



*Gifted
by
Wendy*

Wendy M. Roth

GYPSY NIGHTS

by

Mandy M. Roth

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Dedication:

To Shane, for all that you do to help me do what I love. Thank you.

Chapter 1

Gitana divided the mint rhizomes out carefully on the countertop. She glanced at the parent plant and bent down to take in a deep breath. The scent of peppermint never got old. She concentrated on cutting the runners into the sizes needed to replant them. She was just about to make another snip when the bell, which signaled that a customer was in the shop, dinged. Dusting her hands off, she gave them a quick swipe across her smock before reaching up to adjust her falling hair.

Hours had been dedicated to trying to unlock the secrets of keeping her unruly hair up, but after twenty-nine years, it was still a mystery. It was hard to fight the gift that Mother Nature had given her, wavy dark brown locks that seemed to grow faster than a weed. She shrugged and gave up.

Oh, well, you can't flaunt what you don't have.

Leaving the greenhouse, she headed into her tiny herb shop. It provided her with enough income to pay her bills and she enjoyed it. "Be right with you," she called out, hurrying to hang her smock on a hook and adjust her hair--again.

"Take your time," a deep male voice said, rolling over her, through her, before finally settling in the apex of her thighs.

Gitana glanced up, and drew a deep breath in, ceasing to fidget with her smock. Every now and then she'd get a health conscious hot guy who wanted to jump on the homeopathic bandwagon, but never had she had a man as stunning as this one walk in before. The tall stranger stood smiling at her just inside the doorway. His onyx hair hung in loose curls over his shoulders and blended in with his black leather jacket.

He slid a pair of leather gloves off his pale hands. His long fingers seemed to caress the shell they'd been enclosed in. Whoever he was, he'd managed to turn the simple task of removing a glove into an erotic moment. She'd never wished to be a pair of Italian gloves before in her life, but now she did. The thought of having his long fingers sheathed inside of her was almost too much.

"Umm, hello...is there anything I can do to you...I mean for you? Can I help you?" Gitana rolled her eyes slightly, embarrassed by her slip of the tongue. A slow devilish smile crept onto his handsome face and she reddened.

Great, blush a little more, why don't you.

He took a step toward her. "Oui, I was told that you were the woman to see if I wanted to start my own herb garden." His voice was laced with a heavy French accent.

She gave him a sideways glance. He didn't look like the gardening type. No, he looked more like the millionaire international playboy type. Jet setting and yachts came to mind when looking at him--not herb gardens. But, if he really wanted one, she'd help. "Sure, what size garden do you

have in mind...?" She didn't have a name to address him by, so she let her question just fade away.

"Je m'appelle," he said, stopping quick and shaking his head slightly. "Pardon, I did not mean to be rude. My name is Sebastian Rolle. I purchased the house across the way." He pointed out toward the woods. "I am thinking of having several gardens put in."

Yep, just as she thought, he wasn't the gardening type. He probably already had a crew of twenty men waiting for him to tell them where to dig. "You can have your landscaper call me. I'd be happy to help him out with what he needs."

His brow furrowed. "Je ne comprends pas--I do not understand. I have no landscaper. I will be handling all of this on my own."

She let out a tiny laugh and covered her mouth, hoping that he wouldn't notice. Much to her dismay, he did. "Do you find that amusing, Madame...?"

"Gitana," she said, walking out from behind her counter and extending her hand to him. "Sorry, no...I don't find it funny. It's just that you don't strike me as the type who'd want to get dirty."

"Getting dirty is one of my many specialties." He slid his cool hand over hers and cupped it gently. For having had gloves on, Sebastian's hands were like ice. She knew just the place to warm them, but refrained from commenting on it. Pulling away slowly, she noticed that she'd left dirt on his hand. She waited for him to try to find a place on his designer shirt to wipe it, but he just glanced down and smiled.

"Looks like I am well on my way to being an avid gardener."

Impressive, indeed, perhaps she'd underestimated him. Sebastian's shoes alone were worth more than her entire wardrobe and yet here he was in her tiny shop, wanting her assistance. The best part of it all was that he was her new neighbor. "You bought the old McGregor estate?"

Sebastian nodded. "Oui, it needs quite a bit of work, but what can I say? I fell in love with it." He brushed his hair back and exposed the most beautiful pair of navy blue eyes she'd ever seen. He winked at her and made her jump. A nervous laugh escaped her. "Would you mind if I use your restroom? They will not have my water on for some time yet. I

attempted to find other accommodations for the night, but it seems that this quaint little town has none."

"Sure, umm, you'll have to use the one in my house. The one here in the shop has been acting up for weeks now. I've been meaning to call someone, but with spring just around the corner I've been too busy."

Chapter 2

"You are sure that I am not putting you out?" Sebastian asked as Gitana poured him a cup of tea. A piece of her chestnut-colored hair fell forward and covered one of her large brown eyes. He had to fight the urge to reach up and brush it out of the way. From the moment he'd seen those chocolate-colored eyes that were the doorway to her soul, he'd wanted to touch her and to know what it would be like to be buried deep within her while she called out his name. The very idea of filling her eyes with lust, with passion, shocked his senses, and left him shifting awkwardly to hide his erection.

He'd been surprised when she'd not only invited him in to use her restroom, but had also insisted that he stay for some tea and a bite to eat. It was clear that Gitana had no idea what he was, or she would have never bothered offering him food. Sebastian was old enough now that he could hide some of the oddities that normally betrayed his kind.

It was easy for vampires to lose their humanity if they didn't work to maintain control. His eyes would be the first thing to give him away if he didn't control them. They had a tendency to swirl with vibrant shades of navy and black whenever his emotions ran too high or too deep. The next, and generally most recognizable, trait was his teeth. He'd mastered the art of hiding his fangs when he smiled and talked, long ago. Kissing was a different situation. He'd spent centuries trying to work the kinks out, but every now and then he still drew blood. He thought of his lips on Gitana's, how tempting hers were, calling out to him, but the last thing he

wanted to do was to hurt her. He'd spent too long searching for her to allow anything happen to her.

It'd taken Sebastian almost thirty years to find Gitana, but here she was. She was even more beautiful than her mother was. He hadn't even thought that possible. Her mother, even in her final moments, looked like a gift from the Goddess herself. He'd come across her mother, Tawni, during the war between the Roma (Gypsies) and the demons. Christians had long mistaken the Roma as being at one with the demons. They'd tired of this misconception and decided to banish a few well-known demons to another realm. Their power was great and they succeeded, but they also managed to bring the wrath of the entire demon community down on them. All walks of demon life attacked them and in such numbers that few tribes survived.

Sebastian cringed when he thought of the heinous acts his own kind had committed during the height of the war. Word had spread of a tiny group of healers who had come to help the victims of the war. He'd been unable to stop the others from going once they heard that the healers were Romas, so he'd followed in the shadows and did his best to save as many innocent lives as he could. The war between good and evil had been a bloody one. It still claimed victims although not in the same numbers it once did.

He could still remember how scared Tawni was when he found her pregnant and hiding in the woods. She kept calling out the word mullo and covering her face. Sebastian had been alive long enough to know that mullo meant demon in her native tongue, and that the young girl was right, that's exactly what had attacked her tribe.

Tawni went on and on about how she was pregnant with the chosen one, and that was why she and her people were attacked. He tried to tell her that it was a random act of violence, but the more he thought about it, the less random it seemed. The vampires had been ordered to seek out the Gypsies in the area and destroy them. When a master vampire ordered his people to do something, they did it without question, at least all but Sebastian did.

He carried the very pregnant Tawni to the nearest group of human soldiers and left her near their base. He'd thought that would be enough. He'd assumed that the young woman would seek help, but he was wrong. When he returned the next night, he found her bitten and on the verge of death. The mullos had returned and found her alone. She used what magic she had left to fight them off, but she was unable to hold them all back.

Sebastian tried to pick her up and carry her all the way into the Roma base, but Tawni wouldn't allow him to touch her until he promised to make sure that her child was safe. Reluctantly, he agreed.

"You will be the one for her. It has been foreseen," she said, and with that Tawni, the tiny Roma woman, died in his arms. The actions that followed would haunt him until the end of his days. In the height of his glory as a blood drinker he would have taken great pleasure in mutilating a human, but that had changed. Sebastian had softened over the years, and forcing Tawni's child into the world was bittersweet for him. He'd aided in saving the tiny baby's life, but had been unable to save her mother. Sebastian took the baby and returned her to the survivors of the brutal attack. That night he'd been plagued by visions of Tawni and by her final words to him. The next night he tried to find the Roma tribe that he'd left the baby with, but they had vanished. He'd spent the next thirty years trying to find the child again.

Now, as Sebastian watched Gitana prepare a sandwich for him, he had a hard time believing that she was the same child he'd seen so many years ago. Gone was the tiny, purplish, screaming bundle he'd carried, wrapped tightly in his coat for miles in the pouring rain. He could still remember how loud the thunder was that night, and how severe the storm was that followed. He'd feared that the tiny baby girl would not make it, but she did. Now, Gitana was a creature of such beauty that he thought for a moment that his heart had actually started to beat. Of course, that was ridiculous, he hadn't fed today and it wouldn't beat again until he took the blood of the living into him.

"Would you like some mayonnaise?" Gitana asked, glancing at him and then the sandwich.

Sebastian wasn't sure how to respond to that because he wasn't entirely sure what that was. He could eat human food, but it did little in the way of sustaining him, so he tended to avoid it. Gitana wrinkled her nose up and gave him a very adorable look.

"It's okay to tell me what you do and don't like. I won't hold it against you when I help you with your herb garden."

"Very well then, no, I will pass on the may-o-nnaise. Thank you, though."

She took time to cut his sandwich and arrange it on the plate, just so. It had been ages since someone had done that for him--over a hundred years. He sighed and thought of Tawni's last words. Could Gitana really

be the life mate he'd been searching for? Could he really be the one for her? He looked around the tiny yellow kitchen for signs of a man's touch. Dried herbs and flowers hung upside down from the ceiling and lined the walls. Gitana was an excellent housekeeper, at least from what he'd seen so far, so he couldn't gauge by the number of dishes she had out. A more direct approach was in order.

"Your property is almost as large as mine. It must be hard on you caring for all of it. I am already asking myself why I bothered to buy such a large house and so much land when there is only me."

Gitana sat down at the other end of the table and looked out the window in the direction of his house. "It's not so bad. You get used to being alone. I purchased this place right out of college. My husband...."

The phone rang and she stopped talking. Sebastian felt as if his shell of a heart had been ripped from his chest. He'd been searching for centuries for that perfect someone, his one true mate, and now that he had finally found the one who was supposed to be it, she was married.

Sebastian tried to be polite and block out Gitana's conversation but his vampire hearing made it easy for him to pick up on almost any noise. He perked up when he heard an older woman's voice. The woman was talking about a man named Aaron, and about how Gitana should return his phone calls.

Gitana turned in towards the phone and tried to whisper. "Grandma, I'm not going to call him, and don't you call him either. The divorce is final and the restraining order is clear, if he sets foot on my property, I'll call the sheriff. I have to go now...yes...I'll call you in the morning."

Sebastian's blood boiled. Who was this Aaron and what had he done to his Gitana? If he found out that Aaron had harmed her in any way, he would personally snap his neck. Right after he drained him of his blood.

* * * *

No sooner did she hang the phone up than it rang again. Gitana picked it up expecting to find her meddlesome grandmother on the other end and

felt her stomach drop out when she heard Aaron's voice. She glanced over at her guest and hoped that she didn't look as nervous as she felt.

"Gitana, don't hang up. I just want to talk to you."

"You were told not to call here. I've changed my number enough," she said, as quietly as she could.

"Come on, baby. I just want to see you, that's all. Your grandmother thinks we should try to work things out."

"She also thinks that she can communicate with the dead and read people's fortunes, still want to go with what grandma thinks?" She didn't wait for a response. "I have to go. Don't call here again."

"Don't hang up on me, Gitana, I'm warning you."

She put the phone down and shut the ringer off. Aaron could redial her number all night, and she wouldn't have to be bothered with him. She turned her attention back to Sebastian. His jaw was tight and his body language said that he was agitated.

"Is everything alright?" he asked, his gaze narrowing.

She glanced back at the phone and hoped beyond hope that he hadn't overheard her conversation. She'd had a hard enough time meeting and keeping men around due to Aaron. Her ex-husband had made it his mission in life to see that she was single. He'd once beaten up a man she'd gone out to dinner with and threatened any others that he found out about. Aaron had made it hard for her to do much of anything. He'd been possessive when they were married and he was still doing it now, two years after the divorce had become final.

Gitana gave him a slight grin and sat back down in her chair. "Yes, everything is fine. So, tell me, how do you like the house so far?"

Good girl, change the subject.

"Ah, the house is perfect. Well, it is perfect minus the lack of water, electricity, and heat. They cannot turn anything on until the contractors are done making upgrades. I apparently purchased a money pit, but after having met my new neighbor, I believe it is worth my while." He winked, and her heart fluttered.

