

Suz deMello



HIGHLAND  
VAMPIRE

Spice **BRIEFS**

# Highland Vampire

Suz deMello

*Spice*

On the run from her vindictive family, Natasha Desmond takes refuge at Kilburn Castle, reputed hunting grounds of a deadly vampire—and home to Garrett Kilburn, its sexy-assin owner. Though Garrett seems cold and remote at first, Natasha quickly learns that he’s red hot in the bedroom. He seems to know all her secret desires and brings her ecstasy like she’s never known before.

But at night, Natasha is visited by another mysterious lover. A lover who leaves two tiny wounds on her neck.

# Contents

[Chapter One](#)

[Chapter Two](#)

[Chapter Three](#)



# Chapter One

I had fled as fast and as far as I could. I could run no farther than to the edge of the world, here at the northwestern corner of Scotland.

The gloaming was deep upon the land when I found Kilburn Castle. Isn't that what Scots called it, the gloaming? That mysterious time between day and night, when blue dusk dims the sky and magical beings wander forth.

I let my little rented Vauxhall roll to a stop and considered the broody hulk of a castle high on a hill above the sea, silhouetted against the deepening night. The crash of the waves against the cliff was interrupted by a car roaring out of the fortress's gate. It sped past me, almost clipping my bumper in its haste, and raced down the hill, its headlights switching on as it traversed a curve in the narrow road.

Darkness fell, and I shivered theatrically. A light winked on in a small stone gatehouse a few yards from me. It illuminated a sign written in neat script, thick black on white.

VACANCY.

That settled it. I got out of the car, shivered nontheatrically—it was chilly—and walked toward the gatehouse, my boots crunching on the stony earth. I rapped on the glass-fronted door.

After a few seconds, it opened to reveal a pale-skinned man, a local from the look of him. I'd noticed that everyone here wore a pallor indicative of little sunlight. His eyes, however, were the green of snapping turtles, and he had hair as dark as the other side of the moon. His beard was burgeoning.

He held a pipe, which on any other twenty-something male would look stupid and pretentious, but seemed natural in his hand.

He was sexy, and I was surprised I'd noticed. I hadn't thought about sex since Auntie Jacqueline had collapsed and died, leaving me in this mess. But this man's pale, well-cut lips, high cheekbones and masculine stubble shot my mind straight to deep kisses and hot sex.

“Do you have a bed for the night?” I asked. I tried not to scope out his body, but I noticed that he was fit, if slender, and clad in a dark sweater and jeans, like me.

“I do indeed.” His voice was rich, melodic, accented. “And who wants one, may I ask?”

I stuck out my right hand. “Natasha Desmond.” I didn't see the point of concealing my identity. I didn't have a fake passport, and all hoteliers asked for papers.

When he shook my hand, I noticed his grasp was firm, his fingers cool. He released me quickly. “Well, Natasha Desmond, are ye certain ye wish to stay at Castle Kilburn?”

“Sure. Why not?”

A short pause. "Ye'll be our only guest. Even the staff leaves after sundown."

I remembered the car that had sped down the hill a few moments ago. "That's not safe! What if I fall in the shower? What about dinner?"

"There's an emergency cord in the loo," he said.

Like in institutions. Like in the kind of place my family had wanted to put me. Great.

The gatekeeper continued, "And there's food in the buttery."

"The buttery?"

"The pantry. A buttery was a storage area for liquor," he explained. "We don't make whiskey anymore, so we use the room for food stores."

"Oh. All right. I suppose." I silently questioned the usefulness of Auntie's billion-dollar bequest if it forced me to stay in a drafty castle with no staff and dubious food.

But I had gotten myself into the situation by randomly driving around the Highlands. I had no one to blame but the skinny blonde girl I saw in the mirror every day when I brushed my teeth. I certainly couldn't blame the gatekeeper.

"The gate's open," he said. "I'll meet you at the front."

Good heavens. There was a *portcullis*. I drove through quickly, mindful of the many films I'd seen which featured portcullises (portculli?) trapping knights, or orcs, or whatever.

Whatever, it was creepy.

I drove into the castle courtyard and passed what looked like a fire pit. When I reached the massive front doors of the castle, he was already there. The gatekeeper. How had he done it?

There had to be a quicker way than driving through the huge front gate, I decided, and he'd taken it, along with the terrier that gamboled along in his wake.

I got out of the car and opened its back door for my suitcase. The gatekeeper got there first "again" and pulled it out. "Just the one bag?" he asked.

"Yeah. Um, by the way, you are?"

"Garrett Kilburn." He turned and smiled at me. "Welcome to Castle Kilburn, Miss Desmond."

"This is your castle," I said, surprised. I bent to pat the dog, who licked me enthusiastically.

"Indeed it is. Sort of," he added under his breath.

"Excuse me?" I straightened, wiping my damp hand on my jeans.

"Come along through here." He ushered me in through the carved wooden doors. Bound with massive dark metal bands, they were straight out of *Robin Hood*, or perhaps they'd been used on the set of *Lord of the Rings*. But these were the real thing. "I'm awed," I told Garrett.

"This place is magnificent. I'm honored to stay here."

He handed me a key. "Let's see what ye say in the morning."



I ate, bathed and went to bed, and by the time dawn rolled around was wondering if perhaps my family was right, and I was crazy.

Iâ€™d become convinced that Castle Kilburn was haunted.

Oh, nothing dramatic had happened. No clanking chains, moans or screams in the night, but a pervasive sense of being watched. Unnerving, especially in the shower, though Iâ€™d convinced myself by the time I climbed into bed that I was imagining things, dark visions born of my flight and my plight.

A luxurious canopied creation draped in ruby-red velvet, richly pillowed and comfy with very soft, well-worn linens, the bed itself was conducive to dreams of the most sensual sort. Maybe my fantasies were the result of meeting Garrett Kilburn, but as I lay in bed, my mind driftedâ€¦

Was I awake or asleep?

Cool air washed over me, as though heâ€™d torn away my sheet. I felt the scratchiness of his sweater on my breasts, his stubble on my throat.

I couldnâ€™t see himâ€”it was dark within the red canopied bed, but I was sure it was Garrett. My lover smelled like the Highlands and pipe tobacco.

I pulled off the sweater, tugging to get it over his head, and ran my hands over his face, reading his features with my fingertips. We kissed, a sweet melding of mouths. Light fingernails scrabbled down my sides, and, moaning, I moistened with delighted anticipation.

One cool hand slid between my thighs while he cupped my breast with the other. I opened my legs, and he went for my pussy, separating the folds with his clever fingers, caressing my clit as he thrust his tongue in and out of my mouth.

