



JUST ONE BITE

VOLUME TWO



Just One Bite

Volume 2

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Volume 2
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First Time Fang Bang

by Victoria Blisse

It didn't look like a vampire club to me. I couldn't see any fangs or bloods shed or even a predomination of black velvet. It was all quite normal really.

I got myself a glass of red wine and watched. I wasn't really sure why I was there except that for months I had been walking past *The Point* and wondered what it was like inside. I'd heard the rumours, everyone had, of vampires, sex and lewd behaviour and after two glasses of red wine on a Friday night I decided to go and check it out. So I slipped into my favourite deep cleavage, short skirt man pulling outfit and went.

I felt a little like a kid in a grown up conversation, everything seemed to go above my head and I wasn't involved. As I sipped my red wine the heavy berry flavour bathed my tongue and the alcohol soothed my thoughts. I'd finish my drink and leave, I decided, after all I had done what I set out to do. Okay, so it hadn't turned out to be the exciting and erotic adventure I'd dreamed of, I'd had no vampires lusting to bite my neck but then vampires don't really exist, everyone knows that.

As I finished the last few drops of my drink I noticed two very dark and very handsome men beside me. One was wearing a red shirt, the other black and they looked as if they'd just walked off the set of an advert for aftershave, they smelled like it too. I felt intoxicated and knew it had nothing to do with the wine.

I placed the empty glass down on the bar and was about to

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push myself off the seat when I heard the hottie in the red top give his order to the barman,

“...and another red wine for the lovely lady beside me please.”

I looked up and he was smiling at me. I lowered my lashes and ran my hand through my hair.

“Thank you,” I replied once I managed to work out how to make words come from my mouth, “but I was just about to leave.”

“Well then call it one for the road,” the guy in black replied with a husky French accent and leaned past his friend.

“I’m Jean and my friend is Sebastian.”

I shook his hand. It was cool but strong and his touch made every thought disappear from my mind except one and that one was naughty.

“Hi,” I replied as he let my hand loose, his fingers trailing over my skin, “I’m Carrie.”

“Hi Carrie,” Sebastian’s fingers entwined in mine and sent shivers down my spine, “I’ve not seen you in here before.”

“No, it’s my first time,” I replied, his hand still enveloped mine and I didn’t want to try and withdraw in case he took it as an insult but I was beginning to feel uncomfortable with the over familiarity. It wasn’t that I disliked his touch, it was that I enjoyed it far too much.

“Oh, a virgin,” Jean smiled, “we love Point virgins.”

“Why, what do you do to them?” I asked, not realising how flirty it sounded until the words left my lips.

“Let us show you,” Sebastian pulled on the hand he still had in his grip and dragged me towards the dance floor. I laughed and looked behind me at Jean with appealing eyes, he just shrugged and followed us to the dance floor.

I don’t know what song was playing as we pierced the swaying throng of dancers, it was slow, I know that as Sebastian pulled me into his arms and held me close as soon as he cleared a

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space for us in the centre of the floor.

“Wow, you don’t waste any time,” I gasped as his hands gripped my waist and I was forced to hang on to his shoulders to steady myself.

“I’ve become impatient over the years. Small talk is a waste of time especially so when a hot woman is involved.”

“Oh,” I replied. My mind was a muddle of fear and desire. There was no doubting I wanted to be in his arms but I was thrown by his unconventional style. It was probably for the best, I didn’t have time to think and therefore I didn’t have time to talk my way out of things.

As I swayed against Sebastian I felt a hand on my hip, then one on the other. I didn’t scream but I did stiffen up then a familiarly exotic accent caressed the air beside my ear.

“Hey, you started without me, that’s not fair.”

And suddenly I found myself sandwiched between two hot men on the dance floor of an exotic club. Me, sensible, dependable

Carrie. It all seemed like a particularly enjoyable dream but I was sure I’d wake up and it would dissolve away as such things never happened me.

I tried hard to push away my doubts as I was lodged slap bang in the middle of any girl’s wildest fantasy. I was not going to let my usual cautious nature hold me back.

“You smell delicious,” It was Jean’s voice in my ear, soft and purring, his French accent adding more spice to the already hot situation, “I just want to sink my teeth into you right here, right now.” I gasped as his lips found the skin of my neck just below my chin. My pulse point thudded excitedly and his groan of desire sent sparks of passion flying throughout my body. I was starting to wish he would sink his teeth into me and I wondered if I could have found the vampire I’d been looking for.

“Hey, Jean, you impatient soul, wait for me,” Sebastian’s voice was rough with arousal and as he dipped his head to taste the other side of my neck, his body pressed hard against me and I

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found out just how aroused he really was. I gulped down the irrational panic that rose with the lust in my breast. I was not going to wimp out on this, oh no. I went to *The Point* to find excitement and I was not going to run away from it. Even if it seemed to be two huge vampires with a desire for my blood.

“Carrie,” Sebastian’s accent caressed my name as he spoke it, “would you like to come with us to one of the private rooms, we would be more comfortable there.”

“Well,” I replied, my voice hoarse with desire, I cleared my throat before I continued, “I would like that very much.” There, I’d said it. I’d let my body over rule my mind as it craved for more of the kisses that were still burnt on my neck and whatever else might follow. My heart beat like an impassioned rock drummer and I clung on to Sebastian for dear life.

“Wonderful,” Jean spoke and deprived me of his kisses, “let’s go through to the VIP suite.” He grabbed my hand and turned me away from Sebastian’s body and pulled me forward none too gently. I should have been scared, especially when I felt Sebastian’s arm slip around my waist but even though I was surrounded by dangerous monsters I felt nothing but arousal and excitement.

I’d always been a vampire fan and even if the lads turned out not to be real vampires, if they’d bite my neck and indulge my fantasy I would be more than happy, I’d be ecstatic.

The huge hulk of a man on the door nodded to Jean as he let us past and smiled broadly. I felt like a piece of meat, dragged home from the hunt under the bouncer’s heavy stare and I liked it. My blood hummed inside my body as I anticipated what was to come. We walked past the little bar and the intimately lit room directly behind the VIP doors and continued down a corridor beyond yet another scary looking bouncer. His flesh was as white as fresh milk and there was a dangerous gleam in his eye. I could see where this bar got its vampiric reputation from.

“This one is empty,” Jean said, pulling me towards a door, “follow me.”

The room was huge and dominated by the biggest four

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poster bed I had ever seen. There was absolutely no doubting what this room was for and I nibbled nervously on my lip as I started to wonder if I was woman enough to take on two incredibly sexy men at once.

“No, no, no,” Jean shook his head to the beat of the sing song lilt, “do not be looking worried *Ma Cherie*, there is nothing to be afraid of here, is there Sebastian?”

“Not at all,” he replied, “you’re about to have one of the most fun experiences of your life, I promise you.”

I laughed nervously, “You’re terribly cocky,” I said and they just looked at each other and smiled.

“Just confident,” Sebastian continued, “now less talking, more fucking.” I had never been with such a forthright person before and as my jaw still hung open in shock I was pulled closer to the bed. Jean and Sebastian pushed me back and I landed with a yelp on the soft, cool satin sheets. As I scrabbled back, trying to adjust my skirt that had ridden up to expose way too much thigh for my liking the boys stripped.

Oh, dear Lord, that is such an inadequate description for the display I devoured eagerly with my eyes. If I were to tell you in detail just how perfect their bodies were, you’d say I was exaggerating but I assure you they were the most perfect manly specimens I had ever seen. I had an urge to whip out my phone to take photos of the perfection but my bag was not to hand and I really didn’t want to take my gaze off them to search for it.

Sebastian’s skin was a light caramel colour where Jean’s was more like creamy, milk white chocolate. Both had scars, Sebastian’s just over his heart and Jean’s along the crease of his neck but somehow these enhanced their handsomeness and did not detract from it. I barely had space for thoughts in my mind it was too full of the erotic images before me. Two hot men were taking off their trousers before me but as the underwear disappeared a little doubt wriggled its way in amongst the lust. What on earth would they make of *my* body?

I was pretty and I could make the most of my good curves, the plentiful cleavage, the hips and the arse to match. Also I’d

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learnt to hide the curves I was not so proud of but I wondered what would my hot lads make of my hidden curves? I was very worried they would hate them.

I was distracted by my thoughts and it was only the weight on the bed that made me realise that the two fully naked and obviously horny men were climbing up the bed to join me.

“You have too many clothes on, *ma Cherie*,” said Jean, “we must remedy that.”

And before I could articulate any kind of misgivings he had pulled off my top and Sebastian had his hand on the top of my thigh. At that point I decided to stop listening to myself and just go with the flow. I was not going to let my stupid misgivings get in the way of me enjoying what was about to happen to the full.

“You’re so hot and soft and you smell divine,” Sebastian cooed as he traced kisses down my neck to my chest and into my cleavage. His hand rested high up my thigh and I wished he’d move it even higher. As Sebastian kissed, Jean worked on the practicalities. He took mere moments to pop open my bra fastenings and to run the straps down my arms. He kissed a trail behind them and so I did not worry about the natural give of my large breasts, I was too distracted by the sensation of two mouths on me at once.

Sebastian did not hesitate to move his roaming kisses onto the flesh of my breast and down to my eagerly puckered nipples. Jean kissed my fingers, which in comparison seems boring but I can tell you the thrill of finger disappearing in between hot lips is not something to be dismissed. He stared deep into my eyes as he plunged his mouth over my pointer finger and it was by far the most deliciously seductive thing I have ever witnessed.

“So hot,” Jean gasped, “I want more.”

And so did I. His hands ran down my hips, up under my skirt and into my knickers. I groaned as he pulled the material to the side and slid his fingers into me, slowly and confidently hitting hotspots to make me writhe against Sebastian’s teasing mouth.

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“I need to fuck you, Carrie, I really do.”

“Yes,” I gasped, without a split second’s thought, “yes, fuck me.”

He moved in closer, his body cupped around my back and he lifted my top thigh with his large, cool hand and pressed against my bum. Every brush of his skin against mine sent shocks of arousal straight through me. His cock slipped down the crack of my buttocks and nestled for mere seconds at my entrance before pushing in deep and filling me to complete my lust.

“Fuck yes,” I gasped before Sebastian’s lips pressed against mine and any other noises I made were muffled by his kiss. I grabbed onto his hips as Jean thrust rhythmically making my body shake and explode with excitement. Sebastian’s hands shifted down over the rumpled ring of my skirt and under the stretched band of my knickers and into my warm slit. His finger slipped to where Jean I and were joined then rubbed back up to my clit. The juices of my excitement meant his finger glided over me, bringing me closer and closer to orgasm with each pass.

My mind could barely comprehend it. I was being fucked by one hot stud and kissed by another. I have never felt so alive before, so wanton and free. I was startled when Jean spoke as I was lost in the flow of my lust.

“Baby, you’re so good,” he said, his cock stilled inside of me and left me aching for more. “I want to share you with Sebastian, I want to slip right back here,” he said, squeezing a buttock, “so Sebastian can enjoy your fine pussy, is that okay?”

I tensed up, I had tried anal sex before and not liked it but I wanted it, I want to stuff both those cocks inside of me and to revel in the excesses of sensation. I nodded emphatically.

“Oh, Carrie, this is going to be so good.”

I was wet. I could feel how so as Jean pulled his cock from inside me, and slipped himself back, rubbing my juices onto my small, tight hole.

“Here, mate,” Sebastian stretched back and pulled a small

tube off the bedside table, "use this."

"Thank you," Jean replied and as his dick pressed eagerly against me I heard the tube uncapped then felt a cold jolt as he rubbed the unctuous fluid into my relaxing hole, his finger slipped in eliciting a gasp from between my lips. Another finger joined it and as I was invaded Sebastian kept up the pressure on my clit and the pleasure and pain coalesced until I begged breathily for more.

"I'm going to ease slowly into you," Jean whispered, his lips pressed forward to kiss my neck, his sharp teeth grazing my skin, "you're so fucking tight, Carrie." He pressed into me, I strained to accommodate him for a moment, but the constant rub of Sebastian's finger on my clit combined with his forceful, heavy kiss made me relax and open up to Jean's invasion.

"Oh, fuck," I gasped as he gently pressed deeper, "oh, fuck,"

"It's good, isn't it?" Jean groaned, "oh, so good, just wait until Sebastian joins me, you'll come so hard you won't know what hit you."

Sebastian shifted his weight, angling his body so his pelvis fitted against mine. Jean tipped my hips on his in a calculated move that opened me up just the fraction needed to allow Sebastian to press his cock into my wet pussy. He slid in slowly and I felt full. I know that is a short, inadequate word but that was the first sensation I felt. It wasn't until the guys began to move that the fullness turned into full on pleasure.

Two men used me and I enjoyed every last movement of it. I was in raptures. I could feel them moving against each other inside of me and Sebastian, sweet, hard Sebastian was grinding against me in such a way that made my clit sing. I shuddered with mini orgasms until I was on the brink of ecstasy.

"Now," Sebastian hissed and I felt teeth at my neck to the front and the back of me. I came, I thrashed and I screamed as they punctured my flesh and sucked. I wasn't scared though, it didn't hurt it accentuated the pleasure of my body encompassing orgasm. And the rhythm of their sucking echoed through my

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clenching cunt as they exploded inside of me.

The next morning I woke in the strange bed, naked beneath the soft sheets. I looked around and on the table beside me were a card and a pile of bank notes.

We hope you enjoyed your visit to The Point, we did. Please come back soon, your body and your blood is intoxicating.

Love& lust,

Sebastian and Jean.

I smiled and began to plan my return visit. Vampires are addictive.

Ghost Beside Me by Kathleen Dienne

I don't believe in ghosts. My friend thought the Mount Dinah Inn was crawling with them.

"You're staying where?" gasped Allison when she heard about my reservation. She had been my freshman year roommate. After graduation, she'd stayed in our college town, gotten a job, and fallen in love with the boss. I was still single, but I knew what love was. I mean, I loved the view from my Manhattan apartment. I'd come back to the Blue Ridge Mountains to see her get married.

"Mount Dinah. It's perfect. I can walk from the reception at the winery to my bed. Bring on the zinfandel, sister."

"But don't you know? The inn is haunted. Oh, Tricia, I should have made you a reservation somewhere else, I just didn't think. Everyone else lives close enough to go home." She was clutching her crystal beads so tightly that I was afraid the string would break.

If that happened, she'd take it as an omen and be miserable. I reached out and disentangled her fingers.

"You know what's haunted, Allie? That No-Tell Motel off Route 81. It's haunted by the ghosts of drunk college kids and their one night stands." She cracked a smile, so I continued. "Those mattresses, imbued with the spirits of a million dying sperm. They cry out... for vengeance! Or possibly Lysol!" I waggled my fingers in a spooky way.

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She laughed, but she still looked worried. “Okay, the inn is probably cleaner. But you don’t have to believe in ghosts for them to believe in you. Please be careful.”

“How am I supposed to be careful? Would a ghost be stopped by a chain lock?”

“I’ll ask the spirit world to protect you,” she said.

I hugged her, and changed the subject. “Oh, Allie. It’s your wedding day. Let’s let the spirits worry about you. I am so happy for you, you know that? Now that I’ve met Jack, I understand why you don’t want to leave this cow town. He is smoking hot.”

Her eyes lit up, and we were off on her new favorite topic. I liked her husband to be. He was gorgeous, successful, and kind. Privately, I was relieved to find that he wasn’t the least bit into crystals or magic moonbeams. Her friends seemed similarly level headed. Her best girlfriend and I could have been twins, in that alternate universe where I could stand country living.

Before she ran out of things to say, it was time to get ready.

The wedding was glorious. The October evening came on fast, and by the time the reception started we were dancing under an Appalachian night sky filled with stars.

It was late when I reached the inn. My room was nice, if you liked country décor. I didn’t, but I sure liked the extra tall bed with its down comforter. Without undressing, I threw myself on it with a sigh.

Oh, man, it was good to lie down. Allie had let her bridesmaids wear whatever we wanted, and I had on a cobalt blue sheath. It looked good, but it looked best when I wore my highest strappy heels. None of my New York friends would dream of getting married so young, so I’d never been part of a wedding party before. I hadn’t realized how much standing around I was going to be doing.

As I lay there, limp, with my numb feet dangling off the side of the bed, I listened to the night noises coming in through the open window. Crickets and tree frogs were quite a departure

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from rumbling trucks and honking taxis. I'd never heard the wind make quite that sound, either. Kind of a soft moan. Almost a whimper.

Ugh. Allie was rubbing off on me. I staggered up and closed the window. Before I flopped back down, I put the chain on the door.

I got comfortable again. The sounds of the inn were normal. I heard the clunk of the stairwell door, footsteps going down the hall, and the distant rumble of someone filling their ice bucket at the machine.

There was also a strange scraping sound, of ceramic on wood. That sound was close by. On a little table under the mirror, there was one of those china pitchers in a bowl. It was moving, almost imperceptibly. I felt my heart speed up.

Then I realized the tiny movements were in time with the footsteps going down the hall. This was just an old, rickety building. I heard a door open and close, and all was still.

I stared at the ceiling. "Stop twitching," I said to myself in a stern voice.

There was no reply. But somewhere off to my left and down near the floor, I heard a woman's laugh. It wasn't a nice laugh, either. There was a menacing edge to it. I got out of bed again, looking for the vent that was probably conducting the sound from another room.

I found the vent, all right. Too bad it was on the other side of the bed and near the ceiling.

This being October, the air conditioning was off, I thought. All of a sudden, I was cold. Goosebumps rose along my bare arms, and I shivered. I shook my head to clear it. The chill didn't pass. Instead, my room got colder, and colder, and still more cold until I thought I could see my own breath.

I went to the phone to call the front desk and have the air conditioning fixed. There was no dial tone.

I fled to the door as fast as my poor abused feet would take me, unchained it, and threw it open. I was going to demand

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either a new room or a refund and a ride to the No-Tell Motel, sperm and all.

Instead I blundered into someone standing right outside my door.

“Whoa there,” he said, steadying me. “Something on fire?”

I looked up at him, and even half out of my head with fear I couldn’t help but stare. Longish dark hair, tall, and cheekbones like a model’s. His smile was fantastic. His chin was square, with a little dimple in it. His eyes were the soft brown of my favorite Italian leather coat.

Best of all, he was warm. I could feel the cold air on my back rushing away.

I tried a little laugh. “I think something was wrong with my room’s air conditioning. I was hearing strange sounds and I nearly froze for a few minutes.”

“Wow. That’s a coincidence. My air conditioning is messed up, too.”

“Seriously?” I felt so much better. “I was starting to think I was crazy.”

“No, you’re not.”

He was wearing a soft cambric work shirt and a pair of retro style jeans. I tried to make a joke. “Now I’m starting to think I’m overdressed.”

He looked me over and gave me a wink. “You’re the best dressed woman I’ve ever seen.”

“Wedding at the winery.”

“Gotcha.”

“Thank you, by the way. For the compliment,” I said.

“Well, I’d say more, but I don’t want to be creepy.”

I was foolishly pleased. Me, the veteran of dozens of dinner parties where empty flattery is practically on the menu. “No, my room was creepy. It wasn’t just cold. I seriously thought I heard someone in there. Kind of... under the bed,” I faltered.

He looked concerned. “Would you like me to check it

over?”

I stuck out my hand. “I’m Tricia.”

He looked confused, but he rallied. “Justin.” His hand was callused and dry. I felt a little tingle at his touch.

“Good. Now that we’ve been introduced, I can invite you in. Mama said I should never let strangers into my bedroom.”

I loved his laugh. It was rich and deep, and he didn’t try to suppress it. “Your mama is a wise woman,” he said.

I stood back to let him enter. He checked the vent, under the furniture, and even opened the window to look outside. Everything was normal for a crisp fall evening.

Justin looked at me and shrugged. That was the exact moment we heard the woman’s voice, and this time there was no question of vents. The sound was all around us.

“ONLY A FOOL WOULD STAY ALONE TONIGHT.”

I don’t remember moving, but I found myself pressed against his broad, warm chest with his arms around me. “Tell me you heard that,” I said. I tried to sound cool, but my voice cracked on the last word.

“I did. And I hope this doesn’t make me look like less of a man, but I agree with the voice.”

I was shaking. “This is ridiculous. I don’t believe in ghosts. Someone’s just playing a joke.”

“Hell of a joke,” he said. He rocked me back and forth, his own hands quivering just a bit.

I became aware of just how perfectly our bodies fit together. “If it makes you feel better, you don’t seem like less of a man to me.”

He smiled a little. “Thanks. But I didn’t mean to invite myself to stay. I’m just next door, I could hear you if you got into any difficulty.”

His hair was in his eyes, and I reached up to smooth it back. When I touched the soft skin of his cheek, I felt another little jolt of electricity go up my arm. I shivered. “No,” I said. “I could use

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some company.”

“We could go to the parlor, if you wanted,” he said.

I didn’t move. “We could.”

Justin brought his own hand up to my hair. I felt the strands catch on the rough skin of his palms. He stroked my head for a moment, with a tentative look on his face. I smiled.

“You’re too manly to use lotion on your hands. They’re awfully rough.”

“Horse farm.”

“Gotcha.”

We grinned at each other. There was nothing tentative about the way he moved his hand down to my chin, and tilted my face up to meet his kiss.

Maybe it was the adrenaline following the scare, but his kiss nearly overwhelmed me. And I gave in. My heart was pounding, and I pressed myself against the whole length of his body. I didn’t try to keep my balance. His strong arms kept me close.

His tongue was hot against mine, probing and thrusting. I opened my mouth wider to encourage him, and he made a low throaty sound in response. He pulled his lips away only to put them on my throat and down to the soft flesh where my shoulder met my neck. I arched my back and moaned.

“That feels wonderful, Justin. Don’t stop.”

“You smell so good. You taste even better.”

His hands so far had remained chastely on my back. I reached for one and put it firmly on my breast. This time he made a louder sound. I felt his cock grow stiff and hard against me. He shifted his hips away.

“No. No, please stay.”

He looked at me with wide eyes. “I don’t want you to think-”

“I don’t. It’s my idea.” I wrapped my arms around his waist and pulled our bodies close. “I’m a big girl, Justin. What do we have to lose?”

Kathleen Dienne

“You’re an incredible woman. Where’d you say you lived?”

“I didn’t. New York.” I unbuttoned the top of his shirt.

Mmm. Chest hair. The last lover I’d had was a waxer. I ran my fingers through the crisp curls.

“That’s too bad for me,” he managed to say. “It’s... hard for me to get away from here.”

“We’d better make the most of this night, then.”

“Agreed.”

His mouth met mine again. Somehow he got my dress off, and his own shirt over his head. I could smell leather on him, and soap. I ran my hands from his chest to his powerful shoulders and back, feeling the muscles ripple and shift.

Justin’s hand returned to my breast. He rubbed and squeezed, and his callused thumb on my nipple nearly made me faint. He caught me in time, and laid me on the bed. But before I could catch my breath, he knelt down between my legs. His fingers on my pussy were gentle, a glorious contrast to his rough tongue against my clit. He licked back and forth until I started to whimper his name.

“Justin... oh, Justin. Yes. Please,” I cried.

He stood up and pulled my hips to the edge of that lovely tall bed. I had no idea how he’d gotten his pants off without my noticing, but he’d managed, and gotten a condom on besides. The bed was exactly the right height for him to enter me while standing.

He paused with the head of his cock against my opening. He put his thumb gently on my throbbing clit. “Is this what you want, Tricia?”

“Yes.”

“It’s been so long for me. Tell me you want it.” He pushed a fraction of an inch into my body.

“I want it. God, I want it. Please, please fuck me, Justin.”

He groaned as he slid all the way into me. He was as thick and long as my favorite toy, and I tried to concentrate on

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matching his deep, even thrusts.

He noticed. "No, you gorgeous girl. Don't do anything. Just feel." He took his thumb away from my clit, and when I moaned in protest, he put his palm down and rubbed my whole pussy mound in firm, hard circles.

He timed the circles with his thrusts, and picked up speed. Soon all I knew was his cock filling me, and then I came.

The waves of sensation flooded out from my core, all the way to my toes. I rode those waves again and again until they ebbed and faded.

I opened my eyes. "Wow."

"Thank you."

I grabbed him and pulled him down on top of me. "Anytime," I mumbled.

Before I knew it we were snuggled together in the bed. "I wish this was for more than just one night," he said in a wistful voice.

"Give me your email address in the morning," I said, half asleep. He didn't answer except to tighten his embrace. I closed my eyes and sent a little thought of gratitude to whatever trick of acoustics threw that strange voice into my room.

The Blue Ridge morning with its cornflower blue sky was better than anything I could see in Manhattan, and my first thought was that maybe I wouldn't mind visiting again. I rolled over to share that with Justin.

But he was gone. Only the dent in the pillow next to mine and the sweet soreness between my legs were proof that anyone had been in my room at all.

I bounced up and into the shower anyway. He was probably in his room.

When I went to knock on the door next to mine, I realized it was a housekeeping closet. I frowned in confusion. I could have sworn he said he was staying next door, and my room was

Kathleen Dienne

between this closet and the outside wall.

I was feeling a little embarrassed when I got to the front desk. "Any messages for me?" I asked the middle aged clerk.

She gave me a sharp look. "No, hon, I'm afraid not," she said slowly.

I thought I understood her expression, but I didn't care. I'd never see her again, and I had to ask. "Did anyone with dark hair, kinda tall, check out this morning?"

Her pity was even more overt. "Oh, sweetie. No, he... He isn't a guest at all, really."

