



Loose Id

# *A Sinful Tiger*

*Brenda Williamson*

# A SINFUL TIGER

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The Loose Id

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## Chapter One

Devra lifted her head and looked around at the mess on the floor of the boat's cabin. The violent storm had lurched and tossed her back and forth for hours without capsizing the vessel. Rising from the jumble of items surrounding her, she stumbled up the steps to the deck above. Nothing appeared out of place, yet she knew anything loose had washed overboard.

Staggering to the railing, she gazed at her surroundings. White beaches and jungle framed the cove. Water lapped the shore in hurried ripples. The way it curled over the sand and drew back mesmerized her.

Almost faint with dizziness, she touched the bump on her head, recalling her collision with a cabinet. A headache lingered from a combination of the accident and the alcohol she'd consumed the night before. Finding aspirin onboard would be a challenge.

Devra shuffled to the bench along the back of the boat and sat. Hot and sticky because of the sun and sea air, she removed her two-piece swimsuit. She checked her sore arms and legs for signs of bruising, thankful she was still alive.

The liquor bottle from the day before rolled across the deck when the boat tilted the opposite way. She picked up the bane responsible for most of her headache, and removed the

cap. Placing the mouth of the bottle to her lips, she looked for the easy way to cure a hangover, *the hair of the beast*, so they said. One large gulp, and she shook from head to toe. The rum had a powerful kick she hadn't remembered. But then during the storm, she had been too frightened to think about the flavor of the liquid and how it had burned her throat.

Naked, disoriented, and tired, she had trouble focusing on her predicament. A few more swallows of the rum took the edge off her worries and dulled her headache. Needing the rest, she laid down on the tacky vinyl seat with her eyes closed. Her thoughts wandered. From stranded on an island, to her abusive boyfriend, Jerry, and how she'd left him, nothing looked good about her day. It helped when she finally directed her mind to a recurring dream -- an erotic encounter both shocking and shameful.

*Devra opened her legs wider at the first rasp of his velvet tongue. Thrust into the decadent craving of an orgasm, she undulated against the wonderful sensations. Tingling nerves soon made her thighs tremble and her insides spasm.*

*She begged him to sate her lust by using his skilled touch to feed her addiction. "Oh, please," she pleaded, seeking a state of euphoria that left her mind free of troubles.*

*The flick of his long tongue tickled the ring of her anus every time he started the tease to her sex. Unable to wait for him to nudge her into place, she lifted her hips, offering him the entrance to her yearning body. He stimulated her with one thrust, forceful and exciting. With instant shudders, she dripped with anticipation.*

*"Yes," she gasped.*

*His tongue made contact again, taking a different route over her quivering flesh. He parted her nether lips and the silky wetness swirled around her aching clit, tempting it from the hooded sanctuary.*

*"Now, please, before I explode."*

*She tensed -- too far into her sexual awakening to fight the shock waves of an orgasm.*

*The soft brush of his chest hairs gliding over her back stirred and enthused her in new ways. His delay aroused other parts of her body as the drenching release passed. She needed him.*

*"Please." She pressed her bottom back into him, ready to have him take her farther into a sexual oblivion.*

*Sniffing her neck and licking her ear, his body weighted her down, as if she needed to be restrained. His large cock dangled between her wet thighs. His belly slid gently over her bottom. His arousal thrashed against the sensitive insides of her thighs until he leaned in and pushed the knob of his shaft upon her yawning entrance.*

*"Oh, yes," she cried. "Oh, God, yes."*

*Devra arched back and shoved herself onto the impact of his cock's deep penetration. His erection expanded, widening the channel, filling her completely. A strangely foreign sound, part grunt, part whine, rushed from her open mouth.*

*His teeth raked her back with impassioned kisses, and she shuddered at the enthralling danger. Except as hard as he had heaved into her, his plunge didn't reach the spot inside her vaginal walls that would bring pure ecstasy.*

*"Harder," she demanded, needing to feel the pulse of his arousal.*

*Her shadow lover obeyed and slammed into her.*

*"Yes, like that," she encouraged. "More."*

*Over and over, he drove his thick cock into her hot channel, stretching her to accommodate the wide girth of his shaft. His groans steadily increased in pitch. Deep guttural reverberations quickened and fear threaded around her. She didn't want him to climax before she was ready.*

*With an overwhelming blend of emotions, Devra cried out each time he withdrew and plunged. The beautiful moment of complete abandon was capped by a glorious orgasm. Every muscle within her sex constricted. But her mysterious lover never gave the slightest*



*hesitation to her tightening core. He plunged into her abyss with solid, rhythmic strokes. The well of her body went dry, and the friction from his moves inflamed her insides.*

*“Don’t stop.” Her voice barely rose above a whisper.*

*Animalistic sounds of unbridled pleasure hummed in panting beats next to her head. Trying to keep up the same energetic verve weakened her, yet his primitive aggression made her tremble with a rejuvenating liveliness. She rubbed her bottom against him, and searched for relief to the fiery heat of sexual stimulation.*

*A second orgasm made Devra lightheaded. Her weary arms buckled, and her face hit the sand. In her sedated repose, she stared, entranced by the horizon of the red sky over a sea of blue.*

*She lay numb in a blissful rapture, listening to her lover, his ragged breath panting in tempo with her exhausted gasps. His non-stop jabs jolting her against the sand chaffed her nipples and burned her cheek; she was delighted he continued to drive into her.*

*His cock swelled with each penetration. Her body gave way, and her depths accepted his length. Their limbs and torsos mated like two puzzle pieces in a perfect fit.*

*When his caterwauling roar ripped the tranquility surrounding them, Devra shivered. He pulled her to her knees, and she dropped her head back to the pleasurable sensation of him nibbling at her jaw. Heated whispers caressed her ear and she writhed with pleasure upon the hardness of his chest.*

*“You’re mine,” he growled.*

*“Yes,” she readily agreed.*

*“You’ll be the tiger’s mate.”*

*“Yes.” She twisted her head, loving the movement of his lips down her neck.*

*“Forever.” His possessive hold reinforced his statement.*

*“Forever,” she repeated and cupped the large hand holding one of her breasts.*

*He squeezed and massaged her tender nipple until she wove her fingers with his and moved his hand to her other breast. She clung to his knuckles while he kneaded her flesh. He kept her arched at the right angle for his cock to stay buried in her. Closing her eyes, she enjoyed the tender kisses on her shoulder. She thought how nice it would be to fall asleep as her lover held her.*

*His hands, moving exquisitely against her flesh, did not draw her out of the peaceful abyss she drifted toward. His purring voice comforted, and she nestled into his embrace.*

*Yet, even in sleep, she confused the man with a beast and vice versa. Her imagination tangled all the fibers of her being into lusting for something she didn't understand.*

*Devra felt driven to desire by the touch of a sinful tiger.*

## Chapter Two

Tolerant of the tempest winds upon his face, Gannon stood on the widow's walk of his island mansion. High above the ground, he intently watched a small boat flounder on a sandbar. The receding tide left it trapped in the cove. The aftermath of a storm brought many things ashore, but nothing that concerned him like the boat. Come high tide, the craft could sail away from the secluded inlet, and the occupants would leave. Until then, an inner pulse hammered inside his soul in anticipation of knowing more about those onboard.

Gannon rubbed his crotch. He forced the seam of his trousers against his aching erection as if a simple stroke could alleviate a basic need. His cock throbbed with a familiar call for relief. The skin of his scrotum stretched and tightened with a fiery liquid requiring release. Yet, he ignored his body's demanding hunger. He liked to confirm he had more control than the beast inside him.

His long hair fluttered around his face. It whipped across his eyes and stung. He pushed back the wild mane and continued gazing at the boat for signs of life. Where had it come from? Who was onboard, out of his sight?

The longer he ignored his innate requirements, the worse the pain immobilized his sanity. Shifting from one foot to another, he took a new stance and massaged the front of his

trousers again. He gripped the ridge of fabric, and squeezed his hard cock until an explosive sting traveled through his loins.

Hurting the way he did, by denying the discharge of semen, he stopped resisting nature. He couldn't fight the wild animal blood that ran through his veins.

Pinching the zipper tab, he jerked it down. "Ah...hhh," His erection sprang from the confinement of his clothing.

He seized the engorged, mushroom-shaped head on his cock, and wiped his thumb over the tip. Teasing his senses with a devilment meant to relieve him of anguish, he manipulated the length of his solid shaft and concentrated on the pleasure. In a loose-fisted hold, he shut his eyes, and enjoyed the peaceful moments when he appeased the beast. Much more was needed to slake all the pain of his deprived lust.

Gannon lifted his hand and spit in the center of his palm. He wiped the saliva over the soft but dry skin. Repeatedly, he twisted his palm and pumped the sheath of thin flesh over the bone hardness of his blood-filled veins. With intermittent firm pressure at the base, his testicles heated, and the fluid became anxious for liberation. Jerking rapidly, he moved toward the railing to steady himself. His thighs tensed and trembled, and his skin dampened as sweat leached from his pores. Working at an aggressive speed to quicken the process, Gannon's breathing increased to heavy pants of air wheezing from his lungs.

"Yes," he grunted.

He kept up the momentum, feeling weak, while the riveting sensation singed his nerves. Thrashing his hips harder, he pumped into his tight grip. The glorious tenderness of a suppressed orgasm hovered on the brink of explosion. His blood pressure rose, and his heels lifted from the deck.

Right down to the calf muscles tightening in his legs, Gannon tensed. He clenched his jaw and focused on moving his other hand up and down on his shaft. The first droplet of

moisture glistened on the tip of his cockhead. He swirled his thumb over it, making the skin slicker.

His climax peaked, and he wrapped one hand over the weathered railing for support. Rocking on the balls of his feet, he went silent as the maddening ejaculation spewed a stream of fluid into the air. Spasms rattled through his limbs for several minutes, then finally decreased, leaving him lethargically paralyzed.

Gannon bowed his head and took in long, deep breaths. Releasing the air slowly from his lungs, he dropped his shoulders in relief as he recovered strength. Sounds from behind made him shove his slumped cock into his trousers and yank up the zipper.

“With each pass of the moon, you grow more distant from me,” his sister spoke.

He didn’t like when Lillia surprised him with her quiet appearances.

“The beast gains control of me everyday.” He leaned on the rickety banister, not giving a care it might break.

Lillia pressed her face against his back, nudging her cheek over his shirt-clad body. Her arms wrapped his middle.

“You should leave this place.” He held her arms, rubbing a hand over hers.

“I’d never leave you, Gannon.”

She pressed a kiss to the center of his spine, and he shivered. He loved Lillia very much, but he worried about her safety. It concerned him how his memory failed during certain periods. Nightly strolls apparently took him to places he never remembered going to or returning from.

“One day, Lillia, I may have no control of the beast.”

“We’ll be fine, my darling.”

“Will I?” He suspected his mind had deteriorated over the years. His sister would never be safe, should he lose all his conscious willpower.

“You haven’t been with a woman in a while.” She moved her hands leisurely up to his biceps and massaged them. “Maybe if you were, you’d not be this anxious.”

“I don’t want to involve anyone else in my strange existence. You know what might happen.”

“It’s not your fault what’s occurred in the past.” She kissed his back again. “It’s your nature.”

“To kill?” He looked over his shoulder at her. “I don’t feel it should be that way.”

He thought about the stories of the women missing on the island. Girls he had been intimate with were never heard from again. Several he never even knew were found dead -- slaughtered by some animal. Shaking his head, he pushed away the idea he’d had anything to do with those events. He had no memories that suggested he was involved. Lillia had told him he must be responsible, but he never believed the stories.

The winds howled on the island, making the palms sway in a fight with the gales. Gannon turned his attention back to the boat. Regardless of the dying storm’s lingering power, it remained wedged.

“I’ve sent servants to assist them,” Lillia informed him.

He had yet to see anyone approach the cove, and found it more likely the servants had gone home to hide in their dwellings as they did every night. Who on the island didn’t know the vulnerability to their young women? Luscious, ripe, and virginal girls went missing, and rumors flowed about a tiger stalking them. No one left their safe shelters at night -- no one.

“Gannon, come inside before a heavy wind sweeps you over the side. The boat will be fine.” Lillia’s voice moved away from him.

Her warning reminded him of the tragic way his first lover had died. In some ways, he looked upon that night as a blessing. The end had come quickly for Alara, while he struggled every day to hold onto his sanity.

"It would be for the best." He stared down at the unyielding ground below, considering the drop a lethal one.

There hadn't been a day since Alara had fallen from the balcony he didn't wish it had been him. He gazed at the patch of emerald green grass, envisioning her beautiful body twisted in a broken heap. From that day forward, he'd sworn he'd never allow anyone on the high spire of his house. As he stood there recalling the vow, he hadn't yet scolded Lillia for her presence.

"Gannon, please. Come back in the house."

"I'll be there in a minute." He clutched the baluster, and studied the cove. The erratic breeze continued thrashing his hair into his eyes, blinding him with painful stings. It was a punishment he endured as penance to the woman who died because she had been foolish enough to love him.

Gannon's blurred vision didn't stop him from seeing someone jump from the boat. Against the intense sunset of a blue and red striped sky, the glow showed the outline of a body leap from the stern into the dangerous waters. Taking into consideration the eddy of long dark hair, he imagined a female.

He turned from the rail and pushed Lillia into the glass rooftop room. The small area of the widow's walk allowed enough space for two people. The special cupola occupied the rooftop for a woman to watch the sea for her husband's return. Born from that woman and the curse a voodoo priestess put on her, Gannon used the high balcony as a place to hide and observe the world in which he lived.

He shut the door and trotted down a narrow spiral staircase.

"Where are you going?" Lillia called after him. "Your time nears."

He didn't heed her warning. Just as the tides knew their direction, he sensed the changes within him. For nearly a half-hour, he tried to remove his thoughts from his transformation.

The time didn't near. It had come.

Primal instinct made him rush down the metal stairs to the wide wood staircase leading to the entry hall. He leapt from the third tread at the bottom. Landing with a dull thud, he raced to the door, stripping away his clothes.

Gannon and Lillia lived alone at night. Their servants always left before the twilight. No one would see him in his frenzy. There were no witnesses to what he did -- that or any night. By the time Gannon reached the dense jungle, he had transformed into the beast he feared.

His naked body sprouted a furry coat, and he dropped to all fours. He stalked the abundant underbrush with the sole intention of making his way to where he'd find the female from the boat. There was no stopping the beast when there was a full moon. At that time of the month, he was an animal to the core. He had more than the desire to mate; he had a physical instinct.

A summer rain began, and heavy droplets pelted the hair on his body, soaking and weighting him as he plodded through the wet sand. The sexual scent of the woman had a faintness only the beast smelled. He loped along the path, breaking through the large tropical leaves obscuring his destination. The pads of his feet beat hard against the gritty earth. His rapid heartbeat forced blood swiftly through his veins.

When he stopped, his heavy panting was an expression of his apprehension. His approach had to be careful. The female lay naked on the shore. He watched and waited for her to move. Water lapped at her feet. Long dark brown hair matted her head and concealed her face.

He inched forward, cautiously aware at how frightened she might be by the sight of him. When she didn't move, he used his nose to push the tangled mess from her cold cheek. She didn't budge. Death would have been his first thought, if he hadn't observed the shallow rise and fall of her chest.



Gannon nudged her limp body, and her pale breasts jiggled in response. He was held mesmerized by the fascinating display of surrender. He sniffed and breathed over every inch of her chilled flesh.

In the aftermath of the storm, the moon rose, illuminating the beach. With the thoughts of a man, he fought the loss of his conscience, as if evil attempted to possess his mind's reasoning.

The fragrance of the woman's feminine recesses lured him with the enchantment of claiming her as his mate. Animal instinct dominated and possessed his freewill. He licked her collarbone and down her cleavage to appease the tension in his limbs. Sating the beast to some extent, he controlled his speed. Lapping at the curves, he ran his tongue over her hard, plump nipples. Round, erect, and deep red, they sat atop tempting ivory mounds. His stomach growled, reminding him of his rapacious eagerness.

Lowering his head, he licked the smooth flesh, tasting the sweetness of her skin as if he readied for a meal.

She moaned softly. The encouraging sound drew out his tongue, and again he whipped his taste buds across the dark, rigid morsels. He continued dragging his tongue over the tips until a dusky pink blush formed a widening stain around the irritated spikes.

Goose bumps rose at the base of every hair on his hide.

Gannon nuzzled his nose to the underside of her breasts, making them shake. Her groan intensified with an apparently unconscious urgency. Her breath stuttered an encouraging soft trill and he dropped his head lower. The feral scent of her sex dangerously aroused his illicit needs.

He licked her belly and tasted the sand, but savored her flesh. One swirl of his tongue into the dent of her navel and her abdomen retracted in a quivering retreat. She made another charming, seductive sound, and it stimulated the wrong side of his thoughts. The

more he hovered, the worse his expectancies became. He began to look at her more as another animal, a feminine beast lusting for a mate in the same way he yearned for one.

Gannon closed in on his prey.

The air rushed in and out of his lungs. Just as any animal comes into heat with a submissive exhibition, obvious instinct led her to spread her legs for him.

His gaze rolled upward and locked to hers. She stared at him with a quiet reserve. He couldn't read her expression or know what she thought. When could any male know what went on in a female's mind?

"Come to me, my lover," she murmured.

If he hadn't seen her lips move, he wouldn't have believed what he'd heard.

Gannon paced a circle around her, studying her movements, agitated by her compliance. She rubbed her breasts and belly as if her manipulations could shape the flesh.

She closed her eyes again and moaned, groping and squeezing her body in other areas with a restless speed. Assuming she hungered the same way he did for sexual gratification, he dipped his head between her supple thighs and inhaled the arousing scent.

She smelled of the sea, and leaked with the arousing bait of her nectar. Her fingers stroked beneath his jaw and beckoned him closer. He licked her wrist and palm as her touch moved away. With one long stroke, he swiped his tongue deep into the fleshy moist folds of her cunt. Instantly, she bucked, forcing his tongue to plunge further. He needed no other confirmation of what she wanted, especially when the exquisite flavor of her essence spilled into his mouth.

Gannon shuddered, and his body made an unexpected transformation from beast to man. He'd never experienced anything like it after dark. The sensations of transforming aroused him. Nerves twitched beneath his fur and flesh.

The woman's hands latched onto the sides of his head and guided him back in place. He drove his tongue into her, making her cry out in pleased tones. Sucking and rolling his

tongue around in her heated center, he ravished her cunt until the gushing juices flowed heavily.

“Again,” she cried.

He rose up on his hands and stared at her wild writhing recede. Pressing his lips over the tender area, he licked again, proceeding faster by her command.

“Yes. Yes, more.”

He shook with the delight her pleasurable moans stimulated. Listening to her incoherent whimpers, Gannon drank greedily. When he backed away from the splendor of her willingness the second time, the beast returned.

Gannon threw his head back in agony. “Noooo,” he wailed in torment as the sound rolled into the caterwauling scream of his inner demon -- the tiger.

He panted and puffed, and looked down at the woman. She stared back with half-closed eyes, obviously not seeing him as a feral animal. The sultry pucker of her lips didn’t engross the beast, because kissing was for man. Her butterfly pose, exposing her luscious sex, was the bestial attraction.

“Fuck me...tiger.” She fingered the opening into which he wanted to ram his swollen cock.

The demands of his repressed nature retreated. He stepped around to her side, fighting the challenge she made. However, the unbelievable spell of his curse slowly reversed and drew back his beastly nature. The transformation of his body ebbed from four-legged to a fur covered two-legged creature. Like a miracle, Gannon was awestruck by the change. Something about the woman worked magic on him.

“Hurry,” she stretched her hand toward him. “Hurry, tiger.”

He ventured toward the dangerous edge of an existence he wanted to protect her from and couldn’t. She called the beast, and he made the change, shifting into what she called for.

Her hand dropped to her side, and she closed her eyes. She cooed with another series of sexual inducements that pulled him close.

With his whisker-framed nose, Gannon prodded her lithe figure. He pushed harder and turned her over on her belly. She flopped in the wet sand with no more movement than a rag doll.

