lighter than his sweater, a dress that hugged my body all the way down to my hips, then flared out in short diaphanous layers. I already had my thigh-highs on, so I slipped into a pair of three-inch heels, took a quick look in my mirror and headed back to the man.

Wow. He'd been sexy in his filthy garage clothes. Now that I had a chance to assess him, he was stunning all cleaned up.

With a purely masculine smile, he rose from the couch and scanned my outfit. "I'm glad you waited to decide." His voice was lower than normal, sending a shiver through me.

With his hand burning a track straight from where it rested on my back to my cunt, he led me out to the parking lot. I froze when I saw the oversized pickup truck he drove, though, wondering how in hell I would get into the thing gracefully.

"Allow me," he whispered in my ear. Then he opened the passenger door, lifted me like I weighed nothing and deposited me on the seat.

I almost took him then and there.

I managed to control myself while he drove, though I had trouble keeping my eyes off his thighs as the muscles there bunched and flexed while he operated the pedals. Of course I wasn't looking at the distinctive bulge that kept growing larger while I stared at his...leg.

We finally reached our destination and I felt myself grinning like an idiot when he opened my door and helped me out. *Chez Touchez*. Translated in my mind it meant the house of touch. Whether I was right or not, who knew?

The restaurant he'd chosen was one I'd been to before, with a dark, romantic atmosphere and intimate seating. We were shown to a booth and I was happy when he slid onto the seat next to me. His large, firm thigh pressed to mine.

I let him order for the two of us, not caring about the food, wondering how quickly we could eat the meal and get on to more interesting activities.

Wine was served and I had trouble wrapping my mind around the garage mechanic choosing a fine table wine but when I looked at Bucky, he somehow fit. Tough aggressive businessman and laborer all rolled into one.

"Christ, Angie, if you keep looking at me like that, I'm not going to make it through the meal." He leaned down toward me as he spoke and I thought he was going to kiss me. My lips parted in anticipation but he straightened up without making contact. "If I touch you now, I really will lose control."

The waiter brought our soup and we both concentrated on eating it and not on jumping each other. At least that was what I was concentrating on and from the looks he kept sending me, I figured he was either trying and failing to ignore me, or mentally planning his moves once we got out of here.

I had to laugh over the main course. Bucky had ordered *Boeuf Flambe*. I stretched to buss his cheek and he turned at the same time, started to say something and our mouths met. His arms flew around me, one hand at the back of my head, smashing my face to his, the other kneading the flesh at my waist, my hip, then lower.

We angled our heads and he slipped his tongue into my mouth. I moaned, as he stroked around inside.

He dropped his hand to my thigh and worked it under the hem of my dress. I spread my legs wider to give him access. He didn't hesitate. Just moved straight to my sex and worked his fingers under the edge of my panties. He groaned as he slid a finger between my labia and found my vagina.

He pressed a finger inside and I arched into his hand as he pumped it all the way in. He added a second finger, curled them and twisted them as he drove them in and out of me, striking the G-spot near the entrance of my pussy, sending bursts of pleasure throughout my core.

"Excuse me," an irritated voice grated through the haze of my lust. "I said, excuse me."

Bucky tore his mouth away from mine and spun his head at the intrusion. "What?" he barked at the man.

"This is a family restaurant and..." His eyes dropped to my lap.

Bucky and I both looked at my crotch, knowing damn well his fingers were still inside me. Then we looked into each other's eyes and laughed.

Bucky withdrew his hand and brought his fingers toward his mouth, until the guy standing next to him cleared his throat. Narrowing his eyes, he picked up his napkin and used it to clean my cream from his hand.

"Thank you," the man said and turned stiffly away from us.

We faced our meals and found them burnt to a cinder.

"You flamed our food," Bucky laughed, a rich sound that sent shivers over me.

"Looks that way." At least I hadn't set the tablecloth on fire.

"Let's get out of here." He slid me a wicked grin.

I just nodded. Enthusiastically.

* * * * *

By the time we pulled into my parking lot, Bucky was paying more attention to me than the road. Our hands were all over each other, our mouths locked the second he put the truck in park.

"I can't wait," Bucky's voice rasped in my ear as he shoved his hands under the hem of my dress and grabbed the sides of my panties.

I slouched back in my seat so he could work the bit of satin off my body. Then he was yanking at the opening at the front of his trousers and shoving them down his thighs. With a wildness I'd never expected from the man, he grabbed my hips and tugged, pulling me toward him and causing me to fall flat on my back on the expansive front seat.

"Christ, woman, raise your knees," he growled, as he wedged his way between my legs.

I did as he requested, as eager to have him fill me, as he was to get inside.

With a savage thrust, he was there.

For the next several minutes he drove into me with a vengeance that stole my breath. Then he changed his grip, moved his body higher and stared down at me.

I gasped when his eyes locked with mine. There was a raging fire burning inside them that shouldn't have been there. Searching within myself, I was relieved to find that I was not responsible for this phenomenon.

But something was.

"Bucky," I meant to shout but it came out a husky whisper.

"God, Angie, you've got the sweetest pussy I've ever fucked." He bent and brushed his lips over mine.

I started probing him to see who, or what, was responsible for his actions, when he found the bundle of nerves deep inside me that guaranteed I'd be unable to think. The head of his cock rasped over the place, again and again and I was lost.

I arched up into his strokes, my own movements becoming fevered, desperate.

We screamed our release together, my vagina clamping around his cock, as it pulsed and spurted its semen. He dropped his head next to mine, as his climax continued. His breath washing over my neck, as he groaned and shuddered.

When we'd finally settled down, our hearts beating normally once again inside our chests, I heard him sigh.

"You know, when I left for this date, I was looking forward to kissing you goodnight. At the most, I thought I might try to cop a feel." He laughed softly, raising his head to look at me, his eyes once again normal. "I don't know what the hell came over me but that was fucking awesome."

I didn't know what had come over him either.

Now it was too late to find out.

"Get out of the truck," a male voice tight with anger shouted, accompanied by the sound of his fist hitting the door.

Bucky raised his eyes to the window. "It's Quinton."

"Get off my woman, Buckram," Chase bellowed.

Bucky raised an eyebrow at me.

"Hell if I know." I rolled my eyes.

"What do you suppose he'd do if I took you again?" I liked the smile that lit his face when he said that.

"How much do you value your truck?"

Bucky actually had to weigh the decision for a moment.

"Now," Chase screamed, bashing the door again, with enough force to rock the vehicle.

Bucky withdrew from me with a grimace. Helped me sit up, then put himself back together again. He waited until I had slipped my panties back on before he opened the driver's door and helped me out that side, away from Chase.

I started around the front of the vehicle but Bucky stopped me, took me into his arms and gave me a heated kiss. "Would it be better for me to stay or go?" he whispered into my ear.

I didn't even have to think about that one. "Go."

"I want to see you tomorrow." He kissed me again briefly, waited for me to accept his invitation, then gave me a gentle shove in Chase's direction.

He shot a look at the man, then climbed back into his truck.

Chase glared at me as I sauntered up to him. Of all the things I was expecting him to say or do, what he did wasn't one of them.

"Come on," he barked, wrapping his hand around my wrist, he started hauling me toward my apartment building.

He led me straight into my apartment and directly to my bedroom. To my bed. He tackled me onto the mattress, his hands roaming over my sides, my hips, my breasts. His mouth eating at mine, nipping, licking. Then nibbling his way down my neck.

"I have to cover his fucking scent," he breathed against my collarbone.

Time faded away and we fell into the rhythm we had always had as lovers. Only this time it carried a hectic edge of need that we hadn't had since our first times together.

We removed each other's clothes in a wild erotic dance that drove our arousal to a fevered pitch. By the time he loomed over me, knees plated firmly between mine, we were both on the edge of control.

I trapped his ass with my ankles and tried to draw him to me with the muscles in my thighs. His eyes flashed to amber, a growl forming deep inside his chest, as he adjusted his position, found my opening with the head of his cock, then he drove his hips forward, impaling me.

I moaned as my inner muscles stretched. He grabbed a section of my neck between his teeth, ran his tongue over it, then sucked.

Gnawing on me, he powered his cock in and out—deep, hard strokes that sent fissures of pleasure blasting through my groin. I felt my magic stirring, swelling to the heat of the wildness running through us.

His beast reached out to touch my magic. The two forces met, then rubbed together, sending a wave of power washing outward through my body, through Chase. He shuddered, his thrusts becoming erratic, his breathing harsh.

All sensation narrowed down to my vagina, sucked down into a vortex that twisted the very center of my being tighter. Chase's shaft grew larger, wider, harder and the tornado inside me blew. My back arched, my hips jerked, my core spasmed as the twined magics exploded outward. Chase cried out, his cock erupting with his seed as the powers blasted through him.

We bucked and writhed, grinding against each other for long moments of intense pleasure.

When I finally ceased trembling, I began to wonder about what had just happened. Whatever it had been, it had never happened before when Chase and I had had sex.

"What the hell was that?" I asked.

Chase worked himself up onto his elbows from where he'd collapsed on top of me. "Hell if I know but I'm damn sure going to fuck you again."

That made me laugh, though it didn't dispel the uneasiness growing within me. He chuckled along with me, then suddenly shot a look over my head.

"Damn." He levered himself off me and grabbed the blanket off the floor. "You've set the drapes on fire." Using the blanket, he beat the flames out then tore the fabric off the hooks and disappeared into the bathroom. I heard the water running and was scooting to the side of the mattress to see what he was up to when he returned to the room. I had to give it to him. He was used to my setting things on fire, though it had never happened during sex before. He hadn't even batted an eyelash.

"All taken care of." He stood too close in front of me, his cock hard again, just an inch from my face.

"Is this a hint?" I couldn't help but laugh again at how very unsubtle his tactics were.

"Not if you're not getting it." He flexed his hips forward and bumped my lips with the head of his cock.

I stuck my tongue out and just barely touched him with the tip.

"Oh, for Christ's sake, Angie, suck my cock," he growled, placing a hand on the back of my head.

I laughed, licked my lips, then parted them as I eased my mouth over his cock. Swirling my tongue around the hardened flesh and rotating my head from side to side, I managed to slick him up enough for an easy glide.

Then I concentrated on driving him wild. I teased the little bundle of nerves just under the head, until a muscle twitched in his thigh, then I plunged all the way down his shaft, swallowing him into my throat.

He groaned, his hand fisting in my hair reflexively.

Keeping my tongue moving back and forth along the fat vein on the underside of his cock, I sucked while I moved back up to the head.

"Jesus," he groaned, his hips following my face, his other hand finding my shoulder and gripping it for balance.

I repeated the pattern, a little more swiftly, swirling tongue on my way down, followed by hard sucking on the way back. Picking up my speed, increasing the suction I used on the upward stroke, I soon had him moaning my name and flexing his hips in counterstroke.

I rolled my eyes up to watch his face and nearly smiled when his closed. His head fell back as he moved his hand from my shoulder to the side of my head, digging his fingers into my hair.

"Fuck me." He held my head in place while he drove his cock ever faster between my lips. I kept working my tongue over him, faster now, sucking harder.

"Oh shit" was the only warning I got from him before he buried himself deep, held my skull in a death grip and began pumping his seed down my throat.

I kept sucking and swallowing until he twitched and eased up on his hold. Then I let him slide from between my lips.

"Damn, you do that well." He grinned at me, as he climbed onto the bed and pulled me against his chest. "What are you going to tell Devon?" he asked, out of the blue.

"About what?" I played my finger across the muscles of his chest.

"About our getting back together." He shifted and drew me tighter to his side.

"Uh—" *Shit*. I didn't consider us back together, why would he? He liked women too much to restrict himself to one. "I hadn't planned on telling him anything."

"He's going to come around again, Ange." His hand wandered lower.

"Probably. But what difference does that make? It's not like I'm his or anything." My crotch was heating up and I slid a look to his groin to see if he was getting the same idea. He most definitely was.

"He might see it differently." Chase moved my hand from his chest to his cock, wrapping our fingers around the hardened length.

"Mmm-hmm." I was losing interest in the conversation.

"Angie?" He let go of my hand and inched lower on the bed. Then he forced me onto my back and wedged his hips between my thighs. "It'll only be you, this time." He bent to kiss me.

"Really?" I asked before his lips captured mine.

"Really," he breathed, then took my mouth.

We didn't talk after that. We didn't do much of anything else that night, except lose ourselves in each other, my magic having found a new outlet that both of us were quickly becoming addicted to.

As Chase put it after one especially intense blast. "Fuck me, Angie, that's so good I may never take my cock out of you."

We finally passed out from exhaustion in the wee hours of the morning. Our sweat-and cum-soaked bodies pasted together. A fleeting thought running through my mind before I sank into oblivion. When had sex become so important?

* * * * *

I came awake by degrees. The first thing I noticed was the warmth of the sun. Then the rough texture of Chase's skin against my back. The calluses on the pads of his fingers as they brushed my flesh.

He gripped my thigh and placed my leg over his hip, while he scooted forward. Working his other arm beneath my neck, he angled his hand down to cup my breast as he guided his cock to my vagina.

My magic flared to life as he pierced my opening, wringing a gasp from both of us.

"You're going to kill me," he groaned, then drove his hips forward, impaling me with one push.

"But what a way to go." I bowed my back, seating myself more firmly against his groin.

My magic woke his beast, then stroked itself along that lush wild power. Chase growled, throwing his hips into motion, locking his arm around my thigh for leverage. The energies grew, feeding off each other, working their way through our bodies, filling us. My world narrowed down to the feel of Chase's cock plowing through my sheath. The jolt of pleasure at the end of each stroke as he hit my womb. The pinch of his fingers around my nipple.

He raised his head and locked his teeth around my shoulder, close to my neck, while he increased the power of his thrusts. I grasped the back of his head, holding him to me, pressing him closer, silently begging him to bite down.

The magic sparked and flared and he did just that. His teeth, sharper with the nearness of his beast, easily pierced my flesh in a grip that claimed me. Raising my leg higher up his chest, he ground his groin against my ass, his cock swelling, hardening further.

My vagina clenched, the resulting spasm throwing him into a storm of motion. He hammered his shaft into me, snarling, sucking on the flesh between his teeth.

My entire body went on alert, the muscles tense and trembling, holding on the brink. Then the magic detonated, screamed through us with an intensity of pleasure that was almost painful.

I sobbed his name as my muscles released in a tremendous rush of sensations, each vise of my sheath tearing another sob from my throat. Then Chase joined me, his hips slapping my ass in staccato punches as he jetted his semen into my depths.

He slowly released my shoulder, licking the wound before dropping his head to the bed. He let my leg go and it fell limply to the mattress. Splaying his hand across my stomach, he held me tight.

"Hell of a way to start the day," he gasped.

"I don't think I can move." I would have sounded amazed, if I'd had the energy.

"Here, let me help you." But he didn't. "Just as soon as I can."

We both chuckled.

The phone rang.

"You get it," I told him.

"Sure," he replied, then just stayed where he was.

The answering machine picked up.

"So, read any good books lately?" he asked.

"What do you think about this weather we've been having?" I shot back at him.

We laughed.

Finally, I regained voluntary control of my body.

"Hey, I can move." I wiggled my arms and legs. My ass.

He groaned. "Have mercy on me." He pulled out of my sheath, then rolled to the edge of the bed. "Come on, let's get cleaned up."

I scooted out of the bed behind him. "Oh shit." There were several scorch marks on my walls. Fortunately none of them were burning.

"You're getting better at least. Otherwise we would be toast."

He had a point.

* * * * *

After showering and dressing, we headed to the kitchen in search of food. Thankfully I had some.

Grabbing three steaks and a loaf of garlic bread out of the freezer, I turned the broiler on, then loaded the coffeepot and got it started.

The blinking light on my answering machine reminded me that someone had called earlier. I hit the play button, then rummaged in the cupboard for a couple of mugs.

"Call me, Angie. I'm going to need you to help find Miles. I've heard a couple of—disturbing—things since I talked to you last."

I looked at Chase. "That doesn't sound good."

He poured us coffee, while I grabbed the phone and dialed my brother.

Justin answered, just as Chase placed the food under the broiler.

"What's up?" I asked.

"Angie, thank God. How soon can you get over here?" He sounded almost panicked and that was unusual for him.

"About forty-five minutes. I've got to eat something first." I was momentarily distracted as Chase bent to look into the oven, providing me with a delicious view of his ass.

"Just get here as soon as you can." My brother's worried voice brought me back to the conversation.

"What's wrong?"

"I'm not sure he's still alive," Justin admitted, "and if he is, then we can't waste any time getting to him."

"What have you heard, or should I say *seen*?"

"I'll tell you when you get here." He disconnected.

I stared at the phone for a minute, then replaced it in its cradle.

"How long on the meat?" I leaned against Chase's back and peered around his shoulder at the oven.

"Just a couple of minutes. What'd your brother say?" He removed the garlic bread and I helped myself to a slice.

"He thinks Miles might be dead, or close to it." I frowned, wondering what in the hell had happened to the dwarf after leaving the party.

Chase removed the pan from the oven and dropped the steaks onto plates he'd taken out earlier. I grabbed some silverware for us, the loaf of bread, and we sat down at the table.

"Why would anyone want to kill the little guy?" I cut my meat into bite-sized pieces, then started shoveling them into my mouth.

"I never met him but I've met a few dwarves before and they tend to be annoying, especially the Swordstrikers." Chase stuffed a large piece of steak between his teeth, then sighed as he bit down.

He consumed both of his, then eyed the meat still sitting on my plate. I shoved the bread toward him, which he eyed disdainfully.

"Uh-uh," I said, wrapping an arm around my plate, "we didn't eat last night."

"Why do you think I feel like attacking your food?" But he grinned when he said it, got up and went to rummage in the fridge. "Perfect." He held a deli bag of roast beef in his hand as he returned to the table.

"Why don't you eat some of this bread?" I took a big bite of mine. "Mmm."

"You should know better, Ange. I'm a wolf. When I need to refuel, meat is the only thing that does the trick." He stuffed a wad of beef into his mouth, grinning.

By the time I was finished with my steak, he'd eaten the roast beef and the package of chicken breast slices I'd picked up.

"I forgot how much you ate." I stared at his flat stomach.

"I got a pretty good workout last night." He took his plate to the sink. "And this morning." He caught me as I came to the counter with my dishes.

Leaning back against the cabinets, he trapped me between his legs. "I can't tell you how good it is to be back together with you."

He planted his mouth on mine, taking his time working my lips with his, delving into my mouth with his tongue.

I'd intended to tell him I wanted us to take it casually this time. I didn't expect him to stop seeing other women, because I planned on seeing other men. I just didn't trust the wolf the way I had when we were first together.

But he kept kissing me and I forgot about the talk, forgot about Justin, forgot about Miles. When he let me up for air, I was in a total daze.

His grin was pure male satisfaction, as he watched my reaction to his kiss. "We'd better get going," he said and I nodded dumbly. He found my purse, dug through it for my keys, then hung the bag on my shoulder. "Where's your spare?" he asked, looking at my key chain.

"Devon has it." I straightened up, checked to see if I had cash, then closed my bag.

“We can get a copy made after we take care of things at your brother’s but we should probably talk to the landlord and have the locks changed.”

Maybe Chase was right, I wasn’t sure. Then again, I didn’t know if I liked his taking charge of my life. I’d have to think about it.

He dropped my keys into his pocket, then herded me out the door.

Chapter Four

"About time you got here," Justin greeted us at the door. Then he took a look at Chase and raised an eyebrow. "What are you doing here?"

Chase grinned. "Your sister and I got back together again."

Justin gaped at me. "Does the Dragon know?"

I gave my brother the eye, willing him to shut the fuck up.

"He doesn't know, does he?" Justin turned to Chase. "You are so fucked."

"Definitely," the were said, his grin turning wicked.

"Don't we have more important things to be doing?" I poked my brother in the chest to get his attention.

"You're right. Why don't we do this in the kitchen?" He turned and sauntered off.

I looked at Chase. He was still grinning. "What are you smiling about?" I grumped.

"Great sex?" He winked at me, then headed in the direction my brother had gone.

Muttering under my breath, I trailed along behind him.

Justin and Chase sat at the table, with a beer in front of each of them, so I helped myself and plopped down across from my brother.

"You know the procedure," Justin said, reaching toward the arm I laid on the table for him, placing his hand on my wrist.

I concentrated on the last time I'd seen Miles. Thought about how excited he looked at the prospect of meeting up with Ealinda.

Chase grew quickly bored, finished his beer and got another. Then he started poking around the room, looking in my brother's cupboards and drawers. He had his head buried in the fridge when Justin started speaking.

"I see the Cram. Only it's after hours. There's a set of stairs going down. Wait. I'm somewhere else now." His fingers tightened painfully around my wrist. "Fuck. I think we're under the Cram." He was quiet for a long time. "What the hell?"

He finally released his hold on me and I rubbed my arm.

"He's under the Cram, somewhere," Justin said. "You guys want to come with me?"

"What, you think we can just walk in and get him?" I was wondering what his "what the hell" comment had been about.

"Maybe." Justin spoke to a point over my left shoulder.

"You're not telling us something." I stared at him, letting the silence lengthen.

My brother fidgeted in his chair, then looked at me. "Someone shoved me out of the vision."

I blinked at him. I hadn't even realized it was possible for someone to do that. "That doesn't sound good."

"What are the two of you talking about?" Chase waved the hotdog he was eating, for emphasis.

"Somebody knows we're looking for Miles. Somebody powerful enough to block Justin," I told him.

"I see." Chase returned his attention to the frankfurters, totally unconcerned with this development.

"So are you coming with me, or not?" Justin levered himself out of his chair and started toward the door.

"Uh, I've got a date tonight," I told him, trying not to look at Chase.

"Of course you do." Chase smirked at me, thinking, I'm sure, I was talking about him.

"So bring Chase along."

My brother, the fucking clairvoyant.

"It's not Chase," I said through gritted teeth.

The were's head snapped up, his eyes flashing wolf at me, his jaw clenching. "What do you mean?"

"I've got a date with Bucky," I mumbled.

"Bucky?" Chase and Justin said at the same time.

"Yeah, with Bucky. What's with you two?" I straightened in my seat and thought about zapping my brother. Maybe both of them.

Chase came around the table, shaking a half eaten wiener at me, his eyes narrowed in anger. "The fuck I'll have you going out with him again when you're with me."

I snorted. "That's a good one, coming from you."

I watched in fascination as he flung the hot dog around in the air. "You're *mine*," he shook the frank at my crotch, "that's *mine*," he thrust the dog toward me again and it flew from his hand, hit my chest and disappeared down my shirt.

"Huh." I stared at my chest, like I was expecting the wiener to do something else.

"While you two play with your food, I'm going to look for Miles." Justin stomped through the doorway and a moment later I heard his keys jangle as he grabbed them off the table by the front door. "If either of you checks up on me and I'm not back here in a few hours then consider me missing as well," he snarled, then slammed out the door.

"Why'd you throw a wiener at me?"

"I didn't throw a wiener at you, it just got away from me." He stepped closer to me and shoved his hand down the neckline of my shirt. I felt the hot dog move but his

fingers kept roaming, glancing across my nipples, toying with them, moving back and forth between them.

"Ever get lucky on your brother's kitchen table?" His voice was husky with arousal and sent a surge of heat straight to my groin.

"No."

His fingers clenched on my breast. "Take your pants off."

He whipped his hand out of my shirt and started working on his jeans.

I stripped my pants and panties off, then climbed up onto the top of the table, eager, so very eager to feel him inside me. Unease flashed through me but quickly vanished when Chase neared.

"Fuck yes," he breathed, as he lifted my legs and scooted my ass closer to the edge. He dipped a finger into my vagina, worked it in and out a few times, then replaced it with his cock.

He shoved my shirt and bra up, out of the way, bending over me. I looked down at his head when I didn't feel his lips on my body and caught him chewing. Guess that took care of the frankfurter. I thought about commenting on his eating the damn thing when we were in the middle of sex but he started sucking on my nipple and I lost the ability to speak.

Chase angled his hips and I forgot everything else.

"Aw, not my kitchen table. I eat on that."

I jerked, at the sound of my brother's voice and started to roll my head so I could see if he was really standing there. Chase growled, fisted his hand in my hair and forced my attention back to him.

Fire flashed in his eyes, eyes that had gone totally wolf, as he drove himself hard into me. He tightened his hold further and I could feel his cock swelling, getting larger, harder, as the bones in his face stood out in harsh relief.

"You are not going out with Bucky tonight." His voice so rough I had trouble understanding what he was saying.

I could feel the bones of his hips shift, grow, then he was picking me up off the table and dropping to the floor with me. He slapped my back down, levered his body over mine so that he was hammering himself against my womb. He grew larger, harder yet. His body heavier, driving his cock into me with a tremendous force.

"Mine," rumbled out of his throat, all but unintelligible. His lips peeled back, exposing a set of long, wicked fangs.

There was a wrenching in my groin, then I was consumed by an orgasm so powerful that I didn't have time to direct the burst of magic that shot out of me straight into Chase. As soon as it hit him, he went nuts. Everything about him was immediately bigger, harder. With wild eyes and a possessive grin, he thundered away at me.

I came again, pouring more power into him, his body sucking it up, expanding with it, energizing. Another orgasm ripped through me, so intense I almost blacked out.

He drove his cock deep, hard against my womb, bent over me and sank his teeth into my shoulder. A bolt of electricity shot from his mouth to my vagina, as he started to spew hotly inside my core. I screamed, as my body was thrown into another climax. I was barely aware of him drawing a claw-sharp nail over his chest, hardly registered the tang of earth and spice of his blood as he shoved his wound against my mouth.

