



Changeling Press

CLASSY

LAST CALL: EUROPE

BITCH

LACEY SAVAGE

Last Call Europe: Classy Bitch

Lacey Savage

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Last Call Europe: Classy Bitch

Lacey Savage

Classy Bitch: Whore in designer clothing, ripe for the taking.

Being summoned home to be married is the last thing Vito Moretti expects. But before he can convince his father that he's not about to be chained down to any woman -- especially one he's never met -- Vito swings by Last Call for one more night of pure, unapologetic pleasure.

Margot LeFevre has a duty to uphold, and a mission to fulfill. And nothing would jeopardize both quicker than ordering a drink from Last Call's exotic menu. Still, she can't help but wonder what it would be like to be someone different, just for one night. Someone sexy, someone alluring, someone free to give in to the need for pleasure and pain that simmers inside her.

Lucky for her, she's about to find out.

Prologue

With the severed head of his opponent dragging on the ground behind him and his heart pounding from the rush of adrenaline, Vito Moretti grinned widely at his audience. "Let it be known that a winged serpent is no match for a Synai warrior!"

His voice boomed through the clearing where he stood, surrounded by two dozen of the greatest warriors gathered from among the top werewolf packs in the country. Yet instead of awe and admiration, he saw nothing but envy and hostility in their eyes. Every warrior there had dreamed of being the one to bring down the *jaculus*, but Vito had robbed them of the opportunity for that particular glory.

Well, to hell with them and their resentful scrutiny. He wasn't here to make friends. He'd been summoned because the fine people of Lanchester, Maine, had a problem they couldn't solve. The *jaculus* had been terrorizing humans and werewolves alike, running unchecked for the better part of a month. They'd needed someone skilled in the art of fighting savage monsters, someone with a proven track record, someone who wielded a variety of weapons with brute strength and elegance. They'd needed *him*.

Vito tossed the creature's head to the ground. It rolled, leaving a slick puddle of purple blood in its wake, and landed at the feet of the man who'd summoned the warriors to the rescue. The Alpha of the Dorai pack eyed the prize, then nodded once, curtly.

"We thank the great Synai pack for sending a fighter capable of ridding us of this evil. Your reward, warrior."

He stepped aside, making room for four women to step through the gap in the crowd. Overhead, the forest canopy swayed and rustled. The battle had taken the better

part of the night, and now the sun rose in orange hues through the trees, sending the women's long, curvaceous shadows swishing across the grass.

"My daughters are yours to do with as you please. They will see to your every need for as long as you wish to stay among us."

Ah, now this was more like it! Vito gave a hoot of laughter and swept two of the women into his arms. His cock responded instantly with a jolt of excitement that surged through his bloodstream, mingling with the adrenaline already there.

He planted a kiss on the luscious lips of the nearest woman. "I accept your generous gifts."

The sisters giggled as one and rubbed up against him. If the air in the clearing had been dark with hatred before, now it practically churned with the rancor and bitterness of those assembled.

Vito's hand went to the fastening of his jeans. He'd show them why a Synai warrior was the only one who could claim the spoils of this battle. He had enough stamina to satisfy all four women, and then take on the rest of the pack's females. It would be a tough job, but someone had to do it.

One of the Dorai Alpha's daughters covered Vito's hand with hers while she knelt before him. She undid his zipper and gasped in appreciation as his cock sprang free.

Damn, but he loved his life. There was nothing like roaming the world looking for the next fight, the next fuck -- not having to answer to anyone about what he did or didn't do. No commitments, no promises, no expectations. Just freedom, violence, and as much pleasure as his mighty cock could handle.

A hot mouth closed around the tip of his dick. He groaned, and so did the other men in the clearing. The rustle of clothes followed. No doubt the warriors had themselves in hand by now, staring wide-eyed and short of breath at the erotic display before them. If they couldn't be him, at least they could live vicariously through him.

"A message for the Synai warrior! A message!"

Vito's eyes snapped open just in time to see a short, slight-of-build man elbow his way through the crowd. He sighed and pulled away from the eager mouth that held him tightly in its moist grip. Cool morning air streamed over his heated shaft, sending a shiver through him.

"What is it?" he snapped at the messenger. "Can't it wait?"

"No, sir, I'm afraid it can't." The man lowered his voice and leaned in close enough so the others couldn't hear. "It's from your father."

The shiver turned into icy fingers of apprehension. Leave it to the old man to know exactly where he'd be at any given moment, even when he was half a world away. Still, Vito recognized where his loyalty lay. He owed his father his allegiance. He could postpone his well-earned reward for a few minutes to hear what his father had to say.

The messenger pulled a yellow envelope from his coat pocket. Vito grabbed it and turned it over, leaving fingerprints of purple blood across its pristine surface. The envelope tore beneath his hands, and he pulled out a sheet of crisp, unlined paper.

On the paper, Vito's father had scrawled six words. Vito read them, failed to comprehend them, and read them again. That's when the eager lust that had been swirling through his system dissolved in a pool of acid that gurgled in his gut.

Come home, the catastrophic note said. You're to be married.

Chapter One

"A cup of coffee, please. Black."

The blonde bartender, fine featured and lovely, stared at Margot LeFevre like she'd just asked for a cup full of cyanide.

"You realize this is a bar, right?" she asked, waving behind her to indicate the bottles stacked in neat rows in front of a floor-to-ceiling mirror. "We sell alcohol. Lots of it. Anything your heart desires. Or if you're in the mood for something that'll light a fire in your veins... and in other places... have a look through these." The woman slid a leather-bound menu in front of Margot, then leaned on her elbows across the bar. A jiggly mound of cleavage almost spilled from her bustier, drawing Margot's attention to her nametag, which read *Susan*. "So? What will it be?"

Nervous jitters gathered in Margot's belly. She knew she shouldn't be here, but she couldn't help it. The desire to do something wild and rebellious warred with the obligation to do what was expected of her, urging her in two different directions. Most nights, the good girl in her won. But then there were nights like this one, when she couldn't help but tempt fate.

She thumbed through the menu and scanned the exotic descriptions of various mixed drinks, wishing she were brave enough to order one. She didn't need names like Screaming Orgasm and Faery Dust to illustrate what kind of bar this was. She'd been here half a dozen times over the last year alone, but never before had she worked up the courage to sit at the bar. Normally she perched on the edge of a seat at the back of the room and observed the erotically charged crowd, ready to bolt should anyone approach her. No one ever had, probably because she'd never ordered anything. There were rules, even in a place like this.

Rumors about the bar abounded. According to the supernatural grapevine, magical creatures only came here for one thing, and it wasn't to get a pleasant buzz. The real reason beings of all shapes, sizes, and sexual orientations visited Last Call in London, or its counterpart in New York, was to find willing partners to indulge their every erotic desire, no matter how smutty or obscene.

Margot's gaze fell on a concoction of gin, vodka, triple sec, lime juice, and tonic water. The description below the list of ingredients was simple in its vulgarity.

Classy Bitch: Whore in designer clothing, ripe for the taking.

A jolt of lust gave Margot's heart a sudden kick-start. Blood roared in her ears, and her body tingled with a rush of excitement that set her groin to throbbing. What kind of person ordered such a drink?

She squirmed and surreptitiously glanced down at the outfit that had seemed so appropriate this morning. A two-piece, classy knit... with a price tag most women would have to save up for a year to buy.

As a member of the Royal Pack of Neveere, and a diplomat to boot, price was the least of Margot's concerns. Looking the part of the high-class politician -- a woman trained from birth to charm, manipulate, and negotiate with the toughest wolves under the most harrowing circumstances -- was.

Well, the "designer clothes" part of the drink description fit. But nothing else did. Still... what if she could pretend, just for this one night? Tomorrow, life as she knew it would be over. Why not give in to her most desperate desires? Why not experience the kind of passion she'd never otherwise have?

Duty, a voice in the back of her mind reminded her.

Ah, yes... that was why she couldn't act upon her own wants and needs. If anyone ever learned of her indiscretion, her pack would never forgive her. She'd be an outcast, or worse. And for what? One night of mind-blowing pleasure?

"Coffee," Margot repeated, pushing the menu away with a heavy dose of regret. If only she'd been someone else. Anyone else. "Black."

"Look, maybe I didn't make myself clear. There is no coffee. We don't brew it; we don't keep it around; we don't want anything to do with it. I can offer you a coffee-flavored liquor, though, like a shot of espresso-infused vodka. Or better yet, how about a Bahama Mama?" She gave Margot a quick once-over, then shook her head before Margot could reply. "No, you're not into that, are you? A Colorado Bulldog, perhaps? Or maybe a Smith and Wesson?" She squinted against the pulsating lights of the dance floor just a few feet away. "I could have sworn I saw them both come in tonight."

"No. No special drinks, all right? In fact, no drinks of any kind." At Susan's pronounced scowl, Margot sighed. "Just a glass of water, then. You've got water, right?"

Susan rolled her eyes. "Of course we've got water. We just don't serve it to customers."

"Why not?"

"Because it would be free, for one, and that's just not good for business. We don't have any of that fancy iceberg stuff here. And for two, because this is a bar." She waved at the array of bottles behind her again, and Margot got the distinct sensation that the woman would have liked nothing better than to pour one over her head.

"Oh, for the love of --" She bit her lip in frustration and glanced at the menu still splayed in front of her. She'd pick something relatively mundane, just to shut the bartender up. What was the worst that could happen, anyway? If her drink order elicited any unwelcome attention, she'd simply say no. It's not as though she was going to be raped right here on the shiny counter.

"Fine," she said, her confidence growing. The beat of techno music blasting through the bar energized her, and she chose a drink more or less at random. "I'll have -
-"

A swift breeze caught her hair and lifted the strands at the nape of her neck. On it wafted the scents of honeysuckle, strawberries, and cinnamon. Abruptly, Margot found herself sandwiched between two women on either side of her, and a third at her back.

"She'll have a Classy Bitch."

"Make it a double."

"I'm not sure that'll be enough. Hell, look at her. The girl's inner whore is so tightly smothered by that cashmere sweater that it'll take a bucket of the stuff to get her out."

A flush crept up Margot's neck as the newcomers scrutinized her with identical piercing blue stares. A redhead, a brunette, and a blonde, all three willowy and tall, all slender in a runway-model way. The family resemblance in the narrow chin and slight upturn of the nose was unmistakable.

"Last call for the lady in the beige sweater!" Susan called out. "One Classy Bitch, coming right up."

Margot gasped and leaped to her feet, common sense finally giving her a swift kick in the rear. "No! I didn't order anything."

"Sure you did, pumpkin," the redhead said, tapping the crown of Margot's head with a condescending little pat. "You just didn't order it out loud."

* * *

The rental car was stuffy and hot. Vito rolled down the window, rendering the misery slightly more bearable. Humidity smacked him upside the head like an open palm, and he sucked in a lungful of air while undoing the top two buttons of his shirt.

Damn, but he'd forgotten how much he hated the weather in London. The constant rain, the dark clouds, the stuffy nights. He wanted to be back in Maine, lying on a fragrant meadow beneath the scorching sun, fucking those four women senseless with the smell of grass in his nose and the sticky scent of pussy on his fur.

He'd be back there soon enough. All he had to do was meet with his father and make the old man see reason. He wasn't the marrying type, and Damian Moretti knew that.

Vito was savage and rough, even by his own pack's standards. The Synai females who'd willingly taken him into their beds had complained to his father the next

morning, whining about the marks he'd left on their bodies and the savage way he'd mounted them.

