

STEPHANI HECHT

The book cover features three characters against a dark, forested background with a large, glowing full moon. On the left is a man with long dark hair and a brown mesh tank top with a blue trim. In the center is a man with short blonde hair and blue eyes, shirtless. On the right is a woman with dark hair and green eyes, wearing a green hooded cloak. The title 'BLOOD AND MAGIC' is at the bottom in a stylized, outlined font.

BLOOD
AND
MAGIC

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Blood and Magic
Drone Vampire Chronicles 3

By

Stephani Hecht

Dedication

*To Cody, you have always been a source of
inspiration and I am so proud of you.*

Chapter One

Corn dogs, popcorn and cheap oversized stuffed animals. These were the things that came up whenever someone thought about a carnival. It certainly wasn't things like grumpy, mean and vampire. Which is exactly what was walking down the midway.

"Tell me why we're here again?" Rafe griped as he cast a jaded eye at all the people milling around and having a grand 'ol time. Adding insult to injury was how the cheap speakers were distorting the rock music, the warbling sound filling the air to mix in with the excited squeals of the children.

"Because we're under orders to be here," his oldest brother, Kane, responded in his best just-do-what-you're-told-and-don't-argue voice.

Unfortunately, for Kane, Rafe wasn't in the mood to play along. "We're vampires not clowns. We don't belong here." He glared angrily at the Farris Wheel that was twinkling in the dark sky. As if it were to blame for his sorry ass winding up

in the land of happy.

"Just suck it up," his other brother, Dante, chimed in with a way-to-eager-smile. "Better yet, relax and have some fun." Dante stopped dead in his tracks to point over at a rusty concession stand. "Oh look, they have cotton candy!"

"Yeah, just what you need, a sugar rush." Rafe nervously sized up a group of werewolves that were walking by. He relaxed when he realized they were all teens and had no interest in any of the vampires.

"Stop being such a buzz kill." Dante watched the wolves until they were out of sight. "Before you know it, we'll be home and you can go back to your brooding."

"I don't brood," Rafe grumbled. Both his siblings stopped walking so they could give him droll stares. "Okay, maybe I brood a bit," he conceded with a growl.

"A bit?" Dante echoed, incredulously as they started walking again. "You have made it into a fine art form that would make Picasso jealous. If you were a rapper your name would be, *Brooding Rapping Rafe*. I'm going to write a romance novel about you called, *The Brooding Vampire*."

"Are you finished?" Rafe snapped.

"Nah, I'm just getting started," Dante returned, his brown eyes dancing with his all too familiar cockiness.

"Look, I'm sorry," Kane cut in, serious as always. "I know you hate crowds and I know you hate being stuck with something as lame as this, but this order comes from the top. Now that we're living with the Drone Clan that means we have to help protect all the vampires there, especially the kids. Can it be helped that they wanted to come have some fun at the carnival?"

"No." Rafe hated to admit it, but he couldn't fault the kids for wanting to have some damn fun. Even vampire children liked to forget real life for a while. But why did it have to be here? With a trained soldier's eye, he picked out all the areas where assassins could hide to pick them off. Vampires, be they Pure Born or Drone, had many enemies in the paranormal world and Rafe didn't like feeling so vulnerable.

Been there. Done that. Had the souvenir bumper sticker to prove it.

A chorus of screams sounded off to his left and Rafe acted on instinct, spinning toward the source, his hand on the butt of his gun. A cold sweat broke out over his body as he realized it was just some riders enjoying the Zipper and he'd almost taken out some poor unsuspecting carnival worker. Letting out a pent up breath, he released the gun and slid his hand out from inside his jean jacket.

"Little edgy tonight?" Dante raised one dark

brow. "You almost shot that carny and his only crime was wearing a ten-year old shirt and showing his butt crack."

"You've been really twitchy lately, even for you," Kane agreed. His eyes narrowed as he looked Rafe up and down. "You're real thin and pale, too. When's the last time you fed?"

"Right before we left. I snagged a bag from the cafeteria," Rafe lied because he couldn't remember the last time he'd had blood. As usual, his brothers saw right through him.

"Bullshit," Kane snarled while Dante cursed under his breath. "You've stopped drinking again. Damn it, Rafe, this whole slow suicide thing is getting old."

Rafe didn't answer because in all truth, he wasn't denying himself blood on purpose. It just didn't interest him anymore. Nothing did. Food, sex, fighting, all of it had lost its appeal to him since he and his brothers had been put into prison over a decade ago. Even after they got out and were back in the real world, nothing seemed to matter to him. Nothing called to him.

Well almost nothing.

As if on cue, his glance caught sight of the one thing that made his bleak life worth living. Morgan. The small female was leaning against a railing and watching some of the younger vampire children ride the carousel. Her long, raven hair

was loose, the wind picking up some of the tresses and making them caress her pale face. Instead of her usual dark clothes and green cloak, she was dressed in a pair of tight blue jeans and red tee shirt so she could blend in with the humans. The civilian clothing molded perfectly to her small yet curvy form. His cock grew rock hard as he imagined, for what had to be the ten millionth time, how it would feel to have that soft body under him.

Rafe gave himself a little internal head knock and forced himself to look away. He could want Morgan, but he could never, ever touch because there was one little problem. She was a witch and the last thing he wanted to do was get mixed up in the magical world. That was one piece of his past that he never wanted to face. Not only was it picking at an emotional scab, but it could be a real detriment to his physical health as well.

While everyone already knew that he, Dante and Kane were really half-brothers and they all had different mothers, what they didn't know was that Rafe's mother was a witch.

Rafe was a halfling and, as far as he knew, no halfling had ever been allowed to live. Either one side or the other killed them off. Yeah, centuries of infighting and hatred had a way of making individuals real sticklers when it came to stuff like keeping their bloodlines from mixing. A rough

punch to his shoulder brought him out of his musings. Scowling he glared at Kane. "What?"

"Are you with us?" Kane's blue eyes shifted over to where Morgan was still standing. "Shit, you must be really needing some blood if you're salivating over the witch."

"I'm not salivating." Wow, Rafe was just lying all over the place tonight. "I was just seeing what she was up to tonight."

"Is she still following you around?" Dante asked.

"No, she hasn't talked to me for weeks now." Rafe hated that it bothered him so much, too. When Morgan had first somehow weaseled her way into the clan compound, despite the hatred for witches, he'd done everything he could to avoid her. Now that she was ignoring him, he missed her and her nagging.

"I still can't believe she didn't oust you as being half-warlock." Dante glared at her with pure hatred, but it wasn't because she was a witch. It was because of the threat she posed to Rafe.

"She says she won't because she wants me to accept who I am on my own terms," Rafe snorted.

"I don't trust her," Kane said darkly.

"I don't either," Dante agreed with a deep sigh, before he switched topics so fast Rafe almost got vertigo. "I'm going to get an elephant ear."

Rafe wanted to go along with their distrust for

Morgan, but he couldn't. For some odd reason he did trust the strange witch. Oh, she had her own agenda, he was sure of that. And he was damn sure she had plans to include him in it. That still didn't stop him from believing in her and that was something that didn't come easy for Rafe. Not when he'd been betrayed by almost everyone in his life.

Before her, the only ones Rafe could count on were Kane and Dante.

"I don't believe it," Kane's deep voice said.

"That Dante is going to get an elephant ear?" Rafe shrugged. "The only thing I find hard to believe is that he held out this long. You know how he likes sugar."

"No. What's got me shaking my head is the way you're staring at the witch."

"Morgan," Rafe replied softly as his gut felt like it had taken a direct hit. If Kane had noticed him watching, how many others had caught on?

"What?" Kane was beginning to sound really annoyed now. Usually it was Dante who was on the receiving end, but it looked like Rafe, lucky duck that he was, would be getting it tonight.

"Her name is Morgan not *the witch*." Rafe closed his eyes and gave a silent curse when he'd realized that the best thing right now would be not to get all defensive on Morgan's behalf.

Against all better judgment, his gaze shifted to

her again. She was leaning against the railing, her ass tilted out just right. He'd had a couple dreams where she was in that position. Of course she'd been nude at the time, her porcelain skin glowing against the candlelight as he grabbed her soft hips and plunged into her tight pussy. The strange thing was in his dreams there was always a third person. Rafe could never figure out who it was since they stayed in the shadows, but in his dreams it never seemed to bother him. It was almost as if that other person belonged.

"What's Rafe drooling over?" Dante asked as he walked over with a plate overflowing with grease, sugar and pastry.

"I'm not drooling," Rafe snarled a bit too savagely. "I'm just—" Whatever he might have said next was cut off when Dante shoved a piece of his crappy food into his mouth. Rafe had no choice but to chew or else he would have choked. Damn it, Dante had been right, this stuff was good.

"He looking at the witch again, isn't he?" Dante gave a wicked smile as he shook his head.

"He would prefer if we called her Morgan," Kane drawled as he crossed his arms and glared at Rafe.

"And I would prefer to call her flambéed, boiled and cooked at the stake," Dante countered, shooting Rafe his own look.

A low rumble built up in Rafe's chest and he was shocked to realize he was two seconds from attacking Dante for that comment. Dante flashed that cocky grin of his, daring Rafe to make his move. Kane stepped between the two of them and put a large hand on both of their chests.

"Normally I would be okay with you two throwing down the gloves and going at it, but we're on a mission here." He grabbed a handful of Rafe's shirt and gave him a shake to get his point across. "Eric specifically said we were to blend in with the humans and if you two go all primal on each other that, isn't going to fly.

"He started it," Dante chanted like one of the clan children.

"You're an idiot." Rafe rolled his eyes. "I don't know why Brenden puts up with you."

"My mate appreciates my charming personality."

"Oh, fucking give me a break."

"You know, that's just not nice," Dante admonished. "Here I was getting ready to take your side, too."

"Why do I get the feeling I don't want to hear this?" Kane pinched the bridge of his nose with his thumb and forefinger.

"I think that Rafe should take the witch...oops my bad, *Morgan*, to bed and fuck her brains out. Then he can get her out of his system once and for

all.”

Both Kane and Rage stared at Dante like he'd lost his flipping mind, which really wasn't a long step as far as the middle Toren brother was concerned. Rafe didn't know if he wanted to laugh or make another lunge at the idiot. Unfortunately, at the words *fuck her brains out*, Rafe's cock had jumped back to attention like it was giving the idea a big *woo hoo!*

“This is the reason why some weres kill off the insane in their pack,” Rafe said to Kane. A wave of dizziness hit him and his hands started to tremble. Shit, just what he needed now. Since he'd been living on the bagged stuff lately, he'd been getting weaker by the night. Fresh was always better, but ever since Morgan had come into the picture Rafe couldn't imagine feeding off anyone.

“I'm dead serious.” Dante lost all the humor in his expression and pinned Rafe with a worried look. “You're twitchy, blood starved and as mean as a wolf.”

“I'll get some blood when I get back.” Rafe reached over and snagged another bite of Dante's elephant ear. Sometimes sugar helped when he got the shakes like this.

“I thought you got some before we came here,” Kane said sharply.

“I did, I just must not have got enough.” As he licked his fingers clean, Rafe wondered what it

would be like to pin Morgan under him. Now that would be one meal he wouldn't mind sinking his fangs into.

"You need fresh blood," Kane snapped, the irritation clear in his eyes.

"You need to fuck. You need blood," Rafe mimicked nastily under his breath. "When did everyone become so interested in my private life?"

"Since you started denying yourself blood again." Kane exchanged worried glances with Dante. "You haven't done that since right after we got out of prison."

"We're concerned about you," Dante added.

A group of teenage girls walked by and the brothers stopped talking, not wanting to be overheard. For a while the only sounds were the females' giggles and the other chatter from the carnival. Once they were alone again, Rafe ran his hand through his hair. The front was always long and hung in his eyes. kind of his shield against the world.

"Look, I'll be okay. I've just had a lot to deal with lately. Finding out my mom is alive and wanting me to go to her coven. Having Morgan show up and then hound me to come back. Then me wanting..." He trailed off and clamped his lips shut, realized that he'd almost admitted that he actually desired her.

And there was no way he could any longer

deny to himself that he wanted her. Bad. When Morgan had first come into his life, he'd disliked her intensely, but somehow along the way, she'd managed to crawl under his skin and she was now an itch that had to be scratched.

Looking over at her, the way her full breasts strained against that tight tee and how those jeans cupped her ass just right, he decided he needed to scratch that itch soon. Dante had been right, Rafe needed to fuck Morgan. Maybe then he'd be able to get her off his brain for longer than ten seconds.

Then there was a shift in the air that had nothing to do with Morgan or the crappy carnival food. It was as if a slight electrical current had fizzled down Rafe's spine, making the hairs on the back of his neck stand on end. Something or someone had just come in the area and it wasn't vampire or human. No it was – magical.

He looked over to see if Kane or Dante had noticed, but they seemed unaware of anything. But then again, they weren't half warlock like him, so maybe only he could feel it. Even though he hated using any part of his magical half, Rafe reached out to see if he could pinpoint the source.

Nothing. All he could get was that one little sputter of energy. Damn it, maybe he should have listened to some of those magical lectures Morgan was always spouting off. Now his brother's lives might depend on it and he'd failed them again.

"There's something coming," he finally spoke his fears out loud. Instantly Kane and Dante switched into alert, their hands slipping inside their coats as they scanned the area.

"Are you sure?" Kane asked. "I don't see anything."

"Me either." Dante tossed the rest of his food in the trash.

"I can feel it." Rafe tried not to blush when he made that admission. What if Dante and Kane thought he was imagining things?

But they didn't. As always, his brothers trusted him and his instincts out in the field. "What do you think it is?" Kane signaled to a nearby group of Drone soldiers. "Animal, vegetable or mineral?"

"I think it's magical. I know it sounds crazy, but it's giving off vibes that are like Morgan and me." Okay at least it didn't hurt so much to admit that one. What's more, it didn't seem to bother his brothers either.

"Got the little bastard." Dante smiled, his eyes dark and predatory. He'd always been the best tracker. "It's a blond male and he's stalking Morgan."

Rafe instantly went into protective mode, moving forward toward her, but Kane put out an arm and stopped him.

"I don't think he means her any harm. I want to see how this one plays out."

"You can't be sure that he won't hurt her," Rafe snarled, seeing red. The thought of Morgan being in any kind of danger was setting him on edge. His fangs grew longer and a low growl rumbled in his throat.

"Down tiger," Dante added. "I think he's just here to talk to her. If he was going to attack, he would have made his move already."

"You guys better be right." Rafe ducked his head to hide his fangs from the humans. "If he so much as touches her, I'll rip his head off. Witnesses or not."

Chapter Two

Morgan clutched the cool railing of the carousal and watched it go around. The lazy circling of the festively painted horses, mixed with the bright lights, lulled her into a peaceful almost hypnotic state. One of the little girls waved at her and Morgan returned the gesture.

“A witch making nice with a vampire. I never thought I’d see the day,” a deep male voice rumbled behind her.

“It’s a child vampire and they like me,” she returned, not bothering to look back to see whom it was. Even after months of separation, she would recognize Dominic’s voice anywhere. *This. Was. Not. Good.* She tightened her grip on the railing so hard her knuckles grew white.

“Aren’t you going to at least turn around and give me a proper hello?” he asked, his voice light and teasing.

“Why are you here?” she asked, still looking forward. Her heart hammered in her chest and she

had to resist the urge to glance around to make sure nobody was watching them. If she were seen with Dominic, it would be bad with a capital BAD. And not bad as in you-got-sent-to-bed-without-dessert, but bad as in exiled, killed or worse.

"Ouch." Dominic chuckled.

Even though she couldn't see him, she knew exactly what his facial expression was, a mixture of hurt and understanding. Morgan breathed in deep, taking in scents of the carnival, greasy fries, cotton candy, diesel and sawdust. Maybe if she continued to ignore him, he would go away and leave her in peace. But if she knew one thing about the warlock it was he could be as stubborn as a mule when he wanted something and, lucky her, he wanted to talk to her now.

"Look at me, Morgan," he urged.

She jumped when she felt him brush a hand against her long dark hair.

"Damn it, I've missed you so much, the least you can do is let me look at your beautiful face."

"Do you have any idea how dangerous it is coming here? This place is crawling with vampires, all of whom would love to tear apart a warlock."

"But you said they like you." He captured one of her locks and toyed with it.

With a sigh, she finally turned to face him. Dominic hadn't changed any in the months she'd

been gone. His blond hair was still cut short, the front bushed back stylishly out of his bright blue eyes. He still had those same dimples that made him look devilish and charming at the same time and he still had a build that could put any of the Drone soldiers to shame.

One thing had changed though, instead of his usual uniform of green and black leather, Dominic was dressed like any other civilian. He had on a pair of faded blue jeans and a black tee shirt . Yet somehow he managed to make the everyday outfit look so damn sexy. "The vampires may have accepted me but they won't open their arms for a warlock." She brushed a strand of hair out of her face and glared up at him.

"They won't even know I'm here," Dominic said with way too much cockiness.

"Please." She snorted. "If I know Rafe and his brothers, they probably already spotted you."

"The day that I'm scared of vampires is the day they should strip me of my powers." He reached out and traced her bottom lip with his finger.

Goddess, she'd forgotten how good his touch felt. "They'll kill you," she declared breathlessly as she darted her tongue out to caress him.

"I can take care of myself." He wrapped one arm around her waist and hauled her closer to his hard body. "I came check on you. The coven has been worried because we haven't heard from you

in so long.”

“I’m busy completing the mission they sent me on. To bring Rafe back so he can help us.” She gripped his biceps and savored the familiar comfort of his warmth. She hadn’t realized how much she’d missed him until now.

“How’s that mission going?”

His full lips were only inches from hers and it was all she could do not to stand on tiptoe so she could taste him. “Not so good, he hates our kind.” She could feel his hard cock pressing against her belly and she had to resist the urge to rub against it like a cat in heat.

“Doesn’t he realize he’s partly one of us?”

“Yes, but you have to remember he was raised by vampires and they are bred to despise us.”

“I think I’m about to get a firsthand view of how much Raffy hates me because he’s coming over here now.” Dominic pulled away from her and turned to face the oncoming threat.

Rafe was walking slowing up the midway, his brothers on either side of him. While Dominic tended to lean toward the more sophisticated side, Rafe was more rugged and dangerous. His dark hair was cut short in the back, but the front was long enough to hang over his eyes—eyes that were a deep green that could make your heart stutter with fear and desire when they were locked in on you. Rafe reminded Morgan of a tiger that had

been abused one too many times and was just waiting for the right moment to strike out at someone.

Morgan started to tremble, but it wasn't just out of fear. Whenever she saw Rafe looking all dangerous like that, she was reduced to a mass of quivering hormones. Sad really, since he had made it clear on countless encounters that he couldn't stand the sight of her.

"Damn it, Morgan!" Dominic said in a low voice. "Why didn't you tell me he was our third?"

Fear seized through Morgan as her heart pounded so loud the entire carnival probably heard it. Okay, Dominic had picked up on that one way quicker than she had thought he would have. Damn his fine hide for being so smart.

"I wasn't for sure myself until recently." She licked her dry lips. "Rafe isn't exactly warm and fuzzy with me."

"Hate to break it to you, sweetie, but that vampire knows you belong to him. He's looking at you like you're a morsel of meat and he's coming to claim you. Right after he skins me for touching you." There was no mistaking the desire in Dominic's husky voice as he made that observation.

"You don't get it." Morgan felt the panic build up higher and higher with each step closer Rafe took. "He really, really hates us. If you even

mention to him that he's our destined mate, he'll lose it and go after you and not in a good way."

"I think I might like that." Dominic gave a lustful grin.

"Just be quiet and let me do all the talking," she snapped. "And don't ogle him either." She pasted on a fake smile as the brothers approached.

Rafe stepped forward, grabbed Morgan by the wrist and yanked her by his side.

She was so surprised by his protective gesture, she didn't resist and allowed herself to be pulled to his side.

"Who's your friend?" Rafe asked her although his gaze remained locked on the other male.

"This is Dominic. He's from our coven." She placed heavy emphasis on the word *our* trying to remind Rafe of his warlock half. Maybe then he would be less inclined to attack.

"What's he doing here?" Rafe continued to keep his iron-clad grip on her.

Morgan tried to pull away, but he refused to let go. Anger surged through her until he ran the pad of his thumb along the inside of her wrist. The intimate gesture was so foreign coming from him that she let out a gasp of shock as a warm heat filled up her insides. "He's just checking up on me. Dominic means no harm, I promise you." She barely held in a moan when Rafe caressed her again. Her womb clenched in desire as she

imagined how nice that caress would feel on other, more intimate parts of her body.

"I'm sure you think he's harmless," Kane spoke up. "But when we see a strange warlock in the mist of clan children, we get a bit antsy. So you'll just have to excuse us if we don't give him a great big hello hug."

"Our kind would never harm a child no matter what species they may be," Dominic shot out, his eyes growing hard with anger. "You insult me by even suggesting that."

"Oops, our bad," Dante drawled in a don't-give-a-fuck-what-you-think tone. "Sorry if we offended you there."

"I didn't come here to fight," Dominic replied in clipped tones. "I just need to talk to Rafe and Morgan alone for a few minutes."

That must have been the wrong thing to say because Rafe threw her behind him and barred his fangs with a hiss.

"You won't be doing anything with me or Morgan. She's mine."

"I'm what?" she nearly yelled. Her stomach did a strange flip and damn if his possessive words didn't make her cream her panties.

"Mine," Rafe repeated. "And you're not going anywhere."

Morgan let out a squeak of outrage even as her body tingled from head to toe at his cave man like

words. Why did that make her so hot? There was no denying it either. Right now, Rafe could have thrown her over his shoulder and carried her off and she would go without a second thought. Just so long as Dominic could go, too.

"I would just love to sit around and chat, but we have better things to do. Laundry, wash our hair, taxes, root canals, so you'll have to excuse us." Rafe turned to go, tugging on Morgan's wrist to indicate that she was to follow.

"The fate of our world depends of you listening to me, Rafe," Dominic called after them. The vampires pulled up short to look back at him.

"Did my mommy tell you to say that?" Rafe growled, looking up from under his dark hair.

"No, but I'm telling you the truth." Dominic pulled out a chain and let it dangle from his outstretched hand—on the end was a large ring. All three brothers let out a collective gasp.

"Where did you get that?" Kane demanded in a furious voice.

"What is it?" Morgan asked, shocked at the reaction the piece of jewelry got from Rafe and the others. To her it just looked like a heavy gold ring with a large ruby in it. She couldn't even detect any magic in it.

"It's our father's ring. He never took it off." Rafe's voice shook with fury. "What I'm wondering is how your little boy got it."

"It was sent to your mother along with a note that had one demand for his safe return."

Morgan's stomach dropped and her knees almost gave out from under her. She knew what that demand was. "They want Rafe, don't they?"

