



Dark Guardian  
Book 3

# AMANDA AND SIMON

T. S.  
Walker



AMANDA & SIMON: DARK  
GUARDIAN 3

BY

T.S. WALKER



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Amanda & Simon: Dark Guardian 3

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## CHAPTER ONE

Amanda Duncan closed her blue eyes, drew in a long, deep breath. Exhaling slowly, she mentally tried to block the images from last night's dream. Squeezing her eyes tighter, lights flashed inside her mind. When she opened her eyes, she no longer sat at her desk in her office. She was daydreaming again. Darkness surrounded her. Endless darkness. Amanda knew first hand that darkness came first, second the light, then finally him. Who is him you might ask? She did not know herself. Maybe he was a man she conjured up inside her mind. Maybe not. She could not be sure since he seemed so real to her.

Every night when Amanda dreamed, he aroused her body in ways no other man could ever entice. When he touched her body, it melted. Liquefying from his touch. She was his to have and he knew it. He took her body in more ways than she ever imagined a man could.

Suddenly, a flash of white lights danced in front of her eyes. She closed her eyes briefly, only to open them with a start when she felt his hands on her shoulders. Her heart fluttered. Her body leaped to life with excitement. Amanda wanted to turn around, throw herself in his arms and kiss him from head to toe. She wanted to worship his body. Pleasure him until he could not or would not deny her any request.

"I know you want me," his dark voice slid down her spine, making her entire body shiver at the erotic sound.

Never in her life had she heard a more pleasant sound from a man. God, she wanted him. Needed him. Craved him.

Amanda did not dare turn around to look at him. If she did, she knew she would not see him clearly. She never could see him the way



she wanted. That's how she knew that she dreamed. They had made love in her dreams plenty of nights. Her body coming around his in endless ecstasy, but she never got a clear picture of the man who brought her this pleasure. Never could see the man who she wanted so badly.

"You do not need to see me to know that I desire you," he said, reading her thoughts.

Amanda opened her mouth to ask if he could read her thoughts, but when he pressed the length of his body against her, fitting into her every curve, Amanda moaned at the contact. Electricity danced along her skin.

"Do you want me? Want my cock inside you again?" He nipped at her earlobe. She cried out in shock at the feel of his teeth. The pain and pleasure mixed excited her beyond believe.

One of his hands cupped her breast, the other wrapped around her waist preventing her from escaping him. Like she would ever try to run away from him.

She moaned again. Her voice echoed into the darkness.

The heat of his hand burned through her shirt and bra, tantalizing her flesh. She wanted more, needed more.

"Do you," he hissed. "Answer me now." His warm tongue trailed a heated path down the side of her neck.

Was he crazy for asking her such a foolish question as that? She wanted him and would have him. She would soon take him if he did not put out the ache throbbing between her thighs.

Leaning back to give him better access to her neck, she whispered a low, "Yes." At this moment in time, Amanda did not care if she dreamed him up. He made her feel like the only woman in the world for him. She loved him. She knew it. Odd. She frowned at the thought of loving a dream man.

She felt him smile against her neck...Amanda blinked out of her daydream, staring around the room, wanting to yell to the heavens in frustration. Tears stung her eyes at the reality of it. No dream man should make her this crazy for him, especially while at work. She had a real man she loved more than anything. But why had she come up with



this dream lover?

Amanda's long slim fingers flew across the computer keyboard at incredible speeds while she keyed in the client's information. She wondered how long she stayed in the daydream. Maybe not long. At least not long enough for her friends and co-workers to notice she sat there not doing anything. Coming to a stop mid-stroke, she glanced up from the computer screen and to her best friend who walked up to her, then lazily flopped down on the edge of her desk.

Amanda acutely studied Sheila for a moment. Cocking her head slightly she watched her friend begin cleaning her nails, on her desk.

*She is up to something*, Amanda thought.

Sheila smirked, her white teeth flashing as bright as someone's teeth would be in a toothpaste commercial. Sheila's black eyes sparkled mischievously as they only did when she wanted to do something she had no business doing. If Sheila wanted to play, then they could play.

Amanda's lips curved upward. "What do you think you are doing, besides cleaning your nails on my paperwork?"

Sheila stopped. Her black eyes averted from Amanda to Emma who smiled also, then both girls stared at Amanda. "There are three of us in the office and you are the only one working. The boss isn't out here watching us like slaves. So why are you working like fat Clayton is watching us?"

Amanda looked back to Emma who nodded in agreement. She cleared her throat. "Well, Shelia," she said quietly. "If you get your big butt off my desk, I'll tell you."

"Big butt? I don't have a big butt."

Both Amanda and Emma snorted. "Honey, I can sit a glass on your ass as you walked by and you would not notice it." Amanda teased. "As for me working, I am a little behind on inputting client's information because I am always chit chatting away with these two women who work here and don't work. They keep me from completing my assignments because they don't want to work."

"Emma," Sheila called to her best friend. "I think Amanda just insulted us."



"I did not!" Amanda denied.

"I think you did," Sheila retorted.

"No, she didn't," Emma finally said.

"Thank you, Emma." Amanda said. "At least I have one friend in here."

"You do, Amanda." Emma told her. "Even though you're behind on your work because you want to be. Not because of us."

Amanda stared at her smiling friend. "You are so off my Christmas list this year, Emma." Amanda narrowed with contempt at Sheila.

"What did I say? I was only telling you the truth. You are behind because this work bores you. You should not be working at Davis' Travel Agency. You should be out in the world as a Manager or a Doctor making three times the money you make now."

A small gonging noise erupted from Emma's watch, making Amanda look at her again.

Emma pressed the little button, stopping the notice. Emma reached inside her desk grabbed her purse, then stood. "I have to leave for my appointment. Remember what I said, Amanda. I'll be back later."

"See you when you get back," Amanda said.

"Behave you two," Emma chastised.

"We will," they both said in unison.

Amanda knew what Emma meant. She was smart, probably one of the smartest, well-educated people who lived in Kansas City, yet instead of putting her Master's in Education and Bachelor's of Psychology degrees to good use, she worked as a Travel Agent. Not that the job bored her, she loved it, in fact, craved the work, it just did not pay the money that she knew she could make. Money did not make the world go around, or at least not hers.

Amanda did not want to have a high paying job and did not like working there. She loved working here and she would continue as long as she could. She would not let things like where she worked for a living worry her. She knew that soon she would be with her boyfriend Luke—the love of her life—and nothing could ruin that. You have to be good to have Luke Reeves as a boyfriend. He was not like some of the lazy out of shape bums that lived in Kansas City.



Luke was smart, charming, handsome and drop dead sexy. Luke's well-built body came from hours and hours of exercising in one of the topflight gyms every day. He had a nice firm chest that went down to his slim waistline and a rock hard six-pack abs that you could bounce a quarter off. Along with the package came sexy, brown eyes that she loved to look into all day and a set of perfect white teeth that shone bright like the morning sun. The man never looked grimy or not ready to take on his day. He always kept himself clean with every strand of his soft brown hair in place. In a word, he was perfect, and all hers.

The front doorbell sounded as an elderly couple walked in. Amanda smiled as Mr. and Mrs. Anderson strolled toward her desk.

Amanda looked at Mrs. Anderson who had her long silver hair in a tight braid that touched the middle of her back. It bounced with every step she took. Her nice cream-colored blouse tucked neatly in her gray pants. The older woman looked good for her age. Mrs. Anderson could get any man she wanted, or at least Mrs. Anderson thought she could.

Amanda then looked at Mr. Anderson who had been something in his day. The man told her about his life every time they met so she would never forget. Even at the age of seventy-five, Mr. Anderson still looked good for an older man. He had great posture and could get around like anyone three times younger. Being in such good shape had to come from him jogging a couple of miles each morning. Every day on her way to work, Amanda would spot him, by himself or with his wife, jogging like teenagers through the park.

Aside from his fitness, Amanda knew of his kindness and generosity and he always kept to himself. However, Mrs. Anderson happened to be another story all together. She had to be the only seventy year old who was so out spoken that the local newspaper always hung up when she called them. Everyone considered her the town's *gossip* reporter. When anything happened or new people came to town Mrs. Anderson found out everything she could about them first then she would let the rest of the town know if they had any secrets that needed to be known.

Amanda frowned a little at Mrs. Anderson because she always told her to let go of Luke. Amanda never knew why Mrs. Anderson did not get along with Luke and Mrs. Anderson never told her the reason why



she should let him go. The only thing Mrs. Anderson would say was, "Honey you can do better without a man like Luke. He's wild and will never settle down."

Amanda knew that Luke could settle down. The diamond ring on her finger proved that point. He wanted to settle down and he proved it to her and everyone by wanting to marry her. Luke said that he loved her and wanted to be with her for the rest of their lives. She and Luke would be together and all the women who claimed they had been with Luke or wanted him could look elsewhere. Luke was hers and she was not about to give him up over one woman's opinion.

"Hello, Mr. and Mrs. Anderson," Amanda greeted when the couple sat down in the chairs in front of her desk. "How are you this evening?"

"We are doing well, dearie," Mrs. Anderson spoke first. "And I told you, you can call me Marie and my husband, Richard."

Amanda leaned over her desk so she could make sure they heard her clearly. "I know Mrs. An-Marie, but it is not appropriate to refer to our clients by their first name. Especially when my boss is around."

Mrs. Anderson also sat up, then grabbed Amanda's hand in her cool clammy ones.

Amanda had to reframe from pulling away from the old woman's touch. Something about Marie's touch made her blood chill.

"I know, but you make us feel old when you do." Marie smiled making Richard laugh at her comment.

Amanda gave up on trying to make this woman understand that she had to be a professional at all times. "Okay, Marie." When Marie let go of her hand Amanda sat back in her chair, rubbed her hands against her jeans to wipe the feel of whatever lingered from Mrs. Anderson's touch off. "Where do you want to go this time?" Amanda began typing away at her computer screen to find their information.

"I really don't know," replied Richard, answering for his wife. "We have been almost everywhere."

"I know." Amanda looked at her computer screen as their information came up. "I have been your agent for five years now..."

"And a darn fine one, too."

Amanda arched an eyebrow when Mr. Anderson gave her his



famous I-could-be-yours smile.

“Richard!” his wife bellowed. “You promised you would behave.”

“I am.” He winked at Amanda. “Am I not behaving today, Amanda?”

Amanda smiled in amusement at his words before typing at her keyboard again. “Yes, Marie, he is being a perfect gentleman. At least for now. Later, it might be a different story.”

“I told you, dear.”

Amanda never took Richard’s flirting seriously. She knew how much he loved his wife and that no one would be able to take her place in his life. Not that Amanda wanted to take Mrs. Anderson’s place. Amanda believed he liked to get under his wife’s skin sometimes. That’s what kept them going all these years. Love and a sense of humor.

Then a thought about their intimate lives came to Amanda. Did they...nahhh... they cannot be still having sex at their age. Don’t all sexual urges leave you around fifty? Shaking the thought, Amanda went through their records looking at all the places they traveled. “I can tell you that I don’t think there is a place you two haven’t been.” Amanda leaned closer to the screen to get a better look at their information. “You have traveled to Rome, Asia, California, New York, Florida and Jamaica in the past six months.”

“We have been traveling, haven’t we, dear?” Richard asked Marie.

“How about we go to Hong Kong, honey,” Marie suggested. “I know it’s not the perfect time of the year to go because of the cold weather, but I know we can handle it.”

Amanda waited on Mr. Anderson to speak. She watched as he slowly leaned over and kissed his wife on the lips. Ahhhhh, that’s so sweet. She hoped that she and Luke would be that in love that when they were that age.

“My love wants to go to Hong Kong and I can do nothing more than go. Book us for a two week trip.”

Amanda began tapping away at her keyboard again. Her job was to find the cheapest, at the same time, best accommodations there were. She also knew that they did not care if it was cheap or not. Mr.



Anderson made so much money in the stocks twenty years ago that he had enough to travel to each city of the world and still have enough left over.

"I found a flight that leaves tomorrow and one that leaves next week Tuesday. With two people, plane tickets and hotel accommodation..." Amanda stopped speaking, then looked up at them. "It will be four-thousand-seven dollars. Then there is one with better hotel accommodation, which would bring your total up to five-thousand-two-hundred dollars."

Richard looked at his wife. "It's up to you, sweetheart. Which one do you want to take?"

"How long is the flight, Amanda?" Marie asked.

Amanda glared at the computer screen again. "About twelve hours, with one stop. Is that a problem?"

"No, not at all," Marie told her. "Book the one that leaves tomorrow."

"Great," Amanda tapped away at the keyboard again. "I will book it for you for tomorrow. All I need is your credit card and you two will be on your way."

Richard patted his jacket pockets. "I left my wallet in the car. I'll be right back."

"Take your time. I have to process this anyway." Amanda continued to type at her keyboard as Mr. Anderson stood and headed back to his car.

Amanda peeked at Marie when she cleared her throat trying to get her attention. From the look on her face Amanda knew she was about to get started with the whole, Luke-is-not-good-for-you lecture. Slowly, Amanda eased out of Marie's view, hiding behind the nineteen-inch monitor.

"Amanda, dear."

Damn it, she was using her nice, nice voice. Which mean Amanda couldn't ignore her as much as she wanted to. "Yes, Marie," Amanda mumbled from behind the screen.

"How are you and that man Luke doing?"

"We are doing fine, why?" Not too snappy, but anyone could catch



on that she did not want to discuss it now. Everyone else would have just left it alone, but she knew Marie would not. She just opened up a conversation that could go on for hours if Marie had anything to do with it.

“Are you sure?”

Told you. Amanda gritted her teeth. “Yes, Mrs. Anderson,” Amanda spoke her last name letting her know she had gone back to being a professional. “His car dealership is doing well and as you can see.” Amanda waved her finger in Mrs. Anderson’s face so that she got a good look at it. “We are engaged.”

Marie grabbed her hand, nearly pulling Amanda out the seat to get a better look at the ring. “It’s very nice dear.” Marie let go, then sat back with an almost evil smile in place. “So when is the date?”

“We haven’t decided on one yet.”

“Oh really?”

“Yes, *really*.”

“Well, have you thought about a date yet?”

Amanda took a deep breath to try to stay calm. “No, Mrs. Anderson. We are taking things one day at a time.”

Marie’s snort let her know that Marie did not like her answer. What did this old woman want from her? She always spoke badly about Luke, but never told her why she shouldn’t be with Luke. What was her problem with her man?

“You know you can do better.”

Amanda hands slammed down on the keyboard, making Sheila look at her from her desk. She shook her head to let he co-worker know not to intervene.

Shelia began working on her project in silence.

Amanda knew Sheila would ask her later what Mrs. Anderson said to make her mad. “How, Marie?” Amanda snapped. “How can I do better? Who in this town is as good-looking as Luke? Who is as financially stable as he is? You tell me.”

Marie’s smile only irritated her more. If Mr. Anderson did not get back in here soon, she would scream and send them out without booking their trip. Taking a calming breath Amanda asked in a calmer



voice, "What is it, Marie?"

"You didn't say anything about loving him. You are only worried about the way he looks and how much money he has. But nothing came out of your mouth about how much you love him or vice versa."

Amanda bit her lip. Hard. She had not said it, had not even thought about it. Marie did not understand. She knew she loved Luke. No one could tell her differently. Why she hadn't said it *had* shocked her. Marie tended to do that to her, make her forget to say important things.

"You know I love him." Amanda sat back in her seat, twisting the ring on her finger nervously. "I said *yes* didn't I?"

"Did you?"

*Count to ten. One, two, three, four, five.* Amanda teeth clenched at the way Marie kept her face muted, yet Amanda knew Marie wanted to say something else.

Amanda's light blue eyes went up to Marie. She moved her auburn brown hair out of her face to get a clear view of the elderly woman. Through clenched teeth, she asked, "What do you mean by that?"

Mr. Anderson had better hurry back before she said something to his wife that neither he nor his wife would respect her in the morning for saying. They did not pay her enough to sit here and listen to this crap. They paid her to book flights and do their paperwork.

"How did he propose, Amanda?"

*Six through ten!* Amanda snarled to herself before resting her head on the desk. She had to control the power coursing through her body. Powers that wanted to explode. It has been so long since she has even thought about her powers and now was a bad time for her powers to come back.

With her head still on the desk, Amanda thought about what Mrs. Anderson asked. How did Luke propose to her? She remembered her and Luke walking into a jewelry store last month where she saw a lovely wedding ring set behind the glass case. She asked the clerk to let her see it. As she looked at the lovely ring, Luke came over when the woman spoke about how much she loved the ring and how much she would love to receive a ring like that when her boyfriend proposed to her. Luke did look at the ring and said he would get it for her and he



would love her to have it.

With a loud squeal, Amanda jumped on Luke hugging and screaming *yes* she would marry him. Luke had a blank look on his face at the time. She could not tell if he looked happy or not so happy. All that mattered at that time was getting the ring on her finger.

Amanda groaned at her flashback. Luke had said, *Would love for her to have it* not that he *wanted* her to have it then. She believed that she made such a big deal about it by showing the people in the store and even calling Emma and Sheila on the cell phone that he could not take back the proposal he never intended to make.

Lifting her head, she took a nice relaxing breath. Now she really felt like an idiot. The man probably did not want to get married yet. When they first started dating five years ago when he was twenty-eight, he said that he was not going to get married until he fell in love with the woman of his dreams. At that time, he said it might be her, but he wanted to get to know her better first.

\* \* \* \*

Richard came back up to the desk and the angry look on Amanda's face must have told him what her and his wife had been discussing.

"Is my wife bothering you again, Amanda?" he asked, then handed her the card. Not waiting on an answer, he turned to his wife. "What have I told you about being in other people's private lives, dear? It's called *private lives* because they don't want anyone else in them."

"It's okay, Mr. Anderson. She made a good point today."

"No it is not!" his voice quavered with anger.

Amanda could tell that Mr. Anderson was not all too pleased with his wife. Had the look on her face been that bad?

"But, Richard, she said I made a good point."

"It doesn't matter, love." He took his wife's hand and kissed the back of it. "I love you and I always will. We had to go through bad times with other people and between us before our love got to this point. No one will have the perfect relationship and if Amanda and Luke are meant to be together, in the end, they will. If not, they will



not. You cannot change that. No one could but Amanda and Luke or God.” He looked back at Amanda. “I am sorry, but you know how she is.”

“It’s okay.” Amanda stood and went over to the printer.

When Amanda returned, she had Mr. Anderson to sign the papers, then handed him the card and the papers for the trip.

“This is going to be exciting,” Richard told Amanda, his eyes shining with pleasure.

“It will be,” she replied. “Enjoy your trip.”

“Thank you.” Marie grabbed her into a tight hug. “And I am sorry for bothering you, dear. I just wanted to make a point. You need to open your eyes about Luke. The man is not what he seems.”

When Marie released her, she watched them leave. Amanda had the strangest feeling that Marie knew something and she wasn’t telling her.



## CHAPTER TWO

“Amanda.” Sheila walked up to her, studying her acutely. “What was that all about? Was Mrs. Anderson picking on you again?”

Amanda tried to keep her face mute. “Yeah, something about Luke not being what I think he is.”

Sheila snorted. “The man is sexy with a capital S. I don’t know what Mrs. Anderson knows, but I bet you it’s not good.”

Amanda felt the pit of her stomach cramp up and she wanted to be sick. “You think he is cheating on me?”

“I don’t think so. I haven’t heard of him cheating on you. And you know if I had, you would have been the first person I let know.”

“Yeah, I know, but I work from ten in the morning until six at night. He goes in at five in the morning to do paperwork and is home by eleven. That is a lot of time to do what he has to do before I get off seven hours later.”

Sheila ran a hand through her short, black, curly hair and sighed. “Don’t let that woman have you thinking that your fiancé is cheating on you. Neither I nor Emma has heard anything.”

“I know, but I was just wondering. It could happen you know.”

“Yes, but who is it that stays with him at night? Who is it he comes and drags out of the apartment when you don’t come over fast enough?” Sheila eyes widened incredulously at her before she continued. “Thank God for that because you two have to be the loudest lovers I have ever had the un-pleasure of hearing.”

“You devil!” Amanda squealed and hit Sheila on her arm. “You said



you didn't hear us."

"I said it, but I lied. I thought you two had torn the wallpaper off the walls with your voices. I got so tired of hearing you scream, *harder Luke...deeper please*) and him with his *just like that baby*line."

Amanda turned away from Sheila making her laugh, but it wasn't a laughing matter. Amanda never told anyone about that night. That night when she and Luke made love it was a big lie. She screamed because he asked her to. In all, the sex was not that great. He was good at what he did and could make her feel good, but sometimes she had to get herself off when he went to take a shower or left the room. Amanda guessed all women had to do that occasionally. "Luke would kill you if he knew you heard."

"Why, the entire fifth floor heard the two of you. Emma still complains about having nightmares about that night. I even wake up in a cold sweat some nights."

"You two are so dead tonight," Amanda said bluntly, but jokily. "You both said you didn't hear."

Sheila shrugged her shoulders at the threat. "So we lied."

Amanda watched as Sheila tilted her head, looking at the door when the bell sounded again. Sheila's face lit up. A large smile formed on Sheila's lips when her boyfriend, Darrell, walked into the agency. This man with mocha colored skin, who Amanda met through Sheila, was just as sexy as Luke was. His brown eyes could melt chocolate when he stared at you. Sheila told her his tongue could also.

Darrell Banks played for the famous arena football team for three years. His career stopped when he had three concussions in one year and had to take an early retirement. Since then, he moved to Kansas to get away from all the stress of having to give up his life's dream. He now worked as a volunteer coach for a little league football team.

"Hello, Amanda," he greeted in his deep, sensuous voice, and then walked up to his brown-skinned goddess, giving her a kiss. "You three want to go out to lunch?" He glanced around the room. "Where's Emma?"

"Doctor's appointment," Amanda answered. "She will be back around two."



"Is she sick?"

Amanda could clearly hear the concern in his voice. Darrell cared for all of them as if they were his family. "No she isn't sick. It is just a yearly check up."

"That's good," he said then looked back at his girlfriend. "You two want to go out then?"

"Sure," Sheila said. "What about you, Amanda?"

"No, you two go and have fun."

"Why not?" Sheila walked up to her. "I told you don't let Mrs. Anderson get to you."

"She isn't." Amanda lied. "I have to finish up their package anyhow."

Shaking her head in what had to be disbelief, Sheila responded, "You are such a liar, but I will let it go this time."

"I know I am." Amanda chuckled. "But I don't want to go out yet."

"You want me to bring you back anything?"

"Yeah, you can bring be back a chicken salad with light Italian dressing."

Sheila chuckled at Amanda's weird eating habits.

She ate, but over the past year, she could not tolerate a lot of different foods. Fruits made her stomach cramp the most. When she did eat, she wanted rare and undercooked meats. Anything that had a little blood in it was just right with her. Therefore, she started eating more vegetables and salads after she noticed that. She did not want to get food poisoning from undercooked foods. "What?" Amanda inquired with a frown firmly in place.

"You need to eat, Amanda," Sheila told her. "You are what a size eight?"

"Yes and I love every bit of it." Sheila's demure giggle let Amanda know that she was teasing her. "Luke loves it also," Amanda added.

"I bet he just loves all of you...which is not much."

The side of Amanda's lips curved upward. "You are only a size ten because you black girls have big behinds. Some of your jeans are too big for your waistline. That's why you wear dresses most of the time because you can't find pants that fit."



"She has a point," Darrell jumped in, then slapped Sheila on her butt.

"Cut that out before I break your arm," Sheila threatened him. "Yeah, Amanda, you aren't far from it. You are the first white girl that I know that has a butt that big or has breasts the size yours are."

As if to prove a point, Ms. Silicone walked into the building. Debbie DeVirgin had the correct name for what she was. Nothing said virgin about Debbie. Everyone considered her the town's slut. Married women keep their men on short leases around Debbie.

Along with fake breasts and butt implants, Debbie had long blondish colored hair and blue eyes. She was five-feet-seven inches tall. Males considered her sexy even though she looked around ninety-nine pounds soaking wet. Debbie might be a hundred-ten pounds with eleven pounds of silicone in her breast and ass.

Then she had the nerve to wear a red almost non-existent dress with five-inch heels, which resembled something you would see in a pornographic video.

"Hello, everyone," Debbie spoke chirpily while she bounced through the office. All of her literally bounced while she walked. "Hellooo...Darrell," she said with a voice that made both Amanda and Sheila stiffened up at her attempt to seduce Darrell. Amanda stiffened because she knew Sheila would not take anyone flirting at Darrell and she would have to pull Sheila off Debbie in three...two...one.

"I am going to kill her," Sheila yelled right on cue, then proceeded to head toward the same office Debbie went in. "When I get my hands on that little hussy, she will be black and blue all over."

"Baby," Darrell grabbed Sheila around her waist before she went through the door. "I don't want her. I love you and I want to be with you and you only."

Amanda saw Sheila scowled at him, then lifted her finger to the corner of his mouth, pretending to wipe away something. "If you drooled anymore I would have to go and get a mop."

If Sheila had not been smiling, Amanda would have taken her joke seriously. One thing everyone did know about Darrell was he did not cheat because Sheila would beat him up as well as the one he cheated



on her with. Sheila had this mean, scary and kind attitude all rolled into one—a very scary combination. She can be the sweetest person in the world or the devil when needed.

“Sheila, I would never leave you for something like Debbie. I have class.” He released her. “Now let’s go out to lunch so we can sneak back to your apartment for a little playtime before I go out and coach today.”

Sheila stood on her tiptoes and kissed him. “How about we skip lunch and go straight to my apartment.”

Amanda began making gagging noises. “I think I am going to hurl all over the floor,” she teased.

“Just make sure you clean it up when you are finished, *jealous*.” Sheila told her.

Amanda watched as Darrell grabbed Sheila around the waist, holding his lover close to him.

“I am not,” Amanda retorted. “And look who’s talking, miss I-will-turn-her-black-and-blue.”

Sheila shot her the middle finger.

“So evil,” Amanda said.

“If you say so. I am going to lunch. I should be back in an hour.” Amanda looked at Darrell shaking his head no. “Two hours. Cover for me.”

Sheila grabbed her purse out of the drawer.

“Don’t forget my salad,” Amanda called as they walked to the door.

“I will remember,” Sheila, told her. “Be back in a few.”

“See you later, Amanda,” Darrell said before following Sheila out the door.

Sitting back in her leather seat, Amanda grimaced in revulsion when she thought she heard a low, sexual moan coming from her bosses’ office. Whom was she trying to kid—herself? Everyone knew Debbie only came around on payday. When she did, she bounced into Clayton’s office for a quick fuck, then left with her pockets full.

The thought of being with Clayton Davis sickened her. The man resembled a pig. Him being the color red instead of pink was the only reason you couldn’t label him as a pig. Not only did he look the part of



a pig, he had no hair on his head like one. He had a black shaggy beard that turned Amanda off from the beginning.

Men with beards were not on her what-I-like-on-a-man list. Clayton stood only five-feet-five inches tall, weighing in at two-hundred and thirty pounds. Maybe more. To top it off, he had a round stomach that he patted on every time he talked to someone. He must have thought it made him look sexy. Dirt bag didn't even come close to the proper name for him. He had a wife and kids at home and, instead of honoring his marriage, he sneaked around with the town's slut.

If Amanda had his wife's number, she would call right now and invite her to come to the office to catch him in the act. Then again, no one wanted to be hurt. It would kill his wife to know that her husband cheated. It would surely get her fired if she did do it.

When she heard a deep grunt from Clayton, she picked up the telephone quickly, dialing Luke's number. Maybe talking to Luke would drown out the sounds coming from the office behind her.

"Hello," Luke answered sleepily after the fourth ring.

"Baby, were you asleep?" Amanda asked.

"Yeah," he groaned into the receiver. "When I made it home I decided to take a nap."

"I can let you go back to sleep."

"No, baby. I will talk to you. What's up?"

Amanda paused for a moment. It was now or never. "I wanted to ask you something."

"Shoot."

"You remember last month when we were in the jewelry store?"

"Yes I remember. What about it?"

"Did you...umm...did you want to marry me or did you just do it because I made a big deal about it?"

Silence.

Not good.

Amanda turned the ring on her finger. Tears welled up in her eyes from the fear that Mrs. Anderson had been right all along. Luke didn't want to marry her or anyone else.

"Luke," she murmured.



Not getting an immediate response, her stomach churned from the pain of knowing that her lover didn't love her enough to marry her.

"I can't say, Amanda," he spoke after several seconds.

With the quietness, Amanda thought he had hung up on her. A tear rolled down her cheek, landing on the papers on her desk, but she didn't care. Nothing mattered to her at this moment except getting answers from Luke. "Why not?"

"Because I don't want to hurt you, that's why."

Her chest expanded when she took a deep breath to keep herself from crying more. She wouldn't let him know how much just hearing this from him hurt her. "You didn't propose did you?"

"Not really," he said, then quickly added, "but you were so happy, I couldn't tell you that I didn't want to get married. I loved the way you ran around showing everyone the ring and calling people telling them about it...but..."

"*But*," she interrupted, "you don't want to get married, do you?"

"I do and you are the woman I will marry." He exhaled noisily. "I just wanted to wait a year or so before we did. I want you to be sure that I am the man you want to marry."

"But it's been five years. You are thirty-three and I am twenty-eight. We are not getting any younger. I know you are whom I want to marry. I love you."

"And I love you, Amanda."

Amanda didn't know what to get out of his lifeless monotone of an I-love-you reply. He said it, but she couldn't tell if he meant it. Love is so easy to get into, but so hard to live through or even get out of.

"So what's the problem with us getting married?"

"Nothing, baby. If you want this as bad as you say, we will talk about it and set a date."

Amanda smiled, then wiped the tears from her eyes as her heart soared from happiness. "Are you serious?"

"Yes. I am very serious. I love you and I want to be with you."

"How about I come over tonight? No—I can't. I have to cook tonight and do some damage to my friends—but what about tomorrow?"



“Okay.”

She heard him yawn.

“That’s fine by me.”

Amanda sighed in relief when she heard a female shriek followed by a male's groaning out in pleasure. That must mean they were finished. “Look, you go back to sleep, I have some things to do. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“All right ,sweet. Love ya,” he said sweetly.

“Love you, too.” Smiling she placed the phone back on the receiver.



## CHAPTER THREE

Amanda took an appraising glance up when Clayton's door burst open and Debbie walked out. *Bitch*. Amanda thought when she walked by her and didn't even look her way or say goodbye.

"Amanda," her boss bellowed over the intercom the second the front door closed. "I need you in my office, *right now*."

Good grief what had she done now? On the other hand, haven't done? Pushing herself from the desk Amanda walked into Clayton's office. From the moment she walked into his office, the smell of stale food, cigarettes and sex assaulted her nose. He never could keep his office clean. Papers were laying everywhere. Some were out of date. Some needed immediate signatures. Some she didn't even want to know what they were. Food, old food, had to be buried underneath the mountains of papers. You needed a tetanus shot just to enter his office, but from the look of contentment on his chubby little face, Debbie had done her part.

"The woman is an animal I must say," Clayton said to her as he sat down in his chair.

Way too much information for Amanda. Didn't her boss know that you never want to hear about their sex life along with your parents and grandparents? That's something no one wanted implanted in his or her memory for later use. "You needed to see me, Mr. Davis?" Change of conversation before she needed a bucket to hurl in.

"Yes. Sit down," he ordered.

Amanda thought about his offer. Raising a concerned eyebrow, she



wondered if they were in this chair having sex a minute ago. Looking closely, she checked the leather for any sign of wetness. Seeing none she sat down, carefully.

"Amanda, I called you in here because I have to do something that I dread doing." He picked up his lit cigar, taking a long drag from it before speaking again. "I have to let you go."

"What!" Amanda's voice vibrated off the walls. Feeling the energy flowing through her again, she closed her eyes, concentrating on not using it. Why has it been coming to her lately? The last time she thought about using her powers was when she opened a door to...no she wouldn't think about it right now. She had other business that she had to attend to first.

"Sit down," Clayton shouted, his stubby fingers pointing to the chair she had jumped up from.

"No," she told him, crossing her arms over her chest. Her eyes narrowed in anger as she looked into his blue eyes. "Not until you tell me why you are firing me." The powers coursing through her veins pleaded for her to lift his big ass out of his chair and pin him up against the wall where he needed to be.

"Because," he whispered, then leaned up in his chair, "I thought you would be out of here by now."

Amanda calmed down a bit because she didn't understand him. Taking a deep breath, she asked, "What do you mean by that?"

"You are a smart woman and you have a lot of education. Something half of this town doesn't. You went to college the moment you graduated from high school. I hired you because I saw potential in you. I saw you doing big and better with your life. Something that doesn't have you here being something you were never meant to be."

Pressing her lips together to keep from saying the wrong thing, she thought about her current situation. *Fuck it.* She didn't work for him anymore so she could say what she wanted. "You are firing me because I wouldn't fuck you."

His entire body jiggled in a nasty way when he began to laugh. "So true, but you turned down my offer."

Amanda looked down at the blue carpet in his office, thinking hard



about what she had done. Of course, she turned him down. She would never sleep with him or anyone to get ahead. If she made it to the top, it would happen because she worked hard. Once she told him about sexual harassment, he backed off from her.

That was almost six years ago. Since then, she had become best friends with Sheila and Emma and moved in with them. They had a nice three-bedroom apartment on the other side of town. With her not having to pay but a few dollars a month for rent and other utilities, she had saved a lot of money. Right now, she had enough saved to be comfortable for about a year and a half, maybe two, if she didn't work.

"You can go places and do things, Amanda. You don't need to be trapped in this office."

His words of wisdom brought her attention back to him. "But I like working here. My friends work here."

"I know and it hurts me to have to do this to you. I would have fired Sheila, but she has a couple more months before she graduates from college. Then Emma, poor child, she only has a GED. I couldn't put her out in the streets. She wouldn't know how to survive."

"But you would fire me?" she growled maniacally at him. The initial shock of not having a job was replaced by anger. Amanda knew if she didn't get out of this office soon she would end up hurting him.

"No, I am not putting you out. I am helping you. You are smart and intelligent and will land a job before the week is out."

A sickening wave of terror welled up in her stomach. Her face contorted in anger. "Fuck you, Clayton." Another laugh came from him, only fueling her anger more.

"I tried but you wouldn't take my offer."

"I can't believe you would do this to me."

"I haven't done anything, my dear, but opened up your eyes to see that you can do better."

Amanda gave him one final snarl before turning to leave his office. When she made it to the door, she grabbed the frame of the door with both her hands, stopping, but didn't look back. No telling what would happen if she looked back at Clayton. In her angered stage, she would likely kill him. "Is it her?" she whispered.



"Is what her, Amanda?"

"Debbie?" she asked, finally looking back at him. "Is Debbie the one taking my job?"

Clayton looked down, then at her once again before answering. "Yes."

"You are an asshole," she said with a low voice. Pain clearly heard in her voice.

"I might be, but you'll find out one day who the real pig is."

She needed to get out and get out fast. Quickly she grabbed the couple of pictures of her friends she had on her desk and her purse. Making sure she didn't leave anything of value behind, she stormed out of the door.

The tears were flowing down her face when she sat behind the wheel of her Toyota Camry. "Damn that job. I don't need it. I can work anywhere and make three times the amount of money. And I don't have to put up with potbelly pigs in the process."

With a weak smile, she grabbed a tissue out of her purse and began cleaning her face. After the tears finally stopped, she took out her makeup and proceeded to try to make herself look as happy as she could. At least as happy as a person could be who just lost their job.

She would stop by Luke's home before heading back to her apartment. He would make her feel better, that she knew for sure. Amanda grabbed her cell phone then quickly placed it back into her bag. She wanted to call Sheila and Emma and tell them about what happened, but she thought that it would be best if she waited until later.

At first, she didn't know why she wanted to wait, that was until the images of Sheila trying to kill both Clayton and Debbie popped into her mind. Tonight would be a better time to tell them. That would give Sheila enough time to cool off before work on Monday. For now, she would talk to Luke and see about working for him. Tonight, Sheila and Emma could make a gallon of margaritas and drink until they couldn't drink anymore. Amanda didn't drink, but this called for a lot of drinking to take place. She had to remember before she went home tonight to pick up the tequila, limejuice and a couple of bags of ice.



Looking in the mirror again, she had to do some more cleaning up of her face. She didn't want Luke to think that losing the job affected her that much. Amanda reached back into her purse and pulled out her makeup kit. After carefully applying some facial powder and a little eyeliner, she smiled in the mirror, not surprised to see an unhappy woman staring back at her. The image in the mirror reflected a woman who had been hurt by a man who thought more about his libido than someone's feelings.

*Fat bastard.*

Amanda hoped he couldn't get another erection for as long as he lived. Men these days have nerves like nothing before. They only thought of one thing and once they got it, they go after someone else.

Before she knew it, the car began to shake from her anger. Quickly, she raised her hand to her forehead, closing her eyes and concentrated on something less upsetting. *No, not now. It's been years since you have had one of these. You can't move objects with your mind. You cannot do it. The doctor and your father said you couldn't.*

The car shook harder. She knew that I-can't-move-objects-with-my-mind mumbo jumbo wouldn't work. Her father told her to say it to herself whenever she felt an attack coming on and it would go away, which it did—sometimes. Then there were times like this when she wanted to let it out and do harm to the person that caused her pain. The powers pleaded with her to do it.

"No! I will not hurt him."

As if the powers heard her outburst, the car stopped moving. Slowly, she took a deep breath, then exhaled. It has been years since she'd had one of those fits. Amanda had to be five when her mother noticed that every time she got mad she would make things fly around the room. At first, her mother thought she was being disrespectful and throwing things against the walls. That was until her mother came into the room one day and saw her toys floating in midair. That's when Amanda's mother knew that she had inherited her powers.

The same powers her mother told her to never use. The powers of a witch could be dangerous and hard to control. It took years to control her powers with her mother's help. She could control them



until someone pissed her off. The last time she had an attack was when a man tried to mug her in an alley about two years ago. At that time, she made a trashcan hit him in the back of the head, then she fled. After that, she had no problem controlling it. Until today.

Finally getting herself under control, she started the car and drove off.

Amanda placed her head on the steering wheel when she arrived in front of Luke's home. Her dream home. Just like in the fairytale books. Luke's home was a two story white home with a wood picket fence around it. Not white, but she could always change the color later.

A large waterfall sat in the middle of the lawn, the huge windows so clear so anyone could look right into the lovely dining and living room. The large chandelier in the dining room was big enough to be seen from the driveway, along with the beautiful furniture Luke had decorated the living room with. The place was worth more than any property around these parts.

Since she wasn't going to stay long, there was no use pulling around the side and into the garage. After looking herself over once more in the mirror, she got out of the car.

Amanda smiled when she thought about living here and raising their kids here. They would be just like Mr. and Mrs. Anderson. She just knew it.

Using the key Luke gave her, she made her way into the front room. The place was quiet and clean as always. The house cleaners always left around one. The fresh scent of pine flooded the room.

Amanda made her way up the spiral-woodened staircase, then headed down the hallway toward Luke's bedroom. The man was still sleeping after all this time. Maybe she could give him a little wake up surprise.

When Amanda reached for the knob on his bedroom door, her heart sunk at the sounds that met her. She could hear a female and Luke's voice moaning from pleasure.

Okay, if she just walked away, then she wouldn't have to see what was behind the door. Maybe, Luke was watching one of his chick flicks and jerking off. She never saw him doing it before, but that doesn't



mean he doesn't do it.

*God let that be it.*

With shaky hands, she opened the door. Every bone in her body stiffened at the sight on Luke's bed. Luke had some woman's legs over his shoulders while he thrust into her. Both of them were so caught up in the moment, neither one of them seemed to notice she had entered into the room.

"God, baby, you feel so good," Luke moaned to the woman underneath him.

"Deeper, Luke, please."

That voice! She knew that voice, it was Debbie. The same slut who just left her boss for an afternoon fuck and was now here screwing her man's brains out. If Amanda weren't so upset right now, she'd notice how gross that really was.

"I can't believe this shit!" Amanda screamed as she approached the bed. "Luke, what the fuck do you think you are doing?" Stupid question, Amanda knew it the second the question left her lips, but she couldn't think of anything else to ask him or say. What do you say when you walk in on your fiancé screwing another woman's brains out? Beats the hell out of her. It wasn't like she walked in on her supposed men screwing other women all the time. She didn't have flash cards for this.

Amanda's voice startled Luke, at least she thought it did by the way he stopped, his back tensing up for a moment, but he didn't stop his movement. However, he did let go of her legs. Debbie, on the other hand only, smiled at Amanda.

"Luke!" Amanda screamed grabbing a hand full of his hair.

Finally, he stopped and moved away Debbie. He had no choice. Amanda had his hair balled so tightly in her hand she knew it hurt like hell.

"You could have waited until I finished. I didn't mind you watching," he said.

She watched Debbie pull down her dress and head out the door without a word. Amanda couldn't believe this. Instead of speaking, she watched the door Debbie walked out for several moments. Finally she



looked at Luke. "You shouldn't be doing this anyway. I thought you loved me."

"I do," he answered. "I love you more than life itself."

Tears formed in her eyes, making her look away to keep from letting him see how much this affected her. "You have a crappy way of showing it." Spasms of nausea from grief settled in and Amanda knew she had to get out of here now.

Luke moved toward her, making her take a step back. He still looked sexy as hell, but there was no way she would let him touch her with her boss and Debbie all over him. Even if he had nine inches of hardness strained for attention. Her attention.

"Don't touch me."

He stopped, then looked at her. After following the same path of her eyes, then smiled, knowing what she looked at.

"How long, Luke?" she asked, then turned toward the window to keep from staring at his body. No matter how gross it was she still wanted him, in a small, almost non-existing way.

"How long what?"

"How long have you been fucking that slut?"

"About two months."

Just like that! He couldn't tell her about not wanting to get married, but he blurted out how long he's been cheating on her without a second thought.

"Two months. Two months!" her voice became high and hysterical with anger. "What does she have that I don't?" Amanda saw Luke eyes widen. She knew he saw the hurt, pain and anger in her eyes. Mentally, she felt his hurt for hurting her, but it did not mask her own pain. She should have called him before coming over. She usually called no matter what.

"Nothing. I love you, but I doubt that you would have a threesome with me."

"That was not a threesome," she shouted. "A threesome requires three people. That was you and the slut."

"Baby."

"Don't baby me," Amanda snapped, then stepped away when he



took another step toward her.

"Amanda, let's be grown up about this."

"I am acting like an adult. If I wasn't, you would be laying on the floor right now."

"What if I say I would never see Debbie again?"

"Then you would be lying piece of shit. Were there any before Debbie?"

Luke ran his hand through his brown hair.

Amanda knew he mostly did that when he didn't want to answer her or agree to something that she wanted to do.

"Amanda," he whispered. "Don't ask a question you don't want to hear the answer to."

*Count to ten, remember count or Luke will be flying through the window.* "Answer the damn question." The way Luke looked at that moment told her that not only had he been cheating with Debbie, he had to have been with others. The question was how many.

"Yes. There were others before Debbie."

*Others? How many others? No, I don't want to know.* "How many?" she asked before she thought about how she would feel when he told her the truth.

"Amanda," he whined.

"How many others was there, Luke?" Amanda's voice had gone to a low whisper.

"Six or seven."

If this was what a broken heart felt like, she never wanted to experience it again. It felt like someone just tore her heart out of her chest and left a gaping hole there. A dull, empty ache gnawed at her soul as tears formed in her eyes again. She could feel the vibration of her powers coming forward. Nevertheless, she wouldn't let it take over because if she did Luke would be a dead man. To ease the hurt, she laughed an all out giggle. She had to be losing her mind. Her lover just told her that he had been with at least seven different women since they have been together and she stood laughing at it. Sign her up for room three and a size eight white coat in the crazy house.

"Amanda, I know you are upset, but..."



"Upset..." She looked at him, an evil smile firmly in place. "I am not upset. I will say that Mrs. Anderson was right."

Luke's eyebrow arched at her. "You are talking about old Mrs. Anderson from across town?"

Amanda nodded.

"What was she right about?"

"About you. For years she has been telling me you were a bastard, but she never straight out told me why."

It was Luke's turn to laugh.

Amanda didn't know Luke had moved until he stood directly in front of her.

"Mrs. Anderson was mad because I wouldn't marry her daughter."

"But you slept with her didn't you?"

"Yes, but..."

Amanda pushed at the wall of his chest and walked toward the bedroom door. His hand on her shoulder stopped her retreat. "What Luke?" She spun around to him removing his hands from her. "What do you want me to say? I forgive you. I can't forgive you for cheating on me."

"It was just a fling. I can be faithful. I can. I just needed a little more and you wouldn't have done it."

"What makes you think you can be faithful now?"

"Because I know I can."

Amanda shook her head. "You know, I came here today for comfort because Debbie took my job. My boss hit on me years ago and, because I threatened to sue him, he kept me on." She looked at her now ex-lover. "I got fired and the same girl that took my job is fucking my boyfriend. Man, could my day get any worse than this?"

"I am sorry about that. You know you are always welcome to come and work for me anytime."

"I don't think so."

"What are you going to do, Amanda? Are you going to throw away five years because of sex? Sex is nothing compared to how much I love you."

"No, you don't love me."



“Yes I do.” He grabbed her hand. “And if you would be a little more opened minded, you can be on your back screaming my name instead of standing here fighting with me.”

Amanda scowled at him. Did he just say what she thought he said? Was he offering to have sex with her after Debbie? The man had to be even crazier than she thought. “You are an asshole,” she said, then snatched her hand away.

“Okay, how about this, we can have a threesome and I would get another man to join us. Trust me, I would love to watch.”

Her day just got worse. Luke just treated her as if she was Debbie. Did he think that by letting her have sex with another man would make it better?

“So what do you say?”

Looking into his brown eyes and putting all the power that she knew she had in her right fist, she pulled back and hit Luke in his eye. With the power behind her, Luke flew across the room and landed a couple feet back on the floor. Amanda knew his eye would be black and blue in the morning, but she didn’t care. She walked up to him bending over his naked form.

“You are an asshole and a jerk,” she jerked the ring off her finger. Holding it tightly in the palm of her hand for a moment, she knew what she had to do. “If you come near me again, I will kill you.” In anger, she tossed the ring at him, then stormed out of the home and out of his life.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### DAVIS TRAVEL AGENCY

“Where’s Amanda?” Emma asked Sheila when she walked in the office.

Sheila looked up from her computer. “I don’t know. When Darrell and I returned, she wasn’t here. That was an hour ago.”

“Maybe she went to lunch.” Emma suggested.

“I don’t think so. Amanda wouldn’t leave the office with no one else here. Anyhow, she asked me to bring her a salad. I put it in her fridge to stay cool.”

“True. Maybe I should give her a call on her cell.”

“Try that.”

Emma went to her desk, then dialed Amanda’s number. The phone rang and rang until it went to Amanda’s voicemail. “Hey, Amanda, it is Emma. Give me or Sheila a call back. We are worried about you. Bye.”

“Not picking up?” Sheila asked.

“No, that is so unlike her.”

“Maybe she left her phone home again.”

Emma knew she was jumping to conclusion, but Amanda never did anything like this. “I am going to Mr. Davis,” Emma stood, then looked around when the front doorbell went off.

Emma frowned when Debbie walked into the office. She whistled to herself as she went over to Amanda’s desk and began pulling drawers out and throwing Amanda’s personal items in the trashcan. Instead of walking into her boss’ office, Emma watched in shock at what was



unfolding in front of her.

Sheila leaned closer to Emma. "What the hell does she think she is doing?"

"I don't know," Emma retorted quietly. "It looks like she is moving into Amanda's desk."

"It does, doesn't it?"

Sheila moved to approach Debbie, but Emma stopped her by grabbing her arm. "Sheila let me ask because I know as soon as you go over there you are going to try to beat her up."

"Try?" Sheila laughed looking at Emma. "That is one dead woman if she did something to Amanda."

"Just wait until we find out what happened before you start killing."

Sheila nodded.

Emma wiped her hands on her blue jeans before making her way over to Debbie who hadn't said anything as she rummaged through Amanda's desk. Emma pushed her blondish-brown colored hair out of her face. "Ummm...Debbie."

Debbie looked up, blue eyes sparkling as she smiled at her. "Yes, Emma."

"Why are you at Amanda's desk?"

"Because this is my new desk now."

Emma looked back at Sheila, then back to Debbie. "I'm sorry, could you repeat that because it sounded like you said, *this was your desk now.*"

"It is."

"Okay." Emma placed her hands in her pockets. "Where's Amanda going to work?"

"I don't know," Debbie said, then shrugged.

"Okay, new question. Is Amanda fired?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean yes!" Sheila yelled, coming over to them.

Emma caught her by the arm before she made it to the desk. Debbie stopped what she was doing and ran into Clayton's office so quickly that Emma didn't even see her move.

"Calm down, Sheila."



"I am calm, Emma," Sheila pulled out of her grip. "Why did you stop me?"

"Because you need a job just like I do and we aren't going to find out what happen by you beating that poor girl up."

"Poor girl is right. That's exactly what they are going to be saying when I am finished with her." Emma watched Sheila took a calming breath. "That *poor girl* got the crap beat out of her."

"What is going on in my office?" Clayton bellowed as he came out of his office. His pet, Debbie tailed his every step.

Emma looked over to her boss with his dirty white t-shirt hung loosely over his jeans. His beard had what looked like pieces of crumbs in it. The commotion must have stopped him mid-bite. Slob happened to be an understatement for what he truly was.

He stopped in the middle of the floor looking at them, waiting on some answers. "Well, what happened?"

"Nothing," Emma spoke up first.

"That's a lie." They heard Debbie's voice say from behind Clayton.

Emma wanted to chuckle at how his body covered Debbie's completely. The only thing they could see was her golden hair from above him.

"Then you tell me what happened, Debbie?"

"I was moving into my desk just like you told me to do when Sheila attacked me."

"No she wasn't," Emma lied for her friend. "Sheila moved toward Debbie when she said Amanda was fired. She wasn't going to do anything."

"Amanda *is* fired," Clayton told them.

Emma frowned. What had Amanda done, besides not have sex with him that would make him fire her like this? "May I ask what happened," she said with a too nice of a voice. She knew Sheila decided to listen to the conversation because she knew if Sheila said anything, it would have a couple of curse words followed by her foot pounding someone in the ground.

"No," came his harsh reply. "If she wants to tell you, she will."

"But..." Emma said, but Clayton stopped her.



"No buts," he spoke. "You three will have to learn to work together. Either you accept working with Debbie here or you two can look for another job. The choice is yours. If you stay, you three will learn to work together." He stared at them. "Got it?"

"Yes, sir," Emma finally answered. She looked at Sheila who had a tight grip on her bottom lip with her teeth, a sure sign that she didn't want to say anything.

"Sheila!" Clayton snarled.

"Okay," she snapped then went back to her desk.

Emma watched as Sheila sat down and began to type away at the keyboard, but she knew no work was being done.

"Now get back to work," Clayton told them. "Debbie in my office...now."

Once the door closed, Sheila looked at Emma. "Fat pig."

Emma walked over to Sheila. "We need to talk to her. She must be devastated. You think that's why she didn't pick up her phone?"

"I know it is." Sheila looked up and Emma could tell from the frown on her face she knew Emma was mad as hell. "You keep trying her cell and I will call Luke. Maybe she went there to talk to him."

"Perhaps you are right. But if she went there, you know they may be doing more than talking."

"True." Sheila sighed. "But I want to make sure she is all right."

The both of them looked at Debbie when she came back into the front office. For some reason Emma was glad there weren't many customers today because if this woman said anything to Sheila she didn't like, this would be where the next world war would take place.

"Ladies," Debbie spoke as she made her way up to them. "I know we started on the wrong foot, but if we have to work together we might as well get along. What do you say we start over?"

Emma wanted to do more than just *start over* as Debbie said. She wanted to beat the hell out of this woman. She didn't deserve Amanda's job. There was no way in hell they would all be able to work together. Emma looked at Sheila.

"What do you say," Debbie repeated.

The room became quiet as the three women stared at each other.



“Okay, Debbie,” Sheila said as she stood, making Debbie flinch a little.

Emma moved closer so she could intervene if Sheila tried to attack Debbie.

“We will start over. I can’t get mad at you because you didn’t fire her. Clayton did. So for that we can start over.”

Emma really didn’t like the evil look on Sheila’s face. She believed that if she photographed Sheila right now, Sheila would be sitting on a throne of fire with red horns protruding from her forehead. The woman looked like the devil in disguise.

“See, I knew we could get along,” Debbie grabbed Sheila in a big bear hug.

From the way Sheila froze, Emma knew she wasn’t expecting the physical contact. Oh, she knew Sheila wanted to get physical, but it had more violence in it. Sheila looked wide-eyed at Emma with a get-this-woman-off-me-before-I-do-something-to-her look. Quickly, Emma intervened, pulling Debbie off Sheila and immediately hugging her. That’s all she could do to spare Debbie’s life. As Emma hugged Debbie, she could see Sheila in the back doing gagging signals and begging her to let her kick Debbie’s ass. Sheila stopped when Debbie turned around to look at Sheila again.

“Okay so you have to teach me everything you know,” Debbie said. “I know all about computers and things like that. I just need to know what I have to do.”

Emma watched Sheila ground her teeth, then pushed her hair out of her face.

“The customers come in, they want to go somewhere, then you look it up and print it out.”

“Sheila,” Emma yelled. “She’s only kidding you, Debbie.” Emma looked over to Sheila and shot her a don’t-you-start-with-this-woman look. “Weren’t you, Sheila?” Watching Sheila ground her teeth again made Emma laugh.

Sheila answered after a long pause. “Yes,” she snapped. “Joking. Sure...that’s what we do in this office. We are a big ‘ol bag of jokes. Ha-ha.”



"That's great," Debbie squealed. "You joking with me has made me so happy."

"We are one big happy family," Emma said. "Come on, Debbie, let me show you what to do and Sheila you can get right on what we talked about earlier."

"Will do," Sheila agreed.

Sheila almost said something mean when she watched the half-naked woman follow her friend over to her best friends used to be desk. Sheila knew Emma was right, beating Debbie up wouldn't get her anywhere.

Sheila called Amanda again and grunted in frustration when she got the voicemail again. Where could she be? Amanda didn't ignore people, no matter how mad she got. When they called, she would always pick up the telephone.

"No luck," Sheila told Emma who sat behind the desk with Debbie standing over her.

"Keep trying," Emma shot back an order.

Again, she dialed her cell, then remembered she had to call Luke. That's probably where Amanda went and now she may be lay between the sheets with Luke. God she hoped that's where Amanda was.

After calling Luke's home and getting no answer, Sheila decided to call Luke's work. Maybe they went there afterward.

"Luke Reeves new and used auto. Janice speaking, how may I help you?"

"Janice," Sheila whispered.

"Yes, this is Janice. Who is this?"

"This is Sheila."

"Sheila? Oh," Janice spoke. "Why are you whispering?"

"No time to tell you. Is Luke in?"

"Yes. Do you need to speak with him?"

"Yes."

"Let me see if he is free."

Janice Law placed Sheila on hold, then rose from her chair. With a soft knock, she walked into Luke's office. "Mr. Reeves," she said seductively.



\* \* \* \*

Luke turned around with his dark glasses on to cover his black eye. He moistened his lips at the curly blonde-haired woman that stood in front of him. Immediately, his body hardened at the short miniskirt she had on that showed every bit of her lovely legs. His brown eyes followed a heated path up her legs up to her breast. He knew through her thin silky shirt, she didn't have on a bra or panties because he made it an order when she came to work. It was easier for him to get to her that way.

"Sir, if you keep looking at me like that I might have to close this door and forget what I came in here for."

Willing his body to calm down he took a long deep breath. These women were the reason why he was in the situation he was in now. He just lost his love because he couldn't keep his libido under control. If he wanted Amanda back, he would have to control his urges. That meant that he had to get rid of Janice Law, but how could he get rid of the best blowjob person he had ever run into? Nevertheless, he would, for Amanda.

Janice licked her lips and he hardened again. *Damn it!* It would take a lot more discipline to become the faithful man Amanda needed than he realized.

"What is it you want?" his voice became hard as stone.

He saw Janice jumped a little, never seeing him become that serious with her before.

"Sheila Freeman on the line," she snapped. "Sir."

"What does she want?"

"I don't know, I didn't ask."

Raising his hand, he gestured for her to go back to her desk. "Then go and ask, then let me know."

When Janice left, he sat back in his chair and pressed his hand against his pants. Man, he felt harder than stone. He had already given himself a release before he came in. Amanda interrupted him before with Debbie but now, he needed Amanda more than anything and he



wouldn't take it out on Janice.

"Mr. Reeves," Janice said over the intercom. "She wanted to know if you have talked to Amanda."

Luke stared out the window for a moment. If Sheila was calling him, that meant Amanda hadn't talked to her yet. He knew she wouldn't call him if Amanda had told them what she caught him doing. When she did, he would probably have to hire a bodyguard. Sheila was a small thing, but she had a harder punch than Amanda did. The girl took Martial Arts and had a black belt in it. "Put her through." When his phone rang, he picked up.

"Luke," Sheila whispered. "You talked to Amanda?"

"Yes," he answered

"Where is she?"

"I don't know. She didn't tell me where she was going after she left my house."

"So you have seen her lately?"

"Yes I did, but she is a little upset with me right now," Luke said softly, feeling grief overwhelm him. He hurt her also. More than losing her job would ever hurt.

"Why is she upset with you?"

"I can't tell you, she has to."

"What is it with you men today?" Sheila shouted. "What did you do to her, Luke? I know she told you about her job."

"Yes she did and I am sorry to hear it."

"So what has her upset with you?"

"I can't tell you."

"Forget this," she snarled. "How long has it been since you saw her?"

"About an hour ago."

"And she didn't say where she was going?"

"No, she just left."

"Okay, if you hear from her let me know."

"I will."

"Bye, Luke."



## CHAPTER FIVE

### LAS VEGAS, NV

Simon Baldwin woke from his rest. Immediately, he knew that something was different. His bed didn't feel cold like so many other nights when he awakened from his dead sleep. No, tonight she laid there beside him. Not the woman he wanted. He left the woman of his dreams, unsatisfied and now he needed a release of his own. Since she was here, he would have to settle with her.

Pushing her brown hair slowly from her long pale neck, with a smile, he rolled onto his side and ran his tongue against her neck. His body jerked at the taste of her blood that he left from their earlier lovemaking. It tasted so sweet, so pure and so fulfilling. Maybe because she was almost three hundred and fifty years older than he was, maybe she was just sweet in that way. Slowly, moving more of her long brown hair from her neck, he sunk his teeth into the tender flesh at the column of her neck. At the same time, slid his cock deep into her from behind.

Simon heard Rosa's intake of air as she woke from her sleep the second she felt the sting of his fangs in her neck and his shaft in her warmth. Simon knew he happened to be by far the best lover she has had, but he could wear a woman down, especially with ten inches of hardness stretching a woman to her fullness. He was insatiable and he knew her body was still sore from last night's marathon, but he had to have her.

"Simon," she hissed when he grabbed her breast with his large



hands and drove deeper and harder than the last stroke.

Rosa moaned when her body vibrated around him making Simon moan low and deep against her neck. Dark hair began to cover his body.

His control was slipping again!

Simon's unusual, unearthly snarl must have alerted her. "Simon you must control yourself," she told him as she still moved against his demanding body.

With another growl, he pushed her onto her stomach, still attached to her neck as he sunk back into her welcoming body, then pulled back to plunge back in harder. Rosa grabbed his black hair, pulling it hard so he would release her neck. Without a fight, he released her neck. The thin layer of hair disappeared from his body. His movement went to a slower, more erotic pace. He never wanted to hurt her.

"I am sorry," he whispered into her ear, then came to a complete stop.

"I know," she said. "Don't stop I am so close."

