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DELICIOUSLY WICKED

Dimi of the Seven Moons

Jenika Snow

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EROTIC ROMANCE



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DELICIOUSLY WICKED

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DEDICATION

To everyone who supported me. Without you guys I wouldn't have gone through with my dream.

Thank you.

DELICIOUSLY WICKED

Dimi of the Seven Moons

JENIKA SNOW

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Chapter One

Squatting on all fours, Mena rummaged under her bed. “Kitty, have you seen my jeans?” Blindly reaching under her bed, she pulled stuff out and tossed it aside.

“Which ones are you talking about?” Kitty said through a mouthful of mashed-up banana.

Mena gave up looking under the bed and sat with her legs crossed on the floor. Staring at Kitty, she couldn’t help but feel a little bit envious of her best friend and roommate.

Kitty and Mena met in high school and since then had been inseparable. They became roommates in college and after graduating, nothing changed. Mena was more of the strong-willed, opinionated type. Kitty’s personality fell more towards the shy and passive side.

Kitty and Mena were total opposites when it came to looks as well. Kitty’s hair fell in wheat-colored waves down her back—her eyes the clearest color of blue. Along with her perfect girl next door looks, Kitty was also a glorified virgin.

Mena always thought herself more on the average side with her “voluptuous” body, as she liked to say, shoulder-length, stick-straight black hair and gray eyes.

Kitty, being so soft hearted, threw compliments out like they were going out of style. Whenever Mena felt down, Kitty would say, “Mena, babe, you are beautiful with killer curves, great tits, gorgeous black, silky hair, and beautiful gray eyes that make me think of stormy afternoons.”

Looking at Kitty, she got off the floor and headed over to her dresser. “You know, my favorite ones that make my thighs look killer and my ass awesome!”

“Mena, hun, you are hot shit, and you know any guy would be lucky to tap that ass!” Moving over to the bed, Kitty lay on her belly and finished eating her banana. “All of your jeans make you look good. I’m jealous of your curves!”

“Well tonight I have that date I told you about, and I want to look good.”

Tossing the banana peel in the trash, Kitty switched to her back and stared at the ceiling. “Oh, yeah, the blind date with *Dick*, right?” Looking over at Mena, Kitty gave her a wicked grin.

“Yeah, the blind date with *Dick*. So, do you know where they are?”

“No, I don’t, but is he picking you up here? Where are you guys eating?”

Bent over, Mena pulled her clothes out of her dresser. “I told him I would meet him at the restaurant. Just seems kind of weird having a blind date pick me up at the house, doesn’t it?” Mena looked over her shoulder and crinkled her nose.

“Yeah, I guess that is kind of weird, but as soon as the date’s over, call me!” Getting off the bed, Kitty headed to the door.

“Ah ha, I found them.” Mena looked at Kitty with a huge smile on her face.

“You’re crazy. Have fun tonight!”

* * * *

Pulling into her driveway with a frown on her face, Mena turned off her car and sat there staring off into space. Finally climbing out of her car, she shut the door and stared up into the starry night sky.

No more blind dates, Mena! Maybe you should just give up on men altogether!

She let out a sigh and pulled herself away from the car. She walked to the front door, dreading telling Kitty about the date. She knew Kitty would get a kick out of the whole thing and laugh her ass off.

Before she could even reach for the handle, Kitty flung the door open with a huge smile on her face. “Well, tell me, tell me! I have been waiting to hear the juiciness.”

“Damn, Kitty, let me get in the door first. You’re just going laugh anyway.” Mena moved past the smiling Kitty and headed into the kitchen.

“Oh man, this one of those dates where you have to come home and have a beer, isn’t it?” Kitty said, right on Mena’s heels.

Throwing her purse on the counter, Mena headed over to the fridge and pulled out a beer. “Well, where to begin, where to begin?” Opening her beer, Mena propped her hip on the counter and stared at Kitty. “Promise not to laugh?”

“It’s that bad, huh? Okay, I promise!”

Taking a swig of her beer, Mena smirked inwardly. “Okay, well I got there, and I saw him waiting outside like planned. He was cute, I guess kind of balding, but I didn’t really care. He had manners, held the door open for me, pulled the chair out for me, you know, really nice stuff.” Blowing out some breath, she continued, “So we ordered our food and everything, and all of the sudden he starts asking me about my dental history. I mean, I didn’t think too much about it since he is a dentist and all, but then after dinner he scooted his chair next to me and asked me to open my mouth so he could look at my teeth. Kit, I was so stunned I actually opened my mouth.” Glancing up at

Kitty, she saw her friend holding in her laughter. “Oh, go ahead and let it out.”

“Holy shit, that is so funny! That date tops all of my horrible ones put together, Mena!” Kitty threw her head back and laughed so hard she wiped away the tears under her eyes. “I’m sorry, Mena. I don’t mean to laugh at you. I just can’t believe there are actually people like that out there. Okay, I can believe it, but I can’t believe you got stuck with one.”

Going to the fridge, Kitty grabbed a beer, too, and popped the top on it. She took a long drink. “You’ll find that perfect guy for you, Mena, when the time’s right. You still have me.” Smiling at Mena, Kitty threw her arms around her friend in a big bear hug.

Sighing, Mena hugged Kitty back. “I guess it is kind of funny. It just sucks that I have to be the other party involved in the story.”

“You know, Mena, I have told you my fair share of horror dates, and if I recall correctly, you laughed your ass off at me.” Gulping down the rest of her beer, Kitty walked to the trash, threw it away, and leaned against the wall.

“Yeah, you’re right. You have told me some horrid ones.” Smiling to herself, she finished her beer and said her goodnights to Kitty. Heading toward the bathroom, she washed up before she turned in for the night.

Chapter Two

“Mena? Hey, Mena, wake up!”

Rolling onto her back, Mena slowly opened her eyes and waited for them to focus in the darkness. “Kitty? What’s wrong?” Mena said through a gravelly voice. Looking at her clock, she saw that it was the middle of the night.

Whispering, Kitty moved closer. “I don’t know. It’s probably nothing, but I thought I heard something in the backyard.”

“What do you mean, you thought you heard something? It’s nothing, probably an animal or something. Go back to bed!” She rolled back over and closed her eyes.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh. Turning back over and knitting her eyebrows over her eyes, Mena stared at Kitty. “What the hell? Is that what you heard?”

“Yeah, with a lot of clicking noises, too. Do you think someone is trying to break in? Should we call the police?” Kitty’s voice rose as she began to panic.

“No, calm down. It’s probably an animal or something.” Throwing the covers off, Mena padded over to the window, pulled the curtain aside slightly, and peered out. “I don’t see anything.”

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh. Turning wide eyes to Kitty, she grabbed her robe and headed for the door.

“Where are you going? Do not tell me you’re going outside!” Kitty looked at her, shocked.

“I have to find out what the hell is making that noise. What if it is some kids or something, and they’re destroying shit?”

“Okay, hold on, I’m coming with you.” Kitty ran to her room, grabbed her robe, and met Mena at the stairs. “Are you sure we shouldn’t just call the police?”

Looking at Kitty with an eyebrow raised, Mena saw that she not only grabbed her robe, but also an aluminum baseball bat. “Where did you get that thing? You don’t even like baseball.”

“Don’t look at me that way. You want to go out there unprotected? Anyway, I got it a while back. I did have my eye on a gun.” Bringing the bat up to her shoulder, she cocked her hip and stared at Mena. “So, should I call the police or what? It could be some crazed lunatic out there, you know.”

“And tell them what? That we hear a strange whooshing noise? They’ll laugh at us.” Rolling her eyes at Kitty, she headed down the stairs. “It’s probably just a stray or something. Don’t go thinking the worst. You’re just going to freak yourself out!”

Making their way quietly down the steps, they headed to the back of the house where the noise came from. Standing in front of the back door, Mena slowly peeled the corner of the curtain away from the door and peered out the glass. Staring wide-eyed, she let her mouth drop open. “Holy shit, what the hell is that?”

“What? Should I call the police? What is it?” Kitty pushed her out of the way. Kitty’s eyes went wide and she gasped. “It has to be a trick of the moonlight or something.” Unlocking the door, Kitty slowly opened it. Standing shoulder to shoulder, they both stared into their backyard. What greeted them on the other side of the door looked like something straight out of a movie.

“What is it, Kitty? It looks like something out of those sci-fi flicks.” The swirling circle, which seemed to be at least six feet in height, touched the ground. Inside of the circle hues of color ranged from blues to whites to greens. The colors swirled together in a clockwise motion. The same noises they had heard in the house seemed to be coming from the “thing” in front of them.

“What should we do, Mena?”

"I don't know. Maybe we're dreaming," Mena murmured. "Ow! That hurt!" She glared at her friend and absently rubbed her arm where she got pinched.

"I just wanted to see if this was a dream."

Stepping out the door, Mena made her way toward the circular whirlpool.

"Stop! We don't even know what the thing is."

Ignoring her, Mena circled the whirlpool until she stood in front of it again. "There isn't anything behind it. I could even see a blurry version of you staring at it!" she murmured as she moved to stand next to her friend.

Doing the same, Kitty walked the circumference of it and stared at Mena with her eyebrows drawn over her eyes. Mena slowly moved her hand toward it and saw Kitty's hand strike out and stop her. "Don't. We don't even know what it is, or what will happen if you do that."

"You're right. Give me the bat." She handed the bat over, watching as if in awe as Mena stuck it into the whirlpool. It made a noise that sounded like sucking and whooshing, a gross combination. They both stared ahead in astonishment. "Kitty, go see if it's coming out on the other end."

Walking behind it, she disappeared. "I can see you and part of the bat that you're holding onto, but there isn't anything back here." Walking back to Mena, she stared at her. Pulling the bat all the way out, they both examined it. "I can't see anything wrong with it. Can you?"

Attempting some humor, Kitty smiled and said, "No. It looks like a bat." The same whooshing and sucking noise greeted them when they threw the bat into the whirlpool. Stepping closer to the whirlpool, Mena looked over at Kitty. "I'm gonna try and go through it," Mena said nervously.

“Are you crazy? We don’t know what’s on the other side, and we sure as hell don’t even know what this thing is. It could melt you, for all we know,” Kitty said in disbelief.

“Melt me? It didn’t do anything to the bat, and it doesn’t look like it’s going anywhere, so I want to see what it can do.” Slowly walking up to the whirlpool-type thing, she stuck her index finger out and slowly put it into the whirlpool. Hearing the sucking noise, she snatched her hand back and looked at it. “It looks okay. It doesn’t hurt or anything.”

“Did it feel weird?” Kitty asked with wide eyes.

“It felt kind of like my hand fell asleep or something. My finger felt.” Mena stared at her finger. “Go get a rope or something. I’m going to try and go through.”

When she didn’t hear a response, she looked over. Kitty’s eyes were wide, fear pouring off of her.

“What?”

“No way, sticking your finger in it is one thing, but actually walking through that thing is totally different!”

“My finger is fine, and this thing is just too weird not to check out more. Anyway, if there are any problems that you see, or if you just feel uncomfortable, then pull me out.”

“I feel uncomfortable with the whole situation.”

They were both silent, each one waiting for some kind of response.

“I can’t talk you out of it, can I?”

“Probably not, but don’t worry. It’ll be fine... I hope.”

Mena took the offered rope and tied it tightly around her waist. She handed the loose end to Kitty, watching as she gripped it for dear life.

“Everything will be fine. I promise.” Taking a deep breath, she slowly walked toward the whirlpool. Stopping right before it, she turned around and gave a small smile.

“Mena, are you sure about this? This kind of seems like a really stupid idea.”

Mena smiled once again, not having a logical answer. Turning back around, she stepped through the whirlpool.

Chapter Three

She felt lightheaded, her whole body feeling as if she were floating. Darkness surrounded her, so thick it suffocated her. She tried to focus her eyes in the darkness, but it didn't make a difference. Blindly moving her hands to her waist, she felt for the rope. She breathed out a sigh of relief, thankful the rope was still tight around her waist. She didn't know what to expect, but the fear that it had slipped loose bounded into her brain.

Turning around, she took note that the whirlpool still swirled behind her. Turning in a circle, she took in her surroundings. It took some time for her eyes to fully adjust to the darkness.

This is too weird! Where the hell am I?

She looked into the sky, her brow knitting in confusion.

The first thing she noticed about the sky was the absence of stars. She turned in a small circle and her eyes slowly widened. "No, that can't be right."

Seven translucent and pale blue moons hung in the sky, lined up horizontally from biggest to smallest.

She started to hyperventilate and turned quickly to retreat back to the whirlpool. Losing her footing, she screamed as her arms swung in every direction, trying to grab something to stop her fall. Landing on her ass several feet away, she stared up at the whirlpool as the familiar sucking and whooshing noise began.

Coming from the whirlpool, a wide-eyed and heavy-breathing Kitty emerged. "Mena? Mena! Where the hell are you? I can't see a damn thing." Mena heard the panic in her voice.

“Kit, I’m fine. I just slipped and fell. It’s dark, and your eyes just haven’t adjusted yet. What the hell are you doing anyway? Why did you come through the whirlpool?”

“I felt the rope tug and got scared. I thought something happened to you. I wasn’t really thinking. I just jumped through the damn thing.”

Sitting up, she made her way over to Kitty. She reached towards Kitty, wrapping her arms around her and giving her a big hug. “I don’t know where we are, but it isn’t home! Look up into the sky and tell me what you see.”

Kitty pulled away and looked into the sky. Mena watched her as confusion settled in to horror.

“That can’t be right. My eyes must not have adjusted yet.”

“No, you’re seeing right. There are seven moons in the sky! Or, at least, I think that’s what they are. Now last time I checked, there weren’t seven moons when we looked into the sky back home.”

“You know there aren’t. Where the hell are we?”

“I don’t know, but I want to get out of here now!” They turned in unison, Mena taking hold of Kitty’s arm. They both sucked in air at what greeted them. Nothing. She turned her head towards Kitty, her mouth unable to close all the way.

“Where is it? Oh no, what’s going on here! Where is it? How are we going to get home?” Kitty spoke quickly, hysteria taking hold of her voice. She sat on the ground and pulled her knees to her chest. Kitty started to cry softly, breaking Mena’s heart. Mena sat next to Kitty and pulled her close.

“I know it’s hard, but you have to calm down so we can figure out what’s going on. Let’s look at this logically for a minute. The whirlpool thing must have been a portal of some sort, and—before you say anything—I know that sounds crazy.”

She stared at Kitty, pleased when she stopped crying and looked at her. Kitty wiped her eyes, threw her head back, and laughed. Mena

knew this wasn't a funny situation, but she could not help but give in to the hysteria.

Kitty said, "That's the craziest thing I've ever heard! Although, given our predicament, I would have to say you're probably right on the money. That, or we are dreaming."

"Maybe we'll wake up soon, and we can laugh about it in our own kitchen without seven moons above us." Mena stared up at the sky. "Although they are rather beautiful, don't you think?"

"I guess, in a crazy sort of way. Well, I'm giving you the leader position since you seem to be the one who is the calmest, and it was your dumb idea to go through the hell hole. So what do we do first?"

"I really don't know what to do. It's really too dark, so I say we sit here until the sun rises... if there is a sun that rises here, that is. What do you think?"

"That's as good an idea as any. I don't want to be walking around in the middle of the night anyway." Kitty shivered. "Who knows what the hell is out there. At least if the sun rises, we can see what we are dealing with." Kitty lay her head on Mena's shoulder, and they sat in silence and waited.

* * * *

Mena opened her eyes, her head feeling hazy and disoriented. *Uhhh, I feel like shit! I must have fallen asleep at a bad angle.* She rubbed her eyes and then stopped. Her eyes flew open. It all came crashing back to her. The portal... the darkness... the moons, no, scratch that, the *seven* moons. A soft snore sounded, and she turned her head. Kitty lay on her side, her face serene and calm.

Oh, thank goodness Kitty's all right!

"Kitty." She shook her lightly and spoke a little louder. "Kitty! Wake up!" Kitty rolled onto her back and rubbed her eyes. "What Mena? You know I am so not an early riser," she said with a big

yawn. She stopped mid yawn and flew up into a sitting position. “Oh shit. I can’t believe I actually fell asleep! Are you okay?”

“I’m fine. I can’t believe we fell asleep either, given the circumstances and the hard ground beneath us.” Mena stood and rubbed her back, a nasty kink settling in. She helped Kitty up, both of them looking at their surroundings. The both gasped at the same time. In front of them a jungle stretched for miles. Huge trees seemed to touch the sky, the branches so thick she wondered if even the light could penetrate. She turned around, and her breath stopped. Tugging on Kitty’s shoulder, she pointed ahead. “Look at this.”

Her hand still outstretched, she looked at Kitty. Kitty’s eyes went wide, and her mouth dropped open. Behind them, deep blue sand stretched for miles, barren of all life. Mena looked at the jungle again, then turned and looked at the desert. “What the hell, is all I have to say. What... the... hell?”

They both decided to go into the jungle, thinking they would rather take their chances with wild animals than get heat stroke and die of dehydration. Neither one of them wanted to walk on freaky-looking sand like that anyway. They realized that death could be their outcome going this route as well.

Sweat poured off of Mena in rivers, the oppressive jungle sucking the very breath out of her. They both had decided to take off their rubbers, but that didn’t even seem to help. The large trees, thick branches, and leaves above them helped to keep the sun off of them, but they also made their surroundings feel like a sauna. Mena couldn’t understand how it could be so humid when a dry desert sat behind them, but then again, nothing about this situation made much sense. They found a small clearing and sat down to take a breather. They both were breathing heavily from exertion, their bodies coated in sweat and aching from walking.

Mena said, “What are we going to do? I mean, we can’t walk forever until we find that portal thing again. We have no food and haven’t found any water yet, if there even is any. You know what the

freakiest thing about this is right now? Listen.” Kitty tilted her head to listen, and gave a small shrug. “Can you even hear anything? Animals? The wind? Anything?” She scrubbed her face with her hands and let out a long sigh of frustration.

“I don’t want to think much on how there seems to be no sounds. If I think about it too much, I will have another meltdown.” Mena saw the frustration reflected on Kitty’s face as she idly picked at her clothes. “At least we wore PJ’s that are appropriate for the weather.”

Mena had to laugh at her comment. She had to agree that she was glad she hadn’t worn long johns. “Just think, if I would have worn my long johns, my crotch would be sweating up a storm right now.” Looking at Kitty, she couldn’t help but laugh at her friend’s crinkled up nose.

“You’re nasty, Mena,” she said through a smile.

After getting back up and walking farther into the jungle, Mena stopped dead in her tracks and held her hand up for Kitty to be quiet. “Listen! Can you hear that? I think it’s water.” Taking Kitty’s arm, she walked quickly toward the sound.

Pushing bushes and branches aside, they found a glorious oasis. To the left of them, a small waterfall flowed into a small pond. A small pool of water was surrounded by trees, bushes, and flowers of every color. The waterfall climbed ten feet into the air, and they could feel the light mist coat their faces. “Oh, look how beautiful it is! Water, glorious water. Kitty, come on!” They made their way down to the pool of water. Stopping Kitty from chugging down a handful of water, Mena shook her head at her.

