

Blood Promise



Kell Casey

Changeling Press

Blood Promise

Kell Casey

**All rights reserved.
Copyright ©2007 Kell Casey**

Warning: The unauthorized reproduction or distribution of this copyrighted work is illegal. Criminal copyright infringement, including infringement without monetary gain, is investigated by the FBI and is punishable by up to 5 years in federal prison and a fine of \$250,000.

**ISBN: 978-1-59596-751-0
Formats Available:
HTML, Adobe PDF,
MobiPocket, Microsoft Reader**

**Publisher:
Changeling Press LLC
PO Box 1046
Martinsburg, WV 25402-1046
www.ChangelingPress.com**

**Editor: Chrissie Henderson
Cover Artist: Reneé George**

This e-book file contains sexually explicit scenes and adult language which some may find offensive and which is not appropriate for a young audience. Changeling Press E-Books are for sale to adults, only, as defined by the laws of the country in which you made your purchase. Please store your files wisely, where they cannot be accessed by under-aged readers.

Blood Promise

Kell Casey

Jag's mission is simple, find the last celestial goddess and slay her. But when he comes face to face with the most beautiful woman he's ever laid eyes on, it becomes more difficult to carry out his blood promise.

Morgen's mission is to survive all the godforsaken vampire hunters and she's been successful so far. That is, until she comes face to face with the most notorious slayer of her kind, and now running is the last thing she wants to do.

Chapter One

Jag threw open the door to Club Morbid and waited to face the Angel of Death. Technically the bitch was no angel and death wasn't what waited for him.

It was her turn.

He'd spent the last three hundred years in anticipation of this moment. The moment he'd rid the world of the last Tzitzimine, a ruthless goddess of the night.

The musty smell of the tavern drifted into his nostrils, intermingled with stout, alcohol, bad cologne and cheap thrills. It didn't do anything for his demeanor but piss him off.

Hell, the kill was in the air. He smelled it. Felt it down to his bones, and his bones had never been wrong. Once the leader of his clan, Jag never faltered when he smelled a kill. He had to fulfill the blood promise made so long ago by his people.

And yet...

The lady in question emerged from the curl of smoke surrounding the mass of bikers perched at the table. Crimson leather pants clung to the slight curve of her hip and a black lace tank top covered -- or barely covered -- the outline of her breasts. Gods, she looked like sex on a stick and then some. Long, ebony hair caressed the creamy skin of her shoulders.

Awareness prickled through his already sex-starved body -- ending in the place it usually did -- his pants. But it was nothing new. Damn bitches, it was their greatest weapon. Every man knew that a Tzitzimine appeared beautiful to the single male. To the mated male, their truthful haggard appearance shone through. Beauty was their weapon and this one had gone above and beyond any he'd ever met. Hell, Jag had met more than his share.

A temptress beyond compare.

No, she was a wrinkled, haggard demon, searching for life force.

Well, this chick was in for a surprise. Jag didn't have a soul, so vamp girl here couldn't suck anything outta him.

A legend among men. Born into royalty, the head of the Aztec Jaguar clan until the day he died. He'd died a warrior, lived as a slayer. It was something he took pride in.

Jag rubbed the prickle of stubble lining his chin, and slammed down the whiskey sour, enjoying the slow burn as it traveled to the pit of his stomach. He turned to face the vile creature.

Damn, it was his lucky day and he was the luckiest son of a bitch in the bar.

* * *

Morgen was miserable. She'd been hungry -- scratch that, ravenous -- for days. Feeding wasn't what it used to be. There were too many dopers, too many people eating fatty foods and clogging up good veins. Blood just didn't flow like it used to. More's the pity, because she more than anyone needed some at the moment.

Nothing was like it used to be.

Morgen swallowed at the knot forming in her throat. Shit, things had gone so wrong.

At least Jim, the DJ of Club Morbid, had decided to play good music this time, she thought as the sound of Chevelle's "Suffocating" drifted into the air. The beat was intense. Steady, like the rhythm of a heart.

She made her way to the bar and found her supper. Morgen's nipples drew up into tiny rock-hard darts as she eyed him. Her palate sang with the anticipation of this one. *A delicious morsel indeed.*

And a rather *large* morsel. Hey, she'd found the all-you-can-eat buffet and then some. Morgen's gaze traveled the length of the enormous frame/main course and then back up again. *Oh, baby, prime rib!*

Being shorter than the average goddess had never bothered her, unless supper was too tall and then there was the whole standing on the old "tiptoes" gesture.

Levitating just drew too much attention these days so that was out. But there were just so many ways to enjoy this man.

Oh yeah, this one was definitely a “tiptoeer” and if he tasted even a fraction as good as he looked, she’d enjoy every minute of him and probably go back for dessert.

Although he was seated, she could see he was tall and muscular beyond imagination. He wasn’t vamp. She’d smell it if that were the case. He wasn’t a morpher, either. Nah, he wouldn’t sprout wings or all that unattractive hair. This one was smooth, head to toe silk.

He was a mortal. All mortal, delicious, with long, ebony hair and an auburn streak that hung loosely over his left eye. If that eye matched his right, they were the deepest green like the sea on a full moonlit night. His nose had never been broken. Nope, he was a pretty boy and he’d taken *good* care of himself.

And she was about to take good care of him.

She slid in between two older men who hadn’t gone without noticing her. The weirdest thing was supper hadn’t noticed her at all yet. Well, Mr. Tall, Dark and Yummy, she could make the first move. “Can a gal get a drink?”

He turned, slowly, not too anxious, and she couldn’t help but wonder why he was cautious. No, he couldn’t sense what she was. She shook off the tremble easing down her spine. No one could identify her kind. Not a mortal. Not this soon.

It wasn’t like they were regular average-variety vamps anyway. They were descendants of ancient goddesses who had evolved over the years. No, she was of a pure breed, the last of her kind, and could go undetected like no other. She smiled, straightened her top and sucked in a sharp breath. Yeah, thinking he suspected a thing was beyond ridiculous. Hunger beat at her, but she shook it off and focused on the task at hand.

His eyes narrowed as they bore into her, down to her soul. “Not if I’m what you’re drinking.”

Shit! Morgen could've been knocked over with a feather -- an honest to goodness feather. It wasn't like her kind to be rattled so easily. It was the hunger. *It had to be the hunger...* She laughed innocently. "Is that an invitation?"

"Depends." He shifted on the bar stool. He didn't wear the common variety biker jacket or anything with a Harley Davidson logo. This guy had on a black suede jacket, regular jeans with the knees faded out and a white T-shirt -- and damn was he hot. Morgen fought her fangs hard. *Back, babies. Not yet. Not playtime yet.*

A hint of familiarity nibbled at her consciousness. Any normal guy would've pounced on her by now. Why did he stand there looking smug? Where had she seen that face?

Images of her mother and sisters running through the streets of Mexico flashed through her head. Their innocent blood spilled because of what they were, not who they were. The horror of unspeakable prejudices.

"On what?" she asked, ignoring the thoughts plaguing her mind.

"On whether or not you're buying," he answered with a half smile.

Goddess, look at those teeth. Perfect, white and -- *Oh. Shit.* It came to her.

Jag?

Morgen took time from ogling her prey for over two seconds and it was enough to recognize the folly. How could she be so stupid? Panic engulfed her. Nerves bunched and gathered.

All she wanted to do was to come out and get a bite to eat. Instead, she'd tried to take a nibble of the most notorious vampire slayer of all time. *A legend.* Touched by the gods -- well, not the good ones -- he was deemed the savior of the Aztec people and she was fucking trying to eat him?

What was she going to do? Adrenaline rushed through her like a freight train barreling through a tunnel. *Just breathe, Morgen. You can make it out of this. Don't alert him to who you are.*

"I'll buy," she said, gesturing to the bartender and forcing a smile. "What will it be?"

"Oh, I don't know. What do you usually have?" His voice should've frightened her, sickened her or something, but it didn't. It did just the opposite. Enticing and smooth as honey, it dripped over her with its warm timbre. What she wouldn't give to dip her head to the delectable curve of his neck just so, and sip and sip.

But that wasn't possible now and she couldn't waste any more time. She was hungry. And weakening. Not to mention about to be staked if she didn't get the hell outta Dodge, and fast.

"Lady's choice?"

"Why not?"

"Bartender, two margaritas."

Jag tilted his head, lifted an eyebrow. "Interesting."

"What?"

"Could've sworn you'd go for Bloody Marys."

There was no humor to his voice, although she'd have given anything to hear even a trace. "What makes you think that?" Morgen feigned innocence.

"We both know we're too old to play games," he warned, and Morgen knew now was the time to flee or die.

Stepping backward cautiously, Morgen moved her high-heeled feet slowly, calculating some form of --

Jag's muscled arm snaked out to claim hers, but she jerked, whirled on her toe and took off running like she'd never run before. Morgen had experienced death, but she sure as hell hadn't known death would come in tall, dark and delicious.

She nudged and clawed her way through the crowd. The muscles in her jaw tensed and her breath hitched in anticipation. It wasn't as if she hadn't lived a long life. A thousand years wasn't bad. No, it was damned good. But she couldn't die. *Not yet... not until...*

Just as she reached the exit a massive arm nailed her in a clothesline, slamming her to the floor. Fight or die. Every instinct she possessed screamed it, demanded it, and she would comply.

Pushing up with a *Matrix*-like flip move, Morgen planted her foot solid on the ground. She then whirled with a spin kick, catching the handsome jaw with the heel of her boot.

When she spun around for the second time, he caught her leg, pushing her back on one foot through the dancing crowd and against the wall of the club.

Since when had she gone limp in the arms of a man? It was unheard of. Really, Morgen had never been like this and she wasn't about to start now. "Put me down -- asshole," she commanded through gritted teeth.

"You'd like that, wouldn't you? But hey, that's not in the job description. So, instead, I guess I'll have to kill you now."

Shit.

Double shit.

"No, that's where you're wrong, Jag. Today's the day you die," Morgen bit out as fangs lengthened full-force. Normally they were utensils, but tonight they'd be used to rip out his throat.

Chapter Two

Jag dipped his head low, so only she could hear. "I look forward to the game." He couldn't help the wry smile curving his lips. Oh yeah, he had her right where he wanted her -- almost. He'd dusted hundreds of vamps aka Aztec goddesses of the night, but something about the way she looked at him with those please-don't-kill-me eyes affected him more than he liked to admit. His job was simple.

Find and kill.

All he had to do was kill the last of her kind -- the very Tzitzimine standing before him now -- and he'd be released of any further obligation as a slayer.

Hell, he'd gotten off easier than any of the Spirit Warriors. Plus he got to rid the world of the vile goddesses that had so many times descended from lighted skies and drained his people dry. It was a great job until the last few years. Chasing this one had proven the most challenging. She was the last.

And she'd be the best...

So why in the hell hadn't he already jammed wood in her chest and ended it?

As she moved, her scent drifted to his nostrils. She smelled of mint and lavender. Unexpected for a vile goddess.

She looked up into his eyes and for a second he fell into her trap. Her eyes looked shadowed. That meant only one thing. This vamp hadn't fed in a while, possibly days. With so many victims lined up in the club tonight, the question remained, why?

"My life isn't a game and if you want to be the one to end it, you'll have to stand in line." Morgen's voice came out quietly, weak, and he wondered why he hadn't noticed it sooner. Then she inched closer to him. "Is yours?"

"My life's been a game for years but after I kill you, I get it back."

There wasn't shock on her face as there had been on the faces of the others he'd taken. Morgen stood tall, moved in closer against his chest. He felt her breath tickle with the words, "Your move."

Jag should've reacted immediately, but he didn't.