Gitana brought her hand to her face as she smiled. If Sebastian was flirting with her, he was doing a great job. If he was only being polite, well, that was still good too.

She watched him stir his tea. He leaned forward and placed his spoon on her saucer. Her eyes bulged. One of her grandmother's specialties was reading fortunes. She could do it in just about anything: tealeaves, water, crystal balls, even candles. Sebastian's very casual discarding of his spoon was a sign of a marriage to come--at least, it was if you bought into divinations. If grandma was right, then Gitana was heading back down the aisle soon. She laughed a little at the absurdity of it all, even though part of her wanted more than anything for that to be true.

Chapter 3

It felt so wrong to him to invade Gitana's mind, but Sebastian was finding it hard to control himself around her. His rage over her ex-husband calling her had set him on the edge and he'd suddenly found himself deep within her mind, exploring her most private of thoughts. He had been pleased to find out that he'd inadvertently given her a sign of a pending marriage and was even happier to find that she hoped it was true. He wanted nothing more than to find his mate and spend eternity with her. And part of him knew that Gitana was the one.

Sebastian's only complaint about his potential mate was that she always covered her smile. He'd get her to stop doing that soon, even if he had to hold her hand away from her face while he made love to her, and he had no doubt that he would make love to her very soon. He would stop at nothing to see that happen. He would be a gentle lover for her, if that was what she needed, different from this Aaron fool who obviously didn't know how to treat a woman of Gitana's caliber.

He had to fight to keep a feral smile off his face when he heard Gitana thinking about his chiseled face, thick neck, and how his chest looked

from the little bit she could see. He was pleased that she found him attractive, but was even more pleased by how perfect she was. In his eyes, there had never been a woman as beautiful as Gitana. Her olive skin and delicate features made him want to wrap his arms around her and protect her from the world. He had none of his normal primal urges to use a woman and discard her after he was satisfied. No, Sebastian wanted nothing more than to please Gitana.

He took a few bites of the sandwich she'd made him and tried to wash it down with the tea she'd poured him. The last thing he wanted to do was offend her, but trying to push down human food on an empty stomach was never a good idea. After he had blood, he would sometimes eat a few strawberries or have a glass of wine. He should have fed before he came to see her, but his excitement over finally finding her had clouded his better judgment. He needed to go and feed soon, or he'd be unable to control himself much longer. As much as he hated to leave her, he didn't want her to see his demon manifest itself. He rose from his chair and picked up his plate.

Gitana rushed around the table and took it from him. "Here, I'll get that."

"Merci, and I hope to see you again soon. I really should be getting home."

She shifted and bit at her lower lip. Instantly, his body tightened and his cock hardened. Thoughts of her lush lips wrapped around his shaft flooded him.

"Are you sure? I mean, you don't have any utilities hooked up yet and it's supposed to be cold tonight. I have a guest bedroom. You're welcome to stay in that."

He couldn't hide his shock. He never expected her to go so far as to invite him to stay the night. Sure, he'd hoped, but he never really thought that she would. Truthfully, he didn't mind sleeping in a house with no heat. His body stayed cold regardless of his surroundings, so it didn't matter. As much as he wanted to be with her, in her, the need to feed was too great. He was about to decline her polite offer when he sensed her fear of being alone. Aaron's call had unnerved her and Sebastian wanted to have a go at him if for no other reason than that. Standing slowly, he nodded.

"If you are sure that it would be no trouble, then yes. I would welcome the opportunity to not only have a warm bed, but the company of a beautiful woman as well." His comment was suggestive, just as he

intended it to be. Gitana blushed and it warmed him. He wanted to touch her, hold her in his arms and feel the length of her body pressed close to his.

Suddenly, the lights flickered and then died. Gitana yelped and crashed into the corner of the table. Sebastian's vampire eyes could see perfectly in any light, and he used his speed to cover the distance between them. Touching her arm lightly, he whispered in her ear. "It is okay. A storm approaches from the west." He ran his fingers down her arm. She tipped her head back, exposing her smooth neck to him, and let out a soft, sexy sigh. "Can you smell it...the rain I mean."

Gitana took in a deep breath and held it for a moment. "Yes, I do smell it."

She turned into his arms and tightened under his touch. Her body wanted him. He could sense it. But she was unsure of what to do next. Sebastian also sensed fear in her. It was unclear if her fear was of him or for him. There was only one way to find out.

Leaning down to her, he let his lips hover just above her cheek. He wrapped his body around hers, embracing her, holding her tight. "Ma vie, you are shaking. Do you not like storms?"

"No, I've never liked them. I have these dreams sometimes of..." She stopped short.

He moved his head more and blew out a cool breath onto her cheek. It wasn't hard to notice the sweet smell of her nervous sweat and the soft scent of vanilla that she seemed to secrete. He wondered if her cream would taste every bit as sweet as it smelled.

Thunder boomed around them and the window lit up with the blue flashes of lightning. Gitana jumped and threw herself against Sebastian, leaving his body tightening and his cock painfully erect. He closed his eyes for a moment to try to regain his composure, but being this close to her proved to be too much.

He wanted to have her naked in his arms, to taste what wonders lay beneath her long red skirt, and to press his cock deep within her velvety folds. At least, if he'd taken blood today, he could have held his sexual urges at bay. But now he wasn't sure if blood would do much in the way of calming him while he was around Gitana, and that was a sign that she was a candidate to be his mate.

* * * *

Gitana held tight to Sebastian's shirt and took in the scent of his Dolce and Gabbana. It was one of many types of cologne that Aaron had owned. He treated his colognes the same way he treated his women. He used them quickly, changed them often, and tossed them aside. She shook her head, not wanting to associate Aaron with Sebastian any further. Something about Sebastian felt so right, and she wouldn't let her ugly past interfere.

Gitana thought about pulling away from Sebastian. She hardly knew him, and yet she had her face pressed against his hard chest. To top it off, she'd invited him to spend the night. It was a bold move on her part. She'd never done such a thing before. He'd seemed reluctant at first, but when he finally agreed to stay, she'd felt like she could fly. She wished that she'd had the nerve to ask him to stay with her in her bed, but she'd chickened out and offered him the spare room.

He moved his arms lower, leaving his hands resting on her hips. Tipping her forehead down, she let it rest on his chest. She wanted to run her hands up and through his long black curls, to feel the muscles in his neck as her fingers danced along them, and to know what it would feel like to see them straining above her as he worked his body in and out of hers. The lights flickered back on and startled her. She pulled away, bringing her hand to her face as she laughed.

"Geesh, I'm jumpy. Sorry, I didn't mean for you...you didn't have to..." She wasn't sure how to thank him for comforting her. She'd never had a man do that before.

Aaron's temper always prevented him from being too nurturing. He liked to blame it on his "condition," but a year into their marriage she realized that was just the way he was, mean and domineering. Sebastian seemed different. He seemed to have a tender side that he wasn't afraid to let show, yet something dangerous lurked just below the surface.

Her grandmother had told her that Aaron was the one for her, her true mullo mate. In her language, mullo was a term used to describe demons like vampires and werewolves. The prophecies had told of Gitana's coming, and that one day she would mate with a mullo. Their union

would produce a ruler that would end the fighting between the Roma and the demons, saving mankind in the process. She'd been raised to believe in demons and creatures of the night. She'd seen so many different types of things that were thought to exist only in nightmares that they no longer fazed her.

That's what had made Aaron seem perfect for her. Being a werewolf himself, he knew about how strange her life was and he understood the traditions of her people, the craft that they practiced, their vows of secrecy. Normal people just didn't get it, and letting them know that there were demons living and working among them would only cause mass chaos.

There was a loud crash and the house seemed to shake for a brief moment. The lights went out with a pop. Gitana screamed and fell backwards, tripping over the leg of the table. She waited to hit the floor, but didn't. Sebastian was suddenly there, holding her tight, protecting her. He sparked something primitive in her, something she'd never before experienced. Raw animal lust overcame her and she almost begged the stranger to take her to bed, to ravish her, to use her until their bodies were spent.

His face was so close to hers that she couldn't help herself. Leaning up, she planted her lips on his. Part of her expected him to just drop her. Another part hoped he'd reciprocate her advances. He did.

Sebastian's cool tongue slid into her slightly parted lips and inched its way around her mouth. Tiny, low moans and throaty laughs passed between them as they embraced. She shifted her legs a bit in an attempt to stop the dampness that he was creating, but only managed to stimulate her body more. Slick, wet cream lined her inner thighs now. As she slid her fingers into his silky curls, her dampened legs gave out from under her. In an instant, Sebastian had her swept up and off the floor.

It was hard to make out his face in the dark, and the sporadic flashes of lightning weren't helping much. Sebastian's pale skin looked blue as each bolt struck out. He walked with her in his arms, carrying her toward the back of the house. He was doing remarkably well for a man who had never been in her home before, especially in the pitch darkness. He stopped only once to open her bedroom door before he continued onward.

Sebastian laid her on her bed gently and moved his body over hers. His kisses came faster now but were every bit as rewarding as the first one. He was so much taller than she was that her legs stopped at just below his

knee. She moved her legs out and allowed him to settle against the soft material of her long red skirt.

* * * *

Sebastian used his arms to prop himself up to keep his full weight from bearing down on Gitana. She seemed so tiny to him that he didn't want to hurt her. He'd spent too long looking for her to risk anything happening to her now. He'd thought that she would have a hard time breaking through the barrier of him being undead, but he was pleasantly surprised to find out that Gitana not only knew creatures like him existed, but had been married to a werewolf. His chest tightened as he thought of her sharing her bed with another, and he silently cursed himself for not finding her sooner.

No man but me will ever touch you again, my beautiful Gitana.

Chapter 4

She'd never taken a man she'd just met to bed before. Gitana had known Aaron for close to six months before she found herself in his arms. This was a first for her, and so far, it was wonderful. Sebastian's kisses moved down her neck. It took everything in her not to push him off her and run from the room. She had to keep reminding herself that Sebastian didn't pose the same risk to her throat and chest that Aaron had. She'd learned to be cautious about baring her neck to Aaron around the time of the full moon. He'd come close to ripping her throat out during intercourse once. Thankfully, he'd managed to stop himself before any real damage had been done.

It felt good to relax and let Sebastian's fingers and kisses run all over her. So far, he was being a gentleman. It was Gitana who finally crossed the line and pulled his shirt out of his pants. Running her fingers over his back, she felt his smooth, cool skin give way to thick raised welts. Sebastian tightened under her touch as she traced the length of the scars. His kisses slowed and he pulled back from her. He kissed the tip of her nose softly. She pulled her hands away from his back and tried to cover her mouth as she smiled. Sebastian caught hold of her wrist and pulled her hand to his lips.

"Why do you cover your mouth when you smile?"

Gitana tried to lower her face from him and pull her hand away. She hadn't realized that she covered her mouth when she smiled, but it made sense. After years of living with Aaron she'd started to feel ugly, inferior. He made it a point to tell her daily that she was nothing like the wolf bitches he had lined up. He would go on and on about the she-wolves beauty and their knowledge behind bedroom doors. Aaron had made Gitana feel ugly, and not even divorce could erase that pain.

He bent down towards her and kissed her cheek. "Let no man tell you lies, Gitana. You are tres jolie, and to say otherwise is a lie."

Gitana's stomach tightened, and she had a hard time holding back her tears. Only in her wildest dreams did men say such sweet things to her. To have one here with her, whispering all the right words was a bit overwhelming. The Goddess must have sent Sebastian to her. There was no other explanation for him. He was just too perfect, but the best thing about him was that he wasn't a mullo--he wasn't a demon.

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Sebastian kissed Gitana's lips and tried to kiss away the salty tears on her cheeks. For the first time in over two hundred years, he felt as if he might cry as well. Some of his pain was Gitana's, but the rest was all his own. He'd been eavesdropping on her thoughts and picked up on how relieved she was that he wasn't like Aaron, that he wasn't a demon. What had Aaron done to ruin her so? How could a werewolf allow himself to harm a woman he loved? If he ever found out, he would kill him, so it was best that he not know all the details.

He wanted to take Gitana and mate with her the way it had been written long ago, but it would be a lie. She had the right to know what he was before he made love to her. If she found out that he was a vampire, she would send him away. But, he'd rather know that he'd been honest with her, than use her like she'd been used before. The Sebastian of centuries ago wouldn't have thought twice about taking advantage of Gitana, but not now.

It was so much easier then, he thought to himself as he kissed along her collarbone.

He couldn't remember the exact date of his change, but he did know that it had happened close to fifty years ago. He'd eaten his fill of human blood in a whorehouse outside of New Orleans and was ready to retire for the day. It was no different from the thousands of other pre-dawn expeditions he'd been on in his life, that was, not until he found himself on his knees with the sun pouring down on him. It'd seemed odd, at first, for the sun to be up so early, and even odder for him not to be burned by it.