Other Synai warriors were fierce bedroom partners too, but he was much more menacing. More dangerous. It wasn't long before his reputation ensured that none of the Synai females would get near his cock. That was part of the reason he'd left home and never looked back. It was so much easier to find eager women on the road; women he never had to see again. He never seriously hurt any of them, but he knew he had it in him, and it scared him to death. He was so much more powerful than the females of his pack, so much more savage. None of them shifted with him, or met him brutal thrust for brutal thrust.

He'd realized long ago that there was no woman who'd accept his vicious nature in bed. And now his father wanted to marry him off? The old man probably wanted an heir too. Hell, Damian had to know better than anyone that any female of their pack would only marry him to be next in line to the Synai fortune. The nuptials would be a sham, and Vito wouldn't shackle himself with a farce of a marriage like that.

No, he'd simply explain to his father that --

The surge of lust shooting through his bloodstream nearly made him lose control of the car. He swerved around a truck, came headlight-to-headlight with an oncoming tram, and jerked on the steering wheel hard to bring it back into the left lane.

His heart hammered against his ribcage. Furious need jolted his senses, heating his blood. The shift, more turbulent than ever, writhed just beneath his human skin.

He needed to fuck. *Now*.

The craving to bury his dick inside a hot, willing pussy was too much to bear. He had to have it, had to rut like a beast in heat. The compulsion overwhelmed him, messed with his sense of reasoning.

There'd be no waiting, no putting this off. His head pounded, agony raging against his temples. A dull pain radiated out from his breastbone, clenching his heart. He drove like a madman, with no logical destination, impelled by a desire he couldn't

understand. The thoughts tumbling through his head made no sense. He didn't know where he was going, only that he needed to get there.

Before someone else claimed his woman.

* * *

"Shit. He's not here." Sky looked at her sisters, who both glanced around them at the crowded bar. If someone other than Vito Moretti heard Margot's Last Call and decided to answer her sensual signal, their mission was doomed to fail. They couldn't let the girl order a random drink, but neither could they let her offer be snatched up by some horny creature looking for an easy lay.

Moretti was on his way. Sky could feel it in every fiber of her magical being. They just had to stall until he showed up.

"What do we do?" Summer asked under her breath, low enough so only Sky could hear.

Storm cast them both a worried glance through slitted eyes. She stood the closest to Margot, just out of conversational distance from Sky and Summer.

"We do what we always do," Summer said, flipping through her arsenal of spells in her mind. They hadn't failed a mission yet, and they weren't about to start tonight. "We improvise."

She found the shielding spell she searched for and brought it to the forefront of her thoughts. Her sisters added their power to hers, a silent supportive wave of magical energy that enveloped Margot from head to toe in a protective bubble.

Now they just had to keep her there, out of reach of anyone who wanted her for themselves.

Well, almost anyone.

Summer shifted from foot to foot, casting a worried glance at the crowd. Sky followed her gaze. A few men had broken away from their respective groups of friends and were heading toward them. There was no mistaking the hunger in their eyes, or the fluid lasciviousness in the way they moved.

"Moretti had better hurry," she murmured under her breath.

Chapter Two

Margot tried to draw a breath, but found she couldn't inhale. Last Call had gone deathly quiet. Even the thud of techno music that had been raging through the joint had suddenly stopped. She didn't have to turn around to know that men were, right at this very moment, considering her request.

A wave of dizziness rushed through her, and a tight band wrapped around her ribcage, making it impossible to get enough air. Any second now, someone would walk up and offer himself for the night. Would he be handsome? Would he make her body sing in all those places that until now she'd barely been able to make hum with her hands and her toys? How would she react? Would she remember to stay true to her duty, or would every good intention fly out of her head when presented with the opportunity to make her wildest dreams come true?

The questions rushed through Margot's head in the span of a few seconds. And then, just as suddenly as the noise in the bar had come to a screeching halt, it kicked up again. The rhythmic beat of dance music filled the air, and the laughter and loud chatter resumed as though it had never been interrupted.

The air whooshed out of Margot's lungs. She drew a breath, then another, just to reassure herself that she could. Her anxiety lifted with each second that passed, and she mustered a small smile for the bartender, who slid a glass of clear liquid in front of her.

"Drink up."

The brunette who'd ordered the drink pressed a little closer to Margot. The blonde and the redhead closed in as well, forming a solid barrier behind her.

"Hey, I just want to talk to the lady," a deep male voice said.

"She's busy," one of the women shot back.

"But --"

"Go bother someone else."

Curiosity got the better of Margot, and she turned her head to get a glimpse of the man who'd spoken.

"Wouldn't want this to go to waste," the redhead said, grabbing the glass from the bar and snapping Margot's attention back to it. The woman lifted the drink to her nose, sniffed it, blew a stream of air to ripple the surface, then slammed it back down. She wiggled her red-tipped nails over the rim, and a blue haze settled onto the surface of the liquid, then sank down, disappearing.

"What did you do?" Margot asked, curiosity getting the better of her.

"Cooled it down a little for you. It's supposed to be served on the rocks, but the bartender forgot the ice."

Margot eyed the drink suspiciously and tried to ignore the argument that continued behind her. It couldn't be about her... could it? She attempted to sneak another look over her shoulder, but the redhead grabbed her arm and forcefully twisted her back toward the bar.

"Drink up, girl," she insisted. "It'll do you good."

Only minutes earlier, ordering anything had seemed like a very bad idea. But it was only a drink, wasn't it? And besides, she hadn't actually asked for it herself. The strange women had ordered on her behalf, but nothing had happened. No testosterone-laden male had lunged up from the crowd to hurl her over his shoulder and take off, caveman style. Which made sense, she supposed. She wasn't a whore. She'd simply had the wrong drink called out. That meant the Classy Bitch sitting in front of her was nothing more than a harmless mix of vodka and tonic water.

She wrapped her hand around the glass and downed the entire thing in one long swig. It slipped smoothly down her throat, instantly warming her from the inside. A sudden cascade of heat seeped into her bloodstream, slid down her veins, and settled in the apex between her thighs.

"Oh." It was less of a word than a moan. Her pussy throbbed and tingled, clenching with need. Cream slicked her panties. Her nipples beaded as though tweaked

by invisible fingers, and her breathing quickened to tiny little pants she couldn't get under control.

Margot's head spun. The dizziness returned, but it was a pleasant burst of confusion this time around, not a jolt of anxious unease.

"Shit. I didn't know it was going to do that," the redhead said, pushing the glass away. "Stupid side effects of hastily cast spells... A room for the lady. Now!"

Susan nodded and pulled an old-fashioned skeleton key from underneath the counter. The etching on one side read 1287.

"Stay away," one of the women warned, louder this time. It sounded like she was talking to a crowd. "The lady's spoken for."

"I didn't see no one with her," a man argued.

"Yeah. And she put out the call."

"Well, she's not for the taking, all right?" Voices rose, angry now. Margot wanted to see what the commotion was about, but her vision had gone fuzzy, and she had trouble lifting her head.

All that from one drink?

She shook her head in an attempt to clear it, but that only heightened the twin sensations of wooziness and lust.

"Bitch. Thinks she's too good for the likes of us, does she?"

"Yeah," another man chimed in. "Classy bitch. If the description fits..."

The voices swirled and faded around her. Margot's vision tunneled, until she couldn't see anything but the empty glass in front of her. Hands grabbed her beneath the arms, and she was lifted off the stool. She went along without protest. Putting up a fight seemed pointless in her current state.

"Come on. We need to get you up the stairs, quickly." Margot thought the blonde spoke, but she couldn't be sure.

"Who... are you?" she managed as her feet stumbled over each other in an attempt to right themselves.

"I'm Summer. These are my sisters, Sky and Storm."

"Nice to meet ya." Margot tried to lift a hand, but it fell uselessly by her side. She looked up at an endless staircase that appeared to end somewhere beyond the clouds. "Am I... drugged?"

"No, nothing like that. Sky cast a simple spell to make you sleepy. You just need a bit of undisturbed rest until he comes for you, that's all."

"Who?" Margot asked, vaguely aware that the word came out slurred and unclear.

No one answered her, and she lost the strength to argue while the trio dragged her up the stairs. The hoots and hollers of unhappy male voices, distorted and jumbled together, followed her all the way to the room.

* * *

Walking into Last Call did nothing to improve Vito's mood. Lust roiled through his veins like an impending storm. The incessant need had been gathering force for the better part of an hour, giving way to intolerable edginess the closer he came to this place. He'd never been here before, but he'd heard rumors about the bar's existence, and its purpose.

He made his way through the crowd, elbowing a couple of men aside in the process. The guys he'd jostled turned on him. They looked as frustrated as he was and more than ready to take it out on someone, yet one glance at his scowling face had them reconsidering that particular course of action. Or maybe it wasn't his face at all; maybe they could still smell the reek of decapitated winged serpent on him.

He waited until they retreated, which took longer than he expected. The men seemed torn between starting a fight and darting up the steps leading to the upper floor. At last they stomped off toward the stairs, where three slender women with identical blue eyes cut them off at the pass.

Vito turned away, uninterested.

"What'll it be?" the bartender asked when he stormed up to the bar. "Let me guess. How about a --"

"A whore."

The woman blinked. Damn, if he hadn't surprised her. His lip curved, and he bared his teeth in a semblance of a feral grin.

"Why don't you look through these?" She took a step back from him, yet somehow managed to push a leather drink menu across the polished surface of the bar with the tips of her fingers. "I think you'll find we can accommodate your needs."

He scowled, the mock smile wiped clean by a wave of frustration. "I don't want a drink. I want a whore."

A good fuck would take the edge off. Hell, a bad fuck would do too. He just needed to work the lust out of his system, and he wanted to do it with someone who expected nothing of him -- because he had less than nothing to give.

"I understand. If you'll just --"

A flurry of girly scents wrapped around him. Honeysuckle, strawberries, and cinnamon, strong enough to make him take notice, yet not so powerful that they turned his stomach.

"I believe we can help you with that."

Vito slanted a glance to his right, where a redhead leaned against the bar. He narrowed his eyes, trying to place her. *Ah. One of the women at the bottom of the stairs.* He glanced toward the steps, where the men itchin' for a fight had gone. The blokes now lay sprawled on the bottom step, in a spooning position that looked anything but natural. Some of the twitchy anxiety flooding his veins eased at the sight.

Vito turned back to the redhead and gave her a swift nod of professional respect. As a warrior, he had to admire someone who could take out a couple of troublemakers without making a mess.

The woman was a looker, all right, with deep blue eyes and flawless skin. Yet the sight of her didn't make his dick stand up and take notice. But that was fine, he figured. Once she wrapped her lips around his balls, it really wouldn't matter what she looked like. "You offering?"

She shook her head. "Not exactly, though my sisters and I have a solution to your little problem." She waved her fingers in the direction of his family jewels.

Vito scowled. He didn't like her swishing those red-tipped fingernails anywhere near his prick while uttering the word "little." Everything about her screamed "witch," and he wasn't about to take any chances around someone who commanded magic like it was nothing more significant than a clump of belly button lint.

He caught her hand and lifted it to a safer level. "If your sisters like to watch, I'm sure we can work something out."

The redhead rolled her eyes. "We're fairy godmothers, not succubae. Don't push your luck."

He quirked an eyebrow. Now she had his full attention. "Fairy godmothers, huh? Are you here to grant me three wishes?"

"You really don't know your fairy tales, do you?" A blonde who resembled the redhead slid onto the bar stool on the other side of him.

"Fairy godmothers grant wishes, right?" Vito asked, trying to recall threads of various stories he'd heard as a child. Even as a pup he never much cared about the history of magical creatures. It wasn't as though he'd ever needed to know anything about the ones he slaughtered aside from the exact location of their vulnerable squishy bits. He'd fought more than his fair share of dragons, giants, and wyverns, but he tried not to make friends with them.