I undulated, my body writhing against his, and stroked down his back, reaching for his firm ass. His flesh was hard with muscle, cool as though heâ€™d been outdoors, dry. He pulled his lips from mine to nibble my neck, lick the spot heâ€™d bitten, then traced my collarbone with his tongue. He stopped to rim my nipples, nuzzle my tits and rub his face on my belly. I liked the direction he was going, and moaned with approval and longing, running my fingers through his hair.

He used his body to part my legs, then slid lower so he could nibble on my thighs. He spread me open with firm palms and tasted me. A sultry heat flowed through my body, but I wanted more. I set my feet on his shoulders and pushed my hips forward so his tongue pressed against my clit.

He sucked hard and I let out a startled little shriek. He stopped eating me and gave a low laugh. A long, cool finger tested my wetness, my readiness. Another entered alongside, stretching me.

â€œYessssâ€¦â€¦ I sighed.

Another flick to my clitoris and heat suffused my body, radiating in shuddering circles from my sex. I shook with need, crying out.

He withdrew his fingers, but his lips continued their exploration of my tingling pussy while his hands traveled lower, spreading the halves of my ass. A wet fingertip traveled the length of my crack, then entered me, eased in by my moisture. I squealed

and jerked, but he wouldn't stop. I wriggled, impaled on that long, cool finger, as his tongue continued to stroke my clit, taking me higher and higher.

Waves of pleasure crashed through me. Moaning and thrashing, I came hard and long, with his finger up my ass to the second knuckle and his cool tongue and lips lapping at my pussy.

My shuddering sighs calmed, and his finger left me, moving slowly, drawing out the pleasure. His naked body slid up mine, and his scratchy stubble sent ripples swirling over my skin. He nuzzled and nipped at my neck as my orgasm faded into a gentler bliss, easing me into slumber.

I awoke at dawn, disconcerted by what had happened, and wondering how I could face Garrett. I pulled the hangings aside and got out of the cozy bed, shivering. The slate floor was chill on my bare feet as I dashed into the adjoining bathroom. Flicking on the light, I stared at my body, examining it for signs of Garrett's intense loving.

But I saw nothing. No scratches on my breasts or thighs, which surprised me. I have sensitive skin and I expected to see beard burn from Garrett's stubble.

But there was not a single mark on my body, save for two tiny wounds in my neck. Odd. And there was no sign of Garrett in the bright morning light. Instead, a cheerful maid directed me to the morning room, where I ate a hearty Scottish breakfast of oatmeal, thick whole-grain toast and eggs, all washed down by Scottish tea, served sweet with milk.

Well-fed for at least the next two days, I set off to find Garrett and arrange for another tryst. He was nowhere to be found, so I got into the Vauxhall and drove to the nearest village, Kilburn Vale.

*Village* was a grandiose term for one straggling, narrow street fronted by picturesque stone buildings: a pub, a gas station—or, rather, a petrol station, with the prices in pounds per liter of fuel—and a Tesco grocery store. No Starbucks, and I longed for a double tall mocha. I filled the car and drove toward the Isle of Skye.

I returned to Kilburn Vale again at sunset, and stopped at the pub for a bite to eat and a drink before I went to the castle. I felt like socializing a little before going to bed, and didn't know if Garrett Kilburn would be at his post in the gatehouse.

The pub was warm and friendly, apparently the local gathering place. A well-worn but shining wooden bar dominated one side of the room, while a big stone hearth with a stove insert occupied the other. A small desk with a computer on it was tucked in the corner; the neighborhood's internet café, I guessed. Garlands of braided flowers, chilies and garlic decorated the windows above lacy curtains. I bet they had hams and game hanging in the back.

I spotted a cozy seat near the stove and I tossed down my sweater to keep it before going to the bar. I ordered a Guinness, but before I could pay, a long-fingered, white hand dropped a five-pound note on the polished surface in front of me.

Garrett.

I gulped, drew a breath and managed to say, "Hello. It's nice to see you."

The memory of what weâ€™d done the night before burned in my mind. My pussy tingled, moistened. I wanted more.

He smiled at me, and I remembered how those white teeth had savaged my neck and nibbled my breasts. My nipples tightened, rubbing against my bra in delicious anticipation.

â€œAnd how did you occupy your day, Natasha Desmond?â€

â€œI went to the Isle of Skye, Garrett Kilburn.â€

His grin stretched wider. â€œAh. A romantic, ye are.â€ His accent was pleasing.

â€œWhy?â€

â€œOnly romantics and newlyweds visit Skye.â€

â€œNot the merely curious?â€

â€œPerhaps. Is that what brought you to the Highlands? Mere curiosity?â€

I picked up my glass and drank a swallow or two while pondering my answer.  
â€œNo.â€

â€œThen what?â€

I went for it. â€œIâ€™m a damsel in distress, a woman on the run.â€

His brows lifted. â€œOn the run from what?â€

â€œA wicked stepbrother who wants to steal the family fortune.â€

â€œWhich happens to be yours.â€ His green eyes gleamed. â€œAre ye a wealthy heiress?â€

â€œExactly.â€

â€œSo yeâ€™ve taken refuge in a haunted castle.â€

How many beers had he drunk? â€œA *haunted* castle?â€ I laughed, though my skin prickled in remembrance. Hadnâ€™t I sensed watching eyes while Iâ€™d showered?

â€œCastle Kilburn has that reputation.â€ He turned to the rest of the packed pub.  
â€œHow many of ye would spend the night, alone, in the castle?â€

Nervous laughter was the only response.

â€œWell, this lady has made cowards out of ye all.â€

Shocked silence fell.

â€œYe let her, Garrett Kilburn, ye rascal!â€ A motherly-looking lady wagged her finger.

â€œNothing happened,â€ I said.

â€œNothing?â€ a burly man asked.

â€œNo. Nothing. No clanking chains, groaning ghosts or spectral shadows. Nothing but a good nightâ€™s sleep.â€

â€œNo mysterious visitation?â€ Garrettâ€™s twinkling eyes met mine.

â€œNo,â€ I said deliberately. â€œNo unwanted visitation.â€

â€œNo spectral hand touching you in the night?â€

â€œNope. Nothing spectral. Whatâ€™s the big deal?â€

Silence and stillness again, until the bartender, a thin redheaded girl, passed a rag over the bar. â€œCastle Kilburn is said to be haunted by a vampire.â€

I emitted a nervous giggle, then lifted my hand to my neck, where two small marks had greeted me that morning.

Garrett reached over and tugged down my turtleneck's collar. "Nothing," he said. "Perhaps the vampire was also sleeping soundly last night." "What about you?" I asked him. "Did you sleep soundly last night." "Like a baby."

I doubted Garrett Kilburn did anything like a baby.

Â

After drinks, dinner and more teasing, Garrett walked me to my car. "It's a dark night." He tilted his head to look at the clouds, which obscured the moon and stars. "I'll drive with ye to the castle, just to make sure ye don't lose your way."

