

TUESDAY MORRIGAN

MONSTROUS
KINK

Loose Id

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The Loose Id

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Prologue

The Path of Passion

The Path Of Passion Is Forever Tread

But for Few it Leads to Rest

The Path Of Passion Is A Sight Unseen

It covers Those who Claim eternity

The path Of passion Can only Part

For The One Who Completes The Heart

Chapter One

That's What It's Made For

The air was thick with the scent of wet, aged stone. He took a deep breath and filled his nostrils with the pungent smell until he was sure his lungs were going to burst. Zacharias looked around him, at the miles upon miles of densely wooded acreage surrounding the ancient castle he called home.

His keen green eyes caught everything. He saw the falcon swoop low and grasp the scurrying mouse in its beak. He saw the pack of silver-haired wolves camp for the night at the farthest left edge of the property that was his domain. Zacharias even saw the small group of villagers making its way up the long, winding road to his castle.

His sigh of acceptance was deep. He could turn the villagers away, but they would keep coming back until he decided to listen to them. For some reason, the humans thought that just because he was the Krim Guardian, the king of the Krim kingdom, he had to heed their words, listen to their accusations, and fulfill their every desire.

The hard as stone skin that protected him didn't allow him to feel the chilling temperature of the air, but he knew it was cold. His breath was foggy and the preternatural sixth sense he never understood told him the temperature was dropping, and rather quickly.

The humans were lucky. If they had left a little later, they would have found themselves on the road when the cold air came in. They surely would have frozen to death.

A circle of air moved around him. It was the only indication Zacharias received that he was not alone. Zacharias didn't bother to turn and greet his guest. He knew who had joined him.

"I hope they are not here because of you," he grumbled, his irritation at the humans' arrival evident.

"No, not I," said the cat. "I'm not the man they came to talk about tonight," Hugo said. His smooth melodic baritone grated along Zacharias's skin. "I haven't bitten anyone who didn't want biting," he finished with a chuckle.

Zacharias turned in time to catch the flash of Hugo's smile. It was nearing midnight, but the full moon and his sharp sight allowed him to see Hugo's sharp canines with stunning clarity.

Zacharias took a deep breath and breathed in the vampire's scent. He did not smell any fresh blood on Hugo. The bloodsucker was telling the truth. He had not fed tonight. Nor had he lain with a woman tonight. For once the villagers were not coming to complain he had taken one of their daughters or wives for a night of debauchery.

And the werewolves had not left their property for weeks.

Which meant they were coming for him.

"You have a duty to man and to those of Krim who look to you." In the wake of his honest words, the shadows that cloaked the night parted to reveal the elderly gargoyle. Zacharias looked up to catch Rufus's knowing eye. As one of the oldest gargoyles who had ever lived, Rufus was one of the most important of his counsel. He was also his friend. The older man understood all too well Zacharias's current predicament. None knew exactly how old Rufus was. All of Krim only knew he was old enough to have witnessed the beginning of the damned tradition Zacharias was trying to ignore.

Rufus had witnessed the first marriage between man and gargoyle.

Zacharias sighed before turning and walking across the roof. His feet thundered with every step. The only thing that kept the floor from crumbling under his impressive weight was a carefully calculated architectural design that was over a thousand years old.

Hugo met him at the door at the top of the carved stone staircase. He smirked at Zacharias before throwing the door open.

Zacharias growled at him. The damn vampire found his situation humorous. Unfortunately, Zacharias was not man enough to admit that Hugo had a good reason to think this was funny.

He flapped his gigantic wings twice and stretched out his muscles before changing out of his gargoyle form. For one second he had considered going down to meet the villagers in his bestial appearance. A grim smile had tugged his lips at the thought. He knew the villagers would probably cower in fear at the sight of his gargoyle figure. Unfortunately it was not enough to get them to run screaming in fear. The bastards were too used to the preternatural beings that lived in the kingdom of Krim.

The griffons and dragons lived to the north, the werewolves and shape-shifting cats stuck to the western region of the land, the centaurs and unicorns never ventured far from the central plains, the vampires were everywhere, and the gargoyles protected from the midnight sky.

There wasn't a week that he did not receive a visit from at least one villager complaining about some way he had been slighted by the un-naturals, as the preternatural beings were known.

Zacharias ran one long-fingered hand through his wavy, shoulder-length chestnut locks before stepping through the doorway. *I would give anything to believe they were here because of one of the un-naturals' actions*, Zacharias thought before stepping onto the first stair.

He grimaced at the feel of the cool stone under his feet. Goose bumps immediately broke out over his golden flesh from the harsh lash of the cold air within the stairwell. It was the most disconcerting fact about changing. After hours of numbness, his body had to readjust and get used to feeling all over again.

“It doesn’t help that you’re naked,” Liana said, her French accent soft and soothing as she made her way to him, bundle in hand. Even in the dimly lit enclosed space, his sharp eyes could make out the jeweled tones of his clothing.

“No, it doesn’t,” he murmured before gifting her with an honest, white smile. “But there is no point in wearing clothing when I tear through them changing into my guardian form, and the clothes I wear while a guardian won’t fit when I’m a man.”

Liana gave him a soft kiss on both of his cheeks before standing to look him in the eyes. “True. And with this method I get to see you naked night after night after a long night’s watch,” she said softly before holding out the pile of clothing.

Zacharias laughed at her flirtatious words. He was even able to brush aside the fact that Liana eyed him as he dressed. Her gaze roamed over every inch of his six feet eight frame. But with Liana, there was none of the uneasiness that came from being around another female of his kind.

Liana understood that he could never take a gargoyle bride and that he could not take one as his mistress. The Krim Guardian had to guarantee the existence of his people by cementing the relationship between gargoyles and humans with a joining, a handfasting, a marriage.

And the Krim Guardian had to be wed to a human by the night’s fall on the last day of the full Black Crescent moon and that night fell on All Hallows’ Eve -- Halloween -- this year.

By Halloween he had to be wed to the human queen who would stand beside him. With the aid of his magicks he would bind his chosen wife to him and she would be his for the span of a gargoyle lifetime. At least a thousand years.

No big deal, his mind said in mocking tones.

For weeks now Zacharias had tried to pretend that fall wasn't coming now simply because it meant that All Hallows' Eve was right around the corner. The problem was Zacharias hadn't found a female that appealed to him in over two hundred years, but in less than two weeks he had to find a woman and bed her.

That was going to be no problem at all.

Less than twenty minutes later he stood in the midst of a human meat market. All around him females were parading their wares, hoping to be purchased or, in this case specifically, wed.

He glanced at a woman across from him. She was the comeliest of the girls on display. Her smile was vivid and shocking. Her hips were small and graceful. Her breasts were large and firm. She was a woman of perfection. Even in the long dress she wore, Zacharias could see the woman's legs were long and shapely. Arianna was an exceptional woman.

Too bad the sight of Arianna's ruby lips made him want to snarl. It should have made him happy, excited...aroused. But it did none of the above. It made him want to howl at the moon.

The woman was beautiful, sexy, and desirous, but she wasn't what he needed. No, she was another woman in a long line of women who could never satisfy his needs. His gaze moved down the line, looking at the many women the villagers had lined up for him. Not one of the women appealed to him.

"You have chosen one on your own?" The voice belonged to the wizened witch priest who had gathered the women for his perusal.

“No,” Zacharias said with a sigh. He ran his fingers through his hair as he eyed the women. One had to be better than the others. One of them had to appeal to him, right?

“I will choose one for the Black Crescent Moon.”

“You will choose one now.”

Zacharias’s green eyes darkened at the priest’s bold words. “I will choose one when I am ready. Never think to tell me what to do, human.”

The priest backed up at his growling tone. He knew he’d overstepped the boundaries. He had no right to tell the Krim Guardian what to do, but the old man knew of Zacharias’s...issue with the opposite sex.

For some time Zacharias had felt there was something unnaturally wrong with him. It wasn’t that he liked men. He loved women. Zacharias just didn’t get aroused. He had even sought out the priest’s knowledge on the subject, only to find he had not been cursed. Zacharias just had not found a woman to stir his blood in centuries. The priest attempted to appease him when a loud commotion broke through Zacharias’s thoughts.

The whole room turned around at the sound of the boom.

Zacharias slowly rose from his throne. The crowd parted as he made his way toward the source of the commotion. The priest reached out one feeble hand. His fingers almost touched the thick wool jacket Zacharias wore.

Zacharias turned and stared at the weathered hand seconds before it would have reached him. It stopped instantly. He turned back and caught a glimpse of bright red fabric before the villagers swarmed and blocked his view.

Zacharias didn’t realize he’d growled until he saw the villagers scatter and run. They parted and allowed him a view of the newcomer.

She turned toward him and smiled.

He took a deep breath, taking in the scent and sight of the woman before him.

Her midnight hair was in disarray. Her bright red wool coat was dirty and stained. There were black coal streaks on her cocoa face, and her matching leather suitcases were ripped.

She looked like hell.

He took another step toward her.

“Hi there,” she said with a fluttering wave. “Thank goodness I stumbled onto this place. I was so lost and scared and then my car broke down and I --” She stopped suddenly. Her mouth dropped open and her eyes widened. “Jesus, you’re a big one,” she muttered.

Zacharias took a deep, steadying breath and smiled back at her. His eyes almost immediately narrowed. Her scent was thick and strong. She wore perfume, lovely smelling perfume, but beneath that was her scent and it called to him.

Zacharias took another whiff of the woman and rolled it over his tongue. It tasted like perfection. It tasted like home. And it made him feel.

Heat coursed through his veins. Arousal spread through every inch of his body, and desire like nothing he’d ever felt before consumed him.

“I guess I’m not in Kansas anymore,” she said with a soft chuckle.

“No, you’re not. You’re home,” he responded.

Chapter Two

Beautiful Struggle

Mila smiled at the dark giant across from her. He was kind of sexy in an old world, eastern European way.

She looked him up and down, starting from his chestnut-colored hair to his long, broad feet, and back again. Her gaze paused on the dark, tight pants he wore. Her smile grew wider. Mila definitely liked what she saw.

She needed something to make her feel better about her bad luck. Her glance drifted back to the man before her. Mila might as well have a bit of fun, and something told her she would have more than a little bit of fun with the gorgeous man before her.

She lifted her battered red camera bag onto her shoulder. She had been in the area taking pictures. And to top things off everything that had gone wrong today, her car broke down on her night off. She was stuck.

No more traveling.

And that was her favorite part about being who she was. Mila loved traveling. She loved taking pictures. So it only made sense that she'd taken off right after graduation to

apprentice with one of the world's most famous photojournalists. Five years later she had struck out on her own.

After spending ten years living out of suitcases, hotels, and surviving on the bare essentials, most people would have found themselves drained. Not Mila. She lived for the moment when she could travel to another exotic locale, live out of another suitcase, and bathe in a nation without running water.

And this was definitely an area without running water.

"I'm sorry to barge in like this. I saw the lights and I was hoping I could crash here until the storm was over."

"You are always welcome here. I am Zacharias," the giant said before wrapping one long, broad arm around her shoulders.

"My name is Mila," she said softly. Her voice came out a thick whisper. His simple touch had ignited something that slithered over her body to settle in her lower abdomen. It was suddenly a reminder of how long she had gone without a man's touch.

Too long.

Out of the corner of her eye, Mila saw the old, wizened man jerk. She gave him a narrow smile that was sharp and full of bite.

She had seen the same man less than three hours ago. She had begged him for food and shelter. She had even offered to pay. He had spit on her, told Mila her kind wasn't wanted, and that she could never afford his hospitality.

Zacharias turned to the old man suddenly. "What have you done, priest?"

The old man's eyes widened and he visibly shook with fear. "I did not know. I swear I did not know, my lord. I could not foresee."

"You could not foresee that all who reach this town have a destiny."

Her gaze slid to the man beside her. What did he mean by destiny? She opened her mouth. At that moment, Mila's stomach growled. She had the grace to blush.

“You are hungry.”

“Yes,” Mila said with a shy smile. “Apparently people are supposed to eat every day. Imagine that.”

Zacharias smiled at her. “I have learned that lesson during my lifetime,” he said with a chuckle. The soft sound of his laughter landed on top of the tense sexual feeling his touch ignited. It made Mila feel more like a cat. She simply wanted to rub herself all over his hard frame.

He turned and glanced at a woman across the room. “We will have a meal prepared for you.” The woman immediately turned and left the room.

The woman’s quick action made Mila raise her eyebrows in surprise. She turned back to the man beside her and peered at him curiously. It was obvious he was someone important. And it had not escaped her notice she was standing in a genuine castle.

She chewed her lip as a thought occurred to her. He couldn’t be a prince, could he? She’d done research on the region she was traveling to, but she had no idea where she was.

She could have wandered into a kingdom without even realizing it. She uneasily glanced around her. Yeah, the room screamed abode of a ruler. “It’s late. I don’t want to put you out. I’ll be fine with a sandwich or just simply bread and water. I’m not a demanding beggar,” Mila said as she eyed the doorway the woman had departed through.

“Come. Let me show you to your room.”

The tone of his voice let Mila know the chestnut-haired god was not going to accept any arguments. And she *was* exhausted.

The long walk to Mila’s temporary room was filled with little snippets of history. Zacharias described every artifact that caught her eye, and there were quite a few. She stopped in front of a picture of one of his ancestors. “He looks just like you. When was this painting...painted?”

Zacharias coughed. “Uh...It was done in 1675.”

Mila turned to him with wide eyes. “He looks exactly like you. I can’t imagine what that must be like. I only know my family tree back a few generations, but yours... What was his name?”

He said nothing for several seconds. Mila turned to him, ready to repeat the question.

“Zacharias.”

She blinked twice.

“His name was Zacharias. I was named after him. He was named after his father. His father built this castle.”

He turned suddenly. “Your room is here,” he said, before pulling open a dark door.

Mila gasped when she walked through the doorway. The room was absolutely beautiful.

She had lived as a vagabond with no home, little money, and even less resources, but the one thing she purchased every month regardless of how little money she had was the latest copy of *Vogue*. French *Vogue*, Russian *Vogue*, American *Vogue*, any *Vogue* was her *Vogue*. And at that moment she was standing in the doorway of a room that could have appeared in any *Vogue* couture photo shoot.

The floor was hardwood with a gigantic Persian rug that looked aged and well cared for. The silk drapes on the wall spoke of an era long gone. An era that exemplified extravagant beauty.

She took a step back. “I can’t stay here.”

“You can and you will,” he growled.

She turned at the sound of his rough voice.

He reached out and caressed her cheek. She stilled at the feel of the soft gesture. “Mila, I want you to stay here, in my home.”

She smiled at him. He was so kind and charming with his old world grace. The man, like the room, reminded her of a time long gone, a time she could get used to. "Since you asked so nicely," Mila said with a smirk.

Zacharias took a slow step away from her. "You must be tired. I will let you rest now," he said before turning and heading to the door. He paused. "Amelia will bring your meal shortly."

"I'll walk you out."

She held the door open for him. He stood in the doorway and looked down at her. It seemed almost as if Zacharias didn't want to leave her.

And the truth was, she didn't want him to leave. Unfortunately, her conscience reminded her she was not the kind of girl to sleep with a man on the first night.

"Sleep well, dream better," she whispered before closing the door on him.

* * * * *

Mila slept well. She dreamed better. She dreamed of the chestnut-haired giant with the eyes that burned an emerald fire. And this dream was like none she'd experienced before.

Mila stood in the shadows that hung beside his bed, watching him. She knew the exact moment he realized he was no longer alone. His breathing changed. The rise and fall of his sculpted chest became less even, more sporadic, as he tried to feign the calm breathing that came naturally with sleep.

She stepped from the shadows to stand in the silvery beams of moonlight. "Zacharias," she called softly.

"Mistress." His voice was throaty and thick with desire. Its even lower, deep timbre tones skated down her spine.

"I have waited many lifetimes for you, Mistress."

She smiled to herself. "Have you really, Zacharias?" It had been so long since anyone, let alone a man, waited for her. In that instant Mila realized she wanted the moment, the dream, to last forever.

She wanted to always feel like Zacharias was waiting for her.

"I have waited centuries for your touch. Please do not make me wait any longer."

She made her way across the room to stand beside the bed. When she neared him, he started to sit up. She cocked one eyebrow. He immediately stilled, waiting for something, waiting for something from her.

