



ACACIA II: Blindsided

L. Shannon

Changeling Press

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ISBN: 978-1-59596-952-1
Formats Available:
HTML, Adobe PDF,
MobiPocket, Microsoft Reader

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

Editor: Margaret Riley
Cover Artist: Bryan Keller

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Within the refuge of the moon Acacia, vampires have established peace, and built a thriving empire based on control and logic. But emotion rules their hearts and lust defies logic through the long cool nights. Against all odds, Medic Blake has fallen in love -- with his human slave, Dash.

Blake, a high ranking member of Acacia's Medical Division, is shocked to find blood donations to the vampire moon colony have been contaminated with an antigen that could wipe out their entire race. Who would contaminate the blood, with what and why? The answer may cost him his life -- and his one chance at true happiness. Unless Dash can save him from himself.

Chapter One

"You don't want to go in there, Med Blake, not yet."

Blake paused beside his human slave, Dash. "Explain to me why I don't wish to enter my own examination room."

A flush spread up Dash's thick tanned neck. The slave's embarrassment was tempting to all of Blake's baser instincts. Despite the pressing duties, Blake vividly imagined drawing in close enough to that flushed skin, close enough to smell the sweet blood and feel the heated flesh.

He jerked his mind away from the possibility he'd been denying for years. He should be processing the new arrivals from Rahla, not daydreaming about his best assistant. "Well?"

"Agent Aeron and his new consort are inside. They are... intimately occupied."

"Indeed. Well, perhaps we can give them a few more minutes." Blake turned away from his exam room and instead led the way to his office, tucked between his two private exam rooms. He might as well check over the files while he waited.

Dash, following in his wake, hesitated at the doorway. "Master?"

Hiding his grin at Dash's discomfort, Blake flipped on the low grade lights and picked up the top file on his desk. "Relax, Dash. Observation is a most useful tool for any med specialist." The large window in front of the room faced into exam room one, where the subjects of his files were demonstrating their healthy conditions.

Agent Aeron was performing quite vigorously considering his recent injuries. But oddly it was not the physical elements that drew his attention. Instead, it was the connection that the couple seemed to share. Blake glanced at the file. The couple had just met on Aeron's last mission, and yet they appeared to be completely attuned to one another. Even while her thigh slid upward over his own, Agent Aeron's hand caught

her knee, tightening the leverage there. What at first seemed to be the simple act of copulation on closer inspection was more like a dance. "They are quite beautiful, are they not?"

Dash cleared his throat. "Perhaps they should have some privacy."

Continuing to watch the couple together was not medically relevant. Why had he become caught up in the moment? He should remain objective, yet even his body was reacting to the desire to experience such an interaction. Which was ridiculous. There was no one in his life he felt that connected to, so it was a fool's wish. Dash was right to redirect their attention. "You are far wiser than your young years."

"No so young, Med Blake."

He looked back at Dash, surprised to see his slave was right. The years had passed in a blur. Dash was no longer a boy, but had grown into a fully mature man. He'd seen the changes before, but never thought of Dash as anything more than the orphaned boy he'd claimed as a servant for his household. "Still young." At least compared to his own three hundred and twelve years.

"What about the other one?" Dash looked toward the long window on the opposite wall.

"Doctor Kaven." The man had never worked medicine among the vampires so he chose to keep his human title even though he was no longer one of them. "Come, we can see to him while our other patients are occupied."

He returned to the hallway, but paused before entering the second exam room. "Dash, please retrieve blood for the doctor. I believe his most pressing condition will be malnourishment, which we can begin treating immediately." Trusting Dash to do as he was asked, he continued into the room.

Dr. Kaven stood in the opposite corner. He might be attempting to appear relaxed, but his emaciated body was tight, bordering on animalistic, radiating paranoid fear.

Blake made no attempt to approach. Their kind, especially the young ones like Kaven, had little restraint when cornered. His patient had been starved, beaten and tortured. He wasn't going to be the trusting sort.

Blake sat beside the exam table, more than eight feet from the patient. "Dr. Kaven, I'm very glad to have you back on Acacia." He looked down at his file, giving the doctor time to relax. "In case no one has explained, you will be staying here at the import and arrival facility under my care until you feel well enough to return to an independent residence."

"Can I leave now?"

"Yes, of course you may. But I was hoping you would be willing to stay here for the next full night at least. I'd like to be certain you are well, but if you'd prefer future exams to be done in your quarters, that can be arranged."

Kaven gathered himself enough to step away from the wall. "My daughter came with me. Can I see her?"

"Yes, but she is with Agent Aeron at the moment. Perhaps while we wait we can do something to make you look more presentable to her. She must have been terribly worried by your current condition." The door opened and Dash stepped into the room carrying a translucent blue silicone insulated cooler. The blood sacks were visible through the sides.

But Kaven's gaze was locked on Dash, not the bags of blood. The hunger bursting forth on the patient's face was almost painful in intensity.

Much as Kaven might want "fresh from the source" blood, he wouldn't have enough restraint yet to feed without killing. "Thank you, Dash. You can wait in my office."

As if the flare of Kaven's nose wasn't enough warning, the moment Dash turned his back, the vampire moved as if to pounce.

Blake's instincts reacted before his mind had a chance to calculate all the factors. In less than a human heartbeat, he was between the patient and his slave. Fortunately, Dash had lived among the vampires all his life. The mistake of turning his back on an

injured vamp was a rare one. And even now while safely outside the door, his heart rate only increased marginally, a sure sign of trust.

Kaven came to a sudden stop and then backed away. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to..."

"Of course not. It is natural that your body will try to replenish what it is lacking." Blake kept his voice calm, but Kaven's condition was alarming. He was on the verge of going feral and yet had too little control to seek appropriate measures to correct the problem. "My servant brought fresh high quality blood to help you recover all the faster. Please, help yourself."

"No, I won't," Kaven said while backing away from the cooler.

The reaction was not what Blake had expected. He flipped open the file again, but found no answers there. "Dr. Kaven, you need to feed. The blood will help you recover your strength, body mass and self control."

"Not bagged. I... they did something to the blood."

"What do you mean? Explain. Do you believe this blood is contaminated in some way?" Was this just paranoia from Kaven's mistreatment? Or was it possible that whatever they'd done to the blood had been done to the imported blood as well?

"The Reapers and their damn scientists. They did something to the blood. It tasted fine, but it made us all ill. Killed the others. The first batch of tainted blood made me sick. That's when I started refusing blood. The others... they kept testing the new batches on the others and they all died. Violently. Horribly."