She didn't see the smile on his face when he reached under her and pulled her onto her knees. The new position made her gasp out in pain and pleasure. That's all it took for Rosa. Her body shook, then exploded in a blissful release. Her muscles contracted and rippled around his shaft.

Simon wasn't far behind, with one last thrust, he came with a low groan. While his body still released itself, he laid her back onto her stomach, loving the feel of her warmth around him. When he could move, he removed himself from her body to lie on his back.

Rosa looked over to him, staring into his silver eyes.

He reached up touching her face. "I am sorry," he apologized again.

With a satisfied sigh, she smiled. "I know you didn't mean to hurt me."

"I wish I could control this thing."

"You can, Simon."

"No, Rosa." Simon removed his hand. "The other part of me is trying to take over. Each day I feel that I will become...become." He



stopped speaking not wanting to say it.

"You will never be a full-blooded werewolf, Simon. You were born a Dark Guardian and you will always be one. You cannot be a Cotranth either. Only full-blooded werewolves are Cotranth and you know that. You have to be born one. Not made."

"Until this thing takes over. The wolf bit me almost twelve years ago and it's getting worse with each passing day. I stay away from humans sometimes because I can't control it. I leave and go off by myself when it gets so bad that I feel that I can't stop the transformation." He looked up at the ceiling. "I don't know what to do anymore."

"You know they say that Manuel made a cure."

"I know," he snarled at the thought of begging that fleabag. "Manuel is Tyren's father and I will not give up my stepson to him. I love Tyren just as much as I loved his mother. If I can keep him away until Tyren turns twenty-one, Tyren can live a normal life, like normal people."

"How can he be normal? He is the child of a werewolf."

"Don't remind me."

"I know you think you can't control yourself with a human," Rosa comforted. "But you can."

"I know I can't. Look what I almost did to you."

Rosa laughed at him. "I might be a Triane, but I am a powerful one. Not many have made it to the ripe age of one-thousand. And I have made it one-thousand and seven. It takes a lot more than you taking my blood to hurt me. My master gives me his blood every five-hundred years, right on time so that I can live longer and become stronger."

Simon looked up at Rosa. Her brown eyes shone brightly in the darkness as she looked at him. The Dark Guardian that made her knew exactly what he was doing. Rosa happened to be one of the few women he found beautiful and he knew plenty other men did also, that's why he could never let her know how he felt about her. He cared for her and he, in some way, wanted her all to himself. "I know, but I still don't want to hurt anyone."

"I know you don't love me, Simon."

"I..." She pressed her finger to his mouth stopping him before he



said something he would regret.

Slowly, she shook her head. “No, we are only sexual partners and very close friends. When your urges become unbearable and you are afraid to be with a human, then you can always count on me. And when I need someone that will leave me walking bow-legged for days, then I call you.”

Simon laughed at her joke. As always, she made him smile when he felt down. Rosa spoke the truth about them. She has been beside him since Tyren was born from his unfaithful wife...he shook the thought. He loved his wife Karen, but she had cheated on him. Tyren was the proof. Karen knew how to detect a werewolf. The only thing she had to do was look at their right hand for five marks. Karen also knew he was a vampire and she accepted him and for that, he loved her. Karen wasn't his Truelove and he knew he wouldn't be able to get her pregnant. He wanted to, but he knew he couldn't and her night of sex with a werewolf has caused a boatload of trouble.

First, his stepson was a half werewolf and he could live a normal life if he stayed away from his father or any werewolf's blood. If his father gave him his blood, then Tyren would become a full-blooded werewolf.

A killer.

If Tryen's father, Manuel, was a Cotranth, a peaceful form of a werewolf, then it would be okay. But he wasn't. Manuel was a cool-blooded killer.

On the night Tyren was born, Manuel had come for Tyren, but Simon made sure to take Tyren away the second he took his first breath. When Simon went to rest that night, Manuel murdered Karen as she lay in the hospital bed. The hospital said that she died of a heart attack, but he knew that Manuel had injected her with something that killed her. He knew Manuel would have killed him also if he could have found him before he woke.

When Simon rose and found out what happened, he set out to kill Manuel. Only to find out that Manuel had a trap set up for him. Instead of killing Simon, Manuel gave him his blood, mixing it, unbalancing Simon's blood. He became the first half vampire, half werewolf to live.



Now at the slightest anger or sexual need, he would almost turn, sometimes painfully. He had never been a full werewolf and never wanted to be one. Over the years, he has controlled it when something upset him. The only time he could not control it was when he had sex. Therefore, having a relationship with humans was off his list. That's where Rosa came in. She knew how to control his other side. Sometimes make it go away for a while.

Finally, Simon listened to the commotion below. He heard slot machines ringing, people yelling as they won and lost their money. He heard the cards being shuffled by dealers and the dice being rolled onto the table by customers. He looked out his window to see the last of the sun disappearing. Simon lived in the penthouse on the top floor, which was on the hundred and tenth floor.

His room had been decorated with dark blood red carpet. His bed was made out of dark mahogany redwood. His windows tinted with a special vampire sun-proof tint. Plus, he had dark black drapes hung just in case it didn't work. The red light made the room darker and more romantic. Right outside his double glass sliding door was a pool and Jacuzzi he had installed last week and hadn't had a chance to use yet. It sat right next to the window so he could look out at the stars. His floor, unlike the others that had twenty rooms, only had five bedrooms, three bathrooms, and a large stainless steel kitchen and study room. All the rooms were occupied except for the room beside his.

Living above ground wasn't uncommon for his kind. Not many of them did it. He enjoyed the cool, safe underground, but loved living as close to a human as possible. He enjoyed this life and he loved that this hotel made money. He mostly donated half of it to charities. His job as a Dark Guardian brought in more in a month than his hotel could do in six months. In all, running a casino kept him from becoming bored and losing his soul like so many other Dark Guardians had.

Las Vegas was the most active city for vampires so there were about five or six Dark Guardians here alone. He hunted and did his duty, but he only had to go out and hunt once or twice a month and that gave him a lot of time on his hands. Rosa kept him occupied when he needed a release, but deep down he needed more. He needed his



Truelove, but alas, he couldn't be with her. He would kill her and that he couldn't live with. Over the years, he faded away from women. The only ones that were near him were Rosa and his son's private teacher...teachers to be precise.

Simon believed that Tyren scared off half of his teachers because he didn't like to be told what to do. This new person...Trisha...Tia...Tina—he didn't know—he met her once and, when she looked at him, he knew she wanted him sexually. Simon made it his business to stay away from her. That was a week ago. He might have to go and ask Barbara about her.

"How is Tyren doing with this new teacher?" Rosa pulled him away from his thoughts.

His silver eyes went to her hazel ones again. "I wish I could tell you."

"Simon!" she yelled, then sat up in the bed. "Why haven't you talked to that woman? It's been over a week. Don't you want to know how he is doing?"

"Of course I do," he answered. "It's just she..."

"She wanted to be with you, didn't she?"

"Yes. I read her thoughts and I must say I wouldn't mind doing some of those things she came up with. But I am afraid I would kill her and she is a bit too old for me."

"I am sorry you have to suffer like this," Rosa said as she rose from the bed to dress.

"Where are you going?"

She laughed. "As much as I want to do that again, I don't think my body can handle it. My body is sore, which always happens every time I am with you. And I need to feed."

"I have blood in the fridge and you know that."

After dressing in her black evening gown from last night, she sat on the bed and put on her shoes. "As much as I want it, I don't do cold blood."

"I know I don't like it either. I never craved blood until this mix up happened. Now I am just like those movie vampires. I have to have blood every other day or I will starve to death."



"Poor baby," she said then stood. "I have to go. I'll call you when I come to town again."

"Where are you going this time?"

"Paris," she told him. "Somewhere like that. I heard the French men are yummy."

"You better be careful because there are some Dark Guardian's there that won't let you feed off humans."

"I know and I didn't live this long not being careful."

"I know you are careful."

"See you in a few months." With a quick kiss, she left the room.

Simon wanted to stay in the bed, but he knew he had to make an unplanned visit to the afterhour's club. Tonight at the Anything Goes Casino and Resort, Club Sixty-Nine, opened at nine and the night was not complete if the owner didn't come in and say hello to everyone.

Simon's casino ran differently from a lot of them. Not only did he have floors and floors of rooms, but he also had enchantment rooms. He had an entire floor for people that wanted their darkest fantasies fulfilled, from threesomes to orgies, like no other. Club Sixty-Nine was an underground padded room just under the casino. In the back of the hotel was a gigantic swimming pool, which he could look into from his balcony. His manager Barbara came up with Skinny Dip Fridays. It was where guest could go skinny-dipping from midnight until two.

He also had two full restaurants, a wedding chapel, a spa, a weight room and a room for when he hired comedians or had magic shows performed. His place was where you went and never had to leave the building. Everything there was right at your fingertips. The problem was that he still wasn't happy.

Groaning to himself, he went to take a shower, then go down to his club. After that, he would go and check on Tyren and his new teacher or maybe he would check on them before heading down to the club.

\* \* \* \*

Tyren sat back in his chair, glaring at the computer screen. This was definitely not what he had planned today. His teacher, Ms. Osborne,



wanted a power-point presentation on ancient history by tomorrow. He hated history with a passion. Now math that was a different thing, give him trigonometry and advanced calculus any day. Ms. Osborne has been here for a week, but he could tell that she didn't know too much about math or pretty much anything over a fifth-grade level.

Last night he snuck into his father's office and looked at her files. She used to teach kindergarten until she had a nervous breakdown and had quit at the age of forty. Since then she did nothing but sit around and get bigger with each passing day.

*What was Barbara thinking about when she hired her?* Even with him being eleven, his IQ was way past college level. He wished his father would stop hiring these women and let him have fun downstairs in the casino. The few times he snuck down to the casino, he didn't get a chance to have fun before his father made him go right back up to his room. There were thousands of people in Las Vegas and the only time he could see them was at night when his father was around. Then he couldn't go into the casino at all. He couldn't hang out at the pool on Skinny Dip Fridays. Tyren laughed. What father would let their eleven-year-old look at women in such a manner? His father would be pissed if he knew he had snuck into the empty room beside his to look at the naked women who enjoyed themselves in the pool.

What do you expect, he was a boy? This would be a wonderful town to live in, if he could do more than go downstairs to the movie theater. He wanted to have fun and he would, as soon as he turned eighteen. When he did, he would leave to explore the world.

Don't get him wrong, Tyren loved his father and he knew he would have loved his mother, but he needed to get out. Tyren considered Simon a night man. Simon entertained all night and slept in his overprotected room during the day.

The man had more dead locks and other mechanisms on his door that an army couldn't get in during the day. Sometimes Tyren thought his father did some illegal stuff. Maybe it's just him. His father would never do anything illegal or anything that would involve the police.

"Tyren, you are day dreaming again?" Mrs. Osborne asked.

Tia tied her black shoulder length hair with a tie as she looked at



him with her tired black eyes as he did not attempt to type at the keyboard. It didn't matter, it was almost eight and she would be leaving soon. Today, she started late and she knew she had to stay late.

"Tyren."

Hazel eyes going to black ones. "Yes Tia," he answered, knowing it burned her up when he called her by her first name.

"You better show me respect, Tyren."

"Or what? You are going to tell my father?"

"No, she doesn't have to tell me," a deep, dark growl came from the other side of the room making his body tense up.

The blood drained from his face when he saw his father walking into the room. Now he knew he was in trouble.

"Apologize to her," Simon hissed through clenched teeth.

Tyren smiled, his father didn't know her name. He never could remember their names. The only names he remembered were that woman Rosa and Barbara's. Tyren liked Rosa, but she had this I-don't-want-to-be-a-mother image. Tyren never wanted anyone to replace his mother, but he wanted a female in his life. He looked at Tia and frowned, a female younger looking than her. "Good evening father," Tyren spoke.

"I don't want to hear that." Simon walked up to him. "Apologize now. You are not too young for me to bend you over my knee."

"You wouldn't!" Tyren teased, "In front of a girl." He watched as Simon had to hold back a laugh. Tyren's ran his hand through his blonde hair, his hazel colored eyes looking into his father's silver ones. *You don't even know her name father*, Tyren spoke to his father by mind.

Tyren knew he was different because he could talk to his father and hear other people's thoughts. That's why he didn't go to a regular school. His father thought it would be better if he stayed away from others and because he could read at a high school level at the age of five, it made no sense to put him in with students that were not up to his level.

*Why are you acting in such a manner as this? Haven't I taught you better than that?*



*I am sorry, but she is not bright enough to hold my attention. I know more than her father.*

*I know you do, Tyren. You know more than a lot of people.*

*So why keep her here?*

*Because you need to get a degree from high school. You will not be able to make it in this world without it.*

*Like you?*

*Yes, like me. Now apologize before the woman thinks we are crazy from just staring at each other.*

*Can we find someone else?*

*Yes, let her finish her last week and I will have Barbara place an ad in the paper by tomorrow.*

*Make sure it is in different papers around the world.*

*Why?*

*Because I feel that my favorite teacher doesn't live in Las Vegas.*

*I don't think someone will want to move here from another place.*

*She would, trust me. Pay her more.*

*Okay, now apologize.*

\* \* \* \*

With a little boy smile on his face, Tyren turned to her.

Tia had been wondering why they were standing there staring at each other. If she didn't know better, she thought that they were talking to each other, but no words left their lips. One thing she knew, she didn't mind just staring at Simon all day. Her body tingled from just looking at him. He had on the same colors he wore last time she saw him. Black leather pants that stuck like second skin, a silk black shirt unbuttoned so she could get a peek at his toned chest hiding underneath. He had the most unusual colored eyes she ever saw. They looked gray, then silver at the same time, but made her shiver from desire. Simon looked at her and she smiled at him.

"I am sorry, Ms. Osborne," Tyren finally spoke.

Tia shook her head, breaking the trance she had been in. "Thank you, Tyren." Smiling, she continued staring at Simon.



"I will finish this assignment and give it to you first thing tomorrow."

"That will be great." Tia may have been speaking to Tyren, but her mouth watered for a piece of Simon. Sure, she had gained twenty pounds over the years, but she still looked good for her age. She didn't have any wrinkles, her skin still toned and smooth. She had a little more butt and breast than she wanted, but some men liked a little cushion. Maybe Simon liked cushion.

"Have a nice day, Ms. Osborne," Simon spoke, then looked at Tyren. "I will speak with you later, son. Maybe we could do a movie after I go down to the Club."

Tia watched as Tyren took in a deep breath to speak, but Simon cut him off. "No you cannot go with me and you know that you have to be twenty-one years and older to go into the casino. You, my son, are only eleven." Simon smiled. "You do the math, you are a smart boy."

\* \* \* \*

Simon walked into the main kitchen on his floor. The smell of steak, baked potatoes and freshly cooked bread filled his nose. The short, brown haired woman took a pan out of the oven, then sat it on the cooling rack. After that, she went over to a pot and opened the lid, mixing the food with a gigantic spoon.

"Are you going to stand at the door all day or do you want anything to drink," Barbara said without looking at him.

He knew she detected the moment he entered the room. Barbara Alston, once what he considered a streetwalker, now a two hundred year old Triane. He watched as her brown curly hair cascaded to her shoulders, her jeans hugging her slim waist. The Dementra that made her made a great choice for a sexy mate, but she wasn't really his type. She had been turned at the age of nineteen and she still had the teenager ways sometimes, then there were the times when she had to manage his business, she acted her age. And the woman could cook a southern meal and made bread that felt like clouds in your mouth.

"Nothing for now."



"Rosa filled you up I see," she teased.

"You know it."

"I don't have anything against Rosa, but you need to think sometimes."

"Think about what?"

"About Tyren."

He looked at her strangely, not understanding what she meant.

"I think about Tyren all the time. I take care of him and I make sure that he never wants for anything."

"Yes, but you need to think about finding your Truelove. You need to find her before it gets too late."

"No," was his only response.

"Why not, Simon?" she asked, then replaced the lid on the pot. "Why?"

"Because of the thing."

"You have werewolf blood running through you. So what. Go to Manuel, get the cure and it will be over. Also, nothing can happen to a Truelove. If your blood is contaminated, she will filter it out. You and I both know that."

"You know it's not that simple," Simon told her as he sat down on the bench. "Manuel wants Tyren and I can't let him have him. I would suffer like this forever for him to have a simple life."

Barbara shook her head. "Tyren will never have a simple life and you know that. You are afraid that you will kill this human."

"I will." He looked away. "I almost took too much from Rosa. If she hadn't stopped me..." he let the sentence hang.

"You would have stopped yourself."

"How can you be so sure? How do you know that I won't hurt this human?" his voice ascended in an angry tone.

"Because once in the presence of your Truelove, you will see nothing but love and you will not hurt her." She smiled. "Trust me on that."

"You speak wisely. I hope you are right. Anyhow, I am not looking for her right now. She might not even be born as of yet."

"True, but there's always hope," she said, then walked back to the



stove. "You are not eating tonight?"

"Later. I will send Tyren down to eat." Simon walked to the door, then stopped. "Oh, I forgot. We need to place an ad for another teacher." He turned back to her.

"Why?" Barbara asked angrily. "What has Tia done?"

"Tyren complains that she is not teaching him anything."

"Simon," she whined. "Why are you letting him do this? He says that they are not teaching him anything and you believe him."

"He cannot lie to me and you know that."

"I do know it, but Tia is a nice woman and she has years of experience."

"With kindergartners," he said dryly.

"It doesn't matter, she is smart."

"Yes it does. I am not paying that type of money, plus giving them room and board with free meals when they cannot keep his interest for more than a day."

"What do you want me to do?" She placed her hands on her hips.

"Ask for more experience, raise the pay, I don't care. Just have someone here by next week. Also, make sure that you place it in more than just the Las Vegas newspapers. Place it in newspapers around the world if you have to."

"Anything else," she snarled at him.

"Yes," he smiled, knowing he had angered her. "Leave me a nice plate in the microwave."

"Gladly," she snapped. "I wonder what type of poison works on Dark Guardians?"

"I don't know. You try if first and I'll know if it works when you are laid out on the floor."

"Bastard is an understatement for what you are."

He raised an eyebrow. "I assure you, Miss, that my parents were happily married, in the human way, when I was born."

"You know what I meant."

"I did, but I like making you upset. You look cute when you are upset with me."

"You won't be saying that when you sink your teeth in a nice



overcooked, poisonous steak.”

“You love me too much to do that to me.”

“Yes just like I love a toothache.”

Simon ended what would have been another hour or two of quarreling by leaving. The people should be entering the club by now and he didn't want to be late.



## CHAPTER SIX

### KANSAS

“Where the hell is she?” Sheila yelled to Emma. Both women had made it back to their apartment hours ago and Amanda hadn’t made it home yet. They thought about calling Amanda again, but after leaving so many messages her cell phone couldn’t hold any more.

“I don’t know,” Emma replied, almost wanting to cry. When things like this happened, she got very emotional and she would start crying. However, crying wouldn’t help right now. Right now, she needed to get herself together and help find Amanda.

“I’m calling the police.”

“Sheila, wait.” Emma moved between her friend and the phone. “As much as I want you to call the police, we can’t.”

“Why not?”

“I think a person has to be missing twenty-four hours just for someone to be considered missing.”

“I’ll lie and said she had.”

“You can’t because they will ask Mr. Davis when the last time he saw her was and he would say around one o’clock today.”

With a deep breath, Sheila looked at her. “Then we sit here and wait?”

“As much as I don’t like it, yes. We have to sit here and wait.”

They both jumped as Amanda walked through the doors.

“Helloooo,” Amanda slurred, “everyone.”



"Amanda!" they both shouted, then ran up to her. "Where have you been?"

"I can't remember." She straggled into the living room and flopped down on the couch. "I got fired. Luke is cheating on me with Debbie. I got three piercings. I had fun."

"Whew." Sheila waved her hand in front of Amanda when she smelled Amanda's breath. "You have been drinking, haven't you?"

"Yep."

"She's drunk?" Emma asked because she never knew Amanda drank, let alone to get drunk. "Did she say Luke is cheating with Debbie?"

"Yes, bastard." Amanda hiccupped. "Caught... them in the bed...having wild monkey sex." She giggled. "I punched him. His face hurt. My hand hurt."

Emma saw Amanda pouted like a little girl and grabbed her bruised hand.

"Emma, get some ice out of the refrigerator and put it in an ice pack," Sheila told her.

"Okay." Without waiting, Emma ran into the kitchen to get what Sheila asked for.

"Amanda, you need to...well you need to bathe because you smell like a liquor store and you are drunk," Sheila said.

"Nooooo, I'm not drunk." Amanda tried to stand, immediately falling back to the chair. "Okay, I'm tipsy, but not drunk."

"Okay come on missy," Sheila stood, then pulled Amanda up to stand. "A shower can wait until tomorrow. For right now you are going to bed."

"Nope, don't wanna. It will make me forget when I drink."

"Oh no you don't," Sheila stopped her from going into the kitchen. "You are going to bed. Now."

"Nooooo."

"Yes you are," Sheila spoke with a mother's voice, then pulled her into her room. Once in Amanda's bedroom, Sheila took off her shoes and laid her down. The moment she laid her down, she spotted a shiny object under her shirt.



Amanda followed Sheila's gaze. "It's a tummy ring," she said, then lifted up her shirt.

"Oh god," Sheila said stunned.

"I have two more," she said, then stuck out her tongue and showed her the tongue ring. "And I have another one in my special place."

Amanda looked up at Sheila and smiled before she closed her eyes. It didn't take a moment before she was snoring...loudly.

Sheila turned see Emma coming in the room with the ice. "I don't need it."

"Why not?"

"She is asleep already."

"What did she think she was doing? I hope to God she didn't drive home in this condition."

"I doubt it, she is a smart woman," Sheila lifted her knocked out friend's shirt, showing the tummy ring.

"Amanda got a piercing?"

"Yep."

"She cried like a baby when she got the second hole in her ear and she got a body piercing."

"I know," Sheila let go of the shirt. "That's not the only one."

"It's not?"

"Nope. The woman has a tongue ring and she said she has one in her *special place* whatever that means."

Emma thought, then looked at Sheila. The look must have told Sheila what Amanda's *special place* meant.

"I am going on a hunch and say that her *special place* is below her waist line," Sheila whispered when Amanda turned onto her side.

"Boy, she is going to be sore in the morning," Emma said, looking at her friend.

"I can agree with you. Maybe we should get her a trash can, just encase she doesn't make it to the bathroom."

"That's a good idea. I will get up early and make some coffee, if she can drink it or live past tonight."

Emma laughed before following Sheila out the door. They both turned to hear a knock on the front door. "Who could that be?" Emma



asked.

"I don't know but I know who it better *not* be..." Sheila headed toward the door. "If it's Luke I am going to give him more than a black eye."

"I would love to see him now. If Amanda is serious about giving him a black eye."

"Me and you both." Sheila opened the door.

"I am sorry, but I wanted to make sure your friend made it up here safe," a tall man with spiked golden hair and dark glasses spoke from the door. "And to return this to her."

Sheila grabbed the purse out of his hand. "Thanks, where did she leave it?"

"In the back of my car."

Sheila handed Emma the purse and scowled at the man. No matter how good he looked, he was about to explain what the hell Amanda was doing in the back of his car. If he took advantage of Amanda, all hell was going to break loose in this apartment. Starting with her kicking his ass. She placed her hands on her hips, tapping her foot at the same time. "Why was Amanda in the back seat of your car?"

The man's eyebrow rose and he laughed. "Nothing like that happened. Trust me. As I drove her home she told me what floor and apartment number." He stepped back from her. "I hope it was okay that I brought it back to her. I didn't go through it or anything."

Shelia wanted to kick herself. This man only helped her friend when so many men would have taken advantage of her in a situation like this. "No, thank you for bringing it up. Not too many honest people these days." Sheila really looked at the person in front of her. At first glance, she only saw a man. Now that she paid more attention to him, she could see that he was tall with wide shoulders and what she knew was nothing but muscles under that blue silk shirt. His black leather pants hugged very nicely to his thighs. She wished she could see his eyes, but he had them covered with dark sunglasses. When he smiled at her, she got a good view of his pearly whites.

"You are very welcome."

"Wait," Sheila yelled when he turned to walk away. "What is your



name?"

\* \* \* \*

Slowly he turned back to her. "People call me Dragon."

"Dragon," she repeated when Emma made her way beside her. Sheila saw him smile again when Emma began staring at him as she had. "Where did you find her?"

"I was in Jays, the club. She spoke about her boyfriend and what he did to her and how upset she felt for being faithful. I kept her company because she seemed to be drawing a lot of attention."

Dragon didn't want to tell Amanda's friends that she was drawing Dementra's to her. A drunken woman was the best one to attack. Humans with a lot of alcohol in their blood could get a vampire drunk faster than drinking it yourself. With the amount she had in her, he wouldn't be surprised if she had a hangover from hell by tomorrow. "So when she finished telling me her story I brought her home."

"You are a good look..." Emma said, but stopped. "Good citizen for what you did. Not many of your kind around."

How right she was about that. Dragon was only passing through when he spotted some Dementra's going into the club. He decided to do a clean sweep of the club before heading to New York as he had planned. When he spotted Amanda and the way the Dementras kept looking at her, he figured he better get her home safely before they turn her or worse kill her. "Thank you, ladies." He pulled his glasses down, both women gasped at his silver colored eyes.

"What happened to your eyes?" Emma asked.

"Nothing," his silky voice told them. "You won't remember me or anything about me. Your friend caught a cab home and, Emma, you have to go and get Amanda's car from the club." He replaced his glasses, then thought. Maybe he should go and replace Amanda's mind but for what? The woman was so drunk she wouldn't remember him anyhow. "Do you understand?" he asked again just to make sure.

Both women nodded.

Knowing he had done what he set out to do, he made his way back



to the car. He might go back down to Jays just to take out those Dementras. He had a little time before he had to be in New York.

He walked away from the two women and down the hall.

\* \* \* \*

Shelia shook her head, then wondered why she and Emma had come to the door. Not coming to a conclusion, she slowly shut the door, then looked at Emma, who stood in one spot staring off into space.

Emma shook her head, then looked at her. "I'll be back." Emma handed Sheila back the purse.

"Where are you going?"

"I have to go and get Amanda's car."

"Okay you need a ride?"

"Nahhhh...it's only nine and I only have to walk a couple of blocks. It shouldn't take me long."

"You be careful."

"I will."

After Emma left, Sheila took Amanda's purse back into her room. Once in her room, she could see that Amanda now lay on her stomach, still knocked out. With a soft chuckle, she once again left her room. They were going to have fun with their friend tomorrow. Amanda would have a hangover and pain from those piercing.

This would be an interesting morning.

\* \* \* \*

Las Vegas.

He could detect a Juevama in his club the moment he entered. Having one in his hotel was not impossible, but highly unusual. No Juevama ever came unannounced and a Dementra would rather meet the sun than step foot into his club.

Unhurriedly, Simon made his way through the dancing bodies. The smell of alcohol, cigarettes, sweat and sexual arousal flooded his sense. If humans only knew how their bodies told their moods, their wants and their needs, they would try to hide it better. He took a deep



breath and the Juevama scent hit him again. Wait a second...he knew that scent.

Simon looked over to the table where a Juevama had surrounded himself with two beautiful blonde women and one red head. "To what do I owe this visit, Nezar?"

Looking up at him, Nezar smiled. "Simon." He stood. "I knew you would be down tonight."

Simon took Nezar's hand.

"These are my concubines, the twins, Tamara and Tasha." The blonde women smiled and the other winked at Simon. "And this is Francesca"

"Nice to meet you all," Simon greeted over the music.

"Sit." Nezar ordered. "Join us."

Simon moved to the empty seat beside Francesca.

"How have you been, Simon?"

"Fine. Why?"

"Are you sure? I have heard about what happened to your wife and you."

"It was tragic, but I am fine now."

"You are not fine. More than you think."

Simon knew Nezar could detect his mood and his pain far better than any other Dark Guardian or vampire could. Juevamas were the closest thing to being a God than anyone who roamed the Earth.

"Like what?" Simon leaned over so he could hear Nezar clearly. "Why does everyone think that I am not fine? Yes, I love Karen with all my heart, but like all humans die, she died also."

"You are not going to be able to control yourself much longer. You need that cure that Manuel has made."

"No!" Simon shouted. "I will not go to him."

"I know he wants Tyren. Who doesn't? Tyren's a miracle birth. He is not the first, but there haven't been many half werewolves born," Nezar explained.

"And you do not remember what you told me only a year ago?"

"How could I forget?"

"So why would I have Tyren around Manuel? I will do anything for



him to have a normal life.”

“He will never have a normal life, Simon.”

Why did everyone keep telling him that? Simon watched as Tamara or Tasha, he couldn't tell which was which because they both looked alike. However, he watched as one ran her hand over Nezar's short hair, then her hand drifted lower to his red mustache and beard. Nezar green eyes sparkled as Tamara kissed him softly on the lips before moving to kiss Francesca.

“They are a lot of work,” Nezar told Simon who had gotten quiet at the show in front of him.

“I'll bet,” Simon growled, feeling his own body begin to react. He knew he wouldn't last long, never could. And knowing Rosa would be gone out of town for a couple of weeks, it would be harder. “So what do you want me to do? I can't take Tyren to Manuel. Tyren doesn't need to know about our world. And Manuel will not freely give up the cure without a fight.”

“Then you must fight.”

“No, not now. Not while Tyren is still young. I am the only thing he has and, if something should happen to me, then what will happen to him? Manuel would show him the ways of a werewolf.”

Nezar stopped the girls from distracting him and sat up. “Is being a werewolf so bad?”

“Yes, Manuel killed my wife, remember.”

“I understand your anger with him, but what about others. You have spoken with them, been in their presence. They are just like ordinary people.”

“Some of them eat humans. Not only take their blood but also eat their flesh. That is not right.”

“Not all of them. Not Cortranths. There are Dark Guardians who are Cortranths. Only true blooded werewolves that are in some type of Clan eat flesh to prove they are worthy.”

“And I have heard Manuel is part of one of those Clans.” Simon stood. “Discussion ended. I will not go and beg or fight him for anything. Tyren will remain by my side and I will stay away from humans.”



"You won't be able to forever. You are in need right now. I am sure one of the girls wouldn't mind helping you out." Nezar smiled. "Won't you, girls?"

All three looked at Simon. "He is tasty," Francesca spoke with a French accent.

Her half-naked breast caught his attention when she leaned up to give him a perfect view of them. She even moved her black dress to the side, teasing him.

"I could show him plenty of things."

Simon groaned. He needed to leave before these humans got themselves in a whole lot of trouble. "Thanks for the offer, but no thanks." All three women pouted and so did he, although he didn't show it. What he wouldn't do to drag all three up stairs and have his way with them. The tip of his fangs pressed his bottom lips just from the thought of having sex with them.

"Are you sure?" Nezar asked with a smile. "I don't mind sharing. They are a handful sometimes."

"I am sure of it. I have to decline."

"Well then, you must find your Truelove soon."

"No."

"Are you mad man? Why don't you want to find her?"

"What will happen when I do and I can't control myself? What will happen when I exchange blood with her? Do you really know that she will not turn into a half werewolf also?"

"I knew you would ask that and I know that nothing will happen. When the werewolf bit you, he did not infect you like they do humans. You do not carry the virus in your blood. In your cells, yes. Which means that you cannot infect your Truelove. If she takes your blood, nothing will happen to her. Your Truelove will filter out the bad blood and only keep the good."

"I am not talking about that now. Nice to meet you all, enjoy your time here." Simon walked through the club. He didn't want to talk about his Truelove. No one really knew if a Truelove would filter out the bad blood. They only knew Trueloves could filter out bad blood with manmade viruses.



After his introduction to the club guests, Simon spoke to a few guests, then headed out into the night for some time to think. A good fight would do him wonders right now.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### KANSAS

Amanda moaned out in pain as she woke from her sleep. The harsh sunrays beamed through her window and onto her face. If felt like everywhere hurt—her head, her tongue, stomach and—she rolled or attempted to roll on her back. When she moved, her stomach lurched a little from nausea. It took several moments before she could roll onto her back. The pain in her tongue and stomach throbbed, but the one between her legs hurt like hell.

As she unbuttoned her, pants she tried to remember what happened last night. Not much came to mind, but she knew she would have remembered having wild sex with someone. Having sex had to be the only reason she felt pain between her legs. When her pants rubbed up against her clit, she hissed.

*What the hell is going on down there?*

Once again, she attempted to take off her pants. She slipped her hand down underneath her underwear. She froze from both pain and shock at what she felt. With a flying leap, she jumped out of the bed. The moment her feet touched the floor, she had to sit back down on the edge of the bed. Sickness over took her quickly. “Man how much did I drink last night?”

From the way she felt, she guessed a few dozen drinks. The bad part about her waking up was she couldn’t remember after she went into the tattoo place. She didn’t, she couldn’t—pain flared from everywhere—she must have gotten the tattoo below the waistline. Once



the room stopped spinning, she stood again. She had to get to a mirror. On unsteady legs, she crossed her room to the closet and closed the door so she could look into her full-length mirror. The first thing Amanda noticed was the person looking back at her looked like she had been through hell and back.

Her face was green in color, her brown hair wild as if she had been having sex all night. Her blue eyes didn't sparkle and dark circles lined her eyes. Not thinking about it, she took a deep breath, then lifted her shirt and a pink navel ring sparkled back at her. Whoever said these didn't hurt afterward lied. It looked cute on her except the red skin surrounding the ring. Next, she stuck out her tongue. A golden ring implanted deep in her tongue made her frown at her courage of getting it. A throb of pain from the ring made her close her mouth. Next, with extreme embarrassment, she pulled down her pants. She always kept herself shaved so she couldn't miss the gold ring that dangled from her clit.

"That's interesting," she said, then headed to the bathroom. What else could she have done? Not that she would take it out. They hurt to the touch, no way in hell she would try to remove them. As a matter of fact, she didn't want to remove them because they symbolized her pain from Luke. The only thing she had to do was wait for them to heal.

After turning the water on hot for a nice soothing bath, she went into her medicine cabinet and pulled out some extra strength pain medicine. After swallowing four pills, she groaned and finished undressing.

Amanda eased into the tub once the water filled to the rim. The hot water did wonders for her belly ring and the other in her clitoris. After sitting back, she thought about what happened yesterday. When she left Luke's home, she went to their local tattoo shop. At the time, she didn't know why she went there, she just wanted to look around. The first thing that caught her eye was a nice looking woman, tall, slim with black hair and a belly button ring and it looked cute.

After talking to the nice sales person, Tommy agreed to help her with all her piercing needs. With anger coursing through her, she thought that the pain would take her mind off her cheating fiancé.



*Dirt bag!*

Just one thought about what she walked in on with Luke and Debbie and the pain in her heart hurt worse than the one in her belly. Amanda then thought about clit rings, wondering if it was true that women had orgasms from it rubbing up against their pants. Eventually, she will find out. After getting the navel ring, another moment later, the pain still didn't overtake the pain that went through her heart. Tommy seemed to like doing piercing and she hadn't been embarrassed at the time of doing the ring down below. Now, her face flushed red from embarrassment. She never let a person look at her like that, not even Luke. Now that Tommy had gotten an eye full of her goodies, she was embarrassed. She could never show her face at that tattoo place again.

"God, if you let me make it through this I will never drink or get any part of my body pierced again." Too funny. Every time we are in pain we ask God for help, and we all know he's not going to take it away because as soon as the pain is gone, we forget and do it all over again.

The pain in her head was almost gone when she moved out of the tub. After drying off, she dressed in a t-shirt and loose jogging pants, then laid face down onto her bed. She couldn't go anywhere in this condition. The room had begun to spin and she groaned again.

*Stop the world, I want to get off!*

Her purse!

She jumped and moaned out again. She left her purse in that man's car. Great, the man probably robbed her blind by now. Why did she get in the car with him? She knew why. There were not many men she considered *drop dead gorgeous* in Kansas. In addition, he looked dangerous, dressed like a dark angel. His voice was soft and beautiful and he was a great listener. He listened to all her problems and he told her how she could do better. Closing her eyes, she tried to remember his name.

*What was his name?*

She thought harder, making her head pound more. For some reason she felt that this mystery man didn't want her to remember his name or him. She laid back face down on the pillow.



*What is it?*

She knew she remembered. Her bed shook just a little from her powers as her mind broke through the layers of memories.

“Dragon!” She cheered when she remembered his name. “Dragon, of course.”

Too bad, she will never see him again. Now he happened to be the exact type of man she needed to make Luke mad and jealous at the same time. If she could get someone like Dragon, she could do a lot of teasing and pissing off that no good, cheating bastard.

Amanda hoped he couldn’t get another erection as long as he lived, just like Clayton. He cheated on her with the town’s hooker and he expected her to have sex with him now. He didn’t have the decency to use a condom with Debbie!

He used one each and every time with her because he said he didn’t want to have any children. She didn’t want any right now either, but she felt so used and mistreated. He wouldn’t use a condom with miss everyone-has-had-a-turn, but he wore one with her. The thought made all her earlier anger come back tenfold. There were too many things out there to catch and he has been with six or seven different woman. The thought made her happy that they had used rubbers. If not, she would be very scared for her life right now.

“Screw...Luke,” she slurred up against the pillow. Great now she was getting a lisp. The pain she felt gradually went away, which meant the pain medication had to be working. Thank god.

*Codeine! You are the best!*

Her doctor prescribed it to her for when she got those awful headaches. He could never find out why she suffered them, but she knew why. She always got them when she had to control her anger. If she didn’t control it—well let’s just say that a lot of people would have been flying through the sky with the greatest of ease.

A rush of wind from her room door opening brought her back to reality.

“I don’t think she is dead,” Sheila said as she walked into Amanda’s room. “She has changed clothing and everything.”

“How are you today, sweetheart?” Emma asked before sitting on



the bed beside her. "You feel okay?"

"No," Amanda said with her face still buried into the pillows.

"Could we get you something, Amanda?" Sheila asked from the other side of the bed.

"The phone..." Amanda turned unto her back. "I need the phone to call and cancel my credit cards. My purse was stolen."

"Your purse is here." Sheila told her. "Right on your dresser."

Amanda gaze went to the dresser. Had Dragon brought her purse back without taking anything? She watched as Sheila retrieved her purse, then handed it to her. She made a quick sweep through it to make sure that everything was still there. Maybe there are some good men in this city. "Dragon brought it after he dropped me off?"

"Who the hell is Dragon?" Sheila said with a smile.

"The tall good looking man...he's about six feet tall. Gold spiky hair. He almost resembles a hippy if you look at him."

"Where did you meet him?"

"At Jays." Amanda gasped. "Where my car is still parked."

"Not it's not." Emma fished Amanda's keys out of her pocket and passed them to her. "You were so drunk last night that you took a cab or something here. After you told us about your unusual piercing habits that I didn't know you had, I went to get your car."

Amanda looked at Sheila, then Emma. "Thanks you guys."

"You're welcome." Sheila sat on the bed beside her. "What happened? We were so worried about you yesterday. How did you end up with this?" Sheila pointed at her stomach.

"That nasty boss of yours fired me yesterday after you left," Amanda explained. "He and Debbie had just finished in his office doing God knows what and then he fired me to give that...that...whatever she is my job."

"Just like that?" Emma asked.

"Yes." She lay on the pillow, looking at the ceiling. "He said that I should be working for a better company and that I shouldn't be there. What a crock of junk. I have been there for six years. I haven't taken a decent vacation. I was there every day and this is the thanks that I get?"

"Don't worry about it, Amanda. Sheila and I can file a lawsuit. He



doesn't have a claim on why he fired you."

Amanda shook her head. "No. Don't worry about it. In a way, he's right. I can be working for better companies. I just wished he had let me know that this was what he was up to. I could have been looking for another job before now."

"Don't let that pig get away with this, Amanda," Sheila advised. "If he gets away with it with you, then he will do it again."

"I don't want the drama. I have enough in my life." Boy had she ever. She could start a soap opera on television that would last at least of year from her life alone.

"What happened with Luke," Emma's voice softened.

"I caught Luke," she stopped talking when her throat closed up. Tears welled up in her eyes as she imagined Luke and Debbie tangled in the bed together.

"You caught Luke what?" Sheila pressured.

"They were at Luke's home where I caught them having sex."

Sheila's mouth twitched.

Amanda knew what evil plan she was conjuring up. When her lips curled up wickedly, that told her the plan had been put in place in less than five seconds. "No, Sheila," Amanda pleaded. "Don't."

"Don't what?" Sheila looked at her. "I wasn't thinking about anything."

"You are such a liar. Every single time you want to do something evil, the corner of your mouth twitches."

"It does?" Sheila asked surprised.

Emma nodded. "Yes it does."

"I see I have to stop that." Sheila smiled. "Are you sure you saw Luke and Debbie together?"

"I am pretty sure I saw Debbie's legs over Luke's shoulders. They were in the bed when I walked in and, when he saw me, he didn't even care. He kept going like he got off when he knew I was watching."

"Bastard," Emma hissed.

"Yes and once he stopped..." Hot tears ran down her cheek. "He told me that I wouldn't have a threesome so that's why he did it. Then he added that he would make it up by letting me have a threesome with



another man.”

“What!” Sheila yelled.

Amanda groaned from pain at her voice when her head throbbed. She may not feel too much pain, but her ears were still sensitive.

“Sorry,” Sheila whispered.

“It’s okay.”

“I can’t believe that dog did that,” she continued.

“Yes, he did.”

“What did he think,” Sheila hissed, “that you were like Debbie or some hooker that would do anything?”

“I don’t know, but once he asked me that I punched him.”

Both Sheila and Emma’s eyes lit up.

“You didn’t,” Emma said shockingly. “You hit him? I thought you were joking last night when you said that.”

With a proud nod, Amanda smiled. “Yes and I really messed up his eye. I hit him so hard he flew back a couple of feet. After that I gave him back the ring and told him I would kill him if he came near me again.” Amanda wiped her tears from her face.

“I am so proud of you, Amanda. Now, the only person I have to deal with is Debbie,” Sheila told her.

For the first time in hours, Amanda smiled and meant it. Sheila could be overprotective but at the same time a wee bit violent. Well, she could be all out violent when she wanted to. “No you won’t!” Amanda ordered. “I don’t want you getting into trouble. You stay away from Debbie and Luke.”

Sheila nodded her head.

Amanda wasn’t convinced she would. “I mean it, Sheila. You stay away from them. I am good with what has happened. Maybe it happened for a reason. Luke never proposed anyway.”

Both of her friends yelled “What?” at the same time.

“I talked to Luke after Mrs. Anderson left...—”

Sheila quickly cut her off. “I told you not to let that woman get under your skin. She is the town gossip and she would say anything.”

“She didn’t tell me that Luke had been with her daughter sexually.”

“Noooo...” Emma said. “How...I mean...she’s big.”



"The girl is a house all ready built with extra padding," Sheila said.

"Sheila!" Amanda squealed, "That's not nice."

"I know, but I have to agree with Emma. How did he do it?"

"Beats me," Amanda shrugged. "Unfortunately, Mrs. Anderson's daughter wasn't the first. She happened to be one of six or seven as he told me." If the devil was a girl, Sheila could be it. Her black eyes went darker with hate for the man she used to love. If she didn't love him anymore, why should she care if Sheila killed him? A man with a sick mind like Luke didn't need to live. What was she saying? She didn't want Luke dead...or did she?

"You tell me that Luke told you that he had been with six other females?" Sheila asked after a long pause.

"Yes he said it, at least six."

"And you only hit him once?"

"I think that showed him that I didn't want him anymore."

"When you are ready to *really* show him a thing or two, you can count on me," Shelia said.

"Me, also," Emma jumped in. "I may not be a violent person, but this man has hurt one of my best friends and I cannot let that go."

"Thanks, guys, but I will be all right. I will find another job and live on. I hate to say that we won't be working together any longer. I will have to find a job close so we can have lunch together every day."

"Sounds like a plan," Sheila told her. "But I must ask, what's with the piercing?"

Amanda looked at her stomach, then thought about the other piercings. She really didn't have anything to say about them, but she had to be a pain freak and didn't know about it. Just like a drug abuser, after the first, she wanted more. "Spur of the moment."

"Okay I can understand the spur of the moment as you called it by going out and getting your navel pierces or your tongue, but your clit. It hurts just to think about it."

"Doesn't it hurt?" Emma asked.

"Not now, since I am doped up on codeine and I don't feel any pain. I might have to call my doctor and get a prescription because for the next two or three days this is all I am going to be taking." Everyone



laughed at her humor.

“Do you think you can eat?” Emma stood from the bed. “I cooked breakfast and made some coffee.”

“Is the coffee strong?” Amanda asked.

“Yes, just like you like it.” Emma told her.

“Then I think I will have a cup or two or ten. After that than I’ll see if I can eat some food.”

“I want to see you eat with that gold ball in your mouth.” Sheila teased. “Man, Luke is going to miss out on a good blow job.”

Amanda threw the pillow at her. “You are a pest sometimes and I don’t do that.”

“Yeah, yeah, tell me anything, but we all know that women that get those things in their tongues only do one thing and that is take the men deep.”

“I don’t think so.” Amanda slowly got out of the bed and headed into the kitchen.

\* \* \* \*

“So what’s the plan for today?” Emma sat at that the table with her paper.

“I guess I look for a job,” Amanda spoke.

Sheila sat a cup of coffee in front of Amanda. “So, you don’t feel any pain?” Sheila inquired.

Amanda took a sip of her coffee, savoring the warm fluid that flowed over her tongue. It didn’t hurt, but it irritated the hell out of her tongue. “No,” she answered. “The pain pills helped. The only thing is it feels funny to have them there.”

“I wish I had the courage,” Emma spoke. “And how did you get the courage? You whined like a baby when you got that second hole in your ear.”

“I did not!”

“Yes you did!” Sheila teased. “Man, I thought we would have to take you to the hospital or tie you to your bed.”

“Ha-ha,” Amanda hissed. “You two are so funny.”



"We are only stating the facts." Sheila said, then headed back into the kitchen.

Emma flipped the page on the next paper and the words seem to jump out at Amanda. "Teacher wanted. Good pay. Free room and board. Las Vegas, Nevada."

"Let me see that." Amanda snatched the paper out of Emma's hand before she could respond.

"What..." Emma said. "What is it Amanda?"

"Listen to this. Barbara Alston is looking for a teacher for one child. There are offering free meals, room and board."

"That sounds like a cake job." Sheila placed a plate of food in front of Amanda.

Amanda moved the paper back and peeked down to see, bacon, eggs and toast. A good meal. She just hoped her stomach would keep it down.

"It does. Almost too good," Amanda spoke about the ad.

"You know what they say," Emma began to quote, "If it is too good to be true it probably isn't good at all."

"So true," Amanda agreed, then read it again. "But it's for one kid. Maybe it is a sick child that can't go to school any longer and it's in..." The room went quiet as she looked at the ad repeatedly.

"Where is it?" Sheila asked.

"Las Vegas."

"Las Vegas! No! You can't think about taking that job." Sheila sounded worried as she spoke. "That's too far to go. I mean you don't know anyone there. What will happen to us if you get the job?"

Amanda knew Sheila wouldn't approve of her going that far. Heck, she didn't approve, but to get away from this was what she needed. She needed time to get over Luke and time to *not* think about what she saw or heard in his room. Just getting away would be better than staying here and trying to cope. What she could do was find out about the job. She knew that jobs like that had a trial period, all jobs did. Maybe she could go and try it out then if it did not work, come back. "I know how you feel but I need time away from this place."

"No!" Sheila pleaded.



"It's only fair, Sheila," Emma jumped in. "She can do better."

"I know she could, but why do you have to go so far away? What if something happened to you?"

Both Amanda and Emma smiled. Sheila had a mean streak, but she had pudding for her insides when it came down to her friends.

"Nothing is going to happen to me."

"But you don't know that," Sheila's voice had changed to a whisper.

"Look, let's not get ahead of ourselves. I will call to see if the job is still available. For a job like this I doubt that it would still be free." Amanda continued when Sheila opened her mouth. "If it's not, I will look for something closer. You know I can't stand thirty or more students calling my name at once. This one kid may be sick and can't go to school. If I can help this child out, then you know I want to."

With a non-agreeable shrug, Sheila continued to eat. Amanda took her silence as the go-ahead. "Emma, pass me the telephone." Amanda looked at the clock then estimated. If it was eleven here, then it should be around nine in Las Vegas. Hopefully it wasn't too early to call.

\* \* \* \*

## Las Vegas

"Simon, why are you not resting?" Barbara asked from the kitchen doorway. Simon had a cup of coffee in his hand and it had to be well after nine in the morning. Barbara knew that some Dark Guardians, with practice, could stay up most of the mornings. Not all could. In her lifetime, she had met one that stayed up past noon.

"I can't." Simon turned around. "It's been like this since Nezar came to my club last night."

"Nezar came here?" Barbara sounded a little scared. "Why did he come here?"

"To tell me about what he saw. Unfortunately, he told me that I needed to go to Manuel and get the cure because I will not be able to control the werewolf part of me anymore."

Barbara's eyes wide from shock.



“What is it, Barbara?”

“You never referred to it as *werewolf*, you always say *the other part* of you?”

“I know. What can I say?” Simon smiled.

“So go to him.”

“No, Barbara. I will not go to him. Manuel will want Tyren and I will not give him to him freely.” He sighed. “I have to leave tonight.”

“What are you talking about? Where are you going to go?” Barbara grabbed his shoulder, making him turn to her when he shied away. “Simon,” she whispered his name when he didn’t respond.

“It’s only for a few days. I need to get control. Talk to some more Juevamas. Find out if they see the same thing Nezar saw.”

“But you know you can’t go unannounced. I never made stir fried Dark Guardian, but I am willing to try it once.”

Simon smiled at her joke, then sat his cup down. “You have a sense of humor sometimes that I don’t understand.” He shook his head. “I will return in a week.”

“What about the teacher?”

Slowly, he took Barbara’s hand. “I trust you and I know you will make the right decision. I give you permission to hire whoever fits the job. Just make sure that she is well qualified to teach my son.”

Barbara didn’t like the look in Simon’s eyes.

Without a Truelove, a Dark Guardian feels cursed. Nothing of this world mattered, not even if they died. The only thing to bring a Dark Guardian back to reality was for them to find their Trueloves. Not some human woman to pass the time, but the one female that can complete him. A female who was born for him. A female who will be his other half, his savior and his mate for all eternity. The love they would share would be more than just love. It would be...she couldn’t even form a word for what Trueloves are. They have an everlasting, ever growing love that no human couple would ever have or feel.

“I promise you that I will do my best.”

He released her hand. “I know you will. I will talk to Tyren and let him know I am leaving. He is to stay inside as he already knows. If he gives you any trouble, call me.”



"Tyren is no trouble. He is practically grown. That is a man in a child's body."

Simon chuckled. "Don't let Tyren hear you say that. He has a big enough head already."

"I know. You look tired. You need to rest before your trip."

"I know. I will rest."

Barbra watched Simon head down the hallway and into his room. For some odd reason she felt that something was coming for him. Something in his life would change and she not only didn't like the feeling, but also didn't want it. Simon was the type of Dark Guardian who didn't want anything to change in his life and felt he didn't need anyone in his life. He always felt the need to protect Tyren. He never wanted Tyren to meet Manuel, not now, not until Tyren had turned twenty-one. At least by then, they all could tell him the truth.

All of it.

Even about Simon being a Dark Guardian and having werewolf's blood in him.

Barbara picked up the cup Simon had and tossed it into the dishwasher. She was about to start cooking breakfast for Tyren and Tia when the telephone rung. She picked up the phone from the charger. "Hello."

"Hello my name is Amanda Duncan and I am calling about your position you posted in the paper. Is it still available?" A young woman's voice spoke through the receiver.

"Yes it is."

"Good, are there any qualification's you require?"

"Yes...by the way my name is Barbara Alston. I am the person that will be doing the hiring."

"Nice to speak with you, Ms. Alston."

"Nice to speak with you. Now, the position is for my boss, Simon Baldwin's son. His name is Tyren Baldwin and he is eleven years old. I assume you have a degree?"

"Oh yes, I have a Master's in Education and a Bachelor's in child Psychology. I love children and I love doing things with them."

"Good," Barbara reached over and grabbed her pad. "Do you



mind if I ask you a few questions?"

"No not at all."

"Where are you staying now?"

"Blue Springs in Kansas City."

"Nice town. Have you been there all your life?"

"Yes."

"What about your job, what do you do now?" Barbara felt her hesitation, but she did not push.

"Well...my boss downsized the agency and he let me go yesterday. I worked as a Travel Agent at Davis Travel Agency for five years."

"Not a problem," Barbara told her. "Do you have a problem living in Mr. Baldwin's home?"

"No...I don't."

Barbra felt the small lie, but what person wouldn't have a problem living in a stranger's home? "That is good. I know it is hard to live in a stranger's home, but trust me, I have been here for years and it is a peaceful place. Even with it being in the heart of Las Vegas. You will have your privacy and at the same time, fun."

"That sounds great."

"Okay, I know this is a bit personal, but young Tyren has a thing against older women. He says that they don't have the energy he has. You sound young, but I need to know, what is your age?"

"I am twenty eight."

"Good." Barbara wrote down Amanda's name and age. "Do you find yourself very energetic?"

"Yes, sometimes my friends think I have too much energy."

"You have to have it and patience with Tyren. One last question, do you know math?"

"My favorite! Can he do algebra yet?"

"More like trigonometry."

"You gotta be kidding me, right?"

"No he is a very smart boy. Is that too much for you?"

"No, actually I know a lot about trig and statistics."

"That is excellent. Well what we do is a two-week trial. If you would like, I can set it up for you to catch the flight by tomorrow." The young



lady went quiet for a moment. She knew her quick decision shocked her. Barbara felt something with this woman. Something different. Something strong. This woman would be perfect. She knew it.

"You mean I can come just like that?" Amanda's voice crackled as she spoke.

"Of course, I don't know why, but I like the sound of your voice and I can feel that you are a nice person and that you will try your best to help Tyren with his studies."

"Please forgive me," Barbara spoke. "I didn't ask you when will be a good time for you. I just..."

"Don't apologize. Tomorrow will be great timing. Around what time? You guys are two hours behind correct?"

"Yes, so, you can take the...give me a moment," Barbara pulled out her palm pilot and tapped away. She found a flight leaving out of Kansas at ten tomorrow. "Ten o'clock is the next flight. Everything will be set up for you at the airport. A limousine will be waiting for you once you arrive."

"You don't need to go through all of that," Amanda told her. "I can catch a cab."

"Nonsense. My job is to make sure that you have a peaceful flight and stay and I will do no other than that."

"Thanks. So I will be at the airport at ten and I will be there tomorrow."

"I cannot wait to meet you Ms. Duncan."

"Me either."

\* \* \* \*

Amanda squealed after she hung up the telephone.

"What did they say?" Emma saw the excitement in her eyes.

"I get a two week trial," she sung. "And I get to ride in a limo when I get there."

"You didn't ask about the pay," Sheila said all too dryly.

Shit! She did, didn't she? Well she wouldn't call back, she could ask Barbara when she got there. "Well it's free room and board and if



something doesn't go right I have enough money to live almost two years without working. So don't worry. I am sure the pay is great."

Amanda looked at Sheila and smiled. Sheila stood from the table, then went to Amanda. "I hope you know what you are doing." Then she grabbed her into a big hug. "You better come back and visit if you get the job permanently."

"Ah, you guys," Emma cried out and ran up to her friends.

Amanda groaned when Emma's body impacted with theirs. Finally, they let go and she could breathe again. "Didn't know how much I loved oxygen until now," Amanda said with humor in her voice.

Amanda ducked when a piece of bread flew toward the top of her head. While giggling, she retaliated by throwing another piece back, not knowing she would have to duck again from another piece from Sheila.

"Ladies," Emma cut in. "Please, could we not throw food in the house."

Both Amanda and Sheila looked at each other, then smiled. Emma must have seen their silent ambush. She sprung from her seat and headed for her room. She didn't make it to the door before her and Sheila had made it up to her. In Sheila's hand was a cup of cold water.

"Sheila, you wouldn't," Emma pleaded as she pressed her back up against the door. "You remember last time what happened. You know how you girls are about your hair."

Sheila's face tightened as if to keep herself from laughing. "Amanda, I think she just made a joke, a raciest joke at that."

"No! I didn't I..."

Before the words were out of her mouth, Sheila poured the water and it ran down the front of Emma's shirt.

"Sheilaaaaa!" Emma screamed, then turned the knob before racing into the room.

When the door closed, both Sheila and Amanda laughed so hard, they had to lean on each other just to hold themselves up.

"That was so mean," Amanda said between giggles.

Sheila wiped the tears in her eyes. "You think." She giggled again. "I don't think she will come out for a couple of hours."



"She will," Amanda assured. "What we have to do is watch out for what she will do to us."

Finally getting themselves together, they went back up into the kitchen to clean up the mess.

"So what time is your flight?"

"Ten tomorrow," Amanda sighed and thought about all the packing she had to do. "I have to pack up a lot of things."

"Las Vegas is the city that never sleeps."

"So I have heard. I hope that I don't have to teach all day because I want to try some of the casinos."

"You are going to have so much fun. I wish I could go with you."

Amanda watch Sheila put the last of the dishes into the dishwasher. "I hope I do have fun and if I get the job you know you two are welcome to come visit me."

They both turned when Emma's door opened. They both went wide-eyed when they saw Emma standing there with a water gun in her hand. The same water gun she bought for her nephew's birthday. The wicked smile on Emma's face told them what she planned on doing with it.

"Now you want to play, *we can play*," Emma said.

"Wait!" Sheila held up her hand. "We are too old for this, remember?"

Amanda stood almost behind Sheila, hoping that she could compromise with Emma.

"You weren't too old when you poured icy cold water on me. Anyhow I want to see how my nephew's gun works before I give it to him."

Before either of them spoke, water blasted from the gun. Both girls screamed and ran for their rooms.

Amanda heard Sheila scream something about her hair, but she didn't wait to find out what happened. She went into her room, locking the door behind her. Only moments later, she heard what had to be Sheila's door slam with a loud bang.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

Amanda leaned up against the door, breathing hard. Yeah, it was childish, but they had fun and they all got along. This will be one of the things she will miss doing when she was gone. Her and her friends always had a good time together. There's no telling how serious she had to be on her new job.

If she did get the job permanently, would she find friends like these in Las Vegas? Would she have to give up her friends and only come and visit on holidays and weekends? She hadn't thought about that before calling about the position. She just wanted to leave for a while.

Leaving this town wouldn't be hard. Leaving Luke wouldn't be hard, but leaving Sheila and Emma would crush her. She jumped when someone pounded on the door.

"Truce," Amanda yelled through the wooden door. "I call a truce because my head hurts." Which in a way it did. She giggled when she heard the same negotiation coming from Sheila from behind her door.

"Okay." Emma said. "Only because I know you were drunk last night. Truce, but you have to go shopping with me."

"Okay." Amanda unlocked the door. "I need some new clothes before going to Las Vegas."

"Did I hear the word shopping?" Sheila asked, coming out of her room.

"Yep, I need some new clothes before I go there."

"Why? You have a closet full of clothes and shoes that you haven't



worn yet," Sheila advised.

"I know, but I need something that I can wear to work, not look like a street walker. And you brought them for me remember, Sheila?"

"Yes. I must say you have to wear at least one outfit up there."

"Okay."

That answer must have come out too fast because Shelia shook her head. "And you have to send me a picture by phone at the time you have it on."

"Okay."

Shelia's eyebrow lifted. "And people have to be in the background so I know you went outside." Sheila knew how Amanda thought. She would have put on the outfit taken a picture in it in her room, sent it to Sheila, then changed.

"Once I find out everything I will."

"Good. Let me go change and we can go shopping for some teacher clothes."

They all went back into their room for a clothing change.

