

Queen

Two for Twila



Bonnie Rose Leigh
Cups

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Two for Twila: Tarot – Queen of Cups

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**Two For Twila: Tarot –
Queen of Cups**

By

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Tarot Meaning:

Twila is a single mother. She runs the family diner. Her widowed mother lives with her and her daughter, Emily. She's all about family and taking care of what's hers. But when her daughter is threatened, she'll do whatever she must to protect her, even if it means finding the man who abandoned Twila a decade ago, Emily's father, and asking for his help. Two for Twila is my novella representing the Queen of Cups in the Tarot Series.

Dedication

This one is for my readers. It's ultimately for you that I write each and every story. Without the readers, all I have is a bunch of characters running around my head telling me their stories. Now they have a broader audience and by sharing their tales with you my brain feels a lot less crowded. And to Chris, my real life hero, I love you. Every day with you feels like the first.

Prologue

Darkness surrounded her. No matter which way she turned, which way she ran, she couldn't escape the suffocating shadows. She could feel its approach, feel the evil closing in, hunting her, hunting her family. Closer. Closer. The stench of evil wafted into her nostrils, urging her to pick up her pace.

In the body of the panther, she continued to run. She had to reach home, had to reach Emily before all was lost. The harder she ran, the more her claws dug into the dead leaves and rich soil of the forest floor. She could see the porch light glowing in the distance, but no matter how fast she ran, how hard she pushed her feline body, the safety of her home seemed to grow farther away.

Her limbs quivered as she ran harder than she'd ever run before. Her fur was slick with sweat and still she ran, desperate now, knowing that her family's lives depended on her. Heart pounding, rage filled her. No one would harm her family. Screaming out her anger, the big cat

lowered her head and increased her pace. Just when she thought she had a chance to reach her home, a scream of inhuman pain pierced the night, sending shards of fear rippling down the big cat's spine.

Startled, Twila Wakefield sat up, her heart pounding in fear, dread suffocating her. Another scream rent the air. Throwing her tousled covers off, her feet hit her bedroom floor on a run. Her daughter, Emily, needed her.

Rushing into the bedroom next door, she found her daughter huddled into a tight ball in the corner of her bed, shaking with fear. Her hair lay matted against her head in a sweaty jumble. Her skin had turned incredibly pale and her green eyes looked haunted.

Gathering her precious child in her arms, she rocked her, waiting for the trembling to stop. Minutes passed, and when she finally lay in her arms with only an occasional shudder racking her small body, Twila smoothed her daughter's hair away from her face and gazed into her haunted eyes. "Tell me, baby, what did you see?"

Twila waited, knowing that only a terrible vision would have had her nine-year-old daughter screaming out in terror. Emily's father, Damian used to get visions, so when Emily started getting them as a toddler, she didn't blow them off as

nightmares as most parents might have. Instead, she listened and did her best to make sure the future events her daughter predicted didn't happen.

Emily shuddered one more time, then sighed. In moments like these, her daughter seemed so much older than her nine years. Was this how Damian had been as a child, growing up faster than he should have had to?

Twila flung that thought away. It had been nearly ten years since she'd last seen him and yet, at times like these, she couldn't help but think about him, couldn't help but wonder where he was, what his life was like away from Serenity. "What is it, baby? What did you see?"

Emily curled her arm around Twila's neck and pressed her small body against her mother's chest, burying her face in her mother's hair. "I saw my father and another man fighting someone. You were bleeding on the ground, not moving. I was tied to a tree and couldn't get loose to save you. Then the bad man started to say something and my father and his friend went flying through the air, landing hard on the ground. No one moved, but then the bad man started walking toward me. He pulled a knife out of his robe and started talking again, but I couldn't hear what he was saying. That's when I woke up."

Twila held her daughter, fear and worry

swamping her. If Emily saw her father and another man battling someone, saw herself tied to a tree, then more than likely, it would happen unless she could do something to stop it. But what? What could she do? None of Emily's predictions had ever been about her own family. From what her daughter told her, it sounded like a cultist had taken her.

No one had heard from the cultists in months, assuming they'd left town when the Hunters, Noah Andrews and Chance Mercer, had arrived in Serenity right before Christmas. First things first, she'd contact Ben Marcum, Serenity's Sheriff, in the morning. What she would do about Damian, Twila didn't know.

Cuddling her daughter closer, Twila rubbed her back. "It will be okay, baby. Somehow, Momma will make sure everything turns out okay. You have my word." In her heart, Twila knew it wouldn't be that simple. Nothing would be simple again.

Chapter One

Damian Santiago couldn't sleep. The dreams were coming more frequent. Dreams of a demon causing trouble in his hometown, dreams of a little girl held captive, dreams of his first lover, Twila, lying in a pool of blood.

Damian closed his eyes. No, not his first lover, he admitted. His mate—one of them anyway. Opening his eyes, he gazed at the bed where his lover, his partner, Antonio Grazioso lay amid the crumpled blankets.

All through high school, he struggled with his sexuality. He'd known Twila was his mate and yet, he felt incomplete as though something were missing and he seemed to always be looking over his shoulder, expecting *him* to show up. He'd known, even then, that a male would complete their circle of love and yet he'd never been attracted to men before.

So he'd left, knowing that until he met this male, until he answered his own questions about

his sexuality, he couldn't commit to Twila. He'd come to her whole, in mind and body, before marking her as his mate. Years passed before he found Antonio, too many years he thought, to simply return home and try to claim his other mate. If he sometimes felt incomplete, his heart and soul aching for what was missing, he shoved it away and thanked the Goddess that he had Antonio.

As though his thoughts alone could disturb him, Antonio stirred, rolled over and unerringly met his gaze in the darkened room. "Dreaming again?" he asked, his voice curious and perhaps a little anticipatory.

"Yes, they're becoming more frequent, more ominous in tone."

"You know what you have to do. It's time, Damian."

Damian looked at his lover, his male mate. "Are you okay with this? You know what will happen if I go back to Serenity. My beast will insist on mating her this time—I won't have a choice."

Antonio sat up, letting the blankets pool around his waist. Damian's cock stirred as his mate stretched, showing off his six-pack abs and muscular chest. Now wasn't the time to get distracted with his lover's body. "I know, Damian. Do you think I can't sense the emptiness inside you where your other mate should be? I feel it like

it's my own loss. You need her to be complete. If I have to share you with her, if we have to share her, then that's what I have to do, but you can't put it off much longer—the dreams won't let you. Hell, I won't let you. It's time you went home and it sounds like we are needed there, the both of us."

Sighing, Damian crossed the room and sat on the bed facing Antonio. Even after several years together, it never became easier to speak to Antonio about his feelings. "You're right, but I don't want to do anything to harm our relationship either. It took me a long time to come to terms with my visions, with knowing inside I'd not only mate Twila but that a male was out there, too."

Antonio laughed, then leaned against the headboard, his arms crossed over his chest. His brown eyes sparkled with mirth. "I imagine while you were trying to come to terms with it all, you never imagined you'd meet me while I was out looking for a late night snack."

Damian snorted, then shook his head. "You're right, I never imagined I'd find you—or you'd find me—because you were hungry and needed blood."

"Hey, I wasn't just hungry. I was starving. I'd been stabbed if you recall and needed to replenish my supply." Antonio stuck out his bottom lip in a pout that enticed more than it made him feel sorry

for the man.

Chuckling, Damian held up his hand. "Enough, you couldn't look pitiful if you tried."

Antonio shrugged, then looked him in the eye, his face serious. "When do we leave?"

Rubbing his palm over his unshaven cheek, Damian sighed. "I don't know. I feel something else must happen first. I just don't know what."

Nodding, Antonio reached for Damian's hand and gave it a light squeeze. "Then we wait. You'll know when the time is right and then we'll go."

Damian smiled. How could he not with Antonio as his mate? No matter how crappy his day, he knew that Antonio could always make him smile. Squeezing his hand, he pulled the vampire against his chest. Sinking one hand in his hair, he claimed Antonio's lips in a ravenous kiss, licking and nipping at his lips until Antonio let him in. Once Antonio groaned, Damian knew he had him. He returned his kiss with the same hunger, matching him stroke for stroke as their tongues tangled together.

Beneath his sweats, Damian's cock grew thick and rigid. He pulled Antonio closer until they pressed together. He could feel his mate's erection against his stomach, could feel the pre-cum bathing his skin. Damian groaned. Knowing he could turn his mate on with a kiss was an aphrodisiac all its own—not that he needed one

when it came to his lover.

Damian eased away, desperate now for the taste of Antonio's seed. Loosening his hold on Antonio's hair, Damian slid his hand down his lover's body, trailing his fingers along the hard ridges of his abdomen.

Antonio gasped. Goose bumps erupted on his flesh. He reached out, slid his knuckles across Damian's arousal, making him shudder in reaction.

Desperate now to taste his mate's cock, Damian pulled the blanket down past Antonio's hips with a swift yank. His hand wrapped around Antonio's thick cock. He wanted to wrap his lips around it, but first, he was over dressed. He wanted to be naked, pressed against his mate, skin to skin, hard body to hard body, cock to cock.

Antonio's hand gripped the leg of his sweats and pulled. Nobody had to tell him what to do next. Reaching down, he eased his pants off, kicking them out of the way, impatient now to continue exploring his lover's body.

Finally, skin to skin, flesh to flesh, Damian lowered his body over Antonio's, pressing him into the mattress. Thrusting his hips, their cocks met, surged against each other. He slid his hand down, trailing his fingers down Antonio's side, his hip, then gripped his cock in his hand. He stroked it from base to tip in a twisting motion, forcing a

gasping moan from his mate.

Antonio's hips rose from the bed, flexed and surged rhythmically against Damian's. He groaned, couldn't help it. The feel of his mate's body so desperate for his always made his lust stronger, hotter than before. He needed to come, but more than that, he needed to make Antonio come, needed to feel that sense of power, the power of controlling his lover's release and satisfaction. He couldn't explain it and he didn't always need it, but tonight...tonight he did.

Gasping moans and harsh groans filled the quiet bedroom. Lips and tongues met in a frantic duel, need and desire spiraled higher and higher. Damian continued to stroke Antonio's cock even as their kissing grew hotter, rougher, more demanding. Hips grinding together, pre-cum seeped from their cocks, bathing their bellies with the evidence of their need.

Damian groaned again when Antonio reached up and wrapped his arms around him, stroking the sensitive spot at the base of his neck. When his hands skimmed down his back and settled on his ass, giving his buttocks a squeeze, Damian shuddered.

His lust soared. He tilted his head, took their kiss deeper. His cheeks hollowed as he suckled on Antonio's tongue. When Antonio's fingers traced the cleft of Damian's ass, he stroked his lover's

cock faster, rougher, in reaction. Antonio nipped at Damian's lip, drawing blood, an aphrodisiac for his vampire mate. The tiny pain forced a rumbling purr from Damian's chest.

Damian couldn't stand it anymore. He had to have more. Breaking the kiss, he snaked down Antonio's body until he was eye level with his mate's cock. With his hands fisted around the base of Antonio's cock, Damian's swirled his tongue around the head as if it were an ice cream cone he couldn't wait to eat. He flicked at the sensitive underside. The thick erection jerked in his grasp, pulsing as it grew thicker and longer. Damian flicked it repeatedly until Antonio writhed atop the bed.

Antonio sank his fingers into Damian's hair. "Suck it, dammit," he pleaded, his voice raspy with passion.

Damian chuckled, then slid his lips over the weeping cockhead in front of him, taking the steely length deep into his throat. He sucked and licked, teased and worshipped Antonio's cock, showing the other man just how he felt about him.

Antonio twisted his hands in Damian's hair, pulling and twisting it as he writhed on the bed, but still he didn't let up. He continued to suck and lick until he knew his mate was getting close to coming. Finally, he cupped Antonio's balls in one palm as he continued to stroke his lover's cock

with the other. They were taut, ready to explode.

It wouldn't be long now. He knew just what to do to send his mate over the edge. Without any warning, he inserted one thick finger into Antonio's ass up to the first knuckle, without lube of any kind. The momentary pain of entry was just what Antonio needed to come. Jet after jet of hot seed splashed into Damien's mouth and slid down his throat.

Unable to help himself, he thrust his hips against the bedding, his own body demanding release now that he'd eased his mate. Heat roared through his veins and his thighs began to tremble as he felt his whole body tighten. Within seconds, his come bathed the comforter below him and both he and Antonio lay panting on their backs, trying to catch their breath.

No matter how long they were together, the passion between them only seemed to burn brighter and hotter. *What would happen to that passion, that love, if he returned to Serenity?*

"Stop worrying, Damian. It will all work out. Come share a shower with me, then we'll head to bed. Maybe things will make more sense in the morning."

Damian nodded and followed his mate into their bathroom. He could only hope Antonio was right. He didn't want to lose one mate in order to claim the other.

Chapter Two

Antonio knew he was dreaming from the moment it began. The surroundings were unfamiliar to him, but the sense of impending danger was all too identifiable. Growing up in the Grazioso Crime Family had taught him to recognize the feel of danger from a very early age. As the oldest son, everyone expected he'd take his father's place as head of the family. Instead, he'd chosen a different route, becoming an enforcer on the side of law and order.