"What about your car?" I opened the passenger door for him.

"Didna bring it."

I got in the car, started it and headed out of the village. "How did you get here?"

"Walked." He gave me a jaunty smile. "There wasna much to do up at the castle, so I spent the day hiking."

"Are there good trails hereabouts?"

"Och, yes. Many. Some along the cliffs, some through the glen, some along the beach." He gestured at me to turn up the narrow road to the castle.

"That sounds fun," I said.

"I can think of something that's more fun."

I stopped the car at the gatehouse, turned and gave him what I hoped was a seductive smile. "What?"

"This." He leaned toward me, cupped the back of my head in his palm and drew me close. His kiss was a scorching promise of ecstasy. He tasted like the custard we'd shared for dessert, tasty and completely irresistible. Enraptured, I sucked on his tongue with delight and swirled my tongue in his mouth.

I pulled up his sweater to again explore his body, enjoying the hard planes, the sinew overlaying solid bone. His skin was hot and a little sultry, no doubt from the warm, crowded pub. I rimmed his nipple with a fingernail, and he moaned deep in his throat.

The many facets of this man enthralled me. Last night, he'd been remote, almost discouraging as I'd sought shelter in his castle. When he'd made love to me in my romantic canopied bed, his touch had been cool and controlled, but now he was hotter than August in Los Angeles.

He pulled away and shoved open the passenger door, almost stumbling in his haste. He strode around the hood and yanked open my door. "Let's go."

"Where?"

Grabbing my hand, he led me to the gatehouse, down a short hall and into what I guessed was the living room, or the sitting room, as they called it in Britain. While he pulled me along, he was tugging at my clothes, taking off my turtleneck, scrabbling for

my jeansâ€™ zipper. My hands were no less idle, and by the time we reached the sitting room, we were both naked, our underwear strewn on the carpet underfoot.

â€œHurry!â€ I said as he knelt beside the open-hearth fireplace that dominated the room. I stood shivering in the darkness until he lit a match, then touched it to paper laid beneath kindling. As it caught, I could see details of the room: crossed swords above the mantel; a cozy sofa covered in red-patterned brocade; lace draping the windows. Even better, a quilt lay over the sofaâ€™s old-fashioned, curved back. I seized it to wrap it around me.

â€œNo,â€ he said. â€œI want you naked.â€

â€œIâ€™m freezing.â€

His grin was feral. â€œNot for long, I promise ye.â€ He rose and stripped away the quilt, then pushed me lengthwise onto the sofaâ€™s cushions. I didnâ€™t resist, surprised by this new, dominating side of Garrett Kilburn. I occasionally enjoyed dominationâ€¦how had he known? Or was he merely expressing his own desires?

The burgeoning fire crackled and snapped, and its reddish glow showed me the strong lines of his body before he opened my legs and sprawled between them, covering me. He lowered his head and kissed me again, thrusting his tongue insistently between my teeth, gripping one of my breasts, kneading the nipple to a sharp, needy point.

I sucked in a breath, and he kissed down my neck to my breast, nipping and nibbling almost to the point of pain. He sucked my nipple, then licked, comforting the spot heâ€™d so sensually savaged.

He bent one knee, pressing a brawny thigh onto my core. I responded, grinding my slick pussy against him, feeling the hair on his leg abrade my clit. I opened my legs wider, welcoming the stimulation.

â€œNow?â€ he asked, his voice rough.

â€œI donâ€™t have any protection.â€

He groaned, then hastily stood and sprinted into an adjoining room. He came back soon, waving a condom packet. Fingers clumsy with need, he fumbled.

Pleased to see this evidence of his desire, I said, â€œLet me.â€ I reached for it, ripped it open and covered his thick, red cock. The condom was lubricated and went on with ease.

He dropped onto me and inside me in one motion. I gasped; he was big and hard and hot, but I was wet and open and the sensation of his cock entering me shot me straight to heaven. Clinging to him, I flung my legs up and around his waist as he began to pump, kissing me all the while. He filled me all the way to my womb, and his steady rhythm was just right. I could feel his thick head against my channelâ€™s walls each time he plunged into me, opening me wider, taking me higher.

Our bodies, sweaty from the great sex, smacked together every time I lifted my hips and he drove into me. Every thrust took me closer to my goal.

Just when I thought it couldnâ€™t get any better, he lifted up, reached between us and began to finger my clit. He explored the folds, and I could tell from the intent

expression on his face that I was listening to my response. I closed my eyes and let it happen, let him find the trigger to my orgasm.

He pushed directly on the pearl, and I gasped, "Too much, too much." He moved his finger to one side and that was it. Ripples of pleasure began to radiate with my core at the center of the intensity. Enveloped in ecstasy, I began to come, and while I did, he continued to play with me and fuck me.

The orgasm went on and on, fueled by Garrett's searching fingers, his probing cock opening my cunt. Long, deep moans poured from the heart of me, ebbing and flowing with the waves of pleasure.

When I was done, I opened my eyes. He'd been watching me, and I was a little embarrassed; did I look weird when I came, my mouth wide open, eyes squinched shut, writhing and crying out?

Fuck it. I didn't care, especially when he kissed me. Still deep inside, he said, "My turn." He gripped my hips hard and hammered into me faster, pounding me without restraint. I hung on to his shoulders, my pussy full and aching from the relentless surge of his thick rod.

When his tool, impossibly, seemed to thicken even more, I hurtled again into bliss as we came together.

## Â

I awakened with Garrett watching me, his green eyes gleaming in the dim light, a satisfied smile on his face. But where my legs stuck out from underneath him and the quilt, I was cold, and I noticed that the fire had cooled to embers. I squirmed away from him and looked for my panties.

"Where are ye going, *kylyrra*?"

"I want to take a bath and go to bed."

"Ye can do that here."

"Mmm; I want my own toiletries," I said, thinking of the lush rose-scented cream and powder I'd bought from Marks & Spencer.

He raised his brows but didn't protest, instead picking up his shirt. "I'll walk ye to your room."

His arm was tight around my waist as he walked me to the castle. Inside, lamps shaped like medieval torches lit the way. Garrett kissed me at my door and whispered, "See ye in the morn."

His attentive staff had turned down my bed before they left. The remaining coals in the hearth glowed, glinting off the crossed pair of medieval claymores that hung on the stone wall. I bathed quickly and dived between the sheets, expecting to shoot straight off to dreamland.

Instead, my body took a few minutes to warm the linens, but I used the time to smile about the amazing sex with Garrett. I never expected my cool Scotsman to turn into a wild man in the sack, but he had. For the first time since Auntie Jacqueline's illness, I fell asleep happy.