After checking her piercing, Amanda dressed in a pair of jeans and a t-shirt that showed her new belly ring. At first, she thought it would be too much, but now she liked it.

\* \* \* \*

Four hours later, three women carrying a boatload of bags and boxes walked back into their apartment. Amanda looked at the answering machine to see there were eight messages left. After putting the bags and boxes in her room, Amanda went back into the kitchen. She pressed the play button, then went to the refrigerator to fix her a glass of juice.

The machine beeped, "Amanda this is Barbara Alston. I forgot to get your number with me being so excited about meeting you. I wanted to let you know that your ticket is ready and your flight is scheduled to leave at ten-twenty. Along with your ticket is the address to here. See you soon."

Beep.



“Amanda, it’s Luke...”

The glass slipped from her hand, apple juice splashed all over the kitchen floor as she hit the stop button on the machine. Amanda hadn’t caught her breath before Sheila and Emma came running into the kitchen.

“Was that who I think it was?” Emma asked.

Amanda nodded.

Emma grabbed the cup from the floor and a couple of napkins and began cleaning up the mess.

Amanda was too devastated to do anything.

“Let it play,” Sheila sneered. “I want to see what the dog has to say.”

Amanda hesitated. She knew she hadn’t turned on her cell or checked her messages since yesterday. Emma had told her that they had left a ton of messages, so she would not waste minutes listening until she was free to call.

Seeing her hesitation, Sheila pressed the button.

“Amanda, it’s Luke.” He sighed into the receiver. “I am so sorry about what happened. I never meant to hurt you...”

“Lying piece of shit!” Sheila yelled at the machine.

They heard the phone go dead.

Beep.

“It’s me again. I have tried your cell and it just keeps going to your voice mail. Amanda, I don’t care if Sheila or Emma hear this or anyone else, I love you. I never loved anyone, but you. I know I hurt you, but I can change...I have changed. Please call me back.”

Beep.

“Amanda this is Clayton. Debbie told me what happened and I wanted to see how you were doing. I am sorry that this happened, but I knew, many people knew, but I couldn’t hurt you by telling you. Debbie asked for your forgiveness, she never meant to hurt you. I hope Sheila will leave her alone because I know how she is.”

Beep.

“Amanda, this is not acting like adults. You know I have a black eye because of what you did. I don’t think this is right. We cannot end five



years just like that. Call me back.”

*We can't end five years just like that!* Amanda scowled. The five years weren't in consideration until she caught him screwing Debbie's brains out. Amanda pressed the delete buttons so hard that her fingers tingled from the pain.

“What is wrong with him? Did he think he could screw another woman in my face and I would forgive him?” Amanda stormed into her room and slammed her door.

Once inside tears, the first set of real tears came. Her life was a mess. She had lost her future husband and her job to the same woman. What else could go wrong?

“Amanda, sweetie, are you okay?” Emma's worried voice called from the other side of the door.

“No,” she said honestly. “But I will be.”

“Are you sure? Can we help?”

“I'll be okay. I just need to think for a while.”

“Okay, honey. If you need something let us know.”

“I will.” Amanda sat on her bed, refusing to let this hurt her or her chances at the new job. Once in Las Vegas, she needed to be ready for any and everything this kid might dish out. The math books she bought at the bookstore would be helpful. Along with that, she brought a few things that might keep his mind occupied for a couple of days—weeks if she was lucky.

Luke would no longer run her life or play a part in her mind. As of right now, she would not date men...or women...she had to add that because of the way this world was, but she would not date right now. Her main concern was to get the job and keep it. If they were paying good wages, which she knew they had to be, she would work for as long as they needed her, then maybe live in Las Vegas. It depends on how she liked the city.

\* \* \* \*

Las Vegas

“Tyren,” Simon spoke as he walked outside to his son's small pool



area.

Tyren grinned at him. "You're leaving again, aren't you?"

"Yes," he answered. "You have been on my mind so you know why."

"I know that deep down you feel that you need to go, but I don't know why. Why is it that you have to leave every so often? Your business is here."

Simon placed his hands in his pockets. He hated lying to Tyren, but he couldn't tell him the truth because he dreaded what would happen on the day he told Tyren everything. What would his stepson do or say when he finally told him that he would have become a flesh-eating werewolf if he hadn't kept him away from his real father? Better yet, what will he say when he told him that his mother had cheated on him and become pregnant by the same man that killed her?

Simon knew that Tyren wouldn't accept or believe that, but would he believe that he was a vampire? He knew he could prove that, but it doesn't always turn out right. Maybe he wouldn't tell him anything. It would be better if he kept it all in and let Tyren live a normal life like the millions of humans in this world.

"I know, son," Simon gazed into his golden eyes as Tyren sat in his pool. The boy looked so much like his father. Golden hair, hazel eyes, that sharp nose and stubborn chin. Tyren also has a nasty temper like a werewolf. The only reason he let Tyren get away with so much was because when a werewolf got angry they changed and he really didn't want Tyren changing or trying to change.

"You leave all the time," Tyren whispered so low that he would not have heard if he wasn't a Dark Guardian.

"Only because I have things to do and I have to go. If I didn't have to, I would stay." Yeah, as if he could say, *Every time I feel the werewolf urge I have to go out and lock myself up for days in a cage in the middle of the desert.*

"I understand." Tyren ducked under the water, then reappeared on the other side of the pool. "I will be here. It's not like you allow me to go anywhere."

"I am sorry that you feel that way, but it is for your own good that



you do not go out. You know people know me and they think I have money and if they found out you are my son then..."

"I know father," Tyren said dryly. "I know what they could do. It's just sometimes I don't want that. I want to go to school like a normal kid and I want to be able to go to the movies without you having to be there. I want friends other than my teachers and the hired help."

That's what he was trying to give him, a normal life. The only way that would happen is if he stayed away from people that weren't all normal.

Including him.

"Your new teacher is coming. I told Barbara to hire someone for me since I will be away for the week."

"Really?" Tyren smiled, his white teeth a predator gleam.

"Yes, really," he scowled at him. "And you better be nice because you aren't getting another one for a while."

"So I am stuck with this one?"

"Yes."

"Man," he mumbled.

"Is it so bad that you cannot get along with one of your teachers?"

"I *can* get along with them. It's just that they can't keep up with me. I know that I am smarter than other people, but if my teachers can't keep up, then I don't need one."

"All I will say is try to get along with this one."

Tyren bit his lip as he always did when he didn't like agreeing to something. "Okay I will," he finally answered.

Simon smiled and, for the first time in weeks, he felt that his son would try his best to get along with his teacher. "And make sure you do what Barbara tells you."

"Okay now you are taking it too far."

The moment the words flew out of his mouth, something dangerous roared in Simon. Simon pulled Tryen up out of the pool by his shoulders before he could react. "Look, *boy*, I am very lenient with you. You and everyone knows that, but you *will* listen to Barbara while I am away and you *will* do as your new teacher tells you. Do you understand?"



Tyren's eyes widened in alarm. "I...I understand," he whispered.

Immediately, Simon eased him back into the water when he smelled his son's fear. Something he never wanted his son to feel toward him. Looking in his eyes, he went deep into Tyren's mind. *You will not be afraid anymore. You will never be afraid of me. You did not see red in my eyes.*

Tyren's body loosened up. With another smile, he looked up at Simon. "Enjoy your trip."

Simon knew what he had done and wasn't happy about it. The last thing he wanted was his son to be afraid of him. "I will. Behave."

With an assuring nod from Tyren, Simon left the room.



## CHAPTER NINE

After sleeping for almost all day and half the night, Amanda got up and started packing. When she looked at the clock, she saw she only had an hour to get to the airport. After rushing to get things together, she made it to the airport just in time.

“Do you have to go?” Sheila whined then placed Amanda’s bag on the conveyor belt.

Amanda wanted to stay, but she knew she shouldn’t. If she did, Luke would keep calling, leave her hundreds of messages. She would eventually break down and talk to him, and then they would end up back in bed.

*Damn it!*

Getting back in bed with Luke had to be the last, scratch that—none existing thing on her list of things to do, no matter how horny she got. “Yes, Sheila, and whining won’t help.”

“Then I want to go.”

Amanda turned to her. “Why?”

“Because I don’t want anything to happen to you.”

“Nothing is going to happen to me, Sheila.”

“Yeah like the little boy that fell down the well on Lassie. Nothing happened to him either.”

“That was really mean to compare me with a dog show.”

“Hey, I call it like I see it.”

Amanda groaned under her breath. Emma happened to be taking it. She looked at Emma and noticed that she looked as if she would



burst out in tears at any moment. In fact, she hadn't said anything since they arrived at the airport, which meant she didn't want her to go either. "Emma..."

"No, Amanda, go. I don't want to do the goodbyes. Just go, have fun and come back...soon."

What could Amanda do or say? In a couple of hours, she would be flying to Las Vegas to her new job. Amanda paused at that thought. She had only been thinking about herself, not Sheila or Emma's feelings.

"Sheila," Amanda whispered. "I can stay. I didn't know me staying meant so much to you guys."

"No!" Emma practically screamed, making everyone in the airport seem to take a dramatic pause, looking for where the scream had erupted from. "You cannot do this. Sheila and I are going to be okay. *Right, Sheila?*"

Where did that come from? In all her years of staying with Emma, she never heard Emma growl. Not even saw her get mad at her ex, another lying piece of crap like Luke, cheating on her. James was no better than Luke was. He went after everything in a dress and, once Sheila found out, he looked like a tenderized piece of meat after Sheila beat him up.

"You should go," Sheila mumbled. "You need to go. I don't want you to stay here because of us."

Tears formed in her eyes. Amanda closed her eyes to regain control then light blue eyes met black. The thought that Sheila had spoken those words, but didn't mean it, made her feel worse. "I promise to come back."

Both Emma and Sheila gave her a big fake looking smile before hugging her. When Amanda pulled back, the tears that she had been holding were flowing down her cheek. She noticed that both Emma and Sheila were also crying. "I am going to miss you guys."

"You better," Emma said as she wiped the tears from her eyes. "Call us as soon as you get there."

"I will."

After giving them another hug Amanda got her ticket and was on the plane to Vegas. She had only flown twice and never first class, but



after this trip, she will make it a priority to always fly first class.

### Las Vegas

Amanda stood in front on the conveyor belt where the bags were. She watched the little belt go around in a circle. When she didn't see her bag, she sighed before turning around and spotting five men standing near the door. Apparently, they were limo drivers. There all had on black suits, little black hats with signs in their hands with people names on it.

Kelly, Mark, Sarah, Tim and Amanda.

Amanda! The last man had her name.

"Are you waiting for me?" she asked after she made her way up to the man. As she got closer to him, an odd feeling over took her. The hairs on the back of her neck stood up. She didn't know why, he looked okay, nothing like a serial killer. His short black hair was thick on his head waiting to be touched by someone. He stood tall and obviously worked out a lot from his wide chest and muscles showing under his white shirt. The only thing that made him look out of place was he had on sunglasses, in the airport, at night. Odd.

"Are you Amanda Duncan?"

"Yes." If she weren't would she have not come up to him asking him if he was waiting on her? *Dumbass*.

"I am Anthony, Ms. Alston asked me to pick you up."

"Okay, let me get my bags."

The limo driver moved so quickly up to her that she jumped when he touched her arm. Amanda gasped from fear when his hand wrapped around her arm.

"I am sorry, Ms. Duncan, but I am to get your bags for you."

"No..." she told him. "I can get them myself." For a moment, behind those dark glasses she could have sworn she saw his eyes glowing brightly. It felt like he walked inside her mind trying to take over and command her to do his bidding. She closed her eyes tight and forced her mind to close up on whoever it was, which she had the feeling that was Anthony, left her mind.



He took a deep breath, stepping back as if she had surprised him by closing her mind to him.

With a smile on her lips, she asked, "Is there anything wrong?" She watched him cock his head to stare at her.

"No, madam, nothing is wrong. I just wish to make your trip very comfortable. It is my duty and my pleasure to receive your bags for you."

Amanda wanted to protest, but deep in her mind, she knew whatever he planted had taken affect. Making her do what he wanted.

"Okay." That answer seemed to please him, more than she liked.

"Which bags are yours?"

Amanda gazed at the belt rack. "Those. The two white Dooney bags."

After retrieving her bags, he led her to his limo.

To hear about Las Vegas and see it in the pictures was nothing like seeing the city that never sleeps in person. There had to be hundreds of people walking around and it was almost midnight. There were casinos everywhere. The lights from the different casinos, restaurants, and wedding chapels lit the city streets. The place was beautiful.

Amanda peered through the dark window to see that they even had slot machines on the street corner for those that couldn't make it inside the casino.

Amanda looked strangely at the sign when they stopped in front of a building. Anything Goes Casino and Resort.

*Ummmm...interesting.*

Guess she should have asked Barbara the name of the place. Maybe that would have taken off the shock of it all. Then the name itself, Anything Goes Casino, made her wonder if that mean, at this casino, anything went.

A low chuckle escaped her lips, it immediately left when the door opened and Anthony, still in dark glasses, stood waiting.

"This way, Ms. Duncan."

"Thanks."

"It is my pleasure to make you comfortable."

The way he smiled at her, made her feel that he spoke of some



other type of pleasure, she could be wrong.

"Is this your first time in Las Vegas?"

"Yes."

"Then you will have fun," he spoke, then closed the door. "Mr. Baldwin is a very nice man and easy to get along with. I hope once you settle in I might be able to show you the city."

Did he just ask her on a date? Man, two minutes in Las Vegas and she already had a date. She smirked remembering she had sworn off men for a while. "I will keep that in mind."

Amanda really looked at the place. She heard the sounds from the slot machines ringing loudly from the inside. In addition, she heard the voices, screaming from winning and losing their money. She guessed that's why they were screaming.

In the middle of the floor sat a large water fountain with golden water in it. Could this be the right place? If so, how could a child study, let alone live in a place like this?

Amanda looked up to see a cute, brown curly-haired woman walking up to her. She looked too young to be Barbara. The woman looked about eighteen.

"Amanda," the familiar voice spoke to her.

It was Barbara.

"Barbara," she greeted with a smile.

"Yes." Amanda took Barbara's hand, shaking it. "Welcome to the Anything Goes Casino and Resort. This is owned by Mr. Simon Baldwin, he sends his apologies for not being able to be here tonight."

"Very interesting name," Amanda teased. "Is it really named anything goes?"

"Yes." Barbara gestured for her to follow her inside. "This place has many fantasies as well as mysteries."

When they made it to the main hall, Amanda saw that the place had been decorated beautifully. Another huge waterfall sat in the middle of the floor, blue lights lit the pool. It went well with the dark blue carpet and white lounge chairs and desk. Behind the desk stood two woman and three men, all dressed in white suits.

"This way," Barbara spoke when Amanda moved to go to the desk.



"Don't I have to check in?"

"No." Barbara smiled at her. "You are Mr. Baldwin's guest and you are not staying in the hotel part. You will be staying on the top floor."

Amanda nodded her head in understanding. As they approached the elevator, she looked to her left to see slot machines of all sizes and shapes. To her right she saw what had to be miles of tables. From blackjack to crap tables. Then right next to that was a door with the sign Club Sixty-Nine over the door.

*Club Sixty-Nine?* She had just been abducted to the freak show. The club name answered her question about does anything goes. With a name like that, anything had to go.

Amanda could have sworn she heard Barbara laughing at her inside joke. It made her wonder if Barbara read minds as well. Amanda followed Barbara inside the elevator.

"You will be staying on the hundred and tenth floor."

"I'm sorry say that again."

Barbara chuckled. "Don't tell me you are afraid of heights."

"Yes." What's the use of lying? "I get a little afraid when it comes to heights."

"Don't be. It is a great view. I stay on that floor and so does Tyren and Mr. Baldwin."

"Is there a Mrs.?"

"No, madam, there isn't. Not for a while anyhow. Oh I forgot!" Barbara reached inside her pocket and fished out a key card. "You will need this to get to the penthouse. The elevator stops on floor one-hundred and nine. After that put in the key card and a number pad will come out, which you will see in a moment. After the pad comes out, punch in the number, eight-nine-five-six and then the elevator will continue to the top. It will take a moment to go to the next floor because between the two floors is padded so you will not hear the noise below."

Amanda took the card and placed it in her purse.

"Also always use this elevator because it is the only way you will be able to get to the top floor. Unless you like to walk up a hundred and ten flights of stairs. We have instructed limited use so not a lot of



people use this one. You have to make sure that no one comes up to the top floor with you. If someone happens to get on you must always let them know that this is a personal elevator. When someone does get on, they will be stuck on it. Most likely security will see them and let them off. Like I said, people know when they check in not to use this elevator, but we get those who don't want to listen sometimes."

"I understand." She was going to be living on the hundred and tenth floor the tightening feeling in her stomach let her know the nausea was settling in already.

"I will give you the short tour," Barbara told her when the elevator made it to the top floor. "As you saw below, it is the first casino room."

"First?"

"Yes. There is one on the fiftieth floor. Down below, is Club Sixty-Nine. Don't let the name fool you. It is only a name. The club is very professional and no nudity allowed." Barbara laughed. "Now we do have what we call Skinny Dip Friday's. It is from twelve midnight to two in the morning."

"Oh," Amanda said shocked. "You don't have to worry about me going to that."

"Your activity here is your life. If you do go, it's none of our business what you do on your own time. In fact it could be fun."

"Have...have you gone? I am sorry to be so outspoken, but you can't be any older than nineteen."

"Thanks. I am young and I have explored this place and never apologize for being out spoken. With Tyren you have to be."

The elevator doors opened. Amanda saw that the top floor was nothing like the bottom. It was equally decorated, but it held more of a gloomy look. Dark red carpet filled the hallways. Dark black paintings of wolves and other dark animals hung on the walls. The top floor didn't have many doors. That must mean that the rooms were big.

"There are five rooms up here. Mine is here." Barbara pointed to the first door. "This is Tyren's room." His room was on the same side.

They walked down the hall. "This is..."

Amanda wondered why she hesitated.

"A vacant room, or will be soon." They continued to walk. "This is



the kitchen and dining room. A bit small, but I cook for everyone. There are only four of us. Breakfast is at eight, lunch at twelve and dinner at seven.”

“You don’t have to cook for me.” Amanda said, looking in the stainless steel kitchen.

“It’s my job, but if you want a snack or anything you are welcome to the kitchen. Come this way.”

Amanda followed her to the other end of the hallway.

“This will be your room and right beside your room is Mr. Baldwin’s room.”

*What! Why is she putting me here?* Amanda didn’t want to be next to the boss’ room.

“I hope it’s okay for now for you to stay here?”

Amanda looked up to Barbara.

“The other room is not ready. As soon as it is, you can move into that room. That is, if it makes you uncomfortable to stay next to the boss.”

*Wouldn’t it make you uncomfortable if they put you next to your boss?* “It will do.”

“Great,” Barbara pushed opened the door.

The first thing Amanda noticed were her bags on the bed. A very big bed. What size was that, two king sizes in one? The room also had black carpet, but the white comforter on the bed brought a little sunshine to the room. There were also white flowers around the room and the one picture of the ocean was over the balcony door.

“This is Mr. Baldwin’s balcony and his private pool. He is the type of man that does not care if you use it or not. The last teacher took a liking to it.”

“I will probably try it later.” Amanda turned to look at Barbara.

“Okay. I know you want to get settled in. Make a few calls, but I want to explain some things.”

“I am all ears.” Amanda sat on the bed and almost moaned at how soft and comfortable it felt against her skin.

“Tyren is eleven years old. His mother passed when he was born and I...” Barbara stopped speaking for a moment, then continued. “I



have been here for a while and as I know, Tyren gets bored fast. The only thing you need to do is keep him busy. He loves math. Very much. Also, you only have to work four hours a day. It doesn't matter what time. If you want to keep the same hours, it's up to you, if you want to change it, also up to you. The only thing we ask is for four hours a day, five days a week."

*Cake job!* "What about the pay? I know it's crazy to ask now, since I have traveled almost fourteen hundred miles to get here."

"You are in luck. Mr. Baldwin increased the pay and you will be paid every week, your yearly gross will be eighty-thousand a year. If I didn't explain before, your room and food are free. If you need something from the grocery store, let me know and I will send someone to get it. The only thing we don't provide is casino chips. You gamble at your own risk."

"I'm sorry, what was the pay again?" She had heard. She just wanted her to say that again.

"Eighty-thousand a year."

With free room and board! That's a whole lot for four hours a day, but if that's the pay, then she had to do her best.

"Will you take it?"

"Do I have to beg now or later?"

Barbara smiled at her. "Also be aware of floor sixty-nine."

"Why?" Amanda frowned at her change in Barbara's demeanor. It went low and dangerous sounding.

"It's what we call the fantasy floor."

"Fantasy floor?" Amanda said with a giggle. She should have known.

"Yes. It is a very exclusive floor. I advise you to go there at your own risk. There, all your dreams will come true."

"So stay away from floor sixty-nine."

"No, dear. It wasn't a warning. I only tell you this because I didn't want you to go to that floor and have a dark stranger pull you into a room and have his way with you. It has been said that the power on the floor is unbelievable. However, you can go. You have the key to go to any and every door and floor, except Mr. Baldwin's room."



*That figures.*

“Also since it is Saturday, you can look around tonight and tomorrow. Tyren will be notified of your arrival. You will get to meet him later on.”

“Where is he?”

“Probably sleeping or playing that awful Playstation or sneaking somewhere he has no business being. Trust me he won’t be late for breakfast. The schedule of all activities here and down below are in the envelope on the dresser. There’s other information that you need to fill out also. You know for IRS and other purposes. You can take your time on that. I will only input that information if you decide to stay. You will still be paid for the two weeks, if you are here or not. Just let me know by tomorrow what time you want to start on Monday.”

Amanda looked at the woman, wanting to ask what happened to the other teachers. Nevertheless, it wasn’t her job to ask. Her job was to teach this young man everything she knows. “I will,” Amanda stood.

“Welcome aboard and enjoy your stay,” Barbara told her before shaking her hand.

After Amanda paced the room for an hour she took a shower, then called Sheila and Emma. They were still upset with her leaving, but told her to enjoy herself. They also didn’t believe her when she told them the name of the hotel she was at or what Barbara told her about her pay. It took two cell phone pictures before either of them would believe that there was a resort named Anything Goes and actually, on the sixty-nine floor, anything went.

Amanda looked through the package Barbara told her about once again. Simon was the big man here. With all the floors and over nine hundred rooms, the resort still didn’t have enough space to house everyone. And the staff...man he had enough people working for him to start a small army.

As she flipped through the book, she noticed that not one picture of Simon existed. At least the owner should be in it the book. Looking over at the clock, she saw it was nearly twelve. Too late to go down and gamble and she was too excited to sleep. She looked over to see a remote control.



Maybe it played music. She pressed the button and a large flat screen television rose from the foot of the bed. Right out of the hardwood.

“You gotta be shitting me.”

She flipped through the channels. Showtime, Cinema Max, Stars, they were all there. She hadn’t thought about a television when Barbara showed her around. It wouldn’t have bothered her too much not to have television. Okay that was a complete lie, she had to have her television programs and now with her schedule she didn’t have to miss half of them. She could work around her television shows.

Lying down on the bed, she flipped through channel after channel. Within moments, her eyes fell lower as she watched Sex and the City.



## CHAPTER TEN

Amanda's watch beeped waking her from her sleep. Seven-forty-five!

"Damn it." Don't want to be late for the first meal together. Breakfast, the most important meal of the day.

She threw the covers off, then rushed into the bathroom. After taking a quick shower, you know, making sure to wash the nether land regions, underarms and face. You don't have time to relax your muscles doing one of these baths. Amanda quickly brushed her teeth, dressed in a pair of jeans and a nice t-shirt. After lacing up her sneakers, she looked at her clock.

"Eight-fifteen." She grabbed her purse and ran out the door, almost running into Barbara on the way out.

"Whoa, slow down girly."

"Sorry, Barbara," Amanda closed the door. "I didn't want to be late."

"You're not late. I'm just going to retrieve little Tyren now. You can go into the dining room."

"Thanks."

"You're welcome."

Amanda watched Barbara head toward Tyren's room. She turned and headed into the dining room. "Man, this is too much."

And it was. Were the king and queen of Spain coming? The small mahogany table had everything from eggs, bacon, sausage, toast, orange juice, pancakes and coffee.



"Reliable coffee," she said as she poured herself a cup. "I could use this." She didn't sit because she didn't know where to sit.

"Amanda."

Barbara's voice startled her. The hot coffee touched her lips. It burned, but not enough to make her drop the cup.

"I am sorry to sneak up on you."

Amanda sat the cup down, then grabbed a napkin. When her lips stopped burning, she turned to Barbara. "It's okay." Then her eyes went wide at Tyren. Eleven? Yeah right that kid looked at least eighteen.

"Tyren, this is your new teacher."

The five-foot-six feet golden haired child smiled at her. His teeth were perfect, straight and clean. If she saw Tyren in the street, no one could tell her he was only eleven.

"It is a pleasure to meet you, Ms. Duncan," he spoke with a man's voice, then shook her hand. At least he was polite. "I am sure that we will have fun exploring the world of learning together."

"I am sure we are going to have fun."

"I know we will," he agreed, then turned to Barbara. "Is Tia gone?"

\* \* \* \*

"Tyren," Barbara chastised. "Ms. Osborne will be leaving in a couple of days. She will not disturb you any longer." *Behave!* Barbara spoke to him by mind.

*Don't worry I like her. She is smart, I can tell and she is nice.*

*You think.*

*Yes, and she doesn't smell like old people rub. I will be good to her. I promise.*

"Have a seat anywhere, Amanda. This is not a proper household where we have assigned seats."

\* \* \* \*

Amanda saw that they didn't because Tyren was already on his third piece of meat. She sat beside him, pulled up a plate, but instead of



eating she drank her coffee.

"So, Tyren," Barbara spoke from the other side of the table. "Tell Amanda about some of the things you know."

After stuffing the fifth piece of meat in his mouth, he smirked. , "I know a lot of things."

"Okay, smart boy. You know what I mean."

Amanda turned to the handsome young man, his hazel eyes sparkling mischievously. If he looked like this, she wondered what his father looked like. He had to be a light-haired man, with hazel eyes like Tyren. Probably even built, had to be. Tyren was only eleven, but she could clearly see that he worked out a lot. Even at his age.

\* \* \* \*

Tyren laughed at her thoughts of his father. How wrong she was. His father had dark black hair that hung past his shoulders. He had silver eyes also. The only thing they had in common was their shape. Simon was huge and strong and so was he. He never saw his father workout a day of his life. Maybe that's why he was so fit. He never worked out, but he could see that he had more body mass than other boy's his age. "Ms. Duncan..."

"Amanda," she said between sips. "You can call me Amanda."

This entire experience shocked Barbara. She looked at him knowing that he never, ever, called any of his teachers Mr. or Mrs., she or his father had to threaten him before he did.

"I don't think it's appropriate," Tyren answered.

Barbara nearly spit out her juice at his comment.

"Are you okay, Barbara?" Tyren asked with a huge smile on his face. He knew what she thought about him saying that. That was why had he had said it.

"Yes," she answered wiping her mouth.

"See you call her by her first name," Amanda said.

Tyren golden eyes went back to her brown ones. Then he gave her his trademark smile again. "Yes I do, but I have known her for years. She's old."



"You are treading on thin water, Tyren." A warning growl followed Barbara's words.

"Sorry." He apologized, but for some reason Amanda knew he didn't mean it. "If you insist on me calling you by your first name I can accept it. *But*, when my father arrives you must let him know that you gave me permission." He leaned over to Amanda. "He doesn't like me calling my teachers by their first names."

"It's okay with me. When you call me Ms. Duncan, I feel old. I don't mind if Barbara or your father doesn't have a problem with it."

"No, I don't mind." Barbara quickly added, "as long as you show her respect."

"Not a problem." he smiled again. "As to answer your question, *Amanda*, I know a lot of different things. It will take me awhile to show you all the things I know. I love math and I hope to one day run my father's business. I know numbers well. I still need a little help with Calculus and Trig, but I will get it."

"I know math well. Actually, I aced Calculus and got a B in Trigonometry. By the time I finish with you, you will be a math wiz." She looked over at Barbara's nod of approval. "What about the other subjects."

"Boring."

"There has to be something you like."

"I don't know. I hate history. Why would I need to know what happened hundreds of years ago? I do well with English, but like everyone, I hate to write. Science is just...I never got into it."

"Why not?"

"Making tornados in a bottle doesn't teach me much."

"I understand, but do you know how a rainbow works?"

"No."

"Well that is an interesting thing to research. What about how a space shuttle takes off? On the other hand, how batteries work? Have you ever dissected anything like a frog or a worm?"

"No," he shivered at the dissecting part.

"Ever thought about it?"

He shook his head.



"Then I will have to get busy, Mr. math genius. Without math, the space shuttle wouldn't be able to take off. There is some science involved also."

"That sounds like it would be fun to work on."

"It will be. Have you ever grown anything in your life?"

"No. I had plants in my room and they all died because I didn't keep them watered. After that I haven't grown anything."

"This may be the first assignment for me and you."

"You?" he asked.

"Yes I can't grow anything. I have to find out if roses can grow in the heat, or how they grow. If they can't grow, then I will find another interesting flower to grow. Maybe have a little contest on who can grow the biggest flower."

"You are on," he challenged, making Amanda smile. "Do you play video games?"

"I did, not much anymore. My friend's nephew comes over and stays sometimes. He has an Xbox and he sits in front of that thing and plays for hours. After seeing that, I wanted to see what had his interest for that long, so I played, and lost two days of my life playing."

"Oh, you have to play the Playstation with me," he said almost childlike. "I never had an opponent that was in the same room. I always had to play with online opponents."

"Well..."

"Please, Amanda. My father's friend just came out with a new game, Night Blood II, and it is so good. I just have to find someone to play with me on the difficult levels. I have to win that game."

Amanda smiled, then nodded. "Okay, I will play."

"Today?" he asked, hoping it would be.

"Tyren you can't ask Amanda to do that. She has so much stuff to do and I know she wants to tour around before she begins working on her lesson plans."

"It's okay. I can play for an hour, then go touring. We can work on some math tomorrow and history..." Amanda looked off. "I will need a computer though."

"Great!" Tyren said with excitement in his voice.



"Are...are you sure, Amanda? I don't want you to do something you don't want to."

"Trust me if I didn't want to I wouldn't."

"See, Barbara, she wants to." Without another word, he downed his juice.

"As for the computer, Amanda, you can use the one in the study room. That is where you are going to be teaching him."

"Study room? You didn't show me that room."

"I am sorry in all the excitement I missed that. It is located in front of your room. It has a computer, books, all type of books for learning and a board, a desk for you and him. It is very comfortable."

"Thanks."

"Do you have a time for tomorrow?"

"We can start right after breakfast."

"Great!" Tyren jumped in. *Barbara will have to pick up her eyeballs after a while*, Tryen thought. They kept bugging out every time he said something unusual. "Then tomorrow after breakfast it is."

\* \* \* \*

Amanda ate a piece of toast and drank the rest of her coffee. The second she finished her coffee, Tyren pulled her into his room, that was two hours ago. Night Blood II was interesting. She never thought about vampires and werewolves before, but the entire game centered on a vampire having to save his mate from the evil werewolf Clan. "Tyren, you are good."

"Thanks, Amanda."

"I have to go and check out the study hall."

Tyren pouted.

"Don't pout. I have to get some things together for us tomorrow. I said I wanted to take a tour of the place and if you keep me here all day I won't be able to do anything."

"You know there is theater on the other side of Club Sixty-Nine."

Hearing him say it sounded so funny, but he lived here all his life so it had to be like second nature. "Are there any scary movies out?"



"All the time. I go all the time , but not allowed to leave the casino without my father with me."

"Why not?"

"My dad is really rich and he said that someone might kidnap me when I go out alone. They may hold me for ransom or even kill me."

"That's not a good thought for you to have."

"I know, but it's the truth. I am allowed to go to the movies. It holds up to two hundred people and if we go now we can catch the next movie."

Amanda nodded. Why not go? She didn't plan on gambling or going to floor sixty-nine, so a movie would be good. "Let's go."

Tyren smiled. "I have to tell Barbara." He set the controller down , then grabbed his phone.

After telling Barbara, they headed to the lobby to the underground theater.

Amanda slid the card and pressed the lobby button. "Tyren," she called.

"Yes , Amanda."

"Do you like staying here?"

"Yes, because I don't know of any other place. It's quiet on the top floor. I have everything I ever wanted except friends. But I don't need them now."

"Why not?"

"Because, I need to learn to live and grow up as a man. I will have time to make friends when I am older."

"So you haven't lived anywhere else but the casino?"

"No and to tell you the truth I don't see what all the talk is about. You put your money in and there is an eighty percent chance you will lose."

Amanda looked over to the young boy—well man. He didn't speak nor act like an eleven year old. She felt that she could ask him anything and he would tell her. "You are very smart aren't you, Tyren?"

"That's what everyone keeps telling me. I know I am smart , but I do things. I am a boy after all."

"Things like what?" She looked at him strangely. Amanda saw him



smile at what he thought to tell her.

"Well I peeked during Skinny Dip Friday's."

Okay, she didn't expect him to be that honest. "You are wrong for that. You shouldn't look at women like that, not now."

"I know and I didn't look at them in a sexual way."

Her blue eyes shot to his. "You didn't?"

"No, my father taught me about females and males a long time ago and the one thing he taught me is to show them respect. Their bodies should be treated like temples, not used laundry."

"Your father talks to you a lot I see."

"Yes."

"That is good. A lot of fathers should do that. Then they may turn out like you."

"And I am like?" He was teasing her now.

"You are a very respectable young man and I like you a lot. I hope to be the best teacher you have and one day I hope your dreams come true about running your father's business."

Tyren giggled. "I hope so, too." Then he looked away sadly.

"What's wrong, Tyren?"

"Nothing."

He was closing up on her she knew it. "Don't say that. You know you can tell me anything and I will listen."

"Well," he looked at the number on the elevator instead of her. "I wish you could be my mother." The statement made her heart beat loudly against her chest. She hadn't expected that comment, especially not this early in their relationship. "But don't worry my father doesn't date my teachers. In fact, he doesn't date anyone. He has this girlfriend. At least I think she is. She doesn't say much to me when she comes around."

"Mmmmm...Tyren...I don't think we should be discussing your father's relationships." She said it, but she really wanted to hear about it.

"I'm sorry for saying that."

"Don't be." Amanda touched his shoulder. "I won't make a good mother right now. I will be a good teacher and friend to you."



"You will?" he asked.

"I promise." Change of topics. "Now let's go see this movie that you say is scary."

"It is."

"I'll see."

The doors to the elevator opened and the sounds of the casino noise flooded her ears. Tyren had been correct about it being quiet up top because down in the lobby it sounded like five hundred video games going off at the same time.

They headed to the door that had cinema on the top. As they took their seats, Amanda hoped that she could win Tyren's father over the same way she had Barbara and Tyren. She hadn't hung out with him because he asked her to. She did it because she wanted to and, in the end, found out that she would have to do a little more work that is advanced for him. The boy had the mind of a well-educated doctor and she would have to come up with some serious planning to keep him occupied.

Amanda stopped thinking when the previews began to run. This life she could get use to. Having only four-hour workdays, free movie, free room and free meals, it made her feel like a queen.



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### KANSAS

“What do you mean Amanda’s gone?” Luke Reeves stood at Sheila’s desk.

“She is gone, Luke,” Sheila snarled at the same time, wanting to chuckle at his darkened eye. “Amanda has a job somewhere far away from you and your cheating ways. She is starting a new life without you and you need to leave because I have to work.”

“Look you n...”

Luke was a big man, but he moved back when Sheila stood up angrily. “Say it, Luke. I triple dog dare you to call me the *N* word.”

“I wasn’t.” He lied.

“Luke I think you better leave,” Emma told him.

“I am sorry.”

Sheila snorted. “You got that right, you are a sorry ass.”

“Leave him alone.” Debbie almost screamed from her desk. “He said he was sorry and trust me, I don’t have anything to do with him anymore. So tell him where she is. They belong together.”

Sheila shot Debbie the meanest look she had ever seen. “A and B conversation, C your way out of it, Debbie.”



"That's really mature." Debbie snapped.

"No more than you having sex with him knowing that he was Amanda's boyfriend."

"He came on to me."

"And you had to take that offer." Sheila breathed. "You slut."

Emma laughed.

"I heard that," Debbie shouted. "I thought we were going to get along?"

"I am getting along. I always call people as I see them. Emma is kind, but she has some issues sometimes. Luke is a dog in heat that always has that pink thing hanging out. My boss is the same. I am a black woman who is pissed off that my friend has been cheated on by the same slut I have to work with everyday. I really want to beat someone down into the ground. And if anyone ever builds up the nerve to call me a Negro to my face, they will get their asses kicked." Sheila pointed at Debbie. "You are what you are, a slut and a whore...sorry, bitch. Amanda had to be the only normal person here and she is now gone because you two have hurt her. So please forgive me if I am not acting like a white chick today who doesn't give a shit."

The entire group listened to Sheila's opinion of everyone. It shocked Debbie so much that she sat back down and pretended to work. Emma also went to her desk, wanting to laugh at Luke's blank expression.

"Now if you would kindly leave my work place so I can work. It would be greatly appreciated," Sheila said calmly.

"I love her, Sheila. You know that."

Sheila snorted. "With a love like yours, no one needs any enemies."

"I am sorry I had sex with Debbie. She wasn't that great. I just did it because I could."

Debbie growled, but didn't speak.



"T.M.I. I really don't want to hear about your fling. Amanda is gone and she might not come back if that job works out. I hope it does so she doesn't have to deal with you."

Luke ground his teeth, then snarled when Shelia laughed at him.

"And snarl outside because it doesn't work on me, bucko."

"Why are you so mean and hateful?"

"Mean!" Sheila stood again. "Hateful! I am both because Amanda can't be because she is so free hearted. If she was here, she would forgive you and then she would be hurt again because of you. Now that she is gone, I will be her anger. She loved you, Luke, really loved you. All she ever talked about was Luke this and Luke that. To think about it I hated you before now because I had to hear about you every day and then it was the marriage part. Thank God, that didn't happen. Do you know what she wanted us to wear? Of course you didn't, you were too busy fucking everyone else instead of taking care of Amanda. Therefore, if I am mean I have a right to be. You are just lucky that Amanda hit you and not me. I promise you that your eye wouldn't have been healing so fast if I had gotten a hold of you." With another snarl, she sat down. "Now leave before you make me say something that is unladylike."

Both Debbie and Emma laughed at Sheila's outburst. Sheila had to look away from Luke to keep from laughing herself. She knew she had said plenty already.

With another snarl, Luke stormed out of the agency.

"I can't believe you said that," Emma laughed as she walked up to Sheila's desk.

"Well I am mad. I am sorry about the part about you."

"It's the truth, isn't it?"

"Yes," Sheila smiled. "It is."

"Then what's to be sorry about?"



"I guess nothing."

"You're right."

"You know that isn't going to be the last time he asks where Amanda is."

"I know." Emma sighed. "Don't worry, you know I am not going to say anything and I know you are not going to say anything. So then there's nothing to worry about."

"Yes there is."

"What?"

"Her parents. You know how much they loved Luke and regardless of what he has done or will do, they always will. They want Amanda with a man who has money and if that means spending her life with a cheating scum bag like Luke, then that's what they want."

"I haven't thought of that. Maybe he isn't smart enough to go to them."

"Let's hope not. Now let's get some work done so we can go home for the day."

"Couldn't agree with you more, Sheila."

\* \* \* \*

### Carpathian Mountains

Simon eased through the thin cave, noting that this was not the place to wear a suit. A frustrated sigh left his lips.

He had to do this.

His life was becoming more and more difficult. The beast within him was growing stronger with each passing day and he knew Manuel had the cure, a cure that he would never give him freely.

Rumor has it that Zechariah was a twenty-six-thousand-four-hundred year old Juevama could help him. Just thinking about



living that long made his skin crawl. That's a long time. There aren't that many Juevama's around that old. After ten thousand years, a lot of them let themselves be taken from this world. Who could blame them? If you are tired of feeling pain, tired of watching this world corrupt itself, why not do something like leave the pain?

Anyhow, this Juevama's age had nothing to do with why he came to the mountains, but it's his ability to transform what used to be. He can restore things back to their original self. Maybe he could transform him back to his original vampire self.

Simon squeezed through another small passage that led to a large opening. It amazed him that a mountain could be decorated so beautifully. Candles lit around the room causing the warm springs in the middle of the floor to glow. There were chairs, actually lounging chairs, in a cave.

One moment Simon stood in the middle of the room, the next thing, he felt hot pain going through his left shoulder, followed by him flying across the room to the wall.

Damn it, he knew he shouldn't have worn a suit here. Rule number one: Never, ever, ever, go into a Juevama's home unannounced. If you do, wear rubber gloves.

What other way could he get in contact with this Juevama when he doesn't have a phone, not even a cell? Nor does he have a secretary, matter of fact, the only way to get in contact with him is to come and see him unannounced. No one had seen him public for centuries. It's said that he had been down here, moping, so to say, for that long. Now his favorite suit has been ruined because the Juevama didn't have a phone.

"How dare you come into my presence, vampire?" A dark, evil sounding voice wailed throughout the cave.

Simon looked around, but did not see him anywhere. Juevama's don't like being surprised. Vampires and other



demons could suck the life force out of a Juevama. It will not kill them, but it would take away all of their powers, making the one that stole it more powerful. A powerful vampire that had access to the gates of all hells dimensions was not something you would want. Especially Dementra's. They would probably send someone to Nairapha, for just looking at them sideways.

"Answer me, vampire."

Simon wanted to snarl at his ruined suit. It didn't matter that he had hundreds, he liked this one. He had it tailor...

"Vampire."

Simon's red eyes searched the cave again. "I know I am a vampire, show yourself, you coward." Oops, not a good idea to make the Juevama mad while he has you trapped against the wall like a piñata. But he couldn't help getting mad and the longer he felt pain in his arm, the more upset he got. Hair began to form on his body. He snarled, trying to control himself.

After several moments, he controlled the werewolf part of him. Simon then heard a distant chuckle followed by a blast of cool air whipping through the cave, at the same time his body was released from its hold and he fell to the ground.

"Simon." A short man appeared in front of him.

Simon had him by a couple of feet so he could clearly see the top of the Juevama's baldhead. Blue green eyes with a hint of anger looked up at him. This Juevama may be shorter, but he had more strength, powers and knowledge than anyone else he has ever had the pleasure of meeting. "Zechariah," Simon spoke as he looked down at the man.

"I know why you have come."

"I know you know what I seek."

Zechariah laughed at him. "I cannot help you."

"What!" The dark vampire snarled. "What do you mean?"

"What you ask, I cannot restore."



“Why the hell not? Whatever you want, I will get you. Whatever you seek or need I know I can get. Now, tell me why.”

Zechariah moved back when Simon’s powerful eyes held him. “I can’t. You have to get your cure from Manuel.”

“No! I will not give him my son for the cure.”

“Really, he is Manuel’s son, Simon.”

“Bull shit! Tyren is *my* son, maybe not by blood, but by his mind.” Simon stiffened.

Zechariah must have called out to his guards. Where the hell were they when he first entered the cave? And why did they let him get this far? “Call off your dogs.” Simon ordered. “I don’t have time to play.”

Zechariah must have seen that Simon did not intend to entertain him by fighting his men. With a wave of his hand, his men blended back into the shadows.

“I didn’t come all this way to be rejected. If I keep this—”

“You will kill. I know,” Zechariah finished his sentence. “I cannot help you, Dark Guardian. My powers have been taken. By whom, I do not know. This vampire came to me, stronger and more powerful than any I have known. He killed half my men, then took my powers. So your wish I cannot grant.”

Simon’s black eyes flickered red, then slowly went back to his unusual silver. There’s nothing he could do now. Without his powers, Zechariah couldn’t help him at all. “So this was a wasted trip?”

“Sorry to say, but yes.”

“There is not another around that could restore me?” he asked Zechariah.

“No, but you have to take control of this beast. Your Truelove can control it.”

“No, I will not kill my Truelove.” Simon turned away from the Juevama, then headed out the way he came in.



"You will not kill her."

Simon stopped, hung his head before saying, "How can you say that. I nearly killed Rosa when we...you know."

"I know, but your Truelove will help you."

"No!" Simon left his cave without another word.

\* \* \* \*

"Come on, Tyren," Amanda pulled him out of the theater.

Tyren was a sneaky little devil. Their movie had turned into a double feature. She had laughed so much that now her throat felt raw. Laughing and from the tons of popcorn they ate.

"One more movie, Amanda, please."

Amanda's eyes narrowed. "Go up stairs, you little devil. I have some exploring to do. After that I will expect you to be up and ready to learn bright and early tomorrow."

Tyren pulled the tie off his hair to let it hang loosely. "Okay," he pouted. "Will you play later?"

"I can't promise you that, but I will if I can."

"Okay," he agreed, then he did something that amazed Amanda, he hugged her.

It took a moment before she responded with her own hug. "What was that for?"

His eyes widened from confusion. "I don't know," he told her honestly. "I won't do it again if it bothers you."

Amanda quickly grabbed his hand before he ran off. "It doesn't bother me, Tyren. Don't ever think that. It just shocked me that you did it. I like hugs and you don't have to have a reason to hug me. Just don't make it an everyday habit." She smiled at him. "Then you would have to give me one every day for the rest of your life."

"Amanda!" Tyren said as if he saw something shocking. His



eyes bugged and he looked at her face very closely.

“What’s wrong, Tyren?” The way he looked made her think she had grown another head.

“Say, ahhhh?”

“Why?”

“Just do it.”

“No, because I know what you see.” She hadn’t thought about it much since she hadn’t felt any pain. Actually, her tongue hadn’t bothered her since the other morning.

“When did you get that? Did it hurt? Is that the only piercing you have? Do you have a tattoo? Can I get one?”

“Slow down, Tyren.” She waved her hands. He stopped his series of questions. “I got it the day before yesterday and yes it hurt, but not that much and it won’t hurt because I take a lot of pain medicine for it. It’s none of your business how many piercings I have.” She couldn’t tell him that she had her navel and clit pierced, nor would she. “No, I don’t have a tattoo and I don’t want one. And no, you cannot get one. You don’t want to mess up your body like I have.”

“Why did you do it?”

“Because I was mad and at that time, I wasn’t thinking clearly. I would take it out, but it symbolizes that hate and I want to remember to stay away from what made me mad.”

“I understand.”

“Now go to your room.”

Tyren ran off when she released his hand.

“Amanda Duncan you have a call on line two.”

Amanda looked around when she heard a male’s voice over the intercom. Who would be calling her at the hotel?

She went up to the receptionist. “I have a call on hold.”

“Ms. Duncan,” the blonde woman said with a large smile. “Welcome aboard. You can use the phone at the end of the



counter. Just press line two.”

“Thanks.” Amanda went to the counter, then picked up the phone. “Ms. Duncan speaking.”

“Girl, your name is Amanda.”

Hearing who it was, she smiled. “What do you want, Sheila?” Amanda said while laughing. “Didn’t I just talk to you a couple of hours ago?”

“I was lonely and I needed someone to talk to.”

Amanda snorted. “Why don’t you talk to Debbie?”

“You know I had some vital information for you, but if you keep acting like you are not happy to hear from me, then I can just hang up.”

“You better not hang up this phone on me. If you do I will—  
,”

“You will what?” Sheila chuckled at her. “Argue at the dial tone.”

“You just wait to I get back to Kansas, woman. All the bad things you say to me I will keep a count and when I come there, I will get you.”

“Yeah whatever...your threat is a useless as Luke’s.”

Amanda went quiet. Did Luke threaten Sheila? Nah, Luke had plenty of sense, just none when it came to being faithful. Grief overwhelmed her quickly at the thought of Luke. She hadn’t thought about that insignificant, cheating bastard. Now hearing his name all she could think about was he and Debbie. “What did Luke do?”

“He came in here about ten minutes ago screaming at me to tell him where you were.”

“He didn’t.”

“Yes he did and he threatened to call me a Negro.”

“I am so sorry, Sheila.”

“For what? You didn’t do anything.”



"I know." She sighed unhappily. "But Luke is harassing you because of me." Amanda heard Sheila snarl.

"Don't you do that to yourself? You better not. I handled Mr. Reeves and I am sure that he will not come at me like that again. And I let Debbie know how I felt and I don't have to worry about her either."

Amanda tensed up. She didn't know how to take that last statement. "Is she in the hospital?"

Sheila laughed loudly. "No, she is safe. I just told her what I thought about her. Oh! I told Luke that he is like a dog with that pink thing hanging out."

"You didn't!"

"Yes and I told her she's a slut and a bitch. I told Luke if he comes around me again, he will be leaving with more than just one black eye."

Relief washed through her. No one had been admitted to the emergency room. That's a good thing. "You are one of a kind."

"I know. Emma says hi. I had to tell you that because she is giving me the if-you-don't-tell-her-I'll-kill-you stare."

"Tell her I said hi."

"She said hi, Emma, now go away," Sheila told Emma. "So how was your first night?"

"Good. This place is huge. You would love it here. They have a club named sixty-nine as you know, but what I didn't tell you is they warned me about the sixty-ninth floor."

"I am afraid to ask, but what's with that floor?"

"They say that it's where people go to have all their fantasies come true."

"Have you been?"

"Nope and I don't plan on going."

"Why the hell not?"

"Because I don't need a dark stranger pulling me into a



room.”

Sheila went silent. “Mmmmm...let me think. I can go to a floor where a dark stranger lifts me off my feet and makes passionate love to me. Or I can stay on the other floors with a tongue ring I will never use.”

“Screw you, Sheila.”

“I have someone to do that. You, on the other hand, need to visit that floor and let me know what it is all about.”

“No. I have to go because the clerk is looking at me funny.”

“So what, tell her you are talking to me.”

“No. I doubt she knows you.”

“Do I need to come for a visit?”

Amanda shook her head. The last person she needed in Las Vegas, threatening the people like she did in Kansas was Sheila. “Please don’t. I will call you later.”

“Fine be that way. Talk to you later.”

Amanda hung up the phone, then turned and squealed out in fear. Everyone turned to see where the scream had come from, but no one made a move.

“I am sorry, Amanda,” Tyren. He looked down and away from Amanda.

“What’s wrong?” she asked. “Why aren’t you in your room?”

“I came down to see if you were okay. I had this funny feeling that you were sad.”

Amanda looked at him wondering if he could he feel her emotions. Sometime she knew he could. Her mental ability to move things with her mind made her know that there were some mystical things in the world. That’s why she didn’t want to go to the sixty-ninth floor. She had the feeling that there were dark, handsome strangers just waiting to have their wild and wicked way her and with the floor probably being sexually heightened, she would let them do it to her. Well, that’s not what she needed



or wanted. She made a promise that she would not date or go out with a man for a very long time. Men were pigs and they were out for one thing, a woman's body.

"Can you..." she paused, then made him look at her by lifting his face with her hand, "can you feel things? Tell me the truth."

"I can't talk about it."

"Your father," she said as an answer more than a question.

Tyren nodded.

"I understand. You don't have to talk about it. Not until you want to. I have a secret of my own that maybe one day we can talk about. But not until you are older."

Once again, he nodded. "Did a man make you sad? Is that why you came here?"

She released his face. That's part of the reason but not the entire reason. "Yes and no. I came here to get away, but I also wanted to come. Now that I have met you and Barbara, I really want to stay. Hopefully your father will like me enough to let me stay and teach you."

Tyren smiled. "He will."

"How can you be so sure?"

"Because..." He chuckled. "The other teachers I didn't like and I only have to pout and then he finds me another one. But you I like. You don't have to worry about me pouting for you to go."

"So you want me to stay?"

"Forever if you can."

Forever. She never thought about that word. What would she be doing in the next five years? Ten years? Would she ever go back to Kansas? Probably not. There were no plans on her agenda to go back there any time soon, only to visit, but that was about all the time she wanted to spend in Kansas. "I don't know



about forever, but I will stay as long as I can.”

It made her feel warm inside to look up in a child’s face and see so much hope, so much happiness and so much joy. What a shame she couldn’t mirror that feeling. “Are you ready to go to your room?” Amanda asked.

“No, but I will if you want me to.”

“I think you will be safer there. I need to go to the study anyhow and check my email.”

Tyren grabbed her hand and led her to his father’s private elevator.

Once they made it back to the room, Amanda went into the study while Tyren went into his room. Now knowing that he could feel emotions, she had to keep hers under control. A child should never feel sorrow from another person. It’s hard to feel that type of emotion, not knowing if it’s yours or someone else’s. For now, she would try her best to keep Luke out of her mind.

(new) Keeping him blocked out worked until she opened up her email to see that her box was over the limit, with over sixty emails from Luke alone. That could be the reason why she could not receive any more mail. After reading the first two emails, both mostly the same thing, him apologizing about what happened. Him wanting to know where she ran off to work. Him wanting to talk because she hadn’t picked up her cell or cleaned her messages. She had to do that soon. They all ended with *I love you* and give him a call back.

Nope, not going to happen, she would never call him.

Without reading anymore, she deleted each one. He wanted Debbie now he could have her. Now she had to surf the web for some teaching techniques on how to teach a genius. Luke was the farthest thing from her mind. Right now, she will do her best here and, once Tyren got too old to teach, she would move to another location and teach there. She had her life plan laid out



now. She knew what she wanted to do, when she wanted and how she wanted to do it. She didn't need a man in her life. In a couple of years, maybe, but for now she was a free bird.



## CHAPTER TWELVE

### ONE WEEK LATER

The sun shone through her balcony window. Amanda turned onto her back. With her eyes still closed, she smiled to herself. This had to be the best job she ever had. If she didn't want to get up for the next two hours, she didn't have to. If she wanted to work at night, then she could. This had been the best week of her life.

Tyren has been very corporative with learning new things. She had even found a telescope still in a box. From the looks of it, it had to be worth a lot of money. It would be good to use at night, but not in the heart of the city. She doubted that she would be able to see anything with the city lights.

Maybe if she got permission from Barbara, she would take Tyren out in the desert to do a little night exploring. She could consider it a field trip. But Tyren couldn't go out without his father, so the field trip part may be a little difficult to set up. Then again, she could pull up some information on the computer, but there's nothing like seeing the stars in person.

With a yawn, she opened her eyes, ready to start her day. Amanda yelped, nearly jumping out of the bed when she saw golden eyes looking down at her. If she wanted any more sleep, she couldn't now that her heart was beating excessively fast. The energy flowed through her veins, wanting to come out and play, so to speak. She closed her eyes and concentrated before anything happened. She didn't need this building to begin shaking, not with her living over a hundred stories



up. "Tyren! What are you doing in here?" she asked trying not to scream.

"I'm sorry," he apologized. "I wasn't doing anything, I promise. I just wanted to wake you so we can go to breakfast together."

She sat up, glad that she didn't feel comfortable sleeping naked or wearing any provocative sleeping attire. Amanda looked at him, not angrily just wondering why he always wanted to be around her so much.

"Did I upset you? I can't tell because you have your feelings blocked to me. Why is that? Ever since that night in the lobby, you keep them away from me. Do you not like me?"

His words made her heart ache. Having him in her mind, especially when she thought about how much she hated men, wasn't good. He didn't need to know how much she hated Luke and Debbie or how much she would like to cut off the part Luke had deep in Debbie, then throw it in the trash.

"No, never think that I don't like you, Tyren. I think you are a wonderful boy with a very respectful attitude and very smart. I don't care that you came in here. You are always welcome. The only thing I ask is that you knock first. I don't like people standing over me while I sleep."

"I am sorry." He looked away from her.

"It's okay." Slowly she stood up. "Let's meet for breakfast in ten minutes?"

"Can we do our studies later today?"

"Why?" She looked at him.

"Because..." he stopped speaking.

"I see. You want to play that video game today."

"I am on the last level, I think. Maybe you can come and help me through it."

If she did do her studies later, she could go down to the gym. She hadn't been able to run or work out for over a month. Sheila always told her she didn't have to work out as much as she did. Now that she needed a stress relief, it became a necessity.

"I will help you, but first you have to finish your homework."



He pouted at her request.

"When you finish working, I will join you."

"I'll wait in my room."

"Now, get out you little bugger and let me get dressed."

Amanda heard her door open, then close. When she turned around, she looked up at the sky, then sighed. Maybe she'd talk to Sheila and Emma first, work out, then shower. Her stomach rumbled at the emptiness. She'd do all that after breakfast.

Amanda made it to Tyren's room around two in the afternoon, and in his room, she sat playing his game. Night had come and she wondered what time it was. They had stopped briefly for dinner, then they headed back to the room for another round.

"You're cheating," Tyren whined when his player died. "I'll get you for that."

Amanda laughed. Not ever had she had this much fun playing a video game. Night Blood II was an addictive game and the man that made it will be a rich man. "Are you accusing me of cheating?"

"Yes," he told her.

"But to go to the next level one of us had to lose a life. We fought, you lost and I won. How is that cheating?"

Tyren smiled. "Okay the next level is mine."

"I'll see about that."

While they played the next level, Amanda concentrated on winning. All of a sudden, her stomach contracted to a tight ball. Her very being trembled, causing her muscles to lock. Her blue eyes shot up to the door when she felt someone looking at her. "Holy crap!" she screamed, letting go of the controller. It crashed to the floor.

"I am sorry to startle you," his rich, dark voice spoke to her.

Her entire body quivered at the sound of his voice. He had to be Tyren's father. There was no question about that. Tyren had a look about him, but the man that stood in the doorway...well you figure out a word. The dark God stood at least six-feet, two inches tall. He had the longest wavy black hair she has ever seen. He must use a ton of conditioner on it. His nose was sharp, but not too long. It went perfectly with his high cheekbones. Then those dreamy eyes were to



die for. They were this oddest color gray, maybe they were silver. Whatever color they were, they pierced her very soul. As they did, she swore she could see darkness in him. This man had a secret about himself, not just one but several.

All different.

All dark.

Then something touched her mind and she knew it had to be Mr. Baldwin peeking. Just as quickly as he entered, she pushed him out.

"Are you okay?" his smooth voice spoke again when she stood there watching him like a hawk searching for prey.

Her eyes went to those lips that spoke the words. They were full, luscious lips. His lips were made for kissing a woman's body. His large hands could be used to arouse a woman's body to the point of no return.

"I will be okay," her voice constricted as she spoke.

He gave her a drop-dead smile that made her weak. For some reason she felt like she knew this man. Deep down in her very soul she knew Mr. Baldwin. He...he resembled the man in her dreams. She drew in a deep breath. Her dream man. No. It couldn't be.

"Tyren, you didn't tell me you had company," his tone went from soft to harsh and even toned.

"Well, father," Tyren spoke with humor in his voice, "this is my teacher, Amanda."

"What have I told you about calling your teachers by their first name?"

Tyren opened his mouth to speak, but Amanda spoke for him. "I asked him to," Amanda jumped in. "I am sorry, Mr. Baldwin, but I did ask him to call me Amanda."

Amanda watched his beautiful lips go thin, his lovely eyes went to the window for a moment. She thought he must have been counting to keep his cool for her jumping into his conversation. She knew that mouth would get her in trouble one day and today probably was the day she would get fired from the best job she ever had.

\* \* \* \* \*



"You can call me Simon," he told her as he finally pushed himself out of the doorframe.

*What's going on, father? You changed when you saw Amanda. Do you not like her?*

*I will talk to you later, Tyren.*

\* \* \* \*

"I don't know about that," Amanda told him. She couldn't say his name. Saying his name seemed so intimate to her.

Simon shook her hand.

When their hands connected both almost snatched them back.

"Yes you do," he whispered. "We don't have to be so formal now, do we?"

She nodded in agreement.

"Good," he said.

