



TORNAN'S CURSE

Book 1: Gypsy Wolves Series

By

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Chapter One

Thunder rocked the Transylvanian ground beneath Galena's restless horse. The violent tremors vibrated within her. She tightened her hold on the smooth hemp reins and gazed upward, searching the night heavens for a sign of an impending storm. Faced with the hint of a full moon between the branches, the rain clouds appeared unready to emit a wild tempest.

"What are we waiting for?" she whispered to the man on her right.

He acted more her guard than an escort. Every move she made since leaving home, he watched with too much interest.

The man didn't answer. She considered she hadn't spoken loud enough. He turned away from her with a suddenness that startled her horse.

"Shhh..." She leaned forward and stroked the animal's neck.

The thick canopy of dense treetops of the Black Forest prohibited the moon's full glow. The best light they had came from the torches her two escorts carried. Yet, the flames provided no help in seeing what came for them.

She trembled and flinched at the snap of a branch. A dead twig on the ground had her rattling from head to toe. She swiveled in her saddle. Her ears pricked to the intensity of the increasing rumble. An alarming fear of the unknown ran shivers throughout her limbs. Blood chilled in her veins as if death approached on a roaring gale.

The two men stared blindly into the bleak darkness. They were her escort to Dragomir Keep and while they appeared capable by size, she felt uneasy by their nervousness equaling hers.

Galena shifted in her saddle, nervous and watchful. The men altered the placement of their weight in their seats while straining their necks in search of evil. Though, she didn't think it was possible to catch sight of the devil's path.

At the approaching riot of sounds, the man to her right yelled, "Come and get us you beasts of terror!"

Galena squeezed her eyes shut, attempting to block out the madness surrounding her. The man invited trouble and she couldn't stop the devastation.

"We're not afraid of you or your kind, Wolvraine!" the man that would not answer before shouted with too much fervor.

She wondered if he didn't like his life. Only a man wanting to die boasted with the courageous zeal of immortality.

Her horse pranced in place with a jittery sidestep. The wait seemed too long for something to happen and her fingers ached from her fisted hold on the reins.

"Let your pack of wolves show themselves," the man challenged again.

Galena opened her eyes and stared with disbelief at the lunacy of her escorts.

"Are you insane, man?" She twisted her head in the direction of the sudden snort of a horse in the thick woods behind.

Fine wisps of her hair fluttered in the night breeze and dropped with the abrupt hush of nature. The immediate chill licked at her nerve-dampened skin and then warmed. Her breasts

tightened. Her nipples spiked. An ominous breath resounded around her and she couldn't discern if it was man or beast.

"Would you have us bow our head for the slaughter?" the man next to her argued.

Her fist clenched on the reins until her fingernails dug into her cold palms.

"Stop," her plea whispered from her parted lips.

She watched the fool charge into the oncoming eerie mist of large, menacing shadows. The man rose up in the leather stirrups, lifting from his saddle with neither grace nor good judgment. A silver streak slashed the blackness where a moonbeam illuminated a large steel weapon. It flashed lightning-swift and the guard came unseated from his horse. His scream of death echoed and faded into a gruesome silence.

The second man, no more intelligent than the first, rushed the demon horde. Galena shut her eyes again. She refused to open them when the second shriek of reverberating terror pierced the air. Her nerves were too shattered with the swelling fear.

The unexpected, baleful silence provided little comfort when she knew something awaited her in the darkness.

"Kill the Gypsy whore." Men rushed from the darkness and charged her horse.

She turned the animal away, but the path was blocked.

"Why are you doing this to me?" She backed up.

"We'll not let a Gypsy use her magic to get a Romanian to marry her, especially the master wolf hunter."

Several men grabbed her reins. Another grabbed her skirt in an attempt to pull her from the horse. Galena swung her foot at one and hit him in the face. She jerked the reins free from the man holding onto her horse and gave a swift kick to the flanks of the animal.

Afraid of the mob preventing her from riding home, she headed deeper into the forest. She aimed for Dragomir Keep to find her betrothed. She didn't know him, but the marriage was his idea. He'd not let the people of his village harm her.

Her horse snorted and shuffled in agitation when she slowed. The trundle of steps upon the leaf-strewn forest floor alerted her to someone coming near. Her heart hammered hard, bruising her ribs. At the sudden snarling growl, her pulse skipped a few beats.

Galena stopped the horse. She tried not to panic, but the heat of something breathed on her ankle. She glanced down at a large black wolf. He watched her while pacing restlessly. Each fretful step her horse took, the wolf repositioned its stance.

Galena's fingers went numb from the grasp she had on the reins in her sweaty palms. She wanted to look away from the entrapment of the hypnotizing stare. The wolf's lips curled and receded each time she backed her horse an inch. Yellow fangs hung long and dangerous when he snarled again. Her horse tried to retreat from the threat, except something, or someone, prevented her from moving.

Observing the area, she spied silhouettes of other wolves. They all stood wary, appraising her. She listened to their heavy breathing, like harsh whispers among men. Did they debate or decide her fate?

Galena forced her mind to form a semblance of control over her destiny.

Lay with the wolf, accept him, and thou shall survive.

Lay with the wolf, with his breed witnessing, and he shall live.

An old prophesy from her past swam through her head. The cryptic nonsense never made sense. She had never understood if the words were real or imagined in a dream. The thought of them now, comforted her with a strangeness she didn't appreciate.

Galena swung her head to review the area. Worse than death, she worried what they planned for her. She worried what her mind kept insisting she needed to be a part of.

When a dark, leather-gloved hand reached for the halter on her horse, she pulled back to avoid capture. The assailant moved a swift arm toward her and she flinched. She wouldn't die without a fight. At the very least, she wouldn't die in submissive surrender.

Instinct for survival made her kick her heels into the flanks of her horse. The animal reared in surprise and bolted from the assemblage of beastly shaped slayers. Wolves swarmed her like bees to nectar. They were everywhere, running aside and behind.

Galena raced blindly through the gloomy forest as she had done when the villagers were after her. Unexpectedly, the roar of stampeding horses closed in around her. Concentration on one thing didn't allow her to think how the wolves were gone and riders flanked her.

Over a hurried misplaced step, her horse stumbled. The jolt caused Galena to lose balance in her seating and she tumbled into the icy fingers of the perilous air.

The hard, brittle twigs and leaves did not cushion her landing. Bruised and aching, she glanced about at the beasts. No men, no horses, just a fearsome pack of wolves had her cornered. Terror devilishly played with her mind. She fell into a ready hell and she suffered the despair of defeat.

Recovery came when her fingers touched a sturdy stick. She grabbed at it and swung the two foot limb at the pack. "Stay away from me," she shouted, unwilling to go calmly unto her demise.

The laughter of men swirled the forest. She glanced about and saw only the faces of fiends. The wolves tightened the space around her and their stare remained trained. They could rip her flesh from the bone and make her death tortuously slow.

"Please," she begged.

Scanning the shadows, she searched for the men she was sure she had heard. They had to be real and in charge of the salivating pack of beasts. From the darkness, one large wolf came forward. He paced several times, side to side near her stretched out legs. He stopped, sniffed her ankle and then her calf. The crimson skirting of her gown rose up to her knee with the push of his muzzle. Profuse puffs of air from his nostrils sprayed her skin with a bedewed heat.

Galena bent her knee and drew her leg away. She froze when his lip curled and a low growl followed. Fear knotted her muscles and hindered her from kicking.

The heavy fabric moved up her thighs. It rode on the bridge of his inspecting nose. His long thick tongue glided with a silky wetness along the inside of her trembling leg. Each lick circled further into the recesses of her clothing, tickling her skin. Then he neared the crux.

"Stop!" she demanded.

Because she lacked close fitting under garments, torrents of air from his panting whipped into her body. Her insides tweaked at the stimulation of forced heat caressing her intimate furrows of flesh. She held her breath in fearful anticipation of his next touch. Yet, underneath the tremors of apprehension, a hellish demon possessed her soul, making her suffer sinful twinges of excitement. Something magical stirred an astounding anxious sensation of yearning in her body.

The wolf backed out of her clothing and lifted his head. The cool air brought goose bumps to her exposed thighs. Her skin quivered. She stared up at him looming over her. A ruff of silver hair gleamed suddenly on his neck. His face stretched to the glow of the full moon and he howled in a long, piercing wail.

Galena whimpered with a strange understanding. His boastful triumph brought an ovation from the wolf pack. Hundreds, maybe thousands joined in a chorus of repetitious howls. From a

great distance, the sound rolled into a wave of resonant drones replanting the forest with a continuous echo.

From everywhere, eyes looked upon her, beastly eyes that glowed in the darkness. One pair hungrily met her gaze. She stared at them for a split second. Cold and dangerous, she felt fear and attraction to the nemesis and the wolf was gone.

Chapter Two

Tornan watched the Gypsy stare hard in the direction of Kurian. She selected well with her attraction. He and Kurian often shared willing females. As men, they could, as wolves they had a natural instinct to be monogamous.

"We camp here for the night!" Tornan commanded.

The Gypsy's head turned sharply his way. He saw her surprise that the wolf sniffing at her sex was gone and he sat hunched in its place.

"Where are the wolves?" she asked.

"Hmmm." He rubbed a hand over his jaw. "They're gone for now."

He saw no reason to offer an explanation.

"Are we close to Dragomir Keep?" She rose up from leaning back on her elbow to a sitting position.

"It's within a short distance by horse."

"You're not from there, are you?" Her question didn't sound as if she assumed he was, but more like she hoped he wasn't.

"No."

"There were men...." She paused, glancing around at his men setting up tents. "There were men that tried to kill me tonight."

"And that's what brought you into my forest?"

"Yours?" She snatched the hem of her gown, tugging and tucking it beneath her feet when she noticed his stare at her bare legs.

"I claim this area as mine. Those men that chased you won't come here?"

"Then I'm safe with you?"

Tornan grinned at the thought. Very few men would consider him safe.

"If I am rewarded."

"But I haven't any money."

With her knees drawn up and her arms clenching them to her bosom, she appeared frightened. He may have foregone the tease if she hadn't already made his cock hard by her fleeting glance in its direction.

"I think you know what compensation I desire?" He bent down and gripped her chin. "With that mouth, you need not lose your chastity in payment, either."

He rubbed his thumb over her moist, full lips. No payment, including copulation, could match her willing mouth pleasuring him. He pressed his thumb between her teeth and massaged the flat of her tongue.

"I'll be in my tent if you should come up with a pleasurable way to thank me for your life." Tornan walked to the first tent erected no more than ten feet from him. "I wouldn't try to leave here. The wolves are very restless at night. It's when they do their hunting."

Inside the pitched A of canvas, he lay down and folded his arm under the back of his head. The minutes ticked by slowly. Wishing and willing the Gypsy to come didn't give him any power over her choices.

He had planned her flight through the forest like a well-timed production. He had his men

eliminate her escort and leave her unguarded. While she sat vulnerable to her fear, he had other men pretend they were villagers from Dragomir Keep and threaten her life. It worked perfectly and led the master wolf hunter's bride right into his clutches.

Tornan put a halt to his thoughts about his enemy, the master wolf hunter when the flap of the tent moved and the Gypsy crawled through the opening.

"I've come—"

"Show me why you've come." His pulse raced with victory.

She neared him and put a hand on his leg. Her fingers glided along his thigh, stroking, teasing, and calming his anxiousness. She released the ties of his trousers and the cool air of the night collided with the heat radiating from his groin.

"Have you done this before?" He lifted his hand to her smooth cheek.

Her quietness remained steadfast while dipping into the garment and touching him. She excited him. Abandoning patience, he slipped a hand behind her head and brought her forward, down over him. Lifting his head, he came within an inch of kissing her and stopped.

Against his cock, the prick of something sharp kept him frozen.

"You would do well not to move or speak," the Gypsy whispered. "Unless you want to lose that which you regard as precious."

Tornan unfolded his hand from the grip of her hair and she leaned away. Agile in her travels, she repositioned herself to her feet while keeping the knife dangerously close. He could have snatched it from her grasp, except she intrigued him. Letting her play out her plan gave him a thrill he didn't get with most women.

Animals liked to stalk their prey, tease and taunt them. The rarity of the Gypsy doing the very same to him left him exhilarated. Her fear showed and that in itself could prove a danger. She'd be rash with her actions and Tornan considered his manhood valuable.

* * * *

Galena backed out of the tent and ran. At first, no one followed. The men looked at her with indifference. She left the camp and headed through the trees without thought to a direction. She paused at a tree to catch her breath, but a sound from her right caused her to run again. Turning left, following paths, she stopped at the sight of a wolf in her path. The dark sky hid the stars and she hadn't considered she was circling back.

Stumbling away, the uneven ground caught her foot and she tumbled down. Galena tried to scream. Fear forced her silence. The large wolf uttered a threatening sound and an unreal stillness blanketed them. If she were not the feast before the lust starved pack of animals, she could almost feel the tranquility in the hush.

Paralyzed by terror, she laid motionless beyond the shudders of her frazzled nerves. The wolf stepped deeper between her trembling legs. She whimpered inaudibly when the fur of his husky legs brushed the sensitive inside of her quivering thighs. His dark head hung over her body and she stared into the sparkling gold eyes. Hit with a blessing of unusual comfort, she waited for him to make a move.

The sensation of tranquility ebbed away letting trepidation return tenfold. Closing her eyes for a moment against the advance of the wolf's bared teeth and his scorching breath, she moved her hands slow to the laces on her bodice.

Lay With The Wolf, began to take meaning. Fate had fashioned this moment solely for her and she surprisingly didn't want to fight it.

She opened the gown and chemise, exposing her body to the wolf. His regard of her actions seemed almost human and his gaze followed her trembling fingers working open the

gown to her waist.

Saliva dripped from his jowls to her perspiring flesh. In a thin, frothy stream, the moisture rolled to her belly and pooled in her navel. His head came up from his inspection and the saliva spilled to her breasts, heating her nipples. It trickled from the slopes of her heaving chest and took a route to the hollow of her neck.

The internal tremors radiated to her extremities and her breasts jiggled. The wolf pushed at her erect nipple with the pressure of his tongue. He lapped in long, almost sensuous strokes. She bit the inside of her lip, fighting the urge to enjoy the sensation, and swallowed in relief, when his licks moved away from her breast. He made a trail over her breastbone and proceeded downward. The puddle of warm liquid in her navel vanished under the whip of his swirling tongue. He massaged the moisture into her flesh, providing an erotic stimulation.

She moaned in growing defeat. Her willful body and her accepting mind responded to the velvety wet slurp over her quivering flesh. She writhed involuntarily at the tingling bloom of her clit. Muscles tweaked, clenched and a rivulet of creamy fluid spilled from her insides and trickled into the cleft of her ass.

"Oh, God," she cried.

Mortified by the arousal he created, she dug her fingertips into the bed of leaves and tried desperately to prevent another encouraging sound from escaping her lips. A rumble of noise like a satisfied man's sigh could not get her to open her eyes. She didn't want to know who sniffed between her legs—man, beast, or demon.

The chants, breathing words of encouragement to the wolf, caught her attention. She twisted her head with an attempt to see who watched. In the recesses of the darkness, faceless outlines of men appeared. Then they mysteriously receded into the motionless shadows.

The wolf standing over her moved slowly as if he were under a pensive trance. His stare drew her deeper into his hypnotic golden-eyed gaze. She fought the dark thoughts of surrender and lost.

Upon her leg lay the long, firm length of the wolf's hot cock. The desire for the bestial sin surpassed decency in her. The urge to succumb, intensified.

Galena squeezed her eyes tighter, hoping to blind herself against the vulgar cravings she felt near to experiencing. His tongue glided over her skin, drenching her in his spit. The scrape of his teeth on her breasts and her belly intrigued her. His licks no longer hit upon her sanity, but rather riveted her senses to the acceptance of a decadent pleasure.

"Lay with wolf," she uttered the words slithering in the back of her thoughts. "Lay with the wolf, with his breed witnessing, and he shall live."

She couldn't stop murmuring the words over and over.

Her confused mind lifted her hips to the thrusts of his tongue cleaning her belly. She bucked violently each swipe, feeling the euphoric fever burning the place he didn't touch. The spot she needed him to alleviate, maddened her with convulsive contractions. The cheeks of her ass clenched in response to his inebriating caresses. She desired his cooling splashes to soothe the hot area between her legs.

"Please," she begged. "Please, don't stop." She squirmed frantically under the barrage of sensations.

"Yield to me your virginity?" A deep and gravelly masculine voice spoke near her face. "Give unto me your chastity with the willingness you are ready to share."

She opened her eyes in hopes to see the man reading her thoughts. The clouds shaded the moon and she saw nothing. All but for his voice, the presence over her could be any form.

Dragging her fingers over the leaves, she lifted her hands with hesitancy and sought to touch him.

A wolf had been her nemesis, yet a man spoke to her.

"Give into your lust," he whispered.

One evil far outweighed the other and Galena nodded. Not for the wickedness of his request, but for a wanton's tethering to a primal need. She touched his arm, sliding her fingers over the hair on his arm. Higher, she followed the firm, muscular shape of his shoulder.

"You have to speak your agreement."

"Yes," she answered, a hoarseness kept her voice low.

"Loud, so the pack can hear." His tone had a ragged pain to the resonance. "Tell witnesses of your wish to consummate our mating.

"Mating?" Her fingers lifted from his skin and he nuzzled his jaw against them.

She stroked the roughness of his short whiskers.

"Yes. Mate with me," he murmured seductively gentle.

She felt his stare. A wolf would benefit from the ability of nocturnal sight, but a man.... It was a man, wasn't it? She didn't understand her mind. This night, all her thoughts were muddled by emotion.

"Lay with the wolf." His lips brushed her cheek.

She turned her head, savoring the texture of his tongue along her jaw.

"Lay with the wolf." His teasing breath swirled around her ear.

"Yes." She gripped the long, silky tendrils of his hair.

"You surrender?"

He seemed surprised, but he couldn't be more mystified than she was. She inhaled a sharp breath when he kissed her jaw. Her whimper stopped him from doing it again.

Lay with wolf... Lay with wolf... Lay with wolf. The words echoed in her head.

"Lay with the wolf," she spoke the words.

"To lay with the wolf, is to lie with me." His hot breath warmed the shell of her ear. "Do you still agree?"

"Yes." She squirmed from the ticklish tip of his tongue passing over her face.

"To lie with the wolf commits you to me for eternity."

The demands of her conscience overpowered lucidity. The hands sliding up her thighs conquered her conflict with the bounds of decency. He pushed the gown and her chemise up to her hips. It left her vulnerable to the cooling breeze and to *him*.

Her questions abounded and vanished with the pressure of something soft and rigid at the mouth of her sex. The hesitancy forced her to look. The massive dark shadow outlined the body of a man. For that one second, she believed he might be a wolf, a heart wrenching relief brought tears to her eyes.

"Want me," the soft murmur caressed her face. "Want me, Gypsy."

Galena hummed her agreement. Teardrops splashed to her cheeks when his hips jerked against hers. His cock invaded fast, yet shallow. Every muscle in her body tensed. He lifted and thrust again. Pain strangled her voice and she grabbed his back. Again, he rammed into her and she squeaked a funny sound.

Her muscles involuntarily unclenched and let him enter, caressing his shaft going in and pulling out. He grunted with urgency, stretching and tearing her insides with unrelenting energy. A whine sputtered from her each time, until her insides numbed from the passing strokes.

"Yes." The heat of his puffing breath warmed her cheeks.

His body rode hers faster and harder. She folded her fingers behind his head and pulled him down to her aching breasts. She didn't need to instruct him to take one of her sensitive nipples into his mouth. His lips took up the ravishment of her breasts with an instinct that ran a thrill deep into her chest.

"More," she pleaded, uncontrollably snatching at his hair.

He lifted his face, his movements pausing.

"Don't stop, please." She drew his mouth down on hers.

His kiss connected to her lips briefly and then he pulled her into his shielding embrace as if he didn't want anyone seeing what they were doing. His hand maneuvered beneath her head and he lifted her face beneath his jaw, against the sweat layered on his skin. She cried with an exhilarating joy she didn't comprehend. It was as if she had found a part of herself she didn't know was missing. Blood rushed through her veins and her quickening pulse turned her frenzy into an inferno of maddening energy.

Galena writhed in the leaves, thrashing her head from side to side with shameful jubilation beneath a man she didn't know. His kisses splashed across her collarbone, up her neck to her ear.

"Want me." He nuzzled his face to hers.

Nodding her head, she didn't know if he actually said the words, or if she wanted to hear them. She desired him with an unexplainable passion and wanted the same from him. His body jerked and he made another thrust into her as he lifted his head. Roaring into the wind, wolves howled in unison.

In the moment of her splendor, a sharp awakening rushed her weary mind. She opened her eyes and stared up at the wolf panting and drooling on her. His chest heaved against hers surging upward. Her raw nipples stirred in his fur with each breath.

Lay with the wolf...Lay with the Wolf...Lay with the wolf, ricocheted in her fading thoughts.

Chapter Three

Tornan slowly rose to his full stature. His sex-ravished body heaved from the arduous throes of his copulating shift. The expenditure of energy left him dizzy. For a moment, he was unable to stabilize his shape. He waited for the blood flow to reverse.

His cock hung in a sated arch, dripping with the mixed fluids of their spending. He ran his hand down his wet throbbing shaft and lifted his fingers up in front of his face. He stared, in a daze, at the smear of diluted red on his skin. He licked the virginal blood christening their union. Then, mopping a slow stroke across his wet brow, he flicked his sweat away. He blinked rapidly, removing the evidence of his confusion from his fixated eyes. His memory had a fuzzy veil over his actions. Yet, there on the ground, he stared at the object of his primordial lust.

With another swipe of his hand down his swollen cock, he brought his dampened fingers to his tongue again. The pure flavor of her virtue dulled his senses. His cock throbbed with an insistence to sheath into her heated core. He couldn't deny that bathing in the chaste fluids of her innocence excited him.

His knees began to buckle to desire. The hand on his arm stopped him, and he glanced around at the witnesses to his weakest moment. He bowed his head and examined the girl. She had the power to control his freewill. She lay unconscious and provocatively exposed. He focused on the bane of his immediate problem—her delicious nakedness.

"Are you all right, m'lord?" Kurian's voice held concern.

Tornan had never felt this lost in thought. His gaze went out to those that breathed his name. The pack stared out from the black shield of the forest trees. They rose to their human feet, surprise written in their expressions.

His attention dropped to the Gypsy. Leaves and twigs tangled in the mass of black curls strewn around her head in a dark halo. When he saw her on the horse, he thought the devil plucked her from his dreams. He felt taunted by her presence even now.

"Tornan?" Kurian shook his arm.

"The wolf wanted to taste her," he muttered. "He had the taste of her creamy skin on his tongue and he wanted in her."

"Nevertheless, Count Wolvraine, you, the man, joined with her." Kurian reminded him. "We should go now. Dragomir will send men to search for those that don't return with her."

"I mated her, Kurian."

"You defiled the master wolf hunter's bitch. It will send him a message you will not be played with."

Tornan couldn't move his gaze from watching the Gypsy breathe. Beautiful ivory breasts rode high and firm on her petite young body. Her nipples were no longer large dark stains. They were small disks with dimpled centers. His subdued urges devised a reason to take her again.

He never took a woman by force, but he had trouble reconciling he didn't this time either, especially with Kurian boasting how he had ravaged the beauty for revenge. He'd never dare use an innocent woman as a pawn in the game he and the Wolf Hunter had engaged in for years.

Tornan tried recalling the Gypsy's voice. It sang with the angelic sounds of her sweet lilting words. In his soul, the spell of magic had a mesmerizing control over them both, and she

had agreed to the union.

Lay with wolf... Lay with wolf... Lay with wolf. His mind screamed the forgotten curse.

"What now, Count Wolvraine?" Kurian nudged the Gypsy's limp body with his foot.

"Stay away from her." Tornan pushed him back.

A possessive thread weaved through him. Caught by unwanted emotions, he tried to toughen himself against the lurking guilt. His strength in leadership came with little regard for people outside his horde of wolf shifters. The Gypsy girl jeopardized his rule, just as she had endangered the last thread of his decency.

Tornan knelt. The sight of her made him feel bound by an old hex.

"We should go," Kurian told him.

Tornan's hardened heart softened with the sleepy sigh from the Gypsy.

"Sleep will be good for her." With the back of his hand, Tornan caressed the peak of her breast, swirling his knuckles over the dusky tip until it spiked, hard and hungry for his lips.

Kurian's cough rushed a wave of embarrassment through him. His indulgence showed too much affection, making his actions too human. The weakness compelled him to gloat over his conquest and prove his power. He shifted into the wolf and howled victoriously. He had gotten what they came for and their triumphant celebration would not end early that night.

Tornan strutted among his pack of wolves, proving his leadership and determination.

He glanced back, unable to resist the vision of her tender body, and he saw the young Hungarian wolf, Joren approach her. Tornan didn't move. His triumph should be shared. But when Joren dared to drag his tongue over the Gypsy's skin, rage boiled the killer blood in his veins.