I floated back into consciousness with the sensation of being watched. Then cool

fingers stroked my breasts. "Garrett," I sighed.

Low, soft laughter before a mouth latched onto my nipple, the same one he'd tormented earlier in the evening. "The other one," I grumbled.

More laughter, then obedience, with those strangely cool lips caressing the crest into hardness, sucking the tip, nipping until I groaned. A hand slipped between my thighs, fingering me anew. Though I was a little sore from the rough ride he'd taken earlier, I was willing. I parted my legs and when long fingers slid into my channel, I was ready. I clenched around the hand, cool and hard as marble. The sensation was both heady and refreshing, and I came rapidly while his teeth stroked my neck.

I fell asleep again, fully pleased, delighted that my lover had come to me and given rather than taken.





## Chapter Two

The wicked stepbrother showed up the next afternoon, just after teatime.

Garrett and I had spent the day hiking. Heâ€™d showed me his favorite walks, starting with a ramble along a burn through the glen to the next little town, Torcuil, where we ate lunch. Later we walked past emerald pastures dotted with white puffy sheep, ending up at the ocean. The sun had broken out of the clouds, and we dared to lie naked on the beach in the thin sunlight, even to wade in the cold shallows, his terrier playing and snapping at the waves.

We returned to Kilburn Castle chilled but happy and laughing. We sipped tea in his cozy sitting room before he kissed me, took me by the hand and walked me to the door. â€œI see ye for dinner?â€

â€œAnd later, I hope.â€ I smiled at him.

â€œI take ye somewhere special tonight. A half hour away thereâ€™s a big inn with a gourmet restaurant, believe it or not. It was featured on one of your Food Channel shows, even.â€

â€œOh, I believe it. Nothing would surprise me about the Highlands.â€ I was rapidly falling for the place as well as for Garrett, who seemed to embody the spirit of this beautiful, wild country.

We walked from the gatehouse to the castle and there *he* was, clad in a navy pin-striped suit. I stiffened, recognizing the same suit heâ€™d worn at the reading of Auntie Jacquelineâ€™s will. Heâ€™d been red faced and furious, vowing to wrest control of our family company away from me.

I clutched Garrettâ€™s hand. â€œStanton! What are you doing here?â€

The bastard waved a sheaf of white papers. â€œGotcha, honey.â€

â€œI donâ€™t think so,â€ Garrett said. â€œI believe I have, er, got the lady. Who is this?â€

â€œThe wicked stepbrother,â€ I said.

Garrett looked confused for a moment before realization flashed through his eyes. â€œAh, yes. Well, letâ€™s greet him, shall we?â€ He advanced upon Stanton. â€œWelcome to Castle Kilburn. I am Garrett Kilburn. Will ye be needing a bed for the night?â€

Stanton harrumphed and said, â€œThe only thing I need is her to come with me.â€

I laughed. â€œWhy would I do that?â€

â€œCourt order,â€ he said, trying to sound important. He thrust the papers at me.

I took them, noting the heading. â€œItâ€™s from California and it doesnâ€™t mean a thing here.â€ I grinned at him and rocked back on my boot heels, wondering how long it would take for Stanton to get me into trouble in the U.K.

â€œWhy donâ€™t ye work it out in the morning?â€ Garrett said, his voice gentle.

I stared at him. Why was he so insistent upon offering hospitality to Stanton the snake?

“Night”s falling,” Garrett continued. “There”s no other suitable lodging hereabouts.”

A sly expression crossed Stanton”s face. “els she staying here also?”

“There”s nowhere else.” I struggled to remain composed in the face of his insulting habit of referring to me in the third person. He didn”t know that I was evading, and planned to stay in the gatehouse with Garrett. I wouldn”t chance staying in the castle alone with Stanton.

Stanton took a deep breath. “Then I”ll stay.”

“Good!” Garrett said heartily. I had never heard that tone of voice from him, but felt like I knew him well enough to suspect he had something up his sweated sleeve. His gaze flicked upward, toward the castle”s tower. “el I”ll lodge ye in the tower. It”s quite picturesque, unique even. In the meantime, ye can get a fine meal in the village pub.”

That would work for me. The last thing I wanted was to break bread with that snake. When we returned from dinner at about midnight I could see lamplight high in the tower. “els that Stanton”s room?” I asked Garrett.

“Indeed it is.”

“el guess no one at the pub told him that the castle”s haunted.”

“Or he ignored their warnings,” Garrett said calmly. “Ye”re not going to sneak off back to your room tonight, are ye? I don”t advise it.”

“No, but I want to get some things from there. Come with me, will you?”

Garrett opened the huge double doors and ushered me through. A cold breeze flowed inside the castle, chilling me through my sequined sweater and wool skirt. “el I”s colder in here than outside,” I said. “That”s strange.”

“Not at all. I lowered the heat.” He smiled at me. “No sense making the wicked stepbrother too welcome.”

I laughed, but a prickling feeling of unease trickled down my back, and I had the now-familiar sense of being watched. I turned my head, and there was Garrett, regarding me with bright, curious eyes.

“You”re not worried about him, are ye?”

“Oh, no.” I shook off the feeling. After all, I”d slept two nights in the castle and nothing had happened to me, just some great sex. And I looked forward to more tonight.

But when we got to bed, nothing went right. The tension from seeing Stanton again, knowing he was so close, locked me tight as a safe-deposit box. Finally, after fifteen minutes of sixty-nine, Garrett raised his head from my unresponsive snatch. “Talk to me.”

Rolling over onto my back, I sighed and closed my eyes. Tears slipped out and ran hotly down my cheeks.

“Och, *kyllyrra*, it canna be so bad. We”ll get through this. Just tell me

whatâ€™s going on inside your pretty head.â€™ He caressed my temple, played with my hair.

â€™Stanton,â€™ I whispered. â€™m really scared of him.â€™

â€™He canna do anything to hurt ye, he truly canâ€™t. Not while yeâ€™re here with me. But what happened?â€™

I gulped. â€™When ourâ€™myâ€™ aunt Jacqueline diedâ€™she wasâ€™ Okay, lâ€™ll start at the beginning. My aunt, Jacqueline Desmond, was a research chemist. She specialized in taking industrial chemicals and refining them to a point where they could be used in pharmaceutical research. She made a lot, and I mean a lot, of money.â€™

He stirred beside me. â€™see. When she died, she left ye that money and Stanton wants it.â€™

â€™m not just the money,â€™ I said. â€™We all have money. She left me the patents and a controlling interest in the company, Desmond PharmaChemistry.â€™

â€™Ahâ€™ He nodded. â€™She left ye the money and the power.â€™

â€™Yeah. She was a lesbian in an age when gays didnâ€™t leave the closet, you know? She never married or had kids, and I was her favorite relative. She loathed Stanton, who became part of the family when my father remarried five years ago. She was the person who first called him Stanton the snake.â€™

â€™And she showed her feelings in her will.â€™

â€™Yeah.â€™

â€™And Stanton, obviously, did not respond well.â€™

â€™And he got the rest of my family on his side.â€™ I gulped, trying to hold back tears of betrayal. â€™See, I didnâ€™t know what to do. Hey, I majored in art history, not business! lâ€™m not stupid. I decided to leave everything as is. The company was concentrating on anti-aging and cancer-fighting compounds. Stanton wanted it to manufacture psychopharmaceuticals, which *he* knew more about.â€™

â€™A power grab.â€™

â€™Exactly. But first he claimed that I was floundering, and then he said I was a nutcase. Heâ€™s trying to have me thrown into an institution.â€™

â€™What? An institution? What kind?â€™ For the first time, Garrett sounded alarmed.