Hell, he didn't make friends with anyone.

"Not quite," the blonde said. "We help folks figure out what's really important. We give them what they need, not necessarily what they want."

Vito waved a hand in a dismissive gesture. "Great. I need a whore. So now what? Do you snap your fingers and make one appear?"

The redhead grinned. She lifted her right hand in front of his nose, touched her thumb to her middle finger, and with an audible snap, produced a room key she dropped into his lap.

"She's waiting."

He ran a trembling hand over the stubble on his chin and tried to keep his voice level. "Just like that, huh? What if I don't like her?"

"You'll like her." A brunette, apparently the third sister, came up behind him. "We guarantee it."

"Or what?" Vito asked, rising from the bar stool. "I get my money back?"

That crack didn't elicit the slightest smile from any of them. Well, whatever. He wasn't here to amuse them. He was here to get laid.

With a crisp salute in the direction of the fairy godmothers, Vito turned toward the stairs. After stepping over the fallen blokes, he paused and glanced at the room number etched into the surface of the old-fashioned key.

1287.

A wave of lust crashed into him again, and he took the steps two at a time.

Chapter Three

It was close to midnight by the time Vito slid the key into the lock and turned it. Somewhere far beneath the perpetual lust and the roiling need, a bone-deep exhaustion begged him to head to bed.

That was exactly where he wanted to be. In bed. With his cock buried between some nameless, faceless woman's legs, pounding away at her until he forgot who and where he was. Tonight, he didn't want to think about his father, or his reason for returning home. He didn't want to think about tomorrow.

He wanted only to feel. And the woman waiting for him in room 1287 would make sure he did just that.

Vito cracked open the door a notch. Energy pulsed from within, crackling softly, beckoning him forward like the tug of a magnet. He stepped inside and pushed the door closed behind him. The only light came from the blood red moon casting eerie beams through the window. He blinked rapidly and waited for his eyes to adjust.

He'd never seen the moon that color before, but he'd overheard his father talking to another warrior about it once. Damian had warned the man that when the moon changed hues, the Synai better pay attention to the signs it cast. At the time, Vito hadn't shared Damian's certainty that the moon sent his pack signals from above, but tonight he wasn't so sure.

Who was he to say that that big pie in the sky wasn't beaming him a message? Maybe it was a big, glowing neon sign that his life, as he knew it, was over.

Tomorrow.

Tonight, he'd do what he always did. He'd fuck some woman senseless, and send himself into oblivion in the process. No wonder he didn't need a drink. Fucking was the best way he'd found to numb emotion.

He considered shifting to wolf form, which would allow him to see better in the dark, but decided against it. The fairy godmothers hadn't told him what kind of a creature they'd just handed over to him, and he hadn't asked. Goddess forbid she was a rabbit shifter or something just as vulnerable to his true form.

No, better to meet her just as he was. Human. Or at least, as close to human as he could get.

As Vito's eyes became accustomed to the shadows, he began to make out the shape on the bed. From this distance, he could only tell that it was small and silent, huddled in on itself.

Perhaps she'd fallen asleep waiting for a customer. It was late; maybe she figured she had the night off. He didn't know how things worked at Last Call, but it seemed clear to him that a few choice girls were set aside. Maybe girls like her were marked for important customers, in case a rock star of the supernatural world happened to show up unannounced.

To anyone who recognized him as the heir to the Synai throne, Vito might as well have been the werewolf version of Jon Bon Jovi. He frowned, not putting it past the fairy godmothers to know just who he was. In fact, that explained the strange compulsion he'd felt in the car. They'd lured him here, no doubt having cooked up some half-baked blackmailing scheme. Tonight, they'd have him fuck a trollop of their choosing. Tomorrow, they'd show up at his father's court and ask for a ridiculous favor.

He turned, ready to storm from the room. He could find his own whore.

The girl moaned, and the sound of her voice was so sweet and seductive, it jerked an answering groan from his lips. Vito's pulse quickened, and blood rushed to his cock in an explosion of lust.

Well, maybe he didn't have to leave. Perhaps he could stay, just for a little while. Just to find out if she was the temptress they'd promised him.

You'll like her. We guarantee it.

A shiver of apprehension ran down his spine unchecked. The sultry note in her moan had been enough to make his knees quiver. What was the rest of her like? And how had the magical trio known just who to summon for him?

Not that it mattered, in the end. They could have scrounged up a slutty little creature from the depths of hell, for all he cared. Just as long as she was wet, willing, and eager to please.

He couldn't stand it anymore. He made his way to the edge of the bed and fumbled in the dark for the light switch. It took endless moments to find the knob. It was a style he hadn't expected, with a circular dimming switch. He turned it up just far enough to produce a soft pool of golden light that spilled onto the bed.

Vito's breath caught in his throat at the sight before him. He sucked in her scent, musky with arousal, and realized she was as much a wolf as he was.

But Goddess, unlike him, she was... *perfect*.

The first thing he noticed was her skin: tawny and flawless, from the top of her head to the tips of her pink-painted toes. Her breasts spilled out from the bottom of a beige sweater, which no longer covered much of anything. She'd hiked it up so that the fabric bunched beneath her armpits. She didn't wear a bra, and twin dusky nipples stood at attention, begging to be sucked. Her stomach was flat, her hips curved, and her legs absolutely endless. And between them --

"Holy Goddess," Vito murmured before he could stop himself.

She held both hands clenched between her thighs, pressed so tightly that her knuckles had turned white. She'd hoisted her skirt up too, just like her sweater, so the beige material was now no more than a scrunched up belt around her waist. She wore silk panties -- white ones -- that she'd pushed aside to bare the glorious pink folds of her pussy. A light sprinkling of blonde curls, now matted with moisture, draped her velvety skin.

The index and middle fingers of her right hand lay deep inside her channel. Her lower belly twitched, and he could bet her inner walls did the same, clinging to the slim digits invading her sex.

When his gaze finally made its way back to her face, he was stunned to realize she was fast asleep. He figured she'd been waiting for her client, preparing herself for his arrival. But... no. There was no mistaking the slight flutter of her long black eyelashes, or the way her eyes moved beneath her eyelids as she dreamed.

Her lips were full and lush, parted just enough to reveal a glimpse of straight, white teeth. She had a tiny birthmark just below one eye, and an array of freckles that dotted the bridge of her nose and the apples of her cheeks.

But it was her hair that made him reach out and touch. Golden spirals fanned out across the pillow in sharp contrast to the dark red color of the satin sheets. She looked like Sleeping Beauty, ripe and ready for the taking.

A grin spread across Vito's face as the usual array of savage carnal thoughts kick-started his brain. He twirled a golden corkscrew around his index finger and wondered what it would feel like to have that mass of hair draped across his belly as she sucked him off.

Damn. If his sweet Sleeping Beauty had been waiting for Prince Charming, she was in for one hell of a rude awakening.

* * *

Margot was having the most wonderful dream.

There was a man in it, and his large, gentle hands roved her body. His thumbs skimmed her nipples and she arched her back, a moan slipping from her parted lips. His touch was surprisingly light, yet somehow still managed to leave streaks of heat in its wake. It felt like being kissed by sunlight, caressed with loving strokes that melted the stress and anxiety with every tender glide.

The slap was entirely unexpected.

Margot's eyes jerked open. The cry that jammed in her throat turned into a full-fledged blood-curdling scream as her gaze landed on the man standing beside her bed.

His hand was still on her breast, glued to her flesh. Heat radiated outward from the point of contact. Though fear curdled in her stomach, Margot's nipples tingled, and an answering ache throbbed between her legs.

"I-I'll scream," she warned him when she could find her voice. "Again."

His lips curled in a predatory grin, and his dark brown eyes glowed like hot coals. "Mmmm... you *are* perfect. I like a whore who knows how to make some noise. What's the fun in fucking a silent wench? Might as well screw a pillow."

Margot shook her head and stared at him wide-eyed, uncomprehending. "W-what did you call me?"

"Whore." His voice was low, impossibly deep, rumbling from the depths of his powerful chest.

A blanket of arousal wrapped around Margot's sex. Her inner walls pulsed, clenching around the fingers thrust deep inside her.

Margot gasped and glanced down at her disheveled state. Shame washed over her and she yanked her fingers out of her cunt, then struggled to right her clothing in a flurry of uncoordinated movements. She was breathing hard by the time she'd covered her breasts and sex from the man's hungry gaze.

"Why did you slap me?"

"You were asleep. Seemed as good a way as any to wake you up."

She gasped. "You're kidding."

His grin dimmed a little. "I am. The slap..." He lifted a powerful shoulder in a half shrug. "It's what I do, darling."

She shook her head. "I don't understand. You creep into women's rooms and smack them around? That's supposed to put me at ease?"

His laugh heated her blood from the inside. She swallowed hard, struggling to cling to the terror she knew she should be feeling. But something about the way this man looked at her, like he wanted to lick her from head to toe the same way he'd enjoy a frozen Popsicle on a scorching summer day, soothed some of her anxiety.

She lifted herself up and propped her back against the headboard. He still leaned over her, and her nose was just inches away from his now. She could smell his breath, minty with a lingering trace of coffee. And beneath it, something animalistic and

primal. Something that screamed wolf. The scent was intoxicating. She wanted to lean in closer, to learn the scent of his body, his hair, his cock.

"Honor, pack, pride. These things mean everything. Sex means nothing. Not in our world. Let lesser wolves be driven by their base impulses. We're better than that. Better than them."

Her mother's words flittered through Margot's mind as she squirmed against the lust that set her body on edge. One hell of a werewolf princess she'd turned out to be. While all the women in her pack were prim-and-proper, prissy and puritanical to the core, she couldn't stop dreaming about being bent over a table, spanked until her bottom turned rosy, and fucked within an inch of her life.

A cold clench in her gut reminded her why she was here. She had a mission to fulfill in the morning, one she'd been preparing for since puberty. Her mother had worked tirelessly to secure an arranged marriage for her daughter -- one that would advance the pack's interests. Tomorrow, Margot would march into the midst of another pack, introduce herself, and submit to her future husband -- the Alpha of the Synai pack, a man old enough to be her father.

She fought back the shudder turning her veins to ice. If she was very, very lucky, the resulting marriage would be loveless. Sexless. If not...

She gulped past the wedge of anxiety lodged in her throat and met the stranger's eyes boldly. "How did you get in here?"

He lifted his hand. A key dangled from a ring hanging off the tip of his index finger. "You must have wanted me here."

Margot licked her lips. The man's gaze zoomed in on her mouth, and his own lips parted. She could make out the quickening of his breathing, the way his chest rose and fell beneath his silk shirt.

"Ah." She struggled to remember what had happened earlier that night. She recalled working up the courage to finally sit at the bar. The names of the exotic drinks flashed through her mind. Classy Bitch. The bitter taste of alcohol on her tongue.

And then... nothing.

Oh, Goddess... I must have picked him up. I had too much to drink, and came on to him in a drunken stupor. Then I brought him up here, where I wasted no time making a complete fool of myself. First I yanked up my clothes, then I showed him how I frig myself, and then... ah, the coup de grace. I passed out.

Embarrassment washed over her in waves. She jerked her gaze from his, unable to meet his eyes. Her cheeks burned, and the rest of her body might as well have been on fire.

With a lunge that was both predatory and graceful, he leaped on the bed, pinning her beneath his powerful form. His breath stirred the fine hairs around her forehead. "Don't lie to yourself, little whore. You do want me here. If you don't, well, just say the word. I won't force myself on a woman. I'll walk out that door, and you'll never see me again."

