Ellora's Cave Presents



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Summoned by Lust

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SUMMONED BY LUST

Amanda Sidhe

Dedication

For my friends and cheering section (in no particular order): Trish Kazee, Lori Balster, Sherri Siniff, Nikki Burris and Amanda Parsons.

And most especially for Brady, who is my friend and inspiration in a mostly platonic way.

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Chapter One

As the vampire Kinsman known as Razor disembarked from the private jet, Karma didn't need to reach out with her telepathy to sense the menace billowing around him like a storm cloud. It rolled out like an invisible fog to flick spine-chilling tentacles across her flesh. At the tingle of adrenaline in her blood she suppressed the urge to grin. This one would be a challenge. And a hot one at that, judging by the silhouette of his bod against the landing lights behind him.

Karma leaned with a studied casual air against the bumper of her midnight blue Jaguar. The precise trim of her slacks painted the smooth fabric to her long, shapely legs and the flare of her hips with designer perfection. The ruby satin button-down top, unbuttoned enough to show a significant glimpse of cleavage, offered her a mix of sexy professionalism that her clan respected. Not only was it a style that looked stunning on her athletic frame but more importantly it was one more tool in her arsenal to keep her alive and kicking. Any edge she could gain, Karma snatched with both hands. Tonight most especially. She'd dealt with some of the deadliest Kinsmen on the planet and from all accounts, Razor was the biggest badass of the bunch. The Offspring, the youngest of the vampires of her clan, whispered his name as though he were the boogey man. When the older Kinsmen gave her the assignment to escort Razor on his visit, she'd sensed fear even from the seasoned Kinsmen. If she survived this assignment she'd secure the respect of the entire clan.

Respect for a human wasn't something the clan granted lightly. Only two things had kept her alive and human for the last seven years as the Summon to the Wescott Clan. Her considerable telepathic talent and her willingness to do whatever she had to in order to not get dead or undead. That required quick thinking and a tough hide but

Karma had come equipped with those long before she'd encountered her first vampire. She had her father and all the scams she'd helped him run as a kid to thank for that.

No ground crew at the tiny airport bothered with the private jet just yet. The clan had paid plenty in hush money to cover the frequent deaths that occurred when the clan received late night visitors. She knew, because she'd been the one to arrange the payoffs, or target the troublemakers for the clan to eliminate, whichever way the witnesses wanted to play it. Those still willing to service the clan's fleet made damn sure to do it in the daytime. It wasn't a pretty business, the one she'd been drawn into against her will by whatever quirk of nature made her susceptible to the thrall of the vampire, but she knew better than to fail at her appointed tasks.

Keeping her face neutral, Karma sized up the formidable Kinsman approaching her. Razor certainly looked as dangerous as his psychic aura and the rumors suggested. The black fatigue pants snug to his hips, crotch and butt revealed the power in his long-legged stride as he covered the distance between them with a threatening speed that jumped her pulse into a sprint with the desire to flee—or submit. His thighs were absolutely massive and all muscle.

The duffle he carried in one hand strained at the fabric where the handles were sewn on as if it were filled with heavy lead bars but Razor didn't seem the slightest overbalanced by the weight. The sleeveless black top glistened tight over his chest muscles and six pack like spandex, even though Karma didn't think that was what the material was. Her fingers twitched to glide over the silky fabric and trace those amazing abs. Razor virtually dripped with sex appeal. She'd have to be six weeks dead not to be affected by his masculine power. He bulged more massively than a pro wrestler, making Karma's mouth water to run her tongue along the dip between the cap of his shoulder and his bare biceps.

The wavy dark hair swept back from his face fell in loose tangles to his shoulders as though he'd brushed it after getting out of the shower but not since it dried. His lips were full, sensual and yet tightly pressed together with bad-boy attitude. Absolutely deadly in appearance and absolutely yummy at the same time. So dangerously sexy a woman could be tempted to risk her neck for a night sampling a man like Razor. For the first time ever, Karma felt her conviction never to sleep with a vamp waver. But, no matter the potential thrill, it wasn't worth the emotional and probably bloody mess. Especially when it was her blood that was at risk.

Unlike her, Razor had not bothered with sunglasses. His face was handsome, probably the most handsome she'd ever laid eyes on. She wanted to touch the perfectly masculine plane between his cheekbone and jaw to discover if it truly was as flawless as it appeared. The set of his mouth held a cruel edge and the stunning silver of his eyes could rip through a person as easily as his fangs. The very fact his eyes were silver with no hint of iris or pupil meant his vampire nature was aroused. It advised the wise who looked upon him to tread very carefully.

Even with the pupils hidden Karma could follow the path of his gaze as it raked up her body like rough, probing fingers that dragged over the flesh to leave it heated, electrified and aching for more. The trembling that danced along her nerves brought her body alive with feminine desire that she couldn't afford to entertain.

As Karma straightened, she cast a gentle telepathic probe into the threatening presence surrounding Razor and sank a fiber of her power into his consciousness. Nothing so noticeable that he could detect the invasion. Just enough so she could monitor his emotions, particularly his expectations. Anticipating and fulfilling the needs of a Kinsman generally kept them happy and herself in one piece. It was also why the clan sent her for the most violent and unpredictable visitors. Her talents kept her clan leaders safe from the occasional executioners issued from rival clans. It was also why she'd been a Summon for seven years. Six years and seven months longer than the previous record.

Immediately, she sensed exactly what Razor required from her, someone to drive him without comment and without eye contact. Following the unspoken instructions, Karma walked to the driver's side and climbed in. She waited for Razor to stow his bag in the opened trunk and settle into the passenger seat. He was nearly too large for the sports car but he didn't comment or complain in his words or his emotions. Staying as far toward her door as she could manage, Karma's arm still brushed Razor's when she reached for the gear shift between them. He was so broad through the shoulders there barely seemed enough air in the compartment for the two of them. Keeping her expression blank, she started the engine and eased across the tarmac to the road leading back to town.

As she prepared to take the turn onto the main road, Karma turned her head to the left while checking for traffic, unintentionally flashing Razor the length of her bare neck. His fierce desire coursed though her thin connection to him like a pulse of electricity. Frozen while she absorbed the images coming from him, Karma struggled not to react.

Blood lust stormed inside Razor, barely contained. He imagined himself pouncing on her, tearing her throat out and then burying his face in the gaping flesh, getting the hot, fragrant blood all over him as he fed.

Shit.

Razor was the psycho vamp everyone said he was. Zenica had told her that not a single human servant survived his last visit but Karma had hoped that was an exaggeration. The only reason a clan would allow all their Summons to be slain would be if they feared the Kinsman too much to stop him. Her clan was known for its fierce fighters and for them to not challenge Razor...

Well, Karma had wanted a challenge, hadn't she? Talk about regretting what you wish for.

As disturbing as the vision seeping into her mind from Razor was, it was hardly the first time a Kinsman entertained the notion of attacking her. Although most of them just considered biting her, not ripping out chunks of flesh. When she glanced to the right, ostensibly to check for traffic, she pumped a quick image back into Razor's stream of consciousness. Behind her sunglasses, he couldn't see the brief eye contact. Adding the

mildest physical impression with the image, she cast the picture of herself bending her head into his lap and taking his stiff cock into her mouth. She even went so far as to carry the daydream forward to the first two or three dips of her wet mouth over his erect body, before withdrawing the sending.

Dangerous as Razor was, his sex appeal was undeniable. The kind of dangerous bad boy who was scrumptious from the word go. Her tongue rubbed longingly against the ridges at the roof of her mouth, wanting to know how he would have felt for real. To know what it would be like to curl her sensitive tongue along his swollen shaft. To feel the way his thick head would catch behind her lips before pulling free from her mouth.

With an almost inaudible grunt, Razor gripped the fabric of his fatigues a couple inches above the knee. As he leaned back into the seat he tugged on the pants as if just to arrange himself more comfortably. Karma knew the need to loosen the grip of the clothes at his lap had everything to do with her sending.

As she turned back to the road, she suppressed a grin. The daydream had entertained her as much as it apparently had Razor. The tactic had been effective before. Men were so easy. She could steer them from blood lust to physical lust as masterfully as she handled her sports car. Once they weren't thinking of her as food, she could keep them distracted from following through on the sexual thoughts with various diversions and a tight schedule. Despite the threats in his thoughts—after all, what kind of vampire didn't fantasize about blood?—Karma felt a small pang of regret that she couldn't get a chance to nibble on such a gourmet bod as Razor's.

"What Kinsman claims you, Summon?" His voice rumbled with a deep gravelly tone of boulders grinding together as if he didn't speak often enough to soften his vocal cords.

Karma tensed. He'd not wanted conversation before. She'd felt no change in that intention but now Razor required an answer from her. Missing the change in his attitude was not good. For her and the safety of her intact throat, seriously not good.

She counted on knowing well in advance any expectation, often before the vampire even fully realized what they themselves wanted, and being prepared to provide what was required in a way that kept her personally clear of any danger. Not knowing that Razor was going to ask her a question meant he could keep his thoughts tightly to himself like a gambler with a poker face and a mean talent for sleight of hand. It undermined her one advantage in a game where the odds were already stacked against her. "No one. I'm Summon to the clan."

"Sent to service me?" There was an amused twist to his tone that cast a tingle across her skin and tightened her nipples with naughty suggestiveness. Razor's still silver eyes were half closed as he regarded her. The corners of his full, kissable lips quirked up in a way that spiked Karma's blood with adrenaline.

Oh shit. The oral sex pictorial had worked too well. No matter how enjoyable bedding a mountain of a man who looked like Razor might be, that was a strict no-no for little Summons who valued their lives and humanity. Particularly when the vamp in question was stone cold deadly. Trying her best to keep any sexual innuendo out of her voice, Karma replied, "I'm at your service during your visit."

For the rest of the drive to the private townhouse where Razor would stay, Karma didn't pick up the slightest impression from him, save the heat of his eyes as they roved lustfully over her. Not good. Any attempt to deepen her telepathic probe would be apparent to his silent, attentive mind. He was keeping his thoughts tightly to himself. Dangerously tight.

Karma focused on her driving and on the fearless, blank expression she wished to present. Even with the air conditioning on, she could smell Razor's hot, masculine scent. It filled the compartment like spicy musk and she found herself wondering if his skin tasted as delectable as he smelled. Although there was hardly room for it in her car, Karma longed to climb into his lap and straddle him while she tasted his kiss. The sensitive skin of her inner thighs could already feel what it would be like to have Razor's hard body between them. Her lips parted ever so slightly as if they didn't know

she'd only been fantasizing and they expected to feel the pressure of a forceful kiss at any moment. Her heart rate increased as the building desire tightened her stomach and grew steamy in her core.

With the smallest movement she could manage, Karma exhaled a calming breath slowly out of her mouth. Even Offspring could hear the human heart. An exhilarated pace would certainly alert a Kinsman like Razor to her excited state and remind him of the blood thoughts of before.

The last thing she needed was her sudden unbidden attraction to him to trigger Razor's predatory nature. This was totally unlike her. No matter how attractive the vampire, she knew they were all killers. She never had trouble remembering that and remaining all business with them before. What was it but perhaps a previously unknown suicidal tendency on her part that would spark any interest in the most unpredictable and deadly Kinsman she'd ever encountered?

When they finally reached the townhouse, Karma almost allowed herself to sigh in relief. She popped the trunk using the inside switch. Once she got Razor out of the car and passed him the keys she could get some breathing room. And a cold shower. Or perhaps even privately find the release she needed to curb her hormones before she had to return that night. Dawn was approaching. There wasn't anything more he could require from her before settling in for the day.

