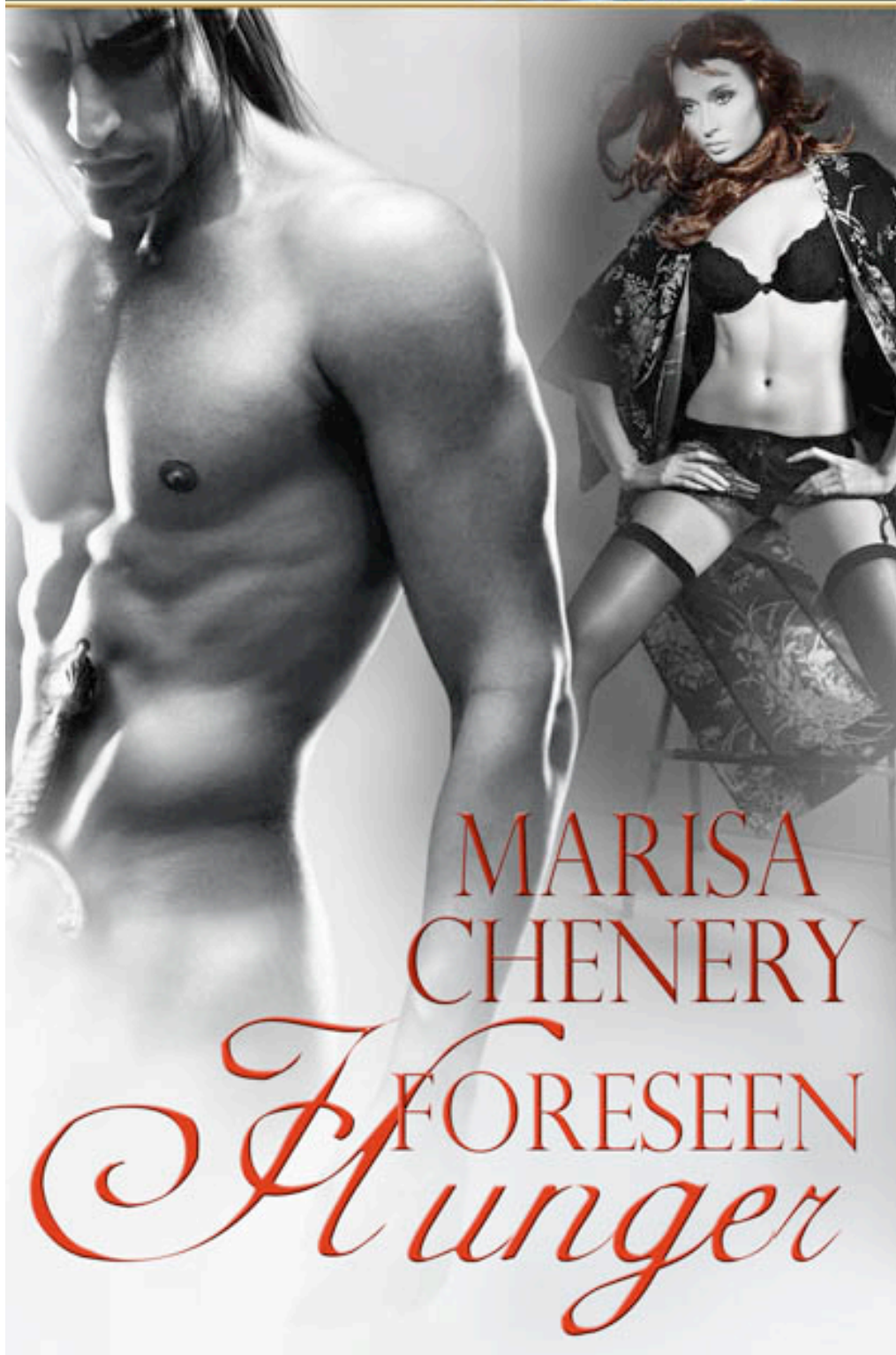


ELLORA'S CAVE TWILIGHT



## **Foreseen Hunger**

*Marisa Chenery*

*Book six in the Ra's Chosen series.*

Takan has hidden who he is for three thousand years, but the time for secrecy is coming to an end. He knows it, and more importantly, Ra knows it. To complicate matters, Takan has found his mate. And she means more than happily-ever-after and smokin' hot sex. She's the key to ending the demon god Apep's threat to the mortal realm. Too bad Takan, and who he is, scares the bejesus out of her.

Falon lost her love years ago to the bite of an undead and has spent her nights hunting the creatures ever since. When she happens upon a man fighting the same fight as she, relief overcomes her. She's not alone. But when she kisses him and discovers his fangs, she does what any warrior girl would do – she stabs him.

Just as the couple is coming to terms with their relationship, Ra drops a bomb that changes Takan forever, and Falon discovers her true destiny. The couple must deal with a new beginning while bringing an end to an age-old battle.

An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



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

Foreseen Hunger

ISBN 9781419933486

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Foreseen Hunger Copyright 2011 Marisa Chenery

Edited by Grace Bradley

Cover art by Dar Albert

Electronic book publication March 2011

The terms Romantica® and Quickies® are registered trademarks of Ellora's Cave Publishing.

With the exception of quotes used in reviews, this book may not be reproduced or used in whole or in part by any means existing without written permission from the publisher, Ellora's Cave Publishing, Inc.® 1056 Home Avenue, Akron OH 44310-3502.

Warning: The unauthorized reproduction or distribution of this copyrighted work is illegal. No part of this book may be scanned, uploaded or distributed via the Internet or any other means, electronic or print, without the publisher's permission. Criminal copyright infringement, including infringement without monetary gain, is investigated by the FBI and is punishable by up to 5 years in federal prison and a fine of \$250,000. (<http://www.fbi.gov/ipr/>). Please purchase only authorized electronic or print editions and do not participate in or encourage the electronic piracy of copyrighted material. Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

This book is a work of fiction and any resemblance to persons, living or dead, or places, events or locales is purely coincidental. The characters are productions of the author's imagination and used fictitiously.

# ***FORESEEN HUNGER***

**Marisa Chenery**

### *Trademarks Acknowledgement*

The author acknowledges the trademarked status and trademark owners of the following wordmarks mentioned in this work of fiction:

Corvette: General Motors Corporation

## **An Old Legend**

In Egypt of old the sun god Ra held sway, worshiped as the father creator. Each day he rode the skies in his solar barque, bringing light to the land. And every night he traveled through the dark underworld until the dawning of a new day.

During his nightly voyage Ra faced his greatest adversary, a being of such evil and darkness, people shuddered—the demon god Apep, the eater of souls. Ra and his companions battled the demon, defeating him each night only to face him again when darkness fell once more.

It is said that one night Apep gained the upper hand, which caused thunderstorms to rage and the earth to shake. Using the chaos he had created, Apep unleashed two evils into the world. Two demons called Sek and Mot were set loose to bring down mankind by collecting souls for their dark master, turning mortals into soulless shells commanded by Apep.

To counteract Apep's evil minions, the sun god chose six warriors. He gifted them each with immortality and the powers needed to defeat their enemies. As Ra's Chosen, the warriors fought the evil that threatened to take over, pushing it back, to stand between man and demons.

Some say to this day Ra's Chosen still fight to protect the unsuspecting mortals around them. In the shadows they stalk their prey each night, ever on guard, forgotten by those who they had been charged to watch over.

## Chapter One

Takan got out of his car to begin his night of hunting the undead. The creatures stalked mortals to steal their souls, and it was his job, along with the other five warriors who made up Ra's Chosen, to protect them. One bite from an undead and the victim became what had hunted them. He wore his sheathed *Khopesh*—an ancient Egyptian sword with the uppermost part of the blade shaped like a sickle—on his back. The sword's bronze blade was an undead's greatest weakness. It only took one cut for them to instantly decompose, leaving nothing but a pile of empty clothes and dust to mark their existence.

He walked down the sidewalk, his gaze shifting left and right as he waited for the familiar prickling of his skin to alert him to an undead's presence. While doing so, Takan let his mind wander. As they tended to do of late, his thoughts went to the subject of mates. As the only remaining unmated warrior, it was simply a matter of time before he would find his.

Actually, that time was probably closer at hand. Gifted with the ability to see into the past and future, Takan had already had a vision of his would-be mate. And as sometimes happened when he "saw" something, he hadn't seen the full picture. He hadn't been able to see what his mate looked like, but he had learned her name—Falon.

He'd also "seen" something else in the same vision. The final battle between Ra's Chosen warriors and the demon Mot and his undead warriors was about to come to a head. The final outcome hadn't been revealed, but Takan had seen enough to know this would be their only chance to take out Mot.

Then there was the small matter of the secret he'd kept to himself for so long it had become second nature to not reveal it to the others. Takan dreaded the day he no longer could keep it to himself. Once the secret came out, the chances were good Mehen, Set,

Denger, Akori and Kysen would never look at him the same again. He didn't want that, but if he didn't tell them, the matter would be taken from his hands. Ra, the sun god, had already started to push.

On one of the deserted side streets, Takan drew up when he felt the telltale prickling of his skin. He looked around to find not one, but three undead warriors stepping out of the shadows and surrounding him with their swords drawn. After a quick glance, he saw none of the undead's eyes were black. Nor did their bared fangs drip, leaking a black substance—both signs one of the demon god Apep's little gold snakes were inside them. If it had been, a bite would be all it would take to have Takan under Apep's thrall.

He turned in a slow circle and unsheathed his sword, trying to keep the three undead in his sights as they slowly closed in on him. He knew these weren't some of Mot's newest generation undead warriors. They weren't big enough, for one thing. The new generation were usually large males well over six and a half feet tall and heavily muscled. Much like Ra's Chosen, who all were six-foot-eight and weighed close to two hundred and ninety pounds. These appeared to weigh half as much.

With a loud hiss, the first of the undead went on the attack. Takan easily blocked the strike. No, these were definitely first generation. Their newer counterparts handled a sword with better skill. It wouldn't take much effort on his part to disarm them and take them out.

Takan let out a loud hiss of his own when all three undead warriors launched a strike at the same time. He blocked each sword that came at him with a swing of his own.

Out of the corner of his eye, he caught a glimpse of a figure coming out of the shadows. When he shifted his gaze and it materialized into the shape of a woman who struck out at the closest undead warrior with a sword—a bronze sword—Takan almost lost his concentration. Focusing on the task at hand, he blocked a hit that would have caught him across the chest before he took the undead out with a slice to the stomach.



As the stench of decomposition filled the air, and the undead became no more, Takan only had enough time to see the woman take out the one she fought before he had to concentrate on the last one. Her skill with the sword was impressive, close to a match of his own. It also made him wonder who the hell she was, and how she knew enough to carry a bronze-bladed sword to end an undead's existence.

\* \* \* \* \*

Falon had spent more time than she liked to admit hunting the creatures of the night that had attacked her and her boyfriend five years before. She'd barely managed to escape, but her boyfriend hadn't been so lucky.

That night had changed her life forever. The timid girl she'd once been had vanished. In her place, a tough, determined woman had emerged. One who took martial arts classes and learned how to use a sword. After the attack and the police's disbelief of her story, Falon had turned to the internet and found there were more than a few accounts of the same type of creature attacking others. People just like her who had escaped to tell their story.

Now, so many years later, she'd taken out a fair number of the creatures, but more always seemed to crop up. She had no idea how they first came into existence. She only knew a bite turned a victim into one of them in a matter of seconds. Falon had been a witness to that very early on.

With her hands shoved into the pockets of the long coat she wore to keep the sword on her back hidden, Falon kept her senses on alert as she walked the circuit of where she hunted that night. Each evening she chose a different part of the city. Sometimes she felt as if she fought a losing battle, especially when she came up empty-handed. Knowing the creatures were out there and she hadn't at least taken one out made her worry about how many lives she could have saved if she had made a kill.

Down a section of street where at this time of night no one was usually about, she heard the sound of metal hitting metal. Taking a quick look around, she pulled her sword out of its sheath and went to investigate.

Rounding a corner, she stepped deeper into the shadows and her gaze landed on a very large man swinging a sword as he fought off three others who carried the same type of weapon. Falon inched closer, using her training not to make a sound.

She sucked in a silent breath when she realized the three others were the creatures she hunted. Their fangs and dead, flat-looking eyes gave them away. But fighting with swords was something Falon had never encountered before. Usually they attacked with fangs, only focused on sinking them into flesh. Not liking the odds—even though the large man seemed able to hold his own—Falon brought herself into position and joined the fray.

With the two of them, it didn't take very long to end the existence of the creatures. When it was over, three piles of empty clothes littered the ground and the stench of decomposed bodies filled the air.

Lowering her sword, Falon turned to the man who stood a foot away, staring at her. Now that the danger had passed, she took a really close look. The first word that came to mind—gorgeous. Even his long bangs hanging in his face did nothing to take away from his good looks. She saw one light brown eye that verged on gold meet her gaze. She looked lower. His straight black hair fell to his very broad shoulders. Lower still, she encountered a wide chest and slim hips. His snug black jeans were molded to muscular thighs. With the sword still held in his hand, he looked like a warrior of old, except for the modern clothing he wore.

Not denying the fact she was instantly attracted to him, Falon looked her fill. Her fingers itched to push his bangs out of his eyes to get an unobstructed view of his face. Then she wanted to sink her fingers into the long length of his hair and kiss him until she couldn't think straight. At her wayward thoughts, her nipples tautened beneath her shirt and an ache pounded between her legs. It had been a while since she'd taken the

time to be around a man, let alone take one to her bed. Her sex-starved body wanted nothing more than to rub up against the man who seemed to be eating her up with his gaze.

Falon veered her thoughts away from the pleasures of sex as the man slowly walked toward her. She stood her ground, her gaze never leaving his face. When he stood directly in front of her, she found she had to crane her neck to look at him. At five-foot-nine, there weren't too many men who could actually make her feel small like this particular one did.

"You've fought the undead before," he said in a deep, slightly accented voice.

"The undead? Is that what you call those creatures?"

"Yes. For that is what they are—undead."

It made sense, since they decomposed so quickly once they were taken out. Remembering what he'd first said about her having fought the creatures before, she pulled herself up straighter. "It's not the first time I've come across undead."

He looked her up and down, his gaze intense, causing the ache in her pussy to increase. With him standing so close, she found it a fight not to reach out and see how hard his body was, especially in the area between his legs that seemed to be sporting an interesting bulge.

"The sword," he said. "How did you know bronze is an undead's weakness?"

She shrugged. Falon wasn't about to tell this stranger she'd dreamed of a man's voice two nights before her first hunt, telling her she needed a bronze sword and where she had to go to get one. And she for damn sure wouldn't tell him her sword had already been forged, paid for with her name on the sales receipt when she'd gone to the place the voice had sent her.

When he seemed to wait for an answer, she said, "I just knew."

"You're very good with a sword."

"I've had lots of practice."

Silence fell between them when he took another step closer. His gaze seemed to focus harder on her, and Falon felt as if she'd become sucked into it. Unable to pull away, she didn't move when he reached across them and placed his hand on the left side of her chest, directly over her heart.

He drew in a breath and then said almost reverently, "Falon."

The sound of him saying her name shot a jolt of arousal through her. Her blood heated even more when an image of him and her naked, their bodies straining against each other as they had sex filled her head. It abruptly disappeared when she gasped sharply.

A few more seconds passed before he lowered his hand and clamped it around her wrist. "You're the key," he said.

Falon quickly tried to pull her wits together when he took a couple of steps back, taking her along with him. "What? What key?" When he didn't answer and continued to drag her along, even though she dug in her heels, she yanked at her arm. "Stop. Where do you think you're taking me?" she demanded.

"Where I can watch over you."

She struggled harder. "I don't think so. I don't need anyone to watch over me, especially not some strange man I just met."

He suddenly stopped walking, causing her to almost slam into his back, and turned to face her. "I'm not some strange man. My name is Takan, and you are mine."

The possessiveness in his voice caused her pussy to clench, but the saner part of her didn't like what he'd said...at all. Before she could think of a way to get free, Takan yanked her close so she slammed against his chest, released her wrist and buried his hand in her hair at the back of her head. His lips descended, taking hers in a kiss that just about turned her legs to jelly.

Falon didn't normally get swept away by a man's kiss, but with Takan it felt as if her world centered on him, all her senses attuned only on the man who held her. The scent of the cologne he wore filled her nose with each breath she took. The feel of his

hard body had her resisting the urge to rub up against him. And the way he took her lips, it was no gentle exploratory kiss. It was filled with raw hunger and need, causing her to libido to soar even higher.

She kissed him back, reaching up to put a stranglehold on the front of his t-shirt while she kept the sword in her other hand pointed down at her side. When his tongue swept along the seam of her lips, she opened to allow him entrance. The feel of it twining with hers, stroking and tasting, had her becoming more excited. Pressed as she was against him, Falon felt the unmistakable ridge of his erection nestled along her belly.

A soft moan rose from her. And when Takan sucked her tongue into his mouth, she clutched his shirt tighter. She explored, stroking the roof of his mouth before running her tongue along his teeth. He groaned when she touched a rather pointed tooth. Falon shifted to the other side and found a match. Given how pointed and sharp they felt, the teeth had to be fangs.

Her mind whirling with the thought she actually kissed one of the creatures, the undead she sought to destroy each night, Falon acted as if she was still into his kiss. Slowly, so as not to alert him to what she did, she lifted her sword arm, pulled it back and stabbed the tip into Takan's stomach. With a grunt of pain, his hold loosened and Falon pushed him away, taking a step back to watch him start to decompose.

But when Takan only pressed his hand against his stomach and it came away red with blood, Falon shook her head. Had she made a terrible mistake? She shook her head again. "How can you be bleeding? You have fangs. I felt them. You have to be one of those creatures, only a type I've never seen before."

"I bleed because I'm not one of the undead. I'm very much alive."

Falon backed away. "Then what are you? A vampire? You aren't exactly human. You're still standing. A normal person would be down for the count after receiving a belly wound."

“It takes a lot more than this to take me out.” Takan took a few steps toward her, but stopped short when she held her sword in front of her. “It’s all right, Falon. I won’t hurt you.”

He smiled as if to reassure her, flashing the fangs she’d felt while they’d kissed. The horror of the night five years before came rushing back. Inside her head, all she saw was what she’d thought had been a man lunging at her as he tried to bite her with sharp fangs. Even worse was the image of her boyfriend having his neck torn into by the very thing she’d barely managed to escape.

Fighting the fear that threatened to take her over—something she hadn’t allowed to happen since that horrific night—Falon spun on her heel and fled. Without looking behind her to see if Takan followed, she ran as fast as her legs would carry her.

## **Chapter Two**

Takan let Falon go, her long, wavy red hair flying out behind her as she ran. He hadn't missed the fear that had flashed in her green eyes just before she'd run away. Having his mate look at him in terror hadn't been a thrill of a lifetime. Or having her stab him because she thought he was one of the undead.

He pressed a hand to his stomach and winced. It hurt like hell but he'd live. Being immortal, the only thing that would truly end his life would be for him to lose his head, literally.

Takan lifted his shirt and gave the wound a close inspection. Using some of his saliva that healed superficial wounds, he spread it over the spot where Falon had stabbed him. It partially sealed it, but was only a temporary fix. He healed at a faster rate than mortals, but a good dose of sunshine, Ra's light, would completely heal it as if the wound had never been. Since it was night, he'd have to wait hours to do that.

There was one other way he could speed the healing process, but now that he'd found Falon that wouldn't be an option. Ra had gifted all his warriors with fangs so they could drink blood to keep them as strong as the undead they hunted. They all had to feed once a week. A donor would be chosen when the need arose. Usually a woman, since feeding was orgasmic for both parties. Once fed, they wiped the mind of the donor, leaving her with no memory of their bite, or of them. Ra had decreed that no mortal would retain the memory of what his Chosen were, or the fight between them and the undead.

Now that Mehen, Set, Denger, Akori and Kysen had mates, they no longer had to go in search of donors when their blood hunger rode them. Once mated, they could only drink the blood of their mate, and she in return could only drink theirs.

Since Falon was his mate, Takan couldn't go in search of a donor to drink from to help heal the wound she'd given him. If he were to do that it would only increase his need, causing his blood hunger to increase. The blood of another would also have his stomach cramping painfully.

Tugging his t-shirt into place, he hissed at the pull on his wound when he reached behind him and sheathed his sword. Even though it was still fairly early, Falon had made sure his night of hunting ended prematurely. Besides not being fully healed, the scent of his blood would be enough to scare off any undead before he could move in for the kill.

With a sigh, Takan walked in the direction where he'd parked his Corvette. He'd return to Ra's Chosen's headquarters in the old warehouse district here in Phoenix and wait out the rest of the night. He didn't have any worries about not being able to find Falon again. With his sight, and now that he knew what she looked like, he'd be able to find her. She wouldn't get away.

As he walked, he sorted through the images his vision had given him when he'd had his hand over his mate's heart. Not only had they showed she was indeed his, they had shown him she was the key to finally bringing down the last of Apep's demons. Takan hadn't seen how, only that Falon played an important role in Mot's demise. It didn't sit easy with him, though. She was his mate. He wanted her protected and as far away from danger as he could get her, not right smack dab in the middle of it. Now he knew how Mehen felt when Blythe, his mate, helped take out undead. Because she was his daughter, the sun god had given Blythe a diamond pendent that had his symbol, the Eye of Ra, in the center of it. Any time Blythe came near undead the diamond glowed like the sun with UV light and instantly ended their existence. It had come in handy more than a few times.

Reaching his car, Takan unlocked it and got in. While Blythe didn't have to physically fight the undead, Takan didn't think that would be the case with Falon. She was already just as skilled with the sword as he. And she obviously had more than



some knowledge of the undead if she knew how to take them out. It made him wonder what had happened to cause her to hunt them. It was no mere coincidence she'd come along, carrying a bronze sword, to fight alongside him.

Takan started the car and pulled away from the curb. His mate's fighting skills, and the fear he'd seen in her eyes, were just a few of the things he'd learn about when he was with Falon once more. She could run from him tonight, but he wouldn't let her do it again.

\* \* \* \* \*

Falon had a stitch in her side and panted for breath by the time she reached her car. She skidded to a stop, unlocked it and threw herself in, tossing her sword on the passenger seat before she jammed the key into the ignition. Once it turned over, she gunned it and peeled away from the curb. It wasn't until she raced down the street did she glance in her rearview mirror to see if Takan had followed her. Her grip on the steering wheel loosened a bit when she didn't see anyone.

Finally able to catch her breath, she shot a quick glance over to where her sword had landed on the seat. The tip of it was still stained with Takan's blood. She yanked her gaze back on the road. The sight of blood made her stomach roll a bit. The creatures she normally used the sword on didn't bleed when she stabbed or cut them.

Since Takan had bled that meant only one thing—he wasn't one of the undead, as he'd called them. The blood proved he lived, but what he was, she had no idea. And he didn't have fangs just to show them off. He had to use them, which screamed vampire to her.

Pulling onto the street where her little bungalow was situated, some of the tension in her shoulders and back eased. She was almost home. At her house, she drove up the driveway and parked the car. Before she opened her door, she took a quick look around to make sure none of her neighbors watched, not that she expected any since it was late by their standards.

Not seeing anyone, Falon grabbed her sword, got of the car and rushed to the front door. She quickly unlocked it and went inside, locking it behind her. Shrugging out of her coat, she headed for the kitchen, needing to clean the blood off her sword before she did anything else.

She flung her coat on the back of one of the kitchen chairs and got an old dish cloth and tea towel. She wet the cloth in the sink, and with quick strokes, cleaned the tip of her sword, making sure to dry it thoroughly with the towel.