He let his thoughts venture from the unnaturalness of his position when she muttered a soft, seductive tone of approval.

“Take me now.”

Hot, lustful, and anxious, he let his tongue glide downward between the cheeks of her ass. Each swipe he took of her delicious skin drowned him with a hungering torture. His veins pulsed, his cock throbbed, and every pore beneath his fine coat of fur had tiny flames boiling his sweat glands.

He took a chance he'd not lose control. Yet, each taste heightened his animalistic senses.

“Yes,” she moaned.

He pushed his tongue into the crinkled ring.

She clenched hard on his probe. “Oh, yes,” she gasped.

The flavor of her succulent recesses, the fragrance of her sexual scent, and her consent drove his pulse insane. The very essence of her intimate juices taunted the tip of his tongue. He needed more.

“More,” she said softly. “It feels so good.”

With her body responding to the primitive call of his nature, he lost the power to back away. She moaned sweet explicit sounds of enjoyment. Her body sought with urgency everything he offered, and it made his passion wilder.

Shame had no ground on which to claim him as his erection grew. His cock unsheathed involuntarily; his instincts took command. He positioned over her. The animal

lust controlled his every thought. Her voiced acceptance permitted the beastly character of his nocturnal existence to take what he required. His rapacious lusting saw a cure to an ache so deep he couldn't stop shaking.

For this night, he would fuck a woman with his greedy hunger, and the tiger would claim her as his mate.

### Chapter Three

Devra twisted her head, then her body. A blast of heat rushed over her. It didn't stop her from flipping onto her back. She looked up and smiled. Her tiger came soft and gentle into her arms. She saw the golden eyes of an animal and wished, just once, she could see the man he represented.

As with all dreams, the bizarre parts of her subconscious reflected emotions. She wondered if she didn't have the lecherous thirst for a man to dominate her. The fact her boyfriend hit her didn't fit with that theory, but she couldn't get it out of her head that she sought abuse.

She studied the tiger. Her lethargic mind absorbed the vivid details as if they were real. His exposed teeth formed a salacious grin. Did he laugh at her for making up strange fantasies? Were there other women who envisioned a tiger as a lover? How odd her mind sketched an animal from whom she craved attention.

Devra drifted in and out of the dream with a burning ache in the pit of her belly. She watched the bulk of gold and black fur move over her, and in the blink of an eye, the large shadowy feline transformed into the profile of a well-built man. He hovered, his face unclear

as he whispered sentiments she didn't comprehend. Then he moved away, and she lost sight of his appealing shape.

"Touch me," she pleaded, needing him.

She lifted her hips to the wet kisses slurping over her belly and sucking at her skin. She jerked uncontrollably at the instant electrical tremors of an orgasm that rattled her sluggish muscles. Too tense to suggest more and too exhausted to move on her own, she lay prepared and poised for a fervent encounter of bonding.

As she watched the silhouette of a man, her vision blurred. When it cleared, the tiger stared at her. She continued to study him for a long time. Saliva dripped from the corners of his mouth onto her heated breast, and the wetness cooled her nipples. She should have feared the danger he presented, but she remained submissive.

The strange notion of her coupling with a beast had no place in her thoughts. She saw him as a replacement for the man she required. The tiger's head swung away, and she closed her eyes to accept the inevitable. With her arms stretched out and her fingers buried in the warm, wet sand, she waited. An intense shiver of excitement raced up her back each time the searing heat of his nostrils puffed over her skin. His prickly tongue whipped over her aching nipples. She arched, unable to deny the pleasure of the coarse licks.[KW1]

His teeth scraped her belly. The sharp points of his incisors scratched her flesh without cutting.

Devra lifted her head, finding the moment too real, unlike prior dreams. At the crux of her legs, a tiger panted.

He drooled into the entrance of her sex, making her shudder from the sensation, and all thoughts to break from the dream or reality were gone. Air quickly exhaled from her lungs, but she couldn't get oxygen to reenter the passageway. Lightheaded, she dropped her head onto the sand.

Again, a blast of air from his nostrils rushed into her. She didn't want the titillation to stop. Drawing her knees up and fanning them out, she showed him the opening. She spread the lips of her pussy wide with her fingers to expose her twitching center already dripping from anticipation.

The tiger backed away. He shifted around to the right side, and she let her gaze follow his path. She heaved with a gasp when he smashed his nose into her hip, forcing her to roll onto her belly.

Eagerly helpful, she elevated her bottom in the hopes he would hurry. Each delay left her agitated beyond measure.

"Fuck me, tiger." She beckoned him. "Please, fuck me!"

Devra arched, forcing her hips higher, presenting herself to her feline seducer. She glanced back and stared at his amber eyes glistening with a feral lust she understood. Shadows played tricks with her vision, turning the tiger into an outline of a man. His breath whispered hot across her skin. He paused, and she couldn't stand the wait to have him thrusting inside her.

"Put your cock into me, beast!"

Devra pried open the dewy, sand-roughed lips of her cunt. She wanted fucked so badly, she couldn't think of the reasons why she shouldn't taunt the creature into mounting her. It was what a male was made to do.

She dripped with perspiration, and her breasts hung heavy and swollen. The stimulation of the gritty sand scratched her nipples into tender stiff knots. While her head swam in a state of confusion, the conscious realization of the tiger still didn't frighten her.

"Take me. I want to be yours," she cried. "I want to belong to the tiger."

She didn't know what else to say to make him understand her desire to live the dream that gave her peace.



## Chapter Four

Gannon paced the hallway outside the room in which he put the woman. He didn't trust himself to remain calm. The way she controlled him or rather, the way she commanded his beastly urges, disturbed him. Her sublime passion transformed him from tiger to the monstrosity of a cursed man before the sun came up.

In every previous sexual encounter, he had managed to leash the tiger, never showing a woman his inner beast until after they'd copulated. Of course, he couldn't count the dead and missing ones in his tally, if he were to believe he was responsible.

Whether by her pleas or her succulent scent, something about this woman had him entranced to do her bidding. Her body had dripped with lust, and he had experienced the flavor of her juices clinging to his taste buds. His hunt for a mate to appease the tiger seemed fraught with an ill-fated doom set upon women. Each one mysteriously vanished after fleeing his form. His curse tortured him with the guilt that he might be to blame and not know it.

And yet, this woman lived.

Gannon shook with the prospects of claiming her again. He stopped his incessant pacing when the bedroom door opened, and Lillia stepped out.

“Is she awake?” He looked over his sister’s shoulder to see for himself.

When the woman passed out, he brought her home. She declared her commitment to be his long after they joined. Only her actions were less than lucid. He wondered if once she woke, she might reconsider.

“No. She’s exhausted.”

“Intoxicated,” he muttered, recalling the odor of alcohol on her breath.

Lillia moved away, toward the bed, leaving him just outside the confines of the room. The woman lay on the mattress, clean and scantily covered with a thin sheet. Her tanned legs had old bruises -- yellowish purple marks that indicated her clumsiness or abuse.

She moved in her sleep. Her limbs went askew, and the sheet shifted. It left him the vision of her upper thighs and the intimate hint of her sex. The fragrance of her center still wept with a mouth-watering sensuality that drew him through the doorway. The sexual scent of their mingled fluids inebriated him, and he staggered slightly as he stepped farther into the room. Wiping a hand over his mouth, he savored the memory of the arousing flavor. He hoped it wouldn’t be too long before he had the taste of her on his tongue once more.

“She’ll wake soon.” Lillia turned to him and rubbed a hand over his chest. “You should go to her now. Take her again before she wakes. The tiger must be satisfied.”

Lillia’s words disturbed him.

He shook his head, fighting the very idea. “I won’t let it happen,” he replied, upset he wanted to indulge his instinctive needs. “When she’s gone, she’ll be safe from the evil my body possesses.”

“You’ll suffer. She’s here, and you should use her.”

He looked at his sister, only half understanding the insensitivity of her tone. She would not want him to undergo more than he already had, but they were talking about a human being -- a defenseless woman.

Gannon stared at the sleekness of the woman's legs and the curve of her arms lying at her sides. He wanted to feel those limbs coiled around him, hugging him in adoration. Her prior willingness aroused him. She had pleaded for the tiger to come into her body. The strange struggle he often suffered during transformation went smoothly, as if she was the one possessed by the wickedness of her suggestion.

"I won't let her become another victim." Even as he said it, he knew if the woman didn't leave the island, he'd go after her again. The tiger would be the one to do as she begged. The next time, he couldn't be sure it wasn't the tiger sinking his cock into her tight cunt. He already stepped over the borderline of decency when it came to appeasing his insatiable desires.

That night, for the first time in his life, he'd let the tiger take pleasure in the flavor and scent of a woman.

The incredible sweet fragrance of that beautiful woman tugged at his soul and pulled him toward her. She lay quiet in the small bed canopied with netting to keep the bugs away. He stared at her composed features. The delicate shape of her nose met with exceptionally smooth cheeks. He knew the texture because he had kissed her face when he put her on the bed. He wondered if she dreamed of him or feared to wake to the realities of their sexual uniting. No matter his form, he still had the soul of a human. He had the thoughts, desires, and the life of a man. The tiger simply shimmered over his manly torso.

Gannon extended his fingers to touch her neck. He outlined the mark the tiger forced him to leave on her shoulder. The purplish bruise would have represented a man's love bite. The dashed ring of dents embedded in her flesh represented the tiger's carnal imprint of dominance.

Her spiked nipples poked the sheet upward, and he dragged his fingers lower. The memory of her breast stuck to his tongue made his cock jolt. Her chest rose and fell faster under the caress of his knuckles, and her mouth moved with a soft, aroused moan. Her pulse

sharpened. His keen awareness recognized the fervent beat of her heart reacting to the stimulation.

With a sequence of rapid blinks, her eyes snapped open. Gannon stepped back. The woman stared at him for a second with a blank and tranquil expression that turned wary.

“Where am I?” She twisted on the bed and looked around the room. “Who are you?”

The white cotton sheet slipped lower. It hung by a magical force right at the edge of her nipples. He wanted to wait for another move, a revealing stir that would show him the glory of her naked breasts.

He was a man obsessed.

Gannon studied her pale blue eyes. The manifesting fear in her stare turned him away. He refused to watch her vivid recollections turn into terror. He’d not wait to witness her repulsion of the scars on his face. His long strides took him immediately from the room and he didn’t glance back.

He had yearned for someone to love. A woman not from their island seemed exceptionally intriguing. Her body sang to him during her joyful ecstasies, and it gave him hope he might have found someone to cherish again.

Outside in the hall, he stopped. Hidden in the alcove several feet from the doorway, he shut his eyes. The vivid memory remained implanted of how she lifted her hips to his every thrust, forcing him into her. Her cries of rapture had rubbed him with a murmuring caress of pleasure. He needed a mate -- a woman willing to comfort his troubled soul and meet the tiger’s demands.

If the thoughts of his cherished Alara hadn’t gotten in the way, he would consider keeping the woman. He’d offer her the moon to stay on the island. Yet, Alara was his first love and his greatest heartbreak. When she plunged to her death from the widow’s walk, he considered whether the tiger part of him had driven her insane.

Everything bad haunted him.

“Gannon, come back,” Lillia called to him.

He ignored her request and hurried down the stairs. Needing the woman gone, he wanted to drag her to the boat and send her away immediately. However, as much as he wanted the woman to leave him to his long-suffering existence, the beast would never permit her to flee Tiger Island.

## Chapter Five

Devra scooted upright on the soft bed pillows and wished for the edges of her vision to fade like a hazy dream. She stared at the slender woman in the doorway, but her mind jumped from the tiger to the man that rushed out of the room.

“How are we feeling?” The woman approached.

“Confused.” Devra’s impulse was to say she felt like shit, except then she’d have to get into details about drinking too much liquor. It also wouldn’t be polite to swear in front of an unfamiliar person.

“Maybe a drink of something cool will help.” The woman lifted a pitcher on the table and poured a dark liquid into a glass.

“Who was that?” Devra asked, staring at the doorway to indicate the man.

Something in his gaze had brought out a hunger in her heart. She couldn’t have mistaken the gleam of desire in his gaze. The intensity made her squeeze her thighs together to stave the zing of heat inside her. The familiarity of his brown eyes captivated her. She likened them to the carnivorous tiger she sought in her dreams. It made her nervously aroused.

The woman didn’t answer.

“Where am I?” Devra inquired, feeling out of place in a stranger’s home.

“You’re on Tiger Island.”

Devra watched the woman’s thin fingers drift toward her, making her eyes cross and her vision blur when they came close.

“I’m Lillia, and what’s your name?”

“Devra.” The rhythm of her breathing increased with Lillia’s light touch stroking her hot cheek.

“Here, drink this.” Lillia held the glass to her lips.

Devra drank greedily because of thirst. She couldn’t believe how odd she felt soon after the empty glass moved from her mouth.

“What was in that?” The inside of her head seemed to spin.

“Coconut milk and other things to help you sleep.”

Devra had always thought that coconut milk was white. She didn’t question what the other things were and assumed they darkened the liquid.

“I need to see about my boat and if it’s safe. The storm forced me into the cove then the tide went out, leaving me caught on a sandbar. Once the water rises again, my boat might float away.”

“Gannon will see to it.”

“Gannon? Is that his name?” Devra turned her gaze toward the door.

The room grew hazy, almost like her dreams. She imagined the man re-entering the room, touching her in all sorts of decadent ways and making love to her until exhaustion pulled her into sleep.

She shook her head free of the fantasy. “How did I get here? I mean, in this bed?” Devra looked at Lillia’s hypnotic stare.

“Gannon carried you.” Lillia touched Devra’s neck with a feather-lightness that tickled.

“Oh?” She shivered, and averted her gaze, focusing on the beautiful room, using it as a distraction from Lillia’s petting.

She couldn’t concentrate on any one thing around her. Everything, including Lillia’s caress, seemed distanced from reality.

“The last thing I re-recall was jumping from the boat.” Devra gasped at the arousing stroke of Lillia’s fingers along her collarbone. “I was drinking, and I shouldn’t have. I don’t know what I was thinking jumping into the water.”

“Gannon likes you.”

Devra’s gaze shifted to the closed door again. “He does?”

“Oh, yes. Do you wish to know what it is that attracts him to you?”

Devra believed she nodded her head, but didn’t get an answer right away.

Lillia lowered the sheet to Devra’s belly. The diversion carried her thoughts in another direction. Did she like that a woman was fondling her?

Devra’s nipples perked as if a cool breeze swept over them.

“You have exquisite breasts.” Lillia squeezed one as if testing the ripeness. “And your skin is soft, like the fur of an animal.”

Devra grasped Lillia’s wrist, but she let go as the woman’s strokes relaxed her. She shook her head again, finding it hard to focus on her original train of thought -- where was she, and who were these people?

Lillia bent over and flicked her tongue between her parted lips. She stole the air from her gasp and sealed the best means Devra had for breathing. Lillia’s kiss lingered -- her hands did not.

Devra lay in a stupor, accepting the woman’s fingering of her pussy. When Lillia didn’t hesitate traveling to her breasts, she remained speechless. The kisses and licks to her belly progressed downward. She felt somewhat eager for Lillia’s lips to connect with the intimate region already hungering for relief.



Devra shuddered and closed her eyes. The invasion of Lillia's tongue into her sex triggered memories and visions. She writhed and wiggled her hips, lifting to every jab that teased her with a climax. Her mind reeled with the dreams of her carnal joys, and she opened herself to the pleasure. Lillia's presence faded. Devra begged her vision of a man to service her as if he were her slave.

"Don't stop," she moaned.

Kisses brushed her inner lips and licks circled her clit. With all that went on in the intimate area, she didn't notice the hand at her breast or the fingers pinching and twisting her nipple.

An intense flush of heat rushed deep into her center, and her muscles contracted. Grasping the head between her legs, Devra didn't let go of the glorious sensation. She ground her pussy against the mouth suckling her.

"Oh, God, yes," she rasped almost breathlessly.

Swinging her head from side to side, she rode the wave of ecstasy. Undulating in rapid heaves to meet the sensations spiraling through her, she crashed in exhaustion when her climax peaked. She slumped against the bedding, out of breath. Releasing her hold on her lover's hair, she enjoyed the aftermath of rapture. Light kisses speckled her belly and climbed to her breasts. Lips captured her nipple; teeth pulled at the flesh. An almost weightless body slithered farther upward. While the clothing of her ravisher raked against her sensitive pussy, a mouth pressed to hers.

Sticky sweet lips groped hers. Devra whimpered with an exhausted defeat of her senses by the aggressive fervor. Unaware of who fiercely kissed her, she clung to the body squirming on top of hers and responded to the passion. She curled her tongue to that of her unknown lover, and enjoyed the affection she rarely experienced with Jerry.

As the person shifted away from her center, and the mouth pulled free, a moan escaped Devra. She turned her head and panted heavily as a hand glided from her neck downward

and caressed her breast. Traveling to her waist, the slow strokes worked between their mating hips. Devra tried lifting her bottom, anticipating the insertion into her twitching center.

The ticklish motion of fingertips inching across her flesh made her tremble. Fingernails scratched against her nether lips. She reached for the hand in hopes to guide it quicker to the spot she wanted fondled.

Instead, a hand grasped her fingers and took the lead. Fabric, then skin brushed her palm. She touched a patch of hair and tried withdrawing.

“Pleasure me.” Lillia’s voice echoed in Devra’s head.

Devra searched the fluff and raked her finger into the slit.

“Hurry,” Lillia’s voice deepened.

Curling her finger, she dipped into the center, stroking the flesh in the same manner she used to masturbate. Lillia’s moans were like short grunts. Devra felt at odds with what she was doing, but she could not stop.

The knock on the door stopped her movements. She opened her eyes and blinked several times. As if waking from a dream, she looked blurry-eyed at Lillia rising off her.

While Devra had imagined the tiger and the man, she didn’t know how to react to the knowledge a woman aroused her body. Lillia stimulated her lust, and Devra’s confusion thickened.

“Come in,” Lillia answered the second time a tap resounded from the door.

Dumbfounded by the sexual encounter, Devra gathered the sheet to cover her nakedness. The embarrassment she suffered seemed intentional when Lillia smiled at her. Heat seared her neck and cheeks, and she held her breath as the door opened without a creak.

The man from earlier filled the entry’s framework. His wide shoulders almost touched the wood jamb on each side of the three-foot opening. Edged by thick black lashes, his

amazing golden-brown eyes observed her with caution. The hypnotism of his stare captured her attention. Everything surrounding him faded into a blur.

She wanted to be alone with him. He was who she imagined, who she wanted lying on top of her. Her hands itched to touch him and drag his gorgeous body over hers. On his deeply tanned face, twin scars sliced the length of one side. The thin lines marred his features, but they didn't distract from his attractiveness.

Devra smiled, finding him an enjoyable sight. Then a memory flashed from her dream -- of him -- and the tiger. She had been the seducer, but to whom? How did this mysterious man find his way into her erotic fantasies?

Lillia made a small sound with her throat, a sort of cough that tried to disrupt the enchantment. It didn't work. Something about Gannon invigorated Devra. That wasn't to say she wasn't frightened as well.

Keeping her wary gaze on him, too afraid to turn her head away, she studied the rest of his good looks. She examined his full mouth and the strong line to his jaw. Her smile widened at the sight of his dimples.

"This is my brother, Gannon Tremain." Lillia curved an arm around his. "His rudeness earlier should not warrant him an introduction, but I love him dearly and therefore, I forgive him for many things."

Devra could forgive him too, especially the delay to his ravishment of her.

"Go get her some clothes," he growled.

His dark tone rattled Devra. She stopped smiling and tightened her grip on the sheet. If his manner before had been rude, she wondered what Lillia called his temperament now?

Lillia left them, and Devra didn't know what to say. Her body had a warm pink glow from the stimulation of Lillia's sexual fondling. Gannon's gaze heightened the shade. He stared at her as if he saw through the sheet. Her breasts rose with her deep inhale. If it were possible, her spiked nipples would have jumped to his lips.