Suddenly conscious of a strange, disconnected feeling stealing over my body, I forced myself to focus, concentrate on what was happening. Chase once again looked fully human, except for his eyes. They were all wolf and he was staring at me, a shocked expression on his face.

He withdrew from me, untangling my legs from around his back, allowing them to drop to the floor. I reached a hand toward him, expecting him to help me up. But he turned away, staring at his shredded jeans.

"Chase?" My voice was hoarse, catching in my throat.

He bent for his shirt. Shook it out and snorted in disgust.

I struggled off the floor, fixing my bra, pulling my shirt into place. Then I looked for the rest of my clothing, smirking when I heard Chase groan as I bent over to retrieve them.

Dressed, I turned to find Justin standing next to him, his face scrunched up in a grimace.

"What's with you?" I asked him, as I headed in their direction.

"I'll never be able to eat at that table again," he groaned.

"Grow up." I bumped into him to get him to move out of my way.

"I suppose congratulations are in order?" I heard Justin ask.

Glancing back at him from where I stood in his living room, I saw he was talking to Chase. The were was shaking his head, a smile curving one side of his mouth. "Probably not."

Both men looked at me and I shot a quick look at my zipper to make sure I'd done it up. Shrugging, confused as usual with the way men's minds worked and certain it was something that would piss me off anyway if I asked for clarification, I changed the subject. "So, Justin, what are you doing back here anyway? I thought you were off to save Miles."

Color bloomed, high on his cheeks. "I thought better of it. Storming in there alone, that is."

"Good choice. Take Chase with you, I've got to be getting home." I wasn't going to bring up my date again but that's what I was intending on going home to get ready for.

Chase was in front of me in two strides. "Guess again, sweetpea." His voice was deeper than normal. "In case you haven't noticed, you're my mate, so that definitely rules out your dating other men."

I blinked at him. "Your mate? I don't think so."

He grinned wickedly. "Mated, married, however you want to put it, you're my wife now."

"I am not going to be married to an unfaithful son of a bitch like you!" I knew better. Hell, everyone knew that a mated wolf had no desire for anyone but their mate but I couldn't seem to stop myself from saying things. "You'll stick your cock in anything female that will let you!"

He grabbed me, hard, by my upper arms, his fingers digging into my flesh. "Enough."

That worked to shut me up but I was still thinking about zapping him a few times in his pride and joy.

"We're going to help Justin retrieve his friend, then I'm taking you home."

The way he said "home" tipped me off that he meant *his* home.

I stuck my tongue out at him.

* * * * *

The three of us stood staring at the door in the back corner of the Cram. Chase had borrowed some clothes from my brother and being bigger than Justin, he looked mighty fine in them. At least I thought so.

It was quite a bit later than we had intended to be there and the sky had already started to darken. At least Chase had allowed me to call and cancel my date with Bucky, though I was seriously getting pissed by his insistence that we were mated.

You'd think I'd *feel* it if we were. That I wouldn't be, even now, entertaining ideas of fucking Bucky again. Putting that aside for the moment, I placed my hand on the door and tried to open my senses to whatever lay beyond. Justin's hand landed next to mine and I spared a smile in his direction.

"Let's open it," Justin whispered.

I shot a surge of magic into the lock and the door clicked open. Justin grasped the knob and eased it wider, keeping the bulk of his body behind the door itself. Peering around his side, all I could see were steps leading downward into darkness.

We both looked at Chase. As a werewolf he would be able to see even in the blackness before us.

"I could light a torch but do we really want that?" There were trees not far from where we stood, so I'd have plenty to work with.

"Grab a couple branches but don't light them, we might want them later." Chase stared into the opening.

I grabbed three branches, thicker than my wrist, about three feet long each and handed two of them to my brother. With a hand on the wall, I followed Chase down the stairs. The only sounds were the ones that the three of us were making and the muted drip of water somewhere below.

The stairway continued ever downward, turning and then turning back again upon itself as we wended our way closer to hell.

Okay, so maybe my mind was starting to get the better of me but I couldn't see a damn thing and the weird absence of sound was getting on my nerves. Justin accidentally bumped me and I nearly screamed. I scooted closer to Chase and dug my fingers into the waistband at the back of his pants, hanging on to the only one of us who wasn't blind.

I could almost feel his smirk at my relying on him and thought about shooting him in the ass with a spark of electricity.

He stopped and I plowed into his back, just before Justin rammed into us. Reaching back, he grabbed my hand and moved it around his side, laying the palm flat on the door we'd come up against. Scooting to his side, I drew my brother closer, so he could touch the door too. When Justin squeezed my wrist, I figured he meant it was okay for me to open it, the brief flash of light that accompanied my spell a welcome relief to the darkness.

Thankfully, there was the flicker of firelight in the passage beyond. We exchanged a glance, then Chase moved into the hall. It was wide enough for all three of us to walk abreast but Justin stayed at my back, protecting me.

We'd barely made it a dozen feet down the passage, when I felt the first stirrings of foreign magic. The air in front of us shimmered, thickened, as an enormous form began to take shape. It filled the corridor in front of us, growing denser, darker. When its image finally resolved, a dragon-man stood glowering at us, puffs of smoke curling out of his nostrils.

"You're trespassing," he rasped out, a hint of flame accompanying his words.

Chase tried to hold me back but since fire was one of my elements, I handed him my stick and shoved my way closer to the creature.

"Give us Miles and we'll go." I glared at the beast.

He drew in a harsh breath through his jagged teeth, his shoulders pressing hard against the walls, causing a network of cracks to appear under the strain.

"Leave," he rumbled.

"Not without Miles." I took a step closer, raised my chin higher.

"You've been warned," he said, inhaling slowly, then letting out a directed stream of fire straight into my chest.

I soaked it up, drawing it deeper into myself, frantically trying to figure out how to disburse it. Then an absolutely delicious idea occurred to me and I went with it before I could reconsider.

I simply turned the fire back on the dragon.

He jumped back a pace, shaking his head, a startled expression on his face. It looked like he was going to shoot another volley at me, when he stepped closer and sniffed. Tilting his head to one side, he studied me through eyes narrowed to slits.

"You're Devon's?" He inched closer and smelled me again. His eyes swirled between red and brown, as he shook his head. "What are you?"

"I'm the one who wants the dwarf." I planted my hands on my hips, trying for an imposing stance.

The dragon-man studied me for a moment, his muzzle open enough for me to get a good look at the rows of serrated teeth. "If you'll wait here, I'll get him," he finally said.

Surprised, I looked at Justin, then Chase. Both men shrugged, Chase following it with an irritated expression I couldn't fathom. A couple of minutes passed, then the dragon-man returned, dragging a filthy, wretched-looking Miles in his wake.

"Your dwarf," the beast spat, dropping Miles on the floor at his feet. Then he turned and disappeared back the way he'd come.

Justin helped his friend to his feet. "Hey, are you okay?" He brushed Miles' hair out of his face.

Chase moved to their side, inspecting the smaller man for damage. "I'll carry him." He dropped the stick, then bent over, effortlessly lifting the dwarf off the ground.

Since the bad guys already knew we were here, I lit the torches Justin carried before we started back up the stairs.

* * * * *

"I still don't get what happened." I helped myself to a cola out of Justin's fridge, Chase motioning for me to grab him a beer.

"I can't make it any clearer," Miles huffed. "I was coming out of the bathroom. I heard a roar and the next thing I know I'm waking up in a cell."

Justin slid a glance at me that said this had all been my fault. "You do know what happened, Angie."

"Are you trying to say that Devon did this? Because of me?" I thought he was right but I really, really didn't want him to be.

"What am I missing here?" Miles looked around the table.

"Nothing," I threw out, before anyone else could say anything.

"Angie and Devon..." Justin trailed off. But only because he saw me glaring at his crotch and taking aim.

"They what?" The dwarf looked confused for a second, then his expression cleared, turning into a sly grin. "I see. Devon thought that *I* was the competition."

I rolled my eyes. *As if!* "Something like that," I muttered.

Miles preened at the thought.

"Come on, babe. Let's get out of here." Chase rose from his chair, holding a hand out to me.

Glad for the excuse to escape, I took his hand and let him drag me toward the front door, Justin tagging along behind us.

"Thanks, sis, for helping me get Miles back."

I might rag on my brother, hell, I might even want to zap him but there are times like these when he shows how big his heart is and I know I'm lucky to have him in my life.

"Anytime, Justin."

* * * * *

Devon paced the length of his study, a scowl on his face. Three of his men tried to look invisible around the edges of the room.

"I can't feel her," he growled, flames flickering to life in his eyes. "What the hell is she up to now?" He shot a look at one of the men and considered frying him, just to see if it relieved some of the tension that was building in his gut.

There was a shuffling at the door, jerking Devon out of his thoughts, directing his attention at the man that stood there, obviously unhappy.

"What?" Devon glared at the man.

"Sir, Frederick reports that," the man swallowed audibly, "that your woman came and took the dwarf."

In a flash Devon was twice his human size, his eyes swirling in a state of rage. "I should have killed that miserable little..." He reared back, preparing to torch the messenger of such distressing news. But a glimpse of himself, accidentally seen in the glass of the credenza, brought him to a halt. "Fuck." He let the power waver, eased his hold on it and shimmered back into his human form. "Bragstrom, be thankful that this is 2007, even a century ago I could have flamed you for bringing me this message."

The way Bragstrom's eyes were flitting about the room let Devon know the man didn't believe the Dragon wasn't going to kill him anyway.

"Go." Devon grinned evilly at him. "Before I change my mind." He turned his back but heard as the messenger raced away from the study.

"Rhodes, get me the file on Grimthorne." He strode to his desk, bumping the mouse while he lowered himself into the chair. "And while you're at it, get me Quinton's file, as well." The screensaver blinked off and Devon quickly found the icon that he was looking for. "Accevedo, I'm printing out a list of things I'd like you to purchase for me. Be back here with them before three o'clock tomorrow."

Opening a different program, he brought up the video image of the apartment. Nothing moved on the screen. He'd missed something in the past day. Clicking through the file, he found where the recordings were saved in thirty-minute increments. He opened the file that would show the last time he'd been there.

* * * * *

I finally talked Chase into taking me home the next day. Sure, we'd had a lot of great sex but he kept talking like we were married now and I just wasn't seeing it. He thought he'd brought me here so I could change for work, since none of my clothes were at his place. I'd sort of led him to believe that I'd pack more after I got home from Elizabeth's tonight.

He was pressuring me to move in. You know, permanently.

I did a lot of mumbling that he must have taken as acquiescence, because he'd finally shut up.

"Might as well pack all your clothes. I'll stop by with the Expedition and take them over to the house after you get home." He wrapped his arms around me, kissing me possessively.

"Sure," I said when he let me up for air. What I really wanted to say was, "Who are you and what have you done with Chase?" It had never occurred to me the werewolf-millionaire-playboy would ever settle down. Let alone with me.

"Call me if you get off early." He kissed me again.

"I will." *Not.* Don't get me wrong, I liked him but that's still a long way from *love*.

As soon as the door closed behind him, I jumped in the shower, changed into my favorite sundress, then got the hell out of there.

I decided to go to Elizabeth's, just in case he was spying on me. If she didn't need any help, I could always hide out in her kitchen. Maybe I'd get to bake some cookies.

* * * * *

Even though I'd spent the entire day trying to figure out how to avoid moving in with Chase, I still hadn't come up with a solution. Knowing I had to face him, I pulled into my parking lot, heaved a weary sigh when I saw his SUV already parked there and dragged my ass out of the car.

He was on me in the blink of an eye, his arms caging me to the side of my car, his mouth dominating mine. Then he pressed the length of his erection against my stomach and I started to wonder if living with him was such a bad idea, after all.

Then he was gone.

I blinked, my mind not functioning properly.

I heard the sound of flesh meeting flesh and I knew it wasn't a friendly sound.

Looking around frantically, I found them just in time to see Kraid lay Chase out cold with a solid punch to his jaw.

Fear flashed through me, followed closely by anger. I started stomping over to Devon to give him a piece of my mind when the man turned and leveled his gaze on me.

There was a fire burning in the depths of those eyes. A fire that wasn't lust. At least, not just lust. He was on me in two strides, his large hands grasping my shoulders, his chest rising and falling rapidly. I felt heat wash over my face and cringed back from it.

His expression changed, cooled. His eyes shifted back to the dark, dark brown I was used to. He glanced over to where Chase lay sprawled on the ground. "Don't know what came over me." When he looked back at me, he was almost smiling.

Chase groaned and I flicked my eyes in his direction. He had a big stupid grin on his face. *Men!* He levered himself off the ground and came over to where we were standing.

"Got a hell of a punch, Devon." He grinned at the man and I thought his brains must have been scrambled.

Kraid narrowed his eyes at the were. "Keep your hands off Angel and I won't have to punch you again."

Chase raised an eyebrow at me and I shrugged. Devon caught the byplay but said nothing. "Can't do that, Devon. She's my wife, now." Chase grinned at me.

I blinked at him, knowing he spoke what he thought was the truth, wanting to contradict him but not wanting Devon to get hold of me either.

Kraid's reaction was immediate and surprising. He lifted a hand at Chase, his fingers splayed. "Not if I have anything to say about it." Then the sizzle of power shot out of him and straight into Chase's chest.

Chase gaped in surprise, then vanished.

Kraid looked at me, his eyes searching. "What is it about you?"

I didn't have an answer for that so I started toward my building at a trot, hoping Devon wouldn't bother following, hoping Chase was still alive, somewhere. The Dragon sauntered in after me, so I went to the kitchen, thinking of it as neutral territory. Until I thought of my brother's kitchen. *Shit.*

"What do you want, Kraid?" I plopped into a chair at the kitchen table, knowing I sounded kind of bitchy.

He leaned against the counter, his long legs stretched before him. Arms crossed over his chest. "You."

I dropped my head into my hands, bracing my elbows on the tabletop. "Why me?" I hadn't meant to say that out loud.

He knelt beside my chair, dropping one arm in front of mine, the other around my back. "Because you are the hottest fuck I've ever had."

I tried to slip out of the chair, intending to put as much space between this man and myself as I could, but his reflexes were faster. If half the stories I'd heard about him were true I really, really didn't want to keep seeing him.

Trapped in his arms, I wriggled and squirmed and actually thought about kicking him. Fire, I was good with fire, electricity, maybe just a small zap to just the right

appendage and he'd leave me alone. I was starting to act crazy but I just couldn't handle being the Dragon's woman. The man was a stone killer, for God's sake.

Without a second thought I flicked my magic at him. His arms clenched when it struck, his head tipping back, a long, low groan issuing from deep inside his chest. I watched in amazement as my fire spread from his groin until his entire body was encased in flickering blue flames.

His head came forward and as he lowered his mouth to mine, I caught a glimpse of eyes that were no longer human.

Then he was kissing me and all thought left my head as the fire moved from his lips to cover mine. He thrust his tongue into my mouth and I was seared with desire all the way to my groin. I wanted him more than I had ever wanted another man. I was hotter for him than either Bucky or Chase. I didn't know what it was about the Dragon but it was high voltage and I wanted more. Had to have more. We tore at each other's clothes, until we were naked.

He lifted me onto the edge of the table, pressing his hips between my thighs, thrusting forward in a rush to bury himself inside my core. When he was fully seated, he broke the kiss and stared into my eyes.

His pupils were elliptical, the irises a blend of browns and reds, swirled around the pupils. A ridge of bone crested the front of his forehead, his cheekbones wider than they usually were, sharper.

"What are you?" I traced the ridge along his forehead with the tips of my fingers.

"Dragon," he growled. "I thought you knew."

He started moving in me and I began to lose rational thought again.

"Dragons are fairytales." I moved my legs higher around his back. Oh, I'd seen the dragon-man at the Cram but I figured that was an illusion of some kind.

"Just like witches and werewolves." He picked me up from the table and held me in his hands while he powered his cock in and out of me.

I grasped his biceps, then had to look at them. They were larger, hard as rock, the veins tracing blue paths across their surface.

He gave me a forceful thrust to bring my attention back to the business at hand.

"What—"

He captured my mouth, ending my questions.

Moving faster now, he raised and lowered me on his shaft while he counterthrust with his hips. His penis swelled further when my muscles started clamping down on him. I groaned as his cock dragged across the bundle of nerves deep inside my vagina.

"Az *firbint*," he growled into my ear, nipping the lobe.

A wrenching, painful pleasure shot through my core. "Kraid." I dug into the muscles beneath my fingers. Then I was flying.

"Yes...yes." He hammered into me with a blinding fury. Then stopped.

He roared, just before thick jets of cum blasted into me. He held me down on his cock as he continued to come, his body jerking, his heart thudding against my chest.

I felt his cock pulse, shoot another load of release into me and I shattered. Gouging his arms, I came so hard my vision darkened and still I felt him spewing.

I came to my senses, clutched tightly to his chest. His lips brushed the top of my head as he whispered the same thing over and over into my hair.

"It has begun."

Chapter Five

Devon held the woman, *his* woman, for long moments. A fierce pride rushed through him as he thought of how they had tried to mate her and had failed.

He thought about the business that had kept him away from his Angel for too long. Almost too long, he corrected, knowing that it was only because of his precautions that Quinton had been unsuccessful.

He wouldn't have been so fortunate if they had realized his mating hadn't taken and tried again.

With a sigh, he shifted the woman in his arms and carried her into her bedroom.

"Fuck, it smells like wolf in here," he grumbled as he laid her down on the bed.

Snagging the phone off his hip, he hit the speed dial. "Get over to Angel's," he barked, as soon as his second answered.

The time had come for his involvement, anyway.

Kraid's lips curved up in an intimate smile. He brushed his hand down the side of her face, and felt an odd tightness build in his chest. He snatched his hand away, choosing to ignore the feelings that were starting to build inside him. He thought again of the days to come. Angel had no idea what she was getting herself into.

* * * * *

I was burning up.

Flopping over onto my back, I clawed at the covers draped over me. Desperate to get them off, to feel the cool air on my overheated flesh.

"Shh, shh, my little angel."

I couldn't figure out where the voice was coming from. Couldn't see in the darkened room. Started to panic.

Strong arms came around me, pulling me to a hard, muscled chest.

"Kraid?" The voice that croaked out of me barely sounded like my own. "I'm so hot."

"It's the change."

Struggling to focus my thoughts, I tried to push myself away from him. Didn't have the strength to do it. "What change?"

The heat that was torturing me was suddenly worse. Much worse. "Oh God!" I cried out, voice cracking as the pain torqued higher. My back arched, my eyes rolled up into my head and I knew no more.

* * * * *

Dragos Enescu strolled into the apartment and quickly scanned the interior. "Not much to look at, is it?"

Devon took a look around, never having thought to do so before now. "Hadn't noticed." He shrugged, while Enescu chuckled. "She's going through the change." He headed into the kitchen, his second following behind.

"And?" Enescu prompted, when Devon didn't continue.

Grabbing a couple of beers out of the fridge, he handed one to the other man. "I've decided to make you our Annar."

Dragos blinked at his Rule, his leader. "I'm honored."

Devon studied the man for a moment, noting the hesitation behind the words. Being called on to fulfill the role of Annar was the highest of honors. Especially after the Purges, a second male, sworn to care in all ways for the primary mate, was essential. "Never fucked a human, have you?"

Enescu closed his eyes. "No."

The Dragon leaned back in his chair and smiled. "You're in for a treat." His hand absently stroked his cock through the layer of denim. "Especially if she's a little pissed off at you, at the time."

"Why?" His second's forehead wrinkled in consternation.

Devon barked out a laugh. "She's full of fire."

* * * * *

The next time I woke I was cooler. I opened my eyes experimentally and found the room lit brightly by the morning sun.

After flexing my arms and legs to make sure they worked, I rolled to the side of the mattress and swung my feet to the floor. A wave of dizziness washed over me when I sat up too fast, forcing me to wait for it to pass.

"You're up."

I swung my head in Kraid's direction. "You sound surprised."

"I am."

I rose, a little shakily to my feet, then lurched toward the bathroom. Kraid followed me and I didn't have the energy to argue about it. Once I was seated, I forced myself to look him in the eye. "Why are you surprised that I'm up?"

The side of Kraid's mouth curved in a grin. "Because it's only the third day. I have never heard of anyone getting up before the seventh day."

He wasn't making any sense to me. "What the hell are you talking about?"

"I'll tell you when you get back into the bed." He turned on his heel and disappeared.

I finished my business, then decided to take a quick shower. The water felt wonderful but my curiosity was starting to get the better of me.

Still dripping, I hurried back to the bedroom. Kraid was waiting for me, stretched out on his back on the bed, his hands behind his head. Totally naked. His cock thick and full against his stomach.

I scrambled around the bed, to the far side, knowing if I crawled over him it would be a while before my questions were answered. "So tell me."

He rolled onto his side, placing his hand on my stomach, tracing a random path with his palm down to my abdomen, then back up to the base of my breasts.

"There's something in my fluids that can cause a reaction in certain humans, if I choose it to. When that happens, the human undergoes a change. Not a huge one but one that makes you more compatible with my species."

"So what, you're telling me I've been changed?" I didn't like the sound of that.

"Yes."

"What's going to happen to me?" *Was I going to sprout scales or something?*

"Nothing really. You've become stronger, harder to damage, you'll live longer." His hand had moved up the base of my breast, his fingers idly toying with my nipple.

"That's it?" Both nipples contracted and I willed him to suck on them.

"Pretty much," he murmured as he bent his head to my chest.

Other questions crowded into my head, then swirled away as he suckled and nipped. He moved to my other breast, pulling on that nipple until I was begging him to enter me.

"Not yet." His eyes were heavy with his arousal, his voice husky.

When he lowered his head to me once more, he nipped a path down my belly to the apex of my thighs. I was making these little whimpering sounds by the time he'd spread my labia apart with his hands and his hot, wet tongue swiped through my slit.

He licked his way down to my vagina, circling the opening with the tip of his tongue, then driving it into me. I rocked my hips, smashing my sex against his face. He grasped my thighs, anchoring me to the bed, then licked and nipped his way to the top of my vulva. I was straining against his hold, trying to force my clit into his mouth.

I felt him chuckle against my flesh, then the heat of his lips as he placed them around the hardened bundle of nerves. He sucked me into the moist depths of his mouth and I screamed.

Plunging two fingers into my vagina, he pumped and twisted them, brushing over the sweet spot as he ate at my clit. My body snapped, the waves of my orgasm ripping through me. Liquid washed out of my core onto his hand, my muscles clenched around his fingers, eased, then gripped again.

He growled, lapping my cum up with long strokes of his tongue, dragging it between the folds, from my anus to my clit. I could feel myself smiling like an idiot when he worked his way back up my body but I didn't care.

"Now that was hot," he rumbled at me before he took my mouth with his.

I tasted myself on his lips, his tongue, as he devoured me. He slid his hands beneath me and cupped my ass. Tilting my hips, I wrapped my legs around him and felt him prod my opening. His fingers sank into my flesh as he drove his shaft deep.

He felt larger, harder than he ever had before, as he powered his way in and out of me. The low grumble in his chest growing in volume as his thrusts became faster, deeper.

My world exploded, the breath wrenched from my lungs as my entire body contracted and released with my orgasm. Kraid cursed, then plowed himself hard against my womb as his semen began shooting in hot bursts from his balls.

He collapsed on top of me, his chest heaving, his body trembling.

I felt myself drifting. With his warm weight anchoring me to the bed, I nodded off to sleep.

Devon allowed himself to relax as his Angel's breathing evened out in slumber.

He stayed with her long enough to be sure she was really okay, uneasy with the fact that she'd risen from transition after only three days. He needed to get back to the compound and check in to that.

After a couple of hours, he eased himself away from her, dressed quietly and left.

He made it to the compound forty-five minutes later, cursing himself for not shifting and simply flying there.

"Devon." Enescu inclined his head to him as he strode through the door to his home.

"Dragos." He started past the man, then thought better of it. "Come with me."

Heading straight to his library, he went to the section that should house the books containing information on the change.

"I'm wondering what it means that Angel rose from the transition after only three days," he told his second.

"Three days?!?" Enescu's hands clenched, a muscle in his cheek twitching.

"Ever hear anything like it before?" Devon kept his voice even, watching his second carefully.

"Uh..." Enescu wiped a hand over his forehead. "Just once."

"Perhaps you'd better tell me about it." Devon moved to the sideboard and poured them both a stiff drink.

He handed a glass to Enescu and motioned the man to a chair, taking the one on the other side of the occasional table.

"It supposedly happened to the first woman my great-grandfather was interested in." Dragos took a healthy slug of his drink. "It wasn't long after the Middle Ages when

our numbers had been reduced dangerously low and the council determined that we needed to...reproduce...to strengthen our numbers."

Devon waited while Enescu took another sip, wondering what had the man rattled.

"Anyway, old Bregin started collecting women of a variety of different species, thinking a little trial and error was in order."

Devon laughed at this, he'd met the old bastard and the man was still as randy as a youth.

"Some didn't make the initial change, so he adopted a three tries policy. Just in case there had been something wrong, other than a species resistance to the transformation.

"He kept notes on his findings. You probably have a copy of his papers on your shelves there, somewhere." Dragos waved in the general direction of his books.

Devon was sure he did but he didn't want to wade through all those pages for the one tidbit of information that interested him. "Cut to the chase." He flicked his hand at his second, urging the man on.

"Okay." Enescu narrowed his eyes. "So Bregin collects a human female. He releases the chemical into her in a series, over about a month, instead of all at once, because humans are so frail. The heat hits her and he tucks her into bed, then heads out to deal with his other women."

Dragos held his empty glass up and raised his eyebrow at him.

Devon threw back the rest of his drink and handed the glass to his second. Then waited impatiently for him to return.

"Bregin figures he's got at least seven days before he needs to check on the human. He has one of his lesser *truls* look in on her a couple of times a day but that's it. It took him a while to realize the man he'd assigned that task hadn't reported back to him."