He meant it too. She could feel the truth of his words in every fiber of her being.

She hesitated, and he ground himself against her, boldly masculine and proudly triumphant. The feel of his hard cock pressing against the cleft of her slick pussy scattered every other thought from her mind. Throbbing heat suffused her body. In desperation, she tried another tactic. "D-do you know who I am?"

"Uh-huh." He lowered his head so his cheek brushed hers, and his lips aligned flush with her ear. When his teeth clamped around her earlobe and tugged, an answering flutter danced all the way through her belly straight to her cunt. "You're a horny little slut. I can smell you. You can't wait until I get my cock in that well used pussy of yours, can you?"

Shock careened through her. His words were so crude, so coarse and unrefined. Just like the rest of him.

"My name is Margot," she whispered, thinking that as a wolf, he'd recognize her. If he knew who she was, he'd stop this madness.

She realized, even as she said it, that she'd made a mistake. She didn't want him to stop. This was the closest she'd come to taking a lover in all her twenty-four years. Tomorrow, a man not of her choosing planned to take her virginity. Well, she'd be

damned if she gave him that. Others had granted her future husband the use of her body, but this was hers to give.

"Margot." The stranger rolled her name on his tongue like a piece of particularly juicy candy. "I'm going to fuck you now... Margot."

She swallowed hard, her mouth suddenly dry. She knew how she could wet it, how she could bring a touch of moisture back to her parched lips. Before she could think better of it, she darted forward, closing the distance between them.

She felt his shock when her lips slammed against his. It traveled through her, an ethereal jolt of raw masculine desire that set every one of her nerve endings on fire. A victorious bolt of triumph chased the sensation. She was in control now, if only for a moment.

Margot parted her lips, coaxing her mystery man's open with a soft flick of her tongue against the seam of his mouth. He gave a low, husky growl that vibrated against her lips. On a bold impulse, she dared to go further. Her tongue glided into his mouth and swept against his, summoning a deep groan from the back of her throat.

I should push him away.

She wouldn't; she knew. The feeble protest was mechanical and expected. It had been drilled into her since she hit puberty.

"Sex is dirty. It's a sinful, shameful act best left to the lesser beings. We're above that. We control our base instincts. They don't control us."

"Yes," Margot murmured against her lover's mouth. The feel of his hot breath sent a blast of ecstasy through her veins.

She couldn't believe she was bold enough to do this. For so long, her fantasies had been kept under lock and key, a secret only she knew. Now she was going to give herself over to a stranger in the most deliberate, wanton way possible.

"Yes... what?" he prompted. His lips glided down the length of her throat, summoning a soft gasp in their wake. His hands, large and powerful, cupped her breasts and squeezed them together as he pinched her nipples between thumbs and forefingers.

"Just... yes." It was all she could give him. And yet, it was so much more than she had a right to give.

It didn't matter. No one would ever know. After tonight, she'd never see him again. He'd never know what gift she'd given him. What risk she took for this one night of pleasure.

"This won't be quick." His rough voice held a note of warning, but rather than frightening her, it only served to send a shiver of anticipation down her spine. "I plan to take my time with you."

Margot licked her lips. It seemed she couldn't get enough moisture in her mouth. All of her bodily fluids must have flowed downward, slicking her pussy, wetting her thighs.

She nodded once, firmly. The assent was as much for her as it was for him -- perhaps even more so. "Good. I dreamed..." She shook her head, scattering the thought she'd almost voiced. "That's good."

He looked up at her then. She couldn't read the glimmer in his eyes. Something danced in those black depths, something curious and eager. If he had a question for her, he didn't voice it. Rather, he returned his attention to her breasts, which was fine by her. He lifted her sweater, and she let him.

When he smacked her again, she didn't flinch or cry out. She simply released the breath she'd been holding and arched her spine, giving him better access. "Again," she demanded.

To her surprise, he obeyed. One sharp slap, then a second and a third, and the pale skin of her breasts turned a pale rosy hue.

"Harder."

The smack brought a sharp flood of tears to her eyes. Bliss chased the sting of pain, and she gave a soft mewl of delight that came from deep in her soul.

"Is this what you want, whore?"

The menace in his voice was unmistakable. When she grinned, her glee clearly caught him off guard. She flushed with satisfaction at seeing the look of surprise in his eyes. "Not quite."

Margot splayed her hands on the mystery man's chest and shoved him lightly back. She looked past him, to the cabinet barely visible through the curtain of shadows against the far wall. Her heart thudded. She'd heard talk of these cabinets, standard in every Last Call room, but she'd never thought she'd see the contents of one up close.

If she was finally going to let herself do this, she'd damn well do it right. It would be the only chance she got.

Margot sprung off the bed and headed straight for the cabinet. Steeling her nerves, she grabbed the twin copper handles with both hands and yanked on the double doors. They opened to reveal an array of toys, trinkets, and other sexual paraphernalia that would make even the most experienced Dom drool in anticipation.

"Now this," Margot whispered, running her fingers along the silky tassels of a wicked-looking whip, "this is exactly what I want."

Chapter Four

"This is why I wanted a professional." Vito flipped onto his stomach on the large bed so he could face Margot. He still felt her warmth seeping through the mattress, but it was nothing compared to the heat emanating from her perfect body. He wanted her in his arms again. Under him, on top of him, around him...

Gone was the exhaustion he'd felt when walking into Last Call barely an hour earlier. Now he was alert, fully awake, in a state of heightened arousal just short of painful... for which he was grateful. Lust banished anger, and anxiety, and all those other emotions that had been building inside him like a raging storm ever since he'd torn open that damned yellow envelope.

Margot cast him a look over her shoulder. The lamplight didn't penetrate as deeply into the room as he'd have liked, and she stood in the murky gloom, a pale goddess cast in shadow. "Why's that?"

"It's been my experience that a lover in touch with her own needs knows how to meet mine."

She ducked her head quickly and didn't reply. A sudden flicker of uncertainty nagged at his brain. If he didn't know any better, he'd think she was blushing. But... no, Margot wasn't an innocent. Not if the way she'd fingered herself to sleep and then begged him to slap her tits was any indication. And then there was the way she ran her hands along the variety of whips and handcuffs in that cabinet, as though she was intimately familiar with each item.

Jealousy swarmed his veins in an unexpected rush. It flooded his system with heat and familiar anger, driving him to his feet. The thought of other men touching Margot, fondling her, bending her over the bed and spanking her delectable ass until she cried out their names was more than he could bear.

It made no sense, this sudden possessiveness, yet he could no more ignore it than he could ignore her. She'd worked her way into every aspect of his being. Her scent flooded his nostrils, forcing the beast in him to stand up and take notice.

"Against the wall," he growled, his voice barely recognizable to his own ears. The shift tingled in his nerve endings, a mere breath away from exploding through him.

Not now. Not yet.

He drove it back by sheer force of will. There would be time for that later. Right now, he'd need his human form for what he had planned.

Margot didn't move. She gave no indication she even heard him. Her spine was ramrod straight, her body rigid.

Vito made his way to her on a predator's glide. He reached her within seconds and hooked his arm around her waist, forcing her against him. His rampant erection pressed into the warm flesh of her back, and he groaned at the contact.

"Don't pretend you didn't hear me," he warned. "I won't tolerate games."

Her entire form shook beneath his grip. What started as soft shudders became full on trembles. "I need..."

"I know exactly what you need." He reached past her and grabbed the whip she'd so lovingly fondled upon opening the cabinet.

She'd chosen well. It had to be at least twenty inches long, with a thick black leather handle and hundreds of soft, silky tails. He slipped the wrist strap over his hand and pressed Margot up against the wall, exactly where he wanted her.

She obeyed without protest. Splaying her hands out, she flattened the side of her face against the wall and thrust out her delectable ass, presenting him with a view that made the breath catch in his throat. Damn, but she was utterly, incredibly perfect.

He couldn't wait to fuck her, but he would. Something told him she needed this more than he did.

The whip whistled menacingly as it sliced through the air. Margot's spine stiffened, and when the tassels landed against her flawless skin, she gave a soft mewl of acceptance that tore at his heart. He lifted the instrument of pain and pleasure again,

and brought it down once more, harder this time. She received the blow with a moan and lifted her hips, so the next hit landed a touch lower. This time, she cried out. The tassels had to have hit her sensitive folds, but instead of begging him to stop, she parted her legs and widened her stance.

“Give. Me. More.”

He growled low in his throat, but it was his turn to obey. He whipped her as though his life depended on it. His strokes were at once measured and chaotic, both calculated and random. He varied the strength of each strike, chose a different location for every smack, and relished the way her body responded to the whip as though the two had been made for each other.

When at last he feared she couldn't take another stroke of velvet against her flesh, he let the whip drop to the floor. Her eyes were closed, and tears leaked freely down her cheek. He kissed the salty trail, made his way down to her beautiful bottom lip, and kissed her there too.

She turned her head to meet him full on while straightening away from the wall, but despite the show of valor, he noted the way she teetered on her feet, ready to crumple at any moment.

Again, the nagging doubt bit at the edges of his mind. Surely she'd done this before. Yet he'd seen no marks on her skin. No scars, no tell-tale pink lines, no dark bruising anywhere on her pristine body.

Vito nipped at her lower lip. “Stay on your feet for me, just a little while longer.”

She nodded. He cupped her buttocks lightly, but the rasp of his palms against her wounded skin caused her to cry out and lean against him. Her tight, pebbled nipples grazed his chest, and the barrier of his shirt became too much to bear.

“Undress me.”

Her eyes sought his, widening as his harsh command registered. Though her eyes still swam with fresh tears, he caught a glimpse of instinctive refusal in those green depths. *Interesting*. Either she didn't like taking orders, or she wasn't used to obeying. Strange quirk for a whore who clearly had submissive blood running through her veins.

She reached out tentatively with her free hand. Her fingers wrapped around a button, and she worked it through the small hole with great care. Her other hand slid down to cup his bulging erection.

Vito gritted his teeth against a groan. Ah, yes, this was more like it. Tentative yet sensually aggressive, just at the right time. *Perfect.*

Her fingers trembled as she bared a strip of flesh down the center of his body. She kept her eyes down, focusing on the buttons rather than on the skin she revealed.

"You haven't done this often," Vito observed. "Why not?"

A flash of pink tongue between her rosy lips nearly sent him over the edge. He tightened his grip on her buttocks, digging his fingernails into her flesh.

She whimpered in agony, ground her pussy against his concealed cock, and choked out an answer. "I-I usually don't bother with clothes. Neither do the men I'm with."

She wouldn't meet his eyes as she spoke, and he damn well could recognize a lie when he heard one. But talking about the other men she'd fucked was the last thing he wanted to do, so he let it go. For now.

She pushed his shirt back over his shoulder, and gasped at the webbing of scars that had lain hidden beneath the fabric. He cringed inwardly, but didn't pull away from her touch. Let her look her fill. If she was appalled by him now, it would only get worse when he let her see him for who he really was.

Margot ran the tips of her warm fingers along each scar -- every shocking, ugly one of them -- tracing the silvery lines with an awe bordering on reverence. A husky sound slipped from her throat. Her hands slid down his shoulders, and while she could not see those particular hieroglyphs of a body honed in battle, she explored his skin as though mapping out its topography.

Vito held himself still, though with each passing moment that stillness demanded a greater toll. He felt naked beneath her scrutiny, despite the jeans he still wore. Heat rolled off him as he tried to stifle the predatory energy that buzzed to the surface of his flesh each time Margot's delicate fingers skimmed over his muscles.

"What are you doing?" he growled at last, impatient and confused.

She glanced up at him, startled. "You're Synai."