"All this blood has been through our testing facility, but what you say is serious. We can look at it now to be sure." He lifted one bag and poured it into a specimen jar. "Come, you're a doctor. You can help me with this."

Setting up a second examination scope and slide, Blake motioned to the chair beside him. Whether the doctor wished to help or not was up to him, but he set to studying the slide at once. Time crawled, passing in silence, but he found nothing. "The blood appears normal, rich and healthy."

Kaven had looked some for himself and then taken to pacing the exam room.
“Nothing?”

“Did you find anything unusual?”

Kaven shook his head. “No, but I haven’t much experience with blood poisons or pathogens. At least not with anything unusual. I didn’t know what to look for.”

Blake faced Kaven and laid out the truth. “I understand your concerns completely, but you will not be allowed to feed directly from a human when you are in such dire need as you are. It will not happen. Your only option is bagged blood.”

Kaven nodded, but fear laced his expression.

“I’ll test the blood myself in the most conclusive way possible.” He lifted the specimen jar and downed the contents in a long swallow. “Now we will both know if there are any ill effects.”

Chapter Two

Dash stood in the office tidying the files, but also watching Med Blake work with the ill vampire. He had turned on the sound to listen in. His master was always so skilled at dealing with the worst injuries and most traumatized patients.

None of that prepared him for Med Blake's dangerous decision. He heard the words but almost discounted them as a simple ploy to get the vampire to feed. After all Med Blake never fed on the bagged blood, claiming his position with the clinic meant he should leave the bagged blood for those who needed it. He had servants to feed from and no need to deplete the imported blood supply.

He watched, expecting Blake to fake drinking the blood, but knew immediately that he was not faking. He also knew one other terrifying fact. The blood *was* poisoned.

Dash was to the door even before his master called for him. The fine lines of strain around the older vampire's eyes were the only betrayal that there was a problem. "Dash, could you please see that two blood slaves are brought here. Oversee the withdrawing of blood yourself, while Doctor Kaven watches."

"Med Blake?"

His master stood slowly, and walked to the door with odd slow steps. "See to the doctor first, then come check on me." He leaned in closer to whisper, "Don't look so worried. I had no more than a sip."

Sip? It had looked more like a full cup. "Master?" Dash wanted to go with him. There were others to see to the patient.

"Do as I say, Dash. I trust you."

In other words, the blood might have been contaminated here on Acacia. "Yes, Master." He bowed enough to show deference even while he hurried back to the hall to see to his master's wishes. "Keri and Jess, please come quickly."

The girls came to his call at once. They were all used to working under emergency situations and knew fast action could save lives. By the time the girls sat at the table, he had them both prepared to withdraw the blood. He asked all the proper questions to be sure they could donate, and to be sure Kaven could hear their answers.

The tick of an antique clock sounded off the seconds, each more slowly than the last. The moment the blood bags were filled and the girls' arms were swabbed and taped, he passed the food over to Kaven. "This blood is pure, fresh and still warm. Drink or not. I must see to my master."

Then he fled, shoving the girls out of the room before him. "Get ADM Med Sullivan and bring him to Med Blake's quarters."

He had compassion plenty for the tortured vampire, but in truth only one of the undead mattered to him. And it was to Blake that he rushed, praying he found his master well in his private quarters.

Med Blake had found him abandoned on the streets of Rahla's Central City as a child, barely arrived planet-side. His family had died in transport and he'd been no more than a few turns old and alone in a strange new world. Without the vampire's aid he would have died, or worse. Instead Blake had taken him in and given him a safe productive life. On Rahla he'd been paid a wage as a servant. Here on Acacia he was called a slave, but otherwise there was no difference in his role or in his affections.

He reached their private quarters in the dome closest to the import facility. His heart slammed painfully as he made his way inside the quiet area. The lights were dimmed. The rooms were shadowed. But it was his home, too, and he didn't need to turn on lights to navigate the familiar rooms.

Then he tripped over a chair, not in its place. Flipping on the lights he found the room mostly as expected, but there was a clear path across the main living area of furniture and rugs knocked askew.

Fear lanced through him. His careful and self-contained master would never leave such a mess. He ran to the master's bedroom, dreading what he might find, praying it was not as bad as he feared.

The door opened and he stared into the dark room. "Master?"

The weight that hit him had ripping claws and snapping fangs. All vampire. Fully into bloodlust.

Not his beloved master. This couldn't be Med Blake. It couldn't be.

But it was. Fangs sank into his throat.

He wanted to fight back, but fell into the terrifying euphoria of feeding. He'd give anything for his master, his heart, his soul... everything. The pleasure pain spiked, while his master tore at his clothes and fed from his life.

He brushed back tangled hair and stroked over the master's head, cradling him close. The fury of the moment would pass. When his master was well again, he'd regret this savagery, but Dash would have no regrets. No, he'd offered up everything to his master once before and been refused. This time he would offer again without ever uttering a word.

"You belong to me." The master's words were little more than a beautiful snarl. His head came up slowly. His glowing silver gaze was filled with a wild need on the edge of madness.

"Yes," Dash answered, although it had not been a question.

Clawed hands gentled. The brutality was gone, replaced by a dark possessiveness that was almost tamed. "Mine."

"Always." Dash might be willing to offer up his life, but there was more at stake than his mortal life. If a mere sip of the poison could turn his rational master to madness, what would it do to a whole colony of vampires? The humans would be fodder. He had to get Med Blake through this because only he could stop the spread of the toxic blood.

How? How could he calm his master? How could he give the poison time to work through his system? How could he survive long enough to do so?

His clothing hung in shreds, torn apart by the violent claws, but curiously his skin was mostly intact. Bruised and cut some, but no damage past what could heal. Which was a miracle considering the snarls coming from his master.

"I want you."

Dash's heart slammed into hyper drive at the barely understood statement. "I am yours." Was this the answer, the way he could comfort and calm the master?

He loosened his embrace enough to turn them back toward the bed. The dim light from the doorway lit the wide expanse clearly.

The invitation was clear enough even to the master, even through the madness. The only question was, would his master accept?

He needn't have doubted. No more than a single heartbeat passed before he was on the bed and the rest of his clothing was torn free. Fear and adrenaline had brought on his own erection, but feeding his master had sustained it and now his own need was blatant before the master's fiery gaze.

But the kind and calm master from all their years together was not what he saw before him now. No, the vampire before him knew nothing of scared children or protecting the injured or traumatized of both species. This vampire knew only one emotion... desire. No, even that was too tame. Lust ruled his every move, all consuming lust for blood and for sex, primal and fierce and uncompromising.