The Dragon had to wait again, as Enescu took a long swallow.

"He figured a total of three days had passed since the transformation had begun, when the *trul* had actually vanished. It was five days past, when he went to the human's room first, wondering if she'd died and the *trul* had taken off instead of risking his hide by telling him. What he found shook him to his core. I can still remember the haunted look that came into his eyes as he told us about it all these years after the fact."

Devon watched as a shiver passed through Enescu.

"The human was not only awake, she was in *Voraz*. Evidently the *trul* had tried to bind her to the bed when he found her in that condition. Even though one of her wrists was still tightly bound, there was very little left of the dragon. There were bits of him all over the room but even gathered together they wouldn't fill a mug."

"*Voraz*." Devon dredged up what he remembered of the seldom-seen condition. It was a hunger, unlike any other known to his kind. Not necessarily for food, it was a madness that caused the stricken beast to do just about anything to excess. And for a dragon, that was pretty extreme.

"What did Bregin do with her?" Devon asked.

"Pretty much what you would expect. He played with her. Fed one hunger, until she'd had her fill, then start on another. He watched her fuck twenty *truls* in a row, often two at a time and still she screamed for more."

"What happened to her. In the end?"

"Once he realized she was pregnant, he killed her. There was no way to determine back then, if the draglet was infected."

There was no way to tell now, if a human was. Devon sipped his drink, wondering what he should do next.

* * * * *

The phone was ringing and I struggled awake to answer it. "'Lo."

"I'm taking you to dinner tonight. Wear a dress."

Then I was listening to dead air.

Shaking my head to clear the fog out of my mind, I wondered who had just called. It had sounded kind of like Kraid. I glanced around the mattress, certain I would find him around me, somewhere.

I was totally alone.

Crawling out of bed, I staggered to the bathroom, Kraid's cum leaked in a trail down the inside of my thighs, causing an odd—warm—sensation to pass through me.

I spent some time studying my face in the mirror, making sure everything looked the same. I know Kraid said that I wasn't going to change in that way but I didn't really know him, couldn't really believe him.

After my shower, I opened my closet to find a dress for the very first date I was about to go on with the Dragon. Odd thought, that. Hanging in there, in a soft golden-colored bag, was a dress I'd never seen before. If it hadn't been such a perfect shade of green, I wouldn't have worn it. It's the principle, you know. Here was this guy taking over my life and I didn't even want him in it.

Well, okay, I wanted the sex and he was a total thrill to look at but the rest scared the hell out of me. Sort of. Oh hell, I was falling for the guy.

I was dressed and ready when Kraid let himself into my apartment. I heard him come in and stomped out of my bedroom to tell him exactly how I felt about the liberties he was taking.

Only I never got that far. My mouth was hanging open but I was speechless. Kraid stood there in a pair of black slacks and a dark green shirt and looked good enough to eat.

"Turn around." His deep voice caressed me.

I turned around slowly, managing to close my mouth while my back was turned. When I completed the circuit, he was standing close enough to touch.

His arms came around me, his eyes glittering. "You're beautiful." He dipped his head and brushed his lips over mine.

"You look especially tasty yourself." My voice came out all breathy and seductive.

He kissed me again, with more intent. Then leaned away from me. "Later. I'm taking you to dinner now."

* * * * *

He took me to a restaurant that I'd never even heard of before, farther out of town than I'd remembered any restaurant being. I found that odd in itself. While Hillside is a rather large town, I tend to go out a lot and I knew all the good places to eat. At least I thought I did.

We were seated in a booth, in a back corner of the softly illuminated dining room. Kraid trapped me on one side by sitting next to me. His thigh was hard against mine, my shoulder rubbing his arm.

He ordered me a glass of wine, which I drank while I looked at the menu. I couldn't tell what he was drinking, it looked like scotch but it lacked that telltale smoky aroma.

People kept stopping by the table, all of them ogling me, eager to meet me.

When we got a break between interruptions, I asked Kraid about it. "What's with all the people staring at me?"

Kraid smiled a sexy half smile and I felt my nipples harden. "Probably because I've never taken a woman out to dinner before."

"Never?"

He reached around me with one arm and bent to my ear. "I've never had to date a woman to get what I wanted from her." He nibbled on my neck.

"Then why are we on a date now?" I tipped my head back to give him better access.

"Maybe I want something from you I haven't gotten yet."

His lips were too distracting for me to figure out that statement. The best thing I could come up with was he wanted to fuck me in the ass, or some other, more adventurous sexual something that he thought I might balk at.

With the way his hand was moving over my breast and the feelings he was producing with his lips, I was ready to let him take me right here at the table.

I moaned when he moved away from me.

Shaking his head, he placed our order with the waiter before I realized what he was doing.

More people stopped by and I started noticing a common thread between them. The men had hard eyes, set jaws and toned bodies. The women were sharp-featured, slim but muscular.

Our food came and I was surprised to see he'd ordered for me what I'd been planning on ordering for myself.

While it was very good, I had trouble concentrating on the meal, what with Kraid's thigh pressed against mine. Every time he cut his meat, or raised his glass, his muscles would move along the side of my leg, the friction causing a curious effect in my crotch.

"Angel."

I got the impression he'd been trying to get my attention for a while now.

"Huh?"

"Is your food to your liking?"

"Yeah, it's great."

He squinted at me, then continued to eat his meal.

Thankfully he finished his food, took a look at mine, then helped himself. He was soon done with that as well. My nerve endings sparking, I passed on dessert and after-dinner coffee. All I wanted to do was get him home and jump him. Hell, I wanted to get him into his car.

I was squirming by the time he eased himself out of the booth and reached a hand out to help me.

Then he started leading me in the wrong direction, leading me away from the door, away from privacy. I pulled on his hand, letting my feet drag along the carpeting until he stopped. I had to motion to him to bend down so I could whisper in his ear.

"If I don't get you inside me soon I'm going to explode."

How could he not feel the need screaming off my body?

With a wicked smile he gathered me to his chest and captured my mouth in a possessive kiss. He slanted his head and delved inside, stroking his tongue along and around mine, while he rocked his erection against my stomach.

I came.

He continued to kiss me through the orgasm and didn't stop until my shudders had quieted.

"Christ," he breathed into my hair.

I took a deep breath and smiled up at him. "I think I can hold out now."

He turned me with an arm around my back and a hand latched onto my hip, then propelled me toward the door.

"You might be able to," he growled. "But I can't."

His hand kept wandering over me while he sped back to my apartment. By the time we'd made it through my door we were tearing at each other's clothes.

He jumped me, knocking me over onto the floor, cushioning the fall with his arms. Then he was spearing his way into my vagina.

I clawed at his back while we slammed our bodies together. Faster, harder, out of our minds with the blazing arousal that consumed us both. I was vaguely aware that

his body was getting larger, harder, his thrusts more forceful. But I grew mindless with the feel of his cock as it stretched and filled my pussy.

He growled and I felt a wash of heat sear across my shoulder. It burned a path straight from there to my crotch and my vagina convulsed.

"Aaahhhh!" I screamed with the intensity of the sensations.

"Angel." His voice, hoarse, commanding.

I pried my eyes open and looked into his face.

He was no longer fully human but not a full dragon yet. The bony ridge across his forehead was more pronounced than before, as were his cheekbones. Leathery golden scales covered every inch of his skin that I could see. A crest ran from the center of his forehead, over the crown of his head and out of sight.

"Let your magic go," he commanded.

I gathered my powers around me and let them fly. We were instantly encased in flames. A conflagration that drove our passions higher. He powered his shaft into me with a ferocity that had me soaring, begging for more.

Then Kraid covered my mouth with his and poured his own fire into me.

I exploded in an orgasm so violent that my heart stopped, then started pounding wildly as my sheath vised around his cock. He grunted, then hot liquid jets of flame spewed against my womb as Kraid joined me in release.

We came together for a long, long time, the fires slowly dwindling, then dying.

Neither one of us could move in the aftermath. His body was covering mine, keeping me warm as we fell into an exhausted sleep.

I woke some time later when Kraid lifted me off the floor and carried me to the bed.

"Mmmm." I nuzzled his chest.

He laid me down on the soft, fresh sheet, then climbed in beside me and maneuvered me until my back was pressed to his front.

I was drifting back to sleep when I thought I heard him say, "You're mine now."

* * * * *

My alarm clock woke me the next morning. I almost didn't recognize the sound of it, since I hadn't used it for a couple of weeks. Checking the calendar in the kitchen, I saw that today was one of the days I was supposed to help Elizabeth at her shop.

I got ready for work, ate a bowl of cereal, then trudged down to my Volvo. There was a note for me under the windshield wiper from my brother. "Call me, I don't think you realize how much trouble you're in."

As I drove to work, I wondered if he'd heard something, or if he'd *seen* something.

Elizabeth looked up from her morning crossword puzzle and smiled at me. Then her eyes widened dramatically and I rushed to her side, afraid she was having a heart attack.

"Are you okay?" I grasped her by the shoulders and focused on her eyes.

"Who have you been with?" Her voice cracked when she asked, sending a shiver of apprehension down my spine.

"Uh." Boy, I didn't want to tell her.

"Angie." She gave me a stern glare.

"Kraid Devon." I dropped my grip on her and went over to the coffeepot. "Why do you ask?"

I heard her shuffling step as she came to stand beside me. "Because there's something in your aura that wasn't there the last time I saw you."

I grimaced at her, not really happy with the thought that this gentle old lady could tell that I'd been well and truly fucked.

"Oh." I took my coffee over to the little refrigerator that stood beside the back counter. Digging inside, I found an onion bagel and some cream cheese. I dropped the bagel into the toaster and leaned my back against the cabinets while I waited for it to cook.

"How much do you know about this man?" she prodded.

"Not much." I didn't *really* know that he killed people.

"Hmmm." She went back to her place at the table but I caught her sliding glances my way while I slathered cream cheese on my bagel, then joined her.

"So anything interesting come in that I should know about before you open?" I changed the subject, certain that she would bowl over my attempt anyway.

She pressed her lips together, a crease forming between her eyebrows. "I've got to tell you, I don't like what I see. I think maybe I should call Mabel and have her take a look at you."

No! She'd call all of her old bat friends, then I'd have to tell a bunch of sweet little old ladies that Kraid Devon was a total sex machine and that he'd repeatedly fucked my brains out.

"Elizabeth." My voice rose as she started to get up from her seat. "Please, it's just that Kraid and I are, uh, having relations, you know?"

She shuffled over to me and patted my hand. "Honey, I don't care that you're sleeping with the man, there's something else going on here that's worrying me."

I just gaped at her back while she toddled off to get her phone.

I don't know how many of them she called. She was puttering around now out in the shop, not talking to me.

I figured it had to be a lot of them.

Grabbing the phone and another mug of coffee, I dialed my brother's number, slouching in a chair at the table while I waited for him to answer.

"Yeah."

"Hey, bro, why the note?"

"Jesus, Ange, I thought you were going to stay away from that guy. I haven't been able to get near you."

"He just keeps showing up. What do you expect me to do about it?"

Our voices were getting louder, neither of us really mad at the other.

"You'd better do something about it and fast."

I'd never heard my brother sound so upset before and it scared the hell out of me. "Why, Justin?"

"I think he's going to use you as some kind of sacrifice." His voice shook when he spoke.

So did mine. "What did you see?"

"I see you and Devon and his face is twisted in a mask of anger, then the next thing I see is this dragon—" his voice broke and he gulped a breath of air. "You're naked, kneeling on a bed, and there's this huge dragon looming over you." He swallowed loudly. "The dragon moves over you, covers you completely, I can't see you, all I can see is the dragon moving, jerking, twitching and then you scream. Oh God. You scream and you keep on screaming and the dragon tips back its head and roars. This horrible, unearthly roar. Fire shooting from its mouth, its eyes churning, its fangs glistening."

I swallowed convulsively. *Oh shit.* "Uh, Justin?" I waited until my brother's breathing wasn't quite so loud.

"Yeah?"

"You know how they call Devon the Dragon?"

"Of course I do. Look, you're not listening to me. He's going to give you to that dragon of his. You've —"

"Justin!" *Could he be any more dense?* "It's Devon."

"What? Devon's the Dragon. Oh, Devon's the *dragon*."

"Yeah."

He was silent for a moment. "Then you're probably not being killed, huh?"

"I don't think so."

We were both quiet this time.

"Still, if you'd seen what I did, you'd be running for the hills. Didn't look like something I'd want to participate in and you know I'm not very picky."

"Shut up."

My brother laughed, the tension draining out of his voice.

"I appreciate your concern, though. Thanks for letting me know," I told him.

"You could always say no to him."

I made a face at the phone. "That's not going to happen."

If there was one thing I knew, it was that I had a very, very hard time saying no to Kraid Devon.

* * * * *

"Angie?" Elizabeth called out to me and I rose from where I was crouched, dusting items on the lower shelves.

"What?"

"The girls are here, let's take a break and let them get a look at you."

Fuck. I toyed with the idea of running away. They were a bunch of old ladies, they'd never catch me.

"It won't take a minute," she called, her voice getting closer.

"I'm coming," I mumbled, feeling stupid.

When I came through the door to the back room, I saw she'd called the entire contingent of biddies for the viewing. Little finger sandwiches, cookies and pastries covered the counter. Three different kinds of tea were sitting in pots on a warmer. The coffeepot was full.

I snagged some of the treats, poured a mug of coffee, then stood where Elizabeth told me to stand.

"Oh my." Beatrice Walker was the first to comment.

"Would you look at that" came from Mabel Huggins.

Among the other comments, I heard several "I never"s and one "What am I supposed to be looking for?"

They were taking so long that my legs started getting tired, so I backed up to the wall and slid down it until I was sitting on the floor, my legs stretched out in front of me.

They continued to talk among themselves for several minutes. It was almost entertaining when their voices rose in heated discussion. So involved were they that no one else heard the bell ring announcing a customer had just entered. Hell, they didn't even notice when I left to take care of that customer.

I walked into the main part of the shop and froze.

Devon stood just inside the doorway. His hair was mussed sexily about his head, his grin as sinful as ever. He was wearing the damn sunglasses though, so I couldn't tell if he was up to something I'd like, or something that would scare the shit out of me.

The conversation with my brother made me suspect that I was in for something unpleasant.

"Come here," he growled.

I could feel his eyes boring into mine, even though I couldn't see them.

My feet started moving toward him, my nipples tightening painfully as I neared. Trapping the back of my head, he claimed my mouth in a heated kiss. His other arm came around my hips, pressing me close to the hard length of his cock.

"Oh my." I heard Elizabeth's voice and tried to push Kraid off me.

He continued to kiss me, then slowly raised his head and looked over mine at my boss. "Do you have an Impurature?" he asked her.

I blinked up at him and racked my brain to see if I knew what he was talking about.

"Angie, could you go to the stockroom and bring me the box that's on the back shelf next to the Franciscan urn?"

Kraid let me go and I raced out of the room. I didn't know if he'd hurt Elizabeth but I wouldn't be able to live with myself if something happened to her while I was gone.

Mabel stopped me as I was dashing past the table. "Angie, I've got to tell you something."

"Not now, he's alone with her in the shop." She'd taken hold of my wrist and I tried to gently remove myself from her grasp.

"Yes, now. Elizabeth can take care of herself around that man," Mabel snapped.

Damn, she was strong for an old lady. "What?"

"The girls and I have discussed your aura and we agree." She nodded her head. "The Dragon has claimed you as his own."

I had a sinking feeling that she wasn't just saying I was his girlfriend. "What does that mean?"

"A dragon never gives up anything they consider theirs."

I looked from one serious face to another. "Like a possession, or like a mate?"

They glanced around the table, all eyes eventually turning to Mabel. "Possession, we think. But we don't really know."

Well, hell.

"Are you aware of the...urge?"

I blinked at Beatrice. "Urge?"

"Once a dragon starts claiming you, your...libido goes into overdrive and you let off an energy that tends to get other males very interested in you," Mabel explained, gently patting my hand.

"Can actually...possess human males." Ardyse nodded her head, a gleam speaking of personal experience lighting her eyes.

"It goes away after he completes the claiming though," Maeve added.

"Usually," Beatrice chimed in.

Just great.

I ran into the storeroom and grabbed the box that Elizabeth had asked me to get. Then I dashed back out front, skidding to a halt when I saw Devon sitting in a dainty chair, sipping a cup of tea, chatting idly with my boss.

"Where would you like this?" I asked, trying not to show my surprise.

Devon rose and gave Elizabeth a hand out of her seat. She beamed at him and he smiled and patted her arm.

"On the counter, please," she said as she placed her hand in the crook of his arm and allowed him to lead her across the room.

I couldn't help gaping at the two of them. Kraid had removed his sunglasses and when our eyes met, the possessiveness I saw in them made my heart skip a beat.

Elizabeth opened the box, a contented sigh escaping her that caused me to lean closer for a better look. She lifted out a black felt sack, which she sat on the counter, then untied the top of the bag and pushed the fabric out of the way.

It looked like a cheesy gold coffeepot to me. One of those things with the long curved spout and the hinged lid. It was crusted with multicolor jewels that added to the depth of its tackiness. It was possibly the ugliest item I'd ever seen in her shop.

I was about to comment on that fact when I glanced at Devon. He'd forgotten all about me and Elizabeth. His eyes glued to the pot, his hands hovering over the curves of its sides.

"It's magnificent." His voice was hushed with awe.

I snorted. Then I slapped my hand over my face, the burn of a blush rushing up my neck, as I waited for Devon to turn on me.

He didn't even notice. At least he kept staring at the pot and didn't pay any attention to anything else.

"I must have it." His hands closed on the glittering sides of the pot, he shuddered, then groaned. He stroked it lovingly and I felt a shot of jealousy streak through me.

Oh fuck. I was one of Kraid Devon's possessions and he liked the coffeepot better.

I glanced around, happy to note no one was looking at me, afraid I'd blurted out my thoughts out loud and sure I would die from embarrassment if I had.

Even though I was beginning to think I'd had some kind of mental break, I satisfied myself with the thought that I could always arrange for something to happen to the thing later.

Devon was signing a charge slip when I wrenched my mind off my thoughts. Elizabeth returned the pot to its felt bag, then placed it in a paper bag with the store's logo on it. She offered it to Devon, her eyes bright, her smile knowing. He accepted the package, then bent and kissed Elizabeth's hand.

"I shall treasure it always." Then he turned to me. "Come."

I didn't want to.

I looked to Elizabeth and her secretive smile twisted my nerves tighter.

Chapter Six

I had assumed Kraid had taken me home early from the shop because he had plans for the evening. Maybe he did, they just didn't involve me. He'd driven me to my apartment, come inside with me long enough to strip me out of my pants and take me from behind, bent over the arm of the sofa.

Then he left.

He hadn't even said a word.

I took a shower, then pulled on a soft cotton dress. Slipped into some sandals and headed out.

I'd decided to go to Mac's for dinner and was pleased to see, when I entered the pub, that the place had a lively crowd. I managed to snatch the last available booth in the back. Got myself a tall frosty mug of beer and settled in to look over the menu.

Someone slid into the booth beside me, I looked up to see who it was and found Chase. "You do have a death wish." I smiled despite my words.

He grinned, stroked a hand down my hair, then held me still while his mouth covered mine.

I'd always enjoyed kissing him, he was very good at it and the chemistry between us had always burned hot. True, it was hotter lately than it used to be.

But now, as his lips danced with mine, an uneasiness churned in the pit of my stomach. As Chase deepened the kiss, dropped a hand onto my thigh and worked it under the hem of my dress and up to my sex, the churning, burning feeling grew, expanded, threatened to ignite.

I pushed on his chest. He pushed back. He leaned over me and slipped two fingers beneath the side of my panties. I began to struggle harder, when his digits found my vagina and one stroked deep.

Finally breaking the kiss, I whispered urgently to him. "Something is eating me up."

He barked out a laugh. "Not yet but I'll get to it shortly."

He moved his mouth to my neck and started sucking and nipping down the length of it.

"No, you don't understand." He inserted a second finger, next to the first, his thumb going to my clit, rubbing across the nub while he drove his fingers in and out of me. "My insides are on fire."

Chase brought his lips back to mine and hovered over them. "Baby, my cock's so hot right now it's ready to explode."

Then he crushed his lips against mine, eating at my mouth while he spread and twisted his fingers inside my sheath.

I felt a jolt, a blast of energy in my groin. A flash-burn of pain. Chase cursed and withdrew his hand with a snap.

"What the hell was that?" He stared at my crotch accusingly.

"How the hell should I know?" I stared right along with him.

The waitress came and placed a menu in front of Chase. "Would you like something to drink?"

Chase and I couldn't tear our eyes off my groin.

"Scotch. Make it a double," he answered her without looking.

He eased himself further from me but couldn't bring himself to drag his eyes away. "What made it do that?"

"I don't know, it's never done that before." It sure as hell wasn't something I could ask anyone about either.

"But you're my mate," he said as the waitress set his drink down and left.

Not the mate thing again. "Could have been worse." I was afraid to move, afraid of what it was going to do next.

"How?" He picked up his drink and took a long swallow, eyes still riveted to my lap.

"Could have been your penis."

He flinched and finally managed to look away.

I shifted and was absurdly relieved when nothing happened.

Chase kept inching his way out of the booth and I couldn't blame him.

"Well," he rose, darted a look around the room, "I'll get in touch with you about moving your things into the house." He flicked his eyes to my crotch. "Soon."

"But—" He disappeared into the crowd before I could tell him anything. I was suddenly nervous, left alone there in the booth with my flaming pussy. Torn between hunger and anxiety, I ordered takeout, then hustled back to my apartment.

I kept waiting for something else to happen, the tension growing as time passed and nothing did. Around ten o'clock I finally got fed up and crawled into bed, then lay there wide awake.

Easing my hand down between my legs, I tapped a finger to my slit, ready to jerk my hand away. Nothing happened. I traced a finger between the folds of my labia, circled my clit, then worked my way back down to my vagina.

Still nothing.

Taking a deep breath and gritting my teeth, I slipped a finger inside my sheath.

So far, so good.

I worked it in and out, then added another finger and got my other hand involved rubbing my clit. Getting hot, I kicked off the covers, grabbed my rubber friend out of my nightstand and greased it up.

If my crotch was frying the dildo, I couldn't feel it. I didn't care anymore. I was working my way to the promised land and a little flame wasn't going to stop me now.

I was really getting into it, my hips thrusting, my hands working faster and faster, my pelvic muscles bunching, tightening.

Then my hands were wrenched from my crotch and pinned above my head. I felt the dildo slide out of my sex, followed shortly by a splat as it hit the wall.

Kraid was cursing in that language of his, his face a mask of anger. With his free hand he worked his cock out of the confines of his jeans. Then he jammed himself between my legs, one hand still holding mine captive, the other grabbing one of my legs behind the knee, shoving it upward toward my chest, then flattening it out on the bed.

He shot his cock into me with a vicious thrust of his hips. "You want fucked, you get fucked by me."

Dropping my wrists, he grasped my other leg, bent it up and outward like the first. Cursing while he hammered himself into me, I felt his cock begin to swell, knew the change was coming over him.

My orgasm took me by surprise, wrenching through me with a speed and force that left me breathless. Kraid followed me, jets of cum blasting into my core as he continued to thrust.

He yanked himself out, flipped me over and jerked my hips into the air.

I could feel the power radiating off him. The air grew denser, his growls deeper, harsher. His fingers shifted, hardened, became talons wrapped around my hips, the sharp tips nicking into my flesh.

I had to look, had to know, so I glanced over my shoulder.

Kneeling behind me was Devon, I could see him, his body larger, harder than usual, the ridge on his brow standing out. But I also saw something else, something not entirely there, its head hunched, its long sinewy neck pressed against the ceiling, was a full, golden dragon. Jaws parted in its wedge-shaped head, revealing rows of sharply pointed teeth.

As I watched, Devon and the creature adjusted their stance, adjusted their grip on me, then I felt the head of Devon's cock prodding the space between my legs.

"No." It came out of me on a whisper. "No," I managed to say louder.

He found my opening and with an iron grip to keep me in place, he shoved his way in.

"No!" I dropped my head to the bed, gritting my teeth, irrationally thinking I was about to be torn in two.

Kraid kept thrusting, driving himself deeper, his cock larger, but in his partially shifted form, filling me beyond what I thought was physically possible. My inner muscles gripped him tightly but still parted enough at his invasion.

Then he was grinding his groin against my ass, his scales rasping across my sensitive flesh. He was fully buried and I was thoroughly packed. With a start, I realized that it felt really, really good.

He nuzzled the back of my head, moving his mouth lower, nudging below my ear, his tongue flicking out, lapping the side of my neck.

Angel, know now that you are mine. Your body, your life, your soul, all belong to me. I do not share what is mine, nor do I ever give it up.

He drew his cock most of the way out of me, then slammed it home.

I screamed at the sharp pleasure. "I will not be your possession, Devon."

But you already are.

He thrust again and I came. Cursing myself for my weakness where Kraid was concerned. Cursing Kraid for thinking to own me. Cursing my brother just because I could.

Did you enjoy the werewolf's attentions this evening?

"Yes," I hissed, not really meaning it.

Then perhaps I should ask, did he?

At least now I knew that Devon was behind the incident.

"What do you want from me, Kraid?"

He stroked his cock slowly in and out, taking longer to answer than I expected.

Enough talking.

He lifted his face away from my neck, the dragon's muzzle mimicking his actions. He tightened his hold on my hips and started powering himself into me in earnest.

I screamed and kept on screaming, my nerve endings firing a constant pleasure through my body, so hard that it bordered on pain. It was one long, over-the-top orgasm, my inner muscles unable to clamp down any further because of his girth. A release that was no release.