Now I understood. "Well, that's probably for the best," I said briskly, as I signed the bill. "By the way, my air conditioning came on full blast last night, even though it was nice and cool outside. The maintenance man knows."

"Thanks for telling me."

I turned to leave, but I couldn't leave things well enough alone. I looked at the woman. "Please don't be angry at your maintenance man for being in my room. And please tell him I'm sorry I didn't see him this morning to say goodbye."

"I'm afraid I can't do that," said the woman. She came around the desk and sat me down on the couch by the fireplace. She took a deep breath. "This inn is haunted," she said in a rush.

I laughed. "So I'd heard."

"There's a woman ghost, and she's always laughing and taunting people. It's not just her, though. I personally have seen children wearing pinafores and a Civil War soldier."

"Really?" I tried to be polite. I made a mental note to tell Allison to come down here and make a friend.

"Justin is my favorite, though."

"What did you say?" My face and hands went cold.

"Justin. He's very sweet."

"Oh?" I said weakly.

"You're lucky to have seen him at all. We usually just hear him, because he only materializes on the anniversary of his

Just One Bite: Ghost Beside Me
death. Good looking boy, too.”

I felt an almost hysterical giggle bubble up from my chest.
“He is. Was. Ha, yes, anyway, how do you know —”

“I was here when the fire tore through the east wing back in October of ‘75. The people across the hall from him were nearly overcome by smoke, but Justin got ‘em free. The lady cried out that their little dog was still in their room. Justin went back to try and save it right before the roof fell in.”

“My god.”

“So I’m sorry, honey, but when the sun comes up, Justin can’t be seen nor heard. But I think he’s hanging around, listening.” Just then, a phone rang in another room. The clerk gave me a motherly pat, and went to take the call.

I sat frozen on the couch. I felt a little breeze on my cheek, almost a kiss. And then the room was empty.

THE END

Fangs, Fur, and Fae

by Marie Harte

Devon Meadows held perfectly still in the dark corner of the empty bedroom, willing herself invisible. It had long been rumored in her family that the women of her bloodline could do amazing things during times of crises. Either she'd been adopted, or this wasn't enough of a crisis to merit panic magic.

She didn't fade into the woodwork as she'd hoped. Her next best choice would be to escape the second floor and hide somewhere else until daybreak, when the moon disappeared. The mansion had enough rooms to conceivably hide herself, except that her scent carried to the maniacs after her. The darkness didn't help any, because her pursuers could see just as well at night as they did during the day. The genes of vampire and wolf shifter had blended together to create a most powerful predator. Or predators--considering the dangerous brothers hunting her.

Her heart pounded like thunder, and she tried a muting spell to camouflage her presence from the marauders stalking her like a walking filet.

"Gotcha."

She shrieked as Alistair Drake grabbed her and flung her over his shoulder.

"Dammit! Let me go!"

A large arm wrapped around her thighs and held her close. The man was like steel. No chance breaking free from his grip, not without some unworldly help.

Just One Bite: Fangs, Fur, and Fae

Devon concentrated. "Mother Maker, bring me—oomph." She suddenly found herself pinned against the wall, nose to nose with a very angry, sexy, and determined vamp-shifter.

"Not another word." Alistair glared at her with enough heat to melt the icecaps. And the frigid hold on her sex drive.

Devon could have ignored his anger, but the carnal need in his dark eyes stirred an answering response deep within her.

He inhaled and groaned. "I knew it. You *do* want us."

Before he could gloat, she kned him right between the legs and shoved him away.

He fell and cupped himself while she scrambled to escape.

"No way am I taking on *three* of you," she emphasized and left the room, heading for the stairs. Best friends or not, Devon had no intention of mating with the three hungry hybrids. She didn't want permanence yet. Fae didn't stray, and she wanted to live a little before making babies, or in the case of the Drakes, puppies--whatever.

She raced to the stairs, planning to go down, when Lachlan, Alistair's brother, appeared at the base.

"There you are. We're holding dinner for you, Dev." He smiled, showing bright white fangs. Then the lights went out, and she seriously freaked.

Muttering an incantation, Devon threw up a magical wall between her and Lachlan and hastened up another flight of stairs. So far, she had Lachlan trapped on the first floor, Alistair incapacitated on the second... With any luck, Douglas, the third Drake brother, was still sitting in the kitchen below.

She crossed her fingers and looked around for the attic, needing a place she could ward. From what she remembered, the amount of cedar up there would make her spells powerful enough to withstand vampires, shifters, and anything in between.

She couldn't understand it. She'd been friends with the triplets for years. Alistair, Lachlan and Douglas made her laugh, rage, and once cry. Though to be fair, that occasion had been in third grade, when Douglas accused her of having cooties.

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Sunday dinners had been a regular occurrence. Until a few months ago, when they'd turned mate-hungry.

Moonlight streamed through a glass window, and she shuddered at the sight of the mating moon in ascension. If one of them caught her, she'd lose her waistline for good. She just knew it.

The Drake family had a penchant for breeding. Vampires were sterile, yet their father had not only impregnated their mother, he'd gotten the werewolf with child—children--when the two species were supposedly incompatible.

The rumble of a low snarl made the hair on the back of her neck stand on end, and she scrambled for the attic. Unfortunately, the door leading there was locked.

"Don't run, Devon," she heard Lachlan yell. "We're not gonna hurt you."

"I might," Alistair roared. "Christ, Devon. My balls? What's wrong with you?"

"With me?" she yelled back. "I came over for dinner, not to get knocked up by the Drake demons!"

She knew how much the name irritated them but couldn't help it. She loved the idiots, but that didn't mean she planned to settle down now. Devon had plans. And being tied down to one man didn't signify, let alone being tied down to three. Maybe in another few years, after her business got off the ground and she'd played the field a bit, she might consider marriage. Maybe.

A low pop jolted her body, and she realized one of them had broken through her magical barrier. She heard the rush of claws against the hardwood floors. Footsteps drawing closer...

Hell.

Fae in, Fae out, take me to my fate without. Hold back naught, give what's right, protect me from all harm tonight. She concentrated on the attic and in seconds found herself in the large room space barricaded behind a magically reinforced door.

"Thank God." Devon sighed and slumped to the floor in a heap of nerves. She closed her eyes and covered her face as she

Just One Bite: Fangs, Fur, and Fae
recovered from the energy drain of her spell.

Why her? Women loved the Drakes. The guys were huge, handsome, and powerful. One at a time could be overwhelming for a less confident girl, but all three at once? And for a Fae with business goals, furred and fanged wasn't an option. Or so she kept telling herself.

She admitted she'd had a few harmless fantasies. Who wouldn't? But she was almost family. They'd grown up together. She'd watched Lachlan learn how to ride a bike. Had helped Douglas learn to read Fae. And she'd been the only one Alistair had confided in when he'd first shifted and had accidentally eaten the family cat.

Hell, she—

The sudden silence dawned on her. As did the notion she was no longer alone. Cautiously easing off the floor, she glanced around. Three sets of glowing yellow eyes blazed at her from the darkness.

“Oh shit.”

Well, she'd done her best, but it hadn't taken more than Alistair to hold her while the others stripped her naked.

Devon should have been embarrassed and would have been if she hadn't been so mad.

“Let me go!”

“You are so fucking sexy.” Lachlan shook his head and licked his lips. “I'm really sorry we didn't think of this sooner.”

“Me too,” Douglas agreed. “She's so white she's sparkly. I can't believe it's taken you two this long to see what I've known for years.”

Devon gasped. “Dammit. Alistair, cut it out.”

The brute kept pulling her back against him, and each time he did, she felt the swell of his erection through his jeans against her lower back. Instead of alarming her, his size made her wet.

She heard him inhale and thought her face might burn clean

off.

"I'm not gonna last," Alistair growled and leaned down to clamp his sharp teeth over her shoulder. He didn't pierce the skin, but his hold remained firm and arousing as hell.

"Brush her hair back again," Douglas said as he stood in front of her, arms akimbo, looking like a raiding conqueror.

"No, don't," she begged. God, if they knew how sensitive her ears had become, she'd be a goner for sure.

Alistair pulled her hair back and exposed the pointed tips.

Lachlan stripped out of his clothes in a hurry. "You smell good, Dev."

She moaned, wishing more of it was from embarrassment than arousal.

"You really do." Douglas winked and gave her a wicked grin. "You smell...wet."

Alistair bit harder, and the press of his teeth against her unmarred flesh caused an answering flare of magic to draw him closer.

She felt another burst tingle through her body before Alistair pressed his hot, naked cock against her back. Douglas' clothes had vanished as well.

"Thanks, Dev. I needed that," Douglas said as his brother ground against her.

Hell, she'd lost control of her magic. Now they'd think she wanted them when she really wanted to escape. She just wished her body would get on board with her ten year plan.

"I've been waiting for this for a long time," Douglas said with satisfaction.

She closed her eyes, trying to blot out her impending reality. Devon had a plan. She had a future filled with the freedom to answer to no one.

A hand brushed against her breast, and she opened her eyes to see the Drake brothers naked, aroused, and surrounding her.

Lachlan grinned and licked his incisors growing steadily

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longer. "Time to play, Dev. Ready or not, here we come."

Maybe if she could have lied to herself, she might have gotten a handle on her magic and poofed herself out of the room. But her secret fantasies had suddenly come to life, and Devon couldn't resist Douglas, Alistair and Lachlan looming over her while she sat helpless in the middle of a large-ass bed. *In the attic*. The bastards had planned the whole thing.

The play of candlelight over their sculpted muscle and feral smiles only added to the erotic tension filling the air.

"I'm not sure what you think is going to happen here." She wished she didn't sound so breathless. "But I'm not in the mood to mate with anyone."

Alistair held his cock in hand. Good God, the man was seriously hung. They all were. "Mate or not, I'm fucking you tonight. And you're more than willing to take it, aren't you?"

Lachlan looked more wolf than vampire as he stared at the moist place between her legs. "You're creaming for us, definitely hungry for it."

"I tell you what, Dev. Just give me a kiss," Douglas suggested. "If you still want to leave after that, we'll let you go."

Alistair scowled. "What? Hell no--"

"Shut up." Lachlan nudged him in the side.

Devon blew out a breath. "That's cheating." Honestly, did Douglas believe she'd even be able to speak after a taste of that sexy mouth?

She scooted back in the bed when he joined her, too nervous to be shy about her nudity. His breath touched her leg and her nipples, already hard, tightened painfully.

"You're so sexy." Douglas caught her ankle and dragged her down to him. He loomed over her, caging her between his body heat and his massive arms on either side of her.

She licked her lips, trying to prepare herself, but Douglas didn't approach her mouth. Instead he zeroed in on her breasts.

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“Douglas, wait--” She sucked in a breath and gripped the bedspread beneath her when Douglas took her nipple in his hot, wet mouth. “Oh, God.”

“There we go,” Lachlan sighed and nudged Douglas over.

Douglas made room, and Lachlan sucked her other nipple, nipping with arousing bites.

Devon held them to her, tangling her hands in their silky hair.

They were so beautiful. Dark haired and dark eyed, but each so very different from the other. Lachlan, the charmer. Alistair, so dominant. Douglas, the deep thinker. Yet every one of them was a man ridden hard by desire.

Douglas’s tongue lashed her nipple with rough licks as he tormented her breast, while Lachlan sucked and blew over her flesh, seducing her into a mindless puddle of need.

“Open your eyes and look at me,” Alistair growled.

She did and saw him stroking his cock, the long, thick shaft ruddy with arousal.

He held it out to her, offering it as his due. “You hurt me, Dev. What will you give me to make it all better?”

She wanted to tell him to kiss her ass. But watching him touch himself made her mouth water. An internal *click* locked her in place.

“Whatever you want,” she heard herself say, wondering at her sudden submission.

Douglas and Lachlan froze then backed away.

Everyone watched as Alistair approached the bed. “Come to me.”

He waited by the edge, and Devon had a sudden urge to crawl to him on her hands and knees, to service him any way he wanted.

Fae desires broke over her in waves, and she shuddered as her vision sharpened to acute detail. She saw so much more as she looked at these men. Her friends were beasts, a mixture of

Just One Bite: Fangs, Fur, and Fae vampire and shifter with a need for blood, power, and surprisingly, acceptance. Her heart pounded as she saw what she'd always known. They'd always been hers and they always would be, if she had the courage to reach for them.

No one spoke as Devon slowly made her way to him. She took his cock in hand, and he hissed at the contact.

"You're pretty," she whispered and licked his slit, startled at his sweetness.

"Oh fuck. I need to mark you."

"Yeah," Douglas breathed.

"All over her," Lachlan agreed.

And then Alistair's hands were guiding her closer, and she was taking him inside her mouth.

The thick wedge of his cockhead slipped between her lips and pushed deeper.

She stroked him with her tongue, suddenly hungry for him.

Her little teeth grew Fae-sharp, and she raked them over his shaft with a delicious bite.

Alistair's hands tightened in her hair, and he howled his delight. "Yes. Yes, Dev. Suck it. Bleed me, baby. Yeah."

Then other hands touched her, petting, fondling. Biting. Someone pried her ass cheeks apart and licked her hole. The tongue pressed closer, and excited, she sucked Alistair harder, laving him with her tongue.

She knew he tried to be gentle, but his thrusts stabbed her with rough pleasure as he angled deeper.

She was briefly aware of the noises behind her, and then a cool, slick finger replaced the tongue in her ass. The burn stretched her, reminding her that though her experiences into anal play had been fun, no one had ever been as big as the Drakes.

"Fuck, Devon. I'm coming, baby. Swallow it all," Alistair ordered around grunts and gasps as he shuttled between her lips.

"Take him, take me," Douglas rasped and removed his

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finger, only to push the head of his thick, lubed cock inside her. Slowly, deliberately, he probed and prodded past her discomfort and pain until he seated himself fully inside her.

Alistair gave a cry and jetted down her throat, the taste of him changing her, making her hungry for him. For *them*.

“Oh, Christ. Devon.” Douglas’ claws gouged her hips, but it was nothing compared to the sheer pleasure she felt when Lachlan leaned close to whisper kisses and praise against her ear. He fingered one pointy tip, and she shuddered, squeezing Douglas tight.

“Baby, I love you,” Alistair wheezed as he withdrew from her mouth. “Always have.”

He knelt in front of her to kiss her hard.

Then he disappeared and Douglas pulled out.

Lachlan lay down on the bed. “Ride me, Dev.” He held his arms out to her, and she willingly met him. With one hard tug, he pulled her over him, satisfying her empty womb.

“Lean forward.”

She did and felt Douglas against her ass again.

He pushed inside, making her feel so full she couldn’t move.

“That’s the sexiest thing I’ve ever seen,” Alistair whispered. “You’re it, Dev. You’re the one.”

The moonlight speared them, painting a picture of future tomorrows. Douglas pushed when Lachlan retreated, and Alistair watched over them, his eyes caressing the way his brothers touched her, past her skin deep inside her soul.

“I can’t wait. I’m sorry.” Douglas rotated his hips, prodding deeper.

He stiffened and growled, then bit her shoulder hard, absorbing her blood as he shuddered and came inside her. He withdrew, and Lachlan rolled her over, so that she lay on her back while he controlled his thrusts.

He pounded into her, never blinking as he stared into her

Just One Bite: Fangs, Fur, and Fae eyes. “You’re mine, finally, Dev. My little Fae.”

“And mine.” Douglas caressed her arm.

“And mine,” Alistair repeated.

Lachlan shifted his pelvis and grazed her clit repeatedly as he fucked her. Until she couldn’t hold on any longer, love and lust mixed into a heady combination she could no longer refuse.

Devon cried out as she came, and she dimly registered Lachlan groaning her name as he jetted inside her.

Once finished, he pulled her up into his lap. They remained joined with her legs around his waist, his cock buried inside her. He bit her next to Douglas’s mark and feasted on her blood. Alistair nipped her shoulder over his own bite, drawing a sip more. And Douglas stroked her back, soothing her with calming words.

“My spell worked,” she said dumbly, remembering what she’d cast for. The words *fate*, *right*, and *protect her from all harm* came to mind.

Douglas grinned. “Good. Now we just need to say our magic words to finish it.”

“What words?” Devon still tried to catch her breath, hard to do when the three of them grew hard pressed up against her.

“We love you,” they said as one and waited.

“Oh hell.” Devon blinked hard, knowing she’d found her fate. “I love you too, all three of you.”

Wide, toothy smiles made the night that much brighter. And as the brothers prepared to fuck her again, they promised to cherish her, to love her, and to protect her.

“I’d also like to add that when my hands are full of my new business and fae-wolf-vamp babies, you three are going to be right in the thick of things.”

Alistair shrugged. “No problem. With three daddies and a mother to love them, our kids will never want for anything. They’ll have the best of all worlds.”

“The very best.” Devon smiled at her mates. “Fangs, fur,

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and Fae. And the magic of love.”

Secured Heart

by Yvette Hines

Strolling around the room one more time to check with his men and ensure everyone was in place and everything was secure before he left, Kal stepped to Dwayne, the man in charge of the evening.

“Okay, Dwayne, everything appears to be under control. I’m heading out.” Normally, he wouldn’t have come at all with Dwayne leading the team for the night but this project was a big one. The success of tonight’s event would mean more contracts of this caliber. Tyler, Bridge and Anderson law office was the largest firm in the city. They handled all the high-profile white collar crimes around the state. Having Mayor Davy present was an extra bonus. The fact that he’d snagged this contract was just proof his company was succeeding in a major way. In the next few weeks, he would be hiring four more security people to add to his team of twelve.

“Got it, boss man. Everything will be fine.” Dwayne, his good friend and pride member had left his job as athletics coordinator at a local recreation center to work with him. He was a six-three, dark-skinned black man that was as wide as he was tall.

Patting Dwayne on the shoulder, Kal confirmed, “I know you got it all under control. I didn’t doubt it for a moment.” Glancing around, he whispered, “I just came here to show face.”

“And what a lovely mug shot it is.” Dwayne’s bantering tone matched Kal’s as he added, “A face only relatives and pride

members could love.”

Chuckling, Kal nodded. He and Dwayne’s family had lived in Albuquerque most of their lives, only five hours away from their *Amofeli* pride’s land in Timberon. “Well, I’ll see you tomorrow at the offi--”

“Sorry, I’m late, everyone.” Burt Tyler, the lead partner who started the law firm twenty-seven years ago with his father, came in with a petite black woman.

Presently, she was about five-eight in her three inch heels and her skin was a soft brown with red undertone, like Georgia clay. She was perfection, every feature designed to attract and hold a gaze, in its perfect symmetry. Her long ebony hair cascaded down around her shoulders in layers, tempting a man to bury his hands in it.

Kal’s hands itched to do just that as the desire, he once believed dormant, flared up as hot and scalding as ever. He watched her smile and work the room beside the stout lawyer barely an inch above her in height. Her short black dress haltered around her neck, conservatively revealing the swell of her breast. The garment hugged her slim form and ended mid-thigh, giving the illusion her toned legs went on and on. Lana Grieson.

Fuck. What the hell was she doing here? With him? Kal took a step along the outside perimeter hall.

The hairs on the nape of his neck rose and his scalp tingled seeing another man touch her. He had to remind himself that this was not the time or place. His business was at stake if he did something foolish like shift and take out the town’s leading lawyer. It was hard to tamp down the urge to swipe the older man’s head off with his claws. If he used his concealment trait, it would be hard for them to pin it on him.

Dwayne, who knew what Lana had once meant to him, must have clearly sensed his intent. His friend grabbed his arm keeping him from following the couple. “Man, this may be a good time for you to head out.” Raising an eyebrow, Dwayne spoke firmly. “As you planned.”

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Glancing first at his arm and then up at his friend, Kal stifled the hiss rising in his throat. He knew Dwayne was right. This contract was too damn important to Elite Expert Security. Even knowing that, he couldn't walk away.

"I'll be fine. In a few minutes I'll go."

Dwayne let go of his arm, but the second eyebrow arching high spoke volumes. "Well, at least get your hair under control. You look feral."

With a broad, cocky smile, Kal finger-combed his hair back into place. Evidently, more than just the hair on his neck had risen when he saw his mate with someone else.

"Excuse me for a moment, Mr. Tyler, Mayor Davy. I'm going to powder my nose and check on a few things." Lana smiled at her boss and the people gathering round the two influential men. It had been an hour since they'd arrived and she'd smiled and chatted like a good girl. She hated being in the spotlight. She preferred to hang out in the background coordinating things and people.

"Don't worry, Lana, everything is going perfectly tonight." Mr. Tyler reached out and squeezed her hand. "Of course, I didn't expect otherwise. Relax."

Allowing a small laugh to grace her lips, she commented, "Now, you know it's my nature to worry over things. That's why you keep me around."

"It's true," he said to the small group as he sipped his bourbon. "Not much gets past our Lana. She's sharp."

Lana walked away enjoying the pride in her boss's words. Meandering through the crowd, she touched bases with a few people, ensured everything was going well.

Stepping down a hallway, she nodded at one of the security men and continued on towards the bathroom. There were several patio doors open wide allowing a soft early summer breeze to waft through the rooms. Taking a deep breath along the way, she enjoyed the solitude of the area. Most people were congregated

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in the large ballroom and used the bathroom closer to the front so she had privacy and a moment to herself.

A few steps from the bathroom, past the last set of French doors, someone grabbed her arm and dragged her out onto the terrace. Before she could scream, her back was against the cool stucco wall and Kal Walters stood before her, his arms caging her in.

“What the hell are you doing here with Tyler, Lana?” he demanded.

Shock kept her speechless for a few moments. However, it didn’t stop the heat from curling low in her belly. It had been over four years since she’d seen Kal. He looked good, real good in his buttoned down shirt and slacks. His chestnut brown hair fell in waves over his forehead emphasizing the golden amber cat eyes. He’d always stayed fit, his *Amofeli* genetics keeping his body honed to perfection. Kal had a set of broad shoulders that made a woman want to curl up against them. She had done so many times in the past during late night study sessions.

“It’s none of your business, Kal.” Placing her hands against his chest she tried to push him away. He was as unmovable as a Mack truck.

He glanced down at her hands, then to her face. “You get enough of Paul Stellar? Now you’re on to the next old man?”

Gritting her teeth, she forced out, “For your information, Paul divorced me.” Paul Stellar had been the CEO of Turner Corporation, one of the biggest Mid-West shipping companies. They had their hands in everything that came through the Gulf and its owner had been almost twenty years her senior. She’d been young and stupid and allowed him to wine and dine her, convince her that he was falling for her. If she’d done her research instead of dropping out of University of New Mexico her junior year, throwing away the academic scholarship she’d work hard to gain, and heading to the first Justice of the Peace Paul took her. She’d have known it was Stellar’s M.O. Young naïve girls. Promise them the world at his side, marry them, then dump them when they’d outlived their usefulness and he was off

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to the next perky thing. Coming from a low-income family, she'd snapped onto his bait without caring what her friends said. What Kal had tried to tell her.

"What?" His eyes widened with shock.

"Yea, nose. He tossed me over for some twenty-four year old after a year and three months." She shifted her gaze passed his shoulders, taking in the night lights of Albuquerque, not wanting to see the pity in his eyes.

When he didn't respond, she asked, "What? No 'I told you so'?"

"Well, I did." He brushed her hair over her shoulder.

She rolled her eyes, trying not to think about the light shivers racing along her spine at his gentle touch.

"Have you set your mark on Tyler as husband number two?"

Shoving hard this time, she step away from him and faced the railing. "Stuff it, Kal. You don't know anything. I'm not some whore for hire."

"Are you sure? Because that's what it looks like to me." He growled low, his lips pressed against her ear.

Years ago, in college, she'd thought she had a chance with him. That Kal may be the one. One night she'd gone to his apartment and had seen a large cat looking like a North American Lynx leap out of his window and head toward the Sandia Mountains. She'd paced his living room waiting for his return. When he did, he explained to her all about his kind and how the *Amofeli*, shifter cats mated for life.

She'd wanted to be his soul mate. That wasn't the case. In college he'd picked off every easy bimbo and party girl that shook her big breasts in his face.

"Just leave it alone, Kal." Her throat tightened with emotion and she took a deep breath to calm herself. Seeing him was bringing up old hurts and pains, most of them she'd brought on herself. "You didn't care enough years ago when I needed a friend and you hopped on the first plane to Afghanistan to make

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your fortune like so many civilians.” She glanced at him, then looked away again. “I needed you then and you stayed away for two years.”

Kal could hear the pain in her voice. He knew back then it had been wrong to leave without talking to her. After college he’d gotten a job with his criminal justice degree, but had heard about the opportunity to work in the Middle East doing base and facility security, earning up to seventy thousand a year. He applied, got the position and was gone before the ink dried on his resignation to his employer. The mountainous region allowed his cat a lot of area to play. When he returned, he started his security business with Dwayne. Even though his rash decision had paid off, he’d only taken the chance to get out of the city. A city that enjoyed plastering pictures and gossip about Paul Stellar’s business and his new plaything, Lana.

Yea, he’d royally fucked up with her in college. He’d known he cared about her and took their friendship for granted as he screwed his way through undergrad with every available piece of ass. He’d barely learned to control his shifting and his mating gene had erupted to full capacity making his sexual urges indiscriminate. However, he knew enough to keep clear of Lana on the worst days. By the time he’d got his cat under control, stopped tomcatting around and gone after Lana, his mate, it was late. She’d met Paul Stellar at a function put on by the Dean.

He wouldn’t make the same mistake twice. Staring at her, he watched the wind lift her hair away from her body.

“Do you need me now?” he asked.

