



Heart Bond  
Gwendolyn Cease

Voracious Vamps

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**Warning:** This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature readers. This story has been rated *Total-e-burning*.

# **HEART BOND**

**Gwendolyn Cease**

## *Dedication*

To one of my best friends and writing partner Jessica Jarman.  
Thank you so much for your support and friendship.  
I couldn't do it without you.

## Chapter One

Loud music thumped through the dark club, shuddering the floor under the dancers' feet as if the building were a living entity with a heartbeat. Jaz Maloney gyrated wildly, flinging his arms around as strobe lights flashed in rhythm to the music. Though considered petite, sleek muscles packed his five-four frame, which he used quite effectively to clear space on the floor. He despised being crowded when he danced. He wanted room to be able to express his own unique style. He flung his brown hair, currently tipped with day glow pink, out of his sweaty face and let out a yell. The other dancers on the floor answered back and Jaz smiled. Yep, he was in his element, the centre of attention.

The song switched to one he didn't particularly like, so he headed towards the bar. Vitala in the crowd waved as humans instinctively moved out of his way. Humans naturally gave Vitala a wide berth and, though he was small, he was no exception. Jaz certainly never thought of himself as small, other people were just freakishly tall.

He shoved his way to the bar and stepped up on the decorative metal piping. It was approximately six inches off the floor and it put him at the right height to catch a bartender's eye. He waved his hand and the bangles on his wrist made a cheery ringing sound. Damn, he did look fine tonight. No one had yet to catch his eye, but the night was still young.

"Hey sweetie," he addressed the bartender. "I would love a ginormous glass of water. I am parched."

She handed him the glass and he smiled at her as he hopped off the pipe. Sipping his drink, he headed to a back room and the table his friends had commandeered. He wished his best friend Keller had come out, but since the whole bonding deal with Khalid, they stayed in quite a bit. Slut. However, if he had Khalid, he'd definitely stay in too. The man was total hotness. Jaz mentally patted himself on the back. If it weren't for him, Kell and Khalid would probably still be floundering around in non-relationship land. He certainly didn't know how Keller had survived without his assistance. The thought stopped him. What a great idea for a career, professional best friend. He could sweep into the pathetic lives of sad individuals and help them to better their existence. Everyone could benefit from having Jaz Maloney instead of only a select few.

He pondered this exciting thought as he reached the table. The room was actually fairly quiet since it was tucked as far away from the dance floor as possible. Jaz slumped into the booth and ran his fingers through his sweaty hair. Getting icky sweaty was the one thing he hated about clubbing. He looked around the room, to see if he could spy any of the people he'd come with, and his eyes met those of Andrew Robertson.

*Shit.* He quickly looked away. The man was moving beyond nuisance to stalker level. Three months ago, Jaz had met him at a party his parents had thrown. Afterwards, the man had begun to call him...constantly. Jaz had tried telling him, politely, he wasn't interested, but the man wouldn't take no for an answer. He didn't want to have to call Keller since Robertson carried a bit of power within Vitala society, but if this persisted, he'd have to.

"Jaz. I've been looking for you."

"Mr. Robertson." Jaz looked at him not smiling. "What are you doing here? This doesn't seem to be your type of place."

"Like I said, I was looking for you."

Robertson wasn't a tall man, but he did carry some muscle on his closely packed frame. He wore his blond hair slicked back from his face, which only highlighted his ruddy, pocked face and thin, cruel eyes. Overall, as far as Jaz was concerned, not an attractive package.

"Now, why would you look for me?" Jaz slid farther into the round booth, away from Robertson.

"Please, Jaz, why do you play these games?" The man sat and reached for Jaz's arm to stop his subtle flight. "I'm quite taken with you. You'll make a perfect addition to my household. Come, quit playing games and kiss your new master."

"Have you lost your mind?" Jaz tugged his arm free from Robertson's grasp. "Look, buddy, I don't know what you imagine, but I don't like you. You're not my type. In fact, truthfully, you gross me out. As for calling you master, you must have been smoking something bad to imagine that. Go away now. Thank you. Bye-bye." Jaz waved both his hands in a dismissing gesture, praying this loon got the message.

Instead, the man laughed. "I love that you're playing hard to get. However, I tire of the game. Now come here, before I am forced to do something you will regret."

Jaz growled and flashed fang, a clear indication of how pissed he was. "I don't know if you're deaf or stupid, but leave me alone or you'll be the one regretting." His voice had dropped as he ground out the words between clenched teeth. Rising, he popped over the back of the booth and did his best to disappear into the crowd.

Gods, the man was seriously deranged. Jaz carefully reviewed his actions of the last three months and could think of nothing he'd done to give the man the impression he welcomed his advances. Jaz was friendly, but he was always friendly, deciding to give every person he met a chance. Anyway, most people needed more than one chance to make a good impression. Andrew Robertson, on the other hand, just got worse with every meeting.

Jaz was so involved with his own thoughts he ploughed right into a solid, immovable object. He looked up to apologise and was struck mute by the incredible male perfection looking down at him. The man was clearly of Asian descent with high cheekbones and thickly lashed, night-black almond eyes. He wore his hair pulled back from his face in a thick braid that fell to mid-back. He was also Vitala, which Jaz could tell by his rich exotic scent.

"Why are you in such a hurry, little one?"

Jaz shivered at the deep, soft voice that could probably cause orgasms from reading the classifieds aloud. Hell, he was almost there and the man had spoken less than ten words to him.

"I'm trying to lose someone who's become a real jerk." Jaz waved his hand in the general direction of the other room, but never took his eyes off the stranger.

"You will dance with me. I am quite sure we can convince this someone you are not interested."

Jaz could do nothing but nod as the man led him to the dance floor. He was dressed all in black from his boots all the way up to his jacket, but where it would look like a costume on other men, it suited this one perfectly. Jaz hesitated only a second then threw himself into the dance. The man was infinitely graceful on the dance floor, and Jaz had to remind himself to dance as well, and not stand a gawk. The man was truly a moving wet dream. Other people on the floor turned to watch him with obvious interest, but he looked at no one else but Jaz. Jaz smiled and he returned it with a slight upturn of his very lush kissable lips.

*Damn, Jaz thought, he is total hotness, maybe almost hotter than Khalid.* He couldn't wait to tell Keller about this.

After the song was over, the male took Jaz's hand and led him from the dance floor. Jaz fairly vibrated from the touch alone. The man was incredibly large and male, and Jaz was lightheaded as if he were about to swoon like some idiot in a romance novel. But he couldn't help it since the other man's hand was hot on his own.

"Tell me your name, little one," he leaned close to whisper.

"Jaz."

"You may call me Jin, which is what my family calls me."

Jaz nodded mutely, unable to form a coherent thought. What was wrong with him? Jaz never lacked for anything to say. In fact, Kell had once remarked he'd still be talking when he was dead. But the idea that this beautiful creature wanted to talk to him, dance with him, was overwhelming. He could have anyone in the place, but he'd chosen Jaz.

Jin leant forward to gently brush his lips across Jaz's own. When no protest came, Jin deepened the kiss and thrust his tongue into Jaz's mouth. Jaz gasped and wrapped his arms around the man's neck. Jin's tongue twined with his own, coaxing it forward until he could suck on it, making Jaz tremble. Jin hummed in appreciation as his hands began to glide up and down Jaz's back and finally came to settle on his ass. Jaz pushed himself up on tiptoe to get closer, and Jin lifted him off the floor and pressed him against a wall. Jaz squirmed, feeling the man's large erection press against his stomach and didn't know whether he should feel alarmed or more turned on.

Jin broke the kiss. "Come, I know a place we can have more privacy."

Once again, Jaz found himself following along as Jin held his hand. The tiny, itty-bitty part of his rational brain screamed at him to stop. He didn't know the man. Thankfully, the gigundo part of his brain, which ruled most of the time, cheered him on. Jin led him to a dark corner of the floor and opened a door Jaz had never noticed before.

The room he found himself in was all black from the ceiling down to the thick carpet on the floor. The only colour came from the small couches and chairs, which were all a lush, deep red velvet. Jin moved through the room and under an archway into the next, which was decorated exactly the same. The only differences were the room was more dimly lit and the larger couches. This is where Jin led him.

"I thought we could be more comfortable here." Jin ran a finger down Jaz's cheek as they sat together on a couch tucked in a corner.



"I've never been back here, didn't know it existed." Jaz looked around the low-lit room in interest. Other people were scattered around the room, some on the couches and others on the floor. Most of them were in different stages of undress. Jaz looked away quickly, a bit embarrassed. He hoped like hell this man didn't want to sex him up in front of everyone. That wouldn't do at all.

"Do not look at them," Jin whispered in his ear. "When we eventually make love it will be some place private. But here, we can sit and enjoy on another."

