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# Sanctuary Moon

## Second Howl

### A Paranormal Anthology



Tainted Blood  
Raven Starr



# *Tainted Blood*

*By*

*Raven Starr*

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Tainted Blood by Raven Starr

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Kali Myer has given up on life. Ever since she was five years old, she constantly changed foster homes, always the misfit, the outcast, the intruder. All she truly wants is to find her family and to a place to belong.

Walking home from a horror movie from her friend Tavia's one night, she's attacked by what she thinks is an ordinary timber wolf and her whole world changes.

With her trusty dark-witch and roommate named Skyla, the women battle forces unknown looking for the werewolf that started it all. They're looking for the one with Tainted Blood....

## Chapter One

The huge full moon hung in the sky as if held by an invisible string. Kali inhaled the night air; the strong scent of pine needles filled her nostrils.

Translucent light from the moon lit her path as she hurried down the rocky trail.

Her feet crunched on the dry leaves littered her way. Twisted visions of the zombie movie floated in her head. As she rounded the bend, a knot of suspicion festered in her gut. As she ventured further in to the darkness of the trees she heard an animal moving in the brush. Growing fear made the tiny hairs on the back of her neck begin to rise. She walked faster trying to get to clearing near the street. Snapping of twigs behind her made her stop short and turn around.

“Is anyone there?” her shrill voice echoed in the crisp night air. The only response heard was the not-so-distant wail of a wolf. Kali sped up her pace, sliding on the small rocks littering the path. Continued howling followed her. Her heart raced. One misplaced step sent her reeling forward. She threw out her hands to break her fall. Rocks and small shards of rough bark cut into the soft skin of her palms.

“Damn it.” She wiped the dust from her face. “Just great, Kali.” She chided herself while spitting out tiny particles of dirt. She pushed herself into a sitting



position. She squinted at her hands trying to see if her hands bled. Her heart pounded. It felt as if something stalked her in the void. Noises from the right made her jerk her head and try to scan the woods. *What's going on? Why would wolves want to chase and scare me? It's not like I've never traveled through this strength of woods before.*

The incessant howling she heard stopped. She sat still to reflect on what had scared her. "No more horror movies at Tavia's new place until I get my car fixed." Kali tried to sound chipper when she stood. She continued down the trail. The same thought crossed her mind. What made her take this trail at night? Why didn't she stick to the main road? As quickly as the thought appeared, Kali dismissed it. There was no turning back now so she swallowed back her fears and continued on.

Determined not to fall again, she placed her feet carefully on the trail, steadying her thoughts as she did so.

An uneasy feeling crept over her as if a giant fuzzy spider crawled against her skin. She stopped, straining her eyes in the darkness. "Hello?" her voice shook uncontrollably.

Her question was answered only by the crunching noise of footsteps over dried leaves. Faster down the trail she fled with the sounds of a howling wolf snapping at her heels. From the corner of her eye she saw the fleeting lights of cars driving too fast down Chesterfield Drive. She headed straight for racing lights. *I'm*

*gonna make it*, she chanted with each stride. As her confidence swelled her fear slipped away. She spied the road only a few yards ahead before her legs were knocked from beneath her.

Kali hit the ground with a sickening thud. It knocked the air from her lungs. Packed earth scratched her brown skin, as the pain in her chest seized her breathing. A large shadow crept from the darkness, its large gold eyes shimmering menacingly in the moonlight. Her eyes widened as the wolf leapt on her, its nauseous breath gagging her as she gasped for air with her aching lungs. Large foamy pools of drool landed on her blue tank top, soaking it through.

Panic-stricken, she inched backwards when the giant gray wolf stepped on her chest. With the weight of the wolf pressing down, she felt sharp rocks dig in her back. From the wild look in the wolf's eyes, Kali knew her shortcut was a costly one for her. With a last burst of energy, she grabbed the front legs of the powerful beast and tried to throw it off-balance. The creature looked stunned but quickly overpowered her, clamping its steel jaws around her throat, sealing her airway. Frenzied, she fought her attacker until the darkness of death overcame her.

Daylight broke the next morning piercing the shroud of darkness surrounding Kali. Her eyes popped open. She arched her back and slowly began to rise, inhaling the fresh air, like an infant gasping for life for the first time. Instantly her hand shot to her throat, feeling the healing puncture wounds. She swallowed a

mixture of dry blood and leaves; felt the tiny swords slicing the pink meat of her esophagus. Kali forced herself to her feet. Tremors rushed through her limbs as if earthquakes erupted in her muscles. She collapsed back on the dirt. She laid her forehead against the cool ground, thankful the sun had not spread its light to warm the earth underneath her.

With both hands on the ground she pushed herself to her knees. Visions of last night floated in the clouds above her. She slanted her dark brows as the memories parted her cloudy mind like the sun on a hot mid-summer day. Again she pushed herself to a standing position, locking her wobbly knees. She stared at traffic pulsating down the busy drive. Without dusting the packed debris from her clothes she staggered from the woods, anger clouding her every step. The blood that had soaked through her shirt, now dry, stained the beautiful blue tank top. Once on her feet and moving, Kali didn't bother to look for cars on Chesterfield Drive. With the increasing rage building in her, the cars should be watching out for her.

Blaring horns mixed with loud curses whizzed past her as she made her way across the road. She walked as if in a daze, searching her memory for every scrape of detail on exactly what happened. She remembered the glowering gold eyes. There was no way in hell she would ever forget those penetrating orbs. Kali stumbled up the back steps of the apartment she shared with her roommate Skyla.

Skyla was a tall, lanky Goth beauty that always wore black, with the earplugs of her booming iPod pumping sounds of the latest punk-rock band. “She’ll love this,” grumbled Kali.

She pushed open the back door. Kali looked at the knob in shock. It usually took sometimes twenty minutes to twist the old-fashioned handle. She shook away the extra thoughts as she closed the door. Summoning her strength she opened her mouth and yelled for her roommate who swore she never left the house before dusk, “SKYLA!” Without waiting for an answer she staggered on. The wounds on her throat began to ache.

“Hey Kali what’s...” Skyla stopped short once Kali turned to face her. “What the hell happened to you?”

Skyla rushed to Kali, wrapping one arm around her shoulder and leading her down the hall. Skyla kicked open the door and helped Kali on the bed. “Should we call the police? What do we do?”

Kali heard Skyla’s worried remarks. “No police.” She forced out the words.

“No cops, why not? Someone attacked you, Kali and you need to get to a hospital.”

Kali waved her hand. “No cops, and definitely no hospital. My wounds are beginning to heal.” Kali sat up, feeling the grunge plastered on her body and she longed for a long, hot shower.

“Where are you going?” Skyla arched her slender brows.

“I need to figure out what happened.” Kali walked to the bathroom, peeling off her ruined clothes as she went. With each layer she shed, to her it was like shedding the skin of the person she was before the attack. From today on she was changed, different. She felt it in her blood. Somehow the wolf changed her, tainted her in some way, and she would make it right.

## Chapter Two

After a long shower, Kali felt renewed. Grabbing her towel and pulling it around herself, she walked back to her room, where Skyla sat with a book and a glass of cold water. A look of relief flushed over the woman's oval face.

"I'm okay, Skyla. Thanks." She gulped the water.

"What happened?"

"I was attacked by a wolf." Kali kept her back to her friend as she began to dress. She heard Skyla gasp at the healed scratches on her right shoulder.

"No shit," Skyla couldn't contain her excitement.

"Yeah, no shit." Kali cast a look over her shoulder, her sarcastic tone hinted to the severity of the situation. "You're into all this crazy supernatural crap, right?"

Skyla's head bounced up and down like a bobble-head.

"Good. Help me figure out what the hell is happening to me so I can make it right again."

"Yeah, I can do that no problem. You know they say one bitten by a wolf will become a wolf. It has something to do with tainted blood or something." Skyla rambled as she searched through the book on her lap.

"Great. I can't find a decent date and now I'm gonna look like Cousin It. That's not gonna happen." Kali shook her head in disbelief.

"Some werewolves are strong-willed enough to control their change, only

transforming half-way.”

“First.” Kali held up one finger. “Don’t say werewolf...”

“But Kali...”

“No,” she cut her off, scared just by hearing those words the realization would become true. “Let’s just not say werewolf; it sounds insane.”

“Okay, but you’re going to have to get used to it because if you don’t find and kill the alpha were-blank, you’re cursed forever.” Skyla flipped through several more pages. “And forever is a very long time in your case. Werewolves don’t age; they’re almost immortal. Anything that totally injures the heart or brain can kill you, silver or not.”

“Oh, so, silver works, huh?”

Skyla didn’t look up from the huge book. “Yeah it really does. The silver must be pure. That dollar store crap won’t do the trick.”

Kali sat by the window ledge staring at the passers-by. She could smell each and of them. Mrs. Brickson had a sweet aroma like chocolate chip cookies while the Kyle McMurphy smelled of sweat and rotten gym socks.

“Kali you really should be listening. What are you going to do?”

“I’m going to kill the son of the bitch that attacked me. He left me for dead and that was his mistake.”

“Kali...” Skyla closed the book

Kali waved the question away. “I know what you’re thinking, Skyla, and it’s what I have to do if I want to get my life back. And even if I didn’t want my old life back, I want a rematch with whoever did this to me.”

“Well even if the thought crossed your mind of embracing your newfound gifts, you’d better listen up.”

Kali knew this woman had her hands in the occult, the smell of the paranormal oozed from the girl’s pores. If anyone could help on her quest it would be Skyla.

“The animal within you will grow and the transformation from you to wolf is painful, but while a wolf you can still retain some of your human characteristics. But you’ll be stronger, you’ll be able to regenerate and now you have a killer instinct along with amazing fighting abilities. Kali, this is a gift and a curse. If you want to gain control over the wolf in you it will take great strength. You might not be able to fight the primal urges you’ll feel and by the look on your face, you’re probably feeling it now.

She felt the heat tinge her cheeks. “Skyla, crazy thoughts are zooming through my head. I’m so angry.”

“Mounting aggression and anger are some of the symptoms of the change.”

“Great, now I’m gonna be a crazy PMS Woman with thick matted fur. Sounds delightful.”



“Honestly, Kali what are you planning?”

“I have to find the alpha male right, that’s what your handy book says to do. Find him and deal with him.”

“And how are you going to do that?”

Kali turned and flashed Skyla a knowing smile. “That’s why I have you my dear. You’re gonna help me. I need you to help me.”

“You’re not gonna eat me, are ya?”

From the tone of Skye’s voice, Kali knew she was being funny but serious all at the same time. “I hope not.”

“It’s funny that this werewolf left you alive, most would rather feast on your flesh than injury you and leave.”

Kali crinkled her brows. “Maybe that’s where we start looking.”

Skyla shrugged. “Where do we start? You’re confusing me.”

“Maybe it’s someone I know. I walk that trail all the time and this never happened. I never felt the way I did last night. This bastard stalked me like prey. He wanted me scared. He was toying with me, Skyla. How can I tell if someone is a werewolf?”

Skyla laughed. “You said it, not me.”

Kali forced a smile but inside she fought the overwhelming feeling to rip open Skye’s slender throat and drink her warm blood.

“Detecting a werewolf isn’t easy. The book says pale skin is a main point in detecting a werewolf. Because they’re creatures of the night, they would sleep during the day. Hairy palms are another way.”

As soon as the words crossed her Skyla’s lips, both women looked at Kali’s hands. “Oh no that’s gross.” Kali grumbled. “Let’s hope that part is myth. What else does it say?” Kali jumped from the window and crossed the floor without making a sound.

Skyla flipped through the pages, her soft brown eyes scanning every word. “Howling at dawn and excessive thirst. Ya know, dogs don’t sweat like humans, they pant.”

“This is getting better and better. I’m an angry, hairy palms chick who’s gonna start panting any moment and chugging gallons of water because I can’t sweat properly. Being a werewolf sucks. People should really read the fine print of this crap first,” Kali scoffed. “Is there any other wonderful parting gifts this creep left me?” Kali gut was full of disdain for the creature that turned her. All she wanted was one shot at destroying him and anyone else that got in her way.

“Yeah there’s one more thing, it’s the mark of the beast, the five pointed star, either of your palm or chest.”

Kali didn’t remember any markings on her chest but she wasn’t really paying close attention, either. She pulled her shirt to reveal five distinct markings

on her chest above her left breast. She gazed out the window. “I think I’m gonna get some rest.”

“Yeah, you do that. After I watch my anime, I’ll chat with my myspace buddies and get you some more lycan information.” Skylar smiled and trotted to the door.

“Thanks, Skylar, for everything.”

“No problem. Honestly this whole thing is wicked cool. My roommate is a werewolf.” Skylar giggled as she closed the door.

Kali slipped under the covers for the first time in twenty hours. The coolness of her cotton sheets wrapped her in a cocoon of warmth and before she could clear her mind, sleep overtook her.

Even in the dark abyss of sleep she couldn’t escape the ravaging memory of her attack, she tossed and turned as she fought him again and again in fits of rage. In her realm dreams, she searched his golden cavernous eyes and found them wanting for power. “I will kill you,” she vowed.

