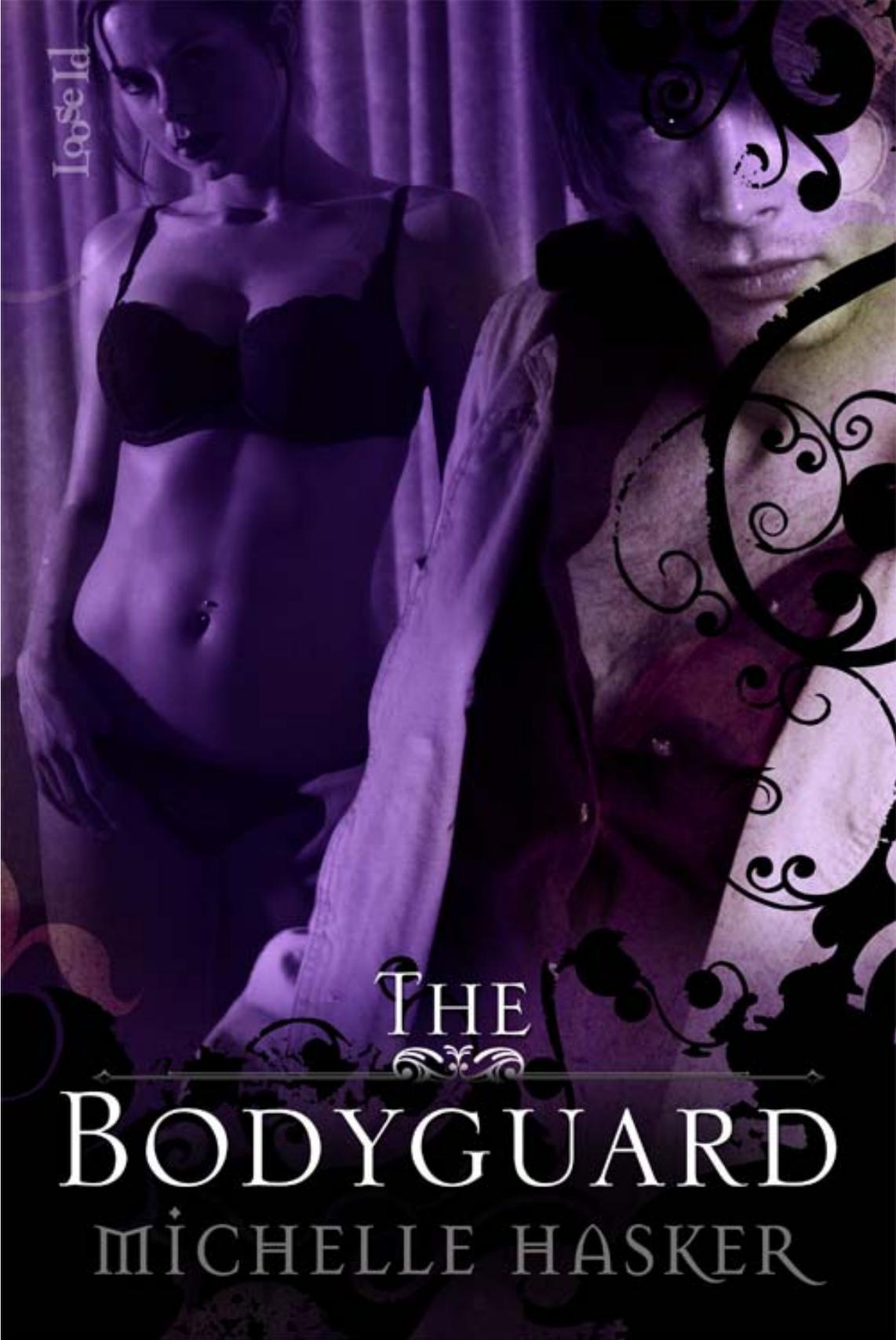


Loose Id



THE  
BODYGUARD  
MICHELLE HASKER

# THE BODYGUARD

Michelle Hasker

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# The Bodyguard

Michelle Hasker

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## Dedication

*For my biggest fan, my Aunt Kathy. Thanks for all the long phone calls listening to me plot. Love ya.*

## Chapter One

“Bite me.”

“Are you serious?” Elena Fortescu stared at her bodyguard.

“Dead.” Nicolas Dupree stood his ground.

At six foot six and a wall of solid muscle, he couldn't be used to having people stand up to him, but she wasn't afraid of him. It had been a long year. A long, long, loooong year. One where she'd been cooped up in this house. All because of Lucian.

So Nicolas guarded her during the day and her cousin Adrian watched her at night. Since he was human, she'd assumed Nicolas would be easier to manipulate, but Adrian was the one who couldn't stop her from doing anything. And Nicolas was the one who had her respect. She spent the days either sleeping or with Nicolas. She'd grown to know him very well, and he probably thought he knew her well, but he would be wrong. If he knew what she was he'd tremble in his black boots.

Instead, his brilliant blue eyes met hers in a challenge she couldn't let pass. Ever since she'd healed physically, she'd been itching for a fight. Preferably with Lucian. That bastard was the reason Sorin had hired her bodyguards, and the reason for her sleepless days and

nights. She wanted blood. It didn't even matter whose blood it was at this point. And Nicolas's called to her like a siren's song.

"You don't know what you're saying. You have no right to make me stay inside," Elena snapped, and turned to walk past him.

"The hell I don't, princess. You're not setting one foot outside those doors tonight." He crossed his arms and narrowed his eyes as he stepped in front of her.

"You don't scare me, Nicolas. Now move out of my way." She reached out to push him away, but he wedged himself in the doorframe and wouldn't budge. "If I have to hurt you to get outside, I will."

Nicolas snorted and shook his head. "Not a chance, honey."

"Don't honey me, you big baboon. I'm a grown woman. I'm older than you! I can go out for a drink if I want."

"Not dressed like that."

Elena looked down. She had on a short black dress that covered the essentials. A silver chain accentuated her small waist, and black boots came up to her thighs. Her outfit was actually conservative compared to most others she'd seen lately. When you have the body of the eternally young, why not flaunt it? "What's wrong with the way I look?"

"Nothing, if you want to get propositioned by every man in the bar." Nicolas stared pointedly at her breasts. "That is cut so low I can see your nipples."

"In your dreams, honey," she mocked, tossing the endearment back at him.

"You wouldn't want to know about *my dreams*," he purred and then licked his lips.

"All right." Elena immediately switched into fighting mode. "Let's see you take me, big guy."

Nicolas eyed her as she moved into a stance she liked to call Come-And-Get-It. She raised her hands and bounced, waiting for him to assume his position. After months of sparring she knew his moves better than he did. There was no way he could win. But instead

of taking his usual position, he grabbed her arms and pressed them to her sides as he spun around, pushed her back, and pinned her to the wall.

“Nicolas!” she gasped in surprise. His sudden move had caught her off guard. It was a first for him. “I didn’t think you had it in you.”

He was such an honorable man it hadn’t occurred to her that he’d pull a fast one on her. But then she’d already learned that lesson the hard way. Trust no one and never let your guard down.

Not only was Nicolas very fast, but he wasn’t as easy to trick as Adrian, either. If he weren’t human, she’d have had Sorin replace him long ago. Ever since her attack and imprisonment she couldn’t stand not being in control or being around people who were stronger than her. But Sorin trusted Nicolas, and she did, too. Now that she’d gotten to know him.

As he pressed his hard body against her, she was glad he didn’t know she had superhuman strength on her side. If she really wanted to go out, she could put him out of commission and go down to the bar to find a victim. Blood donor. Whatever. All she wanted to do was to sink her fangs into Nicolas.

“Surprise, surprise.” Nicolas winked.

Elena wondered if she could stomach using her charms on him. When she needed to feed she found weak-willed humans and seduced them. But Nicolas wasn’t weak-willed, and he was her brother’s friend. And, she grinned, he wasn’t as immune to her charms as he claimed. Not with the way his eyes darkened as he focused on her breasts. Again. Elena shivered as the sound of blood pumping quickly through his veins increased her hunger. She licked her lips as she watched the barely visible throbbing of his carotid.

“Mmm.” He buried his face against her neck and breathed in deeply, sending a rush of fluids to her core.

*Take me, handsome.*

He leaned back a little and looked at her with a wide grin.

*Did I say that out loud?* Elena broke his hold and knocked him to the ground. As they fell she pulled out a small but deadly dagger. She sat on his chest, holding the blade to his neck, waiting for him to make a move.

“Gotcha.” She grinned, triumphant at her success.

Nicolas growled and reached up, causing the knife to dig into his flesh. Elena gasped and pulled away, but not fast enough to prevent the blade from slicing him. The sight and scent of his blood hit her hard and fast. Hunger took over, and the change started so quickly she was helpless to stop it.