She unstrapped the scabbard on her back and sheathed the sword in it. Falon walked to the table, pulled out a chair and sat. Her legs were none too steady. Flashes of Takan standing with blood on his hand still played through her head. No matter how many times she told herself he wasn't exactly human it didn't make the images go away, or lessen any of the queasiness she felt. Nor did it make him less attractive looking. God, she had to be sick to have the hots for a vampire.

Falon took a deep, cleansing breath in through her nose and let it out through her mouth. The sick feeling would pass. She just needed to go out on the hunt again and she would be fine. She'd patrol another part of the city, hopefully find an undead to take out and she'd be back to her old self. If she kept telling herself that, maybe she'd believe it.

\* \* \* \* \*

Takan had just walked through the secured door that connected the docking bay they used to park their cars and the main part of the headquarters when the mates walked into the hallway from the kitchen. All five of them stopped and gave him a surprised look. He returned their stare, his gaze lingering half a second longer on Blythe, as it normally did.

She of course was the first one to leave the group of women and close the distance between them. "Takan? What are you doing back so early?"

He shook more of his bangs in front of his face. "I had a little run-in that put me out of commission for the rest of the night."

Blythe ran a concerned gaze over him. "What happened?"

Takan quickly glanced at the other women, Desiree in particular. She was known for being a pain in the butt when a warrior first found his mate. She was never mean about it. She just liked to pry information out of the poor bugger whose turn it was to become mated. Considering only he remained so, she already had him in her sights.

Not in the mood to be grilled, Takan did the only thing he could—he lied. "I ran into a couple of Mot's first generation undead warriors. One got a lucky hit and stabbed me in the stomach before I could take him out."

"And it's still bleeding," Blythe said. "I can smell the blood."

He pushed her hands away when she tried to lift his shirt. "I'm fine. I'll patch it up until I can get in the sun."

That turned out to be the wrong thing to say. Desiree joined them and said, "Why didn't you seek out a donor to feed from to speed up the healing instead of coming back here to be fixed up?"

Takan silently cursed. It figured Desiree would be the first one to pick up on that. "It's not that bad, and I couldn't be bothered to go in search of a donor. I fed last night, so my blood hunger is still under control."

He *had* fed the night before, for the second time that week. Not that anyone knew about it. And he had managed to stem the flow of blood from his wound before he'd lost too much of it to cause his blood hunger to kick in. He'd be fine for a few days, at least he hoped.

Desiree gave him a look that said she didn't know whether to believe him or not. "Are you sure that's the case and you're not avoiding a donor for another reason?"

"You can take my not wanting to feed any way you want," he said with a grin and a shake of his head. "I know you're just waiting to pounce on me once you think I start showing the signs of having found my mate."

She shrugged. "It's going to happen sooner rather than later. And after you, I won't have anyone else to bug. I want to have my fun while it lasts."

He shook his head again. "I think Set must be neglecting you a little if you have nothing better to do than follow me around, hoping to see my number come up."

Desiree smiled. "Set hasn't been doing anything of the sort. In fact, I'll have his undivided attention all night long once he gets back from hunting."

Takan pretended to gag. "Unlike you, I don't like to know about other people's love lives."

Blythe chuckled as she took his hand and pulled him down the hall. "Enough you two. Come on, Takan, I'll patch you up."

On the way by, he saw the other mates, Nyx, Jordan and Cena, smiling. Nyx and Jordan were used to Desiree's tactics, but this would be new to Cena. Having only been mated to Kysen for a month, she hadn't been around when it had been her mate's turn to get the third degree.

Takan did nothing to break Blythe's hold on his hand and allowed her to tow him farther down the long hallway to her and Mehen's quarters. To distract himself from how much he enjoyed Blythe's nearness, he looked at the hieroglyphs and artwork he'd painted on the walls. It had taken him years to transform the newly renovated warehouse into what it looked like today. He'd first painted all the walls and concrete floors to resemble the stone used for the Temple of Amon Ra at Karnak in Egypt. On top of that, in bright jewel tones, he'd painstakingly hand painted hieroglyphs and pictures of many of Ra's exploits.

At her quarters, Blythe pushed open the door and took him through the bedroom area to the en suite. "All right," she said once they reached the bathroom sink. "Off with the jacket and shirt."

He smiled. "Are you using the excuse of my wound to look at my naked chest?"

She swatted him on the arm. "Of course not. You know I think of you as the brother I never had. A much, much older brother, I might add. And it's not as if I haven't seen you bare chested before. I do recall a time shortly after Mehen and I became mates of me crying my eyes out against it. You do have a nice chest, but I prefer Mehen's."

Takan remembered that incident very well. Blythe had been a wreck after Mehen had tried to feed from a donor, even though the mating bond had formed between him and Blythe. Through that bond, she'd known exactly what Mehen had done. Takan had done his best to console her, wanting nothing more than to beat the crap out of his friend for hurting Blythe. He hadn't, of course. It would have had the others questioning what Blythe really meant to him.

"In that case," he said as he took off his jacket and the scabbard on his back, placing them on the counter in front of him, "I'll keep the shirt on."

Blythe chuckled. "Fine, I can work around it. I wouldn't want to offend you by not staring at your male perfection."

"And I wouldn't want to distract you from the job you're supposed to be doing."

She rolled her eyes. "No, we can't have that," she said sarcastically. "Enough silly talk. Let's see what we have here."

He looked down when Blythe took hold of the bottom of his t-shirt and lifted it high enough to reveal the stab wound. The temporary seal job he'd done using his saliva hadn't held up very well. The edges had started to come apart and a small trickle of blood leaked out of it.

Blythe poked at it with her fingers, causing him to hiss with pain. "Take it easy," he said. "It might not kill me, but that doesn't mean it doesn't hurt."

"Sorry. I just wanted to see how deep the wound is. It's pretty shallow, so it shouldn't bleed too much once I bandage it. And it shouldn't cause your blood hunger to kick in, which will be a good thing since you can only feed from your mate now."

He stiffened. "What?"

She lifted her head and smiled. "You heard me. I know that's the real reason why you didn't go in search of a donor tonight. You're going to be mated soon."

"How do you know that?"

"Ra told me. He said your blood hunger had increased and you've already fed twice this week. And that during the second feeding—how should I put this without embarrassing the both of us?—you didn't use the opportunity to enjoy it to the fullest, if you know what I mean. I really wish my dad would learn that fathers don't discuss sex with their daughters."

It really shouldn't have surprised Takan that Ra had known, but it did a little. What made it worse was the fact Ra had talked about it with Blythe. She was the last person he ever wanted to talk to about his sex life. Just knowing she knew he hadn't had sex with the last donor he'd fed from caused his face to warm.

Blythe laughed. "Are you blushing?" When he scowled, she quickly said, "Sorry, I didn't mean to laugh. I actually think it's kind of cute to see a man of your size blush."

"Great. Now you think I'm cute."

"Don't worry. I won't tell anyone and ruin your warrior reputation."

"So Ra really told you I hadn't..." He let his words trail off.

"Yeah, he did. He also made me promise not to tell the others about you being mated soon, especially Desiree. He said you would have more to deal with than the others had when it came to claiming your mate. Whatever that means."

Takan knew exactly the meaning of what Ra had said. Once he claimed Falon as his mate, he had to reveal his secret. He'd seen it in a vision, which meant Ra more than likely had as well. At least the sun god hadn't said too much. The cat wasn't out of the bag yet, and he wanted it left that way. He would be the one to reveal the secret, not Ra.

"I'll be grateful if you don't tell Desiree," he said. "And just between you and me, I *did* meet my mate tonight." He cleared his throat. "She, um, was the one who stabbed me, not one of the undead warriors, though there really were three of them."

"Your mate stabbed you?"

"After she helped me take out the undead warriors. She can handle a sword as well as I can."

"A female warrior mate. I like the sound of that," Blythe said with a smile. She then grew serious. "If your mate helped you with the undead, that means she knows about them. How did that happen?"

He shook his head, then watched Blythe reach into the medicine cabinet on the wall and pull out a bottle of rubbing alcohol. That would sting like a bugger. "I don't know how Falon knew about them, much less how she knew to use a bronze-bladed sword to take them out. I didn't get the chance to ask."

Blythe now had a cotton ball in her hand and soaked it with rubbing alcohol. "Why not?" She shot him a quick smile before she bent her head to look at his wound. "After taking out the undead, were you too busy kissing her to carry on a conversation?"

Takan winced and sucked in a breath when she dabbed along the wound. "If you must know, I only managed to kiss her once. That was also when Falon learned I had fangs, which was the reason she stabbed me. She thought I had to be one of the undead too because of them. They also caused her to run from me."

She threw away the cotton ball and placed a square piece of gauze over his wound. "Hold this while I tape it in place." Once he did as she asked, Blythe said while she worked, "I can see why she would think that. I thought the same thing when I first saw Mehen's fangs. To the unlearned, it's hard to tell Ra's Chosen apart from the undead because of them."

"If I had been thinking straight at the time, I would have kept my fangs hidden. It was a bit disconcerting to see my mate jumping into the face of danger to help me. Then there was the vision I had of her at the time."

Blythe put the last piece of tape on the bandage and lifted her gaze to meet his. "What did you see?"

He sighed. "She's the key, Blythe. Falon is the key to taking out Mot and bringing an end to the foothold Apep has in the mortal world. I just don't know exactly how, though."

With a low whistle, she shook her head. "That's a lot to put on a girl's shoulders, especially one who really knows nothing of our world. What are you going to do about it?"

"I have to let her play her part, even though I want nothing more than to lock her behind the walls of the headquarters to keep her protected."

Blythe tugged down the front of his t-shirt, then gave him a hug and a kiss on the cheek. He returned the hug, reluctantly letting her go once she pulled away.

"You can't always have it your way, Takan," she said. "You'll be able to keep Falon safe, and from the sound of it, she's more than capable of looking after herself. So you're going after her tomorrow, right?"

He smiled. "Of course I am. I'll be able to find her using one of my visions."

"I thought as much. Well, you're all patched up. I should go join the others. And don't worry, I won't say a word about anything you told me. It'll just be between you and me. And when the time comes that you bring Falon to the headquarters, I'll act surprised like everyone else."

"Thanks, and thanks for taking care of my wound."

"It was no problem. And good luck with Falon tomorrow."

Not able to resist, Takan kissed Blythe's cheek, then collected his jacket and sword from the counter before walking out of her quarters.

Once inside his own, he hung up his jacket and sheathed sword in the walk-in closet. The ruined shirt was pulled over his head and thrown on the floor to dispose of in the morning. He sat on the end of his bed and yanked off his boots.



Forgoing another shirt, Takan grabbed the remote for the TV and settled more comfortably on the bed to watch it. Hopefully this would be one of the last nights he'd sleep alone. Thoughts of making love to Falon, then holding her while they slept for what would remain of the night, caused his cock to twitch. Now that he'd found her, he was eager to put his lonely life behind him.

Tomorrow, he'd get Falon past her fear of him, and then he'd work on getting her to accept him as her mate.

## **Chapter Three**

The next morning Falon woke with a start when her alarm went off. She reached over to the nightstand and shut off the annoying sound. God, it couldn't be morning already. But of course it had to be or her alarm wouldn't have woken her up.

With a groan, she stretched and sat up. She really didn't want to get out of bed, but if she wanted to keep paying her bills and put food on her table, she had to drag her ass into work.

Feeling like a walking zombie, Falon left her bedroom and went to the bathroom. Working full time during the day and then hunting the creatures until the early morning hours meant she didn't get much sleep. It had started to catch up with her again. She was able to go for almost a year on what little sleep she allowed herself, then all of a sudden it would hit her like a ton of bricks. Today was that time.

After she used the toilet and brushed her teeth, she turned on the shower. It also didn't help she'd hardly slept at all during the night. At every strange sound, she'd come awake thinking Takan had found her. No matter how many times she told herself he had no idea where she lived, it didn't seem to settle her nerves.

But what was even worse was the dream she'd had just before her alarm had gone off. In it, she'd let Takan kiss her again. Only this time, it seemed to go on forever. She became so aroused, she'd rubbed up against his hard body, grinding against the thick thigh he'd put between her legs. And his fangs, what fear she'd felt in the real world, disappeared. If anything, she'd found them a turn-on to the point she'd bared her neck for him so he could sink them into her.

Falon stripped out of her pajamas and stepped into the bathtub, closing the shower curtain with a snap. Her pussy clenched from the memory of Takan's bite in her dream.

While he drank her blood, she'd had an earth-shattering orgasm. One that had left her wet and aching in the real world.

She pushed aside her erotic vampire dream and finished her shower. After blow-drying her hair, she returned to her bedroom and dressed for a day at work. As the receptionist at a small, local rag magazine, what she wore had to be on the dressy side. That meant mostly skirts, blouses and high-heeled shoes. She was supposed to be the first face people saw when they came to the magazine's offices. Therefore, she had to make a good impression.

Dressed, morning coffee drunk, Falon headed out the door. Still feeling a bit zombie-like, she drove to work. At the small commercial building, she parked her car and went inside. She took the elevator to the second floor where the offices of the magazine were located.

The phone started to ring after she'd just put her purse away and sat down behind the receptionist's desk. "Good morning, The Revealer," she said once she put the telephone's headset on.

Falon grabbed a scratch pad that sat on top of the desk and wrote down the information the caller gave her. Given the articles The Revealer published, it could be counted on she'd get more than a few calls from people who had a lead on some bizarre story. It was her job to write down all the pertinent information and pass it on. Half the time, the leads were alien abductions or someone claiming to have seen their neighbor turn into a werewolf during the full moon.

Then there were the callers who claimed to have seen vampires. Those, if they sounded remotely like the creatures she hunted, Falon kept for her own personal use. Just because someone called in, there wasn't a guarantee their story would get chosen for an article. So far, four such phone calls had led her to an area of the city where a creature had been on the prowl.

After she finished writing down everything the caller said along with contact information, Falon hung up. She typed it up on the computer and emailed it to the

editor-in-chief who made the decision to pursue it or not, and which reporter would get the story.

And so her day went, answering phone calls and doing any computer work that was passed her way. Her job at times could bore the hell out of her, but the pay was not half bad. That was about all she could say about it.

With about an hour left of her shift, Falon heard someone walk up to her desk while she was in the middle of writing out another caller's lead for a story. She held up a finger to let the person know she'd be with them in a minute and finished the phone call. She wrote out the last bit of information, then pasted a smile on her face as she lifted her head to greet the walk-in.

Seeing Takan standing on the other side of her desk, returning her smile with a closed-mouth one of his own, caused a surge of adrenaline to shoot through her as she automatically reached behind her for the sword that wasn't there. Coming up empty-handed, she frantically searched for anything on the desktop that could be used as a weapon. All she saw was the one-touch stapler, but didn't think shooting staples would do much to stop a vampire.

"Hi, Falon," he said with his deep, sexy, slightly accented voice.

She swallowed, fighting the urge to run. "Get the hell away from me," she said in a low, clipped tone.

Takan grinned. "It would seem you missed me too. That's a fine hello after I waited most of the day to see you. Impatiently, I might add. I thought it would be better to come closer to your quitting time."

*A courteous vampire?* "All it will take is one scream to have my coworkers come running."

The grin faded as Takan shook his head, the movement causing more hair to fall in front of his face. "I would never hurt you. Ever. You have to believe me."

She didn't have to do anything of the sort. "How did you find out where I worked?"

"I have my ways."

"Well, you can just turn around and use those same ways to do the opposite of finding me."

"Not going to happen. We have to go somewhere to talk."

"I think not." She took a quick look to make sure no one was around, then said in a harsh whisper, "I would be stupid to be alone with a vampire."

Takan took a step closer to the desk, put his hands flat on it and leaned toward her. He spoke in a low voice only she would hear. "That's why we have to talk. Just because I have fangs does not mean I'm a vampire."

With him so close, despite herself, Falon found her gaze drawn to his lips as she remembered how good they had felt against her own. "Then what are you?"

"Come with me and I'll tell you."

"I already told you no."

"You can pick the place if you don't trust me."

Falon felt repelled and drawn to Takan at the same time. Knowing he had fangs behind those firm lips of his—lips he'd used to kiss her almost senseless—made her extremely wary of being alone with him. But she was undeniably attracted to him as well, even with all that hair hanging in his eyes. She wanted to believe he wouldn't harm her, but the night she'd lost her boyfriend had marked her too much just to take Takan's word for it.

He straightened and continued to stare. "If it will make you feel more comfortable, I'll take you out for dinner. A restaurant is about as public a place you can get. We'll have a nice meal, then we can go out hunting together and you can tell me how you learned to dispatch the enemy."

She blinked and said the first thing that came to her head. "You can eat food?"

Takan sighed. "I'm not what you think I am. I eat, drink and can walk in the sun like everyone else. How do you think I came here? I used the front entrance."

Falon let her gaze skim over his face. His complexion was tanned, and not a pasty white you would expect from a vampire who had to fear the sun. If she went out for dinner with Takan, and he did eat the food, it would be more proof he wasn't a creature of the night. But there was still the fact he had fangs.

Meeting what she could see of his gaze, she said, "You might eat, but you obviously drink something else that would require your dental difference."

"Just say yes, Falon. Along with telling you what I am, I'll tell you everything I know about the things you helped me take out last night."

That had her wavering. Knowledge was power. Her internet searches, and what she knew from firsthand experience, only scratched the surface about the creatures. If Takan knew more and would be willing to share that information with her, it was worth taking the risk of being alone with him. She'd spent too many years fighting this fight alone. To be honest, it would be a nice change to have another person to fall back on who knew and accepted that the creatures truly existed. The big question was whether or not she wanted to take that risk.

Falon looked Takan up and down. If he'd been a normal guy, she'd have jumped at the chance of going out on a date with him. He was gorgeous and had a body that she'd love to have spread out naked before her so she could lick every one of those hard muscles his form-fitting jeans and t-shirt hinted at. And thinking about his jeans, Falon couldn't help checking out the front of them and liking what she saw.

As if he'd read her mind, he said huskily, "If you don't want to do dinner, I'll willingly let you tie me up somewhere—preferably on your bed—totally at your mercy. You can do whatever you want and I won't stop you."

She sucked in a breath as her body went into overdrive. Heated blood surged through her veins while her heart beat at a fast pace. Beneath the desk, Falon squeezed her legs together, trying to alleviate the sudden ache that built in her pussy. A crystal-clear image of Takan tied to her bed pushed out every other thought she had. It also had her accepting his offer before she had a chance to change her mind.

"All right, we'll go out to dinner," she said, doing her best to keep the arousal she felt out of her voice.

Takan smiled, not showing any fangs. "Good. You can tie me up after we eat if you want to."

Even though his words made her pussy clench, she didn't let on what effect he'd had over her. "What time do you want to meet?"

"No need for that. I'll just wait for you."

"I still have another forty-five minutes left before my work day is over."

"I don't mind. I'll take a seat and you won't even know I'm here."

Falon watched Takan walk to the small reception sitting area off in the corner and lower himself into one of the chairs. She tried to ignore him while she went about her work, but it was a losing battle. He was too big of a presence and she had a hard time focusing on what she did.

The remaining minutes before she could leave seemed interminably long. And it didn't help that she felt Takan's gaze following her every move. Even when she caught him doing it, he didn't shift it away. The way he sat there, legs stretched out in front of him, he looked as if he was comfortable enough to sit there all day.

Finally at five o'clock, Falon took off the telephone headset and prepared to leave for the day. The phone rang, but she didn't pick it up. With office hours over, an automated answering system would take all the incoming calls. She collected her purse, pushed back her steno chair and stood. As she came around the desk, some of her earlier fear of Takan returned as he got out of the chair and crossed to meet her.

"Ready to leave?" he asked.

"Yes, but I'll follow you in my car."

He reached for her hand as they walked toward the office door, but she jerked it away. Takan shook his head. "I won't bite. Unless you want me to, that is."

Remembering how much she had enjoyed his bite in her dream, Falon stumbled. Takan took hold of her elbow to help steady her. A jolt of awareness shot through her at his touch. The heat of his hand soaked into her skin. After she gave her arm a small tug, he released it and they continued on their way.

Down at the ground floor of the building, she looked through the heavy glass doors that led outside. Bright sunlight shone through them. This would be the first test to see if Takan had lied. With a purposeful stride, she headed for the doors, pushed them open and stepped through. She only walked far enough to be directly in the sun, then turned to see if Takan had followed.

Falon almost knocked into him, he stood so close. He grinned. "See, I didn't turn to dust. The sun is not my enemy. It makes me stronger."

He definitely passed that test. She silently watched him lift his face to the sun, close his eyes and take a deep breath as if he savored the sensation of the rays heating his skin. Falon found herself unable to look away. The sight of him standing like that made her hungry for something other than food.

Ignoring her baser needs, she forced herself to turn away and walk along the row of parked cars. It didn't take Takan very long to catch up. At her car, she turned again, only this time she slammed into his chest. He put his arms around her and held her trapped against him. It felt good. Too good.

She pushed at his chest, but he didn't release her. "Let me go."

"I think I'll hold onto you a little bit longer. I'm getting the impression you're about ready to bolt."

She'd thought about it, but not out of fear. Being held in his arms, she found Takan to be too much of a temptation. Her traitorous body didn't give a crap what he was. It wanted him pressed skin-to-skin while he pumped his cock between her legs. And it didn't help that he had an erection. Falon felt the hard length of it nestled against her belly. Even though the feel of him aroused her, she still needed to be cautious.

"I promise not to run," she said a bit breathless.



"I'll let you go once we've discussed where we should eat. I find I like you exactly where you are."

Takan pulled her a little closer so her breasts brushed against his chest, and her nipples tightened beneath her blouse. "How about Mexican? There's a great restaurant a few blocks over."

He nodded, then leaned in to smell her hair. "I know which one you mean. Mexican food sounds good." He straightened. "You can drive."

"Wouldn't it be easier if you just followed me instead?" She didn't need the extra hassle of having to drive him back here, especially if she decided this wouldn't go any further than dinner.

He released her and took a step back. He glanced over at her car, then back to her. "All right. You drive yourself and I'll meet you there."

"Okay." Making no move to walk to wherever his car was parked, she asked, "Do you want me to wait for you so you can follow me?"

Takan shook his head. "You go ahead. I'll catch up with you."

Falon unlocked the car and got in. Takan stood off to the side watching her. With a slight shake of her head, she started the car's engine and backed out of the parking spot. Before she drove out of the lot, she looked in her rearview mirror and had to do a double take, since Takan was nowhere to be seen. Once she arrived at the restaurant, she pulled into an empty parking spot, then just about jumped out of her skin when Takan opened her door.

"How did you get here so fast? I didn't see you behind me, and I looked."

He smiled. "Just another trick of mine."

After letting Takan help her out of her car, Falon walked beside him as they went inside the restaurant. Seated at a table away from the other diners, Falon decided to cut to the chase. She flipped open the menu and said, "All right, we're here. Time for answers."

She looked across the table at Takan in time to see him take one of the complimentary taco chips, dip it in the salsa and put it in his mouth. He chewed and swallowed before he took another. Test number two passed—he ate food. With his next chip, he made a show of scooping up the salsa and eating it.

With a glare, she said, “I get it already. You’re eating.”

“And what is inside the salsa?”

Falon ran through the list of ingredients, then rolled her eyes. “Garlic. Okay, you aren’t a vampire. Then what are you?”

Takan ate another chip before he answered. “I’m one of Ra’s Chosen warriors.”

“Ra, as in the Egyptian god Ra?”

“Yes.”

The arrival of their server to take their drink order forestalled Falon’s next question. Once they were left alone, she asked, “And what makes you one of the sun god’s Chosen?”

“He handpicked all the Chosen to protect mortals from the undead who hunt them for their souls. We’re also charged with eliminating the two demons Apep, the demon god, unleashed on the world. The demons are the ones who created the undead. We’ve managed to take out one.”

Now she knew exactly how the undead creatures had come into existence, and what their purpose was. That an actual Egyptian god was real, going around handpicking warriors to protect the world against them, seemed fantastical at best. But she couldn’t discount it, not when the undead proved some things beyond the scope of reality were actually true.