Instead, he took a minute to assess just what in the hell was going on. Her lips were just millimeters from his. Just a fraction of an inch and he'd taste them, feel their warm plumpness brush against his in a caress.

What was wrong with him? He'd never had this type of reaction to a vamp before. Hell, he knew they were built to seduce, but still...

He took her arm and wondered why she hadn't made good on her threat to kill him. Her strength was wavering, but she'd had enough in her to attack and drink.

"I'll do you a favor. Since you're my last, I'll do it quick and in private." He tugged at her, dragging her through the crowd to the back hall. He knew every nook and cranny in the joint. It wasn't like the establishment was on the up and up.

"Don't do me any favors, champion." She came with him willingly without a fight. Strangely, not like any other of his prey.

He paused, turned to face her. "What did you call me?"

She opened her mouth, breaths heavy, as if it was hard for her to speak. "Isn't that what you are? Champion to your people?"

"You don't know me," he ground out.

"I know you. I've met thousands just like you, seeking fame through hurting others. What do you get for being a legendary slayer anyway? A get out of Hell free pass?" Her words cut, stinging when they shouldn't have.

Get this over with, he told himself. End it and move on.

Could he end a mission that had been so much a part of his existence? The touch of his hand to her back had done nothing for Jag's resolve to finish the job he'd come to do. Morgen's compliance was a little unnerving as well. Jag felt her skin warm to his touch. His fingertips coasted over the curve of her waist.

Since when was a vampire warm?

"Paws off," she commanded, but she kept walking through the mass of the dancing crowd. Even though she knew her demise was at hand?

"Don't worry. You won't feel anything before long."

She rolled her eyes at him and he felt a tic work its way along his jaw.

They made their way to the edge of the wall. Cautiously, he scanned the area for some sort of ambush, an attack of an entire vamp clan -- something. It was going too easy. Entirely too easy.

Once they'd made their way there, he turned to face her and she collapsed in his arms.

* * *

Cloudy.

Everything was cloudy and horribly hazy. She'd been on the run so long, she hadn't had time to feed properly. Animals were out of the question. She was highly allergic to the antigens in animal blood. Made her puff up like a Macy's Thanksgiving Parade Float.

"What in the hell is wrong with you?"

Like he cared. He was going to kill her. Watch her explode into thousands of particles like fireworks and probably light up a cigarette while the entire debacle unfolded before his very eyes.

Morgen dipped her gaze to the bend of Jag's corded neck. She was all too aware of the strong, masculine arms holding her, of her own arms draped around his neck. Creator, she was hungry. Starved near to death. A mere caress of this man caused her to drip with anticipation of his touch. But with Jag, feeding was out of the question. The man wanted her dead. A smile formed on her lips. A damn shame, too. Just looking at the bulge in his pants made her ache for more.

She wanted to feel him, feed from him in the worst possible way. But that wasn't what he was here for. He was here to kill her. He casually placed a hand on the small of her back. His touch should have sent off all types of warning signs.

It should have.

It didn't. It made her crave him even more.

The heat from his body seared, burned into her. Her senses reeled, tumbling with the scent of citrus and spice. Hmm... Mr. Yummy smelled so good, like a breeze on an autumn day.

The faintest noise of her stomach rumbling in hunger sounded in her ears. Why was he foolish enough to hold her so dangerously close to his jugular? Morgen leaned in, fangs aching and throbbing, and swallowed in anticipation of what was to come. The tiny pulse beat in his neck. She could see it. Hear it.

Taste it.

When she could stand it no longer, Morgen moved her lips to the curve of his neck, latched on, and drank.

Chapter Three

Ecstasy. Pure ecstasy raced through Jag's body as Morgen drank. Gods, the only thing he could think of was the quickest way to divest Morgen of those tight, clingy leather pants and sink into the bliss that surely waited.

It had been a small twinge of pain, followed by a rush of tingly sensations and now -- lust. He had to have her. At that moment he'd never craved anything so much in his life. He knew he should jerk her back and get her the hell off him. He also knew she clouded his mind with lust. There was no way he truly craved a Tzitzimine. No way.

Never.

But his cock didn't lie. In fact, it strained against the stiff denim keeping it confined. Jag leaned back against the wall, enjoying the feeling coursing through his body. He felt paralyzed. Moving away wasn't an option. Not that he wanted to move away from her.

Visions of Morgen lying beneath him, writhing in pleasure as he pumped hard inside her, clouded his mind. The vixen was conjuring thoughts he shouldn't have. He was weakening. His legs felt as if he'd swum in the water for hours. His mind muddled with thoughts of taking this sweet creature here and now.

Where the hell had that come from?

Unable to control his lust, his craving, Jag cupped Morgen's firm, leather-clad buttocks and pulled her pussy tight against his raging erection, letting her feel exactly the effect she was having on him.

Hard. *Aching.*

She moaned, her mouth humming along his throat.

Stop this. Get her the hell off of you, he warned himself, but she had complete control of him while she drank. Gods, if she didn't stop he'd take her then and there. She was like a drug. An instant addiction.

Morgen pulled back, licked her lush, curvy lips and looked him directly in the eyes. Knowing he was making a mistake, Jag captured her beckoning lips with his own. She tasted so damn good. Their tongues swept over one another in a tempestuous tango. Slowly, he allowed her feet to drop to the floor, half expecting her to knee him in the balls and make a run for it, but she didn't.

Morgen leaned into him, her hardened nipples pricking at him through his cotton T-shirt. He kissed and kissed her, drinking up while the aphrodisiac of her bite still seared his neck. Before he knew what was happening, Morgen broke their kiss and drank again.

Emotions flooded Jag. Emotions he'd kept buried deep below the surface. The weirdest part was he experienced her feelings, her wants, her fears, her... hunger.

This woman was damned near starved to death. His earlier instinct had been spot on. Why would a Tzitzimine not swoop down and take what she needed when she needed it?

Jag didn't have time to think about it. All he experienced now was bliss. A sexual awakening he hadn't felt in years and by a goddess of the night no less.

Here he was, a destroyer of souls, and he had been sent to destroy hers. Contrary to what many believed, goddesses had souls. Jag was about to rid the world of the last of her kind because his father had wished it. What in the name of all that's unholy was wrong with him? One move, one swift thrust to the heart and he'd have his freedom. Have his life back. Was it worth it?

As pure unadulterated bliss hummed through his once sex-starved body, he doubted it. Morgen suckled once more. His cock took notice and seared his stomach, burning with buried desire.

Surely she wasn't alone in this world? Morgen had to be baiting a trap for him, luring him in to save her miserable soul, tainted with the blood of innocents.

A tongue laved the pinpricks.

Jag saw her thoughts, the faces of her victims and their fear.

He had to kill her...

Morgen backed away, leaving him with a hazy, dazed sense of reality. A longing gaze reached for his, eyes the color of the Guatemalan sea -- the purest turquoise. All signs of lifelessness vanished, the dullness replaced with bright flecks that danced and swirled under the neon lights of the bar.

By the gods, he didn't know why he did what he did next, but he couldn't seem to help it. Jag lowered his lips once more to capture her still swollen ones. She surprised him right back, kissing and meeting him, movement for movement.

That's it, baby, come to me. What was he thinking? By the stars, she tasted good, sweet, and like nothing he'd ever experienced. Like exotic chocolate on a summer day. Like the sweetest caramel melting on the tip of his tongue.

And he'd have more...

Morgen drank from Jag's mouth as if he were rain in a desert after a thousand-year drought. She hadn't meant to take from him -- not after she'd discovered his identity. A legendary slayer.

The idea was ridiculous. Crazy.

Dangerous.

Did she have a death wish? She must. The weakness had overtaken her from days of not feeding. After all, he was the one who'd stuck her mouth to his neck -- well, not technically -- but a man like that was just asking for it. It wasn't as if she truly enjoyed feeding. It was a necessity. Her life force. It had never been a luxury -- until now.

She pulled back for a millisecond, her breaths ragged, sporadic. The taste of Jag lingered on her mouth, her tongue. Tiny taste buds that applauded and sang for more as she dipped her mouth back into his and enjoyed.

Ah, caramba, this man; dark, dangerous, delicious.

Deadly.

Strong hands tangled through her hair. Jag moaned a guttural cry of pleasure as his tongue swept against hers. Aching, needing, Morgen rubbed her leg along his, moving inward to feel his erection press firm against her leathered sex.

And it felt as glorious as she thought it would.

Get out. Get out of here now, her mind shouted, but her body betrayed her in the worst way.

Blood always did that to her. Made her lust, need, but somehow this was different. She draped her arms around his strong shoulders, his heated skin radiating from under the cotton T-shirt. For some reason -- right now -- she needed him to fuck her.

As if he'd read her thoughts, Jag tore his lips from hers, and grabbed her arms. Funny though, she didn't know whether to run for her life or to go in for another taste...

Should she? Had she tempted fate more than she should? "Why did you do that?" she asked, searching for breath to speak the words.

Jag narrowed his gaze, as if studying a science experiment or witnessing an animal at the zoo. "I d-don't know," he answered, obviously still affected by her feeding.

Knots tied in her stomach. *Don't give him time to recuperate. Get the hell out of here now! Move, legs*, she commanded the still trembling, shaking limbs, but they didn't. She stood there, eyes meeting his, lips begging to be taken in a passionate caress once more. "Is this the way you kill all your victims?" Why had she just said that?

"You?" He reversed positions, leaned in, pressing one arm on the wall behind her, caging her.

"I'm not a killer."

"Could've fooled me," he retorted.

Oh yeah, he was back to his old self. "Are you going to kill me or kiss me?" *Kiss me*, she pleaded silently.

He didn't answer. Instead, breath ragged, he shot a dangerous glare in her direction, then reached his left hand deep into his jacket pocket...

He really was going to kill her. *Run!*

Somehow -- she didn't know how she managed -- Morgen aimed the pointed toe of her leather boot and planted it directly in Jag's shin. Jag answered with a *humph*.

Thankful that her legs had decided to cooperate, she took off running as fast as her high heels would carry her, out of Club Morbid, out of Jag's clutches.

He was on her trail. She felt him. The anger. The confusion.

Once out the door, Morgen sprouted wings and ascended high into the sky.

Chapter Four

Damn.

Jag shook off the reverie, fighting the constraints of his cock pressing solidly against the unrelenting denim of his jeans. Gods, he was slipping. How the hell had he fallen for that trick? It was the oldest one in the damned book!

Distract a man with sex... or the promise of it. A few more seconds and it wouldn't have been a promise. It would've been a reality. Jag knew with everything in him, he'd have taken her. He had fallen too deeply into her clutches.

Damn creature.

Now, he was no ordinary man and he didn't distract that easily, but tonight he had. This was no way to win his freedom. No way at all.

He shoved his way through the drunken, now rousing crowd. The backdrop of muffled voices and bantering capped with loud-as-hell music proceeded in aggravating his now aching head.

Blood loss. No doubt from becoming *Jag al dente*.

Now he'd have to search for her. Kill the woman he'd just kissed. It wasn't his fault, not really. Choices had been made long before he'd ever met Morgen. His orders from the gods, to destroy the Tzitzimine. Back in the day, they'd been the most feared goddesses of the Aztecs, and when his people had fallen to the Spanish, the warriors paid a price. Each given their own missions.

His was to slay the vampires. Cut and dried.

But wasn't it really his choice to take their lives? He'd seen so many swoop down and take from his clan. Killing and drinking until their sickened stomachs filled. It was beyond imagination.

Now it was time to end it.

"Hey, Jag, long time no see," a beautiful she-wolf crooned in his direction. Long blonde hair flowed, stopping just shy of the small of her back. She had pretty blue eyes, and on another day Jag might have paid a little more attention to her in order to relieve his raging hard-on. But not today.