Jaz shivered at the dark promise in the other man's voice. Mister Man, down below, raised his head in interest and Jaz was sure the other man could smell his lust. One bad thing about dealing with his own species was the heightened senses everyone possessed. It made it difficult to hide anything from the Vitala around them.

Jin leaned in once more and took his lips. Damn, the man could kiss. Jaz hesitantly looped his arms around Jin's neck and found himself pulled into his embrace. He wasn't into huge shows of affection, but this was comfortable and safe. Stupid, since he didn't know the man, but his instincts told him he was secure with him.

Soon, Jaz found himself laying flat with Jin over him. The weight of the other man, instead of crushing, was safe and erotic against his body. Jaz found himself rubbing his crotch against Jin's thigh. Jaz knew he should stop, but it was too good. The friction against his cock made his toes curl, and he moaned softly against Jin's mouth.

Jin pulled his lips away and smiled. "I love the needy sounds you make, little one."

"Sorry," Jaz muttered, feeling embarrassed. This guy probably thought he was a total idiot, moaning and carrying on. He should be cooler, as if he did this all the time. As if that would ever happen.

"Never apologise to me. I love to hear how much I please you." Jin kissed him. "Do you trust me, sweet, to make you feel good? I will take such good care of you."

Jaz nodded before he could fully get his mind around the question. He had never had anyone affect him the way this man did – as if he were fuzzy and slightly stupid, only able to nod instead of stringing words together to make a sentence.

Jin reached down and swiftly unbuttoned Jaz's pants. Shoving the material apart, he reached in to close his very hot hand around Jaz's erection. Jaz gasped and tightened his arms around Jin's neck.

“Easy, sweet, this is all about pleasure, nothing else.” Jin kissed him on the lips. “Now watch me.”

The two men locked eyes as Jin slowly moved down to engulf Jaz’s cock in his mouth. Jaz shuddered and grabbed onto Jin’s arm. The whole world was swirling, but he focused solely on Jin’s mouth on his body. Never breaking eye contact, Jin circled his tongue around the sensitive head and plunged his mouth down to take all of Jaz’s cock at once. Jaz watched fascinated as the other man worked his cock as if it was his favourite treat. First, twisting his tongue then dropping down far enough Jaz’s dick bumped against Jin’s throat.

Jaz gripped the back of the couch and Jin’s arm as he worked himself in his fabulously, clever mouth. The man was a god and Jaz his willing servant. If it were possible, he’d wish this would go on forever, but Jaz’s balls tightened signalling his impending orgasm. He wanted to warn the man sucking him so thoroughly, but could only moan and thrust his hips.

Jin hummed low in his throat. The vibration shot through Jaz’s cock and into his chest. He could do nothing but hold on as he began to orgasm into Jin’s mouth. The other man never flinched, instead he slurped him up like a sweet dessert. Jaz gasped for breath, certain his shoes must have shot off as hard as he came.

Jin kissed his cock once more and moved up to reclaim Jaz’s lips. Jaz could taste himself mixed with the unmistakable flavour of Jin. The combination was both erotic and addicting.

“Little one, you came beautifully.” He spoke against Jaz’s lips. “I cannot wait to spread you naked across my bed.”

A small vibration in Jin’s pocket pulled them both apart and he cursed, taking a cell phone out. He kept one hand on Jaz as he flipped it open and answered curtly. The conversation was incredibly short, but Jaz could tell Jin was not happy with what he was hearing.

He snapped the phone shut and took Jaz’s lips in a hard, quick kiss. “I’m sorry, little one, but I must go. I will find you because we are far from finished with this. Now that I have tasted you, I want more.”

A zing of pain shot through Jaz’s chest at the idea of Jin leaving. Their brief time together was more intense than any real relationship Jaz had ever been in. Jin helped Jaz

swiftly redress and kissed him once more. With a sigh, he dragged his lips away to study Jaz's face intently. Jaz stared back, unable to tear his gaze away. The man looked at him with hunger and...longing. Finally, he stood and quickly left the room. Jaz lay alone on the couch, attempting to catch his breath. Hell and damnation, he couldn't wait to tell Keller. Still, if he never saw him again, it would be an exceptionally good story. The idea of never seeing Jin again did not set well in his chest, but Jaz pushed it away. Slowly, he too stood and left the room, not looking back.

\* \* \* \*

"Girlfriend, he was total hotness." Jaz flopped on his bed, phone stuck to his ear.

"Yeah, but you don't know who he is," Keller Montgomery, his very best friend in the whole wide world, replied. "Do you know how many Vitala are in the city?"

"Doesn't matter. He said he would find me. Can the course of true love be denied by a little thing like not knowing who he is? Of course not. Besides, everyone knows who I am. I'm practically famous, honey bunny." Jaz waved his hand around and rolled his eyes.

"Okay, practically famous, but what's wrong? I can hear it in your voice and it's not this guy."

Jaz sighed. The biggest problem with having Keller for a best friend was she knew him well, too well. "Andrew Robertson, do you know him?"

"Yes." Her short answer and cool tone signalled she was in full bodyguard mode.

"Okay, well, he's becoming a bit of a nuisance."

"Define a bit."

"He followed me to the club last night. He insists I move into his household and call him master. As if!"

"He what?" Kell demanded, her voice now ice cold. "How long has this been going on?"

"For the last couple months, but he's become stalker level within the past couple weeks."

"Why haven't you said something before?"

Jaz sighed, feeling a headache beginning behind his eyes. "I thought he would move beyond this foolishness. I mean I understand I'm irresistible, but once I say I'm not interested, he should have gone away. Well he didn't.

"I will kill him."

"No, you will not." Jaz sat forward clutching the phone. That's all he needed was Keller going out to kill a high level Vitala. He didn't think the senate would appreciate it one bit.

"Fine, I won't kill him...yet. I'll ask Khalid to go through the senate and see if something can be done. But if it doesn't work —"

"Yes I know, punkin," Jaz cut her off. "You will kill him dead. Deader than dead, in fact. So dead even his spirit will be dead."

Keller laughed. "You're a jerk."

"Yes, love bug, but I'm your jerk, and you love me."

"I do, and that's why this guy had better watch his step. In the future, you'd better start giving me information right away. What if something happened to you?"

Jaz sighed. "I know, I promise the next time some person becomes obsessed with me I'll let you know right away."

"While I'm looking into the situation you stay inside. Do not go out. Make sure you turn on the security system and leave it on. I know how you are, Jaz. You have it, but don't use it."

Jaz looked around at the huge master bedroom of his five-bedroom condominium. "You mean I'm stuck in this hovel? How long? Keller, you know I cannot survive without bright lights and people adoring me."

"You'll stay there until I tell you. You may not survive at all if this nut job decides to come and collect you. Are we understood, Jaz?"

"You are such a party pooper, mother. Yes, I understand. I know, you do it for my own good, blah, blah, blah."

Thankfully, the conversation moved into other areas, and soon, they said their good-byes. Jaz tossed his phone down and lay back on the bed exhausted. He knew he should have told Keller sooner, but he'd hoped the man would take the hint. Apparently, not and now his best friend was gunning for blood. Gods, what a mess. At least, Khalid was there to

temper her more impulsive actions. If one could call murder an impulsive act. He didn't care if Robertson met a sad fate, but imagined there might be others who would feel differently.

Jaz stood and began losing clothes as he went to his enormous master bath. He decided what he needed was a shower and a long soak in the Jacuzzi. If he had to stay at home, he might as well relax and enjoy. Turning, he caught sight of himself in the mirror and stopped. Jin had picked him up as if he weighed nothing. He hoped Jin hadn't initially thought he was female. Jaz figured he'd had a huge surprise once he shoved his hand down Jaz's pants.

Jaz shivered at the thought. Gods, thinking about it made him hard. He'd only told Kell about meeting Jin. He certainly hadn't related the incident in the backroom. That story he was keeping to himself, since he imagined Keller blowing a circuit at the idea of him going off with a guy he didn't know. Once again, his eyes went back to the mirror, he didn't look anything like a girl. Jaz studied his reflection, seeing dark, shoulder-length brown hair tipped with pink. Dang, time for a haircut. His face was nice, with high cheekbones, a sharp chin, and full lips. He twisted those lips in a scowl as his blue eyes narrowed. There was no way Jin had thought he was a woman.

Though slight, his muscles were well defined since Keller forced him to work out with her. Evil bitch. He flexed in the mirror and burst out laughing. Trapped in the house for only an hour, and he'd already lost his mind. Keller would say he'd lost it long ago, but Jaz preferred to think of himself as creatively unique.