He bounded through the pack toward Joren. The wolf, extremely immersed in the girl's scent, continued to lick her, completely unaware of the swift vengeance Tornan would take. Joren moved to her legs when Tornan barreled into him.

Tornan tore into Joren's hide. They somersaulted over one another in a death match. He pinned the wolf to the ground with his teeth firm on Joren's jugular.

"She isn't worth it," Kurian yelled.

Tornan looked up. The man would not understand. However, Joren's death would not fair well with his pack if he killed the wolf in favor of the Gypsy girl, so he set Joren free and shifted into a man.

She made a small sound when he tugged her clothing over her body and tied the laces. Lifting her limp body from the bed of leaves stained with her virgin's blood, he moved to dispel the idea that he'd share her.

They were men living a cursed life as wolves and wolves mated for life. By the rights of mating before witnesses, he claimed her as his. A ritual he'd never done before, nor would he do again.

Tornan looked over her sweet face nestled against him in the cradle of his arm. Her dark hair swam in a storm around her head. Clouds overhead shifted. The moonlight peeked between branches, casting a glow on her angelic face. He witnessed perfect beauty, and he devoured the sight of graceful contours to her jaw. Cursed for decades, he was unable to recall anyone as delicious.

He had not hunted her for sport. When word reached him that the Wolf Hunter, Dragomir readied to take a Gypsy girl as a wife, something possessed him to stop the alliance. Since his father's time, no nobleman married a Gypsy without ulterior motives.

"Count?" Kurian drew Tornan from his lingering study of the Gypsy.

"We ride for the Castle," Tornan ordered.

"Yes, m'lord."

Tornan required two hands to get on his tall black steed. He hoisted the Gypsy to his shoulder, slipped a foot in the stirrup and swung up onto the back of the horse. Once seated, he let her slip down in front of him.

"Hmmm," she sounded out softly, protesting the disturbance.

"Sleep, my precious," he brushed a kiss to her forehead. "Dream of me."

He held her close. The overwhelming fragrance to her tender skin intoxicated his senses. He blinked, trying to release the spell she had over him. He couldn't lead an army of shape-shifters if his mind wandered to dreams of a tranquil seclusion with her.

Combing a hand over the disarray of her hair, he freed some of the debris ensnared. Nothing broke a distraction more than a girl's flailing arms or her striking fists. Her ebony lashes fluttered open after she blindly swung. Her fingers, already curled into tight balls, merely glanced off his broad shoulders.

Her spirited veracity immediately stiffened his cock, and his mind reeled with indulgences he'd partake of with her in his bed. He'd leave no spot missed by his kisses. Tasting her from the outside to the in with exalting pleasure.

"Easy, Gypsy."

"Put me down at once. Release me or I'll put a curse on you that will descend for all eternity upon your line!"

"Curse me, will you, little Gypsy?" he laughed at the irony. "You freely gave yourself to me, so you should remember the fruit of my loins will be the seed that grows in your belly."

He gazed at the eddy of black hair dangling in her face and draped across his arm. Lifting a guarded hand to her face, he smoothed the tresses over her head. Tipping her chin, she forced his hand to go with her hair. Her gaze swept the area around them.

"You have no ally here to save you from the way your body craves mine." He twisted his fingers tighter to keep her from looking away. "They know you're mine."

"You ... we ... they watched." Her voice wavered.

Brandishing her emotions freely, she shamed him. He pulled her face close. The tears broke the rim they clung to and spilled to her fire-blushed skin. He placed his lips on one scalding cheek and kissed lightly.

"Lay with the wolf, with his breed witnessing and he shall live," he recited the phrase crashing around in his thoughts.

"Lay with the wolf, accept him and thou shall survive," she whispered in return.

Tornan brought her head to his shoulder, and the Gypsy wept with muted shudders. He stroked his hand over her head, offering a silent comfort. Somehow, they were predestined to mate and neither of them had the power to stop the collision course. It happened, and he couldn't change his asking or her accepting. Neither of them understood why they complied with the dreamlike chant invoking a spell over their rule.

Lay with the wolf...Lay with the wolf...Lay with the wolf.

The words would haunt him if he couldn't shelve them away or bring a reasonable explanation.

Kurian waited with an impatient pace near him. Inhaling and taking strength from his position, Tornan gave the signal for them to ride for home. He took lead and swung his black steed out in front of the horde.

A shift in the air swept through the treetops and moonlight filtered through. He hadn't

considered her sensitivity to the men she had ridden with, until she whimpered. His horse stepped around the beheaded one, and Tornan turned them away before they reached the next slain man.

When she brought her tear-stained face around, it put her eyes close to his. Defiant and frightened, her stare hinted at the trust she sought with him. He pulled her face beneath his jaw where her tears wet his neck.

"Where are you taking me?" She sniffed, her tone putting forth a little courage.

"Home. And I hope your threat of curses is over, for I hold no store in superstitions, my little Gypsy."

"I need no curse to give you grief," she declared. "You have touched the skirting of my gown and that alone has condemned you to bad luck."

He laughed and rubbed a hand over her red skirting, cupping the cloth close to the center of her legs.

"I had plenty of good luck befall me when your soul awakened to me." He forced the cloth into the crease of her thighs.

"Please." Her hand clutched his. "Please, stop or I'll..."

"Curse me again with some other meaningless threat to my future or my body?" He yanked the fabric up and touched the silkiness of her inner leg. "You're too young to wield such power."

Her gray-eyed gaze drifted to his mouth. The heat of her body made him shiver as it connected to the chilled sweat in his pores. Her lashes, large fringes fluttering with a shy reserve, drifted down to her cheeks.

The Gypsy's luscious lips parted and the delicious sweetness of her breath floated into his mouth. He covered her next exhale with his and their kiss swirled like a tornado in the locked cavern they created.

Tornan slipped his hand up the center of her legs and smoothed over the wet ringlets.

"Mmmm..." Her fingers touched his cheek and slid to his jaw, giving him permission to continue.

He parted the swollen lips of her cunt and exposed her erect clit to the brush of his finger. She squirmed, but didn't give up his mouth in protest. He dipped his middle finger into her and thrust it deep.

She moaned with a long vibratory sound echoing into his lungs. He pumped two fingers and a stuttered pleasure came out in a gasp. In the minutes thrumming her clit, he had her writhing in ecstasy. His cock needed the same slaking and yet, with her in his lap, his erection remained trapped into submission. In her languid state within his embrace, she permitted him the pleasure of sucking at her full lips. He drank her saliva with the relish of being the only one to taste of her kisses. He wished hard to be at the castle. There he would drink of her spending. In his bedchamber, he would repeatedly quench his thirst, suckling the essence of her innocent passion.

"So beautiful," he murmured.

Her whimpers grew intense as her insides constricted. He kissed her harder when her body stiffened. Fingers, as strong as his, dug into his arm, and she jolted with spasms, clutching at him.

Her bottom rocking on top of his engorged cock made him spend as well. He held her tight, letting his horse set the pace for home. When the tension of their individual climaxes dispersed, he lowered her back in the sling of his arm.

Tornan studied the placid expression on her face. Her eyes opened while she remained in her inebriated state of indolent fervor. He rubbed at her swollen breasts. Beneath the gown, he felt the hard nipples. Her moan purred with contentment.

"You are soft in all the right places." He voiced his pleasure of her curves.

She made small humming sounds, enticing his fingers to sneak between the laces and touch the silky flesh. Relaxed in her place in his circling arm, her complacent gaze held no emotions. Her body, on the other hand, felt relaxed and satiated.

"Why were you traveling at night?" he asked.

"The men you slayed were escorting me to my betrothed, Viktor Dragomir."

"But why at night, when the Black Forest is dark and dangerous?" The fine hair on his neck prickled with the sixth sense, warning him the situation was not right.

If Viktor had any care for the Gypsy, he'd have an army seeing to her safety. The night journey reinforced Tornan's guess that Dragomir was plotting something.

"I don't know." Her fingers mindlessly stroked his arm. "Why did you kill my escort?"

"The men did not die by my sword." He pointed out. "While my men are overzealous, they have the right to defend themselves."

"But wolves were attacking us?"

"Wolves?" He laughed.

"Yes. And the men were killed by blows of a sword so I can only assume they are your wolves."

Tornan nodded an acknowledgment.

"Do you know why the master wolf hunter wanted to marry you?" He cupped her face and smoothed a thumb over her lips. "Nobles don't marry peasants, especially Gypsy girls."

"I wasn't informed of the details to the arrangement."

"Surely, Dragomir told you something of his plans."

"I've never met him."

"You are a very skillful Gypsy then, to obtain such a marriage position."

She trembled under the inquisitive glide of his finger around her face. He liked the line and curve of her neck. He rubbed his finger over her soft sensual lips. They had tasted good—exceptionally delicious.

"What are you thinking?"

Her stare dropped to his mouth and he didn't need an answer. He bowed his head and pressed his mouth to hers until her breathless pants suggested he let her breathe. Urging his horse on a faster gait, Tornan reveled in the idea, the sooner he got to the castle, the quicker he'd taste every inch of his Gypsy's flesh.

Chapter Four

Galena heard the other man call her seductive captor, Count. She knew little of the Transylvanian aristocracy other than people stayed within their stations. Why would a powerful man of nobility have anything to do with her?

She had questioned her father as to why the master wolf hunter wanted her as a bride. He didn't have an answer, other than ask for her cooperation. How could she refuse her father?

With the Count urging his horse on a faster gait, Galena had no choice other than to hold his arms tighter. Hard muscles beneath his clothes did not allow an inch of give. He frightened her, and yet, he made her feel safe at the same time.

The way they raced through the woods concerned her. The men she had as escorts had torches lighting their way through the Black Forest. These men with the Count rode by a strange instinct. They skillfully weaved the dark trails much like demons that could see in the black of night.

She tried to stay awake and alert. They traveled a long time and any fear she had, waned. The beating heart under her ear played a soothing rhythm. It drew her indolent body into the same cadence. With the harrumph of the horse, each leap and stomp of hooves surrounding her acted as a methodical calm, lulling her toward sleep. Her eyes drooped, her lethargic limbs dropped, and her thoughts floated. She drifted in and out of slumber based on whether the terrain was smooth or rough.

Welcoming the strange dreams of the Count, she felt rescued and out of harm's way. When the uneven path uphill eventually jarred her awake, she lifted her head, tilted it back and dared a look at evil in the eye.

Mindlessly, she pushed her hand around his back. The muscled hardness, unyielding to her fingertips, kept her captivated by a longing to touch more of him. His scent had a pleasantness she didn't often find around men. The heady musk drifted up her nostrils, stimulating her feminine recesses.

"Where are you taking me?" She couldn't accept his announcement of home because she didn't know where home was located, and she lost her sense of direction long before the Count seized her.

"Wolvraine Castle."

"Wol—vraine Castle," she stammered.

She'd heard the tales of Count Wolvraine's brutality. She grew up on the stories of his cruel nature. While she hadn't witnessed any of the atrocities, she heard tell he had numerous men and women impaled on spears for the vultures to feast upon simply to please his whims.

She shivered and pushed slightly away from the comfortable warmth she enjoyed.

"You've heard the unfounded information, I gather."

"You cannot tell me none of it is true."

"Can't I?" He laughed, teasing her with a hand massaging her breast. "Maybe I know not of what you speak."

The fondling distracted her. His fingers plucking at her gown, pinching her skin, tugged sensations from the pit of her belly. That very thing made her want to know more about him and

the possessive way he controlled her feelings.

"What is your name?" she asked.

"Tornan."

"Count Tornan Wolvraine?"

His horse slowed and he regarded her with a concentrated gaze. His stare wavered once to her mouth and came back to her eyes. Her insides shivered when his green eyes changed briefly to gold.

"Yes," he answered.

She drew her bottom lip nervously between her teeth. The Count put a hand up and touched her face—first her cheek and then her chin. He eyed her like a meal. His tongue licked a ring around his mouth while she continued the incessant gnawing on her lip.

"If you want to bite something then I bid you, bite me." He lowered his face toward her.

His thumb curled her bottom lip out, allowing his kiss to press into her startled gasp. His tongue thrust inside the cavern of her mouth, rotated one slow lick that dripped saliva into her throat. He touched everything in her gaping mouth with a velvet tickle. Involuntarily, her tongue darted out of the way, but he latched onto it with his teeth.

He let go and rubbed her top teeth with his caressing tongue. It moved to the bottom row. Her jaw ached with it arched open far too long. A primitive yearning held her immobile, fascinated, and eager for his exploring probe. She never had a man kiss her before that night. The uniqueness to the experiences he offered put her under a spell of enchantment each time his mouth pressed hers.

"Go on, bite me," he charged.

"I cannot." She couldn't fathom why he would even ask her to do such a thing.

"You're soft, yet firm, and a delight to have had the pleasure of bedding." His hand roamed, squeezing and kneading her fleshy areas. "You will be treated well."

The horse came to a complete halt. The Count pushed her from the perch on his thigh and she slid off into another man's arms.

"Take her to my chambers, Kurian."

She looked up at the man the Count foisted her off to and a shiver, frightfully quick, raced from her shoulders to her toes. Kurian's cold blue eyes were the first ones she saw before she lay with the wolf. Her attraction for him lessened in favor of the handsome Count's. Nonetheless, it lingered with an unnerving realness inside her. The wish to go with him as the Count's replacement for her safety seemed fitting.

It didn't take her long to realize his long stare at her had not been for lust. He regarded her as many viewed Gypsies. He thought her unfitting in his presence. This tall, dark Romany-blooded man had the very condemnation of others she knew just like him.

Kurian jerked her arm and she stumbled away from Count Wolvraine. It would be pointless to struggle since his pitchfork-sized hand had folded over her arm. The long pointed, tine-sharp fingers wrapped her upper arm in a manacled bind that pinched and hurt.

"Let go." She slapped at his hand.

When his fingers squeezed to make her cry out, Galena laid into his arm with her teeth. She bit down hard. He grunted his annoyance and she felt victorious when he released. However, her jaw met with the crack of his knuckles. In a starry daze, she fell on the stone steps. His backhand left her in utter shock.

Through watery eyes, she saw his alarm. She thought it was for his actions until she noticed the Count's arm across his chest. A long bladed knife hovered near Kurian's throat. It

pressed to his bristly skin and he gulped.

She put a hand to her lips to hold back her instinct to beg mercy for him. He hated her race and there she sat with her sympathetic waving between right and wrong.

"I don't think your size nor strength needs to be reinforced by such a display again, do you, Kurian?" Count Wolvraine asked.

Galena's heart sighed with the awe she found in the Count's chivalry and his compassion. He lowered his knife from Kurian's throat. When he stepped away, she only saw Kurian's black leather boots topped by brown leather leggings. The Count acted a shield for Kurian's humility rather than for her protection. She found it another appealing attribute to Tornan Wolvraine's character.

"She's a fragile woman, Kurian. Her importance here is greater than yours at this moment," the Count threatened calmly.

"Of course, as you say, Count Wolvraine."

The Count moved to turn around and she caught a glimpse of Kurian's face. He was capable of anything if she angered him, so she made a mental note to avoid him.

"No one is to ever touch what belongs to me without my specific orders," the Count announced. "Do I make myself clear? If not, say so now."

Galena didn't hear anyone reply. Not even Kurian whom the Count stood closest to.

The Count impressed her when he flicked his wrist and waved her guard away. He walked toward her with a striking elegance. His worn leather boots clacked on the stone with the paces it took to get in front of her. He stopped and extended his fingers toward her. She looked at the lines in his hand when he put it in front of her face. The torches on the castle wall did not shed the kind of light she required to read his palm.

"Come." The Count bent lower. "Kurian forgets how it is to be courteous to guests. We rarely have the pleasure of one, so it may account for his poor judgment."

"I'm a prisoner, not a guest." She took his strong hand only because her position on the cold steps came with no comfort. "I was not asked to come here, but rather, forced."

"You are much more than you realize, but we have time to discuss that later."

The Count pulled her up from the dampness. He led her closer to the dim torchlight, and there, with a hand on her jaw, he turned her face. He examined the bruise she felt swelling on her cheek. She, in turn, surveyed his features.

The glow of the fire danced in his green eyes. It warmed her insides the way he had a ravenous twinkle in the gems. Hungry, like a wolf, lecherous, like a lust-starved man, he hypnotized her. The intriguing stare drew her closer. His masculine features, ruggedly handsome, had her hands trembling to touch him and connect with his power.

"You'll heal." His finger skated gently under the curve of her jaw.

Once again, a warm wetness leaked from between her legs. It seemed sad that a man so truly attractive would have the reputation of a blood-lusting killer. She would not have believed it herself if she hadn't witnessed the two men he killed, or had killed, that very night.

"What do you plan to do to me?" She looked at the gated entry.

"I don't know exactly."

"You said something about mating me for life."

"Did I, it was in the heat of the moment, I suppose. It meant nothing. Why do you ask?"

It meant something to him, but she'd not press to get an answer. She had her own mixed emotions about the animalistic encounter they shared in the forest.

"I guess I don't understand why we did what we did or why you've kidnapped me."

"Some things have no explanation, Gypsy. You know that. As for my bringing you here, that was to prevent your marriage to Viktor Dragomir." His fingers caressed her sore cheek again.

He looked troubled and confused. She surmised it was a foreign feeling for a man that ruled with strength.

"Come." He guided her to the entrance of the castle.

The guarded fortress had a dual role; to keep people out and to keep people in. She still wondered what he had in store for her in the prison of his castle.

Galena shook it off as some remnant memory. He made her feel a past life existed between them. The illusion of previously encountering him before left a disturbing knot of angst in her stomach.

His wide hand dropped from her face. It landed on her shoulder, heavy and commanding. He used his firm grip to direct her to the castle entrance. He didn't exert pressure, but the weight alone gave him the power to steer her.

That same heaviness came in many forms and she remembered how bulky he felt lying on her body. She recalled how she feared and welcomed him at the same time.

He didn't want her to marry the master wolf hunter.

"Why?" she blurted.

If ever she had a great fault, her inquisitiveness got her in the most trouble.

"Why, what?"

"Why don't you want me to marry Viktor Dragomir?"

"Because," he snorted, almost comically. "I'm of good humor today."

"Oh, and am I to presume having me at your mercy has something to do with your mood?"

"No need to presume. You have every reason to be my amusement. The bastard deserves to have one plan foiled and I deserve to have you as a delight beneath my fingertips."

"I understand the part of your pleasure, but why does my not marrying Viktor give you reason to be happy?"

"I like to do things in opposition of what one would like. He and I are enemies, and such delights are those we take at the pain of others." He rubbed the side of her arm, slow and tender, quite pleasing.

"He'll not know what happened to me, so why didn't you kill me like the others? Or at the very least, leave me there so I might tell him what happened."

"I don't know." His expression appeared as perplexed as she felt.

"You must have some plan—an inkling of an idea."

"One would think so, but I've not given the matter much of my attention. It had no dire importance at the time."

She didn't have an appreciation for his comment. *No importance*. He forced her to feel things she shouldn't have, and to hear it meant nothing gave her an ache in her chest. The little niggling flame of resentment stepped on the last threads of her dignity.

"Maybe together, we can decide why you're here," he added.

She sucked in her breath when his touch slithered from her back to the top curve of her bottom. The gown didn't hide the heat of his firm, wayward caress.

"I cannot help you in that regard. I was minding my own business and have nothing to do with ... with...."

He made her powerless with the closeness of his face. His sultry stare provoked tingling

tremors in her wet vagina. The quiver of her clit hinted at plunging her insides toward the rapture he enticed her to take pleasure in before.

"You and I are connected, Gypsy. Somehow, for some unknown reason, we've been destined for this moment." His breath fanned her face.

She fought the desire to have him sweating and grunting on her like an animal. The acceptance of the diversion had a sinful intimation. She feared for her soul, knowing how much she enjoyed their joining.

"Yes, I feel that way too, but why?"

He shook his head and led her across a small dirt courtyard. She glanced behind him at the shadows of men dispersing. For a time, she knew she had passed out. Had other men made use of her? The possessiveness she felt from the Count, told her no.

Glancing at the wolf keeping a steady pace at her side, reinforced the fear she tried keeping out of her thoughts. The animal curled the corner of its lip up and Galena averted her eyes, afraid the animal would feel threatened by her.

"You have a wolf as a pet," she commented.

"Saskia is not exactly a pet." He flicked his hand at the wolf to dismiss it.

The wolf's eyes glowed, and Galena stepped closer to the Count. He pulled her around where he held her to his opposite side.

"Go," he directed the wolf. "Leave us."

The wolf stalked off.

"She understands you?" Galena clung to him.

"Naturally, but don't ever trust a wolf to obey. They are a temperamental lot and sometimes, nature forces them to be unruly."

"They're just animals."

He looked down at her. A strange twinkle in his eyes displayed some amusement he derived from their conversation. "Yes, they are, aren't they?"

She didn't want baited into discussing her theories on the evils a wolf possessed. The strange night had shown her more than she wanted to know and talking about it upset her.

When she pulled from the Count, he let go of her waist. She picked up the hem of her gown and walked unhindered up the steep stone steps. She hurried her pace on purpose, because she didn't like the way she felt some sort of unruliness in herself when he touched her. Worse, she didn't want him seeing how his hands upon her met with her secret approval.

From the arch of the Castle's doors, she looked back. He smiled and the sincerity in his expression infused her with an appreciative heat. Her toes, her fingers and even her nipples perked up to the deliciously handsome grin.

"Viktor Dragomir believes all wolves should be killed." She informed him with her desperation to make him say something to anger her. She needed something to stop the way she leaned toward begging him for kisses.

Galena didn't have a specific reason for mentioning what he probably knew. Count Wolvraine was probably aware of a great deal more than she did about many things. However, his smile vanished and she thought it was a good thing.

"He's a butcher and a murderer of his own people," he grumbled.

"I've heard he's a savior to the villages plagued by wolves."

"You are young, naïve, and misinformed. If I were to let you meet him, it would not take long for you to see the atrocious stories are attributed to the wrong man." He took her arm and walked her down a long chilly corridor.

Stone walls, heavy carved tables and black iron sconces lit everything for her inspection. She didn't know the finery of castles could exceed her dreams. She always lived in a bow topped Vardo wagon where space remained limited to the most practical of items.

"If that is so, why have you not done something to stop the rumors? Provided of course, they are as you say, attributed to the wrong man."

"I've had enough problems on my lands without worrying over the master wolf hunter's quest for power. However, today you witness the start to my revenge on his choice of direction. He's crossed onto Wolvraine lands too often and it's time he learned a lesson about boundaries."

"And I am to be your retaliation?" She laughed. "I hardly think my value will go noticed for more than a minute."

"You, Gypsy, are a means to start a war."

"So you do have a plan for taking me."

He made a grunt at the suggestion she was right. They continued to walk and every fifteen paces or so, they passed a door. The Count didn't stop at any of the heavy engraved slabs of wood, until he reached the last one. He opened the door, ushered her inside with a hand to her bottom, and shut it behind them.

Galena stared at the largest piece of furniture housed in the spacious area. A huge wood-carved bed overpowered the room. She hardly took notice of the other small, unobtrusive pieces of furniture. The crimson blanket neatly spread over the mattress, captivated her like a pool of blood. Her stare remained riveted. Not even her scarlet dress had the same vibrancy as the coverlet.

"Take off your gown," he ordered.

She spun around and faced him. He said he would want to use her again. She didn't think it would be so soon. Did he not need rest or take nourishment? She debated telling him of her famished state.

"Please, do not ask me to do this." She looked over her shoulder at the bed. "Can we ... maybe talk?"

"Take it off."

"Please, could I not..."

He came for her and Galena shuffled back with nowhere to go.

"I want this off of you, now!"

She shook her head and clutched at the bodice of the garment still sagging from the earlier engagement between them. She feared his unspoken intentions with a strange stimulation, and yet, she needed more time to think.

"You shouldn't cherish gifts from a beast." He grabbed her arm and tugged her to him.

"Please," she implored him. "Not yet."

He wrenched the ties loose on her bodice and pried her fingers from the fabric. She grabbed his wrists and the thickness made it hard for her to get a firm grip. Pulling at his hands, she made one move, but not in the intended direction.

With the back of his knuckles beneath her unlaced chemise, he caressed her breast in a series of swirls and strokes. The gentle attention hypnotized her. Her nipple puckered from the arousing touch and the longer he fingered the one spot, the more she wanted him to continue.

"You are a curious creature." He picked up her breast and kneaded it blindly while staring into her eyes.

"You are more a creature than I, m'lord." She didn't mean to say anything that might incite him, just distract him from his plan to make use of her.

"Even a human is a creature, little one."

His head dropped down and she breathed heavier as his tongue glided over her skin.

"Some creatures have a higher value, however," he continued. "Some are to be cherished."

A quiet hum escaped her throat.

"While others," he added. "Other creatures are to be detested and killed as an infestation on this earth."

He rose and his thumb took over touching her where his tongue left off. The graze of his fingers bumped over her hardened nipple and joined to pull. Summer lightning never moved so swift, as the threads of heat ricocheted a sensation low into her belly.

His stare met hers again.

Tangled in a knot of anxiety, she didn't know how to translate his comment. Many people didn't like Gypsies, and his talk confused her when put up against his actions. The intensity of his roguish gaze forced her into a submissive mood of total complacency. She didn't want to anger him. More importantly in her thoughts, she didn't want him to stop his actions.

