

# **Descendants Of The Light: Raven's Calling**

## **Eve Vaughn**

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## Prologue

### The Feast of Flesh

#### Tiearen, The'Ran home land, Planet H'trae

"Where in H'trae is Dyshira? If she is not brought before me at once, someone will pay." Prince Garm the Fierce, son of Kasper, heir to the throne of Zerus, surveyed the naked, trembling women who stood in a line for his inspection. His wings flapped behind him in short angry motions. "Where is she?"

The Chief Elder, Bulbo the Wise, head of the council and Dyshira's father, finally spoke up. "Your Highness, Dyshira is promised to another. She cannot be included in this ceremony."

"You're lying, old man."

"I w-would never l-lie to you, Your H-Highness."

"Save your breath. Do you think me stupid?"

"No, Your Highness, but you see, Dyshira..."

"You dare defy the sacred covenant? You dare defy *me*?" No one had ever denied him anything. "I am Prince Garmonian Rohar Barloz, heir to the throne of Zerus." Garm's face grew hot with fury as he glared at the smaller man. "I want Dyshira brought before me at once."

"Your Highness, we do not wish to anger you, but we have fulfilled our end of the covenant as agreed upon by our ancestors many moons ago. Before you are twenty of our comeliest women, each gifted with powers of the light."

Garm sensed the older man's fear despite his brave words. The look in Bulbo's dark brown eyes gave him away. "Is Dyshira not the comeliest wench among your women?"

"Yes, Your Highness."

"Is she not holder of the great power?"

Bulbo became evasive. "What do you mean, Your Highness? All The'Ran women hold powers of the light."

"I know of her powers. She is the one I want." He'd known since the first time he'd seen her...

Garm had first glimpsed Dyshira two H'trae years before while on a trade mission with his father. He'd seen her at the enchanted Falls of Tiearen, standing naked in the spray of water... a sight he'd never forget.

\* \* \*

Garm studied the nymph in the waterfall, his loins filling with lust. Her long dark braids cascaded down the elegant curve of her back. Every feature of her mahogany face was perfect, from her high cheekbones to her huge brown eyes and full, bow-shaped lips. The small tilt of her nose finished off the masterpiece of her face. His cock stirred at the very sight of her.

Garm's mouth watered as he took in her rounded buttocks, full, firm breasts crowned with nipples the color of blackberries, slender waist flared into rounded hips, and the thick patch of hair resting above her woman's treasure. He wanted her right then and there. He was ready to throw the tiny beauty to the ground and thrust his aching shaft into her tight virgin pussy.

He saw the distress in her lovely eyes when she spotted him, but he didn't care. She dashed to the side of the waterfall to grab her clothing, but Garm was quicker. He grabbed her by the braids and pulled her to him.

"Please do not harm me, Ceyan." Her eyes widened in fear.

Garm lifted her up into his arms so that they were eye level. "You are Dyshira?"

"How do you know of me, Ceyan?"

"Surely you have heard the stories of your own beauty."

"They are of no interest to me."

"Regardless of how you feel, I am pleased the stories are true. You shall be mine." His grip tightened. He could almost taste her fear, and he liked it.

"Put me down, Ceyan." Dyshira struggled against him.

"I am Prince Garm, son of Kasper, heir to the throne of Zerus. I shall claim you in the next ceremony of the sacred covenant."

Her eyes narrowed. "I will never consent to marry you. There is evil in your heart."

"It matters not what you want. You will be my queen." He brought his mouth down upon her soft lips, tongue stabbing forward. She tasted so good.

She tried to twist her head away but one fist came up to grip her hair, keeping her head immobile. He ignored her tears, wanting her too much to care.

Dyshira struggled against him, but her meager strength could not match his. She planted her small hands against his broad muscular chest to push him away.

Feeling a sudden tingling in his chest, Garm looked down to see his flesh glowing underneath her hands. He released his hold, letting her escape. The scar that had once marked Garm's chest was no longer there. Dyshira must possess the great power, a very rare gift. He would claim her and her power.

\* \* \*

Now, two years later, as he stood before the council, Garm refused to be deterred again. "If Dyshira is not brought before me at once, we will withdraw our protection from your people. I shall claim her, in any event. Do you give her to me willingly or must I take her by force?"

Loud gasps of outrage went throughout the crowd. The sacred covenant took place every two H'trae years. In exchange for protection from the Shadow People, the The'Rans offered their women as mates to the Ceyans. To withdraw their protection from Tiearen would mean the doom of the The'Ran people.

A voice called out. "I am here." Dyshira stepped forward, her head held high and carriage regal. "Do not withdraw your protection, Ceyan. I surrender to your will."

## Chapter One

**300 H'trae years later**  
**Zerus, Ceyan home lands, Planet H'trae**

Prince Aarik looked at his twin with a helpless expression. "Another victim has fallen to this strange ailment. Many of our people have died, brother. Is there nothing we can do?"

"What would you have me do? Do you think I have done nothing? I have traveled this vast world for a cure. Since this sickness has stricken our people, I've thought of naught else. I am king. It is my duty to protect the subjects of Zerus. I feel helpless. No cure can be found, and my people are dying!" King Rohman roared with frustration.

"Easy, brother. Aarik is as concerned as you. We all are," Prince Thane pointed out.

Rohman sat with his face in his hands. "I know this, Thane, but it does not lessen my frustration."

"What of the The'Rans? They're gifted with the special healing powers of the light."

Prince Kalian joined in the conversation. "Thane, you know the The'Rans are no more, and even if there were any left, only the great power can save us. No one really knows if the great power ever really existed."

The Ceyan people were many, but this strange ailment was spreading rapidly, causing the afflicted slow painful deaths. Rohman sighed, raking his fingers through his hair. "This is true, Kal. The The'Rans disappeared a very long time ago."

No one knew where the sickness came from or how it was spread. So far, the quarantine of the sick seemed to be working, but they weren't sure for how long.

Stranger still, the sickness only seemed to affect Ceyans. Thane and each of his brothers had traveled their world in search of a cure, but no other races had ever heard of such a sickness.

"If the The'Rans are all gone, then why does the crystal of Tiearen still glow? The legend of the crystal states that as long as the powers of the light survive, there are living The'Rans. Granted, the glow of the crystal is dim, but still it shines."

"But how can that be? The The'Rans were gone long before we were born. Not even the slavers of Xanadon have The'Rans, and they possess all manner of races," Rohman countered.

"I believe there is a chance they still exist," Thane refuted, his eyes locking with Rohman's silver gaze.

"Is the crystal with you now?" Aarik asked his youngest brother.

"No. It's among my other relics at my palace. I am positive the crystal still glows. If the legends are true, there must be The'Rans who possess the powers that we seek."

The room fell silent. Kal raised his head. "It is hard to make sense of this all. Should we rekindle our hopes once more when they have already been dashed so many times?"

Queen Daliah entered the council room, her gown of *ilsa* flowing freely around her firm figure. "Why do my sons have such long faces?"

Rohman looked up with an angry scowl on his hard face. "Mother, you know women aren't allowed in the council room, queen or no. Please leave us. We have no time for silly women's chatter."

Daliah blushed with embarrassment at her eldest son's abruptness, and turned her head to hide the expression of hurt that briefly crossed her lovely face. She looked to her other sons for support. Kal and Aarik nodded to her respectfully, while Thane smiled at her with encouragement.

No one liked to cross Rohman when he was in one of his moods, but Thane reminded himself to say something to Rohman when their mother was gone. Then again, Rohman was always disrespectful where their mother was concerned. Thane's

heart went out to her in that moment. He was proud of her as she squared her shoulders and lifted her chin defiantly. The fierce look on her face said she wouldn't let Rohman deter her from why she had joined them.

Daliah smiled as if Rohman's words had not affected her. "Now that I have all my sons together, I wanted to mention that it is time for the four of you to begin your search for your brides. You're all over fifty H'trae years. Rohman, you are nearly one hundred. Surely you should understand my position when I say that it's past time for you to be producing heirs. I feel it is my duty as queen to remind you of this. The future of the kingdom is at stake. It would also be nice to have some little ones at the palace again."

Seeing the explosive look on the king's face, Thane spoke up first, trying to spare his mother the pain that Rohman's words would cause. "Mother, we're all eager to settle down and find brides, but right now we have a much larger concern than pursuing our own happiness."

The queen pouted. "But there's always a crisis of some sort. Can you not find some time to search for your mates? I begin to think that you four enjoy your whoring ways too much to settle down."

"Mother, this is no mere crisis. Our people are dying. As queen, surely you can understand our dilemma." Thane walked over to Daliah, put his arm around her and gave her a quick squeeze and peck on the cheek.

"I wouldn't be doing my duty if I did not remind you. I so rarely see you all together that I felt now would be a good time to mention it."

Thane gave his mother another reassuring squeeze. He was closer to his mother than the rest of his brothers, and it was generally he who was able to reason with her. "We appreciate your concern."

"But the palace has been in preparation for the Feast of the Flesh that will be taking place within the next few days. Women from all over Zerus will be here. At each Feast we've hosted, each of you merely dallied with the women who were here hoping



to snag a royal groom, only to snub them later on. Eventually the dallying must stop. Or do you all believe in that silly prophecy from so long ago?"

She referred to the prophecy of a wandering mystic who they had once entertained in their palace. Thane could still remember the mystic's words clearly, when she had been asked by Daliah about her sons' future brides.

*The sons of Pytor will find their brides in a world unheard of. These brides will be gifted with beauty and possess great skills that will save your people.*

"Could it be so, Mother?" A frown marred Aarik's face as if he too remembered the prophecy, his blond brows furrowed. He turned to his twin. "The The'Rans?"

"What are you talking about, Aarik?" Daliah wanted to know.

Rohman, who looked as if he had been holding his temper in check from the minute Daliah joined them, finally exploded. "Mother! Get the farken out of here! I said that women are forbidden from entering this chamber. We have heard enough of your nonsense. Leave now or I will ground you to your quarters for ten moon risings!"

Daliah's hand flew to her mouth. With a stricken look on her face she fled the council room. When she was gone, Thane stormed at his brother, furious. "Why do you always talk to her in such a manner? She is our mother!"

Rohman's voice was as chilling as his silver eyes. "She is our mother. I do not dispute that. What is your point?"

"She deserves your respect! She is the queen. When you show such disrespect to her, especially in front of the servants, you shame her. You even let that wicked bed wench of yours, Ani, mock her. The queen! Mocked by a lowly bed wench, and it is your fault! How do you think that makes her feel?"

"I don't think about how she feels, nor do I particularly care," Rohman answered in a tone that suggested he was bored with the conversation.

"You are a most unnatural son," Thane hissed.

Rohman shrugged in response.

"Roh, you were a little harsh with Mother. Can you not antagonize her for once? She means well," Kal defended.

Rohman maintained a stubborn silence.

Aarik projected his thoughts to his twin. *Mehier, you will eventually have to let this anger go. I know you hurt, but she hurts too.*

*Never! I will never forget what she did!* Rohman projected back.

Aarik let out a mental sigh, but didn't attempt to sway Rohman again.

"Getting back to what we were talking about," Kal said, trying to ease the tension in the room. "Thane, you were telling us about your feelings on the The'Rans."

Thane was still seething over Rohman's insolence to their mother, but pushed it aside for now. "As I was saying, I believe the Crystal of Tiearen is glowing for a reason. I have researched this matter thoroughly, and the only conclusion that I can come up with is that there are The'Rans out there somewhere, and they apparently hold the powers of the light."

"Yes, we understand this, but would those powers be sufficient? Would we not need the great power?" Aarik inquired.

"I think you may have touched upon something, Aarik. I'm beginning to think that old prophecy might tie into our dilemma. Our people need saving, and perhaps we have seen no The'Rans because they are indeed in some unheard-of land."

"But what of the great powers, how can we be sure they exist?" asked Kal.

"Remember," Thane pointed out, "one of the great queens of Zerus was a The'Ran. It was said she possessed a power greater than any The'Ran who ever lived."

Rohman chimed in. "Dyshira? No one knows for sure. It was only hinted upon in the records of the Royal Lines. Besides after only a few H'trae years of her reign, Dyshira's name was stricken from the records. She was obviously barren, as King Garm died with no heirs. How could she hold such great power if she couldn't bear her mate any heirs?"

Thane wouldn't back down from this when his people's lives were at stake. "I feel that I'm right in this matter."

"All right, then, brother. Prove it. Find them," Rohman challenged.

"How will he be able to do that? You yourself have seen no The'Rans. What makes you think our little brother would fare differently?" Kal asked the king.

"I will go to the Temple of the Ancient Ones," Thane declared.

"That's out of the question. To go there without being summoned could mean your death. I will not lose another brother." Rohman's fist pounded on the table.

"I must. If I die, it's my destiny, but we could all die if I do not try."

"I will go with him," Kal volunteered.

Thane looked at his oldest brother with determination in his fierce gaze. He wouldn't be swayed even if Rohman pulled rank and ordered them not to go. A smile touched his lips as he watched the king sigh in resignation. What choice did he have? The fate of their people rested on the knowledge of the Ancient Ones.

\* \* \*

*Who dares enter the Temple of the Ancient Ones?* The booming voice seemed to come from nowhere and everywhere at the same time. A Ceyan, let alone a Ceyan warrior of the Royal Line, was taught not to feel fear, but Thane and Kal were feeling an emotion as close to fear as one could get.

"Prince Kalian, son of Pytor, from Zerus."

"Prince Thane, son of Pytor, also from Zerus."

The ominous voice boomed again. *State your business, Ceyans, and be quick about it, lest you lose your pathetic lives!*

"We're on a quest to find the The'Rans formerly of Tiearen," Thane stated pulling himself up to his full height and puffing out his chest.

Another voice spoke, a female voice this time. *The'Rans? The The'Rans are no more, thanks to the Ceyans.*

"We believe The'Rans still exist. We possess the Crystal of Tiearen."