He turned on the tap in the shower and hopped in when it was the right temperature, just this side of boiling. He sighed as the water rained down on his head. He crossed his arms and stood under the flow without moving. He loved water pouring down his body, especially if it were extremely hot. He couldn't wait until he climbed into the Jacuzzi to soak. He smiled as an image of Jin and himself came to mind as they lounged in the huge tub together. Yeah, right, never going to happen. No matter what he told Keller he knew there wasn't any way the man would find him. But there was no harm in indulging in a fantasy. It beat thinking about stupid Robertson.

Gods, why hadn't the man taken no for an answer? Now there was all the drama to contend with and Jaz hated being involved without causing it. Honestly, no matter what he said, he hated drama. His whole family was all about the drama, which was why he had his

own place. He needed his solitude. Everyone, but Kell, would laugh, but she was the one person, the only person, who knew the real Jaz Maloney. He had become quite adept at presenting his created public face to the world and making it look real.

He quickly finished his shower and began running water in the spa. As he waited, he took a cursory swipe at his body with a towel and wrapped it around his waist. No use drying off when he was going to get wet again. Picking up the remote off the countertop, he turned on the large screen TV mounted on the wall. There was nothing like soaking and watching TV at the same time. Spoiled? You betcha, but he figured he deserved it.

After flipping around, he went back out to his bedroom to hunt up a DVD to watch. He would prefer to soak than try to change channels in water. Yeah, electricity and water didn't mix. He finally picked two movies he considered comedies, *Underworld* and *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. He loved how they portrayed vampires. He wished he could turn into mist and leap off gigantic buildings without being killed, but wasn't going to happen.

Jaz turned to go back to the bathroom when the phone rang. He looked at the caller I.D. and winced. His father. He didn't want to answer, but knew it wasn't an option.

"Hello."

"Jazon."

Jaz winced at hearing his full first name. He hated it since he thought he sounded like some kind of dweeb. "Yes, sir, what can I do for you?"

"Tell me about Andrew Robertson. Are you involved with him?"

The order in his father's voice was clearly present though it had clearly been phrased in the form of a question. "No, sir. I am not nor do I wish to be involved. Mr. Robertson has approached me quite a few times, but I have told him in no uncertain terms I am not interested."

Phineas Maloney sighed. "How much of a nuisance has he become?"

Jaz sat on the side of his bed. "He approached me at a club last night and demanded I join his household and call him master. I've talked to Keller Montgomery about it and she said she would look into it."

"Even though she is Khalid's blood companion, she is still human. I will take this before the senate and see what can be done. You will stay home until further notice."

"Yes, sir, Keller already told me."

Without a good-bye, Jaz found he was listening to a dial tone. He turned off the phone and tossed it on his bed. Damn, now his father was involved. His life kept getting better and better. Jaz dropped his towel and climbed into the hot water of his spa. He turned the faucet off and flipped the jets on, relaxing deep into the bath. Movies forgotten, he focused on HGTV and watched a couple try to decide which seaside vacation home they were going to buy.

## Chapter Two

Jaz lay face down across his bed, head buried under the pillows. He'd been trapped in his home for three days, and he was slowly losing his mind. The first day hadn't been bad since he found time to sleep, relax and reorganise his closets, but now he was totally and completely bored with his own company. On-line shopping, one of his favourite past-times, had lost its allure and he loved, loved, loved ordering things to get mail.

He flopped over onto his back and stared up at the ceiling. Could a person go stark raving mad if left alone too long? He pondered the question seriously and finally decided yes, he could. Jaz needed to be around people. He didn't need to talk to them, but enjoyed being in the company of others. His favourite thing to do was to sit in a coffee shop and observe the humanity around him. Humans were different from Vitala. They had no archaic societal rules they were required to follow, nor were they bound to the class in which they were born. Humans could be anything and anyone they wanted as long as they had the drive and the brains.

Sitting up, he looked at the clock — twelve-thirty. If it had been a regular day, he would have been up and out as soon as the sun set. Now here he sat without a shower to his name and nothing before him but reading or TV. Okay, he admitted to the lie. He had his art, but he was uninspired. Jaz climbed out of bed, pulled on a pair of lounge pants, and padded through his condo to the room he designated as his studio. Since he couldn't paint during the day, his room was equipped with rows and rows of track-lights. He turned them on and winced since the room was almost too bright.

He staggered out, partially blind and made his way to the kitchen. Opening the refrigerator, he fished out a container of blood and grimaced. Gods, he hated the canned stuff, but beggars couldn't be choosy. Vitala had to only feed once a week, but Jaz much preferred his dinner to be warm and from the vein. Since there was no one around to donate, here he stood in his kitchen, gulping the canned stuff down. As he finished, he shivered, jerking around, making faces. Damn, the stuff wasn't good, but it did the job, which was keeping his stupid ass alive.



He made his way back to the studio and opened the door. The room housed huge windows overlooking the city and ocean beyond. The room was painted white with light hardwood floors and every available surface was crammed with canvases, either started or blank. He wandered over to his stock, pulled a large blank canvas out, and put it on the easel in the centre of the room. He grabbed the remote and pushed a button until soft jazz music eased through the room. Slowly, he began to squeeze paints onto his palette with no real idea in mind about what he was going to do. He decided to go where inspiration led.

He took up his brush and began to mix paints until the colours were pleasing to his eye. Turning to the canvas, he paused only a moment and placed the brush against the empty surface. He blinked slowly and was off, watching lines of colour blend and become an image he refused to concentrate on too much. He painted best when he allowed his mind to roam instead of trying to paint something he had preselected. He was always a little startled that he actually had a talent, but if he thought too much, nothing happened.

Other than Keller, most of his friends were unaware of his painting. Once again, this was something he didn't show the world. Painting was private and sometimes revealed too much about himself. He had sold pieces for large sums of money, but no one connected party boy Jaz Maloney with Jazon the artist.

He finally understood Keller was his one true friend. Everyone else he knew were all fun acquaintances he hung out with, since none of them knew the real him. Dang, he was as anti-social as Keller but in a more social way. Because, unlike Keller, he at least liked people. Growing up in a highly-placed Vitala family, he had learned to shield the soft spots because there was always someone out there willing to stab you in them. Cynical, but true as far as he was concerned.

The ringing of the phone interrupted his thoughts and brought his awareness back to the painting. The man, Jin, stared out at him from a sea of night black hair. What the hell? Jaz hadn't thought of him since the day after they'd met. He snorted, now he was lying to himself, he'd dreamed of him every night. Hot, sweaty dreams Jaz knew would never come to pass.

He wiped off his hands on a rag and hurried to the phone in his living room. Keller's name flashed on the caller I.D., and he picked up quickly. "Thank gods you called. I was incredibly bored."

"Buzz me up." Her cool voice issued from the receiver. "I need to talk to you."

"What's going on?" He pressed a button linked to his security system letting the guard downstairs know to let her in.

"Not on the phone. I need to see you."

Jaz hung up the phone and waited for Keller to arrive. For some unknown reason, his heart began to pound and his stomach knotted. Bad news, Keller was coming to tell him bad news.

He shook his head. *Stop it*, she was only coming to visit. He'd been trapped with his own company for far too long. Once she arrived and they started talking, he'd be fine. However, telling himself that didn't still the ache in his stomach.

Keller had barely given one knock when Jaz pulled the door open. She was dressed as she normally did, black from head to toe. The only spot of colour was the deep cobalt of her hair and a gorgeous diamond ring winking from the ring finger of her left hand. A gift from her mate Khalid.

They stared at one another and Keller sighed. "We need to talk."

Jaz followed her into the living room and tentatively sat on the couch beside her. He wanted to run screaming into his bedroom and hide in the closet, but knew she would follow him wherever he went.

"Look, I'm not going to beat around the bush. Your father went to the senate about Robertson's pursuit of you. Robertson claimed he had stated his intentions and according to a very old Vitala law, since he was of a higher rank, he could claim you. Anyway, a challenge was issued. Jaz, I am so sorry, but Robertson killed your father in combat."

Jaz staggered up and away from her. "No. That's not possible." He shook his head. "This is the twenty-first century. My father would neither issue a challenge nor accept one. You're mistaken."

She shook her head. "According to senate law, a challenge was the only way to settle the matter since Robertson refused to give up his claim. If I would have been there, I'd have offered to stand in, but your father didn't contact me. Khalid wasn't told. He's beyond upset and incredibly furious."

A buzzing started in Jaz's head blocking out anything she said. He could see her lips moving, but what he heard was the sound of angry bees in his head. All he could concentrate

on was the reason his father was killed. It was because of him. If he would have given Robertson what he wanted, his father would still be alive. A horrible grating sound finally invaded Jaz's mind. He refused to hear, but the shock of Keller touching him made him understand the sound was issuing from his throat. It was a keening wail, and it broke the buzzing cocoon of isolation he'd put himself into. Instantly, everything rushed in, all the feelings and thoughts and Jaz ran, as if running would help keep the truth at bay.