With a screech, she dropped the knife and backed away from him, shielding her face. Sooner or later he’d find out what she was. She wanted it to be later, but his word choice and flirting had brought out her baser instincts. It was all his fault. Inviting a vampire to bite you was akin to dangling raw meat in front of a werewolf. She should just bite him and be done with it.

“Elena?”

She heard the concern in his voice, but refused to look at him. From the scent of his blood, she knew it would taste rich and thick, sweet as honey. And man, was she hungry. Even just one little taste would be her undoing. She didn’t want him to find out her secret this way. She’d thought she’d never trust anyone again, after the abuse she’d suffered from Lucian, but sometime in the past year Nicolas had slipped under her guard, and once in, he’d refused to budge.

“I’m okay, Elena. You know, when you play with knives, someone is bound to get hurt. I thought you had better control than this.”

“Go away,” she mumbled past her enlarged fangs. Damn, he’d never understand her now. It was difficult to talk with fangs down past your lower lip. Her eyes were probably glowing, too. Terrific.

“Honey, what’s the matter? It’s just a little nick. It doesn’t even hurt. Look, it’s not even that much blood.”

*Shit.* If only he knew. Elena tried to keep her face covered as she ran for the stairs. If she could get into her bedroom, she’d be safe from his prying eyes. He never entered her room without permission because Sorin had threatened to kill him if he ever set foot in there.

“Dammit, woman. What the hell is wrong with you tonight?” The sound of his footsteps echoed in the hall as he chased her.

She reached the base of the stairs as his hands closed on her shoulders. He spun her around and pressed her against the wall while she kept her hands over her face. It took every ounce of control, but she managed to force her inner beast into submission.

Nicolas tugged her hands away and she glared at him.

“You just can’t keep your hands off me, can you, Dupree?”

“I find it more difficult with you dressed like this, yes.” His gaze dropped to her breasts again.

“Pervert,” she chided as she sucked in a deep breath meant to raise her breasts higher. As they threatened to pop over the top of her dress, she watched Nicolas struggle with himself. It was tempting to invade his privacy and listen to the thoughts obviously racing through his mind.

God, how she wanted him. But she knew the only way it could happen was if he gave her control. Since he was human, her vampiric strength would win out if it came down to a battle, but after getting to know him so well this past year she couldn’t believe he’d do anything to hurt her.

His hands trembled as he raised them to cup her face. He lowered his mouth and kissed her, tentatively at first, then more eagerly when she parted her lips. A breathless moan

escaped as his tenderness surprised her. Instead of the raw, hot desire she'd expected, he gave her sweet, gentle loving.

Hunger rising, Elena cupped the back of his head with one hand, and wrapped the other around his waist, tugging him closer. Rock hard, his cock dug into her belly as she pressed her breasts against his chest.

The sweet, metallic scent of his blood stirred her into action. Throwing caution to the wind, she wrapped one leg around him and kissed her way up his cheek to his ear, where she teased his earlobe with tiny nips and hard sucks. She dipped her tongue in his ear, then licked a trail down his neck.

When she slid her tongue over the small amount of blood hardening on his wound, her stomach tightened and heat flared. Elena moaned, some of her juices dampening her thighs as her desire swelled. It had been so long and he tasted so good. Hell, time didn't matter. Something in Nicolas called to her, and she was powerless to resist.

Nicolas moved, exposing his neck to her ministrations. She lapped at the wound once, twice, then froze just before she could sink her fangs deep in his neck. Control. She needed to control herself. He wasn't just a meal.

"Elena?" he whispered. His hands dug into her ass, lifting her so he could press more intimately against her. "I want to be inside you. Now."

"Yes, please," she whispered as he bit the sensitive flesh of her neck.

Warm hands slid under her dress and up to cup her bare ass.

"Oh, Elena, my wicked, wanton girl." He sighed then slowly slid her down his body.

The sound of his zipper opening and his groan as he released his cock from confinement added to her hunger. Once again he reached under her dress and lifted her up, pressing her back against the wall as she wrapped her legs around him. First one finger, then two entered her canal, probing and testing her readiness. She tightened around his fingers,

wanting more, about to demand more when he pulled his hand out and licked his fingers. Elena met his gaze and held it, mesmerized by the desire glowing in his gorgeous orbs.

“You taste so good,” he whispered, his breath brushing against her lips.

“So do you.” She moaned and moved against him. “I need you inside me. Please, Nicolas.”

Begging was so unlike her, but he was so delicious. One taste wasn’t enough. She needed him buried deep inside as she drank his blood.

“Elena, I --”

“Stop talking and just fuck me, Nicolas. Now!” The last came out as a growl, and she was sure her eyes flashed her displeasure.

He blinked and looked at her with an odd expression before lifting her up and impaling her on his long, thick cock. She moaned, fingers gripping him tightly as he slid in deeper and deeper until he filled her completely.

“Shit.” She gasped for air as her muscles tightened around him

“Are you okay?”

“I didn’t expect you to be so ... ohhh,” she said, and gasped again, nonsense words escaping when he twitched inside her.

His thumb found her clit, and he pressed the tiny bud, rubbing it as he began to slide in and out of her quick and hard. Then he grabbed her with both hands and rammed her down on his cock as tingles shot up her spine. Even though it was too soon, her body tightened and electricity raced through her veins. She shivered and clenched around him, her orgasm imminent.

“You. Are. So. Tight.” He grunted and thrust into her even harder with each word until at the last she screamed. Her body spasmed as he continued his thrusts until he joined her, shouting out his climax as he dug his fingers into her hips.

Elena collapsed, her head dropping on his shoulder as she struggled to breathe. He slid out of her, and set her down. She leaned back against the wall as he nuzzled her neck.

“Sorry, I lost control. You’re so damn responsive. I didn’t mean to take you like an animal. Did I hurt you?”

Something he said didn’t sound right, and suddenly she wasn’t in her house anymore, but a dark, damp dungeon. Instead of her gorgeous bodyguard holding her, it was Lucian, and it was her blood and his cum dripping down her body.

Panic had her gasping for air as her heart stopped, then slammed into a rapid tattoo. She whimpered and pushed at her captor. Bile rose in her throat as his cum leaked down her thighs.

“Elena?”

Nicolas’s voice came from far away, too far to help her. Lucian’s evil grin and his laughter rang in her ears. Suddenly cold, she shivered and blinked rapidly, trying to get her eyes to focus, but she couldn’t stop the memory.

“Oh, God.” She gagged and broke free. When Nicolas reached for her, she evaded him and raced up the stairs, skipping three or four at a time in her haste.

“Elena!”

She heard Nicolas, but her only thought was to escape from Lucian, to escape from the memories of him violating her in every conceivable way. She was on the verge of losing control and she didn’t want Nicolas to pay the price.

“Elena!”

He chased her up the stairs and down the hall. When she slammed into her bedroom and closed the door, he banged on it heavily.

“Dammit, Elena! Open up!”

The scent of blood and fear almost brought her fangs back down, but here in her bedroom, in her sanctuary, she felt the memories of Lucian moving back to the dark edges of her mind.

Usually when she had sex she was in total control and used it as a means to feed. Domination over human males was so easy when you had vampire magic. But she'd forgotten herself with Nicolas and let him take control. If only she wasn't so hungry she might have been able to stay in command of herself. One of the bottles of blood she kept in the fridge would have at least taken the edge off. But no, she'd wanted to wait.

Hunting was one of the most pleasurable parts of being a vampire. Her delicate frame was an advantage she liked to use. When men saw her alone, either their protective instincts made them come over, or they saw an easy target. Right now Nicolas probably thought she was a freak. Her goal had been to keep him in the dark as long as she could because she didn't plan on needing him much longer. Letting him go would be easier with her secret still intact.

Letting him go. Her heart tightened painfully at the thought. He wasn't like any other man she'd known. If there was anyone who could handle the transformation he was the one, but could she do that? Give him eternal life but curse him so that he'd spend the rest of it drinking blood? But then he'd want to dominate her just like everyone else.

"Elena!" Nicolas shouted as he burst into her room, nearly knocking the door off its hinges.

She backed up until she hit the bed and stared at him, cornered. At the sight of his face, red and angry, and his hands clenched at his sides, she felt the panic start up again. As her inner beast fought for release, she struggled to control it, and slid back onto the bed. She inched backward.

What did he want? He'd already fucked her, what else could he want from her? Even though she fought them, images of her imprisonment flashed before her eyes. Damn it, it had

been a whole year. Why couldn't she get over this? Nicolas. It was just Nicolas, her friend. He didn't want to hurt her. He couldn't hurt her. Just like he couldn't enter her bedroom, but had anyway.

"What do you want?" It came out as a whimper, but she couldn't help it.

He hesitated, confusion clouding his dark features. "Are you all right?"

"I'm fine. Not even sore. It's okay."

"It's not okay. I'm supposed to protect you, not ravish you. I hurt you, I know I did. You looked like you were in terrible pain as you ran up here. Let me make it better. I have some healing abilities --"

"I'm fine. Peachy keen, jelly bean."