"I don't have the time," he replied, leaving the pining woman to stand, rejected.

He didn't have time to chase his cock. Not for a cheap thrill anyway. He weaved his way through the remainder of the crowd and left the thump of the music and the smell of smoke.

Closing his eyes, Jag honed his senses, trying to calculate just where Morgen had gone. The cool air whispered through his hair, brushed his face. The smell of the crisp night air jolted his senses and made him feel alive again. A hoot owl called, alerting him to her direction, and Jag took off north, following it.

He snaked around trees, leaves crunching under his thick-soled boots. He should be quiet, but hell, it wasn't as if she didn't know he'd be coming for her. He'd counted on it. He just hadn't counted on finding her so soon.

The night air was replaced with the subtle scent of caramel and flowers. *Morgen.*

It should've alerted him to attack -- it didn't. It alerted his cock to swell yet again, but that wasn't the effect he'd hoped for. Damn, what had this woman done to him? Crouching low, Jag continued through the brush. Hell, he'd been a tracker in the clan. The faint sound of a cry carried with the wind.

Surely not, he thought as he quickened his steps. The tiny mew came again. Jag's breath hung in his throat. *Gods no!*

A knot twisted low in Jag's stomach. How could he have kissed something so vile? Damn, there was nothing good about this woman. He'd let her feed, and felt her up? *Piss.* In the modern world that was considered aiding and abetting. In his world it was a sin.

Fuck, he knew better. Jag, leader of the infamous Jaguar Clan of the Aztec Warriors and he'd kissed the very creature that'd left so many lifeless bodies to rot in the hot Mexican sun?

But then his mind drifted to Morgen. That kiss, the way her lips tasted of the warmest caramel. The way her body curved in all of the right places.

The misery. The hungry look on her face. Surely that'd been a ploy.

And the way her firm body pressed against his in a sinful caress...

The cry sounded again. Jag quickened his steps, seeking an entrance to the lair of Morg -- the creature, he corrected his thoughts. He couldn't let her get close to him again. Things were better ended swiftly. She was all that stood in the way of his peace. A normal existence.

Closing his eyes, Jag sought Morgen's presence. The faint fall breeze wisped across his face. What should've happened at this point was he should've felt discomfort, lust for the kill. Instead, Jag drank in the alluring scent he'd smelled before. Morgen. Beautiful, sexy Morgen. *Fuck, Jag, could you be any more of a puss right now?*

Tempering the strain of his cock pressing painfully once more against his jeans, Jag sought the sound troubling him. He moved a few stray branches hanging down lower to the ground than usual and that was when the entrance appeared.

The sound was unmistakable. Small cries echoed from the depths of the carefully hidden habitat. He entered the mouth of the cave dreading what he might find. Dampness clung to the inner walls. Trickles of water dripped and echoed through the depths of the earth.

Morgen was here and like it or not, Jag had to kill her. It wasn't as if he could give up his return to mortality. He'd come too far to trade normalcy for a piece of ass. He'd never been so stupid and wouldn't start now.

Stepping cautiously through the inner walls he focused on the deepest parts of the cave. She could be hiding or attacking from anywhere.

Drawing in a deep breath, he scanned the dampened area, mindfully listening for the cries that had shaken him earlier. At any cost, he couldn't allow her to do what she was about to do. Jag squeezed the weapon tight in his hand, so tight it almost bled. The piercing pain did nothing to temper the unrelenting anxiousness crawling down his spine.

Silver eyes pierced through the shadowy interior. He'd found her.

Carefully, Jag paced in her direction so as to ease the creature's panic. Gods, the last thing he needed was to witness another blood bath. They were messy and he'd long lost his stomach for them back in his days in the warrior clan.

It was as if a silent drape had been lowered over the confined area. In those moments, Jag's eyes adjusted to the murkiness and he witnessed his worst fear come true. Morgen held...

Jag blinked, not believing his eyes. *Oh gods, please no.*

Shaky eyes met his, eyes filled with fear, confusion, and most of all, protection. Morgen, the last of her kind, held something Jag never thought possible.

A baby.

Morgen nestled Selithia close to her breast, fighting the hunger flooding her once more. "Leave us," she commanded, holding the infant in a protective gesture.

"You know I can't." He took a step in her direction and shook his head to dismiss her request.

"We've done nothing to you." Morgen rose to her feet, backtracking a millimeter at a time. Why didn't he just go? She hadn't done anything to him. Well, other than make him a meal, but that was the way of it. Her survival, nothing could change that.

Not even Mr. Cute Butt.

Jag just stared at her in puzzlement. Then words slipped from his gaping mouth. "Put the baby down, Morgen." He held his hand out, coaxing her.

What? He had to be nuts if he thought -- *Oh.* "You think I'm going to eat her?"

Jag's right hand disappeared under his long coat and Morgen knew she didn't want to find out just what type of toy he kept tucked away. "Aren't you?" he asked.

Funny how the comment tugged at her gut. It shouldn't, but somehow it did. Straightening, she spat out, "Get out of my cave. I'm not going to hurt anyone, but if you don't leave us be, I'll kill you." It was a threat she didn't want to carry through, but damn it, she would if it meant their survival.

"Give me the baby." His teeth clenched now, Jag was more forceful. Morgen mustered strength somewhere deep from within.

Selithia cooed and whimpered. With a bouncing motion, Morgen consoled the infant. "Shh... it's almost time to eat, Sel. As soon as the mean man leaves, we'll eat. Okay?"

Selithia cuddled closely to her and ran a possessive hand down her back.

"You're sicker than I thought," Jag accused, and in an instant he was upon her. His glare, tone, and all-out smart-ass attitude were not un-noted. The nerve of the man! Coming into her home and demanding compliance with his orders.

"No, Jag. You are. What kind of man would try to kill my baby sister?"

Jag knew his legs were there. He was standing on solid ground, but how he still stood after that bout of news was a mystery. Nevertheless, he stood. "What?"

"You're the sicko who --"

"No." He cut her off. "Your sister?"

"Yeah, why do you care?"

Good question. Why? If this child was her sister, then he'd have to kill her as well. Jag's throat knotted and suddenly the confines of the cave seemed to close in around him. Gods, he'd never killed a baby before. Not sure it was even in him to do so.

"I d-don't..." He paused, moving back from the couple.

"Selithia is my sister. Our mother is dead," she informed him, caressing the back of the baby's curly hair.

Shit. Hundreds of faces whirled through his mind, their screams, their pleas. Hell, the first hundred years he'd been assigned vamp duty, he hadn't even known how many he'd killed. He'd gone at it like a bloodthirsty vigilante, exacting revenge, staking hundreds. "I'm sorry for your loss," he said, thinking the words were a lie until he'd spoken them. Weren't they?

"I doubt it." Morgen tipped her chin, her gaze lifted to sear into his. She had every reason to hate him. He'd killed the bulk of her kind. It was his job, the price he

had to pay to return back to mortality, something he'd been robbed of centuries ago. He'd be damned if he was going to throw it all away on a piece of ass.

"I lost my mother as well." Had he just admitted that to her? He'd never really talked about that with anyone. Maybe he shouldn't have told her. A twinge of regret moved through him.

"I don't want your sympathy." Morgen's voice held contempt, but the truth was he detected the underlying weakness it held, as well. She was scared.

"I don't expect to give it to you." He shouldn't feel sympathy. Jag shuffled his boot against the dirt in the cave. What were they doing in a place like this? It was no place for a baby. Even if the baby was a Tzitzimine.

Sister? Was such a thing possible? Gods, he didn't really know.

The first thought ricocheting through his mind was that she was lying. At least he hoped like hell she was lying because if she wasn't it only meant one thing.

He'd killed their mother.

Morgen snuggled Selithia even closer in her arms. Jag was a good kisser, but she wasn't endangering her sister further for any set of lips. Morgen had been through hell and back to make sure they'd survived the Medias' raid of their home.

She swallowed hard, and swiped the loose strand of curl from her forehead. Bastard creatures had ascended to the land she held most sacred and tried to take over the throne. She wasn't about to hand their lives over to the slayer of her people. Not after battling all of that.

Closing her eyes, Morgen inhaled the sweet smell of cookies and cream. Selithia had just had a bath in spring water and smelled sweet, innocent. Thankfully a shifter at the pub had agreed to baby-sit while Morgen went to hunt. What blood she'd had in her veins had all but withered from feeding the baby.

And she was about to die.

Jag just stared at her. For the life of her, Morgen didn't know whether he was going to attack her, or fall over from shock. "You have to be kidding."

"No, I'm not. So it's your lucky day, Slayer. Two for the price of one." Sarcasm dripped from her tongue, but she couldn't help it. It wasn't fair he'd been sent to kill her. It wasn't fair after all she'd already been through.

"I-I..." He paused

"What? Never kiss before you kill?"

He blew out a loud breath. "No, that's not..." He took two steps toward her, paused again.

"Sudden attack of conscience?"

"Will you just stop?" he managed in a less than happy tone.

"What do you expect me to do? You follow me into the cave, demand my sister be handed over to you, the entire time hiding behind the façade that you're on a holy mission to rid the world of an ancient goddess." She pointed an accusatory finger in his direction. Anger seared Morgen's cheeks. Why didn't everyone just leave them alone?

"It's not like that."

"No? What's it like then? You haven't had a good kill lately?" He didn't answer, which just aggravated her further. "Oh, come on, you know you enjoy the kill."

He lifted a brow at the question. "Yeah, I guess I do."

Sick bastard. Morgen's stomach knotted as she thought of how many people had begged Jag for their lives. "Stay away from me."

"No," he answered, letting the hand that held the star drop to his side.

"I mean it, so help me if you don't back the fuck up, I'm going to hurt you, Jag."

His face softened. "Listen, Morgen. I'm no more of a killer than you are."

"The hell you're not."

"So, tell me, precious. How many people have you killed over the years? I've seen your kind in action. Sucking the life out of people and leaving them to rot." He crossed his arms firmly over his broad chest. "You're no better than me."

"I am."

"Yeah, how?"

"I've never killed anyone."

Yeah right. She was lying. There was no way any goddess of the night hadn't killed a single soul.

"Look, Jag. I'm not defending myself to my killer."

"Guess not." He felt his jaw tighten. He'd never been played for such a fool. Or had he? Jag lifted his gaze to meet Morgen's. Shit, her eyes were hollow once more. Dark circles ringed her beautiful eyes. Her skin was porcelain pale -- the color of milk. And if he wasn't mistaken, her strong stance wavered.

"You need to rest," he scolded, not really knowing where it came from.

"The hell you say."

"You're exhausted." He approached her with cautious steps. Still, Jag couldn't figure out why he really gave a shit. She was his mortal enemy. An order sent straight from the gods. He shouldn't give a shit.

But somehow he did.

"Yeah and the minute I fall asleep, you'll kill us."

It was what he was *supposed* to do. He should do it. He knew. But something deep inside Jag told him he wouldn't be a slayer today. Especially when he looked at the child Morgen rested on her hip.

He reached his hand out to her, steadying her starving, frail, tired body, and eased her to the floor. She didn't fight, just gave into his request. Tears welled in her eyes as she looked up at him. Damn, she was gorgeous. "Please," she pleaded. "She's just a baby."

Jag made the mistake of turning his gaze to Selithia -- a curly, black-haired baby who smiled up at him as if he was her hero. He was no one's hero. He was the monster that had taken her mother away. He was the monster sent to destroy them.

Jag extended his hand, cupping Morgen's chin, tipping it so he could look into her eyes. Gods, was he in trouble. "I'm not going to kill you."