"Who's they?" Kane moved closer, but Rafe put his body between his brother and Morgan.

"They are what's going to cause this world a whole bunch of hurt unless Rafe agrees to come and help our coven beat them," Dominic answered. He tossed the ring to Rafe who caught it neatly with his free hand.

"It's a group of dark witches and warlocks and they're growing stronger each day. Already they've taken over three covens. They convert some and kill the ones who refuse to go along. We think it's only a matter of time before they move onto humans, vampires and anything else that stands in their way."

"What does Rafe have to do with this?" Dante had lost all of his good humor and was looking as mean as ever.

"Rafe's mother, Olivia, is our coven leader and she wields the strongest magic of any of us. A soothsayer foretold that her son would be the key to beating the dark ones and driving them back," Morgan supplied in a dull voice. Now that she'd revealed what she'd known all along, Rafe was probably going to go back to hating her again.

"I'm sure that Rafe isn't her only son." Kane gave her a filthy look.

Morgan had to resist the urge to cower closer to Rafe for protection.

"The soothsayer said it would be a son that is half vampire half warlock." Dominic flicked a glance over Rafe. "As far as I know, he's the only one who fits the bill."

"Please," Dante snarled. "This is obviously some ploy to get Rafe to go meet Olivia. Like we're going to fall for the old the-fate-of-the-world-depends-on-you line." He turned to give Kane a bored look. "Can I kill him now?"

"Later," Kane answered in an equally dull tone. "We promised no homicides until after the kids go home."

"Let's get out of here. I'm so done hearing about my mother." Rafe curled up one side of his mouth to flash a fang.

"But she's worried about you," Morgan protested knowing from past experience that she was treading on thin ice, but desperate to get him to realize the truth. As expected, her words made him angry. His eyes narrowed and his face grew hard.

"If she gave a damn about me, then she would have never left me when I was still a kid. Until you came around, I never even heard a word from her. So you'll have to excuse me if I doubt the

sincerity of her love for her baby boy.”

“Wow, Rafe really must be pissed. He just spoke a whole paragraph and used big words, too,” Dante cracked. “You knocked the brooding right out of him, witch...oops, Morgan.”

Rafe didn’t respond to that, instead he tugged on her hand and started to lead her away from Dominic again. When she tried to turn around to look, Rafe stopped in his tracks and gazed down at her. Nudging her chin with his finger, he made her look at him. The raw possession she saw in his eyes made her shiver.

“There’s no looking back anymore, Morgan,” he warned her. “I meant what I said. Witch or not, you’re mine now.”

Chapter Three

As soon as they got back to the clan dwelling, Rafe grabbed Morgan's hand and started to drag her through the winding halls. They got some curious stares along the way, but Rafe was way too beyond pissed to care.

"Where are we going?" she asked.

Rafe noticed she was panting because she had to run to keep up with his long strides. "To my room. It's time you answered some damn questions. Now keep up or else I'll throw you over my shoulder and carry you there," he threatened.

Her eyes grew wide as she nibbled on her bottom lip. "Are you sure you would want all your little vampire friends seeing you hauling me to your bedroom?" She tilted her head to the side, her green eye sparkling. "They might think you actually like me."

"Be quiet," he ordered as they rounded the final corner to the hall that led to his quarters.

"If I keep quiet, then how will I answer your

very important questions?" Morgan blinked at him innocently.

Rafe was torn between strangling or kissing her. "Don't push me now," Rafe warned as he unlocked the door and pushed it open. Dragging her in, he slammed it shut and turned to face her. He was still holding her hand and damned if he could make himself let go.

"Are you mad at me?" she asked in a soft voice, almost as if she didn't want to talk loud for fear of provoking him further.

Rafe didn't buy the timid act for one minute. If she had one weak bone in her body, then she would have never had the guts to live this long in a vampire clan. No, his witch had more courage than most Drone soldiers did. "Cut the act, Morgan," Rafe said dryly as he moved closer to her, making it so she had to tilt her head up to look at him. It made her white throat stretch out perfectly and he honed in on the pulse fluttering at him. His mouth watered as he realized Kane and Dante had been right about one thing—he really did need fresh blood. Growling, he pulled away from her and went to the other side of his way too small room.

"I've never been in here before." She flicked a glance over the piles of dirty clothes, beer cans and wrappers. "Is it the maid's day off?"

"I don't need much since it's just me and all I

usually come here for is to crash. But I didn't bring you here to talk about my housekeeping." He crossed his arms over his chest and leaned against the wall.

"Ah yes." She plopped down on his unmade bed. "You would have to bring up those pesky questions again."

"All those things that Dominic claimed earlier, did you know anything about them?" he asked, trying hard not to notice how nice she looked on his sheets. Made him wonder how she would look tangled in them.

"About your mother and what the soothsayer saw, yes." Morgan sighed heavily and gave him a look that might have been regret. "I didn't know about your father though. I swear it. I would never keep something that big from you and your brothers."

"My father disowned us years ago when we went to prison," Rafe replied darkly. The pain of that rejection should have dulled over time, but it was still a raw wound with him.

"I'm sorry, that wasn't very nice of him."

"No, it wasn't." Rafe looked down at his feet so she wouldn't see the hurt on his face. "Especially since we were innocent. It was his friends at the Vampire Regulation Force that helped set us up in the first place."

"What did they say you did?"

"Oh, no." Rafe lifted his head to lock gazes with her. "We're not talking about me and my secrets. This is all about you, Morgan."

"I told you when I first came here that it was very important that you come back to the coven with me." She threw her hands up in exasperation. "How is it my fault that you refused to talk anymore about it? I've been trying for months to discuss it with you, but you either avoid me or yell at me."

"I don't yell at you." Rafe winced at the blatant lie.

"You do, too." Morgan pointed a finger at him. "Up until you pulled that whole he-man mine thing back at the carnival, I thought you hated my guts. Part of me is wondering if you only said it to get back at Dominic."

"I wouldn't say something like that unless I meant it," Rafe admitted harshly. His body roared to life when her eyes grew dark with desire. The fangs in his mouth grew larger and it wasn't just because he wanted blood, it was because he wanted her. "I should have never brought you here." His voice was low and guttural with need.

"Why is that?" Her tongue darted out to lick her bottom lip, making Rafe's cock throb.

"Because the sight of you on my bed is making me lose all my control." Rafe moved forward until he was standing in front of her. "If I don't get

away, I may do something you'll regret."

"I could never regret anything I do with you," her tone was all husky, like warm whisky sliding down his throat.

"Right now it's all I can do not to strip all your clothes off, pin you to the bed and screw you while I bite you." He made sure she saw him run a tongue over his fang. "Is that what you want? To see all my control shatter."

"That's what I've wanted since the moment I first saw you." Her throat worked as she nervously swallowed. "If you only knew how many nights I've dreamed of you doing those things to me."

"You say that, even knowing that I'm a vampire? I know you were raised to hate us, just like we were brought up to despise your kind." The war between the magics and vampires had gone on so long neither side even remembered what had started it in the first place. That didn't stop them from still attacking each other though.

"You're my vampire." She reached out and ran a finger up his arm, her touch fanning the flames already banking in him. "You're also my warlock. But most of all, you're my Rafe and that's all that ever mattered."

"Funny, you seemed awfully chummy with Dominic earlier." On one hand, Rafe wanted to rip apart the warlock, but there was another part of

him that was strangely intrigued by the mysterious male.

Rafe had usually chose females to have sex with in the past, but there was something about the warlock that was kind of alluring. With his blond hair that looked like he'd just finished rolling in bed and that tight, muscular body, Dominic was a walking poster child for hot sex. Rafe closed his eyes and had a nice visual of him slamming his own head into the wall so he could knock some sense into his thick skull.

Man, he did need to get laid soon. Now he wanted not just the witch, but the warlock, too? Yeah, that would go over like gangbusters with Kane. Rafe could just see it now, *I found a stray magical duo and I want to keep them both. Can I please? I promise to take good care of them and feed them every day.*

Morgan stood up and pressed her body to his. She smelled like Dragon's Blood and the herbs she used in her potions. Alluring and intoxicating the scent threatened to shred what little bit of self-control he had left. Cupping the back of his head, she brought him down into a kiss.

As soon as he touched her sweet lips, Rafe knew they were both in trouble. There was no way he would ever have the strength to give this up. No matter what the consequences may be. Witch, vampire, both worries went out of his head as

desire slammed into him. The kiss was both tender and carnal at the same time. Since she had initiated it, he let her take the lead for a few moments. Parting his lips, he allowed her tongue to slip in and explore his fangs. When she stroked them, he moaned deep.

Did she know that caressing a vampire's fangs like that was second only to a blow job? Damn, he could come just from this. The tentative way she went about it made it even better. "Keep teasing me like this and I'm not going to be able to pull back." Rafe ran a finger suggestively down the thin column of her throat so she got the idea.

Morgan shocked the ever-living hell out of him when she tilted her head to the side so more of her flesh was exposed to him.

Rafe didn't think it was possible, but his fangs grew even larger as his mouth watered. "Are you sure this is what you want?" he asked, his words slurred from his incisors. "Even if I don't bite hard, there will still be a mark and everyone will know a vampire fed from you."

Plunging her hands into his hair, she cupped the back of his head and gently urged him down. "I've been noticing how bad you need this." She pulled him even further down so he was just a whisper away from that fluttering pulse. "Let me take care of you, please."

Even though he wanted to bite down so bad his

fangs ached, Rafe forced himself to hold back. If they were really going to do this, then she was going to get as much pleasure from the act as he was. Slipping his tongue out, he very gently tasted her silky flesh.

She jerked at his touch, then moaned as she melted in his arms. He buried his nose in the spot right behind her ear and breathed in her scent, enjoying the way her hair tickled him.

"Aren't you going to bite me?" she whispered.

"In a second." He inhaled deep, trying to identify what exact herbs were lingering on her. Several times Morgan had tried to give him lessons, but Rafe had always made sure to be too busy. Now he regretted that missed time with her. Who knows what else she had wanted to teach him.

"What are you doing?" She was still whispering as if she didn't want to ruin the moment.

"I'm savoring you. Some things shouldn't be rushed. A fine meal. Sex." He let his hands trail down until he could finally cup that sweet ass he'd admired so often.

"You seem awfully sure that you're going to get lucky there, Fangs," she moaned.

He chuckled at the derisive nickname that she'd used so often with him. "I told you back at the carnival—mine." Barring his teeth, he sank them slowly into her creamy flesh. He meant it, too, she

was his. To hell with what custom dictated, the hell with running from who he was, the hell with what his brothers thought. This female—this witch—belonged to him.

The sweet essence of her blood washed over his tongue and he nearly whimpered in relief. After depriving himself for so long, it was like pure heaven to finally drink. There was something else about her blood. A wild aftertaste that he'd never experienced before. It was far from unpleasant though—it was almost addicting.

"I'd heard that this felt good, but I never had a clue it would be *this* good." Morgan arched against him, as if it were possible for her body to press in tighter to his.

Rafe wanted to answer, but he'd always been taught it was rude to talk with a full mouth so he made his needs be known another way. Walking forward, he forced her to backpedal until they were at the edge of the bed. Never taking his mouth off her, he lowered her down on the mattress and settled between her legs.

* * * *

She was going to come. Rafe had yet to really touch her intimately and yet she was on the edge of an orgasm. Morgan felt a slight sucking motion at her neck that told her he was still feeding and

she spread her legs further so he could even closer to her. When she felt the hard outline of his cock straining against his jeans, she couldn't help but lift her hips to grind against it.

Pleasure shot through her like a magic bolt and she was more than a little pleased when he groaned against her neck—the vibration making even more delectable desire course inside her. Morgan rocked against him again, and this time, he thrust forward to meet her.

“More, I need all of you,” she pleaded as she reached between them to blindly claw at his jeans. She almost cried in relief when her fingers found the snap. Popping it open, she lowered the zipper and then reached inside to free his cock. It was large and thick, already slick with his pre-cum. Running her finger around the tip, she gathered some of it up and brought it to her lips. “You taste like magic,” she moaned. “Magic and something more dangerous.

Rafe laved his tongue over the puncture wounds and finally looked up at her. His eyes were feral and full of passion. His dark hair was hanging all around his face, a fine sheen of sweat on his brow. A small shiver of fear went through her as he gazed down, his lips smeared with her blood.

“I could never hurt you,” he assured as he reached down and brushed his hand through her

hair.

Morgan stared, amazed that he so easily read her thoughts. "Maybe not." She reached down again to stroke his erection. "But you should hate me for not telling you everything."

"I should," he agreed before he moaned as his cock jumped in her hands. "I can't though. Ever since the day I first saw you, I've been trying so hard to hate you, but all I can think about is how it would be to hold you."

"You're just horny," she scoffed, not wanting to give herself the false hope that he'd finally given into the sexual tension that had been crackling between them from day one.

"No, that's not it." He fixed her with those intense green eyes. "At first I thought I could make my feelings go away if I made myself hate you. Then I hoped if I were mean enough you would leave. Finally I hoped that maybe you had bewitched me somehow and I wasn't acting under my own desires."

"I never zapped you with a love spell, I swear it." She shook her head violently.

He slid a hand under her shirt and cupped one of her breasts.

Morgan nearly came off the bed at his touch and it was through the material of her bra. How was she going to react when he was touching her skin on skin? She couldn't help it though. This was

the moment she'd yearned for so long, yet never dared hoped would happen. For months now, she'd admired Rafe from afar, wanted so badly to be close to him. He'd always acted like she was a burr under his skin and now he was acting as if he couldn't stop touching her. The only thing missing was Dominic.

"I've tried to stay away from you, but damn it, I can't," Rafe said, before he captured her lips in a possessive kiss.

The coopery taste of her own blood filled her mouth as he plunged his tongue inside.

"Do you like this shirt?" he asked after he drew back so they could catch their breath.

"What?" She didn't even try to hide her confusion. While she was thinking of getting hot, naked and tangled in the sheets, he was asking her fashion opinion?

"Do. You. Like. This. Shirt?" He smiled, flashing his fangs at her.

Goddess, something like that shouldn't be so sexy, but on him it was. "It's okay, I guess." The last words of that sentence had just left her mouth and the sound of tearing fabric filled the air. With one tug, he ripped her shirt down the middle and pushed the two halves apart.

Morgan sucked in a breath, realizing how exposed she was. Small all over, including her breasts, she couldn't help but wonder how she

compared to all the other females he had in the past. Desperately, she tried to read his face, but as usual, his hair was in the way.

"You're beautiful," he crooned as he cupped one breast and gently squeezed.

"If you're saying that just to get me into your bed, you can save it, Fangs." She sucked in a harsh breath when he tweaked her nipple between his thumb and forefinger. "In case you hadn't noticed, I'm already here."

"Damn, I've always loved your sense of humor." With a flick of his wrist, he undid the front clasp of her bra and slid it off her.

Morgan was pretty sure she had a snappy smartass come back to that, but all words were lost when he bent down and took her nipple in his mouth. Oh stars and bells, the things this vampire could do with his lips, teeth and tongue. Thanks to how aroused she already was from him going all fang on her earlier, she came almost instantly. To add to her embarrassment, she was loud about it, too, screaming his name so hard the entire clan probably heard.

"My jeans," she wailed as she grabbed him by the back of the head and urged him on. "I hate them, too. Much more so than my shirt."

Rafe chuckled and Morgan was surprised at how pleasant that sound was coming from him. Usually he was so sad and acted as if every single

wrong and hurt in the world was weighing on his soul. To see him this carefree and relaxed was almost as good as the orgasm he just gave her.

Undoing her jeans, he scooted back enough so he could peel them off her legs and toss them to the side. Too late she realized she'd worn her Mickey undies today and she closed her eyes as a flush came over her cheeks. Why oh why hadn't she'd picked something sexy and skimpy? Instead, she just had to pick the ones that could not have been any less sensual. She may as well of gone all the way and donned some granny panties.

Rafe didn't seem to care though, he slid them slowly down her legs. When he used his tongue to trace the path his hands left behind, suddenly underwear became less important. Soft, hot and like velvet, his tongue seemed to leave a trail of fire wherever it went.

Settling back between her thighs, he jerked his jeans down just enough to get his cock totally free. Surging his hips forward, he entered her in one hard fluid thrust. Morgan shrieked in pleasure as his hard thick erection filled her almost to the point of pain.

"Damn it, sweetie, your pussy is so tight," he said in a strained voice as he stilled. "I didn't hurt you, did I?"

"No, it feels so good." She dug her heels into the small of his back and thrust up so he went

even deeper in her. They both moaned in unison.

"I wanted to take it slow with you, but I can't hold back." Pulling back, he slammed into her again. "Fuck, I'm so sorry."

"Don't feel sorry. I want it hard, too." She went to tug his shirt off, but he stilled her hands, grabbing her wrists with one hand and pinning them above her head.

Confused as to why he didn't want to be naked with him, she opened her mouth to ask him if she'd done something wrong, but he caught her lips in another kiss, cutting her off. Fissures of magic danced over both of them as the passion built. Rafe had his eyes closed and didn't seem to notice, which was fine with Morgan. The last thing she wanted to do was tell him the truth.

They were bonding. Not in the way vampires did either, but in the way her people. After tonight, they would share a magical bond that could never be broken. Once Dominic joined in their circle of three, then it would be complete. All of them would share their gifts and powers and be three times stronger. Rafe didn't know it, but they had gone down a road and neither one of them would ever be the same again.

Then Rafe snarled, "Mine!" Hissing, he bared his fangs and sank them into her neck again. This time he did it harder and much deeper. White hot pain sliced through her before the most intense

orgasm she'd ever had washed over her body.

Under the pleasure, she realized she'd made a huge mistake in thinking he didn't realize what was going on. The same urge to bond that had been calling out to her had been drawing in Rafe. Instead of just bonding as witch to warlock though, he was giving into his more primal vampire side. By biting her this hard, he would forever leave his mark on her. Everyone, everything that every came into contact with her would see that scar and know she belonged to him.

It would mark her as a pariah when she went back to her coven. To let a vampire feed from you was bad enough, to carry his bite mark forever was even worse. She should have been horrified, disgusted and dismayed. Instead she held him tighter to her and urged him on as a wave of contentment and happiness went over her.

Rafe snarled again, the sound muffled this time since his fangs were still inside her flesh, as his semen pulsed inside her body. At the same time, Morgan came again. Even though she didn't think it was possible, the pleasure was more intense than last time. She screamed out his name as she felt more of her magic travel into his body. A smaller surge of power came back from him. It was a dark, wild and dangerous feeling, just like she'd expect from her vampire. Closing her eyes,

she allowed herself to get lost with the passion.

Hers. After all this time, Rafe was finally hers and damned if her life didn't feel right for the first time in what seemed like forever.

Chapter Four

Rafe closed the wound at Morgan's neck and looked down at the mark he'd left behind. Deep and vicious there was no way to deny what it was. A bonding bite. While in the throes of the moment, he'd done exactly what he'd told Kane he wouldn't. Looked like he would have some 'splaining to do.

Strangely though, Rafe didn't feel guilty. In fact, he couldn't remember the last time he'd felt this good. The shakes were gone and in their place was a warm buzz that made him feel like he could take on a pack of wolves, then run a marathon afterward to celebrate.

"Say something. Anything," Morgan whispered in his ear, her husky voice laced with fear.

Rafe kissed her, taking care since his fangs were still fully out. The lingering sweetness of her blood still filled his mouth and knew that he could live forever and not get enough of it. Her warm body felt so damn good under him and his only regret

was he couldn't take his clothes off so he could feel every inch of her against him. "That was amazing." He kissed her again, the scent of Dragon's Blood filling his nose.

"It was, wasn't it?" She gave him a sleepy smile.

Rafe frowned when he noticed how pale she was. "Damn, I think I took too much blood from you." He got up, zipping up his pants. "Let me go get you something to eat."

"Really," she protested weakly as she pulled the covers over her body, "you don't have to."

"Yes, I do." He tucked her in and brushed her hair back from her brow. Eck! When did he get so lovey dovey? Next he would be spending all his time sending her sappy text messages. Damn if he could help himself though. Not only did he want to make sure that she was happy, he personally wanted to make sure that her every need and want was met. Right now, he would walk through fire for her, love sick idiot that he was.

"You don't mind?" she asked, her lids already closing.

"Not at all. You took care of me now let me take care of you" Truth was he could use the exercise. Right now he was so jazzed up he felt like he was about to jump out of his skin. Not waiting for her to answer, Rafe left for the kitchen. Since it was now just before dawn, he had the place to himself.

Going to the huge fridge, he was just pulling out some meat and cheese when Dante and his mate, Brenden, came in.

Where Dante was dark and cocky, Brenden was blond haired, blue eyed and easy going. Complete opposites, but they seemed to be perfect for each other. Sometimes they were so sickeningly happy, they made Rafe want to vomit.

"Hey guys!" Rafe exclaimed, for some strange reason he was overly thrilled to see them. "What's up?"

Dante and Brenden screeched to a halt, twin looks of confusion on their faces.

When they just stared in stunned silence, Rafe decided that it was up to him to fill it. "What are you doing up? Where you guys on a mission? Oh, did it have to do with that fresh pack of kubolds? Nasty things, aren't they? Did you kill them? What did you do with the bodies? Snuggles would probably like to eat them, you should go visit her. She still lives in the Detroit River, right? I mean it's not like a sea monster can just up and move, huh?" Rafe realized he was babbling like a teenage girl on Red Bull, but he couldn't seem to put a cork in it. For once, Dante had nothing to say so he just continued to gape at Rafe like he'd suggested going sunbathing.

Brenden went to the door and leaned out to call someone, but Rafe couldn't catch who it was

because he was still playing Chatty Cathy. "Is Kane in bed? I wonder if he's still ticked at me?" The entire time he was asking questions, Rafe was slapping together sandwiches. By now, he had enough to feed the entire clan, yet he continued making them.

"Are you feeling all right?" Dante finally ventured in a suspicious voice.

"Of course I'm okay. Why wouldn't I be good? I've got you for a brother and you are just the best."

"What did that witch do to you?" Dante stepped closer and peered intently at Rafe.

Cherish, a female vampire from Brenden's team, came into the kitchen. Small, with a riot of brown curls, she had a near genius IQ and a bubbly personality that even Rafe could not help but warm up to.

"Hey, Cherry," Rafe sang. "Was it you who Brenden was calling in? Whacha doing up? Usually it's so quiet this time of day and all of you are awake. Oh, you must have been doing some work in the weapons lab. You'll have to take me there sometime. I've always wanted to see it."

"Fix this," Dante demanded to Cherish.

"Fix what?" Cherish stifled a giggle behind a closed fist.

"This." Dante gestured disgustedly at Rafe.

"It's pretty obvious what his problem is."