He peeled the gown from her shoulders leaving the long chemise in place even though the gauzy fabric gapped open.

Her breathing came ragged and hard as he shoved the gown off her shoulder and forced it over her heaving bosom. Lowering it down the length of her, his hands never missed a curve as he smoothed the chemise in route to remove the garment. He grabbed the front of her chemise near her sex and pressed it to his nose. His inhale emitted an erotic groan that tightened her insides. Every muscle in her clenched.

"Step out," he commanded.

She lifted one foot and then her other. His hands glided over her calves as she did so.

"You will be brought something else to wear." He rose up clutching the gown in one hand.

He appeared to want to say more before he turned away. Her skin flushed with an embarrassing heat, and she considered stopping him from leaving. Nevertheless, his boots made his departure sound determined as he went out of the room. The door snapped shut, leaving her in his bedchamber alone and confused.

She didn't know what to think as she looked at the heavy door. It took a long while for her to move. When she did, rage engulfed her mind, latching onto the only reason she could think of for him taking her gown. She didn't like the notion her thoughts concocted. She hated it with a jealous ferocity. To think or even care what the Count did beyond her presence showed her lack of common sense. If Count Wolvraine planned to give another woman the red gown Viktor sent her for their wedding, it shouldn't have meant a thing to her.

Galena didn't know which could be worse, to be the Count's prisoner and plaything, or have an attraction to him too great to ignore.

Chapter Five

Tornan sat in his chair at the head of the long mahogany banquet table in the dining hall. Holding the Gypsy's wedding gown up in front of his face, he examined it, remembering it on her. The fabric fit her shape like a layer of skin. He didn't see that in the forest.

He rubbed the cloth between his fingers, closed his eyes and let the memories of her fill his mind. For a stimulant to the arousing recollection, he put the garment to his nose. The Gypsy's intoxicating scent lingered in the rich threads. Like a toxin to annoy his thoughts, the perfume of her sex poisoned his senses. The delicious fragrance permeated his flaring nostrils.

Instead of shaking off the capture of his fantasies, Tornan visualized her silken thighs sliding against his cheeks. Soft, wondrous skin pressed to his face while he drank in the glistening creamy essence spilling from her undulating body. Her sexual nectar had the infusion of her virgin blood. The thought of tasting, savoring, and dining on such a treat, invigorated his pulse.

He opened his eyes and studied the red gown--the symbol of a virgin bride. From the garment to her virginity, he stripped her of her chastity, knowing the greatest upset would be to the master wolf hunter's plans.

Tornan rubbed the brocade on his cheek, over his lips, and relived the event in the forest. Torrents of black curls hung long down her back and had a softness he liked. The sparkle of fear and distrust in her eyes also had the feral yearning he understood. They shared the kind of lust two people are attracted to the instant they see each other. Some call it love at first sight. A wolf knows it more primitively as a bitch in season.

He took the female and filled her with his seed and he didn't understand why. He had lain with her, letting his men witness the union, and it felt as if his fate were sealed with condemnation. He could accept the doing—it was done and unchangeable. What bothered him more was what he feared would come to pass—a mortal woman, living with him under the domination of a wolf's instincts. It unnerved him to think that one day the crazed animalistic nature of his tainted soul would regress too far.

Tornan tore the frock's bodice. He swung his arm and tossed the gown to the center of the table. He stared at the puddle of red as if evil touched his skin. The tradition of a Gypsy wearing the color of blood for her wedding reinforced an ageless representation of virginity and he couldn't get the cloth away from her fast enough.

The pretty girl had cast a spell, binding his mind. With a harsh rub over his mouth, he tried to wipe away the kiss of her sweet breath. He tried to understand why the urge came on him out of nowhere. Yet, one look at her luscious berry-stained lips and he thirsted for a taste, just as he had hungered for her body.

The enchantment now weakened with their division. The space of separation allowed him time to think harder and clearer on what he wanted from her. Unfortunately, his cock grew rigid with her there in his mind, lodged in his thoughts like another curse. Her young lissome limbs had held him intrigued. Her womanly curves fit and suggestively aligned with his. She surged up to him with an equal passion.

Yearning drummed within his mind outside the physical reach of her. He rubbed a hand

at the crotch of his britches. His balls ached under the swollen pressure of denial. Releasing the points lacing his britches closed. He liberated his erection and took it upon himself to seek the calming he required. With his legs stretched under the table, he fisted his pulsing shaft. The throbbing heat caressed his damp palm and he pumped the thin sheath of skin. Over his bone hard cock, he jerked a slow, rhythmic approach toward orgasm. The vision of the Gypsy girl danced in his head. She made him crave to have something he fought.

Squeezing his cock firmer, he twisted and pulled faster to release himself. Fraught with the existence of teetering on the edge of his climax, he ground his teeth, clenched his jaw and thought of her. If he had the Gypsy's tongue licking at him with the passionate appetite he felt before, he'd spill readily.

His muscles grew weary, taut from the repetitive motion. The difference between his rough fingers and the gentle wet glide of a woman's tongue made his orgasm hover evasively. Somehow, his cock knew the difference between his clumsy hold and that of a woman's drenched cunt eagerly milking him with her clenches.

"Damn." He pounded the table in frustration.

Moments later, the pressure grew explosive. He no more than glanced up at Kurian's entrance to the dining hall, before shutting his eyes to his full and satisfactory ejaculation. His hot juices gushed over his knuckles and dripped from his hand, spattering the stone surface near his feet. He groaned as the fluids rushed feverishly from his stretched-tight testicles. For a minute, he couldn't move. He jerked his cock several times until he expended his tension. Then he dropped his head back and roared in agony of not having the Gypsy's tight body absorbing his aftershocks.

Kurian's wait seemed impatient. Whether he felt aroused or annoyed, Tornan couldn't tell. There would be others that saw the Gypsy just as Tornan did—a woman in heat. She-wolf or not, females gave off a smell a male could not ignore. Her strong and powerful scent dominated his rationale so why not another man's.

"If you had whistled, Saskia would have laid herself out on the table for you to fuck, m'lord." Kurian's comment came unwelcome.

Tornan's pent up frustration didn't want any outlet. Besides, Saskia preferred him humping her as a wolf. He didn't want his wolf-bitch lover, he required the Gypsy girl. She somehow emerged from his dreams into a reality he wanted to stalk.

"I've no need of a female to relax myself." Tornan took the red gown from the table and wiped away the discharge of his virility. There was a wicked pleasure in having his sperm touch a gift to a girl Viktor Dragomir would never touch. He waved Kurian forward and tossed the frock back to the table.

"You sent for me?" Kurian asked.

Tornan noted carefully Kurian's expression, and he saw no signs of a resentful malice for their earlier upset. But looks could deceive and Tornan used his best judgment to be cautious of the man for a while.

He had been rash to threaten Kurian at the point of his dagger. The Gypsy shouldn't have meant anything to him other than a means to irk her intended, and yet, she inevitably became more than he wanted to admit. She fit into plans he hadn't made.

"I need you to get that bloodied gown into the hands of Dragomir." He pointed to the bunched up material. "I want him to think the worst has happened to his vanished bride. If the man wishes to make me out to be a devil to the people of Transylvania, then I shall accommodate his fantasy."

"Instead of the pretense that she is dead, why not send her to him that way?"

"Because I am not the barbarian monster he makes me out to be. And you disappoint me, Kurian. We are not at war with the villagers. We do not kill our countrymen for sport."

"She's just a Gypsy." His words were fringed with a sentiment other than disgust.

Tornan never heard Kurian express a hate for Gypsies. Though, to harbor hatred toward the Gypsy that had put upon his head the curse to walk as a wolf would not be so farfetched.

"Ah, you have ill-will against the Gypsies, have you, for our cursed existence I assume?"

"Contemptible creatures, these Romany witches."

Tornan gave way to a smile. "You forget my birth, Kurian. My mother was a Gypsy."

Tornan laughed off Kurian's somber expression.

"I'm sorry Count Wolvraine. It did slip my memory and I beseech you to forgive me." He bowed his head. "If not for the hex put upon our ancestors, I could tolerate them, m'lord."

"Just tolerate, Kurian? We are all creatures of this world."

Tornan could not ask for anyone more loyal to him than Kurian. If he had a brother, this man would suit the position well. He could even say he felt love for the man—their closeness had been that great.

"Forgive me for bringing up past grievances. Your Gypsy should not be condemned for the actions of another."

Tornan got up from his chair and walked to him. His hand clasped Kurian's shoulder. His other patted Kurian's cheek.

"You have nothing to be sorry for, now go. Deliver my wedding gift to the pompous master wolf hunter and tell him I have his young Gypsy bride in my bed. Elaborate if you will on our bonding, but I insist, you make sure to tell him she begged me to make her mine."

He paced the length of the table with an anxious exhilaration.

"I do wish I saw the look on his face when he learns I've stuck my cock in her chaste body." Tornan laughed.

"I will tell him how you defiled her on the leafy floor of the Black Forest until she screamed with her lustful rapture. He'll especially not like hearing how a breed of the cursed wolves tasted the virgin."

Tornan stiffened. If he had his way, the wolf in him would never have licked one inch of her sweet flesh. "Hmmm, I suppose that will do, just watch your neck. He may seek temporary vengeance by slitting your throat."

Kurian left him and Tornan's gaze shot to the vaulted ceiling. He had the Gypsy very close to his bed. The idea of having her in it grew appealing. He couldn't believe the way his body pulsated thinking of her. He grew hard in the want of everything he imagined. He breathed heavier in anticipation and shook with the strangeness he felt possessed by. To recognize the symptoms of a curse was one thing. To avoid the lure drawing him into the enthralling depths, was entirely different. He didn't want any spell controlling his actions, but he felt too weak to deny the chance at owning her soul.

"My Count Wolvraine," a servant interrupted his thoughts. "Do you wish something to eat?"

Tornan poured a drink into a pewter goblet and swallowed the fiery port. He did so with a need to dull the flavor of the Gypsy girl's breath. He fought the idea swimming in his head. The wine, however, didn't help him in sating his thirst for her cries of ecstasy.

"Nothing," he replied and strode from the room.

His mind went into a whirlwind. He shouldn't touch the girl again. His palms sweat with

the thrill of having the opportunity. His legs making longer strides and his feet mounting the stone steps two at a time up carried him swifter to his bedchamber.

Hurried by the thump of his heart upon his ribcage, he made way for the door. The Gypsy's presence, like a tonic for invigoration, kept him aimed to cleave to her nakedness.

Tornan stopped at the door. His wolf-bitch met him. Saskia glared with an accusing, dark look, and he didn't like her threat.

"Shift," he commanded.

She rose up on her hind legs and transformed into the shape of the woman he used for his sexual urges. The slender Romanian woman sought him out years ago when she heard of his gathering. She gave him her body with unbridled lust whenever he wanted her. Yet, looking at her, he didn't remember one time lusting for her the way he did for the Gypsy.

"You mated her," she hissed. "You bred the Gypsy whore in front of everyone."

"I don't know about everyone, but yes, I did allow the witnessing."

He stared at Saskia, not knowing what he saw in her. Her narrow face had no appeal. Her dark, charcoal hair lacked softness. He never felt connected to her regardless of whether he humped the woman or the she-wolf. They hadn't bonded with a sliver of affection.

"I want her gone from here. You have done what you intended," she reminded him. "Dragomir's hate will be the greatest it ever has been since you've taken his bride."

Tornan didn't want a conversation, discussion, or a debate over his actions with Saskia. He set out to stop Dragomir from gaining access to a Gypsy's powers in a tyrant's hands. Never had he intended to cleave to the Gypsy with the soul of a man.

"I'll have her and you have no say," he told her. "Our time is done, Saskia. You may, of course, stay and take your shelter here."

"You think I will just back down and skulk off because you think you have found a replacement for me?"

Saskia dropped to all fours. Her curse, much older than his, made her walk the way of the wolf more often than in her human form. He felt himself growing in the same direction and knew it was only a matter of time.

She growled with another attempt to stop him. He had the scent of the Gypsy on him, and he knew it disturbed Saskia to be cast out of his favor.

"Step aside." He challenged her aggressive behavior.

She came at him and he swung an arm, hitting her away. She stumbled down the steps with a whimper. He hadn't a cruel streak in him, but she did, and he knew her bite well. Twice in the past, Saskia had attacked him for what she considered a betrayal. Her deteriorating mind of reason limited her from understanding.

He watched her disappear below before he continued in route to his bedchamber. Once inside the room, he bolted the door, banning Saskia's intrusion.

The Gypsy stood at the embrasure where the moon cast her as a silhouette. She had an unearthly beauty to her moves. Her long hair hung loose, elegant, a mantle of radiant black. Her delicate features were unordinary in an attractive way.

The flames were low in the fireplace, and he went to it to add a log. He bent to toss the wood onto the grate.

"What the hell?" A soft thump over his head turned him to her.

"You gave my gown away to another woman." She threw another shoe at him.

Tornan deflected the soft leather slipper with an arm. He walked slow and undisturbed by her outburst. He expected the shock of her abduction would wear off eventually. He never

guessed she would demonstrate jealousy. Her display of that emotion tightened his lungs.

"So, the dress had sentimental appeal to you?" He grinned, liking the way her face already squished up in opposition of the notion.

"No!" She backed to the corner of the room.

"Ah, then it matters to you that I may have other women?" He began undressing, feeling the heat of her anger very appealing.

"Of course not!"

One, by one, he shucked the garments layered over his body. He flung them to the floor uninterested in where they landed. When he undid his britches, she shut her eyes, and it made him smile. Adorably attractive with her bashful retreat, he shed the final vestiges of human modesty.

"What is your name?" Her innocence intrigued his stifled way of life and he relished knowing every detail about her.

She lifted her chin and opened her eyes. A fascinating haughty determination sparkled in the watery depths. He saw her trying to prove to herself, she could be brave.

Each day that passed, he seemed more in a fight for his freedom against the wolf side of his nature. He never had the chance to appreciate the beauty of youthful simplicity. Nor did he expect her to display a rebellious defiance to his commands so soon.

A rush of old memories sucked the air from his constricting lungs and purged the tightness. His face twitched, trying to piece the fragments in his head. A woman, the Gypsy woman that cursed him had a young girl with her. She came begging for a handout from his mother and his mother told her to go away. He didn't think it right and still, he said nothing. After all, it wasn't his place to speak against how his mother dealt with the peasants that came uninvited to the castle.

He closed his eyes and let the memory wash over him. The remembrance he had fought to block from his nightmares, rushed his mind like a vivid scene on a mural.

"Come, Galena," he whispered the enchanting name he heard in his head. "Come, Galena."

He lifted his lashes and offered his hand. He watched her marbled-gray eyes for signs she too recalled their past encounter. Big saucers of alarm gazed with a penetrating stab at his cool exterior. He had known of her all along and didn't recall until now. The strange influx of information left emotions unguarded and a tremendous wish to have her in his arms rushed him to take her.

In his wizened soul, they belonged together, like the stars belong to the heavens. He'd found his chosen, his predestined soul-mate.

Chapter Six

Galena knew she had not given the count her name. She even doubted her betrothed knew, since the master wolf hunter sent a direct missive to her father, requesting to marry his eldest daughter. Viktor Dragomir had no idea she happened to be the only daughter.

"How do you know my name?" she asked curiously.

The attraction to the Count came with inquisitive features to his character. She skimmed his nakedness. His taut tanned skin expanded and contracted over a broad chest with his every breath. The appeal of his nudity left her shaking. Her nipples jutted out with a chill shivering up her spine. At the same time, certain places within burdened her with hot, tingling sensations she didn't know how to quash.

"Long ago, when you were a child, I saw you."

"I don't remember."

"You came here, to the castle."

"I've never been here before, and I've never known any nobility."

He came closer when she wouldn't go to him. Something held her back from taking the long sinewy fingers. An enormous and unexplainable apprehension warned her she would fall victim to his charm. She didn't fear him as much as she knew she should have. Apprehensive by what he spoke of, and what he endeavored to make her accept as true, kept her reserved. She couldn't be the kind of woman to throw herself into the passion he teased her with experiencing.

Tornan smiled. "I just saw you and heard your name."

His warm palm cupped her cheek. A sizzling tremor caressed her flesh. Another barrier lowered her defenses against her swaying toward sin. She already crossed the threshold with her transgression in the Black Forest. It caused her to wonder if the familiarity she felt around him, weren't the past and the present, swished together like a spell in a pot. He had a way of putting her at ease in her heart, even though her mind wildly petitioned to flee from the beast.

"Well, I don't remember," she replied with her agitation at his insistence they knew each other.

His chest pressed hers and she liked the way soft, short hairs tickled her eager nipples. A giggle formed in the back of her throat--a silliness she abhorred for the moment.

"You should. It was the most important day of our lives."

Galena didn't like the riddles his words formed. It gave her a headache just as her dreams had with *Lay with the Wolf*. She had never been good at deciphering omens.

Count Wolvraine turned his head to a knock at the door. "Yes?" he answered.

She took his distraction as a chance to exam his firm, square jaw line. Her heart, already racing with anxious beats, stepped up a pace at the magnificence in his attractive features.

"We have a serious matter that needs your attention at once," a man's voice said from the other side of the barrier.

"Have Kurian take care of it."

"You have sent the baron on an errand, M'lord."

Tornan looked at Galena and she lowered her eyes. The heat of his breath brought her stare back up, and she saw regret shine in his dark eyes. He didn't want to handle whatever the

man wanted, but he knew he must. The reprieve from his aggressive fondling did not come as a relief, but a loss.

"I shall return shortly, my sweet."

She nodded in acceptance.

His stroke glided down her face and dripped one finger at a time from her jaw. When his gaze drifted to his fingers plucking her breast, the anxiety was outweighed by the thrill of his lustful perusal. Outside of marriage, fornication complicated life. It formed the hellish foundation for men to make use of those women they knew were had before.

The Carpathian demons residing in the Black Forest must have possessed her. She had no other explanation for the way she yearned to have Tornan immorally joined to her.

Tornan's strides took him over to his clothes. He dressed just as swiftly as he had shed the garments. Galena brazenly watched the muscles in his ass move. Her tongue swept her top lip when he bent over and she saw the way his balls hung large between his thighs like a bull. She didn't know of all sexual things, but nature provided an instinctive insight to what would please her. He turned slightly, and she stared at the end of his cock. A wide purplish cap tipped his thick shaft. Such a weapon seemed dangerous, except she had felt him impale her. Other than an initial stinging pain, the smooth skinned rod rammed her with a soft, velvet simplicity of what nature intended.

Tornan left her standing in the corner. The cold stone upon her back chilled her hot skin. She looked to her nipples standing out from her heavy, swollen breasts. She touched the sore tips tenting the fabric and rolled her fingers over them, remembering Tornan's lips there.

She pinched the teased bud and the exhilaration escalated. Sliding her finger down to her flat belly, she imagined Tornan's open hand skimming the area and she shivered. She inched the garment up and combed into the nest of curls between her trembling thighs. Watching her finger dip into the split, a tremor skittered inside her belly as she brushed over one sensitive spot. Her nipples and the small knot of flesh were wickedly connected.

She brought her hand up and rubbed her palm over her breast. Light, then hard, she made small circles until she made her herself jerk with spasms. Her finger wiggled the nubbin faster and her clit enlarged--straining to reach the touch she began to withdraw. The sting, the ache, the torture of her sex wouldn't allow her to keep fondling the stimulated bud.

With a quick plunge, she drove her finger up inside her wet channel. A perfect ridged ring of muscle squeezed hard on her knuckle with each thrust. There too, when the twinge of sensations began, she thrashed against the stone.

The blood pounding through her veins worsened her headache. Her temples throbbed with a blinding pain and she rotated against the stone, seeking out one rock housing iron elements. She pressed her forehead to the coolness of granite. Her body undulated with the shockwaves and brushed her nipples to the rough surface. The thin fabric provided no protection from the rough chafing. Her arousal intensified, and her body sought the tease, scraping her hungry flesh.

An appealing heat suddenly bathed her cool back. She had fallen too far into her enthralling reveries to question where the warmth came from. When an arm reached around her middle and a large hand covered hers over her mound, she froze. Her shameful self-seduction embarrassed her. She had no words to express the humbling moment, but she learned she needed none.

Without question, Tornan assisted pumping her finger into her eager cunt. He gripped her hand just right to jerk her finger in and out. It felt too good to question the decadence of his

actions.

She kept her face against the wall as she accepted Tornan's help in bringing her to another orgasm. She had given herself completely over to his care. He grabbed her breast and massaged it gently while all she could do is heave breathless gasps out of her quaking lungs. His kneading fingers intensified with a firmer strength. She thought to tell him it hurt, but the effects left her speechless.

When her small finger didn't provide enough friction for her numbed channel, with initiative she grabbed his hand and placed his longest, thickest finger into her drenched cunt. She kept her eyes closed, letting the wondrous sensation of his masculine skin sink into the narrow passage. Her clit went as hard as stone against the knuckle of another finger. The anxious irritation she felt only pushed her further into seeking her own relief. She gripped his hand and worked the thrusts she needed to peak.

"Oh," she moaned. "Oh yes."

Her hips, ardent and unruly, jerked with spasms. Each time the cheeks of her ass pressed into his groin, it forced his finger deeper. The hardness of his cock, ridging his britches, nested into her ass. His wide palm, sweaty hot, covered her breast and squeezed her tighter.

Galena threw her head back with the elation sweeping through her extremities. She twisted her face against the solid, heaving, leather clad chest. His warrior's clothes, she noted. She opened her eyes, not remembering him putting on those garments to leave the room.

It made her wonder if something were amiss, trouble she should know about. He smelled good, different, and she craned her neck to look up. A stupefied shock left her speechless, all but for the groans she made while her willful body climaxed with an intense orgasm. She tried to look away, but she fell under a spell that only Kurian's cold, blue-eyed stare could command.

Galena opened her mouth, and he put a hand over it. She tasted his sweaty palm with an errant tongue. He kept her strongly locked against him. Steel could not be as restrictive as the arms surrounding her. She wanted to scream, but it wouldn't be for Tornan's help. Her fingers held Kurian's tight and she continued to fuck herself with his long, thick finger. Her lust drove her wildly insane and she thrashed in the mounting quest for fulfillment.

Kurian said nothing. He hypnotized her with his frosty stare. She saw no pleasure in his gaze, no feelings expressed on his face. And yet, she bucked and humped her mound into his open palm with a riotous assailment. She suffered the shame of a slut, reposing against him—allowing—no—forcing him to submit to her needy use until she was relieved of energy.

He moved his hand, touching the sensitive areas, and then he slid a second finger into her. She merely had to hold his wrist while he finished what she could not. Rhythmic, deep and fast, he pumped. She closed her eyes when the hot gush of liquid rushed down her thighs. Her hand dropped from the tense grip she had on his. She hadn't noticed before that she had covered his hand over her breast and their fingers were interlaced.

He held her up when she felt herself weakly slipping away. She wanted to believe he reconsidered his feelings for her. Fantasies of him rescuing her from Tornan's death sentence entwined with the desires of her carnality. When her jittering tremors stopped, she remained dazed by her libidinous actions.

He removed his sweaty hand from her mouth and jerked free his two fingers wedged between her legs. She felt the loss with a cool air whooshing inside her yawning folds. When he cupped between her legs, she sighed with a glorious fascination. The rendezvous of rough skin on her swollen flesh made her squirm, and he gave no mercy for the pouting inflamed center.

"I suggest you not speak of this to Tornan, little Gypsy." His voice, a harsh hiss warned

her.

She writhed to the abuse he took in rubbing her close to another climax. She would tolerate the soreness of her insides, but his cruelty was meant to take her to the brink and stop. He released her with a slight shove so she sprung forward to the wall.

"He wouldn't like to know you enjoy being fondled by another man."

Galena couldn't turn around. To face him would be to let him see her naked through the thin gauze clinging to her damp skin. Although, after the thrill he helped her obtain, she wondered how far he would go in feeding her immoral interest in the hungers of her flesh. She experienced a wicked desire to let him fuck her, but only so Tornan would punish him, she told herself, still resenting Kurian for hitting her.

He stood back and licked his fingers. A twinkle of evil glinted in his eyes while he tasted her juices on his skin. A pass of his hand over his head pushed back his brown mane and the smirk on his face had the satisfaction of a thief stealing the cream from a pail of goat's milk.

"Tornan will kill you," she said without much conviction.

For all she knew, Tornan had sent him to do whatever he wished to her.

"Will he?" His hands perched on his narrow hips and he surveyed her.

"He told you not to touch me," she challenged.

"Without his permission." He reminded.

"You haven't his permission," she spat. "If it were so, then you wouldn't tell me not to tell him."

"I didn't tell you not to tell him. I told you the consequences of such a foolish thing. You would be the one to suffer, not I."

The hiding of her front seemed ridiculous when he had delved inside her. She spun around, wishing to taunt him with all she had of use to her. She wished for Tornan to come in the room and catch Kurian's defiance. She would then know if Kurian believed his own comments.

