



The Werewolf's Mate

C.A. SALO

OTHER KIN BOOK I

**OTHER KIN
BOOK 1:
THE WEREWOLF'S
MATE**

by

C. A. Salo

TORRID BOOKS
www.torridbooks.com

Published by
TORRID BOOKS

www.torridbooks.com
An Imprint of Whiskey Creek Press LLC

Whiskey Creek Press
PO Box 51052
Casper, WY 82605-1052

Copyright © 2012 by C. A. Salo

Warning: The unauthorized reproduction or distribution of this copyrighted work is illegal. Criminal copyright infringement, including infringement without monetary gain, is investigated by the FBI and is punishable by up to 5 (five) years in federal prison and a fine of \$250,000.

Names, characters and incidents depicted in this book are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, organizations, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental and beyond the intent of the author or the

publisher.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

ISBN 978-1-61160-438-2

Credits

Cover Artist: Gemini Judson

Editor: Sara Kent

Printed in the United States of America

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING ABOUT A SLAVE'S WAY OUT

"C.A. Salo has outdone herself and I trust this is only the beginning of a bookshelf overflowing with sexy sci-fi treats. I hope there will be a story showcasing Trea and

Daniel since their characters made such a lasting impression and added to what was already an outstanding read which I definitely recommend to the masses."

Indy

Joyfully Reviewed

"I've read a lot of books over the years, but A Slave's Way Out is one of the hottest I've read in a long time. It isn't just the chemistry between Catrin and Niko, which explodes off the pages, or the dynamics of the secondary characters. It's that C A Salo shows a woman can be not only outstanding in her job that she fights for but also that she can be dominated by her lover and not look weak. When the reader first starts reading this book they are sucked into a different time and space right off the bat and aren't let go of until the last word is read. They realize the voyage is over. I hope C A Salo writes more about these characters as the world she's created is one you'll want to visit over and over again to see how each one is doing. This is definitely going on my keeper shelf and I am looking for more of her stories."

Donna

FAR

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING ABOUT THE DEVIL HIMSELF

"I really enjoyed the author's unique approach to a classic love story. This wasn't an ordinary boy-meets-girl

story as it featured a creature that some might find hard to love, yet the author was able to humanize the beast in the story and make me, the reader, fall for him as well despite what some might consider imperfections. I found the author's use of an imperfect hero, at least when it comes to looks, refreshing and interesting.

"This was a very touching love story that I would definitely recommend to those looking for something a bit different."

Lilac

Whipped Cream Review

Rating: 4.5 Cherries

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING ABOUT A WARRIOR'S LONGING

"A Warriors Longing is definitely steamy. The chemistry between Lord Gage and Meiken is strong enough to raise anyone's blood pressure. C.A. Salo did an excellent job blending the sci-fi, romance and erotica genres. Not everyone can do it so seamlessly."

Victoria Cross

Night Owl Reviews

**Other Books by Author Available
at Torrid Books:**

www.torridbooks.com

A Slave's Way Out
The Devil Himself
A Lady's Challenge
A Warrior's Longing

Dedication

To my fiancé
for dealing with all my little eccentricities
while I'm in writing mode...and not.

Thank you for not grumbling
when your bologna gets burned
from my mind being in plot mode
when I'm supposed to be cooking.

Love you!!

Chapter 1

Kalana sighed as she approached the outer city limits of Alston, Maine. Alston was a great little laid-back country town up in the Northern Quadrants. Tourists only came during the summer and fall which was great for the town because they'd come spend their money and leave. The only way to get there in the winter was either

by helicopter, snowmobile or dogsled...for the humans anyway. Alston had a little over one thousand permanent residents comprising of any Other Kin who wanted to settle down there. Well, make that one thousand and two. A soft smile etched her lips as she glanced over at her sleeping eight-year-old. Her stomach churned with what she had to do, what she should have done years ago. She knew the repercussions might be harsh, but she had to take that chance.

Her family, the Fairlawns, had been with the group of first settlers who numbered about one hundred and forty today. The Lyken Roven Clan had grown to be the largest

clan in Alston with over eight hundred members who stayed throughout the year. The Beven Clan of Vampires, which was relatively small, only forty or so, stayed year-round. The rest were Other Kin who just wanted to settle down away from the violence of wars between the clans for dominance. It was widely known throughout the Other Kin nations that the clans of Alston would not put up with any of the rivalries and if a war was brought to their perimeters, the entire town had shown more than once they would fight to keep what they had...peace and quiet. The town had rules besides what each individual clan had. If the rules were broken then

the violator would go before the Council of Elders, which was comprised of two elders from each clan who lived within Alston. They were allowed to voice their opinion to the council before a judgment was handed down.

Kalana's stomach cramped at the thought. Not only did she have to sit before the council, she'd called for the meeting. Her grandfather, one of the elders of the council, had made the plans the day she'd phoned to tell him she was coming back. Kalana wished this could have been done differently, but with the information she'd learned, she could not sit back and let her town down. One of the rules of Alston was if you leave

the town, you change your name, and you never tell anyone where you come from. That way if there was something, or someone with their sights set on Alston, the town had feelers and informers out there to report. The only problem was you had to give the report in person.

"It had to be me," she mumbled as she pulled up behind her grandfather's house. She'd been out in the human world for more than eight years and had never heard of anything dangerous toward Alston until several months ago.

A huge smile lit her face as her grandfather stepped out onto his porch. "Pappy!" Jumping out, she left the door open as she ran into

his arms for a big bear hug.

"Do you know how much I've missed you, girl?"

"I know. I've missed you too!"

"Well where's that little sprite of mine? That skyping stuff just isn't like seeing her in person."

"Livi's in the car sleeping." After hugging him quickly she backed up a bit. "I'm sorry I've been gone so long; I just didn't know what to do."

After wiping the tear away that rolled down her cheek, he kissed her forehead softly. "You were young and scared; I'm sure he'll understand. If it's who I think it is, he asks about you every time he comes into the store."

"But will the council understand?" she whispered as she

met his gaze.

"That we'll have to wait and see. Now go get the sprite, I've got the covers turned down for her in her room."

"Thanks, Pappy." After kissing his cheek, she strode back to her small SUV and lifted her sleeping bundle.

"She's getting a little big for you to do that." Pappy smiled.

"Yeah, but she's really just a mite. She definitely takes after our side on being small and limber." She grinned as she stepped in to the house.

* * * *

Kalana had stayed hidden most of the day, but Olivia wanted to get out and Pappy wanted to take her

through the trails of the forest as he'd done with her when she was Olivia's age. That left Kalana in charge of the family store for the last hour or so.

Ten more minutes and it's closing time. Kalana groaned when she heard the chimes of the front door signaling a customer.

"I'll be right there," she called out as she leaned the broom against the wall. Heading to the front she stopped in her tracks when he turned, tingles of fear and excitement traveling through her veins. "Drake." Her voice was a whisper to her ears, but his twitched as she met his gaze.

"Kala— What the hell are you doing here?" A little more rough

than intended. "Is this why you tried calling me two days ago? To let me know you were coming back?"

Dragging in a breath to her deprived lungs, Kalana started forward. "Well, maybe if you'd call back you'd know, wouldn't you?" she spat out as she stepped behind the counter. Turning, she met his gaze. Now, she was angry.

"You're going to get pissy with me? I'm not the one who disappeared nine years ago. No word, no note, no kiss my ass, you just up and left."

Her eyes lowered, bottom lip between her teeth. He was right. She was the one who'd done him wrong, she had no business being

angry. "I'm sorry."

"Did your grandfather even know where you were?"

"Sometimes. I spoke with him weekly but never told him everything." Lifting her gaze to his, she noted the anger he'd held was gone. "Drake, I have to tell you something, something important."

"After nine years?"

"Yeah, I..."

"Why are you back, Kalana?" he asked as he folded his arms over his strong chest.

"I-I have to talk to the council."

Arms down, brows furrowed, he leaned forward. "Why?"

"You know I can't say, well not all of it anyway. We really need to talk."

"Right now, I'm worried about dinner. What's left for the beef?"

The change of subject rattled her for a moment. "Ah, um, well there was one piece left, it's a rib eye cut, about a pound."

"Was?"

"It was close to closing so I thought to have it for dinner, it has pepper and garlic on it, so if that doesn't bother you I can wrap it up and grab something else," she said breathlessly as she met his unwavering gaze again.

"If you wouldn't mind. I need red meat and don't feel like hunting it down or waking Manuse tonight because I'm out late."

"Manuse is still in charge of the kitchens?" Kalana twisted her hands

at his unwavering gaze. "Ah, sure, be right back." Moving quickly to the back area, she grabbed up the steak and started wrapping it. "Damn, this isn't going good." Shaking her hands out at her sides when they started trembling she stopped, took a deep breath and let it out slowly. "Okay, I can do this. Just tell him and get it over with. He can probably hear every word you're saying but that's alright." Stepping into the store area again she lifted her eyes to his. He was so damn hot and masculine and so damn alpha, the only way he'd changed was for the better through maturity. He watched her as a predator would, except she wouldn't become his next meal,

either that or he was just really hungry for this steak. "I, um, really need to talk to you before I go to council."

"Fine, I'm here so spill," he stated as he tossed a twenty on the counter.

"It's not a two-minute conversation, Drake, it's..." Her eyes flew to the phone on his hip.

"Drake...yeah, I'm on my way, five minutes."

"Drake."

"I have to go."

"It's imperative that we talk before council," she said as he headed for the door.

"Is it for the safety of this town or my pack?"

"No, but..."

"Then it can wait. I have to go."

"You need to come back before I go to the council!"

Drake stopped and turned.

"Why?"

"Because I need to tell you something before I tell them."

"I'll try, but we have an issue at the northern border."

Oh damn! She just let him get away as he walked out the door.

* * * *

Dressed in ceremonial gowns, Kalana made her way into the council's chamber. She'd had Olivia sit on a bench outside to wait for her under the watchful eye of Yulin, one of the Council of Elders' guards, and although he hadn't said a word about the little sprite, his gaze

showed his curiosity. Breathing deeply, Kalana's lips parted slightly as she let the breath out slowly, stopping in the middle of the chamber, standing before the seven elders of Alston.

"It's good to see you again, Kalana," Councilman Gwil of the Roven Clan stated. "You've been gone a long time. Care to tell us why you've called for a meeting before the council?"

"Thank you," she stated softly. Her grandfather's small smile her encouragement to proceed. "It's good to be back in Alston. I've called for this meeting for two purposes. The first is that several months ago I was in hearing range of a plot to attack Alston." When

silence prevailed, she continued, "I was bartending in an Other Kin establishment that is supposed to be neutral for all. I'm not sure if they knew I overheard what they were speaking of, but with all the ears in the room, I think most of the patrons will be involved somehow. The two men speaking were of the Vampire nation and the Lyken nation. I could not gather full names, but the Lyken was named Gilfore." Kalana stopped when Elder Gwil turned to look at the current Alpha and Drake's brother, Evan. "The vampire's name was Theodoris and they are amassing an army to attack and either take over or destroy Alston, depending on how many of us fight and

survive."

Kalana hesitated when the council members started speaking to each other. "I'm sorry," she said over their voices. "I'm not done." Taking a deep breath, she returned her gaze to Gwil and Evan Roven. "Apparently they already have a spy in your house. Did you take in a man by the name of Phillip?"

"Yes, he came to us about four months ago. One of our patrols found him bleeding badly in the ravine to the south," Gwil replied.

"It was a setup. He's been reporting back to them from the day you stopped checking into his background."

"Not all," Evan stated as he sat forward. "Drake's had a bad feeling

about him since we took him in. He's had constant surveillance on Phillip."

"I don't know how he's communicating with them, Evan, but the last report they had, and I don't mean to pry or voice your pack business, please understand that, but I need to make sure you believe what I'm saying is true." Silently she waited until he nodded his head to give her permission to speak. "The last thing I heard them talking about was that you were looking for a mate and thinking of claiming Sophia Cutler. She's in danger. They were talking of having a female by the name of Isla take her out and make it look like an accident."

"Isla?"

"I don't know who she is..."

"She came in about two years ago. She's Sophie's best friend and she's had her eye on Drake."

"Yes, I know," she whispered. "She's supposed to take out Sophia, have you claim her and she's supposed to..."

"Supposed to what?"

"Kill you after she's carrying your heir so Drake would have to claim her as next in line to Alpha."

"By the Gods!"

"I know this upsets you, Evan, but you see...their plan is for nothing...because, because..."

"Tell them the rest, Kalana," Amias (Pappy) encouraged.

She placed her hands over her

stomach as it churned with nervousness. "The other reason I'm here—I-I'm not sure how to start. I know my punishment can be severe if the man so chooses. I have no excuse now at my age." Her soft speaking had the room quiet again. Lifting her gaze to her grandfather, she then moved it toward the Rovens. "I left when I was eighteen because, because I was scared and I didn't know what else to do or how to ask for help. I thought that because of the way I was treated by the others because I'm half-human, that I'd be ousted from Alston and, and..." Her breathing hitched, showing her fright. "I was making plans to come back when I heard of the plot so I stayed a bit

longer to make sure I was hearing correctly. Evan, Elder Gwil, I ask of you to please not tell him until I have a chance, I tried yesterday but he was called out on pack business. I...Drake...I, um...I left because I-I found out I was pregnant." She'd whispered the last, but knew they'd heard her when Evan's brows arched. "I-we...Drake and I have a daughter. I know he'll understand why I was scared, things didn't—well they weren't..."

"You don't need to say anything further," Gwil said. "I'll give you twenty-four hours to speak with Drake concerning this matter. If you do not speak with him, then the council will have no choice but to bring you both here and we will

disclose this information. If we are forced to do so, you will not only receive Drake's punishment, but ours as well. Do you understand this, Kalana Fairlawn?"

"Yes, sir."

"I will personally make it known to Drake that he needs to see you and we will make sure he has no duties to interfere with your time."

"Thank you."

"Did Elderman Amias know of this?"

"No, sir. Pappy never knew why I left until after I had Olivia, but I still wouldn't tell him where we were or name her sire."

"Olivia?"

"Yes." She smiled. "I named her after the only woman outside my

clan who didn't treat me as a vile pestilence. I named her after Olivia Roven, the greatest woman I knew who took me under her wing and helped me believe in myself. Drake's great-great-grandmother, rest her soul."

"So that's where you'd scoot off to every Saturday?" Pappy asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Is Olivia here? Can we meet her?" Gwil asked.