The server returned with their drinks—Takan’s beer and her soda. Their food order taken, the girl walked away.

“Okay,” Falon said. “You’re one of Ra’s warriors. And your job is to protect mortals from the undead. Is there a reason why you used the term mortals?”

"Because that is what you all are – mortals."

"And you aren't?"

"Correct."

"So you're immortal?"

"Correct again."

She swallowed. "That's why you were still standing after I..." Falon let her words hang there, unable to say the rest.

"After you stabbed me? Yes." His gaze met hers. "Later, I'll show you that it's gone. Ra's rays healed it."

Falon grabbed her soda and took a big sip, wishing it was something a lot stronger. She put it down and said, "So you're immortal. How old are you then?"

Takan reached across the table and captured one of her hands in his. The warmth of his fingers soaked into her chilled digits. "I was born in ancient Egypt well over three thousand years ago."

The Egyptian part explained his slight accent and dark good looks, but holy shit. *Over three thousand years old?* Takan didn't look a day over thirty.

She shook her head. "You have to know, if I hadn't had any experience with the undead, I would be having a really hard time believing all this."

"I know. I've given you some answers about me. It's your turn now. How did you learn of the undead's existence?"

"It happened five years ago. My boyfriend and I were attacked by an undead. I managed to escape, but Brad wasn't so lucky. After I led the police to the spot of the attack, thinking we'd find Brad's body, there wasn't any sign of him except for a few drops of his blood on the ground. The police didn't believe my story of something not human, having dead, flat eyes, attacking us."

Takan stroked the inside of her wrist with his thumb. "I'm sorry you had to go through that, but I'm thankful you survived. And the sword? What made you decide to hunt the undead with it?"

The stroking against her skin was a bit distracting, but it helped Falon tell the rest of her story. She hadn't talked about this with anyone before. Not even her family.

She took a deep breath and forged on. "After the days went by, and Brad couldn't be found, I did some searching online and learned I wasn't the only victim of an attack from an undead who lived to tell about it. I researched all I could, then decided to do something about it. The police weren't going to do anything, they ruled me out as a suspect and with no real evidence or clues to go on, they labeled the case as unsolved. So I knew it would be left up to me to hunt down what had killed Brad."

"You must have cared about him a lot if you were willing to go to that extreme."

"I did, still do in some ways." Falon didn't miss how Takan stiffened at her words. "The next six months, I took martial arts classes and learned how to handle a sword. Using a gun was out of the question. When I felt I was ready, I went out on my first hunt."

"And?"

"I found one of the creatures that had attacked me, feeding. While distracted, I moved in and took it out." Falon paused, pushing back the sick feeling she felt every time she thought about that night. "The undead turned just as it started to decompose. It was Brad. I also had to take out the man he had been feeding from."

"Shit," Takan said softly.

"I made a vow to myself that night to find and take out as many of those creatures as I could. I've been hunting them ever since."

Their server returned with their food. Falon pulled her hand free of Takan's and put it in her lap as the girl placed her plate in front of her. Food delivered, the server left to see to another table.

Takan and she ate in silence for a few minutes before he said, "You've been hunting the undead for basically five years?" At her nod, he continued. "I and the rest of the Chosen go out to hunt every night, and have since we came to Phoenix from Egypt over thirty years ago. With six of us, I'm surprised none of us crossed paths."

Falon shrugged. "I try to search different parts of the city, but given its size, I'm not surprised we haven't met up before. Maybe we weren't supposed to until now."

"You could be right."

Silence stretched between them again while they ate. Falon found her gaze drawn to Takan over and over again. Now that she'd spent more time with him, and he seemed to act like any other man, she found it hard to ignore her attraction to him. She was drawn to his good looks and exceptional body, but she found his quiet intelligence a turn-on as well. Then there was all that hair he hid behind. She so badly wanted to push it off his face to see if he did it to hide a scar or disfigurement, not that it would matter to her. She couldn't see either one of those things taking away from his handsome features.

After they finished with their meals, Takan paid and they headed out of the restaurant. It wasn't quite dark yet. Normally after she'd had dinner, she would have been at her house, preparing for a night of hunting.

At her car, Falon stopped to ask Takan if he still wanted to go looking for undead with her as he'd suggested back at her work. She opened her mouth to speak, but didn't get a chance to utter a word as Takan pulled her into his arms and took her lips with his.

## **Chapter Four**

He'd been dying to kiss Falon ever since he'd walked into that office building and found her seated behind her desk. A vision had led him directly to her. It had driven him a bit crazy to have to wait until the end of the day to see her, but it had been for the best. If he'd had to sit in that small reception area for hours, waiting for the time she could leave, it would have been horrendous. Leaving wouldn't have been an option. He'd had a hard enough time with the short wait. Watching Falon, aching to touch her, hold her again, had been torture.

Then hearing about the undead attack she'd survived, and that she'd taken it upon herself to hunt them every night for the last five years, had his protective instincts going through the roof. Not immune to an undead's bite as he was, Falon took a huge risk every time she went out hunting.

What had been even harder to hear was she still had feelings for her dead boyfriend. For the first time in his life, he felt jealous. It was irrational, but when it came to Falon, rational thought seemed to disappear.

It also made Takan do things like pull his mate into his arms and kiss her senseless in the middle of a restaurant parking lot. He kissed her deeper as the scent of flowery perfume and aroused woman filled his head. He dropped his hands to her bottom and held her tighter against him. A swipe of his tongue along the seam of her lips and she opened for him.

She stroked her tongue with his and the taste of her made his cock go rock hard. His fangs throbbed in time with his swiftly beating heart, but he ignored them. Falon was nowhere near ready for them to come into play, but it didn't stop him from longing to sink them into the soft skin of her neck as he took her with his cock.

He rocked against her, pushing his erection into her belly. Falon let out a whimpered moan. That small sound was enough to have him putting on the brakes before things got out of hand. They needed to go somewhere more private, where he could test the waters, see if she'd completely gotten over her fear of him to let him make the next move to bring them even closer.

Lifting his head, Takan found Falon standing with her eyes closed and her cheeks flushed. Her lips were puffy from his kisses. "Let's go someplace where we can be alone."

Her eyes blinked open. "What about hunting?"

"We can still do that. I want to spend some more time with you before we go out."

"Is there time? Don't you have to get ready before we go out? I don't exactly see your sword hanging on your back."

He grinned. "Besides being immortal, I have a few other abilities you don't know about."

"And they would be?"

"All of Ra's Chosen have the ability to manipulate time and space. I can flash myself to any place I wish. Also, I have second sight, something the others don't have."

"Okaaay. I'm really having a hard time believing you can do all that."

Takan kissed the tip of her nose, then released Falon. "I had one of my visions last night, when I put my hand on your chest—though I don't need to do that to have one—that's how I found you today. As for my ability to flash, I'll take you with me when I get my sword."

She shook her head. "I don't know if I'm ready for that."

"You're tough. I think you'll be able to handle it." He dropped his voice to an intimate whisper. "Are you going to invite me back to your place?"

Falon's eyes dilated and she sucked in a sharp breath. At first, he thought she'd say no when she didn't extend the invitation right away. But when she nodded and went to unlock the passenger door of her car for him, Takan felt he'd just cleared a big hurdle.

She moved to the side and said, "If you're going to flash me to your car later, how about I give you a ride to my place?"

Takan smiled. "I thought you'd never ask."

About ten minutes later, Falon drove into the driveway of a bungalow. He looked around, noting the kids playing outside. This was definitely a family-type neighborhood. He got out of the car and followed her up to the front door of the house.

After she unlocked the door and let them inside, he no longer could keep his hands to himself. He turned Falon toward him, cupped her face and kissed her. As if no time had gone by since he'd last touched her, passion flared between them. This time he couldn't stop his fangs from dropping. They throbbed along with his cock.

Takan gloried in the feel of Falon's hands pressed to his chest as she greedily kissed him back. Still not sure how she would react if she encountered his fangs again, he pushed his tongue inside her mouth to stop her from trying to do it to him. Falon sucked on it, causing his cock to jerk.

He backed her up against the nearest wall and dropped his hands to her hips. He rocked into her, showing her exactly what she did to him. Falon moaned, increasing his libido. He wanted her, but they didn't have the time he needed to completely indulge in her. But that didn't mean he wouldn't strip her naked and make her come with his lips and tongue.

They were both breathing heavily when he pulled away. "Will you let me touch you?" he asked huskily.

She nodded with a shiver, then her gaze seemed to center on his mouth. "I can see the tips of your fangs."



"I won't bite you. When I get aroused, they drop. I don't have much control over that. Much like I don't have control over how hard you make me." For emphasis, he rocked his erection into her.

Falon took her bottom lip between her teeth. "Should we be doing this?"

He kissed her again until she moaned. Against her mouth he whispered, "I just want to make you come. Nothing more."

"Oh god. I should be telling you no, but I can't."

"Don't fight it, Falon. This is meant to be. I will never hurt you. Trust me."

"I do."

"Then where is your bedroom? I want to hear you crying out with release before we leave here tonight."

He backed up to give Falon some space, then with his hand held in hers, she led him down a short hallway to her room. Takan tugged her back into his arms as soon as they reached the queen-sized bed. They stood chest to knee as he claimed her lips in a heated kiss. He pulled her blouse out of her skirt before he undid all the buttons. With a swipe of his hands, he pushed it off her shoulders and down her arms to fall on the floor. Next, he worked on the button and zipper of her skirt. Falon kicked it away, along with her high-heeled shoes.

He broke contact with her mouth and looked down the length of her body. Her bra and panties were plain white cotton with a bit of satin trim, but he found them arousing anyway. Putting his arms around her waist, he lifted her and placed her on the center of the bed. Takan followed her down, stretching out alongside her.

Capturing her lips once again, he supported himself on one bent arm as he covered her breast with his hand. Her nipple was taut, the point pressing into his palm. Reaching under her, he found the hooks of her bra and undid them. Once he had Falon free of it, Takan pinched her nipple between his thumb and index finger.

Still fondling her breast, he left her mouth and placed kisses along the side of her jaw and down to the side of her neck. He gently dragged the tip of a fang across her skin where the large vein was. He smelled the scent of her blood just beneath the surface. Falon stiffened, but relaxed once he licked the same spot before continuing down to her collarbone.

He shifted down her body, drawing level with her full breasts. They were more than a handful, tipped with dusky pink nipples. He laved one with the flat of his tongue before he sucked it into his mouth. Falon moaned and sank her fingers into his hair to hold him to her.

Takan switched to her other breast to give it equal attention as he trailed his hand down her stomach to the top of her panties. He worked his way down the front until his fingers made contact with her pussy.

He released her nipple and groaned. "You're already wet."

"It's been so long since a man has touched me like this. You make me ache."

"And I know just how to ease it."

After he stripped her panties off, Takan kissed a path from between her breasts to the flat plane of her stomach. He put a thigh between her legs to spread them farther apart before he settled in the open space. Going lower still, he dragged the flat of his tongue along her pussy. The taste of her, and the whimpered sound she made, had his cock growing even harder. Takan felt pre-cum leak out of the tip and soak into the material of his jeans. He so badly wanted to sink himself into the warm, moist heat of Falon, but he wouldn't.

He flicked her clit with the tip of his tongue while he thrust one finger inside her pussy, pumping it in and out. Falon gasped, her hips lifting to meet his strokes. Sucking on her clit, he pushed a second finger inside. Her inner walls squeezed around them.

"So close," Falon panted. "Just a little more and I'll be there."

Takan sucked on her clit harder as he pumped his fingers faster. Her cries grew louder the closer she came to her orgasm. She moaned his name when he took her over.

He continued to work her with his fingers until the last wave hit her. His cock aching, he allowed Falon to pull him up the length of her body. He lay on top of her, resisting the urge to free his erection and push it deep inside her pussy.

Falon pushed him off so he lay on his back next to her. She sat up and took hold of the bottom of his t-shirt, lifting it up to his chest. "Now it's my turn to make you feel good." She lifted his shirt higher and off over his head. With a quick intake of breath, she stroked her fingertips across his chest. "God, I could explore your body all day and still never get enough of it."

She bent to him, using her lips and tongue to make a trail across his chest. Takan moaned, his hands fisting in the duvet beneath him to keep himself from touching Falon. He'd let her have her way with him. He was just happy that the fear she'd felt for him had disappeared. In no way did he want to go any faster than what she was ready for.

He couldn't stop himself from lifting his hips off the bed when Falon skimmed her mouth down his abs, headed toward the top of his jeans. A loud groan escaped him as she undid his pants and reached inside to grasp his cock. She pumped her hand a couple of times to make more pre-cum leak from the tip.

Takan watched Falon tug his jeans down a little farther until his shaft sprang free. She licked her lips before she bent and tasted the bead of moisture that sat on the slit of his cock. He fisted his hands tighter as she circled the head with her tongue, then opened her mouth and sucked him inside.

Falon gripped the base of his shaft tightly while she took him in and out. The sensation of her pleasuring him this way just about had his eyes rolling back into his head. He thrust his hips, encouraging her to take more of his length. His cock grew harder, the point of no return inching ever closer.

She sucked harder, the flat of her tongue stroking just under the sensitive head each time she reached the tip. His balls tightened, drawing closer to his body, then he was there. With a strangled moan, he came, giving Falon everything he had.

After his climax ended, his blood hunger rose to the surface. The sound of Falon's rapidly beating heart, and the scent of her blood under her skin, had him fighting a battle not to pull her into his arms and sink his fangs into her neck.

He jerked away and sat up. Takan dropped his chin to his chest and closed his eyes as he fought for control. He then remembered what Akori had done to ease his blood hunger the first time he'd been with his mate. Takan lifted the inside of his wrist to his lips and bit down. The rush of blood filling his mouth worked to bring his hunger back under control. He removed his fangs, and with a swipe of his tongue, healed the bite mark.

"Takan?" Falon asked with a tremor in her voice.

He opened his eyes to find her watching him with a wary expression. "It's okay. I'm under control now. Sex and feeding are usually tied hand-in-hand. I promised I wouldn't bite you, so I bit myself instead."

"You get turned-on when you feed?"

"Yes. It's actually orgasmic for both parties involved."

"So if I let you bite me I'd come?"

"Yes, but you're not ready for that."

Falon reached out, then stopped. "Can I do something?"

At his nod, she put her fingers in the front of his hair and pushed back his bangs. So used to hiding behind them, he almost pulled away. Falon's gaze ran over his face before she met his.

"There aren't any scars or disfigurements," she said. "If anything, with your bangs out of your eyes, you're even more handsome. Why do you have them hanging in your face?"

"I have my reason." He pulled her hand out of his hair so it fell back into place and he kissed the tips of her fingers. He changed the subject. "How about you get dressed for hunting, then I'll show you how I can flash from one place to the next?"

"All right, I guess. I'm still not sure about all this Ra's Chosen stuff."

Takan pulled Falon onto his lap and gave her a gentle kiss. "Well, at least you've stopped thinking of me as a vampire. That's a step in the right direction."

She stroked his cheek. "I have, haven't I?" Falon held his hair out of his face. "And you're definitely not one of those creatures. Your eyes are far from dead and flat looking."

"I'm glad for that. I would hate to have you stick me with your sword again."

Falon smacked him on the shoulder. "Don't joke about that. I felt really bad for doing it."

"It's no big deal. No lasting mark. See?"

She shifted on his lap, causing his cock to jerk with interest. And it didn't help that Falon was still naked, either.

Her hand skimmed across his stomach where the wound had been. "I can see that. I can also see something else has recovered as well."

Takan looked down to where his semi-hard cock was trapped between them. "What can I say? And you *are* naked. Remember, I'm not one of the living dead."

"Then maybe we should act on this opportunity." Falon dropped a hand to wrap around his shaft and gave it a squeeze.

He quickly pulled out of her grip. "It's almost dark. We don't have time, especially for everything I want to do to you." Takan met her gaze. "If we have sex, I can't guarantee that I will be able to stop myself from biting you. The urge to take you with my fangs while I take you with my cock might be too much to resist."

Falon's eyes widened slightly and she slid off his lap. "I don't know if I can do it, Takan. After the attack, I had nightmares of the creature catching me and tearing into my throat. I still have them from time to time."

Takan cursed to himself. Falon had gone back to being afraid. He smelled the adrenaline in her blood as her heartbeat quickened. He shouldn't have said anything

about his wanting to feed from her. The subject had to be broached, since his blood hunger would start to ride him full force soon and only Falon's blood would now satisfy him, but she didn't need to know that right at this moment.

He watched as she silently got off the bed and walked to her dresser. She opened a drawer and pulled out some clothes. Takan slipped off the bed, stuffed his cock back inside his jeans and did them up. He stood behind Falon and put his hands on top of her shoulders. She jumped.

"Sorry," he said. "I didn't mean to startle you. And you have my vow I will not bite you unless you have given me permission. It'll be hard, but I will control my blood hunger."

Falon turned to face him. "Let's not talk about it right now. Okay?" She gave him a small smile. "And you did say you were going to show me this neat trick you could do."

He shook his head. "Not a trick, an ability. Hurry up and get dressed."

Takan turned away and looked for his shirt. It was in a heap on the floor where Falon had tossed it.

"Wow," she said. "That's gorgeous."

He looked over his shoulder and grinned at her. "What? My butt?"

She laughed. "No, but I do have to say you have a very fine ass. I was just admiring your tattoo."

"Oh. It actually isn't a tattoo. It's the mark of Ra. Each of us warriors has the same mark in the same place. Ra put it there after he gifted us immortality, fangs and our abilities."

The mark of Ra was on his back, high across his shoulders. It consisted of a red sun with the Eye of Ra in the center, colored red and blue. Two cobras in striking position, faced out on either side of the sun. Attached to them were two large wings, outlined in black, colored peacock blue. The tips just touched the edges of his shoulders. Once

Falon became his mate, she'd carry the same mark on the small of her back, and not quite as large.

"However you got it, I still think it's gorgeous."

"I'll be sure to tell Ra how much you like it the next time I see him."

Takan looked away from Falon and bent to scoop up his shirt. He pulled it on over his head. That done, he turned back in her direction. She'd just finished putting on a pair of black jeans.

Taking out a black long-sleeved t-shirt, she said, "You actually *see* Ra? Like a real person?"

"Of course. He's just as real as you and me."

She shook her head. "I'm not a religious person, so I find it hard to believe an actual Egyptian god exists."

"Well, he does. Are you just about ready?"

Ra was the last person Takan wanted to talk about. Even though the sun god was trapped in the underworld during the night, fighting against Apep in that realm, it didn't mean Ra wouldn't be watching him. Unlike the rest of the warriors, Ra and he had a deeper connection.

Falon tugged her shirt into place. "Yes. I just need to get my sword."

She turned back to the dresser and pulled out one of the very bottom drawers. She lifted some clothes and took out her sheathed sword from under them. Takan then remembered he hadn't asked her one very important question.

As she strapped the sword to her back, he asked, "How did you know bronze was an undead's greatest weakness? I know I asked you this last night, but you didn't exactly give me a straight answer."

At first, Falon didn't say anything in reply. She went to her closet and took out a black jacket that was long enough to hide her sword when she put it on.

She crossed to where he stood and said, "I don't know if I should tell you."

"Why not?"

"It's...a bit strange."

Takan crossed his arms over his chest and locked gazes with her. "It can't be any stranger than me telling you what I am. I doubt what you have to say I'll find unbelievable."

She gave him a small smile. "You do have a point there. All right. It came to me in an early morning dream shortly before I went out on my first hunt. A man's voice told me to go to a place that makes custom-made weapons. When I arrived, I found they had a bronze-bladed sword already finished with my name on it. The bill was also already paid. By whom, they wouldn't say since the customer who had ordered it had paid them enough money not to reveal his or her identity."

Takan had a good hunch who that customer had been. On one hand, he was glad Ra had made sure Falon had the right tools for the job when she went hunting the undead. But on the other, he was a little ticked the sun god had encouraged her by putting the sword in her hands.

"Whoever it was," he said, "I'm glad they did it. Without that sword you would have just pissed an undead off and not taken it out. I'm immune to an undead's bite since I'm one of Ra's Chosen, but you, my little mortal, are not. I want you to always remember that. I don't want you to take any unnecessary chances."

Falon pulled herself up straighter. "Getting naked with you and allowing you to make me come doesn't mean I've lost IQ points. I've had five years of experience hunting the undead all by myself, I might add. I'm always careful."

He held up his hands, palms out. "I apologize. I didn't mean to insult you. I would just hate to see something happen to you." Takan shifted to her side and wrapped an arm tightly around her waist. "Let's go kick some undead butt." He then flashed them out of the room.



## **Chapter Five**

The floor disappeared beneath their feet and Falon felt as if they were falling. When solid ground seemed to be back under her, she found herself no longer standing in her bedroom. They were beside a black Corvette that was parked on a side street close to her work. Holy crap, Takan hadn't been pulling her leg when he said he could manipulate time and space. This is how he must have arrived at the restaurant before her.

She looked at him to find him giving her a closed-mouth smile. "So? What do you think?"

"It's a lot faster than driving, but what would you have done if somebody saw us just suddenly appear?"

"That would be no problem. I'd just wipe the incident from their memory."

"What?"

"Ra has decreed no mortal can know of us, or about the undead. So we have the ability to wipe their minds. Even when I feed, I have to wipe the donor's mind."

She stepped away and Takan's arm fell to his side. "If that's the case, why haven't you wiped mine?"

He looked at her for a few seconds. "I can't."

"You can't? Does that mean you've already tried?"

"No."

"Then how do you know you can't?"

"I just can't."

Falon had started to feel comfortable around Takan, especially after he'd given her one hell of an orgasm, then he said something like this and the uneasiness crept back in.

She could accept he wasn't a vampire, but the thought of him ever trying to bite her scared the crap out of her. The dream she'd had about her enjoying it wasn't enough for her to really get over her fear while awake. It was as if the dream really hadn't been her own, but placed into her unconscious mind to play out.

As for his other abilities, having second sight and being able to flash to another location with just a thought, they were neat. But Takan's ability to wipe minds definitely made her uncomfortable. In no way did she want him messing with her head like that.

What she saw of him through his hair pinned her with a stare. "What are you thinking, Falon? I'm sensing you're pulling away from me again."

"I'm just wondering if you have any other abilities I should know about, along the lines of you being able to erase memories at will."

"I can also plant suggestions in a mortal's head."

"Like mind control?"

"In a way, but it's necessary."

She took another step away. "For what?"

At first Takan seemed reluctant to answer. "For feeding mostly. Once a week I have to feed, so I search out a donor, plant the suggestion for her to come with me somewhere, usually behind a building or in an alley."

"What do you mean by donor? These women don't have any idea what you want with them before you put a suggestion inside their head?"

He cleared his throat. "If they show interest in me, as in they find me attractive, I pick them."

That's when Falon remembered Takan saying feeding and sex came hand-in-hand. "Oh god, you bite them, have sex with them, and when you're finished, you wipe the memory of yourself."

"It's not as bad as you think," Takan quickly said.

"Yes, it is. You're using them. You take their blood and get your rocks off at the same time. And considering how old you are, and that you have to feed once a week, that is a hell of a lot of one-night stands."

Moving faster than she'd seen anyone move, Takan closed the distance between them and took hold of her upper arms. "That was in the past. Before I found you."

Falon tried to pull free, but he didn't let go. Using one of the martial arts moves she'd learned, she circled her arms over Takan's and exerted enough pressure to force him to let go.

She backed away. "What are you saying? I already told you I don't think I could handle you biting me."

"If I were to feed from you, it would be something you would enjoy. Something we'd both enjoy. It would also help to bring us closer together."

Falon gave Takan a look that said he'd suddenly lost his mind. "How could you drinking my blood possibly make us closer? You would be getting something from me that I wouldn't be from you."