*Oh God.* She said. Now she can leave this room because Simon made her feel things and nothing was right about wanting to jump in the bed with a boss you have only known for three minutes. Maybe two. Anyhow, no men for a while. "Tyren," Amanda looked down at the floor. No need to let the boss see you drooling over him. "I'll play later."

"But why?" he whined.

"Well..." Amanda didn't know what to say. "I have some work to do." There, her first lie to Tyren.

"Okay."

"I will see you later, Amanda," Simon spoke.

"Ye...okay...see you later." Amanda nearly ran out of the room.

\* \* \* \*

Barbara felt it, anger and frustration all rolled together. After placing the pot on the stove, she turned around to see angry silver eyes watching her. *What had had him so upset?*



The last time she saw him look like this was when Tyren did something he was not supposed to do. He must have had a bad trip. She knew the moment he had returned, but instead of coming to find her, he went straight into Tyren's room. If she known that he would do that, she would have warned Amanda. Meeting Simon could be intimidating sometimes. Especially, if he was looking like he did now. "What's got your boxers in a bind?"

Simon growled. "I don't wear boxers."

"I know you don't. Actually, half of the time you don't wear anything under your clothing." She smiled trying to lighten up his mood. "I do the laundry remember." She looked deep into his eyes.

Okay, so he didn't even crack a smile. His face had to be harder than stone. She believed if he had smiled his face would crack and break apart. What little humor she felt left her face. "What happened?" Barbara knew Simon did not want to tell her what really happened.

"I want her fired!" he almost yelled.

Barbara frowned at him. "What has Amanda done to make you come up with that decision in five minutes of meeting with her?" Barbara heard his thoughts about he ordered and she must obey. Boy, how wrong he was. She did not listen to him when he was making a stupid decision.

"In your dreams, Simon," Barbara snapped after reading his thoughts. "Tyren is crazy about Amanda. In the past week he has been doing everything, I mean everything, she has asked him to do. That includes schoolwork and going to bed when she asked. Not tell, not yell, but ask. The boy clings to her so often that I have to order him not to bother her so much."

*Tyren actually doing something his teachers ask?*

"Yes, Simon, he does and there is no eye rolling or any of that. So unless you caught her doing something illegal, which I doubt, unless you have something legit, I am not going to fire her."

"What did you say to me?"

Barbara took a step back when Simon appeared in front of her. His silver eyes lined with red from anger. Her body actually trembled from fear. Even at her five-foot-seven, she still had to look up at him.



Dangerous clung to him like second skin and she could tell how upset he was.

"I said," she whispered, then grew louder. She couldn't let Simon know he frightened her. If he figured that out, he would not let it end. "I am not going to fire Amanda. She is good for Tyren. I think—"

"Don't think. It doesn't matter what you think."

Barbara snarled, her teeth itching to come out and bite his ass. "Don't tell me not to think, Baldwin. I know what's good for him and you are not telling me why you want her gone." Calming herself, she looked around to see Tyren making his way into the kitchen.

"Father is something wrong?"

"Go back to your room, Tyren," Simon snapped.

"But—"

"Go!"

Tyren turned, storming out of the kitchen.

"Why did you do that?" she snapped. "Tyren hasn't done anything wrong, but concern himself about your feelings."

\* \* \* \*

Simon really tried to calm down. Tyren hadn't done anything nor had Amanda. She didn't ask to be the mate of a beast. She never asked to be destined to bond with a half vampire, half werewolf. As long as he stayed away from her, she would be safe. But how? How could he stay away from his savior, his tempest and his supposed to be lover?

"I am sorry." He moved back, giving Barbara the much-needed space she wanted. He smelled her fear of him, and like Tyren, he didn't want them to fear, only respect him.

"Could you repeat that?" she teased. "I never heard you say that since I have been working for you."

"You think you are funny?"

"Sometimes I am." Barbara went over to the stove, turning it down to a lower heat. "So why don't you like her?"

"I never said that I didn't like Amanda." Simon leaned up against the counter.



"I just thought you didn't. You burst in here like Amanda had drained your bank account."

"No, she seems to get along with Tyren very well. I can tell he has taken a liking to her."

"True."

Simon took in a breath.

"So what is the problem with her? Amanda is cute, tall and she is single."

Simon snorted. He knew why she said that Amanda was single.

"And..."

Oh great, now he has to sit here through the whole I-like-Rosa-but-you-need-to-settle-down-and-start-a-new-life,-or-find-your-Truelove speech.

"I like Rosa..." The speech had begun. "But Rosa is not the correct mother figure for Tyren. She is a free spirited person and she is not ready to settle down. In fact, she never will settle down. Now Amanda is...you know cute."

"And so was my wife." The love of his life had cheated on him. Ten years thrown down the drain for a one night fling.

"But you forgave her."

"Yes because I loved her. Now I will never love another."

"You will love your Truelove."

"No and I will not date Amanda."

Barbara looked at Simon, really looked at him. "Why not, *Amanda's* nice?"

Simon tensed up when Amanda walked into the kitchen.

"Oops, I'm sorry. I didn't know you were in here." Amanda stopped.

Simon quickly pulled away, then walked over to the stove as if what Barbara was cooking was more interesting.

"Don't be," Barbara comforted. "Is there anything you wanted?"

"I left my notebook." Amanda grabbed it off the chair. "Sorry for the interruption." Then she left.

"Simon," Barbara called.

He turned to look at her.



"You like her, don't you?"

"Like who? I don't like anyone."

"You like me," she spoke childlike.

"That's because you grew on me and I couldn't get rid of you if I tried."

"If you say so." She moved to stand in front of him. "What's up with you? You are acting weird."

"No I am not."

"Tell me the truth, Simon. You can tell me any..." she stopped mid-sentence and she smiled up at him.

"Whatever you are going to say, *don't*."

Barbara's white teeth flashed for a moment. She went to the table and sat down, then the smile returned.

Simon was tempted to leave because she was acting weirder than usual. What made him stay was she had blocked him out of her mind and he wanted to know what she had in that mind of hers. He knew that she would try to get him and Amanda together and he couldn't let her do that. They needed to stay away from each other, forever. He could stay away. He knew he could.

"Amanda's your Truelove, isn't she, Simon?"

*How in the hell did she know that?* What gave it away? He couldn't tell her. If he did, she would be the love doctor until he had Amanda under him, screaming her head off from pleasure. Bad image. Just to think about Amanda made his body shiver and his member twitched.

"Well you don't have to tell me. I know. Every time I say her name, I smell the scent of her body."

Of course, she knew. His smell, his arousal for Amanda had filled the kitchen. "Leave it alone, Barbara."

"I will when you tell me the truth. I know you wouldn't lie to me." In a flash, she stood in front of the door Simon was trying to go through.

"Move!" he snarled.

"No and you can snarl all you want. Now tell."

What could he do or say? Barbara wouldn't leave it alone. "Yes she is. Amanda's my Truelove."



Barbara's entire face lit up. "That's wonderful."

"No it is not."

"Why not, you have found someone Dark Guardian's over a thousand years old haven't found."

"So what. I bet you half of them are not a half werewolf."

"Cut it out. I believe that she can help you. I am betting that she will be able to help you." She stared at him. "Amanda has powers."

Simon looked at her. He hadn't got into her mind to find out things about her past. What types of powers did she have?

"I think Amanda is a witch or Destroyer, a weak one, but strong enough to open a gate. I am betting she can open the door to hell and close it, but that's about it."

"No," he whispered. Amanda couldn't be one, God, please don't let her be one. If one of Nairapha's men found out that Amanda could open the gates to one of those hell dimensions they would make Amanda open that gate and that's something he could not let happen.

He will not kiss her! Never. He would never make love to her. He would keep her around so he could keep an eye on her. If he kissed Amanda a symbol would appear on his left wrist and Amanda's right. That symbol would be a bond between them. Husband and wife, so to say.

"Yes, Simon," she corrected. "Amanda has the mental ability to move things. In her sleep she is opened minded..."

"And you went probing?" he snapped.

"I had to know the person that had taken Tyren's heart. I wouldn't want him to be around someone who had intentions to hurt him."

That, Simon could understand. Barbara always protected Tyren from evil and, when she didn't feel that someone was safe, she didn't let him or her be around him.

"I understand, but that gives you no right."

"Didn't you try to go into her mind?"

"Yes I did. I didn't know that when I returned to my home my Truelove would be here."

"Why are you angry with me? I didn't know she was. I thought she was special."



"You don't have to worry because I am not going to mate with her. Once she tires of Tyren, she will leave on her own. I will not turn her because I am not in threat of losing my soul."

"So what? What are you going to do, let your Truelove grow old, then die? Then what will happen in another hundred years when you start to lose your soul? What about the next hundred days? What are you going to do?"

"Nothing," he moved to the door, then stopped. "I will not mate with her. I will live as long as Tyren needs me. After that I will take my life, if I cannot control this monster anymore."

"You're not thinking rationally."

"Yes I am. She doesn't need to be bound to a beast."

"You are not a beast, Simon."

"Only because you do not know what I am capable of. Now, end of discussion. I am going down to the casino. I haven't made an appearance in a while."

Simon had made up his mind. Yeah right. The moment he's alone with her all hell will break loose. He knew that. There hadn't been a Dark Guardian that could resist his mate. They could try, but the outcome was always the same. Their mates end up under them, crying out in the heat of their passion. It's just a matter of time before Simon would have Amanda the same way.

\* \* \* \*

Whoever said a man couldn't be sexy, beautiful, and dangerous looking all the same time did not know Simon. Amanda hadn't moved from her spot, against her room door since she left Simon and Barbara in the kitchen. Simon could, more likely, was pulling it off. The man had a beautiful face, a sexy body and he looked as if he could be the most dangerous man if needed. With a long breath, she tried to concentrate on stopping the throbbing between her legs. And it wasn't because of the ring it throbbed. Simon Baldwin, was the cause of this ache. Slowly, she descended to the ground. The wood door smooth against her back. Her head pounded from the energy traveling through her.



After several moments, she felt the hair on the back of her neck stand up. She moved away the door. Bright light shined underneath the door from the hallway light. A shadow strolled by. It had to be him! An endless tremble made its way through her body. Just the thought of him walking past her door turned her on. On its own accord, her stomach tightened, she felt her body would go into overdrive if she didn't get a release soon. Giving herself a release wasn't what she wanted. She wanted him to do it and she knew which him. Turning, Amanda ran into the bathroom. She needed to take a nice, cool shower and another pain pill.

After stripping, then gulping down two pain pills, she turned the shower on. Cold. Icy cold shower. If she had been in her own apartment, she would have screamed out when the cold water touched her body. Then one of her friends would burst through the door asking her what's the problem. Here she couldn't scream because she didn't need Simon bursting through those doors.

Rethink that opinion.

Simon bursting through the bathroom door and seeing her standing, showing him all of her glory. Maybe she might scream for the hell of it. If he did come in, then he might see something he liked.

"I'm off men," Amanda chastised herself, then stuck her head under the water. This was an attempt to cool down, which didn't help one bit.

\* \* \* \*

Simon froze the moment he made it to Amanda's door. He felt her. He wanted to touch her, feel how soft her skin really was. This woman deserved to have a normal life, just like his son. They didn't need to be brought over to the world of darkness. A world where they always had to fear for their lives. A world where feeling pain was just like breathing air.

Slowly, his hand rose to the door. *I am sorry, my love. Our love can never be. My passion for you, I must drown.*

His eyes saw her shadow move away from the door, then he heard



her feet on the floor as she raced off to the bathroom. The mere thought of never touching her, feeling her or tasting her, made him want to scream out his frustration. The beast that lived inside had move to the surface and it had him wondering why. The beast never rose unless he was having sex with Rosa or when some jerk pissed him off. Besides that, the beast really didn't surface.

Instead of wondering about what can never be, he went to speak with Tyren. He had snapped at him and it was time for him to apologize for that.

Tyren looked up from his game when he walked into his room. Showing respect, he sat the controller down, then waited for him to speak.

"I am sorry for my earlier outburst. I am going through emotions right now that you do not understand."

"I do understand." Tyren looked at him.

"What do you mean you understand?" Simon sat in the chair Amanda occupied earlier. The moment he sat down, her scent rose, teasing his senses. He would have jumped up, but he didn't want Tyren trying to poke around in his mind, trying to figure out what's going on.

"I know you have feelings for my teacher. Deep feelings. Feelings that were meant to be."

Simon touched his temple when a slight ache came. He didn't even know he could get a headache. "What have I told you about being in my mind," Simon snarled a little.

"I didn't go into your mind. I went inside Amanda's mind. From the moment you came in, she changed, her mind opened more and I felt it."

"You shouldn't be feeling anything like that. You are only eleven..."

"I'll be twelve in a couple of months and plus I have the IQ of a genius."

Of course, he was a genius. All werewolves and vampires develop and mature faster than the average human did. If he had to guess Tyren's age by his mind, he would be around twenty-one, closer to twenty-two. For one, you have to have a faster growing mind as a beast.



The main thing you have to do is survive. The one thing Simon had kept and made Barbara and Rosa keep out of their mind was about them being vampires. Tyren didn't need to know about it and he planned to keep it that way. "Doesn't matter how old you are."

"Simon!" Barbara came into the room. "Rosa is in your room and you better get her out because..." She looked at Tyren knowing she couldn't say it in front of Tyren. "You know what will happen."

He knew. If Amanda saw Rosa in his room, she would go ballistic. Rosa could beat Amanda in her human stage, but if Amanda were a vampire, then Rosa would have to put all her thousand-year combat experience into action.

Simon didn't hesitate. He stood from the chair, happy that he didn't have to smell Amanda's scent anymore. Whom was he trying to fool? Amanda's scent was all over the top floor.

The moment he entered the room, he closed and locked the door, then he went over to the room where Amanda and his door connected and locked that door also.

Why had Barbara placed Amanda next to him anyhow? Oh, he forgot Tia was still here when Amanda arrived. Maybe that's why they put her next to him. Simon turned to the browned hair woman.

"Are you *that* ready for me already, lover?" Rosa purred when she saw what he had done.

Before he could respond, she wrapped her arms around him, then touched her lips to his. Shocked at his lack of participation, Rosa pulled back.

"What's wrong?" she asked, then removed her arms. "Is it Tyren?"

"No, Rosa."

"Then what?"

He knew Rosa had never seen him like this. By now, she should be gripping his long black hair while he brought her to a blissful release with his tongue. Instead, he stood here, waiting, worrying about what Amanda would do if she saw Rosa here.

"I can't be with you anymore. Not right now." A chuckled escaped his lips. His words shocked himself. "Maybe in another eighty years I can."



Rosa studied Simon for a long time. Her thoughts flooded his senses. She thought that he wanted another lover and not her. Then the thought of a threesome came to her mind along with explicit images.

"It's not that I have another lover, Rosa." He smiled at her thought of him, her and a new lover wrapped together in his bed. Before an hour ago, he would have had to try it, maybe have her to control his beast while he took another lover. Now, the thought sickened him. The only one he wanted was the one taking an extremely long shower next door. The thought of water running over her nice plump breast, then running down her flat stomach made his body harden.

Rosa noticed his arousal. "I see that you are still in need, but you refuse to be with me. Why is that, Simon?"

"Because my," he looked away for a moment. "My Truelove is here."

"Really!" Rosa sounded a little too happy for him. "Where is she? I know you haven't mated with her. What are you waiting for? Is that who is showering in the next room?"

Simon held in a chuckle. "Yes really, Rosa. She is next door in the shower. No, I haven't mated with her yet because I haven't planned on mating with her."

"What are you talking about!" she yelled.

"Keep your voice down. You know how Truelove's react to other women being around their mates. Even ones that haven't take their mate yet."

Rosa pointed to her chest. He couldn't see the mark, but he knew she had a deep cut from a Truelove she ran into long years ago. It happened before she was turned. That's why she was turned. The female thought she wanted her mate, when in fact Rosa wanted the twin brother. The woman attacked Rosa and left a permanent reminder on her chest. That night Rosa had lost so much blood that the twin brother, Jas, she hadn't wanted, changed her. Then he left her high and dry for his Truelove.

"I have the mark remember."

"I know so you know you must not let her know of your presence. And no I am not going to mate with her." Rosa opened her mouth to



speaking, but he stopped her when he spoke again. And “I do not want the speech again. Barbara already gave it to me.”

“So you won’t mate with her?”

“No and nothing you can say will change my mind.”

Rosa shrugged her shoulders. “I am happy that you have found her, truly I am, what saddens me is that I have to lose the best lover I ever had. My lover that leaves me pleased and sore at the same time.”

Simon shook his head. He knew of his endowment, but he didn’t need her to keep reminding him. That’s another reason why he couldn’t be with Amanda. He might hurt her.

“You won’t hurt her. You know how to make love. Anyhow, the other Dark Guardians that have found their mates didn’t hurt them.”

“I know and I am not going to do it.” His ears picked up on Amanda when she cried out in pain. In moments, he flew to the door. He knocked first.

“Who is it?” Amanda said softly.

“Amanda, it’s Simon.”

“Come in,” he heard Amanda’s voice speak with pain.

\* \* \* \*

Amanda wondered why he was at the door anyhow. And why in the heck had she said come in? She was still in her bathrobe and naked underneath.

“Are you okay?” Simon asked before closing the door behind him.

When the door clicked, Amanda jumped. She froze when silver eyes looked at her. He had lost the jacket and black sweater, which now gave her the perfect view of his wide shoulders and the t-shirt that went down into his black leather pants. She swallowed, then tried to smile. “I’m okay. Did you hear me?” Duh, he had to, if he didn’t he wouldn’t be here.

“Yes,” he said, moving closer to her. “What happened?”

To tell or not to tell, that was the question. “I...ummm...well before I came here I got some things done to my body that I am not proud of, but I won’t take them out because it symbolized the pain I



went through.”

“What did you do?”

“I got my tongue pierced.” She showed him her tongue.

“It’s red,” he told her.

“I know. It’s still a little sore. I also got my navel pierced.” She blushed. “That’s why I yelled. My robe is stuck on it and I snatched and it didn’t let go.” He moved up to her, but stopped when she took a step backward.

“Is it still stuck?”

“Yes. I pulled it, but it is still stuck. I thought about cutting it, but I can’t see the string.”

“I could release it, if you want me to.”

Now what dummy wouldn’t want him to? Just the thought of him loosening up her robe made her body flush all over

“It would be helpful...”

Before she finished her sentence, Simon dropped to his knees in front of her. Slowly, his hands went to her robe and untied it. Clothes! Her mind screamed. She didn’t have anything on underneath.

“I can be professional about this,” his words were soft. “If you promise not to seduce me, I will do it.”

Amanda trembled when the air-conditioned air touched her body. She looked down as he tried to loosen the ring.

“The diamond stone is what has snagged your robe,” he spoke from below. “I’ll have it loose in one more second.”

She jerked back when his warm breath skidded her cool skin. Simon’s hand shot out holding her in place by her leg.

“Don’t move or it will hurt more. Your skin is red around the ring.”

*Don’t move? You try not moving when your handsome boss is looking at all your goodies and the only thing you want him to do is move an inch closer.*

With another maneuver, he removed the robe and it flew open, showing him all of her.

Seeing he had no intentions on moving, Amanda grabbed her robe, but his hand stopped her. What he did next made her yell out, louder



than she wanted.

He took the ring on her clit into his mouth.

She thought it would hurt to touch it, but when Simon's warm mouth wrapped around it, pleasure slammed into her body, making her cry out in instant desire.

Oh god! Why was she letting her boss do this? She never dated the boss. She would never have sex with her boss, no matter how good he looked, or how good his tongue felt on her.

\* \* \* \*

Simon had to hold back a growl when he took her into his mouth. Definitely not his intentions when he came into her room. He only wanted to see what made her cry out. But her smell called out to him and he knew his saliva would heal her flesh faster.

His hands slid up her slim legs, gripped her buttock pulling her closer to his mouth. He had to have died and gone to heaven. Just her taste alone was enough and his beast was nowhere in sight.

Fangs exploded out of his gums unexpectedly when she moaned from above him. He had to be careful not to nip her or that would lead to him feeding, which then would lead to her on her back, then...you get the picture.

Amanda grabbed his shoulders to steady herself. "Simon," she cried out as his tongue probed deeper inside her wet body.

His hand moved to her clit, pushing on it gently. That's all it took, her body shook and she came with his name on her lips.

A dark growl escaped him as more of her wetness flowed over his tongue. With one last lick, he moved to her navel ring. As he healed that one, he went deep into her mind. With her sexual urges sedated. He commanded her to rest.

Amanda felt him there and she tried to push him out, but she couldn't fight the command. Her eyes lid went heavy and soon she was asleep.

Simon stood, holding her in place. He wanted to heal all of them, but he knew he couldn't heal the one in her tongue. A kiss would start



the bonding process and he had already gone too far.

Carefully he laid her on her bed. He looked at the rings seeing that the redness had disappeared, the pain gone. Too bad his pants were too damn tight to walk.

He redid her robe, left her room and headed for the kitchen. She would only sleep for a moment or so, and then she would think that it was a dream. Only if she asked would he tell her the truth. Yeah it was wrong, but he knew he had to stay away. Had to. Amanda was too tempting and he had already fallen into the trap.

\* \* \* \*

“Ah, the city that never sleeps.” Manuel said to himself as he made his way through the city streets.

It had been a long time since he was last here, almost twelve years to be exact. That’s when he took the lovely Karen Baldwin to his bed. Ah, passion, loving and she had a throat that could swallow all eleven inches of him.

Since Karen, he hadn’t found another woman to please him like she could. It was that bastard Simon’s fault. If he had given him his son, then Karen would be alive. Maybe not, he tried to kill her because she had gotten pregnant with his child. He didn’t want to bring a child into this world out of wedlock. He wanted to be with his mate, living happily. He didn’t want to have a half breed as a child. Also, when his people mate they have more than one child, between two to four children. Karen had only gotten pregnant with one. His son was a half werewolf and now he wanted to bring him full over.

Manuel touched the amulet around his neck. The cure, Simon’s cure. He always had it close to him. It only took one drop to reverse the transformation. He knew he could just give it to Simon, but why make it that easy. Simon got his cure when he got his son.

An even trade.

He continued to stroll down the street. He couldn’t wait to see his son again so he could teach him all of the ways of a werewolf. Soon, he would inherit the Lone Wolfe fortune. It has been said that a half



werewolf would come to take over as leader of the Lone Wolfe Clan. Only a half werewolf would possess powers beyond anyone's imagination. At the age of twelve, he must be brought over, fully over. That is six years before other wolves do their first blood exchange. Most of them took blood from the father. It makes them stronger when they do.

Then there's a part about the half werewolf killing him. He knew Simon wanted him dead, but he was here to make sure it didn't happen. Anyway, Simon should be on the verge of going crazy by now. The werewolf part should be over bearing to a point he would do anything to get control again.

Manuel knew it wouldn't be easy getting Tyren away from Simon. If fact, he hoped it wouldn't be so easy. What fun would it be if he could waltz in get Tyren and no fighting occurred? So he wanted a little struggle. Hopefully, Simon had another unfaithful wife in his life. Taking her also would bring back old memories and burn Simon up from the inside out. To screw two of his wives would be the ultimate hurt factor. This was going to be sweet.

He smiled when a blonde woman with thigh high boots, a leather miniskirt and leather looking bra walked by. She smiled, then stopped in front of him.

"Want to have some fun?"

Manuel knew she was a hooker and he needed a release. He sniffed making sure that he was her first and would be her only customer tonight. "Oh yes, baby," Manuel answered. "I hope that you can handle what I can do to you."

"If you got the cash, I can do anything you want me to."

*Don't bet on it.* "How about we get a room and call it a night?"

"I have my own room reserved."

"No, baby," Manuel touched the valley of her breast with his fingers, making her shiver. "I am not going to some room where you have fucked other men before."

"I haven't been with anyone tonight," her voice trembled at his touch. "You will be my first."

"Well, Sophia, how about I pay you for the entire night if you come



back to my hotel.”

“I don’t know about that.”

“What if I triple what you make?”

“Okay.” She didn’t even think or worry about how he knew her name. To get paid triple for one lay was worth it in her mind. “You are not joking, are you?”

Manuel pulled out six hundred dollars, then handed her three. “You get the other three after you have pleased me. And you get another two if you find a friend to come along. Meet me at the Night Fire hotel, room 101, in one hour. If you don’t show I will come looking for you.”

“Don’t worry I’ll be there.”

He knew she would. “Room 101 in one hour,” he told her again, then left. Before he could worry about his pleasure, he had to see if he saw Simon or Tyren walking around the Anything Goes Resort. He wouldn’t take Tyren away now. Later he would, right now, he had to check and see if they were still here, then get back to his room so he could be pleased by two lovely hookers.

Las Vegas was just like he remembered.

\* \* \* \*

“So...” Barbara’s cut her words short when Simon walked into the kitchen. Rosa looked at Barbara and they both smiled at each other.

Simon knew what they were thinking and didn’t want to get into it, not tonight. “Don’t say it!” he practically yelled at them.

The women didn’t care, they both laughed at him.

Why did he come in here anyhow? He thought that a drink would help him, but he needed to go and feed tonight. Unlike a lot of Dark Guardians that didn’t have to feed every day, he needed it every day. It sustained him and the beast side.

“You half seduced her,” Rosa teased. “Come on, you pleasure her and don’t pleasure yourself. That is so male of you.”

Simon turned to her, scowl firmly in place. When did he become such a joke? All feared him and here they were teasing him about not



having sex with a human.

"She had some piercings that where red and I healed them." He added, "I don't know why I am telling you this anyhow."

"Because you know we care," Barbara jumped in.

"Yeah," Rosa added. "I am not too pleased with giving you up fully, but I know what I have to do."

"And that is?" Barbara asked.

"I have to wait until all the available men come to floor sixty-nine." A smile crossed her lips. "Maybe you should take Amanda there, Simon."

"No," he quickly answered. Going to floor sixty-nine with Amanda would be disastrous. In a good, pleasure, all out sex competition the entire time they are there kind of way. But bad because he would break his promise...second promise...to not lay his hands on her again. Or tongue, he had to add that just as a precaution.

"Oh come on, Simon, I know you want to. There are little images of what you want to do to her running all through that mind of yours. Why are you so afraid? When you were just with her and the beast didn't even rise."

She had a point. A good one. The only thing that rose was his need to take her blood and that's usual for him. "I will not." Simon told them again as he reached down in his pocket then pulled out his cell. "Hello."

"Simon, this is Ramon."

"Yes, Ramon."

"You need to come down to the Night Fire. They found two hookers shredded to pieces by a werewolf."

A werewolf in his town! That had to be the joke of the century. All demons, werewolves and Dementra's knew that Las Vegas had not only him and Anthony, but also other Dark Guardians watching over the city. When one came to his town, they came to battle. "Have the police been called?"

"Not yet. Anthony found them. He said he smelled blood when he walked into the building. So we investigated and found them."

Good, no police meant fewer memories he had to erase. "Let me



dress and I'll be there in ten minutes."

"I'll be here."

Simon placed his phone back in his pocket and looked at the women in the kitchen. "Amanda will awaken after a while. I have to go on a case. If she asks, tell her I'll be back soon."

"Will do, lover boy." Barbara taunted making Simon sigh.

"Look, Simon, I won't be here when you return. Give me a call later. I would love to meet the woman that is lucky to have you as a Truelove."

"I will." Simon quickly left the room.

As Simon made his way into the Night Fire Inn, he spotted several security guards looking at the screen of the security televisions.

"The damn thing just went out all of a sudden," one man said to the other. "I tried everything. We have to get this back up and running or someone will walk right in here unnoticed."

Simon wanted to chuckle as he walked passed them, unnoticed. The man had been right, someone could just walk in here without being noticed. Someone like him.

The down security cameras had to be the work of Ramon. That man could disable, connect, and get into anything with a computer and an Internet connection. When his fingers were on a keyboard, he turned into Mr. Nerd. That's probably why a Dementra turned him. Some Dementras are not wealthy, but wanted to live the wealthy life style.

The problem with some Dementras are they wanted money, but weren't bright enough to make it. They lived for blood and lust. Therefore, when one found a human with the ability to go out and make money, they turned them. They didn't care if this human had to break into a national bank to transfer money. If that's what it took to get it, then that's what they did.

The scent of blood and sex assaulted his nose the moment he stepped into the elevator. Ramon hadn't offered to tell him what floor and he knew why. A human couldn't detect blood, but he could. Taking a deep breath, he pressed the button with the number ten on it. The tenth floor was where the scent hovered.



Once he made it to the tenth floor, another smell hit him. A werewolf, a familiar werewolf, but he couldn't pinpoint who the werewolf was.

"It's a mess in here," Ramon said as Simon walked into the room.

He looked to see Anthony leaning up against the wall dressed all in black like him. "Welcome to the main course," he said, then smiled at Simon.

Simon knew it's not a laughing matter, but Anthony had been in here for at least thirty-minutes and the blood had all types of drugs and alcohol in it. The fumes alone could make anyone a little tipsy. "How long has he been in here?" Simon asked Ramon as he looked at the bodies.

Not all werewolves lose control when they have sex with women. Some do when they are just turned, but the smell of this wolf told Simon that he was old. The women looked bruised from head to toe. Their necks had deep bite marks on them. A cover up to make it look like a vampire had done it. And from the smell of sex, they had to be enjoying themselves before that bastard attacked.

"A half an hour. Why?"

"The drugs in the blood could make you light headed. Did Anthony taste any? He seems a bit off."

"I don't know," Ramon moved a string of his golden hair out of his face, then hazel eyes met silver. "Did you?"

"No," Anthony immediately answered. "I would never. Not that I don't want to."

"Do you recognize the werewolf's scent?" Ramon asked Simon.

"Yes and no. It's familiar, but I have been running into a lot of them passing through lately. Some have come to ask me to spend time in my city and now you see why I always tell them no."

"What do you want to do?" Ramon asked.

"I can't do anything until I find this werewolf. However, I am betting you he has enough sense to get out of town. What you can do is get someone to clean this up, get Anthony out of here before he passes out. If you hear anything, give me a call."

"That's what I do. Aim to please," Anthony answered for Ramon.



“Better yet, take him outside first to detox. After that you can handle this.”

Simon didn't give Ramon a chance to say anything before he walked out of the room. His main concern was getting back to Amanda. She had awakened. He felt it. But would she remember what happened? If she did, would she hate him for it?

If she didn't, he hated himself for doing that to her. Not hated, just felt a little bad about taking advantage of her.

\* \* \* \*

Amanda woke mystified, but deeply satisfied. She frowned. Had she dreamed about Simon, her boss no less, down on his knees satisfying her with his tongue?

She closed her eyes trying to remember what happened, but her mind couldn't put it together. She remembered her robe, the same one she had on caught up in her belly ring. She pulled and yelled, then Simon was to her door in a flash. He helped get the ring loose, told her about how red her skin was, then he used his tongue to heal her.

She threw back the covers and opened her robe. Her skin wasn't red anymore and the rings didn't hurt when she touched it. The only thing still tingling was her tongue. If it did happen, why hadn't he healed that one also? And why did she think he healed her with his tongue? She must think he was a dog or something.

Amanda's gaze went to her clock. The bright red number had nine o'clock on it. She must have passed out after the shower. After running into her boss, she must have come here, lay down and then dreamed the entire thing. If she had dreamed up her boss giving her the best orgasm she had ever experienced, she could never look him in the eye without blushing. One thing she did know was she couldn't leave here. She cared too much for Tyren and she wanted him to learn everything he could.

Crap...Tyren can read thoughts, if he got into her head while she thought about her dream he would probably think she was nasty for thinking like that.



\* \* \* \*

Kansas

“Luke if you keep harassing me I will call the police.” Sheila yelled from the door.

Without waiting on a reply, she grabbed the door, trying to slam it, but Luke caught it before the door shut.

“What are you doing? Can’t you take a hint? If Amanda hasn’t called you that means she doesn’t want to go out with you.”

“I have to talk to her.” Luke made his way into her apartment, making Sheila take a step back.

“No.”

“Where is she damn it!”

Again another step toward her and again she moved away. Okay, now she had given him a chance to back down, if he took another step, he would regret it. “Amanda is probably with that handsome, stunning boss of hers. She told me that he was tall, dark and handsome, just like in those novels. And...” Sheila laughed to herself knowing it was a lie. “I heard that they had gotten kicked out of a movie theater because they were in there about to get it on.”

Luke snarled. “You’re lying.”

“Why lie when the truth hurts more?”

“Amanda wouldn’t do that to me. I know it.”

Sheila looked in his brown eyes, an evil smile spread across her lips. “Go away, Luke. Get out of my apartment before I do something to you. Amanda doesn’t want you anymore and she is right where she wants to be.”

Luke took a step away from Sheila. “Sheila.” He ran his hand through his hair. “I am sorry for coming up here like this. It’s just that I have to know if she is okay. Have you talked to her lately? Is she really having an affair with her new boss?”

Maybe if she told him something he would leave. Maybe.

“Listen, I talk to Amanda almost every day. She is doing great. She is over you and moving on with her life. As for her affair with her boss,



well, that's none of your business." Sheila looked passed Luke to see Emma walking into the apartment. Luke also turned, then immediately turned back to Sheila. "Now we have that out of the way. You can go because I have a date to get ready for."

Luke opened his mouth.

"And don't even think about talking to Emma because she isn't talking either."

"Damn right," Emma said in the background.

"I'm leaving, but this isn't over with."

"I'm betting on it Luke," Emma said as she opened the door to let him leave. "Bye, bye, Luke."

They both giggled when they heard a faint "Fucking whores," in the background.

"Should we call Amanda?" Emma asked as she sat at the table.

Sheila looked over to the clock. "No it's late there. I'll call her tonight, which would be morning on her end."

"Okay, I want to talk this time."

"Not a problem. So where have you been?"

"I went for a walk."

"You haven't done that for a while."

"I know. I guess...I miss Amanda. Not that you are not the best company in the world."

Sheila gave her the middle finger.

"But I really need to see her. Make sure she is really doing all right."

Sheila knew Emma had many emotions for Amanda. She would be the same way if Emma left.

"Let's do this. When I call Amanda, I will ask her if it's all right to come and visit one weekend. Maybe two weeks from now. Fat Clayton will be closing for the entire weekend because he is taking his new toy on a business trip. Slut." Sheila just didn't like Debbie, there's nothing she could do about it. "If she says it's okay, then we go visit that weekend. We leave Friday morning and come back Sunday night." The smile on Emma's face made her feel better already.

"That will make me feel better."



"I'll ask. Now I have to get ready for my date." Sheila went wide-eyed. "Why don't you come with us? Darrell has some cute and available friends."

Emma shook her head.

"Why not? I don't like leaving you here alone."

"Because I don't like jocks. They have too much muscle for me. Give me a skinny man any day."

"If you say so. Are you sure, you don't want to come? I can call Darrell and one of his friends will do it."

"No I am going to bed and, when you call Amanda, you wake me."

"I will."

Emma sighed, breaking Sheila's heart.

Emma went in her room.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### LAS VEGAS

“Tyren pay attention!” Amanda squealed when the cool water hit her. She had a feeling that Tyren was doing it on purpose. Each time he got her a cup of water, he would run back and the cool water would splash on her when he stopped.

“Sorry again, Amanda,” that voice he made let her know that he wasn’t.

They were trying to get a black, red and yellow rose to grow. A little horticulture study. Amanda had the plants potted. She made sure they stayed drained, because that’s what she read in the book. Then she had a little glass green house that sat on the small end of her balcony.

Amanda looked up at the sky, night will be here soon and it still had to be ninety-nine degrees out. With a big smile, Amanda took a sip of the too cold water before flinging it at Tyren, making him yell. “I am sorry, Tyren. I didn’t see you standing there.”

“You did that on purpose.”

“Just like you kept dousing water on me on purpose,” she retaliated.

“Oh! You want war do you?” Tyren had a playful look on his face as he went over to where the water hose lay.

“Tyren! Don’t you dare!” she moved to run if necessary. She glimpsed Simon’s curtain move, then go back in place.

One thing Tyren told her was his father worked all night and slept all day. In the city that didn’t come alive until night, he had to have an



unusual sleeping habit.

Amanda's order went unheard. She saw Tyren turn around, water hose in hand. With speeds unknown, she ran toward her room. The water hit her back just as she slid the glass door in place. "I will get you, Tyren!" she yelled through the door.

"Open the door so I can see how."

"What about a truce?"

Tyren shook his head.

"Come on, Tyren," she pleaded. She had never laughed so hard in her life.

"Play with me tomorrow after my studies."

"The Playstation?"

"Yes," he lowered the hose. "Ever since my father came back, you haven't been back to my room."

It's only been one night and the reason why is because Simon had done some things to her, at least she thought he did. After she woke last night, she went to get a sandwich. She didn't have dinner with Tyren. After that, she raced back to her room and watched television until she passed out around four this morning. That's why she started her study with Tyren at four. She couldn't get up before two.

"Deal. Come on through, I have to answer this call." She opened the glass door, and then picked up her phone. "This is Amanda."

"Amanda, Sheila and Emma on speaker phone."

Amanda sat on the side of the bed. "You don't have to introduce yourselves. I know your voice." She lay back on the bed, not caring about her being wet. "To what do I owe this call?"

"Luke came here last night."

"Again!" she turned over and looked at the black screen. "What did you do to him, Sheila?"

"Why is it that I have to be the bad one? Why didn't Emma do anything?"

Amanda giggled. "Because I know you and I know Emma and Emma wouldn't do anything to Luke. You on..." she stopped when she felt a tremble from deep down in her. Amanda quickly rolled over to look out in the now lit pool. The sun had descended and she had a



feeling that someone was looking at her from the door. Strange that someone would be on her and Simon's personal balcony. The only person... she perished the thought of Simon looking in on her.

"What was that, Amanda? Why did you stop talking?"

"I thought I saw someone on my balcony."

"Was it that handsome boss you told us about?"

"I don't know. You guys need to see him. I know I told you that I am off men for a while, but Simon, God, he makes something inside me go from zero to sixty in a matter of seconds." Amanda heard both girls giggle. "It's not funny," she went to a whisper. "Yesterday, I had a dream about him. I think it was a dream."

"Oh, what type of dream?" Emma spoke first.

"It started off with me getting my robe snagged on my belly ring. I pulled it and I yelled out. The next moment he was coming into my room. Dark and handsome, something right out of a GQ magazine. I told you how I never saw a man look that good in leather. No man could pull that off. No man could wear those in this heat, but he can."

"You are babbling. Plus, you got off the subject," Sheila taunted.

"Sorry, so as I was saying, he came into my room and offered to help. Before I could really protest he was on his knees in front of me."

"You're kidding," Emma sounded surprise.

"No, and he offered to help if I kept it professional. So I did. He saw all of my nakedness under the robe. Once he loosened the robe, he umm..."

"He did what?" both girls asked.

"You know my piercing used to bother me a little that was until I took a couple a pain pills. Well the only one that does hurt is the one in my mouth. That's because he didn't kiss me. I mean, how can a man heal you with a kiss? I never..."

"Babbling again. Collaborate in English form please," Sheila teased.

"You are such a witch sometimes, Sheila."

"That I am."

"He took the ring on my special place into his mouth."

"Oh, Emma, she had a kinky dream. Keep going."



"And, he made me come, hard. The next thing I know I woke up some time later."

"And it was a dream?" Sheila retorted.

"I don't know. I mean, I am not sore anymore. Nothing, but my tongue. I am sure that he healed the other one when I passed out. But not my tongue. I just don't know."

"Do you still love Luke?" Emma interrupted.

"Why would you ask that, Emma?"

"Because obviously you have a thing for Simon."

"I do not. I don't know what I feel for Simon. I never felt like this about anyone and the only thing I want him to do is make me feel the same way in my dream. For some reason I know he could."

"You still haven't answered my question."

What did she feel for Luke? "Five years doesn't go away fast. When you see your boyfriend screwing another woman's brains out, it does make you forget faster. In all saying, I still love him, but not as much." Amanda turned when she heard a low snarl from her door. Maybe it was a bird. Yeah right, like birds snarl.

"But..." Sheila began to say.

"No buts, Sheila," Amanda said.

"There is a but, and the but is you like Simon. So go into his room with a sexy nightie on. Seduce him and get it over with. Wait! Has he looked at you in any way to say that he wants you?"

When he came into Tyren's room, he looked at her as if he wanted to devour her. And when he helped her with her ring, it seemed that he wanted her. If it was real. "I don't know. He looked at me, but I think his eyes would make any woman think that he wanted them. He has this evil, scary, handsome and sensuous emotion all rolled into one. He is a big man and looks like he lifts weights, but not to get those icky muscles all over his body. He just looks toned under his clothing. He has a nice flat stomach and great arms."

"You have really been thinking about this haven't you, Amanda?" Sheila said in a teasing tone.

"I would tell you to go to hell, Sheila, but you wouldn't. You would stay here and torture me for all eternity."



"Maybe. But the purpose of this call was to ask if Emma and I could come up in a week or two for the weekend. You know play some tables. Maybe you could show us the hot spots. And we could hang out. You don't work on weekends, do you?"

"No and what about this weekend. I know you can find a good flight that will leave in a couple of days. I am bored as hell and I need someone here I know."

"What do you think, Emma?"

"I am all for going."

"Great, you guys make the reservation for the Anything Goes Resort. You might not be able to get a room on short notice. I haven't been around a lot, but I looked this place up on the Internet and the place sometimes has a four-month waiting list. So if you can't get this one, I think the next place to us is the Night Fire."

"Night Fire?" Sheila repeated. "I am almost afraid to ask. The Anything Goes I can assume anything went. But the Night Fire. Let me guess that the Fire only starts at Night."

"Your guess is as good as mine."

"Why haven't you been on a tour yet?" Sheila inquired.

"I haven't gone anywhere because I haven't been here but two weeks. I hope to have the job, but I don't know."

"Then we need to come this weekend just in case you don't get it. You can come back with us if you don't."

"True but I still haven't had a chance to see anything."

"How about you go check out the mysterious floor?"

"You mean you want me to go to floor sixty-nine?"

"Yes. Go tonight. See if it's all it says it is. What's the harm in a little fun?" Sheila pushed.

"You're right. I will go to that floor. But I am not letting a dark stranger have his way with me."

"I don't know, it could be fun." Sheila told her.

"Sorry to cut that short, but we have to get to work and make some reservations," Emma ended the conversation. "Talk to you later and see you soon."

"See you soon guys." Amanda got up from the bed. She grabbed a



towel then headed into the bathroom.

\* \* \* \*

Simon listened to the entire conversation. He knew it was wrong to eavesdrop, but he couldn't leave, especially when she mentioned him. He had to hear what she said. Then he growled unintentionally, when she talked about loving someone else. He wished he could see her past, but just like all Trueloves you can only see so much. That's until you mate with them, then their minds open up like a river.

Simon stood back when she went into her bathroom. And he'd be damned if he would let anyone touch her on floor sixty-nine. He had to go and do a little pre-warning before she got out of the shower.

Amanda was his and he will not let any Dark Guardian or human male touch his mate. Not waiting, he went and headed downstairs to warn his guests about not touching his mate.

\* \* \* \*

Turning off the warm water, Amanda stepped out of the shower and onto the cool tiled floor. Blinded by the thick fog of steam she created from the water, she grabbed a large fluffy white towel, wrapping it around her slim waist before releasing her hair from the smaller towel that kept it dry from getting wet in the shower.

With a grin on her lips, she went to the sink and took her toothbrush out of the small cabinet. After brushing her teeth, she made her way out of the bathroom. There's nothing like a warm, relaxing, shower to make a person feel refreshed and ready to take on the day.

Amanda went to her closet, opening the glass door. She looked at the clothes she had hung up. Nothing but jeans, t-shirts, and more jeans hung there. Groaning in annoyance, she tried to remember if she brought anything besides jeans on this trip. Getting ready to grab a pair of jeans, one article of clothing in plastic caught her eye.

Reaching up she pushed clothes aside to reveal the dress she had brought for a special occasion. Special meaning, a date with a really



hot guy who she might want to look at her cleavage all night. Knowing this would be the perfect dress for tonight, she pulled out the silk, not-too-short-not-too-long black, spaghetti strapped dress.

Why she wanted to dress up to go for a walk puzzled her tremendously. But she thought she might as well look the part if she was going to that floor.

Letting the towel fall to the floor, she pulled out a black laced thong from her drawer. She slipped it on before pulling the dress out of the closet. Taking the dress out of its plastic wrap, she tossed the plastic onto the bed before slipping the dress over her head. The fabric felt smooth and soft against her skin.

After dressing and putting on just a little makeup. Amanda walked up to the full-length mirror and wasn't all surprised that a beautiful woman looked back at her. The short dress gave her the perfect view of her long, beautiful, shapely legs. Something that she didn't do too often. The black heels gave her an extra inch or two in height. Her hair brown hair was styled to perfection. Blushing, she grabbed her purse, then headed out the door.

"Amanda, you look great," Barbara said as Amanda walked down the hall. "You have a date with someone special? And if you do, does Mr. Baldwin know about it?"

Amanda tensed at those words. Why would Barbara say something like that? And didn't she say that her personal life was her own business? She didn't dress like this because she wanted Mr. Baldwin to see her—or did she? The question would plague her mind for the rest of the night. Repeatedly, she would ask herself, did she do this for herself or for him. It didn't matter because she didn't like Simon anyhow.

Trying to look as if she wasn't about to tell a bold face lie, Amanda smiled. "No place or anyone special. I decided to check out the nightlife for once. Tyren has had me busy lately."

"I have heard. He told me about your water fight. Good for you. Someone needs to cool that boy off." Quickly she asked. "He didn't hurt you, did he?"

Shaking her head at the same time, she responded, "No it was just



a little water fun. I can take it.”

“I’m sure you can. Have a nice night out and enjoy yourself.”

“I will.”

Amanda went to the elevator, turning around, she saw the door close, but she didn’t press the button. Her eyes went to the button that had the small number sixty-nine on it. To press that button would lead her to the forbidden floor. There’s no telling what would happen to her if she went there. What would people think if they saw her on that floor? Why should she care what they thought? If they saw her on that floor that would make them just as perverted as she was. Slowly, she reached out, pressing the button, almost tempted to press the button for floor seventy so she could get off before floor sixty-nine.

Amanda’s heart beat louder with each floor she passed. Looking up at the red light that went from eighty-eight to eighty-seven, she bit her bottom lip. Why was she so nervous about this floor? It’s probably nothing anyhow. It’s most likely just a rumor, just something to make the guests want to stay on that floor because of the name.

The elevator stopped at her floor.

*Here? Already!*

With a small jerk, the doors slid open. Amanda gulped, then stepped out of the elevator. It looked just like their darkened floor up top. More rooms on each side, the only difference was more doors. Same color, same patterns, everything.

Amanda swayed from side to side. Grabbed her head as a heat filled her, making her body tingle. She felt drunk yet hadn’t had anything to drink at all. Not even water. She shut her eyes tight, hoping the sensation would go away. It didn’t. It only intensified. When she reopened her eyes, she saw the room had changed from black to red. The carpet the walls everything looked different. She looked down at her clothing. Even her black dress had turned white.

“Oh my god what happened?” She turned to leave. “What happened to the elevator?” The elevator had disappeared leaving a wall in its place. “Stupid, Sheila made me come to this stupid floor. Now I am stuck and about to be ravished by a dark stranger.”

“Is that so bad?”



Amanda jumped, turning toward the sound of a male's voice. She turned to see a tall man, almost as tall as Simon, standing behind her. His golden eyes intensified with lust the moment she looked into them. His light blond, almost white hair hung long, but it didn't make him seem less manly. No, nothing could make him look less manly.

He looked good!

His black silk shirt opened just enough so she could see the outline of his chest. Averting her eyes, she looked back to his face instead of moving down his body to check out the rest of him. She knew in her mind where this might lead. Nothing good would come from her next thought. "I'm sorry what did you say?" she asked nervously.

"I said is it so bad to be ravished by a dark stranger?"

His smile made her insides twist and not from lust. Amanda was sure it was fear, but she didn't feel that he would hurt her. Maybe she felt that they wouldn't be good together. She didn't know or care about the feeling, she knew she wanted one thing and he could give her that.

What was so bad about him ravishing her? Give her a couple of condoms and let him lead her to the room of pleasure... *Hey! Where did that come from?* "It's the floor it has to be," she said. One second she felt sick, the next she wanted Mr. Tall, Dark and Handsome to lead her to a room—she knew it was the floor.

"What did you say?"

"I said that I would not be here if my friend hadn't told me to come here and now I am stuck. No elevator, so I can't get out."

He smiled again.

She was glad someone found it funny to be stuck on a forbidden floor because she sure as hell didn't.

"You can get out."

Her eyes lit up with hope. "How?"

"You have to fulfill your fantasy. The floor locks you here until you do."

She snarled. "So I am stuck here until I have sex with someone?"

"If that's your fantasy, then yes."

"Great. Sheila you are one dead chick when you come here."

"I am Ramon and you are?"



"Amanda."

Ramon stopped smiling, then took a step away.

She wondered did she offend. What would make him step away from her?

"I am sorry, but I cannot share a fantasy with you."

"Why not?" Why did she want to know that? She should be happy that this man didn't want to have sex with her. At least her mind agreed, but her body didn't want to hear that. It kept telling her to take off all her clothing, then lead him into the nearest room.

"I can't say." He walked off or attempted to until Amanda's hand on his arm stopped him.

"I need to know how to get out of here."

"I cannot help you." He removed her hand gently. "I would love to, but I like my head." Ramon's teeth flashed at her. "Try going to the other end of the hall. Maybe the floor will let you go." Ramon said nothing else, then went into a room.

Amanda stood there thinking about what he said. He likes his head, what did he mean by that? Did he think she would bite it off when they were finished? It would have been a good idea to ask him what he meant by that, but it's too late now.

"Go to the other end of the hallway?" she said to a now empty hallway. Man she was going to kill her best friend if she ever made it out of here. Maybe she was destined to walk this hall and dark strangers would reject her for the rest of her life. What a life to live.

Boy, Sheila...Amanda screamed loudly when she felt someone pulling her into the room just before she made it to the end of the hallway. A large hand clamped over her mouth, muffling her scream. With her eyes shut tight, she tried to scream again or faint. Either one would do right now. But she couldn't do either. Amanda screamed again when her back met a hard body. One hand went around her waist holding her too close.

"Amanda, stop screaming," a dark voice spoke from behind her.

She knew that voice. "Simon," she muffled against his hand.

"Yes," he answered. "I am going to remove my hand, but you can't scream. I don't want to disturb the others on the floor."



Amanda nodded and he removed one hand, but kept the one on her waist tightened. "What are you doing here?" she asked.

"Waiting for you," his voice now spoke closely to her ear. His hand on her waist moved up to her stomach, making both of them shiver at the touch. Amanda almost moaned when he pulled her closer to his body. Once again she must ask herself why was she letting him do that to her? "I need to get out of here," she whispered. Amanda tried to move, but Simon only held her facing away from him.

"I know." He placed a small kiss the side of her neck.

She took in a deep breath and, before she knew it, she leaned back into his touch.

"That's why I am here. To help you get out."

"Si...mon." She moaned this time. "It's the floor. You know it is. I know we can fight whatever is happening to us."

Simon chuckled and continued with his neck inspection.

Not entirely true about the floor. She knew it. The white room they stood in made a swooshing noise. In front of her, a bed appeared, then she could see herself lying there. But she still stood in Simon's embrace. Amanda took another good look at herself on the bed. She was naked! "Simon, what do you think you are doing? How is this happening?"

"I am not doing anything. You conjured up that bed and yourself lying there. I haven't done anything."

Simon's large hand moved up to cup her breast through the silk fabric.

"But I couldn't..." She pushed closer to his wandering hand.

"You did do that, Amanda. That's why the floor is called the fantasy floor."

Amanda watched herself on the bed as she reached up, grabbing her breast in one hand. The other moving between her legs, two fingers teasing her clit, making her back arch off the bed. The scene was just too weird for her, but Simon's hand on her made her forget things like this don't happen. They must pump the room full of gas, it had to be gas because she didn't... Her thoughts flew from her mind from the feel of Simon's fingers teasing her hard nipples, his tongue



savoring her neck, his hard body pressed intimately against her buttock.

"No," she whispered when Simon pulled the strap down on her dress so he could reveal her silky skin. His hand dipped lower and lifted her dress as the other grabbed her breast, forcing another moan from her. Closing her eyes, she lost herself in the feeling his hands were creating.

"Keep your eyes open, look at her," Simon ordered.

Amanda had to fight to open her eyes, but she did. A gasp left her lips when she saw an image of Simon making his way to the bed, equally naked.

Bending his head, Simon brushed her hair aside, so his lips could nibble at her neck again. Amanda's body seemed to vibrate. Her nipples were already taunt, her body already slick and wet, ready from him and him alone.

Amanda's gaze remained on the explicit scene. Every muscle in her body tightened as Simon's fingers teased her nipple, but never quite touching them before he moved to the other breast.

A small sound of pleasure fell from both their lips. Her from Simon's teasing her nipple and from the Amanda who lay on the bed with Simon's head between her thighs. Amanda watched as her legs parted and she moved restlessly to get Simon closer to her.

"Do you want that feeling, Amanda," he moaned to her. "I could give that to you. Make you cum just from me tasting you. I have done it before and I can do it again."

She was beyond speaking. Just like her image self on the bed who had her head thrown back, sounds of pleasure escaped her lips with every plunge of his tongue. Simon's hands dipped inside her panties. She heard him hiss as warm liquid greeted his fingers.

"So wet, so responsive."

One finger eased into her wet cavern. Amanda's head rolled as a soft sigh escaped her lips. A second finger was soon followed by a third. Amanda cried in pleasure, her gaze left the couple on the bed.

"No. Watch," he said again. "Open and see how beautiful we look together. Joined together. We were meant to be." His words were



spoken through clenched teeth.

“Simon!” The distant cry made her open her eyes.

Simon had straddled her hips and was now moving in long sexy strokes into her body. At the same time, the fingers deep in her were moving at the same slow pace.

Amanda buckled when she felt her orgasm rising. She had been with only two men her entire life and never could one of them make her come using his fingers. And especially not when she stood up. It usually took a lot of concentration, a lot of directing him to the right spot before she would cum.

Simon was a different story entirely. He knew what he was doing. She watched as the couple on the bed moved together. Amanda almost came herself when the image of her cried out, correction, *shouted* Simon’s name.

Amanda shook her head, emptying out the image of her and Simon having sex and the image faded as fast as it appeared.

“I want you to cum for me,” Simon whispered in her ear. “Just like she did.”

He ordered and she obeyed. With a loud moan, Amanda came, her juices flowing over Simon’s hand. Her walls convulsed around his fingers. If Simon weren’t there to catch her, she would have fallen nose first to the floor.

It took a few moments to recover. Simon removed his hand and redressed her. The white dress turned back to her original black, the room changing back to the dark color it was before.

Anger! Why did she now feel anger after Simon had just given her an orgasm that would take time to forget?

“Why are you upset?” Simon whispered.

It must be on her face, wait she wasn’t facing him. So how did he know? She turned anger clearly in her eyes. “Because what I let you do is wrong. I am not here for my pleasure, Simon, or yours. I don’t date my boss and I surely don’t let my emotions get in the way of my job.”

Amanda had to get out of here. She was upset because Simon made her want to do nothing else, but strip out of her clothing so they could make mad passionate love. And from what he did with his fingers



alone, she was afraid to find out what he could do with other parts of his body. The large part that butted up against her back as he played in her...she growled at the thought.

"Amanda, calm down," Simon said.

"Don't tell me to calm down," she snarled. "I am so outta here." She threw open the door to see that the hallway had also returned to its usual black color. That must mean she could get out of here. She made a mental note to kill Sheila later. What joy they would get from hearing this story when she told them, if she told them about it. They would love to hear how she let her boss take her in a room while she looked at them making love on the bed. The thought of how weird this floor really was, made her want to get off it even faster.

"Amanda."

Before she knew what she was doing, she turned around and slapped Simon in the face. Opened hand and all. Now she knew she was fired.

The look on Simon's face had to be shock, if not anger. Amanda hands flew to her mouth as she watched and waited for Simon to react to her non thought-out reaction. At least she didn't punch him like Luke. "I am sorry."

Simon laughed. Something she didn't expect.

"No you are not. You let out an anger you didn't know you had held in."

Trying to read Simon's vibes was hard. He laughed, but as he spoke, the words were simple and held no emotions. "Well you deserved it." No use lying anymore about it, he did deserve it—in a way he did.

"So you tell me you didn't like it?"

Simon couldn't be teasing her, could he? Looking up at his smiling face, let her know he was. From how wet she was, she knew he knew she liked it and wanted to go farther. "That's not the issue."

"That's the entire issue, Amanda."

She growled, really growled at him. "Am I fired?"

"Why would I do that? You are the best teacher Tyren has had in years. Because we have a conflict of interest, doesn't mean it has to



involve him.”

Conflict of interest? That’s a joke. They had the same interest indeed. She just had to make sure to change that interest fast. “I’m sorry, Simon, but I am not ready for a relationship. Not yet.”

“Do you care to talk about it?”

She laughed, then her blue eyes met silver. “Not really. Not now anyhow. Not after what just happened. Maybe later. For now, we have to control what we feel. As I said before, I am here for Tyren. Not your pleasure or mine.” She pressed the button on the elevator. “Maybe you can find someone else to play out your fantasy with.” Amanda stepped into the elevator, then pressed the button for floor fifty. Simon’s hand caught the door before it closed and she yelped.

“I don’t want to share a fantasy with anyone else. If you know it or not, this floor doesn’t work that way, it takes more than just two people meeting on this floor to make a fantasy work. Some type of bond has to be between the two and I only want to share it with you.”

Amanda almost threw herself into his arms at his words. She had said he could be with someone else, but her heart said no. Something deep inside her had claimed Simon as her own.

“But,” he sighed. “I will give you time. I *will* let you know that we need to talk. About everything.”

Then he let the door close before she could say a word. “Damn it,” she said reaching into her pocket for her cell. “No service. Like that’s anything new.”

Calling Sheila would have to wait. Tonight she would gamble to get Simon off her mind, which would take a whole lot of gambling.

\* \* \* \*

“Something wrong, Simon?” Ramon asked coming up to his boss and friend.

“No,” Simon growled, then pressed the button for the elevator to come back up.

“I see you found Amanda. Did everything go okay?”

“Not really. I need to talk to her. Tell her everything, but I am



afraid that she will reject it.”

“I know it’s not any of my business—”

“Correct.” Silver eyes went to golden, letting him know just how much he *didn’t* want to hear his opinion.

“But,” he continued, “you need to give her time. Let her take one thing in at a time. I don’t think it’s wise for you to just jump up and say, *I’m a vampire and you are my mate. We must perform a bonding ritual at the same time have wild sex together.* That line would run any woman away.”

Simon wished he would go away. The elevator bell went off. Thank God it’s here. That meant he did have to hear any more advice from Dr. Phil. “Thanks for the advice, but I think I have it under control.” The elevator door shut.

So what, he told a lie. If he could, he would lay on the floor of the elevator until his erection went away. Damn thing hadn’t budged since Amanda screamed out in pleasure. And that’s what kept replaying in his mind. Her sexy voice crying out from pleasure that no one else could give her but him.

He cupped himself and grunted from the pain when it pulsed and grew harder. Just thinking about Amanda would not be getting that down anytime soon. He needed to check with the casino intake for the week. Simon didn’t need the money. The casino brought in a millions each year. Not counting the rooms he rented, people paying for movies, marriages and other entertainment. As a Dark Guardian, he was paid three million dollars per month. Their God thought that it would be best if they were financially stable, then they could devote their time to fighting evil.

Anyhow, his casino made millions and he paid his workers well. Since Triane’s like Ramon and Barbara didn’t earn money from their Gods, they were paid by the Dark Guardians they worked for. Out of his income, he paid the bills and paid taxes on the hotel. His Dark Guardian money was tax free, since his account was direct deposited each month.

