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ANGELS
OF ROCK

Icy
TEMPTATION

MARISA CHENERY

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Blurb

Arwen is an individual figure skating coach who never thought she'd ever get to meet the lead singer of the band Soar. She'd been crushing on Gannon ever since Soar's first CD came out. While attending the band's concert in her hometown, Gannon's and her gaze meet during a love song he sings, making Arwen think he's only singing for her. Unexpectedly, the next day, an even more unbelievable situation occurs. Gannon appears at the skate club and asks her out on a date.

When his gaze met the woman's in the crowd, Gannon became immediately taken with her. Something about her drew him like no other human woman had before. As an Alte, a winged being humans had mistaken for angels through chance encounters, he and his band mates are the last of their kind after an illness swept through their people. Surviving, they find themselves able to manipulate the elements, allowing them to hide what they truly are from the humans around them. Their bright silver eyes become natural, and even their wings are camouflaged, leaving a tattoo-like mark on their backs. Immortal as well, the remaining five have together lived for over a thousand years.

As Gannon grows closer to Arwen, he finds himself fighting to keep his true self hidden. Even more frightening, when they make love, he starts to absorb her life energy causing him to put some distance between them. But when another of their kind arrives on the scene, revealing what caused the demise of their people, Gannon is faced with letting Arwen die or risking the rest of humanity to save her.

Chapter One

Arwen Grayson stood off to the side of the ice rink in her skates and watched her skater prepare to execute one of the harder jumps in her long program. When the skater landed it perfectly, Arwen smiled and gave her a thumbs-up.

“Nice work, Jenny,” she said when the young teenager pumped her hand in the air.

Jenny skated over to where Arwen stood. “I nailed it again.”

“I knew you would. You should be able to do a perfect landing practically all the time now.”

“It helps that I have a great coach.”

“And it makes my job easier to have a great skater to train,” Arwen said with a smile. “Let’s call it quits for today. I’ll see you tomorrow bright and early.”

“Have fun at the concert tonight. I wish I could go with you. And take some pictures.”

“I’ll try. Now get out of here before I end up being late. Your mom should be waiting for you.”

Arwen watched Jenny skate off the ice. As an individual competitive figure skating coach at the Kalamazoo Skate Club—one of many clubs in Michigan—she got a lot of satisfaction out of seeing kids like Jenny excelling at the sport. And one day she hoped to see one of her skaters go further than she had.

At one time, it had been Arwen’s dream to go to the Olympics, but that fell through once she’d qualified for some of the bigger competitions. Out on the ice, knowing what the stakes were, she’d choked. All the hours she’d put into training, nailing all her jumps, had meant nothing when competition day had arrived. Unable to overcome it, she’d had to give up her dream and took the road to becoming a coach. Totally leaving the sport had been out of the question. She loved it too much to just walk away because she’d failed.

It was her commitment to the sport that had ultimately led to her not having much of a social life, not that Arwen found it too much of a hardship. The last relationship she’d had was the year before, and it had only lasted six months. It had ended because her then boyfriend hadn’t liked the hours she had to keep for her job. When he forced her to make a decision between him or her coaching, she’d picked the latter.

Now her life had fallen into a regular routine. By day, she coached, and by night, she returned to her apartment condo to spend it alone with her TV. But tonight was going to be a break from that routine.

Crossing the rink and skating off the ice, Arwen walked to her office. She hurriedly unlaced her skates, took them off and dried the blades with a rag before putting on the guards. She slipped on her runners and collected her purse out of her desk. The last one at the rink, she turned off all the lights and set the alarm. She then locked the club’s entrance door behind her.

Arwen glanced at her watch. She was still on time. Her best friend, Natalya, had been the one to talk her into going to the rock concert at the Wings Stadium to see the band Soar. A huge fan since their first CD had been released two years before, it hadn’t really taken much convincing for her to say yes. And with seats a few rows back from center stage, she would have been crazy to give up the chance to see her favorite band

perform live. That they were actually going to be in here in The Zoo, the city where she lived, was a coup in itself.

Since she lived fairly close to the skate club, it didn't take Arwen very long to drive to her condo. She parked her Kia Rio into her assigned space in the underground garage and didn't waste any time getting into the elevator. Pushing the button for the fourth floor where her apartment was, she watched the numbers light up above the doors as the elevator car moved upward.

At her floor, Arwen walked down the hall to her apartment door and let herself in. She had fifteen minutes to get changed before Natalya showed up. Inside her bedroom, she stripped out of the athletic pants and long-sleeved t-shirt that were her normal coaching wear. After she pulled on a pair of black jeans, a pale pink t-shirt and a dark grey hoodie, she dragged a brush through her long hair. Next, she put on a small amount of eye shadow and mascara. Never one for wearing a lot of makeup, it would have to do.

Arwen managed to slip her runners back on just as her buzzer went off. Glancing over at her bedside clock, she shook her head before she went to answer it. It had to be Natalya, early as usual.

She pushed the answer button on the console next to the door. "I'll buzz you in, Natalya."

"How did you know it was me?" her friend asked through the intercom.

"Well, I'm not expecting anyone else, and you're earlier than you said you would be. Come on up." Arwen hit the button that would allow Natalya through the secured entrance.

A few minutes later, Natalya knocked on her door. Arwen pulled it open and waved her in. "I'm basically ready." She held her arms out from her sides and did a small spin. "Do I pass muster?"

Natalya looked her up and down, her blue-green eyes narrowing as she did so. "You'll do. At least you're wearing jeans instead of those ghastly athletic pants you always have on." She flipped her long black hair over one shoulder.

Her best friend was forever complaining about the clothes Arwen wore. Natalya—always dressed in whatever was currently in style—used every opportunity to try to get Arwen to dress better. Arwen personally didn't think there was anything wrong with her sense of fashion, or lack of it. Being at the skate club most days, she didn't exactly have to worry too much about a dress code. She was more comfortable in her athletic pants and long-sleeved t-shirts over fancier clothes, anyway.

"I'm glad you approve," Arwen said with a chuckle. "Shall we go, or do you want to hang here for a little bit longer?"

"We can go. Earlier the better, as far as I'm concerned. I'd rather have to line up at the door than be late."

"We're hardly going to be late. I'll just grab my purse and keys."

After retrieving said items from the kitchen table where she'd left them, Arwen rejoined Natalya at the apartment's door. A few minutes later, they were outside and getting into Natalya's cherry red Ford Mustang.

"So are you looking forward to seeing Gannon live and in person?" Natalya asked once they were on the road.

Her friend had known for a little while now that Arwen had a big crush on Gannon, the lead singer of Soar. She'd also used that knowledge to persuade Arwen to go to the

concert.

“Yes, I’m looking forward to seeing the band perform,” she said nonchalantly.

“Come on now, Arwen. You can tell me the truth. You’re going to spend the entire concert drooling over Gannon.”

Arwen shook her head and laughed. “Okay, maybe I will be doing a little of that, but it isn’t as if I’m actually going to be able to get up close and personal with him. Even with our good seats, I doubt he’ll notice me out of the thousands of people who are going to be there.”

“You never know,” Natalya said. “Maybe your eyes will meet, and he’ll be so taken with you he’ll drag you up on the stage.”

“That scenario is even more doubtful.”

They arrived at the stadium, and Natalya cursed under her breath when she moved into the line-up of cars waiting to claim parking spots. “Crap, I knew we should have left earlier. We’re probably going to have to park so far away from the stadium it will be a major hike just to get to the building.”

“Hardly,” Arwen said with a laugh. “You’re just lazy. That little bit of exercise surely won’t hurt you.” Natalya had always been like that. Even in high school she’d tried to get out of gym class with any excuse the teacher would accept.

“Exercise is overrated,” Natalya replied with a sniff.

After finally pulling into an empty spot, they got out and headed for the stadium. It wasn’t that long of a walk. Arwen moved into the line-up of people slowly filtering through the doors with Natalya at her side. Once they presented their tickets, they found their seats and sat down to wait for the concert to begin. Not that she thought she would be doing much sitting once Soar performed.

Forty-five minutes later, the opening act came out on stage. It was a band Arwen hadn’t heard of, but they weren’t bad. When they finished their set, the energy of the crowd rose to a fevered pitch. By the time Soar took the stage, almost all the females in the audience were shrieking. Arwen had to put her finger in her ear as the teenager on her right practically screamed into it. At twenty-five, she had a little more control of herself, even though seeing the band members walk out had her heart beating a little faster.

As bright lights flooded the stage and the first notes of music blared through the speakers when Soar began to play, Arwen focused her gaze on Gannon, unable to look away. All six band members were drool worthy, but she thought Gannon was the best looking of the bunch. Now that she saw him in person and not just in a picture, she found him even more attractive. She would love to run her fingers through his shoulder-length blond hair. From this distance, she couldn’t see the color of his eyes, but she knew they were turquoise.

Arwen ran her gaze down his six-foot-four muscular frame. She’d seen pictures of Gannon with his shirt off so she knew his chest and abs were cut. The number of times she’d fantasized about running her hands—along with her lips and tongue—over all that enticing bare skin was too many to count.

Halfway through their set, Soar played their latest hit—a love song. It was one of Arwen’s favorite songs from their CD. Watching Gannon sing it, his gaze looking out over the audience, she sucked in a quick breath when it came to land on her, and didn’t pull away. Even though it was ridiculous to think it, she couldn’t help falling into his gaze, feeling as if he only sang to her. A wave of awareness washed through her.

The crowd around her seemed to disappear until only she and Gannon existed. The combination of the lyrics he sang and his intense gaze kicked her libido into high gear. In reaction, her nipples grew taut beneath her t-shirt, and a dull ache pounded deep inside her pussy. God, how she wished she could climb up on that stage and kiss Gannon until neither one of them knew their own name. But with her unspectacular looks, Arwen knew full well she wasn't the type of woman to draw a famous rock star's attention. Not when there were plenty of younger and gorgeous women in the crowd willing to throw themselves at him.

When the song ended and Gannon's gaze shifted away, Arwen let out a deep sigh. Whether it had actually happened the way she thought—Gannon singing the love song to her and her alone—she figured the experience was well worth the price of the concert ticket. And would be one she wouldn't soon forget.

* * * *

Gannon watched the last song of the band that had opened for them from backstage. The concert had been sold out. Being around so many people, it only brought home how he and his band mates, Jalen, Keiran, Malik and Trae, weren't like them. The humans had no idea what they truly were.

They were the last of their race—the Alte. For thousands of years their people had lived alongside humans without them knowing about them. A few chance encounters though had the humans calling the Alte angels because of their wings and ability to fly to great heights.

Now all that was left of the Alte race were the members of Soar. Over a thousand years ago, an illness had swept through their people, killing everyone who became infected within a few days of contracting it. For some reason, he and the others survived. Their bodies had fought off the sickness, but not without the illness changing them. No longer were they mortal as the rest of their kind had been. With their new heightened senses that enabled them to manipulate the elements and eyes that had changed to a bright silver, they had become a new breed of Alte. It also hadn't taken them long to realize they could hide what they truly were to allow them to walk among humans for the last thousand years.

Gannon looked over his shoulder at Trae when he came up behind him, which wasn't too hard considering Trae was six-foot-six. "Are you ready to be screamed at by a bunch of women?" he asked.

Trae smiled. "At least I have you to block any who should happen to make her way onto the stage uninvited." He twirled his drumsticks in his hands.

He turned to face his band mate. "Thanks," he said sarcastically. "I guess we should get ready to go on stage. The opener just started their last song."

"We were only waiting for you."

Gannon followed behind Trae as they walked to the place they were to enter the stage. Since Trae usually performed shirtless, Gannon's gaze landed on the large black wings that looked to be a tattoo on his back. They all had the same mark, making the humans think it was a band tattoo. Little did they know the tattoo-like wings were the by-product of them hiding their real ones. At will, they could manifest them and use them to take to the sky as they had throughout their lives.

Reaching the rest of the band, Gannon let his gaze settle on each one—Jalen, the

guitarist, Keiran, the bass guitarist, Malik, the keyboardist, and lastly, Trae, who played the drums.

“Let’s give them a good show,” Gannon said.

Each man nodded just as the opening band walked by, the sound of the excited crowd following them in their wake. It was their turn to perform. With a deep breath, Gannon geared himself up to step out onto the stage. Becoming rock stars hadn’t been something any of them had planned. Their kind had always been artistic, and when rock bands started to become popular with the humans, they had formed their own, playing mostly for themselves. Soar was the fourth group name they’d come up with. Being discovered at a small venue, none of them had wanted to pass up the opportunity. Performing had also given them a new purpose to their lives that had been missing. They hadn’t really thought about the potential fame that came with the job. Not that any of them were willing to give it up now.

Entering the stage with his band mates behind him, Gannon headed for the microphone set up front and center. He waved to the audience, giving the others time to get into place.

“Hello, Kalamazoo,” he shouted into the mic. The audience responded with a resounding roar. “Let’s get loud.” Trae hit his drumsticks together to the beat of their opening song, then the others started to play.

While Gannon sang, he scanned the crowd, finding the usual screaming females. The price of fame had women throwing themselves at them, or trying to grope them. Sometimes some of his band mates would take what they were being offered, but they mostly liked to keep to themselves.

Given the volume and number of women screaming, it was obvious Kalamazoo would be no different from any other city where they’d played. He hadn’t been very thrilled to find out they would be performing in this city. It wasn’t exactly a huge one by any means, but it was at least the second to last stop on their concert tour.

At the halfway point of their set, he scanned the crowd once more, his gaze landing on a woman standing not too far from center stage. There was something about her, something that drew him. He couldn’t take his eyes off her.

Using his heightened senses, Gannon drew in a deep breath, singling her scent from the many. With it filling his head, he found himself intoxicated while the rest of his senses zeroed in on her. Taking in her long, wavy light brown hair, light hazel eyes and pretty face, he burned it to memory. And when their gazes collided—her staring at him with the same longing he felt—his cock went instantly rock-hard.

Gannon had no idea why she affected him so intensely. He’d slept with women who had been prettier, but none of them had him feeling like this—desperate and aching just at the sight of her. He had to fight the urge to manifest his wings, fly out into the audience, snatch her up in his arms, and take her to some remote place where he could get her under him while he sank his cock into her pussy. But he couldn’t do that, no matter how much he wanted to. He was stuck on the stage until the concert was over.

When the love song he sang ended, Gannon forced himself to pull his gaze away. He needed to pay attention to what he was doing, but knowing that didn’t stop his gaze from straying back to her over and over again while he finished the rest of the songs.

As the final notes of the last song faded away and the audience cheered, Gannon sent his senses out, directing them to the woman he wanted to get to know. With them

thoroughly centered on her, he memorized her energy mark—something each human gave off that he and his band mates could read. With it, he now could focus on it and be able to find her wherever she may be. That done, and satisfied that they would meet at a more appropriate time, he looked longingly at her one final time before exiting the stage with the others.

Chapter Two

The concert over, Arwen headed toward the exit of the stadium, following the flow of the crowd with Natalya behind her, not really paying very close attention to where she was going. She kept replaying what she thought had passed between her and Gannon before he'd walked off the stage in her head. The intense way he seemed to have looked at her, it almost felt as if he'd peered into her very soul, which had to be her letting her imagination get the better of her. But that didn't stop her from wishing it was what she thought it was, or reliving it in her head again and again.

Once they were free of the crowd, Natalya gave her a nudge. "Earth to Arwen. Is anyone home?"

"What?" she asked, pushing her thoughts of Gannon aside.

Natalya shook her head and chuckled. "You looked lost in la-la land there. I bet you're mooning over Gannon. Not that I blame you, considering those smoldering looks he kept sending your way, especially when he sang that love song."

"I'm sure he wasn't looking at me." Arwen felt a small measure of relief to hear she wasn't the only one who had assumed Gannon could have been looking at her and her alone.

"Are you sure about that? I swear I got a little singed standing next to you. He was looking at you as if he wanted to eat you, in a good way. If you know what I mean."

Finally reaching Natalya's car, Arwen got into the passenger side when her friend used her car remote to unlock the doors. Once Natalya was inside, she continued their conversation. "Okay, let's just say that Gannon was really looking at me—and I'm not saying he was—it's not as if I'll ever have an opportunity to actually meet him."

Natalya pulled her key out of the ignition. "All right. You want to have a chance of meeting him, let's go back to the stadium and hang out at the back exit with the rest of the groupies and see if you can snag him for an autograph."

Arwen shook her head. "No. No way am I doing that. I'm not a groupie. Anyway, I'd like to keep the fantasy that it was me he gave those hot looks to, thank you very much. If I saw him again and he just looked right through me, it would kill it."

"So you're admitting you think he was staring at you?" Natalya asked.

She turned in her seat to look at her friend and found Natalya wearing a look that said she dared Arwen to deny it. She rolled her eyes. "Fine, I'll admit that, yes, I think he was, but that still doesn't mean it couldn't have been another woman out of the thousands there that he was interested in. Can we leave now? Unlike you, I have to be up almost at the crack of dawn."

Natalya put the key back in the ignition and started the car. "What a shame. I guess we'll never find out since you're in such a hurry to get home."

"Just drive already," Arwen said with a laugh.

As Natalya drove toward the parking lot's exit, Arwen looked back at the stadium one last time. Gannon was somewhere inside there still. When the building disappeared from sight, she felt almost tempted to tell Natalya to turn around and go back. But knowing she wouldn't be getting much sleep as it now stood, she wisely held her tongue and shifted her gaze to the front of the car.

* * * *

For the first time after a concert, Gannon felt impatient to endure the test of trying to wade through the throng of groupies wanting autographs. Usually the prospect of having to deal with a bunch of screaming girls—while he tried to make it to the limo that would take the band to their hotel in one piece—was something he wished he could avoid at all costs. Not this time, though. The prospect of the woman he'd seen in the audience being among the throng had him more than willing to go through the mauling and shoving he'd have to put up with. If she were there, it would save him from having to search out her energy mark on the following day.

After dealing with the obligatory seemingly endless things that had to be done after a concert, Gannon and the rest of the band were escorted to the back exit of the stadium. Large bodyguards flanked them on either side, ready to hold the crowd back once they stepped outside. Once the door opened, a multitude of flashes went off, making it hard to see. Blocking out the screams of the women he passed, taking the time to sign a few autographs, he scanned the jostling crowd. Much to his disappointment, he didn't see the one face he wanted to see.

At the end of the gauntlet of women, the limo sat waiting with its back door standing wide open. The driver stood by ready to slam it shut once everyone was inside. Gannon gave the throng a wave before he ducked into the limo and shifted to the opposite side of the seat. His band mates piled in behind him.

When they were on the road to the hotel, he looked over at Soar's manager who'd been waiting inside the limo. Gannon met his gaze. "I'm not leaving Kalamazoo tomorrow." That statement seemed to draw everyone's attention when all eyes turned to him.

"What?" Owen, their manager, asked. "You still have one more concert in Indianapolis, and that's only four days away. It will take the tour bus half a day just to get there."

"You're exaggerating. It only takes a few hours to drive there. We won't be late for the concert," Gannon reassured him. "It just means we won't arrive in Indianapolis early and then waste time hanging out in the hotel until the concert."

"You have interviews and some radio appearances already scheduled."

"Then cancel them."

"Sure, I'll just call and say you've decided for some unknown reason not to show up," Owen grouched. "I have to give them some kind of an excuse. It's my reputation you're putting on the line."

"I'm sure you'll think of something, Owen. Tell them we're all suffering from exhaustion."

"Like they would believe you all came down with that at the same time." Owen looked at the others. "What about you guys? Did you know about Gannon wanting to stay here longer?"

Malik shrugged. "This is news to us, but I don't mind staying on here for an extra couple of days."

"That's fine with me," Jalen said.

"I'm okay with it too," Keiran added.

"It will give me a chance to catch up on some rest," Trae said.

Owen shook his head. "Fine. I guess I'm out voted." He then leveled a steady glare

at Gannon. “You have two days, then I want the tour bus on the road. Tomorrow I’ll fly to Indianapolis and do any damage control necessary to smooth things over in regards to the cancellations.”

“Two days it is,” Gannon said.

He intended to make good use of those days. He’d find the woman tomorrow and see how things progressed from there. In that short period of time, he should be able to get to know her well enough to decide whether he wanted to act on this strong attraction he had for her or not, and find out if she felt the same way about him.

Inside their hotel, they all rode the elevator up to their floor. Owen didn’t say anything as he left them standing in the long hallway to go to his room. Gannon headed for his and didn’t shut the door behind him, knowing full well the others would follow him in.

Once the door was closed behind them, Jalen was the first to speak. “All right. Why the sudden need to delay leaving Kalamazoo? Just this afternoon you said you couldn’t wait to get back on the road.”

Gannon turned to find his band mates staring at him, waiting for his answer. “Something happened during the concert, or I should say someone. There was a woman in the audience...I’m not ready to just walk away without meeting her.”

“This is about some woman?” Malik asked. “If you just want to get laid, all you have to do is walk outside in front of the hotel and you’ll be able to find another willing woman to warm your bed.”

“I’m not looking for a quick fuck,” he said. “There was something about her. It’s hard to explain, but let’s put it to you this way. Out of all the women in the crowd, once I noticed her, I couldn’t see anyone else.”

