



Changeling Press

# Vampires Aren't Real

*Willa Okati*

# **Rogue Vampires 1: Vampires Aren't Real**

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## **Rogue Vampires 1: Vampires Aren't Real**

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Gilly. Big, beautiful, smart-mouthed, one hell of a lady and oh, yeah -- a werewolf who works on a faux-reality show. It's a living. Warren. Die-hard cynic with the attitude and build of a Navy SEAL. Does not believe in the supernatural. He's in for the surprise of his life. Dusty. A toned, muscled, devastatingly handsome teddy-bear of a guy. Loves to play games. Loves Gilly and Warren. He's not prepared for what's going to happen.

Together, the three of them are an unstoppable force. Sex, love and friendship rule the day and rock their world. That's the way it's always been. But they're about to be put to the test. One night at a dance club plus one stranger in a ridiculous vampire costume equals a whole lot of trouble. Especially when the stranger turns out to be a real vampire. One who has some really nasty plans for Gilly, Warren and Dusty.

The problem with his plan? Gilly doesn't take anything lying down, and she's ready to kick some ass...

## Chapter One

Vampires aren't real, you say? I know better. I live with two of them. They weren't vampires when we first started shacking up but as they say, anything can happen and usually does.

They also say "may you live in interesting times." Hoo, boy, do I ever.

Okay, so here's how my two harem boys became vampires. Or two-thirds of our ménage a trois, as Warren would put it. Or most of our fuckpile, as Dusty would say.

You're starting to get an idea about opposite ends of the spectrum, aren't you? Warren is butch. Dusty is a ripped teddy bear. Yin and yang.

Things would be a lot simpler if I weren't a werewolf and the Council of Weres and the High Sanguine Order weren't at each other's throats. Mostly literally.

I'll explain later. Right now, buy me another drink. Nothing froofy or girly. How about a Rusty Nail? And let's go back to the night when our lives took a spin on a merry-go-round doing Mach 60 and whip-cracked us off again.

\* \* \*

It's a pretty sweet life when you come home from a thanklessly hard eight hours in the gulags to find a free sex show going on in your living room. The sight of Warren and Dusty, my lovers, my fuckbuddies, my friends, going at it like rabid weasels, was enough to wash my cares away. You know what I mean. Mmm-mmm.

I took a good long moment to appreciate the view. Might just be me, but there's nothing sexier than watching two men make the double-backed beast. Beaded sweat running down toned muscles, broad hands grabbing anything that could be grabbed and not being gentle at all, not to mention two cocks waving hello to each other.

Bet it makes the strongest of women, especially the ones with a taste for kink, go weak in the knees and/or damp at the pussy. Watching Dusty and Warren maul each

other, bringing sexy back in a big, big way, presses my personal hot buttons. Being a werewolf, which you'd better remember because it's going to be important later, the bouquet of male musk and sweat blasting my nose made this even better.

Simple, really: one man good. Two men better. Add me into the equation and it's enough to make me start reconsidering my darksome views on the suspiciously evil concept of mathematics.

Watching them together makes me want to zap some popcorn in the microwave and settle in for the show. Either that or cowabunga smack in the middle of all those flailing limbs.

At the moment, I felt more like perving. They don't mind. Besides, hey, the scene before me was definitely porn-worthy. Completely wrapped up in each other, neither one seemed to have heard the door open. Don't you love the way guys get completely zeroed in on sex when they're horny? You can read their thoughts: *Must fuck now. Fuck good. Fuck now. More fuck. Uh-oh, coming!*

When Warren groaned his extra-special *unngh* warning of imminent orgasm, my fingers slipped on the strap of my lumpy, frayed canvas duffle-bag-sized purse. Army-Navy Surplus special. That purse, covered in quirky, snarky and obscene buttons, is crammed with everything plus a toy model of a kitchen sink. When it drops, you hear the *kaboom* for blocks.

They didn't so much as flinch when my bag hit the linoleum. Dusty did, however, let Warren flip him onto his stomach and, ooh, hey, were they using a butt plug? Oy! They'd raided my toy box, the bastards, always swearing up and down kink wasn't their thing.

I decided to kick their asses later and enjoy watching Warren work Dusty's ass over first. The temptation to dive-bomb them got stronger and my pussy started creaming at the noises Dusty made. Some men, gay or straight, doesn't matter, *do* squeal like a piggy if you play them right. I didn't have a great view, but the key of prostate pegging in Dusty's wail clued me in to what Warren was doing with the plug.

Dusty struggled to his hands and knees, Warren not missing a beat. He looked halfway between stoned and orgasmic. His cock rose up to tickle the lower end of his six-pack. He half-turned to look over his shoulder, lips parted and eyes hooded. "Gilly. Hey."

I had to grin. "Yo, dollface. How long did you know I was here?"

Warren glanced around to give me his own evil I-Am-The-Sex-King leer. I let him get away with the smug because hey, he is more or less a potentate in the sack. "Since you walked in the door."

"Evil. You're both wicked, rotten pricks and I should hose you down."

"We don't have a hose."

"I know, Dusty."

Dusty isn't too bright, but you'll never find a sweeter heart simultaneously encased in a cover-model body. Golden-skinned by nature with a mix of Greek, Italian and Cherokee in his blood. Also, weirdly, Icelandic. Ripped fit to make Charles Atlas proud, and his face... Judas Priest, the man's face. Razor cheekbones, full lips, beautiful without being effeminate. Naturally sky-blue eyes.

Warren? Dusty's polar opposite. Hair so darkly brown you might as well call it black, just shy of a military buzz and cut to stand up in spikes. Good-looking in a Marine sort of way, which is to say he's seriously hot shit. Built like a SEAL and carries himself like a five-star general.

Never has spent a single day in the armed forces. Go figure.

His glasses are the only clue to the quirkiness that lies within. Chunky black frames, a geek-chic sort of look. Ladies do make passes at men who wear glasses, thank you very much, or at least I do. Rawrrrr.

"Dusty's camera is on the shelf."

"This would be your clever suggestion that I should take a picture, since it'll last longer?" I eyed their cocks, gorgeously dark and wet. Mmm, yummy. "How much longer do you think you've got before you pop?"

"You can't exactly time these things, Gilly."

"I can," Dusty put in. Scary thing is, he probably does have the ability. He's uncanny about body language. He's also sweetly vicious on occasion. He grasped Warren's cock at the base, right above the man's balls, and squeezed.

Tough men also sometimes squeal like a piggy. "Hey! I was going to fuck you with that. Unless you want my dick to come *off* instead of come, how about letting go?"

"Dusty, keep him on lockdown."

"Gilly," Warren warned in a growl. He was in the kind of mood where if he didn't get to sink his cock into something hot, wet and slick in the next few seconds, he was going to explode. "Either tell your doggie to let go of my bone or give me something better to play with."

Now how can a girl resist such sweet-talking? "And here I was going to wash my hair," I told them, peeling off my favorite blouse -- I love plunging V-neck collars. They do show off these bazooms.

What? I never said I had any shame.

Moving nice and slow, driving them nuts being the goal, I inched the shirt off, gave it a few lazy spins above my head, and tossed it into a corner.

Ooh. Glazed eyes, slack jaws, and still contorted as if frozen in the middle of a game of naked Twister. Very nice. I started shimmying my hips nice and nasty as I reached for the front fastening on my demi-cup lace bra. The bra popped open and my boobs emerged, Playboy Butterflies out of their cocoons.

"Unh." Warren licked his lips.

Don't you love having a guy wrapped around your pinky? Not as hard as it seems, really. Figure out what they like and use the knowledge for all it's worth. When to hold 'em, when to fold 'em, when to walk away and know when to play.

I cupped the breasts in question and lifted them up in offering, rolling the cherry-colored nipples between fingers and thumbs until my nipples stood up sweeter than gumdrops.



"Ahhh." Dusty let go of Warren's cock, reaching out to touch boobies instead of balls. Warren didn't blink. You get a guy to forget about the state of his dick and you *know* you're good. Breast hypnotism. Works every time.

Poor sweet Dusty didn't have the reach to get me where I stood. He did try.

I minced a step backwards, avoiding the coffee table, and toyed with the zipper on my jean shorts. They're cut obscenely short -- Daisy Duke would be proud -- and tighter than a second skin. Plump or not, I can smell the pheromones pouring off men and some women like waves when I walk down the street, a whole heap of honey that's oh, so sweet.

Yeah, smell. Werewolf, remember?

I like the scent of Warren and Dusty's Eau de Desperation best of all. They looked so a-dork-able tangled around each other, gawping at me. I like to tease, but the secret to successful torture is to come through with what you promise. Wiggling out of the shorts, I was left with only a G-string chosen to match my discarded bra.

The cool thing about G-strings? They don't really get in the way of sex. Just move 'em to the side and get the party started. This is me being kinky again, but I seriously get off on being fucked while I've still got some kind of clothes on. It's fun to see men get creative and it makes me feel extra-special naughty.

"Sex, party of three?" I suggested after letting them drool for a minute. "Room for one more in there?"

Dusty nodded. Warren lunged for me. He missed, but hey, it's the thought... blah, blah, blah. "Get down here before I get up and toss you on the floor."

"What are you going to do then?"

"I'm thinking I'll rip whatever it is you're calling panties off and fuck you until you don't know your own damn name."

"Threat or promise?"

"Both."

*Sweet.* "Banzai!"

It would have been an impressive swan-dive into the manpile if they hadn't caught me in mid-air and wrestled me down. No biggie. I liked the improv.

I liked what they did next even better.

"Heads or tails?" Dusty asked, already on his way down to my pussy, which approved and demonstrated by releasing another gush of cream. He tore the G-string off like the paper on the best birthday present ever. Sweet as honey, strong as an ox.

*Gilly like.*

I licked my lips and spread my legs. Slutty, maybe, but I'm not into playing the blushing virgin. I like sex; I like getting sexed by my boys, so why pretend to be coy? Dusty moaned as the aroma of my soaking pussy wafted up to meet him.

Oh, yeah. Woman power.

"Heads," Warren decided, knee-walking up for a good angle to get at my breasts. "Except after you're done making her see stars, I'm the one who gets to fuck her."

"Aww."

I patted the nearest convenient patch of Dusty's bare skin. "Don't worry, big boy. I'll suck you off while he fucks me."

"Ooh!" He and Warren shared one of those evil male looks, the kind promising a girl the time of her life. They always make good on their vows too.

They don't waste time, either. Dusty was between my thighs, the fringes of his hair tickling the extra-soft skin there, and Warren fondling my casabas before I could say "boo." With their weird but really cool sense of synchronicity, they both dove in and put their mouths to much better use than talking at the same time.

I went a little ape-shit. Can you blame me? One stud licking juice off my cunt and his partner in hunkalicious crime doing amazing things with his hands on my mammaries and his tongue around one nipple. It's kind of embarrassing after the fact to remember yourself wailing and screaming, not to mention thrashing, but at the time it feels so fan-fucking-tastic you don't care.

Dusty should sell “how-to” videos instructing the clueless men of the world how to eat pussy. (He could have a side-line explaining the fine arts of sucking cock, according to Warren.) The man’s tongue went absolutely everywhere and worked its magic, thrusting into my entrance and trailing up to flick over my clit. He never does the same stuff in the same order. Trying to figure out where he’s headed next when you don’t have many brain cells working... oh, hell, yeah. Best of all, he loves this. The man’s obsessed with tastes and textures. Hearing someone gush about the hot slickness and sweet flavor of your cream while their lips are still on your pussy, making the words buzz, is an experience not to be missed.

Warren held his own just fine with my tits. He’s got more focus than Dusty but no less skill. He played each breast like a two-bell choir, making me want to sing Holy Hallelujah. I could smell the traces of his cologne, the lingering traces of his shampoo, and the salty sweat of his skin. His tongue, which he must have sold his soul to the devil for, twisted and teased and flicked. He used his teeth to nibble ever so gently and then, when I least expected him to, give me a sharp nip.

Caught between the two, I didn’t know if I was coming or... no, definitely coming. I have no idea what I said, but I think it was along the lines of “oh God oh God oh God more, more, more, aieeeeeee.” Either way, they were both excited and I was off in Happy Orgasm La-La Land, floating free of my body but still feeling the rush of blood and those indescribable spasms no one can ever really explain. Who wants to, though? All you want is *more*.

When I floated back down to ground zero, Warren and Dusty leered at me, Dusty’s face covered in my pussy juices. I was having a little trouble breathing, not really able to form words yet, but they knew their cues. Another round of scrambling into new positions and there we were again. Warren lifted my legs, all the better for me to lock my ankles around his back, and nailed me but good, his cock stuffing me almost past my limit. Impressive.

Dusty guided his cock along my lips until I opened up and sucked him in.

I don't care what you see in porno flicks. Blow jobs are not easy when you're being fucked. Your body kind of wants to concentrate on what's happening down under, you know? Still, I managed to use my tongue, not drool, and let Dusty plunder my mouth, thrusting deep enough to make me glad I'd trained myself out of a gag reflex. From the sounds of his moans and the way he shook where he gripped my skull, I'd venture to say he enjoyed himself just fine.

Warren, on the other hand, I had no doubts about being happy. He makes these amazing animal noises, growls and grunts and slightly wolf-like howls (verrry nice, especially for a dame like me) when he pounds my pussy and hey, bonus points for him, doesn't forget about the boobs either. He sucked me while he fucked me, and as I sucked Dusty, who fucked my mouth.

Trust me. It gets no better. And the weres wanted to know why I stuck with two mundanes? I should've sent the misogynist alphas a videotape. They might have gotten my point then.

Orgasm time! I came first -- again -- what lady wouldn't if she could? -- and you've got to groove about being a woman when you can keep on climaxing like the freakin' Energizer Bunny. They keep going... and going... and going... Meanwhile, Warren lost his cool in the spasming of my cunt muscles and let out a groan that came from the bottom of his gut while I felt him pulse hot, sticky cum inside me.

Dusty, probably because he's a good sport and a team player, moaned and shot his load over my tongue. He tasted great, absolutely great. No idea why. Some men are salty, some sour, some bitter, but not my Dust-Buster. I swallowed every drop and cleaned him off.