But that wasn't what he wanted her to do and she knew it the minute she moved to pass the keys over. After the mental silence of the long drive Karma had begun to worry that she'd lost her mental connection to Razor altogether but now the impressions from him were strong and clear. He expected a gesture of hospitality he could sneer at but if she denied him that, he'd take offense. An unhappy vampire tended to kill whatever aggravated him.

Keeping her expression neutral, Karma turned off the engine and climbed out. While he fetched his bag, she unlocked the front door. She walked in and made a show of holding open the door for him, waiting for the sneer she'd expected, but it didn't

come. Instead he dropped his bag in the foyer. Brushing her hand away from the knob, he closed the door with an ominous thump like the sound of a coffin shutting. He turned the deadbolt. Presenting her with nothing but his wide, muscular back, Razor remained facing the door with deadly stillness.

Not good. Despite her outward appearance of calm, her mind screamed. Not good. Not good! Not good! Fear starved her blood of heat and it chilled her like ice water. Never before had she felt death stalk her as it did right now and it had taken the form of a massive vampire.

Karma laid the keys on the table by the door for Razor. He'd gone mentally silent on her again. She didn't know what he wanted and that frightened her. No one she'd ever encountered before could suppress his thoughts completely from her telepathic probe. The stillness in his mind and body reminded her of a jungle cat waiting for prey to wander a little closer. And she was that prey. Karma needed to get a handle on the situation and fast. While his back remained to her, she risked the slightest deepening of the probe.

The double blow came simultaneously.

Razor spun on her in a blur of movement, clamped his massive hand around her throat and shoved her into the wall. The attack had been very controlled for a vampire. He could have driven her clean though the wall but instead her head didn't even bang into the drywall, only her shoulders.

The second blow had been mental. Razor's mind snapped around her tendril of invading consciousness and trapped her within him. Damn it. He was a telepath too? How could the clan have overlooked adding that crucial detail to the profile they'd given her?

With her probe still locked into his mind, he stopped shielding his thoughts. Razor curled back his lips, revealing his oversized fangs. They were huge like a lion's, extending a good three inches from gum to tip and broader than most vampires' so the tip was blunted and not needle sharp. With his face so close to hers that his burning

breath toyed with her long brunette bangs, Razor dragged his tongue over his left fang in a lingering stroke that was as erotic as it was frightening. The image of him tearing the flesh away in a sheet from her neck to her breasts with his teeth spilled from his mind.

Recoiling from his thoughts, Karma twisted them from the violence he entertained to a lusty dream. The animalistic drive surged in Razor but Karma knew vampires, knew how closely linked the blood hunger was to sexual desire. Taking his image, she remolded it, returning the vision of him massaging her bare breasts while he licked along her breastbone so her full curves rubbed against the rough stubble on his cheek.

As she recovered from her initial shock, she picked up the impression that Razor had given her the vision as a test, to see what she would do. Karma swallowed with effort not to react. He possessed the strength to do as he willed and fighting would only incite his attack that much sooner. With every ounce of willpower, she kept her fists down by her side instead of clawing at his arm. Submission before a powerful Kinsman sometimes spared an Offspring who might otherwise have perished for giving offense. This was the first time she had to fall back on that tactic of last resort.

"You like playing mind games?" Razor hooked a finger under her sunglasses and flicked them away so nothing shielded her from those metallic eyes of his. This close, she could just make out the shape of his irises behind the veil of magic and they bore into her.

"I meant no offense, Kinsman," Karma said as naturally as she could with the tightness of his grip over her vocal cords. "I wished only to anticipate your desires." This time she did add a hint of sexual coloring to her meaning. Better to end this risky encounter with her virtue sullied than with her vital organs displaced from her body.

She relaxed mentally to let him feel the truth in her. That was even harder than trying to force her body to relax despite the fight-or-flight response that dumped adrenaline into her bloodstream and made her bones tremble. Not knowing how powerful he was telepathically she carefully forced her mind open, like trying to unball

a fist when it gripped the ledge of a cliff and the drop was deadly. It wasn't a natural thing to do. When she thought she'd exposed her thoughts long enough for him to see her sincerity, Karma tugged experimentally on her telepathic probe to see if he'd release the connection. No dice. His mental jaws tightened, keeping her firmly inside his controlled upper layer of consciousness.

Razor's focus lowered to his hand at her throat. Adjusting his grip, his fingertips settled over her pulse. Despite her outward attempt to project calm, her blood slammed with fear under his touch.

His other hand tugged her shirt out of her slacks in a long, slow pull that made the soft fabric of her blouse rub tantalizingly over her stomach even as panic froze Karma's muscles. Razor slipped his hand beneath her shirt and palmed her breast, enclosing it completely, which spoke to the size of his hands because she was fairly well proportioned up top. With a squeeze that pinched her nipple between his thumb and the side of his finger the terror that had been coiling inside her shattered as a spike of desire shocked her entire body. Karma hadn't been able to suppress her cry of pleasure. A roll of thunder cascaded first across her skin and then through her muscles and finally vibrated through her bones like the rhythmic beating of a base drum. It was as though her own natural attraction was being soaked up by Razor's telepathic power, amplified and projected back into her a hundredfold. Instantly, her entire being softened with sexual heat. Writhing against the wall, Karma bent her knee and stroked it up the outside of Razor's thigh. Forgetting why she had her hands at her sides, she reached up and explored the rocky terrain of his hard stomach.

Razor smiled wide, exposing his fangs. "I'll make you a deal. If you do to me what you promised and keep my thoughts from roaming from sex to blood, I won't kill you before sunrise."

Sunrise was in less than an hour.

She didn't have to ask what promise he referred to. Her own image echoed in his mind of her head moving in a bobbing motion over his lap. His desire flavored the memory, making her lick her lips in anticipation. Even though Razor was a big, scary vampire, his barbaric domination thrilled her. He was a man used to taking what he wanted and the fact he wanted her made her wet and ready to surrender. If only she could trust him. "And after sunrise?"

"One step at a time," he said in a manner that seemed to indicate he didn't think that would be an issue. That would have frightened her but Razor rolled her nipple with his thumb, rocketing a fresh surge of need through her that was already more explosive than any orgasm she'd ever had. The need was so massive that she knew he was magnifying it with his own telepathy. But her body didn't care and she squirmed and heaved against his palm. It wasn't merely her survival instinct that led her to agree. "As you wish, Kinsman."

"Razor." He released her neck but kept his hand on her breast. "Say my name." Looming tall over the top of her, he didn't need to physically pin her to make her feel trapped and at his complete mercy. The solid heat of his body closed around her, invading her space and her body. Every breath was heavy with his masculine spice. Deadly handsome, any woman would disintegrate with longing just to be on the receiving end of his lustful attention.

Karma suppressed the urge to reach up and check her neck for damage but it didn't really hurt much anyway. Instead, she roved her fingertips up the hard hills of his delicious pecs. Sinking into the silver pools of his eyes, she murmured in a seductive voice, "Razor."

At last he closed his mouth, hiding his fangs behind a wanton grin that quirked up the sides of his mouth. Finally releasing her breast, he reached up with both hands, scrunched up two handfuls of her hair and began to guide her downward.

Karma would give him what he wanted but there was no reason to spoil it by rushing. Her own smile tugged at her lips. Her daydream image before had not been simply to distract Razor. The desire was truly her own. Her mouth was watering now because despite everything else, she wanted to taste him, to feel the shape of him with

her tongue, to see just how his expression might change when he lost control and emptied himself into her mouth. "Sit," she instructed.

Razor walked backward into the living room, his hands still working through her hair and massaging little circles over her scalp. When the recliner pressed against the back of his knees he stopped. Karma knelt before him, noting the ready pressure straining at the lap of his fatigues.

The first hint of a blood thought began to form in Razor's mind. The impression of sinking his fangs into flesh. Karma plunged her mind hard against the thought and mutated it into the image of a deep, passionate kiss instead. The kiss she imagined for him was one of those deep soulful kisses that incorporated the teeth as well as the tongue. In it, Razor's teeth closed tightly over her lower lip and drew gently back so the soft mound of flesh escaped in a slow squeeze. And it was their mouths Karma pictured, not some ephemeral unknown couple but Razor and herself. She imagined stroking her tongue along his upper teeth until she reached his fang and then gliding roughly up the length of the canine before plunging deeper into his mouth to find the hot softness of his tongue. It was a kiss so perfectly conjured in her thoughts Karma regretted it wasn't real.

"You almost lost the deal before you'd even begun," Razor chuckled with a depth that was both sexy and menacing.

"Can't have that, now can we?" she grinned playfully up at him, resting her hands on his hipbones so her thumbs framed his swollen member. He'd not resisted when she'd climbed deeper into his thoughts and now she had a slight foothold. Enough to possibly—maybe, hopefully—exert some small influence over him. So as she unfastened the buttons of his fly her motivation was not solely out of self-preservation. Her breathiness was not only from fear but from excitement. The goose bumps and tingling of her flesh made her tremble just enough to be noticed. She was honest enough with herself to admit that she wanted this too.

Karma projected her focus on her task into Razor's mind, keeping him preoccupied from other lurking blood thoughts. With a tug, she lowered his pants to his knees. He'd gone commando. No pesky undergarments restrained the massive cock that reached straight toward her. A hungry smile crept across her face. She'd had large before but Razor was absolutely delectable in his massive stature. As she cupped his lightly haired kneecaps, she murmured, "Sit down and relax."

Razor did as she told him. While untying and removing his boots, Karma sent him the vision of her kissing him on the inside of his thigh. Prompted by her images, Razor touched himself, gliding his hand over his shaft and shifting more comfortably into the chair. Once the boots and his pants were out of her way, she did exactly what she'd thought about doing.

Tickling her hands up the inside of his thighs, she widened his legs enough for her to reach him. She trailed kisses up the hill of his thigh muscles until she could go no further. Moving his hands aside, she circled his shaft with one hand. Well, not circled it exactly. He was too wide for her fingers and thumb to meet by a considerable distance.

Deciding to thoroughly enjoy her task, Karma bent down, scooped one of his balls into her mouth and rolled it with her tongue. Razor's hands slipped under her hair and tugged her waves back in a ponytail. Using her hair like a handle, Razor guided her upward. It was a controlling gesture that thrilled Karma in a way she'd not expected. She licked the underside of his shaft from the base to tip, making him tense all over. He tasted even better than the warm scent of him had suggested, masculine and earthy.

"You're evil, woman," Razor growled.

At the tip, Karma licked away the drop of moisture she found there. Sparing a glance up at Razor, she enjoyed the way his hard features had softened with passion. The way he was slouched on the chair was oddly relaxed and intense at the same time. The cushion cradled his sensual frame while his muscles all tightened and trembled because she touched him. His eyes had half closed and he breathed through his mouth

so the hint of his fangs showed between his perfectly kissable lips. Before her task was done, she hoped to get a sample of that mouth of his.

"Later," Razor said, shoving her face downward. Karma had intended to start with a slow teasing pace but Razor wasn't having any of it. Plunging himself into her mouth and then her throat, he forced her down on him even as he thrust up with his hips. Karma closed her eyes and held her breath as he choked off her air. There was no way she could deep throat all of him, so she wrapped her hand over his shaft and stroked it as she worked up and down over him. Her other hand fondled his balls and the crisp hairs in his lap.

"That's it," Razor gasped. "Fuck me with your pretty mouth."

The dirty talk from him excited Karma in a way she wouldn't have anticipated. She'd always thought she preferred tender talk but not from Razor. He was too formidable, too scary for that kind of subtlety. Even though it wasn't part of the deal, her core tightened, wanting to feel his body filling her. The ripples of that desire washed down her legs and coiled up inside her chest, making her nipples remember the sinful effect he'd had on them.