Mila smiled at him when realization slowly filled her mind. He waited for her demands. He waited for her requests. He waited for her domination.

He waited to pleasure her.

She took a deep breath and drank in the heady musk scent of aroused male. She could taste his hunger on her tongue. Her hands clenched and she had to fight the rising urge to give in and satisfy both their primal urges.

But tonight was about more than urges. It was about needs. Her need to dominate and his need to submit.

"Tell me what you want, Zacharias," Mila breathed out in a soft, thick whisper. She propped one knee-high booted leg on the edge of the bed. She watched his gaze follow the movement of her thick thigh. The flaring heat she saw there made her panties moisten with arousal.

His gaze slowly lifted to hers. "I want to please you, Mistress."

Mila stepped back from the bed and turned, giving him her back. She reached for the soft strap of fabric that lay on the bedside table. The moment Mila turned she heard the sharp intake of breath. She smiled at Zacharias's shock. She probably should have warned him. Her smile widened into a smirk.

But what would have been the fun in that?

Mila glanced back at him, midnight hair falling over the left curve of her shoulder. “Do you like what you see, Zacharias?” she asked softly.

His wet, pink tongue licked his full bottom lip. His nostrils flared. Slowly he tore his gaze away from the sight of her naked ass cheeks. “Yes, Mistress,” he growled, his voice rough and heavy.

The grip he had on the soft satin sheets tightened. “I enjoy the view very much, Mistress. You are exquisite.” Even though deep with arousal, his voice still held that old world elegant tone she loved.

One small, gloved hand palmed the full globes of her ass. The feel of the satin on her own skin was highly intoxicating. And there was the fire in Zacharias’s eyes. Mila watched his heated gaze as she trailed the tiny strip of lace that separated her cheeks. His gaze followed her every touch.

She slowly turned to him, leather strip in one hand. “Tell me how much you like the view, Zacharias. Show me, Zacharias.”

The edges of his beautiful mouth bracketed with lines of apprehension. Zacharias blinked at her, seemingly unsure of whether he wanted to obey her.

This was when the dominant in her came out.

The sharp snap of the leather whip cutting through the air ricocheted through the room.

He jerked at the sound and glared at her.

Mila felt the immediate need to assert her control. She cracked the whip across his strong naked thigh. The supple leather left a red mark in its wake.

It was like the mark of a lover on his thigh.

It *was* the mark of his lover on his thigh.

It was Mila’s mark.

“Now, Zacharias.” Her voice was soft, dark, and held an undertone of granite.

He would bend to her will.

She would give him no other choice.

“Do you want to be punished for not submitting to your Mistress, Zacharias?” she purred in a voice as thick and airy as whipped cream.

He slowly lifted his chestnut head. His heated gaze collided with hers and for one moment Mila was stunned by the effect. Her panties and her palms moistened with her gut-wrenching arousal.

There was so much passion in his emerald eyes. “No, Mistress. I do not desire punishment.”

Mila’s smile was slow and full of the sexual heat she felt burning inside. She was a predator and he was her beautifully erotic prey. “But you have earned a punishment, Zacharias.”

His eyes flashed with acceptance and...joy. Though he tried to mask it, Mila was very aware the brunet giant had gotten exactly what he wanted.

He liked being punished.

And she liked giving out punishment.

“Bring me the chair, Zacharias.”

His gaze lowered until they rested on the large protruding bulge tenting his sheets. He was naked. And he was aroused.

“Do not make me ask again, Zacharias, or you will receive two punishments and you will not like either.”

“Yes, Mistress.” He threw the sheet off from the masked lower half of his body.

Mila had mentally prepared herself for his nakedness. She had prepared herself for the sight of his nude body, even his naked aroused body. She had not prepared herself for the sight of his sexually aggressive beauty.

Mila had not prepared herself for the eroticism that cloaked his every masculine inch.

Zacharias was breathtaking.

Her hungry eyes devoured the sight of his naked body. His shoulders were broad, muscled, and darkly tanned, evidence that he did not fear the sun. His muscles moved purposely with his every movement, his every step. Mila found herself catching her breath at the sight of his broad, strong back. She had never once thought of a man's back as erotic, but as she stared at Zacharias's, she felt her panties further moisten with arousal. She was so wet, so horny, she could scent herself.

She licked her bottom lip. Then she bit it to stifle the urge to tell him to discard the chair. She had a new idea for his punishment.

But it would have to wait.

She was his Mistress.

And she had to teach him not to disobey.

Her gaze roamed lower. The broad planes tapered into a slim waist accentuated by the small of his back. With his back to her, Mila felt no shame or concern with her naked perusal of his body. She took notice of every inch of Zacharias's gigantic frame. She took note of the defining indentation of his spine and the twin dimples sitting above the full, firm cheeks of his magnificent ass.

She made a silent promise to pay special attention to them...later.

Her teeth bit into her bottom lip, breaking the skin. She felt lightning arousal streak through her limbs when he bent and picked up the chair. The firm globes of his ass moved with the action, contracting and giving her a glimpse of his heavy balls.

If he behaved she would run her tongue across them.

But first came his punishment.

She smiled at Zacharias as he placed the chair in front of her. "Now, lie down."

Zacharias stilled. It was obvious he had expected her to tell him to sit.

But a good Mistress knew to do the unexpected. It was what kept the sub's heart pumping with arousal.

Zacharias slowly padded his way across the room. Mila watched his every move with heavy-lidded, desirous eyes.

When he reached the bed, he paused to lift the sheet. "No sheet. Lie on top." He dropped the sheet and settled himself on the bed. It was obvious he was uncomfortable with the proof of his desire. His long-fingered hand lifted toward his stiff cock. It reached halfway before dropping at his side.

"You're learning, Zacharias."

She walked away from the chair to stand beside the bed. She opened the first drawer in the nightstand and found exactly what she sought. She pulled the black cloth mask out.

Mila turned back to the bed. It was so high it stood against her stomach. She lifted one leg over his muscular thighs. He jerked beneath her. She smiled at the telltale action.

She leaned over him, pressing her lace-covered sex over his pulsing erection. "Are you ready to be punished, Zacharias?" she whispered against the strong column of his corded neck.

"Yes." He shivered.

"Good." She slowly fit the mask over his eyes, being careful of the luxurious chestnut strands of his hair as she pulled it over his head. "Your punishment is lack of sight."

She kissed both his cloth-covered eyes and sat back. The enormous bulge between Zacharias's thighs pressed at her swollen cleft. She moved her hips on top of his, pressed her pussy against his rigid cock for several moments.

Watching his face, Mila's fingers wrapped around his wrists. The tension there told her he was clenching his hands into fists.

She closed her eyes and smiled. Pleasure like no other shot through her body. She moaned. "Zacharias."

He gasped and jerked beneath her.

“Can you smell my desire? Can you smell my arousal?”

She widened her thighs, pressed her cleft harder against his cock, and rubbed her pussy against him.

“Yes, I can smell you, Mistress.”

One hand left his wrist. She pressed her fingers against her lace-covered pussy.

“I’m so wet, Zacharias, wet for you, but you misbehaved. And now...”

Mila spread her legs farther and her nether lips parted, revealing the swollen bud at the apex of her cunt. She pressed two fingers against her engorged clitoris.

“I must satisfy myself.” The hand that held Zacharias’s wrist tightened. The fingers on the other hand made a vise over her clit.

“I’m sorry, Mistress.”

She moved her pussy on top of him as she fingered her clitoris. Her gasps permeated the air. His moans echoed hers.

“Come for me. Come for me, Mistress.”

She held him as she rode him.

His thick, desire-deepened voice spurred her on.

She held him as she came, shivering on top of his supine body as her own exploded. She screamed until her voice was hoarse as her orgasm ripped through her, rending every other orgasm she had ever experienced a shiver in the force of its quake.

His shout of satisfaction came seconds later.

Chapter Three

Whispered Promises

“There are rumors circulating that she will make her presence known during this Dark Moon.” Liana paused dramatically as she added two more spoonfuls of sugar to her tea. The man across from her shrugged his wide shoulders nonchalantly.

“Every year the kingdom claims the same thing. And every year they are wrong. She never comes. I doubt she will show this year.” Hugo stared at the giant stove for several moments before apparently making a decision. He reached across her and grabbed a sausage link off one of the frying pans on the burners. He popped it into his mouth.

Liana lifted one eyebrow in silent rebuke for his actions. She did not need to say anything because at that moment, Elsie, the cook, rounded the corner. The full-figured matron set down the container she was carrying and strode toward them. “You been picking off my stove again, Hugo?”

He gave Elsie a warm smile. “Now why would I do that?”

Liana grinned at the two of them. They had been going through the same routine for the last decade. Elsie turned to her suddenly, wiping her palms on her apron. “You’ve told him what they are saying?”

Liana nodded slowly and inclined her head in Hugo's direction. "He believes it is just another endless rumor."

Elsie glowered at her. Liana could feel Elsie's irritation washing over her in waves. "Well, that's because you haven't told him all that they are saying." Elsie's gaze caught Hugo's curious eyes. "They are claiming that even Iya herself is agreeing the signs all point to the arrival of the Dark Moon Queen."

Hugo stilled at Elsie's words. Liana could see the fine lines of tension etched all over his body. Hugo understood what the return of the Dark Moon Queen meant. The woman was supposed to be the greatest and most powerful witch that all of Krim had ever known.

Her return was prophesied to be the lone act that would push Krim into prosperity. For over five hundred years, since the death of the last Dark Moon Queen, her return had been whispered about. But never with such fervor.

And this time one of the greatest oracles of Krim had confirmed the rumor. Change was upon Krim. The whispered promises of several generations appeared to be bearing fruit.

Hugo watched Elsie for several tense moments. "That is not all she said, Elsie, is it?"

Elsie shook her head and wrung her hands together. "Iya claims she has already arrived in Krim."

Chapter Four

Thanks for the Memories

The Magician was livid, filled with a fire that raged out of control, burning through all semblance of compassion he had ever pretended to own. One large fist pounded against the table. The heavy thud echoed throughout the cavernous room. The ricocheted sounds of his anger seemed to settle deep in his heart, oddly cooling some of the heat that simmered within.

He had planned so perfectly. Zacharias, King of Krim, was to marry the woman he had sent to him. Beautiful and talented, she should have been too lovely to resist. And she would have been his puppet, poisoning the powerful king until he was weak enough to bend to the will of his black magick.

But *she* had ruined it all.

The moment Zacharias had looked into her dark eyes, the Magician knew he could not stop them from coming together.

She was his mate. The other half of the king's damn soul.

The Magician's smile was cold, filled with the unhealthy fire that burned in his gut. He could use the truth to his benefit. It did not have to be an obstacle to his goals. He just had to

make sure the human was a memory and nothing more. He could not let her become a permanent fixture in the kingdom of Krim.

His smile broadened. When he cut her from the picture, the king's heart would be torn. And there was nothing easier to control than a broken man. He turned and strode back to the library that was his sanctuary. His long, gnarled fingers plucked a large leather-bound text from the endless array of books. He quickly flipped to the recipe he sought.

It was a magnifying spell. He would increase the sensual power that surged between Zacharias and the dark woman. They wanted one another. They were each other's complements. Every male and female in the castle had witnessed the magnetism that drew them to one another. Coupled with the spell, the two would be powerless to resist the temptation of their desires.

And once Zacharias had fallen for the damned woman, the Magician would dispose of her. The broken gargoyle would be too weak to resist him.

The Magician whistled to himself as he gathered the ingredients for the magnifying spell. He would not let Zacharias's mistress disrupt his carefully crafted plan. The Magician had a destiny to uphold. And nobody, not even the king himself, was going to stand in his way.

Chapter Five

Dirty Little Secret

Zacharias's long fingers clenched around the glass goblet he held. For a few moments he stared at it with unseeing eyes. His mind drifted back to the night before. When he had touched Mila, he felt a connection between them. There was a strong pull that lured him to her, but he had never once believed the intense attraction that simmered between them was strong enough to drag him into her very vivid, very erotic dreams.

Zacharias had not once considered that Mila was telekinetically *and* telepathically gifted.

It was unheard of.

Zacharias had not once considered that his mate would be one of the women whose mental powers were powerful enough to draw him into her mind.

And what a mind!

A wry smile curved his sensual mouth. His gaze drifted to the growing bulge between his spread thighs. His cock was heavy, full, and thick.

It ached with arousal.

The emotion was shockingly alien. It had been centuries since he had last felt desire.

If you don't count last night, his mind reminded him with a chuckle.

He had not laid his head on his plush pillow for more than twenty minutes when his eyes had jerked open with shocking awareness. He saw the room that surrounded him, recognized the red and black fabrics as his chosen colors, but it was not his real bedroom he saw, but the room Mila dreamed.

He could feel her presence pressing against his mental shields. It was a ghost of a touch, like two soft lips pressed against one another in a butterfly kiss. His first thought was, how could she know the distinctive décor of this abode, the colors of his room?

The question was wiped from his mind when he saw the sleek outline of her voluptuous body hiding in the shadows that cloaked his darkened room. And even though he had felt her mental presence when he opened his eyes, Zacharias had been shocked by her physical presence. He had not expected her to be strong enough to project her image into his mind.

He had watched her for a few moments as her body played with the lights and shadows that streaked his room.

He had watched for a few moments as she watched him.

Finally when he could take no more of the wait, he called for her, begged her. "Mistress," had come so naturally from his lips and in that moment Zacharias realized why no other woman had affected him like she did. Mila was the other half of his soul, the Dominatrix to his submissive.

Zacharias had not acknowledged his submissive side until Mila had lifted one midnight eyebrow in question at his actions. He immediately leaned back.

Even then, hours after the experience, he was still unsure of the depth and nature of his submissive side. Zacharias only knew he had never experienced anything as powerful as the emotions Mila evoked when she held him against his will and used his heavy cock to make herself orgasm.

“Someone is up early.”

Zacharias turned and regarded the man in the dining room doorway. “I could say the same for you,” he murmured softly. “I have not seen you rise with the sun in years.”

Hugo shrugged one massive shoulder and entered the room. Like most vampires he preferred nocturnal hours, despite the fact that the barrier that kept the kingdom hidden also worked like a veil protecting the vampires in the region from the sun. His kind were not so lucky. If caught in daylight in his gargoyle form he turned to stone.

He gave Zacharias a mischievous grin. The sight of his sharp canines made the act just a little sinister. Rufus, Zacharias’s most trusted warrior, lounged in the doorway watching Hugo.

Watching him.

“And miss the chance to meet her? I think not.”

Zacharias fought every emotion that reared its head at Hugo’s words. He aimed for calm on the outside despite the battlefield of emotions that warred within. “Who is this *her* you speak of?” he asked nonchalantly as he watched Rufus take a seat on his left.

“All the humans know of her presence. Even the castle staff is abuzz.” Zacharias turned to welcome the latest person to invade the dining hall, the room that had been his sanctuary. “Good morning, Liana.”

She gave him a warm smile. “Good morning, Zacharias. I hope you don’t mind our intrusion. I know you normally eat breakfast alone, but...”

“We want to meet her,” Hugo finished for her. He turned to Zacharias and looked at him in question. “I’ve never known you not to stand when a female enters the room.”

Liana stopped halfway to her seat. She turned slowly. Her gaze wandered up and down his body.

Zacharias stifled the urge to growl. Instead he murmured, “I am not harmed, so please stop looking for pain, bruises, or cuts.”

She took two steps toward him. She stopped when he held up his hand. “If you need to be healed...” she pressed.

“I am not broken, but I cannot stand, not right now.”

Hugo leaned back in his seat at the other end of the table. His dark head pressed against the long back chair in exasperation. “Please, no riddles. It’s too early in the day for that.”

Zacharias contemplated the three people in front of him. Over the centuries, Hugo and Liana had become his closest friends. They had shared bloodshed, war, and even death.

He trusted them with his life.

He could trust them with his secret.

He sighed and let out the truth. “I can’t stand because I have an erection.”

The admission thundered through the quiet room. Zacharias looked back and forth between Hugo and Liana. The shock on both their faces was vivid enough to make him smile.

The fact that Hugo was speechless made him chuckle.

Liana opened her mouth to say something.

“Good morning, everyone.”

All three heads turned to the woman in the doorway. Zacharias immediately felt hunger burst through his system at the sight of Mila’s beautiful face. Goddess, she was lovely.