Hands capable of healing or killing captured Dash, turning him over with a brutal spin until he was face down in the soft mattress. Fingers stroked across his shoulders, down his back.

Dash yelped as a stunning slash of pain burned across his lower back. His every instinct screamed to pull away, but the choice was not offered. Arms snaked around him lifting and caging him. Fingers slid across and then into his ass. Slick and sure. Slick with... blood. His blood.

The master's cock jutted hard against his ass. Fangs sank into his shoulder.

The euphoria came back, blazing through his mind and filling him with the master's dark needs. Then with a single brutal thrust, he was filled physically. Too much. Too fast. But the pain was edged out with pleasure.

The next thrust came, and another and another. A claw-tipped hand found his cock, dragging more pleasure to the aching, burning shaft until he shook under the

violent domination. Another deeper bite to his neck sent him over the edge, coming with a bellow.

With a low purring growl, and a last hard thrust, his master joined him, shuddering in release and slumping over him in a relatively loose limbed collapse.

Dash held still, waiting, holding his breath. Was his master relaxed enough for him to escape the lax cage of his arms? Fleeing prey might reawaken the poison driven rage, but could he risk missing what might possibly be his only chance?

Not that he gave a rat's ass about what his master did to him. No, that he would welcome in all its forms. But unless he missed his guess, the fiery heat coming off his master was a very high grade fever. Dangerously high. The poison was still working its evil. He couldn't risk losing his master because of his own inaction.

Slowly, ever so slowly, he moved from the bed, from the room. Once outside the door, he commanded it closed and jammed it locked with the emergency code which would immediately summon security to the quarters.

No more than a few moments passed before the door to the quarters was forced open and emergency staff flooded inside. At the head of the group were Med ADM Sullivan and Mil ADM Deshea.

Dash sagged to the floor with relief.

Chapter Three

Blake's senses blared, every one of them on overload. He squinted against the brilliant light pouring over him from the ceiling. His skin was tight and burned as if the sun itself had settled directly above him. Trying to pull back, retreat to safety he jerked against the restraints binding his wrists and ankles.

"Wha..." Trying to speak brought his lips painfully tight across swollen, over sensitized fangs.

"Easy, Master." Dash's voice came from his right. "Don't try to move."

He blinked, attempting to focus on Dash's face despite the blinding brightness. The human crouched beside the bed, his face etched with fear as well as deep scrapes and a multitude of cuts. "Your face?"

Dash ducked his head.

Oh Gods, he'd done that to Dash. Flashes of memory crackled through his mind. He hadn't just cut him, he'd bled him and... He shut his eyes in shame.

He'd brutally raped Dash.

"Master, ADM Deshea and ADM Sullivan are here. Much has happened. ADM Sullivan gave you a drug to help you gain control." The anger in Dash's voice made it clear he'd fought them on the use of the drug. "They need you to remember so they can stop the poisoned blood from reaching any others."

Dash might have fought the use of what must be X2frost to bring him around but he could understand the reasons to do so. He also knew that the drug would only work for a few minutes. "Get the ADMs here."

Both vampires stepped into sight. Mil ADM Deshea said, "Med Blake, we need to get ahead of this strike at once. What can you tell us about the blood? Which city was the supply shipped from? Do you know how it was poisoned?"

He drew in his breath and let it out on a long sigh. "The last blood shipment came from Central City, but there was nothing suspicious about it. The supply registration and delivery channels were all the usual. Nothing irregular. I even studied it under the scope and saw nothing unusual."

"Nothing?" This came from ADM Sullivan. "What about the reaction? What can you tell us that will help any others who may be affected?"

"My guess is that healthy blood will replace the tainted blood and the victim will return to normal with time and treatment."

"I hope you're right. What about symptoms and progression of the poison?"

He thought back to the moment he'd swallowed the poisoned blood. "It begins with a burning sensation followed by weakness. Then it seemed as if every primal demand took over. The need to hunt was undeniable, to my shame." He looked to his side and caught Dash's gaze. How could he ever amend for what he'd done to Dash?

Dash held his gaze, steady, without blinking or flinching.

ADM Deshea interrupted. "I only have one other question. Do you feel this was purposefully done as an attack on the Acacia citizens?"

"I can think of no natural or accidental contaminants that could result in any similar reactions. Due to the catastrophic physical response and the inability to identify the affected blood or the toxin, it must be intentional. I can only guess that if blood had been distributed, the damage to both human and vampire citizens could have been expansive, perhaps even apocalyptic."

ADM Sullivan nodded thoughtfully. ADM Deshea's reaction was somewhat more violent. "The goddamned fuckers will pay for this." He turned on his heel and strode out. The screeching sound of objecting metal hinted that the automatic doors hadn't opened fast enough to escape the warrior's fury.

The sound cut across Blake's nerves. He wanted to care about what was going to be done. After all it was his job to supervise incoming slaves and imported blood. He should have asked what ADM Sullivan planned to do or even if there would be retaliation for the attack.

He didn't.

The effects of the X2frost were diminishing. The scent of blood -- probably Dash's blood -- set his fangs throbbing. Turning his head to where Dash sagged against the bed, he noticed the deep bite wound on his slave's neck, and remembered the scent of his arousal... his cock jumped to attention under the light blanket, tenting the material upward.

ADM Sullivan cleared his throat. "Dash, you should come with me back to the med facility to have your injuries attended."

Dash's gaze came up, meeting Blake's head on. "I won't leave my master alone."

"He won't be alone. Med Grace, Queen Caitlin's own personal medic, will be here to watch over him. Come with me."

"Sir, with all due respect, I am a privately owned slave. I only obey my master. And until he orders me away from his side, here is where I will stay."

Blake heard the words and felt Dash's fingers close over one of his bound hands. He should order Dash away, to get medical care, to be safe from the coming nightmare. He should and yet... he was too weak to do what was right. The firestorm of rising desires might consume them both if the restraints failed, but if not, he couldn't bear to send his one confidant away.

"I am yours to command, Master." Dash offered him strength to make the right decision.

But he was helpless. "Stay."

Sullivan must have left, but Blake couldn't remember him going. Med Grace probably checked in, but that didn't register either. Only Dash could draw his senses.

Dash's dark blue eyes became tempting pools he could drown in. His familiar face took on new perspective. When had he grown so fully? Dash was far from the boy Blake had rescued from the streets. Now Dash was a man at the pinnacle of maturity. The thick muscles of his shoulders were powerfully obvious under the satin robe -- Blake's robe. He imagined his own scent blending with Dash's human musk. The fine

scent of Dash's blood was more than he could bear. His fangs pulsed in time with his hard cock, giving a firm reminder of all the pleasures to be had.