He fell over a table, hit the wall, and rolled on to the floor. He lay curled in a ball and shook, causing his teeth to rattle. Keller was instantly at his side, wrapping him in her arms and rocking him. A distant part of his mind realised he must be pretty bad off if she was doing the 'mama' routine. He was the one who performed the service with her, never the other way around.

"Jaz, I'm sorry." She whispered against his hair. "So sorry, but you aren't to blame. Blame Robertson. He caused this. It's all his fault. Believe me, I will kill him. He won't be able to run far enough or hide well enough to get away. I will fucking destroy him. I will make him regret his mama ever thought about giving birth to him. I will bring his head to you in a box."

Jaz's spoke around his chattering teeth. "Now what the hell am I supposed to do with that? Make a vase out of it? So won't go with my décor."

She held him as tears boiled up, and he sobbed uncontrollably. His father, the man who'd supported and loved him no matter what, was gone. Though he knew he'd exasperated his father to no end, their relationship was surprisingly close. And now, he was gone. Who would he go to if he had problems or questions?

"Let's get you cleaned up." She easily lifted him to his feet and helped him walk to his room. "Your family has been summoned before the senate."

"Why?" Jaz stopped to stare at her. "You need to tell me everything."

Kell walked him into the bathroom and turned on the shower without speaking. She tossed off her coat and began to gather towels. She purposely avoided his gaze and he knew the situation was much worse. As if anything could top his murdered father, but obviously something could.

Kell faced him. "Vitala law says since he's the winner of the challenge, he now owns everything your family owned."

"My mother and sister —"

"They're under his control. They must live where he says and how he says. All of you do. Servants, business holdings...everything is his."

"He told me, he told me if I didn't quit denying him he would do something I would regret." Jaz choked back a sob. "Fuck, Kell, this is my fault."

"No!" she shouted, startling him. "This is not your fault, I already told you. He made the decisions, not you. It's all on him and he will pay. Khalid is going before the senate. I don't know what he's got planned, but we need to be there. And if it doesn't work, I'll kill his ass."

Jaz let her help him undress and put him in the shower. He stood beneath the hot water and knew, no matter what, he would never be warm or safe again. His life and the lives of his family were officially out of control and no matter what Kell said, he was responsible.

\* \* \* \*

Jaz stood in a small waiting room in the building that served as home to the senate. He was dressed in a black suit and his usually flamboyant hair was pulled back into a discreet ponytail. He had wanted to cut the pink off, but Kell had pulled the scissors out of his hand and threatened to cut it herself...with a knife. He'd decided to wear it back out of his face.

The door opened behind him and he turned as his mother and sister entered. He started to go over to them, but stopped at the look of anger and loathing on his mother's face.

"You caused this." Her voice rang out in the silent room. "You murdered your father. I hope you're satisfied with the little game you were playing. Do you like how it turned out?"

Jaz blinked as tears filled his eyes. "What are you talking about?"

Antonia, his sister, sneered. "Don't act as if we don't know. You and that man, Robertson, planned this to seize all the family assets. Do you feel all powerful now you own everything?"

Jaz was speechless. Had the whole world gone insane? "I have no idea what you're talking about. I hate Andrew Robertson. He's been stalking me for months now. If I would have known what father was going to do, I would have lied to him. You can't think —"

"Spare us." His mother turned her back on him. "I want nothing more to do with you. From this day forward, I have no son. Come, Antonia, we will sit over here until they call us."

His mother and sister sat together on a couch and didn't look his way again. Jaz stood, unsure of what to do. In the span of a day, he had apparently lost his entire family. He was, for all intents and purposes, an orphan. He slumped in a chair as tears rolled down his face. They blamed him. As if this was some elaborate ploy. His mind swirled with a million thoughts, and he sat paralysed as it all boiled down to one point. No matter what Kell or anyone else said, he was to blame.

He began to shake again. He clenched his teeth together to stop them from chattering. No matter what happened, he was alone, as he had always been. He had talked about his family, but in reality, the only person he'd connected with was his father. He had secretly hoped, as he grew older, he would grow closer to his mother, but now he knew the truth. It would never have happened. He wondered if she'd ever liked him or merely tolerated him. Man, a guy must really suck if his own mother hated his ass.

The door opened and Tomas, the senate's secretary, entered. "Follow me, please."

Jaz hung back, allowing his mother and sister to exit the room. He followed slowly as the secretary led them across a huge foyer and down a flight of stairs. A long hallway filled with people greeted him. He wondered if they were here to petition the senate or to view the sideshow his life had become. He searched the crowd for Kell. She had promised to be there, but he didn't know what the promise was worth when talking about the senate. They were the ruling body of the Vitala in the United States and if they didn't want you present, you weren't. End of story. As he walked, he frantically searched for her, but instead a form stepped out of the crowd. Jin, it was Jin.

The two of them looked at one another, but Jaz was ushered into the senate chamber before he could say anything. The door clanged shut behind him and he sighed. What was there to say? After today, it wouldn't matter. Unless something major happened, he would be under Robertson's control. The idea made his stomach churn and he breathed through his nose, hoping he didn't disgrace himself by throwing up on the floor.

The room the senate used for official business was opulent enough to cow the most haughty of Vitala. The floors were a deep rich wood covered with thick oriental rugs. Heavy

tapestries depicting the history of the race adorned the walls and the high ceilings shone with ornate chandeliers. The room wasn't very wide, making up most of its space in length. Each side of the room contained a tiered seating area, three rows deep to hold any Vitala who wished to view the proceedings. The senate, themselves, sat on a high dais in the front of the room on chairs resembling thrones. Petitioners sat at long tables directly in front of the ruling body, and this was where Tomas led them.

The Maloney family sat to the right of the senate, who were in full attendance. Jaz kept his eyes focused on the intricately carved wooden surface in front of him. He didn't want to gawk around, trying to find Kell or Khalid. If they were there, they were there. And he especially did not want to meet Andrew Robertson's eyes. The man sat at a table across the aisle laughing and talking with friends. Jaz knew if he looked at him, he might go up and punch him in the face.

The door opened behind him and he could hear people entering to sit in the gallery on each side of the room. Gods, people were here to see the public humiliation of his family. *The whole situation kept getting better and better*, he thought.

Tomas rose and called the assembly to order. The room fell silent as the *Procul*, the voice of the seven member senate body, spoke, "The Vitala is a race with an ancient tradition. Our laws have been passed down from generation to generation without fail. Yester eve, Andrew Robertson issued challenge to Phineas Maloney for his son, Jazon Maloney. Robertson won and according to the laws of the Vitala, everything Phineas Maloney held now shifts to the care of the winner. Stand, Andrew Robertson."

Jaz looked up to see Andrew Robertson rise to his feet, arrogance oozing from every nasty pore. Hatred bubbled up from Jaz's soul as he stared at the man who had murdered his father. The shit of it was, it was legal. According to Vitala law, per the *Procul*, Robertson had done nothing wrong. The image of Robertson's head sitting on his dining room table flashed through Jaz's mind. When Keller presented it to him, he would figure out how to decorate around it.

"Andrew Robertson, do you promise to care and protect everything you receive today as winner of the challenge? Will you faithfully —"

"I offer an objection."

A voice rang out cutting the *Procul* off in mid-sentence. The assembly stirred uneasily. The *Procul* was not known as a woman who allowed such interruption. The offender would be lucky if he escaped death.

Jaz turned to find Jin approaching the dais where the senate sat. The big male neither looked at Jaz nor anyone else, but kept his eyes steadily on the *Procul*. Surprisingly, she didn't call for a guard to come out and destroy him. She merely sat back with a raised eyebrow and a small smile.

"What type of objection are you raising?" She finally asked.

"I object to this...person issuing a challenge for Jazon."

Robertson stepped forward. "The challenge was lawfully offered and accepted. You have no reason to object to anything. In fact, why are you here? I do not know your face. *Procul*, I request this man to be thrown out of the assembly."

"You cannot claim someone who was never yours to begin with," Jin explained as if Robertson was slow.

"I stated my intentions —"

"About someone you had no right to." Jin finally turned his gaze to where Jaz sat and smiled.

"He is mine as is everything Maloney owned. There is nothing you can do about it," Robertson spat, his ruddy complexion turning red with anger.

"Oh there is. I offer challenge. Pick your weapon."

Jaz stepped forward. "Please stop. I don't want you to die."

Jin moved to him and cupped his cheek. "I have no intention of dying, little one. I told you we would continue what we had started the other evening. When I win, will you willingly call me master? I will take such good care of you."