Yet another voice spoke out, this time a deeper male voice. *Insolent fool! How dare you contradict us?*

"We seek your counsel, Ancient Ones. We mean no disrespect. Our people are dying. We have a duty to the people of Zerus to do whatever it takes to save them. If it

means we must forfeit our lives before you, then so be it." Kal bowed his red head reverently, speaking with just enough fierceness in his voice to show his conviction.

There was a brief pause. *What do you know of the Crystal of Tiearen?* the first male voice asked.

"I know the crystal serves as a sort of a tracking device to the powers of the light. As long as the powers exist, the crystal will glow," Thane answered.

*How did you come by this crystal?* the same voice inquired.

"I traded for it at a bazaar in Rozak."

The deep voice sneered. *What do you want of us then? You have the crystal. You know they exist, so what can we tell you that you do not already know, Ceyan?*

"We humbly request to know the whereabouts of these The'Rans."

*Why should we tell you? It was your people who were responsible for the demise of the The'Rans. The The'Rans built temples in our honor. What have the Ceyans done other than scoff at us. Now you come to us because you want something? So I ask again, why should we tell you anything?*

Thane was the first to reply. "What you say is true. You have no reason to help us, but our people are dying. We need your help. We will give you anything you ask in return for the information we seek."

*Even your lives? Would you sacrifice your worthless lives?* the female voice asked.

Both Ceyans answered without hesitation. "Yes, Ancient Ones."

The voices spoke together. *We do not want your lives, so we ask only three things of you. First, we want our Temples resurrected. Second, we want Tiearen restored.*

"But Tiearen is a barren wasteland," Thane blurted out before he was able to stop himself.

*Tiearen was once a rich, lush land until it fell into the hands of the Shadow People. Ceyans were responsible for this, therefore Ceyans will be the ones to restore Tiearen,* the female voice decreed.

"You said that there were three things that you wanted."

*And so we did. The sons of Pytor will each take a The'Ran woman as their bride, begetting many heirs with them to restore the balance on H'trae. Your children will bring Zerus and Tiearen together as it was always meant to be,* proclaimed the deep voice.

"So there are four The'Rans left?"

*We did not say that. However, there are four women now only coming into their powers. At one time, there were several thousand The'Rans, but many of them did not sustain long under the white moon,* the female voice explained.

Thane looked at Kal dumbfounded. The moon was a pale green. What were the Ancient Ones talking about?

The deep voice answered their thoughts. *H'trae has a parallel called Earth.*

Kal frowned. "Earth? Why have we never heard of this place? What manner of world is it?"

*It is a world of low breed beings much like the conquered people who are sold and bartered for on H'trae. Once Earth was a great world much like ours, but humans misused the natural power resources of their world. Earth creatures are closed-minded and wary of things that are different, which is why there are so few The'Rans left. Many of the The'Rans were accused of witchcraft several Earth centuries ago and put to death in a barbaric ritual called burning at the stake.*

*Because of this fear of witchcraft, the remaining The'Rans did not use their powers and did not pass on the knowledge of their powers to their descendants. As a result those powers now lay dormant.*

Thane snarled. "These 'earth creatures' sound very primitive. Why would The'Rans be among these beings?"

*Despite its faults, Earth was once much like Tiearen in its majesty. The people of Earth look a lot like the The'Rans, as well, with their different shapes, sizes and skin hues. Unfortunately for the The'Rans, many Earth people do not celebrate these differences. They scorn our people and mock our ways.*

"They know of H'trae? How is that so when we have not heard of them?" Thane asked.

The deep voice sounded impatient. *They do not know about H'trae, but they know of the beings of H'trae.*

"How is this so?" Kal persisted.

*When the The'Rans fled to escape the Shadow People, they took with them their records of this world. Those records eventually fell into the hands of the humans, who in turn used them as stories for their little ones as if the people of H'trae were make-believe. Fairies, unicorns, ancient mystics are nothing but tales of myth on Earth. Fairy Tales, they are called there.*

"How do we get to Earth?"

*Through the portal behind what was once the Enchanted Falls of Tiearen. Use the Crystal of Tiearen and what you seek will find you.*

"And does one of these women possess the great power that we seek?" Thane wanted to know.

*Aye, each possesses the powers of the light. However, one of these women who is also a direct descendant of your Queen Dyshira possesses the great power you seek.*

"But King Garm had no heirs."

*Just because your spoiled King Garm did not have heirs did not mean that Dyshira did not, the feminine voice pointed out, relaying the story of Dyshira and her tragic ending.*

The warriors were made uneasy at the role that the Ceyans had played in her downfall. "We will do all that you ask of us to right this wrong," Thane pledged.

*You have no choice. Now be gone, pesky Ceyans.*

Thane and Kal turned to leave, their minds heavy with thoughts of the women they sought.

As they were just about to walk out of the temple, the female halted them. *Fret not, Ceyans, you will know what to do when the time comes. Now go, your destinies await.*

## Chapter Two

### Planet Earth

*Her dark angel had come to her again that night. Raven lay on the bed naked as the day she was born. She fingered her throbbing clit in anticipation of her lover's touch. Her body shuddered with yearning. She was hot and ready for him, and she knew that he liked to look at her this way. It turned her on knowing she could arouse him with just the sight of her.*

*When he looked at her, Raven knew he saw long blue-black hair was spread out around her head and body against her white sheets creating a startling contrast, her smooth alabaster skin glowing in the moonlight that illuminated her bedroom.*

*He always paid extra attention to her small red-tipped breasts that were now tilted forward in an enticing manner. Her nipples hardened as she thought of how they would feel in her lover's mouth. She loved the way his reverent tongue worshipped her breasts. Perhaps tonight he would give her some cock. Something always seemed to happen just as he was about to fuck her.*

*Her lover stepped up to the foot of the bed. As always, he stood bare-chested wearing only a loincloth covering a very large bulge between his muscular thighs. Her mouth watered at the sight of him, and lust coursed through her body. His black wings spread out spanning the entire width of her bedroom. He was the most beautiful man she'd ever seen. His face was perfect with its chiseled features, as if the finest sculptor had crafted it with skilled hands.*

*Not only was his face perfect, so was his body. He was tall and broad. Not too slender or overly bulky, his muscular frame was just right. His lightly tanned skin created a nice foil to the black mane that tumbled around his shoulders. Her fingers itched to touch him. She wanted to run her hands over all the solid planes of his body, comparing his hardness to her softness.*

*As she watched him, he was making an appraisal of his own. He gazed with those unfathomable, strange colored eyes of his. "Open your legs for me. I want some pussy." The*

*command came from him, although he hadn't opened his mouth. It seemed as if his voice had caressed her mind.*

*She spread her legs further apart so that he could inspect the lush pinkness of her cunt. Her clit was engorged with blood. Just having him watch her this way was a bigger turn on than having sex with some of the so-called great lovers she'd been with.*

*Raven cupped her breasts, fondling them lightly, knowing what it was doing to him to watch her like this. She ran her tongue seductively over her full pink lips. She smiled knowingly as she saw a muscle twitch in his jaw, noticing he was fast losing control of his calm demeanor.*

*Her lover leaned over to pick up her feet and then kissed each one of her toes, taking the time to nibble and caress each digit with his tongue. He placed kisses along the tops of her feet and ankles. Raven had not realized how sensual feet could be, and if he could make her feel this way by merely playing with a part of her body that she had never viewed as sexual, God knows what would happen when he finally touched her between her legs.*

*Just when Raven thought she could not take more of the delicious ministrations of his mouth on her feet, he knelt down in front of the bed and grabbed her ankles, pulling her body down the length of the bed until his face was directly in front of her pussy.*

*He began to press tender kisses on her inner thigh, creating an erotic charge that was almost more than she could handle. His nose brushed against her damp slit, and he inhaled her essence deeply. "You smell so good, woman." He briefly touched her mind again before fitting his mouth over her aching sex.*

*Raven gasped as he devoured her with his mouth. Not an inch of flesh between her legs escaped the attention of his mouth as he slurped on her clit. The friction his lips created swept her away on a tidal wave of passion. He ate her pussy as if it were the most delicious thing he'd ever had the pleasure to partake in. Her hips bucked up against his face, causing him to increase the pressure of his greedy mouth.*

*His tongue lapped over and over with long broad strokes. He nibbled at her labial folds, tugging and teasing her until she was writhing and moaning with an uncontrollable burst of emotion, under the ministration of his mouth. He slid a finger inside her wet channel and began to work it in and out of her, never lifting his mouth from her.*



*The man was driving her insane, and she needed his cock now! "Fuck me. Please fuck me," she begged him, but her lover continued to eat her pussy as if he had not heard her. She was sure he had, but for reasons known only to him, he seemed intent to prolong her torture. Oral sex had never been this pleasurable to her before. Raven moaned as he continued to do the most arousing things with his mouth and fingers.*

*He used his free hand to lift her hips higher in order to gain further access to her lower region. He rubbed his thumb against the puckered hole of her anus. The stimulation of the tight hole made her shiver with desire. Raven had never been a fan of backdoor love, but when he touched her like this, she wanted him to bury his dick deep within her rear so badly, she ached. The thought of him deliciously stretching her anal walls sent a wave of pleasure up her spine.*

*He rubbed her rosebud for several more minutes before he slipped a thumb inside the hot hole. Raven thought she would lose her mind. "Please stop teasing me, and fuck me! Goddammit, give me some cock!"*

*He looked up with those unfathomable eyes, as if to say he was in charge. She trembled. Raven loved the way he took control. He brought her body to orgasm after orgasm. When she felt as if she wouldn't be able to take it anymore, he suddenly stood up. He made eye contact with her while he licked her juices from his lips. He smiled that wicked grin of his. Finally, he will take me now, she thought. His hands moved to his waist to remove the loincloth...*

Raven woke up, her body glistening with sweat and her pussy still contracting from the dream that had seemed so real. She looked around to find herself alone. Damn. The dream ended the same way every night, with her lover about to reveal what was beneath the loincloth. Disappointment surged through her. She didn't know if she could take another night of sexual frustration.

Damn it. Why couldn't she get past that part of the dream? Every night, she was taken to an intense peak that threatened to drive her insane only to be let down.

Her body was covered in goose bumps, the dream had been so graphic. She'd been having this particular dream now for several months. Her dark angel. Who was this winged man in her dream? It wasn't the first time she'd ever dreamed of magical creatures. When she was younger she used to dream of a far off world with mythical

beings, but then again, she'd grown up dirt poor in a trailer park, and her dream world was her escape.

Her other dreams had never seemed as real as this one.

*God, I need some dick.* It had been quite some time since she'd broken things off with her last lover, the twenty-year-old personal trainer. He was a tiger in the sack, but when she read about their affair in a tabloid, she had to fire him. Why couldn't a girl get a little action without having it blabbed to the world?

Raven glanced over at her clock. It was only two o'clock in the morning. She tossed and turned trying to fall back asleep, but to no avail. Finally she gave up. The damn dream had gotten her too hot and bothered, so she climbed out of bed and grabbed a robe to throw over her nakedness. Her stomach rumbled loudly, but she opted for a glass of water to fill her belly. To eat this late at night or so early in the morning was a detriment to her career.

Grabbing her pack of Virginia Slims, Raven walked out on the balcony of her penthouse suite. She inhaled deeply, knowing she should quit, but it was either smoke or eat that last piece of cheesecake in the refrigerator. She'd rather have had the cheesecake, but she had a photo shoot in five hours.

*I have got to get out of this business.* Modeling was a young girl's gig and she was already thirty-three, which was ancient in her profession. Every day it seemed the girls were getting younger and thinner, but still, she was Raven Storm, the face that had graced several hundred magazine covers over the span of her career. She was well-known all over the world.

Sitting down in the corner of the balcony, she gazed distracted at the city of Manhattan. Raven took another drag of her cigarette. The thought of her upcoming photo shoot made her cringe. When she'd been offered the cover of the September issue of *Vogue*, she hadn't thought twice about signing the contract. It was *Vogue*, after all, and the fee that she would earn was very respectable.

Still, when her agent let the name of the photographer slip, Raven tried to back out. Tommy Rice had been trying to get into her pants since she first broke into the

business. If he hadn't been such a good photographer, he probably would have been blackballed a long time ago for the way he treated the girls he worked with.

Raven knew how to take care of herself. She had a low tolerance for bullshit. For that she was labeled "Difficult." She was sure she was called a lot worse behind her back.

Well, she'd raised herself to be tough and self-sufficient. Having lost her mother at an early age to a drunk driver, and her father more slowly to alcohol, she'd dropped out of high school to work full time, leaving home at sixteen. She'd hated school anyway. She'd reached her full height -- 6' 2" -- by the time she was fifteen. No one wanted to make friends with the freakishly tall girl who wore secondhand clothes.

Raven smirked as she thought about those girls still stuck in that backwoods town, probably wanting what she now had.

If only they knew the truth. Her life wasn't so great either.

Raven took one final puff from her cigarette before flicking the butt away. Everyone always saw the glamorous side of her life. In the beginning she'd been seduced by the limos, the money, all the free stuff people threw at her. She adored the clothes, the jewelry and the traveling, but the flipside to her profession was not so wonderful.

She hated the parties filled with people so high they couldn't hold a rational conversation, the late nights, knowing the people around you were there for what they could get from you. Even the profession itself wasn't all that glamorous. She spent most of her time in hair, makeup and wardrobe. Shoots rarely lasted longer than an hour.

To the world, Raven Storm had it all, but besides her material possessions, she had nothing of meaning to show for herself, except three ex-husbands. She felt empty, lonely, disenchanted. The only problem was there wasn't much else she was good at. However, one thing she knew for certain. Her modeling days were numbered.

\* \* \*

Tommy leered as he snapped each picture. "That's it, Raven, baby. Give me that come-fuck-me look again. Lick your lips like you want some of this here cock. Yes, like that. Oh, Raven, you're going to make me cream in my pants."

Raven posed as directed. Her mind was blank, her body was on autopilot. The way Tommy was carrying on you would have thought that she was posing for the cover of *Hustler* instead of the cover of *Vogue*. God, she hated him. He must have taken at least a hundred shots before he stopped. She stepped down from the platform to go to her dressing room. She'd had enough.