“What? I am dying of thirst, and I know you are, too!”

“Kitty, let me try the water first, just in case there is something wrong with it, okay?”

“Why do you have to play the hero, Mena? We’ll both try the water. That way, if it is poisonous, we both can die in this hell hole, and neither one of us is alone out here. Okay?” Mena nodded with

Kitty, and they both scooped up a handful of the water and drank it. They sat there, letting the time pass by, expecting the worst to happen.

“It tasted like water, and I feel okay. What about you, Kit?”

“I guess if it was poisonous, we would have felt something by now. Come on, drink more so that we can jump in and wash the sweat and dirt off. The water looks like heaven,” Kitty said, already going for more water.

After drinking their fill, they lay back staring at their surroundings. “You know, I’d say we’re handling this pretty damn well, given our circumstance. Maybe we’re in shock or something. This place seems normal in so many ways, but then there are those moons in the sky and that freaky blue sand.” Not getting a reply back, Mena turned her head to see Kitty by the edge of the water taking her clothing off. Watching her dive naked into the water, Mena couldn’t help but smile.

Resurfacing a few feet away, Kitty yelled, “Come on, the water feels fabulous!”

Chapter Four

Mena took her clothing off as well and made her way over to the edge. Enjoying the water, Mena didn't hear the branches snapping all around them or the heavy fall of footsteps.

"All right, come on, we need to walk some more and see if we can find that portal thing again," Mena said.

Mena made her way out of the water, Kitty following behind her. Mena walked over to where her clothing was and bent to gather it. A boot stepped into her line of vision—a very, very large boot. She backed up and kept her head low, her eyes still on the boots. Slowly moving her eyes up, her every sense was on high alert. The strong smell of leather engulfed her as she took in huge thighs the size of tree trunks. A bulge that made her swallow just from the sheer size of it seemed to take up her entire line of vision. Muscles rippled under a smooth, hairless chest, the skin a golden bronze. She swallowed, not from fear, but from what... excitement? Her heart pounded quickly, heat consuming her every being. Arousal washed through her as she continued to stare at the most glorious male body she had ever seen. She should have been embarrassed by her blatant staring, but no, all she could think about was the purely male body in front of her. As she continued to stare, she noted the massive size of his forearms and biceps. The veins roped their way under his skin, standing in stark contrast. When her eyes finally reached his face, she felt her mouth drop open in amazement.

He was close to seven feet tall and nearly three hundred pounds of solid, rippling muscle! Mena craned her neck back just to look into his face. He showed no emotion, his expression making him look

ruthless. His hair was short, cropped and the color of midnight. The color of his eyes boarded on eerie, an ice-blue that seemed to stare straight into her soul. A dark leather band wrapped around his forehead with strange tribal-like words written on the circumference.

Although she feared him on some level, she couldn't help the arousal that burned inside of her. He wasn't handsome in the classic sense, but the air of power and danger that surrounded him made him attractive in his own right. She brought her eyes back down and noted his chest sported tattoos in the same writing and tribal designs as the leather band around his forehead.

The tattoos began just above his nipples, working in a swirling pattern that disappeared over his shoulders. The same leather bands wrapped around both of his biceps, and tribal designs were tattooed around his forearms.

Who or what is this?

She snapped her eyes up to his face, and noted that his eyes roamed up and down her body. She suddenly remembered her nakedness, her nipples choosing that exact moment to bead into small pearls. She would have covered herself, but a mixture of fear and shock held her still. His eyes moved back to her face, startling her. Half his mouth went into a grin, one eyebrow rising as his eyes kept moving down to her breasts and back to her face.

Hearing a scream brought Mena back into reality. She stared in horror as twenty men of the same gargantuan proportions stepped out of the trees. Her eyes widened as another giant threw Kitty over his shoulder.

"Hey, you bastard, let her go!" Mena turned to run toward Kitty just as huge hands grabbed her by the waist and turned her around. Wide-eyed and frightened, Mena came face to face with the ice-blue-eyed man. The arousal she felt just moments ago vanished when she saw the smile on his lips. Fear seized her entire body, and even the act of breathing seeming difficult. She felt dizzy, uncoordinated, and all she wanted to do was make sure Kitty was okay. Her skin broke out in

a light sweat, her heart beating so fast and hard she felt as if it would break through her ribs. Everything around her spun, and she felt herself start to fall. Before she hit the hard ground, big arms caught her.

* * * *

Demariak looked down at the small woman he held in his arms. A truly beautiful creature. He couldn't keep his eyes off of her and kept catching himself skimming every curve and hollow of her body. Her lips were luscious, red, and slightly swollen. Small droplets of water coated the surface, and every part of him wanted to lower his head and lick them off. She had long beautiful hair, the dark strands feeling like silk against his chest.

He watched her from the trees, the image of her glorious body swimming beneath the water causing his cock to harden painfully. Her breasts skimmed the surface of the water, the sun catching the droplets that slid off of them. He gritted his teeth at his arousal—the strongest he had ever felt before—licking through him like a flame through wood. Even though her eyes were closed, he remembered all too well how the light gray brightened as she laughed. He stared at her feet and swept her body with his eyes, taking in the smoothness of her creamy skin. Her feet were small and delicate, the toenails painted a light pink. She had long smooth legs, their smoothness making him picture them wrapped around his waist. Taking his eyes higher, he noted that she hardly had any hair covering her mound, only a small trimmed strip hiding her cleft. Her curves went on for miles, the sight making his cock stand erect and feel tight in his leathers. Her breasts were large, smooth globes big enough to fill his hands. Both were tipped with dusky rose nipples with little droplets of water still clinging to them, begging for his mouth to lick them off.

His cock grew harder at the very sight of her. He led his men through the jungle of Timanta to his kingdom high in the Bolla-Ta

Mountains. He turned around and saw his second in command, Keirak, holding the other small female. He didn't miss how Keirak's eyes strayed to the blonde woman's breasts and trimmed mound. Demariak smiled and turned back around, making his way through the thick foliage. He looked down at the female in his arms and brought her body closer to his. Whispering in her ear, he couldn't help the words that spilled forth.

“ThallaThalla te vata kenna calla ka bakatha.”

My sweet, you don't know it yet, but you are already mine.

* * * *

Mena felt like she was in a dream. She tried to sift through the fog in her mind. Her eyes still closed, she could hear two deep, muffled male voices talking close by. She slowly opened her eyes, and blinked them a couple of times. The dimly lit room's candle glow left the edges in soft shadow. The ceiling was black and brightly polished. Intricate carvings covered the stone in swirling patterns. Looking around, she could hear deep male voices. More alert, she realized the voices came through a closed door.

She sat up and looked around the room. Black polished stone glistened above and below her, the same intricate swirling patterns covering every inch. She reached to her side, running her hands over the smooth marble-like stone. The carvings felt rough beneath her fingertips, every bump and indentation easily distinguishable. A white rug covered the floor, and no décor covered the walls. In each corner of the room sat a small white table. A thick pillar candle sat in the center of each table, a sweet smell coming from the burning wicks. Looking down she noticed she wasn't on a traditional bed. A stone slab acted as the bed's frame, and the mattress was filled with a fluffy substance. The sheets were red and felt like a combination of silk and velvet. The pillows had the same texture, and the same fluffy material filled their confines.

The door opened with a soft click, and a large shadow stood in the threshold.

“Malltaka ventamma boltasta.”

Her heart pounding fiercely in her chest, and she swallowed roughly. She lightly shook her head. “I don’t... I don’t know what you’re saying.” She really wished her voice didn’t sound so much like a whisper.

“I am sorry. I should have realized you do not speak my tongue. I go by Demariak. Do you know where you are?”

His accent was thick and heavy, his voice deep and purely male. He stepped through the door, the light seeping over his features. Her eyes widened as his features became clear, recognition making her heart start to pound wildly. Everything came rushing back to her. Swimming with Kitty... the man—the very large man... and then the darkness that overtook her.

Tilting her head back, she saw hard-set, ice-blue eyes, and a very masculine face with sharp angles.

Remembering how he looked when she first saw him seemed like a dream now that he stood so close and half naked again in front of her. He wore nothing but leather pants, the material covering his massive legs. He didn’t have the leather bands on, and his hair was disheveled, which seemed to soften his features slightly.

She gazed at him and couldn’t help but notice his impressively sculpted chest. The tattoos he sported on his chest and forearms had the same designs as the engravings all over the room.

His height and muscular body made her feel petite for once in her life. She couldn’t help the fact that her eyes traveled down to the very huge bulge that strained against his leather pants.

“Please, if you would cover yourself.” When he cleared his throat, Mena didn’t miss how his tone went grave and deep. His eyes flickered to her chest and back up to her face as she quickly looked down. She realized the sheet pooled at her waist, her breasts bare, her nipples stiff.

“Oh, I didn’t even realize.” Covering up with the sheet, she glanced at him and couldn’t help but swallow as she saw the bulge in his pants get bigger. Her body became hot, and she slowly brought her eyes up to his face. He greeted her with an ice-blue gaze that reflected lust. His breathing got shallower, his body tensed, and his fists kept clenching and unclenching.

She cleared her throat and brought her eyes down. She knew she should be scared of this man, but for some odd reason she didn’t feel the fear she had felt earlier when he first approached her.

He could have hurt you when you passed out, Mena, but he didn’t, and he hasn’t made any moves to do so now.

She looked back up at him. “My friend--her name is Kitty. Is she okay? Can I see her? Make sure she isn’t scared or hurt?” Holding her breath, she waited for his reply.

“Your fair-haired companion is fine and not hurt. My second in command, Keirak, took care of all of her needs, and she will meet with you in the gathering chamber when you are feeling up to it. I have to say, she is a feisty one. Gave Keirak some trouble, but that’s what he needs.”

He smiled and went to a door that was hidden in the wall and pushed it open. From what she could see by craning her neck around his wide shoulders, it seemed to be a closet. He walked in easily and pulled a red box off one of the shelves, bringing it to the bed and setting it in front of her. “I will be happy to answer any questions you have. Soon it will be the last meal, and I would be most pleased if you attended. Your companion, of course, has already agreed to join us for the last meal after we assured her you would be there unharmed. So please, it would honor me greatly and put your friend’s mind at ease if you would come.”

Staring up at him, she clutched the sheet closely to her naked body. “Well, first off, can you please tell me where I am?” she said, trying to sound calm and confident. She didn’t do as well as she

hoped. Demariak slowly—as if knowing she was still unsure of him—sat on the edge of the bed, his big body almost hanging off of it.

“You speak the language of English, so I can only assume you came from a portal of sorts. Is this to be true?” Speaking slowly he stared at her, and she already knew he knew the answer.

“Yes, Kitty and I went through that portal thing and ended up here... wherever *here* is.” Swallowing, she waited for his reply.

“How do I explain this?” he asked as if talking to himself. He looked at the ceiling and thought for a second. “Where you are at is called the *Dimi of the Seven Moons*. You passed through a portal, which led you here. You are still on Earth, so to speak, but have just passed into another dimension. The portal that you and your friend saw only happens once a month, and the location is unknown.”

She held her breath. *The portal that you and your friend saw only happens once a month, and the location is unknown*. Luckily, she was sitting, because, at that moment, she felt herself get lightheaded.

“Wait a second.” She closed her eyes, and held out a hand as if to stop him. “What do you mean once a month? I can’t sit around in this place that long!” Her voice rose in panic, and she willed herself to calm down. “Anyway, if that *portal* is unknown, how do you know it only comes once a month?” She thought this might be some sick joke, and waited for his answer with a dry mouth.

“We have the ability to predict... certain things. It is the same concept as seeing something in your sky at a certain time, such as a comet, but we just can’t know where it will be. It is strictly found on luck. Maybe one day that will change.”

She shook her head once again and felt like Alice down the rabbit hole. Oh, what must Kitty be going through? Mena didn’t think of herself as aggressive, but compared to Kitty, she was a bitch.

“This can’t be real,” she said, absently talking to herself. He wore the same stoic expression, his features hard and fierce.

“I am sorry you think this isn’t reality, but I assure you it is. You must have noticed you are not home, yes?” He waved a hand around

the room as if to emphasize his point and looked her square in the eye. He spoke to her as if she were a child. She straightened her shoulders and lifted her chin, taking offense at his tone.

“Yes, this sounds a little crazy and scary. If the roles were reversed, you know damn well you would think so, too. Yes, I realize I am not at home!” She waved her hand around the room in a mock gesture and stared back at him, “I appreciate all you have done for Kitty and me, but if it’s all the same, I would like to find another way home if that damn portal won’t show itself for a whole fucking month!” She knew she should probably watch her language since pissing off the giant sitting in front of her probably wasn’t the wisest move. Fuck it. She let her anger take control. Feeling her ire rise at the look of amusement on his face, her body grew warm with irritation.

She watched as he moved fluidly off the bed like an animal stalking through the jungle. He walked over toward the hidden door, stopping and turning back to face her.

“I will just be outside of the door, waiting to accompany you to the gathering chamber if you choose to attend. I will remind you your friend will expect you there.” He left and lightly shut the door.

Mena sat in silence, her gaze trained on the closed door, her irritation rising with each breath she took.

Chapter Five

Looking down at herself, Mena couldn't believe Demariak actually expected her to wear the black, sheer, gauzy dress. It dipped low in the front with only miniscule straps at the shoulders. The dress fell to her ankles, which would have been great if the thing wasn't transparent.

Who the hell wears something like this out in front of people?

Picking at the fabric with her hand, she agreed it was a beautiful dress. That was, if she were planning on seducing someone. He actually expected her to eat a meal in front of people with this thing on? The very thought sent a shiver down her spine. The fabric clung to her full breasts, the friction of the fabric against her skin making her nipples impossibly hard and sensitive. The dress clung to every curve and showcased her sex for all to see. Shaking her head, she went to the door and opened it, making sure that only her face and neck showed.

She saw Demariak in the corner talking with a man who looked like the total opposite of him. The stranger's hair was short, a little longer than Demariak's, giving it a shaggy, just-got-out-of-bed appearance. The color bordered on white, the blond locks so light. Under the lighting she saw streaks of gold running through it. He stood just a few inches shorter than Demariak but was still impressively built. She couldn't really see his face but knew he probably wore the same ruthlessly intense look as Demariak. Clearing her throat, she waited for Demariak to look at her.

Turning his head, he stopped talking and walked toward her. "What is it you need, *thalla*?"

“Um, well, you see, the thing you gave me to wear is, well, um... transparent. You don’t actually expect me to wear this, do you?” Her face became hot with embarrassment, and she didn’t miss the smirk that Demariak quickly hid.

“You are in the *ZorZack* colony now, and I know you are not accustomed to our ways, but this is what our females wear when they’re not nude.” She saw him hide a smile and grew frustrated. She gripped the door, shock resonating throughout her whole body.

She spoke through her teeth, not hiding the anger that showed itself. “I can’t go out and eat with people wearing this thing. I don’t even know you or the people that will be there. Where are the clothes I had with me?”

“We couldn’t gather your clothing because the moons were to rise soon, and it can be unsafe out in the open during that time. I didn’t know you would faint, so I worried more about getting you and Kitty to safety before the moons rose. I assure you that what I saw should not make you feel uncomfortable, Thalla.”

“What do you mean *unsafe*?”

“There are creatures that only come out when the moons rise, creatures that are more dangerous than you can even imagine.”

She stared at him, wanting to know more but hesitant to ask. In the end, though, her curiosity got the better of her. “What kind of creatures?”

He watched her, his body half shrouded in the shadows. “Creatures that tear you to pieces with knife-like teeth. There are creatures that only drink blood and then leave the bodies to rot on the ground. Predators that only have to touch you for their poison to get into your body. Believe me when I say you don’t want to be out there when the moons are high.”

She could only stare at him in shock. The creatures he described were something out of a nightmare. She couldn’t believe creatures like the ones he described really existed, and just beyond the enclosure she was in. “Really?” She knew how stupid the comment

sounded, but it automatically came out. She didn't know how else to respond.

He nodded, his face serious as he watched her. She shook her head, wanting to get the sudden, horrible images of those creatures out of her mind.

"It would be a great disrespect for you not to follow our customs while you are here."

She was thankful for the change of subject. "Okay, well, I don't know if I want to know all about what happens when the moons come up since Kitty and I slept outside last night, but maybe later you can explain a little more to me." She said it more as a statement than a question.

"Anything that you may wish to know you have only to ask." Trapping her gaze, his gravely, deep voice did something to make her nipples tingle and her pussy start to weep.

Oh, how crazy am I? Get yourself together, Mena. Now is not the time or place to be getting all hot and bothered. Something must have happened to me when I went through that damned portal.

She closed her eyes and shook her head. She knew nothing changed her when she went through the portal. She would have to be blind not to know that this man oozed sex appeal, making the very junction between her legs become wet with wanting to be filled.

Looking back up at him, Mena didn't want to seem disrespectful to the man who claimed he brought Kitty and her to safety.

For now it might do me well to play nice until Kitty and I can find another way home. This man and his people may be friends, but until I know for sure, I better play it safe.

She threw her inhibitions aside and opened the door to reveal herself to Demariak.

Mena walked down a long hallway, Demariak in front of her, his body tense. After basically flashing herself to him, she got a little self conscious when he hadn't said anything. She looked down at herself once more, running her hands over the smooth material.

Come on, Mena, what are you hoping for? Do you really want him to throw you over his shoulder and do deliciously wicked things to you?

Getting vivid pictures of that act in her head, she clenched her legs together as best she could. She could feel her clit throb with the beat of her heart and her juices start to coat her pussy lips. Veering off to the left, they entered a large room with white stone floors and white polished stone walls.

He led her through a small, quiet hallway. She wasn't even hungry, but she agreed to all of this because he told her Kitty would be there. She couldn't even imagine how Kitty was holding up. She picked at the dress, a *stonna* he called it.

The dress looked even more ridiculous on her than she could have imagined. She admitted, though, it did showcase her assets perfectly. He told her all the females wore this when not nude, and that gave her a little bit of courage. She at least wouldn't be too noticeable in it... she hoped.

"Are we close?"

She felt like they walked for miles, every turn looking like the last. He turned back, his eyes roaming over her body as he smiled and nodded. She shivered, arousal coursing through her body again. How could one look from him cause her to become so sensitive? So aroused?

* * * *

Walking into a large dining room, surprise filled Mena at what she saw. The room itself was fairly large, many of the seats around the table enormous. The stone walls and flooring had the same patterns carved into them as every other wall. The colors seemed to vary in each room, this one combining red and black.

The only lighting that illuminated the room came from candles scattered sporadically. An enormous chandelier made up of some type

of cloudy glass hung in the center the room. The banquet-sized table sat in the center of the room, bare except for dishes and goblets. The top of it had a giant circle carved into it with the familiar writing and tribal designs inside the circle. Several thick stone chairs sat on either side of the table, many of them filled with fearsome looking men. Many of the men sported bare chests, showcasing their perfect physiques. Three chairs at the head of the table sat empty.