I felt my magic wrench free and burn hotly over our bodies, increasing the sensations. The edges of my vision started to dim when my entire body was thrown into the greatest, most explosive climax I had ever had.

It seared its way through my system. Ripped away my hold on reality. All I knew were the waves of agonizing pleasure and the hard, hot shaft plowing into me.

I heard him roar, the sound vibrating the glass in the windows, knocking over small items on my dresser. The flare of fire lit the room over my head.

Then he started to come.

Great, burning-hot gouts of semen punched into my core. I hovered on the edge of consciousness as he continued to climax. His cum filling me, flowing out of me down my legs in a stream, to puddle on the mattress.

He came for several minutes, each new blast of seed blanking my mind, torturing my body with its ungodly pleasure. When he'd finally emptied his balls, I felt his talons ease on my skin.

I will hear that you are mine, he demanded.

He didn't get a response. I wasn't able to do anything but let the blackness take me.

* * * * *

I woke up glued to my sheets. Groaning, I flopped over onto my back and took stock of myself. I seemed intact, if a little battered.

After I'd showered and thrown the bedding into the washing machine in the basement, I fixed myself something to eat and tried to figure out what was going on with my life.

Who could I go to for information about dragons?

I thought of all the people that populated my world. Most of my immediate family would be of no help. I ruled out Elizabeth and her biddy brigade as well. What did that leave me? Several people. Miles had been held by the dragons, he might know something. Even Chase seemed to know more than I did but I wasn't willing to call him, not after our last encounter.

There were some distant aunts and an uncle that might have some knowledge.

I figured I'd start with the dwarf and go from there. I called Justin for his number, then tried it, hoping to catch him at home and cursing myself for not asking my brother what kind of schedule the guy kept.

Fortunately, he answered on the third ring.

"Miles, it's Angie." *Did I sound as desperate to him as I did to myself?*

"What can I do for you?" He sounded very happy to hear from me.

"I'm trying to get information on dragons," I told him. "Can we meet somewhere to talk about it?"

"Uh...don't take this the wrong way but I don't want to be seen with you. They didn't kill me the last time, so they're sure to do it this time if they see us together again." He no longer sounded quite so happy to be talking to me.

"I understand." I didn't want him killed either. "Tell me what you can. If you don't mind."

We talked for nearly an hour. He gave me a lot of information. Most of which I didn't care for in the least. Basically what it all boiled down to was that Devon did indeed own me now.

That didn't mean I had to lie still and take it.

* * * * *

Devon turned onto the drive that led back to the gathering place. It had evolved, in the last few decades into a strange sort of extension to the town. This is where he'd taken his woman for dinner. There were three clubs altogether, in the area, and several restaurants that were popular with both his people and the humans.

Shaking his head at the changes the times had wrought, he pulled into his reserved space behind Trulaks.

He nodded at Milano, one of the bouncers that stood near the rear door where he'd entered, then strolled down the hall to his office. He stopped at Roberts, his assistant, to tell him to contact his second-in-command, before entering the room beyond and closing the door.

Filling a mug with the potent beverage his brew masters had created, he settled at his desk. He'd be moving Angel into the compound. After she was here, he could kill that bastard of a werewolf who thought he could mate with Devon's woman. *The fucking balls of that man!*

He took a healthy swig of his brew, slamming the mug down as he felt the fires spring to life in his chest. *Omori*. Yes, he would see to the wolf.

Dragos Enescu, his second, stepped through the door.

"Help yourself to a drink." Devon jerked his head toward the bar.

The man moved across the room with a heavy stride, his large frame radiating a presence that made others wary. He poured himself a mug of the same liquor Devon was drinking, then sank into the plush leather chair on the other side of the desk.

"I'm thinking about killing the werewolf." Devon didn't need to say which werewolf, his second was fully aware of who he was talking about. "He tried to mate her. Didn't take. I'd already laid claim to her."

"If you're asking my opinion, I say forget it." Enescu savored his beverage before he continued. "It'll probably be a while before you're invited to any more of his parties as it is."

Devon laughed. He couldn't help himself. "Hard to say." His second shrugged.

"Get the house ready for her. I'll give you a call when I'm ready for the team to move in." Devon's quick change of subject didn't faze the man in the least. Having worked with the Dragon for over a century, he was accustomed to it.

"Anything else?" Enescu finished his drink and prepared to rise.

Kraid considered telling his second that he was going to impregnate the female, then changed his mind. He'd already asked him to be their Annar, it would follow that he'd impregnate her. Several times. Perhaps he'd even read the prophecy himself. "Not right now."

Enescu nodded, then let himself out of the room.

* * * * *

I am an idiot.

I didn't have any idea what Kraid Devon had done to me but I was starting to crave the bastard. Starting to? Hell, I was suffering from Devon withdrawal.

Once again I was stalking around the backyard at my parents' house, zapping the heads off dandelions. All that had happened to me since my last fit of temper in this very location was simply pissing me off.

Justin strolled out onto the stoop and leaned against the railing, his arms crossed over his chest. "'Bout done there?"

I seethed when he grinned at me and stomped over to him with punishment on my mind. I drew my hand back, letting the power build in my fist, narrowing my eyes at his smirk. "Wanna fuck with me?"

He held his hands out in front of him, waving his empty palms. "Hold on now. I'm not here to make things worse."

"Like I believe that!" I practically screamed. I started waving my arms and the powerball on my right hand flew up into the air. I didn't notice but Justin did and, not realizing what he was looking at, just knowing he wasn't giving me the attention I deserved only fueled my anger. "Look at me when I'm talking to you," I screeched. "Damn it, Justin, it's your fault this whole mess started in the first place. If you hadn't insisted I go to that party—"

The powerball landed on my head and zapped me into oblivion.

Chapter Seven

It was a dream. It had to be a dream. I didn't see my parents lying on the living room floor, their bodies bent, unmoving. I didn't see my brother Justin thrown down the basement stairs, or hear the sickening crunch and meaty thuds that accompanied him.

I willed myself awake, desperate for reality to intrude on the horrible images that kept playing over and over in my head.

Then Devon was there. A wicked light shining in his eyes, as he yanked me to the edge of a table I was somehow lying upon. He reached a hand toward me and I found my own hand lifting to join his.

Pulling me into his arms, he lifted me off the table and let me slide down his body to my feet. "Christ, I want you," he muttered into my hair and I felt a wash of arousal course through me.

He quickly worked to remove my clothes, then picked me up again and carried me to the wall. Pinning me there with his chest, I heard his zipper work, then moments later, I felt the blunt head of his cock as he prodded my opening.

Looking deep into my eyes, he captured my mouth and I heard his voice in my mind.

Fuck me, Angel.

I ate at his mouth, driven by the chemistry that existed between the Dragon and myself. I thought nothing of the fact that he was taking me roughly against a wall. It was like the first time we'd come together and it drove my arousal higher.

Kraid! I thought back at him, willing him to take me harder yet.

He growled, locked his fingers into my flesh and tried to hammer me through the wall with his hips. I came, screaming his name, my body bucking and writhing around his cock as he continued to pummel his way into me.

His shaft grew larger, thicker and I came again, knowing he was close to his own release.

He tipped his head back and roared, then the hot, wet surge of his cum began filling me. He continued to drive in short, hard strokes as he gave me all of his seed.

Heat poured off his body, as he rested against me. We breathed together, tremors occasionally ripping through us, as we waited for our hearts to slow.

The look he gave me when he raised his head went straight to my heart. Leaning forward, I dragged his face down to mine and expressed my desire for him with my lips. He responded in kind and was soon thrusting his penis within me again.

"Come for me, Angel. Scream only for me."

With his words I shattered, screaming his name, knowing I would have done so even if he hadn't asked it of me.

"Yes," he murmured, his breath rasping in his lungs, as my vagina vised down around his cock. "Yes!" he cried in my mind as he went into a frenzy of motion. "*Mine!*" he shouted as he reached his crisis and started spewing his semen deep inside me again.

I was still pinned to the wall by his cock and his chest when I heard the movement of others around us.

Devon leaned away from me but didn't withdraw from my body, as he glanced over his shoulder. "Take him to the guestroom," he said to someone I couldn't see because his body was blocking my view.

When he turned to look down at me, a different kind of expression lit his face. "It is true." He sounded awed.

"What is?" I asked him but he kissed me instead and I lost all thought of the question.

"*Somn,*" he whispered into my ear. "*Dormi.*"

* * * * *

The alarm clock jerked me awake and I stared at the blaring thing for a minute before turning it off.

I had that weird disoriented feeling that something was terribly wrong, or I'd done something incredibly stupid but I couldn't figure out what.

Rolling out of bed, I hurried into the bathroom and started getting ready for the day. I figured I must be due at Elizabeth's early, otherwise I wouldn't have set my alarm.

I started the coffeepot, then fixed myself a bowl of sugared cereal. The true breakfast of champions. Deciding I wanted a piece of toast as well, I dropped a slice of bread into the toaster.

Happily sated, with a full mug of coffee in my hand, I locked the door behind me and headed toward the parking lot, not acknowledging the blinking light on my answering machine.

* * * * *

"Hey, Elizabeth," I called out as I entered the store.

She came shuffling out of the back room and gave me the once-over. "What in the world have you been up to, girl?" Alarm clearly evident on her face.

"I don't know what you mean," I mumbled. Like I was really going to tell her I'd mated a werewolf, had a burning crotch attack, given myself to a dragon and knocked myself unconscious, since I'd last seen her.

Hey, *I'd knocked myself unconscious*. In my parents' backyard. How did I get home? Better yet, how did I get undressed, into bed and set my alarm?

"What do you see?" My voice shook when I asked her.

"I'm going to have to call Mabel," she said, trundling off to the kitchen.

I rolled my eyes and followed her. *Great*.

There were two stools in the kitchen that hadn't been there the last time. I climbed on top of one while I waited for the coffee. Elizabeth was calling yet another of her cronies and I began to wonder if there were more of them than I'd originally met.

She spoke in hushed tones, with only the occasional word spoken louder, so I didn't pick up any information listening in to her conversations. When she'd hung up from the last call, she turned in her seat and leveled a gaze at me.

"You certainly are the busy one." Her eyes shone bright with an emotion I couldn't figure out.

"Yeah, well..." I shrugged, hopping off the stool to grab a mug.

"Come over here, so I can get a better look." She waved me over.

I slumped into the chair next to hers, staring into my coffee instead of looking at her.

Just call me a coward.

She was clicking and tsking a lot but she wasn't sharing anything with me. Not that I didn't know what she was seeing anyway.

Elsie Baker was the first to arrive. She came to a dead stop in the doorway, her mouth dropping open, her face paling. Elizabeth hustled to her side and guided her to a chair, gently urging her to sit down. Her eyes never left me.

Beatrice Walker was next with another old lady who could have been either Martha Higburton or Fran Dickenfuse. Sorry to say but a lot of them looked alike to me.

Mabel brought up the rear with either Martha or Fran and three doddering oldies that I'd never seen before.

"We're all that can make it right now," Mabel said, as she assisted one of the crones into a chair.

At Elizabeth's urging I stood in the same spot by the wall that I'd stood in last time. I closed my eyes and willed this all to be just a bad dream.

When all I heard was a few gasps, I opened my eyes and looked over at the ladies. Every last one of them was staring, looking as though they'd seen a ghost.

"What?" I fidgeted, shifting my weight from foot to foot.

They conferred in hushed whispers, glancing in my direction often, then quickly looking away. Several minutes passed, with fewer whispers coming than originally. One of the oldest of the women, and one I had no name for, heaved herself out of her seat and came tottering over to me. She dug a handful of dust out of her pocket and blew it into my face.

"Hey." I stumbled back into the wall, my eyes watering, my nose tickling with the promise of a sneeze.

"Hrumph." She wobbled away from me, her mouth set in a thin line of distaste.

They conversed for a few more minutes after that, then they all fell silent. I sneezed. Someone squeaked. Mabel cleared her throat, looked around at the others, then turned her gaze on me.

"I suppose we should say congratulations," Mabel started.

"For what?" I didn't like that sound of that.

"On the start of your mating," she continued, blinking at me like I was daft.

"What mating?" I shot a glance at Elizabeth, shaking my head in confusion.

"To the dragon, of course," the really old bitch who had blown dirt in my face said.

"I'm not mated to the Dragon," I snapped.

"Well, no, not yet but he's taken you through the first step," Elizabeth stated.

"So." I couldn't figure out what to do with my hands, so I put them in my pockets. "My kind marry, not mate. It means nothing to me."

One woman gasped, another cringed. The bitch snorted. "Honey, mated is mated. Your body will reject any other man who tries to touch it."

"No." It couldn't be. Chase said we were mated and Devon still fucked me.

"We also see that a werewolf tried to mate you while you were under the dragon's claim. That didn't take, by the way." Elsie Barker's quiet voice brought my gaze in her direction.

"Why would the Dragon mate me but not—" *Take me with him? Ask me to live with him?*

"Dragons are different from other shifters," Elizabeth said.

"You've got that right." I was starting to like the bitch. "Dragon males can mate as many women as they want to. It only stinks for the woman, who can only be with the one male," she sniffed, "well, mostly."

I'm going to kill him. I was so going to let Devon have it the next time I saw him. "There's got to be a way out of this."

"Sorry," the bitch shrugged.

I heard several "no"s from around the table. Defeated I slumped to the floor.

"Well..." Elise started, "I've heard that a demon could break the mating."

"Don't even say such things out loud," Elizabeth jumped on her friend.

"I was only trying to help," Elise threw back.

"She doesn't need that kind of help," Mabel said firmly.

"Maybe I do." I'd risen to my knees and was creeping closer to the table. Eager to hear how to break this hold Devon had put over me.

"Nothing good ever comes from calling one of *them*," Elizabeth insisted, several others agreeing with her.

"Elizabeth, I'm the one stuck with this, tell me everything and let me be the one to decide." I'd made it to the edge of the table and turned pleading eyes up at her.

She patted my head. "Very well but we must ward the shop before we speak of this further."

* * * * *

Chase opened his front door and found an enormous man who looked vaguely familiar standing on the wide front steps.

"Yeah?" He left the storm door shut between them, figuring it might slow the guy down a fraction of a second if he was going to attack.

"Dragos Enescu. I'm Kraid Devon's man." The guy smiled and Chase wondered how many women he'd won into his bed with that grin.

"What can I do for you, Enescu?" He dropped his arms to his sides, mentally preparing himself for action.

Enescu's gaze followed his movements, then he laughed. "I come in peace." That same winning smile, this time with a glitter in his eyes.

Figuring if the dragon wanted him dead, he was a dead man anyway, he opened the door and led the larger man through the house and out onto the back patio. He offered him a drink, which the man accepted, so he fixed one for himself as well.

Sitting down across from the guy, Chase couldn't help but wonder what was in store.

Enescu took a healthy swallow of his beverage, then shifted his intense gaze to Chase's face. "I'm just here to give you some advice. Devon knows you tried to mate his woman and yeah, he was thinking of killing you for it." The guy lifted his glass again and Chase grew impatient.

"So, are you going to kill me?" he snarled.

"Nah, you throw the best parties. But I'm supposed to give you a stern warning. Stay away from Angel." He finished his drink and waggled his glass at Chase.

He refilled his own as he fixed the dragon another. "Just tell me what you're going to do to me, I can't stand the suspense."

He heard the bark of laughter behind him, picked up the drinks and headed back toward the table, staring at the man as he got himself under control. "Can't say I've ever liked a wolf before but there's something about you, Quinton." Enescu accepted the glass, waiting until Chase had resumed his seat before continuing. "Nothing's going to happen to you. I'll make sure of that. Hell, if I let any harm come to you, you'll bar me from your shindigs. Now that's something I don't want to have happen."

Chase leaned back, not convinced that he was going to escape unscathed. "Won't your boss be pissed?"

"Actually, he's willing to turn a blind eye, if you keep his name on the guest list."

"Well, I'll be damned." Chase shook his head, wondering if he could continue seeing Angie as well.

"I know that look. Don't even think about it. Your mating didn't take, Devon had already laid claim to her. Since you pulled that stunt, he finalized it."

Pain lanced through his heart. Pain for losing her but also a sympathetic ache for what had been done to the woman. "Fuck."

"He was planning on doing it all along, he just stepped up his schedule," Enescu said.

"He scares the hell out of her," Chase spoke softly, mostly to himself.

"Smart girl," Enescu stated, finishing his drink. "I'll do what I can to help her out. Devon at least had the sense to make me their Annar. Of course, that doesn't ensure I can actually do anything for her. You know the bond."

"Yeah." Chase raised eyes to the other man's face that spoke volumes about the loss he felt. "I do."

* * * * *

Two hours had passed. The old bitch had gone with Mabel to get more supplies. When they'd returned, all the ladies got busy depositing pinches of herbs and dust around the perimeter of the room.

Once they had that accomplished, the women took up positions of the compass rose, Elizabeth at north, Mabel at south. They all started whispering the same incantation and a shiver passed over my skin at the precision with which they worked together.

When they concluded, they resumed their seats at the table.

I'd dragged one of the stools over, so I could sit near them.

Elizabeth started and my heart picked up speed. "Never speak of demons without protection." She looked me straight in the eye and I saw in her an ageless wisdom that I'd never noticed before. "They'll take advantage of any slip you make. The biggest problem, and the reason that we do not use them in our magic, is that they are evil. Even with the most carefully cast spell to call one, they find a loophole so that they can exact a payment from you. And their payments are death, souls or sex. Usually a combination of the three."

"Maybe you should be a little more specific," I said, actually thinking of a couple of people who I wouldn't mind turning over to a demon.

"The death or soul of a loved one, or yourself. The sex would be with you, of course but not something that would ever satisfy you, would probably leave irreparable

damage and might even break your mind.” Hearing those words delivered by her soft, elegant voice made them all the more horrible.

She continued talking but I’d already gotten the big picture. When she stopped, she gave me a searching look.

“I am so fucked,” I groaned.

* * * * *

As I stopped by the grocery store, sort of on automatic pilot, the Volvo made a funny gurgling sound just before I shut it off but I had so many other things on my mind that I didn’t pay it a second thought.

Strolling through the aisles in the store, I randomly added items to my cart. By the time I reached the checkout, the only conclusion I’d come to was that Devon might be the lesser of two evils. Even if he was a murderer. Maybe he only killed people who deserved it, ya know?

Turning the key in the ignition, the engine sputtered but wouldn’t turn over. Without thinking I shot a jolt at it, sensing the déjà vu just before I saw the puff of smoke. This time I managed to grab my purse before I bailed.

Standing in awe, I watched as the fireball consumed my auto. Just mine, even though there was a Buick parked right next to it, the paint didn’t even blister on the other car.

I backed away hastily as the tires exploded, then slumped down onto a concrete block, resigned to my fate. I buried my face in my knees and let my mind go blank.

Soon I could hear the sirens as the firemen responded to the call. I didn’t bother to look up when they screamed into the lot and clattered about their business. I didn’t raise my head to answer their questions, one of the men finally sinking down to my level.

“Miss,” he spoke to me in a quiet voice, “are you all right?”

I mumbled at him.

He placed a hand tentatively on my back. “I need to know if you’re okay,” he said, a bit more firmly.

Rolling my face so I could look at him, I realized he was one of the guys who had responded the last time I’d fried my car. “My life sucks,” I told him.

I saw it in his eyes, when he recognized who I was. I don’t know what I was expecting but his laughter wasn’t it. “Well, I’ll be damned. I can’t believe you’ve had another one blow up on you.”

“I think I’m cursed.” I felt a grin tug at the sides of my mouth.

“I’d have to agree.” He continued to chuckle. “You’re okay though?”

“Yeah, all things considered.” I sat up, stretching my back out because I’d been hunched over for so long. Glancing over to the wreckage, I grimaced. “Ugh.”

"When you do it, you do it right," the fireman said.

As a tow truck arrived to haul the carcass away, the fireman bent and shook my hand. "I can't wait to tell the guys." He winked at me, then trotted off.

Another man approached me and handed me a clipboard. It was for the tow, so I put down my credit card information and signed it. The guy took one look at my name. "Hey, didn't you just blow one up a couple of weeks ago?"

"Yeah, yeah," I muttered.

He raised an eyebrow at me and I just shrugged. But I could see the amusement in his eyes as he gave me one last look before heading off to deal with my latest disaster.

I was studying my feet, wondering if I had the energy to call my brother for a ride, when familiar boots passed into my line of sight. Taking my time scanning up the length of his jeans-clad legs, I eventually came to his handsome face, his eyes hidden behind dark glasses.

"How did I know it would be you?" The side of his mouth curved into a grin as he stared down at me.

"Just lucky, I guess." A flutter of arousal disturbed my stomach and I cursed myself for being so attracted to this man. Then I remembered that he'd started to mate me and I swore again.

He reached a hand out for me. "Come on, Angel."

I let him heave me off the ground. "Kraid?" He slung his arm around my back, locking his hand on my side.

"Yes?" He started me toward his car.

"Why can't you be as perfect as you look?" I don't know why I'd said that but it was what I was thinking. Had been thinking about since the first time we'd had sex.

"Who says I'm not?" I thought I heard amusement in his voice but then realized it was unlikely.

"I hear things," I said, suddenly weary.

"Let me take you home and then we'll talk," he surprised me by saying.

We rode in silence, not to my home but his. I felt tension rushing into my muscles, as we swung through the gates that protected his property. I'd never been to his house before but I'd driven past it and knew it was huge.

When we rounded the curve, I realized it wasn't just huge, it was intimidating.

He helped me out of the car, then kept my hand in his as he made his way to the door. Once inside, he led me up an elaborate staircase to the next level, nearly fourteen feet above the first. We went down a long hallway with carpeting so thick my feet sank with every step.

Taking a left near the end of the corridor, he guided me into a cozy room with books on the wall and a fireplace. Depositing me on the couch, he lit a fire, then poured us both a drink from a glass decanter that sat on top of the bar.

Sitting next to me, close enough that our thighs touched, he raised his glass. "To the beginning." Then he clinked the side of my glass with his and took a swallow.

I slugged back a mouthful and nearly choked on the potent beverage.

Devon chuckled, dropping an arm around my shoulders.

"So tell me," I said, surprised my words came out slightly slurred.

His fingers tightened, then relaxed. "Very well." He stared into the fire as he spoke. "I've been alive for a very long time. In the beginning, humans were looked on as sport. Then again, so were my kind. Between the hunting and the fact our males always outnumbered our females, our numbers declined." He took a slow sip of his beverage and I could feel his muscles work as he swallowed. "Many of us took to engaging in sex with human females. It was really by accident that we found out about the change. That we could breed them. After that, we became more...circumspect in our activities."

He turned his head to look down at me. "What have you heard that has you so worried?"

Looking up into his dark eyes, I felt a blast of yearning and had to rein it in. "You're a cold-blooded killer, for one thing."

His grin did not reassure me. "I can't deny that claim. Though I like to think I make the right decisions when it comes to that these days."

"I'm also told that you've done something to me that makes me only able to have sex with you but you can still have sex with whoever you want to."

"Ah. And this bothers you?" He raised an eyebrow at me.

"Of course." I frowned at him.

"I imagine it would." He nodded, his lips curved in a grin as he sent his gaze back to the fire.

"So...undo it," I huffed.

His lips twitched. "Now that I can not do."

"Why?" I struggled to get out from under his arm, shifting my body so I could see his face better.

"Because I don't want to."

I blinked at him. "Well, I want you to."

He spun on me so quickly I barely saw him move, the ridge across his forehead, pulsing outward, growing, his eyes spinning into red-gold. With a twist, he had me flat on my back, his weight forcing the air out of my lungs.

His mouth captured mine, his tongue thrusting between my teeth, possessing me.

When he let me up for air, I found I'd wound my arms around his neck.

"You can't deny the fire between us," he snarled.

"Never said I did." I wanted him now.

"Then what's the problem?"

"Does it bother you when you think of me being with other men?" I countered.

"You won't be, so the question is meaningless."

"If I could, would it?" I pressed.

"I don't share."

"But you expect me to?" My voice had gone up half an octave.

"Woman, what you're failing to understand here is that we are not in that type of relationship." He glared into my eyes. "I enjoy fucking you. I might enjoy it very much, but that is all it is. You will be dead and gone, long before I will even begin to age. If I'm not making myself clear, try to wrap your mind around this. You are a piece of ass. One that now belongs to me."

Shit. Now I didn't want to fuck him anymore. Even if he'd made a valid point.

Fisting his hand in my hair, he angled my head and attacked my mouth. With his other hand he sliced the clothes from our bodies.

He was breathing heavily, his face a mask of irritation when he wrenched away from me. "Believe this, if you believe nothing else, you will never deny me." His voice had dropped low and gravelly as scales shimmered into existence over his skin. "Never!" As he bellowed the word, he drove his enlarged shaft, straight into my core.

His arms came around me, one large hand cushioning my head, the other gripping my ass. His strokes turned wilder, almost desperate.

Mine, mine, mine.

It was the most arousing thing that had ever happened to me.

My body clenched, then blew apart, consumed with an orgasm that brought tears to my eyes. He powered on, roaring and trumpeting as he slammed his shaft into me. I burned, the pleasure so intense it was nearly painful.

Then his eyes met mine, a mixture of pride and hunger gleaming in their depths. He pulled back his lips, in a triumphant grin, right before he started to spurt his seed into my depths.

It sounded like laughter, in my head, as he continued to come for over a minute. Filling me, overflowing me.

When he was finally done, he stared hard into my eyes. Then he withdrew from my body, picked me up and carried me to his bedroom.

The Dragon fucked me for the rest of the night.

* * * * *

Chase snatched his phone off his belt and raised it to his ear. "Yes."