## Chapter Six

They were alone in the room. His silence worried her. She chewed the inside of her lip, thinking up a sentence, a word, *something* to break the devastating chill of his unnerving glare. She wondered if he sensed her yearning to be devoured by his passion, or did he stand aloof because he sensed his sister had laid some claim. It would explain his hesitancy.

“Was there anyone on the boat with you?” His quiet manner severed the tension between them.

Devra froze. She swallowed, and the dry lump of restless longing rendered her mute. She shook her head in reply. Her thoughts continued noting details of his pleasant features. His black hair enhanced the exotic nature of his sun-bronzed skin. Muscles topped muscles beneath the tightness of his shirt. It occurred to her that she had missed feeling the pleasure of his strong arms when he’d carried her from the beach.

“The hurricane came close to this island, but not enough to do damage. Were you trying to outrun the storm or find it?” His gaze left her face and drifted lower over her body.

“I didn’t know about it.” Her insides clenched.

He returned his gaze to her eyes, and she gulped when his face wrinkled with a look of disbelief at her stupidity.

"My radio broke," she added.

He came closer to the bed. His strides were majestic paces displaying power, warning her she didn't know him. He could do as he pleased with her and she'd not have the strength to resist.

"The sky should have been reason enough to make you turn back."

"I didn't want to go back." She gripped the sheet, finding the air scorching her lungs as she breathed.

His hand rose too swiftly. She flinched -- mindful of how painful even a slap could be, except he didn't hit her. Her boyfriend Jerry's similar movements conditioned her to react in such a fashion. He had a way of surprising her with his anger over such little things. On their trip, he had flown into such a rage she had thought he'd kill her. That's when she'd mustered enough courage to leave him.

Gannon lifted her hair from her shoulder and held it away. She looked where he did. The red indentations in her skin circled front to back.

Using the tip of his finger, he traced the sore outline with a gentle touch. His caress repeated several times. A sigh escaped her lips, and his hand snapped back as if her skin burned him. Devra's insides churned to the point she lost her hold on the sheet. He reached toward her and the back of his hand swept against her chest as he lifted the covering for her. Their fingers tangled in the exchange, and she held onto him along with the sheet.

Begging a stranger to make love to her didn't fit in her character, yet the idea hung there, waiting for him to read her mind. It had been a long time since Jerry had showed her tenderness. This man stepping near offered the hope of affection, especially when he freed his hand from hers and inspected her neck. His long fingers wrapped her throat, holding her head up. His thumb swirled against the artery just below her ear.

Devra watched his face, mesmerized as he massaged the sensitive spot. Euphoria multiplied when she shut her eyes and absorbed the loving strokes. Raising her hand, she

found the front of his body close. She clawed at his solid abdomen, and her fingers dropped to the front of his trousers.

The wayward sheet fell from her breasts. Gannon's touch was almost instant. Rubbing her pliant nipple until it was plump, he pinched it between his thumb and forefinger, and teased hundreds of nerves.

"Take me." The words floated from her mouth as if she had no control over her own voice.

He twisted her nipple harder.

"Take me, now," she begged.

He pulled, tugging her whole breast outward.

"Please," she whimpered.

Her twitching center made her squirm, and she squeezed his trousers, grabbing his aroused cock.

He groaned louder as her orgasm drove her to wildly clutch at him. He let go of her throat and drove his fingers into the hair at the side of her head. Twisting the strands in his grip, he showed her who was in command and pulled her toward his groin. While the forceful action presented his strength over her, it also displayed a seductive control instead of an abusive one.

Devra looked up and the feral glaze in his eyes appeared to make him oblivious to her. He pinched her nipple again, tweaking it until she shuddered.

Gripping her hand, he put it near the tab to the zipper. She pulled the fly open, and a burst of masculine heat rushed out.

"Here we are." Lillia floated back into the room.

The startling interruption jerked Gannon from Devra's hand. She pulled the sheet up over her breasts, embarrassed by the same woman that only a short while earlier was suckling her.

Gannon turned, and in several long strides, he disappeared from the room. Devra watched his departure with unquestionable loss.

“We’ll get you all dressed and then down to a meal.” Lillia announced. “We’ve a splendid selection of fish and fruits.”

In an unabashed fashion, Lillia drew the sheet aside, leaving Devra no choice but to get up.

Devra tried to determine Lillia’s age. As Gannon’s sister, she didn’t think too many years would separate them. Yet, at the same time, she appeared more mature, especially around the eyes.

“I brought you something simple to wear.” Lillia lifted the brightly printed cotton. “The day is usually humid after a storm. It would be best to go without undergarments or anything heavy clinging to your skin.”

Devra lifted her arms, allowing the woman to wrap her in the soft fabric. Lillia took liberties in touching her with the pretense of adjusting and knotting the cloth. Devra couldn’t complain. Lillia had a firm understanding of how to caress a woman. Each shift of the garment came with a gentle squeeze, an intimate pat, or an arousing rub.

Between Lillia and Gannon, Devra’s nipples were tender. Everything that contacted her sensitized flesh made her tremble. The unfulfilled craving to have Gannon drove Devra crazy in a way she had trouble understanding.

“The flower smells wonderful,” Devra commented when she inhaled the scent of the white orchid Lillia wore in her hair.

“These are common on the island.” Lillia plucked it from her own lush brown curls and tucked it behind Devra’s ear.

“It’s a lovely fragrance.”

“Here, let me get you another drink.” Lillia picked up the pitcher and poured.

“Thank you.” Devra gulped the coconut milk concoction. “I don’t know why I’m so thirsty.”

“It’s the heat.” Lillia rubbed Devra’s back. “You’re dehydrated.”

The delicious liquid slid down Devra’s throat and soothed muscles she hadn’t been aware hurt. Lillia’s continued caress reminded Devra of the dream-like sexual incident between them. The thought aroused her in a bizarre way. She didn’t want a woman, but her feelings didn’t have to do with anyone -- male nor female or beast. She desired zealous attention expressly aimed at her. Her spirit sought a soul mate that conveyed a complete devotion to making her happy.

The instant Lillia slipped her fingers around the glass, it left Devra’s hand. Walking to the large open windows, Devra stared at the tropical surroundings. An odd sensation similar to the one she had before in bed, gave her a mildly numbing buzz in her head.

Again, she relived memories, bad and good. Jerry’s violence had escalated over time. In the beginning, he was loving and considerate. He kept her a prisoner to his cruelty by making her believe it was her fault and he’d be the only one ever to want her.

Devra shifted closer to the opening and took in a deep breath of tropical air. She pushed Jerry from her mind and wrapped her thoughts around Gannon. The attraction between them was instant. Her heartbeat quickened in his presence. Even now, her pulse was rapid as she considered how wonderful sex between them would be.

Her limbs tingled. Leaning on the windowsill, Devra re-aimed her mental meanderings.

No screens or curtains covered the view between her and the tropical beauty of the yard. The idea that fresh air would clear her mind kept her breathing deeply. Only, the longer she stood there, the more her thoughts tangled. Memories, dreams, and fantasies overlapped. She closed her eyes and the tiger became the predominant vision in her mind. The way his massive head swung over her body and his saliva dripped to her skin excited



her. The sweltering heat of his breath pleased her into surrender. His tongue bathing her aching nipples gave her the kind of pleasure only available in erotic dreams.

Devra rubbed a hand over her belly at the memory of his teeth raking across her flesh, traveling into the juncture of her thighs. The sensation left her shivering.

"You look very pretty in this dress." Lillia smoothed it over Devra. "Gannon likes pretty things."

"Oh?" Devra's mind switched to Gannon.

She enjoyed thinking about him. Mysterious, dark, and utterly the handsomest man she'd ever met, Gannon Tremain captured more than her interest. He also made her apprehensive. She wanted him and worried that all she thought she felt from him was her imagination. What if he rejected her? How would she accept that?

Lillia confirmed those worries. "Beautiful women always attract his notice, but remember, he will only want to use you for his pleasure."

Devra spotted Gannon below, walking from the green lawn to a well-tended flower garden. She put her hands over her breasts and rubbed at the ache. Squeezing her nipples, making a lightning quick sensation skitter through her extremities, she watched him. He paced the path, capaciously lost in thought. When he stopped abruptly and lifted his head, nothing could prevent the stimulation his gaze shot into her fevered veins.

She desperately needed him. In her mind, her feet were already hurrying her into his arms. She imagined the heat of his breath upon her, and the distinctively keen growl from his throat. She hadn't kept her desires a secret. Neither had he. Time would bring them together and she felt it an unbearable wait.

Stepping back, out of his line of sight, Devra bumped against Lillia. The woman's hands grasped her upper arms.

"You can think of him, if you like," Lillia whispered over Devra's shoulder. "You can close your eyes and imagine Gannon's touch. I will help you."

Lillia's hands seized Devra's breasts and squeezed.

"I don't need help." Devra dropped her head back onto Lillia's shoulder.

"Yes, you do. He's not here while you're in need, and it pains you to wait for him."

Lillia forced her to the window. "We can make him want you more."

Lillia snatched the slip of a dress she had fastened around Devra and tugged it below her breasts.

"There," Lillia exclaimed and cupped her hand just beneath one hardened nipple. "Let him see what he's missing."

Stunned, Devra stood transfixed on the garden, and the man she desperately wanted. She hardly took notice of Lillia's manipulation of her flesh.

"No." Devra shoved herself from the window and wrenched free of Lillia's hold.

She wrapped her arms around herself, crossing her limbs over her bare breasts as if to hide the way they yearned for attention. Her heart pounded unmercifully fast, stimulated by Lillia's actions and aroused by the woman's suggestions that Gannon would want her. The dreams she'd had, the man she watched, and the flashbacks of the tiger blended. The woman stroking her arm, played with her senses.

How had she become so desperate for love, she'd let anyone -- human or beast -- fuck her?

Dizzy with the overwhelming delusions, she spun around and gripped the window sash. Her fingertips hurt as she strained to hold onto to the wood to keep from falling. The harder she squeezed, the less strength she had in her limbs.

Her mind cried out for Gannon to help her. Something about him soothed her spirit. The more she wanted to scream, the fears of her past warned her not to trust him. She couldn't deal with life if another man trapped her into becoming his object of torture.

She clung to the hope Gannon might rush to her side, yet as she stood locked in gaze with him, neither of them moved. Not until the stressful day finally pushed her to the brink of sanity.

Shivering from the heat of someone's breath on the back of her neck, her thoughts turned to Lillia's presence. The involvement she had with the beguiling woman was too much. Even as she thought only of Gannon, she strangely let the woman rub seductively against her.

When Devra's vision darkened, she looked forward to the void in her thoughts. She collapsed on the floor in willing relief at escaping what she didn't understand.

## Chapter Seven

At the dining table, Gannon avoided looking at Devra. The relationship between them could destroy her. While in her room, he had begun renewing the bond he'd created with her soul. He didn't want to suffer a broken heart, but how could he avoid it if Devra didn't stay?

"You're not eating, dearest." Lillia stroked his hand where it lay on the table.

"I'm not hungry." He resented Lillia's interference in his relationship with Devra.

While he was in the garden, he had seen them in the upper window of the house. He'd watched Lillia touching Devra and exposing her to him as if she were for sale at market.

"You need to keep your strength up." Lillia made her usual cluck of dissatisfaction.

He ignored her, and trained his thoughts on Devra. Why had she let his sister push her in front of the window? Did Devra's lust rule her actions as strongly as his desires governed his?

Devra's brief glances beckoned him and taunted the tiger. He couldn't fight his urges where a woman willed him to do what he wanted.

"Devra is such a pretty name." Lillia reached out to Devra's hand. "Are you not hungry either, sweetness?"

Jumping up from her chair, Devra's graceless move sent it over backward to the floor. "I'm sorry. I don't feel well." She raced from the room as if a fire were lit beneath her feet.

Gannon rose just as quickly and went after her. They hadn't spoken much, yet the connection was there. Body and soul, he suffered from whatever angst she experienced. Kicking the chair out of his way, he crossed the room and followed her out the large glass doors onto the porch. He thought her flight might take her into the jungle. He was relieved to see her leaning on one of the old, imported marble columns of his house.

He paused at the alluring sight of her waiting for him. He had no other way to explain her calm expression or her gaze at the doorway as if she didn't doubt he'd come after her. Fitting exquisitely into the scenery, she was as he had always dreamed -- a woman of beauty, willing and wanting to be a part of his life.

"Your home is lovely, but strangely out of place," she commented.

"Much of this house was shipped here piece by piece long before I was born. The island has trees and lush tropical foliage, but it didn't have the rich textured wood found in other parts of the world. From what I understand, my grandfather pirated many of his possessions."

"I've never heard of this island." Devra turned and faced him. "Is it very big?"

"From my viewpoint, it's rather small. I know it extremely well. There's a village on the far side. If I had to guess, there must be near a thousand people there."

She smiled. "That's a small island, Mr. Tremain."

"Call me Gannon." He moved closer to her. "After all, we've already crossed the boundaries of formality."

Her heavenly blue gaze rose. Reserved and yet seductive, the qualities he knew about her amazed him. The sexual fragrance emitting from her body lured the beast in him.

"Lillia said you fainted earlier." He hesitated at touching her, worried his restraint of the tiger would vanish.

She leaned toward the hand he held near the curve of her jaw and he made contact with her skin. Caressing the contours with his thumb, he memorized the left side of her face. Every detail, each rise and dip to the bone structure, he confirmed by what he saw. She was beyond lovely. Devra exceeded the magnificence of anything he'd ever known.

She closed her eyes and lowered her head as he swirled his fingers beneath her face, covering the territory of her neck and back to the base of her earlobe. The softness kept him spellbound. Since she avoided looking at him, it made him think she didn't like the scars on his face and that idea pained him.

"Maybe you should lie down," he suggested, thinking of her wellbeing and his escape from her aberrance of his features.

She shook her head slightly, and the orchid dropped from her hair onto the stone porch floor. Gannon let go of her and retrieved the flower instantly. He carefully pushed it into her dark curls above her ear. He liked the tea-hued color highlighted by what reminded him of the sky's twilight reds.

Devra put a hand on his chest. Her touch acted like a strong chain binding him to her. The heat of her palm burned through to his tortured soul. Resisting her or his attraction seemed fruitless when his thoughts cried out with joy for the great find he had brought home.

"You were on the sea alone?" He fingered a lock of her hair while attempting to direct his mind away from his increasing obsession with her.

"Not at first." Her mindless petting stopped. "I left him."

Gannon tensed at the idea of another man touching her the way he had. "It must have been a serious disagreement."

With a flick of his wrist, he flipped her hair back over her shoulder. The brown waves of silk fluttered, and he looked at the mark he'd implanted in her skin. The abrasion

summoned the recollections of her nakedness, the taste of her flowing juices on his tongue, and her voice encouraging him.

Devra lifted her head, and her gaze met his firmly.

“Why did you leave him?” He cupped her face and stroked his thumb over her luscious lips.

“He hit me.” She pulled from him, and stepped off the porch onto the lawn.

Strolling to the center of the lush green grass that spread toward the fringe of the jungle, she stopped midway.

“He just let you go?” Gannon walked to her and put his hands on her small shoulders.

“Other things occupied his immediate attention.”

“I don’t see how anything could be more important than you.” He dropped his hands from her arms as she turned to face him.

He stood where no shadows concealed them and Devra’s face never revealed a hint that she disliked his disfigurement. He tried to relax for her sake. The idea anyone would abuse such a beautiful woman, however, enraged him.

She put her palm against his chest and mindlessly rubbed the cloth. “I wasn’t woman enough for him, I suppose. Someone appealed to him more than I did. While he went gallivanting off with her, I took the boat and left him in Jamaica.”

Her caress slid up leaving a fiery trail from his hardened nipple. She reached toward his face.

“How did you get the scars?” Her cool fingertips pressed his cheek.

“A serious disagreement,” he replied, not wanting to give details of his past.

“I’m sorry.”

“It was a long time ago.” He closed his eyes to her touch.

She traced the lines on his face, calming his spirit then her inspection stopped. He opened his eyes and saw hers fill with tears. Inadvertently, he had unlocked old wounds to her emotions. She tried moving away, going back to the house, but he grabbed her wrist. Her lips parted, and he didn't hesitate in swooping down to claim her engaging breath. Catching her ready mouth in his kiss, he slipped his tongue inside and caressed the arch of the cavern.

Shifting his weight from one foot to the other, he aligned his knee between her thighs and nudged her to widen her stance. She stepped into his positioning and straddled his leg, moving against him. She placed a hand behind his head and returned his kiss with eagerness. Soon their tongues engaged and they twisted their mouths for the best possible fit.

Compassion sealed their fates.

Gannon would never give her up.

The flimsy wrap Devra wore offered no hindrance as he pulled it up her legs. He moved his hand against the back of her silken thighs until the bare cheeks of her ass were accessible to him. Firm with his grip, he kneaded the supple flesh and drew her forward to his throbbing erection. Pressing a finger into the split of her bottom, he rubbed the tight ring of her anus.

She clung to his arms, grasping what she could of his shirt as he plunged his middle finger into her. The tight circlet constricted, and he thrust harder. When her lips tore free of his, she turned her head away and put her cheek on his chest.

Gannon felt the tension in her shudders.

"Don't stop," she murmured when he pulled out.

He gripped her thigh, towed it up along his leg, and plunged his finger back into the tight ring. She hopped on one foot, rubbing up and down against him, forcing his hold on her to strengthen. His skin quivered with each warm breeze, chilling his wet pores.

Her whimpers came to an abrupt halt. She capped the pause with a long, almost airless gasp. He pulled out of her clenching chasm and let her hand snake between them. Rubbing



the front of his trousers, she made the ache inside him increase. He tried to stay sane, but the lowering sun drew out the predator's rebelliousness. It didn't take much to unleash the bestial cravings.

Devra opened his trousers. The jerk of his shaft when she pulled him free of the clothing set off his mood change. He breathed heavier and watched her inspect his swollen member. It lay across her palm, throbbing against the beat of her pulse. The pressure escalated, and he felt detached from that part of himself altogether.

Her thumb rotated over the tip several times until a drop of moisture glistened like a glass bead. She swiped it off with the tip of her finger.

"Suck it," he groaned.

She put her finger in her mouth and licked the end. "I want you in me," she hummed.

"Get on your knees."

"No, not that way." She jerked on his shaft. "I want your cock in my hot cunt."

The sins of his birth emerged.

"First, take me in your mouth." Gannon shoved her down so she knelt before him.

He fisted his erection in one hand and coiled Devra's hair in another. He held ready for her refusal, unable to explain the beast had to be satisfied first. Dropping his head back, he tried to reason with his split personality. He needed to prevent the tiger from taking without conscience.

Grabbing her wrist, he yanked her arm up the front of his chest. Since the day he was born, his transformation into an animal cursed him to live in hell. If he understood, maybe he'd have control. If she hadn't looked at him with a similar voracious hunger, he might have won the battle.

Devra's light touch sent the white-hot lightning of lust through his suffering nerves. A fiery heat surged him forward, and he hit the corner of her mouth with his cock. Clumsily, she tried to catch his involuntary thrust. Only her lips slid along the side of his shaft.

“Suck me,” he growled, the tiger’s will behind his harsh urgency

“Fuck me,” Devra answered.

Apparently oblivious to his tone or his disquieting demand, she gave the tiger more control.

Gannon jerked Devra’s head into place. If she wanted to incite the tiger with her lust, he’d not stop her. He pushed toward the target of her parted lips and entered her mouth, feeding her his cock.

She took him inside along her cheek. Her tongue swirled and teased with a carnal voracity. He refused to thrust, making her try harder to change his mind. Her slender fingers slipped beneath his balls and tortured him with feathery sweeps, back to front.

“Hold them,” he directed. “Let me feel them in the heat of your hand.”

She pushed her fingers further back and pressed her thumb against the taut skin of his scrotum. The pressurized point throbbed. Dragging her fingers back, she cradled and squeezed. Her lips continued their loving caress over his cock. She pinched the tip between her teeth and pumped his balls with firm squeezes.

“That’s good,” he praised.

She withdrew her mouth and held his cock up against his abdomen.

“You like this?” The hum of her voice vibrated down his shaft where she kissed the raised vein.