Cherish winked at Rafe. "You're baby brother has been drinking things he shouldn't be."

"Please tell me that doesn't mean what I think it does." Dante growled.

"I told you all she was mine." Rafe bit into one of the sandwiches, not giving a kubold's ass what his brother thought.

"You drank witch blood?" Dante's outrage echoed through the kitchen. "Do you have any idea what that will do to you?"

"Yeah, it felt good." Rafe grinned and knew it was wicked. "I think I'm going to do it again really soon." There was a distant part of Rafe that was screaming at himself to shut the hell up, but the words just kept tumbling out of his mouth. Once when he'd been in prison, the guards had shot him full of a stimulate so he would be jacked up and willing to fight with a werepanther. It kind of felt the same as he did now. "It did kind of feel zingy though." Rafe munched thoughtfully. "Morgan's blood, that is."

"I think he took in some of her magic and it's making him high," Cherish supplied with a malicious grin of her own.

Usually Rafe would scowl at her for her smartass comment, instead, he grinned back. "I did kind of gorge myself on her." He took a bite of food. "Oopsie daisy."

Dante smacked the sandwich out of Rafe's

hand. “*Oopsie daisy?*” he growled incredulously. Turning to Cherish he snapped, “Get Doc and meet me back at Rafe’s room.”

Did he just say my room? Oh shit! Rafe shot toward the door, but Dante had already left. His brother could be damn quick when he wanted to be, too. By the time Rafe caught up with him, Dante was already kicking open the bedroom door.

A wild wave of protectiveness slammed into Rafe. Dante was no longer his brother, he was a threat to Morgan and that just wouldn’t do. Letting out a snarl, Rafe leapt through the door. Raising his hand, he shouted off some garbled words and shot off a magic bolt, hitting Dante in the chest.

It was a tossup between who was more shocked—Dante who ended up across the room and crumpled on the floor, Rafe who had no idea what he’d just done or Morgan who had been naked and sleeping soundly in the bed until the vampire invasion.

The possessive mate part of him took over and Rafe moved to the other side of the bed so he could pull Morgan protectively to his chest. Making sure the sheet was wrapping her important parts, he leveled a glare at the Dante. “Don’t touch her,” Rafe snarled, sounding more feral than sane.

"I wasn't going to lay a finger on her." Dante lifted his hands in a placating manner. "Calm down, buddy."

"Well isn't this a change?" Brenden quipped as he came into the room. "Usually it's Dante who's on the receiving end of the calm-down-buddy."

"Where's Doc?" Dante asked, never taking his gaze off Rafe.

"Does anyone want to tell me what in hell is going on?" Morgan swallowed hard.

But she didn't pull away from Rafe's grip. Quite the opposite. She moved closer to him, as if she was seeking his protection. Rafe couldn't help but feel a primal thrill go through him. She knew whom she belonged to.

"Funny you should wonder what's going on, witch." Dante curled his lip in disgust. "I was just coming in to ask you the same thing. My brother is acting real strange and it just happened to start after you finally got your claws into him. What did you do to him?"

"Nothing." Morgan shook her head as she shrank even further into Rafe's chest. "Well, nothing magical or menacing that is."

"Oh shit, this just gets better and better," Dante snapped as his gaze honed in on Morgan's neck. "You fucking bonded with her?"

"Watch your mouth before I reach in it and snap your fangs off."

Both brothers snarled and tensed, getting ready for a fight. Rafe was itching for a good battle and Dante was always a great choice to get rid of some aggression. While Rafe was more muscular, Dante was quicker and scrappy so it was usually a pretty good match.

* * * *

Just as Rafe was getting ready to attack, Morgan put a hand on his arm. That was all it took. Although his body didn't relax and he still had that mean glint in his eyes, she could sense him backing down. Across the room, Brenden put his hand on Dante's chest and held him at bay.

"Don't take offense on my behalf," she cooed in a soft voice, kind of like what an animal trainer would use with an angry tiger. While she wished she could have just used her magic to send everyone flat on their asses, somehow she didn't think that would make the situation better.

"He shouldn't talk like that about you." Rafe did that snarl thing again.

While it shouldn't have, it so turned her on again. If the other two hadn't been in the room, she might have been tempted to pull him into bed and demand he talk that way while he made love to her. "I've heard much worse." She tilted her head back so she could give him a soft kiss on the

jaw. Despite the cluster fudge that was presently going around her, she couldn't help but be a bit thrilled that Rafe had just used magic. Although judging from the shocked expression on his face at the time, he had no idea how he did it.

Morgan knew and as soon as the others left, she would be more than happy to tell him. It was the reason why she was acting like a shrinking violet and cowering against Rafe instead of lashing out and blasting Dante and his attitude herself. When she had made love to Rafe and he'd taken her blood, there had also been a magic exchange.

It was common among witches and warlocks when they made love to have a magical flow between the two. The problem with her and Rafe was, he didn't know how to control his magic yet so he had taken much more than he'd given since his body was starved for more than blood. That had left Morgan drained and almost without any magic until she had some serious sleep to recover.

"What in the hell is going on?" Kane demanded as he stormed into the room.

"Is it just me or is everyone asking that today?" Morgan muttered under her breath. Great, now all the brothers knew what was going on and, thanks to the ruckus, so did probably half the clan. The small room seemed even more claustrophobic as Morgan realized she was one witch against four vampires. Make that five since Cherish just came

back in.

"Sorry guys, but Doc is out in the field," she announced as she narrowed her eyes. "Oh wow, Rafe bonded with the witch."

"She has a name," Rafe said as he licked the mark on Morgan's neck.

She jumped at the touch of his velvet tongue possessively lapping at the bite. While she would have usually enjoyed it, she wasn't too sure now was the time or the place for—necking. Holding her breath, she had to work hard to keep in the hysterical laughter at her own bad pun.

"He mated with *Morgan*," Dante slowly drawled out her name, like it actually caused him physical pain to say it. "To add it to it, he's not acting right."

"What's he doing, besides licking her?" Kane's expression never changed so Morgan couldn't tell if he was angry or not.

"Well for starters, he talking and he's being nice." Dante hurled out both accusations like they were some horrible crime. "I think she hit him with a spell or something."

"How dare you?" Morgan yelled, finally so outraged that she forgot she was without magic. "I would never use a love spell and certainly not on Rafe. He's too important to me."

"You mean too important to that stupid made-up vision you and your warlock boy toy spouted

on about.” Dante went to take another step forward, but stopped when Brenden gave a slight shake of his head.

“Hate to take the wind out of your conspiracy sails there, el’jerko, but even if I wanted to use a love spell on Rafe, it wouldn’t take.” As soon as those damning words slipped out of her mouth, Morgan closed her eyes and silently cursed her temper.

“Of course it would,” Cherish said as she gave a slight nod of her head. “The only ones love spells don’t work on are witches and war—oh, boy.” Her eyes got huge as she put two and two together.

There was a reason why Cherish was known as the brainy one of the clan. Morgan was only surprised that it had taken her this long to figure it out.

The petit vampire hitched her thumb to the door. “You know I think I’ll go find something to do. This is really a family issue.” She paused on her way out and said to Dante, “Don’t worry. I won’t say a word to anyone about what I saw and heard here.”

“I know you won’t, Cherish, you’ve always had my back.” Dante gave her a nod.

Brenden stepped away from his mate and shut the door behind Cherish so they could have complete privacy.

"I guess you weren't just blowing steam when you said *mine*." Kane showed some real emotion for the first time as he glared at Rafe.

"I'm not giving her up." Rafe nuzzled her neck. "I'm keeping her."

"We don't keep witches." Dante flicked a look of disgust at her. "We kill them, then use their bodies to feed our campfires."

Rafe tensed again as a low growl made his chest rumble.

This time, Morgan didn't put a hand on him to stop the attack. As far as she was concerned, what Dante had just said was fighting words.

"Not helping the situation here, Dante." Kane rubbed his temples.

Morgan was half-tempted to ask him what his stress was. She was the one who was sitting in the middle of the Angry Vampire convention, not him. "I'm not giving Rafe up either because *he's* mine." Morgan had to resist the childish urge to flip off Dante when she made that announcement.

"You don't get it, do you?" Dante clenched his hands into fists. "When the rest of the vampires find out Rafe has bonded with you, they will all start to get suspicious. Vampires, be they Drone or Pure Born, don't mate with witches—period. How long do you think it will be before they figure out his little secret?"

"I hate to say this, but Dante's right." Kane

nodded, worry painted on his face. "Neither side has ever let a halfling live. As soon as word gets out that Rafe is one, both sides will hunt him down."

"Not my coven," Morgan insisted, desperate to make them see the truth. If they continued to try to protect Rafe, then they may be shoving away his only hope of survival. "He's too important to us."

"Only because they think I'm something I'm not," Rafe said, never letting his iron hard protective grip on her go. "Once they realize I'm not what they think I am, they'll want me just as dead."

"I won't let them hurt you and neither will Dominic." As soon as she let that last nugget slip out, Morgan slammed her lips shut.

"Why would Dominic give two shits what happens to me?" Rafe's tone was even and careful.

Oh boy, he knew something was up, he just didn't know for sure what it was yet. Morgan was willing to bet that if he did, he wouldn't be all cozy with her now. No, he would be on the other side of the room with his brothers, helping them decide the best way to kill her. "He just does," Morgan said, knowing how weak that sounded, but it was all she had to go with for now. "You know because of what the soothsayer saw and all."

"I still don't trust or like you," Dante sneered.

"Back at ya, bud," Morgan returned. There was plenty more that she wanted to say, but she was feeling more weak as the seconds ticked by and the last thing she felt like was wasting her remaining energy on was him. Not when she'd rather be using it to do fun stuff with Rafe.

"We can talk about this later," Rafe told his brothers. "Morgan still isn't looking too hot and the last thing we want is for her to keel over dead before we can find out what she's up to."

Ouch, that comment stung a bit. Morgan threw a dirty look over her shoulder as she struggled to pull away. Unfortunately for her, the traitor was holding her too tight so she had to settle for an exasperated huff instead. The most unfair thing of all was she could feel the magic zinging around Rafe—he probably felt just chipper.

Dante and Kane reluctantly left.

The silence between Rafe and Morgan was so thick she almost choked on it. He finally let her pull away from him and she settled back on her side, the cool pillow pressed against her cheek. Purposely, she turned her back on him and refused to meet his eyes.

"What are you hiding from me?" he asked. Even though he didn't raise his voice, his question was still hard and demanding.

Well too bad so sad because she wasn't in the

mood to be bullied. After several seconds of tense silence, all of which she could feel him glaring holes in the back of her head, she let out a deep sigh. "If I promise to tell you everything when I wake up, will you let me sleep for a while?" Her words were now coming out heavy with sleep. She was shocked when she felt him reach out to caress her hair, much like Dominic did at the carnival.

"Sure," he surprised her by giving in. "Is there anything I can get you? Food? Drink?"

"You know what I could really use? You to lie down and hold me in your arms." She steeled herself for his rejection.

The bed shifted as he did what she asked. Lying down on his side behind her, he pulled her to his chest and actually spooned her. She grabbed his hand and placed it over her heart so she could absorb some of his excess magic. It wasn't as good as a sexual sharing, but it would do for now.

He was angry with her, she could tell by the tense way he held himself. But all that faded compared to how nice it felt to be in his arms. After yearning for him for so long, it was pure heaven. Letting out a content sigh, she closed her eyes and went to sleep.

Chapter Five

Dante glared at the closed door, as if it were somehow to blame for all the mess Rafe and his witch had caused. "I don't like this one bit," he seethed.

"I don't either," Kane admitted.

"Then why in the hell didn't you back me up a little back there?"

"Because, unlike you, I don't think it's always best to go into situations, fists first," Kane drawled.

Dante turned his glare to his older brother now as his anger shifted course.

"He's right." Brenden gave Dante a light punch on the shoulder. "Yelling at Rafe wasn't going to do any good. He's too jacked up to listen."

As always, Brenden's voice soothed Dante back from the edge. He closed his eyes and let his anger slip away. His mate was right. With the way Rafe was acting, there was no reasoning with him. "So what do you we do then?" he asked as he stepped

closer to Brenden, drawing comfort in the male's presence.

"We go out at sundown and track down the warlock that was sniffing after Morgan." Kane gave a cold smile. "We may not be able to force her to talk, but all bets are off with him. By the time I get done with him, he will be begging to tell me what they want with Rafe."

"Then what?" Dante felt the familiar thrill go through him that always came before a hunt.

"Then we send the pieces back to the coven as a warning. They come after Rafe, they go back in a box."

* * * *

Dominic sat up, gasping for breath as he was ripped from yet another nightmare. Chest heaving, he looked around stupidly for several terror filled seconds as he slowly remembered where he was. The backseat of his car. Not back at his old coven.

The sounds of screams and cries still rang in his ears for several more moments as did the rancid smell of burning flesh. Gradually that went away, too. He still slid to the front seat so he could open the passenger door. Stumbling out, he reveled at the feeling of the cool night air hitting his sweat plastered face.

He'd parked in an alley and the smell from the dumpster wasn't exactly pleasant, but it was better than what he'd been snuffing in his nightmare so he was willing to take it. As his rasping breaths slowed, the sounds of nearby rushing traffic and the city noises from Detroit took over. He let them sooth him. Sounds like that meant life.

Goddess, what was he even doing here? There was a nice warm bed waiting for him at his adopted coven and yet he was camping out in the back of his old Cavalier and why?

Because he was chasing down a vampire-warlock who didn't want to be caught. So what did that make him for being the chaser? Sad and pathetic both came to mind. Yet there was no way he could go back. Not without Morgan. And not without Rafe, damn it.

As soon as Dominic had seen Rafe, he knew there was no going back. With his dark look, dangerous attitude and wounded aura, Dominic had instantly been drawn to him. There was something about the male that made him want to heal him, sooth him and then fuck him. Not necessarily in that order either.

Why hadn't Morgan told him that their third was Rafe? Dominic snorted, probably because she knew that he would have run in the opposite direction if he knew that their other destined mate was a psycho with fangs.

Dominic leaned up and tried to look at the stars, but the city smog and lights washed them out. He was only slightly surprised when several vampires stepped out of the shadows and one of them pressed a dagger to his throat.

"You're coming with us," one of the dark-haired ones that Dominic knew was called Kane ordered.

"I don't think so." Dominic flexed his fingers and let his magic start to build up. "Something tells me you're not having me come so you can make me a home cooked meal."

"You should be counting yourself lucky we haven't killed you already." This comment came from the middle brother, Dante.

Dominic didn't sense any other magical markers nearby, which meant that Rafe wasn't along for this field trip. Interesting, it would appear his family was coming out to find out how much of threat Dominic was. How protective of them. "You won't kill me," Dominic goaded, trying to bide for time. "I'm sure you have questions you want answered and you can't very well get them from a corpse."

"We could probably figure out a way so I wouldn't push your luck." Dante flashed a cocky smile that was all fangs.

"What if I don't feel like talking?" The magic was fully charged, the surge making Dominic feel

powerful.

"Then we'll just have to make you want to." Kane pushed the dagger in even deeper.

"Pass," Dominic said as he raised his hand and shot off his magic. He aimed for Kane first since he was the biggest threat. Before any of the vampires could react or run away, he hit Dante with one next.

Dominic lost focus on the other vampires in the alley and that proved to be his downfall. A blond male fired off something that looked almost like a large barreled gun. A net shot out and covered Dominic. Just as he was raising his hands to use his magic to blast it off, a shot of electricity burst from the net.

Dominic let out a guttural cry of pain as the voltage surged through his body. Curling up into a ball, he slammed onto the hard ground. Even if he had been able to lift his hands, the pain would have made it impossible to concentrate to use his magic. After several agonizing seconds that felt like minutes, the current stopped and he was left gasping like a weakling. Opening his eyes, he saw boots circling him as the vampires moved in.

"Hurts, doesn't it?" Dante asked, sounding way too cheerful about the whole thing.

If Dominic had been able to talk, he would have told the vampire to go fuck himself. All he could do though was glower at his captures and hope

the message carried over on his expression. Another surge of electricity shot through the net. Dominic's body arched as pain sliced through him, head to foot. By the time this one passed, he was barely conscious. Dimly he was aware of hands picking him up and tossing him into the back of a van. They weren't exactly gentle about it either causing his head to thump painfully onto the floor of the vehicle. *That was going to leave a mark.*

The blond vampire looked down at him with a small frown. "I think I need to lower the amps on this thing. It's really knocked the warlock for a loop."

"Good," Dante snarled. "If he's out of it, then he can't try to use magic on us."

"I don't know." Blondie sounded concerned. "He doesn't look so good."

Another surge went through the net and the last thing Dominic heard was his own screams. They didn't sound so different from the ones from his nightmares.

When Dominic woke up this time, he found himself in cell. Well, he was pretty sure it was a cell. While there weren't bars, the heavy steel door and the handcuffs that had him shackled to the bed, told him he was in a prisoner. Call him crazy, but he didn't think the vampires were exactly

rolling out the welcome mat.

No biggie. He would just blast his way out of here. No warlock out of his first year of training could be held by handcuffs and a locked door. Actually, he couldn't believe his capturers were so sloppy not to know that.

Getting to his feet, he was hit by a wave of dizziness so hard he fell right back on his ass. Drugged! Okay maybe the vampires weren't as stupid as he had originally thought. Shaking his head, he tried to break through the fog in his brain, but it was no use.

So he did what any other self-respecting male would. He tugged at the handcuffs and glowered at them when they refused to give. Forcing his sluggish mind to focus some, he scoped out the room, looking for escape routes. All he found was the camera that was mounted in the corner. Glaring up at it, he flashed a rude gesture. Hell, if he had been able to stand, he would have been half-tempted to stand up and flash them his lily white, warlock ass. Let that entertain them for a while.

"I want to talk to your clan leader, Eric," Dominic slurred to the camera, hoping they had a mike on it. "I want to see Morgan and Rafe, too. You want me to tell you shit, you'll bring all three to me."

"I really don't think you're in the position to

make any demands," a strange male voice announced.

Since there was no sign of anyone Dominic figured they were talking through some loudspeaker. "You're probably right." Dominic laid back and used his free arm to cover his eyes. "But those are what they are anyhow. Take them or leave them."

"You got balls, I'll give you that," the unseen speaker chuckled. "Hold on, I'm on my way."

While he waited, Dominic tried jerking on the handcuffs again. Not that he really expected them to give, but because he had to do something to keep himself occupied. Every time he lifted his head to look at the door, the entire room seemed to spin on its axis. Shit, what had they given him, horse tranqs? Rubbing his eyes with the heel of his hand, he tried to focus, but everything remained a fuzzy mess.

The door opened and Dominic had to blink several times before he recognized the vampire as Eric, the leader of the Drone Clan. In his human life, the vampire had been in the military and he still looked the part, down to his blond crew cut and kick ass attitude. His brown eyes were hard and cold, showing no emotion so Dominic didn't know if the male was here to talk or to knock some teeth out. Since he knew that he couldn't stand without making an ass out of himself by falling

flat on his face, Dominic stayed where he was. "My coven is going to be looking for me," his words came out sloppy and slurred. "You just can't keep me here chained to the bed." *Unless Rafe and Morgan were here, then I would be all up for that game.*

"I'm haven't decided if I'm going to let you live long enough for your coven to even mount a search party," Eric replied in clipped tones.

Wow, this guy really had a stick up his ass. He must have been off sucking on some chick's neck when all the personality was handed out in vampire land. "My clan has witches scrying me at all times. They probably already know that I'm missing." *Liar, liar pants on fire. Like the clan would ever waste any of their resources on an orphaned warlock.*

"Why are you here in the first place? You had to know it was suicide for a warlock to try to mingle with vampires." Eric fixed him with a glare that would have had a lesser male tremble.

What to say? What to say? I really do need fang head's help, but I don't want to fess up to too much. Then I would lose any advantage I have.

"At this point, you don't have any advantage so I think you really better just fess up to all of it," Eric drawled.

Dominic was so shocked, he jerked, making the handcuffs rattle against the bed. *Oh shit, are the drugs making me think out loud?*

"Yeah, they are." The corners of Eric's mouth

twitched like he was holding in a laugh.

"Well damn." Dominic cringed as he realized all the things he'd just babbled about without meaning to. "Please, tell me the speaker is off and nobody else is listening in?"

"Sorry." Eric flashed a grin that showed how un-sorry he really was. "It's on and the control room is pretty crowded. And before you ask the next question, yes, Rafe is one of listeners."

"Why didn't you just kill me? It would have been a lot less painful and I wouldn't keep blurting shit out like what I'm talking about right now. Oh goddess, shut me the hell up!"

"Oh, you're going to be doing a lot of talking, starting with what you're doing in Detroit." Eric pulled up a steel chair and sat in it, acting as if he had all the time in the world. "You see I happen to take any threats to my clan very seriously and warlocks are just that."

"Warlocks are a clan now?" Dominic cocked his head to the side.

"No, you idiot, you're a threat." A tick developed in the vampire's jaw.

"No, I'm not. I meant what I said, I'm here to get Rafe and then I will be more than happy to get the hell out of this city and away from you bloodsuckers."

"What do you want with Rafe?"

"Well I would be happy to start with a blow job

and work our way from there." Dominic cursed under his breath. "What in the hell did you guys give me?"

"Something that will make you a little easier to control." Eric flashed a shit-eating grin. "Sorry, but it has a nasty side effect that compels the user to tell the truth, no matter how hard they fight to hold it in."

"Well damn, that's not good for me since I was planning on trying to lie my way out of this situation. I can't even use my magic."

"That was the plan. Get you by the short and curlies and yank until you talk."

"Ouch." Dominic leaned his head against the wall. "I always seem to find my way into these situations."

"Really?" Eric crossed his arms over his chest. "Tell me about them."

"One time I went out and got drunk, hooked up with a sorceress. Things were going just fine until her husband showed up." He chuckled at the memory of how embarrassing it had been trying to escape with his dick hanging in the wind.

"So the husband was ticked, I take it?" There was a hint of amusement in Eric's voice.

"Yes, and I was even nice enough to invite him into bed with us. I have no problem with group play." Dominic wondered how the vampire would react to him admitting his sexual habit out loud.

Luckily, it didn't seem to shock the male.

"He wasn't willing?" Eric cocked one brow.

"No, he caught me in a magical hold and took me before his council. In case you vampires didn't get the memo, the only thing that hates warlocks more than you guys, are sorcerers. They were happy as ducks to get their hands on me and had all kinds of nastiness planned for my sorry ass." A shiver went through Dominic's body as he recalled the beatings he'd taken before, during and after his so-called *trial*.

"How did you get out of that mess?"

"Morgan." Despite the unpleasant memories, despite the fact he was still chained to the bed and despite the fact he was drugged to hell and back, Dominic couldn't help but smile as he thought about her. "She blasted her way in and got me out."