Morgen blinked.

Blinked again. Why? She wanted to ask but she didn't want to tempt fate. Hell, she'd been on the run so long from so many people. Everyone was on her trail -- present

company included, and the one man who was the equivalent to instant death wasn't going to kill her?

"You want me to buy a tie with that load of crap you're trying to sell me?"

"What?" he asked, his hand dropping a fraction.

She couldn't think with him this close. Hungry lips craved the bliss she'd found at the bend of Jag's neck, begged to taste those strong, masculine lips once more.

Stop it, Morgen. You're just tired. You're just not yourself. She wasn't. She hadn't been herself since they'd come. Since the beasts had descended upon their haven in the stars and ravaged everything in sight. Her throat tightened at the thought.

A tear trailed down her hollowed cheek. "Just make it quick."

The pad of his thumb came up to swipe her tear away. Then he did something that totally surprised her. Jag scooped her up in his arms, Selithia and all, and cradled them both close. "You're coming home with me."

Fight, she begged herself. *Fight*. But she just couldn't. There was no strength left in her. The fight had gone.

She had no choice but to trust Jag. The Medias would come for her soon, to finish the job they'd started.

So Morgen did the only thing she could do, she closed her eyes, and nestled into the security of her killer's arms.

Chapter Five

What in the hell was he doing? Jag questioned himself as he placed a sleeping Morgen down on the bed. In his house. *His house*. Gods, he'd actually brought one of them home. An actual *Tzitzimine*.

The Aztec goddess of the night aka the origin of all vampires. One was in his home. *Damn*. He cupped his forehead in his hand, rubbing at his temples. This one looked beautiful and drained and *uncomfortable*? Fully clothed, she looked uncomfortable.

Unclothed, he could only imagine...

Jag unzipped her boots, and tugged them steadily down the length of her leg. His skin grazed hers, sending tingles down his arm. Jag closed his eyes, praying he'd be able to resist temptation long enough to find out just what was going on. Goddesses of the night didn't have baby sisters, did they? Hell, he'd never heard of it.

Jag pictured Selithia in his mind for a moment. She'd looked like any other baby. A human baby.

She looked like Idara, the baby he'd lost... *Damn*, it had been so long ago. *Not long enough*, he thought wryly as pain tore through him at the thought of his infant. A girl. *Just like Selithia...*

Jag clenched his teeth hard at the fractured memory and turned his attention back to the task at hand. He had to find out what was going on and even more importantly, what to do about it.

"Hmm..." Morgen's voice moaned through the sleepiness.

Jag tugged off her other boot and dropped it to the floor. Studied her face, the softness of her breaths, the tiny puffs of air escaping her bowed lips. Long lashes rested on her slightly pinked cheeks. Dark hair feathered on the white sheets.

Quit looking, just get out. You can question her later, Jag. Just get out. He told himself to leave. He begged himself to leave, but when her arm snaked out for his, he took it.

Jag cupped Morgen's hand, cold from blood loss, in his, feeling the tiny bones seeking warmth. Damn, she was freezing. Her lips had frosted to a pale blue. Jag knew she needed blood, and the tiny, fresh marks on her arms told him she'd been feeding Selithia to keep her alive.

Maybe she wasn't a killer.

"Please," she moaned, still asleep and tugging him down to her.

Jag wanted to warm her. Warm her in ways that would satisfy both of their longings, but it was impossible. Instead, he dropped her hand and left the room. Trying to figure out what to do with Morgen, her sister, and his now even more screwed-up life.

* * *

The smell of coffee and steaming biscuits tugged Morgen from the recesses of her dreams. A bed... she was dreaming, she was warm and nestled in a bed and there was food. Honest to goodness food and for the first time in a long time -- she was warm.

Stretching her arms above her head, she let out a contented sigh. She'd dreamt of Jag. He'd brought her to his home to kill Sel and her.

She had to stop him.

"You hungry?" a male voice asked, and Morgen's eyes shot straight open.

Jag.

He looked kind of funny standing there, holding a tray of food. Did immortal vampire slayers even do that sort of thing? Take a vampire home, put her to bed, and serve her breakfast on a tray the next morning?

Really, all that was missing was a rose in his mouth. *Or some salt on his neck*, she thought wryly. What could she say? No thanks, no food, I'll just kabob you and I'll die a happy vamp? She decided against that. "I'm hungry," she admitted, pushing up on her palms until she sat in an upright position.

"I had Belita make you something," he said as he sat the piping hot plate of biscuits, eggs and bacon down on the nightstand beside the bed.

"Who?"

"My housekeeper. You know you've been asleep for a couple of days." An uneasy silence followed. This morning Jag had foregone the jacket, wearing only a white cotton T-shirt and faded jeans. The white showed off his copper-kissed skin and grabbed his muscular torso just right.

"What?"

"You must've been exhausted."

She ran a hand through her hair as she stretched. "I guess so. You have a housekeeper? Slaying must pay well these days?" she asked sarcastically.

"I'm ignoring that."

"Why? It's what you are."

"I'm ignoring what we both are for the time being," Jag informed her as he eased down to sit next to her on the bed.

Heat radiated from him. His heart drummed a dull melody in her ear. Her fangs ached slightly, but just enough to keep them in check. "Why?"

"There's something I need from you, Morgen."

The businesslike tone of his voice bothered her. His business was slaying vampires, and hers was keeping her and Selith -- Bolting up, she demanded, "Where's Selithia? What have you done to her?"

Fear welled with a pain so fierce, she knew if he'd harmed her, she'd drain the bastard dry. Hell, she wasn't a killer, but she'd make an exception if Jag hurt Selithia.

Selithia was all she had left...

"She's fine," he consoled, but she wasn't ready to trust him completely yet.

"I have to see for myself." Morgen hurried out of bed, attempting to step past the mass of man now blocking the doorway.

"Move, Jaguar," she warned, exposing her fangs in a hiss.

He eyed her suspiciously, his gaze traveling her full length and back up again. "No one's called me that in centuries."

He appeared taken aback. *Good!* She'd heard the stories and knew he didn't like to be called that. "Yeah, well, I'd heard of you. Now scoot out of my way before I kick your ass." She was being bold, mustering up what strength she had to get to her sister.

Jag raised an eyebrow. "Promise?"

He was cocky, overconfident and... well... sexy, but now wasn't the time to think about that. "I want Sel."

"Relax." The slightest touch of his hand brushed her shoulder. "Belita has her. She's great with babies."

"Selithia isn't a normal baby, Jag. She needs me."

"And she can have you..." he moved her slowly backward, "... after we talk."

Shit, she wished he'd stop touching her. Didn't he know Tzitzimine needed blood, and far more, they needed sex from their prey?

Morgen had gone a long time without both. Truthfully, she didn't know if she could keep it up if those large hands kept touching her. "If you don't quit touching me, you'll have to do more than talk."

If Morgen meant sex, then the feeling was mutual. Her scent, her essence clung to everything in this room. His cock was semi-hard and if she brushed against him one more time, it would be rock-hard.

"Sorry," Jag apologized, lowering his hand from her. "Would you sit back down?"

Morgen complied. Her bare feet padded back to the bed, and Jag noticed the crimson varnish covering her toes had chipped just on the edge.

"You have a foot fetish?" she asked, tucking her toes back under the blankets.

No. He didn't, but her feet were dainty. They were clean, but he couldn't help but wonder why a creature whose business was to lure men into seduction would leave her toes unkempt. "There are some things I need to understand." That was an understatement if he'd ever heard one.

"You're not the only one, pal," she retorted, squaring her shoulders.

"Will you hush for a minute?" To his surprise, she did. "Why were you living in a cave?"

"Why do you care?"

"I don't," he lied. "I just don't understand why you would be hiding out in a cave with your so-called sister. It doesn't add up."

"She's not my 'so-called' sister. She is my sister. I was hiding in a cave because you're not the only one trying to kill me."

Chapter Six

She hadn't meant to say it, it'd just come out that way. The shock on Jag's face was unmistakable. "What? Didn't you know you were in a long line?"

Jag just stood there, his frame blocking the door. Morgen still didn't know whether he would kill her today or not. With the Medias hard on her tail, Jag seemed to be the least of her worries. "Well, you are."

"Who?" he demanded, raising his brows with the question.

"Doesn't matter," she managed, knowing her words weren't the truth.

"Might."

"Why would it? You've brought me here to kill me."

He took two careful steps toward her. "I think I've established I'm not going to do that right now." His arm came out to touch hers. "I need to know."

"Yeah, and I need my sister," she insisted, pushing at him to move out of her way, which he didn't.

"Stop playing games."

"I'm not playing." Morgen's fangs receded and she closed her eyes for the strength she needed. She needed to get Selithia and get out of here. She didn't trust Jag yet. Not enough to put Selithia's life in any more danger than it already was. And she had good damned reason. He was a slayer.

She was a vampire.

Morgen knew that whatever their circumstance, Jag was her last hope.

"I have to know who's after you, Morgen."

"Why? Why in the hell would a slayer care who was after me? I mean, aren't they doing the world a favor?" Sarcasm dripped from her mouth, and just kept pouring. "What's in this for you anyway, big boy? You get to mount my head on a wall

like hunting game? I'd imagine with this big house you probably have a trophy room of goddesses you've killed. Am I right?"

"Do you not know how to shut up?"

"No, I guess not." She felt her temper rise with his question. "Do you not know how to do your job? I'm still alive. Kidnapping and torturing isn't part of the deal."

He was inches away from her face now. Closing in the small space. "I'm going to help you."

He had to be kidding. A slayer helping a vampire? Those things only happened on Buffy reruns, not in real life. Within Jag's words lay a promise. *Hope*. He said he'd help her. Did she have a choice?

Tension filled the ever-shrinking room. *Was it hot in here?* Jag's close proximity was astounding, affecting Morgen's innate craving for sex. *Blood*. It wasn't anything she could help. Hell, Morgen's pussy dripped at the thought of having her powerful enemy's cock buried deep inside her while she drank his crimson elixir. Her damned near starved body screamed for blood. For sex. *For Jag*. God, her pussy ached. "You wanna help me?"

"Yes, I do --"

She cut him off by brushing her lips against his. She needed food. Jag was food, plain and simple. Jag stood stone still as Morgen murmured against his mouth, "I really could use some dinner."

She waited. Waited for him to back up and move away. But he didn't. Jag captured her lips in a passionate kiss. Tangling, pulling her half-clothed body hard against his. Morgen looped her legs around Jag as he cupped her buttocks with his hands and gave a good squeeze.

Morgen ached for him. Begged to have him. Not just a sip. She wanted all of him. Maybe it was because she wasn't supposed to want a slayer. Maybe it was because he was dangerous and the promise of fear heightened her arousal. Either way, she was going to sample Mr. Tall, Dark and Yummy before she left. Every last delectable inch.

What if he tried to kill her while they fucked? She'd be more vulnerable then. She really couldn't think about that right now. Hell, she really couldn't think of anything except Jag and how good his lips felt devouring her mouth.

Jag knew he'd regret it. He knew he'd be punished for his disobedience. He knew he was giving up his only opportunity for normalcy -- something he'd fought long and hard to obtain all these years.

But when Morgen wrapped her legs around him, his cock went rock-hard and he lost any voice of reason. Gods, it'd been years since he'd had a woman who moved him the way Morgen did. She dripped pure sex and he wanted to sample his one forbidden pleasure.

The back of his mind kept screaming she was Tzitzimine. Goddess of the night and evil to the core.