“If you felt that way, why didn’t you arrange for her to be brought backstage after the show?” Keiran asked.

“Doing that would have had her picture splashed all over the tabloid papers. You know they always find out things like that. They’d be speculating what she means to me. I don’t even know her name. That wouldn’t exactly be fair. Instead, I learned her energy mark. I’m going to go looking for her on my own terms, without being in the spotlight.”

Trae nodded. “I see your point about not wanting to alert the tabloids about your interest in her. If you intentionally learned her energy mark, she must have had quite an effect on you.” He scratched his chin. “I’m not saying you’re headed in this direction, but what exactly are you planning on doing if you meet her and you find you don’t want to leave her behind? In the last thousand years, we all have so far managed to avoid forming any kind of lasting relationship with human women. And it isn’t as though you can tell her what we are after spending only a couple of days with her.”

The pragmatist of the group, Trae could always be counted on to think through any given situation to the most probable outcome. He had a level head on his shoulders, and over the long years, they’d all valued his advice.

“I haven’t thought that far ahead,” Gannon admitted. “I know as well as any of you that it’s vital to keep what we truly are from the humans. I don’t want to end up being dissected by one of their scientists any more than you do.” He sighed. “Truthfully, the woman sparked my interest as nothing has done for many years. I just know if I don’t seek her out I’ll regret it. Who knows, I could lose that interest in a day after meeting her.”

Trae held up his hands. “You don’t have to say anything else. Since none of us seem to mind staying on in Kalamazoo a little bit longer, it’s no skin off our noses.” The others nodded. “I, for one, am going to look forward to sleeping in and not having to do anything other than decide when I want to eat and sleep again.”

“Then it’s settled,” Gannon said. “I’ll seek out the woman, and the rest of you can take some much needed time off.”

“That actually sounds pretty good,” Jalen said with a smile. “Since we’re officially taking a small break, I’m going to hit the sack. Now that we have time, I’m going to see if I can find the old Gibson guitar factory. Hopefully it should still be around. They didn’t move the factory to Nashville until the 70s.”

“I’d like to see it as well,” Keiran said.

His band mates then walked out of his room. Gannon had known they wouldn’t be too upset with the minor change in plans. They’d been on the road for almost a year and were all starting to feel the strain of it as the tour wound down. The small break would do them good.

With plans set into motion, Gannon closed the curtains on the only window and stripped off his button-down shirt. He then manifested his wings on his back. Extending them to their full almost six-foot width, he flapped them a few times to give them a stretch before folding them once more on his back. It felt good to just be what he truly was without having to hide his strange eye color or wings. He and his fellow Alte spent more time pretending to be human than not. Such would be their fate for however long they existed.

After shucking his leather pants, Gannon walked naked to the bathroom. He’d shower, then have an early night. If all went according to plan, he’d be spending a large part of the day with the woman who made him crave things he hadn’t craved for a very long time.

* * * *

Arwen’s five o’clock alarm went off far too soon the next morning. With her eyes barely cracked open, she lunged across the bed to the small table next to it and shut off the annoying sound. She flopped onto her back and let out a groan. She would love nothing more than to close her eyes and catch up on the sleep she’d missed. That of course wasn’t an option.

Forcing herself to sit up, Arwen stretched as she yawned largely. Since she had a six o’clock practice, she had no choice but to get up. Luckily it was Friday, and the skate club had shorter hours. She’d still be the last one out of the building, but it wouldn’t be too late.

Arwen dragged her butt to the bathroom and got into the shower. The concert had kept her up well past her regular weeknight bedtime, but it had been worth it even if she did end up paying for it during the day. She’d make sure she went to bed early tonight to catch up on the sleep she missed.

Dressed in her usual athletic pants and long-sleeved t-shirt, Arwen ate some toast while she packed a lunch to bring to work. That done, she left her apartment and took the elevator down to the parking garage.

She had to stifle more than a few yawns while she drove to the rink. It didn’t help that it was still dark out. Now that it was fall, it was usually dark when she went to work

and dark when she returned home. Sometimes it felt as if she never saw much of the sun during the short winter days.

Inside the club, Arwen waved to Tessa, the owner, who had just stepped out of her office. "Morning, Tessa."

"Good morning, Arwen," Tessa said as she met her halfway. "How was the concert?"

"Great. Soar is one of the few bands I like who can actually perform live and sound as good as they do on their CD."

"So it was worth the late night?"

"Yeah. I'm tired, but I'll have the weekend to recover." She continued walking to her office with Tessa falling into step beside her.

"You do look a bit tired. I'm not going to find you stretched out on the ice sleeping in between coaching sessions, am I?" Tessa asked with a chuckle.

"No," Arwen replied with a laugh. "I'm not that tired." Putting her lunch and purse away inside her desk, she asked, "Is Denise coming in today?"

"No. She still has that flu. I'll be covering for her. Neil should be in soon."

The only male coach, and gay, Neil fit in well with the rest of the female coaches. The skate club wasn't very large, but they had become like a close knit family. They also worked together to help build the club's reputation for having some of the best coaches in the city.

"Hopefully Denise will feel better soon," Arwen said. "If you need any help covering for her, just let me know."

"Will do, but I should be okay." Tessa took a quick glance out the office door. "I see Jenny is here. How is training going?"

"Really good. I can see her doing well in her upcoming competition."

"She shows a lot of promise."

"She does. For thirteen, Jenny skates better than most girls her age who skate."

Arwen had high hopes that Jenny would make it on the Olympic team at some point.

"I better let you get ready."

After Tessa left the office, Arwen hurriedly put on her skates and took off the guards. She then went out to meet Jenny on the ice. Not every coach wore skates while they coached, but Arwen's style was more hands on. She found it easier to show her skater how to correct a jump or a spin by doing it herself rather than just telling them.

Reaching the rink, Arwen skated out onto it. She watched Jenny go through her warm-up and stifled another yawn with her hand. It was going to be one hell of a long day.

* * * *

By the time she'd finished her last coaching session, Arwen was more than happy to see the end of her work day. Alone, with the ice to herself, she went to where the sound system was set up and put Soar's latest CD into the player. After a long day, she liked to unwind by skating one of the programs she'd choreographed for herself to their music.

With Soar playing through the speakers, she moved into position on the ice and waited for the next song to begin. When it did, Arwen went through the intricate glides and footwork, building up speed for her first jump—a double Lutz. She dug her toe-pick into the ice, taking off from the back edge of her blade, and then landed perfectly on the

opposite foot. She completed the jump by gliding backward in a wide curve before digging her toe-pick once again into the ice to go in the opposite direction.

She'd just pulled out of a layback spin—where her head and shoulders dropped back while arching her back—when she heard the sound of someone cursing behind her. Spinning on her skates, Arwen's jaw dropped at the sight of Gannon, of all people, slipping and sliding on the ice toward her. He let out another loud curse as his arms flailed while he tried to keep his balance, but unable to save himself, he fell on his butt.

Shocked to see him actually at the skate club, she stared at him, frozen in place. It was Gannon. The lead singer of Soar sitting on the ice staring at her. How was it even possible?

Flashing a big smile, Gannon held out his hand. “Do you think you could give me a little help?”

Chapter Three

Gannon sat on the ice with his butt slowly getting cold and watched the look of shock spread across her face. Up close, she was even prettier than he remembered. She also had the same effect on him as the night before. His cock throbbed in time with his rapidly beating heart as he ran his gaze up and down her body. He ached to pull her against him and take those kissable lips of hers.

He'd arrived at the skate club shortly after noon once he'd focused on her distinctive energy mark and followed it straight to her. He had been here ever since. Using his ability to bend light around him, making him invisible to the human eye, he'd slipped inside the building without anyone being aware of his presence. After he located her, he'd watched her for a few minutes on the ice. It hadn't taken him long to figure out she was a figure skating coach. He'd then left to wait outside in the car he'd rented for the day for her to leave.

With a baseball cap pulled low on his head so no one would recognize him if they happened to look into the car, Gannon waited hours for her to come out. But as the parking lot slowly emptied until only his car and one other remained, he'd decided to go back inside to find out where she could be.

At the sound of his music playing, he followed it to the rink. He'd come to a sudden halt just outside it when he caught sight of the object of his desire gliding, jumping and turning on her skates as she moved gracefully through each movement. Seeing her skate made him want her even more.

Before he could stop himself, irresistibly drawn to her, Gannon had gone out on the ice. That had been his first mistake. Having never lived in a cold climate—and never having a reason to put on skates, let alone be on ice—he'd soon lost his footing. So now here he sat after making a very undignified entrance.

When she made no move to come any closer, he said, "Seeing as how you're more comfortable on the ice than I am, can you give me a hand up?"

Her mouth opened and closed a few times before she seemed to pull herself together. "Ah...yes, of course."

She skated over to him, dug her toe-pick into the ice as she took his outstretched hand and tugged him to his feet. He quickly found he was more stable if he didn't try to move around.

"Thanks," he said. Meeting her gaze, he saw the shocked expression she'd worn earlier slowly slip back into place. She also hadn't let go of his hand yet.

"No...no problem." She swallowed. "You're Gannon," she said a bit breathless.

He smiled. "Yes. And who would you be?"

Seeing the tip of her tongue come out and lick her lips, his hard-on jerked inside his jeans. There was something about this woman that stirred him like no other ever had. He wanted to strip her naked and lick every inch of her skin until he'd learned all her curves and angles.

"I'm Arwen. What are you doing here?"

This part Gannon hadn't put too much thought in. He couldn't very well say he'd seen her at the concert last night and then happened to find her at the skate club. They'd

never met before. And he couldn't tell her he'd been out for a walk and heard the sound of his music playing, either. The sound system wasn't set loud enough to be heard outside, and the skate club wasn't exactly near the hotel where he stayed.

"Well, you see, I've never been inside a skate club before so when I happened by here I thought I would come inside and check it out." Gannon cringed inside. Now that had sounded really intelligent.

"Oh. We're sort of closed for the night. And as you can see, I'm the only one here. So there isn't much going on at the moment."

"I was able to see you skate. You're quite good. And I have to say I approve of your music choice."

Arwen's cheeks turned a bright shade of red. "Thanks. I'm a big fan of Soar."

"Were you at the concert last night?"

"Yes. You guys were great."

The longer they talked the more Gannon wanted her. His erection strained against the front of his jeans. If Arwen happened to look down, he was sure she wouldn't be able to miss the unmistakable bulge he sported between his legs. But so far, she hadn't pulled her gaze off his face.

"Thanks," he said, lifting his gaze to hers.

The pull she had on him increased. It didn't take much to get lost in her eyes. The scent of her—all woman with a touch of a flowery scent from the perfume she wore—filled his head. His libido kicked into high gear. God, how he wanted her.

Tightening his grip on her hand, he tugged her closer. The sound of her heart beating at a frantic pace reached his sensitive ears. His gaze drifted lower to her mouth. He needed to taste her. During the night, he'd dreamed about her being in his arms, of him plundering her mouth as he touched and stroked her until she pleaded for him to take her. And when he finally sank his aching cock into her pussy, she'd held him tight while she moaned his name.

Arwen's lips parted as she sucked in a sharp breath. That was all the invitation Gannon needed. He let go of her hand, bent his head and closed his mouth over hers. He put his hands around her waist and pulled her closer until her breasts were pressed against his chest. At the first stroke of his tongue along the seam of her lips, she opened for him.

A low moan punched out of him when he stroked his tongue against hers, thoroughly tasting her. Arwen's hands came up and rested on his shoulders when she tentatively kissed him back. With his arousal beating at him, Gannon deepened their kiss, angling his mouth over hers for a better fit. He ground his throbbing erection into her soft belly, becoming lost in the haze of desire that had descended over him.

Her soft, whimpered moan brought him suddenly back to awareness and what he was doing. Reluctantly, he broke their kiss and stared at her. Arwen's lips were puffy from his kisses and there was a glazed look to her eyes. It took everything he had not to take her mouth once more and finish what they'd started.

Instead, he took a deep steadying breath. He had to slow things down a bit. Yes, he only had a few days to be with her, but trying to make love to her on the ice would be pushing it. They'd hardly spoken and already he'd had his tongue in her mouth. He counted himself lucky she hadn't slapped him. He had to do this the way every human male would—he'd ask her out on a date, then see how the evening progressed.

Putting a little space between their bodies, Gannon said, "Have dinner with me

tonight.”

Some of the dazed look left Arwen’s eyes. “Dinner? With you?”

He chuckled. “Yes. I don’t make it a habit of kissing women I wouldn’t want to take out on a date.”

“Tonight?”

“Yes, tonight. That is if you aren’t busy.”

She shook her head. “No. No, I’m not. Not busy at all.”

“How about if we have dinner at the restaurant in my hotel? I’m staying at the Radisson Plaza. I’d rather not take my chances with another restaurant. I could get mobbed.”

“Sure. I can do that.”

“Since it’s already after five, how does eight sound? I can pick you up at your place.”

“Yes. No. I mean yes,” Arwen said haltingly.

“Which is it?” he asked with a smile.

Her face flushed again. “Yes, eight will be fine. What I meant was I can drive myself to the hotel. I live in a condo apartment. If someone were to spot you there, you’d find yourself surrounded pretty quickly.”

“All right. I’ll leave word at the front desk that you’re coming. We have the entire sixth floor booked. What’s your last name?”

“Grayson.”

“Then I guess I’ll see you in a few hours, Arwen Grayson.”

Cupping her face in his hands, Gannon gave Arwen a hard, deep kiss, then let her go before he found himself unable to stop. He slowly took a step back, and with great care, shuffled his way off the ice determined not to make a fool of himself by falling on his ass again.

* * * *

After Gannon left the ice, Arwen started to breathe faster, almost hyperventilating. She bent over and put her hands on her knees as she forced herself to take slower breaths. Holy shit, I have a date with Gannon. Just thinking that had her breathing too quickly again.

Straightening, she skated around the rink. A goofy grin spread across her face. She, Arwen, had a date with Gannon. It was almost unbelievable. And the kiss he’d laid on her... Her grin spread even wider. She was still shaking from it. Her body had gone up in flames when he’d devoured her mouth and pressed the hard length of his cock against her. The feel of it had caused an ache to build deep inside her pussy while wetness pooled.

Picking up speed, Arwen set herself up for a jump and landed a triple Lutz. With a whoop, she exited the ice before she turned off the sound system. After putting away the Soar CD, she went to her office to take off her skates and get ready to leave.

Once she was inside her car on her way to her apartment, it was then Arwen got hit with the reality she hadn’t anything to wear for tonight. Since the Radisson Plaza was a three and a half star hotel, she was sure the restaurant would be on the fancy side. Jeans and a nice blouse wouldn’t do.

Able to make it to her apartment in record time, she went straight to her bedroom

closet. Arwen flung open the bi-fold door and stared inside. It was as she'd feared—her limited wardrobe didn't have much in the way of stylish dress-up clothes. The only dress she had was at least five years old and was woefully out-of-date.

Now is not the time to panic, Arwen, she reprimanded herself. She had two and a half hours to figure it out before she had to meet Gannon at his hotel. She just needed help, and knew exactly who she could ask on such short notice—Natalya.

Crossing the room to her bed, Arwen sat down and snatched up the cordless phone on her bedside table. She hit Natalya's number on the speed dial and nervously tapped her fingers on the mattress while she waited for her friend to pick up.

After the fourth ring, Natalya answered. "Hello?"

"Natalya, I'm desperate here. I really, really need your help," she said all in one breath.

"Arwen? Slow down. What do you need help with?"

Still talking fast, she said, "I have a date at eight o'clock, and I have nothing to wear. If I show up looking like a frump, he'll regret having asked me out. I don't want to ruin it."

"Arwen," Natalya said calmly, "you have to remember to breathe or you're going to pass out from lack of oxygen. Relax, it's just a date."

"It's not just any date!" she shouted back. "It's a date with him."

"Thank you for making me deaf in one ear. And who exactly is him? You usually aren't this nervous about going out with a new guy."

She forced herself to speak in normal tones. "It's Gannon. I have a date with Gannon tonight." After a long stretch of silence, Arwen asked, "Natalya? Are you still there?"

"I'm still here. Did you just say you have a date with Gannon, the lead singer of Soar, tonight?"

"Yes." Arwen had to pull the phone away from her ear when Natalya let out a loud shriek.

"Are you kidding me? Gannon truly asked you out? And where in the hell did you meet him?"

"I can honestly say I'm not making this up. He just showed up at the skate club out of the blue after everyone had left."

"So he just asked you out?"

"Basically. Right after he kissed me." Natalya shrieked in her ear once again.

"He kissed you! Damn. Now I wish I came to visit you more often at work."

"If it turns out that I end up going out with Gannon again after tonight, I'll see what I can do about introducing you to him. But right now, I can't see that happening if I have to wear my one and only dress, which you hate, I might add."

"No way can you wear that old lady dress," Natalya said vehemently. "I have the perfect outfit for you. Do you still have those high heels I gave you for your last birthday?"

Arwen cringed. "Yes. I have them shoved to the back of my closet still in the box. I don't know why you gave them to me."

"Right now, be thankful that I did. They'll go perfectly with what I'm bringing over. I'll be there as quick as I can."

After Natalya disconnected their call, Arwen went back to the closet and reached into the back of it for the shoebox that held the high heels. Lifting the lid, she took one

out. She hadn't worn the dark grey sandal-type shoes yet. She at least took a small measure of comfort from the fact they weren't too high.

Putting the shoes aside, Arwen stripped off her clothes and took a quick shower, taking the time to shave her legs. She'd just finished blow-drying her hair when she heard the buzzer to her apartment go off. Tightening the belt of her bathrobe around her waist, she went and let Natalya into the building.

She opened the apartment door and stood aside for Natalya to come in when she knocked on the door. Arwen stared at the plastic garment bag her friend carried over her arm. "You're a lifesaver, Natalya."

"You can thank me later. Let's get you dressed." Natalya took her by the arm and pulled her into the bedroom. "All right, take off the robe."

Once Arwen did, Natalya looked at her bra and panties with a critical eye. Arwen looked down, not seeing anything wrong with the white lace material of them. "There is nothing wrong with my underwear, so stop staring at them."

"Don't you have anything a bit sexier, and in black?"

"This is the best I have. And it's not as if I'll be walking around out in public in them."

"No, but Gannon may want to see you in something a little sexier."

The idea of Gannon seeing her in just her bra and panties had heat filling Arwen's cheeks. "I doubt the evening will go that far."

"Why not?" Natalya asked. "What are the chances of you getting to sleep with another rock star? I say go for it."

"I'm not going to hop in the sack with Gannon just because he's a famous rock star. Like I told you yesterday, I'm not a groupie."

"It was just a suggestion. Now let's see if this dress looks as good on you as I think it will."

Natalya unzipped the garment bag and pulled out a black, short sheath dress that had little cap sleeves. "This hits about mid-thigh to me, but since you're almost a couple inches shorter than I am, it should be a trifle lower on you."

Being only five-foot-three, Arwen was on the short side compared to her friend. Other than that, they had the same build. Since there was no zipper on the dress, she held up her hands as Natalya slipped it on over her head. With a few tugs, the form-fitting dress fell into place, molding all her curves. She pulled at the material to see if it would loosen a bit, but it only settled back into place when she let it go.

Natalya slapped her hand away before Arwen did it again. "Stop that. It's a Lycra blend. It's supposed to fit on the snug side."

Arwen walked over to the long mirror on the wall and looked at herself. The neckline of the dress veed down to the top of her breasts, exposing more of them than she was used to. She'd also never worn a dress that hugged her body so snugly.

She met Natalya's gaze in the mirror. "I don't know. It's awfully tight."

"No it isn't. It fits you perfectly. Even the length isn't too long. Now put on the heels so we can see the whole package."

Doing what she had been told, Arwen went and sat on the bed to pull on the heels. After she did up the last small buckle, she stood and walked back over to the mirror. She had to admit the heels completed the outfit. Her legs were already toned from the amount of hours she spent on her ice skates, and the shoes made them look even sexier. Maybe

she could pull this off after all.

Her dress taken care of, Natalya pulled Arwen into the bathroom to put on her makeup. Her friend gave her a final inspection, then nodded in approval. “Gannon will be blown away.”

Arwen could only hope. With butterflies in her stomach, she sat with Natalya in her living room until she had to leave for the hotel. When the time arrived, she was so nervous she had no idea whether she’d be able to eat even one mouthful of food.

Chapter Four

Arwen sat in the parking lot of the Radisson Plaza and stared up at the high glass-fronted building before her. Her nerves were definitely getting the best of her. She took deep, even breaths as she tried to slow her rapidly beating heart. It's just a date, she told herself. Gannon might be famous, but he was still only a man. A man who could more than likely get any woman he wanted, but for some reason had asked her out.

Flipping down the visor, Arwen peered at herself in the small mirror attached to it. Her hair and makeup still looked all right. There was nothing stopping her from going inside the hotel. Nothing except for her nerves, that is. She found making herself get out of her car to walk into the hotel just as hard as when she'd had to skate in a competition.

"You can do this, Arwen," she said out loud, giving herself a pep talk. "You've gone on other dates before."