Because I'm willing to take one, or in this case two, for the team, I let them collapse on me like particularly floppy Raggedy Andys. Makes for some difficulty breathing, but it's a small price to pay for spectacular sex. Besides, they're considerate. As soon as they could move they did, worming their ways down and up until they lay on either side of me. I opened my arms so they could snuggle against my chest. Warren

refuses to call this “cuddling,” but I let him get away with his own definitions and they love this no matter what.

I hummed and sighed as I caught my breath. Warren and Dusty felt like twin furnaces puffing out hot air and scalding my sides with overheated flesh. We were all slicky-sticky with sweat. I do not “glow.” I sweat. Nothing wrong with it. Shows you’ve been working hard and reaped your reward.

And as I lay there, stroking the wisps of hair from Dusty’s face and rubbing my knuckles through Warren’s short cut, still tasting sweet cum on my tongue and bathing in the smell of sex, I thought to myself: *so what if they don’t believe me when I tell them I’m a werewolf?* (Which I had. Asking for trouble if any of the Alphas ever found out, but at the time I more or less figured the old weres could go screw themselves. Even so, I wasn’t dumb enough to do a full transformation in front of people who didn’t believe me. Mundanes.)

So what if they thought I was playing games when I took a trip out to the forest every full moon? It wasn’t a big deal. I was spending the rest of my life with those two hot-blooded hotties and woe betide any man or woman stupid enough to stand in my way.

This was my life, and I figured it was a seriously great one. I didn’t think I could get any happier. I remember thinking to myself: *this is the good stuff that lasts forever.*

Yeah, yeah, famous last words, I know...

## Chapter Two

For most people, the insane monkey sex comes *after* drinking way too much. Dusty, Warren and me, we're just as happy to get plastered after the fact. Don't get me wrong. The sex is worth at least a bottle of champagne. Plus some Roman candles exploding overhead, a backup orchestra, maybe an admiring audience... you get the idea.

And yeah, I am that kinky.

After we peeled ourselves off the floor, Dusty took clean-up duty and went to get some soft, fluffy washcloths dampened with warm water. I watched him go. Great ass. You could pop Sacagawea dollars off those glutes. Or dimes. I never did get why quarters are the coin of choice. Anyone know?

Warren circled me from behind with what he'd call a panther attack -- as if. I know from panthers, or at least the weres. They don't hug you. If they wrap their paws around you, they're mentally sizing up the tenderest bits for dinner. He growled into my shoulder and gave me a playful shake.

"What, it was that good for you?" Kissing is hard when you're spooned, but if your neck is flexible enough it can happen. He tasted like Dusty's cock and peppermint, or possibly spearmint. Fresh and zingy and tingling. "I felt the earth move." True, and it never hurts to give the male ego a gold star. This evening's fuck would have gotten ten out of ten from the Russian judge, even.

Dusty reappeared with his hands full of multi-colored cloths. He attended to me first -- good boy -- gently swiping off sweat and cream. Nothing sexual about the way he touched me. Easy and sweet. I love the big doof so much sometimes he makes my heart ache.

With Warren, he took a different approach, scrubbing away like Warren was a kitchen floor that hadn't been mopped in weeks. From the way Warren hissed and his muscles undulated, I could make an educated guess that he didn't mind a bit of rough at all.

Leather and lambs' wool. Them's my men.

"So what are we doing tonight?" I asked, looking around for my blouse and shorts. Ripping your clothes off in a fit of passion works great at the time, but finding them afterwards can be as bad as trying to remember where you parked at the grocery store. "It's Friday night and Monday's a federal holiday. We have a long, long weekend ahead of us, and I for one, say we spend it drinking, dancing and working our way through the *Kama Sutra*."

"Again?"

"Yes, Dusty. Again."

"Okay." He beamed at me. "Can we do the gay *Kama Sutra* as well? And maybe play the *Kama* board game?"

"For you, dollface, anything." He bent down for me to kiss his forehead.

"Oh! And eating? Eat, drink and be merry, right?"

Women aren't "supposed" to have appetites these days. Screw that. I love to eat. Healthy food for the most part, sure, but I don't whip myself over a bowl of ice cream or a piece of cheesecake. "Eating, absolutely."

"Sounds good," Warren said, sounding as if it was anything *but*.

"I sense a qualifier coming."

"Last time I checked, Gilly, we barely have enough together to pay this month's rent." Warren rocked me back and forth. He's got to be the hard-ass in our group over money matters. The little I made clerking at the sex toys shop didn't go far. Warren's job as a mailroom clerk at an IT firm where he's lusting to climb the ladder and get into game design makes for a pretty puny paycheck itself. Waiting tables, Dusty drags in more than either of us. The manager of his restaurant is smart enough to assign him the

tables with gay or metrosexual men and the girls-only parties, and damn, does he ever pull in some sweet tips.

All that said, Warren was right. Even with three incomes we scrimped and pinched to get by with the basics most months.

Not anymore.

I wiggled my way out of Warren's panther hug and padded barefoot over our worn, dust-gray carpet to my bag. Rummaging through its innards, I pulled out a mostly uncrumpled envelope and popped up to wave the letter at him. Them. Dusty had taken my place in Warren's arms, and they were both tilting their heads in curiosity.

Returning to the lovebirds, I opened the envelope, slipped out the sheet of paper on seriously high-quality letterhead, and began to read.

**Dear Ms. Marshall,**

**After considering all the applications for the position of staff writer, the director, producer and the rest of the creative team feel you have the energy, creativity and work ethic to be the woman for the job. Please report to the studio Tuesday morning at eight a.m. Just as a reminder, we do allow our creative teams to dress casually, but we prefer not to see extreme or provocative ensembles.**

**Thank you for your interest, and we look forward to your future creative contributions to...**

"Blah, blah, blah," I finished, re-folding the letter double-quick-time and tossing envelope and all onto the coffee table. "I made it, guys. I actually made it!"

Dusty picked me up and spun me around, laughing like a little boy. When he lowered me lightly as a feather to my feet, he gave me a kiss that managed to be sweet and excited at the same time. "I knew you'd make your dreams come true."

"You will too, dollface." I caressed Dusty's breathtaking cheekbone. "Someday your prince of a photog will come along and decide you're so perfect for their ad campaign they don't want anyone else."



Dusty purred and grabbed my ass for a massage, nice and firm, not a grope. Something I've observed: wholly straight men grab a woman's ass like it's about to escape. Bisexual and gay men treat a lady's ass with respect. I *like* a good nasty squeeze, but that's Warren's job. I may be a tough, kinky bitch, but Dusty treats me like a princess.

Warren, on the other hand, can be a suspicious bastard. "You didn't mention the name of the show you'd be working on, Gilly."

"Oh, just a genre-network drama series." I tried for "light and airy." "That's gonna look great on a résumé, won't it?"

"Uh-huh. Why don't you want us to know which show you're going to write for?"

"Does it matter?" I hedged. I did *not* cling to Dusty for support. I merely hugged him tighter. "The salary's four times what I'm making in retail. Four! We can not only afford a weekend painting the town crimson, vermilion, ruby and scarlet, but we can probably renovate the apartment after a couple of months."

Warren crossed his arms over his chest. "You don't want us to know the whole story. Given how you're the one who lets it all hang out, this makes me suspicious as hell. Details. Give 'em. Now."

I swear, all Warren needs are medals pinned over his chest. The urge to salute was strong enough already... which, hey, if I could get him into role playing wouldn't be a bad idea, would it? I made a mental note on that idea and switched back into big-eyed-fawn innocence. "There's nothing to tell."

"Fool me once, shame on you." Warren snatched up the letter before I could disentangle myself from Dusty and, too fast for his own good, had the paper unfolded and was scanning through his glasses.

He lowered the paper. "*Joe Vampire?*"

"Er... yeah?"

"That faux-reality show too weird to be real? You're working on *Joe Vampire*? Gilly, what the fuck?"

His reaction wasn't entirely uncalled for. I'd been making fun of *Joe* for months. A man pretends to be a vampire and suckers in women, offering them immortality if they'll just do him one special favor.

Kidding.

Actually, no, I'm not. I only wish I was. *Joe* doesn't ask for sexual favors -- still can't get away with that during primetime -- but the idea is to see how many people he can fool. It's amazing how many people fall for the illusion. Dangerous because once burned they'll never believe again and real vampires *love* worldly-wise cynics.

They taste like chicken.

Working on *Joe* wouldn't be all sunshine and roses, which I'd known from the get-go. I have my own reasons to stay away from anything involving bloodsuckers. Weres and vamps mix like TNT and a lit match.

Hell, though. A lady's gotta keep herself fed, clothed, and there are big names involved with *Joe*. I wasn't kidding about the résumé. It's in desperate need of padding and *Joe* would pork my creds up nice and fat.

Warren pinched the bridge of his nose and let the letter fall. "Okay. Fine. Just don't expect me to listen when you go off on 'the truth is out there' again." He was, of course, referring to his disbelief in what I had told him I was. Geez, it's not like I asked to be born to grow fangs and fur under the full moon -- but I'm sure as hell not ashamed. I am who I am, woman and wolf. Full stop.

I decided deliberate deafness was the better part of valor and returned the focus of my personality to Dusty. "Put on your raunchiest best, sugar. Not one of your T-shirts, though, not even the one that says 'My Boyfriend Loves Cock'." Dusty has a whole collection of these, each one worse or possibly better than the last. I like his "Orgasm Donor" shirt best. Tonight, though, no go. "Shine yourself up like a new penny, babe. We're going to party like it's 2099."

Dusty lit up. "What about the mesh shirt? The glittery one?"

"Rock on. Gloriously tacky. Perfect. I'll even add some sparkle to your cheekbones." I cut a sly glance at Warren. "You can borrow my eyeliner too."

"I love you!" Dusty grasped my cheeks to pull me in for a hearty smack on the lips, then made tracks for our closet, which is actually rope strung up across one side of the room, tied securely to eye hooks the approximate weight of ship anchors. "Mesh... mesh..." he muttered. "Warren, what are you wearing?"

I put a finger over Warren's mouth before he could answer. "Uh-uh. This is my night and I want my man candy looking edible. You're wearing the black undershirt and your black jeans."

"Those are two sizes too small. Both of them."

"Exactly." I gave him a wink, left him to figure it out, and traipsed to my section of the "closet" to find my own wardrobe choices.

The three of us have lived together since undergrad days. What would it be by now, seven years? Our degrees in creative writing (me), philosophy (Warren) and drama (Dusty) have gathered dust while we've flipped burgers, stuffed envelopes and raked leaves -- but none of us have ever given up on our dreams. We're going to hit the big time some day, all of us.

Which brings me back to the whole ménage situation, which you're probably wondering about, wanting to hear some juicier details. Too bad. A lady doesn't kiss and tell.

Kidding.

Me, I'm not a lady. I'll get around to the savory tidbits in my own time, but for now this is the short version:

- Two bisexual males in one dorm room
- One trisexual female in the room next door
- Female attempts mediation to get the males to stop fucking like crazed bunnies while she's trying to study
- Four or five six-packs of beer
- Three extra-large pepperoni pizzas
- Six condoms put to good use

-- One surprisingly un-awkward morning after that turned into a thing lasting all the way through college and out the other side.

"Trisexual," by the way, means I'll try anything once. Twice, if I enjoy myself. Three times lucky and I'll develop a new habit. Hence my happy participation in an almost anything goes ménage.

Shacking up with two mundanes, non-weres, has gotten my tail paddled more than a few times in both forms and it's kind of a bitch having to deal with their disbelief in the supernatural -- but I wouldn't trade these guys for the world.

Usually.

In the middle of tugging his sinfully yummy tight shirt over stomach muscles that just make me want to bite them, Warren caught sight of me and froze. It's funny to see a grown man doing an impression of a deer in the headlights of a train, isn't it?

"You... you... what are you *wearing*?"

I plucked up a length of silky fabric. "If I had to guess, I'd say it's a plain white blouse. Kind of demure, even, with the angel wing sleeves and lace on the collar."

Warren got his Stern Face on. "Demure? Are you off your nut? Gilly, no. As one of your lovers, I qualify for the position of designated bodyguard and there's no way in hell I feel like fending off the hormonally-crazed horndogs who are going to go after you in that... blouse. The last person I saw wear frills like those was Lestat. Come to think of it, that's downright disturbing. Not to mention, this shirt is..." He flapped a hand at me, lost for words.

"See-through," Dusty supplied helpfully. Or not so much.

"Translucent," I substituted. "Don't go throwing stones, Mister. You thought Lestat was hot."

"Hotter in the second movie."

"He wasn't played by the same actor, Dusty."

"Oh."

"See-through," Warren insisted, damn him for his ability to evade distraction. "Your nipples are on display like a red-light special. And what you have on your nipples. What the hell would those be?"

When someone's accusing you, always tell the truth. They have no fucking idea how to come back. "Clamps. Fourteen-carat gold with diamonelles and great copies of rubies, sapphires and emeralds. The chain linking them is supposed to be gold, but I have my doubts."

"They're not strung through actual holes, are they?" Big strong man, big baby wuss about piercings. I almost had Dusty convinced to get a stud in his tongue once (everything you hear about tongue piercings and oral sex is true). Warren dragged him out of the piercing parlor. I think they went to a monster truck rally or something, which they both hated, but Dusty got sidetracked and that was that.

Eh, well, everyone's got a phobia or three. I hate silver. Okay, so that one's kind of obvious when you know what I am...

My nipples *are* actually pierced, but I take the hoops out before I come home from work. Small sacrifice when it comes to keeping the man happy. Also, when I do stop pitty-pattering around and flaunt the nips with honkin' huge, blatantly real jewelry the look on his face is going to be priceless.

I felt like tormenting him right about then. I'm wicked, evil, and I have mad skills when it comes to making my men crazy.

Turning to Warren, I ran a finger down my admittedly well-exposed cleavage and paused at the top of the slope. "Mmm." Swaying my hips, I sucked my finger into my mouth and did my best slow, sexy sashay toward him. "You love seeing my breasts on display. Don't lie. They're all swollen from what you did earlier, and they feel, ooh, *so* sensitive. See?" I tugged on the chain, tilted my head back and moaned.

The jeans Warren had been about to put on fell out of his grasp. "You are such a bitch."