"Witch," he grunted. Razor tossed his head back, gasping and hissing. His body moved with hers with the demanding upward thrust of his hips that found a smooth rhythm. His perfect muscles only made her mouth water more to watch him. That plunging force would feel magnificent within her steaming sex, she just knew it. "Don't you dare make me come early with your wanton thoughts."

She pumped up and down over his engorged head, working him with her tongue and teeth. *Karma*, she thought to herself. *My name's Karma*.

He shuddered, "Fuck me, Karma."

Shit. He was completely inside her head, getting every thought from her, not just what she pushed to him through their connection.

Razor laughed, somehow sounding sexy and evil at the same time. How he was enjoying the unrestrained lust in her thoughts. She could sense that powerfully in him.

He loved her wanting him badly and he loved her giving him satisfaction while she squirmed in unrelieved need.

Fighting against the pace he'd set with his hands in her hair, Karma withdrew from him just enough to close her lips firmly. Sending Razor the vision of her straddling him naked and positioning him at her entrance, she lowered her mouth half closed down over his cock. Using her mind, she made it feel to Razor as close to how her tight pussy would feel as she could.

"That's it, girl," Razor heaved upward with his hips. "Ah. Yeah. That's it!"

Karma struggled as Razor convulsed. He shoved her down in a pumping action harder and harder as a burst of seed shot down her throat. There was no question of whether to swallow it or not. With effort, she stole snatches of breath between the pumping of his body until he finished his release.

At last he relaxed. Still on her knees, Karma sat back on her feet before him. As she reclaimed her stolen breath she rested her cheek on his knee and gazed up at Razor. The silver had finally bled from his eyes and for the first time she saw the deep green of his irises. He seemed so much more human to her now, relaxed and trembling as he was. Even though he was still a bit short of breath from his orgasm, Razor's fingers toyed with her hair.

Razor scooped his palms up the curve of her neck and cupped her face. Tugging her gently, he guided her closer until she sat across his lap. Her legs rested over one armrest and Razor supported her back with one strong arm. His other arm crossed her thighs so he could grip her bottom with massaging, forceful squeezes. When he lowered his handsome face toward her neck, panic flicked through her.

Quickly, Karma sent him the impression of nuzzling her. No biting, she thought. Just cuddling.

She caught his easy smile that formed at her thoughts before he lowered to her. Doing exactly as she'd suggested, Razor buried his face in the curve of her neck so his nose and lips stroked lightly over her skin. His heavy breath tickled the fine hairs and

sent hot shivers through Karma. He licked the length of her pulse and Karma had the impression of being groomed by a Bengal tiger. As nice as it felt, it was about as dangerous. Despite her projecting thoughts of him moving his attentions down to her breast or up to her mouth, Razor obstinately persisted. Inhaling, Razor nibbled at the thin skin over her vein. He murmured, "You smell like sex."

Karma stroked through his black hair, liking the way it clung to her fingers because it was so thick. Since his considerable frame so overpowered her smaller one, he engulfed her body when he bent over her. His body heat trapped her as surely as his arms. Even though she knew she should be thinking about how to get away from him, part of her, well, most of her truthfully, wanted him never to let her go. As he kissed and nibbled at her neck, his formidable shoulder curled so close to her that she kissed the bulges and grooves of his muscles.

A tender roll of compassion spread from Razor over Karma like sweet melting butter. The rumble of his voice vibrated on her skin. "You're such a treasure. I can't believe your clan shares you."

"I don't sleep with my clan."

Razor sat back, his heavy eyebrows pressed together with confusion. Searching her eyes, he asked, "Never?"

"I've never had any form of sex with a vampire," she caressed the strong plane of his cheek, feeling strangely affectionate for him, "until you." Without the deadly silver in his eyes and the vampire blood lust coloring his thoughts, Karma began to see Razor much differently. He cradled her body carefully, mindful of his strength and the fragility of a human's body.

"Wait," he held up a hand in a stop gesture, obviously bothered by her confession, "then what was that mess in the car, if not an invitation?"

She frowned as she admitted, "I saw your thoughts. The ones with my throat torn out. I only intended to distract you from that."

He chuckled, "Backfired on you, didn't it?" Smiling sexily, Razor drew circles through her shirt around her taut nipple with his fingernails.

The casual stroking fired through Karma. With a sigh, she admitted, "A little bit."

"More than you know." His burning gaze lowered to her breasts where he continued to fondle her.

Karma's throat tightened and her mouth went dry. Just when she was starting to relax, Razor's cryptic comment activated her internal "Oh crap, I'm in trouble" alarm. Not sure she wanted to know, she asked, "What do you mean?"

He'd become serious, his smile vanished and cold hardness returned as he met her eyes. "That was the first time in over seven hundred years I've had an orgasm without blood in my mouth."

She couldn't even fathom seven hundred years of anything. By the serious way in which he'd confessed that, Karma knew it was something that displeased Razor. She got the distinct impression that he wasn't referring to a little love bite either. As disturbing as the thought of him feeding on the women he'd been with was, at least he seemed regretful about it.

His conviction when he spoke next frightened her more than anything else he'd thought, said or done yet that night. "I don't care who I have to kill. I'm keeping you."

Chapter Two

"Keeping me?" Her first unguarded thought had been to wait until Razor bedded down for the day and run like hell. Having a momentary fling with Tall, Dark and Dangerous was thrilling, being owned body and soul by him was a completely different story.

Angry silver bled back into his eyes as if from ducts under his lids. Malice spilled around him in a cloud so intense she could almost see it. His next statement permitted no argument, "I will kill you if you leave me."

Terror froze her blood, knowing he meant every word. His assurance went against her first rule—stay alive. She'd had that rule since she was a kid running scams with her father. Whenever the shit started splattering, which it seemed to do a lot, she stuck to that one cardinal rule. She'd done a lot of icky things she refused to dwell on or regret just to survive before honing her telepathy. After she'd got a handle on her talents, she'd managed to avoid most of the shit storms.

Until she'd come to town for a heist. The first day hadn't passed before she felt the magnetic draw she now knew was the Summoning. She had walked right into the middle of a vampire rave without ever having known such creatures existed until that moment. Razor's ultimatum sounded much like what the Kinsmen had told her that night. Become a Summon, a human servant of the clan, or become part of the four-course meal served at the rave. When in doubt, always refer to rule number one.

That night, her second rule had been established. Stay human. Sixty or seventy years and then out. None of this seven hundred years of blood orgasms for her, thank you. No hiding from sunlight, no blood lusting, no battling as an Offspring to survive the fury of the elder Kinsmen who killed a good three quarters of their Offspring in the first couple of years of their undead lives.

She harbored no great loyalty to the clan she served. They hadn't killed her yet because she'd proven useful to them. And aside from the wanting to stay alive part, Karma fulfilled her obligations because the pay was insane. She'd bought her first brand new Jag outright with her first paycheck. Having been raised by a moneyworshiping conman, Karma couldn't deny the lure of the almighty dollar on her semi-corrupt soul.

Razor remained silent thus far and Karma was aware that he was absorbing every thought that flittered through her head. Before she could even try to withdraw from their connection again, she felt Razor clamp down on it even tighter. He was good, she thought. He could keep his thoughts private from her if he wished but she couldn't block him out at all.

"Practice," Razor explained. The threatening silver had faded from his eyes about the time she'd being musing about rule number one. He'd correctly surmised that she'd not mistake his present gentleness as a guarantee that he'd not harm her. Just because the cloak of monstrous ferocity had dropped away for now didn't mean he wasn't still prepared to carry out his threat.

"Let me be clear on the terms of this arrangement." Karma tried to sound as businesslike as a woman could while curled in the lap of a partially nude man, especially considering which parts of him were nude. "I will be your Summon, not your Offspring?"

"I haven't decided yet. Summon for now."

She nodded, not really pleased with the uncertainty but letting it slide for now. Her fears darted like silver minnows in her mind, schooling and scattering as she futilely tried to catch and calm them. "And what if my clan would rather see me dead than leave?"

"You won't have to worry about that." His grin revealed his white, even teeth and lengthy fangs. Again she marveled at how handsome and frightening Razor could be at the same time. His lush lips hid those deadly teeth. The penetrating green of his eyes

could quickly become veiled with the silver of vampire power. The strong, chiseled features of his face could soften into a sexy smile as readily as harden into a mask of frightening menace.

"No chance this would be a platonic relationship?"

"None whatsoever." Razor's gaze followed the path of his fingertips as they wandered down to her crotch. They slipped between the silk of her thighs and cupped her soft center. He added, "You wouldn't want it that way." As he curled his fingers inward, a shock of pleasure rattled though her body and did for her what hours of foreplay could do. Gasping, she jerked upright in his lap, momentarily out of control of her body's reaction. Her core clenched and quivered, becoming instantly moist in demanding need. Her hesitations and resistance shattered like glass into glittering sand only to be blown away by winds of desire. She was so ready for him, right now.

"Razor," she gasped. She was on the verge of begging him to make love to her and would if his touch hadn't stolen her breath. All her instincts for self-preservation crumbled and fell before the thought of one shattering night of passion with him. More than anything she wanted him to touch her, to take her, to destroy her self-control.

"Here's a new rule for you, lover," Razor pressed circles hard into the clothes and folds of flesh covering her flaming clit, "an addendum to your rule number one."

Karma clutched at his hand but didn't stop him. Instead she opened her legs to him, giving him greater access. She stuttered, "What's that?"

"You have to keep my blood lust at bay. As often as you can but especially when we're alone," he swirled his touch the other way and Karma arched from the sensation, "or being intimate."

"I'll do my best," she panted.

Razor withdrew his touch and caught her chin. He forced her to meet his stern eyes. "Your life depends on it."

She blinked, the lustful rush cooling.

"I'm not saying that to be an ass." Razor brushed back the bangs that had fallen into her eyes. "If I could control it myself, I would. If it gets away from both of us, I won't be able to stop. As it stands, this past hour with you is the longest period of relief from the lust I can remember."

She'd seen the monsters vampires could become when the blood lust was on them. To have no escape from it would nearly have to drive a man crazy. If he thought she brought him relief from that it was no wonder that he wanted her for himself.

Having listened to her thoughts, he said, "Sometimes I have thought of myself as psychotic. I know others have labeled me that and worse." Razor relaxed back into the easy chair. "I thought it was true until just now. You make me feel almost human again. I'd thought I'd lost that part of myself a long time ago."

Karma watched him as he closed his eyes and sank into the feeling he'd described. When he drew a deep breath, it was like the first one he'd enjoyed after a long stressful day and he exhaled into the meditative comfort of it. Only it hadn't been a long day he was recovering from. Her heart went out to Razor in a way it hadn't ever gone out to anyone before. And it wasn't just because she could sense his pain either. She'd sensed that in many others before but she never considered herself much of a compassionate person. So what if other peoples' lives were shitty? Her life was shitty and no one bothered sending her flowers. But Razor's pain touched her. Made her want to soothe him, comfort him. Only she would fall for a maniac Kinsman who made other vampires dread the very sound of his name.

With her thumb, she traced the shape of Razor's lips. His eyes slit opened with a hunger in them that had nothing to do with blood. There he is, she thought, the man beneath the animal. Could this man be capable of more than lust? Could he be capable of caring? Of tenderness? Of love?