Turning to the camera, Dominic yelled, "You hear that, Rafe? She came for me because we don't leave our mates behind. We protect and would die for each other. Which is why neither one of us could ever hurt you."

Chapter Six

As Rafe watched the warlock make his announcement, a small erotic thrill went through him. Stupid really, when he should have been wanting to go in and rip the male's head off, yet there was no denying the way he felt. No more than there was denying how hard his dick had got as soon as Dominic had turned his blue eyes toward the camera and seemed to be gazing directly at him through the lens. "I'm going in to talk to him," Rafe said. Behind him, both Kane and Dante let out simultaneous curses.

"Not a good idea," Kane growled. "Who knows what that idiot will blab if he sees you."

"So what? Eric already knows about my half-breed status. Besides, I'm sick of hiding from what I really am. Maybe if I had embraced who I was earlier, then I could have stopped what happened to us all those years ago and we would have never ended up in prison."

"Rafe, don't even think like—"

He cut Kane off, "Like I said, I'm going in." Not waiting for any further arguments, Rafe left the observation room and burst into the holding cell.

Dominic looked up with blurry eyes and a sloppy smile. "Hey, sexy," the warlock said in a dreamy voice.

"Sir, you mind giving us a minute?" Rafe asked Eric.

Eric paused, running his tongue over his teeth. "You sure that's a good idea?"

"Yeah, if we're alone together I may try to make the moves on you," Dominic blurted before he clamped his lips shut and balled his hands into fists.

"What did you guys give him?" Rafe asked as he took in Dominic's glossy gaze. His pupils were huge and there was a fine sheen of sweat on the warlock's brow. Memories slammed into Rafe of his time back in prison when he had been on the receiving end of the needle way too many times.

"It's not like that," Eric said, his tone gentle and understanding.

He was one of the few that Rafe had ever confided in so he knew some of the horrors from the prison.

"We had to do it so or else he still would have been a threat to us."

"I guess you have a point." Rafe nodded, not taking his gaze off Dominic. Even though he knew

it was for the greater good of the clan, it still didn't settle well with him though.

"I'm having Doc monitor it carefully so we don't overdose him."

"Hey, jackass!" Dominic called as he gave the handcuffs another jerk. "Did it ever occur to you fang heads that you could have just asked me to come in?"

"No," Eric replied simply. "We don't make it a policy to trust warlocks."

"You trusted Morgan. She's been living with you forever."

"Morgan saved the clan when the ghouls attacked and she fought off a dark witch for us. So she more than earned our trust. You, we don't know from a hole in the wall." Eric got up from the chair.

"I'm actually not so bad once you get over my past. I do snore sometimes, but Morgan says it's cute." Dominic sat heavily back on the cot.

"You sure you want to be alone with him?" Eric's mouth twitched like he was holding back laughter.

"I think I can handle it. The worst thing he is going to be able to hurl at me is slobbery insults and I'm pretty used to that."

"That comment hurt!" Dominic called from across the room. Eric and Rafe ignored him.

"I'll be watching," Eric informed in a low voice

so only Rafe heard.

Rafe nodded. He had expected as much. As leader of the clan, Eric had a huge interest in what Dominic might reveal. Once Eric left, Rafe took his chair and studied the warlock. Even sick, he emanated a don't-mess-with-me vibe that put Rafe on alert. Though he was lying down, Rafe could see the male's muscles coiled and ready to spring into action. He had been stripped of his weapons when he had been brought in, but his large hands seemed capable of doing more than enough damage on their own.

"Where's Morgan?" Dominic used his free hand to scrub his face like he was trying to wipe away the cobwebs.

"She's sleeping."

"I don't need to ask where that may be." The warlock lowered his hand and stared up at the ceiling. "I can feel her magic inside you."

"Are you jealous?" Rafe cocked his head to the side as he remembered the intimate way Dominic had gazed down at Morgan at the carnival.

"Just jealous that I wasn't there when it happened." A wicked smile spread over Dominic's lips.

Rafe would have called him out for bullshitting, but there was no way he could lie under the influence of the drug. No, the interest Dominic was showing was genuine and damned if it didn't

make Rafe so hard it hurt. "Sorry, I've never been into group play." Rafe licked his suddenly dry lips

"Maybe that's because you never found the right group." Dominic's gaze honed in on Rafe's mouth and held.

"And you think you're the right one?" Rafe cast a nervous glance over at the camera as he shifted in his seat.

Dominic leaned forward and raked his gaze over Rafe. "Are you going to deny you don't feel it? The connection between you, me and Morgan?"

"No," Rafe growled, shooting another look over at camera. He could only imagine how Kane and Dante were reacting to this.

"It's okay to not be happy about it." Dominic gave a dry chuckle. "God knows I don't want to be saddled with a vampire, but there's nothing either one of us can do about it. Once the Goddess decides who belongs with who, there is no fighting it. She has her reasons for setting up triquetras."

"She's not my Goddess so I can fight all I want," Rafe snapped. "What in the hell is a triquetra anyhow?"

"Witches and warlocks put a lot of stock in the number three. We use it on our spells, potions and everyday life. When we have a mating, it's often not between just two individuals, but rather

three.”

“They must make pretty big beds where you come from,” Rafe drawled, trying his best to look disinterested – all the while his mine was whirling like a souped up engine. Could it possibly be the whole reason he was so fucked up these past couple of days was because of a cosmic bitch with one bad sense of humor?

“Joke all you want, but it’s true and you know deep down you can’t deny it.” There was no mistaking the desire in Dominic’s eyes. “Tell me something, Rafe. The entire time you were fucking Morgan, you felt like there was something missing, didn’t you?”

Against all his will, Rafe found himself nodding. While he’d been making love to Morgan, there had been more than once where he had found himself reaching out for something. Now he realized that something was over two hundred pounds of well-muscled warlock who had a chip on his shoulder and a cocky attitude.

“Don’t look so upset,” Dominic said with a sad smile. “It’s really a blessing when you find your triquetra. By sharing each other’s magic, it makes all of us stronger.”

“Strong enough to beat that group of dark magics you’re so worried about?” Magics was a term vampires used for warlocks and witches. Rafe used it deliberately to try and rile up

Dominic.

"Maybe." Dominic gave a half-shrug, making his handcuffs rattle. "Maybe not. With you only being half and refusing to learn how to use your magic, we may not be strong enough to take out a pack of weremice."

"How do I know that you're not making up this threat just to get me to come with you?"

"Because I'm still under that damn drug that won't let me lie even though there have been several times in the past ten minutes I would have loved to. You think I wanted to shout out to the world that I think you're sexy?" Dominic snorted. "I do have pride. In fact, that's all I have left."

"You said that Morgan's coven adopted you, what happened to your old one?" Rafe asked, hating how Dominic winced at the question, but not enough to pull it back.

"The dark witches and warlocks came and wiped them out," Dominic said harshly. "Every last one of us, men women, children—none were spared."

"You lived," Rafe pointed out.

"Yes I did," Dominic conceded with not a little bitterness. "But only because Morgan's clan found me in time. I was under some rubble, badly injured and would have been dead within hours. They took me back with them and healed me."

"Why do I get the feeling that it wasn't all easy

sailing for you from there?" Rafe knew all too well how hard it was to be the only survivor of something.

"My coven practiced dark magic, too, so they weren't very chummy with Morgan's group. She is the only reason they ever agreed to take me in. They weren't exactly happy to have me around and they made sure I knew it."

"Why did you stay?" Even as Rafe asked, he had a sneaky suspicion why that might be.

"Morgan," Dominic answered. "By then I had already fallen in love with her and I was willing to do anything to keep her, even give up the dark magic."

A surge of jealousy reared inside Rafe, but he wasn't for sure if it was for Dominic or Morgan. Damn it, if he ever got his hands on this matchmaking Goddess, Rafe was going to rip her heart out. The all-too-familiar feeling of being out of control of the situation slammed into him. No, not again. He was done with bending to other's whims and desires.

"I'm glad I did, too," Dominic continued, giving Rafe a heated look that was full of sexual promise. "If I hadn't, then I might never have met you."

"I don't know what you think is going on between us, but you can forget it," Rafe bit out angrily. "I'm not a warlock, I'm a vampire so there

is no way I can be part of your magical threesome. Go find some other sucker to try to sell the story to." Standing up, he turned to leave.

"They're coming here," Dominic called. "And they're looking for you. Why do you think they took your father?"

"Oh, I don't know." Rafe stopped, but didn't turn around. "Maybe they realized what an asshole he was and decided to do the world a favor. Hey, that would even make them the good guys in my book."

"They're using him to draw you out. Right before I left, our soothsayer went missing. We think the dark witches took him and he told them all about you. That means they know how you feel about Morgan."

Rafe spun around, his hands balled into tight fists. Heart hammering, the implication of Dominic's words hit him full. "What are you trying to say?" he still asked, desperately hoping to be wrong.

"They won't be coming just for you. They're hunting down her now, too." Dominic tried to get up, but the handcuffs brought him up short. "I know you don't give a damn about me, but I can tell you do care about her."

"I do," Rafe admitted in a harsh voice. The thought of any harm coming to his mate had his gut clenching in fear.

"Then you have to let me help you. Damn it, if you don't, then they will kill her and use your rage to turn you to their side. By the time they get done, not even your own brothers will recognize you either. You will be full of hate and rage. You will become the very thing that you despise so much." Anger and desperation carried over into Dominic's words.

"I can protect her without your help."

"No, you can't," Dominic countered. "Muscles, guns and grit haven't been able to take these witches down. Everyone who has tried that route has failed. We're the only ones who can do it. You know I'm telling you the truth."

Yes, he did know that Dominic was telling the truth. Fear for Morgan made his stomach tight as he tried to think of a way, any way to keep her out of this. Judging by what Dominic said, there was no way to do it. While Rafe was good with battle and weapons, there was no way he could fight a whole coven of dark witches, even with the whole Drone vampire clan behind him.

He was going to have to do something that went against a lifetime of vampire beliefs. Trust a warlock. One who had just admitted that he had once dabbled in black magic. Not the best of options on any day. Add to it the flurry of conflicting emotions he was eliciting in Rafe and it made things even more dangerous.

Giving the camera an apologetic look, Rafe reached into his pocket and pulled out a key. Going over to Dominic, he unlocked the handcuffs and grabbed the male by the front of his shirt. "If you're playing games with me, then I'll kill you myself," Rafe snarled and hauled Dominic to his feet. The sounds of boots told him the others were coming into the room. "Give him the antidote so he's ready to go out. If those things are coming, then we better find them before they find us," Rafe ordered, not looking at his brothers. The last thing he needed was to see the anger or betrayal in their faces.

Dominic's feet scrambled, trying to find purchase.

He buckled against Rafe. His pelvis bumped into Rafe's cock and both of them took in sharp breaths. Damned if his dick, little traitor that it was, didn't jump up and start doing the Happy Dance. "It's just a physical reaction, don't read anything in it," he said as he helped Dominic stand. Dominic's hand drifted down to brush against Rafe's cock. Somehow he didn't think it was an accident either, especially when the warlock did it again and this time, let his touch linger for a bit before he pulled back.

"Do you really believe that?" Dominic's gaze traveled up and down Rafe's body. Although he still had a bleary look in his eyes, there was no

mistaking the desire stamped there. He licked his lips as he stared at Rafe's mouth and, for a second, he thought the male was going to kiss him.

"Yes, I do. Whatever you think there is between us, forget it. Not going to happen in this lifetime or any other." Rafe pushed himself away from the male and finally turned to face his brothers. As expected, they were both good and pissed. To top it off, Eric was there, too, and he didn't look exactly happy either. Oh goodie, let the fun begin.

"Are you sure you know what you're doing?" Kane asked as he shot the warlock a jaded glare.

No, I don't, but this is all I have to go with right now. Since he knew that would be the last thing any of them would want to hear, Rafe said, "I think if we're going to have any hope of facing this threat, we need to go on the offensive. Since Morgan and Dominic are the only ones who know anything about this enemy, I think we need to use them."

"I don't trust them." Dante fingered the hilt of one of his many knives as he eyed up Dominic.

"Do you trust me?" Rafe asked quietly. Before the past couple of days, such a question would have never come up. The three brothers had been to hell and back for each other. When they had lost everything and everyone had turned their backs on them, they had always known they could at least count on each other.

"Of course I do," Dante replied in a slightly wounded voice. "I've always had your back."

"Then I need you to have it now." He swallowed hard, dreading the reaction to his next words. "This is something I have to do. I don't know how I'm so sure of this, I just am. I think there is a real threat coming and if we don't do something to stop it, we could all die."

Stunned silence met his declaration, the only sounds coming from the overheard fan rotating. The vampires all looked as if Rafe had punched them in the gut. Eric was the first to recover.

"Okay just tell me what you need." He ran his hand through his crew cut and started to pace the room.

"I could use a couple of teams to help me scout the city." Rafe released a breath he hadn't realized he was holding.

"I'll round up Brenden's team," Dante volunteered. "While they might not have as much muscle as some of the other teams, I think we're really going to need their brain power on this one."

"Thanks." Rafe's throat felt thick. As usual, his brothers had come through, even though he was a half-breed. It felt so good to know that he would have their familiar presence backing him.

"We'll help you any way you need, baby brother." Kane came up and punched him lightly

on the shoulder. "We always stick together no matter what, remember?"

Rafe nodded, too overcome with gratitude to do anything more. While a part of him had known that his siblings would never turn their backs on him, another part of him had been afraid. After they way their father had chucked them away like yesterday's garbage, he was always waiting for the next blow.

"What in the hell is going on?" Morgan exclaimed from the open door.

"Hey, sexy!" Dominic slurred.

Rafe almost laughed at the déjà vu moment, but the pissed off glare Morgan shot him sobered him up good and quick.

"Oh, someone is in trouble," Dante drawled in a low voice.

Chapter Seven

A couple of hours later they were out patrolling the streets. Morgan was still pissed at him, but at least Dominic was sober so that was something. Of course, Dominic was a bit pissed, too, so maybe that wasn't something after all.

"Tell me again why I have to wear this damn thing?" he asked for the hundredth time as he glared down at the crude device strapped to his waist. All metal, leather and wires it looked like a science project gone awry.

"It's the only way Eric would agree to let you go out." Rafe sighed, although he truthfully couldn't fault the male too much for his ire. If they did see some action, the last thing any soldier wanted was to have an extra ten pounds of equipment dragging him down.

"Yeah, one wrong move on your part and we get to zap you," Brenden announced gleefully as he waved the remote. "It's something I whipped up since the net wouldn't work in this situation."

"You are so damn smart." Dante smiled at Brenden.

"I try." Brenden grinned back at his mate.

The moment was so tender it made Rafe want to gag.

"Just know that if you zap him, then I zap you," Morgan promised darkly. She was wearing her green cloak and while it covered most of her face, Rafe could still see the angry spark in her eyes.

"Oh aren't you just a little firecracker," Dante snipped.

"Leave her alone." Rafe sighed. This was starting to look like it was going to be a long night already and they had just stared.

"Okay, I'll be good. But just so you know, teasing the magics was all the fun I had planned for the evening. Now it's just going to be dull."

"I'm sure we'll find plenty of trouble to get into out here." Kane cast a sweeping gaze over the dark Detroit skyline. "Even if Dominic's witches don't show, there is always a whole lot of nasty that comes out when the sun sets."

"They're not my witches," Dominic declared with such vengeance the brothers pulled back in surprise.

"Whoa, looks like we touched Magic Finger's nerve." Dante gave off his patented cocky grin.

"Knock it off, Dante," Rafe muttered, noticing the look of hurt that passed over Dominic's face. It

was so brief he almost missed it.

"Now you're defending both of them?" Dante eyed him closely. "But then you always did go for the underdogs. Which is why assholes and idiots seem to flock to you for protection."

"Which explains why he's stuck by you this long," Dominic shot back, not missing a beat. Everyone tensed waiting to see how the vampire would react.

A slow smile came over Dante's face. "You got some smartass in you." There was no mistaking the admiration in Dante's voice. "Maybe this night won't be such a bore after all."

"I'm so glad I could please the dick of the vampires." Dominic made a ticking motion with his finger. "Get to mark that one off my list of things to do."

Rafe exchanged amused expressions with Morgan. It had been the first time they had even acknowledged each other since she'd confronted him back at the clan. A thrill went through him when she directed that infectious smile at him once more.

Get a grip, he yelled to himself. Going all gaga over a smile. Next thing you know you'll be picking daisies for her and getting her name tattooed on your arm. Oh, better yet, her name surrounded by a big old red heart. If you're going to go for it, may as well take it all the way. Still, despite his internal smack down,

he found himself grinning back at her. And of course, Dante had to notice.

"That's just damn cute." Dante rolled his eyes. "I thought Rafe had lost the ability to feel before tonight. Now he's acting like a love sick puppy."

"You're one to talk. A few weeks ago you were a mess until Brenden had mercy and took you on," Morgan countered as she came to walk beside Rafe. Her hand brushed briefly against his, the touch sending a spark of desire up his arm.

"Is he always this annoying?" Dominic asked as he came to the other side of Rafe.

"No, he used to be ten times worse," Rafe informed in a droll voice. "Brenden keeps him in check now." Morgan laughed at his comment and Rafe couldn't help but let out a little chuckle at her pure reaction.

"Maybe being an orphan isn't such a bad thing." Dominic gave a rueful shake of his head. "At least I don't have to put up with idiots like him."

"Hey! I heard that!" Dante called, although there was no anger in his tone.

"Do you like it here?" Dominic looked over the city, letting Rafe know what he was talking about.

"I do," Rafe admitted honestly. "It's not just because the werewolves here offered us sanctuary from the Vampire Regulation Force either. This city has been a great place for us to regroup and

lick our wounds."

"The clan has been accepting of you, even though you're Pure Born?"

"Yes, they took us in as one of their own from the very first day and have never treated us any differently." Rafe swallowed hard as he remembered how humbling it had been to finally be treated as an equal by other vampires. It had been the first time after their trial and long imprisonment that anyone had shown them a shred of kindness. "I can never repay them," he surprised himself by saying aloud. "That's why I would die for them."

"They have been very good to me, too," Morgan added. "The past few months with them have been very happy times for me."

"Even though I was a jerk to you?" Rafe grunted, hating himself at that moment.

"Come one, Rafe." She looked up at him from under her hood, her eyes sparkling. "We both know that was foreplay."

"Is that what you call it?" He cocked a brow at her.

"Look sharp!" Kane called from behind them. "We just got a report that there is a band of feral vampires in the city and they've already taken down one human. Orders from Eric are we are to find and eliminate."

Instantly the group closed up and gripped their

weapons tighter. Dominic held out his hand and Rafe didn't hesitate for a moment before he slapped a Glock in it. Even though Dante and Kane had made it clear the male was not to be armed, they would need every gun they could get if there really was a band of ferals out there.

Ferals. Rafe's lip curled up in a snarl. The last time he had to face a group of them had been the night he had failed to fend off an attack by them. The price of his failure had been high, too, almost an entire human family had been slaughtered because of it.

"It's different this time. We're with you and you won't be facing them alone," Dominic assured in a near whisper.

Rafe almost dropped his gun he was so surprised. He'd never imagined that anyone other than a few handful of others knew what had done down that night. "How do you know about that?" he asked, heart hammering in his chest. He worked hard to calm it down, knowing the vampires around him would be able to pick up on it.

"Your mother has kept close tabs on you all your life." Morgan brushed her hand against his again.

This time he knew it wasn't accidental, but to comfort him.

"So we know that you were ambushed that

night and how it was all a set up to charge you and your brothers with dereliction of duty for not protecting the humans." Dominic shook his head, his face dark with disgust. "Like you had a chance in hell of stopping a pack of ferals all by yourself. Even if your brothers had got there sooner, they would have just been attacked and taken down like you."

"I should have figured out a way to help them," Rafe choked out. "I keep replaying that night over and over in my head, wondering if—"

"There is nothing to wonder about," Dominic interjected harshly. "I have been a soldier just as long as you have and I know there was no way you could have done anything different."

"You have to remember that not all the humans died either," Morgan added. "You did manage to save the baby."

Despite the warm evening, Rafe shivered as he remembered how long he had laid there wounded as the sounds of that wailing baby ripped through the carnage-filled house. Not a day went by where he didn't hear that crying in his nightmares.

"Do you know what they did to me after I was down?" The shame filling him made him direct his gaze at his boots. If they did know, then how was it possible that they could even look at him, let alone want to be with him like they professed?

"Are you talking about the vampire slugs?"

Morgan ventured in a small voice.

"Yes." Rafe clenched his teeth so hard together that his jaw popped. The size of a large rat with the appearance of a slug, the creatures would find a dying creature and suck out what little life was left, leaving behind an empty husk. His attackers had placed them on Rafe's injured body as one last fuck you before they had left.

"It was a coward's move on their part and it only makes me want to kill them all the more," Dominic snarled.

"I agree." Morgan added. "We will have to make sure they suffer before they die, too."

Rafe looked up, half-expecting to see they were just playing him, but the fierce expressions on their faces said they were telling the truth. Morgan's lips were pressed in a tight line while Dominic's eyes were dark with fury. All along Rafe had feared they would be disgusted of him. Instead, they looked ready to do murder and all for him.

No one, nobody had ever given a damn about him except for Kane and Dante. His mother had abandoned him, his father shunned him, old friends had turned their backs on him, yet these two magics actually seemed like they cared. It felt way too nice, if he wasn't careful, he could actually get used to it.

Giving a furtive glance over his shoulder at his

brothers, he saw they were both gape-jawed with shock. Before tonight, Rafe had never talked about the incident and now he was babbling away like he was a guest on Dr. Phil. He shrugged back at them. Hell if he was going to feel guilty about it. It felt good to finally unload after all this time and Dominic and Morgan seemed to want to know about it.

When her hand brushed against him again, Rafe broke regulation and grabbed it, lacing his fingers through hers. All the while, every nerve ending in his body was alert to the fact that Dominic was close, too.

Then he caught movement from the corner of his eye. It was so brief it could have passed for a shadow to anyone who hadn't been as highly trained. Letting go of Morgan's hand, he nodded to his brothers, pleased to note they were already alert, having seen the threat, too. Dominic also got into a fighting stance, his gaze darting all around.

From the darkness, several feral vampires jumped out and attacked the group. Snarling and more animal than sane, the things were dressed in bloody rags and had bright red eyes. Their fangs were fully out and engaged and Rafe could feel his own incisors grow at the threat.

Before the enemy could get more than a couple of steps closer, Morgan shouted and threw off a magic bolt. It hit one big male in the center of his

chest. He let out an inhumane sounding scream before he burst into flames and was reduced to ashes.