The scene around him grew sharper in clarity. Sounds and scents stood out in the vivid detail. He could hear the flurry of pounding paws crackling through fallen leaves. He could smell the stench of terror on the wind. Surrounded by trees, he tried to pinpoint his location, anything to help determine exactly what he was seeing. Yet nothing stuck out as indigenous to any particular area to help him narrow down the location. The only clue to his whereabouts was the inch-thick ice coating

the tree limbs. With over half of the country in the middle of a deep freeze, he could be anywhere.

As soon as *she* broke through the trees, he figured out where he was, whom he was seeing. Twila, Damian's mate. It had to be. Why else would he see the particular scene in his dreams? Seconds after the Black Panther ran past him, two human men carrying rifles, chased after her. The panther didn't slow even as one of the males stopped, took aim and fired a shot at her. The bullet went wide, embedding in the trunk of the tree inches above the big cat's head.

Rage consumed him, turning Antonio's vision red as the men continued to fire at the feline trying to outrun them. Every instinct inside him protested against him just standing there doing nothing but observing the scene playing out in front of him. With hands fisted down by his side, he tried to memorize the men's faces, anything about them that would help identify the males chasing Damian's mate.

One minute he was in the woods watching the men shoot at Twila, the next, he was standing in what was obviously a little girl's bedroom.

Twila was kneeling on the bedroom floor at the foot of a twin canopy bed, rocking back and forth as she sobbed into a pink blanket she had clutched to her chest. The one window in the bedroom was open, a white curtain billowing in the wind.

Antonio had no idea if he was seeing events that had already happened or an event that had yet to take place. The clock on the nightstand showed half-past three in the morning. He only wished he could tell the date as easily as he could the time.

The longer the woman cried, the more Antonio wanted to pull her into his arms to comfort her. If this was Damian's other mate, then who was the child's father? He knew he was going to have to tell Damian about this dream, but he didn't know what he was supposed to tell his mate about the child. As Twila continued to grieve, Antonio scanned the bedroom, looking for any clues about what had happened to cause her to break down.

A computer desk sat on the far side of the room, across from the bed. There were a few schoolbooks spread across the surface as well as a couple of pictures in frames. As Twila's sobs grew louder, Antonio moved to the desk, looking for anything with a date on it. Unfortunately, it didn't look like any of the papers were dated. His gaze moved to the framed photos.

One of the pictures showed Twila with her arms around a dark-haired girl with amber eyes, the spitting image of Damian. The child couldn't have been more than eight or nine in the picture, which would be about the right age to be Damian's daughter. The photo in the next frame

was a picture of Damian and Twila as teenagers. From the formal clothes the pair wore, it looked like they posed for the Prom or some similar event. Taken in context, it appeared his assumption had been correct. Damian had a daughter because why else would this picture be in the child's room if not so she could look at her father as she studied or before going to bed at night? He could only hope that once they arrived in Serenity it would be before whatever had broken Twila's heart. If Damian learned he had a child only to find out he'd lost her before getting to know her, it would destroy him.

Antonio couldn't let that happen. Even if he had to use his family's contacts, he'd make sure Damian would get to know his child. After one last glance at the grieving woman, he willed himself to wake. The sooner he contacted his father's people, the sooner he'd have the answers he needed. He couldn't let Damian down. He *wouldn't* let Damian down.

* * * *

Twila looked out the diner's window for the hundredth time in the last hour, a sense of impending doom pressing down on her and making her jumpy. She'd called and checked on her daughter half a dozen times since she came

home from school that afternoon and still the fear wouldn't leave her. She couldn't help it. With the Demon Lord Leonard still on the loose and her daughter's precognitive dream the other night, she was beyond tense.

As the hours ticked by with nothing happening, her nerves were getting the better of her. She constantly reached for the phone, desperate to search for Damian and yet every time, she put the phone down without dialing. Hell, she didn't even know where to begin looking for Emily's father though she did know someone with the connections to do so—Abby Coleman.

Twila was aware Abby Coleman knew people, people who had their hands in just about every facet of government. The more hours that passed worrying about her daughter, the more she wanted to reach out to Abby and have her *friends* locate Damian. As the dinner customers thinned, Twila once again reached for the phone. Before she could dial Abby's number, the bell above the door tinkled. Twila sighed, then dropped the phone back into the cradle. Lifting her gaze, she looked toward the door, ready to greet whoever had entered, anything to avoid placing the call, which would change her life.

When she saw who'd just come in, she smiled, her first real smile of the day. One of her closest friends, Sera Serveti, and her two mates, Noah

Andrews and Chance Mercer, were taking off their coats and hanging them on the coat rack by the door. Stepping from behind the counter, Twila gathered three menus and went to greet her friends. The threesome was just the distraction she needed. Besides, Chance and Noah were both Hunters and might be able to help her keep her daughter safe. What's more, if Emily was right in what she saw, eventually Damian would return to do the same. She just had to find a way to contact him...somehow...if he didn't show up first. "I'm so glad to see you all. What brings you out so late?" she asked, pulling Sera into her arms for a hug.

Sera returned the gesture, then stepped back when Noah started running his hand through his mate's braids. "I'm starving and since we just got off work over at the pub, I talked my men into taking me out to dinner."

Chance chuckled. "She had a craving for a cheeseburger. When her stomach growled before we even got the truck out of the parking lot, we decided to feed her now instead of making her wait until we got home."

"When Sera has a craving, it's best to just give in immediately or she'll nag until she gets what she wants," Noah added.

Sera stepped back, elbowing Noah in the gut. "That's not funny you two. I worked through

lunch. I can't help it if I'm starving."

Laughing, Twila tucked Sera's arm in hers and led her to one of the empty booths. "That's the second time one of your men mentioned cravings. Is there something you haven't told me?"

Sera blushed and placed her hand over her stomach.

Twila gasped in understanding. "You're pregnant?"

Nodding, Sera smiled, her happiness apparent for all to see. She practically glowed with it. "We didn't want to wait to have children. We just confirmed this morning that I'm expecting."

Twila squealed and dragged Sera back into her arms for another hug. "That's so wonderful. So, which one is the father? Do you know?"

Noah shrugged. "It doesn't matter. Whatever children we have will have two fathers regardless. It's not necessary for either of us to know because we wouldn't love the child any less if it wasn't born of our DNA."

"Besides," Chance added, "with both shifter and vampire blood running through his or her veins, it's not like we can go to a human doctor and ask them to run blood tests to determine the father."

After the threesome took their seats, Twila handed them their menus. "So do you have any idea when the baby's due? I want to throw you a

baby shower.”

“I think I’m only a couple weeks along. If that’s true, then it looks like it will be a Christmas baby, or close to it.”

“Fantastic, that gives me plenty of time to throw together your baby shower.” Twila pulled an order pad out of her apron. “Now, what will you have to eat? We can’t let you go hungry. Shifters burn thousands of calories a day normally. Pregnant shifters need even more than that.”

Sera nibbled on her bottom lip and scanned the menu. After a few moments, she looked up and blushed when her stomach growled again. “I’ll take a bacon double cheeseburger, an order of fries and a large milk.”

Chance closed his menu and pushed it in the center of the table, atop Sera’s. “That sounds good, make that two orders.”

Noah added his menu to the pile, then handed them over to Twila. “Make it three,” he added. “Since Sera’s cutting caffeine out of her diet during her pregnancy, we are, too, which means no more soda or coffee.”

Sera grimaced. “I’m really going to miss my coffee in the morning.”

Twila tucked a lock of hair behind her ear before ripping their order off the pad. “They make some really good decaf now, not like when I was

pregnant with Emily. You don't have to give up coffee all together if you don't want to."

"Really?" Sera asked. At Twila's nod, Sera sighed. "That's good news. I'll have to remember to pick some up next time we go to the grocery store."

"I'll be right back. I'm going to place your order, then we can chat. There's something I want to talk to you all about."

Chance and Noah both looked up, but Noah was the one who spoke. "Is everything all right?"

Twila shrugged. "I'm not sure. I need your advice about something." When Chance's eyebrows lifted in question, Twila added, "Your professional advice." Before they could ask her another question, she turned away and headed toward the kitchen. Now she just had to figure out what exactly she was going to tell them. She knew one thing. She couldn't live looking over her shoulder constantly. Something had to give before she gave herself an ulcer or worse before the events Emily had predicted actually came to pass.

Chapter Three

Sera's gaze narrowed as she watched Twila head into the kitchen, her back ramrod straight and her gait uneven and rushed. She could feel her friend's fear as if it was her own. Whatever was going on, whatever it was Twila wanted to talk to her men about, it had Sera worried. She waited until Twila disappeared into the kitchen and the chance no one would overhear their conversation before fixing her gaze on her mates. "What do you think she wants to talk to you guys about? It's not like Twila to ask anyone for help."

"I don't know, baby," Noah replied. "But whatever it is, it has her seriously worried."

"That's what I'm sensing as well." Sera turned to Chance, placed her hand atop his and squeezed. "What do you think?"

Chance shrugged, furrowing his brows as he stared out the diner window, seemingly lost in thought. "I'm not sure, but we'll find out soon enough. If your friend needs our help, we'll do

whatever we can to see that she gets it."

Nibbling on her bottom lip, she couldn't help but glance back toward the kitchen. "Something tells me that whatever she has to tell us will herald changes none of us are prepared for. Since my arrival here in Serenity, Twila has become a very close friend. She's had a hard life, raising her daughter without the help of her mate. I don't like seeing her worried. She has enough on her plate."

Noah reached over and placed his hand atop Sera and Chance's joined ones. "Then we'll make sure she gets all the help she needs."

Nodding, Sera once again looked toward the kitchen where Twila had disappeared. "I think, depending on Twila's problem, we might need Abby and her contacts, if you know what I mean. I have a feeling whatever problem she has to tell us about will require all the help we can get to solve."

Sera narrowed her eyes, then met each of her mate's gazes before looking back toward the kitchen. "I think it might be wise to bring Abby and her friends in to help as soon as possible. With that demon still on the loose and the way it's been eerily quiet since his release, I sense major trouble ahead."

Before either Noah or Chance could comment, the kitchen doors swung open and Twila came out carrying a tray full of platters. They'd have to resume this conversation after she ate because

right now, her baby demanded red meat and until she satisfied the craving, her thoughts wouldn't be on Twila's problem but instead on her stomach. She wouldn't do that to Twila. Besides, she could smell the burger from here and the vampire half of her hungered as much for the taste of half-raw meat to satisfy its need for blood as the baby she carried.

* * * *

As Twila set the platters down in front of Sera and her mates and stepped back, her stomach gave a nervous flutter. Deep down, despite any help that her friends might give her, she knew to the depths of her soul that she'd have to do her best to locate her child's father. Knowing she would more than likely see Damien again sent shards of pure fear whipping through her, even after all the time that had passed since his abandonment. Goddess, why after so many years did the thought of seeing him make her both giddy and distressed? Just the thought of telling him they'd made a child together, a child he didn't know anything about, had her forehead breaking out in a nervous sweat.

Her mind protested her body's responses to the upcoming confrontation. Why should she be nervous, after all? She wasn't the one who'd left town with no word, no goodbye and no

explanations as though nothing and no one in Serenity mattered—not even the woman he claimed was his mate. With that firmly in mind, Twila steeled herself to do the one thing she'd never imagined doing—asking her mate for help. She could do this—she would because her daughter needed him, needed his help and so did she. If it became painful because of their shared past, well she could suck it up. She needed to do this for Emily. Her daughter was all that mattered.

She'd give Sera, Chance and Noah a few more minutes to eat and then she'd join them at their table and tell them everything she knew. Even if they couldn't help her themselves, they knew others who might be able to lead her in the right direction. Hell, for that matter, Abby Coleman, one of the newer residents of Serenity, knew a lot of people and not all of them followed the rules.

Feeling better about the situation, Twila smiled, forcing away some of the tension building inside her. After washing down the diner counter thoroughly, she peeked over at the trio. She must have been lost in thought longer than she imagined because all three were looking in her direction with their plates piled atop each other at the end of their table.

After taking one deep breathe, Twila headed toward the pie fridge and took four slices of strawberry covered cheesecake out, setting them

on a tray. Offering them dessert is the least she could do while she told them about her woes. Setting the tray down at the end of the table, she slid in beside Sera and handed out the dessert. *Now, how do I go about starting the conversation?*

Sera dove right into her dessert while Twila watched, filled with amusement. She'd have to remember never to get in front of Sera and food, especially while she carried a babe because she inhaled her dessert. Five huge bites and the massive piece of cheesecake had disappeared. Sera wiped her mouth, then looked up. A blush spread across her cocoa skin. "What?"

Twila couldn't help it. She chuckled. Shaking her head, she reached out and one-arm hugged her friend. "Thanks for the laugh. After the last few nights, I really needed it."

Sera tilted her head, obviously waiting for an explanation.