“Yes,” he groaned.

Gannon no longer guided her. She took the route she wanted, and that which he had anticipated. Sucking the side of his aching sac into her mouth, she massaged his balls with the churn of her tongue. His body tensed as the explosive juices rushed to expel.

He growled at the loss of her lips ceasing their salacious play. The tickle of her panting breath crept along the length of his erection as she backed away from his balls. The unbearable delay to ejaculate sped up his pulse. Then Devra jerked his trousers down to his

knees. She grasped the cheeks of his ass, slipped her lips over the end of his cock, and pulled him forward.

Gannon glanced up at the sky. The splash of color tranquilized his thoughts. His hips moved. The torture of not thrusting into her throat went on for a long while, especially when she stroked a finger into his anus and rubbed an erogenous point never before touched.

Her moans fueled his. As his shudders became violent, he knew the beast neared escape much faster than the liquid he wanted to spurt into Devra's greedy mouth.

In an attempt at redemption, he ripped himself from her clutches. Her wantonness incited the tiger, and he had to do something to save her from herself.

"Stop." He held her head back from him and stared at her half-closed eyes.

"Come into my mouth." Her lips parted with her sensuous whisper. "I want to taste you."

## Chapter Eight

Devra leaned forward, ignoring Gannon's resistance. He tugged on her hair, attempting to hold her away. Then he groaned with obvious defeat and sheathed his cock into her open mouth. The musky scent of his body tickled her nostrils, just as the nest of hair did against her skin.

Gannon shifted from one foot to the other. His wet, velvet-skinned arousal brushed her tonsils, and her gag reflex locked onto him. She immediately pulled his cock out and rubbed the soft head to her cheek, along her jaw, and guided it along the pulse in her neck.

"Suck," his strained voice demanded.

Clutching his balls, she squeezed hard and released, making him groan in agony and pant in relief when her grip slackened.

"Suck me," he growled.

"Not just yet." She rubbed her face into his crinkled black hair.

He growled again. It rumbled and whirled through his body as if he were an animal. She licked his belly until the sound smoothed into a vibratory purr.

"Now." His tone hinted of begging.

"Who's in control, Gannon?" She clamped her teeth onto the shaft.

“I am.”

He gave a little jerk to her head, and she gazed up to see the strain of his needs wrinkling his features. She lifted his cock and massaged the sac beneath. The sounds he made resounded deeper.

Emotions pulled her in opposite directions.

“Who?” She took playful nips at his balls.

“Ah...ah...ah.” He grunted sounds, not words.

She let his taut skin drop from her mouth. The heavy sac swung down.

“You. You’re in control.”

She licked over every rippled vein in his shaft. She pulled, and twisted and tickled his senses because it elated her. For one whole minute, she wiggled the tip of her tongue in the little dip under the plump head of his erection. It brought the greatest sounds she’d ever heard from a man. It made her hot and wet, and she wanted to hear him grunt like that while he fucked her.

Devra engulfed his cock until it wedged into her throat. Breathing through her nose, she worked her tongue under and up the sides. Unnourished and greedy, she recalled the coconut milk Lillia gave her. The tart juice had empowered her with an intrepid sense of authority. Domination waned, and she looked for the nectar from Gannon.

His grip on her head increased and he thrust faster. Enervated by his growls, Devra fingered her clit and brought herself near orgasm. She wanted to come with him so the spasms of her body enhanced every swallow she took.

Gannon stroked his hand over her head with an incessant harshness. His groans thundered like a storm preparing to let loose, and she worked toward sharing his release. Petting the soft fibers of hair on his abdomen, she lifted her gaze and watched his jaw shift back and forth, making the muscle flex his cheek. She waited for the signs and rolled her

tongue around his shaft, teasing him closer to an orgasm. With firm squeezes of her lips, she made him desperate for the volatile discharge.

“Not yet,” he begged.

She buried her face into his groin with her anxious needs, nuzzling his balls with kisses and inhaling the musky scent of him. She handled him in ways she’d never thought of touching another man. His sounds encouraged her to keep fingering and feeling every crease in his nether region. They were close and climbing toward an explosion of passion.

Gannon tensed beneath her massaging fingers. Devra pressed her lips over his arousal and then she fell back from the shove of Gannon’s hand on her forehead. In her hunched position, she had no balance and the momentum of his push sent her sprawling on the lawn.

“Get in the house,” he demanded. “Stay away from me!”

Shocked out of her intoxicated stupor by his caustic tone, Devra scooted backward on her hands and bottom toward the porch. The sunset left a faint glow in the sky. When she glanced over her shoulder at the house, she easily saw Lillia at the glass door, illuminated by a lantern. Devra didn’t know what to think or how to feel about Gannon’s sister watching them. She wasn’t necessarily opposed to kinky sex, but she didn’t appreciate Lillia’s voyeuristic spying.

When she turned back to Gannon for an explanation, he had bolted into the jungle. She felt his embarrassment, if that was what it was. What man wants his sister gawking at him getting a blowjob? If the situation hadn’t been so disturbing, it would have been comical the way he trotted off with his pants dangling below his ass. One hand held them as he disappeared into the underbrush of the jungle.

Devra sat up and swept her fingers over her lips. Her mouth was sore. Gannon had a magnificent-sized cock. She’d almost choked on the thickness and length when she held it in her throat.

A glimpse of movement from the underbrush Gannon ran into caught her attention.

“Gannon?”

A flash of gold and black, patterned like a tiger, came out of the darkness into the moonlight and vanished back into the shadows.

“Gannon?” she called again.

She rubbed her eyes and shook her head. Tigers didn’t live on a Caribbean island. Laughing at the notion her bizarre day was another one of her dreams, she brought her legs up to her chest and wrapped her arms around her knees. On an island with a handsome man and a beautiful woman giving her pleasure shouldn’t have given her an ounce of concern. Yet, headaches ensued after her encounters with them, the same way the mind-numbing ache followed her dreams.

A caterwauling growl ripped the peaceful silence, and she knew the tiger did exist.

The rustle of leaves, the low vibratory sound of an animal, and the effects of a weakened mind left Devra little choice in accepting the warning. What she thought she saw and discarded as a dream approached. Reality or illusion, the danger advanced, and she didn’t wait to find out what happened next.

She scrambled to her feet and hurried to the double doors of the house, turning and twisting the handle to no avail. Gannon’s sister had locked her out.

“Lillia!” she shouted. “Lillia, let me in!”

The hairs on Devra’s nape rose. A chilling shudder raced up her spine. She turned from the door as intuition warned her someone watched.

Replacing the serenity she’d previously felt, silence enveloped the night with a deafening terror. Slow with her moves, she rotated. From the leafy vegetation of the jungle, she saw the animal advance. His large feet padded quietly over the thick grass. With his back slung down and his head hovering low, he crept closer. The menacing gait excited her, and she didn’t know why. The danger gave her thrill. Like skydiving and bungee jumping, the moment rushed adrenaline through her at an alarming rate.

Devra stepped away from the door. She made a short, cursory study of the house and searched for another viable entrance. A trellis on the end of the porch appeared sturdy. The vines of tropical passionflowers hid the sight of possible thorns. She had to take the chance or die. Shuffling cautiously to the side, each move she made, the tiger edged toward her. He stalked with vigilance. If she had been at a zoo, she would've been in awe of his color and the sleekness of his beauty. But she wasn't in a civilized place. She was on an island named because of such a creature. She didn't have time to ponder how he had ended up in a part of the world unknown for large cats.

The glide of Devra's bare foot didn't have the length of stride in comparison to the outstretching of the tiger's leg. He closed the distance between them quickly.

"Go away," she whispered, feeling silly in thinking he'd understand.

Cursed by her nightmares, her sanity waned as the tiger came for her. She didn't want to think about the premonitions. Nevertheless, no matter how convoluted and distorted her strange desires, they were coming true.

Acting on impulse, Devra ran. She couldn't think of anything but running for her life. Behind her, she heard the *harrumph* of the tiger's heavy body landing. His massive paws pounded the ground in a rush to catch her, and the vibration of earth shuddered up her spine. Then, as if she were in a horror movie, she went tumbling forward. Her foot caught on nothing more than clumsiness, and she landed face down on leaves and sticks.

Rolling over, she threw her arms across her face and cringed. The last thing she glimpsed was the beast leaping at her. She opened her mouth to scream and nothing came out. Her vocal cords knotted in fear.

She would die, and no one would hear.



## Chapter Nine

Gannon stood panting. Positioned on four legs, his body heaved with the exhaustion from his transformation. The process, while quick, took a great deal out of him when he struggled to resist. Years of living such a way had not diluted his rebellious nature, and every time it became necessary to shift into the tiger, he challenged the alteration.

He breathed heavily with exhilaration. Devra's scent inebriated his mind, and his lust of her drove aside the rational arguments of abstention. He wanted her with an instinct impossible to ignore.

Curled up in a ball with her arms wrapped around her head, she trembled. Bunched to her thighs by her drawn up knees, the flowery dress left her bottom exposed. He inched forward and sniffed the pink center of her sex. He licked the air -- close to touching and tasting the wet pleats of flesh -- then he backed from her.

She lowered her legs and stretched out the ivory splendor of her shapely limbs on the carpet of grass. Moving her arms, she peeked out from between her shaking fingers. Tears rolled from the outside corners of her blue eyes.

Gannon shifted from one set of paws to the other. Hungry for her body, he held back from despoiling her with a hope of acceptance. He had spent the night before waiting for

such a thing. When she had submitted to the part of him hovering between man and beast, he was elated -- ecstatic over the unexpected acceptance.

As the fully formed tiger, he didn't have a lot of patience, but what he possessed paid off. Her gaze grew curious. She lifted a hand up to his face and traced the scars. Perplexity filled her beautiful stare. Fixated on examining his face, she seemed close to accommodating him. Would she know the man within the shell of fur?

Gannon stepped over her, straddling her lithe body. The sudden low whimpers she made stopped the vibratory rumble in his chest that expressed his heightened contentment. Her compliance calmed him, and once she shut her eyes, she spread her legs as if she read his mind.

The wrapped dress parted and uncovered her intimate recess, making her vulnerable to his penetration. Instantly, his cock extended, thickening in eager anticipation of mating her. When the tip glistened with a beaded drop of his sperm, he lifted a paw and placed it forward. Another step with his other paw and he aligned his erection with her entrance.

Blinded by her closed eyes, Devra pushed her fingers into the thick ruff of hair on his neck. She slid her touch deeper to the fur covering his expanding chest. Her palm glided around his side with a welcoming stroke, and he shuddered.

Bowing his head, Gannon raked his teeth against the swell of her breast and gripped the dress. He gave a shake of his head. The knot of cloth popped loose, and the flimsy garment fluttered open as her body jerked upward from the forceful tug.

Devra lay helpless, exposed, and yet ready to except him. In victory of his dominance, he issued a low growl -- a warning she'd forever belong to him and no other. Then he lowered in the haunches. His cock brushed the split of her sex. He rocked his hips back, ready to make his first thrust into the feminine canal.

"Gannon," she whimpered.

Turning her face from him, Devra's fingers gripped his fur tighter, pulling so he felt the tension. Hesitant because of emotions welling inside him, he relaxed the muscles in his hindquarters and stood still, letting his cock lay against the inside of her thigh.

Adoration rushed through his enervated thoughts. Eager to show her his devotion, he fought the urges insisting he drive into her like an animal.

"Gannon, please don't..."

The conflict between the instincts of the tiger and the conscience of a man always ended in the beast's favor. He studied Devra's slender frame and licked his lips. The delectable flesh was a feast. His thoughts drifted and he licked her rounded breasts. The generous mounds of flesh jiggled with each lap. The erect peaks of her nipples eased into soft bumps.

"Please," she whispered. "Just don't hurt me."

Her grip on him loosened and it was her downfall. She yielded to the tiger. Gannon had no command left. He shifted his weight, prodded her sex with his cock and pushed.

The first stab missed, and he rocked his hips back for another attempt. The tiger would not stop until he penetrated and deposited his seed.

Inhaling with a sharp intake, he lunged forward. Devra twisted, and again his rigid shaft slid up her belly.

"Gannon, don't." She wrapped her arms around his neck.

He lifted his head and she hung there, off the ground. She hugged him tightly and a sob broke from her as she buried her face into his neck.

Gannon exhaled and in one breath, his body transformed to that fine mark between beast and man. He held himself up on one hand, while using his other arm to curve around Devra's waist for support. She'd invoked this miraculous change within him, heightening his desire to love her, rather than possess her.

He lowered her to the ground and leaned over her, a man cloaked in the fur of a tiger.

“Look at me, Devra.” He pushed confusion aside. “See the man that needs you.”

Her gaze darted over his face. Perplexed just as he was, she touched his tiger-striped face. “I don’t understand.”

“And I don’t know how to explain.”

He wove his fingers between hers, turned her hand over and nuzzled his fur-covered skin across her knuckles. Rotating her hand, he brushed a kiss in the heart of her palm.

“I won’t hurt you.” He tightened his grip locked with hers.

Her hard nipples pressed into his chest, teasing him. Aroused and desperate for her affection, he tried not to alarm her. The sudden transformation had unexplainable qualities. The tiger still had a hold of him, but there was something special about Devra. Acting like a leash on the beast, she influenced his change and made him into the unusual being he became during a split second at sunset and sunrise.

Her gaze traveled over his face. “When I saw this, I just knew.” She touched the scar.

The smooth pad of her fingertip stroked the line on his face and the soft descent of her inspection soothed him. He closed his eyes, treasuring the feel of her inquisitive exam. Tilting his head to the side, he enjoyed the way she mindlessly petted him. Her inspection moved over his shoulders and arms. She touched his chest and scratched his belly with tender, but unaware, caresses as she stared at him.

An uncontrolled purr, deep and guttural, fluttered from his lungs, and Devra snapped her hand back.

She covered her eyes again. “I feel like I’m going mad.”

Gannon rubbed his nose alongside hers, afraid to show all his emotions, yet unable to suppress the tears rolling down his cheeks.

He moved her hands away and replaced them with his own. Her gaze reflected many thoughts. He couldn’t grasp even one, until she lifted her head and pressed her mouth to his.

An amazing minute of kissing prevented him from thinking. Her lips quivered against his, and he took pleasure in the feel of her tongue pursuing his.

Gannon's heart ached. This wasn't like his first love, a head-over-heels infatuation. From the moment he found Devra on the beach, there was an attachment stronger than any physical attraction. As if their spirits merged, he sensed her emotions because they mirrored his.

Devra's kisses traversed to his cheeks and over the wetness leaking from his eyes. No one had ever been more right for him.

"You should have gone in the house when I told you," he gently chastised.

"I tried."

"What do you mean you tried?" He rubbed his face into every affectionate brush of her lips.

"Your sister locked the door and I couldn't get in. I think she purposely kept me out."

"She wouldn't do that. Not knowing what I am." He lifted his head and stared at the house. "She just wouldn't."

"You're probably right." She continued to pet his face. "I saw her and assumed she locked it. Maybe I turned the knob the wrong way."

Gannon captured her mouth with his. He hugged her to him and rolled to his side, drawing her tight against the length of his body. The tension of his muscles melted.

"Let me take you someplace special." He stroked the hair from her face. "A place we can be alone and undisturbed."

On the beach, they had bonded. They had merged like two spiritual entities. Reining in his enthusiasm was no longer an option. His debate over whether she left the island or not finally came with an answer -- the tiger wouldn't let go, and neither would he.

Glancing at the house, he sensed Lillia's observance. It took all his energy to fight sating his lust for Devra right there on the lawn.

"I don't know how long I have, but I want us away from here." He held her face. "I want you."

She nodded her agreement.

Devra's dress was nothing more than a piece of cloth lying on the grass within his reach. He picked up the bright fabric and wrapped it around her trim figure. Taking his time tying it in place, he touched all that it covered -- the curve of her breast, the slight swell of her belly, and the slope of her hip. He hungered for the hours they'd spend together.

Rising from the ground with a hand beneath her arm, Gannon brought her up with him. Her eyes twinkled in the moonlight, and her face radiated beauty from within her soul. He bent his head and planted a kiss on her mouth, welcoming the opportunity.

Once again, her response was tentative. Her engagement showed a reserved tenderness he relished. He scooped her up, and held her close as the fervor of their kisses increased. Her arms wrapped his neck tighter, and her hungry mouth clung to his with wild abandon. Enjoying the stir of her slippery tongue, passion grew between them. His cock jolted up to her every humming pass over his lips.

"I want you so much," she gasped, taking in a deep breath. Her fingers twisted into his hair.

"It can never be more than I want you."

Cradled to his chest, she drew her head back. "Is it you or the tiger that wants me?"

"Both." He smiled, not thinking his answer would make her happy expression fade.

"Last night?" she questioned, a puzzled look added lines around her eyes. "Last night... You... Oh, God, the tiger. Let go of me." She struggled in his arms.

"Devra, the tiger and I are one in the same."

"Put me down, please put me down." She pushed at his shoulders. "I wanted him. I wanted the tiger and --"

“Remember, it’s not a real tiger.” Gannon returned her to her feet. He kept his arms banded around her as she fought to be released. “It wasn’t as you think.”

Her head dropped to his chest. A defeated cry hiccupped from her. “What is this place I’ve come to?” she cried. “What *are* you?”

He held her, unable to answer.

“I’ve had dreams...vividly sensual encounters, and I’ve always succumbed to an animal.”

“No.” He kissed into her hair. “You’ve surrendered yourself to nothing more than your imagination. I appear as a creature, but I’m a man with a conscious thought of you every moment, even when I walk on paws.”

She moved her head, and he kissed over her eyelids, across her cheeks, and covered her mouth with his.

“You’ve changed me and the way I am, Devra. I want you to stay with me.”

“Gannon,” she murmured.

“Devra, I want you.”

“Gannon.” She repeated without giving him a firm answer. “Make love to me.”

He nuzzled her with his fur-clad nose and scooped her up again. “With the greatest pleasure.”

## Chapter Ten

Devra held onto Gannon as he walked from the lawn behind the house into the jungle. The surroundings blurred. She felt lucid, but her mind spun with the familiar dizziness she'd experienced in the bedroom when she'd fainted.

Resting her head on his shoulder, she listened to the jungle sounds engulfing them. He took her deeper into the dense foliage where palm fronds parted as he proceeded to a location only he knew.

The sluggish, disoriented feeling triggered memories of her last fight with Jerry. He'd hit her hard and the impact knocked her out. When she woke an hour later with a headache, he was gone. He had left her lying unconscious on the floor, and she suspected it was because he didn't want to be late meeting the island girl she'd seen him talking to in the bar.

Devra relaxed, finding a security in Gannon's strong arms. Settling against his fur-clad body as if she were safe at home, her eyelids became heavy as darkness begged her to fall asleep.

She woke with the feeling of something gritty pressing her cheek. Opening her eyes and lifting her head from the sand, she discovered she'd slept longer than a few minutes. The transition from the cradle of Gannon's arms to the ground hadn't disturbed her.



Staring into the dark void, panic crept in on her. "Gannon?" She swung her arm around. "Gannon!"

"I'm here." His hand caught her arm.

"Where are we? Why is it so dark?" She didn't tell him how afraid it all made her. "I have such a headache."

"I think my sister has been putting something in your drinks."

She squirmed upward against him. His embrace came with gentle fingers and the easy rise and fall of his chest.

"Something in the coconut milk?"

"Yes."

She put a hand to her head. "Is that the reason for my headaches, the dizziness, and the --"

"Fainting." He finished her sentence.

"Why would she do that?" She didn't like her state of mind remaining suspended in confusion. While Lillia presented herself as an oddity, she had treated Devra as if she liked her. The intimate moments, the helpful suggestions, the understanding looks. Except the more she considered everything, Devra felt used by the woman. Lillia drugged her and took advantage. She assumed it was from a sexual standpoint for herself or her brother, but when Devra needed her on a personal level, Lillia prevented her from getting in the house by locking the door.

Gannon's frustrated sigh indicated he didn't have answers. If he did, why would he share them? After all, Lillia was his sister.