He gritted his teeth and tamped down his desire so he could stand and properly greet her. “Good morning, Mila.” He placed one arm around her waist and guided her to the seat nearest his.

“Good morning, Zacharias,” she whispered softly, shyly. Scorching fire snaked through Zacharias’s system. He was instantly aware of the fact that Mila was remembering her dream. She was remembering how much he had pleased her fantasy self and she was getting aroused by the thought.

He took a deep breath and drank in the scent of her blossoming arousal. If he wasn't careful he was going to embarrass them both and show her just how much she pleased him, just how much he was aroused by her.

Still, he couldn't help her playing with her. "Did you sleep well? Did you dream a little dream of..." He drifted off purposely, knowing what she would automatically think.

Her pink tongue traced the soft curve of her plump bottom lip. "I...uh...yes, I slept well."

Out of the corner of his eye, Zacharias saw Hugo perk up. He did not like the look in the other man's eyes. Zacharias got the distinct feeling his friend was considering how he could catch the woman in his arms.

But she was his.

Mila belonged to him.

Liana's delicate cough reminded him he was being rude. "Mila, I would like you to meet Liana, Rufus, and Hugo, my friends. They live here at the castle with me."

"So what brought you to our town, Mila?"

Zacharias's head whipped to Liana. Although the question would seem innocent to Mila, he knew what Liana was truly asking. What heartfelt desire did Mila seek that brought her to the kingdom of Krim? What need had allowed her to walk the infamous Path of Passion?

Those who were lucky enough to live within the walls of the kingdom of Krim understood that its power created a surrounding force field that would not allow humans into the ancient eastern European town unless there was a desire in their hearts that could only be returned by someone or something inside the kingdom of Krim.

And Liana wanted to know if Zacharias was Mila's desire. Had Mila's soul called loudly enough for him that the invisible walls around Krim had come tumbling down?

Mila shrugged one softly rounded shoulder. “Honestly, it was an accident. My car started to stutter and I got lost trying to find one of those pit stop stations. I thought I would be able to find someone to tow my car, or at the very least find a motel. I was just beginning to realize how foolish I was when the lights in the castle, I mean building, appeared. It was like my prayers had been answered.”

“And what exactly did you pray for?” Hugo asked softly, his gaze never straying from Zacharias’s face. Rufus’s gaze bore into him.

Mila was silent for several seconds. Zacharias could feel her lovely mind. The expression on her beautiful face told him she was considering what to say. She opened her mouth, ready to change the subject, when Liana cut her off.

“What did you ask for, Mila?”

Zacharias knew Mila didn’t want to answer the question. An aching feeling in his abdomen told him it was for the same reason he needed to hear her say the words.

Everyone in the dining room understood the truth was a very powerful thing. And right then Zacharias needed to hear that his Mila truly wanted and needed him.

She shrugged again, but this time no one was convinced by her feigned indifference. “The truth is, I asked for a savior, someone to help me through the roughest of times, and someone to appreciate me the same way I would appreciate him. I kind of got fed up with having to rough everything on my own.” She shrugged. “It just suddenly hit me that I’ve spent the last decade on my own. I blame it on a moment of weakness, but the truth is I asked God to send me a good man.”

Chapter Six

Green Light

“You heard her words. She was sent here for you. She is your queen.”

“She is more than that. She is his destined mate,” Hugo purred from across the room. He sat languidly in one of the several ancient chairs that littered the ballroom.

Over the centuries the room had become more a basement than a room for entertaining one’s guests. Among the chairs, there were endless portraits of long forgotten family members and relics.

Zacharias whipped around, eyes swirling with the potent anger and disillusionment he felt deep inside. They had come to the ballroom after breakfast to speak in private. He had known the moment Mila spoke that this conversation was coming. Still, he was not prepared for it. “I heard what she said and she specifically said a man. I am no *man*. I am a gargoyle. A shape-shifter. I am not the one she desires.”

“And you must not forget that,” Rufus said.

Liana snorted. “Begging your pardon, Rufus, my lord, but don’t be an ass. I’m not blind. You are the only thing she desires. I shudder to think what would have happened if we hadn’t been in the dining room.”

Zacharias blushed at the truth in Liana's words. He was not sure how Mila would have reacted to finding them alone. He only knew how he would have responded. He would have taken her, right then, on top of the table that had been in his family for generations, and if the goddess had been with him, he would have sired the next generation of Krim Guardians right there between her dark thighs.

The thought of Mila carrying his seed made the pain of knowing he was not the one she sought all the more unbearable. He turned to confront Liana and her painful optimism. "I am not the man she requested. I am a gargoyle, more beast than man was ever meant to be."

Hugo leaned against the wall. "The Path of Passion leads one where he needs to be to fulfill his heart's desires. Do you honestly believe there is another man in the kingdom of Krim who would fulfill her every desire, a man who is not you?"

"I am not a man," Zacharias thundered.

With blinding speed, Hugo strode across the large ballroom to stand in front of Zacharias. "Are you forgetting, your highness, that a staggering amount of the males in your kingdom are not men, strictly speaking? There are those who are part beast, part god, and those less fortunate are part demon. Do you consider me less of a man because I have the devil inside of me?"

"Don't you dare try to guilt-trip me out of my reasoning. Do you think this is easy for me to even consider? Just because I want her does not mean that she wants me."

"Humans are fickle. It is in your best interest not to allow yourself down that road. It can only lead to pain."

Liana rounded on Rufus. "Why would you make such a statement? Mila is here for a reason."

"And there is nothing saying that our king is that very reason. We have all witnessed how humans conduct their affairs of the heart. They do not use their hearts or bodies. They love or hate with their minds. She will not be able to accept him unless he is what she has

envisioned her mate to be. There have been plenty of destined mates who have not become couples because the human did not *think* her mate was truly meant for her.”

Silence descended on the room at Rufus’s words. The truth was they had all witnessed just how deadly loving a human could be. Especially for gargoyles. They fell in love with their very souls. Rejected lovers were known to have withered away, unable to survive without their other half.

Liana turned to Zacharias. “Then don’t give her a choice. Force her hand. Make sure she has no choice but to desire you.”

“Exactly what do you mean by that?” His voice was deadly soft.

Liana simply lifted one eyebrow at his tone. He turned away, feeling slightly chastised.

He heard her mutter under her breath, “Idiots, every last male.” A little louder she said, “You have to seduce her, mind, body, and soul. You have to make her realize that you are the other half of her being.”

“And this will make her ignore the fact that I am a shape-shifting gargoyle?”

Liana crossed her arms over her plump breasts and smiled. “You, your highness, will be amazed to find what a woman would do in the name of love.”

Zacharias stared at her for a few moments. The calm security in her eyes made him feel immensely better. “Okay, what do I have to do?” He turned to include Hugo in the conversation. “You two are the experts on seduction, so teach me what I need to know to get my queen.”

“First things first. We need to get you a costume.”

“A costume?” Zacharias choked out.

“Oh yeah,” Liana purred. “There is nothing as seductive as a handsome man in a dashing costume. Tomorrow night we will throw a masquerade to celebrate the coming holiday. The human will find herself inexplicably bound to you by Halloween.”

Rufus watched Zacharias as Liana spoke to him. Zacharias could feel the wise man's eyes on him, searching his face. With a sense of relief, Zacharias dismissed Liana and Hugo. He turned to the other gargoyle. A man who he'd spent many days on the battlefield with. A man he'd come to think of as a father since the death of his own. "Tell me what you are thinking, Rufus."

"You should choose a bride among those presented. They know about your nature. They know their duties. And you will not need to convince them to bind themselves to you in less than two weeks' time."

"But none of them make me feel...anything."

Rufus sighed. It was obvious he sensed he had lost the battle, but he could not refrain from giving Zacharias a piece of his mind. "I still think it is in your best interests to choose among one of the humans who are from Krim. Love is a dangerous and deadly road. I would hate to find that you are among its casualties."

Chapter Seven

Heartburn

He found her in the gardens, long nose camera in her hand as she peered at an Alpine Swift as it swooped low over the terrain. He watched her with hungry eyes for several moments before she turned to him. With the camera in her hand propped on her hip, she looked up at him from under the fan of her onyx lashes. “You have a beautiful home,” she called out.

Zacharias strode toward her. “It’s even more beautiful now that you are here,” he whispered, staring deep into her midnight eyes.

She smiled at him shyly before breaking the hold his gaze had over her. “You’re a slick one.”

He caught her arm before she could walk away. Away from him. Away from the need that coursed between them.

Their gazes connected. His fingers dug into the resilient flesh of her shoulders as he held her. “I’m an honest one.”

She blinked at the roughness of his voice. Desire thickened his tone, yearning governed his movements as he stepped forward, closing the small space that separated their bodies.

The pain in his chest could not be ignored. His heart burned with the need to touch her, feel her skin against his, her plump body against his own harder frame. His long fingers wrapped around the back of her neck and pulled Mila across the last inch, until he could feel her breasts pressed against his chest.

Zacharias stifled the roar that threatened to tear from his chest when he felt the insistent stab of her nipples. They were hard and she was aroused. So easily. By him. He could already smell the thick musk of her desire.

His glittering gaze caught hers. "May I kiss you?"

She stared up at him in surprise for a moment. Then she whispered her answer so softly he wondered if he had dreamed it. As if she knew he needed to be sure, she leaned up on her toes, searching for the touch of his lips. Zacharias readily complied, placing the soft contours of his lips against the plump valleys and ridges of her succulent mouth.

He took his time tasting her, indulging the need to explore her mouth, fill his senses with the woman who fit so well in his arms. Her small hands dug into his scalp, fingers tightening in the overgrown strands of his hair. Her lips pressed harder against his; her tongue, determined and uninhibited, swept through his mouth, touching, caressing, painting over the inner canvas of his mouth until all Zacharias had was a vivid picture of his own burning desire.

The curve of her rounded stomach pressed against the thick bulge between his thighs. Fire streaked through his every limb at the feel of her body pressed against his cock. Sharp talons dug under his skin, pulling at his self-control. Fingers curling, his arms strained at his sides with the need to pick Mila up, align her body more perfectly with his so his cock was nestled between her thighs, pressing against her moist cunt.

But he could not touch her until she gave him permission.

Her fingers slipped through the silky strands of his hair to dig into the tense muscles of his corded shoulders. He felt the burn of her five fingernails down to his soul. She seemed to

be crawling over him, climbing his large frame in order to ride him. He answered both of their silent pleas and clasped the backs of her thighs.

Zacharias lifted Mila and wrapped her legs around his waist. His movements were gentle and slow, totally at odds with the rough, relentless need blazing deep within him.

They groaned in unison when the full curves of her decadent figure were enfolded around him. Enveloped in her, Zacharias felt every shudder, every moan, every shiver that swam through her as he deepened the kiss, plunged his tongue deep into the inner recesses of her mouth to devour the woman who had somehow conquered his soul.

Mila broke off the kiss. "It hurts. Make it stop hurting," she moaned against his parted lips. His gaze caught hers. A dark fire burned in her own gaze. She was on fire. Zacharias understood her pain. His cock was so hard it hurt when he breathed.

The air around them thickened and deepened with the passion swirling between their heaving bodies. Energy, ruthless and coarse, swam through the garden. Out of the corner of his eye, Zacharias noticed Mila's camera hovered several inches above the ground. And it wasn't the only item. Several fallen petals, leaves, and twigs drifted through the air around them. His gaze snapped back to Mila's face. If he wasn't mistaken, the fire in her eyes was blazing higher, brighter. She was a woman lost in her passion.

Her fingers skirted over the planes of his jaw, his cheek, before dancing upon his lips. "I want you, Zacharias. I need you."

"Yes, Mila. Yes, Mistress," he murmured before moving his lips over hers, sipping from her mouth, and lowering his body until her back pressed against the ground. He loomed over Mila, watching the satisfaction spread across her face the moment her body settled upon the grass.

He hissed through clenched teeth when her fingers slipped under his T-shirt to dance over the tense muscles of his abdomen. His belly jumped at her simple touch as the sensation of being explored sliced through him, settling deep in his balls. It had been so long since he

had been with a woman. He could wait no more. He grabbed the hem of his shirt and pulled it over his head in one swoop. Discarded, it fell to the ground beside them.

His hands settled on the waist of her tight-as-skin jeans and worked the button and zipper until Mila was able to shimmy out of the barrier. She grabbed the bottoms and tossed them over her head before wrapping her legs around his waist and moving her hips, pelvis, and pussy against him. The thin fabric of her lace panties forced him to feel the demanding heat of her hot cunt. It scalded him.

Zacharias knelt and quickly pulled his jeans down his hips until his cock was bare. Five small, dark fingers curled around his dick, testing the width, sliding down the long length before moving up to allow one determined finger to swirl around the red, angry, bulbous head. Mila's hot pink tongue darted over her bottom lip as she eyed him hungrily.

Her gaze lifted to his. She tightened her hold on him, almost painfully. All semblance of control slipped from him. Zacharias fell upon her, a man starved, denied sustenance for too long, in the midst of a succulent buffet he could not ignore. Her chuckle of joy drifted over their sweat-slicked bodies before evolving into a moan of satisfaction when his lips wrapped around the swollen bud of one of her blackberry nipples.

Hungry, Zacharias had pushed her shirt up until it was under her arms and pushed aside the molded cups of her bra so Mila's heavy breasts were freed. He suckled her, using his mouth, his lips, his teeth until she was writhing and begging for something more.

Demanding satisfaction.

He turned to lave the second breast with the same ardent affection. Her fingers tightened in his hair. The wet heat of her cunt brushed across the sculpted muscles of his stomach. Her hand drifted between their slick bodies and slid beneath her panties. Her fingers moved over her sex. His hand circled her wrist. "That's my job," Zacharias murmured around his mouthful of breast. He kissed his way down her belly, over her pelvis, before he

reached the mound of her pussy. Zacharias slowly moved the simply cut panties down her thighs, taking his time, intent on drawing out the pleasure of revealing her.

By the time he threw the drenched fabric away, Mila's chest was quickly rising and falling with shallow breaths.

He stared at her bared flesh with hungry eyes, devouring the milk chocolate and strawberry tone of her cunt. He slowly parted the fleshy lips of her sex to reveal the darker, cherry color of her pussy. Thick cream coated her, making her slick, wet, and tempting. Zacharias slowly lowered his head and swiped his tongue down the length of her slit. Above him, Mila keened. She lifted her hips, pressing the heat of her pussy against his face, forcing her sex deeper into his mouth.

Zacharias gladly filled his senses with the taste of her desire, eating, licking, sucking, nipping, and biting her flesh. Mila shuddered above him just as he flicked his tongue against her clit. Two long fingers slipped deep between the folds of her cunt. The wet, slick heat there nearly singed him. She was so hot. So wet. So tight.

"By the gods." He growled and withdrew his fingers. He surged back in, twisting them on the upthrust. Mila stilled beneath him for a moment. And then she convulsed, screaming, gasping. She lifted her hips for him, fucking his relentless fingers and he forced her higher and higher up the precipice of satisfaction. Mila came so hard for so long, Zacharias knew the image of her pleasure would be forever emblazoned in his mind.

She belonged to him. At least for the moment.

And he could not take his time enjoying the feel of her body clutching at his fingers anymore. Desire raked angry nails down his spine. No, Zacharias needed to feel her tight cunt clenched around his cock. He leaned up on one arm, grabbed a small package Hugo had given him earlier and fitted the thin sheath over his hard length. With one thrust he surged into Mila. Below him, her breath caught. Heart in his throat, he wondered if he had pressed her too hard. He mentally chastised himself for not taking his time to enter her. Then she

wrapped those lovely legs of hers around his waist and lifted her hips, forcing him deeper into the depths of pussy.

Her nails dug into his shoulders, moved up the corded column of his neck, scraping as they went until her fingers framed the hard line of his clenched jaw. His gaze caught hers.

“Fuck me, Zacharias. Hard. Deep. Fast,” she growled through lips swollen and painted dark red from his kisses.

For a moment Zacharias was blinded by the passion that overtook him. The leash that kept his monstrous desires at bay snapped. Freed, he fell upon Mila and did her bidding, thrusting deep into her, filling her with the full length of his aching cock.

“Yes. Yes. Oh God, yes!” Mila moaned as he surged into her.