Karma rose to lightly touch her lips to his. They were burning and yielded under her pressure. Deepening the kiss, his tongue flicked between her teeth and stroked the roof of her mouth. He supported her head with his huge hand, drawing her harder to him. His other hand curled on her hip and gripped and massaged with the pace of his probing tongue. Karma curled more into him, giving herself to the kiss, to this experimental moment to discover what more there could be between them and just what that would be like. When her tongue stroked over his fang, Razor groaned into her mouth.

Flexing his hips, Razor worked his stiffening erection against her bottom. Withdrawing from the kiss just enough to speak, he murmured, "Strip."

Karma rubbed her nose playfully against his. "Don't you want to undress me?"

"If I do you'll never be able to wear those clothes again," he laughed in all seriousness.

Smiling seductively, Karma sat forward slightly and reached up the back of her shirt to unhook her bra. When she tugged her shirt off over her head, she removed the bra with it. Razor's gaze dropped to the full roundness of her breasts. Her nipples were already pinched into tight points so sensitive his breath made them ache.

In her mind, she saw Razor's blood fantasy. In the vision he saw himself scooping one of her breasts into his mouth and biting down until blood escaped. Quickly she drove a replacement thought to block out that vampiric desire. It was not as though she tried to remove that deadly want from his consciousness, merely tweaked it. Just a shift from horrific to erotic, two shades of experience that existed so near to each other on the spectrum for vampires that they could crave both in nearly the same way. Even still, when Razor lowered his mouth to her chest she honestly didn't know which path he'd follow. His rough tongue dragged over her nipple, rolling Karma's eyes back with the shot of pleasure from it. He circled it and then nipped ever so lightly on the very tip.

Holding his head in her hands, Karma heaved up toward him and sighed with need. The sensations from her body multiplied with his telepathic prowess. Each tiny touch rocked her whole body and when he gripped her other breast tightly so her nipple dug into his palm Karma convulsed with the electric passion so great she couldn't contain it within her skin. It echoed back through their connection and Razor grabbed her harder to him as his muscles clenched involuntarily.

"Wicked," Razor laughed. His voice became deeper, more feral. "Sex with a fellow telepath is going to be ferocious."

Karma couldn't help but smile at his pleased expression, making him look very human and very delectably male. She could feel his heart beating with anticipation through the palm she'd rested on his chest. The surge in his erection ground into her backside with more insistence.

Razor practically tossed her off his lap and to her feet. "Pants. Off. Now."

As Karma kicked off her shoes, Razor stood up and yanked off his shirt, the last bit of clothing he still wore. He towered over her and she remembered what a mountain of a man he was. When he was sitting down, he'd seemed powerfully built. But extended to his full height with no clothing to diffuse the definition of his body, Razor was more than the perfect male specimen, he was art. His naturally swarthy skin glowed in the pale light of the living room lamps. And his massive member was beyond the organ of her dreams. It was practically a weapon. A sword on which to impale herself, not caring if she survived it.

By the time she'd shucked off her pants and underwear, Razor was already reaching for her. His thumbs hooked over her hip bones and his huge hands curled around and cupped her ass. As though she weighed nothing, Razor lifted Karma up. To keep her balance she gripped his rock-hard shoulders, the skin barely yielded to her touch. She wrapped her legs around his waist.

To her amazement, Razor eased her down so her opening rested on the wide tip of his erection. He was so large, she wasn't sure if he could enter her at all, even as wet and ready as she was for him. The expression of lustful confidence on Razor's face told her he didn't doubt her ability to accommodate him.

Carefully, Razor released Karma's weight so she pressed heavily onto his head. With a squeaking gasp, Karma's center relaxed just enough that the bulb of Razor's cock entered her. A tingling wildfire burst through Karma and she gripped Razor's shoulders harder.

"That's it, lover." He lifted her again, withdrawing from her only enough that his tip remained kissed just inside her lips. This time, he thrust with his hips when he lowered Karma. He forced her core wider, lubricated with her moisture so there was no pain, just an incredible pressure that spasmed through her and down her thighs with pure physical joy. Even with the body rocking sensation, he'd still only entered a scant few inches. "Let me in that tight pussy."

Again he raised her and lowered her, finding a greater depth and making space for himself in her shivering, tight center. With each pump, he gained more room to maneuver, a deeper home for his body inside hers. There was not any part of him she didn't feel fully as his width dominated and caressed her insides. "Razor." Karma rolled her head back, so overwhelmed she could do nothing but endure as it washed through her. "Oh God."

To her eternal amazement, Razor kept delving further and further. Glancing down, Karma nearly freaked when she saw how many more inches she had yet to consume. Razor's extremely satisfied grin told her just how much pride he took in impressing and frightening her with his considerable physique. On the next stroke, he rolled his hips and plowed the remaining distance into Karma so she trembled with her crotch finally seated flat over his.

Karma's body clenched around Razor's arousal. "You're so big," she quavered. Her breasts felt so full and tight with her excitement. Arching her back, she rubbed her rigid nipples against Razor's chest and sent happy sparks deep into her breasts. So consuming was her body's reaction that she released echoes of it through her connection into Razor. "So fantastic."

Without warning, Razor snarled back his lips and exposed his fangs. The growl that escaped him was frighteningly like a cougar's, hungry and vicious. Karma barely covered his mouth with her hand in time as he plunged for her throat. His fangs

snapped inside the cup of her hand but she managed to keep him from biting her palm. Razor ground her down on his cock as he tried to force his way to her skin without dropping her.

"Cut it out, Razor!" Karma shouted. Try as she might, she couldn't think of anything but his animalistic lunge at her neck and that seemed to only enflame him more.

She almost lost her grip over his mouth as Razor suddenly dropped to the ground face forward. Yelping in surprise, Karma clutched to Razor as she freefell backward. He landed in a one-arm pushup position, with Karma smashed between him and the plush carpet. His single muscled arm had absorbed most of the impact but it still jarred Karma enough that she saw spots. No longer needing to support her, Razor's hand slipped away from her bottom and closed around her wrist, preparing to pull her muffling hand from his mouth.

Closing her eyes, Karma recalled the kiss they'd shared earlier. Through the connection, she pushed into him the consuming melt of their mouths, the way he'd licked the roof of her mouth, her tongue exploring the shape of his fang.

Razor stopped snapping at her hand. With easy strokes, he began to pump smoothly in and out of her clenching core. He licked her hand, dragging his tongue over her life line and prying it between her fingers as though French kissing. Carefully, Karma removed her hand.

"Sorry," he murmured and then lowered his mouth to lick her cheek. He said it easily, as if he'd merely bumped her accidentally.

The apology shocked Karma more than the attack had. First of all, vampires never regretted attacking a human, not even a Summon. That was their nature, that's what they did every night of their undead existence. Secondly, Razor didn't strike her as the type to apologize for anything. Rather, she expected admonishment for failing to keep his focus away from the blood lust. Somehow, that single uncensored apology made him seem a bit more human.

"Don't wander now," Razor laughed softly into her ear. Cupping her breasts with his hands, he pinched both her nipples as he slammed his massive cock into Karma. Every nerve sang as the sensation pulsed through her body, reflected inside Razor and bounced back through her in a twin explosion, or an almost explosion anyway. Karma knew the orgasm she would have had at that moment was suppressed by Razor's telepathy. He brought her right to the edge in one second and he kept her perched there at the maximum climax of joy right before release. Every fiber trembled, every nerve burned but still she did not come. Razor murmured, "You're not getting off that easily."

"You sadistic bastard." Karma writhed beneath him, making damn sure she was funneling her sexual ecstasy down through her connection to Razor and ensuring she left him no room for blood thoughts. With that precaution foremost in her focus, Karma heaved her hips upward against Razor. She wanted more. A lot more. Every tiny bit of the shattering pleasure he could give her. Her insides quivered around him as the mere presence of so thick a member inside her would normally have been enough to fountain her cum over him in a world-exploding orgasm. Her need strained her voice as she pleaded, "Fuck me, Razor. Please, fuck me."

Razor drew back and smiled knowingly down at her, his fangs plainly showing but not because he meant to scare her with them. He kissed the tip of her nose and eased slowly in and out with long strokes that made a wet, sucking sound. "You're so juicy."

When he moved to lower his mouth toward her neck, Karma grabbed handfuls of his luscious thick hair, stopping him. Knowing what she wanted, he allowed her to tug his head back and expose his throat to her. She kissed the spot where his collarbones joined in a dip, then licked it. The taste of spicy flesh, sweat and power rolled intensely inside her mouth. Razor groaned and she felt the vibration of it on her tongue. Kissing the thick cord of muscle flexing between the cap of his shoulder and the curve of his throat, Karma marveled at his virile body.

Careful to make sure she didn't spark any blood thoughts, Karma closed her mouth over the pulse in his neck. The arousing musk of his scent filled her mind and senses.

He tasted so delectable. Karma licked and sucked at his skin. Not for a second did she desire to bite down, even though she felt that urge from Razor. He wanted her to taste his blood. He asked for her to pierce his skin through his thoughts and the way he arched his neck beneath her so her teeth dimpled his flesh. "No, lover," she whispered on his skin, "but how about this instead?"

Closing her mouth over the pulse, she sucked. Hard. She'd not given anyone a hickey in a long time but she still knew how to do it. And she knew how to do it in a way that hurt as much as it felt good.

Razor gasped. The torturously slow pace he'd set faltered and then he slammed into her with a new, demanding rhythm that compounded the astronomical height of her unrelieved climax. Ah, she thought. She'd found his sexual Achilles heel, the magic spot with which she could drive him wild. Riding the tremendous surge of his pumping demand, Karma moved against his skin. Each thrust struck her pleasure center like the strike of a blacksmith's hammer on hot steel, reverberating and sparking inside her.

His orgasm flared a match inside Razor, burned like a trail of gunpowder through their connection and ignited the ready powder keg inside Karma. Screaming against his throat, Karma's whole body seized, gripping Razor's heavy cock tightly. The power of her release flashed back into Razor. With a roar that would have frightened a lion, Razor impacted her core with thunder strokes so forceful their bodies slapped noisily together. Karma felt the jet of his seed geyser into her womb, there was so much and it was ejected with such force. Her core gripped in spasms on Razor until he emptied himself inside her.

Not forgetting her responsibility, Karma flooded her contented afterglow into Razor. Never, never had she come so completely that no fiber, no cell of her being remained untouched. Razor did things to her that were inhuman in their intensity. Things that thrilled her just thinking about her future as his Summon. He couldn't top this, could he?

"I most certainly can, lover." Karma tightened with her reluctance to release him as Razor eased back from her, escaping her body in a long, slow drag. Without him filling her, Karma felt empty. Hollowed out. Alone. Her probe remained locked inside Razor's mind, not just locked anymore but merged as though there was an element of her mental touch that was a mixture of both of them. If he were to release her now, the emptiness in her body wouldn't compare to the void he'd leave in her mind, in her soul. That was the scary and dangerous part of telepathy. Bonding came so quickly and became so deep, as if the soul hadn't been meant to be singular and sought to meld with a compatible mate. Just her luck, she would bond with a big, bad wolf of a vamp like Razor.

He rested his head between her breasts and sighed. His huge arms hugged around her thin waist with tight possessiveness. "If it wasn't already past sunup, I'd make love to you over and over, my treasure."

"Make love?" Not fucking anymore, she noticed.

"I don't want to fuck you, girl," Razor nuzzled between her breasts. "I want to claim you. Make love to you. Lose myself in you. No more heartless fucking for my lovely Summon. Tender or rough, from now on, it will always be making love."

Karma laughed, tangling her fingers in his hair. "You sound like you're in love."

Rising so his guileless green eyes burned into her, he said, "I am. There is no part of your mind or soul I have not already delved into, Karma. I know you like you don't even know yourself. Who you are. What you do for me. How could I not love you?"