Tommy called her back. "Hey baby, I'm not finished yet. I want to get a few more shots."

"You're done as far as I am concerned." She really wasn't in the mood to deal with him today.

Tommy ran toward her and grabbed her arm. "Hey, babe, I said I wasn't through yet." He yanked her back around to face him.

"Take your hands off me, Tommy." Raven spoke with a calm she didn't feel.

"Or you'll do what, baby? Don't you know I could break you, doll face?" Tommy Rice glared at her incredulously. "Who the hell do you think you are, calling an end to my session, you little cunt? You get your sweet little ass back over there, or things could get very difficult for you. You already have a rep for being a bitch, and let's face it, baby, you're no spring chicken, so either get over there now or this will be your last cover shoot. One word from me and you're finished," Tommy threatened.

Raven in her spiked heels towered over Tommy's five foot nine frame. "Tommy, you only wish you had that kind of pull in this industry, you pesky little cockroach. That threat may work with some young up-and-comer but it doesn't scare me!" She grabbed his hand to remove it from her arm, only to feel a spinning sensation. Her eyes locked with his momentarily. She dropped her hand and he removed his from her arm quickly as if her skin were on fire. Raven's eyes narrowed. "I see you," she said in a strange whisper.

"What are you talking about, you crazy bitch?" Tommy backed away from her, his eyes widening.

Raven glared at him before walking away. "I know your secret, Tommy, so don't fuck with me."

Tommy looked too stunned to argue. Raven smiled at him knowingly, the look on his pale face confirming what she'd just seen. He puffed his chest up with bravado. "You're bluffing."

"Do you want to try me?" She raised a black brow.

"Fuck you!" He stormed off.

Raven sat in her dressing room feeling drained. This was it. She needed to quit. She couldn't do this anymore. And that weird thing had happened again. When she'd touched Tommy, she had seen something in him that sent waves of revulsion through her. Even she would not have expected him capable of such deviant things. What was going on here? Was she crazy? How in the world was she able to do that? It wasn't the first time that it had happened, but the feeling had never been so strong before.

She had sometimes gotten faint impressions of a person's inner self when she touched them, but she'd always managed to dismiss it. But today, it had been as if she could see right into Tommy's very soul. It was eerie and she didn't like it one bit.

After changing and scrubbing the make-up off from her face, she headed out. As she sat in the taxi she called her agent.

"Randy Kay speaking."

"Randy, it's Raven."

"Hey Rae, you're just the person I wanted to speak to. *Sports Illustrated* is shooting their swimsuit issue in Egypt this year. I know you were hankering for an assignment in Africa. You have the best chance of being on the cover this issue, since they've only signed a bunch of no names so far." Randy's idea of a no name was anyone who wasn't on at least five covers that year.

Raven sighed rubbing her temples. Her head was beginning to ache. "Randy, I was calling you to let you know that I won't be taking any more assignments for now."

"What! You're kidding, right? Are you doing this to me because I didn't tell you Tommy would be shooting today?" Randy always took things personally, and Raven was not in the mood to stroke his ego right now.

"It has nothing to do with the shoot today, which by the way I really do wish you'd warned me about before I actually signed the contract, but that's besides the point."

"Then why did you bring it up?"

Raven paused for a moment. She was not about to blow up in the back of a taxicab. "You brought it up. Look, let's not get into semantics here. The point is, I'm tired and I need a break."

"But Raven, you're hot right now. You know at your age you have to get it while the getting is good."

The way people went on about her age you would have thought she was a grandma in her rocker. "Randy, I don't really care. I'm not interested in taking on any more assignments right now."

"What about your shoot in Milan next month?"

"I never agreed to that shoot, Randy. As a matter of fact that contract is still sitting on my desk unsigned."

"And will you sign it?"

"The way I'm feeling right now, I don't think so."

There was silence on the other end of the line. Raven waited for Randy's response, knowing that he was sulking. "So how long are you going to be in this funk, Rae?"

"As long as I feel like it. Goodbye, Randy." She turned off her phone and sat back in her seat. The cabby was shooting looks at her through the rear view mirror, as if he'd recognized her. She was sure this conversation would be in the tabloids by next week. *I have to get out of this crazy business.*

Two hours later she was leaving Manhattan, not knowing where she was going. Her SUV was packed with two weeks' worth of clothes. *My life has no purpose*, she thought as she drove through the Lincoln Tunnel heading east.

She must have driven for hours when she felt a sudden urge to detour. She found herself in a hokey little Virginia farm town. Just great. The last thing she wanted was to run into a couple of toothless hillbillies telling her that she had a 'purty' mouth. However, as if a force unknown was guiding her, she found herself pulling over on the side of the road.

Raven got out of the vehicle and began to walk down a dirt road that was off to the side. She must have walked a mile, because the high-heeled Gucci boots she wore were killing her. *I must be out of my mind*. Yet she continued walking. She walked until she spotted a little shack.

She saw a car parked in front of the house, which on first sight looked like a convertible, but on closer inspection, it looked as if the top had literally been ripped away along with the passenger door. A chill ran down her spine. Her brain keep telling her to turn away, but her stupid feet kept walking until she was standing right at the front door. As if on its own volition her hand went up to knock on the door. Just as Raven raised her fist to knock on the door, it swung open.

A pair of hands reached out and grabbed her.

## Chapter Three

Raven was too stunned to react as she was pulled into the little house. She struggled against the strong arms that held her. She looked up to see a tall man with hair that fell to his waist. His hair was such a startling red that it almost looked alive. Men had all the luck. Many women would pay lots of money to get a red that shade.

*Oh God, why I am thinking about the color of this maniac's hair when I should be trying to get the hell out of here?*

She pushed against his chest, but he was as solid as an oak and just as unmovable. He didn't seem to be putting any effort into holding her struggling form. Raven stretched her neck up so that she could get a better glimpse of his face. Being as tall as she was, she wasn't use to craning her neck to look up at anyone. This man had to be close to seven feet. She gasped when her eyes locked with his. His eyes were silver.

Déjà vu. He reminded her so much of someone. She almost felt like she knew him. Her dream lover! Except for the flaming red mane and the paler skin, the sheer masculine beauty of his face made her stare at him like an idiot. The giant wore a tight T-shirt that strained against his broad muscular chest. She looked a little lower at the tight, hip-hugging jeans he wore. Oh God, she could see the outline of his cock through his pants as if he were not wearing underwear.

Wait a minute! What the hell was she standing here ogling this man for? He would tear her apart with that thing hiding in his jeans. What the hell had possessed her to come to this godforsaken shack in the first place?

She kicked out at his shin, missing her mark. As if he were bored with her, he set her down on her feet. "Who the hell are you?" she demanded, her hands on her hips. Her eyes narrowed to slits. Raven knew she should try to run, but some unseen force



seemed to be telling her this was exactly where she needed to be. Inside she was trembling, but right now she needed answers.

The large man looked at her with those strange colored eyes as if he were assessing her. He didn't speak. She yelled at the giant man again. "Are you deaf or something? I asked you a question." Still he did not answer.

She tried to sidestep him only to have her arm grabbed. Raven struggled as he lifted her up under her arms and took her to the only other room in the shack. *Oh my God. This is it. I'm a dead woman. I can see it in the headlines now. "Supermodel Raven Storm raped and mutilated."*

He deposited her back on the floor. She struck out at him, but he easily deflected her blow. His silver eyes flashed in a message of warning. Raven felt chilled to her very core. Then, to her utter surprise, he turned and walked out of the room, closing the door behind him. Her heart stopped when she heard a decisive click, indicating that she was locked in.

"I'll be damned," she muttered.

"We feel the same way," said a voice from the corner of the room. Raven nearly jumped out of her skin when she realized she was not alone in the room. Sitting on the floor, huddled together, were two women. One was a cherubic looking blonde, while the other was a very striking black woman. The dark beauty looked as if she was ready to commit murder, glaring at the door with hate filled eyes.

"What's going on here?" Raven asked.

"We don't know. But we all felt this strange pull to this location. I was home and woke up with the strangest urge to drive and mind you, I live in Toledo, for Christ sake. I just kept driving and driving, ending up here. That's when they grabbed me. I've been here for two days now." The blonde sniffed as if on the verge of tears.

"They? You mean he's not the only one?" Things seemed to be getting weirder. Raven looked toward the black woman who was still shooting daggers at the door. Raven supposed the woman was visualizing their captors in her mind. "Wait a minute,

you said all of us, and I just got here, so how do you know this was how I came to be here?"

The other woman turned her dark gaze to Raven. "We didn't know. My sister escaped and the black-haired one went after her. I hope she manages to get away." Her nostrils flaring, she stood up and ran to the door and started pounding on it with all her might. "Do you hear that, you big ape? She's going to the police and your asses are going to jail!"

Without warning, the door slammed open. The redhead giant stood in the doorway with a stormy expression on his face. Raven watched in amazement as the dark beauty, with no apparent fear, started pummeling her fists against his chest, but then something very strange happened.

The giant's silver eyes began to glow. His attacker's fists were in mid-air ready to strike again, and Raven's eyes widened in horror as the brave woman suddenly clutched her head as if she were in pain before collapsing to the floor in an unconscious heap. The blonde let out a loud scream.

Holy shit! What the hell had just happened? Feeling as if she had stepped into the Twilight Zone, Raven froze to the spot.

"Oh my God! Oh my God! I think she's dead," the blonde cried.

The sound of her voice broke Raven from her trance. If she was going to die, she was going to die fighting. She knelt down beside the unconscious woman and felt for a pulse, breathing a sigh of relief when she found one. Raven turned to the giant who was staring at them dispassionately. Or was he? There seemed to be something else in his eyes. Regret perhaps? No. She was imagining things. Raven stood up to confront him, uncaring if the same fate awaited her. "What have you done to her?"

"No, please don't do it! He will kill you too," the blonde pleaded.

Raven ignored her. She made a grab at the redhead to demand some answers. When she touched him, that spinning sensation ran through her body again. She immediately let go of his arm. *Oh hell. Please tell me that I didn't see what I thought I just saw.*

The red-haired giant ignored Raven. To her surprise, he knelt down to look at the woman lying on the floor, lifting her into his arms. He carried her to the other side of the room and laid her limp body on a cot. After touching him, she knew he didn't mean them harm. Not that it mattered, considering they were still being held captive.

The door was open and the giant's back was turned to them. Now would be an ideal time to escape, but her conscience wouldn't let her leave the other women. She walked back over to the blonde to offer comfort. "She's not dead," Raven reassured her.

The blonde grabbed her arm as Raven plopped back down on the floor. "What's he doing to her?"

"I don't know."

"I told her not to try anything, but she's been raging at him since she and her sister arrived. Her sister got away, and boy could that woman run. Those guys sure were mad. I thought they'd kill us right then and there."

Raven looked at the woman who was chattering away. She held up her hand to stop the woman from speaking. "First, who are you and what are we doing here? What do you know about these men holding us captive? Also, maybe I'm going crazy, but that man's eyes were glowing. People just can't do that," Raven finished on a near hysterical note.

"My name is Hope, and to be honest, I don't know what I'm doing here. Like I said earlier, I woke up with an urge to drive, which is kind of crazy considering I'd planned to be in the Catskills on a retreat that day. It was as if something was leading me here. I know it sounds weird. I felt this was where I needed to be even though I don't know the area -- have actually never even heard of it -- but I drove here anyway. The minute I pulled up to this house, I saw the redhead and another guy who looked a lot like him, but his hair was shorter and black. I panicked, so I turned the car around and was about to drive off, but they stopped my car. Granted, I have a small economy car, but how the hell can someone stop a freakin' moving vehicle? Now that's just not normal!"

"Was that your car out there without the door and the roof?" Raven asked, fearing the answer to her question.

"Yes. While one of them was holding it, the other started ripping my car apart with his bare hands."

"What? This just doesn't make sense. That's not possible." Raven shook her head, trying to convince herself this wasn't happening. But then she remembered what she saw when she had touched the redheaded giant. She refused to accept it, tried to make sense of it all as she looked toward the prone woman on the cot. The redhead had long since left the room. "How did she get here?"

"She arrived yesterday with her sister. That's Genesis, and not long before you arrived, Eden escaped. The dark-haired one -- I call him Blackie -- went after her. We were hoping she got away."

Raven shook her head. Only hours before she'd been in New York at a photo shoot, and now someone she didn't think was even human was holding her captive! "I don't understand any of this."

"None of us do. We don't know why they're keeping us here or what they want from us. We can't even understand them when they talk. I know four languages, and I have never heard anything close to what they're speaking. They gave up trying to communicate with us after a while. There's something not right about these guys."

"How do you mean?"

"Well, you noticed the eye glowing thing. That in itself is strange, but put that together with what they did to my car, the strange language, and I could have been imagining things. I could even swear I saw something moving up and down under the back of their shirts." Hope bit her lip, apparently trying to hold back a sob. "I'm sorry. You probably think I'm being a baby."

"No, I don't. I feel like crying, myself." Raven felt an instant bond with this woman, and it wasn't because they were both being held captive, but for some other reason she couldn't put her finger on. They sat in silence for a few minutes.

Hope broke the silence. "Who are you, by the way?"

"Raven." A faint smile touched Raven's lips. It had been a while since someone had asked her that.

Hope's jaw dropped. "Raven Storm? Oh my God, I thought you looked familiar. I can't believe I'm sitting here with Raven Storm the supermodel!" Her china blue eyes were as round as saucers.

Raven shrugged uncomfortably. "So they tell me."

"But you can't be her!"

"And why is that?"

"Well, you're not as mean as..." Hope's face went red.

"Oh, I see. You don't think I'm the bitch they say I am. Why do I get the feeling that you read a lot of tabloids?"

"I'm so sorry! I didn't mean --"

Raven held up her hand. "It's okay."

"You sure look different, though. I mean, you're still a knockout but... Oh dear, there I go again. Feel free to slap me." Hope groaned.

