

ELLORA'S CAVE **AEON**

JORY STRONG



FIRST
FALLON MATES
SHARING

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First Sharing

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FIRST SHARING

Jory Strong

Chapter One

You take a great risk, and if you fail, if your vision proves false, then you doom our line.

His father's words were a heavy weight on Laith d'Amato's shoulders as he made his way toward the transport chamber that would take him to Winseka, the Bridge City, where even now the man who had been his near constant companion since adulthood was no doubt scouring the postings in search of a job on another planet, one far from Belizair.

If time weren't so urgent, Laith would have spread the feathered wings marking him as Amato and flown to Winseka from his parents' home along the western coast of Belizair. But time was of the essence and it had taken far longer than he anticipated to accomplish the things he'd set out to do when he returned to his home world. He was anxious to return to the human woman who'd soon be his mate—and Rykken's—if he could convince his friend to cast aside his Vesti heritage and fight his Vesti nature.

A shudder went through Laith as he envisioned them both lying with Cyan, joining their bodies with hers. His cock filled and pressed against the thin loincloth favored by both Vesti and Amato males when they were on Belizair.

From the first moment he'd seen her he'd hungered as he'd never hungered for a woman of his own race. The Ylan stones, melded seamlessly into the bands he wore at his wrists, pulsed in time to the heartbeat throbbing in his penis as he thought about her, pictured sky-blue eyes and the long, luxurious locks of brown hair only a few shades lighter and a few inches longer than his own.

Enchanting. Mesmerizing. Captivating.

In the brief time he'd been with Cyan it had required every ounce of self-discipline he possessed not to mate with her. He ached to possess her, to claim her and bring her back to Winseka, to the city where all those returning with human mates had to live

initially. Even if the experiment failed, even if no children came from their joining, he would be content to have her as his bond-mate.

You take a great risk, and if you fail, if your vision proves false, then you doom our line.

His father's somber expression, his mother's pain-lined face as he told them of his intention to share the female he'd been matched with, made anger flash through Laith as hot as the despair that followed on its heels was cold. He cursed the Hotalings and the bio-gene weapon they'd unleashed on Belizair.

A few on Belizair had died when the virus was first introduced, the weak, the old, their passing painful but not the festering wound that opened later—when the true horror became known. Females early in their pregnancies miscarried, then came the devastating realization there would be no new pregnancies.

In desperation the Council's scientists had come forth with an experiment, pairing males from Belizair with human females who carried the genetic markers of the Fallon—the shared ancestor race of the Amato and Vesti.

Like some of the Amato and Vesti in older times, before laws were passed against interfering with cultures not as advanced as the one on Belizair, the Fallon had also been intrigued by the inhabitants of Earth. They'd walked among them, bred with them, though they'd also appeared to those on Earth as creatures that became a part of human legend and religion.

The Fallon could take an infinite number of forms because at their core, they were a race of winged shapeshifters. Their potential had soared without limit until arrogance and jealousy, pride and prejudice had destroyed them, ultimately splintering them into a multitude of races, all lesser than what the Fallon had once been.

With a sigh Laith entered the building housing the transport chamber. With effort he pushed thoughts of the past and the heavy burden of his family's future away.

He felt the rightness of his decision, felt an unshakable sureness. The dreams that gripped him when he slept were a vision for the future and not only erotic fantasy, though they left him writhing, waking in an eruption of hot semen.

The dreams had started only when he was on Earth, only after seeing the human female whose Fallon genes the scientists thought most compatible with his own. Cyan.

Laith wrapped his hand around his fabric-covered cock. He prayed to the Goddess for success in convincing Rykken to return to Earth with him, to the cabin where Cyan waited within walking distance from the hidden and guarded transport chamber in the Sierras—though he'd taken the car to mask his destination. There'd be no fighting against the need to make love to her the next time he was in her presence. It had taken everything he possessed to resist this long.

The Ylan stones in his wristbands warmed, pulsed, fed on the energy of those making up the transport chamber. They weren't a true stone at all, but almost a living entity, one with an infinite number of uses, but also one that varied from individual to individual.

They were a power source allowing for transport between cities, for travel to Earth and back using the ancient portal in Winseka. But they were also necessary for survival on Belizair. Without the Ylan crystals worn in bands at their wrists, Amato and Vesti alike would die on their home world.

The only time they were free of the Ylan stones was at the cusp of adulthood, when the stones that had migrated from their parents' bands onto theirs like liquid crystal minutes after their birth melted away, allowing the new adult a choice of which stone to wear until death.

A shudder of lust rippled through Laith. The bands at his wrists were heavier now, the stones having grown denser in preparation for separating and migrating onto the bands he'd crafted for Cyan so she could be brought to Belizair.

He clenched his jaw, tightened his grip on his shaft. The transport chamber doors closed, guaranteeing him privacy. Only then did he give in to the needs of the flesh.

Laith sank to his knees. Justified the freeing of his cock by telling himself he could hardly hold an intelligent conversation with Rykken when all he could think about was lying with Cyan, thrusting his penis into her slick woman's folds.

His breath escaped in a jagged pant as he imagined what she would look like naked, open, her breasts bared, her thighs splayed. His hips bucked, forced his cock through the tight fist of his hand as he thought about positioning himself at her entrance, slowly fighting his way into her channel.

She'd be tight, or at least his size would make her so. And wet. Whenever he was with her he could smell her arousal, could see the need in her eyes, the willingness to couple with him.

It'd been so hard to keep her at arm's length until he was sure the dream of having Rykken join in a mate-bond with Cyan was a vision and not just a fantasy.

It'd been nearly impossible to pretend he wasn't ready for anything more than friendship with her when his heavy testicles and hardened penis proclaimed him a liar.

No longer. When he returned to her...

A moan escaped, then another as he worked his cock with his own hand. Saw in his mind's eye Cyan writhing underneath him, calling his name and pleading with him to mate with her, fill her with his seed.

"Yes! Yes!" It was a hoarse shout ripped from his core as semen rushed through his penis, erupted in a heated release that coated his chest and abdomen.

"Oh Goddess, yes," Laith whispered, left weak by the orgasm even as he knew that every time he came while thinking about Cyan, the urgency to get his cock inside her became more intolerable. If Rykken couldn't be convinced, there would be no second chance.

* * * * *

Cyan Dupre's eyebrows drew together as dusk began settling and there was no sign of Laith. She rubbed her bare arms and shivered, told herself it was from the coolness of the early evening air in the mountains and not from being alone in the middle of nowhere.

"He'll be back," she murmured, not letting worry and uncertainty diminish the beauty surrounding her.

She'd spent the day outside photographing it, though it felt like cheating to snag images with the digital camera rather than capture them on a sketchpad. But a weekend trip didn't allow her the time she needed to draw everything that caught her attention. She loved being out of the city and when Laith suggested this trip...

Cyan shivered again, this time with the heated need thoughts of him always generated. He was so innately sensual she was reminded of a pagan god, a lithe, dangerous predator who defended what belonged to him with savage ferocity.

He called himself a bounty hunter. But from what he'd shared about his work, it sounded as though he and his partner Rykken did more than hunt criminals. They also guarded people and places.

Cyan nibbled on her bottom lip. Not for the first time she wondered if he'd been so careful with her because his job was dangerous and he couldn't offer a woman more than fleeting friendship and casual sex.

Maybe the emotional distance was for the best, she thought on a sigh. She was deeply attracted to him, more so than she'd ever been with any other man. It'd be easy to fall in love with him, too easy.

He was lethal grace and poetic beauty combined with tenderness and sensitivity. It was a devastating combination, especially to an artist, especially to her – and apparently unattainable, or attainable at a painful emotional cost.

But then, didn't artists thrive on heartbreak and suffering? Didn't agony and angst fuel their creativity? She laughed. Maybe, though she'd always preferred happiness over unhappiness.

A breeze picked up, chasing her into the cabin for a sweatshirt. She couldn't resist the impulse to open the sketchpad lying on the table and page through it until she got to the first drawing she'd done of Laith, in the park, on the day they met. He was

dressed in black jeans and bare-chested, the elaborate bands with the dark green stones at his wrists emphasizing his masculinity, making it raw and primitive.

She had other pictures of him, nude ones, but this one was her favorite. This one reminded her of the instant when their eyes first met and heat flashed between them with such primal intensity she'd imagined him a male animal in search of his mate and known to her core she was the female he wanted.

Cyan laughed softly. "Maybe I should have been a romance writer," she said, but couldn't stop herself from tracing the masculine lips, the flowing waves of hair.

Laith was beautiful and he responded to her physically. Either that or sporting an erection was his natural state.

She was a fool for agreeing to come here with him, for getting her hopes up. Even worse, she was a coward for not asking him why he continued to spend so much of his time with her if he wasn't going to fuck her.

There, she'd admitted it to herself. She felt so needy around him that caution and sanity fell away under an onslaught of pure, animal lust. She wanted him, desperately, even though he was heartbreak waiting to happen.

She glanced at the only bed, one large enough for an orgy, and wondered if seeing it was what had prompted Laith's sudden need to take off in the car on a mysterious errand. Was the reality of being here alone with her suddenly a huge mistake in his eyes?

It hurt her to think so, sent a lance of pain through her chest. But maybe he was right, maybe coming here *was* a bad idea.

