

ELLORA'S CAVE EXOTIKA

AMANDA  
SIDHE

*Kitten*

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Kitten

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# ***KITTEN***

**Amanda Sidhe**

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*Buffy*: Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation

## **Chapter One**

The hotel bar filled with snow bunnies and snow studs wasn't a place Jamie normally hung out. Ever. Never before in her life had she any desire to subject herself to the weekenders and vacationers who trolled for easy company with the hopes of adding a dirty little smile to their vacation stories. Even as Jamie walked into the bar, she couldn't really reason why.

That it was Friday night made no difference to her other than she didn't have to get up early to teach aerobics. In fact, she'd already dressed in her nightshirt and snuggled in her bed when the strange sensation descended into her like a shower of shivering snowflakes. Immediate awareness sparked low in her stomach with a sexual urgency stronger than any she'd felt before, bolting her upright in bed with the sudden force of it. It drew her. Called to her. While her rational mind had tried to question it, nothing diminished that urgency. It compelled her to seek the source of the powerful call as though it magnetized her blood.

Not half an hour later, Jamie found herself drifting around the fringes of the overpopulated hotel bar, ignoring the lustful glances from the tourists. The short, hot-pink, underwear-flasher skirt and plunging fluffy white sweater wasn't anything she'd normally wear. Except for the tugging desire in her gut that compelled her, she would never have come here wearing this "catch me and do me" get-up.

And she really wanted the "do me" part. Bad. Even still, it was not that sexual need alone that made her hands tremble. An unfinished feeling welled inside. Like the acoustic throbbing of heavy metal music. The sensations were akin to being submerged in the ocean when the power of the wave action rhythmically lifted and plunged her body ever farther from the safety of the familiar shore into the dangerous unknown.

Only this power surge she felt came from deep within, welling up and reaching for...something.

The strange call whispered inarticulately over her skin with a static pull that urged her onward. As the tide of patrons parted before her they revealed her destination, Jamie's body jerked awake with want. An almost visible glow vibrated around the two sexy men speaking to each other on the far side of the bar. That vibrancy rang through her soul like a dinner bell, making her mouth water with hunger for them.

The pair scoped out the ladies of the club, but so far they hadn't cast a glance toward Jamie, so she stared openly at them. As the one with his back to her shifted, Jamie admired the perfect curve of his ass sheathed in his black jeans. A silver belt snaked around his narrow waist. Not even the loose cotton top in a deep shade of hunter green could disguise the sculpted slope of his back. His gothic black hair dipped just over his collar, inviting her fingers to comb through it. So far, she'd only caught his profile as he glanced around, but the line of his jaw appeared strong and his smooth cheek at once both masculine and beautiful.

She wanted to touch him. To embrace him from behind so her breasts flattened against his toned back and his rear curved into her belly. To wrap her arms around his waist and learn the map of muscles on his abdomen through touch. To smell his hair as she kissed his neck.

While the dark one flashed his luscious backside toward her, his blond friend presented her with his full frontal beauty. The dimensions of his gorgeous face were perfectly symmetrical and strongly drawn, accentuating the power of his azure eyes. He smiled as he spoke, and the sexy curve of his mouth made her imagine biting gently on his lower lip and tugging until she had his undivided attention. Leaning back against the wall, he hooked his thumbs in the belt loops of his navy slacks and propped one foot against the wall behind him. His build was similar to his buddy's and she could visualize them both playing the endless array of sports young men engaged in to exert their masculine competitiveness and keep their athletic figures.

Jamie wanted them. Either or both. She smiled at her own lustful thoughts. She craved these men and the new fierce urge burning in her heart compelled her to indulge.

Pressing her lips together to even her lipstick, Jamie began to stalk them, her lovely prey. She knew exactly how she wanted to invite their attention. Just a small gesture really, but suggestive and unmistakable in its intended meaning.

Gradually, Jamie crossed the dance floor on her side of the bar and approached the jukebox that already played a slow song. The song selection didn't interest her as she skimmed the titles. Excitement quickened her heart at the thought of the move she was going to make. Any other day, she would not waste time with such a mating dance on strangers. Jamie was hardly a prude, but she was practical. Her fit body attracted all the male interest she'd ever need and then some. She was not above using her body, one she worked hard for, to provide leverage when she needed it.

But tonight was different.

Tonight she was going to play the seduction game. She'd send an invitation of interest to the sexist men in the room. If they weren't interested, so be it. But if they were...

Jamie drew in a deep breath. Her hands brushed up along her heated cheeks and back through her hair. The stale odors of people and alcohol only skimmed her senses. Something else perfumed the air. As she smoothed down her clothing, the sliding touch charged her skin with acute awareness. She perched on a dizzying cliff, like a skier poised to plunge forth on a dangerous ride. Jamie couldn't even begin to guess how she knew this. All she knew was that if she didn't leap now that she never would and the rest of her life would only be a consolation prize.

The pair hadn't noticed Jamie yet. She didn't hear what the dark-haired one said, but both he and the blond chuckled in low, warm voices that stroked her skin. While they looked away from her toward the bar, Jamie glided closer as if just to walk past.

Taking her time, she focused on doing her thing with grace while enjoying every millisecond of it.

Softly, Jamie reached out and curved her palm over the thick muscles along the right side of the dark one's back. With her thumb indenting his shirt so she could stroke the dip of his spine, Jamie slid her hand downward. The firm heat of his body reached her palm through the rough cotton fabric.

Even without looking up, she saw him twist to glance down at her. Other than that, he didn't move or speak, so Jamie finished her motion, sliding her hand down over the lovely roundness of his rear end. As she continued to walk past, she dragged her palm across his jean-clad bottom. Only when she'd stepped so far she couldn't reach back to touch him anymore did she risk meeting his eyes. She knew her gaze smoldered as she quirked a slight smile. His heated response telegraphed from the stillness of his body and the unwavering, open interest in his Swiss chocolate eyes.

*Mmm*, she thought. Those eyes were a yummy chocolate to be savored.

Her invitation delivered, her interest expressed, Jamie continued her slow stride to the bar. Pretending as though she waited for the bartender as he served the other customers, Jamie watched them from the corner of her eye.

The pair were definitely focused on her now as they talked to each other. The blond nodded to what the dark one said.

*Breathe, girl, breathe.* Jamie felt the building burn of her desire. She'd done it and it had been nice. Really nice. Touching so delicious a man in even the casually sexual way left her hungry for more. Her intention, to wait for them to make the next move, suddenly felt impossibly difficult.

The throbbing demand deep inside her coiled like a serpent around her womb. Craving hardly began to describe her mounting agony. Obsession was closer to the beast rumbling to life. What if they didn't come for her? The disaster was hardly imaginable.



Jamie stared hard at the polished surface of the bar, her hands clenched until her wrists protested. What madness could have possessed her? No man, or rather two men, were worth insanity. More was at stake here. What it was, Jamie couldn't guess, but it consumed her. She refused to even consider leaving the bar tonight empty-handed, no matter what she had to do.

A heavy stroke across her bottom fractured her thoughts and made Jamie jump. The warm palm moved over her left cheek as it traveled, ruffling her short skirt before settling into a cupping squeeze over her right buttock. Jamie glanced up at the dark-haired man. Standing so close to her, his body radiated a heat that made her skin prickle. The attraction he expressed wordlessly with his intensely hungry gaze and playful smile stole her voice. While she'd caught a glimpse of him when she'd walked past, the full force of his irresistibly handsome face captivated her. He possessed the clear, intense gaze of a cobra that saw past her defenses and held her mesmerized.

She would have remained stunned, lost in his dark eyes, if he hadn't scooped her hand from where it rested on the bar, into his easy grasp. With a brush of his fingers her fists unfolded, releasing the heavy layer of tension that had gripped her. "Want to dance, Kitten?" The timbre of his voice dribbled over her like liquid sex and she wanted to drink it from his mouth.

Holding her hand, he led her along behind him through the crowd. With amazement, she memorized the fluid movement of his body as he walked ahead of her. His touch thrilled her with its casual possessiveness. The embrace of his fingers snugged tight enough to stake his claim but loosely enough that she could have escaped with a simple tug. Even when he led her not to the dance floor but to the place where he and his friend had been standing, she didn't resist.

The blond held her gaze as she approached, stirring the attraction that led her to them in the first place. She offered him a soft, suggestive smile. The side of his mouth quirked up. He'd gotten the message loud and clear. Energy she could feel but not see swirled around them both and reached out to her. Either one of them could devastate a

woman with just one glance. The intense power of their unyielding eye contact weakened her muscles and liquefied her core with anticipation.

The dark one drew her across in front of him so her back rested against his chest. He hugged her around the waist, angling her bottom against his crotch. They swayed to the music so she danced softly against him. Gasping, Jamie struggled to remember how to breathe while the touch of his body overcharged her nervous system. Lowering his head so he could nuzzle into the hair by her face, he spoke to the blond. "You said the Summoning wouldn't work for us." He kissed Jamie's cheek, sending a shower of goose bumps sparking across her skin. "And yet, this pretty little kitten answered our call."

Cocking his head to the side, the blond cupped her face with a gentle but insistent caress so the flow of his fingertips over her soft cheeks hypnotized her. Excitement slammed her heart against her chest as he lowered his mouth to hers. Their lips gently molded to each other. His tongue slid past her defenses, sampling her in a lingering kiss that made her tremble. Breathing in his clean, woodsy scent and spring water flavor, Jamie felt permeated by his presence, as if a part of him sank inside her with the kiss and remained. Drawing back, he licked his lips. "Delicious."

Sandwiched securely between them, Jamie felt deep relaxation blanket her. The urgency from before faded, replaced by heart-softening contentment and completion. As in a dream, she didn't want to question the perfection of the moment. She longed only to remain close to these two men, touching them, being touched by them.

The blond pulled back the curtain blocking the door to the storeroom. Her heart jumped into her throat and her stomach clenched as he pushed the door ajar for her and then both men followed her inside. The blond closed the door and leaned against it with his arms crossed.

The dark one collected Jamie into his embrace and smiled. That smile could ask for anything and get it. And from the demanding sexuality in the way he regarded her, what he wanted was her. His eyes never broke from hers as he eased an arm down to the small of her back and drew her against him. Her hardening nipples flicked excited

sparks through her when they brushed his chest. Slipping a hand under her auburn waves, he cradled the back of her head. "You're awfully trusting, Kitten. Letting us bring you in here alone."

He was right. She didn't know a thing about these two men other than they were smoking hot. She didn't even know their names. All she knew was somehow they filled a gaping need inside her gut. Some gravity they possessed had her falling into their arms.

Jamie slid her hands up, over the light dusting of hairs on his forearms and the sleeve-covered bulge of his biceps, and settled them on his shoulders. "I'm an awfully hungry kitten. And you're just the bowl of cream I want to lap up."

He smirked at her sassy response. "How about I do the lapping up instead?" Twisting his long fingers in her hair, he drew it back from her neck. Chills scattered across her flesh with panic and pleasure as his nose and lips tickled from the base of her ear and then down the burning curve of her throat. "You smell like honey and ginger."

Jamie clutched to him as his tongue glided up the side of her neck and sent shards of anticipation ricocheting through her. When she gasped, he growled as though her response aroused him. He tugged her tightly against him, and Jamie discovered just how aroused he was. With a circling motion of his hips, he ground himself against her stomach.