"I don't believe you."

"You don't have to." She squeezed her eyes shut as he moved closer. She moved back until she hit the headboard, then swallowed and held out her hands. "I won't tell Sorin about what happened between us. You won't lose your job."

"Fuck my job! I couldn't live with myself if I hurt you."

Caring concern. Just what she didn't need. She could take care of herself better than he could. "You conceited jackass. I'm fine. Now get the hell out of my bedroom before I throw you out on your lily-white ass!"

He suddenly grinned and stopped in his tracks. "That's my girl. You had me worried for a minute. Promise me you won't go anywhere tonight."

"Fine, Nicolas. You win. I'm not going out tonight. But could you have Gloria bring up two bottles of my tomato juice?"

Nicolas sighed and ran a hand through his thick black hair. "I don't believe nothing's wrong. You aren't acting like yourself."

"I really need to get out. I need the fresh air. I've been cooped up for months. I don't like it."

“Until Lucian is caught you don’t have a choice. I have specific orders, and that is to guard you from sunup until sundown when my replacement arrives. I’m sorry that Adrian didn’t show up tonight and you’re stuck with me, but I’m not about to leave you alone, and we’re not going out. I can protect you better here.”

“You couldn’t handle Lucian if he did come after me.” Elena snapped her mouth shut before she could say anything else. *Smart, real smart. Drop more clues, why don’t you? Why not just tell him you’re a vampire and then kill him before he can stake you through the heart?*

Elena focused on hardening her heart. There was no room in there for humans. They had a short lifespan and, inevitably, Nicolas would die and leave her alone. And friendless.

“My brother never should have hired you. I can take care of myself.”

“Is that right, babe?” Nicolas asked, as he advanced on her. “From what I heard, Lucian barely left you alive.”

Elena shivered and climbed off the bed as she turned away, hiding her pain. She didn’t want to remember Lucian’s cruel hands on her as he tortured her. He’d wanted total submission and she’d refused to give it, even after he’d done his worst. In the end he’d failed, but she knew he’d be back. But she’d be ready. And one of them would die.

“I see I hit a sore spot. Did you think you were invincible?”

She drew in a few deep breaths to keep from killing him. She needed him. She needed a guard while she slept. Nicolas was one of the best. Hell, he was the sexiest man she’d ever seen. Who cared about his body-guarding skills? What she wouldn’t give to invite him into her bed. Wait. She’d just had him and it had turned into a nightmare. She wasn’t ready for sex. Not unless it was to feed. She might never enjoy the act of lovemaking again.

“Elena?” His voice was gentle as he grabbed her shoulders again and turned her around. “Seriously, are you okay?”

“Yes.” She sighed. Right now her fangs were under control. But a few more minutes this close to him and she wouldn’t be. Already, her juices were flowing, and she wanted nothing more than to have him deep inside her. *God, what is wrong with me?*

He tugged her against him, and held her pressed so tightly to his chest that she couldn’t breathe. Not that she needed to breathe, but it would have been nice to have the option. Oh, who was she kidding? There was no place she’d rather be.

Elena melted against him and turned her face into him. She sighed and snuggled against his broad chest until the sweet, metallic scent of blood became too much to bear. She glanced up. Controlling the demon inside was hard when she was this close to such a delicious specimen. All she needed to do was stretch on her tiptoes and sink her fangs into his soft, yielding flesh.

His grip tightened and he pulled her close as his gun dug into her stomach. When it moved she realized the bulge wasn’t his gun. *Oh, Shit.* He was hard. Again.

When he moaned and cupped her ass in his hands, her mind went blank. He shifted, lifting her. Elena reached up and wrapped her arms around his neck. Her lips brushed against his drying blood. She purred and sniffed him, the scent of aroused male enough to override the last of her self-control. Her tongue flicked against his neck. His moan filled her ears as she repeated the action, her fingers digging into his shoulders.

Nicolas guided her legs around his waist. His blue eyes were cloudy with desire and lust as her sensual magic rose up within her and broke free, leaving her trembling as his hands kneaded her ass while he rubbed his jean-covered erection against her. The only thing separating them was his pants.

Her fangs began to lengthen but she fought the urge. She didn’t want to hurt Nicolas or even worse, scare him off. She needed him. As a guard. Not a lover.

“Elena,” he whispered.

His eyes closed partway, reminding her of the expression *bedroom eyes*. She closed her eyes. *Please let me keep my inner beast under control.*

“I’ve tried to fight this for so long,” he whispered as he placed kisses along her jaw.

“How long?” Elena pulled back so she could see his face.

He groaned. “Since I first laid eyes on you.”

“Oh, really?”

“It’s not your looks.” He laughed. “Well, it’s not just your looks. You can’t deny the chemistry between the two of us. Even the air sizzles between us. The others already suspect there’s something going on.”

Elena snorted even though he spoke the truth. She’d noticed it as well. “Unless you shut up and kiss me there will be nothing between us except a cold, hard, wooden door.”

“It’s far too late for the ice-maiden act now, sweetheart. I’ve already been buried deep inside your tight, wet sheath. Your body trembled as you came all over my cock. How can you even want to pretend nothing happened in the hallway?”

Nicolas tightened his hold and kissed her. His lips and tongue drove every thought out of her head. The fine hairs on the back of her neck and arms rose as the air around them grew thicker, sizzling, just like he’d said it did.

With a moan, she buried her fingers in his thick black locks and pulled him closer. “Nicolas.” His name came out on a sigh as he slid a hand under her dress and in between her slick folds.

“Tell me I didn’t hurt you. Tell me it was something else that made you run away.”

Elena groaned. How could he expect her to say anything, let alone understand what he was saying as he slid his finger in and out of her?

“Nicolas, less words, more action.”

“As you wish, my lady.”

She gasped as he smiled and set her down. He lifted her dress off and tossed it across the room. Before she could move, he pushed her down onto the bed and cupped her breasts. Pleasure raced through her as he pinched her nipples.

“Fuck me, again. Nicolas.”

He grinned again, then rolled her over and took one of her pebbled peaks into his mouth and suckled. She buried her hands in his soft hair again, as this time she rocked her thighs against him. When he switched his attention to the other nipple she wondered if she could come from this act alone.

“You are so beautiful,” he whispered as he kissed his way from her breasts to the top of her mons.

Elena gasped and arched. The chilly air on her damp, heated flesh only added to her desire. He was potent. How did she think she could keep control? When his tongue flicked against her clit, she cried out, all rational thought gone once more.

“Gods, woman. What you do to me should be illegal.” When he groaned, the vibration from his mouth rumbled against her sensitive nub.

“Nicolas!” she screeched and arched again.

He pulled away and grinned up at her as she panted. Before she could brace herself, he brushed his nose against her folds. “You’re so wet and ready.”

“Yes,” she cried out, grabbing his shoulders. “Please, Nicolas. Please.”

“Say it, Elena. Tell me you want *me*. Not just my dick, but me.” He pulled away as if he was going to wait for her answer.

She whimpered and met his hungry gaze. “You. Okay. I need you, Nicolas. No one else. And if you don’t put your dick in me and make me come, I’ll cut your head off.”

“With pleasure.” He laughed and finished undressing. His flesh gleamed in the soft light from the moon. His cock stood at attention. As the hard shaft twitched against his stomach, she wondered how he managed to keep something that big hidden.

Once he was naked, Nicolas kneeled on the floor and took her foot in his hand. He massaged first one, then the other before he slowly worked his way up to her thighs. Elena moaned and reached for him when he hesitated at her core.

“Are you sure, Elena? There will be no going back once we start.”

How could he be so honorable while she was spread on the bed, naked and trembling for him? Her heart clenched, but she ignored it. There was no room for love. Not in her life. Not when just existing put her life at risk. No.

“We already fucked once, what does another time matter?”

Nicolas froze, the tip of his shaft brushing against her wet folds. “There is no going back to bodyguard and client. You’ll be mine and I’ll be yours until one or both of us decides to end the relationship. I will not be used for my body, Elena. Decide now. Relationship with me or with your vibrator?” To punctuate his question, he rubbed the tip of his cock against her clit.

No man ordered her about. No man. She avoided looking at him as she rolled away and grabbed the edge of her bedspread and tugged it over her. “I’m sorry. I don’t know what I was thinking. Please have Gloria send up two bottles of my juice on your way out.”

Even though she wasn’t looking at him, she could feel his tension. It radiated to her in waves. She wasn’t a tease. But he was right. Once they made love he could never guard her again. Most men became ensnared in her sensual magic. Wiping his mind of their lovemaking would be a greater sin than what she usually did to her meals. She loved him too much to mess with him.

Love. Tremors racked her body as she tried to deny it. There was no room in her life for love. Lucian was still out there and she wouldn’t find peace until he was gone.

“Elena?” Nicolas leaned over her and cupped her chin as he forced her to meet his gaze. “We should talk about this.”