Love her? He was serious but how could he be? She wasn't the type for love. Even her father did not love her and he was the only family she'd ever known. She'd never asked for or expected love. Razor's confession made her uncomfortable and of course, he knew it as he knew her renewed urge to flee.

Razor didn't threaten her for her thoughts of escape this time. Instead, he scooped her breasts in his hands. He massaged them as they squeezed around his face. He kissed her breastbone and licked the inside curves of her breasts. The slow work of his

attentions soothed her, melted her tensions, wore down her resistance. The sensations were not telepathically enhanced this time but through his unrestricted awareness he knew exactly what she wanted and what felt good to her. Razor was her first telepathic lover and she never realized how skillful that talent could make a man. The way he could pleasure her was as evil as it was delightful. Karma sighed as she surrendered, at least for today. She hugged him to her, enjoying the play of his extensive muscles on his back as he moved.

Lifting his head, he met her eyes again. "As much as I am enjoying you, I have to rest now. The sun is fully up and I have a long night ahead of me."

"Go on," Karma smiled, trying to keep her thoughts as tight to her as he could.

He smiled. "You're not getting away from me that easily, Karma." Razor rested his chin on her chest and frowned. "I don't understand this reluctance of yours. You've been a Summon for how many years now?"

"Seven."

"Seven years. I'm not changing your job description, only the number of Kinsmen you have to answer to. I'm not high maintenance. I won't require much from you. Certainly less than an entire clan." He watched her face as he asked, "Is it the sex that bothers you?"

Karma laughed. Did the most intense sexual experience of her life and the promise of many, many more nights of passion bother her? "Hell no. After you, no other man will ever measure up." She raised her eyebrows and glanced downward meaningfully. "Literally."

"The threats then?"

"No. Kinsmen threaten me all the time. I don't think Kinsmen know how to make a request without adding the usual 'or else' clause. It's good to know where I stand, where the lines are drawn." Karma played with the spill of his waves beside his face. "I know I'm nothing but food should I disappoint, so I don't mind the reminder not to trust the lions just because they have not eaten me yet."

"Ah. I see." Razor bent down and licked her breast with a heavy drag of his tongue. "It's trust then."

"With your persistent blood lust, should I trust you?"

He froze, his mouth inches above the swell of her breast. The mere mention of it spurred the blood lust back to life. Karma grabbed the thought as she gripped Razor's face, raising it so she could see the silver veil drop over his humanity. In a second, he'd lose control of his vampire nature and devour her. It didn't frighten her this time. As persistent as the blood lust was, and as strong as Razor was as a Kinsman, the vampire thoughts were weak. As least for her. It was as though Razor was possessed by a vampire who knew how to push his buttons, how to disconnect his humanity, but it couldn't fight her, not with her highly developed survival instinct. The blood thought struggled to escape her easy tether on it like a wild animal while she tested her control. Finally, she banished it with the thought of kissing Razor.

Their mouths came together. Razor drank of her kiss as he'd wanted to drink of her blood, with deep swallows and sucking insistence. He drew back. "Don't play with him," Razor referred to the vampire nature she'd sensed. "He's devious and he bites."

And it was after sunup, that would weaken it as well.

Razor hugged her tighter to him as he stood, picking her up with him. The width of his hard chest firmly embraced to her soft body sparked her smile of enjoyment. With her arms wrapped around his neck and her legs locked around his narrow waist, Karma allowed him to carry her to the bedroom. Pushing back on her hips, Razor detached her from him and set her on the bed. Razor left her long enough to retrieve his bag.

Watching his nude body while he worked, Karma drank in the sight of him. He had a body better than Schwarzenegger in the first *Terminator* movie. No muscle was left undefined by his glistening skin. The heavy muscles that spanned his upper back, the curve of his lower spine, the flare of his rounded ass, the thickness of his thighs, all of them as perfect as a body builder and that was just from behind. For a vampire, he had

a tanned hue to his skin that must mean he had a naturally Mediterranean tone, since he'd not seen the sun in centuries. From the bag, Razor dug out lock bars that he used to secure the bedroom door and windows.

Karma shivered at the implication. Razor thought someone might try to kill him during the day. A human servant of the clan. She wished it was merely paranoia on his part but she doubted it. More likely the precaution was born of experience. The bars appeared to be heavy I-beams of steel and each one would probably be impossible for her to lift. Razor held one balanced at the center with one hand while he worked some complex mechanism to expand the interlocking bars to block the upper half of the door, a process he repeated for the bottom half.

Karma could not help but observe closely, trying to see how it worked. What if there was a fire? She reasoned that it seemed only prudent to know how to release the locks. The weight of the bar itself might even make it fall from the door frame, so removing them might be easier than installing them. It wasn't that she'd try to escape Razor. No, it was not that, she thought loudly in her mind, trying to believe it so he would too, she just felt a little caged in, which wouldn't be so bad if she had a key.

The next bar went across the window with a wide flat plate welded to the center so no one could simply break the glass and crawl around it. Her next thought was sobering. What if her clan did break in and found her there without a stitch of clothing, for everything she'd worn still lay strewn in the living room? What would they think of their loyal Summon sleeping with a Kinsman not of the clan? Could she convince them that she'd done it to save the clan somehow? Her body in exchange for him going easy on them this visit? It hadn't been the case but she could lie convincingly enough and back it with telepathic reassurances. That was assuming they gave her a chance and didn't barge in with guns blazing.

Or the flamethrower blazing. That thing she'd seen in the overstocked armory of the clan house was a flamethrower, wasn't it? She was pretty sure it was. Karma noticed Razor casting a knowing glance over his shoulder at her. He turned back to the task of securing the window without comment. None was needed. They both knew he'd seen her thoughts and not only knew where the armory was inside the clan house but what it contained.

If the clan ever found out she'd let that information slip to him... Karma drew her legs up to her chest and hugged them. A fresh tickle of fear slid down her spine like an icy drop of sweat. And to think she'd pretty much had herself convinced that she might survive the long haul in this fate she'd been dealt. Silly girl. And if she was not very, very careful, she'd end up a silly dead girl. Feeling exposed and vulnerable in her bare skin, Karma climbed under the blankets. It was only a minute longer before Razor joined her.

Following his expectations, Karma curled on her side with him curving behind her. With his wide hand covering her stomach, he tugged her back against him so her head pillowed on his biceps and the length of her body formed perfectly against his like an echo. The position was so cozy and familiar. While she'd been with other men in her life, they had never been the type to stick around, much less cuddle, after sex. The comfort of it startled her with its contentment. Who would have thought she could find moments like this with a Kinsman? Especially one as stunningly gorgeous and frighteningly unpredictable as Razor.

Karma sighed with a growing sense of contentment. Whatever would come, whatever consequences she might have to face in the future, this moment was perfection. Her body felt sated and well loved. Her heart warmed to Razor's gentle caresses and easy affection that merged like music with the afterglow she felt. To top it all off, he'd assured her that he knew her—the real her deep down—and he loved her. Her soul believed him. Her head thought she needed to be committed to the funny farm but the rest of her was finding hope for things she'd never dreamed she'd find.

"I can't leave you alone while I sleep," Razor murmured into her hair. "I have to keep you with me."

"What do you mean?" She'd just asked the question when the plunge descended on her. Razor's mind encircled hers and dropped them into sleep like they'd dived off a high cliff into a lake of dreams together. Karma would have struggled, would have screamed with the startling rush from full consciousness into the unreal depths of sleep but he'd given her not a breath of time to react.

Chapter Three

Karma floated on the current of black sleep, sensing Razor's constant touch for time immeasurable. Surrounded by his subconscious, she could taste his soul. His heart played like a harmony on her skin. In deep stillness Razor blanketed her with his strength, comforting her, hugging her inside his mind. Here he was not a monster. Here he was a man who would allow nothing to harm her or take her from him.

Then the dream began.

Flame pots in the huge black cavern burned with thick plumes of smoke, casting dancing shadows that disguised the scurry of the demons. Karma dreamed lucidly and this dream was no different. She was herself, awake and aware inside the dream. Razor, on the other hand, dreamed from his subconscious.

Karma followed him as he moved deeper into the cavern with steady, battle-ready steps. His broadsword gleamed even in the hellfire lighting. Dressed as a knight in heavy armor, Razor showed no fear, only determined caution. They walked in a low trench between higher open ground on either side. Foulness choked the heavy air with the evil smell of death. Stalactites and stalagmites sheltered the demons like huge fangs. Karma caught a glimpse of one of the pale "demons" in torn and dingy rags and recognized it as a vampire. But this was Razor's dream, his memory, and to him they were demons. And they knew he was here as they lured him deeper into their realm.

With a chorus of high-pitched squeals, a spill of vampires dropped down on Razor. He spun, leading with his blade, slicing a pile of them in half. Any vampire that came within reach of his sword died by it. Blood and chunks of vampire flesh splattered everywhere but there were still more attackers, spilling down on him like a sheet of cockroaches. Karma had never seen so many vampires at the same time. Hundreds of them scurried from deeper in the cavern as if hell had opened and all its damned

citizens were descending upon Razor. She could tell, from the skeletal appearance and lack of silver in the eyes, that all these beasts were recently claimed Offspring, as likely to die by starvation in these numbers as to the swords of the knights who mistook them for demons. They lacked the strength and power of the Kinsmen. Unlike mythical vampire lore, vampires did not require holy water or relics to kill them. It was all a matter of will and who possessed the greater strength of it.

They bit and scratched at his armor and chain mail uselessly. Razor had to climb on top of the corpses he created or be buried by them. The press of bodies flooding around Razor packed tightly around him, slowing his swings, stealing his room to fight.

In the struggle, his helmet was yanked off and tossed aside. The chain mail hood was lost next as the vampires scrambled to strip him of the armor. Razor didn't stop his berserk battling even as his chest plate was wrenched free. A vampire landed on his back and sank its fangs into the flesh of Razor's neck. He shouted and flailed to rid himself of the attacker. A group caught his sword and twisted it away from him. Beating at them with his fists didn't slow the feasting. Razor lost his armor as the vampires ripped it away to access his flesh.

Karma lost sight of Razor as the vampires covered him. His shouts never revealed fear, only pain and fury. They fed for so long and there were so many that when they scampered away Razor was torn and drained of blood, verging on death.

A Kinsman dressed in black armor strode from the depths of the cavern to Razor. The demon-like vampires fled before him. He didn't see or react to Karma, just like the other vampires hadn't, so she climbed closer to see better as he knelt beside Razor. The vampire knight ripped off his gauntlet and yanked up his chain mail sleeve. His guttural accent sounded Germanic but the words were English, at least Karma heard them in English. "Taken in fury, my brother. The rage will never wane for you." The vampire raised his wrist to his mouth and bit down. He positioned the bleeding wound over Razor's mouth as the blood dripped in. "That is your fate. For you the slaughter

will never end. As you've killed my Offspring, so will you kill your beloved people. No rest for you, wicked one. No rest ever."

Slowly, Razor reached up and caught the vampire's hand. He forced the bleeding gash down to his mouth and drank roughly from it. "Yes," the vampire knight growled, "already the blood lust claims you."

Razor drew back, opened his mouth and hissed, his huge vampire fangs already completely grown in. With a lunge, he bit down on the vampire's arm and tore a new wound.

"Enough." The Kinsman backhanded Razor to dislodge him. He rose and, as he staunched the blood flow from the severe bite wound, he turned toward the depths of the cavern. "Now follow me, my fierce new Offspring, proud son of a noble house. Let me teach you the ways of brutality."

Razor got to his feet and reclaimed his sword. He ran it through the Kinsman's back all the way to the hilt. "I don't need you to teach me anything," Razor snapped.