Sighing, Twila pushed her plate away and sat back in the booth.

Noah and Chance followed suit, crossing their arms over their chests.

Twila swallowed, then leaned forward, bracing her hands on the edge of the table. "Emily's father is my mate. I got pregnant at sixteen, shortly before Damian Santiago, her father, left town without a word. He didn't know about her before he left and as far as I know, he still doesn't know

about her. But Damian wasn't just a shifter, he was also a seer."

Noah leaned forward, nodded. "Go on, tell us the rest. What has got you so upset?"

"Emily inherited her father's abilities. The last few nights have been rough at our house because she's been dreaming, seeing."

From across the table, Chance nodded. He tilted his head and narrowed his eyes as though deep in thought.

After licking her lips, Twila continued telling her friends of her plight. "She sees herself tied to a tree, me lying crumpled on the ground bleeding and her father fighting our abductors."

Chance nodded again, then uncrossed his arms. "So, you know that your daughter's father—your mate—needs to be here. Just as you know someone will have gained possession of Emily. What you don't know is how or when. Do I have it right?"

Twila nodded, thankful she didn't have to explain the seriousness of Emily's visions to them.

Sera gave Twila's hand a quick squeeze, then reached for her milk. After taking a sip, she looked toward her mates, then returned her attention to Twila. "So we not only have to find your mate and convince him to return to Serenity—without making it look like your begging—but we have to be on guard for someone stalking Emily."

Twila nodded.

Sera smiled. "Piece of cake." Sera paused to finish off her cheesecake before voicing her thoughts. "You know, Abby and I have gotten pretty close. I imagine, with her associates and the connections my mates have as Hunters, it should be relatively easy to locate your mate. Don't forget, too, with all the Hunters here in town, we shouldn't have a problem gathering a few bodyguards for you and your daughter."

Twila's shoulders dropped as some of the tension growing inside her eased. She'd made the right decision telling her friends, felt it in her soul that she'd done what she needed to help ensure her daughter had a future.

Chapter Four

Antonio paced his father's office like a caged animal. No matter how many times his father summoned him here, he always cringed inside, expecting to find something amiss. A Vampire he may be, but that didn't make him a monster. But times like now, when he needed to ask his father a huge favor, he knew without a doubt his family would help. The Grazioso's always stood together in front of an adversary—and the creature they were after had definitely been marked as an adversary. One the family had already come together to face in Serenity once before.

He could still see it, the day they'd discovered that something was attacking Serenity's residents, something completely evil. Antonio had been unable to go to his honorary little sister's rescue then, but he'd heard all about the things going on in the sleepy little town. Running his hand through his hair, he stared at the door, willing it to open. He had to hurry if he intended on keeping

up with Damian.

As soon as he'd told his mate about the dream he'd had, Damian sat up and tossed the blankets off. "It's time. You need to call in your father's people for this, too, Antonio."

When Antonio protested, he'd held up his hand. "I know you need to involve your father in this. Besides, you and I both know you wouldn't have been so upset about the dream if it weren't possible you might end up being another mate for Twila."

He had a point. Once his father heard that he'd found his second mate, or potentially found her, at any rate, he'd do whatever he had to ensure she stayed safe. That protection would include any family she might have because family meant everything to his father.

Just thinking about Emily, the little girl he'd seen in his dream, had him anxious. An enforcer in his own right, he'd never really feared anything since he'd grown into the man he now was. But seeing Damian's mate and daughter bloodied, perhaps dying, ripped into his soul.

Rubbing his chest with his fist, Antonio sighed, then headed for the low-slung leather sofa lining one wall of his father's study. He was tired, having spent the last few hours traveling as a large timber wolf to his father's retreat in the Catskills. The sooner he reported in to his father, the better

off everyone would soon be. Getting to his feet, Antonio headed to the window that faced out to the back gardens. He saw his mother out there, talking with wide hand movements to one of his female cousins. Curious, as his mother was usually demure and circumspect, he wondered what had her upset.

Before he could think on that further, he heard the doorknob twist, then the turn of a lock echoed throughout the room. He didn't hear his father move up behind him, but he could feel him there regardless. They stood together, silently, watching through the window. Eventually, his mother and cousin walked away, leaving the walled garden empty. When his father put his hand on his shoulder and gave it a firm squeeze, he knew it was time to tell him everything.

"Come, have a seat, Antonio."

Nodding, he followed his father back to the sofa, joining him there. "I've come to request your help, Father."

Marco Grazioso's brows rose in apparent surprise.

Antonio could understand why. He knew how ruthless his father could be, in business and his personal life. Not wanting to share the life his father led, he'd begun to distance himself from the family.

"What's so important that you'd ask for my

help knowing that it goes against what you stand for, Son?"

"I ask for help because of my mate and his child. Damian's from Serenity and he sees his other mate—the mother of his child, though he doesn't know of her yet—grieving, bleeding, their daughter tied to a tree and the Demon Lord Leonard about to make a sacrifice. With so much at stake, we'd like to take some of your men to watch our backs."

Marco stood, walked over to stand in front of the window with his hands clasped behind his back. "Is there anything else I should know?"

Antonio joined his father. Meeting his gaze in the glass, he slowly nodded. "I dreamed of her father, dreamed of the child as well. I don't normally have that ability as you well know. Which could only mean..."

"That she's your mate, just as Damian is."

"Yes. It worries me, to tell you the truth. She'll be so conflicted when we show up, what with Damian taking off to search for me and never returning for her." Antonio shrugged. "She might blame me for keeping her mate away from her and even if she doesn't, I still feel guilty that she had to raise their daughter alone all this time. I should have made Damian return to Serenity before now. Showing up during a crisis isn't going to endear her to us, that's for sure."

"It seems to me you're worrying about a great many things that may never come to pass. Isn't it better to go there, explain things and, if she is stubborn about not wanting to get involved, chase after her? It sounds to me like she deserves a good old-fashioned romance."

"You're right, Father. When we talk like this, it's hard to remember you're a ruthless son of a bitch."

Marco chuckled. Clasping Antonio's shoulder, Marco met his gaze. "Gather up Damian while I make arrangements for me and my men to travel to Serenity. It's been a while since I've seen Abby anyway. We will make sure your new daughter and mate survive the Demon. You have my word on that as head of the Grazioso Horde."

Knowing that his father was as good as his word, Antonio nodded and made to leave. "Damian and I will return here shortly. We fear that it may already be too late to prevent the child's abduction."

"Then we'll do whatever we must to retrieve my soon-to-be grandchild."

His heart already feeling lighter, Antonio left his father's lodge.

* * * *

Damian couldn't believe what Antonio had done

for him, knowing what it might cost him. Antonio did his best never to ask his father for any type of favor because they learned long ago that because they were on opposite sides of the law, they didn't always see eye to eye on how certain things should be handled. For Antonio to go to his father and ask for help protecting the only women Damian had ever loved, humbled him. He didn't know how one person could be so selfless and yet generous to another. He'd like to think he'd have done the same thing if he was in Antonio's shoes, but he didn't know for sure and that made him think. Whatever does or doesn't happen with Twila in the future, he had to make absolutely certain Antonio never felt slighted, never felt less loved and needed than he truly was.

With Antonio asleep in the passenger seat, he had plenty of time to think as he drove this leg of the journey. The closer they got to Serenity the harder it was not to remember the joy of his youth, the town that called to him and the glow of first love. He had to do whatever he must to make sure he didn't hurt either of his mates because he hadn't lied to Antonio. He intended on claiming Twila as his. He just hoped she could handle that she'd have to share him with another man.

For hours, Damian drove letting his mind wander, replaying his memories of the past he shared with both his mates, the good times he

shared, the joys and laughter. His heart felt heavy when he thought about how he'd left Twila, without much more than a short goodbye. He swore he would keep in touch. At the time, he'd intended on keeping that promise. Somehow though, days, then weeks and months had passed without him calling or writing and by then, he thought it was kinder to let her get on with her life without him. Perhaps, he was too cowardly to admit that he'd left because he had to search for something more, something she couldn't provide him.

Damian tightened his hand on the steering wheel when he noticed the sign on the side of the road announcing his arrival. Leaning over, he shook his mate's shoulder. Antonio woke quickly, as he always did, going from asleep to alert instantaneously. "We're here."

Antonio yawned, then scratched his face. "How long have I been asleep?"

"A little over four hours."

"We made good time then. So, where to first?"

Damian continued to clench his hands on the wheel, then turned to park on the shoulder of the road. After stopping the car, he faced Antonio. "I don't know. I don't know whether I should go straight to Twila's house or go to a motel in town and stop by the family diner sometime after I get a little shut eye."

"It might be better to wait until you've had some rest. You want to be fresh the first time to see your mate after not seeing her in a decade."

"Are you okay with this?"

Antonio reached over and squeezed his hand. "I sure am. Will you be if it turns out that you have to share me as well?"

Damian smiled. "It would make me happy. She deserves to receive as much love as possible and so do you."

"Then get this truck of yours back on the road. We have a woman to woo."

Feeling lighter in heart, Damian put his SUV in gear and pulled back on the road, heading toward the bed and breakfast on the edge of town.

Chapter Five

Twila reached for the phone on the first ring, afraid it would wake her mother and daughter. Within minutes, she was dressed and running out the door, racing toward her diner. Chills raced down her spine as she sped down the highway toward town. She didn't know what she'd do if the diner was a total loss. She only hoped that Mrs. Mortimer had called the fire department before calling the house.

In half the time it normally took, she arrived at the restaurant. Flames shot out through broken windows and erupted through holes in the roof. Her heart clenched in grief. The fire destroyed her business. They'd have to rebuild. Sure, she had insurance, but it wouldn't cover everything. She just hoped that no one had been hurt when the fire started.

Jumping out of her car, she headed toward the Sheriff, Ben Marcum, who was speaking to Raine Nolan, the new Fire Chief. Both Ben and Raine

turned to greet her when she reached them. "What happened here?" she asked, her voice quivering, full of unshed tears.

Raine nodded toward the burning building. "It looks like arson. I'll have to wait until I can get in there and investigate, obviously. But I can smell the accelerant they used pretty easily. I don't think they were trying to hide what they were doing."

Twila's head snapped up. Her eyes widened. She staggered as realization struck. Blindly, she reached out for Ben's hand. She needed to hold on to him before she fell to the ground. "Send a deputy out to my house, Ben. Make sure my mama and Emily are safe, please."

Ben didn't question, just reached for his phone and dialed his office. After relaying his instructions, he closed his phone. "What's going on, Twila?"

"I think the fire was set to get me out of the house. To leave Emily unprotected." Twila could hear the fear in her voice, the stark terror and hysteria. What would she do if Ben didn't believe her or wrote her off as crazy? What would she do if he did?

Instead of dismissing her fears, Sheriff Marcum squeezed Twila's hand. "Then we better return to your house and make sure that everyone is safe. I'll leave Raine here with a few of my deputies to gather witness reports for her arson

investigation.” He turned to the Fire Chief. “Is that okay with you, Raine?”

“Of course. I’ll send you a copy of my report as soon as I have it ready.” Turning toward Twila, she gave her shoulder a quick squeeze before stepping back. “I hope everything is okay at home. Emily is a beautiful little girl.”

Choking back a sob, Twila nodded. “She is,” she whispered.

When Ben led her toward his Police Issued SUV, she didn’t argue. She wasn’t in any shape to drive anyway.

She didn’t remember much about the ride home, not after Ben snapped the seatbelt around her and shut the door. All her thoughts, all her energy, centered on her daughter. What if Emily wasn’t there when she got home? What if she were already too late?

Beside her, she knew Ben had tried calling the house and no one had answered. Not even her mother. It didn’t look good. She just prayed that they were still alive. If they were alive, then there was a chance they could be rescued. *If they were alive.*

* * * *

Damian woke, gasping. He needed to get to Twila. Now. She needed him. Them. Reaching over, he

shook Antonio, waking him instantly. "Twila needs us. They have Emily." He didn't have to say anything else.

After shoving off the covers, they were dressed and out the door in a couple minutes. Damian drove to Twila's house as though the hounds of Hell were chasing him. He could feel every moment of agony that his mate suffered. Every agonizing worry and sadness that she experienced, he felt it, too. He needed to hold her, to let her know that she'd never be alone again. He needed to let her know that they'd find Emily and bring her back. That they'd bring her back.

While he drove, Antonio was on the phone with his father, putting out feelers, trying to figure out where Emily might be. Before dawn broke, they'd know where Emily was, and by nightfall, they'd have a rescue plan in place.

Damian found Twila in her backyard in the arms of another man. His panther grew enraged, snarled out a warning. It didn't want another man comforting its mate.

The male's head snapped up. He dropped his arms from around the female and backed up, putting space between them immediately. Rationally, Damian could see that the male wore a Sheriff's uniform and a wedding ring and only offered comfort but the panther inside him snarled and raged that another male had put its scent on

her.