Letting things keep going the way they were without talking about it wasn't smart either. It would be easier to handle the overwhelming attraction and less confusing if Laith admitted his stay in her life was temporary and he'd decided he wanted to avoid the complications of sex.

The one time she'd tried to initiate intimacy he'd grabbed her wrists and held them away from his chest as if she'd burned him with her touch. It embarrassed her then and made heat rise to her cheeks now just thinking about it.

It was probably just as well he'd stopped her. She wasn't sure she was going to stay in California. Moving to Taos was tempting, even if it'd take a huge chunk out of her savings and mean starting all over again building relationships with art dealers.

Tension settled into her shoulders as she thought about Nathan's offer to let her live cheaply in a loft above one of the galleries he co-owned there. He wouldn't wait forever for her answer, she knew that, just as she knew he wanted more from her than an artist-patron relationship. Getting her to New Mexico was just the first step in his plan to seduce her.

There was chemistry between them. She'd resisted it when he was in California, visiting small-town art galleries as he vacationed. And then she'd met Laith a few days after Nathan left for Europe.

Intellectually she could make an argument for spreading her wings and moving to New Mexico—to grow her talent in a community where art thrived, to explore possibilities with Nathan. But her body voted against her mind, delayed her decision for one simple reason. Nathan wasn't Laith. She didn't hunger for Nathan as she did for Laith.

Cyan flipped the page of her sketchpad to one of Laith on his side, naked, his long hair unbound and draped over his shoulder and chest, his cock hard against his abdomen.

Her eyes caressed the lines of his body. Her mind wondered why he'd agreed to pose for her at all.

She didn't think she could handle the mixed signals he sent much longer. Her panties stayed wet thinking about him and being around him. Her nipples hardened to the point she found herself fighting not to bare her chest and beg him to put his mouth on them.

She ached, ached like she'd never ached before. Felt like a junkie around a drug so potent that coming into contact with it was all it took to be addicted.

A small whimper escaped as she slid her hand underneath the waistband of her shorts and panties, wet her fingers with arousal before settling them on her stiffened clit. She shouldn't give in to the need, was embarrassed to find herself looking at his picture and masturbating, but she couldn't stop herself.

It wouldn't be enough, not to relieve the deep-seated ache. But it would help her recapture some semblance of calmness.

White-hot need lanced through her as she stroked over the tiny head of her clit. A moan followed, soft, almost a mew of distress.

This is crazy, she thought, but didn't retreat from the pleasure as she imagined it was Laith's mouth between her thighs, his tongue caressing her swollen knob, his lips sucking, pulling liquid heat from her very soul.

"Laith," she panted, fingers tightening, becoming rougher as fantasies of exquisite tenderness and carnal mastery had her rushing for orgasm, shattering when it came.

"Oh god," she whispered, weak, her upper body lying across the table, tears forming at the corners of her eyes. "I need to stop seeing him if this is what it's going to do to me."

* * * * *

Rykken d'Vesti frowned as he studied the work postings and found nothing of interest. He'd hoped for a contract that would take him away from Belizair and keep his mind challenged so he wouldn't contemplate Laith's visit to Earth and claiming of a human mate.

They'd been like brothers, closer than brothers in many ways, their time together in dangerous situations bonding them to the point where it seemed natural to accept work together as a team. And now he felt Laith's absence keenly.

He didn't fault Laith for accepting what the Council scientists offered, a chance to claim and couple with a woman who might become heavy with child. Even if there were no guarantees it would happen, a tiny flicker of hope was better than none at all.

Still, he preferred not to remain on Belizair and witness the death of that hope, the deepening of the despair hanging like a heavy shroud over the land.

Several human women had been brought to Winseka. None of them was yet pregnant though the scientists remained convinced that all hope to avoid extinction rested with them.

Rykken rolled his shoulders in an effort to relax. He flexed the bat-like wings marking him as Vesti and resumed his study of available assignments, this time with an eye toward finding something to occupy himself with, even if it was only marginally interesting.

Familiar footsteps sounded along the corridor. Rykken's eyebrows drew together in puzzlement. His attention shifted to the doorway just as Laith stepped into view and said, "I thought I might find you here."

Rykken looked closely at his friend, noted the tenseness of his features, the hardened cock impossible to conceal in the thin loin covering. "You are back with your new bond-mate?"

If anything Laith grew more coiled, a man ready to do battle. "No."

When nothing else was forthcoming, Rykken was unsure how to proceed. Of the two of them Laith had always been the more talkative, but not by much.

He thought perhaps Laith had been unable to convince the female to return with him of her own free will—a condition stipulated by the Council. That would explain his presence. And if so, then work would keep his mind off his failure.

"There are a couple of postings here to consider," Rykken said, indicating the list he'd been studying.

Laith shook his head. "That's not why I'm here. I want you to accompany me to Earth. I want you to join me in a mate-bond with Cyan."

Surprise held Rykken motionless though his cock betrayed him by hardening at the thought of taking the female who excited Laith enough to have him fully erect in public. Laith was not a man to lose control of himself.

"It's not the Vesti way," Rykken said. "We are not like the Amato to bond in whatever arrangement satisfies those in it. Vesti males claim one female and take her completely, totally, possess her in every way so that neither will crave another's touch."

"I know," Laith said. "But these are desperate times for all of us. I would not suggest it at all except I have been plagued by the same dream. You are in it. As am I. And in the end the two of us joining with Cyan are able to offer both the Vesti and the Amato what they need most, the promise of children and the hope of a lasting, deep peace between our races."

Rykken turned away from the painful plea he saw in Laith's eyes, heard the words not said, that Laith believed the dream was a vision sent by the Goddess the Amato held sacred. "So far this experiment with human women has failed to produce even a single pregnancy," he said, fighting emotion with logic.

"I know. Meet her, Rykken. At least grant me that much. Trust me that far."

"You ask much," Rykken said, shifting so he could meet Laith's gaze. "And if I take her? If the mating fever of the Vesti swamps me and I can't share her, even with you? What then?"

"It is a risk I am willing to take."

A shudder went through Rykken at the depth of Laith's belief in the rightness of this sharing of his human mate. It was not the Vesti way, but still he found himself saying, "So be it."

Chapter Two

Cyan pulled her knees up against her chest as she sat on the porch glider. She'd showered, elected to put on jeans and a sweatshirt instead of something more feminine, then gone outside to wait for Laith.

The night was pure black, the moon and stars magnificent in the velvet sky. She loved sitting underneath it, looking at it. From the time she'd held her first crayon her world had centered on color and shape, translating thoughts and feelings, impressions, into images on paper, and later onto canvas.

Study, practice, the maturity that came with getting older, knowing the pain of loss and the joy of love—they'd improved her art. But she'd never been able to capture the nighttime. It was cloaked in mystery, as deep as it was dark, unwilling to be reduced to two dimensions.

Despite the chill of the night air, Cyan's palms grew damp when she heard the rumble of a car's engine. Her labia grew flushed and heated.

She needed to get herself under control. She knew that. Her resolve to talk to Laith had strengthened in the shower, when the hot pulse of water from the handheld wand led to more fantasies, to another orgasm—to the realization that each release was only making her want him more.

Cyan stood when the car came into view. She was trapped in the headlights until it stopped in front of the cabin.

The car door opened and he emerged, filled her vision and held her attention as moonlight bathed him, revealed him for the lithe predator he was.

Movement, a second door opening. Cyan turned her head and couldn't breathe as lust rushed through her and made her cunt spasm violently.

Oh god, she thought. It was the same first reaction she'd had to Laith and look where that led.

She had the insane urge to flee, to get as far away from the two men as she could. That urge was matched in intensity by the desire to submit to them, to have them both.

A shudder went through her. She managed a breath, a small one because they were walking toward her and she didn't dare inhale their mingled scents.

They were like something out of an erotic fantasy. Well-matched physically, the stranger only a few shades darker than Laith, his hair equally long, straight instead of falling in waves down his back as Laith's did. And his eyes... They were nearly black with a hunger he was making no effort to hide.

Cyan bit her bottom lip to keep from whimpering. Arousal wet her panties as thoroughly as guilt flooded her chest. She forced her attention back to Laith, shivered when she saw his taut face and was afraid to read anything into it.

"You're back," she said, wanting to break the tension between them.

He took her hand and she closed her eyes for an instant, steeled herself against the desire coursing through her, turning her blood into molten need. It was worse now, much worse for all the hours she'd spent alone, thinking about him, waiting for him.

"Cyan," he said. "This is Rykken."

Rykken's hand claimed her free one and sent a jolt of sexual heat to her clit. Her eyes went to Rykken's face then down to the erection pressed aggressively against the front of dark sweatpants.

She noticed the bands around his wrists. They were similar enough to Laith's that for a single shock-filled second she thought the two of them were a couple and this was Laith's way of revealing it to her. But then Rykken carried her hand to his chest, pressed her palm against the tight male nipple beneath the thin mesh of his shirt and said, "I don't know how Laith has found the strength to keep his hands off you."

She shivered in reaction to the sensual promise she heard in his voice, looked to Laith and found his eyes nearly as dark with hunger as Rykken's. "Let's go inside," he said and this time she was the one who wondered if it was a good idea to be in the same room with a bed large enough to have an orgy in.