"No." He turned his face away from the temptation.

"Master?"

The one word jumped both desires to a higher level. It held such willing devotion, loyalty, and perhaps even love. Blake returned his gaze to that handsome face. Why had he never seen the truth before? Dash loved him. And he could honestly return the emotion.

Or he could if the poison didn't kill him. "I'm sorry."

Dash's fingers rose to the wound at his throat. The vampire saliva had begun healing the torn flesh but without attention it was a slow process. "I will heal."

"Everything... I remember some. You should have run from here. For all of it, I beg forgiveness."

Dash tightened his grip over the master's bound hand. "There is nothing to forgive. I'm here. I'm staying." He wanted to say more, to point out how much his master meant to him, how nothing could drive him away, how he'd give anything to help his master get well. Instead he said nothing else.

"The drug is wearing off."

"What should I do?"

"Have to just ride it out."

"More blood would help, shouldn't it? It did last time." Or was that the sex? Something had allowed his master to regain control for a short time. Or at least to slumber outside the grip of the poison. Maybe it hadn't cured him, but it had offered a reprieve. "Let me help you."

"Too dangerous."

"Then it's all the more important that I do help you."

His master closed his eyes. Was that defeat? Resignation? "Not your blood."

The reason was obvious. He'd already lost quite a bit to the first feeding. More might be dangerous. But he hated the idea of another providing what his master needed.

"Get blood from the slaves. Only their blood, not them."

For a moment the command made little sense. Then he understood. "You want me to do for you what I did for Kaven."

"Yes."

"I'll go at once, Master." He squeezed the master's hand again before leaving him there to see to getting fresh, untainted blood. There were several blood slaves who served in the med facility. They would be willing to offer what was needed.

Entering the slave quarters, he searched the lounge for any of Med Blake's preferred blood slaves. Blake often fed from those communally owned by the facility. Samuel was a large man and could offer more blood than most. He grabbed the supplies and drew Samuel aside to speak privately. "I need blood for my master. Fresh, but bagged."

Samuel began rolling his sleeve up at once. "That's an unusual request, but I've no reason to refuse."

He didn't bother with any more talk, just got straight to the business of bagging Samuel's blood. Within a few minutes he had the bag filling.

"If you need more, I know Harry there would be willing as would Rashel."

To take more than one feeding would be better, but to do so would also set tongues wagging even more than this unusual request already would. "Perhaps later."

"Don't let pride keep you from asking. Dash, you may be privately owned, but don't give your last drop, not even for a good master." The kind words were almost a motto among the slave population of Acacia. And this time they were accompanied by a pointed look to the wound at his throat.

"I won't." The slaves like these ones who served the med facility were a tight group. He'd always been on the outside of that circle because of his long relationship with Med Blake.

The moment he had the blood bagged and sealed, he taped Samuel's arm and rushed back to his master.

Snarling and growling echoed inside the quarters. Med Grace stood just inside the door as if she wanted nothing more than to escape the horrible noise. "Don't go in there, Dash. He's much worse. If the plas-cuffs don't hold he'll attack you again without ever knowing it's you he's killing."

No doubt what she said was the truth. "I will see to him. The blood will help."

"You don't understand. The X2frost wore off. I can't give him another dose. Even one risks damage to his neural system."

"I do understand. Is there anything you can do for him?"

Her hand twitched toward the door panel. "I took a little blood to have analyzed. The stabilizer and depressant I administered had no effect." She shook her head. "Nothing. I can't think of anything else."

"The blood you took... I can watch him while you focus on analyzing it."

She shook her head. "I should be here."

"If there is no cure, then this poison will likely kill him. I don't see how having one of the best medicals in the colony watching him die will help the situation." Stating his opinion so bluntly was frowned on, but he didn't much care at the moment. Maybe if Med Grace spent more time studying the blood and less time standing here being afraid and useless, maybe then they'd have a chance to find an antidote.

Anger blazed in her eyes for a long moment before she slammed her palm against the door sensor. "It's your death, menial slave Dash. But know this, once I leave, this door will be sealed. No one will come to your rescue."

Her insult to his slave status, the lowest of the ranks meant nothing. Neither did her exit. Good riddance. He hurried back to the bedroom. Now he could see to the only purpose in his life. Now he could see to the master.

His master vampire who was currently a raging monstrosity.

Burning red eyes stared out at him, surely seeing nothing but prey for his enormous fangs. At some point he'd thrown off the light blanket. His straining erection

rose upward in a demanding arc. His corded muscles stood out in stark detail. Every inch of him had become the image of lethal desire. If not for the plas-cuffs holding him in place, he'd become the worst nightmare form of his kind.

The gentle features normally covering his chiseled face were gone, replaced by hollowed cheeks and sunken eyes. The look reminded Dash of the lingering effects on Kaven's body. The starvation that couldn't have resulted from his short captivity made sense now. The poison, whatever it was, devoured the vampire's flesh, leaving behind only the primal desires to hunt, feed and fuck.

Shit, Dash wanted to offer what his master craved. He wanted it to be his blood feeding his hunger and his flesh sating the wild desires. But in the thirty cycles he'd been with the master, today, driven by poison, was the first time they'd ever come together in either way.

Never before had his master shown any sexual interest in him. As a child, he'd been mostly raised by the servants employed in the estate on Rahla. And as an adult, he'd become a servant and then a slave, both with clear lines stating what interactions were allowed and which were taboo.

All Dash's current thoughts were definitely taboo.

And probably suicidal.

Chapter Four

Fuck suicidal. He was going to live and make sure his master did too. Still carrying the bag of warm blood, Dash slipped the rest of the way into the bedroom. His master followed him with his gaze, tracking every motion as if looking for weakness.

First he checked the restraints. He ignored his master snapping those deadly sharp fangs his direction. All four plas-cuffs were solid. His master wasn't going to get free any time soon.

"Master, I brought you the blood. It will help you think clearly."

"Blood."

"Yes, blood. Samuel's, and so fresh it is still warm. There is no poison in it and it will help you." He held out the bag, lifting it slowly within striking distance.

The master's gaze darted once to his still healing throat, before he lurched forward, sinking his fangs into the bag. His snarls settled to a low rumble. No way would Med Blake make those animalistic sounds willingly. He was cultured and controlled, and never acted the beast like the poison made him.