Closing her eyes, Jamie turned her head to give him a better angle to kiss her neck, which he did. The magic of his yielding lips on her flesh sparked through her body and puckered her nipples. This was what she'd wanted, to plunge herself into a purely physical expression of sexuality. To just be in the moment. To receive and give enjoyment. "Yes," she whispered.

She moved against him, rubbing bodies intimately, eliminating the space between them. Her breasts pillowed against his solid chest. He grabbed her bottom and worked her hips against his swollen groin. The unhesitant demand thrilled Jamie. His commanding touch dominated her body and she let him have control. He kissed her

cheek before tickling her ear with his whisper. "Are you going to give me what I want, sex kitten?"

She smiled, hugging him tighter and rolling her hips against his erection. "Only if you tell me your name."

"Mace," he said, returning to her neck.

The sharp pressure on her throat registered for a second before it bit through her flesh. Jamie gasped. The quick pain vanished into a throbbing sensation that drummed erotically through her head and seeped through her body.

The impossible awareness that he was a vampire ignited a distant ember of fear. Like in a dream she knew the fantasy was true. Crazy as that sounded, standing face-to-face with a vampire disturbed her less than her reaction did. For all her life she'd been strong. In control. How much of what she felt now was real? Could the fabled lure of the vampire from movies be real? The seductive lust ravaged her mind, shredding her worries in a tornado of sensation. Her pussy gripped tightly, ready to spasm in a violent orgasm. Mace didn't keep biting her. He didn't even suck her blood as she expected. Jamie slipped a leg behind Mace's knee and ground herself against him. Flung free from the sexual rush of the bite, Jamie struggled to reclaim it in any way she could.

With long strokes of his tongue, Mace licked the blood from her wounds. Animalistic but tender, the steamy liquid of his attentions made her wet with a hunger of her own. "Mace," she whispered, hugging him closer. "Yes, yes."

His passion-darkened eyes skimmed over her face as he drew back, heating her with his want. "Open your sweater, Kitten." His velvet words fondled her. "I want to see you. I want to suckle from you."

Jamie wanted Mace to have her. Wanted to experience the tsunami of his passion crash over her and sweep her away. Her pussy lips tingled in eager encouragement, demanding she surrender to her desire, surrender to Mace. As she unbuttoned and opened the sweater, he stared with unrestrained lust. The bra clasped in the front and she unhooked it, revealing her fullness to Mace.

When he exhaled with appreciation, his scalding breath washed over her flesh, tightening her already-pert nipples. Jamie cradled his head as Mace dipped down to swirl his tongue around first her left nipple and then her right one. As he opened his mouth wide, she saw the light gleam moistly on his sharp, white fangs. Glancing up, he watched her face as he drew her breast deep into his mouth. Nibbling her own lip in encouragement, she arched into Mace as his fangs stabbed into her breast.

Jamie tossed her head back and moaned. Like the devastating power of a sudden avalanche, the bite swept across Jamie's body, destroying her control. Her body spasmed as the limits of pleasure shattered with a sexual sonic boom. As quickly as it exploded it vanished. Mace retracted his bite. Jamie cried out in frustration. Again, Mace didn't drink deeply from her, instead he licked and sipped at her blood as it seeped from her. The silky fullness of his hair feathered lightly over her fingers as she encouraged him. "Bite me again," she demanded.

He didn't. Instead Mace glided his hands up under her short skirt. With a sharp rip of fabric he tore her panties away. Jamie gasped, thrilled by his physical response to her and her soul's reply to him. Quickening with need, Mace unzipped his jeans and extracted himself. With her open sweater and bra still hanging from her shoulders, and her skirt shoved up around her waist, Jamie wrapped her legs around Mace as he easily lifted her. As though her weight was nothing compared to his strength, he supported her by her hips as he eased her moist opening down onto his rigid cock. Jamie squealed with delight as he entered her.

"Damn, Kitten." Mace thrust himself deeper, rocking her with the pleasurable force of it. "You're so wet and tight."

Jamie hugged him around the neck as he worked her up and down, stroking and gliding delightfully over every sensitive surface inside her. Her core gripped him and her whole body trembled. What she wanted, what she needed, was a major orgasmic release. One that would refresh her body with a cleansing rush of hormones and

passion. One that would make up for the false starts Mace had teased her with. One good release that would destroy the mundane world as she knew it.

Mace grinned at Jamie. "You don't mind if Archer joins the fun, do you?"

Hands drew her hair back from her neck. While Mace continued to drive himself inside her, softening her center with the swelling build of an approaching climax, his friend stood directly behind Jamie. Archer wrapped her hair around his hand at the base of her skull.

Jamie relaxed, allowing her body to absorb the enjoyment without questioning it. With a tug on her hair, Archer drew her backward until her shoulders rested against his chest. With one hand trapped in her hair, he covered her nude breast with his other. He kept her steady before him even as Mace pounded more insistently into her. Archer bent forward and bit her neck over the wounds Mace had created, going deeper.

Jamie stifled a cry at the intense sexual stimulation his bite created through her entire body. Every nerve sizzled to life as if electricity poured into her from Archer's teeth. The glorious agony of the orgasm building once more vibrated deep within. As he sucked hard, she clenched around Mace's substantial shaft, rising to work him deeper with each thrust. Her legs locked tight around his waist. One arm wrapped back around Archer's neck and her other hand dug into Mace's biceps.

"Don't drink deep, Archer," Mace panted. "I want her to last."

The pressure of his mouth eased and he drank more slowly. Her blaring need trembled so near to the breaking point. Jamie wept in frustration, "No. Don't stop. Oh, please don't stop!"

Mace smiled. "Ready to make her scream?"

Archer moaned with agreement. The vibration on Jamie's throat rolled through her, finding her excited core and tingling down the inside of her thighs.

True to his word, Mace bent forward and bit her breast again. The piercing of her skin made her clench and in the next moment she lost control. The shockwave of her orgasm rippled out from deep within her core. The orgasm exploded not only from her

body, but from her soul and mind as well. She came so totally, so completely, no part of her was spared. The sheer power of it wiped away the lingering resistance, leaving only wild abandon. The pleasure flung Jamie off a cliff and into freefall with no clue how far the bottom was. The pulsing desire continued to throb from the bites and from her pussy, but her awareness could no longer sustain it all. Her body jerked with the last jolts of sensation she could endure before a buzzing numbness blanketed her in a consuming afterglow.

Squelching her scream as best she could to avoid attracting the attention of those in the bar, Jamie thrust down to take all of Mace's heavy shaft as she convulsed and spasmed between the vampires. She came so much and so intensely that she knew her juices flowed slickly over Mace.

"God, I'm coming!" Mace didn't contain his cry as he emptied himself inside her. It took four more pumps to finish his release. Sweat glistened on his face as he grinned down at her, looking younger and more handsome than ever. "Good, Kitty. You're such an awesome lay."

"My turn," Archer whispered, his voice heavy with desire.

Mace eased out of Jamie and set her unsteady feet on the floor. He maneuvered a rolling stool in front of her and, with Archer and Mace directing her, she rested her stomach on the cushioned seat. The hum of her afterglow made her eyes unfocused. Jamie relaxed against the stool, feeling too good to think about finding someplace more comfortable to collapse. Glancing back, Jamie watched Archer drop his pants. His eager cock sprang forward, thick and ready. Smiling at him, she watched as he eased her thighs wide. As Archer entered her pussy from behind, Jamie moaned for him. The numbness was wearing off, and Archer's fat cock had her tingling as her body reawakened from its stupor.

Mace stroked Jamie on either side of her face to bring her attention back to him. His slick erection waited before her. She gripped Mace's fantastic ass, encouraging him into her open mouth. His full length slid between her lips and down into the top of her

throat. With an identical pace, both men drove into Jamie. Two attractive men, taking her so completely, blew her away. Her whole being vibrated like the diaphragm of a drum with their unified pounding making music inside her. Vampires or not, they did sinfully wonderful things to her and she didn't want them to stop. One night of this awesome passion simply wasn't going to be enough. Even as she shuddered, she knew she was becoming addicted to the intense sensations Mace and Archer offered. The more they gave her, the more she craved.

Mace came again, filling her mouth with his seed. She swallowed it and then licked the last of his moisture from his tip. She'd only just finished when Archer grunted desperately then pounded out his release. The effect of it heightened her afterglow until her body seemed to sing with the glory of it. Jamie had not followed the men into orgasm. Only once before had she managed to force herself to have a second orgasm in one evening, and even then it was one of the quiet, sighing kind. Now that she'd had a few moments to recover, the constant sexual input from Archer and Mace threatened to blossom into a second full-blown explosion.

When Archer completed, he didn't withdraw from her right away. Instead he bent over her and kissed her back in a random, tickling pattern.

"What do you think of our little sex kitten?" Mace asked, stroking Jamie's hair.

"Does our Kitten have a name?" Archer glided slowly in and out. He'd not softened completely, and with the each glide in her wet pussy, he was building potency again.

Moaning with the enjoyment of his continued attentions, she replied, "Jamie."

"I like 'Kitten' better." Mace stroked her face. "What do you think, Archer? Should we keep her?"

"Definitely." Archer sighed, "But we can't bring her to the clan house. I'm not sharing her with any damn Kinsman."

"Fuck no." Mace curled his fingers under her chin so she looked up into his chocolaty eyes. "Do you like being our sweet Kitten? Did we make you feel good?"

Their Kitten? She'd hate to break it to them, but she was her own person first.



Jamie circled Mace's shaft and stroked him. He rolled his head back and worked against her hands. If she didn't enjoy them enormously, then vampires or not, she wouldn't bother sticking around for the post-sex cuddling. "You two are amazing. I've never felt so alive." Smiling at his dick, she added, "Or so horny."

With strain coloring his voice, Mace said, "That's it. Move over, Archer. I need some of that."

Archer withdrew from Jamie. Mace moved the stool out of the way. As before, she wrapped her legs around Mace's stomach as he lowered her onto his cock. The feel of his hands on her hips heated Jamie until she thought her flesh must steam where they touched. Once Mace was in position, Archer moved in behind her. He spread her cheeks and the knob of his erection knocked at her anus. Never before had she had anal sex. Carefully, Archer pressed through her resistance. Once he was inside she relaxed and gave him her tight, virginal opening.

Archer's hands covered her breasts and squeezed while Mace raised and lowered her over their cocks. She relaxed into it. Taking them both. Letting her body ride the waves of sensation coming from everywhere inside and outside her body at once. Archer's chest rubbed against her back as Mace bent to kiss her.

He was the best kisser she'd ever had. His tongue worked unhurriedly around hers. Their lips melted together. Their breaths mingled, uniting them. When she glided her tongue into his mouth, he bit it. Odd how none of their bites hurt. He drank the arousal-spiced blood from her mouth while they kissed. The bond she felt with them deepened with the kiss. She wanted more from Mace and Archer. She wanted what they had to offer.

Archer bit her neck again and sipped slowly at her. Everything overwhelmed her at once. Their mouths, their hands, their cocks. Their bodies surrounded her so completely.

Jamie came again in an orgasm that seemed to stretch out forever and melt her entire body. It was so good and so complete, she thought she would pass out. Her heart

drummed inside her chest as if she'd run a marathon. The air itself didn't seem to contain enough oxygen. Her lungs burned.

Both men followed her, coming simultaneously and flooding her in both entrances with their seed.