"Certainly, but I have to warn you, she's a bit spirited for an eight-year-old." Kalana smiled as they called for Livi to be brought in and turned, taking her hand when Olivia came to her side. "Olivia, these are the Elder Council, you remember me speaking of them."

"Yes, ma'am," Olivia said then smiled. "Hi, Pappy!" She waved her hand.

"She looks just like him," Evan stated.

"Like who?" Olivia asked.

"Your father," Kalana answered with eyes on her daughter, meeting her gaze when she lifted those beautiful amber eyes that were so much like Drake's.

"You mean they know him; they know my father?"

"Yes, they are his family."

"Then where is he?"

"He's not in chambers."

"Why? He's a great Lyken warrior, isn't he? Why isn't he here?" Olivia asked as she glared at the council. "I want to see my

father. Please."

Evan chuckled. "Yep, just like him."

"Your great Lyken warrior of a father is taking care of pack business at the moment, but no worries, little one, you'll be meeting him shortly," Gwil stated.

The corner of Kalana's mouth tipped up, at least they were smiling. But she knew that if she didn't have a heart-to-heart with Drake, they would make good on their promise of punishment.

"Now back to the first issue," Elderman Gavril of the Vampire Beven Clan said.

Kalana glanced up. "Yes, sir. Livi, please go back outside and sit on the bench. I'll be right out,

okay?"

"Okay, Mamma. Bye, Pappy."
She waved happily as she followed Yulin.

Kalana's gaze didn't waiver from her daughter until the chamber door closed. Turning, she faced the council again and knew this was not going to be a short meeting as they questioned her about every possible thing she heard. Kalana was glad she'd had the foresight to write everything down when she arrived back home so she could give them an accurate account of information she'd taken in over the last three months.

"Did anyone ever insinuate that they knew where you were from?"
Elderwoman Noela of the Elfin Clan

asked.

"No, ma'am. I had moved around so much they just assumed I was an ousted Fairy because of my human father, and I used his mother's maiden name as an alias for both Olivia and myself. But there is one thing I do need the Rovens to do." Her hands came together as she met their curious looks. "Phillip and Isla cannot know it's me. I'm sure Phillip was in the bar before they sent him in. If he sees me, he may recognize me."

"Understandable. Don't worry, Kalana, those two will be dealt with silently in case we have others in town," Evan stated.

Kalana stood there as they ended the meeting four hours after

it had started. Her shoulders sagged with relief a bit until Gwil spoke her name, walking toward her with Evan at his side. Kalana took a step back before stopping herself.

"Are you that afraid of us?" Gwil asked.

Her face heated. "I, well I suppose I could lie and say it's habit." She chuckled nervously. "But I can't. I know I wronged Drake and your clan by keeping the truth from you, but I..."

"Speak with Drake and whatever he decides the clan will abide by."

Kalana turned when she felt a hand on her shoulder. "I'll take Livi home and get her something to eat and into bed," Pappy said with a

smile. "You stay here and take care of business."

"Okay, Pappy." Kalana turned and met Gwil's gaze and the gentle smile he wore. "I-I don't know what else to say, except I really have no excuse for what I did. I guess after the fright of truth wore off, I pushed it to the back of my mind with the intention of dealing with it later and before I knew it eight years had gone by."

"Did Drake treat you that badly?" Evan asked. "Although I'm a few years older than Drake and he of you, I heard of the way others treated—and if I dare say—tormented you. But I didn't think Drake was in that crowd."

"He-he wasn't, at least not until

the night we, um, well, you know," she whispered as heat ran down her neck. "I never thought of it until after, when Livi was about four. The whole 'after' incident kept playing over and over in my mind. I think it was a setup on both of us, but I'll have to speak with him to clarify that."

"You have to know, Drake would never do anything to intentionally hurt you, Kalana. This I know for fact."

Her head tilted as she met Evan's gaze. He knew something, and like the loyal brother and Alpha he was, he wouldn't speak of it without his brother's permission. Nodding her head, she listened to their promises to have Drake at her

door tomorrow as she left the council chambers. It felt as if a great burden lifted off her shoulders. It's as Pappy always said, 'The truth will lighten your feet, while to lie will make your steps heavy.' Now all she had to do was tell Drake.

Chapter 2

The scowl lining Drake's lips darkened as he opened the door to

the Fairlawns' store. His great-grandfather had all but ordered him to come today to finish his talk with Kalana. Why the old man was getting involved with his life eluded him, unless it had something to do with her going before the council. He knew there was a town-wide meeting called for tomorrow to discuss an extreme threat, but other than that everything was being kept under wraps. Even Evan refused to open his mouth and tell him what was going on, something very unlike his brother.

"Amias." He nodded as the old Fairy met his gaze with a smile. "Gwil told me I needed to discuss something with Kalana. Is she here?"

"She's out back breaking up boxes, but before you go find her, I have someone who has a few choice words for you."

Drake snorted, arms crossing over his chest. "Besides your granddaughter?"

"Oh, yes." The smile turning to a grin as he turned his head. "Sprite, the man you've been waiting for is here."

"I'm on it, Pappy!"

Drake swung his gaze to Amias at the sound of a little girl's voice. He turned when he heard a child's footsteps running from the back room toward them. A small girl child with black hair and amber eyes stared at him meanly.

"So you're the one who took my

steak and made me eat a grilled cheese sandwich, huh?"

Drake's brow lifted as she crossed her arms over her chest. Uncrossing his, he just stared at her, she seemed so...his nostrils flared as he caught Kalana's unique scent running through the child as well as...

"I didn't appreciate that, you know. I need my red meat too. I'm half-Lyken and my father is the greatest Lyken warrior there is, so you better not steal my meat again or when I meet him, I'm going to tell him all about you."

"Greatest..." He'd heard those words before; Kalana had said them to him on the night they'd made love. Fear clenched his stomach as

he looked at the wee bit of attitude in front of him; she had all the characteristics of...whipping his gaze to Amias he saw truth in the old man's eyes. "Is she..."

"Yes," Amias replied.

"She's out back?" Drake asked, not waiting for an answer as he stormed past the little girl to the back of the store.

"Hey, where's he going? I'm not done with him yet!" Olivia yelled as she took off after Drake.

"Kalana!" He flung the back door open, watching it bounce off the wall as she turned, startled. Kalana's gaze went to the little ball of fury running up behind him.

"I'm warning you, mister, you better watch it!" Olivia yelled as

she ran in front of her mother. "If you think you're going to hurt my mamma, you better think again. I'm no weakling!"

"Livi, stop," Kalana said as she put a hand on her daughter's shoulder.

Drake stood there, his gaze on the child, his brow lifting as her eyes glowed giving the amber color a transparent look to them.

"Olivia, you need to stop. Control, now!" Kalana ordered.

Drake stepped forward as Kalana moved to kneel in front of her daughter calming her down. "Olivia?" he whispered.

"Yes," Kalana said as she turned, meeting his gaze. "Named after your grandmother."

"She's my..." His hand lifted motioning to Olivia. "I mean am I..."

"Yes, Drake, Olivia's your daughter." Kalana's voice dropped to a low whisper as she rose, taking Olivia's hand within her own. "Livi, I know there are a lot of things you want to talk about with your father, but I need for you to go with Pappy right now so your father and I can talk, alright?"

"Okay, Mamma."

Drake kept his gaze on the woman in front of him as the child walked by and the door shut. "Explain," he demanded through clenched teeth, the shock wearing thin and anger erupting.

"The night that we..."

"Mated," he growled.

Kalana winced. "Yes...you can't blame me for leaving after."

"The hell I can't!"

"You-you were in on it with the rest of them; you helped set me up! I thought you were different, but you weren't! The minute, the minute you were done, you rolled off with a smile and then the whole gang came in, didn't they? They came in and you rolled up and away from me as they heckled and tormented me and what did you do? You did nothing!"

"You ran before I could!"

"Did you expect me to lay there after what I thought was the most wonderful night I'd ever had and be attacked by your friends?"

"Marissa set that up, not me! I had no idea they'd show up! And I did stop them; I punched John and Kendal in the face and shifted to take on Kad and I kicked his ass for setting us up!" Stepping back, he turned, running his hand through the top of his hair. Breathing deeply to calm himself down, he heard her low sobs and it tore his insides up. "I didn't know, Kalana, not until they showed up. I never would have done that to you. I was smiling because I enjoyed loving you as much as you did me. I spent three years trying to find you after you left. I hounded Amias' doorstep daily, but he told me he didn't know where you'd gone either."

"He didn't," she said, her voice

barely audible. "I'd never tell him where I was, only that I was alright. And I didn't contact him until after Olivia was born."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"I was scared. I thought you had set the whole thing up, and you never tried to contact me the week after. When I found out I was pregnant, I ran, I ran away from you and from Alston. I thought everyone would judge not only me, but my baby. I was so scared they'd treat my baby the same way everyone had always treated me."

"There's no doubt about her being mine?"

"No doubts."

"Are you sure? You didn't..."

"You're the only one."

Drake turned to meet her watery gaze. "You've never been with anyone else?"

"No."

"What if you'd had to heal?"

"I've never been injured badly enough and if I needed some energies, there were Other Kin clinics and healers I found in every city. You know she's yours; you can scent your blood running through her veins."

Drake sighed, his arms crossing over his chest. He knew all right and he had scented his blood within the child the moment she stood in front of him, daring to take him on. Now, what to do with her mother? His nostrils flared as he took in Kalana's scent, the act giving him

an instant hard-on. Damn, the woman could still make his body react to her with but a whiff. Her eyes lowered with submission when the growl emitted from his throat. Well, at least she understood who was in charge. "She's my daughter, I want her with me."

"Please don't take her from me."

"She needs to learn our ways."

"I agree, but please, please, Drake, don't take her from me."

"I have every right."

"I know."

Drake's eyes narrowed as her head lowered, she looked so despondent and beaten. "What have the Elders decreed?"

"Everything's up to you. Whatever you decide they will

stand by."

"You never told her the stupid things humans tell their children, like I was dead or I disappeared in the middle of the night?"

A sad smile lined her lips. "No, she always knew her father was alive, she just didn't know your name."

"Only that I'm the greatest Lyken warrior alive." He grinned as she lifted her gaze.

"Yes. I started wondering when she was around four if you'd been in on the setup, but then I was afraid to come back and ask because I knew you'd be angry with me for keeping her from you."

"Would you have ever told me?"

"Yes. I was making plans to

come back when I heard something going down that I had to gather more information on for the town. It put me months behind my plan to come back, but I knew it couldn't be helped."

"The meeting tomorrow?"

"Yes. Drake, what are you going to do?"

"I don't know yet," he answered, noting the fear in her eyes again. "I'll let you know tomorrow before the meeting, as I'm sure I will have to report my decision to the council." When she nodded her head in acknowledgment, he turned and headed out the back gate. He stopped suddenly when he saw Olivia standing there.

"I don't care if you're my father

or not, I won't let you take me away from my mamma."

"If I recall correctly, children are not the ones who dictate to adults." He tried to stop his smile, but damn she reminded him of himself when he was her age—all full of piss and vinegar.

"Maybe not, but if you take me away from her, I'll make it a living hell for you and everyone near me."

"You're eight."

"I'm also a quarter Fairy and a quarter special human. I'm not stupid and I'm not a scared little girl, I know how Mamma was treated by the meanies of this town."

"Kalana spoke of their cruelty?"

"Not out loud, she's never said a

bad word about anyone here, but like you'll learn, kids pick up a lot more than adults think we do, especially me."

"Well then, I'll take your...requests, under consideration. Tell me, have you shown any Lyken tendencies besides needing red meat?"

"Not yet, but I'm not going through puberty either."

His brow arched. Well that was something he never thought he'd have to talk about with a child. "Okay then."

"I want you to be my dad and I want to get to know you and learn stuff with you, but not if it hurts Mamma."

Drake knelt, bringing him to her

eye level. "You're very protective of Kalana, aren't you?" he asked softly.

"She's my mom. Wouldn't you tear someone's throat out if they thought about hurting yours?"

Drake grinned. "Yeah, I would and I'm thinking you have more Lyken tendencies than you know of."

"Probably."

Drake stayed still as Olivia leaned closer, her small hands cupping his face on either side as she met his gaze. He chuckled. "Don't think to try and read me, little one. I know of the gifts your human grandfather had."

"You know how to block." Her brows furrowed. "A lot better than

Mamma, although she does have different gifts."

Leaning back on his heels as she moved her small hand, he watched as her fingers trailed down the hair hanging loosely on his shoulders. "Can you scent me as Lyken?" he asked.

"A little, I know the differences between humans and Other Kin, and I can smell things far away lately. Mamma's tried to help me, but she doesn't have the Lyken nose."

"You need training to enhance your abilities."

"Will you help me learn?"

Drake kept her gaze as she moved back, thrusting her hands into her pockets. She exhibited so

many of his traits it was a little unnerving. "Of course I will, Olivia; I'm your sire."

"Will you promise me that you won't take me away from Mamma?"

A sigh escaped at her soft voice and little quiver of her bottom lip. "I don't want to hurt you or your mother, Olivia. I promise I'll do my best to come up with something that will be good for all three of us." His heart flip-flopped when she smiled; her entire face seemed to brighten.

"Thank you!"

He chuckled as she launched herself into his arms, hers going around his neck. He lifted his arms around her small frame, his eyes closing as he inhaled deeply,

content with her in his arms.

"What do I call you?"

Drake met her gaze as she leaned back. "Dad I suppose."

"Okay!" Grinning from ear-to-ear, she jumped back. "I'll scoot so I can give you time to come up with the perfect plan, okay? Don't take too long." Leaning in, she kissed his cheek before bouncing back again. "I'll be waiting to hear all about it, Dad, I know you can do it!"

Drake rose as the little scamp skipped around the corner to the front of the store. The smile etched across his features as he headed home.

* * * *

"She looks like you."

Drake glanced to the left

meeting his brother's gaze as he leaned casually against the doorjamb to his den. "You've seen her then?"

"Ah yes." He smiled. "And spoke with her. I must say she's you to a tee at that age."

"Yeah she's a little spitfire." Drake grinned.

Evan tilted his head to the room at his back. "Come on in, there's a few things we need to talk about."

"The other reason Kalana came home."

"Yes and you're not going to like what's going on."

Drake shut the doors behind him as he stepped into the den.