His lips peeled back from his teeth in a snarl. They were both wolves through and through; she'd have smelled his essence, just as he'd identified hers. But there were no telltale olfactory signs in his scent that branded him a member of the Synai pack.

"No," he answered flatly. "I'm not."

She saw right through him. He didn't know how it was possible, but there it was, written on her beautiful face. She licked her soft lips. "I recognize the scars. These were made by a *lantar*. Synai warriors are the only ones who wield them, and only during the rite of passage to become one of the sacred warriors."

Vito narrowed his eyes. "You're not Synai. How do you know this?"

She had to think fast. Admitting that she'd studied the ways of the Synai pack for years in preparation for her inevitable farce of a wedding would give her away. If he learned that by this time tomorrow she'd be his queen, she'd lose any chance she still had to convince him to make love to her. Even now, even knowing that he was one of them, she still wanted him. Burned for him.

"I have fucked many Synai warriors," she murmured, hoping her voice sounded sultry and alluring instead of high-pitched and anxious. She'd never been able to lie convincingly. Even as a teenager, getting caught with her hand up her skirt in the middle of her pack's monthly midnight worship, she hadn't been able to assure her mother that she wasn't doing anything more defiant than scratching a wearisome itch on her inner thigh.

"Have you now?" She'd clearly caught him off guard, but his pack had no qualms about fucking. Not like hers did. She knew her excuse sounded plausible to someone who didn't know her.

She nodded. "Dozens."

His lip curled again and a half growl emitted from his throat. Perhaps she pushed too far. A childhood friend had once told her that the key to lying successfully was knowing when to stop adding details that hadn't been asked for.

Margot's hands skimmed his back and threaded into his long black hair. She stood on her tiptoes and brushed her lips with his. His palms, still clamped on her aching buttocks, sent stabs of furious heat straight to her cunt.

"There is only one Synai warrior I want to think about tonight."

That must have pleased him, because he hardened even further, his thick cock prodding her belly. A sigh slipped from Margot's throat. Being held this way felt even better than she'd imagined in her fantasies. And being whipped had been beyond incredible. Her entire being tingled with the intoxicating mix of pleasure and pain that still coursed through her veins.

The man radiated strength. Tall and muscular, his body powerful beyond measure, he emanated power in a way no other man she'd met ever had.

Synai warriors were skilled in battle. They were trained from birth, just like she was. Except rather than being tutored in politics and manipulation, they were thrust in a ring and instructed to fight their own.

The *lantar* was considered a holy weapon in the Synai pack. Crafted from natural materials like wood and leather, it made Margot think of a cat of nine tails. A whip might have been considered a rather harmless choice of weapon, only the leather strips at the end all sported metal-tipped extensions that resembled a spider web. *Goddess...* no wonder he'd been so skilled with the whip he'd used on her. Except that the instrument chosen for her pleasure had been rather benign. It left impressions and caused pain, but it never broke her skin. The *lantar*, on the other hand, dug in and left permanent marks when it struck an opponent's bare back. For Synai warriors, those scars were something to be proud of. They indicated entry into an exclusive club, and were meant to instill fear into anyone who saw them.

Margot wasn't afraid. Perhaps she should have been, but she wasn't. She'd faced down royalty, pack clerics, and other diplomats. This man made her feel alive in a way she never had standing before any of them.

Maybe that had to do with being naked. She wondered what her mother would say if Margot suggested all diplomats of the Royal Pack of Neveere should be trained in

the concubine arts. It would open up a world of possibilities to a diplomat intent on manipulating her adversary.

"You know far too much about me, little wolf." The warrior dipped his fingers into the crease of her buttocks. "A man should be allowed his secrets."

Margot's breath hitched in her throat. He wouldn't take her there, would he? She'd played with that area of her body a few times, but the lack of inherent lubrication made it difficult to find such a thing pleasurable.

Her trembles subsided when his hand delved lower, slid between her legs and stroked her lips. She parted her legs, spreading them wider to give him room to discover her intimately.

"I have secrets of my own," she whispered, rocking against his hand. Her cheek scraped against his as she buried her face in the side of his neck. The way his slight stubble abraded her skin made her crave the lick of the whip all over again.

He pulled away abruptly, his dark eyes clouded. Margot's pulse sped, and she feared he'd ask her to explain. He didn't. Instead, he dropped to his knees before her, and leaned toward the cabinet. After a few moments of questing among the paraphernalia within, he appeared to find what he sought.

He came away with a long chain, which he held between the thumbs and forefingers of both hands. It was Y-shaped, and Margot couldn't miss the wicked-looking clamps attached to each of the three ends.

"Do you know what this is?"

She shook her head before recalling her ruse. By the time she realized that she should have been well versed in every single toy in that cabinet, it was much too late.

He made a sound low in his throat, a mix between incredulity and pure arousal. "You're full of surprises, little wolf."

She licked her suddenly dry lips. "Most men just want to get down to the main event. Playing doesn't come naturally to them."

He lifted his right hand to her breast and circled the puffy areola with the tip of a clamp. Her body responded instantly with a surge of lust. An ecstatic cry escaped her throat as he attached the clamp to her distended nipple.

He did the same to the other nipple, using the opposite clamp. Cold stabs of pain shot straight between her spread thighs, joining the ebbing ache stinging her buttocks. Her breath came out in shallow pants. Every undulation culminated between her thighs. Cream flowed freely now, slicking her nether lips.

“But you like to play, don’t you?”

She swallowed hard. “As do you.”

He inclined his head, holding her gaze as he snapped the remaining clamp into place, right on the tender hood of her clit. She gasped in surprise, expecting an excruciating jolt of pain that never came. When she glanced down at herself, she realized the remaining clamp was rubber tipped, providing tight constraint and continual stimulation, but no serious discomfort.

As she watched, the warrior buried his face between her parted thighs. His eyes glittered with barely restrained hunger, and when he pressed his lips to her eager sex it was to eat her like a ripe, juicy orange.

His sinuous tongue wasted no time tracing the edges of the clamp, then delving lower to insert the tip into her entrance. Pure erotic sensation engulfed Margot from head to toe. The desperate lust that had her wound tighter than a stretched elastic band burst in an explosion of sensation. Ecstasy streamed through her cunt, causing sharp ripples to thunder through her channel, and before she could utter another cry of disbelief she was coming in furious, endless waves of relief. A flurry of clenches and throbs assaulted her inner walls, fluttering madly. The trembles returned, wracking her body with howling primitive need.

Animal urges roiled through her, and she gave in to howling of her own. Her inner beast bayed its pleasure at the fat red moon. By the time she crashed back to reality, the sounds of her ecstasy bounced off the walls. Still he continued to devour her,

feasting on her swollen flesh. The pressure became too much to bear. She thrashed and held on to his head, muscles spent and aching.

The Synai warrior pulled away, sat back on his heels, and offered a broad grin of unmistakable male pride.

Chapter Five

She was no whore, his little wolf. She was much too innocent beneath the façade of sexual proclivity. Her arousal was real enough, but her bravado quivered every time he touched her. Undressing a man had been foreign to her, as had the tit-and-clit clamp he'd pulled out of the toy cabinet on a whim. And Vito would bet his favorite *lantar* that she'd been a virgin to the whip, too, which only served to drive him out of his mind with pent-up lust for her.

He licked his lips, savoring the musky flavor of her climax on his tongue. He couldn't resist reaching out and placing one more kiss on her flushed nether lips. She gasped at the contact, her fingers coming up to twine themselves in his hair.

"Sex isn't about nipple clamps and dildos, whips and handcuffs," Vito murmured against her swollen flesh.

"I-I know that."

She sounded affronted, and he almost laughed. "For instance," he continued as though she hadn't spoken, "I can make you come with nothing but my tongue. I don't need these gimmicks." He eased the clamp off her clit, then pressed the flat part of his tongue over the little nub.

She cried out as blood rushed back into that sensitive part of her body, and rocked against him. Her arousal intensified. Her scent heightened, spicy and unmistakably feminine. It pricked the membranes of his sensitive nose, claimed his taste buds -- his entire world blurred and narrowed in on her pussy.

"These objects help focus your concentration and intensify your excitement. But you don't need that, do you, little wolf?" Vito reached up and unclipped first one clamp from her nipple, then the other. He watched as the throb of blood darkened her nipples once more, then tossed the chain aside.

Margot made a little mewling sound at the back of her throat. "Why are you doing this?"

"What? This?" His tongue traced a hot path through her slit, stopping at the entrance to her body. "I could do something else, if this doesn't please you."

"Please me?" She sounded like she nearly choked on the words. "Since when does a whore's pleasure mean anything to you?"

Since I realized you aren't one.

He shrugged. "You're right." He picked her up, hauled her over his shoulder, then gently laid her on the bed. "This is about my pleasure. About taking what I want."

Her eyes were huge green orbs, clear and sensuous. He saw a glimmer of fear shimmer to the surface, but it dimmed as quickly as it appeared. Still, it was enough. That flash of true emotion spurred him on. He shucked his jeans quickly, unleashing his erection.

Margot's gaze flicked down the length of his body. She paused at the apex of his thighs and her lips parted. A flash of pink tongue glided across her bottom lip, leaving a trail of moisture in its wake.

A tiny bead of clear fluid pebbled at the tip of Vito's shaft. He felt it slide down the length of his rod and sink into the curls at the base while he searched his discarded jeans for a condom. For long moments, he let her watch him roll it on, and adjust to the size and girth of his dick.

Then he pounced.

In one smooth glide, he covered her body and pressed her down into the bed, urging her legs open with one knee. His shins trapped her ankles.

"I won't be gentle," he cautioned.

She squirmed beneath him, cried out at the scrape of cloth on her tender ass, but didn't try to get away. Instead, she burrowed closer to him, arched her back, then rubbed her sweet pussy over the arch of his pubic bone. His dick swelled and slid against her well-lubricated folds, but remained on the outside of her body... for now.

Margot's mysterious Synai warrior hovered above her, holding her captive between his steely arms. His chest, sleek and tan and sprinkled with dark curls, rippled with muscle in a way that compelled her to reach out and touch. She splayed both hands over his muscular pectorals, and he froze, clearly expecting her to push him away.

His cock nudged her, spreading her labia, making itself at home within her warm folds. He rocked against her slightly, just enough for his cockhead to nudge her clit and send a bolt of lightning into her cunt.

He held his weight on outstretched arms on either side of her head. His thighs nestled between her outspread legs. Without asking for permission, he pushed himself inside her body.

He took. Just like he promised.

A furious wave of heat and pleasure flooded her cunt and flared outward. Every inch of her flesh prickled with excitement. She was being fucked. Seriously fucked, by a man who made every part of her stand up and take notice. He filled her entirely, not just her cunt, but her chest when she breathed. His scent flooded her lungs, his strong arms encased her in hard steel, and his thighs held her down as he drove himself into her, over and over again.

This was nothing like fucking herself with a dildo. She'd expected the sex act to be mechanical and perfunctory to some degree, but there was none of that with this man. He offered only vital sensation, waves and waves of it, heightening her perceptions, lifting her awareness to levels she'd never before experienced.

"Warrior..." She wished she knew his name, but his station was enough for now. It slid from her tongue like honey.

He growled and thrust deeper, harder, faster. His gaze pinned her just as surely as his body, demanding she surrender every part of herself to him for the taking.

Her mouth parted, each breath coming faster now. Prickles of sweat dotted her skin and trickled along the sensitive nape of her neck. She couldn't get enough of this. Of him.

His cock coasted in and out of her throbbing cunt. Each glide threatened to pull his shaft entirely out of her body, and a whimper of protest caught in her throat, only to be replaced by a needy sigh when he seated himself deep inside her again.

