

INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLING AUTHOR
B. M. CLEMTON



KNIGHT RESOLUTION

A BLACK VEIL UNIVERSITY NOVELLA

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BLACK VEIL UNIVERSITY

A NOVELLA



B.M. CLEMTON

CONTENTS

[Content Warning and Trigger Warning](#)

[Knight Resolution Playlist](#)

[Main Character Index](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Also by B.M. Clemton](#)

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CONTENT WARNING AND TRIGGER WARNING

This story is a Reverse Harem novel that has darker elements that readers should be aware of such as, strong language, adult situations, and mentions of child abuse and self-harm.

Knight Resolution is a Black Veil University Novella that ends in a HEA for Danica and her men while leading into Serafina Covington's story

KNIGHT RESOLUTION PLAYLIST

Still Falling For You- *Ellie Goulding*
Fictional - *Khloe Rose*
Starving- *Hailee Steinfeld (feat. Zedd)*
Something Just Like This- *Chainsmokers & Coldplay*
Unanswered- *Hanniou (Serafina and Ryland)*
Do Or Die- *Natalie Jane*
Would Anyone Care- *Citizen Soldier (Serafina)*
Second to Last- *Ryan Nealon (Teos)*
Whatever It Takes- *Stephen Stanley*
I'll Be Waiting- *Cian Durcrot (Solomon)*
Trying Not to Love You- *Nickelback*
Half Life- *Livingston*
Dancing All Alone- *Clinton Kane (Atlas)*
Figure You Out- *VOILA*
Forever And Ever And Always- *Ryan Mack*
Family Line- *Conan Gray (Gabriel and Serafina)*
Brother-*Kodaline (The Covington Brothers)*

MAIN CHARACTER INDEX

Danica Knight- FMC, Ractori Elementalist
Remington Moore- MMC, Wolf Shifter
Daxton Pearce- MMC, Telekinesis- Teleportation
Zander Evans- MMC, Dragon Shifter- Fire Element
Roran Kaiser- MMC, Gargoyle- Earth Element
Gabriel Covington- MMC, Reaper- Shadow Walker
Dominic Carter- MMC- Angel
Atlas Hawkins- Warlock-Shield
Kayla West- Vampire
Ryland Evans- Dragon Shifter (Demon magic)
Teos Ramadan- Phoenix Shifter
Solomon Abara- Angel
Serafina Covington

(FMC- Female Main Character/ MMC- Male Main Character)

CHAPTER 1

DANICA



“Danica? Angel, are you in here?” Dax asks, tapping lightly on the door to my room before peering around it, his bright green eyes finding my own and making my heart skip as I slowly let my hand drop from my stomach. “Hey, I’ve been calling for you for a bit, but you have your mental shields up,” he says softly, walking into the room and shutting the door lightly behind him. “Are you alright? Where did Dom go? I thought he was in here with you?”

“What? Oh! I’m fine,” I answer, a little too fast, and I cringe, knowing that I may have been able to get away with that lie with Roar or possibly Zane, but Dax is way too perceptive. “Dom went to talk to Solomon and Gabe. They are trying to figure out everything with the treaty,” I say just as quickly, hoping I can cover up my awful lie with some information that might distract Daxton.

As expected, he arches a brown brow from behind dark blue-rimmed glasses as he walks over and offers me his hand. He helps me to my feet from where I had been sitting on the bed and pulls me gently into his arms. I go willingly, letting him soothe me, wrapping me in his arms protectively as he dots a kiss to my hair and then rests his cheek on my head.

“Want to try that lie again? It really wasn't very convincing,” he teases. I sigh and poke him in the ribs, making him jump back, releasing me enough to scowl down at me.

“No. But I’ll tell you as soon as I’m ready,” I say with a grin, going up on tiptoes to press a kiss to his soft lips. Dax immediately sinks into my kiss, letting me distract him as he pulls me flush against his chest. Reaching up, I tangle my fingers into Daxton’s messy brown hair and moan against his lips

when I feel the length of his hard cock press against my belly.

Dax groans, his fingers slipping under my shirt as he grips my waist. “Fuck, Angel,” he rasps against my lips, and I’m just about to suggest we move this to the bed when the door to my room bursts open, letting in two upset and yelling children.

“Mommy! Xavier won't give me my book back!” Monty cries, storming after his older brother; his light brown hair that is identical to Daxton’s is ruffled and just as messy as his dad's. I pull back from Dax and give him an amused look before turning to see our son's bright purple eyes filling with tears as he tries to take the book from Xavier, who twists just in time and then holds it in the air, using his height to his advantage.

“He's not reading it correctly, Mom! He wants to read the third chapter before the second, and that makes no logical sense,” Xavier complains, giving his younger brother an icy glare that reminds me of his father’s when he's mad. Ever since Monty started reading the same books as him, Xavier has felt a little insecure, not liking how fast or smart his little brother is. I had overheard Gabe telling him it wasn't a competition, and that Xavier needed to help his brother rather than compete, but it had fallen on deaf ears.

“Boys,” Dax scolds, turning on the two of them with a calm I never seem to manage when they start to fight. He places his hands on his hips and looks down at the boys over the rim of his glasses, glancing from Xavier to Monty. Neither of them pays their dad much attention. Instead, they glare at each other, Xavier narrowing his eyes so much I can hardly see them while my younger son pushes his small glasses up his nose and glares right back, refusing to back down.

“It's my book!” Xavier snaps, making Monty's bottom lip tremble, and I lean around, trying to see what book it is. When I see the words *Fahrenheit 451* printed in bright red letters, I smile and look at my younger son, loving his newest obsession with his father's favorite book. I would have never read a book like that at the age of six, but the boys seem to get their brains from their fathers, and I have already stopped helping them with their homework.

“Was it a gift, or was it a book that was bought for the family library?” Dax asks, trying his best to keep things fair. Xavier turns his cold glare on Dax and scowls, using his other hand to keep Monty away when he tries to snag the book that is still being held above his head.

“Father bought it for the library.”

“Alright, and who had the book first?” Dax asks, then coughs a little

when Monty raises his hand so fast I'm worried he might have pulled a muscle. Monty keeps his angry glare on his brother, making Xavier roll his gray eyes as he brushes back a strand of his jet-black hair before he turns on Dax with a serious look.

“But Dad!”

“No buts, Xavier. If Monty had the book first, then give it back.” Dax crosses his arms over his chest and stares down the stubborn seven-year-old while Monty and I watch on with wide eyes. Eventually, Xavier sighs and then begrudgingly lowers his arm, holding the book out to his side, making his brother walk to him and snatch the book for himself.

“Ha!” Monty scoffs, then sticks out his tongue before darting out of the room.

“Montag!” Dax hollers, then sighs, looking at Xavier, who is glaring after his little brother, his hands fisted tightly at his sides. “Hey,” Dax whispers, walking over and crouching in front of him, tousling his black hair. “I know you and Monty have been butting heads recently, but you have to know he only reads the same books as you because he loves you so much. You're his favorite person in this world, Xav,” Dax whispers, making our son roll his eyes and push Daxton's hand from his hair.

“Mom's his favorite,” Xavier corrects, and Dax laughs.

“Mom's everyone's favorite, so she doesn't count,” he says with a wink and stands up, holding his hand out to Xavier, who eyes it in distaste. His nose scrunches and his eyes flick to me like he's asking if he actually has to hold his dad's hand. I smile and wink at him, making him purse his lips in response. “Come on. I may have bought a few new books, and have one I picked special for you.”

I have to cover my mouth and turn away to hide the laugh that tries to escape when Xavier immediately slaps his hand into Daxton's, and a bright smile takes over his entire face.

“Really? What is it?” he asks excitedly, following Dax as he leads him from the room, leaving me alone with my thoughts again. I grin, letting my hand rest on my flat stomach and take a deep breath.

I've been busy planning for this weekend, lining up a babysitter for the boys, and trying to make sure everything is perfect. It's been ten years since I officially joined the Covington family group as more than just a member on paper. Ten years since Gabriel gave me his mother's ring and asked me to be his wife.... Their wife.

As the head of the household and the only one who could legally add me to the family, the guys had picked Gabe to ask me. Apparently, there had been an argument about whether one or all should propose simultaneously, and they decided they wanted to each have their own moment with me. If I accepted Gabriel's proposal, they would each be able to have their own moment to propose over the following days. Something that I appreciated since each of our relationships is different and unique.

What I didn't know was that the other five were waiting on the other side of the door, biting their nails and nervous as hell that I might say no and ask for more time. I had been adamant that I liked things the way they were. We had worked too hard to get to that phase in our relationship, and I wanted time alone with my guys. I was young and had no interest in changing anything. But they took that as I wasn't ready to be theirs forever, which is ridiculous. I'm literally tied to each and every one of them.

When Gabe dropped to one knee and proposed, I was so shocked I simply stared at him for several moments. My heart burst in my chest, and my eyes filled with tears. I guess that freaked out my poor Reaper because he promptly offered me the option of more time if that's what I wanted, making Zane storm into the room mid-proposal and scoop me up, saying time wasn't an option, and he wanted to get married that night.

I grin at the memory and rub my belly again. There's so much joy filling me that I can't contain it. It spills over my mental barriers that I threw up the moment Dominic asked me to talk to him in private, and I feel Dax press against my mind, his magic cording around me like a soft hug.