* * * *

Drake sighed as he stared at the

waxing moon. In several short days it would be full and bright. Today had been an experience of shock, excitement, anger, and disbelief when he found out about Olivia. He'd always thought about having children, but to be blindsided by an eight-year-old version of himself wasn't something he'd ever thought of. His hand slammed on the railing, he knew why she'd kept Olivia a secret, but damn it, she should have told him he had a daughter. How in the hell was he supposed to come up with a plan of having Olivia with him unless he brought Kalana along too? Drake groaned as his cock grew with the thought of his little Woodland Fairy. Damn the woman. Nine years later

and his body still stirred with the thought of her. What was he going to do with a woman he wasn't sure he could trust fully, yet made his body ready for mating? Not to mention, he had to declare his decision to the Elder Council tomorrow night before the town meeting and try to come up with something that would keep his daughter smiling. "Damn," he growled. Turning, he stepped back into his room, removed his clothing and slid onto the cool sheets of his bed.

* * * *

He knew he shouldn't, but Drake loved the stunned look that came over Kalana's features. Drake struggled to hold his smile back as

Olivia did a dance around them 'whooping' every now and then.

"Did you get dropped on your head too many times as a baby, Roven?" Kalana snapped.

"Now, Kalana, you might offend Evan as Alpha not to mention our mother." He grinned, arms crossed over his chest, his feet spread.

"That's a sign of defensiveness you know."

"Now, baby, it's a sign of pure male confidence."

"No way, there's no way in hell I'm moving in with you."

"Olivia seems to like the idea."

"Olivia doesn't know what's best for her yet."

"What's the matter, sweetheart, afraid you'll like the end result?"

The frustration she felt was all over her face and movements. He knew he shouldn't tease her, but he just couldn't help himself.

"That depends on what you think the end result is going to be."

His eyes narrowed slightly as fear streamed through her being quickly. Was she afraid of him, his clan or just the thought of what might happen between them again? Evan had mentioned to him how she'd backed up when he and Gwil approached her the other night. Lowering his arms, he glanced around at the Council of Elders. "May we have a moment please?"

"Certainly," Amias said as he took Olivia by the hand leading everyone out.

"Why are you afraid?" Drake asked the moment the doors closed.

"I-I'm not, not really."

"Are you afraid of me?" he asked, his chest tightening at the thought.

"No!" she answered quickly, her gaze flying up to meet his. "No, I'm not afraid of you, Drake."

He breathed a bit easier. "Then what frightens you, Kay?" Stepping closer, he itched to take her within his arms.

"The unknown, the future, everything."

Her whispered words tore at his heart, something he hadn't felt since the day he'd found her gone. "Kay," he whispered soothingly. "I'll

do everything in my power to make sure your life is wonderful."

"I know," she sobbed as she stepped forward wrapping her arms around his waist, and laying her head on his chest. "And I think that scares me the most."

"Gods, baby," he groaned as he brought her closer to him, settling his cheek on the top of her head. "I had to come up with something to make Olivia happy. I promised her I wouldn't take her away from you."

"Why would you promise her that?" she asked as she lifted her head.

He met her gaze. "Because, she's my daughter, Kay, and she needs me. I can feel the Lyken in her screaming to get out and play

and I can't help her the way I want to unless I have your blessing." His hand lifted, brushing several tendrils of hair away from her face. "Because you're her mother and we must agree to her training."

"Are you just saying that to make me happy?" She frowned.

Drake chuckled. "Yeah, a little bit. So are you alright with this? Can we go tell the elders there's no more fighting?"

"Yes."

The smile left as he remembered what his brother mentioned. "You know the females might—challenge you, right?"

"Yeah, I had a feeling."

"I'll stand behind you, Kay, but if we're not mated, they have a right

to challenge."

"I know I'm up for it, but I'm telling you right now, Drake Calum Roven, if they bother Olivia..."

Chuckling, he leaned forward placing a small kiss on the tip of her nose. "Damn, the middle name's been dropped. I know, Mamma, you'll kick their asses."

"You have no idea."

"Meaning?"

"I'm not a shy little girl anymore, Drake, and I've honed my abilities. If they piss me off, they'll get a surprise."

"Well then," he stated as he put his arm around her shoulder, leading her to the door. "I say, serves them right. Now, let's go inform the masses you're back."

"You say that with such joviality. You love this, don't you?"

"Hell yes."

"You know I'm still highly attracted to you, right?"

"Thank the Gods for small miracles," he groaned.

* * * *

Drake was exhausted by the time they arrived back at Roven Manor. The town meeting had gone exceedingly well, all members of Alston had showed, including the Other Kin who didn't like being around others for various reasons. It lasted longer than anticipated, but questions needed answers. Then they'd gone by Amias' to gather the few bags Kalana and Olivia had. Drake smiled as he

glanced down at his daughter sleeping in his arms as they climbed the stairs to his wing of the manor. He knew he'd made the right decision by having them come live here, now he just had to convince Kalana.

"Are you sure?" Kalana asked.

"She'll be fine. I told her I'd put her in the room across from mine tonight and she could choose her own tomorrow morning. She knows where to find us, Kay, stop being a worrywart."

"I'm not a worrywart."

Drake smiled as he glanced her way. "Yes, you are. Now I thought I'd put you in with me tonight, you know in case she needs you and all."

Kalana scoffed. "You're so full of crap your eyes are almost brown."

He chuckled softly as he bumped the door open with his hip and reached over to turn on the bedside light. "Seriously, we didn't tell her where you'd be. If she does get disoriented, she knows I'm right across the hall, but I'd rather have you there, Kay. I don't have the daddy ears yet."

"Daddy ears?" She smiled as she started untying Olivia's shoes. "I'm sorry, I don't mean that meanly; I know what you mean. If she rolls over I hear her; if she sneezes or coughs, I'm on it in a heartbeat."

Drake stepped back as Kalana finished undressing Olivia down to her skivvies and quickly dressed her

in pajamas. "I promise to do nothing but sleep. I'm beat and you're ready to fall. It's been an emotional and physically demanding day. Besides, my bed is big enough that you don't have to touch me if you don't want to."

"Oh please, don't take all my fun away." Lifting the covers to tuck Livi in, she turned and met his gaze. "Come on."

Drake grinned as she took his hand while walking by him and headed right to his room. He wasn't kidding, his bed was bigger than a California king—he'd had it specially made. After all, his six-four frame didn't like to be restrained. He left the door open so Olivia would know which room was his and he followed

Kalana over to his bed. "I like the left."

"That's good because I'm a righty." She yawned.

Drake drew his shirt over his head. "I usually sleep nude, but I'll keep my boxers on for you tonight."

"I don't have any panties on."

His gaze whipped to her. His dick twitched as she removed her bra from under her shirt. "Seriously?"

"Yeah, I hate panties; they drive me up the wall, like socks used to when I was younger."

He remembered her always ripping her socks off and running barefoot. "I thought that was just a Fairy thing."

"No." She chuckled. "Just a me-

ism."

"Gods you're killing me, and I promised to be good." He groaned as she wiggled out of her jeans. "Are you seriously not wearing panties?"

"Yeah, so keep your paws to yourself."

He moved slightly trying to get a glimpse of her bare bottom, but she was too quick for him as she scooted under the covers.

"Brrrrr, hurry and get in here so I can warm my feet on you."

"Cool sheets are the best," he sighed as he slid in beside her, scooting away when her feet landed on his shin. "Damn, woman, those are cold toes."

"I know, warm them up."

"Crazy woman, get those things back on your side or I'm going to smack your naked ass. How can they be cold anyway? It's seventy-five outside."

Kalana chuckled as she rolled to her side, meeting his gaze. "I'd like to try that."

"Try what?" he asked as her eyes fluttered, a sleepy smile lining her lips.

"A spanking."

Drake barely heard her breathless whisper as she drifted off to sleep. He groaned, rolling to his back. He tossed his arm over his eyes, trying to take his mind off her words.

Chapter 3

Kalana stretched her arms in front of her toward the edge of the bed as she lay on her side. She loved waking in the morn to a nice cozy and warm bed. She smiled when her butt pushed against something soft. "Drake," she whispered, cuddling against him when his arm came around her waist. She sighed as she drifted back off to sleep.

* * * *

Rolling over, she heard a muffled grunt as her arm came down on warm flesh. "Sorry," she mumbled.

"Damn, Kay, trying to give me a black eye or what?" Drake grumbled.

"I'm not used to sleeping with anyone, Roven, so stop giving me a hard time."

"Roven." He grinned as he rolled onto his stomach, painfully aware of his arm draped across her warm body. "What happened to that whispered 'Drake' I heard being sighed off those lips earlier?"

She snorted. "You must have been dreaming."

"Somehow, I don't think so."

Kalana's eyes widened as his head lowered to hers, her pulse

quickenning the closer his lips came. She gasped and turned her head when she heard Olivia speak.

"See I told you they were up."

She saw her daughter standing there with Evan Roven.

"Livi, you're up?" Sitting up onto her elbows, she forced Drake back.

"Yeah, Mom, it's like nine already. I've been up and Uncle Evan's fed me and I've met Sophia, that's the lady he's going to marry. She's really nice, Mom, I think you'll like her a lot."

Kalana smiled. "I'm sure I will," she answered. She turned her head when the mattress moved to see Drake propped up on his elbow, smiling. She turned her attention back to Olivia. "Well, um, why don't

you scoot so I can get up for the day and I'll meet you in a little bit, okay?"

"Sure, Mom. Uncle Evan's going to show me around; this place is huge."

"What's the matter, Kalana, don't want to get up now?" Evan asked with a smile.

"She doesn't wear panties, Uncle Evan."

"Olivia!" Kalana exclaimed.

Evan chuckled as he put his hand on Olivia's head. "That's alright, your dad doesn't either."

"Hey." Drake chuckled. "I have my boxers on."

"Olivia Teresa Roven, that's not something you go telling people, uncle or not!" Kalana scolded, the

heat rising up her neck when Evan's brows rose.

"Alright, squirt, let's go so your parents can get up and make themselves presentable." Evan chuckled.

Kalana flopped down to the bed with a sigh when Evan shut the door. "Kids."

"You gave her my name?"

She turned her head at his whispered words. "Of course I did; she's your daughter."

"I figured you would have gone with Fairlawn."

"Maybe if you were human or a Fae male, but I know how you wolves are with your children and it, well, it just seemed right to name her after her father. She's

yours, Drake, that will never change. I-I just regret not bringing her home to you sooner."

"I know you do," he whispered as he leaned over.

Her lips parted as his brushed across her cheekbone, then down to the sensitive hollow of her neck, making her shiver with delight. "Drake." Her hands came up, clutching his biceps as her nerves came alive from his touch. She gasped when he rolled, bringing her with him to straddle his waist, his hard cloth-covered cock pressing against her clit. His hands captured hers, lifting them above his head so the back of his rested on the pillow, her body lowering closer to him. "Drake."

"I want you, Kay. My body screams to make you mine and I know you want me to. Let me claim you."

"Drake, no." Her eyes squeezed tightly. "It's too early," she whispered. "Too early."

"Why, because you've been gone for nine years?"

Arching up, he rubbed his shaft against her hard little nub.

"You're the only one, Kay, the only one who's ever made me feel like this. The minute you went into puberty, I knew it and I knew you were mine. But you were younger than me so I had to wait and when I did, you ended up being hurt. Tell me you want me, Kay, tell me."

"I do," she cried softly. "I do

want you, I always have, but we can't rush this, Drake. We have to make sure for Olivia's sake."

"Olivia or you?" he asked.

Her eyes fluttered until she met his gaze.

"The moon will be full in two days and I'd rather mate with you instead of a pack bitch while thinking about you."

"Thinking about me?" she asked, knowing that Lyken males had to mate every full moon. It was bred into them to help the race survive.

"How in the hell do you think I've lived for nine years without you? No female can work me up the way you do unless I close my eyes and pretend she's you, Kay. You know we're meant to be together.

Stop being so human-ish and listen to your inside self and your body."

"I just, I just..."

"I want you, Kay, and I'm asking you to let me claim you on the full moon because I don't know if I can hold myself back from marking you as mine in a moment of passion. My body's telling me it's you and you know as well as I that my inner wolf will take over when we mate if you are to truly be my life partner."

"I know."

"I don't want to end up claiming you without you wanting me to. If you don't want me then I'll have to choose a pack bitch out of heat for I want no children with anyone but you."

Uncertainty, confusion, and now

anger ran through her veins. "You would go to a pack bitch with me laying in this bed waiting for you?"

The corner of his mouth lifted. "Only if you told me you don't want me on the full moon. You know I'd have no other choice. But..."

"But what?" she asked as she rose a bit.

"But I'd want you there with me..."

"What?"

Jerking back to rise, he brought her back to him quickly.

"You have the right to be there as my intended to make sure it's nothing but a full-moon fuck. Because now that you're home and here, another woman will not get me hard unless you're with me."

"Freaking Lyken shit," she grumbled, shifting to lie on top of him. Her arms were still above her head her fingers entwined with his as they lay on either side of his head. His rumble of laughter had her sitting up, pushing his hands into the pillow and his dick against her clit. The instant urge of jealousy hit her hard. "Don't you even think of fucking anyone else."

"Oh, sweet, your eyes are glowing. You know you're mine. The kirmid is telling you, just as my inner wolf tells me."

"No shit!" she snapped as the kirmid ran through her veins, making her aggressive. "Stop taking pleasure in this, dog face."

"Or you'll what?"

"I'll tie you down to this bed so you can't stick your dick in anyone else."

Drake chuckled. "And you know what will happen to me."

Kalana snarled. He'd go into wolf form and wouldn't be able to change back until he fucked a female.

"Do you want me to fuck you in wolf form?" He leaned up and brushed his lips against her neck. "Kinky, and so willing to do my little Fairy."

"Stop that," she breathed as the anger and jealousy left her system.

"Listen to your inner Fae, sweetheart. You're supposed to be with me, and you know it." Moving her hands behind her back, he

forced her to lie on top of him, with one hand holding hers as his other ran over her butt, squeezing one cheek roughly. His cock jumped at her moan. "I want you, Kay, and I want you now."

Tingles swarmed over her body. "Yes." She nodded once, her lips already wrapped around his ear. His hips arched, bringing his hot shaft to rub between her nether lips when his head turned, and he came up on his elbows. "Drake?"

"I'll be right there," he called out. "Ah, sweet, I am so sorry."

