



SKIN AND MOON

IMMORTAL COUNCIL

COURTNEY BREAZILE

She runs and manages to hide, but can't forget his brief touches and insane claims of being her mate. Fucking him out of her head is the best plan she can come up with. If only his scent wouldn't haunt her, she might succeed.

Danger to her coven and a betrayal from within drives her to accept his help. She will use him to gain her coven's trust back, but once she allows him to claim her, can she just leave him?

He would do anything to have her. His werewolf instincts drive him to take her and make her his own. Will he be able to let her go if she chooses her coven over him?

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Skin and Moon
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SKIN AND MOON
IMMORTAL COUNCIL FIVE

BY

COURTNEY BREAZILE

DEDICATION

*For all my new and old friends...I love to write
for all your pleasure.*

CHAPTER ONE

Terrance tracked Emmalia from Walker Weston's dungeon prison. He followed her faint scent. *She must be using magic to hide from me.* It wouldn't work. Terrance merged with his black wolf and her scent intensified. As a werewolf, his senses were heightened and he could smell everything in the air, especially her. His wolf had declared her mate and she would not escape him. Her scent called to him, a mouthwatering mix of spicy witch and mate.

She was the reason Terrance had stayed in that prison as long as he had. He could have walked through the wall to freedom at any time, but he couldn't have left her there to possibly suffer. She was his mate and leaving without her went against every instinct he had, and of course his wolf refused to even consider such an idea. It would have been nice if she hadn't been so damn disagreeable though.

She had often told him how she wanted nothing to do with him or his wolf and how she

would run from him as soon as she had the chance. She had done just that as soon as the barriers holding back her abilities were destroyed. It had stunned him how quickly she'd been gone. It had triggered his every tracking and claiming instinct.

Terrance hadn't even waited around to talk with Paxton and the other council members. Nothing mattered more than the tiny vixen making her way at an impossibly fast pace south. She wasn't as fast as him and if it wasn't for him having to stop every so often to concentrate and find her scent again, he would have surely overtaken her by now.

The chase she was giving him was thrilling, his blood pumped hot through his veins. He could feel all his mating instincts boiling up, ready to explode on her as soon as he got the chance. She would be claimed in no time. He growled, thinking about how this chase would end, with her under him over and over again. There was no other option, she was his mate.

Terrance pushed away the remembered words of hatred she'd spat at him when he'd informed her of the wonderful news of their mating. Witches and werewolves were not on the friendliest of terms. In the past, weres had been known to hunt witches. Since they were the hardest species to track by scent, it was the biggest

challenge for a were. Of course that had been a very long time ago. Terrance doubted most living weres and witches had even been alive at the time, or at least they were no more than children. It had sparked quite the war within the immortal world and a sort of peace had resulted. Each species going their separate ways, but apparently not forgetting.

Werewolves didn't think much of witches either. Commonly referred to as *crazy bitches* by most immortal species, witches were avoided. They tended to overreact and lash out, not the type of being you wanted to cross. Some were extremely powerful and could kill you almost instantly, but you would never know just to look at one. They dressed like gothic sluts most of the time and acted like it, too.

Terrance paused, testing the air. They were close to some human town now and there were so many scents filling the air. He wouldn't give up though, no matter how long it might take to find her. She was his and that was all that mattered.

* * * *

Emmalia was proud of herself. She had outsmarted the stupid were two weeks ago when they'd finally escaped that terrible dungeon and he still hadn't caught up to her. *Was he still*

looking? She hoped he wasn't, she reminded herself for like the thousandth time. She hoped he had given up his insane belief that they were mates.

She shivered, remembering how it felt the one time he had slipped through the wall separating their cells and taken her into his arms. She had been too shocked to push him away. Her body had reacted almost instantly, her skin on fire where he touched her. As he whispered promises in her ear, she only half-heard, her lower body pressed forward of its own accord, seeking him out. She had felt his hard cock, could still close her eyes and feel it pressed intimately against her, wanting her. Her body had reacted with wanting and needing, her cunt dripping.

Thankfully footsteps had come quickly down the hall and forced him to retreat to his cell. When her head cleared, she'd forbidden him to ever enter her cell again. He'd obeyed, declaring himself her mate and wanting nothing more than to protect her and make her happy. They had spent four days in there together and the entire time, he tried to convince her they would be together eventually. She had denied every one of his insane claims.

I will hunt you down. A were's mate cannot hide, he'd claimed and she'd believed at least part of that, believed he would try and find her, but she

knew she could hide. There wasn't a witch alive who didn't know how to hide from a were. Being hunted was something a species didn't really get over or forget.

By the time she had zigzagged her way back to her coven, she'd been glowing bright green from all the spells she'd cast. It'd been a week before they had all worn off and she'd been back to her usual perfectly peach self.

Inside, she wasn't so easily righted. In her dreams, she saw his wolf, its glowing yellow eyes staring at her through the darkness. They were terrifying eyes, but she was drawn to them. Then she would see him, his intense brown eyes focused on her, his tempting mouth half-smiling. Growls would erupt from both him and his beast and her body would react. Not the way it was supposed to, however, not with fear, but with lust. Lust more intense than she had ever felt in her long life.

She wanted him and hated herself for it. It was a betrayal of her coven to want to mate with *that* species. Almost any other would be acceptable. Witches weren't purists. They often went outside their species for sexual play. They didn't mate in the traditional sense like other species did anyway. When a witch wanted a child, she sought out a warlock, they would stay together as long as it took to conceive and birth. If the child was

female, it would return with the witch, if it was male, the warlock would take it. The parents never stayed together longer than necessary. It would never work, both species being so volatile, and the bond between a witch and her coven was her lifeline. She couldn't live without that. Her magic would wither and she would die without it.

Emmalia knew werewolves were much different. They mated for life and they lived with their mate forever. She shuddered at the thought. Witches needed the energy of each other. It was part of what made them so strong.

"Emmalia, are you ready yet? We're going to miss the boat!" Selene, one of her coven sisters and her best friend, called up the stairs.

"I'm ready," she called back as she closed up her suitcase. The coven was taking a vacation, a Mexican cruise. Leticia, their coven leader, had surprised them with it last week, saying they all were in need of a getaway.

Emmalia was thankful for the distraction. Hopefully by the end of the cruise she would have that damn werewolf out of her mind. She was horny as hell and planned to find a human or two to sate herself with while they were on the boat. Witches were very sexual beings by nature, their bodies extremely sensitive to touch because their power flowed so close to the surface. It made for great sex and no witch abstained from the

pleasure for long.

"Are you okay?"

Emmalia jumped at the sound of Selene's voice close behind her. "Yeah...I'm great, excited about the trip."

"Liar," Selene spat at her with a knowing grin. "You are wound so tight I think just the thought of sex could bring you to orgasm."

Emmalia's mouth gaped. She wasn't surprised by Selene's words, outspokenness was an inherent trait in the witches and sex was as ordinary as dessert as far as conversation went. It was more alarming that Selene had detected what Emmalia thought she was stealthily hiding. *Does everyone see how desperate I am for the touch of a werewolf?*

Emmalia couldn't deny Selene's words so she fell back onto her bed and closed her eyes tight. "I don't want to talk about it," she grumbled up at her friend. "I just want to go on this vacation and forget about it."

"You mean fuck this guy out of your head?"

Emmalia moved fast, grabbed a pillow and flung it at Selene with a playful giggle.

"I'm so not bunking with you. You have only dirty things on your mind and I won't manage to relax at all on this vacation," Selene teased.

"You won't have to worry about that," Leticia said calmly from the open door. She was leaning casually against the doorjamb, studying her black

fingernails, which were sharpened into points. Her purple fishnet clad legs were casually crossed at the ankle of her spike-heeled knee-high black boots. She wore a black velvet miniskirt and purple corset. It was typical clothing for a witch, but not for a witch about to go out in public.

"What's going on?"

"The elders and I are staying here. We have some business that must be tended to immediately. As the only daughter of an elder, Emmalia, that leaves you in charge of the others while away. You will be held responsible if anything happens to them, or if they happen to anyone else." Leticia's last words were spoken with implicit warning.

Emmalia thought she might hyperventilate. She hated being in charge of the others. "Leticia, I don't—"

"You will get your own room now, congratulations. Feel free to dole out the remaining rooms as you see fit. I have already advised the others of your status and they are sworn to obey you as well as they would me."

Shit! Leticia was their leader, but they all banded together to keep all but their worst screw-ups from her. Emmalia didn't want to be the one kept in the dark. She didn't want to be elevated above the others. She would never get their trust back. *Why isn't Leticia sending one of the elders?* It

didn't make sense.

"Thank you, Leticia, I won't let you down," Emmalia said with what she hoped was a convincing amount of enthusiasm. She really didn't have any other choice. Leticia's words were law in this coven and following her had kept them all alive for too long to quit now.

"Good, enjoy your vacation, girls," Leticia said and pushed away from the wall. "Oh, I almost forgot—" Leticia snapped her fingers and her skin tinged slightly green. "You will need an increase in your power supply if you're going to handle them." Leticia walked away casually, as if she had done nothing more important than give her grocery order.

"This is huge!" Selene squealed quietly, her purple eyes wide.

"Let's get going before we miss the damn boat." Emmalia grabbed her bag and stalked out of her room and down to the waiting cab. She couldn't believe what had just happened. Her body was thrumming with new magic energy. She was suddenly, and quite unwillingly, apart from her coven sisters, now well on her way to being an elder. She was the oldest member of their coven who was not an elder, it made sense she would be elevated above her sisters. She just didn't want to be, didn't want to worry about anyone else, just herself. Responsibility had never been her

strongest trait. She would be expected to set a good example and uphold the laws more carefully than her younger, more inexperienced, coven sisters.

This is such bullshit. She didn't want any part of this. She just wanted...*fuck what do I want?*

Emmalia was silent the entire drive, thankful for the human in the front seat preventing her coven sisters from commenting on the changed situation. They all looked at her with similar veiled expressions. Witches all looked very much alike, black hair, purple eyes and light skin that turned green when they cast spells. They all looked different of course, different noses, chins and hair lengths, but it took barely a glance to see a witch, at least it did if you were an immortal.

"We have six rooms and seven of us, who wants to bunk together?" Emmalia asked, not wanting to make the decision, hoping someone would volunteer so she wouldn't have to.

"Gabby and I don't mind bunking up together," Kamea said with a sympathetic smile.

Emmalia smiled back with appreciation. "Good, then the rest of us get our own rooms. It will be a fun vacation. I'm certain."

The tension broke then and they all began talking about what they wanted to do on the cruise. Emmalia tried to relax, but there was something she couldn't pinpoint that kept her on

edge. She scanned the surroundings, but saw nothing odd as they drove through the city.

Emmalia felt her phone vibrate. It could only be Leticia or her mother, Rose. Neither woman did she care to speak to so she ignored it, knowing she would pay for it later. It signaled a message left and she cringed, knowing it would be an angry call-me rant.

They arrived at the boat and she forgot all about the message as they joined the crowd of humans on the dock. She smiled to herself and knew this vacation was exactly what she needed. She couldn't wait to find a few human males to sate her desires. The deep ache seemed to be getting more intense as time passed.

* * * *

Terrance growled low in his throat. He was really starting to hate witches. He'd been led so far out of his way he couldn't believe he was now actually standing outside her house. It looked so unassuming he hardly believed the coven of witches actually lived here. But they did, she did, he could smell her scent so strong his body was vibrating with the anticipation of seeing her again. His wolf was begging to storm the place and claim her, mark her and be done with it.

Settle down. She will freak out and so will her coven

if they even get a whiff of us out here. We will stay downwind and watch. She has to separate from the rest at some point, and then we approach. Terrance thought toward his wolf.

Beside him, his wolf growled reluctant agreement. It was full day so his wolf was invisible to all who might pass by, only a keeper could see its wolf without the moon to reveal it. *I know you're right, it doesn't mean I have to like it,* his wolf thought back.

Terrance stayed to the shadows, watching the large house. It was on the outskirts of San Francisco and looked like a pleasant place. Nothing like where he expected to find a coven of witches living. There was nothing dark about it, no skeletons in the yard or anything so very obvious. There was a scent of magic heavy in the air around it. Any immortal would be able to sense it immediately, but a human would pass it by and think nothing was odd. It was a good thing immortals didn't like to be noticed by humans.

When he saw her emerge, it took every ounce of control he possessed to stay still and silent. She was breathtaking, just as he had remembered. She was dressed like a human this time though. A jean skirt and a plain white tank top, she was perfect. She had a bag and six of her coven sisters followed her out of the house and into a cab. They all carried bags, too. Terrance was concerned, but she

wouldn't be able to hide this time, she didn't even know he was following.

She hopes to escape us, the coven is relocating, his wolf thought angrily.

No, there are others still in the house and I didn't see their leader. We will follow them anyway. She won't get away from us.

No she won't.

Terrance stalked the cab, never letting it out of his sight as it weaved through the city toward the ocean. He was surprised to find it stopping at a cruise ship. It didn't seem like the sort of thing a witch would be interested in. All that human fun, it was odd. As he watched, the group of witches made their way onto the ship and he knew he had to as well.

He smiled as he thought of the close quarters a cruise ship would provide for them. *It will be difficult for her to escape us on there, he thought toward his wolf.*

And it'll be difficult for us to hide from her sisters.

Yes, but I think I know just how to take care of that.

Terrance walked around the crowd to the back of the ship. There was no way he could walk on with the others without a ticket, but he could walk right through the ship, as long as no one was around to see him. *We are going to get a little wet.*

Terrance jumped into the water behind the ship, not really caring if anyone noticed. They wouldn't think much of it, other than that some

lunatic just jumped into some nasty water with all his clothes on. He swam quickly to the ship and passed easily through the thick steel. He made his way through the ship with surprising ease. He weaved in and out of rooms, careful to go unseen as he passed through walls and doors. It took a while, but in the end, he had accomplished two very important things. He knew which rooms all the witches were staying in, and he had put his scent in every room of the ship. There was no way the witches would be able to pinpoint his location at any time. He had infused the ship with his scent.

They must be going crazy by now, his wolf thought to him.

Well there is only one I care about. So let's go ease her mind about our presence.

CHAPTER TWO

“What do you mean a werewolf followed them!” Rose screamed at Leticia.

Leticia tried to ignore the disrespect, knowing it was fear for her daughter that was making her yell. “I scented him after they left, I tried to call, but your daughter wouldn’t answer her phone,” Leticia shot back. “Now, I don’t think there is any need for worry. A cruise ship is such a confined space and with so many humans on board, if the were even got on the ship, which is doubtful, there is no way he could risk harming her there. She will be fine until she returns.”

“How can you be so sure?”

“I trust them. They are powerful and against a single were, they will be fine. Trust me, Rose, you know I would never put my coven daughters knowingly in danger. They are capable of taking care of each other if necessary, not that I think it will be.” Rose didn’t look convinced, but she held her lips tight and Leticia took that as a sign that

she was going to let it go, for now. "Now I need you and the others to pack, we are traveling to Oregon. We must speak with the Council of Immortals."

Rose nodded and left Leticia's room to tell the others.

Leticia gathered her things and tried to concentrate on just what she was going to say when she approached them. Witches didn't do humble well and asking for entrance into the council instead of waiting for the invitation felt wrong. She couldn't wait. She needed to be the representing witch. The place of power and influence was something she wanted enough to practice a little humility.