Jaz shivered at the look in Jin's eyes. It was stark and hungry, not the easygoing charmer of a moment before. Jaz found himself nodding, wanting to run away and be owned all at once. He never wanted to call anyone master, but this man, this man he could easily imagine owning him, claiming him.

Jaz blinked, remembering the night at the club. If Jin took care of him by sucking his penis, he didn't think he'd mind all that much. In fact, if calling him master got him more of the same treatment, he'd jump right in. "Promise me, you won't die." Jaz was surprised to

hear his voice shake, but he didn't want this beautiful man to die because of him. He couldn't take one more death on his conscience.

"I will die, as we all do. But not today." Jin kissed his palm. "I had not intended to take a consort while I was here, but I think we will do quite well together. Now sit, love, I will quickly dispatch this nuisance. Then we will go home."

Jaz backed up, falling into his chair. He watched Jin quickly braid his hair. Robertson, in the meantime, was complaining vehemently to the *Procul* about this break in protocol. She, on the other hand, coldly reminded him of the laws of the Vitala. The laws he took advantage of the other evening.

Robertson fumed, but offered no more argument. Jaz wished he would push it so he could see the *Procul* come down off her seat and beat his ass. He rubbed a weary hand over his face. He wanted all the drama gone. He was tired, and his chest ached. He wanted nothing more than to curl up and sleep for about a year.

Robertson pulled off his jacket and began rolling up his sleeves. "My weapon of choice is the sword. By the way, what is your name? I need to know to have it carved on your headstone."

Jin laughed as he shrugged off his shirt. Jaz stared appreciatively at wide shoulders, muscular arms and a to-die-for ass. He could feel his mouth begin to water as Jin turned to reveal a tattoo covering his entire back. It was a cobalt blue dragon in full flight and the wings covered each shoulder blade as the tail meandered down his waist and into the tight leather pants. Damn, he'd pay money to see the rest of the tat and lots more if he could lick the great beast all over.

"You will call me Master Ryujin."

Robertson burst out laughing. "If you think throwing around the Dragon's name will rattle me, it won't happen."

Ignoring the gibe, Jin waited expectantly. Jaz was surprised to see Khalid step up to him and hand him a beautiful, but lethal, katana. The two men spoke a few words to one another and Khalid backed away. He gave Jaz an encouraging smile and walked out of his line of vision. Khalid? Khalid knew Jin? Keller hadn't said anything about it, but they hadn't had a lot of time for pleasantries either. Hey, someone killed your father didn't easily lead into giggly talk about hot men. He tuned back in to hear Robertson's baiting voice.



"You're incredibly cocky to claim the name of the Dragon," Robertson sneered. "He would kill you if he were alive, but you'll be dead anyway."

Jin twirled his sword around, the blade flashing in the light. "Come. Enough chat. I am anxious to take my prize home."

The two men met with a clash of metal. Jaz jumped as the sound echoed in the silent room. If he didn't know better, he would swear no one else was in the room. Jin's fighting style was like watching water move—effortless and fluid, as he continuously evaded Robertson, nicking him here and there before moving away. Jaz wondered what it would feel like to allow this man control. His mouth watered and his cock hardened at the thought of all that energy directed his way. Oh yeah, he had it bad.

Robertson staggered, gasping for breath, as he bled from numerous cuts on his arms and torso. "Who the hell are you?"

"I told you," Jin said, barely winded. "I am Ryujin...the one you call The Dragon."

"That's not possible. The Dragon would be over fifteen hundred years old—"

"Sixteen hundred and thirty-four, but who's counting?" A slow smile spread over Ryujin's face, but it never reached his eyes. They were a cold and glittering black and Jaz knew if the look was turned his way, he'd pee himself. "Come, I grow weary with these paltry games."

Robertson sprang and attacked again, but Jaz could see the confidence of before had gone. Instead, he fought with an urgency bordering on desperation, which was bound to get him killed. Keller had always told him if a person did not stay in control, there was no chance. Robertson had no chance. Jaz breathed easier. No matter how this turned out, Robertson would no longer be a problem.

Jin's sword moved like lightning as he beat Robertson down, until the man slid on the blood on the floor. He hit the ground hard, gasping for breath, as Jin kicked his sword away and laid his blade on Robertson's neck. "Do you yield? Or do you wish to die this night? It matters not to me."

"I yield." Robertson groaned between clenched teeth.

Ryujin stepped back. "You will stay away from what is mine. If I find you have broken this rule, I will hunt you and kill you. Nothing you do will stop me. Are we understood?"

"Well fought, Master Ryujin," the *Procul* said.

Jin bowed to her, "Thank you."

"You are now the sole possessor of all the Maloney holdings. Do you swear to take care of what you have won this day?"

Jin looked at Jaz and smiled. "I will take extremely good care of what is now mine."

Jaz slumped in his chair. It was over. Now what? Obviously, Jin...Ryujin now owned all the Maloney holdings. Jaz crossed his fingers hoping Jin would treat his family fairly. In spite of his mother and sister disowning him, he didn't want anything to happen to them. Sadly enough, they were still his family.

Jaz watch Jin approach him. He moved like a great hunting cat, graceful and deadly, and Jaz found himself unable to move or look away. He now understood how a mouse felt when cornered. Ryujin stopped in front of him and Jaz looked up to meet night-black eyes. The two of them watched one another until Jaz grew hard and sweat beaded on his brow. What the hell?

## Chapter Three

Jaz opened the door to his condo, and looked around puzzled. It just didn't have the feel of home, as if he had left it a lifetime ago. But, if pressed, he'd say he felt old and tired and strange, especially with Jin following behind him like a dark, sexy shadow. Up until three days ago, his life had been moving along as he'd planned. Nothing huge, hanging out with Kell, going out to clubs, the regular day-to-day happenings in the life of Jaz Maloney. Now, he didn't know what was going to happen from minute to minute. For the first time, his life was very much out of control, and he hated it.

He tossed his keys on the granite island, which separated the living room from the kitchen. Idly, he thought he would have to get more food since there was barely enough for him to eat. He wondered what type of food Jin liked? Would he expect him to cook? Jaz hoped not since culinary skills consisted of opening a bottle of wine.

"Jazon."

The soft voice interrupted his reverie and he looked up to find Jin watching him. Jaz yawned widely and rubbed his face. "What? Do you want anything? I can fix you something."

"No, sweet." He stepped forward and took Jaz by the hand. "You are exhausted and so am I. Let us go to bed, there will be time enough for other pursuits once we are rested."

Jaz nodded and led Jin into his bedroom. He had a million questions for Jin, but now they were alone together he couldn't think of one. His head was fuzzy like it was stuffed with cotton and every time he opened his mouth he yawned. Sitting on the side of his bed, he began to kick his shoes off. But, for some reason, they wouldn't get off his feet. He pulled his foot up and tried to wrench the shoe off, but he couldn't get his hands and foot coordinated. Finally, he lay back on the bed in exhaustion. Screw it. He would sleep in his shoes.

"Jazon, let me help you."

Jaz forced his eyes open as Jin knelt and removed his shoes. The man was remarkably beautiful and, for some reason, he had fought a challenge for him. Why? Okay, Jaz had to admit he was terrific, practically perfect, but his life at this point was a horrible reality show.

And reality shows were truly bad, but his life was way worse. Why would anyone want to get involved? He wouldn't, that's for sure.

He lay as Jin carefully undressed him. Jaz wanted to ask him questions, but couldn't manage to string anything together other than yawns. Tomorrow, he promised himself, he would ask his questions tomorrow.

\* \* \* \*

Jaz came awake slowly. He breathed deep of a dark spicy fragrance and his penis began to stir. Well that was sad, his fabric softener was turning him on. Obviously, it meant he had gone without a date for far too long. The bedding under his cheek was warm, warm and smooth. He rubbed his face against it, liking the softness on his skin. As he became more aware, he realised his arms and legs were kind of dangling off something. Oh damn, was he sleeping on the kitchen counter again? No, it wasn't cold and it wasn't wide enough. He forced his eyes open to see skin, lots of skin.

"You're awake."

Jaz put his head up to find he was lying on Jin. He opened his mouth to say something profound. "I'm a boy." He wrinkled his brow, okay not as profound as he thought.

The other male laughed. "Yes, love, I know."

Jaz nodded dumbly and began to move to the bed, but Jin stopped him. "Stay. I find I quite like where you are."

"Why? Why did you get involved?"

"Numerous reasons." Jin ran a hand through Jaz's hair. "First, I hate a bully and Andrew Robertson is nothing but a bully. He used archaic laws to further his own agenda and in the process destroyed a family. His actions did not go unnoticed. The senate, most especially the *Procul*, requested my immediate attention to the matter. Second, after I saw you in the club I began to ask around. I wanted to find you, as I promised, because as I said, we are not finished. When Khalid told me who you are and what had happened, I happily acceded to the *Procul*'s appeals. I would not allow Robertson to touch you."