"What, what's going on?" she asked, moving off him as he sat up.

"Something's happening. My grandfather wants me in attendance."

"Olivia?" Grabbing her jeans she tossed them on as he did the same across the bed.

"She's with Evan."

Rummaging through her bag, she brushed her hair quickly, braiding it as they left the bedroom and found chaos in the foyer of the home. Gasping from the sight of blood over the floor, her hand went to his back, following him as she glanced around.

"Mamma!" Olivia cried.

"Livi, are you alright?"

"Yes, Mamma, but you have to come; you have to come now!"

Kalana glanced up at Drake as Olivia grabbed her arm yanking her toward the doorway filled with Lykens. "Olivia?"

"Now, Mamma, now or he's going to die! Sophie's brother's is gonna die!"

"Get out of the way!" Drake yelled as he made a path for them to pass.

Kalana was hit with the energies escaping from the Lyken warrior as they moved into the dining room where he'd been laid on the table. Her lips parted as the energies built in her body. "Look out."

"Step back, fairy bitch; you have no business here," a female snapped.

Kalana recognized her as one of her old tormentors. "Move!" she yelled, her hands lifting. She tossed the female across the room with but a thought. Her vision now a

hyped-up version of what was happening. She knew her eyes were glowing translucent as her powers kicked in. Moving to the table, her hands lifted; she moved them from his head down to his feet. "He has several minor injuries, but this one..." She breathed stopping over the one near his heart. Her eyes fluttered as she transferred energies into his body, seeking the destroyed tissue. "By the Gods," she breathed.

The extent of his wound was bad, very bad. Concentrating, she could mentally see the insides of his wound, and searched until she found the largest bleeder and started healing them one by one. Her fingers moved with each stitch

she created by using inner chakra over every wound she healed. With each healing, she closed his energies back inside him, giving him the strength to stay alive. She could hear Olivia in the background, ordering someone to find blood to replace what he'd lost, and she knew the strength standing straight behind her was Drake. Sophia's weeping died down to sniffles as her brother's life force evened out into a more stable condition. Although she knew the room was filled with Lyken energies, it was silent.

"His wounds are bad. I-I need to use someone's energies, mine are fading, I—" She stopped when she felt the boost of renewal and

strength. She knew it was Drake who'd touched her and gave his energies to her freely. She was almost done, just a few more— The breath came out of her mouth in a mist, her hands lowered, icy cold, as she started falling. Strong hands grabbed her and lifted her. Laying her head on his chest, Drake's heartbeat lulled her to sleep.

* * * *

"Let me love you."

The whispered words were heaven to her ears. "Drake."

"It's the fastest way for you to get your energy level back up quickly."

His warm hand moved over her chilled body. Kalana sighed as his lips enveloped her cool nipple; this

was not the way she'd pictured being with him for the first time in nine years.

"I'll do everything, you just lay there and enjoy." Rolling onto his elbow he poised above her, his long hair sliding over his shoulder to tickle the nipple he'd just laved within his warm mouth.

Kalana groaned as his fingers touched her clit. She lifted her hips toward him as his mouth covered hers, gentle yet dominating at the same time. She belonged to him and he was going to prove it. Although she already knew he was right, he wanted her to voice it. His thumb flicked over her stiff clit, rubbing the small nub until she cried out in his mouth.

"You're so wet, baby," he breathed as he slid a finger slowly into her tight sheath. "Gods, you feel so good."

The rush of blood in her ears was uncanny and something she hadn't experienced since her first time with him. "Drake!" she cried as he slipped another finger in, stretching her as he'd done that first night.

"My Gods, you're so tight, Kay, and wet. You're so damn wet. Gods, I need to taste you."

His growl sent a stream of excitement spiraling through her veins. Whimpering as he withdrew his fingers, she begged, "Please. Please, Drake."

"I'm coming, baby," he mumbled

as he lowered his head between her creamy thighs.

Her hips bucked the moment his warm mouth landed on her pussy, a cry of pure exhilaration leaving her parted lips as his tongue touched her plump clit. "Oh my Gods, yes," she breathed, her fingers lowering to grab handfuls of hair. The whorl of ecstasy blocked out everything but the feel of his hands and mouth on her body. "Oh Gods, Drake!" she yelled as she crested, her orgasm shattering, body trembling, arching beneath him.

Drake moved up to lay on his side next to her panting body, his palm resting on her stomach, but he couldn't stop the grin when she peeped an eye open. "That was

fast."

"Nine years in the making."

Drake chuckled as he leaned down to kiss her soft lips. "You sound a little winded there, my Woodland Fairy. Will you be breathing after we make love?"

Kalana giggled. "I guess we'll have to wait and see."

"Not too long. I just found a nerve still alive." His hand moved down. Rolling her to her side, he lifted her leg up and over to rest on his thigh. Her pussy wide open to him now. "I'll try to hold back the beast, Kay, but I can't promise anything on the full."

"I know." Her eyes fluttered when his fingers found her clit again, playing and smearing her

cream all over her and him. The tingles streaked through her again, as her breathing hitched. "Please, Drake, please fuck me."

When her hips arched into him, he slid the head of his cock barely into her opening, groaning in cadence to her gasp. "Gods, I'll try to go slow but..."

"Don't, don't you hold back!" she cried as she thrust her pelvis to him, encasing his large shaft within her warmth. "Oh Gods," she gasped as the tingly wave traveled straight from her head to her pussy.

Drake rolled her under him, legs bent, stretching her to accommodate him. She lifted one leg, placing her heel on his tailbone as he thrust into her fully. Her

scream of pleasure met his growl as he rammed into her warmth, his balls hitting her ass. Her hand slapped his ass cheek hard, then with a growl she dug her nails in as her teeth nipped his neck. "Gods, woman!" he growled, pumping into her with force. "I said slow, damn it!" he snarled as he lifted, rolling her onto her stomach before lifting her hips and plunging into her pussy.

Kalana groaned when he moved his fingers to the back of her head, grasping a handful of hair close to her scalp. She loved the sensation coursing down her spine from his rough handling, and her pussy clenched every time he thrust into her, the pleasant pain intensifying

her bliss. "Drake, Drake!"

"You're mine, Kay," Drake growled as he leaned near her ear. "Say it!"

"Yours, I'm yours!"

"Come for me, sweetness."

Kalana cried out with the longest orgasm she'd ever had in her life as her body reacted to his words. She belonged with him; her body knew it, her brain knew it, she just had to let her heart believe it. "Oh Gods, Drake!"

At that moment Drake spilled his seed into her, ecstasy washing through his veins with a howl. Her pussy muscles convulsed around his spewing cock as he lay on her back. Breathing deeply, he went to withdraw. "Shit," he groaned when

his cock thickened to stay inside her warmth. "You're in heat?"

"How do I know?" she said, collapsing to the bed with her butt in the air. "I'm not Lyken."

"When did you have your last cycle?" he asked as he gently lowered her pelvis to the bed and rolled them so he spooned her body.

"Ah, about a week ago."

"I should have scented that on you; your body chemistry has changed a bit."

"Probably from having Livi. I have the momma belly and weight too."

Drake smiled as he wrapped his arms around her, holding her close. "I like it. You have more of a figure

than you did before; you've filled out in all the right places."

"Yeah right, the momma belly isn't..."

"What, this little pootch?"

"Hey." Grabbing his hand from her belly, she turned her head meeting his gaze. "That's not funny you know, it's not easy to get rid of the momma belly."

"I like it." Snuggling to her, he kissed her shoulder. "Would you have let me love you if you knew you were in heat?"

Kalana hesitated briefly. "Yes," she whispered, his gaze lifting.

"You know there's a greater chance of conceiving."

"I know." After kissing him quickly, she turned her head, laying

it on the pillow. "So how long are we attached for again?"

"Half-hour or so," he smiled. "Why, want to get rid of me?"

She breathed in sharply when he thrust his still-hard dick into her more fully. "Drake."

"Hmm?"

"Again."

His brows rose. "Again?"

"Mmmm hmmm, yes."

"Whatever my little Fae wants." He grinned as he moved within her slowly, igniting her body all over again.

* * * *

Kalana slowly descended the stairs from Drake's living quarters to the main foyer, glad to see the blood from yesterday cleaned away.

She couldn't believe she'd slept so long, but then again, she'd never healed someone with the kind of wound the young Lyken had either.

"Thank you."

Kalana turned to see the female Lyken from yesterday.

"If it wasn't for you, my brother would have died."

"You must be Sophia?" Kalana asked.

"Yes."

"No thanks necessary, I did what had to be done. I'm glad Drake was there though, or else I may have failed. I've never healed anyone like that before."

"I didn't know you had healing capabilities."

Kalana laughed. "Neither did I

until seven years ago."

"Well you sure as hell showed Marissa you wouldn't put up with her crap."

"Trust me, she had it coming," she snarled. "So do you know where my daughter or her father is?"

"In the den with Evan and Gwil. Just go down the hall here and it's the last door on the right."

"Thanks." Kalana smiled as she headed that way and groaned when she heard what Olivia said.

"No, Grandpa, like this."

She could hear Lady Gaga's hit song Poker Face. Rounding the corner her eyes widened as Olivia danced to the song on Dance

Central for the Xbox 360 Kinect. "Oh no," she groaned, Drake's brows hiked as he listened to the lyrics. She knew Olivia had brought her gaming system, but she didn't think the brat would set it up for everyone. Her mouth dropped when Gwil picked her up and moved her to the side so he could continue the game. Well maybe it wouldn't be as bad as she thought.

"And you let her listen to stuff like this?" Drake asked.

"She doesn't know what the words mean, and don't flash-step on me, it makes me jump."

Drake chuckled as he drew her into his arms. "How are you feeling?"

"Better, rested. Thank you."

"No need to thank me, Kay." After kissing the top of her head, he turned, walking them into the den.

"Mamma, did you see Grandpa? He picked it up real fast." Olivia laughed.

"I see that."

"Mamma can get a flawless every time. She's really good."

"Really?" Drake smiled.

"I think she's up next." Evan laughed.

"Good idea."

"I don't think so," Kalana replied.

"Are you still drained?" Olivia asked, taking a hold of her mom's hands.

"No, Livi, I'm good. Your dad helped me."

"Ohhh, is that why I couldn't go

into your room? Grandpa told me you were doing stuff."

Kalana caught Gwil's smile. "I'm sure he did."

"Were you making me a brother or sister?"

"What?" Drake slapped Kalana on the back as she started coughing.

"Well, Uncle Evan said the stuff was for adults only so I just thought you two were making me a baby sister or brother, although I do have to say, Mamma, I'd like to put my request in for a brother."

"You would?" Kalana breathed in sharply.

"Yes, please."

"Well, it doesn't work that way, but I'm sure your request is noted

with the Gods."

"Alright! Now let's get back to the game!"

Kalana whipped her gaze to Drake, who was bent over laughing his guts out, and smacked him hard. "Cut it out, Roven, or you can explain to her how babies are made and where they come from. Ha!" she quipped with liveliness when he stood up with a straight face.

* * * *

Later that evening Kalana sat next to Drake at the clan meeting. Normally she wouldn't have been invited as it dealt with clan safety and business. Only the heads of the household usually sat in session. Drake, as the head of security for the Roven clan and brother to the

Alpha, sat to Evan's right as Gwil sat to Evan's left. The rest of the table was occupied by elders of each Lyken household within Alston, and the high-ranking members of Drake's security force. Only the Alpha female was allowed to sit in on the meetings, but as Evan had not claimed Sophia yet, she wasn't let in.

The energies were high. The wounding of Graham, Sophia's brother, was a big topic. Apparently, Phillip, the spy, had been the one who'd almost killed Graham in an effort to escape. Captured moments later by Drake's security forces, he'd been slapped in silver manacles making his powers all but useless. They then

led him to an underground detention center and chained his hands and feet to the ground.

"Kalana," Gwil said. "I know you told the council what you remember, but is there anything else that you may have forgotten?"

"I don't think so. I made sure I wrote every detail down after to make sure I didn't forget anything." Drake must have noticed her nervousness as his hand lay gently on her thigh.

"Would you be willing to let one of our empaths look further?"

"I will do anything to protect Alston and its people, but no. I will not allow someone I don't trust to search through my memories." Voices rose at her rejection, her

gaze not wavering from Gwil's.
"However, I happen to know where
one is who I trust implicitly."

Chapter 4

"I don't know if I want you doing
this." The low throaty growl
emanated as Drake paced his
bedroom. "It's tricky to have
someone digging around. What if
they wipe a memory out?"

Kalana smiled as she followed

his irate movements.

"And all you had to say was, 'I need you.' What the hell kind of friend is this who will just up and leave their life to help you?"

"Drake, come here," she said softly. When he turned her way she waited until he stood before her. Taking his hands, she yanked on them until he knelt making them eye level. "She is very good at what she does. I trust her because she was my only true friend out in the human world. She knew I'd be calling because she's halfway here. Now you need to tell your scouts to let her into Alston and bring her straight here. She said something dark is hovering and it's close. She said that Olivia and I are not

allowed to go anywhere outside this house without you or your family. I will follow what she says because she's never led me wrong." Smiling, she leaned forward brushing her lips against his, and ran her hands over his shoulders trying to relieve some of the tension. "Now, her name is Mari she's a...special human."

"A witch?"

"That's something she'll have to confirm, so you better tell those vamps on security that she's my friend and if they hurt her, I'll string them up by their toes."

"Alright, what's her ETA?"

"Around four a.m."

"I'll get the word out. No one will harm her, but I suggest she stay

with Amias or here."

"I want her here if that's alright."

"Of course, sweet. Now I want you to get some sleep. I'll check in on Livi before I go down to command."

Leaning in, Kalana wrapped her arms around his neck bringing him close before softly placing a kiss on his lips. "If you're a good boy, I'll let you claim me tomorrow after your run." Her smile soft as her lashes lifted, meeting his gaze.

"You'll let me, huh?"

"Mmm hmm."

Drake chuckled as he brought her to him, having her straddle his lap as he leaned back. "Maybe if you're a good girl, I'll make you scream with pleasure all night."

"You're so conceited."

"No, baby, I'm just good."

Her cheerful laughter rang down the hallway before he claimed her lips as his own.

* * * *

Drake smiled as he exited the woods. He knew he needed to see to the witch's arrival firsthand, especially with Rhys on duty. That vamp not only had a dislike of witches, he hated them. He had to give the witch credit though, she wasn't backing down from the huge leader of the Beven Coven. "Rhys, you know if you hurt her, I'll have to kick your ass because my woman will tear me a new hide if her friend has even a scratch on her little witchly body."