The slick sound of flesh sliding through moist flesh sliced through the air with every thrust, every withdrawal, every sweet caress. Her pussy fluttered around him insistently, stroking along the sensitive length of his cock, demanding that he give in to the allure of the satisfaction that hovered at his fingertips. Below him Mila moaned. “I’m coming. Dear God, I’m coming.” Her cunt clenched so painfully around Zacharias with the force of her powerful release, he found himself unable to ignore the lure of his climax. He pumped his hips harshly, thrusting his cock through the slick, tight walls of her sex as his orgasm tore through him.

For a moment darkness threatened, as the three-hundred-year-old release surged through him. With a heartfelt groan, the last shudders of his orgasm racked his body. Body limp, Zacharias barely managed to roll over, taking Mila with him. Exhausted, he fell asleep with her softly curved body pressed against his. He had never felt more content in his life.

Chapter Eight

Moment of Clarity

A small chuckle of delight slipped past his parted lips at the sight of the couple fornicating in the gardens. The Magician darted a cautious glance around him at the sound. For a moment he didn't realize it had come from him. Still, he shrank back into the foliage. Being spotted would definitely be a bad thing.

And so many good things had happened lately. He considered himself lucky that the human woman had the gift of telekinesis. The magnifying spell had elevated even that ability, allowing her to draw the king to her more easily.

It was becoming increasingly obvious the gods favored him.

They too understood the need for his action.

The time had come when humans and the un-naturals could no longer live in peace.

The time of war was upon them.

Why else would they have placed the perfect weapon to bring about the king's downfall, if they did not want him to succeed? The sweet, intoxicating taste of victory was near. The Magician could not wait to drink his fill of it.

Chapter Nine

Dance of Seduction

Mila stared at her reflection in the mirror and wondered how she was going to get herself out of her current predicament. She was in dangerous territory and if she wasn't very careful she would be pulled downstream in the current of her own desire. She felt her cheeks heat with the thought of just how potent her desire, her arousal, was.

The wet dream Zacharias had starred in had been almost unnatural with its intensity. She had woken up feeling satisfied and wet, drenched with sweat and the moist desire between her legs. Mila had been shocked and confused when she placed her hands against the swollen lips of her pussy to find that there was cream and semen smeared upon her skin.

She was still trying to figure out how the semen had gotten between her legs. The dream she remembered, but it was just a dream, right?

And then there was the wild, wicked sex in the garden. She suspected she had never come so hard in her life. Then they had repeated the deed. Despite the fact that she'd taken a shower, she'd been picking leaves, twigs, and other portions of the garden from her hair as recently as an hour ago.

"You look lovely, like a queen."

Mila turned at the sound of Liana's softly accented voice. She ran a trembling hand down the beautifully intricate front of her corseted dress. Goose bumps broke out on her skin as her fingers moved down the pale gold lacings that held up the bodice. The lightly boned creation pushed her bountiful breasts up and out. The whole outfit was not only gorgeous; its light and dark gold colors contrasted beautifully with her milk chocolate skin.

She looked, as her mother would say, like a girl who was asking for it.

And wasn't she?

"This dress, it looks like it was made for Marie Antoinette herself. I better look lovely wearing this," Mila said with a laugh. "This dress is gorgeous. Are you sure Zacharias won't mind that I'm..."

"Zacharias's own words were to 'Give her whatever she needs to make her stay enjoyable.'"

"Oh." She tried not to think of just how enjoyable he'd already made her stay. She doubted she would ever want to leave if he kept it up.

And what would be the harm in that?

She pushed away the thought and caught the other woman's knowing gaze. Liana smiled. "And are you enjoying yourself?"

"Yes. Yes, I am."

"Come," Liana murmured, "we must join the festivities."

Mila stood, leaving behind the comfort of the vanity table. She was not sure she was ready to participate in the party. She was not sure she was ready to be around Zacharias again. Mila hadn't been around him since the episode in the garden.

She got nervous just thinking about what she would do if he touched her again.

Damn, she had it bad.

With shaky hands she put on the last article of her costume, placing the satin and ostrich feather mask over her dark eyes.

“I have to admit that I was a little shocked to find that you celebrate Halloween over here.”

“Black Moon Crescent, that’s what we are actually celebrating. It just happens to fall on All Hallows’ Eve this year.” Liana shrugged. “So we’re celebrating Halloween, just a little early,” Liana said over her shoulder as she led the way out of Mila’s bedroom.

Mila was so preoccupied with her thoughts of Zacharias and the coming party that she didn’t notice until it was almost too late that she’d arrived. She almost plowed into Hugo.

His strong fingers grabbed her shoulders, biting into her skin, keeping her on her feet.

A dark, ominous sound ripped through the air.

Hugo smiled at her and stepped closer. “I’m rooting for you, my dear,” he whispered before pressing a soft kiss to her cheek.

When Hugo moved away, Mila saw that Zacharias was standing several feet behind him, and her dark giant did not look happy.

Her dark giant?

She stopped short at the thought. It had come naturally, too naturally. Things were moving way too fast, her emotions churning way too deeply, and she hadn’t even known the man more than a few days. Not that the fact had stopped her from sleeping with him.

She groaned inside. She was so screwed.

The dream had left her in such a state that she hadn’t been able to concentrate on anything but the chestnut-haired man with the devastating eyes that seared her soul.

The moment he had stepped into the garden she knew it was all over. She knew then that if he touched her, she would not be held responsible for her actions.

Mila had wanted Zacharias, yes! She was used to desiring men. She was, after all, a straight, contemporary woman. What she wasn’t used to was the feeling of needing any man.

And she had needed him then. The moment his lips had brushed against hers a wild, unchained fire had singed every doubt, every caution, every reluctant thought until all she had was her need and Zacharias.

As each moment passed, Mila felt like she needed Zacharias more and more.

She was driven to him.

She only hoped that she didn't drive straight into a brick wall.

Mila stared into Zacharias's eyes, breath panting as he moved through the thick crowd of celebrating villagers. She could feel her palms sweating as she watched him stride toward her. She curled her fingers into a fist.

"You look ravishing," he whispered into the shell of her ear. Her skin tingled and burned with the soft caress of his breath. The emerald fire in his eyes ate her up, nibbling at her toes and following up until it reached her face. His gaze took in everything, the way the corset dress flared over her hips, cinched her waist, and emphasized her breasts.

He executed a sweeping bow, bending at the waist, making her heart flutter. "May I have this dance?"

Inside Mila was screaming "Hell yes," but she managed to utter a polite, "Yes, you may," as she took Zacharias's outstretched hand.

She shivered the moment his fingers brushed against hers, as her nipples pebbled and her pussy flooded with creamy arousal.

Hell, they had already done it twice today and she wasn't even remotely satisfied. He had created a monster.

Mila had never really considered dancing erotic. Bumping and grinding, yes, but the kind of polished dancing that characterized the waltz, no. But then again she had never danced the waltz before and she had never danced with a man who moved like Zacharias.

As she moved in his arms, her body pressed so intimately against his own hard frame, Mila realized why the matrons of dance halls had been outraged when the waltz first came to

England. If the young girls had felt the way Mila felt, they would have been headed straight to the marriage bed, minus the permission of the church.

Mila took a deep breath and drank in the sensual, masculine scent that permeated the air around her. Her belly muscles clenched and her pussy moistened when she consumed that little part of Zacharias.

It was not enough. She wanted more.

Mila stepped forward, closing the small chasm that separated their heated bodies. “Zacharias, I need you,” she whispered softly against the beating pulse at the base of his long, corded throat.

He jerked as if he’d been struck. The long, strong fingers against the small of her back tightened almost painfully. She could hear the soft fabric of her dress crushing beneath his hold.

“Do not tease me, Mistress,” he growled harshly.

Mila’s gaze snapped to his. The fire she saw there seared her soul and his words stroked over her skin.

Mistress?

He had called her that once, earlier. The title felt right, like it belonged to her, and only her. Yes, she was his mistress. She pushed aside thoughts of how he could know the words he had spoken in her dreams and stepped closer.

“I want you, Zacharias.”

An inferno blazed in his emerald eyes. He leaned low and whispered across her lips, “Be careful what you ask for, Mistress. You just might receive more than you bargained for.”

She smiled at his taunting words. If he wanted to play, she could play. She knew exactly what she was going to get from the gorgeous giant. And she wanted every hard inch. “I get exactly what I want.”

“Do you now?”

His deep, gravelly voice purred over her skin, making her already hard nipples ache. She was done playing with her mouse. This kitty wanted to feed.

“Come, slave,” she growled, pulling one thick wrist and dragging Zacharias deeper into the dark alcove that shrouded them.

“Mistress, I’m not so sure...”

Zacharias’s words broke off when Mila’s small hands pushed against his chest, pressing his back against the wall.

“This is a very good idea, Zacharias, or...don’t you want me?”

He pressed the lower half of his body against hers, allowing her to feel the heavy bulge between his thighs. “I cannot deny my desire.”

Her hand slid farther down his body, skirting over the firm muscles of his pecs, down the ridges of his six-pack abdomen, to settle above the straining cock his breeches couldn’t hide.

“I cannot, either.” Mila snatched back her hand, feeling as though she had been burned, and turned away. A few steps into the ballroom she turned and glanced over her shoulder. “Come, Zacharias. The party is about to begin.”

Chapter Ten

Confessions of a Broken Heart

Zacharias had never been so nervous or uneasy in his life. The bubbling sensations didn't even compare to when he had first entered battle many centuries ago.

Then again, the outcome of that battle had been less defining than the war he waged with Mila.

In this battle he could lose his very heart.

As he watched the swish of Mila's hips, Zacharias cursed Liana. He knew the gargoyle had purposely dressed Mila in a costume guaranteed to drive him crazy with need.

And it was working.

If Zacharias wasn't careful he would lose his control, control he had cultivated all his life. Control that was the only thing keeping him from giving in to the beast that lay deep within him.

He couldn't seem to drag his eyes away from the full scoops of Mila's dark breasts above the low neckline of her dress. Throughout their dance he'd found himself alternatively cursing Liana and thanking her. He would give anything to tongue those mounds.

Mila paused at her bedroom door and looked over her shoulder. The slow, sultry smile she gave him made his heart jump. He watched her slowly twist the golden knob and open the door.

When he followed her over the threshold he felt like he had just crossed a chasm.

Zacharias watched, bewitched, as she moved across the room and placed one arm on the chair in front of her vanity table. He couldn't help the groan that slipped past his lips when Mila bent low at the waist and pushed it a few feet.

She cocked one eyebrow at him and smiled. There was little doubt in his mind that she knew exactly why he groaned. Her gorgeous breasts had almost spilled right out of her dress when she bent over. Zacharias had even gotten a glimpse of her dark blackberry areolae before she stood.

The tease!

Mila moved the chair until it sat before him. She plopped herself upon it and eyed him. He stared at it. It was gigantic, large enough to accommodate his giant figure. And hers.

The chair had been specially made for him. He wondered when Mila had it removed from his bedroom.

Zacharias's gaze lifted. He braced his feet apart and folded his arms over his broad chest. "Where do you want me, Mistress?"

Her smile widened at his tone. There was nothing submissive about it. But this was their game, their own little piece of pleasure where they battled one another for dominance.

"Exactly where you are."

She bent at the waist and gathered her skirts in her hands, slowly lifting the garments until her knees, thighs, and pussy were revealed. Zacharias sucked in his breath when he saw Mila wasn't wearing any panties.

"Will you do anything I ask?"

Zacharias stared at the dark folds of her cunt, mesmerized. The midnight curls shrouding the haven of her sex were shiny with moisture. She was wet. He took a deep breath and drank in the musk of her desire. It was thick, heady, and more alluring than the French perfume she wore. He licked his lips, imagining the taste of her pussy.

“On your knees, Zacharias.”

He couldn't help the wide smile that came over his face. Zacharias would gladly do her bidding. He lowered to his knees.

“Touch me.” Her words came out a shivering gasp.

With shockingly steady hands, Zacharias wrapped his long fingers around her mocha thighs. He watched the sharp planes of her lovely face soften with pleasure as she groaned his name. He tightened the grip on her thighs and pulled them apart, creating space for his large body. Tightly wound muscles trembled beneath his fingers. Zacharias looked up to watch Mila shiver at his touch.

The sight settled deep in his gut before winding its way south to his cock. The engorged length twitched with need.

Zacharias ran his fingers up the inside of her thighs until he reached her soft ebony curls. He traced one finger over the slit, separating the folds of her sex. He reached the apex of her sex, and slowly parted her lips, revealing the swollen bud of her clit. He pressed his thumb against it, watched as the nub doubled in size. When he pulled his finger away it was wet with the moisture of her desire. He held her gaze as he licked it off.

“Don't you dare tease me, Zacharias,” she growled, wantonly spreading her legs wider.

Zacharias felt heat infuse his system at her actions. Mila wanted him and she was woman enough to admit it. She wasn't hiding from her desire.

He put his mouth to her skin, kissing the insides of her thighs with soft lips, licking her, and alternating with shocking love bites on her tempting flesh.

She wiggled her hips and slid lower in her chair as he moved up her thighs, nearing her pussy.

“How many times, Mistress?”

Mila’s onyx lashes fluttered at his words. He could see her quick mind trying to work through the haze of lust clouding it. “Excuse me?” she whispered softly.

“How many times would you like to come? How many orgasms would you like me to give you?” Zacharias whispered against the moist lips of her pussy before running his tongue down the same trail his fingers had caressed.

He held her lips apart and swirled his tongue around her engorged clitoris. Mila jerked and groaned his name, tangling her fingers in the strands of his hair, pulling Zacharias closer to her hot pussy.

“Damn it, Zacharias.”

“By the Goddess.” He dragged his teeth down her pussy lips, growling when he heard Mila sigh. He pressed her lips further apart, revealing the mouth of her sex. His tongue, agile and wet, thrust deep within her cunt, capturing the creamy essence of her desire.

Zacharias swirled his tongue over her, teasing her, tasting her, devouring her, as he licked her opening, thrusting it deep to touch her inner walls, before moving north and flicking her swollen clit.

He stabbed his tongue against it, making it hard, and flicked her clitoris once, twice, three times.

She shrieked above him and gasped his name. One large thumb pulled back her clitoral hood to reveal the painfully sensitive head of her clit. He tongued the tiny, bright red pearl, watching Mila’s face for signs of her pleasure.

“Bloody fucking hell.”

Two long, thick fingers thrust deep within her tight cunt, stroking her from the inside. His tongue continued to foray over the engorged nub, stroking it, flicking it, as his fingers thrust in and out of her pussy.

“Oh God. Oh my fucking God,” Mila moaned when Zacharias curled his fingers and dragged them along her inner walls. Knowing she was near the edge, he wrapped his lips around her clit, flicked his tongue against the exposed head, and suckled the bud hard.

“Zacharias,” she cried out, jerking beneath him as her body erupted in a powerful orgasm that had her thighs clenching tight around his head. Zacharias groaned deeply when he felt her cunt tighten almost painfully around his two fingers.

He swirled his tongue around Mila’s clit as she moaned his name and slowly withdrew his fingers, only to thrust three back in. Mila stilled and, for a moment, Zacharias worried that he had overestimated her. She was tight, almost too tight, and then with a deep breath she took him, accepting the long, thick length of his three fingers.

“Shit. Shit. Shit. SHIT!” she screamed, tugging on Zacharias’s long locks, pulling him closer to her quivering cunt. Zacharias tongued the area surrounding the portal as his fingers kept disappearing in and out of flesh. She flinched and her eyes slowly fluttered open. He caught her gaze and held it as he lowered his head.

“Yes,” she breathed out on a whisper.

He gave her a heated, devastatingly mischievous smile before hardening his tongue and flicking it with fast strokes against her clitoris. He thrust all three fingers deep and twisted them.

“Holy fucking shit.” Her lips parted, her mouth dropped open, but nothing more came out. Mila gasped for breath as her body imploded, erupting around his fingers, against his tongue as she came in a hard, fast, blinding orgasm that literally robbed her of breath.

He was there when she came down from her high, tongue moving slowly around the still hard nub of her clitoris.

“No more. Oh God, I can’t take any more.”

“Yes, Mistress,” he growled against the moist, fragrant lips of her sex. With gentle pressure, he widened her stance and continued his merciless, sensual assault, licking, sucking and fingering her pussy until she begged for mercy. Even then he continued, eating at her mound until her voice was hoarse and he had tasted enough of her unique cream to get him through the day.

He slowly lifted his head.

Five times.

He’d made her scream for him five times.