"Let's say you had to drink my blood as well. Would that make it easier for you to accept?"

"Me drink blood? Are you out of your fucking gourd?"

Takan sank his hands into the sides of his hair and yanked. "I'm not going to win this one, am I? No matter what I say you're still going to be pissed because I've had to use donors."

More than a little irritated at this point, Falon shot back, "Stop saying it in the past tense. If I won't let you bite me you'll eventually seek out a donor. Let's just say the idea of the man I'm sleeping with going around screwing other women doesn't make me a happy camper."

"You don't understand," Takan said, exasperation lacing his words. "I won't do that."

She really wanted to believe him, but it would never happen. How could it? Some of the anger she felt slipped away. What was she doing? The way she acted, you'd think she and Takan were in a serious relationship. They'd had oral sex, but that didn't change the fact he was an immortal. Her lifespan would be a drop in the bucket for him. She might find him hot, and she definitely wanted to have sex with him, but she couldn't see a committed relationship working between them.

"Whatever," she said. "You can stand here and discuss this all night, but I'm not. There are undead that need to be taken out. I'd rather spend my time doing that than arguing with you."

Falon turned on her heel and walked away. She didn't get very far before Takan suddenly appeared directly in front of her. He'd had to have flashed himself there. He yanked her to him, greedily kissing her until he had her melting against him. All her anger disappeared to be replaced with demanding arousal. It coursed through her body, heating her blood.

Takan finally lifted his head and said, "Enough, Falon. I know what you're trying to do. You still want to push me away. But I have news for you, I'm not going to let you. No more talk of what I am. For the rest of the night that topic of conversation is closed. We're going to go hunting, nothing more." He took her by the hand and led her back over to the Corvette. "I'll get my sword, then we have to go talk to someone first before we start."

"Talk to who?"

"Mehen. He's the leader of Ra's Chosen. He's the one who assigns which section of the city each of us warriors get to patrol each night. I usually check in at the headquarters before I hunt. Since he's already out, we'll flash to him and find out where he wants us."

He released her hand as the trunk opened by itself. Obviously another ability Takan had and hadn't told her about. Falon had the feeling there was a lot more he had to reveal and just didn't want to do it tonight. He reached inside and took out the

scabbard holding his sword. Once he'd strapped it to his back, he pulled on a black leather jacket to conceal it.

Takan closed the trunk and turned to her with his arm held out. "Are you ready to meet Mehen?"

She silently nodded and stood against him. He embraced her, and just like the first time he flashed them, the ground disappeared beneath her feet and she felt as if she fell. They ended up behind the building of a store. A man just as tall and muscular as Takan stood a short distance away. His straight, black hair hung past his shoulders. He wore black jeans, a black motorcycle jacket and motorcycle boots.

He walked toward them and said, "Who would this be?" He stopped directly in front of them.

"This is Falon," Takan said. "Falon, this is Mehen, the leader of Ra's Chosen."

Mehen inclined his head her way. "Nice to meet you, Falon. I hear you've been helping us with our undead problem."

"I like to think so. If I'd known about you guys, I would have searched you out."

"Well, you found us now." He turned to Takan. "I take it you've told her about us."

Takan nodded. "I've given her the basics. I thought it would be best if we went hunting together, to see how good with her sword she actually is. I know she's already good at stabbing me with it."

Mehen chuckled. "Yes, Blythe told me about that."

Falon looked at Takan and asked, "Blythe?" After hearing how he used donors, the thought of him being around another woman who he actually knew showed she had a streak of jealousy.

"Yes, Blythe," he replied. "She patched me up after I returned to the headquarters. She's also Mehen's wife."

Falon's head jerked toward Mehen. "You're married?"

He nodded. "Set, Denger, Akori and Kysen, the rest of Ra's Chosen, are married as well. Takan is the only one who isn't."

"But you're all immortal. Your wives have to be mortal. How can that work when you'll basically live forever and she won't?"

Mehen turned his attention to Takan and gave him a meaningful smile. Falon caught a flash of his fangs. "It would seem you have left out a few things in your explanation."

"I got as far as what donors were and it started to go south from there," Takan said. "I decided the rest can come later when she's ready to actually listen to me."

She elbowed Takan in the ribs, getting a little satisfaction when he grunted. "I'm standing right here, and I'm far from deaf. Keep talking about me as if I'm not and I'll find my own section of the city to hunt in."

Mehen's loud laughter echoed around them. "You'll definitely do, Falon," he said once he brought himself back under control. "I think Takan just got more than he bargained for." He looked at Takan. "You and Falon can take Paradise Valley district. If you run across any new generation undead warriors, contact all of us telepathically and we'll take them out. Mot should be recovered from our last tangle, and I'm sure he's going to make another move soon."

"I'll call."

With another nod at Falon, Mehen walked away, disappearing around the corner of the building.

She met Takan's gaze. "You can communicate telepathically?"

"Only with the rest of Ra's Chosen. It comes in handy when we're hunting and one of us ends up in a bind. We can flash ourselves anywhere in seconds."

"I guess it would. And Mot? Who is he?"

"He's one of Apep's demons. The last one."

"So running into him would be a bad thing?"

"Without backup, it could be."

The ground disappeared beneath her feet again, and once she no longer felt as if she fell through empty space, Falon found herself in an alley, presumably in the district of Paradise Valley.

She stepped out of Takan's embrace. "So what do you do to hunt the undead?"

"Walk and wait to feel my skin prickle. That's a warning sign that one is nearby. I can follow the sensation right to an undead by how strong or weak it gets."

"Nice. And here I have to do it the hard way by hoping I'll stumble across one."

"Well, it does help to have a god on your side."

She walked toward the entrance of the alley, but Takan stopped her by taking her hand. "What?"

"When tonight is over, I want to take you back to our headquarters to sleep."

"I can't. I have to work in the morning."

"Call in sick." He tugged her closer. "I want to spend the day with you tomorrow. Show you a bit more of my world."

"Will you tell me the rest of whatever it was Mehen talked about you having left out?"

She ran her gaze over Takan's face. His bangs hid most of his eyes again. While they'd spoken to Mehen, she'd seen him shake more hair in front of his face. Only around her, he didn't seem to mind when she brushed it aside.

Should she go back to the headquarters of Ra's Chosen? Deep down inside, Falon knew she'd say yes. Takan and the rest of the warriors, what they were, intrigued her. And if the others were married, maybe meeting their wives would help her accept Takan for what he was. God, there she went again thinking Takan and she had a chance of working out. She had to stop doing that or chance the risk of setting herself up for heartbreak.

"All right," she said. "I'll call in sick, but only one day. I need to keep my job to pay the bills."

He leaned in and kissed her long and deep. Afterward, Takan said, "That's for saying yes, and to tide me over since I won't be able to touch you while we hunt. It would be too much of a distraction."

She had to agree with Takan. With one kiss, she forgot about everything else around them. Walking beside him out of the alley, Falon forced her head to clear, focusing on the job at hand.

\* \* \* \* \*

Deep inside his lair, Mot sank his fangs into the neck of the large, struggling male mortal he'd just flashed there. He drank his blood, taking some of his soul with it. To turn the mortal into one of his new generation undead warriors, Mot had to separate the five parts of the human soul – the Ib or heart, the Sheut or shadow, the Ren or name, the Ba or individual personality, and the Ka or life force. To make a regular undead, he wouldn't have to do this and would have taken all the pieces of the soul. For an undead warrior, the Ka as well as a very small part of the human's Ba had to remain. Just enough Ba remained to give them the ability to think for themselves on a small level and to be trained to fight.

Mot released his new undead warrior and watched with mild interest as he collapsed on the ground at his feet. He licked the last of the blood from his lips and waited. A few seconds later, the undead got to his feet. Mot held out the inside of his wrist for his creation to take. The undead sank his brand new fangs into his skin and drank his fill of the blood that rose to the surface. Feeding his new generation of undead warriors his demon blood made them stronger than the first generation. It also gave them the ability to become expert swordsmen in an incredibly short period of time.

Sending the undead to join the others of his kind, Mot left the large chamber and went to the smaller one he claimed as his own. He was slowly rebuilding his new



generation warriors. Since he fed each one as they were created, he could only make one a night, otherwise he risked the chance of becoming too weak. After his latest run-in with Ra's Chosen, he had to be at his full strength.

Mot snarled and hissed with anger as he remembered the last time he faced the sun god's warriors. He'd been so close to bringing Kysen over to his side, using the Chosen's mate for leverage. Kysen had just about taken the gold snake that would have brought him under Apep's thrall when the other warriors had shown up. He'd not only lost Kysen, but also all his new generation undead warriors and a hand. The last one had hurt the worst.

Squeezing his now restored hand into a fist, he felt the faint remembered echo of the horrendous pain Apep had put him through to give it back to him. The demon god had used it as a chance to torture him for failing once again. Mot reached up and touched the heavy scarring on his face, the product of another encounter gone bad with Ra's Chosen. He had to be thankful Apep had given back his hand and not left him maimed as he had done when his face had been burned.

*Mot.*

The sound of Apep's voice inside his head caused Mot to bite back a moan of pain. The demon god's voice felt as if someone took a sharp knife to his brain. *Yes, master?*

*The time is near.*

*What do you mean?*

*The one who could be your downfall will be found soon. You must quickly rebuild your army of undead warriors.*

Blood dripped from Mot's nose as the pain in his head increased. *I have started, but it will take time. If I make too many at a time it weakens me.*

Apep let out a howl of rage, bringing Mot to his knees. *What do I care about that? You will do as commanded. If you fail, it won't just mean the loss of your hand, it will be the end of you, permanently. It will also mean I'll lose my foothold in the mortal realm.*

Mot panted in pain. *I won't fail you, master.*

*Concentrate on building your army. And be prepared to strike when I say.*

*Yes, master.*

As Apep's presence receded, Mot stood and wiped away the blood that dripped from his nose and ears. He flashed himself to one of the many side streets in downtown Phoenix. If Apep wanted an undead warrior army, then an army he would get.

## **Chapter Six**

Takan thought this had to be the hardest thing he'd ever done. His body was so tightly clenched it felt as if every muscle would never be loose again. His fangs had extended, and he held back a hiss of rage that threatened to burst out of him. He could do this. He'd led her here, following the prickling of his skin. He'd let her walk down the alley alone, knowing what the outcome would be.

His gaze stayed glued on Falon while she used a martial arts move to slow down a regular undead who had launched himself at her. A roundhouse kick to the undead's head brought him to a complete standstill. Looking a bit dazed, he shook his head as Falon reached for her sword on her back. Once she had it free, she sliced it across the undead's chest. The sick scent of decomposition filled the air and the creature turned to dust. She kicked the empty pile of clothes up against the alley's wall.

Falon sheathed her sword as she turned and walked back to him. "Well, did I pass the test?"

Takan took a deep breath, forcing his fangs to recede before he answered her. One by one, his muscles unclenched. "Yes. You didn't take any unnecessary risks, and you took out the undead as quickly as you could."

"I would never do either of those things. They would just increase the chance of me getting bitten. I told you I know what I'm doing."

To test how fast her reflexes were, Takan whipped out his sword and aimed it at Falon. The sound of his blade hitting another rang in the alley. She'd managed to get her sword out in time to block his.

"You're fast," he said with respect tingeing his words.

She grinned. "Of course I am. I've had a fair amount of hands-on practice, after all. Let's go find the next undead and maybe I'll let you take your turn."

He shook his head. "Let me, huh? You might be able to move fast, but without the ability to flash, I can still get there before you."

"That would be cheating."

"I wouldn't call it that. I would say it just gives me a distinct advantage over you."

Falon rolled her eyes. "I still say it's cheating."

Takan turned toward the entrance of the alley to get them moving again, then cursed under his breath when he saw the figure standing a short distance away.

"What?" Falon asked. "Who is that?"

He sighed, knowing there would be no getting around this. "That is Akori, one of my brothers-in-arms."

The other warrior walked toward them and Takan heard Falon suck in a breath. He looked at her to find her gaze locked on Akori. He scowled. "Quit staring."

"Holy shit, I know him."

"What do you mean you know him?" he asked a little too sharply.

"Well, I don't know him, know him. But I recognize him. I saw him in a spread in a magazine a few months back." She gave him a sheepish look. "Since I thought he was really, really good looking I saved it to stare...I mean look at."

From the crooked smile Akori gave him as he drew even with them, Takan knew all too well the other warrior had heard what Falon had said. With their sensitive hearing, it wouldn't have been too hard.

Akori winked at Falon. "I hear I have a fan."

"One damn photo shoot does not mean you have fans," Takan said. "And what are you doing here? You have your own district to hunt in."

"Mehen told us you had a partner tonight, so I thought I would take a little break and come over and introduce myself to your ma—" Takan's hand shot out and smacked Akori on the side of his head. "I mean, introduce myself to your girlfriend."

Akori met his gaze, then said telepathically, *You didn't have to hit me that hard. A little tap would have sufficed. It was just a momentary slip. It won't happen again.*

*It better not, because next time it'll be my fist. No saying anything about Falon being my mate until I've told her,* he said in return.

With a nod of acknowledgement, Akori turned back to Falon. "I do have to say Takan is the lucky one to have you as his partner."

Falon stuck out her hand. "Thanks. I'm Falon."

Akori shook it, holding it longer than what Takan thought was necessary. Before he could stop himself, he gave the other warrior a hiss of warning. Akori chuckled and dropped her hand. Takan looked over at Falon and saw her staring with her brow furrowed. He shrugged. He now knew what the others had gone through when one of them had touched their then soon-to-be mates. He wanted to rip Akori's arm off and beat him over the head with it for daring to touch Falon. The rational part of his brain told him Akori was no threat since he was already mated, but the irrational part just recognized him as a male who could be competition.

"You've introduced yourself, was there anything else?" Takan asked Akori.

His brother-in-arms smiled big enough for his fangs to clearly show. "No not really, except the rest of us thought it would be nice to take Falon out for a drink once we're done hunting. Sort of a welcome to the club thing."

"She's not a Chosen."

"No, but she still hunts the undead."

Takan looked at Falon. She shrugged. "They're your friends. I'll leave the choice up to you. I don't mind going."

He nodded, then turned back to Akori. "We'll think about it. Now get out of here before I tell Jordan you're paying too much attention to another woman."

Akori gave a mock look of horror. "Please, not that." He grinned. "Hey, who do you think asked me to come and introduce myself to Falon? Jordan also can't wait to meet her."

"I suppose Desiree knows about Falon as well?"

"I'm afraid so. Mehen let it out of the bag when he told us you wouldn't be hunting alone tonight."

Takan groaned. "Terrific."

Akori chuckled. "Don't worry. Set has already warned Desiree not to interfere."

"Like that has ever stopped her from doing something she wants to do."

"I'm sure Blythe will keep her reined in. Since you and she are such good buddies, she'll protect you."

Desiree did tend to listen to Blythe more than anyone else. At least Blythe had kept her promise not to tell anyone about Falon. Living the way they did, it wasn't exactly easy to keep secrets from one another.

"Anyway," Takan said, "Falon and I will think about going out for that drink."

"All right. Catch you later then."

Akori flashed away, finally leaving Falon and him alone. By silent agreement, they left the alley and continued on their hunt.

After they'd gone a short distance, Falon said, "Akori seemed nice, so did Mehen. I wouldn't mind meeting the others. I should at the very least see what they look like just in case I'm hunting alone and run across them. I would hate if I happened to see their fangs and then mistook them for one of the undead. One mistaken stabbing is all my nerves will be able to handle."

Takan ground his teeth to stop himself from saying she wouldn't be hunting alone ever again. That was just his protective instincts kicking in. From what he'd seen, Falon was more than capable of taking care of herself, and by no means needed him to babysit

her. For one thing, she'd probably hate him for it if he did. She only put up with him at her side tonight because she wanted to prove she could look after herself.

Falon and he crossed the street and headed for another alley. He still didn't feel any undead nearby. At the entrance, a hand shot out, grabbed Falon by the collar of her jacket and yanked her inside. Takan burst into the alley to find Kysen standing next to Falon laughing.

"Kysen, you jackass," Takan snarled. "Why the fuck did you do that? You just about gave me a heart attack."

"You should have seen your face," Kysen said between laughs.

"By the gods, you can be a shit at times. And what is this? Drive Takan nuts day?"

"Hey, no harm done. Right, Falon?"

She nodded. "Though I have to say for the first few seconds you scared the bejesus out of me."

At her words, Takan pulled her away from Kysen's side and wrapped his arms around her, holding her close to his chest. "See, that makes you a shit."

Kysen chuckled. "Whatever. Akori told us you aren't decided whether or not you'll meet us for a drink once the night of hunting is over. I thought I'd come and see if I could talk you into it."

Takan let out an exasperated sigh. "And you probably won't go away until I say yes."

"How did you know? Did you have one of your visions?" Kysen asked with a smirk.

"Ha ha," Takan said. "Having to live with you these past three thousand years, I think I know you well enough to have an understanding of what you're capable of. I still don't know how Cena can put up with you."

"She loves me no matter what I say, and always will. So? Am I going to have to hound you or what?"

Before he answered, Falon said, "We'll go, but I can't promise you I won't end up falling asleep at the bar. I've been burning the candle at both ends—working at my job during the day and hunting the undead for most of the night—for too long and it's starting to catch up with me."

"It'll just be a short drink."

"I guess you have your answer," Takan said.

Kysen nodded. "It would seem so. Now that you said yes, Set won't have to come and harass you. See you at The Oasis."

Once Kysen flashed away, Takan allowed Falon to step out of his embrace. "I hope you don't feel as if you have to go, Falon. If you're that tired we could always call it an early night."

"No, I want to go to the bar. Don't worry about it. I can only go for so long and then I eventually hit the wall. When I do, I'm forced to take a couple of nights off to catch up on my sleep. If I didn't have to work a day job I'd be able to sleep in longer like you probably do."

"We don't usually sleep in that late. We can get by on four hours a night, or none at all if it comes to that. If that happens, we end up spending a longer time in the sun to take away any tiredness we feel."

"I have no such way to recharge my battery other than sleep. Come on. I think we've wasted enough of the night. Get your undead radar working and let's see what we can find."

He grinned. "You're such a tough task master."

Following Falon out of the alley, Takan wanted nothing more than to flash her to his private quarters in the headquarters and make love to her for the rest of the night. But that wasn't going to happen. He breathed in her scent and felt his gut twist a bit with blood hunger. Tomorrow, he'd put the day to good use and see if he could get her to stay with him permanently. But he somehow had his doubts as to whether she'd be



agreeable. He smiled to himself. He'd just have to do a lot of convincing while he had her naked in his bed.

\* \* \* \* \*

An hour before The Oasis closed for the night, Takan flashed Falon and himself back to where he'd parked his Corvette. He decided it would be less of a hassle to drive there than flash. He would have to collect his car before heading back to the headquarters, anyway.

As he drove, he took a quick glance over at Falon. She looked exhausted. They'd only managed to take out two more undead. He'd ended the existence of the second and they did the third one together. They worked well as a team.

"Are you sure you just don't want to go to bed?" he asked. "The others will understand." Out of the corner of his eye he saw Falon turn her head to look at him.

She nodded. "I'm sure. Since I'm not going into work tomorrow, I can sleep in. After I call in sick, that is."

"I can do that for you."

"And who exactly will you say you are to me?"

Takan shot her a smile. "Your boyfriend, of course."

"I guess they'll accept that." There were a few seconds of silence, then she asked, "Are you my boyfriend, Takan?"

"To start."

Falon sighed. "I still don't see how this will last."

"It'll last. Remember Mehen, Set, Denger, Akori and Kysen all married mortal women. It has worked out for them."

"Yeah, but I bet their wives also let them feed from them, correct?" She took his silence for an affirmative answer. "I thought as much."

"We can get past it, Falon. There's more I have to tell you about my world."

"Then tell me."

"No, not tonight. You're exhausted and might not be in the right frame of mind to hear everything I have to say."

"Okay, I'll give you that, but tomorrow I want to hear the rest."

Takan pulled into the back parking lot of The Oasis and saw Mehen's motorcycle already parked there. A quick look at the rest of the cars and he saw the others were already there as well. He took the spot next to Mehen's bike and shut off the ignition.

Falon waited for him after she'd gotten out of the car. He used his mind to open the trunk and took off his jacket. He undid the scabbard at his back and put his sword in the trunk. Falon followed suit, doing the same. Once he shut the trunk, he captured her hand in his, lacing their fingers, and walked her to the front entrance of the bar.

Already knowing where the rest of the warriors would be, Takan guided Falon to the back of the room. Sure enough the others sat around the table they considered theirs whenever they came to The Oasis. There were two empty chairs between Set and Denger. Takan made sure he sat beside Set, since there was no telling what he'd say and didn't want to risk the chance of him saying something stupid to Falon. At least this way Takan could smack him a good one before he got out of hand.

A waitress arrived at the table as soon as he and Falon were seated. He ordered a beer, as did Falon. The others already had theirs, and they looked to be well into them. Not that one beer would do anything. Being what they were, it took a shitload of alcohol to get them even remotely drunk.

After the waitress left, Mehen said, "Since Falon has already met me, Akori and Kysen, I'll introduce her to the ones she hasn't." He looked at her. "The one with the long ponytail sitting next to you is Denger, and the one sitting beside Takan is Set."

Falon nodded at each warrior. "Nice to finally meet you. Now I'll recognize you if I happen to pass you on the street."

"I would hope you would do more than just walk by," Denger said with a friendly closed-mouth smile. "I hope you'll at least stop and say hello."

The waitress returned with his and Falon's beers. Once she left them again, Takan said, "What is up with you guys? It seems all of you have taken a marked interest in Falon."

Set snorted. "Do you blame us? She's the first woman who hunts the creatures of the night like we do."

"Blythe has taken out more than her fair share of them."

"Yes," Mehen said, "but not using a sword, or going out every night to find them. Thank the gods."

"I'm just happy it isn't only me out there like I thought," Falon said. "Now that I've seen how you guys work, I'm surprised I've been able to take out as many of them as I have. I've been running on blind luck to find them."

"Which should be something to be proud of," Kysen said. "I don't know if I would want to be doing what you do, especially if I was still mortal."

"Having survived an attack, and losing my boyfriend to the creatures, I couldn't *not* do anything. No one believed me. It was either hunt or drive myself crazy."

"We're glad to have you on our side," Akori said. He lifted his bottle in salute to Falon, then finished it with one long pull. Slamming it down on the table, he asked, "Who is ready for another one?"

It ended up not being just one quick drink, but several. They stayed at the bar until closing time and were kicked out. It wasn't until Falon stood and almost fell against him did Takan realize she was drunk. Her speech hadn't slurred as one would expect from someone who was completely hammered. She'd kept up with all of them beer for beer, which happened to be around four.

Takan caught Falon and held her steady. "I think you're feeling a little too good."

She gave him a lopsided smile. "I wanted to fit in with the rest of the boys. Don't be such a downer."

Kysen laughed. "Yeah, Takan, don't be such a downer."

He flipped Kysen off, which only made the other warrior laugh even harder. "Stop your jackass braying," he said.

"Would you rather I sing instead?"

He and the rest of his brothers-in-arms said a loud, resounding "no" when Kysen opened his mouth to do just that. The warrior couldn't sing to save his life, and was so bad they all would prefer to have metal stakes pounded into their heads rather than listen to his caterwauling. But that didn't stop Kysen from doing it with a lot of enthusiasm.

With his arm firmly wrapped around Falon's waist to help keep her from listing to the side, Takan walked her out of the bar with the rest of Ra's Chosen following behind.

At his car, he unlocked the doors with his mind, then opened the passenger side. "Time to get you in bed," he said to Falon.

She turned into him and ran her hands up and down his chest. "And I know exactly what I want to do to you once I'm in there."