"Why couldn't Kalana befriend someone of substance?" Rhys growled.

"Up yours, buddy," Mari snarled.

"Damn, that sounded a little ferocious. What the hell did you do to her in the matter of the few minutes it took me to get here?" Drake asked as he stopped beside them. Drake met Rhys' gaze when he turned. Drake's eyes narrowed as his nostrils flared before he busted out with laughter. "Oh shit, this is good!"

"Shut up, Roven!" Rhys snapped.

Drake laughed so hard he couldn't catch himself when Rhys hauled off and belted him on the arm, sending him flying back. Rolling on the ground, he couldn't

stop the uncontrollable laughter as Kalana's friend ran up to him, her hands running over his shoulders.

"You're an ass!" Mari yelled as she turned to Rhys. "I thought you guys lived peacefully?"

Drake reached out, grabbing her hand when she rose. "It's all good, Mari." The laughter dying down, he sat up, arm across his stomach. Damn he hadn't laughed this hard in a while; the muscles of his stomach were tightening up. "Rhys is just having a bad night."

"Bad night hell, Roven," Rhys said as he approached. "If Kalana knew this and didn't tell me, I'll be pissed."

"She isn't a seer, Rhys, you know this." Grabbing his hand, he let his

friend help hoist him up to his feet. "But you have to say, it's the most excitement we've had around here since the ogre set the bridge on fire when the tourists from the Red Hat Society were crossing over it."

"After the threat to Alston is over, I need to talk to Kalana."

"I'll let her know."

"Are you claiming her soon?"

"Tonight after the run."

"Your daughter's beautiful." Rhys smiled.

"Thanks, I think she's going to give me a run for my money and keep me hopping, especially when she notices boys." Drake chuckled.

"Shit, are you kidding me? She'll probably be telling Evan how to run the pack."

Drake glanced over at Mari when she whimpered. "You alright?"

"Yes, but...we need to go closer to town. The darkness, it's coming close."

Drake turned the same time Rhys did to look down the road. "What the hell?" Stepping in front of Mari he noticed his men and Rhys' coming up on either side of them. "Are you seeing this or am I losing my mind?"

"I'm right with you, brother."

Drake had never seen anything like it before; a swirling dark cloud covered the moon, lightning streaks running through as it touched the Earth almost like a tornado. The closer it got the more he could see that it wasn't wind—it was faces

writhing in pain and horror swirling around the funnel cloud. Malevolence and evil radiated off the abnormity; the beast within wanted to come out and fight. His facial features changed, growling the closer it came. Drake glanced over, when Mari shoved her way between Rhys and himself, to see Rhys in vamp mode. They could feel the danger swirling inside the cyclone.

"It can't come any closer. It can't cross the boundaries of the land. That's why it's using the different clans of Lyken and Vampires who have something against Alston to do its dirty work," Mari stated as she turned to look at them. "We need to go. Just because it can't

cross the lands doesn't mean it won't try to drag one of us in."

"She's right," Rhys said.

"Mari, go get in your car. I'll be driving so hit the passenger side. Men, I want a secure detail two hundred paces inside Alston boundaries. Let them know what Mari's divulged." He'd shifted back as Rhys had. "I need to get her to Kay. I'll be back, so keep me updated."

"Yeah, I'll be with the men. I'm not leaving until I see what this thing wants."

"It wants to kill us all," Mari said. "You, wolf boy, let's go. I've been driving straight for two days and I'm ready to fall."

The side of Drake's mouth lifted

as he caught Rhys' smile. "Yes, ma'am."

"Good luck," Rhys whispered.

Drake winked. "Don't forget what I scented." He chuckled when the smile dropped from Rhys' face.

* * * *

His eyes closed the minute his head hit the pillow. Dawn just broke and with a sigh he draped his arm around Kay's shoulders when she rolled halfway up his side.

"She's here?"

"Yeah, she's sleeping. We had an issue; it's being watched."

"Vamps didn't bother her, did they?"

Drake smiled at his woman's feistiness toward her friend. Wait until she found out what he scented

when he'd come up on Mari and Rhys. "Not like you're thinking, baby. Go back to sleep, it's early."

* * * *

Drake frowned when he caught the slight wince his grandfather made when he'd learned of what had happened early this morning with the arrival of Mari.

"You know what it is, don't you?" he asked, listening as the men around them quieted.

"A story passed down from the first settlers of Alston," Gwil replied. "It was a few years after the town had been founded; something tried to kill the people, wanting to take over their souls and the lands. The old books said that nothing so evil had ever been seen by any of our

ancestors. Many died protecting this home of ours, many wounded, and many so frightened they never spoke again."

"If the old books name what kind of apparition it is, then maybe they'll have how to defeat it."

"I'll have Yaki start looking through the archives and I'll notify the Elder Council of the latest news."

Drake remembered the stories from his childhood. Many Lykens had died in the seven-day siege of Alston. It had been bad and it had been bloody. Frowning, he couldn't remember ever being told how the siege ended. Entering the hall, he headed for his office in the security communications area.

"Why are you looking so grumpy?" Kalana asked.

Drake turned. "Do you remember how the great siege ended?"

"No." She frowned. "Why, does this thing Mari told me about have something to do with it?"

"That's what Gwil thinks. He's researching it." Leaning over he kissed her quickly. "When are you and Mari doing the mind probe thing?"

Kalana smiled. "She already has."

Drake frowned as she lifted his hand putting a small recorder on his palm. "I told you I wanted to be there."

"And I told you, it would be

better if you weren't, so I had her do it while you were at your meeting."

"Damn it, why can't you listen to my orders just once?"

"Firstly, don't take an attitude with me. Mari and I would have been more nervous with you there, because we would have been sensing your energies. It's not as if I don't listen to you, Drake, but I know what situations will be more comfortable for me. You need to trust me and remember I don't take orders." She snapped the last.

His seriousness passed as a smile lined his lips. Lifting his arms, he brought her to him, placing a small kiss along her neck. "I've been thinking."

"Oh yeah," she whispered breathlessly. "What about?"

"Why don't you come on the run with me tonight? When was the last time you let that little Woodland Fairy out to play?"

"Not for a while, but who will—"

"Watch Livi? Well, Mari's not going anywhere, unless Rhys stops in."

Kalana leaned back from his assault of her neck. "Yeah, what is with that anyway?"

Drake chuckled. "When I arrived at the border last night Rhys and Mari were already spitting at each other like a couple of cats."

"Well we know he doesn't have a fondness for witches, especially after what happened when he

visited his parents before I left."

"Oh yeah, but it gets better. The reason they were spitting mad at each other isn't because of hatred. I scented the bond emanating between them."

"You what?" Kalana shrieked.

"Oh yeah and I laughed so hard my stomach still hurts."

"But that's not possible, it's...by the Gods, they'll kill each other."

Drake chuckled as he led her down the hallway. "Hopefully it will only be the little death of pleasure. Shit, this is going to be fun to watch."

* * * *

Kalana smiled at Olivia as she shifted to her Fae form, shaking her wings out when they uncurled from

her back. Kalana sighed. It felt good to be in her Fae form again.

"You're beautiful, Mamma."

"Yes, she is," Drake said as he stepped in, smiling at her beauty.

"Are you ready, my sweet?"

"Yes."

Taking Kalana's hand when she stepped forward, he looked at Olivia. "We'll be back late, so behave, and listen to Mari. Guards are stationed and the manor is protected. If you need help all you have to do is yell."

"Dad, we'll be okay. When can I go run with you?"

He chuckled. "Not until you can control your shifts."

"I haven't even shifted to wolf form yet."

"I know, little one, and depending on your abilities, you may not be able to, but we won't know for sure until you reach puberty."

"You never know, Livi," Kalana said. "You may change to Fairy form."

"It'd be cool if I could do both." Olivia smiled.

"Honey, two shifts are very rare, but yes, it would be cool."

"So, are you guys coming back married or what? I heard Evan talking to Grandpa and they said you were mating tonight. That's the same as marriage, right?"

"Yes, we're coming back married." Drake smiled as he led Kalana out of the bedroom.

"It's like I'm floating," Kalana stated as they stepped outside the manor.

"You haven't shifted in a long time, huh?"

"No."

Drake wrapped his arms around her as he waited with the others for Evan to come out. Kalana's eyes had gone translucent, her skin shimmered, and her wings were an iridescent pattern of earth-tone colors. "You are absolutely beautiful."

"That's because I'm naked."

His head went back with a chuckle. "That too, my sweet, but I'm as naked as you."

"Do you think Olivia will be alright with nakedness? I mean I

tried to bring her up with it, but it's not the same as being around everyone who grows up with the everyday lifestyle."

"She'll be fine. She wasn't balking at my chest or at Tommy running around the manor. Then again she did tell him to get his naked butt out of her face." He laughed.

"What the fuck is she doing on our run?"

Drake turned the same time Kalana did, and his eyes rolled to the sky with a sigh. "Marissa, cut the shit."

"She's not one of us."

"She will be tonight."

"Are you claiming her?" she shrieked.

"Yes!" Kalana snapped as she came out of Drake's arms to face the female Lyken fully. "He's claiming me tonight after the run."

Drake glanced over to see Evan step up beside him as Kalana faced Marissa. He didn't want to but he had to let her handle this herself, especially if it turned into a challenge. The worst part, if Kalana lost, he wouldn't be able to claim her, ever. He was next in line to the Alpha should anything happen to Evan. His head tilted with a frown as he eyed Marissa, the bitch needed to settle down. "I will never pick you, Marissa; you need to understand that now."

"Are you challenging me?" Kalana asked.

Marissa snorted with a nasty smile. "Yes and when I win, I'll toss you're dirty-blood ass off this land and that of your spawn."

Drake growled, Evan stopping him when he stepped forward. "Watch what you say about my daughter, bitch."

"Daughter?" she yelped. "But you only screwed her that once."

"And the Gods gave us a child!"

"Drake," Evan whispered. "Settle down and let Kalana handle this."

Kalana shimmered, her fist landing hard on Marissa's jaw. The pain ricocheting through her knuckles was worth it as the bitch went flying back to the ground. "My daughter can kick your ass at her age, so I suggest you watch your

mouth. If you truly wish to challenge me, Marissa, then get off your ass and let's go!" she snarled.

"Forget it, you're not worth it," Marissa snapped.

"You're the one who's not worth it; you're nothing but a damn bully with a big mouth. This will be your only time to challenge me, for if you get in my face after Drake and I are mated or mess with my daughter, I'll meet you in the arena and I'll kill you."

Drake's brow rose. He'd never heard such a lethality come out of his little Fae.

Evan stepped forward. "Drake is claiming Kalana of the Fairlawn Fairies this night as I am claiming Sophia of the Lyken Cutler Clan.

Should any of you wish to challenge, you had best speak now."

Drake wrapped his arm around Kalana's waist as silence ensued, smiling when Evan gave permission to start the run. "Let's go, baby." Stepping back, he kept her gaze as he shifted to his wolf form. Lykens, by nature, were large creatures, but being a blooded Alpha increased his size. Of course, his brother was larger in stature than he, which was the natural procession of things.

Drake shook out his black fur before stepping closer to his woman. He hated that he couldn't mind speak with her, but the smile on her face wiped out any doubts.

She put her arms around his

neck and hugged him, her face buried in his neck as she whispered, "I love you, Drake."

Moving forward, he knocked Kalana to the ground and stood over her. Meeting her gaze, he lowered his snout rubbing it gently along her neck until he heard his brother through mind speak, chuckling as he told him to get on with the run. After licking her quickly he jumped back, looking to the woods. He glanced over when she passed him, her smiling face turning back to egg him on. Letting out a short howl, he took off after her and started the courtship.

* * * *

Kalana laughed as Drake shifted at the last moment, capturing her

against a tree. His hands forced hers to her sides as he lowered his mouth to her neck. His lips sent euphoric tingles streaming up to her brain and back down through her body. Her lips parted on a moan as his Alpha-ness washed over her entire being. "Drake."

"I love you too, Kay. I always have."

His amber eyes glowed beautifully when he met her gaze, his canines lengthening slightly, ready to take his mate and claim her as his own. Her body answered his as she arched forward, her hard nipples grazing his chest. Her wings went to her back, cushioning her against the tree as he came at her aggressively, moaning as his mouth

claimed hers.

"If I get too rough you need to tell me, and I'll try to back off." He breathed heavily, his hands capturing hers behind her back.

"I'll be alright, Drake; I'm stronger than I look."

"You're not Lyken."

"And even in the throes of the full moon, you'd never do anything to hurt me."

"When I mark you, it will hurt you."

"And the pain will fade with the pleasure of taking my life mate."

"Do not come unless I grant you permission," he growled, knowing the claiming would not hold if she released before him and the marking ritual.

"Yes, my Alpha."

Delight coursed through him at her words. She knew to be with him, she'd need to be submissive, especially in bed, especially on the full moon. His fingers moved low, her stomach muscles trembling as he wisped over them to her heated core. She was wet from their courtship through the forest. His fingers glided over her clit, stroking, her body withering against him and the tree. Her head lolled exposing her bare neck. Lowering his mouth, his teeth nipped, as soft moans exploded from her throat. His hand released hers, moving up her back to thread them through her hair, grasping a handful near her scalp. "I missed you so much. If you ever

dare leave me again, I'll hunt you down and bring you back with an ass so sore you won't sit for a week."

Kalana gasped as the pleasure his fingers created had her about ready to burst. "I'll never leave you," she gasped, her body trying to slide down when he inserted a finger into her heat. Pleasure tingles raced over her scalp from his grasp on her hair where he held her against the tree.

Kalana placed her hands on Drake's biceps as he moved between her thighs. Her fingernails bit into his flesh causing explosions of pleasing sensations to course through him like lightning, tightening his balls, and hardening

his cock even more.

Drake's voice lowered even more; a deep animalistic growl emerged from his throat. He pressed his mouth near her ear and her skin tingled as his hot breath covered her sensitive skin.

"Are you ready for me?" he moaned into her ear.

Her pussy muscles contracted with anticipation. "Yes." The head of his shaft pressed against her sex but didn't enter. "Drake, please." Her gaze lifted from their touching stomachs to meet his eyes. "You know I'm ready for you."

Thrusting her pelvis to him, he moved back slightly as not to penetrate her yet.