Dash waited, praying the blood would satisfy Blake's desires, but as the bag deflated and the growling continued, he saw that it wouldn't be enough.

Setting up another bag, Dash filled it with his own blood. He ignored the lightheaded feeling that surfaced when the bag was near half full. He finished filling it before withdrawing the needle. Darkness danced at the edge of his vision. But he managed to finish the job without passing out. Not much more. He waited, focusing on breathing until his blood pressure worked to get the needed blood back to his brain. Not long. Only a few moments passed before he started feeling closer to normal. Still light, less substantial, but on the ground enough to handle it.

Blake was staring at him. The bag was empty, the blood long gone. The growling had ceased. For a moment, he thought that was a good sign. But his master wasn't back in control. Far from it. His eyes burned, willing prey closer within striking range. The mental command was strong, impatient, demanding.

Dash escaped the snare, jerking backward just in time.

The master's bestial gaze laughed at him. Maybe not this time, but soon he would be caught. Soon he would be nothing but food.

Dash shook from fear and anger. "Damn poison." He slammed the second bag of blood hard over Blake's fangs.

But blood alone wasn't enough. His master needed all his hungers satisfied. What should have been nothing but pleasure was broken down to the worst possible act. First it drove his master to attack him and now it was almost forcing the same back on the master. "Damn the poison."

And damn himself.

Dash climbed onto the bed, ignoring the way his master writhed under him, fighting the restraints. Willing or not, he was going to satisfy at least one more desire. He wrapped his hands around the master's twitching cock. The moment he did, the master's hips jumped, shoving the thick flesh through his hands.

He wanted to act like this was therapy, something that had to be done to help his master, but it wasn't happening. This was his master, the one vampire he'd devoted his life to, the one man he'd desired all his adult life.

And Blake was completely at his mercy.

His fierce grip loosened. He stroked up and down the length of his cock, enjoying the way his master reacted to his touch with rolling hips and a purring growl.

He continued his torment, touching, stroking, petting, caressing. Over and over. He drew out the torture because deep down he knew this might be his last time with the master. Years together and they had never come down this path, not until poison took away the master's choices. Now here they were at a place they might never come to again.

He wanted to take his time, enjoy every touch, worship the moment.

Dash tightened his fingers, letting his hands become a channel for the master's cock to ram through. With hips rolling, the invitation was accepted. His long shaft drove upward, through hands made slick with pre-come.

His own cock was hard and aching.

Shifting, Dash lowered his mouth to the master's cock. He took him in, sucking at the head before swallowing down the length in a long wet motion. The reaction was violent. The master's hips jerked hard, driving the cock deeper and deeper.

Using his mouth freed one of his hands to see to his own cock. He rubbed and stroked it in time with the mouth fucking his master gave him.

The moment stretched out. He varied the motion just enough to hold onto the release threatening the master, threatening himself. On and on, he devoured the master. They took turns controlling the motion. He slid up and down the length for a while and then held the position while the master's hips ratcheted back and forth, filling him over and over.

Orgasm, when it came, was shattering. The first taste of the master's spurting come, the first psychic wave of his satisfaction, broke over him, leaving devastation in its wake. He cried out against the flesh filling him. His body jerked and shuddered, jacking into his hand more powerfully than ever before. He drew back, licking the master's slackening cock until his head pillowed against the vampire's hard hip.

"Dash?"

No inquiry was ever more welcome. He looked up, meeting the master's clear gray eyes, grinning at the surprise and pleasure he saw there.

"Was this what you wanted, Dash?"

Heat rushed to his face, but he didn't lie. "Yes. For as long as I knew what making love could be, I wanted it to be with you." More heat. He ducked his head. Maybe he'd said more than he should have.

"I didn't know." His master cleared his throat. "I'm sorry. I never wanted you to be put in a position where --"

"No! I wanted this." He flinched. "Well, maybe not this, with you being ill and bound to the bed. But I wanted to be with you, any way I could."

"Oh..."

Shame flooded through him. "I don't expect you to feel the same. I just... I had to show you at least this once. I won't make any demands. We can go back to how it was." Even if it killed him.

"Dash, stop."

He met those silver-gray depths again fearing the coming rejection. Would he send him away? Trade him to another vampire?

"I wanted it too. Dash, I wanted you."

Holy hell. "Really?"

"Yeah. Now get up here so I can kiss you."

Dash crawled up Blake's body so fast he felt awkward, but the moment called for immediacy. His master might come to his senses any second. Once they were face to face, he hesitated. Now that was awkward. He'd never initiated a kiss. Thirty freaking years of living and he was a babe in the woods when it came to this kind of affection.

His master must have understood. Of course he did. He would have surely noticed that Dash had never dated or even gotten close to any other. Tilting his head just slightly, his master leaned up into the kiss, bringing their lips together. Their mouths became one, parted only by the master's partially retracted fangs.

Lips and breath played over each other, until the master's tongue teased along his lips, parting him and plunging inward. Dash gasped at the sweet invasion. Sensation shot through his body. His cock hardened again, brought back to life with a kiss. A kiss which deepened, hardened until the master's tongue plunged deep in an imitation of fucking.

He couldn't help it, he suckled at the master, much like he had moments before, and he received the same reaction too. His whole body slipped the reins of Dash's control. He lay astride his master and the slightest of motions bought their hard slick cocks rubbing in delicious contact.

How could he want him again so soon? He was hard and aching, a single throbbing, demanding need.

Dash reached for the plas-cuff binding the master's left wrist.

"Don't." The quiet word still held the command of a master. "You can't turn me loose, not yet anyhow. There is no telling how long this reprieve will last, and I won't have you hurt any more than you have been."

Anger and fear cooled his arousal. "There has to be something we can do."

"Don't fret. The others will be doing all there is to be done. All we must do is wait until they find the answers."

"I was thinking... what if we bled the poison out of you?"

"What do you mean?"

"The poison is in the blood, or at least it was, right?"

"It still is. I feel it burning through my veins each time it gains strength."

"Then why can't we bleed it out? From working at your side, I know how difficult it is for a vampire to bleed to death. It's practically impossible. If we bleed out the poison and replace it with good healthy blood..."

"It might work. In fact it should work." The master's expression softened. "I knew you were a smart one from that first moment when I found you making a kingdom from the street trash. I just didn't know you would save my life one day."

He blushed again. Someday he hoped he grew out of that indignant response. "You think it will work?"

"Yes, but we'll need blood. Can you get more?"

"I can. I will." He started to crawl off the bed.

"Wait, Dash. Kiss me again."