Demariak lightly placed his hand on the small of Mena's back and led her to the foot of the table. As soon as they reached the end of the table, all of the men stood at once, turned toward them, and bowed their heads. Getting nervous about her nearly nude appearance among so many large and virile men, she quickly flung one arm across her breasts and the other hand to cover her mound.

Feeling the warmth of Demariak's hand on her back, Mena felt her arousal start to grow again. His hand nearly covered her whole lower back. She didn't know what to expect. She looked back and forth between the men and Demariak. They all wore leather pants ranging in color from creamy white to pitch black.

"Mena, these are my warriors."

"Your warriors?" She knew Demariak held himself in an air of authority, but he called them *his* warriors, and that implied he lead them. It wasn't hard to believe since Demariak's presence screamed command and leadership.

"Yes, these are some of my warriors from the first line. The rest of them have been sent to a neighboring village and aren't expected back for some time. I am the leader of the *ZorZack* tribe, as was my father, grandfather, and so on and so forth."

Swallowing roughly, Mena nodded and stared at the men Demariak introduced. Going down the line, he first introduced a large, fearsome-looking man with black hair shaved close to his skull. His eyes were intense and dark, the midnight orbs showing no emotion. Demariak called him Draydon. Mena shook herself at the chill that went down her spine, the dead look he gave her making goose bumps

rise over her flesh. All the men had a certain air about them, a power that made one fear them. Something seemed off about Draydon. He expelled a stronger aura of danger and menace that coated every part of him.

The next man's hair brushed his shoulders. He tied it at the nape of his neck, the sandy colored strands pulling away from his square features. He called him Icezak. She instantly felt the uneasiness that she got from Draydon wash away. Icezak's eyes were the color of sapphires, and she felt a calmness with him. She pictured him as the gentle one of the bunch. A friendly smile played across his lips. She didn't doubt how powerful he was, but something about him put her at ease.

Turning to the other side of the table he introduced her to "the twins". He called them Merak and Adriak, both almost identical in appearance except for their unique hair. Both their hair fell to their shoulders, but Merak's was a deep bronze with blond highlights, and Adriak's a sandy blond with bronze highlights. Both had eyes the color of burnt amber.

"Shortly Keirak will be escorting Kitty to the gathering chamber." Hearing the deep rumble of Demariak's voice, Mena turned her head his way. Hearing what he said, but not quite registering it, she kept thinking about how not a single one of the men had said one word to her.

She looked at Demariak to question him about it when she heard Kitty's familiar voice yelling down the hall. Turning toward the open doorway, Mena hid a smile at what she saw. Kitty was being dragged by the enormous man Mena had seen Demariak speaking with earlier, whom she took to be Keirak. Now that he wasn't turned at an angle, Mena's eyes widened when she noted that his eye color rivaled that of a fresh lime. The closer he got, she noted a black ring circled the outside of the iris.

"Get your fucking meaty hands off me, you barbarian! I told you I would go wherever you took me without a fight if Mena would be

there.” Mena smiled as she saw Kitty wearing the same gauzy-looking dress as she wore. Kitty twisted out of his grip and turned around with her hands on her hips. Never having seen this side of her before, Mena watched Kitty with her mouth going slightly slack.

I guess in any circumstance anyone can snap.

“Don’t you have anything to say? You have been by my side the whole day and haven’t said one damn word to me!”

The man stared at Kitty while his fists clenched and his jaw worked. He turned toward Demariak, his eyes doing a slow sweep of Kitty’s barely-hidden body. In a deep, low voice, he spoke directly to Demariak. “Thannoja vankclack benna ta, balletka te manolla.”

Mena saw Demariak smile, her curiosity piquing as to what had been said.

“Kitty!” Rushing over to her, she threw her arms around Kitty, crushing her in a bear hug.

“Are you okay? That barbarian over there wouldn’t speak to me when I would ask about you.” Tilting her head toward Keirak, Kitty didn’t even look over to acknowledge him. “Look at this thing he brought me to wear! I look like I should be on the freaking street corner waiting to get fucked! I yelled at him to bring me my clothes, but he just looked at me and shoved the damn thing toward me more. I put it on thinking this was the only way they would let me see you. Anyway, I’m certainly not walking around this place naked, so I guess this will have to do.”

Looking down at herself, Mena felt the beginning of actual amusement at their predicament. “Well, at least we can look like sluts together,” she said, with a smile in her voice. After making sure they were both unharmed, they went to their seats. Demariak gestured for Mena to sit next to him at the head of the table and for Kitty to sit next to her. Keirak then sat at the end, diagonal to Kitty, which made Kitty look at him, turning back with a scowl on her face. After they sat down, all of the men talked freely among themselves in their language. Feeling intrigued watching them speak with themselves,

Mena didn't notice the women who stepped through the doorway, carrying huge trays.

Chapter Six

“What...the...?” Looking in front of her, Mena’s eyes widened. Her mouth going slack, she watched as ten *naked* women walked into the room with platters and trays overflowing with strange food. Even though Demariak had told her the females of his tribe went naked most of the time, shock still went through her at the sight. The women made their way around the room with their small or large-sized breasts bouncing along. As her eyes drifted south, she noted that all of the women were completely shaved. The women came in all shapes and sizes, all equally beautiful in their own exotic way. Their hair must have been long because every one of them swept it up in tasteful knots on their heads with pieces coming down and framing their faces.

A petite but large-breasted redhead came up to the man called Icezak. With her head down, she spoke softly to him in their language. Mena watched as Icezak caressed one of her breasts, nodding and speaking softly to her. The redhead’s breathing picked up, and her eyes slowly drifted closed. Icezak took hold of both of her breasts, gave a good squeeze, and brought her to sit facing him on his leather-clad lap, which, of course, made her legs spread apart.

She felt weird for watching, but, unable to take her eyes off the scene in front of her, she stared as Icezak kept a constant squeeze on both breasts. He then licked a path up her neck toward her mouth where he took possession of it with extreme force.

Clearly the woman was enjoying herself if the little moans and gasps were anything to go by. Mena looked over at Kitty and saw that she, too, watched the scene but with little interest.

“Lord, Kitty, you don’t look the least bit surprised about this,” Mena said in a hushed tone as she stared at Kitty.

Facing Mena, Kitty shrugged her shoulders and started picking out food from the many platters. “Those naked chicks have been walking all day. I guess I’m used to it.” Shrugging her shoulders again, she nibbled on the food in front of her. Mena could not believe the turnaround Kitty seemed to make since they had fallen down the “rabbit hole”.

What happened to the soft spoken, shy Kit I know?

She turned back to the scene that became more explicit by the second.

Having moved from the woman's mouth, Icezak brought his mouth to her breasts and popped a stiff nipple into his mouth, sucking it, making it get impossibly longer. He slid one of his hands between the woman's legs. Mena craned her neck just to get a peek. Feeling herself blush, she looked around to make sure no one saw her acting like a voyeur. After several moments of his fingers delving, no doubt, in the woman's pussy, she got on her knees and slipped under the table. Sitting up straighter, Mena tried not to let her curiosity about what was going on under there get the best of her.

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Demariak watched as Mena saw the naked females bring in the trays of food and didn’t miss how her eyes widened as they went around the room. Looking over at her, he didn’t miss the curiosity in her face at what Kenna did to Icezak under the table. If she only knew what happened when the meal actually finished. Inhaling slowly, he looked over at Mena again and did a slow sweep of her gauze-covered body.

Her nipples stood erect, and it surprised him that they hadn’t cut through the fabric. Her breathing had gone shallower, her tongue running over her lips. He could smell her arousal, the sweet honey

that flowed out of her plump pussy lips. What he wouldn't give to throw her on his bed, spread her legs, and suck on her juicy pussy. He would then take her swollen clit between his lips and suck it until she screamed his name, her honey sliding down his throat. He cleared his throat and glanced at her with heavy-lidded eyes, his cock giving a mighty jerk through his pants.

Oh, my sweet, soon you'll be mine.

* * * *

Not wanting to seem too obvious, but having her curiosity nag at her, Mena slowly pulled up the bottom of the tablecloth and watched in awe at the display before her. Her eyes slowly widened as she saw the redheaded woman on her knees with her hands placed on Icezak's big, muscular thighs.

The redhead pulled his pants down and threw them out of the way. She encased his huge cock in her mouth and worked it like it was dinner and she hadn't eaten anything in forever. She watched as the redhead slowly pulled the cock out of her mouth to take hold of his balls and gently knead them. She ever so slowly stuck her tongue out and licked the spit-glistened head and then took the whole length into her mouth again, bobbing up and down while gripping the base of his cock with her hand.

Feeling her face get hot and her labia become moist, Mena straightened back up in her seat and was surprised to see Demariak staring at her. His hands tightly held on to the edge of the table, and he slowly inhaled. Leaning close to her ear, he whispered to her as he brought his hand down on her knee, "Do you realize, *thalla*, that I can smell the sweet moisture that is pooling between your legs right now?"

Gasping, she pulled away, and looked him in the eyes.

"Does it turn you on to watch Kenna sucking Icezak's cock? Do you wish you were the one on your knees taking it in your mouth?"

As he slowly rubbed his hand up and down her thigh, Mena clenched her legs together to stop the wetness from slipping out and running down her leg. Sure, the act she just saw turned her on, but what really got her worked up was the deep, almost growl of Demariak's voice and the sexual things he said in her ear. Pulling her leg away from his hand, she cleared her throat.

"I don't know what you mean about *smelling* me, but I assure you that type of behavior does not... make me excited."

Not even commenting back to her, he gave her that oh-so-sexy half smirk and righted himself in the chair. She watched as a curvy brunette with apple-sized breasts and pierced nipples set a large platter of strange fruit next to her. The items on the tray were different but appeared similar to the fruit she knew back home. She reached over to the tray and grabbed what looked like bright blue raspberries. She brought them to her nose and inhaled deeply before popping a few in her mouth. She closed her eyes, moaned inaudibly, and savored the taste that exploded in her mouth. The fruit tasted like a combination of strawberry and blueberry, a sweet concoction that tantalized her taste buds. Grabbing another handful of the berries, she popped them in her mouth and looked over at Kitty to see her friend staring at Keirak. She noticed Kitty doing that a lot tonight, whether she realized it or not. She offered some berries to Kitty, trying to get her attention off of Keirak. Kitty waved her hand away, not even looking at Mena as she moved the food around on her plate. She would have offered Kitty some encouragement or sympathy or something to cheer her up, but what should she say? They were both stuck here, and until they could find a way out, they might as well try to deal with it.

She reached over to grab some more berries when a large, roughened hand landed on her arm. Scrunching her face together, she turned toward Demariak, eyed his big hand on her arm, and then looked him dead in the eye.

“What the hell do you think you’re doing? I am starving!” She lifted up her chin a notch, her hunger making her courageous. He leaned in close to her again, his warm breath tickling her neck right below her ear. Shivering at the desire that swamped her from the simple act, she turned her head slightly so they were almost nose to nose.

“*Thalla*, as much as I would like for you to eat a whole platter of the *deyada* berries, I feel it would be cruel of me not to warn you first.” His deep voice shot straight to where she wanted him the most, making her clit tingle with awareness. Confusion assaulted her at his comment.

“What do you mean, warn me? Am I not supposed to eat those? Will I get sick?” Looking at the berries, she turned toward Kitty. Before she could warn her, Demariak’s warm palm landed on her upper thigh, stopping her.

“I don’t mean to frighten you, *thalla*. The berries will not harm you. It’s just that those particular berries are saved for after the last meal because of their... side effects.” He slowly rubbed circles on her thigh, as he spoke the words softly.

* * * *

Demariak watched as Mena ate berry after berry. His cock grew hard as her ripe red lips sucked them in, her tongue licking the juice off of her mouth. He knew the *deyada* berries would kick in shortly, leaving Mena desperately wanting sexual gratification. The berries were used as the *dessert* when the warriors’ hunger had been sated, but when another kind of *hunger* presented itself. How would Mena react to the knowledge that after the last meal of the evening the gathering chamber broke out into a large orgy of sweat-soaked bodies rubbing on each other?

As he tried to explain more, she stopped him. He didn’t want her to be unaware, but if she refused to hear what he had to say then he

would sit back and enjoy the show. The *deyada* berries would take effect very soon. He leaned back in his seat, a smile covering his lips as he watched Mena eat more of the berries. What she didn't know was that the *deyada* berries were a natural aphrodisiac, one so potent it wouldn't take very long for them to kick in.

Chapter Seven

She finished up the meal, sat back and watched everyone around her. Her belly grew warm and tingly, and she idly rubbed it as she sat up straighter. Clearing her throat, she grabbed something to drink to see if that might cool her down. Inside of her a fire lit, her very fingertips tingling with warmth.

She looked over at Demariak, a smile covering his lips. She scowled at him, not thinking any of this was funny. She looked down at the food, wondering what was in it. Maybe she should have listened to Demariak? She clenched her teeth, her nipples puckering up and rubbing against the fabric of her dress. She rubbed her legs together, trying desperately to ease the ache between her legs. Every move of her legs caused her pussy lips to slide together, pinching her clit between them.

“How do you feel, *thalla*?” Demariak threw his big muscled arm over the back of her chair, making it seem like he loomed over her. Clearing her throat, she did her best not to make it obvious that his voice did something sexual to her.

“Actually, I think I’m ready to go to bed now. I’m pretty tired.” She breathed in deeply and tried to look like she actually meant what she just said.

Yeah right, tired my ass! I need to touch myself before I explode.

She did a quick sweep up Demariak’s body, suppressing a shiver of delight at the obvious erection pressing against his pants. The heat in her belly grew and moved throughout her body, making her nipples grow sensitive. Her core swelled with need, and the juices from her pussy lips trickled down her leg.

She needed to be alone fast and felt like a fool for the insane feelings going on inside of her. She didn't know what else to do, so she turned toward Kitty, and quickly told her that she would be back later.

She rushed down the hall, all but running to her room. She momentarily stopped to catch her breath, braced herself against the smooth wall and clenched her thighs together. The sweet pressure only seemed to inflame her desire, making her softly moan to herself. A hand brushed against the nape of her neck. Her head rose as she tightened her jaw at how exquisite the simple touch felt.

"Are you okay, *thalla*? You ran out of there so quickly, I thought you might have been ill." His voice was rough against her ear. He slowly pressed his leather-covered erection lightly against her back, eliciting a moan from her. She suppressed a shiver of delight when he gently thrust against her. His erection was huge against her back, every curve and vein prominent even through the material.

She knew she shouldn't be engaging Demariak in anything sexual, but her need was so intense it was hard to push him away.

Oh my, you're acting like a crazed schoolgirl right now! You just met him. You're in a strange world, and all you can think about is having sex?

A part of her brain knew that what was happening shouldn't, but the other side of her brain screamed for sexual release.

The material covering her breasts felt far too rough and made her stiff nipples tingle. She could feel her vagina swell impossibly more, and the juices now ran freely down her thighs, making her lips rub deliciously together.

His hot breath tickled the nape of her neck, and she laid her head back on his massive, hard chest and felt his large hand move to cover her belly.

"Oh, *thalla*, what you do to me." He growled as he dragged his hand up her belly and over her rib cage to cup one breast in his hand. Bringing his other hand in front as well, he brought it up to the other

breast and tweaked both of her hard nipples. She moaned from his touch.

“It was those damn berries, wasn’t it? Why didn’t you tell me not to eat them?” The statement came out on a moan. She closed her eyes at the pure pleasure his wicked fingers caused.

“*Thalla*, I tried to tell you, but you didn’t want to hear anymore.” Demariak slowly licked from the curve of her neck to her ear, where he swirled his tongue around and then gently bit down. She gasped and brought her hands up to cover his. She urged him to squeeze harder, and breathed in deeply as he continued to take both of her nipples between his thumbs and forefingers and tweak them.

She gasped in delight as he scooped her up in his arms and quickly carried her to his chamber, slamming the door behind him with his foot. She was about to say something but gasped as he pressed her back against the door. Before anything could be said, Demariak took possession of her mouth. His firm and warm lips moved against hers, his motions that of a starved man. She could feel the hot, hard length of him pressed into her belly, making her moan into his mouth. Demariak swirled his tongue around hers, sucking hers back into his mouth with a possessiveness Mena had never known. He broke the kiss and rested his forehead on hers and breathed heavily.

* * * *

Kitty watched as Mena rushed out of the room and barely missed the naked women in the process. Demariak followed her out, his movements slow and predatory. It reminded Kitty of a wild animal stalking its prey. She stood and made her move to follow Mena, not wanting her to be alone with that barbarian. She slipped between the women, barely missing their naked flesh, and stepped into the hall. It was a catacomb of tunnels, turns, and dips that made it impossible to

find out which way they went. She took a blind leap of faith and veered off to the left, knowing Mena hadn't gotten that far.

She walked for ten minutes before she stopped and leaned against the wall. She was lost. Every wall, every turn looked exactly the same as the one before. She wanted to scream out in frustration. She slid to the ground, pulling her knees to her shoulders and staring at the smooth ceiling. As worried as she was about Mena, she knew Mena could take care of herself. Mena was a strong, fierce woman in her own right, a female that could hold her own. She at least hoped her instincts were right because God help anyone who hurt her. "What am I going to do?" Her head fell back against the smooth, cold surface, and she closed her eyes, not knowing where to go from here.

Loud footsteps neared, and she slowly opened her eyes. She wasn't surprised to see Keirak standing in front of her, his posture stiff, his expression stern. She didn't know why he insisted on following her around, only giving her privacy in the room he stuck her in. She didn't bother saying anything, knowing he couldn't understand a thing she said. Walking past him, she went back toward the dining room, not knowing where else to go. She wanted to go to her room, to just sleep and wake up and have this all be a bad dream. When she reached the dining room, she stood at the entrance, not going in, just standing there. Her eyes stayed on Keirak, telling him without saying a word where she wanted to go. He was smarter than he looked, not just brawn and no brain. She followed him, knowing there would have been no way she would have found her own way back. Because of the twisting turns, everything looked exactly the same.

He opened the door for her and stepped out of the way, giving her plenty of room. She slowly went into the room, her eyes constantly on him. "Do you know where Mena is?"

His brows dipped over his eyes, the confusion clear on his face.

"Oh never mind." She shut the door quickly, wanting to be alone, wanting to shut out everything around her.

* * * *

“Oh, *thalla*, I should stop.”

Feeling Demariak's large hands flex and release on her hips, Mena knew she should tell him to stop, but the fire running through her body could not be ignored.

“No, Demariak, don't stop... I need you to put out the burning inside of me.”

She stared at him, and saw his nostrils flare and his eyes glaze over with lust. Ready this time, Mena took his kiss and gave back just as forcefully. She nibbled on his mouth and took satisfaction at the groan that escaped his lips. She ran her tongue over his lips and thrust her tongue inside his mouth. Demariak let out a pure male growl of satisfaction, but soon took over the kiss, showing his dominance.

He ran his hand up her rib cage, skimming the sides of her breasts to grip the edge of her dress. He ripped the fabric down to her navel, immediately taking possession of one of her breasts with his mouth. He swirled his tongue around the already stiff peak, drawing it between his teeth, giving it a little tug.