â€™He filed to break the will, but that takes too long. It could be a decade before courts rule on anything. Heâ€™s a psychiatrist, so he got a couple of family members to say that I was off my rocker. That would get me committed.â€™

He sucked in a breath, visibly angry before he controlled himself. â€™So ye ran.â€™

â€™So I ran.â€™

I stared into his cool green eyes and he stared back. After a moment, he said, â€™promise ye, thereâ€™s nothing for ye to fear. Ye spoke rightly when ye said that a California order has no effect here.â€™

â€™But I canâ€™t go back home,â€™ I whispered.

He raised a brow. "Are ye so eager to leave?"  
"Well, Los Angeles is my home and this is well, you have to admit that this is a bit of a backwater."

"I see." His voice sounded remote. "Not enough excitement for a big-city girl."

I was pleased that he understood. "Yeah, but it's great being here now. You make me feel so safe."

"Safe." He didn't seem happy.

I squeezed his cock. It hardened in my hand, and I got an absurd feeling of accomplishment. "I hate having my freedom limited."

He sighed. I didn't understand what that sigh meant. "We'll make it right. Ye said ye have money, right? Money buys lawyers. We can hire a good solicitor here and one in Los Angeles."

"True."

He hesitated a moment, then said, "Are ye absolutely sure that Stanton is as evil as you say?"

"Oh, absolutely," I said fervently. "He's never been kind to me, and when I saw the men in the white coats show up at my front door I shuddered and broke out in a sweat. I ran out the back and fled all the way here. Believe me, there isn't a shred of affection between us."

"Foine," Garrett said. "Now, I think you need a distraction."

"A distraction?"

"Yeah." He stood, and I admired his wiry body as he reached for a tartan cloth draped over a drawer pull. It was in two shades of blue with red and yellow.

"What's that?"

"'Tis the Kilburnie tartan." He ran the edges of the oblong cloth over my breasts. My tips puckered. "Lie down, *kylyrra*."

I stretched out on the bed. He took my hand and wound one end of the scarf around my wrist.

"Wh-what are you doing?"

"Making you feel good." He looped the free end of the scarf around a bar in his headboard, then took my other hand.

Soon I was secured tightly, but comfortably. A distraction, indeed. My tense breaths came short, lifting my breasts as he lightly ran cool fingers down my arms to my tight, hard nipples. He plucked them, and intense shards of pleasure snapped through my body, as though he'd flicked my clit. He kissed me, thrusting his tongue deep, then nibbled my lower lip.

I sighed and pressed my body against his, opening my legs. He settled between them, his lovely weight pushing me into the mattress. His erection throbbed insistently, hard and hot against my pussy. I lifted my hips and rubbed against him, our bodies sliding together. He pulled away and I groaned, an incoherent protest.

He chuckled. "Want something more, *kylyrra*?"

“Yes yes yes” I tried to tug my wrists out of the tartan, but the scarf was tied tightly enough to entrap me, keeping me entirely under his control.

He left my lips and laid a trail of nibbling kisses along my neck while continuing to caress my breasts, thumbs and fingers pressing my nipples, heightening the pleasure into ecstasy.

“Do you trust me?” His hand found my pussy, caressing between the folds.

Breathless, mindless, I could hardly speak. “I guess.”

He slipped a finger inside me, and my wetness belied my hesitant answer. He chuckled, then turned me over, twisting the scarf so it tightened. My face was in the pillows and my buttocks in the air.

“What a lovely sight.” He caressed my ass, ran a finger along my crack, stopped at the snug back portal.

I drew in a sharp, frightened breath. I’d never liked anal sex. “Uh, I don’t know if I want to do that.”

“Do what?” His voice was reasonable. Something warm and wet touched the sensitive bud. His tongue? Then something entered me, its way eased by the wetness. “Irresistible.”

His finger pumped me slowly while he caressed my clit with his other hand. Writhing, I rubbed my aroused nipples against the sheets. A glittering pleasure shot along every nerve ending.

Hands palmed my rear, separating me. I whimpered.

“You’re very open,” he whispered.

“Am I?” Every muscle was tight and tense. I didn’t want this or did I? Garrett was a tender and considerate lover, and I couldn’t believe he’d hurt me. “I’m scared.”

“Don’t be.” His hands clenched on my ass a moment before his cock thrust deeply into my pussy.

Relieved, I arched and bowed, pushing back and forth into the rhythm he ordered. Then, with the next surge, his open hand met my butt cheek. The smack vibrated through me, reverberated around the room.

I gasped and jerked. “What the hell are you doing?”

“I’m spanking your pretty rear end, *Kylyrra*. Hasn’t anyone else ever spanked your bottom? It’s fair irresistible, your bum.”

“You’re the bum here.”

“Now, don’t be cheeky.” Each syllable and thrust was punctuated with a loud slap on my ass, which tingled and stung. “And don’t tell me I’m hurting you, either. Your pussy tells me differently.”

That was true. With my love channel open and dripping with sex juices, he rode me with ease. The sound of his merciless spanking alternated with the sucking and slurping of my pussy as his cock pierced my core. My bound hands forced me to focus on responding to him with the rest of my body. My entire being seemed gathered into my glowing cunt and flaming bottom.

I was about to come, when he leaned forward, spearing me deeply, and gripped my hands. My legs spread wide, my ass burning, I had never felt so taken, so possessed, in my life.

My groan burst from deep inside me—to my surprise, he untied my hands.

“Yes or no?” he whispered in my ear. His cock left me, leaving me still needy and wanting.

“Yes!”

The hot, rounded tip pushed against the sensitive membrane between vagina and back hole, sliding forward until it rested atop the tight rosette. I drew a deep breath and willed myself to relax as he pressed inside, opening me anew.

He was wet with our combined juices, and slipped in with surprising ease, but I couldn’t repress a yelp. He stopped immediately but didn’t withdraw, allowing me time to relax and accept him into my body.