Devra let time pass without asking more. Even if Gannon knew everything she wanted to know, she had no way to make him provide the information. She reached up to his face and touched the soft hair of the beast. She didn't understand why it didn't bother her. In the real world, he'd be a freak, a travesty on humankind. All she had to go on were her dreams.

Maybe those fantasy encounters with the tiger had prepared her all along...or she was in yet another dream.

“Where are we?”

“In a cave.” His heartbeat increased against her palm.

“The tiger’s cave?”

“Yes.”

“If he should come, what should I do?” She preferred to think of Gannon’s other half as an entirely different being.

“I’m a man by day and a tiger by night. As I am now only happens for a few seconds at sunrise and sunset. Cursed since birth by a voodoo spell, this is all I know. Something about my feelings for you has upset the normal process.”

She rubbed the hardness of his muscular chest, comparing him to Jerry. There was nothing remotely similar. Jerry had an average physique. His short hair receded prematurely at his temples, and he’d kept it military short, even though he’d never been enlisted. She touched Gannon’s soft hair. The silkiness of a cat’s coat tickled her palm.

“There’s no way to stop it from happening?” She stroked the sleek fur on his arm.

“My life has always been this never ending cycle.”

“How long will you be like this?”

“I don’t know. I’ve never been this way longer than a minute at dusk, and again at dawn.”

She rubbed his chest and stirred a finger over the small beaded rise of one nipple. Turning her face into him, she kissed his body. All fears of the unknown dissolved. He didn’t want her to trust the tiger, but how could she not, when she trusted him?

The dark made things easier to disassociate her mind from Gannon’s strange form. As if sensing her distress, he slipped a hand behind her back and eased her to the ground. She

stayed still while he caressed her. He covered her breast and kneaded it with rough urgency. She guided his touch downward to her belly.

He went lower than she could reach, down her leg as far as her knee. Then slowly, he brushed over her thigh. He parted the dress and ran his claw-like fingertips into the folds of sensitive flesh. Spreading her moist inner lips, he inserted a sharp-tipped nail into her sex. She opened her legs wider.

Devra moaned as he fondled her clit with the point of another nail. Rotating her hips, she drew the erogenous swirl of his finger deeper, bringing her closer toward a climax.

His mouth fell on hers and his lips were of a man, firm and kissable. He dragged them across her face and under her jaw. Responsive areas of her skin tingled from the fervent touches. Nipping at her flesh, he tortured her with a sweet delay of his licks reaching her breasts.

His gentle, passionate, and amorous actions aroused her mentally. She'd never experienced adoration the way he showered her with it. He sucked one of her tender nipples into his mouth and rolled it between his teeth. Pumping his finger, rasping it in and out of her vaginal channel, he brought her sexual awareness to the point of explosion.

Devra's insides clenched, gripping and locking onto his knuckle. When she lay panting and more relaxed, his silky body slithered over her like a fur blanket. It felt good to have the muscled weight of him cushioned by a plush layer of a cat's pelt.

He kissed his way back up, beneath her jaw to where her neck met her shoulder. Sucking her hot, hungry skin, he drew the flames of her blood near the surface. She got a strange delight out of the danger his teeth presented. His sharp incisors scraped the sensitized nerves, and she clutched at his thick biceps, letting her mind follow the sensations. She trusted him even though a puncture would release blood from her veins.

"Gannon." She stiffened as he stirred his touch.

The fur-covered finger created a burning friction, pumping in and out. Rhythmically thrusting, he made her breathe heavier as his claw curled forward with an unerring accuracy. Her insides exploded with an intense orgasm.

Gannon moved, and she slid from the support of his arm. He continued to stroke his finger as he changed his position. Twisting, turning, he crawled over her. The softness of flesh bumped her jaw, and she reached up. The dark prevented her from seeing, but she felt the soft hair over his abdomen. The musky warmth of his groin was near her face, and she realized he was over her in the reverse direction. She searched the vacant air until he leaned forward and his dangling arousal brushed her lips.

Pressing down on the inside of her thigh, he kissed and sucked on her skin. He traveled deeper between her legs. His mouth descended on the entrance to her buried ache and she rocked against his face, as his growl echoed inside her.

Recognizing his desires were the same, she wrapped her lips over the head of his cock. When his hips jerked, his downward plunge filled her throat with the length of his stiff flesh. He lifted and repeated the motion. Devra gagged, but the noise wasn't enough to stop him from fucking her with long strokes that tickled her tonsils. Grasping the shaft, she wrenched her head to the side to catch a breath, and Gannon groaned.

He rolled to the sand and dragged her atop him. Pulling her back onto his mouth, he brought her to new heights of ecstasy by pinching her clit between his teeth and flicking his tongue rapidly.

"Oh, God," she whimpered in a strangled cry. "Gannon, please don't stop."

A stronger wave of rapture pushed her over the edge. She burrowed her face into his fur-covered groin, rubbing and kissing his musky scented skin. His hard muscled body, clad in the softest fur, had a sensuous texture.

That position ended too soon. He rolled her on her stomach and shifted behind her. Grunting from the onset, he drove himself into her saturated cunt. She couldn't tell if déjà vu

struck her odd or if she relived a memory. With her face in the sand, she lay immobile, her hips in the air and the cheeks of her ass stretched open.

Gannon repeatedly rammed his hips against her bottom until she wobbled on her knees. Her concentration centered exclusively on the vibrations churning within her feminine walls, grasping and devouring the hard cock slamming into her.

She had a quiet sort of orgasm. The heat made her nerves shiver. Gannon's vigorous thrusts slid deeper, reaching farther than she thought possible. The girth of his shaft thickened. It stretched her sore insides, making the expanding pressure almost unbearable.

"Gannon," she cried, unable to say more.

With a roar, he withdrew and drove a part of his shaft into her that had more bulge than she previously thought. The hard flesh kept him from backing out too easily, and he made slow, short strokes.

"What are you doing?" she gasped, ready to ask him to stop. As his strokes quickened, she found a renewed energy bubbling inside her. Stretched by the girth of his cock, she shuddered with a massive orgasm. Her insides felt raw and torn apart by his thrusts until he jerked several times, and the warm, sexual balm jettisoned and soothed her chafed insides.

"Mating you." He curved an arm around her middle and lifted her from the ground.

She hung in the sling of his embrace. Her palms barely touched the sand as his strength held her dangling beneath him, and the seed-laden liquid of his loins filled her. Spent of energy, Devra clutched at Gannon's arm when he dropped onto his side. He hugged her back against him, and his body jolted with erratic spasms. She tried to move away from his thrashing, but he held her tight. With a hand to her lower belly and an arm bound around her chest, he forced her to remain in place for several long and tense minutes.

Eventually, the grasp of his long fingers eased, and his hot breath panting along the side of her face slowed.

"Mine," he growled against the side of her head. "You're mine."

He repositioned himself and left her lying in the sand. She reached out to push herself up, and her fingers brushed over his foot...his paw.

“Gannon,” she whimpered.

His roar answered.

## Chapter Eleven

Gannon ran from the cave. The moment he let go of Devra, he transformed into the tiger. He feared losing all his senses, and hurting her the way Lillia told him he had harmed others. Whether he believed he could kill or not, it didn't make him any less wary of his animal instincts.

He roamed the jungle, staying far away from her scent. The path he walked led to the far side of the island. Many nights he had used the long walk to work off his frustration. All his life, he had suffered with his condition. It seemed the curse was meant to drive a man insane.

Gannon stopped in his usual spot, near a clearing with a small hut. Something magical kept him from entering the circular area when he was a man. He had tried often when he was younger, and Lillia had told him about the voodoo priestess who lived there. At night, when he was the tiger, he would stride to the door, prepared to demand answers. The place made him fear the unknown information he sought. He had attacked the building several times when his frustration drove him mad. The animal wasn't as disturbed by his predicament, so he remained distanced from the place.

When he couldn't stay away from Devra any longer, Gannon returned through the jungle. He entered the entrance of the cave and swung his head around, inhaling the perfume of her skin. Like a miracle, he shifted into his half-human form. The sudden noise Devra made as she blindly moved in the dark toward the cave's entrance startled him. He reversed into the tiger and growled. Devra's squeal stabbed him like a sharp instrument through his thoughts, and he rushed at her. The predator in him pounced.

"Gannon!" She cried out.

He veered midair and landed to the right side of her. His paw brushed her leg and while he suspected her nearness triggered his beast to man changes, apparently something else worked the miracle.

He instantly shifted partway back to a man, and grabbed her leg at the calf.

"Let go." She kicked at him.

He pulled her toward him and flipped her onto her back. Swinging a leg over hers, he pinned her against the sand, afraid her rejection might trigger his change again. "Relax," he instructed. Inhaling deeply, he drew in a good amount of her natural fragrance, hoping her scent would help keep him in his present condition.

"Please, let me go."

"Shhh...you're safe. I'll make sure you're always safe."

"You left me here in the dark." She stopped struggling. "Why?"

"I need you, Devra, and it scared me at how much." He sat back and pulled her from the ground. "I just had to have time to think."

He kissed along her hairline at the temple.

"I...need you, too." Her words sounded unsure.

"I don't think you do, even though that would be nice."

She leaned toward him and stroked his face. "This is all so sudden and hard to take it in. I have trouble believing it's real."



Gannon nuzzled his cheek to hers. Brushing sand from her skin, he massaged her torso, lingering on her breasts and belly. He explored parts of her he had skimmed over before. She willingly turned to his every manipulation. Soon, he had her positioned on her hands and knees. Kissing over the sand-dusted cheeks of her bottom, he fingered the cleft, massaging her anus. "I want inside you."

"And the tiger?"

He drew her back into position and rubbed his cockhead against the tight ring of puckered flesh. "I won't let him have you."

She whimpered, and he bent over her. Rubbing his face along her spine and kissing her shoulder, he tried to make her relax. He teased her senses with light brushes of his fingers up and down the back of her thigh. When he circled closer to the split of her ass, she shifted her legs, widening the gap for him.

"Ahhh." The sound fluttered out on her exhaling breath.

His touch slid into the fissure, and while his fingertips touched the puffy lips of her pussy, his thumb landed upon the unclenched access of her anus.

"Mmmm, that feels good," she voiced as he rubbed the crinkled ring of flesh.

Gannon wiggled his finger between the dewy lips of her cunt and thrummed her swollen clit. Devra sighed, and it released her tense bottom chasm so he could penetrate her with his thumb.

Instantly, the opening squeezed shut.

He let her adjust to him, then thrust slowly. Her sultry hum encouraged him to taunt the sensitive interior as she undulated with eagerness. Fingering her bottom and her clit at the same time aroused him as she swayed her hips and moved in a sexually stimulating erotic dance.

"Oh, God, I'm coming, Gannon."

He withdrew with a jerk and repositioned, pressing his cock against the opening of her sex. The lips of her cunt flared out, making them plump. Without hesitation, he shoved the length of his shaft into her.

A satisfied sigh blended with her startled cry. His erection swelled, filling her tight and locking against her womb. Her insides clenched with inflexible strength, claiming him. Pain radiated through his limbs when he tried to move away.

The mating began again.

Just like earlier, the beast in him engaged in a natural breeding. He lifted her up, and wrapped his arms around her torso, squeezing her body to his chest. Stimulated beyond understanding, he jerked against her until a stream of liquid shot into her waiting womb.

Devra thrashed in his tight hold, her concentrated orgasm evidently rendering her mute except for the short rapturous cries that pierced the silence around them. She turned her head to the side, stretching her lips toward him, and he kissed her hard, swallowing the stuttering euphoric moans.

Severely animalistic, her muffled cries turned primal instinct into human passion. Her kisses hungered with nips and tugs of his lips. Their tongues collided, vying for dominance, and settled for equality.

Gannon hugged and massaged Devra's body, finding no one place better than another while the pressure grew in his loins. He released her as soon as he could endure ripping his swollen cock from the vise of her twitching core. His nocturnal vision allowed him to see her. Rotating her to face him, he held her face and watched her teary eyes trying in vain to observe him in the darkness of the cave.

She put her fingers on his scars and touched a sensitive point that caused him unexpectedly to flinch.

"I'm sorry." Her hand retreated, and he snatched it from the air.

“No. Don’t say that.” He held her palm to his cheek. “It was only a sensitive nerve, not you.”

He pulled her close. A spark of light glinted from her pupils. They lightened in the dim surroundings and it meant dawn approached. He jerked forward, hunching his back. The tiger fought to emerge. Clenching his fists, he flexed his fingers as his molecular structure moved in a turbulent fashion throughout his body.

“Devra, get out of here.” He pushed her out the exit, hoping the sunrise might come swift and save him from metamorphosis.

“Gannon?”

“Don’t question. Just go. The tiger comes again.”

“But it’ll be daylight soon. Let me stay.” She clutched his arm. “I trust you.”

The tremor in her voice wasn’t supportive of her statement. If anyone needed more assurance of her safety, it was him.

“No...ooooo!” His roar sent her running.

Gannon put a hand to the back of his head, and cringed at the pain. His heartbeat gained speed; he felt as if it would explode from his chest. Fighting the transformation was something he often did. But he’d never succeeded.

While this was an important moment to battle the inevitable, he suffered from the pressure inside his brain. His head hurt from the intense concentration it took for him to resist even a little.

Then he dropped to the ground on all fours, and the process was over in the blink of an eye. He shifted into the tiger and didn’t waste a second chasing after Devra.

Following her sex-scented path, he charged the jungle. On the fans of leaves, he smelled traces of her sweat. Each fragrance engaged his senses. Instead of making him half of a man, he remained a tiger. The lack of her presence was the only explanation for why he hadn’t shifted.

While he thought like a man, the tiger only wanted to mate.

Gannon reached Devra with his firm, purposeful strides. She looked back, and her alarmed expression grieved him. Their coupling had blended many emotions. It seemed his every action pushed her toward fearing him instead of trusting he'd die before hurting her.

He stood panting, watching, and waiting, as if it would reverse his curse. He darted into the jungle and headed back to the one place his troubled mind had always led him.

He roared at the voodoo priestess's hut. His agitated pace wore a rut in the surface of soil. For years, he'd wanted an explanation of why her damnation on his mother had affected him. He stared at the symbol carved on the doorframe. It matched the birthmark on his thigh. Tattooed in his flesh, the burnt-colored skin had the design of a snake.

Gannon had learned about voodoo from servants, and he knew the marking represented the unified transformation. Where a snake sheds his skin and leaves behind the old, his new self emerges with a keen knowledge, bridging a conscious awareness between the two dimensions of the mind.

He felt threatened by the snake's shifting position on his leg. It had grown with him; the serpent inched closer and closer to his groin from boyhood to adulthood. The wide-open mouth appeared ready to jump from his skin to eat his cock. When he'd taken Alara into his house as his mistress, the snake had shrunk. It made him crazy trying to figure out why.

He walked to the door and sniffed the wood, inhaling the familiar scents.

"I know why you've come," the woman told him from inside her sanctuary. He growled at her laughter. "I know the answers to the questions gnawing in your belly," she taunted.

With an angry strike, he clawed the door. It wasn't the first time nor would it be the last. He had scarred the timber with his repeated strikes. Every time he came to the hut, she goaded him with her chuckles and her mocking remarks.

“Your time is close.” She gave a warning he’d never heard before. “The snake will strike, and you will lose the ability to change into a man.”

Gannon threw himself at the door. He had prowled the woman’s home before and knew he’d not get into the rickety dwelling. For all the effort he put into trying, the icons and talismans around the ramshackle hut prevented him from entering. She had the spirits of her religion working on her side.

“You’ll never find someone to accept you.” Her words stopped him.

It was like a clue that rung in his head. Alara had somehow halted the growth of the snake. If Devra could do the same, things might reverse.

Usually, the tiger took to mindless roaming the jungle and scouting the village. Tonight, with Devra, everything had been upset in the balance of his nature.

Gannon ran for home.

## Chapter Twelve

Devra didn't know the island. The rising sun laced the jungle with light through the canopy of the trees. She shouldn't have found Gannon's house so easily. Her sense of direction was never very good.

She tried the same door she suspected Lillia locked and found it remained bolted, barring her from entering. "Lillia, let me in!"

Devra didn't wait for Gannon's sister. Instead, she raced around the house to the next entrance. It opened to her turn of the brass knob. Out of breath, she gasped for air as she shut the door and leaned on it inside the foyer. Managing to cry at the same time seemed a farfetched impossibility.

"Where's Gannon?" Lillia descended the staircase from the second floor.

Devra's brows wrinkled downward. "Outside," she wheezed.

"You're crying. Why?" Lillia came closer, her hand drifted toward Devra's face.

"Stay away from me."

"Whatever is wrong, dear? What's happened?" The syrupy sweetness oozed.

"You don't fool me with your innocent stare. You locked me out, hoping the tiger would hurt me."

“Did he?” She placed a shawl around Devra’s bare shoulders.

Devra looked down at the marks from her night with Gannon. Bruising from his kisses, scratches from his claws, and red splotches marked her skin. Chaffed by the sand as well, she had multiple signs that made a declaration of carnal activity.

“Gannon believes you’ve been drugging me.”

“You don’t understand, do you? He has needs, and I help him get what he requires.”

“You speak of him as if he was two beings. He’s not.” She felt a flame sweep over her skin with the memory of Gannon satisfying her with his prowess.

Lillia cupped Devra’s chin. “Never mistake his sexual interest as anything other than what the animal in him requires. You’re a convenience.”

Devra held a hand to her chest and worked to pull air into her lungs. Her week had turned from bad to worse. She dumped Jerry and ended up with a mentally disturbed woman and her physically altered brother.

“Come, let us get you washed.” Lillia pulled her from the door. “A nice long sleep afterward will do wonders for your disposition.”

Devra wrenched her arm free and spun to the door. She rushed out of the house without a clue as to where she could go. She couldn’t take the path she used before. It would lead her back to the tiger’s cave. The one in front of her looked used and she thought of the servants. Those villagers working at the house would have to travel some path to return home.

The further she ran away from Gannon’s house, the more the jungle hindered her escape. The lush tropical foliage covered what might have been a trail. She walked for a long time, running when a sound startled her. Each time she tripped and stumbled over tree branches, she slowed her gait. Several times, her turns led her to beaches. While she wanted to follow the shoreline, she feared it would be the easiest way for the tiger to track her.

However, when common sense had a foothold in her thoughts, she remembered he was an animal and he'd trail her scent more than her footprints in the sand.

The sun finally rose. It seemed to take forever, yet she knew it couldn't have been more than an hour. She considered going back, returning to Gannon, except fear pushed her onward.

She emerged from the tree line, and stared at beach she'd seen before. Tromping across her earlier path, she kicked at the indents she'd left in the clean white surface. She felt she had gone a mile, though she hadn't gotten anywhere.

Defeated by her lack of direction, she wandered a different route, determined to end up anywhere but where she stood now. The course she trekked led her to a clearing with an old hut. Relieved by her discovery, she ran to the door and pounded excitedly.

"Who is this beating on my house?" A large island woman answered and took a stance in the opening.

"Can you help me?" Devra leaned against the outside wall, tired from the long night with Gannon and her ill-conceived escape from him. Realistically, where could she go on a small island without him eventually finding her?

"Help you?" The woman's brow rose as if it were a request she never got from anyone.

"Yes. I was shipwrecked, and then this tiger...this man --"

"Come in." The woman yanked her over the threshold and shut the door behind her. Her tone contained no surprise at the mention of a tiger. She pulled Devra into the room and thrust her toward a chair near a small wood table. Her dark, almost black eyes, raked over Devra with distrust. "What do you know of the tiger?"

"He wants me." Looking around she noticed the palm-thatched building offered no safety from an animal.

"No one can satisfy the tiger. You should leave this place."

"How?" Devra asked, even though she didn't want to leave Gannon.



"You must find someone that will take you from this island. You're not safe. Every year, the man becomes more a nocturnal creation of instinct. He'll kill you."

"You seem to know a lot about what will happen to him." She surveyed the small room cluttered with oddities. "How do *you* know?"