"Don't you tease me, damn it."

Drake chuckled as he loomed over her, his other hand lifting above her head on the tree as he slipped an inch into her warmth. Her gasp and hot insides wrapping around the head of his dick had his eyes rolling skyward with a groan. His hand lowered quickly to stop her thrusting. "Easy, sweet, I want this to last a bit before I go beastie on you," he breathed harshly.

"You can go beastie; you have all night to make me scream, remember?"

Drake chuckled. "You would remember that, wouldn't you?"

"A night of nothing but pleasure at your hands, hell yes I'm remembering."

Slowly he slid into her heated

center, her muscles grasping him like a tight glove.

The hot press of his lips came down over hers, bringing her mouth closer. The hand gripping her hair tightened as his tongue tangled with hers eliciting streaks of bliss pulsing down her spine to her center he had barely invaded. Her hands gripped his muscles; her body moved relaying the urgency she had for his touch.

Drake thrust fully in, Kalana's moan of satisfaction undulating as he took her hard and fast. He knew she could handle him; if she'd been pure human he would have worried more. Breaking his mouth from hers, he moved her to the grassy ground at their feet, her wings

spreading out under her like an earthen angel. Grabbing her waist he positioned her a bit better, lifting her legs over his. He knelt before her, his cock thrusting in and out, as he kept her gaze. His thumb worked circles around her clit, her body lifting to him. Her sounds of pleasure met the pace of his thrusts. His vision became more wolflike as his body shifted another level. His hands had changed as well and he glimpsed the claws grabbing her delicate flesh. "Am I hurting you?" he asked, his voice rough with the change upon him.

"N-no."

"I can't hold back any longer."

"Don't!"

Drake roared and he took her,

his thrusts animalistic as he panted her name. When she cried his name, he leaned over her body, his hands above her shoulders keeping him barely off her as he pumped in and out of her convulsing heat. She was close. His nostrils flared and inhaled the scent of her passion. Electrifying zaps soared through him as he lowered his mouth to her neck scenting the spot he needed to be. "I claim you for mine."

His growled words hiked her senses. "I accept!" she cried, so close to bliss tears ran down her cheeks. "Drake."

"Now!" he roared.

The moment she tumbled into ecstasy, his body tensed with his release and she felt the pinch of his

canines break skin on the most sensitive spot between her neck and shoulder. Her eyes flew open as millions of light shards erupted within her. Kalana cried out as the euphoric wave swept over her body and soul. Images of him flashed quickly in her mind like an old-fashioned picture player—they were mind marking, which only happened when you were with your true soul mate. “Oh Gods, Drake!” she breathed, her eyes fluttering shut, her body spent. She winced when he withdrew his canines, and smiled as he sent up a long howl. “Telling them I’m yours or just howling at the moon?”

“Both. Are you alright?”

Her lips lifted with a soft smile

as he licked the area he'd marked to help her heal a bit faster. "Oh, yes."

"Does the mark hurt too much?"

"No, and so you know, I like being bitten on that muscle."

Drake chuckled as he shifted them to lie on their sides and brought her leg up over his hips. "I'll remember that, love." Lifting his hand to the back of her head, he caressed her scalp, especially the area he'd gripped earlier.

"Why didn't we do it doggie-style, wolf man?"

"Smart ass." Slapping her ass hard he chuckled at her response. "We will, the night's still young and it's a full moon. If you weren't in heat, I'd have you on all fours right

now."

"You just plan on keeping me out in these woods all night, don't you?"

"Partially, then anywhere it hits me on our way back to the bedroom."

Kalana sighed. "I think I like that idea."

Drake lifted his head and chuckled at the low and steady howl renting the night air. "Well it took him long enough."

"Who?"

"Evan. I figured he'd claim Sophia first."

"Why?"

"Because I figured you'd give me more of a run." He laughed, before kissing her on the nose.

"Oh please," she scoffed. "I've been thinking about you for nine years."

"Ah, so you couldn't get me out of your head?" Tilting his head, he met her gaze with a smile. "You knew we were meant to be together just like I did."

"Yes, I felt the connection, but I was still scared, Drake."

"I know, baby." Wrapping his arms more securely around her, they laid back down on the forest floor. "I don't ever want you to feel scared again. If something bothers you, I want you to promise me that you'll tell me and not hold it in."

"I will tell you. Besides I don't think I'll be able to keep anything from you now."

"I didn't think the mind marking was going to be so—deep I guess is the word I'm looking for."

"I could see your whole past, even the years I wasn't here, and I felt what you were going through." Her hand lifted, laying palm down against his heart. "I'm so sorry, Drake; I never meant to hurt you like that when I disappeared."

"And I never meant for you to be so afraid and scared. By the Gods, I wish we could change it all."

"No." Lifting her head, she met his gaze. "For if we change what's happened, then we wouldn't be the people we are today."

"So true, my little Fae." His hand wrapped around the back of her neck, gently bringing her down until

their lips touched. Drake's head went back quickly as Daddy screamed across his mind.

"Livi," Kalana gasped.

"You heard that?"

"I heard 'Mamma'. I've never heard her before, Drake. What's going on?"

"I don't know." Slapping his hand over her mouth, he mind spoke with his security team. "Hush, woman, my cousin Ken's there, he says there's no danger but..."

"But what?" she mumbled behind his hand.

"We should get back immediately."

"How are we going to do that? We're still attached."

"I can carry you and run."

"Are you crazy?"

"Evan's on his way back now, as he heard her cry as well." Moving to sit on his knees, he wrapped her legs around his waist.

"But that means..."

"That she can mind speak. Now wrap your arms around my neck and hold on; we only have a few more minutes and should be able to dislodge by the time we arrive."

"Drake, this is craz-zy-y," she yelped as he took off quickly, folding her wings down so they didn't flap in his face.

Drake ran through the forest, his feet barely touching the ground, arms wrapped around her so she didn't fall.

"We can't let Livi see us

attached; we're her parents and she's too young. She shouldn't know this stuff yet."

"I know that. We'll think of something and I'm pretty sure she knows more about sex than we think she does." Drake saw Evan coming from the other end of the wooded area with Sophia carried in the same manner and chuckled. "We're not the only ones still attached."

"Damn you Roven men," she mumbled, turning back into his neck.

"We're almost there."

"And detaching."

Drake felt what she did—his cock sliding easily from within her warmth just as they reached the

doorstep.

"We're still attached. Go," Evan said as he headed the other way.

Drake lowered Kalana to the floor, grabbing two robes from his security detail and wrapped one around her as they headed to the library. His eyes widened at the vision in front of him. "Holy shit."

"Oh my God, is that Livi?"

Drawing his robe on, he moved around the table to the small wolf sitting by Mari. "Yes." He smiled as he knelt in front of her; she was the exact replica of him in wolf form. "Can you hear me?" he asked with mind speak.

"Yes. This is so cool, huh, Dad!"

"What happened?" he asked then looked up at Kalana. "Babe, I

can't speak with her while you're talking behind me. I know you're anxious to know what's going on, but just hold on a moment." When she nodded her head, he turned back to their daughter. "Well?"

"I don't know, Dad. Mari and I were playing a game and all of sudden I felt this strange wave of something, like zapping me, and I was scared and cried out to you and Mamma and then Mari was telling me to calm down, that I was alright and showed me what happened in the mirror."

"Did you have any pain while shifting?"

"No, now that I'm not scared anymore, it was kinda cool. Can I go run with you now?"

"Not until you can control the shift."

"Can I go play with Tommy? The moment I shifted, he ran in and shifted too so I wouldn't be scared."

Drake glanced over at the other pup who sat there patiently. Tommy was a good kid. He was Galen's son, who was his second-in-command for the security force. He didn't know why he was having such a hard time letting her go. It must be the daddy instincts kicking in. Smiling, Drake rubbed the top of her head; he wanted her to rejoice in her shift. "Yes, so long as there's an adult watching you and you don't leave the perimeter of the manor."

"Thanks, Dad! Let's go, Tommy. I'm gonna get you for mooning me with your bare ass earlier!"

Wh-where is she going?" Kalana asked breathlessly; she was frightened.

"She's going to play," Drake replied as he rose to stand. "We have to let her be like other Lyken children and embrace her shift, not let it hold her back. She's safe, she won't leave the perimeter of the manor, and Ken will be watching over them." Taking her within his arms, he hugged her to him. "Don't be afraid, she's doing what's natural."

"I know, but I-I couldn't even talk to her to see what was going on."

Drake knew what she was going through as he'd just been swept into the daddy instinct a moment ago. "I wish I could help you hear her and take your anxiety away. I have to say, I know how you feel. When she asked me if she could go play, I had this overwhelming urge to say no and keep her near me, not letting her out of my sight to make sure she's safe. But then it hit me that I have to let her go, I can't seclude her from her right to have fun and be the Lyken child she is."

"It's not easy being a parent, is it?"

"No, ma'am, and I sure as hell don't know how you did it alone for nine years."

"Was she okay though? she

wasn't having any aftereffects?"

"She said she was fine, there was no pain, but the shift just came on suddenly."

"It's from the pull of the full moon and all the Lyken energies surrounding her tonight," Mari said with a smile. "She's fine, Kalana, and you," she said, meeting Drake's eyes, "are going to be one fine daddy." Sliding past them to the door she smiled at Evan. "Okay, I'm happy now that my girls are where they're supposed to be. I'm going to bed, for I see myself getting into it with a vamp tomorrow."

"She's right," Evan said as he stepped into the room. "The full moon and its influence over us..."

"Mixed with Lyken energies

surrounding her, no wonder she shifted." Drake smiled.

"But when will she shift back?" Kalana asked.

"When she's ready, honey, you know that."

"I know," she sighed. "I just want to be able to talk to her I guess."

Drake wrapped his arms around her as she leaned onto his chest. "I know and now that she's alright, what say we go finish our original plans?" The corner of his mouth lifted as he swung her up into his arms, then headed for their bedroom.

Chapter 5

Kalana stormed into the security command rooms heading to Drake's office. Her ire was up and leaves were blowing behind her wake. Coming to a stop as she opened his door he lifted his gaze to hers as wind and leaves flew around his office. "Drake Roven, you better do something about your daughter."

"Baby, I'm in a meeting."

"I can see that, sorry, Evan, Galen, but Livi is—" Sighing, her hands flew into the air. "I don't know, she won't change back. It's

been over a week, I can't talk to her, and she will not listen to me. I'll tell her something and she gives me this little wolf shit-eating smile and takes off as if she doesn't understand what I'm saying. You need to control her. Stop letting her run this damn manor and put her in her place. She's eight, damn it, and you Roven men are letting her run this roost. I thought Evan was Alpha here, not my daughter."

"Hey..." Evan started.

Kalana shot him a pissed off look. "Don't you hey me, Evan Roven. You and your brother are letting her walk all over you; even Gwil is bowing to her wants. Make her follow pack rules, she has to have boundaries set, and you have

to make her follow them."

"But she's my niece and new to this."

"That's why you have to make her follow the rules, Evan. She can't be allowed to do whatever she wants, break pack rules, ignore me and think she can get away with it. If I go full Fae on her, I'll drag her back here by the scruff of her little neck and..."

"Calm down, Kay," Drake said as he lifted his hand. "Come here."

Kalana stepped from behind the desk and let him pull her onto his lap. "I'm just frustrated I guess and her not listening to me isn't helping."

"I know. Tommy's been keeping us updated on what she's been

doing. He's been trying to teach her pack rules as they go and he said she listens, somewhat."

"It's the somewhat I'm worried about, Drake. We have a huge security issue happening and she needs to learn to follow orders; she can't do what she wants when she wants."

"I know."

"Does that mean I have to go Alpha on her?" Evan asked.

"It may." Kalana turned to look his way. "I mean, Evan, she needs to understand. I love my daughter but she can't get away with what she's been doing."

"She's not going to like it and she may end up hating me."

"She may, for a while, but the

older she gets, she'll see the rules are there for a reason."

"Yeah, but you're the mother, you're supposed to set the rules. I want to be cool Uncle Evan."

"We'll both approach her then," Drake said. "In wolf form. We'll make sure she understands when she's done something wrong."

"Tommy says she's heading outside the perimeter to the woods," Galen stated.

"Let's go," Drake said as he rose, setting Kalana on her feet. He watched her shift to full Fae. "Baby, we'll handle this."

"I know, but I'll be in the trees watching her just to see how she reacts."

"Don't you mother hen her after

we've punished her, not after that scolding you just gave us." He sounded stern even to his own ears, but he needed to get his point across.

"I won't, Drake, don't worry."

Drake nodded. Undressing, he shifted with Evan and Galen the moment they stepped outside. He turned his gaze and followed his mate as she shrank and shimmered to the trees. Lifting his nose, he scented Olivia and took off. If he was in human form his scowl would convey his thoughts as they stepped into the woods. He'd warned her not to enter them without a guard at her side and what did she do? Break his rule and run without them.

"Calm down, brother," Evan mind spoke.

"If we were in human form, I'd tan her ass for this."

Evan chuckled. "No you wouldn't, just like I wouldn't. If Kalana hadn't just stepped all over our Alpha senses we'd just slap her hand and tell her to be good."

"Maybe you're right," Drake sighed. "But she knows better than to enter the woods right now without a security detail."

"And that's something we'll both bring up to her and make sure she understands."

"Alright, she's up ahead, let's spread out and come in surrounding them." Drake took a left, quickly

but quietly making his way around to the area he wanted. He could hear Livi talking with Tommy through mind speech and him giving her hell for being out here, trying to urge her back. But not his headstrong daughter, she egged him on every step of the way. Glancing up when a shimmer caught his eye, he smiled as Kalana flew up beside him, keeping speed as he made his way along the forest floor. She was no bigger than ten inches and could go smaller if she needed to. Damn, she was beautiful.

“Okay, brother, eye on the target and not your mate.” Evan chuckled.

“Sorry about that.” Crouching

down, he slowly made his way under the bush on his belly until he was less than two feet away from Olivia and Tommy. His eyes narrowed as she rolled around on the soft grass as Tommy stood guard over her, like a little warrior, and smiled. So the young Lyken thought to protect his daughter, did he? Well he'd just have to talk to Galen about that. His eyes narrowed when Tommy's head went down and Olivia called him out to join her on the grassy knoll.

"Hush, Livi, something's wrong," Tommy said.