Turning her back on him, she stepped away from the rail. “I have a job to do. I don’t have time fo--”

Grabbing her by the waist, he pulled her body against his. “Answer me, Lana,” he commanded. “Do. You. Need. Me. Now?” He bit out each word slowly. The question was more than about a friendship, but about desires as well.

His cat was so in tune with her that he could feel the

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quivering breath she took. The intimate contact didn't allow them to hide anything. He was sure she could feel his body's response to her as well. His cock was pressing into her back, insistent.

She turned, her brown eyes darkened and he could see her need clearly, before she admitted the truth. "Yes."

"What's Tyler to you?" He had to know. If this man was her next meal ticket, he wanted to know, had to know who his competition was. This time he couldn't walk away from her. He refused to walk away from her.

"He's my boss. I went back to school and became a paralegal and worked my way up to his assistant. I not only help with cases, but I organize the firm's important functions, like this--"

Seizing her mouth, he kissed her deep. He didn't need to hear anything else. Slipping his tongue into her mouth, he tasted her. It wasn't enough. A few steps forward brought them against the wall. Lana kissed him just as passionately in return, her hands fisting in his hair. The clatter of her small purse striking the cement floor didn't stop them.

Reaching down, he placed his hand beneath her dress and palmed her sex. Her warm wet heat greeted him, evidence of her desire. He squeezed and captured her moan in his mouth. Breaching the seam of her panties, he fingered her stiff clit and she arched toward him.

He broke the kiss. "I've waited years. Denied myself what I wanted. You, Lana."

Panting, she declared, "I want you, Kal."

"I know this isn't the time or place, Lana, but I swear if you try and stop me, I'll fuck you so hard you'll scream and everyone down that hall will hear you."

"Don't stop."

Enough said. Snatching up the hem of her dress to her waist, he made quick work of her underwear as he moved them to the side and undid the fastenings of his pants. Within seconds

Yvette Hines

he was freed. She gazed at his cock. Her hand took hold, fisting his length and pumped several times. It wasn't enough. He pushed her hand away and pressed his cock against her pussy.

He deepened the kiss once again, reducing the sounds of her cries and his groans. Placing her legs around his waist, he cupped her ass and thrust into her tight moist folds. They created a beat and cadence all their own. The world stood still, the breeze stopped blowing and everything around them disappeared. Nothing else mattered but them, that moment.

Feeling her wet pussy clutch his length made him purr. The erotic vibrations from his body encompassed them both.

Moaning at the sensation, she was the first to complete. Her sex fisted his cock and pumped him into sensuous rapture.

Their breathing was heavy, both of them trembling as the world came alive once again.

In the distance, they could hear someone calling her name. He watched her eyes widen with trepidation, recognition of the occasion that brought them both there.

"That's Mr. Tyler."

Kal barely had time to camouflage them before her boss stepped out on another patio four feet from theirs. Normally, his chameleon-like ability only allowed for him to blend into his surrounding, but because he was still intimately connected to Lana, it masked her as well.

Together they watched Mr. Tyler scan the balconies. He looked one way, then turned and glanced in their direction. Kal had no worries. He knew that unless Tyler understood how to decipher the inconsistency of patterns he wouldn't see them.

Shrugging, Tyler walked back inside.

"No regrets," he whispered, then kissed her again before stepping back, ending the disguise.

They both righted their clothing. She stooped down and snatched up her forgotten purse. Digging frantically inside her clutch, she pulled out a small mirror and tube of lipstick. A Kleenex repaired the smeared make-up.

Just One Bite: Secured Heart

He couldn't help but be impressed at her efficiency at putting herself back together. Except for the haze of satisfaction in her eyes and the slight redness around her mouth, she looked presentable, untouched. He almost regretted the polished finish.

Giving him a beguiling smile, she turned to get to her boss before he discovered her whereabouts and with whom. That would really place a dent in his business.

Reaching out, he grabbed her hand before she crossed the threshold. "This is not finished between us, Lana." He kept his voice low.

She stepped back into the shadows where he stood. "I would be disappointed if it was."

Caressing her cheek, he asked, "How'd you get here?"

"My boss picked me up at the office." She brushed her thumb over his hand, still holding hers.

He searched her gaze. "How do you want to play this?"

Without hesitation, she informed him, "I'll tell my boss I have a ride home."

Her boss called her name again, closer this time.

"I'll meet you downstairs at the end of the evening," he confirmed. There was still a lot they needed to discuss.

"I'll be there, Kal." Slipping her hand out of his, she stepped into the bright corridor. Moments later he heard her say, "Sorry, Mr. Tyler, I was in my own world and lost track of time."

"I looked around out there and didn't see you." Confusion registered in his voice.

"Hmm, I must've blended into the darkness. Must be the dress."

Smiling at her words, Kal shifted into his feline form and leaped off the second floor balcony onto the manicured lawn. He had some time before he had to meet her and he'd use it wisely and go for a run. Tonight had been full of surprises and the mistakes of his past were being corrected. Now that Lana, his

Yvette Hines

mate, was back in his life, he couldn't wait to see what the future had in store for them.

Bite Me

by Jambrea Jo Jones

I don't care what anyone says. The first bite is always the best. The rush of the chase and the delicious taste of victory are much better than the same thing day in and day out.

So why do I keep coming back to *him*? I've had his blood. Nothing special there, just life sustaining, A-positive goodness.

Maybe it's because there is no fear in him. He likes when I stalk him and pouts when I'm away for too long. And I can never stay gone. He knows as well as I do that the thirst for hunting others is waning. I won't admit it. I maintain that it would be boring to settle down with one donor. He claims he would be more than a donor, but I refuse to agree with him.

Tonight he is sitting in front of a fire in his home. I've been invited inside many times, but I want to sit outside his window and look at him. I remember another night, much like this one, when I watched him. He was with a group of friends and I knew the instant I saw him that he would be my prey that night.

I waited until the bar closed and he left his friends. I followed him to his house and the moment he left his car, I crowded him against the door and sank my fangs into his neck. No foreplay with me. I'm an eat and run kinda gal. But that night something changed. First, I'd expected a struggle. Granted I didn't do my usual build up—letting my quarry know they were being hunted—but the guy just stood there and allowed me to drink from him. His blood surged through my body and I felt more powerful than ever. The blood was normal and there was

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no reason for me to have the sensation that I could do anything, but I did.

Once I'd had enough, I backed away and prepared to leave but he stopped me.

"You know, you could be polite and at least ask my name before you vamp out of here."

That gave me pause. He shouldn't have been aware I was there. My brand of delight is usually forgotten moments after it happens. An ancient spell helped me with that. No need for my food to remember our encounter. That would cause all kinds of panic.

I had no idea what to say so I stepped back.

"Don't leave. Not yet. Tell me your name."

I never said a word that night. It would be days later before I returned and found out who he was.

Jordan Smith. A plain name to go with the ordinary blood. Color me bored, right? Wrong. Even his features were nothing to write home about. I mean, make no mistake, he had a body to die for. His muscles rippled with strength and I wanted to nibble on him all night. But with his brown hair and brown eyes he should have been unremarkable.

"Annemarie, I know you're out there. Stop sulking and come in out of the cold," Jordan called from the house.

He never even turned from the fire. He did things like that all the time. Maybe that was why I was intrigued. Was he a witch? No, he couldn't be. His blood would have tasted different. But he always knew when I was around.

I sighed and headed for the door. I did not stomp there like a reprimanded child. I was a grown woman doing this of my own volition, not because he told me to. Tonight, I would find out why his presence called to me. No fucking or sucking until I knew. I was putting my foot down this time.

"I don't sulk or get cold," I declared once I entered the house. I was proud of myself for not slamming the door.

Just One Bite: Bite Me

"If you say so. You've been gone too long." Jordan still didn't turn from his place on the couch.

"I shouldn't be here now," I countered.

"Then why are you here? Got an itch you want me to scratch or are you hungry?"

His question irritated me. Who the hell did he think he was? I'm a powerful being who could kill him between heartbeats. He should fear me.

"Why can't I erase me from your mind?"

"Ah, sweets. You haven't figured it out yet? I'm not surprised. Your kind doesn't like to acknowledge mine."

"Your kind? My kind?" This was confusing. "You're human."

"I am more than human. I'm your mate. A being created to be yours for eternity." He turned and smiled at me.

"Not. Possible. Vampires don't have mates. And even if I did, it wouldn't be *you*," I said with as much disdain as I could.

"It is and I am. You know the lore. Created as halves of a whole, a shifter and a vampire will mate and become one. The vampire will only want the shifter's blood, no longer needing to feed on humans. Most vamps run from it because they like variety," he said.

"That's just a stupid story passed on through the years. It isn't true," I insisted.

I didn't like the desperation in my tone. This couldn't be true. So focused on my thoughts and fears I didn't hear him approach me. I could only stand there as he wrapped his arms around me. I struggled to get free, but he was stronger than I realized.

"Haven't you felt the change? Your passion for the hunt has left you. That's why you show up more and more as the months go on. You want only me," Jordan whispered against my neck.

I shivered and closed my eyes. Canines scraped the juncture where shoulder met neck. It was both heaven and hell. The

Jambrea Jo Jones

sensation curled my toes. I didn't want to want this.

"I—I..." I couldn't speak. Jordan traced the teeth marks with his tongue.

"Shh, don't think. Feel, Annemarie. Let me love you," he coaxed.

I pulled as far away as I could. Love? We didn't have love. We had sex and feeding. That was it. It didn't matter that any time I stared into his dark brown eyes I wanted nothing more than to fall into them. It didn't matter that I reveled in the feel of his strong arms wrapped around me. It also didn't matter that I craved his kisses. Love wasn't my deal. In all my two-hundred and thirty-five years I had never felt love and I wasn't about to start now. No matter how his smell made me want to lick him from head to toe. Lust. That is what I had. A good old case of lust.

I allowed him to draw me back into his arms. I relaxed into his touch and let him lov—sex me up. Yes. I wasn't saying that word. Wasn't even going to think it.

This was my show and it was time I got it on the road. I shoved until Jordan stumbled against the couch. He gave me a cocky grin, but I was about to wipe it off his handsome face. I'd feed and leave. No reason to stay around. I wasn't about to start some weird paranormal family with shifter boy. Wait...shifter.

I pressed my body to his, holding him in place. Well, maybe he let me. I wasn't going to worry about it right now.

"So what do you shift into?" Not what I really wanted to ask, but it would do.

Jordan bucked his hips and let me feel his erection through his slacks. Damn, but he was tempting. I wanted to rip his clothes off and fuck his brains out. Maybe *then* he'd forget about me and this stupid notion of mates.

"A frog."

"*What?*"

He chuckled. "What do you think I change into? A wolf, my dear. I shift into a wolf."

Just One Bite: Bite Me

He was trying to distract me with humor and it was almost working. When he rose up enough to kiss me, I let him. When his hands grabbed my ass so he could grind against me, I was ready for action.

“Clothes off. Now, wolf boy.” I stood to take my dress off. The touch of skin to skin would soothe me like nothing else.

“We have time. Why must you always rush? I thought—”

“What? What did you think? That you would declare your love for me and tell me we were mates and I would fall at your feet and beg you to give me everything?” Now I was naked and pissed.

“Well—yeah. I did.”

“Your powers of persuasion aren’t that good. One, I don’t believe you and two—I don’t believe you.”

“I can prove it.” He winked at me.

No way was I going to admit we were mates, because it wasn’t true. I’d never met a vampire who had a mate. *Ever*.

I glared at him and put my hands on my hips. “Sure you can.” Disbelief laced my voice.

“Annemarie, have a little faith in me.” He held his hands up and moved closer. “Let me bite you and then you’ll see.”

“What the fuck? No. Not happening. In what universe would I let you bite me? I’m not baring my throat to you.”

“You did it earlier tonight.” He continued to creep closer.

“You’re not helping your case here, bud.” I backed away. For every step he took toward me, I took two in the other direction.

“Are you afraid?”

Fuck this. I wasn’t afraid of anything. Certainly not the mutt in front of me.

“Fine. Do it. But once this is over, I’m out of here for good.” I tilted my head, leaving my neck open to him. I stared into his eyes because no way did I want him to think this meant I was submitting to him.

Jambrea Jo Jones

“When you bite me, my cock gets hard and I want nothing more than to pound you into any surface available. I can feel you in every pore of my being. We are so connected that I can’t tell where you end and I begin. It will feel the same for you. And you’ll want to bite me back. You have no idea how difficult it’s been to stop myself from taking a sip. I knew you weren’t ready then, but it’s time now. I need you, Annemarie.” He’d crept closer with each word.

He’d mesmerized me enough that I leaned forward, anticipating the feel of his teeth breaking my flesh. I licked my lips at the images he put in my head. When his canines pierced my neck, I moaned. He drew my essence from my body and I melted. My knees would have buckled, but he clutched me close. My fangs extended. I craved him but I wanted him deep inside me when I fed.

His tongue soothed the wound at my throat and I knew it was healing already.

“Anything different, love?”

Where did that come from?

“What?” I said out loud.

“Can you feel our connection? Close your eyes and listen.”

That was Jordan speaking in my head. I looked at his face for a second before closing my eyes. And there he was. I could feel him in every part of my body as if we were one. My heart settled and my breathing calmed. I felt...at peace.

I don’t think I’ve ever felt this loved. That he would sacrifice himself for me if the need arose came through our bond. How was this possible? We were...mates.

I opened my eyes to see his intense gaze on my face. I knew he must see awe on mine because I couldn’t school my features like usual. I was out of my depth. I needed some control. He had to have sensed it because he backed away and took off his clothes. I followed him into his bedroom.

I pushed him onto the bed, reasserting control. He must have loved it because he was as hard as a rock. I licked my lips. I

Just One Bite: Bite Me

wanted a taste. I used my tongue to make a path to the juncture of his thigh and let my fangs take control. I sank into his vein and his heavenly blood flowed through me. For the first time, I was fully aware of the thing that made his blood unique. The thing that brought me back time and time again. That sense of me in him. My other half. It was right there in his blood. It always had been. I had just been too blind to see it. But at this point, I didn't really care. This moment was mine and I would take it and him.

Sealing the wound I'd created, I focused on his lovely cock. I sucked on the tip and used my hands to stroke his length.

Hands tugged at my hair. "Annemarie, please. I'm not going to last. Too excited. Please, baby." He tugged again and I released him.

I moved up his body, kissing every inch of skin I could find. He was mine. I paused to leave a mark on his stomach. Mine.

I finally got to his lips and they tasted sweeter than I remembered. Hands grabbed my hips and lifted me so I hovered over his cock. I was so wet I wouldn't have any problems gliding down. We both moaned when I settled fully on him. We continued to kiss, battling for control.

Never had I felt so wild. Usually I had total control. I see now that he let me think I was in charge. We were evenly matched and the struggled turned me on even more.

He sat up and I wrapped myself around him, moving my hips faster and faster. Jordan gripped my ass and squeezed. Our lovemaking turned feral, building inch by inch until we exploded. My orgasm raced through me. I growled when he bite my neck. Not to be out done I found the closest part of skin and bit him back. I couldn't stop trembling. My climax wouldn't let me go and I continued to milk his shaft inside me.

Finally, I collapsed on top of him. Jordan rolled so we were side by side and I snuggled in. Not something I was used to, but it felt right.

"This isn't going to be easy," I said after a few minutes.

Jambrea Jo Jones

“You think I don’t know that? It took me months to get you here.” Jordan chuckled.

“I feel—”

“Whole?” he asked.

I nuzzled his chest. This after part was kind of nice. Usually I ran off by this time. I’d missed a lot running from him. I didn’t know if I was ready for what was to come.

I shrugged. “I guess. Different for sure.”

I placed a hand on his chest and felt his heart beating. I couldn’t lay there for long. I placed a kiss on the spot over his heart and got out of bed. I paced as I warred with indecision.

“Don’t go,” he whispered.

He knew me so well. I almost didn’t hear him as I stalked the length of the room.

“I—I’ll stay. For now. But this is so much.” I could feel my anxiety rising but I turned to face Jordan. He held out his arms and I went to him.

“Don’t stress, Annemarie. I’m not asking you to move in tonight. I just want you to acknowledge us and know that I am here for you. When you’re ready we’ll talk.” He kissed my forehead.

I could feel his contentment. That’s what eased me. Something clicked into place. I bit my lip, nervous. Jordan soothed me with a hand stroking my back.

“I want to try.” I felt better as the words left my mouth.

“That’s all I ask. We’ll do this together. You’re my other half.” He took my lips in a fierce kiss and I welcomed it.

His other half. I could get used to that. Love practically glowed between us. I didn’t know if it was his or mine and I really didn’t care. My fear could bite me. The past months had gotten me to this place and I was happy.

“Mine,” I moaned against his lips.

“Yours,” he answered.

Something Wild

by Tracey H. Kitts

I opened my door and stepped out into the hot summer night. My car had always been reliable. I had no idea what was wrong. To say I was pissed was such an understatement that it made me laugh. The scenery was beautiful. There was nothing but trees and fields for miles, and not a house in sight.

I reached for my cell phone. "Searching for signal," it said.

"Shit. Why does this have to happen tonight?"

I was meeting a friend at his summer cabin. We'd been close since high school and he had someone he wanted me to meet. At first I was offended when he made the offer.

"I don't need you to fix me up."

"Nicole, it's been a year since the divorce, and you're still single. Obviously, you do."

He was right, and since his offer was made out of kindness, I accepted. It seemed like a good idea at the time. Now here I was in the middle of nowhere with no car, and no phone. To make matters worse, I was wearing heels.

I walked to the trunk, opened my overnight bag, and changed on the side of the road. Hell, no one was around to see. I exchanged my nice pants, blouse, and heels for some jeans, a t-shirt, and walking shoes.

According to the map I'd printed, I was five miles away from my friend's cabin. I sighed. At least this wasn't my first five-mile hike. I stuffed the map into my back pocket, locked

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any valuables in the trunk, and set off with only my keys and a flashlight for protection.

“This isn’t safe,” I told myself.

But, what choice did I have? In twenty minutes not a single car had passed. I could do the five miles in an hour, easy. Then Matt, my friend who was also good with cars, could drive back here with me and make this nightmare go away.

Despite the circumstances, the night was beautiful. Crickets chirped in what sounded like a chant, as if they were trying to communicate with the golden moon above.

The moon was so bright; I didn’t need the flashlight. Physical activity always helps me deal with stress. So the more I walked, the better I felt. Matt could fix my car, I was certain. I’d been too upset to even try to figure it out. Not that *me* looking under the hood would have done any good.

My clothes clung to me, both from the heaviness of the air and the sweat I had worked up. I checked my watch. I was making good time. I paused to stretch my legs and it was then I became aware of another presence besides mine.

Someone was watching me.

“Hello. Is anyone there?”

No reply.

“Just my imagination,” I said, hoping the sound of my voice would steady my nerves. I continued to talk to myself as I started walking again. “I shouldn’t watch so many horror movies. Zombies are *not* going to jump out of the bushes.”

The sound of a limb cracking made me jump. I held the flashlight like a club as I continued forward.

The crickets had stopped. Everything was quiet.

A fine tremor had begun in my hands by the time I reached the end of the road. I took out my map and confirmed which way to go.

Something leapt past me and I stumbled back, hitting my foot on a rock. As my butt smacked the pavement I cursed

Just One Bite: Something Wild

myself for acting like those stupid women in the movies. Were rocks just magically around when you tried to run?

What looked like a wolf leapt into the bushes just down from where I had fallen. Trees and darkness obstructed my view, so I couldn't be sure. But that wasn't possible. There were no wolves around here. Not in *Florida*.

Amber eyes glowed in the darkness, much too high up to be even a large dog. They moved toward me, moving ever higher, as if they were floating. Then I knew I must have fallen and hit my head. Because out of the woods stepped a gorgeous and completely naked man.

My first thought was, "*Crap. My red shirt even has a little hood.*" Later that would be funny. But right now I was terrified.

His amber eyes took me in with a glance. Hunger was evident in the look he gave me. But what he was hungry for I wasn't sure.

"I won't eat you," he said, his voice deep and rough.

"Well, that's a damn shame."

What had come over me? I decided to enjoy my obvious delusion. Hot, naked men don't just walk out of the woods. And there is no such thing as werewolves.

His lips curled in a slow, side-of-the-mouth grin and I noticed his short fangs. He moved toward me with grace a dancer would have envied. Thunder rumbled in the distance. Before I could even register the thought of a storm approaching, it began to rain.

Nothing could have prepared me for the sight of him standing there in the rain. He looked wild and dangerous and all I could do was wish he would come closer. Water poured down his body, washing over each curve as if the rain couldn't resist touching him. Whatever color his hair was, it was so wet that it appeared black. Dark strands clung to his throat and shoulders, making the contrast of his skin seem pale.

I watched as water ran down his hair, beading in his long eyelashes. I watched a drop of rain as it slid down his

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forehead, down his face, his collarbone, around one nipple, and down the ridged curves of his abs. I wanted to follow that drop lower, but was interrupted by a growl.

I shook my head. I was coming undone from watching a man standing in the rain. And he wasn't even real. This *couldn't* be real.

He came toward me and I watched the muscles of his long legs flex with every subtle movement. He truly was a work of art.

He knelt beside me, his amber gaze penetrating. "Are you all right?"

"I'm fine. My car broke down about a mile up the road."

Why was I telling *him*? He wasn't here and this wasn't happening. I'd hit my head and was lying on the side of the road in the rain, having a wonderful delusion.

"Do I frighten you?" he asked, a trace of growl still in his voice.

"A little bit."

He leaned closer, his face just above my abdomen. He moved slowly upward until we were face to face again. What was he doing, memorizing my scent?

"You want me," he said. "I can smell your desire, hear your heart fluttering. I *do* frighten you."

"Not enough to keep me from doing this."

I had intended to kiss him, but I didn't get that far. When I pressed my palm against his chest one thing was certain. "You're real."

He laughed, a deep rumble that thrilled me. "Of course, I'm real. What did you think?"

"I thought that when I tripped I hit my head instead of my ass." I looked at my hand, resting against his chest. Why should the fact that he was real change my intentions? "You're hot, burning."

"The moon is almost full."

Just One Bite: Something Wild

“What does that mean?”

He smiled again and I could feel myself growing wetter. Even if we weren't in the middle of a storm, I thought my jeans would already be soaked through by now.

“You know what I am. You saw me.” He laughed again. “And you didn't hit your head.”

When I just looked at him he asked, “Are you hurt? Do you want me to take a look?”

You're damn right I did. I pulled up enough to put my hand behind his head and pulled his lips to mine. His kiss burned. Whatever fever ran through his body made his lips warmer than anything I'd ever felt. I was already growing cold from the rain and as he pulled me into his arms I sighed, melting against his warmth.

He was right when he said I wanted him. There was something about him I couldn't resist. I didn't want to. I was tired of resisting my natural instincts. I needed to let go, to do something completely out of character ... something wild.

He leaned forward slowly, then faster than I could imagine he lifted me up, moving off the road to the cover of nearby trees. My back was pressed against a large oak, my legs around his waist.

This was crazy, but he made me feel something I never had, and I didn't want to lose it. I didn't want to walk away from him and never feel again what I felt right now. His hands slid beneath my shirt and I arched against him, hungry for the feel of his skin against mine. My need for him was so sharp that my pussy ached.

“I won't hurt you,” he said softly.

He lowered me to the ground so that I stood, pressed against him. I knew he was going to kiss me again and felt my lips parting in anticipation as I rose on tiptoe to meet him. His gentle kisses were a relief from so many lonely nights.

He pulled back to look down at me and my breath caught. His hair fell forward framing his face, his amber eyes burning in

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the darkness. Their fire might consume me, but I no longer cared.

A slow smile curved his lips as he held me against him, lowering me to the wet grass. He kissed me with something beyond hunger or need. It surprised me to realize there was loneliness in his touch.

I opened to him, letting his tongue plunge inside my mouth. I wanted to lose myself in his kiss, and in the hard flesh pressing against my body.

He pulled the t-shirt over my head and, my bra quickly followed. His lips burned wherever they touched me and when he reached my nipple I almost came. He drew the flesh into his mouth, sucking it, flicking the peak with his tongue.

He ran his tongue between the valley of my breasts, licking the rain from my flesh. He flicked his tongue over my ear and I shivered. But when he pulled my earlobe into his mouth I screamed. My pussy throbbed and I arched against him. I hadn't even realized he'd been unfastening my pants during this time until he opened them and pulled back from me.

He laughed softly as he moved to pull down my jeans. As soon as they hit the ground he was back on top of me, pressing his hard cock against my thigh. I writhed beneath him, grinding my pussy against his thigh and wishing he'd taken off my panties too. His fangs grazed my earlobe and I screamed so loud it startled me.

"Shh," he said, pulling back with a smile.

His long, dark hair slid over my body as his kisses trailed lower. I was arching off the ground as he hooked his fingers beneath the top of my panties and slowly pulled them from my body.

My heart was pounding with anticipation.

"Tell me what you want me to do," he said.

"I want you to eat my pussy."

The image of his dark head between my thighs was intoxicating. He pulled the soft flesh into his mouth, sucking at

Just One Bite: Something Wild

my clit, moaning as he shook his head back and forth, tugging the skin and bringing me closer and closer to orgasm.

His broad shoulders were the only thing that kept my legs from clamping shut as I trembled. He slid one long finger inside of me, moaning once more as he tugged my clit into his mouth. That was enough. My back arched off the ground as I came. The vibration of his growl echoed through my body as he held me tight. My muscles contracted hard as I ground my pussy into his face, aching with anticipation for his next touch.