The woman didn't answer. She seemed heavily entranced by the words. She mumbled something incoherent, then her hand reached out. Devra flinched out of habit. The woman touched the mark of the tiger.

"You're his. You've offered yourself to the tiger."

"No, not the tiger. I've been with Gannon."

"The tiger does not need to come to you on his own to mate. The man is capable of the deed."

Devra shuddered, recalling how she had agreed to everything Gannon asked of her. He used the term "mating," and she accepted it as a form of commitment.

"He's bred you." The woman leaned forward and placed her hand on Devra's belly. "He's planted his seed and bred you."

"Bred!" Devra shot up from the chair. "I don't think so... Oh, no, I...I..."

"You'll bear the tiger's offspring."

"No," Devra paced a circle and rubbed her hand over her stomach. "No, it can't be. Maybe it was careless of me to have sex without protection --"

"The tiger has bred you, and there's no going back." She pushed the hair from Devra's other shoulder.

Upon her skin was another circular indentation she didn't know she had.

"It's the tiger's mark showing others he's your mate."

"Others?" Devra's eyes widened.

The woman laughed a horrible cackling sound. “There are none, but he’s an animal and doesn’t know that. Instinct dictates his actions. When a cat breeds a female, he holds her with the bite of his teeth in her flesh, so she can’t get away.”

“I didn’t want to get away.” She shoved the woman’s hand from her shoulder.

“Nevertheless, he is an animal and will do what comes natural. Breeding you to bear his offspring is the only thing he wants.”

“The last pill I took *will* work,” Devra whispered to herself as she thought of her birth control method.

The woman gave her an uninterested glance as she took a seat on a low stool. Her wide girth appeared to float since the seat disappeared beneath her. She clearly didn’t understand modern medicine or the ways a woman could prevent herself from getting pregnant.

“Many years ago, I was in love.” The woman looked up. “I had the gleam of it in my eye like you do.”

“I don’t know that I’m in love with Gannon. It’s too soon.”

“Is it?”

“It may be I’m infatuated with him right now,” Devra argued. “I’ve been having a rough month, and his tenderness is refreshing.”

“I don’t think you are so free with your favors as you’d like to believe. Though I sense you were hurt recently, and you need to feel loved.”

“I wasn’t thinking straight. He said his sister drugged me. The first time I thought he was a dream and --” Devra put a hand to her throbbing temple. “You were telling me about someone you once loved.”

“His mother is a seductress with her potions.”

“The man you loved?”

“No. The man you do. Here.” The woman poured water from a small glass carafe. “This will make you feel better.”

Devra drank the liquid. It wasn't water. The bitterness clung to her taste buds. Suddenly, she felt strange and dizzy. "What did you give me?" She rose from the chair.

"It will help you accept the unacceptable."

"And what is that?" She staggered toward the door to leave.

"If you stay on this island, the tiger will kill you."

"He said he wouldn't let the tiger hurt me." Devra didn't understand. She bumped into a cabinet, and bottles danced on the shelves. Weakly, she searched for something to hold onto. The woman came toward her. A breeze of air touched her bare skin. She looked down to see she was naked. The woman had removed the cloth that twisted her body in concealment.

"Go. Let the tiger feed on you."

"Why are you doing this to me?"

The woman pushed her from the step, and laughed. The wicked echo played over and over in Devra's head.

"Because he harbors the same evil as his mother."

The woman's serious tone sent a shiver through Devra.

"What evil?" Devra rubbed a hand over her belly and up to her breasts. *What evil was there in having Gannon's affection?*

The woman's wicked laughter followed Devra as she stumbled away.

"Lillia's son will never have peace for his mother's sinful past."

## Chapter Thirteen

Gannon followed Devra's scent. She'd not go anywhere he couldn't go on the island. He had the delicious taste of her on his tongue, and he wanted more. The sun finally lifted beyond the horizon completely. As a man, he sat hunched near the old woman's hut, still trapped by a spell that wouldn't let him advance toward the rickety dwelling. Devra was inside. He tried not to imagine something bad happening to her. She hadn't done anything for the woman to put a curse on her.

When the door opened, he didn't have to wait long to see Devra. She walked unsteadily out to the yard. Her movements were blind advances and retreats as if she were drunk. He stayed concealed by the palms and waited for her to reach him. Just a little closer and he could hold her.

Then she turned, spoke to the woman, and danced away with unbalanced steps to the left, then to the right, displaying she'd obviously been drugged. He bided his time until she made it to him.

"Devra?" He extended his arms and caught her.

She stared at him with a strange happiness. The morning sun sparkled in her confused eyes. She moved her hands over his outstretched arms, investigating his skin, apparently in hunt for the tiger.

“Where is he?” She confirmed his suspicions.

“Come with me,” he urged.

She smiled and took his hand. The cool fingers glided into his palm without reserve. Her hand curled and gripped his tighter, as if she might lose him. She came willingly, her composure sedated by whatever the priestess had given her.

In her sway, Devra brushed against him, a scorching touch he enjoyed. She swung around in a dazed sort of dance then leaned toward him. With an audacious swiftness, she grasped his semi-erect cock. “I want you,” she whispered as her other hand guided his down her belly.

“Here’s not the place.” He touched the soft mound between her legs.

“I can’t wait.” She rubbed herself and forced his index finger into the slit.

Gannon fought the urge to bed her on the sand and leaves. Aroused by the aphrodisiac she had to have consumed, she made it hard for him to ignore the indecency of taking advantage of the moment.

When Devra shuddered, her moist recesses expelled a heavier dose of the sexual liquor he wanted to taste. It distracted him from her provoking strokes on his shaft and the caresses lifting and pressing against his balls.

“I need you in me *now*,” she begged, unrestrained with her movements against him.

He scooped her up, and she coiled her arms behind his head. Combing her fingers through his hair, she stared with a sedated trance. Her gaze lingered on the scars on his face. What did she think?

“I need you to touch me.” She stroked his cheek and kissed his jaw. “I need you to want me.”

“I do want you.” He walked through the jungle, carrying her to his lair.

“As a possession?”

“When I say you’re mine, it’s because I --”

Gannon ducked under the low hanging entrance to his cave. He didn’t know how to express his feelings for her. They were strangers.

“It’s still dark in here.” Devra held tighter.

A shiver of excitement or a tremor of fear rattled her in his arms.

“I can see. Trust me.” He laid her down on a bed of dry palm leaves.

Her hands slid to his ribs and she lifted her head. Lips, softer than he remembered, skated over his skin. Her tongue teased his nipples. Slow, circling swipes closed in so the small bumps hardened.

“Love me, Gannon.”

“I want to.” He stroked her face and dropped down alongside her. “First, do something for me.”

“What?”

“Sleep.” He thought of the drug she had drunk, and how it would be better to wait until she was clear-minded before they came together again. “I want you to sleep for awhile. Then I’ll love every last inch of you.”

She accepted his deal without negotiation. He lay back, and she nestled into his embrace. Gently, he soothed her agitation with a calming hand, lulling her to sleep off the aphrodisiac. He recognized her mood and knew he hadn’t been the first to get to her from the boat. Someone had drugged Devra with a mind-altering substance that allowed her to shed her inhibitions. She would be a willing mind to most any suggestion.

The priestess, no doubt, had a hand in the devilment.

Devra slept. He didn’t.

The hours crawled by. The darkness of the cave brightened with the steady rise of the sun from morning until noon. A soft glow spread into the entrance. The light bathed Devra, and gave her appearance an angelic radiance.

Gannon lay on his stomach to watch her beautiful face. She slept better without him hanging on, and he wanted her to get as much rest as possible.

When her eyes opened, she smiled. It captured his heart with a renewed hope. Her hand lifted and touched his face. She stroked the scars over his skin. He closed his eyes to absorb her inquisitive touch. The exam went other places, his shoulder, his back and his ass. She rose and kissed the same places.

Her tongue followed the paths she chose, darting to the crease of his bottom, licking his back. She moved with an artist's design, showing passion, displaying adoration.

"You didn't make love to me." She pouted.

"How do you feel?"

"Groggy, hungry, and horny." She bit the cheek of his ass.

Gannon rolled onto his back and grabbed her shoulders. He dragged her on top of him where his cock already stood tree stout. She swung around, turning her back to him. When she came down, she impaled her dripping wet center on his stiff erection.

"Ah, yes," he moaned.

Rocking her hips, she held onto his ankles for support. She pumped her body up and down on his shaft and her breasts bounced against his knees. Faster, harder, she rode him and jerked with contractions. He gripped her waist and steadied her rise and fall action. He rubbed over the smooth cheeks of her bottom, massaging and squeezing her supple flesh.

Her cries and moans increased. Slick hot juices flowed down his shaft as she writhed from an orgasm. Bathing his scrotum, the fluids excited his blood vessels, and his cock swelled more.

Gannon drew up his legs and tugged Devra back on his chest. He reached around her waist and fingered her clit. Slow and spiraling inward, he brought her quickly to another climax. He massaged her heavy breasts and roused her soft nipples into solid beads that he pinched between forefinger and thumb. Rolling, rubbing, and tugging, he played with her beautiful body.

“Gannon,” she cried fretfully. “Gannon, please.”

She squirmed in his hold, her bottom wiggling against his abdomen and on his thighs.

“Take me like a beast,” she rasped.

He eased forward, putting her face down on the palms he had gathered to make a bed in the cave. Without disengaging from her clenching channel, he grabbed her wrists and drew her arms up for leverage. Then he pounded his groin into her backside.

“Yes, like that,” she cried.

Her voice drove him into her. The battering lifted her off the ground. Her pleas to be sated turned to whines of ecstasy; her gasps became grunts of exhaustion.

“Gannon,” she whimpered.

“I’m here. With you,” he murmured while kissing her between her winged shoulder blades.

“I feel you.” Her delighted hum quaked in stuttered gasps.

He didn’t stop until the last drop of his seed filled her chasm. He plunged and pulled back as if it would get his semen deeper. When the liquid oozed out and he felt the urge to shoot more into her quivering body, he backed and pressed the head of his cock to her anus. He met the wrinkled ring of her bottom hole with force.

“Gannon!” Her voice echoed with rapture in the cave.

He held her up by her hips and finished. Her contractions pinched like a vise. Bending down, he licked the inflamed entry. Holding her cheeks open, he drove his tongue into her irritated sphincter.



When he flipped her over in his arms, Devra looked up dreamily at him. He knew his heart was lost to her.

## Chapter Fourteen

Devra rubbed her hand over Gannon's shirt. "How did I get this on?"

"I put it on you while you slept."

"Take it off." She yanked it up. "I want to feel your skin on mine."

He removed the shirt, and the first touch of him sent a river of fire through her. He kneaded her breasts, pinching her nipples between his knuckles on each swirling pass. She tried arching, moving near to the feel and heat of him.

"More," she begged.

The cave reeked of their mating. The strong scent of their sex made her hot, anxious to move on to the next level. She wanted to be a part of him and pushed at him to hurry to her ache.

Gannon laid her back. Suckling her skin, nudging her breasts with his nose, he kissed around them. Over, under, and across, his lips teased her. Puffs of hot air from his nostrils made her squirm away, restless for his mouth to move lower. She arched, inhaling sharply in response to his mouth covering her breast, suctioning it to his lips.

"Hurry," she pleaded.

It took him forever to seal his mouth over the heat between her legs. She locked his head in her thighs and rose to his jabs. His tongue took periodic licks deep into the neediest part of her. She couldn't get enough.

Hours rolled by. Her mind grew weary, but she craved him in every position she could image. From the back, he pulled her with his powerful grip to meet his thrusts. Bent over her, his hot breath blasted against the nape of her neck. The sharpness of his bite pressed into her shoulder.

Gannon pleased her with one glorious orgasm upon another. His voice rose with a guttural sound he strained to let loose. Animalistic, yet human, his lunges became erratic and forceful.

He roared with a masculine pleasure reverberating around her head, and then he collapsed on her. His weight pressed her to the sand and he panted heavily.

"You need rest." He wiped the hair sticking to her perspiring face, easing up from totally crushing her to the ground.

She looked up while held in his arms. A wanton with cravings yet to be satisfied, she pulled his hand against her wet recess and rubbed her clit with his finger.

"You're exhausted," he told her again. "I need to let you rest."

The light of another day began to diminish in favor of night. For a time, she had seen his face. Now, shadows crept into the cave. She pulled his finger from her and put it to her lips, licking at the flavor of her sex on his skin.

"It's time to take you to the house, to protect you from the tiger. Besides, you haven't eaten all day."

"I'm not hungry."

"You still have to eat."

She accepted what he told her, and soon she rode in his arms. She liked the texture of his flesh on her fingertips. The smooth hair on his arms made her think of the tiger. She closed her tired eyes and let her mind wander.

She needed to leave and couldn't remember why. She had to fear the tiger, and yet, she felt closer to the beast than she had to anyone in her entire life. If she could think with reasoning, she'd know the answers to her muddled mind's questions.

Devra opened her eyes to the refreshing water splashed over her breasts. She inventoried objects as if she made a shopping list. Towels, colorful bottles, soap, and a tub filled with bubbles. She hummed to the caressing fingers washing her shoulders, soothing her sore nipples. It seemed unimportant how she got in the tub when the last she recalled was the delight of Gannon carrying her.

She turned her head and stared at Lillia. The woman's brown curls were pulled up on top her head. Her sun-browned skin glistened with droplets of water down her arms. She rubbed Devra's breasts with a brisk and stimulating swirl of her hand.

"It feels good, does it not?" Lillia fondled her swollen nipple.

Devra hummed in agreement. She liked her breasts touched. Gannon had made them tender with his sweet abuse.

"You've been with him recently," Lillia whispered close to her ear.

Devra's mind grasped bits and pieces of another conversation.

"You're a convenience," Lillia said. "A playmate."

Devra sipped at the coconut milk from the glass held to her lips. Her stomach grumbled with hunger. "Gannon said I should eat."

"Drink first."

The glass tipped too far and the liquid slid from the corners of Devra's lips. It trickled down her jaw, and she shuddered as the cool drops splashed on her heated breasts. She closed her eyes, squealing in surprise.

“My son’s had you many times.” Lillia wiped the cloth over Devra’s sensitive breasts again.

Devra shrunk from the contact. “Your son?” She opened her eyes and watched Lillia’s dark head lower over her chest. The first soothing touch of lips felt good and the alleviating licks of Lillia’s wet tongue distracted her.

“You taste delicious.” Lillia moaned and took another hold of Devra’s breast, not only with her mouth, but also her hand.

“Please don’t do that.” Devra pushed at Lillia. Drained of energy, her efforts were useless.

“Drink some more.” Lillia placed the glass to her lips again.

Devra drank in gulps. It seemed the more she swallowed, the thirstier she was. She closed her eyes and leaned her head back as the euphoric cloud in her brain became too weighty. She welcomed the loving dream.

*Fingers skittered over her in different directions and felt like a dozen people. Caresses warmed and lifted her. The familiar things kept her looking away from whoever had her hand. The bed sank wondrously beneath her bottom. She stretched out and stared at the sheer curtains surrounding her. Candles flickered, and the soft scents of the fragrant island air made the room a paradise.*

*Then the sting of a thousand hands slapped her skin until it burned with heat. The inferno blazed over her pores followed by cooling kisses filling the dimples in her quivering flesh.*

*“You’ll not want him after I show you what it would be like for us.”*

*“Lillia?” Devra didn’t understand.*

*Hands moved over her again. Petting and rubbing her with an exciting stimulation. She opened her legs to the arousing taunts of something on the inside of her thighs. A sudden*

*thrust into her pussy made her shudder. She accepted the insertion as it probed her delicate interior. She bucked at the swift orgasm.*

*Someone spread over her. The weight pushed her further into the soft mattress. She reached to grab whoever was near and hugged the body pressed to hers.*

*"I understand your body better than you understand yourself."*

Devra opened her eyes. Lillia stared at her. The depths of her pupils were void of recognition. She ground her hips against Devra's.

"What are you doing?" Devra involuntarily rocked her hips, following the rhythm of Lillia.

"You're a pretty woman." Lillia's explanation didn't answer the question.

"But what are you --"

Lillia's mouth silenced her.

Sucking and pulling at her lips, Lillia kissed her thoroughly. Devra felt faint from the attack yet, she lay engrossed by the woman's determination.

Lillia lifted her head, and Devra couldn't look at her. Turning her head, she pulled Gannon into her thoughts. As Lillia kissed and nibbled along her collarbone and sucked her breasts, Devra imagined Gannon's mouth pleasuring her. She moaned as her insides clenched. Stimulated by the constant brush of Lillia's pubic hair against her shaved pussy, Devra shuddered with an orgasm. She grabbed the woman's bare bottom and pulled her pussy tighter, forcing the hair to tickle her clit.

Lillia's gasps and cries escalated. Another orgasm exploded inside Devra, and she grasped Lillia's body tighter. Their breasts shuffled together; their hearts pounded in unison.

"Gannon," Devra murmured.

Time stood still or moved without Devra fully alert until, without warning, someone roughly flipped her over. She landed on the floor, blacking out just long enough for everything to change.

Had she fallen asleep? Where had Gannon gone?

The room was as she saw in her dream, except it wasn't dark and there were no candles. She scanned all the familiar furniture. Gannon's room. She turned her head when a door shut, but she didn't see anyone in the room with her. Crawling on hands and knees, she climbed back on the bed. She inhaled the musky scent of Gannon in the covers and smoothed a hand over the blanket. Burying her face into the pillow, she deeply breathed in his masculine scent as if it were a tonic.

The aching soreness of her muscles and the tenderness of her skin came with a slow realization that she'd had sex with Gannon and with Lillia. Or had she invented one event and not the other?

The door creaked as it opened and she grabbed the sheet to cover her nakedness.

"Good, you're awake." Gannon entered and walked toward her on the bed.

"Yesterday, last night...I don't know what's a dream, a nightmare, or real anymore."

He gave her a concerned frown as if questioning her sanity was ridiculous.

She had dreamed of wanting the tiger. Still, she abhorred the way she desperately begged as if it was real. Gannon and his shape-shifting didn't give her concern like the woman in the hut had, or the idea Lillia had no trouble in fondling her into accepting a bisexual experience.

## Chapter Fifteen

Gannon sat on the side of the bed. He gripped Devra's shaking shoulders and laid her back on the pillow. He pulled the cover up over the exquisite ripeness of her full breasts and fought all the urges to jump on her like an animal.

"How did I get here?" She didn't let go of his arms.

"I carried you here. Don't you remember?"

"Kind of." She looked over at the glass on the bedside table. "The woman drugged me, and then your mother did the same, just like you said she did before."

"My mother died a long time ago."

"No, Lillia is your mother."

"Devra, my mother died before I knew her. Lillia is my sister."

She shook her head, and tears sprung from her baffled gaze. "When I talked to that island woman yesterday --"

"Three days ago." He smoothed over the worry lines in her face. "For three days, you've been asleep."

"That's not possible."



He turned his head to the knock at the door. "I'll be right back." He cupped Devra's face in both his hands and kissed her. When her tongue slipped into his mouth and hunted for his, he accommodated her passion.

"I want you, Gannon. Don't let me forget that."

He gave a quick and annoyed glance at the door when the knock came louder.

"The door's not locked. Lillia isn't opposed to just walking in here if I don't open it." He told Devra.

"Maybe you could lock it then?" She tugged at his trousers until the button popped off and bounced on the floor.

"No lock on it." He breathed heavier as her fingers claimed his cock.

All her movements were rough, heated by an animalistic hunger he enjoyed. She raked her nails down his ass to discard the trousers altogether. He bit her lip and held it while she wiggled against him.

The knock came disturbingly loud.

"Go away," he growled at his sister's persistent interruption.

Gannon hoisted the naked, feminine flesh up to the sweltering heat of his escalating urges. Devra's long legs folded around his hips. Her calves nested, and her heels dug into his ass. His cock slid up like a rutting pole against her belly. Squished between them, it throbbed and jerked as if it were deep in her core.

"Love me." He kissed the long stretch of her neck.

From under her chin, over every gasping swallow, he licked into the hollow. There he drank the salty sweetness springing from her pores. He bruised her flesh with hard kisses. The kind of love bites marking her as his. She hummed to the zealous fervor of his aggressive hold.