Yeah, she had, but none of the other men she'd dated had been famous rock stars. And with that thought, there went her little pep talk out the window. She was pathetic. She'd done nothing but lust after Gannon since she'd first discovered Soar, and when she had a chance to date the real man, she was chickening out. This was a once in a lifetime event. Arwen could not blow it.

She forced her hand onto the door handle, pushed open the door and got out of the car. With her shoulders back, Arwen walked toward the hotel's front entrance, fighting back nervousness as she concentrated on walking across the parking lot without falling on her face. She so rarely wore high heels that when she did she had to get used to walking in them every time.

Inside the hotel's lobby, she took in the shiny marble floor that was a yellowish cream color. The tall columns interspaced throughout the area and the walls were painted the same color as the floor. A black grand piano was off in one section of the large lobby, while nearby were grey leather armchairs set up in a sort of circular formation. The whole design gave the hotel an elegant air.

The sound of her high heels clicking on the marble floor followed Arwen as she walked toward the front desk. When she reached it, she smiled at the man standing behind the waist high counter. "Hi. I'm a guest of one of the people staying on the sixth floor."

She deliberately didn't say Gannon's name just in case someone overheard her. There were only a few people milling about the lobby, but she still didn't want to take any chances.

The man clicked away on the keyboard, then looked back at her. "Can I have your name, miss?"

"It's Arwen Grayson."

He smiled. "You're expected. I'll give them a call to let them know you're here. You can take the elevator up to the sixth floor." He pointed across the lobby to the elevator.

"Thanks."

Arwen walked away from the desk and headed to where the man had indicated. When she reached the elevator, she pushed the up button and stared at the numbers above her as each one lit up until it stopped at the L. Stepping inside, the doors closed behind

her when she pushed the button for the sixth floor. The butterflies in her stomach increased with each floor that passed.

At her floor, the elevator doors slid open. When Arwen went to walk out, she gave a little start when she noticed the huge man standing just in front of her. Given his large muscle mass and great height, he had to be one of the band's bodyguards.

She gave him a small smile. "I'm here to see Gannon."

He stepped out of her way, allowing her to exit the elevator. "Gannon is waiting for you in his room. It's Room 604 on the left."

Arwen thanked him, then headed toward Gannon's room. When she reached it, she glanced back over at the bodyguard to find him watching her. Doing her best to ignore him, she knocked on the door.

Gannon answered. "Come in, Arwen," he said, waving her into the room.

She walked inside and turned back around to watch Gannon shut the door behind her. Arwen sucked in a quick breath when she caught his heated gaze looking her up and down as he closed the distance between them.

"You look beautiful," he said.

"Thanks." She took in his black jeans and grey button-down shirt that wasn't tucked in. The top four buttons were undone. Arwen forced herself not to stare at the tantalizing bit of Gannon's chest that she saw through the opening. "But it looks as if I overdressed."

"I would have called, but I neglected to get your phone number before I left the skate club. My idea of us eating downstairs in the hotel restaurant was kind of shot down. So instead we'll order room service and eat here. Is that okay with you?"

Considering Gannon had one of the suites with its own dining and sitting room, she didn't mind the change in their plans. "I'm fine with that."

"Good. That way we don't have to worry about having one of the bodyguards dogging our heels."

"Yeah, that wouldn't be too much fun," she said. "I already met one, and he looked more than a bit intimidating."

Gannon chuckled. "That would be George. He may look tough as nails, but deep down inside, he's nothing but a softy."

"I'll have to take your word for it."

"How about we look at the room service menu? You must be hungry."

Arwen followed Gannon to the long rectangular eating table that sat inside the sitting room. A small binder was open on top of it. She looked it over, unsure what she should order. In the end she said, "I'll just have a large garden salad."

Gannon shook his head. "You have to have more than that. After spending the day on your skates coaching, you must be hungrier than that."

She met Gannon's gaze. "How did you know I was a skating coach? I never told you what I did at the club." And she hadn't. She knew that for a fact.

He looked down at the menu and then back up at her. "I just assumed that was what you were since you were the only one there after everyone left. It was either a skating coach or the owner of the club."

That was a logical assumption. "I'm an individual skating coach."

"See?" he asked with a smile. "I made an educated guess and ended up being right. Now pick something else besides a salad, Coach Grayson."

"All right." Arwen quickly scanned the menu once more and made another choice.

“I’ll have the shrimp Alfredo.”

“That does sound good. I’ll have it as well.” Gannon walked over to the phone on another small table and placed their orders. When he finished he rejoined her. “One of the bodyguards will bring us the food once it arrives. Oh, I should warn you. We may have some company very soon. The rest of the band wants to meet you.”

“They...they do,” she stammered. “Why?”

Gannon put his hand on her back and guided her over to the black leather couch. Once they were seated, he said, “Curiosity mostly. They want to meet the woman who caught my interest enough for me to invite her out for dinner.”

“I’m sure you have invited lots of women to your hotel room,” Arwen blurted, then immediately regretted it. “I don’t mean you sleep around. Just that I’m sure you’ve gone out on lots of dates before.” That sounded even worse. Her face flaming with embarrassment, she snapped her mouth shut and looked at the floor before she said something really asinine.

Gannon cupped the side of her face with his hand and turned her head until she looked at him. “I know what you meant, Arwen. And truthfully, I tend to keep my distance from women while on tour. It’s not as if I get to stick around in one city for very long before we move onto the next.”

Arwen swallowed, liking the feel of Gannon’s touch. “But you won’t be staying in Kalamazoo for very long. You still have one more concert to do before this tour ends.”

He shifted closer on the couch while he ran the pad of his thumb along her bottom lip. “For you, I willingly broke my own rule. You see, there’s something about you that I find irresistible. When I saw you out on the ice, I had to ask you out. You’re a really good skater.”

More than a little breathless, Arwen tried to force more air into her lungs. “I once had dreams of skating in the Olympics.”

“What happened?” Gannon asked in a husky voice.

“I choked. I was fine in smaller competitions, but once I qualified for the bigger ones, I couldn’t handle the pressure.”

“So you became a coach instead.”

“Yes. That way I could still be a part of the sport I love.”

“I’m sure you’re a great coach.”

Arwen only nodded. The way Gannon looked at her, as if she were something he hungered for, had her body reacting to his nearness. Her nipples tightened beneath her dress, begging for attention. Her pussy throbbed as wetness pooled between her legs. His stare alone made her ache to be filled, to have his cock buried deep inside her as he took her.

Gannon’s gaze grew even hotter. It became riveted to her mouth. In a voice husky with need, he cupped the other side of her face and said, “I have to kiss you now. That one taste of you at the skate club wasn’t enough.”

With a groan, he closed the distance between their mouths and claimed her lips in a heated kiss. Arwen angled herself into a better position on the couch and put her hands on Gannon’s waist as she opened for him. The feel of his tongue rasping against hers shot her desire to greater heights. Her hands fisted in his shirt at his sides, anchoring herself as she became lost to the pleasure that washed through her body.

Arwen moaned when he sucked her tongue into his mouth. She explored it as

thoroughly as he'd explored hers. Lost in Gannon's kiss, she vaguely heard the knock on the room's door. It wasn't until it turned into a pounding did she jump away from him.

Gannon cursed under his breath. "Of course they would have to stop by now." He turned to sit back on the couch and tucked her under his arm. "You can come in," he shouted at the door.

The door opened and the other members of Soar filed in as she tried to force her body to calm down. Arwen gazed at each man as they walked toward Gannon and her. They all had the same muscular build as Gannon but with varying heights. Jalen, the guitarist, was six-foot-two. His dark brown hair was worn on the longish side. His light green eyes lit up as he smiled at her in greeting. Keiran, the bass guitarist, stood at six-foot-three. He had shaggy black hair and light brown eyes. Malik, the keyboardist, was the same height as Gannon at six-foot-four. He wore his dark blond hair long. His hazel eyes were friendly and open when he met her gaze. The last member of Soar, Trae, the drummer, was the tallest of them all at six-foot-six. His auburn hair was short and his eyes grey-blue.

Arwen wanted to pinch herself to make sure she wasn't dreaming, but she didn't. She still had a hard time wrapping her brain around the fact she was in the same room as her favorite band, let alone getting to meet them all.

Gannon spoke when the others reached them. "I'm going to make this short and sweet. Guys, this is Arwen, my date for the night." He turned his head to look at her. "Do I need to introduce them to you?"

"No. I'm a big fan so I know who everyone is."

"Good, then I can get rid of them faster."

"Real nice, Gannon," Malik said with a laugh. "Maybe we would like to stay and have dinner with you and Arwen to get to know her better."

"And maybe you'd like to feel my foot connecting with your ass when I hoof you out of my room too."

"I guess we'll take that as a no," Jalen said. "It was nice to meet you, Arwen."

"Maybe next time we'll be able to say more than hello before Gannon kicks us out," Keiran said with a smile.

Malik snorted. "Fat chance of that happening. If Arwen was with me, I'd want to keep the rest of you away from her as well." He gave her a wink.

"Since Gannon found her first, you'll just have to find a woman of your own, Malik," Trae said. "And one who would be willing to put up with your ass long enough for us to even see her."

Arwen bit back a smile at the band's banter. It was easy to see they'd been friends for a long time. From the interviews they'd done, she'd read that they had grown up together. She could picture them as little boys, terrorizing their neighborhood.

A knock sounded on the door. Gannon stood and said, "That will be our food. Time for all of you to get lost."

The others gave her one last smile before they headed for the room's door. Gannon followed behind them, and after they'd left, he held the door open for George who pushed a white tablecloth-covered trolley with stainless steel covered dishes and a bottle of wine inside an ice bucket into the room.

Gannon took it from him. "Thanks, George. I can take it from here."

The large bodyguard nodded, turned and walked out the door, closing it behind him.

Arwen stood and joined Gannon over at the dining table. He took the covers off their plates of food, pulled out one of the chairs, and motioned for her to take a seat. Once she did, he took the chair beside hers. Reaching over to the trolley again, he snagged the two wineglasses from it and the bottle of wine.

“I hope you like white wine,” he said as he poured them each a glass.

“White is fine, but since I’m driving, I’d better limit myself to one glass.”

Especially since Arwen had no idea how long this date would actually last. If she had to go by the kiss his band mates had interrupted, she didn’t think it would end right after they finished eating, but she didn’t want to take any chances.

Silence fell around them as they ate. Arwen racked her brain to think of something witty to say, but nothing came to mind. Focusing on her food, she forced the nervous butterflies that fluttered in her stomach away once again and ate small bites.

“The food is good,” Gannon said. “Same with the wine. It would have been nicer if we could have eaten in the restaurant.”

Arwen wiped her mouth with the cloth napkin from her lap and looked at him. “Yes it is. And I don’t mind eating here. Really. This way I get you to myself.”

Gannon chuckled. “True. And I don’t have to share you with anyone else, either.”

“Even if we ate in the restaurant, you wouldn’t have to worry about crowds of people flocking to me. I’m nobody. You, on the other hand, are another story.”

“Well, I don’t think of you as a nobody,” Gannon said, his gaze drifting over her face. “In fact, I hope to learn more about you before the night is over.”

Arwen’s heart skipped a beat. The sudden heat that flared in Gannon’s eyes had her libido kicking into high gear. She could easily forget about finishing the rest of her food and throw herself into his arms to take what his gaze promised. But she didn’t want to be another notch on his bedpost.

“I’d like that,” she softly replied.

They ate the rest of their meal in silence, then Gannon suggested they see what played on the hotel’s pay-for-view station. Taking her wineglass with her, Arwen sat on the couch beside him as he reached for the wide-screen TV’s remote from the glass coffee table in front of them. He settled down beside her and put his arm around her shoulders, his side plastered to hers. The heat from his body soaked into the bare skin of her arm, making her more aware of the man who sat beside her.

When Gannon reached the preview station, he asked, “What kind of movies do you like to watch?”

“Anything but horror.”

He turned his head to look at her while he gave her a crooked grin. “You don’t like to get scared?”

“No. I end up having nightmares afterward.”

“We can’t have that.”

In the end, they decided on a comedy. Gannon set up the movie, and they settled in to watch. Arwen sipped on her wine, more turned-on by the minute just by sitting next to the man who had long been the star of her sexual fantasies. Torn between not wanting to let Gannon slip between her fingers and not wanting to only be an easy lay, she fought a silent battle with herself. Sometimes it sucked not to have loose morals.

Chapter Five

Gannon looked at Arwen out of the corner of his eye as she watched the movie. When he'd opened his room door and seen her standing in the hallway in the dress she wore, all the breath had left his lungs in a silent whoosh. His cock had gone instantly rock-hard, making him glad he'd worn his shirt untucked. The dress hugged her curves in all the right places. He'd wanted to pull her into his room and slowly strip her out of it. But able to sense how nervous she was, he realized he had to take things a little slower than that.

He'd ordered the wine with their dinner hoping it would help Arwen become more comfortable around him and loosen up a bit. So far it hadn't helped much. He had a feeling he'd have to get her to drink more than a couple of glasses to have it be of any help. And he wouldn't be able to do that since she only wanted the one glass.

When Arwen finally finished it and put the empty wineglass on the coffee table, Gannon used another tactic to get her to relax. He withdrew his arm from around her shoulders, turned her on the couch and put her legs across his thighs. Happy she didn't try to pull away, he undid the small buckle on one of her shoes and slipped it off. He did the same to the other before he set to work massaging her feet.

Arwen leaned back against the cushion behind her and sighed. "Does that feel good?" he asked.

"Very. After the number of hours I spent wearing ice skates today, and then the high heels, that feels wonderful."

"Since it's my fault you had to wear the heels—not that I don't think you look incredibly sexy in them and your dress—a foot massage is the least I can do to make it up to you."

Arwen moaned as he massaged her arch. "Then you can make it up to me every day. I could get used to this."

So could he. Out of all his long years of life, no human woman had ever made him ache this much to possess her. Having Arwen near, getting to know her better, he wanted her to distraction. Usually sex was only a release his body demanded from time to time, but with Arwen, Gannon had a feeling it would be more than that. He didn't think he could sleep with her and then just walk away, never to think about her again.

He glanced at Arwen to find her eyes closed. Gannon moved his hands from her foot to ankle, caressing her silky skin with his fingertips. Going higher, he kneaded her calf, which was toned from the amount of skating she did. Arwen moaned as he worked the muscle. The sound went straight to his cock, making him even harder.

Higher still he went, running his hands over her kneecap before he worked his way to the back of her knee. His sensitive hearing picked up the sound of her quickened breathing and heartbeat. The scent of her arousal perfumed the air around them, filling his head. Her reaction to his touch had him fighting to keep the slow pace he'd set for himself.

When he reached her inner thigh and gently pressed on it to spread her legs slightly farther apart, Gannon looked up to find Arwen watching him. She stared at him, her arousal plain to read in her heavy-lidded gaze. She took her bottom lip between her teeth

and sucked in a sharp breath when he skimmed his hand higher, lifting the hem of her dress as he went.

Keeping their gazes locked, he used his other hand to pull her toward him and onto his lap. He then placed a hand on her nape to urge her mouth down to his while he stroked ever higher up her thigh. Their lips met just as his fingers came in contact with her panties.

Gannon increased the pressure of his lips as he swept the inside of Arwen's mouth. The heady taste of her went straight to his head. His heartbeat thundered in his ears as he kissed her deeper. At her soft moan, he ran a caressing finger along her panty-covered pussy.

Arwen pressed closer and wound her arms around his neck. Encouraged, Gannon slowly lowered her down onto the couch and stretched out alongside her. He continued to caress her pussy through her panties as he left her mouth and trailed kisses along her jaw to the side of her neck. He ground his erection against her hip, letting her know the kind of effect she had over him.

Shifting his mouth to the plunging vee of her dress, he licked and sucked his way to the top of her breasts. Using his arm to keep himself propped up while his other hand was between Arwen's legs, Gannon couldn't touch her hard-tipped breasts. But that didn't stop him from nuzzling a taut nipple through her dress with his lips. He laved it with the flat of his tongue through the material just as he slipped a finger under her panties. Her hips lifted off the couch when he ran it along the seam of her pussy.

He groaned. "So wet," he said huskily.

Gannon pushed a finger inside Arwen's slick core, moving it in and out. She panted as he added a second. Her inner muscles clamped down around them, making him wish it was his cock that plunged inside her.

"Gannon," she moaned. "That feels...oh god. So close."

"Just let go, Arwen. Fly for me."

He pumped his fingers faster, using his thumb coated in her wetness to caress her clit each time he pushed them inside her. Arwen rocked her hips against him as she met each of his strokes. A whimpered moan pushed past her lips when the first flutter of her orgasm rippled around his fingers. The sensation of her pussy rhythmically clutching and releasing made him feel as if he were ready to explode.

When Arwen settled, he pulled his fingers out of her and languidly kissed her. "Stay with me tonight." He ground his hard cock into her hip. "I want you in my bed. This was just the appetizer."

She groaned. "I can't."

Gannon reached up to cover one of her breasts, bent his head and dragged his tongue along the top of her chest. "Do you have to work tomorrow?"

"No, but I still can't stay."

"Why not?" He rocked against her again, and Arwen gasped. "I'll make it worth your while. I want you. God, how I want you." He lifted his head and met her gaze. "And I know you want me."

Arwen ran her fingers along his jaw. "That's the problem—I do want you. That's why I can't."

"I don't understand." With his cock hard as a rock and leaking pre-cum into his pants, Gannon had a hard time concentrating enough to decipher what Arwen meant.

“I want you too much. And I won’t ever be one of your groupies who will hop in the sack for a night of sex with you just because of who you are. I don’t do one-night stands. Ever.”

He brushed a lock of hair off her forehead. “I’ve never thought of you as a groupie, Arwen. I want something more than a night of sex.”

“What else would it be? You’ll be leaving soon.”

“Yes, but I’m not ready to let you walk out of my life yet. I have all day tomorrow to spend with you. Our bus isn’t leaving until the morning after that.”

Arwen worried her bottom lip with her teeth. “I’d love to spend tomorrow with you, but I’m still not going to sleep with you tonight. No matter how much I want to.”

Gannon groaned and rested his forehead against hers. “You’re torturing me here. Hearing you say you want me when I can’t do anything about it isn’t helping me calm down. If you know what I mean?”

She reached down between their bodies and cupped his erection through his pants. “We may not be sleeping together, but that doesn’t mean I can’t offer you some relief. It would only be fair, considering I’m the one who got you in this condition.”

He pulled her hand off him. “If I let you do that, I definitely will want you naked and under me.” Gannon pushed himself up to sit on the couch.

Arwen gave a pointed look at the large bulge in the front of his jeans. “Are you sure? You must be uncomfortable.”

“Don’t worry about me.” He pulled her up next to him and positioned Arwen with her back resting against the side of his chest. He kept her there by putting an arm around her waist. “Let’s watch the rest of the movie. I still want you to stay. Being in your company is just as enjoyable.”

Even though he was still horny as hell, having Arwen in his arms was enough. He understood where she was coming from by not wanting to have sex. Frankly, if she had been more than eager to jump into his bed, he would have lost interest in her. Somehow he’d make it work, because sleeping with her wasn’t something he wanted to forgo. The way she’d responded to his touch only showed how good they’d be together.

* * * *

Arwen woke with a start and looked around her not remembering exactly where she was. At the sound of a deep male chuckle, she turned her head to find Gannon staring at her. It then all came rushing back. She was still in his hotel room, sitting on the couch as she leaned against him. Crap, she’d fallen asleep on him, literally.

“Did you have a nice nap?” he asked with humor showing in his turquoise eyes.

“I’m so sorry. I had a very early morning today. Some date I’ve turned out to be.”

“It’s all right, Arwen. You don’t need to apologize. I didn’t mind. I imagine you being a coach means you put in a lot of long hours. I enjoyed watching you sleep.”

She reached up and touched her mouth to make sure she hadn’t been drooling. Now wouldn’t that have been sexy if she had? “I should probably go before I crash again and end up not waking up until morning.”

He brushed his lips against hers. “I wouldn’t mind.”

“You might not, but I don’t think that’d be wise.”

Gannon sighed dramatically. “You’re right. Having you sleep in the other bedroom would be too much temptation for me. I would be so overcome by my manly urges I just

wouldn't be able to help myself."

Arwen laughed. "Manly urges, huh? Maybe it's me that I don't trust."

"So you would take advantage of me while I slept? Well, I do sleep naked, and I could leave my bedroom door wide open for you."

She shook her head. "You're not helping." Arwen put her high heels back on, then stood. "I really should go."

Gannon stood and pulled her into his arms. "You'll see me tomorrow, right?"

"Of course. What time do you want me to come back here?"

"I'm thinking I'd like to go to your place."

"I don't know. I thought you didn't want to risk the chance of being mobbed."

"Don't worry. I'll manage just fine to slip into your building without anyone seeing me."

"All right. If you give me a piece of paper I'll write down my address and my phone number in case we have to change our plans."

"You can do that on your way out. Right now, I need a kiss to tide me over until I see you tomorrow."