His cock screamed take her. Own her. *Tempt fate.*

Jag cupped her firm buttocks and pulled her up against his cock and savored the feel of it. Roughly, he pitched her to the bed, his gaze traveling the full-length of her. Hair, the color of the raven, spilled across the solid white pillowcase. The contrast was astounding. Ebony and silk. A hint of rose colored her cheeks. Dark eyes beckoned him to join her.

Breathtaking.

Jag hadn't seen such beauty since his --

"Aren't you going to join me?" she coaxed, reaching out a frail, dainty hand.

"Yes. Gods help me." He took her hand in his.

Jag cupped her face as he lowered his body to rest on top of hers. Morgen felt soft, supple, and was extremely receptive to his touch. *Too receptive.* She moaned into his mouth, making him hard as a brick. He wanted to bury his cock deep within this woman and forget for a moment who and what they were.

But that was crazy, wasn't it?

Jag was the best-tasting man Morgen had ever nibbled. Never had she thought she'd be in bed with him. A man who'd almost single-handedly made her kind extinct. She wanted him. Wanted to experience the danger.

Passion. She hadn't experienced anything besides fear and hunger in so long, she wanted to know what it was like to be wanted, no longer the prey of some ruthless predator. Jag's large body made her feel feminine.

Sexy.

Hard muscles pressed against her. Moving and playing with her emotions. Morgen took it in her stride and pressed deeper into the danger.

The safety.

Jag broke contact from her lips. They immediately cooled, still throbbing from his passionate kiss. "This is crazy," he breathed. Warm air tickled with his words.

"No, this is the sanest thing I've done in a while." She reached up, feathered her lips against his and slipped her tongue into his pliant mouth.

He moaned and that just encouraged her further. Morgen's nipples drew tight, hard against his firm chest. Jag's cock was brick-hard. She felt it through his pants and she couldn't help but wonder what would be the quickest way to divest him of said pants.

Breaking the kiss, she made her way down his chin, down to the curve of his neck. The pounding rhythm beckoned her; Jag's blood could be powerfully addictive. Stronger than any aphrodisiac she'd ever encountered.

"No, not this time," he said, his voice breathy.

"I wasn't going to," she lied, kissing her way back to his lips instead, and drank kisses from his mouth.

His fingers crawled under her shirt, finding her erect nipples. The first touch to the tip nearly sent Morgen from the bed. He kneaded her nipple between his thumb and forefinger, causing her need to strengthen. Her pussy dripped in anticipation of knowing him as a lover. A man. An enemy.

He was seducing her and in the worst way. All of these years her kind had been taught how to lure a man. To coax him to comply with their every wish and here she was, putty in his hands.

At that moment, Morgen would do whatever Jag asked of her to feel his power inside her just once. Other men she'd fed from were weak. She could control their mind without a second thought. But not Jag. He was muscular, hard and strong as an ox.

Morgen splayed fingers over his back. Pressing him closer. *Closer.*

She needed to feed again, the urge overtaking everything in her so much that she didn't know if she'd be able to resist much longer, and the hardness of Jag's cock pressing against her only made her pussy hungry for his touch.

He lifted his head. "We shouldn't do this." The words tickled her kiss-swollen lips.

"Yes, we should." She reached to him, flipping him over and taking control. She straddled Jag now. The most powerful killer of her people and Morgen in her weakened, starved state overpowered him. She unzipped his pants and freed his cock. It sprang out, hot, hard and ready. She tugged his jeans around his ankles and he kicked them off the rest of the way.

She jerked her clothing off as well. It had been so long since she'd felt anything but fear, she couldn't wait until Jag was deep inside her.

His hand came up behind her back to unfasten her ivory-laced bra and expose her breasts. She knew she was beautiful. All of her kind were, but something inside her wanted Jag to think she was beautiful in herself, not because it was part of the allure.

And she was about to show the killer of her people just how beautiful her race could be.

Morgen stroked his hardness. He sucked in a hiss of air and his hips lifted to meet her ministrations. The hotness of his need seared her palm. Morgen's nipples drew up even tighter, harder. Who was the one doing the seducing now?

He reached up, cupped her exposed breasts and lifted himself up on the bed. "Gods, you're beautiful."

"You're not so bad yourself," she admitted as she stopped touching him.

"We're breaking all kinds of rules here." His voice was a reminder of the natural order of things but the natural order of things hadn't been her salvation, ever. So Morgen mentally shot it the middle finger and moved on.

"Rules are made to be broken." Then she lowered herself onto his ready cock and reveled in the way it made her feel.

Chapter Seven

Jag drew in a sharp breath as Morgen lowered her pussy onto him. *You've fallen right into her trap.* The problem with that was he didn't care. Something drew him to her. Made him yearn to help her, save her. To fuck her until they were both spent from the pleasure of it.

Now that he'd had a sample, he feared it would only get worse.

They moaned in unison as her pussy clenched his cock, sinking down to his balls. Warm, hot, and oh so tight. The scent of their lovemaking filled the air. He captured her breast with his mouth, toying, playing with it.

Morgen hissed in pleasure as his lips flicked her nipples.

He paused, backed away from her, his gaze traveling to meet hers. She was breathless, utterly and completely breathless. "I'm not supposed to be doing this." The words came out breathy and rasping.

"Jag." She said his name like a prayer.

"Gods, Morgen, you feel so good."

"You feel good yourself," she said as she kissed a trail down his neck.

He was weakening. She felt him pause beneath her. Felt the dull rhythm of his heart...

Morgen wanted this. She wanted to weave a spell so powerful. Wanted to drink once more from her enemy and share his strong emotions and feelings.

"Will you die? If you don't feed now, will you die?" His question caught her off-guard. Why in the hell did he care if she lived or died? He was sent to kill her.

And Selithia...

Morgen shook off the shudder running the length of her spine at that last thought. She no longer held back her inhibitions. She would drink and she would be

full. "Survival of the fittest, baby." Then she lowered her throbbing fangs to his neck and drank the metallic bliss.

Jag knew it was crazy. Hell, everything he'd done in the last twenty-four hours was beyond crazy. However, the feeling that raced through his body when Morgen drank, coupled with her warm pussy sheathing his cock, caused his balls to draw up tight and beg for release.

Damn, no wonder his kind had always fallen victim to the goddesses. They were wonderful. Alluring, mystifying. Sexy as hell.

And as she drank, visions -- like an exotic dance on a warm rainy day -- clouded his mind. Morgen drank as Jag moved her body the full length up and down his hardened cock, enjoying her pussy dripping over him.

The pressure built deep within him and he knew he would come with an orgasm so intense, like an earthquake.

Morgen stopped drinking and peered deeply into his eyes. Behind those jet-black eyes lay a good woman. Somehow she had to be. Gazes locked, she began moving faster, faster. Higher, flying with him until she came, her pussy clenching his cock. Jag met her, thrusting harder with each pulse of her sex. They both came together and then collapsed on the bed from the exhaustion of it all.

"I'm supposed to kill you," Jag admitted.

She shot him a half-smile. "Stand in line."

Although he knew it couldn't be fun for her, always being on the run, a lump formed in the back of his throat. He'd never run from anyone or anything. Hell, he'd never had to. Everyone had always feared him. He'd always been the predator -- before Morgen. "Don't be a smart ass," he teased.

"I'm not. There's a long line ready to rid the world of the Tzitzimine. You just found me first."

He blew out a breath and moved from the bed to step back into his jeans, buttoning and zipping them. "Well, if you're not going to tell me who's after you, I can't help."

"Why would you help me, Jag?" It was a good question. How did he answer it? Because I've just had the best sex I've ever had in my life? No, that wouldn't work. He stood, quiet for over a moment. "Let's just say destiny has screwed us both."

"Meaning?" She lifted from the bed to face him, a look of concentration and pain on her face.

"Meaning, if I kill you, there's still someone else." It was the bitter truth. As much as Jag hated it, there it was. He couldn't kill a baby. Not after what had happened to his. Fighting the emotions buried deep within him, Jag swallowed hard.

"Yeah, well, you have us both here. Two birds with one stone's the way I see it."

He grew quiet. "I'm not killing a baby."

"Why not? We're killers. So low, in fact, you've single-handedly rid the world of most of my people. So why not a baby?"

Gods, he didn't want to talk about this now. Why couldn't they just take another tumble in the sack? Women always had to go serious right after sex.

"Jag. I asked you a question. How come a legendary slayer can't kill a baby?"

Jag turned, fiddled with the doorknob and averted his eyes. "Because someone killed mine."

"What?"

"Get dressed," he said and then left the room.

Morgen could barely believe her ears. Jag had a baby? Even worse, someone had killed it. Did Jag really have a heart after all? Morgen dressed herself, ignoring the way her body still zinged with excitement and the absolute best sex she'd ever had, and brought her mind back to the task at hand. No matter what he wanted her and Selithia to do, she had to get her sister and leave.

It was all too surreal. Honestly, too surreal. She was in the house -- strike that -- freaking castle of the one man appointed by the gods to obliterate her family to a pile of ash, and he'd damned near done it. Single-handedly. What Jag hadn't done, the Medias had taken care of. Morgen bit back tears as she thought of the torture the Medias had put her mother through.

All because those bastards wanted to rule the sky. They could have it. It had been her home, yes, but it was gone and she had to make her own way. On Earth. Morgen tugged her shirt over her head and stood to make the bed.

Bed. She looked at the crimson comforter with a sense of longing. She'd been on the run so long. The bed had been so comfortable. Selithia deserved to sleep in a bed like that every night. Not just sometimes, but all the time.

She shook off the thought. No use thinking like that. Morgen couldn't give these things to Selithia. If they stayed put for too long, the Medias would find them and they worked for the same god Jag did.

Jag just didn't know it.

* * *

Shit. Jag punched the wall of his bedroom. Why in hell had he just said that? He hadn't spoken of his daughter since she'd died. Jag leaned against the wall, closing his eyes tight. It had been so many years ago.

He wasn't the Aztec prince. He was only a relative. This damned curse should've left him the fuck alone but it hadn't, and after the death of his wife and child from the disease that engulfed Tenochtitlan, he'd been more than willing to kill whatever came into sight.

With each life, each spirit withering to dust, it was as if he'd brought justice for losing his daughter to the people that had robbed him of so much.

Until now...

Gods, his cock throbbed with the thought of Morgen and how good it'd felt to be inside her. Jag fought the urge to stalk back into the room and fuck her again. No wonder his people had fallen to prey to the goddesses. They were fucking addictive. Scary addictive. And Jag had fallen so hard under her spell, he didn't know what he could do to stop it.

He was in trouble, plain and simple, and as soon as the gods found out Morgen and Selithia lived, he was in even more trouble. A tic worked its way down Jag's jaw.

He didn't care. They could damn him to Mictlan for all he cared but he wasn't going to kill Morgen or Selithia.

His mind drifted back to his daughter's sick infantile body. The disease brought by the Spanish to Tenochtitlan after the invasion had been devastating. Well, he wasn't powerless. Not any more. Fear held more power than any other emotion known. Jag was feared in life. Even after his death.

Death, he thought wryly. He needed to kill them to become mortal again. That was the deal; the blood promise.

Could he?

"She's asleep," a woman's soft voice called.

Jag turned. "Thanks, Belita."

"No problem. She's a sweetie. She cooed and played. I went to the store and got her a pacifier. But the weirdest thing..." She held it up and Jag almost burst out laughing. "She chewed it up. The poor child will definitely have a few visits to the orthodontist when she grows up."

Jag felt the corners of his mouth tilt up slightly. "Could be." He moved over to the bar, extracted a glass and poured himself a shot of whiskey then slammed it down.

Would the pain ever go away?

"I'll leave you to yourself. Just wanted to tell you she's nice."

"Yeah, she's sweet."

"I meant your lady friend." Belita winked at him and left the room.