I sighed, and that release loosened me. He slid in a little deeper.

I drew a shocked breath; he was big, and it hurt.

“Too much?” he asked, his voice tender.

“Ye-yeah.”

He pulled out without any hesitation, then rolled over, taking me with him so we lay facing each other. “I’d kill myself before hurting ye, *kylyrra*. Do you understand that?”

My bottom burned and sizzled, inside and out. “Yeah—let’s finish this another time.” Strangely enough, I wanted more, but that would have to wait. I knew it was best to listen to my body.

“I want to bring you off.” Kissing me, he reached between my legs and gently caressed my clit between thumb and forefinger.

I put my arms around him and asked, “What about you?”

He found the spot that had worked the night before, and rubbed it. “Don’t worry about me. I want this for you.”

“Oh, Garrett.” More of this bliss and I’d fall in love. I let go, moaned and came, shivering with ecstasy.

À

We were awakened by screams splitting the early morning, followed by pounding on the gatehouse door.

“Mr. Garrett! It’s happened again!”

Garrett rolled over, smiled at me and said, “See?”

I blinked, trying to understand. “What?”

“Get up, sweetheart, the fun is just beginning.” He was already out of bed, pulling on jeans and a moss-green sweater that looked especially good with his eyes.

I followed suit, adding a denim jacket against the misty morning. “Do you know what’s going on?”

He grinned. “It’s the vampire. He’s struck again. My guess is that your stepbrother’s dead.”

“Dead?”

Outside, we trotted up the hill to the castle, where the big wooden doors were wide open and a small crowd of staff had gathered. When Garrett approached, a uniformed maid flung her arms around him, sobbing.

He gently stroked her graying hair and asked, “What happened, Robina?”

Robina sucked in a breath, visibly controlling her sobs even though tears streaked her cheeks. “It’s him, Garrett. It’s the vampire. He killed the gentleman in the tower. I went in there to tidy up the room and there he was, white as a cloud, completely limp.”

“Dead?” Garrett asked.

“Dead.”

“Has anyone called the police?”

The assembled staff shifted and muttered. “They won’t do anything,” one sturdy man said. He wore mud-caked Wellingtons, and I guessed he was a gardener. “Nevertheless, that is what we must do,” Garrett said briskly.

À

When the local police came, I was surprised that they didn’t arrest me as a suspect. After all, I was the only connection to Stanton, and now he was dead. They told me only that there would be an inquest in a few days, and to please stay locally until that formality was over. After that, I could make arrangements for Stanton’s body to be returned to Los Angeles.

Later, when Garrett and I were drinking tea in the gatehouse’s cozy kitchen, I asked him about the police’s unexpected behavior. He pointed out, “Neither you nor I are suspects because we were together all night. Plus, they believe in the vampire.”

“Right now I do too. What else could have killed Stanton?”

Garrett rubbed his stubble. “Nothing else, *kylyrra*.”

I regarded him. “You knew, didn’t you?”

He evaded my gaze, instead standing to fetch the teapot. “Knew what?”

“You knew that the vampire would kill Stanton.”

“I didn’t know. I guessed.” He refilled my mug.

Horror suffused me. “But you’ve let me stay, alone, in that castle.”

He set down the teapot, sat down and faced me. A thin smile crossed his face. “He likes women.”

“What?”

“The vampire never kills women. He has haunted the castle for centuries, and has never killed a woman.”

I rubbed my neck.

“But there are stories.” He glanced at me, speculation in his eyes.

“Stories of what?”

“Visitations in the night, ghostly caresses and so on. I’ve never put much stock in them.”

Memories flooded my mind, heated my body. I recalled the strangely cool touch of my nocturnal visitor, so unlike Garrett. I'd never seen his face, but had assumed;

"You've never come to me at night, when I slept in the castle?"

"Of course not." He stared at me. "Are ye saying?"

"Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying." I rubbed my arms. "Did you pimp me out to the castle vampire?"

"Kyllyrra, no, I would never do that!" He reached across the table for me, but I pulled away and didn't let him touch me. "I said, I never believed that. And when I looked at your neck that night in the pub, it seemed untouched. And ye denied anything had happened."

"I thought it was a dream." A rueful chuckle escaped me. "A very sexy dream."

"Did he hurt ye?"

"Well, no. I was more hurt by Garrett's attitude. What did he know? How come he hadn't told me? How had he allowed the vampire to make love to me? Does he know we've been together?" Angry, I made a point of using past tense.

"I dunno. Probably. He's abroad at night, sometimes during the day, especially in the winter."

"Does he know what we're talking about now?"

"No, he's not a ghost. He's a vampire."

"Can we get him?" I was pretty pissed off. But who was the target of my temper? Garrett or the vampire?

"No. We've been looking for him for centuries, we Kilburns."

"Kilburn," I said thoughtfully. "The way you kill a vampire is to burn it."

"Aye. That's the family mission, to root out the vampires here."

"Why?"

"Guilt." A wry smile twisted his lips. "He's one of us."

I gasped.

"Let me show you something." He went to the sitting room and opened an ornately carved wooden box. He withdrew a leather-bound journal from it.

The diary's cover was worn around the edges, crumbling with age. I opened it to see spidery, faded writing on yellowed pages. It seemed to be very old, its leather binding cracked, pages yellowed and crumbling, ink faded and difficult to read. Nevertheless, I was able to decipher some entries. The first dates were in the 1600s, but I am not sure when the following was written.

### *Of Vampyres*

*Of our kind, many misconceptions abound. Some say we can fly or can transform into all manner of beast. Myths, all. We have no superior powers of any sort. What power we have derives from the blood, for it is in the blood alone our life resides. We can attain great age, perhaps immortality, if the*



*blood is present in sufficient quantities. We need not sleep.*

*Our bite is not always fatal, but if a victim is drained he or she will die.*

*We cannot fly. We cannot turn into other animals. We are not faster or stronger than humans. We have no unusual ability to heal; in fact, we are a frail breed, slow to heal. We scar easily. It is hard to recover from injury without quite large quantities of human blood, its animating and recuperative powers are essential to our survival.*

*With sufficient human blood, however, a vampire can do anything a human can, including eat, drink and reproduce. We need not avoid the light, though due to the weakness of our eyes, we prefer darkness. Our skin is sensitive to light, and should you encounter a vampire on a sunny day, it is likely that he or she will wear an unusual amount of clothing. For that reason, vampires prefer northern latitudes, especially near seacoasts.*

*We are not unusually attractive to the opposite sex, unless we were beautiful in life.*

I dropped the diary from hands rendered boneless. Though it shed some light on the mystery, it didn't restore my trust in Garrett.