Gannon held her tighter against him and bent his head to claim her lips. Like every other time he'd kissed her, Arwen's body went instantly up in flames. Her pussy clenched at the remembered orgasm he'd given her, and how thick and long his cock had felt in her hand. If he kissed her like this too many times tomorrow, she didn't know if she'd have the will to resist him. Her body ached for his in the worst possible way.

He released her mouth once he had her melting into him and her breathing had become ragged. "Come on. I'll get you that piece of paper."

He led her over to the small desk set in the corner of the sitting room. Gannon pulled open the top drawer and took out a pad of hotel paper along with a pen. Arwen quickly wrote down her address and phone number.

"You're welcome to come over any time you want. And like I said before, if it works out better for me to come here, I don't mind. Just call me."

Gannon ripped off the top sheet of paper from the pad. "Then you don't mind if I show up on your doorstep at eight in the morning."

"Considering tomorrow is one of two mornings I actually get to sleep in past five o'clock, I doubt I'll be awake."

"Fine. I'll let you sleep in. How's eleven?"

"Much better. I'll definitely be awake by then."

Putting his arm around her waist, he walked her to the room's door. "I'll be at your place exactly at eleven." Gannon gave her another quick, hard kiss, then opened the door. "I had a good night, Arwen."

"So did I," she said softly. "I'll see you tomorrow." Arwen stepped out into the hallway. She expected Gannon to close the door behind her, but he walked out with her.

"I'll walk you to the elevator," he said. When they reached it, he pushed the call button. "I would have had George walk you to your car, but I guess he must have gone to his room for the night."

"It's all right. I can get downstairs to my car by myself."

The elevator dinged when it reached their floor. Once the door slid open, she walked inside and turned to face Gannon before she pushed the button for the lobby. She gave him one last wave before the doors closed.

More than happy with the way their date had gone, Arwen couldn't wait to see him again tomorrow. Never in a million years had she thought she'd actually ever get to meet Gannon. Not only had she done that, she'd gone out on a date with him. She didn't want to think what would happen when he left Kalamazoo, but she only hoped she'd see him after his tour ended.

* * * *

After the elevator doors closed, Gannon hurried back to his room and stripped out of his shirt. He then rushed back out into the hallway and ran to the door that led to the stairs. He took them two at a time up to the roof.

Reaching it, he went to stand at the very edge that overlooked the hotel's parking lot. He was able to see Arwen walking to her car below. He manifested his wings. His eyesight grew keener when he let his true self out. Bending what light was around him to keep him hidden from humans, Gannon spread his wings and jumped off the roof as Arwen drove away.

He let himself drop a few stories before he flapped his wings to level out. Keeping a high enough altitude not to have streetlights and power lines interfering with his flight, he stayed with Arwen all the way to her condo apartment.

Gannon remained with her until she'd safely made it inside her underground parking garage. With two hard flaps of his wings, he soared off into the night sky. When he returned tomorrow he'd have to take the rental car again, even though it would be quicker for him to fly. Since Arwen had no clue as to what he truly was, he'd have to keep up with the charade of being human.

Could he ever show her what he hid from her? He wasn't sure, but a part of him wanted her to know. For the first time, he wanted to just be his true self around a human. And he wanted to take to the sky with Arwen held firmly in his arms to show her the freedom he felt every time he took flight.

Chapter Six

The sound of her telephone ringing woke Arwen up. She cracked open an eye to look at her alarm clock. It was only nine in the morning. Reaching for the cordless phone, she wondered if it could be Gannon calling her. When she focused on the display and saw it wasn't him but Natalya, she flopped back down on the bed.

"You do realize it's still early," Arwen said with a yawn after she hit the button to answer.

"I couldn't wait anymore," Natalya replied. "The suspense is killing me. So how did your date with Gannon go?"

Arwen smiled, remembering every detail of her time spent with him the night before. "Really, really good. We ended up spending the entire date inside his hotel room."

"Did you sleep with him?"

"No, I didn't sleep with him, though he did ask me to stay the night after I fell asleep on him."

Natalya burst out laughing. Once she got herself back under control, she said, "You had a date with one of the hottest rock stars and you fell asleep? How did he react to that?"

"Hey, I hadn't gotten much sleep the night before because of the concert, and then I had to get up at five. For your information, Gannon didn't mind at all. I'm also seeing him again. He's going to spend the entire day with me."

"Oh, my god, Arwen. You've snagged yourself a famous boyfriend."

"I don't know if I would call Gannon my boyfriend just yet. He's leaving tomorrow. We haven't talked much beyond seeing each other today."

Natalya snorted. "He's your boyfriend. If he's spending the day with you—after you not putting out—I'd say he's wanting more than a good time."

"I'm still not going to hold my breath over it." Gannon and she were from two different worlds. The chances weren't good that they would last past these couple of dates.

"I think you're going to be in for a surprise. I'll bet you any money that Gannon will arrange to see you again after Soar performs their last concert."

"You can keep your bet," Arwen said. "I'm not going to think about it. I just want to enjoy today with Gannon, and if it doesn't work out that I'll see him again, I'll be happy with what I got."

"Sure," Natalya said drolly. "You're not fooling me. You'll be disappointed."

"Maybe a little."

"Only a little?"

"All right, a lot, but I'll get over it, eventually."

"Did you get to meet the rest of the band last night?"

"Yes, but just briefly before Gannon kicked them out of his room."

Natalya groaned. "I hate you."

Arwen chuckled. "Will it make you feel better if I get Gannon's autograph for you?"

"Some, but it would be even better if you could introduce me to one of the other guys so I can have the chance of saying I'm dating a member of Soar too."

“Since Gannon is coming over to my place today, I doubt I’ll be seeing any of the others.”

“He’s coming to your apartment?” Natalya asked excitedly. “What time?”

“At eleven.”

“Then what are you still doing in bed? You have less than two hours before he’ll arrive.”

“That’s plenty of time to shower, dress and have some breakfast. It’s not like last night when I thought I had to get all dressed up.”

“Fine, do it your way. At least promise me you’ll put on some makeup.”

“I’ll do that much.”

“Good. Now get out of bed. I’ll talk to you later.”

After Natalya hung up, Arwen returned the cordless phone to her bedside table and stretched. She threw back the covers and sat up. Slipping from the bed, she headed to the bathroom. After talking to Natalya, her excitement to see Gannon increased. As she’d told her friend, she intended to enjoy her day with him. She’d let things play out as they would and not pressure him about seeing her again. If it worked out that she did, all the better. If not, she could live with it.

* * * *

Dressed in blue skinny jeans and a dark pink t-shirt, Arwen gave her living room one last look-over before Gannon arrived. She’d run a duster around and vacuumed the carpet after she’d grabbed a quick breakfast of tea and toast. It was clean enough, but it would never compare to the luxury of Gannon’s hotel suite. The couch and armchair were a little on the old side, but they at least didn’t have any stains on them. The coffee table had been a hand-me-down from her parents, so it had a few nicks and scratches. Since she couldn’t run out and buy new furniture, there really wasn’t anything she could do about it, anyway.

At precisely eleven o’clock, Arwen seated herself on the couch, expecting Gannon to buzz up to her apartment at any minute. The seconds ticked by. Then the minutes. To distract herself, she turned on the TV. That only helped for the length of time it took her to flip through all the channels she had.

By eleven-thirty, Arwen started to wonder if Gannon would show up. Maybe he was just running late. She thought about calling him at the hotel, but then thought better of it. He’d said he would call her if their plans had to change. She didn’t want to come across as pushy. It wasn’t as though he were a couple of hours late. Who knew what he had to do to slip out of the hotel without being seen.

Unable to sit still any longer, she paced the length of her small living room. On one pass, Arwen stopped to check to make sure her phone hadn’t stopped working. Hearing the dial tone, she hung up and put it back down.

Another ten minutes went by. Arwen had just about convinced herself Gannon would be a no-show when her buzzer went off, making her jump. She raced over to the panel next to the apartment door and pushed the talk button. To make sure it really was Gannon, she asked, “Yes?”

“It’s me, Arwen.”

Hearing Gannon’s deep voice, all the tension left her body. “I’ll buzz you up.”

After she let him in, she opened the apartment door and stood partly in the hallway.

A few minutes later, the elevator arrived, and Gannon stepped out. He wore dark sunglasses and a baseball cap low on his head. He smiled when he caught sight of her and walked toward her.

Arwen stepped back into her apartment to allow Gannon to come inside. "I see you managed to slip away," she said as she closed the door behind him.

Gannon pulled off his hat and sunglasses. "Sorry. I know I'm late. There was a bit of a mix up with the rental car. One of the rental company employees let it slip that I would be using one of their cars. I had to scramble to use another company, or put up with paparazzi following me here."

"It's all right. You must have gotten rid of them."

"I did. There was no way they were going to stop me from seeing you."

He put his free hand around the back of her neck and pulled her closer. Arwen let out a breathy sigh as Gannon's lips closed over hers. His kiss had her clutching at the front of his t-shirt. When he pushed his tongue inside her mouth, she matched him stroke for stroke. All the insecurities she'd felt about him possibly standing her up eased away. He kissed her with the same pent-up longing that surged to life deep inside her.

Gannon finally pulled away and ran his thumb over her bottom lip. "I missed you, Arwen."

"I missed you too."

"Did you think I wasn't coming?"

She shook her head. "Not really."

He bent his head to stare into her eyes. "You can tell me the truth. If the situation were reversed, I would have thought that. I should have called you to let you know I would be late."

"Okay, maybe the thought had crossed my mind."

"Do you want to give me a spank for worrying you? On second thought, I'd probably like that too much."

Arwen laughed. "Sorry, but I'm not going to spank you."

"Well, the spanking option is still open."

She gazed into Gannon's turquoise eyes. "I'd much rather do something else to you besides spank you."

Gannon let his hat and glasses drop to the carpeted floor before he took her by the hips and yanked her against him. "Keep talking like that and I won't be responsible for my actions."

A shiver of awareness shot through her. His words stirred a wicked part of her to see just how far she could push him before he lost all control. Even though her brain told her it wouldn't be a good idea to sleep with Gannon if she didn't see him again, her body thought otherwise. What Natalya had said about not giving up the one chance Arwen had to sleep with him echoed inside her head.

"Maybe that wouldn't be such a bad thing," she said as she looked longingly at Gannon.

He ran his gaze over her face, his eyes filled with desire. "Are you saying what I think you're saying?"

In answer, Arwen went on her tiptoes and kissed him while she rubbed up against his hard body. Gannon tightened his hands on her hips and greedily kissed her back. She moaned as he sucked her tongue into his mouth and allowed her to explore it thoroughly.

The kiss became more desperate. Arwen clung to Gannon while the feel of his mouth against hers fanned the flames of her arousal higher. Needing to touch his skin, she dropped her hands to the bottom of his t-shirt and shoved them under it. She skimmed her fingers over his defined abs and up to his wide chest. She molded the muscles there with her hands, exhilarating in the feel of his heated, smooth skin.

Gannon let go of her hips to run his hands around and down to her ass. He took hold of it and lifted her to grind his cock against her pussy. Waves of intense pleasure shot through her body at the intimate contact. She rocked against him, increasing the sensation with each thrust of his hips.

Arwen allowed her head to fall to one side as Gannon trailed his lips from her mouth to her neck. "More. I need more."

"I'll give you what you want," he panted against her skin. "I haven't been able to stop thinking about you since you left last night."

"Then take me to bed."

Gannon lifted her higher, urging her to put her legs around his waist. "If we're going to do this, I'm not taking you on the floor or the couch. Not for our first time."

"My bedroom is down the hall," Arwen said as she shifted her hands from his chest to his back, her palms coming to rest on the large tattooed black wings she knew were there.

With her pussy pressed against his erection, each step Gannon took toward her bedroom had his cock grinding into her. The short distance it took for him to traverse the hallway was enough to have her wetness leaking into her panties.

At the bed, Gannon lowered her on top of it and followed her down. He rested his weight on his bent arms as he continued to thrust against her, making her hate the barrier of clothing that separated them. She took her hands out from under his shirt and fisted the material. Arwen dragged it up his back and then off over his head. She threw the t-shirt to the floor, not caring where it landed. Lifting her upper body from the mattress, she licked the hollow of Gannon's throat before she kissed a path to his upper chest.

He moaned deep in his throat. "I love the feel of your mouth on me, but I'm going to go crazy if I don't get you out of some of these clothes."

More than eager to get skin to skin, Arwen lifted her arms over her head as Gannon peeled off her shirt. When he rolled them to their sides to give him better access to the back hooks of her bra, she threw a leg over his lean hip. He made short work of ridding her of her bra before he rolled her onto her back, settling between her legs once more.

A gasp slipped past Arwen's lips when Gannon covered her breast with his large hand while he licked and kissed a trail down her chest. When he drew even with her nipple, he circled the taut peak with the tip of his tongue, causing it to tighten even more. Arwen arched her back in invitation.

Gannon plucked at her other nipple as he opened his mouth and sucked the one against his lips inside his mouth. Arwen buried her hands into his blond hair to hold him to her. Each pull of his mouth made her pussy clench with need.

Shifting to lie at her side again, Gannon brought a hand down to the top of her jeans, working on the button and zipper. Once her pants were undone, she helped him pull the tight fabric down her legs and off. Now only in her panties, Arwen watched Gannon gaze down the length of her body and back up again.

"So beautiful," he said, his voice rough and deep with arousal.

“Touch me, Gannon.”

“I’m going to touch you and so much more.”

He licked the underside of her breast before moving lower on her body. The feel of his lips against her stomach made it quiver. Gannon continued downward. He stroked her hip as he licked her pussy through her already wet panties. Arwen rocked against his mouth with a whimpered moan.

Her panties slid down her legs when Gannon hooked the top of them with a finger. Once she was free of them, he settled between her legs, his wide shoulders forcing her thighs farther apart. At the first touch of his tongue sweeping along her pussy, Arwen let out a stifled gasp. She fisted her hands in the comforter beneath her, lifting her hips off the mattress.

Gannon circled her clit with his tongue before he sucked on it. Arwen’s cries of pleasure filled the room as her body coiled even tighter. He pushed a finger, and then a second, inside her pussy while continuing to stimulate her clit. With the combination of him finger fucking her and sucking on the spot where her pleasure centered, he had an orgasm quickly building inside her core. Lost on a wave of sensations, Arwen cried out, whimpering Gannon’s name as her climax took her over.

Rising between her legs, he tore open his pants and pushed them down until his cock sprang free. He took hold of her hand and led it to his hard shaft. “Feel how hard I am for you?” When she wrapped her fingers around his erection, pumping up and down, Gannon groaned. “That’s it. Don’t stop. I’m going to come.”

He flexed his hips, pushing his cock harder into her hand. His shaft swelled even more. Arwen looked at Gannon’s face and saw his lips were pulled back from his teeth as he breathed at a fast pace. His eyes were only open to mere slits. She thought she caught a flash of sliver before he shut them completely. But then she looked down to where she stroked him when he let out a strangled moan and his cock pulsed in her hand. Warm splashes of cum hit her belly with Gannon’s climax.

When he collapsed so he laid half on and half off her, she said, “I thought we were going to do more than this.”

Gannon brushed a lock of hair off her sweaty brow. “I sort of remembered at the last second that I didn’t exactly come prepared. I figured if I didn’t bring any condoms with me then I would be less likely to push you to do something you weren’t ready for. Unless you have some here.”

Arwen cringed inside. How stupid could she be? She’d been all willing to have sex with Gannon without using any protection. She wasn’t even on the pill.

“I don’t,” she said. “At least one of us was able to keep a sane head.”

Gannon chuckled. “I wouldn’t exactly say my brain had been firing on all cylinders.” He then grew serious. “I want you to come with me when I leave tomorrow.”

She blinked. “Are you asking me to join you and the rest of band on your tour bus?”

“Yes. I don’t want to leave you behind.”

Arwen wanted to give him a resounding yes, but she held off. “I’d love nothing more than to go with you. I’d have to see if I can find someone to take over my coaching duties while I’m gone. Luckily there aren’t any competitions for the next little while or there wouldn’t even be a remote possibility of me being able to get away.”

“So you’ll come with me?”

“Only if my skaters are looked after during my absence.”

Gannon smiled. "I'm going to take that as a yes."
He then kissed her until she almost forgot her own name.

Chapter Seven

Gannon sat on the edge of the bed with his jeans pulled up but not fastened. Arwen had gone to the bathroom to wash. He ran his fingers through his hair. The excuse he'd given her as to why he hadn't gone beyond oral sex hadn't been the real reason he'd switched gears midstride. AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases were no causes of worry for him, and he couldn't pass them on to his partners, either. He and the others never got sick. Not once had they become ill since they'd integrated into human society. The last time any of them had sickened was when they'd contracted the illness that had wiped out most of their kind.

The real one had to do with the fact that while he'd pleased her, his wings had tried to manifest. As she'd cried out with her orgasm, and he'd become more excited, his wings had moved against his skin, fighting his ability to keep them hidden. And when Arwen had wrapped her small hand around his cock, his eyesight had grown keener, alerting him to the fact they'd changed to their true silver color.

The combination of those two instances was enough to have Gannon reining things back a bit. His control to keep his true self hidden had never faltered in that way before now. Over the last thousand years, he'd slept with his fair share of human women, and not once had they caused this kind of reaction in him. He didn't understand it.

It was also another reason why Arwen stood out from the rest of her human sisters. Gannon still couldn't put a name to why he'd been so drawn to her right from the start. And now, having grown closer to her, touched and tasted her, he'd become possessive of her. The thought of leaving her behind in Kalamazoo while he went to the next city on the tour had left him feeling more than a little anxious. She was his, and he didn't want to let her go.

Gannon stayed where he was when he heard Arwen's soft footsteps entering the room. The bed dipped with their combined weight as she climbed on it behind him. His cock stirred at the feel of her soft hands outlining his wings, which took up most of his back.

"I love your tattoo," she said as she pressed a kiss to where he knew was the top of one wing. "And I love the fact that all the members of Soar have the same one. Whose idea was it for you all to get matching ones?"

He forced himself to concentrate on what Arwen had said rather than what she did with her hands and mouth. "It wasn't really a conscious decision to do it. It sort of just came about." Which was partially true. When they'd first found they had the ability to hide their wings, none of them had known the tattoo-like mark would be the by-product of it.

"It must have taken hours for the tattoo artist to do you all. And you must have had a hard time sitting through it."

His cock did more than stir when she put her arms around his shoulders and pressed her naked breasts to his back. It grew hard, pushing through his open jeans.

"It wasn't anything I couldn't handle," he said gruffly. A surge of need shot through him when Arwen nibbled at his earlobe. "Are you trying to get me worked up again? Because if you are, you're doing a pretty good job of it."

She chuckled. “Maybe. And from my vantage point, I see the proof it’s working.”

“You’re just trying to torture me. The hand job was nice, but the next time I come, I want to be inside you. And since neither one of us has any condoms, that won’t be happening.”

“I could get dressed and make a quick run to the store for some.”

Gannon took Arwen by the arms and pulled her onto his lap. His cock nestled against her bare bottom. “I have a better idea. Why don’t you make whatever phone calls you need to do to arrange for a few days off instead? Then you can come back with me to the hotel and spend the night. We have to get on the road pretty early tomorrow, anyway. If you’re already with me, it will be much easier. And since I’ll be driving us back to the hotel, you don’t have to worry about driving your car or having to take a cab.”

Arwen kissed his chin. “Now you’re really giving me the incentive to make this work. This might take a while. It’s the weekend, and I might have a hard time getting a hold of the skate club’s owner. She’ll be busy teaching lessons to the little ones. Then I’ll have to call my parents and let them know I’ll be away.”

“Take as much time as you need. I’d much rather spend the day inside your apartment than cooped up in the hotel all alone.”

“Then I’d better get dressed and start on those phone calls.”

Once Arwen slipped off his lap, Gannon watched her pull on her clothes that had ended up strewn all over the floor. By the time she’d finished, his cock had gone down enough for him to stuff it back into his jeans and do them up. He picked up his t-shirt and put it on.

Gannon followed Arwen out to the living room. He lowered himself onto the couch beside her when she sat and reached for the cordless phone on the end table next to it.

“Do you want something to drink before I start calling?” she asked. “I’ll make us something to eat once I’m done.”

“I’m fine. Don’t worry about me.”

He sat back and made himself comfortable as she dialed the number of her first phone call. When someone answered on the other end, she asked for a woman named Tessa.

Arwen put her hand over the mouthpiece and said quietly, “I’m in luck. Tessa—she owns the skate club—is in between classes.” She took her hand away from the phone when he heard a feminine voice on the other end say Arwen’s name. “Hi, Tessa. I know you’re busy, so I won’t keep you too long. I’m calling to see if I can have a couple of days off next week.” There was a pause while Tessa spoke. “Three days?” Arwen asked hesitantly while she gave him a questioning look. He nodded.

He then listened as she discussed with Tessa what each of her skaters needed the most help with in their long and short programs. Gannon took that to mean Tessa had given Arwen the time off she’d requested.