I sigh, lowering myself onto the bed as I try to devise an idea on how to tell Zane I'm pregnant with not one... but two little Dragon shifters. Dom had been practically bouncing on his toes with excitement that he picked up on the magic signatures before Zane came home. Apparently, Dragons can tell if their mates are pregnant pretty fast, so he said not to be surprised if Zane senses it the moment he sees me. At most, he said I had a day or two if I wanted to do something to surprise him.

Everyone in the family knows how desperate Zane has been for a child of his own. So much so that when I decided I was ready for our third child, he took me to the townhouse and kept me locked in his nest for three days. His Dragon had gone into a rut, not letting me leave until I had finished ovulating. Gabe and Dax had shown up with food and water when they knew the coast was clear and they wouldn't have a feral Dragon trying to roast their

asses. Gabe took me, and Dax took Zane since he was the only one who could talk to Zane's Dragon.

Unfortunately, it took a lot longer this time to get pregnant, and I began to worry it wouldn't happen. I conceived Xavier the first month of going off the birth control potion. It wasn't until after the surprise romantic getaway Gabe had spirited me off on that I realized he had calculated when I would be ovulating and took me away, ensuring I would have his child first. Something that caused several heated debates and sparring matches between him and Zander over the next nine months until Xavier was born.

But that all changed the moment Zane saw our son's thick black hair and gray eyes. I watched as my giant, seven-foot-tall Dragon shifter fell in love with the tiny version of his oldest brother. The moment Xavier's little fingers wrapped around one of Zane's—our son's hand was so small that he looked like a doll in my Zander's arms—everything was forgiven, and the arguments then turned to who could hold the baby.

Zander was a baby hog, going as far as hiding from Gabriel in odd places in the house so that he could snuggle our son more. Daxton's heart melted every time our tiny baby boy was in the room. Roran and Dom had a bright spark of pride in their eyes the moment they were able to hold Xavier, and Remi damn near cried when Gabe gently placed his son in my Wolf's large arms. But what made the fifteen-hour labor worth it was watching Gabriel become one of the most overprotective and loving fathers I have ever seen. I don't think Xavier slept in a bed for the first three months of his life. When I wasn't feeding him, he was in Gabriel's arms, tucked close to his father's chest, as he whispered how much he loved and would protect him.

Montag was conceived when Xavier was only four months old. I couldn't go back on the birth control potion while breastfeeding, so we stuck to good old-fashioned condoms. Unfortunately, Dax and I had a little tryst in the library while Xavier was napping one afternoon... Okay, not a little tryst. We had crazy hot sex for the first time in months, since all the guys were too scared to get rough in bed while I was pregnant. We knocked over three bookshelves and used all three condoms Daxton had with him before moving to the bed for a fourth round. One thing led to another, and some choices were made. Then nine months later, Montag was born.

That was six years ago. I decided I needed a break physically, so we were careful, and I immediately went back on the birth control potion the moment I stopped breastfeeding Monty. But we have been trying for another baby for

almost a year now, and I know I'm not the only one who had started to worry it wouldn't happen. So when Dom pulled me aside this morning, telling me he sensed not one, but two little dragon signatures coming from within me, I had been more than a little emotionally raw. Dom had left me to my thoughts, kissing me sweetly and whispering that he wouldn't tell a soul until I told Zander.

When I was pregnant with Xavier, Dom had chosen not to tell me I was pregnant, not wanting to spoil the excitement for Gabriel or me. But when I had gone out dancing with Roar and flew home on the back of my Gargoyle, letting him do flips in the air as he landed in front of the other guys, it made him change his mind. My Angel promptly lost his shit about my safety, something he hardly ever does with the guys anymore, and brought both Gabriel and me inside to tell us the news, not wanting me to unknowingly hurt our child. It was then decided that for all future pregnancies, Dom would inform me so I could tell who I wanted about it and ensure the safety of our children and myself.

A familiar voice shouting and a slam of a door draws me from my thoughts, and I stand and move to my door, opening it just in time to see a flurry of dark black hair rush by.

"Fina!" Gabriel shouts after her as he yanks the door to his study open, glaring after his seventeen-year-old sister. "Serafina, we are not done yet! You can not hogtie and lock people in janitor closets when you get mad!" he snaps, stalking down the hall, his eyes sparking silver as his hands ball into fists at his sides. "You do realize you were expelled, right? This is the second school in the last year!" I wince and sigh, moving out of the room and stepping directly in front of him, making him pull up short, his chest heaving with anger as he glares down at me.

"What did we talk about this morning?" I ask softly, placing my hand on his chest and tugging on our mate bond, trying to soothe the burning rage inside him. Gabe curses and looks over my head toward his sister's room just as she turns, narrowing her silver eyes on him, and flips him the bird before slamming her door shut.

"That Fina needs patience and understanding. Not lectures," he bites out, his silver eyes still locked on his sister's now shut door. "But what am I supposed to do when I get called in almost weekly about her behavior? I'm running out of schools to send her to. She's far too powerful to attend a human school, even with Daxton shielding her magic, and she's burning

through the fae schools faster than I can find them.”

When Fina hit puberty less than a year ago, her Fae form emerged and in a deadly way. The boy who had been crushing on her chose to lean in and steal a kiss, making Fina panic, and her magic encased him, draining him of life. Luckily, they were at home working on a class project, and Dominic had been here and reversed the effects of Fina’s magic before she completely reaped the boy’s soul.

She begged Gabe to bring her to the hospital so she could see the boy and apologize, but Gabe refused. When Fina left his office in tears, I asked why he wouldn’t bring her to the hospital, and he explained that the boy’s parents were still considering pressing charges against her for lack of magic control and that this was the only way he could protect not only Fina... but the boy as well.

Serafina’s magic had taken all of us by surprise when it came in, most of all Gabriel, since there hadn’t been a known female Reaper in centuries. Dante apparently had Fina tested while young when she showed signs of possibly being a Reaper. But when they came back negative, he threw her away like trash, only using her to keep her brother in line when needed.

“Gabriel, she is the first female Reaper born into the fae world in centuries. She’s trying her best to reign in her magic. You know that,” I whisper, letting my hand on his chest move up to cup the side of his neck. I feel his pulse thrumming there and go up on my toes, brushing my lips on the sensitive skin between his neck and shoulder, making him relax a little against me. “It’s going to take time and patience from all of us,” I remind him.

Gabe clenches his jaw, the shadows around him dancing as the temperature drops, and I shiver a little. Gathering the shadows around us, I use them as a cloak, trapping us in a dark little bubble, making Gabriel sigh and finally look down at me, anger bright in his eyes until he notices me shiver. Warm arms band around me, and the air warms as he pulls me close, tucking me into his chest and taking deep breaths to try to calm down.

Gabe and Fina have been butting heads for the last six months or so. I know it’s mainly jealousy because of her willingness to talk to Daxton mentally and not communicate as much with him. She finally started talking about a year after Dante’s death, but it was only ever in quiet, short answers.

It started with Ryland, the young Dragon shifter Zane saved from Dante’s warehouse. Dominic occasionally overheard her whispering to him, and Gabe

doubled down on his efforts to help his sister, hoping to pull her out of whatever was happening. Then she started talking to Remi when he was in his Wolf form. We found out right after Dante's death that Fina felt most comfortable around Remi's Wolf, so he tried to be in that form whenever he could for the small girl. They soon became fast friends, and Gabe and Remi formed a strong friendship as a result. Sure, they still poke fun at each other, but they are much closer than I could have ever hoped for when we first became a family.

Finally, after several months of love and support, Fina whispered goodnight to her brother, her first words to him in over a year. Atlas had been in the room and beamed at her with pride shining in his eyes, and Gabriel held her close, his eyes wet as he snuggled her to sleep.

Slowly Fina started to talk more and more. Mostly to Ryland and Remi's Wolf, but she even smiled and occasionally said hello to me. She seemed to really enjoy it when my best friend Kay brought over Barbie movies and did her hair, so I planned as many girl's nights as possible with her and my newest little sister.

Talking is no longer an issue for her, though she still doesn't speak to us very much. However, that sure doesn't hinder her ability to express herself. You would think a quiet, broody teenage girl would be better than a loud, overly emotional one, but you would be wrong.

I'm unsure what Dante did to her before Gabe got her out of their father's evil hands, but it left permanent scars. Gabe's hired the best therapists in the world over the last ten years, making them come to help his sister, but she never opened up. And even after all these years, I can see the flickers of fear and pain in her eyes, though she is incredibly good at hiding it. Adding on the fact that her Fae form emerged with deadly and cold magic probably doesn't help.

Gabe has discussed how hard it is to control his magic and the urge to reap daily. Our family helps him fight off the need to kill, our bonds stabilizing his magic and making him strong enough to control it. But Fina doesn't have that yet, and I know Gabe is worried about his sister's mental state.

As time went on and Fina got older, I saw how she grew into a strong young woman with a temper that rivaled Gabriel's. They are more alike than just their looks. Her cold glares could wilt anyone's soul when she chooses to use them. Roar has gone as far as mapping out her menstrual cycles in order

to avoid her death glares during her time of the month, choosing to spend more time at the boys' home he opened for young abandoned Fae boys.