"No, he would do something. He drew his knife upon your neck when you struck me."

Kurian's face hardened. He stepped toward her and grabbed her neck.

"He let a thousand men watch while he fucked you," he growled, "when one witness would have sufficed."

Her eyes watered and she searched his face, trying to understand what he meant by one would suffice. She tried to block out the memory of men whispering chants of victory while she fornicated with wanton acceptance. The zeal of thinking Tornan would care about her quickly deflated the fight she had with reality.

Kurian let go and backed off with a strange flash of regret in his eyes. She didn't believe it for a minute. He wished to save himself from Tornan's wrath should she tattle about his mistreatment of her again.

He looked down the length of her. Just as tall, and extremely handsome as Tornan, something in the man attracted her. He only gave one hint of his arousal—the bulge growing against the fabric of his britches. His emotions however, were well hid, unlike Tornan's warm enjoyment of her.

Thankful he could not see how his gaze excited her, Galena stood silent.

"He would not like you freely letting any man have you," Kurian said. "Tell Tornan and you may regret it."

She watched him leave the room. It would be the reason she didn't speak of Kurian to the Count. Tornan would blame her. He would kill her for throwing herself at another man when she had been refusing him. Only she didn't want to refuse Tornan. Before she knew Kurian's hands

were the ones awakening her heart with such frenzy, her mind had set on Tornan's.

Unlike her unknown breeding, Tornan had dark Carpathian characteristics to his features. His high cheekbones, wide set eyes and strong shaped jaw gave her much to consider.

Galena wrapped her arms over the chemise. Kurian's words produced a new fear. Tornan would take one look and know she let—no, he would see she used Kurian for her sexual gratification. If he didn't see and she didn't tell him, Kurian would surely use the information against her. He hated Gypsies. He loathed her. He had tricked her body into accepting his touch just so he could find a way of ridding Wolvraine Castle of her presence.

Galena glanced out the embrasure in the wall and stared at the full moon. It made her anxious to be alone. She paced with the pent up energy she hadn't slaked at Kurian's touch. She didn't know how she would refuse Tornan when her heart leapt at his voice.

"Not far from whence I left you." He entered the room at her thought of him.

She clutched the chemise across her midsection and her breasts.

He removed his clothes much faster than the first time he stripped before her. His massive cock aimed her way as he strode across the room.

His nose lifted and he drew in a deep breath. She watched his eyes grow dark.

"Kurian was in here."

"He looked for you." She offered the information quickly. "He left immediately."

She couldn't smell anything and didn't question how he could.

"Did he touch you?"

She shook her head but his eyes sparkled with disbelief.

"I smell your sex," he growled. "I see your dark nipples hard beneath the cloth."

His hand rose and she lifted her arms in defense.

He jerked her hand away, and looked at the flimsy garment and rubbed the tip of her breast where the cloth was dirtied from her brush against the wall.

"I did that," she rushed to explain. "I had a headache and pressed myself to the wall seeking the cool comfort of stone. I tried to feel the curative powers of the iron elements in the rock."

Tornan grabbed her hand and pulled it to his mouth. He licked her fingers and smiled. He gripped the wet curls of her cunt through the gauze and tugged them.

"You readied for me?" He rubbed a finger pushing the cloth into the gap. "I'm sorry my departure left you so wanting?"

Galena pushed at him. Her body quivered with the sensitive stimulation. She couldn't handle his touch and she pushed at him to stop.

"What is this? Your agitation isn't from my touch."

He tugged the garment up and pressed his finger up inside her. "Tell me I'm mistaken. Tell me Kurian didn't come to this room and fuck you."

Chapter Seven

Tornan felt something wrong with the way Galena's eyes shimmered and her body sweat. "No!" It seemed a rushed denial she made.

He gripped her small wrists and dragged her arms above her head where he pressed them against the cold stone. Her chest heaved with the rush of energy she expelled. The developed swells of her firm, sensuous breasts thrust to his chest. Her nipples had formed into plump rigid beads. They stroked him with every breath she took. They pierced the hold he tried to maintain on his inflexible emotions.

He lowered down, keeping her wrists shackled in his grip. Sniffing her crotch through the diaphanous cloth, he hunted for a trance the Gypsy lying. Saskia often let other men have her. He knew, and she knew he knew. Yet, when she came to him, she acted just as jittery. He didn't get jealous of the men she had, because she didn't mean anything to him the way the Gypsy did.

He nipped Galena's belly, and she shrank away from him.

He licked her dampened mound and burrowed his nose into the moist folds. Her scent and just her scent alone coated the tip of his tongue.

"It's a trick," he chuckled.

He had to believe it an illusion of his mind. The curse on his blood had him going crazy with protectiveness. He hadn't thought on the days gone by for years. His mother, also a Gypsy, married his father, the then Count Wolvraine. She denounced her family's way of life for that of the opulence of the nobles. She pretended to be something she wasn't for the sake of her survival.

That one fateful day an old woman came with the girl, Galena, was a change to his life. The woman cursed him for his mother's actions. Then, his mother in anger, retaliated with her old ways.

It was her words he remembered in his dark dreams,

Lay with the wolf, accept him, and thou shall survive.

Lay with the wolf, with his breed witnessing, and he shall live.

He didn't understand them at the time. His mother died within months from an illness, and he had forgotten about those involved. When his mother cursed the old Gypsy, she cursed him, her own son, as part of the bargain of revenge. The young girl was cursed to be with him.

The young girl had the pretty features that most little girls have. Some grow to appear nothing more than normal. This one, Galena, had blossomed into the rarest of creatures. He almost laughed at the way his mother misused her ability. The curse on Galena actually came as a blessing for him.

He rose up and pulled Galena's arms over her head. He studied her pensive expression and recalled the question he never answered for her.

"I sent the gown back to Dragomir."

"I don't believe you."

He smiled at the wavering of belief in her words. "I didn't ask you to believe me."

"Why?" she quickly asked. "Why would you send it to him?"

"To taunt him."

"How? I'm nothing to him."

"Oh, I think you are. Instead of making you his whore, he's taking you as his wife. He's Romanian and treats Gypsies as servants. I've heard tell of him cutting open a horse and putting a young Gypsy servant in the belly of the horse where he had it stitched closed."

Her eyes flashed with abhorrence.

"The servant was left there to die, naturally." He finished.

"You are telling me of something you did and I won't hear of it." She closed her eyes as if that would prevent her from hearing more of the tales he could tell her.

"In the winter, when a servant displeases him, he lays them out naked in the snow and pours water on them until they freeze to death."

"Please, don't speak to me of your vile atrocities." She struggled.

"Being his wife would not offer you any security. If you displeased him, he could very well put a hot poker to your skin, scaring your delicate flesh."

"He wouldn't do any of those things. He couldn't because he knows I would put a curse on him."

"He wouldn't care or believe in the curse to let that stop him, unless...."

A Gypsy could be bargained with for her to put a curse on anyone. Dragomir had to have another reason to make her his wife. He was up to something and Tornan couldn't figure what it could be.

"Unless what?" Her misty eyes narrowed with her vexation.

"Never mind that, let him stew with his outrage by the fact you are in my bed."

"I'm not in your bed!" She pushed at his shoulder in toil to get free.

He let go of her one arm and cupped her cheek. His thumb swept the succulent bottom lip she gnawed on again. When Saskia bit him, she had a sharp sting with her long pointed fangs. After the first time, many years ago, he grew to like the snap of her strong jaw, and the piercing of his tough flesh. It reminded him he still had the mind of a mortal man.

Tornan pushed his thumb between Galena's clenched teeth.

"Bite me." He taunted her with the grind of his aching groin upon her maiden's mound.

She made a small, hardly audible sound. However, his hearing had advanced over the years. The beast in him slowly took over his soul, leaving him with a sixth sense in the void. It gave him no pleasure to think it possible to only walk on all fours one day. He saw no joy in becoming solely prey to wolf hunters.

He pressed his mouth to hers. Between the delicious parted lips, he thrust his tongue, starving for something he couldn't define. He nipped at her quivering lower lip and she whimpered. Not for pain, he observed, when he took the second to goose back his head and look at her. Her thoughts were visible in her eyes and it became apparent she thought he would be brutal with his treatment.

"I'll not hurt you, Galena."

He cupped her face, caressed her silky cheek and kissed her. Dragging his lips over her face to her eyelids and her brows, he drew exciting sounds of a desire from her. Pushing his hand over her breast, he squeezed the plump softness of her flesh. The peak, hard and spiked, poked the center of his palm.

"Please," she cried out to his pumping fingers.

"I will never hurt you, my sweet Gypsy," he whispered reassuringly.

He pecked lightly at her pouted lips. Little pants of air infused his nostrils with the flavor of her gasps.

"I have never done what I told you Dragomir did to your people." He slid his lips across her cheek to her ear. "I am not the beast he has spread rumors about."

A gentle hum of her partial acceptance drew his mouth back to hers. He took her breath into his lungs and plied her lips with a tenderness he had yet to fully show her. Regarding her features as the beginning of his infatuation, he learned something wonderfully untamed in her eyes had trapped him from the start.

"That's it, sweet Gypsy." He encouraged her kisses.

She leaned toward total submissiveness with her hands lying on his arms and her slender fingers moving in a claiming way. Her touch inched toward his shoulders. The lightness of her movement made him shiver. She had more power than any woman ever had over him and he didn't want to allow that it could be a Gypsy's enchantment, except what else explained the attraction they grasped and clung to so persistently?

Tornan had her small frame pinned in the corner of the room with his body. Her squirming increased his desires for all he would do with her. The cloth of her chemise did nothing to detract from the way she hotly melded into his contours. The gauzy fabric gave way to his hard cock pressing at her lower belly. Her hip fit into the concave of his pelvis while her ample breasts squished to his ribcage.

He drew back and looked at Galena's intrepid eyes, feisty, energetic and adorable. How could he ever look back to his past and not have seen her in his future?

"Please, Count Wolvraine," she panted.

"I will please you from your pretty head to your dainty toes. It's only a matter of getting you the ten feet to the mattress," he whispered against her jaw.

She stiffened and he felt he'd lose the fight with his conscience if he didn't take her soon. He jerked her out of the niche and scooped her kicking legs up with one arm and his other behind her back.

"You are a beast and your quest for more punishment will soon catch up to you," she charged.

"I am indeed a beast, my lady." He held a hand to the back of her head and kissed her.

"You are a horrid, brute!"

"I am undeniably a vile creature, as well."

He kissed her harder, letting his tongue glide over hers. Her whimpers of pleasure fueled his teasing licks to circle her face.

"You are...." Her words fell away and she twisted her neck giving him access to the underside of her jaw. "Please."

Her fingers danced across his shoulders. They fluttered as quickly as the stutter of her whines. Once her hands met his jaw, he paused and let her guide him. Wet, open and ready, she caught his mouth with hers.

Tornan kissed her sensuous lips with an attentive gentleness she deserved.

"So undecided, are you not, my beautiful Gypsy?"

His comment incensed her immediately. "You are a wicked man, Count Wolvraine." She wiggled in her struggle to get free.

He laughed at how effortlessly he had to work to distract her.

"There's not much life hasn't already put upon me. But alas, you no longer have your dress skirt touching me, so I'm afforded one less sin to taunt superstition." He jested with her.

"You are evil, and cruel, and—"

"And you are breathtaking, my precious lady. I would never have imagined any child

growing into such a desirable loveliness as you have. Your voice alone could stop a man's heart."

She stared out at him from her marbled-gray eyes, and he inventoried every detail to her sweet face. Not a line of age or a flaw from injury showed on the delicate porcelain skin.

"Remember Galena, remember back when you stood with an old woman looking for a handout. She was your grandmother, perhaps?"

He looked over the brilliance to her glassy eyes. They shimmered, dark like the Black Sea on a moonless night. They spellbound him to the emotions riding the liquid flow of her shifting gaze.

"You are a horrible—"

"Think my beautiful little Gypsy. Remember me, my precious."

She shook her head with a refusal of her faded past. Memories were a fragile thing and he wanted to nurture hers. He needed to find a way to connect with her beyond the physical demanding wants of his body.

"I told you, I've never seen you before. I don't know what you are talking about. You're crazy."

"I'm a horrible demon," he agreed. "And you, my pet, will be sacrificed to appease my insatiable hunger for your affections."

He dropped her on the bed and she tried to escape by rolling to the other side. Her limbs moved over the fabric of red, rumpling the covers with the claw of her fingers. Tornan snagged her leg right at the firm base of her calf, but not quite to her dainty ankle. She kicked her other lovely leg and caught him in the chest. Her bare toes tapped with no more than the strength of a butterfly. It gave him the opportunity to seize her delicate foot in the swift trap of his large hand.

Galena continued to wiggle and thrash so it seemed as if she came with more legs than most. When she managed to get one leg free, the shapely stem shot out and he gained her other foot in his strong grip.

One firm squeeze and he knew he'd crush her thin bones. With that thought in mind, he made sure not to put too much restraint in the efforts to hold onto her.

"You have nowhere to run, my sweets." He tugged her to the edge of the bed. "Besides, outside this room you are not safe without me."

With her legs stuck up in the air, the ecru chemise slipped down her thighs. His followed the smooth skin leading to the desired entrance of her soul. His breath caught at the exposure of her center. The very legs he wanted belted to his hips were against his chest. In the glow of the renewed firelight, he saw the dark shadowed thatch nestled at the crux of her legs. Inside the forest of ringlets, he'd find the spring of molten cream. He licked his tongue around his hungry lips, anticipating the taste of her smooth rich flavor. This time he would indulge in long swallows instead of the tiniest taste from his fingertips.

He thought the Black Forest ritual would taint his cravings with morality. Her provocatively innocent position renewed his primitive lust.

"Please, have you no decency, no shame to whence you let your eyes wander?" Her hands jammed the fabric into the crevice of her legs.

"My gaze never averts from beauty nor does my appetite wander from the extravagances I can partake."

His cock stood erect and waiting to penetrate. Thrice in that day, he had spilled himself for the want of her. Once, in her delicious body where a strange possession made the memory vague; once on horseback, when he teased her body into a quickening rapture; and once in the

dining hall while he thought of her luscious mouth suckling him.

His cock poked between Galena's knees from behind while he held her legs up against his chest. The tightness made him consider fucking her thighs and letting his juices splatter her breasts and spill to her belly, except, he wanted in her. He needed to plant himself where her emotions could entwine with his in a joint experience.

Her cheeks were infused with a scarlet radiance creating a ravishing sight. While nothing would feel better than sinking into her snug abyss, he tried to practice patience. He wanted to hear her beg him to come into her again.

"Let go!" she shrieked.

"I don't intend on letting go of you anytime soon."

He licked the sole of her foot. His tongue went from the roundness of her delicate heel, up the center, to the middle toe. She squirmed when he sucked one into his mouth.

"Oh stop, I beseech you, I can't stand to be touched there!"

He laughed and tortured her opposite foot in the same manner. She displayed the weakness of a woman in her struggles until he hit the ticklish nerve. More power than he could control jolted from her limb. Her knees crushed his cock in a viselike grip and her foot pushed his chest. He stumbled back unbalanced, surprised and remarkably aroused by the vigorous foreplay.

"Galena, wait!" Tornan moved swift around the bed when he saw her intentions.

The gravity of her opening the door of the room would be detrimental. He knew who waited outside, spying, brooding and hating him. Ever since he came in the room, the large pads of Saskia's paws thumped in the corridor in a restless pace. The wolf would kill Galena if given the chance and those horrors seized the burning air in his lungs. He couldn't lose the only woman he'd felt truly alive around.

Chapter Eight

Galena had broken free of Tornan's clasp of her leg. She tumbled backward and flipped awkwardly over the far edge of the bed. Lacking grace in her hurried movements, she landed on the floor with a hard thud. A painful cry burped from her lips, but she didn't give into the weakening move. Instead, she scrambled to get up and get to the door. Escape looked so close.

She reached the handle, released the steel bolt and gasped at the Count's fierce grab of her hair. He jerked her back just as she managed the simple mechanism. The engraved slab of wood sprung open without her help. It came with a great force and a black shadow leapt at her.

Even if the magic of every Gypsy's soul gathered, there wouldn't be the protection Tornan offered, by intervening. He pushed Galena away so she stumble-danced at his release toward the bed. She kept running to the far side for her safety and pressed herself in the same corner the count had trapped her before. Then she watched Tornan, her naked captor lunge at the attacking wolf.

"No!" she cried out.

Her eyes widened in horror at the vicious assault of the wolf on Tornan's sleek bronzed skin. The ferocious animal sunk long fang teeth into his upper arm. Blood spurt into the air. It sprayed the wall and squirted on the wolf.

Galena rushed forward to the bedpost. She hugged the polished wood while her heart raced with the fear the wolf would win and Tornan would die.

The two hugged, as if in play and then they disappeared from the room. Tornan wrestled the cullion outside the room. Galena covered her ears to block out the vicious snarling sounds. The savage threatening tones of the aggressive animal were near unbearable. In all that time, she had not heard Tornan make a single cry from pain. Far off, outside the castle, howls echoed like some triumph. A chorus of animals bayed and Galena cried.

"Tornan," she mouthed inaudibly.

Her heart leapt with an immediate grief for the belief he might be dead. In fear of the wolf coming after her, she ran to the door. She pushed the heavy wood and it stopped just short of shutting.

A hand covered hers and she jumped. Tornan slipped inside. He pushed the door closed himself. She put the back of her hand to her mouth. So many thoughts had her confused, frightened and unsure of what she should do. She continued staring into his eyes, never averting them to look at the magnificence of his body as she had seen it entangled with the wolf.

"I warned you!" he yelled. "Outside this room isn't safe without me."

She turned away frightened by her stupidity more than his anger. He had saved her from an assured death. The emotional unbalance she suffered grew worse. When his hands gripped her arms, a shudder raced down her spine. She tried to twist toward him, but he wouldn't give up his hold. She imagined he thought she still tried to get away, when all she wanted now was to relish his embrace.

"I thought ... I thought the wolf may have...." she sobbed unable to get the words out.

"You thought the wolf could kill me?" He eased the hair from her shoulder, away from her neck and kissed her skin tenderly with his soft lips and hot breath.

She nodded.

"She doesn't have that kind of strength." He kissed under her jaw.

She allowed him the freeness of her throat. The affection becalmed the tension. He swirled her hair up and his lips traveled along her nape. He went to the other side taking her mind further and further into a heaven. His hands slipped up to cup her breasts while he kissed passionate wet trails to her shoulders.

"Tornan," She spun in the circle of his arms and saw blood on his arm. "You're hurt." She touched just below the wound.

"It's nothing."

"It should be washed. The bite of a wolf is unclean."

"Is this concern?" He brought his hand up and held her chin.

"No ... yes ... oh, it's all my fault. I've no wish to be punished for disobeying you."

Tears rolled down her cheeks because in her heart, the worst fear had been something awful would happen to him. She couldn't explain why it meant anything, it just did.

"Come to the bed with me," he whispered.

She nodded against his lips brushing her cheek. She wanted him so desperately, her mouth moved with the joys of surrender. She broke free of her need to escape and submitted to the fervor of his roaming hands. She didn't want her last memory to be Kurian's fingers bringing ecstasy. She needed Tornan embedded in her to reawaken a dream.

He pushed her toward the large oasis of red. Her feet shuffled with her capitulation. The distracting slurp of his lips on her skin left her little room to concentrate on anything other than the delightful touch of his fingers wandering freely about her body.

"Count Wolvraine, I..."

"Tornan," he brushed a kiss to her hand. "I like the way you say my name."

"Tornan, your arm?"

He slid the back of his knuckles along her jaw. His fingers spread beneath her chin, tilting her face up. He smiled without arrogance in the curve of his lips.

"You have a superb mouth," he commented. "The shape, the color and the softness captivate me."

Habit pulled her bottom lip into her teeth. His thumb flipped it down.

"You are not going to ask me to bite you again, are you?" She stared into his beautiful green eyes.

"I'm going to ask you to kiss me, Galena."

She swallowed hard.

He lowered his head and nuzzled her face with his nose. His dark skin had a shadow of stubble and it scratched her cheek. He shifted his stance to burrow his face under her hair. She found herself wanting to kiss him.

"I'm begging you to kiss me," he breathed heatedly on her lips.

She moved closer to the warmth of his large body. Wide shouldered and narrow hipped, his build impressed her with muscles everywhere. Her hand rolled over the thick sinewy bulk of his arms. Her head turned from the way he nudged her jaw.

"Kiss me, my sweet," he murmured close to her mouth.

She let her gaze fall on the lines of his full lips. In all his hardness, she knew that part had an enjoyable softness. She had experienced tender restraint when she went willing to his advances so it seemed futile to try and deny her fascination.

With determination to brave the man's challenge, she tipped her chin and touched the

corner of his mouth with a small peck. He hummed with an engaging tone to draw her lips up to his cheek. The same likable sound whirled and she swung her breath to the alluring attraction.

"Tornan," she whispered her undefined plea for him to be gentle.

With mouths melded and the pleasure sealed tight, Galena hung onto him. Her hands traveled toward his shoulders. His remained respectably on her hips until she hit his wound and he groaned with a constriction on her ribs and set her back.

"I'm sorry."

"It'll be all right."

"Please Tornan. Please let me take care of you."

He had such a strange glow in his eyes she almost thought he'd cry. But after she blinked several times, the honey gold disappeared back into a tranquil field of green. His expression wore a tender smile and he brushed a hand on the side of her face.

"Have you magic to heal my body?" he asked.

She shook her head. His amused laugh wrinkled his eyes and she saw or maybe noticed for the first time, the dimples in his cheeks. He enticed a smile from her and she moved away with his leave.

"Come, let me wash your arm." She went to the porcelain basin and lifted a white ceramic jug.

He came close. The heat warmed her chilled skin. The coolness of the autumn night hadn't been as noticeable until she encountered the fever of his passion and the lack of his touch.

"You're cold." He rubbed her arm.

"I should think not as cold as you, m'lord."

She gave a glance down at his limp cock trying to hide from the room's chill by shrinking back into the nest of dark hair.

"Remember, I like it when you say my name?" He reminded her without comment to her wandering stare.

"The puncture wounds are not very deep. They should heal with only small scaring." She focused on something other than his name or the intimacy he wanted.

"I'll have no scar," he leaned and whispered. "The beast will not be marred."

His cryptic comment made her shudder. His gaze created quakes to her insides. She fought looking at his body. It seemed a sinful trick of God to make a man so striking and then forbid anyone to look. She took his thick arm and had him raise it over the basin. She poured a little water on a clean rag and dabbed gently at the blood. Stopping, she poured more clear water over his taut swarthy skin to cleanse his wound and then dabbed again.

"Mother Nature has been kind with the autumn weather," he commented.

She kept busy at her task and tried not to think of Tornan's hands traveling in an idle motion over her under garment. He had her vulnerable to the pleasures of the flesh. He made her skin hot, her insides damp. Her mind went on a wild journey into immoral dreams.

"Please Tornan," she closed her eyes.

His fingers continued circling, rubbing and fondling her aching breast. His other arm came down and that hand glided along the edge of the fabric concealing her.

"I intend to please you and myself." His grip strained the garment.

"It's all too fast. You make me dizzy with the way you rush me."

"I don't move quickly enough, I should think." He ripped the gauzy shell of her last piece of clothing.

A gasp escaped her.

Stunned by the exposure of her breasts, Galena remained immobilized. His roving inspection soon came with roaming lips. He seared her skin with torrents of fire. Her arms wrapped his head and held him to the blaze of her lustful heart. She stood a wanton proffering up her body for pleasure.

Galena watched the firelight dance on the stone wall. Their shadows molded into one so a carnal scene of decadence swayed with their doing. Her fingers dug into his scalp so the image appeared a devil with horns. The iniquity held her a captive witness to her ravishment.

"Taste me well, Tornan," she begged, possessed with a voice not sounding as her own. "Savor my skin."

He pressed his tongue to her nipple and then sucked it into his mouth. His fingers pinched the other bud of her breast until the inflamed bead grew heavy with a desire to be soothed. His wet kiss brought relief and provoked the ache to journey between her legs.

"Please, don't stop." She lifted her heavy eyelids and glanced at the puppet shadows. The outline of his head went lower. She felt herself pushing him with an urgency she didn't comprehend. She only knew she wanted his lips to touch her everywhere. She needed the beast to sate her obsession.

"Yes, Tornan...oh yes."

From the background, her attention went to the night. Something from outside kept her on edge. Even Tornan's nips at her skin, didn't completely have her enamored by him alone.

"You taste so good." He sucked on her breast again.

His suckling traversed up to the hollow at the base of her throat. At the side of her neck, he put more pressure making the spot feel bruised by his fiery kiss. His travels took him down between her breasts. Gently, he knead the handful of flesh and flicked his thumb back and forth over her nipple.

"I shall enjoy this furrow later." Tornan slurped down to her stomach.

His tongue wiggled into the dent of her navel and tickled a giggle from her.

"Oh please, stop," she laughed.

"Your beauty radiates from your lips as well as from your face, now I wish to taste it dripping from your delicious center." He knelt.

Galena wobbled on shaky legs when his tongue tested her stamina. He licked her skin close to the fringe of curls shielding her private area. He picked up her foot and held it in his palm.