"And you wouldn't have me any other way." Close enough to feel the heat of his breath on my cheeks, I got a good handle on his ass and stroked down the crease in the

middle. His expression didn't change from wary-slash-horny (mostly wary, although horny was making a bid to be top dog.) His breathing did speed up, harsh-sounding. Another man would have been begging by then.

This is one of the reasons I love Warren. No matter what the hell you do to him, he'll *never* beg. Argue, snipe, snark, yes, but he will never bow his head to anyone and woe betide anyone who tries to bring him down because he *will* kick their asses.

Remember that, 'kay?

"I don't know." He wet his lips, but not nervously. Sinuously, snake-like. A python facing down something cute and fluffy and on the menu. I let him grab me by the forearms and manhandle me far enough away to get a good look at his face.

While he analyzed, I took action and went for his balls. He might have stopped breathing. No matter how much someone loves you, if they grab your jewels while *not* in the middle of active sex a wise man raises the white flag on autopilot.

"All I want to do is make you feel good, big man," I crooned, rolling his nuts together in the way guaranteed to make him go cross-eyed. His cock, half-stocked from my little act, jerked against my palm. "You always make me fly. When I think about this inside me I get so wet and so horny. All I can think about is the next time we're gonna fuck."

All true, but it also did the job. Warren's brain clicked over to sexsexsex mode and 99% of the wariness lost its hold. "That's my good boy." I rose up on tiptoe to kiss him, flicking my tongue over his bottom lip. Moving from balls to cock, I worked him over like the pro I am when it comes to my honey. He seized me by the back of my head and deepened the kiss, thrusting into my mouth.

Ooh, yeah, now that's what I'm talkin' about. I love seeing him get all dominant. Love being dominated by him. He's a natural who'd shine with a dab of polish. If he was a were, he'd have beaten the shit out of his pack brothers and risen to the top before he turned twenty.

However, never underestimate a woman. I did the thing with my hand, a twisty sort of slide both Dusty and Warren claim should be illegal, and Warren buckled as if

stabbed in the gut. He shot over my hand, sticky and drippy. He let go of my head, and I took advantage of the moment by lifting my fingers to my lips and sucking his cum off, every pearly drop.

Swear to God, if he'd had anything left to blow he would have. His Adam's apple jerked as he swallowed, and he sounded like he'd just run the Boston Marathon. His cock twitched between us and he groaned, probably coming dry.

Now tell me I don't know about Woman Power.

"Good, good boy," I whispered, rubbing my thumb along his lip. He automatically put his tongue out and tasted his own spunk. I started wondering if another orgasm wouldn't do my body good, and was about to suggest he let his own fingers do some walking when I felt a tug on the back of my transpa -- *translucent* blouse.

Turning around, I saw Dusty in all his glittery mesh brilliance, the effect sort of spoiled by woeful puppy eyes. "I'm your boy too, aren't I?"

"Aww, Dusty." I gave him his own fair share of kisses, just the way he likes, scattered over his face before finishing up on his lips. "You know you are. Now come on, let's get you prettied up."

"For the love of God, no makeup," Warren protested. "If he flames any harder he'll spontaneously combust."

"Pay no attention to the grouchy man behind the clothesline. He knows there'll be hell to pay for sassing me."

"I'd be watching my own back," Warren warned, probably trying to sound threatening but ending up with sexy-as-hell. "I know what all that was about, just now. You figured blowing my mind would turn me to putty in your hands."

"Well, you *were* sticky and I had fun playing with you."

"Just you wait, missy. I'm so getting you back."

I paused in the middle of reaching for something Dusty would love and Warren would hate and gave him my best Bette Davis smile. "Promise?"

Warren started to answer me, but Dusty saw what I'd been going for and squeaked. "Oh, my God! You're letting me wear the collar tonight? And the leash?"

Yeah. We're *all* that kinky, apparently.

I'm pretty sure Warren was busily devising some way to trump everything I'd come up with so far when we got back home, something probably involving fucking me in an impressively creative way until I screamed for *momma*.

I wish I'd known what he was planning.

Reality saw to it we never found out.

But let me tell you about the club, next, where the shit really started hitting the fan...



## Chapter Three

Lights. Camera. Action. I love the smell of gay clubs around the midnight hour. Strobes everywhere in a rainbow of colors, mouth-watering men bumping and grinding, and yep, there are actual cameras too, taking shots of various dancers. There are half-a-dozen in town, and we'd been to all but one -- a new kid on the block, and what looked like the best one ever.

Babylon, eat your heart out. You might be the biggest, but you ain't the best.

Contrary to expectations, a lot of gay clubs will let a woman in without the bouncers changing their *oh-my-God-kill-me-now* attitudes of total boredom. Unclick the rope and I walk right in, no fuss, no muss.

They probably think I'm a lesbian or a tranny, or possibly the acceptance has something to do with leading Dusty on a black leather dog's leash. Once inside, some men treat me like estrogen is contagious, but most of the guys are live and let live and love it when I get my groove on on the dance floor. They don't go for the tits, but I get more gropes to the ass than Charmin gets squeezes. Doesn't bother me.

What? Would anyone sane complain about hunkalicious men showing some hands-on appreciation? Besides, see my earlier comment about how gay and bi men respect the female ass.

Dusty loves this kind of place so much he started bouncing on the balls of his feet when we walked through the doors. Warren gritted his teeth. "Gilly, do you think this is a good idea? It's past midnight and my God, where do you put all the alcohol and why aren't you even a little tipsy?"

"Natural talent, Cap'n." I blew him a kiss. Didn't completely erase his frown, but the turn of his mouth flickered upside-down for a sec. "Come on. You don't want to

dance, don't dance. We'll find some seats at the bar, which you can hold for us while Dusty and I go knock our socks off."

"We're not wearing socks, Gilly."

"Figure of speech, sugar. But hmm, good idea. Kick off your boots."

"I like these boots."

"So do I. Who wouldn't?" A sexy pair of steel-toed shit-kickers gives a man a definite *rrawr* look. "I want to see my slave boy go barefoot."

"The sign says no shoes, no shirt, no service," Warren pointed out.

I rolled my eyes. "Pedant. If you'll look around, ninety-nine percent of the men here are completely shirtless. I don't think anyone's going to kick Dusty out for bare tootsies."

"You won't let anyone tromp on my feet?" Dusty asked dubiously.

"If they do, I'll kick 'em in the nuts." I preened in my own footwear, white leather *domme* boots up to the thigh with four-inch-long stiletto heels. "I won't kick with the blunt end, either."

Dusty and Warren both went pale. Honestly. I wasn't threatening *them*. Men and their common bond of sympathy when it comes to a crotch-shot. I tugged Dusty's leash. "Come, boy. Take those shoes off. Now."

"Yes, Mistress." Dusty grinned wide and toed off his boots. He held them up for approval and I nodded. "What do you want me to do with them?"

"Carry the boots under your arm for now. When we find a table -- ah-ha, I see three spots at the bar, so hustle your asses -- we'll put them under your chair. Move, boys, move!" I helped them along with a hand to the middle of each one's back, maybe using a *touch* more strength than I usually pretended to have, and we got there just in time to beat out a bear who really should have reconsidered the not-shaving option and his hopefully legal twink.

They shot us death glares. I gave them my best sunny smile and swung daintily up into my, my, *my* bar stool. That's the were in me. Graceful and protective as hell of my territory. Apparently they were the sort who are terrified by double-X

chromosomes, because they scrambled fast enough to leave cartoon clouds of dust in their wake. Metaphorically.

As Warren and Dusty claimed a bar stool on either side of me, I flagged down the 'tender. Ooh, yummy. Had a sort of George Clooney look to him, maybe twenty years younger and fine as good wine. Gay as pink ink and seriously easy on the eyes. "What can I get you gentlemen... er, and you, miss?"

I don't bitch about "miss" versus "ms.," and I can deal with "ma'am" if the speaker is looking up while on their knees. This guy had a sort of old-world courtesy you don't often find these days. Fluid as flowing water, smile like we were old friends, and *holy momma* sexy hands.

"Slippery Nipple," I said sweetly, to see how he'd react.

"You don't look like the type to want mixed drinks."

A point for him, a definite point. "You're good," I approved.

He winked at me. I liked him more and more by the second. "How about a martini? Classy, some might say erotic, and we have some great quality gin with a bite drier than the Sahara."

Pretty, smart and well-spoken. If I didn't already have my hands full with Dusty and Warren, I'd have asked him to try a swinger's night. He probably wouldn't want *me*, but hey, I have no problem with sitting back and watching. "Martini it is."

"Shaken or stirred?"

"Go with the James Bond classic."

"And for the gentlemen?" Hmm. An amorous glance at my boys. Maybe the swingers' night wasn't out of the question. "Coffee, tea, me?"

Okay, move that from a question to a definite possibility.

"We're with her," Warren informed him with a scowl. "Both of us."

"Lucky lady." He took my hand in a super-smooth move for a kiss on the back of my knuckles. I enjoyed the thrill. Warren's lips tightened. Dusty watched with the eagerness of a soap opera fan for the next thrilling twist. "First round is on the house. What would the gentlemen care to drink?"

"Give Dusty the Slippery Nipple." I wrapped my boy's leash around my wrist. "The grouchy one can tell you what he wants himself."

"Beer." Warren clipped the word off like a bullet. "Australian."

"Coming right up. By the way, if you need anything my name's Dmitri." Dmitri bowed and went to do the mixing and shaking bartenders do best. I enjoyed the view while he stood with his back turned -- hey, I'm committed, not blind -- and entertained myself with fantasies about our own personal Zorba the Greek.

Warren scowled and turned around on his bar stool to watch the crowd of humping, pumping, mostly-naked and sweaty-gleaming men. A cornucopia of riches. Trouble is, Warren can't dance and he knows it for a fact. The man has less rhythm than a Weeble, although he does do all right with slow songs. Those are basically hugging someone and swaying.

Slow songs are, however, in short supply in gay rave clubs. Right then they had something electronically techno blasting, seriously hot bass line with pounding drums, and I was ready to get out there for some sweet funky. I stood up and pulled Dusty along behind me. "Come, dollface. Our public awaits."

"We're dancing?" Dusty perked up. "What about our drinks?"

"They'll keep. Warren can watch them until we take a break."

"Okay." Pause. "What's a Slippery Nipple?"

I pretended to mouth an explanation he couldn't hear over the boom-boom-boom of the music. Dusty, bless his heart, smiled and nodded and followed like a good puppy.

One tiny if curvaceous woman leading six-feet-plus of ripped male perfection onto a gay dance floor does draw a few stares. I like to think some of them were due to my outfit, which consisted of nothing more than incidental, matching underwear and the *translucent* blouse, which hung down to a couple inches above my boots. Satisfied with the impression we'd made, I gave Dusty enough leash length to jive properly and wound the rest around my wrist.

I'm not the best dancer ever, but I'm not shabby and frankly, a few undulations and some suggestive gestures (thank you, Madonna; you're good for something after all) while holding a prime piece of man meat by a strap of leather while he goes to town works just fine. Dusty, for his part, dances like a gay Swayze with an extra dollop of habanera-hot sexuality.

"God, this is fun!" I read his lips as saying. Didn't really need to hear the words, though. His huge grin and the shine in his eyes said it far better: "Wheeeeeeeee!" I'd have mussed up his hair if I hadn't been going for the big bad *domme* look. As it stood, I took him by the chin and gave him a shake. He brightened further, almost glowing. My darlin' thrives on knowing he's done good.

Now, what would he look like when fucking Dmitri? Dusty switches, so I was able to develop nice mental images of my man both on top and bottom. Would Dmitri have a good cock? I'd have laid odds he did. Men that carefree are usually easy-going because they don't have anything to prove. Which could mean anything anywhere else, but in a gay dance club it's usually got to do with dick size.

A hand, presumably belonging to one of the dancers behind us, landed on my shoulder. A big, thick hand with the weirdly contrasting long fingers of a pianist. I would have delivered a backwards kick, but he intrigued me enough to turn around and see who had the balls to interrupt.

That was my first big mistake.

The second was probably failing to choke down my hoot of laughter. Now, I've seen it all and done most of everything during my not-so-innocent life, but this guy took the cream gâteau. Glossy black hair falling past his shoulders -- either a really good dye job or great genes -- huge dark eyes, skin so pale it was the blue-white of skim milk, and, going back to jeans, filled out painted-on 501's fit to make anyone tongue-tied with lust.

That wasn't what made me crack up. The funny part was the long black Dracula cape he wore along with a red lipstick circle around Magic Marker "bite marks" on his neck.

I mean, *please*. Hot does not mean you can get away with that kind of shit without looking like an ass.

He smiled, sweet yet confident, a nifty mix between Dusty and Warren. "Mistress, may I borrow your slave for the next dance?"

Getting all flattered by being called "Mistress." Third major screw-up. The idea sprang into mind that passing over Dusty's leash and sashaying off the dance floor would look hella cool popped into my mind and without even thinking I handed over the reins. "Be my guest, but bring him back in one piece. I'll be at the bar."

Mr. Tall, Dark and Strange inclined his head, the picture of politeness. "Thank you, Mistress. I'll bring him back in one piece."

I didn't even ask Dusty if he was okay about dancing with a stranger. My shy Dusty, who needs a lot of hand-holding and reassurance. I still wonder why I didn't see the Clue Stick hovering above my head, ready to smack me one that would knock some sense back in my head. Either way, it missed and I made my way to the bar without a backward glance.

Warren was still sunk in a grouch, but also halfway done with a sinfully dark beer. I slid into my seat, picked up the martini -- it even had an olive -- and took a sip. My mouth puckered. Dry? Fuck, it turned my tongue to parchment. God bless Dmitri, though, who'd left a glass of water on the bar as well.

Satisfied, I turned to Warren and dug my elbow into his ribs. With love. "First slow dance up is yours, big man. With me or with Dusty, whoever you want."

"Looks like Dusty's already spoken for." Warren glowered. He gets jealous. I followed his line of sight and, hell, what I saw startled me. The stranger had Dusty's leash wound tight enough to nearly choke the poor guy, but Dusty wore a look of stoned bliss, head tilted back, neck arched and eyes closed. He moved slower than the music's tempo called for. For his part, the stranger swayed in a way that gave me the creeps. Couldn't figure out why.