She moaned and threw her head back, grabbing Demariak's wide shoulders for support. His hot breath skimmed over her breasts, causing her to suck in a deep breath of air. He moved from her nipple and licked a path between her breasts and up the column of her neck, lightly sucking and scraping his teeth over the skin below her ear. He whispered to her in his language, his words roughened by his lust. She gasped as he picked her up, carrying her to the bed and setting her lightly atop it. In one swift move, he tore the rest of her dress from her body.

“You are so beautiful.”

She shivered at the harsh deepness of his voice and looked at him from under her lashes. She suddenly felt nervous and saw his hands

go to his pants and unlace them. He quickly shoved them down his legs and kicked them to the side. Mena swallowed at the sight. His body was thickly muscled, all bulging muscles and sinew. She took in the wide expanse of his shoulders, the tattoos that seemed to amplify the air of power and dominance he emitted. She slowly gazed at the length of his rippled abdomen, hot wetness flowing from her at the sight of him. Every inch of him was smooth, golden skin. Her eyes drifted farther south, leading to what she wanted most at the moment.

He watched her with heavy-lidded eyes. The way his eyes traveled down her body made her vagina clench with need.

Mena held back the gasp that traveled up her throat when she caught sight of the massive erection he revealed. Demariak's erection was thick and long, being at least the width of her wrist and jutting from smooth, hairless skin. The head shone a violent red, a pearl-sized drop of liquid dotting the tip.

"Th-that won't fit." She felt stupid for even saying anything. She saw Demariak smile slowly and stalk toward her. She moved back farther on the bed, her back hitting the ice-cold wall. She knew an erection that size couldn't fit in her. The arousal in her made her think of how deliciously he would stretch and fill her. Blushing, she felt her hot juices slide down the inside of her leg from her illicit thoughts.

Her eyes grew wide as he moved onto the bed. His big body covered her, all light blocked by his sheer size. His hand covered her hip, running up to her breast and causing her flesh to prickle with awareness. He removed his hand and sat back on his haunches. A gasp came out of her when both of his warm hands landed on her thighs, gently spreading them. She held on to the sheets as his head dipped. She felt him run his tongue up and down her inner thigh, moving more toward her center. Her mouth opened on a silent cry as his tongue touched her clit, sucking it into the warm cavern of his mouth. He moaned deeply, looking up from her thighs and making eye contact with her. Mena didn't bother hiding her shock when he licked all her glistening wetness off of his lips.

Looking down at Mena's soaked pussy, Demariak spread her thighs wider, watching as she lay completely back and closed her eyes. His cock jerked at the sight of her bare, pink pussy lips, swollen and wet from her arousal. Her clit pulsed with need, ruby red from his ministrations. Sticking his tongue out, he twirled it around her clit again, sucking the little berry into his mouth. She moaned in satisfaction as he ran his tongue down her slit, plunging it into her waiting hole. Looking up, he saw her hands grabbing forcefully onto the material of the bed.

He looked at Mena with lust-filled eyes and suppressed the desire that consumed him. Her muscles tightened around his fingers, gripping him like an iron fist. He sucked harder on her clit, needing to bring her climax to the surface. She threw her head back as he sucked harder and faster. Her moan went long and loud, driving his arousal higher. He thrust his fingers faster as he felt her warm juices start to coat his hand.

* * * *

Mena sucked in her bottom lip, a moan spilling from her mouth. Demariak did wicked things to her, making her juices flow out and down her ass. He moved from her clit, plunging his tongue in and out of her hole, bringing his thumb to her clit and moving it around in slow circles. His tongue left the hot depth of her and moved along her lips, lightly nibbling them as he went. Mena gripped the sheets tighter as he sucked in her throbbing, swollen clit vigorously. He slipped two large, rough fingers into her soaked vagina, thrusting them deep. Mena felt all the pleasure build inside of her. Her inner muscles tightened, drawing Demariak's fingers in deeper.

Chapter Eight

Her body felt drained from the intense orgasm Demariak gave her. Demariak moved up her body, lying between her thighs. His hard, hot length slid sensuously up and down her center. He brought his hand up, glistening with her juices, and sucked his fingers into his mouth. Her eyes widened, and she shivered with arousal. Watching him made her dimming arousal start to burn again.

“Mmm, *thalla*, you taste of sweetness.”

He licked every drop from his hand. She could feel his hard length pressing against her sex. Her pussy clenched, needing to be filled with his hard cock. A fresh coat of wetness escaped her and ran out of her. She grabbed his huge penis and couldn't help but rub her pussy along his length.

“No, *thalla*, I am on the edge, and you are tempting the beast within.” His ran his hands along her flesh, clenching and unclenching his fists against her. He breathed in deeply, groaning against her mouth and running his tongue along the seam of her lips.

“I want you to be sure about this, Mena, because when I plunge deep within you, I won't be able to stop. So I will ask you only this once if you are sure.”

She smiled up at him, and placed her arms above her head. “I am so ready, Demariak.”

She arched her back, causing her breasts to rub against his smooth chest. Her nipples scraped erotically against the smoothness of his skin, causing them both to moan in delight. She rubbed her pussy along his length, whispering *yes*, as the head of his cock teased her clit. His look spoke of hunger and lust, a combination that excited her.

“Please, Demariak, I have never been this hot before, and I am so wet for you. If you don’t fuck me now, I’ll go crazy.” She never felt this wild or wanton before, never spoke this erotically. She also never felt an arousal as strong as the one making her weep at just the thought of Demariak’s larger-than-life cock.

She watched as he gripped his erection, which dripped large amounts of pre-cum. He placed it at the entrance of her pussy and started to push inside.

“Please, Demariak, I need all of it now!” Arching her back and moaning, she felt him growl deeply and plunge every hot, hard inch of him into her. He let out a sound of pure male satisfaction. He dipped his head, taking control of her mouth and plunging his tongue deep within. Dueling with her tongue, he pumped long and hard inside of her. The sound of wet sex echoed throughout the room.

He plunged in and out of her, her muscles rippling along his shaft. He took both of her wrists and brought them above her head, pinning them under one of his hands. He brought the other one between their bodies and stroked her clit. Her muscles flexed around him violently. She moved her head from side to side and let out a long female moan. He slammed into her once... twice, and let out a roar as his release washed into her.

Mena’s orgasm seemed to go on and on. When she felt it start to subside, a long shot of hot cum would wash her insides, a new orgasm cresting inside of her. She felt the last hard pulse of Demariak’s release inside of her. Her own release slowly drifted her into relaxation, making everything fuzzy around the edges. Demariak slumped over her and gave her a slow kiss, running his tongue along her teeth and nipping her bottom lip. He released her wrists and lay next to her. She felt a sense of emptiness consume her at the loss of Demariak’s warm heaviness. He grabbed her by the waist and pulled her ass flush with his still rock-hard erection. He lightly kissed the nape of her neck, and she closed her eyes, a sigh of contentment coming out of her. She snuggled in closer, her ass rubbing against his

cock. He growled in her ear, his teeth gently biting down. “No, *thalla*, we will wait. You must be sore, and when I take you again, I want you to be rested.” His breathing grew even and deep, and she snuggled deeper into his embrace. “Demariak?”

“Yes, *thalla*.”

“What does that mean? You keep calling me that, and I was just wondering.” He didn’t speak as he stroked her hip.

“It means *my sweet*.”

Feeling a smile spread across her face, she couldn’t help the happiness that a simple endearment like that would cause.

“Sleep now, *thalla*, since I can guarantee you will need all of your strength when you wake.”

He pulled the soft, silky sheets over them, causing her to drift off into a peaceful slumber. She felt warm and secure wrapped in Demariak’s protective embrace.

* * * *

She moaned lightly, her eyes slowly opening. Pleasure washed over her, making every cell in her body light up. Looking over her shoulder, she saw Demariak’s hands caressing her ass. His mouth trailed kisses down her body, causing her skin to prickle.

“Ah, you’re awake, *thalla*.” He looked at her with heavy-lidded eyes. He pressed his rock-hard erection against her backside, rolling his hips and letting her soft skin caress him. He rolled her over, lifting her arms above her head and causing her breasts to thrust out. His hand slipped between their bodies, her pussy already soaking wet. His thumb found her clit and smoothed her juices across it.

She watched the erotic sight of him spreading her thighs wide and inserting two large fingers into her. She let her thighs fall open as wide as they could, letting the sweet feeling of being filled consume her. His fingers delved faster inside of her, his thumb working her clit

in smooth circles. She placed her hand over his, applying just the right amount of pressure to her throbbing clit.

Pleasure built in her belly, making its way to the very tips of her fingers.

“Oh, yes. Don’t stop.” She breathed heavily as he removed the hand that played with her clit. About to object, she felt his hot breath and wet tongue bathe her clit with knowledgeable strokes and caresses.

Her orgasm washed through her, and she moaned out his name. After the final pulses left her body, she lay there in a sexually satisfied daze. He lay beside her, pulling her close to his body.

His hard sex pressed against her thigh, and she felt selfish for taking and not giving. She wanted to taste his hot cock in her mouth, wanted to roll her tongue around the head and taste his cum. Feeling brazen, she straddled him, rubbing her hot, wet core over his hard length. He moaned loudly, the sound enough to send her over the edge by itself. She felt his cock pulse beneath her. Sliding sensuously down his body, she let her hands feel the hard muscle beneath soft skin. His muscles flexed under her hands, the skin tightening and the veins bulging. She ran her hands down his inner thighs, the muscles clenching in response. She lowered her mouth to his cock, the tip already glistening with need.

She did a sexy slide down his body, making sure to rub every part of exposed skin. She smiled at him before her mouth encased the head of his cock. Her tongue slid over the slit of his cock, her moan vibrating against his shaft. She encased his length, her head bobbing up and down. Her hand gripped his balls, kneading them in rhythm while she sucked his cock.

She let go of his cock with a resounding pop. Her tongue ran in a long sweep across the underside of his cock, her hand never leaving his aching balls. She dipped her head low, taking his balls into the hot cavern of her mouth. He growled low in his throat, her mouth sucking him in deep, her tongue sweeping across the skin.

The sound of him gritting his teeth echoed throughout the room.

She took as much of him as she could. She could only get half of him into her mouth. She savored his musky male taste. She picked up a smooth rhythm, grabbing the base of his cock with her hand while her mouth worked him. She brought her other hand between his thighs, and gripped the huge, heavy sack that lay nestled beneath, rolling his balls in her hand. His whole body tensed, and she tasted a fresh squirt of pre-cum bathe her tongue. Bracing herself for his release, she moaned with the knowledge of what was about to come.

“*Thalla*, you must stop. I can’t hold off much longer.” He pleaded with her in a gravelly, sexually-laced voice. She resisted his attempts to push her away and sped up her bobbing motion. She tightened her lips around his cock, sucking him in deeper. He let out a loud male groan, the hot jets of his seed hitting the back of her throat. Keeping up her motions, she swallowed every last bit of his cum. He tasted of strong virile man, and she couldn’t get enough of it. He relaxed against the bed as she gave his member one last long lick. She crawled up the length of him, feeling satisfied at his release.

Chapter Nine

He ran his hands up and down her back, his still-aching erection pressed against her moist center. He flipped her over, coming to rest against her back. He grabbed her by the waist, lifting her hips up and bringing her ass flush with his groin. She braced herself on her hands and knees and pressed her ass closer into him. He ran his hand up her spine, moving her hair over and gripping her shoulder. Her back was smooth and flawless, her ass succulent and perfectly round.

He squeezed her ass, gripping the skin and parting it slightly. He was perfectly still behind her, his attention focused on the tight rosebud of her asshole. He let go of her shoulder, his hand moving to her breasts where he encased her flesh. She moaned and dropped her head between her shoulders. His hand gripped her breasts, her nipples beading from the friction. His fingers gripped her stiff nipple, tweaking it between his thumb and forefinger. His other hand squeezed her ass before smacking the cheek. She gasped, the sound making his cock jerk in response. His finger glided slowly between her cheeks and rested on the tight hole in the center.

“*Thalla*, will you let me here?” He pressed slowly against her anus, and she hesitated for a second before nodding. “Good, *thalla*, that’s real good.”

Bending down, he kissed both globes of her ass and pulled back to spread her cheeks wide. He squeezed both cheeks in his hands and looked at the sight before him. The rosebud between her cheeks was small and tight. He knew it would strangle his cock with pleasure when he slid it in. Her pussy lips were smooth and swollen and the

most beautiful red color. Her sweet wetness dripped onto the sheets as her body prepared herself for his invasion.

He slid his fingers across her soaking center and brought the fluid to the tip of her clit, lightly stroking it. Feeling a jolt of pleasure wash over him at her sexual moan, he continued his ministrations. He brought his fingers back to her soaking pussy hole, coating them in her juices as he plunged his fingers into her. Immediately her inner muscles gripped his fingers. Her wetness dripped down his hand as she climaxed. Before her orgasm faded, he brought his soaked fingers to her asshole and coated the small hole. It glistened in the soft light, making his cock jerk hard. She tensed. He stroked her back and whispered encouragements to her in his language. Ever so slowly, he slid one finger into her and let her muscles adjust to the size.

* * * *

Mena tensed. She didn't know what to expect, since she had never let a man enter her there before. Yet she knew Demariak would never harm her. She felt his finger slip into her. Her muscles tensed at the strange and new invasion. Once she felt his whole finger in her, she felt a second one slowly slide in. She tried to relax her muscles back there, as his fingers slid completely in. With both fingers buried deep within her, he slowly spread them in a scissoring motion. A shot of pure pleasure traveled from where his fingers were, straight to her clit. Her pussy grew wet with need, her body aching to be filled in both places. Moaning loudly, she knew she should be embarrassed by her wanton behavior, but she couldn't help how her body reacted to Demariak's touch.

"That's it, *thalla*. Do you feel me filling you? I will have my cock in here next. Tell me you want me here." He turned his fingers in a slow circle, eliciting a moan from her.

"Oh... yes, Demariak, there, I want you there, in me ...now." Breathing deeply, she thrust lightly back toward his fingers. She

stopped as his fingers slowly pulled out. She turned, trying to see why he stopped. The bed slightly dipped as he moved off of it. He walked over to one of the small tables and pulled a silver jar out. He was behind her again in an instant, his hand smoothing over the top of her ass. Before she could ask what he had, something thin and cool slid into her. A shot of warm fluid entered her. Before she could say anything, she felt the scorching hot crown of him poised at her back entrance.

“It’s lubricant, *thalla*. It is from the *pandie* flower. It will help to relax your muscles so you can take me easier.”

She nodded and couldn’t speak. He poised the head of his cock at her back entrance again. He pushed into her, the lubricant making it easy for him to slide inside. When the head sat inside of her, he stopped and let her adjust to the invasion. His large size felt a bit unusual, but the initial uncomfortable feeling immediately washed away when he slid completely in. Wave after wave of pleasure shot straight to her core, making her inner muscles clench around his shaft. Gripping the sheets, she let the pleasure continue to course through her body. He slowly pulled out, the head almost popping free before he plunged back inside. She looked over her shoulder, and she saw sweat trickle down his forehead. His face looked intense. He swallowed roughly and closed his eyes. He moaned in a pure male way as he slid another thick, hard inch of himself in. Turning back around, she dropped her head between her shoulders and braced her legs farther apart. She wanted to take in more of him. Breathing hard, she felt sweat trickle down into the valley of her breasts.

“Please Demariak! All of it—I need it all now.”

A loud, purely animalistic growl came from him as he slammed repeatedly into her. His balls were huge, slapping repeatedly against her clit. Her entire body lit up with pleasure, her inner muscles gripping him continuously. An orgasm like she had never felt before raced through her body. Her inner muscles closed hard, the feel of Demariak inside of her intensifying. He thrust hard into her, his fast

repetitive motions never ending. His balls continued to slap against her clit. Orgasm after orgasm exploded inside of her. The sound of their combined moans reverberated throughout the room. The sound of their sweat-soaked skin slapping together heightened her pleasure. Her pussy wept to be filled. His big arm reached around, gripping one of her breasts in his big, sweaty palm. He pinched the nipple between forefinger and thumb, and tweaked it. The pleasure traveled down to her belly button and straight to her clit. His massive body tensed. Hot pulsing jets of his semen coated her insides. The pulsing seemed to go on forever, and soon after Demariak pulled out of her.

She collapsed on the bed, and closed her eyes and sighed in contentment. Every cell in her tingled, the very tips of her fingers and toes numb from the aftershocks. Demariak got off the bed and went into the bathroom. The sound of water splashing came from the darkened room. The bed dipped next to her as he brought her body flush with his. Mena rested her head on his bicep, loving the feel of his hand stroking her arm. He softly whispered to her in his language.

“Demariak?” He continued to rub her arm in a soothing way.

“Yes, *thalla*?”

“You didn’t use a condom, and I’m not on the pill, so that could cause some major problems.” Speaking in a lazy, half-asleep tone, she knew she should be more worried. Her body was completely satisfied, every cell pulsating sexual fulfillment. She really didn’t care at the moment. It had been more of an idle thought than anything else. Tomorrow was another day, and the severity of the consequences would hit her then.

“Our females are only fertile when the moons are at their fullest. Unless two members of my tribe wish to conceive young together, we do not have sexual intercourse during the high moons. We don’t have condoms as you have on your dimension because our females are fertile only during that time. Any other time there is no chance for young to be produced.”

His voice spoke next to her ear and sent shivers down her spine.

“Well, I’m not from your dimension, so those rules don’t apply to me. What about diseases? I mean, I don’t have anything, and I’m not implying you do, but well, you know. I’m just wondering.” The more she thought about it, the more worried she got. Not because she thought of all of the negative things that could possibly come out of this, but what if she got pregnant? That would make this whole situation clearly real and... permanent.

“*Thalla*, please do not worry. We do not have diseases of a sexual nature here. We are different from beings in your dimension. Our bodies cannot get or carry disease like that.”

“Well, what about me? I can get pregnant whether your moons are at their fullest or not. Can your, you know, sperm get me pregnant?” Her face got hot from her question. She waited for what seemed like forever before he answered.

“I truly don’t know the answer to that, *thalla*. Since I have been leader of this tribe, we have not encountered someone from your dimension before to know how that works.”

“But you know English. If you have never seen someone from my dimension, then how can you speak it?” She turned and looked into his eyes.

“We are taught it when we are very young. When my grandfather led the *ZorZack* tribe, they encountered males and females from your dimension. But there are no records of sexual relations with the females that could have resulted in young being conceived. I really don’t know if it is possible.” Stroking her hair, Demariak stared down at her and lightly kissed her on the lips.

That was the last thing she felt before she succumbed to sleep.

Chapter Ten

The following three weeks flew by for Mena, and she actually enjoyed her stay. She spent more time with the females of the ZorZack tribe, learning their customs. She picked up on some of their language, mainly common phrases they used daily. She was still getting used to the clothing the woman wore, or, more so, the attire they didn't wear. Kitty was still pissed about the whole situation, and Mena couldn't blame her. If she hadn't found comfort with Demariak, if she hadn't felt so welcome and accepted, she would have felt the same way as Kitty.