"What are you going to do?"

"Eat you," he laughed wickedly.

Only this time, she understood his playful intonation and didn't totally fear his bite.

The hand not holding her leg up, pried the lips of her sex open further. A cooling air stirred over the inflamed tissue. Raw from the slaking Kurian helped her achieve, she still desired Tornan's finger penetrating her. His long thick probe pushed deep inside.

"Oh God, please," she whimpered.

His finger slipped out.

"No!" she pleaded.

She didn't want him to stop touching the spot her finger could never reach.

He folded the sore lips apart again. The heat of his nostrils teased and pleased the waiting center and she gripped the top of his head for balance. Her fingers wove into his black locks and took hold with restraint to his moves.

"Tornan, please!" she wailed, impatiently.

Chapter Nine

Tornan hummed against her clit, "Please what, my enchanting Gypsy?"

"Please hurry." She dug her fingers deeper, scratching his scalp in agitation. "Please lick inside me."

Tornan flogged the wet folds of her labia and enjoyed the flavor of her moist succulent flesh. He lifted her leg higher and put it over his shoulder allowing his hands free to hold her open to his investigating tongue.

"Like this." He swirled a teasing jab to her hooded clit.

"Yes—no—please—inside," she gasped. "Touch me inside."

"Like this," his voice echoed into the cavern.

She squirmed closer.

"Deeper," she groaned.

She flexed her hips, searching ways to alleviate the ache he created. Her entrance already squeezed rapidly, crunching his tongue. He backed off and sucked her clit into his mouth. The morsel of throbbing flesh lay on his tongue waiting for his devouring. He savored the sound of Galena's whines each time he bit into the flesh with his teeth and pulled. Her fingers churned in his hair and tugged with a fretful restlessness.

Her feral scent maddened his mind. With the force of his hands placed on her ass, he pulled her fragrant interior into his face to drink the creamy flux she expelled in torrents. He rubbed a finger into the crevice of her bottom and felt the crinkled hole twitching. While sucking hard on her vulva, he fingered her bottom. She didn't notice or didn't care that the tip of his finger rubbed vigorously over the back entry. His cock jolted up and down with a growing anticipation. He imagined humping her, not as the wolf, but as the libidinous man anxious to have her in every position he could take her. As a day old deflowered virgin, she would be so tight his cock would only have to thrust once before he ejaculated.

"Stop," she screamed as she climaxed. "I can't take any more."

He didn't give up the torture of her clit or the almost belligerent assault on her sizzling insides. Even his finger on her anus pushed faster and deeper.

His cock jerked, slapping nothing but air, searching for the warm sheath he drank greedily from. His balls were hard, swollen and aching in the taut sac of skin dangling between his heels as he sat kneeling in front of her.

He managed one last, long-clinging kiss to her inflamed sex, before Galena's trembling thighs gave out and she dropped in a willowy slump. His kiss skittered up her middle and claimed her mouth. He guided her to her knees before him and ravished her face with kisses. She gasped against the hard claim of his mouth over hers.

"Please, no more," she wheezed, dropping her head back.

"I will yield you a minute to allow you to catch your breath." He lifted her head and kissed her again.

"I cannot," she gasped. "I cannot if you ... if you keep kissing me."

He smiled and saw she did have a point. With the guidance of his hand, he bent her head away and sucked on the fluted ripple of her ivory neck. Suctioned to her skin over her rapid

pulse, he sucked long and hard in several places, speckling her flesh with more of his love bites, none as dark and severe as his first.

The fire crackling in the fireplace warmed them as they knelt before the hearth. As he gave her a chance to catch her breath, he rubbed the sheet of perspiration into her curves. Nothing could make him stop touching every inch of her splendid form. Her full breasts were made for suckling. Her flat belly had a slight swell ripe for childbearing. And with the voice of an angel, he felt redeemed when she said his name.

"Tell me, my sweet Gypsy, have you had a hard life?" He wanted to know everything about her.

"No," she panted.

He stroked her soft black hair back from her porcelain skin. Cupping her face, he let his thumb sweep back and forth over her kiss-swollen lips. The irresistible mouth pulled his to plant another kiss. Without her objection, he explored. His tongue parted her lips and felt the contours to the inside. Her smooth teeth, her tongue and her throat were searched as if he'd find the treasure of a lifetime. The vaulted cavern held just one gift, the sweetness of her breath.

"Galena." He nuzzled his face alongside hers.

"Yes, Tornan," she answered, giving him the same affectionate cuddling.

He found something in her arms he hadn't realized he looked for. He wouldn't name it, feeling that to speak the rushed words would jinx him. Regardless, he experienced the sentiments of his heart growing fonder and he enjoyed the prospects.

"I'm glad you are here, with me." He looked over her face.

She hugged him and he held onto to her slender body. No woman ever made him want to hold them with a simple tender embrace.

For ten years he didn't venture further than Wolvraine lands most days. His people were no longer the nobles of the country. He had nothing to gain by associating with such men. His mother never involved him with the Gypsies because she didn't want anyone to know of her past. He lived among Gypsy cursed wolves and it made him ignore the atrocities of Dragomir until the wolf hunter stepped over personal bounds. The killing of real wolves he tolerated, but when the man came after shifters, he had to intercede. What he soon learned put a mission in his mind, to purge Transylvania of the Romanian tyrant. To have found Galena, his perfect mate in all the upset, gave him hope at also having love.

When Galena pulled her head back, her eyes widened at the poke of his cock on her belly. He drew her closer so his errant erection lay between them. He rubbed a hand down her back over the damp undergarment. He gripped her ass and pressed into her to stop the throbbing ache threatening to spurt fluid all over them.

Her fingers drifted up behind his back and she touched his hair.

"I can't remember you, but...." she slid a finger around his ear, along his jaw and her gaze went from his mouth to his stare.

"You feel something though, don't you?"

She nodded and the glossy black locks danced.

"Galena," he leaned and kissed her delicious lips. "We were brought together by magic, that there's no denying, but not all enchantments are created by Gypsies. Some are a chance of fate."

"I know." She lowered her eyes with the bow of her head.

Tornan lifted her face with the curl of his finger under her chin. He brushed the smooth texture of her skin with his thumb. The soft slope of her jaw and the high rise to her cheekbone,

shaped her face beautifully.

"Do you?"

Her loveliness surpassed any he knew. Her innocence captivated him beyond words. If it were not because of one momentous incident, some would believe he and Galena would have never met. He didn't believe that. She had been born to be in his arms.

Their mouths came together and Tornan drank in her lovely kisses, relishing the feel of her luscious body enmeshed to his.

A tapping drew his gaze from her to the door and he stood, pulling her up.

"Enter," he answered the knock, moving himself in front of Galena.

One of his servants carried in a tray of food and drinks for them. The old woman sat it down on the table and lifted the pitcher to fill their goblets. She carried one to Tornan.

"For the Lady, m'lord." She bowed her head. "Something cool and sweet for her."

He nodded for the woman to leave and turned to Galena.

He held the pewter goblet to her lips and watched her drink. Greedily, she showed her thirst by gulping at the wine. He kissed her flavored lips, and then turned to the tray.

"More?" he asked, glancing back.

She shook her head and the black curls swished over her shoulders. He liked the way she didn't try to hide her nakedness from him.

"How about something to eat?"

"I am a little hungry."

He picked up the loaf of bread, broke off a small piece and handed it to her. He removed the carafe of wine and left it on the table. The tray of food, he carried to the bed.

"Come," he called her. "We will sit."

He didn't watch when she gripped the under garment to hold it closed. She went to him and took her place on the mattress. Sitting, he placed the tray on the far side of her.

"Go on, eat your fill."

She nibbled at the bread, glancing at the tray filled with meats, cheeses and fruits several times.

"Eat whatever you'd like." He encouraged.

She picked up a cluster of grapes and picked them from the stem one at a time, popping them into her mouth.

"Do you think I could have one?" He leaned toward her.

She held a grape out to him and he closed his lips on the tip of her fingers. The most exquisite smile followed her giggle. She offered him another and he took the plump purple grape between his teeth. He jerked his head for her to come forward so he could share the juicy piece of fruit.

"There's more." She held the stem of grapes up for him to see.

"I know." He grinned, maintaining his grip on the grape in his teeth.

Her sly smile curved the corners of her mouth up further. She leaned close. Her teeth clicked against his and a little juice squirted from her bite cutting the grape in two. He didn't move a muscle as her tongue licked down his chin and around his lips. She pushed the halved grape into his mouth and sucked at his lips. Pulling on him to pucker, she slowly backed away.

"Should we eat all the grapes like this?" She plucked another from the stem and put it in her mouth.

He nodded and she poked half the grape back out from between her gleaming smile.

For a half hour, Tornan found his enjoyment of grapes had increased. Galena's kisses,

sweet and short, were enough, while they ate. He didn't want her to feel rushed.

When she suddenly stood up, the tray tipped from the edge of the bed and crashed to the floor with a loud clatter.

"I'm sorry." Fear filled her once tranquil expression.

"Galena, it's all right." He reached for her.

She shrank from him with a worried expression. Her arms wrapped her body with a renewal of bashful concern.

"Galena, what is it?"

Chapter Ten

Galena looked at the embrasure and back at Tornan. The frogs croaked, the crickets chirped and another frightening sound tightened her lungs. The reverberation from outside took her look away from Tornan's puzzlement to the eerie trepidation she felt closing in on her.

"What's wrong?" he asked again.

"I hear something."

Tornan rose and went to the windowed port. She watched the magnificence of his backside. The dusky hue of his skin appealed because of the cut to his muscles. She took special note of the firm, rounded shape of his buttocks. The downy black hair flowed from thin to thick on the backs of his thighs. His smooth back had no marks and she found it strange for a man whom history had made into a murdering fiend.

He turned and smiled. "Come and listen." He held his hand for her to join him.

She paraded across the room feeling naughty and nice. She saw lust in his stare, but it was the hidden adoration that attracted her beyond words. She slipped her fingers in his open palm. Her smile met his with the nervousness she felt.

She almost forgot what worried her.

"There, do you hear?" he asked.

"No, no I don't want to hear it." She tugged her fingers from his grasp. "It's bad luck to hear the hoot of an owl. You must know that."

She wrapped the undergarment around her like a robe and folded her arms together tight over her bosom.

"Ah, my sweet, I forget the old superstitions of the Gypsies." He came to her and enveloped her in his arms.

"You mean to condemn me to every cruelty there is in this world," she cried.

"My lovely pet," he whispered against her head. "If bad luck has brought us together, then I'll invite the demon into my life more often."

He rocked her in a consoling hug. They swayed for seconds and then minutes. She wanted to melt into his kindness with all her soul. He took her captive by body, but he made quick time in stealing her heart. Her Nana had read her tea leaves once and she said love would come like a flash of light on a dark night. She had hoped it would be the man she married. She prayed she had found the love she needed from Tornan.

The owl hooted again. A shiver made Tornan's embrace tighten. She glanced over his shoulder to the moonlit night. The darkness had been in the Black Forest, not the night sky. Bad luck began long before the omen. She couldn't change the course of events, nor did she think she wanted to any longer.

She blinked away the tears and let her spirit go willingly into the passion Tornan promised with his touch. Turning her head, she pressed her lips to his cheek. He drew back and she unfolded her arms. The torn under garment parted naturally. He had the view most men would die to have and he didn't even glance. He gave her the flash of his smile before it waned into a pensive expression. With a brush of his hands across her shoulders, what little she wore floated down her arms and spilled to her feet.

This time, no spell of self-induced enchantment propelled her. With hands out to him, she let him lead her to the bed.

"I won't hurt you," he caressed her face.

She nodded and leaned toward the trust in his words because she wanted to. He had protected her from Kurian and the wolf. In many respects, it would be her soul she owed him for his gallantry, if it were not for the part of her he requested in the forest.

Tornan shoved his hands into her hair and pulled her mouth against his. He dropped down on the bed taking her with him. The comfort of his hard body meshed with her every yielding curve. She lay on his heartbeat and took the aggressive kiss with the fervor of never wanting him to stop.

His tongue swished around hers. It curled and claimed hers. He licked the roof of her mouth, dove to the far reaches of her throat and traced the edge of her lips. She didn't know why she surrendered so much so fast, but she did. She wanted to belong to him.

He rolled her to her back. Curious contemplations made her search his torso, his hips and his ribs. She wanted to know him from within the shell of the man she had tried to fear. While he had made her nervous, he had yet to make her truly frightened to be with him.

"Ah, my beautiful Gypsy," he kissed her neck. "I believe I have learned the reason for my existence."

"Yes," she agreed, feeling she too found a relief in her soul.

Her pulse quickened to the suction of his lips. The velvet stroke pushed up under her ear. He nipped her earlobe and tongued the outer shell.

"Taste me, Tornan," she beseeched. "Touch me everywhere with your lips."

She raked her hands down his sides, loving the way his licks at her skin made her come alive. It encouraged her to feel him. To explore everything she could reach. The long planes of his back, the curve to his buttocks, and the downy fibers of hair lacing over the slit in his ass led her finger to stray with inquisitiveness.

Her rigid nipples quaked to his contact. He twisted and pulled the sore rounded points. She arched from the lightning jolts of pleasure shooting to her center. Her body dripped from the swollen pleats of her sex.

"Savor me, Tornan." She couldn't seem to say his name enough. "Taste me, Tornan."

His fingers played over her begging lips, while he devoured her breast. She sucked his thumb into her mouth. The tang of his calloused skin had a hint of blood. Something left from his fight with the wolf, she suspected. It sweetly flavored her taste buds so she pulled his hand away and took in each salacious inch. Kissing and licking to his wrist, she writhed under his arrival to her stomach.

"Taste me," she pleaded.

"I'm going to devour you."

His head lifted and she watched the shifting color of his eyes. They changed from green to gold. A chill swept her hot skin. Then, she saw teeth. Long pointed fangs like a wolf's. He lowered his head and she twisted under his grip. The scream began to rumble in her chest. It stuck in her throat. She didn't know if she'd ever get another sound out before his teeth made contact with her flesh.

Chapter Eleven

Tornan sunk his tongue into her cunt, unable to resist the taste of her heavenly essence. The succulent juices of her ripeness smeared his probe into her. He withdrew and circled the nubbin of flesh quivering in anticipation. Galena's panic rose to a dangerous level before she succumbed to the lashing of her clit. Lapping at the knot, he made her plead with quaking moans.

"Oh God, Tornan." She tried closing her legs but he didn't let her.

Sniffing, inhaling and taking in the delicious scent of her fragrance brought goose bumps to his skin. The smell of her exquisite entrance drew his nose deeper into the forest of black. He parted the dewy lips of her mound and found the vibrant pink center. With ringlets capturing his fingers, he flicked his tongue to one side of the chasm.

She purred like a kitten, and it brought out his canines again. His body stiffened and his fingers curled to dig into the supple flesh. Once the soft purr from her throat changed pitch, he breathed slower and his incisors retracted.

Her impatience bucked her hot core into his face. He could drown a happy man in the second gush of sweet cream. Suckling the Gypsy's juices made his cock seep. The tip of his tongue lapped up every expelling drop of her until he had savored the emptiness he could fill. His unshaven face turned her delicate pink pussy into swollen red folds.

Tornan had no patience. He took her expeditiously the first time and this would hardly be done with less verve. He jerked her under him. His cock slid against her hot crease. Her milky spending lubricated his shaft, and he fit the tip of his erection against the yawning mouth of her sex.

"Tornan," she whimpered.

Her fingernails embedded to his skin in preparation. Her stalled breath wouldn't hold out long for the shock and he drove his painfully hardened cock into the fiery tunnel. He hadn't thought that night, when he rode the Black Forest in hunt for Dragomir's evil, he'd end his quest by riding an angel.

Her cry, still hinting at a trace of a virgin's, whined from her with a stutter. Sealing her mouth with a deep-throated kiss, Tornan controlled her pain with distraction. He braced for the shredding claws of her fingers on his arms. She chose the pillow as her outlet. Her arms flew up and took a deadly grip on the linen-sheathed casing of goose feathers.

He pumped into her clenching center. Each thrust he sheathed himself deeper. Their bodies collided with a violent resounding slap. Galena's orgasm started long before he entered her so her gasps came rapid and her hips bucked urgently. Her insides snapped in spasms claiming him, drawing him in and pushing him out. He thrust faster as her excited groans wrapped warmly around him. Then he lifted almost completely out of her.

"Not yet," she implored.

"Not yet," he replied, ramming to the very depths that he thought her body might be too small to take.

In and out, he hammered her.

In and out, he pumped.

In and out, he slid.

In and out, he moved restlessly.

Each time Tornan sank into her, his testicles wedged into the tight niche of her ass. He went rigid while a rush of liquid fire burned through his body. His cock felt near the exploding point until the welcomed release discharged in heavy torrents.

Her unleashed scream of ecstasy met his howl. She bucked up and down, and together, her cry and his thunderous roar, shattered the tranquil night.

Tornan had never climaxed so hard, so long and so utterly painfully. Sweat rained from him to the glistening ivory skin of Galena's heaving breasts. The berry tips were large tea-colored caps with tiny dents in the satisfied nipples. He licked the morsels and commanded them to grow into the distended rigid spires.

Outside the castle, the wolves howled. While his human yell had a strangled end, theirs pierced the silence far longer.

Galena repeatedly jerked in spasms. Her swollen core sought to keep him locked inside when he tried lifting. He tugged himself free and dropped down next to her on his belly. Her sob drew his hand to her face. Turning on his side, he pulled her against his drenched body and stroked a hand over her dampened hair.

The beautiful woman intrigued him and mystified him at the same time. He kissed her forehead, not understanding her tears, let alone having the words to make them go away. If her emotions were in the same tangled mess his were, then maybe he did comprehend the upset to her mind.

"Get some sleep," he whispered. "I shall want you again soon."

"Yes," she cooed, softly.

Her serene answer gave him enough to know she did not regret being with him. Curling her body against his, her exhaustion won out. Soon he heard the hushed breath of her sleep. He smoothed a hand over her and let himself drift off to sleep, memorizing her curves with his fingertips.

Blackness engulfed his mind. Galena vanished from his side and for a long time, he felt alone, abandoned, afraid—for what reason, he didn't know. Mindlessly he rubbed the place alongside him. Fur grew beneath his palm. It sprang up and took form. He laid in the bed, a naked man stroking a wolf.

Turning his head, he stared into Saskia's eyes. He rolled over, shifting so his caress landed on her flat belly. Gliding his touch to the tip of her breast, he twisted her nipple hard, making her scream in pain. Saskia liked pain and he didn't mind inflicting it on her. He didn't know why. He never touched another woman as rough or as seemingly abusive. Saskia was different. She lapped up the small tortures with a strange delight.

"Tie me up, Tornan." She squirmed against him. "Tie me to your bed and have your way with me."

He sat up and looked around the room. He checked to see if someone watched. Someone he didn't ever want to learn about his dark side. He didn't know who he looked for, but he kept turning his head.

"Whip me, Tornan. Whip me until I beg you to stop."

She slithered around his hips, curling her body to his like a snake coiling in wait. His attention went back to Saskia. He got off the bed and stared at her. The slender woman laid spread, like a hawk in flight, her arms fanned out, her legs opened. He smelled the scent of her sex filling the air.

"Whip me, Tornan."

He watched her fingering her wet vagina. It made him hot. Sweat ran from his forehead in nervous torrents. He didn't want her, but no one else was there for him to relieve himself of the excruciating tension in the back of his head.

He crawled on the bed between her skinny legs. He lifted her from behind the calves and pushed her knees back. It opened her more, exposing the gapping folds of her sex.

"No Tornan, please, tie me up first," she coaxed him.

"Beg me."

He pushed on her so her bottom lifted and he examined the dusky ring of her anus.

"Please, I've been bad, I've been very bad. I beseech you to whip me for my deeds."

He looked from her narrow face to her small breasts. He saw the scars from her past. The men that used her beat her many times. That was all before she spit on a Gypsy and suffered the curse of the wolf. Fresh scars would heal. The others remained forever.

She thrust her chest up. The small erect nipples were black buttons on brown saucers. He lowered his head and bit one hard. Her fists hit his shoulders and pounded. He laughed until she raised her head and bit his nipple, drawing blood. She bit his chest in two more places before he grabbed her jaw and held her face away.

"Tie me up," she demanded.

Tornan jerked her from the bed and tied her to the bedpost. The whip found its way into his hand and he snapped it several times close to her quivering tits. Finally, she thrust her chest out and took a cutting sting to one breast.

"Ah ... again," she beseeched.

He gave her a dozen lashes that crisscrossed her body. The final, he brought up between her legs. Then, he knelt before her and licked the wounds. Every cut he painted with his healing saliva. He untied her arms, threw her on the bed, belly down, and from behind, fucked her hard and fast.

Saskia whimpered with her reveries. He could tell he satisfied her when he rolled her over. Her drowsy stare and her smile were the signs of a well-sated woman.

"She'll never want you to do that to her." Saskia laughed.

He didn't understand, but he knew she was right. His stomach turned. He had always known Saskia had something wrong in her mind, a mental infliction that made her truly mad.

Her laughter made him angry, resentful and stiff. So rock hard, he shoved his cock in her again for immediate release. Her laughter continued like the whirring drone of a hornets nest. He shifted and his anger intensified with the cries of her rapture. He shook and beat his hips downward.

A whimper startled him and he opened his eyes.

Galena gasped beneath him and he stopped pumping into her. He looked to the right and to the left. From a dream to reality, he went from Saskia to his Gypsy. He drew back, leaning on his heels and looked at her body for signs of his abuse. Her glistening ivory skin heaved with her laborious breathing, but he saw nothing to indicate he had whipped her.

He held her chin while her eyes rolled up into her head. Her body tensed. He kissed her with a soothing, consoling gentleness until she wistfully sighed.

"Galena?" He lifted her up.

"Again Tornan," she rasped.

He pulled her head up, kissed her forehead and hugged her within the tender restraint of his arms. He hadn't hurt her. He thanked God he hadn't hurt her.

Tornan rocked Galena to sleep and carefully put her back on the bed. His head throbbed

and the odd feeling wouldn't go away. He got up from the bed and paced the room in agitation. The time spent with Galena had him confused like a drug.

Saskia's disturbed whine outside his chambers drew his attention. She wanted to go out, just as any pet would, except she had other reasons for wanting to leave the castle, just as he did. He opened the door and stared at her passive stance. She obeyed his many commands only when she chose.

Sated by sex, Tornan dropped to all fours and shifted into his fur hide. He needed fresh air to clear his mind. The Gypsy had stirred emotions with too strong a scent. He required a measure of time to sort out his confusion.

Where he walked, Saskia followed. They joined the anxious wolf pack outside the castle walls. His band of warriors, reduced to a pack of beasts, were the result of his search for more like him. Once gathered, they came quickly to regard him as their leader. He saw two choices in the world. To lead or to follow, and he did not follow well.

The group dispersed into the woods on their nightly hunt. An obsession in him grew so he began to favor the wolf instead of the man. The toil everyday to resist the effects of the curse grew demanding on his will. The old Gypsy woman trapped him in a quagmire he didn't know how to get out of.

Halfway through the forest, he wondered if the young Gypsy in his bed could remove the hex put upon him by her grandmother. The thought dissipated swiftly. With his shapeshifting abilities, he found his senses heightened and he cut away from the pack to run for home.

The danger of losing Galena before realizing all the qualities her spirit encompassed panicked him enough to make haste. He lost sight of Saskia at the same time he recognized she had put something in their drinks. Saskia planned to kill Galena and if he didn't hurry, she would succeed.

Chapter Twelve

Galena lifted her lethargic eyelids trying to wake to the sounds of howls. She reached for Tornan as sleep started to claim her again. It seemed each time she drifted out of her daze she couldn't find him. That sort of disorientation pulled her back into dreams.

And back into fantasies of Tornan she dove willingly.

His large hard body climbed on hers. She ached to have him fill her again and her arms lifted to hold him. The brawn guided her fingers around the ridge of muscle making up his wide shoulders. She lifted her lashes to watch the rise of passion in his eyes.

The tip of his cock pushed into her and her groan, a surprised grunt, pushed from her lungs when she saw Kurian's icy blue eyes. They glistened with a wildness matching his hard thrust into her. She wondered where Tornan had gone or if he watched this massive man grinding his hips into hers.

Kurian didn't speak. Not with his voice, but he did communicate with his thoughts. She read them in the breathless grunts he made while pounding into her. He stretched her with his thick cock and she guided him with her fingers digging into his ass.

She imagined his lips moving to the words in her head.

"I want you, Gypsy whore, and I will have you."

"Yes, she pulled at him. "Yes, Kurian."

His erection pulsed and hammered the walls of her vagina. His heart echoed in her ears. He shut his eyes and his grunts strung into one strained sound. With thoughts of Tornan faint at the back of her mind, Galena gripped Kurian's waist. His body rippled outward where his ragged breath expanded his ribcage.

She pushed his chest, to move him away and stop him from taking what should only belong to Tornan. The lightheaded weakness still had a hold of her strength. Instead of shoving at him, her fingers raked the mat of brown hair on his chest. Her finger landed on a scar, and she caressed the jagged knot of flesh.