Unable to sit beside her any longer and not touch her, he shifted closer and pushed her hair over her shoulder to expose the side of her neck. He pulled her into him with her leaning against one side of his chest. Gannon then proceeded to nuzzle the patch of skin just under Arwen’s earlobe. She shivered and stuttered her next words. Loving how she reacted to his slightest touch, he tucked her hair behind her ear and swirled his tongue inside it. Her shoulder lifted, and she bent her head toward him when another shiver swept through her.

After Arwen hung up, she turned to look him in the face. “Do you know how hard it was to talk with you doing that?” she asked with a laugh. “I’m sure Tessa wondered if I were having some kind of fit with all that stuttering you caused me to do.”

“Maybe so, but she did give you the time off, right?”

“Yes, she did. One of the other coaches—who just so happened to be in Tessa’s office with her—offered to work with my skaters while I’m gone.” Arwen pushed herself off the couch and stood. “Now I have to call my parents. Since you’re too much of a distraction, I’ll make this phone call in my room—alone.”

“Sorry, but you can’t expect me to be near you and not touch. That’s just asking too much of me.”

She shook her head. “I’ll try to keep this call as short as I can. Once my mom gets talking, it’s sometimes hard to get her to stop.”

“Then I suggest you hurry up and phone her before I get too lonely out here.”

Gannon watched as Arwen walked down the short hallway toward her bedroom. His gaze traced the line of her back down to her shapely ass. Her skinny jeans left nothing to the imagination, perfectly outlining her butt and long, toned legs. He couldn’t wait to have them wrapped around his waist again, preferably when he was pounding into her.

Arwen had only been in her bedroom for a few minutes when a loud buzzer went off. Looking around, he tried to pinpoint where the noise had come from. The second time it sounded, he got off the couch and followed it to a panel beside the apartment door. Gannon looked toward Arwen’s bedroom the same time she popped her head out into the hallway.

With the phone still held to her ear and the mouthpiece covered by her hand, she asked, “Do you mind getting that, Gannon? Just push the talk button, then release it to hear who it is.”

He found the button and pushed it. “Hello?”

“Oh my god, it’s really you,” squealed a voice through the speaker.

At Arwen’s loud groan, he turned in her direction. “That’s my friend, Natalya. You’d better let her in before she draws too much attention to herself. The button to do that is the one next to the talk.”

Gannon turned back to the panel and spoke into the speaker. “Arwen said for you to come on up, Natalya. I’ll buzz you in.” He pushed the other button.

A minute later, someone pounded on the apartment door. Since Arwen had disappeared back into her bedroom, Gannon went to answer it. He unlocked the door, and had barely managed to open it, when a solid form slammed into his chest, babbling a mile a minute. He caught the woman—who he could only assume was Natalya—by the shoulders to steady her before she knocked them both over. That seemed to encourage her to wrap her arms around his back and squeeze the hell out of him.

Holding his arms out away from his body, he slowly turned with him facing the hallway. “Ah, Arwen,” he said in a loud voice. “Can you come out here please?”

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Hearing the tension in Gannon’s voice, Arwen left her bedroom to return to the living room. At the sight of Natalya wrapped around him while he stood stock-still looking uncomfortable, she had to hide a smile behind her hand.

Into the phone, she said, “Mom, I have to go now. Natalya just showed up. Say goodbye to Dad for me, and I’ll call you when I get back.”

Arwen hung up and walked toward Gannon and Natalya. She threw the phone on the couch on the way by. She went to stand behind her best friend and tapped her on the shoulder.

“Natalya, do mind not mauling Gannon. I think you’re making him a trifle uncomfortable.”

“Do I have to?”

“Yes, you do,” Gannon said. “The only one around here who is allowed to maul me is Arwen.”

Reluctantly, Natalya released her death grip on Gannon. He quickly moved to Arwen’s side and pulled her under his arm.

“I was right,” her friend said. “You do have a famous boyfriend now.”

Arwen ignored Natalya’s comment and gave her a meaningful look. “I wasn’t expecting you to come by today.”

“Did you really think I’d be able to stay away after you told me Gannon would be here?”

“Actually, yes I did.”

“I figured you’d forget to get his autograph for me, and since he and the band are leaving tomorrow, I thought I’d stop by and get it myself.”

Gannon spoke before Arwen could answer. “I’ll be more than happy to give you an autograph, Natalya. But even if Arwen had forgotten today, you still would have gotten it. She’s leaving with me and the band tomorrow as well.”

Natalya’s eyes widened. “Really, Arwen? You’re leaving with Soar?”

“Yes. Gannon asked me to go with him when they play the last city in their tour.” She cringed at her friend’s high-pitched shriek.

“You have all the freaking luck, Arwen. It’s a good thing you’re my best friend or I’d be so jealous of you right now.”

Gannon chuckled. “Why don’t you come and have dinner with Arwen, me and the rest of the band at our hotel tonight, Natalya? That way you don’t have to feel left out.”

Natalya’s mouth opened and closed a few times before she found her voice and shouted, “Hell, yeah, I’ll be there. What time?”

“Say around six?”

“Perfect. That way I’ll have enough time to get ready.”

“It’s only one in the afternoon,” Arwen said. “Surely you don’t need five hours?”

“If I want to make a good impression on the others and maybe land one for myself, yes, I need all of those five hours.”

Arwen rolled her eyes as Gannon said to Natalya, “Arwen will meet you down in the lobby and bring you up to my room. We’ll do room service again.”

“I’ll be there. I’m leaving now. See you both later this evening.”

After Natalya left as fast as she’d arrived, Arwen turned under his arm to look at him. “I hope you know you’ve created a monster by asking her to have dinner with us and the others. She’s just as huge a fan of Soar as I am, maybe even more so.”

“Natalya looks harmless enough,” he said with humor in his voice.

“She might look it, but she’s far from it. She’s had the hots for the rest of the band, especially for Trae, for quite a while now. The only reason she hasn’t included you in her lustful thoughts is because she knows I singled you out as mine.”

Gannon grinned and waggled his eyebrows. “So you’ve been lusting after me from afar, have you? What have you thought about doing to me?” Arwen’s face flushed a becoming shade of red, giving away the direction her thoughts had turned.

“Maybe later tonight I’ll show you,” she said softly.

The low, sexy timbre of her voice seemed to wrap around his cock, making it rock-hard in an instant. Gannon dropped his hands to her hips and walked her backward until her back hit the wall. “I’d like that,” he said as he bent his head closer to hers. “Then I can show you all the things I’ve been aching to do to you since I met you.”

Arwen lifted her arms around his neck and played with the hair at his nape. “In that case, we’ll have to kick Natalya and the others out of your hotel room early. If we don’t, we might not have enough time to do all this ‘showing’ we want to do. There are only so many hours in a night. And you did say we had to leave early in the morning.”

Gannon closed the small distance between their mouths and kissed Arwen with all the hot lust that surged in his veins. His cock throbbed inside his jeans. With desire so intense he couldn’t think of anything else but quenching it between her legs, he pushed his tongue inside her mouth, dueling with hers.

Lost in the passion that had suddenly flared between them, Gannon could think of no reason why he couldn’t take Arwen against the wall. The mewling sounds of desire she made into his mouth told him she wouldn’t refuse him. Her pussy was wet. He smelled the scent of her arousal in the air around them, which made his cock ache even more.

He kissed her deeper, ready to tear open Arwen’s jeans to see how wet she actually was when he felt it again—his wings shifting against the skin of his back. Breathing hard, he broke contact with her mouth and rested his forehead against hers. He closed his eyes for a few seconds as he fought to tamp down his arousal.

“I think we’d better stop before I get too carried away and say damn the consequences,” he said, his voice rough with the residue of his desire.

“Right now, I’m about ready to say forget about the condoms.”

Gannon groaned before he took a step away from Arwen. He immediately felt the loss of having her body against his. “In that case, I’m going to have to keep my hands and lips to myself. How about you pack while I watch?”

“I have a better idea. I’ll make us something for lunch, then I’ll pack.”

“Food is good. It’ll give me something else to do with my mouth besides using it on your body.”

Arwen sucked in a deep breath before she brushed past him. “I had better get to work on that food right now.”

He walked over to the couch and sat. Seeing the phone on the seat cushion next to him, he returned it to its base on the end table. He heard Arwen moving around inside the kitchen. Whatever caused this new reaction in him to her, Gannon wouldn’t let it stop him from sleeping with her. He could only hope that after spending the day with her he’d be able to clamp down on it harder, but that could be wishful thinking on his part. His mind made up, he’d take her to his bed tonight, and he’d fight to the bitter end before he let his true self show. He still hadn’t decided whether or not to tell Arwen what he was, but he sure as shit didn’t want whatever overtook him from taking that choice from him.

Chapter Eight

Knowing full well that Natalya would show up at least ten minutes early, Arwen made sure she was downstairs in the hotel lobby well before six. Her friend was nothing if not predictable.

Sure enough, at exactly the time Arwen had figured upon, she saw Natalya walk into the lobby. She stood from the leather armchair she'd been sitting in and watched Natalya head her way. Arwen had to smile when she took in her best friend's outfit. Natalya had gone all out. She wore a short dark grey slim-fitting skirt that barely reached her mid-thigh. Her blouse was silk and baby blue in color, which accentuated the blueness of her eyes. It also veed down sharply, to give an ample view of the top of her breasts. The spiked high heels completed the ensemble.

Arwen felt decidedly frumpy in her jeans and t-shirt compared to what Natalya wore. Once her friend stood in front of her, she said, "I thought you realized this wasn't going to be dressy."

Natalya swept her long black hair over her shoulder, which Arwen noticed had been perfectly styled. "Hey, you already snagged a member of Soar. I'd like to leave a lasting impression on at least one of the remaining ones."

"Oh, I doubt the guys will forget you," she said with a chuckle. "You do have a way of coming into a room and taking it over."

"What can I say? I have a gift."

"Let's go before your head gets any bigger and won't fit inside the elevator."

Arriving at the sixth floor, Arwen smiled at George who stood at his post close to the elevator doors. She'd had a chance to talk to him more and found him not so intimidating. Gannon had been right—George was a bit of a softy.

Natalya stepped off the elevator beside her and gave George the once-over. "Well, hello there," she said while she flashed him her famous come-hither look.

Arwen grabbed her arm and rolled her eyes. "Come on, Natalya. I'm sure George has better things to do than put up with your flirting."

As she pulled Natalya down the hall, George said, "She's more than welcome to flirt with me any time. I would enjoy the company." He gave them a wink.

Reaching Gannon's hotel room, Arwen used the keycard Gannon had given her to unlock the door and ushered Natalya inside. The others had arrived while she'd been downstairs in the lobby. They sat in the sitting area with Gannon laughing and talking. Their conversation ended when they noticed Arwen and Natalya.

Arwen led the way over to the men and made the introductions when they stood in the center of the room. "Everyone, this is my friend, Natalya."

"I already know who you all are," Natalya said after the men said hello. "And just so you know, I intend to get each of your autographs. I just haven't decided where I want them yet."

"Where you want them?" Arwen asked. "You're just getting the guys to sign a piece of paper."

Natalya gave her a mischievous smile. "I was thinking of doing something a little different."

“Such as?”

“Getting them to sign my chest or my ass. I’m leaning more toward my ass. That way I can run to a tattoo shop and have the artist make them permanent without having to worry about them showing.”

Malik burst out laughing, and the others soon followed. “I like your friend, Arwen,” he said.

She relaxed at the men’s mirth. Used to Natalya’s outrageous humor, Arwen had known her friend hadn’t been serious. She was thankful the others hadn’t taken it the wrong way.

“Why don’t the two of you take a seat?” Gannon suggested through chuckles. “Arwen, there’s room enough to sit with me.” He patted the space on the couch between him and Keiran. “We saved the armchair for you, Natalya.”

Instead of heading for the offered seat, Natalya made a beeline for the loveseat where Trae and Malik sat. She lowered herself between them, causing both men to squish over as far as the high padded arms would let them.

“This will do nicely,” Natalya said once she’d made herself comfortable.

“If you’d like more room,” Jalen said, “you could always sit on my lap.” He sat on one of the high-backed chairs from the dining table.

Natalya flashed him a smile. “Maybe later. I’m quite happy where I am now.” She linked her arms through each of Trae and Malik’s and snuggled first into one and then the other.

Arwen groaned. “You can dress her up, but you can’t take her out. I think you try to embarrass me on purpose, Natalya.”

Her friend laughed. “And it’s so easy to do. I’m sure if Malik and Trae minded they’d let me know.” She looked at each man. “Right?”

“Don’t worry, Arwen,” Malik said. “It’s no hardship having a beautiful woman plastered to my side. I’m sure Trae feels the same.”

Trae nodded. “You don’t hear me complaining.”

“See, Arwen?” Natalya asked. “There’s nothing to worry about. If it will make you feel any better, I promise to not to jump Jalen, Malik, Trae or Keiran. Unless they ask me to, that is.”

“I could be up for some of that later,” Jalen said.

“How about we decide what we want to get from room service?” Gannon suggested.

Arwen looked at him and smiled, grateful for the change in conversation before it went too far. “Sounds good to me.”

Even though she enjoyed watching the banter between Natalya and the others, Arwen still was very aware of Gannon sitting next to her on the couch. She couldn’t wait to have him all to herself again. During the hours until they’d come to the hotel, they’d done everything they could to distract themselves from the rising desire that flared between them. It left her feeling decidedly frustrated.

The evening turned out to be enjoyable. And even better, it seemed to wind down fairly early. Keiran had been the one to suggest they call it a night around ten o’clock, reminding the others that their bus would be on the road around seven tomorrow morning. Before he and the others left for their separate hotel rooms, they gave Natalya their autographs as promised.

Arwen walked Natalya to the door when she said it was time for her to go. “I’ll give

you a call when I get back,” she said.

“You’d better.” Natalya leaned in and whispered, “Have fun screwing Gannon’s brains out.” She gave Arwen a saucy smile, then left.

Shaking her head at Natalya’s parting words, Arwen turned back to face the room and found Gannon had silently come up behind her. Her libido kicked into high gear when she saw the stark desire on his face. Her nipples grew taut beneath her shirt.

“I heard what Natalya told you,” he said in a gruff voice.

“Then I guess we’d better get started,” Arwen said as she stepped into his arms.

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Gannon relished the feel of finally having Arwen held against him, their bodies touching from chest to knee. All evening he’d wanted to throw his fellow band mates and Natalya out so he could take Arwen to bed. He’d been semi-aroused the whole time, aching to finish what they’d started earlier in her apartment. Thankful for Keiran’s suggestion to call it an early night, he now could get Arwen how and where he wanted her—naked and in his bed.

Taking her mouth, he pushed his way inside. The taste of her had his blood surging through his veins. His cock pulsed in time with his racing heartbeat. Nothing would stop him from claiming her as his. And when she fisted her hands in the front of his shirt and increased the pressure of her lips, he no longer could wait to have her.

Lifting his head, he said, “If I don’t have you soon, I’m going to explode.”

Arwen rubbed up against his erection. “I can feel that. I want you, Gannon.”

With a groan of pure need, he scooped her up in his arms and carried her to the bedroom they were going to share for the night. At the bed, he ripped the covers down and settled Arwen on the center of it. He toed off his shoes and slipped hers from her feet before he crawled onto the mattress beside her.

Arwen turned into him and put her leg over his hip. He plucked at a taut nipple through her shirt, rolling it between his thumb and index finger while he kissed her deeply. She pushed closer, rubbing her pussy against the large bulge in the front of his jeans. His cock strained against the zipper of his pants.

Not wasting any time, Gannon pulled Arwen’s shirt up and over her head, then took off her bra. With her breasts bared to his view, he cupped one and sucked her nipple into his mouth. She moaned, rubbing herself against him, driving him crazy with desire.

Releasing her nipple he peeled her tight jeans off, taking her panties with them. The scent of her arousal shot his libido to higher heights. It also had his wings shifting along his back. The sensation of the material of his shirt rubbing against them became an irritant. Grabbing the back, Gannon roughly pulled it off.

He groaned as Arwen placed kisses across his pecs and pushed him onto his back. The bed sheets didn’t feel any better against his wings, but when she licked a path down to his abs while she undid his jeans, Gannon found himself able to ignore it.

His breath sawed in and out of his lungs when she pulled his jeans down past his hips. He lifted his head to watch Arwen strip them completely off him. But when she stared hungrily at his cock, which was completely engorged, he had to shut his eyes as he fought back the change that was taking place in them.

“I’ve wanted to do this all day,” Arwen said as he felt her take hold of the base of his cock.

The sensation of her licking him from base to tip had him stiffening as he fought not

to pump his hips. Her tongue circled the head of his cock, paying extra attention to the sensitive spot just under it. She did that a few more times before she took him inside the hot confines of her mouth.

As Arwen sucked on his cock, Gannon lifted his head off the bed and cracked his eyes open to mere slits. The sight of her pleasuring him, her mouth moving up and down his shaft, pushed a deep moan from him. Unable to hold still any longer, he thrust his hips, getting her to take more of his length. His cock hardened even more.

Arwen's grip tightened on the base of his shaft as she sucked on him, her teeth gently scraping against his skin. If she kept pleasuring him in this way for much longer, Gannon would come in her mouth. And the more turned on he became the harder he had to fight to keep his true nature from revealing itself.

Feeling the need to come building inside him, Gannon pulled at Arwen's arm. "Enough. I'm too close."

She gave his shaft one last lick, released him and sat up. "No coming yet."

With his gaze averted, he reached over to the small table next to the bed and pulled open the drawer. He grabbed a condom out of the box there. Quickly, he tore open the foil packet and rolled the latex sheath down the length of his cock. Taking hold of Arwen's hips, he positioned her pussy over his erection. He pushed up as she pushed down until he was buried to the hilt inside her.

Arwen placed her hands on the mattress on either side of him to support herself before she started to ride him. Her inner walls gripped his shaft as he slid in and out of her. The feel of her body taking his had him gritting his teeth to stop himself from coming. She felt too good. When she moaned loudly and her pace quickened, he risked opening his eyes wider. The sight of her moving up and down on his cock, her eyes closed while she wore a mask of pure pleasure just about undid him.

Looking down at their joined bodies, Gannon watched his cock moving inside her pussy. He lifted his hips to meet each of her thrusts. He was close. His balls tightened against his body, but he fought the urge to come. He wanted Arwen to find her climax first.

He sucked one of her nipples that hovered so tantalizingly close into his mouth. Arwen whimpered, her movements becoming almost frantic. To push her over the edge, he reached between their bodies and rubbed her clit with the tip of his finger. She let out a keening cry as her pussy rhythmically clutched at his shaft, squeezing him in a tight fist.

Even before Arwen's release finished, he rolled her onto her back. Lifting on his hands, Gannon took her with hard, fast thrusts. She put her legs around his waist and met each of his strokes. He pounded into her, his cock growing hard almost to the bursting point. And his wings kept shifting along his skin, threatening to manifest.

When he reached his climax, Arwen came a second time. In the middle of the best orgasm of his life, something built inside him, fighting to be let loose. Moaning, continuing to come, he opened his eyes to find Arwen's energy mark glowing brightly around her. As whatever it was that was building grew, some of her glowing life energy seemed to be pulled toward him. Afraid of what would happen if he didn't stop it, he fought against it, barely winning the battle.

Collapsing on top of Arwen, Gannon kept his weight on his arms to keep from crushing her. The sound of their heavy breathing filled his ears. He buried his face in the crook of her neck. He had no explanation for what had happened while he'd made love to

her. He didn't know why his eyes had reverted to their true state, or why he'd almost lost control of his ability to hide his wings.

But what he really found disturbing was what had happened to Arwen's life energy. He hadn't deliberately tried to touch it, nor had he tried in any way to manipulate it.

With his true self safely hidden once more, Gannon lifted his head and ran his gaze over her face. She showed no sign that she'd noticed what had almost taken place between them. All he saw were the aftereffects of their lovemaking. Her cheeks were flushed, and her lips puffy from his kisses.

Pulling his now flaccid cock out of her, he kissed the tip of her nose. "I'm going to go clean up in the bathroom. Even though it isn't all that late, when I get back, we should go to sleep."

Arwen nibbled on his chin. "I don't mind sleeping, so long as I get to sleep in your arms."

He smiled. "I wouldn't have it any other way."

Gannon got up from the bed and went to the en suite bathroom. It didn't take him very long to get rid of the used condom. Before he went back to the bedroom, he looked at his reflection in the mirror. His eyes were turquoise without a hint of silver in them anywhere. Turning his back toward the mirror, he looked at the tattoo-like marking of his disguised wings. He ran his hand over the part of it he could reach, relieved to feel skin without a hint of feathers.

Returning to the room, Gannon turned off the light before he crossed the distance to the bed. He got in next to Arwen and took her in his arms. He stretched out on his back with her cuddled against his side and her head pillowed on his chest. Hooking the covers with his feet, he pulled them over them.

It didn't take too long before Arwen relaxed against him and drifted off to sleep. Gannon lay in the dark, unable to get his brain to shut down enough for him to find his rest as well. Making love to Arwen was nothing like the casual sex he'd indulged in before meeting her. He also knew he wouldn't be able to easily walk away from her. He didn't know when, or if, he'd be able to let her go. She felt right in his arms. Not only were they great together in bed, he enjoyed being around her.