Damn my fritzing Clue Stick. It picked a hell of a time to short out.

"Hey." I nudged Warren. "Don't worry. You know Dusty. He's just in the moment. He'll give the guy a great big smile, or possibly a hug, take his leash back and come join us when the song's over."

Warren grumbled something.

"Say again?"

"I hate it when you two screw around with those leash games," he growled before tossing back a chug of beer like a shot of whiskey. "I mean, where does playing master and slave get fun?"

"Easy, tiger. You mentioned the key word. *Playing*. Lighten up, huh?"

"Dusty doesn't think you're just goofing off."

I boggled. Yes, sad to say, I did gawp at him. "What?"

"Dusty..." Warren shrugged. "He talks to me, sometimes, when you're not around. The guy seriously gets off on taking orders. He'd probably lick those hooker boots if you asked."

Temper: on the rise. "Hooker boots? Lick them?" I put my martini on the bar and hopped down to get in Warren's face. "Want to rephrase your statement about my wardrobe choices?"

His face turned stone cold and silent as the grave.

"Fuck you too!" I grabbed his beer, fully intending to dump it in his lap. Honey or no, there are some things you don't let a man get away with. "Where the hell do you get off insulting me *and* implying I'm turning Dusty into a slave-boy junkie?"

"All I'm telling you is the truth, Gilly. Face the facts."

"Uh-uh. That's your job, Warren. You like cold, hard logic. I like having fun. You see the big difference here? Last time I checked, you liked my being a free spirit. I seem to recall you using those exact words. So one more time, Warren -- what the fuck's crawled up your ass?"

I thought Warren would dodge the question again, but instead he looked back at me. Well, first at my boobs, then above my head, but still. "Gilly, you can't play forever."

You have to grow up some time. If you're going to be part of a creative team for a network show, you have to change."

"Uh-huh. Yeah." I know a *lot* about changing, for one, and I can play nice when I want to. I got on the crew of *Joe* because I was outrageous and quirky and they thought I'd be a great resource for pop culture and colorful characterization. I decided to put rainbow streaks in my hair as soon as I could lay hands on some Manic Panic and possibly get a few more parts of my anatomy pierced.

I don't respond well to challenges. Sorry.

"Gilly," Warren said, his eyes turning old and weary. I really didn't like the look. It didn't suit him, and it pulled in a flood of worry about his giving up on his own dreams. "Someone has to keep you two out of trouble. Help me out and grow up. Be the woman I know you can be."

I had no idea what to say. Zippy wit doesn't work well for moments like those. Warren leaned forward and kissed me gently as a butterfly wing, then slipped off his bar stool. "Keep the beer and watch our seats. I'm going to go take care of my guy."

Like a puppet without the necessary hand up its ass, I stayed put, mostly out of shock.

And so I had a really good view of the action as it unfolded.

Warren strode through the crowd of dancers, who parted before him like a re-enactment of the Red Sea. He got more than his fair share of awed glances and some admiring salutes -- the whole military man thing, I guess. Men generally go uber-weak in the knees over someone who's had the nerve to buck "don't ask, don't tell," and hey, tall and sexy doesn't hurt, either.

He reached Dusty, still tranced out as a flower child. He didn't bother with the niceties, just grabbed Dusty and hauled him backwards. There was an awkward moment where I feared for Dusty's air supply, but then the stranger let go of Dusty's leash and held his hands up in the universal *see? I'm harmless* gesture. Or possibly the *please don't hit me* one. Kind of hard to tell sometimes.



They started to talk. I picked up my martini glass to have something to grip. Maybe not the best idea, since I lose control of my strength when I'm stressed and glass has a nasty tendency to shatter, but hey, I wasn't thinking too straight and I figured I'd be all right.

And I was, until a second strange hand gripped my shoulder. I screeched and whirled around, going for the drink-toss this time.

"Shit!" Dmitri's eyes were squeezed shut as rivulets of gin ran down his cheeks.

"Oh, my God. I am so sorry. Is there a towel around here? Not the one you use to polish the bar. Please, don't be blind now."

Dmitri mumbled something in Greek and fumbled under the bar. He came out with a fresh white cloth and mopped his face. He blinked a few times and looked kind of red and puffy, but he was laughing. "Remind me never to startle you again. You've got a mean aim, miss."

"Call me Gilly. I think after assaulting you with vermouth you're entitled to use my name when you yell at me."

"I'm not going to yell." Dmitri gave his chin a final swipe to clear off the last of his martini facial and switched from "tickled" to "concerned." "I wanted to give you a head's up. The Dracula wannabe dancing in the middle of your two guys isn't exactly the kind of person you want to tangle with."

"They're both dancing?" I turned halfway to check for myself, and be damned if both Dusty *and* Warren the Mighty weren't toking off the same buzz-pipe then, rocking back and forth while the man I labeled "Dracula" did his weird little sinuous sway.

A snake. Fuck. That's what he reminded me of. Not an innocent-type corn snake or blacksnake, but more of a cobra charming its keeper instead of the other way around. "Dmitri, want to tell me what's happening out there?"

"I'm not sure." Dmitri's accent slipped out, probably a sign of nervousness, which in turn amped up my own antsiness. "The guy comes in here around once a month, and he leaves with a new man every time. I figured he had some special trick for getting lucky, but..."

Pauses in this kind of sentence are never, ever good. "But what?" I demanded. I still had Dusty's untouched Slippery Nipple to use as ammunition if necessary. "Either finish what you're saying or feel my wrath. I'm not in the mood for ellipses."

Dmitri rolled his drying cloth into a twist and tugged at both ends. He glanced from me to my menfolk and back again, ping-ponging to keep an eye on everyone. "I don't want to scare you, okay?"

"Uh-huh. You realize that now I'm fucking terrified and I'm going to rip off your arm and beat you to death with the bloody end if you don't talk? Talking would be good."

"Jesus. You mean it, don't you?"

"Don't make me angry. You wouldn't like me when I'm angry."

"This isn't anger?"

"No, this is fear masked by intimidation. I want to know what you were waffling over warning me about."

Dmitri hesitated, sighed, and dug under the bar a second time. He emerged holding a slim manila folder. "I'm not a PI or anything, but I see a lot of things tending bar and when I get bad vibes about someone I'm usually not wrong." The manila folder slid my way. He stood back and let me look for myself.

The folder held three photocopied newspaper articles and a sepia photograph, the real deal from Ye Olden Days. I read the news reports, took a good long look at the pic, and lost my cool faster than an unplugged refrigerator. Slamming the folder back down on the bar top, I tossed Dmitri a quick "thanks" and made a beeline for my men.

The plan was to drag them away from "Dracula" by their ears and lecture them until my tongue fell out, and then spank both their asses cherry-red, Marine and teddy bear or no.

Didn't work out too well in practice. The crowd failed to do its customary path-parting, and I had to fight my way through. Carefully. I *could* have sent every twink, leather man and gym bunny flying, but that would have drawn too much attention.

In retrospect, it would have been the best thing I could have done.

Because by the time I got to where I'd last seen Dusty and Warren dancing with Dracula, they were gone.

One-hundred-percent fucking *gone*.

## Chapter Four

There isn't enough "oh, hell, no he doesn't" in the world to cover what I was thinking at the moment. What I'd read in Dmitri's manila folder didn't incline me to look at Dracula in a good light. I'd rather have seen him in the blue strobe lights of a police car, or hey, several. Preferably with policemen included, plus some policy-busting Saturday Night Special guns.

If Dracula didn't kill Dusty and/or Warren, I decided I'd kick both their asses and keep them on leashes 24/7 after I got them home safe.

Which meant going after Drac and kicking *his* ass first.

I didn't see a back exit, which didn't mean one didn't exist. Meant the way out was hidden. T-R-O-U-B-L-E. If I went right after him, I could pick up the scent before it had a chance to cool off and --

Aw, hell. Dmitri. To ditch on the tab or not to ditch? I hate stealing, but when lives were on the line... then again, he might have a few more handy hints to share about Drac.

Back to the bar I went, shoving and wriggling my way through writhing bodies who had not a single clue as to what was going on. I may have stomped on a few insteps, but if anyone asks I didn't hurt a single soul.

When I emerged on the other side, hair ragged and one of my angel wing sleeves ripped, Dmitri looked as if he'd been waiting for my return. He had a highball glass in one hand, yet another white polishing cloth in the other, and a grave expression I didn't like one bit.

I slammed my palms on the bar. "Everything you know. Now."

Dmitri didn't flinch, pause, or even blink. "There isn't much more than the articles nicknaming him 'Vlad,' suggesting he's a suspect in the disappearances. But

I've heard about dozens of other gay men who vanished off all known radars after one night in the club. Nights when Vlad's been hanging out. No one ever hears from them again. They just don't make the news."

"Peachy." I ripped my dangling sleeve all the way off and tossed it into the crowd. "If the cops brought this bastard in for suspected murder, why did they let him go? I mean, the way the guy dresses alone should have been grounds for a stay in the local loony bin."

Dmitri cracked a small, bitter grin. "For one, I hear he had airtight alibis and plenty of witnesses. For two, since when do people give a shit about gay men? We dress like lunatics and wander off all the time, don't we?"

"Back in the Village People days, maybe. What are they, on *crack*?"

"Could be." Dmitri shrugged, imbuing a whole world's worth of bitterness in one twitch of his shoulders. All the same, I saw a glimmer of a lost and sorrowful soul in there. "Doesn't change the fact that no one cares, and no one's willing to do anything about Vlad."

"Yeah, well, now there's me, and trust me, when I get through with Vlad his only alibi is gonna be a stay in intensive care."

I know, I know. Vamps don't go to the hospital when they're hurt. I just don't let logic get in the way of a good rant.

One of Dmitri's eyebrows went up. "You're going after him?" He didn't add any qualifiers about only being a woman or a small one, which I liked, but hey, more important things to do at the moment.

"You bet your balls I am. Here, keep these safe."

"Keep what -- whoa!" I'd wriggle-kicked out of my fuck-me stiletto boots and tossed them over the bar. He caught both boots without a fumble. Nice reflexes. "What am I supposed to do with these?"

"Same thing you can do with these." I plunged down my blouse for the nipple clamps, pulled them off and handed them over. "Wear them for the night if they fit. Duh! Stuff them in a storage locker or something."

"You're chasing Vlad down barefoot?"

"I have extra foot coverings," I muttered, turning to stalk away. Then I paused to look quizzically at Dmitri. "The man's name is really Vlad? As far as you know, that's actually his birth name?"

Dmitri nodded.

"Jesus, the things parents do to their kids," I grumbled as I went forward into the breach one more time and damned the consequences of tossing twinkies around like bouncy balls.

Vlad. A vampire pretending to be a human pretending to be a vampire. An actual vampire.

And insane.

And a killer.

Lucky for me the alley behind the club -- what was it called, anyway? -- "DD's Ride"? -- didn't matter -- stood empty. No trash, no quick-fuck assignments in progress, but no Dusty or Warren or Vlad either.

Not such a big deal. The scent would still be good enough to follow. Besides, with no one around to ask questions I could change my clothes. So to speak.

Shifting forms between human and wolf isn't like what they show in movies. Not really painful once you get used to the change, but not an effortless silverfish glide where you melt from one entity to another like you should be swinging your glossy fur and moaning "yes, yes, yes!"

Closest way to describe shifting shape is to compare the process to a full-body sneeze, or ripping off a Band-Aid. Yeowch -- done. And voila, there stood a big-ass gray timber wolf where a petite plump redhead with tattered glad-rags had been.

Much, *much* better.

I lowered my wolf's nose to the cracked concrete of the alley floor and discovered two things. The alley wasn't halfway as clean as it looked. I smelled vomit, beer, rank sweat, asparagus spunk, and latex from a hundred rubbers.

I also smelled Dusty and Warren's trail. A whine was as close to a groan as I could get in wolf form, but trust me, the sound was heartfelt. They hadn't headed for the streets. Nope, they'd gone deeper into the alley, which not very much to my surprise did *not* dead-end, but led into a friggin' maze of back passages that made me think of hedge labyrinths.

Vlad probably counted on anyone chasing him getting hopelessly confused right away. Hah! Not me, baby. Wolf senses to the fore, and you *cannot* beat any kind of canine for sniffing power. I honed in on Dusty's honey sweetness and Warren's spicy clove smell and followed as fast as I could run.

I refused to be creeped out by how Vlad himself had absolutely no scent at all.

Smelly or not, I was thinking the vamp in question really didn't have too much common sense beyond hiding in a dodge'em maze. Tracking Dusty and Warren was pathetically easy. I smelled out where they doubled back and looped around. Interesting and not a little alarming: the smell of arousal grew stronger with every step.

Now maybe it's just me, but when someone who dresses like it's Halloween all year long leads you into a city's worth of back alleys, horniness is not the top concern. Which left me with the unhappy bet that Vlad was using a thrall and playing my guys. It'd explain the way they'd looked stoned, and why they'd followed him in the first place. Dusty, alone, might have gone, sure, but Warren? Like hell.

I'll spell it again: T-R-O-U-B-L-E.

I'll spell what came next, too: C-R-A-S-H. As in the seriously heavy length of rebar coming down hard and fast on my wolfy noggin. I barely had time to see the weapon, much less dodge.

If I'd had doubts before, no matter how small, they were gone for good then -- fat lot of help, though. Only kind of creature with that speed on land? Vampire. Real, honest to -- er -- Vlad -- vampire.

As the lights went out, I saw Vlad himself leaning over me, flashing sharp white fangs in a nasty-bastard smile. "Got you," he whispered. "Two to go."

S-T-U-P-I-D.

\* \* \*

"Hey. Hey, you in there. Fido. C'mon, girl!" A series of shrill whistles threatened to split my skull open like a melon. "I know you're in there. You can't play roadkill with me, Fido. Let's see the whites of your eyes."

I recognized the voice, as I'd heard it in the club and on my way down into Concussion Land. "You son of a bitch," I muttered. Or tried to. Wolf muzzles aren't shaped for human speech. Came out more like "grumble *snarlsnapgrrr*."