Raven threw her head back and laughed. "Now why would I want to do that? It's nice to hear someone speak their mind rather than telling me what they think I want to hear. Besides, I get that a lot when I'm not in hair and makeup. You can't be glamorous all the time, especially after being manhandled by some big bully." For a brief moment she'd almost forgotten where they were. They had to get back to the issue at hand.

"Now, how did supermodel Raven Storm end up in this hellhole?"

"Like you, I just ended up here. I had been disenchanted with my job for a long time, and since I don't have any contracts to fulfill any time soon, I thought I would take a little trip to clear my head. Now after hearing your story, I'm not sure if it was a need to get away from my life for a little while, or if it was like you said, something pulling me here. One thing I do know for certain is that we have to figure out a way to escape."

"Been there. Bought the T-shirt. We have all tried to escape, but they've been able to thwart us each time." Hope's eyes welled up with tears again. "Oh damn, I haven't cried this much since I was a kid," she muttered, catching a tear before it ran down her cheek.

"How did Eden get away then?"

"I had gestured to them that I needed to use the outhouse. While the dark-haired guy took me out back, Genesis distracted the redhead and Eden slipped away. To say they were mad was an understatement. What are they doing here and what do they want with us? I'm just a social worker for chrissakes." Hope threw up her hands.

"They haven't tried anything funny, have they? I mean sexually."

Hope rested one plump hand under her chin. A serious expression crossed her face as if she was thinking very hard about the answer. "Well, not with me or Eden, but I think something happened between Genesis and Red when he escorted her to the outhouse yesterday, because when they got back, she was madder than a rabid dog. She's been shouting obscenities at him ever since. Now, I can't be sure exactly what happened, but she looked disheveled and her lips were really swollen, and the way he was looking at her... it was as if..."

"If what?"

"Like he owned her."

"Really? Then what the hell did he just do to her? He didn't even touch her and she collapsed."

"Haven't you been paying attention? I may sound crazy for saying this, but I don't think they're human," Hope whispered.

Raven refused to acknowledge Hope's last comment. "Are you sure they don't understand us?"

"Of course I'm sure. We've all tried to communicate with them, but when they answer they use that strange gibberish. You know, Raven, a couple of days ago, I didn't think I had a lot to live for, which is why I was going on the retreat I had planned, but

now that I'm faced with the prospect of dying, I want to live. I've never wanted to live more than I do now." Hope began to cry again.

Raven put her arms around her companion. "The redhead won't kill us," she said with a certainty that surprised even her.

"How do you know?" Hope sniffed.

"Well, you're going to think I'm not normal either, but sometimes when I touch people, I feel them. Not in the normal sense, but it's like I can see into their souls," Raven explained, not sure why she was sharing this with a woman that she'd only just met.

"Really?"

"Yes. I... When I touched him, he didn't have the intent of murder in him."

Hope looked at her in wonder. "Maybe he doesn't, but the other one might. So what else did you 'see'?"

"Nothing, it was just a brief impression," Raven lied. How could she explain that she didn't think they were human either?

Hope pursed her lips. "You're not telling me something."

"What makes you think that?"

"I can just tell. You have to remember that I've been here for two days now, and I'm a little more sensitive to things than you are. I've seen things that can't be easily explained away."

Raven wasn't ready to concede. She looked around the room for possible escape routes, but the windows were so tiny that even she wouldn't have been able to slide through it. She stood up and tried the door. To her surprise, it was unlocked.

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to try to talk to him. I'm not going to sit here and wait for them to decide my fate."

When Raven walked through the room she was met with a sight that startled her. The red-haired giant was sitting in a chair with his face in his hands. He sat very still.

As she took a step forward, he looked up sharply. "Why are you keeping us here?" she demanded.

Raven backed up when he stood. He began to speak in a clear baritone. His words, however, were incomprehensible. Hope had been right, this language that he spoke indeed sounded like gibberish. Raven was fluent in English and Italian, and had an ear for a handful of languages, but she'd never heard anything like this before. "I don't understand," she said, shaking her head.

The giant looked frustrated, so she tried something else. She pointed to herself. "Raven." She repeated the motions several times.

Seeming to understand, he pointed to himself. "Kah-lee-an."

"Kalian?" Raven repeated, and was rewarded with a huge white smile.

She repeated her name and pointed to herself again. "Ray-vin." He finally repeated. She nodded. Well, at least he had a name, and she could stop referring to him as the redheaded giant.

Kalian said something else, but Raven didn't understand him. She threw a few phrases at him from every language she knew, only to have him look at her without comprehension.

Just when she was about to give up, the door crashed open. Standing in the doorway, holding a tiny woman over his shoulders that she could only assume was Eden, was the very man who had been haunting her dreams for weeks.

Things had just gotten stranger.



## Chapter Four

He looked exactly the same as he had in her dreams. The only difference was his lack of wings and the clothing he wore. His tight black T-shirt accentuated his sculpted chest, and his jeans could be considered indecent they were so tight, like Kalian's. Her eyes strayed to the bulge in front of his pants. It was huge. She wondered how that monster looked when he was undressed. She bet it would stretch her pussy quite nicely.

Their gazes locked. His unusual silver eyes looked at her as if saw through her very soul. It was as if he had slipped out of her dreams. He lost his grip on Eden, who was flailing like a wild woman against him, and nearly dropped her. He managed to catch her just before she hit the ground.

A raw wave of lust washed over her, and she could feel her nipples tightening as she wondered if he ate pussy in real life as well as he did in her dreams. Her dream lover was extremely tall and broad. He was all male, and she couldn't help but wonder if he delivered on what his body promised. It didn't seem as if he could look away from her either.

It was Kalian who broke the silence by speaking to his companion. Seeing the two men together, she could see they were related, most likely brothers.

Her dream lover hesitated for a moment before tearing his gaze away from Raven to look at Kalian. They began to communicate in their strange language. Raven stood rooted to the spot, unable to move. She couldn't stop staring to save her life.

Eden managed to tear herself from her captor's grip. Her movement finally caught Raven's attention. At a glance, Eden could have been mistaken as a teenager because of her small stature, but on closer inspection, she was a very stunning woman. She looked up at Raven with distress in her doe-like brown eyes. "He's done something to my sister."

Raven stared down at the smaller woman who couldn't be more than five feet, if that. How did she know something happened to Genesis? "She's in the room."

Eden turned to go into the room with Raven following her. Raven looked over her shoulder to catch one last glance of her dream lover and looked away. *I must be crazy. Here I am held captive with a couple of guys who could probably crush me with one blow, and I'm thinking about getting laid.*

Eden ran to her sister when they entered the room. She tried to shake her sister awake, but Genesis lay unresponsive. "What has he done to her?"

"We don't know. He just looked at her and she passed out," Raven whispered in fear. Genesis still could not be roused. Something had to be wrong with her. Hope and Raven joined Eden by the cot, trying to rouse the unconscious woman.

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"You put the mind lock on her? Why did you do that? You're not usually so rough with your women. Besides, we're not supposed to harm them. They are going to be our brides, and we need them to save our people," Thane scolded.

"She will be okay. I am sure she'll snap out of it as soon as we get back to Zerus. Now that we have them all, we can finally leave this place. I hate Earth with its dirty water and filthy ways, and by the stars, I hate these rags that the humans wear. How can they move about with all this restriction? I *demmed* near choked myself trying to get this thing over my head." Kal grabbed a handful of his T-shirt in disgust.

"I dislike this place as much as you. The wee one led me on a merry chase. I didn't realize that Earth bred so many runtlings. For a moment I thought we were among the trolls when I saw the Earth people."

"I know what you mean, brother. It worries me because these women's ancestors could have intermingled with the humans. It's possible they have human blood coursing through their veins. How can we be sure that the Ancient Ones were right in their assessment of these women?"

"We have no choice but to believe them. They are our only hope." Thane sighed, shooting a glance toward the room where the *tela*-eyed beauty had retreated. She was

breathhtaking. Had he not been holding the wee one when he walked back into the dwelling, he would have reached out to touch her skin to see if it was as soft as it looked.

One thing held true about these The'Ran women. All four women possessed a beauty that far surpassed any woman he'd ever seen, but the one with the midnight locks was exquisite.

"What of the one with the midnight tresses?"

"She arrived while you went out chasing the wee one. She is called Raven."

Her feline-colored eyes had a seductive slant to them, hinting at mischief and danger. Her lips were red like crushed berries, and all that beautiful milky white skin and glorious black mane made his heart pound. When they returned to Zerus, she would be the one he claimed. "Raven." Thane said the name as if to test how it rolled off his tongue. He liked it. "How did you come to learn this? Did she speak our tongue?"

"No. She repeated it over and over again while pointing to herself so I figured that she was trying to tell me her name. Beyond our names, we were unable to communicate."

Thane grew impatient. "When will we be able to communicate with them?"

"Once we're back on H'trae, they must touch the crystal. Then they will remember our tongue."

"I hope so. I grow tired of the golden one's tears."

They'd been here for five Earth days, and the brothers had learned right away that they had to sheath their wings lest people run away screaming or stare openly at them like oddities.

It had been quite a task trying to barter their gems for supplies and the strange earth clothes. This fabric chafed his cock. Besides that, it made his balls itch so much he nearly tore through the coarse material. Having observed Earth men, he didn't have to wonder why they were always scratching themselves. How the *farken* could the men on this world stand it?

When Thane and Kal had all the supplies they needed, they had found the abandoned dwelling not too far from the portal linking their worlds. It seemed as if they had waited for a long time before the golden one showed up, followed by the two brown skinned beauties, and then Raven. The very thought of her made his loins ache. He couldn't wait to get back home so he could rut between her silken thighs to his heart's content.

Kal broke Thane's thoughts. "Let us go then."

"They won't go willingly."

"They will have to accept their destinies. I will put them out, so we don't have to worry about them fighting us."

Thane watched his brother stride into the room where the women were, his silver eyes glowing. Kal locked his gaze on Raven first, then Eden, who looked up at him in horror. They fell unconscious to the ground.

The golden The'ran, who had been watching the entire scene play out, screamed. "Don't kill me!" She shielded her eyes, her hands covering her face so she didn't notice his swift approach. Kal yanked her hands away from her face and looked into her eyes. She shook her head back and forth before she joined the others in their comatose state.

Thane looked at his brother's handiwork. "I hope you were not too hard on them. I remember you used to do that to us when we were children. I would wake up with the most terrible headaches."

"I went easy on them. They're only sleeping. We should be back to our world by the time they awaken. Get the crystal so we may find the portal." Kal lifted the blonde into his arms, throwing her over his shoulder. Then, walking over to the cot, he picked up the prone woman and threw her over the other shoulder. Thane noticed his brother seemed to take extra care with the tall dark-skinned beauty.

He'd known that particular woman would be a handful for Kal the moment he saw her. It would be interesting how the ceremony would play out because he wanted Raven, and if he guessed correctly, Kal was already showing a particular interest in the fiery dark beauty. It would take Thane a while to get used to her strange Earth name.

Thane picked up the two remaining women, taking special care with his Raven. "The portal is not far away. We can make it home by sunset."

"Thank the stars," Kal muttered.

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### **H'trae: Zerus**

Raven woke up feeling disoriented. She lay in a pool of streaming water with someone washing her hair, while another washed her body. The care actually felt rather nice, but she didn't remember getting into the tub, and she'd never had anyone bathe her before. She shook her head to make sure she wasn't dreaming.

There was something different about these women. Their faces seemed a bit off. When her eyes focused, she realized that the two women bathing her had cat faces. What the hell? She recoiled from them, and they looked at each other in distress, breaking into a stream of words that Raven didn't understand.

She stood up abruptly, backing away from them. She looked around wildly, grabbing the first blunt object she could get her hands on. Uncaring of her nakedness, she began to swing the object toward the cat women. "Stay away from me! Get away, you monsters!"

The two women ran out of the room screaming. When they were gone, Raven started to relax, only to have her guard raised again when several large men rushed into the room to see what the commotion was.

Raven couldn't understand a word anyone was saying. "The first one of you that gets close is going to get his head bashed in." She knew they didn't understand her, but they could probably tell by her tone what she meant.

Amid all the commotion, her dream lover stepped forward, looking just as he had in the dream, wearing nothing but a loincloth. He held a large red glowing rock. He said something to the men. The crowd left the room, bowing their heads to him. He was obviously their leader.

She could feel her nipples harden as she remembered his hands roaming over her body in her dreams. Her mouth went dry, and she hesitated, but only for a moment, before she raised the blunt object over her head once more. Grade A hunk or not, she wanted some answers. "Who are you?" she demanded.

When he stepped forward she swung at him. He was swift, avoiding her blow. He moved closer and she stepped back, tripping over the edge of the pool-like tub, falling on her rear.

"Don't touch me!" She remembered she still had the object in her hand, raised it to swipe at him but he caught her hand in his larger one while holding the glowing red rock out to her. She wasn't sure whether she should take it as he indicated or wait to see what he would do next. He grunted as if to tell her to take it.

As scared as she was, Raven reached for the glowing rock. Her hand instantly began to tingle. She wanted to drop it, but it wouldn't let her. It felt as if a bolt of lightning went through her body.

It was several seconds before the rock seemed to release its hold on her, and when it did, she dropped it as if it had burned her skin. Her body began to tremble out of control. The dark-haired giant pulled her against his chest. When she stopped shaking, she raised her head to look at his face.

He stroked a damp lock of hair away from her face. "How do you feel, Raven? Does your head ache? Sometimes Kalian doesn't realize the effect his mind lock has on people." His voice was a deep baritone like Kalian's had been.

Oh shit! She understood him. Now, how in the hell did that happen, especially when he was still speaking that weird language? How was it possible? It defied all reason. "How... how is it that I understand you?"

"You've always been able to speak and understand our tongue, but now that the power of the crystal has run through you, you remember it."

"Huh? I speak a couple of languages, and I understand quite a few, but this jibber-jabber has never been one of them." She was stunned that she was speaking the very same gibberish she was disparaging.