Soon after his morning in the sun, Sebastian began having bizarre dreams that involved helping humans. He'd wake covered in sweat and wonder how this could be. He was a vampire, and vampires don't sweat. His tolerance for sunlight grew. He did not burst into flames as the rest of his kind did, but it would leave him drained, so he still tended to avoid the sun if at all possible. But that wasn't the strangest part of the slow change. Over time Sebastian had begun to lose the taste for the blood of the innocent victims he used to feast upon. Now, he took care to make connections at local hospitals. And if he felt the need to hunt, he'd only hunt the humans who deserved to be bled. Those were always easy to find. He could read their minds and know what they'd done. The world was a better place without killers on the street.

The only thing that mattered now was Gitana. Sebastian couldn't remember a time that he'd ever felt this way for a woman. It was hard to pull away from her when all he really wanted to do was mold their bodies into one and feel how glorious it would be to release his seed into her. She tried to pull him to her, but he kept her at bay. Her big brown eyes looked hurt, and instantly Sebastian second-guessed his decision to wait until she knew what he truly was.

I pushed too hard, moved too fast. He'll never be back, he heard her thoughts as clear as if they were his own. He wasn't sure how to comfort her without revealing that he had the power to read her mind.

He was about to say something endearing, something comforting when his vampire senses kicked in and told him that danger was near them. A tingling sensation that supernatural creatures gave off crept up Sebastian's spine. There were at least two, possible three threats. Tipping his head to the side, he took in a deep breath. Over the sweet vanilla smell of Gitana he picked up the scent of wolves. His body stiffened and his jaw tightened as he thought about Gitana's ex-husband trying to hurt her.

"Sebastian, are you okay? Did I do something wrong? I'm not normally like this. I'm sorry. You came here looking for help with a garden, and I do this...I'm sorry...I..."

"Shh, my sweet Gitana, you are perfect. You could never do anything wrong. I just need to...." The telltale howls of a wolf rose over the wind of the storm.

Gitana grabbed hold of his shoulders and stared up at him, a look of sheer terror on her face. "Stay here, and do not move," she said as she wiggled out from under him.

Rolling off her, he climbed out of the bed and watched as she smoothed her skirt down. She unpinned her hair and let it fall in dark waves down her back. She was breathtaking. "Sebastian, I'm sorry. I should've never let this happen. I need you understand...promise to stay here."

She glanced around the room and moved toward her dresser. Curious as to what she'd do next, he watched in silence as she lit several candles and took one in her hand. The soft candlelight reflected off her lovely face. He wanted to take her in his arms and kiss away the worried look that now clouded her beauty, but he had to deal with the danger lurking outside first.

Howls sounded in the darkness again. Gitana jumped and then regained herself before heading toward the door. Sebastian moved behind her and she spun around on her heels, glaring at him. Even angry she made his body burn. He wanted her now, more than ever. "I told you to wait here!"

The sound of glass breaking, followed by a loud thud filled the room. Sebastian tried to push past Gitana without hurting her, but she grabbed hold of his arm. He could have shook her off without effort, but he would never do that to her. He could never harm her. Taking her hand, he lowered it gently. "I will be back. Stay here."

She huffed and grabbed hold of him again. "Okay, rich Frenchman, I can see that you don't listen very well, so this is for your own good." She moved her hand over the candle and through the flame. It didn't harm her. Instead, the flame burned bright blue. "Spirits of the past, those beyond the grave...who no longer live today...keep the living here to stay." The candle flared, and the temperature in the room dropped as she looked up at Sebastian. "I'm sorry, I should have told you that I was a..."

"Witch, yes, but I assumed as much."

Leaning up, she kissed his cheek and he wanted to confess his secret to her then and there. He didn't. "I'm so sorry. I'll lift the spell come morning, but for now I need to know that you're safe."

Chapter 5

Gitana ran from the room. She felt horrible using her magic to imprison Sebastian, but if what she feared were true, Aaron would do far worse to him if he got the chance. She wouldn't let that happen. She'd spent hours burying crystals around her house to ward off evil and keep those intent on doing her harm out. Even though she didn't actively practice the craft anymore, she knew that she was powerful. Her grandmother had raised her to understand all the power she possessed and to respect it. It was about time that Aaron learned to do the same.

She was concerned about the amount of energy she'd used to confine Sebastian to her room. It took a great deal of her "juice" to call upon the spirits of the dead for assistance, but it was necessary for his protection. It hurt her heart to think that come morning he'd be gone. Normal, everyday people weren't used to the power of the Roma Witches and of the supernatural creatures that surrounded them. She fought back the tears that were forming in the corners of her eyes and headed toward the banging noise.

Something slammed around in her greenhouse. Aaron couldn't get into the house if his intent was harmful. What could it be? Fear gripped her as she made her way through the house, through the shop, and finally into the greenhouse. A blast of cold air hit her, reminding her of Aaron's cold heart. She shuddered.

"Aaron?"

Gitana took another step and her candle blew out, leaving her standing in the pitch-blackness of the night. Putting her hand out, she felt the edge of the long potting table that ran the length of the room. She moved down it, walking slowly to avoid tripping on any garden hoses, and listened for the sound of the wolf that she knew was near. Even with the wind blowing and the rain pounding hard against the glass enclosure, Gitana knew that a wolf was there watching her. Stalking her. Coming for her.

"Aaron, stop it! I'll talk with you, but this is ridiculous. It's too close to the full moon for you to be running around like this. You of all people know how hard the beast is to control this time of the month."

She wasn't sure why she was bothering to talk to him. He only ever heard what he wanted to hear anyway, wolf form or not. Sliding her hand over one of her potting shovels, she picked it up and walked with it held out. It wasn't the best weapon to have, but it was silver and would inflict damage if need be.

She heard the growl a moment prior to seeing the wolf before her. Startled, she stepped backwards and raked her hand over a piece of broken glass. She grimaced. Suddenly, sound she'd heard only a few minutes before made sense. The wolf had broken into her greenhouse. She hadn't thought to surround it with crystals as well.

She debated between pulling the large shard of glass from her bleeding hand, or keeping her eye on the big white wolf that stood before her. The wolf won.

"Who are you?" She quirked an eyebrow. "You're not Aaron, he's brown."

The wolf growled, baring its teeth. She didn't run or scream. She knew better than to let it sense her fear. Werewolves fed off fear. They enjoyed it more than the kill itself. Aaron must have sent one of his pack members for her. She should have known. Aaron was, after all, alpha male for the

local pack. It would make sense that he wouldn't want to get his hands dirty.

Gitana glanced down at her hand and realized how much blood she was dripping. The wolf noticed too and crouched down, ready to strike. Another bolt of lightning flashed and a swooshing noise shot past her head. The greenhouse lit up as the storm's pyrotechnics continued. Suddenly, Sebastian was there in front of her, blocking the wolf's path. He stood tall, his large muscular frame filling the aisle easily. A gust of wind blew in through the broken window, lifting Sebastian's hair and tugging on his clothing. For a second, she couldn't breath, couldn't think, couldn't move.

Protect him.

"NO! Go, Sebastian! Go!" She tried to get him to move, but was too late. The wolf lunged at him. Sebastian's hand flew up and he caught the wolf by the throat. He held it up in the air and glared into its eyes.

"Go back to your master and tell him that Gitana is under my protection now. And if he tries to harm her again, he will have me to deal with. And I am not one to be crossed." He threw the wolf out the broken window. She watched as it scrambled to get to its feet and took off for the woods. Sebastian turned to her, his face looked hard, foreign, frightening.

"Sebastian?"

He brought his hand out to touch her cheek, but she backed away. The hard edges of his face softened as he glanced at the broken window. "S'il vous plait...ma amour ...I could not let them harm you. I wanted to tell you the truth. I never wanted you to find out this way. I am sorry. I will go once I know that you are safe." His lip curled upwards before he turned away from her and she caught a glimpse of his fangs.

He's a vampire, a demon... a mullo.

Gitana backed up, afraid of what he might do to her next. Living with a monster for so many years gave her insight into just how ruthless they could be. She stopped when her foot hit the entrance to her shop. Sebastian had been able to cross the threshold to her home with the crystals in place. That meant that his intent had never been to harm her.

He turned his back to her and put his head down. She knew that whatever she decided next would determine her fate. If she let Sebastian walk

away, then that would be one less demon to worry about in her life. Her heart raced. The thought of not seeing him again sickened her. She held firm to her spot, afraid that she'd throw herself into his arms and beg him to love her. The urge to go to him remained, did that mean he was the one that the prophecies foretold would come. Could he be her mullo, her mate, the future father of her child?

* * * *

Sebastian stood there struggling with the decision he'd made. It had been right. He would not have been able to go on "living" if he'd let anything happen to Gitana. But, now she knew he wasn't human, that he wasn't even alive. Her spell to keep him in the room had done nothing more than tickle when he walked out. It was only designed to hold the living captive, not the undead, like him.

"Gitana, you are hurt. You should wash that out before it gets infected." He kept his back to her, unable to face her disapproval.

"What? How'd you know...?"

"I can smell your blood. The scent of it calls to me, taunting the demon within. I can hear it, your blood, pumping through your veins. It is like a drug for my kind--you should run before you become my addiction." His words were harsh, cold. It was more for his sake than hers. He'd fallen in love with her the moment he'd laid eyes on her, maybe even before that, and he wasn't sure he could survive being cast aside.

"Well, since you're such an expert on me and my blood, come help me clean this cut out."

Sebastian turned half-expecting to find her standing behind him with a stake. Gitana stood there holding her bleeding hand up to him with a hopeful look in her eyes. It was a remarkably brave move on her part. The Romas were well aware of vampires and the demons that they carried within, for Gitana to offer her hand up, full of fresh blood, said that she trusted him. But could she ever love him?

He took her wrist and pulled her closer to him. A six-inch piece of glass was rammed into her olive flesh. "If I pull this out, it will bleed more. We should take you to the hospital. You require stitches."

She moved closer to him and placed her other hand on his chest. "I need you. You can heal this. I've heard stories about a vampire's bite, and how your saliva can close a wound."

"I cannot take blood from you."

"Why? I'm not good enough?"

He sighed. "If only that were true."

"Then why?"

"Because, I do not want you to fear me come morning," he whispered, his eyebrow rising slightly.

"Pretty presumptuous, don't you think? What makes you think you'll be staying the night?" The idea of having his body deep in hers sounded more and more appealing.

He looked down into her dark eyes. "You invited me to sleep in the guest bedroom, remember?"

I'm such an idiot. He heard Gitana's thoughts as if they were his own. How could I ever fear you? You make me feel safer than I've ever felt in my life.

That was all Sebastian needed to hear. Bending down, he wrapped his arms around her tiny waist, and lifted her up and onto the long table. Her face was so close to his that he had to fight to keep from drowning her in kisses. He lifted her hand to his face and gently removed the large shard of glass. She gasped and closed her eyes. He knew that she was in pain, and he wanted to punish the person responsible.

"I will kill him if he sends anyone else here."

Gitana's warm hand touched his cheek. "Don't think about him. I just want you to think about me."

Sebastian put his lips above her bleeding hand and let the coopery smell of her blood seep into him. "Thinking of you should not be a problem." Working his tongue into her cut, he slid it around, sucking gently as he

went. He could taste her power, magic, and most of all her desire for him. Visions of Tawni's last words and of Gitana talking with her grandmother hit him. In his mind, he saw a petite older woman who looked a little like Gitana smiling as she told a tiny dark-haired child of her future.

"You will love a mullo, he will give you the gift of a child, and the two of you will raise a future ruler," the older woman said.

The little girl smiled up at the woman. "Yes, grandma."

Sebastian's eyes flickered open, and he found that he was planting tiny kisses on Gitana's healed hand. He looked up into her dark eyes and dreaded the fact that he had to clear something up for her. Lying to her was not an option.

"I am not the mullo that your grandmother told you about. I can't be. Vampires cannot reproduce, at least not vampires that are as old as I am."

She put her finger to his lips. "Shh, don't worry about things we can't control. The attraction is here and it's real. Forget about prophecies and make love to me."

His cock instantly hardened. Of course, he would make love to her. He just didn't want her to have false hopes about who he was. He wondered why Twani had told him that he was the one for Gitana when she knew he was a vampire and that vampires couldn't reproduce. Gitana's slid her hands into his shirt and he stopped caring about anything other than this moment.

Gitana worked his shirt open and ran her warm fingers over his hard chest. He managed to ease her blouse off her and stood back for a moment to soak in her beauty. She was perfect, her breasts perfectly proportioned to her frame, her nipples dark and calling to him. Bending his head down, he drew one into his mouth. He rolled it around in his mouth, taking pleasure in her sweet tasting berry. Her fingers laced in his hair and then moved down his back, taking his shirt with them.

Gitana lingered over the scars on his back. Her tiny fingers worked their way over each section of raised skin. "Who did this to you?"