But each thrust grew more insistent too. She felt his rod swell, heard his ragged breathing quicken. Then his hand came up, and his fingers closed around her neck. The air she'd just inhaled filled her lungs to bursting, and her eyes widened in anxious unease.

He wouldn't hurt her... not like this.

Claws sprung free from the tips of his fingers, their sharp edges digging into her tender skin. His upper lip curled, baring sharp teeth as his jaw elongated into a muzzle. He was losing control, and there wasn't a damn thing she could do about it.

The scent of his arousal heightened, flooding her senses. Her hips came up to meet him thrust for thrust. His eyes, dark and potent, glowed with an inner fire that startled and scared her.

So this was what her mother had warned her about. Other wolves weren't like them, able to keep a tight rein on their animal nature. Other wolves were like him, primal and feral when gripped in the clutches of relentless lust.

But then again, so was she.

Margot arched her spine until her shoulders and buttocks dug deep into the mattress and her breasts flattened against his chest. The unexpected elongation of her body caused his grip to slip, and she reared her head and growled as her own muzzle extended and her limbs shifted along with the rest of her.

Her transformation spurred his. She felt his muscles bulge, stretch, and lengthen. Smooth skin melted away, replaced by soft fur. In the span of a few seconds, they were no longer two mundane humans fucking like animals, but two animals caught in frantic rut.

The warrior pushed her away, only to grab her around the waist and reposition himself behind her in true doggie-style. His hot shaft impaled her, sliding easily into her slippery sex. He belonged there, throbbing against the aching pulse of her core. His

teeth scraped the fur on her right shoulder, and when they sank into the tender flesh, she howled. But it wasn't the pain that drove her to cry out, it was the swift understanding that with that carnal bite, he'd marked her as his.

She thought briefly of what tomorrow would bring, of the way the mark on her shoulder and the lashes on her ass could interfere with her mission, but then those worries fled as he pounded into her once more.

He offered no pity, no mercy. No emotion except for furious urgency. He made no promises. But he made demands -- oh, so many demands. Demands she was helpless to resist.

The hairs on her body lifted, every one of them standing at attention as tension and excitement set her nerve endings on fire. Her channel gave a sharp spasm, then another, and soon she was quaking with the unstoppable flow of release. Lust bolted through her, followed by the ecstatic glide of more pleasure than she'd ever imagined.

Her cunt pulsed, tightening around her warrior's cock. He growled, a warning sound that made her grind faster against him. She wanted to make him come, to know what it felt like to have such female power over a male who could no longer control his need for her.

She felt his rod pulse, and he gave in with a guttural keening noise that filled the room. She held her breath, not daring to move while he spilled himself. Her pussy spasmed again, tightening and fluttering madly around the hot blasts of pleasure pummeling her channel.

When the shudders stopped wracking them both, he lapped at the spot he'd bitten. His rough tongue slicked her fur, sending renewed shivers of awareness down her spine.

They shifted as one, their agreement unspoken, yet understood. He held her close, his arm around her waist, her buttocks pressed against his pelvic bone. Margot's human skin was drenched with sweat. She hated to pull away from him and break the connection they'd forged, but her legs had cramped and her body ached in too many places to count.

"I..." The words died on her lips. What could she say that wouldn't sound inadequate after what they'd just done?

He seemed to understand, because he let her go, but just long enough to pull his cock out of her folds. The motion severed the connection between them so cleanly, she could almost hear an audible *snap*.

"Oh, shit!" He fell back on the bed, one forearm covering his eyes, chest rising and falling with the force of his deep breaths.

Margot wasted no time crawling to him and laying her cheek on his chest. "What?"

"The condom tore when I shifted."

Her eyelids drifted closed. Dread washed over her, causing her skin to itch all over. She squirmed against him as her throat tightened. Damn it... she knew she was taking a risk, but she hadn't expected it to be so colossal. What if she was pregnant? What if this night -- this man -- ruined everything for her?

She couldn't think about that now. She'd made her own decision, her own mistake. Tomorrow, she'd do her duty. If pregnancy occurred, her husband would never know the pup wasn't his. The timing was simply too close.

Sensual fingers stroked her breasts, her ribcage, her stomach. Then her warrior's touch skimmed over her skin to move up to her neck, where the sweet caresses started all over again in a downward glide. She relaxed into the warm, comforting embrace. If only she could stay like this forever.

"Thank you," he whispered after an eternity of silence. "That was exactly what I needed."

The husky sincerity in his voice startled her. She lifted her head and met his dark gaze. Her heart pounded a feverish rhythm, and just like the last time she tried to say something halfway articulate, she couldn't find the words.

So instead of speaking, Margot bent her head and lovingly traced his lips with her tongue. He responded instantly, slanting his mouth over hers and claiming her with

a soul-searing kiss that threatened to shatter her heart. Her hand went to his shaft, which hardened quickly beneath her touch.

She tossed her leg over his waist and straddled him, then took his bare cock inside her body. That's where it belonged, perfectly embedded inside her as though it was a part of her now. A part she never wanted to be without.

The shock in his eyes pierced her to the core. She smiled and lowered her head to kiss him deeply. Every ounce of restless torment racing through her flowed into that kiss. Her body rocked with the realization that it wasn't just his cock she wanted. It was all of it.

All of him.

Forever.

* * *

Margot lay in the glow of the lamplight, not bothering to pull the comforter up over herself. In the course of their second bout of furious lovemaking, the bed sheets had gotten wrapped around her lover's legs, and the comforter lay beneath him in a tangled heap. She'd wake him if she tugged at it, and she didn't dare risk that. Watching him like this, his brow smoothed into restful sleep, caused a knot to tighten in her chest.

What would it be like to do this every night? To lie beside him and drink him in as he drifted off to dreamland with her scent on him, lips swollen from her kisses, hair mussed from their frantic coupling? Her heart ached with wanting. She'd never know more than this. Tonight was all she had.

In the morning, she'd report for duty. At dusk, she'd wed the ancient Alpha of the Synai tribe. While he plundered her body, she'd think of her warrior. Tomorrow night, and the night after, and the night after that.

Because no matter how much she desperately wanted to be with this man lying so peacefully beside her, she knew an encore of tonight's events could never happen. She'd worked too hard for the position she held within her pack. Her status wasn't something she could sacrifice. Not for any man.

Not even for this one.

Regret swelled inside her, clogging her throat. She'd achieved what she'd been after -- one night with a man of her choosing. One night in which she learned what it meant to be a woman, to have the sexual power to bring a man to climax with the simple, natural allure of her body.

She'd never imagined it wouldn't be enough. As sleep proved even more elusive, she realized that after tonight, it would never be enough.

What this man had done was more dangerous than she'd ever imagined. He'd given her a taste of what she could have, and doomed her to spend the rest of her life craving it in vain.

Stupid little bitch. You should have known better.

The reprimand rang in her head with her mother's voice, but not even that could take away from the pleasure still searing her skin.

She'd made her choice. Now all she had to do was live with it.

Chapter Six

Vito opened his eyes just as the door clicked shut. He bolted out of bed before the fog of the erotic dream he'd been having could clear from his mind, and paid no attention to the bed sheet binding his ankles. Within the span of a fragmented heartbeat, he found himself hurtling, face-first, toward the cheerful-patterned plush carpet.

Streaks of yellow, red, and blue smeared his field of vision, and he barely had time to thrust out his arms to break his fall before landing hard enough to slam his teeth together. Carpet fibers scraped his naked body, making him wince.

The parts of him that didn't sting from the impact throbbed with remembered pleasure. Every inch of him called out for Margot, and he wanted nothing better than to yank her back to his arms. Back to bed.

He frowned. Funny, how holding her had been the first thing he'd thought of, and not slamming his cock into her sweet pussy like he would have expected. This morning, he wanted nothing more than to burrow his nose in her hair and linger until noon, simply holding her.

His unbound hair fell into his eyes, obscuring his view of the room, but he didn't need to see to know she'd left. Margot's scent lingered like a carnal impression, but she was gone.

He had to get her back. The impulse was so strong, he didn't question it. He kicked off the sheet and reached for his jeans simultaneously, then rolled to his feet and dressed in record time. Drawn by the muffled sounds of traffic from the street below, he paused just long enough to skid to the window, where bright slabs of sunshine poured into the room.

Just like the previous night, her curls riveted his attention. A black hackney carriage pulled up to the sidewalk curb where she stood, flagging it down.

Vito heaved the window, swearing when the pane stuck. He finally got it lifted, but it took precious seconds he didn't have. "Margot!"

She didn't look up. He watched, impotently, as she climbed into the back seat of the hackney, her long legs disappearing behind the door she slammed shut.

Vito felt that slam through every fiber of his being. "Fuck!"

He hadn't run that fast since a green dragon chased him through Nottingham Forest when he was a boy. He flung himself down the stairs, taking the steps five at a time. On the main floor, he raced through the empty bar and yanked open the front door, where he came face-to-face with three familiar faces.

"Got away, did she?" the redhead asked, a lopsided grin slanting her full lips.

"Out of my way," Vito growled, stopping himself just short of shoving the fairy godmother aside.

"Aww... now is that any way to treat the women who can help you find the love of your life?"

"The love..." Vito faltered, suddenly at a loss for words. "What?"

"Leave the poor boy alone," the blonde said, looking him up and down. "He's not so good at this relationship stuff."

"Not so," he sputtered, indignation building in his chest. "I'll have you know --"

"Yeah, yeah," the brunette chimed in, "you're a love god, no one's ever complained, you make women drop their panties everywhere you go. We get it. But that's not going to mean a damn thing when it comes to winning over Margot."

"Take me to her," he demanded. "Now."

The blonde snapped her fingers. "As you wish."

A black Lincoln limousine turned the corner at the end of the tree-lined street, then pulled up smoothly, stopping just in front of Vito. The tuxedoed driver stepped out of the front seat, tipped his hat, and pulled open the back door.

Vito sank into the soft leather bench. The driver slammed the door shut, and Vito pressed the button to lower the window just in time to hear the brunette give

instructions to the driver. "Take him to Synai Palace. And hurry. He doesn't have much time."

A vein pulsed in Vito's jaw. In his frantic need to find Margot, he'd forgotten why he'd returned to London. After spending last night in Margot's sweet embrace, after she'd done the impossible and had accepted him in his savage wolf form, well, there was no way in hell he'd marry anyone.

Anyone but her.

But first, he had to figure out why she'd leave his bed to run to Synai Palace. The possibility of blackmail entered his thoughts again, turning them turbulent. Could someone have put her up to sleeping with him last night? If so, why? To gain favor with his father?

He had to find out. For the first time in his life, he knew he wasn't doomed to spend his life alone. He'd found a woman he'd convinced himself couldn't exist -- a woman who not only accepted his fierce nature, but who matched it with a raw savagery of her own.

The fairy godmothers gathered around the back window. "There's no time to waste. Go. Now."

The driver climbed into the front seat once more. Vito tipped his head in silent gratitude as the limo pulled away from Last Call.

* * *

He found her standing outside the wrought iron gates, finger poised above the old-fashioned ringer. She hesitated, and Vito had the distinct impression that she'd been standing like that for a few minutes.

A foreign vibration reverberated through his chest at the sight of her, and he scratched absently at the area just over his heart. Spring draped the trees in bright green leaves and pink flowers. Tiny petals scattered as branches bent under a gust of wind, some landing in Margot's hair. The breeze played with the hem of her skirt, lifting it up her thighs an inch or two with each soft puff.

His pulse sped. He reached for the suspicions inside of him, wanting to hold on to those familiar emotions rather than the new, unsettling feelings that plunged deep into his chest.