Completely exhausted, the three of them weakly settled on the floor to regain their strength. Cuddled together, Jamie curled into Mace's chest and Archer rested his head on her hip and hugged her around her legs. From the way the men struggled to catch their breaths, Jamie figured that even vampires had a finite amount of stamina.

After several minutes of contemplative silence, Mace shifted uncomfortably. With a groan as though his body protested, he extracted himself from beneath Jamie. His long, athletic body stretched like a cat's, the play of his sinuous muscles under his skin evident. He collected his clothes and tugged them on. "What are we going to do with our Kitten, Archer?" he asked as if she were not right there. "We can't just let her walk away knowing we're vampires. Not with the rules."

Jamie and Archer followed his lead, sorting out the clothes, turning them right side out, and slipping them on. For the time being Jamie held her opinions to herself. The fire of their passions was crackling down to embers. The rational side of her mind was waking up to the reality that she had two potentially dangerous vampires on her hands and not sure what to do with them. Or what they planned to do with or to her.

"We could change her. Make her a vamp."

Mace smirked at Jamie. He crinkled his handsome nose in a childlike manner and shook his head. "No way. That might change her personality. I like her this way. Open. Willing. Wanton. Obedient."

Obedient? Jamie sat on top of a stack of beer cases to tug on her ankle boots with the spiked heels. Where the hell did they get that impression?

"Then she'll have to be our Summon." Archer glanced up at her with his captivating blue eyes, and clarified, "Our human servant."

"Servant?" She cocked a brow at him as she searched first Archer's exquisite face and then Mace's. Vampires or not, they were making quite a few assumptions. Not one of them Jamie liked.

Mace grinned, "Don't worry, Kitten. We won't ask much of you."

"Except all of you," Archer laughed suggestively. His fangs glinted under the overhead lighting, making her wonder if he used them for other things than just love bites, and seriously hoped she never found out.

The potential for fantastic sex aside, Jamie had a sinking feeling that she should have read the fine print in advance. She didn't recall any mention of becoming a servant when they were banging her senseless. What exactly would be the price of disappointing them?

Archer hooked a comradely arm around her shoulders as she got to her feet. He kissed her temple fast and playfully. "Don't look so forlorn, Kitten." With her still close to his side, he opened the storeroom door and the clatter from the bar flooded in. The door had barely been opened half a second before Archer closed it with a bang. Jamie and Mace both stiffened and stared.

"Trouble."

## **Chapter Two**

She couldn't tell by the tone of Archer's voice the degree of trouble he referred to, but the look he flashed Mace gave her no doubts as to the seriousness.

The energy of the room changed with the mood. The attraction and lust that had once spilled freely like wine at a feast for Dionysius now soured into anxiety.

"Wait here, Kitten. I don't think he saw you, and if he did, he most likely doesn't suspect your value to us." Archer murmured in a low voice. "Wait for twenty minutes and then go straight home. We'll find you when it is safe."

"Are you sure?" The breath she sucked in felt dry, giving her a hollow feeling inside.

"You belong to us now. We'll keep you safe." Mace kissed her forehead then pushed back from her.

As they slipped out of the storage room, each vampire gave her a backward glance. Small though the gesture was, it was something.

The short waist of her sweater and high hem of her miniskirt didn't offer much coverage. Without Archer and Mace to keep her overheated, the storage room chilled her quickly. Even the friction of her hands running up and down her bare legs didn't help much. Time seemed to expand, she thought, when you're freezing your butt off.

Bad as it was in there, it would be worse when she went outside to head home. Jamie hadn't noticed the temperature when she'd felt the urge to find Mace and Archer. Even before she'd laid eyes on them, they had consumed all of her awareness.

The intrusion of the "trouble" broke the spell that had come over her. The vampire lure, or whatever it was. Free for the moment of their joint influence, Jamie felt no desire to escape. These vampires may have given her the most erotically exciting ride of her life, but the cost seemed to be racking up. Aside from the undefined "trouble" lurking

just outside, the idea of indentured servitude kept nibbling annoyingly at her comfort level. Jamie could still smell them, her vampire lovers, on her skin. Even though the bite marks ached as sweetly as her well-loved ass and pussy, some things she was unwilling to compromise.

Maybe twenty minutes had passed, but possibly less, when Jamie sneaked out of the storage room. Not quite as casually as she'd had intended, Jamie scanned the bar as she crossed it. Only a few lingering partiers remained, and none of them appeared to pay her much attention, but she felt watched. Neither Mace nor Archer was in sight. Jamie collected her coat from the coat check and hugged it around herself as she braved the winter chill.

Even without a watch, she knew the hour must be late. Freezing fog turned the haze around the streetlights into amorphous glowing orbs free floating above the deserted street. The arctic chill muffled sounds, even her own breathing. Her boots crunched lightly through the thin carpet of fresh fallen snow. It should have been a lonely feeling, Jamie knew, but instead it felt as though the night itself held its breath, knowing...expecting...

As her foot tilted on the slippery ground, she looked down to watch her step more closely. Stopping short, Jamie stared at the boots that had appeared as if by magic before her. She froze.

Slowly her gaze rose, taking in the long jean-clad legs of a man. The stranger wore no coat, just an open shirt. His flesh gleamed corpse white.

Jamie stepped back. At last she found the courage to look into his face. The vampire bared his fangs at her like a wild dog. In the stillness of winter his low growl became even more ominous.

For the first time in her life, Jamie understood the phrase "gripped by fear". Both instincts for fight and flight kicked in simultaneously and somehow managed to counteract each other, leaving her stone-still in terror. Her heart clenched as if to stop, and then charged into a racing pace that stole her power to speak.

She stumbled a step back. And then another.

The vampire crouched. The dark of his pupils vanished behind a veil of silver that reflected like chrome.

In the span of time it took her to gasp a quarter of a breath, the vampire lunged for her.

Jamie dropped back, throwing up her hands in useless defense.

Only nothing struck her.

A shadowy blur swept across before her, taking the vampire with it.

Jamie landed on her bottom in the snow, stunned. In the dark, mist-filled street before her she could see that not one form but two were wrestling with the vampire. The two bared their fangs just as ferociously, even though their eyes did not reflect silver as the other one's did.

Mace and Archer each caught a shoulder and forced their opponent down on his back. Over his shoulder, Mace shouted at her, "Go, Kitten!" His voice growled with effort.

Two against one seemed like an advantage, but the other vampire raised his arms slowly, each hand forcing back the full body weight of one man.

Jamie scrambled to her feet, her boots fighting the slippery snow for purchase. A cold hand caught hers and held steady as she stood upright.

"I prefer that you stay, if you don't mind." The man closed his fingers tight around her hand. Danger danced across her nerves just standing so near to this man. The vampire fighting Mace and Archer had animalistic strength and aggression. This man now capturing her attention had deadly charisma that seeped hypnotically into her awareness. The power Mace and Archer wielded when she first encountered them, the one that had drawn her to them, was nothing but a whisper compared to the orchestral crescendo of magic blaring around this stranger.

Her mind screamed for her to run from him. She could visualize herself shoving and kicking to escape him. In reality all she could do was stare, fixed and wide-eyed, into his silver-glazed eyes.

"You cannot escape me physically any more than you can escape the force of my will, Kitten. However, this is not about you." His smile was easy and confident. "I am called Deacon. I made the two who Summoned you."

From behind her she heard Mace yelp in pain, and then shout in anger. Sounds of the struggle continued, but Jamie could not turn away from Deacon.

"Such ambition my youngest Offspring have shown. They cannot defend you. They cannot keep you from those who would take you." Deacon's black hair sparkled from the light dusting of snow as if gilded with stars. Each breath she exhaled formed a cloud of mist between them, but his did not. The glint of fangs peeked out from between his parted lips.

Deacon released her hand and then slid his cold hand inside her coat. Jamie closed her eyes as his fingers burrowed beneath her shirt. Sparks of delight tickled from his fingertips as Deacon explored under her sweater. Jamie sucked in a sharp breath as he skimmed the silken fabric covering her puckering nipple. With a twist of one finger he broke the shoulder strap of her bra. He brushed the fabric aside. Deacon palmed her breast, his large hand cupping her curve completely.

Her breath, held until now, escaped from her in a gasp of pleasure so pure her legs threatened to collapse beneath her. Shivers spawned not from the forgotten winter chill but from the aura of seduction surrounding Deacon like a cologne. Deacon pushed her backward and her feet moved of their own volition to keep up. A frosted brick wall halted her forced retreat.

Deacon pressed himself close against her. His thigh parted her legs until his thick muscles nuzzled against the unprotected heat between her legs. As the pressure rubbed the tender lips of her pussy, Jamie's body moved to ride the feeling. Without even the

thin barrier of a pair of panties, her tender skin felt the soft quality of Deacon's expensive slacks.

The fingertips of his hand gripped her breast firmly, sending a shock wave of sensation through her chest. His other hand found her hips. Forcefully he lifted her up toward him. Her arms circled him to steady her balance but remained because he felt so damn good. Jamie's body molded against Deacon's. Breast to chest. Her flat stomach to his rock-hard abs. Her crotch to his thigh. His smooth face to her cheek. The warmth of his words spilled over her ear and made her hair dance against her arched throat.

"You would give yourself to me if I willed it," Deacon reassured her, a smile coloring his deep, smooth voice. The hand on her breast drew back so the light scratch of his fingernails gathered erotically around her nipple.

"Look at your masters, those who Summoned you to risk your life for them." Deacon angled his head to watch the battle still raging to his left. "See how they fight to keep you selfishly to themselves?"

Jamie twisted under Deacon's embrace. The world cloaked in the misty veil seemed to move in slow motion. Jamie knew somehow it was Deacon who made it seem so. Even as his body surrounded her, his mind wrapped around her consciousness.

The vampire strangled Mace with one hand. Frantically Mace dug at the fingers, struggling to break free. Archer shouted as he attacked. The vampire swung to backhand him. Archer spun to dodge the blow but reacted too slowly. The sound of fist cracking against jaw made Jamie cringe.

As Archer spun away from the blow, he dropped. His leg swept out and caught the vampire at the ankles. Mace took advantage of his opponent's unsteady balance. He grabbed the vampire's open shirt. As Mace dropped to his knees, he yanked hard. They both impacted the solid ice hard.

Deacon pinched Jamie's nipple. She squeaked as the surprise and pleasure ratcheted through her like a gunshot. Twisting the hard nub made her body tremble, threatening to collapse. Jamie might not know exactly how she felt about the guys who



would enslave her for their own pleasure, but she didn't want to see them hurt either. Deacon's intimate touch was meant to distract her. Was anything not a game to these vampires? Jamie thumped on Deacon's chest with the side of her fist. In no way could it have hurt him, but it disrupted his control over her senses.

She watched, tense with anxiety, as Mace and Archer piled onto the vampire's back while he was facedown. They both fought to keep their opponent's arms wrapped up even as the vampire did a push up, lifting all three of them from the ground. Archer and Mace ferociously tore away the vampire's shirt, exposing his upper body. They bit him with wickedly sharp teeth and dug with clawed fingers, tearing at the flesh as though to strip him of it as well.

Deacon pinched Jamie's nipple hard. "Feisty," he smirked. "Squirming just like the kitten you are. Not the least bit obedient."