The meaning wasn't lost in translation. "Now, now, Fido. Mind your manners or I'll smack you with a rolled up newspaper. Speaking of papers, I hope for your sake you're trained and you have a good big bladder. As you'd be able to see if you took a look around, you're not going anywhere anytime soon."

I covered my muzzle with my paws, trying to convey the right degree of "fuck you."

In response, he pressed something sharp against my shoulder. It sizzled, and I'm not a big fan of the smell of roast *me*. I yelped, scrabbled back -- claws clicking on a bare floor -- and hit a wall, gasping for breath. My eyes were open then, boy howdy, and settled on Vlad waving a small silver knife at me with macabre cheer.

*Holy shit*, was all I could think. Have you ever been face-to-face with a madman? Not pleasant. Vlad had ditched his costume cape, scrubbed his neck clean, and pulled his raven's wing-colored hair back into a severe ponytail. He looked saner now until you put together the gleam in his eyes, the faint curl of his lip, the tension coiled in his muscles and, oh, yeah, the room full of torture implements.

I think I saw a fucking *rack* behind him, and I seriously didn't like the looks of his invitingly opened Iron Maiden. Not the hair band. An actual casket full of nails guaranteed to Swiss-cheese you with little skill but definite precision and certain fatal consequences.

Ah. The nails in his Iron Maiden were silver. You can bet this perked me right up, huh?



I had enough light to see all this by from a host of dribbly candles arranged around the room, which only had one tiny window way high up on the wall and, big shocker, silver locks on the door. Golly, wonder who had the only key?

I tried to growl at Vlad. He laughed, low and rumbling and so clearly a fruitcake that it was terrifying. "That's not polite," he chided. "We're all friends here. Why don't you play like a nice girl, Fido?" At my glare, intended to inform him of my plan to tear him into itty bitty kibble-sized chunks as soon as I could, he clicked his tongue. "Now, now. Werewolves. They're always so bloodthirsty."

*And you're not?*

"Well, of course I am, but I have more style." He could read my thoughts. Of course he could. It figured. "I could care less if you stayed in wolf shape or turned back into a chunky 'ho, but I thought you might want to try calling out to them."

"Worrrf?" I peeked past Vlad and squawked, not a pretty sound from a wolfy throat. The bastard! The utter, complete, shitty bastard! He had my boys, all right, and from the looks of things unless I stopped him Vlad could do whatever the fuck he wanted.

*You have what it takes, I ordered myself in a stern mental talking-to. Jaws. Claws. Never killed a man, but hey, he's not technically a man, the undead bloodsucker, so eat fur, mother-fucker!*

I launched myself up, up and away -- and hit a nifty invisible wall, sliding back down faster than a fireman on a greased pole. Clocked my head another good one and lay there dazed while Vlad cackled. Villains cackle. I don't care what they actually sound like. It's a villain thing. The meaning, not the tone. Vlad could have sounded like a fucking babbling brook and I'd have picked up on his nasty glee.

One full-body sneeze later, I lay naked on the floor, a lot colder than it had been in wolf form. "What the *hell*? Is this a containment circle? You're not only a nutbar vampire, you're a psycho bloodsucker wizard?"

Apparently, I amused Vlad. He crossed the circle, no problem, petting my head the way you would a favorite old spaniel. "Sort of yes, sort of no. It's powdered silver

sprinkled in a ring around you. The guys said it wouldn't work, but look how smart I am, huh?"

"You have guys? As in friends you hang out with?"

"Huh." Vlad frowned. "I used to have guys. Then I got hungry."

"Charming." I struggled to my feet. Took a lot more effort than I'd expected. Part concussion, part strength-sapping silver. Weres really, really don't get along with the moon metal.

Which doesn't make a whole hell of a lot of sense, come to think of it.

I'd think about clichés later. For the moment, I focused on Dusty and Warren. They stood facing each other, dreamy as lotus eaters, not really seeming to see the person in front of them. Dusty giggled every now and then, murmuring to "pretty lights" dancing around his head. Warren swayed slightly and didn't say a word.

"Thrall," I accused. "You've got them hoodooed."

"Of course I do." He left off but emphatically implied the *you idiot*. "The Marine bristles with hostility. Is he sexually frustrated? The dimwitted one, eh. He just got on my nerves. He did go under more easily than military guy, but neither one was what you'd call a challenge. Even if they had been, I always win my games."

"Yeah, and I bet you pick them really carefully, don't you?"

I didn't see Vlad's hand coming. Just felt the power behind his slap explode into starbursts of pain as I went flying over to visit my new best friend the wall one more time. Tumbling into a heap, I reflected on two things. I'd had enough of being bounced around like a rock in a tumbler; also, I thought even if he hadn't trapped us all, the space cadet, I might have killed him as a public service to humanity.

"I can hit harder," he said mildly. "Want a demonstration?"

What I *wanted* was to grind his bones to make my bread. Instead, I got my red-headed and wolfish temper under control and stood, wiping blood off my split lip. "Uh-uh."

"Good, good girl. You get a doggie treat, Fido." He dug in the hip pocket of his jeans and dragged out a freakin' Milk Bone, which he winged in my general direction. I

dodged before the canine version of an animal cracker hit me and winced when it ricocheted against the wall. It bounced, then rolled gently to kiss my bare toes.

Ugly suspicion time. I picked up the doggie treat and carefully crumbled the stiff meat-and-grain paste apart. Managed to drop it in time before the silver razor-type blade touched my fingers.

"Not hungry?"

"You sick --"

"Sick, sick bastard. Is that what you were going to say? I know." Vlad turned his attention back to Dusty and Warren. "Mmm. Looking good, boys."

I had to look too. My skin wiggled with creepy-crawlies. "What are you doing to them?"

"Me? Nothing."

I snorted. "Pull the other one. It's got claws on it."

"Silly wolf."

"Good at spotting bullshit."

That earned me a measuring glance. "Interesting. I was planning on having my wicked way with your ripe peach of a body and then draining you dry as the gin they serve at Club DD, but I like your spirit. I have a collar made of silver, sweet Fido, and it's got some fucking brilliant enchantments. Once on, you'd never be able to shift again. Also, for the sake of emphasis, let me repeat the fact that it's made of silver." He chuck -- cackled. "Innovative minds at work are the best. Want to be my pet?"

"Fuck you."

"Not right now, thanks. You're a few sizes up from my type. Besides, I like to watch, and if you'll turn your attention to the center ring, the action's heating up. I think you'll want to see this."

*Crap!* I swung around for a visual of Dusty and Warren. There was a subtle difference in their trance states. Less of the stoned, more of the focused on each other. Love so bright and pure it made the rest of this place, wherever we were, look unbearably grubby.

"You're in a cellar," Vlad informed me absently, intent on his viewing pleasure. "We're underneath an old rum factory. Hit its heyday back in the 1940's, closed in the 1970's, more or less forgotten by the city. This would be the part where I'd tell you not to scream because no one can hear you, but I think you're smart enough to figure it out on your own."

"Stop reading my mind." *Smug, smarmy, psycho prick.* See? This is one of the reasons why weres and vamps don't get along. We have way too many secrets to be comfortable with others digging around in there.

"Now, now. It's not nice to call names." Vlad yanked my ankle, bringing me crashing down but still inside the silver circle, damn it. "Have a seat. Enjoy the show."

"If you harm one hair on those men's heads --"

"Spare me. And shut up." Vlad pulled another silver knife from a sheath so black and closely fitted to his thigh I hadn't seen it before. I really should have. Wicked, curved knife with an edge you could split a Kleenex down the width with. "There will be no talking without permission or I'll be forced to use corporal punishment."

Bad news for me. I can't keep my mouth shut even when I'm *not* in mortal danger or trying (if failing) to protect my boys. "What are you doing to them? Stuff your 'nothing' where the sun don't shine, fang boy. Look at them! They look like they're on a mix of Quaaludes and Viagra."

"Close enough, metaphysically speaking." Vlad toyed with his knife, tilting it from left to right to watch it gleam in the candlelight. He started paring his nails. "I'm messing with them, but don't worry. They're having a ball. When I pulled them out of the club, they were in total agreement with the idea of a threesome."

"Under your influence."

"Not one-hundred-percent." He accidentally cut into the meat of his thumb and *tched* before licking off the blood. "They liked me. They wanted to fuck me. Just them."

"Son of a bitch."

"Jealous?" he mocked me. "Right now, they think they're on a sunny, deserted tropical island, playing in the sand, and oh, by the way, they don't remember you, not

one teeny tiny bit. They're happier than they've ever been and you're not part of the picture." His grin turned plain mean. "I'm there. Ooh, the wicked things we're doing together, the three of us. Without. You."

Okay, he hurt me with that one, but since he couldn't have been more obvious about wanting to sink his own claws in I didn't rise to the bait. And I did *not* cry. I had an eyelash turned inwards. And the cellar hadn't been cleaned in, oh, ever. So there.

"Watch," Vlad whispered.

I couldn't not. Dusty and Warren had sluggishly made their way to one another. Once they touched, their lethargy went bye-bye faster than tickets to a Justin Timberlake concert and they were galloping to the races. A little rough on take-off as it filtered through that they didn't have any clothes to get rid of, but they recovered just fine.

"Oh, yeah." Vlad leaned forward, bracing himself on one slim wrist. Dancer's bones, boxer's hands, pianist's fingers. Really kind of freaky-looking, all in all. I saved the knowledge in case I needed a good insult later and multitasked between trying to watch my boys while figuring out how on earth to cross a silver circle.

"You're not enjoying yourself," Vlad mock-pouted, glittering with dark humor. "I thought you liked kinky sex games. Oh, but you're thinking there's a difference, right?"

Go me. I kept my mouth shut.

"Good girl, Fido. I feel like fast and dirty. What about you?" Vlad stared at my boys, murmuring something under his breath in a language I didn't recognize. Lots of consonants. Russian, Ukrainian, something along those lines. Point was, as soon as he started talking, Dusty and Warren got their groove thing on as if they were being paid by the drop of sweat.

Anywhere else, any other time, I'd have either been waving a lighter to cheer them on or turned on enough to join in the fun with my own fingers in my pussy. I don't mind playing voyeur.

I just think the performers should have a choice as to audience.

Warren and Dusty are about equal in strength. Looked like Vlad had either beefed Warren up or weakened Dusty from the way Warren knocked Dusty down and was on top of him between one breath and the next. My breath. Vlad, the undead scum, chortled. "I don't breathe."

*If you're reading my mind now -- go to hell, asshole,* I thought at him.

"I've already got a seat reserved, thank you. Shh. I'm trying to concentrate. Not because I need to maintain any kind of willpower over them. They *are* going to finish this dance purely because *they* want to. I just want to watch without comments from the peanut gallery. Peanut. Maybe that's a better name than Fido. Anyway, I don't want you to miss a thing. Face forward, doggie, and keep your eyes peeled."

*Damn vampire.* The power of Vlad's suggestion had me kneeling with my thighs parted slut-style, hands resting palms-up on my knees, and unable to look away.

Two men doing the nasty is a gorgeous sight. They get rough, holding nothing back. Kill-or-be-killed fucking is the general rule. Teeth, nails, fists, feet, everything comes into play while they duke it out for dominance.

My sweet Dusty didn't stand a chance, and Vlad didn't make the defeat any easier on him. Sad as a kid who's had his Game Cube taken away, he stopped fighting and gave Warren the unspoken white flag. Warren bared his teeth, much more of a wolf expression than a human one, and got busy. He dragged Dusty's legs over his shoulders, scraping his butt across the stone floor, and lined up a stonkin' huge erection -- was it my eyes or had he, er, grown since I last saw him?

Wait. No lube. Jesus, not even spit. You do *not* fuck or get fucked dry; it's just common sense. "Don't," I warned Vlad, unable to look away. "You sadistic animal, don't you even --"

Warren thrust his cock balls-deep in Dusty's ass. Both men screamed, a mix of agony and ecstasy.

"Beautiful," Vlad whispered. I'd have bet he had half a stock himself.

As for me? Yeah, I did cry that time.

"Stop this," I begged. I'm willing to grovel for a good cause, and no time like the present. They were happy -- ecstatic -- feeling no pain, but they'd hate themselves in the morning. "They love each other. I love them. Don't make them do what they're doing. Stop this!"

"Ah-ah-ah." Vlad waved a finger in my peripheral vision. "What's the magic word?"

Screw pride. "*Please.*"

"I knew you could learn some new tricks. You want this to end? Glad to oblige, Peanutty puppy." Vlad stood, stretched lazily, and strode toward Dusty and Warren.

The instant he reached their sides, Warren stopped mid-thrust and came, both of them shuddering. I think Dusty came too; sensing someone else's orgasm is usually enough for him.

Then, both Warren and Dusty stared up with the deadness of zombies, no lights on and nobody home.

"Separate," Vlad ordered casually as anyone else might order a Big Mac and fries. He half-yawned. "Stand up and face me. Four-eyes, walk into my arms."

I realized too late what he had planned. "No! No, you asshole, don't! Don't!"

Too late. He did. I'm guessing the rush of blood in Vlad's mouth distracted him enough to let me turn my head right after I heard the sound of fangs crunching through flesh and tendons. Sounds like someone biting into an apple, but it's a hell of a lot worse.

I heard Warren howl, the sound of a man lost in a tormented nightmare, and I heard Dusty scream.

Then I heard Vlad say, thickly around bloody teeth and tongue, "Take a nap, Fido," and that was all she wrote. *Hello again, unconsciousness.*

I didn't wake up for three days.

## Chapter Five

Let me start off by saying no one should ever have to go through what happened next. I didn't wake up for three days, sure, and I had some good long stretches of black-outs, but the rest of the time... I think they call it "twilight sleep." You know you're halfway between snoozing and awake, aware of what's going on around you but not really able to move or do anything of your own free will.

Which pissed me off.

I didn't hear Warren or Dusty die their mortal deaths. I'm grateful for that, at least, although Vlad probably made sure I was out during their last breaths so I wouldn't try to save them. As if I could have. When a vampire drains you dry, CPR doesn't really work. *If* I'd been able to break the damned circle and shift form, I could have bitten or scratched them deep enough to break the skin and pass on my wolfy nature, but I kind of doubt the lupus maximus works on someone who doesn't have any blood flowing through their veins to spread the DNA change around.