He didn't want to answer her, wanting only to feel her smooth skin and be allowed to take pleasure in her warm body. Gitana leaned forward and pressed her mouth to his ear. "Who would do such a thing to you, and why?"

Sebastian moved his hands up, cupping her breasts gently. Running his thumbs over her erect nipples, he took in the scent of her cream. Knowing that he was what made her wet only served as encouragement. Caught up in the moment, he gave into her questions. "My old master had me whipped for disobeying him."

"What did you do?"

"I saved an infant's life and tried to save her mother's, too."

"I hardly think that deserves punishment."

He didn't want to talk about this with her. If she had any idea what other horrible tortures he'd been subject to, she would never touch him again. The horrors in the months surrounding her birth were too painful for him to think about.

Gitana tugged at his earlobe and sent a wave of lust running through his body. "Saving an infant's life entitles you to a reward," she said in a sultry voice. Her fingers slid into the top of his pants, caressing the line of black hair that ran from his navel to his groin. She freed him from the confines of his pants, letting them slide down his body. Her warm fingers wrapped around his cool cock and he tipped his head back, savoring the moment he'd always dreamed of.

"Gitana."

"What would take the pain out of your eyes?"

Until Gitana had spoken, he'd never realized that he still carried the hurt of that night with him. The torture at the hands of his old master was secondary to the grief he felt for not staying with Tawni.

"You," he said, kissing her dark hair out of her face. "You could make it all go away." He moved her long skirt up her silky legs.

"What do you want?"

"Je veux faire l'amour avec toi."

He moved his hands up and found the center of her world. His fingers glided over the tiny patch of dark curls that hid the wonders of her body. He let his finger run over her swollen mound and felt her writhe under his delicate touch. He slid his middle finger into her wet entrance and found

the hot paradise that he longed to be in. She contracted around his finger, almost virgin-like from not having sex with a man in over two years. He eased her open more with a second finger. Hot juice flowed over his hand, and he used it to wet his thumb as he stimulated her clit.

* * * *

Gitana grabbed onto Sebastian's upper arms to stay upright. Her stomach tightened as he brought her within inches of her climax. As good as it felt, she wanted more. She wanted to feel what it was like to have the length of his pale rod deep within her. She tried to get Sebastian to stop, but his fingers started to swirl, working her to the point that she could stand it no longer. Her legs shook as the orgasm swept over her. She pulled her body closer to his and watched dreamily as he pulled his finger from her pussy to his mouth, taking with him a string of her cum.

Sebastian licked his fingers clean, reached down, grasped his cock, and brought it to her entrance. The mushroom-shaped head of his shaft pushed against her but did not enter. His lips met hers, and she savored the taste of her sex on his mouth. She opened her mouth to him and, as his tongue dove in, so did he. She cried out as his girth spread her open. In one fluid movement he was sheathed deep inside her, tearing at her, pulling her to the point that pleasure and pain blurred, leaving only passion.

Tugging on her hips, he brought her body to the edge of the table, allowing him to dig even deeper. She cried out and reached for anything that would help her focus on the pleasure instead of the pain. Sebastian's hands found hers and their fingers intertwined. This simple act of holding hands was more intimate than any other level of sex, and it was just what she needed to be able to focus on him.

Sebastian brought her hands up and put them behind his head. She laced her fingers together and held tight as he rode her body. The table shook, plants tipped over and off the high countertop. Gitana didn't care. She'd give up anything to have Sebastian with her, even if that meant giving up her destiny, her mullo. Sebastian felt right--to hell with fate.

Looking up into his blue eyes, she watched as another flash of lightning illuminated his pale face. His rhythm slowed almost to a complete stop,

and he glanced past her. She tried to follow his gaze but he caught her chin in his hand and brought her lips to his.

* * * *

Sebastian kept Gitana's mouth occupied while he looked out at the shadow that loomed in the distance, along the edge of the tree line. He could smell the scent of the wolf and sense the hatred coming from the figure. He had little doubt that the visitor was Aaron, Gitana's ex-husband.

"Bastian?" Gitana said his name, or the shortened version of it, with so much love and concern that he almost forgot about their visitor.

Glancing back up, he sensed the alpha in the man, and wanted to show him who was truly the dominant male in this situation. Sebastian concentrated on his thrusts, easing his cock in and out of her tight silk binding. She felt so good, better than he could have ever dreamt. Each movement, each connection forged an even greater bond between them. Her channel fisted him, gripping his cock tightly.

"Uhh...Se-bastian."

Gitana's body prepared to climax again. The feel of her legs tightening around him and her increased moans threatened to make him explode. He knew that he should stop making love to her, but every fiber of his being wanted to stay in her, rooted deep. In addition to that, their late-night visitor needed to know that Gitana was not only under his protection, but was also his mate.

Gitana's tossed her head back. "Do it," she said in a low sultry voice. He didn't need to ask what she meant--he could read her thoughts. She wanted him to make her into a vampire too.

He kissed her neck softly and her pussy constricted around him, milking him. A sharp pain tore through his chest and lost his rhythm, his control. His balls moved up, his cock twitched, shooting forth his seed. Shaking, he filled her with his come, his essence, his love.

"Bastian."

He looked off into the distance and saw the shadowy figure receding into the night.

* * * *

Aaron watched from the edge of the property as the vampire fucked his wife. He didn't care that the law said they were divorced. Gitana would always be his. He couldn't believe that she'd let that corpse have his way with her. His fists burned for the change, but if he let himself shift this close to the full moon, then he wouldn't be able to return to human form for several days, and he needed to be able to function to do what needed to be done.

He wanted to leap on the vampire and tear his throat out, and he would when the time was right. It was bad enough that the vampire had threatened him through one of his people, but he had taken Gitana as well.

"You will pay, vampire, and so will you, Gitana."

Chapter 6

Gitana picked up the last of the broken glass and placed it in the plastic trash bin. Glancing around her greenhouse, she smiled. Sure, she needed to get a window replaced and had smashed four flats of caraway during the night's festivities, but being with Sebastian had made it all worth it.

She scooped the tiny fern-like foliage up off the table and placed it in a small pile. She would use it in something, and at the rate she was going, she'd need it more than ever. Caraway worked great for soothing upset stomachs, and hers had been in a knot since she woke to find that

Sebastian was gone. She'd been telling herself all morning that he probably had to go home before sunrise, but it seemed odd that he never said good-bye.

The bell to the shop rang. Gitana jumped to her feet and ran to the shop, expecting to find Sebastian there. She held her smile, even though it didn't quite reach her eyes when she saw one of her most loyal customers, Mrs. Mills.

"Gitana, how are you dear?"

"Fine, and you?"

"Oh, I could be better. The doctor wants to put me on 'happy pills.' Have you ever heard of such a thing?"

Gitana laughed quietly to herself. She had indeed heard of happy pills. She'd entertained asking her doctor for antidepressants during her divorce, but had managed to find some herbal remedies that had worked to lift her spirits.

Walking over to the back shelf, she pulled a box of tea down for Mrs. Mills. "Here, have look at this and see if you'd like to give it a try. It might help."

"Thank you, dear. You never did tell me why a girl with a degree in herbology and enough courses in holistic healing to qualify her as a doctor sticks around this tiny town. You could be making good money out in California, you know."

"Yes," Gitana said, laughing softly. "I suppose so, but I like it here. This place called to me and I answered. What more can I say?" She turned to head back out toward the greenhouse.

"Gitana, wait, I drink this and what will happen?"

Gitana smiled and took the tiny box of tea bags from Mrs. Mills' hands. Turning it over, she put her fingers on the ingredients. "See here, it contains Albizzia bark, it'll help improve your mood, trust me."

"Oh, I don't think a tea is going to cut it. The doctor thinks the pills will help, but I'm not too sure."

She smiled and shrugged her shoulders. "You should do what your doctor recommends and what you're comfortable with. I can't make your decision for you. I do know that within fifteen minutes of having a cup of that your mood will improve. Talk to your doctor first to be sure that this won't counteract with your medication and get his opinion on it. If he gives it a thumbs up then I say go for it."

"I will, and thanks, Gitana. You're a life saver."

She placed the box of tea in a brown bag and bid Mrs. Mills good-bye. She generally enjoyed seeing her, but today her thoughts were on Sebastian. Last night had been both amazing and terrifying. She'd given herself over to a vampire and expected him to love her back. She was a fool--she realized that now.

It was true, what they said about hindsight. Looking back, after they'd made love, Sebastian had seemed preoccupied, distant. He had followed her back to her room and held her in his arms. Once he thought she'd fallen asleep, he began pacing the room and watching the windows. She coaxed him back into bed with her, but knew it wasn't where he wanted to be.

It would serve me right if I never saw him again. What was I thinking, sleeping with a man I'd just met?

"Gitana?" She cringed as she heard her grandmother call out to her from the greenhouse.

Chapter 7

"You should come in and eat. Your food is getting cold. Always playing with those plants...I tell you, in my day we did not spend all our time with our nose in a book or hand in a pot, now in my day we...."

Gitana waved at her grandmother. She meant well and Gitana knew that, but it didn't change how annoying she sometimes came across. She was tired of hearing about dead customs and ways of life, and most of all she was tired of hearing about being the chosen one. Lately, that was all her grandmother seemed to want to discuss. Gitana's thirtieth birthday was fast approaching and with it came the superstitions of old.

"You should call, Aaron. He should have dinner with us. He should come and celebrate with us."

Gitana dug down deep and cut through the mint rhizomes she'd been trying to root. "Shit!"

"Such a mouth on you. It's no wonder you don't have a husband."

"I'm not feeling very hungry." Please don't bring up having dinner with Aaron again, please.

"Of course you're not hungry. It's not popular for you young women to eat now. No, now you all starve yourselves trying to look like fifteen-year-old."

Turning, Gitana gave her grandmother a stern look. "I don't starve myself, and I can't help it if I'm petite. Besides, you're shorter than me, in case you haven't noticed."

"Gitana, your mother would not be pleased to know you're speaking to me this way."

She turned, wiped the mint rhizomes onto the floor, and glared at her grandmother. "I wouldn't know what my mother would think. I've never met her. I don't have the luxury of being able to communicate with the dead, Grandma...Tell me what she thinks of me now? How does she feel about me divorcing my mullo? Huh? Does she care? Does she even know?"

Her grandmother pulled back into the doorway slowly and clasped her hands together. "I shall ask the Goddess for forgiveness for you. You're upset about the vampire."

Gitana froze and stared at her grandmother. "What did you just say?"

The old woman shrugged, smiling sheepishly. "He came to me while I was walking home the other day in a vision. I looked down into a puddle

of water and saw you in the arms of a vampire. I don't think it's wise to fall in love with a man so soon, especially not a vampire. You should be careful with him."

"Have no fear. He's gone, and I don't think that he'll be coming back."

"Hmm, that is a shame. I did want to meet him. Your mother wanted me to ask him something. It seemed important to her, but I wasn't clear on what it was." She lifted her hands in the air and dismissed the whole thing. "Oh well, I'll contact her later and find out."

Rolling her eyes, she watched as her grandmother made her way back into the house. Grandmother had been communicating with spirits ever since Gitana could remember. It used to bother her when her grandmother would pull out a pocket watch to communicate with the dead and ask it questions, waiting for it to swing to and fro signifying the answer. Over time, Gitana grew accustomed to her grandmother's theatrics and learned to ignore her. She'd even secretly practiced some of the old ways.

Chapter 8

Sebastian sat with his head against the abandoned warehouse wall, trying to make sense of what he'd done. The last thing he remembered was making love to Gitana. A sharp pain had seized his chest while he released his seed into her. Afterwards, he took her to bed and held her warm body in his arms. He laid there for hours as the pain in his chest continued. It wasn't until he'd heard the pounding in his own ears, and felt his body warm ever so slightly, that he realized his heart was beating.

It was normal for his heart to beat during a kill, while he fed from the victim and let their warm blood flow through his veins. Sebastian hadn't fed all day. He'd had only a tiny drink from Gitana's wound, and it wasn't nearly enough to qualify as a feeding. His heart should not have started to beat again, yet it did. An overwhelming hunger had come over

him. He'd spent centuries learning to control his demon, but looking at Gitana's sleeping body had nearly sent him over the edge with carnality.

He fled before she woke and did not even dare kiss her good-bye. He was blind with the raw need to hunt, to kill. He woke to find himself here, on the floor of the old warehouse with three bloody corpses at his feet. It wasn't as easy for him to read people once they were dead, but it could still be done. Two of the men had been involved in the rape and murder of at least three girls, but the third he couldn't read. That meant that he was either an innocent or a supernatural. Sebastian had no memory of tasting his blood, and that was the only way to tell if he was supernatural or not.

The thought of having killed an innocent human was tearing him apart. He'd been "clean" for close to fifty years now. Others like him had a hard time understanding how he could go cold turkey like that, and so did he. There was no logical explanation for his behavior. He had simply lost the taste for anything other than the blood of evildoers.