Damian could feel Antonio's rage brewing, anger at the spilling of an innocent's blood and horror that he would take a child as a blood sacrifice for a demon. He needed to get Twila somewhere private, where she could vent without feeling others were watching her misery. If he remembered right, there used to be a sofa in there where she could stretch out if she needed to. Scooping Twila in his arms, Damian headed toward the closed-in back porch. She tried to twist out of his arms, doing her best to dislodge his hold. "Twila, baby, it's Damian. It's just me, sweetheart."

Instead of calming her, she started crying harder, pounding her fists onto his chest as she grieved. She needed privacy. She wouldn't want her neighbors to see her break down this way. The least he could do was protect her now. He should have been here all along. But then he wouldn't have Antonio. He couldn't think about that. Not now.

As he expected, he found the battered sofa on the back porch, just as it has been a decade earlier. He and Twila had spent plenty a make-out session on it during their teens in fact. If Antonio was right and Emily was his daughter, it wouldn't surprise him that they conceived her on that sofa. After placing Twila on the couch as gently as he

could, Damian knelt at her feet. Antonio followed suit. Taking her hands in his, Damian waited until she met his gaze. It took quite a while, but he waited patiently. She deserved to take as much time as she wanted, especially after all that she'd suffered.

When her tear-filled eyes met his, he made the most important introduction of his life and the hardest. "Twila, this is Antonio Grazioso, our mate. Yours...and mine." He probably should have waited to make the introductions, knew it would have been the smartest thing to do, but he wouldn't have her think that he was hiding things from her, not ever again. He did that when they were teens and he'd never do that to her again. That had been his mistake in the past and he'd never repeat it.

Her gaze widened in shock, her head tilted to the side, then she gave a short nod as though she finally understood something though she didn't comment on it at all. All of a sudden, she hunched down, curled in on herself and shuddered, letting out huge, gut-wrenching sobs. Unable to take it another minute, Damian moved forward and took Twila in his arms. Antonio followed suit, wrapping the both of them in his.

* * * *

Wrapped in her mates' arms, Twila held onto the comfort they were offering her with both hands. Her daughter was out there somewhere, alone, probably scared out of her mind and crying for her mama. Just the thought of the fear she must feel had Twila's gut clenching in agony. Damian and Antonio continued to rock her back and forth as though she were a baby in need of soothing. Her child, her family meant everything to her, but now her mama had passed on and her daughter was in the hands of a demon.

Great, racking sobs washed over Twila. At least she knew that her aunt and grandmother could be trusted to handle the mess with the diner. Tucking her knees beneath her chin, Twila allowed her tears to run free. How could she have been so stupid? She should have known that the fire at the diner was set as a distraction. Anyone who took the time to learn about her would know that the diner belonged to her and a fire there would have her running toward it.

Time passed, it could have been mere minutes or even hours. Eventually, her tears dried up. Only then did she truly realize how precarious her position was. She lay sprawled over two men, one her mate she hadn't seen in a decade and the other a perfect stranger—a stranger that apparently knew her mate intimately and who would want to know her the same way.

When she'd come home, she seen her mother lying in the entryway, her throat ripped out, a wound typical of a shifter—from one of their own here in Serenity. Her daughter's bed had been empty, her nightgown tossed on the floor and her clothes she'd worn to school the day before missing. The only reason she suspected the Demon Leonard had her daughter was the dream that Emily had several nights ago that foretold of the kidnapping. Now that Emily's father was here just as she predicted, there was no doubt in her mind that is who had her. She just had no idea where to find her. She wouldn't rest until her little girl was home where she belonged. If Twila had to die like her daughter's vision foretold to ensure Emily lived, so be it.

Lifting her head, she really looked at Antonio for the first time. Something about him seemed familiar to her. "Did you say your name is Antonio Grazioso? As in related to Marco Grazioso?" When he nodded, Twila gave him the first real smile in what seemed like hours.

"Why? Do you know him?" Antonio asked.

"Yeah. I met him when he came up here when Abby was having problems. He came by the diner a few times for meals. He seemed like a real nice man. Considering..."

Antonio and Damian both chuckled before the lighthearted moment passed. "Well he's on his

way. We've already been in contact with him. Damian's started having dreams about you. About Emily and you, about what might happen here so we've been heading this way. My father and some of his men should be here in a few more hours and we'll be fanning out, looking for your daughter. Within twenty-four hours, we should know where she's at and have a rescue plan in motion."

Twila's swallow passed the sudden lump lodged in her throat. Tears spilled passed the corners of her eyes. Fisting her hands together, she met both of their gazes...first Antonio's, then Damian's. "Thank you. Both of you."

"There's no need to thank us. You're our mate. She's our daughter," Damian whispered.

Twila's startled gaze jumped to Damian's. "How did you know?"

Smiling, Damian shrugged. "Well, we were pretty much all over each other that last summer, in each other's pockets, so to speak. I know you were a virgin before me and I know we were mates. I couldn't see you just jumping into bed with anyone, even out of spite after I abandoned you. And she's about the right age to be mine from the visions I've seen."

"Oh," Twila whispered. Why did it hurt that she thought maybe he might have asked around about her during the years he'd been gone and hadn't? She'd have thought she'd have thicker

skin than that. Right now her daughter was missing, her mother dead, and she was upset that he hadn't asked about her during the years he'd been gone. What was wrong with her?

Nothing is wrong with you, Twila. Your mind needs something else to think on right now to keep you from going into a nervous breakdown. Don't be too hard on yourself.

Antonio?

Yes.

How are you doing this?

I'm a vampire. I can do a lot of things. Besides, I'm your mate. Even though we're not bound yet, I can already sense your thoughts and emotions. It will get stronger with time. I'll be leaving soon to give you time with your first mate, to get reacquainted with him. He has missed you every day that he's been away from you and hasn't known how to make you understand why he had to leave you so he could find me.

You're the reason he left?

He sensed that he needed a man for a mate. And didn't realize he needed the both of us. That it would take two mates to complete him.

I understand – I think. Serenity has a lot of Triadic relationships. Thank you for understanding and for giving us this time. But don't be gone long if you can help it because I need to know what is going on to find my daughter and I'd like to get to know you, too.

"Damian, my father should be arriving any minute and I need to meet him at Abby's. You

should stay here with Twila. I'll be a few hours, start organizing some searches, then come back here and get some shut eye, then you can take my place if you like."

Damian nodded. "That sounds good."

When it appeared that Damian was just going to let Antonio leave like that, Twila shoved his shoulder. "Aren't you going to give him a kiss goodbye? Don't ignore him on my account. If you normally show him affection, don't stop because of me." She could tell she shocked both men because both their jaws seemed to drop a couple inches.

"Really?" They both asked in unison.

"Really."

Sinking one hand in his mate's hair, Damian leaned forward and claimed Antonio's lips in a thorough kiss, licking and nipping at his lips until Antonio let him in. Once Antonio surrendered, Damian moaned. He returned his kiss with the same hunger, matching him stroke for stroke, thrust for thrust.

Twila's groan snapped them out of it. "That was hot," she whispered.

Antonio blushed, the tips of his ears even turned pink. "On that note, I'm out of here."

Within seconds, they were alone with only the past separating them.

"Why?"

Chapter Six

Damian didn't even pretend to misunderstand Twila. He knew what she wanted to know. Why did he leave her? Why did he stay away? Still kneeling between her legs, he placed his hands on her knees and looked in her eyes. He wanted her to see his sincerity, to see the truth. "Because I couldn't hurt you anymore and because I couldn't fully commit to you, not when I didn't know what was wrong with me, why I kept looking over my shoulder for another man to mate with. Every time we made love, I felt as if it wasn't completely right and it wasn't because of you. What we had was beautiful and I loved you so much, but I didn't feel whole and I didn't know why. I thought there was supposed to be one mate so something must have been wrong with me, that I was screwed up somehow. So I went looking for answers. By the time I found them, I was scared to come back. I was afraid you'd not want me if I had a male mate that you'd have to share me with."

"So instead of explaining to me, instead of asking me to wait or to come with you to search, you left me, abandoned me. You didn't even say goodbye to me, Damian."

Damian hung his head. What could he say? She was absolutely right. "I was a coward, Twila. I was afraid that if I told you, you'd convince me to stay and I'd never find my answers. I'd loved you so much, I would have stayed and I might have eventually regretted it. I didn't want that, didn't want to tarnish our love like that. I would have rather you hated me for leaving you, then me hated you for staying. And how selfish does that sound?"

Twila's lips curled up in a tiny smile. "I can actually understand that. Believe it or not, in the last few months there have been quite a few ménage relationships develop in this town. No one will bat an eye when we step out together."

Damian's heart stuttered in his chest, then sped up. "What are you saying?"

* * * *

She looked up and met his gaze. "Make love to me, Damian." Scrambling out of his arms, she stood up, went to the nearest window and closed the blind. "Right here, right now." She moved to another window and twisted the lever to close its

blind as well. She needed to forget just for a moment that her baby was in the hands of a monster. A monster that would have no compunction at killing a child—especially one as gifted as her Emily.

Twila desperately wanted to be there when the Hunters made their attempt in her daughter's rescue, but the demon would sense both her and Damian if they were anywhere near his lair. That being the case, she had to stay behind and wait on word from the others, no matter how her soul cried out in agony. If she could shut out the horrors in her mind for just a few minutes, she knew she could get a firmer grip on her emotions. She needed to be strong for her daughter—and for her mate. At least Antonio had gone to get his father's people in position. Having the Grazioso family at their backs—even if they were a vampire mafia family—eased her mind a little.

As she peeked at Damian through half-open eyes, he stood and followed suit, walking around the room, going from window to window turning the lever until all the blinds were shut. Soon, they were alone, isolated from the outside world, and surrounded only by the room's overstuffed furniture. Despite the agony of missing her kidnapped daughter and the very real fear that she might never hold Emily again, sexual tension thickened the air around them. How could she

want to jump her mate's bones when right now their daughter was probably terrified, afraid and alone as she'd never been before? She was a horrible mother. Guilt surged through her, almost overpowering her.

When Damian turned to face her and held out open arms, she moved into his embrace and rested her head on his shoulder. It took everything she had not to give into the grief choking her. If she cried now, he wouldn't make love to her and she needed this, needed him, at least for now. She'd think about the long term later. Much later.

Heat pooled in her middle as he wrapped his arms around her, his large hands splayed over her back, the curve of her hip. He rubbed her back in slow circles soothing her until she relaxed into him. Soft kisses started at her temple, moved down over her cheek, to her jaw, before covering her lips in a tender caress. Letting out a soft sigh, Twila licked his bottom lip, begging him to open up to her, to taste her. Would he taste as good as he did when they were teenagers? Had his lovemaking improved over the years of their separation? Regardless of the pain she felt knowing he'd taken other lovers, was in fact mated to another—a male—she needed to feel him inside her. This may be the only time she'd have with her mate ever again. Even if she couldn't say the words locked inside her heart, she could let

him feel her passion, her love for him, with her body. Despite his abandonment, she *still* loved him. Probably always would.

When he pulled her hips against the hard evidence of his arousal, she wrapped her arms around his neck and groaned into his mouth. His erection pressed against her lower abdomen and she nearly collapsed, her legs trembling with her need of him. Pulling free, she yanked her blouse up over her head, uncaring that a few buttons popped loose and scattered across the floor.

This may very well be the last chance she had to show him how much he meant to her. How much she wanted him—and Antonio—in her life. She may be shy at voicing her emotions, but she had no problem showing them. She'd seize this chance with her mate and could only hope that he and Antonio hadn't lied about wanting to both mate with her. If she did discover they were lying, well, she'd deal with that later.

Keeping her gaze fixed on his, she unbuttoned the fly of her jeans. Sliding the zipper down with a metallic hiss, she shimmied out of the tight pants and kicked them halfway across the room. When she looked up, she became suddenly shy at Damian's intense stare. What would he think of her wanton behavior? Would he think less of her for her sudden hunger, this desperate need eating her alive? How could he not?

Damian continued to stare, his body as still as a marble statue.

"What?" she asked. Anxiety crashed over her, so much so she nervously wet her lips. She looked around to find her clothes. How could she have made such a fool of herself? "If you don't want to—"

"Shh... Oh, baby. I never said I didn't want to make love with you. I just can't believe that you're standing here in front of me, wearing nothing but that sexy underwear set. I've hurt you so much and still you're willing to give yourself to me." He scrubbed his hand over his face, then speared his fingers through his tousled, chocolate brown hair. "I've never seen a more beautiful woman in my life. I'm debating on whether or not I should pinch myself so I can wake up. This is surely a dream. A dream I've been praying would come true from the moment I left Serenity all those years ago."

Her face burned at the compliment. He'd never failed to surprise her, even as teenagers. Perhaps that was what she saw in him—could *still* see in him. Well, that and his lean, hard body and massive cock. He'd certainly filled out in the years since he'd been out on his own. Her face heated even more at the thought. What in the world was wrong with her? She shouldn't be this damn horny with her daughter missing. There *had* to be something wrong with her. "Why do I want you

so bad, Damian? They could be torturing our daughter even now and yet I just want to strip you naked and lick you from head to toe."