Yeah. I'm fixated on the "dying" part. You're telling me you wouldn't be if you were trapped in a room, totally unable to even hold someone's hand as they cross over? I didn't get a chance to kiss Warren or grasp his hand, to hold Dusty's head on my lap, to smile and lie and promise him he'd be okay.

This is another reason I hated vampires. I'd never met one who wasn't a sadistic bastard. Vlad took the cake, the icing, and the baking pan, though. Asshole. I didn't feel his presence in the room whenever I floated in the twilight. Didn't mean he was really gone. I just hoped so.

It took me by surprise when I woke up for real. Not easing out of sleep the way you do on a Sunday morning, looking forward to lazing in bed with the funnies and schlepping around in your PJs until noon. More like the *gasp!* brand of wake-up call,



where your eyes snap open and you see everything around you with crystal clarity. You know you should be freaking out about something, but damned if you can remember what.

Lucky for me, I don't put up with that kind of shit. I gave myself a few good hard mental slaps, kicked my own ass (metaphorically) and struggled up to brace myself on my elbows.

*Oh.*

*Oh, shit.*

*Dusty. Warren.*

I screeched like an elephant who'd just seen a mouse and scrambled clumsily around to see if I could spot my guys. Spot them I did, and wished I hadn't. I won't go into really graphic details about the gaping bite marks in their necks or the huge spill of dried blood, but I will tell you how someone -- and it could only have been Vlad -- had arranged them. He'd laid Warren out all ready for a coffin, hands folded on his chest, and even stuck a calla lily through his fingers plus put coins on his eyes. Dead, dead, dead. Dusty was even worse. Vlad had him cuddled up to Warren's side, snuggling them together as if Dusty was only sleeping.

Yeah. I threw up. Nothing to actually void, but my twisting stomach did its best. When the dry heaves stopped, I tried to make myself stop shaking and start thinking. Thoughts raced around to start with -- *oh, my God, what do I tell Warren's dad and the eighteen zillion members of Dusty's family? How do I get them out of here without attracting the press? Ambulance chasers, and I don't mean lawyers, will jump all over this mess. Probably what Vlad wants.*

Most important of all: *how do I track Vlad down and kill him slowly, messily and painfully?* The Pack wouldn't help me avenge two mundanes whether they were my lovers or not, or maybe because they were -- had been -- my lovers. From the looks of the silver-dust circle still surrounding me, I could assume Vlad knew how to deal with weres.

He wouldn't be an easy kill, but I swore on my granny's grave there would be fiery hell to pay for what he'd done.

Then I'd bury my boys and wage full-out war on every damn vampire I could track down. More or less suicide even for a were, but frankly, if the loves of my life were gone I figured I'd just as soon join them and see if fucking was allowed in the fields of Heaven.

My plans of death, destruction and glory came to a screeching halt when the unexpected happened.

Warren moved.

"Yipe!" I bolted up, forcing quaking knees to bear my weight. "Warren!"

He groaned, his usual waking-up noise. Warren's okay once he's up and moving, but he hates dragging himself out of bed. "Warren, big man, can you hear me?" I couldn't believe what I saw. How could he be alive?

"I hear you," he mumbled. Reaching up to rub his eyes, he frowned, then flicked off the coins. "Where are my glasses?"

Er. "Can't help you, hon. I don't know. They might be somewhere in here."

Warren's eyes blinked open. "Where's here? And why did I lose my glasses?"

Ookay. Could be his brains got scrambled. Mine would have been after what he'd gone through. "No glasses, hon. Sorry."

"Where are we?" he asked again, turning his gaze over the whole of the room. "I can't see for shit without my glasses, you know that. Just blobby shapes. Gilly?"

In the fading light from that teeny tiny window way high up, probably street-level, the place looked worse than my vague memories had provided. Underground, definitely. Vlad hadn't lied. The air stank sickly-sweet of the burnt molasses they used to make rum and every surface wore a layer of dust thicker than felt. The candles had long since burned out into stubs and messy spills of wax. Tables and barrels lay overturned and cracked.

I had remembered the torture toys down to a Y, though. Y for Yeowch. They looked worse in natural twilight. Dark red/brown with what could be rust but was

probably blood, showing definite signs of serious hard use, and spread around in abundance. Things I hadn't noticed before. Trays of pinchers, vises, knives and a couple of freakin' hacksaws. Some sharp-ended sticks of iron that looked like modified fireplace pokers. Chains, wrist-thick chains.

The Iron Maiden wore the creepiest smile I'd ever seen on anyone living, dead, or carved in statuary. Mona Lisa mixed with Satan. Brrr and geesh.

Time to make with the tracks. "Warren, are you strong enough to stand? I need your help to break this circle."

"What circle?" Warren sat up, rubbing his neck. "Do I have a hickey or something? This hurts like a bitch."

Yeah, I'd pretty much figured it would. "Yup, one hell of a hickey." Well, it was more or less the truth, and I didn't want his brain going kersnappety before he broke the goddamned silver circle holding me prisoner. "Crawl this way and wipe a hole through the glittery dust around me. Once I'm free, I'll take care of you. Swear."

"You always take care of us," Dusty said in his sweet voice, first curling tighter around Warren and then blinking sleepily at me. "When's it going to be our turn?"

A bit bitchy for Dusty, but I figured he had an excuse to grouch. Warren frowned. "He's got a point, Gilly. We're the guys. We should be the ones taking care of you."

Right about now you're going to be wondering why I didn't put two and two together to get the whole truth. Maybe I was in denial. Maybe I was just too happy to see and hear them to notice the signs.

Either way, my cluelessness almost cost me -- us -- everything.

At the moment, though, all I could think was: *for the love of Pete. Men!* I rolled my eyes. "You want to be my savior? Go right ahead. Break the silver circle like I asked, and then you can do whatever you want. Carry me off into the night like Rhett toted Scarlett up those stairs. You and Dusty can pass me back and forth. Whatever. Just get me out of here!"

In retrospect, I really shouldn't have said most of what I did.

Ever seen someone's eyes glow red? I have. I had, before, whenever my luck was bad enough to cross paths with a vampire.

When Warren turned all Godzilla on me, I finally realized the depths to which Vlad had sunk and added a week's worth of slow, painful torture to my plans, should I somehow manage to survive. Bamboo under the fingernails would probably still hurt a dead man. He'd feel pain when I nibbled him like a cob of corn.

Bloodthirsty? Damn right I was bloodthirsty.

Vlad hadn't stopped at draining my men. He'd gone and brought them over. Go out dancing one hundred percent human, catch four hundred winks, and wake up undead. A vampire.

"Gilly," Warren growled, crawling to me and my silver circle, which suddenly seemed a whole lot comfier and where I wanted to be. Until I remembered Vlad didn't have any trouble crossing the line himself. "Gilly, come out and play."

"I want a turn at the rag doll first." Dusty, who I knew hadn't had a mean bone in his body, made me shudder with the still boyish but murderous purr in his words. "I like dolls. You can pick out their eyes and unravel their hair. Poke around to see what's inside."

My human heart broke. My wolf nature screeched at me to change into something furry with claws and sharp teeth. It's usually not permitted in front of non-pack members, but like when I'd shifted during Vlad's torture, there are such things as extenuating circumstances. I can't think of a better "break glass in case of emergency" loophole than having two newborn vampires prowling your way.

Here's something you should know about fresh-raised vamps. They're not really operating on all cylinders, whatever that means. I don't know cars. They're a few fries short of a Happy Meal, a few pieces short of the picture puzzle, not the brightest bulbs on the tree. You get the idea. When they first rise as the undead, they have two things on their mind: feeding and fucking.

They're not noted for being gentle or classy with either, and they sure as hell aren't picky as to choice. Usually why a vamp's nearest and dearest end up as the first dish on the menu. Which meant --

"Vlad, you are a dead undead man walking," I breathed, pressing my back to the wall. Evil prick had seen to it I'd have double the pain. Not only did I have to see the two loves of my life changed into bloodsuckers, but to save my own life...

Aw, hell...

To save my own life, I'd have to kill them a second time.

I knew if I let myself think any more or any harder, I wouldn't be able to do what needed to be done. Giving in to the full-body sneeze, I waited to shift into a huge, vicious wolf with its own *killkillkill* drive and do what had to be done.

Didn't happen. I stayed human. Naked. Vulnerable.

"Come on!" I yelled at myself, willing the change to happen. What had Vlad done *now*? Had to be one of the "enchantments" he'd gloated about, like the silver collar, applied to the circle around me. I'd shifted before, no problem. Now, when I needed the extra oomph of the wolf more than ever, I might as well have been asking for wings to fly away on or possibly for a burger "my way" at a certain fast-food chain. Doesn't and didn't happen.

To add insult to injury, Warren thought I'd screeched at him. "You're in a big hurry to die." He licked his lips, and I saw a flash of fang.

Dusty bared his own shiny new sharp choppers. Real vampire fangs are not the dainty little points you see on TV. They're a half-inch long with a wicked curve, serrated edges and a slightly blunted tip. They're meant to cause as much pain as possible to their dinners, and you generally don't survive the kind of chomp a hungry vamp delivers.

Deep shit time? Oh, yeah. Eyeball level and sinking by the second. I thought fast, but unfortunately stupidly. "Do I get a last request?"

The question confused Warren. He stopped mid-crawl and frowned. "What?"

"A last request. Kinda customary for those who are about to die, hail Caesar."

"Caesar who?"

"Never mind. Think back. You'll remember. The dying are always given one final gift before they set sail down the River Styx. Er, before they kick the tin pail or whatever. So how about it, big boy?"

You can probably see where I was going. If you don't, wait for it.

Warren's frown deepened. He lifted up and sat back on his heels. "What do you want?"

He didn't quite understand, no, but Dusty broke into giggles which sounded downright spine-chilling coming out through his new fangs. "Bet I know what she wants. She's asking for a show."

Vampire Dusty? A lot sharper of a tack than human Dusty. Something to worry about later, if there was a later, but at the moment his insight suited me fine. I kept my back to the wall but spread my legs to display my pussy. Dry as a blade of bone -- thinking you're about to die doesn't generally get the old juices flowing -- but still, pussy on parade. I slid a finger between my folds and faked a lazy, hopefully sensual smile. "One good orgasm before I tumble off the mortal coil. For old times' sake. What d'you say?"

Warren narrowed his eyes. I think he might have been figuring out what I was up to, but even though he was smarter now Dusty still worked on impulse, and after my little display he'd changed modes from *feed* to *fuck*. He rose to the balls of his feet and glided up to join Warren. "Get up, handsome," he ordered, toeing Warren in the ribs. More of a kick, to be precise. "The lady wants a show. I want your ass. Want to ream you out until we blow our minds. Stuff you so full of cock you split open." He'd been pulling Warren to his feet as he spoke, his voice dropping into a throaty whisper which *did* get me damp, God help me. I'm such a horndog.

Er. No pun intended.

As Dusty spoke dirty to him, Warren's own switch tripped over. Red eyes glowed like fire alarms and he showed off his fangs. "Who says you get to be on top?"

"I do." Dusty spun Warren around and nearly KO'd him with a sharp pop to the solar plexus. Warren didn't need to breathe, but forgot when he hit the floor. A corpse struggling to catch the breath he doesn't have sounds like water gurgling in clogged pipes. Not pleasant. Dusty followed Warren down, landing on hands and knees, pinning my big Marine type easy as a butterfly to a display board. "Roll over and spread 'em."

Warren snarled. Dusty snarled louder and slapped Warren's face hard enough to leave fingerprints, a pretty impressive feat for the bloodless. Actually, an impossible one. Then again, Dusty always did have his own special ways.

"Turn. Over."

Warren lunged up, fangs snapping shut on empty air. Dusty slammed his knee into Warren's balls and pancake-flipped the man -- vampire -- himself while he did the gurglegurglegurgle thing again.

Female juices off. These weren't the guys I knew. Nothing left but stone-cold killers wearing the faces of my lovers. The thought of jilling off to this kind of violence turned me colder than Popsicles in an Alaskan winter.

Good luck on my part, they'd all but forgotten about me. Dusty had one hand on the back of Warren's head, forcing his nose into the dirty cellar floor. He'd dropped his voice to a level only a were could pick up at that distance, whispering things fit to make a sailor blush. Where he'd learned to talk that way, I didn't know, but geez, he'd have made a hooker want to wash his mouth out with lye soap.

Apparently Warren didn't mind. He bucked up, trying to throw Dusty off, and I got a good eyeful of his massive hard-on. As I had seen earlier, he'd definitely grown. And as I saw now, when Dusty punched Warren's skull hard enough to daze even a vampire and got into position between Warren's legs, I noted that Dusty too -- who'd already had the length and girth men would have killed to possess -- had enlarged to a downright frightening size.

Eeee. The thought of having his new and improved monster inside got me damp again. Ever wish your cunt would make up its mind about whether or not something's sexy or scary? If you have, you're not alone.

Horndog moment deux. I started dripping, pussy lips swelling, as Dusty prepared to drill for oilgasm.

Oil. Oh, shit. Oil. "Lube!" I yelled, withdrawing dripping fingers which had found their way down to tease my throbbing clit. "For the love of sweet mercy, use lube, you morons!"

Dusty ignored me. Kind of a stupid demand, anyway, since I didn't see any in the cellar and you can bet your ass Vlad wouldn't have left a supply. He turned tit for tat back on Warren, driving in dry. The key difference this time around the block? When they both howled, it was nothing but pure glee. They got off on the pain. Vamps do, when they're in the mood. It's a thing. Not a pleasant thing, but them's the facts.

Maybe it was my own inner animal nature kicking in, but watching my men go at it no holds barred, chained or padlocked got me hotter than a bonfire in summertime Bronx. I couldn't stop myself from rubbing faster, harder, slipping on my own cream, drizzling a swear-to-Bob honest puddle on the cellar floor beneath me. I could feel my own orgasm coming on, one big mother of a climax, the kind that, once you'd ridden out the wave, would leave you ready to die happy because there's no better way to go.