* * * *

Emmalia paced her room, cell phone held in a death grip. The message was important and she was kicking herself for not listening to it before the ship had sailed. It was a warning that a werewolf had been scented not long after they had left in the cab. That coupled with the scent of werewolf on the ship, everywhere it seemed, could only mean one thing. It was not something she was happy about.

Terrance was on the ship.

"Fuck!" She sighed as she fell back on the bed.

Her sisters had already converged on her, scared and demanding she do something. As the elder here, she was expected to keep the others safe. How the hell was she supposed to do that? Any other were and she would gut the damn thing first chance she got, no question. She wasn't sure she could do that to Terrance, as much as she wanted to. *Gods, life would be so much easier if he was just gone!*

She still hadn't called Leticia back either and there wasn't much time left where there would be cell service on the cruise. She didn't know what to say, so she didn't call. She couldn't very well admit she knew who the were was on the ship and a part of her was happy about it because she wanted to throw him down on her bed and fuck him out of her head.

Half-expecting Terrance to walk into her room at any moment, Emmalia lay on her bed for hours, well past the chance of calling anyone. Eventually she dropped the useless phone and closed her eyes. Not falling asleep, but waiting and trying to decide what she would do when he undoubtedly walked in.

He never showed up and sometime before dawn, Emmalia fell asleep, waking up a few hours after the sun, still alone in her room. She sat up, confused, and as much as she hated to admit it, disappointed. Just because she was hoping to deal

with him right away and enjoy her vacation, she told herself, not because she wanted to see him up close again. She did not want to see if the fire he could set off in her body was as intense as she remembered.

Emmalia closed her eyes as her body heated at the memory. The way he had touched her, his voice, the feel of his body consumed her. She wondered what it would be like to fuck him, *what kind of a lover would a werewolf be?* Intense, she decided, wild and animalistic. It would be an all-consuming kind of passion, something she wouldn't walk away from unscathed.

Her chest rose and fell rapidly and her hands gripped her bare thighs. *His hands would be rough, abrasive against my sensitive skin.* Moving her hands higher, she felt her damp panties and moaned. She needed some release.

Moving quickly, she pulled her panties off and sat up in bed, crouched, her knees high and wide, one hand on the headboard for balance, one hand at her clit. A snap of her fingers and a simple thought brought the vibrator from her suitcase to her hand. She would be slightly green from the use of the magic, but it was a simple spell and would wear off quickly. She wasted no time, she needed a release and she needed it now. She turned the vibrator on high and plunged it deep into her wet cunt. She moved it with swift hard

strokes, gasping and moaning, thrusting her hips to meet it. Pulling it out, she rubbed it against her sensitive clit until her thighs were trembling and her toes were curling.

An image of brown eyes rimmed with glowing yellow filled her mind and her rhythm faltered. Her eyes popped open and scanned the room. She expected to find him there. Her nipples tingled for his touch and she wet her lips in the hopes of his kiss. She was alone though, alone and so in need. She took a breath and closed her eyes, concentrating on the feel of the vibrations, the sensation of penetration.

She let her mind wander. It settled on those intense eyes.

She shoved the vibe deep again and felt the walls of her cunt contracting around it, starting to come. "Fuck..." She groaned as wetness poured from her and her body tensed and released.

She collapsed on the bed, a panting, sopping mess of satisfaction. A sigh of contentment left her lips. She took a deep breath, paused and choked as she rushed to sit up and look about the room. She had smelled him, strongly.

"Terrance?" she called out to the empty room as she pulled the sheet up to cover her naked bottom half. There was no answer, but she wasn't convinced. After a few more minutes of no response, she began to wonder if she had

imagined it, wished for it after fantasizing about him helping her with that intense orgasm. *Had my mind really fabricated the scent of him?*

More than a little disgusted with herself, she went to the shower, hoping the scalding water and soap would wash away her guilt. It couldn't though, so she stood under the hot spray and groaned. It was a betrayal of her sisters to want a werewolf so much. She needed to rid herself of him, mentally and physically. The only way was to kill him and the thought twisted her gut.

She had to do it, she resigned herself quickly to that fact. His death was the only way. It wouldn't be easy. She had to take his head, which meant she had to be close to him and he had to have his guard down. A werewolf was always on the edge of exploding, there was no way, unless he was asleep maybe. She could always use herself as bait. Draw him close, then take his head. It was risky to go after him alone, but she wouldn't enlist her sisters' help. She couldn't put them in danger like that, not over something that was her fault. She had brought this terror on them all and she was the elder here. She was in charge of their safety.

"It smells like sex and werewolf in here, Emmalia."

Emmalia jumped when Selene's voice came through the bathroom door. "The entire ship

smells like werewolf, Selene, we figured that out last night."

"Yes, but still, seems fresher in here."

"It's your imagination, I didn't smell anything different." Emmalia hated to lie, but she couldn't admit she had thought the same thing earlier. Had Terrance entered the room while she was masturbating? If he had, why hadn't he said or *done* anything? Was he not here to claim her as mate? *He must be here to kill me. I angered him too much by running away.*

With shaking hands, Emmalia finished her shower and dried off. By the time she left the bathroom and saw Selene waiting for her there, she was visibly calm. Her insides were knotted though and it would be hard to hide that from Selene.

"I'm so ready to go up on the top deck and drink and sunbathe! This vacation is going to be awesome," Emmalia chattered as she pulled on a bathing suit.

Selene sat quietly and watched. "What is going on, Emmalia?"

"I don't know what you mean. Do you have your suit on?"

Selene looked like she wanted to say more.

"Just leave it, Selene," Emmalia pleaded.

Selene narrowed her eyes at Emmalia, obviously angry but she nodded in agreement.

"For now," she said.

"Alright, let's go soak up some sun and I need a drink."

"Me, too, apparently."

The two made their way through the ship up to the top deck. It was already crowded, as early as it was, but she didn't see any of her other coven sisters. "Where is everyone else this morning?"

"Gabby and Kamea are still sleeping. Well, at least they're still in their room. They took a couple men in there with them last night. Novalee, Marlis and Yadira were going to hit the breakfast buffet when I was headed to your room."

Emmalia settled into a deck chair, glad to hear no one was worried about the scent of werewolf on the ship. She would hate to have anyone else's vacation ruined.

Emmalia excused herself from dinner early. She just couldn't take any more of the attractive males hitting on her. It was flattering, subtle for the most part, and was everything she had wanted when she thought about this trip. Yet she couldn't bring herself to return the flirtation and pick one, or two, of them to take back to her cabin.

She couldn't even pretend she didn't know what was wrong with her. It was the scent of werewolf, of Terrance, that seemed to cling to every man she came into contact with. If she

didn't know better, she would say he was rubbing himself against every attractive male on this ship. Since he couldn't mark her for them to smell and know she was taken, he marked them, so she couldn't possibly forget the very real possibility that he was on this ship somewhere. Waiting to either kill her or claim her, she wasn't sure which idea was more terrifying.

Damn him, whatever his plan, it was working. So she was heading back to her cabin, early and alone. She couldn't take any more of the frustration. Couldn't smell him again when she looked into the flirtatious eyes of an attractive man.

When she walked into her cabin, the smell of Terrance was stronger than usual, as if he were still there. Emmalia slammed her door shut and threw her boots off as she walked toward the bed. She collapsed with a resigned sigh.

"Kill me, Terrance, if that is what you're here to do. Just stop torturing me with your scent all over the fucking place!" she called out to the room on the hunch he was listening.

"Is that really what you want?" Terrance's rough sensuous voice slid over Emmalia and she shivered.

She rolled to her side to face the direction of the voice and saw him slip through the wall from the bathroom as if he were walking through air. It was

creepy, and yet the sight of him made her body react as if it were the most erotic thing she had ever seen in her life. Her nipples hardened and her panties dampened. "For you to stop torturing me, yes," her voice was weak and she cleared her throat, trying to focus.

"Is it torture to smell me all over the place?"

"You're an animal, marking your territory. Except the humans around here can't even sense it so you're wasting your time." Emmalia was impressed with how flippant her words came out this time. Inside, she was still struggling. The desire to rush him and kiss him was fighting with the desire to run away from him screaming.

"It isn't for the stupid human's benefit that I have been spreading my scent about." He arched a black brow at her and she felt her toes curl. He exuded confidence and it was so attractive.

If he had been anything else, she would be all over him right now. She would be dragging him to the bed and tearing at his clothes, wanting him to prove that his confidence was founded on sexual fact, prove that he really could do all the things his voice and eyes promised. "I figured as much. So what is your plan? You have me here, alone." Emmalia licked her lips, knowing it would entice him. She couldn't help it, she wanted him so badly. If he was about to rip out her throat, she wanted to at least know what it would be like to

have his hard body against hers before she died.

A deep rumble emitted from Terrance's chest as he took a step forward, his gaze locked onto her lips. "I'm here to claim my mate. Will you deny me?"

Emmalia's throat closed, she gasped and sputtered as she tried to respond. She hadn't expected this. *Is it some kind of trick?* "I'm not your mate, Terrance. Witches don't mate."

"But weres do and I'm one hundred percent were. Raw, animalistic and completely focused on my mate. Nothing will turn me away until I claim her, mark her and make her mine for all to see." Terrance approached the bed as he spoke, his gaze now locked with hers.

Emmalia was panting, unable to speak as her body trembled with the desire to have him, the need to be claimed by him. *What the hell is wrong with me?* She wouldn't deny him. She knew it even as she assured herself that this was sex, not mating.

Terrance kneeled beside her on the bed. "Will you deny me, Emmalia?"

"No," she whispered, falling onto her back. "Just don't mark me," she added at the last minute, as his body moved to cover hers.

He held himself above her, his eyes flashing yellow. "I want to bury myself in you more than I want to breathe." He moved closer, his nose

brushing against hers, his gaze even more yellow and intense now. "To take you and not mark you would be impossible."

"Th-then don't take me," she stuttered, ashamed at her own weakness. She should be pushing him away right now, not offering to let him have her, *just a little bit*. It was ridiculous and deep down she knew that. She just couldn't help herself from wanting it, wanting to feel him move inside her, his cock pounding into her while she gave herself over to an intense orgasm. He would mark her though, and she had no desire to be owned by him.

Terrance growled, his eyes turning almost completely yellow.

Emmalia had a moment's fear that he would merge and rip her apart right there. Her sisters would come in and find nothing but a pool of blood remaining, werewolves ate their kills most of the time. Thick fear filled her and she knew he would be able to smell it. Animals could sense fear like hers, reveled in it. He would no doubt lose control. He wouldn't be able to help himself.

As these thoughts filled her mind, she began to panic. Her palms were slick with sweat and gripping the sheet. Her breaths were nothing but shallow pants that left her lightheaded. In that moment, she was convinced she was going to die and just hoped her death would save her sister's

lives. Yet she was unable to draw up her magic, unable to think of a single spell to cast to save herself. As if her being rejected the idea of killing him.

She was choking on panic now. His lip curled back in an angry sneer and he leaned closer, his nose brushing hers. She wanted to scream, but wouldn't give him the satisfaction.

"I can smell your fear, I know you're trembling with a mix of desire for my body and fear that I will rip out your throat."

His voice was angry, dripping hatred as he spat the words at her. Emmalia bit her lip, trying to swallow her fear. She couldn't.

Terrance opened his mouth, but whatever he was about to say was cut off by a loud knock on the cabin door.

Emmalia looked from the door to Terrance's angry face above her. It had to be one of her sisters. If they came in, Terrance would kill them, or they would try to kill him. Neither possibility appealed to her. Another knock had Terrance growling in the direction of the door. Her panic for herself subsided a bit, her suffocation eased as she feared for her sisters instead of herself.

"A witch," Terrance whispered.

"One of my coven sisters."

"Emmalia! What is going on? I smell....dog and I'm coming in in five seconds if you don't open

up."

It was Selena and Emmalia knew she wasn't kidding, she would barge in, she could surely smell Terrance. "A locked door won't keep her out, Terrance."

Terrance narrowed his yellow eyes at her. "Get rid of her."

"How?"

"Emmalia!" Selene called again, knocking loudly.

"Or I will come back and kick her little witch ass off the god damn boat!" Terrance's words were as threatening as a roar, even though they were whispered.

Just as the lock slid open on the door and Emmalia was getting ready to scream for Selene to not enter, Terrance disappeared. Well, more accurately, he fell through her and the bed and she didn't know ultimately how far down. Emmalia felt a warm rush as his body passed through hers, it left her cold, shaking and terrified.

Selene's deep purple eyes were wide and wild, her gaze locked on Emmalia on the bed and she rushed to her.

Emmalia couldn't move, couldn't speak at first. She just stared up at her best friend for a moment and thanked the universe that she was still alive to see her. Emmalia gathered herself quickly and sat up, wrapping the comforter around her shaking

body. "Selene, you have to leave."

"Fuck that! What the hell is going on?" Selene's voice was high with worry and her hands were up, ready to cast death toward any danger she could find. Selene was the best death witch in their coven. Most witches had power that was general and unfocused, but some were born with extra ability in certain areas. Selene's death power made her dangerous and likely to be picked as next coven leader. Their current leader, Leticia, was a mind witch, her powers of messing with the minds of others was unparalleled. Emmalia's own mother, Rose, was a healing witch, a power Emmalia had always wished she'd passed on to her daughter. Emmalia had never shown any signs of specialized power. Their's was a powerful coven to have three witches within it who had specialized powers. It was why they were so large at eleven sisters. Why they were feared by other covens and sought out by many warlocks looking to breed was obvious.

"Selene, you can't stay in here, it's too dangerous."

"I agree, let's go. The stench of werewolf is so intense in here. Werewolf and..." Selene let her eyes flutter shut as she breathed in the air of the room, her mind analyzing the subtle scents. "Oh my God, Emmalia, why do I smell mating in here?"

Selene fell on the bed, her face buried in Emmalia's skin, smelling her neck, arm and thigh. She rocked back on her knees and glared down at Emmalia. "You don't smell as if you've been mated, but the scent is in the room, as if a rutting werewolf were here."

Emmalia closed her eyes and took a steadying breath. "Please, Selene, just leave."

"What have you gotten yourself into, Emmalia?"

"It's nothing, I can handle it."

"Sure, and I can refuse to leave until you stop lying to me. I'm not afraid to use magic against you to keep you safe."

Emmalia gasped and swung her gaze up to her friend. It wasn't forbidden to use magic on another witch in the coven, but Leticia frowned upon it and it was rarely done. "Selene I assure you—"

"You're insane. You're obsessed with a werewolf and obviously in trouble. I won't walk out of here without you." Selene leaned forward, her gaze intense and locked with Emmalia's. She mouthed, *is he here right now?*

Emmalia shook her head. It wasn't a lie, she was almost certain he had gone all the way through the floor. "No one is here except you and me, Selene. I—I can't tell you what's going on. I don't really know, but you're going to have to

trust me.”

“Angry werewolves go on killing rampages, Emmalia. Happy werewolves kill for fun. All werewolves are dangerous. Don’t let lust blind you to that truth.”

“You don’t know what you’re talking about, Selene. I order you to leave this room right now and not say a word of this to anyone.” Emmalia pointed to the door with a shaking finger. She hated to use her new position of power, especially against her best friend, but what choice did she have? She had to protect Selene against Terrance and her own insane lust for the werewolf. “And I forbid you to mention your unfounded fears to anyone else, Selene. We don’t need a panicking bunch of witches in a confined space like this.”

Selene glared at Emmalia, but she moved toward the door without a word. She had to respect Emmalia’s orders. It came with being an elder. “I love you, Emmalia. I don’t want to see you chewed up.” Selene opened the door and looked back at Emmalia. “Promise you’ll tell me if you get in over your head.”