Laith took a seat on the couch and struggled to hide his satisfaction. Cyan was nervous, fighting the attraction to Rykken.

She'd curled herself into a chair, her sketchpad on her lap like a protective shield. But the scent of her arousal, the hard press of her nipples against her sweatshirt and the way she studiously avoided looking at Rykken gave her away.

In the end she would lose this fight. She wouldn't win against the desire building, heating the room.

This was meant to be. He knew it with soul-deep surety. This was what the Goddess intended when she sent the dreams.

And Rykken... Laith couldn't prevent the corners of his mouth from curving upward in a slight smile. Rykken struggled not to give in to the Vesti mating fever and take Cyan immediately.

It would have been thoroughly entertaining if it weren't also dangerous, if his own cock didn't ache with need. Vesti males were territorial, aggressive. Their instinct was to isolate their mates completely and fuck them repeatedly until the Ylan stones split and migrated, sealing the bond and marking it permanent.

Rykken's warning on Winseka hadn't been offered lightly. But then neither had his acceptance of the risk. He trusted Rykken, believed their friendship would prove strong enough to hold against Vesti instinct, that in the end the Ylan stones at Rykken's wrists wouldn't migrate to the bands he'd yet to give Cyan until the moment his own did.

He pictured the elegant bands, imagined slipping them on her wrists. He'd crafted them himself, included the bird-of-prey device of his clan-house as well as the predatory cat of Rykken's family.

Longing filled Laith, not just the desire of the flesh but of the heart. He'd thought of nothing else but returning home with Cyan since the first moment he saw her.

Patience, it was a bounty hunter's skill, one necessary for success and it would serve him here as well. She'd been reared in a culture as restrictive as the Vesti's when it came to not only taking multiple lovers but joining with them in a lifelong bond.

A shudder of need rippled through him and he cast about for a way for them to begin. He found it in the sight of her clutched sketchpad, in the thick rug placed in front of a fireplace left ready for use.

In that moment he gained a new appreciation for the Council scientists and the bounty hunters who lived and worked on Earth, all of them focused on doing everything in their power to speed the claiming of human mates. When he'd told them of his intention to bring Cyan to this cabin only a short distance away from the building housing the transport chamber, they'd made it ready, anticipated what he might find useful.

Laith stood and pulled Cyan to her feet. He considered warning Rykken using the telepathic ability all those on Belizair possessed, then decided to enjoy Rykken's reaction instead.

"Let's start a fire and sit in front of it," Laith said. "I promised Rykken you would capture his likeness on paper."

I am only barely hanging on to my control, Rykken shot back, rising from his seat, his body protesting the thought of posing motionless even as it thrilled to the idea of being on display for Cyan.

The full heat of the Vesti mating fever was on him, had been from the moment he'd seen her in the headlights of the car. He wanted to strip her of her clothes, to fuck her until she acknowledged his dominance and accepted his protection, until she craved his touch as much as he now craved hers.

There was nothing gentle in what he felt. It was animal desire and raw hunger, tempered only by his deep friendship with Laith, his willingness to trust in Laith's vision.

He stripped out of his shirt, reveled in Cyan's small whimper, in the way she fought against looking at his chest and lost. When his hands went to the sweatpants, her whispered "No" made his cock pulse in protest.

"No, leave them," Cyan said, nearly lightheaded from the lust pounding through her.

They wanted to share her. As soon as Laith had pulled her from the chair, told her of his promise to Rykken, she'd known. What she didn't know was whether she wanted to accept the pleasure they offered.

It was one thing to fantasize about having two lovers, but to actually risk her heart... That's what it would be for her, a risk with the potential of leaving her devastated. She knew herself well enough not to hide from the truth.

Casual lovers weren't her style. She'd never been able to separate the needs of the body from the needs of the heart, the soul. And for weeks Laith had tormented her with his closeness, his sensual appeal, the mixed signals of desire and reserve that left her aching and feeling confused. To give in now then return to the way it had been... She didn't think she could handle it and yet... She let Laith guide her to the rug in front of the hearth.

Her cunt spasmed when Rykken lay down in front of her on his side, assumed a classical pose, the same one Laith had taken when she'd drawn the first nude of him. She forced herself to breathe deeply, to slow the wild rush of her heart, to see Rykken as an artist's subject instead of a man who wanted to cover her body with his.

It was almost impossible to do.

Laith started the fire then positioned himself behind her. She wanted to ask *why* and *why now* but fell into the rhythm of drawing, instead. She tried to keep her distance but the atmosphere in the cabin found its way into the picture—captured heat and

intimacy, smoldering desire – all made more so by Laith’s presence at her back. Fantasy invaded, slowed her hand as images of being held between Laith and Rykken intruded, the two of them potent masculinity, beautiful power given perfect form.

Her breath grew short. Her cunt lips were flushed and swollen beyond bearing by the time she was done sketching Rykken. She handed the tablet to him, thought to rise and escape the cabin but Laith’s hands on her shoulders stopped her, his lips on her neck sent her resistance tumbling.

“Cyan,” he murmured in between hypnotic kisses, the sound of her name holding such profound desire she whimpered in response, closed her eyes against the thick burn of lust.

His hands moved down her arms, stilled at her waist but only long enough to push under her sweatshirt. Sanity tried to surface but it lost against the smooth glide of his palms over her abdomen, against his whispered, “Let us have you, Cyan. Let us take care of you. I’ve dreamed of this from the first moment I saw you.”

His words sent heat curling through her breasts and cunt. “The three of us?” she asked, wondering if this was why he hadn’t touched her intimately until now.

“Yes.”

“Just for the weekend?”

“No.”

She wanted this, ached for it. Knew there wasn’t any guarantee her heart would emerge unscathed. But she also knew she’d regret not giving in to the fantasy, not knowing what it was like to love them.

“Yes,” she said, moaning as Laith’s hands glided upward, unclasped her bra then settled on her breasts.

She arched into his touch, opened her eyes only to have them captured in the darkness of Rykken’s gaze. Feral heat burned there. Carnal desire as he took her lips, her breath, her soul.

There was no gentleness in the kiss, no hint of seduction. It was possession, domination, a promise to cover her body with his and make her scream with the ecstasy of being claimed completely.

She struggled against it instinctively. Grew more aroused when Rykken's fingers tangled in her hair, held her in place as his tongue plundered her mouth, demanded submission.

Laith's fingers tortured her nipples. His murmured words of desire and praise had her arching, trapping his hands between her breasts and the hard wall of Rykken's chest.

Lust pooled in her cunt, so fierce and hot the feel of her panties and jeans became unbearable. She wanted them off, wanted to spread her legs, wanted relief.

"Please," she said when Rykken lifted his mouth from hers.

Satisfaction roared through Rykken, swelled his cock further and fed the flames of the mating fever.

Mine!

It echoed with savage intensity, sounded with each beat of his heart, urged him to take her, to protect her, to keep any other male away from her—including Laith.

Rykken's lips twisted in a silent snarl as he fought his instinct. It was not the Vesti way to share a mate but if he could do it with any man, it would be with the one whose hands were even now baring Cyan's upper body, pulling the clothing away and exposing her lush curves and beautiful skin.

It took every ounce of Rykken's control not to pounce. *How have you managed to keep from taking her?* he asked as lust swamped him, made his breathing ragged.

I did what I had to do and now we both will reap the rewards of it.

Laith's hands returned to her breasts, cupped them in symbolic offering as he turned Cyan in his arms enough so he could press his mouth to hers in what Rykken knew was the first kiss Laith shared with her.

He didn't expect to find it arousing, but the intimacy of it pierced through genetic programming and cultural upbringing alike, touched the core of him. His penis jerked, leaked as Cyan whimpered softly, yielded to Laith's gentleness as thoroughly as she'd yielded to his aggressiveness.

He'd never thought to be mated to any female but a Vesti female. Now he couldn't imagine any other than Cyan. He ate her with his eyes, memorized her, inhaled her scent and imprinted her on all his senses.

Rykken remained enthralled, motionless as Laith eased her onto her back, his lips still on Cyan's, his moans joining the sweet sound of her pleasure. As soon as Cyan was stretched out on the rug, the need to see all of her became imperative.

Rykken stripped her of her shoes and socks. Groaned and was lost when his knuckles brushed against her sleek abdomen as he unfastened her jeans.

She was smooth and silky, utterly feminine, delicate. Without the wings of the Vesti or Amato she seemed fragile, in need of a strong male to care for her.

Protective urges assailed him. His mouth followed his hands, caressed her taut belly, savored the taste of her skin. He'd thought to bare her quickly but now he wanted to explore her slowly.

Rykken shed the confining Earth clothing he wore and kissed upward. Had to take himself in hand when he got to her breast and latched onto her nipple.

Desire whipped through him as he suckled. His hand slid up and down on his shaft in a pale imitation of the pleasure he would soon know.

With a groan Rykken forced his hand away from his cock, went to the waistband of her jeans and panties. He pushed underneath them, nearly came when he felt her stiffened clit and wet slit.

Hunger gripped him. His mating fangs threatened to emerge from their sheaths for the first time in his life. *I can't wait much longer*, he sent to Laith as his testicles pulled tight in warning.

Neither can I, Laith said, his mental voice husky with need, his hand joining Rykken's, making Cyan moan as they circled and teased her clit, played in her wet, silky woman's folds.

