

Zyra is dating a vampire who is completely obsessed with her, but now that the newness has worn off, she realizes it's nothing more than great sex. She wants more. She wants the true love she knows will last her throughout her immortal days and nights.

Tarquin has been living on instinct for far too long, it is his time to die, and he knows it.

Can the patience of his beautiful enemy give him the will to control himself? Can they find a way to pure ecstasy together in bed? The unauthorized reproduction or distribution of this copyrighted work is illegal. Criminal copyright infringement, including infringement without monetary gain, is investigated by the FBI and is punishable by up to 5 years in federal prison and a fine of \$250,000.

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BLOOD VISIOUS Immortal Council Book One

BY

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Dedication

For my fated family.

THE STRENGTH TAROT

In the upright position, this card represents courage and self-control. It stands for the power of love and control of passion against one's baser instincts.

In reverse, this card represents power wrongly used and surrender to unworthy impulses.

This card stands for inner strength being more powerful than raw physical strength, anger, impulse management. It is often represented with a picture of a maiden taming a lion with a touch.

CHAPTER ONE

Zyra was so sick of her vampire life and her vampire boyfriend. She knew there was more out there, there just had to be. She was certain that Paxton wasn't the one for her to spend her immortal life with. No matter how many times he swore his undying love.

It was this discontentment that fueled her now as she prowled the streets of Spokane Washington, looking for a human to feed from. But tonight it had to be a certain kind of human, not just any blood would do for what she had in mind.

Usually, she merely drank a human's blood because it was a very effective birth control for a vampire. The only birth control aside from abstinence actually, something Zyra had never been very good at.

There was something about the intake of a single male's sperm and blood that created the right recipe for babies. Taking blood from another source rendered this impossible. It was something

easy enough to do, unless your lover was the possessive sort who fancied himself your fated match.

Paxton was borderline obsessive about Zyra and his idea of their life together. He saw years upon years together just as they were now, and babies to strengthen their bond.

Zyra disagreed.

It wasn't that Zyra didn't love Paxton. She did in a way. It was just that she knew he wasn't her fated match, her mate. Paxton was a very attractive vampire with silky jet-black hair that reached his chin and bright blue eyes. Of course it was the same look all vampires had. Pale skin and great bodies came with the DNA as well. It was something Zyra had gotten used to in her nearly three hundred years, and it just didn't hold her attention anymore.

The sex was toe curling, and she was quite fond of the taste of his blood. He was a passionate vamp and so utterly devoted to pleasing her. How could she not enjoy herself? But like everything else, after a while it gets old. Great sex just doesn't cut it when you are talking about the lifetime of an immortal.

Zyra hungered for more, and her tastes had always run to the exotic.

When she was young, some hundred and fifty years ago, she had been involved in an affair with

a human, and another more recently. Whitney still lived and Zyra thought of her often, but stayed away so she would be safe from Paxton and the other vampires. It was something that was very taboo and could get her executed if the wrong people found out. The first human had been male and that relationship hadn't lasted long. He had gotten tired of her biting him during sex. Not that he knew she was drinking his blood. The thrill it had given her was unbelievable, and she craved more excitement like that.

She craved more forbidden fruit.

After fifty years together, Zyra was growing tired of Paxton's constant badgering for a commitment. He claimed that he didn't believe in Blood Visions. So it didn't matter if none had occurred between them.

"I know my mate, and that is you. I don't need a Blood Vision to tell me I love you." he told her often.

A Blood Vision is how a vampire is supposed to find their mate. They are shown their mates face through a vision while drinking the blood of another immortal or a human with preternatural abilities.

Zyra had never experienced one, but she believed in them wholeheartedly. And she knew it would not be Paxton's face filling her mind if she had such a vision.

Vampires were a secretive bunch, even with each other. So the talk of such things was rare. Some vamps, like Paxton, believed it to be nothing more than a myth. Zyra couldn't help but wonder if that was more because of his own desire to believe she was his mate than any actual disbelief. She had yet to meet someone as stubborn as a vampire.

Zyra's gaze roamed over the seedier inhabitants of Spokane's streets. This late at night there were only hookers, druggies and pimps about. A neon sign flashed ahead and Zyra quickened her pace. Her red stilettos clicked loudly against the pavement, she was dressed in a red leather miniskirt and black bustier style top. Her bright blue eyes and pale skin contrasted nicely with her long black hair. She had applied enough black eyeliner and lipstick to look Goth. And of course she looked no more than twenty-five years old, which is about the time she had stopped aging. If anyone saw her, they would assume she was just another hooker working the streets tonight.

It was a useful disguise she used often when hunting. She wasn't approached by nice people who didn't deserve to lose a pint of blood and the memories of their meeting. She never relished taking blood from unsuspecting innocents, like some vampires did. The oldest vampires were a different breed. They relished in the pain and fear they could inflict upon their victims, often killing them in the process. It was how all those horror stories had been started about vampires.

Zyra entered the small shop under the flashing sign that proclaimed palmistry and fortune telling. A clanging bell sounded above her head and an old woman peaked out from behind a sheer curtain. The place smelled strongly of incense, the woman smelled of strong magic.

"How may I help you?" The woman eyed Zyra cautiously, assessing her pale skin and light eyes.

She was a Gypsy, a fortuneteller, and she was a powerful one by the smell of the blood pounding through her veins. Its tempo had crept up significantly since Zyra had entered. Obviously, she suspected Zyra was more than an average costumer. The hundred-dollar bill Zyra flashed was enough to make the woman forget her worries and motion to a small table.

"I need to see my future," Zyra said simply, seating herself at a small table in the corner. Silk draped the table and a very old, very musty set of Tarot cards lay in the middle. It was a classic setting, one meant to play to the stereotypes of humans. They could come in and get a thrill, but not really believe what was said because it was all a hoax to them.