“Thank you, Selene, I love you, too.” She couldn’t promise though, she was already in over her head, drowning with conflicting feelings. She refused to bring Selene into it though. She wouldn’t drown her sister along with herself.

Selene gave Emmalia a half-smile and started to

walk out the door. She didn't get more than a foot out before a hysterical Gabby was throwing herself against her.

Emmalia rushed off the bed, all thoughts for her own situation vanished in light of her sister's obvious distress. Selene was holding Gabby who had gone limp in her arms. "Bring her to the bed," Emmalia ordered and helped Selene lay their sister down gently. When Selene pulled back, Emmalia gasped at the sight of blood covering the front of both her sisters.

"What happened?" Selene whispered shakily, staring down at herself.

Emmalia pulled at Gabby's clothes, looking for the injury. Gabby's entire stomach was lacerated, deep gashes and claw marks. "Shit, Gabby, Gabby, can you hear me? What happened?" Emmalia shouted into Gabby's face, shaking her.

Gabby groaned and moved her head. Emmalia stopped shaking her, but continued repeating her questions.

"Oh God, Emmalia you have to get away," Gabby said weakly.

"Why, Gabby? What happened? Who did this to you?"

"Claws...oh God that awful face..."

"Gabby, what was it?"

"You have to get off the ship, it will kill us all." Gabby's last words were a whispered gurgle.

Blood poured from her mouth as she choked on her last breath, spraying blood over Emmalia. Her insides must have been destroyed for the wounds to have killed her. The easiest way to kill an immortal was to take their head, but enough damage done to the vital organs would also do it. It was rare, difficult and painful. Whoever had done this knew exactly what they were doing. They wanted her dead, but they wanted her to suffer first.

Emmalia sat back, trembling and wiped an unsteady hand across her face. She stared down at the crimson stains for a moment and panic welled up inside her.

Selene's panicked gaze landed on Emmalia and she swayed a little. "Let's go, Emmalia, we have to get everyone off this boat before he gets to them."

"He?"

"Your werewolf friend. You heard Gabby, we have to get off this ship, now!"

Emmalia could only shake her head. There was no way Terrance had done this. *Was there?* She looked down at her dead sister, the obvious claw marks that marred her beautiful skin. *Had Terrance done this in his anger because I denied his claiming?*

Selene grabbed Emmalia's hand and started to pull her out of the room. Emmalia pulled away. "Gather the others, bring them back here, we are strong together, Selene. *Whoever* did this won't be

able to attack us as a group." Selene looked doubtful, but Emmalia wasn't budging. "Go!"

Selene rushed out the door and it slammed behind her. Emmalia took one deep breath and turned back to the body of her sister. *Is this my fault?* Such a short time in charge and she had already lost a sister. Leticia was going to kill her and she would deserve it.

"What the hell happened here?" Terrance's voice startled her.

She jumped and twirled around, hands going up defensively. Terrance growled and hunched forward as if he were about to launch himself at something. Emmalia's heart rate soared and she wanted so badly to run. Terrance sniffed the air, his eyes slightly yellow. "Where is the danger, Emmalia?"

"Did you do this?" she whispered.

Terrance growled and his yellow eyes narrowed. "I have no reason or desire to harm any of the witches, Emmalia."

Relief flooded her, she'd been fairly certain, but hearing him say it, she knew he hadn't. Somehow she doubted he would ever lie to her. He hadn't yet, even to get into her pants he hadn't said he could and would refrain from marking her.

"What is going on here, Emmalia?"

"I don't know, Gabby just came here like that. Selene went to gather the others. Terrance, you

should go, it will upset them to have you here. They won't believe you didn't do this."

"Like hell I'm going to leave. You will be in my site from now until forever, Emmalia. I won't let harm come to you."

His words were so sure, so fierce she believed he meant them. "Terrance I—"

"Don't think to argue with me, Emmalia. I will drag your ass out of here to safety if I have to. You won't be getting rid of me. Besides, you will need my help to defend your coven against this attack."

"We don't even know what it was. It may not be directed at us."

"It's not random, Emmalia. No mortal could have killed her, you know that. The only thing she couldn't have been able to protect herself from is an immortal attack. It wasn't me and if it wasn't one of your sisters..."

"No! Of course not."

"Then accept that I'm going to be here to help protect you."

"And my coven?" Emmalia couldn't believe she was thinking of accepting his help. It was insane and unheard of, but she was not about to risk losing another sister while she was in charge. The thought of having him close, guarding her, it was too tempting to pass up. She still craved his touch, still wanted to experience him. If only he could take her without claiming her.

"It would hurt you for them to come to harm, the same as it would hurt me if my pack was attacked. I will do what I can to protect you all, but mostly you, Emmalia. You are the one I need safe, if anything happened to you, it would destroy me." Terrance had closed the distance between them as he spoke the words.

His eyes were so intense, she was left with no doubt in her mind he was telling the truth. It was terrifying and it warmed her. Emmalia closed her eyes and took a deep breath to focus. "Okay, but it will take more than a little convincing for the others to accept you."

"I heard you order Selene out of here. I don't see their acceptance as a necessity or a problem."

"I can't order them to accept you, Terrance. That would be too difficult for them."

"You could always tell them the truth."

"Which is?"

"I'm your mate and therefore they must accept me. It is what would keep my pack from wanting to harm you." Terrance's fingers stroked her hair as he spoke, his mouth tilting up at the edge in a small smile.

"I will do no such thing. Witches don't mate." Emmalia stepped back. She needed to keep her distance from him. Whenever he was close, she wanted to melt into him, let him do as he pleased with her. *When in my life have I been so submissive?*

It made no sense and went against everything she believed about who she was.

"I think you will make a very good mate, Emmalia."

"Not if I'm dead, or you are," she reminded him, motioning toward her dead sister on the bed.

Terrance's face hardened and his eyes cleared. "I won't let harm come to my mate." He approached the bed and knelt, putting his face close to Gabby's body.

Emmalia watched as he sniffed at the wounds, then stood silent for a moment, seemingly deep in thought. He nodded at nothing, then turned to her.

"What?"

"There is a scent on her I recognize...selkie."

Emmalia gasped, those ugly seal creatures had done this to her beautiful sister. "Are you sure? They almost never venture out, and aren't really known for attacking other immortals."

"That's not entirely true. It's just never been proven. They keep mostly to themselves, but the mermaids are convinced the selkies are the ones responsible for killing all of their men. They're jealous creatures. They attack beauty. I'm not surprised they would come after the witches next. Think about it. The mermaids were known as *sea sluts* and witches...well, you guys don't have the best reputation either."

Emmalia glared, daring him to continue his line of reasoning.

"Anyway, I smell selkie on her. Why she was attacked, I can't say for sure and it doesn't matter. I want you off this ship and out of the ocean as soon as possible."

"I agree. I don't want my coven in danger."

"Where the hell are they?"

Emmalia bit her lip anxiously. It hadn't been that long, but they should have been here by now. The death of their sister would have been felt and they would want to gather up and see what happened and grieve. It worried her. "What happened to the mermaids?"

"No one knows. It is assumed all the males were caught and killed. The females retreated to land and haven't been back in the ocean much since."

"Over jealousy?"

"Have you seen the selkies?"

"Yeah..." Emmalia had met one selkie in her life and she hadn't been able to hide her shock at the creature's face. She hadn't been wearing her seal skin so she was in human form, but her skin was still grey and when Emmalia had accidentally brushed against it, she'd been disgusted by its slippery feel. Her round face had been flat except for her protruding snout, almost pig-like in appearance. Her eyes had been huge and

completely black. Emmalia hadn't hidden her dislike and now wondered if this was revenge for that offense so many years ago. "Perhaps we should go find my sisters." Emmalia turned to the door, but it flew open before she could get there.

Selene rushed in, followed by Kamea, Marlis and Novalee. They all stopped, pressing themselves against the door when they saw Terrance who currently had his hands on Emmalia's shoulders.

"Where is Yadira?" Emmalia asked, stepping forward, purposefully breaking the contact.

"What the hell, Emmalia? Why is he here and not dead?" Selene demanded.

"He's going to help us."

"Fuck that!" Novalee said and a lamp flew from the side of the bed.

Luckily Terrance was quick and moved just in time. It crashed into the wall nearby and he growled, but didn't move to attack.

"He didn't do this, I assure you. Where is Yadira?" Emmalia demanded again.

"Gone," Marlis whispered. Green tears filled with powerful magic slipped from her eyes and charged the room.

Emmalia closed her eyes and concentrated on the ball of grief inside her. She'd been ignoring it on purpose, trying to stay sane as she dealt with everything. She looked at it now, embraced it and

realized Yadira was there, too, her life had been taken. Their powerful coven was now two less and it was all her fault. Emmalia pushed the grief aside and opened her eyes, determined to fix this.

Terrance was behind her again, his hands offering her support in their heavy weight on her shoulders. She didn't step away this time, knew she was going to need his help. "We're going after them."

"Who? And why can't we get rid of that fucking dog?" Selene demanded.

"Terrance is going to help us go after the selkies. They did this."

CHAPTER THREE

Emmalia managed to negotiate a very thin truce with her sisters. They believed Terrance hadn't killed their coven sisters, but they didn't believe he wasn't going to harm them. Selene knew, she could see what was happening and she knew Emmalia was weak for this particular werewolf. She lovingly offered to kill him for her, but Emmalia refused. She didn't want to harm him, didn't think it was fair. He was only trying to help them, for now. She made Selene swear to keep the knowledge to herself of Emmalia's desire for the beast. She would die of embarrassment if her entire coven knew.

They searched the ship together and came up empty. The selkie had left after killing the two witches. That didn't mean it wouldn't come back, as Terrance reminded her firmly. They needed to get out of the ocean and prepare to go after them.

"The council will help. It's what we're here for. We want to make and keep peace between the

species," Terrance told them. He wanted them to go meet with the council before setting out to do anything he would consider stupid.

Emmalia knew they would need all the help they could get, especially since the selkies were likely based underwater. It would not be an easy place for the witches to get to.

So they pushed their sister's bodies into the sea that night with a blessing sent out into the universe for their successful reincarnation to the world. The somber group stayed together in Emmalia's room. Terrance stayed, too, their *guard-dog* as the others not so lovingly put it. He lay in front of the door and the five witches cuddled up on the bed. None of them really slept. For immortals, that wasn't unusual. They didn't need much sleep per day and could easily go a few days without it.

The next morning they were the first off the boat at port and they wasted no time in getting to the airport. Flying from Puerto Vallarta to Portland should have been simple, but there wasn't enough room for all of them on the earliest flight.

"We will only be a few hours behind you," Selene assured Emmalia. "You go, and take that dog with you because he won't stay behind without you and I have no desire to spend more time with him."

"I don't like us separating."

"We are fine. You need to get to the council. I think maybe the rest of us should head to San Francisco anyway. We haven't been able to contact Leticia and that worries me. She is probably freaking out right now, feeling the loss of two coven sisters."

"You're right. Okay, you guys go to San Francisco and tell Leticia everything. I will get to the council and plead our case."

Selene pulled Emmalia away from the group. "Are you certain you're okay with him, alone?"

Emmalia looked back at Terrance. He was glaring in their direction. "Yeah, I'm sure he means me no harm right now."

"It's not necessarily the harm I was talking about."

"I don't intend to sleep with him, Selene. I don't want him to feel any more *mated* than he already does."

Selene looked doubtful, but nodded and gathered the other girls and went off to get their tickets to San Francisco.

"Just you and me," Terrance whispered in her ear as she watched them walk away.

A shiver of anticipation went through her. She walked quickly away from him. The flight was going to be torture, so close to him with no hope of escape. At least surrounded by humans he

wouldn't be able to bother her too much...she hoped. He had been respectful since her coven sisters had joined them. Hadn't said or done anything to try and get her in bed with him. She had a feeling that was going to change now that it was just them and a bunch of meaningless humans.

* * * *

Terrance smiled as he followed her. She was swinging her delicious ass as she stalked off in a flustered huff. He knew he got to her, in a good way. He had a very limited time to stake his claim on her. If she reunited with her coven leader, it would be nearly impossible. He had spoken with Paxton earlier, letting him know what the situation was and that he was bringing in the witch he wanted instated as representative. Paxton had informed him that Leticia was there requesting herself to be instated as witch representative. Paxton had yet to make a decision, but agreed that Emmalia was a better candidate. Terrance didn't tell Emmalia, didn't want her to know she would have her leader's support so soon. It might harden her resolve to resist his charm.

If you had more charm, maybe she wouldn't be having so many doubts in the first place, his wolf

thought to him.

Terrance ignored his wolf and closed the distance between himself and Emmalia. "We have a couple hours to kill before the flight, let's get something to eat. I'm starving."

"Good idea, wouldn't want a hungry wolf sitting next to me on a plane."

"Oh I will still be hungry," Terrance drawled and his gaze landed on her breasts, visible out the top of her low cut t-shirt.

"Animal," she huffed.

He didn't miss the hardening of her nipples or the slight smile on her lips as she rushed to stay a step ahead of him.

As much as she wanted to be, she wasn't indifferent to him and that thought made his mood brighten. He followed her to a café in the airport where they ordered beer and pizza. He ate three quarters of a large pizza and drank three beers. She stared at him in shock as she nibbled her second piece of pizza and finished her first beer.

"I'm insatiable," he drawled, then stood up. "I'm running to the men's room and letting Paxton know when our flight lands. Stay here." He knew the order would grate on her nerves, but she nodded through her glare.

Terrance dialed his brother. He needed some assistance with this plan he was formulating.

"What's up brother, when you returning?" Ian barked through the phone. He was not happy about having to be the interim council member while Terrance chased his mate around.

"I need your help."

Silence for a moment. "What do you need?"

Terrance knew his brother would do anything for him, would happily and willingly kill and steal and threaten. Especially if he knew it was all in the name of mating. He'd had a difficult time with his own claiming. His mate was Alexia, a half-vampire, half-werewolf. She was the daughter of Tarquin, the alpha of the Oregon pack, and Zyra, his vampire mate. Terrance was glad his own situation was a bit less complicated.

"I'm coming home and I'm bringing my mate."

"Fuck yeah!" Ian shouted.

"There's a problem."

Ian laughed. "There always is, brother. What do you need from me?"

"I need our plane detoured. I know that if I have alone time with her I can claim her."

"Done."

Terrance loved his brother, absolutely no qualms about a few dirty deeds for a good cause. He gave him the flight information, then hurried back to Emmalia.

They boarded their flight without issue and the first leg went smooth. Landing in Houston, they

had to change flights.

"I'm sorry, but this flight was overbooked."

"What? That's ridiculous we have tickets," Emmalia argued with the flight attendant.

"I understand that, ma'am, but this happens sometimes. We just have to push you back to the next available flight. It leaves at six tomorrow morning. I'm sorry for the inconvenience."

Terrance saw Emmalia's hands ball into fists and he pulled her away from the desk. "Not a problem, we will just go to a hotel to rest for the night."

"I'm going to fix this," Emmalia whispered.

"You can't. What are you going to do? Blow up her computer?"

"I'll just make her forget she saw us and we will walk onto that plane."

"You're crazy. If it's a full flight, then we won't go unnoticed. One night is not worth the risk of exposure. As a member of The Council of Immortals, I must advise against that."

"We can't waste that much time."

Terrance pulled her away from the crowds and turned her to face him. "Your sisters are dead, not captured. The others are together and safely away from danger. One night is not going to make a difference."

Emmalia closed her eyes and took a deep breath.