"But why?" Jaz asked, still confused. "You could have been injured, or worse, killed. I'm, I hate to say, nobody."

Jin laughed softly. "Do you not realise how beautiful you are?" Saying this, he pulled Jaz up until they were face to face. Jaz liked the view from the top, especially when Jin pulled him down for their lips to meet. Jaz didn't wait for Jin. Jaz thrust his tongue into the other man's mouth. The needs in him were overwhelming – to feel safe, to feel loved, to feel needed. He didn't care if this encounter was an illusion, he was willing to accept what he could get to fill the emptiness in his heart.

As much as he bragged to Keller, Jaz wasn't very experienced when it came to sex. He wasn't a virgin, since he had been with women, but knew they didn't do it for him. The guys he found himself with were all as inexperienced as he was. The encounters ended with hand jobs or the occasional blowjob. But there'd been no penetration. Jin, on the other hand, was a man and Jaz doubted he would go without actual sex. However, right now, Jaz would do anything he wanted. He needed what this man was willing to give him, even if it wasn't real.

Jaz wouldn't fool himself into thinking Jin was permanent in this life. He'd said the senate had asked him to step in. No matter who was in trouble, he would have fought either way. But after the events of the past days, Jaz wanted to pretend there was someone who genuinely cared for him. Obviously, he had no more family and the only real friend he had was Keller. He'd never been alone before, with Jin he could imagine there was someone else in the world who cared whether he was there or not.

Jin rolled them to put Jaz under him. "Tell me what is wrong, little one?"

Jaz blinked to find he was crying. What an idiot. He was finally in bed with an incredibly handsome man and went all weepy. He shook his head. "It's nothing." Jaz tried to pull Jin down for another kiss, but the other man stopped him. "That's fine." Jaz started to wiggle out from under him. "We don't have to do this. I have stuff to do anyway. Do you want breakfast?"

Jin held fast to him, though, not letting him get away. "Jazon, what is going on in that mind of yours?"

Jaz stopped fighting and huffed out a breath. "Why? What do you care? You won me in a fight, it's not like we have some kind of deep, undying connection. No matter who I was, you would have fought Robertson and won, since you act as if he was no big deal. I'm like a fucking stuffed animal at a fair. You know, you toss some balls at glass bottles, and if you knock down enough, you win. Great for you, you won. And I am such a fucking prize too.

"My father was murdered because of me, my mother and sister blame me and don't ever want to see me again, and I'm not the guy you met at the club. I only have one person I trust and can say is my friend, but other than her, I have nothing. I am nothing." Jaz angrily wiped the tears off his face. "I know this isn't some kind of forever deal, so if you want to fuck, great, and if not, I don't have anything else to offer. You're what, over sixteen hundred years old, and I'm barely ninety, and a guy, kids are out. I'm Vitala, which puts me off the list as a blood mate, so all I can do is sex. If you don't want sex, I don't have any other skills. I can't do secretary stuff and I don't know how to clean. Hell, a service comes in three times a week to clean for me. Right now, Master Ryujin, I don't know what I can give to you, since I don't have anything."

Jin gently took Jaz's face in his large capable hands. "Is this how you see yourself, little one? I will tell you what I see. I see a bright, shining individual with much to share. You are passionate and talented and more than anything else, you are mine. I told you I hadn't planned to take a consort, but when I met you those plans changed. Therefore, you may attempt to run from me, which I think I would find quite exciting. But you will not escape because you are mine. And mine you will stay."

Jin pulled Jaz into his arms and claimed his lips in a scorching, mind-bending kiss. He aggressively thrust his tongue into Jaz's mouth to rub against his growing fangs. Jaz whimpered, never realising how sensitive his teeth were. Any other thoughts he had were scattered like leaves in a breeze, under Jin's onslaught. Obviously, the man had been holding back before, since he was almost ferocious in the way he laid claim to Jaz's body.

Jin finally released him and quickly rid himself of the pants he'd been wearing. Jaz lay, panting, trying to catch his breath as the other man stood naked before him. The dragon tattoo, Jaz had admired, actually wrapped around the front of Jin's body. The great animal's tail meandered down Jin's hipbone and finally came to rest, curled around the base of his cock.

Jin fisted his penis and smiled, bearing fangs. "Do you like what you see, Jazon?"

Jaz could do nothing but nod and watch as Jin slowly stroked himself. Pre-cum dotted the tip as Jaz licked his lips. "Come, sweet, give me your mouth."

Jaz slowly sat up, never taking his gaze from Jin. The man was built. Jaz had a quick thought of, *how the hell is that thing going to fit up my ass?*

Jin stepped between his spread legs and painted Jaz's lips with the head of his cock. Jaz darted his tongue out to lick Jin off his lips and lightly brushed the obviously sensitive head in the process. Jin sucked in a breath, but waited patiently. Jaz looked up to see the other man watching him. There was no anger or demand in his eyes, only need. Keeping his eyes on Jin, Jaz leant forward and delicately swirled his tongue around the dark plum-shaped head. Jin tasted as dark and spicy, as he smelled. Jaz's mouth watered.

"Come, love, suck my cock." Jin kept one hand on the base of his dick and the other he thrust into Jaz's hair. Jaz gripped his hips as he leant forward and slid Jin into his mouth. The other man gasped, and Jaz hummed in appreciation. He tasted good, better than good, in fact. Jaz took as much as he could, but didn't want to gag since he had never given head before. Received it, yes, but never given. Now he wondered why he had waited. He loved the feel and taste of Jin's cock in his mouth. He wondered if Kell had done this and if so, why she hadn't told him.

Jin pulled his mouth away and leant down to claim a kiss. Jaz wrapped his arms around Jin's neck, enjoying safety in his embrace. The other man eased them back to lie on the bed. Jaz separated his legs, loving the bump and slide of their bodies against one another.

Jin pulled away to look down at him, fangs evident. "I want you to taste me and I will take you in return."

"If we do, we're bound by Vitala law," Jaz whispered, unable to tear his gaze from Jin.

"Yes, love, that's the point. I asked if you would call me master and you agreed. The blood exchange will seal our union. No one will be able to break us apart." Jin pulled his hair aside, to bear his throat and Jaz's teeth dropped in anticipation. He wanted to taste this man so bad, his gut hurt with longing.

"Yeah, but when you decide you want to move on—"

"There is no moving on." He cut him off. "You are mine and I am yours. Do you think if I did not truly want you, I would have acceded to the *Procul*'s request in public? I could have very easily tracked Robertson down and killed him without anyone being the wiser. But I didn't. I waited and challenged him in front of the senate. I wanted everyone to understand, you are mine, and I will kill anyone who touches you. Now will you be my consort, my mate, and call me master?"

Without the least bit of thought to what any of it meant, Jaz nodded. He never had anyone look at him the way Jin did, with need and want and possession all wrapped into one hot package. Jin cradled Jaz's head in his hands and pulled him up to put them mouth to throat. Jin ran his tongue down the long vein on Jaz's throat. Shaking, Jaz took a breath and sank his fangs into Jin's neck. The first splash of blood in his mouth made him moan and squirm. Gods, he tasted divine. Since the exchanging of blood between Vitala was such a major deal, he had never drank from another before. Now he could see why it was. The taste was almost addictive in its intensity and flavour. Jaz gasped, and he lost his ability to see when Jin slid his fangs into his neck. At the first strong pull, Jaz came. Hard. Damn, like a twelve-year-old boy seeing his first boob. It would have been humiliating if it wasn't so damn good.

Jaz remembered to retract his fangs and lick Jin's strong throat to seal the puncture wounds. The other man did the same and pressed their lips together. Their flavours mingled and if he hadn't already come, Jaz was sure he would have since their blood was an intoxicating mix.

Jin broke their kiss to sit up. "Forgive me, love, but I need to have you. I can't wait any longer."

From the nightstand, he grabbed a bottle and quickly popped the lid. He poured the lube on his hand and quickly rubbed it on his cock. Putting more in his hand, he held it a moment to warm it, before sliding a finger around Jaz's puckered hole. Jaz jumped at the sensation, trying to remember everything he had read about anal sex.

"Have you done this before, Jazon?"

"Not exactly," Jaz panted, as Jin pushed a finger deep into his body.

Jin backed off, a smile blooming across his face. "Good. Turn over, and get up on your knees. Spread your legs wide and keep your chest and head on the bed. It will make it easier for you."

Jaz rolled to obey and found himself kneeling, ass in the air. He cradled his head on his folded arms and tried not to be embarrassed. He was open and exposed for the world to see, as if at any moment someone would jump out brandishing a camera to snap a picture.