"Of course, what question are you seeking the answer to tonight?" The woman settled her large

body into the chair opposite Zyra, and with shaky hands, picked up the musty deck.

Most humans would be drawn to Zyra. They would be nervous, but still unexplainably drawn in. Not the gypsy. Her blood would run cold and unexplainable terror would tell her to flee. Zyra knew it was there, ingrained instincts that came with her other talents toward self-preservation.

"I need to find my mate," Zyra said quietly, she didn't look the woman in the eye. She knew there would be no chance of entrancing her that way. Zyra leaped across the table, her eyes turned to a glowing red and her fangs extended from her gums a split second before they cut into the woman's vein.

Hot blood rushed into Zyra's mouth, sweet with life and tangy with magic. Zyra concentrated as she drew deeply from the stunned woman. When it was over, the woman would awaken from her daze, a bit dizzy, but otherwise fine. Best of all she would have no memory of the visit from the beautiful stranger. Not even her magical blood would be enough to fight the enthralling powers a vampire's bite could induce.

After a moment, an image flashed into Zyra's mind. An image of herself dressed in a flowing white dress, much like a toga. She was seated in a moonlit meadow, alone.

Suddenly a large dog-like creature broke

through a thicket of trees. As it approached, she recognized that it was a werewolf. There was a wild and tortured look in its eyes. It was wounded, she was sure, it was in pain and it was nearly crazy with it.

Zyra stood up and the beast saw her. Its yellow eyes locked onto her. It saw her as the enemy, as prey. The creature bounded toward her and leaped into the air, jaw wide for attack. The fangs glistening in the moonlight ready to rip through her neck. Sharp claws were extended, ready to tear her flesh apart.

Zyra was unafraid as it came at her in a death leap. As she watched it unfold in slow motion, she reached out a hand as if to touch it, reassure it. The beast collapsed at her feet, just inches from contact, becoming completely docile.

Zyra knelt before the wolf and stroked its head. The red fur was surprisingly soft under her palm. The beast whined at the contact. The man, the Keeper as they were called, split from its wolf half. A trembling naked man lay before her and a large red wolf, only slightly smaller than the werewolf had been, was beside him.

The man had a huge body, muscled and golden. He was completely and utterly delectable. He had shaggy rusty red hair that matched his wolf's fur. Zyra reached out and stroked the man's head. He lifted it slowly, as if he were almost too

weak to do even that.

Zyra looked into the face of her mate. He had dark brown eyes set in a strong square face. His jaw was wide and tough and his lips were kissable, even as he snarled at her. She pulled her hand back. He obviously didn't want her to touch him. His wolf licked her arm lovingly and nestled closer.

Zyra's eyes popped open and she dropped the woman's limp body to the floor. She couldn't believe it had worked. She'd had a blood vision, and now she knew who her mate was.

Unfortunately, it was a werewolf. A mate whose Keeper half appeared to hate her. Not really a big surprise since vampires and werewolves were natural enemies. Both were predatory and territorial, both beings of the night. A relationship of any kind between them had been rare, and a sexual relationship had never even been whispered about.

Zyra smiled a wicked smile as she wiped a drop of blood from her chin. She could only imagine the sinful possibilities.

There was a new hop in her step as she left the shop. Her mind running through all the positions she could bend that sexy man into. And the ones he might want to bend her into.

"Zyra, you have been feeding again." Paxton fell into step beside her, seemingly out of

nowhere. A vampire could move faster than the human eye could see. It was a reason why rumors were rampant that they could fly or teleport, something only those psychotic Elves could do.

"Paxton, you know I have to feed at least once a week. I am just too young to be a mommy, too irresponsible by far." Zyra spoke with a light teasing tone and ran her finger suggestively along the front seam of his pants. "So now that I am all pumped on human blood, why don't we go somewhere and fuck?"

Paxton hissed and grabbed her hand in a punishing grip. "No more games, Zyra, I can smell the magic. You went out deliberately looking for a Blood Vision, didn't you? Are you really so unhappy in your life with me?" His voice turned pleading and so sad. He dropped her hand and turned away.

"Oh, Paxton." Zyra laid a hand on his shoulder. "You know how I feel. I never misled you in any way. You just chose to believe what you wanted."

Paxton stiffened.

Zyra could smell the smoke like scent of his anger intensifying.

"That's bullshit and you know it." He whirled back to look at her, his eyes burning bright red. "I can't make you stay, but I don't have to let you live in peace without me either."

With those foreboding words, he was gone,

Courtney Breazile

moving so fast that a couple hookers down the street had to look twice and rub their eyes in an attempt to make sense of the man who seemed to just disappear right in front of them.

CHAPTER TWO

Two weeks later, Zyra found herself waiting for the sun to set over a small town in British Columbia. She was safely barricaded against the sun in a tiny hotel bathroom. Her mind was full of anticipation and her body was wound tight. She hadn't had sex in the last two weeks and was aching for release. Not even pleasuring herself had been enough. She had even been tempted to take a human to her bed while she was waiting for this night. Yet each time she had come close, the image of her future mate had flashed to mind and she just couldn't go through with it.

She was nowhere near a virgin, but she didn't have to go to him with the recent scent of another man on her body.

Her wait was almost over, thankfully. The sun was two minutes from setting and there was a full moon set to rise tonight. Her whole body thrummed with anticipation just thinking about meeting her mate tonight, and perhaps consummating the match.

"Almost time."

"Oh shut up, Paxton, the only reason you are in here is because there were no other rooms available and I took pity on your sorry ass. I don't want conversation." The damn cheap hotel was far from lightless enough for a vampire outside the bathroom. When Paxton had shown up after two weeks apart, she had been tempted to send him on his way to fend for himself. But she still cared for him. She couldn't have turned him away so close to dawn and he knew that. Otherwise, he wouldn't have chosen that moment to show up. Even then, she had almost told him to have a nice stay under the bed, but she was too nice for that too.