Terrance hated to be so harsh with her. She was still grieving, even if she didn't show it. "I think we could both use a couple good hours of sleep anyway."

"Yeah, I think I'm exhausted," Emmalia admitted.

Terrance led her out of the airport and caught a taxi to a nearby hotel. He got them one room, with two beds so she couldn't complain too much. She did glare at him a little when he registered them as Mr. and Mrs. Wolf.

Once in the room, she collapsed on the bed, eyes closed.

"I'm going to run down to the gift shop and I'll order some dinner, too. You rest, maybe take a hot bath."

"Okay," she mumbled with her face buried in the pillow.

* * * *

Emmalia woke to the smell of seafood and steak. Her mouth watered and she opened her eyes, feeling refreshed. Terrance was arranging plates of food across the room. His hair was damp and he wasn't wearing a shirt. He must have showered while she was in a dead sleep.

She stared shamelessly at his back, his muscles moving and flexing under his tanned skin. It was a

delicious site. She wanted to feel those muscles moving under her hands as he moved above her. The thought made her tingle, her body melted a little and her nipples hardened.

"I hope you like what I ordered. I got a variety, unsure what your favorite was," he spoke without turning around.

Sometimes being around immortals was a pain, their heightened senses made it so hard to be sneaky or private. "I'm not a picky eater and it smells delicious."

"Well then join me, please." He turned.

Her gaze ravaged his bare chest. There was dark hair around his nipples and in a large patch high on his chest, a delicious happy trail led down to the waistband of his jeans. She moaned, unable to stop herself and his cock bulged as she watched.

Terrance growled. "You had better come eat. Or I will be coming over there."

Emmalia believed it. She jumped off the bed and diverted her eyes, concentrating on the small table. "Looks good," she said, her voice oddly pitched as she tried to keep herself under control.

"Take whatever you want. I like it all."

She could just imagine that he did. He was so obviously male and animalistic. He was probably an insatiable lover, just the kind she liked and her body reacted accordingly. A new hunger took

over and her mind filled with images of their bodies entwined. Her cunt ached and she knew it would be dripping.

Daring a glance in his direction, she saw his eyes half-lidded and glowing, watching her. His nostrils flared and she knew he was scenting her arousal.

“Emmalia,” he groaned. Pain filled his voice.

She knew he must be aching twice as much as her. Aching for her and yet he sat there like a civilized beast instead of dragging her by the hair to the bed, or more likely, pushing her over the table and taking her from behind.

This last image was her undoing and she couldn’t think clearly of anything other than having him. She didn’t trust herself to speak, just stood and walked over to him. She was going to have him under her terms.

He didn’t move, just watched her. He sat back, seemingly relaxed in his seat. There was a tightness to him though and his cock was noticeably bulging and eager in his jeans. She knelt down in front of him and ran her hands up his thighs. Her skin tingled at the prospect of his touch. She had needed this for so long.

She glanced up into his eyes as she opened his pants and freed his cock. His eyes were bright around the edges, yellow with his wolf. She couldn’t hold that gaze, it was so intense. She

looked down as his cock sprung free, her hand gripped it greedily and the skin to skin contact almost burned with pleasure. If she hadn't already been on her knees, she would have fallen to them. Her mouth watered and she couldn't wait to feel the thick flesh against her tongue.

She leaned down and took it full into her mouth, moaning. His hands immediately fisted in her hair and his hips thrust up, shoving the head of his cock against the back of her throat. He pulled her up and off, she whimpered at the loss. He brought her to his lips, kissing her hard and fast, then forced her head back to look into his eyes.

"I'm taking you. You are going to be mine. Accept that."

"Y-yes," she stuttered. Her gaze was locked to his increasingly yellow one and she couldn't think straight. Her mind was mush, her body ruled. Her body wanted him, needed him and didn't care what it would mean if she let him take her. At that moment, she didn't care, couldn't see beyond the immediate relief his body was going to provide.

He smiled at her, a wicked smile that promised naughty things would be done to her. She smiled back and he pushed her head back into his lap. She greedily took him in her mouth again. Licking and sucking. She wrapped one hand around the base of his cock and the other she slid up to feel

his chest.

She slid her mouth up and down his cock, stopping to pay extra attention to the tip. His taste was intoxicating, the feel of him against her tongue addicting. She never wanted to stop. She moved back down until he was in her throat again, then slowly back up, sucking hard, wanting to torture him delightfully.

It was working. His chest was rising and falling rapidly, his hand gripping her hair was white-knuckle tight and his hips were thrusting to meet her mouth. She moaned and felt an answering moan from him, his chest vibrating under her palm.

He pulled her off his cock, pulling her into his lap and smashing his mouth to hers. This time his tongue invaded hers, claiming her mouth. His exposed cock pressed against her crotch through her jeans, teasing her. She rocked her hips forward, wanting any kind of contact she could get. Her hands were in his hair, holding him tight as she met his thrusting tongue. She wanted to crawl inside of him, wanted him to crawl inside of her. Needed to be consumed, filled and completely satisfied.

"Oh fuck, Terrance, I need you to take me. Now!"

Terrance growled, crushing her to him and standing, walked with her to the bed. He set her

on her feet and she clutched him, not wanting to break contact, but he was much stronger, easily pulling away. His beautiful brown and yellow eyes glowed at her and his hands pulled her shirt over her head. His gaze took in the revealed skin and his tongue darted out to wet his lips as if he were imagining tasting her nipples. They were hard and visible beneath her thin bra.

His head bent quickly and he latched onto one, his teeth grazing it, his tongue flicking across it. Emmalia's cunt clenched, her panties soaked and she groaned. Her skin was so sensitive. She knew she would cum so easily for him. He pulled away as her hands gripped his hair, trying to press him closer. He knelt before her and removed the bra. His hands covered each breast, pulling at her nipples.

She bit her lip and arched her back, pressing her breasts into his hot hands. He kissed down her belly, his tongue dipping into her bellybutton. Emmalia shivered. He slid her jeans down, exposing her already dripping cunt.

"Fuck, Emmalia, you are so wet," he groaned and buried his face between her thighs.

She trembled as his tongue ran across her lips but no further. She ached to open her legs and let him in, but he had left her jeans tight around her thighs, stopping her. She whimpered and dug her fingernails into his shoulders. He grabbed her bare

ass with both hands and held her still as he pushed his tongue in and ran it slow and torturously against her clit.

Emmalia's knees buckled. Terrance moved quickly to catch her. He picked her up and laid her down on the bed, removing her pants. She opened her legs for him, watching as he hurried out of his own pants. His body was everything she had imagined, long, hard and bulging in all the right places. He looked like he could snap her in half if he wanted and it made her tremble with anticipation. He was so strong, so much better than fucking a human male who only *thought* he was stronger than you. This was going to be everything she had needed since she met him.

He crawled onto the bed, up her body and bit at each of her nipples until she was squirming and crying out beneath him. Her body was beyond ready, waiting was torturing her. Her sensitive skin burned everywhere he touched her. "Please, Terrance. I need you to take me now!"

He rumbled a chuckle and kissed up to her neck, biting roughly. She knew he would leave a mark and she loved it, wanting the evidence of their fucking to be visible to everyone.

"I hope you're ready for this," he whispered in her ear. His knee shoved her legs wide and his cock pushed at her cunt. Her lips parted for him eagerly and she rocked her hips forward, pulling

him a little deeper. Terrance put one hand in her hair and the other on her hip as he moved slowly into her.

She gasped at the feeling. Never had she felt so complete, so full. He stretched her and filled her perfectly. It was like nothing she had ever experienced, and she had been with many different species. She dug her nails into his back when he was fully in her and holding himself still above her.

She looked up at him, his eyes were closed, his lips, too, thin and tight. The veins on his neck were bulging. He looked so strained, so pained.

"What is it?" she whispered.

"I'm...trying...not...to...cum...yet," he panted.

When he opened his eyes, she saw they were nearly completely yellow. His wolf was almost in control and it frightened her. She made a move to scoot away from him, but couldn't, his hands held her still and trapped, her breath came in pants as panic began to fill her.

"Stop moving, for God's sake, Emmalia, I won't harm you. The wolf is always in control when a mate is claimed the first time."

His words did little to comfort her, but he began to move in and out of her and the sensation was too wonderful to think about anything else. Her body reacted, her hips now free of his hand's hold. She moved in rhythm with him, taking him

deep, feeling him slide in her cunt and rub against her g-spot. Her already tight body tightened further and she knew she wasn't going to last, was going to cum any second. She didn't want to, she wanted this to last, wanted this wonderful, perfect feeling to go on. Reality was going to hurt and, in the back of her mind, she still knew it and didn't try to stop what was about to happen.

Terrance lifted his head, growling viciously and pounded into her harder, faster and without care. She met his thrusts enthusiastically, her cunt clenching around his cock as she started to cum. Terrance began to cum, too, she felt it, hot and hard, rushing into her, filling her, marking her. His scent surrounded them and she knew it was filling her, infusing her. This was what other weres would smell on her, it would tell them she was mated, that she was his. The thought was terrifying and exciting. She came again, another orgasm, intense, on the heels of the first and she screamed. A pleasure like that had never happened to her and she accepted the gift with wonder.

He seemed to cum forever, then fell, rolling and taking her atop him so he wouldn't crush her. She lay there on his chest, panting and still smelling the earthy scent that was now forever a part of her.

As her mind cleared, it began to race around,

thinking of a way to get out of this apparent mating. No matter how good the sex, it wasn't worth being forever attached to someone her coven would always fear.

"Mmmm, just what I always imagined my claiming would be," he whispered lazily against her head and squeezed her. "I never imagined her turning green in the process though."

Emmalia sat up and threw out her arm, staring down in horror at her bright green skin. It was the color that would mark her if she used a lot of magic and, as some old stories that no one believed were real foretold, it was the color a witch turned when she had sex with her fated partner for the first time.

Emmalia jumped off him and raced for the bathroom, locking the door behind her.

CHAPTER FOUR

Terrance stared at the closed door from the bed, confused. He wanted to bask in the wonder of claiming his mate, not figure out what the hell was wrong with her now. If she was having second thoughts about the whole thing, she was out of luck.

A little sensitivity might be needed here, Terrance's wolf thought toward him. He was laying outside of the bathroom door, glaring back at him.

She knew...and she made me wait fucking long enough. Did you forget what she put us through? The god damn chase across North America after captivity? I don't think we owe her any sensitivity. I...

Am an idiot, yeah so get over here and talk nice through the door. She is crying in there.

"Fuck." Terrance wanted to not care, wanted to be hard and unrelenting, be the beast she expected him to be. He just couldn't. Knowing she was crying in there broke his heart. He jumped off the bed and approached the door cautiously. As he

got close, he could hear her sniffles. Never in his life had he heard a sound that so affected him. His heart ached to go in and comfort his mate. She should never feel anything but happiness.

He put his hand on the door, but made no sound, her sniffing stopped anyway. She knew he was there.

"Emmalia...let me in, love."

"I need a little space, Terrance."

"What's going on? I warned you about the mating, gave you every chance to avoid it."

"It's not your mating...its mine."

"Well yeah, it's ours I guess if you want to get technical."

"No, you don't get it."

Emmalia opened the door suddenly and he grinned at her bright green naked body. He never could have imagined how appealing the color green would be to him.

"I fucking turned green! I *mated*, with you! Mating for a witch is supposed to be a myth, and even then it's supposed to be with a warlock, not a werewolf!" Emmalia threw her hands up and flopped against the counter. "I just don't understand." She stared down at her green body that was already starting to fade.

"I admit to knowing next to nothing about witches, but one thing I know, well thought I knew, was that witches don't mate."

"A witch who finds the one being who can perpetuate her magic like her coven can is supposed to be a myth. She will turn green when they first come together. It's a result of the magic that passes between them. But you are no magical being, Terrance, you are a werewolf."

"Not a magical being!" Terrance merged with his wolf, becoming a large black wolf, a werewolf, then proceeded to walk through the wall into the bathroom. He split from his wolf and glared at Emmalia who was watching him with more than a little fear in her eyes. "I'm a magical being, Emmalia. My magic just isn't the same as yours."

"It's not supposed to be real," she whispered.

"Then why are you green? Why did my wolf recognize you as our mate if you aren't?"

"I don't know!"

"It is what it is, Emmalia. The gods decided a long time ago that we are for each other, that is not something you can argue with."

"But why now? Why me?"

"I don't know." Terrance crossed the small space and pressed his naked body against hers. His cock was hard and ready again. He shamelessly pressed it against her and smiled when she shivered slightly at his touch. "But I do know that I'm happy about it."

"I'm not sure how I feel about it."

Terrance slipped his hand between their bodies

and dipped his fingers into her cunt. She was drenched once again and she moaned, her eyes sliding shut for a moment as he moved in her. He pulled them out, showed her the dripping evidence of how she felt, then sucked the contents off. His gaze never left her purple eyes as he did this. They darkened and her lips parted as she watched. He pulled the clean fingers out of his mouth and smiled.

“You feel ready, willing and accepting. You taste like dark honey and cinnamon. You smell like my mate. You look like the light I would follow down any dark tunnel.” Terrance kissed her tenderly, trying to emphasize how this whole mating thing worked for him. She was his everything now.

“Terrance...” She moaned against his lips and he deepened the kiss.

He wanted to ease her mind, wanted to comfort her in a way she would accept right now. He knew she would reject a hug, would push away a cuddle and scoff if he offered to listen. So he would give her one thing she couldn't possibly deny.

He lifted her and sat her on the bathroom counter, placing himself between her thighs. There was an urgency to the way she clutched at his shoulders and wrapped her legs around his waist. He recognized his mate in need, unable to stop

himself from giving her exactly what she was asking for. He buried himself in her fully with one quick movement, never breaking the deep kiss. She sucked at his tongue, stroked it with hers as he moved in and out of her cunt.

Her moans went into his mouth and with each muffled sound, her nails dug farther into his skin and the sting drove him wild. She was everything a were mate would be, rough, uninhibited and giving as good as she got. She would never lay back and let him simply fuck her, not unless she was tied down. The thought appealed to him and he briefly wondered if she would be game for that sort of play.

Another moan and dig of her nails brought him back to the present and the feel of his balls slapping against the counter as he pounded further, faster and harder. Her moans became pants and she broke the kiss to fall forward and sink her tiny teeth into his shoulder, her hands falling to his hips and her nails digging in there, encouraging his intense movements.

A delicious rush of warmth covered his cock, she cried out as she came. He held back, but God it was hard, just kept his rhythm and rode her orgasm out until she was trembling and panting, her small body pressed against him.

He pulled out of her, his cock so erect, so ready. She didn't need to be told what he wanted, she

knew. He couldn't help but think what a perfect mate she was going to be as she knelt in front of him and took him in her mouth. She stared up at him as she engulfed his cock. She took him full and deep as if it was the tastiest of morsels. She groaned and it vibrated his cock delightfully. He knew she tasted herself there and it pleased him that she seemed to enjoy it so much. She pulled back and licked him clean, tip to balls, then once more took him fully into her mouth.

One hand wrapped around the base, one cupped his balls and she moved with expertise up and down his shaft. Terrance placed an appreciative hand on her head and let loose with his own moans and groans to let her know he liked what she was doing. She moved just the way he liked and soon he felt the tightness of his orgasm coming, knew he wasn't going to make it much longer.