Jin moved between his spread legs and once again eased a finger deep into his asshole. Jaz squirmed, not sure how to feel. It didn't hurt, not really. It was uncomfortable,



but bearable. He focused on breathing and relaxing as Jin's one finger became two. Jaz gasped, not sure if he liked this anymore.

"Relax, love." Jin smoothed a hand up and down his back. "Move back and forth on my fingers, I promise you will find satisfaction."

Jaz followed his instructions, until Jin ran his fingers across a spot deep inside his body. Jaz moaned, wanting him to do it again. Jaz began to work himself on Jin's fingers, enjoying the sensation of being filled. Jin pulled his fingers out and Jaz squirmed wanting him back. Soon, a blunt weight pushed against the ring of muscle and Jaz knew it was Jin's cock. He hesitated only a moment, before he pushed out and relaxed as Jin began to push forward. His penis was way bigger than two fingers, and pain mixed with pleasure so subtly Jaz wasn't sure he could tell the difference.

"Please tell me you're okay?" Jin practically begged when he stopped moving.

Jaz squirmed against him, making Jin tighten his hold on his hips. "Keep going, please."

Jin began to ease his cock slowly in and out, going deeper each time until Jaz was panting and pushing back to meet him. Finally, Jin's balls slapped his own. He was all the way in and, hell, he was bigger in his ass than he'd first looked. Jin pulled out and pushed in slowly. *Hell, that was good*, Jaz thought, *damn good*. He canted his ass higher and spread his legs a bit farther apart as Jin slowly drove him insane. The in and out motion continuously hit the spot Jin had found with his fingers. Jaz moaned, wanting more.

"Yes, sweet, that's it, work yourself on my cock. I wish you could see how hot you look as I fuck you," Jin muttered as he leaned over to grasp Jaz's penis with lubed fingers.

Jaz bit the covers as he moved back and forth, between the hand clasped tightly around his erection and the monster in his ass. But it wasn't enough, he needed more. Jaz glanced over his shoulder. "Please, Ryujin, harder."

Jin froze for a moment and began to move faster, harder. "Jazon, say my name. I love how it sounds coming from you."

Jaz used his arms to shove back harder to make their bodies slap together. "Ryujin, please, fuck me harder." Jaz shook as his lover complied, driving their bodies together again and again. Every time Jaz uttered Jin's name, the man went nuts, fucking him harder, tightening his hold around Jaz's cock.

The orgasm, when it came, snuck up on Jaz from out of nowhere. The tightening of his balls and the lightning burn froze him, as he began to shoot his come onto the bed below. He worked himself against Jin's hand, gasping at the intensity of the experience. Finally, he slumped to the bed panting as Jin leaned over him and began to work his cock in short digs. Jaz shivered loving the sensation, since Jin continually rubbed against the spot deep in his body.

"Jazon," Jin yelled as he shoved in deep one last time and began to come. Jaz's legs gave out and he sprawled across the bed with Jin on top of him. The weight, far from crushing, made Jaz feel protected and secure. Besides, he was totally wrung out and couldn't imagine trying to get up and go anywhere.

"Are you okay, love?" Jin whispered in his ear.

"As soon as I can feel my body, I'll let you know."

Jin chuckled. "I hope I can assume it was satisfactory."

Jaz snorted. "If you're fishing for compliments, it was fucking amazing. I came so hard I'm surprised I still have hair."

Jin burst out laughing and rolled slowly to lie beside Jaz. "You are a joy."

Jaz lifted his head to roll his eyes dramatically. "Honey, I've been called many things, but a joy was not one of them."

Jin ran a hand gently over Jaz's hair. "That is what you are to me."

Jaz laid his head down, as embarrassment washed over him. He had always secretly hoped, one day, someone would shower him with compliments, but now that it was happening he was uncomfortable. He didn't feel like a joy. In fact, most of the time people would say he was a complete bitch. Of course, Jaz Maloney would say they were majorly jealous, but the real Jaz...okay, admitted they were probably jealous too. Yeah and there was so much to be jealous of now. His life was in taters and he was mated to a man who didn't know him from Adam. Oh, yeah, his life was certainly spectacular right now.

"Let us take a shower, sweet, then I will feed you." Jin rose and easily lifted Jaz from the bed.

"I can walk." Jaz muttered, not attempting to move.

"I know, but it pleases me to carry you."

"Oh." What else was there to say? Jaz looped his arms around Jin and allowed him to carry him into the bathroom.

\* \* \* \*

Jaz yawned widely as he rested his head on his folded arms. He was sitting at the granite island in the kitchen watching Jin fix food. Magically, someone had delivered food for them to ensure they wouldn't starve. Jaz was most thankful Jin was cooking because he didn't think Jin would appreciate cold cereal, which was the extent of his talents in the kitchen. Now he thought about it, he couldn't do much. It was depressing actually, to think if he didn't have money, he would have probably be dead since he had no marketable skills.

His mind wandered back to watching Jin. The man was a certifiable wet dream. The only thing covering him was a pair of low-slung pyjama pants, nothing else. Damn, Jaz could feel himself get hard, which shouldn't be possible. In the shower, Jin had pushed him against the wall and fucked his brains out again. Hell, much more and he wouldn't have a functioning brain cell left. The only reason they weren't back in bed was because their stomachs had begun growling. Jaz knew if they didn't have to eat, he'd once again be bent over something as Jin drove into his body.

"Love, you need to stop."

Jin's voice brought him out of his thoughts. "What?"

He leaned across the counter to put the two of them practically mouth-to-mouth.

"Your thoughts are evident, as is the low growling. Believe me, if food weren't a necessity we would be back in bed."

Growling? He had been growling? Jaz blinked. "I'd apologise, but it would be a lie."

"You are a terrible tease, sweet. I'll make you pay. You can count on it."

Jaz pushed himself forward to touch his lips to Jin's. "I'm counting on it."

Jin flashed fangs, but before it could go farther, the phone rang. Jaz instantly tensed, dreading the disruption. Once the real world started to intrude, Jaz knew he would have to start making some serious decisions. No matter what Jin had promised, Jaz knew the other man would not be content with him for long. He wished it didn't hurt so much to think

about it. Because, somehow, Jin had shoved his way into not only Jaz's life and body, but his heart as well.

## Chapter Four

Jaz quickly pulled real clothes on. The phone call was from Keller and she was coming up. Jaz knew better than to argue with her – when the bitch got that tone a bulldozer couldn't stop her. In the meantime, Jin stood still dressed in pyjama pants watching with a small smile as Jaz attempted to straighten his hair and not look so...recently fucked. At the last minute, Jaz rushed out with a huge t-shirt he didn't remember owning and thrust it in to Jin's hands.

"Put this on. I don't know where it came from, but it looks like it'll fit."

Jin laughed, pulling the shirt over his head. "Love, it's my shirt. That's why you don't know it."

"Oh, were you wearing it last night?"

"No, Jazon, along with the food, I had my servants bring clothing. As much as I would have loved to spend days and days with you naked in bed, I assumed we'd have visitors."

Jaz froze as the image of Jin's naked body flashed in his mind. Of Jin's naked body thrusting into his naked body. Jaz clenched his butt cheeks as the sensation of being filled, being possessed by Jin overwhelmed him. Blinking, he found Jin standing a hairsbreadth away, fangs evident. The two of them stared at one another until Jin leant forward to take his lips. Oh damn, the man could kiss.

"Keep thinking those thoughts and your friend will walk in on us." Jin licked Jaz's lips slowly and ran his large hands under his shirt to caress his back. "It could be quite an education for her."

The ringing of the doorbell saved Jaz from a reply. He scurried across the room to fling the door open. Keller stepped forward and hugged him tightly. Jaz wrapped his arms around her and buried his face in her coat. Kell didn't often hug him, but when she did he took full advantage. He doubted she realised it, but since her mating to Khalid, her scent had subtly changed. It was richer and more complex, containing hints of Khalid's own essence. Jaz quite liked it, since the complexity truly complimented who Kell was as a person.

"Are you okay?" she whispered in his ear. "Khalid made me wait to come over."

"Indeed, I did." Her mate spoke as he moved past them. "I doubted very much if either of them would have liked the interruption." As he spoke, he and Jin clasped one another, as if they were long-lost friends.

"I'm fine," Jaz muttered back.

Kell stepped back to stare hard. Jaz squirmed under her scrutiny, knowing without a doubt she would say embarrassing shit he didn't want anyone else to hear. He took her hand and began dragging her through his condo to one of the empty bedrooms. As he walked, he yelled back to Jin and Khalid. "You two chat, we have to do private girl talk."

The two of them entered a spare bedroom, and Jaz closed the door. Kell took off her coat, tossing it on a chair and sat on the bed. She never uttered a word, but the look on her face spoke volumes. She wanted to know everything. Now. Or else. Jaz huffed out a breath and sat on the bed next to her.