How had he known about the journal? Okay, maybe it was an old family heirloom as he claimed, but maybe he'd written it himself. Or was he in cahoots with the Kilburn vampire? In this fantastic place, nothing seemed impossible.

A vampire inhabited Kilburn Castle. And why not?

My breath stuck in my throat. What of Garrett Kilburn? Was he my midnight lover?

*We need not sleep.* Had Garrett been telling me the truth?

Though we'd been to bed many times, I had never actually seen Garrett sleeping. Had he lied to me? Had he slipped into my room and made love to me? Did his kiss contain some mysterious elixir that rendered me only semiconscious, able to feel, taste, touch and hear, but not to see my lover?

He'd seemed so confident that Stanton would not survive the night. Was it because he'd slipped out of our room and killed my stepbrother?

I dismissed the notion as too far-fetched, again recalling the difference between the vampire's touch and Garrett's. Also, though the vampire had made love to me, he had used only his hands and mouth to pleasure me into mindless rapture before taking blood. My experiences with Garrett told me that he liked to fuck, liked his cock in me, to ride me until I screamed with joy.

But with enough human blood, a vampire could reproduce. The thought of bearing the vampire's baby froze my blood.

I lifted my head from the pages of the book and stared at Garrett, who sprawled in a sofa across from me in the sitting room. A warm fire crackled in the hearth, the coziness of the scene contrasting with the icy bands gripping my heart.

Who wrote this book? I asked.

One of my ancestors. His face and voice were moody. Lord Gareth Kilburn.

The similarity of the names didn't escape me. But how could I know?

Did I need or want to know? After all, wasn't I going back to Los Angeles? Didn't I have obligations, obligations to the company and to my family?

I have to make some phone calls, arrange for the transport of Stanton's body to Los Angeles. I paused at the door and looked back at Garrett. The expression on his face as he stared at me was of naked longing.

He dipped his head in acceptance. "Do what ye must." His gaze shifted to the fire, and something changed inside me. I sensed that he'd spent many nights in this room, staring into the flames, alone.

I had to know. I didn't want to give Garrett up. Why should I? I'd been happy here and knew I could be again. But I had to find out the truth. Was he or wasn't he? The only way to know for sure was to see them together, the vamp and Garrett. Otherwise, how could I be sure that there wasn't some unnatural bond between the two of them?

I gulped and said, "If we ever want to live in the castle, we have to get him. We have to lure him out and catch him in the act, right?"

He raised his head, and a glimmer of hope sparked in his eyes. Or was it deception? "Aye. We've never been able to locate his lair. We canna trap him tonight. He's sated, and we dinna know where he hides. We suspect somewhere in the tower."

"This is why you put Stanton in the tower."

"Yes, after making sure ye truly wanted to get rid of him." His voice regained excitement and energy. "The vamp is used to going without human blood for days, even weeks at a time. We suspect that when no one stays in the castle, he drinks from animals. This is why we keep sheep and dogs. They distract him from the villagers."

I glanced at the terrier, curled up asleep on the rug in front of the fire.

Garrett smiled at me. "I suspect you're irresistible to him, and if ye really want to capture the vamp, it's possible. But you have to go back to L.A. to take care of business."

"True, but not until after the inquest. The board of directors and the staff take care of Auntie Jacqueline's company, and I can use the internet in the pub to communicate with them if necessary."

He stood and walked over to me where I leaned against the doorpost. He didn't touch me, but said, "So there's no need for you to leave."

"Not right now. Do you want me to stay?"

"Sure, for right now." His voice was casual. He toyed with my hair.

Clearly, Garrett wasn't ready to commit in any way, nor was I. Not until the lingering questions about him remained, and not after the multiple shocks of the day, to say nothing of the last week or two. Plus, we'd just met. And was "vampire hunter" an adequate job description for a potential mate?

But Garrett was definitely Mr. Right Now. Or was he? I wouldn't know until we'd trapped the vampire. If Garrett protected the vampire in any way!



## Chapter Three

I followed him into the kitchen, and we began to prepare food.

Garrett took out lettuce and vegetables from the old but functional refrigerator, and set them on the sideboard. He handed me a knife, and said, "I know you're angry with me and ye dinna trust me. But will ye share me bed for two more nights? Then we'll stay a few nights in the castle and perhaps trap the old vamp."

"And it will all be over." I found a bowl in a cupboard above me.

"Not all, I hope. *Kyllyrra*, I promise ye, I'd never knowingly give ye to him." He took a pot down from a high shelf.

"You could have warned me."

"Of what? When ye came, I did tell ye ye'd be alone in the castle and that the staff leave after sundown. Should I have said, "Oh, by the way, Ms. Desmond, Castle Kilburn is haunted by a vampire who's rumored to enjoy pretty ladies?" He set the pot on the stove and lit a burner beneath it.

I hesitated. Put that way, Garrett's actions seemed reasonable. "Why do you take lodgers at all?"

"It's a business, and a good one, when I'm booked. It's the off-season now and it's quiet. Come midsummer, we're full, and the vamp doesna come out. He doesna like the light, long days. I'm not sure what he does." He turned and smiled at me.

Though I was still suspicious of Garrett, that night, with the vampire asleep in his lair, we enjoyed a cozy evening in the gatehouse. We ate stew and crusty bread, along with a salad, and washed everything down with a nice red wine from Spain. After dinner, we cuddled naked under a quilt before the fire and watched *Braveheart* on the DVD player—my choice. Garrett thought the film rather quaint and laughed at me when I picked it.

During one of the lengthy battle scenes, my attention flagged and I found my hands and mouth wandering to Garrett's lovely cock. He'd seen the movie a few too many times, he said, so I ended up on top of him, sucking his male meat while he was busy with my pussy.

I took him in as far as I could until his mushroom-shaped head pushed at the back of my mouth. Relishing his flavor, I wrapped my fingers around his rod's base and squeezed. I wanted to make every millimeter of his tasty shaft feel great, and focused most of my energy on his head's rim, running my tongue repeatedly along it. Experience told me that this was the most sensitive spot on a man's body, and Garrett's appreciative moans told me that I was right.

He was no less attentive to my pussy, licking and kissing my clit while fingering my back door. I sensed he wanted to give anal sex another try, and I did, also.

The sensual spanking he'd given me told me that he could take me higher

any other man, and I was eager to explore this undiscovered side of my sexuality. With him; no one but Garrett would do.

But he took his time, treating my clit to long, firm swipes of his tongue. Each caress suffused my being with delight, my nerve endings alight, with the pleasure centering in my well-loved cunt. And I matched him stroke for stroke, pumping up and down over his cock while shaping my lips into a ring of taut flesh. Every once in a while I'd vary the pace and the pressure, sucking harder, bringing him to the brink before backing off.