"Perhaps your mind didn't, but your heart has always known." She freed herself from his hold and leapt to her feet, dashing to the far corner of the room.

"First of all, who are you and where the hell am I? Oh my God, those women had cat faces. Why did they have cat faces?"

"I apologize for being so remiss. I am Prince Thane Dacro Blaisdan Modikhan. You are in our homeland Zerus on H'trae. As for your serving wenches, they are Lazerens. They all look like that. If you find their appearance offensive, we can find some others to serve you. Of course, there are not many races who are as fair as you The'Rans, so please be kind and remember that."

"Look, Prince Thane Dacro Bl -- well whatever your name is..."

"Thane will do."

"Well, Thane, you must think that I'm stupid if you think I'm going to believe I am on another planet. Now, I would like some clothes, and then you can explain to me how it is that I can speak and understand your language, and don't give me any of that crystal mumbo jumbo. And what did you and the red-haired hulk do with the other women?" Raven's eyes narrowed.

Thane looked amused. "You talk too much, Raven, but I understand how you must be feeling right now." Raven shivered as her arm crossed over her breasts. Her eyes widened at the sight of the twitching bulge between his legs. He looked huge!

"You don't have to shield yourself from my eyes. You have a lovely body with all that beautiful white skin, those lovely little buds crowning your tasty looking breasts that look ready for my mouth."

Raven gasped at his frank words. Some men who were downright crude had hit her on before, but this man seemed to be seducing her with his words. She knew she should feel outraged that he had the nerve to talk to her like this, but she couldn't help thinking about the dream again. Her eyes strayed to his muscular thighs, wondering what it would be like to have her legs entangled with them. Her tongue poked out to moisten her dry lips.

"I... what do you want?"

He smiled, revealing even white teeth. "You, of course. I think you want me too. I can smell that mouthwatering pussy of yours from here."

She held out her hands as he drew near. "Don't come any closer!"

"I can't help myself. You are very beautiful. In time you will become accustomed to me, as I plan on becoming accustomed to every inch of your body. Perhaps you will relax with some wine. You must be parched." He turned his back to fetch her a drink.

"What is wrong with your back?" Raven screamed in horror. It looked as if something was moving under the skin of his back. It was like a scene straight out of one of the Alien movies. *Okay, maybe I am crazy.* She stared at him in wonder and fear.

He turned back around. "Those are my wings. I did not want to frighten you so I sheathed them."

"Wings?"

Thane hunched his shoulders and let out a loud grunt. Right before her eyes, his back sprouted wings.

"Holy shit!" If there was ever a time when she needed a cigarette, it was now. She streaked across the side of the room, as far away from him as she could possibly get.

"Don't be afraid, Raven. I will not harm you."

"Stay away from me, you winged freak!" She held her hands out in front of her to ward off his advance. It was one thing to dream about a guy with wings, but it was definitely another to actually see one.

He stepped closer, ignoring her command. "You're being silly. It is not becoming of a future princess of Zerus, my lovely The'Ran."

"What on Earth are you talking about?"

"We are not on Earth. We are on H'trae."

"Whatever! I don't care where the hell we are. I want to go home!" She lashed out at him this time, her hand connecting with his chest with a loud stinging slap.

*Enough, woman!*



Raven clutched her head. The sound of his voice reverberated through her, but he hadn't moved his mouth to speak. This was beyond weird. Her eyes welled up with tears of frustration. Now she understood why Hope had been such a watering pot. "Get out of my head. Just let me go home," she pleaded.

He stepped closer, pinning her against the wall with his hard body. "You *are* home, *jihar*."

Raven's eyes widened at the tender endearment. She wanted to run away, pretend this was all just a dream, but she couldn't move. She stretched to look at his face. His intense silver eyes looked down into hers. She gulped, and her body began to grow hot as images of that dream flooded her mind. It had been a while since her body had reacted to a man's nearness. Was he a man? No man she knew had wings.

"Are you an angel?"

His face was only inches from hers. "I know not what that is. I am Ceyan." His eyes scanned her face, as if he could not get enough of the very sight of her. She flinched when he leaned forward to brush his lips against hers as if it were his right to do so.

"No," she whispered. Out self-preservation, she pushed against him, disturbed by the feeling of her naked skin against his bare chest. Having been a model for several years, she was comfortable with her own nudity, but to have him look at her so intensely, she felt as if he were looking through her very soul. She had the urgent need to cover up. One arm crossed her breast while another hand crossed her now quivering mound.

*Please don't. Your body is far too lovely to be covered. Remove your hands and let me see all of you.*

There it was again. He was communicating with her telepathically. "Stop that!" she said, maneuvering herself sideways in order to get away from him.

"Stop what?" He frowned.

"Stop talking to me in my mind. It's creepy."

"I see that you are in distress. What is it that I can do to put you at ease, *jihar*?"

Raven hesitated briefly. For some strange reason, she could feel that he was sincere. She also sensed something else, something that she did not want to dwell upon. "Well, I would like something to wear."

"Getting you something to wear is easy enough. What else do you require?" He lifted a black brow.

"It would be nice to know why I've been brought here, and why the hell you have wings. That is definitely not normal."

"You have a sharp tongue, Raven. I like my women with spirit. My brother Rohman, however, would not like a woman speaking to him in such a manner. You should remember that when you are presented to him." Thane's eyes gleamed in amusement. A lazy smile spread across his face.

Raven glared at him. She was torn between hitting that smirk off his face, and throwing herself into his arms. She was so confused, and anger seemed to be her only outlet. "Do you think I give a shit about what your brother does or does not want? Why should I care?"

The smile left his face. "I'm sure that you don't, but you will cease this tirade, woman. My brother is king, and he is due the respect of all subjects in his realm. I will send you servants with something for you to wear and when I return, I will explain all." He turned to leave.

She called to his retreating figure, needing to know the answer. "Why have I been brought to this place?"

He turned to look at her for a moment. "You were brought here to save my people, but first, you will be my bride," he said before walking out of the room.

Raven's jaw dropped. She was quite sure that if this were a dream, now would be a pretty good time to wake up.

"Wait a minute! Now just wait one damn minute. You can't just tell a girl something like that and walk away, for Pete's sake!" Raven yelled at his retreating figure.

Thane turned around with an amused expression on his handsome face. "I find it hard to comprehend your surprise about becoming my bride, when you have dreamed of me each night."

She gasped in astonishment. "How did you...?"

"For many moons I have longed for my heart mate. Someone to be my companion, share my bed and produce my heirs, but for the many H'trae years I have lived, I had not found the one. It was not long ago however, that I began to dream of a woman with hair like the night and beautiful white skin with eyes like *tela*. I called out to you. That is why you have dreamed of me. You knew who I was the minute you saw me, did you not?"

Raven could only shake her head in agreement, unable to speak to save her life. "I can see the confusion on your lovely face. And I promise, I will explain everything, but I will give you something to think about before I take my leave. In your heart, did you ever truly feel like you belonged anywhere when you lived on Earth?" Thane asked before departing.

Raven wished she could say that she had, but she couldn't.

## Chapter Five

"Are the women comfortable?" Aarik asked Thane as he entered the hall. A pretty serving wench was massaging his feet.

Thane sighed. "As well as can be expected. Raven is now in her room raising havoc. She's not pleased with what she was given to wear and she is giving the serving wenches quite a time. She is confused and frightened, but she will soon adjust to our ways."

"And the others?"

"Kal is currently with the one called Genesis. She has still not overcome the mind lock. The wee one is with them."

"That is odd. I have not known Kal to be overly forceful with a woman. She will have a mighty headache when she regains consciousness."

"That she will, and a mighty temper, judging from what I have seen of her. I suspect Kal has an interest in her. Her feistiness will never bore him at least."

"And the one with the golden hair?"

Thane picked up the odd inflection in his brother's voice, and he raised a dark brow. "Ah, so you have interest in the golden wench."

"I know naught of what you speak." Aarik turned to the serving wench, who seemed to be listening to their conversation intently, and told her to be gone. She bowed her head to the prince. Aarik gave her a playful whack on the buttocks as she scurried away. The serving maid blushed with an attractive rose-colored hue to her cheeks before leaving the two princes alone. When she was gone, Aarik turned back to his smirking brother.

Aarik's face turned red. Among all his brothers he was the most sensitive and was teased quite mercilessly for it. "I inquired about the status of all of the women, not just her. Besides, you know that Rohman has first pick of the women at the feast."

"Hope, as I have learned her name to be, is doing well. She was a bit hysterical in the beginning, but she was administered a calming tonic and is resting now. As for Rohman having the first pick among the women, he will not stop me from claiming Raven. She is the one I desire."

"I only hope for your sake that she is not the one that Rohman desires as well," Aarik countered.

Thane was not going to let his precious Raven be handled by his brother, who held most women in contempt. As spirited as Raven was, Thane knew that Rohman would make her miserable with his arrogant and abrupt ways. As he had warned Raven earlier, Rohman would not tolerate anything but obedience to his word. Thane had come to admire Raven's spirit, and he hated the thought of it being broken. The punishment was harsh for any Ceyan woman who disobeyed her lord and master.

His thoughts drifted back to her beautiful face and body. He had wanted to throw her on the floor and fuck her until she couldn't walk for days. Her very scent made it hard for him to think clearly. He could hardly wait until the Feast of the Flesh. There, he would claim her, but until then, he knew he must gain her trust in him. "Damn Rohman."

"Exactly what am I being damned for, Thane?" Rohman walked into the hall, a blond eyebrow raised in amusement.

Thane had the good grace to look embarrassed, but when he regained his composure once more, he lifted his chin with defiance, his wings flapped in challenge. "I was telling our brother that I wish to claim the one called Raven."

"I see, but what if I say she is the one I want?" Rohman asked his youngest brother.

Thane stood his ground. Too many times before, Rohman had used his position as king to run roughshod over their family, but not this time. "I would challenge you for her."

"Hmm, what you speak of is treason, brother. Does the wench stir your cock so much you would go against your king? I'll tell you this, Thane, no woman is worth it. As it stands, I will sample all four women at the feast and then we shall see." Rohman turned to Aarik. "Do you wish to challenge me as well, mehier?"

"No, but don't be so harsh with him. He believes he has found his heart mate. He does not mean to be so defiant," Aarik answered.

"I am sure Thane would not appreciate your defense of him. He means exactly what he says, and I admire that. As for finding his heart mate, I don't believe in such foolishness. That illusion was destroyed for me long ago."

"Rohman --"

"No! Don't try to convince me otherwise. If I am to take a bride in order to save my people, then so be it, but I'll have no more talk about heart mates. All that I require is a channel to plant my seed in and complete obedience. I do not even want to see any of these women until the feast."

Aarik protested. "But --"

"But nothing! Keep them out of my way until the feast."

Thane's temper was close to exploding. He hated that the two of them had talked about him as if he weren't even in the room. He watched in frustration while his two older brothers began to communicate telepathically, wishing he knew what they were discussing, but his mind-reading abilities were not as strong as the twins'. Whatever they were saying, neither twin looked too pleased.

Before exiting the hall Aarik said aloud, "If you'll excuse me, I have some duties that I must see to right now."

"I will not be dismissed, Rohman. She is my heart mate and therefore it's my right to claim her, and I will." The room seemed to radiate with his anger.

Rohman turned to Thane, silver eyes glowing. "And as I said, we will see." He spoke in a low, soft voice filled with dead calm. Everyone knew to steer clear of him when he used that tone, but Thane would not be deterred.

"That we shall. I don't know what happened to make you the miserable creature that you have become, but don't think that because you are king I'll let you stand in the way of what is mine!"

"What is yours? This is my castle, and everything within it belongs to me. Everyone who dwells in my castle is here on my sufferance, so don't forget it, Thane."

Queen Daliah joined her sons. "What goes on in this hall?"

Rohman glared, but it was Thane who answered. "We were discussing the upcoming feast."

"I see. I thought I heard raised voices in here. Rohman, you're the one with whom I wished to speak." She squared her shoulders to face her oldest son.

Rohman looked bored. "Yes?"

"I'm in need of an escort into town. Can I make use of some of your men?"

Rohman shrugged. "You need not have applied to me for that. You're queen here."

"Really? I would never have known. The last time I took a few of your men with me into town, you were angrier than a sitla beast."

"That's because you took my men while they were in training. As I trust that you aren't addle-brained enough to make the same mistake, you may use my men at your discretion."

Daliah turned a deep scarlet. "How dare you! I'm your mother. If you don't respect my status as queen, at least give me the respect due to me as your mother."

Rohman gave his mother a crooked grin. "I give respect where it's due. You may be queen and you may be my mother, but they're both meaningless titles because you are not worthy of either!" He stormed out of the hall.

Daliah stood there in stunned silence, watching Rohman's retreat. When he was gone, Thane went to his mother and pulled her into his arms to comfort her. "I will talk to him, Mother. He shouldn't speak to you in such a manner."

She sniffed, looking on the verge of tears. "No, don't go to him on my behalf. It will only make things worse."

"Why do you put up with him? I would very much like to give him the thrashing of his life but each time, you stay my hand. Why, Mother? Why do you let him do this to you? He continues to hurt you, yet you endure it."

The sad look in Daliah's eyes broke Thane's heart. "What choice do I have? I may be queen, but I'm still only a woman, and in Rohman's eyes, women are the lowest form of creatures."

"But why? I do not understand. If he holds all women in such contempt, why does he continue to invite that wicked Ani into his bed?"

"Don't be fooled, my son. He sees her exactly for what she is, which is probably why he keeps her around. With her, his heart will never be at risk."

"Will you not tell me what has passed between you and Rohman?" Thane asked, not knowing what exactly had happened between the king and queen that caused Rohman to hold their mother in such contempt. At one time, they'd been closer than he and Daliah. Thane had always assumed the power of his throne had gone to Rohman's head. It was not that he didn't make a good king, because for the most part he was a fair and just ruler who cared about the welfare of his people. After hearing his mother's comment, however, he wasn't so sure that it was the power that had changed his brother.