"Why are you here anyway?" Zyra asked quietly, since their uncomfortable silence was broken anyway. She figured she may as well ask the one question she cared to know the answer to. Even if she already thought she knew the answer. He wasn't going to let her go easily. She kept telling herself she didn't care, but she did, she didn't want to hurt him, but he just kept making it so damn hard not to.

Paxton took a deep breath and closed his eyes. "I am here to make sure you don't get yourself killed. It didn't take long to hear you were asking

around about these werewolves, and knowing how your tastes run to the...exotic, I didn't doubt for a second that you were delusional enough to look for your mate in one."

Zyra hissed through her clenched teeth. "If I remember right, you never seemed to mind what my tastes were."

Paxton smiled an infuriating smile and opened his eyes. "The sun has set."

Zyra jumped up and followed him out of the cramped space. "I am going to shower and dress, when I am done I plan to hunt, then go looking for my mate. I don't want to see you during any of that, do you understand? Werewolves or not, I don't need you to keep me safe and I definitely don't want my ex-boyfriend around when I meet my future husband." Zyra grabbed her bag and stomped back into the bathroom with a grace only one with super human abilities could possibly muster.

Zyra turned the water to scalding and stepped under the spray. She hated hotel showers. They either spit at you or cut through you with razor sharpness, and they were all made for people shorter than five foot tall. She missed the shower at Paxton's. It was big enough for six people and had four showerheads that were perfectly positioned. This particular shower was positioned at about neck level and spitting water on her with

intermittent dullness, she hurried through her shower and stepped out, feeling less than soothed.

She slipped into a matching black lace bra and panty set with little red bows strategically placed to draw the eye in. She had bought it especially for this occasion, along with a white summer dress. It hung to her knees and had cap sleeves and a high waist. It was a sweet looking dress, and she hoped it would detract from the innate deadliness her mate would sense when they came into contact.

Zyra studied her reflection in the mirror. She critically eyed her pale skin, bright blue eyes and black hair. Nope, she still looked like a vampire. But she looked like a damn hot one, and that had to count for something. She knew she was beautiful. She was also strong and deadly when needed, but was that enough to tame the wild beast that was her mate? She hoped so.

She left the bathroom and was relieved to see that Paxton was not sitting there, waiting for her. At least he had listened to her wishes this time. She didn't kid herself into thinking he wasn't nearby, watching and waiting. He would be hard pressed to give up, but she couldn't worry about that now. She had a mate to meet tonight.

Zyra left the hotel room in search of blood. She didn't want to go to her mate hungry. Not when that mate wasn't a vampire as well. She couldn't help but wonder how he would react to her desire

for his blood during sex. For a vampire, the sharing of blood was an unbelievably erotic experience. It could be used as foreplay, or in conjunction with orgasm to heighten that ultimate pleasure. Other vampires were immune to the daze induced by a vampire's bite, or eye contact, but she wasn't sure how it would affect a Keeper. It would be quite inconvenient for her mate to become slightly unconscious every time they had sex. Even if she held off the full power of her bite, she would still render a human incapacitated almost beyond function, another problem with taking human lovers.

A couple blocks and a dark alley later, Zyra ran into her meal. A sickly man was crouching behind a dumpster, shooting some kind of liquid into his vein. The man was so involved in feeding his addiction that he didn't even notice Zyra was there until her fangs were piercing his neck. He went limp immediately and she fed quickly, his blood was bitter, tainted by the drugs. She wished she could have had more time to find a more suitable donor with cleaner blood. The human drugs had no affect on her, but it made her meal less enjoyable. Not something she would usually stand for, but tonight she was in a hurry.

Soon, she reminded herself, soon she would be drawing blood from the vein of her mate. The sweet tangy magical blood of an immortal, drawn during the height of passion, her body heated at the thought.

Zyra emerged from the alley with her mind focused on one thing, her mate. All the preliminaries were taken care of and now was the time for them to meet. She closed her eyes and focused on the picture she had seen in her Blood Vision. She saw the meadow and the moonlight. She felt the breeze and the soft grass.

Her eyes flew open and she started walking in the direction her senses were pulling her. She would be in that meadow waiting when her mate showed up.

CHAPTER THREE

Tarquin basked in the moonlight along with the other Keepers of his pack. They were all waiting for midnight and the full moon merge. It was the best time to be a werewolf, the entire pack was merged and running, hunting. It was freeing and so wonderful to be such a part of the pack like that. Or at least for most it was. For Tarquin, it had always been less about the togetherness, and more about the freedom. Freedom he would rather die than give up.

Tarquin was a strong Alpha, and he was more than old enough to have his own pack. Had he wanted the responsibility that came with it. But he had never taken the place. He was far too comfortable being a member of Karios's pack. Kairos was even older than Tarquin and they had crossed to Canada together years ago from Scotland. They had been like brothers embarking on a new adventure together. Tarquin had stayed

with Kairos as his second in command when this pack had formed, only stepping aside when his two sons were born.

Now Tarquin was fourth in command and lived a pretty relaxed and easy life. Too easy most said. He did whatever pleased him at the time, living more like an animal than man. Unlike most Keepers, he had never felt the desire to mate and settle down. And after seeing Kairos lose his mate, Tarquin wasn't sure he ever wanted to. There was not a Keeper he had ever met who made him want to give up his baser instincts and become an incontrol family man. Even now, knowing that his end was near, he didn't regret not having children. It just wasn't ever part of his fate.