"You've been hurt," she said, sadly.

"Your body, little Gypsy, will make—the hurt—go away," he grunted.

Fire ripped through her veins. Kurian steadily thrust his heaviness against her—into her. She turned her head and lay helpless with the euphoric rush of liquid oozing between her legs. Her insides twitched in spasms with the greed she felt every time her orgasm magnified. He took her to the edge, over and over.

Her scream vanished inside Kurian as he planted his wide mouth over hers and inhaled the sounds she made while climaxing. He didn't suck, or kiss, or bath her with his tongue and she came to think he only wanted her silent from the hearing range of the wolves.

While her insides continued quivering, he rose from her. His hand slid under her head and his fingers gripped the back of her neck.

He pulled her to sit.

"Clean me," he ordered.

"With what?"

"Your tongue." Rising to his knees, he expected immediate compliance.

Galena stared at his wet erection. She stuck out her tongue and licked the tip. Dragging her lips down the side of his shaft and back, there seemed to be no taste. When she finished, his skin remained glossy from a layer of her saliva.

She got to her knees and rubbed his cock between her breasts. Tornan mentioned the act and curiosity drove her to experimentation. She leaned and rubbed the silky skinned tip over her nipples.

With his large hands, Kurian pressed her breasts tighter, making a snug fit as his body lifted, lowered and pumped against her breastbone.

"Kurian," she sung his name with the beguiling trance she sunk into with his grunts heaving him quicker against her chest.

The fevered pitch of his hips forced her head to drop back. His hoarse cry melded with her shallow whimper. A liquid heat bedewed her neck under her chin. It glided and spread over her breasts where his hands massaged her flesh.

He pushed her back on the bed and looked down at her.

"I will come for you whenever I want." He squeezed and kneaded a breast.

She nodded her head, not in agreement, just understanding.

"I will love you." His caress petted her nipples, pinching them and plucking at them.

"And you will love me."

Galena woke with a start. She sat up in bed and looked at the room. Her fingers traced her lips in puzzlement.

"Kurian," she breathed his name with the vivid dream locked in her head.

She twisted to look at the place beside her on the bed. The heat of Tornan was long gone, leaving the coolness of the ticking under her palm.

She laughed at the thought, recalling the few minutes they were together.

"No, it's too bizarre," she said aloud. "He hates me and now I'll be plagued by dreams of him holding the threat of Tornan learning of my indiscretion."

She held the sheet to her breasts and stared at the open door. It drew her mind away from the odd dream she had of Kurian wanting her.

"Tornan wouldn't leave it open if I weren't safe," she swallowed.

The fire blazed high in the fireplace. It told her, he or someone had added logs recently. She slid to the edge of the bed, careful not to make a sound. Putting her feet down, stretching her toes to the wood floor, she stood. In one turn, she wrapped the sheet around her aching torso. Never had she felt so sore or pleased by it at the same time. She went toward the door knowing if she shut it, she'd feel safer. If she bolted it, she'd add to the feeling of security.

A wolf appeared in a quiet manner.

Galena gulped the dry lump of panic rising in her constricting throat. She let only her gaze move in survey of the almost barren room. She needed a weapon and the room had such an unused emptiness to it, she already knew there would be nothing. Her shoes were the only thing she thought of to throw at the count earlier.

The wolf lunged at her and Galena ran for the bed. She didn't think it could shield her, but she had nowhere else to go. She jumped to the mattress and bounded over it to the floor. The wolf leaped and went over her head. Galena wiggled to get beneath the heavy wood frame before the wolf turned around and killed her.

When the sheet she wore as a makeshift garment got stuck, Galena desperately tugged and yanked on the cloth. She twisted and turned to see what held it taut and spotted the huge paws of the heavy wolf standing on the end of the linen.

"Get away from me!" She pulled to get free.

The wolf answered with a low menacing growl. It lowered its black head to look under the bed and the flash of sickly yellow teeth quickened her heartbeat. With the real terror closing in on her, Galena gave up her fierce grasp of the thick sheet. She squirmed further beneath the protective bed until she almost reached the opposite side. Across the room, the door stood open—inviting her to escape. She debated whether she'd get out of the room as well as close the door before the wolf got to her. What she would do from that point? A castle inundated with wolves didn't give her much hope in finding a safer refuge than under the low bed. Where she was the big wolf couldn't fit, or have the dexterity to try.

Suddenly a hand grabbed her leg. Long nails on skinny fingers clawed at her flesh. The sting of the cutting talons in her calf forced her to cry out painfully. She jerked her leg free and managed to get far enough under so the hand couldn't reach. Confusion swept her deep into a huddle when the wolf's growl came again. The resonance of evil echoed beneath the platform holding the mattress she had so recently lay peacefully asleep in. The bed bounced. It thumped the wood-planked floor and rattled against the wall. She felt sure the wolf wouldn't get the piece of furniture moved off her and then the wood legs groaned in protest as it slid.

The floor felt no different from any on her bare feet, but on her bared breasts, the cut of the tiniest splinters hurt. Regardless of the inflictions to her skin, she kept going. The painful sting would be the most endurable of fates if she managed to get away. When the wolf rammed into the bed making it jolt, she scrambled from beneath and raced for the door.

The wolf had speed. It leapt over the bed in a single high bound and landed forcefully against Galena's naked back. The thick claws scraped her flesh. The impact sent her flying out of the room and she crashed to the floor with an excruciating collision into a chair and a wall.

Out of thin air or maybe it was out of her line of vision another wolf attacked the first. They hit head on and somersaulted away, back into the room in a wild frenzy of violent sounds. The horrendous fight, loud and brutal, ended with a yelp.

On shaking limbs, Galena crawled weakly to the doorway. She lived by curiosity, and like a fool looking for further abuse she peered into the room.

"Tornan?"

She questioned his presence. He stood looming over one wolf and the other was gone. Naked, regal and panting, he looked exquisitely majestic in her eyes. Her body felt on fire watching his muscles roll beneath the glistening taut skin textured with fine black hairs. His chest expanded and contracted rapidly with each breath he took. His nipples were spiked and his cock semi-erect with a feral stimulation. The masculine lines twisted and turned at his hips first. From between the long and stout muscled thighs, his cock swung tense. She gazed up at his golden eyes glowing fiery hot.

While all of his body appeared too hard and rough to be of comfort, she knew how the softness of his skin caressed her breasts and soothed her limbs. When he had laid over her, he blanketed her with that luxury she now stared at in admiration.

His head came around and he saw her immediately. She sat back and pulled her legs up to hide, frightened by what she thought she saw. He appeared from nowhere or he appeared as the second wolf.

When he emerged from the room, naked and out of breath, she looked to him for an explanation. The wolf ran from the room and trotted down the stairs with a whimper.

"Tornan?"

He stood silently before her while the turmoil of emotions reached a limit to the stress she

could handle. She put her head down, and cried on her knees.

"Galena," his voice rasped.

A hiccup burped from her lips. She glanced up and he stared at her with his examining gaze at her naked limbs. It made her turn her head away for a second, and then, assembling courage, she returned to his intrusive inspection. The only thing preventing her from seeing all of him was the temptation of his cock. Rigid and long, it jutted straight out from the black nest between his legs. It engrossed her attention. An arrowhead never looked more dangerous or exciting as his well-crafted weapon for fornicating. Her dreams of Kurian entranced her with this reality. She had dreamt of licking his body the way he perused hers with eagerness.

"Take it in your mouth." His voice sounded like a low growl the way it echoed in the passageway.

He thrust his hips toward her and brought his cock closer. She parted her lips and stuck her tongue out. The judgment of distance was slightly off and she missed the heart shaped head by a fraction.

"Suck on me, Galena. Taste me."

Her mouth watered to capture the velveteen tip in her kiss. She reached an unsteady hand up so when she grasped the pulsing shaft, the shudder of her nerves shook him and he moaned.

"Yes, that's it." His ragged voice trembled.

Her thumb looped the rim with several strokes. When a tiny bead of moisture formed in the dimple on the tip, she whipped her tongue across the peak to seize the escaping droplet. Her tongue continued to traverse the head, lapping every new and creamy dewdrop.

"Take me in your delightful mouth," he implored urgently.

She wrapped her lips over the crown, sucking the engorged head, savoring the enticing flavored juices. She became a greedy woman when the zest dried up. She pulled and twisted on his shaft as if milking him would produce the taste she hungered to have coating her tongue. Dreams lacked the realness she yearned, especially with Tornan's groans of pleasure.

Her fingers ventured to the base of his well-proportioned shaft. The length hardly fit in her palm, but the size had fit in her very well. She rubbed the veins thumping on her fingertips, and he hummed the accolades.

"Yes, there," he moaned.

He tensed when she hit several specific points, and she liked that she had found ticklish areas to torture as he had done to the soles of her feet. Only, he never once uttered a sound to make her think he wanted her to stop.

She cupped the soft leathery sac of his scrotum and he drew in a sharp breath with her gentle squeeze. He continued to inhale in short gasps while she massaged his balls and ran her tongue back and forth along his shaft.

Her body quaked at the thought of his enormous cock stretching and filling her. She dripped from between her legs ready to have him plunging deep into her aching cavern again. It put aggression in her slurps over his erection. She lifted the long shaft and pressed it up to his smooth, flat belly. Her tongue glided down the length to his balls. Massaged with her tongue, the heat of his skin radiated from the hairless sac.

"Don't stop," he begged. "You, have me aching to feel your scorching breath."

Galena sucked on his scrotum. She couldn't take all of it into her mouth since it was far too big for her to handle. What she could do, he seemed quite eager for, anyway.

Then, for a reason she didn't understand, he jerked away from her.

Chapter Thirteen

Tornan bent down and scooped Galena up from her crouched position.

"I wish to spill inside you, not on the floor, or even in your lovely mouth," he explained. "I want my seed to fill your womb."

He kissed her face with haphazard pecks to her cheeks, her nose and the corner of her mouth as he carried her to the bed.

"I should have known she would come after you." He lowered her on the mattress.

"I don't understand about the wolves." She kept her arms around his neck. "There were two ... fighting, and then you were standing with one."

He inspected her blood-smeared breasts. "You already know the answer."

She shook her head even though her eyes betrayed her.

"You know me, Galena. You know what your grandmother and my mother did to us."

"It cannot be true, it cannot be done. Not really."

"I and my men are cursed creatures, encompassing centuries of spells put on us by Gypsies. Some of us are deserving. Some are not. You had a different hex put upon your head and you will have to face it."

He planted his mouth over her sweet lips to prevent her from denying what her heart spoke. Destiny had pushed them together and he'd not give up his hold. He licked over her teeth, exhausting himself of her breath before he ventured to her breasts.

"Tornan."

He lowered his head and licked her wounds. Gentle devotion washed the splinter pricks. He took his time over every inch of her cut flesh. He bathed her with a rasping glide, so all cleansing came with a mounting stimulation. Her belly, her hips and her thighs quivered with the eager anticipation his journey aroused.

"Yes," she moaned, beckoning him. "Yes, come into me."

His mouth covered her sex and she didn't flinch with fear of his bite. The lust drove her hips up. His tongue lashed through her with a feverish adulation. She flexed, working hard to drive him deeper.

"Yes," she cried out. "Yes!"

Her scream drowned out the wolf howls outside the castle.

Tornan slid up and kissed her hard on the mouth. He entered her with a shallow and testing prod. Each poke went deeper until he sunk low where their bellies brushed.

"Tell me again, Gypsy, how you think you might curse me?"

Galena shook her head.

"Imagine the wolf hunter, Victor Dragomir devoting himself to pleasuring you."

"No," she cried out.

Her orgasms, in a string of small vibrations had her writhing beneath him. Tornan rolled over pulling her atop. Instinctively she sat up.

"That's it, wicked Gypsy. Ride me."

His encouraging words bounced her up and down. As she grew wetter, her body stretched to accommodate his cock's girth.

"That's good." He slapped the cheek of her supple ass.

She stiffened and her pleased surprise raked her fingernails over his nipples.

"Faster," he commanded, giving another stinging smack to her buttocks.

Her insides clenched on his shaft. Each time her muscles weakened their hold on his cock, he slapped her bare-bottom. It made her squeak and constrict on him.

"Don't stop," she directed.

Her hands rubbed his chest. His repeated thwacks lifted her higher. The increased elevation, made her plunge down hard. She shuddered with desire blazing in her eyes. Her nicely rounded breasts bounced around, and they were a breathtaking sight near his face. He lifted his head for an appetizing lick and couldn't reach.

He gripped her hips and rolled her forward, not allowing her to spring up and down. Instead, she rocked back and forth. In that position, he had the advantage of suckling the pendulous delights.

Galena writhed with a chaotic anxiousness. From the salacious expression on her face, he knew his cock angled just right to create the abrading joy on her clit.

"Oh God," she groaned, and a sizzling warm liquid lubricated his shaft.

The titillation wracked her atop him. She grasped the short hairs on his chest and twisted in her violent throes of a building orgasm. He smacked her reddened bottom several more times not wanting her to stop her lunging quakes.

With his hands grasping her hips, his long fingers dug into her flesh to pull her down tight to his desperate thrusts. His seed spewed into her, filling the chasm until it leaked out around his depleted cock.

He jerked her down on his chest, burrowed his fingers into her hair, and twisted his grip to angle her face. While they both panted out of breath, he attacked her mouth with a ravenous kiss. His tongue whipped hers into an instant submission and then, he turned her over on her back and jerked his hips forcing himself all the way into her, up to his aching balls. She lifted her legs, encircled his waist and fastened herself to him with desperation. He indulged her control, grinding his hips to her, driving his throbbing cock against the tight walls of her cunt.

It took him longer to build to the point of explosion. Ejaculating in spurts, he heaved wildly upward, filling her again. With nowhere to retain the creamy fluid, it rolled out, down the split of her ass and made a puddle under her bottom, drenching the bedding.

Tornan yelled out with a painful release. He thrust forcefully against her petite frame unable to hold back the rush of wildness in his culmination. Ferociously, he shoved into the inundated chasm. He had no control in the throes of his raging orgasm.

"Tornan," she cried.

Her pleasure, a beautiful sight on her face, madly thrust him into her. Her agitated fingers danced up and down his back. Her head tossed from side to side and her blushing body wiggled. Her insides contracted on his shaft and Tornan collapsed on her and lay heaving with most of his weight pressing her into the mattress. He could have suffocated her by his heaviness pummeling her slender body. The stir of the air with her gasps brought his cock up from the half-limp stage. Her scent engaged the lascivious cravings of the beast inside him. He shifted off her and dragged her from the soiled bedding to the side.

"Get on the floor," he ordered.

"What?" she squeaked in surprise.

"Get on the floor now, on your hands and knees."

"I don't understand."

"Just do it." He snapped the order again.

The tension in his body demanded he take her like an animal. The wolf wanted a different kind of pleasure, the kind he conjured in visions. He fought the idea in vain. He watched her hurry to the floor. On her knees straight from the bed, he looked at her delicious round bottom facing him. Blotched red from his smacks, he couldn't wait to feel the heat of her flesh pressing into his groin.

Tornan dropped to the floor behind her. His paws thumped the wood. The blast of heat from his nostrils startled her. He inhaled the fragrance and expelled another curling flurry of air into her anus.

"Tornan please, tell me what you'll do."

He didn't respond, because he couldn't. The answer he gave came in a long, forceful lick into the cleft that retained the savory tight ring she held clenched shut. She was holding her breath and when she couldn't any longer, the exhale puffed from her lungs and the rosy circlet of flesh opened. He drove his thick tongue savagely deep into her.

"Oh God, no."

Even though Galena protested, she didn't move. He enjoyed the confines he embedded his raging tongue into, until her elbows buckled. She collapsed to the floor raising her bottom higher. Her face lay on the wood just like her breasts. The position gave him a clearer view of both points of entry. He lapped at the dampness to her skin. The sexual perspiration of rigorous involvement had a unique flavor. He lowered his head, and shoved his muzzle into her sex. He inhaled the enticing scent. Intoxicating and feral, it taunted the beast. Animalistic urges kept pushing him to take her like a creature of compulsive habit, instead of a reasoning man. He couldn't help the primitive duress. Some days it overpowered his human logic.

He licked the twin halves of scalding flesh and ran his tongue through the wet center. Galena remained immobile. With his cock too hard to ignore, he shifted into a man, up-righted himself on his knees and probed her anus with his hot throbbing flesh. The idea of fucking her ass leaned him toward that goal. He smoothed over her back and slipped down her sides until he cupped one of her breasts.

The soft and succulent globe hung to the floor where he scooped it up. He squeezed and fondled her plump hard nipple. He let go, slid back and shifted again. Like the flicker of a flame, his form would not remain as either the wolf or the man.

A whimper stuttered from Galena. The hum had hardly an ounce of sound. His paws brushed her legs and he watched her shiver like the quaking aspens. Her pores dampened with the dew of sexual excitement. He wanted to kiss her milky flesh and yet, he became absorbed in watching her vibrant body awaken to the stimulation of his breath alone, panting at the back of her head.

He licked between her shoulder blades, dragging his tongue everywhere, tasting her smooth flesh, and delighting in the sounds of her stimulation. Her bottom drew his tongue down and into her with a newfound verdure. He played rapaciously with her anus and her cunt alternately.

A gurgling groan panted from her. Her gyrated orgasm forced her ass back so his lips smacked her amorous cunt. She continued wiggling and outrageously searching for her debauching relief.

With his tongue dripping from her spending, he lubricated her anus. He smeared the thick cream over the opening making the winking gap slippery for his access. First, he would have her feminine canal raw with a ravaged repletion.

"Tornan!"

She wailed his name loudly as he rammed his cock into her juicy body. It made him jerk out of her with a chilling fear he hurt her.

"Galena, my precious?"

"I'm afraid of the wolf."

He kissed her back and laughed. He had similar fears, but he'd not share them with her.

"I want you more as a man," he whispered.

He fisted his shaft and pumped the flesh hard to bring it back fully erect. He rubbed it to the tight crinkled ring of her bottom. With his other hand, he reached between her legs and used her wetness to lubricate his throbbing cock. He massaged some more to the pink hole hungrily tweaking.

He pressed the tight entrance knowing he'd hurt her if he took her there too hard. Using his thumb first, he worked his way into the orifice. It made her shudder. He moved to the side and eased his finger into her cunt. He thrust simultaneous in both retreats and her orgasm came extremely hard. She jerked and flopped on the floor in spasms. He moved into position and pushed his cock into her a little until he passed the clenching ring.

"Relax," he rubbed soothingly over her lower back. "Push your bottom toward me and relax."

Slowly, Galena complied and the halo yawned. He sunk into her and hesitated halfway. Reaching around her thigh, he fondled her clit and when her body responded, he charged into her bottom.

Tornan thrust into the cove and rooted deep. He savored Galena's rumbling gurgle of sounds. The moaning and groaning of a woman pleased by sweet pain captivated him.

"You have a small ass," he rasped.

Galena gasped again at the push of his groin shoving his cock into her.

"You please me with such delight." He continued to listen to her grunting and groaning on the floor, her body deluged with spasms bringing her a long, arduous and scorching climax.

His orgasm, fashioned by hers, spewed a shot of liquid into her. He whipped out of her, sending a stream of liquid to the floor as he repositioned and pushed into her cunt where he finished.

Galena succumbed to the wilting heat and burning passion he ravenously forced upon her. He hauled her fatigued body up from the floor and hugged her frail, limpness. Tremors shook them both, but it didn't stop him from agitating her clit with his constant fondling, making her feel the extent of his insatiable desires.

"Tornan, no more, please no more."

At the very end of their release, she went completely limp and her head lulled to the side. Tornan reached around behind him and grabbed a folded blanket from the foot of the bed.

"Are you all right?" he asked.

"Hummm?"

Her head turned making her forehead fall against his lips.

"Did I hurt you?"

"I'm so tired." Her head tipped down to her chest. "The cuts are gone," she whispered her observance.

"A little magic I can offer you." He nuzzled his nose into her damp black hair.

He too felt extremely exhausted, more than he should have.

Tornan twisted her in his arms to hold her cradled in the crook of his arm. Her damp hot

hand slid across his heaving chest. The sensitivities of his nipples, stimulated by sex, drew his moan. On his arm, she touched where Saskia had bitten him. Not even a scar was present.

"Like this healed?" She smoothed over his muscles.

"Yes."

He pulled her down on the blanket he spread on the floor. Holding her snug, he stroked her into slumber, and then let himself relax and sleep as well for a short time.

After the rest that helped him decide what had to be done next, he took another cover from a trunk, covered Galena and left her curled up on the floor to sleep. He needed to handle the matter of Saskia's interference in his new life.

His departure was as quiet as he could make it. He pulled the door and stopped. Shutting it would not prevent Saskia from finding a key and getting to Galena. He needed a guard to watch over his sleeping Gypsy until he returned.

He called for a servant to see if Kurian had returned. Even after the upset between them because of Galena, he had to trust someone. Kurian would be his only choice against the thousands of men he commanded. Kurian would guard Galena, not because of his personal feelings, but because he asked it of him.

With females lacking in their group, Saskia would not be the only threat. Young Joren of Hungary had tasted of Galena's flesh and others would have tried, too, if Tornan hadn't stopped Joren immediately.

"Yes, Count Wolvraine." An old woman looked at him.

"Baron Kurian, has he returned?"

"Yes m'lord. Not more than five minutes ago. I saw him in the kitchen partaking of enough food to have a feast amongst twenty men."

"Baron Kurian is a large man," he smiled. "He requires a great deal for the energy necessary to run my errands."

"Yes, m'lord."

"Send Kurian to me immediately and find fresh clothing for Lady Galena."

He didn't hesitate in thinking of his Gypsy as his soon to be countess. At the earliest possible moment, he'd marry her.

Tornan's pace remained agitated outside his chambers. He shifted into the wolf to think with a harsher mind. Saskia had to leave the castle. He would have to send her away and it disturbed him. He had never sent a shifter away. Wolvraine lands were a sanctuary to the hundreds, maybe thousands of Gypsy-cursed wolves.

"M'lord?" Kurian managed to come up the stairs without a sound and startle him.

Tornan rose as a man and waited for the news. He took the clothes Kurian brought with him for Galena. He looked at the elegant gown, something pillaged from a war with another noble he assumed.

"I managed to get an uninvited audience with the master wolf hunter." Kurian smirked. "Dragomir, at this very moment is no doubt skewering a dozen men for their laxity in letting me sneak by them."

Tornan liked the prideful tale, but he wanted to know the results, not the details of the quest.

"And, what did Dragomir say to having heard his bride had been violated?"

"His outrage was very evident. He threw the gown in the fireplace by the guidance of his infused wrath and swore his vengeance—on you."

"Good, it will force him to think less before his actions. This will only cause him to make

mistakes and soon all of Transylvania will know they follow an evilly flawed man.”

“You should kill the bastard.”

“To kill him would make him a martyr. He has poisoned the country with his lies.”

“So, we kill him quietly and make it appear an accident—a hunting accident to show his ineptness with his bow.” Kurian laughed.

Tornan put his hand on Kurian’s shoulder. “Forget Dragomir, he’ll meet his end at the appropriate time. I have another problem. Saskia’s jealousy has twice surfaced and I’m afraid she’ll kill Galena.”

“I have no sentiments for the vile bitch. You should have left her to Dragomir.”

“I couldn’t leave her to the wolf hunter.”

“Then you should have killed her when you had the chance.”

Tornan looked back at the door to his bedchamber. The decision he made would change many things about his life. Kurian’s bloodthirsty attitude worried him. He feared his friend had lost too much of the humanity in him to his wolf side.

Chapter Fourteen

Galena woke, wrapped in a blanket and still on the floor. Weary and disoriented, she got up. Her body drenched in sexual perspiration, she saw Tornan had left her alone again. From her angle, she couldn't wholly tell, but the door looked slightly ajar. That would not do. Her memory still clear on what happened before, she staggered across the room. She felt intoxicated by the wine more than she felt she should be, but knew the effects would wear off eventually.

As she thought, the door stood open within an inch of being closed. She heard voices outside, and Tornan's resonance blanketed her fear with the alluring tone. Then his brusque words sank into her muddled brain.

"I just want her gone," Tornan's voice came clear.

"I'll take her to the forest and kill her." Kurian's voice answered. "You know I've never liked her."

"Hard to believe you didn't feel something while touching her."

"I felt nothing. You know yourself, willing women are few and our actions are often instinctive, not personal."

Galena backed from the door in horror. She had been wrong to think Tornan liked her. The responses she longed to have from him were nothing more than tricks to get what he wanted, and Kurian, he hated her more than she thought.

When the door opened, she grabbed the blanket she clutched around her with a tighter hold. Kurian stared at her from behind Tornan.

"Good, you're awake." Tornan came toward her and she backed until the post of the bed stopped her. "Galena, there's nothing to be afraid of, he's quite harmless."