Gannon leaned over the bed and drew her arms off his shoulders. With their fingers laced, he held her hands pinned to the mattress. Then taking gentle nips to her breasts, he worked her legs loose. Not free, just loose enough so his cock could drop into place.

“Now,” she whined. “Put it in me now.”

He poked at the dripping entrance.

“Please, Gannon, don’t wait.”

He let the head of his cock prod her clit. It made her squirm and forced her to beg again.

“Please, I need you in me. I want to feel your heartbeat from the veins of your shaft throbbing against the pulse in my cunt.”

“In good time.”

What she wanted, she would get.

First, he’d watch her writhe with orgasm. Each time she lifted her hips, he drew back so he didn’t enter her. She flung her head from side to side, agitated, anxious, and desperate. His balls tightened with unbearable pressure.

“Oh, God.” Her whine came to a stuttering stop.

He pushed his cock into the gapping entry. It only took a second for his thrusting to spur her into orgasm. She stiffened from the vigorous climax.

Devra’s grunts punctuated his every burning thrust. She bucked against him, and took the length as if she had a limitless depth. He knew differently when she squeaked from his inflexible hits breaking through her cervix, crashing to her womb.

“Your eyes ...” she panted. “Your eyes are...changing.”

He looked to the window and saw the fading daylight. The tiger in him began to emerge. He pounded into her faster. Necessity reigned.

He let go of her fingers so he didn't break them. From her palm to his, the beating of their hearts fell in sync. The hot liquid curled its way through his shaft, coursing along the vein toward the exit. He erupted into her, and his cry blending with hers made a beautiful sound of rapture.

Devra's legs dropped from their wrap behind his thighs. She lay with them dangling over the edge of the bed. He pulled his cock free and rubbed over her sensitized clit so she jerked in retreat. Her fingers gripped his wrist, and she held him to the spot.

Gannon knelt on the floor and put his face on her belly. "I have to go." He inhaled deeply, drawing upon the arousal she created in his soul.

The sexual fragrance from inside the hot pleats of her cunt filled his lungs. He hoped it would tame the beast, should she encounter him as the tiger.

## Chapter Sixteen

Devra held Gannon's arm. "Don't go."

"I must."

"But if you stay, maybe you'll shift only part way." She got up from the bed, clutching the sheet to her nakedness.

"I can't risk finding out." He opened the door, and in seconds, it closed between them.

She opened a dresser drawer and lifted a shirt. Pressing it to her nose, the unmistakable scent of Gannon filled her with renewed desires. She shook out the garment and dipped her arm in a sleeve to put it on. Walking to the window, she glanced out and saw Gannon. His unhurried strides took him across the lawn where he disappeared into the shadows.

In a patch of moon-bathed grass, the tiger appeared. He looked up at the window as if he knew she'd be there. Devra remained captivated by him until he turned and vanished into the darkness of the jungle.

At the tap on the door, Devra jumped. Lillia didn't wait for an invitation to come in, and she gave Devra a strange look. In her hands, she carried a tray.

"I've brought you something to eat and drink." Lillia sat the tray on the table and picked up the glass.

“Why? So you can drug me?”

“It’s merely a sedative.” Lillia offered the glass. “The tiger has tasted you. He’ll crave more. Drink this, and you won’t find his mating unpleasant.”

Devra swallowed past the dryness in her throat. She had to believe whatever magic was at play, Gannon would not hurt her. That he controlled the tiger, whether he thought so or not.

“I know who you are.” Devra stayed at the window, glancing from Lillia to the nighttime lawn. “I don’t understand why you haven’t tell Gannon you’re his mother.”

“It makes things simpler.” Lillia didn’t deny the fact.

“For who?”

“Gannon sees me as his friend.” She sat the glass down. “If he knew I was his mother, he’d not confide in me and I’d lose the closeness this secret has brought us.”

“I think there’s something else.” Devra drew back her shoulders. “If Gannon knew who you were, you’d have to explain to him why he’s like he is and you fear he’d hate you.”

“Yes, there is that.” She smiled. “But I feel his ignorance of the facts a better position for him.”

“Again, another excuse for you not to tell him you’re the one at fault. You seduced the voodoo priestess’s husband. She put a curse on the child born from your adulteress affair.”

Lillia laughed. “When I was fifteen, her husband, Paulo, raped me. My parents, in their shame, put me out of the house. Paulo found this to his benefit. He kept me in a hut in the village. For months, I was his slave because I needed a roof over my head and food in my belly.”

“Didn’t you ever try to go home?”

Lillia slid her hand along a dresser top. “My parents died from a fever outbreak before Gannon was born. That’s when I came back here.”

“And Paulo?”

“He came around for awhile until I was round with his child. Then he found another girl much younger than I. It was my good fortune and his mistake. Her brother killed him.”

Lillia stepped closer. Devra turned to look out the window again.

“Gannon is a beast.” Lillia breath tickled her neck. “He stalks women, seeking a mate, then he kills them in frustration when they won’t accept him as the tiger.”

“I don’t believe Gannon has ever hurt anyone. I don’t care what you or that other woman say.” Devra hugged the shirt to her body. “Gannon isn’t a beast. I’ve seen him in his transition. He’s still human. I’ve been near him when he’s the tiger. He can think and reason, and he wouldn’t harm anyone.”

“He doesn’t want to.” Lillia’s hands crawled around Devra’s waist. “It’s just his nature.”

Devra twisted away and ran from Lillia’s cackling laughter. She didn’t have any direction in mind, just escape. When she saw the narrow stairs leading up, she took them and discovered they led to a small glass room on top of the house. She opened the door and stepped onto the planks forming a sailor’s widow’s walk.

The breeze off the sea brought the fragrance of the island up to her nose. She found an immediate tranquility from the sweetly scented night. The fresh air cleared her cloudy thoughts. She tried to think of how she would tell Gannon about Lillia. He hadn’t believed her when she told him before.

The breaking glass of the small cupola’s windows turned her swiftly, and she faced the tiger. He appeared bigger than she remembered. Shivers of fright churned her insides. His large paws took determined steps and behind him, Lillia stood watching.

Devra tried to step back, but the railing stopped her. She didn’t need to look to know the drop to the ground would kill her.

The tiger rolled his head in a slow circular motion while letting out a thunderous roar. With her hands up as if she could stop him, her trembling fingers hypnotized her. The uneasy memory of Lillia’s words came back to her: *You won’t find him unpleasant.*

She couldn't see much beneath the tiger's massive body. The gold and black fur hid the folds of skin hanging loose on his muscle-laden frame until he turned to look back at Lillia. The new angle of his stance allowed Devra to see why Lillia gasped. She saw the tiger's erection -- all pink and wet hanging from the sheath, and nearly touching the deck.

The tiger rotated toward Devra once again, prepared to pounce, ready to mount, and came well equipped to mate her.

"Gannon, don't." Devra spoke barely above a whisper.

Lillia watched with a quiet and wide-eyed evil excitement. Her mouth twisted up on one side with a satisfied sneer, and her tongue licked over her lips with some morbid fascination. Was she excited to see her brother -- no, her son -- in the form of the tiger. How many women had the tiger mated before? Did he kill them?

The widow's walk had limited space. It formed a narrow porch circling the perimeter of the glass room. Devra shuffled her feet, one after the other and maneuvered along the railing. It would be silly to think she could run around the cupola to keep away from the tiger, but she saw no other choice.

"Give up," Lillia told her. "Get on your hands and knees, and present yourself to him. It'll be less painful if you accept his mount."

Devra shook her head and kept moving. Her dreams may have had the inflection of a tiger, but she knew in her heart it wasn't an animal she wanted. Gannon's beastly form represented the nuance of wild, unbridled lust. His gentleness as a tiger in her sleep and in her waking moments gave her something she didn't have with Jerry. Gannon gave her unconditional love.

"Take her," Lillia ordered.

The tiger stalked Devra on command. With each advancing move, one shoulder dropped while the other rose. His head hung menacingly low instead of passive. The pads of his large toes made no sound. The thick nails, however, tapped in rhythm to his steps.

“Gannon, please,” Devra pleaded.

In a misstep sideways, she stumbled over her feet, and dropped painfully to her hands and knees. She scrambled to get up, and the shirt snagged on a nail. Struggling with a new urgency to get loose, she stopped when the tiger reached her. Her back against the railing, Devra sat and stared. The tiger’s face came within inches of hers. His panting breath was hot and sticky. His gaze traveled to where two paws stood between her spread legs. He couldn’t see beneath the shirt, but he’d smell her. If she let him sniff, would he back off if he caught the scent of his own fluids?

The buttons came undone easily under her trembling fingers. The shirt gapped open with access to her intimate region. The tiger breathed deeper.

Since she couldn’t find where the fabric remained caught on a nail, she slipped her arms from the sleeves.

“Take her!” Lillia shouted.

The distraction turned the tiger’s head. It gave Devra the chance to get to her feet. She ran to the other end of the widow’s walk and crashed into the railing. The wood baluster broke away from the post, and she went over the side. A pain shot through her shoulder as it wrenched in the wrong direction.

The tiger bounded toward her and his jaw opened, exposing his long, sharp teeth. Clamping down on her arm, the incisors pierced her flesh. Her pulse beat to a point in her arm that spurted blood on both of them and the wood decking. She just stared at his golden eyes and tried not to cry out when he pulled on her. Not wanting to fall, she grabbed the fur around his neck as he dragged her up far enough that she could take another grip.

“Gannon,” she cried out. “Gannon, help me.”

Her fingers clenched a fistful of fur. His paws hit her sides, and hands suddenly hauled her back onto the floor. The man-tiger part of Gannon elevated her from the danger.

“I got you.”



She wrapped her arm around his neck. The bite mark in her flesh continued oozing blood. "You changed for me," She sobbed.

"You have something to do with the transformation, Devra, something in your emotions. I feel it deep inside, and it draws me out of the tiger."

She hugged him for the minute he let her.

"Let's get you in the house and clean that wound." He walked her around to the glass door where Lillia stood.

"Gannon, it can't be." Lillia's surprise clearly indicated she'd never seen Gannon in his transitional form.

"It is. Now, help me get her arm cleaned and bandaged."

## Chapter Seventeen

Gannon took Devra to his room and sat her on the bed. After he wrapped a sheet around her torso, he stepped back, nervous and hesitant to say anything.

“This room is much different than other parts of the house,” she said surveying the area.

Her comment gave no indication how she felt seeing him as a beast in the low lamplight of the room.

“This is where I change into the tiger.” He wanted her to forget the beast, yet he stood as a glaring reminder, covered with the animal’s hide.

“You’re practical.” She smiled, holding the sheet together in the middle of her breasts. “Why damage beautiful furniture when you can have simple, replaceable items.”

Gannon dropped to the floor next to bed. He put a hand on her bare knee, and she flinched. He wasn’t as prepared as he thought he’d be, should she reject him. Too many of his emotions were bound to her reactions. He rocked back on his heels to rise and distance himself from her, but she reached out. Her hand came toward him, and her fingers stretched.

“Don’t go.” She grasped his fur-covered fingers when he chanced touching her. “I’m not afraid of you, just jumpy after the incident on the widow’s walk.”

"It's my fault you're hurt."

"You saved me." She stroked his hand. "Thank you."

"The accident was because of me -- the tiger."

"I shouldn't have gone up there."

"Why did you?"

She shrugged, giving no explanation.

"I had to come when I saw you." He held her hands cupped in his. "A long time ago, a woman fell from there and died."

"Then I'm glad you rescued me."

The weight of his worries eased with the brightness in her eyes. She leaned toward him. Her warm mouth pressed to his, and he placed his hand at the back of her head. Their tongues circled and licked. His cock grew hard, and his muscles tensed with desire. Every moment with her drove him insane. The beast wanted to mount her. Luckily, the half-stage of animal and man gave him -- the man -- greater control.

Lillia came in the room, and sat the basin of water on the floor near him. He drew back from his obsessed kissing of Devra. But when her lips remained in that puckered position, he planted his mouth over hers again. He gave her a gentle reminder of how she made him feel. Lillia's stance behind him shouldn't have mattered. However, her heavy breathing stirred the small hairs on his body. She put her hand on his back and stroked him as she might a pet. Her closeness upset him, and he didn't know why. Devra's grip on his hand tightened. He couldn't tell if Lillia's presence troubled her also, or if something else had transpired between the women.

Gannon took the cloth Lillia held and wet it. Carefully, he washed the blood from Devra's skin. She cringed several times when he touched the wound. Once he finished, he pushed the bowl aside.

Crouched close to her, the scent of her sex intoxicated him like wine.

“Leave,” he ordered Lillia while bandaging Devra’s arm.

The door shut.

“Gannon.” Devra put her hand on his cheek, her thumb swept back and forth in a mindless motion. “I’m all right.”

As he rose, he bent toward her. Devra’s arms slid around his head, and his circled her back. He lowered her onto the mattress. Her legs parted beneath the sheet. He hadn’t noticed how it fell away from her breasts until her hard nipples burrowed in the hair on his chest.

He rocked forward, and his erection pushed into her wet flesh. She opened her legs farther, and she fit to him perfectly.

Gannon covered Devra’s mouth with his and worked to sweep the incident on the widow’s walk from her thoughts. He pushed his sleek, feline tipped fingers up to her hands, stretching her arms above her head. His body tingled with a scorching heat from the veracity of her kiss. He released her hands and wove his claw-like appendages into her hair, and dragged his lips over her smooth face.

“All night,” he groaned. “I want you all night, Devra, every night.”

She sighed, twisting under the length of him.

They moved around the bed, rolling, turning, and enjoying the tender moments. The sheets fell to the floor with the pillows. Unsheathing from her, he put her on her belly and kissed over her silky shoulders, down her back, and to her supple ass.

Déjà vu.

He grasped her ivory cheeks and spread the gap. Sticking out his tongue, he gave a lick to the twitching ring of her bottom.

“Yes,” she moaned.

He pushed in deeper, enjoying the clenching spasms.

“Oh, God, yes.” She thrust back and up, her hips lifting from the mattress.

He rose and helped her to her knees. With her legs slightly parted and the pink slit of her cunt exposed, his nostrils filled with the sweet scent of her sex. Aching to be inside her, he fit his cock against the succulent wet flesh.

“Take me, now.” She wiggled her bottom with impatience. “Now, Gannon.”

He remembered the beach, the way he couldn’t resist her. She moaned with a pleasing sound of delight. Her body trembled with urgency to be satisfied -- then and now -- while his hands held her from taking him into her heated core.

“I can’t.” He jumped back off the bed, afraid of the energy whipping through his veins.

Devra sat up on her heels, her back to him. With her legs bent to the side, she sat in a position he could study her as if he were an artist. Her hair draped her shoulder and her glistening back faced him.

“You can’t let fear rule you.” She didn’t look his way. “I trust you, Gannon. Please, trust me.”

“It’s not that.” He moved forward and put his hands on her shoulders. “I don’t trust the tiger.”

She scooted forward and lay back, hanging her head off the mattress. Her fingers were warm and aggressive on his erection. She encouraged him closer, and he watched her mouth form an O. Her lips slipped over his cockhead. He lost the battle in himself to oppose her.

With her fingers clamped on his shaft, he fucked her mouth. Each plunge stretched her cheek. She sucked hard, and his release came swiftly as he forced himself into the narrow channel of her deep throat.

He bent over her and kissed his way from her flat belly to her open legs. Putting his head between her thighs, he took her nether lips into his mouth and sucked while he continued to thrust his erection against her tongue. When they climaxed, it couldn’t have been more beautiful.

Gannon pulled from her dewy lips and went to his knees. Holding Devra's head, he twisted her face into a position to kiss her hard on the mouth. Without stopping, he dragged her up on the mattress and lay with her. His heart beat fast, and he panted, out of breath. She clung to him as they kissed until exhaustion forced sleep upon them.

## Chapter Eighteen

By morning, Devra lay nestled in the crook of Gannon's arm. Somewhere between falling asleep and waking, dawn came and so had Gannon's human body.

"Are you asleep?" she asked.

"No." He kissed her forehead.

"I wish I was. Then I could hang onto the magical night a little longer."

"With the beast?"

She tilted her head back and brushed her lips along the edge of his jaw. "With you."

He shifted to his side, sweeping a hand around her face. "And today wouldn't be good enough?"

She didn't have to answer. He leaned in, pressing her into the mattress, and kissed her deeply. As he titillated her with sweet murmuring pants across her face, she squeezed his broad shoulders. Devra loved the feel of his muscles moving beneath her fingertips, and she reacquainted herself with the satiny texture of his masculine flesh.

Gannon moved downward, tantalizing her breasts with his hot breath. His mouth fit over her spiked nipple, and she arched to the glorious sensation. His fingers crept down her belly, tickling, and teasing her senses. Skimming her hip, gliding along her inner thigh, she

writhed from the delights of his touch. Plunging a finger into her, he drew back and forth, arousing all her senses. The intoxication of lust obliterated her thoughts.

“Gannon.” She had no energy to move away from the friction of his hand stimulating an intense heat.

She clung to him and drew in a breath, inhaling his scent. The wild maleness drove her crazy with desire. She arched her body, exposing her neck for his kisses, and pushed her breasts against his chest.

“You’re wet and ready for me, aren’t you?”

Devra made a small sound of agreement, unable to do more as his persistent fingers kept her climax hovering near liberation. When she felt she’d die without launching into a full orgasm, the sensation retreated along with his fingers.

He pushed her legs farther apart with his knee. Forcing his cock into her in one thrust, he brought the tingling twitch back. Fastened beneath his hard torso, she rubbed his back, following the contours of his shoulder blades. She didn’t get to hold him long or absorb more of his physique nested to hers because he rose from her.

Gannon propped himself up on his hands and flexed his hips. His stiff erection moved like a piston, pounding into her without mercy. The action lifted and pushed her against the mattress so she held his hips and then his ass. The cheeks tightened and became rock hard, making her frantic to find another place to hold.

He drove deep into her, creating a fire that licked her insides.

She dug her fingertips into his shoulders when he came down to her level again. “Please, Gannon,” she cried, as tense muscles twitched violently.

His mouth landed on hers, and she sucked wildly at his lips. She pushed her tongue inside and whipped over the flavor of his tongue, the silky coarseness reminded her of his feline attributes.



Unyielding, he kissed her with the same, fierce exclamation of delight. Pulling out, he rolled her over with a deft skill, putting her on her belly. Trembling from head to toe, she shivered against his kisses down her back. He pried open the cheeks of her ass and flicked his tongue, tickling the ring of her anus. She clenched automatically, barring him from entry, but he continued to lick along the split.

When Gannon swung his leg over the back of her thighs and straddled her legs, she reached out to grip the sheeting. She couldn't describe the thousands of sensations that rippled through her in anticipation. He grasped her wrists and twisted her palms up. Clasp ing her hands in his, he pushed the knob of his cock into position. She held her breath, awaiting the pleasure he always gave her.

He pressed, and the head popped through her tight ring. She breathed heavier as pressure swelled until she felt he'd come out of her belly. His balls rested against her wet pussy. He lay there for several seconds, not moving. The weight of him comforted her while her insides relaxed to better accommodate his size. His body shuddered, and a low purr brushed her ear. She tried to adjust herself to his heaviness but a growl -- or a sound like it -- warned her not to move.

"Relax," he whispered, kissing her shoulder.

She did, and as her insides expanded, he slowly stroked in and out. Nothing had ever compared with the gentleness he showed her. He took his time, churning in her with a sensual rhythm until she tried raising her bottom to meet his thrusts.

"Yes," she moaned as the tip of his cock hit a spot that twitched in response.

He pumped faster and harder until the only sounds she made were animalistic grunts. The surge of Gannon's cum filling the tight space sent Devra's body into a fit of extreme pleasure. Her limbs locked and released with an intense jerk. She wanted the experience to last forever.

Gannon dropped to his side and pulled her to him. "I don't want you to ever leave."

Devra nodded, crying with a happiness she hadn't known in a long time.