All the other Keepers were standing well away from him. He was alone in the crowd because none dared get too close, lest he lash out at them for whatever reason. More and more lately, he had found himself picking fights and not caring about the general niceties that made living in such close proximity to so many others bearable.

Some whispered that he was crazed and should have been put down years ago. Perhaps they were right. He had lived so long and so hard, there was nothing left of his Keeper humanity.

It was pack law that a Keeper who had lost control over its wolf instincts was mercifully killed. To protect the others around him and to protect the secret of the Immortals, no one wanted the dangerous humans to know what existed right under their noses.

Humans tended to overreact and kill before asking questions. Tarquin could respect that, not that he relished the idea of being the one to bring about the destruction of so many species.

Tarquin looked over at his wolf, sitting proudly by his side, rendered completely solid and visible to all by the full moonlight.

Do you think we are as crazy as they all think we are? he thought toward his wolf.

It was a nifty trick that all Keepers had. They shared a linked consciousness with their wolves. They could also see their own wolf no matter the presence of moonlight, and as merged werewolves, they could talk telepathically to other werewolves in the area. Not that any of them bothered talking to Tarquin, except Kairos and his boys. They weren't afraid of him like the others were.

Tarquin had the added ability to smell a lie from anyone he talked to. It was extremely useful, and a very big reason Kairos valued him so much. No one interrogated like a half-crazed lie detecting Keeper. Kairos had kept him around for that as well as their long-standing friendship. It was hard to sentence a friend to death. Especially one who had saved your life so many times.

I think you are as crazy as they say. You're just lucky I am here to keep you under a semblance of control, his wolf thought back smugly.

But for how long? Tarquin wondered to himself.

He met the gaze of Terrance, Kairos's eldest boy. The dark gaze peeked at him from beneath dark shaggy hair. His jaw was set in a determined line and there was a purpose to his stance that told Tarquin his time was up.

Two weeks ago, Terrance had come upon Tarquin in the middle of a feeding frenzy. Merged and close enough to town to alert humans, Tarquin was attacking a bull that had gotten loose from its pen.

Terrance hadn't said anything that night as he ran interference and made sure the mess was cleaned up afterward. But Tarquin had seen it in his face then, the solidified decision to take out a threat to the pack. Tarquin respected the boy for his decision. He truly hoped Terrance succeeded without too much injury. No doubt he would go down fighting. His last vestige of humanity might agree that he needed to be released from this world, but his primal instincts were running the show more often than not nowadays. Those instincts would scream for self-preservation.

As the hour of merging approached, Kairos and his two sons, Ian and Terrance, stood facing the gathered pack. Tarquin made his way to the back of the large group, close to the trees. He always liked to be in front of the run, not following the others.

After Kairos spoke to the gathered pack ,they all held their faces up to the moonlight and waited for midnight to strike. When the hour hit, each Keeper disappeared, merging into its wolf. What was left were werewolves. Bigger than the wolves that had been present, they were fierce and deadly predators. They howled together, then took off through the trees. They hunted only animals, despite the popular Hollywood movies. They avoided people at all costs. Self-preservation was an ingrained trait for all of the immortal species. It was why they had remained unknown to the humans for so long.

Tarquin entered a euphoric state as he flew through the woods, leaping over fallen trees and racing around obstacles. He felt free and so alive, his entire being was ruled by animal instincts. This was his favorite way to be, and probably one of the reasons he didn't try to get in touch with his more tame side. In this form, his senses were sharpened. He felt raw power coursing through his veins, pumping up his muscles with adrenaline. He loved the knowledge that nothing could stand against him.

The woods may be full of deadly predators, but he was by far the deadliest. He caught the scent of a fox and veered away from the pack. Foxes were fun prey. Better than smaller animals like rabbits and grouse, which were abundant in these woods. It was only a moment before he had caught up to the animal. He slowed down to toy with it. Let it see him following. Let it know it was being stalked for the dinner of a larger carnivore.

It darted left, then right, going up and over and around every obstacle with the ease of practiced prey. Its evasive maneuvers had gotten it by in the past, with big animals that didn't move nearly as fast or agilely as a werewolf did. There was no hope for the little thing this time, not against him.

Tarquin grew tired of the chase and decided to end the game. He quickened his pace, closed the distance in a flash and leaped into the air, claws extended and jaws wide, ready to snap the neck instantly. The fox wouldn't suffer more than necessary. He wasn't that kind of cruel. He could only hope for the same consideration when his own time came.

He was inches from contact when a flash of black fur came out of nowhere and slammed into his side.

The fox skittered away as Tarquin struggled to understand what just happened.

Terrance loomed over him, growling low and vicious. A promise of death gleamed in his eyes.

Tarquin had known this would happen. He had also known he wouldn't accept death gracefully. His base instincts roared to the forefront, demanding self-preservation at all costs. Nothing would make him bow down and take this without a fight. Not even the undeniable knowledge that this is what he deserved, what was best for everyone he cared for.

Tarquin surged to his feet and crouched, ready to spring forward and meet Terrance's challenge. He shut off his mind from the pack so no hint of this would get out and draw them here. Then he leaped forward, catching Terrance's shoulder in his powerful jaws.

Tarquin's teeth scraped off bloody hair as Terrance shook off his hold.

Terrance responded quickly, swiping out with a huge paw and catching Tarquin's leg, leaving a painful laceration.

They circled, both bleeding.

Terrance leaped at Tarquin, aiming low. He missed his mark by mere inches, and that was all it took to spare Tarquin's life.

Tarquin swiped out as he rocked to the side and landed a hard hit to Terrance's head. Terrance was momentarily stunned by the hard blow and by the time he could see straight again, Tarquin was on his back, tearing ferociously into his neck.

Terrance threw himself toward a nearby tree,

using his special ability to walk through objects, he came out the other side and Tarquin was left behind. Tarquin made a quick recovery from the shock and knocked Terrance sideways with a head slam to the side.