Rafe blinked in surprise. It had only taken a few seconds for her to off the male. A slow smile spread over his lips as a thrill of pride went through him. His mate could kick ass better than most Drone soldiers.

Not to be undone, Dominic fired off his own magic. Although his target was a bit smaller, that feral was soon ash, too.

By then, Rafe didn't have a chance to feel any pride as the rest of the attackers were on them and he was having to fight.

"Did you bring any of your daylight grenades?" Morgan asked Brenden as she dodged some claws.

"It wouldn't do us any good." Brenden stabbed a feral in the heart, the young vampire's face briefly illuminated as his enemy burned away. "We don't have our protective gear with us so we would toast right along with them."

Just as Brenden was finishing his statement, another feral leaped at his back. Rafe watched in horror as the thing made a direct beeline for the vampire's neck. Brenden spun around and started to raise his gun, but there was no way he was going to get a shot off in time.

A bright light streaked through the sky as

Dominic fired at the feral. It burst into flames, the ash raining down on Brenden. Rafe breathed out a sigh of relief. That had been too damn close. The group continued to work together, using guns, blades and magic until finally all the ferals were gone. For a few seconds they all stood, catching their breath before Dante went over to Brenden and pulled him into a tight embrace.

"I thought you were a goner," Dante said in a broken voice. He looked over at Dominic. "Thank you so much. I'll never be able to repay you for what you did."

"No big deal." Dominic waved a dismissive hand. "I like him. Now if it had been you, I might have held back for a few more seconds."

Dante stared at the warlock for several seconds before both of them burst out laughing. Rafe soon joined them as did Kane.

Morgan just gave a slight shake of her head. "I swear I will never understand men," she muttered under her breath. Since she was the only female there because Cherish and Toni had stayed back at the clan, she had only herself to bitch, too.

Rafe almost felt bad for her, then he remembered how she had used a spell to give him a bad case of jock itch a couple of months back when he had tried to duck her one time too many. He decided she deserved to suffer just a bit.

"Sorry to break up all the fun, but we really

need to split up and clean up any mess the ferals left behind," Kane ordered once everyone had sobered. "I don't think the werewolves would be too happy with us if we left any remains behind on their turf."

"Fine, I'll take Morgan and Dominic with me," Rafe said quickly before Kane could order otherwise. Surprisingly, neither one of his brothers argued.

Dominic cocked a brow at Rafe. "Well, since this is your city, I'll let you lead the way."

Rafe set off, the other two once again on either side of him. As they took off into down the dark sidewalk, Rafe could not help but feel each step took him away from his old miserable self and led him to what might have been hope.

Chapter Eight

As soon as they out of sight of the others, Rafe stopped and faced Dominic. Keeping his gaze down, he undid the crude electrical belt and tossed it into a nearby dumpster. If Rafe's fingers trembled as he worked, neither one of them mentioned it.

"So you have decided to trust me?" Dominic asked in a low sensual voice.

"Maybe I just don't want to have one of my team members being hampered down by extra weight." Even Rafe could hear the lie in his words.

Dominic reached over and cupped Rafe's chin and, for some insane reason, he allowed it. Their gazes locked and there was no missing the smoky desire in the warlock's eyes. Their lips were just inches apart. So close that Rafe could smell the mint on his breath, feel the warmth of the male's strong body.

Rafe knew he should pull back. That if they went down this path there would be no turning

back. Yet he couldn't do it. If the entire world had started to go up into flames, he still would not have been able to leave the comfort of Dominic's touch.

"Have you ever kissed another man?" Dominic grabbed Rafe by the nape of the neck, holding onto him like a predator would its prey.

"A couple of times, but that was a long time ago." Rafe's cock strained against his uniform pants and it was all he could do not to thrust forward to rub against Dominic.

"After tonight, the only one you will kiss besides me is Morgan. Do you understand?"

Normally Rafe would have chafed at anyone giving him an order like that, but coming from Dominic, it made perfect sense. Nodding his consent, Rafe tilted his head back and parted his lips. Closing his eyes, he did something he hadn't done in over a decade, gave complete and total control over to someone else.

Dominic's moan of desire filled his ears before the warlock captured Rafe's mouth in a hot kiss. It was hard, demanding, as if he wanted the whole world to know he was claiming Rafe as his.

"I never realized how hot it would be to see you two locking lips," Morgan gasped.

Rafe jumped when he felt her soft hands caressing his back. He started to return the kiss in earnest, his tongue delving into the male's mouth

to touch, stroke and tease. There was a dark wild flavor to him and Rafe's fangs grew as he imagined how exotic his blood would taste. Morgan continued to run her hands over him, her fingers drifting down to his cock. He sucked in a breath when she gave him a gentle squeeze.

"I have waited so long to see the two of you together," she cooed into his ear. "Since the time I first saw you, I knew we were all meant to be together."

Strange, Rafe didn't have a problem with that anymore. He groaned his acceptance as he plunged his fingers into Dominic's hair and continued to kiss him. A metal rasping sound filled the air as Morgan unzipped Rafe's pants and reached in to grab his cock.

"We're out in the open, someone can see us," Rafe protested weakly against Dominic's lips. Dominic responded by walking forward, making Rafe backpedal until they were in a narrow alley separating a closed liquor store and an ice cream parlor. Rafe's back slammed into a brick wall, before Dominic returned to his mouth.

Morgan followed and reached inside to start stroking him again.

Rafe sucked in a breath when she trailed her finger along the tip.

"Dominic, you should see how big he is." She swiped up some pre-cum and offered her finger to

the warlock. He broke away from the kiss so he could suck it clean.

Years of disciplined and training screamed for Rafe to put a stop to this. They were out in the open, vulnerable and he sure as hell knew his head wasn't in the game. Then Dominic dropped to his knees in front on him and Rafe knew there was no way in he could stop this. He let out a moan as Dominic nudged Morgan's hand away so he could take control of his cock. She stood on tiptoe so she could capture Rafe's lips in a kiss, taking over what Dominic had started. He pushed her hood down so he could thread his fingers in her dark, silky tresses.

Dominic looked up at them, his blue eyes stormy with passion. His cheeks with tight and flush and his lips swollen from kissing. "After tonight we will always be by your side," he vowed. "You will never be alone."

"Never," Morgan agreed, her lips still pressed to Rafe's, she reached up and trailed her fingers along his jaw line.

They knew. Somehow they knew that despite having Kane and Dante, Rafe had always felt so alone because he was different. But to Morgan and Dominic, those differences didn't matter. In fact, they seemed to love him because of them.

"You were right, Morgan," Dominic marveled as he lowered Rafe's black cargo pants and freed

his cock. "He is huge." He leaned forward and flicked his tongue over the tip. "And it's all ours, too."

"This is so wrong," Rafe moaned before running the edge of a fang against the long column on Morgan's neck. *Ah, Dragon's Blood, never get enough of that smell.*

"What? Being with two magics?" Dominic asked as he used his tongue to tease the crest of Rafe's cock again.

"No, that I'm supposed to be on patrol and all I can think of is getting back to a bed so I can fuck both of you. Now quite taunting me already and suck me like you mean it."

Dominic chuckled softly before he obeyed, his hot mouth surrounding Rafe. At the same time, Morgan started to nip and suck at his neck. The sensation of two mouths working him at the same time in two different places on his body made his nearly blind with lust.

Rafe did know one thing though, the warlock sure knew how to give a blow job. He used one hand to hold Rafe's shaft while the other gently massaged his balls. He attacked his erection like he was starved for it, his tongue and lips frantic.

Morgan pulled back to watch Dominic as he worked, her gaze hooded with desire. Little pants passed through her parted lips and her cheeks were flushed. The vampire in Rafe could hear her

heart hammering in her chest, the way her blood rushed through her veins, her heightened arousal.

Off in the distance the rattling roar of the People Mover sounded, reminding him that there was others awake in the city and that at any moment someone could come stumbling on them. Then Dominic took his cock in even deeper and sucked so hard that Rafe decided he didn't give a damn. There entire Detroit Symphony Orchestra could have come marching through and he wouldn't have noticed.

"Let go," Morgan urged as she ran her tongue along his neck. "I want to see what it looks like when you come inside Dominic's mouth."

"You're killing me here, witch," Rafe moaned as he gyrated his hips, his cock sliding in and out of the male's lips.

"Please." She bit down on his flesh and it wasn't exactly gentle. That little bit of pain sent him over the edge, a blinding orgasm ripping through is body. Her throaty laugh echoed through the alley as Rafe released himself into Dominic's eager mouth. Rafe tasted blood and realized he had bit his bottom lip in an effort to hold back his cries of pleasure. Darting his tongue, he licked it away as he slowly opened his eyes and came down from his post-sex high.

Dominic wiped his mouth with the back of his hand as he stood up and used the pad of his

thumb to caress Rafe's bottom lip. Rafe couldn't resist parting his mouth so he could dart his tongue out to taste the male's flesh. He noticed the warlock smelled erotic, much like Morgan. Yet his scent wasn't Dragon's Breath, but Nightshade. A plant that was alluring yet deadly, just like Dominic. Rafe was just as drawn to it.

"I think that was some of the best cock I've ever had," Dominic said, a satisfied smile playing on his swollen lips.

"What can I say?" Rafe grinned back as he snagged Morgan by the waist and hauled her even closer so she was part of their circle. "You know what you're doing."

"Our poor girl got left out." Dominic reached out to twirl a lock of her dark hair around his fingers.

"Yes, she did," Rafe agreed. "We'll have make up for that once we get her home."

"I feel very, very neglected." A wicked gleam came to her eyes. "I think you two are going to have to work extra hard."

Rafe's earpiece crackled before Kane's voice came over it, "Rafe, are you there?"

Giving the others a sheepish shrug, he zipped up before he pressed the device to respond. "Yeah, what you got?"

"Brenden and Dominic found something a couple of blocks from your location. They need

some help and you're closest."

"Copy." Rafe jumped when Morgan bit his ear lobe and had to struggle to keep his voice steady. "We're on our way." Disconnecting, he turned to Morgan and pulled her hood up. "Be good," he admonished in a light tone.

"But you like it better when I'm bad." She blinked her eyes at him innocently and Dominic chuckled.

"Let's get out of here before I break another dozen regulations," Rafe grunted, even though he was far from irritated.

They quickly made their way to the location and found Dante and Brenden standing over something. Dante looked up and his gaze honed in on Rafe's rumpled pants and then Dominic's plump lips. Given his brother's previous reputation as a bed-hopper, it didn't take him long to flash Rafe an annoyed look. Thankfully he kept his trap shut and, instead, waved Rafe over.

Stepping closer, the smell of fresh blood mingled with death hit Rafe full in the face. Glancing down, he saw the shattered remains of two humans. They were so mangled and gore covered he couldn't even tell if they had been male or female. "The ferals we killed?" he asked as his fangs dropped down, an instinctive reaction that happened to all vampires when they were faced with violence or danger. Between the sex

and battle, his teeth had been in and out today more than a puppy with a weak bladder.

"Yes, but there is something different." Brenden nudged one body gently with his boot, pointing out a black area in its stomach. "This isn't the work of any vampire."

"That's because it's dark witchcraft that causes wounds like that," Dominic said as he came up to examine the bodies. Holding his hand over the corpses, he closed his eyes.

For a second, Rafe thought he had gone into a trance. When he opened them, again they were bleak and grim.

"There was a lot of dark magic here recently. I think our two enemies were working together."

"Impossible." Brenden gave a disbelieving shake of his head. "Ferals don't have the temperament to play nice with others."

"He's right." Morgan lifted her face to the wind, her skin pale in the moonlight. "I sense the darkness, too. There are many of them and for some reason they are choosing to avoid us for now. I don't know why and I don't like it."

"You don't think they were doing to it to try and draw out Rafe, do you?" Dante shot a nervous glance around the street.

"Probably," Dominic agreed in clipped tones as he pulled out his Glock and checked to make sure it was ready.

"Then why haven't they attacked yet?" Brenden asked as he spun around in a slow circle, his own gun out and ready.

"They will," Dominic promised darkly. "They're just waiting for the perfect melodramatic moment."

"You should know, cousin." A tall dark-haired male stepped out of the shadows. "You are one of us after all."

Several more figures moved out of the darkness and surrounded the small group of vampires. All of them were dressed in crimson robes with intricate black designs stitched into them.

"Look at this everyone," the male sneered. "It's our long lost buddy Dominic. Now we can finally have that family reunion."

"See?" Dominic snorted to the vampires. "I told you they would be melodramatic."

Dante let out a bark of laughter. "You sure did, but you never warned me that they would be dressed up like a glee club."

"He can't reveal everything, that would take away the fun," Morgan replied as she threw her clock back off her shoulders and splayed out her fingers.

Rafe could feel the magic building up in both parties and he also knew there was a whole hell of lot more juice on the dark witches' side. Things were about to get real ugly soon. He tried to move

in front of Morgan and shield her with his body, but she made an impatient noise and shoved him to the side.

"You guys really do have us cornered, Treven," Dominic drawled. Obviously, he was on a first name bases with the leader.

"If you surrender, we'll only kill the vampires." Treven gave a cold smile that never warmed his sinister dark eyes. "We'll even be nice and let the halfling live."

Dante and Brenden bared their fangs and let out loud growls. Strangely, Rafe still felt calm. Maybe it was because Morgan and Dominic had yet to show fear and he trusted them to let him know when was the time to strike.

"There is one thing I don't think you counted on." A cocky grin settled on Dominic's face. "A triquetra."

For the first time, a look of doubt crossed over Treven's face. His gaze drifted over Morgan, to Rafe, before settling back on Dominic again. "Impossible," he snarled. "There has never been a circle formed with a halfling."

"That's because there has never been a halfling that is the descendant of Olivia." Dominic cocked a brow. "Half breed or not, do you really want to face him if he's enhanced with our powers?"

"You're bluffing."

Despite that accusation, Rafe could see the

doubt on Treven's face.

"Really?" Dominic grabbed Rafe's hand and linked their fingers together. The warlock mumbled some words before a surge of powers shot through his body into Rafe's. Letting out a guttural moan, he clenched his teeth together to stop from yelling out in shock and pain. A blue light shot from their hands toward Treven. One of his warlocks jumped in the way, taking the blow. It was the last thing he ever did. His lifeless body crumpled to the pavement.

"Does that look like bluffing, you spineless piece of shit?" Dominic's voice was all menace, his eyes so dark they looked predatory. "You go back to your council and you let them know that if they come after us again, then they're going to bleed for it."

There was a long tense pause, as the vampires all waited to see what the warlocks would do. Then a look of reluctant acceptance went over Treven's eyes as he took one step back.

"Fine, we'll let you and your triquetra go for now, but only so you can warn the rest of the vampires you seem so fond of." Treven gave the body at his feet a disgusted look.

"Warn us what?" Dante asked, as always shooting his mouth off at the wrong time. "That a full blown fashion disaster is coming our way. Don't worry, we got that the minute you and your

red gowned minions shuffled up to us.”

“You will be the first to die.” Treven balled his hands into fists.

“If I had a nickel every time someone threatened that to me, I would be rich enough to buy you some shoes to match your dress.” Dante grinned wickedly.

Treven directed his icy glare on Rafe. “When you see your mother, give her my best. Tell her that her former husband misses her so much.”

“You made a mistake in kidnapping him in order to make me cooperate,” Rafe said in an oddly calm voice.

“Why is that?”

“Because I could give a damn whether you kill the bastard or not.”

Chapter Nine

“**D**id you really mean what you said about not caring about your father?” Morgan whispered as she snuggled deeper into Rafe’s lap. They were back in the van as it rushed to the clan dwelling.

“Yes, after he turned his back on us, I stopped caring for him,” Rafe replied.

She would have liked to see what his expression was, but his hair was hanging in his face again and it was dark.

“I could care less about him doing it to me, maybe I even deserved it for letting that human family die, but Kane and Dante didn’t do anything wrong. I still remember the look of hurt and shame on Kane’s face that day in the courtroom when we were sentenced. Dad got up and publicly denounced us right after the sentence was read. Bastard didn’t even wait for the judge to slam down the gavel.”

“I don’t want to hear you talk about yourself

that way." She sat up and brushed the hair back from his face so she could meet his gaze. "You didn't fail anybody. I can't believe that you are actually blaming yourself for not being able to take down a whole pack of feral vampires. You're good, Rafe, but you're not a superhero."

"She's right," Dominic agreed. He was sitting on the either side of Rafe, his body pressed so tight against him, there was no doubt they were now together. "There was nothing you could do to save that family. It was a miracle you were able to save the baby."

"I shoved it under a couch." Rafe closed his eyes against the memories. "I didn't know where else to put it. I had it in my arms and was trying to run away, but the pack caught up to me and took me down. At the last second, I managed to put it there, hoping that it would protect the kid."

"You did protect the kid," Dante said from across the van. "Remember what Jonas said? She is happy and has been taken in by a really nice family. None of that would have happened if you hadn't sacrificed yourself for her safety."

"I guess so," Rafe conceded.

Morgan could tell he was far from convinced.

He turned his head toward Dominic. "How are you doing? It must not have been easy coming face to face with your past like we just did."

Dominic gave a half-shrug. "I was just glad that

I'm no longer one of them." He reached out and stroked Morgan's hair. "I'm much happier where I am now."

Morgan didn't miss the heated look that passed between her two mates and unfortunately, neither did Dante.

His loud snort filled the van. "So the witch wasn't enough for you? You just have to have the warlock, too? You never could take the easy way out."

"Are you going to have a problem with this?" Rafe asked darkly as he tightened his grip on Morgan.

She could feel his strong body tense under her.

"Amazingly enough, no." Dante gave a shake of his head before he shifted his gaze to Brenden. "If you're lucky enough to find someone willing to take on your sad hide, then you better hang onto them tight."

Morgan remembered how lost Dante had been before he'd found Brenden and she knew that he hoped Rafe would find the same peace with her and Dominic. He would, too, if she had anything to say about it. Throwing her arms around his waist, she buried her face in his chest and tried to let her love for him be felt through her embrace.

"Do you think the clan will be so accepting?" Rafe asked as he ran his hand up and down her back.

"I think Dominic might have to do a little sucking up, but they've accepted Morgan and a couple of other supernatural creatures in their mists so I think they'll eventually come around. Especially once they learn how Dominic helped us out tonight," Dante said.

While Morgan was glad that Dante was willing to help smooth things out for Dominic to live at the clan, another part of her still worried. She still had to find a way to make Rafe willing to go back to the coven, at least long enough to meet his mother. Not only did they really need this peace treaty with the vampires, but she had made a vow and she intended to keep it. Olivia wanted to see her son so she could tell him why she really left when he was a baby.

She was pulled from her troubled thoughts as the van pulled into the garage. The sun was threatening to come out for the day and she could sense the weariness in the vampires as the urge to go into day sleep hit them. A yawn came from her, as well, since she had come to live with the clan, she had taken to keeping the same hours as them. She was pretty tired, too.

The rear doors of the van swung open and she blinked against the light spilling in.

Eric looked more than a little tired and cranky. "I know everyone wants to crash, but I need you to come to my office and debrief first."

His piercing gaze searched over everyone before setting on her triquetra. If he was upset or surprised by what he saw, Morgan couldn't say for certain. The clan leader had always been hard to read, much like Kane.

"What about me?" Dominic asked carefully.

Morgan knew that if they tried to lock him back up, he would allow it just so he could stay near her and Rafe. A shot of despair went through her as she thought about him being handcuffed and relegated to that cold room again. Worse, what if they insisted on drugging him again? Holding back a cry of outrage, she clutched his arm so hard her nails dug into his flesh. The muscles in Rafe's body tensed up like he was building up for a fight if they tried anything with their third.

"You stay with us." Rafe's tone almost seemed to dare the clan leader to argue with him. "If you have a problem with that, Eric, then I promise to take personal responsibility for him."

The tension that filled the back of the van was almost explosive as everyone waited to see how Eric would react. The leader remained as impassive as ever, his eyes blank.

"I'll vouch for him, too," Dante broke the silence, his usual trademark grin gone to be replaced by a determined set of his jaw. "He helped us out of a real pickle back there." The possessive way he grabbed Brenden's hand when he made

this statement wasn't lost on Morgan.

"Fine, you can keep the damn warlock." A tic developed in Eric's temple, his fist sign of emotion. "I can't guarantee the rest of the clan is going to embrace him though."

"Story of my life," Dominic muttered so low that only she and Rafe probably heard. Louder, he said, "Thanks, I'll make sure to be a good boy so not to scare anybody. I'll even use a glass instead of drinking from the milk jug and put the toilet seat down when I'm done pissing."

"Dominic," Morgan chided, not wanting his smart mouth to mess things up and land him back in the jail cell.

"Fine." The corners of his mouth twitched. "Pee. I won't cuss in front of the vampires anymore if you don't want me to."

When Dante and Brenden both snorted with laughter, Morgan glared at them. "Laughing only makes him more of a smartass, so stop." Despite her words, she really wasn't angry. In fact, she almost felt giddy with relief and excitement. After so long, both of her males were by her side and she planned to do everything in her power to keep it that way. Even now, she had one hand on either of their knees, her fingers making lazy circles. Rafe leaned down and put his lips to her ear.

"This is all cuddly, sweetheart, but we really do need to get going before Eric has our asses in a

sling."

"Right." She blushed when she realized she was basically draped over the guys, making it impossible for them to get up without tipping her over. Scrambling to her feet, she got up and hopped out of the back. Stepping to the side, she waited for the others to disembark before she reached out and grabbed both of their hands.

Part of her expected Rafe to pull back. Even though he had been touchy feely in the van and back at the alley, publicly walking through the clan with them was another thing. To her surprise and delight, he didn't though. Even more stunning, he brought her hand up to his lips and kissed her fingers. "I love you," she blurted, surprising everyone, including herself.

"I love you, too." Leaning down, he softly kissed her bonding bite.

"Save it for after the meeting," Eric grumbled as he walked by.

Letting out a stifled giggle, Morgan tugged on the males' hands and led them to the briefing room. They followed and she couldn't help but feel a thrill at the thought of having two strong warriors under her whims.

"Damn, even with that cape covering her, that is the finest ass I've ever seen," Dominic breathed. "I hope this meeting doesn't last long."

Rafe's gruff chuckle washed over her, making

her feel warm from the inside out. He'd smiled and laughed more in the past couple of days than in the entire time she'd been at the clan. It made her feel heady to know that she and Dominic had managed to do away with a decade's worth of pain.

He wasn't the only one either. Before now, Dominic had always moved like he had a heavy weight of guilt and hurt weighing him down. For the first time since she'd ever known him, he seemed relaxed and totally open. In a clan of vampires, their sworn enemies, who would have thought it?

A fierce wave of protectiveness went through her as she thought about all the males had gone through. How many times they had been wronged and often times by the ones who should have loved and protected them most. If it took a thousand years, she would wipe that hurt from them.