His long hair fell in wet, silken waves around his face and shoulders. His eyes shown like a fire in the night.

“Bend over.”

I knew I could refuse his sensual command if I chose. But I wanted everything he had to offer, however he chose to give it to me. I flipped over.

When he pressed his body against the back of mine, wrapping himself around me, I moaned. He turned my head to the side, and kissed me. I arced back, pushing my ass into his rock hard erection. He took my ass in his hands, squeezing and spreading me open. I started to move my legs and he commanded softly, “No. Keep them closed.”

He ran his tongue over my pussy from behind, slipping it between my legs and making me scream again. I arched back as much as I could so that he could reach me better. It felt good, but I couldn’t hold still. I writhed against him, hungering for more.

He ran his cock between my still closed legs, rubbing back and forth over my soaking wet pussy. I could feel his teeth against the back of my neck, biting just hard enough to pinch, but not penetrate my skin. I shivered as he bit harder, entering my body at the same time. My pussy stretched so far I thought he might split me in two.

I growled, arching as much as I could against him, driving his throbbing cock deeper inside of me.

“I don’t want to hurt you,” he said.

When he hesitated I begged, “Please, I need it to hurt a

little.”

My words seemed to unleash something within him. His voice was soft against my ear, whispering things he wanted to do to me. He moved faster and I came. Every thrust of his hips seemed to intensify my orgasm. My pussy clenched so tight around him I was surprised that he could move at all, let alone pick up the pace.

When he put his knee between my thighs and finally spread them wide, I came again. He bent over me, one arm cradled my breasts while his other hand slid between my legs. The moment he touched my clit I jumped.

He growled against my ear as he pulled me back against him, my body supported on his thighs. He moved at a slow, maddening pace as he continued to stroke my clit. Rain splashed between our bodies, making it difficult to keep from sliding too much.

I placed my hands behind me on either side of his waist, using his hips for leverage. At first I moved slowly. But his hungry growl sent me over the edge. He took my cue and rubbed my clit faster. I rode him till my thighs shook with the effort.

He lifted me again, laying me down in the grass. I opened for him, taking him in my arms as I wrapped my legs around his waist. He cradled my face in his hands as he kissed me. How could sex with a stranger be this intimate? He didn't just kiss my lips. He kissed my face, my eyelids, my throat. As he pressed his lips to my forehead the raw emotion was overwhelming.

“Have I hurt you?”

“No.” I took his face in my hands, pulling him back down. “Please, don't stop.”

He kissed me again and with one final thrust he came.

We lay there for a moment looking up into the rain. Both of us unsure of what to say.

After a few minutes he asked, “Where did you say your car was?”

He followed me back while I told him what had happened.

Just One Bite: Something Wild

At first I was nervous about walking down the road with a naked man, but no one was around to see. By the time we reached the car the rain had stopped.

I gave him a towel out of my trunk just in case someone did drive by.

“Get in and turn on the heater,” he said.

“In this weather?”

He smiled. “Your car is overheated. Running the heater pulls heat from the engine.”

“Oh.” Well, I was glad somebody knew that.

While we ran the heat he introduced himself as Nick. “I know the circumstances are odd.” He paused, dazzling me once more with that smile. “I’d really like to see you again.”

“Only if you wear that towel.”

“So, what brings you out here?” he asked.

“I’m visiting a friend. Is your house nearby? I’ll give you a ride.” I could feel myself blushing at the choice of words.

He laughed. “Actually, I’m visiting someone too. I went out for a run under the moon and, that’s when I found you.”

In that moment it really hit me that he was a *werewolf*. “Are you contagious?”

“Only when I’m transformed.” He reached over and took my hand. “Are you really all right with dating a werewolf?”

Strangely enough, I was. My fear had long since passed. It didn’t bother me in the slightest. “Yes.” It amazed me how easily I accepted what he was.

On the way to Matt’s house I tried to find the words to tell my friend that I no longer needed his help finding a date. While I was going through the possible conversation in my head Nick said, “It’s at the end of this road.”

“Oh,” I thought. *“His friend must be neighbors with Matt.”*

I didn’t realize until we pulled up the drive that Matt’s was the *only* house at the end of the road. My friend greeted us with a cheerful smile and as he hugged me, looked at Nick and said, “I

Tracey H. Kitts
see you've already met."

The End

Lilith by Karalynn Lee

Lilith often found herself drawn to gardens. No need for perfume amidst fragrant bark and flowers; no need for sheets against the soft earth. The dappled shade of a leafy canopy. Wind against bare skin.

She seduced the gardener and then sent him away a broken man, forever looking over his shoulder in the distant hope that she might be looking back at him. In peace she explored the rest of the grounds: its maze of paths, the dreamward arch of trees overhead. Under the roots of a silver birch she buried the man's soul, a gold coin etched with his visage and his name. She didn't bother remembering either.

Neither men nor demonkind pleased her these days. Restless, she'd left Hellsgate, the city of demons, and ventured farther into the mortal plane in hopes of finding someone to amuse her. It had been a fruitless quest thus far. She had been the first demon to ever tempt a mortal, and perhaps she was jaded to the game now.

She heard a footfall and an extraordinarily handsome man stepped into view, lean and tawny-haired. From his garb and aristocratic cheekbones she knew him to be noble, perhaps the man who owned this estate. He looked startled to see her—as well he should, confronted by a demon in his garden. “Who are you?” he asked.

She smiled at him, senses prickling. He would do very well. She didn't bother hiding her wings or her claw-like nails; there

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was no use pretending to be an ordinary woman, and her appearance was such that she had never failed to lure a man despite them. There were legends of her beauty. "I am—"

There was a soft rush of air behind her. "Lilith," someone whispered into her ear, and she whirled to face the angel who had just landed.

Not a mere angel. An archangel, from the span of his wings and the deep echo of power she felt from him. Her smile faded. Angels were meddlesome, high-handed creatures, and she imagined that an archangel would only be worse.

He made an urgent gesture for her to accompany him, and launched himself back into the air with a powerful beat of his wings.

Lilith's curiosity won over her irritation, and she followed him upward. She knew the movements that would take place between her and the mortal: of tongue, of hands, of deepest flesh. In the end, the offering of his soul. The angel, on the other hand, offered a mystery. That was far more compelling.

He led her to an grove some distance away. She looked about as she landed, but saw nothing of interest that would have prompted an angel to bring a demon here.

"Thank you for coming away from there with me," he said, a bit stiffly. Courtesies to a demon must not come naturally to him. "We don't like letting mortals realize we're present, and if you and I had spoken there, he would have guessed."

Humans had trouble seeing angels, but Lilith supposed that witnessing a demon speaking with one would be revealing. "So why did you take me away from my prey?" She let her voice turn hard. She was not lightly interrupted.

"To keep you from seducing that man," he said.

Her annoyance sharpened. How like an angel to interfere so arrogantly. "And how did you know me or what I intended?"

"Is there any being in Heaven or Hell who doesn't know you or your nature?" he asked in exasperation.

She was used to flattery, but this angel didn't sound as though he was complimenting her. "And which one are you?"

"Baraqiel," he said.

Just One Bite: Lilith

"An archangel guarding a mere man?" she said scornfully. It was a task usually given to lesser angels.

His wings flared, but he contained his temper. "He is a prince marked by destiny," he said. "He can't fall under your thrall. There is a woman he has yet to meet."

"I was only looking for an hour or two of pleasure," she said. "Not to steal his vaunted destiny."

"Lilith," he said, "what man could spend time with you and then not yearn for you after? How could he become intrigued with another woman if he'll be thinking of you?"

His gaze upon her was fierce but not, she realized, out of anger. He wanted her.

She smiled, her irritation suddenly gone. "You speak like one who knows." She began to walk in a circle around him.

He turned to keep her in view. "I have never lain with a demon."

"But would you?" She noted the breadth of his shoulders and his large, strong hands with approval.

His eyes narrowed. "What?"

"You ask that I not pursue that mortal," she said, her voice all silk. "What do you offer in return?"

"You will never take my soul," he said flatly.

"You would have to tell me your true name and offer your soul to me before I could take it. You know that."

"And you do not ask for these things?" He watched her warily.

"Perhaps I'll coax it out of you," she said. "But even if not, the bed-sport would prove entertaining, I think." Her circle tightened into a spiral and she stopped in front of him, close enough to lay a hand on his chest. He was all taut muscle. She could feel the heat radiating from him, not so unlike mortal flesh.

"So you will leave him be if I give you the chance to tempt me," he said. His voice was rough.

She came up onto her toes and brought her mouth close to his ear. "And how I shall tempt you," she breathed, and nibbled.

His hands came up and tore her dress in two. She laughed as he crushed her to him, his hands roving along the length of

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her bare back. She knew what game he played. He thought that if he dominated this encounter, he would stay in control of himself.

So she let him twist her hair around his hand and pull her head back to bite at her throat, and she raked her sharp nails down his arms so that he felt he had to trap her wrists. Her entire body was a weapon, though; she rubbed herself against the steel of his erection and felt herself tighten in response.

His own reaction was even more pronounced. He pulled her away from him and pinned her to the ground face-down, yanking her hips up so that she was on her knees. Then his finger was between her legs, hot and probing. She gasped and writhed. She left his entire hand slick.

He knelt behind her and buried his cock inside her with one stroke. She moaned at the way he filled her, his hard body pressing against her buttocks and his breath on her nape. His hands came up from underneath her to cup her breasts. Wherever he touched her, her skin was wild fever. Whenever he pulled away from her, her mind went incandescent with need. She kept trying to rock back onto him but his hands held her still as he thrust into her with a punishingly deliberate rhythm.

When she felt the tension in him kick up, she remembered herself.

“Give me your name,” she said huskily.

“No,” he growled. His fingers curled hard over her hips.

“Give me your soul,” she said, losing the thread of her words as he started to pound into her with even greater force. Her body, too, began unraveling.

His voice was hoarse. “No.” His movements grew jerky, finesse abandoned for mindless urgency.

“Then give me your seed,” she cried, and he slammed into her and roared out his climax while she clenched around him again and again, lost to the pleasure that wracked her body.

He stayed draped over her after they collapsed, a little askew so that if she turned her head she could look at him while she caught her breath. His eyes were closed, and his face free of many of the stern lines that had been there before. The curve of his lips was relaxed, sensual. She traced them, and he caught her

hand to kiss it.

"I see how easily succubi lead men to fall," he said with feeling.

"But not archangels." She could still feel him hard inside her. "I may have to try again. For pride's sake, of course."

"Naturally," he said dryly, but he didn't seem displeased by the notion. He pressed into her almost experimentally, and she dug her nails into the earth as her nerves reignited. "And while I keep you occupied, I presume my ward remains safe?"

She had no interest in the princeling any more. "I won't touch him," she promised. "But you'll have to keep me busy for a long while."

"I do need to keep guard over him." He sounded regretful.

"Good. I'll need sleep occasionally," she said, and he chuckled. He shifted them onto their sides so that his hand could roam over her more freely.

His fingers dipped into her cleft and stroked. Deftly, he brought her to another peak before possessing her as completely and relentlessly as before, while she fought to bring him to the same pitch of passion he incited in her. Sex with Baraqiel felt like battle, furious and exultant and somehow victorious for both sides in the end. Her blood hadn't sung like this for ages.

He finally left her limp and satisfied before he left to tend to his princeling. The heat in his gaze, sated though he had to be, told her that he would return.

She knew it was madness, a demon and an angel, and yet she kept meeting with him. They always exchanged harsh words, always coupled fiercely, always lay beside each other afterward in truce. He liked to touch her hair, twining it around his fingers and marveling at its sable length. She took to using his stomach as a pillow.

They never spoke of next time, but there always was one. He would come to the grove to find her, and she would be there to be found. Then he would return to his prince.

On the day a storm swept in, she thought of mating with Baraqiel amidst all that elemental force and wished that he were with her. Perhaps he wouldn't venture out into the rain, but

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there was no reason why she couldn't seek him out.

He was likely in the castle by the garden. She had slipped into better guarded places. But she had not reckoned on the prince emerging just as she entered the courtyard.

He strode toward her eagerly. "You!"

Lilith backed away. She had promised Baraqiel to stay away from this man, but she lingered a moment longer, hoping to see the archangel. It gave the prince the time to reach out and snag her wrist.

"I've seen you before," he said. "I just want to know who you are. You're so beautiful."

She tried to pull away, but he was insistent. She could see in the way he looked at her that he was already enraptured by her succubus's allure. Worse, she reflexively responded to his desire. It was so easy to let him draw her toward him, to mold her body against his... He offered warmth against the cold rain, his kisses hot and his hands knowing on her body. This was what she had sought from Baraqiel.

Baraqiel.

The imperative rose cold and clear within her: she had to get away. "Let me go," she said, but the prince's caresses only grew more demanding.

How dared he disregard her? She lashed out at him with her nails and felt them tear flesh.

The prince cried out and fell to his knees, covering his face with his hands. Blood began to well between his fingers.

She turned and fled on wing, cursing herself for her thoughtless panic. She had never allowed a mortal to unbalance her so.

No, it hadn't been the man. It had been the thought of Baraqiel and his disapproval.

She waited for him at the grove, knowing he would come. When he arrived, it was with all the thunder and fury of an angel of vengeance. The wind from his landing whipped at the trees, and the blaze of his eyes was worthy of hellfire.

"You harmed a man under my protection," he said grimly.

She would not let an angel rattle her. "I harmed his face, but

Just One Bite: Lilith

you still succeeded in protecting his virtue, which you seemed to consider more important.”

“So instead of seducing him, you disfigured him so badly he’s withdrawn into his castle and refuses to see anyone, raging like a beast.”

“Do you want me to lure him out?” she asked in exasperation. How much could a mortal matter?

He spread his wings as though to block her way. “No!” He took a moment to calm himself, then went on, “He’ll recover eventually, and some woman will one day be able to see past his hideousness. Not that you care, demon.” He watched her with a new wariness.

Then she realized this was how he had looked at her originally. Over their time together his regard had changed to something warmer. But she’d lost that now, even though all along he’d known her for what she was. She couldn’t pretend remorse for what she had done, and so said nothing.

“You’re skilled, succubus,” he said. “You’ve rendered me senseless. But I will never give you my true name or my soul. Only my heart. Is that enough for you to leave us be?”

She shivered. His words weren’t so unlike the many declarations of love she had gathered over the centuries, but they were utterly, starkly different. They had meaning to her.

“Do you truly want me to leave?” she asked.

“Stop taunting me,” he said wearily.

“I’m not taunting.” She reached for his hand and pressed her lips to the back of it. She had never begged in her life. “If you send me away, I will go. But I will twist your dreams with such torment that waking without me will be Hell.”

He took in the tenderness of her gesture and the threat of her words. “Lilith...”

She refused to listen to a man reject her for the first time. She flung herself into the air, seeking as much distance as possible. It was hard to see in the rain, but it didn’t matter, for she had no destination except away.

Baraquel caught her before she went too far, catching her ankle and yanking her down so that the rhythm of

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her wingbeats faltered. He took advantage of her brief plummet to twist her around toward him and pull her into his arms.

She struggled, but he held her with unyielding resolve and somehow kept them airborne. He kept kissing her, kept saying her name, kept telling her he hadn't realized how she felt, and when she kicked out her legs he wrapped them around him, and the hardness of his cock right against her center made her suddenly dizzy with want. She abandoned her attempts to claw at him, clinging to his neck instead.

He claimed her there in the storm-drenched sky, their mouths and bodies desperately fused while lightning cracked the air around them.

Afterward, he took her back to the grove. Her legs were unsteady. It was a good reason to hold onto him.

"I can't let you go," he said finally. "But I don't know how this can work. We'll have to steal time together."

"Yes. And no one must know." She knew that those of both Heaven and Hell would never let them be together.

"But you really must stay away from my ward," he said, his embrace tightening possessively.

"I don't care about him," she said. "I went to the castle to look for you. Where were you?"

"I was in the garden, trying to save a flower from the storm." He let go of her and bent down to pick up something he must have brought earlier then dropped. "I found this and thought of you," Baraqiel said, handing her a black rose.

Even wet, its petals were softly furred and exquisitely gentle against her skin as she breathed in its scent. That he gave it to her, she knew, meant that he forgave her. "Do you know why I like gardens?" she asked him when she raised her head.

He sighed. "Because that's where you first tempted a man."

"The man was one of many," she said. "But I will never again be in a place as beautiful as Eden." She remembered the verdant richness, the sweetness of the very air. There was an old ache within her.

His expression softened. "The way is guarded," he said, by which she knew he meant he would have taken her there

otherwise.

She kissed him. “When I’m with you, it reminds me of how I felt when I was there.”

“Close to Heaven?” he asked, puzzled.

“Happy,” she said simply.

He held her face in his hands and pressed his lips to her forehead. That was his blessing, which no demon had ever received before, she knew. Then he kissed her mouth. That was his love, and even rarer.

She was a demon—she could never reach Heaven. But in her moments with him, she could reach Paradise.

Unforgettable

by Amanda McIntyre

Gunner flipped his worn leather wallet shut and stuffed it into his faded jeans. The picture, the only one he had of her, taken in one of those funky photo booths, was faded, crinkled by time. Time...it's all he had now.

The main street of the sleepy little town lay deserted stretched out like an asphalt runway. It was as good of a place as any other he figured for the tribe to meet. A flash of light burst in his brain and his head snapped up. The hairs on the back of his neck sensed life nearby. Human. Feminine. Alone.

He stepped back into the shadows, his heart beginning a familiar predatory thud. His acute hearing honed in on her breathing. She walked with a rapid gait, as though she knew it wasn't safe to be out at this hour. Her labored breathing slowly began to match his, a special gift not many of his kind possessed—being able to fall in line with another's breathing, be able to detect the nuance changes due to any number of reasons, most often, passion or fear. There were those in the tribe jealous of his special talents, while others revered him as special. Gunner could care less what anyone thought. If it helped him to survive, he'd use it.

He raised his nose in the air and caught the light scent of the woman's fruity shampoo mixed with the smoky interior of a bar. There was the slight hint of wine on her lips, mixed with a familiar sweet cotton candy scent. His memory, both blessing and curse, remembered her lithe, delicate body arching against

Just One Bite: Unforgettable

him in their one night of passion. He wondered if she remembered him and more important, what was she doing here? His hand eased over his crotch already roused by thoughts of her. Damn. He'd tried to forget—for the better part of five years he'd managed to avoid thoughts of her, and *freakin' 'a*, if she wasn't right here in the obscure, little backwoods town that the tribe had chosen for their Samhain Centennial. Every one hundred years they met to elect a new leader. The present leader, Aidian was stepping down, his reign over, but with a dual purpose, to spend his days with the woman he loved.

Gunner sensed that she was less than a block away and walking home, if he figured it right. He glanced around at the dark storefronts of the main street—a five and dime, a drugstore and a second hand store with a flashing orange pumpkin beaming bright in its window. The wind carried the high-pitched scratchy cry of a cat in a back alley trashcan, probably fell in and deservedly so—he hated cats, they were such sneaky creatures. A dog's wild barking made him smile, but jumbled his radar for a moment and he lost track of her. Gunner waited, focused on retrieving her scent in the heavily misted midnight breeze. He waited another breath and then stepped from his hiding place. An elbow met his face and before he could react, there was a painful blow to his shin and a quick, decisive jab to his gut, causing him to double over and gasp for air.

“You think I didn't know you were here? I sensed you the minute I stepped from the pub. Where'd you go, Gunner? You forgot to say goodbye.”

He wiped the blood trickling from his nose as he smiled at his assailant. “Good to see you, too. I see you haven't changed, Tory. What's up?” Damn the woman still could whip his ass, though he had to figure in that she had the advantage of his jumbled thoughts. He looked her over from head to toe and through an eye he knew would be swollen soon, she still looked good enough to eat—figuratively speaking. She was a bad boy's dream in her form-fitting jeans and thin white T-shirt topped with a worn leather biker's jacket. A fuchsia colored scarf was looped fashionably twice around that beautiful neck. Gunner felt

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a twinge stirring below his belt.

Tory shifted her oversized black bag on her shoulder and eyed him warily. "I suppose you want me to take care of that," she nodded, referring to his eye.

"I wouldn't want to trouble you," Gunner remarked, rubbing his hand over his gut.

"Like hell, you wouldn't, Gunner. Come on then. I'm just up the block. Don't try anything though, I'm warning you."

He grinned, raising his hands in defense. "Wouldn't dream of it," he replied. Only he had and every night for a year after he'd left her at the seedy motel where they'd gone to have some privacy. They'd met at a bistro in Tuscany and spent the next week touring the sights, sampling the wine and food, learning about each other—eventually revealing who he was, what he was and offering her the same. She declined and their last night together, he mustered every ounce of strength, making passionate love with her, but not taking her for his eternal mate.

Gunner followed her up the three flights of stairs sporting a hard-on and a displaced sense of nobility trying to keep from staring at her sweet ass in front of him. He remembered even now, the satin smooth texture of her skin, those hips cradled in his hands, holding her to him, driving into her sweet warmth...

"Here I am." She looked over her shoulder and her eyes grew wide.

Gunner ran his tongue over his incisors, their points becoming razor sharp when aroused.

"Maybe this isn't a good idea, Gunner." She chewed on her plump lower lip, urging the blood—her blood—pulsating to the surface.

Shit.

This was going to be a monumental exercise in self-control. That night he'd sworn to uphold her wishes not to turn her—it wasn't what she wanted. But when they mated, she'd branded him for anyone else. "I promise to be a good boy." He winked, following with a wince to the stab of pain in his eye.

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“Come on in. You haven’t changed much,” she commented as she hung her purse and coat on the single hook inside the door. Gunner followed her into the apartment, checking once over his shoulder to make sure no one else had seen them. He closed the door, chuckling at her joke. It was a joke, wasn’t it? Surely she remembered the reason that he’d left her. Her scent wrapped around him, causing his mouth to water. *Easy Gunner, ol’ boy*. He stepped from the miniscule hall into the living room to wait. The furnishings were sparse, a couch, coffee table, a comfy reading chair with an ottoman—all nestled around a white marble fireplace that looked like it had never been used. An array of candles—squat, tall, in votive holders and elegant candelabra lined the mantel. He looked around taking note that there were no pictures of family, friends, no vacation snapshots and everything, walls, furniture and even the candles were all colorless, clinical—white.

“Make yourself comfortable,” she called from down the hall. “I’ll be right out.”

Gunner parked himself on the pristine couch, realizing how stark the contrast to his faded black jeans was. “Nice place,” he said aloud. A moment ticked by before she answered.

“It’s a place to hang my coat.” She entered the room carrying a slab of steak, the blood leaving a trail on her white shag rug.

“You’re... Uh.” He pointed at the path of red at her feet.

She glanced down, seemingly unconcerned, and shrugged. “It will clean.” She turned her gaze to his. “I thought the blood would turn you on.”

Gunner swallowed and narrowed his eyes, searching hers. “Like I need incentive around you?” He offered a cocky grin.

She knelt before him, spreading his knees to wiggle her body between his legs. Gunner raised his good brow, his body sensing as she leaned forward, her breasts unbound, brushing over his sensitive crotch. She placed the steak over his now bulging eye.

Amanda McIntyre

"I thought your kind healed quickly." She rocked back on her heels, resting her elbows on his knees.

He wanted to reach down and weigh those delightful breasts in his hands, but they were holding a steak. Instead of answering her, he chose instead to ask his own questions. "What are you doing here, Tory? In this little town?"

She eyed him and then rose, walking to the window with its drapes pulled tight. "I'm here for the same reason you are, Gunner."

He let the steak slide from his face, blinking away her duel image into a single one. "What do you mean?"

She crossed her arms beneath her chest and Gunner swallowed hard.

"You're here for the gathering, aren't you? To select the next tribe leader?"

This was getting stranger by the minute. His senses detected a shift in her breathing and he was on full alert. He began to wonder how easy their meeting had been—was it just a coincidence? Something told him that it was not a chance meeting.

"I had to see you once more before the gathering." She unsnapped her skinny jeans and shimmied out of them with ease. She hadn't yet looked at him; her gaze was on the draperies.

His incisors lengthened, his hungry eyes taking in her creamy white thighs. She wore a pair of pink panties, covering just enough to make him salivate. She hooked her thumbs in her panties and inched them down, flicking them away with her toe. And without even a glance toward him, she peeled her T-shirt over her head, causing her breasts to bobble deliciously in the process. Whatever reason she wanted to see him again, Gunner was more than willing to oblige. He stood and shrugged off his jacket and T-shirt in one fluid motion.

"Tory, are you sure you know what you're doing?" Ice-cold desire surged through his veins. Would he be able to stop this time? She stood naked before him, staring at the wall and then

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drew back the curtains. As though the window was already open, it blew her black tresses into a tangled spiral above her head. She held her arms out, reaching for something. He was close, so close--a mere thought would have her pressed beneath him against the wall, holding those luscious hips, making her his. "Tory? What is it?"

She turned to him then, her eyes twin flames. In one hand she held an ancient dagger and in the other a short bladed sword. "When you left me, Gunner I was lost. What could I do? I had you Gunner and I convinced myself that it could work, that neither of us would have to change—that we'd be together always."

Gunner, held his hands to his head, confused, hungry with desire and need. "I left so that you'd have a normal life."

She spat out a laugh. "After you, Gunner? How could my life go back to normal? I died that night, Gunner. You took my life from me."