Terrance, weakened no doubt by blood loss and from using of his ability, stumbled and fell, hitting his temple against a rock.

He didn't move.

Tarquin crept forward, fearing a trick, but still Terrance didn't stir. He knew what he should do, tear out his neck. Finish this like the animal he knew he was. He opened his jaws and lowered his head for the final blow.

No mercy would be shown here tonight.

He couldn't do it. He didn't want to kill his friend's son. That wasn't supposed to be the outcome here. Terrance was supposed to win this fight, end Tarquin's sad existence.

He turned and ran. The oldest animal instinct around, older even than killing, was flight. To flee was to live to fight another day.

A scent hit him as he flew on four paws away from the pack. He turned midair, bolting to the left faster than he had moved in a very long time. Running back toward the pack that was determined he would die tonight.

The scent was death and blood. Vampire.

His paws barely touched the ground as he

hurried to meet the enemy. Vampires knew better than to come this close to werewolf territory, especially on a full moon. Tarquin had no desire to give this creature any forgiveness for its trespass. He would tear its throat out before it had a chance to react. Vampires were dangerous creatures and Tarquin had no respect for them, living off the innocent blood of humans as they did. He may not have been able to finish off Terrance, but he would not live in vain. He could help his pack by taking out this horrid creature before another member of his pack found the strength to mercifully end his life.

Tarquin burst through the trees and landed in a meadow, he paused only a second. His nose told him that the vampire was still a ways away, maybe another half a mile. But right there in the meadow, not more than ten feet away stood a female vampire. Why he didn't smell her like the other, he didn't know. Nor did he care. She was still a vampire. She still deserved to die and he still needed to kill something.

CHAPTER FOUR

Tarquin leaped at the beautiful deadly creature and readied to fight. She just stood there, looking at him with a calm expression. She held out a hand to him as he rushed ever closer, reached out a hand as if to comfort him.

"Mate!" his wolf screamed in his head, completely shutting down.

Tarquin collapsed at the creature's feet, unable to move because his wolf refused to let him.

He drew air deep into his lungs. All he could smell was strange woman. How did this vampire not stink of innocent blood and horrific death?

He felt her hand touch his head and he tried to move but couldn't. His wolf wouldn't let him harm, or leave her while they were merged. His wolf whined as Tarquin managed to force a split from it. He would not stay merged with his wolf if it was going to try and control him. He was weakened. From the battle and because his wolf had taken from him, purposely weakening him more before this enemy.

I will never forgive you for this wolf, he thought to his wolf.

You would never forgive yourself if you hurt our mate, his wolf responded. She will save us both.

The vampire touched his head, gently, hesitantly.

How is she restraining herself when faced with my flowing blood? Tarquin raised his head and glared up into the face of his mortal enemy. Why did she deserve to show a kind of control I have never been able to achieve?

It was beautiful, but he knew that behind that beauty was a heartless bitch that would drain him dry if she could. *Never trust a vampire*, he reminded himself.

His traitorous wolf sidled up next to her and licked her.

"I am Zyra," she said quietly. She didn't touch him again, but stroked his wolf with loving hands.

He couldn't help but envy his wolf that attention. "I don't care who you are." Tarquin growled as he drew on his last reserves of strength and managed to sit up and back away from her a bit. He was healing and gaining his strength back, slowly. If he gave it a minute, he would be able to attack her, only this time without the aid of his wolf.

"You will care. You are my mate," she stated simply, calm even in the face of his obvious aggression.

Tarquin nearly choked on his shock. What, is she some kind of mind reader? Tarquin knew that vampires could communicate with each other telepathically, but he had never heard of one being able to read another's mind.

"What is your name?"

"It matters not. I am no mate of a blood-sucking vamp. No matter how pretty she is. And why the hell don't you smell like a vampire?" He barked angrily at her. She was doing something to him, he could feel it. It was actually getting harder to be angry, and he didn't like that one bit.

He concentrated on her, smelling for lies.

She smiled at him and he spotted her small fangs, they were kind of cute, he thought before he could stop himself and remember that he was supposed to hate her.

"I do smell like a vampire, just not the kind you are used to, I suppose."

"What is that supposed to mean? You don't drink blood?" His voice was dripping with disgust. He was hoping she would lie to him, fuel his hate for her.

"Oh I do, I just don't kill. Younger vamps don't for the most part. It's frowned upon now, although most of the oldest still do, and quite joyfully, too."

"Then what friend do you have nearby that smells of the old vampire, of death?" he asked, hoping to catch her at something. Perhaps she was a decoy sent to distract while others attacked the pack.

Zyra sniffed delicately at the air and frowned. "It is not Paxton. He doesn't smell of old vampire, so I don't know. It is a stranger to me."

She was telling the truth he realized. Damn, he hated when that happened. She hadn't uttered one lie to him. She truly believed, as did his wolf, that they were mates. Of all the insane things that one could believe, a werewolf as a vampire's mate was the craziest. "Look, I am sure you are a real nice...vampire, but I am not really interested in settling down right now. Sorry."

She looked down at his wolf, who had its head lying in her lap as she scratched behind its ears. "I think I have tamed your beast, or maybe not, perhaps you are the beast here and not him."

She looked at him with eyes so blue he just wanted to dive in. He found himself leaning toward her and parting his lips for a kiss.

She blinked and broke the spell.

"What the hell did you do?"

"Sorry, it's a natural reaction. I just have to be on guard against using it on you. I wasn't even sure if it would work, it doesn't affect other vampires."

"I am not a vampire," he said with disgust."Oh believe me, I know." Her voice went down an octave and her gaze perused him appreciatively.