Able to admit there was a good chance he wanted to keep her as his own, Gannon then thought of what that would entail. He'd have no choice but to tell Arwen what he truly was. For so long he and the others had kept their secret, and the idea of revealing it to a human left him wanting to avoid it for as long as he could. But if he kept reacting the way he had, he wouldn't have much choice. At some point he wouldn't be able to stop the changes in time and Arwen would see. Then there was the small matter of what had happened to her life energy while he'd climaxed. He'd have to talk to the others and see if anything like this had happened to them.

Not ready yet to face all that, he closed his eyes and tried to push all those thoughts out of his head. He needed to sleep. Tomorrow was another day. For now, he was happy enough to hold Arwen in his arms.

Chapter Nine

Arwen came awake to some of the bright morning light spilling in through the not quite shut curtains and the feel of a large, warm male body spooned against her. Gannon's arm was across her chest with a hand covering a breast. One of his legs was between hers while his hard cock nestled against her bottom. She pushed back against it as he kneaded her breast and kissed her nape.

"Mmm, I could wake up like this every morning."

Gannon's hand drifted down her body to splay against her stomach. "I have to agree."

His hand lowered until it rested on her mound, and a finger circled her clit. "Do we have time for this?" she asked breathily. "Shouldn't we be getting ready to leave?"

"We have enough time if we're fast."

Arwen moaned deep in her throat when Gannon dipped one and then a second finger into her pussy. His hard-on jerked against her when she rubbed her bottom along it.

"There's nothing wrong with a quickie."

"I hoped you'd feel that way."

She reached behind her to put her hand on Gannon's hip as he plunged his fingers in and out of her pussy. She could do fast. Already her body was primed for him to take her. All she needed to send her over the edge was his cock buried deep inside her.

Her back arching, Arwen pushed against his erection in time with his fingers. "Now, Gannon."

"Don't move," he said huskily.

He pulled his fingers out of her, and she heard him open the drawer on the bedside table. The next sound that reached her ears was Gannon tearing open a foil wrapper. He put some space between their lower bodies as he rolled the condom onto his cock.

Finished, Gannon once more tucked his shaft against her bottom. He lifted her leg and put it over his, allowing his cock to slip between her thighs. At the feel of him probing her slick entrance with the tip of his erection, Arwen angled her hips to give him better access to her pussy. Holding onto her leg, he thrust his cock inside her core, going deeper with each stroke until she'd taken all of him.

She pushed back against Gannon, meeting each of his thrusts as he moved in and out. She squeezed her inner muscles around his thick cock, increasing the pleasure she felt. The feel of him stretching her, filling her all the way, had her moaning. Making love to Gannon didn't compare to the other men she'd been with. He seemed to know without her telling him exactly how to touch her to make her body fly.

A loud, strained groan rumbled in her ear as he increased his pace. His fingers dug into her leg, keeping her in place while he pounded into her. "Come now, Arwen," Gannon said, more of the strain she'd heard in his groan was in his voice. "Come for me."

"Almost...there," she panted.

It only took two more strokes for her orgasm to tear through her. With a whimpered moan, her pussy spasmed around Gannon's shaft. He rammed into her one final time, then let out a strangled cry as he started to come.

At the first pulse of his cock deep inside her core, Gannon stiffened. He roughly pulled out of her and threw himself out of bed. Arwen quickly turned to see what the matter was and found him standing a short distance away still coming inside the condom he wore.

“Gannon?” she asked worriedly. “What’s wrong?”

Seeming to have recovered from whatever had caused him to jump out of the bed, he walked backward toward the bathroom. “I’m going to take a shower,” he replied stiffly.

“We could take one together,” she suggested.

“No!” Gannon then cleared his throat and said in a quieter tone, “That wouldn’t be a good idea. We don’t have much time left before we have to meet the others at the tour bus.”

She opened her mouth to say she would behave herself, but he quickly backed inside the en suite and shut the door firmly behind him. Arwen sat up and frowned. Something wasn’t right. The man who had almost run into the bathroom was not the same one who had brought her awake with his intimate touch. And it wasn’t as if Gannon hadn’t enjoyed what they’d been doing. He’d reached his climax. But why he’d pulled out the second it started, she was at a loss to explain.

Intending to take a fast shower after Gannon finished, Arwen didn’t bother to get dressed once she got out of bed. She moved around the room, collecting the clothes she’d worn the night before, which had ended up strewn on the floor, and put them in the suitcase with the rest. She then took out what she wanted to wear that day and the items she’d need to take with her into the bathroom.

Not long after she finished, Arwen heard the shower turn off in the en suite. A few minutes later, Gannon walked out with his damp hair slicked back and a towel wrapped around his hips.

He didn’t look at her as he walked by and mumbled, “The shower is all yours.”

Arwen went to stand at Gannon’s back. She put her hand on the arch of one of the wings on his tattoo. “What’s going on? You’re acting kind of distant right now. Did I do something wrong?”

Gannon stepped away so she no longer touched him. “No.” He took out a comb from his suitcase and ran it through his hair. “I just need you to hurry.”

She took a deep breath. “All right.”

After she retrieved the items she’d left on the bed, Arwen went inside the bathroom. Gannon could tell her all he wanted that nothing was wrong, but she knew that wasn’t the truth. If he wanted to put some distance between them for some unknown reason, she’d give him his space. At least he hadn’t told her he no longer wanted her to leave Kalamazoo with him.

Confused and a tiny bit hurt, Arwen used the toilet, brushed her teeth and got into the shower. She’d let this go for now, but if Gannon continued to be warm one minute and then cold the next, she’d have to end things between them. Rock star or no rock star, she wasn’t about to let him play head games with her. Either he wanted to be with her or he didn’t.

* * * *

After Arwen finished her shower, Gannon rushed her out of the hotel room. He’d barely said two words to her. The others, along with George, stood at the elevator when

they walked out into the long hallway. Gannon headed toward them, dragging his wheeled suitcase behind him. Arwen followed him doing the same.

When they joined the group, Jalen said, "I thought the two of you were going to meet up with us on the bus. We all figured you'd be a little...busy...to be up and about this early."

"Well, you all thought wrong," Gannon replied sharply.

"Aren't we in a fine mood this morning? Considering who you spent your night with, I would have expected you to be in a better frame of mind."

"Drop it, Jalen. All right?"

The elevator doors slid open, and Gannon stepped onto it without waiting for anyone else. The others turned in her direction with a questioning look in their eyes. Arwen shrugged to let them know she had no idea what had made Gannon so grumpy. She took a measure of comfort from knowing she wasn't the only one being inflicted with his moodiness.

The ride down to the lobby was a silent one. When they arrived, everyone piled out, and as a group, walked out of the hotel. Just outside the doors, a large tour bus sat parked. They left their luggage for the driver to stow away in the space under the bus before they went to get on.

At the door of the bus, George pulled it open and moved aside for the rest of them to go up the small set of stairs. Having never been inside a tour bus before, or been anywhere near one, Arwen stared at the opulent interior. Once they were past the front section where the driver sat, she saw there was a small sitting/kitchen area. There were two tables with banquette seating on either side of the bus, a microwave and a small fridge. Two plasma TVs hung on the wall near each table.

Continuing in farther, she found a small washroom, complete with a smallish shower stall. After that room, on either side of the walls, were curtained off alcove bunks. There were six in total with a bottom and a top. At the very back of the bus, was another sitting room with a large black leather circular banquette that faced a larger plasma TV.

Arwen took a seat there to stay out of the way. She hoped Gannon would come and sit with her, but he said something quietly to Trae before he went back outside. Watching the others get themselves settled in, she tried not to let Gannon's behavior get to her. It was hard, though. The excitement she'd felt about joining him and the band on the last leg of their tour had dimmed a bit because of his behavior.

Trae walked to the back of the bus and sat next to her. "Gannon told me I was to come and keep you company while he went out to talk to the driver."

She gave him a small smile. "Don't feel as if you have to. I'm fine sitting here by myself."

Trae narrowed his eyes. "No, you're not. Did something happen between you and Gannon last night?"

"Not that I know of. He was fine during the night. It wasn't until this morning after we...Let's just say his mood change happened rather unexpectedly."

"Do you want me to talk to him?"

Arwen shook her head. "No. That might make things worse. I'm hoping he'll get over whatever is bothering him soon."

Trae put his arm around her shoulders and leaned in. "I'm sure it isn't something major that has him out of sorts. If it will make you feel better, Gannon wouldn't have

invited you along if he didn't have real feelings for you. And because of you, he extended our time here in Kalamazoo. We were supposed have left for Indianapolis the morning after we performed. The night of the concert, Gannon told our manager to cancel the interviews he'd scheduled with some of the radio stations there because he was staying for a couple of extra days."

Arwen's brow furrowed. "It couldn't have been because of me that Gannon decided not to leave for Indianapolis on schedule. I didn't meet him until the day after the concert in the early evening."

"Oh, that's right," Trae quickly said. "He told me how the two of you met. I must have my days mixed up." He then tucked her tighter under his arm and brushed a kiss against the top of her head.

About to ask Trae what he thought he was doing, Arwen quickly closed her mouth when she heard someone walk into the sitting area and saw it was Gannon. He wore a deep scowl on his face, which he directed at Trae.

Gannon crossed the small distance between them, pulled her out from under Trae's arm and up against his chest. He put his arms around her waist, holding her securely to him.

"I said keep Arwen company not maul her," Gannon said. "Go find your own girl. This one is taken."

Trae chuckled. "I couldn't resist seeing what you would do," he said with a wink, then left them alone as he headed to the front of the bus.

Arwen leaned her head back to look Gannon in the face. He tucked her hair behind her ear. "You look tired," he said. "If you want, you can take a nap in my bunk. It might look a little cramped, but the beds are actually really comfortable."

"Maybe later."

"Okay. We're going to be on the road in a few minutes. Is there anything you want?"

"Since we haven't had breakfast yet, I'd love something to eat."

"We have some single-served yogurts in the fridge. Will that do you until we stop for something for lunch?"

"That'll be enough. I'm not much of a breakfast eater."

"I'll get it for you."

Arwen sat back on the bench and watched Gannon leave. Whatever had caused his change in mood appeared to be slowly leaving him. She still felt he held her a bit at arm's length, but he wasn't exactly cold to her anymore.

Chapter Ten

Gannon sat at the very back of the bus alone, thinking. He was worried. This morning while he'd made love to Arwen, everything that had happened the first time they'd had sex happened again. Except some of her life energy hadn't just been drawn toward him, he'd absorbed it, somehow taking it into himself. Luckily it hadn't been enough for Arwen to notice, but it had been enough for him to shoot out of bed even though he'd been in the middle of his release. He still remembered the jolt that had gone through him when it had happened.

The knowledge that he could possibly absorb too much of her life energy before he could stop it in time had Gannon wanting to keep Arwen away from him. If he took too much of her life energy, it could do a lot of harm to her. And if he took all of it...he didn't want to think about it. Shortly after the illness that had changed them, he'd come across a wounded deer, shot by a hunter and left to die on its own. He'd watched its life energy slowly drain away until death had claimed it.

So he was in a quandary. On one hand, he was afraid he would accidentally hurt Arwen if he made love to her again. And on the other, he didn't want to be apart from her. He wanted her with every fiber of his being.

Trae walked into the sitting area and plopped himself down next to Gannon. "Is Arwen taking a nap?"

"Yes." Noting his friend's serious mien, he knew Trae hadn't joined him just to pass the time.

"Good," Trae said. "Then we can talk openly."

"About what?"

"About what had you in such a bad mood first thing this morning. It was kind of noticeable you were trying to keep your distance from Arwen. I might be wrong, but weren't the two of you hitting it off?"

"We are." Gannon ran a hand through his hair. "It doesn't have anything to do with Arwen. It's me."

"Tell me what's going on, Gannon."

"When I'm in with bed with Arwen, I'm having a hard time keeping my true nature hidden."

Trae frowned. "In what way?"

"My eyes revert to their true color, and my wings try to manifest. It's a battle to keep them back."

His friend let out a low whistle. "That shouldn't happen. We all have complete control when we hide what we are from humans."

"I know." Gannon sighed. "Right now, I'm fine. My control is as strong as it has always been. It only happens when I'm with Arwen and become more than a little aroused. And that's not the only thing."

"There's more?"

"Yeah. This part is what has me stressing out. I know this might be a little too much information, but when I reach climax, Arwen's energy mark starts to glow and then some of her life energy is drawn to me. This morning, I somehow absorbed a very small part of

it.”

“Oh fuck,” Trae said with a shocked expression on his face. “You could kill her if you take too much of it.”

“Tell me something I don’t know.” Gannon scrubbed his face with his hand. “Shit, Trae, I don’t want to hurt Arwen, but I don’t want to give her up, either. I have a feeling I can stop it if I don’t fight my true nature.”

“If you believe that, and feel that strongly about her, then show her what makes you an Alte.”

Gannon laughed, but there was no humor in the sound. “Showing Arwen isn’t as easy as you make it out to be. I’ve thought of telling her, but I’m hesitant to do it. We’ve always kept it a secret from humans. We can’t have the wrong ones finding out and deciding we’d be better off on a dissection table.”

“I don’t think Arwen is a threat. Plus she’s the first woman I’ve seen you have any strong feelings for in the thousand years we’ve been together. Let’s face it, with no Alte women left, there was always a chance any one of us would fall in love with a human one.”

“I never said I loved Arwen.”

“No, but there’s a good chance that you could. And I like to believe love at first sight is real.”

Gannon chuckled. “I never knew you were such a romantic.”

Trae smiled. “We may have lived together for a very long time, but that doesn’t mean you know everything about me.” He stood. “I can hear your woman stirring. Think over what I suggested.”

He watched Trae walk toward the bunks as Arwen climbed out of one. Trae pretended to block her by shuffling from side to side in whatever direction she moved until she pushed him out of the way with a laugh.

Gannon kept his gaze on Arwen as she walked toward him. He definitely would think long and hard about revealing his true self to her. It wasn’t a decision he could make lightly. It wasn’t only his life at stake if it ever got out that they were immortal and a different species.

When she reached him, he stood and pulled her into his embrace. With her cheek pressed to his chest and the length of her body nestled against his, everything seemed right in his world. Now all he had to figure out was how not to accidentally kill his woman while he made love to her.

* * * *

The tour bus arrived in Indianapolis early that afternoon. Even though it really hadn’t been a hardship to travel in it, Arwen was more than happy when they arrived at the hotel the band would be staying in. With herself, Soar and George, the bus had been a little cramped for space. Being the smallest of the bunch, she’d felt as if she had to tuck herself away in some corner just to give the men enough room.

Arwen sat at one of the small tables looking out the dark tinted window as the bus pulled up to the front entrance of the Omni Severin Hotel. It was another luxury hotel—a four star—where she’d normally never be able to afford to stay. Once the bus stopped, she noticed a man stood beside it impatiently shifting from one foot to the other. He appeared to be in his late forties, wasn’t overly tall and had a bit of a stomach.

She was about to ask Malik, who sat at the opposite side of the table, if he knew who the man was when he said, “There’s Owen looking strung out as usual. He’s our manager.”

Jalen came to stand at the end of the table and bent down a bit to get a better view out the window. “Yeah, old Owen does look as if he’s stressed out.”

“Then I suggest we get off and see what’s up,” Gannon said. He’d come to stand at the end of Arwen’s banquette with his hand held out to her. “Come on, Arwen. I’d better go introduce you to Owen. He doesn’t handle any change well.”

Linking her fingers with Gannon’s, she slid to the end of the banquette and let him help her up. After her nap, he’d been more attentive toward her, but she still felt as if he was holding back. He held her and kissed her, only not with the hot passion that seemed to flare between them whenever they touched. With the concert not until the next night, Arwen hoped once she got him alone in his hotel room he’d loosen up a bit. She walked behind Gannon with her hand in his as he led her to the exit. The others followed behind her with George bringing up the rear.

Once she and Gannon stepped down onto the pavement, Owen made a beeline for them. “We don’t have much time before you guys have to be at the first radio station.” He then seemed to notice Arwen. “Who is she? Please don’t tell me you’ve brought a groupie from Kalamazoo with you.”

“This is Arwen,” Gannon said. “And she’s not a groupie. I invited her to come along.”

Owen looked her up and down. “Whatever. I take it she’ll be staying with you?”

“Of course.”

“So long as I don’t have to make any arrangements for her, it will make my life easier. Just keep her out of sight. The hotel staff has had to chase off a few paparazzi already. We don’t need pictures of you and her splashed all over the rag magazines. It’s best to keep any flings you have on the hush-hush as much as possible.”

Gannon stiffened beside her. “Arwen isn’t a fling,” he said in a sharp tone. “You’re going to be seeing more of her, so I suggest you get used to her being around.”

Arwen’s gaze shot to Gannon’s face. From the stern look he gave Owen, she saw he’d meant every word he’d said. They were so contradictory to the way he’d been acting, she was a little surprised, pleasantly so.

Owen gave her another look that said he wasn’t all that pleased with her being there before he said, “Fine. Let’s get you into your rooms. We have about a half hour before you have to be at the first radio interview.” He turned and headed into the hotel without a backward glance.

Gannon and she—along with the others—followed Soar’s manager inside. “We still have the rooms we requested?” Gannon asked Owen as they walked behind him.

“Yes,” Owen said with a nod. “You all have the penthouse rooms with the private balconies. I already have the keycards so there isn’t any need to check in.”

Arwen looked around the lobby while their group crossed it to the bank of elevators. There were white marble floors and pillars interspersed throughout. It had the same rich and elegant feel as the hotel in Kalamazoo. When they reached the elevators, Owen pressed the call button. Once one arrived, they all piled in and rode it up to the top floor.

At their stop, they all got off except for George. He held the doors open and said, “I’ll go back down and help the driver unload the luggage from the bus.” He then let go,

and the doors slid closed.

Owen led them to their rooms, stopping at each door to hand out keycards. Gannon and Arwen decided on the last one.

“Get settled and I’ll come back for you when the limo arrives. I don’t know what your girl is going to do, but you’ll be busy doing interviews and appearances until late tonight. And don’t suggest bringing her along.”

Gannon opened his mouth to say something, but Arwen jumped in ahead of him. “I wouldn’t dream of coming along, Owen. I don’t mind spending the day in the room.”

“Are you sure?” Gannon asked.

She nodded. “Yes. It’s part of your job to do the interviews. Just as it’s part of my job as a figure skating coach to put in a lot of hours on the ice working with my skaters. I understand.”

Arwen looked back at Owen to see him staring at her with a little more respect than he had before.

“Now that that’s settled, I’m going to go remind the others we have to leave shortly,” he said.

Once Owen left, Gannon pulled her into his arms. “You truly don’t mind being left alone for the rest of the day?”

“It’s fine. Hey, staying in a room like this is a vacation for me.” She smiled. “I’ll order some room service and have it charged to your bill.”

Gannon returned her smile. “You mean the record company’s bill. You can order as much as you want. Tomorrow we shouldn’t have any interviews to do. Most of the day will be spent getting the venue ready and sound checks. You can come for those.”

A knock sounded on the room’s door. Gannon crossed over to it and opened it. He then stepped aside to allow a bellhop pushing a cart with their luggage on it to enter. After he unloaded it, Gannon gave him a tip before he left.

Arwen followed Gannon into the bedroom and sat on the bed while she watched him get ready to go out. Maybe the time apart would help rekindle some of the heat they’d lost.

* * * *

Left to her own devices once Gannon left, Arwen used up the time by watching TV, ordering her dinner from room service and taking a long soak in the large Jacuzzi bathtub. She missed Gannon, but being stuck in the penthouse room was no hardship. It made her condo apartment look like a hole in the wall.

When the hour grew late and Arwen found she had a hard time keeping her eyes open, she changed into the pink silk boxer shorts and cotton tank pajamas she’d packed, then climbed onto the king-sized bed in the bedroom. With only one lamp left on, she turned on the television to watch until Gannon returned.

She must have fallen asleep slouched against the headboard, because she jerked awake at the sound of knocking against glass. Sitting up straight, she asked loudly, “Gannon? Is that you?”

Silence only met her ears until the knock came again. Arwen got out of bed to investigate. It had definitely not come from the room’s door. It was wood, and she could differentiate between the sound of wood or glass being hit.

Arwen walked out into the sitting area and looked around the room. She couldn’t

find what would have caused the knocking sound until her gaze landed on the glass sliding doors that led outside to the private balcony. Standing on the other side of it was Gannon, shirtless. He held his t-shirt clutched in one hand.

He pointed to the door handle and then said loudly through the glass, "The door is locked."

Wondering how the heck he ended up out there with the door locked, Arwen hurried to open the glass slider. Once she pulled it open, she asked, "What are you doing out there? I didn't even hear you come in the room."

Gannon stepped inside and closed the slider behind him. "I went outside for a bit of air. The lock must be loose and jiggled into place when I shut the door."

Arwen looked at the balcony door, then back to Gannon. The lock wasn't loose. If anything, it was a little on the stiff side. She'd really had to push on the lever to get it to unlock. "I see."

He gave her a quick kiss. "Were you sleeping?"