He took a step toward her, tasting the invisible pulse of her heartbeat. She wasn't dead, she couldn't be, her breath was warm, and her blood ran like fire in her veins. He could feel her desire. She snapped up her weapons in front of her, holding him at bay. Something had a hold of her that was clear and whatever— whomever it was — meant for her to get rid of him. "Who did this, Tory? Who told you to kill me?"

Her brow wrinkled in a frown, her lips drew into a thin line in conjunction with her anger. "You did! When you left me!"

"And what happens when you've killed me? What happens to you?" Gunner took a step to the side, putting the coffee table between them.

"Then I'll be free of the pain of not being able to ever have you."

"On whose terms, Tory?"

"On mine," she shouted, slicing the weapons through the air with expert ease.

"Why must I have to die in order for you to be free?" He

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kept his eye on her, trying to determine what kind of spell had been cast in her. Who in the tribe would have wanted him dead and known about Tory? He was the favored one, chosen by Aidian, the Tribe's leader. He had to find a way to get through to her, to break the spell.

"Tory, baby. You don't want to do this. Whoever put you up to this, they don't care about us. They don't care what we had once together and Tory, we can have that same passion, every night for all eternity. If you want it, baby. Just like that night, I asked you then, but it wasn't what you wanted and I respected that." He moved slowly toward her, one step at a time. She shook her head as though fighting the conflicting voices in her head. She took another step and she poised the weapons in front of her, swiping one out in front of her, a weak warning he thought, taking another step. He was within arm's reach of her. Gunner looked up and over her shoulder just outside the window he saw one of the new tribe members, one they called Artemis. "Tory, listen to me. Listen to my breathing. Do you see how it matches yours?"

Gunner knew the tribesman was imprisoned outside, unable to come in unless invited. That was the least of his concerns, getting those weapons from Tory and breaking the spell was foremost. "I miss your mouth, my love. Remember how hot our kisses were?" He stepped around the table, hesitant, searching her aura for the frequency of her breathing. He knew the moment his breath found hers and he finding their rhythm, he smiled and drew her close. She came to him, letting the weapons drop listless at her sides. Gunner inhaled deeply, releasing his breath, watching the gentle rise and fall of her breasts in conjunction. "That's it, baby, come to me. Let me make this right, let me make it so we never have to be apart again."

Her eyes flickered between the flames of the spell and the true color of her beautiful green eyes. A fierce wind nearly tore the curtains from the rod and Tory hesitated.

"No, don't listen to him, baby, just a few more steps. He doesn't care; he'll kill you once I'm gone. I want you, Tory. I've

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always wanted you.” Gunner stepped forward closing the gap between them and pushed her back to the wall, holding the weapons fisted in her hands above her head. He kissed her savagely taking back the years of wasted time he’d spent. He twisted the snap of his jeans and shoved them down with one hand. Gunner closed his palm around one breast and looked in her eyes. “Tell me what you want, Tory?” His body reverberated with carnal hunger, he needed to find satisfaction and soon. The weapons dropped to the floor and she leapt into his arms, wrapping her legs around him. He sunk into her sweet warmth, his mouth nuzzling the delicate curve of her neck, searching for the place where her pulse beat wild.

The wind engulfed the room, knocking the candles from the mantel, creating a deafening roar trying to break their joining. Gunner knew that with a willing mate in place, there was no question of who the next leader would be. As he joined his body to hers, so too, he took her lifeblood, making her one like him—a night dweller. Her scream of surrender stopped the wind instantly and Gunner stepped away, holding her by the shoulders until the new life he’d given her took hold inside of her.

“Are you okay?” He asked, brushing the hair back from her face. She looked up at him and nodded. “Okay? You’re sure?” He gave her time to process what had just happened and bent down to pull up his pants. From the corner of his eye he saw her with lightning quickness snatch the weapons from the floor. Surprised by her sudden movement he stumbled back and fell on the couch, watching in stunned silence as she ran to the window and flung the dagger. A screech, not unlike that of the alley cat, made clear that she’d met her mark. She faced him then, twirling the sword in her hand. “We’ll have to finish this downstairs.” Gunner blinked, too stunned by her calm demeanor to respond.

“How do you know how to go about killing a vampire?” he asked as they finished dressing. Gunner sensed her passion for him, but was confused that she could so easily kill.

She reached out and took his face between her fingers, planting a no holds barred kiss on his mouth. “I’ve had a long

Amanda McIntyre

time to prepare for becoming immortal. I read...a lot.”

Gunner smiled. “You’ll make a fine mate for the Tribes leader.”

She regarded him with a smile. “I’ll make a fine protector, Gunner for the leader of my tribe, who happens to be my mate. If Artemis came to me, seeking a way to overthrow you, do not think that he was alone in his quest.”

Gunner wrapped his arm around her shoulder. “It was no coincidence, our meeting long ago, was it?”

She shook her head and glanced up, those gorgeous green eyes searching his. “It wasn’t, no. It just took time for me to come to grips with my destiny.”

Gunner breathed deep and Tory closed her eyes releasing her breath exactly the same time. They shared, not only in passion, but in loyalty. Destiny had made them soul mates. Now the reason for his special gift was clear. “As long as you breathe, I am alive.”

“And the same is true for me.” Her kiss was his future.

The End

My Soul to Steele

by Bethany Michaels

I knew he was watching me the minute I stepped through the doors of the Kostas mansion. His gaze moved over my skin as tangible as a lover's caress and every cell in my body came alive.

Athan Kostas, as I heard whispered, was the grandson of the ball's reclusive host. He wore a black domino and tuxedo like all the other gentlemen, yet he was clearly not one of them. Tall and fair of skin, with dark wavy hair combed straight back from his forehead, Athan stood in the shadows next to the painting of Poseidon, holding a flute of champagne he did not drink. His strong Roman nose, high, sharply angled cheek bones were striking enough, but it was his eyes, as pale and luminous as silver, focused unblinkingly on me, that stole my breath. In a moment of panic, I wondered if Athan somehow knew I was there in a borrowed dress, carrying a stolen journal and planning to search his home for a priceless piece of art the first opportunity I got.

Old Mr. Kostas was a wealthy man who loved beautiful things, but he opened his home to the public only once a year. Pieces from his significant private collection were displayed for the elite crowd of collectors, historians and society benefactors, who in turn would write a sizeable check to the university's art department. The Kostas masquerade ball gave me the perfect entry into the house and I was going to use it.

Bethany Michaels

I accepted a flute of champagne and waited for my opportunity. I glanced at the Atalanta and found Athan was no longer there. Surreptitiously, I looked about the room and was pleased that he was nowhere in sight. I deposited my half-empty flute of champagne on a tray, took a deep breath and headed off to begin my search.

Though the mansion was sizable, there were only two places one could hide an eight-foot slab of solid marble--the attic or the basement. After making sure no one was looking, I slipped up the main staircase and headed to the back of the house, where the attic stairway was located.

Once in the attic, I pulled a small flashlight out of my evening bag. The room ran the entire length of the house and was packed with items covered in dusty white tarps. I peeked under the corner of one to find a museum quality Louis XVI sofa. Another tarp hid a Biedermeier. I could have spent all night admiring the treasure Mr. Kostas had hidden away, but after checking any lump large enough to hide a statue, I came to the conclusion my prize was not there.

I turned to head back towards the stairway, but froze when I heard the distinctive creak of one of the treads. I switched off my flashlight. My evening bag dropped to the floor. I held my breath, waiting to be discovered.

When I didn't hear any other noise after several minutes, I let out my breath. The house was old. It was going to have creaks, I convinced myself. I moved towards the stairs, but quickly realized I had forgotten my evening bag. I retraced my steps to the place in the attic I had dropped my bag.

It wasn't there.

A voice drifted out of the shadows, startling me.

"Did you lose something?"

I looked up and Athan stepped into my flashlight's small pool of light. He smiled and held the bag out to me.

I could feel my face go pale. Should I offer an excuse? An apology? What realistic reason could a guest give for poking

Just One Bite: My Soul to Stele
around her host's attic without permission?

"Thanks," I said, taking the bag. It was lighter. I looked back at Athan. The awareness I had experienced in the ballroom was amplified by the darkness, his proximity and the fact that we were completely alone.

"This is what you desire, I suppose," he said, pulling the journal out of his jacket. "It's been a long time since I saw this little book."

I could smell his soap and the wine he'd been drinking. I could see that his strangely luminescent gray eyes were framed with midnight black lashes. Below his mask, his lips were turned upwards in amusement.

"You've seen this journal before?"

"Oh, yes," Athan said, tracing the initials stamped into the cover with one fingertip. "I'm wondering, though, how you came to possess it." His voice held an accent I couldn't quite place and he spoke with a formal cadence that belonged to another century.

"I found it in the university's library. In the archives." I could hardly tear my gaze away from his.

He nodded. "Of course. Emily was an instructor at the university."

"Yes." The journal had belonged to an English professor who had taught at the university in the 50's. I'd read the journal cover to cover, though the entries held no clues to the piece I sought. The only reason I'd taken the journal was the grainy black and white photo tucked between its pages--a photo of the marble monument and a man standing next to it. The inscription read only "Kostas, 1952", but it had been enough to lead me to the mansion.

"Tell me. What brings you to the attic?" An ebony brow arched over the top of his domino. His voice was low and calm.

"I guess I got turned around," I said. "I should probably go back downstairs now." I turned towards the door. Being close to Athan had my pulse racing and all my senses drawn tight. He

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was attractive and dead-sexy for sure, but there was an edge of danger lurking beneath his calm exterior that excited and terrified me even more.

I blinked and suddenly Athan was standing before me, blocking the door. I stumbled backwards and he caught me around the waist, pulling me against him. It was difficult to breathe. Blood thundered through my veins.

“Let me go,” I whispered. “Please.”

His grip tightened and I could feel every hard contour of his body.

“What do you seek?”

I swallowed. “I’m a student,” I said. “I’m researching Greek funerary art. A particular stele, actually.”

He leaned in closer until his face was only inches from mine. His voice was low but there was an edge to his words, a subtle threat.

“What do you want with it?”

Athan knew exactly what I was talking about and hadn’t even bothered to conceal it.

“I’ve been obsessed with the stele since I first read about it as an undergrad. Those who have seen it say it’s impossibly well-preserved and the most beautiful example of classical sculpture in existence.”

He waved his hand dismissively. “I have heard of this piece. It is nothing more than a myth.”

“No,” I said, shaking my head, it’s not.” I stepped away from the man and pulled the photograph out of my bag. “See?”

Athan took the photograph and stared at it for a long moment.

“It was in Emily’s journal. She knew the statue and someone in your family quite well.”

His eyes flashed and in the next instant his lips were a breath away from mine. “You look like her, you know. Emily, that is.” He stroked my hair and with one hand tugged at the

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silken ties of my mask. It slid silently to the floor.

“Yes. So young, so perfect.” He bracketed my face with his cool hands and leaned in to kiss me. “Flush with life and vitality.”

I should have pulled away. Athan was a stranger. We were alone in a part of the house in which no one would hear me scream. But I was undeniably attracted to this man, had been since the moment I stepped across the threshold of his home. It was as if I had been waiting for the moment forever and now that it had arrived, there was no question that it was right.

Athan still wore his mask and the silk grazed my skin as his lips moved over mine in complete mastery. When I opened my mouth, he seized the moment to deepen the kiss. I had never known that a kiss could be so thrilling and it wasn't long before I was gripping his jacket and pressing my body against his, wanting even more.

His hands glided down the silky black sheath of my gown and up again to my breasts. The cut of the gown allowed for nothing beneath, and his hands on my breasts brought the hardened nubs into the palms of his hands. I felt him smile against my lips.

“I knew it would come to this between us when I saw you. It was simply inevitable.”

By then I was writhing in his arms. I ran my hands up the hard contours of his chest, loving how delicate I felt locked in the circle of his arms.

Athan broke the kiss with a small groan and tugged the tarp off a beautiful red velvet Victorian fainting couch. He looked at me intently, waiting for the reply to his silent question.

Staring right back at him, already anticipating the sensation of him sliding into me, I hooked my thumbs in the slim straps of my gown and let it slither off my body. I was bare except for a skimpy pair of black panties and my strappy, high-heeled sandals.

Smiling, he circled around behind me, skimming my belly

Bethany Michaels

with his fingertips. Cupping both my breasts, he squeezed gently, rolling my hard nipples between his thumbs and forefingers. His head dropped and his mouth went to the curve of my neck where it met my shoulder. Athan inhaled, seeming to take in the scent of my skin, then pressed his open mouth there, licking and tasting, sending shivers racing through my body. Though he was fully clothed, I could feel his excitement, too, pressing into my backside. I arched backwards wanting to feel more of him, wanting him to be as aroused as I was.

Athan eased me onto the couch and tugged my panties down the long lines of my legs, never breaking eye contact. I stared back, anticipation sending blood pumping through my veins at an alarming rate. My whole body felt sensitized and flushed, teetering on the edge of something totally out of my control.

Jacket, tie and his snowy white shirt were removed and Athan laid them carefully, piece by piece over another piece of draped furniture, though he kept his mask on. He removed his shoes and socks with maddeningly slow precision, then unfastened his trousers and pushed them off.

My breath caught--he could have been made of marble himself. Hard chiseled lines and well-defined muscles bunched in his abdomen, this thighs and the curves of his biceps. Shadows accented that delicious line that delineated his hips from his torso and I ached to trace it with my fingers and mouth.

"You are a work of art," I said, feeling a bit sheepish when I said the words out loud.

He smiled down at me. "And you, my dear, are perfection itself."

Athan settled on the couch between my thighs, his skin cool against the flushed heat of mine. His fingers slid into my hair, as his tongue slid into my mouth for another soul-stealing kiss.

Hot tension gathered in my loins at the feel of his hard arousal pressing against me. Please," I whispered raggedly into his mouth. "Please, Athan."

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He broke the kiss and pressed all the way inside me in one long, unrelenting stroke. I gasped as my body adjusted to accommodate him, but he pushed on until he filled me completely.

Searching my face for signs of pain, he waited until my body adjusted. He moved then, drawing slowly out of my wet heat and back in again. I dug my nails into his back at the sweet friction that hovered somewhere between pleasure and pain.

Blood slammed through my veins and I felt hot everywhere. I breathed heavily, loving the sensation of his cool body on mine, the soft velvet of the upholstery on my bare skin and the unbearable intimacy of the moment. Though we were virtual strangers, it felt like a reunion—I was exactly where I was supposed to be. This was exactly what I had spent my life looking for. It was a complete and utter possession.

My hips jerked as his pace increased and I wrapped my legs around him. Pressure built deep within me, a molten ball of energy stacking and stacking upon itself until I became light-headed with its intensity. I squeezed my eyes shut as he drove me relentlessly closer to the precipice.

Athan's lips moved down the column of my throat, teeth and tongue scraping lightly along my flesh. He paused at the juncture of my neck and shoulder, pressing his lips there for a long moment, almost reverently.

Then I felt his body go tense and his sharp teeth slid into my soft flesh.

I cried out as his mouth fastened to my throat, drinking in my essence. Athan pumped his hips, driving into me with sharp violent thrusts, pushing me higher and higher until at last the bubble burst and waves of pleasure flooded my body with pure sensation. Heat rushed to every corner of me and I floated, my body seemingly detached from the earth.

I felt his shudder of pleasure, and at last he raised his head and looked at me. Flecks of blue fire lit up his eyes and his razor sharp canines were glistening, wet with my blood.

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My mind went blank, whether from lack of blood or complete shock I don't know. A moment passed when I simply struggled for breath and to grasp exactly what had happened.

"Are you all right?" he asked me, cocking his head. His fangs had disappeared, making me wonder if I had imagined the whole thing.

I nodded, frowning. "I think so." Athan stroked damp hair off my forehead.

"You're a –"

"Yes."

Denial pressed at my brain but at the same time, I knew it to be true.

He pulled out of my body then used the soft cotton of his shirt to dab at my throat. "Come now, my dear. You sensed there was something different about me the minute our eyes met."

"Yes," I admitted. "But I never thought...never imagined..."

"I hope I did not frighten you."

I should have been screaming my head off. I should be running away. Freaking out. But I wasn't. I couldn't.

"No."

Athan smiled. "Good. That is good."

Reaching behind his head, he untied his mask and set it aside.

I gasped. "You. You're the man. In the photo."

He nodded. "Emily was my lover. She begged me for a keepsake." He looked at his hands. "I should not have allowed it. Photos, records of any kind, are too dangerous. But I could deny her nothing."

"The stole?"

"Mine. From my human life."

My mind reeled. It was here. "Can I see it?"

Athan chuckled softly then cocked his head and looked at

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me for a moment before nodding. "I find I cannot deny your request either."

I scrambled up off the sofa and tugged my gown on over my head.

Taking my hand, Athan led me to the back of the attic. He slid a panel aside and there, inside a secret compartment built into the wall, was the object I had been searching for.

It gleamed white in the light of my flashlight, looking as fresh and new and perfect as the day it was carved. And my lover, in all his glory, was rendered to perfection in stone. The impossibly masculine lines of his torso, his strong profile, the wave of his hair--it was an exact likeness of him.

"You understand now why I keep it hidden."

I nodded. It would raise too many questions—questions about where it had come from and how it was so perfectly preserved. There would be no paper trail to prove he was the proper owner, and it took only one look to know that the man standing before me and the one born in marble were the same.

"It's beautiful."

Athan nodded. "My father was very talented. He sculpted burial monuments for the wealthiest families in my region. When my human life was ended, his grief drove him to work day and night until he produced this masterpiece. I saw it on the ridge bordering our family burial plot several years after my new life had begun and after my father died, I returned and claimed the stele. After nearly 2500 years, it is my one remaining link to my humanity."

A shadow crossed his eyes. "I cannot allow you to expose my secret," he said, nodding at the statue. "I wonder if perhaps you might consider changing your thesis topic. You may have full access to any other pieces in my private collection."

I looked around, my heart beating wildly at the prospect of what other secret finds might be waiting. I could catalogue his collection, perhaps. And I could visit the stele whenever I wished.

Bethany Michaels

Placing my palms on the cool, hard skin of his chest, I smiled up at him. "I would love that," I said.

Athan wrapped his arms around my waist and smiled back, eyes flashing.

"Of course you realize that means you would have to spend a lot of time here. In my home. With me." His head dipped.

I raised my face, eyes focused on his mouth, imagining the pleasure it would bring all over again. "Hours," I whispered.

"Days."

"It could take weeks or even months," I said, anticipating long nights spent exploring the mansion's secrets as well as every curve and angle of Athan's fine body.

"Years," he breathed, searching my expression for an answer.

"Years," I agreed and his mouth possessed mine once more.

Wolf Bait

by Virginia Nelson

Riley

The whole world is only a click away. That was the big perk of being online most of your day. Everyone you wanted to get in touch with, everything you could ever want to buy, available at one simple click of the mouse.

As I sat in front of my laptop and sipped coffee, I checked my social networks. A writer's worst enemy, I knew, was procrastination. Sadly, so was my brain dribbling out my ears to lie in a puddle on the floor, which was what I felt I was headed towards if I didn't leave the bloodbath on the page for a few minutes.

Writing suspense is fun. Murdering off whoever ticks me off in any given day in brutally creative ways is probably the best therapy in the world. But when characters you are attached to, characters you have spent months trying to get into the head of, die in a way that is surprisingly horrible to even you, the author, it is like losing a friend. Probably that meant I needed a whole new kind of therapy but I self medicated with Facebook.

Just now, I had hundreds of friends, again, one keystroke away. Sadly, I spent more time writing about life lately than living it myself.

Then everything changed with the link to bacon soap.

Virginia Nelson

Blinking at the screen, I read the link again.

Bacon soap.

I had done research on pheromones and how scent affected men. Most stories have a love angle, after all.

Some angles are physically impossible, but still...

I knew men liked the smell of bacon. I choked in laughter. But who would buy soap that smelled of bacon? The same page also offered bacon mints. Mints?

But it got me thinking. Men *loved* the smell of bacon. What would be the male response to a woman who smelled like bacon? We spend hours showering, deodorizing, spritzing ourselves to smell good to, in theory, attract a mate.

But men aren't crazy about the smell of flowers. How many men do you find in the park stopping to bury their snoots in a rose bush?

Fry up some bacon and they come running out of the woodwork.

I had the feeling it was an angle.

Looking around my empty apartment, I blew out a sigh. It wasn't as if I was attracting many men from here.

Standing, I went to a mirror. The reflection that bounced back was almost startling in its averageness.

I was medium height, medium build, with some non-descript hair color that couldn't even have the decency to be either blond or brown.

My hair was neither. The best adjective description even I could come up with was maybe a dirty honey.

Peering closer, I stared at my own gray eyes. Even they were mundane.

But if I smelled like bacon...

I would call it an experiment...

Walking with determination back to my keyboard, I yanked my credit card out of my purse before plopping back in my writing chair. If nothing else, I was sure I could make some kind

Just One Bite: Wolf Bait

of story out of it.

Bacon soap and bacon mints...

And then I would go out.

And see if anyone responded.

Basil

I had been a shapeshifter for longer than I cared to remember. The duality of my nature never bothered me. Not one of those whining men, made so popular by television and media these days, I wasn't ever ashamed of what I was.

If you are a monster, you're a monster. Get over yourself.

Raking a hand through my hair, I scanned the club. From the balcony, I could see everyone who dared come into my den. Foolish humans, scraps of clothing hanging negligently on their too skinny hides, slopped back drinks and tried to get laid nightly, filling my pockets in their desperation to find a mate.

I wasn't looking for a mate. I had better things to do with my days. Money was power. Blood was power. Getting laid was something you did to fill a basic need, like eating. The rest of that garbled love crap that my pack had been spouting lately...

I rolled my eyes and was glad no one was near to see me.

Grown men, men who had been around hundreds of year, whipped by a good lay.

Thank whatever god watched over the furry that I wasn't an ass.

But then she walked in.

I smelled her before I saw her.

Bacon, the scent like fresh fried breakfast, wafted to my overly sensitive nose. In a club, it was just odd to pick up the scent of fried pork fat. But I trusted my nose more than I trusted any of my senses and I smelled bacon.

Virginia Nelson

Tantalized in a way that made my stomach growl, my eyes scanned the crowd. Did someone bring in food?

And then I saw her.

Hair glittering in the strobe like old gold and more clothes than anyone else in the crowd set her apart. She was dressed like a librarian. In a club.

I began to move toward the stairs before I had really thought it through.

Was she carrying bacon in her purse?

God knows, she could fit a small army in that horrendous bag.

Cutting through the crowd, I found her. From behind, she looked even less attractive. The skirt she wore was too long, falling to an unattractive length that made her legs seem bigger than they probably were. Her shoes were... *sensible*. That was about the best adjective I could apply to the ugly brown things that covered what looked to be small feet.

Her hair was the big attraction from this angle. Hanging in waves nearly to her waist, it was a golden fall of waves far longer than was currently in style. It looked like she hadn't bothered to get it cut rather than any artful or womanly attempt at loveliness.

The hair and that ass. Even with the worlds ugliest skirt wrapped around it, she had rounded curves that begged you to dig your fingers into them.

And she reeked of bacon.

Sniffing, I moved closer. Turning so I could be near her at the bar, I tried to catch a look at her face.

When she angled her head to laugh nervously at the bartender, my breath caught in my throat.

She was breathtaking.

Lips so full my mind immediately moved to what they would feel like on my skin curved up and I felt a hot stab of lust shoot straight to my dick.

Just One Bite: Wolf Bait

Eyes the color of shadows or the pelt of some sleek gray cat, framed by dark lashes, glittered in the light and I wondered if they got dark when that pale face of hers flushed with passion.

What was wrong with me? She was some strange woman in the bar. I had never felt drawn to anyone like I was this one *bacon* scented woman.

And then I caught it. Under the bacon, I picked up another scent. It was like warm vanilla. Vanilla spiked with cinnamon. You had to be close, as I now was, to pick it up because of the bacon permeating everything about her but I could smell it.

That scent drew me in a way that I wasn't comfortable with. But I knew one thing.

I wanted her.

And I am the kind of man who takes what he wants.

Riley

Okay, I thought to myself. Here I am. In a club.

I tried to calm my pulse as it hammered in my ears nearly louder than the thumping throb of the music.

I felt like an idiot. This wasn't my kind of place. I was safer, smarter, to stay home in front of my keyboard where I belonged.

I had almost decided to run out of there and say the hell with the bacon experiment when I realized *he* was staring at me.

Since he was probably the most attractive man I had ever seen, I immediately glanced over my shoulder to see who he was staring at. Because obviously, this hot young man was not staring at me.

Glancing back at him, I was again pinned by his yellow eyes. My breath came out in a whoosh when I realized he *was* looking at me.

Or glaring at me. I wasn't sure which.

Virginia Nelson

I have written a romantic tale or two. None of them started with the hero glaring at the woman he desires enough to slay dragons for.

Well, then again, it's not like I expected the bacon soap would really work...

"What is your name?"

Again, I shot a look over my shoulder; sure he was addressing someone behind me. I hate that... when you wave at someone and they weren't waving at you or answer someone who had no clue you were even there—

It happened to me a lot.

Nope. He was talking to me. I cleared my throat. "Riley. Riley Perry."

He continued to glare at me and I shifted on my barstool, uncomfortably. I sucked again on the straw on my drink and had to blink back tears as the alcohol burned my throat. Wow. Strong drink.

Could I possibly look any cooler than cringing at my own drink? Thirty loomed over me and I suddenly felt terribly old.

"Why do you reek of pork fat?"

My eyes widened as the man came closer and sniffed at me. "Reek?"