Tarquin suddenly felt uncomfortable in his nakedness, something rare for a Keeper. They were so often naked around each other it became no big deal quite fast. But under her hot gaze, he felt hyperaware of his nakedness, and the feel of the soft grass beneath him. His gaze traveled over her slim body appreciatively.

She had pale skin and although she was very small, she was toned. He knew she would possess a strength great enough to handle a romp in his sack. The thought made his cock twitch with anticipation. His gaze followed the neckline of her dress and he saw a hint of black lace underneath. If she were a Keeper, he would already have her naked, plunging deep into her softness. Never had he stopped himself from partaking in pleasure so willingly offered, especially from someone so beautiful. But he couldn't, wouldn't, fuck a vampire. They were the enemy.

"Tell me Tarquin, what do you know of vampires?"

"Enough to know they are dangerous untrustworthy creatures. Not exactly mate material." Even if his cock was hard and ready between them, thinking it really was a great idea

to have her any and all ways he could.

Her gaze locked onto it and he saw her hands clench in his wolf's fur. The scent of her arousal hit him a second later and he let loose with a savage howl before he leaped at her.

He crushed his lips to hers, forcing them open and thrusting his tongue inside. His hands roamed her body roughly, pulling and tearing at her clothing. If he was going to have her, then he was going to have her his way. Rough and tough, not loving and mating. She wanted him and he wanted her. That is all it needed to be. Raw and instinctual, they were driven to satisfy themselves. No reason to fight it. Ones basest instincts always seemed to win out anyway. And his said take, take what he could without giving anything back.

She moaned against his mouth and her body rubbed against his unabashedly. He tore his mouth away and latched onto one of her perfect pink nipples. She cried out and dug her hands in his hair, holding him close, begging for more.

The sound of her accepting pleasure fueled him. He ran a hand up her thigh, forcing her legs apart. When he thrust a finger into her wetness, she screamed out in ecstasy. She was more than ready for him he realized with an all-consuming pride. He shifted his body and removed his hand, quickly replacing it with his aching cock.

Zyra grasped his head and he could hear her

grind her teeth as if she were fighting the impulse to bite him, take his blood. He wondered briefly what that would be like, would it increase the pleasure for one or both of them?

Tarquin couldn't understand the pleasure he got from her. The undeniable rightness of being inside her. It was unlike anything he had ever experienced before. Each stroke shot lightning through his body, every whimper of pleasure from her lips ripped an answering one from his. Her hands running over his chest and back as he thrust over her was like gasoline to his roaring fire of desire.

His original intent had been to gain his own pleasure, not caring for hers, but that had all changed once he was inside. He needed her orgasm more than he needed his own. Never before had he cared about the pleasure of his lovers. Not this much. They had all cum, sure, but if they hadn't, he wasn't sure if he would have cared.

Not with Zyra, she had to cum or he didn't think he would be able to.

Tarquin rolled to his back, bringing her to the top. She rocked against him and he dug his heels into the ground to steady himself, to hold back. He moved one hand between them and stroked her clit to pleasure her faster. She hissed, then increased the tempo, slamming herself against

him with more power than her small frame looked capable of.

Zyra screamed out his name and raked her nails down his chest in her release. He let go, taking his own release inside of her clenching body. He howled his ultimate pleasure up at the moon.

Zyra lay comfortably on Tarquin's chest as they recovered from their lovemaking. It felt good, having her there, and when she kissed his chest lightly, he felt his face screw up into a grimace. It was way too pleasant.

"That bad huh?" she asked with a lilt of happiness in her voice.

He opened his eyes and glared up at her. "What, you think I changed my mind? You are not my mate, even if you are a good lay."

"Good?" She hissed, her eyes turning red with anger.

She rolled off him and put the torn remnants of her dress back on. The underwear she lifted looked hopeless.

"Come to my hotel with me, I must get there before dawn. Stay the day with me."

She faced him with a confidant set to her face and he wondered if she would take his rejection with as much ease as she seemed to be taking everything else. He looked from her to his wolf who was seated peacefully by her side. "Okay, but that doesn't mean I agree you are my mate."

She smiled at him happily and his heart swelled with a desire to see that smile forever. He shook his head angrily, not understanding what was wrong with him. What was making him react so unlike himself?

They ran, faster than a human could see, back to her hotel.

Before she could even lock the door, he was pressing her to the wall, claiming her mouth in a hot kiss. His tongue stroked hers until her fangs extended and got in the way. He pulled back, fearful and intrigued. He saw that her eyes were burning bright red, a sure sign of blood hunger, and wondered if he had missed that before. He pressed hot open-mouthed kisses to her neck and each breast, licking and nipping at each puckered pink nipple.

Her nails scraped at his scalp and shoulders as she shuddered under his ministrations. Lower he went, trailing kisses over her belly to the thicket of black curls covering her sex. His whole body shook with the need to taste her sweetness, her raw desire for him, to know that this creature's pleasure was for him and him alone.

His tongue flicked out teasingly and she answered with a cry and a whimper. He pressed her legs apart and delved into her flesh, lapping up the wet desire that rushed out in response to him. She spurred him on with her hands and rolled her hips for better contact. He slipped a finger in to soothe her ache and she bucked against him in appreciation.

Tarquin worked another finger, then another, inside and watched her face as he stroked her. Her mouth was open and he could see her fangs had elongated to fill her mouth. Her eyes glowed so brightly they practically lit up the room.

He had seen the look on feeding vampires and he suddenly wanted nothing more than to give her what she craved. What she needed. He could feel her hunger, her need for his blood and the control she was using to rein it in was astounding to him.

He pulled his fingers out and stood before her. He placed her head delicately in his hands and met her blood-red gaze. "Take what you need from me. I won't have you suffering on my account." He needed her full satisfaction like he needed to breathe. She was the lifeline that was thrown to him in his sea of darkness. She was all that could save him now, and suddenly he wanted to be saved.