She whimpered as Deacon twisted and pulled on her nipple. The pleasure was so great it bordered on pain. She writhed between his body and the wall. Every nerve tingled with hypersensitivity. Pressing her crotch against his thigh stimulated her clit within the folds of her pussy lips. He had her teetering on the verge of orgasm, but she didn't want the ultimate joy he could so effortlessly give her. Apparently what Mace and Archer could do to her was not unique. It was all some damn vampire mind game. A trick of emotion and seduction being the object of manipulation, no matter how pleasantly executed, pissed her off almost as much as her body's traitorous hunching on Deacon's uberfine bod.

She struggled to even whisper. "I'm not...the obedient type."

Deacon slipped his face closer to her throat. He sniffed her flesh. The light brush of his nose and mouth tickled over her skin. The heat of his breath brushed lightly on her skin. As he raised his head, his soft, dark hair caressed her cheek. The silver that had overlaid his eyes broke like clouds, fading and vanishing. The emerald green of his irises nearly glowed as they were revealed.

With a smirk, Deacon withdrew his hand from beneath her shirt.

Jamie slumped as the grip of her power suddenly released her. Without him forcing her head to swoon, the crisp cold shocked her fully awake.

He was still leaning close to her, his body trapping hers as he watched the others fighting. His profile was perfect. The defined line of his jaw showed no hint of stubble. The perfect proportion and symmetry of his face, his whole body in fact, could not have been designed more perfectly even with advanced mathematics or Hollywood magic. She could have reached up and explored the secret shape of him beneath his black clothing. If she wanted to risk it she could just lift her mouth to taste the exposed skin of his neck. Deacon was hot enough to make her reconsider her conviction, but the very notion of giving up her freedom or self-control snapped her out of any daydream romp with another sizzling vampire.

She shifted while he was distracted, testing to see if she could make a break for it. Deacon stopped her with just the shifting of one hip to trap her solidly in place.

Trapped for now, Jamie tilted her head to watch what Deacon was looking at. The shirtless and bloodied vampire had Archer down on his back and straddled his chest. Defending himself from the voracious snapping jaws, Archer lifted his left arm. The vampire clamped his teeth into Archer's forearm.

Mace found a snow shovel left leaning against a porch railing feet away from the street. He stomped on the handle just above the shovel head, breaking it off in a jagged wooden spike.

As the vampire shook his head like a pit bull, jerking Archer's arm around with him, Mace came over top of him. With a solid thrust he stabbed the handle through the vampire's back. The point protruded out of his stomach.

The vampire fell away from Archer. He reached back with one hand, gripping the shaft. The other hand circled the broken point protruding from his gut.

Archer accepted Mace's offered hand and got to his feet. Blood spilled down from the wounds on Archer's forearm, dripping in rivulets down his fingers and into the

snow. Both of them had torn and disheveled clothes. Between the subdued light and the dark clothing the vampires wore, it was difficult to guess the severity of their wounds.

Together they stalked toward the vampire who had tried to attack Jamie. Mace growled, "Are we done yet? Do we have an understanding now?"

The vampire hissed and then coughed. Blood foamed from his white lips. "Fine. Yes." He stumbled then dropped to his knees.

"Then this is over," Archer told him with a note of finality. He circled around the vampire. He gripped the handle then planted a foot against his spine. He jerked the handle free as the vampire squealed in pain.

Mace and Archer watched him half crawl, half scramble away, disappearing into the night and snow. They turned toward each other, slapped each other a high-five, and then strode with pain and pride back toward her.

It only took them a second to spot Deacon with Jamie. Their stride slowed as they approached.

Her muscles tensed, ready to run if another battle erupted. Deacon's arms barred her escape, blocking her as if he anticipated her next move.

Mace and Archer each took in the scene, their eyes going back and forth between Deacon and Jamie.

Deacon straightened and faced them. The absence of his body against hers felt like freedom. Jamie burst into a run. She got a step and a half before jerking to a halt.

In one smooth movement, Deacon snagged her by the back of the neck, spun around to face him, and dropped her to her knees. The cold from the slushy snow stabbed into her bare legs. Deacon stepped up to her, and her body moved as he willed it. Her hands reached up and clenched the fabric of his trousers at his knee. She clutched to him in a pose of devotion and submission. No pleasure laced his control over her now. Jamie writhed but Deacon's power had caught her by surprise, shackling her in place. Inside, she seethed.

"She'll still need a little training before becoming a Summon for the clan," he smirked. "Can't have her not understanding who her masters are."

Jamie fought to turn her head, managing to just catch a glimpse of Mace and Archer.

"She's not a Summon for the clan," Mace stated without challenge.

"She's not?" Deacon chuckled. "Then what is she to be? Food for a feast? A prize for challengers to steal from you? Do enlighten me, my young Offspring."

Mace and Archer exchanged glances, and then both looked to Jamie.

"She is for us," Archer said. "Mace and me. For us."

"Really?" Deacon had a winning smile that could charm effortlessly. "Doesn't look like it to me, boys." He spread his hands as he gestured to Jamie kneeling before him. "Looks to me," Deacon continued, "like she's here for the taking. Like the vampire with the strongest will can claim her." He shrugged and then laughed. "That's how things stand right now. Unless you boys can prove otherwise."

Deacon offered Jamie his hand and she accepted it as though some remote control overrode her own wishes. She turned from Deacon to Mace and Archer. Deacon's arm slipped around her waist and clutched her solidly against him. Her bottom rubbed against his thigh and hip. Even though she could not control her body, her mind screamed at Mace and Archer for getting her into this mess.

"Tell you what..." Deacon rocked Jamie against him suggestively. "You claim that she is your Kitten. You are obviously willing to bleed for her."

Archer clenched his bloodied fist.

"You just have to prove your claim over your Summon to keep her." Deacon embraced her to him and chuckled. "What have I been preaching to you both all along? Embrace your nature. Embrace your power. Or lose everything."

With that, Deacon gripped her tighter to him. He leapt with such power that it almost seemed as if they flew. The mist of night raced away from them, leaving Archer and Mace behind.

## **Chapter Three**

The locals called the place “the castle”, which is exactly what it was. In passing, Jamie had heard that some wealthy eccentric had had the authentic Bavarian castle moved stone by stone to the lee of the mountain where it would be sheltered from the worst of the winter winds and snowfall. The building itself completely enclosed a courtyard set in its exact center. Deacon easily leapt from outside the gate, over the building, and down into the courtyard. He landed so lightly that Jamie didn’t feel anything but a mild shift in momentum. From the courtyard he carried her up two flights to a wide balcony overlooking the winter garden of evergreens. Only once they reached the balcony did he release her.

Deacon had set her so easily upon her feet that Jamie felt no imbalance as she had expected, and that in itself almost made her stumble. She took an unsteady step to the stone railing and rested her hand on its icy surface.

He smirked at her, amused. As Deacon strode toward the massive French doors, he stripped off his coat as if he were eager to be rid of it. The doors opened for him before he reached them. Beyond them the lights blazed brightly, reflecting off the profusion of mirrors and glass used for decoration.

Jamie glanced over the balcony railing again, still amazed by the effortless leap. Curious faces shone in the ambient light. A handful of people, none of them bothering with a coat or a wrap against the chill, moved through the trees as they watched her. The unblinking intensity of their reflective silver stares sent anxiety scurrying along her nerves.

On quick feet Jamie hurried into the lighted room where Deacon had gone. The French doors closed once more behind her, but not of their own accord as it had first

seemed. A beautiful couple dressed in white silk pajamas latched the doors against the winter chill that had followed her. Immediately the warmth inside embraced Jamie.

Deacon must have paid a designer a fortune for the artwork and elegant furnishings. The room could have been a ballroom from the size of it, but instead a collection of couches and chairs had been arranged into conversation pits scattered throughout the space. The room was vacant besides Deacon and the couple who had shut the doors.

"This is Kitten. Prepare her," Deacon instructed. He stepped onto a dais at the near end of the room, not bothering to look back.

"Prepare me for what?" Jamie's voice sounded small in the large space. Deacon ignored her while the other two flanked her, each taking one of her arms just above the elbow in a familiar and friendly fashion.

"Just come," the woman smiled. Her flowing blonde hair spilled in shining rivers down her shoulders and playfully inside the open collar of her pajama shirt. Her skin was a flawless buttermilk but Jamie could tell she wore no makeup. The bright green of her eyes must have been contacts, no matter how natural they appeared up close. "Trust us."

The man was just as stunning. His pajama bottoms slung low around his hips. The shirt was unbuttoned, revealing the smooth skin of his chest. He was moderately muscled, athletic without being a bodybuilder. His hair was brown sugar in hue and shine. The timbre of his voice was warm and reassuring. "We'll take care of you, Kitten."

Jamie wasn't sure if she should believe them but didn't see what alternative she had at this point. They shuffled her through a side exit and down a narrow hallway. At the end it opened into a round room filled with a maze of clothing racks. The chandeliers overhead reflected off the chrome of the racks and clothes hanger hooks. The collection of clothing ranged from tiny satin lingerie to elaborate ball gowns to leather fetish wear.

The woman crossed in front of Jamie. "Welcome home, Beloved Kitten." She hugged Jamie like a sister. The perfume in her hair had a strange floral scent Jamie had never smelled before, but like everything else here it was amazing in its beauty. "I am Belle and this is Luscious." When Belle released Jamie, Luscious replaced her, giving Jamie a warm hug that melted into her. Luscious was an amazing hugger. They both were. The welcome in their embrace was oddly heartfelt from strangers.

"Home?" Jamie asked. So much had happened so quickly that the world seemed to be spinning. "What is going on here?"

Belle gave Luscious a knowing smile and then stroked Jamie's hair. "Everyone asks questions, but we don't have time for all that now. Let me give you the basic lay of the land, Kitten. Like us, you have felt the Summoning. Which is why we are called 'Summons' by the clan."

Luscious circled an arm around Jamie's waist and held her comfortably against his long form. She couldn't deny that it was reassuring to be held this way, so she didn't protest. "We are the human servants for the Kinsmen, the vampires who have fully embraced their power, and their Offspring. Are you following us so far?"

"Kinsmen. Offspring. Summons. That's the pecking order. I got that much." Her brow furrowed as she tried to gather the pieces she'd picked up so far that evening. Mace and Archer were Offspring. Deacon's Offspring, to be precise. Among his youngest. New recruits, as it were. They had been concerned about the others of the clan discovering her because they had not intended to "share" her. Only the secret was out and Deacon didn't think Mace and Archer could give her the protection she needed.

The word "protection" rang the loudest in her mind. Whatever this business was about, she'd managed to get herself neck deep into it. Hadn't Deacon even mentioned making her the main course at a feast? Just how much danger was she in? "What are they going to do to me?"

Something unspoken seemed to pass between Luscious and Belle. Luscious released Jamie and slipped behind her where his hands stroked up and down the length of her



arms. Belle continued. "I don't want to frighten you, Beloved." There was more that Belle seemed to be struggling to find words for.

While she debated what to say next, Belle opened Jamie's coat and Luscious helped removed it. He placed it on a hanger and added it to the clothes among the racks. The mass of clothing suddenly held new meaning. To whom had these clothes belonged? What had become of them? Was Jamie herself the latest in a long line of humans carried off to this secret castle hideaway? With effort to hide her growing fear from coloring her voice, Jamie asked, "Am I to be killed? Sacrificed? Made into a feast?"