## Chapter Three

As the moon rose in the darkening sky, Kali rose. Her eyes popped open involuntarily. In a smooth fluid motion, she threw back the blankets, turned and put her feet flat on the floor. She walked across the floor as if she had Hermes winged boots on her small feet. Kali shimmered as she neared the window, feeling the moon before she saw.

A shot of energy similar to a lightning bolt rang through her body sending her directly to the floor. Her body trembled uncontrollably. Her ears honed on a buzzing sound that grew louder. Her arms felt as if they were made of granite. Sweat dotted her hot skin. Her t-shirt clung to her skin as she tried to regain control over her limbs.

Kali parted her full lips gasping for air. Searing pain spread from the pit of her stomach and burned like acid in her blood. She clamped her eyes shut as the burning sensation attacked her eyes. Using her pink tongue, she licked her cracked lips. She could hear the crickets outside talking to each other with precise clarity. It sounded like a thousand buzz saws going off in her head. Kali sucked in a breath and then mustered the last little bit of strength. Soft footfalls coming towards her room alerted her to Skyla's impending arrival. It took several

moments before the shivering subsided. Kali moved her fingers, realizing her limbs were under her control once more. Even though sweat poured from her skin, her mouth was dry as if she'd swallowed hot desert sand.

Her energy ebbed and flowed like the calm splashes of the night waves erasing all the memory of the day. Kali summoned her strength and pushed herself up on her wobbly knees. Slowly she crawled to the bathroom as Skylia's hand began to turn the knob.

"Hey, Kali are you awake?" Skylia popped her head in the room and glanced about. "I've watched my Vampire Knight show. Man is that a good anime to watch. You know..." her voice trailed off as she jumped from the true topic at hand. "Kali? Where are you? You're starting to scare me and I don't normally get freaked out easily. Well not until you were bitten by a werewolf." She said the last part in a hushed whisper.

Kali heard the fear in Skylia's voice and somewhere deep inside it thrilled her. She grabbed the porcelain sink and pulled herself up. Immediately she turned on the cold water and put her head underneath the rushing water. The freezing spray shocked her system. She turned her head to the side, opened her mouth and started gulping down the cool liquid. But nothing quenches her unending thirst.

"I'm here, Skylia," she croaked.

"Wow, are you okay? You look like crap."

Tentatively she glared up at Skyla. In the mirror, Kali's normally brown eyes changed to a sky-blue. Skyla gave her a concerned smile and took one step backward.

Kali eyed her as if she were looking at her for the first time. Skyla was very pretty. She'd pulled her midnight black hair into a ponytail that was so tight, it seems like her soft-brown eyes were squinting at you. She added small swirls and designs next to her eyes with appeared to be black eyeliner.

*What skill and steady had she must have to do that*, Kali pondered. She guessed the designs were added for some dramatic effect, as if her black attire, black nails, a belly button piercing and a few tattoos scattered up and down her arms weren't dramatic enough. If she didn't know better, she would swear this young girl was a dark witch. Her eyes burned again. She clamped them shut.

"Did you find out anything else helpful?" Her voice sounded as rough as sandpaper. Kali ducked her head back under the water, trying to drown out the sound of her warm pulsating blood coursing through her veins.

"I found out there are two kinds of werewolf transformation. When you were attacked was it a big beastly or a regular wolf?"

"It was wolf, a beautiful gray and black timber wolf with golden eyes." For someone hell-bent on killing this creature, her voice betrayed her.

"Well then you'll change into whatever bit you, since it wasn't the hairy

palmed freak you were so afraid of becoming.”

“If that’s different, how can I be sure all the other information isn’t true?”

Kali felt her angry levels rising exponentially. She gripped the sink and with little effort stood straight. Her back felt as if her muscles were sewn together. She stretched her arms over her head, loud cracking echoed through the small bathroom. She cracked her neck and let out a long exhalation.

“W-what was the question again?” Skylia stammered.

Her fear stained the air. With her back still turned she said, “Don’t worry, Skylia. I’m not going to bite you. But I have to go out. I need to find whoever did this to me. I don’t know if I can live like this.”

“I’m not afraid,” she lied.

Kali managed a giggle. She stared at herself in the mirror. “I look like a Siberian Husky,” she said. One eye was brown, the other, blue. With her blue eye, Skylia looked different. She saw the heat radiating from her body. “Do I have control over this at all?”

“Slightly, with concentration you can change at will or be able to use certain attributes of the wolf. If you continue to fight it, the change may take longer.”

“Okay. I’m going out.” Kali focused on her brown eye.

Skylia gasped. Kali watched the deep brown pigment fade away like chalk being erased from a board only to be replaced by the penetrating blue.

“There. I can get use to this, I think,” she said, stripped from her clothes and jumped into the shower.

“Well, I’ll see you later.” Skylar’s tone sounded distant.

Kali hurried washing her body, rinsed off and then looked at Skylar with a taunt expression. “I know what you’re thinking and I do have a plan.” Ducking back behind the shower curtain to shut off the running water, she continued, “And my plan has nothing to do with harming you. Plus you might put a spell on me and we can’t have that now, can we?” Kali stepped out of the shower, her body glistening with droplets of water. She grabbed her towel. The fluffy white material slid lovingly across her chocolate skin.

“Did you just ask me if I was a witch of some kind?” Skylar’s voice rang higher.

Kali cleared her throat as she stared at her reflection. Her crystal blue stood out against her dark skin. She marveled at the subtle changes in her skin now flawless skin, turning her head from side to side in amazement. In her twenty-eight years on this planet, she never believed herself to be dominating or bold. But with the tainted blood of the werewolf intermingling with her own blood, she felt on top of her game. The shy little girl had finally morphed into a wild bold woman. A smile tugged at the corners of her mouth as she licked her full lips seductively. With a quick wink at her reflection, she strode past her roommate and headed for



her closet.

“You look better, different but stronger.” Skylar noted as she walked for the door.

“Embrace it; don’t fight it, you said, right?” Kali didn’t wait for an answer. “That’s what I’m doing. I’m embracing it.” She yanked a pair of black jeans out of her closet. Turning, she walked to the dresser, opened the top drawer and pulled out a silky pair of panties. She dropped her towel and began to put them on, followed by her tight jeans. Sitting on the on the bed, she pointed, “Look in the third drawer and toss me that purple tank top.”

“Sure.” Skylar turned too quickly and stumbled into the dresser knocking a bottle of perfume off the top. “Oops, I’ll...” Before Skylar could finish her sentence, Kali had leapt from the bed, arm outstretched. It seems as if she were flying in slow motion. Skylar blinked her wide eyes in amazement as the bottle fall into her grip. “Whoa... Your reflexes are spot on.”

“Yeah, well, it’ll come in handy living with you.” Kali stood up and placed the glass bottle back on the dresser. “You can trip over the dust particles in the air.” She squeezed Skylar’s thin shoulder reassuringly. Quickly, she opened the drawer and pulled out the purple tank top. The soft material grazed her brown nipples making them pucker under her shirt. Without a second thought, she walked back to the closet and threw on a small half jacket.

“You look really nice. So much different from your usual clothing.”

Kali smirked. “Listen.” Her tone became serious. “I’m going out there. I should be able to track him or at else another werewolf, right?”

“Yes but it also means if you can sense or track him, he can do the same to you.”

“I want him to find me.”

“I know you do but just be careful. And know this, wolves run in packs. Just like there is an alpha male, there is his mate, his alpha female. Only Lord knows how strong she must be. If you start tracking them, she very well could kill you.”

Kali saw the watery sheen in the young girl’s eyes. “Don’t worry, I’ll be careful. Don’t wait up, huh?” She caressed her caramel skin. “I’ll be okay. I’ll have my phone on vibrate, so if you get too worried text me, okay?”

“Yeah, yeah, sure.” Skyla turned to walk out, but once she reached the door she whirled around, raced back to Kali and threw her arms around her in a bear hug. Kali couldn’t help to laugh as she returned the hug. Without another word, Skyla walked out of the room and down the hall. Kali smile faded as she heard the door close.

*Now let’s see how good these reflexes really are. Ready or not, here I come.*

## Chapter Four

Instead of using the door, Kali opened her window and jumped down, landing silently. Not bad. She looked up. It was only few feet off the ground. Summer came to an end, taking with it the heat of the day. Crisp sea-salt air blew through her head as she headed down Main Street. Indian Trail County wasn't a mainstream town. With a little more than five thousand residents, her search for a werewolf pack shouldn't take long. Even on a Friday night the streets were bare, the only sounds were two snarling street dogs fighting over Maria Codfish's garbage cans. It amazed her she could smell the rotting fish hiding in the bottom of the barrel. She wiped her nose as if to wipe the scent away. She hastened her pace and took a shortcut through Old Man Nester's yard. He was known in the neighborhood for hating kids trampling on his grass.

Kali remembered her friends daring her to walk on his lush green grass. She always wanted to fit in so this was her chance to show them she was brave. With some coaxing from her friends, she dashed from her hiding spot and began her tiny assault on the grass. Within moments the big red door burst open and out walked Old Man Nester. He was frail looking man, with tiny wisps of snow-white ears sprouting from the sides of his sun freckled head. When he saw Kali dancing on

his grass, his big bug eyes widened.

“You there,” he pointed his croaked, skeleton-like finger at her. “Get off my grass!”

Kali danced around in a circle, pretending she couldn’t hear the old man’s demands.

“I’m gonna get you, you little brat.” The old man yelled as he began to drag out a rusty pail across the long wooden porch.

Kali continued her dance oblivious to what the old man was doing until the first tomato exploded in front of her. When she turned around a big red tomato exploded on her face. The red and gooey seeds dripped down her face onto her brand new white and pink striped shirt. Behind her, the bushes erupted in childish laughter.

“Ha! I got ya!” the old man blurted out. His laughter joined her friends, who stood to get a better look at the disaster she’d created. Her heart sank as she bolted from the yard, eyes burning with tears. The jeers from her friends followed her all the way home. Kali shook away the bad memory and crept across the forbidden grass. She tiptoed around the side of the faded yellow house. The grass grew longer as she reached the back. No more was the grass a beautiful shade of green; it was far from the sweet, soft lawn of her childhood.

Stealthily, she climbed the back steps, trying to avoid the creaking wood.

She stepped carefully as she made her way to the lit window. The garbled high-pitched voices of actors reciting lines for Happy Potato Chips droned on the television set. Kali peered through the window, part of her still wondering if the old man would pop out and try to scare her. Her new eyes pierced the dim light in the room, filtering out everything. With ease she made out the body sitting in the chair. From where she stood she could clearly make out white hair in array just above the back of the chair. *He's still alive? I wonder if he's the werewolf.*

She spotted an oxygen tank and several bodies of pills neatly placed on the table. *Nope, it's not him.* Seeing him in this condition made her change her mind about scaring the hell out of him for throwing tomatoes at her. Old Man Nester didn't know how close he came to having the fright of his life. Kali smiled as she stalked silently off the back porch.

Her mind raced with questions. One by one she thought each one through. The alpha male can't be some old guy reeking of death, so if he wanted to stalk prey on a Friday it was either the cramped bar on Seaside Avenue or the football game down on Parish Road. Figuring it was such a nice night, she headed toward the football game in hopes of running into a werewolf.

A tore, faded poster of a lost cat rippled in the wind as she past by. She heard the crowd as she neared her destination. A strange aroma tainted the air, making her stop. Kali took a deep breath, trying to pinpoint the strange smell, but

no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't place the scent. Her muscles tensed as she scanned the darkness. *Never again will I become someone else's prey. From now on I'm predator.* Repeating that thought over and over in her head, she turned around to head toward the rowdy football field. But instead of taking the direct route, she cut down the alley that bordered Missy's One-Stop Shop on the right and the burnt out toothpaste factory, on the left.

The factory was abandoned for over twenty years. No matter how many fences the city erected, Kali scaled them all, anything to get a peek inside. Most of the kids in her neighborhood were afraid to go in. Being an outsider she found this place welcoming, like her second home. No one knew the ins and outs of this place better than her. Here is where she would turn the tables and start stalking the stalker.

Once under the cover of darkness, she leapt to a hanging metal pole, bent down in the right angle from many teenage boys struggling to show their physical prowess. Kali swung herself up to the second floor landing of the building and waited. In several moments, she could make out the outline of a woman. She waited and watched. The woman sniffed the air. It was obvious to Kali she searched for her. *Well now, not what I expected.* The girl looked like a high school student. She had on a short skirt similar to the cheerleaders of Mighty Knights, but from the distance and lack of light, she couldn't make out the colors.

When the girl glanced up in her direction, Kali swiftly ducked in the shadows. She heard the girl shuffle her feet as she walked down the alley. *Yeah that's right, keep walking.* She pressed her back so hard against the pillar as if they had been carved from the same stone. Only her eyes moved as she followed the teenager. At the end of the alley there was only one place to go and that was left, behind the toothpaste factory, away from prying eyes. With ease, Kali made her way through the maze of fallen plaster, piles of different lengths metal poles, and rotting wooden floorboards. Kali reached down, picked up a pipe about the length of her forearm and kept stalking her prey.