The boy's senses were doing him well. He'd have to let Galen enter him in the junior security team. As Tommy was telling Livi they needed

to go back, Drake's ears went down when he caught scent of the wind. "Do you scent that?"

"Yes, what the hell is it?" Evan asked.

Drake's gaze darted to Tommy as he jumped in front of Livi, his hackles up, growling. "Holy Shit." Drake growled as a Golem leaped out of the bushes. Usually they were apathetic creatures, but this one, this one looked wild. Drake bounded out as the Golem went for Tommy. Kalana shouted his name as Livi screamed. Jumping up, Drake body slammed the Golem to the ground. "Get her out of here now!" he yelled to Tommy who nudged Livi, making her leave as

Evan and Galen stood beside him.

"Why are you here? Where is your master?" Drake ordered as Rhys and two vamps quickstepped in with the security team that had been patrolling the area. Drake shifted when Evan and Galen did. "Who is your master?"

The vamps grabbed the Golem when he would have attacked.

"He's not coherent," Evan said as he stepped forward.

Drake agreed. "You're right, he's in a frenzy." Nodding to one of his men, they grabbed the Golem's head tilting it back and forced his mouth open so he could get a good look at its tongue. "His master's marking is gone."

"What do you mean gone?"

Kalana asked as she shifted to her full height.

"He has no marking on his tongue; it's been removed. Whoever sent him here did it knowing the kids were out here alone."

"We have another spy," Evan said.

"It looks that way." Drake frowned.

"How do we control it?" one of the vamps asked.

The Golem was trying to escape, making the vamps work at holding him in custody. "The only way to control him is with magic and I don't know if anyone..."

"I do," Kalana said quickly. "Hold on, I'll be right back."

Drake's brow lifted when she shimmered out, reappearing moments later with Mari in tow.

"Damn I hate that shimmering shit, gives me a headache every time," Mari complained as she staggered a bit.

"Couldn't you find someone else?" Rhys snorted as he stopped Mari from falling.

"Up yours, blue eyes," Mari snapped.

"Oh, she noticed my eyes are blue." He fluttered his lashes. "I'm sooo flattered." He laughed, quickstepping when she swung her fist.

"Hey," Drake said. "Can we take care of this before you two continue your courtship dance?"

"This isn't a courtship, wolf face," Mari said as she stepped up. "It's him getting on my last nerve."

He smiled. "Well whatever it is, just take care of our little problem here, will you?"

"What makes you think I can?"

"You're a witch."

"Why, because you said so? What if I'm not a witch? What if I'm something else, but I don't tell anyone what I really am so they label me as witch?"

Drake's brows lifted. "Do you know what you are?"

"Of course."

"Can you take care of this?"

"Yes."

"Then why in the hell are you giving me such a hard time,

woman?" he growled, listening to Kalana's tinkle of laughter. "This isn't funny, Kay! Someone sent the Golem in to go after our daughter! They purposely removed their tag to let this thing go into a wild frenzy! I want the bastard found!"

"I do too," Kalana whispered.

"It's my fault I got him so riled," Mari stated. "I'm sorry. I'll make sure there are no underlying tags, and tag him to your clan; to Evan as Alpha. He'll have to answer all questions you pose to him at Evan's direction, alright?"

"Do it," Drake grumbled as he stood back and let her work. Wrapping his arm around Kalana when she stepped up to his side, he brought her close. He noticed Rhys'

gaze narrow as Mari worked and wondered why until he picked up a slight scent he hadn't caught before. She was right, she wasn't a witch, but who else could do this kind of magic or know of it? "Rhys!" he yelled.

The moment Mari was done she started falling. Rhys caught her before she went down and swept her up into his arms.

"Kalana, do you know?" Rhys asked as he turned.

"Drake told me," she answered.

"Other than that, had you any inkling?"

"No."

Drake smiled. "She's not going to like waking up in your home, never mind your room."

"She has no choice." Rhys grinned before quickstepping out of the cove.

"Oh I hope he knows what he's getting himself into," Kalana said as she chuckled.

"I'm sure he does." Drake turned to the Golem who was standing there unconcerned, his eyes droopy as he listened to Evan's orders. Golems were creatures made by magic with the sole purpose of serving their masters by doing everyday chores. They weren't a danger unless they had their tag removed. Drake's face started to turn serious again.

"But there's that frown again."

"We need to find out who sent it here and talk to our daughter about

her actions."

"I think we also need to reward Tommy for trying to protect her little ass."

Drake called Galen over. "I think Tommy needs to be punished for not notifying us of Livi's dash into the woods."

"I agree." Galen nodded.

"Starting tomorrow he'll be enlisted into the security branch to start training."

"I thought you said punishment; he's been hounding me daily to get him in."

Drake smiled. "Oh, I'm not done yet, and if you agree, I think it may just bring my wayward daughter around."

Galen chuckled as they headed

back to the manor. "Let's hear it."

* * * *

Drake stood in the library, with his feet apart, arms crossed over his chest as he eyed the two Lyken pups. Evan, Galen, Kalana, Sophie and Gwil were standing on either side of him or near the back. "Shift now," he ordered, watching as Tommy did so immediately. His eyes narrowed when Livi stayed in wolf form. "Don't even tell me you can't," he growled.

Evan shifted and went up to Livi. He growled quietly, letting Drake hear what he was saying. "You will do as your father says and shift."

Drake knew Evan's words as Alpha and his stature were overwhelming her, as they should if

she continued to be defiant. He could sense her fright, her eyes were wide, her head lowered and she automatically went to her belly before shifting back. He waited until after Kalana tossed a robe around her and Tommy before speaking. "You both disobeyed direct orders."

"But, Daddy, I..." Livi started.

"Olivia Teresa Roven! You will be silent." While he didn't yell at her, the tone of his voice had her mouth clamping shut and her head hanging. "Rules are made for a reason. The pack follows the rules and our Alpha. Don't you ever disrespect him again. Uncle or not he is your Alpha and you will obey his command. Do you understand that, daughter?"

"Yes, sire."

"What you both did was reckless and could have resulted with your deaths. That Golem was detagged and sent in purposely to attack you, Olivia, because you are my daughter and Evan's niece. You are a high member of this pack, which makes you a target for our enemies. You know of the danger that is surrounding Alston right now and you take off with no care to anyone. Did you even think of how your mother felt when she saw the Golem going after you? Did you think about how your recklessness would hurt her or me?"

Taking a breath, he felt Kalana's hand on his lower back and the calming streak that ran up his

spine. "From now on, you will follow pack rules, both of you, although your punishments will be very different indeed. Olivia, you will be under Sophia's guide. She will mentor you, as she is your Alpha female. If you disobey her, she will punish you and she has our permission as your parents to dole out any punishment she deems necessary." Drake held back the smile as she glanced at Sophia. "Oh it's not going to be easy, I can tell you that. Sophia came from a strict family and while she loves you as her niece, she will make sure you understand pack law. As for your mother and I, you're grounded for a month. That means after you're done with your schoolwork and

studies with Sophia, you will go to your room, sit on your bed and think about what you did wrong, unless any of us yanks you out to do extra chores. That means no television, no games, no friends and no shifting." Drake turned his gaze to Tommy. "Tommy, your parents will be determining your punishment at home. However, for pack punishment, you're enlisted into the security branch to start training. You start tomorrow after school, and I wouldn't go smiling yet, pup. You'll be training under me, so I suggest you start talking to the first-year juniors so you make no mistakes. I don't tolerate mistakes, do I make myself understood?"

"Yes, sir."

Drake nodded and was ready to dismiss the pups when Tommy spoke.

"Sir, may I say something quickly to Livi?"

"Granted." He gazed on the both of them as they turned to look at each other.

"Livi, I like you and want to be your friend, but I can't until you learn from Ms. Sophia. You wouldn't listen to me as your friend when I tried to teach you our ways and to keep you safe. So, I guess until you learn and treat me as your friend by listening to me, I can't be around you. So please don't talk to me until then."

Drake's gaze followed the pup as

he ran to his father and turned when he heard sniffles to see tears running down his daughter's cheeks. His lips thinned with the urge to gather her in his arms and tell her it would be all right, but knew if he gave in to her now, she'd never learn her lesson. "Go to your room, Olivia," he ordered softly, grabbing Kalana's hand when she stepped forward. He shook his head.

"Drake," Kalana whispered.

"She has to understand that her actions just caused her to lose her friend. We can't coddle her even though we want nothing more than to take her in our arms and give her comfort."

"I know, but it's just so hard."

Drake drew her to him as she wrapped her arms around his waist. He hugged his mate trying to give her solace as Galen left with Tommy, and Evan flash-stepped out with Sophia.

* * * *

Amias grinned. "Did he have to send a security detail with you?"

"He's worried," Kalana chuckled as she swept the floor.

"How's Livi liking her punishment?"

"Ha, not very well, but the thing that bothers her most is losing Tommy as a friend. He's walked right by her following Drake, which I think he does on purpose," she grumbled. Stopping, she leaned on the broom handle. "She's said 'hi'

real softly and he just walks right by, without looking at her or anything."

"Well you know, it's not only what he said to her, but with Drake as his mentor, he probably doesn't want his ass bit off if he disobeys an order. And I'm pretty sure, by the look on your shadow's face over there, that Drake ordered him to not speak to Olivia."

"What?" Turning quickly she caught Jonas losing his smile. "Is that true? Did Drake order Tommy not to talk to Olivia?"

"I can't say, ma'am."

"Oh, Jonas Tremont, you better spill right now before I dust you."

"Now come on, Kalana," he said, backing up as her wings opened.

"You know I can't go against one of Drake's orders. Amias, please!"

"Kalana, he's just doing his job." Amias laughed. "Take it up with Drake."

"Oh I will." Going full Fae, she had the store cleaned in minutes and then flew out the door like a whirlwind.

"Oh crap," Jonas muttered.

"You better hurry up, boy, if you want to keep up with her." Amias chuckled.

* * * *

Kalana was mad and she knew dog face behind her would be mind speaking with Drake that she was coming in hot and fast. She was so mad she didn't even sense the danger until Jonas yelled at her to

look out. Turning her head to the left, her eyes widened as a red fireball came right at her. Terror streaked through her, goose bumps rose on her flesh, knowing she didn't have time to get out of its way; a scream erupted from her throat as it hit, sending her tumbling through the air. Wrapping her wings around her body right before she hit the ground hard, she skidded and slammed into a parked car, wincing at the pain ricocheting through her body as Jonas yelled her name.

"Drake's coming but you have to get up!" Jonas yelled as he grabbed her around the waist.

"I'm trying," she cried as she looked down. "My leg's broke!"

"Get her to safety, Jonas, we'll cover you!" Rhys yelled as he appeared with two vamps and Mari.

"Too late!" Kalana yelled as another fireball came at them. Lifting her hands, she concentrated hard, sending it flying back the way it had come. The moment the fireball went back, Rhys and his team headed toward the threat. "Jonas, go with them, Mari will help me."

"My job is to protect you."

"And I'm ordering you to go help them; I'll shimmer if I have to." He nodded and he was gone. Lowering her hands to her leg, she glanced up at Mari. "It's bad."

"Can you heal it here?"

"I don't know. I'll try but..."

Glancing up, she saw Drake and his team flash-stepping in and out of time and pointed to where Rhys had gone. "Go there, they need your help!"

"Damn they're fast."

"Yeah," she breathed heavily.

"Almost as fast as Rhys, damn that made me sick. You guys and your flash-steps, shimmers and whatever make me nauseous."

"If you're not used to it—oh damn this really hurts." Running her hands over her leg, she pinpointed the location of the break and started healing it as Other Kin came out to join in the fight two hundred yards away.

"Kalana?" Amais said as he shimmered next to her in warrior

robes. "The alarm went up and they told me you'd been injured. How bad are you?"

"Getting better by the moment," she gasped. "I just need to concentrate."

"I'll get another healer to help you."

"No, let them tend to the wounded. I can finish this; I just need help home after."

"I need to go; one of the elders is down."

Kalana let him go, knowing the need to have all elders in attendance. They were strong apart, but together, they were unstoppable. "Have you seen Drake?"

"No." Mari shook her head. "Or

Rhys. The fighting is heavy and knowing those two, they're right at the front lines. I will say this: I've never seen so many people run out of their stores and homes to go fight for something."

Chuckling, Kalana laid her head back against the car she'd crashed into. "That's the difference between Alston and the human world. Out there, people will watch someone get beat up or robbed and look away. Here we jump in if one of us is threatened by the outside."

"Hey, are you alright?"

Kalana knew Mari had slapped her cheek gently, but it didn't faze her as she listed off into blackness.

Chapter 6

Her eyes fluttered to the bright morning light. Moaning she rolled to her side, the warmth of a large hand lying on her hip. "How long was I out?"

"Just the night and you had more injuries than just your leg."

"I figured." Opening her eyes she met Drake's gaze. "Were you injured?"

"Minor wounds."

"What attacked me?"

"An Ifrit. Apparently it was sent in by Gilfore."

"What's his beef with you Rovens?"

Drake smiled. "He was a rival for my grandmother, Gwil's mate. He lost and has held a grudge against us ever since."

"Damn, he's causing a lot of problems because he didn't get the woman."

"He's psychotic and was ousted from Alston when he tried to kill Gwil and Trelena on the night Gwil claimed her for mate."

Kalana lifted to her elbow looking down at him. "What aren't you telling me?"

"The attack is close; it can come as soon as tomorrow night. We're

expecting small attacks to be made between now and then to keep us on the move and try to tire us out."

"But you have a plan for that."

"Of course I do." He smiled, bringing her on top of him. "I met with Rhys and the other heads of security after the attack ended and we notified the Council of Elders of our plans."

"You had me healed."

"Yes, when I found you passed out, and Mari having a nutty because she couldn't get you to respond, I called one of our healers in. You need to be more attune to your surroundings."

"I would have been but I was mad at you."

"So I heard."

Her gaze went from his eyes to his hands gripping her thighs. "Drake, leash the claws."

"You need to be more careful; I'll not lose you to foolishness."

"And I don't want to be lost, so reel in your claws."

"I don't want you fighting."

"What? You can't be serious." Frowning, she sat back meeting his gaze.

"Oh I'm serious alright."

She smacked his chest. "Damn you, Roven, I have every right to fight."

"I want you in this manor away from the front lines. You're not a warrior, Kalana, no matter what your gifts or how well you fight."