This all had to be part of a greater plan. A plan that had her fucking him, then run crying to his father. Other women had tried that tactic before, and it had worked. Why would she be any different?

Great fuck or no, he'd be damned if he let her get away with this.

He pushed the button to lower the window. "Get in."

He didn't even have to shout. Margot spun around at the sound of his voice, one hand darting quickly behind her back. The wind whipped her hair around her face, golden spirals dancing against her tawny skin.

She walked toward him slowly, eyes narrowing as she neared the limo. "You followed me."

There was no point denying it. "You used me."

The laugh that bubbled forth from her lips was hollow and incredulous, but it still managed to make his cock tighten. A wave of desire rocked him when he caught a whiff of her scent, still mixed with his. She hadn't showered -- no doubt fearing to wake him and risk him learning of her plan -- and his sensitive nose picked up the aromas of sex that clung to her.

"You fucked me, remember?" She'd stopped a few steps away from the limo, and now shot a glance over her shoulder at the mansion looming up behind her. "Now please leave. You're making this more difficult than it has to be."

"Ah, yes. You have a master plan to see through to the end, don't you?" He was damn proud of himself for keeping a tight grip on the anger and the lust that threatened to spill forth. He wanted nothing more than to grab her and shove her in the back of the limo before anyone inside saw her, but he held that compulsion in check. The claws that sprung forth from the tips of his fingers to dig into the heels of his fisted hands were the only indication of the turmoil raging inside him.

"I have no idea what you're talking about."

"Bullshit," he said amiably. "Get in the car."

"Look, I don't know what you think is going on here, but whatever it is, you're wrong." Her brows drew together over the bridge of her nose, and her beautiful face crumpled into agony. She slipped her hand out from behind her back, and brought up a yellow envelope gripped tightly in her fist. "I have orders from the Royal Pack of Neveere to seek an audience with Damian Moretti."

Shock careened through Vito, slamming into his heart and setting his pulse to vicious pounding. The envelope she held looked identical to his. But it wasn't possible... was it?

"W-why..." He took a deep breath and tried again. "Why are you here?"

She drew her luscious bottom lip between her teeth. Her eyes filled with tears that turned the green orbs a startling emerald. "I'm not permitted to share that information until Damian Moretti makes it public," she whispered.

Sudden understanding stole his breath. He wasn't the only one to be summoned here by his father. Damian had been after Vito for years to take a mate, threatening that if Vito didn't choose one of his own accord, Damian would do it for him.

Margot... Goddess! Was it possible that Damian had chosen Margot to be his bride? But... Damian had to know that Vito would have never agreed to a marriage of convenience, no matter how gorgeous the bride-to-be.

Yet after being with Margot last night, all that had changed. She was the woman he feared didn't exist. The one who would accept him for who he was, in and out of the bedroom. He recognized the shackles of emotion binding his heart for what they were. He ached to claim her as his mate, to protect and possess her, to... *love* her.

His mouth went dry. He didn't trust his voice to speak, so he pushed open the limo door and beseeched her to get in with nothing more than his gaze.

To his surprise, she didn't argue this time. Whatever she saw in his eyes must have convinced her, because she slid inside and perched on the bench across from him without protest.

Vito slammed the door shut behind her, instructed the driver to cruise around the block, then raised the dark panel to seal them in a cocoon of privacy.

"Why didn't you tell me who you are?" he asked in a quiet voice.

Margot searched his face. She held her breath, expecting a torrent of anger and resentment, but when he only continued to fix her with that unnerving stare, she let out a *whoosh* of oxygen. "Would you have fucked me if I had?"

"No."

Ah. There it was. At least he didn't lie to her.

Margot's chin went up a notch. "That's why I didn't tell you."

"Fine." There was so much emotion in his dark eyes. It flickered like lightning in a violent storm, and she feared it might explode at any moment. "Tell me now. Tell me everything."

"I'm a diplomat for the Royal Pack of Neveere," she said cautiously, unsure what he wanted to hear. "I was born --"

"You're a royal princess."

"Yes."

"You're no whore."

"No," she admitted reluctantly. "Not in the classic sense of the word, anyway. I manipulate and charm men, but not sexually. I should have told you. I let you think..."

When she didn't continue, he leaned forward, slid his index finger beneath her chin and tilted her head up so she was forced to look at him. "I should have known. You're a classy little bitch, you know that? But it should have been clear to me you're no whore."

She flinched at the word "bitch" in a way she'd never recoiled from being called a whore. Because this time, the description fit. She was that... and worse. And yet he hadn't hurled the insult at her with venom in his tone. His voice had been warm, almost... affectionate.

Margot cleared her throat and plunged on. "I was trained from birth to lead the life of a diplomat. I knew what was expected of me from the day I said my first word. I

grew up in a house full of women, who all made it clear that to be a princess in the Royal House meant being pure, pristine, innocent. Those qualities were prized above all else. It was my purity that would one day secure a political marriage that would grow the pack's influence."

"But you didn't fit in, did you?"

She nibbled at her lower lip. If he hadn't kept his grip on her chin, she'd have looked away. As it was, she was forced to stare into those dark eyes as she bared her soul. "No. I realized I was different early on. While my sisters were content to spend their dreamless nights dressed in flannel pajamas, I tore mine off and fingered myself into sweat-drenched oblivion."

"Did you get caught?"

"A few times. I shared a room with three of my sisters, and I wasn't always as quiet as I should have been."

His eyes narrowed. "And what about sex with a man? When did you first get a taste of a real cock?"

She stared at him in surprise. So he didn't know. No... she supposed there was no reason he should. She'd torn her hymen long ago, in a lustful fit of self-pleasure that went further than it ever had before. Even now she could recall the sharp sting of pain, the dull throbbing ache, then the wave of pleasure at the feel of the smooth wooden handle of her hairbrush sinking deep within her body.

"Well?" he prompted when she didn't answer. "Finding a willing cock wouldn't have been a difficult task for a woman as beautiful as you. So? When did you finally give in?"

"Last night," she whispered. "With you."

A tic moved along his cheek, another sign that his emotions waged an agonizing battle inside him. He tried to hide them, but she saw much more than he wanted her to. "Impossible."

Margot shook her head. Her fingers itched to reach out and touch him, but she fisted her hands instead, and placed them in her lap. "It's the truth."

He squeezed her jaw in his large hand, the vice-like grip sending a flash of pain along her cheekbone. His eyes pinned her in place, the black depths staring right into her soul. Then, as abruptly as he'd grabbed her, he released her. The limo came to a screeching halt, hurling her forward. She slammed against his chest and his arms came up around her, though whether to steady her or to push her away, she didn't know.

This would be the last time he held her this way. She leaned into him, breathed in his scent. Desire flared, igniting a swift path to the apex of her thighs. The warmth emanating from his body comforted her. The solid thud of his heartbeat beneath her ear lulled her, for an endless moment, into a fantasy in which he actually wanted her in his arms.

When he grabbed her upper arms and urged her to an upright position, a profound sense of disappointment clogged her throat, threatening to choke her.

His thumbs moved across her flesh, stroking her skin in soft, circular motions. She stilled, her heart hammering a steady rhythm in her chest. For endless moments, she could only hear the blood rushing in her ears.

"You chose me."

Margot glanced up, daring to meet his eyes. She feared what she'd find there -- judgment, accusation, disgust -- but she looked anyway, wanting to memorize every line of his face. "Perhaps you're the one who chose me."

"The fairy godmothers... they gave you to me."

Margot moistened her lips. In the morning, she'd remembered everything that had happened the night before. The fairy godmothers' spell must have worn off with the dawn. They'd protected her from the rowdy crowd, just to hand her over to this man. Why, she didn't know. It really didn't matter.

A sad smile tilted the corners of her mouth. "They gave, warrior, but you took."

His fingers slid into her hair, the gentle caress lulling her into a deeper sense of comfort. Her heart swelled. Perhaps he'd kiss her again. She wanted that more than she'd ever wanted anything before.

“I am Vito Moretti, eldest son of Damian Moretti.” Shock careened through her, yet he gave her no time to digest this bit of information before his silky voice chased the unexpected revelation with another. “And I ask you, here, now, daughter of Royal Pack of Neveere, to be my mate. My bride. My love.”

The yellow envelope slid from her numb fingers. Her hands trembled when she brought them up to cup his face, and tears overflowed to spill down her cheeks. This was one fantasy she’d never let herself imagine. She’d always known that her marriage would be arranged by her mother for political gain. Her husband would never be hers to choose.

“I-I can’t.”

Instead of the anger she’d expected, he smiled and placed a soft kiss on her lips. “Answer me again in an hour.”

Chapter Seven

"Father, I'm getting married."

Damian Moretti perched on the end of a throne fit for a king. His hair, grayer now than Vito remembered, had been tamed into a low tail at the nape of his neck. His eyes were as dark as always, and his brows just as bushy and unruly. But instead of drawing down in disappointment over the bridge of his nose as they'd always done, they now shot up in obvious surprise.

"You're... getting married," he repeated slowly. "And I don't have to drag you to the altar bound and gagged?"

Vito grinned. It did him good to see his old man discombobulated. He made an effort to memorize every inch of his father's face, knowing he might never see him like this again. "Nope."

"Is she fertile?"

Vito remembered the torn condom, and winced. "To the best of my knowledge."

Damian stared him down. "A shifter?"

"A wolf."

"Beautiful?"

A wave of happiness flooded Vito, fluid and hot. "Ravishing... Dad." The word felt foreign on his lips. "So damn perfect it'd break your heart just to look at her."

Damian gave a gruff *harrumph*. "Well? Where is this beautiful bride-to-be of yours?"

"She's waiting outside. There's something about her I need to tell you."

Damian's eyes narrowed. "I knew there had to be something wrong with her. What is it?"

"She's a diplomat. A princess of the Royal Pack of Neveere."

"No shit?" His father gave a laugh, the sputtering sound starting low in his throat and building to a booming guffaw that spread through the meeting chamber, echoing off the high ceiling. He laughed and laughed, until tears streamed down his face and he had to fold his arms around his belly to keep from tumbling off his throne.

While Vito watched, everything he'd suspected clicked into place like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. When his father finally brought himself under control, he wiped the tears running smoothly down his cheeks with the back of his hand, and coughed as he regained his composure.

At last, Damian lifted his hand and made a fetching gesture. "Bring her in."

* * *

The wide double doors swung open, and Margot's mouth went dry. She clutched the envelope to her chest like a shield, little good it would do her. The yellow paper had long ago crumpled into a wrinkled mess, and now it was also damp from her nervous hands.

Still, she walked inside Damian Moretti's throne room with her head held high, spine straight, eyes locked on the Alpha of the Synai tribe. The resemblance to Vito struck her instantly. As she neared, she could tell that Damian's eyes were as dark and soulful as his son's. His face was square and handsome, the lines of age only adding to the authoritative strength he bore like a cloak around his broad shoulders. His long hair, now shot through with strands of gray, must have once been as dark as Vito's.

Margot fought the wave of anxiety coiling in her chest and pushed aside thoughts of Vito. Calling on every bit of training she'd endured over the years, she focused her mind on the task at hand. There would be time for her to wallow in self-pity and depression later.

Damian was handsome in a distinguished way, which was more than she could have hoped for. She'd expected a wrinkled, haggard old man.

"Well, come closer, girl. Let me have a better look at you."

His voice boomed across the massive hall, echoing with a strength and power that lifted the fine hairs at the nape of her neck. The wolf in her wanted to rear up and

growl at the possible threat, but she kept a tight rein on her inner beast and kept walking, only coming to a stop in front of Damian's throne.