“This?” Why did her voice sound so shrill? She cleared her throat. “There’s nothing to talk about. I apologize for coming on to you. Please don’t quit. I’ll stay away from you from now on.”

“Quit?” His blue gaze pierced her. Could he see inside to her very soul? “What are you talking about, woman? I chased you in here. I should be begging you not to fire me. I obviously misread the situation. I apologize for forcing myself on you.”

“You didn’t force yourself on me.” She couldn’t help it. She shivered and turned away. Fighting the urge to crawl into a ball, Elena whispered, “Please go. We’ll discuss this later.”

## Chapter Two

Nicolas studied Elena as she shivered under the thick bedspread. Somehow he must have misread the situation. The notion that she merely wanted him for a good time hurt more than he'd thought possible. No. He'd sensed her desire, but something had happened to end it. If he really wanted to know he could read her mind, but he couldn't do that to her. Not anymore. It was an invasion of her privacy, and obvious that she didn't want what he did. Reading her mind hurt too much.

He dressed swiftly, and cast another glance at her before he left the room and fixed, then closed her door. Maybe he would never know what had come over her, but his duty was to protect her, not love her. Even if he did love her with every beat of his heart.

Not once over the past year had she stepped beyond the boundary of friends. Once in a while she flirted, but never had she given off the vibes he'd felt tonight. He knew she was a vampire, even though he suspected she didn't want him to know. Perhaps she feared he'd try and kill her? Who knew what went through her mind.

Vampire or not, he did love her. He wanted to spend the rest of their eternal lives together, but Elena acted as if she wanted to live only for the moment and didn't care what

happened to her or anyone else. A carefree lifestyle wasn't for him, and he didn't think it was for her, either. Something was wrong and he would find out what it was.

If only Lucian would attack on his shift, he'd gladly slay the beast that had hurt Elena. But Lucian was a vampire, and he'd only come out at night when Adrian, her vampire guard, was here. Where was Adrian, anyway?

Nicolas walked back down to the kitchen and glanced around the room. Where was Gloria? She should have been here by now, too. Something was wrong. He reached in the fridge and grabbed two bottles of Elena's *juice*. He knew it was blood, but if she wanted to pretend she was human, he'd let her. Pretending *he* was human was becoming more difficult every day, though. Why she imagined her brother would hire a human to guard her during her weakest hours was beyond him.

He checked the alarm system. Everything was okay according to the steady green lights, but he sensed a disturbance in the magic he'd used to back up the security system. Nicolas put the bottles down and pulled out his cell phone. He used speed dial to call Sorin. Elena's older brother was his boss and closest confidant.

"What's up, Nicolas?"

"Adrian and Gloria haven't shown up yet. I haven't heard from either of them."

"Does Elena seem okay?" Sorin asked.

"I talked her out of going out for the night. She's in her bedroom now. All the lights on the alarm system indicate it's running okay and that no one has tried to get into the house."

"But?"

"Something set off the magical trap I set. I can't tell how many of them or what they are."

"I'll send over -- no. I'll be over myself. Give me five minutes to free myself and get there."

Nicolas disconnected the call and walked back to the stairs. He wanted to check outside the house for whatever had disturbed his magical trap, but staying with Elena was more important. Chances were good there would be more than one attacker, and if he went outside he'd be leaving her alone and vulnerable.

The house was quieter than usual. He took the stairs two at a time wondering why he hadn't heard another peep from Elena. Had he frightened her? Perhaps he'd come on too strong. He'd forgotten to keep his magic under control and the combined powers of their sensual magic must have left her with a nagging ache. Like the one he had.

He knocked on the door. When she didn't answer he opened it anyway. He would rather risk her wrath than stand in the hallway while she was attacked.

A quick glance around the room revealed a slumbering Elena under the bedcovers. He'd only been in the room once before, and that had been mere minutes ago, but nothing appeared out of place. He strode over to the heavily shuttered window and tested the lock. Satisfied it was secure, he turned back and opened the door closest to him. It was a walk-in closet. Elena's scent wrapped around him as he stepped inside. Nothing in here seemed out of place either, so he turned and tried the next door.

The sweet scent of jasmine rushed at him. Her bathroom. The shower was still wet. The aroma of her soap combined with her unique scent and clung to the air, bringing his cock to attention.

Nicolas groaned, but he checked the room thoroughly. As he walked back into her bedroom he adjusted his throbbing cock. What he wouldn't give to be buried deep inside her again.

"Playing on the job?" Sorin's voice startled him.

He reached for his gun and realized his hand was on his cock. He groaned, and gave his old friend a dirty look. He'd lost his touch if Sorin could get into the room without him knowing.

“Don’t give me that look, my *friend*. I can smell you all over my sister.” He rose and walked over to Nicolas. “And she is all over you.”

“Can we discuss it somewhere else?” Nicolas asked with a pointed glance at the sleeping beauty.

Sorin nodded and left the room. Nicolas fought back a sigh. He needed time to get his erection under control before he joined Sorin. After another thorough check of the room, he headed for the office on the first floor.

“This is why I tried to keep you two apart and as ignorant of the other as possible until that damned attack. I had a feeling neither of you could resist the other. Her sex drive could rival any pubescent male, and yours ... Do I need to ask what your intentions are?” Sorin asked as Nicolas closed the door.

“I love her.” Saying it was like lifting a weight off his chest.

“Does she know what you are?” Sorin’s softly voiced question caught him off guard.

“No. She has no clue. Hell, she still thinks I have no clue she’s a vampire. How she can think I’m that dense, I don’t know.”

“It might have something to do with me not telling her about you and who and what you are.” Sorin chuckled, and swiveled in the chair. He pointed to the screens. “Here comes the missing couple now. Judging by the leaves in Gloria’s hair I think they’re having a sordid affair.” He turned back and met Nicolas’s eyes.

“I love her. I’d meet death head-on rather than let it take her.”

“I know, my friend. That’s why I’m going to trust you with the most important thing in my life. My little sister, princess and future queen of the vampires.”

“Queen?” That news shocked Nicolas. There was absolutely no way he could pursue a relationship with the queen of vampires. Her duties would only be hampered by a non-vampire husband.

“I know what you’re thinking, but only she can make that decision. It’s not for you to decide.”

“Sorin --”

“Silence!” Sorin raised his hand as Adrian knocked on the door. “Enter.”

Adrian stepped inside and looked guiltily at Sorin, then angrily at Nicolas. “I’ll deal with you later,” he mouthed, and it took everything Nicolas had not to teach the young vampire a lesson.

“While you were dallying with Gloria, our outer walls were breached.”

Adrian looked up quickly. Nicolas glared at the inept guard. It was fortunate his magic held or the intruders might have made it into the house.

“The inner walls and traps worked well, but now we have a few angry vampires to deal with.”

Nicolas headed for the door, but Sorin stopped him. “I want you to take Elena and keep her safe. Obviously I can no longer trust my own flesh and blood, but perhaps your love will be enough to keep her safe until I can catch and deal with Lucian.”

“Where do you want me to take her?”

“That safe house you told me about last week. I don’t want anyone else to know, not where you are going or even the country you will be in.”

“I understand, but if I need to, I’ll call my brother for help. I’d trust him with my own life, and now Elena’s.” He waited until Sorin nodded, then continued. “How will I keep in contact with you?”

“I’ll be in touch with you. I want you two gone before we get back.” As Adrian walked out of the office, Sorin hesitated after he rose, and put his hand on Nicolas’s shoulder. “I’m trusting you. Don’t let me down.”

“I won’t.” Nicolas swallowed at the deadly gleam in his old friend’s eyes. “I love her more than life itself. If only I could convince her ...”

“Lucian hurt her more than just physically. It will take a long time for her to heal, if she ever heals.”

“I understand.”

“No. You don’t.” Sorin waited until Adrian was out of earshot. “Lucian raped her repeatedly. Every chance he or his cronies had. The fact that she made love to you without feeding gives me hope. Perhaps you’re the one who can heal her.”

Nicolas watched them leave as Sorin’s words replayed in his mind. He pushed them aside as he raced up the stairs. The intruders were held securely in his trap, but Adrian, the ass, and Gloria had been busy getting it on instead of protecting Elena.

*And what were you doing? You were busy screwing her up against a wall, then trying to get her in bed. You’re just as bad, if not worse.*

When she ran from him, it must have been because he’d made love to her. Or reminded her of Lucian. He groaned and wished he could punch himself. He’d taken her like an animal in heat. It was a wonder she was even speaking to him.

“Elena,” he whispered as he entered the room.

She didn’t move a muscle. He made noise as he walked over to the bed so he wouldn’t catch her by surprise.

“Elena --”

He was cut off when she flipped over and knocked him to the floor. He stared up at her, gasping, as she pressed a knife to his throat. Hunger raced through him at the sight of her heaving breasts, bared, inches from his mouth.