Suddenly he didn't want to come in her mouth, wanted to fill her cunt again instead. Needed to know he was marking his mate. He pulled her up, turned her around and bent her over the counter. He entered her from behind. Pumping once... twice...and there, held deep inside his mate's cunt, he came again, filling her with his cum and his mark. The scent of their mating filled the small space and Terrance groaned, knowing she would reek of him. Any were within a mile would be able

to tell without a doubt that she was mated and mated well.

He pulled her gently to the floor, then and curled himself around her, protecting her from the hard cold floor with his warm body. She was so small. He ran his hand over her now only slightly green body and wondered how he was going to protect such a fragile creature.

She raised her arm slightly and the comforter from the bed floated quickly to them and he chuckled. *There is no need to worry, she is small, yes, but she is a witch and she is definitely capable of taking care of herself.*

* * * *

Emmalia heard her phone ringing in the other room. She was still lying with Terrance on the bathroom floor. Terrance was snoring beside her, his arms wrapped protectively around her. She wiggled slowly away. He grunted in his sleep and furrowed his brow in distaste, but didn't wake. She peered into the dark room and jumped when she saw a black wolf fully visible in the moonlight through the open curtain.

It watched her with large yellow eyes. It was lying on the ground, head on its paws, looking very much like a tame dog. It was slightly transparent, the moon wasn't completely full,

thank God, but it was close. She glanced back at Terrance's sleeping form and wondered what he would do when the moon was full and he merged with his wolf. She knew that was a very sexual time for a were. It was the only time a female could conceive. They were driven to mate like beasts on full-moon nights.

Emmalia shivered in excitement and fear. *What will that be like?* She turned back to the room and the wolf was gone.

"Fuck," she whispered. It was in the shadows and now she couldn't see even a hint of it. She didn't like that. "Please go back to the light," she whispered into the seemingly empty room. If she at least knew where it was, she thought she would feel a little more comfortable.

It stepped into the light and sat, staring at her with its head cocked to the side.

"He says he was trying to make you more comfortable by disappearing."

Terrance's sleep-roughened voice made her jump and a lamp flew into the bathroom. It crashed on the wall behind him. Luckily he was quick and dodged it even in his half-awake state. She didn't apologize, just looked back at the wolf. "I would rather know where it is."

"He wouldn't, *couldn't* harm you. You are our mate. He would die to protect you."

"He was staring at me when I woke up."

"He was watching over us and making sure you didn't get up while I was sleeping and try to cut my head off."

Emmalia glared at Terrance, though the thought wasn't completely unprovoked. She could have if she'd wanted to. She hated that she didn't want to. "I don't think that is a worry."

"Oh yeah? So why did you throw a lamp at my head?"

"That was an accident...just a natural reaction to you sneaking up on me." Terrance put his arms around her and she leaned into him, enjoying the feel of his hard naked body.

"I know it will take some getting used to. I will always be here so hopefully you will stop ruining things by smashing them against the wall behind me."

Emmalia couldn't help giggling at the ridiculous statement. He was making light of the situation and she was glad. She didn't need this to be heavy. It was about to get very heavy when she picked up her phone that was now ringing again.

"Who is it?"

"It's Leticia, she won't be happy about this."

"Then don't talk to her, this is our honeymoon."

Emmalia pushed away from him. He didn't let her go, but did loosen up enough to let her look up at him. "That just sounds so wrong."

He smiled down at her. "But it is so very true."

He leaned down and pressed his lips gently to hers, slipping his tongue out, he licked along her lips briefly.

The fast and gentle kiss sent a jolt of desire through her body and her knees threatened to melt. "Okay," she whispered as he pulled away.

"Okay?"

"Okay this is our honeymoon and I will wait to call her back until morning."

"I like that idea." Terrance leaned in for another kiss and Emmalia's phone began to ring again. "Why don't you just answer it, she won't stop unless you do. Or I could just throw it out the window."

"Or I could just turn it off," she said with a laugh. "But it is probably best to just answer it. Get it over with." Emmalia dug her phone out of her pants pocket and looked at the blinking screen. "Can I have some privacy for this?"

"Sure, I will just be in the shower." Terrance gave her a sympathetic smile and shut the bathroom door.

Emmalia took a deep breath and answered the phone, flopping back on the bed. "Hello, Leticia."

"Emmalia...." That one word was full of accusation.

"Leticia, I—"

"Emmalia, you have broken your bond with this coven. What is going on?"

"I—I mated. I—" Emmalia wished there was some other way to say it or some other excuse. There wasn't. It was what it was and she couldn't deny it. The silence on the other end worried her.

"The werewolf?"

"Yes, Terrance. I thought it was just a myth, Leticia. Did you know it was real?"

"I have only seen it once in all my years. Would rather it be a myth. You know this means you can't come back. You're no longer a part of my coven, Emmalia. Your bond with your mate overrules your bond with me...unless he dies."

"I'm not going to nor do I want you to kill him, Leticia," Emmalia said firmly.

"Fine, you're on your own then."

"What do you plan to do about the selkies?"

"I'm a little busy trying to negotiate the future of *my* coven as part of The Council of Immortals."

"But they're responsible for the deaths of two of my—your coven sisters. That can't go unpunished."

"I don't have time for this, Emmalia. It's your mess. You were too distracted by your *mate* to realize your coven was in danger. No one wants to have anything to do with you now, Emmalia. The pain is too fresh. Maybe in a thousand years it will be better."

Leticia hung up and Emmalia stared down at the phone in shock. *How can Leticia think that?*

Guilt filled her. *Isn't part of it true though? I was in charge when two of my sisters were killed.* She had been distracted beyond belief by the presence of Terrance. It was her fault and she needed to remedy it.

She stared at her phone and debated calling the others. With a frustrated exhale, she dropped the phone. She couldn't ask for their help, they weren't at fault, and they were no longer her coven sisters.

Emmalia stared at the bathroom door. The water was still running. Terrance was her new coven. She laughed aloud at the ridiculousness of that thought. He was a fucking werewolf! He would never be able to support her like her coven sisters had. For now he was all she had though. Perhaps if she proved herself, if she evened the score with the selkies, then she could approach Leticia and the others to try and get back in, or at least get some of them to join her. She wanted her coven, even if she no longer needed them. Terrance would have to help her get them back.

When Terrance emerged from the bathroom, Emmalia was sitting on the bed with a tray of food in her lap. She gestured to a cart and smiled. "Got to love room service, they don't care what time it is, they will cook anything!"

"So what did Leticia say?"

Emmalia savored the bite of fresh strawberry in

her mouth, giving her another second. "I'm no longer a part of her coven."

"What!" Terrance exploded with anger, his eyes flashed yellow and he looked like he was about to kill anyone necessary. "How can she do that, just because you are my mate, she kicked you out?"

"It's more complicated than that, Terrance. The bond I had with her and the coven is broken. I'm bonded to you now." Emmalia didn't look up as she spoke, didn't want to see the smile of satisfaction on his face.

The bed dipped as he sat beside her, his arm went around her shoulder and he pulled her to his hard chest. They were thick arms, so strong and they circled her body. He was so warm and she melted back against him, soaking up the unexpected comfort.

"I'm so sorry, Emmalia. I can't even imagine how terrible it would be to get kicked out of my pack." Terrance kissed the top of her head. "You may not be a part of your coven anymore, Emmalia, but you are now a very important part of a pack."

Emmalia was surprised by his words, had expected him to rejoice in the fact that she was now without her coven, all the more *his*. "I'm not sure it's the same thing."

"No, I imagine it isn't. You will still be friends with them, right, and fellow witches?"

"No..."

Terrance grasped her chin and forced her to meet his gaze. "What happened, Emmalia?"

"She blames me for what happened on the ship and she's right. If I wasn't so distracted..."

"That wasn't your fault, Emmalia, you couldn't have known."

"I have to make it right, have to find the selkies." Emmalia gave Terrance her best pleading look. "I want to go after them now, Terrance. There is no reason to return to Portland first. I don't have any ties to Leticia, don't need her permission."

Terrance's eyes narrowed slightly and she wondered if she was laying it on too thick. He wasn't likely to deny helping her go after the selkies. She just didn't want him asking questions about her motives.

"Okay. Get dressed, let's go."

"We don't even know where we are going though. Where do we start looking?"

"Let me worry about that." Terrance grabbed his phone and left the room.

Emmalia frowned at the door. She wasn't sure she could trust him if he had to leave the room to make a phone call, but for now it seemed he was doing exactly what she wanted.

She headed for the shower with a smile. She would have a coven in no time.

When she emerged from the bathroom, showered and in clean jeans, Terrance was waiting for her.

"I have arranged for a few of the council members to meet us. I also spoke with Paxton. He said Leticia is there with him now. She has petitioned for herself to be instated as witch representative on the council. Originally, Paxton suggested you. She was considering it before. Now she is insisting it be herself. Paxton has no grounds to deny her except he feels you would be a better fit."

"I've never met him, how does he think that?"

"He has a vision of the council as a whole. I don't really understand it all. He has seen you as part of it, however, he has been wrong before and so he can't completely deny Leticia either."

"What if I don't want to be a part of his council?"

"You will, because I am." Terrance's words were meant to leave no room for argument.

Emmalia bristled and she curled her hands into fists, thinking of all the things in the room she could easily throw his way. She was not going to let him order her around like that. "I have no intention of—" Her words were cut off by the sound of her phone. It was her mother's ringtone. Emmalia stared at it, unsure if she wanted to answer.

"You going to get that?"

"It's my mother." Emmalia grabbed the phone and answered, hoping to hear something reasonable. "Hello."

"Emmalia, what the hell is going on? Leticia is furious. She has forbidden any of us from contacting you. She says you are responsible for the deaths, that you have betrayed us and left the coven. She is arguing with that vampire, Paxton, now about this stupid council business. I don't know why she cares. We have always been a strong coven, we don't need them."

"Your coven is down three members, mother. That is why she is worried."

"Two, you need to get your ass back here and remedy whatever this mix up is."

"I can't...I mated." Silence met her confession and Emmalia bit her lip and a green tear traced down her cheek. "I plan to make up for the deaths of my coven sisters though. I'm going after the selkies for this. They will pay."

"As you should, I will look forward to seeing you back here when the deed is done then."

Her mother hung up the phone and Emmalia sank onto the bed. There was hurt in her mother's voice and it made her heart ache to know it was her fault. She had torn her coven apart and she was unable to help. No, she reminded herself, that wasn't true. She could get the selkie who had done

this, then she would return to them, and they would heal. The coven would be strong again.

“Let’s go after the bastard,” she said firmly.

“Fine, I will tell Paxton to instate you as member of the council, seeing as this just became official council business. Keeping peace between the immortal species is our main goal.”

Emmalia narrowed her eyes at him. He was underhanded and sneaky and determined to get his way. Damn if she didn’t respect him for it though.

“Whatever it takes.”

CHAPTER FIVE

Emmalia tapped her foot nervously. She had chosen to dress particularly witchy for the meeting. She didn't need to impress any of them and certainly didn't want them to underestimate her. She wore black ankle boots with silver stiletto heels and pointed toes. Her legs were covered in purple and black fishnet thigh-highs. Above that, she wore a pair of skin tight black leather mini shorts and a purple corset top. Her breasts were bulging out at the top in a way that had made Terrance growl and order her to *put some fucking clothes on*. She had merely smiled and told him to shove it, then walked away. He wasn't going to order her around.

It was nearly midnight and they were waiting in a parking lot overlooking Canon Beach. Terrance glared beside her, his arms crossed over his chest, looking every bit the fearsome beast he was. She couldn't help smiling to herself, she had won the battle of dress code, and very easily.

Emmalia frowned, almost too easy. She couldn't help but wonder why he hadn't pressed the issue.

A movement caught Emmalia's eye and she watched as Terrance's wolf appeared and disappeared eerily as it walked the parking lot. When it was under the lights of the few lamps, it disappeared, when it was out of reach of that light and within reach of the almost full moon's light, he showed nearly solid, a large black beast with glowing yellow eyes. She shivered as its gaze turned to her briefly.

"Cold?"

"No."

Terrance gave a derisive snort and pulled her back against his chest. Emmalia immediately pulled away. His warmth was welcome, even if she wasn't cold, but she didn't want to present herself to the coming council members as a weakling in need of Terrance for anything.

"Are you nervous?" Terrance asked, grabbing her hand in his.

She hated to admit it, but the feel of his strong hand engulfing hers was comforting. She felt so small and frail next to him...but of course she did. He was a werewolf, enemy of the witches for centuries. She should feel small and frail next to his strength. What she shouldn't feel is protected and coveted and so horny! She couldn't get enough of him. They had been together for two

days and she was unable to deny him when he growled her way, which was often. His appetite for her seemed to be insatiable.

"Just anxious to get this over with. Who all is going to be here?"

"My brother, Ian, and his wife, Alexia, she is the werewolf representative, Paxton, of course, and Leticia. The mermaid representative, Rina, and her mate, the Animal Elf representative, Lucas. They mentioned something about a Water Sprite, although I haven't met her."

Emmalia couldn't help but laugh out loud at the picture his words created. "It seems unreasonable that they would all work even remotely together, Terrance. I don't get it."

"You will, when you see. There is a need for immortal species to be united. Even Leticia sees that."

Emmalia was doubtful, but didn't say anything. Unless a species was weak, such as the sprites, she didn't understand why they would want to bother with the council.

This would be the first time she had seen any of the council members, even though she was an unofficial member. Paxton had announced his intention and Leticia had threatened him. There was some kind of ordeal with a human he was apparently harboring in his basement. Emmalia hadn't asked for details. The end result had been

that the council would vote after this selkie business was taken care of.

Leticia was determined to have the spot and so she was coming along as well, trying to prove herself as the choice for witch representative. Emmalia wondered if she would feel any sort of power pull from Leticia. She had been bound to her all her life, would there be any residual bond?

Emmalia concentrated on her hand in Terrance's, felt the powerful bond they had, felt his power feeding hers. *No*, she decided. There was no way she would feel anything for Leticia. This bond with Terrance was stronger than any she had ever felt with Leticia.

A black Escalade pulled into the lot and Emmalia squeezed Terrance's hand, then dropped the connection. She needed to meet these people with self-assurance. She could feel their gazes on her through the dark windows. One purple gaze particularly intense. Leticia was pushing at her, her fingers of magic were prodding at Emmalia's mind, trying to get in, testing the bond that should have been there. Emmalia stiffened and pushed Leticia away, not expecting it to work. Leticia's magic disappeared and Emmalia grinned, she had never been able to push her away like that, the bond was truly broken.

Full of confidence now, Emmalia cocked a hip and waited.

The first one out of the car was a vampire, black hair, pale skin and blue eyes, had to be Paxton. He was stoically beautiful, dressed in black slacks, white button up shirt and black duster, everything she would have expected him to be. What she didn't expect was the almost warm smile he gave her.

Next emerged a man so beautiful Emmalia gasped. He was tall, slender and had the longest whitest hair she had ever seen. His skin was pale and luminescent, his eyes a chocolate brown. He was dressed very traditional elf, loose flowing pants and tunic. His mate followed, the mermaid, Rina. She looked like Beach Barbie, only a little more slutty. No wonder Terrance hadn't pushed the issue of how she was dressed. Rina wore a strapless hot pink minidress and silver stiletto sandals, tan skin and flashing silver eyes. She was quite beautiful. Her red curls, a little wild, around her face made her look innocent and air-headed. Emmalia could understand why a creature like that would need the protection of the council. She could also see why the selkies would hate them so much. All mermaids looked similar to that.