She fell to her knees with her chin tucked against her chest like she'd been instructed, and her gaze fixed firmly on the floor. Lifting the envelope on outstretched palms, she handed it to him. As custom dictated, Damian Moretti had to read the demands he and her pack had placed upon her. Her mother had agreed to this marriage years ago, and Margot's acceptance was a moot point. The rest was simply a formality.

The sound of paper tearing ripped through her heart, and a fresh wave of pain threatened to undo every bit of self-control she had. Despite what her mother had hoped for, Margot wasn't nearly as well disciplined as the rest of her pack. She was more like Vito, apt to unleash her inner beast at the most inopportune time.

"Margot LeFevre, you have been tasked with uniting the Synai pack with the Royal Pack of Neveere through the holy sacrament of marriage."

She closed her eyes and waited for the inevitable. The moment she'd dreaded for so long was finally upon her.

"At sundown today, you are to wed --"

"I know." Her shout went against protocol, but she couldn't bear to hear the entire thing. The agony of anticipation had turned excruciating.

"Let me finish." Damian's voice was kind, oddly understanding.

Margot fell quiet.

"As I was saying," Damian continued. "At sundown today, you are to wed my eldest son."

Margot's jaw hung open. Surely she couldn't have heard right. She lifted her gaze from the floor and met Damian's with a beseeching glare.

Damian smiled. "All the preparations have been made. You may refuse, of course, but by doing so you forfeit all ties to your own pack. The marriage is to take place in good faith, between a valued daughter of the Royal Pack of Neveere, and the most treasured warrior of the Synai pack."

Unable to bear the hope and joy that had slammed into her heart, Margot snatched the missive out of Damian's hands. She needed to read it for herself.

Her gaze scanned the paper, recognizing her mother's loopy script. "I'm to marry Vito," she whispered. "Not you."

"Your mother didn't tell you of the change in plans."

It wasn't a question, and Margot felt no need to answer. The truth was painfully obvious to everyone.

She heard footsteps behind her, and didn't have to turn around to know they were Vito's. She felt him nearing, smelled his scent, and fought the urge to shift and claim him as her own -- right there in front of his father and anyone else who cared to watch.

His fingers threaded through her hair. She closed her eyes to keep the tears of happiness at bay, but it was no use. They came anyway, and trickled down her cheeks.

"I ask you again," Vito whispered, kneeling behind her. His breath wafted over her ear, and his arms closed around her middle, pulling her to him. "Will you be my mate?"

"She has no real choice," Damian said, sitting back in his throne. "This marriage has been arranged for the good of both packs. The deed is as good as done. There is nothing left to discuss."

Vito growled, a low, menacing sound that echoed through the throne room with unmistakable ardor. "I will not force her, and neither will you. My mate will choose me. I will not be forced upon her like some rutting beast. I won't have her fearing me, or resenting me when the novelty of my dominant needs wears off. This must be her choice. I must be her choice."

"You are," Margot said, rising to her feet. She turned around, even though by doing so she broke one of the sacred commandments of a diplomat's training. *Never turn your back on the Alpha of a pack. He's likely to kill you, and you'd never see it coming.*

It wasn't that this particular Alpha was to be her father-in-law that put Margot at ease, but rather Vito's presence. She understood, with every fiber of her being, that he'd protect her to his dying breath.

She slid her fingers in his long hair and drew him to her. Vito remained kneeling, but his arms came up around her waist and he burrowed his face in her stomach. He pressed a kiss to the base of her belly through her designer suit. She felt it as though there were no barriers between them.

"I accept your proposal, warrior."

Chapter Eight

The wedding had been a large, boisterous affair. Her entire pack had attended the ceremony, and Margot hadn't been sure whether to be pleased that they cared enough about her to come, or furious at learning that everyone had known the truth of this marriage but her.

She chose to savor the closeness of her pack and use it to unite her family with Vito's. Although the two packs had never been outright enemies, they'd never been friends, either. They were among the most powerful packs in Europe, and each claimed aristocratic lineage that traced back to the first known werewolf.

Her marriage to Vito cemented a formidable alliance, one that would surely cause other packs to take notice. Vito had three other brothers whose bachelor days were numbered. No doubt lesser packs would want to forge their own alliance with the Synai warriors.

But Margot didn't want to think about politics, or the fate of her brothers-in-law tonight. She only wanted her warrior.

Vito stood at the foot of the bed, clad in nothing but the wreath of white flowers she'd placed around his neck during the wedding ceremony. The velvety petals stood out in sharp contrast to his tan skin, covering some of his scars. She homed in on those marks, thinking as she had the first night she saw them that they only made him more beautiful in her eyes.

His cock speared the air, curving slightly toward his chiseled stomach. A drop of fluid had appeared at the tip. It shone brightly in the light spilling from the candles set around the room.

"Does it seem fair to you that I'm naked and you're not?" he asked, one eyebrow quirking upward in mock dismay.

Margot laughed, and slipped the straps of her wedding gown down her shoulders. It was of simple design, meant to allow for a quick shift when the time came for each of the three traditional transformations -- nothing but a silk sheath that clung to her body in all the right places.

Vito closed the distance between them. His eyes darkened, and his fingertips traced the hollow of her collarbone. "I hurt you."

She caught his gaze, knowing he'd found the bite mark he'd placed upon her body the night before. "Yes," she admitted, reaching out for his cock. Her thumb slid down the skin of his shaft. "But I wouldn't have had it any other way."

He shuddered beneath her touch, and she hastened her fist's glide, pausing at the tip to draw her hand back down to the base.

"Mine," he growled between gritted teeth, his gaze firmly fixed on hers.

"Yours," she agreed. "Forever."

They'd spoken the same words during the ceremony, but somehow uttering them in private, with her hand stroking his cock, heightened their impact.

Vito reached out and cupped her breasts. He tweaked a nipple, tugged on it, sending a spasm of pure pleasure down to her cunt. Moisture slicked her folds. His fingers quested between her thighs, parting them. She stood on the tips of her toes, the wall at her back, and closed her eyes in pure bliss.

Vito's long fingers stroked her slit before delving inside her. He dipped his head, grasping a nipple between his teeth. His tongue stroked the pebbled flesh with feverish intensity, sending darts of electrical sensation straight to her cunt.

Margot arched her back. She lifted her legs and propelled herself upward, using the wall at her back to steady her, then crossed her ankles at the base of his spine. Vito chuckled, his lips on her breast sending a flurry of vibrations through her body.

"You're so eager, little wolf. I love that in a woman."

"Just like a professional, huh?" she teased.

He growled a low, menacing warning. "Better. So much better."

She sighed in pleasure and tightened her thighs' grip on his waist. Vito's large hands slid down her body to glide around her buttocks. The marks he'd imprinted on her flesh the night before had all but disappeared, and the pain was now no more than a dull reminder of the sting of his whip.

One thumb found her back entrance and he pressed against it as his cock pressed against her folds. "Bed?"

She gasped and writhed, her clit grazing the tip of his cock. "No. Not tonight."

A wolfish grin etched into the rugged set of his full lips. "Good."

The curls at his groin tickled her belly as he rubbed his shaft back and forth along the slickness of her pussy lips. His cock delved within the soft furrow, the tip pausing at the entrance to her body just long enough to take her to the edge of madness.

"Vito." She hissed a frustrated sigh. "Don't tease."

He chuckled against her throat and grazed the tender skin with his teeth, gently this time. His cock slipped inside her on a smooth glide. She gasped and curved her spine, instinctively clenching around the intrusion. Her body sank down, taking his rod as deep as it would go, until she was seated on the entire length. His balls, firm and tight, grazed her folds.

Margot clung to him, her arms wrapped around his neck, her body tightly folded around his. Then they began to move together, in slow thrusts. She kept her eyes open, not wanting to miss the slightest nuance of his face while they fucked.

Vito stared back, dark eyes blazing with hunger. Sweat beaded on his brow. Beneath the strong bones of his cheeks and jaw, she could make out the faint shimmer of magic; could see the beast within struggling with the lust their joining had awakened.

"Let go," she whispered, hips jerking in time with his thrusts.

He shook his head. "No. Not tonight."

The way he echoed her words back at her startled Margot, until she realized that he wanted tonight to be different. This was about them, about the bond they forged as a mated pair. This was about the love that had begun to blossom, and about the

commitment they made to one another. He wouldn't confuse that with raw animal passion, and neither would she.

But that didn't mean they had to go slow.

Margot grinned, delighting in the way his eyebrow quirked up at the sight. She didn't give him time to question what she had in mind, but hastened her motions, once again using the wall for support. She glided up and down his cock, rocking against him with each thrust. Her legs and ass burned from the effort, but the way he swelled inside her made every bit of discomfort worth it.

Vito clenched his teeth, and his obvious struggle to keep a tight rein on his animal nature, and on his body, thrilled her. She had so much to give him, and she would, one magnificent fuck at a time.

"Don't hold back," she whispered. "Not with me."

He growled then, and his thumb pressed against the rosebud of her anus. It slipped in easily, gliding through some of her own cream that had dripped to slick her back entrance. He stuffed her from both ends, causing a ripple of sensation to start low in her cunt and spread outward.

His mouth captured her scream. She shattered around his tongue, his fingers, and his cock, the pleasure so intense she felt it tearing her apart at the seams. Vito followed quickly, his body jerking against hers, his shaft spasming in intense waves that filled her with his seed.

They hadn't used a condom this time. There was no need.

They collapsed against each other, spent and sweaty. Their tongues remained tangled, sweeping against one another in slow, seductive strokes. Each glide sent a new wave of heat flowing through Margot's cunt.

She smiled against her husband's mouth. She hoped that wherever they were, the fairy godmothers were watching.

Epilogue

"What do you think they're doing right now?" Summer asked, picking up an olive from her martini glass with the tips of her thumb and forefinger.

Sky didn't hesitate. She made a grab for Summer's olive and popped it into her mouth before her sister could react. "Fucking, no doubt."

"Which is what we should be doing," Storm said, eyeing the packed Last Call dance floor.

"Yeah." Summer sighed into her olive-less glass. "How come we never get any time off? Don't you get tired of arranging hookups between people who don't even want to be together?"

Her sisters shrugged, identical shoulders lifting in resignation. "It's not like we have a typical nine to five job. Being a fairy godmother doesn't come with three weeks of vacation time."

"We need to renegotiate our contract," Summer said. "Hell, we need to get a contract."

"Nope." Sky plopped her head on her crossed arms. She could see her reflection in the glossy surface of the bar. She looked zonked, worn out, exhausted. This job was going to be the death of her. "We just need to get laid."

Susan, who'd just finished serving a red-skinned demon with horns the size of Polish sausages, grabbed a stack of drink menus and slid one in front of each of the three sisters. "No time like the present, ladies," she said with a wink. "What'll it be?"

Sky lifted her head and stared at Storm and Summer, excitement rearing up in her chest. Twin blue gazes stared back at her, wide and curious. Neither sister had to say a word. Sky knew they were both thinking the same thing she was.

Did they dare?

Lacey Savage

Award-winning author Lacey Savage loves to write about her dreams -- or more specifically, she loves to breathe life into her steamy fantasies (and she's got plenty!). She pens erotic tales of true love and mythical destiny, peopled with strong alpha heroes and feisty heroines. A hopeless romantic, Lacey loves writing about the intimate, sensual side of relationships. She currently resides in Ottawa, Canada, with her loving husband and their mischievous cat. You can learn more about Lacey by visiting her website at www.laceysavage.com. She loves to hear from readers. Follow her on Twitter @laceysavage or email her directly at lacey.savage@yahoo.com.