As the girl followed the alley she suddenly realized it opened in the middle of a fenced-in desolate back lot. Kali jumped down and locked the fence behind her.

“Looking for me?” she called out sarcastically from behind.

The girl swung around. Kali could see this was no ordinary cheerleader. Her eyes were glowed as if fire embers burned in her eye-sockets. Kali smiled, shook her head and started walking toward the girl, keeping her hands behind her back.

“Why are you tracking me?”

The girl didn't answer but she kept her eyes glued on Kali. Kali took another step. “Did you do this to me?” gained no answer, just a low growl Kali interrupted as stay the hell away from me. Standing only a few away from the girl, Kali

examined this wolf in cheerleader clothing. The female were looked about five-feet tall, give or take a few inches. Kali, herself only stood a little over five-feet. Her white and green skirt had a split on the right side. Her skin-tight shirt seemed as if it could have been painted on. Her breasts looked as if they were fighting for space.

Kali smiled as the damaged lamppost flickered on. *Right on time.* In the dim lighting, her eyes detected the platinum blonde hair the cheerleader wore was not her natural color. Before she could stop herself, she joked, “Now don’t you think it’s time for a touch-up, sweetie? Your roots are showing.”

In an instant, the girl’s hand flew to the top of head as if trying to shield her brown roots from Kali sight. Anger flushed her cheeks. Without a word, the fake blonde flew at her. Kali took the pipe from behind her back, held it like a Boston Red Sox slugger and swung with all her might. The pipe found its mark with a sickening thud. Warm, rich blood raced down the pipe transforming the dull silver into a gleaming blanket of red.



## Chapter Five

The smell of fresh blood made Kali's stomach growl louder. "First things first," she muttered to herself as she knelt down beside the cowering cheerleader.

In the small pools of blood beside the weeping girl, Kali saw white squares she soon realized were teeth. "You know it didn't have to be this way." Kali cooed, running her bloody fingers through the girl's hair. "You want this though, so I can't apologize for something you asked for. I'm going to ask you a few questions and if you're honest..."

She yanked the girl's head back, making eye contact. "I'll make the end quick and painless." Kali thought about it for a minute, enjoying the rush of emotion flowing and contaminating her with each heartbeat.

Shaking her head, she recanted. "If you tell me the truth I'll make your death semi-painless, since you did try to attack me. I think that's only fair." Kali heard her gulping blood.

She quickly turned her on one side and starting patting her back. "Come on spit it out. I can't have you drowning in your own blood before you answer my questions. That wouldn't be fair now would it?"

The girl spit up the clotting blood from the back of her throat and took a

deep breath.

“Great,” Kali turned the girl on her back and pinned her to the ground.

“What’s your name?”

“Sabrina,” the girl sniffed.

Kali cocked her head as if trying to hear the words clearer. “Don’t start with the water works, Sabrina. Who sent you? Do you know who did this to me?” She didn’t realize with each question she shook Sabrina harder.

When Sabrina opened her mouth, Kali felt eyes upon her. Instinctively, she tightened her grip on Sabrina as she searched the shadows.

“It wasn’t my idea, really! I was just supposed to scare you out of town. Aliyah w-wanted you gone. She sent a few runners to find you.” Sabrina rambled.

“Shut up, stupid girl, someone’s here.” Her eyes glowed as she turned her attention back to the cheerleader. Kali sniffed the air. The scent of a cheap men’s cologne filled the air.

“I-I don’t know who it is,”

Kali shoved Sabrina back on the ground and growled, “You’re useless.” She rose to her feet, and her eyes caught movement in the shadows. They seemed to sway back and forth in some whimsical dance of death. Her shining orbs locked on the figures slowly emerging from the dark.

*Two more?*

Handling the cheerleader had been all about using her head, but with two men she didn't know if she could handle herself. Kali puffed out her chest, showing no fear. Her eyes burned with hatred. Inexplicable anger possessed her as she planted her feet on the ground.

"Coming to save your friend?" Kali growled. Her eyes bounced back and forth on the two men.

"Not at all," one of the men replied. They stopped underneath the flickering light. Both men were extremely handsome. "My name is Kane and this..." he gestured to his right, "is my silent but deadly partner Sebastian."

"Silent, huh. That's great. Who is he supposed to be, Charlie Chaplin?" Her eyebrows slanted over her nose. "What do I care for your names? Did Aliyah send you?"

"You have such a smart mouth for a fledgling. Be careful, my dear, someone may have to shut it for you." Kane's lips parted as he spoke.

The men were completely opposite. Kane the African-American guy on the left stood a foot taller than his Caucasian counterpart Sebastian.

Kane took two steps forward and leaned over to look into Sabrina's eyes. The cheerleader grunted as if struck with a leather whip. Kali knew the information received from the girl at her feet was true. Kane tensed his jaw so tightly that she could see the entire muscle throbbing. Even though his skin

looked flawless, her eyes could make out the small indent lines crinkling on his forehead. “What else did this stupid foundling tell you?” Snarling, Kane advanced one more step. Kali answered his question with stony silence.

In a flash, she watched in awe and horror as his handsome face began to change. His square, cleft chin began to push in as his mouth and nose fused and then started to protrude. His white teeth grew longer and sharper. Kali clenched the pipe she had hidden at her side.

*One more step, hothead, and I'm going to clobber you into next week.*

She sized up her opponent. Kane was built like a football quarterback with unnatural looking board shoulders. His black hair was cropped so close to his round head it made his ears stick out as they became longer. She watched his chest rise and fall as he impatiently waited for an answer. Kane stepped forward. At her feet she heard Sabrina's frantic pleas, but they weren't for Kane or his buddy. She begged Kali to save her.

Sabrina began to claw at Kali's ankle. “Stop it,” Kali warned through clenched teeth, kicking furiously at the girl's hand.

Kane snapped, “Tell me what she told you!” He pointed his croaked index finger at her.

Kali licked her lips. “I don't think so, fuzzball. All the secrets she told me will die with me. But I'll tell ya this...” Kali took one step back, putting more

distance between the wounded girl on the ground and the steady-changing Kane. Oddly, Kali felt drawn to Sebastian, who stared at the ordeal. He had his arms crossed over his chest, his dark-eyes fixed on her.

“You sure are ugly. I mean, come on, brother, did ya have to slow your transformation down like that?” Again she inched back. “Sabrina said you were ugly-looking. That’s probably why Aliyah doesn’t have time for you, always sending you out on phony missions?”

Kali knew she was reaching but the more she talked about Aliyah, the angrier Kane became.

“You don’t know that!” Kane barked and leapt into the air at her.

Thankful for her bonus reflexes, Kali held up the crescent-shaped end of the pipe as Kane’s heavy-body landed on top of her. With his weight bearing down on her, she toppled to the ground, her head bounced off the blacktop. Her white-knuckled grip on the steel pipe did not falter. Kane let out an agony filled scream and pushed himself off of her. Kali grasped for air and rolled away from Kane.

“You dirty bitch!” Kane grabbed the pipe embedded in his chest. “You missed my heart.” He pulled it out, licked his blood from the tip and dropped the weapon. It made a clanging sound like a deformed bell trying to ring.

Already on her feet, Kali replied, “Next time you won’t be so lucky.”

“You think this is over?” Kane sprung to feet, ready for a second assault.

“Ah-ah.” Kali wagged her finger as if scolding a naughty child. “Aliyah wants me alive.” At least she hoped she did.

“I don’t care what she wants. I’ll carve you up and serve you to the queen myself.” Kane snarled, edging closer. Kali’s eyes flickered from Sabrina who managed to rise to her feet, to Sebastian who had never uttered a single word. He just stood quietly behind Kane.

“Can you run?” Kali gave Sabrina a sideways nod to the factory.

“Yeah, I can make it. Why are helping me?”

“Stupid. I don’t know. I haven’t worked that far ahead yet. I’m still on the idea of getting the hell outta here.” Kali whispered.

“Yeah, that’s a good plan.” Sabrina agreed.

“I don’t care if you run or not, I will find you.” Kane inhaled the night air. Kali knew he was memorizing her scent.

*Two can play that game too, big boy.*

Kali took a deep breath. Her eyes locked with Sebastian. There was something wicked hidden in his dark gaze. His upper lip quivered. He shot a look past her shoulder as if daring her to run. Kali turned on her heel and dashed into the black warehouse, Kane hot on her trail.



Sabrina laid still her eyes fixed on Sebastian. “I didn’t say anything,

Sebastian. I really didn't. You must tell Kane..."

Sebastian circled Sabrina. His dark hair was cut in a jagged edge, covering his right eye. His upper lip arched. His hair swayed across his forehead as he shook his head in disbelief. "Why must I tell, Kane anything?" He stopped abruptly to glare at Sabrina.

Shaking, the girl sat up. "Sebastian, please listen. I was tracking her like Aliyah told me. She got away from me then hid." Her trembling fingers touched her swollen face. "Look at what she did to my face."

Sebastian nodded. "How hard is it to track one new she-wolf? For you," he pointed at her. "It must be very hard. I understand. You were once a new wolf yourself. She outsmarted you tonight, Sabrina. The pack can't suffer weakness."

With lightening speed, Sebastian moved around Sabrina. He held her head with a swift twist, broke her neck. Sabrina's lifeless body crumpled to the ground. Sebastian wiped his hands, as if dusting cracker crumbs from them. Casually, he stepped over the corpse. He adjusted his blazer. Kane's gruff howl made him turn and dash into the dark factory.



Kali hustled out of her thin jacket. She rubbed it all over the walls, hoping to throw him off her trail. Frantically, she wiped her jacket on the crumbing concrete walls when her foot plunged through several rotten planks of wood. *Damn it.* She

didn't see Sabrina ran in after her. There was no way she was going to yell and give out her position to Kane. She heard his growls as he thrashed around a few rooms away from her.

She stopped to listen for Kane's movement. She heard him pushed through the broken door. She winced as she yanked out her foot. Warm blood seeped through scratches. Splinters clung to her skin and sock like an attached lover. Kali dropped her jacket on the middle of the rotten wood and limped on the other side.

Kane burst through the door. He foamed at the mouth.

"Wow, you really don't make a sexy werewolf. I would've thought you'd look better. I guess I was wrong." Kali goaded him.

"Bitch!" Kane bared his teeth. Kane leapt toward her. She knew the rotting floorboards could not hold Kane's massive weight. As his foot hit the wood it crumpled sending him falling in to a pile of exposed boards with rusty silver nails throughout. Kane howled in pain. Kali inched forward. Carefully, she peered down at him. His leg was bent in an odd angle. She saw the white bone protruding through his flesh. Four by fours clung to skin in a weird array of blocks. She heard the sizzle as the rusty silver penetrated his skin.

She arched an eyebrow. "Now that's sizzling." With a smirk she backed away. Her eyes widen when her back hit a solid object. Afraid to turn around she placed her right hand behind. Her fingers fondled a hard entity.



“That’s definitely not the wall.” A soft baritone whispered in her ear.

“Oh!” Kali swirled around and came face to face with Sebastian. A gust of wind blew through the broken windows, exposing the glimmer in his eyes.

“You don’t have to stop.” He grabbed her wrist.

“Sebastian!” Kane yelled from below.

Sebastian released her then walked past her. He looked over the edge. “Tsk, tsk.” He turned his head to face her. But she was gone.

Sebastian smiled. He dashed from the room to catch up with her.

Sebastian stood defiantly in front of her. “Do you think I should let you go? Our orders are clear when it comes to you. You’ve bested two of the pack.” He stepped closer. “I have to say you’re very cunning.”

She took a step back. “Well, you’ve either got a stupid pack of wanna-be’s or I’m pretty smart. I’d choose the latter, honestly.”

“Sebastian, where are you!” Kane’s rough voice echoed.

Kali jerked her head to the room. “It sounds like your friend might be hurting pretty bad in there. Now you have a choice. We can fight here and your friend can rot or,” she rubbed her chin, “you can let me go.”

“I would choose the latter as well.” He so close to her, his next words caressed her earlobe. “You better get out of here. Your scent will attract the others.”

Kali drew back. She stared into his one visible eye. She turned and darted from the factory.

## Chapter Six

Sebastian made his way to the ground floor to help Kane.

“She tricked you good,” Sebastian joked, yanking a small board from his shoulder.

Kane grunted. “The next time I see her, I won’t be so easily duped.”

“You’re lucky these nails are not longer or newer.” Sebastian pulled out a bent, rusty nail. “It could have been worse for you. Your ego is hurt, but if she had known better it could’ve been your life.” Sebastian tossed down the bloody nail. He walked to the exit.

“What of the traitor, Sabrina? Do you believe she told the she-wolf Aliyah’s plans?” Kane jogged to catch up. From Kane’s labored breath, Sebastian knew his friend came very close to death. The smell of sweaty despair still hung in the air.

“It’s not for certain but it doesn’t matter. She has been taken care of.”