Jag placed both hands on the counter and let out a ragged breath. Shit. What was he going to do?

He'd never be human.

But neither would she...

* * *

Morgen slipped through the halls like a quiet dream. She had to see Selithia for herself and make sure she was unharmed as Jag had claimed.

She wanted Jag. Funny, but she did. She wanted to go back and fuck him again, but she didn't have time. She had to gather Selithia and fly away from this place, high into the stars.

She quickened her steps down the darkened hallway. The place was huge. There were no family portraits. Mostly it looked like a museum. Cold tiled hallways, gray walls. There were more doors than paths to heaven. She couldn't help but wonder why Jag needed a place like this all to himself.

She tempered the visions of how nice it would be to have a place of her own again. A place for her sister to grow up and play down the long halls. A place much like this one. But it would never happen, so she might as well forget about it and resume her life on the run.

Morgen tried the first doorknob. Creaked the door open and peered in. A desk sat against the wall. Tall bookshelves full of old hardback books lined the walls. Selithia couldn't be in there. Carefully, Morgen closed the door. How in the worlds was she supposed to find her in a place this big?

"Looking for something?"

She jumped like she'd been staked. Jag had that effect on her regardless of whether or not he'd snuck up on her. This time he'd gone and got her good.

"Yeah," she admitted as she turned to face him. "Sel."

"She's sleeping." Jag took a few steps in her direction then paused.

"How am I supposed to believe you?" She crossed both arms firmly over her breasts.

"Listen, Morgen. I let you drink my blood, for Christ's sake. I think you can take my word for this."

He had a point. "About that." She gestured to the marks on his neck. "Thanks, it was swell and all, but I think I'll be getting Selithia and leaving now."

Jag sauntered toward her and glared with sheer determination. "You're staying with me."

Chapter Eight

Jag thought about the implications of that. He didn't know why, but the thought of waking up and knowing he could fuck Morgen any time he wished didn't bother him as much as it should. Hell, no, it made his cock throb for more.

Why feel responsible for her? Just because he'd killed her mother? He'd killed a lot of mothers. Hell, and someone had killed his. It sucked but it was a way of life. One that had been dealt to him.

Was he going to be responsible for every orphaned goddess?

No, there aren't any more thanks to you.

Why did he have to go all puss when she was around?

"I'm leaving. You don't understand." Morgen backed against the wall, trying to slither past him.

He caged her in on both sides. "I can help you if you let me."

"Help me? Shit, you've been intending to kill me for over half the time we've known each other. The other half you've been seducing me."

"Seducing you? You forget yourself. *When* I decide to seduce you, make no mistake, you'll know it." He'd let her take control the last time. The next time they...

If he let her go, there wouldn't be a next time. Then what? What would he do with his life? Seek her out again? Try to get the most of his immortality roaming the earth forever?

No. It wasn't what he wanted. Then what in the hell did he want?

His gaze dipped to Morgen's lips. Those lips, still kiss-swollen. Still begging for him to take her again. Gods, he'd never reacted this way to anyone in his life. "That wasn't me seducing you."

"Oh no?"

"No," he murmured as he lowered his lips to hers once more. Jag kissed Morgen's rosy lips as if it were his last chance at life, at breath. She moaned into his mouth, her arm coming up to circle his neck.

Why in the hell was he reacting to her like this? He should be smarter than that. The creature was baiting a trap for him and the legendary slayer was falling right into it. Wasn't he?

He couldn't resist as her nipples rubbed his chest through the cotton shirt. He just wanted to dip down and take them in his mouth and suckle while his cock slammed into her and alleviated about twenty or so years of sexual frustration. It wasn't like Jag hadn't taken a woman to bed in that time. He'd just gotten bored with the same old routine. Meet a woman, take her to bed to help relieve the pressure of his built-up frustration. Then he had a devil of a time trying to slip away before she'd notice and before the light of a new day.

He did not want commitment. He did not want any woman to be dependent on him again. Jag shook off the memories of horror and convinced himself to make new ones, better ones. Memories that held no pain. For some reason, he knew he'd defy the gods and save this one. Morgen. And Selithia.

What was the use in killing Morgen when he'd just have to murder Selithia in order to complete his mission?

"Jag, I... they'll be here. I have to go." Morgen pulled back from his embrace, a tear brimming in her eye.

What was it like to be the hunted? He'd never taken the time to find out. Always moving in for the quick kill. Jag bit back the bile forming in his throat. Who else had he killed that Morgen loved?

Damn, he'd become the very thing that had destroyed his family. His life. And something inside Jag changed. The relentless, ruthless slayer looked down at his enemy and felt sad. "They'll have to go through me to get to you."

Confusion lined her brow. Her eyes searched his. "Why?"

"I owe you, Morgen."

"What are you talking about?"

Jag drew in a deep breath. "I killed your mother."

Morgen blinked. Blinked again. Was he serious? "Jag, I-I have to get Selithia." She turned from him and entered the bedroom. All too aware of the large-framed shadow behind her, Morgen went to the bed where Selithia slept. She looked so peaceful. So at rest. How many nights had she dreamed of a life of normalcy for her? Not running from the Medias?

Or the slayer...

Selithia's long curled-up lashes rested against rosy cheeks. The rise and fall of her tiny chest caused emotions in Morgan to well up. For some reason, Morgen yearned for a home. A family. Because of who and what they were, she knew it was never possible.

"She reminds me of my daughter."

Morgen turned to face Jag. A look of softness and longing swept across his face. "I'm sorry for your loss," she said, turning back to her baby sister.

His hand snaked out to clutch her arm. "I-I -- Morgen, I've just been so full of hate for so many years..."

She'd never thought about it. It all made sense now. He hated what had happened to his family the same way she hated what had happened to hers. "So does that give you the right to kill others because of what they are?"

"No. It doesn't," he admitted. She hadn't expected him to admit any wrongdoing at all, but there it was. "I did what I was told to get what I wanted."

She became furious with him. How selfish! Why would a man like Jag kill for pleasure? He actually got pleasure from killing. He'd all but admitted it earlier. "You're a bastard."

A look of hurt crossed his face. "We all have our reasons, Morgen. Why do you take blood?"

"I need it. That's different," she countered, ignoring his close proximity.

"I need to kill."

Shit, the man was unbelievable. "What in the worlds would make you *need* to kill a race, Jag?"

"Mortality."

Now he made no sense at all. "Why do you want to be mortal?"

He looked away. Tight-lipped and full of regret. "You can't die unless you are."

"Oh." Why would he want... Morgen searched his charcoal-black eyes for the answer. She saw loneliness. Regret. And then it hit her.

No wonder.

In the afterlife, he'd see his family. Oh, God. Morgen stood in front of Jag, lifted a palm to his chest. He did have a heart after all. What would it be like to have a man love her like that? To make it his entire life's mission to go through hell on earth just to be together in the afterlife? He still couldn't look her in the eye. "You want to see your family again, don't you?"

Jag caught her palm, stopping her from rubbing his chest. "More than anything."

Morgen's hopes withered. Why did she even imagine for a second she could earn the love of a man like Jag? If anything, though, he deserved to know the truth. "You didn't kill my mother."

He was silent with her words.

"The Medias did. They slaughtered my entire family. I was taking Sel for a stroll and when I got home they were dead." Tears welled at the memory. "My grandmother, mother, and sisters. All dead. Overrun by the power-thirsty Medias. The demons of the sky. And they found out I was still alive." A shudder ran through her. "I can't let anything happen to the baby. Sel is all I have left."

He looked relieved at her admission. "I've killed a lot of mothers."

"We've all done things we regret, Jag."

"The worst part is I didn't regret them until I met you."

Was that true? "You regret them now? I -- are you sure?"

"More sure than anything. Gods, Morgen," he said, his finger coming up to trace the outline of her lips. "You make me feel. I haven't felt in so long."

He made her feel too. Crazy things. Warm inside, remorse, pain, and she didn't have time to feel. She didn't need to feel.

"This is crazy, Morgen. I can't get you out of my system." He brushed his hand against hers. She wanted nothing more than to crawl into his strong arms and rest. But his heart didn't belong to her. Maybe it never would. How could she compete with a ghost? The memory of his wife?

She just wanted to rest, to sleep a full night and wake the next morning without wondering if today was the day she'd die. "I don't know how to trust you," she admitted, searching his eyes for the answers.

"What choice do you have?"

He was right. She couldn't take Selithia and run again. The past few months had been hell. She couldn't run forever. They'd catch her eventually. Or she could stay and enjoy being with Jag, and hopefully have protection if she needed it. She just hoped she was making the right decision by trusting him.

Morgen took one last look at Selithia, knowing she'd wake in a warm bed with food every day she was with Jag. And it wasn't a bad trade. Sex with Jag had been more than she could have imagined. Fascinating. Crazy, and she was growing to like this slayer. *A lot.* "And if the Medias come?"

"I'll kill them." It was a warning. One she knew he'd carry through. For the first time in a long time, Morgen felt safe. She felt warm, and she felt cared for.

"You've never met them." Could he kill them? She couldn't help but wonder.

"I've come across a lot worse things in my lifetime. I think a few demons should fit right in."

"What if they find me?" She was shaking now.

"If they find you, they'll be sorry."

There was a stern promise in his words. Morgen knew he meant them. The irony of it was astounding. Here she trusted the very man whose sole purpose was to eliminate her race and that man was her only hope if she wanted to live. "I hope so."

"Follow me," Jag coaxed, holding out his capable hand to her. She bent over and gave Selithia a kiss on the cheek, then followed Jag down a long corridor, stopping at a room with double doors.

His room. "Are you thinking about sex now?" Slayer had some nerve. She'd just poured out her heart and soul to him and he was thinking with his nether regions?

"Gods, woman, it's hard not to think about sex looking at you. What have you done to me?"

"Nothing. You're the one who kidnapped me."

He turned to face her. "Like I had a lot of choices. I had to find out what in the hell was going on, Morgen. A goddess with a baby is unheard of."

"Only to people who don't know the Tzitzimine" was her comeback.

A look of distaste curled his mouth. "You're right."

What? Mr. High and Mighty was admitting it? "Damn right, I am. Excuse me for not falling directly into the plot of a person who's made it his business to kill my kind."

His thumb came up to her cheek in apology. "I can't change what I've done." He traced the curve of her chin, sincere eyes boring into hers. "But I can change what I'm about to do."

His arms looped around her, pulling her up against his rock-hard body and Morgen melted. Everything about this was wrong. Maybe that's why it felt so right? She rose up on her tiptoes until her lips reached his. Melding them together, she became pliant in his hold once more. Damn, this man. Felt so good. So...

Jag's hard cock pressed to her stomach as she inched her way back to the bed. This time she didn't hold back. She jerked him down on top of her as they both fell back onto the four-poster bed.

Jag took the lead, practically ripping Morgen's clothes from her body and devouring her, inch by glorious inch. Gods, it'd been so long since he'd experienced something real. For the first time since he'd become whatever in the hell he'd become, he felt good.

Alive.

Morgen made him feel so alive. Gods, he was fucked, but he wasn't killing her. He wasn't losing another family.

Jag paused, looked deeply into Morgen's eyes and knew then. He wouldn't stand by and see another woman he cared for killed for what she was. The irony of it burned as he swallowed. With explosive need and want, Jag tilted Morgen's leg and cupped her pussy, delving a finger into the warmth to ready her for him.

"Jag." His name sounded like heaven from her lips. Pure, unadulterated heaven. "Oh," she moaned and he delved another finger in for good measure.

Her hips lifted to meet his. He brought his thumb and forefinger up to her nipple. Jag twisted it while his fingers pressed into her harder. *Harder.*

"Oh, Jag, shit, I'm coming. I'm coming so hard."