"I fell asleep with the TV on. I didn't plan on it." She closed the small distance between them and put her arms around his back, pressing her breasts against his bare chest while she craned her neck to look at him. "Now that you're back, how about you take me to bed to do something besides sleep?"

Gannon's gaze heated as he looked at her with desire showing starkly on his face. "I'd like nothing more than to do that, but it's late and we won't have the option of sleeping in for too long tomorrow."

She went on tiptoe and placed a kiss on the corner of his mouth. "It's not that late." She placed another on the other side. "And I missed you. I spent a lot of the day thinking what I would do to you once you returned."

Arwen ran one hand caressingly around his side and down Gannon's front until she reached the large bulge in his pants. She cupped him through his jeans, feeling him grow hard. He let out a low groan and captured her lips with his. His hands came up and cupped her face while he moved his mouth over hers. The kiss was by no means a gentle possession. He kissed her as if he'd never get enough of her. Using teeth and tongue, Gannon stoked the building fire of her arousal. Her pussy ached with need. After the abrupt ending of their lovemaking that morning, she longed to have him inside her again.

Just as she went to reach for the button on his jeans, Arwen felt the skin on Gannon's back ripple under her hand. Something that almost felt like a feather brushed the tips of her fingers. He yanked his mouth off hers and let her go as he took a big step back.

Not about to let him get away with putting distance between them like that for a second time without getting some kind of answer, Arwen said flatly, "You're doing it again, rejecting me when things start getting good. What the hell is going on, Gannon? You can't tell me you don't want me." She flicked her gaze down briefly to where his erection pushed out the front of his jeans before she lifted it to his face once more.

He stood for a few seconds, breathing heavily, before he answered. "I'm not rejecting you, Arwen. Believe me, I want you. You have no idea how much. I want to strip you out of your pajamas, take you to the floor and put your legs over my shoulders as I feast on your pussy. You make me so hard I want to take you over and over again until I have nothing left to give."

His words had her heart racing and her breaths coming in short pants. "Then do it. I want you to do all those things to me. Right here, right now."

A pained expression flashed across Gannon's face. "I can't."

Annoyed that he'd get her this worked up and not follow through, she said with some heat, "Yes, you can. I don't understand what's going on with you, Gannon. One minute you're running hot, and the next you're pushing me away. You're confusing the hell out of me. Either you want me or you don't."

He took hold of her upper arms and gazed into her eyes. "I do want you. I told you I do. It's just something is going on with me."

"Tell me what it is and maybe I can help you."

Gannon made a sharp, harsh sound of disbelief. "If only it were that easy. It's something I'm not comfortable telling you right now." He sighed. "Let me get over this last concert, then I'll think about it."

She shook her head. "You thinking about telling me isn't good enough. If you really want us to work, you're going to have to be truthful. I don't like the idea of you keeping something from me when it's obviously getting between us."

He closed his eyes for a second. "All right. Tomorrow night after the concert. I'll tell you then. Can you accept that?"

"Yes. And I'll hold you to it."

Gannon let go of her arms and stroked the back of his hand along one of her cheeks. "I've started to have deep feelings for you, Arwen. We have only known each other for a few days, but I don't want to lose you. Just because I can't make love to you right now doesn't mean I want you any less."

Arwen wrapped her fingers around the wrist of the hand that still caressed her cheek. "I don't want to lose you, either." She let out a small laugh. "Being with you is a dream come true. I never thought in a million years I'd get to meet you, let alone be able to call you mine. When you asked me out at the skate club, I had to keep pinching myself after you left to make sure I was awake. That you really had been there."

Gannon smiled. "Well, let me say that I didn't expect to find a woman I'd want so badly when we arrived in Kalamazoo. To be honest, I hadn't been too thrilled at the prospect of having to perform there when I heard it was one of the cities in the tour. But now, it will always hold special meaning for me."

Arwen's heart melted hearing Gannon's words. Even though they had admitted their feelings for each other, she hadn't told him everything she felt about him. She had more than strong feelings for him. She was falling head over heels for the rock star who she'd been crushing over for so long. Now that she'd met the real man, and knowing he really cared for her, she'd fallen for him even harder.

Turning her head to kiss his fingers, she said, "Now that we've gotten that sort of cleared up, come to bed with me, Gannon. We can still cuddle, can't we?"

He scooped her up in his arms and carried her toward the bedroom. "God, yes."

She leaned her head against his shoulder. Whatever Gannon wanted to tell her tomorrow night, she'd stick by his side no matter what it was that seemed to be bothering him. They'd work it out, because she had no intention of giving up on him.

Chapter Eleven

The night of the concert, Arwen dressed in a pair of black jeans, a light grey silk blouse and the high heels Natalya had given to her on her birthday. Finished putting on some makeup, she walked out into the bedroom to find Gannon had finished dressing as well. For the performance, he wore snug black leather pants, boots and a black button-down shirt that was unbuttoned to the middle of his chest. He'd worn something similar at the concert in Kalamazoo. She'd thought he looked as sexy then as he did now.

Crossing to where he stood in front of the dresser mirror, running a brush through his longish blond hair, she went to stand behind him and grabbed his ass. "Your butt looks great in jeans, but I think the leather pants show it off better."

Gannon looked over his shoulder. "Keep grabbing my ass like that and these pants are going to become very uncomfortable."

She stepped around him, stood with her back toward the dresser and looked at the crotch of his leather pants. "I can see they're already a snug fit, and that any growth in the front would be a bit of a problem. Plus, I'd much rather you didn't walk around showing off what only I get to play with to the thousands of women who will be in the audience at the concert."

"Don't worry, babe, it's all yours."

He leaned toward her and slowly lowered his head, but before their lips met, there was a loud bang on the room's door. Then she heard the sound of Owen's voice calling Gannon's name.

Arwen groaned as he pulled back. "Owen has the worst timing."

"We'd better not keep him waiting. He tends to get even more strung out than he usually is just before a concert. You'd swear he was the one having to go out on stage." Gannon slipped his hand into hers, linking their fingers together. "Ready to leave?"

She nodded. "After listening through the sound checks today, I'm looking forward to watching the concert from the sidelines instead of being in a huge audience."

After Gannon guided her to the room's door and opened it, they followed Owen to the elevator, collecting the others as they went. Arwen looked over the other members of Soar and saw they were similarly dressed to Gannon, except for Trae who wore a plain t-shirt instead of a button-down shirt. Once they went on stage, she knew the t-shirt would come off.

The limo ride to the stadium was a short one. When the driver opened the door for them, Arwen heard the sound of a large group of people standing just outside. Owen got out first followed by Malik, Keiran, Jalen and then Trae. The noise of a bunch of cameras going off as each Soar member got out of the limo had Arwen looking at Gannon.

"Are reporters out there?" she asked.

"I would think so," he answered. "And more than likely a few paparazzi as well."

She swallowed. "Ah, maybe I'd better stay in the limo and have the driver take me to another part of the stadium so they won't catch us together."

Gannon took her hand and shifted on the seat toward the open door. "We both get out here."

"What about Owen? He said not to allow pictures to be taken of us together?"

“Owen will just have to deal with it.”

Not giving her any more time to protest, Gannon stepped out of the limo, taking her with him. Flashes started to go off around them the instant they cleared the car door. Clinging to Gannon’s hand, she tried not to meet the gaze of anyone in the crowd surrounding them. George and another bodyguard kept them back as they yelled questions at Gannon. Most were about who she was.

Once they were safely behind the closed entrance door of the stadium, she breathed a bit easier. The band was ushered into a large room set aside for their use while they waited for the opening band to finish their set. Once it was Soar’s turn to perform, Arwen followed them to where they would enter the stage. This was the place she would stand to watch.

It was a different experience watching Gannon and the others now that she knew them on a personal basis. No longer were they just rock stars she admired from afar. And when Gannon would at times turn to look away from the audience to glance at her, she still couldn’t believe he was actually hers.

Having remembered the order of the songs the band had played during the Kalamazoo concert, Arwen knew the love song where she’d thought Gannon had met gazes with her while he sang was up next.

When he finished singing, Gannon spoke to the audience. “I’m dedicating this next song to a special woman who recently entered my life. I want her to share it with me.” He turned in her direction and held out his hand. “Arwen, come on out here.”

More than a little stunned by what Gannon wanted her to do—to actually go out on stage with the band in front of a huge audience—while he sang the love song, she found herself frozen in place. He couldn’t possibly want her out there. Could he?

George, who’d been standing nearby, came up behind her and gave a gentle push on the middle of her back. “Go on, Arwen. Gannon’s waiting for you. And the longer you stand here the more you’ll hold up the concert.”

Nervous and feeling mushy inside at the same time, Arwen carefully walked out onto the stage and went to where Gannon stood. She stopped in front of him as he took her hand and brought her to the center of the stage. She swallowed when she dared to take a quick glance out in the direction of the audience. To be out on display in this way for a stadium this packed didn’t compare to what she’d experienced during her competition days as a skater. This got to her even more than skating in front of a crowd.

Gannon lowered the microphone he held and leaned in to whisper in her ear, “This is to make up for my behavior for the last couple of days. Now everyone is going to know how special you are to me.”

A thrill shot through her at his words. Gannon was basically staking his claim on her to the entire world. Tears burned behind her eyes while she became choked up.

Arwen couldn’t pull her gaze off Gannon through the entire song. The love she felt for him grew. Each word he sang resonated inside her with Gannon burrowing his way deeper into her heart. When the last note died away and the crowd cheered, he pulled her to him and kissed her senseless, which caused the audience to cheer even louder.

After the kiss, she pretty much felt as if her brain had shorted out. Dazed and wanting to get Gannon alone the first chance she got to continue where his kiss had ended, Arwen walked off the stage. Back at the sidelines, she watched the rest of the concert while fantasizing about all the things she wanted to do to her man before the night

was over.

* * * *

Thinking Arwen had been put in the spotlight enough for one night—running the gauntlet of reporters when they first arrived at the stadium and then pulling her out on stage—Gannon felt it best they wait until security made sure there was no one left outside when she and the band made their exit.

Given the all clear, they left the stadium together. Before their group—minus Owen, who had remained behind to finish last minute things—reached the waiting limo, Gannon came to an abrupt stop. He felt the presence of something watching them from close by. Something that was full of malice and hate.

“What’s the matter?” Arwen asked as she looked at him questioningly.

He searched the area around him, but with his true eyes hidden, his sight wasn’t as sharp. Gannon looked at his band mates. “Do you feel it?”

“Yes,” Jalen said as he gazed around him.

“Same with me, but I can’t see anything,” Malik said.

“Neither can I,” Keiran added.

“Whatever it is, it’s close,” Trae said.

Gannon nodded. “Use your true sight to see if we can find it that way.”

“What about Arwen?” Jalen asked, his gaze flicking worriedly to her.

“It’s all right. I’m telling her once we get back to the hotel,” Gannon said.

He purposely turned to face Arwen, then allowed his eyes to change to silver. She gasped, and when her eyes widened once she looked at the others, he knew their eyes had changed as well.

“Gannon, your eyes,” Arwen said haltingly.

“I’ll explain. Later.” He looked all around them still not seeing anything even when his acute night vision pierced the darker shadows. Then as fast as the presence had come it was gone. “Shit. Whatever it was it’s no longer here.”

Trae nodded. “I’ve never felt such malice in a being.”

“Gannon?” Arwen asked with nervousness tingeing her words. “You’re starting to freak me out. What is going on? What were you guys talking about?”

Turning his eyes back to turquoise at the same time the others made the change, Gannon held his hand out to her, hoping she wouldn’t reject him after he’d shown her that small part of his true self. “I know you have a lot of questions and don’t understand. I’ll explain everything at the hotel. I promise.”

Arwen only hesitated for a few seconds before she put her hand in his. Inside, he breathed a sigh of relief. She might be feeling freaked, but she seemed to be taking it in stride.

The limo ride to the hotel was a silent one. Arwen spent most of it looking at them, her gaze flicking from one to the other more than once. The silence remained even after they had arrived and rode the elevator up to their floor.

Once they were behind the penthouse room door, Gannon steeled himself for what had to come next. “Why don’t you go sit on the couch?”

“Okay.” When she had, Arwen asked, “Aren’t you going to sit as well?”

He shook his head. “No, I need to stand to do this.” His chest rose and fell as he took a deep cleansing breath.

“Tell me, Gannon,” she said in a quiet voice.

“I will. This is a difficult thing for me to do. I’ve, we’ve, never told a human what we truly are.”

He heard Arwen swallow. “Human? Meaning you aren’t one?”

“No, I’m not. I’m Alte, same as the others. An entirely different species from yours.”

“Alte?”

“Yes. Our kind at one time secretly lived alongside yours without the humans realizing it.”

“But you don’t anymore?”

“No, not anymore. The Alte are basically no more. Jalen, Malik, Keiran and Trae and I are the last of our kind. A thousand years ago, a sickness swept through our people, wiping them out. After succumbing to the same illness and beating it, only the five of us survived, though not without the disease irrevocably changing us. We have no idea why we didn’t succumb like the others did.”

“Like your eyes, or is that what makes you different from humans?” With her brow furrowed, she asked, “You said a thousand years ago? And that you all survived it then. That would make you—”

“Over a thousand years old,” Gannon finished for her. “Not only did the disease change our eyes it also made us immortal, along with giving us the ability to manipulate the elements and hide what we truly are.”

Arwen’s face seemed to pale. “Ah...I’m trying really hard here to understand all this. So if all these things changed you after the sickness, what makes an Alte different from my kind?”

Keeping his gaze locked with Arwen’s, Gannon undid his shirt and pulled it off. His eyes changed as he turned, giving her a good view of his back before he manifested his wings. He stretched them out straight for a few seconds, then folded them against his back.

When he turned to face her, he saw Arwen’s face had gone white, and her eyes were round. “You...you have wings.”

“All Alte do. It gave us an advantage over the rest of humans, being able to go where they couldn’t in search of food. Where do you think the idea of angels came from? Sometimes there were chance encounters between Alte and humans, though very rare.” Arwen sat there silently staring at him for so long Gannon became worried she wouldn’t accept all that he’d told and showed her. “Arwen? Say something.”

“Can...can I touch your wings?”

He brought them around, wrapping them around his body like he would a cape. “Of course you can.”

The idea of having Arwen touch his wings sent a surge of desire spiking through his body. During arousal, they became another erogenous zone, especially where skin and feathers met on his back.

Arwen stood, and with a hand that shook slightly, she ran it down the width of one wing. “Your feathers are soft.” She continued to stroke them. “If someone were to tell me a race of people like the Alte existed without showing me the proof, I don’t think I’d believe them.”

His voice gruff, Gannon said, “But can you accept me for what I am?”

Arwen gave him a small smile. “I’m not running screaming from the room, am I?”

“No, you’re not.”

She reached higher and ran a hand gently along the top arch of his wing, eliciting a deep moan from him. She lifted her gaze to meet his. “You like it when I touch your wings?”

“Yes.” He moaned again when her second hand joined the first and stroked his other wing as well. “When you touch them like that, it turns me on just as much as if you were running your hands all over my naked body. I want to make love to you, Arwen. As my true self.”

She took her bottom lip between her teeth. “Is that why you’ve been distant from me? Because you wanted to make love to me as an Alte?”

“Only you seem to have me losing control over myself when we sleep together. Every time we’ve become intimate, I’ve had to fight to keep my eyes and wings hidden.” He opened his wings and put his hands on Arwen’s hips to bring her closer before he closed them around her. “Will you let me make love to you like this?”

Chapter Twelve

Arwen shivered when Gannon's wings wrapped around her, holding her close as much as his hands did. She should be a basket case right now after learning her boyfriend was immortal and from another species, but she wasn't. When he'd first revealed his wings, she'd been more than shocked, but she hadn't been afraid of him. Having seen Gannon and the others' eyes change to a bright silver, she'd known whatever Gannon told her would be something that could be a challenge to accept. During the limo ride to the hotel, it had given her a chance to absorb what she'd seen.

Now standing in Gannon's arms with the proof of what he truly was around her, Arwen found her feelings for him hadn't changed. Yes, they would have to address the whole issue of him being an immortal and her being a mortal, but she didn't want to face that right now.

She gazed into his silver eyes, seeing the uncertainty that lurked inside them. That she was the first human he'd ever told his secret to meant his feelings for her had to be just as strong as hers. Did she want to give him up because of what he was? No. She felt too committed to just turn her back on him and walk away.

"I want you to make love to me, Gannon."

With a groan, he claimed her mouth in a heated kiss. She put her hands on his chest and kissed him, showing him how much she wanted him. Gannon didn't hold anything back. He sucked her tongue into his mouth as he devoured hers, pushing her arousal to greater heights. The distance she'd felt he'd put between them was no longer there.

Arwen clung to him as an ache built between her legs. Wetness pooled in her pussy at the hard length of his cock pressing into her belly. Tilting her head as Gannon broke contact with her mouth to lick and kiss the side of her neck, she said thickly, "I don't want to wait to have you inside me."

"Then you won't have to."

Gannon quickly stripped off her bra and shirt. Once her breasts were bare, he cupped one in his hand and sucked the nipple into his mouth. Arwen pressed herself closer, feeling each pull of his mouth deep inside her pussy. She threaded her fingers through his hair to hold him to her.

Next he undid her jeans and pushed them down her legs. With them pooled at her ankles, Gannon knelt and took off each of her high heels before he freed her completely of her pants. He remained where he was and slid her panties off. Arwen kicked them away.

With feather-light kisses, Gannon left a trail up her thigh. He used his hands to spread her legs farther apart. Arwen put her hands on his shoulders to help balance as he licked and kissed his way up the inside of her leg. The feel of the feathers from his wings tickled her fingers where they brushed up against them.

The first swipe of his tongue along her pussy had Arwen moaning. "I thought you were going to put your cock in me," she said in between breathy moans.

"I will. I need to taste you first."

Arwen spread her legs wider as Gannon held onto her ass and set to work driving her crazy with his tongue. He licked her pussy from bottom to top before he swirled his

tongue around her clit. Alternating between licking and sucking on her clit caused her arousal to edge closer and closer to release. She dug her fingers into his shoulders as she rocked her hips against his mouth. Her whimpered moans filled the room.

Just as she was about to fall over the edge, Gannon left off pleasuring her with his mouth and rose to his feet. Arwen undid his leather pants and freed his erection. He toed off his boots and shucked his pants down his legs while she wrapped her hand around his shaft, pumping it up and down. She looked down to see a bead of pre-cum appear on the tip of his cock. She used her thumb to rub it into his skin.

Gannon picked her up, took her to the floor and came down on top of her. His wings lifted and settled around them. The head of his cock brushed up against her slick opening. She pushed down as he surged inside her.

Loving the way Gannon's cock stretched her pussy as it speared in and out of her, she held onto him and lifted her hips to meet each of his strokes. She gripped his shaft with her inner muscles, increasing the pleasure she felt. His pace quickened as he pumped his hips faster. The tension inside her coiled tighter, her release so very near.

Gannon thrust into her, angling his shaft to rub against her clit with each stroke in. That was enough to send Arwen into an intense orgasm. Crying out his name, her pussy spasmed around his cock, squeezing him in a tight fist. He thrust twice more into her, then threw back his head with a loud moan. His cock pulsed deep inside her while he came.

The feel of Gannon's cum filling her suddenly had Arwen realizing they had forgotten to use a condom. But that thought soon left her head when something similar to a pulling sensation washed through her. Her heart missed a beat and then another as a sense of weakness took her over. She fought for each breath as if her lungs were no longer functioning properly.

Scared of what was happening, Arwen weakly said, "Gannon, something's wrong." A look of alarm appeared on his face before he roughly threw himself away from her. The instant he no longer touched her everything went back to normal. Her heart beat evenly, and she once more took deep breaths.

"I thought it wouldn't happen once I let my true self out," Gannon said.

"What are you talking about?"

"For some reason I absorb your life energy when I reach orgasm. I thought if I made love to you like this it would stop. It only made it worse."

Arwen pushed herself up. "This has happened before?"

"Yes, but not enough to harm you. This time I could have killed you."

She watched Gannon grab his pants and pull them on. Once they were done up, he walked over to the balcony door and slid it open. "Where are you going?"

He looked over his shoulder. "I have to get out of here."

"We need to talk about what happened, Gannon."

"No. I need to be far away from you. I won't come back tonight. In the morning, I want you to go home." With that, Gannon stepped outside and spread his wings. He then seemed to disappear completely.

Arwen blinked, not sure what to do. Knowing she couldn't sit naked on the floor for the rest of the night, she gathered up her clothes. She went to the bedroom, cleaned herself up in the en suite and put on her pajamas. After that, she went back out into the other room and walked over to the open balcony door.

Stepping outside, she reached out with her hands, hoping to find Gannon still there but somehow hidden from her sight. She searched the entire space of the balcony but found it empty. Heartsick, wishing Gannon hadn't left, she returned back inside the room.

Arwen went to the bedroom and got into bed. If Gannon didn't return in the morning, she'd have to go talk to the others. She didn't want to go home. She wanted to stay with Gannon. Feeling as if a piece of her had left with him, she closed her eyes, wishing he was there holding her.

* * * *

"He did what?" Arwen asked more than a little irritated.