“It’s a shame. I wanted to dispose of her myself. With her gone it would leave an extra spot open for another female in the pack.” Despite Kane’s enormous size, he wasn’t the smartest apple in the bunch. His brute strength was extraordinary.

“Exactly.” Sebastian couldn’t help but smile as he led the way back to the

pack to tell Aliyah what had occurred.

Even though Indian Trail County was small, it had rough spots as well as fancy up-town mansions. Sebastian walked the back path toward Collins Manor. A big Tudor set off in the backgrounds of the county. The house was so big it bordered on the Billings Worth County, the town right next door. Both small towns would often fuss over which town the magnificent house truly resided in.

Sebastian loved the way the bright, white paint glowed in the moonlight, almost like a beacon calling him home. The dark markings and shingles offset the white, making it look eerie in the distance. Kane leaned heavily on his shoulder. Sebastian didn't buckle under the weight.

"Were almost there, old friend, then you can rest up," Sebastian said. As they approached the large archway, the door burst open and several members of the pack rushed to help their fallen friend. With Kane under the care of the others, Sebastian fixed his blazer again and waited. Once Kane's injuries were assessed, he knew Aliyah would seek him out. What would he tell her about Sabrina? He had the she-wolf but he opted to let her go? Why? Before he could answer the questions, Aliyah's sweet scent wafted to his nose.

"What happened out there tonight, Sebastian?" Aliyah's voice crept from the darkness.

He replied, "Sabrina failed. She told the newcomer secrets but she was

killed before I could find out what.”

“Killed? By the new one?”

Sebastian nodded.

“Do you know who went out of ranks and changed this girl?”

“I don’t know, but I will found out who it is,” Sebastian promised.

Aliyah sauntered to Sebastian. She caressed his face. “You have always been so faithful to the pack, Bastian.”

He closed his eyes. “I’m always here to serve.”

“Good.” Aliyah kissed the right side of his lips. “I may have some tasks for you.”

Sebastian opened his eyes. Aliyah was beautiful with bronze skin and flowing brown hair. Her family always ruled the wolves of Indian Trail. It was rumored the Martin family were the first werewolves in Indian Trail. The curse started with them. Aliyah, Kane, and himself had been born a werewolf. They held higher ranking in the pack.

After a family rift Christopher, the eldest brother broke away from the pack. He started biting and transforming innocent folk around town. The battle for territory began. With no regard for who was bitten, the true blood of the werewolf was running thin. Sebastian was loyal to the pack. He relished being a werewolf and vowed to save it, anyway he can.

Aliyah loved running the pack.

“What happened to the she-wolf?” She slid behind him. She ran her fingers through his hair.

Sebastian growled. He ducked out of her reach. He fixed his hair, before he answered. “She got away when I went to help Kane.”

“That clumsy oaf,” Aliyah whined.

Sebastian scratched the back of neck and didn’t answer. She had bit and transformed that big oaf, so the fault truly lay on her bossy shoulders.

“I’ll find her for you, my queen.” Sebastian bowed his head. Not in reverence for her stature but because he grew weary looking at her.

“Do that, sweet Bastian. Bring her to me. I will reward you greatly.”

Sebastian nodded in agreement. He turned then took off into the shadows.

## Chapter Seven

Kali limped home. The adrenaline was replaced with exhaustion. With each stride, tiny pieces of fabric dried in her cuts around her ankle causing her pain. Relief washed over her as she turned the knob and walked in.

“You didn’t kill him, yanno.” A familiar voice called from the still open door behind her.

Kali stood straight up. Her flesh tingled. Her eyes darted around the kitchen, searching for a weapon.

“If I wanted you dead, you would be. You should never turn your back on your enemy.” The icy tone of his voice made her turn around.

“Are you my enemy?” she spat.

Sebastian shrugged. “That’s up to you.”

She furrowed her brow. “What do you want? I’m very grateful you let me go but...”

Sebastian stepped inside the kitchen, closing the door behind him. The start of a sinister smile tugged at the corners of his mouth.

“I’m glad you’re grateful because I need you to do me a favor. After that we’re even.” He arched his thin eyebrows. “Come,” he gripped her forearm. “Which

room is yours?”

Kali jerked out of his steely grip. “Why?”

“Because you to lie down and plus we need a private place to talk.” He cautiously sniffed the air and headed toward her door. He gently turned the knob. “Shall we?”

With a loud exhalation Kali replied, “Why the hell not.” Sebastian pushed open the door wider as she limped past him. She sat on her bed to remove her sneaker and sock without pushing any more splinters of wood in her bare flesh. Sebastian closed the door.

“What happened to the cheerleader?” Kali started the conversation to take her mind off of the pain of removing her splinter filled sock.

“Well, after you injured her and Kane, he was furious. He didn’t trust Sabrina so he broke her neck.” He waited for a moment.

Her skin prickled. Kali removed her sock. Trying to show no emotion and started pulling out the visible wood splinters.

“That’s a shame but I would have killed her too so he saved me the trouble.” Kali didn’t look up ridding her skin from the tiny painful needles. “He’s real protective of Aliyah, huh? Just like an alpha male should.” Kali snuck in mentioning the alpha-male in hopes Sebastian would bit. He leapt for her when he did.



“Wolves mate for life. Aliyah is the queen and whoever she chooses as her mate is rightful ruler of the pack.”

“Yeah, I heard that somewhere on National Geographic,” she wiggled her toes.

“This is no game you’re playing. Kane is not dead. You’ve injured and scared him but you did not kill him. He will hunt you down every night until he finds you. He will kill any living person connected to you. So you better pay close attention. Do you know who made you?”

This question made Kali look up in dismay. “Made me?”

“You know, do you know who bit you?”

“No and if I did, I would kill the fucker.”

“Such hostility from such a pretty girl.” Sebastian smiled. “Why do you hate so? I saw you tonight. You loved every minute of that confrontation with Kane. Probably with Sabrina, too, even though I didn’t see it. I would have loved to watch you then too, by the way.” He winked.

Kali looked away. He was right. She did enjoy thinking quick on feet, feeling the rush of power flowing through her veins.

Sebastian folded his arms. “Could you have done everything you did tonight without the essence of the wolf?”

“No,” she admitted in a meek voice.

“Then why hate? Why be thankful for the gift. Just use it wisely; don’t let it use you.”

“Ooh, wise words.”

“Very wise. Tell me your name.” Sebastian went to sit on the window ledge.

“Kali.”

“Well, Kali, I think I can help you but I want you to help me too.”

Kali figured it had to be a double-edged sword in the deal. He let her go for a reason. To use her for something he couldn’t do himself.

“You want the alpha-male, that’s easy. It’s Kane, kill him and everything ends for you. No power, no confidence, nothing...” he shook his head. “You’ll be totally defenseless when Aliyah comes looking for revenge. And believe me she will come looking for you. Even though I bet she is planning to have to you killed before the week is out.”

“And you have a plan, I take it?”

Sebastian’s eyes shone. “Of course, I do. You must take out the queen before you take out Kane. Without her, the pack will fall. Kane will be easy-pickings. You threw him off balance tonight. With his lover gone he’ll be easier to manipulate.”

Kali mulled the idea. It sounded like a plausible plan. Take out the queen and then Kane. “You want me to kill the queen? How does this help you?”

Sebastian flashed a smile. “Because then we will get to pick a new queen.

Aliyah's reign has come and gone. It's time for a change. You kill Aliyah. I'll help you kill Kane in return. Then we're even. Deal?" he held out his hand.

"Deal." Kali thrust her hand into his. They shook hands. Sebastian squeezed her hand again then pulled his hand away.

"The wound on your ankle has already healed."

Kali looked down. The pain had stopped. She held her leg out a bit, twisting her foot back and forth, admiring the fresh, unscathed skin. "Remarkable."

"Yeah, the perks for being a werewolf don't suck," Sebastian said, walking to the door. "Get some rest. You're going to need it. You have to take Aliyah out before the third day of the full moon."

Kali waved him away. "Yeah, yeah." She scooted back on her bed, no longer able to fight the lull of sleep. "When is the third night of full moon, anyway?" She yawned.

"Tomorrow," Sebastian answered closing the door softly behind him.

The thought didn't register right away but as Sebastian's last word echoed louder in her head. She bolted upright.

"What the hell do you mean tomorrow?" It was too late; Sebastian had long gone. Her room was dark and empty.

"Who are you yelling at?" Skyla's groggy voice came from behind her door. "The really hot guy already left." Skyla poked her head in. "What happened last

night?”

“Left? Where the hell did he go? What time is it?”

Skye shuffled in. She pulled back Kali’s light-filtering curtains. The sunlight streamed in. “It’s ten after ten in the morning. Now what happened last night?”

Skyla asked again, sitting on the edge of Kali’s bed.

Kali ran her fingers through her hair as she sat up.

Skyla gave her a concerned smile and a reassuring pat on the leg.

“I tried to find the alpha-male so I thought the only thing happening in this town was the football game. I headed there but I sensed I was being followed. You know the old toothpaste factory?”

Skyla nodded. “Who was following you?”

“Believe it or not, it was a cheerleader.”

Skyla tumbled back on the bed in a fit of giggles muttering something about save the cheerleader and save the world. Kali smiled and for the first time wished she could exchange lives with the young woman. She was such a carefree spirit. Kali didn’t want to ask her about the spells or type of magick she had. Kali figured if she lived through the day and night, it would be topic for tomorrow.

Once Skye calmed herself, Kali continued.

“Long story short I ran into two other wolves. The cheerleader told me that the queen Aliyah wanted me gone. I don’t know why though. When I was

interrogating her, two other wolves appeared. One being the one you saw. His name is Sebastian, and the other was Kane, the alpha male. He's huge, built like a brick shithouse." Kali's mouth quirked. She barely got away with her life last night. Goose pimples dotted her skin. Kali swung her legs over the side of the bed. She put her feet on the cold floor. Her stomach muscles clenched. Worry lines creased her face.

"What's wrong?" Skylia leaned forward. Her brown eyes filled with fret.

"I have to fight the queen tonight and win."

"Why?"

"Sebastian let me go last night. He could have killed me if he wanted too. He had numerous chances. He said he'll help me kill Kane if I knock off the queen first. "

"That doesn't sound fair, Kali."

Kali shook her head. "There's nothing else to do. Sebastian was right. I do like the power I feel now. If I kill Kane, everything will go back to being the same boring old me."

"Do you miss your life before this?" Skylia asked.

"None of that matters. I hurt Kane badly last night and no matter what happens, I have to kill him before he kills me. He's strong though, Skylia. I don't even know how to control my transformation yet. When it started last night I

almost blacked out. What the hell am I going to do now?" Kali refused to let the tears stinging her eyes fall. She dropped her head.

"Do you remember when you asked if I was a witch?"

Kali couldn't speak; fear gripped her words. She slowly nodded so Skylia could continue. "Well you were right."

Kali perked her head up. "I knew it," she croaked.

"I dabble a bit."

Kali sensed a lie but said nothing. "Really? That's great but what can a novice do?"

A flicker of anger at the word 'novice' waved in Skylia's eyes, like a banner flickering in the wind.

"I didn't say I was a novice, Kali," Skylia said in a stern tone. "But maybe I could cast a triple strength spell."

*Triple the strength, now that sounds handy. Maybe having a witch on my side isn't such a bad thing after all.* "Can you do that?"

"I can try. I need to gather some ingredients and supplies but I'm pretty sure I can cast the spell. Once cast it won't last long, but it'll help you."

Kali pulled the girl in to her arms and held her tightly. "Thank you so much for helping me, Skylia. I think we make a helluva good team." She let go of her friend and smiled.

“Yeah, the witch and the she-were...” Skyla bit her tongue before continuing.

“The witch and the she-wolf. How about that?” The two women gave each other a high-five followed by a friendly hug.

“I better get started. Try to hold out for as long as possible. I can’t cast the spell until the sun goes down.”

Kali stood up. “Okay. I’ll go after Aliyah first and save Kane for last.”

Skyla nodded then left the room. Kali felt as if she had the upper-hand. Good or bad, Skyla was going to use her powers to help. The knowledge made Kali feel refreshed. She jumped off the bed and headed to the bathroom. If she was going to kill Aliyah, she first had to find Sebastian.

## Chapter Eight

Fresh out of the shower, Kali donned her favorite pair of ripped jeans and bold blue shirt.

*If this is my last day on earth, at least I'll go out in style.*

A strange smell drifted through the cracked bedroom door. Kali went to the door and pulled it open. Skye had her back to her while stirring a boiling pot on the stove.

"What ya got?" Kali asked.

"You'll have to ingest this tea before you go out. It's the beginning of the spell. Once darkness falls, I'll cast a circle, call the corners and say the spell. After that, it's all up to you." Skyla poured the brew in a cup and handed it to Kali.

"What's in it?" Kali sniffed the vapors.

"Bark from the oak tree."

"Great, bottoms up." Kali raised the teacup to her lips and gulped the hot, bitter brew. The liquid settled her roiling stomach. "I'd better go."

"Be careful."