“Nicolas,” she gasped and dropped the knife. “Shit. I didn’t hear you. I didn’t sense you.”

“I’m sorry. I was trying to wake you. Lucian has found you.”

“Good, I can kill the bastard now.”

“No.” Nicolas shook his head. “We’re going someplace safe. You aren’t ready to fight him. Neither am I, even though I wish him as dead as you do.”

“You don’t understand,” she spat as she rose and grabbed a bathrobe.

“No, *you* don’t understand. You aren’t ready to face him. Not while he still has this hold over you.”

“He has no hold over me.” Elena spun around and hissed at him, baring her fangs for the briefest of seconds before she caught herself. With a gasp she raced past him, probably hoping he hadn’t noticed them.

Nicolas reached out and grabbed her. “Honey, he does have a hold over you. You know what? I’m not going to argue this with you. Pack your clothes, we’re leaving now. After you show me that you’re able to deal with him, then I will personally help you hunt him down and stake him through the heart.”

“Do you mean that?” She whirled around, tears glimmering in eyes that showed the first spark of hope he’d seen from her in two months.

“He hurt you, and I plan to see to it that he can *never, ever* hurt you again.”

She shivered as he growled the last few words. At least she hadn’t caught on to his stake comment. How long did she want to carry on with her charade?

“I ... believe you.”

Her eyes widened, and she relaxed her stance, softening. Maybe she really did believe him.

### Chapter Three

Elena stepped off the private jet and glanced around the deserted airport. When Nicolas had promised her safety, he hadn't been joking. Even if someone saw them, all they'd see is a man and a woman totally immersed in each other. Not only was she wearing a disguise, but he was as well. As he carried her across the tarmac to a waiting limo she wondered who Nicolas really was. Sorin wasn't the type to spend a lot of money. Not even on her. How could a security guard afford all this?

After they were safely ensconced in the car, Elena stripped off the scarf and hat, and tossed her sunglasses to the far side of the limo. "Freedom." She sighed and leaned back in the seat.

"Not yet, but soon enough."

Elena grinned and peered through the tinted window. "The sun will be up soon. How long does it take to get to there?"

"Don't worry. The driver knows to pull into the garage and then leave us."

"Can't he see through the divider?" She looked up and realized there was no window, just wall.

“No. Some people take their privacy very seriously, and that’s one of the reasons my company has a car like this. Some people pay top dollar for the accommodations you are receiving for free.”

“I can pay,” she said quickly, her emotions in a turmoil.

“No, sweetheart. Shh. Just sit back and relax. The driver is my brother and I’ve brought him along for extra protection. I asked him to give us our privacy, though. Sunrise is in a few minutes so I bet you’re tired. I’ll wake you when we get there?”

She nodded, but realized she wasn’t tired. Was his interest in her genuine? Perhaps he was after her money, but then Sorin wouldn’t have hired him if he didn’t trust him. He sounded sincere.

While he looked out the window, she kicked off her heels and tucked her feet up under her on the seat. She leaned against him and pretended to go to sleep. With her eyes half-closed, she nodded off and on, trying to stay awake.

When she opened her eyes again, her face was nestled in his lap, her nose pressed against his erection. Controlling her shock and pretending she was asleep was hard to do, but she didn’t want him to know she was awake. She didn’t know what to do about the feelings he aroused in her. The one time she’d made love to him, she’d freaked out and thought Lucian was after her.

She wanted Nicolas with a desperation that frightened her. Almost as much as giving control to another person. She’d surrendered all control without even realizing it. What if that happened again? What if ...

Shaking away those thoughts, she stretched to let him know she was awake. She sat up and glanced at him through her eyelashes. His face was a cold mask of indifference and she wondered if he’d practiced it. Unfortunately for him, his erection bobbed under his pants giving away his true feelings.

Shock ran through her as she realized something. She'd been able to have sex, and enjoy it. What if they had sex again? Was it possible to forget what Lucian had done to her? Or at least have sex without being reminded of his vicious acts? Perhaps she would be able to erase the memories of Lucian invading her body?

The intelligent part of her said that she was deluding herself. The memories seemed to pop up randomly, and at inappropriate times. Why wouldn't Sorin erase them for her? She'd practically begged him, but he'd refused, saying that it was something she needed to make her stronger. Something to prepare her for the future.

"Nicolas?" she whispered in his ear.

His heart pumped faster, and the knowledge that she aroused him to such a fevered pitch excited her.

"Nicolas." She purred as she slid her hand on his thigh.

He jumped and smacked his head on the roof as he moved away from her. She followed him, sliding her palm toward the obvious evidence of his arousal as he rubbed at his head.

She wanted to forget Lucian and his crude abuse on her body. She wanted Nicolas to love her tenderly and show her that she was a woman, not an object, not something to be owned and controlled. Not something to be dominated and broken.

As she cupped his erection, he brushed her hand away. "We're here. Just wait a few minutes for Nash to check that the house is still secure before we go in."

"Whatever should we do while we wait?" She walked her fingers up his chest as she asked, "Nicolas, what do you plan to do to keep me in the car until he leaves?"

"Nothing." His voice cracked. She fought back a giggle as he cleared his throat. "We'll just sit here and wait until the coast is clear."

"Well, I for one am a little hot," she said as she opened a button on her dress. She was glad she'd chosen the button-up sweater dress. The red complemented her complexion, and he couldn't doubt her statement since it was made of a heavy material.

Nicolas cleared his throat and looked at his watch. "Just a few minutes, then you can take a cold shower."

"I don't want to shower." She opened another two buttons. "I want to relieve this aching, burning need right now." *And maybe forget all about a certain bastard in the process.*

"Please, Elena ..."

"Yes, Nicolas?" She popped open another button, then another. He turned to look and stared at the skin she'd exposed. Smiling, knowing he was ensnared in her spell, she trailed a finger down and opened another button. She shrugged, and the dress fell off to pool at her waist.

He gasped and swallowed. Elena watched his throat work as she shimmied out of her dress and leaned back on the seat. She had a good body, even for a vampire. Obviously Nicolas agreed because he shifted uncomfortably in the seat.

Elena slouched in the seat and spread her legs open, hoping he would see the glistening proof of her desire.

"You ..." He stopped and swallowed again, his throat muscles working as he stared at her body. "You must have been really hot."

"You don't know the half of it."

With her most sensual smile, she ran her hands down her breasts, over her flat stomach, and between her thighs. She traced her fingers over her smooth folds, dipping one in and pulling it out.

"I'm so hot, and wet," she whispered, watching his eyes widen as she lifted her finger to her lips and sucked it into her mouth.

He moaned and leaned forward. Slowly, she slid her other hand down to her nether lips. She spread them open, but before she could do more than gasp, Nicolas had his head buried between her thighs, his tongue lapping at her juices and flicking at her clit.

"Nicolas," she cried out and fisted her hands in his hair as he thrust his tongue into her.

“I can only take so much,” he said, the vibrations sending little ripples of pleasure through her. “You are something else.”

“Insatiable.” She purred as he drew his tongue along her slit, then slipped a finger into her.

Arching her back, Elena spread her legs wider as he added another finger to the first.

“We’re adults, Elena. Couldn’t you have waited ‘til we got inside to a bed?”

She chuckled, then gasped as he added a third finger and crooked them inside. “It ... it shouldn’t be this good.”

“What?” Nicolas stopped and looked up at her.

“I just can’t believe how -- Oh ... ohhh,” she moaned as he pulled out his fingers and thrust them back in, moving them in such a way that she cried out her pleasure, and rocked against his hand as she came.

“How good I am?”

He smirked, rousing her anger, but then twisted his fingers and she forgot all about their conversation as he began to stroke her to another climax.

“I. Want. You. In. Me,” she said in between thrusts.

“I bet you do,” he murmured as he lowered his head and sucked her clit in his mouth. He teased the sensitive bud with his teeth and tongue while she rocked her hips, her inner muscles clenching around him and sucking his fingers in deeper. “But that won’t happen until we get inside.”

Shocked, she looked down at him, her movement stilted as she waited for him to laugh. But he didn’t laugh or smile. He wasn’t joking.

Instead of giving her another earth-shattering orgasm, he sat back, grabbed her dress, and draped it over her. “We’re alone now, and I can’t wait to get you in a nice, big, soft bed.”

Elena purred as she wrapped her arms around him. She nuzzled his neck as he opened the door, scooped her into his arms and whisked her through the dark garage, into the house.

Unerringly, he kept going without walking into anything, or turning on a light, until he sat her down on a large king-sized bed. He turned on the bedside lamp and then stripped, revealing a smooth, muscular chest and hard abs. Biting her lip, she watched as he kicked off his shoes, undid his pants, and slipped both them and his boxers off. He yanked off his socks right before he dove onto the bed with her.

What she'd started to say in the limo came back to her. She'd lived a long time, hundreds of years, but she'd never experienced this need, this desire, nor this much pleasure with anyone else. Something niggled at the back of her mind, but she couldn't grasp it.