He waved one hand, which I noticed was huge. I pictured that hand on my body and my pulse sped. *Yeah, not in this lifetime, Riley girl.*

"It is very..." He paused as if trying to come up with a word and I studied him. The man was delicious and my body was reacting to his proximity in a way it had not ever done before. "Strong."

I blinked. Well hell.

Standing, I moved to leave. I had to get out of there. I was an idiot.

A hand caught my arm and the momentum swung me back to land against a chest like a wall. I was washed in his scent

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which struck me as somehow wild. Something woodsy.

I sucked in another breath and chewed my lip to look up at the striking man. Trying not to notice how his body was hard against mine or how much heat it seemed to generate, I hoped words would pop into my head. Something clever. My heroines always had a snappy comeback. Of course, no one ever told them they reeked.

His face bent towards mine and I was captured by his gaze. It was like molten heat, those amber eyes.

“Why are you leaving?”

In a whoosh, I let the breath go. “You think I reek.”

Okay, the characters on the page would have thought of something cleverer. Then again, when they are feeling hot and needy and pressed against a truly wonderful male body, I am still thinking clear enough to give them something clever to say.

His eyes crinkled at the corners. “It isn’t a typical kind of smell for a woman to be bathing in.”

Crap on toast. He knew it was soap.

I realized I was thinking more than speaking when he continued to stare at me. I finally had the good sense to try to step out of his grip but his hands firmed on my arms and he moved me to a wall.

Pinning me, my options were to struggle or stick around and see what Mr. Super Hunk was doing. What I actually did was freeze up and kept staring at him.

Until his mouth moved to cover mine.

Basil

This close, her vanilla scent was clearer. I had a raw desire to take her, shove her in a shower and get off the remnants of whatever she had done to mask her scent in meat. Looking at her, all flustered and confused, I found myself tempted to

Virginia Nelson

possess her, driven in a way that I had never felt with anyone.

I moved to kiss her.

When my mouth closed over those ripe lips, her hands snapped up to my chest to push me away. I tilted my head and changed the kiss to one of dominance, of need.

A tiny noise escaped her throat and the hands fluttered like butterflies against my chest. As if unsure what to do, she went still, very still and I took advantage of it to allow my body to speak to hers.

I was drawn to this woman, wanted her and it didn't seem to have a damn thing to do with words. My very soul seemed to ache for those hands to stroke my skin. I wanted that mouth to respond to me.

Seeming to give in, she opened that sweet mouth for me and I delved my tongue into the sweet cinnamon tinted vanilla warmth of her mouth. She tasted like a dessert. I wanted more. Greedy, I wove my hands into all that hair.

And then she responded. Her hands stopped their confused fluttering and flattened against my chest. Her body seemed to collapse into me, melting and I sank into her surrender, feeling the globes of her breasts press into me through the fabric of that ugly shirt. This only made my balls tighten further and I bucked my hips into her so she could feel my need.

Overwhelmed, the passion that had flared in her was controlled quickly, as she pulled away from me to look with startled eyes up at me. Her face was flushed and already her lips looked red from my mouths demands on them.

"I'm Basil."

She choked and the eyes went to sort of a desperate hilarity. "Basil?"

I nodded. I nudged her further to the wall with my body.

"Really? All this masculinity and your name is Basil?"

I quirked a brow at her. I was pretty sure I wasn't getting my name bashed by a hot little librarian with a mouth I wanted

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on my dick.

“I am leader of the were pack. Maybe you have heard of me?”

Stilling, she searched my face. “You are one of them?”

I nodded slowly. I wasn’t sure why it mattered so much suddenly that she react well to the news. It wasn’t like I had ever cared before what someone thought of what I was.

Raising one hand to stroke down my face, she looked at me gently.

“They say that weres are like dogs in some ways.”

I snapped my head back from her hypnotic touch. She was comparing me to a dog?

Riley

He turned and stormed away from me. Well, shit. Finally I am hit on by probably the most attractive man I have ever seen and I chase him off by calling him a dog.

I stood, still for a second before making up my mind.

I wove through the crowd, easily picking up his dark head out of the crowd. He towered over them like a stalking night creature.

Bumped and jolted, I made it to a sign reading, ‘Employees Only,’ but I shoved under it to storm up the stairs after him. He had pinned *me* to a wall. The least he could do was hear me out.

He was alone, staring out at the crowd. There were scattered tables and couches up here but I ignored all that.

Before my courage ran out, I jogged to his side and caught his arm. “What I was going to say, before you went off in a snit, was that like dogs, Were’s like order, structure in the pack. The leader is usually stressed, having to take on responsibility for everyone else, something not in their nature. I was going to say how that must suck.”

Virginia Nelson

Blinking those strange eyes at me, his lips began to curve. "Did you just say I went off in a 'snit?'"

Glaring at him, I decided this was stupid and a waste of my time. I spun and was going to stomp back down the stairs when he caught my arm again.

"No. It's not easy."

Glancing over my shoulder, I saw he wasn't looking at me. He was staring at the floor.

I turned back, drawn. My hand again reached up to his face and he caught one of my fingers between teeth that suddenly glittered in the darkness.

A wave of heat washed over me, nearly taking my breath away.

I was drawn to him, this stranger. My body was wet, needy already and he had done nothing more than nibble my finger.

"I want to kiss you again."

My lips curved and I answered without thinking. "Good."

And when that lovely mouth of his closed over mine, I melted into him. Strong hands cupped my ass and pulled me against his firm heat. A tiny gasp escaped me before his mouth again devoured mine with a need as great as my own.

"Maybe bacon soap isn't a half bad idea."

"It's not the reek of bacon. My soul calls to you. Dammit."

Altogether, I still thought it was the bacon. But I wasn't complaining as he took me away with mouth and hands and a body built for sin.

Pulling back, I studied him. "Soul?"

He shrugged. "A bunch of us have found our mates. I think you may be mine."

I quirked a brow. "And you know that because..."

His mouth closed over mine and all ability to think was squashed in the heat and power of that one swift move.

Tilting his head back, he challenged me with those eyes.

Just One Bite: Wolf Bait

“That feel like it had anything to do with bacon?”

Lips curving, I said the first thing that came to mind. “No, but I feel like a meat lover anyway.”

Laughing, he moved over me and swept my world away with a kiss.

Charisma

by Linda Palmer

Myth made me good at what I did--myth and talent. Thanks to Hollywood and the legends we Vampires fabricated ourselves, I'd never be pegged as one...at least at first sight. That meant by the time my prey figured me out, they didn't stand a chance. So what Vamp trivia did the world have right? The deadly feud between us and Weres. That really *had* raged for centuries.

Not that we openly battled one another. Outright fighting would draw way too much unwanted attention from humans. Plus some members of the supernatural society actually wanted to live in peace and harmony. Ha! How they thought we'd *ever* do that with Master Daemon Asmodeus after all our hides, I had no idea. So I personally took pride in keeping the Were-Vamp feud alive and had seduced so many enemies to untimely deaths that my colleagues in chaos nicknamed me Charisma.

This particular Saturday night I wore tight jeans tucked into suede fringe knee boots and a white peasant blouse when I walked into Rafferty's Bar and Grill. That was another thing that contributed to my success. I didn't frequent the obvious Were hangouts as did other assassins. I went where the smart Weres went, to the nondescript places no self-respecting *canis lupus* would go. And I didn't wear a black leather bustier or five-inch stilettos, either. Might as well have *leech* tattooed on my forehead, right? I went for the home girl look.

Just One Bite: Charisma

My initial olfactory scan of the eatery proved disappointing. No Weres so far. What a shame. I'd had such good luck all week, almost every night having a choice among several targets. I even managed a double snuff on Thursday, a pleasure I wouldn't soon forget.

What I did scent was a couple of Vamps keeping a low profile. I did not acknowledge them as I sat at the bar to order a drink and some cheese fries. Yeah, another myth laid to rest. We could eat and drink something besides blood. What we couldn't do was digest it, which meant I'd be puking my guts out later. Unpleasant, but worth it to fit in.

Around eleven, my nose twitched. With a toss of my long brunette curls, I scanned the bustling crowd for the source. I spotted him at the other end of the bar and winced. Just my luck. Another cowboy who probably liked the George Jones song blaring from the jukebox. Well, this *was* Texas. And since I didn't have any other choice tonight, he'd just have to do.

I stole a moment to scope him out, approving of his shaggy brown hair, sky blue eyes, and athlete's body. I especially liked his wide shoulders and long legs. The guy looked nothing but H-O-T, even in that redneck get-up. I licked my lips in anticipation.

What can I say? I'm *undead*, not dead. And I'd always had a thing for...

Three guesses what. First two don't count.

Yeah. John Wayne. Sick, huh?

Somehow I'd have to hold my lust in check so I could do the deed.

I stared until the guy felt it and looked my way, then ducked my head as if embarrassed to be caught ogling. Of course he left his stool and walked over with a bottle of Bud Light in his hand so he could sit next to me.

"May I buy you a drink?"

I hesitated.

"I promise I won't bite."

Linda Palmer

That made one of us. I nodded shyly. "Yeah, sure. Thanks."

"What's your poison?" He eyed my empty glass.

Poison? I choked back a laugh at the irony of that particular word.

"Diet Coke." I gave him a hint of a smile.

He gave me back a full-fledged one and motioned for the barkeep to refill our glasses.

"Name's Beau."

Sigh. Of course it was.

He offered me his right hand. As I shook it, I glimpsed a tattoo on the inside of his wrist just under the cuff of his chambray shirt. A bright red *V* set within a circle slashed from upper right to lower left by a thick black line.

My mouth went so dry I could barely say my made-up name. "Jenny Beth."

"Short for Jennifer Elizabeth?"

"How'd you guess?" Somehow I managed to widen my smile. Before me sat the most notorious Vamp killer in the history of the paranormal universe. We'd stalked this dude for centuries to no avail as he murdered us one by one.

But Destiny made him mine tonight. I could not screw this up.

He sniffed. "Love your cologne. What is it?"

"Infamy." I didn't add that years of testing ensured that one drop not only masked my Vamp scent, but actually lured unsuspecting Weres such as him. Unlike Beau, a.k.a. Omega, I made certain nothing gave *me* away.

As anxious as I was determined, I wanted to rush the process, to lure him outside with the promise of sex. Then I'd deliver a lethal dose of silver via my hot pink lipstick, the latest Vamp weapon fresh from the labs, and leave him stone dead in the parking lot.

Yeah. Silver really did work on Weres. Another myth that had truth to it.

Just One Bite: Charisma

But I took things slow.

We made small talk. We drank. We made small talk while we drank. He told me he owned a ranch. I confessed I taught first grade. I listened to his bullshit about fences, steers, and rodeos. He listened to mine about students, principals, and meddling parents.

Worse, we also laughed. A lot. And by the time I headed to the powder room at closing time to reapply my toxic lipstick, I realized I'd thoroughly enjoyed tonight's deadly dance. I could definitely understand his high success rate. What I couldn't understand was why he didn't hit on one of the other Vamps in the bar instead of little ol' "human" me. I also wondered why he hadn't suggested we leave to be alone. I couldn't remember a night I'd flirted any harder. Why, I must've dropped a dozen hints that the loud music hurt my ears, that the rowdy crowd smothered me, that I wouldn't mind us having a private party elsewhere.

Beau never took the bait.

But I couldn't give up. In spite of my weakness for cowboys, I wanted to kill him badly.

I waited for the place to empty out and the bartender to glare at us before I blurted, "Walk me to my car?" If he didn't initiate a good-night kiss there, *I'd* do it.

"My pleasure."

We left the building just as the owner flipped off the neon lights. I heard the lock click behind us. A glance back told me the sign on the door already said *Closed*.

Perfect.

Two vehicles sat in that parking lot--my midnight blue Hyundai and his black Dodge Ram. I dug my key from my shoulder bag and pressed the remote on it. A distant *blip* confirmed I'd unlocked my car. Beau kept pace with me all the way there, then opened my door and stepped aside so I could slip behind the wheel.

Damn. What was wrong with this guy?

Linda Palmer

Desperate, I brushed my boobs against him and tipped my head back. "Thanks, Beau. I had a great time tonight."

"My pleasure," he drawled. I could've sworn the corner of his mouth twitched as if he struggled not to smile. Clearly this cowboy didn't know how near demise he stood.

When he didn't lean in for a smooch, I took the initiative and pulled his face closer.

I pressed my lips to his; I waited.

Nothing. Happened.

Beau did not drop dead at my feet. Instead, he dipped me way back and laid a big, fat, really juicy kiss on my poisoned lips.

The world blurred as star-spangled midnight faded to pitch black.

And my last rational thought?

Damn, this dog can kiss.

I opened my eyes much, much later according to the clock on my dash. My temples throbbed, a side effect of Were saliva. I realized I sat alone in my locked car, still parked at Rafferty's, my wrists and ankles neatly bound with braided leather rope in such a way that I couldn't use either. A painful glance to my right revealed the Ram parked in the spot next to me.

"Chapstick."

I jumped a foot off the seat. I tried to look over my shoulder, but couldn't, so I glanced into the rearview mirror and saw...

Three guesses who. First two don't count.

Yeah. Cowboy Beau. Lounging in my back seat.

What the hell?

I swallowed hard and tried to keep my cool. "What about it?"

"Keeps the silver from penetrating our lips. Nice try, though. And it would've worked if our undercover Were didn't stay one step ahead of your technology."

Just One Bite: Charisma

Damn. “So you know what I am.”

“What *and* who. Charisma, herself. I’m honored.”

“Nice to meet you, Omega.”

He grinned at me. “So what are we going to do about this?”

“You mean you don’t know?”

“Under normal circumstances, yes. Unfortunately our situation is anything but.”

“Because...?”

“I like you.”

I felt a glimmering of hope. Stupid, stupid Were. So stupid that I could actually tell him the truth. “Oddly enough, I like you, too.”

He laughed at me. “And we can each go our separate ways and forget the other exists?”

“Not so much.”

“Thought you might say that.” He began to hum ‘Should’ve Been a Cowboy,’ all the while examining a combat knife that he held at eye level. It glinted when it caught a beam from the security lights. I knew it could decapitate me in one quick slash.

I tried to distract him. “What gave me away?”

“Your cologne. What did you call it...? ‘Infamy’? That’s apropos.”

“So you’d smelled it before?”

“Yep.” For the longest time, he continued to hum. Then he suddenly leaned forward to lift my hair and trail his lips over my neck.

A shiver of delight stretched from there all the way to my.... No! What the heck was wrong with me? I did not want this cowboy, er, Were, in my pants!

Oblivious to my humiliating reaction--or *not* so--he sat back and resumed his inspection of the knife. “I’ve been watching you work the bar for a while now.”

“No way. I’d have spotted you.”

Linda Palmer

“News flash, baby. Weres don’t just phase from human to wolf to human again. They can also manage a human to human shift.”

Now why would he tell me that secret unless...? I began twisting my hands, trying to work them free of the rope.

“You passed me over five times this week alone. I was just wondering why.”

I thought of all the cowboys I hadn’t made my target. “Your hayseed look, asshole. I hate cowboys.”

“Why? Did one of them break your heart?”

“As if.”

“But you went for it tonight.”

“It was you or nothing. I hate to go home without a new notch on my belt. Figuratively speaking, that is. I’d never wear anything that tacky.”

“Of course not.” The steel knife flashed again. The silence stretched into forever.

“So kill me already.”

“No can do.”

“Why not?”

“I said why. I like you.”

And I like you, dammit. But what has that got to do with anything? “What do you usually do to Vamps you like?”

“Damned if I know. This is all new for me.”

“I’m not having sex with you first, if that’s what you’re thinking.”

“Never crossed my mind.”

“No shit?” It had sure as hell had crossed mine.

His smug laugh would’ve made me blush if I could still do that.

I took a deep breath. “What I mean is...why not? Is something wrong with me?”

“Besides the fact that you’re dead? Not a damn thing.” He

Just One Bite: Charisma
started humming again, a slight frown knitting his eyebrows.

“It’ll be dawn soon.”

“And you won’t burst into flames.”

Hm. “Can we at least get out of this parking lot? I don’t want a run-in with the police any more than you do.”

“Guess I could take you to my place.”

“On second thought, let’s call 9-1-1.”

Grinning, he stretched lazily, then opened my back door and got out of the car. I turned my head away when he rested his arms on the roof and leaned in the open window. That made him laugh again.

“Know what?”

I didn’t answer.

“I think you’ve been avoiding me all week *not* because cowboys turn you off, but because they turn you on.”

“Get real.”

“And if I take you home, we can probably find out just how much.”

Oh no. “I’d rather be dead.”

“You *are* dead.” Beau opened my door.

Fangs out, I went for his throat. He jerked back and hauled me out of the car. Of course I landed in an inglorious heap at his feet.

Slow-motion seconds passed as he stared down at me. “For the record, I still like you.”

Ditto, unfortunately. I studied the toe of his weathered boot instead of risking an answer.

One smooth move had me tossed over his shoulder and then dangling face down above his amazing Wrangler ass. How humiliating. He dropped me into the back of his pickup truck, got into the cab, and hit the road.

Road? I wished. The terrain maneuvered by the Ram couldn’t even be called a path. I bounced all over the bed of that

truck.

“Ooh, damn you! Ow, you son of a bitch!”

What made it worse was Beau’s laughter, and before that truck finally lurched to a halt, I wished I didn’t have Vamp ears. Normally I reveled in the fact that I could hear a bumblebee burp from a mile away.

Nursing my bruised body and ego, I refused to look at my nemesis when he got out of the truck and peered into the bed.

“You okay?”

“As if you cared.”

Chuckling, Beau walked to the back of the vehicle and lowered the tailgate. He grasped my ankles and slid me to the edge, then scooped me up in his arms, Rhett Butler style. Immediately, he headed deeper into the woods.

“Where are we going?” I used my amped senses to identify my surroundings. I realized that tall trees surrounded and arched over us, almost obscuring the light of dawn. I smelled wild jasmine, cedar, moss, and mud. I heard the bark of a squirrel, the slither of a snake. I felt a fresh summer breeze on my face.

“My place.”

“You said you lived on a ranch.”

“I might’ve lied.”

Shit. Shit. *Shit!* If this Were had a cozy log cabin with a table or a couch or a bearskin rug, I’d jump his bloodthirsty bones. But why wait that long? We could do it anywhere. Here, even.

To my fellow Were stalkers: This is Charisma. You know that assassin we can’t seem to kill? Omega? Well.... “Beau?”

“Yeah?”

“Fuck me.”

He stopped in his tracks. “*What?*”

“Fuck. Me.”

His eyes narrowed. “This is new.”

Just One Bite: Charisma

“You can say that again.”

“Weird, too.”

“And we wouldn’t want to go against the norm. I mean, Vamps and Weres are sooo natural.”

He grinned. “You have a point.” His grin vanished. “Would any cowboy do?”

“Nope. Just you.”

“Hm.”

For the longest time, he stood there, looking down at me in silence. But I heard his heartbeat quicken, and felt the tell-tale bulge behind his fly.

I gave him an honest smile. “There *are* rules, of course.”

He rolled his eyes. “Of course.”

“You have to keep your spit to yourself.”

“Only if you keep your fangs to *yourself*.”

“Deal.” I held out my bound hands. “Got a knife?”

Beau set me on my feet and withdrew it from the leather sheath at his waist. A quick flick released my wrists and then my ankles. “We’ll probably regret this in the morning.”

“It *is* morning.” I wiped my lips on the hem of my blouse just in case, then wasted no time in wrapping my arms around his neck. Our lips touched.

Mmmm.

Beau lifted the hem of my shirt. I reached for his fancy belt buckle.

Tree roots to our left began to groan, snap and surge upward as the forest floor buckled before our eyes and something enormous ascended from the dirt to loom before us.

Beau cursed; I gasped and spun around.

Asmodeus, himself. Daemon of all Daemons. Supreme killer of the paranormal universe. The clawed leg and fierce heads confirmed his identity, as did his vicious growl.

I threw my arms back to keep Beau safe behind me...or tried

Linda Palmer

to. He did not cooperate, instead shoving me aside and squaring off to face our mutual enemy alone. His outstretched arm warned me to keep away.

I sprang to my feet.

“Stay!” Beau shouted at me, even as he exploded into an enormous silver Wolf.

Of course I ignored him. So shoulder to shoulder, a Vamp and Were fought off Asmodeus until the hot sun beat down on us from high above. But in the end, our ferocious battle had no victor. The Daemon simply stepped back, nodded politely, and descended into hell again.

The Wolf instantly shifted into naked, bloody, muddy Beau.

And I looked no better. We eyed each other in disbelief.

“What was that all about?” I asked, pushing my hair out of my face.

“The novelty of us, maybe?”

“There is that.”

“I can’t believe you tried to save me.” Beau shook his head. “What the hell were you thinking?”

“That I liked you? That sex on the sly for all eternity sounded perfect, but would never happen if you were dead?”

He blinked. “Thanks, Charisma.”

“Thank *you*, Omega.”

“So when does this orgy start?”

My gaze dropped below his waist. “Mmm, does *now* work?”

He grabbed my shirt again.

And me? Well, I grabbed something else.

Three guesses what.

First. Two. Don’t. Count.

The End

Salute Your Shifter

by Dahlia Rose

The party in the commissary banquet hall was jumping. Spiders, cobwebs, and an assortment of decorations hung from every surface. The fall colors of orange and black were set off strung lights hanging from the ceiling. Specialist Nia Kirkston looked around and took a sip from her drink. She grimaced and recalled that Irish car bombs are not a sipping drink, so she chugged it down.

“Way to go, Nia!”

One of the soldiers from her office clapped her on the back, and she grinned as the drink went straight to her head. It was good that they were given permission to have the Halloween party. As the news came down that the last of the platoons were being drawn out of Iraq and heading home, there was a reason to celebrate. Nia looked down at her boot with the shiny silver heels and knew her costume was risqué. *Sexy kitty with riding crop?* She doubted her choice when she looked in the full length mirror before leaving her place. The black against her ebony skin made a sexy contrast. She had even rubbed gold glitter lotion over her body to give it that sexy sheen. *Thank God my boss is not here to see this.*

Major Casey Johnson’s image popped into her head—sexy as hell, drop-dead gorgeous with a rugged jawline, and deep blue eyes. That was as far as it went because the man was surly as hell. Being the transcriptionist for the head of the Ranger Special

Dahlia Rose

Recon Unit had its perks, and while her boss was hot to look at, he was not a man that made coming to work fun. She assumed that being the head of the Army Beasts came with a whole lot of tension. There was something about the man and the group of men he led. She watched them walk in and out of his office on many occasions. A difference in the way they moved, the way they acted, and their eyes. All their eyes seem to be brighter, deeper in color, and more intense.

“Specialist Kirkston, I’ve been looking for you.”

The sound of her commander’s voice made her choke on her drink as she whirled to face him. There he stood assessing her with cold blue eyes from the top of her kitten ears headband to the tips of her stiletto heels.

“Um yes-yes sir?” Nia put the drink down so quickly it splashed onto her hand. “Shit!” She mopped it up quickly and turned back to his stare.

“You have work to do. Come with me,” he ordered.

“Sir?” Nia asked. “It’s after eleven at night and . . .”

“Are you questioning a direct order, Specialist Kirkston?” Major Johnson snapped.

“No, sir, I’m not.” Nia felt her temper rise. He had no reason to treat her like this. “May I go home to change . . . sir?” She knew she snapped the words out, and maybe it was the alcohol, but she didn’t care.

He raised an eyebrow at her. “You’ll come with me now. Black leather doesn’t affect your typing, does it?”

“Not at all, sir,” she said through gritted teeth.

“Where do I sit, sir, or should I just run beside the car until we get to the office,” Nia said and instantly regretted her words. But she couldn’t bring herself to apologize for the harshness.

“I’m sure sitting in the front seat will be fine,” Major Johnson said. “Plus I doubt you could do much running in those heels. You can call me Casey, you know.”

She was amazed at his statement. “Sir, if I may be blunt,

Just One Bite: Salute Your Shifter

you are a hard ass. Use your first name? I never thought about it.”

This time he laughed out loud. “I can be slightly grouchy.”

“Sir, you made Private Moore cry last week,” Nia pointed out. “I’m sorry about your man down, sir.”

“That’s twice you called me sir. How about you call me Casey unless I otherwise specify, hmmm?”

She nodded. “Yes, si... I mean Casey.”

Nia looked at him out of the corner of her eye while he drove. She wondered what brought on the change. She had worked in the transcription office for the last year, and not once did he give her the time of day except to bark orders. That didn’t stop him from playing some very interesting roles in her dreams, roles that made her wake up gasping from the intensity of the dream, then to dipping her fingers in her moist pussy to relieve the ache.

The car stopped outside of the building where they worked. At night, the structure looked oppressive and intimidating. Even the dim lights that were changed to orange for the holiday crept her out.

“You ok?” His voice made her jump.

“Um yeah, I never had to be here this late,” Nia explained as she stepped out of the car.

“Don’t worry. I’ll protect you.”

He seemed to be behind her in a flash and so close his words caused his breath to tickle her skin. Goose bumps rose on her skin as she followed him into the building. *Weird night*, she thought, *very, very weird night*. Casey flicked the switch on to the office when they stepped into the door and flooded the large room with light. She made her way over to her desk among the rows of mahogany furniture. Her coffin clutch purse dropped on the desk with a soft thud before she sat down to start up her computer. The digital recorder next to her whirled to life with a flick of a button, and Nia looked up to see Casey staring at her intently.

Dahlia Rose

"I'm ready to transcribe, Casey. Can I have the tapes please?"

His scrutinizing look made her uncomfortable, so she looked to her computer screen.