The Kinsman turned his head, shock evident at the silver over Razor's eyes. "Born Kinsman?" the vampire cried with pain and disbelief. "Impossible!"

Razor withdrew the sword, swung it and beheaded his master. The other vampires, Offspring most of them judging by the absence of silver in their angry eyes, charged Razor again. He dispatched them easily with sword and teeth. Blood covered him and everything around him. His cries were no longer in fury but in despair and anguish. Razor's realization of the relentless monster he'd become crushed through his connection to Karma. He couldn't endure it anymore. Neither could she.

Desperately, Karma wedged and pried her way between the stinking, half-starved vampires who still didn't acknowledge her. As soon as she could reach Razor, Karma gripped his arm just before he hauled it back to punch out again. With her telepathy, she shoved her will into Razor. Mutating the dream as she did his lust, the world around them vanished.

The dark cavern disappeared, leaving sunny, blue sky overhead. The ground beneath her lost the corpses and a grassy hill sloped down away from them, leading to a glittering, white beach where the gentle ocean surf lapped with peaceful rushing sounds. A few people sunbathed or swam, ignoring Razor and Karma in their enjoyment of the perfect summer day.

"The sun!" Razor crossed his arms in front of his face, staggering back.

"It's all right, Razor," Karma soothed as she touched his bare arms. The blood had vanished, as had his armor. When she'd changed the dream, she'd changed his clothes so he wore only faded blue jeans and nothing else. She enjoyed his chest too much to cover it up. "We're dreaming, lover. This sun can't hurt you."

Still shading his shimmering green eyes, he blinked at her, awareness slowly dawning. "Dreaming?"

She slipped her hands into his and drew them down. Razor squinted at the summer sky. "I've forgotten what the world looks like in the light." Smiling down at her, his amazement beamed on his handsome face, making him seem youthful in his wonder. Being a dream, he no longer had fangs. He was fully human again. "You did this? Gave me this gift? Banished the blood dreams that have plagued my sleep?"

Karma trailed her fingertips down his cheeks. Her heart ached at the emotional torture he'd endured. "You really have had no relief, have you?"

Razor scooped her up with his powerful arms around her waist and spun with her. "You are my salvation!"

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She laughed, "Razor, you're making me dizzy."
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"Jonah."

"What?"

"My human name is Jonah." Razor kissed her fiercely, making her head spin even more. "You've given me back that name. You've given me back my humanity."

Karma couldn't ruin his joy by reminding him this was only a dream. Not after he'd suffered seven hundred years of hell. The pure amazement he felt after such agony would be beyond her comprehension if not for the psychic and emotional link between them.

For the rest of the dream they walked together under the warm sun. Razor's heavy arm hooked casually across her shoulders as they strolled on the beach. The cool surf lapped over their bare feet. Karma could feel his genuine enjoyment spill though their connection and it mirrored her own. She'd never had a friend to simply enjoy companionship, never had a lover want her for anything other than a few fleeting moments of passion. Wrapping her arm around his waist, she snuggled into Razor. It didn't matter that it was a dream. He felt real. His mind was really here with her. The love warming her heart in a way she'd never before experienced in her life was most definitely real. And so it was for Razor too.

Chapter Four

Karma awoke with the sensation of movement behind her. Something heavy and thick smacked lightly against her butt. Grinning, she cast a glance over her shoulder. Razor whacked his swollen erection suggestively on her bottom again, then swirled the engorged head on her soft skin so tantalizingly that her heart slammed into high gear. There was wicked heat in his expression and in the hungry flare of his eyes.

Snuggling back into her pillow, she teased, "Not now, honey. I'm still sleepy." She smiled to herself, knowing he wouldn't retreat. With her bottom curled into his lap, she could feel just how much he wouldn't be ignored.

"Oh, you can sleep." Razor nuzzled into her hair and nipped her earlobe. His arms snaked around her waist. With his breath tickling her ear, he added, "If you can sleep through it."

With a demanding glide, his big hands slid down her stomach and between her thighs. He lifted her leg and his erection found her soft opening. Bracing her hips against his thrust, Razor plunged inside her. Karma gasped a shriek. The enormous erection spared no part of her core the immense pleasure of his stroke. He didn't manipulate her body's response this time. The system-wide erotic shock to her body was purely physical. The trembling heat that slid like hot oil down her thighs resulted from his masculine girth finding its home deep in her body. With that first strike, her insides trembled and clenched, immediately brought to full sexual alert by his sheer magnitude.

"You don't seem tired now," his passion-deepened voice rumbled against her throat. "Perhaps I should rock you to sleep."

Adjusting his grip on her hips, Razor rocked back and then slammed into her. Karma didn't muffle her scream of pleasure. The impact rocketed from her center through her muscles and lit her blood on fire. Trembling, Karma reached back, grabbed his thigh and squeezed.

"What's this?" Razor glided in and out of her in a brisk rhythm. "Am I keeping you awake, my love? Should I stop?"

"Don't stop! Don't stop!" Karma arched into each of his drives, forcing him deeper still.

"I don't know," he sighed, "I don't think you're into it." Pushing her away, Razor withdrew completely from her body.

"What?" Karma rolled over to her back and blinked up at him. "You're stopping? You can't stop!"

He propped his head on one of his hands and covered her breast with the other. The covers piled at the foot of the bed no longer cloaked his titanic body from her. The passion-softened green of his eyes settled lightly on her face. An evil, sexy grin quirked the corners of his delicious mouth. "Beg for me."

"Beg for you?" The heat from his palm burned seductively through her chest. When he squeezed, frantic tingles spiraled over her skin and puckered her nipples into hard, sensitive buds. The slash of arousal cutting through her rolled her eyes back in her head. Karma reached for his hard cock but he caught her hand and brought it to his mouth. Watching her face with heated fascination, he sucked on her little finger and swirled his tongue along it.

"Please, Razor." She scooted closer.

"That's not begging." Amusement was obvious in his voice. He tickled his touch over her breast, down the dip of her stomach and slipped between her legs, which she opened for him. With circling strokes, he fingered her ultrasensitive clit.

Shuddering, her vicious need demanded satisfaction. "Razor, please, please, please." Flexing with his movements, she hunched into his hand.

"Please what?"

"Please make love to me." Karma circled his shaft with both hands and glided up and down over his slick, stiff body. "Make love to me now."

Grinning with male satisfaction, Razor withdrew his touch. "I thought you wanted a platonic relationship."

"You." Karma shoved against his shoulder until Razor rolled onto his back. Climbing onto him, she straddled his firm tummy. The hard heat of his body warmed her intimately. "Are playing games with me."

"Would I do something so despicable as to get you all primed and ready and then deny you release just to watch you squirm for my own sick amusement?" He stroked the roundness of her breasts, intentionally avoiding her ready nipples.

"You absolutely would." Karma bent forward and licked the cut of his pectoral muscle, eliciting a groan from Razor. She loved the spicy taste of him. "Only I'm not going to play this game anymore, lover. I'm going to take what I want."

Razor watched her with undisguised lust as Karma positioned herself over his engorged cock. Impaling herself in a long, slow glide, Karma thrilled as his smug expression shattered. Squeezing his eyes closed and clenching his teeth, Razor hissed as she enveloped him. Driving him deep into her body slammed a new shock wave through Karma. Damn, he felt so incredibly good. There was no buildup. With his size her body's response was an instant, "Hallelujah."

"Ride me," Razor growled. All his teasing calm shattered under the dark desire burning in his eyes and the hungry snarl of his lips that exposed his fangs. Gripping her bottom, he lifted her up the length of him and shoved her down. He flexed his hips to slam deeper into Karma, rocking her senses with the reverberation of the erotic blow into her center.

Directed by Razor's demanding pace, Karma rose and fell over him, her own excitement crashing like ocean waves over and through her with each pistoning of her body. Liquid fire spread like an inferno down the insides of her thighs as they rubbed

against Razor's pelvis. Leaning forward, she braced her palms on the squared muscles of his chest. Her dark hair draped around her face.

"Karma, lover," Razor gasped, his eyes widening, "I can't hold it anymore." Reaching up, he palmed her breasts. With just the right tweaking pinch on her nipples he toppled her tenuous hold. Just like Razor's spot on his neck that drove him crazy, Karma's nipples were her wild erogenous zones. And Razor was a master of them through their connection. Or perhaps he was just so talented, he knew her body better than she did.

Lost in her orgasm, Karma tossed her head back and screamed with each collision of her body down on Razor's upthrusting cock. Heat burst from her heart and radiated with fiery fingers down her ribs and up into her arms. Razor's flooding release inside her sparked off her shuddering response so she gripped him with her body as if to lock them together as permanently as he'd done with their telepathic bond.

Devastated by the completeness by which their shattering and joining remade them both in those bonding moments of simultaneous orgasm shared on a physical, emotional and psychic level, she could think of nothing but enduring a pleasure so deep it bordered on painful. The spiritual effect rippled and echoed as if never to free her from the giving of her total self to Razor. And just when she thought she'd lose herself in madness from the joy beyond anything mortal woman could endure, it released her from its grip and her orgasm peaked, only to topple gently so she slipped down the slope of fulfillment where her body hummed and vibrated as it slowly released her from the grip of the intense spasm.

When they were spent, Karma collapsed on top of Razor. Her trembling arms hugged around his wide chest as he tickled gentle swirls on her back with his fingernails. His masculine musk surrounded her and she wiggled against him to mark herself with his scent.

"I can't take it." Razor rolled her off him and slid his pulsing manhood out of her. Still keeping her tucked to his side so her head pillowed on his shoulder, he kissed her temple.

Karma snuggled into her powerful and handsome Kinsman, hardly able to believe the man beside her was the dangerous one she'd first encountered only the night before. "The blood lust didn't even rise in you at all that time."

"It's you." His tender fingertips glided down her cheek, brushing her hair from her sweat-glistened face. "The deeper I pull you into my heart, the calmer I feel. It's like I can feed on your stability through our connection. You're so grounded. You know who you are and that gives you strength. You've become my touchstone. My anchor."

He'd burrowed himself into her heart as well. She'd never seen a Kinsman as anything other than a predatory beast marginally controlled. But with Razor, their shared connection allowed her to see the human man Razor had been. Who he still was under the vampire nature and blood lust. She had compassion for him and she'd never had compassion for anyone before in her life. For a long time, she just assumed she was a cold, sensible and self-serving crook watching out for her own neck, in every sense of the phrase. Now she wanted more. She wanted Razor to keep feeling the rare peace he'd found with her. He made her feel good about herself and this strange bond between them. Not only did she accept their new arrangement, she wanted it. Karma didn't bother to explain all that to Razor. He felt it as she thought it.

"Thank you." Razor squeezed her to him and kissed her forehead. "I can't tell you how much it means to me. How much you mean to me."

"I already know." She smiled up at him. "I wish the clan wasn't expecting you tonight. I don't want to move, just lie here in your arms forever."

The relaxed smile faded from Razor's face. Much of his former terrifying intensity returned. "No. My business with them can't wait."

Chapter Five

With her usual focused professionalism, Karma strode into the open foyer of the clan's mansion. She'd grabbed her emergency change of clothes from the trunk of her car so she would have something fresh to wear before the council. With the black jersey tucked into her jeans Karma looked like Cat Woman, all sleek black curves and long limbs. The swing in her hips was designed to express confidence and sexuality, in the minds of the vampires in her clan that made her the ideal image of the Summon they wanted her to be. Through her sunglasses, she surveyed the fifteen or so vampires congregating in small groups along the perimeter. Razor had attracted an audience. With his reputation and the accounts she'd heard about his previous visits, she wasn't surprised.