Atlas seemed to be able to calm her down best, but he hardly ever visits anymore, choosing to stay in the city at an apartment he purchased a few years ago. Dax stepped up to the plate after Atlas stopped visiting. His ability to converse mentally helped, and he taught Fina how to talk back. He even went so far as using his magic and forming a connection between Fina and Gabriel, using himself as a bridge to help the two communicate. But there are certain things a girl has a hard time talking to her brother about, and apparently, she is more comfortable talking to Dax.

I don't blame her. Daxton is extremely understanding in all things, and so when she went to him asking for some tampons and not to Gabe... well, my poor Reaper took it as Fina not trusting him, and he's been hurt ever since. He's not mad at Dax. In fact, I'm pretty sure Gabe is glad Fina has Dax, but he is struggling with the fact that he hasn't been enough for Fina, despite his best efforts to be there for her. No matter how many times Dax tries to explain the reason, Gabe doesn't understand the thoughts of a young teenage girl.

Something crashing on the other side of Fina's door makes me startle in Gabriel's arms and wince again. "See?" he grumbles, sighing and lowering his head to my shoulder, tucking his nose by my neck and growling under his breath. "What should I do? I can't let this behavior go unchecked. She'll kill someone if she doesn't control her temper. But... I don't want to push her too far. She still won't tell me what those boys did to her."

"Probably because she knows you will kill them," I mutter sarcastically, then frown when Gabe nods in agreement. "Wait... She can't tie them up, but you can..." I trail off when Gabe's eyes narrow, and I smirk up at him.

"No, Fina can't. She's a teenage girl that will end up getting herself into trouble. And with trouble comes death when you're a Reaper. The moment she feels that high... the feeling of reaping a soul for the first time, she will be unstoppable without something or someone to ground her. I refuse to have her feel helpless when I can shoulder that burden for her. And yes, I can and will eliminate anything that harms my sister," he murmurs, his eyes flashing with deadly rage, his magic mixing with mine, sending a burst of deadly excitement through me.

"Gabriel," I scold softly. "You can't shelter Fina forever. She is a Reaper, and trying to keep her from her true self will only hurt in the long run. Trust

me, I know. Hiding what you are is hard, and you never feel whole.”

Gabriel's eyes soften slightly at my words, but not enough for me to think they have changed his mind. Stubbornness runs in the Covington family, something I have become all too aware of over the last few years. Frowning, I shake my head, trying to come up with an answer that will help Gabe and Fina.

“What did you do as a teenager in order to calm down?” I ask, running my hand through his silky hair. Gabe scoffs and straightens, his shoulders tense as he sweeps a hand out in front of us, banishing the shadows from around us and sending them back to their rightful place. His eyes zero in on Roar, who has magically appeared next to us and is perched on one of the small tables placed next to my door, and he sighs in annoyance when the Gargoyle grins. Roar's ocean blue eyes dance in amusement as he reaches into a bowl of popcorn sitting in his lap and scoops a handful of the buttery snack into his mouth.

“I didn't calm down. My mate had been murdered, and I didn't think I had much to live for,” Gabe grumbles, answering my question while snapping his fingers at Roar, gesturing for him to get off the table before it breaks under his solid weight. “I killed when I wanted and without restraint.”

I frown at Gabe's words and reach out, grabbing his hand with mine while winking at my Gargoyle when he scowls at Gabe, not budging from his spot on the small table. “Right. Well, that doesn't sound like something you should tell Fina,” I mutter under my breath, making Gabe chuckle darkly.

“You think?”

“Wait... You had us!” Roar snaps, looking affronted at Gabriel's confession while flicking a piece of popcorn at the already upset Reaper. I watch the small yellow kernel bounce off Gabe's forehead and sigh as the air grows chilly again. “We weren't worth living for?” Gabe grinds his teeth together, and I tug on our bond, trying to expel the anger that is slowly rising again.

“You were everything to me and the only reason I'm still alive. But tell me, Roran,” Gabe says slowly, his hand dropping mine only for his arm to hook around my waist and tug me close to his side. “What would you do if you felt Danica die? Had that bond ripped from your chest? Even if our relationship was only one of friendship at that time, the mate bond was there.” Roran's eyes harden, the bright blue darkening instantly, and Gabe nods. “Precisely. It doesn't compare, does it?” Roar takes a shuddering breath

and shakes his head before launching himself off the table, making the bowl of popcorn spill everywhere as he grabs not only me but Gabriel up into a big, rib-crushing hug.

“I love you guys,” he grumbles into my hair, making me wheeze a laugh as Gabe curses and uses his shadows, winding them around Roar and flinging him to the other side of the hallway. Roar bursts into full-blown belly laughter as he flies through the air and rolls across the floor, then leans up to watch Gabe glare at him while straightening his white button-down shirt.

“Roran, control yourself,” Gabe snaps, brushing my hair out of my face and checking me over before twisting toward his sister's room with a determined look on his face.

“Whoa, whoa, whoa,” Roar shouts from where Gabe tossed him as he springs to his feet and rushes to step protectively in front of Fina's door. “Dude, I got this,” Roar says with such confidence that I smile gratefully at him.

“You?” Gabe asks in shock, raising his brow as he points to Fina's door. “Want to talk to her?”

“Yeah me! I deal with emotional teens all day. It's my specialty. Granted, it's teenage boys, but how different can girls be?” I snort in response and Roar throws me a dirty look before he looks back at Gabe. “I'll calm her down and be the good uncle; then you can swoop in and do all the boring older brother shit.”

“Boring older brother shit?” Gabe repeats, crossing his arms over his chest as I grin, then shake my head, pivoting to head downstairs. Now that everyone is calm, I'm not worried about leaving them to handle things.

“Yeah. You know... Brush your teeth. Shower every day. Don't kill people,” Roar starts to list off. “All that boring shit you make her do.”

“Basic hygiene and avoiding murder aren't boring, Roran. They are necessary!” Gabriel mutters, their voices slowly fading as I make my way downstairs.

“You were singing a very different tune when Dax had to stop you from killing that guy who wouldn't stop staring at Dani's chest last week,” Roar accuses.

“That... I... That's not the same thing, Roran! That dimwitted fool deserved to die for looking at what is mine!” Gabe shouts, and I giggle at his flustered tone. Sighing, I shake my head as I carefully make my way down the stairs, letting my hand float back to my stomach as I start planning how to

tell my Dragon that we are having not one but two little Dragon babies.

CHAPTER 2

DANICA



I cinch the light blue apron tighter at my waist when it tries to fall off. It's folded at the center, and I've tied it around my waist twice in order to secure it, but Zane's oversized apron dwarfs me no matter what I do.

"Garlic," I say and look up just in time to catch the small bottle of garlic Remi tosses at me, snatching it out of the air before I hold my hand up again. "Salt and pepper," I mutter, looking at the pot and biting my lip nervously as I mentally tick off the list of ingredients of one of Zane's favorite meals.

Shit, did I add the oregano already? I curse under my breath, grab the oregano from the counter, and add it to the pot as two very large hands circle my waist, stopping me in my tracks.

"Dani-Girl," Remi rasps into my ear, his warm lips dusting across my neck before he kisses the white scar of his mate mark, sending a shiver of pleasure straight to my clit. "Relax, baby. Zane will cream himself the moment he gets home and sees you in that apron." Remi sets the salt and pepper on the counter beside us before turning me in his grip and taking the spatula and oregano from me. He silences my protests with a soft kiss, his arms winding around my waist, tugging me to him, then up off my feet as he stands to his full height.

"I just want this night to go well," I mutter, letting my oldest friend and first love comfort me, his warm, strong body calming me as his chest rumbles, his Wolf close to the surface.

"And it will," he reassures me. "Dani-Girl, you could burn dinner and ruin Zane's favorite pot, and he still would think it's the best night ever. You know that. Now, are you going to tell me what the occasion is?" I grin and shake my head, earning a frustrated sigh from my Wolf in response. "Are we

talking like a special one-on-one date... or is there room for a third member of this party?" he asks, his voice coming out in almost a growl, making my nipples harden in my bra as he nips at his mate mark again.

I laugh and wiggle in his arms, kicking my feet until Remi grumbles and sets me back down on the ground, scowling down at me while pressing his denim-clad cock against my stomach. His hard length has me almost agreeing to the threesome idea, but thankfully a burst of giggles from the living room draws me out of my lust-filled thoughts. Remi and I separate just as Monty and Xavier come tearing through the kitchen, their peals of excited laughter making Remi grin as he turns us, keeping me safely cocooned in his arms as we watch their grandpa chase after them.

"Daddy, help us!" Monty shouts as his purple eyes dart around the kitchen, and he realizes his best chance of escape is his dad. Monty throws himself at Remi and wraps his tiny arms around his leg, making Remi chuckle and let me go. Scooping Montag up, he brings the giggling boy close and blows a raspberry on his cheek, sending our younger son into another fit of laughter.

"Gotcha!" Raphael shouts in victory as he snags Xavier around the waist and yanks him into his arms, poking at his sides.

"No fair!" Xavier shouts between laughter as his grandpa tickles him. "You are faster and have longer legs!" Raphael laughs and then sets Xavier down, complaining about how big Xav is getting.