Good thing witches were immortal just like vampires. She had the rest of forever to take care of Rafe and Dominic. She couldn't wait to get started either. Just as soon as Eric had his damn debriefing. Usually she adored and respected the clan leader, tonight she just wanted to tell him to put his military rule where the sun didn't shine. Although since he was a vampire that was everywhere since they didn't exactly get along

with sun.

Entering the already crowded and stuffy room, she managed to find three chairs together and she took the one in the center, not willing to give up the sensation of having Rafe on one side of her, Dominic on the either. A shiver went down her spine as she thought about how it would feel to be between their hard bodies, all of them naked and sweaty.

"Are you cold?" Dominic asked, misinterpreting her shivers.

"No, she's aroused," Rafe said in a low sensual voice that elicited another tremble from her. "I can smell it."

That revelation made her hotter and she had to bite her bottom lip to hold back a moan. Her panties grew damp with need as she clenched her thighs together in anticipation. Rafe let out a small hiss as he looked over at her, his gaze heavy with desire. That made it even worse for her. The sight of those intense eyes of his peering up at her from under his dark hair made her remember how she had been drawn to his bad boy image from the beginning.

Eric was up front talking, but Morgan didn't catch a word of what he was saying. She was too intent on Rafe and the way his fingers were now making a lazy circle on the inside of her wrist. Even though the wrist seemed like the least likely

erotic zone on the body, the way he was going about it almost had her panting.

Kane and then Dante talked, no doubt giving a rundown about what they had found in the city, From what she heard, they could have been giving the weather report. She did catch a sharp intake of breath from Dominic as he caught onto what was going on with her and Rafe. She didn't need a vampire to tell her that he was turned on by it either. The way he licked his lips and then muttered an expletive under his breath, let her know.

Rafe's brushed his thumb along her wrist again, the contact making her body hum with pleasure. An image of him doing the same thing to her breasts had her nipples peaking and begging for his touch. He had been so good at that, too, last night in bed. Her breasts had ached in a good way from all the attention he'd paid them.

A whimper somehow managed to slip from her even though she had clamped her lips shut, making Dante shoot them a curious look before he directed his attention back up front. Morgan wanted to scream, both from pent up passion and frustration. How damn long was this meeting going to last?

She was already so worked up that she was about to come right in the middle of their precious military debriefing. How stupid was that, having a

frigging orgasm just from holding hands?

Dominic learned down and whispered in her ear, "Just a few more minutes and we'll have you in bed, sweetie. Just think of how nice it's going to be to fuck Rafe right after I fuck him. I'm going to take his tight ass before he plunges into your sweet pussy."

"Stop it," she hissed. If Dominic kept it up, she was sure to lose it and start moaning while sitting in the middle of a room of vampires.

"If you're a good little witch," Dominic continued despite her desperate plea, "I may just let you watch as I pin our vampire under me before I screw his brains out. Would you like that?"

"Oh god, yes," she whispered. Rafe was still caressing her wrist and she didn't think she'd ever been this aroused before.

"You liked that earlier, didn't you?" Dominic gently nipped at her ear. "Watching me suck him off?"

"Yes," Morgan moaned loudly.

All activity in the room halted as every vampire turned to look at her. Eric appeared to be annoyed, Dante amused and Kane looked like he was on the verge of pounding Rafe. Cheeks hot with embarrassment, she jerked her hand away from Rafe.

"I hadn't realized anyone had asked a

question,” Dante chimed in way too chipper. Judging from the shit-eating-grin on his face, he knew exactly what had been going on.

A thought so terrifying went through Morgan that she gasped. Rafe had said he could smell her arousal. Did that mean the others could, too? Oh crap, oh crap, oh crap. She would have bolted from the room if shame hadn’t have paralyzed her. She had faced countless witches, warlocks, sorcerers and other badies in battle, but this was ten times more horrifying.

“Well, now that the magics have our attention, we may as well let them take the floor,” Eric said dryly. “Dominic, you want to tell us a bit about this Treven?”

“Sure.” Dominic shifted in his seat. “He’s the son of the leader of the coven I told you about. The black magic one.”

“Are they the only coven that practices that type of witchcraft now?” Eric leaned against the table and crossed his arms over his chest.

“No.” Dominic swallowed hard before a tic appeared in jaw. “There was a half dozen last I knew, but there is a lot of infighting amongst the groups as they fight over power. That’s what happened to my coven.”

Morgan wanted to reach out and give him a comforting touch, but held back, knowing that Dominic would think it made him look weak to

the vampires. She settled for clasping her hands together so she wouldn't give into temptation.

"Why do you think they gave up tonight without much of a fight?" Dante asked. "I know you managed to kill one of them, but that shouldn't have been enough to scare them off."

"They're teasing. Dark magic works off dark emotions and fear is one of the most powerful of those. I think they want the whole clan knowing they are out there and that it will only be a matter of time before they are reduced to ash like the others."

"You said before that your new coven wanted to make an alliance with us." Eric's gaze drifted to Morgan, including her. "Were you serious and if so, do you think they would be willing to help us out now?"

There were several gasps of shock following his questions. To trust a pair of magics was one thing, to actually seek out an alliance with a coven was a whole different matter. But then that was what had made Eric such a good leader. He was willing to do anything to insure the safety of his clan, even break centuries of tradition.

"They may, but only if Rafe were to come back with us and talk to them himself," Dominic said as he shot an apologetic look over at Rafe.

"Like hell," Kane thundered. "The minute they see him, they'll kill him."

"I won't let that happen," Dominic replied. "Look, I understand your fear. If I were in your boots, I would feel the same way, but this is the only way they're going to even think about teaming up with you guys."

"I'll do it," Rafe blurted.

Kane gaped in horror. "Have you lost your mind?" He jumped out of his chair, hands balled into fists.

Morgan thought for sure he was going to use them on Rafe.

"No, I think that for the first time in forever, I'm finally seeing things clearly." For once Rafe didn't hang his head, he held it high.

Morgan wanted to cheer at the change in him and she was frustrated that his brother couldn't see it.

"I'm going to have to disagree with you on that one." Kane tossed a disgusted look at her and Dominic. "Judging from the way you've been acting the past couple of days, I would say you're head is up your ass and you're running around blind."

"You don't want to go there," Rafe warned in a low voice.

"What, that those two magics have you all fucked up and not in a good way?" Kane thundered, his usually reserved façade gone.

Anger made his gaze flat and cold, the look of a

real predator and Morgan was reminded of how deadly his reputation had been while he had still served in the VRF.

"I won't have you talk about them that way. If you hate them for what they are, then you're hating me, too, because I'm half magic as well."

There were gasps in the room from the various vampires who had not known about Rafe's heritage.

Morgan realized she was slack jawed with shock and clamped her lips together. Of all the things she had thought, Rafe would publically outing himself after all this time was the last one. He had all but painted a bull's eye on his back and slapped a kick-me sign over it.

A cold sweat broke out over her body as panic put her nerves on high alert. Suddenly the small room seemed way too full of vampires. Vampires that could very well see Rafe as threat and want to eliminate him first and cry about it later. She flexed her fingers, getting ready to use her magic. If they wanted Rafe, they would have to come through her first. A surge of magical energy told her that Dominic was getting ready, too.

"Everyone calm down," Eric snapped. "Nobody is going to attack anyone." He pinned Morgan and Dominic with a glare. "So put those things away."

It took her a second to realize he meant her

hands. Good, he was acknowledging that her magic was a real weapon. Giving him a mocking smile, she did as he asked, but only because she wasn't sensing any aggression for the vampires. Just numbing shock.

"Rafe is still considered a member of this clan," Eric declared to the room. "If anyone has a problem with that, they can take it up with me. But know this, if anyone tries anything with him because of who he is, then they are signing their own death and the blow won't be coming from his brothers. It will be from me." His hard gaze traveled slowly over the group.

He looked every bit the predator as Kane had earlier and Morgan felt a little shiver of fear go through her. The menacing glint in his eyes and the way he flashed his fangs let her know he would not hesitate at all to deliver a killing blow if he saw fit to.

When nobody immediately acknowledged his order, he snapped his fangs together. "Have I made myself clear?"

"Crystal, sir," Zeke, one of Brenden's team members, confirmed in a gruff voice.

"Good then." Eric gave a slight nod of his head. "Then everyone is dismissed for now. Go get some rest. I have a feeling we're all going to be needing it."

Chapter Ten

Not wanting to stay around and have to deal with Kane and Dante, Rafe bolted as soon as Eric ended the meeting. As he fled the room, he blindly grabbed out for Morgan's hand, not wanting to give up the comfort of her presence. He instinctively knew that Dominic would follow and that soothed his frazzled nerves even more for he needed Dominic just as much as he did Morgan.

Chalk it up to some magical bond or just pure hormones, but Rafe knew that the warlock belonged to him just as much as Morgan did. He wasn't about to fight that attraction anymore either. For once in his fucked up life, he was going to actually make an attempt to find some good and these two were it for him.

"Where are we going?" Dominic asked as he followed Rafe down the twisting hallways of the clan compound. At one time, it had served as a large warehouse for humans before the vampires

had moved in and converted it to their own specifications. Now it boasted a shooting range, training facility, cafeteria, various living quarters and even a school. Right now, things were pretty empty and Rafe was glad. After the tension of the meeting, the last thing he wanted was more to be heaped on them by having Dominic gawked at.

"We're going my room," Rafe said. Already his body was tight with anticipation and need. Remembering the blow job that Dominic had given him, his cock jumped to life and pushed against his pants. If he didn't have the two of them naked and at his mercy soon, he was going to suffer from the first case of spontaneous vampire combustion.

"Wait, stop." Morgan tugged on his hand to halt their progress.

Did she just say *stop*? No, no, no! That was the last thing he wanted. His room was in view, the door just at the end of the hallway. Giving it a desperate look, he had to work hard to keep a whimper from coming out. "Why? Did you change your mind about me?" he asked, trying hard not to sound as needy as he felt. With Dominic back in the picture, maybe she had decided that a halfling wasn't for her.

"Of course I didn't change my mind." Her red lips curled in that sweet yet wicked smile of hers that had made him fall in love with her. "I just was

going to suggest we go back to my room."

"Oh." Rafe cringed. "I guess mine is kind of messy."

"Yes, it is," she agreed with a light giggle. "That wasn't why I was suggesting it though. It's because my bed is bigger."

"I like how our lady thinks," Dominic said with his own devious grin.

Desire ratcheted through Rafe's body so hard it was almost painful. His fangs lowered in response, growing long in anticipation of feeding. Instead of hiding them, he parted his lips slightly and ran his tongue over them. He wanted them to see how they affected him, how much he wanted them.

"Fuck," Dominic breathed as his lids grew heavy with passion. "I never dreamed that I would want a vampire to go fang on me so bad."

"Then Morgan better lead the way to her room real quick or else I'll be doing it right here in the hallway where anyone could come walking up on us." Rafe almost purred when Morgan reached up and caressed his cheek. Leaning into her touch, he kept his gaze on Dominic. Seeing how he was turning on the warlock was getting his own gears oiled.

"I don't mind public places." Dominic glanced down at Rafe's erection. "You should have figured that out when I was sucking your cock while we

were basically out in the open.”

* * * *

“Come.” She was already holding Rafe’s hand so she reached out, grabbed Dominic’s and tugged them both, making them follow her in the opposite direction. When she got to her door, her hands shook so bad that she couldn’t fit the key in the lock. Dominic came up, his hard body pressing against her back as he helped her out. She inhaled sharply, the scent of Nightshade thrilling her already aroused senses.

“Are you afraid?” he asked, his lips just inches from her ear.

She could feel his erection pushing against her back and it was all she could do not to rub against it. “No, but I am afraid that I’m going to wake up and find that this was all just a dream.” She closed her eyes and let out a happy sigh when his tongue caressed the tender flesh of her throat. “I can’t believe this is finally going to happen.”

“It isn’t if you two don’t ever open the door,” Rafe grumbled good naturedly.

Overwhelmed by happiness, Morgan laughed as she did what he requested. Pushing open the door, she went inside her room. Her quarters weren’t messy, but it was cluttered with hanging baskets of herbs, vials of oils, heavy books and

other various tools of her craft. Walking across it, she took off her cape and set in on the dressing before turning to look at them.

They were so different, Rafe with his dark hair and dangerous aura, Dominic with his blond good looks and self-assured attitude, but in other ways they were so alike. They had both been hurt, both suffered loss and had seen way too much in their lifetimes. Leaning back against her dresser, she tilted her head up and gave what she hoped was a sexy smile.

"You boys aren't going to make me come over there, are you?" She almost choked on the word *boys*. These two were the furthest thing from that. No, they were all man and they were all hers. Although she had no idea what god or goddess she had pleased so much to deserve such a gift. Taking a steadying breath, she waited for them to approach.

* * * *

Dominic didn't know where to start. The raven-haired beauty in front of him or the sexy vampire to his side. Licking his lips, he remembered how good Rafe had tasted when he had come in his mouth. Even though it was so long ago, Dominic swore he could still taste the musky saltiness on his tongue. Then a wicked idea came to him and

he could feel a victorious grin spread out on his face. "Go take care of our girl," he urged Rafe.

"What are you going to be doing?" Rafe looked up at him with fuck-me eyes.

Dominic felt his cock swelling as if on demand. "I'm going to be taking care of you," Dominic promised, his voice husky with need. He tugged the waistband of Rafe's shirt. "Now take off your clothes so I can see all of you."

All of the sudden, the passion left Rafe's face like someone had flipped a switch. Taking a quick step back, he bumped into the wall. Good thing it was there because, judging by his expression, he was to seconds from rabbiting.

"I don't see where me taking my clothes off is necessary." He directed his eyes back at his boots.

Dominic wanted to snarl in anger. It wasn't directed at Rafe, but at all the others who had been responsible for making his mate that way. "Being naked is kind of a prerequisite for what I have planned." Dominic tried to keep his tone even and calm, without even so much as a trace of pity. Rafe may have that beaten attitude about him, but that didn't mean he was down. If provoked, Dominic knew he could be just as dangerous as Dante and Kane.

"We can work around the clothes." Rafe balled his hands in fists and still refused to look up. "I've done it that way since—" He cursed under his

breath and didn't finish his sentence,

He didn't have to. Realization slowly dawned on Dominic and now it was he who cursed. The only reason Rafe wouldn't want to be naked in front of them was he had something to hide, like scars. Like ones that vampire slugs would leave behind.

Looking over at Morgan, he hoped to project his thoughts on his face. It must have worked because she let out a soft gasp as understanding came to her eyes. Pushing herself away from the dresser, she slowly crossed the room until she was in front of Rafe. Even though she now stood inches from him, he still wouldn't look at her.

"Rafe," she said, her face full of heartbreak, but there wasn't a scrap of disgust and pity.

For that Dominic could have kissed her. "Look at me," she commanded. When Rafe finally did, she cupped his cheek. "I love you. All of you. There is nothing that could ever take that away, certainly not some scars."

"You don't get it," Rafe said between clenched teeth. "Vampires slugs are the lowest thing on our food chain. To have been attacked by them is the ultimate sign of weakness amongst our kind. They are a badge of shame."

"No." She shook her head as her thumb lightly fanned his bottom lip. "They are a badge of your courage. You got them because you sacrificed

yourself so that baby could live. You should be proud of them. I am."

"You don't need to sugarcoat it for me. I know what they are and every vampire that has been unlucky to see them has known too."

A whisper of Dominic's old black magic stirred in him as he thought about what he would like to do to everyone that had ever done harm to Rafe. It was foolish, Rafe was more than capable of fighting his own battles. If there was anyone who didn't need a hero storming in to save the day, it was him. Yet, Dominic wanted to do just that. The urge to protect the fierce vampire was just as strong as the one to protect Morgan.

Again the subtle push of dark magic hit him again. In the past, he had always shoved back, put it away and locked it down tight. This time, however, he latched onto it and held. What he had planned for those who had imprisoned Rafe wasn't exactly kind and dark witchcraft would help him out just right.

Any other time, Morgan may have notice the presence of his dark side, but she was too caught up in Rafe. Standing on tiptoe, she brushed his dark hair out of his face and placed a soft kiss on his lips. Rafe was stiff at first, but after some gentle nudging on her part, he soon wrapped his arms around her and got into it. After a few moments, she pulled back and grabbed the bottom

of his shirt. Keeping her gaze locked on his, she slowly lifted. This time he allowed it, although his jaw remained clenched and every muscle was tense in his body.

Dominic moved in and, as Rafe's tight body was slowly revealed, he kissed every scar, slowly and softly like he was worshiping them. The scars were small white circles and they covered all over his torso and back. There were so many that Dominic wondered how he had ever survived the attack.

Morgan tossed his shirt to the side and they pulled Rafe away from wall so Dominic could stand behind him. With a moan of approval, she swirled her tongue over his nipple before licking her way across his pec and tight abdomen. Rafe hissed in pleasure as he wrapped his hands in her long hair to urge her on.

"You are so fucking hot," Dominic rumbled in his ear, before he gave the nape of his neck a love bite. When Rafe trembled against him and thrust his ass back, Dominic felt a triumphed thrill course through him. Stronger than any high, it made him feel like he could take on the entire world and all the crap it held, too. Rafe was accepting him and by doing so, he was helping bond their triquetra together.

Dominic traced the scars on his back, letting him know that they didn't matter to him. Morgan

undid Rafe's pants and pulled them down. He wasn't wearing any underwear so his cock sprang free. Kneeling, she took off his boots so she could get the pants all the way off. Finally they had him naked.

"Wrap your lips around him," Dominic ordered Morgan. "I need to see that pretty mouth of yours full of his cock."

Morgan did just that, parting her full lips and taking in the vampire's thick erection. Dominic felt his own cock jump in response, almost as if it was jealous. He settled for burying his nose in the crook of Rafe's neck. There was a wild, erotic smell about him that made Dominic crazy with need.

Morgan ran her tongue along his length before she took him back in her mouth and sucked. Dominic watched, enraptured. Never would he have dreamed seeing her pleasure another male would be this good. But then again, Rafe wasn't just some other guy.

"Fuck," Rafe moaned as she took him in even deeper.

"She's good, isn't she?" Dominic asked with more than a hint of pride.

Rafe nodded as he stroked her dark hair. His eyes that were usually full of pain were now glazed with passion. "I'd say she's a dead even with you." Rafe turned his head.

Dominic captured his mouth into a heated kiss. Rafe wasn't gentle, using his tongue and fangs with a ferocity that showed just how bad he wanted this. A sharp pain on his bottom lip made him jump.

"Ouch," Dominic breathed, but didn't pull back. He could taste the tangy saltiness of his own blood and feel the warmth as it trickled out.

Rafe captured his injured lip in his mouth and sucked.

If he had known all along it felt this good to have a vampire feed off you, he would have done it a long time ago. It was like every nerve, every erogenous zone were alive. His cock throbbed in time with Rafe's pulls. Dominic could feel his magic flowing between the two of them. Rafe must have felt it, too, because he sucked in a harsh breath. Luckily Morgan caught what was happening and stood up.

"It's okay, Rafe," she soothed. "It's natural what you're feeling. It's Dominic sharing his magic with you. You can give back. Keep drinking from him, but open up your heart and mind at the same time. Focus on Dominic, how much you care for him and how you want to protect him."

Turning so they were facing each other, Rafe continued to suck on Dominic's lip. His eyes fluttered shut before he roughly hauled Dominic closer to him. Then he felt it. A wave of magic so

powerful he would have staggered a step if Rafe hadn't been holding him.

Groaning, he returned the embrace. He hadn't felt this powerful since he'd been practicing in the dark arts, but this was a different high. Much cleaner and pure. All too soon, Rafe licked the wound closed and pulled back. Looking over at Morgan, his eyes were alive with excitement.

"Can I do you next?" he asked.

Dominic had to laugh at his eager tone. He almost sounded like a youth who had first discovered magic. With a slight frown, he realized that was because that wasn't too far off the mark. As far as magic skills went, Rafe was very, very young. He had a lot to teach his male and very little time to do it.

"I would love if you did me next." Morgan started to undo the buttons on her blouse. "Where to do you want to start."

"You, naked and on the bed." Rafe grinned before he licked a drop of blood off his bottom lip. "Don't think I've forgotten my promise that you would get taken care of. By the time I get done with you, you will be screaming my name."

Even though he hadn't been asked to yet, Dominic started to shed his clothes. For once, he was glad he didn't have his leathers on since it was so much easier to take off the tee and jeans quickly.

"Do you mind if I help you out?" he asked Rafe as the vampire led Morgan to the bed and got into it.

"I was counting on it." Rafe grinned wickedly around his fangs.

Dominic almost blew it and came right there. They settled on either side of Morgan and started to kiss and suck her breasts. A loud cry of pleasure ripped from her as she arched against the bed. When Rafe started to move down, Dominic shifted some to the side so he could get a better view, all the while still laving her nipple with his tongue.

"Please," she moaned.

For a second he thought she was directing it at Rafe until he noticed she was gazing at him, tears in her eyes.

"Do it now."

Nodding dumbly, he got up and fumbled around her oils until he found the one he wanted. Going back to the bed, he didn't go to Morgan, but instead climbed up behind Rafe. He was still crouched, his face buried between her thighs, but Dominic managed to squeeze in. For a second, he couldn't move, too enraptured by the sight of Rafe's tongue lapping up her juices. Her hands were buried in his hair and her slender hips were gyrating against him. Then he sucked her swollen clit and her eyes shot open as she screamed his name. One finger was slowing pumping in and

out of her pussy.

"You were right," Dominic said as he poured some of the oil into his hand. The smell of almonds filled the air. "You did make her scream your name. Make her do it again and I'll really be impressed."

Rafe removed his finger from her core, replacing it with his tongue.

Morgan almost shot from the bed as her milky white thighs trembled. A flush came over her cheeks as she bit her bottom lip.

It was now or never. Taking a deep breath, Dominic ran his hands down Rafe's body until he was cupping his ass. He could feel the muscles tense under his touch, but the vampire didn't pull back or object. That gave Dominic the courage slide one finger along the crack of his ass.

"I don't know what is sweeter," he mused as his finger slid deeper in, "your cock or this fine ass."

"Don't tease," Rafe growled between licks.

"What is it you want?" Dominic circled his finger around the opening of his ass. "This?"

"God, yes," Rafe hissed. "I want that and more."

He slid one oiled finger into him. "You're so tight." Using his free hand, Dominic stroked his own cock. It was so hard that it hurt and he had to give it some relief before he came apart. Pulling

his finger back, he replaced it with two, stretching the muscle so it could accept his cock.

Morgan wailed as she came, but Rafe didn't let up, continuing to suck and lick her pussy. Dominic now had three fingers inside him, pumping them in and out slowly, he willed himself to be patient. The last thing he wanted was to rush things and mess it up. It was so hard though, his erection was leaking pre-cum from wanting so badly.