The afternoon sun was high and shining through the upper windows. Beams of it surrounded Sebastian as he staggered to his feet. This much direct sunlight should have knocked him out, leaving him injured. Other than feeling slightly sluggish, a bit under the weather, and hornier than hell, he was fine. Looking down at his bloodied hands, the vampire in him picked up on the pulsating vein in his wrist. His heart was still beating.

Chapter 9

Gitana pulled the remaining weeds from her flower garden and gathered them to the side. Later, she'd add them to her compost pile, using them to fertilize next year's herbs.

"Ah, Dicentra Formosa," a voice said from behind her.

She looked up and had to shield her eyes from the afternoon sun. There was a tall man standing dangerously close to her. His attire screamed scholar. His tiny circular, wire-framed glasses gave his otherwise too handsome face a boyish charm. She glanced at his short brown hair and thought it complimented his green eyes well.

Smiling, he pointed at the flowers before her. "Dicentra Formosa," he said again, his thick British accent becoming apparent.

Gitana followed his gaze and then it clicked. "Oh, yes, I'm sorry. These are Bleeding Hearts, yes. I take it that you're a fellow plant lover?"

He flashed a smile that was so innocent it made her want to like him. "I'm William, and yes I do enjoy studying plants, among other things."

Rising to her feet, she brushed her hands on her long black skirt. The Roma in her had conditioned her to wear dresses to do most everything. For the most part, she'd severed her ties with the old ways, but still felt more comfortable in skirts. She double-checked her hand for dirt before extending it out to William.

"Hi, I'm Gitana, what can I help you with today?" She bent to pick up the pile of weeds. "I closed the shop up early today, but I'd be happy to take you in if you'd like."

Suddenly, he was behind her with his hand on her shoulder. Dropping the weeds, she spun around fast, unsure how he'd managed to move so quickly. William's green eyes began to glow, taking on a supernatural appearance. Terrified, she swung out at him and he caught her wrist with his hand. "I'm not here to hurt you. I'm here to warn you. Sebastian is a friend of mine."

Gitana stopped struggling and stared at William. "You're not a vampire?" It was more of a question than a statement.

He smiled down at her. "No, I'm not a vampire, but I'm not a completely normal human either. I possess the gifts of magic and immortality, I am also a member of the Council."

The very mention of the Council made her take a step back. The Council was in place to oversee the supernatural community, and when they paid you a visit, it normally ended in death. They were the only checks-and-balance system in place, and they'd been around for thousands of years.

The thought of the Council coming for Sebastian scared her more than the thought of Aaron showing up again.

The fear must have shown on her face because William put his hands up to signify that he wasn't a threat. "I'm not here to collect anyone. I'm here to warn you and Sebastian."

"Sebastian's not here." She almost added that she didn't know where he was, but that didn't seem wise. If this man proved to be a threat then it was best he think Sebastian could show up at any moment.

"I know that Sebastian's not here." A rather knowing grin spread across his face. "I'm the one who lured him away."

"You what?"

"I lured him away. It was simple. I used my power to override his system. I imagine that he felt a hunger like he'd never felt before."

If William had indeed used magic to overload Sebastian's system, then it was amazing she was still alive. "You say that you're here to warn me about something, yet you make a powerful vampire's blood thirst border on uncontrollable. Hmm, doesn't sound like you're much of an ally."

He took a step toward her and she backed up. "You are right to assume that, but I am one of your only allies on the Council. I knew that Sebastian would never harm you. He hasn't spent all these years looking for you to let a little thirst for blood ruin his chances."

She'd only just met Sebastian. How could he have been searching for her? Opening her mouth to demand answers, she caught sight of a large green car pulling down the lane. She knew that car. It belonged to Aaron's right-hand man, Travis. Frantic, she searched for an easy escape route for William. He'd be no match for a werewolf in the woods behind them, and he'd have to cross paths with Travis to get to back to his car-- that was no good either.

"Come on!" Grabbing hold of his hand, she pulled him and ran toward the greenhouse. William never protested. He simply ran behind her. They entered the greenhouse, leading him down the aisle and into the shop. She slammed the door closed behind them.

"Care to tell me what that was about?" William asked, sounding winded.

"Gitana, I know you're in there! Come on out! Aaron wants to see you," Travis called from outside. She peeked out the window and watched as the young blond walked toward her shop door. "Aaron just wants to talk to you, I promise."

The minute Travis' hand touched the door handle it was propelled off. "What the hell?"

William looked over at her and his eyebrow rose slightly. "Did you do the protection spell?"

"Yes, its only purpose is to keep anything out those is intent on doing harm to me. Looks like Travis had a little more on his mind than just talking." She laughed softly.

William made an odd noise, clearing his throat. Gitana glanced over at him, unsure what the problem was. He didn't look much like the fighting type. Maybe he was scared. "You're safe in here."

He chuckled. "I'm not concerned about my safety. I'm concerned about yours. The Council has no idea that you're a master of the craft. This will only serve to make them more intent on their mission."

Why did it matter if she could perform magic? She'd never harmed an innocent person, and rarely used her gifts. The look in William's eye told her that there was more to the council's "mission" than he was letting on. "What do they want with me?"

"That's what I came to talk to you about."

Travis tried touching the door one more time and yelped as his hand was knocked off again. "Gitana, you can't hide in there forever, neither can your vampire friend!"

The mention of Sebastian made her pulse race and her throat dry. Aaron obviously knew about him. Now, it was just a matter of time before he attacked. He'd kill Sebastian, and if she were lucky he'd kill her too. The idea of being at Aaron's mercy scared her more than the thought of ceasing to exist.

Travis climbed back into his old green car and left. He'd be back and he wouldn't be alone.

"Would you like some tea, William?" It was a ridiculous question, but it beat screaming like a mad woman out of fear, so she went with it.

Chapter 10

"What do you mean the Council wants us dead?" Gitana choked on her tea.

William set his cup down gently and put his hand over hers. "Not both of you, they'd settle for just one. Sebastian's made many friends on the Council over the last fifty years, so they will most likely be coming after you instead."

Somehow, he wasn't making her feel any better about their situation. "So, you're telling me that they think that the prophecies about Sebastian and I are true? That's ludicrous, I mean, he's a vampire. He said it himself, he can't have children."

"Sebastian isn't a normal vampire. He's never been normal, not even when he was human. He was a clairvoyant and possessed an untapped level of magical power. The people in his village called him the boy with clear sight. His sire saw this in him and that's why he brought him over against his will. The 'change' affected Sebastian's powers and he wasn't able to use them in the same way he once had. Fifty years ago they began to reemerge. They're different now, as to be expected with his condition, but they are there." He took another sip of his tea and continued. "I started studying Sebastian over a hundred years ago. He wasn't the monster that the other vampires seemed to be. No, he was kind, intelligent, and he became my friend in a relatively short period. He's a good man and that's why I am here. I think, no I know, that he'd turn into the greatest threat mankind has ever seen if anything happened to you."

She sat there thinking about what William had told her. If the Council wanted someone dead, then they always got their wish. It was just a matter of time before their wish came true about her. Suddenly, her cheeks felt flushed and her stomach twisted into a knot. Pain gripped her

and she let out a soft cry. Clutching her stomach, she looked at William, pleading silently for help. He jumped to his feet and came to her side. He touched her forehead and his eyes widened.

"It's as I thought." He didn't wait for her to ask anymore about it, he just picked her up and took her in his arms. She let her head lay on his chest for no other reason than it felt incredibly heavy. "You need to rest."

Nodding, she pointed him in the direction of her room. William walked her in and laid her on the bed gently. He sat next to her, taking his jacket off and tossing it aside. He rolled up his sleeve and thrust his wrist out in front of her mouth.

"Drink, your body needs it."

Stomach bile rose quickly at the suggestion of drinking someone's blood. William put his wrist closer to her mouth. "Your body temperature is lower than it should be, and I noticed your sensitivity to the sun earlier. I'm not saying you're a vampire, but I am saying that something is happening--changing you somehow. I suspected it might work this way. You and Sebastian were destined to be mates. In order for him to be able to offer you the gift of a child he needs to become more human, and in order for you to accept his seed, you need to become more like him."

Covering her mouth to keep from being sick, Gitana shook her head violently. Drinking blood was wrong and reserved only for mullos.

I'm not like that--I'm not a demon.

There was no way she could become more like Sebastian. She was Roma, and they were the chosen protectors of the mullo. Each had sworn an oath to never allow themselves to be swayed by the darkness the mullos presented.

It couldn't be.

Another sharp pain twisted at her gut, a hunger rivaled by no other ripped through her body. She clenched her teeth in an attempt to stave off the desire to feed. She could hear William's heart beating, his rich blood pumping through his veins. So close, so easy to taste, to touch.

She dug her fingernails into her into the palm of her. The added pain did little to help ground her. The power within her wanted to press her mouth to his wrist and sample his sweet offering.

No.

Thankfully, William pulled his wrist away slowly. Her resolve was all but gone. Whatever was happening to her, was taking control fast.

William forced a smile onto his face. "There's more than one way for a vampire to get what it needs...a vampire can feed off sex and lust as well as blood."

The mere mention of sex sent her body into a burning rage. No amount of self-mutilation could stop help bring her back now. Her gaze narrowed. She looked out from her eyes, yet was separate from it all. William inched closer and the controlling power in her set its sights on him. The curve of his jaw, and the way his tan skin held the tiniest bit of a five o'clock shadow caught held her attention. Moisture collected between her legs at the thought of having William's hands run all over her body, fondling her breasts, inching over her mound, slipping in and out of her slit. She reached for him and he nearly fell off the bed trying to get away from her.

"William," she said, slowly, her voice not her own. "Let me touch you. Let me run my mouth over you and taste every inch of you. You know you want me to. I can see it in your eye."

"Gitana, no, I can give you my blood--not sex. Sebastian's one of my closest friends and I..."

Reaching down, she planted her hand firmly between his legs, cupping his bulge. It hardened. A clever grin spread across her face. "Je veux faire l'amour avec toi." The words ran off her tongue yet she understood not what she said.

"It's Sebastian's demon coming through. You said that you want to make love to me," William tensed up. "Please, Gitana. Try to fight it. This can't happen."

The tugging in her gut encouraged her to rub the long line of his clothed erection. With her free hand, she removed his glasses, her lust filled gaze meeting his head on. Gitana cupped William in her hand, working it up and down him and licked his cheek. She'd never needed sex so bad in her life. William could deny wanting to sleep with her all night. His hard cock told her the truth.

* * * *

Sebastian climbed out of the shower, pulled a pair of black jeans on, and towel dried his hair. He was still a little taken aback by the events of the day. Waking up surrounded by dead bodies used to be his favorite pastime. It was no longer so. He'd taken the time to dispose of the bodies, sickened by his own lack of control. His only hope was that none all of the men were evildoers. Thinking that way didn't lessen the shock of it all. He'd have spent more time searching for clues to what had happened at the warehouse, but he wanted to get back to see Gitana. He was addicted to her. For him, she was as vital as blood, maybe more so. He would have gone straight to her, and made love to her, but he'd been covered in so much blood that he was afraid he'd scare her.

Tipping his head to the side, he ran a hand through his wet hair and reached for his cologne.

Sebastian...Sebastian...its William, come quick, Gitana needs you. He heard one of his oldest friends say in his mind.

Time seemed to stand still, and his gut tightened--Gitana needed him. The vampire within took hold, allowing him to defy gravity. A normal person would have been able to cover the distance between his house and Gitana's in ten minutes it took him mere seconds. He thrust her shop door open and sniffed the air. Blood, fear, rage, sex--all assailed his supernatural senses. He licked his fangs and took a moment to breathe deeply. Now was not the time to lose hold on his demon.

"William?"

Sebastian... in the bedroom. Come quick.

Utilizing his speed, he raced to the bedroom and pushed the door open. It took a moment for the sight before him to register. William was backed up against the wall--his shirt undone, his bare chest showing, while Gitana crawled before him on her hands and knees, tugging at his pants. William had a death grip on his pants and was fighting to keep them up. Sebastian could smell William's desire to fuck Gitana in the air, and the fact that he wasn't was the only thing that saved his life. He may be an old friend, but Sebastian would kill any man that touched his Gitana.

"Sebastian!" William cried out, looking extremely relieved to see him.

Gitana glanced leisurely back at him and gave him a wicked smile. One that screamed sex and the promise of endless pleasures between the sheets. Gone was the beautiful smile she'd hid so many times before. No, this smile was one he'd seen on female vampires. It was a smile that said that they needed sex to quench their thirst, and that they would take it at any price.

He shook his head. "Non, this cannot be. I never brought her over. I never drew blood from her." As he said it, he remembered the cut on her hand. He'd lick it clean before making love to her. A vampire knew better than to draw blood from person of magic and then deposit their seed in them. He'd done this to her. By drawing her blood and then coming in her, he'd forced an exchanged of essences--of life forces.