She sighed. "I don't think I have the heart to go into the details, but perhaps one day your brother will tell you."

"As things stand now, Rohman does not seem to be in a sharing mood."

"What do you mean?"

"You know that we swore to the Ancient Ones we would take the The'Rans as our brides?"



"Yes. I'm aware of this. Are they not to your liking? They're all a little on the puny side, but they are all fair of face."

"That is not the problem. They are all very fair indeed, but Raven is the one who makes my heart beat faster. I believe she is my heart mate, and our destinies are intertwined," he confessed with reluctance. Ceyan men were not known for expressing their more tender feelings. His cock pulsed at the very thought of the lovely Raven.

Daliah smiled, giving her son a hug. "And you shall have her, my son. I hope she proves worthy of the love I know that you'll shower upon her."

\* \* \*

Raven paced the floor. There was no way she was marrying that big brute, no matter how sexy and devastatingly handsome he was. She tried to push thoughts of her dream lover out of her mind, but it was hard not to think about how his body had felt against hers.

He wanted her to marry him, for goodness sake. By God, she already had three ex-husbands. Her first husband, Danny, was a photographer who had basically been a good guy and a lot of fun in the beginning. Danny was the one who'd discovered her, and she'd never really known if she had married him because she loved him or because she was grateful to him for jump-starting her career.

Raven thought she might have stayed with him if he hadn't made noises about her giving up modeling and settling down to have his babies. Raven had nothing against children, but she had been twenty-one at the time and practically a baby herself. Her career had only just taken off and she was starting to make a lot of money.

Growing up poor without all the little luxuries in life had made her want to hang on longer so that she could secure her financial future. She didn't want to set herself up again to be dependent on anyone, as she had been on her drunken father. Coupled with the doubts of her actual feelings for him, adding children to the equation would have been a disaster, so she'd left him. She'd hated hurting Danny, but she knew she would have only ended up hurting him more had she stayed.

She had married her second husband, Harry, when she was twenty-three. Harry was British, and Raven had always been a pushover for accents. He'd been the lead singer of a popular rock band. Harry had been charming and loving, but he had two vices she discovered after they were married -- his five hundred dollar a day cocaine habit and young girls. Really young girls. Raven had stuck it out with him as long as she could, not wanting to go through another divorce, but the day she found Harry in bed with a fourteen-year-old groupie, she had to admit defeat. That marriage had lasted for two years.

Not one year later, she'd impulsively married Guiseppi, an Italian count whose family owned an international chain of hotels. He was thirty years her senior and swept her off her feet. Unfortunately for Raven, Guiseppi was controlling and domineering, a side that she hadn't seen in the beginning, but when it came out, it was ugly. Guiseppi was not beyond using force to get his way.

The first time he'd hit her for conversing with an old male acquaintance for too long, she left him. He'd begged her to come back to him, blaming his Italian temper. Like a fool, she'd given it one more try. It wasn't long before he hit her again for daring to even look in another man's direction with him standing beside her. He'd hit her so hard that he had busted her lip and loosened a tooth. Raven had been so angry she picked up the first thing she could get her hands on, which had happened to be a priceless Ming vase. She'd smashed it over his head.

They were both arrested for domestic assault in their Las Vegas mansion. Raven's career had barely survived the scandal, especially when Guiseppi had gone around the talk show circuit telling everyone that Raven had treated him badly. He claimed he'd put up with a promiscuous wife, and that the night of the infamous incident he'd been provoked. Raven had never cheated on anyone in her life, but she'd refused to refute the ridiculous allegations from Guiseppi, so the media had made their own assumptions. She could have sued him for slander, but she'd wanted to move on with her life. Because of this, she earned the reputation for being a gold digging, bitchy,

good-time girl who had played with poor Guiseppi's affections. Her lucrative contracts slowed down.

It was only after a national campaign for a popular soft drink took off that her career soared once more. After her divorce from Guiseppi was final, she'd vowed she would never marry again. Besides she wasn't even sure if she'd really loved any of her husbands. She wasn't sure if love really existed.

Now looking back, the only reason she could think of for marrying any of them had been their superior cocksmanhood. She'd thought that perhaps she could build something out of great sex and possibly find in them someone who could give her something else to live for besides her career.

Although she'd grown disenchanted with her life and prayed for something or someone to bring meaning to it, never in a million years had she thought she'd be taken to some strange place that was apparently another planet. Now she was supposed to marry some guy with wings who she happened to have dreamed about for several nights.

She pinched herself to verify she wasn't still dreaming. She yelped at the contact of her nails digging into her skin. "Ouch!"

Thane entered the room. "Raven, why would you wish to mar that beautiful skin of yours? I would slay anyone who would touch you so."

Raven looked up startled. "Where... where are your wings?"

"I sheathed them for you. I noticed they caused you alarm and I don't wish you to have a disgust of me."

He looked at her with an appreciative gleam in his eye. She was wearing the shimmering *ilsa* fabric that wealthy women in Zerus wore. It clung to her body lovingly. She knew he could see the pointy red peaks of her nipples through the see-through fabric, and somehow that excited her. "They don't disgust me. I just never saw a man with wings before. It's not a normal occurrence."

"It is in Zerus."

"Do all your people have wings?"

"Among the Ceyans, only men are born with wings. When a male reaches his thirteenth H'trae year, his wings must be able to spread a certain length."

"What happens if they don't?"

"They get clipped."

"That sounds awful. It hardly seems fair."

"It's the way of our people. Women cannot be warriors, which is why they don't have wings. The span of a Ceyan's wings determines the body specification of a Ceyan man. If a Ceyan's wings aren't to a warrior's body specifications, they don't need those wings. There are other honorable trades a Ceyan male may partake in. However, it is the highest honor to be a warrior serving under the king."

"So I guess that would make you a warrior?"

"Yes, as are my brothers. Only warriors can rule. Who but a warrior would be able to protect our people?" He shrugged.

Raven was about to ask another question but stopped herself. Why was she standing here having a rational conversation with this man when she needed to get to the real issue at hand? She tried reasoning with him. "Look, Prince Thane, what you said earlier about me becoming your bride, I just can't let that happen. All I really want to do is go home. I've already had three husbands."

"You have been the bride of three men? How is that so? Ceyans are parted in marriage only by death. You have lost three mates?" His brow furrowed.

"In theory people in my world marry for life as well, but it doesn't always work out that way. I'm divorced."

"Divorced? I do not understand this word."

"It's a legal procedure that -- wait a minute. Why am I bothering to explain this to you? I said I want to go home!"

He gave her a reproachful look. "You're already home. Now sit your pretty little bottom down. I promised you that I would tell you why you were brought here. I see you wear a pretty *ilsa* dress. You look very beautiful, but then again, you look beautiful when you are completely bare."

"This outfit was all they would give me. It feels very nice against my skin, but it's a bit revealing." In truth, Raven felt more naked wearing this dress than when she was actually naked. The sheer green fabric flowed around her body. It was arranged toga style, leaving one shoulder bare. The floor length gown had one long slit that came up to her thigh to give her room to move. She had worn beautiful clothes before, but nothing quite like this.

Raven had sometimes gone without underwear when she didn't want a seam line showing, but she would have preferred to be given the option. Her ass felt cold. Anyone could see right through this so-called dress. She might as well have been naked.

"It is what our women wear. When you become a member of the royal family, you will only wear the *ilsa* cloth. It's the finest cloth of our land. I'm pleased that you were given a gown to match the shade of your eyes. I am very pleased."

She sighed in frustration. "You talk as if this isn't all new to me."

"Okay, I'll tell you all you need to know. Will you listen?"

"I suppose I have no choice." She shrugged, taking a seat next to Thane. Thane. She liked how his name sounded. Pronounced Th-ahn, it suited him. *Get a grip, Raven.* She shook her head, trying not to stare too hard at his gorgeous body.

"We brought you here to save our people --" Thane began before she interrupted.

"Save your people? How in the world am I supposed to do that?" Was this guy nuts?

"Will you let me explain, or will you keep interrupting me?" His silver eyes bore into hers, silencing her.

"Okay. Tell me."

"An ailment spread through our lands, killing many of our people. We don't know how it began. It happened so suddenly. Men, women and children began to die, all suffering from the same symptoms. My brothers and I searched for a cure, but none

was found. I'm a collector of relics. I came across the Crystal of Tiearen. The crystal is significant because it is said it was a gift to the The'Ran people from the Ancient Ones."

Thane paused, brushing a stray lock from her forehead. Raven shivered under his touch. She did like the feel of his hands against her skin. He gently caressed her cheek before continuing. "The The'Rans were a small tribe of people who were faithful servants to the Ancient Ones who reside at the Temple of the Light. They were already healers sought out by people from all over the planet for their abilities, but because of their loyalty to the Ancient Ones a great power was given to them, to be held by one special The'Ran. This power would surpass any other and heal any ailment. It was said this power was so great it could make one invincible. I'm not sure why, but the healing powers only manifested in the females, although I believe the males carried the trait to pass on to their heirs. Anyway, some several hundred H'trae years ago, they disappeared."

"What do you mean, they disappeared?" Raven wrinkled her nose.

"Exactly what I said. They disappeared, and no one really knows why or how exactly, but this is where the crystal comes in to play. Because the crystal glowed, my brothers and I knew there had to be The'Rans. We learned there were four descendants of the light remaining, but they lived on a planet we'd never heard of, which is why my brother Kal and I journeyed to Earth, to find the four remaining The'Ran women."

Raven gasped as realization struck her. "No! You can't mean I... that I'm..."

"That you are The'Ran. Yes. That's exactly what I am implying. Haven't you ever felt you did not belong on Earth, that somehow you were different?"

Raven stared at him open mouthed, but couldn't answer to save her life, so he elaborated on the pact his brothers had made with the Ancient Ones. When he finished explaining everything to her, she stared at him in bewilderment. "Say something, Raven."

"What exactly can I say? If it weren't for those cat women and me seeing wings pop out of your back, I would think you're making this all up. Since you seem to be telling the truth, there only seems to be one rational explanation for all this. I'm

obviously dreaming. I guess I didn't pinch myself hard enough." She laughed and then, as if she were unable to control herself, she laughed hysterically. She laughed until tears ran down her face. She only stopped when she felt a sharp slap to her cheek.

"Ouch! You hit me, you brute!" She glared at him, rubbing her stinging cheek before punching him in the chest. It was a big mistake. It was like hitting a brick wall and he didn't even flinch. Her hand hurt like a son of a bitch.

"I only wished to free you from your laughing fit. It wasn't my intention to cause you pain. If I did, I apologize. Perhaps now you'll realize this isn't a dream," he said, taking her injured hand in his and bringing it to his lips. Her heart did a flip-flop. Why did her heart have to get involved at a time like this?

"You mean... I'm not human?"

"Perhaps you may have some human blood coursing through your veins, but your The'Ran heritage is more dominant."

"And I supposedly have special healing powers that will save your people?" It all started to make sense, the strange feelings she got when she touched people, her visions of the Ceyan world and Thane, before she even knew they existed. She sensed she had perhaps finally found the reason for her existence.

"You have powers, yes, but to what degree, we do not know. One of you possesses the great power. That's what is needed to save our people."

"I'm not sure that I want the responsibility of saving your people."

"You have no choice. It is your destiny. Besides, you and the other women are our last hope. Our people are doomed if the four of you cannot help us." A forlorn expression crossed his handsome face, and her heart went out to him. It was obvious he cared deeply for his people.

"You care about your people very much, don't you?"

"I would lay my life down for them," he said fiercely.

In the modeling world, she had come across many men of power and position, but none seemed to possess the caring nature of this handsome Ceyan prince, and it made her fall a little bit in love with him.

"What if I don't possess this great power? What will become of me?" Suddenly Raven didn't feel worthy of this Ceyan's regard.

"I am sure whatever power you possess will be of benefit to my people. At one time the The'Rans were sought out for various things, not just for healing. Some were seers, some were empaths, and some only possessed the soothing touch." He smiled at her uncertainty. "Raven, don't worry. You *will* be valued by the Ceyan people, especially by this one." His silver eyes flickered with desire. He grabbed her, hauling her against his body.

"Thane, no," she whispered, stunned by his sudden movement.

"Yes," he countered before crushing her lips with his.



## Chapter Six

Thane's lips moved over Raven's. She tasted so sweet, much sweeter than any bed wench he'd ever sampled. A sudden blood rush filled him, as he grew heated from holding her so tightly in his arms. His cock ached with need. More than anything, he wanted to part her legs and plunge into her depths, but he knew that he must hold himself back lest he hurt her. There would be plenty of time for that later.

The feel of her soft lips under his made his manhood throb. His tongue moved forward to trace her soft berry red lips. He outlined her lips before thrusting his tongue into her mouth. By the stars, she was tasty. He couldn't get enough of her sweetness.

Thane could feel her softening under him. The sensual feel of her mouth under his made his pulse race. She moaned into his mouth, and he knew that she was enjoying the kiss as much as him. Her hands tangled in his hair, as if to pull his head closer so that she could taste him as well.

He had to have her.

Raven wrapped her arms around his neck, deepening the kiss. Her mouth was hot and hungry beneath his. Thane was consumed by the wave of their heat. The women he usually bedded were not as aggressive as this firebrand, and she turned him on more than he imagined any woman could. When her tongue thrust eagerly forward to meet his, Thane thought he would lose his mind.

Their tongues met, dueling for supremacy. He tweaked a pert breast, squeezing and shaping it with his calloused palm. Raven arched her body to his touch, moaning in delight. She ran her fingers through his hair as he lowered his head to the waiting globe he had just fondled.

Her nipples jutted out as if in anticipation of his greedy mouth. Thane suckled on one hard ruby tip through the fabric of her dress. He realized the pressure of his mouth

suckling her against the *ilsa* cloth molded to the hardened peak was causing pleasure when she moaned, "Oh, Thane. This feels so good."

He lifted his head to look down into her beautiful *tela*-colored eyes. "I love the way you say my name, woman. I can hardly wait to thrust my cock inside your pussy. When we mate, you'll be so hot and wet for me that when I slide deeply into your channel you won't know where I end or you begin."