He walked into his own office and came back out with a handful of memory cards. "The ones in blue are from our com units. The orange ones are individual reports from each member of the team." He hesitated before speaking again. "Nia, you are going to hear some things that are confidential, which reveal the true nature of our team. You can never disclose it. You are the only transcriber I know we can trust with our secrets."

"How do you know that, Casey?" she asked.

"I can sense it in you," he replied and turned to go back into his office.

"Are you ok, Casey?"

His smile reflected his weariness. "I'm tired that's all, long day. I need to stretch. I feel like I'm not comfortable in my own skin."

He closed the door with a soft click, and she stared at it for the longest of times. Whatever it was that went wrong had to be bad if it made him call her Nia for the first time since she worked in his office. She had never been sent any tapes like this. All of their missions seemed routine. She soon found out why they were a crack precision team who were sent in to some of the hardest missions for the military. Each word, everything that went from the recording to her ear sent chills down her spine and filled her with disbelief. Major Chase Johnson and his team were shifters.

* * * *

After thirty minutes, Nia shut off the recordings and sat back in her chair stunned. What she heard was like listening to Halloween stories and myths, things that were only seen on television shows. These were secrets that only a select few knew about, and Casey just made sure she was one of the ones that knew too. *But why?* She pushed out of the chair and headed to

Just One Bite: Salute Your Shifter

his office, to find out exactly the reason to the privy information she was given access too. Nia knocked on the door and got no answer. With hesitant fingers, she turned the doorknob and found the door unlocked. She stepped inside. The lights were dim.

“Casey?” She had no answer. “Major Johnson, sir?”

She heard a low growl that made her falter and gulp and then come to a complete stop. In front of the big mahogany desk that took up the middle of the room, a sleek mountain lion flicked its tail as if beckoning her to enter. The yellow catlike eyes watched her as she moved closer, but the animal made no move. This was Casey in his shifted form, and the sight made her breathless. As a mountain lion his fur was thick and tan, and from what she knew about the creatures, he was way bigger than the normal animals.

She held out her hand with trembling fingers. “Can I touch you?”

He gave a low purr that sent shivers through her, but she took that as acceptance. Nia got to her knees and ran her hand across his body. Her fingers buried in the thick fur as she stroked him with wonderment. She could feel the tight sinewy muscle beneath his fur and imagined them bunched and poised for running and capturing prey. He was as magnificent in animal form as he was when human.

He changed under her touch, shocking her to the point that she scrambled across the floor. His back arched, and his body moved and bunched before he extended out again. She looked on as he changed from animal to man. Casey stood nude looking down at her with a small smile on his face. Mingled in with the excitement and the wonder of what he was, desire came to the surface and made her lick her lips.

“Are you scared?” His voice was low, and it rumbled.

She shook her head slowly. “No, sir. Why did you let me into this secret? Why now?”

He roughly pulled her against his naked body, and Nia

Dahlia Rose

gasped at the sensations. His lips nuzzled her neck. She tipped back to give him more access to the sensitive skin.

“Because every time I am around you, I want to bend you over the table and fuck you.” He growled. “I’m going to take you hard. Your body, your scent, you have driven me to the brink of madness for over a year. You don’t understand how that feels?”

She nodded. It excited and thrilled her to finally have her dream become a reality. To have him was taboo, a major and his subordinate in a sexual entanglement. The consequences would be dealt with later. Tonight she would get to love her fantasy.

“Say ‘yes, sir’, Nia,” Casey commanded.

“Yes, sir,” she whispered.

Casey took her lips in a fierce kiss that shook her to her core and took away all thought except for him. She could smell his musky scent while his tongue penetrated her mouth and molded her body to his. He cupped her ass under her tight skirt before tunneling between the elastic of her panties to touch her pussy. His fingers slipped between the fold of flesh to rub her clit. She thought she would go mad from the invasion of his long digits. He took her from simmering to hot in seconds as she spread her legs wide to accept his intrusion. His cock nested between them, and she grasped it in her hands. She stroked his long, thick rod until he groaned and nipped her lips.

He stepped away from her. Their harsh breathing filled the room. “Strip for me, only leave the boots on. I want to see you touch yourself.”

Nia walked slowly away from him until the back of her knees hit the wooden chair against the wall. She stripped for him, seeing his eyes darken as he watched her. She sat and put her legs over each arm of the chair exposing her pussy to him. His gaze followed her fingers as they trailed down from her neck to pinch her nipples. Her eyes never left his face while her hands went down the satin skin of her torso to the apex of her thighs and rubbed her pussy slowly. Her fingers furrowed between the slit, and Nia moaned in pleasure. She was on fire with the intensity of his gaze while he watched her. She dipped her finger

Just One Bite: Salute Your Shifter

inside her wet cavern, and in a flash he was on his knees between her legs. Casey pulled her to him. He ran his tongue up the slit of her pussy, and she moaned while wantonly shifting her hips and entreating him to continue.

“You want me to lick your pussy, don’t you?” Casey spread the full lips of her sex and blew against the coral pink clit making her shiver.

“Sir, yes, sir,” she gasped.

Casey buried his face into the center of her desire and sampled her exotic flavor. Nia grabbed his head and cried out as his tongue invaded her pussy. He lapped at her like a cat at cream. Without giving her any chance to escape his ministrations, he wrapped his arms around the top of her thighs. His tongue and lips took her to a mind blowing release, leaving her gasping and crying out his name. This was not the end of his play on her body. He replaced his mouth with two fingers, sending them deep inside her. He pressed against that special place that made the pleasure more intense. She cried out over and over again as he fucked her with his fingers, and her juices covered his hand. Casey did not relent until she came again.

“Oh God, oh sir!” She repeated it over and over again clutching at the chair.

He pulled her into his arms and took her lips again in a kiss. Nia was glad he held her tight because her legs felt like jelly, and she doubted that she could stand. She vaguely noticed that Casey walked backward until she heard a crash. He pushed everything off his desk leaving the mahogany empty of clutter. Before she could even question why she was bent over the piece of furniture. Her breasts pressed against the cold surface. She felt his hand under her stomach lifting her ass high. Nia felt his cock throbbed against her wet entrance. He sank himself inside her, which caused them both to cry out in gratification. Casey pumped into her, and she gave a low sultry moan at the sensations while she pushed against him. She pulled his hands to her breasts, and he massaged them while he fucked her from behind.

Dahlia Rose

"Give me more, sir!" Nia cried out.

"You don't know what you're asking for," he said harshly.

"Yes, I do. I want it all. I've dreamed of this," she panted out. Nia felt like fire was in her veins. Everything she learned and experienced in this one night blurred together until she could only feel the primitive urge to be consumed by the man behind her. The major who shifted into a sleek predator cat.

He pulled his cock from her wet cavern and raised her just a little higher. He pressed the head of his manhood against the tight glove of her ass. Casey took his time and penetrated her anus. She wiggled in anticipation when she felt the beginnings of his engorged cock slide into her tight hole.

Casey entered her pussy once more with expert fingers sending them deep inside her until she felt the beginnings of a new orgasm building. With every movement his cock inched forward until he was completely buried in the tight glove of her ass. She felt stretched wide with the double penetration of his fingers and his cock filling her. Her body clenched around this new invasion. His fingers matched the rhythm of his thrust inside her ass. She felt her release and involuntary flow when he hit a sensitive spot with his fingers.

"Damn, Nia, you are so tight. I've wanted to take you like this for such a long time," he muttered above her.

He removed his fingers from her depth and took her hand, placing it on her wet mound. Casey grabbed her hips and pumped inside her while she rubbed her own clit. The slapping sounds of their bodies filled the room. She caught the rhythm, and they moved in unison. They flew together to the heights of passion until their orgasms left them gasping and breathless. They were so pliant in the aftermath of their lovemaking that Casey slipped to the floor taking her with him. She smiled at the low growl of satisfaction that rumbled through his chest.

"Where do we go from here?" Nia asked softly. She could see a transfer in her future, if they did work out as a couple or not. The working relationship would be different.

Just One Bite: Salute Your Shifter

“I brought you here for another reason than this.” He chuckled. “I just couldn’t deny my feelings any longer or my desire for you.”

“What was the other reason?”

“We’re being moved to a new sector on base, off the grid and serious black ops. We needed someone we could trust to transcribe what we do and to record our activities,” Casey explained. “It’s for future members of the group, to teach them and to know what we are.”

“Is that all you want me for?” Nia felt doubt invade her chest. She hoped this was not a one night stand.

“You think after this I’m letting you go?” There was amazement in his voice. “If you’ll have me, can you learn to love a shifter?”

“That’s something I think is a definite yes,” she replied.

He kissed her soundly and sent her senses reeling. “I want you again.”

She grasped his cock finding it hard, ready, and waiting. “Oh, yes, sir.”

The End

Falling

by Rosalie Stanton

Even though three thousand years had passed, her back still ached in the absence of her wings. She had no one to blame but herself for her foolishness, but it especially ached on a night spent darting in and out of alleys, intervening in bar fights, doing her damned best to keep people from making stupid mistakes, all to lose at the last second.

Ellyen missed being one with The Light most on nights where she fucked up. The Light offered clarity earth refused to provide. It was a part of her punishment, as The One had phrased it. Granted, she'd only been a few days old when she was expelled for her offense, but those days were enough to drill in that The Light was good and earth was bad. The Light, the warrior line from which her kind originated, worked in accordance with The One, whose name changed based on whatever religion one observed. Each day brought with it new beings to merge with The Light, and there was no grading curve. She'd slighted The One without knowing the punishment, and every day of the thousands of years that had passed since then were wrought with regret.

The road to Hell is paved with good intentions. The tongue-in-cheek wisdom had no idea how close it came to the truth. Elly had built her existence since The Fall on good intentions, and it hadn't gotten her anywhere.

A woman was dead now because of her. A pregnant one, to

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boot. Once it wouldn't have mattered; Elly would only feel the sting of defeat and the will to push forward. Regaining her wings couldn't be that difficult, and once she had them back, all would be forgiven. The One would allow her return.

It seemed perfect. After all, three thousand years of hard labor protecting the human race had to be worth forgiving one little instance of blasphemy, right?

Right?

Only now a pregnant woman was dead, and it was entirely her fault. And it mattered. It sure as hell mattered. More than just the lost time and the fight she'd give to push forward. Humans were a dangerous, clumsy, often useless invention, and she hadn't given a righteous damn about them most of her existence. Somewhere over the last hundred or so years, that much had changed. She cared.

And caring was a bitch.

"The ants go marching one by one," Elly sang under her breath, gripping the cords of the swing and kicking off the ground, strands of her auburn hair whipping her eyes.

"Evening, love."

Elly rolled her eyes, skidding to a halt. The perfect completion to her night: a visit from her favorite neighborhood demon. "What do you want, Arick?"

"Hey now. No way to greet a mortal enemy."

She sighed harshly and twirled in her seat to face him, the swing cords twisting. Arick occasionally stirred up trouble to make her look good, but she wasn't in the mood. Right now, the best thing she could do was rip his head off. It would at least get her back to where she'd been on the cosmic scales prior to tonight's blunder.

But it wouldn't bring the woman back.

"Get out of here," she said, jerking her head. "I don't have the patience for you tonight."

"We both know you don't mean that." Arick slid his hands

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into his duster pockets. All demons wore dusters, it seemed. Long, leathery, Matrix-like dusters. Unlike other demons, however, Arick had bright blond hair to contrast his otherwise sinister appearance. He was lean, mean, and gorgeous as all hell...pun intended. He had to be, else temptation wouldn't be nearly so sweet. "What's eating you?"

Elly held his gaze a minute longer before her eyes dropped to the ground. She always did this—always divulged more than she should. He had a way of wrangling more from her than anyone in her life, and through the lonely nights she'd come to rely upon that. Nights became longer, fights became tougher, but at the same time her enemy provided a constant sorely lacking in her life.

They had become friends, which was weird for both of them. Elly didn't have friends.

"I got a woman killed tonight," she said.

"Women die all the time, last I checked."

"Not pregnant ones."

Arick frowned. "Technically..."

"Not because of me, I should say. I intervened when I shouldn't have." At his look, Elly frowned and continued. "Hold up at a gas station. He fired because I surprised him, and a woman...Rebecca Morgan...died as a result."

"She wouldn't have died anyway?"

"I went to the Oracles. They confirmed my presence sealed the deal."

Arick tilted his head to the side. "Bummer."

"Yeah."

"So your wings..."

"I got tossed out for making one little joke about The One," Elly replied dryly. "Getting a woman killed—one about to pop a kid? I think I'm pretty much done for the rest eternity."

"It was a mistake."

"Strangely, one of the tests into getting back on The One's

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good side is making educated judgments like this on your own.”

Arick rolled his eyes. “Bunch of ninnies, if you ask me. I tell you, Elly, if you ever do manage to get back there, you’re gonna be bored stiff.”

“You *have* to tell me that because you’re a demon.”

“No, I have to tell you that because it happens to be true. Remember my cousin, Raphael? He was a member of The Divine. Bored fucking stiff. He ended up taking a leak behind The One’s digs to get himself booted.” He shrugged. “Figure you were only there a day or so. You’re not missing much.”

“But it’s why I was created.”

“So what? I was created to be evil.”

“You *are* evil.”

Arick beamed. “Thanks. Never get tired of hearing that.”

“And it’s a demon’s prerogative to keep the fallen holy ones from ascending to their rightful place. Sorry. You’re out of the argument on grounds of extreme bias.”

He shook his head. “Don’t like this.”

“Tough titties.”

“I don’t like seeing you all...sullen. You’re no fun.”

Elly waved a hand. “By all means, go annoy someone else.”

“Don’t wanna.”

“Then stop complaining.”

Arick exhaled deeply and took several steps forward. “You’re so much better than this, Elly. So much better than...how long have we known each other?”

“A few centuries now.”

“Right.”

“And you don’t see it. You don’t see anything.”

“What don’t I see?”

“What you have here. What you wouldn’t have if you ever managed to get your lousy wings.”

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Elly perked a brow. "What?"

"Me."

She hadn't expected him to say it, to admit it. To bring up whatever chemistry sparked between them—the dangerous attraction of what she wanted desperately but couldn't have. They'd been friends, colleagues, for eons, without mentioning the way his nostrils flared and his eyes burned when they locked gazes or acknowledging the heat lacing her skin whenever he stood near. Now, however, the silent truce had shattered.

She shuddered, nipples suddenly hard and a foreign heat making her thighs clench. Elly hadn't let anyone bone her since hearing from her few friends in The Light that sex didn't earn a halo. At that moment she'd sworn off men, determined to wander single among the underworld. She'd stopped perceiving herself as sexual and she wasn't about to break that vow. Sex with a demon would make her earthbound residency permanent.

Therefore, she bounded to her feet. Broken silence meant fucking herself over even more than she had already, and she didn't want that. She also didn't want to allow whatever she felt toward Arick to blossom into something she couldn't afford to lose.

"And to that," she said shortly, "goodnight."

"Hold on, now."

"No, don't think I will."

Arick growled and sprinted after her. "Did you hear me? I just told you—" "That I have you. Got it."

"No, you don't fucking 'got it'!" He jogged up ahead of her and placed himself in her path. "Do you have any idea how hard it was for me to choke that out?"

Elly blinked at him. "Wow! Way to seal the deal!"

He scowled. "That's not fair."

"I never asked, for the record."

"But you do."

"Unless there's an epilogue, this is old news, Arick."

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“There’s more to it than that, and you know it.” He seized her by the arms, which sent a sizzling thrill down her spine. No wonder so many people sacrificed themselves for the sake of pleasure. Arick only touched her, and the heat coursing through her skin had her insides tingling. What the hell had gotten into her?

“I can’t get you outta my head!” he hissed.

“Well, let’s start with getting me out of your sight and going from there.”

Arick snarled and shook his head, closing the space between them, his hands clamping down on her shoulders. “Get it through your thick head, already,” he hissed through his teeth, jerking her against his chest. Elly swallowed hard, the rush coming back. The strange nipple-hardening, thigh-clenching rush. She felt hot, wet, and she hadn’t felt either in so long. It was as though an accumulation of every encounter had mounted into something unforeseen. Something of which she wasn’t even aware until that moment.

“It’s you, baby,” he growled, eyes roaming her face until settling on her mouth. She knew then her life was about to change, just as surely as she knew she should fight it. But God, she hadn’t felt anything in so long, and the fog separating the world she wanted and the world in which she lived began thicker and harder to navigate. Arick was all she knew; no matter how screwed up that was, it didn’t make it any less true.

A world without this rush wasn’t worth exploring. This was where she belonged. “It’s all you,” Arick said again, then his mouth was hot against hers, and everything else melted away. Elly moaned—an honest to God moan. She didn’t think she had those in her anymore. He tasted like the world was on fire, desperate, needy nips of teeth against her lips before his tongue implored entry to her mouth. And immediately, her defenses deflated. It had been so long since she’d been touched.

“Oh God,” Elly whimpered as her lips broke from his, his mouth tearing down her neck. “I can’t...this...” “You taste so good,” he purred, hands wandering. “Such soft skin...” His

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tongue laved her skin. "So sweet..."

"I can't believe this."

Arick growled softly, teeth scraping the pulse point on her neck. "Neither can I," he replied. "We're fucked, you know that? Completely fucked. I've wanted to taste you since the moment I set eyes on you, Elly. Wanted this..." His hand delved between her legs, palming her pussy through her sweats, "delicious cunt wrapped around me."

"You have?" God, she hated how small her voice sounded. This wasn't her—it was a shadow of who she was. Sin would render her stranded forever, and she didn't want that. She didn't...and yet what the hell had the last few centuries given her but a sore heart and heavy resentment for The One? Arick had been with her forever, and she'd wanted this—she'd wanted connection—for longer than she remembered.

The hint of femininity she'd cast aside came crashing back, and just as quickly she was a wide-eyed school girl macking on her first crush. Only Arick wasn't a crush, he was dangerous...and he was hers.

"Oh yeah, baby. Wanna fill you up. Make you cream so hard you'll forget anything but what it feels like to have me inside you."

It took a second to realize the ground was moving beneath her feet, but by the time it occurred to her to do something about it, her butt had collided with something slanted and cold. Elly wasn't an idiot; she should stop this. She should kick his presumptuous ass up and down Main Street, but it felt too good to stop. She'd been wandering in the wilderness without touch for so long, and with Arick, it felt right.

It felt too right to fight.

"God, you're a picture," Arick sighed, jerking down her jeans and panties together, but only managing to get one leg free before his patience ran out. "Skin all flushed, lips swollen...just begging to be fucked."

No one talked to her like that.

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Only, for her stunning lack of rebuttal, apparently Arick did.

“Mmm,” he drawled, running his fingers through her curls before dipping to explore her opening. “So wet. Didn’t know you were this hot for me, darling.”

“Bite me.”

Arick’s eyes flashed dangerously. “Be careful what you wish for.” Then his hands were tearing at his fly and shoving his jeans down to mid-thigh, his hard cock springing into Elly’s eager grip. “Put me where you want me,” he murmured, thrusting into her hand. She had no idea how she’d let things get this far. How in God’s name she’d managed to let Arick splay her body on a kiddie slide as his cock pried apart her pussy lips and sank inside her, but nothing could eradicate the voices screaming it was *right*. Her muscles ached as she remembered, but the pain she’d experienced the first time had dwindled to nothing. This was different. This was...

“Oh, my God,” Elly moaned, linking her hands behind Arick’s neck and dragging him down to steal a kiss off his lips. He began rocking against her, cock dragging against her slick flesh. “This...” “I know.”

Her hands drifted to her sides, finding purchase on the rims of the slide. “I don’t know what the hell I’m doing,” she murmured, hips rolling.

“You’re living.”

“This is crazy.”

“Mhmm,” Arick mused. “My kind of crazy. Dance with me, love. Just like that.”

She had no idea if she was doing this right, but perhaps there wasn’t a way to do it wrong. The world was no longer the world—she didn’t know where she lived anymore. All she knew was the bliss of being torn in two, of feeling a part of something larger than she was. “No idea how long I’ve wanted this, do you?” Arick demanded heatedly, dragging his lips across her throat, fingers dancing over her pussy, and the dual sensation about drove her insane. She hadn’t had this before—hadn’t

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experienced a man touching her intimately while driving his cock inside her. It had been a long time, but she knew it hadn't felt like this the first time; her lover hadn't pursued her satisfaction, hadn't fingered her clit, as Arick did, hadn't done anything special to drive her out of her mind.

Arick bit at her lips. "Couldn't eat. Couldn't sleep. You're all I think about."

His hands slid under her hips completely, anchoring her into his thrusts, which grew harder with every stroke. Pain sliced her insides, but she didn't fight—pain was welcome. Pain was pleasure—pain was life. She needed this as much as she needed anything, needed to feel beyond the cold, beyond the death of strangers, she needed touch and touch he gave. "Tell me you think of me," he begged softly, nibbling at her throat.

"What if I don't?"

He stiffened, then exploded in what was either desperation or rage. "Lie to me, then," he demanded, pounding her into the next world, bruising her body with his. Her muscles ached, but she'd never been wetter than she was at that second—the steady slip and slide of his cock from her pussy, her body contracting. "Tell me you think of me."

"I think you're disgusting."

He rammed harder. "Liar."

"Absolutely...ohhh, disgusting."

"Seems like you love disgusting."

Elly grinned in spite herself. Hot streaks of white flashed through her veins, her eyes dipping between them, watching her swollen pussy lips contract around his slick cock every time he entered her. "And what if I do?"

He raised her hips, following her gaze. "God, can't ever get enough of this."

"What is this?" Elly demanded between gasps. "I need more."

"You'll get more."

Just One Bite: Falling

“No...Arick, I need...”

His lips pressed hard against hers. It wasn't a romantic kiss, but it held a world of promise. “Not giving this up,” he promised, voice uneasy though not for lack of conviction. The hand between them remembered itself and resumed the torturous massage of her clitoris, rubbing her in tender circles and igniting a series of sparks across her body. “Wanna take you...somewhere and worship every inch...”

The thought had her insides liquefying.

“Wanna taste your honey. Wanna bury my tongue inside this sweet, hot cunt and eat you for hours.” Elly's skin nearly melted right off her bones.

“Want to come?”

She nodded harshly, not even sure what he'd asked. All she knew at that second, the fingers at her clit began working overtime, pressing her just hard enough to fan the sparks into an all out bonfire without pressing the burn into hurt.

Anything. “That's it,” Arick whispered, kissing her lips. “Feel that?”

Oh, she felt it. The flames licked higher, her pussy grew tighter and wetter with every plunge. And then something pierced her neck and the world tumbled into light, ecstasy ripping through her body. Her muscles clamped and squeezed and Arick roared and bucked, and it was wonderful. There was no pain—there was nothing but this.

Every second was wonderful. She'd never known pleasure like this.

She'd never known pleasure at all.

“Mine,” Arick snarled against her bloodied throat. “You're blood is my blood, Elly. You belong here...with me.”

“Oh God, yes,” she answered without thought.

“Forever, you understand? We're just beginning, you and me. Just beginning.”

Elly nodded hard, choking a sob and riding out the waves.

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Forever.

The One could stuff it.

This was where she belonged.

The Hungering Wolf

by Brenda Williamson

Nothing spelled danger more than a dark night in the hills with the Dakota wolves. Blackie was one of them, a half-breed, an outcast, a man with a heart. But that would all change when he claimed his legacy. Inline to inherit leadership of the pack, he had to have a mate or fight all challengers. Rulership meant power, riches and respect. He hungered for all three, only he wasn't sure his fighting skills could match up against full blood werewolves. By stealing an innocent woman from the deadly pack of renegades, he knew he had made his situation worse.

He looked at the beautiful, golden haired woman curled up on his bedroll. Who was she? What was she doing in those hills alone, unarmed? She shivered in her sleep, so he tossed another log on the fire. Sparks and flames burst upward as pine-scented smoke curled into the shadows of the night.

Without a leader, some of the pack had become an unruly lot of outlaws run by Carl "the merciless" Mercer. He and his offspring robbed and killed on a whim, and their intent was to rape this woman. Blackie's stomach balled into knots with the thought of her ravaged by more than a dozen men. If she were a wolf-shifter, the first man would claim her as a mate. As a human, she was a plaything. They'd molest her with their rapacious greed and leave her to die.

He understood the instincts of his breed, but not the lack of compassion. Her beautiful facial features, her shapely body and

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her womanly scent made him lustful too. The energy of the full moon put pressure on him to mate. He walked to where she lay unaware of his dangerous cravings. He stooped down and pushed her soft flaxen hair back from her face. The ache to undress her and spread her legs intensified. He ran his hand down her side, feeling the curve to her hip. Her feminine scent grew stronger, arousing all his senses. He imagined sinking his throbbing cock into her tight cunt, the wet recesses soothing the friction of his thrusts. Did she not owe him for rescuing her?

Yes, take her now.

Etta woke confused, paralyzed by fear. She kept her eyes shut. Someone stood near—a man. She stayed still as he pulled a blanket over her. He moved away. She listened for the others, but detected the sounds of only him. Men she'd never seen before had jumped her right in the middle of her setting a wolf trap. Then one struck her in the face. Had this man saved her from the unsavory bunch or was he their leader, claiming first rights to rape her.

Unable to ignore the pain of a stone under her, she pushed herself up on an elbow.

"You're awake." The man came over and squatted down on his heels. "How you feeling?"

She watched him closely while she lifted the edge of the bedroll. "All right, except for this." She flicked the stone away.