Rykken was torn by twin desires, to remain at Cyan's breast or to kiss downward and explore with his mouth what his fingers had discovered.

She was so lush, so responsive he wondered how they would ever stop making love to her long enough to get her back to Belizair. He wanted to devour her, to put his hands and mouth on every inch of her.

Her hips lifted to meet their fingers, her channel clamped down, tried to capture them and pull them deeper. Rykken's cock jerked, leaked, demanded to fill the space now occupied by his fingers and Laith's. But a more primitive need prevailed.

The thought of Laith swallowing her cries of pleasure, taking her breath, replacing it with his own, imprinting himself thoroughly on Cyan's psyche had Rykken leaving her breast, growling in warning, in a demand for Laith to yield her lips.

Chapter Three

Cyan cried out when Laith abandoned her mouth. She'd wanted, craved, fantasized about kissing him for weeks. She felt bereft even as he moved downward, latched onto a nipple that strained and ached to be sucked.

And then Rykken was there, pinning her wrists to the rug above her head, thrusting his tongue into her mouth, letting her know he saw himself as Laith's equal when it came to her body and her affections.

A small part of her was shocked at the ease with which she accepted him, needed him. But she could no more resist him than she could resist Laith.

Rykken's taste, his masculine scent mixed with Laith's, blended into a memory that would never fail to arouse her. The thrusts of Rykken's tongue were timed perfectly to Laith's suckling at her breast, to the masculine fingers sliding in and out of her slit.

Fiery hunger engulfed her, her hips jerked and her heels dug into the carpet in a desperate attempt to drive their fingers deeper into her channel, harder. She was so close to coming.

A shudder went through her when they denied her, when their fingers left her sheath as if they'd silently agreed to make her wait. She whimpered into Rykken's mouth and he settled more of his weight on her, covered her bare chest with his own as Laith rolled to the side.

Laith stripped Cyan of her jeans and panties and nearly came just looking at her. By the Goddess, she was exquisite, delicate and feminine, intoxicating. With her thighs splayed, her cunt lips parted, she was fantasy made flesh and blood.

He groaned and shed the clothing he could no longer tolerate, prayed he wouldn't disgrace himself by spewing his seed across his abdomen before getting inside her.

“You’re beautiful, Cyan,” he murmured as he knelt between her thighs and framed her cunt with his hands.

Her pulse throbbed against his palms, testament to the wild beat of her heart. The tiny triangle of soft down pointed toward swollen folds glistening with a sweet nectar he would forever crave the taste of.

She was his—theirs—to pleasure and protect, to claim and breed. Despite the Council’s edicts, she would never escape. They would convince her to return to Belizair with them. They had to. Life without her would be intolerable.

Laith leaned forward, delayed the moment when his lips claimed her lower ones in a carnal kiss. It thrilled him to witness her response to Rykken. Drove his hunger higher.

He had shared women before with a childhood friend, had thought when the time came to settle down he’d enter into a bond that included his friend and an Amato female, or two. But now he couldn’t imagine any other covering Cyan, swallowing her cries of pleasure, except for Rykken.

With a moan Laith nuzzled her, pressed his mouth to her cunt lips and licked along her slit. His cock pulsed, wet his abdomen with arousal, strained toward the heated, tight place it craved.

Cyan jerked in response, lifted into his touch and his hands moved around to cup her buttocks, to hold her in place for his kiss. Lust burned through him, roared through his veins and left him panting, covered in a thin sheen of sweat.

He knew he was playing with fire, that he risked everything by touching her this way, claiming her first orgasm. The mating fever of the Vesti was upon Rykken and he would be driven to mount her—he’d take her first, shove his cock into her channel.

Laith didn’t care. As he licked over Cyan’s clit, felt the ecstasy shudder up her body, all he cared about was bringing her to completion.

He'd fought so hard to keep his distance, to hold off until he was sure about the dream. But now he didn't have to wait, didn't have to stop himself from touching her, from wallowing in her sultry heat.

He slid his tongue into her slit, fucked her with it and reveled in the way she clutched at him, tried to drive him deeper. Her scent, her taste, the silky wet feel of her, they became his reality, the only thing in either world that mattered to him.

His cock grew fuller, his testicles grew heavier. His buttocks flexed, relaxed, flexed again as the need to cover her, to thrust his penis inside her grew.

A growl sounded. He thought it was his own but it could have been Rykken's.

It didn't matter. He was like a starving man, one whose hunger wouldn't be sated until every drop of Cyan's arousal was consumed, until every ounce of pleasure had been wrung from her body and she lay limp, sprawled in utter abandon and satisfaction.

Laith took her clit in his mouth, sucked it as he'd sucked her nipple. Thrilled in the way she writhed, fought Rykken and him, fought herself. He heard her cry of release, felt it shudder through her a second before Rykken's telepathic *Move!* sounded in his mind and he yielded Cyan's cunt.

Rykken could have shifted a few inches, impaled Cyan with his cock as he kissed her. But his behavior was dictated by animal lust, by the need to cover his mate and claim her. He hooked his arm under her, easily lifted and positioned her on her hands and knees.

A nip to her buttocks and she spread her thighs, offered herself to him. And the sight of her glistening, dusky folds sent carnal hunger pounding through him.

He leaned in, tasted her. Thrust his tongue into the very place his cock would soon be, growled against her wet cleft as he found Laith's scent on her.

Mine! He wanted to punish her for accepting another's touch. Wanted to snarl and bite, thrust his cock into her until she was hoarse from screaming his name.

Raw instinct drove him to cover her, to sheath his penis into her slick heat in a single, hard thrust. It had been erotic torture knowing Laith was between her thighs. It'd pushed Rykken almost past the point of sanity to swallow Cyan's cries as another male pleased her to orgasm.

Rykken's mating fangs descended. A growl escaped. Then another. And yet even as he felt the tight, hot, pulsing squeeze of Cyan's inner muscles, he acknowledged to himself that there was something darkly primitive in sharing her, in having Laith watch as he mounted and took her.

He could feel Laith's gaze, Laith's need. Knew Laith had his cock in hand, gripped in an attempt to stave off release, was only waiting for Rykken to fill Cyan with seed so he could do the same.

Another growl escaped. Instinct had Rykken settling more of his weight on her, reaching around to stroke her breasts, her belly, before finding her clit.

Her inherent sensuality and natural submissiveness were deeply satisfying to him. The way she softened underneath him, called out his name, begged him to allow her to come as he manipulated her clit and took her cunt, had him fighting against his own need for release.

His testicles were tight heavy globes between his thighs. Each time his penis was fully embedded in Cyan's channel they pressed against her swollen folds, sent a jolt of ecstasy up his spine.

He'd never felt so powerful, so possessive.

The muscles along Rykken's back quivered. He ached to let the protection of the Ylan stones drop so his wings would manifest and he could take her in his true form.

Fierce pleasure coursed through him when she whimpered and pushed backward, drove him past the point of thought. He gave in to the fevered frenzy of mating with her. Thrust hard and fast. Sank his fangs into her shoulder and nearly lost consciousness as the serum of his race flowed through his fangs in the exact instant his seed spilled into Cyan.

Cyan felt boneless, lost in a sea of endorphins from Rykken's lovemaking, content until Laith slid his arm around her waist and pulled her underneath him. She moaned when he slid inside her. Her sheath tightened on his penis, trapped it in welcome as her arms wrapped around his neck.

She'd thought herself completely satisfied. But the hunger built as Laith's tongue rubbed and twined with hers, as his cock remained unmoving, lodged deep inside her like a second heartbeat.

She ran her hands over the smooth skin and sleek muscles of his back, tangled her fingers in the luxurious waves of autumn-colored hair. He was golden perfection, beautiful to her eyes and soul.

"Laith," she whispered. Meeting his eyes, melting in the rich dark gold of them, thoughts and emotions swirled inside her without definition, without taking the shape of words.

Longing filled her, the need to have him shuddering above her, calling her name as his face reflected his pleasure and jets of semen erupted from his cock and flowed into her womb. In that instant she understood her own conception, why her serious, practical mother had allowed herself to become pregnant by a man already claimed by the open road and his music.

"Cyan," Laith said, leaning in, capturing her lips. It was killing him to remain motionless as her hot core clenched and unclenched on his cock, as liquid desire burned through his veins and his heart swelled with love for her.

He gathered her closer, couldn't stop himself from lying more heavily on her. Lust rippled down his spine, tightened his balls and made his penis throb.

He wouldn't last long once he moved. He wasn't sure he could remain gentle though he desperately wanted to, was determined to show her in this first sharing that he and Rykken would take care of all her needs.

"Please," she whimpered, scraping her nails over his back.

He groaned, thrust in and out, gave them both what they needed. Slowly at first, then faster, harder, until he swallowed her cry of release as extreme pleasure exploded in every nerve ending, in every cell as she milked him of his seed.

Laith collapsed at her side, his skin pressed to as much of hers as possible, his breathing ragged. A satisfied smile curved his lips when Cyan shifted to snuggle against him, her arm draped over his abdomen, her face buried against his neck and the warm curtain of her hair spread across his chest.

He gathered her in his arms, brushed his finger across the place where Rykken's mating fangs had pierced her flesh. She trembled in reaction, moaned and pressed her hot cunt more tightly against his hip.