A tiny blue light flew out of the car, the sprite. Sprites were tiny creatures, basically what humans thought of when they imagined a fairy. Helpless luminescent creatures, they flitted around on sparkling wings. There were Water Sprites, Earth

Sprites and Air Sprites. This was a Water Sprite. Emmalia could tell by the blue light it shined. Air Sprites were white and Earth Sprites were yellow.

A huge man emerged next, brown eyes, white-blond hair and behind him jumped a white wolf that rushed to play with Terrance's. This was his brother, Ian. Ian was dressed casual in jeans and a tight fitting black t-shirt, very similar to Terrance. Another wolf jumped out, small and red, then a pretty little female. She could only be Alexia, the werewolf. She had shoulder length red-brown hair and freaky eyes, one brown and one blue. Her skin was pale as a vampire's and she was quite pretty. She wore jeans as well and a form fitting long sleeve shirt.

Leticia was the last one out. She avoided looking at Emmalia, but fussed around, straightening her miniskirt and tube top. Dressed all in black except for the blood red thigh-high boots, she was a stunning sight as usual.

"Brother!" Terrance boomed beside her and pushed her forward toward the group. He embraced his brother in a back-slapping hug that sounded like it would have broken all the bones in her back. She looked on uncomfortably as the others eyed her with curiosity.

"Emmalia, it is wonderful to meet you." Paxton stepped forward and took her hand gently, laying a chaste kiss on her knuckles.

"Yes, I'm very glad you are all here, willing to help with this situation."

"It is the council's goal to mediate such situations. I'm glad you have agreed to leave the punishment of the selkie up to us rather than by your own methods. This should help to avoid an interspecies war."

Emmalia gasped, turned and glared in Terrance's direction. He was conveniently huddled in close conversation with his brother. She sent a pinch to the back of his neck and smiled when she saw him stiffen.

"I'm sure I won't be disappointed with the punishment given," Emmalia said without emotion. She would make Terrance pay for this deceit and she would most certainly exact her own revenge on the selkie who killed her sisters.

Terrance came back to her side and slid his arm around her back. "This is my mate, Emmalia. Emmalia, this is my brother, Ian, and his mate, Alexia."

Emmalia bristled at the word mate, but didn't argue. She shook Alexia's hand and shivered at the feel of intense magic energy within her. The mixed species was an interesting thing, very powerful. She shook Ian's hand and then was introduced to the rest of the group. She had known of them all except Nawfar, the Water Sprite.

Water Sprites were aware of everything that happened within any body of water they entered. Nawfar would be able to point them in the direction of any selkie nearby. Lucas had been able to get enough information out of a Water Elf he knows to lead them here. A pod of selkies was known to inhabit one of the numerous caves along the Oregon coast. Unfortunately, Water Elves were about as social as Animal Elves and so no one had any idea where they lived exactly or how large the pod might be.

Emmalia smiled as she listened. Unhelpful Water Elves, so self-involved. They, as well as the Nature Elves, refused to join with the council, not seeing the need. She could at least respect them for that. She didn't believe the witches needed to join with the council either. Witches had always looked out for witches. Emmalia's gaze flitted briefly to Leticia. Apparently that was no longer true. Never would she have believed such hostility would be directed at her, not for anything. Of course she was raised to believe that a witch mating was nothing more than myth so obviously Leticia had hidden more than one thing from the coven.

"So what is the plan?" Emmalia asked Paxton when the introductions were complete.

"Nawfar will go in first, get a good idea of the location. Unfortunately, we can't send Rina in, too

much hostility between selkies and mermaids," Paxton said, obviously unhappy about it.

"I refuse to use my mate as bait, Paxton, it's absolutely ridiculous," Lucas stated without emotional inflection.

Emmalia watched, a bit surprised, as Rina patted Lucas's arm in comfort and rolled her eyes in Paxton's direction.

"You know I want to help in any way I can, Paxton. That is why I'm here, I will sing from a distance, draw them out. It will do just as well."

"We hope to capture at least one selkie and then Ian will pick through his mind, find out where the pod lives and if there is any known plot against the witches. Once we have our proof, we will go after the pod, if we cannot find the proof we are looking for, we will seek to contact the pod for further investigation. I know it isn't the swift kind of justice that you would like, Emmalia, but it is better this way. There is more than one pod of selkie out there and I can't destroy this pod if they are not to blame for the incident. Or if it was merely the act of one rogue selkie."

Emmalia tried to keep a straight face as Paxton explained the plan, but it was difficult. She wanted to take the head of every selkie out there. For now, she had to wait, play their game. Otherwise, she had no doubt she would find herself very efficiently contained and away from

the conflict. Terrance wanted her to be on the council and he wouldn't let her get in the way of that.

"I'm sure the right selkie will be punished, that is all I want, eye for an eye."

Paxton looked doubtful. Terrance laid a hand on her shoulder as if he meant to hold her back and Leticia looked oddly smug. Did she doubt Emmalia's ability to control her temper? Was that her plan for winning this stupid little competition? Luckily, Emmalia had no desire to win it. She just needed to play it, for now.

"Well let's not delay," Lucas prodded.

The group headed to the beach and Nawfar dipped into the water. She was down there for about ten minutes and the group was completely silent the entire time. Anxiously waiting and watching out for any human or immortal intruders. An unfortunate couple stumbled upon them during that time. Mortal though, Rina was quick to take care of them, persuading them to turn around and not come back tonight. The couple smiled brightly and walked away as if it was all they wanted to do.

Emmalia was impressed. She had never seen a mermaid's persuasion in person, only heard about it. She had to admit she had always assumed it was less than people said it was, and that the dumb bimbos of the sea couldn't hold such a

powerful weapon. In reality it was certainly not to be underestimated and yet Lucas hovered over her the entire time, as if he feared anything could harm the fragile creature.

Nawfar emerged from the water, a bright energetic blue light popping out of the surf with a barely audible giggle. She flew to them and right up in Paxton's face.

"The selkies are very near, just about two hundred yards south of here. I sense a lot of activity and many immortals. It seems like a big pod to me, though I don't know what the usual size of a selkie pod is."

They all looked around at each other, but no one had an answer for that.

"Okay, I think we will send Rina down the beach, singing as she goes, and we can sort of hang back and watch. Nawfar can float along in the water and signal us when a selkie seems to have taken an interest in Rina's presence. Then we can close in and be more than close enough, if and when the selkie comes out of the water. The key is to capture its skin. It will shed it as it emerges and it will try to stash it safely near the water. If we have its skin, we have more leverage than we need, it will do anything we say," Paxton explained.

Emmalia frowned, it all seemed a bit farfetched in her opinion.

Rina kissed Lucas quickly, then started to walk down the beach, Nawfar dipped back into the water, her blue light barely visible under the surface. All three wolves were stalking behind Rina and their group followed a distance behind and up toward the cliffs to keep from being seen.

"I don't see how this could possibly work. The selkie will sense our presence here," Emmalia whispered to Terrance.

"The selkie will likely be so focused on Rina and hiding its own skin, it won't notice anything else around it," Terrance whispered back. He slid an arm around her waist and held her tight so she couldn't pull away without making a scene.

His comforting warmth made her angry, but Rina's hypnotically beautiful voice lulled her. She almost missed the sign a few minutes later. Nawfar jumped in and out of the water a couple times, indicating a selkie closing in on Rina.

The group pressed further into the shadows, the wolves disappeared out of the moonlight as well and they all slunk forward, eyes darting between Rina's slim form on the beach and the seemingly normal sea surface. The moonlight was glistening off the waves and provided more than enough light to see a dark shape emerge from the water. It appeared a few feet behind where Rina was standing, singing and dipping her toes carelessly in the water.

Silently it slid up on the beach, a seal. Then there was a cracking, a wet suction sound and the seal skin split apart at the back. A woman emerged, naked and glistening, wet, her skin a grayish peach. Her body was slim but shapely, her breasts not large but nice and perky, too. She turned and Emmalia gasped, it was a face that no one could ever find attractive. Larger than human all black eyes took up most of her flat face. Her nose was a snout and her lips a thin line. In her arms, she held her seal skin, no doubt looking for a place to stash it while she was on land.

She didn't go far. With near silent movements, she wedged the thing between a couple larger rocks, then stalked Rina, who had started walking again. The wolves emerged from shadow and attacked the skin, all three grabbing a hold of it with teeth and pulling it in each direction.

There was an intense scream of pain and the selkie dropped to her knees, turning and falling with outstretched hand toward her skin. The wolves did nothing more, merely stood there with it in its jaws. The selkie crouched and stared with widened eyes and mouth open, panting.

Emmalia almost felt sorry for the poor creature, the fear on its face and that obviously pained scream had made her skin crawl. Emmalia stood motionless, watching the thing crouch and stare in horror.

Lucas flashed to Rina's side and embraced her as if she had been in mortal danger. It was admittedly romantic, but still an overreaction in Emmalia's opinion. This obviously young immortal hadn't gotten anywhere near her.

Their group moved cautiously forward. Paxton retrieved the skin from the wolves who sat as if they were the tamest of trained beasts. The selkie stood, her gaze shifting between her skin in Paxton's hand and his face.

"What do you want?" Her voice was weak and her arms were wrapped around herself. She looked so fragile, so harmless.

Emmalia almost felt guilty about trapping her like this.

"It's all an act, Emmalia," Terrance whispered as if he had read her mind.

Emmalia looked at him with a questioning raised brow.

"Lucky guess interpreting your softening body."

"She just seems so helpless and scared. We kind of ganged up on her."

"Selkies don't often travel alone. I would bet she has friends very nearby. They are very strong creatures, fast, with razor sharp teeth and claws. If a selkie gets its hand over your mouth, they can drown a human instantly, an immortal it will only paralyze, but still, don't go near her and don't

underestimate her. Remember what Gabby looked like because of one of them."

Emmalia's body tightened and her hands fisted. She itched to attack the girl whether or not she was the one behind the witch attack. "I'm not afraid of her, Terrance."

Paxton warned the girl to not come any closer to them, then motioned Emmalia and Leticia forward. "These witches have recently lost a few members of their coven. It was a selkie attack."

Emmalia watched the selkie's face as Paxton spoke, but there was no indication of anything. Her face didn't change. She continued to look frightened and intimidated. Emmalia wasn't moved though, Terrance had reminded her why she was here, vengeance for her sisters' deaths.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"I'm Paxton, leader of The Council of Immortals. I don't wish you any harm if you are truly innocent. I would ask that you respect that and not try to harm any of my friends as we discover your innocence or guilt."

"And how do you plan to do that?" the selkie asked rather smugly.

"We have methods. I ask for your agreement and I will take your word that you will not try to harm anyone."

Emmalia couldn't help rolling her eyes. How could Paxton actually expect a selkie to keep her

word?

"Sure, ask me whatever you want. I don't know anything about any witches." The selkie's gaze darted briefly to Leticia and then Emmalia, but focused quickly back to Paxton.

She was hard to read and it was frustrating Emmalia. She wanted to get her hands on the ugly creature and get some answers out of her the fun way.

Paxton nodded to Lucas who was still behind the selkie with Rina tucked safely in his arms. Lucas flashed behind the selkie and grabbed her by the upper arms. The selkie gasped and struggled. Her wet skin gave Lucas difficulties, but he managed to keep his hold.

"Don't struggle, or fear. We won't harm the innocent. We, as a council, intend to make and keep peace between the immortal species."

Terrance joined Lucas and they each took one arm.

"Okay, so get on with your questions. I would like to return to the sea."

Ian moved between Paxton and Leticia.

"What is your name dear?" Paxton asked.

"Ronin."

"Well, Ronin, it is very nice to meet you. Now tell me, do you know anything about an attack on some witches on a cruise ship?"

As soon as the words left Paxton's mouth, Ian

placed his hand on Ronin's forehead. She squirmed, but was unable to break the hold of Terrance and Lucas. Ian's hand never broke contact with her head. The whole thing lasted a few seconds.

Ian pulled his hand back, his eyes wide and slightly yellow. He turned and grabbed Leticia's arm with one hand and touched her head briefly with his other. Leticia stood stiff, not struggling, against his touch. Her face was intense though and her skin tinged green, she was casting a spell.

Ian growled and pulled his hand from her head. "She's blocking me."

"It is quite rude of you to try and invade me like that, werewolf," Leticia defended.

Emmalia stepped forward, but Terrance grabbed her arm.

"Don't get involved, Emmalia, we don't know what Ian saw."

"What is going on, Ian?" Paxton hissed.

"Ronan witnessed some interesting things involving Leticia. Some sort of deal to kill Emmalia."

Before the words had even settled in her mind, Terrance exploded beside her. He was suddenly merged and growling, crouched in front of her, his teeth bared at Leticia.

Emmalia didn't care, actually hoped she was about to see pieces of Leticia being ripped from

her body.

Terrance made no move and Paxton stepped in front of Leticia. "Terrance, calm yourself. This isn't how we do things." Paxton's words were calm, but firm and Terrance seemed to listen.

He stopped growling, but stepped back and pushed on Emmalia until she stepped a few paces away from Leticia. Emmalia slid a hand into his fur to reassure him. She didn't want a battle between Terrance and the council to get in the way of Leticia being torn apart.

Paxton turned to Leticia when it seemed Terrance was calm. "Leticia, what do you have to say to these accusations?"

"I have no idea what the selkie saw. Why would I have any reason to want harm to come to Emmalia? She was a very important part of my coven at the time. I was just promoting her to elder as this horrible thing happened." Leticia's words were calm and stiff.

Emmalia knew her well and knew when she was hiding something. She was definitely hiding something, but what reason would she have to want her dead? It didn't make any sense to her.

"Ian's recall of Ronin's thoughts are accurate, however, Ronin's memory might not be the whole story. I will investigate this further and you will both remain in our custody until it's resolved."

Lucas held Leticia's arm and Alexia joined him,

grabbing her other. "If you try to harm anyone here," Alexia said, "I will personally tear you apart and not care if you're innocent or guilty."

Leticia's eyes widened, but she didn't respond. A female were was more unpredictable than a male and who knew what this werewolf creature was capable of. Emmalia would have been scared if the threat had fallen in her direction. She just hoped Leticia took it seriously. She wanted Leticia to be punished for the crime against her, not anything else.

"How will you keep them?" Emmalia asked Paxton.

"There is a very nice prison under Lucas's colony. We will take them there and they will be unable to escape, don't worry," Paxton spoke with confidence, nodding at Lucas. He disappeared, along with the selkie.

Alexia screamed, Ian grunted and Leticia was running down the beach.

"She fucking burned me!" Alexia shouted and held up her hand to show the skin blistered and black.

Terrance was already after her, his huge wolf form bounding across the beach and disappearing into the shadows where she had gone. Emmalia blinked in shock, then took off after them as well, she wanted in on that kill. Two wolves passed her as she went. Well, one white wolf, Ian, and one

more furry human than wolf. That was a creature she had never seen before and assumed it was Alexia, the werepire. A beautiful mix of vampire and werewolf she was. She ran on all fours, but looked as if she could just as easily walk on two legs in this form.

Leticia would be no match for the three weres. Emmalia knew that, but she still feared. She had managed to escape Terrance after their imprisonment, though she had gotten a head start. A witch couldn't outrun a werewolf, but she could mislead them and hide.

Emmalia hung back a little, searching the shadows. She couldn't sense Leticia anywhere now that their bond was broken. She rubbed her hands together and sent up a flash of lightning. It only lasted a couple seconds, but that was long enough to reveal Leticia.

Terrance was almost on her, the other weres were off in the wrong direction. Terrance must have remembered the tricks Emmalia had played on him. He wasn't so easily fooled. Emmalia rushed forward as she heard Leticia's scream of pain and a vicious growl from Terrance.