She tried to include Kitty in the tribe's activities. She tried to find something that would interest Kitty, whether it be making crafts with the females or helping to cook the meals. Kitty showed no interest in any of those, though. More often than not, she would find Kitty in the garden, staring off and humming to herself. She tried to talk to her about it, but there wasn't anything that could make the situation better for Kitty. She was stuck in her own despair, her sadness so strong it encompassed her whole being. Mena's heart broke every time she saw this. How could she stay here when her dearest friend was so miserable? That was the growing conflict that waged war inside of Mena every day.

Mena thought something would have happened between Kitty and Keirak by now, a friendship at the least. She hoped at least a friendship with him would have brought Kitty out of the hole she had crawled into. She tried to be there for Kitty, to show her comfort in this difficult time, but more often than not, Kitty retreated to her room

and shut the world out of what she felt. Everything Mena said fell on deaf ears.

As much as she wanted to comfort Kitty and make her feel comfortable, Mena couldn't help but enjoy her time in *Dimi of the Seven Moons*. She felt guilty for the happiness she felt when Kitty felt such sadness. This place made sense to her, as if it was the exact match to the puzzle piece of her life. Inside of her, her heart knew this was where she belonged.

She had tried to explain everything to Kitty, tried to tell her what Demariak said about this world. Kitty was stubborn, not wanting to hear any of it. Mena knew Kitty was angry with her, knew deep down she was upset that Mena had found happiness here. She tried every day, though, to explain everything to Kitty. It became a little better each day, with Kitty actually staying in the same room and hearing her out. Once Mena had gotten Kitty's attention, she told her about how the portal showed up once a month. Kitty immediately calmed down and started to try and plot out their escape plan. Mena saw the wheels moving inside Kitty's head. Her sadness and despair were replaced with determination and concentration. That's all Kitty wanted to talk about. She participated in more activities. She helped with the cooking and even made dozens of baskets with the females. Mena knew it wasn't because she had become acclimated to this new place. She knew how Kitty's brain worked, and she knew this was all part of her plan. Kitty was gathering as much information as she could about *Dimi of the Seven Moons* and the *ZorZack* tribe. Mena had asked Kitty why she was so interested all of a sudden, after so long being angry. Kitty became instantly defensive and denied it, even proclaiming she was just curious about her "new home". Mena of course knew better.

Mena would be lying if she said she didn't miss her home. She missed the little comforts Earth offered. On days when the rain fell down, she sat by the bay window, just watching the droplets slide off the glass. She missed food and her bedroom. All those little things

that she took for granted. She would feel homesick, but then Demariak would smile at her and her heart lit up. Rain drops and comfort food could be replaced but the love of Demariak couldn't.

Demariak showed her around the tribe's territory, which Mena learned was built right into a huge mountain. The tribe's territory went from the top of the mountain to hundreds of feet below it. He told her their tribe wasn't as large as it had been back when his grandfather and great-grandfather ruled. Even though they lived in such a large area, most of their people were killed during missions outside of the tribe.

Spending more and more time with him, Mena saw a side of Demariak she knew he never showed anyone else. His thoughtfulness touched her heart. He brought her exotic-looking flowers for no reason, telling her how beautiful she was, how much he cared for her. It amazed her to think that such a large and powerful man could be so affectionate and caring. Was she actually falling for him?

Oh, who are you kidding, Mena? You love the guy.

Even though she loved Demariak, she knew it would be impossible to stay with him. She had a home that she missed, a job that she needed. Aside from Kitty, she didn't have a family. It killed her to know she couldn't stay with him, but Kitty was more important to her. She couldn't abandon her only family, even if that meant it would break her heart.

Walking with Kitty toward a room that resembled a garden, Mena once again listened to Kitty map out their escape.

"Okay, so if I calculated this right, in seven days there will be another portal. I just don't know the exact location. I say we make a break for it in six days. That way we can trek our way back to where it was when we went through it. Hopefully, it will be there again."

Watching Kitty, Mena couldn't get rid of the feeling that Kitty's ramblings resembled those of a mad scientist. Kitty had never been the one to map stuff out and try to find solutions to problems. She almost thought Kitty had lost her mind. Walking into the garden,

Kitty still talked as Mena pulled her down next to her on a stone bench. The garden was beautiful, with the most unusual flowers she had ever seen. The room was carved into a circle instead of the traditional square shape. A large fountain sat in the center of the room. Within the fountain, a large flower that looked like a daffodil and a tulip mixed together was carved out of white stone. The high ceiling gave the room an open feeling. The walls were, once again, carved with the tribal designs and wording. Mena came to find out it was the *ZorZack* tribe's ancient text. The floor and the walls had the same smooth stone as everywhere else. The flowers all around made it the most beautiful room.

Thankfully they were all alone, because no matter where they went, Keirak always seemed to be within eye distance of Kitty. Mena started to get a little creeped out by the whole thing, but Demariak assured her it was for Kitty's well-being. Mena practically begged Demariak to call his guard dog off of Kitty so they could have some *girl time* together. After a good, healthy debate, she got her way. Grabbing Kitty's hand, she waited until Kitty realized it and stopped talking.

"What?" Looking frustrated, Kitty stared at her.

"Kit, I know you want to go home. Hell, I miss the place, too, but I am getting worried about you. Nonstop you have been talking about escaping. I mean, this place isn't so bad, right? What if I agree with you, and we go off into the jungle or whatever the hell it is called? What then? Didn't you hear me when I told you Demariak says it is not safe to travel at night?"

"Mena, don't be stupid. That's just their scare tactic to get you to stay. If I didn't know better, I'd think you wanted to stay here!" She stared at Mena and had long since taken her hand back.

"Don't be silly. Of course I want to go home. I just think we need to be smart about it. Why don't we just ask Demariak and his men to help us find it?"

Yeah right, you don't want to go home. Don't lie to Kitty and yourself. Could you really leave Demariak after knowing how you feel about him? No, probably not.

Shaking her head to clear it, she watched as Kitty rolled her eyes.

“Come on, they are so not going to help us. We are on our own in this. This isn't our world. We are not like them. We need to get back to our home, to all of our friends and family.” Kitty's eyes became glossy, her tears threatening to overflow.

She wasn't about to debate with Kitty that nothing waited for her back home. Her job was entry level, and she really didn't like her coworkers. Her family was non-existent, and she really had no friends. Kitty was her family—her only real friend. She knew there would be an argument if she pointed that fact out, and she wasn't about to beef it out with Kitty. She couldn't help the sadness that overwhelmed her when she saw the fat tears roll down Kitty's cheeks. Kitty had many friends, a job she loved, and men that would kill just to go on a date with her. She was going places in her life and had much more to lose if she stayed here. It killed Mena to leave Demariak, but how could she turn her back on her best friend? “Oh, Kit, please don't cry. You're right. We'll find a way out of this. I just think we should be smart about it.”

“We will. Just let me think about it some more.”

She sniffled and wiped her nose, her face instantly brightening at the prospect of them leaving. She was torn between the friend she held so dear and the man she loved. Her heart broke at the thought of leaving him.

It's for the best. It's for Kitty.

* * * *

The next couple of days took its toll on Mena. She felt awkward to say the least. The more time she spent with Demariak, the harder it got to leave with Kitty. There were times when she thought he might

suspect something, especially when Kitty and she would meet in the garden. She would insist on being alone for their girl time. The look on his face spoke volumes, even though he would say nothing. Every day it got harder and harder. Every time they made love, a piece of her heart broke a little more when she would think about going back home. It was during those intimate times that she would think about what she was giving up. When he would gently whisper to her and tell her how special she was to him, she just wanted to cry. Many times she wanted to confess, to tell him everything. She refrained every time, though, not wanting to betray Kitty when she obviously hurt deep inside.

Kitty would hatch more plans on how to escape, and it would make Mena more ill every time. Then she would look at Kitty, see the hope reflected on her face, and push her selfishness to the side.

It being the day that Kitty and she planned to leave, she tried to act as normal as possible. Her nerves were shot and her heart ached. She felt nauseated by the whole thing, and several times she wanted to tell Kitty she wouldn't go with her. If something happened to Kitty out there, she wouldn't be able to forgive herself. Maybe one day she would come across the portal again and things could be different. An impossible thing to hope for, she knew. She kept in the back of her mind that the possibility that they wouldn't be able to find the portal was huge. Everything that could go wrong bounced around in her head until it pounded.

* * * *

It was a long, quiet walk back to Demariak's chamber, which she now claimed as her own. They walked side by side, the silence a heavy weight between them. They ate a nice meal with all of the warriors and women laughing and joking. Kitty of course clammed up during the whole meal, not even touching the food. Mena wanted to leave when the *deyada berries* came out. Demariak was very quiet

himself during the meal, his jaw ticking at times and his face in a scowl. She and Kitty made plans to meet in the garden later that night. It was all she could think about and was not even able to enjoy the wonderful food in front of her. She picked at the food, more playing with it than anything else. She hardly spoke to Kitty during the meal, both of them making eye contact as they left for the evening. She stopped and placed one hand on the wall and one hand on her stomach as a wave of nausea overtook her.

Calm down. You're letting your nerves get the better of you.

"Thalla, are you all right? You seem a little ill." Taking hold of her waist, he watched her with concern on his face.

She cleared her throat, and righted herself. "I'm fine, really. My stomach is just a little bit upset." She tried to sound like she told the truth. She looked into his face and gave a weak smile. Her eyes went wide, and she yelped as Demariak scooped her into his arms and carried her to the bedroom. "What are you doing? I can walk fine."

"I think our tribe's healing woman should see you. You might be getting sick, and things here can make you so ill, you die quickly without warning."

She swallowed roughly, knowing she couldn't tell him it was just her nerves about her plans for tonight. "I'm fine, really. It's getting late, and I don't want to make someone come all the way over here when it's just an upset stomach." Demariak lowered her to the ground and opened the bedroom door. She walked inside with Demariak's arm loose around her waist. He turned her, his big, warm hand caressing her face.

"Okay, *thalla*, I will not call the healer tonight, but tomorrow will you see her—in the morning?"

Closing her eyes, she felt him caress her cheek. His hand moved to the back of her head, bringing her head to his chest. She could feel the strong beat of his heart and had to fight back the tears that threatened to spill. Clearing her throat, she kept her head on his chest and rested her hand on his shoulder.

“Okay, Demariak, I’ll see her in the morning if it will make you feel better.” Looking up at him, Mena saw the troubled expression marring his face.

“Oh, *thalla*. Do you realize how dear you are to me? I want to pick only the most beautiful flowers for you, and even though your beauty outshines them, my heart skips a beat when I see the happiness in your eyes at seeing them. I want to spend forever and always with you. If you were no longer near me, my heart would shatter into a million pieces, and I could never repair it. I love you with every piece of my being.”

Tears fell down her cheek. Mena cleared her throat and looked away. She knew she should have said something, but she was just too stunned. She couldn’t believe what Demariak had just told her.

Chapter Eleven

“Do you not care for me as well, *thalla*?” Sorrow filled his voice.

She met his gaze, wanting to assure him. “Oh yes, Demariak. I love you so much it hurts!”

He pulled her body into a crushing embrace. “This is good, Thalla, very good. So then you will not leave this night?”

Mena gasped and pulled away. *How had he known about the plan?*

“How did you know? I mean, I thought I hid it so well!” She looked into his face with wide eyes, and felt her face flush.

“*Thalla*, even though I told you I would give you and Kitty privacy, I always made sure one of my warriors was within hearing distance of you. I myself never stayed close to you because I didn’t want to betray your trust personally, but I felt if it wasn’t me, it was different. I am sorry to have betrayed your trust, but I couldn’t take any chances with you. Even though we are inside of this great mountain, and it is guarded like a fortress, there can still be hidden dangers. I could not leave what is so precious to me unprotected.”

She didn’t forget about the horrid creatures he had told her about when she first arrived. Every time she thought about leaving, sharp teeth and wicked claws flashed through her mind. Kitty knew the dangers. Mena made sure to remind her of those dangers whenever they spoke. Of course nothing seemed to discourage Kitty from leaving. Even though Mena was angry that he had people spying on her and Kitty’s conversations, she couldn’t help but feel flattered that he would protect her so much. The love she felt for him grew so much at that moment that her eyes watered. “You know I should be so upset

that you lied to me, but just knowing you didn't want anything to hurt me has to be the sweetest thing. But know that I am still pissed at you!" She tried to look mad and saw the corner of his mouth twitch in amusement.

"Oh, great queen, please forgive me," he said, bowing his head as if she were royalty.

She slapped him lightly on the shoulder. "Oh, quit with the queen stuff, you smartass."

A smile covered his face as he brought his head up. He took her face between both his big hands and kissed her lightly on the lips. "Mena, my love, will you stay with me in my kingdom and be my queen to rule beside me for the rest of our days?"

Her mouth fell open as he took both her hands in his, got down on both his knees, and bowed his head to her hands. "Are you serious? You don't think this is too fast? I mean, how will your people react?" Would his tribe accept her? She truly was ecstatic about his proposal, but a little voice inside her head told her to be cautious. "What if they don't like me?"

"They already love you, Mena. Can't you see that?"

His face was lit up with a smile, and she let out her own smile. She just hoped everything fell into place and that she didn't screw up. This was what a girl waited for, wasn't it? To be proposed to by a king, to have him bowing before her.

"Oh, my beautiful one, nothing would please me more than if you would rule by my side and someday carry my young within you." He looked up at her and kissed her hands and waited for her to answer.

She wanted to say *yes*—scream it, in fact—because of how happy she was. Of course, Kitty's face popped into her mind at that exact moment. "What about Kitty? I mean, she is really determined to find the portal and get back home. What are we going to do about that?" She bit her lip, as Demariak brought his large body to its fullest height, scooped her up—yet again—and carried her over to the bed.

"Fear not, my love. If she likes, we will work our hardest to make her comfortable here."

"You don't understand. She wants to find that portal and leave."

"I fear that it might be a hopeless journey, because the next time it appears, it may be on the other side of my world. I must admit, though, I think Keirak has taken a fondness to your dear friend."

He obviously didn't know Kitty very well. She wouldn't be placated by anything she was told. Mena shook her head, not about to tell him that unless Kitty went home she wouldn't be happy. What should she do? She was torn between the two people who meant the most to her.

He smiled and sat her on the bed, turned, and walked to a black stone table that had a small, white, jewel-encrusted box on it. He moved away from her, and she couldn't help but notice how his body moved with the gracefulness and power of a predator. The tattoo that covered his back enhanced his air of leadership, making his whole persona scream danger. Her sex seeped instantly, and her nipples hardened at the simple way he moved. He picked up the box and brought it over to her.

The box fit in the length of her palm. It had beautiful engravings etched into the wood. She marveled at how the candlelight picked up on the facets of the white jewels, making a rainbow of color wash the room. "What is this?" Not bothering to look up at him, she ran her hand over the jewels and the small latch that kept it closed.

"In this box, if you choose to stay by my side, holds a treasure that doesn't compare to what you mean to me. So, my sweetness, I will ask you again, will you stand by my side as my queen always and be the only one who holds my heart forever?"

She looked up from the box as he once again got on both his knees and placed his hands on her hips. He stroked her hips, caressing her body in a way that set a fire inside of her. He gently took the box from her and opened it to reveal its contents.

Inside the red silk-lined box, a beautiful necklace lay on the material like an offering. She watched in awe as he plucked the necklace out of the box to hold it up in front of her. The length was so long, it would no doubt reach her belly button. Hundreds of tiny strands made up the necklace. Jewels upon jewels covered the delicate strands. The candlelight caught the jewels, casting a rainbow across its confines. She took the necklace from him, and loved the feel of its weight in her hands.

She looked at him and saw how intently he stared at her. “It’s so beautiful.”

“It doesn’t compare to you, my sweet. This *dencha*, as we call it, has been passed down from each queen that has ruled beside the king of my tribe.”

He lifted his hand, and lightly stroked her face, a look of anxiety and trepidation covering his features.

“Oh, Demariak, I want to be with you always, but what am I supposed to do about Kitty? She’s my best friend, and she wants to go home so badly.”

“If she truly wants to go home, then I will dispatch my men to go in search for it. I can’t say how long it will take to find it, though. Its location changes every time. I feel, though, that she could be truly happy here. She could find a loyal mate, make a family for herself, if she gave it a chance.”

He took the necklace from her, reaching behind her neck to clasp it together. She looked down at the necklace, noticing how nicely it covered her. She looked up at him and idly ran her fingers over the necklace. The metal felt cool beneath her fingers, the jewels’ texture rasping over her skin. She wrapped her arms around his neck and yelled *yes*, that she had never wanted anything more in her life than to stay with him, be with him forever.

“Oh, Demariak, make love to me. Make me your queen.”

Chapter Twelve

They made soft, sweet love together. Not rushing it, just two bodies loving each other. He was so gentle with her, making sure she knew how much he loved her. Her body pressed close to his, she stared at the intricate etchings on the ceiling and couldn't help but shake her head at how her life had changed so drastically. Just days ago she had actually contemplated leaving the strong powerful man who lay beside her. She loved him so powerfully, with an emotion that she had never experienced before. He made her feel beautiful, smart, and sexy. He showered her with gentleness and kindness, loved her above all. She turned to her side and looked at his sleeping form. She brought her hand up to his hair and ran her fingers through the short, silky pieces.

"What is it my sweet? Something bothers you?" She smiled as he brought his arms around her waist and pulled her body closer to his. Laying her head on his bicep, she wrapped her arm around his waist, running her hands up and down the hard muscles of his back.

"Nothing. I've just been thinking about how foolish I was to even think that I could have a life without you."

His hand ran lazy circles along her back, eliciting goose bumps on her flesh. "What shall we do with Kitty, my love?"

"She wants to meet late tonight so we can make our escape. She thinks we will find the portal and said that tonight will be the night it shows itself." Biting her lower lip, she sat up and looked at him. He watched her with those devilish blue eyes that made her wet for him in an instant. "I'll just meet her as planned and talk her out of it. I'll remind her about what we could encounter out there. She's hard-

headed though, only wanting to do what she feels like. At the very least, I will talk her out of leaving tonight. I will tell her you offered to have your men go on a search for the portal. Hopefully that will placate her enough to stay.”

Picking up her hand, Demariak brought it to his chest and breathed in deeply. “Promise me that you won’t let her talk you into leaving with her tonight.” He sat up, the look on his face intense and powerful.

“What?”

He looked mad almost, even after she told him what he meant to her. “*Thalla*, I will tell you this: if you run, I will track you. I will stop at nothing until I have you again. There is nothing on my world or yours that can keep me from you.”

She was surprised at the excitement that spiked inside of her. The look of pure determination and possession on his face made a strong burst of arousal course through her. “Is that right?” She was playing with fire, she knew, but it was oh so fun. He lifted an eyebrow, a look of surprise momentarily flashing across his face. *I guess no one has ever questioned him before.* She smiled, knowing he cared so much for her that he wouldn’t let anything or anyone stand in his way to get to her.

“You don’t have to look so scary when you say that, damn it.” She got off the bed and stood, turning toward him and placing her hands on her hips. “Have you not been listening to anything I’ve said? All the stuff I told you about what you mean to me? I am not going anywhere, so don’t worry! Anyways, if I did decide to leave, where would I go?”