"He's got her," the voice on the other end informed him.

"Is she all right?" Chase found he was almost over the intense feelings he thought he'd held for Angie and that bothered him, in light of his attempted mating.

"She's alive," the man said.

"Do what you can." Chase flipped the phone shut and returned it to its place.

Pacing across the width of his patio, he wondered if there was anything in his power to do for her. Enescu had told him of the argument the two of them had had the night before. He'd even told him about Devon's taking her when semi-shifted.

Elizabeth. He was surprised he hadn't thought of the woman before. He'd go to her shop. This was not something he wanted to discuss with her over the phone.

* * * * *

Strong arms came around me and lifted me off the bed. I groaned as my body protested the movement.

"Shhh," a soft male voice admonished.

It took too much effort to open my eyes, so I didn't bother. Just let the man take me where he wanted.

The next thing I knew, I was being lowered into a tub full of very warm water. I couldn't stop the groan then, as it started working on my overused muscles. I let myself slide under the surface, wanting the cleaner feel that a thorough wetting would give me.

Large hands grabbed me, one in my hair, the other around my upper arm, and jerked me back to the surface.

"Hey, it's going to be okay," the masculine voice assured me.

I blinked and found that I could open my eyes. I'd never seen the guy before. He was huge, handsome in a rough way, with black hair that hung nearly to his waist and black eyes.

"Who are you?" I wasn't alarmed at this turn of events but very curious. It didn't seem to me that Devon would fob me off on another male but what did I really know?

"Dragos. I work for Devon."

"Oh." An awful thought occurred to me. "Am I a prisoner?"

I heard Dragos sigh. "Pretty much."

"Shit." I hadn't meant to say that out loud.

* * * * *

"Morning, Elizabeth." Chase kissed the woman's cheek, feeling the warmth he always did for her.

"Why, Chase Quinton. You haven't been to visit me in ages." She patted his hands.

"You wouldn't happen to have any coffee on, would you?"

"Of course I would." She ushered the were into the kitchen, urging him to sit at the table.

Chase watched as she fixed two mugs, then arranged a plate of tidbits. He started to rise, to help her carry everything, when she gave him a look that had him dropping back into his seat.

Once she'd taken her own place at the table, she sat quietly and studied him.

"I don't know how to start. It's about Angie," he began.

"If you're talking about how you tried to mate her but the Dragon already had a claim on her, then made good on it, I already know." She plucked a tiny pastry off the plate and popped it into her mouth.

Chase blinked, surprised that the dainty, elderly woman was taking the situation in stride.

"I should tell you that Kraid Devon has taken her to his place and I don't think he intends to let her go."

"I know the two of you are fond of each other but I think you should stand back from this one, Chase. I spoke at length with Mr. Devon the other day and I think he might make a better match for her."

Chase almost dropped his coffee. "How can you say that? The man is a killer."

"Not so much anymore." Elizabeth looked over the plate for another specific tidbit. "Besides, he only kills the ones that really deserve it."

"Elizabeth!" Chase reached for the woman's hand, intent on getting her attention.

"You're much too serious, young man," she huffed, tugging on the hand that he'd managed to trap.

"I'm older than you," he countered.

A sly grin bloomed across her face. "Now that, I seriously doubt."

Chapter Eight

Dragos bathed me, dried me off, then carried me back to the bed. He gave me a pill of some kind that he assured me would help with the muscle aches.

I took him at his word.

Then I slept for a few hours, waking at dusk, feeling almost...refreshed. Taking inventory of my body, I realized that I'd fared much better than I had thought, since I couldn't find even a trace of pain.

I was hungry though and got up to find my clothes, thinking I would search out the kitchen. I should have known I wouldn't find them. I helped myself to one of Devon's shirts, rolled the sleeves up and glanced down at my legs, satisfied that I was covered enough since the thing hung to my knees.

I threw on a pair of tube socks, before going to the door. It was locked.

"God damn it, Devon," I shouted out, my eyes darting around the room in search of a telephone. Spotting one on the other side, I lunged at it, snatching it off the cradle.

"Yes, miss," a male voice inquired.

Of course I wouldn't have a direct link to the outer world.

"I'm hungry and I want to see Devon," I barked into the phone.

"Is that all?" the voice had taken on a chill.

"No but I'll take the rest of it up with the Dragon." I was sounding childish and I didn't care.

"Sure, you will," the man said and hung up.

"Why you —" I glared at the handset, then slammed it down on its base.

Hearing a snort behind me, I whirled around to find Devon leaning against the wall near the door, looking fine in a pair of black leather pants and a lightweight charcoal-colored shirt.

"You," I snarled, even more pissed because I wanted to press myself up against him and have him ravish me again.

With light blazing in his eyes, he stalked across the room. I took a step back and ran into the dresser. He grinned and my heart stuttered in my chest. Grasping my hips, he lifted me up and planted my ass on the top of the chest. Then moved his hips between my legs.

I still had to look up at him, which started my heart racing. My nipples hardened to pebbles, sensitive to the silk of the shirt I was wearing. My crotch was awash with arousal.

"Why—" He slammed his lips down over mine, shutting me up and sweeping me into a whirlwind of sensation.

I wrapped my arms around his neck, tangling my fingers in his hair, tried to scoot my body closer to his but his hands were in the way. He undid the ties at the front of his pants and the length of his erection sprang free, brushing across my abdomen.

Then his hands were on my hips, pulling me to the edge. He guided himself to my opening, sliding the head of his cock through the wetness he found there. I leaned back, placing my hands flat on the top of the dresser, so I could watch as he joined with me.

The sight of his engorged member, slick with my cream, was absolutely beautiful. He breached me an inch and I wriggled, trying to get more of him inside.

"Angel." His voice was husky with desire. I looked up at him and raised my eyebrow. "Say that you are mine."

I stared at him. He drove himself in another inch and I let my head fall back in anticipation. He stopped. I waited.

"Devon," I said on a sigh, "relationships are not built on great sex alone. If you really want me, there's got to be more to what we have. What we do."

"I don't know what you mean." He sounded like he really didn't.

Shooting him my own evil grin, I tipped my head at him. "Fuck me and I'll tell you."

He narrowed his eyes at me, then flew into a frenzy of motion.

"Ahhhh." I braced my elbows behind me and tightened my legs around his back.

Before long, I was coming, gasping his name as my sheath gripped his cock. He picked me up, crawled onto the bed with me and dropped me onto my back, ripping the shirt open so he could suck on my nipple. The new position also gave him better leverage and he used it, driving into me harder, deeper.

I saw movement to my left, as several men entered the room. Shooting a look at Devon, who either didn't notice, or care, I said, "We've got company."

He doubled his efforts and I forgot all about the men, the room, my annoyance. I forgot everything but the feel of his shaft plowing through my flesh.

"Kraid!" I screamed, as I was thrown into a violent orgasm. My magic responded, shooting out from where we were joined to encircle us in its flame.

"More," he hissed, grinding his hips against mine, then taking up the frantic rhythm once more.

I let my magic go and was rewarded when he rumbled, long and low within his chest. I came again, sobbing out his name. My magic flared hotter, he gasped, then I felt the heat of his semen shooting into my core. He ground himself against me, with each successive release, then stilled.

The look in his eyes, his expression, was unreadable.

He waited until I was totally focused on his face. "I have business to attend to, we will talk later," he said.

"What?" He couldn't be serious.

He withdrew from me, fixing his pants as he stood next to the bed. I suddenly became aware of the men again that were ranged about the room, the ones I had blocked out of my mind. My stomach growled and I realized nobody had brought food with them.

Ignoring my state of undress, I scrambled off the bed. "Are you at least going to feed me?" I had my hands on my hips, the shirt gaping open in the front.

For a moment I thought he wasn't going to answer me. He didn't, really. Just pulled his cell phone out. "Come get her and see that she eats," he bit out, then slapped the thing shut.

With a hand wrapped around my upper arm, he led me to the closet where he retrieved a robe, which he shoved in my direction. "Put it on."

If it weren't for the men that were standing around the room, I would have let him have it. At least I think I would have.

"Fucking asshole," I muttered under my breath, while I tugged the garment over my shoulders. Even rolling the sleeves and tying it tightly around my waist, I was practically swallowed in the thing.

I heard the door open and watched as Dragos strolled in.

Devon shoved me in the man's direction. "Angel," he said in a low voice. I glanced back at him and waited for him to continue. "We will talk."

It sounded like a threat.

"You bet your ass we will," I threw back at him, catching the tic of a muscle in his jaw before I turned to Enescu. "Get me out of here."

* * * * *

"What do you mean?" Chase leaned forward, studying Elizabeth.

She grinned, a touch of wickedness in that smile that sent a shiver over the were. "I come from the Inverness line. As does Angie."

He racked his brain, he'd heard of the Inverness branch of witches but he couldn't remember any of the details. "Sorry but I'm not up on witches."

"We're immortal," she said, deciding on a cream cheese square. "Of course, Angie and her family don't realize it yet."

"How could you not know something like that?"

"Simple really. Just like she doesn't know I'm her great-aunt. There's a bit of confusion on their bloodlines, so to speak. Mostly because of the Purges. The Inverness were hunted with special enthusiasm during that time."

"My own people suffered tremendous losses as well." Chase had heard those stories, though he was an infant during that time. He had nearly been a casualty himself.

"What does that have to do with her being a good match for the Dragon?"

"It's her magic, she's fire and electricity. She won't even mature into her powers for a few more decades."

"Christ," he breathed, trying to imagine how much more damage she'd create with more power.

"Now you're getting the picture." She rose from the table with a fluid grace that Chase had never seen her use before. Snagging the coffeepot, she brought it back to the table and refilled their mugs. "I do wish I could have thought of something to tell her before Devon snapped her up. Elsie slipped up and said a demon could break the dragon's mating and now Angie has that idea in her head."

"I suspect you'll find a way to contact her." Chase took a sip, eyeing Elizabeth with a new respect.

Her brow creased in concentration, then cleared. "Certainly."

* * * * *

Dragos led me outside to a dark sedan and opened the passenger door for me. I wasn't about to question it. I was disappointed however, to see, that he didn't turn toward the main road but took a different fork, which led to a strange sort of business district that looked oddly familiar. He parked behind one of the smaller brick buildings and ushered me inside.

We were shown to a private patio, protected from the wind, as well as any of the other patrons.

"Where are we?" I asked him, as I picked up the menu.

"One of the restaurants in the compound," he answered, opening his own menu.

A waitress arrived and Dragos suggested that I try one of their original brews. I ordered a lot of food as well, unsure when I'd be allowed to eat again.

The drinks were placed in front of us, along with a platter of appetizers, before the man across from me spoke.

"What are your biggest complaints in all this?" He leaned back in his chair, dwarfing the table with his size.

"Since you ask, I don't like being told I'm a possession, I don't like being a prisoner and I really don't like being part of some sort of harem. When and if I ever do marry, it's one man, one woman and love is going to play a large part in it. I want a partner, a companion, a friend."

"Humans are so very different," he mumbled to himself. "Do you have any idea how old Devon is? How long he's going to be alive?"

"Nope."

"He's just over eight hundred years old. He's the Rule of our murder, our clan, he's not only the highest-ranking officer, he's also our most eligible bachelor. And he's pure dragon. His bloodline has never mated outside the species."

"Then he should be collecting dragons, not me," I spit out.

"He might have, except for the prophecy."

"Prophecy?" What kind of crap was this?

"Our kind are pretty much immortal," he started. "Many of the males, at some time in their life, usually within their first century, will learn the name of their *Suflette*. Their lifeblood. Devon's known for nearly seven hundred years that he would one day meet that woman, his Angel." He paused, watching me with hooded eyes. "Imagine his surprise when he found out she was human."

I gaped at him. "I can't possibly be this Angel. Surely there's some mistake."

"I'd like to agree but he's carried the image of her in his head since the day he learned the truth. So it's not very likely you're not it. Believe me, and I don't mean to insult you, he'd much prefer you were a dragon. This goes against everything he's ever believed in. Humans are good for a fuck but nothing beyond that."

"Why, you —"

"Hey, I'm just stating the facts, it's how we're all raised. Me, I've got a particular weakness for humans." He smiled but I wasn't reassured, it seemed to me he really meant he liked to eat us. "The way I see it, he's trying to treat you like a lesser mate. Since we live so long, until we find our lifeblood, we often take these on in an effort to breed. The unions don't usually last more than a decade or two, after that, we move on."

"All that's too complicated for me right now. Tell me as simply as possible what you're trying to say."

"Because you are his *Suflette*, he has to face the fact that you will be the primary woman he will ever sleep with again. It's hard for him to accept that. He's not even a millennium old and he's stuck with you. A human, no less, who will die within a few decades and leave him virtually impotent for an eternity."

"Gee, I feel so sorry for him." I glared at the man across from me and saw his lips twitch. "I will not be a fucking prisoner for the rest of my life."

"He'll stop acting like this when he accepts his fate."

Our food arrived and I dug in.

"Why don't you just give me a ride out of here and he can go back to his normal life."

"Can't do that. When he bound you to him, he bound himself to you."

I slathered more butter on my potato, glancing up at that comment. "What do you mean?"

"He couldn't fuck a new woman if he tried."

I almost spit out a mouthful of food. "You're kidding."

The smile on his face said it all.

* * * * *

Dragos took me back to Devon's room. I was feeling a little better knowing that Kraid had fucked himself when he'd screwed me over. I wandered out onto his balcony, walking its length to see if it connected to any other rooms that I could get into.

I thought about everything that Enescu had told me. Then let myself remember the fire that Devon and I created between us. I pictured him in my mind and I realized that somewhere along the way, I had developed feelings for him. Strong feelings. Not love, exactly. But the foundation had been laid.

Still, we needed to talk. I wasn't spending the rest of my life locked in his bedroom, or babysat by one of his men.

I took a shower, putting the robe back on when I was done, then waited for him.

Someone had come in and changed the linens on the bed but they'd either done that when I was gone, or when I was in the shower. It would have been nice to talk to them. No matter who they were.

I was just thinking about going out onto the balcony for some long-range target practice, when the bedroom door opened and Devon walked in.

He held the door open behind him and a guy shuffled in with a cart laden with food that he directed the man to take to the balcony.

"We can talk while we eat." He followed the cart outside.

I rolled my eyes but trotted after him.

Devon held a chair out for me and I lowered myself into it, while the guy with the cart started unloading dishes onto the table. Kraid sat to my right, not right next to me, though close enough to touch but still see each other's faces without turning.

"I know Enescu talked to you and I'm not very happy about it." He served me a bowl of a hearty beef soup.

"You weren't telling me anything." I fully intended to get everything out in the open now though.

His hands froze as he returned the ladle to the dish. "What do you want to know?" He didn't look at me, as he picked up his spoon and drew it through the broth.

"Mostly what I want to talk about is us." I set my spoon down. "I realize now, that your culture and mine are different. It pisses me off that you just went ahead and bound me to you without...anything—you didn't try to get to know me, even a little. The only thing we do together is fuck and you just went ahead and committed us to each other for life. If my life is going to consist of this room, this robe and getting fucked

by you when the urge comes over you, then I've got to tell you, I'll be seriously tempted to see if I survive a dive off this balcony."

He slammed his spoon down onto his plate. "How do you think I feel being bound to a *human*?"

"Then maybe you shouldn't have done it." My voice was rising.

"You're impossible!" he shouted back.

"I'm impossible? I'm not the one that put us in this situation!" I started waving my hands as I spoke.

He grabbed my shoulders, pinning my arms to my sides. "We're going to talk," he said in a strained voice. "Not yell at each other."

"Okay," I finally said and he released me.

"Look, I've never had a relationship before, I've never wanted one. Don't want one now," he grumbled. "But something inside me keeps getting in the way. Things happen and I find myself—claiming you—wanting you."

"Are we really stuck with each other?" Did I say that right?

"You act as though that would be a horrible thing, being *stuck* with me." A fire flickered briefly in his eyes.

I sighed. "Look, you're the sexiest man I've ever known. God knows that sex with you is so far above and beyond anything I've ever had that I'm addicted to it. But I need more than that. I need *you*. Your friendship, your companionship. I need a life."

He was quiet a long time. "I'll work on it."

"Okay." I wasn't convinced. "You can start with getting me some clothes and letting me out of here."

"I can't do that," he said.

"Wrong answer," I snapped back.

"I'll get you the clothes but you're going to have to move in with me. You're pretty much my wife now."

"Crap." I probably shouldn't have said that out loud.

"I can't think of another woman that would respond to that news in that manner."

"So I move in with you. Hey, how many cars do you have, could I borrow one?"

He shook his head, a grin threatening to break out, if the twitch to his lips was any indication. "I'm sure I have one that I won't miss too much when you blow it up."

Angie.

I glanced surreptitiously around the balcony, sure I'd heard a woman call my name.

Angie, it's Elizabeth.

Really. Even my mental voice held the sarcasm I intended.

You work things out with your dragon yet?

Who is this? Elizabeth didn't know telepathy, did she? I couldn't remember.

You know perfectly well who this is. Just answer the question.

"Angel?" Kraid had a look of concern on his face.

"Just a sec," I told him. *We're working on it now.*

Won't hold you up then. Let me know if you need anything.

Will do.

"Angel?" He'd leaned closer and was starting to look really worried.

"Sorry, Elizabeth was just checking up on me."

He glanced around us, then narrowed his eyes at me. "Telepathically?"

"Yeah. Why do you sound so skeptical?"

"Because you're human."

I shrugged and started in on my soup again. I felt a whole lot better knowing that I could talk to my boss lady if I ever needed to.

* * * * *

Kraid was gone when I woke up the next morning. I bathed, put the robe I was coming to hate on and tried the door.

Locked.

I snatched the phone and yelled into it without bothering to see if anyone was on the other end or not. "Food!"

Then I stomped around the room, out onto the balcony and back into the room. I was making a pass on the balcony when I saw the pine tree. It was tall enough that it was only a few feet below me and had long green pinecones on it.

I spent the next ten minutes making those little bastards explode, muttering things like "take that" and "this one's for you, Kraid" before each shot. Childish? I dare you to say that to my face right now.

Somewhere during my tirade breakfast had magically appeared. Too bad I'd missed its delivery, I could have used some live target practice.

I dug into the food, fuming that I hadn't made any headway with Devon the night before. Then I remembered that I could "talk" with Elizabeth.

Elizabeth? Nothing. I concentrated on her image in my head, thought about the woman I knew and loved, then tried again.

Morning, sweetie. She popped into my mind, crystal clear.

Are all men dumb as a box of rocks?

Her laugh tinkled in my mind, which was kind of disconcerting. *Don't worry, dear, they eventually come around. What's your mate done now?*

Besides binding me without my knowledge, kidnapping me and keeping me prisoner in his bedroom? A cinnamon roll blew up and I tried to leash in my anger.

Oh my, he's such a romantic.

I snorted, then I did it again mentally so she'd know how I felt about her statement.

Well, I think it is, she huffed at me. Look, I'm glad you called, there's something I need to tell you.

That didn't sound good. *What?*

I should have told you this years ago but I just never found the right time. I could almost see her fidgeting in her kitchen as we spoke. Your family comes from the Inverness line, did you know that?

I think Mom said something about it one time, so?

That means you're immortal, dear.

Yeah, right.

Truthfully. All of us from that line are. I should know, I'm your great-aunt and I'm over a thousand years old.

I think I should call someone to come take a look at you.

Angelina, if you take a moment to think about it, you'll know I'm telling the truth. You should also know that you haven't come into the majority of your power yet and that I approve of your match with Mr. Devon.

I was absolutely floored. I didn't know what to think.

Angie?

Yeah?

Take care, sweetie, I'll let you get used to the idea and we can talk later.

Okay. Bye, Elizabeth.

Immortal. Hadn't come into my full power yet. I was related to Elizabeth and she was over a thousand years old. Huh.

Kraid walked out onto the balcony and slouched into a seat across the table from me. I wasn't sure I liked the smile that played across his lips. It looked far too smug for my mood.

I pointed a finger at him and thought about which body part I wanted to zap.

"I know that look, love. You might as well save it, it will only serve to arouse me." He grinned wider.

Suddenly it hit me. That's why I'm not dead from getting fucked by the Dragon, by Kraid in his partially shifted form. I wondered if Kraid knew. He and Elizabeth had been pretty cozy at her shop. Then again, he'd called me a human and technically, I wasn't.

One way to find out. I didn't know if I could fly, I should have tried that out when I was a kid but I just never got around to it. Eyeing the balcony railing, I realized it didn't matter if I could or not. I was immortal, Elizabeth had said so.

"I'm still locked in here, Kraid, I thought we went over that."

His brow creased as he frowned. "I'll let you out when I'm ready."

"Well, I'm ready now and since I can't leave by the door, then I'll just have to go another way."

I shoved my chair back and stood. I looked down at him and knew that I no longer truly wanted to leave him. I went to his side, bent over and placed a kiss on his lips.

He tried to draw me down into his lap but I danced out of his grasp.

"I think I could have loved you," I told him, then I turned, ran the length of the balcony and launched myself over the edge.

And fell like a rock.

I heard a tremendous, agonized roar behind me, just before I impacted with the ground.

Devon landed next to where Angel had crashed into the lawn. He folded his wings and shifted into his human form, his heart thundering in his chest.

Kneeling, he reached for her, his hand stopping an inch away, afraid to touch her, afraid to find the life slipping out of her.

"Angel," he whispered, his voice choked with emotion. "Oh love, what have you done?"

He saw his lifeblood draining out of his soul, certain that he would go with her when her heart stopped beating.

"If you'll just come back to me, I'll do better. I'll give you what you want."

She groaned and he cried out with her. Then she was struggling to move. He watched, his heart in his throat, as she worked her way over onto her back.

"Fuck, that hurt." She glared up at him.

"Are you...glaring at me?" His heart skipped a beat.

"Yeah, I'm glaring at you. I'm pissed off at you, if you remember. Though I'll take you up on the 'giving me what I want' promise you made when you thought I was dying." She winced as she sat up.

"I need to get you to a hospital." He reached around her back, still afraid of hurting her further.

"Naw, I think a soak in a hot bath will do the trick." She grasped his arms and used him to get to her feet.

Several of his men had raced out of the house and were spread out in a loose circle around them. Gawking.

"Why aren't you dead?" He couldn't believe that she was calmly standing there after she'd taken a header off the second floor.

"I thought you knew," she said and started pushing on him to get him walking.

"Obviously I don't." He braced his arm around her back and guided her toward the front of the house.

"I'm an Inverness."

The statement went through him like a knife, causing something unidentifiable to ripple through his heart.

Chapter Nine

I was back in the bedroom, though the way Devon was fussing over me made me glad we were here. I didn't hurt anymore from my controlled flight into the terrain and with his hands roaming over me in search of damage, the space between my legs was taking notice.

"Kraid?"

"Yes," he responded absently, running his hands down my back over my buttocks, a fierce look of concentration on his face.

"There's one spot that you've overlooked that is really aching." *Boy, that was smooth.*

His hands stopped moving as he leaned back from me to study my face. "You're kidding."

"Nope." I reached forward and cupped his cock through the front of his pants, rubbing the length of it.

Desire flared across his expression and I knew I had him.

Staring directly into his eyes, I rose up on my toes, sucked his bottom lip into my mouth and bit him.

His eyes flashed to red-gold, then darkened to a deep amber as he wrapped me in his arms. His mouth captured mine, his tongue forcing its way between my lips as he maneuvered me onto the bed.

When he had me securely trapped beneath his body, he stared down at me with an expression I'd never seen before. His eyes searched my face.

Then he left me. He got out of bed and disappeared into the bathroom. I heard the water running and wondered what he was up to. He came back into the room and started to undress.

Naked, he sauntered over to the phone. "Get me Enescu," he barked into the instrument. "We're preparing for the second binding, be here in an hour."

He hung up and turned to me with a wicked grin on his face. "We're taking a bath."

"There's more to it than that." I braced myself on my elbows and watched as he came closer, his muscles rippling as he moved.

"The second binding." He waved the statement away like it was nothing, but the eager gleam in his eye told me better. Then he reached to gather me off the bed.

I put a hand on his chest to stop him. "And that means?"

He grimaced at me. "I'll tell you in the tub." He bent forward and scooped me off the mattress, then carried me into the bath.

He lowered me into the sudsy water, climbing in behind me. When he had me braced between his legs, my back against his chest, he picked up a bar of soap and a washcloth and proceeded to clean me.

"The second binding?" I reminded him.

"There are four levels of binding in a dragon mating. Lesser mates are taken to the third level only. Full mates are taken through all four." He worked the cloth over my breasts and for a moment I lost track of the conversation.

"We've already completed the first binding. The next requires our Annar to join us."

His hand dropped between my legs and I almost didn't ask the next question. "What's an Annar?"

"Because a dragon's life is perilous, it's necessary to protect our women by both mating them and having them bound as a lesser mate to another male in the clan."

He moved the washcloth away from my crotch and I whimpered at the loss of his touch.

"In plain English please." My mind was already clouding with lust.

"You're in the process of becoming my mate. Tonight we will start to make you Dragos' lesser mate."

Why did I bother asking? It's not like I could figure out what he was talking about anyway.

He proceeded to arouse me as he went but never took it beyond a certain level. When I tried to return the favor, he held me off. That alone should have warned me.

After we dried ourselves, he went to his closet and removed a box off the shelf, handing it to me with a sly smile. I opened it to find a sheer white gown.

"Uh... Okay."

I put it on.

"Very nice," he murmured as he circled me.

There was a knock at the door, then Dragos Enescu strolled into the room, his eyes automatically going to my body. He grinned sinfully at me and I flashed a look at Devon, worried that he'd attack the guy if he caught sight of his interest.