"Hey, Sweetheart," Raphael says, groaning a little as he stands to his full height, his hand pressed to his lower back as he walks over and kisses my cheek.

"Hey, Dad. What are you doing here? I thought we planned on dinner tomorrow?" I lean forward, kissing his cheek, and then hug him tight before I move back to the stove and lower the heat on the dinner I'm preparing, not wanting it to burn.

"We are, but I asked him to come as a favor," Dom announces, gliding into the room and clasping my dad on the shoulder in greeting before walking over to me and placing a kiss on my cheek. "You look beautiful today, love," he whispers, his hand resting on my stomach possessively for only a second as he winks at me and then pulls away.

Dom had said he would be more than willing to wait for a child of his own because any child of mine was a child of his as well. As far as protective daddies go, Dominic is almost as scary about the children's protection as

Gabriel and Zane are.

“Oh, and what is that favor?” I ask, tossing my dad a smile over my shoulder as he walks over and coaxes Monty out of Remi’s arms and into his own.

“Something about your grumpiest husband needing a babysitter tonight,” my dad responds, making Remi laugh. Dom arches an amused eyebrow as he crouches in front of Xavier, whispers a few soft words, then taps him on the tip of the nose. Xavier nods and grins before running from the kitchen, and Dom stands back up.

“I figured you would want privacy, and Gabriel will need to be yanked out of the house after the argument he and Fina had today, so...” Dom trails off and gestures to Raphael, who nods.

“Yes, I’m here on official Angel business. So I’ll be taking Councilman Covington to the council building, and we will debate on whether it is time to integrate Ractori back into the Fae world or not,” Raphael says earnestly. I purse my lips, trying to figure out if he’s being serious or not, then shrug, deciding Gabe will tell me when they actually make strides on that. It’s something they have been planning to do for over a year now, but the last time I talked to Gabe on the subject, there hadn’t been a timeline for it just yet.

“Hello!” someone shouts from the living room, and the front door slamming shut makes Dom smile.

“Is that?” Remi starts to say just as Dom chuckles.

“Your babysitter? Yes, yes it is,” he teases, making Remi scowl as Andrew stalks into the kitchen, his brown hair and eyes a comforting sight as he grins and waves to everyone.

“Boys,” he greets Remi and Dom, then dips his head at my dad before walking over and yanking me into a giant bear hug. “Missed you, Firefly,” he grumbles, kissing the top of my head as I squeeze him back just as hard.

“Missed you more,” I whisper back.

“I don’t need a babysitter,” Remi hisses at Dom, who scoffs, looking the Wolf up and down before reaching over and cupping his hands around Monty’s ears.

“So you’re saying you haven’t already tried to talk Dani into letting you stay for a threesome with Zane?” Raphael and Andrew groan, wrinkling their nose at Dom, who shrugs unrepentantly.

“Can you not talk about our daughter doing.... that stuff when we are

here?” Andrew asks, going tense in my arms and making me giggle under my breath as he pulls away and glares at Dominic, who lets his hands fall away from our son's ears. Remi's cheeks flush, and he growls a little under his breath before rolling his eyes and looking at Andrew.

“Fine, what's the plan, old man?” Remi asks, making Andrew growl in response, his Wolf not liking Remi's teasing.

“I thought we could go help Bryce with the newest shifters. We have a new boy that thinks he's top dog, and I was hoping you could scare him straight.” I freeze at hearing my uncle's words, worry flashing to the surface at the mention of going back on pack grounds. We don't live far from the North Woods pack, and Remi sees his mother regularly, but he still has a very strained relationship with his father, Alpha Moore. I watch my Wolf carefully as his shoulders tense just the slightest amount, but he only nods and smiles, ruffling Monty's hair when he blinks his purple eyes up at him.

“Yeah, I'm sure I can do that,” Remi agrees quickly. I relax a little and return to my dinner preparations as Roar waltzes into the kitchen and moves to stand next to me.

“Yum!” he mutters, leaning close and taking a deep breath before dunking a finger into the gravy I have resting on the back of the stove.

“Roar,” I complain, lightly smacking his hand and making him chuckle as he pops it into his mouth, then snags me around the waist, kissing the back of my neck.

“Come on, little man. Let's go see where your brother ran off to,” Dom says, herding Monty away before Roar can become too handsy.

“You can't do that with the boys in the kitchen,” Remi chides, making Roar snort and pull away, giving Remi a disapproving look.

“What? Kiss my wife? I didn't do something I wouldn't do in public, and I think it's smart to show the boys we love their mom. It helps them know they are safe and secure. I would have given anything to have a dad love my mom and make me feel safe,” he adds quietly, and I turn in his arms, spatula still in hand, and hug him, soothing our bond while arching a brow at Remi, who now looks guilty as hell.

“I could use a little less PDA,” Andrew mutters, making Roar chuckle.

“Aw, come on, Dad. You know I love her, and that won't change. Doesn't matter who's in the room.” Andrew only rolls his eyes and moves over to Raphael, who watches us all with a happy and content look on his face.

My relationship with my father has grown over the years, blossoming into more than I could have hoped for. It started with dinners once a week while we were still attending Black Veil University. He would come over and often stay to help me practice my elemental magic. Either Dom or Dax would stay with me, helping me out when necessary. Gabe only stepped in when I used his magic during training. We tend to get a little hot and heavy while training together, and I didn't want to worry about scarring my new father.

"I've gotta go to the boys' home tonight. Since you have a date planned with Zane, I'm calling dibs tomorrow night after family dinner. I'm feeling a *Harry Potter* movie marathon coming on. I even bought us new matching pajamas," Roar whispers, leaning down to brush his lips over mine as Remi steps closer.

"Hey, Roar... I didn't... I mean... Shit. I wasn't trying to bring up old shit from your past, man. Sorry," he whispers, and Roar grins, slapping his giant hand on Remi's shoulder.

"It's okay. But you have to make it up to me by wearing matching pj's with Dani and me tomorrow night. I need my Harry, Ron, and Hermione fix. Though I really think she should have ended up with Draco. It would have been the perfect enemies-to-lovers story. A waste, really," Roar says with a sigh. Remi scowls and wrinkles his nose.

"Wasn't Draco the bad guy? Why on earth would you want that?" Roar only shakes his head at Remi and tsks under his breath.

"You have no vision. Think of the sexual tension that would build up in that relationship. A muggle with a pure-blooded wizard? It's perfect!" Roar exclaims, making me giggle when he glares at Remi for looking at him like he's crazy.

"Dude, your nerd is showing. Couldn't we do something different... like watch the football game that's supposed to be on?" Roar opens his mouth to protest; then it snaps shut as he thinks about it. My Gargoyle has always loved to watch a good game of football; he even played on the Black Veil team in college, but he hasn't done much since we all graduated. He's been too busy taking care of the orphaned Fae boys that we saved from one of Dante's warehouses.

"No... I bought all seven of us matching *Harry Potter* pj's. I can't waste them," Roar finally says, and Remi heaves a heavy sigh, knowing there is no point in arguing with him now.

"Did you get a set for Kay, too?" I ask, knowing my bestie will be beyond

pissed if she gets left out. Roar looks down, an offended look crossing his face as he places a hand over his heart like I wounded him with my question.

“Of course I did! I even got her guys a matching set. But ours are purple, and Kay’s are pink.” Remi snorts a laugh, and I follow along with him. I will have to clean up the theater room if we want to fit all twelve of us in there.

“Good luck getting the asshole blood sucker into some pink *Harry Potter* pajamas,” Remi says over his shoulder as he turns and moves to Andrew, nodding at the door and asking if he’s ready to go. Remi doesn't say which of the Vampires in our lives he’s talking about. We all know it's not Kayla.

“Pfft. That prickly Vamp will do anything the moment Kay bats her eyelashes at him and smiles,” Roar mutters, looking mildly disgusted at the thought. “But we will have to make sure he and Gabe don’t try to kill each other like last time.” He kisses my hair and then walks away, shouting up the stairs that he's leaving for the night and will return tomorrow. Dax hollers something back before the front door slams shut.

The house clears out relatively quickly after that. Gabe goes with my dad to his office in Seattle, only stopping at Kay's house to drop off Fina for a sleepover. Remi leaves with Andrew, while Dom and Dax take the boys. Dax whispers something about a treasure hunt he and my Angel concocted for the boys to do at Dom's apartment in London before he teleports them there.

I run around the kitchen, trying to finish the final touches on dinner, then place a few candles on the table before running upstairs to take a quick shower and change into a dress I know Zane will like. I smooth my hand down the soft blue fabric of the sundress and smile. When I found this dress last week, I fell in love with it, but I’m guessing if things go the way I hope they will, the dress will not survive the night. Which I mean... is totally okay with me. I can always buy another dress.

I bite my lip and brush through my hair, my purple eyes bright and excited. I’m not going to lie, the way this dress fits makes me look pretty good. It took me over a year to get my figure back after having Monty, and even though I know I'm about to be huge all over again, I can't wait to hold my new babies in my arms. Looking in the mirror, I readjust my boobs so they look good. My cleavage looks fantastic. Not too much, but just enough to have Zane going crazy. I’ve been outside more than usual over the last couple of weeks, and my normally-pale skin has a nice sun-kissed glow.