“Mena, love, I just wanted to let you know where I stand on the whole situation with you. I trust you with all of my being, but if something happened to you, I couldn’t handle it. And I fear for anyone who is within my wrath. Go talk with Kitty. I will be here when you return... ready to service my queen.”

He wagged his eyebrows, and she couldn't hold back the laugh that came out of her. Just when she thought she had Demariak figured out, he surprised her once again. She picked up the black silk robe and covered her body. She shivered at the sensuality of the fabric as it slid along her skin. She gave him a light kiss on the cheek and silently headed out the door to meet up with Kitty.

* * * *

Hours passed before she was supposed to meet Kitty, but she figured she would just go to Kitty's room and talk to her about the whole situation. She stood in front of Kitty's door and lightly tapped on it. She didn't hear an answer so she slightly opened the door. Kitty ran around the room, shoving things into burlap-type sacks.

"What are you doing?" Entering the room, Mena closed the door and walked toward Kitty.

"What? Oh, Mena, it's just you. What are you doing here? We aren't supposed to meet for another couple of hours." Kitty threw more items in the bags, and Mena caught glimpses of different types of fruit and vegetables along with clothing and jugs of water.

"What are you going to do with all of that stuff? You have enough packed for an army." Walking up to one of the sacks, Mena pulled it open to reveal knives and other small weapons she saw the warriors use. She arched a brow at the weapons and looked up at Kitty who now sat on the bed tying up the sacks. "What's with all the weapons?"

"Well, if we're going out into that hell hole again, I want to be prepared. I have been sneaking off with these things when no one was looking and stashing them away behind the bed."

When Kitty glanced up at her, Mena knew she probably had a what-the-hell-are-you-thinking look on her face. "How did you get all of this stuff without anyone knowing? I thought Keirak was always by you?" Mena knew Keirak kept a close eye on Kitty, and she was amazed Kitty managed to collect all of it.

“Well, Keirak has to sleep and do other bodily functions, so, that’s when I got everything.”

“What do you plan on doing with weapons you don’t even know how to use?” Mena sat on the bed and picked up a small knife nestled in one of the bags.

“I’ve been practicing with them before bed. I think I’ve got the hang of them. I have to be on alert, though, because that watch dog, Keirak, seems to be always right behind me.” Kitty took a deep breath, and finally tied up the last of the sacks and slumped back on the bed. “I’m glad you’re here now though. I was going to come for you early anyways since I want to leave right away. We need all the extra time we can get if we are going to find the portal.” Kitty got up, walked over to the door, and opened it. She stuck her head out, looked both ways, then shut the door silently and walked back to the bed, sitting on the edge.

She inhaled deeply, and let out a long sigh as she looked back at Mena. They stared at each other for what seemed like hours.

Mena placed her hand on Kitty’s shoulder, trying to think of how to best present her case. Before she even said anything, she saw Kitty’s brows furrow over her eyes and a frown set in.

“Mena, if you’re about to say what I think you’re going to say, then save it!” Kitty moved farther on the bed, making Mena’s hand drop with a soft thump.

“Calm down, you don’t even know what I’m going to say.” She didn’t want to start off the conversation with Kitty like this. She hoped deep down inside that Kitty might accept the idea of, at the very least, waiting to find the portal. Standing up, Kitty paced the width of the bed and then stopped right in front of Mena with her arms hanging loosely to her sides.

“This is about you staying right? And let me guess...” She placed a finger by her mouth and tapped lightly. “You have fallen madly in love with that beast of a man, are planning on living happily ever after, and popping out a couple of babies?” Going over to the bed, she

sat next to Mena and placed her hands on top of Mena's. "Mena, listen to me. This Demariak," closing her eyes and shaking her head, she looked as if she were in pain, "has brainwashed you. Don't you want to go home? Sleep in your own bed in your own house? I miss all of those things."

Mena thought over what Kitty said. She shook her head, not even knowing what to say. "Kitty, look, you are all I have. I don't have any family, no real friends, and my job sucks. If I were here alone, then yes, I would want to go back because you weren't here with me. I know I am being selfish about my feelings, Kitty. I see how unhappy you are here, and it kills me, it truly does. You're my best friend, my sister—you know I would do anything for you. I can't stand to see this depression that has settled into you. It breaks my heart. I won't lie and say I miss home, because, to be honest, this feels more like my home. I truly feel like this is where I belong." She took a deep breath, tears starting to crest in her eyes. "I love you too much, though, and if you really want to leave, then I can't let you do it alone."

How had things turned out like this? Mena looked down at their overlapping hands, a tear falling from her eye and dropping on her skin.

"I haven't been blind, Mena. I've seen how much you love this place, how your feelings have grown for Demariak. I feel lost here, though, like I am just floating along, watching as life passes me by. How can I make you come with me when I know what you would be missing, what your life could become?"

They both started to cry, and Mena pulled Kitty into a hug. "I can't let you go alone, though. I would die if something happened to you out there." Mena had the full intention of trying to coax Kitty into staying, but that of course wasn't how things worked out. She looked into Kitty's grief-stricken face, and it twisted Mena's heart. If Kitty would just wait, at least so Demariak and his men could help them, this journey wouldn't be so dangerous.

“Demariak told me he would have his men help you find a portal; you just have to give him some time to get everything together.”

Kitty laughed sarcastically. “I’m sure he would, Mena, but how long do you think that would take? If I don’t go now and at least try to find it, I may never have the opportunity to again. I need to do this, Mena. I don’t fit here. I have to do this on my own. I can’t stay here waiting for them to help me go home.”

“Kitty, please, I love you. You’re my family. Let’s think things through, please. You know what kinds of dangers are out there, things we can’t even comprehend. There are creatures, monsters out there that won’t hesitate to rip you apart. I’m not going to try any longer to convince you to stay here. I will leave with you if that’s what you truly want, but please let’s have the warriors help us.”

Shaking her head in what could only be anger and distaste, Kitty picked up a few of the bags. She had too many, though, and Kitty was forced to select only a few to carry.

“You know, Mena, it’s clear you love this place, that you believe everything they tell you. I am not so trusting though. I can’t leave my fate in the hands of men whom I don’t trust. I haven’t formed any attachment here. You’re the only reason I didn’t leave the very first night. You’ve found your peace here. I just feel like an outsider looking in. I am, though, aren’t I, an outsider?” Mena started to respond, but Kitty cut her off with a wave of her hand. “It makes no difference, really. I mean, I kind of knew deep down that you would stay, but I hoped I was wrong.”

Mena didn’t know what to say. She couldn’t just let her walk away but she couldn’t make her stay. Mena watched, her mind blank, as Kitty grabbed what she could and headed out the door without a single look back.

Chapter Thirteen

Kitty walked out of the room, with Mena trailing behind her. She wasn't heartless. She knew how much Mena loved this place, how much she loved Demariak. She would have left by herself, would have said goodbye to Mena if she really wanted to stay. It hurt her to see the sadness that overtook Mena's whole body as she trailed after her. She didn't even bother telling Mena to stay because she knew it would fall on deaf ears. She was secretly happy that Mena was leaving with her, and that simple emotion is what made her feel like a piece of shit. She was being selfish, and she knew it, but this place was not for her. She just hoped that once they finally did get back home, it wouldn't take Mena long to forget about all of this—if she ever did. As much as she hated this place, she did admit there had been a few good points. She learned a lot of different and interesting things and met some nice people, but she wanted desperately to go home. She didn't belong in this world, didn't fit in. She missed her boring life back home, her regular-sized bedroom with the blue star drapes and the matching bedspread. She missed her friends and family, even missed the annoying neighbor kids who liked to be extra loud early in the mornings. Walking quickly down the long, white-stoned hallway, she looked over her shoulder. Mena walked behind her, a couple of bags hanging from her shoulders. Mena attempted a sincere smile, but it fell very short of its mark. The sadness and worry that creased her beautiful features overshadowed everything else.

“Here, I'll lead us out. You don't even know where to go.”

She smiled at Mena and adjusted one of the bags hanging from her shoulder. “Actually I had a feeling you would end up changing

your mind and want to stay here, so during the time I've been here, I found a way out myself."

"Clever, aren't you?"

Mena couldn't believe how this all had played out. Kitty turned back around and made her way down the corridor. Mena didn't know what else to do but follow her. She wanted to talk to Kitty more, at least try to change her mind. Temptation nagged at her to yell for Demariak, but really, what would he do? Hold Kitty down and make her stay? She couldn't do that to Kitty, and she certainly didn't want to cause problems for anyone. No, the best thing to do was shut up and get out of here quickly.

Kitty walked through the tunnels like she lived here, knowing every twist and turn. Mena followed Kitty past a sharp curve and was greeted with a small hallway made up of dull-looking gray stone. It looked nothing like any of the other hallways, its dinginess making it appear drab.

Mena was so confused and had no idea where they were. She turned around in a small circle, trying to see more than just plain, gray rock surrounding her. The small space barely had any lighting, only a soft glow from the hallway to illuminate it. She heard a light scraping sound and turned toward Kitty. Kitty stood by the farthest part of the wall, her fingers running over the stone. She pushed in a piece of the wall, and the stone easily moved.

The small square-shaped piece looked like the rest of the wall and was only a little bit bigger than Kitty's hand. Mena would have never noticed it if she had stumbled by this place on her own, and it made her wonder how Kitty could have possibly found it.

"What are you doing?" She walked closer to Kitty, watching as she pushed the square-shaped stone in until it wouldn't move anymore. Mena jumped back as the wall in front of them slid silently to the side, revealing another cave-like entrance.

"Kitty, what the hell just happened, and how did you know about that?"

“I followed one of the men one day, on one of the rare occasions I was actually free of my watch dog. Anyways, he came to this small alcove. I watched from behind one of the shadowed corners as he put his hand on the wall and made the wall open up. It leads outside.”

Mena walked closer and ran her hand over the cold wall, expecting a trap door to spring open.

“Once I figured out how to do it, I tried every day to get it to open up.”

“How did you come here every day without anyone knowing?”

“You mean without Keirak knowing?”

Mena nodded, her attention still on the gray stone.

“Every day, around the same time, Keirak would go to practice with his weapons. I followed him the first couple of times, kind of curious as to what he was doing. He’s pretty good, really good actually. Anyways, those are the times I came over here.”

“How do you know what’s on the other side?”

Mena stepped back, her eyes on Kitty.

“I watched the men open it. There is a cave on the other side, and beyond that, well, I don’t know. The outside I assume.”

“Oh.”

Fear became thick inside of Mena. Not knowing what lay on the other side was worse than knowing what greeted them very soon.

“I thought someone actually caught me once. I ran to the alcove one night and tried to open the damned thing again when I heard footsteps coming. I dashed into a corner before I was caught.” She walked through the opened stone door, and Mena had no choice but to follow her. She couldn’t let her just leave and possibly get injured—or worse.

“Kitty, please. This is really not a good idea.”

Kitty stopped and turned around. “Listen, just go back, Mena.” She shook her head, turning back around and walking again.

Mena didn’t bother saying anything else. She just hoped Kitty came to her senses once they finally left the cave.

“So anyways, I ran into the corner because I heard someone coming—turned out to be that beast of a man, Keirak.”

Mena agreed with Kitty there. Keirak was a hulking man, almost as tall as Demariak, and certainly not lacking any of the muscles.

“There is no way he could have seen me because of the darkened corner. I even crouched between two large boulders to make sure he didn’t see me.” Adjusting the bags on her shoulder, Kitty let out a big sigh. “So anyway, I am crammed up against these rocks, and I hear him making his way toward the wall, no doubt about to open it. I peeked my head around the corner, making sure I was still in the shadows, when I see his hand go up to that invisible stone square.” She adjusted the straps of the bags once again and went on with her story.

“As his hand was just about to press down on the stone, he stopped in mid air, and slowly turned toward the corner I huddled behind. My heart beat so fast I thought for sure he could hear it. I willed myself to be calm, to slow my breathing. I didn’t want him to be able to sense me, but it seemed like an unbeatable task to accomplish. I thought he caught me. I heard some more men walk into the alcove, and, thankfully, that distracted him, or he hadn’t sensed me.”

Knitting her eyebrows, Mena thought it was funny how Kitty worded that. *He couldn’t sense me?* Not about to even go there, she saw Kitty look over her shoulder and look her in the eye.

“Oh, you didn’t know, did you?”

She walked faster toward Kitty, who picked up her pace. She lightly grabbed hold of Kitty’s arm and stopped her, which made Kitty turn around with a scowl on her face.

“What are you doing? I want to get the hell out of here, and you are just dragging it out! Are you waiting for your backup or something?” Huffing to herself, Kitty’s face got a little pink, a sure sign of her mounting anger.

“I’m not waiting for any backup, Kitty. Stop acting like this!” Her voice rose so she willed herself to calm down. “First of all, I am only acting like this because I care about you and don’t want anything bad to happen to you. Second of all, you’re being stubborn, and I hate that quality in you!” She watched as Kitty’s lips quirked up in amusement, but then she quickly hid it. “I want to know what you mean about him *sensing* you. That is a weird way of putting something. I mean, you make it sound like they’re animals or something.”

Kitty dropped to the ground and let out a sigh and faced Mena again. “I’m not surprised your little boyfriend didn’t tell you, but since you have decided to stay here, I am going to lay it all out for you.”

After what seemed like forever, Mena waved her hand in a gesture for Kitty to go on. “I sat in the fountain room one day, watching the water come down the wall when I overheard a deep voice. I heard children’s voices so I went to the next room and peeked through the door. About ten children sat in a circle around this massive man. It reminded me of story time or something. The children were little boys, and the instructor, I guess is what you would call him, told the boys how to spot their enemy and hunt them. The man went into detail about using their sense of smell to track their prey down and so on. I mean, Mena, these people can *smell* when you’re scared, angry, or... aroused.” Flushing brightly, Kitty turned away for a moment before she continued

“They can see at night just like some kind of panther or something. I don’t have to remind you about their strength or size. They are far from human, and a big part of the reason I am leaving is because that scares the shit out of me.” Flipping a lock of hair over her shoulder, she continued. “I mean, who knows what else these... *men* can do!”

Kitty must be wrong. Mena knew Demariak wasn’t like other men. They were on another dimension, so of course things would be different than what they knew. Even though Kitty talked about them

like they should be beasts to fear, Demariak was so gentle with her. He always went out of his way to make her not frightened of him. No matter what the difference, she knew Demariak would never let anything happen to her. If that meant she needed to get used to supernatural powers, so to speak, well then, she could live with that. Kitty didn't give her a chance to respond. She just picked up her bags and shook her head. She walked again, the subject being completely dropped. Mena looked ahead and could see the glow of the night.

"Kitty, I really don't think this is a good idea." The closer they got to the mouth of the cave, the more she felt tingles go down her spine. She didn't feel right and knew this situation wasn't going to be good.

"Go back, Mena. I don't expect you to go with me, and, honestly, all you have been trying to do is talk me out of it, which you know is a lost cause."

True, Mena knew how stubborn she was, but still she couldn't just watch her walk into the unknown. She should have called for Demariak.

Chapter Fourteen

They walked through the mouth of the cave, the cool air wafting over their faces. Mena turned and looked behind her, the cave just a small opening in a huge mountain. The mountain took up her entire view, going on for miles and miles on either side of her. Turning back around, she could make out the moons above her through a break in the trees. They both just stood there for a minute, looking around at the jungle and all of the shadows that could be hiding unknown threats. Their surroundings held an eerie silence. Not even the rustle of animals gave any sound.

“Kitty, let’s go back inside. I mean it. Can’t you feel how wrong this is? I am not going to just leave you by yourself out here, so don’t even say it.” Mena looked down at her hands, realizing she was twisting her fingers together. She looked up at Kitty, whose hands tightly gripped the bag’s straps.

“If I just start to walk, it’ll be fine. The darkness always makes everything look scary.” Not even looking back, Kitty slowed her pace as they made their way into the unknown darkness.

Oh, hell. Mena did not want to go out there. She had told Demariak she wouldn’t leave, that she would be right back. She could run back and get him, but she wouldn’t leave Kitty by herself.

Bad idea, this is such a bad idea!

* * * *

They walked through the bushes, only ten minutes into Kitty’s little journey. They both wore the transparent dresses, and the cool air

passing through the thin material made them both shiver. Mena didn't say as much, but the breeze wasn't the only thing making her shiver. Fear was at the forefront of her mind, every little sound causing her heart to pound against her ribs. As they made their way through the thick foliage, the branches whipped at her arms and legs, causing her skin to burn and throb. Their travel was slow, and Mena still tried desperately to get Kitty to turn around, but with no luck. She knew it was a lost cause, but fear coursed through her body and she did it out of instinct. A few times, Kitty stopped and looked around, seeming like she might turn back. She would then shake her head and mumble something to herself and trek on. Walking close to Kitty, Mena's eyes finally adjusted to the darkness. The light from the moon penetrated the branches, casting an ethereal silver glow around them. The breeze whistled through the branches, small twigs snapping all around them, and paranoia coated Mena's senses. Looking around, she stopped dead in her tracks and whispered Kitty's name.

"What? I swear if you're going to talk me out of it one more time, I'm going to scream. Just turn around already." Mena was vaguely aware of Kitty stopping and turning towards her, but she would not turn away from the source that held her attention. Her body shook uncontrollably, and her teeth chattered so loudly it seemed to echo off the trees. Kitty dropped the bags on the ground, the sound seeming so loud in the dead silence that surrounded them.

"Mena what's wrong?" She forced her eyes to look at Kitty, pleading with her without saying anything to be still and quiet. Kitty seemed oblivious, though, and placed a hand on her shoulder.

"Be very quiet and quit moving." She spoke through her teeth, trying to be as quiet as she could. Kitty's brow creased, and she turned around, her mouth going slack at what she saw. What stood just a few feet away from them was enormous, a beast from the darkest pits of hell.

"Oh...Holy...Hell... Mena"

* * * *

Demariak lay on the bed waiting for Mena to come back from speaking with Kitty. He knew he was stubborn and possessive, but when it came to Mena, he couldn't help himself. She did something to him, made him feel territorial and protective. She made him feel things that he never thought he could feel. She gave him strength, gave him hope, and brought out goodness in him that he didn't know he possessed.

A loud knock on his chamber door made him get out of bed. He put his leathers on before the pounding could begin again. Prowling over to the door, he ripped it open and glowered at who stood on the other side. Keirak stared at him, his face looking grim. Dread settled in Demariak's gut at Keirak's look.

"My lord, we have a problem, and it concerns the females."

Demariak didn't have to ask which females Keirak meant. Before he could even question what happened, Keirak spoke in a hard tone.

"The female, Kitty, has found the opening into the *Nenana* cave. She has managed to open it and left with your female trailing behind her."

He could feel his anger start to mount to a dangerous level. Mena swore she wouldn't leave him—told him she loved him.

"If I may speak, my lord?" At the tight nod of Demariak's head, Keirak continued. "Icezack overheard Kitty and your female speaking before they left. It is my understanding that Mena tried very hard to sway Kitty's opinion on leaving. I believe the only reason she left was to see her safe. I do not believe she truly meant to deceive you. As soon as I realized what had happened, I came to your chambers immediately to await your orders." Keirak ran a hand over his hair, mussing it up. "I would have gone after them, but by the time I found out, they were already gone. I thought it best to alert you. I await your orders."