"I will. If I win, I'll see ya back here tonight, if not..." Kali couldn't finish the rest.



“You’ll be back. I have faith in you.” The two women hugged again. Kali pulled away and walked out of the door.

The town looked different in the light of day. People bustled up and down the sidewalk, nodding and chatting cheerfully.

*If only they knew how graphic the nightlife is here. I bet they would lock their doors and never come out again.*

Kali headed back to the factory. Kane’s scent was imprinted on her senses so finding him would be no problem. But finding Aliyah would be. Arriving to the factory faster than she expected, she headed directly to the back lot. Dry red stains on the ground indicated where the fight with Sabrina took place. She knelt down and touched the spot.

“Doing your homework?” Sebastian asked from behind her.

She craned her neck to see him. “You’re really good about sneaking up on me, Sebastian.”

“From your reaction, I suspect you were waiting for me.” Sebastian leaned his shoulder against the lamppost and looked at her. “I thought you were resting.”

Kali rose. “How can anyone rest when today I have to kill or be killed? It kinda takes the joy out of sleeping, if ya know what I mean.”

“So?” Sebastian shrugged.

“So, I need you to help me find Aliyah. And how do I know the rest of the pack won’t kill me after I win?”

Sebastian pushed off the pole. “If you challenge her, she will accept. The pack follows the rules of a challenge; they will not interfere. I will make sure Kane will not be around, but we need to move now.”

Kali nodded as she followed Sebastian through the long blades of grass to her destiny.

As they walked up to the Tudor, Kali didn’t marvel at its beauty. She strode stone-face behind Sebastian; with each step she swallowed her fears. Sebastian led her through a row of hedges with a curved wooden door in the middle. They stopped and Kali leaned back slightly to gauge the length of the hedge line.

Sebastian gripped the iron handle and pulled on the door. At first the huge giant didn’t budge. Kali snickered. Sebastian shot her a hot glare then yanked the door open. It groaned on its hinges. He stood inside the doorway and snorted as she passed.

Kali stopped. “Was the door was heavy?”

Sebastian growled and pushed her forward. She giggled. “Aw, do you feel all emasculated now?”

Sebastian didn’t answer. He kept his eyes forward.

Kali looked around. In the distance, she heard the faint echo of voices. Kali realized they must be in the back of the big house. In the distance it looked like alive, swaying in the breeze to a devilish beat.

For the first time tonight, she had second thoughts. At the end of the flat green grass it slope down. On the left was huge rock formation. It resembled a wolf with its mouth open, teeth bared. A shiver ran down her spine. Before she could ask, Sebastian stepped out in to a large arena.

Kali stepped on the packed earth floor; instantly her heart stopped. Straight ahead high on the balcony stood a stunning woman, her long brown hair blowing in the wind. Her eyes pierced Kali's soul.

"What do you bring us, Sebastian?" the beautiful woman asked.

Kali couldn't help but to glance around at the faces of the pack. No Kane. That was good news. Happiness for that stroke of luck spread through her, replacing her fear. The magical tea Skye made for her tingled in her belly. She cast a look over her shoulder at the setting sun.

*Damn time really does fly when your life depends on it.*

Sebastian bowed. "This is the one you seek. The one who killed Sabrina."

Kali glared at him.

"She wanted to ask something of you, my queen."

Kali turned her gaze to the queen. She cleared her throat and spoke loud enough for all to hear. "I challenge you, Aliyah. You've sent amateurs to kill me, yet here I stand." Kali opened her arms wide as if she were ready for an embrace.

"So come, do the job yourself. Come fight me." Kali thumped her chest proudly.

Kali didn't see Sebastian slither away but when she glanced around, he was gone. For his lies, she would make him suffer.

"You challenge me?" Aliyah laughed robustly, followed shortly by the rest of the pack's laughter.

"Did I say something amusing or are you laughing because you're afraid? I look around and all I see is a pack of idiots following a power-hungry lunatic."

The laughter stopped. Aliyah clenched her fists.

The Queen boomed, "Who are you to speak to me in such a fashion?"

"I'm the one you're scared to fight." Adrenaline coursed through her veins. Kali channeled the power of the wolf within her.

"You think I'm frightened?" Aliyah growled, exposing her extending canines.

"If you're not, stop talking and come and fight."

Aliyah pushed a blonde-hair guy to the side and leapt off the balcony into the arena. Kali lifted up her arms and caught the flying queen before they both fell back on the hard, packed earth.

The jolt knocked the wind out of Kali, but she summoned more strength and threw Aliyah across the arena. Kali rolled to her side for a brief moment to catch a breath. Her eyes locked with deadly intent on Aliyah.

Both women bounded to their feet and ran towards each other. They collided in a crash of claws and teeth. Kali grunted as Aliyah's sharp teeth clamped down on her left forearm. Kali balled her fist and punched Aliyah as hard as she could in the jaw. Aliyah wailed, released Kali's arm and staggered back.

"You vile..." Aliyah spat.

Kali swiftly silenced Aliyah by punching her again. Aliyah's sharp teeth penetrate the flesh around her knuckle. Blood poured from the wound.

Aliyah fell back, her hands covering her bloody mouth as she spat teeth into her palms. Kali shook the blood from her arm as the rising moonlight sent shivers up her spine.

*Oh no, not now.*

Her eyes burned as her vision changed.

"Ha-ha!" Aliyah pointed. "You are still enticed by the moon. I'll show what it's like to be beaten by a true wolf." Aliyah smiled a jagged smile, and then advanced swiftly toward Kali, her body changing as she ran.

When Aliyah reached Kali, she was no longer human, but a vicious, gray and white wolf. As Kali stared into its carnivorous eyes, she saw her own death.

“No!” Kali yelled. She held the open jaws of the wild animal away from her face. With a swift knee to its furry side, Kali rolled away from the snarling beast. She tasted blood and the urge to change increased. She surrendered to it. Aliyah ran to attack again, but this time her snout was met by Kali’s snow-white teeth.

The wolf howled and wiggled to get a way from the large midnight-black wolf with piercing sky-blue eyes. The black wolf stood stiff-legged. Its ears erect, fur bristling as she advanced toward the two-toned wolf that crouched as if to attack.

In a flurry the wolves fought, growling and biting each other. A loud wail rang through the arena, followed by dead silence. The black wolf stood on the back of the gray, holding the gray’s throat strongly in its jaws. It clamped down, a loud snap echoed through the night. Shouts echoed around the arena as Kali changed back into her human form. Naked and soaked in sweat, Kali reached for her tattered shirt and quickly put it on.

“The queen is dead!” someone shouted from the crowd.

“No!” roared Kane, jumping in to the ring and pushing Kali off of Aliyah.

*Why is Kane here? Sebastian was suppose to make sure he would be gone.*

“I should have killed you the first night.” Kane glared at her.

“I’ll rectify my mistake.” Kane pounced on Kali and wrapped his big hands around her throat. He picked her up; her legs kicked wildly in the air. “You sicken me.” Kane tossed Kali like a rag doll across the arena.



Skyla walked into the back yard, clad in all black. She held her arms up in the air and began to chant:

“Spirits of night, hear me. Spirits of dark, do as I command. Strength and power I do bestow on Kali’s sweet and innocent soul. In the light of the moon’s rays, let her have the strength and courage to stay. Place in her now the spark to fight. Let her enemies fall by her sheer might.”

Over and over she chanted. The thunder rolled in the distance as if the heavens were answering her demands. Blue lightening streaked across the sky, striking the earth as big raindrop pelted down the clouds.



Kane pressed his foot on the middle of Kali’s back, pushing her down in the dirt. Her whole body was racked with pain. She timed the Kane’s next stump perfectly. She rolled onto her back and grabbed his enormous foot. Kane staggered off-balance. Kali pushed him and scooted back.

Her lungs burned with every breath. She glanced up at the faces but didn't see Sebastian. Kali struggled to her feet. A wave of raw power shot up from her feet, quickly dispersing throughout her body. Her muscles twitched. Skylar's spell was working. Power surged through her, making her feel stronger than she ever did before.

*It won't last long,* Skylar's voice reminded her.

Kali shot in to action. She rushed at Kane, surprising him with a combination of right and left punches to his ribcage. Each punch made a hollow, cracking sound as she broke his ribs.

Kane's hands tried to clamp down on the side of her head, but she caught both his wrists over her head, ducked down and with a twist, threw Kane over her head and into the side of the rocky cell.

Kali rushed to him, grabbing his legs. She spun him around, gaining momentum with each spin. Faster and faster they spun like some strange spinning top. At the height of the spin, Kali let him go. Kane's airborne body soared like a misguided Frisbee, flying high then landing hard on the sharp pointy rocks, impaling him. She knelt, waiting to feel the power coursing through her veins leave, but to her surprise the power never subsided.

"You did well, Kali," Sebastian called down to her.



Bewildered, she looked up. “I killed Aliyah and Kane.” She cast her head over her shoulder to stare at Kane’s broken and bloody body.

“Yes, you did.” Sebastian’s voice was void of emotion.

“I don’t feel any different. I killed the alpha male, but...”

A robust yet sinister voice erupted from the bowels of his gut. “Well, you did kill Kane and for that I’m grateful, but you didn’t kill the alpha male, Kali.” Sebastian smiled wickedly as all the members of the pack stood behind him.

They leered down at her. Suddenly, she realized what was happening. She cast one more look at the bloody Kane and then at Sebastian. Sebastian had played her the entire time.

“I am the alpha male, Kali.” Sebastian laughed.

Anger began to build inside of her. “Why did you have me kill Kane and Aliyah?”

Sebastian folded his arms over his chest. “I told you Aliyah’s time had come and Kane? He was beginning to get under my skin.” He used his chin to point at her. “You just did me a favor, and now were even.”

Kali wiped her mouth with the back of her hand and glared at him. *Not by a long shot are we even. I’ll get you back for this, Sebastian.*

Without a word, Kali bolted for the rock wall. Using Kane’s dead limbs, she scaled the rocky enclave and disappeared in the night.

## Chapter Nine

Kali opened the door to her apartment; she slammed it so hard that the hinges broke. Skyla ran into the kitchen with a charm around her slender throat and metal baseball bat in her hand.

“What the hell, Kali, you scared the hell out of me.”

Kali angrily paced the floor. “It was a ruse! Everything was a trick. I’m not back to normal and I know now I’ll never be again.”

Skyla lowered the bat and edged closer. “Slow down. You’re covered in blood and you’re hurt.” She reached to touch Kali’s swollen lip, but Kali swatted it away.

“I don’t care about that. Sebastian tricked me. He made me kill Aliyah. As for killing Kane I did take pleasure in that one, but he wasn’t the alpha-male.”

Skyla caught on. “If Kane wasn’t the alpha-male, then who is it?”

Kali locked eyes with Skyla. “Sebastian. He’s the alpha-male. He’s the one that did this to me.”

Skyla sucked in a breath.

“I’m going to make him pay for what he did,” Kali growled.

“Well wait, did the spell work?” Skyla asked.

Kali stopped for a minute. She'd forgotten all about the spell. "I think so. I spun Kane around and threw him about fifty feet in the air, impaling him on some jagged rocks."

Finally, she stopped pacing and recapped the fight. "I did feel stronger, almost invincible."

Skyla's smile widened.

"But now I know about Sebastian. It truly makes him a threat. What can we do to keep the wolves at bay without killing me in the process?" Kali walked over to the sink to clean her wounds, her eyes flickered outside looking for glowing orbs in the darkness.

"I've already cast a protection spell around the borders of the house. Since you live here I used your karmic essence to make you immune."

"Karmic essence?" She cast her head over her shoulder, eyes narrowing.

"I'm still not sure if you can control the wolf-side of you. If you would've failed in defeating Kane, I thought they'd come back here and kill me." Skyla shrugged. "I had to protect myself."

Kali nodded in agreement. "Very smart, Skyla, very smart indeed. Well, I didn't die crossing your protection barrier because of my essence. Let's hope if we have company, it'll work on them."

"Yeah, you're pretty lucky. Your head was supposed to explode." Skyla

giggled.

Kali laughed, but it didn't relieve the tension she felt.

"So what do we do now?" Skyla asked, clearing her throat.

"I don't know." Kali answered whispered. "I just don't know. Without their queen, maybe the females will fight amongst themselves to be Sebastian's top-bitch. The fighting could buy us sometime to truly think of a better plan." Kali stretched out her sore arms.

"Sounds good, Kali but you should try to sleep. Your wounds are already healing. Maybe in the morning things will look brighter."

Kali scoffed as she made her way to her room.

How could she sleep after what she'd just experienced? Sebastian was the wolf-bastard who started this whole ordeal. He conned and manipulated her into killing. The blood of the Aliyah and Kane stained her hands.

She walked into her bedroom and flopped on the bed. Her mind kept going back to Sebastian. His charming smile, chiseled features and alluring dark eyes haunted her. A disgruntled breath escaped her lips as she pushed Sebastian's handsome from her mind. She clamped her eyes shut and forced herself to dream.