"No," Luscious said, cutting off Belle before she could answer. A suspicious furrow of concern had creased the space between the woman's brows. His arms circled Jamie from behind. So comforting. So gently reassuring. His lap supported her bottom as he drew her back against him. Gathering her to his body, he spoke softly into her hair. "Deacon would not have named you if he didn't mean to keep you. Watch and learn. Obey him and stay close when the others are around and he will protect you."

His steady hands slipped up the inside of her sweater and cupped her rib cage just above her waist. Jamie jumped at the skin-to-skin contact. Was everyone in the clan so casually sexual? She herself was not bothered by the notion. She just hadn't expected a culture based on blood and violence to use sex as a counterbalance. Luscious' hands were controlling and yet reassuring. Jamie wanted to believe him, that Deacon could keep the predatory elements of the clan at bay. In the den of vampires, could anyone really be trusted? Even the human? She wanted to sink into his supportive embrace and close her eyes to anything else she might learn. It took effort to press forth with her questions. "Only Deacon didn't name me. Mace and Archer did. Do you know them?"

Belle considered the clothing Jamie wore, sizing her up before rummaging through the nearby racks of lingerie. "We know them. They are very young. Just Offspring. They can't protect you from Kinsmen. Many vampires are not at all friendly. You are much safer staying with us and Deacon." She selected something in blue silk and black lace, removed it from its hanger and tossed it over her shoulder.

"Stay with us," Luscious encouraged her. He held her steady as Belle slipped her fingers inside the waist of Jamie's miniskirt. As she knelt before Jamie, Belle tugged down her skirt. Jamie drew in a sharp breath. Luscious clutched her tighter to him, stifling her protest. "We will help you, Kitten."

Luscious leaned back, lifting her from her feet as Belle removed her shoes. Jamie covered his hands with hers. Her fingers interlaced with his. As he set her back down on her bare feet, Jamie pried at his hands, but he didn't release her. "What do Summons do? What do human servants do for the vampires?"

Belle didn't bother unbuttoning her sweater, lifting it instead. It caught under Jamie's arms when she didn't raise them. "Luscious," Belle said simply, and Luscious squeezed Jamie's fingers as he raised their hands above her head. The sweater was tugged up and bunched at her forearms. Jamie squirmed, but Luscious arched her back farther, stretching her lean body tighter, subduing her struggle. Her bra was quick to follow her sweater, leaving Jamie naked, for all intents and purposes. Luscious and Belle had her stripped in seconds. They had it down to an efficient routine.

A harder edge sharpened his voice. "We do everything our master wants us to do. Any and every thing asked of us. We please him so he will take care of us and keep us safe from the others." Luscious released her hands and Belle finished stealing away Jamie's clothing.

Jamie twisted away, but Luscious caught her wrists and yanked her back against him. His hands gripped her hips firmly and secured her against him once more. Her bare breasts pressed against the flesh of his chest, trapped between them as he gathered her closely once more. A frosty glint reflected in his dark eyes. Jamie had seen that look in the dangerous faces of street kids when she'd gone to college in New York. Kids who'd seen pain beyond their age. Underestimating Luscious would be a mistake.

Jamie cupped his shoulders, forcing her body to relax against Luscious as she questioned him further. "Anything? You mean sex?"

He shrugged. "Sometimes."

"And blood? They drink from us?"

"Of course." A soft smile played on his lips. Luscious liked the blood part, she could tell. That might even explain his name, if Deacon found him tasty.

Belle hung up Jamie's clothes. "We also do their laundry for them. Clean for them. Drive for them since the older Kinsmen don't know how."

"You are slaves," Jamie whispered, searching Luscious' expression. "Slaves they could slaughter at a whim. Why do you stay?"

Luscious grinned, shaking his head. The tension vanished from him so quickly it had Jamie wondering if it had ever been there. "We are Summons. It is not a choice. We were called to this life. Just as you were."

Finally he released Jamie as though he'd never had cause to restrain her. Belle handed him a silken vest in robin's egg blue edged with a thin frill of black lace. Jamie watched him cautiously, but didn't fight as he helped her to put the vest on. At least it was some sort of covering. Normally Jamie didn't feel vulnerable when naked. The way they stole her clothing felt symbolic. As if they were stripping away her old life. They thought to dress her to suit the clan's intended roll for her. As he laced the vest loosely up the front, Belle patted first one of Jamie's calves and then the other. She slipped the matching shorts for the vest over her feet and then slid them up her legs and into place.

Jamie glanced down at the outfit. The sides of the short shorts and the short-waisted vest were both laced loosely, revealing the winter-pale skin along the sides of her body. Testing their reaction, Jamie challenged, "What if you just waited until daylight and then ran away?" She glanced back at Belle. "Far, far away."

"They would find you." Belle touched Jamie's hair sisterly. "And then they would punish you for leaving before killing you as an example to the rest of us."

Jamie turned back to Luscious. "How long have you two been here?"

"Belle has been with us for a little over a year. I have been with Deacon about five months." Luscious collected a long, white silk robe from the racks and wrapped it warmly around Jamie. "We have lasted as long as we have by embracing our lives here

and serving our master well. Unless you do the same you will not last long. As for your Offspring friends? They don't bother to follow the Kinsmen rules. Offspring are even more expendable than a good Summon. You are better off staying away from them. Listening to Deacon. Follow the example and advice Belle and I give you." Luscious fisted the collar of her robe. He jerked her sharply, ensuring she gave him her unquestioning attention. "So your choices are to learn to be a good little Summon like us or be the centerpiece at a feast in honor of your ripe, red blood, just as you feared."

The threat in his whisper could have raised the hackles of a wolf. His warning delivered, Luscious released Jamie. He smoothed the wrinkles he'd created in her robe.

Jamie ran her hands along the collar of the robe herself, symbolically wiping away the negative energy from Luscious. Refusing to be intimidated, she gave Luscious a sexy little snarl. He didn't know her. Didn't know what she was capable of. No one ever handed her anything. Her life was her own. "You have found peace with your fate here. I can appreciate that. There is more than one path though. Some of us are meant to control our destinies. My impulsiveness has landed me in the vampire's den. If I cannot back out, then I will find a way to make the most of the choices that are before me." Control was achieved through flexibility as well as strength. To the clan there was no "Jamie". They would never allow her to return to her former life. She was "Kitten" now. But not the Kitten everyone else envisioned her to be. Surviving was not enough for her. Servitude wasn't for her either. She made her own way. Always had. If there was to be a compromise for survival, it would be on her terms. Kitten would become someone quite different than any of them suspected.

Belle toyed with Jamie's hair again, as was becoming her habit. "I would hate to see you hurt. Being a Summon is really not a bad life. You'll see."

Kitten offered Belle a smile. She took the woman's hand and squeezed. "I am ready to see Deacon now."

"I'll let him know." She gave Kitten a kiss on each cheek before leaving the room.

Luscious watched her leave and then circled to stand before Kitten. "What are you up to? Your schemes are not as hidden as you suspect. I see you plotting something." Even frowning, Luscious was incredibly beautiful. "Do you fantasize about staking Deacon in the heart when he is least suspecting it? Real vampires are nothing like 'Buffy'. Kinsmen are not easily killed."

Kitten let a slow smile tug on her lips. "You are a good Summon. Protective. Loyal." She rested her palms against his bare chest. She rubbed over his pecs, discovering the feel of him. So smooth. He must use moisturizer. Luscious didn't retreat from her touch, so she glided up to his shoulders. Her thumbs traced the nearly invisible marks there. When Luscious shivered, she smiled.

"You don't have to fear this little Kitten. I won't hurt you. Quite the opposite, in fact." Kitten leaned against him, bringing her mouth close to his chest. She dragged her tongue up his nipple. It hardened under her moist touch. Her teeth teased the nub until Luscious exhaled shakily. She felt his hand in her hair, encouraging.

Cupping the back of his head, she drew him down closer to her. His hair curled around her fingers. She could have stroked it for hours just for the soothing feel of it. Kitten guided Luscious, encouraging him to turn his head and offer her his throat. Her lips warmly settled in a gentle kiss above his pulse. Luscious trembled.

Her lips still touched his skin as she spoke against his neck, "You like this. I can tell."

"Yes," he confessed.

"Do you get enough to salve your needs?" She flicked her tongue just below his earlobe. "I've been bitten too. I know how sensual it can be. How it can electrify the body with need."

"Yes," he repeated, more softly. So vulnerable. When he hugged her to him, it was with desperation.

Kitten closed her mouth around the side of his neck. His skin tasted hot and honeyed. She sucked until his flesh pressed against her teeth.

Luscious groaned. He angled his head even more, giving her access.

Her hand settled on the hardness of his thigh through his silk pajama pants. Slowly she dragged her hand up until she found his stiffening cock. Through the cool fabric she could feel the shape of his heavy balls, his thick shaft and the helmet of the tip. She brought her circled hand up and down the length of him, making sure not to miss a spot. Luscious moved with her, helping her to stroke him seductively.

With the swirl of her tongue she broke the suction. She blew on the moisture she left on his neck, raising sensitive goose bumps. In a deep whisper next to his ear, she asked, "Are you Deacon's personal Luscious? Or does he share you sometimes?"

"I stay close to Deacon because he leads and it affords me protection. I serve the entire clan." His hands drifted down her back and settled nicely on her ass.

"How delicious," Kitten murmured. She drew back for a second, finding her skirt on the rack. It only took a second to dig into her pocket and come out with a condom. It was one thing to have unprotected sex with vampires when their lure had overtaken her. This was something different. This was her choice. This was the first step to fashioning her place in the clan. Her teeth closed around his neck again and she suckled at him, granting him what she could of the feeling of being drunk from. She slipped the condom into his palm.

Luscious reached out and yanked several fur coats from a rack. They landed in a heap on the floor. Sinking down, he spread out on the furs. His arm around Kitten brought her down with him and ensured that she did not release his neck.

Kitten arranged her robe so it opened wide in the front and pooled around her as she straddled Luscious. Her crotch covered his trapped cock. As she rocked back and forth, Kitten felt it grow harder still. It reached for her.

As hot and as hard as Luscious became so quickly, Kitten couldn't help but wonder how long it had been since he'd last been fucked good and hard. Would the vampires here be so cruel as to take his blood, making him insanely horny, and leave him unfulfilled? If Mace and Archer had just taken her blood it would have driven her to

madness. Even now, just thinking of how amazing it had been with them, her body was quivering and wet with desire.

And if they had indeed been “only” Offspring, what could someone as powerful as Deacon do? Even his simple touches on her nipple had nearly sent her over the edge.

Using his teeth, Luscious tore away the plastic wrapper of the condom. He reached between them. Kitten moved her hand to join his, not to stop him but to feel everything he was doing. He shoved down the front of his elastic waistband until his massive cock sprang free. Together they sheathed him with the ribbed condom. Her fingers explored his girth. He was indeed as luscious as his name suggested. Was such a treat being wasted? His need seemed to grow with his cock by the second.

As he kept the shaft steady, Kitten pulled the leg of her silk shorts aside until there was room enough for him to find his way. Her pussy was slick with her excitement. With his cock head nuzzled to her entrance, all it took was sinking down over him to slide him deep inside. Her lubrication made the initial penetration long and smooth, even though her pussy was tight with her anticipation. Each rib of the condom dragged delectably as it sank deeper.