He dropped to his knees. "NO!"

William fought Gitana off and came to his side. "I don't think you did this intentionally. I think it was meant to happen. Hell, the last case of a vampire turning someone like this was recorded over two thousand years ago. I don't think she'll change all the way, and she almost vomited when I offered her blood, so that's good. Her hunger comes in the form of sex. She's new to this and she can't control it, that's why I called you. I didn't want to have to...."

Sebastian looked up into his friend's eyes and nodded. "Merci, you are a good friend."

William sighed and looking forlorn. "No...I'm not a good friend, Sebastian. I was sent here to kill Gitana, and I lured you away with the intent of doing it. It was me who called your demon out and led you to slaughter the others."

Sebastian was too stunned to do anything. He fell back onto the floor and put his head down. His oldest and dearest friend had betrayed him. "Pourquoi--why would you do such a thing?"

"The Council fears this union. They never thought you'd find her again. In fact, they have spent years feeding you false leads to keep you away from her. They even sent a replacement here to try to fool everyone into thinking that the prophecy had been filled, but Gitana saw through him. And when they divorced the Council put extra men in the area to watch her."

"Je ne comprends pas." It made no sense. To go against the Council's wishes meant death. "Why are you telling me this? Why didn't you...?" Sebastian couldn't bring himself to ask William why he hadn't carried out his orders. If he had completed his mission, Gitana would be dead right now.

William touched his shoulder. "You are the closest friend I've ever had, and when I watched Gitana tending to her flowers, I couldn't do it. I couldn't take her away from you. I can see why you love her. She's beautiful, sexy, smart and most of all powerful."

Sebastian's gaze went to Gitana and couldn't believe his eyes. She was sitting on the floor naked, tracing the edges of her breasts with one hand, while pleasuring herself with the other. He hardened instantly and he wanted to take her then and there, but they had company. Any other time, he would have stroked his cock and watched her finger herself, not now, not with an audience. "Gitana!"

William gasped. "It's not her. Somehow, the two of you morphed powers. I think she has vampire tendencies now and you...."

Sebastian touched his chest. "My coeur--heart beats again."

William's mouth fell open. "Then it's true, you are her mullo! Together the two of you will create a life that will forever change the destiny of mankind."

Gitana cried out and clawed at her face. Red welts appeared and Sebastian raced to her side. Grabbing both her wrists, he looked up at William. "I am not sure one man can satisfy her need for sex. I may need you to...you may have to stay and..." He couldn't ask another man to touch his Gitana. The thought of someone else's hands on her body infuriated him.

William touched his shoulder gently. "See what you can do, never underestimate the power of love, Sebastian. If you need me, I'll be here. I've given my word that I will protect the two of you and I'll be staying. Call me and I will come."

Sebastian didn't even wait for William to leave the room. He planted his lips firmly on Gitana's and pushed his tongue into her mouth. She bit at his lip and made his cock throb with anticipation. His fingers moved down her tight belly and found their way into her cum-soaked recesses.

"Fuck me, Sebastian."

He wasn't so sure that he liked hearing his sweet Gitana talk this way, but he had no problem obliging. He slid down her body. He wanted to taste her before he made love to her. She grabbed his wet hair and yanked his head up. Her eyes swam with flecks of blue and black. They were his eyes, and these were his vampire needs.

She pushed him backwards and he landed flat on the floor. Having his own power turned on him caught him off guard, and he felt Gitana's hands as they slid into his jeans. She peeled them from his body and crawled up his legs. A shiver ran through him as she nuzzled her face in the dark patch of hair at the base of his cock. She took one of his balls into her mouth and rolled it around gently. He tried to coax her up. She needed pleasure right now, definitely more than he did, but she wouldn't budge. She licked the length of him and took the head of his cock into her mouth. Her hot mouth swallowed him down, and he could feel himself touching the back of her throat. She varied her speed and movements, massaging his balls with her hand as she went. He thought that he'd lose it and release his seed into her throat if she didn't stop soon. As tempting as letting her suck him off was, he needed to see to her needs.

"Gitana," was all he managed to get out.

She increased her pace, her head bobbing as she took him deep in her throat. His body prepared for release, his balls drew up and his muscles tightened. "Gitana, if you do not let me give you pleasure then I will need to call William in to give it to you. Is that what you want? Would you rather have another man fuck you, or do you want me?"

She pulled away from his wet shaft and looked up at him with swirling eyes. She started to shake her head yes, but stopped. "Bastian?"

He put his arms out to her and she moved her body up and over his. "I want you so badly, what's happening to me?" She asked, straddling his waist, and sliding her body onto his. She took him into her wet opening, sheathing him, making it almost impossible not to come.

She let out a tiny gasp and continued moving her body down on him, effectively taking his entire shaft into her. He gathered her long black hair back and held it out of her face so he could watch her make love to him. It was beautiful, she was beautiful, and she belonged only to him.

"You are mine, Gitana, mine. Do you understand?"

For a moment, she just stared down at him as she rode him. He feared that she'd refuse his claim on her, and he couldn't let that happen. Pulling on her hair, he tipped her head back gently, driving his hips up as he went, and making her cry out.

"You," he thrust upwards again, driving his cock into her deeper, "are mine! You are mine, Gitana."

"Yours," she whispered.

He watched as her breasts jiggled in his face. He captured a nipple in his mouth, careful not to nick it with his fangs, and sucked gently. She rode him with the need of a hundred women, and that was putting it mildly. He knew better than anyone did just how powerful the hunger could be. Her channel tightened on him, contracting and loosening with such intensity, he had no choice but to let his come fill her womb.

Gitana screamed out and collapsed on his chest. Her body twitched slightly as she stroked his skin. "Will the hunger ever go away?"

He brushed her long hair back and caressed her soft cheek. Lying to her would be the best option. It wouldn't do her any good to know that the hunger would only grow if she didn't tend to it regularly. As long as he had breath in his body, and if she still wanted him, he would stand by her side and be there to feed the demon he'd passed on to her. If blamed him for what she'd become then he would see to it that William watched over her. No man would ever harm her.

Chapter 11

"How are you doing, old friend?"

Sebastian looked up to see William standing over him. He glanced down at the bed to be sure that Gitana still slept. She looked so peaceful, so clam. He couldn't bear the fact that he'd passed on part of his demon to

her. He touched his chest and closed his eyes when he felt the rhythmic thumping of his once dead heart.

"She gave me so much, yet I have passed on nothing of use to her," Sebastian said, his voice full of sorrow.

"Come." William touched his shoulder lightly. "Let's talk in the other room. I do not want to wake her up either. I don't think I could say no if she begged me to touch her again. She's a temptress all unto herself. Your power only intensified that."

If it had been any man, other than William, saying these things, Sebastian would have killed him on the spot. He knew William, and he knew that he was a true friend. He would do only what he had to and never with the intent to do harm. He'd proven his loyalty when he'd refused to kill Gitana for the Council. William could never go back to his position there. They would burn him alive now that he'd disobeyed them.

Sebastian followed William out into the kitchen. William motioned toward a bowl of fruit. "You should eat."

"Merci, but I prefer to eat only after I have taken blood."

William turned and gave him an odd look. "Many things have changed for the both of you. I believe that you may be able to substitute many of your blood feedings with food now, and I believe that your sensitivity to light will decrease with time as well."

"The mid-day sunlight no longer burns as it once did or leaves me as drained," he said softly.

The possibility of becoming more human had never crossed his mind. He would gladly give it all up to see Gitana free of his vampiric ways. Picking up an apple, he took a bite. Normally, he would have to wash it down with water. Today it slid down his throat easily. His eyes widened as he looked at his longtime friend.

"They will not stop until they destroy us."

"No, they'll stop if they destroy her. They need you alive, Sebastian. You are a force to be reckoned with and they need you on their side in the fight against evil," William said, taking a seat at the table.

"I will kill every last one of them if they dare lay a hand on Gitana. She is my mate and will be my wife, by law as soon as I can make it official." Sebastian tossed the fruit aside. Thinking of losing Gitana made him lose his appetite.

"I know that you will. They underestimate you, Sebastian. I fear that they have also underestimated Gitana's powers as well. They've no idea that she's a master of the craft, and if they find out, they will send legions to see her dead."

"Where should I take her? Where will she be safe?"

William laughed methodically. "The only place safe from the council's reach is Hell itself, and I don't think you want to take her there, especially not now."

"Meaning?"

William cocked an eyebrow and shook his head. "You're a brilliant man, yet sometimes your ignorance amazes me. I believe that she's carrying your child or will be within days at the rate you two are going."

My child? Gitana might be pregnant? Non, it cannot be so.

Shocked, Sebastian moved towards the window to look out at the night sky, and collect his thoughts. Two days ago, he'd been elated finally finding Gitana after all these years. Now, his heart beat, he'd found his true mate and he might be a father. It was more than he'd ever hoped for and more than he deserved.

"Sebastian, we need to go and speak with the council. They need to understand that you and Gitana mean them no harm."

"I will not take her to them to be slaughtered," Sebastian said, surprised that William had even suggested such a thing.

"I'm not saying that we should take Gitana with us. You and I should go and plead your case. They may listen to reason if it's coming from us both."

"I cannot leave Gitana here alone. You saw her in there. Her sexual hunger would consume her and any around her. Besides, the 'decoy' your brilliant council sent is an insane alpha werewolf that has taken to

stalking her." Sebastian narrowed his gaze on William. "Marvelous choice by the way."

"I only just found about Aaron and Gitana. They told me the details surrounding all of this when they assigned the duty of killing her to me. Prior to that, they kept me totally in the dark. They know that you're my friend."

Sebastian shook his head. "They know this, yet they sent you to destroy the woman I love. Do you think they suspected you would not harm her--that instead, you would confide in me?"

William cleared his throat and adjusted his glasses. "I had given that some consideration myself, but why send me with the task to kill her then? Why all the secrecy?" William shrugged. "I'm afraid, old friend, that even I can't decipher their reasoning this time. I believe that we should go to them and ask them ourselves."

"Will they answer to you or is my presence required?"

William gave him a knowing look. "Sebastian, they only just now told me that Gitana truly exists. Do you think for a moment that they would feel obligated to tell me anything further? They respect you--some even fear you. They will answer to you."

"Then I shall go," Sebastian said, his chest heavy.

"But you yourself said that we would be leading Gitana to her death," William protested.

"I shall pay the council a visit, and you shall stay and keep watch over her."

"Sebastian, no!" William rose to his feet. "What am I supposed to do about her newfound hunger? I could barely keep her contained for you to come from the neighboring house. What would you have me do with her while you're gone for days? Want me to tie her to a chair? She'll eat me alive, you know, and I don't mean in the cannibalistic way, either."

Sebastian stood slowly, touching his friend's shoulder lightly. "You will do what must be done." His body hurt at the idea of another man touching his mate, but his choices were limited. He needed to assure Gitana's safety with the council members. Aaron was another matter.

* * * *

Aaron walked through the old mansion and shook his head. What in the hell would a vampire of Sebastian Rolle's status be doing in a small town like this, and how did he end up fucking his wife?

He stopped in the center of the living room and let his hand shift into a claw. He slashed the wingback sofa with one fluid motion. God, he hated vampires. He found them to be disgusting creatures that were confined to the night. His wolves were far superior. That's why the council had chosen him to stand in as Gitana's mullo. He'd done his best with her, but that bitch did little for him in the bedroom. She wasn't like his pack women. She didn't bow to his every need.

Who am I kidding? She was the best fuck I ever had. She gave the best head with that hot little mouth. The Council gave her to me, and now she thinks she can replace me with some walking corpse.

Aaron took one last look around Sebastian's home and growled. His people were coming, and they would find that vampire and kill him.

Chapter 12

Gitana stood in her greenhouse and worked the seedlings until she'd accidentally destroyed most of them. She wiped the tears that continued to flow from her cheeks and tried her best to push the thoughts of what was happening to her out of her head. How could she take on vampire characteristics, and why had the major one taken the form of sexual cravings? How could Sebastian think leaving her to visit the Council was helping her? She needed him here, not half-way around the world.

Why had fate dealt her such a hand? What had she done to deserve it? The Council now wanted her dead, Aaron had his pack after her, and as far as she knew, she could start requiring blood to survive. She let loose another sob.

Her fists burned to hit something and she scared herself with the amount of rage that now ran through her body. She tried to push it down, keep it at bay, but nothing worked. She let out a scream and threw her potting shovel at the door. The door flew open and Sebastian stood there, his blue eyes wide.

"Gitana?"

"Make it stop!" She screamed. "Make it all stop!"

Pain covered Sebastian's face. "I wish I could." He looked up at the greenhouse window and hesitated before taking another step out.

Gitana let out a small laugh. "Why would you want to make it all go away? You're able to walk in the light again and live." The burning in her loins started again, and she had to grip the edge of the potting table to keep from collapsing. She licked her lips and the taste of her own sweat made her pussy tight with need.