She looked at him with a mix of fear and hunger.

"Do it!" he demanded and pulled her mouth to his neck.

She hissed, then sunk her fangs deep into his

vein.

White-hot pleasure shot through his body, more intense than any orgasm or sexual act he had ever experienced. She drew deeply of his blood and his whole body shivered with each pull, bringing him closer and closer to orgasm.

She clung to him as her body shook. Her legs latched around his waist, positioning her perfectly for his entry. He pushed inside and howled with the double pleasure sensations.

Zyra broke from his neck to exclaim her own pleasure at the coupling. He covered her mouth with his, the metallic taste of his own blood on her lips, a dark pleasure.

She clung to him as he pounded into her, pushing her hard against the plaster wall. Pictures shook and paint cracked as they mated with inhuman strength and animal lust.

Together they reached climax, one howling, one screaming, both shaking and thanking the gods for this moment.

With just enough energy to get them to the bed, Tarquin brought them down on the hard mattress. Still connected, still panting and hearts beating wildly, they fell asleep.

CHAPTER FIVE

Just before dawn, Zyra woke to the sounds of Tarquin stripping the unused bed and plastering sheets and blankets around the window and door. She smiled at his strong naked back and her heart swelled with pleasure to know he was trying to take care of her. Perhaps he was going to accept her after all. He finished and turned back to her.

"I, uh, I wasn't sure if the little bit of light that would come through would bother you or not."

"Yes, thank you. I spent yesterday in the bathroom to get away from it," she admitted with a grimace and stretched her satisfied body.

A low growl came out of his chest. He pounced on her and made love to her like the wolf he was.

They spent the whole day making love without discussing their mate status.

When the sun set and Tarquin was too hungry to deny his need for food any longer, Zyra knew their respite was over. "What will you do?"

Tarquin looked thoughtful. "It is pretty obvious that you fit me and my wolf perfectly even though you are a vampire. I had just been ready to give up my life, not start it all over again. Somehow you made me want all the things I never wanted. A family, a pack, a child. You calm that part of me that has always screamed in the back of my mind. That beast that had begun to rule me more and more with every lonely year that passed is finally silent. You are mine and I need you. I must have been waiting all my life for you to show up."

Zyra smiled brightly at him and flung her arms around his neck, overjoyed by his acceptance. All that it had taken was hours of mind-blowing sex to tame this beast, she mused. "But will your pack accept me as your mate? Or will you leave them?" Zyra knew how important it was for a Keeper to have a pack. They just couldn't thrive without that companionship. Their pack was almost as important as their mate.

"I will go to them and explain, explain lots of things."

Tarquin didn't have any clothes so Zyra went out for groceries. Something that made her smile hugely, never in her life had she bought food. It was amusing to no end to think of doing this sort of domestic act on a regular basis. She would have to provide for her mate, and he liked meat.

She also picked up some clothes for him and after he was fed and dressed, they headed out for his pack. He had tried to convince her to stay, telling her it was probably going to be dangerous for her. Her eyes narrowed and glowed red during the argument. Never would she leave her mate to enter into a life threatening situation alone. He had conceded.

* * * *

As it turned out, they didn't have to go any farther than the meadow where they had met. As they approached, they both sensed the pack was near. When they came through the trees, they saw them there, sniffing around Zyra's discarded underwear.

The entire pack was there, Tarquin saw. His gaze locked onto first Terrance with relief, then Kairos with dread. All eyes were on him and the small vampire by his side.

"You nearly kill my son. You fraternize with a vampire, disappear for a day and then show up with the horrid creature?" Kairos spat with quiet viciousness.

Tarquin felt guilty about all of it, but the indignation he felt over his mate being called a horrid creature was stronger. "I am sorry for what I did to Terrance, but he attacked me. Not that he

didn't have just cause, I know that."

The whole pack widened their eyes in shock at Tarquin's response since before he would have attacked for less insult than Kairos had just given.

Kairos's gaze landed on Zyra. "What excuse do you bring for her? Do you know that we killed a friend of hers last night? She was trying to kill innocents from the town."

"It was no friend of mine you killed," Zyra responded.

"Smell her, Kairos. She is not a death vampire. She is not like the one who took your mate."

The assessing brown gaze of the leader landed on Zyra. "Come forward, vampire."

Zyra stepped forward.

Tarquin matched her step, keeping himself closer to the danger.

"Very interesting, I have heard of such, but never met one."

"That doesn't make her any less of a threat or enemy." The Keepers murmured around Kairos, eyeing her with clear hatred.

"With that I might agree. Are you a danger to my pack?"

"I am not. Tarquin is my mate," she stated with intensity and glowing red eyes.

All the Keepers sucked in a shocked breath and Tarquin growled low in his throat.

"That's the most disgusting thing I have ever

heard," one Keeper said.

Tarquin growled in his direction, crouching to spring at the offender.

The Keeper stepped back and crouched.

Zyra put a gentle hand on Tarquin and he straightened out of his crouch, looking back toward Kairos.

Kairos watched with clear amazement.

Tarquin hoped that Kairos was seeing the truth, that this creature, this vampire, had given him something he had never had. A reason to control himself.

"I will accept her as your mate," Kairos said to the shocked dismay of his pack, not that any would dare question their Alpha.

Zyra clapped her hands with delight and Tarquin let loose a breath of relief.

A couple of hours later, Tarquin and Zyra left Kairos's house, ready to embark on their new life adventure. They would leave this pack because Tarquin was too strong an Alpha. With a mate, he would be even stronger and had to take on his own pack. They would go to Oregon, where the Portland pack was in need of a strong Alpha to lead them. Tarquin had been there before. He knew most of the wolves and so he was a good match.