Luscious groaned with pleasure. Lifting his hips, he ensured he was buried as deep inside her as he could reach. His hands gripped her rear end through the silk robe. When she scratched her teeth on his sensitive neck, Luscious grabbed her ass harder. He lifted her away a few inches and then pulled her down again. The more she worked his throat, the harder and faster he made her body pound down.

Kitten rode him. Her mouth stayed latched to him even as he moved them faster. His need was consuming him. Luscious growled and then cried out. He came deep inside her. Kitten didn’t slow down. Luscious bucked beneath her as he emptied himself. As the last of the spasms quivered through his muscles, he jerked to a seated position. His body curled into hers in a desperate embrace.

Her mouth released his neck. She sat up and moved slowly over him until his orgasm passed and he slumped limply back on the furs. His softening cock slipped

from her pussy and she sat back on his thighs. Several minutes passed as she watched him catch his breath, his eyes closed as if the lingering sensations were too much to handle without adding the burden of light.

When his almond-colored eyes opened once more, he offered her a weak smile. "I needed that bad."

"I thought so." Her fingers traced the mark she left. The hickie was not dark. She was never very good at making them show. "Sometimes hard and fast is what you need."

Luscious maneuvered her off him. He stripped off the condom and then grabbed a shirt off the rack to clean himself. "I didn't make you orgasm. You might think me rude. It was self-serving, the way we fucked, but I am glad I didn't make you come. I am sure Deacon would not appreciate me taking advantage of his new playmate before he's grown tired of you. I'd rather not die tonight, if it's all the same with you."

Kitten chuckled. "Is that what you did? Take advantage of me?"

"If you had orgasmed, maybe." Luscious pulled up his pajama bottoms and got to his feet. "So now if anyone asks, I can say I was just preparing you, as he asked me to. Getting you all nice and wet and eager to perform."

"That's your story and you're sticking to it?" She glided her fingers through the soft feathering of hair over his ear. Her lips found his and lingered. When she released his willing mouth, he returned the cocky smile she gave him. "I see it as me helping out a friend in need. Like Belle said, we watch out for each other in this clan, right?" When he nodded, Kitten stood up and straightened her outfit and robe.

The ease with which Luscious regarded her now had been worth the quickie. Plans were forming in her mind. Plans to bring her through this situation without getting her killed. She could use all the friends she could get in this dangerous environment. Besides, he had been an excellent partner while it lasted. In the future, when his balls were not on the verge of exploding at the slightest massage, Luscious might be an excellent stress reliever for her as well.



“Are you two done?” Belle asked from where she watched at the end of the rack. Her smile was wide with approval. She probably thought Kitten had completely embraced the idea of joining them as a Summon. Kitten didn’t disabuse her of the notion that seemed to please her so obviously. “Deacon is ready for Kitten now.”

Kitten followed her toward the door, her nerves suddenly kicking into overdrive. There was a difference between coming up with a plan and trying to pull off the plan when a deadly vampire could put a permanent end to everything, including her life.

Luscious brought up the rear. As they walked at what seemed like too fast a pace, Belle continued. “Your Mace and Archer are here too. Seems Deacon has something in store for all of you. He’s found a use for you already. Count your lucky stars in that. Do your best to stay useful, if you can.”

Although her plan was fairly basic and freeform at the moment, she’d been envisioning talking to Deacon alone. There was something going on between Deacon and his Offspring. Kitten was pretty sure that being at ground zero of a vampire disagreement was not a safe place to be.

## **Chapter Four**

The room had changed since Kitten had seen it last. The furniture near the dais was shoved back. In the cleared area there was an unusually shaped piece of furnishing that Kitten could only guess as to its purpose. When she hesitated, Luscious placed a hand on her shoulder and encouraged her forward.

Belle continued toward Deacon, who lounged back on an easy chair on the dais. To the far side of the platform Mace and Archer waited as Kitten was brought before them. Luscious squeezed her shoulder, and she stopped. His hand remained there. If to be supportive or to ensure she didn't run, she was not altogether sure.

Kitten raised her chin and forced her shoulders to relax, determined to remain fearless if only in appearance. When her chance came to speak to Deacon, she wanted him to remember her as brave.

For now though, Deacon's attention was on Archer and Mace. The start of a bruise had begun to darken the skin around one of Archer's eyes. Mace had nasty scratches on his neck, one of which even reached up his cheek. They had won the fight with the vampire who would have torn her to pieces. Even though they were not looking at her, Kitten smiled at the pair. They had defended her.

Deacon rose from his chair and strode toward Kitten. The movement of his body was beyond sexy. The fluid way he carried himself was intoxicating to watch, like the liquid movement of a panther in the trees. The slight smile that tugged at his perfect mouth was tempting. Kitten could easily imagine leaning in to those lips to find out for herself if they were as delectable as they appeared. Even without the added vampire mystique, Deacon was dead sexy. The kind of sexy that made a woman forget to breathe. The cloak of power surrounding him like a solar corona only intensified his

attraction. It was easy to see why Deacon possessed Luscious' loyalty and Belle's dedication.

The sound of a door closing drew Kitten's attention. A woman had entered on the far side and crossed to a table between the sets of French doors leading to the balcony. She poured herself a drink of red liquid from a carafe. Her bright pink snowsuit hugged her long body perfectly, showing every curvy movement as she settled onto a loveseat halfway across the room and watched them with what appeared only mild interest.

Kitten regarded the others, but no one else seemed to pay the woman any notice. As Deacon drew closer to Kitten, he waved Luscious away. He and Belle retreated to the hallway from which they had come. The door pulled around but did not completely close. Kitten imagined they were listening.

"Here she is, boys. The object of your quest." Deacon's fingertips trailed down Kitten's cheek, making shivers dance through her. She fought to keep her composure and did better than she'd expected. "I suspected that if you would come to take her from me, it would be tonight or never."

The guys shifted minutely, doing as Kitten was, trying to present as brave a front as they could, regardless of what they might truly be experiencing.

"Understand me, because I did not take her from you as punishment or to lord my power over you." Deacon's touch glided down her arm, and even through the sleeve of her robe the touch was arousing. "It takes demonstrable power of will to call a Summon to your side. The strength you found within yourselves to battle a challenger for what you claim for yourselves is another point in your favor."

Deacon's hand captured Kitten's and he drew her with him to the strange piece of furniture. Tension stiffened her muscles. On one side a padded leather ledge protruded. With his hands weighing on her shoulders, Kitten knelt down upon it. Before her a padded bench stretched forward at waist height. His hand settled between her shoulder blades and he pushed her forward until her stomach and chest rested on the bench. The effect was disconcerting, like laying her head on the chopping block. Anxiety bubbled

in her stomach. Nothing was worse than having no control. Kitten was nothing but a pawn in whatever was going on between Deacon and his Offspring. As much as she didn't like it, now was not the prudent time to protest. Kitten turned her head to look toward Mace and Archer, her cheek pillowed against the bench. Whatever issues lingered between the guys and Deacon, Kitten would not have her chance until it was settled.

"Few Kinsmen aid their Offspring. We tend to make far more than can be allowed to live. We must police our own number or risk the exposure of our kind." Deacon walked around to the other side of the bench. He took her wrists and brought them forward. When he positioned her hands so they wrapped around the legs of the bench, she obligingly gripped them.

"You've shown potential," Deacon continued. "Begun to embrace your power. Now I am going to give you a chance to do that again. Prove to yourselves and to me and to the clan that you deserve to live." Deacon reached beneath the bench. Kitten felt something fur-lined wrap around first one wrist and then the other. When he stood up, she gave a testing tug, only to find herself securely bound.

Others stuffed into the ballroom, joining the first woman in watching them. No one spoke as Deacon continued. "Think of this as a chance to test your newfound willpower. Succeed and you move one step closer to becoming full Kinsmen."

Kitten could barely see from the corner of her eye as Deacon settled once more into his chair. "Here is your test, gentlemen. Make your Kitten orgasm. It is not only a physical challenge but one of dominating will. You must make her orgasm while I am willing her not to come. If you succeed, you can reclaim her as yours."

Of course, she thought, with a smile toying at her lips. Sex and power would always be intertwined as an expression of the soul. Kitten had always known it to be the case. Bringing someone to the heights of pleasure always gave her the heady sense of power. Kitten had to admit that she'd fit in here better than she could have imagined. Just not as the Summon everyone wanted her to be.

Archer was the first to approach Kitten. "I suppose there is nothing we can do about the audience?" He drew up close to her side and stroked her hair. It was such an unexpectedly reassuring touch that Kitten sighed. "She might be a bit shy. It could inhibit her arousal."

"The clan has a right to witness your test. Besides, her ability to become aroused is a function of our willpower now, not a choice."

He was wrong there, Kitten thought. He was discounting her out of hand. He assumed she had no self-control. Her training in yoga, Pilates and Tai Chi had all been about exercising control over her body. More than just that, Kitten needed to control her life. She'd always been that way. Headstrong. Of course she'd not tested herself against the will of a vampire. So far she'd gone along with what they'd wanted. Mace and Archer had gotten her into this mess, and perhaps saving her from the vamp in the street evened things a bit. But not a lot.

If she had a choice, aiding Mace and Archer seemed like the better bet. If she was not able to orgasm, Deacon would simply assume it was all him and dismiss them all as weak. If she focused on getting off, and helped Mace and Archer, they might take all the credit, but at least they seemed inclined to protect her from anyone else in the clan who might wish to harm her. Kitten didn't doubt that she'd need all the allies she could get.

Mace positioned himself at her feet. He lifted the robe from where it had covered her legs and tossed it to the side. As he knelt on the kneeler it forced her legs wider apart. Kitten cooperated, opening her stance even wider.

His fingers slipped inside the loose leg of her shorts and touched her pussy, exploring. He stroked the outer lips with the backs of his fingers. The sensation was a nice one. Teasing yet tender. Kitten could feel her body opening up for him. Her pussy lips swelled slightly and then parted more. When his touch slipped between her lips, she could feel how wet she was already.

Archer knelt down on the carpet beside her. He whispered to her, "This is not how we hoped things would go, obviously."

She offered him a smile. "I know."

The smile he returned was hesitant. He leaned down and kissed her. His lips were hot and yielding. They molded wonderfully with hers. His tongue stroked its way into her mouth. Kitten moaned.

As Archer penetrated her mouth with his tongue, Mace opened the front of his jeans. The head of his cock stroked up and down her slit, gathering moisture. When Archer deepened his kiss, Mace pressed himself into her pussy.

Kitten gave herself to the sensations, letting them fill and awaken her even more. Archer rubbed his hand down her back until he reached the place where the robe was bunched. He slipped past the fabric and then felt along the elastic top of her shorts. He moved beneath the waistband and his hand massaged the roundness of her bare ass, gripping and caressing.

All the while Mace plunged in and out of her core. She felt him grab her hips as he increased his pace. The groans of effort and enjoyment he made excited her even more. Heat built up beneath her skin. Her pussy drew tighter around his exquisite shaft, wanting to feel him even more.

Archer kissed down her body until he knelt beside her hips. He withdrew his hand from her shorts and repositioned himself. Kitten turned her head to watch. His left hand slipped down the back of her shorts. The other reached under the bench. His gentle fingertips explored until he found her clit, hard and exposed.

His fingers swirled over her clit in time with Mace's strokes. While he did that, Archer pressed the tip of a finger to her tight ass. Gradually it relaxed and allowed him entrance until his second knuckle was curled against her backside. He pulsed his finger in and out of her ass just a tiny bit, adding to her sensation.