Zacharias had never suspected that Mila would be so sensitive or that he would be relentless with his need to give her pleasure. Still...

Five orgasms.

She stared at him with passion-glazed eyes. After a moment she smiled. “You didn’t stop, even when I told you to.”

He sat back on his haunches. “No.”

“You disobeyed a direct order.”

“Yes.”

Her smile widened. Zacharias found himself clenching his hands into fists to stem the desire to shiver under the viciously sexual look in her dark eyes.

Damn, she was tempting. Tempting enough to make him consider breaking the rules and taking her the way he wanted to fuck her.

Then she spoke. “You have earned a punishment, Zacharias.”

He lowered his head. “Yes, Mistress.”

She slowly stood. “Get in the chair.”

“Yes, Mistress.” Zacharias slowly stood from his kneeling position. He found himself stifling the urge to groan out loud when he stood. He had been down on his knees so long his body protested the movement.

But it was worth it.

He didn’t believe he would ever forget the look of pleasure on Mila’s face when she climaxed. He had emblazoned in his mind the image of her face for each and every one of the five orgasms.

He would always have the memories of her satisfaction.

His cock, hard and heavy, ached with every step Zacharias took as he made his way across the room and grabbed the chair.

“Middle of the room.”

He quickly obeyed Mila’s simple order and placed the chair in the center of the spacious bedroom, facing the bed.

Behind him he could hear Mila rustling through her luggage. He ignored the urge to look over his shoulder to see what she was looking for or, better yet, what she would find.

“Take off your costume.”

Zacharias couldn’t stifle the urge to turn and look at her at those words. Even though he had suspected the request was coming, he had not been truly prepared to hear her demand he disrobe.

His hot emerald gaze caught her smoldering brown eyes. His gaze drifted down to settle on the black lace stockings she held.

By the Goddess!

“Zacharias,” she purred softly in a velvet voice, informing him the woman before him had steel at her core. It was a warning, one he heeded. His fingers went to the lacings binding up his vest. He quickly shrugged out of the leather vest and ruffled shirt of his pirate’s costume.

He sat upon the chair to pull off his knee-high black leather boots and kicked them away once he had removed them. His hands on the waistband of his ancient pants stalled when he felt Mila move across the room. His thick lashes slowly lifted to find her standing before him.

Zacharias had been so preoccupied with getting undressed he hadn't realized she'd somehow managed to rid herself of her gown. She stood before him, legs slightly braced, wearing a bright white corset, stockings, garters, heels, and nothing more.

He swallowed thickly.

Son of a bitch!

"Let me," Mila murmured. She couldn't quite hide the smile on her full lips. She obviously knew what she was doing to him.

The minx.

His minx, his mind corrected automatically.

"Mine," he growled.

She blinked up at him, fingers gripping his breeches.

"You're mine," he said slowly, enunciating the declaration. Her eyes slowly fluttered closed. Zacharias felt his heart and very soul plummet. And then, just like that, he was flying. Her eyes opened, her gaze connected with his, and she spoke. "Yes, and you are mine," she whispered.

To emphasize her point, she dragged one nail across the heavy bulge between his thighs. He jerked and his eyes slammed shut at the torturous pleasure. "Yes."

She scraped her nail against him again, a little harder, with a little more determination. "Look at me, Zacharias."

His eyes snapped open. "Yes, I am yours. We belong to one another, Mistress."

Shock lit her face as though she had just realized what she had declared. Her midnight eyes searched his and her full lips parted. “Bad boys get punished,” she murmured, dropping her gaze away from him.

Whatever she had been about to say was forever lost to him. And Zacharias wasn’t sorry for the fact, because he knew she had been about to refute his ownership.

And, submissive or no submissive, she was his forever, entirely, until death did them part. Mila just didn’t know it.

But he would make it very clear to her.

His teeth dug into the firm flesh of his bottom lip when her fingers danced over the lacings fastening his breeches. Her heated gaze caught his, leaving no doubt of her purpose.

This sexual torture was his punishment.

As she loosened the first cross of string, her nails scraped along his bulging erection. Hands gripping the carved chair, he tensed and the swollen length of his cock jerked. She undid the next row, repeating the caress, but dragging her fingernails just a little harder against the leather.

Zacharias felt the touch down to his soul.

He eyed the rest of the lacings. Three more crosses to go. His eyes slammed shut.

One small palm landed hard on his bulging thigh, inches from his cock. His eyes popped open and glared down at her with the simmering beginnings of anger. The slap hadn’t hurt, but it had irritated the hell out of him.

He was tired of waiting, tired of being played with. He wanted her, needed her, and she was taking her time. All he really needed Mila to do was climb up on top of him and slide down his cock so he could fuck them both senseless.

“Did I give you permission to close your eyes?”

The deep velvet of her voice drifted over Zacharias's heated skin to settle between his thighs. His already hard cock thickened further. He felt the retort on his tongue slip away, forgotten and ignored, when he gazed into the feverish heat of her midnight eyes.

He bowed his head low. "No, Mistress."

"Look at your Mistress, Zacharias."

He slowly lifted his head until his gaze collided with hers.

"I want to hear you say it."

His tongue, long and thick, swept over his bottom lip. "I want you, Mistress. I want you more than I've ever wanted any other female."

She blinked up at him, once, twice, thrice, and licked her lips. Zacharias's gaze followed her tongue. He wanted that tongue in his mouth. Better yet, he wanted it on his cock, licking the painfully swollen head.

Mila's hands slipped lower and undid the next intersection of lacings. Zacharias ignored her hands to focus on her lips. He was suddenly ravenous for her kiss. He bit the inside of his mouth, knowing that if he voiced the demand that burned deep within him, he would have to wait longer for the sweet touch of her lips.

Her fingers tightened on his pants. Somehow Mila had finished unlacing his pants without his notice. "Lift," she whispered lightly. Zacharias complied, groaning when she pulled the top band of his breeches low on his hips. When she reached his lower hips, the fabric scraped over his cock, teasing him with the glide of leather over flesh.

He suddenly wasn't so sure it had been a good idea to go commando.

Mila stood up and threw his bottoms clear across the room. In the other hand she held a pair of black fishnet stockings. He eyed them with barely leashed anger, dissatisfaction, and suspicion. Zacharias knew exactly what Mila planned to do with them and he wasn't sure he wanted it.

She stepped forward; one high heel landed on the carpeted floor. The act thundered through him. "Put your hands on each of the chair's arms."

Almost as if to dispel the illusion of his dislike, his cock jumped at her words. Both their gazes lowered and together they watched as a single, milky tear slid from the small eye in the head of his ruddy cock.

Zacharias moved his arms, aligning them with each of the chair's arms, just as she had ordered.

Mila took another step forward, moving to the left as she made her way behind him. He breathed in her unique scent-, tinged with the musky perfume of her desire, felt it roll over his tongue before he swallowed it, taking it deep within him.

His eyes drifted to her naked sex. He found it almost impossible to keep his head forward, knowing that was what she desired when all he wanted to do was turn and watch her walk past him. Watch the slick movement of muscles as her thick thighs contracted and lengthened. Watch the tempting slide of flesh as her pussy lips rubbed together with her every move.

Small, warm hands with devastatingly smooth fingers grabbed his wrists. The soft glide of flesh upon flesh flickered across every one of his nerve endings. Then there was the even more demanding caress of fishnet stocking across his skin.

He turned, trying to get a glimpse of her face. The soft midnight strands that shielded her from his view brushed over his heated skin as she bent and tied the stockings around his wrists.

He flinched when she grasped both ends of the stocking and pulled, tightening the already strong hold she had over him.

Zacharias was acutely aware of where Mila stood. He heard the cushioned sound of her heels digging into the plush carpeting as she stepped away from him. He felt every step she took across the room to reach her dresser. He even felt the slow pull of the drawer opening.

When he opened his eyes he found her making her way across the room. Wide, plush hips swishing, beautiful ebony hair shielding her most important secrets, thighs eating up the distance that separated them, and it all was framed by the lovely, antique gold satin and lace.

Mila knelt between his thighs. He instinctively spread them further apart, giving her room, unashamed of the bouncing erection that seemed to hold both their attention.

Her gaze snapped to the pulsing, ruby red head of his cock. The slow glide of her pink tongue across the plump ridges and curves of her bottom lip made him painfully aware of how affected he was and yet she hadn't even touched him. Mila widened his stance until both calves hit the legs of the chair. Then she squatted, spreading her thighs, giving him a cherished glimpse of the dark inner flesh of her pussy as her cunt lips spread with the movement.

Zacharias licked his lips, remembering the way Mila tasted.

Four nails scraped down the furred skin of his thigh, gliding down until they reached his ankle.

He felt the sensation of all four nails deep in his balls.

Zacharias felt his nuts tighten up against his body, until he had to bite the inside of his mouth to keep from spilling his seed.

It had been so long since he'd felt desire, desire so painfully powerful. The allure of coming right then and there was almost too great.

But he pushed it aside, held it at bay, because he wanted to feel Mila's cunt tighten around him when they both came.

She tightened the lace around his ankle, moved to the other, and tied the last stocking before she stood.

Her lips brushed against his. Not hard enough to be a kiss, but not light enough to be a caress. "Tell me, Zacharias, commander of all that he sees, how does it feel to be bound, at my mercy, my little plaything?" The last vestiges of her question fluttered against the ticking

pulse at his neck. For a moment he didn't hear a word she said. The blood rushing through his veins was too loud, too thick for him to hear anything more than a murmur. Then her tongue, wet, hot, scalding, slid against the same pulse, pressing against the already feverish skin. Just like that he heard every word, every syllable, even the pause in her breath when she addressed him.

And he knew the answer, the only answer to her question.

He turned until his gaze caught hers, bore into a deep midnight gaze that mirrored the inferno he felt beneath his skin. "When I am with you, bound by you, I feel liberated by the emotions, the passion, the pleasure, even the anger you make me feel. Because when I am with you I feel."

Chapter Eleven

Freak Him Dress

Mila stared down into the beautiful sea of Zacharias's deep eyes and decided she could no longer ignore the sweet allure of his sexy, full lips. She bent her head and took a sip from his mouth, sweeping her lips against his, coaxing him to open for her, before thrusting her tongue deep into the tantalizing inner recesses of his mouth. Her tongue stroked over his teeth, caressed the inside of his mouth, before tangling with the soft, velvet touch of his tongue.

He murmured against her lips and she felt the single word, "Mistress," deep in her core. It quivered against the slick, moist walls of her cunt.

Damn, she wanted him.

She lifted her lips from his. His eyes slowly opened. Her gaze collided with his and held as she lowered herself onto her knees.

Every one of her senses was attuned to Zacharias. Mila felt the sharp intake of his breath. She felt the elevation in his heart rate at the sight of her between his thighs. She immediately noticed the glistening beads of sweat that clung to his shapely forehead. She tasted his desire for her on the air. She smelled the thick musk of their combined passion.

She needed him. To taste him. To be with him.

Small determined hands wrapped around the hard length of his cock, moving up it from root to head. Zacharias's breath hitched in his throat. Her dark thumb followed the ridge that delineated the bulbous head of his dick. It jerked beneath her touch.

"By the Goddess." Zacharias's fingers gripped the chair so tightly his knuckles whitened.

A small pearl of pre-cum leaked from the eye in his cock.

She stared at it hungrily. Her gaze lifted to his. She held his gaze as she slowly lowered her head to the single drop of passion.

"Goddess, Mila," he groaned as her tongue lapped at him, swallowing his cum, tasting his essence.

Her tongue swept low, licking his cock, following the trail of the large, bulging vein on the underside of his dick, before sweeping around his root and traveling up the length of his erection until she reached the head. She rimmed the slit in his cockhead, staying painfully close yet away from the hole.

"Mistress," he growled. His fingers gripping the arms tightened so harshly he scraped away the veneer finishing on the antique chair.

And then she suckled him deep into her mouth, taking him to the back of her throat, deep throating him like he'd never been sucked before.

The salty, musky taste of his skin permeated her senses, filled her mouth, until she was drinking it in with every swipe of her tongue. Mila pulled back and flicked her tongue against the angry red head of his cock.

Zacharias groaned and shifted beneath her, lifting his hips toward her.

"Down."

His eyes opened and caught her gaze. He held it as he slowly lowered his hips to the chair. The heat in his eyes mesmerized her, leaving her wondering just how long he would

accept her every command, how long it would take before her beautiful submissive decided to break his bonds.

Her hand sifted through the dark hair between his splayed thighs, over the root of his cock to caress the rough-skinned balls. He jerked when she scraped a single nail over the vein bulging between them.

“Mistress,” he pleaded.

She gave him a slow, sultry smile, stood, and stepped away. Mila could feel his gaze on her twitching backside as she glided across the room to retrieve the small foil package. She held his gaze as she made her way back, slowly opening the wrapping as she neared him.

By the time she reached him they were both breathing hard with the knowledge of what was going to come next. She took her time fitting the clear plastic over his hard length, tightening the fingers that held him as she slid down his cock, unfurling the condom as her hands descended.

Zacharias’s eyes were pinched tight when she reached his root.

She called his name softly. His eyes slowly opened until she was pierced by his vivid emerald gaze. “Watch me, slave. Watch us.” Her gaze drifted to the chasm that separated them. Her hand around his stalk, Mila slowly lowered herself onto his cock.

Air hissed from between her clenched teeth as she covered him with the tight, wet heat of her cunt.

“Damn,” she groaned when he was fully imbedded inside of her. She smiled to herself.

She experimentally wiggled her hips and moaned when his cock scraped pleurably against the moist walls of her pussy. Mila gripped his shoulders and lifted her hips. Her eyes pinched shut as he moved along her sex during his withdrawal. And then there was the slow ride back down that left her gasping for breath.

Mila continued the movement. Up. Down. Hip roll. Up. Down. Hip roll. With every rise and fall of her hips, she felt Zacharias hardening further.

God, he felt so good deep inside of her.

“Yes, Mistress. Yes! Harder. Fuck me harder.”

Spurred on by his growled words, Mila increased the pace and depth of her rhythm, rising up and thrusting down on Zacharias’s cock until she could feel the beginning tremors of her orgasm.

“Don’t stop, Mila. Don’t fucking stop.”

Her eyes slammed shut as her body quaked above him. Lips parted, chest heaving, one of the hands clutching Zacharias’s shoulders drifted past her torso to sift between her midnight curls. Her index finger moved over the swollen bud at the apex of her thighs.

“Rise up. Let me taste you again.”

Zacharias couldn’t describe what had driven him to utter those words, but the moment they were out, he knew that was exactly what he wanted. No, needed. He needed to tongue Mila’s clit.

Her feverish espresso eyes opened and her gaze collided with his. She needed it, too.

Mila’s body shook with excitement and desire as she slowly raised herself until her pussy was in front of him. One hand held onto his shoulder as two dark fingers spread the lips of her sex. Zacharias leaned forward and swiped his tongue across the head of her swollen clit.

She growled his name and dug her nails into his skin. He repeated the caress just to hear her shriek.

Mila was so sensitive, so excited, he knew she would come soon. Zacharias could see the evidence in her breathing, the way her body trembled. He shivered with expectation when her hips slowly descended until he was once again clasped in wet heat. He gritted his teeth as her cunt surrounded him. She fit him like a glove.

Like she was made for him.

Like she was always meant to be his.

Her small hands settled on his shoulders, caressing the corded flesh as she rocked her hips back and forth. “Damn, you feel good,” she murmured before beginning her lift and descend motion. Once, twice, thrice, she rose and fell before her lips parted on a heartfelt scream as her body erupted. Her cunt tightened around him, pulsing, slick muscles fluttering as she came.

Zacharias gritted his teeth and stemmed off the desire to join her. “Don’t stop,” he gritted through his clenched teeth. “Don’t stop, Mila.”

Her arms wrapped around his neck, her lips pressed against his sweat-slickened face as she fucked him with abandon. Zacharias’s eyes slammed shut as endless pleasure assailed him.

“Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.” He growled as he pumped his hips beneath her, unable to stay still, unable to ignore the allure of Mila’s orgasm. Her cunt pulsed around him. She was coming again and Zacharias knew that this time he would not be able to keep from coming.

His eyes rolled back, his body shook, and he growled low, letting forth a howl from the depths of his soul. Belatedly, he realized that Mila was shrieking, screaming as a third orgasm ripped through her. On the edge of her passionate scream was fear. It was at that moment Zacharias realized he was changing. But he couldn’t stop it. Mila’s cunt milked his orgasm from him and, with the descent into pleasure, he lost control of his powers.