Simon had so many accountants and people watching his accounts to make sure they weren’t stealing from him that he couldn’t keep up



with them all.

One thing he knew, he would continue to make an appearance around for another ten years, then disappear for about fifty or so years. The reason he would disappear was that people would get suspicious if he continued looking twenty years old while they become old and wrinkled. That would arouse a lot of questions.

For now, he had to worry about Amanda accepting him. It's so surprising that he hadn't felt the beast rise since Amanda had been here. Maybe they were correct about him controlling it, still he wanted to get rid of it to make sure it never rose again.

Going up in the elevator didn't help his problem. Maybe a nice cool shower would. Barbara stood at the door when Simon opened it.

She immediately frowned. "What happened to your face?"

"What do you mean?"

She pointed as if he could see. "There is a red mark on your face. It looks like a handprint. What happened? You got a little too frisky with Amanda?"

"No."

"Liar, I can smell her all over you. So what happened?"

He stepped out of the elevator, ignoring her question. "Where is Tyren?" Simon noticed that he wasn't on the top floor.

"At the movies. Now stop stalling, what happened?"

Simon hesitated.

"You either tell or I go into your mind and see for myself."

Simon knew she would do it, too. He could block her out, but soon she would break down his barrier and find out. "I overheard Amanda telling her friends that she was going to visit floor sixty nine."

"What friends?"

"On the telephone."

"You eavesdropped?" Barbara sounded upset and shocked that he would do that.

"Something like that, but I heard her so I went ahead and warned the others she was not to be touched. Damn floor locked me there. The floor is smarter than I wanted it to be. It had to already know Amanda was coming. So when she got there, it locked her there also. I wanted



us to get out without confusion, but the floor had other ideas for us. So I teased her, hoping the floor would let us go.”

“And she slapped you for it?”

“Yes.” He smiled. “Afterward.”

Barbara laughed. “Go to Amanda. Get your pleasure first.”

“Not funny at all, Barbara.” She stopped laughing, but from the way the corner of her mouth twitched, Simon could tell that she was having a hard time holding it.

“So you didn’t have sex with her and I don’t have to look at your wrist to see that you haven’t kissed her.”

“No. I said no confusions. I want to talk to her first. I don’t want to bind her to me and she not know what’s going on.”

“Understandable, but you also have to understand that your Gods know what is meant to be and you two are meant to be together.”

“We won’t know that until we kiss and the symbol appears.”

Barbara growled. “Then kiss her already.”

“Not yet. As I continued my story, she made, and I will repeat, *she* made the image of us together appear. I was only going to tease her. Amanda thought of the bed and us in it. Once she came, the floor let us leave. She ran out and, when I grabbed her, she turned and slapped me. Shocked the hell out of her. And me.”

“I bet you it did. Amanda is mean. Leo’s are mean and respond to things before thinking.”

“I have the mark to show it. After she asked if she was fired, I told her no. Then she said that she was here for Tyren and not her pleasure or mine.”

“That’s it.”

“To what she told me, yes, about what happened to her back in Kansas, no. Something happened to Amanda and I am sure that it has something to do with a man treating her wrong.”

“Why don’t you just look inside her mind?”

“I don’t think it’s right and you don’t do it for me. I will talk to her and get her to tell me what happened.”

“I wasn’t going to do it. Thought about it, but it’s her life. So since it’s nothing too bad, I am going down to do some gambling.”



“Why, you have enough money?”

“It’s not about the money it’s about having a little fun. You should try it sometimes.”

“I have fun.”

“Yeah right. You think watching grass grow is fun. Tyren should be back soon and I hope it works out between you two. Tyren will love the thought of Amanda as his full time mother. He probably won’t like the fact that he has to lose a teacher.”

Barbara reached around Simon and pressed the door.

“Have fun with your cold shower.” The door shut.

“Smart mouth.”



## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Amanda pulled the arm of the slot machine. “Hello, young lady,” a dark voice spoke from behind her. She left Simon’s casino to go to the one right across the street so she knew that it wasn’t he who spoke from behind her.

A sick feeling came over her. Her mouth watered as she turned around to meet the male who had spoken. A deep breath filled her lungs. The man that stood in front of her could be a god like Simon. He had long thick blond hair pulled back away from his face. His eyes small shaped as if he had a Chinese background. His skin bronzed colored as if he spent a lot of time in the sun or he had a very good sun tanning bed. His eyes were golden also. He wasn’t as tall as Simon was, but he looked just as dangerous as Simon, maybe a little more dangerous. The man resembled Tyren. This is what Tyren would look like when he was older.

“Hi.” She blushed.

The man stepped closer. He frowned a little and then the smile returned to his face. “I am Manuel Stovall, you are...” He held out his hand.

Amanda hesitated because, even though he was handsome, her stomach felt like she would barf on his shoes. This man had bad energy around him. “I am Amanda. Amanda Duncan.”

“Amanda.” He kissed the back of her hand. “A lovely name for a lovely young lady.”

“I bet you said that to all the lovely young women you have run into



tonight.”

Manuel chuckled and released her hand. “As a matter of fact I haven’t been here, but one night and I was looking for someone to show me around.”

“And that lame line was the only one you could come up with?”

His light eyebrow arched. “I see that not only are you beautiful, but you have a mouth on you.” He smiled, showing his snow-white teeth. “I like it.”

“Well...” She moved to stand. She had to get away before she threw up.

“Wait, don’t tell me.” He touched her shoulder, making her stomach churn. “You have a dark, handsome man in your life?”

If she didn’t want to stick her head in a toilet, she would smile. “No, I don’t.”

\* \* \* \*

Again, Manuel frowned. In some small way, he could smell Simon on her. Not sexually, but Simon had touched her, in the past couple of moments. Amanda must be his girlfriend. Goodie, goodie, he found another way to hurt Simon. Amanda would be in his bed by the end of the week. Hopefully, he would make her pregnant also. What fun that would be when Simon found out. “So you don’t have a boyfriend?”

“No. I had one in Kansas and I left him and came here to work for this jerk. He thinks that I will just go for him because he is dark and handsome.”

Manuel saw Amanda quickly close her mouth. So that’s it. Simon must be trying to seduce her and Amanda wasn’t falling for it. What fun it will be when he got her and Simon could not. “Do you want to talk about it?”

Amanda shook her head. “I am leaving.”

“Okay, Amanda. Maybe I will see you around. You could show me what you know about Las Vegas.” He handed her a card. “My cell number is on there. Just in case.”

Amanda took the card. “I’ll see.” She placed it in her purse.



\* \* \* \*

“Wait up, Amanda!” Tyren yelled as he walked out of the dark movie theater. “Where are you going?”

“Upstairs and what are you doing up?” She looked at her watch on her arm. “It’s past ten o’clock.”

“I had to catch a movie.”

Amanda smiled down at him as Manuel came into her mind. This is how Manuel looked as a kid and Tyren will look like Manuel when he got older. She didn’t know why she was comparing them, but it was something so alike about them. Manuel could be Tyren’s father.

“Anything wrong, Amanda?”

“No.” She quickly answered, clearing her mind. “I’m ready to go upstairs. Are you ready?”

“Yes.”

They moved to the elevator. “Did you eat dinner tonight, Tyren.”

“No, why?”

“Because I see that big tub of popcorn in your hand half empty.”

“You didn’t eat either,” he stated.

“No I didn’t because I had other things on my mind.”

“I can tell.”

The doors closed.

“I know you can.”

“You don’t have to worry I eat a lot. Meat mostly. That’s why Barbara cooks so much of it. How about we go eat together? Barbara will yell at me, but I don’t mind.”

She smiled down at him. “Let’s have dinner then.” Her request made Tyren smiled.

“Tyren Baldwin! Where have you been?” Barbara’s voice yelled when they got out of the elevator.

“Told you,” he whispered to Amanda.

“What did you say? Don’t talk back to me or I will page your father and get him up here faster than you can say, *I’m sorry*. “I’m sorry,” his sarcastic voice said.



"Tyren, cut it out." Amanda chastised.

Immediately he stopped smiling.

"Go in there and eat," Barbara ordered. "Are you hungry, Amanda? I prepared a mouth-watering stew. Simon loves it, but he hasn't been in here to eat tonight. His mind is on something else," Barbara smiled at her. "I wonder what it is."

Amanda stiffened. She knew! The way she looked at her made her believe Barbara knew what happened between Simon and her. She shrugged. "I don't know and I did promise I would eat with Tyren."

"Two bowls then."

Amanda sat at the table beside Tyren. "Is our game still on for tomorrow?"

"Yes and no cheating this time."

"I never cheated. You beat me, but it won't happen again."

"It's a bet then."

After dinner, Amanda sent Tyren off to wash up, then to bed. After that, Amanda went to the pool area and here an hour later she sat in the warm water of the pool. She looked up into the sky, wishing she could see the stars. It was almost midnight and she couldn't sleep.

Who could sleep? Every time she closed her eyes, the image of her and Simon on the bed entered her mind. When her eyes were open, she kept imagining Simon's fingers inside her. It was as if she couldn't win for losing. Her body stiffened when a tingle began deep in her stomach. She knew that feeling meant that Simon was close.

Amanda's gaze shot to his door. Sure enough, Simon was leaning up against the door. She had been avoiding him and now he had her trapped.

"We need to talk," his voice soft, yet commanding.

"No, Simon. I am here to help Tyren and that's it. Not for my pleasure and definitely not for yours. I know you probably have women fall at your feet when you look at them, but not me."

"Not true, Amanda, and I don't want you to fall at my feet. I like your ability to not be persuaded easily."

"Ye..." Amanda watched as he took off his shirt, then begin taking off the rest of his clothing. "What are you doing?"



Simon didn't say anything and continued to undress. He did smile when he heard Amanda gasp as he took off his pants. You would too if you saw your naked boss standing in front of you. And she knew what the phrase *hung like a horse* meant now. Her two piece she had on made her feel over dressed.

Feeling herself blush, she turned away from him. He seemed to not have a problem with public nudity. Her gaze went to him when she heard the water slap the sides as he entered the pool.

"You don't mind me taking a dip with you?" his voice teased her.

*Yes, actually...no I don't.* "You seem to have made yourself comfortable. So I guess I can get out." She turned to get out, but his hand on her shoulder stopped her. Her entire body jumped at his touch. The man was on the other side of the pool a second ago, now he had moved across the pool unheard.

"Don't," he said, turning her around to face him. "There are many things we must discuss."

"Yeah, one thing is about public nudity for one."

Simon laughed, but made no attempt to go and dress or cover up. "Amanda, I know that you feel the connection between us. You felt it the moment I saw you in Tyren's room. When I saw you, I thought about staying away, but how could I? Fate knew that the longer you stay here the more I would fall for you. You are the one person I have been looking for my entire life."

Amanda slowly moved his hand and stood up in the water. "You haven't been looking long. You are no older than twenty-nine. And I want to say twenty-two, but I doubt you had a son at the age of eleven."

"So true. In truth Tyren is not my blood son, but that doesn't mean that I don't love him. The only person I can have a child from is you. And thanks for the comment about my age, but I am a little over six-hundred years old."

"You are not?"

"I am, Amanda, and I will show you later that I am." He moved until he stood directly in front of her. "Right now I need you."

And she needed him more than anything she had ever needed before. "Simon, I am afraid of you."



Looking at her with a serious, stern look, he said, "You should be."  
"But..."

Simon's hand circled her waist, pulling her to his body. He lifted her to him. His warm lips touched her cheek first, then he pulled back. His silver eyes met her brown ones moments before he kissed her.

His warm lips touched hers. His hands circled her waist keeping her pressed up against his hard body. Amanda moaned and his tongue entered her mouth, tasting her, devouring her, pulling her into a world of ecstasy he had created.

Kissing Simon would make any woman forget her own name. The man knew how to kiss. He made love to her with his mouth alone. She was so lost right now there was no going back.

With a low growl, Simon grabbed her right hand in his left and he pulled them both down into the water.

Moments later, the water bubbled around their hand, hissing as their skin cooled from the water. Amanda didn't feel any pain, who could when this man had his tongue down their throat? She felt a feeling around her wrist, the same one Simon submerged, but she would not think about that now.

Simon released her lips, she wanted to protest, but didn't when he kissed the valley in between her breasts. She leaned back giving him access. "Simon," she moaned.

With a harsh growl, he tore her bikini top. The ripped material fell to the bottom of the pool. Simon took her already hard nipple into his mouth before she could protest.

*I can't take this slow, Amanda. I have to have you.*

How he did it under the water she would never know, but she felt her bottom part of her swimsuit fall away from her body.

One moment they were in the middle of the pool, the next her back pressed up against his towel on the side of the pool. Simon continued to assault her breast as he reached down into the water.

His tip pressed hard against her opening. Amanda froze, waiting on the burning sensation to ease. His shaft felt hot, smooth and too thick as it burrowed inside her. The sensation didn't ease. It grew more intense with every inch he pressed inside her.



She grabbed his shoulder, digging her nails into him. He growled against her breast, his hands grabbing her hips, stilling her when she tried to squirm away. "No! I can't. . . I can't take all of you." Her head felt back when he bit her breast with his teeth.

*Yes. Take me,* he growled into her head.

Amanda was about to protest, but she could only whimper when he pushed another inch into her.

*All of me. You were made for me.*

"I can't, Simon."

\* \* \* \*

With one last lunge, Simon buried his entire length in her at the same time his teeth sunk right over her breast. Warm spicy liquid poured down his throat, making him moan.

Amanda screamed.

Simon's placed his hand over Amanda's mouth. He didn't need Barbara or Tyren running out here trying to see what was wrong with Amanda. Simon stopped taking her blood before he took too much too fast. He swiped his tongue over the mark, stopping the blood, but he left the mark on her skin. He could always heal it later, but for now he wanted it to show.

He pulled out, then slowly entered her again. Her walls clenched around his shaft, causing both of them to groan. Simon felt the wind around them pick up and a cold rain began to fall from the nighttime skies. No forecast for rain tonight. It must be Amanda's doing. But wasn't she supposed to lose all her powers the moment he entered her?

"Simon! More please."

He grunted and thrust harder at her command. He could make her cum before taking her back into his room. The rain began to pour down harder, but the feel of Amanda wrapped around him was pure ecstasy. "Come for me," he moaned moving faster. "Now."

The beast rose and he had to control it. No! Small thin hair formed on his body, his fangs descended again.



*No, not now!* At his command her body tightened more, becoming wetter with each plunge from him. Once her body stopped trembling and her head lay on his shoulder, he tried to move, but she kept a tight grip on him. His breathing was hard against her neck, body trembled, trying to hold back his orgasm. With his mind opened, he knew she felt everything flowing into her. He stopped moving, looking into her blue eyes.

“Are you okay?” she asked.

“Yes. We have to get out of this rain.”

“I can’t walk on my own,” she said against his neck.

Walking with her still connected with him was going to be hard. He slowly eased out of water and headed toward his door. The friction felt incredible.

Amanda’s head shot up and she looked at him strangely before he made it to the door.

“What’s wrong?” He felt her trembling and not from the cold. Her body tightened around him again. She needed sexual release again.

“I...”

Simon pushed her back against his cool sliding glass door. “I know, Amanda.”

The rain came down harder, but he didn’t care, right now he wanted to please her. It only took three short, hard thrusts to make Amanda shriek from another powerful orgasm. “God, Amanda!” he groaned when he felt her trying to pull him along with her.

He kissed her, then tried to once again make it to the bed. The way Amanda’s body still gripped his as he walked into his room, he knew he wouldn’t make it.

With a harsh growl, he laid her on the carpet. Damn the bed. They had plenty of time to use the bed. Simon grabbed her hands, locked them in one of his big ones and then thrust harder. His weight pinned her to the floor, holding her in place for his thrusts. When her back bowed as another orgasm began to build, his arms slipped beneath hers and clamped onto her shoulders. With each powerful thrust, she cried out in her own pleasure.

Amanda bit her bottom lip to keep from making the noise.



"No," he scowled, then stopped moving, making Amanda whine and look into his silver eyes. "You will not hide the sounds of your pleasure from me. I want to hear it all."

Amanda squirmed beneath him. The movement caused a sound from deep in his throat, but he didn't move. She sat up a little and bit him on his chest...hard, a slight punishment for making her wait for her orgasm. When she bit him, his entire body stiffened. Didn't she know vampire's like to be bitten? He growled at her. "You are playing with fire, little girl."

Amanda smiled at him. "I like playing with fire."

He grabbed her hips as he moved deeper, making Amanda's control snap. She came, moaning and bucking beneath him.

His teeth once again exploded in his mouth as he buried his head in the curve of her neck, riding out her pleasure. Without giving into his need to feed, his hips hammered into her with animal barbarity. He came with a roar, the cry echoing off the walls as his seed spilled deep in her womb.

He looked down at her just in time to see her eyes closing. She was glorious to him. No other could please him like she could. When he regained control of his body, Simon kissed her lips, then gently disengaged their bodies.

He stood, already missing the warmth of her body, picked her up and laid her on his bed. He went into the bathroom, grabbed a towel and went back to her side. He dried her off as best he could, then wrapped her hair. After making sure she would not wake soon, he dressed and left the room.

For two reasons, he needed time to think and talk to Tyren. Simon opened his son's room when he heard that blasted video game going.

"What did you do to Amanda?" Were Tyren's first words him.

Simon knew in a way, Tyren could detect smell. He might not understand, but he knew Amanda's smell was on him.

"I have taught you to be more respectful than that. Haven't I?"

Tyren looked away from him.

"Haven't I, Tyren?" A low growl followed.

"Yes father. I am sorry for speaking to you in that manner. My



concern is for Amanda.”

“You don’t have to be concerned about Amanda’s well being. I do have a question for you. How would you feel about having Amanda as your mother?”

“You like her?”

“You have not answered my question yet.”

“Yes I would.”

“And yes I enjoy Amanda’s company. More than anything in this world.” Simon looked out onto the balcony, then back to his son. “That would mean that you will have to get another teacher.”

“I don’t care. As long as Amanda’s here, I will be happy.”

Simon smiled. “I will try to win her heart, but it will take some time. I just wanted to let you know.”

“Father,” Tyren called out when Simon turned to leave. “What is that on your wrist? It looks like a small tattoo.”

Simon touched the symbol. In a way it was, in a way it showed his and Amanda’s love for each other. He had finally found his mate, the only person in this world that he would never tire of, or never let go. “It’s something that I will have to explain to you much later. Amanda has one also.”

“That’s neat. Can I get one?”

“No, sorry, not for you. It’s after midnight and you have studies tomorrow.”

“I know, but Amanda said she wanted to start around five. I’ll be up in time.”

Simon snarled in disapproval of him not waiting to go to bed.

“But I will go to bed now.”

“Good choice.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Amanda woke with a yawn. She stiffened, waiting on the slight pain she felt in her tongue when she moved it. No pain. Her tongue had healed. Simon kissed and it healed, then they... “Whoa!” She moved to roll out of bed, but strong arms kept her in place.



“What’s wrong?” Simon asked.

“We...” she frowned when she noticed her nakedness. “You know. I said I didn’t want to. And we did.”

“Relax, Amanda.”

“How can I relax? You did something to my mind. I know you did. I would not have done it on my own.”

“You did.” Simon stood in front of her, naked just like her. “And if you keep standing naked in front of me, we will do it again.”

Amanda bit her lip. God in human form. That was a way to put it. Tall, broad shoulders, muscular chest that went down to his small waist. Then there were his muscular legs.

“If you keep staring at me, Amanda, I will not be responsible for my action.”

Amanda swallowed the lump in her throat. “I need to...”

“What you need to do is lay back down. We will talk for a while. I promise to behave, if you do.”

Behave! He wanted her to behave while they lay naked under the covers. And touching each other’s skin. That would probably lead to touching, which would lead to kissing, which would lead to another episode of wild sex. Him on top of her, her on top of him. Them trying new positions in new places. Lying naked with him had endless possibilities.

“You have a dirty little mind, don’t you?” Simon teased.

How did he know, oh, that’s where Tyren gets it from. Simon could read emotions also. That’s how he knew what she wanted.

“Come to bed. We can talk. The sun will be up soon.” She watched him walk over and close the curtain. “And I will be forced to rest,” he added.

“Rest,” she said moving to the bed. “You sound like you are a vampire.”

Simon grabbed her so she couldn’t move. “I am.”

“Yeah and I remember you said that you were over five hundred.”

“I am six-hundred and sixty years old.”

Amanda looked over to Simon. From the look on his face, he wasn’t joking. She had been having sex with a man who thought he was



over six centuries old.

"I don't think."

"Stay out of my head."

"Sorry, but I can't help it. Now your mind is an opened book to me and I can't help but probe."

"Okay so you are a vampire, correct?"

"Yes. But we liked to be called Dark Guardians."

Amanda lay on her side to get a better look at him. "Then show me."

"What do you want to see?"

"Show me your teeth."

Simon smiled, then opened his mouth so she could see his human teeth.

"So funny, Mr. Vampire man, but you know what I meant."

"You didn't say you wanted to see my blood teeth, but be warned I have been fighting the temptation to bite you. I might have to if I let them out." He growled a little. With his arm still around her, his teeth burst through his gums.

Amanda looked in shock, but not fear. Slowly, she reached up and touched one. "Ouch!" she yelled when it nipped her finger. Her blood dropped onto his tongue.

Simon closed his mouth around her finger tasting her blood. His eyes went to hers as he held her finger in his mouth. The mere thought of him drinking her blood should repulse her, but instead it rekindled her earlier fire.

Amanda pulled her hand away to see that her finger not only was healed, but it didn't hurt any longer.

"I'm sorry," he murmured. "I should have warned you that they are sharp."

Amanda saw that his teeth were now normal again. "How did you become a vampire? I mean I'm scared and all, but I really want to know before I go hiding under my bed."

"I will never harm you. My life job is to please you."

"Your job. You don't have to make it seem like a job. You could have said goal or something like that. And why me?"



“To answer your first question.”

He loosened his grip when he noticed that she wasn't going to run. She doubted she could get away from him if she wanted.

“I was born like this. My kind are not called vampires, we are known as Dark Guardians. Our duty in life is to protect humans from other creatures of the night. We don't go around killing women and stealing babies in the night. That is a myth. The one thing each Dark Guardian waits on is a Truelove. A human female who makes sure that a Dark Guardian keeps his soul.” He grabbed her right hand. “This happened while in the pool after I kissed you.”

Amanda snatched her hand away to look at the golden linked chain around her wrist. It almost looked like a gold bracelet, but much smaller.

“How...I don't...what happened?”

“It's hard to follow, but you have to listen.”

“Okay.”

“Centuries ago our creator, your creator, Yateichaa, is her name, she is the creator of the Earth, the moons, stars and universe. Yateichaa, just like anyone, got bored and created humans on this Earth. Her greatest creations. They were smart, they had free will and they got smarter with each generation.

But like all creators, they have to watch over their creations. Yateichaa created her love, not lover, her love, Nairapha. He was her favorite at first. But after watching humans destroy their world, taking each other's lives, Nairpaha became unstable. He became what we call the God of Destruction. For many days and nights, he flooded the Earth taking lives, killing humans. Yateichaa didn't like that, but Nairpaha promised not to do it anymore. Yateichaa didn't believe him so she made a more powerful god, Darsiq. He is stronger than Nairapha.”

Amanda understood. Sort of.

“Yateichaa gave Darsiq Nairpaha's job. He was to watch over the humans at the same time to make certain Nairapha didn't cause any more havoc. Darsiq did his job well, too well for Nairpaha who went into hiding. While in hiding, he created many hellish dimensions. Or hell as humans calls it. As he hid in his dimensions, he created



creatures of the night. First, he created werewolves. A dangerous creature in human form. It was a good idea, but he couldn't control them or destroy them."

"Why not?"

"Because there are rules. A creator cannot destroy its creations. The creation has to destroy itself. Nairpaha thought that the werewolf would eventually die off. He didn't know that one bite and a blood exchange would change a human into a werewolf. When Darsiq saw this, he created Dark Guardians. Cotranths as they like to be called. They shape shift like werewolves, but do not crave flesh as other do. They are extremely strong and could defeat werewolves."

"After that Nairapha found a way to make Dark Guardians lose their souls becoming Dementras. Dementras are evil. Dementras are out for blood lust and nothing more. Darsiq discovered the change of his creations too late. Hundreds of Dark Guardians turned each day and killed humans by the hundreds each night. Darsiq then created a better Dark Guardian. Just like Dementra's, we have silver colored eyes, fangs, speed, strength, and a forever life span, but we don't crave the kill. Darsiq thought that it would be good if we had an advantage. Some Dark Guardian's haven't touched human blood in years, some have a weaker need for it. Like me, I feed once a day. I learned that when I do I am stronger."

"So you don't need blood, but you take it?"

"Yes for strength, like I said once a day, sometimes once every two days. But I can live without it."

"Go on."

"After seeing what they had done, Yateichaa took both their powers to create, but not change. Nairapha could no longer make more creations, nor could Darsiq, but they could change things. Then Yateichaa sent Nairapha to his own world and in his world is where he sits. Once Nairapha saw his Dementra's dying off, he was upset. He took great joy when they tried to turn humans. It didn't quite work out that way. We can turn a human into what we call a Trianes or Squires."

"A Triane has fangs and craves blood, but they don't have all of our strength. They can go into the sunlight, but cannot turn a human. And



most only stay a Triane for five hundred years before converting back to human, unless given more blood. Squires are just regular humans that we don't take blood from. We give them two or three drops of blood, and they are your slave, so to say, for life.

"Anyhow, The Dementra's were upset because they were dying off. A lot of them went to ground and rest. Once you are under ground, you are safe from everything. Darsiq declared his victory, but too soon. Why, because, the new Dark Guardian's got depressed. They could be with human women sexually, but it wasn't what they wanted. They needed someone that would be equal to them and love them just as much as they loved the female. Also live a lifetime together. You could change a human female, but it did not always turn out right. Some come over with their soul intact, some don't and you don't want to have to kill someone you love. Also, you have to bring over a person of the same blood type."

"Are Trueloves only human?" Amanda asked.

"No. When two Trueloves have a female baby, she is called a Daogna. She is still somewhat human. She is stronger, will age faster until she is a teenager, then the aging process stops. She doesn't have fangs, but she cannot go into the light for long periods of time. She is half and needs to be fully converted. After maybe five hundred or so years, if a Dark Guardian doesn't claim a Daogna, she would begin aging normally and eventually die."

Amanda nodded. "Go on."

Simon took a breath and continued. "When a Dark Guardian goes into a deep depression, his soul is stripped away from him. What a joy for Nairapha. His creations were being made by the Dark Guardian's lost soul. Every one of our souls goes to Nairapha to be tortured. After seeing this, Dementras began to rise again. Darsiq came up with a solution. Special human women would become Trueloves. They would anchor a Dark Guardian's soul to his body. It's a process to make certain you have found your Truelove. One is the kiss. That brings forth a symbol on the woman's right, and the males left, wrist. After that, you have to be intimate. You must have sex with the symbols touching.

"During this entire bonding process, it takes one full blood



exchanges. It doesn't matter what order you do it in, or how many times you exchange blood. The more you exchange, the better the love is between lovers. But to complete the ritual, to bind you together forever, these symbols must be touching during a blood exchange."

Amanda knew she probably looked lost. She was trying to take in a history lesson in an half an hour is hard.

"I know it's hard."

"So you are a vampire."

Simon laughed at her. "To answer your question again, yes."

"And you are telling me that I am your Truelove?"

"If you weren't, the symbol would not have appeared when we kissed."

Amanda bit her bottom lip not, believing that she had had sex with a vampire.

"Dark Guardian," he corrected.

"Don't read my mind," she snapped. "All you guys have silver eyes?"

"Yes. Some more of a gray color, some lighter."

"And you are born like this?"

Simon nodded.

"So where are your parents? Could I get pregnant because I don't won't any children right now?"

"My mother and father are around, where I could not tell you now. We eventually will see each other again. After six hundred years, you don't want your mother nagging you about keeping your room clean."

Amanda laughed.

"And you could get pregnant, but you will know when."

"What..." she was lost for words.

"Another part of the story. Every five hundred years a Truelove goes into what we call a Fervor Period. For days, she goes into heat. At that time, a Truelove could get pregnant, not that it happens all that time."

"So I could get pregnant. Could I go through it without knowing?"

"Trust me, you will know. I don't want to overload you, but males are born as Dark Guardians, immortal when they turn twenty-one."

"Now for the odd questions, I know you don't sleep in a coffin, but



I thought vampires have to sleep below ground.”

“Most do have underground lairs. I myself don’t. I magically lock the top floor when I rest. The only person that can get in and out is whom I want. Anyone that comes here because they want to kill me would probably die in the elevator, on the stairs and faster on my balcony.”

“Are you serious?”

“Very. My window is sun proof. So I could stand next to it when the sun comes up.”

“So it is true. You have to stay in from the sun?”

“Yes. We won’t spontaneously combust, but if we stay out in it long enough we could die. Nasty sunburn and things like that.”

“What about holy water? Does it burn?”

“Hollywood. We are not banned from God. Your God is our God. Holy water or silver will not burn us. We could wear a cross. I can eat,” he winked at her. “Everything.”

“Stay on track, lover boy, this is all freaking me out too much to think about sex. Mirrors! Can you see yourself in a mirror?”

“Yes,” his answer came out all too dry.

“Stakes to the heart, will it kill you?”

Simon shook his head. “I really want you to think about this scenario. If you stab anyone, human or not, you would kill them if you penetrate them through the heart.”

He had a point with that one. “So, I have to be with you now that we have started the bonding process?”

Simon looked away for a moment. “Yes and no, you could go, but the pull between us will eventually bring us back together. I am so sorry that I did this before asking, but I couldn’t help it. I had to have you and I knew you wanted me also.”

“I would say it is okay, but it would be a lie. I just need time. I don’t know what to think about becoming a vampire. I mean I’m not too big on blood.”

“I understand.”

“Another question.”

“Ask away.”



“Do you have to sleep as soon as the sun comes up? I mean, like so many books and movies, the vampire’s up, then the sun comes up and he’s down and out for the count. Are you the sleeping dead?”

A chuckle escaped his lips. “In a way, we have to seek shelter when the sun comes up. And no, we don’t pass out when the sun comes up. The older you are the more you can stand. The later it gets, the weaker we become. When we sleep, our heart slows down and to some we might seem to be dead. If we are in danger, we will wake.”

Amanda smiled at the thought that came up in her mind.

“To tell you the truth, Amanda, if you were to ravish me in my sleep, I assure you that I would wake up. More than just the lower part of my body. I would have to be a fool to sleep while a young woman ravished me.”

Amanda couldn’t hold the laugh. “Okay, smarty pants, you can get into my mind, that I know. But I heard you talk to me. Can everyone do that?”

*You mean like this.*

“Yes.”

*You can respond to me with your mind. Just concentrate. Speak with your mind and I will hear you.*

*I can’t do it.*

*You just did and you did it before when we were in the pool.*

“Okay, that’s too weird.”

“You will get used to it with time.”

“Wait a minute, you said all of you guys have gray eyes, Tyren...” She paused. She was confused.

“I know what you are thinking and you are correct. This is a conversation that is not a happy one. Eleven years ago, I was married to a mortal. I loved her, or I thought it was love. I told her the exact same story I am telling you. Before we were together sexually, I told her that I thought she was my Truelove. But when we kissed we found out differently.”

“So you can get it mixed up?”

“Yes, I think Yateichaa does that to keep us preoccupied until our real love comes to us. I maybe wrong, but we were together for ten



years. She asked me to turn her many times, but I wouldn't. We were of the same blood type, but I couldn't risk her coming out without a soul. Not everyone can be changed. Some will lose their souls. Some will die. On the night we argued about me not wanting to change her, she slept with a werewolf. You see Tyren is a half werewolf. On the night she had the baby, Tyren's father killed her, and he..." he stopped speaking.

"He what?"

"He bit me. No vampire has ever been bitten by a werewolf before. Sometimes I get the urge, a beast rises up and I feel like I am going to turn into a werewolf. That's why I wanted to stay away from you. I didn't want anything to happen to you because when I am intimate with someone, I cannot control the beast. With you I can control it—sometimes."

"Will Tyren ever turn into a werewolf? What about me?"

"They said that if he took blood from another werewolf he would transform into a full blooded werewolf. If I keep him until he turns twenty-one, then he can have a normal life. As for you, everyone is sure that you will filter out that blood, but I am not taking that chance on giving it to you, not now anyhow."

Amanda saw hurt in his eyes. He had so much on his mind that he didn't need her pain added.

"I understand your pain, Amanda, but you are not adding to my pain. I have talked the entire morning about me. Why don't we rest? You can take the day off and you can tell me tomorrow why you are so afraid to fall in love with me."

Amanda shook her head. "What makes you think I would tell you anything?"

"Because, in some mystical sort of way, you do care for me."

"I might, but I am not going have sex with you again, or not work tomorrow, or sleep in here." She moved to get out of the bed, but Simon held her down.

"If you leave me, I will come to your room."

"You wouldn't!"

"Yes I would. Just rest. If you don't want to be with me intimately, I



can understand. I just need you near me for now.”

Amanda slid down beside him. “Just for tonight.”

“One night is all I ask.”

As the sun rose, the couple slept together.

Amanda woke around two in the afternoon. A strong arm around her brought back reality. She turned onto her back. Simon lay there, not cold, but he wasn’t breathing.

If Simon hadn’t told her he was a vampire, she would be running to take a shower, while screaming she had been in the bed with a dead man.

The pull she had for him was indeed strong, stronger than she would like. There was no way she would let another man back into her life just to be heartbroken again. Simon was a man that women threw themselves at and she didn’t need that type of man in her life again. Having a man like Luke had been bad enough. Simon would make her go crazy with jealousy.

She moved his heavy arm before sliding from the bed, grabbing the towel to wrap herself in, since he destroyed her bathing suit. A nice shower and something in her stomach would do wonders for her now. “What the hell!” she yelled when she walked into her room. There in her room, were her two best friends.

“Amanda!” both girls squealed. They ran up to her, grabbing her in a big hug.

“Love you, too, but breathing is becoming an issue.”

They both let go.

“Sorry,” Sheila said.

“I thought you weren’t coming until this weekend.”

“Well we took some time off. Sheila was about to pound Debbie’s head into the desk. I told Mr. Davis it was stress so we have a couple of days off.”

Amanda sat down on the bed and sighed.

“Was it a bad time?” Emma asked.

“No, how did you get up here?”

“Barbara. They called up here and Barbara came down to get us. She let us in the room because she said you wouldn’t be in here. So the



question is where you were?"

"Don't start, Sheila. I am not in the mood."

"That is so cool!" Emma grabbed Amanda's hand. "When did you get the tattoo?"

"Long story."

"Don't get off the story, missy. Is your boss' room next door?"

"Later, Sheila. I have to take a bath. Then we can go out to eat. I'm starving."

"Sure, we are on the third floor," Sheila replied. "Let us go freshen up. Make sure you come up with your story in the mean time. I want to hear why you weren't in your room last night."

"See you guys in a few." Amanda ignored Sheila's order. Amanda didn't know why she felt that she needed to leave Simon a note, but she did. She left it on the mirror of his dresser. After that, she told Barbara that she would pull a Saturday for Tyren.

Instead of eating at Simon's casino, they went to the Chinese place a block away. They all loved a good egg roll.

After being seated, Sheila looked at her strangely. She hadn't said anything about her not being in her room, but she knew it wouldn't be long before she started with the questions.

"Did you sleep with Simon?"

Sheila's voice traveled, that made everyone look at them.

"Too loud, Sheila?" Emma told her.

"Sorry. But did you?"

Amanda felt heat begin at her neck and travel to her face.

"You did!" Sheila smiled. "Oh my God. When?"

"Last night when you made me go to that floor. I got stuck there with Simon. The floor has a magic lock or someone likes playing games with the door. But I got trapped and he pulled me into a room." She couldn't explain to them about her image of them or they might take her back home. They would have to find out on their own about that floor. "He got me off, but we didn't do anything."

"Go on," Sheila pushed.

"I couldn't sleep so I went for a dip in the pool. I really hate that our balcony is connected. Anyhow, he came out, stripped and we



ended up in his bed,” Amanda frowned. “Well, we never made it to the bed. I mean the man is an animal and almost too large for any woman.”

“So in other words he has ruined you for all other men,” Emma teased.

“Pretty much. I mean the man was gentle, but I feel like I was a virgin again. I am sore as hell.”

“That big? I haven’t run into one of them in a while,” Emma spoke.

“You haven’t run into one in a long time,” Sheila taunted.

“Well, I’m waiting for Mr. Right. When I find him, we are going to make love every day.”

Amanda and Sheila looked at Emma, never hearing her talk like this before shocked them both.

“You sure you haven’t been on floor sixty-nine? It makes you do crazy things?” Amanda asked Emma.

“No, I haven’t Amanda, but maybe I will.”

“Oh there is excitement in the woman after all,” Sheila teased Emma.

“Screw you, Sheila.”

“Maybe one day when I am into women.”

They ordered and were nearly through their meal, catching up on their girl talk, when a tall, light haired and handsome man came to the table.

“Look at that,” Emma whispered to Sheila. “Golden God coming our way.”

“Ah! What a surprise that I would run into the lovely Amanda and friends here.”

Amanda nearly choked on her water at the sound of his voice. Immediately the sickening feeling came back. Okay, he made her sick now and she knew it.

“Hello, Manuel,” she said, without looking at him.

“Manuel?” Sheila arched a brow.

“Yes, Sheila,” Amanda snapped. “I met Manuel a day ago. Manuel this is my friend, Sheila, the blabber mouth, and Emma, my nice friend.”



Manuel smiled at her. "Nice to meet you both. Maybe we could all go out on the town one day."

"You look like the type of man that would want three women in your bed." Amanda shot him a glare, hoping it would say go away.

The other girls stared at her in shock. She knew they never knew Amanda would talk to a man like that.

Manuel went to Amanda and grabbed her hand. The moment he grabbed her hand, she watched his gaze go to the mark on her wrist and he scowled at the mark. *Did he know about vamp...correction, Dark Guardians?*

"My lovely, Amanda, you have wounded me with your harsh words. But if you want to know, I would love you to warm my bed. No offense to your friends, but I am a one woman man."

"No offense taken." Emma said.

"I see you have a thing for my friend," Sheila jumped in.

Manuel's golden eyes looked at Sheila as he released Amanda's hand. "I do," he answered. "I can say that if I did have to choose three women, you three would be my choice. I do like Amanda and she is a lovely young woman. A woman that had me sitting by my phone waiting on her call. But I see that she might have someone. The mark shows. I will wait for her to come to me."

Amanda frowned. He did know. "Maybe I will give you a ring later."

"I will wait on your call, lovely one. It is nice meeting some of Amanda's friends. Hopefully you all will be seeing me around more."

They watched him leave.

"What's up with the bad vibes with him Amanda? You seem to not like him?" Sheila asked.

"I don't," she snarled. "He reminds me of Luke." Amanda looked at her watch, they still had some time before sunset. And why did she care when Simon rose? He wasn't her man, not now, not ever. "Want to go shopping?" Amanda suggested.

"You said the magic phrase," Sheila agreed. "Let's spend some money. Emma, you up for it?"

"You know I am."



"Then what are we waiting for?" Amanda said after the sick feeling passed.

The girls left the money on the table then headed to the closest shopping.

\* \* \* \*

Simon rose at five. He knew of his early wakening because Amanda was gone. She wasn't anywhere in the building. He went inside his bathroom to take a nice cool shower. He hoped that when he rose they would make love and spend the night talking about her life. Once he dressed, he went into the kitchen.

"Finally mated I see," Barbara said, without even turning around. "That's good."

"I did and I am not in the mood to talk about it."

"Why not," she closed the lid on her pot. "Amanda didn't take the I-am-a-vampire story well?"

"Actually she took it very well. Asked a lot of mythic questions about garlic and crosses. After that, we talked about Karen, then we went to sleep. When I woke she was gone."

"Yeah she told me that she would teach Tyren Saturday. I told her that's okay."

"Where did she go?"

"You can link with her mentally. Why don't you ask her yourself?"

Simon shook his head. He didn't want her talking aloud in public. He wanted her to be able to communicate well through the link first. "She's not ready for that yet."

"Okay. Her friends from Kansas came over. She went down to get them and they went out."

"How long ago?"

"Since two. They should be back any minute Mr. Mom."

"Can you see the laughter on my face?"

Barbara pretended to look hard. "Nope, only a little anger, maybe you need more sex."

"Hi, Barbara, father," Tyren said as he made his way into the



kitchen. "Where is Amanda?" He sat down in his favorite seat.

"She went out with some friends. You get the night off," Barbara told him.

"Oh goodie. That means I can play my game some more." He stood up ready to rush back into his room.

"Sit down and eat first," Simon ordered.

Tyren followed his father's order without a word.

"I'm going downstairs," Simon, told them. He felt Amanda back in the building.



## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The women carried the bags to Sheila and Emma's room. Amanda said she would get hers later. They were all in a rush to get back down to the entertainment room.

The guy singing tonight was said to have a beautiful voice. They all sat at the little round table. Everyone small talking, waiting on the show to begin.

"I take it everyone is having a great time at this table?" a voice pure as gold spoke from behind them.

Amanda wouldn't turn around because she knew he was there. Felt him the moment he entered the room.

Both Sheila and Emma looked up to see a dark, handsome man standing behind Amanda. Both of their mouths opened as if they were lost for words.

"You two are drooling," Amanda snapped. See! That's what she was talking about! Women got speechless around Simon. She couldn't have a man like that.

"We are not," Sheila spoke, but kept her eyes on the man that Amanda refused to turn around to look at.

Gently he placed his hand on Amanda's shoulder. Amanda closed her eyes as she shivered from his touch.

"Amanda," he spoke softly. "Aren't you going to introduce me to your friends?"

When she reopened her eyes, Sheila and Emma was staring at her. She knew they had noticed her reaction to him. She looked around the



room. Other women at other tables were staring at Simon also. Nope, definitely couldn't date him. This man would break her heart. Concentrating she answered him mentally. *No*

*Why not? And I told you that I do not want these other women. You are my only love for the rest of eternity. So please stop with the negative thoughts. They will make your decision about me hard.*

*I can't help it.*

*We will discuss it later. Right now, you need to introduce me before your friends eat me alive.*

*You are almost funny. And I will introduce me if you remove your hand.*

*Why does my touch bother you?*

Of course it did. If he kept touching her, she would end her night with her friends, haul his butt upstairs and finish some unfinished business. But she couldn't tell him the truth. *No.*

*Not much of a liar are you? But for you I will do as you ask.*

Slowly, he touched the warm skin of her back with his fingertips, making her tremble from his touch before removing his hand.

"This is my boss, Mr. Baldwin. Sir, this is Sheila and my friend Emma. They came to visit me because they missed me."

"It is a pleasure to meet some of Amanda's friends. I hope that you didn't have too much trouble getting here."

"Not at all," Emma finally spoke.

"It's a nice place you have," Sheila said.

"Thank you. How long do you plan on staying?" Simon asked.

"Just tonight. We only got the two days. We have to get back tomorrow."

"Sorry to see you go so soon."

"We promise to come back soon," Sheila said.

"I am hoping that Amanda will stay. In fact, I wish to speak to you a little later about your position, Amanda."

*Laying it on thick aren't we?*

*Not as thick as I am.*

Amanda rolled her eyes.

"You are thinking about keeping her here, Mr. Baldwin?" Emma



asked, almost a little disappointed.

"You can call me Simon, as a matter of fact, I insist you do. We are not that formal around here. And yes, I would like to keep her here. I am also looking for a couple of people that are good with arranging and planning. My bookie is overloaded and he cannot keep up with all the events that go on in this building. He is not able to get the good singers that not only bring in the older crowd, but younger people also."

Amanda cleared her throat when he once again touched her shoulder and he removed his hand.

"We could do that?" Sheila spoke first.

Amanda looked at her friends. *Tell them no.*

"Maybe we can discuss it later. It's up to Amanda though. I would love to hire a couple of her friends to stay here. If it made her happy having you here."

He was making her happy by offering them a job, but why would he do that. Simon didn't even know Sheila or Emma.

*Because I love you.*

Again, every muscle locked in Amanda at his words. No man had ever told her he loved in so quickly. Luke started saying it a year ago because she made him say it.

"Amanda hasn't been going out lately and I'm sure that with you two here, she would have more fun."

Amanda looked up at him finally, then back to her friends and smiled or at least she hoped it looked like a smile.

"You don't have to worry about pay. It will be a nice salary. As for room and board. I usually charge the workers that live on the hundred and ninety-fourth floor. That floor mostly consists of workers, but, if you decide to work for me, your stay will be free."

Amanda wanted to reach back and grab his testicles to make him go away. Not only because he was laying it on with her friends, but with each moment he stood beside her, she wanted to tear his clothing off. She would make love to him on the table if he didn't leave soon.

*Later, my love. I promise.*

*My mind, my private thoughts. Remember that!*



Smiling, he spoke. "I see that the show is about to begin. Amanda, I will speak with you shortly. Sheila, Emma, you can leave your personal information with Barbara before you leave. We can discuss this later." He bent down, kissing Amanda on the cheek, before leaving the room.

"Okay, you said Simon looked good. You lied," Sheila said first.

"Lied about what, Sheila?"

"That man is hot, good looking, fine, sexy, all rolled into one fine-looking piece of man."

"I have to agree with her, Amanda. Simon is one good looking man."

"And that's why I can't be with him. Luke looked good and you see where that got me. Simon is a God in human form and in bed. I am afraid of him and he knows that. The man had me up against his glass door screaming my head off."

"You left out some good parts I see." Sheila teased. "He had you up against a door screaming your head off?"

"Yes that was after once in the pool and before we made it to the floor of his room. We never made it to the bed."

"Kinky little vixen isn't she, Emma?"

Emma nodded.

"No I am not," she snapped. "The man oozes sex and you two cannot take that job."

"Why not," Emma whined.

"Yeah why not? Darrell can move without a problem. We don't have anything holding us in Kansas. So why can't we come live here with our best friend?"

True if she stayed here, and they came it would be the same. Her friends and her together again. "I'll talk to Simon later. See what the terms are."

"So you will talk after or before you two tear each other's clothes off."

*After.* "It's not going to happen."

"Sure, Amanda. The man can't keep his hands off you already. But we will discuss this later because the show is about to begin."

The lights dimmed and the host walked out to introduce tonight's



singer and guest. Amanda listened and it seemed that the man was singing about them. The name of the song was *Second Chance at Love*. This was definitely a second chance at love for both of them.

Amanda talked with Sheila and Emma until well after midnight. She knew that she had to teach tomorrow and she would, around twelve, maybe one.

Once in the comfort of her room, Amanda undressed, then went got into the shower. The warm water poured down, soothing her aching muscles—the aching muscles that Simon had caused.

Amanda sighed at the thought of being with Simon again. She said she wouldn't think about Simon, not now, not ever. Her number one priority was to teach Tyren.

Slowly, she made her way back into her room so she could dry her hair. She had been getting this vibe ever since she got into the shower, but she knew it had to be because Simon was on the same floor. Amanda sat at the small vanity, grabbed her brush and began brushing her wet hair.

"Amanda," his dark mysterious voice whispered from behind her.

Every hair on her body stood on edge. She knew he had to be close, but not this close! Instead of letting him know how his closeness affected her, she squared her shoulders, looked off into the distance and cocked her head, pretending to listen conscientiously.

"Yes, Satan?" With a fake smile on her face, she turned to him and stood. "Simon! I didn't know that was you. I am soooo sorry. You sounded like someone I know."

"Too funny, little girl." In a blink of an eye, he stood in front of her. "What's going to be funnier is when I have you crying out my name in the heat of our passion."

Note to self, Never play with Simon. "Sim...on." Her words trembled to a point she could say anything, but his name. Opening her eyes, she saw that Simon had lost the jacket and shirt, now he stood only in leather pants.

Amanda tried to move, but she was trapped between the vanity and Simon. And she guessed Simon had no intentions of moving. Correction, he moved, he placed both hands on either side of her,



preventing any escape. He leaned close to her.

When his lips were only centimeters away, he spoke. "You like to keep your boss waiting, I see."

The warmth of his body and lips made her forget what her name was. "I..." Amanda bit her lip when he leaned down to kiss her right above the towel. "We...can't." She panted.

"Oh yes we can," he said as he stepped back so he could grab the towel. With quick hands, the knot came untied.

"No." She grabbed it to keep it from falling away from her body. "Simon, we need to talk." His smile sent a heated chill down her spine. Moisture already formed, ready to pour from her body. The man hadn't even touched her and she was ready to take him.

"That I can agree with," he whispered. "But I think that conversation can wait until tomorrow, after you see your friends off and after you teach Tyren."

Amanda stared deep within his silver eyes. Love shined in them. She knew that her eyes, even with her saying no, showed her love for him. No, she couldn't love him. Not this soon, not ever. She didn't want a man in her life that would eventually hurt her.

*I would never hurt you. No matter what you do I will love you always and forever. You are my Truelove and you cannot do any wrong.*

Amanda watched his hand reach to loosen her towel, letting it drop to the ground. Simon grinned, then placed a small kiss on her lips, just a teaser and nothing more.

"You are so beautiful to me. I love you and I know how you feel about me. Why do you deny your feelings?"

"Because having feelings gets you hurt."

"Not with me. I will never want another woman's touch. No matter how they look or what they try to do to gain my touch, I will always love you and no one else."

Eyes full of desire and need looked up at her. Amanda knew that he wanted her, felt it in their connection, but she fought the desire.

Simon would not touch her, not until he was sure that she wanted him the same way. Not only want him for sex. He wanted her to want him, all of him.



"I know you're telling the truth, Simon, but what do you want me to do? I have been hurt lately, badly."

He moved away from her body, grabbed her robe off the bed and handed it to her. The moment he left her, she thought he would leave her and go into his room. When he passed her the robe, she was shocked. Simon had no shame when it came down to public nudity and she doubted that he cared about her being naked in front of him. In fact, she knew he preferred her naked.

"If you want to talk, we can, but if you stay naked, no talking will go on in this room." Simon sat down on her bed again.

Now that he gave her the opportunity to talk, she didn't know if that's what she wanted. No one would want to talk when there was a sexy, handsome, man...vampire slash werewolf... whatever he was, sitting on the bed, half-naked. A low growl from him made her look at him.

"Make up your mind." He then smiled. "You either want me to make love to you, then talk or talk first, then make love. The choice is yours. But you will not keep teasing me with your mind."

Amanda never knew he could be an impatient man. Without heeding his warning, she walked up to him, nudging his legs apart with her knees.

When Amanda stood in front of him, he looked up at her. His gaze immediately left her face, traveled to her neck, then down to where he could see some of her breast peeking from inside her robe.

Amanda watched him, loving the way he held onto what control he had. Without caring about the consequences, she bent down, touching her lips to his. Simon didn't respond at first, but the second her tongue traced his lips, he could not hold on to that control any longer. He opened his mouth to her.

Amanda explored every inch of his mouth. His taste was so addictive.

"I thought you wanted to talk?" he spoke when she released his lip.

"I do," she said. "But I want to tease you first." Simon's warm hands went underneath her robe, touching her skin. Her body shivered at the contact.



"It's not right to play with fire." He nipped at her breast through the robe. "You will get burnt."

Amanda shook again. Damn him and his ability to turn her game around on her. When he pulled her toward him, she didn't resist. He lay back on the bed, bringing her on top of him. His mouth found hers again in a demanding kiss. Amanda moaned as his tongue slowly entered her mouth, taking control of her little game.

The door opened. "Amanda...my god!" Emma yelled from the door.

Amanda jumped off Simon, her knee coming into contact with his groin. She heard Simon hissed out in pain.

"I am sorry, Amanda." Emma's face red as a rose. "Barbara told me you were in the other room. I left my cell on your dresser."

Amanda looked over at Simon who had his bottom lip in his mouth. The knee thing was an accident. She hadn't expected someone to come in scaring her half to death. Closing her robe, she walked over to the dresser. "Here you are." Amanda handed her the phone.

"Thanks. I am sorry." Emma closed the door.

\* \* \* \*

Simon took a long deep breath.

"I'm sorry about that."

"It's all right."

"Did it hurt?"

"Yes," he said as the pain finally eased some. "If you wanted to talk you could have just told me. You didn't have to kick me." To show he was all right, he smiled.

"I didn't do it on purpose." She flopped down beside him. "I can kiss it and make it better."

Simon growled at her, sounding like a large dog. "Don't play games, little girl. You want to talk, now we are going to talk."

"Touchy."

"You would be, too, if you found someone you have been waiting on for over six hundred years. You ran from her, then found out you



can't run from fate. Then, when you finally give in to the love and she runs from you. And to show her she doesn't want you, she kicks you in the groin. Conclusion, you would be touchy." He saw Amanda bite her lip to keep from laughing.

"Okay. I never said I didn't want you. I am sorry for the kick, but let me see if I can explain my fear to you." Amanda quieted from a moment. "Days before I came here I was engaged. We had been together for five years. Luke is his name. He was a Kansas big man. Handsome, fine and he had all of his teeth." Amanda looked down and laughed to herself. "What I didn't know was the jerk was having sex with other women. Seven other women to be exact."

Simon felt the anger go through him as she told him her story. The pain she felt went through him also and it pissed him off. "How did you know of this?"

"Because he told me."

"He just flat out told you that he was sleeping with other woman?"

"Yes." Amanda shook her head. "I don't know about the others, but I do know of one. Debbie DeVirgin. She is a made up Barbie doll and her last name is exactly what she had done a long time ago. But that's not my issue. My issue was when I walked in on them having sex after being fired and Debbie got my job."

"You got fired from your job? By who?" Simon felt Amanda's reluctance to not tell him her boss' name and for good reason. He would have to take a trip to Kansas soon.

"Don't worry about it. What's done is done. The bad part is that she was having sex with my boss, he fired me to hire her. The same day she had sex with my boyfriend and god knows who else. The fact that Luke and I used a condom made me feel secure." Amanda's face paled a little.

Simon heard her unspoken question about diseases and vampires. "No we don't. We cannot carry diseases nor can we spread anything. You are perfectly safe with me."

Amanda looked at him, then back. "If I let you change me, would I be safe from things like that? Will I live forever?"

The thought of her thinking about letting him change her made his



heart beat quicken. To have Amanda with him forever would make his dream come true. "Yes and we will discuss that after you finish your story."

Amanda nodded. "Where was I...oh yeah...I walked in on them in his bed just after I got fired. He told me that I could join a threesome to make it better." She growled. "Who did he think I was, Debbie? I mean, why would I want two men at the same time? Some women are into that, but I am not. After he told me that I got mad and I hit him."

"No!" he tried to sound shocked. Amanda had a temper, that he knew. "You didn't. Not you, hit a man?"

"Hardy, har, har," she hissed at him. "You are so funny. Yes, I hit him. I didn't see him afterward, but Sheila assured me that I gave him a black eye. After that, I saw the ad in the paper and I called Barbara, she told me that she wanted me to come. My friends cried, but I had to get away from him. The thought that half of the town knew my soon-to-be husband cheated on me greatly hurt. The bad part was he never proposed. I thought he did and he said that he couldn't take back the ring after I got so happy in the jewelry store. God! I feel like a jerk."

Simon grabbed her hand. "You are not a jerk. You were in love with the wrong man. I am not a human, never have been one, never will be. I cannot say that I am a Baptist. I have been with women, as you know my wife. She cheated on me also. Her one night of lust brought Tyren into this world. I felt hurt, but I couldn't hate Tyren, he did nothing. I forgave her and helped her have the baby. It was just Manuel. He was upset that she chose me over him. The night she had Tyren he killed her. He bit me the next night. I was hurt, I knew she wasn't my Truelove, but I knew I loved her, but..."

He paused and grabbed Amanda's face so she could face him. "I do love you, more than Karen, more than anything in this world. You are my light and my soul. You are what I have lived to find. I will never cheat on you, never look at or want a woman as much as I want you. The only thing I ask for is a second chance to know what life is about."

Simon let go. "You see, Amanda, Tyren is my son, by my heart he is. I don't want to lose him to a world where I will have to hunt him down and kill him. But if he kills a human, my duty will be to take his



life. Now, that I have found you, I am not obligated to hunt anymore. I am to make you happy, you and the children we will have.”

“I know you speak the truth, but what happened to you happened a long time ago.”

“It did, but it still hurts as if was yesterday. What I feel for you is different.” Simon smirked. “If Barbara could tell you were a Truelove before I kissed you, I would have believed she hired you on purpose.”

“I don’t understand.”

“The symbol. The ones that need to touch as we make love, a stage that would bind us together for eternity. Like I told you before, a kiss would bring it forth. Now, everyone knows you are mine, knows you are my Truelove. Before that kiss, no one, but a Juevama, could tell who a Truelove is. Barbara on the other hand, is a Triane. She has been working for me for a long time and had been trying to find someone for me for years, but she knew that I rejected females because I could not control the wolf part of me. With you I can.”

\* \* \* \*

Amanda almost snorted. There was no way he had gone years without sex.

“You are right. There is a very wise Triane, Rosa. She is over a thousand years old. She knew how to half control the wolf. We were together off and on for years. The problem was, Rosa liked to be a free bird. She wouldn’t have made the perfect mother figure for Tyren. Barbara always told me that Tyren never said anything about how much he liked Rosa. He never liked anyone. You know he told me that he wanted to keep you here. I asked him if he would he rather have you as his mother or his teacher, he said he would like for you to be his mother.”

The thought made Amanda want to cry. She knew Tyren liked her. She liked him also. He always respected her and did as she asked. Never did she have to say the same thing twice to Tyren. “I don’t know what to say.”

“Say yes.”



One minute she sat on the bed, the next she was sitting in his lap. "Don't do that. You move too fast for me." She smiled at him. "And say yes to what?"

"Say yes that you will be my Truelove. Yes to being with me for eternity. Yes to being a mother to Tyren. Yes to finally giving into your feelings for me. Trust me, Amanda, as I trust you. I have given up on trying to suppress my feelings and I know nothing more than pleasing you."

Amanda bit her bottom lip. He might not be touching her with his hand, but she felt heat shimmering over her body from his eyes. She knew the kick in the groin had not affected him at all. His cock pressed hard against her naked body. Amanda knew if she moved his pants would be wet from her already moistened body.

"Amanda, think about it."

She had been thinking about it, but taking his blood, even though it didn't turn her stomach, just didn't feel right. "I will have to take your blood and I don't think I could do it."

"You don't have to worry about that. While we are together, you will not know what you are doing. It will be like second nature to you." His hands finally went to her tie, playing with it for a second before untying it. "I need you with me now, tomorrow and forever. If you don't want to take my blood, I will still be with until you're dying day. When you perish, I will also."

"But you will still look twenty and I will be old and gray. People would think that I am your grandmother."

"I don't care. If you want to grow old I would still love you the same."

And that she believed. But she had a choice, a big choice. She could agree and live forever, with a handsome man who would always treat her with love and respect or she could age and die. Amanda threw her head back when his hand touched her breast. She could not think when he touched her and he knew it. *Live forever...god harder...no can't let him get me with sex. But he's doing such wonderful things with his hands.* "Are you sure that I won't taste anything?"



"I am sure."

Her entire body stiffened when his mouth came down on her other breast. He took her hardened nipple into his mouth, biting it before circling her hard nipple with his tongue. Amanda knew she was lost. All her arguments about drinking blood flew out the window. She groaned when he switched to the other breast, giving it the same attention. Amanda reached up, grabbing a hand full of his black hair, pulling him closer to her. Her breath rasped from her throat when she felt his human teeth bite down. "Simon, I need you now."

He pulled hard once more before letting her breast slip out of his mouth. "I need you also, but our first time was too fast. I wanted to take my time, touch and lick you all over. I want to make love to you slowly, tantalizing, until I bring us to the point of no return."