"Here, or the hall?" Dragos said.

"Here, I think. Why don't you get comfortable and take Angel out onto the balcony?"

Devon went to the phone and when I looked back at Dragos, he was taking off his clothes. I looked between the two men, caught the look Devon gave Enescu, then watched in fascination as the man stripped.

He had an impressive body. Larger than Devon's, bulkier. His skin was a deeper color, with olive tones to it, his chest covered in a fine pelt of black hair. His muscles

bunched and flexed as he worked his pants off his legs, then he stood, totally nude, before me.

My eyes darted to his groin and I took a step backward at the sight of his impressive cock, as thick as Devon's but longer, pointing straight toward me. It was the biggest cock I'd ever seen, outside of the Dragon's.

I stared at it, mesmerized, as it moved closer.

"Eep!" I jolted out of my daze as Dragos wrapped a hand around my upper arm.

The side of his mouth curved in a smile. "Come out on the balcony with me."

I glanced back at Devon and he waved me off. So I shrugged and let Dragos lead me outside into the warmth of the day.

I placed my hands on the railing and took a deep breath of the fresh morning air.

Dragos moved behind me, circled my waist with his hands, then pressed the length of his body against my back, his erection hard against my spine. He leaned down and licked a path along the side of my neck. "I look forward to binding you." His voice came out in a husky purr that caused my stomach to flutter.

He slid his hands up my rib cage, until he was cupping my breasts. His fingers circled my nipples and started pinching and twisting them through the silky fabric.

Arousal flooded my vagina. "Hey, I thought I wasn't supposed to—you know—want anyone but Devon."

His lips worked along my jaw as he rocked his cock against me. "I'm your Annar."

Like that explained anything.

He kept one hand working my nipple, while he stroked the other one downward, his fingers working the hem of my gown up until he could cup my sex. He worked a finger between my labia, down the length of my slit and into my vagina.

"Oh, you feel good." His arms tightened reflexively around me as he thrust his finger in my core.

I felt my groin start to tighten, my clit begin to ache. "Dragos," I breathed, wanting him to bring me to completion. Now.

He withdrew his hand and I whimpered until he turned me around and dove on my mouth, his lips eating at mine, his teeth nipping until I opened to him.

He lifted me and I wrapped my legs around his hips, my arms around his neck as he delved into my mouth. His cock was trapped between us, the length of it pressed against my vulva. I rolled my hips, stroking myself against his arousal, as I dueled with his tongue.

"It's time." The words barely made sense to me. All I could think about was getting Dragos inside.

But he pulled away from me and set me on my feet.

Devon bent and kissed me briefly. "Let's go."

The bed. I let Devon lead me back into the bedroom.

Seven men stood around the perimeter of the room, faces grim, hands clasped either in front of them or behind their backs. They looked like an ad for the Secret Service.

Devon captured my mouth and drew me against his chest. I felt Dragos move behind me, his hands working their way between Devon's body and mine, lifting my gown over my head. I'd been certain I was wrong when the idea had first entered my mind, now I knew it was about to happen. I was about to have sex with both of these men, at the same time.

In front of an audience.

My magic rose in a rush at the thought, tingling outward to my extremities, then entering the two of them. They groaned.

Devon dropped onto the bed, pulling me down with him, urging me onto my back. Dragos following, then lying down on his side, beside us.

Kraid's eyes were swirling and another shaft of arousal shot through me. A glance at Dragos showed his eyes had changed as well. I reached for him but Devon captured my face with one of his large hands and turned it toward him, locking his mouth over mine, his hand moving down to my breast.

I felt Dragos shift lower on the bed, then the moist warmth of his lips as he took a nipple into his mouth. He sucked and nipped at the bud, while Devon tweaked the other. Dragos worked his hand between my thighs and plunged a finger inside me. I cried out into Kraid's mouth, arching up into Dragos' hand.

He stroked me for a moment, then added a second finger, his palm rubbing against my clit. I was climbing toward release when Dragos abandoned my breast and repositioned himself lower, shoving my legs apart with his hands as he dropped his face to my sex.

His tongue rasped down my slit and I clutched at Kraid's shoulders, my breath quickening as Dragos thrust his tongue into my vagina and swirled it around inside.

Devon continued to kiss me, his hand moving to the breast that Dragos had left, his erection hot and hard against my hip. Dragos nipped his way up my labia, then sucked my clit between his teeth.

My hips jerked off the bed as an orgasm shot through me, Dragos suckling me with slow drags that carried me through the waves of pleasure. When I'd stopped shuddering my release, Devon broke the kiss and stared down at me with his dragon eyes.

"Let the binding begin," he rasped, then inched away from me, as Dragos rose over my body.

"Raise your legs," Enescu said, his breath harsh in his lungs.

I brought my knees up along the sides of his waist, as he prodded my opening.

He said something in that language of theirs, then drove himself in. He kept working himself deeper with short digs of his cock, until he was fully embedded.

His gaze heavy with desire, he braced his arms around my shoulders, holding me tightly, while he started to power himself in and out of me.

My magic flared and I was jolted as his dragon answered. The two powers slammed together, then wrapped themselves around each other, flames bursting out along our skin, Dragos arching his head back and groaning as the energy raced over him.

I came again, my body bucking against his, throwing him over the edge of control. He went wild, hammering into me, his cock swelling with his beast, wrenching another climax out of me.

He suddenly rolled us over, keeping himself tightly inside my vagina. "Now, Devon," he barked.

Then Kraid's hand was on my waist and a moment later I felt the head of his cock probe my anus.

I opened my mouth to tell him to stop but he was already shoving his way in. Dragos jerked me to his chest, a hand at the back of my head trapping me against his face while he devoured me.

Devon groaned and I realized he was all the way inside. The two men started moving, their strokes awkward at first, then finding a counterpoint rhythm they liked. I was stretched tightly around them, my nerve endings on fire, as they picked up their speed.

Devon uttered something and Dragos replied. Lost as I was in the sensations the two men were creating within my body, I had no idea what they'd said.

I felt Devon growing larger, harder. His hands on my hips were turning into talons that nicked my flesh and added another dimension to the pleasure. He trumpeted and the men in the room rumbled their approval, reminding me they were there.

Dragos tightened his hold, angled my head to the side and sank his teeth into my neck.

I exploded in a violent climax. Lights flashed in my head and my magic roared through me, adding fuel to the flames that now encased us all.

Dragos sucked on the flesh he held in his mouth and another wave of ecstasy blasted through me.

The Dragon roared, then the two men started spewing at the same time. Dragos' seed burst into me in machine gun blasts, while Devon's cum surged into my rectum, in a rush of heat.

I was vaguely aware of Devon's shifting back, then collapsing on top of me, trapping me between the two of them.

The men around the edge of the room shouted for more.

* * * * *

Devon watched in satisfaction as Dragos shifted back into human form, from his *obrazec*, his guardian form. The two of them had been taking Angel for hours. His Annar backed out of their woman's ass and flopped onto his back beside them. It was a good bond, a strong one that he was going to make even stronger.

"Don't tell me you've had enough." He turned his head so he could see Dragos' face.

"Just taking a breather." The man smiled at him.

The woman moaned, muttered something too low to hear, then went limp on top of him.

With the speed of his kind, he flipped the two of them over and started stroking her again, with his cock.

"We're not done yet, Angel," he laughed when her eyes widened.

"You can't possibly mean that." She blinked.

"Ah but I can." He pulled out of her and motioned to Dragos. "Shift."

Enescu knelt and let his powers wash over him cleansing him, lighting fire for the change. The scales came first, a protective layer that covered his chest, back and pelvis. The bones shifted in his face, his cheekbones widening, his brow bowing out in an impressive ridge. His entire body enlarged, his muscles hardening. When he rose to his feet, his tremendous shaft rose hard and proud before him.

Devon helped Angel sit up, then he lifted her and positioned her over the Annar's cock, the dragon-man wrapping his hands around her ass, a wicked gleam in his eyes.

As Dragos worked his way inside her vagina, Devon let the change come over him. Then he moved into position at his mate's back, his heart pounding in his chest at the thought of what they were about to do.

He thrust himself into her rectum, thrilling at the way her body eased aside to accommodate him, knowing it was his seed, his chemicals that had changed her so that they could take her this way, the ultimate way for their kind.

He tilted his head back and let go a burst of flame, Dragos mirroring him, as the two *obrazeci* began to fuck.

Holy shit. I was stuck between two dragon-men, filled with their cocks and loving it.

My nipples were exquisitely tender as the two powerful males pounded into my body.

I came and kept on coming, driven higher, as they bellowed their pleasure, their strokes wild. My eyes met Dragos' and I felt him enter my mind.

You are, without a doubt, the best fuck I've ever had.

I snorted, then groaned, trying to form a response in my mind. *I'll bet you say that to all the girls.*

Scream my name, when you come, acknowledge that you are mine.

He delivered an especially wicked jab with his cock and I was blasting off again.

"Dragos!" I had the presence of mind to shout.

Ultima! He huffed out a wreath of flame. *Mine!*

Arching his head upward, he loosed a fountain of fire. Then his cock throbbed inside me and his semen burned into my core.

Devon slammed a few more times, then joined us, his own flame merging with Dragos' in an awesome display.

Slowly their fire died down, then they shimmered and shifted back into human form.

Devon kissed my shoulder, while Dragos claimed my mouth.

I would spend the night with you, Dragos said.

We would be honored, Devon's reply filled my head.

The last thing I remember was the two men slipping from my body, Dragos taking me in his arms, lying down on the bed with me and curling his body around mine.

* * * * *

The men woke me up and made short work of it for all of us. I was grateful, since I was powerfully hungry this morning.

"Breakfast will be here soon," Dragos said and I had to wonder if I'd spoken out loud.

"No, you didn't," Devon stated.

"What, are you reading my mind?" I narrowed my eyes at Kraid.

"I always could. "Not that I bother listening all the time."

I spun on Dragos and he raised his hands. "I've only been able to since last night."

Great.

I shuffled off to the bathroom while the two men spoke in low tones with each other. I stared at myself in the mirror while the tub filled. No change. At least that was something. Then I slipped blissfully into the warm, soothing water, letting out a sigh, as it started to work its magic on my body.

"Here. You should take one of these."

I blinked my eyes open to find Dragos perched on the rim of the tub, holding a pill and a glass of water for me.

"I'm not really sore." I took them anyway, figuring he knew best, our fingers brushing, a spark of awareness flashing through me at the contact. "Thanks." I felt my face flush, amazed that I could respond that way after all the sex I'd had.

Dragos stood, then stepped into the bathtub with me. He knelt, trapping my legs between his. Taking the glass from my hand, he set it over the side. Then leaned into me for a kiss.

Today you are all mine.

When he broke away from me, he lathered up his hands and slid a grin in my direction. "I can't tell you how much I wanted to do this the last time I bathed you."

"Where's Kraid?" My breath hitched, when he worked his hand between my legs and started stroking my labia.

"Taking care of business." He stroked over my clit, then trailed his hand lower, the tips of his fingers teasing the opening of my vagina. "He'll be away until tomorrow."

"Really?" I slouched lower and angled my crotch into his hand.

"This is the third binding. It will complete the mating between the two of us." He bent forward, plunged a finger inside me just before he snagged a nipple between his teeth.

I relaxed into the feel of his finger stroking my sheath, while his mouth nipped and suckled at my breast.

"Tomorrow night will be your official mating to Devon," he murmured around my nipple.

"What does that mean?" I breathed and threaded my fingers through his hair, pulling him tighter to my chest.

He nipped me, then chuckled when I jumped.

It's a grand affair that will take place in the main hall. He moved to my other breast, withdrawing his fingers from my cunt and inserting them into my ass. *A special guest will preside over the joining, marking the bond officially.* He curled his fingers, thrusting in and out of my rectum, his breathing deepening. *Fuck me, I love the way your ass hugs my hand.*

He flicked his thumb over my clit and I came.

"Come on." He picked me up as he stood and carried me to the sink. Bracing my butt on the edge of the vanity, he hurriedly impaled me. "Christ, how I want to fuck you."

So he did.

Then he took me down to the bathroom floor and had his way with me again.

From there we moved to the bedroom floor and eventually out onto the balcony.

I gripped the railing as he thundered into me from behind. My pelvic muscles coiled, then snapped. My back arched and I screamed his name as fire shot straight out of me into the sky.

When I came back into my mind, I lowered my head, catching sight of Devon, standing in the yard, staring up at us. At me. Our eyes met and locked. Dragos cried out, then his cum was shooting into me, at the same time a grin broke out across Devon's face.

* * * * *

"How's our guest doing?" Devon rounded his desk, a drink in his hand.

"He's fully recovered," one of his *truls* barked back.

"At ease," the Dragon sneered, wondering why he was always surrounded by yes-men. Then it dawned on him that he used to kill the ones that opposed his will. *Ah well.*

"I'll expect to see him at the mating tomorrow night." He jiggled the mouse and leaned back in his chair as several images resolved on the monitor before him. With a click, he brought into focus the one that showed the best picture of his guest. His father was definitely feeling better, if the way he was driving into the woman beneath him was any indication. "Leave," he issued the command and the men slipped out of the room as Devon dropped the image and went through other shots throughout the compound.

Chapter Ten

Devon showed up just as Dragos came, once again, in my ass. I would never say it out loud but I was getting tired of having sex. Even great sex. I'd been fucked so much I thought I might be able to go several months without and never miss it.

I figured Devon would at least give me a chance to clean up before he pounced on me.

I was wrong.

He unfastened his pants while Dragos finished inside me, then waited for the man to withdraw. As soon as Dragos moved away, Devon was there.

It was over an hour later that I finally got out of bed.

I sighed as I lowered myself into the bubble bath, alone.

Angie? Are you there?

Elizabeth?

How are you doing, honey? I haven't heard from you in a couple of days.

How do dragons get anything done? I hadn't meant to think that.

What do you mean, dear?

Uh...nothing. Just tired, I guess.

Nonsense, I'll bet you're talking about their convoluted mating process.

Maybe. I sank lower in the tub and thought about submerging. Probably wouldn't kill me.

You'll miss it when it's over. Her laugh tinkled in my mind.

I doubt it, I huffed back.

You'll see. Then she was gone.

I lingered, draining out some of the water and reheating it until I was all nice and pruneey and couldn't stand being in there another minute. Heaving a sigh, I climbed out, dried off and went back into the bedroom.

Devon called to me from the balcony and I headed that direction after I wrapped myself in his robe. Thankfully, he was sitting at the table, a sheaf of papers in his hand and a veritable feast laid out before him.

"You've got an hour before they come to prepare you," Kraid said, flipping over the sheet he was reading and starting on another.

"Sure," I muttered, half thinking about taking another flying leap off the balcony.

"Don't even think about it."

Shit. I'd forgotten he could read my mind.

"What'cha reading?" I asked as I helped myself to some rare standing rib roast.

"Financial report," he mumbled.

"Can it wait?" I added some cheesy potatoes to my plate and some green beans.

"Why?" he asked, raising his eyes toward me.

"I thought we could talk, get to know each other better." I narrowed my eyes slightly.

"I see." Devon dropped the stack of papers onto the table. "What would you like to talk about?"

"What do you really do for a living?" *Gee, that was almost as good as talking about the weather.*

"I really run this compound. I really am the Rule of a very large clan of dragons." His eyes had taken on a fiery cast but I couldn't tell if it was anger, or just irritation that had fueled it.

"Come on, Devon. What's your favorite movie, what do you do for fun?" I eyed the edge of a covered crock and realized it was browned cheese I was seeing that had leaked out under the lid.

Lifting the top, the scent of sweet onions and beef wafted out. With a glance at Kraid, I scooted the bowl closer, then picked up my spoon. Flavor burst across my tongue and I groaned.

Devon shifted in his chair, drawing my attention. I just stared at him, while I slurped my soup, waiting for an answer.

He narrowed his eyes at me, heat coloring his face. "*The Terminator*," he blurted out.

"Huh." I thought about it for a minute and realized I couldn't picture the Dragon sitting in front of a television. "And for fun?"

"Fuck." A wicked grin slid across his lips.

I rolled my eyes. "Besides that."

"Make money." He nodded at me and helped himself to more of the roast.

"You ever go on vacation, do the tourist thing?" I finished the soup and started in on the rest of my meal.

"No."

"Oh man, you're going to have to lighten up." I shook my head.

"Angel..." he rumbled.

"There're all kinds of things I haven't done yet. Don't you want to try new things? See new places?" I waved a forkful of potatoes at him for emphasis.

"You're forgetting that I've been around for a while. I've been all over the globe and I've done more—things—than I can remember." He brushed me off with a shrug.

"You haven't done them with me," I shot back.

"I could always show you how I subdued willful women a hundred years ago," he snarled, but I caught the glint of humor in his eye.

"Pass. How about water-skiing?" I could not picture Kraid Devon water-skiing.

"Right." He reached for his stack of papers.

My nerves started winding tighter and I realized what was bothering me. "Kraid?"

With a sigh that spoke volumes, he raised his eyes to mine. "Yes?"

"We're, like, getting married, right?"

Kraid's expression softened. "Yes and you'll see that everything will work out fine." He looked at me with such conviction that I found myself believing him.

* * * * *

I'd been bathed and oiled and powdered. Now three men were working on my hair and makeup. They did everything with a scary, silent efficiency.

By the time they slipped the ceremonial gown over my head, my nerves were pinging like a live wire.

One of the guys handed me a shot glass and I threw it back, gratefully. Then gasped, as the fiery liquid burned a trail, all the way down. "What—"

I was jerked into motion before I could catch my breath, led out of the room and down the wide front stairs. I'd never seen the part of the house they were leading me into and I didn't get much chance to see it now, what with the steady, slightly hurried pace the men set.

They turned off the main hallway and entered a small room that held only a few chairs and tables.

One of the men left, the other motioned for me to take a seat.

A warmth started flowing outward from my belly, until it encompassed my entire body. It was accompanied by a tingling, that caused my nipples to tighten, before I noticed the very air passing over my exposed flesh caused sensations of pleasure along my nerve endings.

"Would you like to see my cock?" the man sitting next to me said with a straight face.

"Yes please," I surprised myself by answering.

The side of his mouth curved. Not a smile really but something else. Something not entirely pleasant. "You are ready."

The door opposite the one we'd entered opened and the second man stuck his head in. He looked at the one sitting next to me, then retreated.

I started fidgeting, tapping my feet and running my fingers along the swirled design of the gown. A muscle started jumping along my babysitter's jaw, his eyes blazing at me with irritation. I glared back, adding a smirk just for the hell of it.

The door opposite the one we came in opened and we both scowled toward it as a man entered the room. My breath caught in my throat, as I realized the man was my father, looking splendid in a tux.

He tipped a smile at me, his eyes shining with love.

"Dad!" I jumped to my feet and raced to his side for a hug.

"You make a beautiful bride." His voice cracked as he patted my back.

"Is Mom here too?" I eased away from him.

"Of course. So are Justin and Elizabeth." His lips twitched into a grin. "Even Chase came."

I grimaced.

"Come on now, your dragon awaits." He held his arm out for me, waiting until I'd linked mine through his, before leading me out the door.

The hall was huge and packed with people. A narrow aisle down the center and along either wall the only clear space left.

With only the hushed conversations to accompany us, he took me through the center of the crowd. We were more than halfway to the front when I caught my first sight of Kraid. His back was to me, his broad shoulders filling his jacket to perfection. Then he turned, his dark eyes locking with mine and I thought my heart might explode.

My father handed me off to Kraid, then moved away from us. I didn't see where he went, my entire world narrowed down to the man in front of me.

"It is time," a masculine voice stated loudly.

Kraid aimed me toward the front of the hall where a man who looked a lot like him stood.

The rustle of movement behind me, caused me to glance back, a smile breaking out across my face at the sight of Dragos in position behind us.

"Allow me to introduce you." Devon tipped his head toward the stranger. "Father, this is my chosen, Angel. Angel, it's a tremendous honor that Grail agreed to initiate the Joining."

I inclined my head to the man, having no idea what the etiquette for this situation was.

He acknowledged my bow with a steely gaze. Guess I'd committed a dragon *faux pas* of some kind.

"Your right hand." He reached for me and grasped my fist, raising my arm straight out before me.

Dragos moved to my side and held a hideous golden goblet below my wrist. The image of the gold coffeepot flashed into my head but I thought it was still the uglier of the two. Still, I frowned at the thing, thinking it was a close second. It took me a moment to realize what I was seeing above the cup. Grail held a thin dagger to my

wrist, made a smooth pass over my skin, slicing deep enough that my blood ran freely into the goblet.

We all watched as the cup filled, then Dragos lifted the wound to his mouth and sealed it with a swipe of his tongue.

Grail repeated the process with his son, as Dragos held a fresh glass under his arm. He then handed both cups to Grail, who handed the one with my blood to Kraid, the other to me.

"Drink of each other's life and become one, for all time."

Oh crap. I wasn't sure I could do this. A glance at Kraid showed a soft smile on his face as he raised his goblet to his lips and took a sip.

I kept my eyes on his expression as I raised the glass, tipped it up and let the liquid trickle into my mouth. The taste of his blood surprised me. It was bold and spicy like the man, with just a hint of sweetness. I drank the rest of it down enthusiastically, gently wiping my mouth with the side of my hand when I was done.

We handed our empty goblets to Grail, then Kraid stepped behind me and placed his hands on my waist. His father moved closer, his expression harsh as he stared down at me.

"The gift of the dragon is a very precious treasure," he placed a hand on my shoulder, "will you accept this gift from me?"

As long as I don't have to fuck you. Kraid's fingers clenched and I remembered that he could hear my thoughts.

"Uh...yes?" I squeaked, coughed, then spoke again. "Yes, I will."

My eyes widened as the man bent his head toward me, fisting my hair with his free hand. He pulled my head to the side, lowered his mouth to my neck and bit me.

Fire burned from his mouth into my veins. My magic flared, throwing a sheet of flame over the three of us.

Kraid pressed himself tightly to my back, his father mirroring his action, crushing himself to my front. I felt Grail swallow, then a second blaze shot through me, my powers responding, adding the buzz of electricity to the flames.

We stayed locked to each other for several heartbeats, then Grail withdrew his teeth from my neck and took a couple of steps back. His expression was much warmer than it had been so far.

"I can see why my son has chosen you," he said softly, then spoke louder, "let the clan welcome their newest member, the Ruleless Angel Devon."

Kraid and I turned to face the crowd, as a few people shouted out. The majority of the group simply looked at me, various levels of disgust on their faces. Except for Chase. He looked way too happy for the occasion.

My brother whistled, then shouted out, "Way to go, Angie!"

My parents and Elizabeth just beamed at me and that was enough. It even made up for all the dragons.

People started getting up and leaving the room.

"This way." Kraid placed his hand in the center of my back and guided me to the little room I'd first been in. "Turn around and place your hands on the chair."

When I was bent over, he reached to the hem of my gown and drew it up the sides of my legs, letting his fingers brush my skin. He bunched the skirt of the dress around my waist, his fingers feathering over my pussy as he drew his hand away.

"I won't be able to keep my mind off the fact you're not wearing any panties under that gown." I heard the sound of his zipper, then felt the blunt head of his cock as he seated himself at my opening.

"Brace yourself." His hands gripped my hips, as he pressed his cock into my vagina in one long, smooth thrust. He pulled out partway, then flexed his hips and buried himself again. Soon he was powering his cock with a driving rhythm and the familiar pressure built rapidly in my groin.

"Come for me, mate." He changed the angle of his strokes and I found myself flying. A blast of energy shot out to encase us, an electrical charge that added another dimension to the sensations rolling through my vagina.

"Fuck, yes." He speared himself deeply inside me then ground his hips. His cock throbbed, then spewed. He shuddered and came again, taking me over with him, as my magic swirled around the point where we were joined.

He stayed in me until our bodies stopped trembling, then withdrew and helped me fix my gown.

"You will not clean up until after the reception." He flicked a glance at me, before opening the outer door and drawing me into the hallway.

"I've got cum running down my legs," I whispered frantically.

He grinned. "Yes, you do."

"Devon," I hissed.

"Come on, love," he started leading me to another section of the house, "we don't want to keep them waiting."

* * * * *

There is nothing like entertaining two hundred strangers who don't particularly like you. At least that's what I was picking up as I stood next to a buffet table with Kraid, greeting all my new clan members. The women barely looked at me, while they all eyed Kraid with hunger and kissed him—with tongue—rubbing their bodies against his. The men, obviously put out by their women, not only frenched me but groped me as well. None of it with any true emotion behind it.

"Real friendly bunch you've got here," I said softly to Kraid when there was a break in the crowd.

"All part of the tradition. A show of clan unity," he replied.

Then my parents made their way in our direction. They approached me first, my mother hugging me tightly.

"We had no idea." Her voice was thick with tears.

"Kraid kind of surprised me with it too," I told her.

"Introduce me to the man," my father barked.

"Kraid," I tugged him closer, "this is my father Bill and my mother Teresa. Mom, Dad, Kraid Devon."

My father swallowed, then offered his hand to Kraid.

"I'm honored to have your daughter for a mate." He inclined his head, shaking my father's hand, before brushing a kiss across my mother's cheek.

They moved to the other side of Kraid, so that other people could greet us, my father busily questioning the most lethal man on the planet. I expected at any minute Kraid would fry him to a crisp.

Justin grabbed me in a bear hug. "Just think, I'm the only man I know that's had to endure the sight of his sister having sex with a man and a dragon!"

"Shut up," I grumbled.

"Seriously," he spoke into my ear, "if you're not happy, or you ever need any help, you call me, okay?"

My eyes misted with tears. "Thank you. I will."

Then Elizabeth was there, gushing about the ceremony. "What a beautiful ritual." Her eyes were bright, a hanky crumpled in her hand. She really shone though, as she'd allowed herself to look thirty years younger than she usually did.