Jag removed his fingers, quickly unzipped his pants, and freed his throbbing cock. When he entered her, the pleasure of it rocked him to the core. "Gods, what you do to me." He pumped his cock into her over and over like he could fuck his regrets away. But every time her sweetness coated him, he regretted what he had done to her kind.

"What have you done to me?" His voice was breathy as her nails bit into his ass, urging him to pump even harder.

"Everything you've wanted me to."

"You read me too well." Ever since Morgen had entered his life, he'd thought with his lower half rather than his brain and now proved no different.

Morgen wrestled him over, taking the top position. She smiled a wicked smile. "You need to read me better."

Jag laughed. "I wanted you to do that."

"Uh-huh." She lowered herself, teasing and torturing him with her cunt. She leaned forward and whispered in his ear. "What else do you want?" Morgen's panting breath teased his ear, causing him to tremble with desire.

"Come here." He captured her nipple in his mouth, biting and playing with it.

The saltiness of her flesh teased his tongue. He nibbled his way to the curve of her neck. She threw her head back in pleasure, meeting his pounding thrust for thrust. Powerful, alluring.

Then she came, her moans escalating his own pleasure. He pumped into her harder with each tremor, feeling her pussy clench his cock, milking it. When her last moan escaped her mouth, he came.

Chapter Nine

Morgen had slept for what seemed like forever in the comfort of Jag's arms. They'd been in the bed all day and night. Morgen had only awakened to nibble at his ear. "You're trying to kill me, aren't you?" he joked.

"Yeah." She kissed a trail down over the hard planes of his chest. Damn, he was hot. Ripples of muscles lined his torso. She dragged a long fingernail down the center and stopped just shy of his navel. "Wake up."

"I am awake." He combed his fingers through her hair, softly, tenderly, then pulled her to him in a searing kiss. The sweetest kiss Morgen had ever experienced. For a minute she was sucked into the illusion he actually cared for her. Not just sexually, but on a deeper level. *The real her*. The one without the innate powers of seduction. The Morgen that cared for him more than she should.

Jag tugged her on top of him, massaging the small of her back and pressing her closer to his heated erection. Her pussy dampened at the contact and she wanted his cock buried deep inside her once more. To escape to a world with no Medias. A world where she could pretend she was Jag's woman. Safe in a nice, warm home where Selithia could romp and play without worry.

Morgen felt the softness of the sheets slide down her body, covering only her bottom half. She broke the kiss and rose up, exposing her breasts to him, and just stared into his lust-filled eyes. Damn, he was handsome.

His left hand came up to cup the swell of her breast. Every time he touched her she felt she could just die. "Do you not know what you do to me?" His voice was huskier than usual and Morgen felt just why beneath her. His cock seared her leg, begging to enter her and have the fever stop.

"To you? I can barely breathe every time *you* touch *me*." He must've liked her remarks because he smiled, then lifted her hips as if she weighed nothing and sat her down over his cock. They moaned in unison as he lowered her onto him. The hardness filling her satiated a need in Morgen she hadn't known existed. He completed her. Jag was what had been missing in her life for so long.

"Gods, Morgen, you're addictive," he groaned, moving her hips up and down as he sank deeper into her.

Gods, so was he. More addictive than any elixir. "So are you," she teased, then rolled them both over so he was on top. She wanted to feel his power. Needed to feel his power pound into her over and over.

She wasn't disappointed. Jag pressed into her, hard and slow. Fast and easy. Over and over until the pressure of it was so intense she thought she might actually lose consciousness. "J-Jag. Oh, Jag." Morgen threw her head back, closed her eyes and imagined he was hers for all time.

She clawed his back as if to hold on for the ride he gave her. He moaned and grunted with each thrust. "You're so tight. So hot. So..." He paused. "Oh, Morgen, I'm going to come."

"Me, too," she breathed. They came together.

* * *

"Sir, I'm sorry to interrupt but you must come quickly." Morgen jerked the blankets up over her nude body and turned to face the voice.

"What's wrong?" Jag asked.

Belita's face was sheet-white as she began to speak. "I've never seen anything like it. They're attacking from everywhere."

"What's attacking?" Jag looked at her, worry etched in his handsome face.

"I-I don't know what they are. I just don't know." There was more than worry in Belita's voice.

Jag jumped from the bed, shot Morgen a quick glance and jerked on some clothes.

"They've found me. Where's Selithia?"

"They're not getting her," he assured her. He zipped his jeans, tugged up his boots. "Morgen, don't move. I'll come back to get you." He gazed deeply into her horrified eyes. Gods, she was scared. She looked away and he could tell she wasn't so sure. "Morgen, listen to me."

"Yeah?" she asked half-heartedly.

"I will be back for you."

She shrugged. "Don't go."

Her voice held worry and Jag wanted to gather her into his arms and tell her it would be okay, but he couldn't make that promise. Hell, it might not be all right, but it was a chance he had to take. Grabbing her shoulders, he said, "Don't move. I'll see you in a bit."

"Get the baby, Belita. Bring her back to Morgen and lock the door. I'll come get you when it's over," Jag instructed as he made his way out the door.

"Yes, sir," his maid answered, giving a polite smile of obedience, and took off for the baby.

Bile formed in the back of Jag's throat. He wasn't going to let her die. Not today. Not by his hands. And not in his home.

Morgen fought the fear filling her chest. They'd found her. *How?* All kinds of emotions ran through her like a rapid storm, swirling and making her dizzy with the possibilities of the outcome.

She wouldn't allow Jag to fight them alone. This was her battle not his. He had his own problems. Hell, problems that had mounted because she had come into his life. If they survived this, she'd have to leave. Jag needed his mortality. He deserved to see his family again and she wasn't standing in the way of that. She and Selithia would find their way. *Somehow.*

She quickly dressed, opened the door to find Belita with Sel. "Mo mo," Selithia called to Morgen.

Looking into her sister's eyes, an innocent baby blue, she knew she'd never let her down. "Oh, baby." She took Selithia in her arms. "That's right. I'm here. The bad guys won't get you." Morgen held her close to her shoulder and smoothed down her hair.

She needed to fight alongside Jag to defend herself. She certainly was capable. She also didn't want to leave Selithia. Torn between her sense of duty and her love for her sister, Morgen did the only thing she knew to do.

She slinked down in the corner, held Selithia tightly to her chest, and prayed.

* * *

High-pitched shrills pierced his eardrums. The scraping sound from the claws as the creatures attempted to break into his home sounded like fingernails dragging down a chalkboard. They came from every direction. All over and nowhere all at once. Jag had no idea what he was up against. Most of the time he liked it that way. Today, when his existence wasn't the only one in jeopardy, he didn't.

Silently, he continued down the hallway to his weapons room. Whatever they were, they weren't subtle and their ability to sneak up on someone all but sucked. "Okay, you bastards. Let's see what you got."

He bit back the thought of what he'd used the weapons for in the past, ridding the world of the Tzitzimine. It wasn't the time to think about this now. It was time to use them for good.

For someone who needed him... Morgen.

Jag extracted his crossbow, and grabbed several stakes. War was something he knew. He was an Aztec, a trained warrior, skilled. It was the way of his people.

Deep down it was something he was born to. Jaguar clan. Every muscle in his body screamed for the kill. The urge overwhelmed him. They couldn't have her. They wouldn't have her.

Then he left the room to go and kill the fuckers.

* * *

The more Morgen sat there, hunched in the corner, the more useless she felt. Nerves bunched up in her neck. Every synapse firing in response to her now supercharged adrenaline.

The hair-lifting shrill of the Medias grew louder, almost unbearable, and it meant one thing. They'd come for the kill. The bastards meant business and Jag couldn't handle them on his own, there was no way. Morgen had no doubts he was as skilled a warrior as all of the rumors said he was but he'd never faced the Medias.

She had. She knew their weak spots and with Jag fighting by her side... *Jag fighting by her side...* She really liked the sound of that, although she shouldn't get too used to it. After they'd killed the Medias she'd take Selithia and get out of his life before they caused him any more trouble.

"Shh... baby." She soothed the baby as she grew anxious in her arms.

Jag needed her help. And no one but her sister had ever needed her help. But he did. This was her problem, her mess, and she wouldn't allow Jag to be injured or even killed for her.

"Belita," she whispered in the direction of the trembling woman. Belita looked up at her, fear in her eyes. "It's going to be all right."

Belita didn't look so sure. However, it would be okay. Deep down, she knew it had to be. "Ms. Morgen, what are they?"

"The worst of the worst." She swallowed. "How good can Jag fight?"

Belita didn't hesitate in her answer. "The best."

"But he can't do it alone. He's never faced the Medias. They're strong." Worry lined Belita's thin face. Morgen could tell the elderly woman cared for Jag. She couldn't help but wonder if she'd been with him a long time.

"Best stay here, dear. Jag can handle it."

The strangest sensation flowed through her. She didn't want him to be hurt. Had she really grown so attached to her enemy this soon? Yes, she had and she'd be damned if she sat around and let another person she cared about be murdered by the Medias.

"Belita, listen to me," she instructed, as terrified eyes bore into her. Morgen straightened her posture, held her chin high. "Take Selithia. Hide in the closet. Don't come out until either Jag or I come for you. Got it?"

"B-but, Mr. J --"

"Jag's not here. I am. Listen, I've dealt with the Medias before. He needs me."

Belita's eyes softened. She saw right through her. She cared for Jag and Morgen hadn't cared for anyone or anything besides Selithia in so long. No one of her kind had stood up for her. No one cared if they lived or died. But for some reason, Jag did.

"Yes, ma'am," Belita agreed and Morgen handed Sel over to her and took off down the hall toward the horrifying shrieks.

* * *

Jag loaded his crossbow, praying with everything in him that the Medias would die on first impact. He crept carefully through the basement passage. If he could come at them from underneath, he just might be able to get an advantage from a distance. He had a sickening feeling that he didn't want to get too close to the creatures.

The dampened smell of the basement mixed with the foul odor of the Medias seared his nostrils. Hell, it wasn't like Jag hadn't smelled death before. He had. But this was beyond anything he'd ever experienced, like old garbage in the hot summer rain. Sweat beaded his brow and he swiped at it with the back of his free hand. He couldn't fail. He'd never failed.

He scampered over the shelf and stood on the table to peer out the window so he could scan the area. "Son of a bitch." The bastards were unlike anything he'd ever seen. What in the name of all that's holy were they? Their yellow fangs dripped with saliva. Talons curved over violet-scaled hands. A head not unlike that of a dinosaur. No wonder Morgen ran from them. They could rip apart an entire town in seconds.

The thought of them hurting Selithia...

Rage welled deep inside him. Head pounding, blood boiling, Jag bunched his fists together. The bastards were going down.

"They're unbelievable, aren't they?"

A shiver ran down his spine. "I told you to stay put." He descended from the table and squared himself to her, ignoring the mind-blistering noise piercing his eardrums from the predators' screeching. They surrounded his home.

"Yeah, well, I don't listen too well now, do I?" she teased, undoubtedly attempting to mask the fear eating at her soul.

"No, you don't, but maybe you need to learn." He didn't mask his agitation. This was entirely too dangerous for her.

"You're not going out there alone."

"Why can't you just stay put? It's dangerous, Morgen."

"Yeah, I didn't realize that." Sarcasm laced her voice as she continued her approach.

Silence captured the air. Jag gazed deep into her eyes, and knew. This was something she had to do. She needed to face her fears just as he'd needed to come to terms with the loss of his family all those years ago.

Her hand came up to cup his face. "Please understand."

The baby-soft caress eased his tension. Gods forgive him. "Okay, but you stay behind me. Got it?"