Oh, his words sound great for what he wanted, but now she needed him, deep inside her. "If we have forever, we will have time for that later." She pushed down, grinding herself on his swollen flesh.

He growled in pleasure at her movement. "You are killing me."

"Good, then give me what I want." Before she could react, she lay on her back, Simon smiling on top of her. Quickly, his hands spread her legs wide, exposing her heated center to him.

"Not so fast."

Gently, fingers explored her swollen flesh.

"I know you can ask better than that."

She drew her legs up, trapping his hand against her. "Please," she begged.

Almost roughly, he pushed her legs apart. "I know you can beg better than that."

"No I can't. One please is all you get." Simon lowered himself, his long hair tickled lightly against her skin. Amanda never knew her skin was so sensitive. Already another please threatened to leave her lips.

"I would love to hear you beg, but I would rather taste you first. So don't start begging yet."

His eyes held hers as he slid lower. Simon smiled at her. One finger parted her wet folds as his thumb pressed against her swollen flesh. With a harsh growl, his hungry mouth descended, lashing out at her



with his tongue, stimulating the little bud until she moaned and groaned from pleasure.

Amanda's hands went to her breast, pulling her nipples as fire raced through her veins. "Simon!" her back arched as she screeched. Her essence coated his tongue as he dipped lower to take in every drop. Strong hands slid around her, lifting her against his mouth.

One hand grabbed his hair, trying to stop him before she came again. "Please, Simon. I can't take much more of your teasing."

Simon stopped, silver eyes shining up to her. With one last lick, he rose above her. "I thought that I could only get one please?"

"If you don't take off those damn pants, I am going to hurt you."

"Evil little woman, aren't you?"

"Only when I don't get my way."

Simon rose from the bed, removed his pants as Amanda took off her robe, tossing it to the corner of the room. She gazed at him for a brief moment. Broad shoulders, nice six pack abs. His desire swollen, hard and ready to please her.

He gripped her thighs, pulling them apart. Amanda moaned when she felt the tip of him teasing her wet opening. He pushed gently, but didn't enter her like she wanted.

"No more teasing, Simon, please."

The smile on his face was priceless. "Not another one so soon."

Amanda had one hand in his dark hair, the other one on his back. "I hate a smart bastard." She dug her sharp nails into his back, making him growl. Amanda hissed at the slight pain as her body seemed to suck him inside her. This man could ruin a woman forever.

\* \* \* \*

Simon rested his head on her shoulder, not moving, to give her time to adjust to his size. The blood running just beneath her skin called out to him. Her flesh around him quivered when she moved the lower part of her body, taking him to the hilt. "Amanda," he panted, his eyes closing as his fangs exploded through his gums.

Simon began a slow rhythm, bringing her closer to another mind-



blowing release. Each down thrust Amanda met him with a thrust of her own.

“Simon,” Amanda cried out when she felt him pull out and fill her again with a harder thrust.

Faster and harder he slammed into her, almost screaming from the feeling of her gripping him like vise grips.

She said his name repeatedly. Her legs wrapped higher around his waist when he lowered himself onto her arms.

Growling, Simon threw his hand back, all his energy centered in his thrust. His mind already twisted with hers, their feelings as one. At the same time, they opened their eyes, both staring at each other. She had to see the beast, the wolf, hovering at the edge. He was trying to fight it. “Amanda,” he pleaded with her, then closed his eyes. He needed her to stop him. The beast had completely taken over.

“No, Simon,” she whispered and pulled him to her. “Please don’t stop. I need you, I need this.”

The hair formed over his body, his thrusts never stopped. He felt Amanda wince at the slight pain of one of his thrust.

*You have to fight this, Simon. We are as one and you will never hurt me. I know it.*

*Amanda, please, stop me. Even if you have to kill me. You have to, I cannot control it.*

*Yes, you can! You can and you will. Look at me.*

*No!* The beast yelled at her as a muzzle formed on his face.

*Open your eyes and look at me, Simon. See that I am not afraid. See that I do love you. See and know that you can control this thing.*

With a loud growl, he opened his now red eyes, his movement stopped. His eyes looked down at the woman that loved him, the woman that would always be by his side.

“I love you, Simon.”

Simon shook his head, his face returned to normal, the hair disappearing and his fangs retracted. This woman truly could control the beast. Finally controlling himself, he could see something in Amanda’s mind, something she hadn’t told him about—yet. “I love you.” Simon reached down and pulled her up, until her legs wrapped



around his waist. He sat back until his back touched the coolness of the headboard.

One hand traveled up to tangle in her hair and forced her mouth to his. His tongue invaded as he thrust deep. Pulling away, he licked the side of her neck. From the smell of the blood, his fangs descended from his gums again. His lips traveled lower to the pulse in her neck. His body trembled as blood lust consumed him. Both of their hearts pounded faster as they both pleased the other with their bodies.

The first wave of their orgasm rush over them, he slammed his hardness inside her, feeling himself swell larger and harder than he had even been.

Her body tightened until it released for the second time. "Simon! I'm cumming," she yelled, muscles clenching around him, milking him of his essence.

"That's it, Amanda." He growled just before his fangs entered her neck. *Cum for me, baby.*

Again, she yelled, this time louder, the sound vibrated off the walls.

With one last thrust, he released her neck to cry out. Simon quickly bit into his wrist and held it up to her mouth. Amanda didn't resist. She took his blood into her, grabbing his wrist tighter to her mouth.

At the feeling of her mouth on him and her warmth wrapped around him, he began to swell again.

Simon eyes went to the mark on her neck, a thin line of blood traveled down her body. As she took him into her body, he caught the path with his tongue. He cleaned her skin, then closed the wound.

He stopped Amanda when he felt lightheaded. Slowly, he rose up and lowered Amanda to the bed. Her eyes closed for a moment, then reopened. Simon knew that she needed time to adjust to his blood. Sleep would be the best option.

*Sleep now, my love.* Right now, he wanted nothing more than to take her again. This time with their symbols touching, but he had to wait, at least until tomorrow and he had to get more blood in him or they would both die from it. He would feed well when he awakened tomorrow night.

*I love you so very much.* Simon whispered into her mind.



*Prove it.*

Simon laughed knowing she would fight his command. Amanda's mind was so strong and so powerful.

*Tomorrow, my love. Now you need sleep.*

Simon curled beside her until he knew she had fallen asleep. He wanted to go deep into her mind, but would not, not yet. Not until they had completed the bonding process.

With a thought, he safeguarded the room, then pushed the hair away from her face as he pulled her closer to him. Amanda's steady breathing soon put him to sleep.

\* \* \* \*

"You caught them doing what?" Sheila asked, way too excited to know that her friend was being ravished by a dark stranger. Deep down, she really liked Simon and hoped that they would be working together.

"I walked in on Amanda sitting on Simon's lap. They looked like they were about to eat each other alive."

Sheila stood. "You think that they will have children? I mean look at Simon. He is dark, handsome, built and Amanda, tall, slim and gorgeous. They would have some beautiful children."

"Are you counting chickens before they hatch?"

"I'm just saying. Amanda looks like she has found a man that I like and she seems to like him a lot." Sheila looked over at the clock. "We better get to sleep. The flight leaves at twelve and it's already two in the morning."

"So true." Emma went to her bed. "We can probably go out to breakfast together."

"Yeah, right, sure." Sheila snorted. "They will probably be going at it for the rest of the morning. No telling what time those two are going to finish."

"You are right. I know one thing, I am never popping into that room again. But I know Amanda won't let us go back without her seeing us off."

"True." Sheila yawned. "Don't worry. We will be living here before



you know it.”

“I can’t wait. The life here is so different.”

“That’s what Amanda needed, and it’s what we need. We have to see when we can start. The sooner the better for me.”

“Me, too. I wish we didn’t have to leave.”

“We will be back soon. I’ll ask Amanda to ask her new lover when we can start.”

Emma chuckled. She knew Sheila would say those exact words to Amanda and then Amanda would start blushing.

“Mind if I turn the television on,” Sheila asked. “It helps me go to sleep when something good is on.”

“Not at all, just keep the volume down.”

Before the weather forecast began Sheila was asleep.



## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### KANSAS

Debbie looked up from her computer when Luke wanted inside the building. She smiled. “Hi, Luke,” Debbie spoke.

“You called me for what?”

Debbie never heard Luke’s voice sound so hard before. Ever since that day Amanda caught them, he hadn’t given her any attention and now she wanted it again. “I called you because Sheila and Emma made an unexpected trip.”

“You called to tell me that they made a trip? Woman, are you crazy?”

Debbie growled. “Not as crazy as you think.”

Luke turned to leave.

Debbie stopped him in his tracks. “I guess you don’t want to know where Amanda is then.”

He turned back to her, looking at her closely to see if she was joking or telling the truth.

“I thought that would get your attention.”

“Where did she go?” he asked.

Debbie stood, walked around the desk and up to Luke. “If I tell you where she went, what will you give me?”

Luke grabbed her before she could come into his personal space. “Where’s your boss? Isn’t he in here?”

“No.” Debbie pushed him when she noticed that he didn’t want her to touch him. “If he was, he would not care.” She sat down in the



chair, then scowled at him. "Since when do you care who I am with? And don't give me that I am a changed man since my lover left town. I heard that you and your secretary still played around after dark."

"Just tell me where she went?" Luke snapped.

"What are you going to give me?" Debbie whined.

"A black eye if you don't talk."

"Testy," she snapped, then tapped at her computer. "The other day, they didn't know I was in Clayton's office. So, they talked about going to visit Amanda at the Anything Goes Resort in Las Vegas. Emma told Sheila she didn't know how Amanda could live on the hundred and tenth floor and not feel sick."

Debbie cursed as she pressed the wrong button and the computer booted her out of her account. "So, I heard them saying that Amanda was teaching this smart kid at the hotel and she would be staying there if they liked her. And then to get a day off they started a fight with me and I told Clayton to give them time off to see where they would go. Sure enough, they booked a two day, one night trip to Las Vegas staying at the Anything Goes Resort." Debbie turned the screen around. "They are scheduled to leave at twelve in the morning."

Luke walked up to the screen to see Sheila and Emma's name as Debbie said they had booked a trip to Las Vegas. "I want to go there tonight."

"What," Debbie said surprised. What has Amanda done to him to make him go almost fourteen hundred miles to find her? The plan was to tell Luke where Amanda was, then they could head back to his place for a night of loving and then...nothing. She just wanted to seduce him to have sex with her.

His brown eyes went to her blue ones as he stalked dangerously close to her. "Book me a flight now. I want to be on anything that leaves in the next couple of hours. When I get there, the two trouble makers should be leaving and that will leave Amanda vulnerable to me. I will seduce her into coming back with me and then I will ask her to marry me." Luke smiled.

Debbie hissed through her teeth as his warm hands went up short dress caressing her bare skin.



"No underwear." He smirked. "Thinking ahead?"

Debbie nodded, then arched in surprise when two large fingers slid deep inside her. "I...I thought you didn't want to be with me anymore."

"I am enough man for you and anyone else," he spoke and pushed deeper. "Make the reservation for me and as soon as I get back, I will finish this."

Her desire flamed more when he removed his fingers. She wanted him, but she had to wait for him to go and get the other woman before he finished. "You promise?"

Luke touched her lips with the same fingers he had deep in her.

Debbie's tongue latched on to his finger, tasting herself.

"I promise," he said. "As soon as I return."

Debbie released his finger then turned back to the computer. "Okay, there is a flight leaving at seven in the morning that should get you there around eleven. Make sure that they don't see you at the airport. They would never leave Amanda alone with you."

"Book that one," he ordered.

Debbie quickly typed away. "I have charged it to my account." She pressed the print button.

"Good. You make sure that you don't say anything to those two when they get back. I don't want them to know that I was there."

Debbie placed the papers in an envelope, twirled around in her chair so she could face Luke. "As long as you get back here soon, my lips are sealed."

To prove his point, Luke touched his lips to hers for a gentle kiss. "I promise," he said before walking out of the office.

\* \* \* \*

Las Vegas

"You think they are up yet?" Emma asked Sheila while she looked for her shoes.

"It almost ten. They might be up or they might be still trying to make babies." Sheila watched as Emma walked around the room



looking for something. She had peeked under the bed twice now. "Emma, what are you looking for?"

"I can't find my shoe!"

Sheila laughed to herself. Emma didn't want to go and she knew it because she saw Emma place her shoe in her bag as she packed, five minutes ago. "Did you check your bag?"

Emma looked at Sheila, then the bag. "Why, my shoe shouldn't be in there."

"Well it is." Sheila snickered. "You put in it there five minutes ago."

"Fudge."

"Ah come on! You can be more creative than that. What is another word that you can use that begins with the letter F."

"I try not to curse. It's unladylike."

Sheila snorted. "So you are saying that I am not lady like?"

Emma opened her bag and took out her shoe. "Yes."

She tossed a pillow toward Emma's head. She saw it and ducked. "That was uncalled for."

Both girls were dressed in blue jeans, tennis shoes and matching Las Vegas shirts they bought at the mall yesterday.

"Are you ready to go?" Sheila asked after ten minutes of stalling.

"No."

Sheila sat beside her. "Don't worry. Hopefully, we will be on the next plane back here. Amanda wants us here just as much as we want to be here."

"I know, I just don't want to go."

"I don't either, but look at it this way, if you saw what you did last night, they will need time to get over the new lovers role. Right now, we wouldn't see them as much because they would more likely stay in the bedroom. That's only until the newness wears a little. Until then, we go back to Kansas and pack, do everything we need to do and then come back here."

"I'll be okay. Let's get checked out."

Sheila looked at her best friend and nodded. She made sure that they had everything before walking out of the door. The private elevator



bell went off as they stood waiting on the elevator.

\* \* \* \*

Amanda walked out dressed in a nice light blue cotton sundress and blue flat sandals. "The double mint twins I presume. I thought you two were supposed to wear green?"

"I would say screw you, but Emma has already talked to me about not being a lady today."

"I am sorry about breakfast, I overslept."

"I figured that." Sheila teased. "Aerobics will do that to you sometimes."

Amanda looked in Sheila's eyes. She knew the moment Emma came down here she would have told Sheila she saw her and Simon kissing and then Sheila put in her ninety percent to uneven the story. "She told you, didn't she?" Amanda looked at both girls while they tried to hold in a laugh that would surely come at any moment.

Sheila nodded. "She told me that you were on top of Simon wearing a cowgirl hat and that both of you were naked in the bed. Emma said the last thing she heard before closing the door was Simon shouting was, *ride em cow girl*."

Amanda couldn't help the laughter that escaped her lips.

"Sheila is telling a lie, Amanda."

When Amanda could control her laughter, she looked at Emma and spoke, "I know what you said and I am sure you didn't say that."

"Well she did," Sheila lied.

"Yeah right. Come on we can take Simon's elevator." The women got into the elevator. "I wish we could take Simon's limo, but it's only operational at night."

"Why is that?" Emma asked.

"Because he is a night owl and so is his crew. Everyone works at night here. Just wait until you get downstairs, there are a lot of people here, but not as many as we saw last night."

Both women nodded understanding but not caring about taking a cab.



\* \* \* \*

Amanda walked behind her friends after they checked their bags at the airport and then headed to their terminal. She really didn't want to see them leave. And the bad part was she and Simon didn't have a chance to talk about them working for him. At first, she thought having them working for Simon wouldn't be right, but then having them with her would be fun.

Why should they move because of her? She wasn't anyone special, besides being a Truelove to a vampire.

She quivered at the thought that she had drunk Simon's blood and didn't get sick. In fact, the moment she woke, she felt stronger, more energized and horny as hell. She would have wakened Simon, but she doubted he could have stayed up long enough to get her off.

"Amanda, you still with us?"

Sheila's concerned voice broke her thoughts. "Ummm...Yeah I'm still with you."

"Then what did I say?" Sheila sat down in the blue chair.

Amanda looked around at the people waiting to board flight, thirteen. "You said that you didn't want to leave..."

"No. I said that we had a two-hour delay. The plane isn't going to leave until two." Amanda sat beside her. "I said you didn't have to wait all that time."

"I don't mind. I mean Simon is going to sleep all day. And I already told Barbara to tell Tyren that I will teach him at five or six."

"What is he like?"

"What do you mean, Sheila?" Amanda's eyebrow arched.

"Is he the type of man that you can be with forever? The way that Emma described you two looking at each other, makes me feel like you probably like him. Maybe love him."

Truth or dare has just started. One, she could play the truth card, tell her how much she felt about Simon. At the same time, keep the part about him being a vampire out of it. Or, she could just say that it was a two-time thing and it wouldn't happen again. In that case Sheila



would hound her until she broke down and told the truth. Since they had hours to wait for the flight come, she could play a while. "I don't like him and it won't happen again," the lie rolled off her tongue easily. "I will never ever have sex with him again. Let's just consider it a momentary insanity."

Sheila leaned back in her chair to speak to Emma who was propped on the chair arm. "You buy that story, Emma?"

Emma shook her head. "Not at all."

"Me either. I think it is an attempt to keep us entertained until the flight comes. She thinks that I am going to beg her to tell me that she loves him. Which in fact, I think I already know. So she won't have to tell me anything."

"The *she* who you are referring to is right here and she can hear you."

Sheila took a glimpse at Amanda before returning her attention back to Emma. "Then she thinks that I am going to pay her any attention, man is she wrong. She might as well just come out and say that she loves Simon. If she does not, I know there are others that would love to have a hunk of a man like that hovering over them."

"So true."

Amanda listened to her friends have a conversation about her as if she wasn't sitting in the seat beside them.

"And another thing, Emma, I bet she loves him so much that she plans on staying here and they didn't talk about us coming and working for them. I mean geez...could they stop the party fest for one minute to think about anything else besides their libido? I understand that it would take years for her to tighten back up for another man. If Simon is as huge as she says." Sheila had a serious, yet, playful look on her face as she spoke. "She might have to go and get stitched up before she takes another lover or she could wait five, ten years."

Amanda stood. "I am going to get a sandwich—witch."

"Did she just call me a witch?" Sheila laughed when Amanda walked over to the food court.

Emma nodded again. "You are so mean sometimes."

"Amanda knows I am joking with her."



"That I know, but I think you read her well this time."

"I do, too."

Sheila could be so damn predictable sometimes. Shelia had read her like a book and Amanda didn't like it one bit.

"So we meet again."

Hairs stood, her stomach churned, sickness becoming an issue, it has to be Manuel. She turned to face the golden God. For some reason she hoped he would be getting on one of those planes and it crashed. Okay, so she knew it was a mean thought, but the man oozed of sickness. His mind was twisted and she didn't have to go inside it to find out.

"Hello, Manuel. What great honor do I owe this unexpected, yet, predictable visit?"

"I am here to pick up my brother. The one person I thought would show me the sights never called so I had to call for company."

Her hope shattered about him leaving. The man was waiting on someone probably more aggravating than he was.

For the first time, Amanda's eyes went to his chest. She didn't care that he had on blue jeans that molded his legs so wonderfully or that his shirt hung open giving her the perfect view of his tanned chest and she could see golden hair over his body. Nope, she wouldn't drool.

Okay so she was drooling, who would not. The man looked good. But it wasn't his chest that had her staring, it was the amulet around his neck. It was oval shaped, clear in color, the top of it golden and it connected to a gold chain. The liquid inside was also golden in color. What was the liquid and why did he have something like that around his neck? "What is that?" she asked rudely.

Manuel reached up touching the vial. "If *a certain person* got a hold of it, it would give him a new life."

"A new life," she repeated, confused at his words.

"Yes, it is said that if a person with a special problem drinks it they get a new chance at their old life."

"Sorry I asked."

"Don't be. I made this myself."

"You did." Now she became interested again. "What's in it?"



"I know you believe in magic?"

Amanda wanted to growl at him. *What makes him think that?* "Yes and I believe in the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus also."

Manuel laughed. "Well then I know you believe in magic. Let's just say this is full of all types of magic solutions..."

"Well, hello there," Sheila had come up to them with either of them knowing. "Manuel, isn't it?"

"Yes..." he cocked his head slightly. "Sheila, right?"

"Right." Sheila smiled "Amanda, your *husband* is on my line. He said he couldn't reach you on your phone so I told him that you must have left your phone at home. You know how much he worries about you. Now, take this call before he runs all over Las Vegas looking for you."

Amanda must have had a confused look on her face because Sheila had a look as if she wanted to roll on the floor while laughing her head off.

"Woman, would you take this phone, I don't want him to think you are up here talking to a good looking handsome golden man, while you are seeing us off."

Amanda finally reached for the phone.

"Now scoot, go over there." Sheila pushed Amanda away from Manuel. "Sorry, Manuel, but this is a call she must take. Her husband is so jealous. You know how men are?"

Amanda turned to see Manuel walking away. "Thanks," Amanda said with the phone still to her ear. "I don't know why, but I don't like that guy."

"You are welcome," Emma's voice spoke from the other end.

"Emma!" Amanda jumped, not expecting to hear anything. She just thought Sheila had opened her phone and gave it to her.

"Yes, it's me."

Amanda looked around to see Emma had disappeared. "Where are you?"

"I am in the ladies room. Sheila told me that it would be better if I didn't sit out in the open as she rescued you. He might have gotten suspicious."



"Thanks ag..."

Sheila grabbed her cell away from Amanda. "There is a roaming charge, Emma. If you two want to say thank you to each other, do it in person." Click.

Amanda just shook her head and laughed.

"That was rude," Emma told them as she made her way up to them.

"You were only a couple of yards away."

"So what."

"Roaming is going to kill me. That's why I know Amanda hasn't had her phone on since she has been here."

"Guilty." Amanda jumped in.

The girls continued to joke until they heard someone over the speaker saying that flight three-ten was now boarding.

\* \* \* \*

He would never fly on that plane again. Never in his life had he had such a terrible flight. He sat next to an old man who smelled like he hadn't bathed in weeks. He knew he would have problems the second the plane took off as he had to push the man off his shoulder while he snored half the way there. The food was horrible, the in-flight movie sucked, and on top of that, they lost one of his bags. How in the world did his bags end up in departures when he got off in arrivals?

Now he had to go to departures to retrieve his bag. Amanda had better appreciate how much he suffered to get to her. The moment he made it to departures, he heard Sheila's voice. He looked to see all three of them standing and talking among themselves. Slowly, Luke moved out of their sight watching them.

Amanda went up to Sheila, hugging her then she let go and hugged Emma. His woman hadn't been gone long, but she looked so beautiful to him.

She even looked like she had gained a couple of pounds in all the right places since she had been here. Her skin was a little pale for him, but otherwise, she looked great.

He wanted to go to her and hug her, but he couldn't right now, not



until her friends left her and were on the flight back to Kansas.

\* \* \* \*

Amanda had a funny feeling that someone had been following her since she left the airport. Every time she shook the feeling, it returned, stronger than the last.

It might be Manuel following her, she didn't know. She doubted that he would harm her. He had bad vibes, but nothing to do with hurting her. If she had to say what she felt about him, it was that he wanted sex with her and nothing more.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Baldwin," the clerk behind the desk spoke.

*Mrs. Baldwin! Why on earth would she say that?* Did they all know she and Simon had slept together? If they did, did that make her the slut of the Anything Goes? Maybe it did because everything went.

Her face turned two shades of red. Instead of asking why, she waved and headed to the bar to order a virgin Bloody Mary.

She had plenty of time to think about why the clerk called her that. Simon might have told them to. No one has ever seen them together so there's no need for panic, not yet.

"One virgin, Bloody Mary," Amanda told the waiter, he wrote it down, then walked toward the other end of the bar and handed her order to another man. A few seconds later a different waiter dressed in all black sat the drink in front of her.

"Living in the fast lane, aren't we?"

Amanda chuckled. "There's no need to start drinking at..." she looked at her watch. "Four in the afternoon."

"Why not? This place never worries about time."

Amanda took a sip of her drink. "True, but the men here are handsome and I might say something while I'm drunk that could lead to bad things." The words came out, why, she didn't know. She felt like joking for some odd reason.

"You don't look like the partying type. I could be wrong." His blue eyes sparkled for a moment. "If you are looking for that type of thing, floor sixty-nine is always open."



*Does everyone know about floor sixty-nine?* “Been there, done that and I must say,” she spoke, then leaned closer to the man. “I don’t like that floor.”

His eyebrow arched. “I never heard anyone say that before.”

“What can I say? I don’t like to be locked down.”

The waiter laughed, then really looked at her. “You are Amanda aren’t you?”

Some of her drink spilled from her mouth at his question. “Yes. Why?”

“The boss’ girl. Man I can’t believe that I am here talking to the boss’ woman. I mean I never spoke to the guy, he’s a little scary, but I must say, it’s good to know that his woman knows how to have fun.”

His woman! His woman?

Simon had to have told them that.

“Did Simon tell you that?”

“No, Mr. Baldwin didn’t, his secretary did.”

Amanda nodded then pulled out some money.

“Oh no, your money is no good here.”

“Why, you think it’s counterfeit?”

The young man smiled again. “No, madam, you are like the owner now. That means everything is yours and you shouldn’t pay for what is yours.”

Maybe being Simon’s woman had benefits. “Thanks.”

“Amanda,” a voice spoke from behind her.

Every muscle in her body locked. Her heart froze mid-beat, her breath caught in her throat. She has to be hallucinating, there’s no way that man was here. No way would she believe that Luke Reeves has followed her here? Knowing she couldn’t say anything, she spun around. “Luke.”

Her former lover stood there, dressed in a blue tailored suit. His brown eyes shone brightly just as much as his white teeth as he smiled at her.

In a romance novel this would be the part when she leapt into his arms and they kissed until their lips were swollen. Then he’d pick her up in his arms and take her back to his room where they would make



mad passionate love all day and night. But not here, not now, not ever. This was real life and she didn't want his nasty hands or lips anywhere on her. "Luke." She stood. "What are you doing here?"

"I am here to find you."

Amanda stiffened when he embraced her with his arms. She only let him touch her for a moment before she pulled away. "That's great and all, but why are you here? We broke up remember."

"And that's what why I am here." He grabbed her hand. "Since you left me, you are all I can think of. I made a mistake, for which I am sorry, but I can also admit that I can be faithful."

Amanda snatched her hand away. "No, Luke."

"No Luke what?"

Once again, he grabbed her hand, in a painful grip. "Luke, let go of me now. I want you to leave." Her voice grew louder with each word she spoke. She cringed at the pain traveling through her hand.

"Not until we talk."

"We can talk, but you don't have to touch me. Let me go." Once again, she tried to pull from his grip, but Luke only held on tighter to her hand, keeping his hand over hers so she could not escape.

"And if I don't?"

"I will be forced to make you let her go," a voice spoke from behind him.

Luke turned around to see a man taller than him standing directly behind him.

"Simon," Amanda wanted to smile as she spoke his name. "What are you doing up?"

"For you." Simon turned back to Luke who still had her hand. "I have asked you once to let her go, if you don't, then I will have to remove it myself." Each word followed with a deadly, menacing sound.

"Look, this is my fiancée so bug off." He looked at Amanda. "Who is this jerk anyhow?"

The hand on her wrist tightened, increasing her pain. Oh! Goodie, goodie, Simon was scaring him. She just wished that he would let go of her wrist because it hurt like hell.

Faster than anyone could see Simon's hand shot, he grabbed



Luke's hand in a way that made him cry out in pain before releasing her hand.

Luke stepped back looking at his bruised wrist.

"Are you all right?"

*You seem weak.*

*I am in a way. I felt your pain so I had to come.*

*Okay, so how did you get down here so fast?*

*I have emergency stairs you know.*

*And you ran down all of them?*

*Something like that. I jumped down the middle of them.*

*You jumped down a hundred and something floors.*

*Yes.*

*And you didn't break anything?*

*No, I didn't. I have done it before. Your boyfriend is calling you.*

"Amanda!"

Amanda wanted to smile at the humor in Simon's voice. He might have said boyfriend, but she knew he didn't mean it. "What, Luke?" she snarled at him.

"I asked you who this guy was."

"It's not none of your business, but since you insist this is...ummmm..." Now what was she suppose to say...boyfriend, husband, new lover, boss?

"Amanda, can I speak with you a moment?" Simon grabbed her arm, pulling her with him. "She'll be right back, Luke."

Amanda moved with Simon, she watched as he pulled out his card and slid it into the elevator slot. The door opened and he let her walk in first.

\* \* \* \*

"Sorry boys," Simon said to the camera as he opened the box, then flicked the switch for the camera and microphone.

Amanda frowned at him. "What are you doing?"

Simon smiled, linking his arm around her waist and pulling her closer to him. With his mouth only millimeters away he spoke, "I want



you to understand what I am to you.”

“And that would be what?” she asked. Her question only provoked him into pulling her closer to his already hard body.

“You already know the answer,” he spoke, then touched his lips to hers.

Amanda couldn't help but respond to his kiss. Every fiber in her body vibrated, heat rose from deep inside her stomach. His hand moved lower to her waist, pulling her closer to his wanting body. He swallowed the soft moan that escaped her lips when their bodies touched.

In all his years he never knew that he would feel this way while he kissed a woman. Amanda woke every cell in his body, making every fiber in his soul want her, want to get closer to her, need to be with her. He loved her more than life itself, and he wouldn't let her go, not for anyone. “You don't know how much I want you right now,” he spoke against her lips. “But your boy toy is waiting outside.”

Amanda would have slapped him, but she didn't want to see any marks on his face.

“You just had to spoil the moment, didn't you?”

Simon smirked. “I ruined the moment?”

“Yes you did.”

He turned her around in his arms. “What do you...” His hand on her breast cut her sentence. While one hand played with her covered nipples, the other went to the junction between her legs.

Amanda's arousal immediately filled the elevator. If they had any time, he would take her right here, but he couldn't. The reason for this little escapade was to show her that she was indeed his wife and his mate. The question to ask her lay on the tip of his tongue, but he would not speak the words. Not, yet. He knew Amanda would be with him, she had already taken his blood once, which meant they were now connected. It would take one full blood exchange for her to be brought over completely and he would wait until she asked for it.

“Simon,” she panted as she ground her desire against his hands. “Don't. Not here.”

He growled against her ear. “Why not?” He nipped at her ear. “I



can tell deep down that you would love to explore the world of adventure.” When he pressed his thumb against her now swollen clit, she buckled, almost coming from his teasing.

“No I don’t.”

Simon almost laughed at her. “You’re not a great liar, but if you want me to...” He pressed his finger a little harder. “I can make you cum.”

*No.*

“No,” he rasped. “You are so close.”

She moved in time with his fingers. “I know but...”

“You want me to stop?” He knew she didn’t want him to stop.

“Simon,” she growled, then pulled out of his arms. “What is it you wanted to talk to me about?”

“Well my dear, you wanted to know what you are to me and, to answer your question, you are my Truelove. Which means that I am your life partner, your other half and your lover for all eternity.” He turned her so his silver eyes met her blue ones. “In human terms, I am your husband. I *was* your husband from the moment you were born. You are my wife and I want nothing more than to be with you forever.”

Simon grabbed her hand. “I don’t care what you tell that man, I would prefer you tell him the truth. You are my wife and I would love to marry you anyway you like. But if he puts his hands on you, I will do something to him that is not allowed by my Gods.”

\* \* \* \*

Amanda felt tears building in her eyes. The words were true, she felt like his wife and she wanted nothing more than to go back up stairs and not come down until she was completely transformed.

“That can happen.”

Amanda snatched her hand away. “Stop reading my mind. If I want you to know I will tell you.”

Another smile came across his face. “I am sorry.”

“No you are not.”

“You know me like a book already.”



Amanda laughed. "You know the name I called you earlier?"

Simon shook his head.

She had called him by different names so he didn't know which one she meant. Satan fits you perfectly."

"I have been called many things, love, but never have I been called Satan."

"I know and I am happy to be the first." Amanda watched as Simon pressed the button for the lobby, then enabled the camera again.

"Let's not keep him waiting. I have some business that I can get over with now instead of tonight at the club. When you are finished, just give me a call."

Amanda tiptoed and kissed him. She didn't care who saw. The angry vibes she got from Luke hit her hard the moment the elevator door opened.

Luke had to be watching them. She knew it and she also knew Simon was putting on a show for him. She trembled when one hand drifted around her waist, pulling her closer to his painful budge in the front of his pants. She wanted him inside her more than ever. Maybe because Luke would see. More because she wanted him. "We can't do this in the lobby remember?" she said, then bit her bottom lip.

"We can always go back into the elevator."

"No thank you. Let me handle this idiot first, then we need to talk about something before we do anything else."

Simon kissed the back of her hand. "I am at your service."

Amanda watch Simon go toward the club. The man should have the word *yummy* tattooed all over his body. Scrumptious described him better.

The red in Luke's face told Amanda that he had witnessed her and Simon's little kiss. Good, he should be upset at what he had done to her. She hoped that he would have walked in on them making love like she did with him and Debbie.

"I see that you have found a new boyfriend," he snapped, then smiled, "or you are trying to make me jealous?"

Jealous! Would he think that Simon only kissed her to make him jealous? Simon did add on when he noticed Luke watching them, but



that's not why he kissed her. "No, Luke," Amanda snarled. "Simon didn't kiss me to make you jealous." With an angry huff, she sat beside him.

"I ordered you an apple martini." He pushed the glass in front of her. "Your favorite when you did decide to drink. I remembered."

"Yes." She shoved the glass away from her, spilling some of it onto the counter. "It is, but I am not drinking anything right now. I have to teach in less than an hour. My student is thinking that I am neglecting him."

Luke nodded.

"So, why are you here?"

"To win you back. Amanda, I made a mistake, everyone does, but that doesn't mean you had to leave. We could have talked about this, solved it." Luke reached into his pocket. "I gave you this because I wanted you to have it."

Amanda's eyes narrowed at the ring. The same ring he didn't purpose to her with. "Are you crazy?" she almost yelled, then pushed the ring away. "I am not going to marry you after what I saw. I am here, I am staying here and, in a couple of days, my friends will be here." She shook her head in anger. "Look, Luke, I loved you, really loved you. I was faithful, honest and the only thing I asked was for you to be the same way. But you couldn't. You couldn't be faithful. Those women must have done something for you that I couldn't."

Luke took a deep breath. "No, Amanda, they couldn't. That's why I am here, I love you and I know you still love me. Love doesn't just go away after a week."

"No, it doesn't. It faded with each passing hour."

"I will not let you go."

"You don't have a choice in this, Luke. Anyhow I have someone." Luke stood in front of her, way too close as she saw.

"Who! That...that...barbarian I saw you kissing a second ago? That is not your type of man? The man is no good for you. He would never show you the type of love I could. He would never give you what I could. Anyhow, who is he? Is he some man you are having a fling with up here? If he is, I can accept that as long as you let him go before you



come back to Kansas.”

Amanda saw the people that were in the bar watched them. Some had stopped speaking to listen to their conversation. “For one, your voice is getting way to loud. Second, sit down.”

Luke hesitated a moment before doing as she asked.

“For your information, Simon, is my boss...was my boss. I don’t know right now how to tell you the truth. As for a fling, he is not a fling, he is a man that I have,” she stopped. Did she really want to say it? “I have fallen in love with. Simon owns this entire resort.”

“So that’s what you wanted, a man with more money.”

Amanda had to count to ten before responding. “Why would you say something like that? I never asked you for anything, I never wanted to live off your money. I always wanted to work. I always wanted to be independent and you know that. Because Simon has a lot more money than you do, doesn’t change a thing. There is something different about Simon and me. Something that you will never understand.”

“And you say you love him?”

“Yes,” she said honestly.

“You love him like you loved me?”

“No. I love Simon more than I loved you.”

Luke rose again. “How could you love him? You don’t even know him. And look at you, you looked like you have paled more in the week than at any time since I have known you.” He grabbed her hand, squeezing it.

Amanda yelped in pain. She knew Luke didn’t mean to hurt her, but his anger overpowered his better judgment. “Luke, let go you are hurting me.”

As if not hearing her, he spoke, “No, you will listen. You are going to leave with me and there is nothing else to discuss about it.”

Amanda was about to protest, but she heard a dangerous sound from behind her. Luke released her hand.

“I told you not to touch her, didn’t I?”

Luke turned.

Amanda wished she could see Luke’s face when he saw Simon along with another man with equally long golden hair looking down at



him.

"What are you doing here? Amanda is my woman and she has no business here with you freaks. Go away, Simon, because she is going home with me."

Simon grabbed at Luke, but the man beside him held him off.

"No, Simon," Ramon held him.

Luke laughed. "You better listen to your friend."

Amanda hadn't moved from where she stood. She only looked at what would unfold in front of her. She knew she wasn't going home with Luke and there was nothing he could do about it.

"No, Luke, that's not why I stopped Simon. I am stopping Simon because he has so much to lose if he hits you," Ramon explained, then drew back. "But I don't."

The hit came from nowhere. Amanda screamed as Luke's body tumbled over the bar and to the other side. He hit the floor with a loud crash. In shock at what had just unfolded in front of her, she stood looking over the counter at Luke's unconscious body. "Is he dead?"

"No," Ramon answered. "That was only a light hit. If I would have hit him with all my strength, he would be."

Simon grabbed Ramon's shoulders. "You know that was uncalled for."

"Yeah, but you liked it."

Simon laughed. "It is what I wanted to do, but I was only going to rough him up a bit, not hit him."

"I know, so that's why I did it. I know how you men are when it comes down to your Trueloves. I can take all the blame and if I get thrown in jail, which I won't, I can survive in the sunlight. Your Nodoro might take pity on me."

"You better hope he doesn't hear of this or you will be sent to England to Arcadia for some serious jail time."

"Why don't you handle our guest?" Simon released Ramon. "And I'll talk to Luke on a more private level. Amanda, love, if you want, you can go upstairs. I assure you that he will bother you no more."

Amanda watched him strangely. She knew what Simon was capable of doing to Luke and she wondered would he kill Luke?



Simon's laughter made her look up at him.

"Now why would I do that? You can trust me, he will leave on his own and never bother you again. Then there's always other ways."

Her light blue eyes went to Ramon as he spoke to the few people that stood around him. She could see that he had them in a trance so he could brainwash them.

"Is everything all right, Mr. Baldwin?" the resort security guards asked as they made their way up to them. "We saw everything on camera. Do we need to arrest this gentleman?" He referred to Ramon. "Or call an ambulance for the other guy?"

"No, thank you, we have the situation under control," Simon told him.

"Are you sure?"

Amanda watched Simon's eyes glow as he went deep inside the security guard's mind.

"Yes everything is under control."

Both men nodded. "Under control," they repeated.

Amanda watched in amazement as the guards went out the same way they came in.

"I am going up to Tyren." Amanda told them.

"I will be up as soon as I talk to him." Simon kissed her quickly. "Ramon, get him and take him down to the club."

"Will do," he said.

\* \* \* \*

"Tyren," Amanda called, then pushed his door open.

Tyren was sitting right where she thought he would be. He sat in front of the video game, playing Night Blood II.

"Did you beat the game yet?"

"No," he answered, but his gaze never left the television set. "I got sucked in one of those black holes and it sent me back to level five."

"You gotta be kidding me," she said, then sat beside him. "We were on level ten."

"The game cheats like you."



"I never cheated," she said, smiling.

Tyren placed the controller down, then looked at her. "I am glad you are going to be my new mother. I am sad that I have to get another teacher, you are the best one I had."

"I can still be your teacher."

Tyren shook his head. "Barbara told me that you will be on my father's schedule and you will sleep all day." Tyren took a deep breath. "I don't mind only seeing you at night, it's just that I don't want you to leave us. My father likes you. He likes you a lot. I overheard him telling Barbara about a ring or something like that."

Simon really wanted to marry her, which she knew. She just wished she didn't have butterflies in her stomach right now. "I am not going to leave you, I promise. We will be a family, just like you want."

"I would like that, but—" he paused.

"But what, Tyren?"

"I would like to have a brother or sister someday."

Pushing his luck wasn't an issue with this kid. "This is a little early to start talking about that. One day I will have one, but I don't know when. It's up to the Gods above to let me know when."

"I hope it's soon."

"Do you want to go check up on our roses? It's not work we are just doing this together."

"That would be great."

They both stood.

Amanda let Tyren out first.

"Amanda," Barbara called from down the hall. "I have to talk to you."

"Okay," she looked at Tyren. "Go outside and I'll be out in a moment."

Tyren did as he was told.

"That boy never listened to me like that," Barbara told her. "Maybe you are good for him."

"Thanks. You wanted to talk to me?"

"Yes. It's nothing bad. I just wanted to let you know that you are fired."



The expression on Amanda's face had to be priceless. Barbara broke, laughing so hard she couldn't catch her breath.

"Hey!" Amanda said with a smile on her face. "I can't believe that you fire me and then start laughing. I mean I just got fired, again!"

"It's not..." A giggle slipped. "It's was the look on your face. You know that since you are going to be Simon's wife that you don't have to be Tyren's teacher." Barbara went to a whisper. "Once he converts you, you will be weak in the day. That is until you are able to fight the sleep. So, it would be better if I fire you now."

Amanda nodded. "I understand."

"Great. I think Simon is thinking about putting him in a regular school. The thought of having another female or male staying here would drive you two crazy. Simon would go crazy if a fine, sexy man gets the position, and you would go crazy if another female lives here and is lusting after him. Then we talked about just getting someone to teach him during the day only and leaving after the shift."

Amanda thought about what Barbara said. It was true all of it. She didn't know if she could take having another woman staying here, lusting after Simon. And Simon would probably feel the same way about a man. Maybe they could get someone to come and teach every day then before they awaken, be gone. "I don't want to change things because I am here, Barbara, but the thought of another female living here upsets me."

"I know and the only reason you don't feel that way about me is that you know that I don't have any lusting feelings for Simon whatsoever. The man is too stiff for me anyhow. He doesn't have a fun bone in his body."

Another fact about Barbara and Simon. Amanda could tell that they had no feelings for each other.

"But we will discuss that later."

"Okay, let me go and check on Tyren before he kills my roses."

"Dinner will be served soon. Are you two going to join us tonight or do you have other plans?"

What did Simon have in store for her? "I don't know."

"I won't cook too much then."



## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

As Luke woke, he wondered if anyone got the license plate number of the bus that hit him. He knew he hadn't been hit by a bus, but the guy with the golden hair had a real punch. Slowly, he opened one eye, then the other. He noticed that he sat in a booth.

"I am glad you are awake," Simon's voice startled him. "I would not want Amanda mad at me for letting Ramon kill you."

"Where is Amanda?" he shouted.

"She is resting. Right now, I want to speak with you."

"I don't have time to talk." Luke stood.

"Sit down!"

Unable to resist, he did as he Simon said.

"You will listen. What you did to Amanda is sick and the way you found out how she got here upsets me. You come here, begging for forgiveness, while your woman toy waits back home for your return." Simon snarled at him.

Luke would run if he could, but an unseen force kept him in his seat. "How...how did you know that?"

"Don't worry about how I know. With anyone else who loved Amanda, and she didn't love them, I would take away that love. That is the only way I could ease a mind, but for you I will not. Your love for Amanda will burn brighter and more than ever with each passing day."

"Go to hell."

Simon chuckled. "The funny part about that is that I have already been there." Simon moved closer and Luke tried to back away. He was



in a trance, had to be. He heard Simon speak again. "I want you to leave here. You will not come looking for Amanda again, ever. Do you understand?"

Luke nodded, then stood. He paid no attention to Simon as he left the room.

\* \* \* \*

"You let him off too easily," Ramon said, coming up behind him.

"So true," Simon spoke, not looking at the young Triane. "If I would have done something to him, Amanda would be upset." Ramon's teasing laughter made Simon finally look at him. "What is so hilarious?"

"You!" Ramon said between breaths.

"Me what?"

"You are in love. Man, I never thought I would see the day Simon Baldwin fell in love again."

"It's different this time."

"I know. I have to run, boss paging me again."

"Tell Anthony I might need him to patrol for me for a while."

"I know. It's all about making your mate happy," Ramon finished his sentence. "I'll tell him."

Simon laughed as Ramon walked out, mumbling something about, "Hope Anthony never finds a mate, then all hell will break lose."

\* \* \* \*

Simon opened the door to Amanda's room.

Amanda looked up and smiled. "Is he gone?" she asked.

"Yes. He is on his way back home."

"Good."

"Amanda, I have to ask you something."

"Go ahead."

"The first time we made love, I felt your powers. You have powers unknown to the humans that I do know. What puzzled me is that you



did not lose all of it.”

This had to be the only story she didn't think she would ever tell someone. She believed if she had told anyone, they would have committed her faster than anything. “Yes,” she sighed, then sat back. “I noticed when I was younger, I could move things with my mind, especially when I got mad. I used to have things floating around in a circle. It took my mind off the anger when I did it, but then there were times when my anger over took me and I hit people with things. My father was one. He made me mad and I hit him with a lamp.”

“So your father knew about this?”

“Yes, he did and he told me that normal little girls didn't do things like that. He was a physiologist and he taught me to control that unknown force. Every day I worked hard because I wanted to be normal, and if other children couldn't move things, then I didn't want to.”

Simon's black eyes went to hers. “Did you tell anyone about this?”

She shook her head. “No, never, I kept it to myself. The older I got, the more I was able to control it. I never wanted that power, and I never knew why I had it. Once my mother told me that I was a powerful witch like her, I laughed. She said that I had other powers, but my father refused to let her show me them. Just like her, she had to suppress them.”

“Did you do anything else besides make things float?”

Amanda tensed and he saw every bone in her body lock. Her eyes watered as her heart accelerated. Simon moved beside her without thought and grabbed her in his arms.

“Amanda, sweetheart, talk to me please.”

The tears rolled down her cheek, wetting his shirt as she shook her head against him. She had imagined it, she knew it. She didn't see what she thought she saw as a teenager.

“Talk to me,” he said, before lifting her head. “You can tell me anything.”

“No,” she denied. “I didn't see it.”

“What didn't you see, Amanda?”

She wiped the tears away first, then took a deep breath before she



blurted the word, "Hell."

"You saw hell?"

"Saw it?" She snorted. "The place was in my closet. The smoke, fire, heat, screaming and demons. There were all there." Again, she went quiet.

"What did you see? You have to tell me."

"I thought I saw hell in my closet. There was so much pain. I was concentrating, doing things my father said not to do. At the age of seventeen, I knew I could do things, so I practiced. My mother told me I had a gift and I wanted to see how far it went. Oh, it went far, it brought hell's gate to my closet. At first, I thought I imagined the sound. Then I looked over to my closet and red light shined from under the door. I hesitated, but the cries grew louder and the pain overwhelmed me to a point I wanted to help them. When I opened the door, fire blasted through it, throwing me backward to the ground. I looked up just in time to see a dark figure looming over me. I didn't see a face, but white eyes staring at me, scaring the crap out of me."

"Then what happened?" Simon urged.

"The winds came, gushing wind of heat filled my room. The dark figure smiled, white teeth and then it did something I never thought it would. It spoke to me. It had a dark, low, dangerous voice that I will never forget."

"What did it say to you?"

"Thank you."

"That's it? It said nothing else?"

"No, but I felt that I had let something out, something dark. I remembered a couple of figures, real humans walking out of that place. One was a man with golden hair. I don't know why, but I felt he had a mission or something to do with bringing forth a new life. Then another one got out, someone I couldn't see, but I knew he had another purpose. He wasn't supposed to escape either. The first demon wanted him out, but the demon didn't. This man he wanted to keep in hell forever." Amanda's eyes stared off as if to see what she saw that night. "Then others escaped. The figure over me frowned and then screamed before it disappeared into my closet. I lay on my floor in that



spot until the next morning. My mother came into my room and I was still there staring at that door. I never did anything else.”

\* \* \* \*

The story of a person freeing hundreds of Dark Guardians years ago was true then. He had heard it, Dark Guardians have said what it was like being trapped in hell with Nairpaha and his men for years. But he never heard about the one that wasn't supposed to escape. Maybe Amanda knew something, something far more than she really understood. “I have heard of you.”

Amanda eyes finally focused as she turned to him. “What did you say?”

“I said I heard of you. A witch, you are a full-blooded witch. You are able to free Dark Guardian's souls that Nairapha have stolen. Dark Guardians and humans were never meant to go to Nairapha's dimensions. When you die, you are destined to go into a dreamlike slumber for all eternity. It is peaceful, no bad dreams, no pain, the only thing you have to do is want it and you have it. The humans that go to Nairapha are mainly killed by Dementras and Trianes. During that time of death, Nairapha could steal a human soul without Yateichaa's knowledge. It's said that a human soul suffers for all eternity with Nairapha.”

Just seeing the little part of it she had, she never wanted to visit that place.

“No one wants to be there. Only lunatics that want to prove they are worthy of having more power. Some go there by opening gates. They beg for power that Nairapha could give them, but never does. Why would a god give you his power? He gave enough to his Juevamas, and he saw what happened. Some turned good on him.”

“Is it true?” Amanda interrupted. “That a minute on earth is a week in hell?”

“Yes. It is, but since we don't age, it doesn't matter if we go down there forever. We will never age or die. For those souls that are trapped there, you can open the gate, not like the Destroyer whose



purpose is to bring hell on earth. Your purpose is to help my kind out and humans that don't deserve to be there."

"But...but I let someone else out. Someone who was not supposed to be out."

"You don't know all of your powers. You will be able to control it to a point that Nairapha cannot come out like he did before. I can't say that it was a demon that escaped, maybe it was a human, a werewolf. It could have been anything."

His words weren't comforting at all. Why would she be responsible for letting things out of hell? Why would someone want her in charge of who can go and who must stay?

"Don't worry about it now. Once you are changed, you will be able to control it more and the fear you feel will vanish. I also want you to meet Nezar." Simon spoke again.

"Nezar? Who is he?"

"A Juevama. I would take you to see Zechariah, but I won't. The man has a mean streak like nothing I have ever seen before. But Nezar has only blasted me once in the years I have known him."

"Blasted! What do you mean by that?"

Simon laughed at her.

"Don't laugh at me, Baldwin."

"I am not laughing at you." Simon smoothed her hair back. "Juevama's powers are being stolen. When it does a Juevama doesn't die or grow old, he just has to live a normal life. They have no abilities to tell the future, which none ever do. They give you a riddle that you have to figure out. Also, they are easily killed. If they are killed by a Dementra, Nairapha gets their soul. Now if the Juevama has betrayed Nairapha, you can guess the outcome of their meeting, they go to hell."

Yes, she could. "But what if I don't want to open the door? I don't want to see that place again. Ever."

"It's nature for you not to want to. Now that you are human. Once you are changed, your fears will lessen and you will want to help those out. But before you do, I really want you to meet Nezar. He may be able to tell who you let out years ago. Maybe, you let someone out that wants to destroy the world, but if they did, don't you think they would



have done so by now?"

"I know but there was something about that man. I never saw his face, but the fear of him was there."

"I will give Nezar a call. Maybe he can meet with us tomorrow. I doubt if he has anything else to do."

"He won't try anything will he?"

"Nezar would never do anything to hurt you. What I am worried about is him trying to hit on you. The man has a way to make women fall all over him."

"Like you don't," she snapped.

"I don't and, the ones that do, I take the feelings away."

"My friends drooled over you."

"Yes, but they would never try anything with me. They are loyal to you and that's why I want them to work for me."

The conversation had ended up right where she wanted. "Are you just making up a job or do you really need them?"

"I do need more help and the smile they brought to you will be worth my hiring both of them. They will stay here close to you. I will not try to keep you away from them. The only people I will try to keep you away from are other men."

"Jealous doesn't look good on you."

Simon smiled. "And you didn't get jealous when you thought about other women lusting over me?"

"No."

"Ah, I see I have a little liar on my hands."

"I resent that."

"You would."

She asked, "When do you need them to start?"

"As soon as they can get back here."

"Are you serious?"

Simon heard hope in her voice. "Yes. As soon as they can come back, I will arrange their flight and they will start immediately."

A knock on the door interrupted their conversation.

"Come in," Amanda spoke.

Tyren pushed opened the door.



"Tyren," she said with a smile. "What brings you to my room?"

Tyren looked at his father, then back to Amanda. "I wanted to know if we could go out and eat. Barbara said it was okay with her."

Amanda looked at Simon and he seemed to understand her unasked question.

"We can go out. It's been a while since we have been out. Maybe we can take Amanda to your favorite restaurant."

Amanda looked at Tyren. "What is your favorite restaurant?"

"McDonald's," he answered with a smile.

"That's his favorite restaurant?"

"Yes, isn't it every child's favorite?"

He had a point, but would he really take her to McDonald's for their first date?

"Only because he wants to go. We will have another time to go somewhere romantic. Just me and you."

With a nod from Amanda, Tyren rushed to his room to get dressed.

An hour later Amanda sat beside Simon at their local McDonald's restaurant. Tyren had gone to order another sandwich.

Amanda knew that someone, besides Simon, was staring at her. Slowly, she looked around the restaurant. The only thing she saw was children running and playing. There were couples sitting at other booths.

"What's wrong, Amanda?"

His deep voice brought her back to reality. With a fake smile in place, she turned to him. "Nothing. I thought I felt someone watching me."

Simon slipped his arm around her. "I am sorry."

"For what?"

"This is not a romantic dinner. I wanted to take you somewhere nice, somewhere with classical music being played in the background."

"For what? I know how you feel about me. You don't have to show it by taking me to an expensive restaurant." She chuckled. "Besides, I don't think Tyren would like caviar."

"So very true. The boy eats so much meat, he frightens me that the



other side is taken over faster than I want.”

“You think it might happen?”

“I hope not. Twenty-one is a long way off.” Simon looked at her lips.

She knew he wanted to kiss her, badly. In fact, he wanted to stay home where he would be devouring every inch of her creamy skin right now. If Tyren hadn’t come to their room, he would taste those wonderful lips right now.

“You have to stop looking at me like I am a piece of meat.” Her words brought his eyes back to hers. “If you want something to eat, go order a sandwich or here...” She lifted up a French fry. “Eat this.”

Simon leaned away from the food. “My body is a temple. I do not eat such fast food. I only let Tyren eat it because he loves this junk and as I see so do you.”

“Junk!” She smiled. “This is not junk. Maybe it is to you because you are used to eating food from a fine chef like Barbara. I bet you don’t even know what a French fry tastes like.”

“I do,” he corrected. “I have eaten a lot of different food because I require the best and...”

“It makes you a snob,” she finished his sentence, then popped the French fry into her mouth.

“I don’t agree with that. I never acted in that manner.”

“Not to me. I am betting you that you would not gain weight if you ate junk food everyday for a year.”

“Actually, you are correct. I stopped growing and changing at eighteen.”

“And,” she went on. “I bet you haven’t worked out a day in your life.”

“Your perception of me is true.”

What she wouldn’t do to not have to have work out the way she had over the years. Dragging herself to the gym three times a week, watching what she ate fifty percent of the time, really tired a person out. “So you never workout?” Now the conversation about his immortality made her want to know more about what would happen to her.



Simon laughed. "Of course I have. Why do you think there is a gym in my resort? Because I don't need to, doesn't mean I don't need to do it. It helps to know the up to date moves in martial arts and it's very challenging." Then he added. "Once you are changed, this will be you forever."

The smile and thought that went through Amanda's mind made him smile. "And if you were fat and out of shape, as you called it, I would still love you. I didn't fall in love with your body. I fell in love with you, Amanda."

She smacked him on the arm. "At least let me ask the question before you answer it."

With lightening speed, he caught her hand and pulled her closer to him, before touching her lips with his.

When Amanda kissed him before it rocked him to his core, but this kiss felt like electricity running through his body. From the way she pulled away from him, he knew she felt it also.

"What was that?" she asked, still feeling the energy running through her.

Simon looked to his hands. "Our symbols were touching, if we continued to kiss, there is no way we would have been able to stop. Sex in McDonalds? We would have ruined a lot of children's lives," Simon said with a smile on his face.

"I am glad you two have stopped." Tyren sat down with a half-eaten sandwich.

Simon released her hand. "What took you so long?"

"I was talking to this group of kids in line behind me. They said they never saw me before and they wondered where I stayed and where I went to school."

"And!" Simon's voice grew louder.

"Relax, father."

Amanda laughed at how protective Simon could get sometimes.

"I did not tell them where I lived or who I was. They only know me as Ren and nothing more. I told them I lived out west and that I had a private teacher."

Amanda felt some of the anger leave Simon.



"Amanda," Tyren spoke to her. "Isn't my father a little overprotective?"

"Not getting into it."

"But come on, I almost twelve and I can't even go across the street without Mr. Dad, right by my side."

"It's for your own good," Simon said.

Amanda and Tyren were laughing.

"Look, Tyren," she spoke softly to him, as if Simon couldn't hear. "Tomorrow, when Mr. I-can't-be-up-in-the-morning is asleep, we are going to go shopping. I know he has a credit card or two lying around somewhere. We can find some new video game that's out. Then just before he wakes, we sneak the credit card back and act as if nothing happened."

Simon looked at them and both of them laughed aloud. Others in the restaurant turned to see what was so funny.

"You would do that?" Tyren asked Amanda between giggles.

"Yes," Amanda answered. "You know where he keeps them?"

"Yes I do."

"He will be keeping them in a safe if the two of you don't stop talking like he is not here," Simon finally spoke.

\* \* \* \*

Simon wasn't upset, he liked that Tyren enjoyed Amanda's company. It would do them some good to go shopping together. What Amanda did in a day wouldn't make a pinhole in his account. She could buy the entire mall and he would still have enough for a lifetime. It would be light, which is good, but then Dementra's, Trianes would be lurking around and that could put them in danger. Amanda bore the mark, his blood ran in her veins and they would know. Maybe, he would have to send Barbara or have Ramon follow them, just in case.

"Simon," Amanda tried to sound shocked. "I didn't know you were sitting there. I would not have said those things."

Simon shook his head, then pulled a credit card out of his wallet. "You don't have to steal it," he spoke, then handed it to her. "Buy want



you want, but be careful, Amanda. People know now of the mark." He knew Amanda understood exactly what he was talking about.

Without thought, she handed it back to him, or tried to. "I have money."

"I am sure you do." He took the card only to place it into her purse that sat next to them in the booth. "I don't mind and you know that. I need to spend more anyway. Buy whatever you want, if you want the entire mall, you can have it. You should not have any trouble using it."

"Okay," she said with a smile. "But you'll be sorry."

"I doubt that, sweetheart."



## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Simon wanted her, the vibes were there since they kissed at the restaurant. He knew she hadn't expected him to tear off all her clothing and have her screaming out in ecstasy in less than a minute after entering the room. This time when they made love, he held her wrist above her head, their bodies moving as one. The shock went through her body with each thrust, feeling like live electricity running through them. Both of them desperately tried to show the other how much they loved the other. Each wanting the other to feel what the other felt. From the first to the last thrust, from the feel of his fangs in her neck until he removed them and from the first taste of his blood to the last was heaven.

Now, after their fierce lovemaking, she lay on his chest as they looked out the window. Simon's hand stroked her back bringing her skin to life again. This woman was his light, nothing else could describe what he felt for her. He hadn't meant to bind her to him as he did. The call was on him. He needed to mate with her, so he did. He had to have her wild, unable to control her own need. He drove her to a point where she craved him, craved his blood and she had. She called out for him to give his blood to her. He had made a cut on his neck where she took from him. She drank deeply and he didn't stop her until a climax tore through her body.

Never in his life had he seen a more beautiful woman in the mix of their lovemaking. Never, had he been in love and at the same time frightened.



True, he had her wild and out of control, but he held himself in check. One wrong move and he would probably change. His animal counterpart would probably rip her to shreds and he could not live with himself if he killed her.

With a tap on his hand to stop, he let her move away. "Where are you going?" he asked when she headed to the connecting doors.

"I have to find my clothes. I have to go to the bathroom. I doubt walking out in the hallway naked is appropriate with others walking around."

Simon sat up in the bed. "Well, my love, you don't have to go out. The other door right there." He pointed. "Is my private bathroom."