Kay would be proud.

I move to grab my phone and take a picture to send to her, needing

mental support, just as I hear the door open downstairs and a loud “*I’m home!*” from my Dragon mate.

CHAPTER 3

DANICA



I rush to grab the balled-up fabric I purposely left out on my bed and the pictures I printed and quickly scatter them through a few of the guys' bedrooms on my way down the hall. I had Kay take a few photos of me for the guys and have yet to use them... and I'm thinking tonight will be a great time to show Zander.

Brushing a hand over my dress, I watch my feet as I head downstairs so I don't slip and fall. I've never been the most graceful of people, and stairs have recently been the bane of my existence. Now that I'm pregnant again, I need to be more careful.

I look up on the last step, my eyes immediately clashing with the soft hazel of Zane's as he grins from where he stands in the living room. He stops mid-conversation with the tall man beside him and strides to me, big hands falling on my waist as he hauls me into his arms and lets my feet dangle in the air.

"Comoaña," he rasps, his lips brushing mine softly before sealing mine to his in a feverish kiss. I melt into my Dragon's arms, letting him fully control our kiss, my body heating in seconds. I can hear Zane inhale sharply, then growl low, pulling his lips from mine and kissing down the column of my neck. "Mhmm, you smell so good. Needy today, little mate?" he rasps in a deep voice, his fingers digging into my ass as he presses his hardening cock against me.

"A little," I admit, biting my lip with a self-satisfied gasp as I roll my hips against Zane's hard cock. Someone coughs a little behind Zane, and I freeze, my eyes snapping open in mortification when I remember Zane had been talking to someone when I came rushing down to greet him. "Shit," I gasp,

wiggling in Zane's arms, wanting to be set down so I can apologize to whoever is here about basically dry-humping my husband in front of them. Zane only growls, his arms locking tighter around me, refusing my demand to be set down. I curse, press my hands to his broad shoulders, peer over him, and instantly relax when I see who it is.

Amused brown eyes watch Zane and me as the tall man leans against the doorway. His long black hair is pulled back into a bun on the top of his head, and his short-cropped beard frames his jaw. A small gold hoop earring glimmers in the light, and I take in the newest addition of tattoos that seem to roll over the golden exposed skin of his arms.

“Danica,” he greets in a low, raspy voice, and I grin, wiggling even more to be set down while smacking at Zane's shoulders, earning a groan and a slap to my ass from my Dragon mate before he eventually relents and sets me on my feet.

“Ryland!” I laugh, running to the young man. I throw my arms around him, laughing when I realize the young Dragon has grown several more inches since I last saw him over a year ago. “You were away for too long this time,” I scold as Ryland laughs and wraps me in a soft hug. It lasts only a moment before he places me back down and steps away, patting my head like I used to do to him when he was only a child. The gold that lines the brown of his eyes is bright as he looks up at Zane, who grunts his agreement, his hand coming to rest possessively on my hip as he stands at my side.

“Sorry, Dani. It's been busy at Silvercrest, and I had to wait for the semester to end to come home. Luckily, I have a few weeks off before I have to go back,” he reassures us, and Zane smiles, crinkles forming at the corners of his eyes as he stares at Ryland, pride radiating from him in waves.

Ryland had been dealt a rough hand early in life. His family was murdered, and Gabriel's father, Dante Covington, essentially kidnapped him. He spent over three years in the warehouses Dante used to test on Fae, where he was tortured and abused. When Zane found him, Ryland was almost gone, his magic fading as his life flickered away. He had been beaten, starved, and forgotten, left for dead in an ice-cold room that Zane had stumbled across as they were leaving. It had taken Zane's Dragon to convince the boy not to give up and a team of doctors to heal him before he came to live with us.

About a month after Dante's death, Zane officially applied to be Ry's foster parent, and the rest is history. Ryland blends into our little makeshift family like he was meant to be with us from day one. When we found out Ry

had more than just his Alpha Dragon as a Fae form, a not-so-welcome gift Dante had bestowed on the boy, Gabe stepped in with the help of Dominic. They were the only ones strong enough to help the boy control his destructive magic, and often it took both of them to do it.

“That's good. You have been away for too long. I would like to go flying a few times before you go back,” Zane murmurs, his thumb running up and down the sensitive skin of my neck and making me shiver a little in response. Ryland grunts and nods, making me laugh at how much his behaviors resemble Zane's as he looks around the house and scowls.

“Where is everyone?” Ry asks, and Zane frowns, almost like he's just now noticing how calm our normally crazy house is. “I was hoping to see the boys tonight.”

“Dax and Dom took them on a treasure hunt. They are in London for the night but should be home tomorrow,” I tell Ry, then frown and look up when Zane makes an odd spluttering sound.

“What? Without me?” he asks, looking offended and slightly upset. Zane is all about spending quality time with his sons, wanting to be there for all their best memories. He reaches into his pocket, growling something about letting the guys have a piece of his mind, and I smile, resting my hand on his and stopping him from calling or texting anyone.

“Gabe is at his office, but Remi is out with Andrew teaching the new shifters who's in charge,” I say with a smile, making Ryland's eyebrow arch up in excitement.

“You don't say?” he mutters, looking at the door before scowling and looking up the stairs. I purse my lips, trying to decide if it's best to tell Ry where Fina is. I know that's who he's actually looking for.

Fina and Ry have been best friends for years. Attached at the hip and together from the day he came home from the hospital. Fina still wasn't speaking then, and it drove the small boy's Dragon mad with worry. As they grew, they became closer and closer, reminding me of my friendship with Remington when we were kids. I purse my lips at that thought, knowing that's precisely the reason Gabe has been sure never to leave the two alone when Ryland is visiting. Fina hasn't been subtle with her crush she has on Ryland. Something I worried was one-sided until I caught him threatening Fina's friend, Teos, away from her.

I grimace at that thought, realizing that it didn't work since he is the boy that kissed Fina and almost died as a result. Hopefully, Ry doesn't find out

about that!

I know Zane and Gabe have become worried at how close the two are as Ry grew older, but I have never seen Ryland act inappropriately with Fina. In fact, I would say he's been incredibly respectful. As kids, they would cuddle up on the couch and watch movies. I hardly ever saw one of them without the other, and they were holding hands more often than not. That all stopped when Fina turned fourteen, though. Fina would try to get near him, and Ryland always added a few inches of distance, never letting her get too close.

Gabe's mood improved when he took notice, and Fina's plummeted. I've been stuck between being happy and irritated at Ryland's actions. Glad he realizes Fina is still young, and he shouldn't be doing that now that he's a twenty-two-year-old man. But also sad. I've had to watch in silence as Fina's heart broke, confusion shining in her eyes every time Ry pulled away from her.

Ry has never been cruel to Fina, but he definitely keeps a barrier between them now. He never reaches out to hold her hand like he used to and always chooses to sit on the other side of the room if he can.

"Fina's at Kay's house." Zane tenses at that and scowls down at me when Ryland's eyes harden.

"That's nice," he says coolly, and I cringe. Hmm, okay, that didn't go as planned. I thought for sure he would want to see her after being away for as long as he's been.

"Why is she at Kay's?" Zane grumbles, and I wince, making Ry narrow his eyes at me.

"Gabe and Fina got into a fight. She's..." I trail off, trying to figure out what to say as Zane curses, and I nod.

"School again?" Zane asks, and I nod.

"Yeah. Apparently, she tied up a few boys who were bullying her and locked them in the janitor's closet," I admit. There is a moment of tense silence before Zane bursts into laughter, doubling over with deep belly laughs as tears come to his eyes.

"Good girl! Teach them to pick on her again," he chortles, and I smile and nod in agreement.

"Yeah... but then she took their clothes, and Teagan found them naked and terrified," I murmur, making Zane wince a little. Teagan Ramadan is the Headmistress of the school and also the mother of Teos, the boy Fina almost killed last week. To say she's not a current Serafina fan would be a serious

understatement. “And one of the bullies is the Councilor's son, so...” I trail off with a sigh and shrug.

“Fina’s being bullied?” Ry growls, his voice deepening, eyes flashing gold as blue sparks fly at his fingertips. Zane stops laughing as he eyes the young Dragon cautiously and steps protectively between us. “By who?” Ry asks in a clipped voice, and I press my lips together in a thin line.

Well, shit. I didn't think that thought through.

“Ryland,” Zane growls as Ry’s Alpha dominance rolls through the air, hitting me like a wave and stealing my breath at the strength of it. Zane curses and looks like it may have even made him uncomfortable, which isn't good. He’s said on multiple occasions that he will only be able to control Ryland for so long.

Dragons live in flights, and we are Zane’s. Him being the Alpha but choosing to defer to Gabe as head of the household. Ryland, who is now a fully mature Alpha Dragon, makes our family dynamic change a little.

Zane has never met an Alpha shifter that could challenge him before. Not even Remi, one of North America's strongest Alpha Wolf shifters, could take him in a dominance fight. So when Zane said he was worried... that made me nervous. Not that I think Ryland would ever challenge Zane for the head Alpha spot in our family. He loves and respects his foster dad too much for that. But it makes controlling a feral Dragon shifter a lot harder.