Kalana snorted as he sat up,

bringing her into his embrace. "I can fight. How do you think I've lived on my own for nine years? And I'm a healer, one of the best, so don't you tell me I can't be on the front lines. I will not be far from you in case you need me." Her eyes fluttered as he rested his head on her shoulder, his warm breath flowing over the sensitive skin at the crook of her neck. Lifting her arms around him she held him close. "I love you, Drake, and I don't want to lose you. I'm scared."

"I am too, baby," he muttered. "I just got you back. I'd go insane if anything happened to you out there because I couldn't protect you."

"I'm not going to hide like a coward. I'm a Fairlawn and a Fae; if

we go down, we go down fighting."

Chapter 7

Kalana bolted upright at the alarm, the fog of sleep disappearing quickly. "Drake?"

"The border's under attack. Get dressed."

"Geez couldn't they pick a decent hour?" Grabbing her jeans, she started putting them on.

"Get your warrior gear," he said

as he turned, meeting her gaze. "They're in force; this is the big one."

Nodding her head, she ran to the closet as he took off out the door. Anticipation and anxiety ran through her as she dressed.

"Mamma?"

"Livi, the fight's here. I need you to stay in the manor with Mari, do you understand?" she asked as she turned full Fae. "Do not leave unless you have no choice."

"I understand."

"I love you." Kneeling she hugged her daughter quickly. "I must go, your father's calling for me."

"Be safe, Mamma."

"I'll do my best." Shimmering,

she met Drake and his security force running for the border on the most western side of Alston. Other Kin were emerging from all ends, the first wave of fighting forces were banding together.

* * * *

Kalana breathed heavily, glancing up from healing one of the Naiads. She turned when an explosion rocked the ground, eyes wide as a wave of energy came at them. "Oh shit!" Standing over the wounded warrior, she lifted her hands as the shock wave neared casting a shield over the triage area. "Ahhh." Her feet slid on the ground as the force pelted her back. Closing her eyes, she concentrated, holding the shield until the wave

passed. "What the hell was that?"

"Syren," Joshia mumbled as he rose. "If we had one up there, that wave wouldn't have gotten through. Thanks for the quick heal, Kay, but I need to get back in the river."

Kalana grabbed his arm. "Did you see Drake before you came in?"

"No. From what I heard, he was fighting on the left front. If I hear anything I'll let you know, but if he hasn't been brought in, take it as a good sign."

She nodded her head, watching him go before turning to the next round of wounded fighters coming in. Kalana knew they needed her with her level of healing ability, but she itched to be at the front fighting with her mate. Her grandfather had

been back once with a gash to his right forearm; she'd healed him and sent him back to the front lines. The one thing about an Other Kin war was it could go on forever. The people of Alston were lucky, not only had they developed a system of protecting the town ages ago, but they also had the advantage of home field territory and the assistance of those from Alston on the outside. No matter where one went, the call for help from Alston came first. She knew two days before the alarm sounded; the call went out about an all-out attack coming and Alston called home all its children. They would meet up on the outside, talk with those on the front lines here, and devise a plan

of attack. "You're good, go get something to drink and eat before going back." Patting the gnome on the shoulder she went to the next in line when Mirva blocked her way.

"You're the one who needs to go eat, drink and rest. You've been healing for six hours straight. Go save your strength, Kalana."

The side of her mouth lifted as she eyed the aging vampire. "I'm waiting for Drake."

"Darling, if he does come in through triage, you'd be pissed with yourself if you didn't have enough strength to be the one to heal him. Now go rest."

Lifting her hand, Kalana saluted her before heading over to the resting area. Grabbing a sandwich

and drink she sat down next to a broken tree.

* * * *

Kalana gasped, opening her eyes with the fear that she'd fallen asleep to see Drake kneeling in front of her. She blinked twice before she tossed her arms around his neck bringing him to her. "Oh Gods, are you alright?"

"A few bumps and bruises but doing good. You?"

Burying her face in the crook of his neck, he wrapped his arms around her bringing her to sit on his lap. "Tired. A lot of wounded, most not too bad."

"Mirva told me you healed for six hours straight. Don't you know enough not to do that? They need

you in case a critical comes through."

"I was waiting for you."

"I wasn't fighting the whole six hours, Kay. You know the waves schedules. Even though I was up there commanding with Rhys, I finally let Galen take over our forces with the third wave. Let's go home and get some rest before the dawn breaks."

"Pappy?"

"He chuckled as he walked by you, said you were drooling."

"I-I was not." Wiping her mouth, she glanced up at his smile and chuckled. "I'm gonna smack you."

"Please, I've had enough smacking for one day." Lifting her up into his arms he flash-stepped

until they arrived home. "I'll carry you to the shower and bed, but I'm done, babe. I couldn't love you even if I wanted to—and I want to."

"Don't worry." Kalana brushed her lips across his as they stepped into the bathroom. "Let's just sleep. We'll need our strength tomorrow."

* * * *

Kalana lifted her arm wiping the sweat off her brow. Frowning, she turned to see Marissa over by the water cooler. It wasn't the fact of Marissa being there, but something about Marissa's body language made her uneasy. "Philly, sense her for me." She called over to the young elf helping with the bandages. Turning quickly at Philly's gasp, Kalana almost missed the

liquid Marissa poured into the cooler.

"Kalana, stop her! She just poisoned the water!"

"Make sure no one drinks from it." Kalana shimmered, coming right next to Marissa and lifted her hand, her knuckles reeling with the impact of soft flesh and bone yielding under her assault to Marissa's jaw. The she-wolf flew back, landing on the ground, and Kalana was on her. "What did you do?" she yelled as she shimmered after her flash-stepping. Kalana followed her up to the front line. Giving it one last push she nailed Marissa from behind sending her tumbling over the war-torn ground. "Get up, you traitor!"

Marissa crawled to her feet as Kalana fully shifted to her Fae form. Stopping when she heard Drake call out her name, she held her hand up and back as the fighting stopped on both sides. "She tried poisoning the water cooler by Triage." Her eyes narrowed as Marissa stood with a smirk. "You dirty bitch, you've been feeding them information all along, haven't you?"

"You're damn right I have! This clan, this town, it's nothing but a joke! I want more and Gilfore is going to give it to me!"

"The only thing he's going to give you is a knife in the back," Drake said as he approached.

"Even if he did it's better than what you gave me! You chose this

half-blooded, dirty, human Fae over me!"

"You are a misguided, miserable woman, Marissa."

Kalana put her hand out stopping him from coming any closer. "No, husband, this is my fight."

"Oh you better believe it, you dirty half-breed!" Marissa yelled. "And after I kill you, I'm going to hunt down your spawn and kill her as well!"

Kalana roared with rage as she sped toward Marissa. Arms out, wings behind her, she flew with lightning-quick reflexes, smiling when Marissa shifted to wolf form. "That won't help you." Kalana knew when she returned home she'd

probably have to fight a Lyken or two so she trained heavily for a Lyken combat the entire time she'd been away from Alston.

Coming in fast, Marissa lunged at her. Ducking, Kalana came up, grabbed her around the middle and squeezed hard before throwing her to the side, knowing she'd just broken several of the she-wolf's ribs. Pausing, she stood there as Marissa slowly climbed to her feet. "When you concede, let me know." The corner of her mouth lifted at Marissa's growl and she shimmered, coming up on Marissa's side. Kalana joined her hands together in front of herself and swung them toward Marissa. She hammered Marissa in the snout with enough force to send

her flying twenty feet along the ground. Chest heaving, she stood as Marissa shifted to human form bleeding and bruised. Her eyes lifted when Marissa raised her hand toward the other side of the line. Kalana eyed an older man standing there. One she'd seen in the bar she'd worked at. He shook his head when Marissa cried out for him to help.

"Are you the one then?" Kalana called out, meeting the man's gaze when he lifted his eyes. "The asshole who started all this? Well come on!" she yelled as she shimmered to him.

She heard Drake's yell behind her as she came up swinging, taking the man to the ground. She

shimmered again, kicking him to the air. Unleashing her wings, she flew up meeting him in midair. Going a bit higher she turned feet first and came down hard, planting them in his chest. A roar of rage exploded in her when someone attacked from behind and lifted her hand. Her energies pushed the Harpie away before shimmering back to see Marissa standing.

Kalana glared at Marissa. "Let's go, bitch."

Yelling, they ran at each other. Kalana jumped four feet from her. Sending her energies to her fist, she could see the glow of chakra from the area and came down with a vicious hit to Marissa's head. Her chest heaved as she stood in a half-

kneeling position listening as Marissa's body hit the ground. Turning, she picked Marissa's limp body up and tossed her to the feet of the man she'd attacked. Her eyes narrowed as he started clapping with a sadistic smile on his face. She sensed Drake's approach to her side.

"I'd heard you'd grown in powers," Gilfore said.

"You have no idea."

"Oh I think I do."

Kalana chuckled. "That was but a sample. Take your bitch and go back to whatever rock you climbed out from underneath."

"You people don't seem to understand who's calling the shots here."

"He's a puppet on a string," Mari said as she came to stand beside Kalana.

"Well I wouldn't go that far, dear, but yes, you are quite right. There is something that wants to destroy this town more than me, so I decided to help out."

"What's he talking about?" Kalana asked as she glanced Mari's way.

"Yes, tell them, my dear, tell them."

"I don't know who it is only that it's evil and old. Really, really old," Mari whispered.

Kalana saw the other man from the bar step forward as Livi stepped up behind her. Now she understood why Mari was here. She must have

seen something where they were needed to defeat this army.

"If we knew how powerful you were, Kalana, we would have asked you to join us," the other man stated. His name was Theodoris and he moved to stand next to Gilfore.

"And you would have failed," Kalana replied. "I will die for Alston, its people and its land. Do not mistake the appearance I showed in the human world as the one I truly am." Kalana held in her gasp, her body jolting from shock as Gilfore brought his foot down hard on Marissa's head, killing her. "You're sick." She'd glimpsed Mari turning Livi the minute his foot lifted.

"Casualty of war." Gilfore let out an evil laugh.

"Why keep her in the back healing, Drake, when she should have been up here fighting on the front lines?" Theodoris asked.

"Because she's carrying, you fool."

Her eyes narrowed slightly as Drake turned her to him. His nostrils flared and she sensed the euphoric tendrils streaming through his blood with her words. "I'm fine," she breathed heavily.

"Get back behind the front line," Drake whispered.

"I can't, I'm needed here."

"Take Livi and Mari and go back to the manor."

"The three of us can stop their

assault but it takes a lot of energy out of us."

"There's over three hundred Other Kin out there; you can't stop them."

Her brow arched at his disbelief. "Have a little faith, would you?" Turning, she met Gilfore's gaze. "Take your minions, leave and don't come back."

"Or else what, you stupid little Fae?" Gilfore laughed.

"You'll all die," Kalana stated, listening as Gilfore and Theodoris chuckled. "This land is protected or didn't your evil puppet master explain that to you? Guardians were set in place in the time of the ancients." The land's power started seeping through her skin to her

bones and every fiber of her being. It was more powerful than that of shifting to full Fae. The deepness of her voice dictated her formation to the others. "The true hearts of this land will always prevail. Your assault will get you nowhere. Leave now and don't come back. This is your last warning."

"Who's pulling your strings, little girl?" Gilfore snarled.

Kalana smiled as Mari and Livi stood on either side of her. "The true heart and protector of this land," she replied as Mari stepped forward, letting lose an ear-splitting screech that hadn't been heard in thousands of years, affecting all those who were not of Alston. Kalana took Livi's hand, stepping

forward with her as Other Kin behind Gilfore and Theodoris fled.

"Who the hell are you?" Gilfore yelled as Theodoris screamed at the folk behind him to hold their positions.

"Are you leaving?" Kalana lifted her hands when he charged her, sending him back with but a thought.

"Kay?" Drake said from the sidelines.

"Stay back, it's out of our hands now. Get everyone off the front lines. Quickly."

Kalana stood in the middle of Mari and Livi.

Theodoris yelled, "Attack!" and their forces charged.

They three of them lifted their

hands; the energy being dispelled was enormous. She heard screaming and realized it was the three of them as the land's power poured through their bodies, using them as a conduit. Theodoris was thrust backward along with the entire front line of his forces. Others scattered, and when the powers started fading, Kalana knew that the threat was gone. "Drake," she gasped, her knees giving out as his arms wrapped around her exhausted body.

* * * *

"That was quite the display of powers," Drake muttered as he rolled onto his side when her eyelids fluttered.

"I told you they grew. Livi?"

"Is fine and resting in her room."

"Mari?"

"Rhys brought her to his home. Now, explain to me about these guardians you spoke of and how you channeled the land's energy."

Kalana smiled. "Mari and I were just the conduit. Your daughter is the real guardian and as she grows, so will her powers. Mari's been helping her with control. I'm not sure about the land and how the energies flow, Mari's the expert in that and she doesn't talk about it much. She says it's not her place."

Smiling, he lowered his head to the crook of her neck, breathing deeply. "Mmm, I can scent my child within you. Are you happy, Kay? Are you okay with becoming pregnant

so soon after our mating?"

"Yes," she whispered, her hand cupping the side of his head. "To both."

The warmth of his lips caressed her neck before he lifted his head and met her gaze. "I love you." Her soft smile had his heart exploding with joy.

"I love you, my great Lyken warrior."

Drake chuckled as he drew her closer. "So how are we going to handle Mari and Rhys?"

Kalana chuckled as she sat up, straddling his waist. "I don't know; let's figure it out later." Leaning down she met his kiss.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

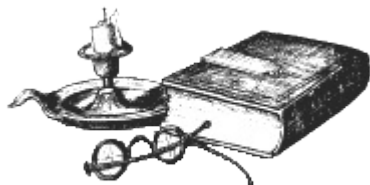
Erotic Romance Author C. A. Salo, loves to write Science Fiction and Paranormal.

Winner of Whiskey Creek Press Torrid's 2007 Best Selling Torrid title of the year, C. A. still does the *Snoopy dance* when one of her titles lands a publishing contract.

When not writing, C. A. enjoys home schooling her son, traveling, movie night with the family, watching the antics of the 'Princess' of the house—AKA: The cat J. Snuggling with her long-haired red dachshund, and digging with her hands in the soil to grow flowers, organic vegetables, and herbs for her family.

Visit my website at:
<https://sites.google.com/site/authorcasalo/>

For your reading
pleasure, we
invite you to visit
our web
bookstore



TORRID BOOKS

www.torridbooks.com