He made it back to those lips in a single heartbeat. This time when they came together, Dash was more confident. He opened at once, welcoming his master in for another sweet exploration. The connection between them left him hard and aching, but also soft in some deeper place inside. He ignored both reactions and broke the kiss short. "Gotta go get that blood. I'll be back as soon as I can."

"I'll be here... waiting."

Dash snorted on his way out of the bedroom. Of course his master would be waiting. He was tied to the bed. The master's good spirits were encouraging. As long as he thought there was hope then surely they could beat this poison.

He hit the door sensor but instead of the door sliding open he was met with a quiet voice announcing, "This room is quarantined. Request to exit denied."

Oh shit. He'd forgotten Med Grace's threat. Not that it would matter. He lifted the communicator and pressed the code for the Med ADM Sullivan. Anyone lower in command would follow orders left by Med Grace. Med Sullivan could counter them.

An automated voice answered, "Your identification code shows this call is being made from a quarantined area." Behind the voice played some calming string instrument. Was that a mock harp? "Please leave a message and we will assess and respond as appropriate."

Dammit. He must have really pissed Med Grace off. He left a message for ADM Sullivan explaining Med Blake's current condition and their proposed plan of action as well as what they would need to be successful.

"Thank you for your message. You should receive a response in two standard days."

Two days! Shit, his master would likely be dead by then. They couldn't wait that long. He needed blood for his master and all he had to offer was his own. But there was no way that Med Blake would agree to that plan.

At this point it was his only option.

He was fucked.

Maybe there was still time. Maybe he could even get through to someone else outside the quarters. He began pressing more codes. Each time he heard the same recording and each time he left a message to contact immediately.

After he'd dialed every code he could think of and spent more time than he had to spare, only then did he give in to the reality that his dangerous plan was still their only option.

First thing he'd do was check on the master. Maybe if he was still well enough they could wait a while before he did something stupid. Before he even opened the door, the sound of low growling told all he needed to know about the master's condition.

The animalistic sounds tore at his heart. From what his master said now, he'd be suffering from burning and unquenchable hungers.

"Easy, my master. Don't fight it. Soon you'll feel better, more like yourself again." He said this and more but there was no recognition on the master's face, no sign he even understood the words.

He backed out of the room. Then he went to the food service area. His master kept juices on hand for blood slaves. Always he carried them in his medical bag while at the facility. Even the most robust of slaves could sometimes use a boost to rebalance their blood sugars.

He drank one straight down then opened a second and took a restorative pill with the first swallow. Any way to boost his blood before he donated would hopefully make it more potent for the master. Ideally it would require less of his blood then to pull his master back from the near death he'd be pushing him toward.

The whole idea was scary as hell. What if he was wrong? What if draining his master took too much or he had too little to offer back? What if his master died?

No, he couldn't do it. He couldn't risk it. His master was his life.

A terrifying yowl came from the bedroom.

Dash flew back and his heart stopped at what he found.

His master was twisting against the plas-cuffs, fighting to the point that the cuffs were cutting into his flesh. His hollow eyes burned red and streamed blood tears. His body was drawn tight with dehydration. The difference in such a short time could mean only one thing. The poison was killing now, not just feeding on him, but devouring.

He couldn't wait. He had to get the poison out of the master. There wasn't time to worry about what chance he had of survival or at what cost this treatment might come. There was only time for action.

Finding a large container for the drained blood, he placed it beside the bed. Then he used the master's medical kit to rig a tube and drain set to a thick needle.

When he attempted to insert the needle into the master's arm the battle began. Only by kneeling on the master's wrist was he able to hold him still enough to force the needle in and even then it was a sloppy job, paid for with several welts on his thighs.

But the moment he opened the valve on the tubing, the dark red blood flooded forth. The color was so dark it might have been called black. Black was bad. For a vampire to have black blood meant that the blood was dead and it was only a matter of time before the vampire became nothing more than a corpse too.

Whatever the poison was, it was destroying the very thing that sustained the vampire's life force. It devoured the blood leaving nothing but death in its wake. "Be strong, Master. Just hold on to the moon a little longer." He did his best to comfort the master, using the rallying cry they had spoken long ago when exiled from Rahla to the Acacian moon colony.

Draining the blood would help. It had to.

While his master was bleeding his dead blood into the container, Dash reopened his own vein and started filling another blood bag, while sipping at his juice. Before the bag was half full he took a second restorative just to keep the black spots from devouring his vision.

The master's growls subsided. The silence became deafening, smothering.

Dash fought to keep his eyes open. Just a little bit more. He needed to be able to offer his master at least one full bag of blood. Even that would be nowhere near enough, but it would sustain his master long enough for help to arrive.

At least it would if their plan worked and the poison was completely removed. If they were wrong and draining the blood only weakened his master then he had in effect just killed the only person who had ever mattered to him.

He forced his eyes open and pushed back the depressing thoughts. The bag was full enough. He sealed it and taped his arm again. To stay awake and watch over the master, he started singing ancient lullabies.

Chapter Five

Blake tasted the blood on his lips and tongue, and knew it was life being reborn to his body. At first the world stayed dark and all he knew was that sweet coppery taste. He suckled at it, drawing the life back into his body, each drop finding a place to be needed. Each one bringing a deeper darker need back awake. The taste of blood retreated far too soon. But he had fed enough to be awake, for his senses to slowly come back online.

Every change served a single purpose. If there was blood then there was prey and if there was prey, he could hunt. His body demanded nothing less than surrender to that basic drive to survive. He lay still and focused his senses, locating the fresher scent of blood, a bleeding open wound, a waving flag calling out, *come get me*. It was close, his prey, so very close.

Then he heard the slight settling of cloth. His prey, moving over him, so close, so very close.

This was his chance. As weak as he was it might be his only chance.

He struck, driving upward with all his strength. He hit some binding restraints with a bellow of rage and pain. One snapped. That freed arm flew outward ensnaring the prey and dragging it back to his waiting fangs.

The surge of sweet blood flooded over him. Filling him. Saving him.

On and on he drank. Every satisfying pull drew his salvation in. His body reawakened. His mind pushed back the primitive drives and once more became the man who had become vampire who had become a master medic.

Only then did he register how his prey's blood was passive, its heart quiescent. He pulled back. "No..."

The prey was human. The human was dead.

Dash was dead by his own fang.

Sweet Dash.

Images flashed through his mind of watching the boy grow into a young man and the man into the perfect assistant and welcomed friend.

No, he couldn't let Dash die like this. He couldn't.