The next morning she awoke with a ravenous hunger. Her eyes popped open as she threw the blanket back and stood. Skyla was right about her wounds healing while she slept. She stretched her muscles, opened the door and journeyed

to the kitchen to quell the ache in belly.

Kali hastily made herself a turkey sandwich and sat at the kitchen table to stare outside. Her dreams were filled with ululating howls and Sebastian's sinister laughter. Anger filled her heart like water filling up a withered balloon. Her eyes stared out the window aimlessly, half expecting to see Sebastian's handsome face leering at her.

A gust of wind blew colorful fallen leaves across the lawn, her eyes following them until she got a whiff of something familiar. Kali slowly put her sandwich on the table and rose. The tiny hairs on the back of her neck stood on end. She inched silently out of the kitchen and through the front door, whatever was outside she wanted to catch it off-guard.

She made her way around the side of the brick apartment building. For the first time since her run-in with Sebastian, happiness for boost in senses filled her. She stood statue-like as her target came into view. Even though the female had her back turned, Kali knew exactly who it was. *Sabrina, the half-wit cheerleader.*

With a surprised burst of speed, Kali ran toward Sabrina and tackled her, they both rolled around in the backyard, volleying for the upper hand.

No matter how frantic Sabrina fought, she was no match for Kali, who straddled Sabrina and began slamming her head against the hard dirt.

Blinded by fury Kali slapped Sabrina ---when she realized the person she

attacked wasn't Sabrina.

"Who the hell are you?"

The girl struggled to wrench her arms free. "My name is Crystal. I'm not here to fight you. I saw what you did last night."

Kali's eyes narrowed. "Where's Sabrina? Why do you look like her?"

"Sabrina was my sister. She made me after Sebastian made her. She thought it would be a good way to keep us together. I can explain, but I can't breathe."

"Why are you here? Did Sebastian send you to spy on me?" Kali growled.

Crystal dug her nails into Kali's wrists. "He doesn't know I'm here," she croaked.

Kali slowed her assault on the she-wolf's skull, but kept her hands firm around Sabrina's throat.

"Tell me why you're here or I swear I'll kill you here and now." Kali growled her face inches from Sabrina's.

"Sebastian tricked you..." Crystal choked.

"Tell me something I don't know!" Kali gave Crystal's head another slam on the ground. "I'm tired of you, Crystal, speak now or die here."

Crystal swallowed. Kali felt the lump slide beneath her grip. "The other she-wolves are all volleying for his top choice but since you've defeated Aliyah and Kane, the other fears he may choose you."

The statement slapped so Kali hard, she loosened her grip and sat back reeling. "Choose me as his mate? Why?"

Crystal sat up slowly, her hand clutching her bruised throat.

Kali rose, hovering over the wounded she-wolf. "You've got five minutes."

Crystal stood and tried to dust off her rainbow outfit. Kali shook her head in disgust.

"It's the type of attitude and fearlessness you possess, it draws him to you. It's what makes him want to choose you in the first place. I heard Sebastian talking to his newly appointed beta male Jake Watson about his interest in you. He says you would make the perfect queen."

"I don't want to be his friggin queen," Kali snarled. "I want his head on a bloody pike. I'm gonna kill that lying bastard." She spun around. "Telling me this doesn't explain why you're here."

"I'm here because you tried to save my sister. I followed her, saw you try to save her, then I watched as Sebastian broke her neck. I'm trying to return the favor." Crystal said through an exaggerated breath.

"You're trying to save me? From whom?" Kali turned her icy glare towards Crystal.

"From the other she wolves. They consider you to be a threat. The full moon's past. You are now one of us, whether you like it or not. Kali, you are a part

of the pack. If Sebastian chooses you, and another she-wolf challenges you, then you will have to fight to death. The winner will be crowned queen.”

“And...” Kali replied annoyed.

“You do not understand me, Kali. I saw you fighting Aliyah and Kane. Even though your strength was amazing, you were obviously spent. Imagine going up against every other she-wolf in the pack? They are determined to track you down and make sure you can’t be chosen by Sebastian.”

Kali’s head spun. Sebastian had her wrapped up in his crazy life. Now her own life depended on the abilities she fought so hard to suppress. She exhaled a breath and a low growl escaped her lips.

“So you’re here to warn me right?” Kali took a step toward Crystal a menacing look on her face.

“Yes, I am...” Crystal held her hands out as if to repel Kali’s advances.

“This might be a trick, something to lure me out in the open...” Kali couldn’t finish the sentence as the realization toppled on her like a ton of bricks. If it was a trap, she’d walked right into it. Kali’s eyes darted around every bush and tree.

Her eyes flashed to Crystal. “If this is a trap, I’ll kill you where you stand.”

“It’s not. If the others knew I was here to warn you, they’d kill me too. I’m taking a risk here, don’t you get it?” Crystal said hotly.

“Fine, you warned me. Thank you.” Kali stalked past Sabrina.



“But wait what about me?” Crystal called out.

Kali stopped short but kept her back to her.

“What about you?” she called out over her shoulder. “Go back and listen. When you find out the plan is, return here. If Sebastian makes a move on me I want to know beforehand, got it?” she demanded.

“Yes, my queen.” In a blink of an eye, Kali spun around. Her hand resumed its position around Sabrina’s throat. “Never call me that again, do you understand?”

Crystal nodded hastily, her head bobbed up and down like a bobble-head doll.

Kali released her grip. “Go get out of my sight so I can think.” Without another word, Kali stormed back in the house, her thoughts consumed about the many new dangers in her life.

## Chapter Ten

The rest of the morning was a blur. When Skyla dragged herself from the depths of her dark dungeon, Kali recapped every detail, especially the part she where would have to fight a pack pissed off she-wolves.

Skyla sat on the counter swinging her caramel-colored legs back and forth. “My only suggestion would be to let me teach you.”

Kali furrowed her eyebrows as she stared up from yet another streaming cup of double mocha coffee. “Teach me what?” She tried to curb the venom in her voice, but thoughts of Sebastian fueled her anger.

“Teach you magic, silly, what else did you have in mind?” Skyla jumped from the counter and sat at the table with her friend. “I’m pretty powerful, but if I could teach you, you’d be one magical she-wolf.”

Kali took another mocha sip. “Didn’t you say that a powerful magical being could remove this curse?”

“Yes, I believe I did, but if I could, I wouldn’t.” Kali gasped but Skyla ignored her. “I wouldn’t because you’re going to need the power and strength that comes with being a creature of the night. If we found someone to remove it, tomorrow you’d surely be dead.”

Skyla paused and let the thought sink in.

“You’re right. They would kill me for sure. Sebastian knew what he was doing when he chose me.”

“Yes, he did. He probably stalked you for a very long time to get to know you and the route you took from Tavia’s house.”

The mention of her best friend’s name jolted her. “Oh my God! If he followed me, then Tavia could be in trouble. I need to tell her. Her life could be in danger.” Kali stood up so fast she almost knocked her cup on the floor.

“Whoa, whoa, whoa, Kali, sit down. Tavia’s life will be in danger either way. Think before you react. Let me teach you what I know about magic. Together we might not be able to cure you but maybe, only maybe, we could alter the way you transform.”

A picture of herself as a huge, drooling, hairy wolf made her sick to her stomach. Another image replaced the first. This time it was the picture of a stunning timber wolf with gold eyes.

*I’m haunted by him.*

With some thought, Kali agreed to let Skyla teach her some of her magical talents, which made her young roommate ecstatic.

Over the next several weeks, Skyla practically had Kali on virtual house arrest. Skyla didn’t bother remembering Kali never dabbled in magic of any kind.

She tested, trained and retested Kali's memory of herbs, potions and spells.

Surprisingly, Kali had no trouble passing each and every test. She wished her high-school years had been so productive. Skye was a brilliant teacher, stern but informative. She didn't tell Kali how or who started her on the witchy-path but Kali was surely glad someone had.

Kali sat at the kitchen table flipping the pages of yet another book ordered by Skyla to read. Since Crystal's warning, no other female wolf approached, but better to be safe than sorry, Kali thought as she skimmed the pages.

"What's the difference between a were-wolf and a wendigo?" Kali said a little too loudly.

"Oh, you don't have to shout, ya know," Skyla said jiggling her ear.

"Sorry, but what's this? Is this what I'm going to look like?"

Skyla peered over Kali's shoulder to read the page. After a minute or two she stood again and replied, "Nope, you're not a jilted lover. A wendigo starts out as a mortal that goes all revengey and crap. You, on the other hand, were bitten by a wolf; two totally different circumstances."

"It seems weird though doesn't it?" Kali closed the book.

"What seems weird?" Skyla pulled out a chair.

"Crystal, Sabrina's sister, came here over a month ago spouting off about these she-wolves coming to get me and nothing's happened. Doesn't that strike

you as weird?”

Skyla rubbed her chin before she spoke. “No, it’s not weird. She placed a hint of fear in your mind; you’ve done nothing but consider everything she said. It’s not weird, it’s strategy.”

For being younger, Skyla had an old soul. Kali nodded in agreement. “You’re right, but I smelled fear on her. It saturated her entire being. I saved her from Kane and Sebastian. If I did become the new queen, I would need a beta-female whom I could trust.”

“Are you thinking of being queen?”

The statement shocked Kali back to reality, which instantly shook the vile thought from her head. “No, no, I’m not but it would give some clarity on Sabrina’s true mission. If she wanted the other she-wolves to hurt, they would have come already.”

Skyla crossed her slender legs.

“I have to ask you something, Skyla.”

“About my powers right?”

Kali smiled. “Yeah about your powers. Where did they come from?”

“Honestly, you haven’t seen my ability? I’ve only shown you my witch side, not my elemental side.”

Kali leaned her back against the chair, her mouth slightly ajar.

Skyla's smile widened. "Yeah, my mother was an elemental and she fell in love with a warlock named Marcel. I remember my mother telling me he was sent to destroy her because she could channel all the elementals of the earth. That made her dangerous. But my father didn't kill her; they fell in love and had me." Skye rose then walked to the counter.

Her story made a lot of sense. Since they met and had agreed to move into this apartment, Kali knew fate brought them together. Now she knew why. Sebastian changed her life and her destiny and whole new world opened itself to her, gobbling her in it. "So what happened to them?"

Skyla's smile faded. "They died, fighting to save the one thing each of them could not live without: each other."

Kali's heart instantly broke. "I'm so sorry, Skyla."

Skyla walked back to her friend, pulled out another chair and sat. "It's okay. I know they love me and are always watching out for me. Before my mother died she told me I had an older sister but I never had enough information to search for her." Skyla shrugged.

Kali sensed her longing and changed the subject. "You said your mother was an elemental. What can you do?"

Skyla's child-like smile appeared. "I can command the earth around me to do anything I wish."

Kali scowled.

“Wanna see?” Skyla tugged her sleeve.

“I sure do.”

The two women walked outside. Kali sat on the bottom step as Skyla walked a few paces ahead.

Skyla made a semi-circle motion with her right hand and a clump of dirt broke free from the ground in front of her.

“Holy shit!” Kali jumped up in amazement. Skyla giggled as Kali stood next to her.

Skyla made the same gesture with her left hand and another clump of dirt broke free and hovered in the air.

Kali walked around the two hovering masses of dirt, inspecting them as if to find marionette strings.

Skyla clapped her hands and the two masses collided with a loud thump, sending a shower of debris all over Kali.

Kali clapped joyously. “That’s f’ing wicked, Skyla!”

Skyla rubbed her palms together and flashed a smile. “You really think so?”

“I do. I have a feeling that power of yours will come in handy.” Kali lead her roommate back to the duplex apartment, her mind reeling at what she’d experienced.

## Chapter Eleven

The next day Skyla tutored Kali in the art of spell-casting but at night Kali felt the magnetic pull of the werewolf inside her. No longer able to hide in the apartment and half afraid of leaving Skyla alone, Kali perched herself on the rooftop decoding every scent on the night air. Each night, she fought the urge to rip off her clothes and let the animal living in her soul run free. She bit her bottom lip as a very familiar scent caught her attention. Slowly Kali stood, her eyes landed on a shrouded figure across the street. She didn't need to see his face. From his scent and his arrogant stance she knew exactly who it was.

*Sebastian.*

For several moments the two of them locked eyes. Kali couldn't tear her eyes away from his burning gold orbs. He beckoned her to follow him, but she held strong.

Gusts of cold wind blew loose tendrils of dark hair around her face. Kali didn't look at the magical border that surrounded the small apartment building. She watched as Sebastian stepped from the darkness and stood under a flickering lamppost. Even in the dark she felt his roving eyes stripping off her clothes to take a peek at her bare flesh. Reluctantly, she somersaulted off the peaked rooftop and



leaned in the middle of the yard, inches from the border and under the moon's spotlight.

Sebastian walked over to her. "You fascinate me, Kali. From the first time I tasted your blood, I knew you would be the one."

"The one to kill you?" Kali hissed.