"Don't kill her!" Emmalia screamed. She wanted justice by her hands, for crimes against her, not this. She didn't want her killed because she ran, that wasn't fair. The others were right behind her and as they reached Terrance and

Leticia, Lucas appeared next to them.

Ian slammed into his brother, knocking him away from Leticia's body. Lucas grabbed Leticia quickly and disappeared with her. Terrance turned and bared his teeth at Ian. Ian returned the growl and snapped at him, then separated from his wolf and stood with hands on hips, fully dressed, to Emmalia's surprise.

"Terrance, she must be held responsible. According to the rules of the council you are a part of. Don't let your emotions overshadow the goal," Ian spoke calmly to his brother, ignoring the snarling.

Terrance gave one last growl, then separated from his wolf and stood completely naked, his muscles bulging in anger. His hands were fisted and his eyes still glowed yellow. "That bitch tried to have my mate killed, Ian."

"Yes, and Lillian tried to have my mate killed, but she still lives. It's all a part of the changing. The changing you were so in agreement with that you became a part of The Council of Immortals."

"Fuck that," Terrance growled, but with less heat than before.

"She will hopefully live long enough to stand trial for this and be held responsible for her actions. Believe me, brother, I would much rather take matters into my own hands. Unfortunately, due to your absence, I have spent way too much

time in the company of your council and their beliefs are starting to rub off on me. I want justice done in a way that will gain the trust and cooperation of more species, not less. There are still too many against us for us to fall apart."

"I don't think I like this new you."

"Yeah well, I'm not sure I do either."

"But I do," Alexia said, grabbing her mate's arm. She was naked and when Ian looked at her, he grunted in disapproval and she was instantly clothed. A handy little trick Ian had.

"Fine," was Terrance's only reply.

Emmalia hurried to him and searched his body. When she was assured he was without injury, she just appreciated his naked form. Her body heated and she smiled. "I'm glad you tried to avenge me. Next time remember, I want to be the one to exact revenge," she whispered against his lips and kissed him.

"Well I think this means you are the new witch representative on the council," Paxton said, clearly happy about that.

Emmalia bit her lip, she really wanted to decline. Terrance answered before she could think of a polite way to do that.

"Yes she is." His words were firm and final and Emmalia didn't have the energy to argue.

She turned to Paxton. "What do we do now?"

"Well I think Leticia's mind will be free to Ian's

talents now. He can go in and find the memory and we will know for sure what was going on. From there we will decide what, if any, punishment is necessary. I assure you that if she ordered your death, the punishment will be swift death."

"And the selkie who killed my sisters?"

"We will find the selkie and they will be held responsible as well."

Emmalia was beginning to rethink her position on the council. But until she saw it done to her satisfaction, she was holding back. "Okay then, let's go."

CHAPTER SIX

It was too close to sunrise so they retreated to the safety of a nearby hotel. Ian, Paxton and Lucas went to the Animal Elf colony to question Leticia and Ronin. The plan was to go after the selkie colony that evening, as soon as they knew who they were going after.

"I don't do waiting well," Emmalia admitted to Terrance.

"I'm sure we can think of some way to pass the time." He pulled her into his arms and pressed his lips to her neck.

The only reply she could think of was a sigh of anticipation and she ran her hands over his bare back. He nipped at the sensitive skin where her neck and shoulder met and she dug her nails into his back. He growled and moved lower, pulling her dress down as he went. He latched onto her nipple when it popped free. She dug her hands in his hair and threw her head back on a moan of pleasure as his tongue flicked her nipple, his teeth

scraping it gently.

He moved to the other nipple, treating it the same. Wetness dribbled down her legs and she smiled when she remembered she hadn't worn panties today, he would love that.

He took his time, moving slowly down her belly, his tongue dipping into her bellybutton and swirling around it. She loved the sensation and shivered. Looking down at his dark head, she couldn't imagine ever enjoying this with another. That was a scary thought, just him for the rest of her immortal life. She pushed it away and concentrated on the pleasure he was bringing her. If it was always like this maybe it wouldn't be so bad.

Lower he went, growling erotically as he found she was panty-less. His tongue slid over her wet lips and she spread her legs wider, welcoming him deeper.

"Grab that chair," he whispered.

Emmalia motioned her hand and the chair slid across the floor to them. He pushed her back onto the edge of it and lifted her legs over the arms, spreading her for him. She felt so open, so exposed and he looked like he wanted to devour her.

He surprised her by grabbing one of her feet rather than going straight to her cunt. Sliding his thumbs over the bottom of her foot made her giggle, then his tongue slid around her toes and

she moaned. She snapped her fingers and the room darkened, candles flared around them. He lavished attention on each toe and then kissed his way up her leg.

His fingers dipped into her dripping cunt and his mouth pressed against her clit. His tongue flicked and swirled as his fingers pushed in and out. Emmalia held onto the back of the chair and her legs clamped down on the arms. Her body was being played so perfectly, he knew just what to do to drive her wild. His movements were a practiced attack on her senses and she was helpless against them. She felt herself gushing around his fingers and his answering moans were fuel to her building desire. Her hips began to pump with his rhythm and she wanted to grind herself against his lips.

"Oh fuck," she groaned. She knew she was close to orgasm, knew she was about to come all over him. The sensations were just too much.

"Don't hold back, this is just the first one," he whispered, then went back to licking her and fucking her with his fingers.

His words were her undoing and she clenched around his fingers, tensing, then releasing. Coming with a scream, she wrapped her legs around his head and rode him as her orgasm rocked through her entire body.

When she was settled, she growled and sat up,

pushing him onto his back. "I think it's your turn."

Terrance smiled and held her face, kissing her. She loved to taste herself on his lips and tongue. As they kissed, she slid her wet cunt along the shaft of his cock, rubbing her sensitive clit against him and trembling.

He groaned and held her hips still. "I'm trying to make love to you slowly, my love, you are not making that easy."

"Maybe I don't want it slow right now."

Terrance growled and lifted her, slamming her down on his erect cock. She threw back her head and groaned. She sat up to ride him, his hands on her thighs, one thumb rubbing her clit as she moved. The candles flickered around them as she struggled to keep a concentrated flow of magic to them. She moved with quick hard thrusts, his cock pushed so deep, filling her. She wanted him to cum, wanted it badly. She increased her movements. Slipping a hand behind her, she grasped his balls, squeezing and massaging them as she fucked him. His growl and arched back confirmed his delight at her touch and she continued. Watching his face as she moved, his gaze was locked on her and she felt as if their souls were touching. His mating scent surrounded them and she felt her cunt clench around his cock.

His back arched, his eyes closed and he howled as his cock shot hot and wet into her cunt. His

orgasm triggered hers and she answered him with another screaming release. Her body trembled and her cunt clenched, gushing around his cock. She felt her wetness cover his balls and her hand.

She fell against him, sweaty, panting and very satisfied. He wrapped his arms around her and held tight, kissing the top of her head.

"I love it when you turn green, Emmalia. It is so very sexy."

Emmalia smiled against his chest. "Well, I can't help it when I cast even a simple spell like moving the chair into position."

"I'm glad. It reminds me of our mating."

Emmalia frowned and sighed deep. She was going to miss this when she returned to her coven.

At sundown they met back on the beach. Paxton and Lucas returned with Ronin in hand.

"So what is the plan?" Emmalia asked anxiously.

"We will trade Ronin for the culprit, Grizelda. Then she will be executed."

Emmalia smiled, this was a good plan. "So how do we get there?"

"The pod resides in a cave, not underwater, but accessible only by going underwater. Aiden, the Pacific Water Elf colony leader will meet us here. He will escort Rina and Nawfar to the selkie colony to make the request. We wait on the beach

for them to bring her out and then we trade."

Emmalia was not convinced. "Why the hell would they agree and not just kill them?"

Lucas spoke up then, his face was stoic and his voice was calm, but Emmalia was certain he had to be full of fear for his mate. How could he not be, sending her straight into her enemy's camp?

"Aiden is far too powerful for even an entire pod of selkies to be a threat. I trust completely in his ability to keep Rina and Nawfar safe."

"But he isn't a part of the council?" she asked doubtfully.

Paxton frowned. "The Water Elves are not convinced joining us is necessary at this time."

Emmalia held back her giggle, but barely. She wasn't convinced either. If she had her coven, they would storm the pod and take as many lives as necessary to get a confession out of one.

They all turned at the sound of gentle splashing. The sea seemed to move, water rising up in the shape of a person. It solidified into a Water Elf. It had to be Aiden. Emmalia couldn't help gasping at the site of the elf. He was dressed only in a pair of white pants, his muscled chest bare, his skin pale and luminescent. White hair flowed freely around his body down to his knees and was surprisingly dry. Pointed ears poked out and she could see his bright blue eyes even in the dark.

Emmalia's mouth went dry and she felt her body heat, she suddenly wanted this man more than anything in her life. Wanted to feel him, taste him and drown in him.

"Aiden, turn it off, you have no need to protect yourself against these council members."

Paxton's words barely registered and the hands around her arms she barely felt as she leaned forward toward him. Then it just went away, she blinked and looked around. It seemed all the women were in the same state of confusion, except Alexia.

"I fucking hate when you elves do that crap," Alexia grumbled.

"What?" she whispered to Terrance who was still holding her tightly by the upper arms.

"Elves can make you feel a deep attraction. It's a nasty trick."

"I'm ready to escort the prisoner and your representatives." Aiden spoke without apology for his actions.

Paxton handed over Ronin and her seal skin. Ronin would not be allowed back into her seal skin until the exchange was made, but she could still hold her breath for long enough to get into the cave. Rina kissed Lucas and hurried into the water, throwing her dress back to shore. Once wet, her entire body was covered in white and pink shiny scales, a beautiful sight with the moonlight

reflecting off her. Nawfar was a bright blue light beside her and then the group was gone, below the waves.

Emmalia hated waiting. It seemed so unfair that she wasn't able to be a bigger part of her revenge. Earlier, she had tried calling her mother and Selene, but neither answered. She hated that they wouldn't answer, that they were inaccessible to her. Her mother and her best friend had been so easily taken away from her. She needed them and she would prove she was worthy of them.

As they waited, Emmalia's mind wandered to Leticia and what the punishment would be like for her. Leticia hadn't looked good when she'd been flashed away last night. *Would she even be aware that she was being punished for her betrayal? Would it be enough to tell her coven that their leader was justly punished for her crimes against her?*

Emmalia was suddenly hit with inspiration. She knew exactly how to get satisfaction out of this. She would get real justice, witch justice.

"Terrance, when we have the evidence we need against Leticia, I have to bring it to my coven. They have to be a part of this. Leticia needs to be punished our way."

"That's not the way this works, Emmalia. The council will decide the punishment."

Emmalia gritted her teeth. "My coven has a right to be a part of this. They were betrayed by

Leticia, too."

"They are no longer your coven, Emmalia," Terrance reminded her harshly.

"Only because Leticia took them away from me."

Terrance grabbed Emmalia by the arms and pulled her off the ground so they were eye to eye, his dark eyes slightly yellow with rage. "I am your coven now, Emmalia. They are no matter anymore."

"They will always matter, Terrance. They are my coven, my family."

He dropped her then and stared out over the water, arms folded across his chest. He was silent, but she knew he wasn't agreeing with her. She worried about what he might be thinking.

An hour later, Aiden returned with Grizelda and Nawfar. Grizelda looked much like Ronin only plumper and with a few wrinkles to her skin. All in all, she was very unattractive.

"It was easy enough. The selkies don't wish to be thought ill of. They were happy to exchange this guilty one for the safe return of their princess, Ronin."

Emmalia felt shock widen her eyes. She had no idea Ronin had been any kind of royalty to the selkies. Why had she been off on her own?

Grizelda was bound and in human-like form.

She refused to speak, but it only took a moment's touch by Ian to determine her guilt and that of Leticia as well. Grizelda's punishment would be swift. The council members began discussing the best way to go about this and Emmalia took their distraction as a perfect opportunity.

She snuck away quickly, covering her tracks and taking no time in getting as far from Terrance as possible. It wouldn't take long for Terrance to find her, but she didn't need a lot of time for what she planned.

* * * *

Terrance eyed the group from a distance. Stationed outside of the Animal Elf colony, they looked as though they didn't sense themselves being watched. He couldn't be sure however. Witches were crazy and unpredictable creatures. He still didn't understand completely why Emmalia had run off like she had. Was it so important to her that she punish Leticia her own way?

You need to stop treating her like a were, Terrance. She is our mate, but that doesn't make her one of us. She will never act like a female were.

His wolf's unwelcome thoughts came to Terrance and he growled. *Does that mean she has to be so unreasonable?*

It means she has to be herself. You will drive her

away permanently if you try and make her conform. I know you know what it would be like for us then.

I would never let that happen.

I hope not...

Terrance blocked his wolf and concentrated on the group below. They had started to move again, closer to the wall that surrounded the Animal Elf compound. Terrance had convinced the others to stay behind and Lucas had even agreed to pull the guard from this part of the wall for the time being. He wanted to take care of things himself. He had to do this right or they would lose her forever. Immortal life without ones mate was a horrible thing. His mother had died years ago and his father had never recovered. A were started to slowly die when its mate died. Living and knowing your mate was out there, but refused to be with you, that was an existence that could only lead to insanity far beyond anything he had ever seen.

Even Tarquin's past madness would be nothing in comparison. Terrance would never let that happen. Whatever it took, he was making things right with her now.

Eight witches lined up along the wall below Terrance. They reached out and placed their hands side by side along the stone. Terrance watched curiously, unbelieving that anything would come of this. The stones began to shake beneath his feet and suddenly he was falling, dropping along with

the stones. He somehow managed to land on his feet, face to face with Emmalia.

"Hello, love," he drawled casually.

The witches circled him and held their hands up, ready to do whatever damage they could. None threw even a simple spell his way, however, and he didn't make a move to provoke them.

"Don't think to stop us, Terrance. This is a witch matter and we intend to take care of it our way."

"Of course."

Emmalia took a step back, clearly surprised by his answer. She quickly recovered and a look of suspicion covered her features and her gaze darted around.

"Have you noticed that no Animal Elves have rushed around to stop what you are doing? It's not as if you can hide this gaping hole from them."

"We are not afraid of a bunch of self-absorbed Animal Elves."

"You should be. This particular colony is led by Lucas and Lillian. Lillian is mated to Henry, a were from Tarquin's Pack." He couldn't help smiling when he heard a few gasps from the witches. A were was always a good threat to them. "Henry is very protective of his beautiful mate and would take great offense to know you all were here and through such violent means."

"Don't try to scare them, Terrance, it won't

work. An Animal Elf mated to a werewolf is less believable than a werewolf mated to a witch," she spat the words at him and he knew she was trying to hurt him, anger him into acting out so they would have an excuse to harm him.

He wasn't going to play into her trap though. No, this was going just the way he wanted it. "If you don't believe me, fine, proceed on your own. I *was* going to offer you my protection, but if you don't want it, then fine."

"Oh, Emmalia, I think we should take him with us just in case," one of the witches whispered behind him.

Terrance smiled brightly into Emmalia's glaring face. "Fine, lead us to Leticia. It will all go faster this way."

"It's nice to see you can act reasonable about some things," Terance said cheerfully, then turned and walked away. It was a risk to show her, and the rest of them, his back, but if she hadn't allowed any of them to harm him yet, he was safe, which told him one very important thing. Now he knew she still cared for him. Things were definitely not as bad as he had feared. She just needed some convincing, and she was about to get it.