She stood transfixed as he slowly undressed. He shucked off his shirt, tossing it unceremoniously to the floor. He raised his face, looked her in the eyes and slowly unbuttoned his jeans, opening them to her hungry gaze. When she knew she had his complete attention, she slowly licked her lips. His body tensed. His dick grew impossibly longer, thicker. She swallowed past the lump that seemed to have lodged in her throat at first sight of his erection spilling out of his jeans.

A sense of power rushed through her when she witnessed Damian's response to such a simple action. With a wicked wink and naughty smile, he lowered his jeans past his thighs. When he stood naked before her, she reached back to unclasp her bra. She wanted to feel his body against hers, skin to skin.

"Don't."

She paused and gave him a questioning look.

"I want to finish undressing you." His intense stare traveled from her lips to her breasts, then down to inspect her very toes before moving back up to meet her gaze. "I want to peel your skimpy panties from your luscious body with my teeth. I want to lap at your cream and suck on your clit until you bathe me with your climax." His eyelids

slid to half-mast and his mouth lifted at one corner into a naughty smile. "I want you under me, your legs thrown over my shoulders, screaming my name as I fuck you into unconsciousness."

Her breath hitched. Her knees buckled. Sweat worked its way down her spine. She whimpered as he closed the distance between them and pulled her into his arms for a scorching kiss. Holy hell. What did this man do to her that had her melting at just a look, a touch? This was so unlike her.

Damian groaned as he pulled her tight against his chest. He palmed the back of her head, tilting it to the side to give him better access to suckle at the curve of her neck. She whimpered in his arms as her cream seeped from her pussy, coating the inside of her thighs with the evidence of her arousal. What this man did to evoke such a response from her, she would never know. He nipped her lips, begging entrance to the heated moisture of her mouth. She opened for him, her tongue meeting his as they tangled together, dueling together.

She could taste his minty toothpaste and hint of the coffee he must have sipped before looking for her. It all blended, her taste and his, her urgency and his, until she couldn't imagine ever forgetting his taste, his touch—even if she lived to be one hundred. She melted in his arms, her body becoming limp and pliant as he held her, kissed

her, using his mouth on her as no other ever had.

Every slant of his lips, every tiny nibble of his teeth, showed her his need. The primal force between them rocked her to her core. She slumped in his arms as her legs finally gave out, unable to hold her up a moment longer. She tightened her arms around his neck as he lifted her into his arms and carried her to the chaise lounge.

He sat with her in his lap and nibbled at her lips, his hands roaming over her back and over the curve of her hip as she straddled him. Turning, he laid her on the sage green lounge and moved over her, his hands and mouth caressing her, seeming to worship her trembling body.

"I love the way you respond to me, baby. The way the goose bumps rise on your flesh when I kiss you, when I whisper in your ear. The way your arms tremble and your legs quiver when you're wrapped around me. I've missed you so much. I've missed this, having you thrashing beneath me."

Twila couldn't believe what he could do to her. His voice, his words had power over her every response, her every emotion. She knew she should be fighting him, fighting this. He'd had plenty of time to return to her and he'd chosen not to. She shook her head. She couldn't think about that right now. She just wanted to lose herself in him, in this one moment of time. The way her body

came to life when he was near her, the desperate craving inside her to feel his touches, his gentle caresses, it sometimes scared her, but exhilarated her as well. Did she affect him the same way? By the Goddess, she'd give anything to read his mind right now.

She wondered if it was natural, the craving, the longing she felt for this man she didn't even know anymore. Was it a by-product of the stress of their daughter's kidnapping? Whatever it was, it was heady and frightening, delicious and horrifying, tantalizing and scandalous.

Her head thrashed on the cushion. Air caressed her breasts when her bra seemed to melt away. Her nipples pebbled, becoming hard points and he covered first one, then the other with his mouth and hands, pulling and tweaking them with his lips and fingers. She shivered as pulses of heat ran from where his tongue flicked the rosy tip of one breast straight to her clit.

With one last pull, he lifted his head, moving over to worship her other breast.

Fire ripped through her blood when the moist heat of his mouth closed over the rigid bud. She groaned, desperate now to feel him inside her. Thrusting her fingers through his hair, she held him to her, desperately seeking relief. Her clit throbbed, pulsed out a rhythm matching the pull of his mouth on her flesh. Her lust raged, a

burning inferno she desperately wanted to quell.

She nearly screamed with anticipation when he kissed his way down over her ribs and stomach, thrusting his tongue into her navel. She squirmed beneath him, torn between the desire to both pull his mouth back to her breast and leaving him to finish what he wanted to do.

"God, I've never had someone remove my panties this way," she gasped, panting as he gripped her panties with his teeth and began to pull. A husky chuckle greeted her comment and she groaned. Christ, the man even laughed sexy.

When he finally removed her panties, he settled between her legs, his cheek resting on her thigh.

Warm puffs of air caressed her needy flesh and she shivered. How did you ask someone to get busy without sounding impatient and rude? If he didn't do something soon, she might rip out his hair in frustration.

"I'm going to make you scream, Twila," he whispered against her creaming pussy. "I'm going to make you scream and cum like you never have before."

She whimpered in frustration, in desperate need. Why didn't he do it already and stop talking about it? Her body already cried out for him. She thrust her hips up in invitation, in demand.

He chuckled again. His warm breath caressed the inside of her thighs, brushing the curls of her

pussy. Her clit throbbed with anticipation and finally, when her every nerve shrieked in desperation, he lowered his head.

The rasp of his tongue laving her sensitive flesh *did* make her scream. She needed this, needed him. Here. Now. She felt him draw the throbbing nub of her clit into his mouth. Her thighs opened further, making room for his broad shoulders as he continued to suckle her and lap at her weeping pussy.

The feel of his mouth was exquisite, decadent. His experienced tongue seemed to dance over her until it drove her to a pinnacle, then up and over the peak. Her thighs clenched around his head, trapping him there. She screamed his name, her hands fisted in his hair. Her back arched as her whole body seemed to go up in flames.

He kissed his way slowly back up her quivering body and she groaned when he pressed his lips against hers, licking her bottom lip before slipping inside and twining his tongue with hers. It was strange, tasting herself on his lips, yet decadent somehow. She enjoyed the taste of herself on him, something she hadn't expected. She moaned against his mouth, thrusting her hips up against him as her body searched for yet another release. She needed to feel his cock deep inside her, taking her once again. It'd been so long since she felt her mate thrusting into her clenching sheath.

"You taste like heaven, baby," he whispered against her lips. He pressed soft kisses to her collarbone and neck, moving up to press an open mouth kiss behind her ear. He gently moved between her legs, giving her plenty of time to pull away if that's what she wanted. When she wrapped her legs around his waist, he ground his hips into hers, pressing his hard cock against her pelvic bone.

Her hips lifted, searching for him, frantic to feel him filling her. Why didn't he do it already? Why didn't he just ram his hard cock into her up to the hilt? That's what she wanted, what she needed.

Twila whimpered when he lowered his head to suckle her breast again. She wrapped her arms around him and, grabbing the cheeks of his ass, pulled him tighter against her, as though she would pull him completely inside her if she could. Hell, perhaps she would if it would relieve her of this burning need, this churning desire in her.

Finally, when she was sure she would scream her frustration to the world, he pressed the head of his cock against the opening of her dripping channel. He attempted to slide into her slowly, but she wrapped her legs around his waist, tilted up her hips and met his first thrust, forcing him deep inside her until he touched her womb.

Her hands roamed his body. She touched him everywhere. His arms. His shoulders. The curve of

his hip. She had to touch him, caress him. The feel of his muscled flesh beneath her fingers drove her closer to the edge as he moved his shaft inside her. His slow thrusts drove her over the edge repeatedly as he reached between them and thrummed her clit. Her legs quivered, grew weak. She barely had the strength in her arms to hold onto him, to keep their bodies merged but she wasn't ready for their lovemaking to be over yet.

Still she needed. Wanted. Would this desire she felt for him never end? Did she want it to end? Soon, all thought was thrust from her mind, leaving nothing but the pure sensation of Damian's body pounding against hers, his huge cock constantly filling her as he rutted between her quivering thighs in long, steady strokes.

His designed his measured thrusts to bring her over continuously. Still, he sought no relief. Sweat dripped from his skin to hers. Grunts, groans and moans filled the room, but he continued to thrust into her endlessly until she was sure she would die from it—die from the pleasure of it. Perhaps she already had and this was heaven because hell certainly would not feel this good.

Finally, she noticed the telltale signs of his nearing climax and she screamed in triumph. His muscles tightened and, gritting his teeth, he growled against her breast as his own orgasm overtook him. He continued to thrust even as his

cock bathed the inside of her pussy with his hot seed. Perhaps, he, too, worried this may be their last time together, for even when he began to soften inside her, he didn't withdraw. Instead, he lay atop her as their breathing slowed and the sweat on their bodies dried.

Minutes passed and neither spoke, too caught up in their emotions, the sense of intimacy that still wrapped around them. Too soon, Damian shifted, withdrawing from her body. He rolled to his side, dragging her into his arms. "I love you, Twila."

Unable to find the words she was desperate to say, she nodded, pressed her lips against his chest directly above his beating heart. He sighed and she knew she'd hurt him. Why couldn't she just say the words? She knew she loved him. Was she still holding a grudge against him, even if she did understand why he'd left Serenity?

Eons later, or maybe it was only minutes, the steady rhythm of Damian's breathing slowed. When she was sure he slept, she slowly pulled away from him. Standing at the end of the chaise, she looked upon her lover, the man she'd die loving.

With a heartfelt sigh, she gathered up her clothes and dressed silently. Once dressed, she walked to the French Doors that led to the back yard. After looking over her shoulder at her

slumbering mate, she headed outside. She had some thinking to do and she couldn't do it in the same room as Damian. She couldn't trust herself around him. She had decisions to make and she needed to make them without his influence. In a choked whisper, she finally voiced her feelings. "I love you, too, Damian."

Chapter Seven

After spending an hour puttering in the garden, Twila went to her daughter's room and sat on her bed. It was where she often went just to marvel at the miracle she and Damian had created with their love. She needed to be here now more than ever. Her daughter was missing and once again, she was involved with her daughter's father. More than likely, she'd soon have another lover as well. So many things would soon change. Grief weighed her down like a lodestone. Her mother's body had been taken away hours ago to be cremated, her ashes to be spread on the land she loved so much.

Her daughter had never been away from her for more than a night and always at a friend's house, only a phone call away. She must be terrified. How could she ever make it up to her daughter? What if she, herself died? Who would take care of Emily? Twila shook her head. What a stupid question. Damian would take care of her.

He was back in Serenity now. He would take care of her. She knew he would. He would make a wonderful father. She didn't doubt that whatsoever. She just had to make sure that he knew that if something happened to her, she wanted him to take care of Emily.

She was sitting at Emily's desk when Antonio came back a couple hours later. She heard him walking through the house, first stopping in the back porch, then her bedroom, then heading in her direction. She wondered how long he'd wait to find out how it went while he'd been gone. It hadn't taken him long at all. Five minutes tops.

He stood in the doorway of Emily's room as though he owned it, naked as the day he was born. Had Damian sent him to her this way? Why else would he be here like this? His scent hit her within seconds and punched her in the mid-section. His eyelids lowered to half-mast, pure, heady seduction. Her lungs expanded. Her palms grew sweaty. Her nipples beaded. Her breath hitched. What the hell was happening to her? All of a sudden, she felt like she was going in to heat.

She sauntered slowly toward her own bed, giving her hips a provocative sway. He followed her and took up a position in her bedroom door. Let him think what he wanted. She didn't care anymore. She was so damned horny she could die,

and just might, if she didn't find relief soon. It wasn't fair that her body had gone into instant heat as soon as she scented her mates. She was so desperate to still the need raging inside her, she practically begged a stranger to take her. Sometimes she hated the female panther inside her. This was one of those times. But she didn't have to take his cock inside her, she could instead masturbate and hope it quenched the fire. Lowering herself onto the mattress, she scooted toward the center of the bed as Antonio watched her, his eyes wide.

"Are you really going to do this? You're really going to get yourself off in front of me?"

She shrugged. "I have to. I can't stand it anymore. Besides, you're with Damian, it's not like you're into women."

Holding his gaze, she slid the heels of her feet along the mattress, spreading her legs open wide, slowing when she saw she'd caught his attention. Stopped. Her breath stilled in her chest as he stared at her as if he was starving for a taste of her. This was something she'd have to explore.

Plastering what she hoped was a sexy smile on her face, Twila nibbled on her bottom lip. "It's so hot in here. Don't you think so?" Her hands moved to cup her breasts, squeezing them, molding them between her palms. After closing her eyes, she threw her head back and moaned as

she pinched her nipples between her thumbs and forefingers, pulling them until they stood erect.

A strange choking sound drew her attention and she looked up to see Antonio staring between her spread legs. A flush of color spread across his cheeks and his amber eyes seem to glitter in the low light of the bedroom. He licked his lips as though he could taste her from where he stood. More cream flowed from her slit. He groaned in reaction. When his breathing grew more labored and sweat broke out across his forehead, she widened her legs until she lay fully exposed to his heated gaze.