Her need was rising fast. Her urge to orgasm was swelling inside her easily. Archer bent over and licked the round curve of her bottom. His tongue tickled her flesh.

Kitten inhaled, feeling her orgasm begin the crest like a wave. This was going to be easier than she had thought.

Only her orgasm didn't come.

She was right on the verge! She was right there! She wanted it and the sense of completion that would come with it.

Only it would not manifest.

Kitten whimpered in frustration. "I'm so close. I'm right there."

"Come, Kitten. Come for us," Mace urged her.

"I am trying," She closed her eyes and tried to force it to blossom forth in a body quake of desire. Only it would not happen. "Damn it."

Kitten knew better than to fake it. She knew in her bones Deacon would sense it and she didn't want to risk pissing him off for any number of reasons.

Mace took her even faster, trying to pound the orgasm out of her trembling body. Archer's fingers moved cleverly over her clit and in and out of her ass. Kitten gripped the legs of the bench as her body was overwhelmed with sensations. Mentally and emotionally she reached for the orgasm. She willed her body to give up the explosion building inside her.

"You are working too hard," Deacon commented. "You Summoned her not by grabbing her arm and dragging her into the darkness. You used your will to bring her to you. Use your will now. Embrace your power."

Kitten couldn't even feel Mace's or Archer's will. Her trembling desire for fulfillment raked her nerves. The magic of the intimacy in the bar was not here now. This was purely physical. It was her body reacting to the unrelenting sexual stimulation.

Kitten closed her eyes and pressed forward with her own personal sense of self-control. How it would reflect on Mace and Archer she could not care about right now. She needed relief. She needed to plunge headlong off the cliff into the oblivion of a mind-shredding orgasm or be driven into madness!

The orgasm was like a scream caught in her throat. Kitten pushed it forward. Shoved at it. Demanded that it rip forth and be heard. There was no challenge. There were no consequences. There was no one around her. There was only the orgasm boiling inside her like a supernova. It built upon itself, flaming as it expanded and obliterating everything it came in contact with.

Kitten heard her scream filling her head and the room. She felt the orgasm as though it tore her in two. Her neck arched back. Her hips bounced back and forth, answering each of Mace's strokes with heat of her own. Her cream made her pussy so slick that even with her body clenching furiously around Mace's shaft, he still pistoned smoothly.

"Damn, she is so fucking tight!" Mace shouted. In the next breath his own orgasm rocked through him. He ejaculated hot cum into Kitten, mingling their juices.

Every nerve felt singed as she collapsed forward. Every muscle fiber sang with ache. Her eyes had clenched shut and Kitten couldn't even muster the strength to open them right away. She just let the bench support her body as the slamming of her blood pulsed in her ears made her temporarily deaf.

At last, the triumphant shouts from Archer and Mace found their way into her awareness. She felt Mace's cock slip free from her quivering pussy. Archer withdrew his fingers from her, and then gave her butt cheeks a few good natured pats. Let them have their celebration, she thought. At least she found the relief she needed so desperately.

"Such enthusiasm," Deacon's voice rose above the sounds of his Offspring's jubilation. Amusement with an equal measure of chastisement colored his words. Kitten was not the only one to detect it, as Archer and Mace quieted down once more.

"Don't let me tarnish your deserved acknowledgement for what you have accomplished this evening. You proved to yourselves what I already believed. That you both have potential."

Kitten opened her eyes and turned her head to watch Deacon crossing to her. As he passed, he pulled her robe down over her butt and legs once more.



“You both have a long journey yet ahead of you before you can call yourselves Kinsmen,” Deacon continued. “Calling a Summon and winning a challenge with a more experienced vampire both showed how far you have come. I would like to see you two try to achieve your strength individually. I know that as Offspring you joined forces for mutual protection against the older vampires of the clan. You need to learn to stand on your own before you can fully become Kinsmen.”

Rustling sounds from the room drew Kitten’s attention. She glanced over and saw there had been several people who’d stopped in to witness the challenge. The excitement for them seemed to have passed as they now began to make their exit. Mace and Archer had turned their backs to the crowd. Possibly to hide their embarrassment as Deacon continued to talk to them like a mentor rather than praising them as equals. The hierarchy was becoming more real to her as she watched them interact. Mace and Archer desired to become one of the powerful and acclaimed Kinsmen. Deacon was telling them that their journey was still far from over.

Deacon cut his eyes toward the barely opened door where Belle and Luscious had gone. As though he’d called their names, the two Summons appeared and crossed straight to Kitten. As they unbound her wrists, Deacon continued to speak to his Offspring. Now his voice softened so that it did not carry for those away from the dais to hear. “You take credit for overcoming the small exercise of will I cast over Kitten.”

It sounded like a simple statement. Kitten was beginning to notice that Deacon was very good at using the inflection in his voice to control how others took his meaning. There was no accusation in the tone, but the words “you take credit” implied so much.

Neither Mace nor Archer spoke as Luscious helped Kitten to rise from the bench. They didn’t lead her away, so Kitten sat down on the cushioned bench, unlike Luscious and Belle who stood off to one side. Everyone else thought of her as nothing but a Summon, nothing but a pawn. Kitten didn’t crave death, but neither did she plan on being anyone’s servant for the rest of her life. She refused to stand with the Summons. Refused to be one of them.

At last Mace answered, "I thought Archer had tipped the balance. I was focused on Kitten and the sex. I was trying to make her come."

Deacon glanced to Archer. The younger vampire replied defensively, "We managed to do it as a team."

Turning his back on them, Deacon offered Kitten his hand. She accepted it without thinking, and then wondered if he'd willed it or if she'd acted automatically. He said, "No. That is not what happened." His green eyes shined as they searched her face, and then he smiled, as though he'd discovered something he was looking for. "You may go now, boys." He dismissed them.

Luscious and Belle started to leave a second before Deacon dismissed his Offspring. He'd probably willed them to go before speaking the words.

"What about Kitten?" Archer protested.

Deacon glared at him over his shoulder and Archer and Mace retreated several steps backward before leaving as they'd been told.

Once they were alone, Deacon led Kitten to the back of the dais. His hand closed around hers with the perfect amount of pressure. Not too hard as if demanding. Not too soft as if suggesting. It felt like the perfect pressure of a boyfriend bringing his sweetheart into a secret abode.

Deacon brushed back the thick tapestry hanging down the wall to reveal a little door. He ushered Kitten through. With a flick of the tapestry it cloaked the entrance once more. When the door closed with a click, it cast the small hallway into pitch-black.

The dark did not last long as Deacon drew her forward. Muted moonlight filtered in dusty shafts from arrow slits cut in the stone wall. They were inside a tower with a staircase spiraling up the circular wall just as she'd seen on the inside of a lighthouse. Deacon smiled back at her, looking so charming and playful she could have forgotten he wasn't a vampire if not for the fangs.

He was charming, she found herself thinking. Although he had the handsome appearance of youth, there was nothing young in his eyes. Those eyes had seen it all,

Kitten thought. He knew the people around him like he knew familiar phrases of music. Each person might be unique in the specifics, but there was a pattern to the melody.

Take Luscious, for example, wanting to be loved and cherished. He followed Deacon with devotion for their alone time where Deacon gave him the joy of the bite. As his master, Deacon saw to it that Luscious had access to giving partners and no one in the clan would risk even so much as an unfriendly look toward the young man. Deacon saw to that. And in return he had a very loyal servant.

Belle was a nurturer. Deacon saw to it that she had a position where she could watch out for the other Summons and the occasion emotionally sensitive Offspring. Deacon gave her Luscious to watch over and that solidified her commitment to her position. For Deacon, Belle managed all the clan's business with the outside world. Her friendliness made her the perfect liaison to accountants banking institutions, contractors and legal entities who needed to be appeased to keep the clan safe and comfortable from outsider interest.

Kitten glanced up Deacon's long frame as she followed him up the tower stairs. "I shouldn't know such things," she spoke softly, not wanting her voice to echo and disturb the sense of quiet sharing between them.

"Shouldn't you?" he smiled back at her. "You know you belong here. More so even than either Mace or Archer," Deacon continued, picking up verbally what he'd just been communicating to her on another level. "I give them opportunities to reach their potential." He cocked a conspiratorial eyebrow at her. "They still have a way to go."

At the top of the stairwell a gilded double door with inlay carvings of Celtic knotwork blocked their ascent. Deacon opened a door and they crossed through the threshold into a gigantic, round tower suite. Sheer curtains covered the curving windows at intervals around the perimeter. A fire crackled in a huge, block-shaped fireplace off to the left and gave a soft illumination to the darkened room. To the right, a living room suite gathered between a huge oak bar and a big-screen, flat-panel TV set to

the romantic instrumental music station. Straight across the room, a king-sized bed was made and turned down.

“Some bachelor pad,” she said. All the furniture was high-end and expensive, but more notably it appeared comfortable. The upholstery was suede. The bed was thickly cushioned and covered with a puffy comforter. The colors were deep blues and burgundy, masculine and soothingly muted.

Deacon released her hand. As he crossed to one of the windows, she trailed him at a leisurely pace, noting the original paintings on the walls and the pieces of artwork displayed on side tables, shelves and pedestals. Deacon drew back the sheer curtain over one window. When she joined him, he casually circled an arm around her waist.

The surge of excitement at the touch didn’t surprise Kitten at all. She’d hoped for his touch to return but hadn’t counted on it. A suspicion was whispering in the back of her mind. She didn’t even want to fully consider it, as though examining a fantasy too closely might jinx it from coming true.

They watched the first hint of the color painting the clouds in the eastern sky. Its light chased the night from the distant mountain faces to the right. The snowpack sparkled as though encrusted with a trillion captured stars. Kitten leaned into Deacon, his solid body a pillar of strength. “So what about you?” she asked. “What does the melody of your soul reveal?”

“You have already begun to decode that mystery, Kitten.” His reply was revealing, but she kept her thoughts to herself.

“And that brings us to the one we have yet to discuss.” Deacon closed the sheers. A timer made a soft clicking sound as the automatic curtain rods activated. Heavy curtains slid over each window in a sequence around the room, blocking out the approaching sunlight. “Kitten is not the name I would have bestowed upon you.”

“I kind of like it.”

“I know. You’ve claimed it for yourself.” His eyes were so clear. So penetrating. Kitten felt exposed to him, right down to the very core of her that she herself rarely

explored. Even as she began to think of escaping his powerful insight, Deacon released her and crossed to the bar. As he poured two drinks, Deacon said, "You wanted to talk to me."

"Yes." She straightened her robe, self-conscious about speaking her mind, and until that moment having forgotten the state of her dress. Or rather the lack of it beneath her robe. How did she even begin the conversation? The topic was one she'd never have imagined discussing seriously before that night.

"Let me make this easier." He brought her a tumbler of sparkling red liquid. His own was a thicker, darker crimson. "I agree with you."

"You do?" Kitten accepted the glass and settled onto the couch. A split cherry floated in the liquid. She sniffed the drink experimentally and then tasted it. White grape juice with cherry juice splashed into it. It was delicious and unexpected. He selected a recliner opposite from her and drank from his own glass. He didn't release the footrest, but Deacon leaned back, a posture of relaxed waiting. A king upon his throne.

"I am not a Summon." She had intended to make it sound more like a request or a question, but instead she said it with factual finality.