Even though he had no intention of making love to Falon while she was drunk, it didn't stop him from getting a hard-on. He also heard a couple of chuckles from the others as they got into their own cars, or in Mehen's case, got on his motorcycle.

Takan used his free hand to still both of Falon's. "You're going to bed to sleep, and that is it. I don't take advantage of pissed-up women."

"Well, this one would like you to."

Gods give him strength. It didn't help that he smelled the beginning of arousal mixing with her scent. "Too bad," he said, a bit gruff. "You'll be doing nothing in my bed but sleeping. Now in the car you go."

He positioned her in front of the passenger seat and managed to get her inside with her seatbelt done up. After he closed the door, he came around his side and got in. He drove out of the parking lot and headed for the old warehouse district where Ra's Chosen's headquarters was located.

Halfway there, Takan took a quick look at Falon. She hadn't said a word after he'd gotten her into the car. He saw the reason why. She had her head turned toward him, resting on the back of the seat, and was out like a light. He chuckled. She might have wanted to be one of the boys, but she'd never be able to keep up with them when it came to alcohol.

At the headquarters, he used his mind to open the gate of the chain-link fence that surrounded the entire warehouse property and drove through. Noticing Denger was behind him in his car, Takan didn't shut it once he cleared it. He pulled into the docking bay and parked.

He left Falon in the car only long enough to reach into the trunk to collect their jackets and swords. That done, he opened the passenger door. She didn't stir. He did the belts up on the scabbards to make a loop and pulled them on over his shoulder. Next he undid Falon's seatbelt and gently scooped her up in his arms as he tightly clutched the jackets in one hand. Once he had her out, he used his butt to shut the car door.

"Need some help?" Denger asked when he drew alongside him.

"No, I'm good. I think I'll take the easy way out and just flash directly into my quarters."

Denger nodded toward Falon. "I guess she won't be doing anything but sleeping, after all."

"I should have watched how much she had to drink. She was exhausted even before we arrived at the bar."

"You're going to tell her what she means to you soon?"

"Tomorrow, but that won't be the tough part."

"I would have thought it would be."

"I have a slightly bigger problem than having Falon accept me as her mate. Because of the undead attack she survived, she's kind of freaked by my fangs and has refused to let me feed from her."

Denger whistled low. "You're fucked then. Have you told her you can only feed from her, that another mortal will just make your blood hunger worse?"

"No, not yet. And I know I'm screwed. My blood hunger has already started to claw at my guts."

"You know, if you make love to her, it'll only make it increase faster. You'll also be fighting not to bite her. It's hard, believe me. That was one part of the mating process I hated – the extreme blood hunger."

"I'm not looking forward to it, but I won't force Falon."

Extreme blood hunger was something all the warriors risked, even the mates, if they didn't feed at least once a week. It felt as if some clawed animal painfully tore at their guts. It weakened them, causing them to lose weight, since their stomachs stopped being able to tolerate food the worse it became. No, it definitely wasn't something Takan looked forward to, but didn't see any way around it. Not with Falon being so fearful.

"Well, good luck with that," Denger said. "If you think it will help, I can always have Nyx talk to Falon alone."

Denger's mate was the nurturer of their "family". She'd taken care of her first husband while he fought a battle with cancer, which he'd eventually lost. And when Cena had been infected with Apep's venom, Nyx had helped Kysen look after his mate.

"I'll keep that in mind."

"Good." The other warrior walked away and let himself through the door that connected the docking bay to the headquarters proper.

Takan flashed himself to his own quarters, flipped back the covers on the bed and placed Falon on one side of it. She mumbled something unintelligible, but otherwise

didn't awaken. To make her more comfortable, he took off her shoes. Thinking it would be better, and less of a temptation, he left her dressed. He flipped the covers back over her and went to the walk-in closet with their jackets and swords to put them away.

He crossed over to the bed again and stared down at Falon. He liked the sight of her long, red hair spread over his pillow. Actually, he liked the sight of *her* in his bed. It felt right seeing her there.

A little apprehensive of what Falon's reaction would be tomorrow, he decided to go greet the dawn in Ra's temple while he thought through what exactly he would say. If he couldn't convince her to accept him as her mate, and allow him to feed, he would be up shit creek without a paddle.

## **Chapter Seven**

Everyone else must have been sleeping, since Takan didn't hear anyone moving around as he walked out of his quarters and down the hall to Ra's temple. The other warriors had to be all snuggled up in bed with their mates, something he planned to do once he got his thoughts sorted.

At the temple they'd built for Ra when they converted the warehouse, Takan stopped just inside the entrance. He'd painted the two pylons that stood on either side of the doorway to resemble the stone ones found at Ra's temple in Karnak back in Egypt. In here, like the rest of the headquarters, he'd spent untold hours painting hieroglyphs and different scenes on the walls. Benches lined them as well. He glanced up at the ceiling. Unlike the rest of the living quarters, the temple didn't have a solid drop ceiling. It remained its original height and had been done in clear panes of glass for the whole width and length of the room. From the rising of the sun to the setting, the temple was filled with bright sunlight.

Takan went into the temple and looked straight up. He saw the sky had started to lighten with the coming dawn. Dropping his head, he ran his fingers in the front of his hair and pushed it back over his forehead, holding it there. It was already tomorrow and he still had no idea what he'd say to Falon. As he'd said to Denger, it wasn't the part about her being his mate that worried him so much as what she'd do when she learned he could only bite her now.

The thought of making love to her while he told her had crossed his mind, hoping she'd be so overcome with passion she'd let him feed from her. He'd then be able to show her how good it actually could be for both of them. But he doubted he'd be able to think straight, let alone think at all, to manage it.



Just as the first light of the new day flooded the temple, Takan felt a presence at his back. He turned, already knowing who it would be. He dropped his hands at his sides and his hair fell into place in front of his face. "Ra," he said.

The sun god reached over and gently pushed the locks away. "The days of you hiding behind your hair are numbered."

Takan jerked away, pulling Ra's hand out of his bangs. "I know that. I'm sure you're counting them."

"You know how I feel. I'm not going to say I'm unhappy about it." Ra searched his face. "You seem bothered by something, enough to keep you from your bed."

Even though he tried to avoid having any closeness with Ra, Takan sighed and said, "You might as well 'look' for yourself. It'll save time rather than having me explain it all."

The sun god smiled before he reached out and put his hand on the left side of Takan's chest, directly over his heart. "And I'm not going to say I'm unhappy about you allowing me this, either."

"Just do it already."

Ra's face took on a faraway look as he summoned a vision. After a few seconds, he said, "You've found your mate."

"Keep looking. There's more."

Almost a full minute passed before Ra pulled his hand away and let it drop to his side. "Ah, I see now what is causing you to lose sleep. Falon's fear does make it much harder for you."

"You're the great sun god, what would you suggest I do to get around it?"

"That is a tough one." Ra grinned. "Though I'm leaning toward the idea of you making love to Falon while you tell her."

Takan shook his head. "Remember what Blythe always tells you when you talk sex. The same applies to me."

"Not really. You're different."

"Why? Because I'm a man?"

"Isn't that what men are supposed to do? Talk about sex?"

"With their friends, but not with their..." Takan let his words trail off.

Ra's good-humored expression turned solemn. "You can say it, you know. It's just you and me here. No one will hear. And after you and Falon have become mated, the secrecy ends. I know you avoid me on purpose just to put some distance between us, and that it has nothing to do with you disliking me. I understand you've only done it to protect yourself. So say it." Ra paused. "Not with their what?"

What Ra had said about him pushing him away to protect himself was true. When Takan had made the decision to keep it a secret, he really didn't have much choice. If he appeared closer to the sun god than the other warriors were, they'd become suspicious. And if they had found out, they'd treat him differently than they did now. It had hurt Ra when he'd learned of his decision, but he'd done nothing to betray him, not in over three thousand years. He guessed he owed the sun god this one little concession. And as he'd said, all too soon it would be out in the open anyway.

Takan took a deep breath before he said the one word he hadn't said around Ra in so very long. "Not with their...fathers."

Ra beamed at him and the sunshine in the temple seemed to become brighter. Takan stiffened for a few seconds, not used to having his father show him displays of affection, as Ra pulled him into a bear hug. Takan brought his arms up and returned it, closing his eyes as he relished the parental contact he'd isolated himself from for so very long.

The sun god gave him one last squeeze, then stepped back. "I've been dying to do that for a while now. Every time I hug your sister, I've wanted to do the same to you. It made it worse to know you wouldn't ever allow it."

"This hasn't been easy for me, you know, especially after Blythe came into my life. Knowing I have a sister, and not being able to tell her who I am, has made it rough."

"I've seen the love you have for your sister. And once you tell everyone you are my son, Blythe will be more than thrilled. She already thinks of you as her brother."

"I know. I don't mean to be a downer — as Falon has already called me — but can we get back on track with my problem of getting her to overcome her fear? She's sleeping in my bed right now and I'd like to get back to her before she wakes up."

Ra chuckled. "I'll refrain from saying I know what you want to do when you get there, since I'm not supposed to talk about either of my children's sex lives."

"Blythe will be pleased to know you're learning."

"As for your problem, Falon is strong. She's as much a warrior as you are. I know you don't want to force her, but if you do end up having to bite her without her consent, she'll bounce back from it quickly. Sometimes you have to face your fears to conquer them."

"And if that doesn't work? If she ends up getting too upset and I can't bring myself to bite her?"

"If she accepts you, I'll make you true mates. Once she has fangs, she'll crave your blood as much as you do hers. Let her bite you first. That should be enough to have her getting over her fear quickly. And after you've finished the blood exchange, the mating bond will form. Being able to feel everything you feel, I'm sure Falon will kick herself for not trying it sooner."

Actually having Ra make them true mates would work. With fangs of her own, Falon would become more comfortable with his. He nodded. "All right. We'll do that. Thanks, Ra." At the sun god's lifted brow, he said, "Thanks, *Dad*."

"Much better. Now go get some sleep. Call if you have need of me."

"I will."

With that, Ra disappeared. His mind settled, Takan covered his mouth as a yawn snuck up on him. Damn he was tired. He'd catch a couple hours of sleep, then he'd start working on Falon agreeing to be his mate. As he walked out of the temple, he grinned.

He might not tell her everything while they made love, but that didn't mean he wouldn't use it to get her to make her decision in favor of him.

\* \* \* \* \*

Falon slowly rose out of the deep sleep she'd been in and forced her eyes to open. When the light from an adjoining room hit them, she silently groaned in pain. Her head pounded as if someone took a sledgehammer to it. She swallowed, finding her mouth to be dry. She was in desperate need of a drink of water. The fourth beer the night before had been the one that had done her in. Not much of a drinker, and then being exhausted on top of it, she should have known better. That's what she got for wanting to be "one of the guys".

The sound of someone else's even, deep breaths came from a spot next to her. Without moving her body, Falon turned her head to investigate. Takan lay on his back on the other side of the bed, sound asleep. Even in sleep, he still managed to keep his long bangs in his face. Since the covers were not pulled up to his neck, she could see he didn't wear a shirt. She, however, was fully dressed.

Feeling a pressing need to relieve her bladder, Falon inched out of bed, not wanting to disturb Takan. Once she stood, she looked around the room. She had no memory of coming here, but seeing the beautiful Egyptian hieroglyphs painted on walls that were done to look like stone, it wasn't hard to guess this was Takan's quarters. She must have fallen asleep on the drive here and hadn't woken up again. What a lasting impression she must have made. She just met him, got drunk and then ended up passing out on him.

Needing to find a toilet badly, Falon tiptoed over to the open door where the only light shined. She breathed a silent sigh of relief when it did indeed turn out to be an ensuite bathroom. She pushed the door closed behind her, turning the knob so it wouldn't make a sound when it shut completely.

Falon did her business, then went to the sink to wash her hands. Once they were clean, she used them to drink some of the water out of the tap. Her immediate needs taken care of, she headed back to the bedroom.

With no windows, and no clock that she saw, Falon really had no idea what time it was. Since Takan appeared to still be asleep, she crossed the room and carefully got back into bed. She'd just nicely settled in when Takan rolled to his side and put his arm across her stomach. His head ended up on her pillow next to hers, and his breath tickled her cheek.

His cock was also hard. She felt it pressed against her thigh. She'd read somewhere that a healthy male had around five erections during the course of the night while they slept. Well, Takan was definitely having one now. The feel of him made her pussy clench as she remembered giving him a blowjob the evening before. He'd been thick and long, just the right size to fill her completely. And the remembered sounds of pleasure he'd made kick-started her libido.

Now for sure unable to go back to sleep since she had become aroused, Falon didn't know if she should wake Takan and see if he wanted to do something about the condition he was in. Ever so slowly with the arm that he wasn't plastered against, she reached across to touch his hip. She bit her bottom lip to stop herself from making a sound when she encountered bare skin. The man lay naked beside her while she was completely clothed.

The knowledge that he didn't wear a stitch turned her on even more. An ache deep inside her pussy throbbed as wetness pooled. She wanted to make love with Takan, and not just oral sex. A small whisper inside her head reminded her he'd had to fight to control himself so he wouldn't bite her the last time they'd fooled around. After having spent the night hunting, and then meeting the rest of Ra's Chosen, Falon was torn about the whole idea of feeding him. The other's wives obviously let them bite them all the time. They must get some enjoyment out of it or they wouldn't allow it.

Could she overcome her fear and let Takan bite her? She didn't know. The one thing she did know, though, was she didn't like the idea of him using a donor, especially since it would be tied in with sex. She definitely didn't want Takan sleeping with someone else. He was hers, for now anyway. The hours she'd spent with him during the night, she found herself liking him more and more, found that she had feelings for him. And if she wanted to keep him, being bitten was something she might not be able to avoid.

Turning her head toward him, she lifted her hand away from Takan's hip and brought it level to his mouth. Using her thumb, she slowly pushed up his upper lip until she revealed a fang. In this state, it didn't look too scary. When it was fully extended, that was another story.

Sensing someone staring at her, Falon lifted her gaze to Takan's eyes and found him watching her through the fall of his hair. She gave him a sheepish smile and pulled her hand away. "Sorry. I didn't mean to wake you."

He gave her a crooked grin. "You can look at my fangs, or any other part of me, while I'm sleeping any time you want."

"Sorry I made an ass of myself last night by getting drunk and falling asleep on you."

"No apologizes required. I should have warned you beforehand that alcohol doesn't affect us the same way it does a mortal. Four beers is nothing to us."

"Great. That just makes it look even worse."

"No, it doesn't." Takan rolled her to her side facing him. "How about a good-morning kiss?"

She licked her lips. "That's all you want? Just a kiss?"

He put his hand on her hip and pulled her closer as he rubbed his hard cock against her. "A kiss would be a nice start."

Falon pushed the hair out of his face and placed her lips on his. Takan quickly took over the kiss, deepening it and slanting his mouth on hers for a tighter fit. With a swipe of his tongue along the seam of her lips, she opened to allow him entrance. Their tongues twined, stroking and tasting. The ache she'd felt deep inside her pussy returned, becoming more intense.

The kiss turned demanding, driving her arousal even higher. She dropped her hand from his hair to the top of his shoulder. From there, Falon trailed her fingers down his arm to his waist. The sensation of his bare skin under her fingertips heated her blood. It also made her very aware of the fact she had on too many clothes.

Dropping her hand farther to his muscled ass, she squeezed it. His cock jerked against her. She broke contact with Takan's mouth. "It's a bit unfair," she said huskily, "that you are naked and I'm not."

"I can easily fix it," he replied in a gruff voice.

He pulled her t-shirt up and off, her bra following shortly after. Takan shifted down the bed until he was even with her breasts. He cupped one, lifting it, and flicked the taut nipple with the tip of his tongue a few times. Falon arched her back, pushing more of herself into his hand as he sucked the tight peak into his mouth. She felt each pull inside her pussy, causing wetness to leak into her panties.

Takan switched to her other breast, sucking it deep. She moaned. His hand skimmed down her stomach to the top of her jeans. He undid them and pushed them down over her hips. Falon wiggled to help get them the rest of the way off.

She felt the scrape of a fang when Takan released her nipple and tugged the waistband of her panties down. She shuddered, but not with fear. Needing to touch more of him, she reached between their bodies and fisted his cock. He groaned as she pumped her hand up and down his full length. The feel of him made her even wetter.

Takan pulled her panties completely off. He shifted back up the bed and took her lips in a devouring kiss. The heel of his hand rested on her mound while two of his

fingers dipped inside her pussy. In and out he stroked until he had her moaning into his mouth, clutching his shoulders to try to yank him closer.

Tearing her lips from his, she said on a pant, "Takan. I want to feel you inside me."

He pulled his fingers out of her and lifted her leg up and over his hip. "I'm going to give you every inch of me and take you until you cry out my name while you come."

Keeping her grip on his cock, she led it to the entrance of her body. She stroked herself with the tip, coating it in her wetness. They both moaned. Only able to think of having his big cock buried to the hilt inside her pussy, Falon placed the head in position. Takan pushed inside as she pressed down on him.

Once he was balls-deep, he pulled back, then surged back inside. Falon tightened her inner muscles around his length, relishing the feel of him. In and out he pumped, pushing her ever closer to the climax that started to build.

In a sudden move, Takan's grip on her hip tightened and he rolled onto his back, taking her with him. "Ride me," he said in a strained voice.

Sitting up, Falon placed her hands on his chest and did as he said. In this position, she took him deeper, and she could put him just where she wanted. She lifted up, then sank back down on his thick cock. The tip of it seemed to hit her cervix with each stroke in. Up and down she rode, her breaths coming in pants. She was so close.

Setting a faster pace, she angled her hips just so. His shaft rubbed against her clit. Falon let out a moan while her pussy started to rhythmically clutch his cock in orgasm. It seemed to go on and on.

As she rode the last wave, Takan surged into a sitting position. He clasped her hips in his hands and moved her up and down his cock. He lifted his hips to meet each stroke, his breath harsh in her ear as he strained for his own climax. Reaching it, he pushed her down onto him and buried his face in the crook of her neck, groaning. Falon felt his cock pulse deep inside her pussy as he filled her with his cum.



Falon fought to catch her breath. That was one hell of a way to wake up in the morning. She was about to say something along those lines to Takan when she noticed his grip on her hips hadn't loosened. He held himself stiff as a board while he panted.

"Takan?" she asked warily.

"Don't. Move," he gritted out.

## **Chapter Eight**

Takan fought for control. After finding his release, his blood hunger rose, stronger than it had been the evening before. Falon's rapid pulse beat in his ears. The scent of her blood rushing under her skin made his already extended fangs throb. He had to swallow the excess saliva that filled his mouth. The urge to bite her, to drink her blood, to make the cramping in his gut his blood hunger caused was almost too much for him to resist.

"Takan?" Falon asked with hesitation.

Unable to help himself, he grazed his fangs over the soft skin of her neck. It would be so easy to sink them into her. She wouldn't be able to stop him. Falon pushed at his shoulders and he hissed.

She grabbed a handful of hair at the back of his head in a tight fist and forcibly pulled him away from her neck. "You said you wouldn't bite."

With a loud groan, Takan pushed her off him and threw himself to the end of the bed. He clutched his stomach as it cramped painfully. Making love to Falon had definitely made his blood hunger worse as Denger had said it would. He couldn't risk sleeping with her again until she consented to feed him.

Takan felt Falon's fingers gently stroking his back. "Is it your blood hunger again?"

He nodded. "Yes," he said through gritted teeth.

"You look in pain this time."

Finally, he managed to gain some control, but the clawing in his guts hadn't stopped. "That's because I am. I think I just reached the extreme blood hunger point."

"Extreme blood hunger?"

He turned his head and watched Falon shift on the bed to sit at his side. "I'm beginning to starve."

She swallowed, her worried gaze meeting his. "If you don't feed, what will happen?"

"I'll slowly continue to starve. I won't be able to tolerate any food, I'll lose weight, start wasting away. All the while I'll suffer from painful stomach cramps. Being immortal, I won't die, but it will be like the worst kind of hell with no end to the pain until I get blood."

"I...I know I said I didn't want you to look for a donor, but I don't want you to suffer because of it. You go and feed. I'll stay here while you do it."

Takan's chuckle was harsh with no humor in the sound. "I can't."

"Of course you can."

He turned on the bed to face her. "No, really I can't. I no longer can seek out donors. The only person I can feed from now who will satisfy my blood hunger instead of increasing it, I'm looking at."

It took her a few seconds to figure out what he meant by his words. "Me? You can only feed from me?" At his nod, she asked, "Why the sudden change in whose blood you can drink?"

He sighed and forged ahead. "It's because you're my mate. Mates can only feed from each other. And now that I've found you, my blood hunger has increased."

Falon shook her head. "You're losing me. Mates have to feed from each other? And by mate you mean like a wife?"

"Yes, like a wife. The others called their mates their wives around you, since I hadn't told you what you mean to me. Remember how you said you couldn't understand how we could work out because you're mortal and I'm not?"

"Yes."

"The other mates used to be as mortal as you. But once they accepted what they were to the other warriors, Ra made them true mates."

"Which is exactly?"

"He granted them immortality, gave them fangs so they could feed from their mates as well and placed his mark on the small of their backs."

Falon's face paled ever so slightly. "So if I were to accept you as my mate as the others have done, I'd have to drink your blood too?"

"Correct." He brushed her cheek with the back of his hand. "It isn't as bad as you think. Once we've done the blood exchange and the mate bond forms, you'll be able to feel whatever I feel and vice versa." Takan lowered his voice. "During sex, we'd be able to feel each other's pleasure as well as our own. We'll also be able to communicate with each other telepathically."

"Blood exchange?" Falon's voice had taken on a decidedly shrill tone.

"Like I said, it isn't as bad as you think."

Falon pushed off the bed and paced back and forth in front of him. He found his gaze straying to her curved-in waist, pert breasts and shapely, long legs. She seemed completely oblivious to the fact she was naked. She made a tempting sight, but Takan made no move to touch her. She needed to sort out everything he'd told her.

After a few more minutes of naked pacing, Falon finally came to a standstill in front of him. She took a deep breath. "You've dumped an awful lot on my shoulders. Even though the thought of you biting me makes me want to freak, I'm willing to feed you. There isn't much I can do about it if you can't use a donor anymore. But as for the rest, I'm not ready. I barely know you, and already you want me to sign on for an eternity at your side."

"It might be quick, but I do have very strong feelings for you, Falon."

"But see, you didn't say love. If I were to do what you're asking, I want to make damn sure we love each other, and that it will last."

"If it wasn't meant to be, you wouldn't be my mate. And with the mating bond, we'll get to know each other on a whole different level than mortals ever could."

"I can't do that right now, Takan. Sorry. You're asking a lot of me. I'd have to give up so much just to be your mate."

That hurt a bit, but he wouldn't push. He didn't want Falon to resent him if he rushed her into everything. He could work with what she would willingly give. Allowing him to feed from her, that was a major hurdle cleared. He'd honestly thought she would balk more than she had. She must have some strong feelings for him as well if she willingly would face her fear, at least he hoped she did.

Takan swung his legs over the edge of the bed, put his hands on Falon's hips and pulled her between his spread knees. He looked up at her and met her gaze. "I know it's a tough decision for you to make. I would never coerce you into doing something you don't feel a hundred percent willing to do." He smiled. "And I wouldn't use the word love after you just blew my mind with great sex. You'd think I said it only to get laid again."

Falon returned his smile. "I blew your mind, huh? I like the sound of that." She pushed the front of his hair back and bent to kiss his forehead. "As if there were ever a risk of you not getting laid again."

He wrapped his arms around her waist. "So you're ready to go for another round? Now?"

She looked down. "Hmm, I see you are."

"What can I say? Watching you pace naked is a turn-on."

Takan fell back on the bed with Falon in his arms. He shifted them both to the center of the mattress before he rolled her under him. Her hips cradled his as he settled between her spread thighs. The tip of his cock came to rest against her pussy, which was still wet from their earlier joining.