She almost smiled. She'd have him eating from the palm of her hand before the night was out—if he didn't decide to eat something else. A shiver of apprehension washed over her at the thought that he might want to feed from her. Swallowing thickly, she pushed her fear away. Damian would have never left her alone with Antonio if he didn't trust his mate completely not to hurt her. With that firmly in mind, it gave her the courage she needed to reach down and slide her fingers through the slick cream dripping from her pussy.

She closed her eyes, unable to bear watching him lick his lips as he stared at her, his fingers circling the massive hard-on that her exhibitionism had given him. She knew that if she continued to watch him stroke his thick cock she'd

beg him to let her taste him. She apparently had no self-control over her body right now. She needed to come in the worst way. Twila bit her lip, sucked in a deep breath as her fingers circled the hard nub of her clit, brushing her thumb across it in a feather-light touch. Sweat beaded on her forehead as arousal grew and grew. Her hips rose from the bed, desperate to be filled. Sinking one finger, then two into her weeping slit, Twila fought to come. She needed to come. Her fingers sped up, thrusting into her pussy with wild abandon and still she couldn't climax. She wanted to laugh with delight, despite her aching frustration.

He muttered, "Oh, to hell with it."

She felt the bed dip beneath his weight. She could feel the orgasm just out of reach and was too close to stop now.

"I have the horrible feeling that we're both going to regret this in the morning, baby," he said, his warm breath wafting against her thighs. "But I can't stand watching you do this while I wonder what you feel like, or better yet, taste like."

Twila didn't know whether to feel triumphant that Antonio couldn't resist her seduction and would take her or insulted that he already thought he'd regret their joining. Right now, while too desperate to come, she didn't care either way.

Pushing her legs further apart, he lowered

himself between her thighs. Puffs of warm air caressed her flesh, sending shards of rippling pleasure through her empty pussy. He chuckled, then leaned closer to give her slit a long, slow lick with the warm velvet rasp of his tongue. His tongue swirled around her clit, through her dripping pussy.

Twila groaned. "Yes," she moaned as her fingers sank into his shoulder-length black hair. She needed to come, had to come. Squeezing her legs together, she trapped him in place as he continued to lick and suckle the small nub that would send her straight to heaven. She was so close. She just needed a little something more to push her over the edge. "Please, Antonio. Make me come. I can't stand it anymore."

He lifted his mouth from her pussy.

She raised her head to look down at him. Her cream glistened on his mouth and chin. His lips were drawn in a firm line, but his eyes twinkled with mirth.

"Do you need me, Twila, or do you need an orgasm, baby?"

"You." When he only tilted his head and stared into her eyes, into her soul, she spoke the truth. She dropped her head back to the mattress and sighed in frustration. "Both, Antonio. Both."

He grinned. "Ah, now the truth is out. You don't want me for my rapier wit and affable

companionship. You only want me for the orgasms I can give you."

Her face burned at his accusation. She realized the truth in his words, but didn't want to think on that right now. She didn't want to think that she could be the type of person to use another with so much disregard, but he was right in that she didn't know him. Yet. "I can get orgasms from my toys and they don't give me any lip."

He raised his brows, mocking laughter twinkled in his gaze. Again, he lowered his head to her creaming pussy. "But it's my lips you're going to love, baby."

She groaned when he thrust his tongue through her slit and suckled her clit into his mouth. She didn't doubt his words, not when he could make her feel so good. He gently inserted one finger into her cunt, massaging the inner walls of her clasp channel with each thrust of his finger. Her hips jerked in reaction. He held her in place, his vampiric strength easily holding her hips down while his other hand splayed over her pelvic bone.

"Yes, Antonio, yes!" she keened as he thrust another finger into her. Her head thrashed on the pillow, desperate now, unable to remain still. She would die soon if he didn't give her relief.

She could feel the pressure rise as her driving need to come climbed to almost unbearable levels. Just as her channel tightened around his fingers,

he stopped and pulled away. "What? Why di—"

"Shh, Twila. I'm not leaving you." He gave a pained chuckle. "I wouldn't leave you even if I could. I just want to be inside you when you come. I can only imagine how tight you're going to be around my cock. You're so wet and ready, I'm not sure how long I'm going to last once I get inside you. I know you're cunt is going to clench around my cock so snug and tight."

"Well, stop talking and do it already. I hurt, Antonio. Make the ache go away. Please." She didn't care if she had to beg. If he didn't fuck her soon, she'd take matters into her own hands and ride him until he begged for mercy. Either way, she was going to get off before this need killed her. Could a person die from sexual frustration? She didn't know and she didn't want to be the first to find out either.

She spread her legs as he moved to kneel between them. Lifting her thighs atop his, Antonio leaned forward, pressing his lips against hers. He nipped her bottom lip, demanding entrance. Plunging his tongue into her mouth, his lips ravaged hers. He pressed his cock against her gate, sinking the plum-shaped head just inside.

She squirmed beneath him, raising her hips in an attempt to force him to take her deeper, to forge inside her clasp sheath. When he didn't take her as she wanted, she growled, the panther

inside her too worked up to play nice much longer.

Antonio chuckled. His warm breath caressed her nipple, drawing it into a tight nub begging to be suckled. "Patience, Twila. I plan to go slow. Very slow. In fact, I plan to tease you until you scream."

Her head thrashed on the pillow. Her thighs trembled and she clenched the sheets between her fists. Screaming wouldn't take long if he kept up his sexy talk. She couldn't remember when someone had turned her on so much. She might just scream the house down if he didn't fuck her now. Hard. Fast. Hot. That was how she wanted it. "I don't want slow, dammit! I want hard and fast. Give it to me. Now!"

He threw his head back and laughed. "As you wish, love. As you wish." He moved slightly, pressing the rigid flesh of his shaft against her nether lips.

When she felt him slowly sink into her channel, she gasped. He groaned, biting his lip as he continued to enter her, slow and sure. All she could do was hold on. Hold on and pray that he fit because she'd never felt so full, as impossibly stretched as she felt now.

As though he knew what she was thinking, he spoke to her in a worshipful whisper. "Oh, God. You feel so good. So fucking good, baby. You can

take me, Twila. Just breathe and relax your muscles just a little bit more, baby.”

Twila bit her lip and tried to go boneless beneath him. He was so large it was hard to relax beneath him. As soon as she did, he slid the rest of the way inside, filling her to capacity. She’d never been so stuffed with cock. Of course, the only other person she’d ever been with was Damian. How would she ever be able to take both of them? “Oh...that feels so good.”

Just as slowly as he’d entered her, he started to pull out. Her muscles clenched around his shaft, reluctant to let him go. When only the head of his cock remained lodged inside her sheath, he rotated his hips, then drove himself into her in one forceful thrust.

She groaned, unable to keep quiet as he began to thrust. In. Out. In. Out. Faster and deeper. Over and over, he drove into her, keeping her on the edge of orgasm. She wrapped her legs around his waist, grabbed him by the shoulders and drove up with her hips, meeting him thrust for thrust. Her body quaked. A light sheen of sweat coated her skin. The harsh sound of skin slapping skin echoed through the room. As their groans of enjoyment filled the room and the creaking of the bedsprings beneath the mattress grew louder, Twila couldn’t help but smile. It was a good thing no one was in the house with them or it would be

obvious what they were doing in here.

Antonio lifted her legs to his shoulders and placed his hands beneath her bottom, changing his angle of penetration, going deeper than she thought possible. His sweat dripped onto her stomach as he continued to pound into her ruthlessly, striving for release. When she thought she could take no more, she found she could. Reaching between their bodies, she pulled on her clit, pinching it between her fingers, shoving her up and over the edge again. Her entire body shuddered. Her vaginal muscles clamped down, desperately trying to keep Antonio's shaft deep inside her. Blood rushed to her head and her eyes closed as wave after wave of euphoria rushed through her.

Antonio groaned. "God have mercy, woman." His hips jackhammered into her, faster, harder and deeper than before as he strove to find his own release. She felt his cock grow impossibly wider, harder, longer as more blood rushed to it. She felt his shaft flex as he finally reached climax. Warm seed flooded her already sopping channel, mixing with her own fluids. She quivered beneath him. Spent.

Chapter Eight

Twila's eyelids fluttered open, her gaze going from cloudy confusion to heated anticipation in seconds.

Antonio could see the desire rising in her, from the pink flush on her skin to the increased pace of her panting breaths. Did the idea of taking both of her mates to her bed at the same time cause the reaction? Perhaps watching one of her male mates taking the other is what had her scenting the air with her arousal? Whatever the case may be, neither he nor Damian could wait any longer in becoming a threesome in every way.

He shivered, feeling Twila's desire as his own. Could Damian feel it? Could he sense their mate's need? When he would have turned to Damian, Twila rose to her knees, pressed the front of her body against his. He could feel her nipples, pebble hard, rasping against his chest despite the cotton nightgown still covering her. He groaned, unable to keep quiet when he could feel every inch of her

from knees to neck.

He tried to back away, positive she could feel his erection pressing against her belly. If he didn't put a little space between them, it would be over for them far too soon—all of them. She wouldn't allow the small respite, instead she wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him closer—if that were possible. Unable to fight both his desire and hers, he gave in and buried his face into the silky thickness of her long, blonde hair. Antonio closed his eyes and inhaled, breathing in her mouth-watering scent. She smelled like fresh baked sugar cookies, not something he normally would have found sexy in the least and yet, it took all his control not to sink his teeth into her neck and sip from her. Only the knowledge that soon, very soon, he'd mark her as his mate gave him the strength to resist the impulse to bite her now.

When Damian's arms enfolded them, Antonio dragged in another deep breath. He could do this, could wait until both his mates were sated before giving into his urge to feed. Antonio let his hands run through the length of Twila's hair. It felt so silky and luxurious against his fingertips. He could hear her heart pounding furiously. "You're okay?" he whispered.

Her lips tilted up into a warm smile. "You have no idea just how okay I am right now."

Before he could respond, she dragged his head

back down and sank into him. Their tongues met in a gentle twine before she pulled back, turned her head toward Damian.

Antonio watched as Damian sank his hands into her hair, holding her to him as he ravaged her mouth. As she accepted the powerful thrust of Damian's tongue, Antonio waited. Watching Damian dominate their woman had lust and hunger burning through his body in a raging inferno. His cock felt huge, bigger and harder than ever before.

The kiss seemed to go on forever before they broke apart and gasped for air. Twila's violet eyes darkened. With her lips swollen and her hair mussed, she looked like she'd just had made love, repeatedly and yet they had not progressed that far. When Twila bit down on Damian's neck, marking him as her mate, Antonio gave a sharp moan. He couldn't wait until she did the same to him. He wanted to wear her mark, like he wore Damian's and before tonight ended, he would. He'd settle for nothing less.

Again, the pair broke apart. Twila turned and faced Antonio, her eyes lit with heated desire. Her hands stroked down his chest in a feather-light caress that caused goose bumps to erupt atop his flesh. Her fingers trailed down his torso slowly, driving him mad. Her gaze met his and for a moment, he could see pure fire in her eyes just

before her thumbs flicked across his nipples. They drew up, hardening into tight buds almost instantly. He groaned as fire and need surged through him. He didn't know how much longer he could kneel in front of her and let her torment him before he lost all control. When she pulled on the nipple rings, he had to clench his fists in the bedding to prevent himself from tossing her down to the bed and fucking her raw.

Leaning forward, she drew one nipple into her mouth, ring and all, and pulled, sucking and laving the pebbled nub until he moaned in agony. Her mouth was heaven and it was hell. "Please," he begged, "suck me, baby. Take me in your mouth," he urged as he pressed down on her shoulders, showing her just what he wanted sucked.

She pulled back then, with a sly smile, before reaching for Damian. When she tugged Damian's hand and wrapped it around his aching cock, Antonio thought he'd lose it for sure.

He tensed, slid his eyes closed even as he acknowledged that he needed Damian's touch as much as he needed Twila's. The feel of a strong, calloused hand stroking his cock sent shivers down his spine. Knowing that Twila watched, had in fact encouraged Damian to touch him, proved intensely erotic. The feel of another man's fingers stroking his shaft while Twila continued to

torment his nipples was almost too much sensation to bear. Antonio's testicles drew up tight against his body, forcing a moan of decadent pleasure out of him. Pre-cum leaked from his cock, spilling onto Damian's hands as he continued to stroke him in long, sure pulls.

Antonio's knuckles went white as he fisted the comforter in his hands. If he reached for his mates now, he'd lose it and this bout of lovemaking would be over all too soon. Just when he thought he'd regained enough control to hold out longer, Twila's tongue left a wet trail down his abdomen, around his belly button, before finally stopping just over his cock. Her hot breath teased him mercilessly. He groaned again, desperate now to feel her mouth on his cockhead. "Suck it, dammit. Don't tease me."