His cock lengthened and widened. His fangs descended. And his talons grew.

Above him, Mila stilled, huffing and gasping with the effects of her orgasm. But it wasn’t enough. He was in the midst of his release and he needed her.

Zacharias tore through the bindings to grasp her hips. Wide eyes caught his gaze. “I need you, Mistress.” He captured her lips and kissed her deeply. He made sure to take notice of his fangs lest he cut her as he devoured her mouth. He lifted his hips, plunging deep within the still fluttering walls of Mila’s cunt as he pulled her down for his thrust. She

groaned against his lips as her fingers tightened in his hair. He withdrew, only to drive back into her. Zacharias continued the rhythm, listening to the soft breathless sounds Mila made above him, against his lips.

But then it was too much. And yet not enough.

One hand slid between their slick bodies to find her clitoris. He pumped the engorged bud once. That was all it took for Mila to erupt. She screamed his name, slammed her hips upon him and tightened around his cock almost painfully. Zacharias couldn't hold back the pleasure anymore. He roared her name as he spilled his seed.

Chapter Twelve

Trick or Treat

She was afraid of him. As much as the knowledge burned him, Zacharias knew he could not ignore the truth. He could smell the thick, putrid scent of her apprehension as she quickly dressed. It clung on the air like cheap drugstore perfume. There was no denying that Mila feared him. What was going on between them. But most importantly, she feared herself.

He suspected she was starting to acknowledge the very powers she had ignored her whole life. The emotions simmering between them wouldn't let her deny the truth anymore.

Zacharias sighed inwardly. Tonight they were both going to have to come to terms with the reality of who they were. He could only pray that he survived the night with few scars.

He stepped into the room, clenching his teeth at the sight of her shivering in revulsion. He closed the door behind him softly. The moment the lock clicked, her eyes pinched shut and her hands tightened into fists. At the same time, the lights in the room flickered.

His gaze lifted to the dancing lights. The rolling emotions inside her were wreaking havoc upon her self-control. What little restraint she had over her abilities was gone. He

would have to take care to not push her over the edge. He was standing in dangerous territory.

“Mila, I will not hurt you. You can trust me.”

Her eyes snapped open. An inferno blazed in her dark gaze. “You won’t hurt me?” she gritted through her teeth as the lights above them flashed wildly.

“Relax,” he murmured softly, trying to ease some of the thick tension emanating off her tightly wound body.

Too late Zacharias realized his mistake. His words seemed to stoke the fire that boiled beneath her skin. Several of the sconces littered about the room burst. Glass shattered everywhere as she whipped around. Her small feet thundered with every step she made toward her bed. The sound of her high heels crunching the scattered glass grated over his skin.

Mila bent at the waist and pulled her battered, red suitcase from beneath it. With an angry huff, she lifted it onto her bed. She opened it and began to refill it with her toiletries. Anger and pain sliced through Zacharias at the sight of her suitcase, already half packed. He realized that she had never completely unpacked. It wouldn’t have made sense for her to fully unpack. But the knowledge hurt just the same.

He had begun to think of her as a part of his home.

And she had only been there for a few days.

Obviously she had never come to see herself in that way. His little vagabond had always been ready to take off on another trip.

Ready to leave him.

He strode through the room and captured her. Fingers wrapping around her shoulders, he forced her to look at him. “You cannot run from this.”

She glared up at him for several seconds. “What are you?” Her words were angry. Soft. Deadly.

"I am a man who is in love with you."

"You are not a man," she spit out. Small insistent fists beat at his chest as she struggled to free herself from his hold.

"Damn it, Mila."

She stilled at his harsh tone. Her gaze slowly lifted to his. The flatness there froze the blood in his veins. She wasn't just angry. She was hurt and livid.

"Let go of me, Zacharias." There was a steel edge to her words. Mila was playing the part of a Mistress, but not his Mistress. This woman was a thousand times more dangerous.

Zacharias stepped forward, forcing her backwards. The backs of her legs hit the bed. She fluttered for a moment. He pushed at her shoulders until she settled atop the bed. "I will not let you go, Mila. You are mine. My Mistress. My queen. My wife."

She stared up at him in shock for several moments. She sputtered, and smacked at his shoulders. "The hell I am."

Zacharias smiled. She was so angry and insistent, but he knew the truth. He took a deep breath. "I can smell your woman's musk, Mila. I can smell your arousal. Right now you're getting wet." His hands moved down her shoulders, up her arms, coaxing her limbs until Zacharias had them positioned above her head. With one broad palm he held both arms.

"You cannot deny it, Mila."

She turned her head to the side, avoiding his gaze. His callused fingers captured her jaw and forced her to look into his eyes. "I need you, Mila. You need me. We need each other. Why ignore what is true?"

She watched him for several moments, searching his gaze. "Damn you," she growled softly. He only had a second's notice before her knee lashed out. At the last moment he moved to the side, preventing her from kneeing him in the jewels. He rolled them both over until she lay on top of him. One hand still imprisoned her arms above her head. The other

moved down her back, tracing the lines of her vertebrae, tickling her spine, until he gripped the full cheeks of her ass. He pushed her hips against himself so there was no denying his own desire.

“You lewd, disgusting...beast.”

Pain sliced through him at her words. “I am a beast. I am half a man. But I am still your man.”

She paused for a moment, just a second. But it was long enough to let him see inside her soul. For that moment her very essence shone in the depths of her dark eyes and he had seen her affection for him. She was not as angry as she pretended to be. More than anything, she was afraid.

He rolled them over until he was once again between her splayed thighs. “I am a gargoyle.”

She stared up at him for several moments, eyes wide with disbelief. They pinched shut and her lush mouth flattened with displeasure. “For fuck’s sake,” she groaned under her breath. “Vampire, I could have handled.” Her eyes snapped open. “You don’t turn to stone in the sun. You’re not ugly and grey and hard. You are not a gargoyle.”

Zacharias smiled at her. “We only turn to stone when we are in our bestial form when the sun rises. And I am never grey. When I am a gargoyle, my skin is a light brown color.” His smile widened. “And I am always hard around you.”

She started to struggle beneath him. “Bastard. Fucking bastard. I’m losing my mind and you’re playing with me.”

Fire flamed in Zacharias’s veins at her words. The emotion must have reflected in his eyes because Mila’s eyes widened and for a moment she was spellbound. He took the opportunity to capture her lips and thrust his tongue deep into her mouth. She growled beneath him and lifted her hips. The feel of her lush flesh moving against his sensitive cock fired the inferno that burned beneath his skin.

He was angry, hurt and desperate.

He would be damned if she left him.

And he could not seem to bring himself to walk away from her.

Zacharias stood at a dangerous impasse.

One hand moved between their bodies to cup one swollen breast. "You cannot run from this. You cannot run from yourself," he growled as his thumb brushed over her dark nipple. The blackberry fruit swelled and blossomed at his touch. Long, determined fingers pushed up her shirt and freed her breasts from their lace cage. He bent low and captured the bud between his lips. Zacharias pressed his lips together, grinding them against her sweet flesh. Mila gasped and arched beneath him.

Body bowed over her straining figure, he wrapped his lips around her nipple and suckled it, using his lips, teeth, tongue to tease her into a frenzy. The soft whimpering sounds of her delight drifted above his head.

"Zacharias... We shouldn't..." she murmured even as her body sought out the wet heat of his mouth.

His hand trailed over her stomach until he reached the heat between her plump thighs. The fire there almost scalded him. Mila bucked her hips at his touch. "No."

Zacharias released her nipple with a wet pop. His hands slipped deeper between her thighs, pressing at the satin panties, stroking the moist fabric into her wet cunt. He lifted himself until his face hovered over hers. He watched her for a moment. "This time I am the one in charge." He growled, a rough, tortured sound, before capturing her lips in a harsh kiss. His tongue snaked between her lips parted in shock, as one long finger glided underneath her panties to thrust into her pussy. The shrill sound of Mila's satisfied scream was muffled by his ardent lips.

Mila climaxed immediately, coming hard and fast around his finger, coating him with her cream. She was so passionate, so receptive to him that for a moment the white hot light

of her response blinded him. "By the gods, I cannot let you go." His groaned words were a promise and a threat.

Quick, determined hands shed Mila of her panties and raised her skirt. In a few moments Zacharias had opened his slacks and released the hard length of his cock. He surged deep into the wet heat of her cunt in one stroke. Mila lifted her hips for his thrust, meeting him halfway, reinforcing his belief that they could not do without one another.

The passion that swirled between them was insane, irrational, and determined.

There was no denying the lure that drew them to one another.

He would not let Mila deny it.

His fingers captured her face. "Look at me." He surged into her. Her passion-glazed eyes fluttered for a moment before connecting with his gaze.

"Tell me you want me."

Her lips parted and she stared at him in surprise.

He withdrew only to slide back into her. Hard. "Tell me. Tell me the truth, Mila. Tell me how you feel about me."

"No," she moaned, even as her fingers dug into the cheeks of his ass, pulling him closer to her. She shook her head wildly, midnight silk flying around her moist, heated face and lifted her hips for his down thrust. "It is not what you think." Her murmured words whispered over the sweaty skin of his corded neck.

"Look at me, damn you." He growled, low, deep, and feral. The sound of a beast being pushed past its limit. Her gaze lifted to his. It took a moment for the cloud of passion to dissipate. He saw understanding in her eyes.

"It's just sex, Zacharias." She moved her hips sensually beneath him, rolling them so his cock moved against the moist, sensitive walls of her pussy. She shivered beneath him and her eyes fluttered shut at the action. "Just sex," she breathed out on a gasping moan.

A cold, dark heat surged in Zacharias's blood at Mila's words. He grasped her thigh and lifted her left leg high, placing it against his shoulder. He immediately sunk deeper into the wet folds of her cunt.

She bowed beneath him, her nipples scraping pleasurably against the planes of his chest. He moved above her purposely, increasing the desirable friction against the swollen points.

A racked shudder went through her body. A flinted, savage smile danced across his face.

Zacharias slowly withdrew from her. The nails clutching his ass dug in deep, almost breaking the skin with their need. The slight pain spurred him on. He surged into Mila. Fast. Hard. Deep.

His fingers tangled in the ebony strands of her hair. He tugged just hard enough to force her to look at him. He slid out of her and stilled. Only the bulbous head of his thick cock remained sheathed inside of her. He watched Mila's face. Her eyes darkened in anger and lust.

Zacharias's smile widened to a smug grin. "I know your secret, Mila." The gruff words were whispered against her neck seconds before his tongue fluttered against her rapid pulse. He stroked into her at the same moment.

His head lifted and his gaze once again caught hers. He moved within her. "You play the part of the Mistress because you want to know how far you can push a man before he pushes you back." He allowed some of the power that surged beneath his veins free. "Well, I'm pushing back, Mila."

The words seemed to be what she was waiting for. One of Mila's hands clutched his shoulder, the nails tore into his skin, moon-shaped proofs of her pleasure as her satisfaction ripped through her.

Zacharias watched, mesmerized, as her breath caught in her throat and her body stilled. Her eyes slammed shut and her chest heaved, taking in a deep breath. Then every inch of her voluptuous frame shook with the force of the shivers that racked her as she climaxed.

The fingers in her hair tightened. His lips brushed against her. “That’s it, Mila. Come for me.” He whispered the words over her parted lips as he thrust through the tight, fluttering walls of her cunt.

Her eyes snapped open in shock as his thrust precipitated another, more powerful orgasm. Feral satisfaction ripped through him as he watched the glazed look of passion enter her eyes. He tightened his hold on her, pulling her closer to him. “That’s it, Mila. The night has just begun. Tonight the Mistress meets her Master.”

Chapter Thirteen

Runaway Lover

Mila lay beside Zacharias, heart thumping wildly in her ears as she reconsidered her decision. The soft sound of her lover's blissful sleep drifted through the air. She turned slightly and glanced at the gentle giant who had snaked his way into her heart. It made no sense how he had come to mean so much to her in so little time.

And she was not a woman given to rash impulses.

For the last hour she had thought long and hard over what she had realized. Every time she glanced at him, she wavered from what she knew she had to do. But she had never truly turned away from the hard decision. It was the only choice available to her, really. She could not stay here, in this place Zacharias called home, and pretend to be the queen to a bunch of misfits who thought they had supernatural powers.

She had to get back to reality. Back to home. And this time she really did mean home. She had to go back to her mother's house in Philadelphia, rest and relax. Because it was becoming painfully obvious to Mila that staying in his castle, being around him was making her lose her mind.

For a moment there, as he told her about his supposed ability to shift, she had believed him. And that just couldn't be.

Mila pushed aside the insistent memory of his teeth lengthening as she and Zacharias made love.

Yup, she was losing it.

She slowly rolled off the bed, landing on the balls of her feet so as to not make a sound. She concentrated on quickly making her way across the creaky wooden floor. Coward that she was, she did not want to confront Zacharias. Like a thief in the night, she wanted to creep out while he slept. That way there would be no attempts to change her mind, no fights, no arguments, and no tears.

Mila was deathly afraid that one look in his emotion-filled green eyes would shatter her resolve. And then she would be the one begging him to let her stay.

Somehow she managed to ignore the nagging voice in her head until she reached the middle of the hallway. It spoke up then, more determined, and insistent that she was making a mistake. By the time she made it to her car, it was screaming, voice thick and hoarse in anger.

Mila opened her car door and sat inside. Zacharias had made sure it was fixed and ready to take her wherever she wanted to go the previous day. The problem was the only place she wanted to go was to the bed she had left. The bed where a man claiming to be a gargoyle lay.

Twenty minutes later, Mila was still sitting in her car. She could not bring herself to start the car and leave. With a heartfelt groan, she admitted the truth. She wanted and needed Zacharias.

He was right. Whatever was going on between them was not something she could walk away from. Shape-shifting gargoyle or not, she was his woman. And he was her man. Only he understood her need to dominate and submit at the same time.

He could always call a halt to their games. She was always at his mercy between the sheets. Just as she was at his mercy in regard to her heart.

“Damn.” She opened the car door and stepped out of the vehicle. The shadows surrounding the moonlit driveway moved to reveal a man. For a moment all she could see was his chilling smile.

“You should have taken off, little human. It would have saved me the trouble of cutting your throat.”

Chapter Fourteen

Belly of the Beast

For a moment, a single, utter moment, Zacharias considered letting her go. Then reality intruded. He could not let her be. Somehow he had to make Mila understand that running from their relationship would not make it go away.

He had to bind her to him.

He had spent the night deep inside her, trying to prove he owned her. Now he understood that, although his actions had spoken loud and clear, he needed to explain himself to Mila.

He needed to tell her exactly what he was. What it meant to be a gargoyle.

A gargoyle in love.

He sighed.

He had to show her his bestial form. And hope she didn't run screaming from the room.

His gaze drifted to her side of the bed. The last vestiges of her body heat still clung to the sheets. She had not been gone long. Twenty minutes at the most. He glanced at the bathroom, wondering when she would return to his arms.

The slight sound of movement caught his attention. The soft sound of gravel being crunched underfoot drifted to him. Someone was taking a predawn stroll.

Thoughts of another vigorous activity to welcome the day lightened through his mind. Zacharias turned toward the bathroom. A smile lit his face. He had never made love in his shower.

And his stall was decadence itself with three different heads that titillated as they invigorated.

One rough hand had just wrapped around the doorknob when the sound of a woman's fear-filled scream shattered the air. Zacharias stilled. There was such terror in the sharp sound that he felt his blood chill.

And Zacharias knew without being told that the scream came from Mila.

He turned, ran through his room and burst through the glass doors that led to his private balcony seconds after changing shape. Monstrous wings spread, he leapt onto the ledge and flew toward the area the sound had come from.

"Zacharias."

The dull, sick sound of flesh hitting flesh pierced the air seconds before he dropped to the ground.

His roar of pain-filled anger tore through the air. He was too late. The air fluttered as the Magician took flight, spreading his ghastly wings and soaring through the night.

Zacharias immediately flew after the beast who had stolen his bride-to-be. Rage spurred him on, energizing him, allowing him to close the great distance between them quickly. Just as his long, dark fingers were about to curl around the Magician's ankles, the fiend disappeared.