Laith dared a glance at Rykken's face and saw the struggle taking place there, the conflict of mind over body. *Lie with us*, he said and his words were greeted with a silent snarl, a flash of savage, primal male in Rykken's eyes. But in the end Rykken moved to position himself at Cyan's back, his mouth going immediately to the place where he'd left his mark.

What have you told her? Rykken asked, his hand on Cyan's side, gliding downward to settle on her hip, both of them shivering when the scent of her arousal intensified at being held between them.

Not much, Laith admitted. *The Council's laws are restrictive. No bond-mate is allowed to see our true form or know we aren't of Earth until we're in the transport chamber.*

Does she have ties here?

Her father is a stranger to her. Her mother has passed from this life. But Cyan is well liked. Laith's nostrils tightened as he thought of the human male who was pursuing her.

Who is he? Rykken growled, taking the knowledge from Laith's mind.

I haven't met him. He's been away though he has contacted Cyan several times since I came here to claim her.

Rykken's lip lifted. His eyes darkened. *He will not have her. She is ours.*

Cyan stirred then, pressed a kiss to Laith's chest. "I want to draw the two of you sitting back-to-back like a pair of erotic bookends. Will you let me?"

"Of course," Laith said.

She turned, blushed under the intensity of Rykken's regard. "Will you pose for me?"

"Yes."

"Let's spend some time in the hot tub first," Laith said, cupping her breast, knowing he needed to mate with her again before he'd be able to endure having her look at him, caress him with her hungry eyes as she sketched him.

How he'd managed all the other sessions, he didn't know. But tonight he had no power to resist the scent of her arousal and the call of her body to couple.

Cyan laughed when Laith rose to his feet then swung her up into his arms. She didn't mind being carried from the cabin though she shivered as the cool night air hit her fire-and sex-warmed skin.

Rykken strode ahead of them, his sureness about the hot tub's location causing the first tendrils of doubt and pain to form in Cyan's chest. Did they do this all the time? Invite a woman to the cabin and share her?

She was grateful when Laith released her and she slid into the water, taking shelter in velvety darkness. It was beautiful out, the stars glittering by the thousands in a way she couldn't see in the city.

Laith captured her hand in his. "What's wrong?" he asked, his sensitivity and concern deepening her feelings for him.

"Do you and Rykken come here a lot?" she asked, not able to expose her heart by putting her fear into words, that she was just one of many they'd shared.

Laith pressed her palm against his chest, whispered kisses along her neck, the corner of her mouth.

"Neither of us has been here before, nor have we ever shared a woman," he said, guessing at what was on her mind.

His tongue traced the seam of lips. "Trust us with your heart as well as your body, Cyan."

Rykken's hand stroked over her belly then lodged between her thighs possessively. "You belong to us," he said, his voice holding complete confidence along with husky desire. "No other will ever have you."

Her soul responded to Laith's gentleness. Her body responded to the sure way Rykken touched her, as if she belonged to him and it was his right.

She whimpered when Rykken began rubbing her clit, circling, pressing the hardened, sensitive knob at the same time Laith's tongue forged into her mouth, his kiss dominant, his heart racing against her palm.

The pleasure left no room for doubts or fears. The heated water and night sky enclosed them in a private world where the only reality was the intimacy they shared.

Cyan opened her thighs wider in offering, captured Rykken's cock in her hand and measured the hard, thick length of him. She loved the way his hips lifted and his breathing grew rough and fast, the way Laith's did the same when she freed her hand from his and grasped his penis.

He and Rykken were well matched. Potent masculinity packaged in breathtaking form.

Rykken endured, resisted the need to shove his cock into Cyan for long moments. Never had he felt so out of control as he did in her presence, so filled with the need to reassure himself she was his, free to pleasure as he willed and protect for all time.

We take her home with us tomorrow, he said, shifting, signaling his intention to pull Cyan onto his lap with a transmitted image.

If she agrees to return with us, Laith said.

By morning she will have no thought but to turn to us for all her needs.

Laith's laughter was like sand across Rykken's nerve endings. *By morning we will be lucky if we have a thought beyond keeping her happy.*

Rykken lifted his lip in a silent reply before sliding his arm around Cyan and repositioning so she straddled his lap, her mound pressed to the hard ridge of his erection. She moaned and rose, guided his cock head to her entrance even as she entranced him with the sight of her breasts.

Her nipples tightened under his perusal, sent a pulse of lust straight to his penis. She swayed, arched her back slightly in subtle offering and sweet temptation.

Rykken was mesmerized, felt possessiveness burn in his belly with the thought of other males seeing her bared breasts. The women on Belizair wore only thin trousers, anything more would restrict their ability to fly, and beyond that, both Vesti and Amato culture revered a female's ability to bear and nurse their young.

Cyan's dusky nipples begged to be suckled and for a long moment Rykken let himself imagine children at her breasts. Hope roared through him in a fierce wave and he sent a prayer to the wandering god of the Vesti that Laith's vision would prove true and somehow this first sharing of a human bond-mate would defeat the Hotaling virus and open a doorway to a future holding more than despair and extinction.

Tenderly he licked over first one areola and then another, nuzzled and kissed them reverently until her low moans and the whispered calling of his name, the tight grip of her sheath on his cock head, chased away thoughts of a child's hunger and replaced them with a man's.

With a low moan Rykken took a dusky nipple in his mouth and began suckling. His hands went to her hips, guided her up and down on his shaft until she cried out in release and took him with her.

Cyan laughed softly when Laith immediately pulled her into his lap. They might like sharing her, but it also made them competitive.

"What amuses you?" Laith asked, covering her breast with his hand and capturing the nipple.

She wrapped her arms around his neck, kissed him. "I was just thinking I could get used to this, having two men fighting to see who can give me the most pleasure."

His chuckle made her smile. "Both Rykken and I intend for you to get used to it."

Laith dipped his head, licked over her nipple, tugged and bit until she arched, invited him to be more aggressive.

Her hand tangled in his hair, held him to her breast. She loved the way they used their mouths on her, was coming to crave the feel of their lips and their tongues, the hunger that spiked through her with each suck, each tongue stroke.

She splayed her thighs and moaned when his hand immediately took possession of her cunt, tormented her clit until she begged for him to fuck her.

He answered her pleas with his fingers, thrust in and out of her slit while his thumb worked her hard, swollen knob as she writhed in his lap and finally shattered.

Masculine satisfaction gleamed in his eyes when he lifted his head. The sight of it challenged Cyan, made her feel unrestrained and mischievous.

She shifted position so she was straddling him though she was careful not to let him close enough to her slit to get inside. "Your turn," she whispered, kissing him, tangling her tongue with his as her hands found him underneath the water, cupped his testicles and fisted around his shaft.

He grunted, thrust, fucked through her fingers. His hands roved over her back and tried to pull her closer. She resisted, deepened the kiss until it became blatantly carnal.

"Let me love you with my mouth," she whispered when their lips parted. "Let me have you the same way you've had me."

Feminine power surged through Cyan when he lifted himself out of the water and onto the small deck built against half of the hot tub.

"Now, Cyan. Take me now," he said and she shivered, loved the command in his voice.

Laith nearly came at the first lash of her sinful tongue against his cock head. His hips jerked. A ragged plea escaped when she sucked only the very tip of him into her wet mouth.

Fire streaked up his spine. Desperate need had the testicles she was cupping in her hand pulling tight, burning, aching.

He tried to thrust deeper but her fingers prevented it. He made the mistake of demanding that she take more of him and suffered the sweet torment of her punishment for doing so.

She warned him with the press of her teeth that she was in control of his pleasure. She refused to grant him release until he was mindless, begging, completely in her power, his defeat punctuated by Rykken's low groan as he brought himself relief with his own hand.

Chapter Four

It was Rykken who carried her back into the cabin and settled her on the rug in front of the fireplace. Cyan stretched, feeling well-loved, utterly contented.

Laith retrieved her sketchpad and pencils before joining them. Cyan laughed when Rykken said, "I see she's already got you well trained."

It warmed her heart to hear him tease, to feel comfortable enough with him she could scrape her fingernails along his inner thigh, brush against his penis and say, "You're next."

His teeth flashed white against his tanned skin. He caught her hand and rubbed the knuckles along his shaft. "You won't find me as easygoing as Laith."

"I wouldn't expect to," she said, already knowing he was the more intense, the more dominant of the two, at least when it came to her.

He released her hand when she tugged it. But he crowded in, his chest touching her shoulder as he opened the sketchpad and began flipping through its pages, halted on a picture of a father hunched over his small son, their hands together on a plastic baseball bat, become absorbed in another one, this one the face of an elderly man.

"These are truly amazing," Rykken said and Cyan felt his praise all the way down to her toes.

"The ones in her studio are even better," Laith said, earning him a smile, a stroke along his naked spine.

Rykken went farther into the pad, arrived at the first picture she'd done of Laith. Moved past it.

Her sense of vulnerability grew as page after page revealed Laith drawn with her heart stripped of all protection. She gave a small sigh of relief when the blank pages began.

"I can only hope you see me in the same light as you do Laith," Rykken said, and warmth filled her chest, spiraled down through her breasts and cunt at the meaning she read in his words.