He tore the other plas-cuff free and settled Dash onto the bed in his place. Checking him over revealed his worst possible diagnosis... death. Having been drained nothing short of immediate replacement of the blood and violent restarting of his vitals would save his human life. None of that was possible in the time Dash had left.

Only one option remained. Having taking his human life, he could replace it with eternal life. Perhaps it was not too late for such a drastic act.

Illegal yes. Unethical, probably. But for once in his very long life, Blake didn't care about the rules. No matter what they demanded, saving Dash was the right thing to do.

He slashed his wrist open on a fang and held the wound over Dash's mouth. The blood was slow to well up and only a few sluggish drops fell to paint Dash's lips crimson. Not enough to turn him. He repeated the action, marking his other wrist and again receiving only a couple drops.

He, a master vampire, having been awarded that title by turning a human years ago, now lacked the strength to change the one man who mattered. To save the man who had saved him. To bring back the man he... loved.

Yes, loved. And not in the way of a mentor. No, this was as a lover, as they had discovered in the last few hours. He marked his wrist again and again, forcing every possible drop into his lover, praying for a miracle that he didn't deserve.

He would have kept trying, kept bleeding himself until he, too, was dry and empty, but suddenly the private bedroom was once more filled with people.

Med ADM Sullivan was beside him, reaching for Dash.

Blake snarled at Sullivan, then he was dragged back by Deshea in an iron hold, helpless to escape. "Be still, you fool. Let the Med see to the human." Deshea growled into his ear. "Then maybe he can see to the mess you've made of yourself."

Med Grace joined Sullivan. "What have you done? You tried to turn him? And failed by the look of it."

He'd failed Dash. He'd tried and not been strong enough.

Sullivan was looking over Dash, but Grace turned on Blake. "I told him. I said you'd kill him and I was right. I just didn't know how far you would go in this insanity. Turning a human without permission is illegal. If by some cruel twist of fate he does survive, he'll be mad and have to be put down."

"Med Grace, help me please." Sullivan had brought a bag of human blood in and was setting it up to feed into Dash's arm.

"Why bother? You can tell as well as I can that he's been tainted with the poisoned blood. There is no point in administering aid now, just to let him die more slowly later. Or worse, put him down if he does turn."

Sullivan's gaze turned to ice. "You bother because I say so."

"I serve the queen, not the ADM."

"Then you shall obey me." The virgin queen filled the doorway, or at least she appeared to with her four bodyguards filling the space behind her slender form. "Med Grace, you are hereby relieved. Return to your quarters and remain there. Your decisions are hereby on review and a new assignment will be given when it suits me."

One guard glided past her and assisted Med Grace out the door. The lean vampire's slight frame disguised the many deadly skills all of her guards had mastered. Half the size of Deshea's warriors, they were twice as deadly.

Without another glance at the indignant medic, Queen Caitlin strode forward to Med ADM Sullivan's side. "Will the boy live, Sully?"

"Perhaps," he said, but he shook his head clearly stating the more likely outcome.

"Is he stable?"

"For the moment. His body has gone into a form of stasis."

The queen stroked a slender hand over Dash's pale cheek. "I want him to live. Permission is given for him to be turned if needed. Make that happen, Sully. Make him live."

Sullivan looked up meeting Blake's gaze across the room. "His human life is over. You knew that."

"Yes." His voice choked on that guilty admission.

"His only hope is to complete the turning that you started. To do that he will need more vampire blood, more of your blood. And clearly from the look of your unhealed wounds, you have none yet to spare."

His head fell forward in defeat. "I tried."

"That is obvious. You will try again."

"Willingly."

"Only after you have fed properly."

"But the blood supply --"

"We have not been sitting on our hands all this time, Med Blake. All imported blood has been isolated and we've set about harvesting a fresh supply from our own slaves. We have enough fresh, pure blood for your needs."

One of the guards carried forward a cooler full of sacked blood.

"You will sit here next to your Dash and drink until you can drink no more. Then I will check you and if you are fit enough you will feed your slave, turn him and set him free as one of us."

Blake nodded. He couldn't squeeze a word out of his tight throat if he tried. Instead he waited for Deshea's grip to loosen and then he did exactly as he was told. He pulled on a robe and sat beside Dash, holding one hand in his while stuffing himself full of blood and strength.

The queen swept out with her guards. One of Deshea's men stayed behind but the military ADM left now that the crisis was under control.

Med ADM Sullivan left after giving his strict orders, but he returned within moments of Blake finishing the last bag he could force down. "Are you ready to finish your duty?"

"I am."

"You care for him. I knew you would do right by him."

"I could do nothing else, even if it was against our laws."

"The queen has granted the right. Even if she hadn't, no good vampire would be put down regardless of what that bigot says. With a touch of blessing, your Dash will live on a very long time, and with his training at your side he will make an excellent Med Apprentice, don't you think?"

Blake nodded.

"Good. Then it's time you give him your life."

Blake shifted Dash, pulling him gently into his lap, cradling him there for a moment's embrace. Then he tore open his still healing wrist and placed the welling wound against Dash's mouth. This time he felt the blood flow easily from him. He opened his mind and reached out for Dash, willing him to feed on the blood, to fill himself with life. Over and over he repeated the mental command.

Dash was his slave still and he would obey. He forced his will over the human mind, demanding he submit, obey and drink.

The flicker of life touched his mind before it awoke in Dash's muscles. *Master?* Dash's lips moved against his skin. His tongue licked over the torn flesh.

The reaction was so welcome that Blake sobbed with the joy of it. He cradled Dash closer and sent another mental command, willing him to drink deeply, to take what he needed.

Dash's lips sealed and he began to draw shallow sucks from the wound. Each one a little stronger, each one a little deeper. The minutes bled together. All that mattered was Dash's return to life.

Soon Dash fed eagerly from him. The sharp points of newborn fangs pierced his skin and added to the delicious sensation. Was feeding always this seductive to the

prey? He hadn't remembered the feel of fangs or the lips and tongue drawing life through injury.

His body hardened in response. It wanted more than just to feed. It naturally paired the sensual act of feeding with the satisfaction of fucking. He couldn't argue much with his body's demands. He wanted nothing else than to share every pleasure with Dash.

With Dash and only Dash.

Dash's blue gaze found his. *Only me?*

Yes, only you.

I love you too, Blake. I always have.

Blake shifted his weight back, pulling Dash more fully over him. *Soon as we are alone I intend to do such things to make you blush.*

We are alone.

Blake looked around and found Dash was right. The room was empty. The door closed. His private quarters were quiet. "So we are." He pulled his wrist free and rolled Dash over in one smooth move. "So now I can see about making you blush."