He stilled in the air, great wings beating at the charged air that swam around him. Anger and fear like none he had ever felt before filled him, making his blood chill with the almost disabling emotions. Zacharias turned at the sound of hurried feet hitting the ground.

“You must change now,” Hugo yelled as he ran toward him.

Zacharias looked up just in time to see the sun rising, shining its golden light across the castle. He flew into the shadows. That single fact saved him from a stony outcome. He shifted form immediately, plummeting toward the ground. Hugo leapt up and caught Zacharias just before he would have hit the ground, body broken.

Naked and determined, Zacharias quickly righted himself to stand beside Hugo. Liana came rushing around the corner. She threw him a pair of jeans. He caught them easily and turned to Hugo.

“He has taken her.”

Hugo sighed, a painful, broken sound. “I had hoped it would not come to this.”

Zacharias’s gaze snagged the other man’s. “You knew he would take my mate and you said nothing.” The words were forced through clenched, sharp teeth. He could not fully leash the beast that lay inside. His animal was intent on finding his woman and would not be denied. As it was, Zacharias was finding it difficult to stay in his human form.

Hugo cracked his knuckles, the only indication he was feeling any emotional strain. His dark, emotionless eyes stared back at Zacharias. “He has been increasingly vocal about his ideas regarding the place of humans and the others, the un-naturals. He has told me that he thinks the handfasting tradition is abominable.”

Zacharias hastily stepped into his jeans and strode toward the forests surrounding the monstrous stone castle. Hugo and Liana followed.

“What will you do, my lord?”

He didn’t bother to turn to answer Liana’s question. He threw the words over his shoulder as he ventured into the deep, dark Obsidian Forests. “I am going to meet the beast in his lair, of course.”

The ten minutes it took Zacharias to make his way through the Forests to the shrouded, dilapidated building was the longest ten minutes of his life. The only thing that

kept him from screaming in frustration was the reassuring thought that the Magician could not make his way through the Forests any faster than he.

The Obsidian Forests, like all the land of Krim, had been spellbound. The area was unique because it did not allow any being to move through it in any other form but their human form. No sorcery or magick could allow him to move Mila more quickly to his dark home.

The Magician was bound to his human flesh.

Zacharias counted it as a benefit to him. The Magician was not as strong in the form of a man.

When Zacharias, Hugo, and Liana finally reached the middle of the Obsidian Forests, the area where the Magician's shelter stood, the sight that greeted them made Zacharias's eyes widen in shock.

Spellbound, he turned to Hugo just to make sure he was not imagining what he saw. He realized, when he saw the vampire's face filled with blatant disbelief, that he wasn't imagining things.

The whispered rumors were true. The Dark Moon Queen had finally arrived in Krim.

Chapter Fifteen

Return of the Queen

Mila's rage was like nothing she had ever felt before. She could not explain the powerful emotions swirling through her. She only knew that she couldn't shake off the man's disgusting touch.

The man had spit at her and called her disgusting names as he dragged her through the dark forests and into his ancient house. And then he demanded that she service him. As if she were his to do aught with. As if she were a whore.

Her gaze darkened as she glared at him, his uttered words rolling through her. "You were good enough for that cursed king, you are good enough for me," he said with a chilling laugh as he reached for her.

As his fingers wrapped around her ankle and he pulled her across his bed, something inside of her snapped.

His lecherous touch was the straw that broke the camel's back.

The fear that had swam under Mila's skin ignited into a relentless, raging fire the moment he put his hands on her. The emotional shift had been so quick that she hadn't been able to control the jagged sensations swirling through her body. A sense of calmness and

unabridged power filled her before she could put up a barrier and keep the rolling emotions at bay. For the first time in her life, Mila had not run from the powers she knew lived inside of her.

A dark chuckle slipped from her full lips as she lifted her arms. The air around her moved with shocking speed, leaving her in the middle of a powerful tornado. She regarded the man who had brought her to this place.

"Rufus, I must say, if not for you I would not have let myself free. I must properly thank you."

"Mila," Zacharias yelled, and lunged for her. She automatically jumped back, evading his outstretched arms. But when Mila moved back, out of the reach of his long arms, she didn't land on the ground. She hovered above him, standing several feet in the air, peering down at Zacharias.

"Damn it, Mila. Stop it," he growled.

Mila watched Zacharias for several moments, feeling the anger inside her battling with something just as powerful. But the anger, the pain inside, won out. For too long, for too many years, she had run from what she knew was true.

She was not like others. And for once she was going to bask in it. She would not let Zacharias or anyone else put her in a cage.

Mila lifted her hand, palm up. Zacharias stopped in his tracks. She watched him try to break her hold. She smiled when he found he couldn't. At that moment Hugo and Liana ran toward them. She turned her gaze to the runners. They slowly lifted from the ground to levitate in the air.

"I do not want to fight you." She turned back to her target. Rufus. The gargoyle Zacharias trusted. With his life. With her life.

One dark eyebrow arched. Rufus was lifted several feet in the air. "How can you...?" he choked out. "Only a Moon royal can break past the Obsidian barrier and use their magicks."

Her smile widened. "One of these is not like the others," she said softly. Rufus paled. "Why do you want me dead?"

The silver-haired man watched Mila for several moments with fear in his eyes. For a moment, she simply relished the pleasure that came when the hunter became the hunted.

"Mila, don't do this."

"Listen to your king, Mila," Hugo yelled.

"I have no king." Her voice was soft. Deadly. The air surrounding her stilled at the sound.

"Now, Rufus. You will answer my question now. Why do you want me dead?"

Mila could feel the caution that permeated Hugo and Liana's bodies in every breath she took. But it was Zacharias's fear that chilled her blood. Still, she needed to hear the answer.

She lifted her palm and curled her fingers. An imaginary fist tightened around Rufus's thick, corded neck, cutting off his breathing. His eyes started to bulge out of his head when he gave. "Because you're human," he choked out.

Mila loosened the tightness of her ghost fingers. "And?" she purred. She had all the time in the world to wait for Rufus's answers. He didn't.

He coughed and glared at Zacharias. "Every king of Krim is forced to wed a human, breed with her, just so he can keep his crown. We are the stronger people, yet we bow to the whims of man. It is not right."

"And you looked to correct the right," Zacharias growled softly.

Rufus's chin lifted in defiance. "I could not depend on you. You are weak, so weak you actually fell in love with the human. Instead of just forcing her to be a breeder, you gave her your heart."

Mila drowned out the urge to turn and look at Zacharias's face to see if Rufus spoke the truth. Had Zacharias given her his heart? Did he love her? Could he love her after knowing her for such little time?

She refocused her attention on Rufus. "What exactly did you have in store for me?"

The bastard smiled at her, a chilling spread of lips that could not mask the evil that lay inside him. "Before or after I raped you?" he taunted.

Mila felt Zacharias jerk as he pushed at the force field that kept him immobile. His roar of outrage and pain ripped through the air to coalesce in the already thick atmosphere that surrounded the group.

She tilted her head to the side and regarded Rufus. "After."

Rufus shrugged, or at least attempted to in his current predicament. "After I disposed of you I was going to use his grief against him."

She ground her teeth. Questioning him was worse than pulling teeth. At least the teeth gave a little.

Maybe he just needed a little more pressure...

Rufus's face paled and he grabbed his chest. She knew he could feel her fingers around his heart.

"Why?"

"Mila!"

"Why?"

Rufus's gaze darted to Zacharias. Seeing that the man was as powerless against her as he was, he turned and answered her question. "I wanted a real gargoyle to control the throne and I knew that if Zacharias died, his seat would go to another."

"You were going to spellbind him to you."

Four sets of eyes turned to Liana at her words. "He would have been no more than your puppet."

"Yes," Rufus sputtered out as blood spilled from his lips.

The air around them dampened and thickened. Anger and fear darkened the atmosphere.

“I will not have his death on your hands, Mila.”

Mila didn’t bother to turn her gaze to what she knew was Zacharias’s livid face. “What exactly are you going to do about it?”

“Just because I have allowed you the power does not mean you have full reign,” Zacharias thundered.

Mila gasped in surprise and pain as a blast of power surged through her veins, setting every inch of her body on fire. The pain was excruciating, mind-numbing, and for just one moment, stars shimmered in her gaze. But she fought off the hold the pain had over her.

“Mila, don’t let the power control you. You must cage the queen. You must fight the bloodlust.”

Zacharias’s words were choppy, sounding as though he spoke from miles away. It was difficult for Mila to focus on him, his words, the plea in his voice. But it was that heartfelt anguish that lured her away from the dark abyss where the power that lived inside of her was too strong a drug for her sanity.

Mila turned and saw him. Zacharias stood at the end of a long dark tunnel. Mila took a step toward him, walking away from the drugging power that surged through her veins. With every step the pain lessened, the power diminished, and she felt better, more like herself.

“Zacharias,” she called. Even to her own ears her voice sounded distant, weak, and empty. She took another step toward him.

And the air around her seemed to thicken, clinging to every inch of her skin. It caressed her, soothed her. Calmed her. She gasped, taking it in, basking in it. With every breath she took, the painful energy deep inside her loosened and unraveled. Zacharias’s long,

corded arms wrapped around her shoulders, wrapping her in his strength, his care, his comfort.

The moment his arms surrounded her, the last of the churning field inside her dissipated, exploding and erupting from her in a great blast that shook the forests.

Mila looked up into Zacharias's eyes. There was so much pain, passion, and fear in his gaze. The concern for her settled over her skin to sink deep into her flesh. No man had ever felt for her what she saw in his eyes.

Out of the corner of her eye she saw that Liana and Hugo had captured Rufus. She flinched inside as she saw what she had done to him. With her powers.

Her gaze lifted to Zacharias's. "Take me home."

Chapter Sixteen

Nobody's Perfect

Mila intertwined her fingers with Zacharias's, staring at the difference in their colors. She had been aware of their different races, but it wasn't until that moment that she understood what it meant. Her skin was a deep, mahogany color with a red undertone that always gave others the impression she'd just come from an island vacation. His skin was lighter, more mellow, but no less enticing with its rich caramel undertone, a remnant of the amount of time Zacharias spent outside.

And they were different in so many other ways. He was tall. She was short. He was all muscle. She had a good twenty extra pounds on her. But she had never felt closer to a man in her life.

Which was the only reason she wasn't running for the door as he told her his tall tale.

She chewed her bottom lip as she regarded him. Even though she had been there, witnessed what he was trying to explain, Mila could not believe that he was an actual gargoyle and she was an actual witch.

Queen of the witches, no less.

So why did she feel like she was the queen of the insane?

“What makes you think I’m this Moon Queen?” She purred as she moved her hand down Zacharias’s toned torso, one nail tracing the fine line of his six-pack until she reached the growing bulge between his strong thighs.

After coming back from what Zacharias called the Obsidian Forests, they had taken showers. Separately. She was still a little moist as she sat next to him in the plush, black robe he’d handed her.

And all he wore were white linen drawstring pants. How she longed to unravel his tie with her teeth.

His callused fingers curled around her wrist, preventing her hand’s descent. Her gaze snapped to his. He smiled, a slow sultry smile that made her breath hitch and her pussy flood with desire. “You must focus, my love. We can play later.”

She moved closer to Zacharias, hearing and feeling the desire in his voice. She frowned when he placed both of her hands in her lap and stood. He gave her his broad back and stared into the mirror above his dresser. “You are the Dark Moon Queen. Krim has waited over a millennium for your return.”

She pursed her lips. “You still haven’t told me why you think I am this queen?”

He turned to her. “How can you ask that after what happened in the Forests? How can you ask that after feeling all that power?”

She squirmed underneath his gaze, the weight of his words. Then something occurred to her. “If I am the queen, why didn’t I feel any of these so-called powers before?”

“Are you telling me you haven’t felt any of your telekinetic powers before?”

“No,” she lied through her teeth as a searing childhood memory sliced through her mind. She had been three and determined to get the large container of sweets her mother kept on the top shelf, away from the children. Less than a minute after she entered the kitchen she had the opened jar in her hand. She could still see her mother’s horrified gaze when she realized what she had done. At least what she thought Mila had done.

To this day, she believed Mila had somehow safely climbed the counters and pulled the jar to the floor.

It was the only explanation her mother had been able to accept. She now understood how difficult it was to believe she was something other than normal.

“I can’t be your queen.”

Zacharias stiffened at her emphatic declaration. Slowly, some of the tension left his body. She could feel him trying to calm himself. Slow his heartbeat. Push past the pain and anger he had felt momentarily.

She stared at him in shock, unsure of why she could feel his emotions.

“I don’t ask that you be *my* queen. I’m just telling you that you are *a* queen.”

The presence of the pain inside Zacharias registered just as his words did. “Are you a king, Zacharias?”

He leaned against the wooden dresser. His fingers clenched tightly along the carved ledge. His knuckles were white with tension. “Hugo questioned Rufus. He admitted that he used the magnifying spell on you, on us. My guess is that the emotions, the powers you feel have been affected by it.”

He gave her a tremulous smile. “I’d like to think it wasn’t all an effect of the spell.”

She stared at his feverish gaze in the mirror, allowing his words to settle. “No, it wasn’t all the spell,” she murmured as she remembered the moments she had spent in his arms.

Whatever had been happening between them hadn’t been magic-induced. At least not the hocus-pocus kind. No, it had been the pure, unadulterated lusty kind.

She sighed. She couldn’t wait until later.

“What I don’t understand is how he was able to get you out of the castle without my notice?” Zacharias mumbled to himself. “He would be fast, very fast as a gargoyle, but I would have sensed him.”

Mila shifted on the bed. The moment they had left the Obsidian Forests, Zacharias had grabbed her and shifted into his gargoyle form. There had been a moment of pure shock and then he had spoken, calming her fears.

Gargoyle or not, she knew Zacharias. When they had landed on the castle roof, he had stood still while she looked him over. She took her time feeling his soft, firm, impenetrable skin. His deadly, sharp claws. Even the tail that whipped around nervously as she examined him.

"You're so beautiful," she had murmured, looking up into his eyes. The memory flashed into her mind as she stared at the beautiful man in front of her now.

Mila knew the exact moment Zacharias realized how Rufus had gotten her outside the castle. He stilled, his hand gripping an ancient ivory hairbrush. The handle snapped in his hand.

"He did not have to take you outside, did he, Mila?"

She shuddered at the gruff sound of his dark voice. Gone was the lover she had come to care for. She licked her parched lips and took a step forward. One hand reached out to him. "Zacharias --"

He turned away before she could touch him. He fiddled with an item on the top of his dresser. She doubted he even knew what he was doing. But Mila found herself unable to break her gaze away from the tense movements of his long, callused fingers. Fingers that had loved her, touched her like she was something truly precious.

Her gaze caught his in the silver mirror. One eyebrow lifted, daring her to deny what they both knew was true.

She had been trying to leave him.

The coldness of his emerald gaze scared Mila more than Rufus's venomous touch ever had. She had finally crossed the line that made her actions unforgivable in his eyes.

For the first time in her life Mila regretted a decision. She should have trusted herself, her feelings for the male before her. She should have trusted him.

She stepped forward. "Zacharias, I'm so --"

His gaze caught hers. "Hugo will see to it that you are returned to your home safely." Zacharias started to turn from the mirror, from Mila, when her hand on his arm stopped him. He stared pointedly at the small, dark fingers curled around his thick wrist. Determined, her grip tightened. His eyes lifted to catch hers. "I have no desire to bind myself to a woman who does not trust or want me."

His words were spoken through clenched teeth. The coldness of his voice, the determination in his eyes, slid over her skin and chilled her to the bone. Her fingers, lifeless, fell from his wrist. He turned and strode through the doorway.

"Hugo will be here momentarily."

He called the words over his shoulder. Zacharias didn't even bother to look back to see her grief-stricken face.

Chapter Seventeen

Hatin' Love

“Yup, he be the one who just pushed the Dark Moon Queen herself out the door. Just like she was nothing. Like she wasn’t the prophesied queen of Krim.” There came a snort. “And to think me mum told me to marry a gargoyle, ‘cause they lived for love. That one makes me believe they hard all the time, not just at night.”

The mumbled words of the old woman drifted to Zacharias as he strode through the hall. It was just one time of many that he had overheard the mutters quickly spreading like wildfire through Krim.

He had not expected people to like his decision. The kingdom had, after all, been waiting a millennium for Mila’s return, but the blatant disrespect, that was something unexpected.