He kissed her until she squirmed beneath him. Takan lifted his head and looked her in the eyes. "Will you feed me?"

Falon cupped the back of his head and brought his mouth to her neck. "Just do it."

His fangs instantly dropped as he drew in the scent of her blood. But he shook his head and lifted it. "Not yet. Not like this." Her muscles had clenched as if she were psyching herself up to face what would happen next.

He claimed her lips, kissing her deeply until she squirmed once more. He'd make her first time of letting him feed good so she'd never fear it again. Show her it could be an erotic experience, but first he had to get her to relax.

Takan sucked Falon's tongue into his mouth and let her explore his fangs with it. At first, she was timid, but when he didn't bite, she grew bolder. The feel of her tongue carefully brushing against the tip of a fang before swiping across the whole thing made him shudder with pleasure.

He rocked into her, pushing just the tip of his cock inside her pussy. Falon moaned and wrapped her legs around his waist. She used her heels against his ass to urge him to go deeper. He gave her a tiny bit more, then pulled out all the way only to give her the same again. Falon's nails dug into his shoulders where she held onto him. He knew he drove them both crazy, but he wanted her fully aroused before he fed.

Supporting his weight on his bent arms, he left her mouth and trailed his lips along the side of Falon's jaw. He slowly gave her another inch. Her inner walls clutched around him. He pumped in and out, going deeper with each thrust until he was seated to the hilt.

Falon's whimpered pants let him know she was right there along with him. His cock grew even harder as her pussy clutched it tighter. She felt so good. Her body fit his like a glove, as if they had been made for each other. He pumped faster, skimming his lips down to the side of her neck. She turned her head to give him better access as he dragged the flat of his tongue over the large vein he'd sink his fangs into.

Surging in and out of her, Takan continued to ride Falon. He opened his mouth and bit down, sending his fangs through her tender flesh. She cried out, panting his name while her body was thrown into an instant orgasm.

The first gush of blood that filled his mouth stopped the cramps in his gut. His blood hunger eased. The second mouthful had him regaining what little strength he'd lost. While he drank, the sound of Falon's cries caused him to come. He rode through it, which had her moaning with a second climax.

After the last wave of the most intense orgasm he'd ever had ebbed, Takan retracted his fangs and dragged his tongue across his bite mark to heal it. He then collapsed on top of Falon, feeling out of breath and completely satiated.

Not wanting to crush her with his greater weight, he held on to Falon and rolled, so she ended up sprawled on top of him. Their fast-paced breaths were the only sound in the room.

Falon laid her head on his chest, putting her arms around him. "That was amazing. You were right. I did enjoy you biting me. I've never had an orgasm quite that..."

"Intense?"

"Exactly. I think it was my turn to have my mind blown by great sex. Is it always like that when you feed?"

He wrapped his arms around her back. "Only with you. Donors don't compare when it comes to my mate feeding me."

"Right now, I'm more than glad you can only drink my blood. If you were to use a donor, I'd probably beat the crap out of her and stab you with my sword again."

Takan chuckled. "I'm glad as well. I'd rather not end up on the tip of your sword."

Falon lifted her head and nipped his chin. "So long as we have an understanding, I'm good." Her face grew serious. "Your fangs no longer scare me, and I can let you feed from me, but that doesn't change my decision about becoming your true mate."

Takan reached up and pushed a lock of hair behind her ear. "I know. We'll take it one day at a time. With my blood hunger no longer an issue, we don't have to feel pressured. Right now, I can accept what we have." He paused for a second, then said, "I want you to move into my quarters with me, Falon."

"You want me to live with you?"

"Yes. We might not have gone through all the steps to make you my true mate, but that doesn't change the fact you are. I want you here, in my bed, at my side every day and every night. Plus it would be safer for you. Ra has protected the headquarters. Mot, or any of his undead, can't find it. You can protect yourself, but I'd feel better knowing you're here when you sleep."

"What about my job?"

"Quit."

"You make it sound so simple."

"It is. If it's money you're worried about, I have more than enough. Living for over three thousand years, it's easy to accumulate a lot of it. If you do quit, you don't have to worry about burning the candle at both ends, like said you've been doing. We make a great team. You and I can hunt together."

Falon appeared to think it over. "You know, if you were just a regular man, not living in the world you do, I'd be running from you as fast as I could, thinking you were pushing the whole commitment thing too quickly."

"But I'm not a regular man."

"I know. I do have feelings for you as well, Takan. Since the attack five years ago, I really haven't let myself become close to a man. But with you, I want to. You make me feel protected, safe, something I haven't felt in a very long time. Not since I learned there *are* monsters lurking in the dark."

"If I do all that, will you move in with me?"

She nodded. "Yes."

Takan brought her mouth down to his and kissed her passionately. He then showed her just how happy he was with her decision.

\* \* \* \* \*



Mot practically stumbled into his smaller private chamber inside his lair. His hand shook as he moved it to close the wall of rock across the entrance, sealing him in tight. Even though the regular undead that resided here literally slept like the dead during the daylight hours, the same couldn't be said for his undead warriors, especially the new generation. Not that he thought they would turn against him, but given his present weakened state, he wouldn't take any chances.

He managed to make it to his large bed—the only mortal concession he allowed himself—and fell on top of it. Following Apep's orders, Mot had started to build his small army of new generation undead warriors. Even though he no longer gave himself time to regain much of his strength, it wasn't something he could complete in a few nights. Finding the right mortal—one who was as tall and heavily muscled as one of Ra's Chosen—made it no easy task. Tonight, he'd lucked out. At a twenty-four-hour gym he'd found four more male mortals to join the ranks. They were also the reason why he'd become so weak. He'd taken them one at a time and immediately turned them into one of his undead warriors as soon as he had them safely inside his lair.

He now had six warriors, the same number of Ra's Chosen, but he still had to make more. The last time he'd had that number Mot had felt more than comfortable with the odds being even. He'd learned the hard way to never take anything for granted when it came to the capability of the sun god's warriors. To complete his small army of new generation undead warriors, he needed at least twenty. That being the case, he had many nights of this almost overwhelming weakness to look forward to.

Before he allowed himself to slip into a deep sleep, Mot wished Sek was still around. He'd hated the bastard, but he'd been good for splitting the share of the work. At the rate Apep had him going, Mot had a feeling the demon god would work him into the ground.

## **Chapter Nine**

Falon turned on the taps in the shower, waiting until she got it just the right temperature before stepping into the tub. She ducked her head under the warm spray and wet her hair. Takan and she had slept after he'd made love to her for the third time. He hadn't bitten her that last time, but if he had, she wouldn't have minded.

She smiled and shook her head as she squeezed some shampoo into her hand. Takan had been right. All it had taken for her to get over her fear of his fangs was for him to bite her. When said bite resulted in an intense orgasm, it was no wonder. Hell, she wanted him to sink his fangs into her every time they made love. Feeling the scrape of them against her skin just before he bit was one of the most erotic things she'd experienced.

And if it hadn't been the fact that Takan would have starved if she hadn't fed him, she probably would have still made him keep his promise not to drink her blood. She would have never known what she'd been missing out on.

The rest of it, about her being his mate and what that would entail, Falon couldn't jump right into. She hadn't said anything to Takan, but the idea of having to drink his blood made her stomach a little queasy. But if she wanted to be his true mate, at some point, it would entail her doing just that.

Finished with her shower, Falon got out and grabbed one of the thick, fluffy towels sitting on a nearby shelf. She dried off, then wrapped it around her body before she walked out into the bedroom. There wasn't any sign of Takan. He'd pulled on his jeans from the previous night and left the quarters when she'd gone to the bathroom.

She dressed in her discarded clothes, making a mental note to get Takan to take her to her house so she could change. That thought made her think about what she was going to do about her place. She rented it—from her parents. Her dad had been looking

for an investment property a few years ago and had found the bungalow at a good price. It hadn't taken Falon long to talk her parents into letting her rent it from them. They didn't exactly charge her what they would have gotten from someone else, but at least they didn't have to worry about her trashing the place.

Falon stood in front of the dresser and looked in the mirror as she finger-combed her damp hair. It would not be fun having to explain the reason why she'd be moving out of the bungalow. And when they found out she'd only just recently met Takan and already they'd decided to move in together, her parents would question it. She could lie and say she and Takan had been seeing each other for a few months, but she hated lying to them. It was bad enough she hadn't told them how she spent her nights. Plus they'd be a little upset to hear she had been seeing someone seriously enough to take this step and had not introduced him to them. It would be better for everyone if she stuck with the truth in the long run.

The quarters' door opened and Takan walked in. He saw her and gave her a wide smile, flashing his fangs. "Good, you're done. Everything is all set."

She crossed over to him and put her arms around Takan's neck. "What is all set?"

"Your job, getting your things moved here."

"What exactly did you do?"

"Well, I emailed your boss and sent in your resignation, effective immediately. Later today, Akori and Kysen will help me flash all your things from your house to here. The furniture can be stored in the old part of the warehouse until you decide what you want to do with it. We did that when the other mates moved in."

Falon narrowed her eyes at him, but she felt a tug on her lips as she tried not to smile. There was an air of excitement about Takan, as if the thought of moving her things to the headquarters was the highlight of his day. "How did you find my boss' email address?"

"Ah...when I hacked into your email. I found it in your contacts."

Her eyes widened. "You hacked my email? Couldn't you have asked me what my password was? I would have given it to you."

"That would have involved seeing you in the shower. You really can't expect me to see you all naked, soaking wet, and not want to get right in there with you. I wanted to get things rolling. It saved time just to hack it."

She shook her head. "A three-thousand-year-old hacker. And here I thought when people get up there in age they have a hard time embracing new technology."

"Did you just call me old?"

"Well, aren't you?"

"Maybe in numbers, but not on the inside." He pulled her close. "Do I have to spend the day making love to you to prove I'm not old?"

A day in bed with Takan? She wouldn't say no to that. To goad him, she said, "Old. Man."

His lips slammed down on hers, claiming them in a heated kiss. By the time Takan pulled away, she'd almost forgotten what they had been discussing before they'd managed to get slightly off topic.

"Once we have you settled in here," Takan said, "we'll be taking that day in bed."

"Is that a promise?" she asked breathily.

He nodded. "I'm going to take a quick shower, then I'll take you to meet the other mates. Blythe is making a big lunch for everyone, and if we don't show up on time, my brothers-in-arms will end up eating it all and leave us nothing."

At the mention of food, Falon's stomach growled. The last time she'd eaten had been the meal out with Takan the night before. "I could use something to eat."

She went and sat on the bed after Takan walked into the bathroom. Her gaze landed on the hieroglyphs on the walls. She'd have to ask who painted them. It had to be one of the warriors. Falon couldn't see them allowing an outsider to come in to do it. They also made her wonder what the rest of the converted warehouse looked like. Did

the beautiful hieroglyphs and brightly colored scenes carry over outside Takan's quarters?

As promised, Takan didn't waste any time showering. He came out of the bathroom stark naked, rubbing his hair with a towel. Her gaze remained glued to him as he walked over to the walk-in closet and took out a pair of jeans. Just the sight of him turned her on. The day she'd spend doing nothing but making love to Takan wouldn't come soon enough.

He pulled on the jeans, hiding his muscular ass from her view, and turned to face her as he did them up. "Stop it or we won't get everything done that I want to accomplish today."

"Doing what?"

"Getting turned-on. I smell the scent of your arousal all the way over here."

She shrugged. "You're the one walking around naked. I'm going to admire what you're showing off. My naked pacing got to you, so your naked walking around does the same thing to me."

"I'm grabbing a shirt and then we're getting out of here before I pin you to the bed again."

"You're just full of threatening promises today that you have no intention of carrying out in the present. Keep it up and I'll start calling you on it."

On his way by to the dresser, Takan smacked her on the rear end. "Be good now."

"I thought I had been very, very good, or you wouldn't be dying to get more of me."

Takan roughly pulled on a dark gray t-shirt, then grabbed her hand to tow her toward the door. "Before this conversation gets any more innuendo-filled, we're leaving."

Falon chuckled as she followed him out into a long hallway. Walking at his side, their hands still joined, she saw the décor from Takan's room had indeed carried over to the rest of the headquarters.

"Takan, who painted the hieroglyphs?" she asked while craning her neck to look at them.

"I did."

She turned her head to look at him. "You did all of them? Are the rest of the rooms' walls painted like this?"

"Yes, except for the kitchen and the bathrooms."

"That must have taken years to do it all."

"It did, but I enjoyed doing it. I wanted to put some of our heritage in our home in the new world we'd moved to."

"They're beautiful. Can you read them?"

He gave her a look that asked if she was serious. "Of course I can. I wouldn't put just any old thing on the walls. These hieroglyphs tell of Ra's exploits. And speaking of Ra, I guess I should tell you that Blythe, Mehen's mate, is the sun god's daughter."

Falon stopped walking, jerking Takan to a halt. "How did that happen?"

He gave her a crooked grin. "The usual way babies are conceived."

She rolled her eyes. "I didn't mean it that way. I didn't think Ra would want to get that close to a mortal woman, being a god and all."

Takan's face took on a blank expression. "I guess he gets lonely like the rest of us." He got her moving again with a tug on her hand.

Falon had to wonder if Takan seemed to avoid that particular subject because it somehow bothered him. She decided it would be best to just let it go.

They arrived at the kitchen to the smell of something delicious and the sound of good-natured voices. Stepping into the room, Falon saw the table was full, except for two empty spaces. She smiled at the warriors as each one met her gaze, smiling in

return. She looked at the women she'd yet to meet. They all seemed to be close in age to her.

The woman with long, light brown hair who sat at the end of the table opposite Mehen stood and walked over to her and Takan. "You have to be Falon," she said, showing a good amount of fang. "I'm Blythe."

Falon gazed at Blythe, trying to see if there was anything about her that would mark her as a god's daughter, but there wasn't. Her blue eyes were friendly and open. "Yes, I am."

"It's nice to finally meet the woman who can swing a sword just as good as the men around here. Since you've already met the males of the household, let me introduce you to the rest of the women. That's Desiree sitting next to Set, Nyx is next to Denger, Jordan is beside Akori and Cena is seated next to Kysen.

Desiree had long, dark blonde hair and gray eyes. Nyx had chin-length red hair and hazel eyes. Jordan's hair was long, wavy and brown. Her eyes were the same color as her hair. Cena wore her straight black hair long. Her eyes were a dark brown. Overall, the mates were as different looking as the warriors were in a way similar with their same black hair and light brown eyes that verged on gold.

"Why don't the two of you take a seat and I'll start dishing up," Blythe said. "I made a big pot of soup and homemade biscuits to go along with it."

Takan released her hand and put it on the small of Falon's back as he guided her around the table to the two empty chairs. Once everyone was served, the men seemed to attack the food with gusto. She'd only managed to eat half of her bowl of minestrone soup before they took their turns to get up and get a second serving. Takan hadn't been kidding about there being nothing left for them if they didn't show up at the beginning of the meal. By the time everyone had eaten their fill, there wasn't enough for leftovers.

Once the dishes were cleared and they were all sitting at the table again, Mehen cleared his throat to get everyone's attention. "Since we're all here, I thought I would use this opportunity to properly welcome Falon into our little 'family'."

She blushed. "Thanks, though I'm not exactly one of you yet."

"That won't be too hard to fix," Blythe said. "Takan just has to talk to Ra today and it's as good as done."

Falon looked at Takan, not wanting to be the one to explain that they were going to hold off on becoming true mates. He nodded in understanding.

"Ah," he said, "Falon wants to wait before we take that last step. I've agreed to give her as much time as she needs."

The last words had barely left Takan's mouth when there was a bright flash of light and a man who hadn't been there before stood a foot away from the table. He was six and a half feet tall and had a very muscular body. He wore what looked like a white ancient-Egyptian-styled kilt with nothing covering his upper body. Two gold armbands that had the Eye of Ra in the center circled his large biceps. Falon looked into his face and found it instantly familiar.



## Chapter Ten

Watching Blythe get up from the table and cross over to their father, Takan wished there was a dark corner he could hide himself in. But there wasn't, and if he suddenly stood and walked out of the room, it would look a little strange.

He looked at Falon and found her staring between him and Ra. *Shit*. She must see how closely he resembled Ra. That was the reason he wore his hair long and in front of his face—to hide it from the others. Falon was the only one who'd seen him without it for any length of time to be able to put two and two together. He hadn't planned on telling her who his father was until he'd revealed the secret to everyone else.

After Ra had greeted Blythe, he turned his gaze on him and Falon. Takan gave an infinitesimal shake of his head to get his father to stop drawing attention to him, but Ra didn't acknowledge he'd even seen it.

"What are you doing here, Dad?" Blythe asked.

"I have some unfinished business to take care of," Ra answered, still staring at them.

Takan didn't like the sound of that, especially since the sun god had Falon and him in his sights.

His father held out his hand. "Falon, come to me."

"Ra," Takan warned sharply.

"That's Ra?" Falon whispered beside him.

"No need to be frightened," Ra said. "I thought it was about time we met in person. Will you come and say hello?"

Wondering what the hell his father was up to, Takan stood with Falon and followed her to where Ra and Blythe stood.

"So you're the sun god," Falon said hesitantly.

"Yes. Since you have accepted Takan as being your mate, I decided to come to you both before you called me."

"We weren't," Takan said through gritted teeth. "We're waiting, but you already know that."

"I heard."

Ra held out his hand, palm out, and Takan suddenly found himself frozen in place. He tried to struggle, but all he was able to move was his head. "What the fuck is this, Ra? Release me."

There was a scrape of chairs, then the other warriors came into view. The sun god looked at each of them. "Relax, all of you. Takan, I've made you immobile since you will resist the most."

"Resist what?" he practically growled. Takan looked at Falon and saw a look of unease on her face. Her gaze kept darting between him and his father.

"What has to be done." Ra took a step closer to Falon. "It's all right. It's time you become what you've trained to be. What I've armed you to be."

"The voice in my dream, telling me where I had to go to find my sword," Falon said slowly. "It was you."

"Yes. And now you are ready."

A knife suddenly appeared in Ra's hand. With a swift motion, he sliced a shallow cut across the inside of his wrist and held it out to Falon as blood rose to the surface.

Takan hissed. "She's not ready for that. I promised her she could wait."

"She can't. It has to be done, now. You saw it yourself, Takan. Falon is the key to helping us defeat Mot and his undead. But not as a mortal. If she does not do it we might never get the chance again." Ra offered his wrist to Falon again. "Drink."

"I'm really that important?" she asked. "If I refuse, will it swing the balance that much?"

"Yes."

Falon looked at Takan. He saw in her eyes the instant she decided to accept his father's offer. She turned back to Ra, took hold of his wrist and brought it to her mouth. Takan knew how she felt about having to drink blood, but she seemed to put her distaste for it aside as she drank.

Ra pulled his wrist away after a few seconds. Takan expected his father to next cup Falon's face in his hands, then gently kiss her forehead, but he didn't do that. Instead, he put his glowing fingers on each of her temples. Falon jerked.

Takan heard his brothers-in-arms suck in sharp breaths the same time he did. They all recognized what Ra did. It was what the sun god had done to them when he'd made them one of his Chosen.

"Why?" Takan yelled as Ra dropped his hands and took a step back from Falon. "Why did you make her one of your Chosen?"

His father turned to him. "Because she is a warrior as much as you are. She's worthy of being one of Ra's Chosen. If she is going to fight like one of you, she needs to have all the gifts you have."

"You didn't give her a choice."

"Sometimes you have to do something for the greater good." Ra stepped closer until he stood in front of Takan. "And sometimes you have to do something even if you risk the other person's anger."

Still unable to move, Takan couldn't do anything to stop Ra from reaching out and pushing his long bangs away from his forehead. They stayed there even after his father shifted to stand beside him. Takan's gaze shot around the room, seeing a look of shock on each of his brothers-in-arms faces along with their mates.

"I told you I wanted to do it my way," Takan said, anger making him bite out each word.

Ra shifted so he stood partly in front of him and gave him a sad smile. "You would have found another excuse not to tell them. I'm your father as much as I am Blythe's. It's time you stop hiding that fact. No more secrets."

Not liking how he'd become the center of attention, Takan struggled, hissing his frustration. "Release me. You've done all the damage you can do."

With a flick of his hand, Ra unfroze his body. Needing to be alone, Takan ran out of the room as if his very life depended on it.

\* \* \* \* \*

He didn't go very far, only to the temple. A place he usually went when he needed to think things through. Plus there was no way he'd leave the headquarters with Falon so newly changed. He didn't want her to feel as if he had abandoned her, but he had to get away from the others.

Takan sat on one of the benches, bent over with his elbows on his knees and his hands hanging loosely between his legs. He shook his head, but his hair no longer wanted to cooperate and hung straight in the front. Whatever Ra had done to it caused it to part in the middle and sweep back on either side.

He hung his head. Could this day be any more fucked up? And it had started out so promising before Ra decided to stick his nose into it. Bad enough his father had revealed what their true relationship was, but for what he'd done to Falon, Takan wanted to punch Ra in the face, repeatedly.

Falon was his mate. He wanted to keep her safe, protected, not have to watch her be put right in the heart of danger. Yes, she'd been hunting undead for years, but not any of Mot's new generation undead warriors. And knowing Ra, he would want her patrolling her own section of the city just like the rest of Ra's Chosen. Being one would better equip her with the same abilities they all had—immortality, preternatural speed, immune to an undead's bite and the ability to bend time and space—but he still didn't like it. Then there was the whole her being able to contact the other warriors

telepathically. As just a mate, she'd have only been able to do that with him. The possessive side of Takan hated that his brothers-in-arms would have access to her in that way as well. She was his mate, the woman he had started to fall in love with.

And he had, even though he hadn't admitted as much to Falon that morning. He probably had from the moment he'd first seen her fighting at his side, taking out first generation undead warriors. The only reason why he'd kept it to himself was because he didn't think she would have believed him. As he'd said, they had just had incredible sex. No man told a woman he loved her after that, then have her take it to be his true feelings, especially at the very start of a relationship.

What a mess everything had become. He should have stopped his father, but he only fooled himself thinking he'd actually stood a chance. Ra was an Egyptian god, after all. Takan may be half god, but he was nowhere near as powerful.

The sound of footsteps outside the temple's entrance reached his ears. Takan didn't bother to look up when they continued inside over to where he sat. He knew who they belonged to.

Blythe's shoes appeared in his line of vision before she squatted down in front of him, and with a hand under his chin, forced him to look at her. Her eyes were bright with unshed tears as her gaze roamed over his face. He waited for her to speak first.

"All this time," she said, her voice choked with emotion, "and you never said a word."

Takan swallowed around the thickness in his throat that had suddenly formed. "It had been my secret to keep."

"But why? And why didn't you tell Mehen and the others?"

"It was easier to have it hidden." He blew out a breath. "My mother was one of the priestesses that served at Ra's temple in Karnak. They were only together once, but it was enough for her to become pregnant with me. From a very young age, she taught me to keep my differences from others. Unlike you, I wasn't born mortal. I guess I take after Ra more than you do. I've always been immortal with some abilities of my own.

One being my sight. Ra would come and visit us in our home a couple of times a year while I grew up. He helped me to take control of my visions. But I still always felt different from the rest of the kids my own age. Always in the back of my mind I knew my father was Ra, the most powerful god there was."

"So you decided to shut him out of your life," Blythe said softly.

Takan laughed with no humor in the sound. "I tried, but Ra wasn't going to have any of that. The more I ignored him the more often he came to visit me. By the time Sek and Mot had arrived on the scene, making their undead, I'd already seen eighty years of life. My mother was long gone and I had no other family besides Ra. He came to me and told me about the warriors he'd picked to become his Chosen to fight Apep's demons. And how he wanted me to lead them."

"You refused."