Seconds passed and nothing happened. Opening his eyes, Antonio glanced down and met Twila's hungry gaze. Reaching out, he gripped her hair in his fist and gently pulled her closer to his cock. She didn't make him wait, thank the Gods and Goddesses, taking every bit of his cock above where Damian still held him in his grip. Antonio bucked against his mates. With his fingers speared in Twila's hair, he held her to him as she and Damian worked together to torment him.

His heart thundered in his chest and his lungs labored for air. He wanted to come in her mouth,

but more than that, he wanted to fuck her pussy hard and deep as Damian mounted him, sinking his thick cock into his ass. Damian's fist tightened as Twila kept up her powerful pulls on Antonio's cock. He shivered, couldn't help it as his mates worked him ruthlessly. He bucked, crying out when Twila sucked harder. He moaned, unable to keep silent, ready to beg her – them – to finish him off. With his other hand, Damian reached down and pinched Antonio's balls – the only thing that could prevent him from coming in Twila's mouth at this point. He was that far gone.

Damian leaned forward, resting his chin on Antonio's shoulder. "What do you want, love?" he whispered.

Antonio swallowed, tightening his fist in Twila's hair. The rasp of his mate's voice always had him ready to fuck or be fucked. Turning toward Damian, he licked his bottom lip. "You." Then he turned toward Twila, meeting her hungry gaze. "Both of you."

After a final lingering pull, Twila released his cock with a wet pop. She slowly slid away, her every movement sensual, a siren's call he was all too willing to answer.

Lying back against her pillow, she held out her arms and spread her thighs, exposing her pretty pink pussy to his ravenous gaze. Antonio's entire body quivered in anticipation, desperate now to

sink his thick cock into her wet heat. He could see her arousal glistening on her cunt lips. He wanted to bend over and lave her pussy, lapping up all her cream like the cat he was.

Unable to wait a second longer, he dropped to his hands and knees, crawling across the bed until he hovered above her. Behind him, Damian's legs bracketed him, his hairy legs tickling the back of Antonio's thighs. With his cock still gripped in Damian's hand, Antonio shuddered, trying to keep from falling on Twila like a rutting beast. When Damian's hand ran down Antonio's spine, he tensed, his whole body frozen, waiting until the moment when his ass would be stuffed full of cock.

"Easy," Damian whispered. With slow gentle strokes, his mate continued to pet him in long, soothing caresses. "In a minute, the three of us will be as one, our circle complete."

Antonio licked his lips, then turned his head until he could meet Damian's gaze. "Hurry," he growled. "I need to take her as you take me. *I need this.*"

Damian nodded, reached over for the tube of lubricant sitting beside him on the bed. Antonio had no idea when his mate had even retrieved it from the nightstand. Cool, wet fingers raked across the tiny rosette of his ass, preparing him for Damian's possession. Once, twice, Damian

stroked over his anus before allowing one finger to enter. Antonio cried out. He shook with need, his arms and legs trembling as his arousal grew higher, the scent of sex thickened. Closing the distance between them, Antonio leaned down, pressed his lips to Twila's before demanding access into her mouth. His tongue dueled with hers, ravaging her mouth as Damian continued to finger-fuck his ass, widening his back entrance so it would be easier for his mate to take him.

Releasing his grip on Antonio's cock, Damian leaned forward, draping himself over his lover's back. "Now," he urged.

Antonio couldn't hold out a second longer, surging into his mate's sheath in one long, hard thrust. In one stroke, he'd seated himself fully into his mate. He desperately wanted to fuck her, ride her long and hard, but until Damian was ready, he had to wait for him to take the lead. The wait was agonizing.

As Damian's cock began to penetrate him, Antonio cried out. The pain and pleasure of this mating blended until all he could think about was surging into Twila, then rearing back into Damian. He wanted to take and be taken—needed it like he'd never needed before. After several short strokes, Damian was fully seated in Antonio's ass. Looking down into Twila's amazing violet eyes, he waited. He wanted her to feel what he was

feeling, know that this was as much about mating her as reaffirming the mate bond he shared with Damian.

Wrapping her legs around both her mates' waists, Twila dragged them toward her. "Please," she whispered. "Take me, both of you. I can't wait any longer."

Behind him, Damian started to pull out, his hands gripping Antonio's hips, forcing him to withdraw from the silken wet heat of his mate's sheath. When he started to sink back into Antonio's ass, he surged forward into Twila's tight pussy. Damian then began pumping faster and harder, moving into Antonio's body, controlling Antonio's strokes into Twila. The bond between the three of them flew wide open so that the pleasure was magnified between them, beyond anything he'd ever known.

They moved as one, their every thrust perfectly synchronized. As the pleasure grew higher and higher between them, Antonio knew that nothing could be more perfect than this single moment. Nothing.

The pleasure shattered over him, taking both his mates into a whirlwind of exquisite sensation that was almost too intense to bear. He collapsed atop Twila, unable to hold himself above her. He felt Damian's slow withdrawal from his ass and turned his head to meet his lover's sated gaze.

When Damian moved to lie on his side, Antonio pulled out of Twila's tight sheath and pulled her into his embrace. Together, the threesome lay quietly, their sweat-slick skin pressed together as they all spooned and waited for their heart rates to slow. Knowing there wouldn't be a better time, Antonio pressed his lips against the nape of Twila's neck and bit down. Hot blood welled up from the wound and Antonio lapped at it—not for nourishment, but to mark her as his mate. Content for the first time in his life, Antonio drifted off to sleep, sandwiched between his mates.

Chapter Nine

Marco was still as friendly as she remembered...to those he considered family, at least. She had no doubt anyone he considered an enemy quickly found themselves a victim of a very violent end. When he'd shown up at her home a short while ago, Twila found herself swept up into a warm hug and welcomed into the family, told not to worry about a thing. He reassured her that her little girl was as good as home and that her diner would be rebuilt better than ever, before she could even miss it. She hadn't cried so much in so little time in her life than in the last twenty-four hours—and they weren't all sad tears.

She may have lost one family member, but she seemed to have gained several more. Now if only they could get her daughter back, everything would be looking so much brighter in her world. Turning toward Antonio, who was placing a stack of pizzas on the kitchen table for both his father's

men and the group of Hunters that Sera had gathered to search for Emily, she asked, "What have you learned?"

"Well, the autopsy proved that we're looking for a pair of hyena shifters. There were two distinct bite sizes on the body. As there is only one family in the area, we know who attacked. They didn't, however, return to their home with the child."

"Billy Bob and Bobby Bill Martin," Twila muttered.

Antonio snickered. "Someone actually named someone that?"

"You've got it," Sherriff Marcum said, clapping a hand on Antonio's shoulder. "We staked out the bar they like to hang out, as well as their girl friends' houses."

"What about the mines where they have their moonshine stills hidden?"

"Do we know why the Demon wants my daughter?" Damian asked.

"She has a lot of untapped power. She is a powerful shifter. A virgin, a seer and a shifter. She'll be a mage with powerful magicks at her disposal in a few years. If he can control her power, he can wield a staggering amount of powerful white magick. Whether he means to corrupt her power or to absorb it, I don't know," Marco admitted. "Either way, it would kill Emily."

You add all her power to all his power he already has and he'd be practically undefeatable."

Twila swallowed the bile, thinking if that were to happen. They would just have to make sure that the Demon would not live much longer and that somehow, destroying Leonard was possible.

Shoving aside the pizza boxes, Ben laid out a map of the abandoned mines where some of the owners had set up stills. "Damian and Twila, you two need to stay here. You share blood with your daughter and the demon may sense the bond. I don't know that, but I don't want to risk that and lose our only chance at surprising him during the rescue."

Twila grimaced, but nodded. She understood. Dammit, it was hard not being there for Emily, but it was worse for Damian, a Hunter by career. It was what he did for a living, rescuing those in trouble. Reaching for Damian's hand, she gave it a quick squeeze. "How far away can we be?"

"Your scents will carry. You know that. I prefer you stay in a locked vehicle, windows and vents closed if you must be nearby...no closer than five or ten miles of the location once we narrow it down."

Damian nodded. "We can agree to that."

"It might take some time to run down the deeds to the mines to find out who owns the rights to all the old mines."

"No. That won't be necessary. I just need to tap into my daughter. If she's in one of the mines, I'll know it. I'm a seer, too, or has everyone forgotten that?"

"Are you sure you can do that without tipping your hand?" Ben asked.

"Yes, I'm sure. I need to do this for her. I need to let her know that help is coming, if nothing else."

Ben nodded. "I can understand that. Go ahead. The more information we have about guards, locations, traps, all the better."

Damian smirked. "This isn't my first rodeo, Sheriff."

Ben ran a hand through his hair. "Right, right."

Sitting on the floor Indian style, Damian tried to clear his thoughts. Doing his best to concentrate, he pictured his daughter as Twila did, with her dark chocolate brown arms, long curly brown hair, a petite frame, a heart-shape face with full lips and adorable dimples. Her face blurred and then burst into focus with crystal clarity.

She was sitting in a pop-up tent outside a mineshaft, her hands tied in front of her. He could make out a couple local landmarks in the distance that were very familiar to him from his youth—a place where he'd taken Twila skinny dipping as a teenager. Using the lightest touch he could, he whispered reassurances to his daughter. *Help is*

coming, baby. Help is coming. Daddy won't let you down. I promise.

* * * *

Antonio crept through the underbrush as full darkness fell, giving him all the advantages in the coming battle. His daughter was in the hands of a monster, one determined to take her power for his own. That he couldn't—wouldn't—allow. Though he hadn't met the child before tonight, he already knew he loved her, how could he not when he loved the mother who raised her.

As he followed the directions Damian had given him, he couldn't help but think about the lovemaking they'd shared earlier, the mating. Never had it been like that before. Never. Now he knew what Damian had felt when he'd been with Twila as a teenager, why he had to leave. And so, too, he believed that Twila understood. After Emily was returned home, they really needed to talk, needed to sit down and let her know that they didn't plan on ever leaving her again, just so there were no misunderstandings this time around.

Recognizing the area from Damian's vision, Antonio slowed to a crawl as he slithered through the tall grass and brush. He was just a few feet behind the pop-up tent now where Emily sat. He

saw her shadow inside, still huddled within it. In the distance, he noticed several men sitting around a campfire, swilling drink and talking loud enough to cover up any noise he made.

Either the Demon didn't know they'd kidnapped their girl yet, or this was a set up and he was walking into a screwed up trap. Not wanting to alert the men of his presence, he continued toward the tent, crawling on his belly, inch by inch. Taking a knife out of the sheath at his waist, he slit a vertical opening at the back of the tent and slithered inside. He found Emily waiting for him, smiling, obviously expecting him. She held her hands out so he could cut her bonds, then he picked her up and, silent as a wraith, slipped out of the tent and disappeared into the night.

Chapter Ten

Several hours later after putting Emily down to bed...

Though they weren't touching her sexually, it didn't stop the raging inferno of need licking her skin. The press of their bodies against hers nearly drove her insane with desire. She'd been with these men, knew their scent, the difference in their touch. With her daughter safely tucked into bed, Twila wanted to spend this night with her mates. Tomorrow would be soon enough to make decisions about their future.

She turned to Damian, then glanced back at Antonio. "Make love to me. Make me forget everything that happened, for a little while." Now that Emily was home safe and sound and tucked into her bed, Twila wanted to spend the next little while with her men, luxuriating in just being a family – if only for tonight.

With Damian in front of her, holding her

against his chest, and Antonio lying pressed against her back, she felt so deliciously wonderful, sandwiched between them. "I only have one question...why am I the only one in this bed naked?"

Antonio snickered. "Because if we'd gotten in bed without our clothes on, you wouldn't have gotten the rest you desperately needed, no matter how good our intentions. Losing your mother, your daughter's kidnapping, it was hard on you. You needed to sleep. But you're awake now..."

Twila turned toward Damian. "Is that true? You're saying you kept your clothes on so I could catch up on sleep?"

Smiling, Damian ran his hand down through her blonde tresses. "Definitely," Damian agreed. "Lying next to you, knowing only a sheet separated our flesh from yours would have been more than either of us could have handled. The beast inside me is enraged that you'd gotten hurt even if it was only emotionally wounded and Antonio's vampiric personality isn't much better off."

As Antonio snuggled behind her, his arm wrapped around her waist, Damian reached for her hand, placing it against the fly of his jeans. His cock was rock hard, pulsing against her hand. She could feel it growing thicker, longer, more than ready to take her if she were any judge. She had to

swallow past the lump lodged in her throat. Now that she was seeing them in the light of day, she was wary of taking them both at the same time. They were both large—maybe too large. How could she have forgotten that? She had serious doubts that she'd be able to take them, at least not comfortably.

When she realized she'd started to nibble on her bottom lip, Twila closed her eyes. She knew without a doubt that her men would not harm her so what did she really have to be nervous about? Nothing. She just had to take it one slow move at a time until she became so desperate for them she wouldn't notice any discomfort.

After all, these two men had saved her life. She should be able to find the strength within herself to trust them enough not to hurt her during lovemaking. Looking up at Damian, she nervously licked her lips—again.