"Gitana, I cannot walk in the daylight as I once did, not yet, and even if I could I would not wish things to be the way they are. I did not intend for this to happen."

She ran her hand over her neck and eased it down the front of her blouse. "You've turned me into a whore. I lust after everything and everyone all the time. I can't control it." She touched her breast and tipped her head back. "My body craves sex, attention, anything, so much so that I feel like I'll die without it."

"I know," Sebastian said wryly. He looked up at the sun and back to her. "Gitana, come and let me hold you. My immunity to the sun's rays has increased, but I can feel it wearing away my resolve. Please come here and we will get through this--together." He stepped back into the kitchen doorway and held his hand out to her.

"Allow me," William said, appearing from behind Sebastian. William locked eyes with her and gave a small smile. "Come on in. We need to discuss some things with you."

Gitana took a handful of seeds and threw them at William. They didn't slow him down. She grabbed another shovel and twisted to strike him with it. He put his hand out and looked at her hand. "Object of harm will be disarmed." The shovel grew instantly hot and Gitana was left no choice but to drop it.

"How?" she asked, amazed by his raw power.

"I told you that I was more than human," William said matter-of-factly. "Now, come and let us discuss several matters with you."

The closer he came to her, the more she realized just how handsome he truly was. The demonic power within her wanted to sample him. She slid her hand back into her blouse and William stopped dead in his tracks. "You want me. I can smell it on you," she said, surprised by her own sultry voice. "You've wanted to fuck me since the moment you laid eyes on me. You want it now, don't you, William? You want to bury your cock in me and have me scream out your name."

Oh, Goddess, what's happening to me?

It is my vampire lust that controls you now. I am sorry, Gitana. Fight it and come in. I will tend to your needs. Sebastian's voice answered the unspoken question in her head. She looked past William at Sebastian and he nodded, his hand still outstretched. She started toward him, but the monster that now resided within her held her in place. She struggled against it. It overtook her easily and left her crumpling to the floor.

* * * *

Sebastian watched in horror as Gitana's eyes rolled back into her head. He knew that she wasn't strong enough to fight his primal urges. She would die trying. "Grab her!" he shouted to William.

William obliged and had Gitana wrapped in his arms in one fluid movement. He raced her back into the kitchen and Sebastian took her from him. He drew in her sweet scent and could smell the mark of the vampire on her, and something else.

He took a deeper breath and recognized the magic that had once run through his veins. He'd passed that on to her as well. He dropped his head down and fought hard to remain in control of his emotions. "Forgive me."

She nipped at his jaw, her eyes swirling with the power he gave her--the curse. "Fuck me."

"You need to rest, and then we need to discuss my leaving."

"Leaving?"

Sebastian closed his eyes slowly and nodded his head. He hated the thought of leaving her even more than he hated what he'd passed on to her. The thirty years he'd spent searching for her had left his need for her so great that the idea of spending one second without her was killing him.

Gitana's brown eyes narrowed and he watched in horror as they swirled with flecks of yellow. She pushed hard on his chest, using the strength he'd given her, and freed herself from his grasp.

"Gitana!" he shouted as he lunged for her.

She dodged his grasp and ran toward the bedroom. Cold wind knocked into him and he struck the wall with such a force that he dented it.

"GITANA!"

The door to her room shook. William ran up next to him, touching his arm gently. "Sebastian, are you hurt?"

"No," he said, lying. His heart was breaking, but he knew that William had only meant hurt in the literal sense of the word.

"Oh, Gods," William said, under his breath.

"What?"

His friend of more than a hundred years turned his green eyes toward him and let a tear fall down his cheek. "She's cast a desire spell, and I believe she's directed it at me."

Sebastian's brows came together. "Why?" he asked, not needing to hear William say it. He knew the demon that Gitana now carried within her. He'd spent centuries taming it. He knew that it demanded revenge for being hurt, and telling her that he had to leave to go visit the Council had

hurt her beyond words. Now, the demon had taken control and would use William, his oldest friend, as retribution.

Gitana's bedroom door flew open and Sebastian's eyes widened as he took in the sight before him. His beautiful Gitana was levitating a good six inches off the ground, as wind swirled around her now naked body. Her eyes locked on him as her fingers went to the apex of her thighs. Her slender fingers darted into her silk binding, and they glistened with each stroke.

William drew in a breath and took a step forward. Sebastian grabbed his shoulder and held him steady. Green eyes of fury turned on him and he saw William's lips begin to move. He knew how powerful a sorcerer William was, and he knew if he rattled off an incantation then he'd be helpless to control the events that were about to take place. A decision had to be made, and he knew that he could not let Gitana fight this alone.

"We shall share her," Sebastian said quickly.

William tipped his head to the side. The magical influence of Gitana's spell still clouded his judgment. William peeled his clothes from his body and grabbed hold of his rigid cock. "I want to bury it in her hot little pussy. I want to feel her lips around my cock." He sounded so uncharacteristic that Sebastian did a double take.

Sebastian touched William's shoulder again. "Old friend, she is ready to conceive a child. Think about the prophecies. If you release your seed into her womb, the end will change, and the child that was once foreseen will be no more. Is that what you want?"

William licked his lower lip as he stroked his cock. "I want to fuck her. I need to fuck her."

"And you shall, but think...think about the repercussions. Think of mankind's future."

Gitana's breath came in pants as she rammed her fingers into her body repeatedly. She let out a cry and Sebastian removed his clothes quickly. "We will see you through this, ma vie." He reached for Gitana and she screamed out, her eyes ablaze with the power of the vampire.

"Him!" She pointed toward William.

Sebastian moved closer to her and ran his hand over her stomach. "Ma sucré, Gitana, fight this evil within you. I beg you. You are mine. You are my mate, and I am your mullo." Sebastian hoped that his words would reach her, but he knew that even if they did she was beyond any help that he alone could offer. He'd need William to satisfy her sexual craving.

Running his hand down Gitana's smooth stomach, he cupped her sex. The hand she'd been pleasuring herself with came to his lips. He drew it into his mouth, sucking her sweet cream from it. Her brown eyes locked on him as her body floated down to the floor. "Bastian?"

"I am here, ma vie."

"It burns," she said, softly.

"I know. Let us help you ease the pain." He motioned for William to come closer. Sharing his mate would be the hardest thing he'd ever done, but it was his curse that had created what stood before them craving sex, and he would see to it that her pain went away.

"Come, William. Let us love her as she should have always been loved."

* * * *

The scent of vampires was strong near the house. Aaron took a deep breath in and frowned in confusion. Why did it smell like there was two of the same vampire within Gitana's home?

He could smell the scent of a man as well, a human, and old magic. The little bitch had aligned herself with some powerful friends. Too bad they wouldn't be able to save her. He looked around the property and nodded to his pack. Hundreds of loyal werewolves encircled the house. There would be no escape for the occupants. If Gitana was lucky, he'd decide to keep her, even though she was damaged goods from screwing that vampire. If all else failed, he'd fuck her for old times sake before he killed her. Either way he'd force her to watch her vampire die.

Chapter 13

Gitana looked at the men before her and tried to make sense of what she was seeing. Sebastian was naked and in his full glory. William was as well, and that scared her. Her body craved the touch of both men. She loved Sebastian, but wanted William's cock nestled deep in her body as well. She'd never felt so bold, so daring in her life.

Sebastian's cool fingers worked their way into her hot slit and she clutched onto his shoulder as soothing sensations shot through her legs. He pulled his fingers out slowly and licked her come from them. Her eyelids fluttered shut and she felt warm hands touching her back. She looked over her shoulder and found William standing behind her.

William caressed the small of her back and inched his way down her butt, cupping and kneading as he went. He drew in a sharp intake of breath when he parted her ass and drove a finger into her tiny rosette. Fire shot through her lower half. The mix of pain and pleasure left her clinging to Sebastian, as William's finger continued to stroke her.

Sebastian lifted her quickly and positioned himself on the bed, pulling Gitana up and over him. His rigid cock found its way into her pussy and she cried out as he filled her.

He pulled her to him, nibbling on her breasts in the process.

The weight on the bed shifted as William appeared behind her. He rubbed his shaft against her anus, gathering juice from her fucking Sebastian, and nudged himself into her ass slowly.

"More!" she screamed as she rode Sebastian harder.

Blinding hot pain shot through her body as William thrust the full length of his swollen cock into her ass. Her body clenched against him, fighting the invasion. She was too full, too stretched, too ready to explode from the heat.

Sebastian grabbed her chin and forced her to look upon his sweet face. "Push down and relax, princess. Let us love you."

He pulled her nipple into his mouth and sucked gently. His fangs nicked her skin, and the minute he began to draw her blood into his mouth, her body relaxed around William's impaling cock.

She drove her body down onto Sebastian's, causing her bloodied breast to slip from his mouth. Gitana dove at his chin, licking the tiny trickle of blood that flowed from the corner of his mouth, and dug her nails into his arms as her orgasm ripped through her.

"Your ass is so bloody tight," William panted, pounding himself into her repeatedly. The odd full feeling, he gave her, made her entire body feel alive. He pumped himself into her, harder and harder, to the point that she was unable to hold her body up and her rhythm while fucking Sebastian had changed to mirror William. "Fuck, oh...oh fuck, I can't hold it much longer." His body stiffened and he flattened himself against her back as he shot his hot seed into her.

The air around them thickened, then stilled. She knew that whatever they'd just done had brought about a magic like none she'd ever seen, but she didn't care. She wanted more.

Gitana could feel William's heart pounding rapidly against her back. He stroked her arms gently as his body continued to shoot semen into her ass. He pulled out slowly, dripping onto her.

Sebastian rolled her quickly onto her back, never leaving the warmth of her womb, and pumped his body into hers. The muscles in his arms tightened as he strained to control his motions. His blue eyes locked on hers and he snarled, "Mine."

He slammed himself down on her, and she screamed out from the pain. He swiveled his hips ever so slightly and found a gentle rhythm, quickly chasing away the hurt with a pleasure such as she'd never known before. She writhed beneath him, another man's come leaking slowly from her body, while she tried to escape the supernova that threatened to claim her.

"I can't, Bastian ... no more ... please." The continual orgasms were sending her over the edge. She clawed at his back and he pumped into her.

"Je t'aime, Gitana--I love you." He said, allowing his seed to project into her body. She felt the demon within her receding, sated for the moment. He kissed her nose and she smiled. He tilted his head to the side and winked. "You did not cover your mouth."

"No, I didn't," she said, laughing softly.

She heard the shower running in the bathroom and remembered William. The shock of what she'd just done hit her and she tried desperately to get out from beneath Sebastian. He pinned her body to the bed and began kissing her neck.

"Bastian, I'm so sorry. I've never ... I'm...."

"Shhh, Ça ne fait rien--it doesn't matter. It needed to be done and I am pleased that it was William who assisted us. I am so sorry for the curse that I have passed on to...."

"Yeah, you piece of vampire trash, you will know sorry soon enough."

Gitana stiffened at the sound of Aaron's voice. Sebastian leaned down and kissed her gently on the mouth, ignoring the intruder. His body was ripped from hers and she screamed out, trying to hold onto him.

Strong arms yanked her out of the bed and she looked into Aaron's cold, hard eyes. His lips curled and his nostrils flared. "You let this piece of rotting flesh fuck you?"

She'd seen this look in Aaron's eyes before. He would kill them all tonight, that much she was sure of.

Chapter 14

Aaron took in a deep breath and growled at her. He brought his hand up and smacked her across the face. Gitana's head jerked back and for a minute, all she saw was flecks of white.

"Leave her be!" Sebastian shouted. He was pinned under a half dozen of Aaron's pack members who were being anything but gentle with him.

Aaron pulled Gitana to him and smiled wide. He let a claw extend from his finger and pressed it against her lower abdomen. Taking a deep breath in, he jerked on her. "You carry another man's child. Does the vampire know this?"

"Another man's child?" Gitana repeated the question, unclear on how she could be pregnant by anyone else. William hadn't released his seed in her womb and Sebastian was the only other man she'd had sex with since divorcing Aaron two years prior.

"You've become quite the slut, Gitana. Tell me, how many others cocks have you had? Huh? How many men have you let fuck you?" Aaron pressed his wolf claw into her flesh. Hot pain followed as he drew blood slowly. It wasn't a deep wound yet, but it would be before long. "Don't look so surprised. Tell me who else you've been screwing?"

"Me," William said, from the bathroom doorway. He held his hand out, palms up and stared at Aaron. "I suggest you leave now and never return."

The werewolves in the room laughed. They weren't scared of a naked Brit, anymore than they were scared of Gitana. Aaron took a step forward and looked William over. He glanced back at Gitana and shook his head. "Baby, I was just too good. My dick was too much for you, huh? No one could compare, so you settled on this human?" He said the word human like it was a disease.