"Which one?" I asked her.

She glanced around the room, then tipped her head at one of the men. He grinned at her and even from here, I could see his desire for her in his expression.

"Good choice," I told her.

"I'll let you know later." She winked at me, then moved over to congratulate Kraid.

The next man moved in front of me and I found myself staring into familiar golden eyes.

"Chase." My breath caught in my throat at the raw emotion I saw on his face.

He grabbed me, wrapping his arms tightly around my back, burying his face in my neck. "I would have made you a good mate." His grin was endearingly shy. "If you ever need me, for anything, anything at all, give me a call."

"I will, Chase, and thank you."

Then he kissed me. Deeply, passionately. And I didn't feel the slightest bit aroused by it. *Huh.*

Chase broke away from me, shaking his head, muttering to himself as he flicked a glance at Kraid, then turned and walked away.

The Dragon threw an arm around my shoulder and pulled me close. "Do I need to break out the Impurature again?"

I blinked at him. "What?"

"The Impurature, the device that causes a certain heat to build in a woman when she engages in sex with the wrong man."

"That's what that coffeepot was for?" I gaped at him.

His grin turned smug.

My father jostled his arm, trying to get his attention. Kraid's eyes narrowed. "If he threatens me again, I am going to eat him," he snarled.

"Don't you dare," I blurted out, causing those nearest us to gawk at me.

"Please." Kraid rolled his eyes and turned back to my dad.

* * * * *

We were back in Kraid's bedroom. Our bedroom. The reception was still going on but I'd had enough and the Dragon had other things on his mind.

I could tell by the looks he kept giving me.

"Let me give you a hand with that." He reached for the back of my dress and worked the zipper down, brushing his lips over my shoulder as he slid the garment off.

It pooled at my feet, leaving me naked, except for my shoes, which I kicked off before bending over to retrieve the dress.

Kraid rumbled at me, working his own clothing off with impatient jerks of his hands. Then waited while I hung the gown in the closet.

He came up behind me and splayed his hands over my stomach, nuzzling the hair on the top of my head. I felt his erection in the small of my back, as he rocked back and forth on the balls of his feet.

A shiver passed through him, his arms tightening around me, as he lifted me and carried me to the bed. He swung me onto the mattress.

I blinked up at him and he gave me a wickedly sinful smile in return that shot straight through my heart. "You will position yourself at the foot of the bed on your back." His eyelids dropped lower, adding to his blatantly sexual look. "You will face me as I take you as an *obrazec*."

My vagina cramped as I creamed, the liquid coating the insides of my thighs. I scooted down to the end of the bed, let my legs hang off the edge and levered myself up on my elbows so I could watch him.

His body shimmered and grew. The golden scales swiftly coating his exterior first, then ridges of bone appeared, stretching his. His cheeks flared out, his eyes swirled with color, and his latent magic flared, calling out to mine.

His lips parted in an appreciative smile before he puffed out a small stream of fire. My magic surged in response, then steadied, waiting.

He stalked forward, gripped my hips, then raised them off the bed, pulling my legs over his hips as he aimed his cock at my opening. With just the head pressed slightly inside, he adjusted his hold on me, lowered himself over my body then captured my shoulder between his teeth. He didn't stay that way though, just broke the skin, then he lifted his head and watched my eyes as he slowly shoved his entire shaft inside.

My God, you're beautiful. He slid himself out, then plunged back in.

I arched my back, more aware of his cock than I'd ever been. I could even feel the veins that ran its length as he plowed through my inner muscles, sparking pleasure with every drag and pull.

Come for me, Angel.

I was burning with pleasure, his command wrenching an orgasm from me, setting my powers free. I blazed, inside and out as the devastating creature that was my mate drove relentlessly into my depths. One climax merged into the next in a never-ending bliss that threatened my consciousness.

Forever, Angel, he roared in my head as he trumpeted over and over. His fire blasted brilliantly from his throat moments before his cum jetted from his cock, splashed against my cervix, then burned a trail straight to my heart.

Kraid! My magic exploded around us, fireballs that slammed into the walls and ceiling, deflected by the magic that kept the place from burning and shot back at us, fueling our own flames higher. His massive body jerked as he came again. My own orgasm was so intense that the edges of my vision darkened, while lights flashed in my head.

He held me suspended off the bed in his mighty grip, my groin jammed against his, as his cock continued to pulse out his seed.

My God, his voice whispered through my mind, then he lowered me to the bed and as I watched, he shifted into the form I'd met him in.

He bent over me, taking one nipple, then the other into his mouth, before he lifted me and held me to his chest, while he moved me higher on the bed.

As he stroked himself back into my vagina, staring straight into my eyes, the moment felt more intimate than any other time we'd joined. I wrapped myself around him, rocked my hips against his and thought, not for the first time, he was the sexiest man I'd ever seen.

Nice to hear. His lips twitched in a grin.

Damn. I keep forgetting you can do that. I smiled back at him.

He brushed his lips across mine, then settled them over me, adding pressure as he slanted his head. I opened my mouth and he slid his tongue inside, swirling it around my own tongue, stroking erotically along its length.

He moved his hands to my butt, gripping my cheeks tightly, as he thrust into me faster, deeper. His body heated, causing a surge in my magic that soon broke over us in a wave of flame.

He groaned and sped up, until he was slamming into me with a driving force. I came, crying out into his mouth as my back arched and my hips bucked against his. Wave after wave of release ripped through me, my inner muscles squeezing him in a powerful grip.

His muscles went rigid, he raised his head enough to gaze into my eyes, then he jammed his cock deep and erupted, shooting fire through my womb, to my heart where it blasted outward to all my extremities.

His features settled into lines of extreme satisfaction before he gave me a peck, pulled out and rolled over onto his back, drawing me onto his chest.

"Forever." He took a deep breath and dropped off to sleep.

"Forever." I gazed down at him, amazed how far we'd come in such a very short time.

As I drifted into my own oblivion, a random thought slid through my mind.

What about love?

Chapter Eleven

Kraid and I actually got along for the next few days. He showed me around the compound and introduced me to everyone we ran across, not that I could keep them straight. He also gave me several new dresses, along with shoes, a few pairs of panties but not a single bra.

"Um...I'm going to need more than three pairs of panties and where are the bras?" I dug through the bags again to see if I'd overlooked them.

"I'd prefer you to go without underthings," Kraid stated and when I scrunched my face up at him, he simply smirked.

Okay. "Why don't you show me that car you said I could use?" I flickered my eyelashes at him. *I could go buy my own.*

For a minute I didn't think he was going to answer me. Then he sighed. "Thinking of going out and getting your own undies?"

"Well...yeah. But I'd still like to know which car I can use."

"Come on." He strode out the door and I hurried to catch up.

I was thinking about where I'd like to go and if there was anything I really needed that I didn't have here, when I plowed into Kraid's back. He'd come to a stop in front of me, at the bottom of the stairs and I hadn't noticed. It was like running into a wall. I wasn't even sure he'd felt it, since he didn't turn around to glare at me, or anything.

"It's been a long time," a sultry woman's voice said from somewhere beyond Kraid.

"Cynara." Kraid's voice came out deeper than normal.

I took a step to the side, to see who he was talking to when he blocked my new vantage point as he sauntered toward the front door. I started following him, when Dragos appeared out of one of the rooms and stood in my path. I glanced at him and moved to go around. He caught me around the waist, then pulled me against his body, when I tried to slip out of his grasp.

"Give him a minute." Enescu tightened his hold when I struggled.

"Why?" I stopped squirming.

"He'll tell you, if he wants you to know."

"Fat lot of good you are." I couldn't help scowling at him. "Now let me go."

He did but he probably shouldn't have as I got an eyeful of Kraid in a heated kiss with another woman. His hands squeezed her ass, as he ground his groin against hers.

I went ballistic. I stomped toward the door, bouncing rudely off Devon's back as I passed, wrenched the door open then slammed it behind me.

I started frying clumps of weeds, then turned my attention to the rhododendrons that lined the side of the house.

"I'd rather you didn't," Dragos said from behind me.

"Fuck you." I disintegrated half a dozen flowers before Dragos pinned my arms to my sides.

"There's nothing at all wrong with what the Dragon is doing. She's one of his lesser mates." He said it in such a reasonable tone, I knew he actually believed it.

"I hope he's happy with her. With all his lesser mates, because I am so out of here." Big words since I was currently trapped by Devon's second.

"You'll feel differently in a hundred years. Especially if Devon is the only one you're sleeping with."

"Dragos, I don't care what I feel like a century from now. All I know is that he's in there sticking his tongue down another woman's throat. In my book he's cheating on me. So he can take this dragon crap and all this mate crap and just shove it up his ass." I'd screamed that last part but I didn't care.

Dragos dropped his hold on me, shoved my shoulder so that I spun around to face him and lowered angry eyes toward mine. "You would deny the greatest dragon of our day the one thing he most desires in his heart, a pureblood child?"

I felt my jaw clench and consciously had to relax my muscles to respond. "On the contrary, he can try to breed as many purebloods as he wants. He just can't do that and also keep *me*. I will not spend the night alone while he fucks another woman, I will not take his cock into my mouth knowing it was inside someone else not long before, I will not stand idly by while he ravishes them in the fucking front hallway, in front of me. In other words, Dragos, and you can quote me on this, I will not share."

Dragos just stared at me, so I started walking. It didn't matter to me how far from town this place was located, I just wanted out of there. I'd made it to the fork in the drive when the second caught up with me.

"Is there nothing that will make you stay?" He strolled along at my side, his hands clasped behind his back.

"Sure there is but you don't see that as an option."

We continued on for several minutes in silence. "I'll ravish you in the foyer, the kitchen, any room I find you in. I'll spend every minute with you that Devon is otherwise occupied, I'll do anything for you, if you'll just stay."

I stopped and put my hand on Dragos' chest, touched by his concern, but determined to leave anyway. "Thanks for the offer but it's not going to work." I saw a column of thick black smoke rising in the distance, over his shoulder. "Um...you might want to check that out. I think I set something on fire."

He spun around, then shot one narrow-eyed glance at me, shifted and took to the air.

I started back down the drive, thinking how much easier this trip would be if I could do what Dragos had just done.

* * * * *

The fire was under control by the time Dragos landed. The fiery witch had set the garage ablaze. At least she hadn't damaged any of the vehicles inside. Shaking his head, his affection for the woman increasing, he returned to the house.

His eyes went to the couple near the stairs. The Dragon had Cynara bent over the entry table as he feasted at her mouth. His cock hardened as he watched and he rubbed it, idly thinking he really should have tried harder to keep Angel here. She would have come in handy right now.

"Kraid," the woman begged.

Devon smoothed his hands down the front of her dress, clutching her hips as he ground his cock against her abdomen.

"Just let me take care of my mate and we can retire to your rooms for the evening." Kraid dropped his hands and took a step back from her.

"I'll just go freshen up a bit then and see you upstairs." Cynara swayed her way up the stairs, both men's eyes glued to her ass.

When she was out of sight, Devon looked around for Angel. "Where is she?"

Dragos didn't look forward to telling him. "She left."

"What do you mean, she left?" The Dragon narrowed his eyes at him.

"She said it was either her, or your lesser mates." He took a step back from his leader.

"That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard." Devon's voice was rising, his eyes starting to swirl.

"Apparently not to her." Dragos moved another few feet away.

"She really left?" A look of confusion crossed his boss's face but was quickly replaced by anger. "I'll just bring her back. She's mine and she knows it."

"Let me ask you a question. How would you feel if she took Quinton as a lesser mate?"

"It'll never happen." Devon waved off his words, unwilling to face the way his gut clenched at the idea.

"But it's possible, so think about it. What would you do if the two of you were on your way out and he came in and fucked her against the table, in front of you?"

The Dragon glanced up the stairs. Then he scowled at his second. "Fucking twenty-first century. So what do you suggest? You know how important it is for me to carry on my bloodline."

"I honestly don't have any ideas."

* * * * *

I slumped onto the bench of my parents' picnic table. *Fucking dragons.*

I was exhausted but didn't think I'd be able to get any sleep. I wasn't even finding any release from frying my mother's azaleas. What was I going to do? That was the real question here. I was trapped in this situation and I didn't see any way out. I couldn't believe I loved the backward oaf. But I wanted something that I didn't think I would get.

Unless...I took the demon option.

I'd talk to Elizabeth tomorrow.

Feeling better, now that I had a plan of action, I trudged inside and up the stairs to my old room.

I was asleep as soon as my head hit the pillow.

* * * * *

Devon paced back and forth in the entryway, by turns furious and confused, angry and hurt. When he couldn't come to a suitable solution, he did something he hadn't done in several hundred years. He sought out his father to ask his advice.

"What can I do for you, Kraid?" Grail leaned back against the desk in the study, where Devon had found the man.

So he explained the situation to him, then started pacing the length of the room as he waited for a response.

"Damn. If it weren't for the prophecy you could just cut her loose." His father went to the bar and poured them both a drink. "As it is, I think you'll have to order your lesser mates to stay away from this area. Then you can take 'business trips' to work on gaining a pureblood son."

Kraid brightened, it sounded like a doable solution to him. "Anybody ever have this kind of problem before?"

"Sure, every strong-willed human female we've mated in the last century acts like this." Grail threw back his drink. "Now go fuck Cynara. Tomorrow is soon enough to collect your mate."

Kraid left the study and jogged to the stairs. He stood at the base, looking upward, knowing his lesser mate was primed and ready for him. With a sigh, he resigned himself to an unavoidable fact. He felt his mate's absence keenly, her leaving had taken something away from him that he wanted back. He didn't want to put a name to it, but it was there all the same. He took one final glance up the stairs, but he couldn't bring himself to climb them. Couldn't see himself ever wanting to breed the lesser mates if it meant living without Angel.

* * * * *

I sat in the kitchen of Elizabeth's shop, eating funky little pastries and drinking a mug of coffee, while she handled a demanding customer.

She was totally unruffled when she breezed into the room, poured herself a cup and joined me at the table.

"Now what's all this about?" Her expression already said she thought I was acting stupidly.

"Kraid and I were leaving the house yesterday, when some babe walks in the front door. He went to her, kissed her with his entire body, while his hands roamed the landscape. She was one of his lesser mates."

"Go on." Elizabeth sipped her coffee, her eyes, over the rim of the cup, showing no reaction to what I'd said so far.

"He was going to fuck her! Not just in front of me but he was going to spend the night with her." I felt tears welling in my eyes.

"He's a dragon," Elizabeth began. I opened my mouth to tell her that didn't excuse his actions but she held up her hand to stop me. "Yes, it does make a difference. The dragon population has been steadily declining. The impurities in their bloodlines are weakening a large percentage of the remaining members. Subsequent generations will be weaker yet. So you can surely understand why it is so important to breed some pure offspring?"

"If the goal is to breed pure then he should have mated someone else."

"Except he didn't. He never even gave a thought to his culture, probably doesn't know the differences between his and the human one. Even if he did, he might not be able to understand them."

"Oh, I understand his customs, I just can't live with them."

"You won't have to and he'll soon realize that." She picked over the treats on the plate and popped one in her mouth.

"What are you saying?"

"It's been too long since he reviewed the prophecy. He needs to read it again."

"Why?"

"Because —" She looked over my head.

"Angel," Kraid growled my name.

I didn't turn around to look at him. I knew what I'd see. One pissed-off dragon. That was just too bad. I was the only one in this room who had a reason to be angry.

"You were saying, Elizabeth?" I snagged another pastry, pleased when the smooth chocolatey flavor melted over my tongue.

"Mr. Devon, would you care for a cup of coffee?" She rose from her seat and went to the counter, not waiting for his answer.

Kraid's leg came into my peripheral vision as he moved to the side of the table.

Get the fuck out of here, Kraid, I don't want to see you right now.

I could feel the anger radiating off him and let him have a blast of my own.

Oh, I'll leave all right but you'll be coming with me.

"No," I turned to glare at him, "I will not."

Elizabeth returned to the table and set the coffee down in front of Kraid.

"You should have a seat," the older woman said in a soft voice and I was surprised when Devon sat down.

I looked between the two of them and realized Kraid deferred to her as a superior. I had to wonder what she'd done to him to garner that kind of respect.

"Kraid Devon, you are a fool," she huffed at him and his eyes widened.

I clutched my mug, figuring his respect for her wasn't going to stop him from burning her to ash for that statement. I almost dropped the mug, when he leaned forward and stared earnestly into her eyes.

"How so?" He was studying her intently, genuinely interested in her reply.

"You should have committed the prophecy to memory." She narrowed her eyes at him. "I suggest you read it again."

He straightened in his seat, blinking at her. "I take it I'm missing some vital piece of information here?"

She gave him a wry smile and nodded.

He stood and reached for me.

I ignored his hand, though I did briefly consider spitting on it.

"You're coming with me." His voice held that low, lethal tone that never failed to turn me on.

"Not likely," I snarled back at him, even though my body thought it was a very good idea.

"Mr. Devon, I suggest you do your homework first," Elizabeth said with a quiet authority.

He glanced at her, then back at me.

"I sent Cynara away," he bit out, clearly unhappy with having to have done so.

"Not before you fucked her." My heart clenched.

He didn't deny my statement but at least he had the sense not to argue his actions.

Elizabeth got to her feet, took Kraid by the arm and started leading him to the front of the store. "I think it's best you give her some time to cool down."

He didn't resist her guidance, just allowed himself to be ushered to the front of the shop and out the door.

"What's in the prophecy?" I blurted out as soon as she came back.

Her mouth turned up in a sinful grin. "It clearly states that he can bear no offspring with anyone but his full mate. In compensation for that fact, the draglets from that union will be true-bloods."

I dropped my head to the table with a groan. "Christ, he didn't even have a good reason to be fucking her."

"I'm not sure he did." She patted my head. "I see the way he looks at you. Though his mind tells him differently, his heart belongs to you. Now you'll want to prepare yourself to face him again."

I tipped my head to the side and squinted at her.

"There hasn't been a true-blooded birth among the dragons in the past millennium."

"This is something different than purebloods?"

"Oh my, yes. A true-blood is the original dragon. The last true-blood died during the Purges. That loss almost thrust the entire race into extinction."

Oh my. He'd be coming back for me and he wouldn't let anyone stop him.

Chapter Twelve

Devon read the passage over again, then lowered the page. His eyes locked onto his second's, seeing the same stunned expression there, he was sure his own face exhibited.

"True-bloods," he whispered, awed by this revelation, wondering how he could have possibly forgotten something that significant in the first place.

"You've got to get her back," Dragos stated.

"You go pick her up, I want to study the rest of this document some more." He waved a hand at the other man, his attention already on the papers he held.

"She won't come with me and I don't intend to kidnap her."

Devon's anger flashed to the surface and he half rose out of his chair. "You will do whatever I tell you to do."

Dragos held up his hands. "Look, she's mad at you and from what I've just read, she's got a right to be."

He was astounded. "What in the hell are you talking about?"

"You were going to fuck another woman. Hell, you would have done it right in front of her if she hadn't left the house. Seeing you knew about Angel because of the prophecy, do you think she's going to believe you didn't know about this?" Dragos shook the papers he held in his hand for emphasis.

"I didn't know," Devon snapped.

"We know that but try to look at it from her perspective."

"You have got to be kidding me."

"Not at all."

Devon closed his eyes and cussed. "So what you're saying is that Angel thinks I was going to fuck Cynara simply because I wanted to?"

"Yeah."

Unable to keep still any longer, he started to pace. "I can't think of a single dragon that's ever had less than half a dozen lesser mates."

"Look, do you want your mate or not?"

He spun on his second. "Of course I want her but I've got—"

"You've got nothing else to be concerned about right now, except for convincing your mate to come back to you."

"And why can't I just force her to?"

"Because that's not how things are done anymore."

* * * * *

"I'll get it," I yelled over my shoulder, skipping down the last two steps as I came downstairs.

The doorbell rang again, before I got there and I yanked the door open, wondering who was that impatient.

I should have known.

"Hello, Kraid." I leaned against the doorjamb, my hand still on the door, blocking entry to the house.

"May I come in?"

God, he looked good. He was wearing a dark blue t-shirt, tucked into a pair of black leather pants. "Since you asked nicely." I stepped back and let him enter.

He waited until I'd closed the door, then he placed his fingers under my chin and stroked his thumb along my jaw. "I'd like you to come home." He took a step closer to me, the heat of his body reaching my chest. His expression was an intense mixture of lust and frustration.

"Let's talk." Neither of us moved though, just stood there staring into each other's eyes. His face slowly drew closer to mine. Then our lips touched and the fire that never left my blood for him, blazed to life.

His arms came around me, as he slanted his head and eased his tongue into my mouth. He stroked my tongue with his, sweetly, slowly, then more aggressively. His arms pulled me into a tighter embrace and I felt his erection, hot and hard, against my stomach.

His hands dropped to my ass, his palms cupping my buttocks, squeezing them, locking me in place while he ground his cock into me. He tore his mouth off mine and groaned. "My God, how I want you."

Extremely aware of the truth of that statement and knowing I could never turn him down, had never really wanted to, I relented.

"Then you'd better get us to our house before I change my mind."

Devon flicked a glance at the woman in the passenger seat. It still amazed him that she responded so completely to his touch. That all he had to do to stop a disagreement was kiss her.

Oh, he'd always had a way with women. All of them. But none like this.

He pulled into the garage and started for the front of the house, when he realized she wasn't right beside him.

Turning, he glanced back at her. She was standing beside the open passenger door, her brow creased in a frown.

"Damn it, Kraid. You're always doing that to me. Making me lose my mind, then getting me to do things. I'm still pissed at you and I'm not stepping foot in that house before we come to an agreement."

Knowing he had the advantage, he decided to be tolerant. Crossing his arms over his chest, he rested a hip on the Pathfinder next to where she stood. "Go ahead, I'm listening."

"You ever touch another woman in a sexual manner and I'll do everything in my power to sever our mating."

"Ever?" He raised an eyebrow at her and wondered how she'd feel in a few hundred years.

"Yeah, ever." She scowled at him and he had to work to keep the grin off his face.

"Ever is a very long time." He started moving in on her.

"I wouldn't know." She grimaced.

He came to a stop just inches from her. His cock pressed uncomfortably hard against the placket of his pants.

"Against custom, against everything I believe, the way I was raised and the way the clan will react to the news, you, Angel, will be my only love." He placed a hand on her hip and couldn't stop the side of his mouth from curving up in a grin as her nipples hardened.

"Promise?" Her breasts rose and fell as her breath quickened.

He bent his head to hers, pausing when their lips touched. "I promise." As long as this deal goes both ways," he brushed his hand up her side. "I'll be faithful to you, as long as you are faithful to me."

"That," she wound her arms around his waist, "is a promise I'm more than happy to make."

Then he captured her mouth, thrust his tongue inside and ate at her with a barely constrained hunger.

She went wild.

Two nights. That was all it took for me to become insane with need for the Dragon. Sparks were flying off my fingers as I tried to undress him, tried to get at that cock of his that pressed so hard against the front of his pants I could see the outline of its plum-shaped head.

He lifted me off my feet and started carrying me away. I tried to wriggle out of his grasp so that I could get back to undressing him.

"I love you but I'm not going to let you torch all my cars to prove it."

I froze. My eyes flashing to his face, to see if he realized what he'd just said. There was only the harsh look of lust reflected there.

He set me on my feet and dragged me into the gardens behind his house. When we reached an open area he started working on my jeans. I helped, then danced from foot to foot while he got his cock out of his pants. The minute it was clear, I launched myself into his arms, circling his waist with my legs.

He knelt took my mouth with his, my back impacting with the ground moments later. I didn't care, all I cared about was getting that big cock of his inside me.

"Shift." His voice was husky with arousal.

I worked my hips around, trying to capture his shaft.

"Damn it, Angel, pay attention. I want you to shift."

"Huh?" I stopped moving around and stared blankly at him. "What do you mean shift? I'm not a were."

"Of course you are." He nudged my opening with the head of his cock. "You accepted the gift of the dragon."

So that's what that meant. I should have thought to question it sooner.

"So what do I do?" I rolled my hips but he eased away from me.

"Just concentrate on becoming a dragon, see yourself changing." He pressed himself against my vagina again.

"How am I supposed to concentrate when you've got that cock of yours anywhere near me?"

He shoved an inch of himself inside. "Know that I'm not going to fuck you until you shift."

My mouth dropped open. "You wouldn't." *Of course he would.*

So I closed my eyes and thought really, really hard about becoming a dragon. I willed myself to change. I pictured what Kraid looked like when he shifted. I imagined my bones refiguring themselves, changing their shapes and structures.

Nothing worked.

"It's not working. Are you sure it took?"

I felt him enter my mind, felt the power of his will as he surged through my essence and tried to force the shift himself.

He cursed, then rolled off me and got to his feet. I watched him from where I lay on the ground as he took his phone out and placed a call.

"Grail, it didn't work. Get out to the garden right now, we're doing it again." He was quiet for a moment. Grunted something I couldn't hear, then dropped the phone on top of his pants.

With an irritated jerk, he heaved me off the ground. "Put your clothes back on."

I made faces at his back while I did so.

His father, grumbling and stomping his way through the landscaping, showed up, gave me a disgusted look, then glared at his son.

"Just do it." Kraid pointed at me.

Grail scrunched his face at him, then grabbed me and crushed me to his chest.

"Try to get it right this time," he growled, bent my head to the side and sank his teeth into my neck.

I felt the burn, as he released the chemical into my bloodstream. Then Kraid's solid body covered my back, his hands grasping my waist as his father continued to infuse me.

Grail sucked for a moment, then the fire returned. My magic flared, embracing the three of us in a dancing blue blaze.