"Oh, sweet Kali. You can feel the bond we share. Stop denying it. You want me as much as I crave to taste you again." Sebastian reached out as if to stroke her skin but stopped just before his hand breached the barrier. "You will come to me, Kali, one way or another. Stop resisting me. I can fill your mind with knowledge and tempt your body in exquisite pleasures of the flesh. Ask anything of me and I will grant it to you."

Images of Sebastian caressing her skin materialized like rising vapors from a steamy shower, his feathery-light kisses sent tiny shockwaves of euphoria throughout her body. Kali shook her head, dissipating the steamy pictures.

"Stop clouding my thoughts, Sebastian." Kali said. "This is your doing and as long as I have breath in my lungs, I will fight you."

Sebastian laughed. "You might not have long, my dear. It's all I can do to hold back Zora and the other she-wolves. They want your blood and are damned determined to get it." He winked. "Only I can make them stop. Let me claim you as my mate and all your problems will fade." Sebastian leaned forward, his long nose

sniffing the barrier between them. “What is this?”

Kali stepped back. “Why don’t you come over here and find out,” she taunted.

Sebastian chuckled again. “You really want me dead?” He stepped forward as if he were about to cross the line.

Unable to stop herself, Kali lunged at Sebastian, pushing him away from the barrier and away from harm.

“Some werewolf protection. Your lips say one thing but your actions are clear, Kali.”

Kali reeled from what she had done. Why did she save him? Deep inside she wanted this nightmare to be over yet the feelings running through her made her feel. . .

Complete.

“You and I are connected. Why do you think saved me just now, huh?”

Kali stumbled backwards in disbelief. She wanted him dead, dead for everything he had done or manipulated her in to doing.

“What was your life before me, Kali? Think about it. You lived a lonely, bleak existence. So lost within your own darkness you never saw me or the sister I hid in plain view.” Sebastian paused briefly letting his words soak deep into her unconsciousness. “I gave you purpose, power and life. I can feel you calling out at

night, your body begging for what for only I can supply. Let's stop this petty game before someone gets hurt." His eyes flicked back to the duplex.

Kali locked her wobbly knees and glared at Sebastian. "Whatever you think you've given me, I owe it now. The power and purpose you gave me is vengeance. I won't let you hurt anyone I care about."

"You don't want to kill me, Kali."

"What I've learned so far is wolves are pack-runners. You threaten one in the pack, it's like threatening them all. Never threaten my family, Sebastian, it really pisses me off."

"Calm down, my love," Sebastian said firmly.

Kali closed her eyes and mumbled words to the wind. As she chanted the wind picked up speed and with one strong gust blew Sebastian across the street, slamming his back into a telephone pole. It cracked loudly. Sebastian hopped up and fixed his collar, annoyed.

"That's some parlor trick you've earned, Kali. You want to play?" Sebastian paused; his tongue snaked from his thin lips and then repeated again before he spoke. "Then we'll play. Let's see how you'll react when the she-wolves sink their claws into you."

Sebastian vanished into the darkness, his insidious laughter lingered in the night air. Kali waited for several minutes, half expecting the bitches to spring from

the darkness and attack her. As she walked back to her apartment, she wondered how she summoned the wind like that. Skylar never taught her a spell like that.

With the mention of her name, Kali remembered Sebastian's threat.

A sister, Kali remembered Sebastian's words. Could Skylar be her long lost sister?

## Chapter Twelve

Kali couldn't wait until Skylia awoke the next morning. Kali grew up in foster care and never had the privilege of knowing either of her parents. Maybe, just maybe, Skylia had answers she'd searched for.

When she heard Skylia emerge from her room, Kali had to control her emotions. Skylia jumped as she turned the corner. "Why do you look like crap?" She walked to the coffee pot and started to brew the dark liquid.

"What do you remember about your parents?" Kali blurted out.

Skylia poured a mug, then shrugged. "I don't know, Kali. I told you. Why do you ask?"

Kali blew out a breath. "Sebastian was here last night."

This news sparked Skylia's interest. "Did ya kick his ass?"

"Unfortunately, no, I didn't. I did somehow summon the wind. A huge gust of wind blew straight across the street. You should have seen the look on his face." Kali looked at Skylia who had a perplexed look plastered on her heart-shaped face.

"I never taught you that."

"I know. Believe me, shocked the hell outta me too. But last night he hinted we. . ."

Kali stopped. Pondering the right words to say, she could hurt Skyla. That's not something she wanted to do.

"What is it? What did wolf-boy say to make you look like you've taken a walk on the freak side of town?"

Kali swallowed the dry lump clogging her throat. "He said we might be sisters."

The color drained from Skyla's face. Her fingers relaxed their grip on her mug. Kali caught the mug without spilling its contents. She set the coffee on the table. "I don't know if he's right or if he said it to throw me, but it worked."

Kali stood and paced. "I don't know anything about my parents. I grew up in foster care, shuffling from one home to the next always seeking to fill the whole left by never knowing my family. Maybe it's why I'm so hard all the time." Kali shook her head in disbelief.

"It would explain our connection and even the reason behind you summoning the wind last night."

"I've thought about that. You said your mother was an elemental with the ability to control water, and your father was a warlock. No great wind-conjurer there either."

"But your blood isn't pure, it's tainted. Maybe Sebastian messed up your genetics or something."

Kali turned to Skyla. She saw the glimmer of hope in the young girl's eyes and refrained from asking Skyla if her reasoning was plausible. She smiled. "Maybe you're right. It would explain our connection and. . ."

"And you're a natural at spell-casting. I remember one day my mother was crying and my father went to comfort her. I was very quiet so I followed him. As I stood by the door, I heard her muffled sobs about missing her child. I thought it was strange because I had only been in the other room. My father held her and told her that they had done right by her, that they'd saved her life. I remember now, he saved her life."

Skyla walked to Kali and held her hands in her own. "What if you really are my sister? You must have a power of your own."

Kali put up both hands as if to push her back. "Whoa, whoa, let's slow down, okay? Sebastian also said he stopped Zora and the other she-bitches from tearing me apart, too. Let's worry about killing them before they kill us."

"Who the hell is Zora?"

Kali shrugged, her heart aching to hear a possible memory from her mother. "One of the she-cronies, I suppose. Nonetheless she and her batch of fuzzy females will try to rip muscle and sinew from me. I'm kinda partial to keeping my body intact, thank you."

Skyla smiled. "I'll get ready to kick some were-tail."

When Skylia left the room, Kali sighed. Her lungs ached. Why did this have to happen now? If Skylia was her sister, she would do everything in her power to protect her, but something inside wanted to protect Sebastian as well. When the time comes she'll be able to make a decision to save a life and not lose one.

Kali rubbed her chin as she stared out the window. She counted each car as they drove down the small street and she inspected each face of the human milling around. There was no way she could let the fight begin here. The loss of human life would be astronomical. Kali needed to move the fight to a place where Skylia could use her powers without fear, a place secluded but somewhere she knew the terrain. . .

"The cabin," she whispered hauntingly.

"What cabin?" Skylia jumped in.

Kali turned around. "I would run away from my foster family and go hide at this cabin in the woods. I loved it there. No one knows the lay of the land better than me. We could set booby-traps there and wait."

Skylia nodded and slung her black bag over one shoulder. "We won't have long to wait, there's a full moon in three days."

"We better get a move on then; we have much to do and scarce time."

After setting a were-trapping spell on the apartment, the two women jumped into Kali's Jeep Cherokee and headed toward the cabin. The usually long



and tedious trek flew by as Skylia rambled on with story after story of their would be parents. Kali kept one ear focused on the chatter and the other on the task.

“Once we get there and I stash the car, you’re going to need a way back after this is over.”

Skylia turned her. “What you just said sounded like you’re not coming back with me.”

Kali could hear and feel the emotion straining the young girl’s voice. “I meant we’re going to need a way back. I’m trying to make sure we both live through this, that’s all.” Kali flashed her a convincing smile.

Skylia nodded and then looked out the window. The air in the jeep thickened with tension. “What’s your plan?” Skylia’s voice lacked its usual bouncy tone.

“We’re here.” Kali shut off the engine and faced Skylia. “Listen to me. I don’t know if we’re sisters or not and the more I think about, I wouldn’t want it any other way.”

Kali held Skylia’s hands. “I’ve never really had a family before so you’re the only one. I can’t fight Zora and the others if I’m worried about you.”

“I’m not leaving!” Skylia snatched her hands back and got out of the jeep, slamming the door behind her.

Through a taut exhalation, Kali slide from the driver’s seat and joined Skylia

outside the jeep. “Look,” she pleaded. “I know you’re strong. I’ve seen your power, but. . .”

Skyla spun around, her midnight hair flowing wildly around her. “I’ve always sat back and watched other people. I’ve turned my heart ice-cold, vowing never to let anyone else close to me again. And now you say my dream might be true, that I’m not alone in the world. I’ve wanted a sister my whole life and now she wants me to turn and run? I won’t do it, Kali. I’m staying.”

Kali felt the ground beneath her tremble. “Okay, okay. You can’t say I didn’t try. This isn’t a game; these wolves will try to kill us so we can’t hold back. We’ve got to kill them before they kill us. No prisoners.”

“What’s the plan?”

“This is my territory. Zora and her pack won’t know what hit them. We’ll set traps around the cabin. We have to make sure they can’t sneak up on us.” Kali walked toward the cabin.

Skyla seemed enthralled by Kali’s plan.

Kali ran her weary fingers through her thick hair. “We want to make them come at us head-on. With your abilities, you can open the earth and swallow them whole. I used to live with a military family once, so I know how to make invisible traps.”

“Sounds good.” Skyla dropped her bag on the front steps. “Show me what

you want to do.”

Glad for the help and support, the sisters went about cutting tree limbs and digging trenches. They worked from dusk till dawn, afraid to stop, afraid to sleep, knowing with each passing day their lives could end.

## Chapter Thirteen

On the third day neither woman could sit. They took turns pacing, worrying and fidgeting. “The waiting is killer,” Skyla exclaimed.

Kali gave her a stern look.

“Wrong choice of words.” Skyla giggled nervously.

“Yeah, well, by tonight you won’t be saying that. Let’s go over the plan again.”

Skyla sucked her teeth. “You’re really starting to act like a sister. I told you I got it.”

Kali cast her head over her shoulder, “Then humor me and let’s go over it again. The plan has to run smooth or one or both of us won’t leave this cabin alive.”

“Yeah, that statement was full of positive reinforcement,” Skyla chided.

“When the sun goes down, you’ll start scouting the perimeter and I’ll stay here and keep my eyes open.”

“Yes. . . but Zora will send her pack to surround the cabin. Some of them will fall into the traps and perish. Zora will stay behind to watch, sending her pawns to fish out the territory.”

“How do you know this?”

“It’s what I would do. Hopefully I can find Zora, kill her and end this quickly. Let’s not hold our breath for that just yet, okay?”

Skyla’s eyes were fixed on Kali, burning into the fabric of her soul.

“What? Why are staring at me like that? Kali said, annoyed.

“Your eyes, they’ve changed, you’re starting to look more like a wolf with each passing day.”

Kali stalked across the room and stared at her reflection, her normal brown eyes were gone, replaced with glowing honey-colored orbs. She whirled around. “Good, maybe when this is over I can charm a decent with these stunners.”

She joked, trying to lighten the mood.

Her eyes flashed back to the window as the rays from the setting sun filled the room with a delicate plum light. “It’s almost time.” She faced Skyla again. “If I can’t find Zora and take her out, I’ll come back here so we can take her together. Without her cronies, she’ll be uneasy. If you need me, scream and I’ll come running.”

“I know, Kali.”

Kali grabbed Skyla’s thin shoulders. “No, you don’t. This is for real. You can’t die out here, do you understand? You use everything you have; you survive. If by some chance I don’t make it, do what I told you and get the hell outta here.”

Skyla opened her mouth to protest.

“Stop! You always want to have the last word. Just do what I say, okay?”

“Yeah, I know.”

For a moment, Kali just held Skye at arms length and then swiftly pulled her in closer for a tight, loving hug. “Everything’s going to be all right little sister,” Kali whispered in her ear and fled through the back door.



The noises of the night and the air cooled Kali's flaming hot skin. She knew Zora and her friends were close.

Her plan would work.

It *had* to work.

If not, she and Skyla were dead.

Kali pushed the negatives from her head and kept to the plan, her steps ever so light as she crept through the trees, seeking her enemies. It didn't take her long to stumble across two horribly deformed women. They both had serious over bites, their hair matted and stunk as if they bathed in skunk juice.

“Looking for me?” Kali stepped from the shadows and put her hands on her hips.

“Damn,” Kali sized up both her opponents and laughed. “Look at you two stank bitches.” She held her nose to emphasize the smell the two gave off. “Phew, I could smell ya coming a mile away.”

“You’ve got a smart mouth,” growled one of the women. Foamy saliva dripped from her crooked teeth and hit her already skin-tight, brown and orange shirt. “I can’t wait to rip it from you.”

The wolfen-woman lunged. Kali nimbly jumped out the way and sprinted toward one of the many traps littered around the cabin.

The chase began.