In the natural course of moving, Gannon's erection shrank and slipped out of her. They remained lying on the bed in silence for a long time. His fingers trailed from her belly to her throat and continued sweeping up and down. The sublime moment left her room to think about what it would be like to stay with him. Was his request genuine? Did he want her there because he cared for her, or was it a trick of the beast?

Devra put her hand over his on her breast and laced her fingers with his. "Why don't you want to believe Lillia is your mother?"

"She's just not."

"How can you be sure?" She twisted in his embrace to face him.

"I remember her since I was little, telling me how our parents died from a fever."

"She told me those were *her* parents, Gannon. Hers, who died while she was pregnant with *you*." She brushed her fingers over his cheek.

"She'd have no reason to lie." His brow wrinkled as his adamant disbelief wavered.

Devra felt empathy for what he must be feeling. Confusion was not an easy emotion to deal with on a regular basis. She suffered as well, but had finally accepted that not all things were explainable.

"Lillia said she was raped by that woman's husband." Devra hoped to give him as much information as possible.

"The voodoo priestess that cursed my mother?" He clung to the idea Lillia was his sister, and Devra couldn't let Gannon blind himself to the truth.

"Cursed Lillia." She watched him for any indication he'd accept what she said. "It explains things, doesn't it?"

He got up from the bed and ambled toward the window. For the first time, she saw Gannon at a distance in brighter surroundings while he was undressed. She hadn't taken much notice of his legs before. Maybe the drugs she'd ingested or the dim lighting had

prevented her from looking. She had no concrete reason to explain her lack of observance. Nevertheless, today she had a clear mind and a need to know everything about him.

The tattoo wasn't extremely noticeable beneath the hair on his thigh. However, when she thought she saw the black strip move, she no longer considered it a birthmark.

"What is that?" She pointed at his leg as the shadowy marking slowly glided from one side to the other and around to the back of his thigh.

"What?" His gaze dropped to where she indicated.

His silent watch never hinted of any form of surprise or shock. If she had to guess, his expression displayed a resigned anger. His frown proved he didn't like what he saw. The flat strip of black took on a three-dimensional appearance and slithered away from Gannon's pubic region. She thought snake, but the absurdity of the idea wouldn't allow her to believe it was anything other than her imagination.

"Gannon?" She waited for a reasonable explanation.

"It's part of the curse." He stalked out of the room without looking back.

Devra didn't know what to think other than try not to think at all. The long night and active morning had tired her out. She wanted to close her eyes and rest, wait for Gannon's return as if he'd make all her fears go away. The snake added to her anxiety.

The last thing in her head before she fell asleep was how Lillia frightened her more than the tiger.

Lillia drugging her for the tiger or herself wasn't clear. She had seduced her, and yet, Lillia wouldn't let her in the house when she was in danger from the tiger. Devra trusted Gannon as a tiger more because he didn't hide what or who he was. Lillia had secrets. Dark and sinister mysteries surrounded the woman, and her actions made Devra wary.

## Chapter Nineteen

Gannon leaned against the palm tree and watched Devra. When he returned to the room, he found her sitting by the window, wearing one of his shirts. She wanted to go for a walk, but he hadn't thought they would go as far as they had. Nor had he imagined she'd strip off her only clothing and use it to carry the treasures she found on the beach.

"We should go back." The sun sat lower and his body readied for her.

"Soon," she answered, continuing to gather seashells from the sand.

They had bonded in the brief time they'd known each other, but he shouldn't have allowed the tiger's feelings to dominate his actions. Devra seemed to trust him too much.

In her naked splendor, she made his gaze stray from her beautiful face. He examined every contour of her beautiful shape. Like a beast on the scent of a female, he hardened from sheer desire. The primitive way she walked about uninhibited by her nudity made him appreciate her more.

She held up each shell and examined it before tucking it in the crook of her elbow. The gentle waves of the ocean lapped at her feet as she hurried toward him. Her presence felt natural and calming.

As she strolled to where she had spread her shirt on the sand to keep her treasures, she glanced up at him. "You have a very serious expression on your face. Is something wrong?"

"I should get someone from the village to take you in for the night."

"You don't want me here?" Her eyes flared wide with worry.

"I want you too much. I can't know what will happen during the night and I could hurt you again."

"You haven't ever intentionally hurt me."

"I know, but it's not good to tempt me."

Her hand came up to his face and stroked a loving caress over his scars. Her nipples danced against his ribs, and her hips moved forward as he reached down, and drew her in closer by grabbing her bottom.

"I have a special command over the tiger, Gannon. You'll not hurt me."

"I don't know what it is about you, Devra. Your scent, your fear, it seems to be many things that keep me under control. Nonetheless, I can't trust there won't be a time when nothing works." He smoothed his hand over her firm cheeks, kneading gently and tugging her against his groin.

"You won't hurt me."

Gannon lifted a hand and cupped the side of her face. He pulled her open mouth to his and their lips met briefly. Several times her breath mingled with his as they kissed and released. Devra nestled herself into the spaces she fit when he nudged his leg between hers. She squirmed against him and their kissing deepened. Their tongues twisted and rolled aggressively with the passion they easily succumbed to when together.

Her hands slid over his trousers, kneading the cheeks of his ass through the garment. Each glide of her body up and down his displayed her desires. He rubbed his face alongside hers, sniffing the sweet scent of her hair. Embedding his senses with memories of how she tasted, smelled, and felt as he worked at removing his clothing, Gannon hurried to help.

Soon the pants slipped down his legs, and his cock lay wedged between their compressing bodies.

“I want in you.” He shifted and curved his fingers between her thighs.

“Yes.” She rushed to guide him.

He dipped into the moist recess and drew them out slowly, raking upward across the bud of her clit. While her stance remained distanced for his playful stimulation of her hot center, Devra’s upper body rested upon his.

“Oh, yes,” she moaned, gyrating her hips to his quickening thrusts.

He jammed two fingers as deep and fast as he could into her. The flutter of her gasps turned her exclamations into an aria of impatient sounds. He took her to the peak of climaxing and then withdrew.

“Don’t stop,” she pleaded.

He placed his palm over her bottom and rubbed the silky skin. “I want in you with something else.” He slapped her ass and hoisted her up.

Devra wrapped her legs around his waist. He repositioned, but his erection remained squished between their bellies.

“Now what?” She laughed, rolling her hips against him.

Her wet cunt lips kissed his balls in the motion. He moved, forgetting about the trousers manacled his ankles. Falling back, he landed with Devra on top. She went forward and held herself up on her hands while straddling his midsection. Her breasts dangled over his eyes. He opened his mouth to suck on one, and she rose on her knees, taking away his intended target.

Spreading his hands over her thighs, he rubbed the soft textured skin as she scooted forward. She sat back and the cheeks of her bottom kissed his chest with a sensuous brush against his nipples. He rubbed the sides of her thighs and urged her closer. In a methodical fashion, he seduced her senses by avoiding the one place she wanted him to touch. Her pussy

lips hung parted. Lifting his head, he stared at the pink slit beckoning him to lick. Instead, he nipped her belly and made loud slurping sounds against the flesh, alternately kissing the quivering skin along her ribs while kneading her breasts.

Devra giggled. It did his heart good to hear her happiness. She squirmed and pressed her body in a direction that rubbed her wet center upon his chin. He gave into the moment and bobbed his head to stimulate her clit.

“Don’t stop,” she pleaded. Her body settled and rested on his chest.

“Come up here.” He elevated her, and she lifted a leg, shifting until he had her positioned over his face.

Devra sighed in contentment as she lowered onto his mouth. She looked down at him. Her eyelids drooped with the kind of sultry lust a woman on the verge of an orgasm had.

With his tongue curled lengthwise, he darted it in and out of her delicious cunt. Making several swirls to tease the muscle inside, he rocked her forward. The new position pushed her clit against his nose, and he rubbed the firm knot of flesh.

Her natural response was to move from the sizzling sensation, but he fastened his hands to her hips and prevented her retreat.

“Mmmm, you taste good,” he moaned into her core.

Devra arched back, and he slipped his hand up to hold her. He closed his eyes and concentrated on playing with her clit, sucking at it harder and harder.

“Oh, God, I can’t take anymore,” she cried, and she flung herself forward.

She leaned over him, propped on her hands. He locked his fingers onto her silky thighs and forced her to stay seated on his mouth as he speared her with his tongue. She rocked back and forth and rode against his face.

“Gannon, please, no more.”

He thrust rapidly, drinking in the liquid spilling out of her constricting channel. Her gasps became frantic, impatient, and demanding. Grabbing her waist, he flipped her off him and onto her back.

Letting his gaze travel along the delicate line of her jaw to the pucker of her sensual lips, he leaned and kissed her. Softly, he outlined her smile with his tongue and pressed her to open to him. She complied. He took her mouth and in the same urgent manner, he claimed her body. Without a pause, he drove his cock into her shuddering vagina.

Devra's cry was a wailing scream of satisfaction.

"Now, tell me you want me to stop?" The smooth flesh of her inner thighs brushed the sides of his hips.

"No, please, no." She folded an arm around his back and her other hand landed against his head, pulling him down. Her fingers twisted in his hair and held tight.

Gannon fucked her with an untamed animal fury, ramming her saturated cunt with his aching cock. He hurried to spill his seed into her, savoring the strength of her movements, yearning to let her have all dominance over him.

"Roll over," he commanded, pulling his cock from her dripping channel.

While she did as asked, he grabbed her hips, turning her quickly. Without letting go, he lifted her ass and stared at the small pink hole of her anus. He wiped the juices from her cunt up along the crevice and into the hole. Leaning forward, he pushed his cockhead against the entrance.

She made a strangled grunt as he forced himself into the tiny gap. He soothed her with his palms, massaging her back and bottom as he sank deeper. Her whimpers expressed her discomfort, but when he tried to retreat, she pushed back.

Short strokes in those depths brought about her small, pleasurable sounds, and he humped her faster. Friction burned his sheath and drove him deeper until he ejaculated his sperm into her clenching bottom and flooded the chasm.



Gannon pulled out and rubbed his fingers over the reddened ring, massaging the tender area. Devra slumped down into the sand. He lay at her side. Placing an arm over her back, he cuddled her.

"Devra." He tried to think how best to tell her of his past. "There have been women, many women over the years, and they --"

"I don't care about other women." She rubbed her cheek over his lips.

"Devra, listen to me." He leaned back on his elbow. "Every woman I've ever been with has vanished or turned up dead."

"No, Lillia lied to you."

"She told you?" He got up and retrieved his trousers, angry his sister would talk of things not meant for other people to know, especially violent, deadly actions of the tiger.

Devra nodded. She had that same sympathetic expression Lillia always gave him -- pity for his plight. But what didn't they show in their sorrowful stares -- disgust, apprehension? Why did they say they trusted him when he couldn't trust himself?

"I don't recall doing anything to anyone, but I know it has to be me. The tiger is killing them."

"I can't believe that, Gannon. You're gentle and caring, even as the tiger."

"You *have* to believe it. You have to get away from here and me before I lose control."

She shook her head. "I'm not going anywhere. I like it here, and I like you. Before my boat brought me to your island, I didn't have much of a life. I lived in fear of what my ex-boyfriend might do to me."

"Then you should understand my concerns. I'm frightened I might hurt you...or worse. I can't live with that sort of torment. Devra, I want you to leave the island."

"You can't mean that. Not after ..."

Her eyes watered with tears. "You said you never wanted me to leave."

"I have to insist." He walked away unable to watch sadness fill her face.

“Gannon.”

He didn’t look back as he headed in search of a boat leaving the island. It didn’t matter in which direction she sailed. She just had to go. He’d not let Devra become a casualty of the tiger’s killing instincts.

## Chapter Twenty

The house stood cold and dark without any lights when Devra returned. She had walked for hours in search of Gannon. She'd had no luck in locating him and went to the house in the hopes he would have returned.

The note on the foyer table told her he had been there. The first boat leaving was in the morning. He'd not see her again.

"He's hurting." Lillia's voice came from the dark beneath the stairwell. "He suffers because of you."

"I didn't do anything wrong. It's Gannon's doing in sending me away."

"The tiger would never allow him to release you."

"The tiger has nothing to do with how Gannon thinks or feels or acts."

The glint of the knife in Lillia's hand came too late for Devra to react.

"I don't like when women hurt him." She snatched Devra's arm and held the knife to her side. "You must die like the others. You must be punished for bringing him pain."

Lillia tugged on her arm and Devra stumbled.

"What are you talking about? Where are you taking me?"

“Gannon loves the widow’s walk. He never fails to go there because it’s the highest place he can stand and watch the sunset. He knows that after the last sliver of sun sinks into the horizon, he’ll become the tiger. After another accident happens there, he’ll see I was right.”

Lillia led her up the staircase.

“Right about what?” Devra stumbled forward and hit her shin against the tread.

“Wanting any woman to take my place in his life.” Lillia pulled her up with a forceful yank on her arm.

Devra swung in retaliation. The knife slashed her forearm, and she cried out.

“You should want him to be happy. As his mother, no one can take your place.” Blood trickled from Devra’s arm as Lillia jerked her onward.

“It’s not only him. It’s you. I tried to make you want me, and all you desire is my son.”

They reached the top landing, and Lillia forced her into the narrow stairwell leading to the widow’s walk.

“Please, Lillia. Don’t do this. Gannon has arranged for me to leave. He doesn’t want me here. I can’t help that I don’t have feelings for you. What you did to me ...What we did wasn’t real. You drugged me.”

Lillia poked the knife at her. “You don’t understand anything, do you? I’m every bit like Gannon is as the tiger. Paulo’s abuse made sure that men repulse me. I get great satisfaction from being with women, but once they meet my son, they no longer want me.”

Devra climbed the steps faster. She bumped into the door, and it popped open. The sun had set, leaving the sky in an eerie darkness. Clouds covered what would be an almost full moon. She hurried along the railing and turned back when she saw the broken gap she’d made before. Lillia’s eyes held a murderous glare. Her advance prevented Devra from returning to the vestibule of the cupola. She hadn’t really studied the layout of the widow’s

walk. The tiger had kept her too distracted before. Looking over the railing for an escape, she saw the lawn below.

A movement from the tree line caught her eye, but she looked back at Lillia. "There's always someone for everyone. I learned that when I came here. My boyfriend was abusive, but it encouraged me to find someone else and not turn from the love of a man."

"You think Gannon loves you?"

Devra nodded.

"I think you're right, and it's my fault."

"Yours?"

"I didn't kill you before he formed his obsession with you."

Devra only half listened to Lillia's ramblings as she continued her retreat, searching for an escape or help. She checked the surroundings of the ground below. The underbrush of leafy vegetation showed no signs of Gannon. Her torn shirt from the day before remained where she took it off -- hanging from the nail on the railing.

"You really did kill those women Gannon talked about? But why?"

"They choose him over me." Lillia answered as she made her advance quicker.

While fear had a way of stiffening Devra's muscles, she managed to stay alert, and then a roar ripped the disturbing silence. She glanced below and watched the tiger running across the lawn.

Lillia charged Devra and slashed the knife downward at her. It missed, and Devra ran.

Staying opposite of Lillia was easy as long as Devra avoided falling against any of the railings where they connected to the dry-rotted posts. Since she had gone around once, she hadn't anticipated the floor having a weak spot until her foot broke through a board, and she fell.

Lillia lifted the knife, seizing the opportunity to strike, but she moved with caution, watching for the floor to give way.

Glass shattered and Devra's eyes widened as the tiger leapt through the wall. He raced over the splintering wood cracking beneath his heavy feet. Air-bound in a graceful spring from his huge paws, he crashed into Lillia.

"Gannon!" Devra twisted and watch him knock Lillia over the balcony. The railing sailed through the air with them.

Scrambling to get up, she heard Lillia's scream fade during the plummeting flight. The impacting thud of bodies hitting the green lawn was dull, almost noiseless.

"Oh, God, no." Devra looked down at the lifeless bodies on the ground.

She spun away and hurried through the mess of the destroyed cupola. She cut herself on glass and wood while jerking the door open. Her heart pounded unmercifully hard. She slipped, descending several steps in the narrow stairwell. Gaining her footing, she rushed down the last flight and flew outside to the lawn.

On the side of the house, she found Lillia and the tiger. Even in the dark, the odd angle of Lillia's head told her Gannon's mother was dead.

"Gannon." Devra dropped to her knees and put her hands out over him. His fur moved beneath her fingers. "Gannon, you can't die." She rubbed his shoulder, petting the warm golden-striped fur. "I need you."

Leaning forward, she kissed his whiskered snout. She nuzzled her face into the ruff of his soft neck. His body convulsed, making her sit back on her heels, staring at the way spasms jerked his limbs.

"Gannon, please." She tried to touch him, but his sharp claws swung involuntarily, forcing her back.

His body transformed before her eyes. He contorted and shrank into the human shape with fur. Every second that passed, she watched the black and golden fibers retract until he lay a naked man.

"Gannon?" She laced her fingers between his and held his hand.

A sound drew her attention to his leg where the odd tattoo of a snake moved. She sat stunned as the one-dimensional mark partially lifted from his skin. Taking on the defined contour of a live reptile, the head twisted and faced her. The long tubular body continued spiraling off Gannon's leg, coiling in the air.

Hypnotized by its small black eyes, Devra didn't move. She tried not to breathe. The creature's head darted in her direction and she flinched, unprepared for the strike.

The snake missed hitting her in the face by less than an inch. His head drew back to strike again, and Devra ground her teeth together with determination. She tightened her hold on Gannon. He clenched in response.

Another hiss warned her of an attack.

"I won't let you have him." Her words formed an equally menacing hiss as they seethed through her teeth. "I love him."

For what seemed several minutes, she and the snake stared at each other. Finally, the creature dropped to the ground, slithered off Gannon's leg into the grass, and glided away into the jungle.

Devra wept in relief. Sobs heaved her body as she brought Gannon's hand to her chest and hugged his arm. When he gasped a deadly sound, it was as if it were his last breath. Devra leaned forward and stared at his face.

"You can't leave me." She shook him, afraid whatever spirit possessed him as a tiger, took his soul away with the snake.

"Gannon, please."

His eyelids fluttered a few times, then snapped opened.

"Gannon," she exclaimed, throwing herself across his chest. "You're all right. I was so worried I'd lost you."

He placed an arm around her and rose, propping himself on an elbow.

"It's night, Devra."

She drew her head back and looked into his glistening eyes. He took in the sights around them as if he was seeing the darkness for the first time.

“Yes, and you’re human -- a fully formed man without fur.” She stroked his face, amazed by the magic herself.

Gannon sat up fully, and his gaze turned toward Lillia lying a few feet away.

Devra bowed her head, concerned he’d blame her. In her heart, she felt at fault, regardless of what logic told her. “I’m sorry, Gannon. She’s dead.”

He framed her face with his hands and brought her gaze up to his. She searched his expression, finding a genuine gratefulness in his stare.

“I’d never let anyone hurt you.” He kissed her on the nose. “Not even Lillia. I’ll protect you above all others.”

Devra lowered her lashes to push the tears away. “Do you think it’s the end of the tiger, just as the voodoo priestess said?”

“I think it is.” He groaned when he moved.

“Are you all right?”

“I think I may have broken a leg.”

“It’ll heal.” She pressed her lips to his.

“I love you, Devra, but if you feel you must leave after all that’s happened, I’ll understand.”

“I’m not leaving, Gannon. Not ever.” She nuzzled her face to his. “I love you. Fate led me here, and I’ll be forever grateful for those dreams that readied me to meet a sinful tiger.”





## **Brenda Williamson**

Brenda Williamson was born on Halloween and loves the paranormal. Married with one son, she lives in the South, USA. Her hobby is her profession and she spends endless hours writing stories in a variety of romance genres. But if she does anything to fill a few stolen hours away from her computer, she takes care of her pets, many of which can be seen on her website.

Country living is a peaceful existence, but it can be a lonely one when know one is around. While working from an office in her home, Brenda surfs the Internet and enjoys socializing online with friends. If you'd like to talk to her or just hang around and read excerpts, then you're invited to join her Yahoo chat group where other authors also come out to play at Brenda Williamson's Romance Party.

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