The heat of his menacing presence prickled at her back as he followed her. He brought his huge duffle bag with him and carried it like it weighed nothing. Normally, she would have scanned a Kinsman to verify the contents of any baggage he carried before bringing him to the clan but Razor held that information close to him and she wasn't going to pry. If he had his way, this would be the last time she'd see this clan. Even if they didn't know it yet, she served Razor as his Summon now. With her loyalty shifted to him, it was not what he carried concealed that concerned her. It was what all these other vamps were concealing, mentally and physically, that she directed her telepathic touch to discover.

Karma had thin connections to every vamp in her clan, Kinsmen and Offspring. She wouldn't turn her back on any of them until she had some notion from heartbeat to heartbeat what their intentions toward her were. What she gleaned as she sampled the mood of the room Razor felt through her. Tension. Expectation of conflict. Fear.

Whispers of thought so loudly projected by emotion scratched at her mind. Karma opened to them and heard the shape of the vampires' dread. Executioner. A Kinsman who killed other vampires, Kinsmen and Offspring alike. One of the vampire culture's built-in population controls. For the protection of their kind, vampires couldn't allow their numbers to swell to the point where humans noticed and took action. That was one of the reasons seventy-five percent of Offspring were destroyed. Even with that precaution, sometimes a clan became top heavy with Kinsmen. If they didn't police their own numbers, other clans took it upon themselves to rectify the situation.

She knew Razor had been here before and not slaughtered a host of vampires. Instead, he'd eliminated every single human servant in his uncontrolled blood lust. What his business was today, she didn't know. A small twist of guilt formed in her stomach as she felt the blanketing reassurance many of the vampires took in seeing her escort Razor. They knew her talent. They knew she'd never before brought a danger to them unannounced. Her guilt didn't last. Any one of them would kill her without a moment's hesitation if she weren't so damn useful to them. For the first time ever as a Summon, she honestly didn't know Razor's intention as she guided him up the stairs to the converted ballroom where the elder Kinsmen gathered.

Out of sight from the vampires waiting below, a small alcove sheltered the entryway to the ballroom. Off to the side of the alcove a half wall blocked what had once been a coat check area but which now contained benches with attached shackles. Humans selected as food for celebrations were kept here, along with the occasional vampire waiting to answer to their elders for some offense.

Slaughter and Malcolm, two of the largest and deadliest of the Kinsmen who acted like muscle for the elder vampires, blocked the double doors. The pair would have dwarfed most linebackers in the NFL but compared to Razor, they still came up short in height and width through the shoulders. Keeping her face neutral, she stopped before them.

Malcolm curled a grin meant to express his utter lack of concern for Razor's power and reputation. Ignoring Razor, he addressed Karma, insulting the Kinsman by speaking with a human first. "Did this guy give you any trouble, Summon?"

Before she could answer, Razor knocked her roughly aside and decked him. Malcolm hit the floor so hard the room shook. He didn't move. Not with his neck snapped and his head cocked at a horrific angle.

Slaughter's wide, dark eyes locked with Karma's, desperately searching for some clue from her. She had nothing to offer him for the two seconds before Razor grabbed his throat, clawed his fingers through the flesh and tore away all the meat. Crumpling to Razor's feet, Slaughter grabbed uselessly at his missing flesh and the spurting blood. Razor ignored the Kinsman as he flopped like a dying fish. Even with all that sudden violence, the blood lust had not risen in him. He'd merely removed a couple of annoying obstacles.

Razor snagged Karma by her upper arms and shoved her into the small side room. "Stay here and stay out of sight. My sight included." He forced her down behind the half wall. Before she sensed his intention, Razor snapped one of the shackles on her wrist.

Karma clutched at Razor. "Wait! Don't leave me trapped and vulnerable!"

From his side fatigue pocket, Razor withdrew a dagger so long it was nearly a short sword. He passed it over hilt first. "I'm going to close you out of my mind now, Karma. For what I'm here to do, I will need the power of the blood lust. Don't try to stop it unless I come for you."

He didn't wait for her reply. Spinning away from her, he returned to his duffle bag in the alcove. From around the side of the half wall, she watched him open the bag. He stuffed several small throwing daggers into his various pockets along with ammunition. He looped the strap of his Uzi around his shoulder. The final two items, a sawed-off shot gun and broadsword, he easily hefted in each hand.

Standing before the entryway to the ballroom, Razor lowered his head. Their connection, which had become so second nature to Karma she barely felt it, snapped closed. It impacted her like a chunk of her heart suddenly collapsing. Grabbing her chest, Karma gasped. The loss of contact tore her soul just like if she'd been in deep telepathic contact with someone as they died. It had happened once by accident and she had carefully avoided that dark whirlpool of shock ever since. Her connection to Razor was dead. The loss shattered her. Clenching her teeth, she stifled the moan of grief that trembled inside her and burned tears behind her eyelids.

Razor shuddered violently. There was pain in the panting gasps of breath that shook him. In moments, that passed. When he raised his head, his eyes were obscured with silver and he bared his fangs. Even though they were no longer connected telepathically, Karma could feel the energy he projected. Blood lust at its most cruel. It cut around him like tiny psychic knives slashing with rage at Razor and everything around him with hatred. With one massive kick, the double doors exploded off their hinges and Razor stormed into the ballroom with an explosive blast from the shotgun.

Karma scooted back in the corner and covered her ears against the gunshots and screams. Pulling back all her tendrils of telepathic connection, she closed herself to all of the vampires in the clan. She couldn't stand the thought of feeling them all dying. And they were dying. Horribly.

When he finished his work in the ballroom, Razor passed through the alcove like an evil wind, chilling Karma as his power brushed like fog over her. She didn't dare peek out at him but instead only tucked her knees closer to her and tightened her grip on the hilt of the long dagger.

The sounds of battle echoed in broken bursts as Razor hunted down and dispatched more and more prey. The rapid bursts of his Uzi vibrated through the floor as he passed directly beneath her.

A female Offspring scrambled into the alcove and screamed when she saw Karma. "Oh shit! It's just you, Karma." Blood streaked her blonde hair and white cut-off blouse but it didn't belong to her.

"Get out, Abbey," Karma pushed her away. "Run while you can."

"He's too fast." Abbey shook her head, her eyes wide with panic. "It's like he knows when someone goes for an exit and blocks it. He's herding us. He's going to kill us all."

The noises coming from the lower level came less frequently and Karma knew Razor had eliminated most of the vampires and was now digging the remaining ones out of hiding. It wouldn't be long before he started back upstairs. Without her connection, she couldn't combat his blood lust. When he found her, he quite likely would kill her as well, whether he meant to or not. His vampire nature had no use for her beyond her blood. She couldn't reason with it, not while it subjugated Razor's human side.

"Help me get out of this cuff," Karma said. "Maybe I can block him from sensing us while we escape."

Abbey inspected Karma's wrist. "I guess this doesn't matter now." She reached under one of the benches and pried out a small metal pick wedged in the space where the leg of the bench didn't quite meet the seat. "I was always afraid I'd end up in here, waiting to die. I hid this just in case."

Abbey worked the pick in the lock and it popped open. She smiled, flashing a peek of her fangs. "Even with everything that's happened, we're still just a couple of street kids, aren't we?"

"We sure are." Karma took Abbey's hand in hers. "Let's get the hell out of here."

The second they stood up, the flare of fury swept across the alcove like a gale. With a lunge, Karma pushed Abbey down seconds before Razor's sword would have sliced her in half. Abbey scrambled to the back wall on all fours but Razor ignored her.

Karma screamed at the insane fury freezing Razor's eyes a dead silver. She dropped to her rear and crawled back into the corner. Her forgotten dagger clattered by her feet as she crossed her arms defensively over her head.

Blood and gore soaked Razor's clothes and slicked in rivulets down his bare, muscular arms, choking Karma with the overwhelming metallic smell of it. The silver of his eyes occluded any awareness beyond his rage. With both hands on his sword, he raised it high overhead, ready to bring it down on her. "You won't escape me!"

Closing her eyes against the inevitable, Karma plunged into Razor with her fear-charged telepathy. The blood lust gripped around her invading mind and squeezed so tight it felt as though it would crush her. Desperately she called to his human side, projecting her love for him with all her strength, "Jonah!"

Rough hands on her arms yanked her up. Karma squealed and squirmed until she realized what was happening. Razor embraced her to him so powerfully she couldn't breathe. Once she thought that, his bear hug loosened just enough to allow her to inflate her lungs. He kissed her cheek over and over. "Oh girl. I'm sorry."

"Jonah." She hugged him fiercely, feeling her connection sinking deeper and deeper inside him and driving back the blood lust as though it had never been there at all, leaving Jonah uncloaked and raw before her. "I didn't want to run from you but I was so scared."

"I know." He pulled back and gazed hungrily down at her as if he wanted to kiss her but the blood he'd smeared on her caught his eye. Drawing back, disgust curled his lips. Blood stained his teeth and glistened on his face. "I've covered you with this foulness."

He stepped back, leaving Karma feeling alone and vulnerable without him wrapped around her. With a hard set to his mouth, Razor retrieved the long dagger she'd dropped. The murderous glare he cast at Abbey jerked the younger vampire upright with fear. With a nod of his head he told her to get out. She slipped cautiously

around him, sparing Karma only a quick worried glance before bolting out of the alcove and down the stairwell.

Razor scooped up Karma's hand and wrapped it around the hilt. Keeping his hand closed over hers, he pointed the tip so it pressed into the muscle over his heart. "Kill me."

"What? No!"

"Your clan is dead. What few that escaped won't bother looking for you if you flee town tonight." He drove the tip harder to his breast and a small well of blood bubbled over the tip. "Kill me and you'll be free."

"I won't kill you, Razor." Karma tried to draw the blade back but he wouldn't allow her to. His huge hand encircled her smaller one completely. "I love you, damn it."

His pleading green eyes locked on her. "Do for me what I can't do for myself. Free me. Free yourself."

Tears stung her eyes and she blinked to release them in cold streams down her cheeks. "I can't. Please don't ask this of me."

Razor's expression hardened. "As long as I live, I can't let you go, Karma. This is your only chance to escape this world."

"I don't want to escape you, Razor. I want to be with you. Don't you know I need you as much as you need me?" She reached up with her free hand and tried to smooth away the wrenching pain she saw there.

Flinching as though she'd struck him, Razor jerked away from her. He removed the knife from her grasp and flung it angrily so it thunked deeply into the wood-paneled wall. "I can't keep doing this! I can't live with you, spared from the blood lust, only to have to surrender to it over and over again. It will destroy me. It will destroy you!"

"Then don't. Don't give in to it anymore. Be with me. Keep me in your heart and live free of this madness. You don't have to be an executioner anymore. You are so powerful, no one can force this upon you. Just walk away. Let's walk away together."

He shook his head, not meeting her eyes. Emotion strained his voice with heartache. "There's no happy ending for us, Karma. What do you have left? Thirty, forty years? And then what? I'll be plunged back into this hell. I can't do this again. I can't have this happiness only to lose it, lose you. I'd rather die tonight than know I'm cursed to return to this."

"Not if you make me a vampire."

His dark green eyes stabbed into her. "That's not what you truly want. Rule number two, remember? Stay human."

She slipped her fingers around his tacky, blood-covered forearm. "That was because Kinsmen kill so many of their Offspring. I have a feeling you wouldn't kill me."

"I wouldn't."

"And you'd protect me from other Kinsmen until I become strong enough to be a Kinsman myself."

Straightening, her grit his teeth. "I would kill any who would raise a hand to you and not just while you were Offspring to me but forever."