She positioned them in front of the fire, back-to-back, arm against arm, their hair draped across their chests, the leg closest to the fire bent at the knee, the other extended so the taut lines of their abdomens and the smooth perfection of their cocks was revealed.

Sensual hunger burned through her belly looking at them. Arousal coated her labia and inner thighs.

Cyan retreated to a safe distance and lost herself in her art. She rarely mixed fantasy with reality, but caught as they were in the glow of the fire, it was easy to picture them as ancient gods descended to Earth.

The firelight emphasized their golden beauty, created an illusionary space between them. Filled it with form so they were no longer back-to-back, but wing-to-wing in her mind's eye.

Cyan's heart raced and her hand rushed to capture what they'd become in her imagination. Only when the last line was drawn did she allow her rational mind to surface.

She bit her bottom lip then and worried what they'd think. Closed the sketchpad, but they were immediately at her side, their hands coaxing it from hers, their lips on her shoulders adding persuasion.

It was a losing battle.

They took the sketchpad from her and opened it. A knot formed in her stomach when they tensed.

"I don't know why I drew you like this," she said, seeing Laith with the feathered wings of an angel, though they were dark-veined, shaded instead of pure white. Her fingernails dug into her palm with worry over Rykken's image, a darkly handsome demon with bat-like wings.

Cyan tried to close the sketchbook but they grabbed her wrists, set it aside themselves before turning their attention to her. Her breath caught in her throat at the expressions on their faces, the lust that blazed in their eyes.

"You like it?" she whispered, needing to hear the words.

"Very much," Laith said, cupping her breast, taking possession of a nipple made tender by all the attention it'd received, his mouth going to her neck.

"It's perfect," Rykken said, his hand smoothing over her belly, his fingers sliding into her wet slit. "As perfect as the woman who created it." His lips claimed hers, his tongue dominant, demanding as it rubbed and twined with hers.

She petted them as they petted her, let her hands explore, flow over smooth skin and hard muscle, touch what her eyes had caressed as she drew them. Her heart ached at the possibility they might one day disappear from her life.

She went willingly to her hands and knees when they guided her there. Spread her thighs and shivered in anticipation when Laith's fingers gathered arousal from her slit before circling, stroking her hardened clit and sending erotic fire to her nipples.

"Please," she said and Rykken positioned himself in front of her, took her nipples between his fingers, squeezed them in perfect synch with Laith's assault on the tiny, naked head of her clit.

Rykken's cock pulsed in warning. The image he'd once believed would be impossible to endure—that of another male touching the female who belonged to him and making her respond—had become a reality that fed his hunger to mate.

The sight of Laith between Cyan's thighs, his penis hard, glistening in anticipation of shoving into her tight channel had Rykken taking himself in hand and leaning forward, his fingers tangling in Cyan's hair, urging her to his cock head.

She wouldn't tease and torment him as she'd done Laith. He wouldn't become a slave to her mouth as Laith had become, Rykken thought as he pressed against her lips, commanded, "Take my cock, Cyan."

A pant escaped when she did as he'd ordered, rubbed her tongue over him and took him into wet heat and ecstasy.

His buttocks flexed against the need to start thrusting.

"More," he growled, pushing deeper, his chest and testicles burning.

White heat filled his mind when she whimpered, obeyed, took more of him and began sucking hard and fast.

He looked up to find Laith fucking her. Thrusting in and out, his face wreathed in pleasure, his hands alternating between holding her hips and palming the sleek curves of her buttocks.

Rykken fought to remain still. But he was helpless against the waves of sensation being pulled through him by Cyan's mouth. He tethered his cock in the tight fist of his own hand so he wouldn't hurt her in his passion.

"Cyan," he moaned, giving in to the need to fuck her mouth, knowing as he did it that he'd become enslaved. Not caring when orgasm left him weak, utterly satisfied, comfortable with the sight of Cyan gaining her release as Laith's seed filled her channel.

They took a shower later and slid into bed with Cyan between them, her face relaxed as she drifted in and out of sleep. Tenderness filled Rykken as he looked at her. He couldn't prevent himself from tracing the mouth that had given him so much pleasure, from circling the nipples that might one day nurse his young.

As soon as he'd taken her the first time, pierced her with his mating fangs, the Ylan stones at his wrists had grown heavier in preparation for binding with Cyan. *You've made bands for her wrists?* he asked.

Yes. They bear the devices of both our clan-houses.

Rykken laughed softly. *You were so sure I'd agree to share your vision?*

I had only to convince you to return to Earth with me and meet Cyan.

Rykken's hand traveled lower. His heart and soul knew complete satisfaction when her thighs parted in her sleep, welcomed his touch as he cupped her mound. *I feel hope for the first time since we learned what the Hotaling virus has done to us*, he said, letting Laith hear the fear that came with renewed hope.

Laith pressed a kiss to Cyan's forehead. *I believe there will be children from this first sharing of a human mate between Amato and Vesti, that the Goddess wants this for Belizair. But even if I am wrong, I will be happy to have Cyan as a bond-mate.*

As will I. Rykken brushed a kiss over her lips. *I don't understand how she was able to capture our true forms on paper as she did tonight, but if it means she doesn't fear us when we reveal ourselves to her, then I am glad it happened.*

The Council scientists told me it was possible. Some of the humans who have the genetic markers of the Fallon are able to pierce the veil of protection the Ylan stones provide for us while we're on Earth. They're able to see us as we are.

Cyan stirred and opened her eyes. She found both men resting on their elbows, looking at her, Laith's hand on her breast, Rykken's in possession of her cunt.

"Still up?" she asked, her laugh joining theirs when her gaze automatically strayed to their cocks.

"Perhaps not up in the way you're suggesting," Laith teased, "though I'm sure Rykken and I could rise to the occasion given the inspiration lying between us."

He leaned down and kissed her, a long, slow tangling of tongues and breath.

Cyan closed her eyes, allowed the golden, sensual lethargy to reclaim her. She felt boneless, satisfied to the core.

Rykken's mouth took hers as soon as Laith's kiss ended. She murmured appreciatively, smiled inwardly. Despite Rykken mimicking Laith's gentleness, she could easily tell the difference between the two men.

"Agree to come home with us, Cyan," Laith whispered against her hair when they'd both snuggled tightly against her.

"Live with us," Rykken said. "Commit to us."

Cyan opened her eyes and looked at them. Saw they were serious.

"I thought you lived out of a suitcase. Home is wherever the job is." At least that's the impression she'd always gotten when she managed to coax Laith into talking about himself and his work.

Laith's mouth captured her earlobe and sent heat spiraling through her. "Join permanently with us, Cyan."

She placed her hand over Laith's heart, felt its increased beat. He covered her hand with his and in the firelight the dark stones on his wristband seemed to swirl and glow with power.

Cyan blinked, cleared her vision of the illusion, looked at Rykken and saw the tension in his face before meeting Laith's eyes. "Are you saying you want me to be your wife?"

Laith carried her hand to his lips, kissed the palm. "Yes, our shared wife."

His words caused a wild fluttering in her heart and a flush of heat in her cunt. Emotion swamped her, a confusion of thoughts, hopes, dreams, all juxtaposed against reality. "I need time to think," she whispered.

"We'll talk further tomorrow," Laith said against her mouth, repositioning himself on top of her.

She spread her legs willingly. Loved the way he filled her in a single stroke, lodged himself so deeply that it felt as if his heart had invaded hers. Was lost in the way he kissed and fucked her as if she was his world. Didn't stop until she'd cried out in release.

And then Rykken took his place and did the same.

* * * * *

Cyan woke to sunlight on naked skin, to tangled limbs and warm masculine bodies pressed to hers. *I could definitely get used to this*, she thought, smiling, content to lie between Laith and Rykken, to feel their steady heartbeats and hear their deep, even breathing as they remained asleep.

Her thoughts returned to the night before. To the lovemaking. The conversation that followed.

Agree to come home with us, Cyan.

Live with us. Commit to us.

Join permanently with us, Cyan.

Are you saying you want me to be your wife?

Yes. Our shared wife.

She shifted onto her side and opened her eyes, lifted her hand, thinking to trace Rykken's masculine features but was immediately diverted by the sight of the bracelet on first one of her wrists and then the other.

They were so light they felt a part of her. She wasn't sure she'd have known they were there at all if she hadn't seen them.

Cyan returned to her back, brought them closer, studied the delicate craftsmanship. They were similar to the bands Rykken and Laith wore, though Rykken's contained dark red stones while Laith's contained deep green. There were no stones in the bracelets at her wrists but it looked as if there were grooved places, ready for them even if she couldn't imagine how they'd be added to the bands.

She recognized the design on her right wrist, the stylized birds of prey Laith wore. She compared the band on her left wrist to the one on Rykken's and found the same cat motif, an elongated, powerful hunter that reminded her of a sleek panther.

Cyan wasn't sure whether to be pleased or worried when she couldn't find a way to remove the bracelets from her wrists. They were significant, she knew it instinctively.

They were a symbolic binding of her to them. *Like a wedding band*, an internal voice whispered.

She hadn't given the fact they both wore bands much thought beyond the first wild guess when she saw them on Rykken and wondered if he and Laith were lovers. But now...now the sight of them unnerved her even as she grew wet with the idea of belonging to Laith and Rykken.