“Why didn’t Icezack stop them when he heard them speaking of leaving?”

“My lord, it is well known that Kitty didn’t want to stay here. Icezack just assumed it was another one of her rants. By the time he realized what had happened, he came to me immediately.”

Demariak was furious. He knew it wasn’t Isaac’s fault that the women left, but his anger didn’t want to make that distinction. He wanted to hit something, hit it so hard he would feel his knuckles crush under the impact. He prayed to the gods that nothing would happen to Mena. Because if anything should happen to her, all would do best to steer clear of his wrath.

Keirak was his second in command and most trusted member of his tribe. Hearing him speak of Mena’s intentions made him calm... slightly. Mena and Kitty had still left the safety of the mountain and the protection of the tribe. Because of that, monumental problems could arise and probably would arise.

Pacing in front of the door, he ran a hand through his short hair and sighed loudly. He could feel the anger radiating off of Keirak, and he could sense below all that anger a good dose of fear. No doubt Keirak felt the same possessive, territorial feelings toward Kitty as he felt toward Mena. He watched Keirak and the way his eyes were constantly on Kitty. He could see the lust and desire radiating off of him when she was near.

After lacing up his leather boots, he went to a hidden panel in the wall and pressed roughly on the cold stone. A loud whoosh sounded as the wall moved aside. As soon as the wall slid aside, a dim light from the back displayed a wide range of weapons.

Reaching up, he pulled down a six-foot sword and strapped it to his back with leather ties. Pulling two daggers down, he attached them on the outside of his thighs. He reached for the traditional *neeko* whip that all of the warriors in his tribe fought with. The *neeko* whip was two long, thick leather straps that had pea-sized stones sandwiched in between them. Once the whip struck an opponent, the pea-sized

pebbles would crack slightly and let out toxic oil that immediately soaked into the flesh. The oil caused paralysis to the affected area. The idea was to paralyze an enemy so that one could eliminate him efficiently.

The *neeko* whip was the *ZorZack* tribe's most secret weapon in defeating their enemies. Curling the whip and attaching it to his hip, he made his way past Keirak without a sideways glance. He didn't need to say anything. Keirak would know to suit up, get the other warriors, and meet him at the entrance to the *Nenana* cave.

The only sound echoing off the stone walls was the heavy thump of his and Keirak's boots hitting the ground. The only thoughts in his head concerned Mena. The fear that he felt for her twisted in his chest, making it feel tight with pressure. Absently rubbing the spot over his heart, he could not remember a time when he feared anything. The thought of losing Mena, though, made his heart hurt and brought a dread to him the likes of which he had never felt.

Chapter Fifteen

As Mena and Kitty stood frozen in place, the only thing they could manage to do was grip onto each other's bodies. In front of them, through the thick foliage of branches and bushes, a set of white glowing eyes stared at them. The eyes were the size of baseballs and held menace in the darkness.

"K-Kitty, what is th-that?" Mena's voice trembled when she spoke.

"I don't know, but I think I should have listened to you about going back." Mena barely heard Kitty's whispered response, but neither of them wanted to draw unwanted attention. She didn't look at Kitty when she spoke, wanting only to keep her sight on the creature in front of them. She would have thought the glowing eyes might have been a trick of the light, but she could see them blinking, darkness temporarily masking their brightness.

"Kitty, we have to move very slowly and start to walk backward toward that cave again." Mena didn't know what else to say or do. The cave was at least a ten-minute walk in the other direction, and she wasn't even sure if she could remember the way. What if this thing attacks by movement, or could smell their fear? There were no other options. Either stay still and possibly get killed, or start moving and possibly get killed. As if they read each other's mind, they both moved slowly backward and to the side.

Kitty left the bags on the ground and clutched her arms as if they were a life preserver. Kitty and Mena made it only a couple of steps before Mena stepped on a twig. The sound echoed through the forest, seeming a hundred times louder than it normally would. Stopping

dead in their tracks, both of them stared ahead into the glowing eyes that seemed to be getting higher. They tilted their heads back as the eyes went higher. The creature still had the darkness cloaked around its body and the light from the moons making a slash on the ground right in front of it. Staring wide-eyed, the women watched as a large, black, razor-sharp clawed foot came into the light. The claws were like swords jutting out from a four-toed, webbed foot. Bringing their eyes up, they watched in horror as the beast finally came fully into the slash of light.

Gasping at what she saw in front of them, Mena couldn't help but tremble with fright. Kitty's hands gripped her arm and shook violently. The *thing* in front of them had to be at least ten feet tall. It was all black, except for uneven lines going through it of darker shades of brown and green. It stood on two lizard-like legs and had two lizard-like arms. The claws jutted from its fingers and toes, lethal and intense-looking. On its belly tentacle-like extensions hung freely. Mena held back her gag reflex just from looking at the creature and the awful wave-like motions the tentacles made.

Her mouth went slack at seeing its face. It looked like something out of a horror movie. Its long snout and needle-sharp serrated teeth came into the slash of light, black saliva dripping on the jungle floor. It had two sets of teeth, one on the top and a set on the bottom. They shined in the moonlight with deadly intent. It hissed at them, the sound like a snake getting ready to strike.

"Oh, hell, Mena, I was wrong." Kitty cried her confession. Mena heard her softly weep and held back her own tears as she felt the prickly sensation come over her.

Damn them for leaving the bag full of weapons several feet away. Mena had known something like this would happen, and she should have stuck with her instincts. She cursed herself for not grabbing the fallen bag when they backed up. If they could find a weapon, anything within their reach, then it might give them the chance to stall for time until, hopefully, help arrived. She hoped Demariak found out

that they had left. It was too much to hope for, though. He probably still lounged in their bed, awaiting her return.

Still clutching her friend, Mena slowly glanced down with only her eyes so she didn't draw any attention to herself. She tried her best to see in the little light that the moon provided. She scanned the jungle floor quickly, trying to find a weapon of some kind. She made sure to glance up every few seconds to make sure the beast hadn't advanced on them. Sure enough, the beast hadn't moved, but just kept drooling and making that disgusting hissing noise.

"Kitty, don't make a sound. I want you to follow my moves very slowly." She enunciated the last word. Mena slowly bent her knees, moving closer to the ground. She kept both eyes on the beast while she went down.

Thankfully, Kitty followed her to the ground silently. A deafening roar echoed off the jungle trees, making Mena and Kitty release their grip on each other. They covered their ears, the sound so loud it made them cringe in pain. The sound was like nothing she had ever heard before. It sounded distorted, like the thing was roaring under water. Quickly scooping up a palm-sized stone she planned on using as a weapon, Mena made sure to grab Kitty by the arm and stand back up quickly. They both became motionless again, and Mena hoped the beast hadn't noticed their movements too much.

The beast slowly slithered to them, whipping its tail from side to side and taking out chunks of tree bark in the process. It crept toward them, flicking its tongue out the same way a snake would. They didn't move, held their ground, and hoped the beast would stop. It took a couple of steps and stopped, smelling the air. It continued to hiss, drool spilling out of its mouth and landing on the razor sharp toes.

The thing can only see us when we move!

The realization surprised her, and her brain instantly started to think of a plan. The heaviness of the stone in her palm reminded her of it and gave her strength. She brought her eyes down to it, making sure to not move her head.

Making sure to barely move her mouth, she whispered, “Don’t move, Kitty. That thing reacts to movement.” Kitty had become silent, her breathing the only sound coming from her.

“I got that, Mena, but what are we going to do now? We can’t exactly make a run for it. I have a feeling that *thing* would take one step and eat us.” She said it much the same as a ventriloquist would.

The stone got warmer in Mena’s hand, giving her the strength to carry on with her plan.

“I want you to follow my lead when I say so.” She didn’t give Kitty any time to respond. In one swift movement, she lifted her arm and threw the stone as far as she could in the opposite direction. As soon as she let go of the stone, the beast spotted it flying through the air and swung its body in that direction.

“Now!” She whispered loudly, wanting to make sure not to draw the attention of the beast back to them. Running in the other direction, they moved as fast as their legs would take them. They prayed they went in the right direction, but the darkness and their fear worked against them. The only light offered was that of the slashes of moonlight through the branches. The air felt cool on her face, and even though the leaves whipped her face and arms, she made sure to grip Kitty’s hand tight and run faster.

She didn’t dare look back, but then she heard the loud crunching of sticks and branches behind them. Giving in, she whipped her head over her shoulder. Kitty ran beside her, and Mena could see the fear in her eyes. She could also see the hard set of determination reflected on her face. It would have been inspirational except for the fact that another loud roar tore through the darkness, making them stumble slightly from fear.

That’s when Mena saw the beast come barreling toward them with a frightening speed. Breathing deeply, Mena told Kitty to run faster and prayed they would make it in time. She was tempted to stop and hope the beast didn’t sense them, but fear kept her moving. She couldn’t risk it, not with the creature so close behind them.

Where are you, Demariak?

Chapter Sixteen

Demariak and a handful of his strongest warriors walked through the dense jungle. The leaves were thick and the cool air wafted across their senses. They kept silent in their search, their heightened senses giving them perfect night vision. They only walked for about five minutes when a deafening roar traveled toward them. Only one creature made a sound like that: the *thanka-ta* beast. The *thanka-ta* beast was one of the most dangerous creatures that stalked the jungle. They only roared like that when they hunted their prey.

He could have pushed it aside, thinking it hunted a smaller jungle creature. He stood there and closed his eyes, focusing his advanced hearing on his surroundings. He could have pushed the roar aside, assuming the beast just hunted, but as he listened, other noises made themselves known. He heard two hearts beating a fast rhythm, the loud thumping of two frightened hearts. He knew those two heart beats were Mena and Kitty, and he knew they were in trouble. About to send his warriors in the direction of the beast, he picked up two swift movements off to the side. He immediately caught sight of Mena's long hair flowing behind her and the light color of Kitty's hair as the two ran quickly.

The heavy thick leaves slapped them on every exposed body part. Demariak didn't wait any longer, just took off through the woods towards the females. He turned his head and saw Keriak run next to him, his expression fierce. Far on the other side, the warriors stealthily moved towards the beast. He saw in horror as the beast closed in on the females, only a few feet away from them.

* * * *

Mena's legs burned from the running. Her lungs strained from the big gulps of air she sucked in. She could feel the monster closing in on them, and she felt hopelessness settle in.

So this is how I die, at the mercy of a horrible beast from my nightmares.

She didn't want to say her thought out loud, didn't want to make Kitty any more scared than she already was, if that were even possible.

She stumbled over her own feet, causing Kitty to stumble as well. They both fell to the ground. Their breathing ragged, and their hearts pounded. About to regain her footing, she froze at the feel of warm, moist breath cascading down her back. She looked into Kitty's face to see her friend's eyes wide with fear. Ever so slowly, Mena turned her head and saw a huge, gaping mouth with razor-sharp teeth. Its slime-like drool fell to the ground, the sound of it hitting the dirt making her feel sick.

She didn't need to tell Kitty to run, instinct causing them to move. Through the corner of her eye, she saw Kitty's body momentarily freeze. Gripping her hands in the dirt, she tensed her legs and shot up ready to make a getaway. As Kitty ran only inches ahead of her, Mena chanced a look behind her only to regret the act. The beast closed in, bringing its deadly-sharp tail up like a scorpion about to strike. Looking forward, she felt a cool whoosh of air behind her before she felt a piercing pain strike her in the back. She stumbled again from the impact, forcing herself to block out the pain and continue to run.

* * * *

Demariak watched in horror as the beast cut into Mena. He moved more quickly, shouting out his orders to the warriors just feet from the beast. In unison, they all pulled out their bows, their arrows flying

through the air and striking the beast. He was so close to them, yet so far away. He pushed his body harder than ever before, not caring that the branches cut against his flesh.

The beast roared as the arrows pierced its flesh, its tail whipping furiously back and forth. The plan worked, though, and the beast stopped hunting the females, its mouth trying feverishly to rip the arrows from its body. Arrow after arrow flew into its body as Demariak's warriors moved closer to the beast. He was so close, so close to the females that he could hear their heavy panting.

It wasn't just the cut that worried him; it was the poison the beast injected into its prey that was the deadliest. He needed to get to Mena fast before the poison fully circulated in her blood. If it set into her muscles and bones, it would be too late.

He ate up the distance, Keirak right on his heels and going straight for Kitty. The females were slowing, their bodies about to give in to exhaustion. The females stumbled again, and that was when he looped his arm around Mena's waist. She gave a gasp as he scooped her into his arms and picked up his speed.

He pumped his legs harder, his feet taking them farther away from the beast. Keirak's moves were quick and steady behind him, and he chanced a look behind him. Kitty was draped across his arms, her whole body curled inward. He was aware of the war cries echoing through the trees—his men closing in on the beast. He would have gotten great pleasure from killing the beast himself, but right now, Mena was what mattered.

He didn't know what ruled him more: the anger that he felt that Mena hadn't listened to him, or the fear that she would be taken away from him. Mena wept in his arms, her soft cries making his heart clench.

"Shhh, it's okay, my love. You're safe now!" She sagged in his arms, her crying slowly calming down. He held her tighter, his eyes taking in their surroundings. He could hear nothing advancing on them and knew his men were doing their job.

He could smell the blood from her wound and knew it was deep. The warm stickiness of it coated his arm, running down his hand. He wanted to comfort her but knew it wasn't the time or place for such actions. Running toward a deep gorge in the ground, he slowed and then finally stopped. Keirak stepped next to him, Kitty in his arms, her soft cries audible.

Demariak stared down at Mena, her eyes wide with fear and the moisture from her tears glistening in the moonlight. He knew she couldn't see him as well as he could her, but nonetheless, she reached her hands toward him and whispered his name softly.

"It will be ok, *thalla*. I am going to take you to the healer." He pulled her closer into his body, her small frame starting to shiver uncontrollably. "Keirak, I need you to finish it. I will take the females back to the mountain; Mena needs the healer right away. He turned towards Keirak, who stared at Kitty with longing. He didn't say anything, just dipped his head and kissed Kitty on the head.

He looked at Demariak, nodded his head and gently set Kitty on the ground. He was gone before another word was said, his movements so fast he was nowhere to be seen.

Chapter Seventeen

Keirak hated leaving Kitty but knew there were no other options at the moment. As he swiftly ran toward the other warriors, he could already smell blood, and not just from the beast. He reached a clearing where the men were all standing in a loose circle around the beast.

The *Thanka-ta* beast mostly relied on movement to catch its prey, so they had a big advantage. The creature was fierce, its weaknesses minimal. Because it had such poor eye sight, it relied on transmitting.

As he silently crouched mere feet from the loose circle of warriors, he knew the men could already sense him. At the moment, the beast seemed confused, its head thrashing back and forth, trying to locate them. It could sense them but was disoriented and confused.

Keirak didn't even flinch when the beast let out a horrendous roar, its tail whipping back and forth and its claws outstretched. This was a predictable tactic, a defense mechanism it used to frighten its prey out of hiding. Keirak took the opportunity while the beast was distracted and moved closer to the circle. He signaled for the other warriors to do the same, each one of them silent and precise in their movements. As the warriors quickly made room, the beast froze and whipped its body around until it stared directly at Keirak.

* * * *

Demariak had Mena cradled in one arm and Kitty hanging onto his back. His legs ate up the ground, and within moments he could see the entrance to the cave.

“Is she going to be all right?”

Kitty’s soft voice vibrated against his back, and he looked down at Mena. Her eyes were barely open, and her breathing was growing slower by the second. “I hope so.”

That was the best answer he could give her, the most honest one. He truly didn’t know if she would be all right, and as Kitty wept against his back, he wished he could reassure her more... reassure himself more.

* * * *

As Keirak stared at the *Thanka-ta* beast, he couldn’t help the fury that went through him because the females had gotten hurt from this creature. Kitty may not have gotten injured, but he knew she would forever be emotionally scarred. He couldn’t even imagine what Demariak was going through right now. All his life he fought the creatures of his planet and had gotten injured in the process. He never, though, in all his time had such an intense desire to slaughter one of the beasts as he did right now.

With Demariak not able to lead, Keirak was put in charge. The warriors waited silently for him to give orders, and he knew he would need their help in defeating the beast. He craved, needed to deliver the first hard blow. Keeping his body still, he brought his arm around slowly to grip the *neeko* whip he had attached to his body. One strike to the beast’s body wouldn’t bring it down, but it would stun it enough for him and his warriors to make their move.

The beast roared as it caught the slight movement he made and went into a crouching stance. It stayed in that position, momentarily frozen in place as it waited. In a lightning flash of movement, Keirak brought the whip out and into a wide arc. It whistled through the night air, making contact with the beast’s back.

The deafening roar would have made a lesser warrior blink, but for him, it only made his irritation spike. Catching a fast movement above, the creature’s needle-sharp tail slashed through the air.

Throwing himself to the ground and rolling to the side, Keirak barked out an order to the warriors. The sharp, poisonous tip of the tail struck the ground mere inches from his body.

That was all it took for his men to attack the beast with skilled precision. Standing up, he picked up the *neeko* whip, which had fallen to the ground in his quick movements, and whipped it around his head in a circular motion. He twisted it so that it wrapped around the beast's neck. The creature's tail slashed through the night, trying to make contact with anything.

Fury contorted the beast's features as the warriors attacked it. Gripping the whip tighter caused it to tighten around the beast's neck. Popping noises sounded around him as the whip's poison-filled stones broke and penetrated the beast's skin. Its claws slashed out, making contact with a few of the warriors. Its claws didn't carry the same noxious poison as its tail did, but they were sharp and could cut a body in half. It whipped its tail again, slashing across his leathers and forcing him to the ground.

Gripping his arm, the warriors rushed the beast, taking it to the ground quickly. The warriors circled the fallen creature and tightened the leathers that wrapped around its body. With the beast temporarily restrained, a few of the warriors went to the injured males to see to their wounds. The *Thanka-ta* beast flailed around, trying to slash out at the warriors even though it was restrained. Even though the poison in the whips would have paralyzed a smaller creature, it didn't much faze the *Thanka-ta*.

Keirak pulled himself off the ground, thankful the beast had only gotten his leathers. Staring the beast in the eye, Keirak reached behind him and brought out his six-foot sword. Bringing it in front of the beast's eyes, he made sure the creature could see its sharp point. The beast hissed at him, showing its rows and rows of disgusting, serrated teeth. It tried to lunge forward, snapping at him. Just as the beast was about to make contact with him, he brought the sword down, cleanly

cutting the head from its body. Even though it was decapitated, it still snapped its jaw open and closed, its body twisting on the ground.

Wiping his sword on his leather-clad thigh, he left the beast on the ground to die.

Chapter Eighteen

Demariak moved quickly through the tunnels of the mountain, pushing past anyone that stood in his way. Kitty tried to keep up with him, her crying echoing off the stone walls.

“Kitty, please go back to your chamber. I will send Keirak for you once I safely get Mena to the healer.” She cried harder behind him, and he clenched his jaw. It pained him to hear her cries, but she was a distraction he couldn’t afford right now.