Morgen dropped her hand. "Got it."

Chapter Ten

Dusk had settled by the time they'd left Jag's home in search of the Medias. Morgen inhaled deeply, ducked low and crept cautiously behind Jag. It was nice to have someone to help her for a change but it didn't erase the unease she felt for his safety.

She smelled them, and the overwhelming flood of memories from the scent of tar and blood returned. The way they'd descended on her people, leaving them for dead. Morgen remembered the ivory castles, a breathtaking contrast to the darkened sky, resting just above the stars. Her home had been beautiful. She swallowed, knowing she'd never see it again.

Hell, she'd never have a home again.

A branch snapped. "Watch out!" Morgen warned. She watched Jag clutch his crossbow, pull the trigger and saw wood splinter through the chest of a Medias. It fell to the ground, hissing and wailing. "Shoot again. In the stomach."

He didn't question her, just followed her instructions, immediately withdrawing another stake and shooting the animal directly in the stomach. The animal writhed and shrieked.

"One down." He turned to her, breath ragged.

She looked away. It was more than she could bear, facing the horrible Medias. For the first time in a long time, she felt safe. *Protected*. Maybe everything would be all right after all. "Thank you."

"Don't thank me yet. There will be more."

The next attack came from nowhere and everywhere all at once. There were two? No, three, biting and clawing at Jag. He punched the tallest in his scaly jaw, while he performed a spin kick move and jabbed the second with a stake. The man could handle

himself, but Morgen didn't want him to do this alone. It was her fight. Ascending, Morgen began circling the horrible beasts that had slain her family.

A hiss sounded through the grunts and groans of the battle. Jag looked up. Morgen flew above him, silvery wings shining through the dark of the night. She attacked, biting and scratching the Medias from behind while he attacked from the front.

She was magnificent. Hell, he'd never seen anything like it and he'd lived many, many years. How was it he'd harmed so many of her kind? Gods, nothing could happen to her. He couldn't allow it. He lifted his bow, aimed, and pulled the trigger, sending one creature tumbling backward.

Then he turned his attention to the one standing before him. The angry beast swiped a sharp claw and caught Jag's shoulder and cut deep. He bit back the pain of his torn flesh.

Morgen had no doubt seen what had happened because she swooped down, distracting the Medias. "Come on, you son of a bitch. Let's see what you've got," she challenged. Unfortunately, it worked. The Medias turned its attention away from Jag, spread its wings and took flight, chasing Morgen.

It amazed him, watching the two of them battling in the sky. *Scary amazing*. Why had she gone and done that? He had powers, sure. His greatest was his ability to fight, but he couldn't fly. It was beyond his capabilities.

And she'd known that. Never had he been so angry. Morgen shouldn't have endangered herself in this way. He barely had time to think about it as the Medias that Jag had sent to the ground rose, angrier than ever and wanting his ass on a platter.

"Come and get it," Jag taunted the beast all the while praying Morgen knew what she was doing.

Morgen swooped and dipped, luring the beast as far away from the house as she could. He was hard on her tail. She smelled his horrific breath as they soared through the cool night air. It didn't matter what happened to her now. She just had to save Selithia. Jag wouldn't let anything happen to her.

Morgen had to believe that.

The dark clouds sailed across the quarter moon and Morgen soared past them until she reached the cliff's edge. She landed on the rocky terrain and prayed she had the strength to stop the Medias.

The scaled creature slithered toward her as it landed, its claws digging into the rock and skittering bits as it stalked her.

"I guess this means you don't want to be friends?"

It snorted, steam emitting from its nostrils like that of a dragon. Although she knew it couldn't breathe fire, it didn't do much for her nerves. Its slanted eyes glowed a feral crimson that probed the inky dark night.

"No? Damn, I already had my best china laid out for a dinner. I guess I'll just have to settle for kicking your ass." Gods be with her, she launched herself into the air, at the bastard.

Too bad the beast couldn't talk. Jag wanted the pleasure of listening to the vile piece of shit beg for its miserable life. Instead, Jag drew up his bow and aimed. Just as he pulled the trigger, the Medias jumped in the air.

The stake missed its heart, instead stabbing the Medias in the leg. But it didn't stop its bloodthirstiness as it moved onward toward Jag. Jag quickly reloaded and aimed higher, just in case the son of a bitch tried it again.

Relentless in its efforts, the Medias shot into the air like a rocket, its ravenous intent spent on tearing Jag to shreds. "Not today," Jag warned, lifting the bow steady before pulling the trigger.

Spot on. The Medias twisted and wrenched in the air before falling to the earth with a thunderous thud. Then it evaporated into thin air as if it had never existed.

Now to get to Morgen.

Four spin kicks later, Morgen began to doubt her ability to win over the beast. She was tired, sick with worry over Selithia, and worse, Jag.

Then the Medias slapped her with a smack of its scaly palm and sent her stumbling back. Morgen caught her footing before she sailed back off the cliff. She could run, she could fly, but the bastards would just track her again.

It was best to deal with it now. "You think you're smart, don't you?" She swiped a drop of blood from her lip where the animal had punched her.

It just looked at her. Then reared its head back and let out a mind-scraping roar. She launched herself at it, punching its stomach with all her might. The beast doubled over, then lifted its horrifying gaze in a gesture that said it was coming for her and growled low in its throat.

He's like the freaking Energizer Bunny. Doesn't know when to quit. Come on, pal, let's see what you got. Straightening her stance, she readied herself for another attack, when all of a sudden the beast screamed out, then vaporized before her very eyes.

What the...

Breathing hard, Jag lowered his crossbow and smiled at her. "I think we got them."

Was it really over? It was hard to believe. Morgen had been on the run for so long. Were the Medias out of her life?

They were. They really were. All thanks to the man who'd been sent to kill her. All thanks to Jag. "I think we did," she reaffirmed as she attempted to get her breathing under control. Exhaustion overtook her. She could rest, actually honest to goodness rest. No more running. No more...

But she didn't have a home.

"Will there be more?" Jag asked.

"I hope not." Morgen tried not to look into his captivating eyes. If she did, there was no way she'd be able to leave. For a little while she had dared to dream she could have a nice home again with someone who cared for her.

And Selithia. But she'd be the reason he'd never see his family again and deep down, she knew he'd never forgive her for that. "I guess you have to kill me now," she teased.

He came to her. "You're kidding, right?"

"You can't become mortal if you don't."

"Do you honestly think I risked my life to save you just so I could kill you?"

"No," she answered. "Why did you?"

It was a good question. A question he really wasn't prepared to answer. "I told you. I don't let babies die." It was probably the wrong thing to say because Morgen had never looked so disappointed.

"Oh."

Damn. Why couldn't he just say it? He loved her. How he'd fallen so hard so fast he didn't know. But the truth remained, he had. Nothing he could do about it now. He loved having her in his bed. *His* bed. And he knew he was already becoming attached to Selithia. "Morgen, look --"

"No, it's all right. I need to get back, get Sel and get out of your hair before you change your mind, Slayer."

It was an impossible relationship. A vampire and a slayer? Really it was the stuff television shows were made from but it didn't stop the twist he felt in his gut at the thought of never seeing her again. "Don't go." It was a start. A bad one, but it was all he could manage. Hell, he hadn't expressed feelings for anyone since his wife. Maybe he wasn't good at it anymore.

"I have to."

"No, you --" But it was too late.

She turned, spread her wings and flew off the cliff's edge.

Gods, why couldn't he just say it? Say he wanted her. He wanted to be her family. Hell, he'd defy the gods just to take her as his -- and he was going to.

He wasn't losing anyone he cared for ever again.

* * *

Morgen ran into Jag's house and straight for her sister. She couldn't bear to stay another moment in this place. It wasn't hers. He wasn't hers and he never would be. It

was better this way. "Hey, baby," she said, as Selithia reached for her, arms spread wide. "Thanks, Belita." Morgen hugged Jag's housekeeper.

"You're welcome, miss. It was nice to have another woman around for a little while and the precious baby."

"Thanks."

"Sure did warm Mr. Jag's heart."

Had it? Morgen would give anything if it had, but he'd merely enjoyed the physical perks of having her around. There was no way a slayer could love a Tzitzimine. And really, she shouldn't be falling in love with Jag. That's why she had to get out of here and fast. If she didn't, she was a goner.

"She did," Jag said as he entered the room. He nodded at Belita and she smiled back at him.

"I have a house to clean. Those big lizards are messy." Belita smiled. Morgen suppressed a tiny laugh. She guessed they were. "Anything else I can do for you two?"

"No thanks, Belita."

"Yes, sir." Belita left the room and with her departure the room fell silent for a moment.

"You're hurt." Morgen gestured toward the ripped shirt and a tiny droplet of blood dripping from his wound. The smell of copper tempted her nostrils, but this wasn't the time to think about anything but leaving.

"I've been hurt before. I'm a fast healer."

"I'm glad."

"Morgen, I --"

"What do you want, Jag?"

"You."

That shocked her. He couldn't mean... "No, you don't."

"Yes, I do."

"It would never work."

"Why not? Stranger things have happened," he said, leaning into the door frame.

"Not many."

He gave her a small laugh. "Maybe not often, but they have. Listen, I don't know what's gotten into me. I just don't want you to leave."

"It will pass."

"What if it doesn't? What then? Am I supposed to scour the earth in search of you?"

"Why not? You've done it before."

"Will you just stop! Stop with the cold act." Jag came closer.

Too close. Damn, she couldn't think straight and be around him at the same time. He smelled of citrus, musk... *Copper*. "Jag, I... you can't do this."

"Do what, Morgen? Care about you?"

"Yeah. You can't care about me."

"Good, because I don't. I love you."

Everything in her wanted to fall into his arms, stay in the warmth forever, but he'd never forgive her. "You can't love me."

"And why not? You think love is easy for me?"

She averted her eyes, letting her gaze drop to the hardwood flooring. "Because I'm keeping you from your family."

"What are you talking about? You're not making any sense."

"You wanted to rid the world of the last Tzitzimine so you can die and be in the afterlife with your family, right?" The thought of Jag dying made her throat tighten. Even though his family was gone, she felt a stab of jealousy. She wanted a family with him.

He cupped her cheek, swiping the tear now streaking it with the pad of his thumb. "Morgen, honey. I wanted to die because I had no reason to live."

"But..."

"But nothing. I was tired of the killing. I haven't been alive in so long. Not until I found you."

"Oh, gods, Jag. I didn't realize." She lifted her gaze to meet his and knew he spoke the truth.

"I haven't loved in so long, but I'm willing to try if you'll let me." His words were so sincere it practically stole her breath.

She answered him with a brush of her lips. "I don't know how to be loved. The only thing I know is to run, but shit, I'm tired of it." Tension seeped from her shoulders.

"Let me protect you, Morgen. You and Selithia."

Should she?

Selithia reached for Jag, giggling as he took her. He was so gentle with her. Lord, she could love this man. Given half a chance she could fall madly, deeply in love. Maybe they could be a family. "Okay."

He smiled. "Okay."

"One thing, though."

"What's that?"

"Can Belita watch Sel for the next four hours?" She dragged a fingernail down his neck.

"Why?"

"I'm hungry, baby."

"Me too. And this time I get to devour you." Jag winked at her. She'd live the rest of eternity happy, safe in the bed of the man who had once been her mortal enemy.

Kell Casey

Kell Casey makes her home in Montana, despite being allergic to horses, cattle, and sheep. One day she'd love to climb the mountains, just as soon as they put elevators in. She does, however, love to volunteer at the local big-cat sanctuary and hear from her readers. You can contact her at kell@kellcasey.com and visit her website at kellcasey.com.