As if she would believe a man that wanted her dead, she fumed internally. Kurian had no qualms in hitting her. Therefore, she saw no reason to believe he wouldn't hesitate to kill her immediately. He had sneaked up on her when she stood vulnerable. He let her have a full resplendent orgasm with his fingers in her. She thought then, there would be a sliver of enjoyment beyond the physical fulfillment. It concerned her when she experienced a twinge of infatuation for the man. How could she not have some attraction to his handsome features and yet, how could she feel the way she did, knowing he wanted her dead?

"Here's a gown for you to dress in. I have business to take care of and I'll be back shortly."

The back of his hand came up and caressed her cheek. She closed her eyes fearing he too would strike her for the betrayal he must have felt.

"There's nothing to be frightened of, I'm leaving Kurian here to guard you from Saskia." He put the gown in her hand.

"Tornan?"

He stepped toward her and pulled her to him.

Overpowering heat from his body wrapped her in the splendor of his seductive embrace. Every thread of muscle tightened against her and she yielded to the exquisite hug he gave her. She didn't want to believe what she heard. How could she accept the words and feel the tenderness in his arms?

Then he let go, and without another word, he left her. The separation between them created a space for her doubts to take over her reasoning. She watched Kurian push the door closed and lean on it.

"Get dressed," he ordered.

She wondered if she might have more a chance of evading death if she found Kurian's weakness. Would he kill her, if he could have her? She could make him think it possible.

Galena let the sheet drop to the floor. She couldn't tell exactly where he stared. She thought of what her Grandmother taught her in control.

His brown lashes lifted and his gaze locked onto hers. He did not look like a man ready to make plans to kill her, except she heard them. She had to hope, maybe, Kurian could be persuaded to help her escape instead of carrying out Tornan's orders.

She turned sideways and held the gown up Tornan gave her. With a graceful step out of the pool of sheet on her feet, she went to the bed, and spread the gown out on the mattress. She bent forward, parting her legs slightly.

Her thoughts drifted to the fantasy she woke from—Kurian having his way with her.

He would be large and heavy inside her. His big feet gave away that detail. Then, just like her dream, she turned around hoping to have him from the front. It would be more personal and intimate. He would have greater trouble killing her if he looked into her eyes while taking his pleasure, or so she thought.

She stood up at the sound of his boots on the floor. Each thud prickled her senses. He panted with his heavy, ragged breath. She stood ready to surrender and watched him unfasten his trousers.

Kurian moved his hands behind her. His fingers slid over her bottom. He dug into her flesh and towed her up against him. She tried not to imagine more than his barbaric display of dominance, but the memory of her orgasm brought on by his touch earlier, pushed her into another delusional stage.

If he lifted her, she'd swing her legs around his hips and have him mount her onto his enormous jutting erection. With no place to hold, other than him, she'd put her hands on his shoulders.

"Is this what you wanted?" He'd growl.

He'd then move to the wall alongside the bed and shove her abruptly hard against the stone. Her forced gasp would answer him instead of words.

He didn't move, and it formed a new kind of torture on her. He had the patience of a hunter. She turned her head from his rude stare.

"You want to be fucked by me, little Gypsy?"

She gulped. His fingers pried the cheeks of her bottom apart. Her insides twitched. Her breasts ached with a merciless need. She leaned on him where they compressed to his leather-clad chest. The old cracked hide grated her nipples with his heavy breathing. She struggled to remove herself from him. His body had a great strength and in all her twisting and turning, the impact of their fit together, created the stimulus necessary to make her forget her plans.

She looked under his arm and stared at the reveling display of them reflected in a mirror framed and sitting on a stand. His large body had a massive protectiveness. It engaged her mind in the provocative fantasy. She didn't like he could be clothed, while her naked limbs hung on him.

He stepped back abruptly and left her to fend for support against the bedpost.

In her determination to use him, she lost perspective over the way she wanted to control

him. Instead, she wished intimacy to evolve. How her heart soared to think of his touch exciting her just as Tornan's did. She felt an embarrassing heat sweep up her face. Kurian's one look told her he felt triumph as well.

She turned away to hide her humiliation. Moments later, the door thud shut.

Galena bit her bottom lip and rushed to the door. She pulled it open a crack knowing he wouldn't go far. Tornan left him to guard her. He said from Saskia, but she knew it was to prevent her from escaping.

She paced the room, fighting the idea she wanted Kurian the way she wanted Tornan. Every point on her body trembled in rebellion of the lie she spun in her head. She fought the anxious flutter of her stomach when she visualized him running his rough hands over her skin.

Fuming to have him the conqueror, she thrust her fingers into her hair and pulled with the frustration seething inside her to find she couldn't seduce the man. Her failing would be her death. The tug on her locks gave her an instant idea. She laughed at the naughtiness of her plan. It actually excited her to know she might turn the tables on Kurian.

"A spell," she spoke to herself. "I will use a love spell that will put him at my mercy."

For a half hour, Galena paced the room hoping she could get to Kurian. She needed him unwittingly asleep. She would also have to leave the room naked.

She searched the room and found a small knife in the bottom of a trunk. She cleared a path through the scattered clothes and sheets, from the door to the bed. Then, creeping ever so quiet to the door, she turned the creaky latch and cracked open the door. The worst would be Kurian's voice booming an order for her to shut it.

She saw him immediately. Her heart sang with praises to see he possessed a human trait. Stretched out with his one booted ankle crossing the other, he napped in a chair. She tugged the door a little more. It groaned enough to make him stir. However, he didn't wake and she hurried out, completely naked and went to the side of his chair.

She went over the details of the spell in her head. Mistakes weren't allowed. Everything had to be done precisely right in order for the plan to work. She had uttered the spell and now had to go naked to the sleeping man to steal a lock of his hair without being seen. If it worked, she'd hold complete mastery over him and his affections. Of course, she'd have to carry the clipped lock of hair on her at all times or the spell would be broken. And she hardly gave it a thought that if he got the lock of hair back the spell was reversed.

She no one in sight as she carefully picked up a lock of his hair to cut it quick, but her miscalculation in how close she had to stand came instantly to the brush of his hand at the center of her legs. She looked down at arm hanging over the side of the chair. A shiver make her hands shake. Her willful body flexed toward the sensation and the push of his knuckle between her wet folds left a glorious heat sweep through her limbs.

Swiftly, she cut the lock of hair she needed, and rushed back to the room before she lost control of herself. Her care in closing the heavy door wasn't the same as when she opened it. It thumped with an awakening sound and she stared at it in wait of Kurian barging into the room to check on her.

He didn't come and she hurried to sit on the bed. There she wove the silky lock of his hair into a simple plaited braid and then she threaded it into her own hair. She chose a spot unnoticed beneath her long thick mane. Not that Kurian would know of her trickery. It was Tornan, however, who concerned her. He knew many things about Gypsies and he very well might know the love-charm's power.

The loud howls outside stole her thoughts for a minute. She stared in a trance at the

embrasure, but the baying of the wolves told her nothing. She went back to getting dressed.

She found an amusing happiness that came with the magic spell woven into the lock of Kurian's hair. He would do her bidding like a puppet and she liked the control empowering her bravery. He would help her escape and for the sake of her sanity, she didn't let a doubt waver in the outcome.

Galena slipped the dark green gown up over her hips. She shoved her arms into the long narrow sleeves and pulled the fur-lined bodice over her breasts. Finer than the gown she came in, she felt naked within the sleek fitted fabric clinging to her shape. The v-neckline sat on the edge of her shoulders with a thick ruff of sable plunging low in the front. She never had such elegance smother her flesh in exquisite softness. It made her feel like the innocent lamb sent to the slaughter.

With nervous fingers, she buttoned the back of the long flow of silk skirting. Her finger curled around the brim of fur on her breast and she hesitantly wondered if she could have misinterpreted the conversation. Tornan's gentleness with her, felt genuine, and yet, those were ploys of predators. Hunters, warriors and villains were not above using emotions as a weapon of distraction.

Dressed and alone with her thoughts, she considered her best chance of survival would be to escape. Within the hour, she may well be dead. She turned to glance around at the room. Blood spattered walls and a blood-smeared floor were her evidence of the violence the people in the castle engaged in without thought to cleaning it up.

She took a deep breath, bolstering courage and opened the door.

Kurian, now awake, stood immediately.

"Help me escape?" she asked.

Prayers toward success held her breathless.

He looked confused, by his feelings or by his mind, she couldn't tell. She went to him and put her hands on his forearms.

"Please Kurian. I don't want to be here."

He grabbed her head and plowed her lips with his thick tongue. She willingly accepted his hungry mouth on hers. Even though the man wanted her dead, she had built an attraction for him.

His kiss came at her with a sweet gentleness she never thought staunch Kurian capable of giving. His lips sucked tenderly and plied her with a usually profound affection of warmth. The heat from his large, strong body radiated and attracted her cool skin. She leaned, absorbing the power of her own spell when his hand slid into her hair and bunched it against her scalp.

He held influence over her as if he stole back the lock of hair.

Kurian's tongue pushed at her lips. He parted them with a thrust and licked the inside of her mouth. A whimpered sigh for all she'd miss of him, hummed from her. He drew her up against him tighter. Her breasts compressed to his hard chest. A beautiful euphoric splendor spiraled like heaven around her.

He bruised her lips by forcing them against her teeth. His kisses went deeply affectionate and made desires of the flesh surface and explode. He rubbed a hand over her breast and the fur collar slipped off her shoulder to his urging. His tease to her skin, tortured her with the delay at coming in contact with her aching nipple.

"Kurian," she breathed hoarsely against his wet mouth.

He pecked short breathless kisses to the corner of her mouth and sipped the moisture her open mouth produced on its own. He moved his splash of kisses to her neck, to her collarbone

and to her breast.

She pulled free from him, afraid too much of the magic would leach into him. From the hard bulge in his britches, she knew how much he wanted her and if she didn't leave, she'd forget her plan and beg him to come into her body with all the power of the building passion.

"Kurian, please." She batted her lashes at him. "Help me get a horse so I can flee this place."

The only choice she saw was to get to Dragomir Keep. The master wolf hunter would protect her from the wolves.

"I'll never see you again if you leave."

His voice, his words, she didn't like the way they make her heart ache. Those were the words she had wished for from Tornan.

"We'll see each other again." She patted his arm. "I promise."

The lie hurt. She couldn't understand why, but it pained her to lead him to believe they would be together. The words he spoke in her dream, the words of love affected her and they weren't real.

"I need to go now," she said forcefully with all hope the sensations coursing through her were strictly from the talisman of the spell his hand had grasped in her hair.

She backed from him. The charm she conjured exaggerated her thoughts. Just as soon as she got away, she would throw away the adornment so her possession of him was no more. Optimistically, it would make her waning management of her own mind go back to normal too.

She took Kurian's hand. His warm fingers wrapped around her small ones and he went down the steps with her.

"I'll take you through the kitchen to the stable," he explained. "There, we can get you a horse."

She walked past the servants as if she belonged. No one questioned Kurian's presence. They went across the courtyard and into the stables.

"You there," Kurian said to a man. "Get the Lady a horse."

Triumph welled in her. It had to fight for a place over the sadness she had lurking farther down. Tornan led her to believe her past and his had meaning. She hated the way he used her dreams against her.

"Are you sure you don't want me to go with you?" Kurian looked at her as if she had stolen something of his strength.

"No, you stay here."

She took the reins of the horse the man brought. Kurian lifted her up to help her get on and she said nothing to him when he rubbed her leg over the cloth of the gown.

"Goodbye, Kurian, and thank you." She reached a hand out and touched his face.

Two men, very different, very much alike, and she had to leave them both. Her heart grieved for what could have been. Her body ached for what she took with her. Both men had invaded her body, her dreams and her soul. She'd carry a piece of them forever.

Chapter Fifteen

Tornan searched the cold lifeless rooms of the castle looking for Galena. He went a whole hour before he thought to shift into a wolf and use more than his sense of fear. He followed her scent down the steps, to the kitchen, across the courtyard and into the stables. He changed back to a man and looked in the stalls.

"Where is she?" he asked a servant.

"Who, Count Wolvraine?"

"Galena. Where is my Gypsy?"

"I'm sorry m'lord. I don't know. I only just arrived. Let me find...."

Tornan grabbed the man by the nap of his clothing and dragged him back.

"Tell me where Galena is hiding or I will tear out your throat," he growled.

"Let him go," Kurian said from behind.

Tornan looked at the doorway. "Galena is gone."

"I know I helped her leave."

Tornan shifted into a wolf and leapt on Kurian. As wolves, they fought with vicious bites to each other's hides. They wrestled and struggled under each other's jaws until exhaustion left them bloodied and too whipped to continue the battle.

"I don't know why I helped her." Kurian shifted back into a man. "Something in my head kept telling me I shouldn't, but she asked and I felt I must do her bidding."

Tornan crawled near Kurian and reached for his head. He held up the blunt butt of a cut lock and sat back laughing. "She is clever, that one." He laughed. "She used a spell of love on you."

"How?" Kurian touched the hair Tornan let go.

They got up from the barn floor. Tornan offered his friend a hand and he clasped it.

"She cut a piece of hair from your head while you were asleep." He eyed him. "You napped outside my room?"

"Yes, forgive me. The trip to Dragomir is a long one."

Tornan walked down the aisle to get his horse. "I have to get her back, Kurian. She's in far greater danger than she can possibly imagine. With what you told the wolf hunter about her and me, he'll want her dead."

"I'll gather the men."

"Kurian, wait." He grabbed the man's arm. "Do you have feelings for my Gypsy?"

"No, of course not."

"Kurian, you need not lie. Her spell worked on you too well for you not to feel something."

Kurian turned his back and Tornan got his answer. He didn't know exactly how to feel. He wanted to hate him, but didn't. He wanted to kill him, but wouldn't. He and Kurian were closer than he and any woman had ever been. They shared a great deal over the years, including Saskia.

He put his hand on Kurian's shoulder. "We will get her back."

Kurian wheeled about. "I would not wish to ruin our friendship Tornan, not over a

woman.”

“As long as we’re clear that I’ll not give up the Gypsy to anyone.”

“I would not think to interfere.”

“Good, however, I do suggest we get the charm from her and destroy it or she’ll have a lifetime command over you.”

He didn’t tell him if he got the talisman of his hair back from her, Kurian could reverse the spell and have the power over her emotions. Tornan thought it better not to rely on friendship where Galena was concerned. A man possessed only so much restraint when it came to wanting a woman. He knew that from the cold hard facts he grew to appreciate since meeting her.

Kurian nodded in agreement with his unawareness.

Tornan set off into the Black Forest. He rode hard for as long as the horse would take him. Kurian gathered his pack.

Tornan’s mind drifted to Galena and he tried to imagine her with Kurian. If he allowed her to choose, whom would she pick? Something happened between the two of them. He sensed it for a long time. She denied of course, but he had a nose, he smelled the strong scent of her on Kurian.

Tornan closed his eyes while the horse ran the path. He pictured Galena on her knees, her mouth open and her tongue lapping his cock. She’d take him deep, letting the muscles of her throat constrict on him brutally tight. The vividness had him yank on the reins when his body jolted involuntarily. Yes, he had like watching Galena devouring his scent—watching her pretty face wrinkle in ecstasy, making his orgasms with her tense.

He kicked the horse in the flanks and they made haste for Dragomir. The image of her on her knees flashed a different vision in his head. It made him sick to think of his Gypsy at the mercy of the master wolf hunter.

Chapter Sixteen

Galena drove herself and the horse to travel fast. She got out of the castle and away from Tornan's wolves, but she had much further to go to get beyond the danger of dying.

Chilly fingers of trepidation grabbed her lungs and squeezed the air out, making it difficult to breathe. Even though her exhausted gasps wheezed with her panic, she was ready to take on the Black Forest rather than stay. Tornan and Kurian were too anxious to dispose of her. She raked her fingers through her hair and touched the lock of Kurian's interwoven with hers. If she took a lock of Tornan's instead, she could have had a say over him and tried to convince him to let her live.

The sun peeked through the gnarled branches and she felt a little better about riding into the demon riddled woods. Yet, when the morning light, glinting through the trees shifted with the breeze, Galena raced the horse as if a fiery wind chased her. The shadows scared her enough to imagine wolves in every ripple of darkness.

She went miles before she exhausted the horse and it stumbled. Tired herself, she climbed down to rest near a stream. The howl of wolves never left her ears. Although distant, they were out there and she felt sure they were coming for her.

"You're on dangerous grounds." A man startled her.

She looked up from the water she sipped out of her cupped hands.

"I was in worse trouble from whence I came."

"And that was where?" He advanced, carrying a bow and a quiver of arrows over his shoulder.

"Wolvraine Castle."

"Are you the Gypsy, Galena?"

She nodded.

His arm shot out and pulled her over the rough ground and she fell into him. At times such as this, she hated the strength men had over her.

"Is it true he's defiled you? Has he passed you among his men like a whore?"

She shook her head. Until then, she hadn't felt soiled by Tornan or Kurian. She lusted to have both men and the blatant acceptance she had of the fact, flushed her cheeks. They thought no more of her than they did her escort. Kurian offered to be the one to kill her. She wondered if maybe that would not have been for the best.

"Did Wolvraine have you?" he shouted his question at her.

She nodded with her eyes cast down in fear.

"I am Viktor Dragomir, the master wolf hunter of this Carpathian range." He hissed in her face.

"What will you do to me?"

The one thing she had not thought about in her planning stage was the anger of Viktor Dragomir. He had a right to feel cheated, but to blame her would be like saying she went in search of Tornan Wolvraine.

"You will need to be cleansed and purified of this sin," he croaked. "And then, you will be put to death. We can't have you begetting his offspring."

"It wasn't my fault," she charged. "He forced me."

It seemed easier to use a lie, than tell her betrothed, how she begged Tornan to fulfill her yearning need of him.

"Count Wolvraine can be very persuasive. Come, you can tell me the truth." He brushed his fingers over her breast. "You are a beautiful woman that needs the touch of a man. You desired him just as you desire me."

"No-no-no, I don't desire any man," she argued.

His thumb flicked back and forth over her swelling nipple.

"Your body does not lie, Gypsy whore."

His fingers wrapped the back of her neck and squeezed. He jerked her forward and she teetered toward him. His mouth fastened to hers. A foul stench from his breath flew down her throat. The staleness of his tongue wet her with a sloppy kiss.

"Stop." She pushed at him. "Let go."

She kicked in her endeavor to make him.

"The village knows of your kidnapping and the way he turned you into his kind." He fisted a handful of her hair and held her head. "We do not tolerate wolves of any kind."

"I'm not one of them," she argued. "They can't change me into one of them. They're victims of magic—men and women cursed by Gypsies to live as humans and wolves."

"They'll want you tortured," he said ignoring her words. "After fifty lashes, if Wolvraine hasn't come for you, then maybe I'll reconsider your worth alive."

"He won't come for me," she cried. "He doesn't want me."

Her scalp ached under the twist of hair in his hand.

"Wolvraine is not a man to give up easily on anything." He leaned closer and sniffed over her just like the wolf did. "I can smell his stench on you. I think he'll come for what he's marked."

"Please, Lord Dragomir," she struggled in his grip. "I didn't do anything wrong."

"Except to lay with the wolf."

A tremor rippled through her as the words zipped up her spine.

Lay with the wolf, accept him, and thou shall survive.

A terrible doom approached for an error in her judgment. She belonged to Tornan and she had to have misunderstood his talk with Kurian.

Lord Dragomir dragged her through the forest to a camp of ten men. He threw her to the ground in the ring of them. She nearly fell into the camp's fire.

"Here's our bait," he told the men staring at her. "Wolvraine's Gypsy whore will bring him."

"Wolvraine doesn't care about her," a man spoke up. "He's had her long enough to embarrass you by defiling your bride."

"Do you honestly think I would marry a Gypsy, Vladimir? Have you no logic in your head to use what knowledge you've gained from stories. Wolvraine's mother was a Gypsy. She married into the house of Wolvraine by a spell she used. Tornan may have grown up in a family of nobility, but it doesn't change the Gypsy blood flowing through his veins."

"But a Gypsy cursed him. Wolvraine won't lift a finger to help a Gypsy. Just as he's not done anything to you in all these years." Vladimir said. "Tornan Wolvraine runs with a pack of wolves and they are the only ones he shows loyalty to."

"We'll see." Viktor placed his hands on his hips and looked down at Galena. "Who among you is not afraid of a Gypsy?"

She watched the man, Vladimir step forward. She gulped when he glanced down and stared at her legs. Quickly, she tugged the gown over them.

"I'm not afraid of Wolvraine or the Gypsy's curses," he said.

"Good, take and guard her from getting away. I do not wish to dirty my hands on the wench any further." Dragomir brushed his hands together as if touching her had soiled him. "She must stay alive, Vladimir. For tomorrow, I'll tie her to the whipping post in the village and accuse her of witchcraft. No one would tolerate a Gypsy practicing such devilry."

Vladimir grinned as he bent over her. "A pretty Gypsy, you are, too."

Her grabbed under her arms and lifted her from the dirt. She hit at his shoulders while reaching for his face. Her legs dangled off the ground.

"Let go of me or I'll put a plague on your head to descend through your line for all eternity," she threatened.

"Little too," he said with a tone of excitement. "I hope Wolvraine hasn't worked you long and hard enough to have you all used up."

"Let me go, you vile beast!"

Vladimir laughed and swung her up in his arms. His fingers tore through her long hair and she watched the lock of Kurian's hair fall to the ground. Her one arm ended up crushed against Vladimir's massive chest. The other wrist he shackled in his grip so she could not reach the one thing she thought she'd keep of her time at Wolvraine Castle.

The spell over Kurian was dissolved.

"I wouldn't want to excite the men watching me make her scream in pleasure." He bowed his head to Dragomir. "I'll just take her to a nice spot we passed that had a good thick patch of grass."

Dragomir waved his hand showing no interest in her fate.

"You can't let him do this. You bartered for my hand in marriage," she exclaimed. "You told my father you would take care of me."

"Yes, well, am I not redeeming your soul from the devil that took you last night?" His laugh roared and a chorus of men chuckled in wrongful merriment with him.

Vladimir trotted down a path. Galena kicked her legs. She bucked and twisted in the tightening binds leaving her little air.

"You are not ... to kill ... me," she gasped a lungful of air.

He dropped her to the ground and followed.

"Do you really think what Dragomir says, rules me?" He snorted with amusement. "I plan on fucking you until my cock is limp, and I can promise you, I have great stamina when it comes to staying hard. I also have no qualms in snapping your skinny neck in the process if you give me too much fight."

Galena didn't accept the threat as real. Vladimir didn't ride with the master wolf hunter to be his enemy. She had to trust her instincts. His idle warning would not be carried out.

He let go of her hands to jerk her gown from her shoulders. She kicked a leg up and it didn't provide her with any strength. She patted the ground in search of anything to hit him. The stick she found broke when she whacked him over the head. It crumbled further when she attempted to stab him with it.

His lips attacked her with brutal force. Her teeth cut into the back of her bottom lip and she tasted the blood. When his head lifted, she took a deep breath and screamed at him.

"May you live an eternity in darkness, you soulless creature!"

Suddenly, blood spurted everywhere and stung her eyes. She squeezed them shut and

struggled, fighting the weight in terrified confusion.

Chapter Seventeen

Tornan hauled the man off Galena. Angrily he flung the dead body away from his Gypsy. Unable to see with her eyes closed against the blood, she swung blindly at Tornan. He caught her thin wrists and pulled her up from the ground.

"It's all right, my pet," he whispered.

"Tornan." Her ragged voice choked out his name with relief.

Anger and sadness had given him speed to find her. Her scent and his skills as a wolf brought him straight to where she lay.

"Here, let me see your face." He wiped her eyelids gently with his shaking fingers.

"When I discovered you gone, I thought the worse. I almost believed I'd never see you again. I don't know why you left me, but we'll discuss it later.

Her tears helped to wash a lot of the blood splatter from her cheeks. He kissed over her eyes until he removed what didn't wash away. Her lashes fluttered up and he pulled her face toward him to kiss her trembling mouth.

"Galena," he murmured. "I'll always take care of you."

Their lips touched. His reservations had merit, but he couldn't resist her. The softness to her skin, the scent of her hair and the sweetness of her breath tamed him. He offered her all he had in affection and all he could promise.

"You're all right? Not hurt?" He caressed her cheek, regardless of the spots of smeared blood.

She nodded.

He pushed his hands freely over her curves, to her hips, to her bottom, inspecting for himself. Putting his forehead against hers, he wished he had the time to tell her the sentiments swelling in his heart. He even prepared to take whatever she offered of her affection, no matter how small, but a sound stopped his distraction. He lifted his ear to the rustle of leaves, the snap of twigs.

"We've got to go." He grabbed her hand and pulled her up.

Instantly men surrounded them.

"I told you he would come, little Gypsy." Dragomir grinned. "His kind can't give up what they think belongs to them."

Galena's hand pawed Tornan's back, her fingers fretted over his clothes with fear. He pushed her further behind him for protection.

"So Wolvraine, you came alone," Dragomir laughed. "The Gypsy has you under her spell then?"

"Let Galena ride from here and I will stay behind to settle our problems."

"Tornan," she whimpered against the back of his arm, clinging to him.

Dragomir gave a nod to his men and they rushed forward. Tornan couldn't fight them off enough to prevent Dragomir from grabbing Galena.