As Kali ran through the brush, a long naked branch scratched the side of her face, but she didn’t stop. She heard the two wolves bounding not so gracefully behind her.

*Imbeciles.*

With a graceful ballerina-like leap Kali sprung over the trap and watched as the wolves found out why she’d stopped.

The two women fell into a deep crevasse lined with razor sharp wooden spikes. From the howls of agony she didn’t have to look, but hatred made her glance down into the pit. Both women squirmed like unearthed worms on fishing hooks. Thick rivulets of crimson poured from their ghastly wounds and stained the dirt. The more the women struggled the deeper they drove the wooden spears into their tore flesh.

Kali nodded, satisfied in the knowledge those mutant beasts would die a slow, painful death. Now if only defeating Zora would be that easy.

In the heart of the woods, Kali stopped to catch her breath and listen. An eerie silence filled the air, not even the crickets dared to speak.

Kali rested her hands on bent knees and prepared for the assault.

*Damn, I wish Sebastian told me how many Zora-followers were here.*

His familiar scent wafted to her nose.

She bolted towards it. Even though her muscles screamed she forced herself on, adrenaline coursing through her veins fueling her forward.

Kali ran hard until an unseen hand collared her by her shirt and yanked her against a tree. Kali grunted in pain. Sebastian's grin was as wide and charming as a Cheshire cat's.

Without a word he leaned in and sniffed her neck. Kali closed her eyes, letting herself enjoy his presence.

"So, you've taken out two of Zora's stooges, huh?" He didn't give her time to answer, but kept his body pressed against hers. "You can end this now, Kali, just accept me and this night can end."

Kali struggled. "Just tell me how many Zora has out there?" Kali's lips moved slightly. Sebastian rubbed his muscle-lined body against her while pinning her hand to the side of the tree.

"Why would I help you?" he groaned in her ear.

"If you want me as you claim, then you don't want to see me dead," Kali said



with more confidence than she had. “So help me.”

Sebastian pulled away and stared at her. “Are you thinking about my offer?” He raised a long, thick eyebrow.

“I might be. Help me, Sebastian,” she pleaded.

Sebastian stared at her as if trying to coax the truth from her. After a long pause, Sebastian answered, “Five. And since you’ve already taken care of Debbie and Sonya, you only have three left.”

*Duh, I can count dingbat.* Kali tried to push Sebastian out of her three feet of personal space, but he didn’t budge.

“Try not to die, Kali. I’d love to truly find out how you taste.” A wicked smile played at the corners of his sexy mouth.

Kali broke free but only because Sebastian allowed her to do so. He held her wrist tightly and gave her a concerned look. “Zora is an animal in all the sense of the word, stay frosty and you’ll come out on top.”

That said, he disappeared into the bleak, dark void. Kali shook off Sebastian’s hypnotic charm and started back to the cabin, an eerie feeling gnawed at the pit of her stomach. Was Sebastian stalling her, so Zora and the rest of her crew could ambush Skyla. . .

The thought of Skyla made Kali ran faster than she ever had before. As she ran the trees whizzed by like shadows on a wall, at this speed one wrong move

and it was over. If she fell now she could break a bone or even snap her neck like a twig. No matter; she had to get to Skyla. She had to get back to the cabin before anything happened.

Kali didn't see the wolf until it was too late. It leapt at her, knocking her backwards and slamming her head hard against the packed earth. Pain shot through her exhausted body but she couldn't give up. The wolf's muzzle clamped like a vice on her forearm. Kali let out a long painful wail as the creature began to shake her arm back and forth trying to rip off a piece of her flesh.

Kali arched her back as her nerves shot painful warnings to her throbbing brain. She clenched her fist and punched the wolf as hard as she could on the side of its head. The animal relinquished its hold of her and backed away but only for a second. The wolf recovered quickly and vaulted on her, its huge fuzzy paws pinning her shoulders to the ground.

"*You're not so tough,*" the wolf pushed its thoughts into her head. After the last few months, a telepathic wolf didn't shock her one bit.

"I'm a whole lot tougher than you, dog-breath," Kali mocked the animal. The enraged wolf bit her shoulder, her warm blood soaking through her shirt. Kali pressed her hands against the wolf's heaving chest and with an expected burst of energy, she tossed the beast off. Kali rolled on her side and pushed herself to her feet. She leaned her back against the rough bark of the tree. Her right arm hung

abnormally low and ached with white-hot pain. She cradled her wounded arm as the wolf growled and sneered as it approached her once more.

“Wait, wait, please,” she begged. “Please don’t do this. I’ll leave. I’ll go now.” Kali eyes welled with tears as she pleaded with the carnivorous animal. The wolf didn’t stop; instead it darted toward her and leapt in the air.

*My timing has to be perfect or this isn’t going to work.*

At the very last second, Kali spun around the side of the tree, slamming her dislocated shoulder back into place. The pain was so agonizing she couldn’t help screaming. Sweat rolled down her back. Carefully, she peered around the base of the tree and saw the unconscious wolf.

*Sucker.*

Before her eyes the wolf started its transformation to a human female. Kali couldn’t turn her eyes away as the coarse hairs covering the girl’s body receded leaving pink flesh.

She waited until the transformation was complete, bent down and picked up a medium-sized rock. The girl’s eyes fluttered then slowly opened and widened in horror as a pissed off, bloodied and bruised Kali loomed over her.

“Wait, Kali don’t do this. . .” the girl begged.

A smirk crossed her swelling face. “Oh, I see, little scary now the shoe’s on the other foot, my dear? I’m going to show you the same courteous behavior you

showed me.” Kali said.

“Nooo,” the girl cried. It was the only word the girl could muster before Kali slammed the rock on her nose, making a sickening, cracking sound with each blow. Kali stood, dropping her bloody weapon.

*Two to go.*

Kali stepped forward and realized it took more strength than she thought she had to walk. She stopped, put her hand on the closer tree. A rustling noise from behind her caught her attention. . . but it was too late as another wolf pounced on her back, sinking its canine teeth into her already wounded shoulder. The pain made Kali almost hysterical.

Frantically, she grabbed the wolf by the scruff of its neck and yanked it loose, ripping her skin as Kali threw her attacker over her shoulder. The wolf hit a tree with a loud smack.

“Oh, how very clever you are, Kali. But the night is still young and you already look spent.”

An unfamiliar female’s voice came from behind her. With a whirl, Kali spun around, her honey-colored eyes burned with white-hot intensity.

“Zora, queen wanna be of the dead fuzzies, I presume.” Kali spat.

“I see my reputation precedes me.” Zora said.

“No, it doesn’t. You just stink worse than the rest of your she-bitch crew.

I'm sure if you look harder, you'll find their bloody remains."

Zora tried to keep a stoic look on her slightly deformed face but Kali smelled fear seeping from her skin. "No matter," she growled, exposing her extended teeth. "This will be over relatively quick, Kali. I can see why Bastian was taking by you. Your strength and agility are astonishing."

"Was?" Kali locked her knees to keep from falling.

"Yes, well, after Bastian convinced you to kill Aliyah and stupid-ass Kane, I'm the next in line."

Kali shook her head, trying to clear away the fog of pain. "You're Aliyah's beta-female." She shot a curious look over her shoulder to see the wolf had morphed into a short, stubby legged woman. As she held her side, Kali noticed her ribs protruding through her caramel skin.

Kali turned her cold glare back to Zora and smiled a very sly smile and said, "Well, looks like you got demoted."

Zora lashed out in a rage. "Demoted!" she lurched out with her claw-like hands.

Kali jumped back. The wounded woman on the ground grabbed her by the ankle making her stagger, and she held out her arms to steady herself. Once she regained her balance, she stomped the woman's hand until she yelped in pain and released her.

Zora laughed.

Kali ignored Zora annoying laughter as she hauled back and kicked the woman in the face. “Light’s out.” Kali smiled as the woman’s head bounced from the tip of her shoe and landed heavily on the ground. Hearing Zora’s clapping made her turn around. “Looks like it’s just you and me now, Zora, old girl.”

Kali stepped over the unconscious woman but she left enough space for a decent headstart back to the cabin.

“Smart little shit, you think you’ve out-foxed me,” Zora said in a shrill voice.

Kali didn’t answer; she kept her eyes fixed on Zora’s jerky movements. She could see the anger boiling underneath her skin causing her veins to appear black.

“I know who’s at the cabin, Kali. A scared little witch crying in the night.”

*She found Skylar! I’ve got to get to her!*

Kali tried not to show the emotion running amuck throughout her core.

“Sebastian told us about the little witch himself. Don’t you think if he truly cared about you he would have kept that tiny bit of information?” Zora smiled as the tides turned in her favor. “You have lived long past your purpose. Now you must die.”

Zora leaped over her fallen companion and tackled Kali to the ground. Kali winced in pain, doing her best to stop the barrage of attacks. She shrieked as Zora’s talons dug deep her flesh.

“My pack weakened you. You’ve taken them on just as I expected you would,” Zora cackled as she punched Kali full in the face.

Kali’s world shifted for a second. This was her final moment. Zora was right, she was spent and her last reserve of energy was depleting rapidly.

The ground underneath the two women trembled.

“What the hell is this?” Zora sat back on her hunches with a puzzled look on her face.

Kali mustered her last reserve of strength and kicked Zora away from her.

“It’s not what the hell is it; it’s who the hell it is. Back off my sister, you fuzzy bitch!” Skylia yelled as she emerged from the trees, her arm out-stretched.

Kali rolled to one side and started to stand; Skylia raced to her, put a free hand underneath her forearm and pulled Kali to her feet.

“Thanks,” Kali smiled. “What took you so long?” She spat blood on the dirt and wiped her mouth with the back of her hand.

Skylia shot her a fervent glance. “Long? I had to waste time tracking your messes making sure you killed them all,” Skylia began.

Kali noticed a purple bruise forming around her right eye. “I had a run-in with your boyfriend and let me tell you next time I see him,” she punched her hand. “I’m gonna make him witach!”

“That’s great but we gotta deal with her first.” Kali nodded towards Zora.

Zora flipped up, snarling. "I'll feast on the flesh from both your bones before this night is through!"

The sisters looked at each other and then in Zora's direction.

"Do you wanna do this or shall I?" Skyla mimicked her mature older sister.

Kali waved her hand dismissively. "Go right ahead."

"Ha! You send a teen-witch to do your dirty work, so you don't have the balls to face me alone." Zora laughed wickedly.

Skyla stood in front of Kali, cast her head over shoulder to see Kali nod and then turned back to Zora. "I am neither a teen nor just a mere witch," Skyla said nastily.

"I don't care what you think you are. You are a child in my eyes," Zora bellowed, each word dripped with malicious intent. She sneered, then leapt for Skyla.

Skyla made a gesture as if she was scooping up fresh dirt and the earth sprung up and encased Zora's moving limbs.

"What the...?" Zora exclaimed in disbelief.

"I'm half witch and half-elemental." Skyla squeezed her hand into a fist and rock cuffs on Zora's wrists and ankles tightened.

"I bet Sebastian didn't tell you that now, did he?" Kali asked over Skyla's shoulder.



Zora's struggled against her bounds but didn't answer.

"Skyla, finish this," Kali ordered as she limped away.

"Okay," Skye replied happily. With a wave of her hand the bounds on Zora crumbled like dry dirt. Zora hit the ground with a thud. She sprung up and laughed hysterically.

"You can't hold me, girl. I'm free. . ."

Zora didn't get the chance to finish her sentence as two boulders collided into her head simultaneously, smashing it open like a rotten tomato. The headless body flopped around before collapsing in a bloody heap on the ground.

"That was pretty cool." Kali smiled, leaning against a tree.

"Yeah it was, huh?" Skyla ducked under Kali's arm to help support her weight.

"Yeah little sister, it was." Kali leaned on Skyla as they walked back toward the cabin. Kali felt Sebastian's presence but didn't falter and didn't turn around. One day they would meet again. Before that day Kali needed time with her family. To learn about her past and possible hidden power and where to bury their were-carnage.

None of that mattered now. They were safe, they lived through the night and tomorrow would be a better day.

*The End*

Homepage Url: [www.myspace.com/dkraven](http://www.myspace.com/dkraven)

new website coming soon...

### Author Bio

Born in rural Tennessee Raven Starr has been writing since she could hold a pencil. Starting with poetry, she honed her skills to include two plays, "The Wrong Choice." and "Running Scared but Free." Three short romantic stories, Fan-tasy, Her Smile and Going Home Again are now available from Red Rose Publishing, Mobipocket.com and Fictionwise.com. She is now working on a novel called, Twin Souls and a vamp story called Vampire's Embrace, watch out now. And an Egyptian inspired e book called Thieves in the Night, along with a few other titles, will be gracing cyber shelves very soon. Besides being a passionate writer she is also a mother of three beautiful kids.

Books she has out:

## Red Rose Publishing

Her Smile

Fan-tasy

Going Home Again- The Misadventures of Raine Matthews-Book 1

One Night at the Office

Thieves in the Night

The Pleasure Cruise The Misadventures of Raine Matthews-Book 2

Tainted Blood

The Perfect Match-coming soon