"Yes. Just because I was his son didn't mean I had the right to lead. I knew Mehen would make an infinitely better leader than I would. So instead, I accepted the offer to become one of father's Chosen on the condition he never told them what I was to him."

"And he agreed?"

"Not at first. Ra was fine with me not taking up the leadership, but he wanted the others to know his son fought at their side. I told him it was my way or I'd walk and never speak to him again."

"Why not just tell them like Dad wanted?"

Takan sat up straight and leaned back against the wall. Blythe stood, then sat down on the bench next to him. He turned his head to look at her. "You of all people should know why I wanted it kept a secret. Remember what Mehen was like when he found out you were Ra's daughter? He refused to drink from you, even in extreme blood hunger, tried to push you away all because of whose blood ran in your veins. Back in the early days of us becoming the sun god's Chosen, the others were too much in awe of him. Even though Mehen and Set had fought at Ra's side at night in the underworld for a few years prior, they still treated him with great reverence. Denger, Akori and Kysen

were even worse, since they'd had no interaction with a god until Ra came to them, asking them to become one of his Chosen. It took Father years to get them to loosen up around him and not treat him any differently than they did each other."

"So if they knew they'd have done the same to you," Blythe said slowly.

"Exactly. This way, they befriended me, became my brothers-in-arms. To them, I'm just Takan who enjoys having a paintbrush or a pen in my hand as much as I do a sword."

"Now that they know, they'll still treat you the same."

He snorted. "Yeah, right. That's doubtful. It might not be as bad as it would have been all those years ago, but they won't be able to look at me the same again."

Blythe frowned. "The hell they won't. I wouldn't let them do it to me, and I won't let them do it to you. If I catch them doing it, I'll kick their asses. And I can do even worse things to Mehen, since he's my mate."

Takan laughed. "Mehen should be afraid, very afraid."

"Damn right." She stood facing him and held out her hand. Once he took it, Blythe helped pull him to his feet. She put her arms around his waist with the side of her face against his chest and gave him a hard squeeze. "I love you, Takan. I've always thought of you as a brother more than the others, so I'm more than happy to know you really are."

He wrapped his arms around Blythe and squeezed her back. He kissed the top of her head. "I love you as well, Blythe. I couldn't ask for a better sister."

She gave him one last squeeze, then stepped out of his embrace. "Come on. You need to see the others. Explain everything like you did to me. And Falon needs you. She has a lot more than just fangs and immortality to adjust to. If it were me, I'd want my mate with me."

"And Ra?"

"Dad left already. He thought it would be better for you to talk to the others without him being around." Blythe reached up and cupped the side of his face. "You look so much like him. Now I understand why you hid behind all that hair. But I'm going to give you fair warning, do it again and I'm going to sit on you and cut those bangs really short. I like being able to see my brother's handsome face."

"You aren't coming anywhere near my hair with a pair of scissors."

"Then don't give me any excuse to."

Blythe grabbed his hand and tugged him into motion. As they walked out of the temple, Takan felt a warmth caress his cheek. Ra hadn't gone so far away it would seem.



## Chapter Eleven

Falon ran her tongue over her fangs for what seemed like the hundredth time. She actually had *fangs*. And they weren't the only changes. Her hearing had improved, dramatically. If she concentrated, she was able to hear every single heartbeat of the people in the room. Her sense of smell had also increased. The soup they'd had for lunch, she could smell each individual ingredient that had been put in it.

Apparently Ra's mark high on her back wasn't the only outward change. Her eyes had changed color as well. Instead of their normal green, they'd lightened to a pale jade green. Cena had been the one to point it out. At first, she'd been worried, but Akori had been quick to tell her that when they'd become one of Ra's Chosen their brown eyes had lightened to what they were today.

Falon glanced toward the entrance to the kitchen once again. There was still no sign of Takan, or of Blythe who had gone in search of him. Obviously, since she hadn't returned, she'd found him.

She returned to her pacing, something she'd done after she'd gotten her wits back from what Ra had done to her. Drinking his blood—she still couldn't believe she'd managed to do it—could only be described as swallowing pure liquefied energy. And when he'd touched her temples with his glowing hands, it had felt as if a bolt of lightning had shot right through every cell in her body. Her gums had burned a bit when her fangs had formed, and the same with her back where the sun god's mark was, but it hadn't been all that noticeable.

She'd barely had time to come to terms with all the changes in her when Ra had dropped the bomb about Takan being his son. A small part of her hadn't been surprised. The son looked so much like the father it was almost uncanny. And to think Takan had kept that fact from the other warriors for all those years just by wearing his

hair in his face. When the truth had been revealed, Falon didn't know if Blythe or the warriors were more shocked.

With her new acute hearing, Falon heard two sets of footsteps walking down the hallway. She stopped pacing and went to stand closer to the kitchen's entrance. The others must have heard them as well, because they stopped talking.

Blythe and Takan appeared in the doorway. Side by side, Falon easily saw the family resemblance in the shape of their eyes and noses. Although there were some differences, there was no mistaking what they were—brother and sister.

Her heart sped up when Takan's gaze landed on her and stayed. He might be the son of an Egyptian god, but he was more importantly her mate. A gorgeous hunk of a man that would be hers forever. Now that Ra had taken her choice from her and made her one of his Chosen, there wasn't any point in denying how she felt about Takan. If anything, making her what she now was, the sun god had done her a favor. The way she'd felt before, the chances were good she would have held back in taking that final step to being true mates with Takan. She would have talked herself out of it every time. Saying she wasn't sure of her feelings for him had just been an excuse. She couldn't deny he hadn't stirred places inside her she'd never felt before. Places she hadn't allowed to come to life since she'd lost her boyfriend to the undead.

Takan left Blythe's side and walked straight to her. He didn't stop until they stood toe-to-toe. His gaze locked with hers. "Your eyes," he said softly, "they lightened."

She smiled. "Just as yours did."

"Are you okay with what Ra did? I promised you would decide when."

"I'm fine."

"Are you sure? Because the first time you feed from me the mate bond is going to form. There will be no going back."

She nodded. "As there will be no going back to being mortal. I've accepted it, all of it."

Takan pulled her into his arms and kissed her as if he hadn't seen her in years. She clung to him, giving as good as she got. He then released her mouth and crushed her to him. Her nose ended up pressed to the center of his chest. She took a deep breath, filling her lungs with his scent. Now she could smell more than just his aftershave. She picked out the musky scent of aroused male, and the scent of his blood rushing just under his skin. Her mouth watered and she felt a slight burning sensation as her fangs dropped, the tips just touching her bottom lip.

"Mmm, you smell really good," Falon said as she went on tiptoe and licked the hollow of his throat. He groaned and the scent of his arousal grew stronger.

The sound of someone loudly clearing their throat caused Falon to suddenly remember she and Takan weren't alone. She went off her tiptoes and peeked around Takan. The other warriors and mates stood a little way away, watching them. Her cheeks warmed at being caught in the middle of so intimate an embrace.

Takan put his arm around her shoulders and pulled her close against his side as they turned to face the others in the room. He glanced at all of his brothers-in-arms. "I see from your faces you're all dying to say something. I'll give you a shorter version of the explanation I gave Blythe, then you can say what you want. Only make it short, because Falon has need of me and she comes first."

After he finished speaking, Falon looked at each warrior. They all stared at Takan with no small amount of shock on their faces. Mehen ended up speaking first.

"How is it possible we never knew?" he asked. "The years we've lived together, I should have seen it, at least had some kind of clue."

"Why would you?" Takan asked in reply. "I was eighty years old when we first met. I'd already perfected hiding my differences from mortals around me."

"You were the last to become one of Ra's Chosen," Denger said. "We were all there when Ra gave you your gifts. You drank his blood like the rest of us had. When he made Mehen and Blythe true mates, she hadn't had to drink it because she was already of his blood, just as you are."

"Ra only made it look as if he gave me his blood. And he still had to give me fangs and put his mark on my back."

"What of the other gifts?" Kysen asked. "Being the son of a god, it explains you having the sight while we don't. What else did you have before becoming one of Ra's Chosen?"

Takan glanced down at her, then back at his brothers-in-arms. "I had it all, except for the ability to communicate with you telepathically. Ra couldn't take away what I was born with, so to make it easier for me to hide what I truly was, he gave you the same abilities."

"Even though you joined last, in actual fact you were the first Chosen," Set said. He shook his head. "You had us all fooled."

"Do you blame me? If I had waltzed in known as Ra's son from the very beginning, would you have treated me the same? Would you have been able to call me brother as you do today?"

Falon didn't need any of the warriors to say anything to know that was what exactly *wouldn't* have happened. They would have treated Takan differently.

At their continued silence, Takan said, "See? It wouldn't have been the same. The way it was, you got to know me, not the man who happened to have a god's blood running in his veins. Even now, you're not looking at me quite like you used to."

"Which will stop now," Blythe said loudly. "I didn't tolerate it and Takan won't either. So he's my brother. Suck it up and move on. Takan is still Takan. He hasn't changed one bit. If I catch anyone doing it, you'll pay the price where it hurts the most."

"Not the food," Set said with a groan.

"Damn right," she replied. "You'll either have to cook for yourselves or get your mates to."

Desiree snorted. "Like that's going to happen. I can't cook worth a shit."

"There is one other thing we mates can do to ensure they behave," Nyx said. "And I don't mean withholding our blood."

Jordan laughed. "I'm onboard with that."

"Same here," Cena chimed in.

"I guess that's settled," Blythe said with a smile. "You'll treat Takan the same as you've always done or find yourselves kicked out of your beds."

"Shit," Akori said. "You ladies aren't messing around." He walked over to Takan and clapped him on the shoulder. "I might slip a bit, but I promise not to let who you are affect how I feel about you. You're still my brother, the one who has fought at my side and protected my back in more than a few battles."

Once Akori stepped away, the other warriors came to Takan one by one, basically telling him the same thing. Falon felt tears threatening to rise to the surface, but she pushed them back. Her mate didn't need to see her blubbering like a baby. She looked over at the other women and saw she wasn't the only who had become affected.

"Well," Takan started, then cleared his throat. "Well, I'm glad we have this worked out."

Mehen jerked his head toward the kitchen's entrance. "Go be with your mate. I know you two are itching to be alone together. You both have the night off, but, Takan, I suggest you use part of it to teach Falon how to flash. She's going to need it when she's out hunting."

"Will do."

Falon let Takan guide her out of the room. They walked a little faster when they hit the hallway and headed in the direction to what was now both their quarters. Her breath had sped up by the time they reached the door, went inside and shut it behind them.

Takan had her in his arms by the time she heard the lock snick into place without either one of them touching the doorknob. "Is that something I'll be able to do as well?" she asked a bit breathless. "Do things with my mind?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Just think about what you want to happen, then concentrate."

She looked down and did as Takan had instructed. Instead of the button on his jeans undoing, it tore out of the fabric and dropped to floor at their feet. She lifted her gaze and said, "Sorry. I only meant to undo it."

Takan pulled her closer so her breasts flattened against his hard chest. "I think it would be best if you didn't try to will anything to do something on my jeans ever again. I'm kind of partial to what is inside them and would hate to lose them like I lost my button."

She chuckled. "I'm kind of partial to them myself. I promise to do it the old-fashioned way from here on out."

Falon reached between them and slowly tugged down Takan's zipper. She parted the material and his cock sprang free. He was fully erect. Her pussy clenched, needing him to fill her. Her fangs dropped and throbbed in time with her rapidly beating heart. As she grew wet, the need to bite Takan, to taste his blood, increased along with her arousal. She hissed when her stomach cramped in response to her thoughts.

Takan cupped her face and lifted it so she looked at him. "Cramps?" At her nod, he said, "That's your blood hunger. We're going to take care of that."

He kissed her long and hard. She shivered when he licked each of her fangs, sending shots of pleasure through her body. Kissing him back with all the hunger she felt, Falon took his cock in her hand, pumping up and down its full length. Takan moaned into her mouth as he rocked his hips in time with her strokes.

She didn't stop caressing him until she'd coaxed a bead of pre-cum from the very tip. Releasing his cock, she took hold of the bottom of Takan's shirt and yanked it over his head. He did the same to her, removing her bra right after.

Takan's hands skimmed down her shoulders to her breasts. He thumbed her taut nipples. Falon arched her back in a silent plea for him to take one into his mouth. She let out a whimpered moan as he locked an arm around her waist and bent his head to suck a nipple between his lips. His sucking caused wetness to leak into her panties.

She anchored her hands in his hair to hold him against her. "More, Takan. Give me more."

He released her nipple and straightened. "I'm going to sink my cock into you so deep you won't know where you end and I begin."

His hands dropped to the top of her jeans and undid them. A couple of hard tugs, and they fell to pool around her ankles. As she kicked out of them, Takan shucked his pants. His hot gaze followed her movements when she hooked the waistband of her panties with her fingers and shimmied out of them.

With a groan, he pulled her back into his arms. His thick cock became trapped between their bodies, making her pussy ache even more to have it deep inside her. Takan ran a caressing hand across her cheek and down the side of her neck. Placing his hands on top of her shoulders, he turned her away from him so she faced the end of the bed.

He brushed her long hair aside. "I never thought I'd see you marked as one of Ra's Chosen. But it still means you're mine as much as my father's."

Falon felt goose bumps rise along her skin as Takan placed his lips on Ra's mark. "I'll always be yours first."

"And I'll always be yours as well. Bend over for me."

Bending with the slight pressure Takan put on her upper back, she placed her palms on the end of the bed, keeping her arms straight. He shifted behind her and put a leg between her thighs, nudging them farther apart.

"Just like that," he said in a voice husky with arousal.

Falon's breath came in short pants. She felt the head of Takan's cock brush up against her slick opening. She arched her back, angling her hips to give him better access to her pussy. He ran his hands down the hollow of her spine, then took hold of her hips. Keeping her in place, he pushed the tip of his shaft into her. Her inner walls greedily tightened around it. He pumped in and out in shallow strokes, making her moan and cry out.

At the point where she didn't think she could take any more of his teasing, Takan pushed himself home. He just about pulled all the way out before sinking deep once again. Falon fisted the covers under her hands as she rocked in time with his strong strokes. She squeezed her inner muscles around his thick cock, increasing the pleasure she felt. Her body coiled tighter, an orgasm starting to surface.

"Yes," she panted. "Harder. I'm going to come."

Takan stilled, then pulled completely out of her body. She whimpered at the loss. He got her to straighten and held her with her back against his chest. He pushed her hair aside and dragged one of his fangs along the side of her neck. She shivered.

"No coming yet," he said, his voice strained. "I want the mate bond in place when we do. I want to feel it through that connection when you find your release."

He let her go and walked over to the bed. Takan climbed up on it and sat with his back against the headboard. His cock glistened with her wetness in the room's light, standing out from his body.

The pounding in her pussy matched the throbbing in her fangs. Falon got up on the bed and straddled his thighs. Placing her hands on top of the headboard on either side of his head to steady herself, she slowly impaled herself on this shaft. They both groaned as her pussy took every inch of him.

Lifting up on her bent knees, she rose only to push back down with a hard stroke, grinding her clit against his pubic bone. She was so close to going over the edge. A few more and she wouldn't be able to stop it.



"I can't hold back much longer," she said.

Takan palmed the back of her head and brought her mouth to the side of his neck. "Bite me, Falon. I want to feel your fangs inside me as I come."

Her mouth filled with saliva, the urge to bite, to drink Takan's blood, had her sinking her fangs into the large vein in his neck. The first swallow had her instantly coming. She cried out against his skin. He let out a bellow as his release took him over. While they came, Falon felt a connection snap into place between them. She let out a keening moan as she fell right into a second orgasm. Through the mate bond, she felt the pleasure Takan felt, increasing hers. And from the sounds he made, she knew he felt it too.

A few more swallows, then she pulled out her fangs and licked the bite mark to heal it. Panting as if she'd just run a marathon, Falon laid her head on Takan's shoulder. It took some seconds before she caught her breath.

Feeling as if she'd be able to talk without panting, she sat up straight. She looked into Takan's eyes. "I can feel you through the bond."

"You're inside me as well."

She sucked in a sharp breath when a rush of emotions that weren't her own flooded the bond. It was full of the love Takan had for her. He didn't need to say the words, because it was there for her to feel instead. She didn't think, just sent all of how she felt about him back through the mate bond.

He captured her mouth in a demanding kiss until her breathing was ragged again. "You love me," he said thickly. "I wasn't sure what your reaction would be when you found out who my father is."

She ran her thumb along his bottom lip. "And you love me. My feelings for you didn't change one bit. You're still the same man I met. Having the truth come out didn't change what you are on the inside. You might be the son of a god, but all I see is the man I fell in love with."

He kissed her again, this time taking her down to the bed beneath him. His cock hardened as he sucked her tongue into his mouth. The sharp graze of his fangs had arousal washing through her.

Through their bond, she felt everything Takan did, his need to take her, to make her come while he thrust himself deep. She wrapped her legs around his waist and lifted to meet his strokes as he pumped between her thighs. In and out he moved. Their combined pleasure sweeping through her had an orgasm racing up to meet her. She called out Takan's name on a whimpered cry, her pussy rhythmically milking him into his own release.

Not wanting to move, Falon wrapped her arms around Takan and held him close as her eyes drifted shut.

## Chapter Twelve

Later that night, Falon found herself in the middle of a lesson on how to use her ability to flash. Takan and she were inside their quarters, naked. They'd yet to leave the bed. She'd lost count how many times they'd made love, but she couldn't get enough of Takan. He only had to look at her, his arousal flooding their bond, and she was on him. Not that he'd complained.

Now he'd decided it was time for her to learn to flash. He started her off small, nothing too complicated. He wanted her to flash herself into the bathroom. If she managed it her reward was him, in the shower, letting her do whatever she wanted to his body. It was enough incentive for her to get it right the first time.

"It's not hard," Takan said. "Just concentrate on where you want to go."

She nodded and watched him get off the bed. He walked into the bathroom and shut the door behind him. She took a deep breath. She could do this. The other warriors managed to learn how to flash. She just had to concentrate like Takan had said. Falon closed her eyes, frowning, focusing with all her might on where she wanted to go. Nothing happened.

She heard the sound of Takan's laughter in her head. *You're trying too hard, love*, he said telepathically. *Relax.*

*That's easy for you to say. You've done this at least a million times*, she replied back the same way.

*How about this? Think of the shower running, the steam from it filling the bathroom.*

Falon brought up the mental image Takan had created for her, but she took it one step further. She pictured the steam-filled room, the shower running with him naked, standing under the warm spray. He had his head tipped back as he wet his hair,

slicking it back. Drops ran down his chest and six-pack abs all the way to his cock. A drop clung to the very tip. She'd get down on her knees and –

She started and opened her eyes when warm water hit her skin. She'd done it. She was in the shower. Takan stood in front of her, his eyes dilated with arousal. Falon looked down and saw his cock was fully engorged.

"Finish that last thought," he said in a deep, husky voice.

"How did you know?" She hadn't sent it along their bond.

"You projected it right into my head. It's part of the ability we use to wipe mortal's memories, or plant suggestions. What you were about to do, finish it."

She licked her lips. "Why don't I just show you instead?"

Keeping her gaze locked with Takan's, Falon went down on her knees in the bottom of the tub. She fisted his cock at the base and used the tip of her tongue to lick off a bead of water that clung to it, just like in her thoughts. His hot gaze blazed into hers.

She stared up at him and dragged the flat of her tongue from base to tip. At the head, she swirled around it, giving a little extra attention to the sensitive spot just under it. Not until she'd sucked him inside her mouth did she tear her gaze away.

With her eyes closed to better focus on all the sensations – his and hers – surging through her, Falon sucked on Takan's cock, careful not to nick him with her fangs. It grew even harder. She slid him in out and out, enjoying the sound of his gruff moans.

"Enough," Takan panted. "I want to be inside you when I come."

Falon felt through their bond just how close he was. She released his cock and stood. She was more than ready to join her body to his. He lifted her in his arms. As she put her legs around his waist, he surged inside her to the hilt with one thrust. He turned her toward the wall and pushed her back against it. With her pinned in place, he thrust with hard, quick strokes.

Neither one of them was going to last long. Takan made sure of it when he leaned in and sank his fangs into the top of one of her breasts. With their pleasure ricocheting between them through the mate bond, Falon was surprised it hadn't fried her brain.

Once their hearts beat at a slower rate, Takan let her down. He rested his forehead against hers. "At this rate, you're going to make me feel my full three thousand years."

She laughed. "At least you won't be the one who will be walking funny tomorrow."

"I need sleep and food, in that order," he said.

"What about moving my things out of my place?"

He reached over for the bottle of shampoo. "It can wait until tomorrow."

"I don't have any clean clothes."

"I'll let you wear one of my shirts, not that I intend to let you out of bed long enough to need clothing."

He ducked her under the water, then proceeded to shampoo her hair. "You're right," she said. "It can wait until tomorrow."

Sure they had used up all the hot water in the headquarters, Falon crawled into bed beside Takan after they finished their shower. They'd sleep, eat and then start all over again.

\* \* \* \* \*

Falon lifted her sword, just barely managing to block the one coming at her. The sound bounced off the walls of the old part of the warehouse the warriors used to train in. She disengaged her blade and made a strike of her own. A smile of satisfaction spread across her mouth when Denger had to act quickly to bring up his own sword to stop it.

Since becoming one of Ra's Chosen two days before, Falon found herself to be a lot faster and stronger than she used to be. Before, there was no way in hell she would have been able to spar against Denger and be able to hold her own. The man was a lethal force to be reckoned with.

Denger stepped back and held up his hand. "Let's take a breather."

She nodded, then turned her head toward her mate when he came to stand beside her. They'd been practically inseparable since becoming true mates. The night before had been her first time hunting as one of the Chosen, but Takan had partnered her. Still learning the gist of her abilities, she wasn't ready to do it alone just yet.

"Fuck, Denger," Takan said. "Do you have to be so hard on Falon?"

"Yes. That's why you aren't training with her and I am. Being as how she's your mate, you'd hold back. She's Ra's Chosen, a warrior, she can't afford to have you babying her."

"It's all right, Takan," she assured him. "I can take it. I'm not as breakable as I used to be. And what aches I get, I'll just stand out in the sun for a bit and they'll disappear. I'm like you now, remember?"

He kissed her cheek. "I know, but it's hard to fight my protective instincts. You're my mate, I'm supposed to keep you safe."

"You are. You're teaching me all things Ra's Chosen."

"I think that's enough training for today," Denger said. "Blythe will more than likely have dinner ready soon, and I need a shower before I eat."

About as sweaty as the other warrior, Falon agreed. "I'm in need of one too. Thanks for sparring with me."

"You did well."

Denger crossed the old warehouse space and walked out the door that connected it to the rest of the headquarters. Falon turned to Takan. "I'm going to shower, alone."

He gave her a crooked grin. "Are you sure you don't need me wash your back, or your front while I'm at it?"

"If I were to let you, we'd be late for dinner. And with how hard Denger worked me today, I need to eat."

Takan took her sword from her and linked their hands together as he walked them toward the door. "Did you manage to find time to talk to your parents?"

"Yes. Just before lunch when you were off talking to your dad."

Now that everyone knew the truth, Ra had taken to spending a lot more time at the headquarters during the day. At night, he still had to travel the underworld to fight Apep, but once day broke, he showed up. Blythe was thrilled. Even though Takan hadn't said, Falon knew he didn't mind having his father around. Through their bond, she'd felt him slowly allow himself to feel closer to Ra. It would take time—since he'd tried to keep the sun god at arm's length for so long—but it would get there. And Ra seemed to do all he could to help it along. He'd even helped flash her things out of her house to the headquarters.

"Good," Takan said. "What did they say when you told them you had moved in with me?"