Whether or not they would accept Zyra? That

was their problem to deal with, as Kairos had pointed out with undisguised amusement.

They were the first of their kind, an immortal interspecies match.

* * * *

Back in their hotel room, Zyra was the first to attack, sending them both sprawling to the floor. She positioned herself between his legs and tore at his pants, popping a button as she rushed to remove them. Once his hardening cock was exposed to her, she smiled wickedly, flashing her extending fangs.

A moment of fear flashed across his face before she bent her head and took him deeply into her mouth.

She expertly administered to him without cutting him with her razor sharp fangs. He trembled and howled as she sucked him deep, then cupped his balls and squeezed gently. She was loving every inch of him, every moment that she could touch him and pleasure him. This is what it meant to be mated.

"Zyra, no more." He panted as she once again took him deep.

She groaned around him, the vibration sending him over the edge. With a howl of bliss, he poured his seed into her accepting throat. She licked him from base to tip and smiled with wicked satisfaction. He turned quickly, landing her gently on the floor and ripped her dress off her body. She hissed with pleasure at his violent lust.

His hands stroked every inch of her as his mouth mated frantically with hers. His fingers delved first into her sweetness, then pressed into her mouth as he moved to take her nipples into his mouth.

She sucked on his fingers, reveling in the taste of her own desire, then pierced his flesh and mixed his hot blood with it. The combination was wild. She nearly levitated off the floor from the pleasure of it. She had never experienced such a heady mix.

As if Tarquin sensed her urgency he positioned himself between her legs, thrusting deeply.

Zyra needed more, wanted more. This wasn't enough, not this time. She forced him to his back and shivered atop his body. Her lust-filled red eyes burned into his dark brown ones. "Take my blood, Tarquin. I need to feel you taking my blood."

His eyes widened, obviously shocked at her request. "I..." He began, but stopped there as she continued to rock against him.

"Yes! That's it," she cried out and clenched around him as she felt her flesh pierced. Zyra

didn't understand what was happening, nor did she care. All she knew was that she was experiencing a pleasure so great she didn't dare question it. With one hand, she grasped at Tarquin's hard body beneath her as she rocked her body to his and plunged the other hand into the familiar dark locks at her shoulder. Paxton.

You needed me, needed this and I am the only one here capable of giving it to you.

Paxton's thoughts filled her mind as he pulled and lapped at her neck. Paxton was hard as he pressed against Zyra's buttocks. She continued to stroke her wet sheath over Tarquin's cock. Paxton reached one hand around and grasped her breast, rolling and plucking at her nipple. She felt him reach with his other hand and grasp himself, stroking in rhythm to her pounding.

Tarquin grasped Zyra's hips in a bruising grip and increased the tempo for all of them.

Zyra brought her wrist to her mouth, pierced her skin, then pressed the wound to Tarquin's mouth. At first, he licked at it gently, as if he were unsure what to do. She grabbed one of his hands and brought his wrist to her mouth. She sank her fangs in and pulled deeply as she returned her open wrist to his waiting mouth. He mimicked her act and pulled deeply from her wrist.

Their gazes met over their exchanged wrists and she knew that he was hers. Despite this impromptu threesome, he was hers and he would be all she ever needed in bed.

Zyra moved her hand from Paxton's head to replace his stroking hand with her own, pulling and squeezing and teasing just as she knew he liked. Her nails scraped lightly against his skin, causing him to shiver with painful pleasure. He thrust into her hand with a frenzy she matched against Tarquin's cock.

Zyra came first, her vaginal walls clenching around Tarquin and her fist clenching around Paxton. She screamed out her intense orgasm, her entire body shaking and shattering as wave after wave of hot pleasure rolled over her.

Tarquin and Paxton found their releases a second after her. One howl and one shout of satisfaction filled the small room.

They fell into a satisfied sleep, Zyra lying on the floor between Tarquin and Paxton.

CHAPTER SIX

Paxton awoke just before dawn and sat up cautiously. He frowned down at the cuddled pair next to him. They looked so damn happy together, he couldn't stand it. He had come to her tonight to prove that she needed him, but it hadn't ended up that way. The only thing he had proven was that she needed Tarquin more. She was lost to him now. He knew that even if he could never accept it.

Paxton stalked away from the hotel room. He wanted death, he wanted destruction and he wanted that dog's lifeless body. But he wouldn't, he couldn't do anything that would hurt his Zyra. So he would take this violent anger out on someone else, happily.

He saw a group of human males up ahead, leaving a bar. He slipped easily into the covering shadow and followed them. As if sensing the danger lurking behind them, the group sped up and one even looked over his shoulder, searching the shadows where Paxton blended.

The man's human eyes would never be able to see him, but he did seem to be looking right where he was standing. Odd.

The group continued on and a couple of them entered an apartment building, leaving two to continue on, one was the man who seemed to sense Paxton.

Paxton kept following, waiting for his opportunity and enjoying the smell of fear rolling off the man. They turned a corner and entered another apartment building. Paxton waited outside a moment, letting the prey get comfortable.

He entered the building and followed the smell of the man. He didn't bother knocking on the thin door. He pushed it open, breaking every lock the man had thrown in place.

Such fear, such excruciating fear paralyzed the man as Paxton approached, eyes swirling red, hypnotizing. Paxton grasped the man close and sank his fangs deep, drawing fast and hard to satisfy his need for violence.

Paxton dropped the man to the floor, blood red eyes wide with shock. He had experienced a Blood Vision at last. He had seen his mate's face, and she wasn't a vampire. She was a fellow member of the Council of Immortals, not that such a thing existed, yet.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I reside in Idaho with my husband and two daughters. I read, write and soak up as much of the sun as possible. Check out my website for my latest and what's to come.

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