Amanda looked at the door. She never thought there was a bathroom through that door. She thought oddly that it lead into the hallway.

\* \* \* \*

With a smile on Amanda's face, she went through the doors. Her eyebrow shot up in amazement at what she saw. Simon's bathroom was beautiful and almost bigger than his room alone.

The entire place was surrounded with mirrors. Every wall had a large mirror hanging from top to bottom on it. Brown tile lay on the floor. The gold light from the sink counter lit up the room. Real flowers and statues sat around the room.

In the middle of the floor was a large tub. She climbed the steps just to look inside it. On the side of it there lay controllers. One was marked, television, others were for the lights and Jacuzzi. One was even labeled heat to warm the water.

Amanda stepped down. She saw a large shower behind the sliding glass door, next to the tub. It had a showerhead on both walls.

After using the bathroom, she stood in front of the sink, trying to figure out where that golden light came from. She ran her hand over the cool counter top.

"Barbara designed it. I always thought it was too much."

Amanda turned to see an equally naked Simon standing behind



her. The mirrors gave her the perfect view of his body. Just seeing him made her stomach tighten and her body tremble with a need unknown. "It's beautiful and different from any I have ever seen."

She never knew what people meant by *being lost in his beauty* but now she did. The man's eyes looked as if he hungered to have her again. As she continued to look at him, his eyes darkened with raw need. He could tell when she was turned on.

"But from the way you look in here, I won't change a thing."

Amanda shivered when he moved the hair from her face. His hands slid down her arms to rest on her hips. The room began to warm or was it just her as he urged her body closer to his.

All their problems and what they had to deal with in the future vanished. What mattered at that moment was that he felt her next to him. Simon bent his head to her, touching her lips with his. A low moan escaped her, but was caught by Simon as his tongue penetrated her lips. The ground beneath them seemed to shift. His arms tightened possessively around her when she locked her arms around his neck. Both of their blood turned to lava until he knew they would go up in flames, consumed by their burning desire.

Amanda was on fire, no longer in control of herself. She wanted Simon, but she also felt him holding back, just like before.

*We have to stop.* His words were spoken in her mind.

Amanda felt his hardness against her, he wanted her, that she knew. She wanted him also so what was the problem?

*Amanda, your powers are stronger. If we don't stop you will open a gate, not that I am complaining about freeing my kind. I doubt if you want them to see you naked.*

Stop. Just like that, he wanted her to stop? Would you be able to stop if you desired a man tremendously and there were no barriers between you two? The only thing she had to do was sit on the sink so he could easily enter her.

Simon groaned at her thought. *You are not helping thinking like that.* His voice spoke to her again.

Gaining some control, she lifted his head, his mouth hovered inches from her. Both of them drowned in each other's eyes as they



looked at one another, passion clearly present. "What happened?" her voice was a whisper.

"You. Your powers," his voice rasped as he released her. "I forgot that once you have taken my blood, with your powers, you are not to lose control." Simon grabbed her hand, then led her back to bed. After they lay comfortably, he continued. "I am not sure because as I said before, from the first time we were together, your powers should have disappeared. It didn't because your mother had powers. How she got them I do not know."

Amanda watched him take a deep breath.

"Tomorrow, when you go shopping, make sure it's noon. The threat is minimum around noon. Also, call your friends and let me know when they want to come back. I will get Barbara to have Nezar meet with us tomorrow. I know he will be able to explain things to both of us better."

Amanda nodded. "So we can't finish?"

Simon shook his head in a painful answer.

She knew his body still burned for her. Just being next to him drove her crazy. "So, I have to stay this way until when?"

Simon's eyes went to hers. "Until tomorrow."

"I don't think I can wait."

"I don't either, but like I said before, it's either wait or let a couple hundred Dark Guardians and other demons see you naked."

Good point, but how could she sleep when she knew that he was still hard and waiting for her under the covers. She only had to move her leg a little more and she would surely touch him.

"Amanda!" his tone was low, but a warning could be heard. "Stop that."

"Sorry." She moved closer to him so she could lie comfortably on his chest. "So each time I take your blood I become stronger?"

"Yes, I will have to drain you, then I will replenish you with my blood for you to completely change."

Drawing small figure eights on his stomach, she asked. "Will it hurt when I am turned?"

Simon wrapped her hair around his hand and pulled so she would



look up at him. "No, your transformation would be erotic and sweet. I will make sure that you don't feel any pain. The only thing you have to worry about is me, taking advantage of you while you are changing." He hissed when she dug her nails in his chest.

"You wouldn't do that to me."

"I don't know, maybe."

She heard an evil tone in his words.

"Sleep Amanda, it is almost sunrise and you have a long day ahead of you."

Snuggling closer she closed her eyes and his steady heartbeat put her to sleep.

\* \* \* \*

Simon waited until she was sleep before dressing and leaving the room. He didn't take long to find Barbara sitting at the computer.

"I am responding to some of the people that replied to the job. Amanda said that she would help find the best person. We have to get someone in Las Vegas or you are going to have to pay someone to live close. Amanda may be quiet and sweet , but another woman moving in would piss her off."

Simon looked over at the screen.

"Man, Amanda must have done a number on you," Barbara's teasing voice spoke when she turned to him.

Simon only snarled at her.

"Are you okay? I mean look at you. You look as if you have no blood in you whatsoever. Your hair is a mess and you looked as if you will pass out at any moment."

"I am fine. The morning sun will be up soon, I guess that is why I am feeling weak. I am going back to bed. What I need you to do is get in contact with Nezar, tell him I really need him to come over to the club tonight if he can. Amanda's friends will be working for us soon. You might want to get the paperwork ready for them. I also need you to contact Ramon, ask if Anthony had him busy tomorrow, if not, I want him to follow Amanda and Tyren. They are going shopping. Amanda



has my card so get on the phone and let them know she has authorization to use it as she pleases. What?"

Barbara eyes widened at him. "You gave her your card? I know you spend money, but Tyren asked for shoes and you nearly flipped."

Simon wanted bed, not to be spending his morning talking. Feeling his Truelove up against him while he slept would be heaven. "The boy has too many shoes. He wears them a week and then wants more."

"He is a boy."

"But he doesn't go anywhere, but downstairs."

"True, that brings my next question. Why are you letting her take him out? You have not turned her yet, if she was turned, she could handle herself. Not questioning your judgment though."

Simon laughed. "That is a first. Whether you know it or not, Amanda is capable of taking of herself. Luke, the guy she wanted to marry, his mind showed me the punch she laid on him. I also looked at some, but not all of Amanda's past. When she got in trouble, her powers strengthened. The love that she has for Tyren would only fuel her power if something happened. Amanda would likely send anyone that harms him to Nairapha, which is where they need to go anyhow. Ramon is just a precaution. If he can't do it, I would like for you to."

Barbara agreed.

"Have a nice rest."

"You should get some rest also. I am sure Amanda will wake in the early morning hours."

"I will only be a few more minutes, then I will."

\* \* \* \*

Davis Travel Agency

All eyes left their computer when Luke Reeves walked into the room. Emma gasped at the sight of him. He looked as if he had a very bad night. He even limped when he walked.

"Luke, what the hell happened to your eye again?" Sheila said with a big smile on her face. It would be good if Amanda hit him again. He deserved it.



“Fuck off!” he growled as he walked up to Debbie’s desk. “Get your stuff, you are going on break.”

The only reason why Sheila didn’t say anything was to see what he wanted.

Debbie looked at Emma and Sheila.

“Well come on!” he shouted. “You want your pay or not.”

Sheilas cocked her head.

“Well!” Once again, his voice rose to an angry shout.

Debbie whispered. “No.”

Luke had already retreated for the door when he stiffened. “What do you mean no?”

“I am not your doormat anymore, Luke. You just can’t walk over me and think that every time your lover turns you down you can run to me. No! I am not going to let you do that to me.”

“What the hell are you talking about? You wanted me. I said as soon as I came back you would have me.”

Debbie bit her bottom lip, then looked at him again. “Amanda turned you down, didn’t she?”

No reply came.

“Didn’t she, Luke? That’s why you are here. If Amanda had come back with you, you would be home with her right now. From the looks of you, she must have punched you again.”

“I knew it!” Sheila said from her desk. Wait a second. If he saw Amanda that meant he was in Las Vegas. Sheila had to call Amanda, she picked up the phone. When Luke spoke, she waited before dialing the number.

“I went, yes, and she turned me down.”

Sheila replaced the receiver to listen.

“She has this brut, they were talking about getting married. I don’t know and I don’t care.”

“Simon hit you?” Sheila asked with concern. Simon was a very big man and to have him hit you would be like running into a semi truck at full speed.

Luke looked at her. “No, not Simon, the other shorter one, Ramon. I think that’s what he said his name was.”



Ramon, they didn't meet a Ramon when they were there. Sheila made a mental note to ask Amanda about this Ramon fellow and about getting married.

"Why did he hit you Luke?" Debbie's voice almost sound concerned.

Luke shrugged his shoulders. "I think Simon was going to, but Ramon jumped in to prevent it. He hit me and when I woke I was in the dark club with Simon." Luke looked at Sheila. "I don't know how you can let her stay with that man. He looks like an animal. Aren't you afraid that she is there with him?"

"No," Sheila answered. "She is safer with him than you."

"I don't know. There is something not right about him. I love Amanda, but I will never go back to her, nor will I ever look for her again. I will always hurt knowing that I will never have her." He shook his head. "Don't worry about it, Debbie. I am not in the mood anyhow." With that statement, he left.

Sheila walked over to Debbie's desk. "We will never get along, but this time I will say, I am happy at your decision. Luke is no good and will always be, but if you have feelings for him, you can go after him. Amanda has moved on. Simon is what they would say, a God in human form. I thought Luke looked good, but this man is more and one thing about Simon that I feel, he would never cheat on Amanda. Never."

Debbie looked at her. "I don't know if I should say thank you or be insulted."

"Be both," Sheila told her. "Just to be on the safe side."

Sheila went to her desk when her phone rang. "Davis Travel Agency, we book for you. This is Sheila speaking, how may I help you?"

"I am calling because I need to book a one way flight for two from Kansas City to Las Vegas, ASAP."

"Amanda!" Sheila's voice squealed with joy at her friend voice.

"Yes, Sheila," Amanda said sleepy. "Simon said that he wants you to come and work for him. I need to know when you can come and Barbara will book the plane and everything."

Sheila placed her hand on the receiver, Emma now stood in front of her. "Simon wants us to come back now. When do you think we can



leave?"

"I am already packed. We don't have to bring any furniture do we?"

Sheila removed her hand. "Do we have to bring anything besides clothing?"

"No," Amanda answered from the other end. "Only sentimental things. The rooms are already furnished."

Sheila looked back at Emma. "She said nothing but clothing, pictures, things like that. I already talked to Darrell and he said that he would come in a week or so."

"So tell her to book it for us." Emma looked at her clock. "Around four, that's five hours from now. It should be enough time to say, *I quit* then go home and pack."

"Around five, Amanda, we will be ready."

"Great! I will tell her and your flight will be ready to go."

"Okay. See you in a couple of hours."

"See you later," Amanda said, before hanging up.



## CHAPTER NINETEEN

Amanda looked over at the clock and groaned. Nine in the morning and, with only a couple hours of sleep, anyone would be grumpy. Simon had her locked to the bed with his arm around her waist. She only managed to move just enough to grab the phone. “Simon, I know you sleep like the dead,” she whispered. “But if I am to take Tyren shopping I have to get up first.”

No reply.

Once again, she tried to move his arm, but moving a house would be easier. “Simon, I know you can hear me.” A little louder, “Simon Baldwin, let me go or I’ll do something...”

“Like what?” came his sleepy reply. “If I was dead you would be sure to bring me back.”

“I have to get up.”

Silver eyes went to her. Just looking at him let her know that he needed rest.

“Is it bad during the day?”

“Not usually, but I haven’t given blood before so that’s probably why I am so tired.” He removed his arm. “Have fun.”

“I will.” She moved to go and try out the big bathroom. Just thinking about soaking in the tub made her insides tingle.

After dressing, she gave Simon a kiss, then went to eat breakfast. Tyren sat at the table gulping down a plate of link sausages. “You can eat a lot for someone so young.” She couldn’t say small because nothing about Tyren looked small.



He didn't resemble the tiny, skinny little boys at the age of eleven. His shoulders were wide, even at his age he had a small but noticeable muscular sculpture. The boy could pass for a teenager already.

"I am a growing boy. Besides, I love meat better than anything. That's why Barbara cooks it for me."

"Good morning," Barbara said and sat a plate down in front of Amanda.

"Good morning." Amanda's eyes went to the eggs, sausage and toast. Then a frown formed on her face. In some way she didn't want that, she wanted what flowed through Simon. Her stomach growled at the thought of taking his blood again.

"It's like that after you drink," Barbara said before removing the plate. "You will not want anything but his red wine, so to say. After you finally drink enough, you will go back to your normal eating habits. As for now, try the coffee, it helps for a little while."

"Thanks," she said, then looked at Tyren.

"Are you feeling up to going shopping, Amanda? You looked pale when you looked at the food. Are you getting a cold?"

Amanda smiled at the boy's worry. She could feel the vibes from him stronger than before. "I'm fine. I am just not hungry and if you don't want that new game, then we can stay here all day."

"No! I want it. I am ready to go now."

Amanda heard Barbara laughing in the background. "Oh, Barbara, I forgot. Could you get a flight from Kansas for my friends around five? Simon wants to hire them."

"He already gave me the heads up on them. I just need to know their names and the flight will be ready for them."

"Sheila Freeman and Emma Stewart."

"Got it. The maid will be up to clean later, is it okay for her to go into your room? She usually comes late at night, but she needed the night off."

Amanda's face brightened. The room didn't need to be cleaned. She didn't sleep there last night.

"Enough thought. I'll tell her not to come."

"I really hate it went you all do that." Amanda did hate went they



read her mind.

"We know," Barbara told her.

"Come on, Tyren, we have a lot of shopping and a card that has no limit."

Tyren jumped up and followed her out room.

If she had to carry one more bag, she knew her arm would break. They had been shopping for hours and most of this stuff belonged to Tyren. For some reason, she didn't feel right buying stuff for her. She didn't need much anyhow. "Tyren, I have to sit," Amanda said out of breath. "I think we need to go home and drop some of these things off."

"If you want to," he said, but didn't look back. "But I like it out here. I can be myself when I am with you. My father wants me to stand straight. Speak with proper English and no running."

Amanda knew that he never got out and this time would bring their already close bond closer.

"I can help you with those,."

A voice spoke from behind Amanda. Without thought, her powers seem to form, ready to strike if needed. "Ramon," she said relieved, calming her powers. "What are doing here?"

"I am shopping," he said, collecting the piles of bags in front of her. "I mean I love clothing, but how many bags of clothing do you need?"

She placed the remaining bags on the floor. "I don't, this is Tyren's stuff."

"Hello, Ramon. Is Anthony around?"

Ramon shook his head. "I can take these to my limo outside," he offered. "Then you can have more room to shop."

"Thanks," she said to him.

"Not a problem. I'll take these and we can finish shopping together. Where were you headed?"

"To the Music Shop. They have all types of video games and music," Tyren spoke.

"I'll meet you there in ten minutes."

"Okay," she spoke then let Tyren pull her up by the arm. Amanda



had to almost run to keep up with Tyren. The Music Shop lit up the entire left wing of the mall. Multihued light showed almost too bright for her eyes. From the outside Amanda spotted on the left a place where kids hung out, playing video games the other side had thousands of CD. They had sectioned it off by the music and video games.

“Let’s go in,” Tyren said loudly, but not as loud as the music when it blasted through the opened door as a customer walked out.

Amanda jumped at what could be no other than rock and roll blasting through the speakers.

\* \* \* \*

Tyren didn’t care at how loud the music played. He walked in, and over to the section he wanted.

Amanda followed trying to get her ears to tune out the loud music.

Tyren stopped dead in his tracks. The hairs on the back of his neck standing up.

“Tyren, what’s wrong?” Amanda asked.

Without answering, he looked around, trying to see what had his attention.

“Tyren,” Amanda touched his shoulders. “What’s the matter?”

“I don’t know,” he spoke over the music. “I felt someone watching us, mostly you. Someone is after you, Amanda. I feel it.”

“What do you feel?”

“Someone wants you, their mind is not right. Amanda, you have to stay away from that person.” Another scan and he still came up empty. Tyren’s body loosened up. The threat must have moved on.

“There you two are,” Ramon spoke as he walked in.

They both turned to him, the look on their faces told Ramon that something was not right. “What’s wrong?”

*It’s not him, Amanda, don’t worry, Ramon would never hurt you. My father would do something to him if something happened to you. He is like us.*

Amanda’s eyes widened.

*I know you can hear me, my father talks to you this way also. He*



*talks to me the same way sometimes.*

"Tyren had a bad vibe," she told Ramon.

"Are you all right? Is it still here?"

Tyren shook his head, then turned to Amanda. "You heard me right?"

"Yes," Amanda knew what he asked. "I didn't know you knew how. I knew you could read feelings."

"It's okay, Amanda, he is a smart little boy and he knows when to stop showing off." Ramon firmly looked at Tyren.

"I do and now I am going to get my tape so we can go home."

"You are ready to go?" Amanda asked almost too excited. "Thank God! There is a God in heaven that looks down upon me and knows that my feet can't take more of this walking."

Both Tyren and Ramon laughed.

"She is funny," Tyren told Ramon. "That's why my father loves her."

"I can see that."

Amanda followed Tyren over to the video game section.

\* \* \* \*

Manuel knew Amanda's scent the moment he entered the mall. Sweet vanilla flavored skin, topped off with a hint of lust. The scent from Simon on her sickened him. He could smell him all over her. But not for long, soon she would be his and his alone. He was getting ready to approach her when he caught another smell. His son! Tyren was there with her.

Instead of going up to her, he blended back into the shadow of one of the shelves. Tyren was his, no doubt. His long golden hair hung loose to his shoulders. The boy's hazel colored eyes showed brightly as he looked around the store. No doubt, Simon had let them go on a shopping spree.

"Why don't you just grab her and let's go. I can smell her. She can open the gate."

"I know," Manuel said to his brother Resniel who stood beside



him. "I know she can. I didn't know it at first, but she is the one that released us years ago."

"Are you sure?" Resniel's golden eyes went to his brother.

"Yes I am. That's who let us out. Nairapha had been looking for a way to let us out for years. He said that he saw potential in you and me and if I would send him plenty of souls, we would be free. I agreed and since then I have sent him enough souls to last a life time. He would be happy to see me."

Resniel growled. "So why are we here in the shadows like we are afraid of her? The woman is meant to be yours. Get her before that Dark Guardian changes her. If he does, you know that she will be lost to you forever."

"I know, but look at the child she is with."

Resniel looked up to see a boy with golden hair like theirs. "Tyren," he said in surprise. "It's your son. This is your chance to get the boy."

"No! Not yet."

"Why the hell not? Why not go and stop hiding like some vampire. We are werewolves and we don't hide in the shadows of a music store."

"True, but what will happen if we go up to her and he starts screaming, vice versa?"

"I'll get the boy then."

"And how are we going to drag the two of them out of here screaming and kicking for their lives. Do you not know the attention we will draw? I will wait for the perfect opportunity."

"Fine, brother, but if she is turned, she is lost to you."

"Then I will kill her," he snarled. "I can't believe the Dark Guardian who I wanted to kill for years is the Truelove of the woman that freed me from hell and she is raising my son. I guess fate loves to play games."

"Not me, not ever. Let's go and find some woman to sink our teeth into. I'm hungry and not for food."

The thought of having Amanda under him appealed to him more than any other woman, but now a slight change in plans was in order.



He had to find a way to get both of them. "All right let's wait until they have left the store. I don't want Amanda to see me, not yet. When I finally have her, she won't know what hit her. If she is changed to one of those vampires, I will still have her once, that's all I need."

Resniel patted him on the shoulder. "I like the way you think, brother. At first, I did not know why you ran behind some human, now I know. You wanted to pay her back for letting you out. One night with you is enough time to pay her back."

Manuel smiled at the thought of Amanda's body squirming underneath his. His body already began to swell. "All I needed was you putting that image in my head." Manuel stood when Amanda, Tyren and Ramon walked out. "Now I need to find a woman for the night."

"Then I feel sorry for the woman."

Manuel looked at him. "Why?"

"Because she is not the woman you want, she will pay a price for that. Make sure she is satisfied before ripping her apart. It's no fun if you don't make her enjoy it."

"I'll keep that in mind."

"May I help you find something," a woman's voice spoke to them.

Both Manuel and Resniel turned to the young woman.

Just what he needed, young, cute maybe in her early twenties. She had long black hair, brown eyes, nicely shaped. Manuel's eyes went to the front of her shirt. Nice firm breasts. "I see I have already found what I am looking for," Manuel spoke. "I am Manuel and I would love to take a break with you so we could... ummm... talk."

"I am Jessica and I will be off in a couple of minutes."

"Great," Manuel said with a smile. "I'll wait right here and I'll send my brother away."

"Be back in a moment," the woman told him.

"Okay, Jessica."

They both watch her walk away.

"A bit young isn't she?" Resniel asked.

"She isn't a virgin if that's what you are referring to."

"I can tell that. She might not have the experience that you need to satisfy your hunger."



“Oh I know she will, if I have to spend all day and night teaching her. I will meet you later. I am about to find out if Jessica lives alone or does she have a roommate. You know the *saying the more the merrier*. ”

“I will meet you at the hotel later. I have to find someone that won’t mind scratching me behind the ears.”

“Until then, brother.” Manuel watched as Resniel left the store. “Are you ready?” he said in a sexy voice when Jessica walked back up to him.

“Yes. I want to stop off home to change if that’s good with you.”

Just his luck, he didn’t have to ask, she would take him there. In one word, perfect. “I don’t mind. Lead the way.”

\* \* \* \*

Amanda saw Simon standing in hallway as they made it back to the apartment. Her Amanda’s throat went dry when she saw Simon, standing in silk black pajama pants, his equally black shirt opened showing his chest that she loved to touch. “What are you doing up so early?”

Simon wrapped his arms around her waist. “I can’t sleep without you by my side.”

“Good evening, father.” Tyren spoke.

“Good evening,” Simon greeted. “I know that bags cannot walk on their own, so I am assuming that Ramon is carrying them for you?”

“Yes,” a muffled sound came from under the bags. “Where to Amanda?”

“Take them to Tyren’s room. Seventy five percent of them are his anyhow.”

Tyren smiled, then showed Ramon to his room.

“I have to go and take a nice soothing bath,” Amanda told him before moving out of his hold. “And I don’t need you to join me, with all those little things playing around in your head. Forget it.”

Simon grabbed her arm, “We have an appointment with Nezar later. I made sure that the VIP section is closed off to everyone but us



tonight. Once the doors are closed, no noise can get in. Also, I have to make an appearance tonight. I have been preoccupied lately and I don't want my guests and staff to think that I am neglecting them."

Amanda nodded. "I'll be ready. And you still can not join me." With that, she pulled her arm and he let go.

\* \* \* \*

"If I can draw your attention away from your Truelove's backside just for a minute I have to tell you something."

Simon looked up as Ramon made his way back up to him. "Go ahead, Ramon."

"Your boy had a feeling that someone was after Amanda. I tried to see if someone was around, but came up blank. What I can say is that you need to change her and change her fast. When she is, the threat is less."

"I already know that, but I can't, not tonight. Her friends will be on their way in a few minutes. I will make sure that their workload is less so they will be able to stay up at night with Amanda. It's going to be hard to convince them that Amanda has to make appearances with me at night and that she has to help run this place."

"They will understand."

"I hope so," Simon said as he tightened the band that held his hair together. "For now I have to make a surprise visit to the bathroom."

Ramon headed toward the kitchen.

\* \* \* \*

"Hello, Barbara," Ramon spoke when Barbara walked out of her room.

"Ramon," she sneered.

"Oh come on, are you ever going to forgive me? Anyhow how could you be mad with the best sex you have had in years? It wasn't like I was the only one enjoying it."

"Ramon, leave."



Ramon pouted. "For you, my love I will leave. I just hope that you will not think of our night of lust was merely the blood and wines doing. I do like you and hopefully you will see that one day."

Barbara didn't say anything. She only watched him walk down the dark carpet and out the door.

The night they were together was hot, but she didn't have time for lust right not. Now, she had to take care of her job and make sure Tyren made it to his twenty first birthday without turning into a werewolf. If he did change and became a killer, Simon would likely be the one to have to kill him, but only if Tyren killed for fun.

"Are you ever going to forgive that man?" Simon asked as the elevator doors closed.

"No, he slipped something in my drink. I know it," she spoke, but never turned to Simon.

"Maybe it was just you. It was years ago, you could at least be friendly."

"No, I don't like Ramon." Without looking back, she headed to her room.



## CHAPTER TWENTY

Amanda sat in the tub as warm water splashed around her. The scented, raspberry bath beads had the entire bathroom smelling sweet. Tyren could wear anyone down. She loved to walk and shop, but her feet weren't ready for her little adventure today. Sighing she pressed the button and a nineteen inch television came up from beside the tub. If she didn't know, what luxury felt like before, now she did. To go and spend as much she wanted, living in a hotel that she practically owned and having a man who loved her and would never cheat on her. What woman wouldn't love it?

When cool air came from the door being opened she already knew who it was. She hadn't expected him to give her warning. She looked at him as he sat on the side of the tub. In his hand were two glasses and a bottle of wine. "Trying to seduce me I see," she said as he opened the bottle.

"No, love, nothing along those lines." He pressed the button for the television and it sunk back down into the floor.

"Hey, I was watching that."

"Do you always watch the Spanish channel?" he teased before pressing the music button.

Amanda listened as a saxophone began playing in the background. "I thought you weren't trying to seduce me?"

"I am not." Simon opened the bottle. "I know how tiresome Tyren can be. This is only pampering you. Nezar should be here in a couple of hours. Tyren is going to be playing his game the rest of the night and



I plan on making sure you are relaxed before we make our first public appearance as husband and wife.”

Simon poured her a glass of wine. Amanda watched as the red liquid poured into the glass. At first, she thought it was blood, until the alcohol assaulted her nose. When Simon offered her the glass, she took it, taking a sip while he poured himself some.

Simon had drifted off in his own little world, so to say. He thought about her being his savior and the love of his life.

She could feel his emotions as strongly as if they were hers. Amanda sent a spray of water his way to stop him from thinking. “Stop thinking so much, you are going to give me a headache.”

“Sorry, I was only thinking about how much I love you.”

“I love you also, but that still doesn’t mean you can get in.”

Simon smiled. “If I promise to behave can I get in?”

He said it, but she didn’t believe him. “Okay, but nothing is going to happen, right?”

“I promise nothing will happen that you don’t want to.” Simon stood and removed his shirt, then his pants.

Amanda almost reached out and touched his body when he stood naked in front of her. She watched him slide down in the warm water on the other end of the tub.

Simon reached down and grabbed her feet. Amanda thought he was going to move her leg, but he began massaging it instead. Her head fell back and she couldn’t contain the moan that left her lips as he rubbed and applied pressure to the correct spots.

“It would be helpful if you didn’t try to seduce me with your sounds, Amanda.”

Her head came back up to look into his eyes. “You are not funny, you know that.”

Simon’s teeth sparkled as he eased one leg down, then reached for the other foot. The music in the background only fueled the romantic tension in her. Along with Simon’s help, the water soothed her aching muscles as well.

\* \* \* \*



Simon's gaze followed the beads of perspiration running between her breasts, disappearing into the warm water. The way she looked right now made his need stronger. Her skin red from the warm water, her body temperature heated from his touch. She had her head resting on the towel behind her head and her breasts just screaming at him to be touched. "You are so beautiful to me." His hands skimmed over her leg and he moved up so he could rub her thigh.

"Thanks," she said not looking at him. "You aren't so bad yourself."

He wanted to touch her, but he also wanted a time where she would have a chance to explore his body. Every time he touched her, he had to take her right then and there, never leaving time for touching her like he wanted. Another moan left her lips.

Amanda lifted her head to meet silver eyes, which he knew glowed with raw need. How was it that only hours ago he made love to her and now he wanted her, again? And then after he had her, he would want her yet again.

"Why is that, Simon?" she asked his unspoken question.

"It's the bond. Over the years it burns brighter. The love we have can only grow. The love that I feel for you will never die. You are my Truelove and I am yours. Nothing will come between us."

Amanda sat up which made him let go of her thigh. She moved forward until she pressed her mouth against his. Sex wasn't part of the plan when he wanted a bath, but Amanda stirred something in him that no other would ever be able to.

His hand circled her waist, pulling her closer to his body. He felt her, already pulsing with need, but she would not give in to his demand so easily. She wanted to touch him and for him to touch her all over.

\* \* \* \*

First, her wet warm hand touched the side of his face. She moved her hand to his neck, a scrape of her nail made him tremble, but he sat still to let her explore. "I wonder what it is about vampires and necks?"



she said just before she leaned over and kissed his neck. When she didn't get a reply, she bit down, not hard, but hard enough to leave a mark.

"I don't know," he finally said.

Amanda looked as the bruise on his neck healed right before her eyes. She reached up, making sure she hadn't imagined it.

"I heal much faster than humans. If I break something, a day's rest with the proper amount of blood will heal me."

Amazed but not wanting to go into that type of conversation, she moved lower. His chest, hard underneath her exploring fingers, at the same time soft to her touch, she felt his muscles flex under her butterfly touch. She almost smiled when he took in a deep breath as she scraped her fingernail across his nipple. Simon's control had to have snapped when his hand reached up and touched the ring on her clit.

"Stop that!" She moved his hand. "You be still and let me explore." Amanda figured out something since she had gotten the piercing, once healed, they are forgotten when there aren't touched. Second, when that one was touched, she could almost orgasm on contact.

"You are going to kill me."

"What a way to go," she told him.

Amanda bent down, kissing his chest. The golden tongue ring seemed to heighten her touch. Her hand took a downward path until she gripped his cock in her hands. She wasn't surprised that her fingers didn't touch. She knew from the first time how big he was. His shaft jumped, then grew thicker in her hand. "Sit on the edge," she ordered.

Simon didn't hesitate to move. He emerged from the warm water.

Amanda could see the steam rising off his body as he sat on the top step in the tub. Before she moved to him, she took a sip of the cold red wine. She kept it in her mouth until she made it back to him. She only swallowed when she took the tip of him in her mouth.

Simon's hips buckled when the cool metal touched his heated flesh.



Her name flew from his lips as she took him deeper into her warm mouth. Amanda loved that she had this type of power over Simon. He moaned loudly when she took him deep into her throat. As she moved up and down on his cock, his hips moved to let her take more of him into her mouth.

A strong hand grabbed her hair when she reached down and grabbed his testicles, squeezing them, pulling another moan followed by a growl. He didn't have to tell her how close he was, she knew it. Simon stayed in her mind most of the time and now it didn't bother her when he was there. And she knew this was not all he wanted. He wanted to be deep in her when he came. Taking her with him as they both soared in new heights of pleasure. Not this time, this time he wouldn't get what he wanted.

"Amanda, love, you have to stop before..."

It was too late. Amanda hummed deep in her throat, making it vibrate around him. An involuntary buckling came followed by a pleasure cry of her name before his seed filled her mouth.

Amanda thought about pulling away, never had she swallowed, not even when Luke begged her to. But with Simon, it was different, she wanted to take him down her throat and she did. Simon's hand held her closer, at the same time, trying to pull her away from him when his body jerked and his seed filled her mouth.

Amanda did not let a drop of him escape her lips. When she looked up at Simon, his eyes were shut tight, his hand in her hair just as tight as the hand that held the side of the tub. Satisfied with her job, she released his still hard as a rock flesh.

Simon let go of her hair before sliding down into the water.

Amanda didn't have time to gloat before she felt his mouth on hers. Simon's tongue didn't hesitate to penetrate her lips. Amanda hadn't noticed it at first, but doing Simon had her more turned on that having him deep inside her.

"You didn't have to do that, you know," he said against her lips.

"I wanted to make you feel the way you make me feel. I knew you wanted it, at the same time, you didn't want to cum without me." She smiled. "Trust me, I know you will make sure that I will before this



night is over.” Amanda stood, but his hand stopped her.

“Where do you think you are going?”

“I am going to get dressed. Its night and I am turning into a prune in here.” Again, she tried to move, but Simon refused her. “Simon I have to get out or my skin will make me look like an eighty year old woman.”

“You think you are slick, don’t you?” Simon pressed her back until her back touched the other side of the tub. “Get me started, then let me suffer the night.” Simon shook his head.

Amanda felt his fingers playing with the ring. She closed her eyes, already feeling her walls trembling from denied pleasure.

“I don’t think so,” he said smiling against her neck. “You are so close right now, aren’t you, Amanda?” His thumb pressed down on the bundle of nerves when no answer came.

Amanda sucked air through her clenched teeth.

“Aren’t you?” He nipped at her ear. “I only have to slip one finger inside you and you will cum, won’t you?”

Amanda’s head went from side to side. She only teased him and wanted to leave him wanting her more, but he would have to wait until later. After they talked to Nezar and made their appearance. Then they would come back and make love until the morning sun rose.

“That can still happen, and will happen, Amanda,” he said reading her thoughts. “But, you will suffer just...like...me.”

Before she could protest, he kissed her hard, his finger penetrated her. Amanda couldn’t think, she couldn’t say anything. The man knew how to play her like a fine tuned piano and he obviously didn’t need any more practice.

Amanda’s eyes closed tightly, white light flashed behind her lids. Her moans were lost in his mouth. Her legs opened wider as she soared higher and higher in a world she knew she would never be able to come back from.

His fingers quickened, drawing out her orgasm to a point she didn’t know where the first one ended and the second one began. Only when he felt her flesh stop quivering around his fingers, did he release her lips and remove his finger.



Amanda opened her eyes to see the man that had just rocked her to the core—twice and she wanted nothing more than to jump on his bone that she knew was hard just below the water's surface. To her, Simon knew how to play this little game better than her. Much, much better.

"Now, we can go and get dressed."

The *F* word sat on the tip of her tongue. What's the use in cursing him out when she was the blame for starting this little game? "This isn't over," she told him.

"I am hoping that it's not. I am beginning to enjoy this little animal you bring out in me." Simon reached over, pressing the button to stop the music. "I would enjoy taking this to another level, but I have to tell you Nezar is an impatient man and I feel his energy drawing nearer. You can, too, if you concentrate."

And she did feel it. Power, more powerful than anything, stronger, than anyone she has experienced. Never before could she feel this, now she could feel everything, at the same time control it.

"You do feel it, don't you?"

"Yes," she said, watching him get out of the water. "Is that Nezar?"

"No one other than him," he spoke, then helped her out. "What you feel with him is what other Juevama's feel when you or I come near. The energy within us is what draws other creatures near. Nezar may not be the oldest, but he is the strongest one I have met. After tonight, maybe he will make clear to you, your powers." As he spoke, he took a fluffy white towel and began drying her off.

"You know if you start this, you will have to do it every day."

Simon chuckled as he went to his knees. "If you want me to dry you off every night, love, I will. If that will make you happy, I will do anything for you. If you want me to move a mountain for you, I will try until I succeed. Your happiness is all that concerns me now. I will not go out and be the Dark Guardian I used to be. My job is to protect humans and that is what I will do. But you will be my first priority. Anthony is here to protect this city now, more will come soon."

Amanda moaned when he stood and dried her breasts.

"You are my life and I will always love you." Once Simon finished



he wrapped the towel around her.

\* \* \* \*

Amanda dried her hair with the blow dryer, then headed to her room to dress. She had a nice outfit she could wear, but it was in Tyren's room. First, she would slip on something, then go and retrieve her things.

As she walked through Simon's room, she saw him sitting on the bed. He had put on black dress pants and a white dress shirt. Lying behind him was a black jacket. It wasn't a suit, but the outfit looked good on him.

They smiled at each other as she made her way into her room. When she walked into her room, she gasped because there, lying on her bed were several white boxes. She turned back and looked into Simon's room, then looked back on the bed. Amanda already knew Simon had done this. Arms circled her waist, catching her off guard. "What is all of this?" she asked, leaning back into his embrace.

He kissed the side of her neck. You won't find out until you open them."

Amanda pulled out of his embrace and went to the big box first. In all her years, a man has never brought her anything without her knowing about it.

Opening the first box, she gasped. She had never seen a dress as beautiful as this. It had black cups in the front with contrasting white satin. On the back, elegant rhinestone detailed the dramatic open back. It flowered into a spectacular black train.

"I can't accept this, Simon, this had to cost a lot," she spoke, then laid the dress on the bed. "You already let me shop as I pleased."

Simon walked up to her. "I cannot accept no as an answer. I had Barbara go and pick this up for you. When I saw it, I knew Barbara had picked out the right dress."

Amanda looked at the dress and knew it was only the beginning of things to come from Simon. "Thank you," she said, then kissed him briefly.



"You are welcome, now open the rest."

Amanda opened the next to the largest box; there were a pair of clear sandals in it. It had a clear strap that went over the top of her foot and around her ankle. Next she opened the final box. In it was what couldn't be real diamonds, but knowing Simon, they were.

"This is what they call an eternity necklace with matching earrings." Simon, said then took it out of the box for her. "It has ninety-nine round, cut diamonds around it."

Amanda let him place it around her neck.

When he fastened it, he looked at her. "I knew it would look beautiful on you."

Amanda had seen this necklace in the jewelry store down the street from the mall. The thing cost. Her eyes went wide, she remembered the price at seventy-thousand dollars. The earrings were just as much. Her hands went up to take it off, but Simon stopped her.

"Amanda, please don't," he pleaded. "Money is nothing to me. For you to have the best, I will get you anything you want."

"But, Simon, this is seventy-thousand dollars. I saw it in the window."

"And it's nothing compared to you. I see in your mind, Amanda, even when I am at rest. I saw the way your eyes lit up when you looked at it. When you went into the room, I called for it to be delivered, hoping that it would get here before you dressed for tonight."

"But I didn't get you anything."

The corner of his mouth tugged up. "You being here is enough. Now get dressed, my friend has arrived." Simon stopped, then turned back to her. "I forgot one thing."

Amanda watched as he reached into his pocket.

"If you walk up to any Dark Guardian, any demon, anyone of power they will know that we are married. The connection we have is far stronger than papers. We will be together forever and I will never let you go. But there are mortals that do not know of our love. I would love for you to wear this to let them know of our love."

Simon placed a small box in her hand. With trembling fingers, she opened it to see a platinum five-stone diamond band in the box.



“I am not fond of gold. I hope that you would wear this. I want you to be known as my wife and, if you want a big wedding, we can have one. It’s up to you.” Again, he reached into his pocket and pulled out a band for his hand.

Amanda was near crying at this moment. She didn’t know what to say, so instead of talking, she kissed him. All the love she felt for him, she poured into that kiss. “I will,” she told him between kisses.

Simon grabbed her hand and placed the ring on her finger. “I love you.”

“I love you.” With another kiss, she watched him go back into his room. Amanda smiled. She did her hair, after that she applied just a little makeup. She took off the gold earrings and replaced them with the ones Simon brought.

After applying lotion to her skin, she dressed. She didn’t know how he knew, but the dress fit perfectly. It hung loose were needed, and hugged the curves that needed to be hugged. Simon would get a treat for this tonight.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Simon stood in the hallway talking to Tyren and Barbara when Amanda walked out of the room. The three of them froze at the beauty walking toward them. Amanda had her hair pinned up, away from her long, lovely neck. She had on the jewelry and the dress he had purchased. He almost wanted her to go and change. He wanted to show her off, not have every man panting after her.

"I told you it would fit," Barbara whispered to him. "Always get it a half size smaller."

Simon only groaned as she walked toward them. For a moment, his eyes went to Tyren to see him staring at Amanda.

"Amanda, you look pretty," Tyren said to her.

"Thanks, Tyren."

"I have to give it to them, Amanda. You look great," Barbara jumped in. "Simon is going to be pissed at all the male attention you will get tonight. If you find yourself a handsome man tonight, don't hesitate to leave with him."

Amanda couldn't help but laugh when Simon turned to growl at Barbara.

"Come on, Simon, you know that I am only joking."

"You better be," he said before looking back at Amanda. "You are beautiful, Amanda. I am about to cancel our event for this evening and keep you all to myself."

Amanda bit her bottom lip. "Thank you."

"You are quite welcome. Are you ready?"



Amanda nodded.

Simon linked his arm around hers, then headed to his private elevator.

Simon looked at Amanda as they stood at the door of the club. He opened the door to let her walk in first. Once he entered, the music stopped. Everyone turned to them.

“Ladies and gentleman, it is my pleasure to introduce Mr. Baldwin and his new wife. Please put your hands together for this wonderful couple.”

Amanda had never in her life been so shamefaced, but now with all eyes on them, she felt a little naked.

The crowd clapped and the music began again.

“Welcome, Mr. Baldwin,” the guy standing in front of the VIP section spoke.

Simon nodded, letting her walk in first, then he followed. The glass door slid back in place and the room went silent. The music on the other side did not penetrate into the VIP section.

“It wouldn’t.” He led her to the large soft chair. “If you want to look at television, the music will not interrupt. Now if you want the music, there is a button somewhere in here that will let the music in.”

Amanda laughed when he poured a glass of wine for them.

“What is so funny?” he asked, handing her the glass.

“Well,” she started, then waited for him to sit beside him. “I thought that vampires were mystical creatures that loved to hide in the shadows and do not like to be known. You are different.”

“I am. In this day and age, why should we hide, because humans don’t understand us? No, I don’t think so. For centuries, I hid underground, sleeping deep underneath the soil. No one knew of me. Nothing. I changed after Karen’s death. I no longer lived in solitude. Think about it, Amanda, the ones that hide, are the ones the DPS are always after.”

Confused, Amanda looked at him. “What is DPS?”

“Division of Paranormal Studies or paranormal hunters. They are a group of people who have one thing on their mind, kill anything not human. If my people would look at it, the ones that are off to



themselves and live in a home hundreds of miles from anyone, and they are only seen at night. Those are the ones the hunters go after first. But when you live in the spotlight, you have a better chance of them leaving you alone. In truth, I haven't seen a DPS van around here in years and I don't expect to see one anytime soon."

\* \* \* \*

Amanda took a sip and nodded at his explanation. It does make sense what he says. If she were a detective, then she would look for those that lived alone and were never seen. They are the perfect candidate to be a vampire. The door opened again and Amanda nearly choked on her drink when Nezar's powers came through the door before he did.

"Simon."

Amanda saw the five-feet-eight inch tall man come into the room. His red hair crew cut short, almost bald. His green eyes looked over to her and he smiled, wide.

"Nezar, this is Amanda," Simon introduced.

Amanda saw Simon stand in front of Nezar when he approached her.

"Don't fret, Simon. I will never hurt your Truelove." The door slid closed. "What a beautiful woman you are, Amanda. Simon does you no justice."

"Thanks," was all she could say. Nezar's powers had her immobilized. "I am pleased to meet you."

"I am also pleased to meet the one that has finally found my friend's heart," he told her, then sat in front of her. "Simon, you may sit. If I planned on doing anything to you, you would be up and molded to the wall by now."

Simon growled, then sat.

"Amanda, do you have a last name besides Baldwin?"

"Yes, Duncan."

"Duncan. Where did you live before?"

"I lived in Blue Springs Kansas."

"And you came here why?"



He's nosy as hell. Simon didn't even ask that many questions.

"I am not Simon, my dear. The reason for the questions is for me to help you open up. I am here not only to help my friend Simon, but to help others." Nezar sat back in the chair.

"I came here to teach, Tyren."

"What a lovely boy. How is he these days, Simon? Eating a lot of meat I presume."

Simon nodded.

"Tell him I say hello. As for you, Amanda, I see that you bear his mark, neck and wrist. You have taken his blood, bonded with him." Nezar turned to Simon. "I told you that giving her your blood will not change her into a werewolf."

"I know. At the time it happened I didn't think about it."

"I knew you would not." Again, green eyes went to her. "Simon is worried about you, Amanda. He wondered why you didn't lose your powers after your first sexual encounter. The reason why is because your mother is a natural witch. She studied witchcraft and she perfected it before she got pregnant. That energy, that power, was transferred to you the moment you were conceived. Now the confusing part. You were born a Truelove, Simon is your mate. Your powers as a Truelove should have depleted it. That's what all Dark Guardian's think."

Amanda stared at him.

"Every Truelove has psychic abilities. They can hear thoughts, feel emotions and talk to others by mind. I know you and Simon have, have you not?"

Amanda nodded.

"Having that type of power is enough to help bring you over without losing your soul. With those powers, your soul is strong and stubborn, so to say. When you do your final blood exchange, you will not have to worry about losing your soul. With Trianes they don't have those abilities and they have to be killed, especially if given the wrong type of blood. Going back to the subject of you," he said with a smile. "Not all Trueloves have powers like you, nor have the powers to open gates, you have both. Every Destroyer loses her powers when she mates



with her Dark Guardian, but not you. You can still open the gate and free souls with the right amount of practice. It comes from your mother passing down her powers. I felt your powers last night, Amanda. You almost opened a gate, but I am sure Simon stopped you."

"Yes," she said. "He did."

"I am glad he had, with his blood running through you, you would have opened a gate that would have taken a lot of concentration to close. Concentration in which you are not ready to study yet."

"I thought that to open gates and to summon things of the night, you needed candles, crosses, herbs and other things like that."

Laughter roared out of Nezar's mouth. "That night when you saw Nairpaha, did you have any candles lit?"

Amanda shook her head.

"Nor did you know any magical words and other junk like that. Only thing it takes is you. Your concentration can open the gate anywhere, your blood will help anyone out."

"Amanda's blood," Simon said with anger in his voice.

"Yes, her blood. It can let demons out. Pray that you never go there because when you do, demons will tear into you so they can escape."

The thought of being trapped in that place made her shiver. Amanda would never want to visit it. Never.

"It's good to know that you are on our side. I hope that answers your question about her still having powers. Once she is turned, it will all come to you. The understanding about Dark Guardians, Juevamas as myself, Trianes and how they can become Dementras and about other demons. It may take years for you to fully understand all of this, Amanda, but think about it, you have a life time to learn."

Amanda smiled.

"Simon, I must say again, this women of beauty deserves better than you."

A giggle escaped her lips when Simon once again snarled at him.

"Keep your growling to yourself, Simon. I have not zapped you in a while. Oh! I also heard you went to what's his face, how is he doing?"

"Zechariah?"

"Yes, I heard that he let some Dementra steal his powers."



“Yes but whoever did, didn’t take all of it. The man had me up against the wall, and that was after a couple of bolts to the shoulder.”

“Just like Zechariah, I will have to go and see him someday. Serves you right getting zapped, you went unannounced.”

“I did, only because he is the hardest person to get into contact with.”

“True,” Nezar stood. “Why didn’t you go to your Nodoro? They are the first person of contact.”

“I know and you know how I feel about following the rules.”

“That I know.” Nezar laughed. “It was nice meeting you. I will love to meet you after your conversion.”

“Nice to meet you also,” Amanda said, then took another sip of her wine.

“Simon, I need a word with you, no disrespect, Amanda, but this is something I need to speak with him in private.”

“No, go ahead. I understand.”

Simon followed Nezar out of the VIP section and out the door.

\* \* \* \*

“I have news for you, Simon, there is a rumor that a half werewolf is to kill Tyren’s father. Have any idea who that is?”

Thinking hard he thought. “Tyren?”

Nezar shook his head. “No, you. The legend is about you. They said that you will kill him and he is not so pleased with that. I think he is here in Las Vegas or very near. I never got a good scent on him, so it is hard for me to keep up with.”

Simon ran his hand through his hair frustrated.

“What is it, Simon?”

“Amanda is strong, that I know. But I can’t hold on much longer. I keep trying to transform and most of the time it’s when I am with her sexually. I am afraid that I will hurt her if I change fully.”

Nezar snorted. “You have a better chance on hurting me than Amanda. If you frightened Amanda to a point she can’t control you, she will likely send your hide to hell for a couple of weeks. With the love,



she has for you, eventually, she will be able to set you free. But don't worry, I am sure that Manuel is more concerned about giving you the cure than anything else right now."

"I hope you are right and I mean about the cure part. Spending time in hell is the last thing I want to do."

Nezar patted him on the shoulders. "I am sure of it. I will talk to you later, old friend."

"You are not going to stay for a while?"

"I cannot. My beauties are waiting on me at home. They have probably started without me."

Simon never knew what a man needed with more than one woman. Amanda was enough to satisfy him for a lifetime.

"That's because she is your Truelove, and she has you whipped already. Oh, and think about moving away from here."

"Why?"

Nezar looked into Simon's eyes. "You need to, that's why. But if you need an explanation here is one. You are a Dark Guardian, you don't have to live in a faraway place, but you need to be safe. I can feel your protection spell from down the road. One thought of killing you while in your building would kill anyone. Great spell, but you need to get out of the spotlight. I can't remember the last time I picked up a paper and you weren't in it. It's been eight years, it's time for you to disappear. If you don't people are going to wonder why you are not aging. People are going to start talking and the DPS will be on your hide before you know it. I know you love this place, but give it some thought. At least in a year or two, take your wife, son and everyone that lives with you out of here."

Simon knew it was time, but he didn't want to leave, not now, not when Amanda's friends were on the way, not when he had just found his Truelove.

"Use your head, Simon. If Amanda's wants her friends around, fine, take them with you, give them a job that requires them to work on the computer for your place. I know you don't have to be here for it to run. The place runs itself. But warn, Amanda, her friends will wonder why she isn't getting older and they are. Then they will find out about



you and her. Some people don't take it well. Some will even go crazy and tell others and you know where that will end."

"I know, Nezar, but Amanda's friends love her. I would move away from here, have them doing other things during the day while we rest. I can get a big enough house for all of us. I don't care, I just don't want to lose Amanda."

"You are a Dark Guardian, are you not?"

"You know that I am."

"Tell them, let them know why you need to move, let them know everything. *If* they cannot take it, wipe their memory of what you have told them. Bring them to me if they take it well and I will place a protection spell around them. The moment they speak that you are what you are, their minds will go blank, nothing about you and Amanda being Trueloves will be remembered. Do it, Simon, once you have settled down, once you have gotten things together. Do it. You cannot stay here forever."

Nezar made a good point. He needed to get out of the light soon. People will begin to wonder why he hasn't aged in ten years. "I will talk to Amanda about this. Let her make the decision."

"I knew you were smart. Until we meet again."

Simon watched as Nezar walked away. The man was very smart and wise. Now came the time to talk to Amanda. Get a place built, wherever she wanted to live, he would move there. Tyren will be safe wherever they go. Maybe he could place him in a school and not need a private teacher anymore. He would do anything she wanted. The decision was Amanda's.

Before going back into the VIP, Simon stopped by the restaurant and ordered two dinners to be delivered. After grabbing a bunch of roses, he headed back to his Truelove. Their eyes met the moment he stepped into the room. "For you, my love," he said handing her the roses.

"You are going to spoil me."

He kissed her before sitting beside her. "That's what I am here to do. I ordered two dinners to be delivered to our room in a couple of hours, we can eat there or, we can go out."



"Let's go for a walk. I have never seen this place at night."

"If that is what you want to do we can walk."

They both stood and headed out the door.

\* \* \* \*

"This place is beautiful at night," Amanda said as they walked down the sidewalk.

"Yes," he agreed. "It's been a very long time since I have walked and just paid attention."

Simon grabbed her closer to him to keep men from running into her. The place had hundreds of people walking around some were playing the little slot machines on the side of the road.

Las Vegas was a place where you came when you had a dream. A dream you will hit it big on the machine and live happily ever after.

Amanda never really thought about what she would be when she grew up or where she would live. She never imagined she would be living in Las Vegas with a man that every woman kept looking at as they walked down the street. But she didn't feel any jealousy because she knew that his eyes weren't focused on those women, they were focused—Amanda frowned, they were focused down the front of her dress. "Simon!" she yelled, then stepped away from him.

"What?" he said with a smile on his face.

"Don't what me, mister, your eyes were so far down the front of my dress I felt naked."

"You are far from naked. You are a true vision. A light in my darkness and you are mine. I hate to even share you with the men that are gaping at you right now. If I wouldn't get in trouble with my God, I would tear their eyes out and pound them into the ground at some of their thoughts of you."

Amanda took his extended hand.

Simon pulled her back to him and they continued to walk.

"That sounds like you are jealous."

"Of course I am. I don't like the thoughts that go on in their minds. Just knowing that another man wants you in their bed sends me into a



rage of fury. But knowing that your thoughts are only of me is calming. And you are right, those other women mean nothing to me.”

His words touched her more than anything had ever touched her. She leaned into his embrace as they continued to move through the city. They made it to a bench at the end of a street. Not a lot of people hung on this end because there were not a lot of places to gamble. “Tell me about your childhood,” Amanda asked.

“What do you want to know?”

“Where did you grow up? When did you come here? Things like that.”

“I was born in Europe, six hundred and sixty years ago. My mother’s name is Susan Chadwick, she was nineteen when my father converted her. My father was also born in Europe along with my mother. He was over five thousand when he met my mother. My father thought the Gods were punishing him to give him such a young, inexperienced girl. For months, he refused his love for my mother, that was until the DPS found out my mother was a Truelove. We still do not know how today.”

Amanda felt the pain while he told the story.

“They kidnapped my mother and tortured her until she was near death. They kept telling her to call out for my father, but by her never meeting him, she didn’t know what they were talking about. Being the hero he was, he rescued my mother and, five hundred years later, they had me. My mother said that I was so hardheaded. I never listened. I always got into trouble by trying to play with the other children. But with my strength, I did more harm than good. When I was ten, we moved around a lot. I know we lived in France for a while, Australia for a couple of years. Once I was old enough to be on my own I moved out, but stayed in Australia for years. When you turn six hundred, you get tired of you mother coming over and telling you how to dress and what to do with your own house.”

“So you moved away because your mother was being a mother?”

Simon laughed. “No actually my father moved away from me. He said he wanted to travel. We both had fought side-by-side, killing evil in Australia for centuries. He wanted to see the world and, after a



thousand years of being together I could tell that they loved each other just as much as when they first met.”

Amanda leaned into his chest so he could wrap his arm around her as he spoke.

“Once my parents moved away, I came here twenty years ago. I was about to lose my soul, I knew it. The fight to hold on was less, I had to do something and that’s when I found Karen. A woman on her last legs, she had lost everything. Her job, her husband and her money was gone. She didn’t know what to do. Her wanting to kill herself brought me to her. I thought I loved her, in some way I did. But I think that we both just wanted something that we couldn’t have. After a year, I told her what I was and what I had to do. She took it, better than I thought, but you took it better than her.”

“Why do you say that?” she said against his chest.

“Because I didn’t have to chase you down a flight of stairs while you screamed, *get away, you evil vampire*, at the same time. After making her see my point, she stayed, I think out of fear at first. After ten years of being together, she began begging me to change her. But for some reason I knew she could not survive the change, her mind wasn’t stable and, as you know, that night she went out with...”

Amanda kissed him. The pain had overwhelmed her heart to a point she felt like she wanted to cry for his pain. The kiss wasn’t one for passion, but for comfort. When she released his lips, she smiled. “Let’s get back to the room. I think I am going to drop from hunger any minute.”

Simon pushed her brown hair out of her face and kissed her once more before standing. “I will get a cab. If we walk it will take over an hour to get back.” Simon moved to the street when a cab turned the corner. He opened the door and helped Amanda in.

He slid in beside her, then told the driver where to go. Amanda once again laid on him and he didn’t mind. Her touching him like this helped him stay calm, helped the pain he felt for his wife, his past and what would happen in the future.

Nothing else mattered at this moment but his Truelove and no one would ever take her away from him. No one.



\* \* \* \*

When the cab stopped, Amanda reached for the door but Simon stopped her with his words.

"Amanda , I have to tell you that Nezar gave me a warning, a warning I think I should heed. Later, we will discuss that matter. It needs to be talked about between you and me first, then everyone else."

She nodded and Simon opened the door for her. The moment she stepped out of the cab, Amanda heard a woman telling someone that she was the one that was going to marry Simon.

"Amanda!"

Her named was shouted the second she stepped into the resort. Her eyes found Emma and Sheila standing at the clerk's desk.

"We were beginning to get worried about you." Sheila said giving her a hug.

Emma followed with a hug also.

"Amanda , you look great," Emma added.

"Doesn't she," Simon said as he walked up to them.

"Hello , Simon," Sheila said while Emma waved.

"I am happy to see that you have made it back safely. Have you two been into your rooms?"

"Yes. Barbara showed us a couple minutes ago. We asked her where you two were and she told us in the club."

"We went for a walk," Simon told him. "Amanda was too beautiful to keep locked away in a club. I wanted to share her with the world."

Sheila nodded , then looked Amanda over again. "This necklace is beautiful." She admired. "And what is this?" Sheila touched her finger.

"What is what?"

"That rock on your finger."

Emma eyes widened when she saw what Sheila spoke of.

"That is me saying, *I do* to the man that I love." Amanda told them.

Simon kissed her on the cheek. "I love you , also. I am going up to check on Tyren. Barbara will explain everything to you about your



positions. I am glad to have you with me and it makes me even happier to know that your being here makes my love happy." With another small kiss, he headed to the elevator.

"Does he have any brothers?" Sheila asked.

Amanda thought, Simon hadn't mentioned any brothers while he told her his story. She had stopped him before he could anyhow. "No, Sheila," Amanda told her. "And what happened to Darrell? I thought he was coming."

"I think, he said give him a couple of days. I say, I am here, if he does not come, who cares. This city is a place I can start over."

"But I thought you loved him?"

"Love, yes, but I will not wait forever for him to ask me to marry him. Look," Sheila said grabbing Amanda's hand. "In less than a month, you have a man falling at your feet. This man loves you, admits that he loves you and has proposed already. I have been with Darrell for two years and he hasn't even said the word around me. He says he loves me true enough, but I am getting old and I don't have time for the bull."

Amanda could fully understand that. "I have to tell you that I am going on the night schedule."

Sheila released her hand and waited for her to explain herself.

"What do you mean?" Emma asked.

"You know Simon works at night, all night, and lately I have been on his schedule with him. If you can call going to the club to be introduced work, but I wanted you two to think about the schedule you will want to work. If you want early morning, then you pick that, but know I will not be up during that time and Barbara will not let you disturb us. I think you only have to work four hours a day. Pick a time from twelve to four so you know you can sleep early morning. This is a night business as you can see." Amanda pointed around to the hundreds of people in the place. "I will be up in the morning to see what Barbara has you doing and to let Simon know of your time. After that, we party." When Amanda smiled, they gave her another hug.

"It's cool with me," Sheila told her.

"Me, too," Emma spoke.



"I have to ask you where you got that dress, Amanda," Sheila said, while touching the fabric.

"Simon brought it as a gift and the necklace and the earrings. To tell you the truth, I am walking around with about a hundred-thousand dollars worth of jewelry on."

Both women's mouths fell open.

"Simon is living like that?" Sheila asked.

Amanda nodded.

"Okay, I asked about a brother, I'll do his sister to get into his family," Sheila joked, making the others laugh.

"The only person that Simon has is his son. And he is only eleven, so you can't do him, Sheila. I just found out the man had this type of money. But look at this place, I should have guessed."

"How about we go up to our room? I am a little tired after the trip," Emma suggested.

"Sounds like a plan," Amanda agreed.

Instead of going to the private elevator, they went to the guest elevator.

"I can't believe you guys moved here for me."

"Can't you tell how much you mean to us, Amanda?" Emma said softly. "We don't have boundaries. You two would do the same for me. Same for Sheila. I would do it for her. Friends like you guys are few."

Sheila and Amanda nodded.

"Thanks and it's true, for you and Sheila, I would have done the same thing." The door opened and they stepped out. "Tomorrow I will be back here, I will bring Tyren and we can all go out to eat. Maybe we can catch a movie. Just something to get him used to being around you guys. He is a sweet boy, but he is a lot smarter than the average little boy is, so talking in pig Latin won't help. Tyren can pick up on it quicker than you think."