"No," he agreed, just as straightforward.

Kitten swirled the liquid in her glass, creating a tiny whirlpool that sucked the cherry down into its depths, capturing it. "I cannot just leave either. I've experienced too much."

Deacon listened, watching her with those deep eyes, knowing what she was going to say, but letting her say it.

"I was the one to pass the test of will downstairs." Kitten looked up at him. "But you already knew that."

He neither agreed nor disagreed, just smiled that enigmatic smile.

Something in the way he considered her made Kitten suddenly doubt herself. She refused to voice any concern though. Any perceived backpedalling would appear weak. In this very precarious situation Kitten needed to show strength and conviction. It would be the only way she could convince him to give her what she wanted.

And exactly what did she want?

Kitten met Deacon's eyes. It was his question she heard in her mind, not her own. He wanted her to voice it. He wanted her to build on what she'd started. To claim for herself this dark desire.

It was there for her to take. Deacon would not offer it. He would allow her to take it though. How these next few hours unfolded would be extremely important in determining Kitten's place in the clan. Up until now most of what had occurred to her had been based on the will of others and their intentions for her. Now was Kitten's turn. She had to claim her power and her right to shape her future. She had to do it now, or the chance would never come again.

Her emotional state as she transitioned to her new status would be largely fixed for the rest of her life. It was vital for her to approach this with the right frame of mind and motivation in her heart.

Kitten set her glass down on the end table. With Deacon watching her, she rose to her feet. Her own soft smile mirrored his as she crossed to him. Her fingers circled his glass and set it aside as well.

Deacon left his arms passively on the armrest of the recliner as Kitten knelt before him. Her hands settled on his knees as she smiled up at him then glided up his strong thighs to the tenting at the front of his slacks. Several times she stroked his legs from knee to the angle where his thighs joined his hips. She watched with fascination as his cock grew ever larger beneath his clothing until it strained behind the zipper.

"I have always had control of my life," she explained to him as her fingers glided over the front on his pants, feeling the shape of him through the fabric. "I make my own choices."

The haze of sex softened his focus as he watched her. The button of his slacks yielded to her mischief. The pressure of his growing cock helped her draw down the zipper. He wore no clothing beneath his trousers. The bulbous head of his cock twitched as it reached upward. With her middle finger and thumb forming a circle, it could not have surrounded his shaft, much less the wider helmet.

Kitten gripped the waistband and Deacon lifted up just enough to allow her to strip his pants from him. When they were bunched around his ankles, she yanked off his shoes and socks along with each leg of his pants. Once they were tossed aside, Kitten once more touched his knees. This time as her hands glided up the inside of his thighs, they parted his legs wide. Her body moved in between them.

Palming his balls, she said, "Even when I felt the urge to go out last night, I still had a choice." She massaged him and grinned at the hiss of breath she elicited from him. Her other hand finally surrounded his shaft. It pumped up and down over him, going from the base of his cock all the way to his tip, her fingers bumping over the ridge of the head and back down once more. "Even before I fully understood your world, I wanted this."

She was not speaking of his cock, even though that is what she took into her eager mouth. Deacon was an integral part of this new reality. Claiming him was like claiming her future here. Her tongue played over the head, teasing him. It rubbed along the roof of her mouth as she lowered over his cock. Her tongue curved around the base, not sparing any angle of his shaft from her touch.

His hips lifted, giving her all his length. His head penetrated the back of her throat with each stroke, making her mouth water even more. When she tasted the salty pre-cum she'd demanded from him, Kitten licked up his shaft one last time. The moisture from her mouth left his cock glistening with lubrication.

As her hands moved upward once more to push his sweater out of the way, Kitten watched the way Deacon's mouth moved. His lips had parted so he could breathe deeper. The white points of his fangs showed. He helped her remove his sweater and

then lounged back once more, letting her have complete control of their encounter. Being given free rein was more exciting than she would have guessed.

Kitten rose, her hands on his thighs, steadying herself. She watched him as he stared at her body. With one tug on the knot, the belt opened, as did her robe. Kitten shrugged and it slithered down her frame into a silken puddle around her feet. Next she hooked her fingers inside the blue silk and lace shorts. She shimmied until they were at her knees and then she let them fall from her.

A thin ribbon laced up the front of her vest, revealing her smooth tummy and full cleavage. Kitten untied it and opened the vest so that it outlined the outer curves of her breasts, revealing her to Deacon.

Excited shivers cascaded through her as she climbed onto his lap. Her knees pressed into the back of the chair beside his hips as she straddled him. Kitten lowered herself so the heat from her crotch warmed across Deacon's lap.

His shaft plumped beneath her. Her sensitive pussy lips could feel it pulsing with his heartbeat. She shifted to increase the pressure of her body to his. Kitten smiled at his reaction. Her hand moved between them. She lifted up just enough to guide his head along her creamy slit. The tease was as much for him as for her when she stroked the head over her clit, back and forth, before finally lining him up with her tight entrance.

Lowering herself over him with joyfully slow agony, Kitten whimpered. He filled her body, not sparing any part of her the thrill of his massive cock. It felt like more than just that though. It was as if she were taking into herself the essence of the vampire. The very essence she so desperately craved.

A silver haze gathered inside the rim of Deacon's eyelids. It thickened and crept like cemetery fog until it occluded all other color. It reflected like the eyes of a cat in the dark, only silver rather than green. His vampire nature was filling him, she knew. The silver eyes were those of a Kinsman, a vampire of considerable power.

One day soon her own eyes would glow the very same way. Kitten was determined that it would be so.



She reached up and gathered her hair. She twisted it and then let it curve around the right side of her neck. The left side was completely exposed. Vulnerable. Prickling with anticipation.

Kitten combed her fingers through Deacon's thick black hair, and gripping it, she urged him to lean forward. His lips kissed against her throat and a tiny cry of hope escaped her. Deacon finally moved his arms. As he gathered her closer to him so her breasts compressed against his defined chest, he kissed her neck passionately.

Thrilled, Kitten began pumping herself up and down over his hard cock. It was not pure fucking, and they both knew it. Kitten could feel Deacon's agreeing thoughts. This was a melding of bodies. This was a spiritual and physical union of transformation. This was the object of her sexual quest. Mace. Archer. Even Luscious had been waypoints bringing her ever nearer to this destination. This destiny.

"Bite me," she told him, her words breathy with excitement. "Make me one of you. Make me into a vampire."

The sudden bite made her scream out. Nothing like the pleasure from before, this bite hurt more than any pain she'd ever felt. Her pussy clenched violently around Deacon's cock. The growl vibrating mutely against her skin was pure animal and violence. Kitten's head jerked back, making his teeth tear her flesh even more.

Self-defense instincts tried to kick in and Kitten pushed against Deacon, but he would not let her escape now that it had begun. Instead he forced her back down over his shaft. Their struggle became a body-slamming sexual pounding that rocketed through both of them.

Her nails tore through the skin on his chest as she fought, unable to stop her frantic struggle. They were locked together in a sexual life or death battle. And she was losing.

Deacon sucked fiercely at her blood. He stole her heat. Her limbs froze, becoming hard to move. He stole her strength. He stole her thoughts as no fresh blood reached her brain. He stole her life, as limply, she died there in his arms.

Kitten witnessed the last lingering wisps of awareness dissolve. All she felt now was a slick glide of blood down her throat.

At first she thought it was outside her body, that the coppery scent of blood dribbled from the wounds down between her breasts and stomach. She swallowed, and more of the liquid was there. The singular sensation flowed not outside on her skin but down the inside. Kitten inhaled as if for the very first time. Breathing and drinking, Kitten came back to life.

Her limbs tingled awake as fresh, strong blood saturated the muscle fibers. The world rocked back and forth, like the ripples of a lake playing with a canoe. Kitten began to follow the rhythm because it felt so nice.

She became once more aware of Deacon's arms holding her to him. Her nipples awoke into hard points that scraped pleasantly over his chest as he lifted and lowered her. Her mouth had latched over a gash she'd scratched in Deacon's shoulder. He tasted like fire and sex, but she knew it was his blood she drank.

His fat cock filled her pussy even still. Kitten felt every inch of it as it attacked and retreated. Her core trembled around him. With each gulp of his blood, Kitten joined his vigor by degrees. The deep stroking shimmered her body awake from the inside.

Deacon slammed into her depths and Kitten wanted every inch of him as deep as he could go. Drunk on his blood, she finally lifted her head. "Fuck me," she demanded, slurring around the thick liquid and unfamiliar fangs. "Fuck me so deep!"

Deacon did just that. His forearms supported her back as his hands gripped her shoulders. He collided so hard into her crotch that the force of it tossed her up and nearly off him, only to have him yank her back down into the next strike.

There was no sense of build up. The shockwave of her orgasm seemed like a nuclear explosion. Every cell of her being burst into life. Kitten could hardly breathe and scream, but somehow she managed both. Her cum rushed from her in a hot flow. Deacon gave a shout and answered her bliss with his own.

It could have lasted ten minutes or it could have been an eternity somewhere outside of normal time, but Kitten's body spent itself in a landside of pleasure. Somehow, Deacon seemed to catch all that sexual energy that flooded from her and take into himself.

Kitten collapsed against him. Her overstimulated nerves retaliated with a buzzing numbness as though the part of her brain that could sense and process physical input had passed out.

She trembled.

Deacon held her.

Time passed.

For a while in the comforting quiet, Kitten thought she might weep. Everything was changed. It did not feel like a bad change, but it was overwhelming. Deacon's fingers stroked through her hair lazily.

"It takes time," Deacon's voice whispered into her hair. "Just remember that I gave you what you demanded. This life is what you chose."

Kitten sat back so she could see Deacon's face. She combed her hands back through her hair, sleeking back the wild locks that had fallen into her face during the encounter with Deacon. "Am I going to regret it?"

"Eventually." With his hands on her hips he helped her to climb off him and stand on her feet. "And from time to time." He paused. "We all do."

Deacon rose. For a long pause they stood facing each other, naked in more than just the physical sense. Finally, he wrapped an arm around her waist. "Most of the time, though, you wouldn't trade it for a chance to return to your old life."

Together they walked to the bed. "Rest here with me tonight. You need to recover your strength after so long a night. No need to deal with anyone else until tomorrow. See Belle to arrange your suite here. I'll have Luscious stay with you until you adjust."

Kitten climbed into Deacon's bed, understanding instinctually that as his Offspring, Deacon could beckon her to his bedchamber anytime he wished it. The bond she felt with him was not romantic, but it was vital. At least until she finally reached her full potential and became a Kinsman in her own right.

Deacon climbed in beside her. He stretched out, hands behind his pillow and elbows out to the side. Kitten snuggled in next to him for warmth.

"Sleep for now," he told her, and Kitten's eyes immediately closed, still subject to the suggestion of his will. Especially when so physically exhausted. "And, Kitten..."

Her eyes flicked open sleepily before giving in to sleep.

"Welcome home."

## **About the Author**

Amanda's interests in the paranormal go beyond paranormal romance. She's involved with Healing Touch, which is a form of healing using spiritual energy. She has gone on ghost hunts and conducted séances. Experiences involving past life regression, channeling, telepathy, precognition and lucid dreams all contribute to the pool of inspiration from which she draws.

Her romances are published by both Ellora's Cave and Cerridwen Press.

Amanda welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at [www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com).

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