He sucked again and injected me a third time, the fluid screaming through my veins in an agony of heat. A strangled sound escaped my throat and the two men pressed themselves tighter to me, trapping me upright while my body started jerking and shaking.

Sweat poured down my face, my powers rising higher in a rush, shooting balls of magic outward from where we stood.

Then Grail released his hold on my neck, stepped back and studied me. Without saying a word, he turned and stalked away.

I suddenly felt better. Actually, I felt a whole lot more than that, I felt absolutely great. Kraid had backed away from me when his father had and I intended to change that. I stripped my shirt off over my head and tossed it into the bushes, then I kicked my pants and underwear off.

With one thing and one thing only on my mind, I turned to my mate.

Only to find that I was alone in the clearing.

I spun around in a circle but neither he nor his clothes were anywhere within sight. *Damn.*

Where'd you go?

Devon had never faced a doubt about anything in his life. He did now and he was having a hard time dealing with it. If his mate couldn't shift into a dragon, there was no way she could carry a true-blood to term.

He grabbed the flask of brew from the bar, tipped his head back and took a healthy swallow. "*Accevedo*," he took another draught of the fiery liquid before setting it back on the bar, "go collect my mate and bring her to our bedroom."

When the man didn't snap to his order he spun around, fully intending to light a fire under his ass.

Only to find he was alone in the room.

Snatching up his phone, he punched the number for his second.

"Dragos, get that mate of mine and bring her to our bedroom." He didn't wait for an answer, just slammed the phone shut and stormed out of the study for the stairs.

They would just keep trying. They had to keep trying because there was no way he could give her up now.

* * * * *

Dragos shoved me through the bedroom door, then slammed it behind me. I stood, blinking at Devon, who looked angrier than I'd ever seen him. *My God, it turned me on.*

"Strip," he stalked toward me, his eyes blazing, "shift." Heat radiated off his body as he towered over me, slicing into me with his gaze.

I just shrugged took off my clothes and went through the mental gymnastics I'd tried before.

Again, nothing.

Devon grabbed me by the shoulders and pulled me tightly to his chest. He encircled me with his arms, then invaded me with his magic.

"Change, damn you," he muttered under his breath while his dragon infiltrated every corner of my being. "Fucking shift!" The muscles in his jaw tightened and before I could consider my actions, I raised myself onto my toes and plastered my mouth to his.

Fuck me, Kraid. I'd never wanted him more.

He kissed me fiercely, then wrenched away from me with a glare, smoke hissing out through his teeth. "Not until you shift."

No! I was nearly mindless with my need. Desperation setting in when he stepped away from me, I launched myself at him, locking my arms around his neck, my legs around his waist.

His clothes. I needed his clothes off and I thought maybe I could burn them, turn them to ash. I drew on my power, intending to give it a try, when his dragon surged up inside me and tried to take control.

Our magics struggled against each other but my state of mind, the utter need that raced through me, prevailed. I cried out in triumph as I lashed out with a blinding flash of power and set my mate on fire.

He stiffened, fires flashing to life in his eyes, then he threw his head back and moaned as the blaze enclosed him. His clothes remained untouched but his hands went to work on the buttons of his shirt and before long, he'd removed every garment.

I came at him again, my eyes glued to his erection.

"Why don't you come out on the balcony with me?" I stopped dead in my tracks and stared up at him. I didn't like the look that had come into his eyes. "I'd like to show you something."

I *really* didn't like it, I wanted to fuck but I let him take me outside, hoping he intended to take me against the railing, the night air cool against my bare legs. He led me to the end of the balcony though, then pressed on the wall. A panel slid open

revealing a keypad behind it, where he entered some numbers. Part of the wall dropped back and glided to the side, exposing a set of stairs going upward.

With my hand in his, he stepped through the doorway and started climbing. We came out on top of the house, onto a large flat area, surrounded by a low, brick wall.

"I'm going to take you flying." He stepped away from me, handed me a bundle of clothes that I hadn't noticed he was carrying and started to shift. "There's a pack at your feet, bring the clothes with us."

I found the duffel and quickly shoved the garments inside, then slung the strap over my neck. *Flying*. I was going flying. Maybe not as good as sex but it sounded like a thrill anyway.

When he was fully dragon, he reached out toward me with one of his clawed forearms. I went over to him, wondering how this was going to work, as he lowered the front of his body.

Climb up my haunch and straddle my neck, as close to my body as you can get.

With the help of his forearm, I heaved myself up on top of him and clenched him tightly with my legs.

Hang on was all the warning I got before he spread his wings and with one, powerful down sweep sent us skyward.

Adrenaline surged through me, kicking my heart into a higher gear as the house disappeared beneath us. The wind of our passage whipped my hair back from my head, a cold contrast to Kraid's hot body between my legs.

How do you feel? He tipped his head and looked back at me.

This is great. He rolled to the side and I dug into his scales, my stomach dropping.

Ah, there it is. I had no idea what he was talking about.

His angle of flight changed and we started descending. Before long I saw the flicker of city lights. It was breathtaking. There were far more lights glowing below us than I'd have thought. Then again, I'd never seen my city from the back of a dragon in flight before.

He brought us to the ground in a patch of darkness, landing softly and silently. I scrambled off his back and waited restlessly while he changed into his human form. He took the duffel from me and dressed, handing me a pair of shoes and a dress to put on, smiling that wicked half smile of his that caused my vagina to twinge.

"I hope you like seafood." He took my hand and started walking.

We wended our way through a scraggly forest, my hand clasped firmly in his. The soft susurrations of sound that I'd been hearing but not paying attention to grew suddenly louder as the trees thinned. My breath caught in my throat as he led me out onto a wide sandy shore. The moonlight reflecting off the gentle waves that rolled toward us, then withdrew.

"Where are we?" I stared at the vast body of water before me, knowing it was an ocean but unable to get a grip on that idea.

"Washington." He tugged my arm to get me going again. "There's a little place just down the beach that serves the best king crab. But I especially like the geoduck when they have it available."

"Do I want to know what a gooey duck is?"

Kraid's lips twitched in a grin. "An unusual clam." He dropped my hand and moved his arm around my back. "Here we are."

I looked at the gray wood siding of the place, only now catching the rich aromas wafting from an open barbeque at the rear.

Devon continued around to the front and I had to keep myself from laughing at the restaurant's name. Clam Hammers. The outside of the building was comfortably weathered, the inside was equally well worn.

And packed with patrons of all shapes, ages and sizes.

Devon and I were led to a small table in the rear of the dining room.

"We're ready to order."

I was impressed when a waiter arrived at our table moments later. With so many customers, I'd expected to be kept waiting.

"Do you have any geoduck?" The side of Devon's mouth curved wickedly.

"Fresh in today." The waiter flicked a glance at me, then smiled at the Dragon.

"Two orders and a bottle of Chardonnay."

I could have sworn some sort of communication passed between Devon and the waiter. I forgot about it after the wine came, when Devon raised his glass to me. "To my flame Angel." He winked, then took a sip of his drink.

A shiver of fear raced up my spine. Devon was being way too relaxed, almost joking with me, when not that long ago he was furious because I couldn't shift. He was up to something.

I raised my glass back at him. "To my flaming dragon."

He squinted at me but he nodded his head like maybe I'd complimented him. Hey, I wasn't sure myself what I'd meant by the statement.

The waiter descended on us with a large tray. He set a basket of bread on the table and a plate of butter, then he laid out our dinners.

I blinked at my plate.

It was an enormous, cooked cock, stuffed into a clam shell. My stomach rolled over and I fought to keep the wine I'd just consumed from coming back up. "It's a cock."

Devon and the waiter laughed. Then the tables nearest ours joined in. I finally managed to drag my eyes from the disturbing piece of meat and blinked again, when I saw the Dragon still chuckling. "You're laughing."

"The look on your face was priceless." His eyes were still alight with his amusement.

"I take it this isn't a penis?"

"No, it really is a clam, it just looks like a penis."

"And I'm supposed to cut it up and eat it?"

He stared at me for a moment. "You could always...swallow it whole."

I rolled my eyes, wondering why it was that Devon had to develop a sense of humor now.

He motioned to the waiter and the man whisked our plates away, replacing them with enormous steaming bowls of a creamy soup.

"Chowder." He placed a bowl of crackers on the table. "Only way to eat geoduck, in my opinion."

With that, he left our table. Devon lifted the bottle of wine and refilled our glasses. He caught me eyeing the soup. "I can have him bring back the other plate, if you'd prefer."

I sent him the evil eye and he winked at me.

"Eat." He lifted his own spoon and drew it through the chowder. His movements exaggerated, showing me how to do it.

With a sigh I picked up my spoon and scooped up some of the broth. It was sweeter than I expected. I took another bite, snagging what I thought was a piece of the clam. It was slightly gritty but the flavor compensated for that.

We ate the rest of the meal in a companionable silence, had an after-dinner coffee, then Devon paid the bill and led me back out onto the beach.

"I want you to pay attention to everything I do, once we return to the place we landed." He pulled me close to his side and glared at a couple of men who were heading into the restaurant. "There is no reason that I can think of why you are unable to shift."

"Okay." *Not that it would make any difference.*

The duffel bag was where we'd left it. Devon stripped without hesitation, then looked at me. "Take your clothes off."

"If I'm not going to shift, do I really need to?"

He stepped close and loomed over me. "Oh, you're going to shift."

With the Dragon's help I shed my clothing and packed it into the bag. I slung the thing over my shoulder and waited for Devon to change.

"Are you concentrating?" he growled at me.

"Yes." Actually, I was wondering why I'd never noticed that mole before, about three inches southeast of his belly button.

Then the mole disappeared behind golden scales and Devon flexed his wings over my head.

Your turn.

I closed my eyes, imagined myself turning into a dragon, altered the image to a very sexy dragon. Added bright red lipstick and a giant-sized curly wig. Okay, it wasn't working.

You are trying, aren't you? The irritation in Devon's voice let me know that he'd picked up my thoughts and wasn't particularly pleased.

"Yes, I'm trying! It's just not working."

He stared at me for over a minute, then offered me his foreleg.

Let's fly.

He gave me a leg up and I clutched my thighs tightly to his neck, bracing myself for liftoff.

This time he flew closer to the ground, though it was dark, I could see things flash by beneath us and the speed of his flight took my breath away.

Shit, bats. Hang on.

Before I processed the information, Devon was rocketing upward. He twisted, hard, to his right and I came away from his neck.

I arced outward, away from him, as he continued to climb for a moment, evidently unaware I was no longer riding him.

Then I began to plummet back toward the surface.

Kraid!

I focused on a spot of light that was rapidly growing larger. The rush of the air over my skin was chilling me, as I wondered if immortality would save me from this type of fall.

I caught a glimpse of treetops and knew that even if I did live through this experience I'd be damaged. Badly.

My heart kicked into high gear, the blood pounding in my ears, the spiky top of a pine tree racing toward me.

Oh fuck.

It was the last thought I had, before a tingling, burning wave of magic surged through me. Lights sparked in my eyes, my bones and muscles stretched. Then I spread my wings and swept them downward, ending my fall.

Holy shit! I tested my wings with huge, languid strokes that sent me higher and higher into the night sky.

Everything was brighter, easier to see, smell, taste, as I soared away from my doom.

I can fly!

I sensed Devon nearing before I saw him. *Fly fast and high, my love, for when I catch you, I plan to mount you.*

What? I glanced over my shoulder at my mate and saw the fires burning in his eyes, the wisps of flame that shot from between his teeth.

Now! he cried, and I put on a burst of speed and shot away from him.

The blood racing through my veins now was hot with excitement, arousal. I doubled my efforts and climbed, a streak of gold in the night as I raced toward the moon.

Devon roared, *Mine!*, right before the weight of his body slammed into my back. I folded my wings close to my body to keep them from damage, as my mate's forearms locked around my chest.

Mine. The desire in his voice had my tail lifting, curling out of the way.

He bumped the head of his cock against my sex until he was seated at my opening. He adjusted his grip around my body, then with a tremendous thrust, drove his entire length inside.

I arched my back, a strange hooting call vibrating out of my throat.

He grasped my shoulder between his teeth, bit down, then started driving his cock in and out of me with hard, brutal strokes.

Yes. He hammered into me, causing jolts of pleasure to shoot through my core.

My magic flared, sending balls of light straight up into the air. *Kraid!* The orgasm started as a rolling wave of pleasure then burst over me like a tidal wave. My sheath fisted around his cock, squeezing tightly, letting up, only to squeeze again as ecstasy ripped through me. The magic flared higher, hotter, erupting in a torrent of energy that blazed across the sky like fireworks.

Fuck, yes! Devon's shaft hardened further, pulsed, then the hot wash of his cum splashed into my core.

Locked together we shuddered and groaned as we both came for over a minute.

Some internal warning system forced my eyes open.

Ground! I shouted in my head, as I saw how close we were to smashing into the earth.

Devon flapped his wings as he withdrew from my body, then shoved me away from him. I unfurled my wings and, with a few, swift strokes, started climbing again.

Over here. The Dragon took the lead and I noticed the flat area on the roof of the house, our house, drawing nearer.

I touched down beside him, then concentrated on shifting into my normal form, panicking slightly when it didn't happen right away.

Devon practically carried me down the stairs and into our bedroom, where he tumbled me onto the mattress, coming down on top of me, between my legs.

"My God, that was beautiful." He crushed his mouth down on mine, thrusting his tongue between my lips aggressively.

I pressed myself up against his chest, wrapping my arms around his neck, tangling my fingers in his hair as he continued to eat at my mouth.

He broke away from me to trail kisses along my jaw and down the side of my neck, nipping the tender flesh at the base where it met my shoulder.

"Lift your legs," he breathed against my skin, raising gooseflesh and causing a shiver to skate through me.

I grasped his waist with my thighs, reached between us and guided his cock to my vagina. With a swift jerk of his hips, he impaled himself to the balls.

"Fuck, you are absolutely perfect, woman." He drew his cock most of the way out, then rammed it in again. Heat wafted over my neck as he worked his hands under my ass and tilted my hips upward. "Fire me up, love."

My power was already simmering close to the surface so it took only a thought to send a blast of it straight to where we were joined.

He gasped, groaned, then took a section of my neck between his teeth as he started pounding his cock into my depths.

Energy poured out of me faster, hotter, in time with his strokes. I arched my back and struggled against his hold so that I could move against him. He bit down harder, his teeth piercing my flesh, his chest pressing me into the mattress as he powered on.

My muscles coiled, tensed, then his cock grew larger, harder and I shattered, sobbing out his name. His thrusts came ever faster, my vagina spasming around his rigid flesh, as bursts of pleasure shot through me.

Devon threw his head back, the tendons in stark relief on his neck, his eyes wild. He stared into my eyes, into me, his lips drawing up in a wicked grin as his cock pulsed and the heat of his seed spewed against my womb.

"Yes," he rasped as he continued to pump out his semen. "God, yes."

When his balls were drained, he hovered over me, speculation coming over his expression. I stared up at him, amazed at how strong my feelings for him had become, at how very deeply I'd fallen in love with him. Especially since he pissed me off half the time.

"What are you thinking?" His features softened, something I rarely saw on his face.

"How did this all happen so fast?"

"Ah, Angel." He brushed his cheek against mine, a surprisingly intimate gesture. "You were meant to be mine."

Chapter Thirteen

I woke up with the first morning rays slanting through the balcony doors. Why the hell I was awake at this hour I had no earthly idea. Kraid had fucked the living daylights out of me again last night, determined to see me knocked up and the prophecy fulfilled.

Then I caught sight of him standing at the railing, his face held in profile. My heart clenched in my chest as the sun gilded his naked flesh. All masculine beauty and power, his sculpted muscles truly a work of art, making my mouth go dry and parts farther south moisten with appreciation. Desire.

He turned to face me, his rigid shaft pointing my direction. My God, how I loved this man. And he was all mine.

I rose from the bed and went to him. He took me in his arms, his erection hot and hard against my stomach.

"I'm finding myself reluctant to call Dragos for the Rite of Conceiving."

"What are you talking about?"

"For my kind, our kind," he looked down at me, his expression a mix of gentleness and pride that I'd never seen before, "if I want to make sure that you become pregnant with my get, then we'll have to perform the Rite. The rite is so old that no one really remembers why it works, we just know that it does. If our Annar joins us, fucks you while I fuck you, bites you when I do and fills you with his seed, at the same time I do, then you will conceive." I felt him take a deep breath, then let it out slowly. "But I find that I don't like the idea of Dragos fucking you." He slanted a grin at me. "How bizarre is that?"

"That's the nicest thing you've ever said to me." I squeezed myself tighter to his body. Though the idea of Dragos joining with us felt...right to me.

"Personally, I find it rather annoying." His voice colored with discontent.

There were several muffled "pops" as I blew off my aggravation at that comment by fritzing some random pinecones.

* * * * *

I stood looking out over the lawn as the sun dipped behind the trees. I heard the rustle of movement as Devon joined me on the balcony, wrapping me in his arms from behind. He pressed a kiss to the top of my head, as he nestled his erection against my spine.

"It's all arranged." His deep voice held excitement, with just a hint of resignation.

I leaned into his warmth for a moment, then turned in his arms so I was facing him. "I just want you to know, Kraid, I love you very much." I stared into his eyes, looking for an indication that he returned at least a part of that emotion.

"I think I'm finally coming to understand your people's meaning of the word." He lifted me and set me on top of the railing, easing his hips between my legs.

We were eye to eye and I saw the fires flickering in the depths of his.

"I love you too, Angel." Then he pressed his lips to mine in a gentle kiss.

"Are you two ready?" Dragos leaned against the rail at my side, his lips curved in a wry grin. I smiled back at him, aware of the fondness I felt for the man, glad he was a part of our bond.

I looked to Devon and the Dragon nodded to our Annar. "Yes."

He set me back on my feet, then he led me down the balcony to the concealed doorway, Dragos following. The three of us climbed to the roof, where Devon and Dragos started shedding their clothing.

"Take your clothes off, Angel, we're going to fly."

Okay, I was starting to get nervous about this now. I looked between the two men with their solemn expressions, their eyes burning with purpose and lust and I felt like bolting.

I was only wearing a robe, so I untied the belt slowly and let the sides fall open. Dragos stalked over to me and I thought he was going to yank the robe off my back. He reached past me though and when he leaned back he held a shot glass in his hand.

My nerves ratcheting up a notch, I let the robe fall to the ground. Devon moved in close on my other side, both men towering over me, their excitement grating across my already tight nerves.

"Drink." Dragos shoved the glass at me and I stared at it.

"It's the same thing you drank before our mating," Devon growled, his eyes glowing with anticipation.

Before I could change my mind, I grabbed the glass and tossed the liquid down, belatedly remembering the burn that immediately followed. Blinking the tears out of my eyes, I found the men smiling at me with wolfish grins.

Devon threw an arm around me and led me to the center of the roof. "Shift."

He began to shimmer and when I looked over at Dragos, I saw that he too was changing. I concentrated on being a dragon and felt my own bones growing, altering. In moments I was a dragon. The men, already transformed, were shuffling impatiently from foot to foot waiting for me.

I took a step toward Devon and stumbled when my ass end plowed into Dragos. *Ooph*. Then I tried to move away from him and I blundered into Devon. *Damn it, how do you guys move?*

I could hear their laughter in my head.

Get ready, love, this is going to be one of the greatest moments of your life, Devon's dragon eyes sparkled at me. *Fly fast and fly high.*

He lunged at me and I spread my wings and took off. I heard their wings unfurl below me and I lengthened the sweep of mine. I rocketed straight up into the night sky, my eyes on the stars. The wind whistled as it passed over me, almost blotting out the sounds of pursuit.

I urged my wings to beat faster, the blood thrumming through my veins filled with the power of the beast and my magic. Sparks began to trail in my wake, just before the air grew thinner, harder to fly through.

I slowed and the triumphant bugle of the two males rang out.

Suddenly I was rammed from behind. I quickly retracted my wings as steely arms with sharp talons trapped me. Then a vision of golden perfection rose in front of me. I bleated a challenge to this male, my mate. He threw his head back and blew a column of fire. With wisps of smoke still curling from between his jaws he lowered his head and looked at me.

The air left my lungs in a rush as he slammed into my front, his claws digging into my shoulders. Then I felt the hot head of his cock as it prodded my stomach.

My God, I want you, his voice vibrated through me.

Trusting them to keep me from plummeting to earth, I relaxed in their grip. Both men rumbled their approval.

I felt their tension rise to a nearly screaming pitch. *Primi acest samanta!* they shouted, at the same time as they stabbed their cocks into me, Devon in my cunt and Dragos in my ass. *Zamisli!*

Then they folded their wings and started to thrust.

My magic blasted out of me, encasing the two larger dragons and myself in a fiery shield alight with electricity. It sizzled and flared as Dragos' hot, hard shaft forged its way in and out of my rectum, while Devon's engorged cock was grinding across the nerve endings in my vagina.

Dragos' claws tightened on my hips, the two creatures' strokes picking up power and speed as we plunged toward the earth.

I came, screaming inside my mind at the intensity of pleasure that shattered my body. Devon roared, Dragos echoing him as they powered on with ever more forceful thrusts.

My muscles clenched, the scales at the base of Devon's cock scraped across my clit and I exploded again. Fireballs shot out in every direction as I bucked and writhed between their unyielding bodies.

Then they both drove themselves in at the same time and held.

Zamisli acum!

Their cocks throbbed, they lowered their heads to my neck and in unison sank their jagged teeth into my flesh. Then hot jets of semen spewed and spurted into my depths.

They were still coming when I heard their wings unfurl and felt the shudder pass through their bodies as they landed.

When they'd finally finished, the three of us shifted form before the men withdrew from my body.

Dragos took me into his arms and kissed me deeply before handing me over to Devon.

The Dragon shook the other man's hand. "Thank you."

"My pleasure," Dragos replied, then turned and walked away.

Devon lifted my chin, his eyes glittering, as he gazed down at me, the edge of his mouth curved in a grin. "It is done."

Epilogue

"God damn it!" I blasted another hole in my parents' hedge as I stomped around their backyard in a fit of anger. "Why does this kind of shit always happen to me?"

My brother Justin stepped out onto the back stoop and leaned against the railing, his lips twitching into a grin. "You done yet?"

I spun on him, leveling a finger at his crotch. "You just watch out, or you'll be next."

He actually had the nerve to tip his head back and laugh.

"Ooph." I clipped the top off the shrub directly below him with a satisfying sizzle.

He just rolled his eyes at me. "Come in and wash up. Dinner is just about ready and the Dragon is getting on Mom's last nerve."

"Is Elizabeth still hiding?" I dragged my feet as I shuffled toward the back door.

"That wasn't very nice of you." Justin's eyebrows lowered as he frowned at me.

"I couldn't help myself." I scudded the toe of my shoe in the dirt at the bottom of the steps.

"Uh-huh." He straightened up and turned for the door. "Try not to shoot anyone else at dinner tonight."

I stuck my tongue out at his back as I tagged along behind him into the house.

"There you are," Mom practically shouted, her hair swirled wildly about her head, a fashion I couldn't remember seeing on her since Justin and I were little.

As I stared at her she raked her fingers through the mess, leaving it looking pretty much the same when she was done.

"Angel," Devon growled, stalking across the kitchen toward me.

He dropped a hand to my abdomen when he reached my side, his other hand resting possessively on my ass. "Twins." His voice still held the awe he'd first expressed when Elizabeth made the announcement. "Do you have any idea what a blessing this is? Do you know what a significant development this is that you're not just having *one* true-blood but *two*?"

"Twins," I grouched, heaving a heartfelt sigh. I didn't really want one baby, let alone two, even though I understood how much it meant to Kraid and the other dragons.

Devon ushered me to a seat at the table, holding my chair for me, as though I was months along in my pregnancy instead of days.

The family started passing dishes and helping themselves, like this was an ordinary meal. I felt anything but ordinary. I was sorry we'd come here, sorry we'd asked Elizabeth to confirm my condition.

"Twins," Devon said to everyone and no one in particular. A stupid grin plastered on his face.

"Kraid," I moaned, not wanting to be endlessly reminded about the two foreign bodies that were growing inside my own.

"Actually," Elizabeth forked some meat onto her plate, "I only asked you how you felt about twins."

I flicked a glance at my mate and saw the skin draw tight across his brow. "Are you saying I'm not going to have twins?" I, myself, was feeling better already.

"That's right," she poured gravy over her meat, "you're not having twins."

Suddenly hungry, I started reaching for all the dishes I'd skipped the first time around. "I'm not having twins," I said much too happily as I caught sight of Devon's brow ridge beginning to form.

"No, dear," Elizabeth added peas to her plate, taking her time.

The clatter of utensils stilled as we waited for her to continue, the room dropping to an expectant hush. Devon rumbled softly next to me, heat radiating off his body. I placed my hand on his thigh and was surprised when he threaded his fingers through mine.

"Not twins." She smiled down at her lap, her fingers curling around the side of a platter, lifting the dish slightly and I realized she was thinking of using it as a shield. Then she raised her eyes to mine, a mischievous twinkle in hers that I was sure I didn't like.

"Not twins, my dear, but – triplets."

About the Author

Lisa Andel was born in City Iowa, Iowa. When in grade school, her family moved to Illinois, where she found she had a knack for telling stories. Most of them got her into trouble. It wasn't until she had lived in Ohio for several years before she finally found a constructive outlet for her creativity.

She lives with her lover, two mentally challenged dogs, and an ever-changing number of freshwater fish.

Lisa writes contemporary erotic romance that features vampires, shapeshifters, dragons, demons, sorcerers, gods, and beings that you've never dreamed before. You'll even find some humans.

Lisa welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at www.ellorascave.com.

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Her Werewolf



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