"I know how this is supposed to work, in theory." She felt her face burn as Antonio pressed his cock against her backside. His shaft rubbed up and down between the cheeks of her bottom. Such a decadent move, she thought. "I've just never done this before. Take two men inside me at once, I mean." And how in the world could she admit there were six boxes of condoms and several bottles of lubricating oil in her nightstand?

"We already knew they were there. We won't

need condoms, not if you're using them for health reasons. I'm a vampire, you and Damian are shifters. We can't catch human diseases."

As Antonio pressed against her rear again, Damian's cock jerked against her hand as she boldly caressed him through his jeans. "What about pregnancy?" She couldn't believe she was contemplating a relationship with these men. Just because she'd been careless about birth control thus far with her mates, it didn't mean she had to let it continue. Hell, how did she know they'd even stick around now that they'd accomplished what they'd set out to do by coming to Serenity?

"I thought you wanted to fill our house with children. Has that changed since our high school days?" Damian leaned down to press kisses to her forehead, eyes and cheeks before he finally allowed his tongue to trace the seam of her lips, gently seeking entrance. She groaned, opening for him, letting him explore the recesses of her mouth.

Antonio's hands moved down her torso, slid over her breasts, then pulled and plucked at her nipples from behind.

Her mind went hazy as a surge of arousal rushed through her. "I do," she said, when he pulled away for a moment to look deep into her eyes. "I'm just not sure—"

He didn't let her finish. Again, his mouth pressed against hers, his need more evident—

more urgent—as he moved against her. He gasped, lifted his lips from hers to trail down her neck.

When one of Antonio's hands moved from her breast to caress the length of her waist and hip, she jerked in response. He smiled, his amber eyes practically glowed with mirth before turning serious. "I can feel you, Twila, feel the fire burning inside you. Do you want us? Both of us?"

Twila groaned, tilting her head to the side as they carried her away on a huge wave of sensation. One moment they were fully clothed and caressing her, the next, her hand was resting over Damian's naked cock, caressing his velvety soft skin. It took a minute to realize she no longer had the protection of a layer of clothes between them. "What the hell happened to our clothes?"

Antonio chuckled, let his fingers trail down her abdomen. "I'm a vampire. I can do a lot of things you wouldn't believe." Without breaking eye contact with his mate, he cupped her pussy, rubbing the heel of his palm against her clit.

She gasped as the sensation zipped from her clit to her womb. Her sheath tried to clench down, but there was nothing there, no one filling her. She nearly shrieked when Antonio's fingers circled her swollen clit. With Damian still feasting at her breasts, laving first one nipple, then the other and his hands caressing every inch of her he could

reach, Twila was practically drowning in pleasure.

He moved lower, kissing the undersides of her breasts, swirling his tongue down the flat plane of her stomach. He stopped there for a moment, circling her bellybutton with his tongue.

Flames licked at her skin with their every touch. It was almost as though her pleasure was alive, a being that moved through her blood, giving her immeasurable pleasure wherever their fingers, teeth and tongues stroked. Even a warm breath upon her skin from one of her mates sent shivers up and down her spine. Goosebumps rippled across her skin in reaction.

The way they touched her made her feel so sensual and beautiful, as though she were a treasure to be cherished. Antonio moved away for a moment, but before she could protest, he returned.

Running his hand along her back, he kneeled behind her, then poured some warm oil over his fingers. Slowly, carefully, he inserted one finger at first, working it within her tiny rosette until she could take another and another. Before long, she was thrusting back on his fingers as they moved inside her.

Twila had no idea how many fingers he slid within her tight passage, but she knew it wasn't enough. It would never be enough until she had them both inside her. She effectively banished the

fear she felt earlier and could only be thankful for that. She shouldn't have worried. They wouldn't hurt her — not intentionally anyway.

She licked her lips and a throaty purr escaped from her as they continued their seduction. She groaned, pressing back against Antonio's fingers, loving the feel of Damian's lips burning her skin down to her most private place. She knew what he had in mind and had no desire to stop him.

When Antonio pulled his fingers from her back hole, she whimpered. Rolling onto his back, he pulled her on top of him so he could nuzzle her neck and fondle her breasts while Damian continued his exploration of her lower body. The moment his tongue touched her swollen cunt lips, she bucked, her hips rising up from Antonio's hard body.

Damian grabbed her hips in his hands, holding her still as he licked and sucked her mound, pulling her little clit into his mouth with fierce pulls.

Her thighs clenched. Her back arched. Her clit quivered. Her sheath clenched. Finally, she screamed out her climax as he continued to feast on her pussy like he was starving for the taste of her. She'd never come like this before. She'd never had the incredible sensation of one man pressed against her back, nuzzling her flesh, plucking, pulling and twisting at her hardened nipples

while another sucked at her nether flesh with such efficiency that she climaxed again and again in mere minutes.

She began to fear for her sanity. She was sure the orgasms they were forcing on her would drive her over the edge of some unknown precipice and her mind would shatter right along with her body. Damian circled her clit with his tongue, his fingers delving deep into her pussy. She ground down on them—couldn't help it. She had to have more. She needed them to fill her, to make her theirs forever.

When he thrust his fingers deeper inside her and suckled her clit into his mouth, nipping the tight bud with his teeth, Twila screamed their names aloud. Her climax washed over her in wave after wave. When she lay upon Antonio, shaking with the aftershocks, she finally figured she would get her reprieve. They would both mount her and show her what it was for two men to make love to her. What she didn't expect was Antonio to roll her off him, look at her with a gleam in his eyes and move down her still quivering body himself.

"Now it is my turn to lap at that beautiful pussy of yours, mate." Antonio closed his eyes and inhaled deeply. "I'm nearly wild with the need to taste you." He looked at Damian, raised his brows and smiled. "Perhaps Twila would like to sample what we find so addictive, baby," Antonio rasped, his voice thick and husky,

sending shockwaves of pleasure through her body just by speaking.

Damian smiled and nodded, wasting no time pressing his lips against hers and thrusting his tongue into her mouth.

Twila jerked, screaming into Damian's mouth as Antonio took his turn eating at her pussy. He latched onto her clit and sucked hard, swirling his tongue around the hardened nub as he used his teeth to heighten the sensation. She came almost immediately, her hips jerking as her clit became too sensitive to stand his continued assault.

Damian's mouth left her lips, trailing down to her breasts where he alternately suckled each nipple into his mouth before finally pushing her two breasts together and laving and suckling both nipples at once.

Her body grew stiff, flames licked at her skin as she felt the fire move through her veins. Another orgasm grew—this next one would kill her. She was certain of it.

Antonio stopped just before she climaxed again. She knew another orgasm would drive her insane, perhaps even kill her. Yet, she had to wonder, did he have to stop at that particular moment? She almost sighed with relief when Damian pulled her on top of him, holding her above his straining erection. For as long as they'd been ravaging her, they must have blue balls from hell. He reached

back and massaged the globes of her rear. "Have you ever been taken here before?"

She blushed and buried her face in his neck. "Only one time, but I didn't like it. It hurt."

"Then you were with a man who hadn't prepared you properly and didn't care about your needs, just his own." Fingers under her chin, Damian gently lifted her head to face him. He searched her gaze, seemingly looking for something. "You will enjoy this. And if you don't, we give you our word we won't make love to you this way again, unless you ask us to."

How could she explain to him that she wanted this, wanted them both at the same time, regardless of the pain, regardless of her fears? How could she tell them she wanted them as a package deal? Hell. Who was she kidding? She needed them as a package deal. What had come over her? When had she become a raving nymphomaniac? Besides, this wasn't just about her, but about Emily, too. Her daughter had been traumatized, having big men in the house might cause more harm than good right now.

Twila licked her dry lips, watched his eyes darken at the action and felt like the most powerful woman in the world. That she could have these two gorgeous men wanting her, needing her so badly, shocked her, despite knowing the inherent attraction between mates.

"Since your beautiful, pink pussy has already been breached, why don't we allow Antonio to show you what it's like to be taken from behind by someone who cares and knows just what he's doing? And once he's seated in your ass, I'll take your pussy. You'll feel so good, baby. So full as we stretch you."

God it sounded decadent, sinful and oh, so irresistible. "It..." She cleared her throat. "It sounds like a plan," she agreed, nodding. She felt Antonio move up behind her. He straddled Damian's legs as she rose above Damian's cock, then tensed.

"Relax, baby, don't fight it going in. I'll move very slowly. If it hurts too much, just let me know and I'll stop immediately," Antonio promised.

She could feel the truth in his words so she nodded and did her best to relax her muscles. Damian held her face in his hands, drew her down so he could kiss her while he used his hands to alternately massage her lush breasts and caress the silky length of her back as Antonio placed the head of his penis at her rear opening. He moved so slowly. With the oil, he'd coated her with and Damian's expert distraction, he settled deep inside her with very little pain. Still moving slowly, Antonio pulled out almost all the way and slowly surged back in. He stopped immediately when she groaned.

"Did I hurt you?"

Twila almost smiled at the anxiety in his voice and shook her head. "No. You didn't hurt me at all. It feels wonderful." She pushed herself up to meet Damian's gaze. "I want you both inside me."

"You're sure?" he asked, his brow furrowed, obviously ready to wait if that was what she wanted, even though she could feel the evidence of his need rubbing against her clit.

"Yes. I'm sure." She smiled and raised herself up on one of Antonio's outward strokes. "Oh, yes," she sighed as she settled herself down on Damian's thick shaft. She waited for Antonio to enter her again. Worrying her bottom lip, she turned to meet Antonio's gaze over her shoulder. "I don't know how this is done. I can't really move much." She wriggled between them, causing them both to groan as though in agony. "I feel so full, so stretched, but it doesn't hurt. It feels wonderful." She sighed as Damian leaned forward, taking a nipple into his mouth. He suckled it aggressively while he pulled the other with his fingers.

"You needn't do anything but enjoy the ride, Twila," Damian said against her chest, his tongue laving first one pebble-hard nipple, then the other. The pair began to work a rhythm that soon had her keening their names as they repeatedly drove in and out of her.

At first, they were gentle. So gentle, it nearly

brought tears to her eyes. "More," she cried. "I need something more." Her face burning with mortification, she leaned down and kissed Damian deeply. When she pulled away, she said, "Harder. God, you two, I'm not going to break. I need it harder...faster. I'm a panther. I can take anything you dish out. Just let go of that damnable control I feel you holding on to so tightly."

Taking her at her word, they both began to ram inside her. A thin layer of sweat covered them all by the time she cried out another orgasm. Her pussy and ass muscles clenched, clamping down on their cocks. Her thighs tightened to the point of pain. Her nipples grew harder. Then her gums began to hurt. She could taste blood in her mouth. She shouted when her incisors grew and she felt the overwhelming urge to sink her teeth into Damian's neck. This is what she'd waited for. To mark her mate — mates — as hers.

"Yes!" Damian called, sinking his own teeth into her shoulder as Antonio covered her and latched onto the side of her throat from behind.

Their sharing of blood connected them more firmly than before. With their minds linked, each of them passed on their pleasure to the other until it amplified tenfold. Lightning streaked through them all, binding them together, searing them into one unit.

In seconds, they all climaxed together. Thighs

quivering, harsh breaths panting, muscles clenching. All too soon it ended, but Twila didn't have the energy to get up. She didn't know if she'd ever get up again, not when she finally realized where she was supposed to be. She knew now that nothing and no one would ever separate her family again. She and Emily were finally where they were supposed to be.

Epilogue

The Demon Lord Leonard looked down on the sleeping fools he'd left guarding his treasure with disdain. While he'd been setting things in motion, *they'd* allowed her escape. He smelled the foul brew they concocted to drink a mile away. 'Tis no wonder the child walked right out of camp. There was no one sober enough here to have stopped her. Enraged, Leonard summoned hellfire into his hands, raised them above his head and aimed them at the two hyena shifters snoring at his feet, letting it loose on the two unsuspecting fools until nothing remained but ash. No one failed the Demon Lord and lived to tell about it. No one.

Now, with Emily back with her mother, he'd have to use the other, and she wasn't nearly as powerful. But this one was full grown and he could use her in other ways he couldn't use the child. Throwing his head back, the Demon Lord Leonard laughed at the thought, rubbing his cock

through his pants. Oh, what fun he planned to have with this one.

About the Author

Bonnie Rose Leigh has been enthralled with the written word since childhood. When she ran out of things to read, she created her own stories. Now, she is a multi-published author and lives in a small town in Upstate, New York. She spends most of her time on the computer either writing or visiting with friends. When not busy on the computer, her free time is consumed with reading. It doesn't matter what genre the book is either, though she is partial to romance novels. Her favorite after-hours hobby is sprawling in a chair with a book clutched in her hands and a cup of cocoa sitting nearby.

Bonnie would love to hear from each and every one of you. Make sure you subscribe to her monthly newsletter or check out her blog as it will be updated regularly with release dates, excerpts and online appearances. And, as always, feel free to drop her email if you have any questions, concerns or just want to chat, and she'll get back to you as soon as she can.

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