"Kill him," Dragomir ordered. "Come Gypsy, we still have those fifty lashes to give you. My village hungers for retaliation against anyone associated with Count Wolvraine."

Tornan laughed at the men brandishing their long steel swords and holding their arrows

aimed at him. He feared little when it came to a fight. He reckoned he could die, but the healing abilities of the wolf miraculously kept him among the living when he should have been dead.

If anyone had a greater reason to fear, it would be Dragomir's men. The pack of wolves he ran with were brutal enemies of prejudice. With their lives shaped by the injustice of different Gypsies over time, they had ancestors of different backgrounds. They suffered the consequences of which Dragomir's men knew nothing about indignation.

"Now what?" He didn't struggle in their hold. "You did not think I honestly came alone, did you?"

His pack of wolves bounded impressively fast from the shadows. Their crucial silence was timed too late to prevent Dragomir from leaving with Galena, but the hands holding him let go for the battle.

His wolves kept the warriors busy. They needed the sport of man instead of animal because it kept them sane and focused. Stripping his clothes from his body, he shifted and ran for Dragomir Keep.

Dragomir could covet his Wolvraine lands until doomsday. Maybe he'd get them if he had the intelligence to do so. The one thing Tornan would never let him have was his Gypsy, Galena. His curse included her. He knew it the moment he looked down at her on the forest floor. The words of his nightmare tumbled from both their lips.

Lay with the Wolf ... Lay with the Wolf ... Lay with the Wolf.

His large paws pounded the earth harder than a horse's. He didn't slow until he stood looking at the slaughter of men, women and children. His lungs burned with the ghastly sight. Rumors had laid blame on him. Now he witnessed just how gruesome such a spectacle could be. He put a hand on a tree and stared out at the dozens victimized by one brutal man. The responsibly to his countrymen skewered became a testament to his blindness in the atrocities. He should have taken matters into his hands personally, long before Galena came into his life.

Tornan rose onto two feet and walked among the dead. Rage built in his heart and stole the air from his lungs.

"I tried to tell you," Kurian said from behind him.

"I didn't want to believe it." He breathed raggedly, trying not to look up as he walked.

"I saw this yesterday. It's much worse than either of us imagined."

"How is it again, Dragomir didn't kill you?" He had a twinge of leeriness.

"I told you, I snuck in."

"Then why aren't you telling me how we could get in the same way now?"

"Tornan, I posed as a warrior in a crowd because no one knows them all. No one questions a man walking indifferently with the enemy."

The sudden wave of distrust came with the inability to stop his eyes from straying to the horror of his reputation as Wolvraine, a bloody impaler of man. Why had he let it get so out of control?

"Surely you don't think I would align myself with this barbaric cretin?"

"No, of course not, Kurian, I trust you like a friend—as a brother of a wolf pack. It would be ludicrous for anyone to think a wolf would betray his own with a wolf hunter." He didn't look Kurian in the eye. He didn't want him to know that for a minute, while his body trembled with fury at the sight, he had let suspicion creep into his frazzled mind.

"Get the others and give these people peace," Tornan commanded.

He picked up clothes from the scattering on the ground, and wore the shrouds of his people. When he was done, Dragomir would be the one at a loss. Dragomir's Carpathian lands

would become one with his Wolvraine lands.

"They're already here, m'lord." Kurian nodded to the shadows emerging from the forest.

Tornan turned slowly. Each wolf of his army rose to be a man and bowed a loyal head to him. They showed him their allegiance and respect every day. He had banded them together and it now served a greater purpose other than brotherhood and safety in numbers.

"Joren, you're in charge of getting this mess cleaned up," Kurian commanded. "I'll go with you, Count Wolvraine to kill the master wolf hunter."

Tornan watched the men begin the long arduous task. He wanted Viktor Dragomir dead. He wanted him impaled just right to make him live to die slowly, over long days, in excessive agony. Galena's sweet voice ringing in his memory, however, made him lenient. He witnessed enough death and if he got his Gypsy safely back in his arms, then Dragomir had a chance to live in exile.

"We find Galena first. She is more important to me, than Dragomir."

Kurian nodded. "That, I took, as already implied, m'lord."

Chapter Eighteen

Galena looked at the spears lining the road to Dragomir Keep. Naked men hung impaled in the gut on the long lances. She wished to turn her head away in horror. Viktor had other ideas and his long gnarled fingers gripped her jaw firmly. He held her face and twisted it to look up.

"This is the handiwork of Count Wolvraine," he said. "You have heard the rumors of his blood lust."

"He couldn't have done this?" She jerked her chin free of his brutal touch.

"Why is that?"

"Because I don't believe he's the sort of man you have made people believe."

The gates to the Keep opened and gained them access across the rampart into the fortress—to her prison.

The idea Tornan wanted her dead, shrank to a mild notion she had gotten all the words wrong.

I want her gone. Tornan had said. Maybe he meant to just send her away. *I'll take her to the forest and kill her,* was Kurian's plan. She should have listened longer to the conversation. Tornan could have said no. In her panic, she could have missed him saying no. He had to have said no for him to be there in the Black Forest attempting to rescue her.

Viktor dismounted with her in tow. She didn't struggle. Physically fighting him might lead to a swifter death. She thought of Tornan and prayed for his safety as well as her own.

"Come, I have a splendid view from the turret." Viktor pushed her up a long winding rise of stone steps. "You will live like a princess for this one night, little Gypsy."

He pushed her harder when she slowed to look out the narrow embrasures. An idea to squeeze through one opening and hurl herself to the ground passed. She'd not give Dragomir the satisfaction of killing herself.

"You've been killing men to lay blame on Tornan, why?"

He let her stop and stare at the dozens of bodies surrounding the forest. Men, women, and she had no doubts children were staked on spiked poles for a show.

"That is Tornan's handiwork." He argued with a chuckle.

"If it were, you would have taken them down and given them a decent funeral."

One body moved and she gripped the abutment of rock to lean over the side and get a closer look. She noticed the twitches of others. Worse, she noticed the garb that lay soiled and scattered on the ground.

"Gypsies!" she spun on Viktor and attacked with the claws of her fingernails. "You're killing Gypsies!"

"Ah, what we could have shared, if only your intelligence had kept you from laying with the wolf."

Lay with the wolf, accept him, and thou shall survive.

The line from the rhyming curse actually gave her strength and comfort.

Viktor shoved her toward the end of the parapet and opened a door.

"You will stay here until tomorrow at which time you will be flogged before the villagers and then given your rightful place amongst your people." He waved an arm out behind him

indicating the dead on spears.

He pulled the door shut with a thud. The rattle of steel in the lock didn't stop her from trying the latch.

Galena looked out the one opening and it gave her the same horrific view. The knotted vine clinging to the stone caught her eye. Such knots in nature were admired for holding the great magic of love. She broke off the intertwined piece of evergreen and clutched it in her fist.

"Tornan, please be alive so I can have a chance to love you," she prayed.

When the door opened later, two burly guards entered with two dowdy women. They each carried vessels of water to a wooden tub she hadn't noticed in the corner before. The largest of the men eyed her too closely. She thought of the man in the woods and hoped no one else tried to take her by force. She didn't foresee the possibility of Tornan coming to her rescue.

"We are to get you washed," the short, round woman told her.

"I don't wish to be washed in a tub," she retorted, her lips compressed together adamantly. "Standing water is not clean."

"If Lord Dragomir says to wash you, then we will." The taller, gaunt woman's brow rose in challenge. She waved a hand at one of the guards and he stepped forward.

"No, please, I'll cooperate." She looked at the water they had dumped in the tub.

The woman flicked her wrist and both guards withdrew from the room. The woman took the position as her new guard standing by the closed door. The short round woman fussed at the buttons of Galena's clothes.

"To think a filthy little Gypsy could hope to marry the master wolf hunter, ain't that a bit of the high note, Agnes." the short woman commented.

"It was a trick all along, Maeve, just as Lord Dragomir said. There was never to be a wedding. He knew the Gypsy girl was akin to the blood whore."

The woman pulled her clothes off and stuck her in the tub with less care than they would give their laundry. Agnes took it upon herself to do the scrubbing and she did a thorough job. When Maeve tugged her to stand, Galena felt the rawness sting her pink skin. She believed the woman thought she tried to scour the Gypsy right out of her hide.

The women left her standing naked. A simple wool gown sat on the table. Her elegant green cloth with the fur lining went with them. In the corner, neat and tidy sat a small bed. Her prison had no luxury as Dragomir suggested. It had less furniture than Tornan's bedchambers. She picked up the dress and carried it with her. She lowered to the firm mattress. The stiff cloth, filled with straw instead of goose down was lumpy.

A breeze swept into the room and a shiver drew her arms around her in a hug. She thought of Tornan and his escape. She imagined him transforming into the wolf in the blink of an eye. The warriors would be terrified of the feat. They would be leery of touching someone cursed by magic.

She set the gown aside and idly smoothed over her skin still prickling from the scrubbing as if they wore away a fine layer of her flesh. Dragging her fingers over her breast, she recalled Tornan's gentleness. He calmed every fear she had of him. In the forest, when the wolf lay with her, she knew it was Tornan that entered her body. Each time the wolf in him wanted, Tornan took. Each time, she reveled in the euphoric interludes, Tornan held her.

She pinched her nipples and plucked them while retaining his image. A naked warrior, a handsome Count, and a loving virile man made up his character. The wolf was just a byproduct of a curse he had no skill to rid himself of. She wondered if what her grandmother taught her, gave her the power to take it from him by the tie that bound them spiritually.

Galena lay back on the bed. She raked a finger into her wet labia finding her clit swollen. She could have been a wolf in heat the way she hungered for Tornan every waking minute. When she put her finger into the wet sheath, it was Tornan's finger masturbating her body into a blissful frenzy. She closed her eyes and let him be there in her mind.

Drawing her knees up and fanning her legs, she pumped in and out with two fingers. Her thighs quivered, her toes curled and she held her breath. When it got too much for her to touch the sensitive skin, she rolled over balling up the gown between her legs and humped the rough fabric until she exhausted herself with one orgasm after another.

Galena bit into the dirty mattress to stifle the cry from her self-inflicted ecstasy. An eerie feeling of not being alone flipped her over and her eyes widened in mortification as Viktor stood in the doorway watching her.

She couldn't move. Propped on her hands, she stared at him. He neared the small bed and she searched around for the gown or the covers to conceal her nudity. She had laid there for his viewing far too long and feared she had invited him by the prolonged exposure.

"Wolvraine sent me the wedding dress torn and soiled with his scent." He grabbed her and held her down.

She struggled to get free, but his strength was much greater. He managed to get both her arms tied to the bedpost with a curtain pull.

"Don't so this!"

"He might not get to smell you before your death, but you will join him in hell with mine clinging to your skin." He unfastened his trousers and produced a healthy sized cock.

She noticed it wasn't as straight as Tornan's and not quiet as long and thick. Still, it would fill a woman. She struggled against the binds holding her and tugged one arm loose.

"Tornan will kill you," she spat, repulsed.

"Tornan is dead and in hell where he belongs." He knelt on one knee on the bed and pried her legs apart.

"I'd know if he were dead." She glowered at him. "He will come for me and you will pay with your life for touching me as you have."

When she managed to slip her hand free, she swung her arm at him. His laughter roared in the small room until he laid on top of her and his mouth twisted over hers. The screams she let out were muffled by his abusive kiss. Wedged between her thighs, his cock grew boldly close to entering as he rocked his hips.

A commotion outside stopped him. Shouts from people in argument drew his attention and he got up from her. He glanced outside the window.

"You'll have to wait." He sneered while stuffed his shriveled cock into his trousers as he departed.

Galena worked frantically with the ropes. The knots so tight from her toil made her fingers bleed. She dug at them until they were all untied. She hurried to the tub and washed the stench of Viktor's foulness from her skin. Putting on the gown, she realized Viktor had left the door open. She checked to see what her chances were for escape, and not a single guard stood stationed outside. Running across the parapet, she trotted down the stairs. Her hand slid along the rough stone as she went, the sounds of men stopped her. Compressing her whole body into the shadows of a corner, she waited. If they came up the winding turret, nothing short of magic prevented them from spotting her.

The voices moved on and she jogged down a few more of the uneven steps. People walked about doing chores, mostly servants, carrying water, food and wares to sell in the village

outside the gates of Dragomir Keep.

"You think I'm a complete idiot," Viktor came from his hiding place when she reached the bottom.

The two guards from earlier grabbed her arms.

"I think you are the scum of the earth. Tornan will come for me and kill you." She had to believe her words.

"Take her to the whipping post." Viktor ordered. "This Gypsy bitch needs a lesson in life."

"You said you wouldn't do this until tomorrow," she cried.

The men holding her arms lifted her to the point only her toes scraped the ground. She tried kicking to get free. The fingers wrapping her arms were no different than the long talons of Kurian. They manacled her harder than straps of steel and pinched the soft flesh near her armpits.

Chapter Nineteen

Tornan trudged along the slope of the ground surrounding the Keep. They avoided as much of the village as possible. No one would recognize him in the peasant clothes. However, no one would overlook Kurian with his brawn intimidating the largest of men.

"There, up along the wall, does that not appear to be a foothold for us?" Tornan gave the man a grin.

The weathered indentations in the mortared stone were nothing more than the dents they were. The climb went near thirty feet straight up to the first rampart.

"Do you think it wise to have ourselves exposed like that," Kurian shook his head in worry. "If we're seen, a good Bowman could kill us."

"Do you have a better plan to get inside Dragomir's Keep? The gates may lay open to the courtyards, but he'd never leave the door open to the innermost sanctuary providing him safety. Even if he does think I'm dead."

Tornan started the climb first. Barefoot, he found it rather easy to keep his grip with his toes. He went nearly ten feet before looking down.

"Well, are you coming?"

"No, and I don't think you'll be wanting to take that route either." Kurian pointed to the gates opening and the procession of Dragomir and two of his men dragging Galena between them.

They had her wrists while she lay suspended face down. Her head bowed and her long sleek black hair raked the dirt. Her legs were limp and slid roughly along the ground. A dead body might be Tornan's first thought of anyone else.

Lay with the wolf, accept him, and thou shall survive. She did lay with him and accept him. She could do nothing else but survive.

Lay with the wolf, with his breed witnessing, and he shall live. She lay with him before the wolves so he could live and he'd not do it without her.

"Tornan!" Kurian hissed low and disturbed.

Tornan ignored him as he ran toward the group dragging Galena through the village. Her body filthy and dressed in rags bounced over stones and ruts. His presence stopped the march.

"Get him," Dragomir shouted.

Galena fell from their grasp into a heap on the road. He tore the clothes he had recently put on and they fell away as his anger shifted him into the wolf faster than ever before. He snarled at the man and heard Kurian covering his flank with the same vicious threat. The villagers ran screaming. Wolves were an evil menace to their flocks of animals and their small children. It was a myth they lived and breathed.

When the guards pulled their swords, Tornan nodded to Kurian to take them both while he went for the jugular of Dragomir. Then, from the corner of his eye, he saw Galena move. Her hand glided through the dirt and her head lifted to look at him. He steered away from his destination and went straight to her.

Shifting into a man, he scooped her up. The rags he took from the ground of dead men still hung from his body.

"I've got you, my precious." He held her close and looked at Kurian.

Injuring one man with a bite to the leg, Kurian as a wolf kept the other warrior at bay as Dragomir fled. Tornan whistled for him to back down.

"Tell the men to scatter," Tornan instructed. "I need to tend to Galena. We'll meet back at my castle in two days."

Kurian rose like a man. "You are going to let Dragomir live?"

"I told you, he's not as important to me as she is."

Kurian's reluctance disturbed him, yet Tornan smiled with understanding.

"Meet me us at the river to the north. We'll wait for you at the bend where it flows toward the Danube."

Kurian gave a bow of his head and left them.

Tornan pulled Galena's face close to his. "Your Grandmother cursed my mother and made me what I am," he whispered. "In a strange bit of events, my mother put a hex on you. Neither woman knew in doing so they gave us each other. Nothing will stop me from keeping you safe, Galena."

Tornan traveled for an hour to a warm tributary stream flowing from the Danube to the Black Sea. The secluded spot sat nestled into a valley of the Carpathian hills and gave him and Galena a chance to recover the aftershocks of their exhaustive day. He would get to know her every dream and maybe a chance to tell her of his secret wish for her to love him.

Chapter Twenty

Galena stretched on the bed of grass and yawned. She opened her eyes and smiled.

"You've been asleep for nearly an hour," Tornan said.

She held his face in her hands to pull him down to her. His rough whiskers tickled her lips.

"You came for me," she hummed along the curve of his jaw.

"I told you I'd keep you safe."

His fingers played with her hair, twisting and curling it around his hand.

She kissed along the cord of muscle in his neck. She followed the v of his collarbone down, and up to the other side of his neck.

"Dragomir will not stop spreading the lies." She kissed his firm chest.

Her nipples tightened just as his did when she licked the brown nubs.

"You are playing with fire, my Gypsy."

"And here I thought you would know how I want that too." She looked up with a pout on her lips.

He touched her face and rubbed a thumb over her bottom lip. She saw the far off worry in his pensive stare.

"Is something wrong, aside from Dragomir?"

"I become more the wolf every day, Galena. While I'd like you to stay with me forever, I have concerns. What if one day I am not the man I try to be, but rather the beast that enjoys your scent too much?"

She smoothed her hands over his well-worked shoulders. He held the weight of problems she didn't know if she could help with. She pressed a kiss to the area that covered his beating heart. She could free his mind with the pleasures they shared and it had to be enough for that night.

Following the crease to his stomach, she swirled her tongue into his navel. She licked the fine hairs and slurped kisses around the stacked muscles enticingly hard against her lips. His smooth skin quivered to her hot breath. His groan of repletion did not stop her from nipping the taut pale flesh at his hipbone.

His hand came up from her shoulder to her face. He stroked a caress over the top of her head. She felt him fight the urge to push her to his ready hardness. Trailing her kisses to the joint of his leg and groin, she enticed his erection to grow. It danced eagerly for her touch. With a cheek to his cock, she rubbed him and deeper moans vibrated through his body.

"Galena, my sweet Gypsy, you torment me with your delay."

"Then prepare to be thoroughly tortured Count Wolvraine. I have many areas to cover." She laughed.

He hummed his content to let her tour every line of muscle she could find. She pushed his leg aside and kissed the inside of his thighs. Since she sat to the outside of him, his hand gripped her hip and swung her bottom toward him. He reached between her legs. She stretched out and kissed his knee, but his fingering drew her back.

"You are distracting me," she scolded.

"And?" His finger circled her clit.

"Don't stop." She lifted her leg over him to straddle his waist. The higher up she moved, kissing his leg, the further it backed her to him, and his hand came away. It slid around her thigh and he reached her quivering cunt from another angle.

She rocked to the rhythmic brush of his finger, her clit quivering to his light fondling. However, she didn't want him to sidetrack her delight. Tornan's cock stood majestic, a spire of masculine pride. She slipped her mouth over the purplish end and sucked on the tip until the few droplets of sweetness were drawn.

A smile formed quickly when his hand stopped moving to give way to the sensation she created by suckling hard. He gripped the fold of her hips and legs, and he jerked her back. The heat of his moan scorched the furrow in her ass. His tongue tickled and teased her anus and her cunt.

"Tornan, you're not giving me enough time," she complained, not minding at all.

She drove her mouth down and took him into her throat.

"Oh God, Galena, swallow," he begged. "Let me feel you swallow."

She gulped and the suction sealed off air so his hips jerked under the pressure. She slid him free and held the shaft, licking, and nuzzling his shaft.

Tornan's tongue penetrated her anus. It wiggled and thrust so the stimulation heightened her ache without relief. Once he withdrew the sweet torture, he started licking at her cunt. He let her arousal trickle down her legs where his tongue caught it.

"You taste delicious."

She liked the exploring, but no longer liked the erotic position. The impersonal put too much distance between her mouth and his. She wanted held and cuddled and loved by him. She swung her leg back to the same side as her other and sat against his hip.

"Your hair should be combed or it will be full of tangled knots." He sat up and leaned behind her.

Her fingers dug into the wet, disheveled tresses and hunted for the knotted vine.

Tornan raked a hand through her hair and tugged a small piece. "Looking for this?" He flipped a strand of her hair over her shoulder with the knotted piece of vine.

"Natures knot," she whispered. "It's—it's for good luck."

"It's for love." He kissed her shoulder. "Remember, I'm half Gypsy, I know these things."

"You don't believe or live the Gypsy way." She slumped to his embrace.

"I haven't much reason to, now do I? I can't reverse what I am, can you?"

She turned her head and looked at his mouth. The soft lines were fringed by short black whiskers. Two days before he had none. The things he could do with his mouth awoke the imaginary butterflies in her belly. The fluttering raised her up to him and she crawled on his lap so her arms could fit better around his neck.

"I can try." She put her head on his shoulder.

"You sound sad I asked."

"What if I succeed and you are no longer cursed a wolf? What about the curse on me?"

"Lay with the wolf, accept him, and thou shall survive. Lay with the wolf, with his breed witnessing, and he shall live," he said the words and she hugged him tighter.

"I don't know what they mean."

"Maybe they only mean what we make of them. In the forest, when all was crazy, you laid with me in front of others like me."

"Because I thought you would kill me?" She pushed away from him.

On her feet, she walked to the edge of the water. Her life changed in last two days. What Tornan asked would make another major change.

"Really, or did you feel something else compelling you to couple with me."

"It wasn't you, it was the wolf." She turned around to face him.

He stood with his arms crossed, his expression amused, and his cock seducing her when it swayed to his casual walk toward her.

"The wolf was there, but he was not who joined with you, not in that form." He put his hands on her shoulders. "Come lay with me now and then we'll discuss how you might remove my curse."

"No." She put her hands on his chest to stop him from trying to kiss her.

He had the strength to wrestle her into any position he chose. If he hadn't mentioned the curse, she would have accepted him with her wanton hunger. His wanting to shed the curse made her afraid his need of her had narrowed to the one thing she might give him—his freedom.

A spell or a desire had tricked her. She'd not let him use her for all his pleasures without her getting something in return.

Tornan snagged her around the waist. She fit up against him tight. He took liberties and her body responded. The arresting way in which he handled her rejection made her hot. Her skin burned under the barrage of kisses. His fingers dug into her flesh to drag her to the ground. The time had passed when he might have been gentle and something in his feral eyes had started her orgasm.

When he forced her knees apart and rammed himself into her, she clung to the impending rapture as his sex starved Gypsy whore. In the not so far distance, a sad wolf howled in sync with her scream—Tornan's lover, Saskia, banished from the home she had with Count Wolvraine.

She wanted Tornan's love. If she cured him of his curse, then she would become an outcast like Saskia. If she didn't, and he kept her as his new lover, she'd have to be extra careful of the one particular wolf that wanted her dead.

Chapter Twenty One

Tornan had never been put off before and he wouldn't this time either. Two women had forged the bonding within the curses they threw into the wind.

"Tell me no, Galena. Tell me the lie your body won't let you." Tornan thrust harder into her. "Tell me you don't want me."

She panted and wept beneath him. Her claiming fingers were her voice. They raked at his shoulders and up his neck. He felt her talons scratch his scalp while getting a grip of his hair. Her hips rising to meet his demands were answer enough. The harder he pounded into her, the tighter her insides clenched, and held with a convulsive strength. Each time he pushed for the deepest point, her whimpers heightened.

"You are mine," he grunted.

Her lips delicately brushed his jaw with her quiet admission of, "yes."

The explosive pressure in his cock continued to build. His insides fought the shifting of the beast. Each time they came together, he wanted to take her like an animal. He strained to hold back the beastly urges.

"My little Gypsy," he whispered, afraid he'd lose control.

"Tornan," she murmured his name.

Her fingers glided down his spine making him shiver. They returned their travel up the center of his back to his hairline. She pet him, soothing the tension in his muscles, relaxing him.

She thrashed beneath him in her own assaulting rapture. Her back arched when his sperm shot out and filled her womb. He put an arm beneath and attacked her jiggling breasts. Her succulent fat nipples were heaven in his mouth. He bit and tugged them until she collapsed. The exhausting sex left them gasping and weak.

He jerked her up from the ground while pushing up to his knees. His still erect cock sprung free. He rubbed his fingers into her swollen mound and found the fleshy folds hot. At first, she pulled her hips away, and then she pushed them forward letting his fingers massage the juices seeping from her.

He put his fingers to her lips. "Taste us."

She opened her mouth and sucked their mingled juices from his skin. He kissed her to lick away the lingering flavor on her tongue.

"Tell me what I want to hear."

Her fingers dug into his shoulders. Her chin lifted so her breath fanned his face.

"I'm yours," she heaved the words out. "I'm yours, Tornan."

He covered her mouth with the passion of a man renewing his soul and for the time being, the removal of the curse did not seem to matter. He had strength and passion flowing through him. He would cure himself with his own Gypsy blood if need be.

He felt happy for the moment and he'd think on the morrow about facing the curse. He would have to deal with many things, including Dragomir, but if he had one concern that tempted his thoughts from Galena, it would be how to prevent their children from shifting and becoming the new generation of Gypsy Wolves.