"Bite me, Rafe," Morgan shrieked.

With a hiss, Rafe did just that, sinking his white fangs into the tender flesh of her inner thigh.

The sight of him drinking from their female shredded the last bit of control Dominic had. Moving his fingers, he positioned the tip of his cock at the entrance of Rafe's ass. Slowly Dominic pushed through the tight muscle until his cock was buried deep.

Rafe grunted, but it must not have hurt too bad because he never looked up from feeding. Encouraged, Dominic started to move in and out in a slow steady rhythm. Rubbing the vampire's back, the sizzle of shared magic grew strong. It was even stronger this time because Morgan's was in the mix. A surge of power washed over all of them as the powerful merging bound their triquetra together.

As always, magic and sex went hand in hand

for Dominic and he roared as he started to pound harder into Rafe. The vampire had to take one hand off Morgan so he could brace himself because Dominic was fucking him so hard.

The magic soared higher and higher until it was as if Morgan and Rafe were infused in every cell of his body. Dominic knew at that moment his heart was forever bound to the two of them. Never again would he walk alone. He would always have Morgan on one side of him, Rafe the other.

"I love you both so much," he gasped as the most intense orgasm ever hit him. It was so strong he couldn't even see for a moment as the pleasure shot through his body. Dimly, he could hear himself crying out as he emptied his cock inside Rafe. When he finally came back down, he collapsed on his side, unable to hold even his own body weight up.

"Looks like you wore him out." Morgan chuckled to Rafe before she lightly traced Dominic's lips.

"Let's see how long it takes for me to tire you out," Rafe said with that husky sexy voice of his.

Dominic cracked open his eyes enough to see that Rafe was stretched over Morgan and was sliding his cock inside her. She wrapped her legs around him and pulled him in even deeper. Closing his eyes, Dominic felt the bed moving as Rafe started to fuck her and fast. Despite his

weariness, Dominic's cock came back to life.

Rolling to his side, he watched them as he stroked himself. At the rate they were going, none of them would be getting much sleep.

Chapter Eleven

Rafe shoved one last duffle bag into the trunk of Dominic's car before he slammed it shut and made his way to the passenger side. The others hadn't arrived yet and for the first time in days, he was alone.

Ever since he and Dominic had gone back to Morgan's room, the three of them had been inspirable. A wry smile came to his face as he recalled how they had spent most of that time. Now he was getting ready to do something a lot more unpleasant—go home to meet *mommy dearest*.

"So you're really going through with this?" Dante ask as he and Kane walked into the garage. They had their mates, Toni and Brenden, with them.

Rafe sighed, so much for alone time, although he should have known his brothers wouldn't let him leave without a sendoff. "The answer is going to be the same no matter how many times you

ask," Rafe grunted.

"Not too long ago you told me that as brothers we were to always stick together," Dante replied in a deceptively calm voice.

Rafe knew that look on his face all too well. He was good and pissed and itching for a good fight. For once, Rafe wasn't in the mood to give it to him. "I told you that after you had taken off for months and didn't bother to tell us where you were," Rafe pointed out. "This is different. I'm only going to be gone a few days and you know where I'm going to be."

"You won't be gone for a few days if they decide to kill you," Kane added his two cents.

Too bad for him Rafe wasn't interested. "That's not going to happen." Rafe clenched his hands in fists as he fought to keep his temper. Even though his brothers were currently annoying him, that didn't mean he wanted to leave on a bad note either.

"How do you know that?" Dante threw his hands up in exasperation.

Toni stepped forward, putting her small body between Rafe and his brothers. As usual, her blonde hair was pulled back in a tight ponytail and she was wearing her black cargo pants. As a former soldier and assassin for the VRF, the female Drone was more comfortable in uniform. Since she was Brenden's sister, she shared the

same caring blue eyes.

"I know you're angry at them, but they're just worried about you. If you were in their boots, you would be doing the same thing," she soothed. As always, she was the peacemaker. Although she may be able to kick ass with the best of them, she had a caring soul that never stopped, another trait she shared with Brenden. "You really don't know anything about Morgan and you know even less about Dominic. We don't like the idea of you going off alone with them and no backup."

Unfortunately, Dominic and Morgan chose that moment to come into the garage. Rafe cringed as he wondered how much they may have overheard. Damn acoustics in the garage were way too good.

"Rafe doesn't need any backup because we'll be right by his side the entire time, protecting him," Dominic snarled as his large body tensed for a fight.

Okay, they had obviously heard way too much. Brenden was the only one who had the good graces to look guilty about being caught red handed talking bad about the magics. The others appeared as if they could give a damn.

"How do we know we can trust you?" Toni tilted her head defiantly, refusing to cower to the warlock. "I happen to care about Rafe and if you think I'm going to trust you on your word, then

you are even dumber than you look."

Dominic glared at her and she glared back, her lips pressed in a hard line. Her fingers inched toward her waist.

Rafe jumped forward when he remembered that was her favorite place to keep her dagger. "You don't need to trust them, Toni." He reached over and gently stilled her hand. "I do and that's all that matters right now."

"You're not thinking right." Even though her tone wasn't angry, he could see the worry and compassion in her face. "You just met Dominic for cripes sake."

"How long did it take for you to know with Kane?" he asked quietly. Rafe knew he had scored a point when she let out a huff of breath and looked to the side.

"That was different."

"Really? How" Rafe tilted his head to the side and silently dared her to say what was really on the tip of her tongue.

"I don't care who your mother is, you'll always be one of us. I love you like you are my own brother and it would kill me to see anyone hurt you."

If it had been any other female, he would have said there were tears in her eyes. "Toni, magic is who I am. At least half of who I am." He gave her an awkward playful punch on her shoulder. "If I

can use that to help our clan and others like it, then it would be cowardly of me to hide out like I'm a burrow worm."

"I promise no harm will come to him." Morgan stepped forward and placed a possessive hand on his arm. "Both Dominic and I would give our lives for him. Like you care for Kane and Brenden cares for Dante, we care for Rafe. He won't be facing this alone."

"You're right, he won't be," Kane announced grimly. "Because we're going, too."

"I don't know if that's such a good idea," Dominic protested sharply. He exchanged worried looks with Morgan.

"Olivia is expecting Rafe, but that doesn't mean she's going to embrace a vampire entourage with open arms," Morgan added.

"Tough," Dante snapped. "Because we're going. Like Rafe told me once, brothers always have each other's backs."

Morgan rolled her eyes before she held her hand out to Dominic. "Pay up, I told you they would be coming along."

"Damn it," Dominic groused as he pulled out a wad of bills and slapped them into her waiting palm. "When am I going to learn not to make bets with you?"

"Hopefully never." She gave Rafe a conspiratorial wink.

He didn't know whether to laugh or be angry. "You knew all along that they would insist on tagging along and butting in?"

"Of course." She gave him a pat on the cheek. "You're brothers love you almost as much as I do. It's only natural they would want to protect you."

"Okay, if you vamps are really coming, then you have to agree to let me run things." She pinned them all with a glare.

Rafe smiled as he watched Dante and Kane give reluctant nods. It wouldn't be easy for either one of them to take orders from someone other than Eric.

"I'll agree, just don't call us vamps anymore," Dante bitched. "It makes me want to break out my black cape and style my hair with a widow's peak."

"Fine how about we go all PC and call you guys sun-challenged sanguinarians?" Dominic drawled. "Our coven is located in the Appalachian Mountains. I could normally drive straight through, but since daytime driving is out, we're going to have to hole up for part of the day. Plus, I want to take time to train Rafe some before we get there. It's best for all if he looks like he can handle magic."

Rafe felt his stomach clench at the thought of having to actually learn to use magic. Even though he cared deeply for Morgan and Dominic, he

wasn't so sure he could ever be comfortable with wielding spells and crap like they were. He had been hoping to be a silent partner in the triquetra as far as magic went. Sure, he knew he would eventually have to master the skill, but he was hoping that would happen later as opposed to sooner. Despite the fact that Morgan and Dominic seemed to believe in him, Rafe had serious doubts that he would ever be able to accomplish even the most basic of magic. After having disappointing so many others in the past, the last thing he wanted to do was the same thing with them.

"If he's going to be safe like you promised, then why would that be necessary?" Dante asked, his eyes narrowed in suspicion.

Rafe almost nodded his head in agreement with anything that would throw a monkey wrench in him learning magic.

"There is one person who isn't going to be exactly glad to see him." Dominic shot him a guilty look.

Rafe's heart rate jacked up. Morgan gasped and clutched at the warlock's arm, she was looking pretty guilty, too, and that made Rafe go from nervous to pissed.

"You know maybe isn't the time for this," she said nervously.

"I happen to think this is the perfect time so someone better start talking. What in the hell are

you trying to hide from me?" Rafe turned on them. He was sick and tired of being two steps behind.

"I wasn't trying to hide anything from you, I swear." Morgan shook her head as her green eyes grew wide. "Several times in the past I've tried to bring the subject up, but whenever I did, you got mad and walked away so I stopped trying."

"What subject is that?"

Morgan gave Dominic a questioning look and he nodded slightly, encouraging her to go on. Taking a deep breath, she blurted, "Your family."

Rafe felt his gut clench, somehow he knew he wasn't going to like what he was about to hear. The way she nervously toyed with a strand of her dark hair told him that. Never once had he seen her act this antsy as it took a lot to shake Morgan up. He could feel Dante and Kane come to stand behind him and he forgot how annoyed he was at them for insisting on coming along. Right now he could really use them. "What about my family?"

"When Olivia came back, she eventually took a mate, one of our kind," Dominic offered.

"So am I going to have to worry about a stepfather from hell?" Rafe gave a slight shrug. He could see how the male wouldn't eagerly accept Olivia's long-lost vampire son popping up.

"No, it's more than that," Dominic said grimly. "Twenty-five years ago she had a son with him.

You have a half-brother."

"Oh," Rafe replied numb from the bombshell. Of all the things he had expected, a new sib wasn't one of them.

"It gets worse." Dominic ran his hand through his hair before he exchanged another one of those glances with Morgan. "He hates vampires with a vengeance and he's not exactly excited about your homecoming."

"What's he got against Rafe?" Dante snapped as he put a protective hand on Rafe's shoulder.

"Olivia didn't exactly go willingly with your father. He took her from the coven and forced her to mate with him." A brief flash of grief and anger went over Dominic's face before he managed to compose himself.

"You mean he raped her. You don't need to candy coat it for me." Rafe looked away, the disgust for his father making him feel as if he himself were somehow tainted. No wonder his mother had left him. It was a wonder she could stomach seeing him now.

Chapter Twelve

They had been driving for over five hours and no one had said a damn word that entire time. Rafe looked through the passenger side window as everything he had learned clanged around in his head.

He had another brother, one who hated him even though they had never met. All his life, the only ones he ever had was Dante and Kane, the link between them unbreakable, even when they had been put in separate prison cells and kept apart from each other for years at a time. To have this open hostility with his other brother seemed so wrong. "What's his name?" he asked, still watching the trees whip by as the car sped through the night.

"Ethan," Dominic said. He was driving while Morgan sat in the back.

Rafe jumped when he felt her reach through and brush her fingers through his hair. She seemed to like doing that and he enjoyed it, too,

particularly now. "What's he like?" Rafe finally turned and looked over at Dominic. Passing headlights flashed briefly on his face, bringing out the hard lines on his jaw and cheekbones.

"He's stubborn like you," there was a wistful note in Morgan's voice.

"You like him?" Rafe felt more than a twinge of jealousy at her looking at anyone other than him and Dominic.

"Yes, but not in that way." She continued to stroke his hair.

He briefly closed his eyes to enjoy it.

"He's just been a good friend to me. We grew up together."

"I don't like him." Dominic's scowl agreed with his words. "He's a bigger asshole than even Dante."

"That bad, huh?" Rafe cocked a brow, barely repressing a shudder at the thought of another Dante.

"Dominic is holding a bit of a grudge against Ethan," Morgan chuckled and, for the first time since she had waylaid him with the bad news, she looked at ease.

"My first day at the coven, he blindsided me with a spell so hard that I didn't wake up for hours," Dominic protested, his eyes narrowing in anger.

"That's because you asked him where the rest

of the Backstreet Boys were." She leaned forward so her cheek was resting against the side of Rafe's headrest, their faces inches apart.

"Wait until you see him." Dominic looked at Rafe from the corner of his eyes, and it was easy to see that the warlock had no love lost for Ethan. "He's Mr. All American, complete with a tan and blond hair."

"In case you didn't notice, you have blond hair, too," Rafe drawled.

"Yes, but on me it looks so much better," Dominic teased, the corners of his mouth twitching.

"Are you mad at us?" Morgan asked, her green eyes looking up to search his face.

"No, I was the one who always shut you down whenever you tried to tell me about my magic side of the family. If I hadn't been so bullheaded, I would have known about this a long time ago."

Dominic pulled into a hotel and parked in front. "We'll crash here for the today."

"Already?" Morgan frowned. "We have at least a few more hours of dark before the sun comes up."

"I know, but we have to start training Rafe. As it is, we're racing against the clock and we could use every second we can get. I should of have been having you teach him chants and spells while we were on the road to begin with instead of

letting him brood."

"I don't brood." The protest came automatically after so many years of Dante accusing him of the same thing.

"Yes you do." Dominic reached over and ran his fingers along Rafe's bottom lip. "Don't worry about it though, I think you look cute when you do it."

What was a bigger insult? Being called cute or being accused of being an emo?

They all jumped when Dante pounded on the window. With a sigh, Rafe rolled it down to see what he wanted. While he would have liked to have ignored the idiot, he'd learned long ago that only encouraged him.

"I take it this is where we're crashing?" His concerned gaze searched Rafe's face, no doubt worried about how he was reacting to all the news he'd got tonight.

"Yes." Dominic nodded. "If you could go get the rooms for everyone, we're going to be over there for a while." He pointed to a nearby cluster of trees.

"Kinky, but who am I to judge?" Dante waggled his brows at them.

"Is sex all you ever think about?" Morgan smiled as she slowly shook her head.

"Yes," Rafe grunted.

"Not true, I happen to enjoy fine food and art.

Speaking of which, I better hurry before the pizza joint stops delivering. I want to eat while I'm watching Charm School on TV."

"By all means, go." Dominic waved his hands. "Just let me know if the blonde chick with all the tattoos gets eliminated this week."

"You got it." Giving them a double barrel point, Dante raced off.

"What exactly are we going to be doing?" Rafe asked, trying to stall for time.

"We're going to start small and have you pull a rabbit out of a hat." Dominic's face was straight and impassive.

"Really?"

"The fact that you even believed that shows how much work we have to do." Dominic shook his head in disgust before he got out.

"Ouch, I think I've been insulted." Rafe turned his head to Morgan.

She had a hint of amusement dancing in her eyes. "He's worried about you and that pisses him off. Dominic is so used to being alone, I think having us in his life scares him sometimes."

"I can take care of myself. I've been doing it for years," Rafe replied, slightly irritated. "He should have figured that out during that fight with the ferals." The soldier in him felt slightly stung that Dominic thought he needed a babysitter. In all of his life, he had only failed in one mission. Of

course, that failure had been a doozy, but it was still only one for Christ's sake. It's not like he was some fledgling who had just got his fangs.

"You're going to need more than your fists and battle skills for what we're going against." Her fingers trailed up his arm, leaving behind a silky heated path. "As much as you don't want to, you're going to have to face your magic half."

"What if I refuse to go along?" He turned his head further and their lips were only inches apart. Maybe if he kissed her, then they could both get distracted enough to forget about his stupid lesson.

"You don't want to deal with it because you think magic abandoned you as a child when your mother left."

With a disgruntled hiss, Rafe pulled back. "If I wanted a shrink, I would call Dr. Phil."

"Maybe you should, if anyone ever needed him, it's you and Dominic," she snapped, her cheeks flush with anger. There was a crackle in the air as some of her magic built up from her emotions. Lucky for him she didn't use any of it against him.

"If we're so goddamn annoying, then why do you put up with us?" Rafe shot back, a bit more than ticked himself.

"It must be the great sex because right now I can't think of anything else that would make me

want to be around your grouchy ass. I'm not your mother, I'm not the VRF, I'm not everyone who has shit on you, so don't take your life out on me."

Squeezing through the seats, she climbed over the driver's seat, got out and slammed the door behind her.

Rafe snarled back at the sound. He got out of the car, but refused to look over at her as he followed Dominic to the cluster of trees. It wasn't until they were under cover and nobody passing by could see them that Dominic stopped.

Rafe almost said how stupid he thought all this was, but one look at Morgan's stormy face stopped him. He may be pissed, but he wasn't stupid. If he pushed her too far, he had no doubt that she would zap him with something that made the jock itch spell seem like a cakewalk. Might as well play along, once they saw he was a hopeless cause, then they could move on. "Okay, what do you want me to do?" he asked Dominic.

"We're going to start with something easy, drawing up energy from the earth."

"It's usually the first skill our children master," Morgan added snidely.

Rafe decided that his earlier attitude might have earned him that one so he took it like a man.

"Here take this." Dominic handed Rafe a small glass ball.

Clean and light, it reminded him of a Christmas

ornament. "What am I supposed to do with it?" Rafe frowned down at it. He half-expected Morgan to suggest he shove it up his ass, but she kept silent.

"Have patience, Grasshopper." Dominic flashed a smile that made him almost seem boyish. "I shall reveal all things to you in good time."

"Promise?" Rafe gave a waggle of his brows that would have made Dante proud.

"You do good in your lesson and we can have all kinds of fun when we get back to our room," Dominic said.

"And if I don't?" Rafe juggled the ball back and forth between his hands.

"Then you have to watch while Morgan and I play and you can't do anything, not even stroke your own cock. You have to sit there while we have all the fun and you will not be allowed to get any relief."

Even though Dominic was talking about how to punish him, Rafe felt his cock stirring to life at the male's frank sexual words. "Well I guess I better listen really hard so I don't let you down."

"See that you don't because I have all kinds of things planned for you and Morgan. It's all I could think about while I was driving." Dominic's lids grew heavy with arousal. "It got so bad that at one point I almost pulled over and fucked you right there by the side the road for the whole world to

see.”

“I think that may have scarred Kane and Dante for life since they were following us.” Rafe was pleased to see a small grin play on Morgan lips. Despite all that they had been through, he’d always hated it when she was mad at him.

“It certainly would have made for interesting dinner table conversation,” Dominic agreed with a chuckle. “Now take the orb in the palm of your hand and close your eyes. Open your mind and ears and get in touch with our surroundings.”

Feeling a bit foolish, Rafe did as asked. For a second, the only sounds were crickets chirping, the occasional whoosh of a car driving by and the harsh rasping of his own breathing. Opening his vampire hearing more, he could pick up muffled voices coming from the hotel guests, the thumping of Dominic’s heart and the sweet rush of blood going through Morgan’s veins. It had been too long since he’d had a taste of her and now it wasn’t just his cock growing. He quickly clamped his lips shut so the others didn’t see and think he wasn’t concentrating on the lesson hard enough.

“What do you hear?” Dominic’s voice was low almost hypnotic.

“You and Morgan. The sound of life inside both of you.” Rafe smiled.

“No, you’re listening as a vampire. I need you to use your warlock senses.”

Rafe frowned, knowing he had somehow let Dominic down, but for the life of him, couldn't figure out what he wanted. How was he supposed to feel things like a warlock would? Before Dominic, he had never even met one, let alone spent enough time to ask him how he got in touch with his inner self.

"You can do it," Morgan encouraged in her soft caring way.

It was the gooey, warm Morgan that only he and Dominic got to see, not the hard candy shell that she presented to the rest of the world. It gave him enough courage to admit what he'd been holding close to his chest for a long time. "What if I can't do this?" he asked, never opening his eyes. "What if the vampire part of me is too strong?"

"You can do it," Morgan insisted firmly, like she didn't have a doubt about him. "I've seen it from you, felt it inside you. You just need to embrace it."

Rafe almost blurted, *Embrace what*, but kept his mouth shut and tried again. This time he heard a couple arguing in one of the rooms. She wanted to tie him up and spank him. He was refusing because last time they had done that he had a hell of a time explaining away the marks on his wrists to the wife back home. Interesting—yes. Helpful—no.

"Concentrate." Dominic came up behind Rafe

and spoke in his ear. "It's there, babe, all you have to do is let it in. I believe in you."

So Rafe tried again. This time he opened up his mind and for the first time accepted that he might be able to do this. The familiar rush of noises came to him, but he pushed them back and refused to listen to them.

"That's it," Dominic's voice encouraged. "Now feel the hum of the earth, the life that's in it all around us."

Rafe did and felt a jolt of power hit him. It slammed into the core of his body and almost took his breath away. For a second he almost pulled back, afraid that it would overwhelm him. Then he felt Dominic touch his shoulder and made himself hold onto the energy swirling inside him.

"That's it. You're doing it." Dominic sounded almost as excited as Rafe felt. "Now I want you to open your eyes and look at the orb, just make sure you don't let go of the magic inside you."

Slowly, Rafe cracked his lids. He was so shocked by what he saw he almost disobeyed Dominic and let go of both the power and the orb in his hand. It was no longer just a clear ball, now it was alive with color, pulsating and whirling inside of it. Green, then red, then blue, it kept changing hue.

Rafe's body hummed with power and he had never felt so alive. This was even better than that

time after he and Morgan had made love.

Dominic moved slowly around so they were facing each other and gave a slow nod of approval. "How do you feel?"

"Like I could take on the entire VRF and then have the dark witches for desert." The orb continued to pulse and it felt warm in his hand, as if it had a life of its own.

"Now you can see how some can get addicted to the power of witchcraft." Dominic's voice was sad, almost wistful.

Rafe glanced back up at him. The pulse throbbed at the warlock's jugular, tempting Rafe. Before he had always been drawn to the siren's call of flowing blood, but now he could see the glow of Dominic's life force as it surged through his tall, hard body. It was so faint it was almost invisible, but it made Rafe so hungry it may as well have been a neon sign.

The orb dropped to the ground and shattered, but he didn't even notice it because he'd already launched himself at the other male. Dominic brought up his arms to catch him, but Rafe's momentum still drove them both to the ground. They landed heavily, bringing up a poof of dust from the dirt—Rafe on top, straddling Dominic's hips.

The warlock didn't fight, quite the opposite. Tilting his head to the side, he presented himself

like a sacrifice.

A primal thrill surged through Rafe as he bared his fangs with a hiss. At that moment, Dominic was his to do with and to have power over such a strong male, made him feel like a god. "You belong to me," Rafe declared, although his words were so jumbled by his huge fangs he doubted Dominic understood what he was saying.

"Do it, please." Dominic cupped the back of Rafe's head to urge him on.