Nicolas ran his hands down her sides, then kneeled between her legs as he guided his cock to her entrance. He hesitated and met her gaze, holding it as he slowly inched inside.

Elena sighed as he slid in all the way. All kinds of sensations raced through her at once. Peace, love, happiness, contentment. Then he began to move, in and out, stroking her very soul.

"Nicolas. Oh, Nicolas." She crooned his name as warmth swept over her. Tingling spread from her core, outwards, until it encompassed her whole body. Elena shook as her orgasm went on and on and on.

"I just can't hold out any longer." He gasped, then grunted as he came with a roar, deep inside her.

His orgasm, coming so close on the end of hers, prolonged hers until she was shaking and clutching him, her back bent and her lips bruised from biting them, instead of him.

Elena stretched and rolled over. Nicolas's scent covered the sheets, bringing back pleasant memories of the morning. A warm body pressed against her, pinning her to the bed. Instantly she was transported back to that awful time in the dank dungeon at Lucian's. She whimpered and clutched the bedsheets in her hands.

“Elena, love,” Nicolas whispered. He smoothed her hair to the side and pressed soft kisses on her neck. “It’s me, Nicolas.”

“Nicolas,” she gasped, fighting the memories. She’d managed to forget them before. Could she overcome this one as well?

A painful scene flashed before her tightly closed eyelids, and she whimpered again.

“Elena, my love.” Nicolas slid his hands down her arms. He nibbled at the space where her shoulder and neck met, then kissed and licked his way down her back. When he reached her ass, he traced a finger down her cleft.

With a hiss, she arched her back. Pleasure warred with memory, then his tongue dipped between her cheeks and she shrieked, clutching the pillows as her legs trembled.

He whispered her name as he licked and kissed her, exploring every inch of her flesh with his mouth and hands.

“Nicolas,” she gasped again, torn between pleasure and pain.

His tongue pressed lower and slid between her wet folds, running along them and lapping at her desire. Elena rose on her knees to give him better access as he nibbled on her.

“Sweet, sweet, Elena.”

“Mmm.”

She moaned as he slid two fingers into her sheath, twisting and thrusting them deep, coating them with her juices. He withdrew, and she cried out, arching, trying to get him to repeat the action.

Nicolas pressed against her rosette, eliciting a panicked squeal from her.

“Shhh, baby, it’s just me. Nicolas. Let me pleasure you, sweetheart. Let me take you in every way.”

Knees trembling, Elena braced herself for the pain she knew would come. Lucian had torn her open many times, sometimes not even waiting for her to heal before doing it again.

Whimpering, she closed her eyes and bit into the comforter.

“I love that you are letting me do this. I know how much you are hurting. I want to make it all better, baby. Just trust me a little longer.”

She squeezed her eyes shut tighter, and chanted his name in her head as she concentrated on his image. He talked to her, and made soft, soothing noises as he stroked her ass, and spread some lotion at her opening.

“Nic --” Her protest ended on a cry as he moved on the bed and buried his face between her legs.

Soft sounds filled her ears as he alternately licked and sucked on her clit. Every so often he’d slip his tongue between her folds and lap at her juices. She didn’t even notice he was fingering her ass until his finger dipped just inside.

Her muscles clenched around him, and he slipped in a little further. At the same time, he grazed his teeth over her clit and plunged three fingers deep in her.

“Nicolas!” She screamed his name over and over again, as he continued to plunge his fingers in her pussy and play with her ass as he nibbled on her clit.

“Mmmm,” he moaned, vibrating her clit.

“Nicolas. I can’t,” she gasped as one finger slipped all the way in. He hesitated for a minute, then began to slide it in and out. “Nic!”

She wriggled, trying to get away. But then he pulled out his finger and Elena froze as the sudden sensation of loss filled her. She wanted him to fill her again.

“You’re so tight, so sweet, so good,” he whispered against her mons as he dipped two fingers in her and crooked them.

Elena rocked against his hand. When he slipped a finger back into her ass, she didn’t even hesitate, but kept grinding against his hand. As he rubbed her sweet spot, he added a second finger to the one in her ass and stretched her, preparing her to accommodate him.

She wanted to laugh and tell him he was a lot bigger than two fingers, but didn't because he nipped at her clit, and thrust his digits in deep.

"I can't come again, even with ... my insatiable appetite, it can't be possible."

"Yes, love. Anything is possible." Nicolas shifted and climbed behind her.

The sensation of loss made his return all the more potent as he kneeled and thrust into her sheath, burying himself in all the way. He pulled out, then rammed in hard and fast.

Elena gasped, but arched, meeting his thrusts. He reached around and played with her clit. Just as she was about to come again, he slipped out and fumbled with something. She looked back and saw him wiping himself clean, then spreading something all over his cock before he returned to her and pressed against the entrance to her ass.

"Relax. Just relax and it won't hurt. I promise to make it good for you, sweetheart."

Elena nodded and moaned as he stretched her entrance.

"Relax," he whispered as he rolled her clit between his finger and thumb.

Burying her head in a pillow, Elena forced herself to relax. *Nicolas. Nicolas. It's Nicolas. He loves you, he won't hurt you. Nicolas. Nicolas. Nic* -- "Oh!"

He slid in until his balls pressed against her cheeks. She felt pressure, but no pain. No pain! Elena turned and looked up at him.

"Are you okay?" He panted, probably from the effort to hold still.

"Oh, yes," she purred and rubbed against him. She arched her back and rocked forward, then back. "God, yes."

Nicolas chuckled, then began to thrust in and out of her slowly at first, then increasing speed as she began to moan. He reached around to flick at her clit while he slowed his movements.

"No!" she gasped and pressed back. "Harder, faster."

Nicolas chuckled when she reached down and pushed his hand away so that she could pinch and pluck at her clit. He grabbed onto her hips and did as she asked, taking her so hard that the sounds of his moans and wet flesh striking wet flesh echoed in her ears.

“Do you trust me, Elena?”

“Yes. No. I don’t know,” she wailed as he stilled.

“Have I done anything to hurt you?”

“No,” she gasped as he pulled out slowly and slammed in fast. Her arms shook as she clenched around him.

“You know I won’t hurt you, right?”

“God, Nicolas,” she groaned. “Please. Stop talking and fuck me.”

“I want you to meet my brother.”

“Okay. After you fuck me.”

“No, Elena. Now.”

“What?” She froze, heart thumping rapidly in her chest.

“I want to know that you know I won’t do anything to hurt you.”

“In the past year, you’ve done nothing to hurt me. I trust you.” It was hard to say, but it was true.

“I want to share you with my brother.”

She jumped, her body tensing at the thought of having two men at once. Part of her hungered for it, the part of her that used to engage in orgies frequently. But the other part of her, the part that remembered Lucian, and the way he’d let his men use her, trembled in fear.

“He’s just like me, baby. I promise he won’t do anything you don’t like. You can meet him first if you like.”

“Um.” She made a strangled sound as she tried to decide whether to panic or not. Nicolas was human, so his brother would be, too. As a vampire she was stronger than the two of them together. If things got out of hand she could easily crush either one or both.

Nicolas thrust in and out fast and hard as he teased her clit again. “I want you any way I can have you, Elena. I don’t plan on sharing you with anyone else. Just once. I wanted to give you a good memory.”

A good memory to replace a bad one, he meant. She swallowed and fought back tears. It was a sweet gesture. One that might work. And it had been so long since she’d been pleased by two men at once.

“You both would give control to me?”

“If that’s what you want.” He groaned as she tightened around him.

“Mmm, what a welcome home this is.”

Elena gasped and looked around at the sound of the voice. She stared at Nicolas. How? He was still behind her. She turned and saw Nicolas’s strained face as he rammed into her.

“Didn’t mention he had a twin, did he?”

She turned back and saw that Nicolas’s look-alike had removed his clothes. After he stacked his clothes on the floor, he dropped onto the chair next to the door and wrapped his hand around his cock.

“You don’t mind if I watch, do you?” he asked with a laugh.

Elena couldn’t tear her eyes away from the erotic sight of him pleasuring himself. As he groaned and moaned, holding her eyes the entire time, she felt a tightening in her stomach and thighs.

“Oh, sweet heavens,” Nicolas moaned. “She likes watching you, Nash.”

“I’d rather be in your place, brother. Or even in that sweet cunt of hers.”

Elena moaned and rubbed her clit.

“What do you say, sweetling? Would you like me buried in your cunt while Nic fucks your delectable ass? You make the rules.”

“Two of you? Both alpha?”

“Answer me, sweetling. Before I come on my hand.”

“God, yes.” She arched her back as Nicolas hesitated. “Hurry up, I don’t want him to stop.”

Nash grinned as he ducked under her arms and popped up under her head. He kissed her long and deep as he slid a slender finger in her. Elena whimpered as her juices coated his finger and dripped down her thighs.

“Yes, I do believe she can handle us both. Quite a catch, Nic.”