"You've lived centuries, Razor. You know how to survive. How to keep us both alive." Karma slipped into his embrace, not caring about the blood on him. As she curled snugly into his chest, Razor closed his arms gently around her. He rested his cheek on top of her head wearily.

"How could you control my blood lust once you have your own to deal with? I won't condemn you to my fate."

"I wouldn't have your blood lust, Razor. You were taken in anger but I won't be. Take me with love and the blood lust will be so minor it would barely be a nuisance. No greater than my physical need to eat."

Razor took her shoulders and eased her back so he could search her face. "You would do that for me?"

"I'd do it for us."

Chapter Six

For three months, Razor tested Karma's resolve, giving her every opportunity to change her mind. They lived alone in his palatial lodge in the woods outside Vale, Colorado. Each night they went to town so he could experience what it was like to walk among humans without the urge to slaughter them and so he could feed. He insisted that she know what it was she was dooming herself to. More than once he'd demanded that Karma taste the blood of his victims, victims he no longer killed but only fed from before using a small dose of vampire magic to make them forget the encounter.

It was not as disgusting as she'd anticipated. Karma actually discovered she liked closing her mouth over the neck wounds of Razor's prey and drawing their essence into her. Especially attractive men. It was a small sexual thrill to share the intimacy of body fluid, whatever the form.

Once Razor was convinced she wouldn't change her mind, they finalized their plan.

Karma curled beside Razor on the huge bed and pillowed her head on his thigh. The ebony satin sheets caressed her skin like a lover's promise. Absently, she stroked the hairs on Razor's leg while she stared up the length of his magnificent naked form. Cedar logs burned fragrantly in the fireplace, casting a flickering, fiery glow over the planes and bulges of Razor's muscles as though the fire burned under his skin.

His blacker than black hair twisted in waves beside his face and caressed his throat. Watching her, outwardly he appeared relaxed but she could feel the worry in him. His joined hands hooked behind his head up on the pillows against the iron headboard that looked like an ornate castle gate. Her thin ankle rested in the crook of his arm.

A snowstorm whistled around the eaves outside, making the warm cabin even cozier by contrast, but it played a vital part in their strategy. If the blood lust escaped his control while Karma was incapacitated, he'd be less likely to reach a populated area

and wreak havoc. They'd kept the blood lust buried so deep for so long, Razor feared it might slip his control, casting him into a murderous rage.

Hence the dual pair of handcuffs he wore, securing him to the headboard. Another pair of shackles bound each of his ankles to heavy gauge chains that ran over the foot of the bed and secured to metal rings deeply set into the concrete beneath the carpet.

"Have you changed your mind yet?" As he tugged experimentally on the handcuffs, his deep voice rumbled sexily, "We could just play sex games all night instead."

"Tempting." Karma stroked the inside of his thigh and his semi-erect shaft stiffened to full potency, making her smile. "But no. We agreed."

With his hands locked behind his head so he couldn't grab her, he used his biceps to draw her calf to his mouth. He licked her with his hot tongue, the moisture and pressure of it making Karma moan. The things that man could do with his mouth, it made her tremble just to think about how many times he'd induced her to orgasm with nothing else.

"I could do that now." He smiled wickedly at her, his green eyes flashing with his passion. Gently he nibbled at her ankle. "I'm at your mercy, lover."

"Then do what you are supposed to do and quit stalling." Karma gently pried his legs wider and twisted the one beneath her, exposing his inner thigh to her. With a firm stroke up his leg, she located the pulse of the femoral artery.

"Ready?" Razor nudged her heel with his chin so her ankle was better positioned for him.

"Ready."

His lips curled back so his oversized fangs poised over her flesh. Carefully he set them against her skin. The furnace of his breath spilled tantalizingly over her tingling skin. With slight adjustments, he picked his spot as if he could find a vein from the pulsing he detected through his teeth. With the touch of his mind, he transformed the pain to ecstasy as he bit down, producing an oddly enjoyable ripping sensation that crept up her leg. A growl rumbled from deep in his throat, vibrating through her calf and traveling by the power of his will to her lap. Even from her ankle he could stimulate her sensitive bud and awaken her core. The effect was slight and intended to be so, just foreplay. He stimulated her but only enough to elicit a sigh and make her flex into the side of his body.

Turning his head slightly, he watched her from beneath his heavy brows. The effect was as predatory as it was thrilling. A trickle of escaped blood dribbled down her leg. He lapped it up with a single, sensual sweep of his tongue before closing his mouth over the puncture wounds again. With a hard drag, he sucked her blood.

Karma stroked her cheek lovingly against his thigh and watched Razor feed. His chest and arms flexed as he worked to deplete her. To combat gravity, Razor drank forcefully from her raised leg. Repositioning his demanding mouth, he selected a better spot and sank his thick fangs into her flesh again, conjuring a new wave of delight that scurried down her leg and caressed her core. Karma shivered.

Growing fatigued, Karma watched Razor for the sign she should begin her side of the ritual. A rush of wooziness spun the room and Karma rolled with it. She'd have succumbed to it and fainted if not for Razor's reaction to her slipping telepathic control.

With an animalistic sound that crossed between a bark and a roar, he chomped down on her calf. Hard. Not only his fangs penetrated but so did all of his incisors. With a violent shake of his head, he tried to rend a hunk of her flesh loose. The sharp pain tore viciously, flooding her system with adrenaline. Karma kicked out with her other foot and caught Razor in the side of the face. He released her leg and she tucked it under his arm out of reach.

Snapping and flailing, Razor battled wildly to find her flesh with his mouth. His eyes glimmered silver. Yanking against the cuffs, Razor's wrists cut against the metal but he didn't seem to notice. Blood dripped from his chin and coated his teeth as he

hissed and chomped angrily as though possessed. Which he was. Completely consumed with the blood lust.

Unable to combat the lust, she focused on her task. With a flicking slice of her small knife, she opened the artery in his leg. Ignoring his shouts and foaming curses, Karma covered the bloody wound with her mouth. Immediately Razor stilled beneath her. His blood tasted spicy and burned down her throat as though marinated with jalapeno juice.

From the first stinging swallow she felt different. It was as if her sinuses opened and she could smell for the first time. Razor's musk filled her nose and mind, making her moist with longing. The flow of his blood slithered down her throat and warmed her body like a shot of whiskey. Karma could hear his heart beating, hear each of his breaths inflate his lungs and then escape with an almost inaudible moan.

Karma opened her eyes. Razor watched her, his irises returned to the deep shade of an emerald displayed on black velvet. His massive erection towered near her face. Karma circled it with her fingers and stroked him while she continued to drink from him.

Arching back, he worked his hips in rhythm with her massaging and sucking. This time when his chains rattled in his attempt to reach for her the lust was from a very different source. "I want you," he growled. "Now."

Karma raised her mouth from the wound to smile at him. She felt her newly formed fangs crowd against her lips. Lisping around the unfamiliar obstruction, she said, "Still in the mood for sex games?"

Moving faster than she could react, Razor twisted around. Karma squealed her surprise as he manhandled her. The chains on his ankles were not taut, so he caught her easily between his legs and rolled her beneath him. Using his superior size along with his legs and elbows, he managed to arrange her beneath him so they were both face down. His hot breath prickled her skin as he whispered into her ear. "Just because I'm the one in chains doesn't mean I'm not still the dominant one in this relationship."

Karma laughed at how deftly he brought her knees under her with his legs and curled his chest and arms around her back and shoulders, locking her beneath him. His wrists crossed in front of her, still secured to the headboard.

Using his knees to spread her stance wider, Razor positioned himself doggy style behind her. It took three awkward stabs before his cock hit the mark and slid inside Karma. She squeaked her delight as he explored every inch of her newly awakened core. It was as if she experienced every nudge and slide over her nerves ten times more intensely than ever before. The tumbling excitement spilled through her connection to Razor and flooded him with the sensation.

"Shit." "I can't block you now. Oh damn, girl. Please, don't make me come yet."

He didn't have any defenses against her anymore. She knew the flavor of his soul. She could smell his emotions. The texture of his soul and song of his heart showed her just how much he truly was still Jonah deep inside and she drew him from the well where the blood lust trapped him and brought him to the surface. The light of his spirit shone unveiled before her. The blood lust surrendered its control and shrank to a manageable animal Jonah tucked into a cage in the back of his mind.

Throughout, Razor hadn't stopped thrusting into her. As they both surfaced from the telepathy to the full impact of the physical, he pumped into her with renewed vigor.

Pushing back to meet his driving force, Karma gasped cries with each stroke. The way his wrist twisted before her presented her with the veins below his palm. Karma didn't even think about it. She used her fangs for the first time and bit him.

Razor gasped, "Damn, lover. Use your fucking vamp powers, why don't you?"

Realizing that the tearing flesh hurt him, Karma focused on the blood. Through the blood she returned her enjoyment. She could feel the heat of her intentions travel through the wound and join them. The echo of his pain in her mind vanished and Razor moaned as he pressed his wrist harder into her mouth. His deep impacts increased with his rising climax. He wouldn't last much longer.

Arching forward, Razor set his fangs over the ticklish spot in her neck. He held her without breaking the skin like a feline as he moved in and out of her. "Do it," she told him. "Taste me. Take me."

With a flinch he pierced her flesh. The immediate exhilaration through the bite shot through her entire body. Her heavy climax built and spiraled with the elation. With Razor controlling her with his mouth and the pumping of his thick body inside her, he brought her to orgasm. It flung her into a spasm as the force of her release was more than she could sustain.

Razor followed her, bursting inside her. His cry muffled against her skin. He came over and over and Karma rode out their mutual summit of passion. Releasing his love bite, he shouted, "I love you, Karma. God, how I love you!"

When the spasms released them, Razor backed off her as best he could and allowed her to climb out from beneath him. She retrieved the keys from the mantle over the fireplace and unlocked his bonds.

Once freed, he collected her to him. Curling her in close to him, Razor nuzzled his face into her breasts. His strong arms wrapped snugly around her small waist. The warm, masculine scent of him comforted her. "You healed me. Do you know that?"

"I felt that too." She toyed with his hair, curling it around her fingers to marvel at how silky it was. "You control the lust now. It doesn't control you."

"You are not only my salvation. You are my redemption."

Karma hugged his head to her breasts. "I've never been anyone's redemption before."

"Hmm." He licked a circle around her nipple, liquefying her. With his teeth buffered behind his lips he nipped the tip hard enough to shoot an arrow of renewed need singing through her. Her wet center clenched with the promise his mouth made. Rising up to devastate her with the craving in his eyes, he said, "I must find a way to thank you for this gift. To thank you over and over until you can't think. Until you can't walk."

She smiled at him. "How are you going to do that, lover?"

With a deliberately languid pace he claimed her hands and drew them over her head. He closed the cuffs loosely around her wrists. "I was thinking I'd start here," he closed his mouth over her pinkie finger and sucked as he drew back ever so slowly until it escaped him, "and work my way down."

"Razor," she moaned.

"Jonah," he corrected. "From now on, call me Jonah."

As he worked his tongue into her palm, Jonah hunched his erection with no hurry into her stomach. His warm hands closed over her breasts and massaged her until she felt she would melt into the soft mattress. Stretching her neck so she could flick his nipple with her tongue, she confessed, "I love you, Jonah."

About the Author

Amanda's interests in the paranormal goes beyond paranormal romance. She's involved with Healing Touch, which is a form of healing using spiritual energy. She has gone on ghost hunts and conducted seances. Experiences involving past life regression, channeling, telepathy, precognition and lucid dreams all contribute to the pool of inspiration from which she draws.

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