Rafe let out one last hiss before he struck, hard, fast and without regrets. As soon as his fangs sank into the sweet flesh of his triquetra member, Rafe's body shattered into an orgasm. In all his years of sex and feeding, he had never come that soon and he may have felt embarrassed had he not been so caught up in how good Dominic tasted.

Eager for more, Rafe bit in deeper, almost savage in his need. Dominic let out a moan and thrust his hips up. Damn, he was so hard that it was a wonder he hadn't come, too. Still keeping his fangs embedded, Rafe reached between them and unzipped the warlock's pants. His cock sprang free and Rafe grabbed at it, hungry to feel the hard, velvety flesh.

"That's it, stroke me," Dominic panted as he thrust up into Rafe's touch.

Rafe did as he asked as he swallowed another mouthful of blood. Dominic tasted as good as he'd

remembered—wild, untamed, with a hint of darkness. Rafe also felt the power of the warlock's magic as it surged between them. Thankfully that was one trick he had mastered. Opening up his barriers, Rafe let his magic pulse between them, too, so he was giving and taking.

"Oh fuck, that's it. Give it all to me," Dominic groaned as he fisted his hands into Rafe's hair and pulled. There was a soft gasp to their right that reminded him Morgan was still there. The smell of her arousal filled the air, mixing with the earthy scent of the outdoors. The knowledge that she was watching and obviously enjoying what she saw made him almost blind with desire.

Rafe snarled in pleasure as he bit even deeper. He knew he was taking things as far as they could go and that Dominic would be sporting a bonding bite to match Morgan's after this, but he could care less. If anything, he felt a surge of relief knowing that Dominic would be his now, too.

With a shudder, Dominic came, he cock pulsating as it spurted semen into Rafe's hand. Rafe continued to stroke, touch and caress him until every bit was milked from him. Only then did he seal the puncture wound with a sweep of his tongue and lift his head up so he could gaze down at male. "I'm sorry the bite I left on you isn't going to heal all the way." Rafe braced himself for Dominic's reaction, knowing the aversion magics

had to having vampires feed from them. "I got carried away and now everyone is going to know you're bonded to me."

"I'm proud to wear it." Dominic gave him a look that was so tender it made Rafe's stomach do a flip.

"I love you," Rafe confessed in a harsh whisper. "I know that I don't deserve to have one mate, let alone two, but I don't think I could ever live without you or Morgan."

"You won't ever have to, I promise. You will always have us by your side."

Rafe pressed a tender kiss on Dominic's lips and, for the first time, dared to believe what he said was true.

Chapter Thirteen

As Dominic approached the entrance to his adopted coven, he had to resist the urge to rub at the scar on his neck. It seemed to throb as if it knew both he and it would soon be under heavy scrutiny. Although he wasn't ashamed of it, quite the opposite in fact, he did know it would make Rafe's homecoming a bit rougher.

Morgan was silently walking by him, her hood obscuring her face so he couldn't tell if she was just as nervous as he was about facing everyone as part of a newly complete triquetra. The excitement over one forming was bad enough, but when you added the vampire son of Olivia to the mix, it was sure to be the talk of the decade.

He had left Rafe and the others behind at the road, wanting to test the waters a bit before he brought his new mate into the lion's den. Even though he assured Kane and Dante things would be perfectly safe, he may have fudged a bit on that. Okay, he fudged big time. The only ones who

knew about the find-Rafe mission was Olivia, Morgan and him.

While Olivia knew an alliance with the Drones was a necessity, she had yet to broach to topic with her followers. There was bound to be an uproar from the witches and warlocks about working side-by-side with one of their sworn enemies so she didn't want to open that can unless she was absolutely certain that the Drones were willing to play.

As they approached the mouth of the cave, two warlocks came out and challenged them. They were wearing the green and black leathers that all the warriors wore. The shirts had hoods, which they both had pulled up so it was impossible to tell who they were.

"Well, look who has come back from the land of the undead," one of them drawled as his head shifted over in Morgan's direction.

"Shove it and let us in, Caban," Dominic snapped. He would have known that asshole's voice anywhere.

"Besides your information is wrong," Morgan added, putting a hand on her hip. "Vampires are just as much alive as you and I."

"You should know," Caban sneered.

"Is that Alex with you?" Dominic asked as he pulled out a dagger and purposely rubbed his thumb along the edge. "You may want to have

him rein you in before you start something that I would be more than happy to finish."

"Yes, because you're kind so loves to stab and kill." Turning around and deliberately giving him his back, Alex shot over his shoulder, "Here, I know that's where you dark warlocks like to do it."

"As much as I would love to indulge you, I promised Morgan I wouldn't go after weak targets anymore. You know, kittens, puppies and pussies like you." With that last insult, Dominic pushed his way past the two warlocks. Morgan followed and he smiled when she heard her call them a name that would have made Dante blush it was so vulgar.

He had changed into his uniform right before they had left the hotel and it felt good to once again be in the adopted style of his coven. Even though all of them had failed to embrace him, Dominic had fully accepted his new home. He suspected Morgan had a lot to do with that.

Pulling up his hood, he turned to an attendant. "Tell Olivia we are back and were successful in our mission. We request she grant an immediate audience in the ceremonial hall."

Even though the coven dwelling just appeared to be caves from the outside, on the inside it resembled a fortress. Long hallways had been carved in the stone and led to dormitories,

training rooms, a kitchen and even a large opening for their children to run and play in. It struck Dominic how it wasn't that much different from the home the Drones had made for themselves in the warehouse in Detroit.

The ceremonial room was large and opulent. A heavy throne like chair was front and center, overlooking a marble floor that was all black save for a huge red pentagram in the center. Almost ten feet in diameter, it was the centerpiece for most of their ceremonies and rituals.

With great care, they skirted the symbol, rather than walking through it because to do so would be sacrilegious. Once they reached the front of the throne, they went down on one knee and bowed, even though it was presently empty.

Thankfully Olivia didn't keep them waiting long. Dominic heard the back door to the room open and the clacking of her heels against the marble. Still he did not look up. It was against all custom to address the leader of a coven unless she granted her permission.

As soon as her butt hit the red plush seat of the throne, she demanded, "Well, did you do it?"

"Yes, High Priestess, we have." Even though he raised his head, he still did not get up. Olivia was as beautiful as always, with golden hair that seemed to glow in the flickering candlelight. It was styled in an intricate weave of braids that

were twisted up around her head to form a crown of sorts. She was wearing a set of dark robes that brought out the brightness of her green eyes. Eyes that reminded him so much of Rafe.

"Then where is he? Where is my son?" She leaned forward in the throne, her usually perfectly schooled features alive with excitement and what may have been a bit of nervousness, too.

"He's with his brothers, just at a half mile or so up the road. We wanted to make sure he would still be welcome before we brought him in." Dominic steeled himself for a verbal attack since his words could be taken as disrespectful. He was relieved when she gifted him with a radiant smile.

"Of course he is welcome here. Don't you realize how many years I have prayed to the Goddess for this moment?"

"There is one thing you should know." Dominic thought it might be better to break the news of the triquetra to her before she met Rafe.

Before he could go any further, a loud crash made them all jump as the front double doors to the room were thrown open. It was Ethan and his group of warlock friends and they had Rafe and the rest of the vampires. Dominic growled when he noticed the heavy handcuffs on the wrists of Rafe and the others. Rafe's face was bloodied and already a bruise was forming on his right eye. The rest of them didn't look much better, there was a

scorch mark of Kane's chest, showing that he had been zapped by magic.

Olivia sprang to her feet, her eyes twin daggers of anger. "What is the meaning of this?" she demanded, her harsh voice echoing through the chamber.

"We found these vampires lurking." Ethan gave Dante a hard kick in the ass.

"We weren't lurking, you fucktard," Dante snarled as he stumbled forward a couple of steps. "If we had been trying to be sneaky snakes, you would have never known we had were around."

"Besides I was invited here," Rafe added as he cast Olivia a jaded look.

Dominic's stomach got tight when he saw the hurt and doubt lingering in his eyes. This was not the homecoming any of them had hoped for.

"Who would invite vampires here?" Ethan's gave a brittle chuckle of outrage.

"I did," Dominic called out. He was still in the kneeling position, having never got the order to rise from his high priestess. While he wanted nothing more than to go beat the hell out of Ethan, he held himself back. While violence and bloodshed had been an everyday occurrence in his childhood ritual room, here was different. As far as he could tell, no blood had ever touched these marble floors and he owed it to Olivia to respect that.

"I never thought that even you would be that bat shit crazy. Unless..." Ethan trailed off as his eyes narrowed, his gaze honing in on Dominic's neck. Uttering a curse, the warlock came over and roughly wrenched Dominic's head to the side. "Perfect, you let one of the bloodsuckers bite you. That's disgusting even for a dark bastard like you."

Dominic grit his teeth together so tight his jaw popped. The urge to strike back was so strong that he had to fight with every fiber of his body not to jump up and lash out. He could hear Morgan let out a sharp cry of distress and he reached out to grab her hand to comfort her. Her slender fingers felt cool to the touch and she was trembling. Although knowing their girl, it wasn't out of fear, but fury. Oh yeah, ol' Ethan better hope he never encountered her outside of this room any time soon or she would be handing him his ass in a pink wrapped gift bag.

"Here I thought Morgan was the only leech lover." Ethan raked her with a disgusted once over. "Does she have a bite, too? I know you've been fucking her so it would only make sense that you would drag her down."

"You touch her to find out and you pull back a stump," Dominic snarled.

Ethan laughed as he pulled Dominic's hair harder.

"Enough!" Olivia ordered, her body shaking with fury. "How dare you come into the sacred chamber and act this way, Ethan. You may be my son, but that does not mean you are not held to the same standards and rules as everyone else."

"Sorry, High Priestess." The smirk on Ethan's face looked anything but apologetic, but he had never had a very loving relationship with his mother.

Dominic didn't know what she had done to the warlock as a kid, maybe she had grounded him from his video games one too many times, but whatever the reason, he seemed to hold a real grudge against her. But then again, Dominic had never once seen Olivia lift a loving hand to her son. If anything, she treated him quite coldly, almost as if he were just another subject rather than her flesh and blood.

A roar filled the room right before Dominic caught a blur of movement out of the corner of his eye. Somehow Rafe had managed to break the handcuffs and he had tackled Ethan. Pinning the warlock down to the ground, Rafe bent down and hissed, his razor sharp fangs just inches from the male's face.

Any sane fool would have been terrified, but Ethan was the furthest thing from sane or smart. He laughed. Stupid moron was literally looking death in the face and he thought the whole thing

was funny.

"You ever touch Dominic again and I will rip off your legs and beat you to death with them," Rafe promised in a gravelly voice.

"So I take it you're Dominic's new boyfriend. I should have known since you look like his type." Ethan struggled to get out from under Rafe, but the vampire held tight.

"You were right." Rafe glanced over at Dominic. "He is a bigger asshole than Dante."

"This is getting ridiculous." Olivia stormed over to the pair and waved her hands at them. Rafe went flying one way, Ethan the other, so they both ended up on their asses, but several feet from each other. "Ethan, I want you to meet your brother, Rafe."

Ethan let out a humorless laugh and shook his head. "You have got to be fucking kidding me."

* * * *

"I am so, so sorry," Morgan said for the umpteenth time as she dabbed at a cut on Rafe's lip.

Trying hard not to wince in pain, he endured her treatment. "It's okay, you have nothing to be sorry for." Taking the cloth from her, he took over wiping up the blood. They were no longer in the huge witchy room as Dante had called it, but were

now in a smaller meeting room. At least that's what Rafe thought it was. It had a few computers off to the side and in the center was a long oval table surrounded by chairs. The only ones presently in there were his triquetra and the other vampires. Thankfully, Ethan and Olivia had yet to bless them with their presence and Rafe couldn't have been happier. He wasn't exactly getting the *All in the Family* vibe from them.

"I was an idiot for leaving you alone so close to the coven." Dominic was pacing, his anger evident in the way he kept running his hands through his hair in frustration. At the rate he was going, he would be bald soon.

"You had no way of knowing that Ethan and his prick patrol would jump us." Rafe was still more than a little ashamed that they had been taken down so easy by a group of magics. The ambush had been so fast that none of them had time to react.

"First chance I get, I'm kicking his ass," Toni declared. She was kneeling in front of Kane and looking at the mark left behind when he had been struck by the magic bolt.

"Take a number," Dante drawled.

Brenden snorted and nodded his head in agreement.

"I'm the one who should be to blame." Morgan looked at her hands, her bottom lip trembling. "I

knew that Olivia was cold, I've seen how she's treated Ethan all his life. I had just hoped that since she was actually looking for you that things would be different for you."

"Don't feel too bad." Rafe cupped her chin and made her look up at him. "I'm used to it by now. I've got you guys and my vampire brothers, that's all I need."

"As soon as this is over, we can leave and go back to your clan." She grabbed his hand and rubbed her cheek into his palm. "We won't force you to stay here."

"She's right." Dominic came and knelt down by her so he was facing Rafe. The love in the male's face was so raw it brought a lump to his throat. "I can teach you how to wield magic there just as good as I can here. All that matters is we get to stay together."

"I would like that," Rafe's voice was harsh with emotion.

"That is if Eric is willing to let another magic live amongst your clan." Dominic gave a rueful smile.

"I think we can convince him." Using his one free hand, Rafe caressed Dominic's face. "I love you two so much. I don't know how I could survive without you."

"And we couldn't survive without you." Morgan pressed a kiss to his hand.

Olivia came in the room, Ethan trailing her. And goodie, it appeared he was still hauling around his attitude. The look on his face was so sour that it seemed like he had been sucking the wrong end of a lemon.

"There was never any soothsayer was there?" Dominic asked as he stood up. When she didn't deny it, he let out a bitter laugh. "Perfect and here I thought I could actually trust you and all this time you were just using me. What's worse is you dragged Morgan in and fooled her, too."

"I did what I had to for the good of the coven," Olivia replied in clipped tones.

"Morgan is part of your coven," Dominic yelled back.

"What's going on?" Ethan asked as he shot confused looks at Dominic, then Olivia.

"He's talking about how our dear sweet mother was willing to throw Morgan into the fire without so much as a warning. She sent her on a fool's errand." Rafe got up so he could stand shoulder to shoulder with Dominic.

"It worked, you're here." Olivia raised one finely arched brow at him.

"See, the thing that had been bugging me all this time was, if you really wanted to reconnect with me, then why didn't you come to me when I was in prison?" Rafe shook his head in disgust, wondering how someone as heartless as her could

have been able to fool so many. "Then I realized it was because you didn't give a damn about me, you never did. It was because you needed me to be your little spokesboy so the Drones would join up with you."

"You can be all high and mighty if you want, but we both know your side needs us as much as we need you," she pointed out, her face the same cold mask. "It's only a matter of time before your VRF starts sending in the dark witches to slaughter your clans. We both know you can't fight them without magic."

"And we both know you can't fight the VRF without the enhanced strength and skills of vampires of your own side," Rafe shot back.

"We managed to catch you guys earlier without any problem," Ethan protested, but the earlier swagger in his voice was noticeably gone.

"You got lucky and you know it," Dante sneered. "Rafe broke through your handcuffs and attacked and it was only a matter of time before we did, too."

"How do we even know the VRF has joined up with the dark witches?" Kane asked. "It's not like you haven't lied to us about a hundred times already."

Pulling a file folder from her robes, she tossed them across the table. It flipped open, scattering pictures all over.

Rafe picked one up and cursed loudly. It was their father and the dark warlock from the fight. Only it wasn't a capture with his kidnapper he saw, no they looked like old buddies. Picking the pictures and leafing through them, the proof grew more damning. Dad and the warlock at a restaurant. Them walking down the street, talking. Sitting in a parked car. "All this proves is Dad has a BFF." Rafe tossed the pictures back down.

"I know you're half vampire, but don't be an idiot." Olivia pursed her lips together in disapproval. "We all know that he is high ranking in the VRF despite the shame your imprisonment and association with the rebel Drones. The only reason he would be meeting with a dark wizard is because they are now in an alliance together."

"What other proof do you have?" Dominic asked, all the earlier respect in his voice when he had addressed her was now absent.

"Last night the coven ten miles west from here was attacked. Not only was there traces of dark magic lingering, but several of the bodies had been drained. They had bite marks on them that only a vampire leaves." Olivia fingered her throat as she spoke, her eyes haunted.

"Did it ever occur to you that you could have come to me directly yourself instead of sending Morgan and Dominic?" Rafe asked, a lifetime's worth of rejection hitting him like a punch.

"Would you have come talked to me if I had?"

Probably not, but damned if he was going to admit that. Instead, he clamped his mouth together and looked to the side, not sure if he could stand looking at her another minute.

"You never cared about him did you?" Morgan stood and balled her hands into tight fists. "That huge song and dance you gave me about wanting to have him back in your life was one big act. Idiot that I was, I fell for it, too."

"Of course it was a lie. How could I ever love something that monster spawned on me?" Olivia spat, anger making her once beautiful features ugly and twisted. "Just look at him." She gestured at Rafe. "With those fangs and dark hair. How could I ever care about that? Why do you think I left him with his father? I was hoping he would do us both a favor and kill the halfling before he reached his first birthday."

"Mother, surely you don't mean that?" Ethan stammered. "He's your son."

"No, he was some...thing that was forced on me and I've resented him from his first breath."

"You say one more word and I so help me goddess, I will bitch slap you before I pull those stupid braids from your scalp and shove them down your throat." Morgan's eyes were bright with fury, her cheeks bright with color. "Rafe is more than you deserve. He's brave, honorable and

caring. Most of all, he's mine and I won't stand by and watch a shrew like you talk down to him when you're not even fit to lick his boots."

"How dare you," Olivia spat. "I am your high priestess."

"Not anymore." Morgan made a gesture in the air with her finger.

Rafe didn't know what it meant, but judging by the gasps in the air from the magics, it must have been big. "I renounce you," Morgan said. "You are no longer my priestess and this is no longer my coven."

"Don't be stupid, girl." Olivia curled her lip up in a sneer.

"I've always been fond of stupid myself," Dominic drawled as he made the same gesture. "Where Morgan and Rafe go, I go. So I renounce you, too, you coldhearted bitch."

"I'm really beginning to like those two," Dante whispered to Rafe.

Rafe was too overwhelmed with emotion to speak. While he should have been devastated by his mother's cruelty, instead he felt lighter than he had in years. Morgan and Dominic had just given up everything and all for him. If he lived a thousand years, he didn't know if he could ever repay the huge sacrifice they just made for him. "Let's go home." He grabbed their hands and led them out of the room, somewhat surprised when

nobody made a move to stop them. Ethan even moved to the side so they could get out the door.

Surrounded by his mates and the rest of his brothers, Rafe realized that he had never been alone. Even when he had been wasting away in that cell in prison, Dante and Kane had still loved him. Now he had Dominic and Morgan, too. They cared for the warlock, the vampire and all because they were both a part of him.

When the VRF and the dark witches came, they would face them together, too. It wouldn't be easy, but for the first time, Rafe felt real hope. Once they were outside, Rafe paused to kiss first Morgan and then Dominic.

"I'm sorry you had to hear all that," Dominic said, his eyes full of regret and sorrow.

"I'm not. It doesn't matter anymore. I've already got all I need, thanks to you and Morgan." Closing his eyes, he pressed his lips to Dominic's mouth again, breathing in deep so he could enjoy the alluring scent of Nightshade.

"Rafe! Wait up."

Turning back to the entrance, he was shocked to see Ethan running up to them. He had a bag slung over his shoulder and appeared to be out of breath.

"If you came to throw some last minute insults at Rafe, you better think again," Dante warned darkly. "I'm the only one that's allowed to pick on

him."

"No, I come in peace. I swear it." Ethan held his hands out in front of him in the traditional I-surrender pose. "I want to come with you."

"Why would you do that?" Dominic snorted. "As Olivia's second, you are so far up her ass that you haven't seen the sun since your teen years."

Ethan flushed, but didn't rise to the bait. "I can understand not wanting to deal with us after all the nasty Mom just laid on you, but our sides really do need each other. Let me go back to your clan leader and start negotiations with him."

"Why should we trust you after everything Olivia has done?" Kane shook his head slowly.

"Olivia may be a bitch, but she does care about the coven. In fact that's the only thing she gives a damn about," Ethan admitted, his voice bitter. "She was telling the truth about the threat of the VRF alliance and the danger to both races. Like it or not we need each other. I know she was harsh on you back there and said some really hateful things, but if it makes you feel better, that's nothing new as far as she concerned. Olivia doesn't give a damn about any of her kids and she's never made it a point to hide it."

Rafe bit back a groan. Against all his better judgment, he actually felt for the warlock. Just a few minutes in the company of their mother had left a rancid taste in his mouth. He couldn't

imagine having to endure her for years on end like Ethan had. No wonder he was offering himself up so eagerly. He was probably desperate to get away from her. Not only that, Rafe's earlier promise to Eric weighed heavily on him. If everything that Olivia did come about, then the Drones would need her coven. Better to deal with Ethan than her. "I'll take responsibility for him," he announced, hoping he wasn't making the biggest mistake of his life.

"Are you sure?" Kane raised a brow.

"No, but I've always been a sucker for puppies. Maybe we can whip some sense into him and make him a decent male."

Ethan opened his mouth like he was going to protest the insult, but seemed to have second thoughts because he clamped it shut and plastered on a fake smile.

"There is just one thing we have to clear up first," Kane said before he walked over and clocked Ethan on the jaw. The warlock went down, landing hard on his side. As Kane walked to the road, he yelled, "Now we're even for you zapping me."

"I guess I deserved that." Ethan rubbed his jaw.

Rafe went over and helped him to his feet. "Yeah, you did. Now let's get back home. They are going to love you there."

"Why does that sound so ominous?" Ethan

grumbled.

Rafe exchanged amused glances with Dominic and Morgan before they burst into laughter. Maybe it wasn't going to be so bad having Ethan for a brother after all. That was if they all lived long enough to see the next year.

Suddenly sober, Rafe exchanged worried glances with Kane and Dante. Just when they had finally found their mates, things couldn't have been bleaker. The VRF was still slaughtering Drone clans, they all still had huge bounties on their heads and now there was the new threat of the dark witches. Add to it the fact that their father was neck deep in this mess and it made the situation seem even more hopeless.

Rafe had the overwhelming urge to take his mates and go so deep into hiding that no one or nothing could ever find them. The only reason he didn't was because he knew there was no way he could ever abandon the Drone clan. Not only that, he knew no matter how hard they ran, the VRF would only track them down.

No, they would have to stand up and fight together or else they would never defeat these threats. Rafe only hoped they were strong enough to win.

About the Author

Stephani Hecht is a happily married mother of two. You can usually find her snuggled up to her laptop, creating her next book.