Nicolas hesitated behind her. Elena turned and caught the look he gave to his brother. “Just this once, *brother*. She is mine. I love her and will have her as my mate.”

When she glanced back down at Nash, she saw his agreement as he nodded and said, “As you wish. Course it’s my loss. But I’ll have to make the most out of this night then.”

Elena moaned and closed her eyes as he crooked his finger, finding the same spot Nicolas was so fond of.

“Yes, Nash. Do that again, please,” Nicolas hissed through clenched teeth as Nash repeated the action.

With a whimper, she clenched around both of them. “More. I want more,” she wailed.

“As you wish, my lady.”

Nash moved until he was in a good position, then he grabbed her hips and lowered her onto his long shaft. He wasn’t as thick as Nicolas, didn’t fill her as completely, but he reached deeper inside her than most humans.

As one brother sank deep inside, the other withdrew, so that she was never empty, but never completely full, either. Faster and faster, they moved in tandem, leaving her to wonder

how often they'd done this same act in the past. But then the thought fled as Nicolas reached around and pressed on her clit.

Elena cried out, and moved frantically, reaching for the peak his pinch almost gave her. Both men grabbed onto her, holding her still as they plunged into her over and over again.

The orgasm was right ... there ... just out of reach. Frustrated, she cried out and thrashed, bucking against them.

"Shhh," Nicolas soothed her as he ran his hands down her arms. He pressed her down so that she took all of Nash deep in her pussy, then he pushed in until he was seated completely inside her.

Filled to bursting, Elena sobbed and rocked against both men. Bursts of electricity danced along her veins and her inner muscles clenched tightly on both men.

"Mmm," Nash moaned as he pulled her down and flexed his cock inside her.

Nicolas echoed his moan and pushed against her, helping press her against Nash, and filling her backside completely.

As they both flexed and pulsed within her, one of them rubbed her clit mercilessly until she writhed between them, her climax shattering around her like a piece of dropped glass. Groans and pulsing cocks alerted her that both men had come also.

Elena relaxed, her body like jelly, between the two. Just this once Nicolas had said? Hell, she wanted to do that again as soon as she could feel her legs.

## Chapter Four

Nicolas stared at his brother across the breakfast table. Part of him was thankful, even grateful for his assistance, but the other part wanted to strangle him for making Elena desire him, too.

“You know, you should be thanking me, Nic. You asked me to meet you here and help Elena get over the fear and bad memories from her rape.”

“You told your brother about that?” Elena paled as she dropped her spoon.

“I trust him with my life, and yours. You needed to be shown that you could take two men without pain or fear. You need to know that you can love and be loved.”

“I’m a pity fuck?”

“Absolutely not,” Nash said as he shook his head. “I wanted you. Hell, I still want you. You’re one hot lady. I don’t know if Nic is man enough to handle you. If it turns out he’s not, I’d be more than willing --”

“He’s more than enough, thank you very much.” Elena stalked into the kitchen. Pretending to be human was hard enough, but with an asshole around it was even harder. And she’d have to hunt tonight.

“I’m sorry for what Nash said in there,” Nicolas said as he walked up behind her and wrapped his arms around her waist. He kissed the side of her neck.

Elena moaned and leaned back, tilting her head to give him better access to her neck. “I went from only making love when I had to feed, to not being able to keep my hands off you.” After she said the words, she realized he might pick up on her slip.

“It’s because you feel it, too, love.” His lips trailed down her neck to her shoulder and back up again.

“Feel what?” she asked as a shiver rippled through her.

“The connection. There’s a chemistry between us that even you can’t deny.”

“Chemistry? Are you saying this is just hormones?” She tried to turn around, but he held her fast.

“I’m trying to say that you feel what I’m feeling, but unlike me, you don’t understand it yet.”

“If you knew the real me, you’d change your mind. Being a rape victim is nothing compared to my deep, dark secret. And, being who and what I am makes a big difference.”

“I know who and what you are,” he said as he nuzzled her neck.

“What?” She stiffened as ice crept up her back. “How do you know?”

“Do you think I could be friends with Sorin and not know what you are? Do you think he would trust an ordinary human to guard you while you slept?”

Blinking was all she could handle as she struggled to understand. “You ... you aren’t human?” She turned around and put her hand up as she backed away.

“No, love. I’m not human.”

“But you aren’t vampire. I knew there was something off, but could never place it.”

“That’s because I’m fae.”

“Fae? You’re a friggin’ faerie!” She snorted and tried to stop the laughter, but failed miserably. “Like Tinkerbell?”

Nicolas growled and tugged her against his erection. “Does it feel like I’m Tinkerbell?”

A hunger rose as he continued to rub his hard shaft against her stomach. “You have to stop, Nicolas. I’m almost out of blood. I can’t make love to you, it’ll use up too much energy. As it is I’ll have to hunt tonight.”

“You can feed on me,” Nash said as he entered the kitchen.

“No she can’t.” Nicolas growled and wrapped his arms around her.

Elena couldn’t stop the smile and warmth that spread through her. Love or not, Nicolas wasn’t willing to share her, and he consistently put her pleasure before his. A girl could do much worse. He took away her pain and loneliness. In his arms Lucian vanished. Now she wondered if his fae magic had anything to do with it.

“No, sweetling. Nic hasn’t used any magic on you. At least not since I’ve been here.”

Elena gasped and looked up at Nash.

“Yes, I can read your mind. One of the delicious side effects of making love to a fae. We’re now joined together for all eternity.”

“It’s true, but I didn’t read your mind. I didn’t want to invade your privacy,” he said with a glare at Nash. “I couldn’t tell you what I am. You desperately wanted to keep it secret that you were a vampire, and I knew telling you I was fae would make your world come crashing down. Thinking a human was watching over you let you pretend the threat wasn’t as bad as it really is. You thought you still had control.”

“I know Lucian wants me. God, I know.” Elena shivered. As memories flooded back, she buried her face in Nicolas’s chest. Trembling, she stood there in his embrace as she remembered the cruel way Lucian had beaten her and forced himself on her over and over.

An image of Nicolas and Nash popped into her mind, superimposing itself over the one of Lucian and his friend. Unable to resist, heat pooled in her belly at the image of both

brothers thrusting into her. It chased away the darkness lingering at the edges of her mind like nothing else could.

“Now you know why he invited me here. He’s trying to replace your bad memories with pleasant ones.”

“All of them?” she gasped looking up at Nicolas. “Please, I can’t bear to be restrained. I just --”

“Shh.” He placed his finger on her lips and met her gaze. “No one said I would tackle all your nightmares today. And no one said I could make them go away completely, but I do plan to be with you always, keeping you safe and making you feel loved.”

“What if I don’t want you with me?”

Nicolas looked at her, surprise etched in every feature. He must not have thought of that.

“Come on.” Nash opened the back door. “It’s a beautiful night. Let’s take a walk on the beach and see if we can find some fresh blood for Elena.”

Elena turned to him with a smile. “You’re going to let me out on the beach?”

“Yes. It’s not true about you not being able to cross running water, is it?”

Elena grinned. “Most of what they say about vampires isn’t true. Why should we enlighten the general public to the truth? What they don’t know can’t hurt them. I haven’t been to the beach in ages. Last one to the water is a rotten egg!”

In a flash, she darted to the water’s edge. The two fae appeared next to her and she cursed her impatience. Here she was, at the beach with two handsome, sensual men who knew how to pleasure her. She could wait a bit longer to hunt.

“Maybe we have some time to play before I feed?” she asked them with a grin, her fangs dropping down past her lip. It was a relief to not have to hide her true nature anymore.

“You could just feed from me,” Nicolas suggested.

“Mmm.” Elena licked her lips as she remembered his taste. “I have tasted your blood. It’s addicting. Sweet and metallic, and rich.”

“The older the fae, the richer his blood.” Nash laughed.

Nicolas rolled his eyes and grabbed Elena’s hand. He tugged her close and kissed her deeply.

“Mmm, wish I could get in on the action,” Nash said as he stared at them.

Elena ignored him as she put everything she had into kissing Nicolas. Suddenly a chill ran up her spine, and she pulled away to glance around.

“Still tuned in to me, I see,” Lucian said as he stepped out of the shadows. He lifted his hand and six vampire warriors joined him.

“Lucian.” Nicolas drew his gun and pulled Elena against him. Nash stepped in between Elena and the warriors who now surrounded them.

“Sorin was a fool to trust you two with her. I couldn’t get to her while she was in your safe house, but out here, where you have no spells protecting you, she’s a sitting duck. Like a ripe, luscious strawberry ready for the picking and oh, so delicious.”

Elena shivered, and whimpered. She wanted to kill him, but she couldn’t fight her fear. He’d hurt her so much and the glow in his eyes promised more pain and humiliation.

Nicolas shared a glance with Nash she couldn’t interpret, then they weren’t on the beach anymore, but deep within the house.

“Good call, Nic.”