Raven trembled, affected by his deliberate words of seduction.

His hand moved underneath her dress to slide up her thigh in a slow, sensuous crawl. The slow, seductive progress of his hand up her thigh elicited soft moans from deep within her throat. Thane smiled, liking the effect he was having on his beautiful Raven. *Demmed*, but her pussy smelled sweet. He wanted her very badly.

Thane moved his hand to cup her throbbing cunt. His hand stilled. Something wasn't right. She was as bare as a *welti*! "Where is your woman's bush?" he demanded.

"Whaaat?" Raven's eyes were glazed with passion.

"Your woman's bush -- the hair that covers your pussy. You have the body of a woman full grown, but you are bare like a child here." Thane frowned rubbing his hand over her bare mound, before caressing her outer labia with his fingers.

Raven trembled uncontrollably at his intimate caress. She seemed to be trying to gather her senses before she answered. "Oh. I shaved it."

Thane's hand continued to graze over her hairless cunt. "Why? Is it an Earth custom?" He slid a finger between the slick folds of her vagina, followed by another long, thick digit. His fingers became moist from her damp heat. They probed and twisted inside of her, hitting spots inside of her that he knew were sensitive because of the way she squirmed beneath his hand.

Her pussy hugged his fingers, drenching them with her juices. She spread her legs granting him further access. "I model clothing on Earth. Sometimes I model swimwear so it's neater to be shaved. Oh my goodness, Thane. I can't concentrate when you're doing that. You have no idea what you're doing to me," Raven moaned.

Thane knew exactly what he was doing to her. He slid yet another finger inside of her, slowly withdrawing his digits from her channel and reinserting them like a cock. Thane finger fucked Raven, with slow seductive motions. He wanted her to burn for him like he did for her. As he increased the pace of his fingers, she wiggled beneath him, thrusting her hips over his hand.

"That's it, fuck me!" Raven cried out in an impassioned plea. He worked his fingers into her, twisting them, rubbing her. The fact that she enjoyed his touch so much turned him on to the point of near madness. His thumb grazed her clit, rubbing the hot little button. She was so passionate and responsive to him.

His eyes locked with hers. He wanted her to see his face as he pleased her. She needed to know she would be his woman, and this was merely the beginning. Raven stiffened before shuddering wildly. She let out a savage scream as evidence of her release coated his hand.

Thane removed his hand, causing Raven to whimper. With his eyes still on her, he licked her cream from his hand, savoring it. It tasted like sweet ambrosia. He took his time licking his hand, until it was clean of every single drop of her pussy juice. Knowing he had Raven where he wanted her, he smirked.

"When I claim you, I won't allow you to shave your woman's bush."

"When you claim me? Why you... you..." she sputtered, pulling away from him. Thane studied her outraged face. He knew he shouldn't tease her so, but he couldn't help it.

"Yes, my beautiful one. I intend to claim you at the Feast of the Flesh." Thane pulled her back against him.

"Oh, no you don't, mister." She pushed against him. "There is no way I'm letting a bunch of random men stick their fingers and dicks in any hole they want. What kind of people are you anyway? This claiming ceremony sounds absolutely barbaric."

"Raven, it wouldn't do for a future princess of Zerus to mock our ways. Besides, I do not particularly want you to be touched by any warrior other than me. I do believe

you'll be mine, so after the ceremony no other man will touch you but me, lest they wish to die."

"Why are you so sure I belong to you?"

"Because I have dreamed of you, my sweet Raven, so it must be so. You have dreamed of me too, have you not, *jihar*?"

Raven gasped and nodded her head in response. "But why?"

"It means that we have a connection, my beautiful one." He smiled at her, stroking her face gently.

"Stop doing that!"

"Doing what?"

"Stop reading my mind. My thoughts are private. It's disconcerting and creepy."

"As your lord and master, you will keep nothing from me. Your body, these breasts, this pussy --" he emphasized by cupping her hot sex, "-- will belong exclusively to me. Even your thoughts will be mine when I place my *cheka* around your ankle."

She looked at him mutinously.

Thane sighed. "Raven, I know how frightening this must be for you. Come with me." He took her hand in his large one.

She reluctantly followed him.

\* \* \*

Raven had not been outside of her room since she had arrived on H'trae. She gripped Thane's arm as they walked through the palace, her eyes widening with wonder at the sheer splendor of the grand castle. Her jaw dropped when they passed people of all shades of the rainbow. Some of them even had horns. There were beings she couldn't quite explain even if someone paid her a million bucks. This was definitely going to take some getting used to.

"Do you live here?" she asked as they walked along a long corridor.

"For part of the year, but I have my own palace. It's not as large as this one, but I think you'll like it."

"What makes you so sure we will end up together?" she asked with uncertainty. The more time she spent in his presence, the more she wanted to be with him. For some inexplicable reason, being with him felt right.

Thane gave her hand a reassuring squeeze. "You must not have been listening when I explained that we're heart mates."

"I was listening, but can't you understand I'm no good at this mate business? I've already told you about my last three husbands. What if you get tired of me? What if we get tired of each other?"

Thane halted. "Your life on Earth no longer matters. There will be no one for you after me. I can assure you I'll never get tired of you, and I will make sure you never get tired of me." He turned to her and grabbed a handful of her hair, before bringing his mouth down on hers.

She returned his hungry kiss, their bodies rubbing against each other. Her breasts pressed against his chest, and her pussy ached with the need to be filled by him. She whimpered when Thane pulled away. "Not here, where others can observe us." He looked regretful.

It took several moments before she could gain her composure. With each kiss they shared, she wanted him more. "But what about this ceremony?"

He caressed her face. "Don't worry. Everything will work out. You and I belong together. Come, I want to show you something." He took her hand, leading her to a door where two large Ceyans stood guard. "Let us pass."

"Yes, Your Highness." They stepped aside, bowing their head in reverence to their prince.

As they passed the guards, Thane winked at her. "When you are my princess, your every wish will be granted by our people."

Raven smiled. She could get used to this princess business. Thane led her out to the most fantastic garden she'd ever seen. It was full of all kind of exotic things. There were flowers, and colors, and even animals she never knew existed. The air was

fragrant with the sweet aroma of the awesome garden. She felt as if she had just stepped into a fairy tale world. She *was* in a fairy tale world.

"It's beautiful," she said with awe.

"Not as beautiful as you, Raven."

She blushed. He always had a way of saying it that made her body tighten with lust. "You really must stop saying that."

"It is only the truth. Unless the men on earth were stupid, I'm sure you've heard it before."

"Well, I have, but my job was my looks. I want to be more than just a face."

"You are to me." He brushed his body against hers.

She turned away, trying to change the subject. If she let the conversation continue along the same lines, she knew it wouldn't be long before she was begging him to take her. "Does the entire planet look like this?"

"Some parts, but there are parts that are barren. It depends on the inhabitants. When I'm not at my own palace, this is my favorite place to come and think."

"It's very peaceful."

"I know. Raven?"

"Yes?" She turned to look at him. Her heart contracted at his handsome face.

"You seem so at home here."

"I feel so at home here," she answered, to her surprise.

"I'm glad. I want you to be happy here. I thought you existed in my dreams, but when I saw you on Earth, I knew you were meant to be mine. More than anything, I want to make love to you right now, but by my laws, I cannot until after the ceremony. I can however, show you how it will be between us."

Her green eyes stared into the mysterious silver glint of his. "How?"

He placed his hands on either side of her head. "Close your eyes," he commanded softly.

Raven slowly lowered her lids, wondering what would happen next. Her body trembled when the image of her naked body lying on a bed of fur popped into her mind. Her eyes flew open. "How did you --"

"Close your eyes and relax."

When her eyes closed again, the image was restored in her mind. Thane covered her body with his. He planted kisses all over her face and neck. Her hands roamed over his broad naked back. He grabbed her hands, held them over her head in one powerful fist. She writhed against him, wanting to touch him. She gasped as he moved down her body to run his tongue along one hard peak of her breasts.

She called out his name at the feel of the wet organ against her silky skin. He sucked her breast into his mouth as if he were trying to devour her. Thane lifted his head, making eye contact with her as he transferred his attention to the other waiting mound. The sight of his dark head nibbling and licking her breast sent waves of pleasure racing through her body.

Raven bucked against him, impatient for more. She wasn't content with the feel of his mouth against her. She wanted some cock, his cock. Just like in her dreams, Raven begged him for it, needing it more than the air she breathed. Thane whispered words of love and endearments as his lips and mouth worshipped her flesh.

When he finally released her hands, she raked her nails against his back to release some of the pent up frustration his delicious torture had created. The buildup of pleasure spread from her head to the tips of her toes. Fire coursed between her legs. She knew she was close to reaching her peak, yet Thane took his time kissing and caressing every inch of her body.

His face dove into her wet pussy, latching onto her clit. Raven's body convulsed uncontrollably when he inserted a finger inside of her waiting channel, milking her pussy of its cream. Thane fucked her with his fingers, never lifting his mouth from her clit. Raven's head rolled on the pillow over and over again as he took her to heights she never thought possible to achieve.

She twisted under his mouth and fingers, demanding that he fuck her. It seemed as though several minutes had passed before he decided to lift his head. Giving her a lascivious grin that sent a jolt of pleasure down to the tips of her toes, Thane spread her legs far apart, preparing her to receive the full length of him.

This was it, the moment she'd been waiting for from the minute he had stepped into her dreams. She closed her eyes, biting her lips in anticipation as she waited to be filled by him. Thane thrust forward. It felt as if a bolt of lightning filled her body.

Raven opened her eyes with a gasp to find she was still standing in the middle of the garden with Thane.



## Chapter Seven

"How did you do that?" Her body shook as if she'd really experienced what was only in her mind.

"It is something most Ceyan warriors can do. Actually, it's a war tactic, used to throw our enemies off course, but it has other uses. What did you think, my beauty?"

"I don't really know what to say, but I liked it."

"I know. I liked it too, very much. I must take you back to your room now."

"Do we have to go back?"

"I wish I could stay with you a while longer, also, but I have my duties to see to. And you must be readied for the ceremony."

Sullen now, she followed him back through the castle. If anyone had told her she would feel such things for another man after her disastrous relationships, Raven would have laughed. She was so confused.

Back in her room Raven sat down on the bed, eyes downcast. "I don't like that look on your face. Please smile for me," he said, walking over to her, lifting her chin.

Shy in the newness of these feelings she was experiencing for him, she gave him a small smile.

"Thank you. Now, my beautiful Raven, I must go before I ravish you. Your body must be prepared for the ceremony. Ceyan men are not built like the runtling men on Earth. The Necromancers will come to prepare you. Don't fear them, for they are beings known for their sensual arts, and will ready you for what is to come." He leaned over to brush her lips with his before standing up.

His kiss sent tremors down her spine. "You seem so sure that one of your brothers won't claim me. Since you are the youngest brother, how can you be so sure?"

"You are my destiny, Raven, and I'm yours. Accept it and you will feel the better for it," he said with a finality that left no room for argument. Raven was left alone to contemplate all she'd been told. This was all nuts, but what was even worse was that she believed him.

Moments later, four men walked into her room, all wearing nothing but sandals and loincloths. Raven cringed because they had no faces. Blank slates stared back at her where their eyes, noses and mouths should have been. "What are you people?" She bit her bottom lip to hide her panic.

"Necromancers, my lady," one thing replied.

Raven didn't know where the voice was coming from, as it did not have a mouth. But it was coming from somewhere. Wary of these faceless men, she backed away from them as far as she could. "What... what are you doing here?"

"We are your trainers. We have come to prepare you for the ceremony, mistress." Raven backed away even further, and the tallest one cocked his head to the side. "I see that our appearance is not pleasing to my lady. Perhaps this will be more agreeable."

Before her very eyes, all four faces of the Necromancers began to transform, their features becoming more familiar with each passing second. When the transformations were complete, Raven gasped. They all looked like Prince Thane. "We hope our appearance is more appealing to you, mistress. We thought to mirror the face of him who you desire the most," the leader said, bowing his now dark head.

Raven's eyes widened. What the hell? She was more disconcerted by the fact they could see her deepest desires than the fact they'd all taken on Thane's face. One of the men stepped forward with a tray in his hand and held a glass toward her. Raven looked at him in bewilderment.

"Please drink the wine." Thane's face stared back at her. The Necromancer's hypnotic tone washed over her. She reached out for the glass he held out to her. She sniffed delicately at the contents before taking a tiny sip. The sticky sweet substance slid down her throat like nectar from the gods. It was the most wonderful thing she'd ever tasted. Raven found herself draining the glass in one swallow.

"More." The Necromancer refilled her glass. The process continued until there was no wine left. Raven's head began to spin, and the most delicious sensations ran up her spine. Her body grew hot and started to sweat. Her flesh was on fire. She obediently followed when one of the trainers took her hand and led her to the bed in the center of the room.

They all surrounded her while one of them slowly peeled off her gown. The necromancers looked so much like her beloved Thane, she didn't care that they were gazing at her so intimately. Her beloved? Is that what Thane had become to her in such a short time? Why not? Stranger things seemed to be true, such as being on an alternate planet and seeing men with wings, women with cat faces, men with no faces. And yeah, finding out she wasn't human. It stood to reason that maybe in the brief encounter she'd had with Prince Thane, he'd become her beloved.

While she lay naked on the bed before the necromancers, they spread her legs wide apart. Raven was too hot to protest, as she needed fulfillment. It must have been the wine. Whatever it was they'd done or given her, she suddenly had the overwhelming need to be fucked.

Panting with need, she was pushed back against the bed. She didn't know what they had done to her, but she no longer cared. Three of the men began to massage oil into her heated flesh. Raven moaned at the titillating feel of their hands against her skin. "Oh Thane," she moaned, as if it really were him touching her. It wasn't so hard to pretend, since all of the Necromancers had his face. She wanted him, but right now, she needed something between her legs and fast.