Hugo stepped in front of him and closed a door softly behind him. “She’s right, you know. Although I would say you threw her out as though she was trash, something to be discarded.”

Zacharias glared at the man in front of him and clamped his teeth on the retort that wanted to come. He counted to ten before he felt the tiniest semblance of sanity return to

him. It was not the first time in the week since Mila's departure that Hugo had made his opinion known, but today it grated against his skin more than it had in the past.

And before it had hurt like a bitch.

Today it hurt like the bastard son of a bitch.

He turned away from Hugo's handsome, stern face with a growl.

Today was the day of his binding. And the whole world, or at least his household, was conspiring to make him feel as though he were going to the gallows.

And wouldn't death be preferable to spending eternity with a woman you don't love?

With a savage curse, Zacharias pushed away the honest thought.

"I still don't understand why you let her go."

Zacharias whipped around. He was tired of pretending the angry sore that was his heart was fully intact. Every day he ached for the one who did not want him. Every day he prayed for the pain to end. He understood all too well why rejected gargoyles died weeks after their loved ones had turned from them.

He lived only for the day when death would take his heartache away.

"You think it was easy for me to let the woman I love leave me? But regardless of what she thinks, I am not a beast to chain her to me against her will."

"But you have no issues with chaining yourself to another woman against your will?"

Zacharias's chin lifted in defiance. "I will do what is best for my people. It is a king's duty to make sacrifices. And I am not being chained against my will. I happily go."

One dark eyebrow lifted in patent disbelief at his statement. "Sacrifices I can understand. What you are doing is no sacrifice. You are a fool. You know that, right?"

He shook his head. "No. For once I am thinking. Although I cannot forgive Rufus for his actions, he was right. Love is a dangerous thing."

Several hours later, as Zacharias sat on his throne, staring across the room at his queen to be, he decided that he was finally losing his mind.

And his household had driven him to the edge of sanity.

For one moment, as he had walked the long corridor to the room where he had been coroneted, the room where he would be wed, he swore he saw Mila. And now as he sat on his throne, feigning delight at the shrouded presence of his bride, his traitorous nostrils were filled with Mila's distinctive scent.

He ground his teeth and focused on the woman in front of him. She knelt at his feet. She was covered in the traditional heavy black lace that was only used for a Dark Moon harvest binding. He could not see a single inch of her. Not even her fingertips.

And he did not know who she was.

He had asked the priest and Hugo to choose a bride for him, any bride. They had done just that.

She moved slowly, rising from her knees, until she stood before him. He immediately noticed two things. She was short. And she was all curves. Lush, plump curves.

Curves that reminded him of Mila.

Again, the whispers of her scent flowed to him. He could hear the sound of his teeth grinding against one another as pain lanced through him.

His memories were driving him crazy.

The slow, soft sound of drums drifted through the pungent, tense air. Several of the binding guests relaxed. He realized then that they had feared the binding would not occur. He couldn't keep away his sharp, cold smile.

The woman moved one hip to the beat of the drums. Thump. Thump.

Her skirt shifted the slightest bit with the deeply sensual movement. Unwillingly, Zacharias found himself trying to catch a glimpse of her skin. She moved the other hip in the

same manner, keeping her torso still. Heat seared Zacharias's veins. A flash of a memory knifed through his brain.

Mila moving her hips above him, grinding her pelvis against his, as she shattered around him.

The crowd shifted in their seats. Zacharias realized the low rumble was a growl...coming from his throat.

The beat picked up. The masked woman turned around, giving him her back. Zacharias got his first glimpse of an ass that had to have been heaven sent. It was large, full, and sweetly rounded.

She rolled her body from her head to her feet so that she moved like a snake, a wicked gypsy floating with the wind, as every inch of her followed the sound of the drums.

Zacharias licked his lips and moved forward. Anger and desire shifted through him as he watched his unknown bride-to-be dance. He did not want to feel the passion for the woman in front of him. Its presence ignited a fire in him that was just as powerful as lust. And just as dangerous. His fingers curled around the carved arms of his throne. A quick glance down told him his knuckles were white with his rage.

He hated her, even though he craved her.

She reminded him too much of Mila.

The beat picked up again. This time there was no doubt to him, to any man in the room, that she was making love to the music.

The way her body flowed to the music was pure decadence.

It was pure sex.

In one sharp movement Zacharias stood, strode down the steps from his throne, and grabbed the arm of his bride-to-be.

He was done playing her games. From now on they played by his rules.

Chapter Eighteen

So Seductive

She had angered the beast. Hurt him. And now she had to placate him, lest she lose her heart. Mila chewed her lips as she regarded the man before her. Throughout the binding ceremony, she had waited, heart in her throat for that moment when Zacharias would stop the program and announce her as an impostor. He had to have known she'd traded spots with the woman the priest had chosen for him. But as usual the man had kept her on her toes.

One hand clutched the black lace veil Zacharias had ripped off her face the moment they left the coronation room. The other gripped the arm of the large, eighteenth-century chair he'd shoved her into. They were back in his bedroom.

Where it had all started.

Where it had ended.

Where she hoped to resurrect their relationship.

"I know you're mad at me."

He smiled. A flash of teeth that left her shivering at the coldness that permeated every inch of his hard body. *He isn't going to make this easy for me.*

“Why? Should I, Mila?”

She stared at him in shock. *Why should I make this easy for you, Mila?* His smile widened, deepened, became more frigid. “The two halves of the Dark Moon are supposed to be able to communicate telepathically in order to facilitate the bonding between the king and the queen. Interesting, isn’t it?”

Even though her mind was telling her to shut her mouth, she couldn’t pull up her jaw. *Iya never told me that.*

“No, she wouldn’t, would she? Despite the fact that she has seen over two thousand years, she still has a youthful belief in love.”

Mila licked her parched lips. “Don’t you believe in love?” she asked softly.

He stared at her for several moments. The fire in his darkened gaze forced a shiver through her body. “No. I don’t.” He took five steps toward her. She counted each and every one. With the pounding of her heart.

You kept sending me images of us during that dance. Images of us together. That wasn’t very nice, Mila.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t know.”

He smiled and took two steps forward. *I don’t think you’re sorry, Mila. Not really.*

A glimpse of his memories flashed to Mila.

Her.

On her knees.

With his cock in her mouth.

She felt his pleasure.

His desire.

His need for satisfaction.

Heat infused every inch of Mila's body as his passion filled her. Her gaze lifted to his. "What are you doing here, Mila?"

She glanced pointedly at the black lace gown she wore, the binding dress, before lifting her gaze to his. "I was about to be wed."

He squatted until his gaze was level with hers. "What are you doing here, Mila?" he growled. His eyes were so dark they appeared onyx. She could feel the emotions riding him, pulling at his self-control.

She searched his eyes for long moments, using the power Iya had taught her to manage, to try to decipher the difficult, sensual man before her. So many of his emotions swarmed to her, almost too many to identity.

But two managed to surge to the surface.

Anger.

Desire.

"I'm sorry, Zacharias," she whispered softly.

It was as though she had slapped him. He stood and pivoted. For one moment she feared he would turn his back on her and leave. Instead, long legs splayed wide open, he sat on the bed. He was a great lounging beast.

Her gaze raked over him, taking in every inch of his perfect frame. She had not forgotten just how beautiful her warrior was. Yet, his loveliness still blindsided her. Her gaze lifted from the large bulge between his strong thighs to his eyes.

He was hungry, starved. She could feel his need. It simmered in the air between them. It came to her in rolling emotional waves.

"You're mad at me because I'm in love with you."

He stilled. "What the hell are you talking about?" he thundered suddenly.

Mila stood, determined and defiant. She knew he wanted her. She could feel his potent desire, the passion that flowed through his veins. She could feel his anger, swirling and

heated, leaving little in its wake. What she wasn't sure about was his love, but she was banking on it. Putting her heart on the line. "You're mad at me because I love you. You're mad because I want you as much as you want me."

Zacharias watched her for several long, tense moments. "That's rich."

Mila strode to him. "It's the truth, damn it."

"Prove it," he growled harshly. One dark eyebrow lifted. "Show me just how much you love me, Mila."

It was Mila's turn to freeze. She stilled at those words even though she knew she had been waiting for that, waiting for Zacharias to give her the chance to show him just how much she wanted him. Needed him. Loved him.

But she hadn't expected him to be so blunt.

"It's a product of the age," he murmured slowly. "The bluntness, that is."

She grinned at him. If he wanted to play that game she could play along with him. Mila's grin widened as she thought of their first time together. The dream that had felt too real to be anything but reality. She sent a telepathic image of the night she had ground on top of him until they both came to the man lounging across from her. She felt Zacharias still moments before his body hardened.

"Stop it, Mila."

She stood and glided over to him. "Why, Zacharias? Don't like when the shoe is on the other foot? Don't you like it when you're reminded of what we've done together? Don't you want to know what it felt like for me?"

"I don't suggest you push me, Mila."

"Why, Zacharias, because you might not like the consequences? Because you don't want to lose control? Too bad, Zach. I want you like I've never had you before. I want you. All of you."

A smoldering image of her riding Zacharias as his fingers dug into her thighs slipped through her mind. A memory shared by them both. A shaft of heat seared her nether regions, streaking through her cunt, the very folds of her sex, until she felt as though her pussy were burning with the need for Zacharias, for his cock, for his touch, for the feel of him.

“I will give you one last warning, Mila.”

The thundered words were more than a threat. Stronger than a promise. And a temptation she could not ignore. She slipped one thigh over his and sent him another, more devastating image. This one was of herself as she looked down at him in shock and pleased surprise as he ate her out, eating her pussy like he was a starved man. Just to tip the scales, she sent him mirror feelings of the emotions she felt as she had lain beneath him. The pleasure. The passion. The excitement. The soul-consuming desire. The feel of his tongue caressing her clit. The hard touch of his fingers, holding her open for his questing mouth.

Mila moved the other leg over his lap until she was straddling Zacharias.

“You asked for it, Mila.” Zacharias growled as his fingers slipped into the ebony strands of her hair. His grip tightened almost painfully. The tugging touch turned her on, flaming the fire that burned deep inside her.

His nails scraped along her scalp just as Mila felt Zacharias’s emotions burst free from the tight leash he kept himself under.

This was what she wanted, needed. Zacharias out of control, giving her every inch of his being, not just the controlled leader. “Yes. Yes! Give it to me, then,” she murmured across Zacharias’s mouth seconds before she pressed her lips against his. The heat exploded between them the moment she touched her lips to his. And it was like nothing Mila had ever felt before. It didn’t even compare to the emotions Zacharias had inspired before.

She squealed in surprise when he picked her up and flipped their bodies over so she lay beneath him. Before her mind could decipher what was going on, he had her wrists bound to the bed.

He looked down on her splayed body and gave her a wicked smile. *One of the pluses of being part animal is the speed, Mila.*

Any other perks you want to show me, my king?

She felt him pause for a moment. She had called him her king, acknowledged his dominion over her. His smile widened, reminding her just how devastating to her senses the man above her was. Her belly muscles jumped and fluttered. Her cunt further moistened.

There's the hunger, the need to appease the beast, and tonight the beast wants you.

Zacharias fell upon Mila, determined, hungry, and relentless. She could feel the need, the desire, the emotions he had kept in check since she had first seen him, in his touch. It was hurried, uncontrolled, unwavering, and devastating. His large palms cupped her breasts, molding the full mounds, tweaking her nipples, scraping the buds against the lace barrier that separated them, plucking at the tips until she was writhing beneath him.

His hunger. Her need. The soul-burning desire that swarmed between them. All three emotions washed over, almost drowning her with their intensity.

His hands drifted down her torso until they reached the hem of her lacy shirt. He jerked the fabric up over her breasts, revealing the swollen mocha mounds. Mila gasped at the feel of his mouth around one nipple, licking, sucking, nipping. She cried out when his fingers glided beneath her skirt and up her thighs to palm the heat between her thighs. She instinctively spread her legs wantonly for him, seeking his touch.

"Yes. Yes!" She gasped when one finger plunged between the wet, hot folds of her cunt, stroking her flesh, teasing her clit. And then he slipped into her, surged deep into her pussy. The single thrust was all Mila needed. She convulsed around his finger, beneath his hard

body as her climax ripped through her. She felt Zacharias slip two fingers into her cunt as she came down from her high.

“So eager, Mila. I did not think you would enjoy being the one tied up.”

“Make me,” she retorted just as he withdrew his fingers. Zacharias gave Mila a wicked, carnal grin that made her heart skip a beat before thrusting his fingers deep into her. She screamed as pleasure assailed every inch of her body, leaving her bereft of breath. Lights flashed around her. The room seemed to shake with the very power of her release.

A soundless whimper escaped from her lips when his thumb stroked over her clit as he plunged his fingers in and out of her cunt. With a delighted laugh, Mila realized she was climbing back up to that precipice that promised ultimate satisfaction. She was going to come soon.

Her eyes slammed shut and nourishing air was dragged into her lungs with gasping breaths as she focused on her body, on what she felt. Using their mind link, she sent the emotions to Zacharias. Soon his breathing began to mirror hers and she knew he felt what she felt. Her passion. Her desire. Her pleasure.

She groaned, almost as though in pain, when he fully withdrew his fingers from her tight pussy. She had been so close to coming.

And I knew that. You made sure I knew that, didn't you, Mila?

Her eyes popped open and her gaze collided with his stormy, glittering eyes. The green color was so dark, Mila felt like she was looking into a slightly overcast midnight sky. It was intoxicating.

She held his gaze as he lowered his head and captured her lips in a sweet, drugging kiss that left her wanting more of him. One hand tangled in the strands of her hair, holding her immobile for his questing tongue, the other drifted down his body to poise his cock at the mouth of her cunt. He propped himself on one elbow, broke off the kiss, and stared down into her eyes.

Mila smiled at him and lifted her hips, pressing her soft flesh against his hard cock. "I love you, Zacharias. I'll always love you." Zacharias thrust the full length of his erection into her in one powerful stroke, pushing Mila several inches up the bed. Unable to do any more, her fingers gripped the bindings around her wrists in an attempt to steady herself for his relentless thrusts. The fingers in her hair untangled themselves to drift down her body and grip her hips, holding her to Zacharias as he plunged in and out of the wet heat of her cunt.

His unwavering gaze caught hers. "You are mine."

Even though his words weren't a question, Mila felt the need to answer him. "Yes," she gasped out between airy breaths. "I am yours. Your queen. Your mate."

"Mine," he growled again. A shiver of excitement tingled down her spine when she saw that his normally green eyes were glowing with a golden light. The binding was upon him. She felt his lengthened nails digging ten half crescent moons into her hips as the beast inside him rose to the surface. Mila bared her neck, moving her head to the side, a silent sign that he should mark her and complete the binding, making her his eternal mate.

There was a movement of painful silence, as though Zacharias could not decide if he wanted her for eternity, and then his teeth sank into her jugular. A white-hot heat encased Mila's body the moment his incisors pierced her flesh. The pleasure was unlike anything she had ever felt, stronger, more intoxicating. For a moment Mila sank beneath the passion as Zacharias fed her the magick that would bind her to him and give her the long lifespan of a gargoyle's life-mate. When she thought she could take no more of the intense pleasure, her body erupted, coming so hard for so long she feared she would pass out.

Zacharias's gaze snapped to hers as he stroked into her sheath with one last deep thrust. It was as though he had depleted himself of all his energies. He stilled above her and tightened his fingers on her hips. "I love you, Mila," he whispered before pressing a soft kiss against her lips. His deep groan of satisfaction drifted above her mouth when he pressed his forehead to hers and spurted his seed deep inside.

“I love you, too, Zacharias,” Mila murmured back, thinking about how lucky she was to have had her rental car break down in the middle of Eastern Europe.

 THE END 

Tuesday Morrigan

Tuesday began her love affair with romance at an early age. As a child she was always infatuated with the romance novels she snuck from her mother. Later, in high school, the public library became her sanctuary with an endless array of romance novels. Tuesday is still an avid reader of books. Thanks to shows like *Buffy*, *Angel*, and her latest infatuation *Supernatural*, Tuesday prefers her stories to have a little more grit. Her favorite genres have always been fantasy, mystery, romance and erotica, so as a writer, she tries to blend the genres to create her own personal niche.

You can learn more about Tuesday, including what's her latest project, at www.mochancreme.com, or by sending an email to her at Tuesday@mochancreme.com.