Ryland’s hands fist, and nostrils flare when he realizes I’m not going to give him a name. He shoves his way around Zane and me, bright gold scales erupting up his neck as he stalks for the door, not listening to a single word Zane is saying. Five seconds later, the front door slams shut with a force that practically shakes the house, and I’m worried Ry may have broken the door frame.

“*Shit!*” I whisper to myself, eyes wide as I watch Zane freak the fuck out.

“*Fuck, fuck, fuck!*” Zane shouts, running a hand over his beard as he yanks the door open to go after Ryland, then pauses and looks at me.

“Why is everyone gone?” he asks, and I wince and shrug my shoulders. Guilt is hitting me hard for setting Ryland off like that. He’s always been protective of Fina... but never to the Dragon hulking out level, so I honestly didn't think he would react like this. Fina’s been bullied before for not speaking very much, and he’s never reacted this way.

“I planned a date for us. They left to give us the night together,” I admit, biting my lip as I watch Zane's brows pull together and a soft smile grace his

face. He slams the door shut, taps something out on his phone, and walks back over to me, scooping me off my feet and making me squeal a little in surprise.

“Zane! But...” I point over his shoulder at the door. “Ry is going to murder them,” I gasp before Zane slams his lips to mine with a chuckle.

“Good,” he grumbles between kisses as he carries me into the kitchen, where I have a small table set up with two chairs and some candles flickering. I may not like the fancy things in life, but my Dragon does, and I’m more than willing to spoil him as much as I can. Zane breaks our kiss and groans, burying his nose into my neck and inhaling. “I texted Gabe. He can deal with it. My mate planned a date with me, and that’s more important,” he whispers, his lips curving against mine. I can feel the joy and excitement bursting from him in our mate bond, making my magic curl around us protectively, and I can’t stop the giggle that breaks free.

“I love you, Zane,” I whisper, making him shudder.

“You own my entire heart and soul, Comoara,” Zane responds, kissing my neck again. “Why do you smell so damn good?” he moans, making me bite my lip excitedly.

Do I smell different to him now that I carry his children? I should have asked Dax before he left, he would know what to expect. But I really didn’t want to tell anyone until I told Zane since he fathered the babies, he should know first.

Zane glances around the kitchen and blinks in surprise at the dim lighting and heaps of food I have prepared. His eyes rest on the small table and candles before he beams down at me. “You did all this?” he asks softly, and I blush a little and nod.

“Uh... well yeah, but,” I don’t finish that sentence because Zane is kissing me again. He slowly sets me back on my feet, keeping our lips locked while his hands wrap possessively around my waist, then slide down to cup my ass. I moan into his lips, heat shooting directly to my clit, making me ache to feel Zane inside me.

“Zane,” I gasp against his lips, pushing onto my toes to kiss him harder, my hands moving up into his hair, tangling themselves there and ruining the messy bun he’s sporting. I feel his muscular body tremble under my hands, his sharper than normal teeth nip at my bottom lip, and I clench my legs together in response. “More, please,” I whisper, knowing he can’t resist when I beg for his attention.

“Comoaña.” The word comes out as more of a growl just as Zane yanks his lips from mine and stands up, groaning like he’s in pain and closing his eyes as he wraps his arms around my waist and picks me back up, moving to sit in one of the chairs in the center of our kitchen.

“What are you doing?” I ask, almost sadly. My pussy is throbbing and wet, and I want nothing more than for Zane to take me up into his nest and fuck me until I can’t walk straight tomorrow. The veins in Zane’s neck are bulging, and his hands are clawing at my hips, making it easy to tell that he’s fighting his Dragon for control as he reaches over and starts piling food on the plate in front of us.

“I’m feeding my mate, since she so lovingly made me a meal. Then I’m bending her over the counter right there,” he grinds out, thumbing over his shoulder at the big white island to our right. “And fucking her until she screams my name no less than ten fucking times,” he grinds out, voice so low I have difficulty understanding him as his Dragon tries to take over. I giggle when he looks down at me with bright gold eyes, his pupils the thin lines of his Dragon. Biting my lip, I nod my agreement as he grabs the fork to his side and stabs at the honey-glazed green beans before bringing them to my mouth and feeding me from his lap.

I suppose this is a good thing. This is what I wanted to do, right? Wine, dine... then fuck my Dragon properly before I tell him about the babies. I know the minute I tell him I’m pregnant, he will treat me like I’m made of glass, and what I really want right now is for Zane to treat me like his mate in all ways that implies.

“I do have my own chair, you know,” I tease, nodding at the empty chair sitting across from us. Zane scoffs, his one arm holding me tighter to his chest as he takes a bite of food, then feeds me another. “You belong on my lap, not a cold chair all the way over there,” he grumbles, and I laugh. I purposely had Remi help me set this table up before he left, because it was the smallest one I could find. Apparently, it’s still not small enough for Zane.

“Right, well, you are much more comfortable,” I agree, making Zane’s chest puff up a little, his Dragon clearly pleased I would rather sit with him than my own chair. I try to ignore Zane’s hand as it gently caresses my side, moving up a little where his finger brushes the underside of my breasts, making my breath catch in my throat before his finger moves, raking back down my ribs to my back. It makes eating difficult, but I really try, knowing that I will be locked in Zane’s room for hours when we finally finish here.

I'm practically panting in sexual frustration by the time I'm full. Zane's hand is running up and down the length of my spine, and occasionally, I can feel him add just the tiniest spark of his magic there, making my toes curl in my shoes, and a soft moan slips past my lips.

Zane's already hard cock twitches when I gasp a little, and I roll my hips the slightest amount, making him curse under his breath. Grinning, I eat a few more bites, loving how his hand trembles as he feeds me.

"Good?" he asks in a hoarse voice, and I nod, happy with how everything turned out. I'm always so nervous to cook for Zane since he's a damn amazing cook. But I really did put my all into this meal, and even though it may not be as good as Zane's cooking, I'm rather impressed with myself.

"Does it all taste alright?" I ask nervously when he takes an enormous bite of the oriental chicken salad I know he favors.

"Fucking delicious," he growls, his chest rumbling and magic sparking around us, making the temperature of the room rise a few degrees. I release my own magic, letting it twine with his as it sparks, spinning around us like lovers on a dance floor. I relax into Zane's warm chest as his hand rests on my stomach, and I grin, closing my eyes in bliss while wondering how the hell I got so lucky that this is my life.

After a few more bites, I hold my hand out and shake my head. "I'm full. You need to eat some more," I whisper, knowing Zane can put away five times the amount of food I can on a normal day, more when he's been shifting into his Dragon. Instead of clearing the plate in front of us like I think he will, Zane sets the fork down on the table, making my eyes widen in shock when I realize the utensil is completely mangled and twisted. I can visibly see where his fingers were pressed to the metal of the fork, and I release a breathy laugh when he stands suddenly, turning me so fast I almost get dizzy.

"Zane! You need to finish eating!"

"Oh... I'm planning on eating," he growls, twisting me in his arms before placing me on the island counter in front of him. Zane's strong hands slide up my thighs, spreading them wide and making my dress roll up to my hips. His eyes fall to the fabric, and he grins as he grabs the blue material, yanking it up and over my head. My breath hitches as he reaches behind him and grabs the back of his shirt, tearing it up and over his head in a smooth motion that makes me even wetter for him before he moves to stand between my legs, rubbing his thick denim-clad erection against my damp panties. "*Every damn*

inch of you.”

CHAPTER 4

ZANDER



“Zander,” my little mate gasps as I drop to my knees, my fire magic heating the surrounding air as Danica's magic curls around it, egging it on. I stifle my groan as the scent of her arousal fills my senses, making my already hard cock strain painfully in my pants, desperate to break free.

There is something about her tonight that is driving me wild, so much so that I'm almost concerned that I might lose control of my Dragon. He's snarling in my mind, growling at me to claim our mate, to bed her, and fill her with every inch of us. To ensure she is so completely covered in us that she is scent marked for weeks. My dick twitches at the thought of scenting her with more than soft touches. The pure primal need to spill inside her... to cover her entirely in my scent, has scales erupting up my neck and smoke blooming from my flared nostrils.

“Oh!” Danica whispers as I slide my hands from her waist, letting my nails slowly sharpen into small versions of my Dragon's claws. Her flesh is so soft and delicate under my touch. She's small, something that would typically turn a Dragon off when picking his mate, yet Dani is so fucking strong. Not only in magic, but in spirit. It had only taken one good look at her for him to know she was it for us.

Even before Danica's magic was unlocked, my Dragon had picked her for his own, even when I tried to argue against him. Not that I didn't want her. Fuck no! That day in the cafeteria, I had only really seen my Comoaña from afar, but my dick was so freaking hard in my pants that I had difficulty keeping up with the argument between Gabriel and the weasel, Anderson. But at that point in time, I had a long-term girlfriend, and I knew Daxton didn't like to share. Fortunately, my Dragon was much smarter than I was,

and everything worked out. I couldn't imagine my life without this small but mighty girl in it. I live and breathe by her every wish and demand.

Danica is *MINE*. My mate, my wife, my Comoara.