Cyan touched her bands, looked again for a way to remove them and failed to find it. She thought about their asking her to return home with them without telling her where home was, thought about how comfortable Laith seemed with the idea of a shared wife, as if it was perfectly legal, an everyday occurrence.

Her imagination took over in the same way it had when she'd drawn them in front of the fireplace. It placed them in a fantastic landscape full of beautiful men who wore similar bands on their wrists.

Cyan shook her head and cleared the image. A soft laugh chased away the unsettled feeling in her chest as she eased into a sitting position, careful not to wake them.

She studied them while they slept, felt her nipples tighten and her cunt lips part just looking at their masculine faces, the long luxurious waterfall of hair spread across the pillows and over their chests—Rykken's dark brown and straight, Laith's in rippling waves of autumn gold and brown.

Was it any wonder her imagination went wild around them? They were a fantasy. And she was deeply attracted to them, physically as well as emotionally. There was no denying it.

Was she ready to live openly with two men?

A spasm of lust made her channel clench and unclench, forced arousal onto her swollen labia. Her nipples tightened in answer. Yes, she was strong enough emotionally, comfortable enough with herself to choose an alternative lifestyle.

Of course, being an artist helped. Artists were *expected* to be eccentric, to flaunt social norms.

She could envision a future with them, but she still needed answers—answers to questions that had a hard time forming when she was naked with them, touching them, hungry for them.

Cyan eased out of bed, stifled a satisfied laugh when they mumbled but didn't wake. They might have worn her out with lovemaking last night, sent her to sleep in a rush of orgasm, but apparently they'd exhausted themselves too. Otherwise she'd expect men who made their living as bounty hunters to jerk awake and be ready for action at the slightest movement.

She dressed and slipped into the bathroom for a few minutes before stopping in the kitchen area long enough to drink a glass of orange juice. Outside the sun beckoned and the birds sang. A walk seemed like just the thing to clear her head and gather her thoughts.

Cyan startled when her cell phone vibrated on the counter next to where she'd left her purse. She grabbed it and escaped the cabin before it switched to the ring tone.

Nathan. She recognized the number and knew he was home.

"You're back from Europe," she said, moving away from the cabin so she wouldn't wake Rykken and Laith with her conversation when she noticed the partially open window.

"Yes. I've got a surprise for you. I wanted to share it with you in person but there are too many things here needing my immediate attention."

"You didn't have to get me anything," she said, her stomach tightening as she glanced at the cabin. A touch of guilt assailed her though she'd done nothing wrong.

Nathan laughed. "It's not that kind of a surprise. It's more of an enticement to get you to move to Taos. I haven't said anything before now because I wasn't sure I could pull this off. But Pieter Van Rijn has agreed to take you on as his student."

Stunned amazement gripped Cyan. Van Rijn's work was astonishing, breathtaking, his level of mastery something she could aspire to but might never succeed in reaching.

"Pieter Van Rijn? You're serious? He's willing to accept me as a student?" Her voice was barely more than a whisper.

She'd never imagined herself the student or protégé of a man like Van Rijn. She was primarily self-taught, guided by inspiration, by the things she could learn in books and by studying the work of others.

There'd been the occasional paid-for or bartered lesson, but they'd been rare when she was growing up because money had always been tight. It had grown scarcer after her mother was diagnosed with cancer. Then at nineteen, she'd been on her own, just trying to survive and stay true to her dream of being an artist.

"He's seen your work and is impressed," Nathan said. "Move to Taos. Take the loft above the gallery and the job that comes with it. You'll have a flexible work schedule so there'll be plenty of time for your art...and hopefully for us to get to know one another better."

Elation gave way to sobered reality. "I've met someone, Nathan." Two someones, but there was no point in telling him that.

Silence greeted her stark declaration, expanded into awkwardness until finally she said, "I should let you get back to—"

"No. I shouldn't be surprised you've met someone. But don't be so quick to throw away this opportunity. Do you know how rare it is for Pieter to take on a student? It was my mistake for not telling you what I had in the works. Move to Taos, anyway, Cyan. If the man you've met isn't going to be supportive of your career, isn't it better to know now?"

There was confidence in Nathan's voice, anticipation, as if somehow her having a boyfriend added to the challenge. She'd wondered from time to time if her reluctance to date him because of his connection to the art world had made her more interesting to him.

And yet his question was a reasonable question. Would Rykken and Laith be willing to live in Taos with her so she could study with Van Rijn?

"If I come to Taos, I can't take the job at the gallery or the loft above it. It wouldn't be right to accept that kind of help from you, Nathan, not now." But the other...especially since she'd been honest about where her heart lay. "I need to discuss this with...him."

Cyan wiped a damp palm against her shorts and wondered what Nathan would think if she said *them* instead.

"Don't take too long."

"I won't."

She said goodbye and closed the phone. Sunlight danced off the tight bracelet on her wrist. She pocketed the cell phone, touched the band and looked again for a way to remove it. There wasn't one.

Previous conversations with Laith filtered through her thoughts. There'd been plenty featuring Rykken, enough so she'd felt as if she knew him even before meeting him. There'd been fewer about their families, none about the place they called home. It hadn't seemed all that important at the time, but now it did.

She thought about going into the cabin, waking them, telling them about the opportunity to study with Pieter Van Rijn. But worry, unnerving premonition formed a cold knot in her stomach. She decided to take a walk and give herself a chance to think about what was most important to her—in case she had to choose between living with them, committing to them, or Taos.

Chapter Five

Rykken rose from the bed, muscles rippling, possessiveness screaming from every cell. *You heard?*

Yes.

He tries to lure our mate away! Enough of this. It's time to take her home with us.

She has yet to agree.

She will when I am done with her.

Rykken snagged the sweatpants he'd worn the previous day and put them on, frowned when he saw Laith sitting on the bed, making no effort to leave it though his face was tight with worry.

You intend to do nothing? Rykken asked, disbelief in his voice.

Laith lifted his hands. *I doubt conversation is on your mind and I can't risk letting my bands touch the ones she now wears, not until we're ready to bind her to us.*

Rykken glanced down at his own wrists, felt the heaviness of the Ylan stones as they drew closer to the point of separating and migrating. *Then I will make the case for both of us and convince her she belongs to us.*

He retrieved the *bouren* tie—the restraint created to secure lawbreakers—that he'd brought with him for his hair, then left the cabin. With each step the mating fever of the Vesti burned hotter. Even without the serum he'd injected through his mating fangs, he found it easy to track Cyan.

She wouldn't escape him. Couldn't. Too much was at stake, not just the survival of the Amato and the Vesti, but his own happiness and Laith's.

"You belong to us. You belong *with* us," Rykken said, crowding her when he caught up to her, loving the way submission filled her eyes, vibrated through her and revealed itself in the curves of her body, the heady scent of increased arousal.

He took her lips before she could challenge his statement. Thrust his tongue into her mouth as his hands made short work of ridding her of her shirt. Her soft mews of pleasure fed the fire burning inside him, acknowledged his right to dominate, to claim her so thoroughly that the thought of any other male would never enter her mind.

With a growl he raised her arms, used the *bouren* tie to tether her wrists and secure them to the tree limb above her head. He felt her shock at being restrained, felt also the tightening of her nipples where they pressed against his chest.

His hands went to her hips, to the front of her shorts, opened them and peeled them down along with her panties until they fell to the ground. Raw hunger assailed him at having her helpless, bared.

The need to taste her, to bury his face between her thighs and spear his tongue into her wet core overrode the desire to take her with his cock. He kissed his way down to her beautiful cunt. Licked and bit, told her with his actions what he'd told her with words. She belonged to them, *to him*.

He held her in position as he thrust his tongue into her opening, fucked her. Reveled in the way she panted, whimpered, tried to wrap her legs around him and hold him locked to her cunt.

"Agree to return home with us," he said, moving to her clit, rubbing the tiny head with his tongue, sucking it until she was close to orgasm, then stopping. "Agree to commit to us."

"Please," Cyan begged, her heart racing, her body screaming, needing his mouth, his cock.

She'd fantasized about a dominant lover. But no fantasy would ever match the reality of Rykken. She was a willing slave to his touch, to the desire he created in her, to the primitive need for safety and protection he satisfied.

"You will commit to us. You will return home with us," he said, making her shudder with pleasure as his tongue slid down the center of her, once again thrust into her core.

He repeated his demand each time he left her channel to claim her clit. Continued taking her to the edge of release over and over again until she was willing to agree to anything if he'd let her come.

"Yes," she finally whispered and he rewarded her by capturing her clit, sucking on it, striking it with his tongue until orgasm slammed into her and left her boneless.

Satisfaction filled Rykken as he freed Cyan from the *bouren* tie and stretched her out on the soft grass. *His!*

The word pulsed through every cell, made his cock swell further. He stripped and covered her, nearly purred when she spread her thighs, tilted her pelvis in order to coax his penis into entering her, to giving her his seed.

His! It was a chant almost impossible to ignore as he rubbed against her wet folds, bathed in heated arousal and coated himself with her scent.

He threaded his fingers through hers, held her hands to the ground, his wristbands touching hers as he took her lips.

His! It became an insistent call, repeated with each beat of his heart.

Laith's image surfaced and was growled away. Returned as Rykken's mind fought his body, as personal honor fought genetic programming.