"Seems that might be harder now."

"You are still you, Dash. I can make you blush."

"Can you make me blush later? I need you inside me. I knew feeding was erotic for you. I never knew it burned like this. I need you now."

Blake laughed. "You give orders well."

"I'm sorry, Master."

"You are free now, Dash. You are no longer a slave of any class."

"Does that mean I have to leave you?"

"Certainly not. I hope you choose to stay with me."

"I do." Dash rolled onto his knees, presenting a wonderful view of his roundly muscled ass. "Now make me blush, Master."

It was an order that Blake willingly obeyed. This time though he took the time to enjoy every step of loving Dash. Licking and nipping at his ass cheeks, he fondled

Dash's hard cock, and massaged his tight sacs. Then he rubbed the head of his cock against his lover's entrance, teasing for several long moments before circling his tight entrance with his fingers, using the slick pre-come to ease the way. Pressing in with his thumb, slowly... oh so slowly. Finger fucking Dash, Blake opened him to a chorus of moans and teasing little growls.

"Master!"

He lifted his aching cock bringing the head back to his entrance, teasing first with just pressure then dipping in enough to leave Dash shaking.

"Please, more. I need you now."

He pushed in, slowly, driving with short retreats, claiming each new inch until he was seated fully, sheathed completely, so perfectly deep he could feel every move Dash made. Each muscle and shifting grip left him gasping with pleasure.

Then Dash took over, bucking back against him. He met each roll of his hips and drew back with each retreat. The pleasure was exquisite, pain and pleasure and completely consuming.

The climax slammed into him from behind and he gasped with the shock of it. Everything stopped. His world shuddered. The perfection was a pinnacle... a place he'd never reached before and couldn't wait to reach again.

Dash laughed and rolled under him until they were face to face, and Dash pressed short hot kisses to his face. "We can go there again and again for as long as we wish."

Then Blake was laughing with him. Of course they could make love again, be together over and over. They had all of eternity to explore this brand new love.

Epilogue

Caitlin hated dealing with the ADMs all together. Bringing the leaders from the five divisions of their society to one meeting inevitably resulted in a fully wasted night, sometimes several. They were all brilliant and determined and the best in their fields, truly vampires born to lead, but having five who all thought they were right meant nothing got done quickly.

The current issue under discussion was the testing standards for the imported blood. Or at least it was supposed to be.

ADM Deshea was adamant that testing the blood supply was pointless. "What we must do is strike back at once and let the damn humans know exactly what it will mean to break our treaties. Hear me now, if we don't crush this... this attack, we will face far worse within the turn." Deshea slammed his thick fist onto the top of their meeting table.

"ADM Deshea, please be kind to the furniture." This from ADM Kersher who sat beside him. Her hand brushed over ADM Deshea's arm.

Caitlin's gaze was drawn to the slight contact.

What would it be like to touch others so casually? She'd touched the slave and still did not know why. She never touched any other. It was too tempting to take a simple touch and then want more. It was a risk she dare not accept.

ADM Sullivan, sitting to ADM Deshea's other side said, "Open war will destroy both Rahla and Acacia. To openly attack would be a folly without all the facts. Instead I propose Deshea lead a team into Central City. Agent Aeron believes the health center there likely holds more secrets, but we have to act fast before all their experiments can be moved."

Deshea laughed. "Fast indeed. I sent Agent Rafael to do just that. He returned on the last transport."

"You sent a team without consulting us?" Caitlin straightened further in her seat. She might leave much of the management to the ADMs, but to take a step that could lead to war without consulting her was... unacceptable.

"Rafael was already scheduled to go planet-side. He and his team were under strict orders to go far deeper than covert. They are the best at what they do."

She nodded accepting that this was not a deliberate attempt to bypass the ADM or herself. "What did he find?"

"They returned with two more victims."

"And their condition? Were they blood poisoned also?"

This time ADM Deshea glanced away. "They are healthy, but sedated. They are not vampires."

"Humans? Whatever would they experiment on their own kind for?"

"Not human either. The two males... they are werewolves."

There were collective gasps from around the table. Caitlin herself was stunned. "This meeting is dismissed. ADM Deshea you will explain yourself immediately."

She waited until the other ADMs filed out of the room. "This is impossible. Werewolves were exterminated from the planet. There are not more, probably none in this quadrant of space."

"The two brothers returned from the wars. They've been away fighting all this time and had no contact during our little civil war." Deshea ran a hand through his already mussed hair. "They are werewolves. Of that there is no doubt. We are still not sure what the scientists were using them for but we believe they have been prisoners for more than three turns."

"And now they are here. Why?"

"I know this breaks our rules. They have not yet been released."

"Only vampires are free on Acacia. It is our only hope to remain strong. You know this and yet you brought two werewolves among us. They are too strong and

independent to make good slaves and they can not be turned vampire. There is no place for them here.”

“I agree. Once they are fully debriefed and we understand what they were used for, then we can either put them to death or send them out of the system on the next galactic ship.”

Werewolves had been among the settlers on Rahla. She had known several of the more wealthy families, but once the wars broke out, few had survived. They had been the ones to flee. What must it have been like for these brothers to come home and find all their kin slaughtered or lost?

Now that they were on Acacia, it was her duty to see they were treated fairly and given back a chance for life. For the first time in turns, excitement filled her. Perhaps this was even one of the werewolves she had once known. Some of them had been quite handsome and they were filled with life.

Her fangs tingled at the thought of their rich blood, so much more powerful than mere human blood. Yes, it was her duty to see to them, but if they were willing, would it be wrong to take just a sip or two? “I would see the brothers myself. Have them brought to me at once.”

L. Shannon

L. Shannon, the author, came into existence in June of 2004. Shannon's always been a reader and lover of books, but never considered writing until one night when she ran out of books to read... She began writing that very night as the first line of defense in a battle against insomnia. Her writing has steadily grown into a full-out war against reality. Her friends kindly say reality never stood a chance.

Shannon currently has more than twenty-five completed works either available now or coming soon. The L. Shannon novels have expanded to fill an entire world with paranormal wonders including Valafrn werewolves, Tascryn demons, blood-sucking vampires, sexy selkies and many, many more. Be careful if you choose to enter Shannon's hunk-filled world. You may never wish to leave...

In the time Shannon doesn't spend writing, she's kept busy by bothering her husband, showing dogs, gardening and watching over her four Butterfly Koi ponds. You can learn more about her writing and her life at www.lshannon.net.