I lift her suddenly, keeping her pressed firmly against the countertop, letting my lips pull into a small smirk when I see her tiny toes brush against the ground, looking for any kind of purchase. She wiggles, making her ass shake right in my face, and my Dragon snaps. A snarl builds in my throat as I use a small claw and slice through the flimsy fabric of her tiny black panties, letting the shredded fabric fall to the ground before I slap my mate hard on the ass and push her further up on the counter, earning myself a delightful shriek from her in protest.

“Zane!”

“Hold still,” I grind out, my control slipping as I lean forward, spreading her legs wide enough to open her pretty pink pussy up to me. A growl of approval rumbles through my chest when I see her glistening sex, and I can't stop myself from leaning in and taking a taste.

“Fuck, yes. *More*,” my Comoara moans, grinding her sex down on my face as her flavor bursts across my tongue. My Dragon is practically strutting in my chest, his wings flaring as our mate chants our name, her hips rocking over my mouth, taking what she needs and what I'm more than fucking willing to give her.

She tastes so fucking good.

I need more. I need everything my mate will give me. My Dragon presses to the surface, and I can feel him taking over, my hands growing in size while my body trembles as I continue to eat Danica's sweet little pussy like it's the last meal I'll ever have. My fingers dig into her hips for a split second before I remember I have claws and immediately relax my hands. I mentally slap my Dragon while trying to get him to calm the fuck down when all he wants is for his mate to be bent over and fucked like the good little girl she is.

Worry and panic fill my chest momentarily when I feel Danica stiffen in my hands and gasp. Throwing her head back, she cries out and grinds her hips even harder against my tongue, making my eyes widen in surprise when she goes feral. Her tiny blunt nails fall to the counter in front of her as her back bows, displaying my mate mark beautifully. I snarl as I reach down with one hand, yanking my jeans open and freeing my cock just as it throbs and cum erupts from the tip. Fuck, she has me coming like a damn teenager.

I lap at her sex as she comes on my face, her hips bucking against me as

she rides out her release. I fist my cock at the base, my erection still painfully hard as I keep my other hand wrapped around my mate's hip, keeping her pressed to the counter for added support. She smells and tastes like the best thing in the world, and I can't wait any longer. The need to have her tight little pussy wrapped snugly around my cock, milking my cum from me, is too much to bear. I stand, keeping my hand wrapped around the base of my cock as I run it through her dripping sex. But before I can thrust into her like I'm so desperate to do, the air shifts, and I'm brought up off my feet.

"What the f—" I mutter as Danica smiles mischievously over her shoulder and stands. I can feel her magic wrap around me, moving me out of reach as she turns and stares at me floating in the air in front of her. Her violet eyes spark with raw lust as she looks up and down my body appreciatively. My Dragon preens in my chest, happy to have his mate's approval of our physical form, and I grin as her eyes drop to my cock in my hand. I slowly drag my hand up my shaft, bringing a bead of pre-cum to the tip, before stroking back down. Her eyes follow my movement, her small pink tongue darting out to lick at her lips.

"Comoaña," I rasp, intentionally deepening my voice the way I know she likes. She shivers delicately, then darts her eyes from my cock to look at me.

"Zander," she whispers back, her voice low and throaty. I groan, and I'm pretty sure I cum a little more. Fuck, yeah, she won that round. My cock throbs in my hand, and I wince in pain. I'm pretty sure I have never been this hard in my life.

"Do you want to play a game?" she asks softly, bouncing up on her toes nervously, making her breasts sway with her movement. Her pretty pink nipples are rock hard, and now I'm not only desperate to fuck her, but also to wrap my lips around those little buds and suck on them, making her writhe with pleasure underneath me. "Catch me..." she starts, then winks as she slowly turns around, giving me a perfect view of that delicious ass. "And I'll tell you a secret," she whispers.

I grin and shake my head. She really has no idea what she's doing to me right now. I can only hope she can handle everything when I finally get my hands on her, because I already know I won't be able to hold back as much as I normally do.

"If... you can catch me, that is..." She giggles when she sees my jaw tense. My palm itches to turn her over the countertop and spank her for doubting my ability to catch her, then have her scream my name while I fuck

and mark every inch of her soft body. Danica laughs again, and I swear she purposely shakes her ass at me as she smirks at me over her shoulder. Her magic is winding around me, mingling with my own, but keeping me in place until she decides she's ready to start our game.

Little mate is pushing her luck. However, her words excite my Dragon, who is taking everything she says as a personal challenge.

“Five seconds,” I murmur, letting my hand fall from my cock as I watch my mate slowly step away from the counter and put a little distance between us. I instantly grow agitated, not liking her that far from me.

“This is my game Zander... maybe I want a ten second head start,” she teases.

“Five,” I murmur, making her freeze and shoot me a confused look. I crack my neck to the side and run my tongue over my sharper than normal teeth.

“Wha—?”

“Four,” I growl, and her eyes widen when she realizes I’m counting down, and she’s losing valuable time.

“Shit!” she squeaks, then dashes from the kitchen, her delectable ass bouncing slightly as she goes, making me release a pain-filled moan when more cum erupts from my length.

Gathering her magic, I twisted it around me, letting the Ractori connection we have practiced for years to use come to the surface. Not only is Danica one of the strongest magic users in the Fae world, but she has made all six of her mates even stronger. Gabriel was the first to wield her magic. It came naturally to him. Daxton was next followed by Roran, and finally me. My Dragon still struggles when using magic, but I noticed that when I do use it, it makes our bond stronger, allowing me to feel my mate even more. That was motivation enough to set aside my reservations and practice regularly.

Remi and Dominic also felt a shift in their magic, even though they are not technically Ractori mates. They both grew more powerful the longer they stayed with Danica, her magic boosting their own and their mate bonds strengthening her. She is still fiercely protective of Remington, never letting him leave her side for longer than a day or two. And of course, that makes the damn Wolf as cocky as a damn peacock. In fact, it was the reason for several Alpha sparring matches between me and my best friend over the first few years.

My jealousy was showing through, but damn... I needed to be wanted as

much as Remington was.

When Dani confronted us about it after the fourth or fifth fight, I admitted my feelings of jealousy, wondering why she never asked me not to leave. I still remember how her beautiful face softened at my words. Our bond had flared brightly in my chest, and she pulled me closer to her. My heart melted a little when she simply smiled lovingly up at me, saying I have never once left her for more than forty-eight hours, so she never had to ask. She knew I would always be there for her and took comfort in the knowledge. On the other hand, Remi would leave to help Andrew for days, which upset her, especially when she became pregnant with Xavier. She wanted all her mates by her side.

After that embarrassing revelation, and with my pride restored, I made sure to keep not only Remi but the other four guys near her at all times, not liking the idea of my pregnant mate wanting for anything. Sure... it was rather awkward when I had barged into the council offices and grabbed Gabe and Dominic from a meeting when they had stayed late to work, but I didn't care. Danica's care and comfort rose above everyone else, no matter what.

With a simple hand gesture, I release myself from Danica's strong magic and fall a few inches to the kitchen floor, landing softly on my feet. I only broke free because she has allowed me to do so, and I smile, knowing she wants me to catch her. And when I do... I'll make sure she can't walk straight for a week without feeling me between her thighs.

"Three," I snarl, grabbing my wild hair and re-securing it at the top of my head. I'm about to hunt my favorite prey and don't need any distractions. I close my eyes and take a deep breath, then let my Dragon rise to the surface, using my heightened senses to track where my little mate hides. The slightest sound of a door opening on the third floor makes a feral grin stretch over my face, and my eyes snap open.

"Two," I shout, letting my voice carry through the absurdly large home Gabriel had custom-built for Danica. My cock throbs as I kick off my jeans and take a step forward, my excitement at an all-time high as my vision narrows, my mind on one thing and one thing alone.

My mate.

My Dragon rumbles in my chest, releasing our magic in a wave and letting it course through the house, more than ready for the hunt.

"One."

CHAPTER 5

DANICA



I tiptoe through the house, using my magic when I need to open or shut a door so that Zane won't hear me. I purposely rub up against the wall on the right and let my fingers drift over the railing as I go, scent marking it so that Zane will follow.

I ran around a bit on the third floor before making my way up the stairs, hoping to buy myself a little more time, but I'm not sure how well it worked. I had planned on a ten-second head start, but I knew by looking into Zane's crazed eyes I was lucky to get five. There would be no changing his mind. I had teased and pushed him too far. Thankfully, I had left a few little surprises for my Dragon to find before he came home. They should buy me a few extra minutes, plus make his Dragon even more excited.

Grinning, I make my way up the final flight of stairs leading to Daxton's library on the fourth floor of the house. There is a pretty balcony that has a spiraling staircase that goes down to the second floor. If I can plan it right, then I should be able to sneak down there and make it to the main level of the house while Zane hunts for me up here.

I quickly learned that Zane is really into primal play, so I like to indulge him whenever possible. However, our games have lessened since having the boys. The last time we did this was several months ago, and Zane had invited Remi to help. I had been running into Gabriel's office, ready to find a good hiding spot, when my Wolf mate randomly appeared, leaning against the wall next to Gabe's door with a smirk dancing on his lips.

I jumped and startled back, not realizing anyone was home with us, and had just opened my mouth to ask him why he was home from work so early when Remi chuckled and announced in a low voice that he had found me. It

only took me half a second to realize what was going on, but when I turned to run in the other direction, I was stopped by a massive warm chest and a strong set of arms wrapping around my waist.