Rykken's hips bucked. His penis throbbed. He was desperate to enter her, to finish this claiming here and now.

The Ylan stones at his wrists hummed, prepared to separate, to migrate.

Mine! his cock screamed even as he forced himself to roll off Cyan before it was too late and they were bound together without Laith's inclusion.

He took himself in hand, stroked up and down roughly until fire roared through his cock in a lava-hot release. And then Laith was there, scooping Cyan into his arms.

She agreed to return home with us, to commit to us, Rykken said, still shuddering from orgasm.

Then let's take her now, Laith said, his features and voice strained, his cock pressed hard against the front of his jeans.

Cyan wrapped her arms around Laith's neck, content to bask in the afterglow of passion for a few minutes longer.

"My clothes," she murmured.

"You won't need them where we're going," Laith said, piquing her curiosity and clearing some of the sensual haze from her mind.

Instead of returning to the cabin he continued along the path she'd been on, then turned onto one she would have sworn wasn't there the day before when she explored.

An adobe building came into view. Rykken moved ahead of them, opened the door.

Surprise made Cyan laugh in delight when Laith carried her inside. They were in an intimate, terraced garden. Above them the ceiling was clear glass to allow the sun to shine on the lush flowering plants. In the center of the room, amid an intricate pattern of stones, was a thick mattress on a frame that rested close to the ground.

Laith set her on her feet, stripped out of his pants then pulled her against him. She shivered, loved the heat of his skin, the hard press of his cock. Rykken took up a position at her back, his penis nestled against the cleft of her buttocks.

"You agreed to return home with us? To commit to us?" Laith asked.

As if Rykken made it possible to say anything but yes.

She nodded, expected Laith's lips to curve upward in a smile. Instead he grew more serious. His eyes bore into hers and uneasiness filled her.

"Rykken and I cannot live in Taos," Laith said, unable to simply take her to Belizair as he'd intended for them to do when they brought her to the transport chamber. "Our home is far from here, in a place you wouldn't have heard of, though you will be welcomed and will find yourself much sought after as an artist there."

What are you doing? Rykken growled. *She has agreed. That is all Council law requires.*

She must have a true choice, not just the illusion of one. Otherwise she might come to hate us for stealing away the chance to study with an artist she has long admired. Do you want to risk that?

No. It was accompanied by a snarl.

Laith brushed his lips over Cyan's. "Will you commit to us and return home with us?"

Somehow she'd known it would come down to this choice. She was glad now for having managed a few moments alone before Rykken caught up to her.

She'd been fifteen when her mother was diagnosed with cancer. Nineteen when her mother's death demonstrated the tenuous nature of life, showed how quickly it could end and impressed on Cyan the importance of living fully, of holding on to happiness.

Her art and her life were inextricably bound together. Her satisfaction came from creating, from capturing moments in time, translating emotion and stripping her subjects to their soul, from touching others with her work—not from gaining fame or recognition.

She still had so many questions for Laith and Rykken, but they didn't need to be answered right now. She doubted the answers would change her own.

What she'd found in their arms was the chance for a lifetime of happiness. And even for the opportunity to study with Pieter Van Rijn, she wouldn't give it up.

"I'll commit to you. I'll go home with you," she said and felt the tension drain from both men.

They hugged her before stepping away. "Then see us as we truly are," Laith said.

The air in the room seemed to vibrate with energy and the stones set in the floor and in Laith's wristbands shimmered as though they were molten liquid. Cyan's breath caught in her throat, her heartbeat sounded loud and fast in her ears as a thousand

golden particles of light gathered behind Laith, took form, became the feathered wings she'd captured in her drawing.

She turned and found Rykken as she'd drawn him, the bat-winged demon to Laith's angel though she instinctively knew they were something other than what they'd been defined by religion. She reached out, touched the deep-brown suede of Rykken's wing, saw him close his eyes and felt him shudder in pleasure. "What are you?"

"Vesti."

"And I am Amato," Laith said, moving in close enough that it was Cyan who shuddered when his wing brushed across her buttock in an erotic caress.

She ran her fingers along the golden-brown edge of Laith's wing. Arousal coated her labia and inner thighs as she looked at them, as she remembered their intensely carnal reactions when they'd seen the picture she'd drawn of them together.

"Make love to me," she whispered, needing their touch more than answers. Wondering if it would always be that way when she was with them.

It was Rykken who picked her up in his arms. Rather than toss her onto the bed, he held her as Laith positioned himself on his back, his wings spread across the mattress like an exotic comforter.

Her cunt clenched. A whimper escaped.

Rykken placed her at the foot of the bed on her hands and knees but didn't release his grip on her hip. His finger trailed along the seam of her buttocks, circled the tight rosette of her anus. "This time we'll take you together, both of us inside you at once. When we are finished you will be bound to us completely, ours to pleasure and protect until this life gives way to the next." He leaned in, lightly bit her shoulder. "Do you want that, Cyan?"

Her cunt spasmed in answer. "Yes."

"Then mount Laith."

It was a command she found easy to obey. She crawled up his body, guided his cock to her opening and impaled herself on it. The feel of his wings against her thighs and legs was incredibly erotic, the sight of his face as she took him in his true form something she'd forever remember.

Laith entwined his fingers with hers so the bands at her wrists were pressed to his above their heads. She moaned when Rykken joined them, gasped when his fingers danced over her dark opening, coated the tight rosette with something that warmed, made her pant and writhe with the heightened need to feel him inside her.

"Please," she whispered, lifting, sliding along Laith's cock as she pushed against Rykken's fingers.

Beneath her Laith's breathing grew fast. His hips jerked, sent his penis back into her and made her gasp as whatever Rykken was using for lubricant found its way into her channel.

"Hurry," Laith said, bucking, his mouth capturing Cyan's.

Rykken's cock head pressed against the tight rosette he'd prepared and she pushed against him as she'd done to his fingers. Pain and pleasure blended, became an addiction she would never choose to fight.

Sensation, heat, ecstasy. All of them pulsed through her, left her begging for more.

Rykken's wings spread, covered and trapped them in a sensual cocoon. His hands joined with hers and Laith's, bands touching, symbolic, intimate.

They began thrusting then, in perfect sync, building the hunger, adding to it with their kisses, their moans, their whispered words of a future together, their promises to always be there for her.

Cyan gave herself over to their care, accepted what they offered, matched it with her own words of commitment. Their thrusting increased in pace, shook the bed and made the room hum with energy, with a light show fed by the cries of pleasure, the wild energy of orgasm.

For long moments afterward they lay in a tangled heap of arms and legs, wings and silky hair, their bodies pressed together. "I liked that," Cyan murmured, freeing her hands, intending to explore soft wings and breathtaking masculine features, but distracted instead by the blend of green and red now present in the bracelets they'd placed on her, as if the stones on Rykken's and Laith's bands had merged onto her own.

You have guessed and found the truth, Cyan. The Ylan stones separated and migrated. For us this is what it means to commit, to bind ourselves to another, Laith said, kissing her, delaying for a second the realization he'd spoken in her mind.

When she stiffened, Rykken laughed, kissed her shoulder. *Perhaps it would be better for us to leave the transport chamber and get to the living quarters assigned us. There we can spend the day answering your questions as well as making love.*

Shock shot through Cyan. She rose on her elbow, felt confused. The room they were in was the same.

Laith caressed her cheek with the back of his hand. "We aren't of Earth, Cyan." He indicated the door with the tilt of his head. "A new world waits for you to explore and capture in your art."

Fear settled in her chest. "And my old world?"

"Your things will be brought here by the bounty hunters who serve the Council," Laith said. "Your disappearance will be handled by them as well, in a way that will minimize worries and fears for your safety."

"But I can't go back?"

"I don't know. Not many humans have been brought here and none of them has asked to be returned."

"Why me?" she asked, almost dreading the answer.

Rykken moved then, made her shiver with renewed need as his wing brushed against her leg. His hand cupped her breast possessively. "Don't think to leave us, Cyan," he growled, his dominance making her feel secure.

Laith speared his fingers through her hair, reassured her with his kiss. "You are our hope, Cyan. Our future."

From his thoughts she learned of the Hotaling virus and its devastation. Saw the dreams he'd had of sharing her with Rykken, felt the depth of his belief—that the Goddess he held sacred intended this first sharing of a human mate between Amato and Vesti to light the way for others.

Laith's sureness became hers. And just as she'd captured their wings in her drawing, an image rose of her swelling with their children, answering their prayers and their dreams.

Her cunt lips parted and grew slick. Need rose and she rubbed herself against them, melted under the onslaught of their emotion and need, felt it more intensely, as if the bands in her wrists captured it, amplified it.

They do, Rykken said and she clung to them as they chased away any lingering fear with heated kisses and intimate touches, with masculine confidence and the erotic brush of feathers and suede, made love again before coming full circle, lying together in a tangled heap of arms and legs, wings and silky hair.

Ready? Laith and Rykken asked, united in their desire to introduce her to their world.

And this time she was. *I'm ready.*

About the Author

Jory has been writing since childhood and has never outgrown being a daydreamer. When she's not hunched over her computer, lost in the muse and conjuring up new heroes and heroines, she can usually be found reading, riding her horses or hiking with her dogs.

Jory welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and e-mail address on her author bio page at www.ellorascave.com.

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