“I want to kill that bastard, but Elena comes first. She’s not ready to fight him. Not yet. Call Sorin. Tell him to get here pronto.”

“I’m here,” Sorin said from the doorway. Elena looked at her brother with relief. “I sensed Elena’s fear. Thanks to the spell you set up, I was able to get here immediately. Where is he?”

“We left him and his miniature army on the beach.”

“Army?”

“You didn’t expect him to come unprepared did you?”

“Nic, you stay here with Elena. Just in case.”

Nicolas shook his head and wrapped his arm around Elena. As he pulled her against his chest she heard him say, “I wouldn’t think of leaving her. Not now, not ever.”

“Good.”

Nash grabbed Sorin and they both vanished.

“Elena?” he whispered in her ear.

Elena shivered. The knowledge that Lucian was here, that he knew where she was, terrified her.

“Remember, sweetheart, he can’t enter the house. He admitted as much outside. And he can’t touch you. This house has been safe for me and my kind as long as I’ve been alive. Even if something happened to me, this place will always welcome and protect you.”

Elena gasped and looked at him.

“It’s true. My spells ensure that Lucian cannot enter. It’s why he waited until we went outside.”

“I still need to feed,” she whispered.

Nicolas grinned and reached for her. “Then I insist you feed from me. No excuses this time.”

“I wonder what fae blood will do to me.”

“I don’t know, but at least this solves one of your worries.”

“What?” she asked, curiosity getting the better of her as she licked her lips and studied the steady pulsing of his carotid.

“You don’t have to try and turn me into a vampire. I already have life eternal and powers stronger than even yours.” Suddenly he grabbed her arms. “I know now why Sorin said you would be queen of the vampires.”

“Hmm?” she asked even though she didn’t care about the answer. All she wanted was to taste the sweet ambrosia that flowed through his veins.

“My blood. With my blood in you, you will gain powers that others can only dream of.”

“I don’t care about power. I want you,” she said as she leaned closer and licked the spot over his pulse.

“Elena!” He tightened his grip on her. “Aren’t you listening to me?”

“Sure, I am. You want to rule by my side and give me those powers others only dream of. Only right now, I’d rather have you deep inside, thrusting into me hard and fast while I bite you and feed.”

“Gods, woman,” Nicolas growled and whisked away their clothes quicker than she could blink.

“I wish we were on the beach.”

“Next time, love. Next time.”

Then his mouth was on hers and she forgot everything else but him as he lowered her to the sofa. Time passed in a blur as Nicolas made slow, tender love to her. Every inch of her body was caressed, licked, and sucked on as he made his way from her feet to her fingertips to her pussy.

Her heart swelled, and filled to bursting as Nicolas expertly roused every inch of her body to an aching need.

The beating of his heart, the sound of his blood rushing in his veins, was her undoing. Elena leaned forward and sank her fangs into his carotid. Nicolas hissed, then shouted her name as he came, hard and fast.

“Shit.” He panted, trying to catch his breath. Nicolas’s blood dripped off her lip as she paused in feeding. “Don’t stop,” Nicolas whispered as he rammed deep inside her, sending a tremor throughout her body as her muscles clenched around him.

“Lucian is dead.”

Elena turned toward the voice and tried to focus through lust-glazed eyes.

“Lucian is dead,” Sorin repeated. He cursed and walked over to them. “I thought you might want to know.”

“Good.” Nicolas shifted and thrust even deeper.

Elena moaned and wrapped her legs around his waist.

“Don’t let me interrupt or anything.”

“She likes to be watched, at least she didn’t mind me watching earlier.”

As Nash’s voice joined Sorin’s, Elena roused from the sensual haze Nicolas had wrapped her in. A vampire’s sexual magic was strong, but a fae’s ... If she were human she’d still be engulfed in that sweet, sweet heaven. She blinked.

“Sorin! Nash! What the hell!” Elena screamed as she grabbed for something to cover up with.

Sorin glared at Nicolas. “I thought you two would be relieved to know Lucian is dead.”

“He’s dead?” Elena looked at Nicolas. “It’s over?”

Nicolas held her tight as she trembled. “Shhh, he can never hurt you again. Never.”

Elena burst into tears as she buried her face in between his shoulder and neck. After a few minutes, Sorin cleared his throat.

“Sorin.” Nicolas pinned him with a glare as Elena looked up at them.

“Are you sure?” Elena asked.

“Dead. Even his ashes have been dealt with. No one will be resurrecting him. Not *ever.*”

“Oh, god.” Elena shivered and held Nicolas tighter. Embarrassment rushed through her at the thought of her brother catching her having sex. It wasn’t like he hadn’t caught her at it before, she’d always had a healthy appetite, but with Nicolas it was different.

“I’m okay, don’t worry about me or anything.” Then, as if realizing what Nash had said, Sorin turned and glared at the faerie. “You fucked my sister, too.”

Nash grinned as Sorin threw his hands in the air, turned, and walked out of the room. “Damn perverts, all of you.”

“Sorin is into orgies,” Elena whispered with a grin. She sniffled and wiped at her tears. “His bark is much worse than his bite.”

“Oh, I know all about Sorin, sweetheart. He and I go way back. Centuries, in fact.”

“I’m not into orgies, and I don’t really want to know about my brother’s sexual history. Or yours, for that matter.” Elena narrowed her eyes and opened her mouth to speak again when Nash came over to them and took off his clothes.

“It’s all right, sweetling. If you don’t want Nicolas, I’d love to take his place.”

“Get your clothes back on and get out of here!” Nicolas shouted and pulled Elena closer.

“Chill, bro. I’m going to jump in the rejuvenating pool.”

Nicolas sighed, and dropped his head on Elena’s shoulder. “I think he killed the mood.”

“Not mine.” Elena grinned. “Us vampires live for blood sucking and fucking, but not in that order.”

“You’re insatiable.” Nicolas groaned, but resumed his thrusting motions as Nash walked into the next room.

“Only for you.”

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“What will you do now that Lucian is dead?” Nicolas asked as he helped himself to another bowl of cereal.

“Try and resume my old life? See if I can stop the horrible nightmares. I still wish one of you would just wipe my memory,” Elena said as she looked out the window at the beach. The soft waves crashed upon the shore, erasing the simple phrase Nicolas had scratched in the sand earlier. *Will you marry me?*

“Wiping memories is a dangerous thing, Elena. You know that. I wish you’d let it go.”

“He still haunts me. When I drop my guard his memory is there taunting me.”

She shivered and fought back tears. It was supposed to be better now that he was gone. Instead she felt unchanged. Nothing was any different. His death hadn’t eased the nightmares or panic attacks. The only thing that helped was Nicolas. He loved her, she knew it. She felt it with every fiber of her being. But how could she get rid of Lucian’s ghost?

“You don’t have to,” Nicolas said.

Elena sighed and turned to him with a frown. “Would you stop reading my mind?”

“I’m sorry, sweetheart. We are connected, and I could no more leave you than I could leave my brother. Even though he sorely tempted me with that crazy stunt last night.”

“He just wants another chance to make love to me.”

“No!” Nicolas growled and pushed his bowl away. “Mine. You are mine.”

Elena gasped as he tugged her onto his lap and took possession of her mouth. He devoured her with his lips and tongue, leaving her dripping with desire.

“I’ll never get tired of you.” She sighed and dug her fingers into his thick, black hair. “I love you, Nicolas.”

“Marry me, Elena.”

“You just want to be Fae King of the Vampires.” She laughed at him as he turned red.

“I just want to be able to hold you in my arms every night. I want to make sure no one ever touches you but me. I want to stake my claim on you in every conceivable way.”

“Well, when you put it that way ...” Elena claimed his lips with her own and kissed him hungrily, trying to show how much she needed him without words.

“Please, Elena. I’m not a begging man, but for you I would be anything.”

“We’ll see.”

“We’ll see?” he echoed.

“It would be nice to have someone to keep the bad dreams away.”

“So you are going to evaluate my usefulness and decide if you want to marry me?”

Elena frowned at the anger in his expression. The frown marred his beautiful features and made her heart sink. She swallowed around a sudden lump in her throat.

“I was just teasing.”

Nicolas growled and scooped her into his arms. “I see you’ll need more convincing.”

“A lot more,” she agreed as he carried her into the bedroom and set her down on the bed. “A whole lot more.”

Nicolas tugged at her robe and kissed the skin he exposed as he parted the fabric down to the belt. “Well, I have eternity to convince you.”

“Eternity.” Elena smiled, then giggled as he licked her bellybutton. “I guess that’ll have to do.”

 THE END 

## **Michelle Hasker**

Michelle Hasker has been writing for two years. She is a member of Romance Writers of America and the Fantasy, Futuristic and Paranormal chapter of RWA.

She loves vampires and things that go bump in the night, so it's no wonder her creations are truly paranormal. While most people only dream of finding love, Michelle's characters find it, but in the most unexpected places.

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