A brown were raced toward them as they cleared the woods and entered the main streets of the colony. It was day and everyone was in their

homes, resting, and had been warned about an expected intrusion.

The witches screeched behind him and one even threw a fireball at Henry's feet before Terrance had a chance to calm them.

"Fucking watch it! That is Henry and you are invading his home. If you try that crap again, I can guarantee him or his delightful mate, Lillian, will tear you to pieces!"

Henry slid to a stop in front of their group, which Terrance was trying his best to shield with his body and arms spread wide.

"They won't try to harm you or anyone else here...again." His words were said for everyone's benefit. If the witches didn't hold it together, his plan would never work because Henry really would tear them apart.

Lillian appeared behind Henry. She was beautiful as all elves were. Her white hair flowing freely around her body mixed in with the thin material of her toga style dress, her pale skin was a shade darker than the white cloth. Her brown eyes were full of light and life. She was really a nice elf he had discovered yesterday when he had come pleading for their help.

"My wall is in pieces. My peace is disturbed in the middle of the day. My mate is angry and now I have to deal with all this. Why?" Lillian's words were quiet but no less of a command.

"Are you really mated to that...beast?" Emmalia asked.

Lillian laid a hand on Henry's head and dug her fingers lovingly into his fur. "I am."

"And you two are the leaders of this colony?"

"We are, along with Lucas of course."

Emmalia pushed passed Terrance, full of confidence. "Then it is to you who I appeal. I'm the one who was slighted by Leticia. I'm the one she wanted to kill and I'm the one who took the guilt and shame of the deaths of my coven sisters as a result of her deceit. I know she is being held in your prison. I want her, want the satisfaction of punishing her the way a witch should punish another witch."

Lillian looked down at Henry, their gazes met and it seemed as if they were communicating wordlessly.

"You are Emmalia?"

"Yes."

"You are witch representative on The Council of Immortals. Why do you not wish to punish her in accordance with the council?"

"I—I'm a member, I guess, but I'm a witch first and always. I must have my coven satisfied."

"And you don't believe the council will be just in their punishment?"

"No, I believe they will kill her, she has taken two lives and threatens mine still."

"And that is not enough? You wish to torture her?"

"No, not at all. I will not make her suffer more than necessary, except with the knowledge that she is being punished. That she failed and as the one that she wronged, I will take her magic from her and her place as leader of this coven."

It was Terrance's turn to gasp and be shocked. He hadn't expected this, couldn't possibly allow this.

Wait, Terrance. Don't act too quickly. We don't know this will work against us, his wolf reminded him as he was about to grab her and run.

Terrance held back, but his good mood was gone. This was not turning out the way he had wanted. "Why must you do that?" He hated to ask, but had to know.

Emmalia turned to him, her face was solemn and she looked so determined he knew there was no hope in changing her mind from whatever path it was on.

"I owe it to my coven."

"Because then our bond will be broken?" he demanded, even though he didn't really want the answer.

Emmalia's purple gaze fell to the ground and he thought he saw a green tear slip from her eye. "Yes," she whispered. "It is the only way I can have them. If I'm not their leader, they will not be

able to take me back, will not be able to bond with me again."

"You can't, or you won't, have us both?" he growled.

Emmalia looked back up at him and her eyes were full of green tears. He wanted to grab her, crush his lips to hers and force the tears to go, but he couldn't. She wasn't really his to keep, she didn't want to be it seemed.

"Fine, go." Terrance pointed in the direction of the prison entrance. "No one will stop you. I made sure they would all be out of your way. Go get Leticia and do what you want with her." Terrance merged and bounded off as quickly as he could. He wouldn't be anywhere near when she broke the bond. It was going to kill him.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Emmalia felt as if her heart had just been ripped out of her chest. She was barely holding it together, but she had to somehow, had to be strong or this was going to be a disaster. Watching Terrance disappear, so obviously hurt, was harder than anything she had ever done. She wanted to comfort him, assure him that it would all be okay, but she couldn't, because it wouldn't be, not the way he wanted it to be. She couldn't have him and them, and she couldn't live without them, couldn't leave them. They had been her entire existence, how could you suddenly live without everything that you had ever known to live for?

She glanced back the way he had gone as their group hurried to the prison. Henry and Lillian had disappeared as well, flashed away together. They were an odd couple, but she could see their love in the way she touched him and the way he stood to protect her. It was the same way Terrance had stood between her and everything dangerous they

had encountered. Even between her and his friends. Emmalia glanced back again.

He was giving her everything she wanted. There was no one standing between them and Leticia. There was no consequence for breaking in here and he wasn't trying to stop her. He had even pointed her in the right direction. Why?

Why did he leave like that? Why hadn't he fought for me? She had expected a fight, had prepared herself for it. Resigned herself to the fact that she may have to let the others harm him just enough to keep him from interfering.

He had given up. She didn't understand it.

The prison was underground and, as Terrance had said, no one was guarding the door. The witches hesitated at the entrance, waiting for her to catch up.

"What's wrong, dear?" her mother prodded. "Are you concerned about seeing Leticia again?"

Emmalia almost rolled her eyes at how wrong her mother was. How completely unaware she was of what kind of emotional struggles her daughter was going through right now. Emmalia's entire being was focused on Terrance and her mother thought she was concerned about Leticia? She wanted to scream, wanted to cry and yell about how unfair it was.

"No, its fine," she whispered on a deep intake of breath and motioned for them to enter.

Selene stood in the doorway and frowned at Emmalia. "Why are you doing this?"

"I can't survive without my coven."

"You are bonded to him, you will survive."

"I can't thrive without my coven," she insisted.

"He is your mate. You will thrive and have children."

"I can't choose between him and all of you!" she shouted.

"Leticia will be dead in twenty minutes and you won't have to choose any longer."

Selene's no-nonsense calm answer grated on Emmalia's nerves and she pushed passed her into the prison. She hurried to catch the others.

"You know it's true so why are you doing this?"

"Because I—I—I'm afraid. Oh God, Selene, I'm so afraid. I don't even know how to begin to be something else. I'm a witch, I'm a part of this coven and I'm nothing else. How do I be his mate? How do I be bonded to him?" Emmalia wanted to crumple into a weeping ball, but settled for leaning against the dirt wall and letting the tears stream silently down her cheeks.

"I don't know either, but I do know that if I had the chance, I would find out. I would go be with him and figure out how to make it work."

"I can't just leave all of you."

"You don't have to. Your mother will take the

place of leader, she deserves it and you know that. She won't reject you, I'm sure."

Emmalia straightened away from the wall. She wasn't so sure about that. It all sounded a little too good to be true. "What happens if she does?" she asked, then ran to catch up with their group, wiping her eyes clear as she did.

They found Leticia in one of the first cells. She was aware and seemed unharmed except for a slight limp when she approached the bars.

"I'm so glad you finally decided to come get me out of here. Hurry up before they come back."

"Why don't you just break out?" Rose asked.

"These cells are dead zones. I'm powerless in here." Leticia threw her hands up to emphasize her point. Nothing happened.

Rose threw up hers and a ball of light floated there. "It doesn't seem to be affecting us out here."

"Good, so get me out then."

"Why did you try and have Emmalia killed?" Rose demanded.

Leticia narrowed her eyes.

Emmalia could tell she was debating on telling the truth, trying to decipher how much they already knew.

"I saw her destroying us, mating a beast and tearing apart our coven. We have been the strongest for so long. I couldn't let that happen," Leticia spoke without guilt.

Emmalia knew she probably felt none. Probably believed she was doing the right thing to protect her coven. As crazy as her actions were, she believed herself doing the right thing.

"I agree that her mating was an unfortunate mistake. She has asked forgiveness for it, she is ready to redeem herself for it by taking place as leader. She will take your power, Leticia. She will be our new coven leader and we will all be bonded to her."

Leticia shrieked in painful denial and Emmalia almost felt sorry for her. *It would be hell to know you were about to lose everything you had worked so hard for, everything you had lived for.* Emmalia choked on her thoughts, coughing as she remembered the pained look on Terrance's face as he turned away from her and ran off, no longer trying to stop her.

They formed a half circle around the cell wall and began to pull Leticia's power from her. The shrieks of rage and pain increased and Leticia fell to the floor in agony, writhing and clawing at the dirt as they pulled and pulled until there was a glowing ball of power held in the center of them. It was linked to everyone in their circle, except Emmalia.

They cut the tie to Leticia and her screams were silenced. She was gone. The ball of power was there for the taking. Emmalia was supposed to take it, bond herself to them as their leader and

break her bond to Terrance. If she didn't, then she would never be bonded to them, but could she still be a part of them somehow? Emmalia looked at her mother, who was smiling so satisfied with this, wanting to welcome her as their leader and forget all the Terrance *silliness* as she had put it earlier when they had planned this.

Why couldn't her mother accept her mating to Terrance? What were all the elders so afraid of? Time was running out and she still didn't know what to do. She closed her eyes and when her mind filled with images of making love to Terrance for far too few times, her decision was made.

She pushed the power forcefully and it was done, no going back. No bond would be made with her coven. They could take her or leave her, but she wanted her were.

It took a couple seconds for things to settle, but as they felt around their new bonds, they stared in shock, not at Emmalia, but at their new leader, at Selene.

"Why?" Selene whispered.

"Because you will lead them right, you won't be afraid of the changes." Emmalia kissed Selene, then her mother and then rushed out of there. She had to find Terrance, had to tell him.

She ran full force out of the prison, but she didn't go back the way she had come. She ran

instead to the large house she assumed would hold Henry and Lillian. They appeared on the porch when she neared.

Gasping, she tried to explain herself, but could only come out with two words. "Find Terrance."

Lillian gave her a slight smile and Henry barked a laugh, merged with his wolf and howled.

"Terrance will return in no time to claim you, I'm sure. Would you like to come inside and wait?"

"No, I will head out the way I came in, meet him halfway."

"If you insist, but please do come visit again soon. I would appreciate getting to know you. You remind me of my daughter." A deep sadness passed through her brown eyes and she turned and walked into the house.

Emmalia didn't have time to ask. She started running for the woods they had come through. How far could Terrance have gotten?

He had not gotten very far, apparently. As soon as she crossed the broken wall, she heard and felt him crashing toward her at full speed. She stopped walking and waited.

Huge and black as night, his wolf jumped at her. He split from his wolf in mid-leap and crashed gently into her, his arms wrapping her up. He turned as they fell and he landed on his back with her on top of him. His lips crushed hers in a

passionate kiss, his tongue sweeping into her mouth.

She responded instantly, her hips grinding against him. His bare cock hardened between them and he growled.

"I will never let you go again," he mumbled against her lips.

"I don't want you to." She assured him, then spread her legs to straddle him.

He rolled them into the shadows and ripped her leather pants in his hurry to get her naked. She was wet and ready and just laughed when she heard the material give. She didn't care about the pants, just wanted him inside of her. As soon as she was exposed, she grabbed his cock and sank down on it.

He groaned, grabbing her ass and holding her down for a moment. She sat up and he loosened his hold, allowing her to move, rocking her hips. His hands moved to her front and he began stroking her clit, circling it slowly. She bit her lip, staring down into his brown eyes, knowing she would be doing this for an eternity. The thought was welcome and she knew it was right.

She leaned forward and kissed him gently, never stopping her smooth rocking movements. "I love you."

"I love you, too," he whispered and nipped at her lower lip, pulling it into his mouth and

sucking on it. His thumb swirled around her clit faster and she was soon panting.

She sat up, arching her back and thrusting her hips hard now, wanting to feel him deeper. He grabbed her hips again, taking control and pounding into her, faster and faster. Each time she gasped or panted loudly, he pounded harder, driving himself deeper. The scent of him that marked her so clearly as his surrounded them and she cried out with the pleasure it always brought her.

He moved then, getting on his knees and wrapping her legs around his waist. He pulled her body close, crushing her breasts against his chest as he continued to pound. With so much skin to skin contact, she felt her orgasm rushing forward. His hands were on her ass now, moving her as he wanted. It was just right and drove her wild. She bit his neck and her body tensed.

"Fuck, Terrance," she groaned as her cunt clenched and gushed around his cock. She came so fast, so hard and so completely.

He answered her with a growl and she felt him cum deep and hot inside her. Holding her like that as they both panted and caught their breath, she was so happy knowing she had done the right thing in choosing him. This bond was the one she needed to worry about keeping, this was her future.

Terrance caressed her back with gentle fingertips. "What changed your mind?"

"I knew you loved me, that you cared more for me than my own mother. You were able to walk away and allow me to have what I thought I wanted. I know now you are what I need and want. You are my everything and I don't need them. I will have them as my sisters, but not my coven and I am okay with that. You are my coven," Emmalia spoke with her hands in his hair. She kissed him, slow and full of passion, showing him every bit of her acceptance and love. She knew she could spend her immortal life in his arms and be very happy.

EPILOGUE

Paxton slammed the door as he came up from the basement. That woman was so frustrating! He tried so hard to be nice, gave her everything she desired, except her freedom of course. It would have been all fine if Leticia hadn't turned out to be a psychotic witch, no surprise there really. All witches were psychotic in his opinion.

Now he had to find another way to clean her mind. She had to go back and soon! She cramped his style. Every time he brought a date home for a little sex and feeding, she started making a racket and if there was one thing a human female ran from, it was feminine screams from a guy's basement.

Just as he was settling in with a disappointingly pre-packaged blood drink, a frantic knock came from the front door. He wanted to ignore it, really wanted to ignore it, but it was quickly followed by the high pitched crying of a mermaid. Damn it, but he was a sucker for those gorgeous creatures.

Paxton straightened his clothes, downed the liquid and opened the door. It wasn't the mermaid he had expected to see there. Acquanetta and Rive were at his door. He stepped aside and they came in quickly. Acquanetta had been crying, the wetness of her tears leaving a trail of blue green scales on her face. Rive was stoic, as usual. She was a strong woman. They were both dressed in pastel party dresses and looked like Barbies come to life.

"What can I do for you lovely creatures?"

"We weren't certain where to find Rina, but we knew you lived here. There has been an attack on our family. No one was killed, but a few harmed. It was the selkies."

Paxton frowned. "I will call a meeting of the council," he assured them.

The council gathered before sunrise. "It seems the selkies have decided to act against us even after we so graciously warned them. We will consider them against us, the first immortal faction to officially become *the other side*. I suggest we double our efforts to bring the Water Elves into our alliance. Rina and Nawfar, you are responsible for contacting Aiden. Go to him and gain his agreement."

"Hell no! You want Rina to go out there after this latest selkie attack on her family? Fuck that!

Find someone else to tag along with the sprite," Lucas spoke calmly, but there was no hiding the fire beneath his words.

Paxton nodded. He couldn't deny he would be the same way with his own mate.

"I will go, mermaids are not helpless," Rina declared angrily.

"No one said they were, Rina. Perhaps another mermaid in your place? Both Rive and Acquanetta are here asking for help. I think they would be good candidates to escort Nawfar, and the three together would be quite safe."

The council agreed and the three went off. Paxton smiled as he shut the door to them all and the sun that was about to come up. This was just the sort of thing he needed to push things further. Another piece was together. Emmalia was seated and soon there would be a Water Elf as well. So close to his goal now, so close to his love.

A scream from the basement drew his attention to a more pressing problem. Maria had to go and soon. She was dangerously close to reaching a point of no return where even the most powerful of mind erasers wouldn't be able to undo the knowledge she was gaining without completely frying her brain.

Listening to her complaints made the brain frying seem more and more appealing.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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