Gitana brushed her hair out her face and stood tall, not caring that six other men were now seeing her naked as well. "I'll have you know that one time with William was better than all the times you were in me." Aaron spun around, letting his eyes go yellow. She knew that the wolf within him was now teetering on the edge of release.

"I'm going to fuck you so hard in front of your heroes that you'll beg me for mercy. And, when I'm done, you'll know who the real alpha is here, Bitch." He lunged at her and grabbed her around the waist. He had her on her hands and knees before she knew what hit her. He slapped her ass hard and growled, "I'll own this before the night is over."

"My good friend Sebastian is her mate, and he would greatly appreciate it if you stepped away from her," William said, taking another step into the room. Two of Aaron's men rushed him and William simply pushed his hands outward. Gitana couldn't see anything emanating from William, but something sent the two weres tumbling into the wall. The room

smelled of magic, a scent she'd become accustomed to after years of living within the Roma witch community.

Sebastian tossed the remaining pack members from his body and lunged at Aaron. Aaron grabbed hold of Gitana and jerked her head back. "Take a good look at her before I gut her," he said, running a half-clawed finger down the side of her throat. Sebastian stopped in mid-motion, refusing to allow harm to come to her. "You claim she is your mate, but you let that human, with a few fancy parlor tricks, knock her up? That doesn't scream mate to me, it screams coward."

Sebastian's blue eyes swirled with black and Gitana knew that the demon within him had risen. Aaron trailed his fingers down her body, stopping at her breast and plucking her nipple. "Look, they still get hard for me, baby." His hot breath felt foreign on her ear. "Want to see how hard you still make me?"

Gitana, use the gifts that were bestowed upon you. Her grandmother's voice echoed in her head. She scanned the room with her eyes to be sure that Grandma hadn't crashed the party. As much as she wanted help, having her Grandmother show up after she'd just slept with two men wasn't her idea of a happy ending.

Aaron grabbed her ass and pulled it back toward him. Parting her cheeks, he rubbed his thumb over her anus. "Yeah, you're hot for me, I can smell it. I'm going fuck you raw, baby. It's my right, you know--you're my wife."

"Come on, Aaron. You said that you wanted to scare her and her vampire, not rape her," Travis said softly, looking a bit banged up. "She's carrying a child now, leave her be. You got her, she's scared. Let's go home."

Gitana was shocked to hear Travis, Aaron's right-hand man, stand up to him. Aaron growled, jerking her hips back against him. "I'll fuck my wife any way I see fit and then I'll kill the bastard that put that child in her."

She closed her eyes and concentrated on the air around her. Her grandmother had spent years trying to convince her that if she only listened she'd hear the spirits of the dead. Gitana hoped it was true because she needed to call upon their power to help her stop Aaron and his entire pack. She heard the whispers of the unknown. They were faint at first, but there. A low buzzing started in her head and she knew that metaphysically she'd tapped into the spirit plane. "Spirits of the dead, heed my need and...."

"Shut-up!" Aaron said slamming his body against hers. He fumbled with his pants and tried to free himself.

"Sebastian, stop her!" William shouted.

Gitana strained to hear him, but the buzzing grew louder. Her nose and throat burned. She reached up to wipe the sweat from her lip and came away with blood. She'd tried too hard, tapping into the dead's magic was too much for her body.

The room shook and Aaron's grasp on her loosened. He fell away from her and she collapsed onto the floor. Visions of a woman who looked like her, but was not, swam through her head. The woman spoke softly to her and tried to ease her pain.

* * * *

Sebastian dove at Aaron and caught his head with his hands. One quick jerk to the side and Aaron no longer resisted. Sebastian let Aaron's dead body fall from his grasp. The lycans in the room growled, and the blond one silence them.

"No more bloodshed," the blond said. "We'll take him and go."

"Travis!" Another exclaimed. Travis turned and let a low rumble escape his throat.

Sebastian knew that Travis was now the pack's Alpha male, their leader, and from his actions tonight, he would make a fine one. Stepping away from Aaron's body, he turned his attentions to Gitana.

William was on the floor next to her, pushing on her chest. Sebastian's mind raced. She couldn't be dead. His mate, his love could not leave him when he'd only just found her.

He dropped to his knees and reached for her. William touched his hand gently. "She is gone, old friend."

Sebastian screamed out, seizing hold of Gitana's tiny body. It cooled and knew that life no longer ran through it. His now beating heart felt as

though it had shattered. He clutched her body to him, kissing her, rocking her back and forth gently.

"Je t'aime," he whispered.

The air in the room stilled. The temperature climbed rapidly around them, but he did not care. He pulled Gitana to him, as tears fell down his face.

Gitana's body tightened, her eyes flew open, and she drew in a sharp breath. William was suddenly there--helping to support her head gently.

"Gitana?" William said, softly.

A small smile formed on her mouth as her gaze moved to Sebastian. "I love you too," she said weakly.

He dropped his lips to hers and kissed her through his tears. His body shook, partly from the shock of the Goddess giving her back to him, and partly out of the need to resist crushing her with his love.

He drew his lips back from her slowly, savoring her sweet taste. She tried to sit up, but he and William said no at the same time. She laughed. "I'm fine you two. Stop worrying about me."

"You died," William said sardonically. "How is that fine? And how exactly were we not supposed to worry?"

"I didn't die. I stepped onto the spirit plane to receive a message, that's all." She grinned mischievously.

"Pardon?"

Gitana touched his cheek lightly. "My mother wants to know what took you so long to find me. She said that you may be slow, but you'll make a fine father for her grandchild."

"Father?"

"Yes, Bastian, the baby is fine. I'm fine."

Epilogue

Sebastian drew in a deep breath as he watched his wife working in her greenhouse. Her hand went to her tiny belly, as it often did. At twelve weeks, Gitana's belly had the slightest curve to it. She had only begun to show and he alone had the privilege of knowing that. Though William remained with them, he had not shared their bed again. Nor would he ever. As much as he wanted to see his friend happy, he could not let it be with his wife.

"I love you," he said, as Gitana repotted a small plant.

"I love you too, sweetie, but that's not what you came out here to talk to me about."

Sebastian sighed. His wife knew him well. William had received a call from a friend informing him that the Council had pinpointed their location and were in the process of planning what their next move would be.

He and William had spent the last two days straight trying to convince Gitana to leave, to go into hiding while they hunted down all that threatened them. She refused.

"You still trying to take my granddaughter away from me?"

Sebastian turned to see Gitana's grandmother standing behind him. The old witch could sneak up on him as no one else could. She took great pleasure in getting the drop on a vampire. As much as she pretended to dislike him, he could sense that she cared for him, and he her.

"Madame, I think it is for the best that you all move somewhere safer."

She huffed. "We are moving boy or have you not noticed the boxes? I swear, Gitana tells me that you're a intelligent man, but I've yet to see it."

Sebastian rolled his eyes and the old woman smacked his arm. "Pardon moi, I did not mean to be rude, but I had hoped to move further than the house next door."

"We all hope for a lot of things, boy. A move's a move. Besides, I've already told you that my granddaughter is safest here. Travis and the pack will aid in whatever you need, and the magic that lives in these lands will protect all of you."

"I hope you are right."

"The spirits have told me that all will be well, and I tend to listen to them. Plus, the British boy's gonna meet his mate real soon, and he can't do it if he isn't here."

THE END

Must be 18 yrs or older to read!

Warning EXCERPT IS EXPLICIT: Extremely erotic, contains EXPLICIT sex and language, multiple partners, anal sex, and oral sex--Not to be confused with other works by author.

Unedited Excerpt from Cyber Sex: Prepared to Please by Mandy M. Roth, coming soon to New Concepts Publishing!

Dear Readers:

This is a bit of a stretch for me, but I enjoyed it too much not to write it. My goal is to entertain not to isolate. Thank you so much for supporting me in this endeavor and I hope that you enjoy this as much as I have.

Chapter One

On board the Expedition Vessel Nine, headed towards the Fargonie galaxy...

"That's it... harder, umm, harder."

Captain Roman Parker pumped the full length of his cock into the beauty below him and held it there as his balls tightened and his seed shot forth. She wrapped her long legs around him and moaned in his ear. "That's it, Roman, give it to me baby, I want all your come."

As the last drop of semen fell from his cock, he withdrew from her. Her bright blue eyes looked up at him with an emptiness that he always hated. She drew in her bottom lip and flashed him a half smile. "Can I suck you off now?" she asked, in a husky bedroom voice.

"Destiny, baby, you can suck my dick another time. Not tonight, baby."

She crossed her arms over her full breasts and pouted. "You never let me suck you enough. I could roll your balls around in my mouth again--you always seem to like that. I didn't get enough of your semen. I want more. It tastes so good."

Roman sat up on the bed and pushed Destiny's hand away. "Computer, end holographic program Destiny-211, authorization code, Parker 0840."

Instantly the life-like holographic image in his bed disappeared. The computer was able to simulate sex almost perfectly but it lacked one thing, the real Lieutenant Commander Destiny Stewart. Sure, his dick was at least partially sated, but it still longed for a taste of the real thing.

The program he'd created gave him something to fuck whenever he wanted, but she lacked all of Destiny's personality. It was nice to have a hot woman begging to blow you, but even better to know that the real thing wanted you. So far, Lt. Commander Stewart showed no signs of wanting him.

The intercom beeped, and he groaned. "Parker here."

"Sir, we're nearing M83293 and are receiving a transmission from the Expedition Central Commander--Myers." Lt. Commander Dirks said.

Roman rubbed his stubble covered chin and stretched his shoulders. "Patch me through to Myers and let me know when we reach the planet."

"Yes, Captain."

The com beeped again and Roman steeled himself to deal with Commander Myers. They'd butted heads since their first day in the academy fifteen years ago. "What do you want Jonas?"

"There's the man I know and love." Jonas Myers said sardonically. "I'll cut to the chase, you were scheduled to be in the Fargonie galaxy for two months, we need you to stay for five now."

"Five months!" Roman was outraged. It was just like Myers to pull a stunt like this when he was at least twenty light years away. "My crew has been ship bound for six months already. They need some R&R."

"Fine, let them take leave on the next planet, but you are staying in Fargonie an additional three months. A replacement vessel will be sent as soon as we can."

"Jonas." He took a deep, calming breath. "Fine, but I want my men compensated. I don't need a bunch of them de-listing."

Jonas laughed. "Well, with you as their Captain it's a wonder they even stay at all. Fine, I'll authorize a three percent bonus for each crew member who completes the additional three months."

"Deal. Parker out." The com shut off and Roman smiled. It was good to be the first to hang up.

He stood slowly, attempting to work the kinks out. The computer generated Destiny had worn him out. "Turn shower on--default settings."

The sound of the particle stream running from the other room sounded like music to his ears. His sore body pulled in the direction of relief, stopping only to glance in the full-length mirror. At thirty thirty-three, he still managed to have the body of a twenty year old. Working out in the fitness center everyday had a little something to do with it. Knowing Destiny would be there, working her tiny little ass to perfection had a little something else to do with it.

Roman ran his hand through his dark brown hair and cursed when he thought he saw a speck of gray in it. That's all he needed, gray hair to offset his gray eyes. Women either loved his eyes or hated them. They weren't a natural color, but he'd ended up with them all the same.

Shrugging, he entered the bathroom. The feel of the hot particle stream against his skin was pure heaven. A knock on his quarter's door startled him. "Enter," he shouted, expecting Dirks to come trapping in with news of their arrival on the new planet.

"Captain, Lt. Dirks told me that I could find you in...oh, I'm sorry, Sir..."

Roman's dick hardened instantly at the sound of Destiny's sweet voice. He turned slowly, knowing that she now stared at his naked backside, and hoping that she like what she saw. He bit back a smile when he saw her blue eyes widened as her gaze went to his groin. He knew he was impressive. He didn't need her to confirm that--or did he?

Her long black hair was down today. That wasn't her normal way of wearing it, and he loved it. Granted, she looked great regardless how she wore her hair, but down she looked so exotic--a vixen in an officer's clothing.

Destiny stood there with her mouth open. She'd seen naked men before, but Captain Parker took the cake. She felt heat rushing up to her cheeks and hoped that he wouldn't notice. She did her best to pull her gaze away from the massive serpent that had seemed to spring to life between his legs, but couldn't. From the moment she'd laid eyes on him, she'd tried to imagine what he'd look like without his uniform on. There was no way she'd done him justice.

He cleared his throat and her head snapped up. "Sir...umm...sorry, Captain."

He laughed. "Lt. Commander Stewart, I've asked you to call me Roman several times before. Now that you've seen me with my clothes off, perhaps you can feel comfortable enough to start doing it now."

"Yes, Captain...err...Roman."

"Can I call you Destiny?"

You can call me whatever the hell you want to, she thought to herself as her gut pulled tight. Snap out of it, girl. You're two steps away from drooling.

To read other excerpts from Mandy M. Roth visit www.mandyroth.com and www.newconceptspublishing.com.