*Uh-oh. Last request, indeed.*

Still couldn't stop fucking myself with my own fingers, pumping two in and out, catching Dusty's rhythm as he pounded into Warren's mostly-virginal ass. They made noises like orcs going through a meat grinder, happy howls of agony, Warren humping up as Dusty thrust in.

They changed position when I wasn't expecting them to. Dusty, cock still in Warren's ass, dragged them both up into a kneel. He got one hand around Warren's porn-worthy boner and yanked almost hard enough to tear the man's -- vampire's -- poor willie clean off. Did the job, though. Warren let loose with a marrow-freezing



shriek and shot spunk halfway across the room, cool splatters landing on my breasts, belly and pussy.

I dare you *not* to blow your lid in the face of such pure, raw sex. I came, oh, yeah, did I ever come, everything going pure white as my mind went bye-bye and my body shook, rattled and rolled through the biggest O of all big O's. Not really aware of anything besides my own waves of ecstasy, I *did* hear Dusty's howl of triumph and knew what it meant.

At the peak of climax, I didn't care.

When I came down, panting for breath, which I was entitled to as I still needed oxygen, my fingers trailed out of my cunt as I struggled to focus on Dusty and Warren. Wish I hadn't. They were finishing up their sex-fest with a refreshing drink. Dusty's fangs were buried in the previously un-wounded side of Warren's neck, and Warren's teeth were sunk deep in Dusty's wrist, which he must have dragged up to his mouth.

They didn't get much. Duh. Bad on them for being stupid.

Worse for me when they realized a nice, fully-stocked snack was right there for the taking. Dusty pulled out of Warren's ass with a jerk and they rose way too gracefully to their feet. Eyes aglow, they made for me in perfect sync, ready for a real feast.

I knew my number was up. Warren reached me first, scuffing a hole through the silver powder easy as a spoon through cheesecake. I could get out of there then -- yay. Staying in would have been better, especially if they'd had to stay *out*. Ya don't always get what you wish for, though, do you?

Warren hauled me to my feet, bracketing me between his own body and Dusty's. They were cold as glaciers, hard as marble, and had breath that smelled like snakes and blood. They hissed, opening their mouths, each taking one side of my throat like proper gentlemen share and sharing alike.

Fine. This was my stop. I knew I was getting off, not in the fun way, and permanently, but I couldn't go without a real goodbye even if they wouldn't understand at the moment. I raised my arms, cupping the back of each vampire's head,

thought about the good times, cursed my impulse for a night on the town, and whispered: "I love you, Warren. I love you, Dusty. Forever and always."

Twin tears ran down both my cheeks. Then, I wound up, took aim, and popped them in the backs of their heads as hard as I could, which for a werewolf is pretty damn hard.

"Ow!"

"Ow!"

They could have really savaged me then for the sake of revenge.

I think, though, that was what snapped them back to the real world. Rubbing the backs of their noggins, Dusty and Warren both paused, sniffing the air.

The prickle of fangs lifted from my throat. Curious tongues tickled up the drops of salt water I'd shed.

And by damn, I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it for myself, but when they tasted my tears both Dusty and Warren yelped, swore, and jumped away from me as if I were made of garlic and festooned with crucifixes.

Ookay, never seen anything like that before. I didn't exactly know what to do except look from one to the other, trying to figure out what had happened. Warren looked baffled, but Dusty, my sweet Dusty, fought his way to the other side fast and sweet. His eyes faded from red to their normal sweet blue. "Oh, God," he whispered, wrapping his arms around his ribs. "Gilly."

Good sign. Good, good sign. "It's me, Dusty. I'm here."

"Gilly, I was about to... oh, fuck, I was... I wanted..."

I wanted to hug him so badly. "Shh. It's okay. You didn't. That's what matters."

"Forgive me?"

How could I say no? Fine, fine, I should have turned him down flat and scrambled for my life, but what can I say? Dead, undead, human, vampire, I still *did* love him.

Warren too, and when I glanced at Warren his red lamps had gone cocoa brown. He looked like he was going to be sick but was way too macho to actually let himself

heave. "I taste blood. Sticky in my mouth." He swallowed hard. "And I remember everything. That crazy cape-wearing bastard bit me and drank my blood. I was thinking *what the fuck?*, of all the shit to go through your mind when you're being murdered, when he sliced his wrist and pushed it against my mouth. Then, nothing, until I woke up and we tried to kill you too. God. Gilly, 'sorry' doesn't cover it." He patted down his naked body, hunting for what I knew he wouldn't find. No pulse. No breath sounds. On the other hand, plenty of panic struggling for place with macho pride. "Gilly, what happened to us? What kind of monsters did he turn us into?"

"Vampires," Vlad replied, sliding so effortlessly out of a super-shadowy corner of the cellar that I knew he'd been there all along. I might have counted on him having a fucking flair for drama. He lurked there, all but scorching the scenery with his scary-monster vibe. "You're vampires, my beautiful boys. You're my new pets." He grinned, showing off his own fangs, displaying the kind of bestially smug glee that made me want to chew the grin off his face. "You've tasted my blood, and you're under my control. The little werewolf knows I'm telling the truth. Don't you, Fido?"

*Fuck.* I looked back at Dusty and Warren to see they'd gone slack-jawed and empty-eyed, swaying just the way Vlad wanted them to.

"You see?" Vlad snickered. "Such beautiful creatures of the night. I have a job for you, boys, pets, and then I'll take you out to feed and fuck your way through the night. First, we're going to play."

I had a bad feeling about what he was going to say next.

Good hunch on my part, because his command, short and to the point, turned out to be: "When we're done playing -- you're going to kill her."

## Chapter Six

"Friends. Gentlemen, ladies." Vlad snickered. "Sorry. Just one lady present. An easy mistake to make. There's so much of her I thought we had at least two women in the room."

Remember my urge to kill him? Getting stronger by the minute.

"So good of me to join you," he went on as he strode between me and my men. Pfft. Drama queen. The weirdo had switched out his semi-swanky duds for a pair of once-black jeans washed soft charcoal gray and a loose black silk turtleneck.

He'd probably been trying for "cool." He looked more like the love child of a beatnik and Elvira.

The shadows in the room didn't hide the insane glint in his eyes. He glittered with malice like a twisted Tinker Bell fooling around in her bag of pixie dust. This guy was mad, bad, and dangerous to know. He had also whipped Dusty and Warren back into a thrall and wound them around his pinky without breaking a sweat (okay, vampires don't sweat; it's a figure of speech), ignoring me except for the slam about my size.

I really, really hate cracks about my weight, so I decided it was time to show him my literal inner bitch.

Free of the circle, I felt that good old *achoo!* all through my bones and muscles, rattling me from the shape of a plump, naked coppertop to a snarling, slaverling wolf with plenty of pointy bits.

Vlad could have read my mind and known what I was planning. He didn't. I don't know why. Cockiness?

To be properly dramatic I should have raised my muzzle and given Vlad a warning howl, at which point he would have turned around in slo-mo, mouth opening

in a silent scream of terror, whereupon I would have lunged for his throat and the scene faded to black amidst splatters of gore and some ominous violins playing.

Uh-uh. Fuck playing fair. The bastard didn't even turn around, didn't even think of me as a threat. Nothing to worry about. So I figured he deserved what he got just a little bit more. Gathering my strength in my hind legs, I launched up, up and away, jaws closing around his throat to tear into the meat.

Or that had been the idea.

What actually happened was that as soon as my teeth touched him, the rest of my body reacted before my brain fully processed the screaming pain. Ever bitten into aluminum foil? Like that, only more so. I crumpled to the cellar floor in a tangle of furry legs, howling because I couldn't stop myself, it hurt so bad.

Vlad casually glanced down at me. "Oh, no, Fido's had an accident." He tugged down the collar of his turtleneck and pulled up the tail of the shirt to show me what he'd been hiding under there.

*Chain mail?* I struggled to process. *Who the fuck wears chain mail? He's even got a neck guard!* And they were made of pure silver, the finest I'd ever had the misfortune to come in contact with. If I believed in elves -- and hey, no reason not to, is there? -- I'd have sworn this suit of armor was forged somewhere Underhill.

Either way, he'd tricked me easy as cheating at Solitaire and he was laughing his ass off at me on the inside. "The suit goes from throat to toe, Fido, and I have silver rings on my fingers and thumbs. You can't hurt me, so why don't you drop the fur coat? We can have a chat, man to blob."

I made my growl sound questioning, teeth itching to bite him despite the chain mail. No way was I shifting back until I knew what he had up his sleeve.

Besides a whole lot of freakin' silver, that is.

He clicked his tongue. "Really, Fido. We're all friends here. I won't hurt you. Scout's honor."

R-i-i-ght. And I was supposed to trust him why, again? A quick look up the stairs showed the doors were still sealed up tight with silver barring the way out. I could run

a lot faster on four legs than two if it came down to flight, but I didn't see Vlad politely lifting his gates for a lady and her knights in any shape or form and I had a nasty suspicion he didn't plan to let my guys walk out at all.

On the other hand, if I took human shape I could cuss him out. That was what decided me.

Sneezing myself back, I opened my mouth to let 'er rip. Vlad did the creepy-fast *zip* vampires have down pat and pressed his finger to my lips. "Shh, Fido. If you raise a fuss I'll break your jaw, and I want to hear you begging for your life."

"Who writes your scripts?" I scoffed behind his finger, which felt dry and papery against my skin. Parchment. Old and dead. "'Cause I've gotta tell you, you really need to come up with some better material."

Apparently I amused him. Vlad slapped me on the shoulder like a good ol' drinkin' buddy, scorching my skin with the silver rings and nearly knocking me flat. "You're a real Mae West, aren't you? Used to be Snow White, but you drifted."

He actually waited for me to laugh.

I got the joke, yeah, but be damned if I'd giggle on command. "See my previous comment on needing something fresh for your repertoire," I said. "Seriously, how do you sleep at night? I mean, how do you sleep during the day? Don't say 'upside-down' or 'in a coffin' either, smartass. You'll ruin a good rant." I paused. "Where was I?" Realization struck as other thoughts turned slippery and hard to hold on to. "Hey! Don't mess with my memory. Get out of my head, you fucker!"

To all appearances, Vlad thought that was downright hysterical. He whooped and pounded his knee. Dusty's and Warren's mouths curved in uncertain grins, although God knew if they even understood what a joke was at the moment, much less the joke in question. I held on, knowing what was coming, what was really going on.

Right on cue -- double drama queen -- Vlad stopped laughing mid-snicker and straightened, glaring at me. He showed his true colors, then, no games, just the face of a stone-cold killer, and confirmed for me the knowledge that he'd never really been laughing at all. "I'm going to enjoy slitting your throat," he whispered, voice cold and

sharp as a dagger carved from ice. "I have a silver knife sharpened just for the occasion. I've wanted to have some fun with one of you hairy abominations for years."

Weres don't like vampires. It cuts both ways. Kind of alarming on the pointy end of the blade.

"You can try," I bluffed as I rose into a semi-crouch, shifting my weight from one foot to another. If I pounced him it was unlikely I'd even make a dent in his attitude, but I didn't want him thinking I was afraid.

Vlad shoved me back down, knocking the wind from my lungs. He sat casually beside the ring of silver, toying with his alarming knife. I noticed a hooked tip and really had to wonder what it was there for, despite figuring I didn't actually want to know. Brrr. "Fido, Fido, Fido."

Down. Not out. "My name is Gilly," I spat at him.

"What's in a name? Gilly, Fido, Rover. I'm Vlad, and other things. We earn our names, don't we, pooch? Whatever our parents call us when we make it through birth, and other titles we collect as we live. Or don't live, in my case. Or in the case of your boy toys over there." His teeth flashed white, fang-tips extra shiny. "I think I'll call the big one Tweedledum and the one with the stick up his ass Tweedledee. Or maybe Tooth and Claw. Doesn't matter, really. Whatever names I use, they'll come when I call."

"You think you're that good with a thrall?" I asked, stalling for time while I desperately racked my brain for some kind of Master Escape Plan. So far, no luck, but at least Vlad kept on talking.

"I'm the best. Want a demonstration?" He flicked his fingers at Dusty and Warren, who swung into one another's arms jerkily as puppets and started to waltz in one small circle, Dusty leading. "Bet the Marine type would hate playing a girl's part. You think?"

I didn't bother answering. Vlad wasn't listening, anyway. He lifted his thumb like Jeannie twitching her nose and Dusty dipped Warren. This was a sight no sane woman should have to see.

"Stop," Vlad ordered mid-dip. Dusty froze, Warren dangling from his arms. Vlad turned back to me. Goody. "See? Putty in my hands. Mallomars, huh?"

"Malleable, you nitwit," I snapped before remembering what a bad idea it was to taunt the psycho vampire. But in for a penny... "Mallomars are *candy*."

Vlad leered. "I meant what I said. They're sweet as cocoa, light milky and bitter dark chocolate. Their blood tasted so young and vital. They had happy lives, didn't they?"

I kept my mouth shut this time.

"Doggie got her muzzle on?" Vlad casually slapped my upper arm, silver searing me. I knew I'd have bruises and burn scars -- if I made it out alive. "No problem. I can make you talk when I want." He waved his knife, doing some fancy tricks to make the blade dance across his knuckles without a single slice. "Vampires consume the memories of the ones they drain. Sort of like seeing your life flash before your eyes when you die, except I get my own no-pay-per-view. I saw a lot in those two. So much potential. They'll make fantastic lackeys."

"Lackeys? You're making them slaves?"

"You have a problem, Rover?"

"Gilly. Gillian, if you want to be a fucking pedant. Yeah, I have issues with slavery. *Duh*. If you saw them for who they really are, how can you melt their brains into slag? You know Warren's overflowing with ideas about blockbuster video games. Dusty's wanted to be a model since he was five, for Christ's sake, *five*."

"Blah, blah, blah."

I kept on going, on a roll. "Dusty carries spiders outside instead of squishing them. He brings me chocolates and cuddles me and lets me cry on his shoulder."

"You? You cry? Outside of the magic Cinderella tears that brought your fuckbuddies back to sweet sanity in your arms? Nice touch. Cheesy, but nice."

"Some kinds of magic work for a reason. Doesn't matter what they come across looking like. And shut up. Warren takes care of Dusty and me both. He's head of the household, and okay, he might be kinda stiff --"



Vlad snickered.