"I hate when you look at me like that." Jaz rolled his eyes.

"Like what?" she asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Like that." He pointed accusingly at her. "Like you already know everything I've done, and you're just waiting for me to confess."

Kell ran a hand through her cobalt hair. "Well, judging by his state of undress and your blushes, I already know what you did."

"I do not blush."

"Like a fucking school girl." She waved a finger under this nose. "Spill. I don't want to hear the gory details of sex. I think I can figure out what you did. But I do want to know what the hell is going on. I mean, if I gotta kill this guy, I need to be prepped since he's good."

"Keller Jean Montgomery don't you joke about that." Jaz bugged his eyes out at her. If she thought about laying one finger on Jin he'd...he wasn't sure since she could beat his ass, but he was sure he'd do something.

"Jazon Phineas Maloney, you'd better start talking. And do not use my middle name, or I will pull your hair."

Jaz's mouth dropped open. "When did you get so vicious?"

"When my best friend got his ass in all sorts of trouble, and I couldn't do anything to help him. That's when. Quit stalling and talk, starting with the huge assed hickey on your neck."

Jaz fidgeted a moment, trying to figure out how much to tell her. Finally, he figured he might as well tell her everything since she would find it out anyway. Taking a deep breath, he started his story when he arrived at the senate and his meeting with his family. He didn't sugar coat what happened. As he spoke, Kell's eyes narrowed – yep, girlfriend was pissed. The very small, petty part of his psyche wished she would go and punch his mama and sister right in the mouth. But he knew it wouldn't solve anything. It would actually make them more important than they were, or at least that's what he told himself.

Throughout his story, she stopped him occasionally with questions, but for the most part, she sat in silence as he spoke. He told her about the conversations he and Jin had and even told her about the blood exchange. For the most part, he kept his voice steady, forcing himself not to cry. Damn, he was getting to be a real fucking girl. All weepy and shit over stuff he couldn't control, like his situation, Jin, everything.

"There you have it, the sad life of Jaz Maloney," he said, trying to make light. "The abridged version is, I'm supposedly mated to a man who doesn't truly know me. I have no idea what's going to happen once he moves on since he owns everything. If I become homeless, will you stop by and drop money in my cup?"

"If that fucker leaves you with nothing, you'll move in with me. I'll get you a big table so you can not only have someplace to put Robertson's head, but also Jin's as well. I promised you, and you know I keep my promises."

"Keller you can't threaten him to make sure he stays."

"Duh, yeah, I know. I'll kill him if he leaves you."

Jaz sighed. "I don't want him to stay because you're going to kill him. Hell, I don't know what I want or what to believe." He lay back on the bed and tiredly ran a hand through this hair. "I've never felt this way before. You know, unsure, confused. I'm tired, Keller, and want my life back."

"What you're saying is you'd like to go back a few weeks and go on like you were?" Kell asked. "No Robertson, no drama, and no Jin?"

Jaz sat up and wrapped his arms around himself. "No, I'd like to go back and still have Jin."

"But what if you can't have both? You either have to take all the shit and Jin or nothing."

Jaz opened his mouth to reply, then closed it. What to say? His reply didn't matter, since what happened was what happened. But he'd often played "What If" games with Keller, and he had to give this serious thought. "Umm, I don't think I could give him up. But, it doesn't matter what I want. Eventually, Kell, he's going to leave."

"Why? Why would he?" Kell stood up to pace.

"Because, he doesn't know me. Not the real me. He saw me once at a club and we spent the night together. I can't see how he could want to stay around. Keller, he's older, mature, and I'm a baby. I haven't been anywhere, don't know much. To Vitala I'm practically a child. A child who needs to be watched over and monitored. I won't come into my official adulthood, according to law, until I'm one hundred and fifty, that's sixty years away."

"Why would you want him? Like you said, you only saw him once and fucked him last night?" Kell tossed the question back at him. "Maybe you'd do better with a younger male. Someone who understands the culture and you can relate to."

Jaz made a face. "The idea of spending time with a guy my own age bores me. I've done that, remember, I feel like I have to burp them before sending them to bed. Ryujin is...he's...I connect with him." Jaz stuttered through his reply. "I love being with him. I love how he makes me feel. I love..." He trailed off.

"Him." Kell supplied.

Jaz nodded. "But I can't let myself, Kell. He doesn't love me. He can't. So eventually he'll leave, and I'll be by myself."

Kell opened her mouth, but whatever she was about to say ended when the door opened. Jin stood in the doorway and, from what Jaz could discern, looked pissed.

"Why do you persist in imagining I will leave? I told you once we exchanged blood you are mine. You are my mate. There is no leaving for either of us."

Jaz sighed and shook his head. "You say that now, and you may mean it. But, you don't know me, not the real me. The first time we met was at a club then at the senate. I'm neither of those people."



"I know who you are, Jazon. In fact, the reason I travelled to this city was to meet you."

Jaz slanted a look at Kell, who shrugged. "I don't get it."

"I have long admired the artist, Jazon. I have a number of your paintings and they speak to me, on a level I cannot explain. I discovered where you live and who you are and came here for you. I did not plan our meeting at the club. But when I knew the person I met was you, Jazon, it told me what I knew in my heart. You are my mate. The person I've waited years to find. When I told Khalid why I was here, he told me about Robertson and I was furious imagining Robertson touching you. Touching what is mine. I let the senate know I was here and when the *Procul* asked me to intercede, I readily agreed. How could I not? I would fight for my mate in front of everyone. Therefore, love, I know who you are. You are the person who holds my heart, my love. Will you not trust me to do the same for you?"

Could he be telling the truth? Obviously, if Jin were lying Khalid would have said something, but he hadn't. Could Jin have fallen as quickly as he had? Because, Jaz knew he loved this man. There was no one else anywhere in the world for him. Sappy, but true. Shit, maybe he'd start writing greeting cards.

Jaz took a deep breath. "Okay, here's the deal. You'd better listen before you say anything. I love you. The only person I've ever said those words to is Kell, and I don't love her like get naked love her. You know, she's my best friend in the whole wide world, but the idea of seeing her naked puts me off my feed. Anyway, I love you, and if you truly love me, I'll trust you. But the first time you hurt me will be the last. Because I'll leave, and Kell will kill you and bring me your head for my dining room table."

Jin dropped to his knees next to Jaz. "Love, I will never leave you and never hurt you. Jazon, you are my heart, how could I?"

Jaz nodded. "Okay." He put his arms around Jin and kissed him. At first, it was a gentle exploration of lips and tongues. Jaz sighed, as Jin softly swirled his tongue around Jaz's. The sweetness of the kiss almost brought tears to his eyes. He'd dreamed a long time about someone who would love him for who he was and not his name or money. Jaz deepened the kiss, wanting to get closer to Jin, and brushed a fang with his tongue. Jin shuddered as if struck and the sweetness of the moment ago was gone. Jaz found himself

thrust back on the bed covered by Jin's hard, hot body. The man's hands were everywhere and all Jaz could do was hold on for the ride.

Jin sat up and ripped his t-shirt over his head. "I cannot wait, Jazon. If you do not want this because you are too sore, you had best say."

Jaz smiled. "Honey, I can take whatever you plan on dishing out. But, if you're too tired, you know because you're old, we can put this off until later." Jaz eased his hand down to rub his erection through the pants he wore. "I can take care of this myself while you nap."

"You are a tease."

Jaz laughed. "And you promised to make me pay, if I remember."

"So I did."

Jaz found himself tossed over Jin's shoulder as he was carried through the condo and back into the master bedroom. He finally noticed Kell and Khalid had left, for which he was eternally grateful. Jin tossed him on the bed and proceeded to strip them both. Soon, Jin's hard, naked body again covered his own. Jaz wrapped his arms and legs around the man he loved and kissed him. In a flash, Jaz realised, for the first time in his life, he was truly happy. Happy because he was finally loved, and he loved in return.

## About the Author

Gwendolyn Cease has been writing ever since she was old enough to pick up a pen. From the very beginning, her stories involved handsome heroes, tough heroines, and happily ever after. Even as she slogged through her undergraduate and finally master's in education, writing remained a top priority. Though she now teaches elementary school, she still makes time for her characters and their never-ending adventures.

Currently, Gwendolyn lives in Kentucky with her three incredibly spoiled cats: Fiona (the queen), Max (he's a lover not a fighter) and Warlock (way too fat for his own good). If you'd like to contact her she'd love to hear from you. She loves to hear from anyone who enjoys a good book, especially the ones she's written.

Email: [gwendolyncease@insightbb.com](mailto:gwendolyncease@insightbb.com)

Gwendolyn loves to hear from readers. You can find her contact information, website and author biography at <http://www.total-e-bound.com>.

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