"Not a problem, Amanda. We will be up and ready to rock and roll." Sheila told her. "Did you pick out a date yet?"

The change of conversation made Amanda lift and eyebrow at her. "Clarify?"

"For your wedding?"



Okay how can she say that they are already married without hurting their feelings?

"Well really we are already married. I didn't plan to have a big wedding since I only know a few people here. Maybe we'll do the big church wedding on our year anniversary."

"You got married and didn't wait for us?"

That was anger in Sheila's voice, wasn't it?

"Wait, Sheila, Simon is the type that makes the decision and it's done. I wanted to get married, but I wanted to wait. I haven't signed any papers yet, but everyone here knows that we are. If I can talk him into it, maybe we can do it in the chapel here." Relief washed over Amanda when Sheila's face softened again. The last thing she wanted to do was hurt her friends.

"So you didn't say the big *I do* without us?"

"No, not yet. I mean I told him I would and tonight the people announced us as Mr. and Mrs., so, I don't know how that goes in Las Vegas. I'll make sure to talk to him about it. But for now, I have to check on Tyren before going to bed. It's good to see you two and I am glad you are with me." Amanda waved before heading out of the room. Amanda saw Simon in his room on the bed, not naked as she wanted, but looking sexy as hell.

He smiled before handing her a glass.

"You are not a drunk, are you?" She accepted the glass as she sat beside him.

"Actually there is no alcohol in this. It won't get you drunk."

Her stomach rumbled when the aroma from food hit her nose.

"I see that someone is hungry," he said before sitting the glass he was handing her on the table. "I think you should sit down and eat."

"What are we having?"

"Roasted chicken with rosemary, lemon and garlic for dinner and tuscan meringue with mixed berries for dessert."

"Sounds delicious, but what is Tus...can...what you said?"

"It is a sweet crisp meringue, berries and whipped cream." An evil smiled formed. "I can use the whipped cream for other purposes later."



“Dream on.”

“I will see about that later for now you need to eat. I hope you like it.”

“I know I will.”

“So have your friends settled in?” Simon spoke half way through their meal.

“Yes, I told them that I will be working at night and I won’t be able to see them until then.”

Simon swallowed the food in his mouth. “I think it will be wise to tell your friends about me, about us.”

Amanda coughed when a little food went down the wrong pipe in her throat.

“You okay, Amanda?”

She nodded, at the same time trying to get the rest of the food out of her windpipe.

“I...” cough. “I know that...” cough. “I thought that we did not go around telling people these things? Won’t that put you in danger if you do?”

“So true, Amanda. What humans do not understand, they want to destroy. No offense.”

“None taken.” Another slice of chicken and she had forgotten about the human put down. Anyhow, she never thought herself as a full human anyway. Being able to read minds and opening up the gates of hell, is not what someone considered human.

“Nezar spoke to me about some important things. As you know that by taking my blood, you were not affected. You will not become a half werewolf like I am. But, he did say, and I agree, that we need to move away. I have been in the light too long, eight years to be exact. People are going to begin wondering why I haven’t aged in all these years. And I think it is about time for me to just sit back and make you happy for all eternity.”

Amanda agreed, but she didn’t understand what this had to do with telling her friends.

“You want them to go don’t you?”

Him, reading her mind was something she would have to get used



to. It was true. She did want them around, but to watch them die?

"There are good sides and down sides to this. For one, if we move, I want you to pick the one place you want to live for a couple of years. Anywhere your heart desires. Wherever we go, you friends are welcome to join us. I do not have a problem with that. The problem is, if we don't tell them what we are, they will also begin to wonder why we are not aging and they are. *If* you do decide to tell them, which I will think is best, not trying to make you worry, but you will have to watch them grow old and perish. If you can live with that, then we must make that choice. Nezar has even agreed to do a spell on them. If they try to tell anyone, their minds would go blank before the words could leave their lips."

The flash of pain that went crossed her face didn't go unseen by him. She knew he saw it.

"There is also another issue, if we tell them, and they do not take it well, then we will have to erase their memory of us telling them. The best thing after that will be to leave them here."

Never in her life did she think that she would have to make a decision like this. She could tell her friends, then if they agreed, watch them die of old age. Or, she could tell them, if they couldn't take it, they erase their minds, and then watch them die from a distance. The whole watching-them-die theory wasn't going well with her. Amanda pushed her plate from in front of her. "Why can't you just change them?"

Simon sighed and grabbed her hand so she could understand. A painful ache went through him at the sight of Amanda's hurt. "Amanda, love, do you want to take that chance with your friends?"

"If that means that they could live yes." *Would you want to give your friends the everlasting?*

"It may be everlasting, but it might not turn out the way you or I want."

Confused, Amanda's eyebrow arched.

"Souls Amanda. It's all about the soul. They might not be worthy of changing. They may become heartless Trianes who think humans are food and nothing else. Then I will have to hunt them down like all the



others. I cannot let them run free, stealing souls because they were once my Truelove's friends." He shook his head. "I don't know what type of punishment I will get for that. I am betting Yateichaa will send one of her favorite Juevamas after me, and burn me to a nice crisp. Not kill me because I have found you, but I will be out of commission for a while. And we may not be compatible by blood, which is most important."

Not something, she thought about. If she did change her friends and then Simon had to turn around and kill them that would be heartbreaking and defeat the purpose of turning them in the first place.

"Amanda, you have to stop beating yourself up. It's tearing me apart. Each time you feel pain, I feel it twice as much."

"I'm sorry." The words were spoken, but she still felt the pain. Amanda laced her fingers with his. "I don't know what to do. What have you done all these years when it came down to humans?"

"I stayed away, especially after Karen. Anyone I knew or I have to know was a Juevama, Triane or a Dark Guardian. Humans have short life spans and I didn't want to get close, then watch them die."

Simon brought her hands to his lips. A brief kiss brought a smile to her face.

"But it's up to you, Amanda. If you want to take that chance, we can. I am not trying to sound harsh or cruel, but I feel that turning them is a bad idea. There are also plenty of Dark Guardian's Trueloves whom you can get to know. They will live as long as their mate does. Friends are hard and you have plenty of happy years together. I just need to know where you want to visit and do you want to tell them."

She did want to tell them, when to tell them was the question. When do you blurt out *hey guys I am a vampire and so is Simon. We want you to live with us, but don't worry, we don't bite necks*. This would take a little more thought than she had right now.

The bed moved as Simon laughed. "Your thoughts amaze me sometimes. The way you think, feel and speak, bring me such joy to have you in my life. You are a spitfire, a part that I haven't met. I am glad that I haven't, but one day I know that I will run into the Amanda that some have."



Words, he had a way of putting them sometimes. One thing she knew was his words were not going to help her this time. "I want to tell them. If they can't handle it, then I want you to erase their minds. I don't think that it will be wise to change them. I can handle them growing old and dying, I don't think I can handle them having to be killed by my lover. Anyhow, do you burst into dust when you are killed?"

\* \* \* \*

As Amanda spoke Simon heard her every word, but his eyes had traveled to the front of her dress where her puckered nipples stood hard and ready to be touched, licked and squeezed. He did have plans for the whipped cream. If he did that, he could taste every inch, every luscious inch of her body. From head to toe.

Just to stare at them made his fangs ache in his mouth. The thought of smearing the cream over her body and licking it clean, made him hard with desire. He wanted to change her now, but he could tell she wanted to wait until tomorrow. Just tomorrow to hang out with them one more time during the day. One more day isn't much to ask for. "I'm sorry what was that?" He'd heard what she said, but once he looked up into her eyes, seeing a smile tug at her lips when she caught him staring, made him forget what she said.

"If you're eyes were on my face instead of other parts you might have heard."

"I heard."

Amanda let go of his hands and crossed her arms. "Okay, mister pervert that wants to use the whipped cream in ways it was never meant to be used, tell me what I said."

"Actually you didn't say anything." His teeth grew long in his mouth at the thought of tasting her. His cock was so hard against his pants, he was afraid it would burst through at any moment. Gaining some composure, he spoke again. "You asked do we explode when killed. Yes, we do. When our hearts stop, we explode. So do Trianes and Dementas." He caught a thought from Amanda. She wanted his fangs



deep down in her flesh just as much as she wanted his shaft stimulating her cavern. "Now it's my turn to call you a pervert." His warm tongue ran over his fangs.

Amanda looked at him with a shocked expression on her face.

"Don't give me that look. You want me just as much as I want you."

"Oh really."

"Yes, but do you know the difference between our wants?"

"No, what?"

"I am going to have you."

"You think so?"

His silver eyes seemed to glow. "I know so."

\* \* \* \*

Amanda jerked away from his hand when he shot out to grab her. She backed up to the door, watching him as he approached. Her skin aching for the touch of his fingers stroking tenderly before they brought her to an amazing release. "Simon," she said through clenched teeth. "I don't want to ruin the dress and the way you are looking, it will be."

The corner of his mouth twitched as he stopped his approach. He cocked his head looking at her. "Strip."

Amanda's gaze went back to his. When he stopped moving, it gave her the opportunity to look him over. Drop dead sexy, fine, built and all hers. Especially the big bulge in the front of his pants that she wanted to run her fingers over. "No," the only word she could think to say. Not one of her better comebacks, but what could she do? The man had to be twice as strong and fast and she believed that if he wanted she would be naked right now. But he didn't do it, he played her game with her.

"No," he repeated, then snarled. "Now where do you get off telling me no? You must not know me as well as you think. So, I am giving you one more chance. Strip out of your dress, before I have to buy you another one."

Where did this come from? The man had scary and sexy mixed up



together. One part of her wanted nothing more than to do as he asked. The stubborn, playful part wanted to see how far he would go. Amanda turned, but before she could turn the knob on the door, Simon moved across the room, fingers locked firmly around her wrist.

“Your choice,” he growled.

Before Amanda could protest, she felt the comfort from the bed as he laid her down on it. Her dress moved up to accommodate his body as he nudged between her legs. “Wait! Wait, Simon,” she yelled. Amanda hands went up to his chest, trying to push him off her.

“I gave you a choice.”

“I know and I was going to go and get something,” she lied.

Simon grabbed her hands in one of his and locked them above her head. “What were you going to get, Amanda?”

Before she could lie again, his warm lips touched the side of her neck. Amanda closed her eyes and trembled at the sensation when she felt his fangs along the side of her neck.

*Tell me what you were going to get and try not to lie to me.*

*What would you do if I lie to you?*

*There are so many possibilities, Amanda. I can take my own pleasure, leaving you panting and wanting for hours. Bring you to the brink of an orgasm over and over again, but never let you cum. That's a punishment that I would love to do.*

Amanda's eyes opened, seeing teasing eyes looking down at her. Simon groaned in his throat when she moved against his already hard member. “You wouldn't!” Another smile showed his fangs, long, looking as if he was ready to strike.

“Oh yes I would. I can prolong your release for as long as I want,” he spoke against her lips. “Now tell me where were you going?”

“I...ummmm...” If you could lie at this moment, what would you say? “Bathroom.” Yes! Good answer. “I had to go to the bathroom.”

When he chuckled, he rubbed his lower body against her clit, stimulating it to a point that almost made her cum.

“That would have been a believable story.” His free hand went up to caress her covered breast. “But the bathroom is on the other side of the room.” His eyes glowed brighter. “Try...again.”



“Would you believe that I heard someone knocking?”

He shook his head. “I guess you don’t want the dress.”

Amanda’s eyes widened when he lifted his finger and his nail grew long and sharp. A knock at the door stopped whatever Simon was getting ready to do.

Simon growled at the door, his fangs retracting back into his gums. “You are a lucky little girl,” he said before giving her a kiss.

Amanda sat up on the bed once Simon let her. He looked back, making sure that she was ready.

\* \* \* \*

“You better have a good excuse for disturbing me, Ramon.” Simon’s voice nearly made Amanda jump up from the bed.

Ramon did take a couple of steps back at Simon’s threat. Dark Guardians had to help humans, but they could beat the hell out of a Triane and a Dementra.

“I...I do have one.”

Frustrated, Simon leaned up against the doorframe. Ramon might have a good reason to be here, but being interrupted from taking his mate’s body would piss off the strongest man. “What is it, Ramon? You have a reason for being here and that would be?”

Ramon stepped closer. “Anthony found another girl and he thought that you might need to see it.”

Fire blazed in Simon’s eyes. The only thing he ever asked of the Dark Guardians of this city was to make sure no one was killed. His duty was to satisfy his mate not go around doing someone else’s job. “How many this time?”

“Just the one, but she had some markings on her body. The ones werewolves do when they are pissed. The body wasn’t destroyed this time.”

Duty calls and he must go. Simon turned to Amanda who sat on his bed, need running through both of their veins and he had to go out. His body telling him that he had only a couple of hours before the morning sun rose, which meant that when he returned, his lover would



probably be asleep and he would have to wait until tomorrow to satisfy their needs. "Let me get my coat." He went back into the room. "I have to go," Simon said as he sat down on the bed beside her.

"I know you have to. It's your job." Amanda looked at him, put on her best smile. "Go before it gets too late. I'll try to stay up as long as I can."

Simon knew she would fight her sleep just to stay awake for him. Simon knew Amanda didn't have to fight her sleep. With his blood in her, she would be able to stay up till the early morning hours without feeling the need to rest. Since she was still half human, her body still felt the need to sleep at night, so she would sleep and soon, in the morning while she slept, she would go into what they considered rest. She would only rise from her rest because she wanted to. "You need your rest. I want you to go to sleep and not wait up for me."

Amanda's smile faded. "Why don't you want me to wait up for you?"

Jealousy could be heard in her voice. Simon wanted nothing more than to stay here with her, but he had a job and if he wanted to continue to get paid for it, when he got a call he had to go. He didn't want to go out when she felt like he was going to be with another woman.

"Amanda," he touched the side of her face. "You know that no other woman could ever excite me the way you do. No other woman could ever feel the way you do. I only ask you not to stay up because you have plans to go out with your friends. Do you not? If you stay up all night, you will not enjoy your day with them. I would love for you to go, but I will never expose you to the things that I have seen and witnessed. I am a beast..."

Amanda shook her head.

"Yes, I am, but I can control mine. Some of us can't, some werewolves can't either. Ramon said that this werewolf left a mark, five stars, it is a challenge as well as anger. This wolf is upset about something and soon he will be showing us why. So that's why I can't chance you being out with me, especially at night."

Simon grabbed her hands in his. "You know that you only have to



go inside my mind. I will keep it open to you at all times. The only reason I would ever block you out is to keep you safe. You must believe that I will never want for another woman's touch. I only want you and I will have you. Tomorrow is the day that I am proud to say you will be mine." He kissed her, only a teaser, before standing up.

"I am sorry. I love and trust you," Amanda said.

"I know. I will return soon." Simon left, then followed Ramon into the small room. The first scent that hit him was blood, filling the air.

"I would not have called you." Anthony looked down at the woman sprawled over the bed. "But it was necessary."

Simon tried to close off his emotions. He knew that Anthony wouldn't have called him out in the middle of the morning, unless it was something very important. "I understand." Simon's gaze took in the woman on the bed. "What happened, besides being drained by a werewolf?" Seeing Anthony hesitate made Simon wonder, something else had to be wrong. "Anthony!"

Instead of speaking, Anthony went over to the woman. "I thought you might need to see this."

Simon moved beside Anthony. Looking down at the woman, he saw a five stars on her stomach that looked as if someone cut it with a razorblade. Typical thing to happen when a human encounters a raging, out of control werewolf. What stopped him was what was on her leg. At first, he thought it looked like claw marks, but looking closer at it—it was his name!

"I thought that you might need to see this. Do you know of a werewolf that might want you?"

Not really. He knew Manuel would probably be after him, but Manuel knew better than to come to his city. The werewolf would probably run into a silver bullet before coming to Las Vegas. Besides, he didn't recognize the smell, but he did know it was the same as the one from the other murder.

"I don't know." Simon ran his hand through his hair. "Maybe some crazy lunatic that is out for revenge because I killed a part of his family."

Anthony smiled. "You think?"



"Maybe, maybe not. I can't tell you. The only thing I know is, if he is still here I will find him and make sure he is properly disposed of. Three women in less than a week, this werewolf must not know what town he is in."

"That is true. But what about Amanda? She isn't safe with this werewolf running around. You know they go after our loves before anyone else."

Simon hadn't thought about Amanda being in danger. When he changed her, she would be stronger, able to take care of herself more. "I will change Amanda tonight," Simon said, then looked at his name on the woman's leg again. "There's nothing to worry about."

Ramon walked into the room.

"Tell me what you found, Ramon?" Simon ordered.

With a sigh, Ramon dug into his pocket and pulled out a small writing pad. When he flipped it open, he sighed again. "Her name was Jessica Haque and she is twenty-two years old. She lived here for six months. Her mother and father died in a plane crash a year ago. She has no siblings and she worked at The Music Shop, for about two years."

"Twenty-two," Anthony spoke sadly. "Damn it. This werewolf is considered dead."

"Just what I had in my mind," Simon finally looked up from the woman. "See what you can find out tonight, I have to change Amanda so you know that I will not be able to be out tonight. Tomorrow we hunt and this werewolf better pray that we do not find him."

Both Anthony and Ramon nodded.

"I'll call if we find anything," Anthony assured. "You can go and we'll clean this up."

With another look and a nod, Simon headed back to his place. As he walked along the streets of the still full city, the images of the woman kept popping in his head. His name carved on her leg bother him.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

He could hear the noise from his casino before he made it to the glass doors. This life, his dream, was all he ever wanted, that was until Amanda came into his life. A fool in love would do anything for his partner. As a Dark Guardian, he would go beyond that just to see his Truelove smile at him.

This was a past life now, time for him to move on, let someone else handle the business. But who? Whom could he trust to run his business so it would not fail? Who could he rely on and would not destroy what he had so successfully built? He only needed someone to take care of this place for at least twenty years, and then he could reappear. Yes, twenty years was enough time for him and his Truelove to travel the world. They could enjoy themselves.

“Dragon!” The name popped into his mind. Simon quickly grabbed his cell. He flipped through dozens of numbers before spotting the name he looked for.

“You better have a good reason for waking me , Baldwin,” Dragon’s sleepy voice spoke over the cell.

“I do. How is it going in New York?”

“It was going just fine, you know, I was sleeping in my nice soft cave underground. You know, the thing you *don’t* do.”

Simon chuckled. “Sleeping underground is so passé. Give me sun proof windows and the best safeguard and I am happy.”

A low growl came from the other end, “Did you just use the word passé?”



“Yes, why?”

“You found your Truelove, didn’t you?”

Simon switched the cell to his other ear as he reached into his pocket for his keycard. “Yes I have. Why is that so interesting?”

“Because you used one of those girly words. I already knew you were a big softy when it came to women. You like sleeping above ground and dressing in suits half of the time. I bet your bathroom is even pink and green.”

*Same old Dragon.* “Not yet. I might be a softy, but wait until you meet your Truelove. You will become just like the rest of us. And I do wear leather over half of the time.”

“Sure, are you wearing it now?”

Simon looked down. Shit! He still had on his outfit he went out with Amanda in. Black slacks, jacket and white shirt. He usually dressed in black boots, leather pants and silk shirts.

“I thought so, Baldwin.”

He forgot Dragon could read his mind so lying was out. “I went out tonight. I couldn’t look like a has-been, now could I?” True, all Dark Guardian’s liked to look their best at all times.

“Is there a reason for this call to talk about attire or did you just want to hear my voice for old time sakes?”

“It’s always for a reason,” Simon told him. “It’s time for me to move on for a while, maybe twenty or so years. I know you wanted to live the New Yorker life, but I would like for you to take over for a while.”

“Why?”

“Because like me, your parents were brain damaged after we were born.” Simon chuckled. “They didn’t have any more children. There are a lot of only Dark Guardian children around, but I saw that you needed to get out more and explore the world.”

Dragon laughed at Simon’s ability to tease him, but Simon knew Dragon wasn’t the type who likes to be up in the lights. He loved his solitude and he loved living underground. He wouldn’t live in that high-rise place to save his life. “Before you say no, I can always have a place built underneath the club. I can have a soundproof room installed also.



It will have all the luxuries of an apartment.”

“Why don’t you get some Triane to do it? I am not in need of money and you weren’t either when you had that place built. So why would I want to run it?”

“The new experience for one and two, I don’t trust anyone else. Years ago, you saved my life and I wanted to make sure that I pay you back. This life is much better, trust me.” He knew Dragon did trust him. Dragon wasn’t the type that liked vehicles, planes or boats. He loved his freedom.

“Don’t worry about coming yet, Dragon. Give it about four months. I can start on the room now. I think that it would be good for you.”

“Okay, four months I will be there.”

“Great,” Simon spoke again. “Are you still traveling by foot or have you come to my time, old one?”

An angry snarl came through the phone. “I am older, fledging, so you should show me some respect. And yes, I had a car, but I left it between North Carolina and here. I like hiking on foot. Maybe you should try it.”

“Don’t need to and you might be older by a couple of centuries, but I am not a fledging anymore. I gave up that title six hundred years ago. You being well over nine hundred should have given it up decades ago.”

“You know, Baldwin, I thought about it and I can’t wait until these four months are up. Just be prepared to get your butt kicked in front of your mate.”

The doors opened on the top floor. “I am really shaking in my expensive shoes. See you in a couple of months, Dragon.” Simon placed his phone back into his pocket, then headed back to his room.

Scented candles burned around his room. The smell of raspberry mixed with the smell of his mate made Simon’s body respond before he made it to the bed.

The television was on and Amanda lay underneath the covers sound asleep. Why did he think that she would be awake? It was four in the morning and she was still one-fourth human. Of course, she would be asleep.



Controlling the urge to wake her, he slipped out of his shoes, then clothes. With a thought, the television went off. When he stood naked, he lay in the bed beside her. He turned on his side, pulling her back to his body. Upon contact, Simon noticed that Amanda didn't have on anything either.

Amanda moaned in her deep sleep, then moved closer, her backside butting up against his semi-hard erection. Controlling the urge to growl out, he concentrated on not moving or even thinking about what he wanted.

With some control intact, he draped his arm around her waist. From this point, Simon knew sleep wouldn't come easily. Amanda's warm body lay beside his, the scent of her all over him and his room only contributed to his torture.

Another move from Amanda and now he stood hard almost in pain. He closed his eyes to try to will the erection away, but it didn't help. Just having her there would not help him get that down if he tried all night.

Not thinking of the consequences of his action, he reached up, cupping the swell of her breast. Amanda moaned faintly, but didn't wake.

Simon felt her nipples harden under his fingers. He leaned over and kissed her lightly on the neck. In her sleep, he entered her mind. Now he could control her not to wake until he wanted her too.

Throwing the covers onto the floor, Simon turned Amanda over so she lay on her back. With the candle light, her body had a romantic glow. His heated gaze roamed over her body. Tenderly, he touched her thigh and squeezed gently. Her heart rate rose from his touch. He knew she could feel everything and would think it was a dream until he released her mind at the right moment.

He slid his hand higher, until his fingers brushed against her mound. On its own, her thighs parted for him, making him smile. His finger probed her wet entrance and flicked over her clit ring. He pushed her legs up over his shoulders as he lay on his stomach. In her sleep, she hissed his name through her teeth as he thrust a finger inside her. Moisture coated his fingers, making him harder, knowing



that even in her sleep stage she wanted him. His thumb circled her hard nub, pressing it in time with his thrusting tongue.

Simon nipped her ring gently and she cried out. His moist tongue darted inside her. Amanda groaned aloud when he flicked his tongue quickly, sweeping her inner walls. His tongue went deeper inside her, his thumb no longer touching her oversensitive bud, only the area around it. A low whimper left her lips. Her breathing quickened as he continued his delicious torture.

Simon pressed his thumb lightly against her bundle of nerves. He saw her back arch and her hands grab the sheet as her arousal flooded his mouth. He moved up her body snatching away his enchantment during the middle of her release. Amanda's eyes flew open, her body shaking uncontrollably, as she looked up into Simon's wicked eyes.

"What did you do?" she breathed out.

Simon shifted slightly, his hard shaft brushed against her thigh. "If I have to tell you, then you don't need to know."

\* \* \* \*

Amanda reached up grabbing a hand full of his dark hair. "You know what I mean. I was awake, but I couldn't open my eyes."

His smile melted her insides. "I didn't want you to fully awake until I was ready for you to wake."

Amanda looked at him and smiled. "I see that a girl can't get any beauty sleep around here."

"You are beautiful enough for me." Simon touched her lips with his, then spoke again. "When I found you naked and in my bed, I couldn't resist."

Simon removed her hands and moved from on top of her. Amanda looked at him curiously.

"On your knees," his tone was almost scary.

Sleep fully gone now she looked at him.

"You know I would never hurt you."

She nodded and smiled before moving to her knees. Amanda moaned when Simon covered his fingers with her natural lubrication.



She jumped away from him when he trailed his finger down her anus and rubbed gently against the opening. His hands grabbed her waist, keeping her in place. "What do you think you are doing?"

"I know you probably have never done anything like this before, but I assure you there will be only pleasure. I'll be gentle and, when you want me to stop, I will."

Amanda hesitated, torn between curiosity and nervousness. She had thought about it, even seen movies about it, but the thought of doing it never passed through her mind. Finally, she nodded.

Simon parted her wet folds and covered his fingers again. Amanda held her breath as he caressed her slowly and gently. When she relaxed under the massage, Simon slid one finger inside her ass. As he did, she felt her muscles grip his finger, then relax again. There was a small discomfort, but the pleasure outweighed it. When he entered her with another finger, her body stiffened.

"You have to relax," he whispered to her. When she didn't, he asked, "Do you want me to stop?"

Amanda shook her head, then let the tension leave her body.

Gently, he eased his fingers in and out, loosening her enough for his member. When a moan escaped her lips, Simon withdrew his fingers. She let him adjust their position so that his hard member rested against her anus.

Reaching around her, Simon's finger slid over her clit as his other hand guided his shaft into her. She felt a twinge of pain when he entered her a few inches. He played with the ring while her body stretched to accommodate him.

When he moved another inch, she cried out, more from pleasure than pain. His fingers moved inside her, bringing her closer to another climax.

"Relax, love," his voice strained from her tightness.

Another thrust and he was in to the hilt. Amanda's body tried hard to adjust to him. If he wasn't bringing her to her peak with his other hand, she knew she would be begging him to stop.

Simon stilled, until another gush of moisture coated his hand. His movements were slow and careful as he maintained his slow pace. A



third finger entered her wet cavern.

Amanda squirmed from pleasure against his member and his fingers, her voice becoming louder with each thrust until the sounds of pleasure filled the room. She arched and thrust against him. He took it as a sign and thrust deeper and harder. Amanda panted, her breath exploding from her as removed his fingers to grip her hips tighter.

Amanda could only tremble as sensations built deep inside her. Sensations she never thought she would have reduced her to a pile of ashes.

"That's it, baby," he whispered.

She pushed back with each demanding plunge. Her muscles tensed and, with one final thrust, he sent both of them tumbling over the edge and into climatic bliss.

A long breath left her lungs when she felt the cool sheets underneath her. She winced as he withdrew. "I never expected it to feel like that," she confessed when he lay beside her. Amanda rolled onto her back.

Simon nodded as he rolled onto his side and settled beside her. He put his arm around her waist. "Neither did I."

Amanda looked at him. "You have done it before, right?"

"Yes, but I never found the pleasure that you can give me. Every time I am with you, I want you more, but I can't tire you out anymore. You have to meet your friends alone with Barbara and you have an even bigger night ahead of you."

She yawned. "I know. What happened to the girl?"

"Werewolf." He spoke. "But we will talk about it later, now you need to rest."

Amanda settled closer to him. "I was asleep until someone woke me up."

"I could not help it," he told her honestly.

With another yawn, Amanda allowed sleep to claim her. Simon soon followed her into a peaceful slumber.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Amanda yawned, coming awake. She couldn't see outside, but she knew from the sun's rays trying to penetrate their window that it was daytime. What time was it anyhow?

*It's a little after one.*

She turned over to see Simon's weak eyes looking at her. "Do you always have to be in my mind?"

*Yes, I never let it go from this morning's performance. You know you can tire a man out.*

*Not funny. I was sleeping remember?*

*Yes. Once again, his eyes closed. Your friends came up here, I heard Barbara talking to them.*

*Where are they now?*

*In the other room.*

Amanda moved from the bed and headed into the bathroom. A quick shower and an apology were in order. She knew they would let her off if she told them that Simon kept her up until early this morning with sex. The shower eased some tensions, but she was nervous about finally becoming a vampire tonight.

*True love, Simon corrected in her mind.*

*Stop eavesdropping and I thought you were asleep.* After the shower Amanda walked back into his room after dressing in black jeans and a white t-shirt.

*I am.*

*Okay, because you have your eyes closed doesn't mean that you are*



*asleep. If you were, you would not be able to talk to me.*

*As I told you before, I am used to you being beside me. The moment you moved, I awoke and it takes time for me to go back to sleep.*

*After tonight, you won't have to worry about it.*

*I know.*

Simon still didn't open his eyes when she gave him a goodbye kiss.

The first person she saw coming out of the kitchen was Tyren.  
"Hey, Amanda."

"Hey, Tyren."

"You just getting up?"

Amanda looked at the young boy. With just the little time she had been here, she could see that he grew up more with each passing day. He had his long golden hair pulled back away from his face and had on a pair of black pants, shoes and a red shirt, something Simon would wear. "Yes I have been on the nightshift with your father."

Tyren smiled. "Barbara told me that. Are you hungry? There is another sandwich in there."

Amanda knew she should be hungry, but she wasn't. "No, but do you want to come with me and my friends to the store?"

"Do I?" he said with a smile. "Let me tell Barbara and we can go."

Amanda chuckled as he raced off

Minutes later Tyren and Amanda stood outside of her friends' door. Amanda knocked. Moments later Sheila stood at the door.

"Well, well, looky who decided to wake up," Sheila teased.

"Sorry I had a," Amanda stopped speaking, then looked at Tyren.  
"Let's just say I had a *long* morning."

"I heard about long mornings."

"You forgive me?" Amanda gave a fake pout.

"Of course."

"I knew you would."

Sheila laughed, then moved to let them in. Emma sat on the bed watching television.

"You guys this is my stepson, Tyren."

"Hello," he said politely.



"Tyren this is Sheila Freeman." Amanda pointed her. "And this is my other best friend, Emma Stewart."

"He is cute, too bad he's so young," Sheila said. "You are lucky I am not eleven, little man."

"Sheila!" Amanda stopped her before she said anything that would not be appropriate in front of Tyren.

Amanda saw that Emma stood from the bed to get a closer look at the young boy. When Tyren turned to Emma, he froze.

Amanda frowned.

As the two continued to stare at each other, Sheila leaned over to Amanda. "If I didn't know any better I would think they were in love."

"It is nice to meet you, Ms. Stewart."

Amanda looked at Tyren strangely. The only time he ever used her last name was when they met.

"Emma, could you not look at the boy like he is on the menu at Red Lobster." Sheila finally broke their eye contact.

"Sorry," Emma said to them. "It's like I know him or something."

"Me, too, Amanda."

Amanda looked at both of them and the only thing she could do was smile.

"Amanda, I didn't get a chance to tell you, but I packed up your room back in Kansas. All your pictures, clothing and other things we put in boxes. The landlord is going to let the movers move it out for us," Emma told her.

"Thanks," she said in relief. Since she'd been here she had not thought about her things back home. The only thing she really wanted was her family pictures and a few baby items that she kept with her. "What about your car, Sheila?"

"I donated it to a charity. With what Simon is paying us, I can get a new one, paid in full in a month or two. Being here, I don't think I need one. This isn't a place where you need a car. Now yours, I can donate it also, it's just if you want me to."

"Yes, donate it." After a moment of quiet, Amanda spoke again. "You guys want to go down to the mall or something?"

"Sure," Emma agreed.



Amanda watched Emma looking at Tyren whom continued looking at her.

“Why not,” Sheila spoke. “Just let me put on my shoes.”

Tyren had been so quiet on the walk. Maybe because he kept looking at Emma in a way little boys shouldn’t. *What is wrong with you and Emma?* Tyren’s eyes went to Amanda’s and he shrugged.

*I don’t know. It’s something I can’t explain, Amanda. I like Emma, but I don’t like girls like that. I want her to stay with me, like you.*

Amanda smiled at his boyhood crush. *You have a crush, Tyren. You are going to start liking girls, but Emma is way too old for you. She won’t be able to act on your crush.*

*I understand. I just want her to stay.*

*She will, just like I am.*

That made him smile.

The sun slowly descended and the air began to cool the valley. Amanda had Tyren’s hand while Emma and Sheila walked in front of them. “Did you have fun, Tyren?” Amanda asked.

“Yes. I like shopping because you always let me get what I want.”

Amanda laughed. They had already sent their bags ahead in the limo she called for and they agreed to walk back.

A loud engine startled Amanda. The car skidded to a stop beside them and the door opened. Before she had a chance to think, a tall man with golden hair pulled Tyren inside the car. Amanda screamed and could do no other than follow him inside to try to get him back.

\* \* \* \*

Sheila and Emma didn’t even make it to the car before it sped away. The scene had happened so quickly that they couldn’t react.

“I got the license plate number,” Emma told her.

“Good, you call the police and I am going to get Simon.” Sheila took off running, hoping to get to Simon and let him know what happened.

Barbara answered the phone when it rung.

“Hello,” Sheila said breathing hard.



"Bar... Barbara, this is Sheila," she said out of breath.

"Sheila, Amanda came down hours ago looking for you."

"I know, we have a problem. I need to talk to Simon, now. Come down on the elevator, I am coming now."

When Sheila made it inside the building, the elevator door opened and Barbara stood inside.

"What happened?"

"Someone grabbed," Sheila took a deep breath, "Tyren and Amanda."

"What! When? Where?"

"Outside the mall. Emma got the tag number."

Barbara prayed that the elevator hurried up.

Once on the top floor, Barbara told Sheila to stand in the hallway because waking Simon up was dangerous.

\* \* \* \*

"Simon," Barbara called out, not too loudly. "Simon, get up."

"It's too early." A muffled sound came from his bed.

"Amanda and Tyren have been kidnapped."

Barbara screamed when Simon leaped from the bed with a growl. He looked around, then grabbed a pair of pants. "What!" Simon shook his head and mentally reached out for Amanda and Tyren.

Nothing.

He growled, "What happened?"

"Sheila said someone pulled her and Tyren into a car. The other girl has the tag number. Can you contact either of them? I have tried."

Simon growled again, hair formed over his body. He snarled when his bones snapped and adjusted to the new form. The pants he just put on ripped to accommodate his growing muscles.

Barbara watched as the pants seem to disappear and more hair covered his body. Quickly, she ran out of the room not waiting. For the first time Simon didn't control the wolf side of him.

"Sheila, move out of the way," Barbara grabbed her arm, moving her from the front of Simon's emergency exit.



"What's going on?" Sheila screamed when she heard a loud growl. "Is Simon that angry when someone wakes him up?"

"No and no time to explain, let's go." Barbara pulled her toward the elevator. She didn't know if Simon would be in a calm state of mind when he came out.

Sheila stood behind Barbara. Both women screamed when an animal burst through Simon's door. Wood flew in all different directions. "What the hell?" Sheila screamed.

A large wolf stood there snarling, looking at them with glowing eyes. He bared his teeth and saliva poured to the floor.

*Simon, listen to me, you have to control yourself. Please.* Barbara spoke to him by mind. "Not good," Barbara said then pressed the down button when the wolf charged toward them.

The elevator door closed just before Simon made impact with the door, knocking a dent into it.

"That's not good." She pressed the button on the panel, but the door wouldn't budge.

"What the hell was that?" Sheila asked while holding on to Barbara's arm.

"That was Simon pissed off."

"Simon! But Simon..." Sheila trailed off.

"We will explain later. If there is a later. Right now, we have to find Amanda and Tyren. Simon is not in his right mind. I still can follow him. The problem is." Barbara, noticed that the door metal was pushed in, but something was stopping it from moving. "We are stuck and I feel that Simon did this not to attack us, but to keep us here."

"What are you talking about?"

Since they were going to be here for a moment, she might as well explain some of it. After pressing the panic button, Barbara pried Sheila's fingernails from her skin. "We are different, Sheila, me, Simon, Tyren and your friend, Amanda. We are vampires and your friend is what they call a Truelove. She and Simon were born to be with each other for all eternity. Tyren is what Simon just turned into, a werewolf."

Sheila laughed.



"Listen to me, Sheila, I am telling you the truth. Amanda knows this and tonight was to be her last night as a human."

"Okay, if you are vampires, then what was Simon doing looking like a wolf. I didn't know you could shape shift."

"We can't, only werewolves can."

Sheila chuckled. "So Simon is a werewolf? I thought you said he was a vampire."

"Simon had never changed into a werewolf before. Long ago after his first wife had Tyren, a wolf bit him. The wolf infected him and Simon hasn't been able to control the wolf side of him. He couldn't until he met Amanda. Amanda calms him and now that she is in trouble, I think Simon would die to keep her safe."

Sheila eased to the other side of the elevator and slid to the floor, listening to Barbara's unusual tale.

Both women's heads shot up when they heard people screaming in the lobby below.

"Simon must have gone through the front door," Barbara told her.

\* \* \* \*

The second Simon hit the street, he could tell which way the car had gone. At this very moment, Amanda struggled to get free from someone's grip. The thought of another person's hands on Amanda only fueled his anger into fury. Then he tried to connect with both of them, but he couldn't. Amanda was struggling so much he couldn't get a grip on her mind. But the man in her mind he could, he didn't know the man, but he knew exactly where they were taking her. Amanda didn't know it, but she was deep in the man's mind while she fought. She was so afraid of what was happening, she couldn't think properly. Still not being able to contact Tyren worried him.

With a loud howl, cars came to complete stops, honking in panic. People looked, then took off running in all directions as the large wolf made its way through the town.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

“Let me go!” Amanda screamed as Manuel carried her down to the basement of a house. She fought the second the car stopped and ran, only to be caught before she got out of the driveway.

“Not yet, Amanda,” he said.

Amanda saw the other man laying Tyren on the pile of sheets as Manuel chained one of her arms in cuffs. “What did you do to him?” she yelled.

“Nothing but brought him over completely. I know you have heard the rumor. A half werewolf will kill me. As you know Tyren is my son, my only son and I couldn’t kill him, so I figured that I would change him instead. As for your Dark Guardian, the one that I believed is to kill me, I will destroy him. This cure...” Manuel touched the jewel on his neck. “I won’t need to give it to Simon. Not when I plan on killing him.”

“What, what cure?”

“This, my lovely young woman, is the cure for your lover. If he drinks this, then the curse, as they call it, will be taken away.”

Amanda thought, so that’s what he meant by new life. She eyed the golden amulet, then thought how she could tell Simon. She felt him in her mind moments ago, but she had been fighting Resniel and didn’t have time to respond.

Manuel grabbed her arm while his brother passed him a needle.

“Ouch!” Amanda cried out when Manuel stuck a needle in the vein



in her arm.

"Sorry, Amanda, but I need this. There is an unlikely chance that Nairapha will let you out of hell, so I need this to get out on my own. When I take Tyren down to hell, he will age faster than you or I. It will be years in hell, but only hours on Earth. Once he is old enough to claim the money, we will come back to Earth."

"You are sick," she spat at him.

"Why do you say that?"

"You are going to take a young child to a hell dimension so he can age faster. Have you ever thought about his childhood? Have you thought about what he wants?" Her fear was replaced by fury. What fool would do that to a child? What person would take a childhood away because he wanted money?

"No and I don't have to. He has centuries to make up for his childhood."

Amanda felt her head becoming lighter by the second. He was taking too much blood too quickly. The next thing she knew the world began to spin before she blacked out.

\* \* \* \*

Simon stopped in front of a huge home. He noticed that he had made it to the outskirts of town. Sniffing, he smelled that Amanda and Tyren were somewhere in the home. Howling loudly, he made his way up to the home. His large black paws pressing the grass down with each step he took.

Not being able to open the door with paws, he growled and leaped through the glass window, shattering it into a million pieces. Once inside the large living room, he shook off the glass, then took a deep breath, following the scent of his lover and child to the open door.

Simon knew it was a trap, that's why he locked Barbara and Amanda's friend in the elevator. He would have to apologize for scaring them later, now he had to find his son and mate. Pushing the door open with his nose, he sniffed. *Amanda! Tyren!*

Carefully, he made his way down the staircase. Once he made it to



the bottom step, he saw Tyren lying on a pile of white sheets. He went over to him and listened. *Still alive—barely.* Then he saw Amanda, chained up to the wall. She hung there unconscious. He detected her blood, but didn't see any on her. He needed to change back or he wouldn't be able to help them.

Simon closed his eyes to concentrate on returning to human form. He growled when nothing happened at first. He tried again, this time the hair fell away from his body. He could feel his body changing back to human form. When he had changed back, he ran up to Tyren.

"Don't try to wake him," a dark, yet, familiar voice spoke from the top of the stairs. "The blood he took is going to have him out for a couple more minutes."

Simon turned to see Manuel Stovall walking down the stairs. Behind him another man that could only be his brother. "Manuel!" Simon snarled, but didn't move. If he attacked both werewolves, his odds would get him killed.

"It's so nice that you have remembered me," Manuel smiled.

"How could I forget, mutt."

Manuel smirked. "How's the bite?" he snarled.

Simon stepped forward, but Manuel shaking his head made him stop.

You haven't met my brother Resniel, but I will say, his temper is worse than mine."

Amanda groaned, getting their attention.

"How is it that your smell is different?" Simon needed to know why Manuel had a different smell than his original one.

Manuel laughed at Simon's question. "That will happen to you when you burn from head to toe for years in hell. Nairapha thought it would be good if I changed my scent, and he did it—painfully."

"Let them go and deal with me, Manuel."

"The lovely Amanda," Manuel said going up to the wall where she hung by one arm. "Her blood will get me back out of hell anytime." He held up a small container in his hand. "Once I kill you, I will take Amanda and my son with me."

Simon snarled. "You will not lay a hand on them."



The order made Manuel chuckle.

Amanda's head shot up and she looked over at Simon, then to Manuel standing beside her. Simon wanted to run up to her, but he couldn't take the chance on getting not only him killed but them also.

Simon nor Manuel saw it coming, Amanda's hand shot out, grabbing the amulet from around his neck. She tossed it at Simon and with one hand, he caught it.

"You sneaking little witch," Manuel said. "You think giving Simon the cure will make me not kill him."

The cure! Simon looked down at the cure in his hand.

"Yes, the cure Simon," Manuel spoke. "Drink it all you want, but it won't help."

Simon turned to see Tyren getting up off the floor. He slipped the necklace in his pocket.

"Ha. My son is awake."

"Amanda, are you okay," Tyren asked.

"Yes, sweetheart, what about you?"

"I don't know, I feel funny but I am okay."

"Amanda, open the gate," Manuel ordered.

Amanda looked at Manuel and yelled, "No!"

Manuel grabbed Tyren from behind. "Do it now or I'll break his neck."

"You wouldn't?"

\* \* \* \*

Manuel tightened his grip and she heard Tyren whimper in pain. Amanda concentrated not really knowing how she did it before.

The room began to tremble and a small portal opened. Heat flared through, along with the sounds of screaming. Manuel let go of Tyren. He ran up to Amanda and held on to her when he heard the screams from the people inside.

"I will be back for him, Simon, and your mate. For now I have to go and make a little deal with Nairapha."

Manuel smiled at his brother.



“Have fun with her for a little while, Simon,” Manuel said, then stepped through. Just before the portal closed, Resniel ran toward it. Before Simon could move, Resniel grabbed Tyren and followed Manuel through the hole.

“No!” Simon ran up, but the portal closed just before he made it through.

“Tyren!” Amanda yelled. “No.”

The second the portal closed, she felt weak, her head begin to spin and then she saw darkness.

\* \* \* \*

Two Days Later.

Instead of being in the dark basement like she remembered, Amanda lay on Simon’s bed.

“I am glad you are awake,” Simon’s voice spoke from beside the bed. “You had me and your friends worried.”

Amanda tried to remember what happened, then it came to her. “Tyren!” she tried to get up, but Simon pushed her back to the bed.

“Don’t get up, Amanda.”

“But, Tyren, I have to open a gate to get him out of there.”

“Amanda, you can’t, not now.”

“What? You just can’t leave him there, Simon. We have to get him out.”

“I know and we will. It’s just if you open a gate now, it’s not likely you will open the gate up at the same level of Nairapha dimension. You will die trying to find him. There are thousands of dimensions, thousands of levels on each one. I have been trying to figure out a way to get him out. Nezar said that he will also try to locate what level Tyren and Manuel are on.”

Amanda looked at Simon and, for the first time she could see, his eyes held a sad look, a look as if he wanted to cry, but stopped himself. Then his vibes of worry and exhaustion were beating at her. “Did you drink the cure, Simon?”

“Yes, the second I got you back here.”



"Simon, how long was I out?"

"Two days," he spoke, then sat on the bed. "Your friends have been up here to check on you."

"Where are they? Are they okay?"

He nodded. "Yes, they are. We have explained everything to them and they seem to be taking it well. Their main concern was for you. I will go and..."

"No," her hand on his arm stopped him. "Do it, Simon."

"Do what?" His eyes went to her blue ones, waiting on her to tell him what she spoke of.

"Change me. I know once I am changed, I can control the gates and where I open them up. I can find him then."

"No, Amanda, I won't do it. I will not send you to that place knowing what can happen to you. If Nairapha gets his hands on you, he will torture you, far worse than anyone else. There you cannot die, no matter how much you wish for it."

"I know, but I can't sit and wait. I want to save him. Please turn me. We can go together."

"Lay back," he ordered.

Amanda did as he instructed. Her stomach tingled from nervousness because the first two times she took his blood they were making love. Now her mind wasn't fogged up from lust, she wondered if it would hurt. Her body tensed when she felt him lay beside her. She smiled, then closed her eyes when he leaned over.

Her body jerked in surprise when she felt his warm tongue slide down her neck, followed by his teeth sliding into her neck. Lust slammed into her and she knew he felt it also, but this wasn't the time to think about their urges. They had to save Tyren first.

\* \* \* \*

Simon took her blood until her heart weakened to a point of almost death. He closed the wound, then bit into his wrist. Amanda didn't hesitate to latch on to his wrist. He let her take his blood until he felt lightheaded from the loss of blood. "Enough, Amanda," he said and



pulled his arm away.

Simon closed up the wound, then watched as Amanda's heart came to a complete stop for moment, then another, then another. He got worried, then her chest rose and she took in air. A knock at the door made him look up. He knew Amanda would be out for a couple of minutes. He went to answer the door.

"Is she okay?" Sheila asked when he opened the door.

Simon wanted to smile, wanted to say everything was great, but a lie he could not tell. Sheila had to be the bravest one, but he could tell that she wanted to run, knowing what he told her he was or what her friend would become. Behind Sheila stood Emma and Barbara, waiting and wanting Amanda to wake up soon.

"She just woke, but she asked me to change her so she will be out no more than thirty minutes. The blood has to do its work."

"We'll wait in the kitchen then," Barbara told him. "We wanted to make sure she was okay."

Simon nodded.

The women walked out.

The second he closed the door, a flash of light came from the room. A loud gust of wind blew pictures off the wall. The lamp on the table crashed to the floor. A moment later a portal opened and out came Manuel—or at least Simon thought it was Manuel, but the scent was not his.

In a flash, Simon stood in between the man and Amanda. He would not let this person hurt his Truelove, he would die to save her. Simon kept looking at the new comer, wondering why he stood in the middle of the room, not moving. What made Simon not move was the silver knife the stranger had in his hand.

"Father?"

Simon went into shock at the same time his door flew opened and Sheila, Barbara and Emma came in with weapons in their hands.

"Who the hell are you?" Sheila ,said drawing her knife.

"This is, Tyren," Simon said, then shook his head not believing it himself.

"Tyren?" The three women spoke his name in unison.



Tyren nodded.

Tyren now stood six-feet-three-inches tall with golden hair down to his butt. His skin golden just like his hair. He looked like a man that spent a lot of time on the beach searching for the perfect tan and found it. This was not a little boy anymore.

“Man, how have you...damn,” Sheila said. “You have grown.”

Simon watched as Sheila looked at Emma who had backed away from the commotion.

“Emma, are you okay?” Sheila whispered.

Emma didn’t respond.

Simon felt her tremble when Tyren’s eyes locked with hers for a moment.

“Emma,” Sheila whispered again.

Emma opened her mouth to speak, but then Tyren smiled, flashing them a perfect set of white teeth. Against his tanned skin it looked great.

“Jesus,” Barbara said. “The body has really grown up. If he didn’t have his eye on Emma I would have to take a crack at him.”

“Agreed,” Sheila taunted.

“Will you two hush,” Emma finally spoke.

Simon was still in shock at the situation, but happy that Tyren made it back safe and sound. But he didn’t move from his spot in front of his mate. He didn’t know how he got back or if he could be trusted.

Tyren looked back at Simon. “You can trust me father.” Tyren placed the knife in its holster in the back of his shirt.

“How did you get out?” Simon asked. No need to stall, he needed to know.

“I killed Manuel and took Amanda’s blood. He might be my birth father, and I appreciate what he tried to teach me, but I didn’t want to be a killer, nor did I want him coming back and killing you. You are my father, will always be. I had to kill him because he wanted to kill Amanda and you. He was mad, so I waited for my chance to take him out. You can go inside my mind and know that I am telling the truth.”

Simon smiled, knowing he was speaking the truth. He had been there from the moment he spoke. “Where is Resniel?”



Tyren shrugged his shoulders. "I really didn't know what happened to my uncle. One minute Resniel had me around the waist, the next Resniel let me go, and I guess he ended up in another level."

"How did you get here in my room?"

"Amanda. The moment she changed over, she called out for me. I knew it was her and she helped me to the correct level and I got out. That is why she is still sleeping." Tyren looked over to Amanda. "I want to thank her as soon as she wakes."

Simon knew this would happen with Tyren being in hell that long. His little boy has grown up.

"How old are you, Tyren?" Barbara asked.

"Thirty-two."

"Emma, he's old enough for you now," Sheila teased.

"Go to hell, Sheila." Emma said.

"Are you a full werewolf?" Barbara asked.

"Yes, I am, but I am not out for flesh. I am a Cortranth. I only want to find my bloodmate, and I think that I have found her."

"You are not Dark Guardian," Simon stated more than questioned.

"No, but I still have a bloodmate. It's the same as Cotranths, which you know. I only want my mate and to live a normal life."

"Emma," Simon told more than asked.

"Yes."

"No!" Emma's breath quickened and she rushed out of the room.

Simon read her mind and he sensed that it was all too creepy and she didn't know how to deal with it. One day the boy was eleven the next he's a man.

"I'll go talk to her." Sheila ran after Emma and Barbara quickly followed.

"So Manuel is dead. The prophecy has been fulfilled." Simon spoke, then sat down on the bed beside Amanda.

"Yes," Tyren spoke, then watched his stepmother's eyes flicker. "I care for Amanda, even in that short time she was here. Once I found out that you loved her, I knew she would be with me forever."

"I am sorry."

The apology made Tyren look at Simon. "For what?"



“For not protecting you better than I did. I love you like a son, my son. I never thought of you as my stepson and I didn’t want anything to happen to you. I wanted to protect you until you were of age and you didn’t have to go through the transformations like I did.”

Tyren sat in the chair. “I understand and I love you for it. When Manuel told me that he was my real father, I believed him. He explained to me how my mother cheated on you. At first, I was mad at her for it because I didn’t want to be his son. I wanted to be yours. Then he told me what happened. He explained to me about you being a vampire and my mother not being your Truelove. He explained to me about Trianes, Dark Guardians and werewolves.”

Tyren sighed. “My mother was wrong, but that didn’t give him the right to kill her. So, over the years, I planned what I wanted to do. When I was twenty-one and he wanted to come back, I begged him to stay, just long enough so we could find Resniel, and he fell for it.”

“But you grew up in hell, yet, I feel no evil in you.”

Tyren laughed. “Manuel didn’t either. He said it had to be you that made me into a softy. Knowing that I would come back someday to see you was the only thing keeping me sane, and knowing that my mate, Emma, was with you.”

Simon smiled. “You knew Emma was your mate before you knew what you were, didn’t you?”

“Yes, I knew she was something, but I didn’t understand at that time. In hell, you don’t have much time to think about things like love and intimacy. Especially, when you got a God of Destruction and your father making sure you do your job.” Tryen felt a slight hint of pain go through Simon at his words.

“What did they have you doing down there?”

“Torture. More like inventory. When newbie’s come in, I had to let Nairapha know. The only thing I hated was seeing innocent human souls down there. It’s not right what they did to them. So, I made it my life to find a gate opener and save as many as I could.”

“I am glad you didn’t turn out bad,” Amanda spoke weakly as she sat up.

“Amanda,” Tyren was at her side, giving her a hug before her



entire name left his lips. "Thank you so much."

"You're welcome, Tyren, but I do have to breathe," she said and Tyren released her. "I see you scared my friend off."

"Emma," Tyren said with a smile. "Yes, I know. I would have gone after her, but I wanted to let her friends calm her first. After that she will be mine."

"Are you okay, Amanda?" Simon's voice almost crackled.

"Yes, I am good, better than good."

"That is great. Your friends..."

"I know you are worried, but Emma is more concerned about taking off Tyren's clothes instead of worrying about me," Amanda joked.

"Well then, let's not keep the woman waiting," Tyren teased.

Amanda shook her head, then stood up. The moment she did, a rush of wind pushed her up against the wall, knocking her unconscious again.

Both men ran up to her, lighting came followed by the screams before Manuel came through the portal.

"Manuel!" Tyren snarled.

"Father to you son," Manuel said, anger in his voice. "You think to kill me? You are dead son of mine."

"I will never be your son."

"True," Manuel looked over to Simon. "You want to be the son of a vampire. Not a problem. Let's see if Simon can change you when I am finish with you."

Manuel ran up to Tyren and grabbed him around the neck. He snarled, then pushed Tyren through the glass door, shattering it. They both fell into the pool.

\* \* \* \* \*

After moving Amanda to the bed, Simon ran out to the pool to see Tyren coming out of the water. He looked to see Manuel's body at the bottom. Blood circled his body and the silver knife Tyren had in his hand earlier, stuck through his heart.



"He's dead this time. For good," Tyren told him.

"Are you okay, there is a lot of blood?"

"Yes," Tyren spoke, then looked down at his arm where three dark marks were. "I thought the knife might be handy. "It's made of pure silver and I had to bring it with me when I escaped hell. You never knew, but people come down there with a lot of things on them. I thought I got him in the heart before, but this time I did." Tyren looked at his father. "How is Amanda?"

"I moved her to the bed."

\* \* \* \*

Minutes later, Amanda's eyes opened to see Simon and Tyren looking at her. "Is this how my day is going to be all the time?" Amanda laughed. "Two men looking down at me."

Both men laughed.

"Are you okay, Amanda?"

"Yes, Tyren."

"Good because I hear your friend running upstairs screaming."

"Which one." She tried to sit up, but Simon stopped her. "Emma?"

"No, Sheila."

The door flew open. Sheila ran in and hung on to Tyren like a lifeline.

"I see nobody knocks anymore," Amanda joked, but the look on Sheila's face told her different. "What's wrong, Sheila?"

Sheila pointed and Darrell came through the door.

"Darrell," Simon said with a smile. "Man it's been..."

"Two hundred years," Darrell said with a smile.

Amanda's eyes went wide. "Darrell is a..."

"Triane," Darrell told Amanda. "I read Sheila's mind and I found out she knew about you so I decided to tell her in the elevator."

Her frightened friend looked around Tyren.

"You just got here two minutes ago and you blurt it out like that," Sheila said from behind Tyren.

"And you ran!" Amanda said, laughing. "You, Sheila, not afraid of



anything, ran?"

"Go to hell, Amanda."

"Come from behind Tyren and say that to my face." Amanda teased.

Sheila gave her the middle finger as Barbara came in the room followed by Emma.

"Okay, okay, let me see if I can get this all straight since everyone is here." Amanda sat on the bed. "I was destined to be Simon's Truelove and now I am a vampire and we will be together for all eternity. Emma, if she stops running from Tyren, is Tyren's bloodmate, and they will be together forever. Sheila, if Tyren can get her off his back, is Darrell's lover, which Darrell is a Triane and he never told her until now. Now, if I am correct, Sheila is strong minded and if she wants, Simon could change her if you are the same blood type." Everyone listened as Amanda made her analyses.

"That's about sums it up," Simon told her.

"To tell you the truth, I know I have a lifetime to think all this out and I want my friends to be with me, now they can forever. I don't know about you guys, but a strong drink is in order."

The entire gang laughed at Amanda.



## EPilogue

### SIX MONTHS LATER

Amanda moved closer to Simon in the limousine. He lifted his arm so she could lay her head on his shoulder. “Are you sure Dragon will be able to handle it?” Amanda asked from the comfort of his shoulder.

“I am.” Simon assured her. “He is on his way. Until then, Anthony is going to run it for me.”

When Simon suggested they move to another city months ago, Amanda didn’t want to go. Simon had so much to give up. She knew that he wanted to stay in the spotlight and she would never take that away from him. She never thought about moving to Seabrook Island in South Carolina. The only reason she agreed was Simon told her that the Dementra activity was out of control.

Last month she and Simon flew down to South Carolina and they found a gigantic beach mansion, as she called it. Brand new beautiful house. It was two stories high, just like she liked, ten rooms, eight and a half-baths and it had a pool and Jacuzzi. It had an underground basement, good for Anthony who was afraid to sleep above ground. The place was fenced off, and it was on private land.

Simon had installers come in and replace all the glass with sun-resistant glass. Amanda and the girls picked out furniture for every room.

With Barbara’s help, Emma and Sheila would still be on the Anything Goes payroll. They wouldn’t need a lot of money because



Simon and Anthony came together and paid for the house and all the furniture. Simon wanted to keep them on, but just in case they left, they would have money to take care of themselves.

“Anthony didn’t look so happy with Ramon leaving him.”

“He’s wasn’t, but he only has to do without his Triane for a little while. He and Barbara are together now.”

“But isn’t he going to be lonely being the odd ball. I mean, you and I are together. Tyren has Emma, sort of.” Amanda laughed at Emma’s attempt to deny her destiny with Tyren. “Darrell has finally pulled Sheila off Tyren’s back and she came over without any problems thanks to Anthony. Barbara has Ramon. Who does Anthony have?”

“I feel your concern, but you have to know that when fate is ready, then he will meet his Truelove, just as I have found you, and Tyren has found Emma. He won’t feel left out. Anthony is strong.”

“I know, but I don’t want him to lose his soul.”

“He won’t,” Simon said, pulling her closer to him. “This is a long trip, why didn’t we just fly? Why are we taking three limos, half way across the state?”

“Because we can stop off at cities, see how the city life is. Stay a day or two if we want. Getting there will be half of the fun.”

“Oh really?”

“Yes,” Amanda said with a smile. “If you like, I could just entertain you the entire trip.”

“And how would you do that?”

“Remember what you told me months ago?”

Simon shook his head, but when she moved to straddle his lap, she knew he had a good idea where things would be going from here.

“Remember these words and I quote, *If I have to tell you, then you don’t need to know.*” A smirk tugged her lips. “I love you.”

“And I love you, Amanda,” he said. “You are my world and I will be glad to show you all of it.”

“That’s is all I ever ask of you,” Amanda said with a smile just before she leaned closer and kissed him.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I've been a writer all of my life. As a young girl I remember reading books and writing my own short stories. I have an active imagination and over the years learned to bring those emotions, characters and pictures to life. I read everything while growing up. I love all types of books but my favorites are paranormal romance books.

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