One of the trainers produced a long cylindrical glass rod which seemed to pulsate in his hands. He rubbed it over the pointed crests of her breasts, making Raven cry out in pleasure. Slowly he ran the rod lightly over her body, making her breath come out in short excited huffs. The instrument titillated her senses, causing her to want more.

As the rod made its way toward her throbbing mound, she bucked against the necromancer's hand. "Please stick it in me," she begged, not remembering a time when she had wanted anything so much.

"Patience, mistress," the leader soothed. He teased her further by rubbing the instrument along her slit, driving her wild with passion.

"Please," she begged again.

"As you wish, mistress," he answered before gently sliding the rod inside her aching cunt and making her moan in satisfaction.

Just as she was getting used to the delectable feeling of the pulsating stick that fit so snugly inside her pussy, Raven's eyes widened when another tool was produced. It was similar to the first one but thinner and covered in a clear petroleum-like film. A broad thumb began to stimulate the puckered bud of her ass. She cried out in pleasure as the erotic motion of his thumb circled her forbidden hole. She bit her lip, waiting for the necromancer to slide the slim rod up her waiting ass.

As if reading her thoughts, the leader slowly slid the thin rod gently inside the tight ring. "Yes, oh God, yes," she cried out.

The other men still massaged different parts of her body. Two men were running their hands up and down each of her bare legs while another gently rubbed her torso and breasts. The added stimulation of their touch pushed her to heights of excitement she had never experienced. The leader slowly worked the rods inside her pussy and ass.

Although these men had taken on Thane's face, they were not him. She closed her eyes to imagine it was him running his hands over her body, filling her so wonderfully. Her eyes opened in surprise when she felt the rods expanding within her, stretching her to a point that she didn't think possible.

"Do not be alarmed, mistress. When you take on your Lord, you will appreciate what is being done." He soothed her as he continued to work the instruments in and out of her hot holes. His voice seemed to work as a drug, calming her down.

What had they done to her?

"Harder!" She bucked her hips wildly at the thrusts of his tools.

"As you wish, my lady," the servant answered, ramming the foreign objects into her. This time the warm cylinders expanded to twice their size, and Raven screamed out in pleasure-pain.

"Oh shit!" she screamed, torn between wanting them to remove the blunt objects and wanting to have the shit fucked out of her. As the three pairs of hands increased the pressure of their caresses, she was lost to the mind-numbing sensation as the four trainers skillfully brought her body to one of the most intense orgasms she'd had ever experienced. Raven was so caught up in the moment, she didn't so much as whimper when the rods expanded yet again.

In a haze, she wondered just how large were these guys' cocks. Judging by the way she was being stretched, Ceyan men were hung like horses. Her senses soared as she rode wave after wave of explosive rapture. Raven was brought to another orgasm. Her body began to convulse uncontrollably.

After what seemed like several hours, Raven lay weak and limp on the center of the bed. One of the necromancers wiped the sweat from her now damp body. She gasped as the leader slowly pulled the two tubes from her holes. She felt empty without them.

Her eyes widened in astonishment when she beheld the size of the rods, which were now about the length of her forearm and just as thick. Never in her wildest dreams would she have thought something so large would fit inside her pussy, let alone her anus.

The Necromancers slowly stood up, their faces reverting to the blank slates that they had been when they first entered the room. Before exiting the room with the others the leader said, "Someone should be here shortly, mistress, to take you to the ceremony."

Raven lay on the bed, weak from the intense feelings that stormed through her. She was a little frightened, yet excited about the upcoming ceremony. Only yesterday she'd been plain old Raven Storm, disenchanting human, with no true purpose in life --

no love or fulfillment -- but today she was Raven Storm, The'Ran with a special gift that was needed to save an entire race of people.

Deep down inside, she realized she'd found her calling. Her thoughts drifted to Thane. She'd never felt such a deep connection with anyone so quickly, and it scared her. Whatever happened from here on out, Raven knew that her destiny lay with Prince Thane of the Ceyans.

## Chapter Eight

Thane could not stay away. He had to see her, hold her one more time before the ceremony. In his heart, he knew she was the one for him, but he feared Rohman would try to claim her just to spite him. Despite the tension between them, the thought of challenging Rohman for Raven's hand made him sad, but he would do it. Raven belonged to him.

As he made his way to Raven's chambers, he ran into his brother Kal, who looked every bit as anxious as he felt. "Where are you going to, Thane? The ceremony will be starting shortly." The redhead frowned.

"I must see Raven before it begins."

"I understand how you feel. I too had to see my woman. She is holding up rather well, all things considering."

Thane raised a brow, smiling at his usually serious brother whom he had thought would never dare break a Ceyan law. "Your woman, eh? You must mean the one called Genesis."

"Aye, I cannot deny my feelings for her. I never thought I would feel this way about any woman. I never believed in heart mates until I met her. When she is near, I can think of naught but to hold her and kiss her."

"I feel the same way with my Raven. I know we are forbidden to touch these women before the ceremony, but how can it be wrong when my heart tells me it's right?"

Kal was silent for a moment before he answered. "I no longer care if Rohman finds out. You've probably guessed by now that something happened between me and Genesis on Earth. I could not help myself, nor did I want to."

"Yes. I figured something happened. You didn't talk about it, so I didn't want to probe."

"I appreciate that."

"Am I talking to the general of the Royal Ceyan Guard who never goes against his king?" Thane teased his older brother.

A faint smile touched Kal's lips. "I find it hard to believe myself. It is still hard to forget Father's teachings, but I would like to think that I can move past that."

"As do I." A silent understanding passed between him and Kal before a servant walked up to them and broke the silence.

"Your Highnesses, King Rohman requests your presence in the hall."

Thane groaned inwardly. He had hoped he could make it to Raven before the ceremony began.

"Thank you, Symi. You may tell the king that we will join him shortly." Kal dismissed him, before turning to Thane.

"I will go and tell Rohman you are delayed. Do not worry. Go to her," Kal whispered.

"What? Are you actually offering to lie to your king for me?" Thane asked with surprise.

"Go now, before I change my mind," Kal hissed, his wings flapping with evident displeasure.

"Thank you, brother. This means a lot to me." Thane smiled before heading to Raven's chamber with a spring in his step.

As he entered her bedroom chamber, the sight of her beautiful body, being toweled down after a bath, greeted him. It took every ounce of his will not to go over to her and crush her in his arms. His cock began to ache with a need only Raven could stir. With her back to him, Thane watched the serving woman rub the towel over her body. As he approached, one of the women noticed him. Before she could address him, he brought his fingers to his lips, silencing her.



He approached the unsuspecting Raven with practiced stealth. *Hand me the towels*, he communicated to the servants. They complied, waiting for his next command. *Wait outside, until I call you back in here.*

The women bowed and scrambled off. Raven turned and gasped. "Thane, I didn't hear you enter." A becoming blush touched her cheeks. She was so lovely. He felt as if his heart would burst with love and lust for her.

"Are you not pleased to see me?"

"Of course I am. What are you doing?" she asked as he began to towel dry her.

"What does it look like, my lady? I am your humble servant because you have surely enslaved me."

"That was beautiful, Thane. Thank you for coming to see me before the ceremony, because I wanted to tell you something."

"What is it, my lady?" He dropped all pretense of drying her body and pulled her against him. She smelled so damn sweet. He kissed her neck.

"I can't think when you do that to me, Thane," she sighed, entwining her fingers in his hair.

"Maybe now is not the time for thinking but a time of action," he murmured, grazing her lips with his.

Raven turned her head away. "No. Please be serious for a moment. This is very important."

Thane lifted his head. Whatever it was that she had to tell him, he hoped it would be fast, because her sweet lips beckoned him to taste them. "What is it, *jihar*?"

"I just wanted you to know I love you. No matter what happens, you have my love always."

Thane's heart felt as though it would overflow with the emotions that surged through his body. In answer to her declaration he brought his mouth down on hers, kissing her with a hungry passion that would not be denied. His tongue thrust forward to taste the sweet honeyed cavern of her mouth.

The tips of her rose-hued nipples rubbing against his chest created a friction that sent shock waves throughout every one of his nerve endings. He ripped his mouth away from hers to rain kisses over her face and neck. "Oh, Thane," she moaned with delight.

Thane lifted her up in his arms. Wrapping her legs around his hips, Raven grasped his shoulders. As she arched back to expose more of her white flesh to his gaze, Thane ran his tongue on her heated flesh, savoring the unique flavor of her.

He carried her the short distance to the bed and fell over her body. His lips closed over the stiff peak of her breast. He licked, nibbled and sucked the soft flesh, causing Raven to wiggle underneath. Thane turned to her other breast, worshiping it with his tongue as he did the other one. Raven cried out as he flicked the turgid point of her nipple.

"Do you like the feel of my tongue against you?"

"Yes."

"My tongue will feel even better against your clit. Do you want me to taste your pussy?"

"Yes. Please, Thane," she pleaded with passion-glazed eyes.

He moved lower, placing soft kisses against her stomach.

"Mmm, that feels so wonderful," she moaned as her fingers played with his wings. His wings were very sensitive to touch, and her delicate fingers running along them created a stimulating sensation that traveled down his spine to the tips of his toes.

If he could not have her, he would go crazy. He nuzzled the soft flesh between her thighs. Her pussy smelled delicious. Already sweet juices flowed from her channel, soaking her thighs. He pushed her legs apart and sucked on her swollen little bud.

She grasped his head, smashing her pussy against his face. "Yes! Yes! Yes!" Raven shouted with glee.

Her moans and screams of delight coaxed him into increasing the pressure of his mouth. His tongue flickered over her clit, licking it with long broad strokes. He lifted her leg higher, thrusting his tongue deep within her hot sex.

"Oh, Thane, your tongue is so long," she groaned, bucking her hips against his face.

He lifted his head to wink at her. "Did I not tell you that Ceyans are not built like the puny men on Earth?" To demonstrate, he stuck out his tongue, letting it hang past his chin before pulling it back into his mouth.

"Holy goodnight. That bad boy would make Gene Simmons jealous." She laughed.

"I do not know who he is. Was he one of your lovers?" Thane stilled. He knew she had been with other men on Earth but didn't want to hear about them.

As though sensing his displeasure, she shook her head. "No. He is a famous musician on Earth, but he doesn't matter. Don't stop doing what you were doing," she said with a pout to her pretty red lips.

He could deny her nothing. "You are *demmed* right he doesn't matter." And with that he lifted her hips even higher and thrust his tongue into her pussy. She screamed at the in and out motion mimicking a cock.

"That's it, Thane, harder!" she demanded, writhing wildly beneath his mouth. His tongue thrust into her wetness, working her body into a frenzy.

Her body became damp with perspiration, and he knew she was close to her peak. Nothing compared to the exquisite taste and feel of this woman, and he could have stayed between her thighs forever. He fucked her with his tongue with a primitive need to brand this woman as his. He wanted to be the only man she ever thought of.

Raven began to thrash wildly. "Oh God, Thane!" she screamed. The warm nectar of her release flowed from her pussy, and he hungrily lapped it up. She lay limp as he took his time sucking her, bathing her with his tongue.

Thane sidled up next to her body, pulling her into his arms. He stroked her hair as she rested her head against his chest.

More than anything he wanted to plunge his aching cock between her smooth thighs, but they would need more time for that. He would have to leave her in a moment to go to the hall, and let her finish her preparations for the ceremony. He didn't

want this moment to end. As it stood, his brother would probably send someone to fetch him shortly.

“Thank you, Thane, that was wonderful,” she whispered.

“Not half as wonderful are you are.” Squeezing her tight, Prince Thane knew this woman would always be by his side, no matter what the future held, no matter where destiny led them.

## Glossary

*H'trae* -- (tray) parallel world to Earth where creature of legend and myth exist. A hedonistic world where anything goes and usually does.

*Tiareen* -- (tia-reen) at one time was the land of the The'Rans, once a rich fertile land, now a barren wasteland

*The'Rans* -- (thay-rahns) a peaceful people known for their special healing powers of the light and their beautiful women. All The'Rans are able to pass special abilities to their offspring, but the powers are only manifested in their women.

*Ceyans* -- (say-ahns) a race ruled by winged warriors

*Zerus* -- land of the Ceyans

*Xanadon* -- (zan-nay-dahn) land where slaves are brought

*Rozak* -- (Roh-zack) city known for bazaars and entertainment

*Ilsa* -- a shimmering see-through material worn by the wealthy women of Zerus

*Tela* -- a rare gem on H'trae, green in color

*Jihar* -- my love, my heart, sweetheart...

*Demmed* -- damned

*Farken* -- a Ceyan expletive

*Mehier* -- endearment used between twins

*Cheka* -- the ankle band a Ceyan male places on a woman when he claims her. The color denotes rank.

*Sitla beast* -- wild indigenous animal on H'trae, looks like a cross between a bear and a lion.

## **Descendants Of The Light: Genesis**

Genesis Johnson is fast losing control of her well-ordered life. Although she's a brilliant doctor, she's run afoul of the hospital administration and may well lose her job. Needing time to sort things out, Genesis and her sister take a road trip, only to find themselves in the middle of nowhere. Her day only gets worse when she's taken captive by one of the most gorgeous men she's ever seen. Fireworks erupt between her and her redhead captor, Prince Kalian.

Spirited away to another world, she learns she is not only one of the last remaining descendants of a race known for their healing power, but she must also become the bride of one of the Ceyan Princes. The only Ceyan she'll have is Prince Kalian, and he wants her too.

## **Eve Vaughn**

Eve Vaughn has enjoyed creating characters and making up stories from an early age. As a child she was always getting into mischief, so when she lost her television privileges (which was often), writing was her outlet.

Her stories have gotten quite a bit spicier since then!

Eve likes to read, bake, make crafts, travel, and spend time with her family. She lives in the Philadelphia area with her husband and pet turtle. She loves to hear from her fans, so feel free to contact her at [EveVaughn10@aol.com](mailto:EveVaughn10@aol.com) or join her yahoo group at [www.evevaughnsbooks-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](http://www.evevaughnsbooks-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).