"They were a little surprised. But when I told them how great you are and that I couldn't picture myself with anyone else, they seemed to accept it. As for the house, I guess it's worked out perfectly. My older sister, Cacey, just found out she's pregnant with her first child. She and her husband have only been married a year and haven't saved up enough to buy a house for themselves. So my dad is going to offer them the bungalow until they can afford one of their own. My mom hated the idea of them living in an apartment with the baby."

"I suppose your parents will want to meet me."

At their quarters, Falon pushed open the door and walked inside. "Of course they do. My dad will want to check you out to make sure you're good enough for his baby girl."

Takan grimaced. "I'm not looking forward to the whole meeting-the-parents thing." He sobered. "You know you can't tell them about our world."

She nodded. "I know. I'll have to remember not to smile big around them too."

"Will you hate me when you have to give them up?"

Falon turned and put her arms around Takan's neck. "I won't say I won't find it tough, but I would never hate you because of it. Hopefully by then we'll have a family of our own to make up for the ones I have to distance myself from."

Takan paled slightly. "I haven't even thought about babies."

She laughed. "It's going to happen eventually, especially since you can't keep your hands off me. But don't worry, I'm not ready for that yet. I want Mot and his undead taken down before I bring a new life into the world."

"And if it takes a lot longer than you think?"

"I can wait."

He slapped her on the ass. "It might sound a bit selfish, but I'm glad. It means I get to keep you all to myself."

She gently nipped his chin. "I'm going to take a shower."

"I'll be waiting out here for you."

Falon headed for the bathroom. She felt Takan's eyes following her all the way.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dressed all in black the same as her mate, Falon walked beside Takan as they started the circuit of the part of the city they'd been given to patrol. Tonight, he'd decided she'd be the one to hunt down any undead they came across, using the prickling of her skin their nearness caused. The night before, they hadn't found one, which sometimes happened.

In the business district, the streets were pretty empty this time of night. They'd been hunting for three hours and hadn't had any luck yet. But the night was still young. Reaching an alleyway between two tall office buildings, Falon suddenly drew up short. Her skin didn't prickle as Takan had described how it would. Instead, it was almost as if she *knew* where the undead was. It seemed to pull at her, directing her exactly where she had to go.



She hurried into the alley, pulling her sword from its sheath as she went. Takan followed behind her. "Did you see something?" he asked. "My skin's not prickling, so it can't be an undead."

Falon reached the end of the alley where it opened on to another street. She stopped and looked around, searching the shadows her excellent night vision allowed her to see into. Nothing. No undead, nothing at all.

"I don't understand," she said to Takan who had come to a halt behind her. "I felt an undead."

"Are you sure? Is your skin still prickling? I don't feel anything."

"It isn't a prickling sensation. It's something else. At the other end of the alley, I suddenly 'felt' an undead would be here. As if I was pulled toward it."

Takan's brow furrowed. Now that he no longer wore his hair long in front of his face, Falon could easily see it. "The way you've described it, it almost sounds as if you had a vision."

She shook her head. "Not really a vision so much as a knowing. I'm not getting any mental images showing it to me."

Takan opened his mouth to say something, but snapped it shut when an undead appeared at the opening to the alley, dragging a struggling male mortal behind it. The creature hissed when it saw them.

Falon didn't think, she reacted. She was closest, and with her sword already free of its scabbard, she swung it, catching the creature across the ribs. It hissed as it jerked and let go of the mortal. It instantly decomposed, leaving the stench of it hanging in the air.

Takan grabbed the mortal who'd landed on the ground after the undead had released him. Once on his feet, the mortal started babbling hysterically. Takan forced the man to look him in the eyes, then said, "Calm down." The mortal instantly quieted. Her mate turned to her while he kept hold of the man. "He needs to have his memories wiped. I want you to do it."

She nodded and stepped directly in front of the mortal. "Look me in the eye," she told him. Once he'd complied, she focused on him. Easier than she thought it would be, she found herself peering at his memories. She saw how the undead had seemingly appeared out of nowhere and had jumped him before dragging him into the alley. She started wiping that memory and moved onto the ones of her and Takan.

"Make sure you give him the suggestion not to see us and continue on his way after you're finished," Takan reminded her.

Falon gave a short nod, then finished wiping the mortal. When she pulled out of his mind, he stared blankly at Takan and her before turning and walking out of the alley. Before, she hadn't liked the whole idea of someone messing with another person's memories, but in this situation she figured it would be a blessing. The mortal she and Takan had saved wouldn't wake up at night with nightmares as she'd done after her undead attack. He wouldn't have to carry around the trauma of learning things that go bump in the night actually exist.

She turned to Takan to find him watching her closely. "What?"

"Has this ever happened to you before?"

"You mean knowing something was going to happen before it did?"

"Yes."

"Not really. Unless you call knowing when the telephone would ring, or a certain song would play on the radio a few seconds after thinking about it the same thing."

"Some people would say that meant you had a bit of the 'sight'. And after what just happened here, I have to agree. I think Ra making you one of his Chosen must have increased what little of it you already had. Has there been anything else you've 'known' about before it happened since my father changed you?"

"No," she said slowly while she tried to recall any other incident. "Nope, only this time. Maybe I can only do this with the undead."

"Then let's go test it out and see if you can find another one."

They left the alley and continued walking. Ten minutes later, the same “knowing” that an undead was nearby took over Falon, pulling her in the exact location they needed to be to intercept it. This time the creature hadn’t had a chance to find a victim.

“Well, I’ll be damned,” Takan said after they took down the undead. “This is why you’re the key. You know where to find an undead even before it shows up. My vision hadn’t shown me exactly why you would be so important.”

“Then why didn’t this newfound ability of mine help us out last night when we didn’t come across any undead?”

Takan shrugged. “Maybe you have to be a certain distance from it to have it work. All I know is we can use it to give us the upper hand.”

Falon smiled. “I guess that makes me kind of special.”

He chuckled and put his arms around her. “I always thought you were. Why don’t you contact Mehen and tell him we need to meet along with the others after we finish up for the night. They’ll need to know what you can do.”

Falon did just that, then fell into step beside Takan after he let her go with a quick kiss. Now knowing what she could do, she was anxious to see how accurate she could get.

\* \* \* \* \*

Takan watched the look on his brothers-in-arms’ faces as Falon told them about her new ability. They were all inside the meeting room, sitting at the large wooden table. After his mate finished speaking, the other warriors broke into large smiles as they realized what Falon could do meant to their war against Mot and his undead.

“I wonder if she can do the same thing with Mot?” Set asked. “If she can, maybe we’d be able to find his lair.”

“That’s if her ability will work around Apep’s protection,” Mehen said. “For a while now we’ve figured the demon god has protected Mot’s lair the same as Ra protects our headquarters.”

Kysen shook his head. "That may be so, but Apep doesn't know about Falon yet. He might not have protected Mot against her ability."

"Who is to say Apep doesn't already know?" Mehen shot back. "It's only a matter of time. His powers are very similar to Ra's."

Takan spoke next. "Apep might know Falon is special in some way, but I doubt he knows exactly why. My vision never showed me it, and I don't think my father knows either. Ra just knew Falon couldn't be mortal, had to be one of his Chosen."

"Then we need to act on this as soon as we can," Akori chimed in. "Right now, we have the element of surprise. Instead of just focusing on the undead, we hunt Mot."

"How?" Takan asked. "Falon is only one person, and can't patrol the entire city in one night on foot. Even if she flashed to different districts, there's a good chance we'd miss Mot."

Mehen nodded. "Mot is a tricky bastard to find. But I have a feeling he's out and about more than he would have been in the past. He has to be rebuilding his new generation undead warriors. If he'd had more than six the last time we clashed, he would have brought them with him. If only we knew where he's getting the large male mortals he uses as his warriors."

Falon cleared her throat. "That's an easy one—a gym. Takan told me what these new generation undead warriors are like. You guys are old school, building your muscles from training with a sword for years. Mot is using mortals. You want to find big, bodybuilding-type men, you search them out in the gyms."

"Shit," Denger said. "We never even thought of that."

"You might be all modernized," she continued, "but I bet none of you have set foot inside a gym before."

Takan shook his head. Falon was right. None of them had gone to a gym to work out. They didn't need to when they had the rest of the old warehouse to train in. And the majority of it consisted of practicing with their swords. It was the way they had always done it since the times back in ancient Egypt.

"Well," Mehen said, "adding new blood to the ranks has paid off." He turned his attention to Falon and Takan. "Tomorrow night, I want you two to hit every gym in Phoenix. They should be open late."

"There's a couple that are open twenty-four hours as well," Falon added.

"Hit those first then. If Mot is rebuilding his new generation undead army, we might end up getting lucky. It's almost dawn. We'll get some rest, then during the day, we'll get a game plan ready."

The others nodded before getting up from the table. Takan held out his hand to Falon and helped her to her feet. They silently walked to their quarters. He felt her tiredness through their mate bond. Once inside, he put their swords and jackets away in the closet while Falon got ready for bed.

After he finished, Takan joined her. She sat on the bed waiting for him. He pulled off his shirt as Falon asked, "So what do you think about this new plan?"

"I think it's a good one. If you find Mot, we have to be very careful around him. He'll be harder to kill than a regular undead. He's a demon, so bronze doesn't affect him the same way."

"You're worried I'll get hurt?"

He sat on the bed beside her. "Of course I am. You've never faced Mot before. And once he sees you and realizes you're one of Ra's Chosen, he'll go straight to Apep with the information."

"If he manages to escape."

"Which is something more likely to happen than not. He has the ability to flash as well. Once he does that, we have no way of following him. Never have."

"Then we'll just have to make sure we subdue him before he can flash away."

"Easier said than done." Takan caressed Falon's cheek. "We'll only have one shot at this. Once Mot finds out we're hunting him, he's going to lay low."

She leaned in and brushed her lips against his. "We have to think positive. Now let's go to bed. I'm bushed."

Takan shucked out of his jeans and crawled into bed next to Falon. He pulled her close and closed his eyes. They'd make their plans, and hopefully it would all work out in the end.

## **Chapter Thirteen**

"What do you think?"

Takan looked up from the telephone directory of businesses he perused to find all the gyms in the city. Falon and he sat at the table in the meeting room compiling a list to take with them that night. He met his father's gaze, then looked down. Ra had forgone his usual snow-white kilt and now wore a pair of black snug-fitting jeans and black t-shirt. The only thing of his old attire he'd kept were the matching gold armbands with the Eye of Ra in the center that circled each of his biceps.

"Why the change of clothes?" Takan asked.

"I thought it was about time I caught up with the times as my warriors have done."

"I have to say you look very handsome," Falon said.

Ra nodded in her direction. "Thanks, though I'm not too sure Takan agrees."

He snorted. "I'm sorry, but I'm not going to tell you how handsome you look."

"Do you at least think I'll fit in now?"

Takan narrowed his eyes. "Yes, and the big question is, why are you worried about it?"

"I've decided to spend more time in the mortal realm. Both my children live here, and I want to become more active in their lives. I couldn't do that until you revealed your secret. I didn't want to make things any more uncomfortable between us than they already were."

"So you're going to make up for lost time?"

Ra smiled. "Of course."

"Don't you have duties you have to take care of in the other realm?"

"I have them all under control. What are you two up to?"

"Looking up all the local gyms," Takan said. "We found out something about Falon last night. She has an ability the rest of us don't have. Did you know?"

His father frowned. "No, I didn't. What is it?"

At Takan's nudge, she said, "It appears as though I have a little bit of sight. When I get within a certain range of an undead, I just suddenly know where it will be, before it even gets there. Almost as if I'm pulled to that spot."

"That was something I didn't expect," Ra said. "You're going to use it to see if you can find Mot the same way."

Takan didn't even bother to ask how his father knew. The god aspect said it all. "Correct. Mot has to be rebuilding his undead warrior army, and since he has taken to using a specific type of mortal, Falon was the one who suggested we check out the gyms where these men can be found."

"An excellent idea, and one that if it pays off, will put us further ahead to ending Apep's foothold in the mortal realm. I'll leave you two to your work and go in search of Blythe to see what she thinks of my more modern look."

After Ra left, Falon giggled. "What do you find so funny?" he asked.

"I was just thinking you and your father look so much alike now that he's dressing like you, I'd better make sure I have the right man before I grab his butt. I would hate to put the moves on Ra."

Takan pulled the wheeled chair Falon sat on closer and kissed her until she leaned into him. Once he lifted his head, he said, "Just remember to look for the armbands."

"I'll remember." Falon got up and sat on his lap. "I think it's time for a break." He heard the lock on the door move into place. "And I know just how I want to spend it."

Soon, Takan forgot about Ra and his new wardrobe change as his mate kissed him hungrily, showing exactly what she wanted him to do to her through their mate bond.

\* \* \* \* \*



The first twenty-four-hour gym they went to ended up being a bust. The place was no longer in business. It had to be a recent event since it had still been listed in the telephone directory. Takan and she decided to hit the two other gyms that were in the same general area before heading for the other twenty-four-hour one. They didn't turn up anything either.

Hanging around outside in the parking lot of another gym, they watched the people come and go. Falon saw why the other place had gone belly-up. This gym was twice the size and had quite a few members.

"Do you sense anything?" Takan asked.

"Not yet. Give it a few minutes. It could be Mot hasn't come in range"

"We'll give it a half hour, then move on to the next place."

A car pulled into the parking lot and two guys that were just the right size to put them on Mot's radar got out. Even though she wasn't that close to them, Falon heard them talking about how a few members had gone missing, and how the police had been interviewing other members.

Falon turned to Takan. "I think we just hit the jackpot."

"I think you're right. I'll warn the others to be ready when I call while you keep looking."

She kept her gaze on the two men as they headed for the gym's entrance. They were halfway there when she had the now-familiar sensation of knowing what would happen next. She broke into a run to close the distance between her and the men. Falon heard Takan shout her name, but she didn't slow down.

She was almost upon them when a blond man suddenly appeared behind the two mortals. As he started to reach for them, Falon shouted, "Mot."

The demon spun around to face her. Falon locked gazes with him and she felt something click between them, almost as if an invisible tether connected them. He let

out a loud hiss as the other warriors appeared on either side of her. Before she could reach for him, Mot flashed away.

"What the hell was that?" one of the mortals said.

Akori stepped up to them, and after a few seconds, they walked into the gym. "I took care of them."

"Damn," Set said "We were so close."

Falon shook her head. "I have him."

"What do you mean?" Takan asked.

"I still have a lock on Mot. I looked into his eyes and something clicked between us. I can feel it pulling me toward where he went."

"Flash me there."

"No," Mehen said. "We can't go one at a time. We need to be there all at once. Falon, can you pinpoint a location?"

She shook her head. "Not like on a map. I just know where to go. What if we all hold onto each other and I flash us there?"

Takan shook his head. "It would be too much of a drain on you. You'd be too weak to fight. But I have an idea. Since it's a 'feeling' you have as to where you have to go, you can send it through our mate bond. I should be able to follow you that way. I take half the warriors and you take the others."

Falon nodded. "Here goes nothing." She pushed the sensation of the invisible tether she had with Mot to Takan. "Do you feel it?"

"Yes. It's almost as if someone is reeling me in."

"Exactly."

To be out of any mortals' sight, they ducked around to the back of the building and into the deepest shadows. They decided who would go with whom, then with a nod to Takan to make sure he still had it, she flashed herself, Set and Denger to wherever it was Mot had gone.

Takan and the others appeared a few seconds later. Mehen looked around. "We're at Four Peaks Mine, the same place Sek had his first lair."

"It makes sense Mot's would be in the same general area," Set said. "But I still don't sense any undead nearby."

Falon walked to the cliff face directly in front of her. "He's on the other side of this rock wall. And he's not alone. I can sense at least twelve undead."

Mehen nodded. "All right. Mot won't be expecting us. I'm sure he figures Apep still has his lair hidden. Even though we can't be sure, we're going to assume those twelve undead are new generation warriors. All other undead would be out looking for victims. Takan, you take care of opening the door to the lair. The rest of you, get ready as soon as he does. Falon, you'll lead since you know where they are."

She took a deep breath and unsheathed her sword like the other warriors had done. Inside her head, she already knew where she would have to go once they breached Mot's lair. Takan went to the sheer wall of rock and placed his hands on it. He closed his eyes and his brow furrowed in concentration. A minute later, what had appeared to be solid rock moved in on itself to create a doorway.

At Mehen's silent signal, they ran inside. Falon heard the others right on her tail as she ran down a long, dirt-floored tunnel. It twisted and turned. At the very end, before the tunnel curved to the left, it opened up into a large chamber. That's where the twelve undead were, and they were all new generation warriors. As one, they turned and rushed Ra's Chosen. Falon blocked a strike from one that got within range.

Mot wasn't with his undead warriors, Falon knew that much. The invisible tether kept trying to pull her out of the chamber. Keeping her thoughts focused on the task at hand, she hacked and slashed. If not for her day of training with Denger, she didn't think she would have been able to put down the undead warrior who attacked her. Unlike his weaker counterparts she was used to, this undead had the skills of an expert swordsman. Using her much smaller size to advantage, she twisted away and ducked

under his arm. Slicing upward, she managed to sink her blade into his side. He might have been harder to kill, but he still had a severe allergy to bronze.

Falon glanced around the room and saw the other warriors had their hands full trying to take out the rest of the undead warriors. They seemed to have it under control. Takan moved with deadly grace. She knew she should wait for the others before going after Mot, but the pull on her was getting harder and harder to resist. Any minute now the demon would learn of their presence and flash himself away.

Unable to ignore it anymore, Falon left the chamber. She ran through the curved part of the tunnel and found herself at a dead end, which really wasn't one since she sensed Mot just behind the rock wall. She put her hands on it and concentrated as Takan had done. A lot longer than it had taken him, she found a "mechanism" that caused the sheet of rock to slide open.

Darting inside, she quickly scanned the room, her gaze landing on the large bed in the middle of it. Mot appeared to be stretched out on it, as if he'd just collapsed. With slow, careful steps she crossed over to the bed. Just as she reached it, Mot lurched up, and batting her sword out of the way with his arm, he grabbed her around the throat.

Falon struggled, but he was stronger. His hand tightened, making it harder for her to draw in deep breaths. He pulled her up into his face. His eyes glowed red.

"What do we have here? A mate pretending to be a warrior? Whichever one you belong to, he wasn't too smart to let you wander off alone."

Fighting for each breath, she mentally called out to Takan. An answering roar echoed through the tunnel outside the chamber. Mot's head jerked in that direction. He was going to flash away again, she just knew it. She had to stop him before he could.

Using the tether that still connected them, Falon mentally willed it to start coiling around Mot, wrapping him tight, muting his ability to flash. His gaze jerked to her, and his hand seemed to forcibly be pulled off her throat as the tether coiled tightly around his upper arms.

"What have you done to me, bitch?" Mot shouted.

Sucking in great gulps of air, Falon heard the sound of pounding feet running toward the chamber. A few seconds later, the rest of Ra's Chosen burst into the room.

Takan ran to her. "Are you all right?"

She nodded. "I'm okay. I got him." She looked over at Mot to see him struggling against his invisible bonds. "And he's not going anywhere."

\* \* \* \* \*

After explaining what she had done to restrain Mot and keep him from flashing to the other warriors, they spent the rest of the night clearing out the other undead that were inside the lair. As dawn slowly started to approach, the time when the other undead who'd been out preying on mortals returned to hide out during the day, they stood outside the lair and cut them down as they showed up. Since she was able to know when one would be coming, it wasn't too hard for the Chosen to take them out.

As for Mot, Mehen decided to let Ra decide his fate. Subdued and unable to get free, he wasn't a threat at the moment. After a search of the rest of the lair, they'd found the chamber where Apep's symbols had been carved into one of the walls and the floor. That was the connection Mot had with his master, and what he used to send the souls the regular undead collected each night. The sun god needed to deal with that as well.

Shortly after dawn, Ra arrived. Instead of ending the existence of Mot, he decided to send him back to his master through the very thing he'd used to send the souls. Just before the sun god sent him, Falon willed the tether binding him away. Mot's bellow of pain filled the chamber as the glow of the symbols seemed to swallow him whole. One touch of Ra's hands and Apep's symbols blackened, the rock bubbling as if they'd been smelted.

The sun god stepped back. "It's over. Apep no longer has any sway in the mortal realm." The warriors let out a triumphant shout. "Your job isn't over yet," Ra said once the sound died down. "There are still undead out there, hiding. Apep might have lost this one, but I'm sure he won't stop trying to gain the upper hand once again."

"The undeads' days are numbered," Mehen said. "Ra's Chosen will be here, ready to protect mortals from any threat he might come up with."

Ra nodded. "As it always will be. But for now, it's cause for celebration. I'm sure Blythe won't mind cooking a feast." The sun god disappeared.

Mehen groaned. "I bet he's gone to the headquarters to wake her up. I'd better catch up with Ra. Just because he never sleeps doesn't mean the rest of us don't."

After Mehen flashed away the others did as well, leaving only Falon and Takan standing in the chamber. Suddenly feeling the long hours of the night, she gladly went into his arms as he pulled her against him. She wanted nothing more than to crawl into bed next to her mate and sleep for a few days.

Takan kissed the top of her head. "I'm proud of you. You were able to do what none of us could."

She pulled back to look at him. "I didn't do it all on my own. How do you feel about it finally being over?"

"I don't think it has really set in yet. We've fought this war for so long, it will take some getting used to. I'll have more free time on my hands now."

Falon went up on tiptoe and nipped his chin. "I'm sure we can think of something to do to use up all those spare hours."

Takan gave her a heated look. "I think you're right. How about we go have a celebration of our own?"

"If you're up for it, so am I."

He rocked his hips into her, letting her feel his erection. "Oh, I'm up for it."

The sound of Falon's laughter echoed inside the stone chamber before her mate flashed her back to their quarters and took her to bed.

## **Epilogue**

Ra stood in the corner of the kitchen and watched his warriors and their mates feast on the big meal his daughter had prepared. Contrary to what Mehen had thought, Blythe hadn't minded all the cooking that went into it. He settled his gaze on her and smiled when she said something that made the others laugh. He then looked at his son. Takan had his arm around Falon's shoulders, slowly feeding her from his plate. The two of them seemed to focus more on each other than the rest of the people in the room.

Ra sighed. Seeing his warriors with their mates, he felt the loneliness that had recently started to creep over him increase. He wanted what his Chosen had—the love of a mate. Since losing the love of Blythe's mother, he'd kept his distance from mortal women. Now he ached to hold one in his arms.

Pulling himself out of his morose thoughts, he walked toward the table when Blythe waved him over. For now, he'd settle for what he had—a loving daughter and a son that had finally begun to let him into his life. But a part of him knew he'd be looking for the one woman he could call his mate.

*The End*

## About the Author

Marisa Chenery was always a lover of books, but after reading her first historical romance novel she found herself hooked. Having inherited a love for the written word, she soon started writing her own novels.

After trying her hand at writing historicals, she now writes paranormals.

Marisa lives in Ontario, Canada, with her husband and four children. She would love to hear from you, so drop her an email.

Marisa welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her [author bio page](#) at [www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com).

### *Tell Us What You Think*

We appreciate hearing reader opinions about our books. You can email us at [Comments@EllorasCave.com](mailto:Comments@EllorasCave.com).



**Also by Marisa Chenery**

Goddess Revealed 1: Bast's Perfume

Goddess Revealed 2: Love's Fiery Arrow

Goddess Revealed 3: The Goddess' Girdle

Goddess Revealed 4: His Sea Goddess

Ra's Chosen 1: Soul Hunger

Ra's Chosen 2: Mate Hunger

Ra's Chosen 3: Longed-For Hunger

Ra's Chosen 4: Embrace the Hunger

Ra's Chosen 5: Reincarnated Hunger

Touched by a Gladiator



Discover for yourself why readers can't get enough of the multiple award-winning publisher Ellora's Cave. Whether you prefer ebooks or paperbacks, be sure to visit EC on the web at [www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com) for an erotic reading experience that will leave you breathless.

**[www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com)**