Mena’s eyes were closed, her breathing almost nonexistent.

“Will you tell me how she is as soon as you get word?”

“Yes, Kitty.”

He was thankful when he didn’t hear her behind him any longer and breathed out a sigh. He picked up his pace, taking the last turn and seeing the healer’s chamber ahead.

* * * *

Kitty paced her room, going back and forth in front of her bed. She chewed on her nails, so nervous she could not stand to be still. Tears streamed down her cheeks at the thought of Mena lying so still in Demariak’s arms. She hated herself, wished she was the one who had gotten hurt instead of Mena. If she had just listened to Mena, none of this would have happened. A light knock sounded at her door, and she rushed over to it, praying it was word about Mena. She threw the door open, surprised to see Keirak standing on the other side.

“Is she okay?”

She stuck her head around the door frame, looking both ways before stepping back inside. She knew Keirak couldn't understand her, but the question had been rattling in her head since they had gotten back to the mountain. He stared at her, sadness covering his strong features. She twisted her hands together, her heart beating wildly against her ribs. He took a couple of steps towards her, and she swallowed. Tears continued to stream down her cheek, and she wished he couldn't see her looking so vulnerable.

He passed the threshold, mere feet from her. She felt his body heat radiating off of him. Her emotions were so strong, so fierce that she needed to feel something other than them. She took the few steps that separated them and wrapped her arms around his waist. He tensed against her, but she didn't care. He felt so good against her, his hard body giving her the strength she didn't have. He whispered something against her hair, his hands running slow circles against her back. She cried harder against his chest, thankful for the comfort he gave her.

"Oh Keirak, I hope Mena is okay."

"Detta ka thentta, vu, Keena."

* * * *

Surprise engulfed Keirak when Kitty wrapped her small arms around his waist. Since her arrival to Dimi of the Seven Moons, she had been so distant with him. Although he knew she was probably just emotional over everything that had happened, he welcomed her warm embrace. Even though he would have preferred her embrace to be because she cared for him, he would take what he could get. He couldn't help the endearment that slipped out and was thankful that she didn't understand his native tongue. He knew she didn't realize that when he said "Detta ka thentta, vu, Keena", it meant "*Worry no more, my heart.*"

He never felt shame or disappointment for never learning the English tongue, for he never had the opportunity when he was a

young child. But now that Kitty had come into his life, he wished he had learned it so he could tell her the endearments in her native English.

He knew when everything passed, she would probably go back to disliking him. He should keep his distance, had heard as much from the other warriors, but he couldn't help himself. He felt possessive and territorial around her, felt himself warm at the sight of her smile when she smelled one of the garden flowers. He knew she always thought no one could see her, and because of that fact, her smile was always genuine. His heart swelled with a feeling he had never felt before.

Looking down at her, he absently rubbed his thumbs over the soft swells of her cheeks. Her beauty astounded him, bewitched him and made his heart stop. But, he knew she would never accept him or a life in his world. He just couldn't bring himself to let her go, though. He knew she wanted desperately to leave, to go back to what she knew. He would give her anything her heart desired, would give her the moons if her heart desired.

She silently cried against him, her small hands gripping his back. He pulled away, gently taking her small hand and leading her out of her chamber. She gave no resistance, just followed him with sadness in her eyes. He didn't know how Mena was, but maybe Demariak could give her some good news about Mena, or at least he hoped he could. She walked by his side, her warm hand still in his. Her sweet scent washed through him, warming his chest. She was his *keena*, his heart. He whispered more endearments and encouragements to her. He told her that everything would be okay, hoping that what he said wasn't in vain.

Chapter Nineteen

Demariak paced in front of the healer's chamber, waiting for word about Mena's condition. She was so close to death by the time he arrived at the healer's chambers. Once he finally reached the healer, he could do nothing but kneel on the ground and let the servants take Mena from his arms. They carried her still form into the sacred chamber, the doors shutting him out and breaking his heart further.

He would have brought her into the chamber himself, but it was forbidden to enter unless one practiced the high healing arts or had been an inducted, loyal servant of the *Chachina*, the high healer. Even Demariak, being the leader of all the ZorZack tribe, followed the same rules as all others. At that moment, though, he wanted to barge through the double doors and take Mena's small hand into his. He wanted to comfort her, make sure she knew how much he cared for her. He didn't, though, and just sat on the cold ground and waited.

He couldn't stop the hollow ache that filled his chest, the emptiness that he felt when they plucked Mena out of his arms. He now sat on a stone bench, the *koola* and *jaggina* flowers' potent scents coating the small waiting area. His senses were numb, and not even the smell of those beautiful healing flowers was able to inspire him.

Keirak had brought Kitty by. Kitty's face was red and wet from her tears. She insisted on staying until they heard word about Mena, but Demariak had talked her into going with Keirak and getting something to eat.

Running a hand over his face, Demariak stared at the floor, moving his foot in a repetitive motion. Elbows on his knees, he placed

his face in his hands and breathed a weary sigh. The chamber door finally opened and out stepped the *Chachina*, her face tired from the strain. He stood up instantly and watched as the *Chachina* slowly walked up to him and stared into his eyes. She stood several feet shorter than him, and her age far surpassed his own. Her flowing white hair brushed her hips. Her eyes, the color of the darkest waters, reflected her immense knowledge.

He worriedly looked down at the healer. “Great *Chachina*, please bring good news about my *thalla*.” He didn’t care that a warrior such as himself spoke such endearments in front of others. He was their ruler, and his love lay injured in the next room.

The healer stared at him, her knowing eyes so wise. His fear increased at her silence. She held up a slender, wrinkled hand for him to be silent.

“Worry not, great lord, for your queen is well.”

Relief washed through him at the knowledge that she would be okay. His body sagged, his big shoulders slumping.

“You are lucky you brought the young female to me when you did.” Taking her fragile body over to the stone bench, the healer sat down, making sure all of her *kooka* robes were in their rightful place. “The poison advanced through her system rapidly, and she hallucinated about... a private moment between the two of you.”

She cleared her throat, and he knew the healer had heard things she wished she hadn’t.

“She is healthy and well, but there have been some things that came up during my healing session that you should be aware of.”

A dread settled in Demariak’s stomach at that thought that something could be terribly wrong. Would there be an illness that she would carry with her through her life? Would the poison leave lasting effects? How he wanted to rush right in there and cradle her body close to his, feel her warmth settle down to his bones and give him the reassurance that he needed—that he craved. He listened in numb shock at what the healer revealed to him in those next moments.

He made his way toward the healer's chamber door, stopping and looking back at the healer. He turned back to the closed doors, his emotions wild inside of him. He stared at the door for long moments, seeing each grain of the wood swirl together in a hypnotizing collection. He wanted nothing more than to rush back there and hold Mena in his arms. He wanted to bust through the doors, show anyone who watched whom he possessed, what was his to keep safe. He didn't, though, just turned away and headed back to his chamber. Mena still lay unconscious. The healer informed him that she needed all the healing rest she could get. He clenched his jaw, forcing himself to keep moving and not turn back.

* * * *

Two days passed since Demariak had brought Mena to the healer. He felt on edge, his temper flaring at every small thing. Everyone steered clear of him, knowing why he acted the way he did. He paced his chamber, waiting impatiently as the time ticked down until he could see her. She would be transferred today to another chamber now that her strength had grown. He sat down on his bed, his pacing causing tracks in the floor. Just a few moments longer, and he could be with Mena.

He walked briskly toward the chamber Mena now stayed in, his heart pounding so fast he thought it would explode. Stopping at the closed double doors, he took a deep breath and pushed them open. In the center of the room stood a great stone platform topped with pillows, furs, and blankets made from the finest fabrics. The candles burned low, framing the bed and making a soft halo of light around it. Several stone slabs sat around the room, holding various natural elements the *Chachina* used in her healing.

Walking toward the stone platform, he sucked in a breath when he saw how pale Mena was. She looked so frail and fragile, her small body covered in blankets. She breathed heavily, her body in a deep

healing sleep. He couldn't stop the joy that rushed through him. To know she was indeed alive and well made him ecstatic.

Closing his eyes, he ran a hand through his short hair, breathing out a deep breath he hadn't realized he held. Almost as if she sensed him, she moved slightly in the bed, her face grimacing in pain. He rushed to her side, his big war-callused hand running over her hair. He whispered softly to her, telling her how precious she was.

"Demariak, is that you?"

Her voice sounded soft, so distant and weak. He clenched his jaw and closed his eyes, joy radiating through him at her state of well-being. "Shh, it's okay, *thalla*. I'm here now, and everything will be okay." He kissed her lightly on the forehead. Her eyes opened and looked up into his face.

"What happened? I mean, I remember the creature, and you and Keirak rescuing us, but after that it becomes a blur. And then, it just goes black." She turned to her side, moaning lightly.

Demariak caressed her shoulders, stopping her movements. He stared at her, knowing worry covered his face. He held her hands, bringing them to his mouth and gently kissing them.

"I'm fine, really. Just a little sore, that's all." She smiled at him, thankful when he visibly relaxed. "Oh, my gosh. Kitty. Where's Kitty? Is she all right?" Panic threaded through her voice, and he ran his hand along her cheek, willing her to be calm.

"Please be calm, *thalla*, so you don't injure your healing back. Kitty is fine and uninjured." He smiled down at her, running his hand lightly down her cheek. "I thought I lost you, *thalla*." Breathing out heavily, he took her hands into his and brought them to his mouth for another soft kiss. "I don't know what I would have done if you had left me. My life would have been over, *thalla*." Moving in, he lightly kissed her on the lips and rested his forehead against hers.

* * * *

She breathed a sigh of contentment at being in Demariak's arms. His hand rubbed lightly over her stomach, the caress soft and caring. She frowned and looked down at his hand. Confusion laced her senses as she looked back at his face. They stared at each other, Demariak gently pulling her into a soft embrace. He seemed careful of her still-healing wound as he pulled her against his chest.

He gently laid her back on the bed, his hand smoothing over her hair. His big palm went back to her stomach, the warmth of it spearing the loose gown she wore. "Demariak, what's going on?"

"The *Chachina* spoke with me when she finished healing you."

"The what?" She tried to pull back and look at him, but he kept a soft yet firm hold on her.

"Please, my love, be still. There's nothing for you to be worried about."

He breathed in deeply, his eyes closing momentarily.

"The *Chachina* is what we call our great healer, *thalla*. She healed you when I thought I had lost you. We spoke, and she has come across something that we didn't think could happen."

Her forehead furrowed, not really understanding what he meant. His palm once again rubbed her belly in soft rhythmic movements. Her breath hitched as everything finally dawned on her.

She shook her head and looked down at his hand on her belly. "Are you saying what I think you're saying?" She looked into his eyes, her mouth slightly ajar. "Are you saying that I'm... pregnant?" She laughed, the sound soft and amazed. He looked down at her in confusion, which only seemed to increase her laughter.

"Is this the response females in your dimension have when they find out such a thing?" He was completely confused. This was a reaction he hadn't expected.

She reached up and ran her hand across his face. "No, it's not the traditional response. I'm laughing because it shocked me... and I'm happy." He smiled at her, a long breath escaping him.

“The *Chachina* told me it came to her attention while she healed you that you were with young. *Thalla*, you carry my young within you.” He lowered himself and laid a soft kiss against her belly. He whispered words in his language, lifting up and taking her mouth in a gentle kiss.

He knew she didn’t understand his language but knew the words he spoke were meant to soothe, to comfort. The knowledge that she would be the mother of his child bounced around in his head, amazing him further. She put her hand over his, opening her mouth and accepting his tongue. Their mouths fused together, their tongues running over each other in a slow dance.

He broke the kiss, smiling down at her. “We’re going to be parents.” She smiled up at him. She laughed again, rising up and initiating the next kiss. He didn’t miss the mask of pain that momentarily crossed her features. He gently but forcefully pushed her back down, covering her stomach with his palm again. “You must be still, your body still hasn’t fully healed.” He leaned down and kissed her softly. “My sweet, sweet Mena, you are to be my queen and the mother of my young. There is nothing in this world or any other that could make me any more pleased.” He kissed her on the top of her head and pulled away. “You need to rest, my love. I will be back later with something for you to eat.” He kissed her one last time before leaving.

* * * *

Mena lay there, her mind running through her new knowledge. She couldn’t wait to tell Kitty. She couldn’t have asked for anything better than to have Demariak be the father of her child. It made the small miracle growing inside of her that much more special.

He returned later that night, carrying a tray of food. He fed her by hand, making sure she finished every piece of food he brought. Demariak explained the pregnancies of the *ZorZack* females to Mena

even though they didn't know if hers would be the same. She was shocked to hear that the gestation period was only four months in their world. There had never been a human pregnant from a *ZorZack* warrior before, so they were both going into this blind.

That night they did nothing but hold each other, whispering soft, loving words to one another. They lay like that for hours, finally falling asleep wrapped in each other's embrace.

Epilogue

Four months later

“Mmm, that feels so good.” Rolling onto her back, Mena looked into a set of ice-blue eyes that were heavy-lidded and filled with deep lust. Spreading her legs wider, she closed her eyes and moaned softly at the feel of Demariak’s hand running up and down her swollen, wet pussy lips. His mouth roamed down her neck, gently biting and then laving the pleasure-pain away with his tongue.

She arched her back, thrusting her breast out for his touch. The warm, wet swipe of his tongue against her already-stiff nipples caused goose bumps to pop out on her skin. Spearing her hands through his short, silky hair, she pushed her breasts farther into his mouth, wringing a moan from him. She gasped when his teeth rasped over her elongated nipple. His hand moved lower, his thumb running over her swollen clit.

Spreading her legs wide, she thrust her hips up, needing his fingers—among other things—deep inside of her.

She watched as he kissed each breast, slowly moving lower down her body with his mouth. He left a path of wet kisses and small bites along her exposed skin, inflaming her senses higher. Her breathing picked up as he neared her wet pussy. He looked up before he kissed her pussy lips. She closed her eyes, moaning his name, and thrust her hips up, begging him without words.

He smiled up at her, flicking her clit with his thumb and running his other finger along the opening of her pussy. His mouth covered her clit, plucking at it wildly. He lifted her legs over his shoulders, his

big shoulders taking up her entire view. He groaned loudly, his mouth working quickly on her clit. She couldn't help the whimpers that came out of her as her body started to light up.

"Oh please, Demariak, do something, anything."

She brought her hands to her breasts, plucking at her nipples, which grew stiff and long with her arousal. He looked up at her again, his eyes closed partly, arousal covering his face. Her pussy juices coated his fingers, dripping down her leg and onto the bed. The feeling turned her on, making her moan louder.

"Who does this pussy belong to, *thalla*?" He brought his mouth down to her clit and sucked it into his mouth, making her groan and moan. "Who, *thalla*?" There was a fierce possessiveness that came through his voice, a sound that made her arousal grow.

"Oh God, you, Demariak. My pussy belongs to you!"

He growled against her clit, bringing her closer to the edge.

"Fill me. Do it now. Oh, God!" She moaned as his thick finger slid into her channel, his mouth working feverously at her clit. The sucking and the thrusting was all she needed. Her orgasm consumed her, finally bursting through her body and making everything go white with pleasure. Vaguely aware of her surroundings, she heard the animalistic growls coming from Demariak as he continued to wring her orgasm out of her.

Before the pleasure subsided, his big body moved on top of her, the hot hard tip of his erection pressing against her opening. In one thrust, he seated himself fully into her, causing another earth-shattering orgasm to wash through her.

The pleasure was never ending as he thrust in and out of her. She gripped him continuously, her orgasm peaking over and over again. He braced his elbows on either side of her head and pistoned his hips faster. She loved the feel of his balls slapping against her wet skin.

She watched in awe as he threw his head back and roared out his release. The hot jets of his semen poured into her, causing another orgasm to crest within her.

Moments ticked by as they both lay there in blissful exhaustion, their bodies still intimately connected, her inner muscles tightening around his shaft.

* * * *

They lay there, Mena wrapped in his arms, as the two of them breathed heavily.

“You’re going to be the death of me, *thalla*.” He kissed her on the top of her head while bringing her more tightly against his chest. She softly chuckled, her hand smoothing over his bicep. He propped himself on one elbow and looked down at her with an arched brow. “What’s so funny?”

She lightly smacked him on the arm, her smile lighting up the entire room.

“You and your after-sex comments.” She gave him a light kiss on the lips and got up at the sound of a light tap on their chamber door. She quickly pulled on her black silk robe and went over to the door. She heard the rustle of sheets and turned to see Demariak pulling the covers over himself. Mena opened the door, and Kitty stood on the other side, her hand raised to knock again.

Kitty adapted well over the course of the past few months, actually becoming closer to Keirak and letting him teach her about their culture. They spent a lot of time together, he teaching her the *ZorZack* language, she teaching him English. Keirak still constantly followed her around like a lost puppy. Although Kitty would look over her shoulder at Keirak and sigh loudly, Mena thought she secretly liked it.

Every chance Kitty got, she apologized for what had happened. Mena couldn’t fault Kitty for her near-death experience. It had been her choice to follow in the first place. She was just glad everyone turned out safe and healthy in the end. Kitty even gave up on her crazy escape plans, for the time being anyway.

“I wasn’t going to interrupt the two of you, what with all the noise you guys have been making in here, but this little one kept fussing for her momma.”

Blushing at Kitty’s comment, Mena smiled and looked down at the small bundle she carried. Kitty chuckled as she handed the small bundle over.

Now, as she looked down into the sweet face of her daughter, she felt joy and love at the creation she had made with Demariak. The tiny little girl had her father’s ice-blue eyes, and a head full of black springy curls. She said bye to Kitty, and closed the door. She walked over to Demariak, a grin covering his masculine features. She curled up next to him on the bed, tucking the little girl between them. Their daughter, whom they had named *Nea*, meaning hope in Demariak’s language, cooed and held her small hands out to her father.

He scooped the little baby up into his arms, giving her a gentle kiss on her tiny forehead, and whispered *I love you*.

Mena couldn’t believe how things had turned out. She sighed in contentment, the love she felt swelling her chest and making her feel so thankful. Mena watched with a smile as *Nea* took hold of Demariak’s finger, her grip strong and promising. Mena laid her head against his chest, absorbing his body heat and feeling contentment.

“I love you, Demariak.”

“I love you too, *thalla*.”

She looked up at him, giving him all of her love, knowing he felt the same way for her. Together they had created a beautiful daughter, a little piece of both of them that would forever keep them connected.

THE END

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jenika lives in the Northeast with her husband Jason, their energetic daughter, and a spunky cat named Milo. She started writing at an early age, when her first real story consisted of a little girl who found a magical doll. Since then her stories have changed quite a bit, with her passion being the vampire genre.

When not writing a story or reading the latest novel by a favorite author, Jenika enjoys photography, scrap-booking, interior design, and gardening (even though she despises those creepy crawlies in the ground). Jenika loves cold, dreary days, when the rain is coming down and the sun is nowhere to be seen—those are her favorite days to create a new story.

Jenika loves to hear from readers. Stop by her website or send her an email.



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