I loved to taunt and tease him, and he did the same for me. When I was on the verge of coming, he pulled away and blew cool air onto my aroused pussy.

“You’re fair steaming, *kylyrra*.”

“You make me sooo hot!”

He chuckled. “Try this.” He slid a finger into my channel and pumped a few times. I moaned. It was good, but I needed something longer and thicker. When his finger was wet, he put it up my rear. I was far more open than before, and the entry was easy. He rotated his finger while licking my clit, and the sensation shot me into the stars. My head whirled, filled with a thousand glittering colors. I writhed, pushing my hips toward his mouth, wanting more, more, more, while the intense pressure from his probing finger made me sweat and pant.

I tore my mouth away from his rod and shouted out my orgasm.

My body wrenched and I rolled off him, half off the sofa, and he followed, draping me facedown in a kneeling position over the sofa’s seat. Behind me, he thrust forward while spreading my buttocks for his entry. One quick push and he was in. I squealed and squirmed, but he held on to my hips and surged in deeper.

I let out a cry. He stopped and reached around me to caress my pussy, my swollen, excited clit. I moaned and panted, scrabbling with frantic fingers for purchase on the sofa’s back, desperate to anchor myself amidst the maelstrom of conflicting emotions. Pleasure. Pain. Pressure. Caress and a searing rapture that radiated from my pierced backside to engulf all of me.

He continued to stroke my clit, and when I groaned, resumed thrusting, taking, possessing the tightest core of me. Two more thrusts and he was there. Amidst the fiery bliss I felt his cock burn all the way up my back channel, and I felt his balls stroke my buttocks, rendered oh-so-sensitive by his thorough spanking.

He ground out something incoherent, and then hot jism flooded my rear, dripping out of me. His rod, now smaller, gave me nothing but delight as he continued to pump my sensitized ass. I came again with a joyous cry and collapsed, sated, upon the sofa, and Garrett let his body relax into mine.

Gradually we crawled back onto the couch, spooning beneath the quilt, and I fell into a happy, grateful sleep.

I’m not sure what awakened me. Perhaps it was a draft of cold air whooshing across an exposed hand or cheek, but something brought me back to consciousness.

Soft red light from the fire’s embers gently illuminated the room. All seemed

calm, butâ€

I was immediately assaulted with that sickening but familiar feeling that I was being watched. Garrett?

I turned my head and there he was, eyes closed, his dark lashes a crescent on pale cheeks. His sleepy breaths were deep and steady.

A breeze stirred the lace curtains framing one of the closed windows.

I kissed Garrett's closed lids, his stubbly cheek. He blinked, slowly coming awake.

Don't move, I whispered. We're not alone.

Beneath the quilt, his body tightened. Knowledge gleamed in his green eyes an instant before he flung away the quilt. He sprang up and away from me in the direction of the fireplace.

I scrambled to my feet to see him scabble for one of the swords that hung above the mantel.

A shadowy figure leaped from the open window toward me, its clawlike fingers reaching for my throat. I threw the quilt, flimsy protection, over where I imagined its head to be. I overshot the mark and the quilt fell over Garrett's pursuing sword.

Inhumanly strong hands grabbed me, forcing me down to the sofa. The vampire's body covered mine. Its flesh was hot, filled with my hated stepbrother's blood. Its erection stabbed insistently at my pussy, and it jerked open one of my legs so it could get to me. It seized my hair and yanked my head to one side.

I shrieked from pain and fear as its cock penetrated me and its teeth tore at my neck. I scratched at its eyes with frantic fingernails.

Above us, Garrett grabbed the thing's head, pulled it back and decapitated it with one swipe of his sword. Its head rolled across the carpet, spewing black blood. Screaming, I shoved its flailing body off me.

I leaped to my feet and kicked the head into the fire.

It howled, and its body windmilled its arms. But without a head, it lacked direction, and stumbled into Garrett's sword before crashing to the floor.

The fire's fitfully glowing brands grew flames that consumed its thin white hair as the head continued its banshee shrieks. Stink filled the room. I ran to the modest stack of logs that sat on the hearth and flung one into the fire, hitting the head. It struck the back of the firebox with a decisive thump and went silent.

I stood shivering, watching as the log caught fire. Garrett added more wood until a roaring blaze consumed the vampire's head.

Garrett glanced at the body, lying limp on the rug. The blade still protruded from its chest, the wound oozing dark blood.

He jerked the sword out of the creature's chest and tossed it aside. Come. We'll build a bonfire.

In complete silence, we dressed and wrapped the corpse in the bloodstained rug before dragging it outside to the castle courtyard. We burned it in the fire pit.

Rank smoke rose toward the black night, obscuring the brilliance of the Highland

stars. I shivered, and Garrett put his arm around me. "Nothing will hurt ye, *kylyrra*, while I'm by your side."

I turned and kissed him, letting my lips and tongue say what I knew he needed to hear.

"Ye'll stay, then?" His voice was rough with longing.

"I'll stay."

Hungry for more? Spice Briefs to suit every taste are available now at [www.spicebriefs.com](http://www.spicebriefs.com), including these recent titles:

*Raise a Little Hell* by Cathryn Fox

*Decent Exposure* by Lacy Danes

*Forbidden Pleasures* by Amanda McIntyre

*What She Needs* by Anne Calhoun

*Blame It On the Moonlight* by Tracie Sommers

*Sin*™s *Pride* by Mandy M. Roth

*Everything Changes* by Megan Hart

*For Your Pleasure* by Elisa Adams

*A Gentlewoman*™s *Ravishment* by Portia Da Costa

*A Gentlewoman*™s *Predicament* by Portia Da Costa

For something a little longer, visit [www.spice-books.com](http://www.spice-books.com) or stop by your local bookstore for stories that will ignite your senses!

Think you™d like to write a Spice Brief? Submissions are always welcome at [spicebriefs@harlequin.ca](mailto:spicebriefs@harlequin.ca)



ISBN: 978-1-4268-5156-8

Highland Vampire

Copyright © 2010 by Suz deMello

All rights reserved. Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the publisher, Harlequin Enterprises Limited, 225 Duncan Mill Road, Don Mills, Ontario, Canada M3B 3K9.

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. By payment of the required fees, you have been granted the non-exclusive, non-transferable right to access and read the text of this e-book on-screen. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, down-loaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of publisher.

All characters in this book have no existence outside the imagination of the author and have no relation whatsoever to anyone bearing the same name or names. They are not even distantly inspired by any individual known or unknown to the author, and all incidents are pure invention.

This edition published by arrangement with Harlequin Books S.A.

® and ™ are trademarks of the publisher. Trademarks indicated with ® are registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office, the Canadian Trade Marks Office and in other countries.

[www.eHarlequin.com](http://www.eHarlequin.com)