"Shut up," I mumbled, crossing my arms over my bare knees and sinking my chin down to rest on them. "They were great humans. Now you're turning them into undead zombies. Forgive me if I don't applaud."

"Mmm. I wonder... I don't know if it's ever been tried before, but I'm all curious now to see what happens when a werewolf is drained and fed vampire blood." Vlad spoke so casually he sent icicles prickling down my back. He picked at his nails with the hook of his knife, cleaning underneath and prodding the cuticles into neat and tidy shape. "Would my blood poison you, or would I be the inventor of a new vampwolf hybrid? I could sell you furry, bloodthirsty beasts to the government -- don't fool yourself, they know all about us -- and make a fortune. I *am* pretty sure you'd croak, though, and I don't feel like keeping you around long enough to see if you turned. I can always catch another doggie later."

*Oh, God.* He could too, I knew it. Vamps and weres hated each other, sure, but up until now no one had been crazy enough to play mad scientist. Vlad would do it without blinking and with a lunatic smile.

"So, I have two delicious new pets to play with, and one annoying pooch. What to do, what to do?" He held his knife up to let the single stream of moonlight gleam over its edge. "I think I'll have some fun." With a fast, fluid motion he sheathed the dagger. "Not with this. Not yet. See, I have a few things you need to know before I put you down, dog."

He leaned in close enough for even a human nose to pick up the stench of decay he wore like cologne gone bad and pointed at golden Dusty and military mighty Warren. "You're right. They are special, both of them. Hot shit on a silver platter. Which you can't touch. Silver or the men. Special guys with big, soft hearts. Way too nice for their own good."

"Meaning what?"

"Don't be dense." Vlad slapped my cheek, then grabbed my chin and forced me to face what remained of my lovers, still dangling in their damned waltz move while

the silver smoldered on me. “*Look* at them. They’re the ideal of male beauty and virility. Young, strong, handsome as Heston in his heyday. Why do you think they took up with a chubby lump like you who doesn’t even have a pretty face? Why do you think they stuck around? You must put out like a ten-dollar hooker. So many memories of sex in their minds. Delicious. Their favorite memories didn’t include you, you know, minus being annoyed when you were around to get in the way of fucking one-on-one. All they really wanted was to be left alone, but you never did take the hint.”

“You’re lying.” My voice shook. I knew he was trying to either make me rise to the bait or break me down, and I was trying to stand strong, but... I’d wondered the same thing sometimes. Thought I might be a third wheel. Knew I was a girl next door, overweight, short, and nowhere near the same league of perfection my guys had reached with ease. “Stop.”

“Gospel truth, Rover. They wish you would go away and leave them alone. The only reason they never said anything was because they felt sorry for you. You should have heard the gripe sessions where they came up with ways to drive you off. Mmm-mmm. They had some good seeds of cruelty in them, and now that they’re mine I’m going to make their gardens grow. They didn’t want you before, and now they’ll only be interested in you for dinner.”

I found an ace in my deck. “If you sic two vamps on a were, you’ll start a war. The pack brothers, pack sisters and Alphas are going to come after your ass.”

“I know.” He took on a dreamy expression. “So much blood. So many suits of silver chain mail already stored in my basement. We’ll beat you down so easily the rest of the world’s vampires will call us kings and follow my lead. My guesstimate is that inside of one year there won’t be any four-footed furry pains in the ass left at all.”

He seemed to be forgetting the weres who weren’t bothered by silver. Not that I didn’t figure he had a plan for them too. My wrath and terror were choking out thoughts of allies and rebellion. Vlad was planning total genocide, and there wasn’t a damn thing I could do to stop him.

Unless I could manage to get past the pain and go for his face, the only part of him not covered in silver. Fingernails first, then a shift into wolf form to finish the job.

"Don't even try," Vlad drawled. He stuck his hand into the front pocket of his jeans, fished around and came out with something fit to make my own blood run cold: a silver collar studded with vicious spikes. "I changed my mind again. I think, now, that you're going to be my living proof."

"No. No way."

"Try and stop me." He grabbed a handful of my hair, dragged my head down, and clicked the collar onto my throat faster than I could react. I didn't scream. I can be proud of that.

I *did* feel like he'd just wrapped a strip of molten lava around my neck. The pressure cut off my oxygen, leaving me struggling for short gasps, and with air went strength and energy. I slumped, boneless, too weak to even try to tug off the collar no matter what it would do to my fingers.

Vlad was tickled beyond tickled. He petted my shoulder roughly as you'd rub an old hound's head, nudged my ass completely into the broken circle, and checked me out. "I can sense your pain. It's wonderful, and it was so easy. I'll just add some more silver dust to keep you locked up safe and sound, and I'll let you watch me train my new recruits. They're going to be stars, Fido, and they'll never even remember you existed. Not that they should have in the first place, fatass." He prodded the plump curves of my ass with a toe and a disdainful sniff. "You know what they say about chunky bitches, right?"

"Usually, I say I like big butts, and I cannot lie."

*What?*

"What?" Vlad echoed, pivoting on his heel -- right into the path of Dusty's fist. Smoosh-crunch, and oh, *hell*, yeah!

"Whoooo! Get 'im, Dusty!"

My gray skies cleared right on up because Mr. Sunshine himself had slipped his own leash and was back in action. He didn't stop at one pop to the nose, either. He

rocked and socked Vlad across the cellar to the far wall and finished up with a kick in the nuts vicious enough to make a eunuch buckle and cry for momma.

He sang all the way too, and I joined in where I remembered the words, pumping my fist in the air, silver collar be damned: "I like big butts and I cannot lie! You other brothers can't deny! You get sprung, wanna pull up tough, 'cuz you notice that butt was stuffed!"

My hero. He was so in for unlimited blow jobs and dildo fucks when he got us out of here, and let me tell you, I didn't doubt for a second he would. Dusty, my soft and cuddly bear. Who'd have thunk it?

I don't think either of us counted on Vlad coming back from the gelding-worthy knock to his nuts.

He did crumple, sure, but only halfway, and when he came back up I saw his true face. God only knew how old he was. Vamps look pretty human up to five hundred years, give or take a century, but it's all downhill from there and if they don't have a knack for glamour the geezers are hideous. Vlad looked like he'd felt, dry parchment skin stretched painfully thin over bones, his hair falling out in straw-like clumps. He'd extended the glamour to his clothes and his chain mail, too, and now that it was gone his GQ had gone ghastly, rags and tatters. The chain mail hung on him like a shawl, far too big, as well as tarnished black and full of gaping holes. He reeked of open tombs.

"Nice try," he said, voice reed-thin and wet-cat vicious. "You're paying for this, slave, with both your balls. I can still fuck your hole and I don't give a damn if you can't come. I'll cut 'em off and toss them in the silver circle with Rover until she gets desperate enough to chow down."

Dusty drew back, wrinkling his nose. "Eww."

"You think I can't?" Vlad drew power back into himself with a visible effort and disguised himself as young and strong again. We knew it was all a lie, but he went there anyway. Vanity. "You have no idea what I'm capable of, slave. Get down on your knees and worship me."

Dusty cocked his head, genuinely puzzled. "Why?"

I stifled a laugh behind my hand. Vlad, Vlad, Vlad... he might have gotten to Dusty at first, but nature trumps nurture every time.

"Why?" Vlad boggled. He grabbed Dusty's ears and twisted. Girly move, huh? "I told you, on your knees!"

"How are you going to cut my balls off if I'm down here and you're up there?"

"Same way I'm slicing off your tongue." Vlad's knife came back out. "I use silver because it's the best for werewolves, but it'll work just fine for clipping your wings. You're mine, brat, you and the soldier and your little dog too."

"Guess again."

I recognized Warren's voice just as I saw the spear of a broken rum barrel plunge through a hole in the back of Vlad's tattered armor and out through his breastbone, bull's-eye in the heart. Vlad had just enough time to look down, grasp the makeshift stake with a look of total disbelief, and then -- *poof*. A cloud of ashes burst open and drifted to the cellar floor.

"Turnabout is fair play, and payback's a bitch," Warren murmured. Then he looked up at me and Dusty. "It's over. Come here, would you?"

Dusty cannonballed into Warren's arms, hugging him tight. I willed away the weakness from Vlad's silver collar and stumbled to Warren fast as I could, flinging myself against his broad chest. I hung on for dear life, shocked at how it had all happened so fast and wanting to kiss him blind and stupid for saving all of our lives. Dusty too.

"Here, Gilly. Let me help." Dusty gently undid the latch on my collar and lifted it away. "Oh, God, your neck. It's all burned."

I could breathe so much better without the choker on. "It's okay, doll. Just an allergic reaction. I'll heal."

"We're putting aloe vera on there when we get home."

*Home*. There really is no place like home. "Sounds like the best idea yet," I said, giving Dusty a good hard squeeze, and went a few steps further to kiss both my men,

good, hard, raunchy kisses with thrusting tongues and nibbling teeth and swelling lips. From the way they groped my ass and kneaded my breasts, I knew for sure Vlad had been lying. He'd almost fucked me around into believing his vicious slams.

*Up yours, ash-boy*, I thought as Warren swung me into a classic screen kiss and Dusty cupped me from behind. Both were hard enough to need immediate relief, hard-ons developed while we kissed, and doesn't that make a gal feel really good about herself?

We were gonna rock our apartment inside-out that night, and it would be a long, long time before I ever suggested clubbing again. I had my men back, and they were all I needed.

So they weren't breathing. So their hearts weren't beating. So they were vampires. No one had ever pulled off *this* kind of ménage a trois before, but Dusty and Warren were worth a shot.

I'd deal with the fallout when it showered down.

"Warren, Dusty, I --" I started, only to stop when I heard sneakered footsteps thumping above, approaching the door to the stairwell. The person approaching opened it from the outside, lamplight streaming in and making us squint, but I spotted and recognized our new visitor first. "Dmitri?"

"Who?"

"The bartender from DD's Ride. He tipped me off about Vlad." I took a few steps in his direction, looking menacing as I could without fur and muzzle. "Would those be keys in your hand?"

"I found them up here next to Vlad's cape."

"Yeah. Right. Sorry to disappoint you, but the vamp I'm guessing was your boss has been demoted to a pile o' ash."

"He's dead?" Dmitri asked in disbelief. To my own shock, he tilted his head back, laughed, and whooped with what sure as fuck sounded like glee. "Hot damn! You did it. He's gone!"

"Ding, dong, the vamp is dead. Why are you celebrating?"

"Hey, pretty lady. You weren't the only one who wanted a pound of his flesh. Need any help? Your clothes are all up here with Vlad's, piled up by the stairwell entrance. I have some Scotch in a hip flask."

Dusty and Warren and I exchanged looks. "I don't think we're in a trusting mood right now," I said slowly. "But... thanks."

Dmitri nodded. "S'cool. Come visit me again, will you? Vlad's not the only bastard around who needed taking down."

My suspicion meter dinged over. "You're more than an ordinary bartender, aren't you?"

He shrugged.

"I didn't smell anything off earlier."

"With all the booze I sling? I can't say I'm surprised."

"Alcohol all gone now, and you don't smell human. You don't smell like anything I've run into before." I took a grip on both Dusty's and Warren's arms. "What are you?"

Dmitri grinned. "A friend. You'll be seeing me around."

He disappeared. One second there, next second gone. Blinked out of existence.

Peachy.

I knew for sure I *would* have another meeting with Dmitri in the future, and wouldn't that be fun?

In the meantime? Home. Home, home, home. "Let's go," I ordered, dragging my men stair-wards, totally chucking any pretense at hiding my strength.

"You really are a werewolf, aren't you?" Warren asked slowly. "I never believed you. I'm sorry."

"And we really are vampires?" Dusty put in. "Dead?"

"Dead." Warren shook his head. He wanted to shudder, I could tell, but he had his brass-plated balls back in place, better and harder and shinier than ever. My tough guy. "And I thought the worst that could happen from going to that club was getting plastered on Boilermakers. Really dead, huh?"

"Undead. It's complicated."

"Are we allergic to garlic? Do we fry in the sun? Do we have to sleep in coffins? I don't want to sleep in a coffin."

"We can't afford coffins, so if we need them we're shit out of luck."

Ahh. The sweet sound of Warren being financially practical. The dulcet tones of Dusty's fascinated naiveté.

"What do we do next?" Dusty asked, tugging my arm. He looked at me, all earnest and eager eyed, and I felt Warren's hard stare boring into the side of my head.

"For one, we get out of here," I replied simply. "We go back to the apartment, we fuck our brains out, I show you how cool it is to have zero snap-back time between orgasms, and tomorrow we start learning everything we can. I have a few contacts." And I'd make more. The Pack leaders were going to shit Twizzlers, but I'd deal with them when I had to. "All for one, darlin's. Life, or unlife, goes on."

"The three oogedy-boogedy Musketeers," Dusty mused. "Hey! Can we get tattoos to show we're part of a spaced-out trio?"

"Ooh!" I perked up, as I usually do when there are tattoos in the offing. "Can we?"

Warren sighed. "Fine. *If* tattoos even work on the undead and *if* we can find someone who won't flip out over inking vampires. But I am not wearing a Musketeer-brand fleur-de-lis on my hip."

"I had you pegged for something cheeky on your ass," I remarked.

Chattering to one another, we faded off into the distance.

Here closes the curtain on the first chapter of our story. There's more to come, sure, but now you know how and where we started.

We were about to make enemies, find friends in the strangest places, and make history.

It's a hell of a second act. Stick around, friends. You ain't seen nothin' yet.



## Willa Okati

Willa Okati is made of many things: imagination, passion for manlove, creativity and sheer bloody-minded determination to keep writing, getting out all the stories in her head.

The only problem with that clever plan is that as she writes, more story ideas pop up...

She's getting into ménage these days, and finding that it's really peachy to write female leads -- but these leading ladies have always gotta have their two men (who are into each other as well as her). That makes for extra-special spicy good times!

You can reach Willa at [willaokati@gmail.com](mailto:willaokati@gmail.com), visit her at her website ([www.willaokati.com](http://www.willaokati.com)) or join her Yahoo! Group for updates at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/willa\\_okati/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/willa_okati/)

May the force be with ya'll!