"That pebble is the least of your problems. What are you doing out here in the middle of the night without a gun, a horse or a man to protect you." Concern fringed his voice.

She sat up, annoyed he believed she needed sheltered by anyone. Her father had done that until his death. "I had a gun, a horse, and I most certainly don't need a man."

"You needed someone against those outlaws." He rose from his guard-like position and went to a saddlebag on his horse.

She looked him over, gauging how much to trust him. So far, he hadn't shown signs of being like the others. As he walked

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back, she was able to see his face. Nice lines to his features—handsome. She let her gaze wander down to his wide shoulders and lean hips. His struts tightened his denims against his thighs. She tried thinking of him undressed, his hard muscular body capable of pounding the ache raging through her.

“Here’s something to eat and drink.” He bent down and handed her a canteen and a burlap bundle.

“I’m Etta Barlow.” Her gaze met his and her insides clenched.

“Blackie Larimore.” He hesitated from moving away, and her heart thumped quicker.

Fear of attack and imprisonment should have dominated her thoughts instead of the hungering for sex.

Blackie stepped back sharply. The irresistible scent of her was driving him crazy. Animal or human, all females came into heat. For him to be near one tonight was agonizing.

“You said you had a gun and a horse. What happened to them?” He rubbed the back of his neck, dispelling the prickling sensation associated with his transformation into a wolf.

“Those men you took me from spooked off my horse. The gun was in the scabbard on the saddle.”

“What were you doing off your horse?”

“Setting traps for wolves,” she said matter-of-factly.

He rubbed the side of his boot. His ankle throbbed along a scar he had from a trap. “More than just bad wolves step in those contraptions,” he said irritably.

“I know and that’s what’s so frustrating.” She opened the bundle of food he gave her and sniffed the dried meat. “I only want to kill wolves. I have a sheep ranch in the valley and the wolves in these hills are wreaking havoc on my profits. The more of them I kill, the better off every rancher in territory will be.”

Fine hairs bristled on the back of his hands as he clenched

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them into fists. He fought off the urge to shift. Instinctive self-preservation threatened to expose him. She was lucky his thoughts remained rooted on ripping her clothes away and fucking her instead of killing her.

Etta took a gulp of the cool water in the canteen. After all the screaming she had done to scare off the men, her throat was raw.

"I explained what I was doing in the forest," she said. "What are you doing here?"

"Just traveling."

"Then maybe you need a job? I'd be willing to pay you to trap and kill wolves." She put her hand to the stinging pain in her arm.

"I should see how badly you're hurt." He came around to sit by her.

She didn't like his closeness. Maybe he was one of the outlaws. She had only heard his voice telling them to leave her alone before she passed out.

"I'll be all right," she said hoarsely.

"They really bruised you up good." He leaned forward, touching her jaw lightly.

His warm breath swept across her cheek. She closed her eyes and inhaled his masculine scent. She imagined his lips caressing the pulse in his neck. He took liberties with her clothing. She said nothing as he flicked buttons free on her shirt. Her father's red flannel one, not very feminine. Nor was she lady-like with her lack of undergarments. His fingers rested on her collarbone. She opened her eyes to see why he stopped. His gaze was on the gap of the shirt exposing the curve of her breasts.

Take me, dashed through her thoughts.

Drawn to him, she lifted her hand to undress herself. Blackie was quicker. He grabbed her open collar and folded the

Just One Bite: The Hungering Wolf

shirt back off her shoulders. She felt the soft cloth slide down her arms.

She ignored intuitive warnings, hoping her foolishness didn't equate disaster.

With water from the canteen, Blackie wet his handkerchief. Carefully, he washed away the blood. He trembled, afraid of not controlling his desires.

"It's not too deep." He tugged her shirt back up.

She grabbed his wrist and stopped him from buttoning it closed. "Thank you."

"Think nothing of it." He looked into her eyes, trying to ignore the heat of her breast against his hand.

"I'm talking about helping me against those men." Her heart beat rapidly under his palm.

"No problem," he whispered, finding speech difficult.

She leaned toward him and her mouth crushed his. He froze for a second. Disbelief cautioned him not to respond, not to mistake the kiss as anything other than a reward. Then her arms folded around him. He grabbed her face and stopped her. Lust smoldered in her blue eyes. Her lips remained puckered, tempting. He pulled her forward and pressed his mouth to hers. She sagged against him, showing her willingness.

He kissed her with fierce greed. Blood coursed through his fiery veins, making him hot. He jerked her shirt open and cupped her breast. She moaned her approval. He laid her back on the bedroll and rubbed the front of her denims. Once unfastened, he slid his hand inside between her legs. He dipped his finger in the moist folds of flesh and thrust in and out. She rocked rhythmically against him. Her moans grew louder from his fondling and probing her cunt.

When she shuddered, he grasped her waistband and yanked her pants down from her hips. He kissed over her breasts and belly, and then he pressed his nose into the scent of her sex.

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“Oh, God, yes,” she moaned at his first lick.

She continued voicing her pleasure with other sounds as he sucked on her. He fluttered her clit with his tongue and teased her. Her gasps of ecstasy made him want more.

Etta kicked, working the pant legs to her ankles. She pulled one leg free and opened herself to be ravished. He sat back and whipped his belt undone. She watched him looking at her. Like flames against her skin, his gaze blazed over her bare breasts and belly. He raked his finger through the split of her sex and brushed her clit again. Extreme sensitivity made her flinch. He went deeper, curling his finger inside and stroking.

“Please,” she whimpered. “Don’t stop.”

But he did. He withdrew and put his fingers in his mouth, sucking off her juices. Was he aware at how arousing she found that image?

In his scorching brown eyes, she saw warnings that he’d not be gentle. She didn’t care. Her desires were always for an animalistic lover.

When Blackie looked away, her attention went to the rustling of leaves. Someone watched, and Blackie knew. Was his job to seduce her, make her ready for the others?

He got to his feet and fastened his belt. She wiggled her pants back up her legs and closed her shirt. He picked up a log and tossed it on the fire, pretending nothing was wrong. She stared at him through the campfire flames and tried to read his thoughts, his expression.

Hell, she wasn’t waiting to find out what they intended to do with her.

Etta jumped and ran. She came to an abrupt halt moments later.

“You didn’t really think I was going to let you get far, did you?” the man that had knocked her unconscious blocked her path.

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She turned at the sound of Blackie sprinting toward her. She gulped, swallowing down her fears of capture.

Don't panic, rattled in her head.

She tried dodging him and tripped on a tree root. Falling flat on the ground, she rolled over as he leapt over her and attacked the other man. Had she been wrong? Was Blackie only trying to help her? At the howl of wolves in the forest, she decided not to wait for an outcome between the men. Her sheep were in grave danger. She had to get home. Stealing Blackie's horse was her best option.

Blackie's stomach grumbled from hunger. He had a particular liking to lamb, and the strong odor of sheep surrounding him wasn't helping his concentration. His fight with Carl went better than expected. He was stronger than he thought and his future didn't seem so rough if he had to fight others.

He had found Etta's ranch and eased around the corner of her barn. The sheep had thrown off his sense of smell and he faced Etta aiming a shotgun at him.

"How did you find me?" she asked.

"Tracked my horse you stole."

"Fine, take him and go."

"What about the job you offered me, or something similar. There are more wolves then you can possibly trap, so how about I keep watch over your flock."

"You want to be a sheepherder?" She snorted an amused sound. "You don't look the type to work for a woman or sit with sheep."

"Looks can be deceiving." He stared into her beautiful eyes, feeling the strong attraction still between them. "I want to help you, Etta."

"That means I'd have to trust you."

"That's right." He grabbed the barrel of the gun and jerked it from her hands.

Brenda Williamson

Thrown off balance, she stumbled forward. He dropped the gun and caught her.

The corner of her lip curled and her eyes went from blue to gold. "Let go of me," she snarled.

She surprised him by being like him. His level of desire rose.

"You're a wolf-shifter." He grasped the back of her head. "How did I not see that?"

But he already knew the answer. Both half-breeds and full bloods were incapable of recognizing half-breeds because of their human scent.

She twisted in his arms, struggling against his hold.

"Stop, Etta. It's all right. I'm a shifter too."

"I know."

"How?"

"By the way you act...the hungry way you look at me. My father warned me what signs to watch for in a male ready to mate."

He slid his hand to her face. She wiggled again, showing less determination to break free. He did want her. However, he wasn't going to let the rules of leadership or the laws of nature dictate when he made a woman his. Besides, it wasn't mating if they were both in human form.

Etta stared at Blackie. "What are you waiting for?" she snapped, upset she wanted a man that thought he could have her by force.

"For you to relax." He brushed his thumb over her lips.

She closed her eyes when he kissed her tenderly.

And then he let go.

No—no—no. She grabbed his face and pulled him to her mouth, excited he was there.

He scooped her up and carried her to a stall filled with hay.

Just One Bite: The Hungering Wolf

They pawed one another to peel away clothing.

“We stay human,” he murmured, kissing her neck.

Sure she wasn’t ready for mating, she nodded in agreement.

Heavily, aroused by his unrelenting passion, she reached between them. She found his thick cock, hard and throbbing. He growled playfully as she rolled her hand back and forth along the shaft. She drew her legs back and guided him to the opening of her vagina. He lunged into her. Several times, he pulled out and thrust again.

“Harder,” she groaned.

His rhythm increased, giving her what she needed.

“Yes, like that,” she said encouragingly.

Her orgasm raged with intensity. She threw her legs over his back and hung on. Then his momentum slowed and his strained grunts stopped. She dug her fingers into his arms as he reared and howled. He fell forward over her, crushing her into the hay. Accompanied by jolts of his hips, the liquid heat of his semen filled her.

Then she felt his muscles twitching, a recognizable sign of him changing. Panic swelled as he jerked his cock out of her and turned her over. If he shifted into a wolf, she’d shift in response. Was she ready to belong to him forever?

Blackie spread his hands out over Etta’s supple ass. He pried her bottom open and rubbed his thumb against the crinkled ring of her anus. Her soft moan said she’d let him have her in whatever way he wanted. They belonged together.

“I’ll not take you as an animal until you ask me to.” He kissed her damp back.

She turned over. “You want to, don’t you?”

“Yes.” He stretched out next to her and stroked her side. “But if and when I do, I want you to know it’s because I want you as my mate.”

“I don’t understand.”

Brenda Williamson

"The wolves don't have a leader. The wolf-shifter in the woods is an outlaw. As the next leader of the pack, I can only do so much to control him until I take over. This Blood Moon night is my deadline to have a mate or I'll have to fight all challengers. I'd rather assume leadership and battle every alpha male out here than have you doubt how I feel about you."

"You have too much human blood in your veins, Blackie." She pushed him to his back and straddled him.

"What are you doing?" he groaned, feeling her wet cunt lips kissing his abdomen as she rocked her hips.

"I want you as my mate, and I'll do anything to have you." She smiled, and bent down to kiss him. "I'll do anything to protect you."

"Why?"

"As pack leader, you can keep them from killing my sheep," she said teasingly.

Blackie laughed and rolled, putting her beneath him. "No one will touch your sheep ever again. I'll make sure of it, whether or not you're my mate."

"Good. I hated setting traps. They just weren't working."

"Oh, they work." He sat up and swung his leg around, showing her his brush with someone's trap.

"Blackie," She rubbed the ragged scar circling his ankle. "I'm so sorry."

"It wasn't one of yours." He assured her and wiped the tears from her cheeks. "Besides, it wouldn't matter. I'd still want you."

"Then make me yours before the sun comes up. I want you too."

These were the terms he could accept—Etta wanting him. He kissed her deeply, knowing he'd take his time loving her. His hunger for power, riches and respect meant nothing without her.

About the Authors

Victoria Blisse is a mother, wife, Christian, Manchester United fan and erotica writer. She is equally at home behind a laptop or a cooker and she loves to create stories, poems, cakes and biscuits that make people happy.

She was born near Manchester, England and her northern English quirkiness shows through in all of her stories. Passion, love and laughter fill her works, just as they fill her busy life.

To learn more about Victoria, visit VictoriaBlisse.co.uk

Other works include:

Over the Moon Anthology, Total-E-Bound

The Point, Total-E-Bound

Big and Beautiful Anthology, Xcite

Restoration, Xcite

Spiced Vanilla, Total-E-Bound

Secret Surprise, Total-E-Bound

Night of the Senses Anthology, Total-E-Bound

Christmas Spirit Warms the Heart, Total-E-Bound

Festive Handbag, Total-E-Bound

Vanilla with Extra Nuts, All Romance eBooks

39 and Holding...Him Anthology, Phaze
Christmas Cake, Phaze
Coming Together Vol.1, Coming Together
Coming Together As One, Coming Together
Coming Together Under Fire, Coming Together
Phaze Fantasies V Anthology, Phaze
Seriously Sexy Stocking Filler Anthology, Xcite
Sexier Side of the Hill, Total-E-Bound
Travel Delight, Total-E-Bound

Kathleen Dienne has been a reporter, a theatrical stage manager, a ghostwriter, a video game consultant, and a marketing analyst. Fiction is the most truthful stuff she's written.

She is very lucky to have the enthusiastic support of a brilliant husband, a delightful toddler, and many friends inside the computer. When she isn't writing, she's reading. Secretly, she practices Italian with those "speak and learn" □ CDs in hopes of someday moving to Tuscany. So far, the only person picking up Italian with any fluency is the toddler.

To learn more about Kathleen, visit KathleenDienne.com

Other works include:

Her Heart's Divide, Carina Press
Her Kind of Hero, Carina Press

Marie Harte is an avid reader who loves all things paranormal and futuristic. Reading romances since she was twelve, she fell

in love with the warmth of first passion and knew writing was her calling.

Two decades later, the Marine Corps, a foray through Information Technology, a husband and four kids, and her dream has finally come true. Marie lives in Georgia with her family and loves hearing from readers.

To learn more about Marie, visit MarieHarte.com

Other works include:

Julian's Jeopardy, Loose Id

Hayashi's Hero, Loose Id

Fallon's Flame, Loose Id

Circe's Recruits: Hale, Loose Id

Circe's Recruits: Derrick, Loose Id

Circe's Recruits: Zack & Ace, Loose Id

Circe's Recruits: Roane, Loose Id

Satyr's Myst, Loose Id

Reaper's Reward, Loose Id

Tied and True, Loose Id

Foxy Lady, Samhain Publishing

In Plain Sigh, Samhain Publishing

Rachel's Totem, Samhain Publishing

To Hunt a Sainte, Samhain Publishing

The Dragons' Demon, Samhain Publishing

Duncan's Descent, Samhain Publishing

Enjoying the Show, Samhain Publishing

A Scorching Seduction, Samhain Publishing

Namesake, Ellora's Cave

The Perfect Creation, Total E-Bound

Creation's Control, Total E-Bound
Creating Chemistry, Total E-Bound
Taming the Beast, Total E-Bound
Lurin's Surrender, Total E-Bound
The Thief of Mardu, Total E-Bound
Engaging Gren, Total E-Bound
Seriana Found, Total E-Bound
Whispers, Total E-Bound
Tempting Traditions, Total E-Bound
Firebreather, Amber Quill
A Royal Continuum, Amber Quill
Emergence, Amber Quill
Darkson's Forfeit, Amber Quill

Yvette Hines loves romance and writing it is one of her greatest and guilty pleasures. She enjoys creating happily ever after stories with lots of HEAT. The hotter the better! Life is busy, it would be great to have a chance to sit down and enjoy a long read. Since that is often not the case, she brings you Short and Sexy, Sensual Erotica. Just long enough to help you meet the need. She was talking about your reading need, where's your mind? As an erotic romance author, she tries to show that every woman no matter color, age, shape or size deserves a high level of passion in their life. Whether you like to see them spanked, tangled in a ménage or simply falling in love, she's got it. So, if you like diversity and a good read, check out one of her books. Then send her a few words through e-mail about it so you all can chat. She runs a newsletter group where she posts contests, excerpts, blurbs, covers and news about where she is and what she's doing.

To learn more about Yvette, visit Sasse-Yvette-Hines.blogspot.com

Other works include:

Trusting St. Nick, Tease Publishing, LLC
Lady Justice, Tease Publishing, LLC
Making the Man, Tease Publishing, LLC
Ho, Ho, Ho and a Dom, Tease Publishing, LLC
Holiday Affair, Tease Publishing, LLC
Take This Man, Tease Publishing, LLC
Bet on a Mistletoe, Tease Publishing, LLC
Apprehension, Phaze
Speed Dating, Phaze
Santa's Helper, Phaze
One Reckless Night, Tease Publishing, LLC
The Marriage Clause, Tease Publishing, LLC
Fantasies VI, Phaze
Coming Together: At Last Vol. 1, Coming Together

Jambrea Jo Jones wanted to be the youngest romance author published, but life impeded the dreams. She put her writing aside and went to college briefly, then enlisted in the Air Force. After serving in the military, she returned home to Indiana to start her family. A few years later, she discovered yahoo groups and book reviews. There was no turning back. She was bit by the writing bug.

She enjoys spending time with her son when not writing and loves to receive reader feedback.

To learn more about Jambrea, visit Jambrea.com

Other works include:

Retribution, Total e-Bound
Appealing Proposal, Ellora's Cave
Magnus, Liquid Silver

Tracey H. Kitts is a multi-published author who has been writing stories for her own entertainment since she was a child. Tracey has always been drawn to the macabre, with a fondness for anything with fangs. She writes what she enjoys reading in the hopes that others will enjoy her stories as well. Her main goal as a writer is to put emotions into words. She wants people to feel something when they read her work.

To learn more about Tracey, visit TraceyHKitts.com

Other works include:

Bitten, New Concepts Publishing
Diary of an Incubus, New Concepts Publishing
Sex Symbol, Ellora's Cave
Red, New Concepts Publishing
Object of My Affection, New Concepts Publishing
The Dread Moon, New Concepts Publishing
Original Sin, New Concepts Publishing
A Dream Forbidden, New Concepts Publishing
Once in a Blue Moon, Noble Romance Publishing
Brain Dead, New Concepts Publishing
Eden, New Concepts Publishing
Wicked City, New Concepts Publishing

Karalynn Lee's first garden consisted of a green onion that

was discarded from a balcony above her in a high-rise apartment building in Seoul, Korea. She now lives in California and only occasionally expects vegetables to fall from the sky.

To learn more about Karalynn, visit KaralynnLee.com

Other works include:

Summer-set, Samhain Publishing, Ltd

Sea Gifts, Drollerie Press

Demon's Fall, Carina Press

Amanda McIntyre's zest for experiencing life has provided fertile ground for her creative story ideas resulting in a number of published works in contemporary, paranormal and historical women's fiction. Preferring the title 'storyteller' to 'author', Amanda loves to challenge her characters and her readers to look beyond the ordinary to the extraordinary, where anything is possible! Amanda lives with her never-a-dull-moment family in the Midwest. Even better than researching history, she enjoys hearing from readers!

To learn more about Amanda, visit AmandaMcIntyre.net

Other works include:

Forbidden Pleasures, Harlequin Spice Briefs

The Master and the Muses, Harlequin Spice

Tortured, Harlequin Spice

Winter Awakening in Winters' Desire anthology,
Harlequin Spice

Private Party, Harlequin Spice Briefs

The Diary of Cozette, Harlequin Spice

Mirror, Mirror, Harlequin Spice Briefs
Risky Business, Total e-Bound Publishing
Tir nan Oge in Faery Song, Crescent Moon Press
By The Light of the Silvery Moon, Decadent Publishing

Bethany Michaels is the author of over a dozen erotic romances in a variety of sub-genres. Her novel, *Nashville Heat*, was a 2009 Romantic Times Nominee for Best Independent Press Erotic Romance. An Indiana native, Bethany now lives in Nashville, Tennessee with her husband and four small children.

To learn more about Bethany, visit BethanyMichaels.com

Other works include:

Wicked Illusion, Red Sage
Nashville Naughty, Ravenous Romance
Nashville Heat, Ravenous Romance
The Secret Confessions of Lady H.--, Red Sage
A Christmas Cara, Red Sage
Secrets 23, Secret Confessions, Red Sage
Fantastica Anthology, Ravenous Romance
Merry SeXmas Anthology, Ravenous Romance
Samhain Scorchers Anthology, Whiskey Creek Press
Torrid
Ruby Magic, Whispers Publishing
Nashville Bound, Ravenous Romance

Virginia Nelson spends her days chasing three very active kids around. When she is not doing this, or plotting taking over the

world, she likes to write, play in the mud, drive far too fast and scream at inanimate objects. She can often be found listening to music that is far too loud and typing her next fantastic tale of blood, sex and random acts of ineptitude. Romance, in Ms. Nelson's opinion, is not about riding off into the sunset on the back of a horse with the knight in shining armor. It is about riding the dragon. If the knight can keep up, well, that is love. Currently, you can find more of her work at Sapphire Blue Publishing.

To learn more about Virginia, visit VirginiaNelson.webs.com

Other works include:

Odd Stuff, Sapphire Blue Publishing

Siren's Song (Book 2: Odd Stuff Series), Sapphire Blue Publishing

Linda Varner Palmer is a diehard romantic and has been writing for as long as she can remember. In 1989, she sold her first romance to Silhouette Books. She wrote twenty more print novels over the next ten years, all of which have been translated and sold worldwide. During that time, Linda was a Rita finalist twice. After taking a break, she began writing again in 2006, and is very excited that eight paranormal romances have been published in print and as e-books so far. Linda also has novel bytes, nibbles, and free reads available. She is married to her junior high school sweetheart. They have been together for thirty-eight years and have a son and daughter, a son- and daughter-in-law, four grandchildren, three granddogs, and a grandcat.

To learn more about Linda, visit LVPalmer.com

Other works include:

Jaguar Moon, Wild Horse Press

Storm Swept, Wild Horse Press

My-Wolf, Wild Horse Press

Operation: Normal, Uncial Press

The Cinderella Swap, Sugar and Spice Press

Nightmare Interrupted, Sugar and Spice Press

Dahlia Rose is a bestselling author of contemporary and paranormal romance with a hint of Caribbean spice. She was born and raised on a Caribbean island and now currently lives in Charlotte, NC with her five kids who she affectionately nicknamed "the children of the corn" and her biggest supporter/long time love. She has a love of erotica, dark fantasy, Sci-fi and the things that go bump in the night. Books and writing are her biggest passion and she hopes to open your imagination to the unknown between the pages of her books

To learn more about Dahlia, visit AuthorDahliaRose.com

Other works include:

Chance of A Lifetime, Amira Press

Black Gold, Sugar and Spice press

Sweet For My Sweets, Sugar and Spice Press

Rosalie Stanton is a lifelong enthusiast of larger than life characters. Her muse is fueled by alpha males, from badass bikers to scruffy-looking Nerf herders, and the intelligent, strong, and independent women who actually do the driving. She loves interweaving the lives of people who appear to be polar opposites and delving beneath the surface to see how well one

actually complements the other.

Rosalie lives in southwest Missouri with her husband and two dachshunds, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. At an early age, she discovered a talent for creating worlds into which she could escape. Over the years, her vivid imagination evolved into a love of words and storytelling. Rosalie graduated from Missouri State University with a degree in English. When her attention is not employed by writing, she enjoys spending time with close friends and family.

To learn more about Rosalie, visit Rosalie-Stanton.com

Other works include:

Firsts, Loose Id

Possession, Loose Id

Ripples Through Time, Siren Publishing

Moving Target, Lyrical Press

Brenda Williamson was born on Halloween. She writes full-time, lets the house fairies do the chores and finds they're not very good at their job. When she's not writing, she reads antique books, gardens, plays video games, and watches television programs like True Blood, Survivor, Big Brother, & Amazing Race.

She has over 30 books in publication with Red Sage, Samhain, Loose-id, Liquid Silver, Whiskey Creek Press Torrid, Aspen Mountain, Total E Bound, and Mojocastle.

She is a member of The Authors Guild, Novels, Ink, Romance Writers Association and their special interest chapters;

P.A.S.I.C., Passionate Ink, Beau Monde, K.O.D, Hearts Thru History, E.S.P.A.N., Celtic Hearts, RWA Online, F.F.&P., and From The Heart.

To learn more about Brenda, visit BrendaWilliamson.com

Other works include:

Sword of Rhoswen, Samhain Publishing
Range War Bride, Whiskey Creek Press Torrid
Wolverton Blood, Samhain Publishing
The Witch Stone, Whiskey Creek Press Torrid
Devil's Kiss, Samhain Publishing
A Beautiful Surrender, Samhain Publishing
One Bashful Lady, Samhain Publishing
In His Protective Custody, Liquid Silver Books
A Desperate Longing, Samhain Publishing
A Sinful Tiger, Loose Id
A Damsel in Distress, Red Sage Publishing
Savage Seduction, Mojocastle Press
Morgandy's Lover, Loose Id
Sexual Deceptions-Book 1, Whiskey Creek Press Torrid
Sexual Deceptions-Book 2, Whiskey Creek Press Torrid
Sexual Deceptions-Book 3, Whiskey Creek Press Torrid
Her Savage Lover, Aspen Mountain Press
Hell Hath No Fury, Loose Id
Savoring Temperance, Aspen Mountain Press
Seducing His Lordship, Loose Id
Dogging in the Park, Liquid Silver Books
Satan's Temptations, Total E Bound Publishing
Stalked By Love, Liquid Silver Books
A Maiden of Mercy, Red Sage Publishing

A Pirate's Mercy, Liquid Silver Books

Sahara Heat, Red Sage Publishing

Naked Sin, Red Sage Publishing

A Wicked Wolf, Red Sage Publishing