"Gannon bought you a plane ticket home. Your flight leaves in three hours," Trae said.

They were all sitting in Malik's room, minus Gannon. She'd gone looking for the others when she'd awakened to find he hadn't returned. It hadn't taken much deducing on her part to realize they already knew something was up between her and Gannon when she'd found them all in Malik's room. Apparently, Gannon had talked to all of them earlier that morning, after he'd made arrangements for her to leave.

"And if I don't get on the plane? What then?" When her questions were met with silence, Arwen shook her head. "Unbelievable. You're going to make sure I make the flight."

"Look, Arwen," Jalen said, "we aren't sure Gannon is going about this the right way, but for now, we're going to follow his wishes. You didn't see him earlier. He spent the night in the air beating himself up about what he'd almost done to you. For his sanity, you need to go home."

"So you think I should just leave and forget what I have with Gannon?" she asked sharply.

"I never said that. Just give Gannon a little space. With you gone, he'll come to realize how much he misses you. He loves you, Arwen. Even though he's scared shitless that he'll end up killing you if he stays with you, he's not going to be able to stay away."

She swallowed. "Gannon told you that? He actually said he loves me?"

"He didn't actually say the words," Keiran said. "But he didn't have to. We've known Gannon for a very, very long time. He's never been this taken up with a woman before. We all heard the anguish in his voice when he told us he would be sending you away."

Arwen let her gaze settle on the other men who sat around her. They nodded, agreeing with what Keiran had said. She didn't want to go back to Kalamazoo and leave things like this between her and Gannon, but staying obviously wasn't an option. "I love Gannon as well. If I go and he doesn't come after me? What then?"

Trae smiled. "Don't worry about that. We'll make sure he does."

She blew out a breath. "All right. I'll go, but I'm counting on you guys to make sure he comes to Kalamazoo. If you fuck it up, I'll personally hunt down each one of you and show you how pissed off I am." The men laughed.

"I'm going to like having you around," Jalen said.

* * * *

Arwen finished packing and did a sweep of the hotel room one final time to make sure she hadn't forgotten anything. She'd called a cab to come pick her up. She didn't want to draw too much attention to herself at the airport by arriving in a limo. After Gannon pulled her out on stage the night before, she wasn't sure what the consequences would be.

She left the room and saw the other members of Soar standing out in the hall waiting for her. After their chat about Gannon, she'd spent some of the time before she had to leave for the airport talking to them, learning all about the Alte. She'd even gotten them each to show her their wings.

They'd also shown her a few things Gannon hadn't. Like what it meant for them to have the ability to control the elements. Each man could control the air around them, as well as the light. She now knew that was how Gannon had seemingly disappeared into thin air. He'd bent the light around him. They also could conjure fire and water, manipulating them to their will. As for the earth element, they thought it best to tell her about it instead of putting on a demonstration since they'd have to go outside to do it. Making the ground shake or open wasn't something they needed to do in such a populated area, anyway.

Coming to stand in front of the men, she gave them a tentative smile. "I'm ready. My cab should be downstairs waiting. Tell Gannon I miss him already."

Malik gave her a hug, then stepped back for the others to do the same. "Don't worry, Arwen," he said. "We'll get this worked out."

"I hope so. I'm going to miss all of you as well. I'm not going to say goodbye because I plan to be seeing you soon."

Giving each man another hug, Arwen stepped over to the waiting elevator George held open. She hugged him as well before she walked onto the elevator. "Take care of them for me."

"I will," George said with a smile.

As the doors slid closed in front of her, Arwen sent up a silent prayer that she was doing the right thing by leaving.

* * * *

"You made another one," Neil said as he slapped a celebrity magazine down on her desk. "Girl, you're famous."

Looking at the open magazine page, Arwen saw the picture of herself and Gannon when he'd sung to her on stage in Indianapolis. The caption under it read, "Rock star loses heart to figure skating coach". It hadn't taken the reporters long to find out almost everything about her. She just counted herself lucky they hadn't started following her around. So far only her face was plastered all over the magazines with Gannon's.

"That may not last long once they find out Gannon and I aren't together anymore," she said.

Neil waved her words away with a flick of his hand. "That gorgeous hunk of a man will come for you soon. I saw the video of him singing to you on YouTube." He sighed. "I'd love a man like that to look at me the way he looked at you."

Arwen chuckled. "You'll find that man one day I'm sure."

"I can always hope. You can keep that, by the way," Neil said as he pointed to the magazine. "I bought a copy for myself."

“Thanks.”

“I’m outta of here. Everyone already left, so you have the place to yourself. Are you going to use the rink before you leave?”

“Yeah. Have a good night.”

Once Neil left, Arwen read the rest of the small article that accompanied the picture of her and Gannon. It depressed her. It had been a week since the concert in Indianapolis. One whole week of her missing Gannon. Contrary to what Jalen, Keiran, Malik and Trae had promised her would happen, Gannon had yet to come after her. At this point, she didn’t think he would.

Arwen went to the rink. Already wearing her skates, she started the music she wanted to skate to. This time, she didn’t pick Soar’s CD. Hearing Gannon sing over the loudspeakers would only depress her and make her ache even more to feel his arms around her.

A small measure of peace settled over her as she did the familiar jumps, spins and footwork of the sport she loved. Even the sound of her skates on the ice was a welcome noise. Concentrating on landing each jump gave her something to focus on rather than the regrets she felt. She never should have left that day. She should have told the others she didn’t give a shit what Gannon wanted, she would stay. But there was no way to get a do-over.

In the middle of a song, the sound system cut out. Arwen spun around to look in its direction and sucked in a breath. Gannon stood at the entrance to the rink. He gave her a small smile. “Are you going to come to me or do I have to get on the ice and fall on my ass again?”

Arwen dug a toe-pick into the ice and pushed off to glide across the rink to Gannon. When she stepped off it, she ran her gaze over him, greedily taking him all in. “You’re here.”

He stuck his hands into the front pockets of his jeans. “Yeah. It was either come see you or listen to the others telling me how much of a fuckup I was for sending you away. They’ve done nothing but talk my ear off about you for the last week.”

“Then I owe them one.” She let what she felt for Gannon show in her eyes. “I don’t want to lose you.”

“I don’t want to lose you, either, but the risk is too great.”

She took a step closer. “We’ll figure this out. We’ll go slow. Maybe it’s something you have to build up a resistance to, or something you’ll have to work on controlling.”

“And if I can’t...control...it? Are you willing to risk losing your life just to be with me?”

Arwen went to Gannon and put her arms around his neck. “For the man I gave my heart to, yes. It has been hell being apart from you. I don’t want to go through it again.”

Chapter Thirteen

Unable to keep his hands off Arwen any longer, Gannon yanked them out of his pockets and put his arms tightly around her. It felt good to have her against him once again. God, how he'd missed her. Each day apart had been agony. And it hadn't helped when the others had kept bringing the topic of Arwen up almost every five minutes, or so it had seemed to him. He'd fought his need to see her, telling himself it was better to hurt over losing her rather than being the one to cause her death. In the end, he'd lost the battle. He only wanted to see her one more time.

But hearing Arwen tell him she loved him, as he loved her, he didn't think he'd have enough strength to leave her now. He crushed his mouth to hers, feeling whole for the first time in a week.

When he lifted his head, he said in a voice thick with emotion, "I love you too, Arwen. God help me, but I don't want to let you go."

Her eyes turned glassy with unshed tears. "We'll make this work, Gannon. Somehow we'll find a way."

About to tell her that he wasn't sure they'd ever be able to figure out how to stop him from stealing her life energy, Gannon stiffened when he felt the same malicious presence from Indianapolis. He then quickly pushed Arwen behind him when a shadowy figure slowly formed a short distance away from them. The shadow slowly lightened until a man appeared.

Having not seen another of his kind—except for the others he'd lived with for the last thousand years—and to see one now standing before him, left Gannon feeling shocked. He also recognized the Alte male who stood staring at him with hate in his pure black—not silver—eyes. They were the same color as his wings, which were visible for all to see.

"Vance?" he asked incredulously.

"Hello, Gannon. It would be polite for me to say I'm happy to see another of my kind, but that would be a lie."

"You survived the disease? We thought no one else had." Gannon felt Arwen peeking around his side. He tried to get her to move away, but she just stepped out from behind him.

Vance's eyes flicked to Arwen before he replied. "You see, I never had the disease."

"How couldn't you have? Every one of our people was struck down with it, even Keiran, Malik, Jalen, Trae and myself. No one was spared. If you never contracted it, how can you be immortal like us?" If Vance was still pure Alte, he would have died long ago. His black eyes were also a dead giveaway that something had happened to change him.

Vance smiled, but the expression held no warmth. "All of you surviving wasn't something I had counted on. Imagine my surprise when I saw who the members of Soar were. Your survival is a mistake, which I soon will remedy. I'm going to enjoy slowly picking you all off one by one until I'm the only Alte left, as it should be. As I had planned from the beginning."

Gannon glared at Vance. Even before the disease had struck their people, Vance had

been a small-minded bully. He'd lorded over any others who had been weaker than him. "What do you mean?"

"I mean I turned myself into something better than I was before. With the use of black magic, I gave myself great powers as well as immortality. And to ensure I would be extra special, I created the disease that wiped out the rest of my kind."

"Why?" Gannon bellowed. "Why would you do something that sick?"

"Power. A thousand years ago, I happened across a bunch of humans and revealed myself to them. They worshipped me as a god come down to Earth. I couldn't very well take the chance they would come across another Alte, let alone have them find out there was a whole race of us. So I used the spell to truly turn myself into a god and destroy everyone else."

With a cry of rage, Gannon formed a fireball in his hand and launched it at Vance, who blocked it with some kind of invisible shield. "Now, now," Vance said snidely. "Is that any way to be when I've so graciously allowed you to live for a little longer?"

Vance disappeared and reappeared directly behind Arwen. He took her by the throat and squeezed until her face turned red. "Humans are such delicate creatures."

"Let her go," Gannon bellowed.

"I will. I'm also going to let you learn firsthand how I started the disease that killed all of our people."

As Arwen struggled to get out of Vance's grasp, he brought one of his wings around and brushed it against her cheek, leaving a grey powder behind. Gannon lunged for him, but with an evil sounding laugh, Vance disappeared completely. Gannon no longer even felt his malicious presence.

He caught Arwen to him as she drew in great gulps of air. "Are you okay?"

She coughed a couple of times. "I think so. What did he mean about letting you learn how the disease started?"

Gannon brushed some of the powder off Arwen's cheek. He brought it to his nose and sniffed. His stomach dropped. He recognized the smell. It was the odor left when the disease had marked its victims.

Taking Arwen by the arm, he hurriedly pulled her into one of the washrooms. At the sink, he ran the water, scooped some up in his hand and used it to wash the powder from her face. Not caring that he was soaking her shirt in the process, he used the soap in the dispenser as well.

When he finished, Arwen met his gaze in the mirror. "You think he gave it to me?" she asked worriedly. "You think the powder from his wing is what started it?"

"I can't be sure, but I'm not taking any chances."

"It may already be too late. You said the disease was deadly to every one of your people."

"But you aren't Alte. You're human. It might not do anything to you. We'll just have to watch. Go take your skates off. The others are waiting for me to bring you to the hotel."

Arwen took a shuddering breath. "Okay. We should tell them about Vance."

"Yes, we have to warn them."

"I'll go quickly."

Still feeling as if his heart were in his throat, Gannon followed Arwen out of the bathroom. He stood in her office doorway as she took off her skates. Once she had her

shoes on, they left the skate club. He walked a little away, sweeping the empty parking lot with his gaze in case Vance was still around while Arwen locked up behind them.

“Gannon?”

At the strangled sound of Arwen’s voice, he turned in time to see her legs give out as she collapsed. He barely managed to catch her before she hit the ground. Her eyes were closed as if she’d passed out. “Arwen?” He gave her a shake. “Arwen, open your eyes.”

When her next breath rattled in her chest, he placed his hand on her forehead, finding it hot. She burned with fever. He held her close and cursed. She’d already started to show signs of the disease, but at a much more rapid pace. The high fever accompanied by the distressed breathing had previously taken at least a couple of days to set in.

He had to do something, but taking her to a human hospital was out of the question. She could infect everyone there in a matter of seconds, causing a mass epidemic. The only place he could take her was to the hotel. He and the others were more than likely immune to the disease since they’d already survived it.

Knowing he couldn’t carry her through the lobby of the hotel or chance contaminating it, Gannon gently put Arwen down and pulled off his shirt. As his wings manifested, he pulled out his cell phone from his jeans pocket and called Trae. When he answered, Gannon told him that he and the others had to meet him on the hotel’s roof.

Scooping Arwen up in his arms, he bent the light around them and took to the sky. He held onto her tightly as he flew. Her chest continued to rattle with each breath she took. “Hang on, babe. We’re almost there.”

He landed on the hotel roof a minute later. The others rushed over. They took one look at Arwen and cursed.

Trae was the first to speak. “How is it possible that Arwen has the disease that struck down our people?”

“We aren’t the last of our kind after all. The presence we felt in Indianapolis was Vance. He’s the one who created the illness. He used black magic to make himself immortal and give himself powers. After a bunch of humans started worshipping him as their god, he decided to make sure no other Alte could take his place. There’s some kind of grey powder on his wings and it starts the sickness with one touch.”

Arwen coughed, a deep chest cough that had her struggling to breathe afterward. She blinked open her eyes. “Gannon?”

“I’ve got you.”

“I’m going to die, aren’t I?”

He ground his teeth together. “Not if I can help it.”

“We need to get her inside,” Malik said.

“How?” Keiran asked. “She’ll infect any human we come in contact with.”

“Fire,” Gannon said. “I’ll create a small shield of fire around us as I carry her down the stairs to my hotel room. I’ll make it so it doesn’t touch our skin, but it will be a barrier between Arwen and the air around us. I just need one of you to bend the light around us. I can’t do both at the same time.”

“I’ll do it,” Jalen said.

With a deep breath, Gannon called upon the element of fire and outlined both himself and Arwen with it. At Jalen’s nod, he started toward the roof access door with him at his side while the others rushed ahead.

Once he had Arwen safely inside his room—without encountering any humans on

the way—he put her on the bed. Her face was pasty white, while her cheeks were flushed a bright red. During the trip down from the roof, she'd slipped into unconsciousness again. Just another sign that the disease was progressing quickly.

“I have to cool her off,” he said to the others. “Watch her while I run a cool bath.” He didn't miss the sad expressions on his friends' faces. “I'm not going to give up on her.”

Trae nodded. “We'll help any way we can.”

Chapter Fourteen

She kept getting worse. No matter what he did to bring her fever down, it stayed burning hot. Gannon had already put Arwen in a cool bath three times, each one cooler than the first, but they hadn't helped. All they did was cause Arwen to wake up and cry out against the cold. Delirious with fever, she'd broken down crying and pleaded with him to take her out. It had been one of the hardest things he'd had to endure, keeping her in the water for as long as they'd thought would be enough to cool her overheated body.

Gannon placed the washcloth he'd just rinsed in cold water on Arwen's forehead. She didn't stir, and she hadn't moved at all in the last hour. Only the sounds of her harsh breathing filled the room. Even that had become worse. With each breath she took, he silently pleaded with her to take another.

Still in his true form, he looked at her energy mark, hoping it had changed. For the last half hour, it had slowly started to dim. Arwen's time had started to run out. He'd debated taking her to a hospital, but at the rate the disease was progressing, she'd be dead before they figured out how to treat her. And what was one life compared to the billions that potentially could be affected? Seeing Arwen suffering, he was about ready to say he didn't give a shit about the rest of the humans if it would save her.

He'd sent the others away for a short break. They'd helped by running a bath when Gannon deemed she needed to be put in the tub again. They'd even gone for ice and bottles of water. With reluctance they'd left to order something to eat at his urging.

His throat tightened as he ran his gaze over Arwen, memorizing every line and curve of her. How could he lose her now? Why would fate wait a thousand years to give him a woman to love only to take her away from him?

Desperate, willing to do anything—even give up his own life if it would save her—Gannon sat on the edge of the bed next to Arwen and bent to kiss her fevered brow. He jerked when a peculiar sensation stirred deep inside him, reminding him of the one that happened whenever he reached climax with Arwen. It grew stronger and stronger with their closeness.

Unable to stop it, her life energy pulled into him. He tried to push himself off the bed to get some distance from her, but he found himself unable to move. Having heard the others return a short time ago, he yelled, "Get in here! Now!"

His four friends rushed into the room. Trae reached him first. "Cut it off, Gannon."

"I can't," he said through gritted teeth. "I can't even pull away from her. It's almost as if all my muscles have frozen in place. Help me."

Trae, along with Malik, took hold of Gannon by the shoulders and tried to pull him off the bed. As if he were cemented in place, they couldn't budge him. All the while, Gannon helplessly watched as more and more of Arwen's life energy swirled from her and became absorbed into his body.

"No," he cried. With his keen hearing, he heard her heartbeat start to slow. "I'm killing her."

Just before her heart stopped completely, the pull changed to a push, and some of his life energy slammed into Arwen, arching her off the bed. Watching more and more of it leave him and go into her, Gannon surprisingly didn't feel the loss. When it finally

stopped, Arwen settled back on the bed, lying much too still.

With tears burning his eyes, he shook her. "Arwen? Can you hear me?" His hand shook as he pressed his fingers to the pulse point at the side of her neck. It pulsed strong and steady. Feeling for fever, he found it had disappeared as well as the rattling in her chest.

The sound of the first deep breath Arwen had taken in hours filled the room. She turned her head toward him and opened her eyes. Gannon gasped aloud at the same time the others did.

"Holy shit," Jalen said. "Her eyes are silver like ours."

They were. Gannon stared into eyes that were no longer light hazel. They were a match for his own.

"Gannon? What happened?"

"I almost lost you. The disease was killing you."

Arwen pushed herself up. "I'm fine now. If anything I feel better than I ever have. But I feel different. I can see better, clearer." She looked over at the dresser. "I can see the wood grain as if I were looking at it under a microscope."

Gannon turned her face toward him. "Remember what happened the last time we made love?"

Her gaze flicked to the other men in the room before she focused her attention on him. "Yeah."

"It happened again. Only this time I couldn't stop it. Whatever caused me to take your life energy saved you. It brought you almost to the point of death, then my life energy went into you. Your eyes are like ours now."

Arwen pushed off the bed, wearing one of his t-shirts, and walked over to the dresser mirror. She leaned in and took a good look. "Does that mean I'm like all of you? Am I immortal too?"

"Only one way to find out," Keiran said just before he left the room. When he came back, he held a clean steak knife from the room service food they had ordered. He held it out to Arwen. "Here. Cut yourself. If it instantly heals, I'd say you're immortal."

Before Gannon could stop her, she took the knife from Keiran and ran it across her palm. She started to laugh as the cut healed before more than a drop of blood welled to the surface.

Dropping the knife, she threw herself at him and hugged him tight. "I'm like you. Nothing can separate us now."

Gannon crushed her to him. "I don't know how it happened, but I'm happy for it."

Trae cleared his throat. "If I were to take an educated guess, I'd say the exchange of life energy bonded you together. But I'm damned if I know how it happened." He took a closer look at Gannon and Arwen. "Both of your energy marks are the same. Identical in every way."

Arwen bent her head back and smiled with tears in her eyes. "I guess that means you're stuck with me forever."

He kissed her hungrily before saying, "I never planned on giving you up, so it works out well."

"I hate to interrupt," Malik said. "Now that Arwen is better, we have the small matter of Vance to deal with. He can't be allowed to do this to another human."

"He has to be put down," Jalen said. "And since we're the only beings who have

strong enough powers to defeat him, I guess the job falls to us.”

Keiran smacked his fist into his palm. “I always hated the bastard. For what he did to our people, I’ll gladly rip his heart out and feed it to him.”

Trae chuckled. “That’s if I don’t get my hands on him first.”

“Not that I don’t love hearing what you’ll do to Vance, but I need you to get out of my room,” Gannon said. “I need some alone time with my woman.”

The others laughed, gave Arwen a kiss on the cheek as they went by, and left them alone. Once the door shut behind his friends, Gannon picked Arwen up and headed for the en suite.

“And what do you think you’re up to?” Arwen asked as she put her arms around his neck.

“We’re going to take a shower to wash all the traces of your illness away, then I intend to put you to bed.”

“A shower sounds nice so long as you take one with me.”

“I wouldn’t dream of you taking one alone.”

“Good because I need to feel your hands on my body and a whole lot more.”

When they reached the bathroom, they tore each other’s clothes off. Naked and in the shower, Gannon held her against his body, holding her with his arms and wings. As Arwen’s body accepted his, he knew this would only be the start of a very long night where he would show her just how much he loved her.

The End

About the Author:

Marisa Chenery was always a lover of books, but after reading her first historical romance novel she found herself hooked. Having inherited a love for the written word, she soon started writing her own novels.

After trying her hand at writing historicals, she now also writes paranormals.

Marisa lives in Ontario, Canada, with her husband and four children. Check out Marisa's website at www.marisachenery.com. She would love to hear from you, so drop her an email while you're there.

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