I shiver at the memory of my two shifters wringing pleasure from me for hours until I had to beg them to give me a break. But now, I use my magic to open the door to Daxton's library and tiptoe in. The comforting smell of paper and ink drifts over my senses as I move further into the massive library, moving to my favorite wall of romance books the guys have bought me and letting my fingers trail over the smooth wood of the rolling ladder. Roar made me.

The more I touch, the more agitated Zane's Dragon will become. I suppress another shiver of desire as I think about what he will do once he catches me. I gasp a little when I feel Zane's mate bond flare bright, then a rush of magic courses over my skin. Zane has started his hunt, and by the feel of the amount of magic he is using, he's not playing around this time.

Shivering, I move away from the books toward the French doors that lead to the balcony trying to ignore how my nipples harden even more as I use my air magic to help carry some of my weight so that I don't accidentally cause a floorboard to squeak. I learned that lesson the hard way from stepping on a squeaky step when Zane first hunted me through our college house back at Black Veil.

A wave of pure, unadulterated lust slams through me at that moment, almost taking me to my knees, and I gasp, then laugh, my breaths coming in short pants as I place a hand on my chest. My sex clenches, desperate to be filled, as Zane's emotions filter through me. I close my eyes, relishing his closeness, and stroke his bond with my magic, knowing I'm only taunting him more by doing so. But hell, I really want to be ravished by my feral Dragon tonight. Zane's mate bond flares, the feelings of his love, adoration, and pure desire are almost too much for me to bear. By the feel of things, I'm guessing my Dragon found the little presents I left for him in the guys' rooms... and he really, *REALLY* likes them.

Stepping outside, I take a deep breath of fresh air, trying to calm my overstimulated libido and slow my heart. Closing my eyes, I relish the sweet scents of pine and wildflowers in the quiet evening air while sending a mental thanks to Gabriel for buying such a large piece of property so that I don't have neighbors to see me streaking around outside.

As a family, we chose to settle in Montana to be close to Aunt Eve and

the boys' home that Roar opened after we graduated. Gabe and Dom were the only ones that needed to be somewhere else for work, and since they both could travel long distances magically, it allowed us to pick where we wanted to live without restriction.

Originally, Gabe bought us a small house about an hour north of Black Veil after Dax and I graduated, but he surprised me on our first wedding anniversary with the house that we currently live in. I say house... but in all reality, the term mansion would be the better description for the enormous place my Reaper had custom-built for our family. Complete with twelve bedrooms, eight bathrooms, and two full sized kitchens.

I had questioned the number of rooms at the time, thinking it sounded like a ridiculous number and most of them would be unused. Gabriel had told me he personally would take that as a challenge to fill them as fast as possible with our children. I caress my still flat stomach, excited to fill another spare bedroom and change it into a nursery for the twins.

The sound of a door slamming on the third floor makes me frown, and I shoot a wide-eyed stare at the closed door of Daxton's library. There is no way in hell Zane is already on the third floor.... Right? It's been all of five minutes since I felt him start the hunt, and I had planned for this way before he got home, setting up a few false leads to give me time to make it up here. Maybe I misheard, and he's still on the second level?

Another door slams, and Zane's mate bond flares in my chest, making me curse. Yeah, he's definitely on the third floor.

Okay... that's fine. I did about three laps around that floor, making sure I touched just about everything I could so my scent would be strongest on that level. I still have time to make it down to the second floor and get to the main level of the house before Zane gets to the library.

Trying not to panic, I rush over to the winding stairs that lead to the second-floor balcony just as I hear heavy steps pounding up the stairs.

"No fucking way!" I whisper just as the door of the library bursts open. One of the hinges breaks, and the door topples to the ground with a pathetic thump. But I'm not looking at the now broken door... No, my attention is solely on the massive Dragon shifter whose broad, shaking shoulders fill the doorway. Zane's brown hair, which had been pulled up into a bun, is now loose and wild, like he ran his hands through it in agitation, giving him an even more wild man look.

My eyes linger on the bulging muscle of his chest and torso, then move

down to his thick, extremely long cock. I have to swallow a little at the sight. Even after all these years, I haven't quite been able to fully handle Zane and his monster cock in bed. But damn... it's been fucking amazing to try to conquer it.

Finally, my eyes move to where my Dragon has my pink lacy panties clutched in one trembling hand, to the other that holds the three photos of me wearing only the panties, spread out over his bed in a position I know he loves.

I'm not going to lie... it was freaking awkward as hell having Kay take those photos. Technically, I'm completely covered. The panties cover all my bits down south, and I have my long, brown hair down, cascading over my chest and hiding my nipples. But she had insisted on doing a mini boudoir session for me, then demanded I do the same for her. My boudoir photos weren't that bad... but Jesus Christ... I think I'm going to need some brain bleach for some of the poses Kay subjected me to while taking hers.

"Comoaía," Zane grinds out as his nostrils flare, and he inhales deeply. He's not angry. I know that for a fact. I take in the sheen of sweat covering his larger than normal body and note how his eyes are not just the gold of his Dragon. But his pupils are so narrow I can barely see them.

Fuck. They are entirely shifted to his Dragon's.

I smirk, knowing I have completely and utterly broken my Dragon's tight control. Zane has always treated me with a soft gentleness. Even when we get crazy in bed, he's always quick to check himself or any of the guys there with us.

It's sweet... super sweet. But I need more, and I know he does too. Our physical relationship has been perfect and fulfilling up to this point, but I know Zander has needs that he refuses to allow me to give him. Dragons are sexual beasts and love a good, hard, and dirty fuck. And for the most part, I know I have given him everything he has wanted. But I haven't missed how he will fist his hands at his sides or clutch the bed frame behind us. Hell... we've broken more beds and couches than I can count... all because he's too worried about hurting me.

My magic far exceeds Zane's in every capacity. So it's not like he could actually hurt me. Thanks to the many training sessions from my father, my magic grew to a level that frankly terrified me. Something that Gabriel refused ever to let happen after his father was finally out of the picture. Little did he know that our problems with my magic were only just beginning. Not

even Dominic or my father could have predicted how strong and deadly my magic would become once I had the freedom and time to use it.

Under the guidance of a powerful Ractori Elementalist, it grew to uncontrollable levels. Apparently, having six mates to feed and stabilize my magic instead of the one that fate typically assigns a Ractori gave me an enormous power boost. After almost barbecuing Zane—who should have been fireproof—and causing actual damage to Dominic with Gabriel's magic, Raphael staged an intervention. They quickly placed me on a strict schedule where I had to practice with my magic and each one of my mates.

After about a year, I eventually became efficient enough to use my magic without scaring myself. However, it was still highly unpredictable and came out whenever it wanted, especially when I was touching one of my mates. One day Dominic suggested trying to tap into our tether and use his magic with my own. It only took one try. I opened up to my Angel's tether, his mate bond, and felt the warmth of his magic course through me like a warm hug. It enveloped my magic and the guys' as well, taming everything and making me strong enough to not only wield my magic whenever I wanted, but with an ease that surpassed even my father's.

I take a small step down on the staircase and grin when a growl bursts from Zane's chest.

"Don't," he snarls, and I tilt my head to the side when I hear the smallest amount of a plea in his words. It looks like Zane is still desperately trying to control his Dragon. I take another step, then giggle when Zane lurches forward, throwing my panties and pictures to the outdoor couch near him, all while keeping his eyes locked on my own as a roar bursts from his lips.

I squeal in surprise as I run down the stairs, narrowly avoiding Zane's talon tipped fingers when he launches himself after me.

"*Oh, shit!*" I whisper, reaching up and grabbing my boobs so I don't accidentally bitch slap myself while trying to run. Honestly, running with big boobs is hard enough as is, but running without support, or worse, naked is really fucking difficult. I can hear Zane right behind me as I race down the steps, watching my feet so that I don't accidentally trip. Unfortunately, I'm not fast enough, and I know I'm only moments away from getting caught. So I do the only thing I can think of. Looking over my shoulder, I wink at my feral Dragon, and instead of rounding the corner of the next flight of stairs, I place my hands on the railings of the step and throw myself into the air.

"Danica!" Zane roars behind me, and I snicker as I wrap my magic

around myself, slowing my descent until I'm slowly floating in the air. It's almost boring how slow I'm going, but I'm only trying to work up my Dragon enough to fuck me the way I want... not give him a heart attack. When my toes brush the soft grass of our impeccably manicured lawn, I release my magic and stroke Zane's mate bond, soothing the small burst of fear I felt when I jumped.

After the falling incident back at one of Dante's evil lairs, Daxton made it his personal mission to ensure that if I ever were put in that situation again, I could help myself. Zane has hated it from the beginning, saying there was absolutely no reason for me to put myself in danger because he would always be there to catch me. Remi had agreed with Zane, while Gabe and Dom sided with Dax. Roar said he wanted whatever I wanted. Ultimately—after they had a heated debate that lasted several hours—I told all of them it was my choice and not theirs.

Later that night, I was out here on the balcony practicing with Dax and Dom. Dom was in his Angel form and would fly right next to me while Dax and Gabe gave out unhelpful tips and pointers. Zane paced back and forth on the lawn, cursing and yanking his hair out every time I jumped, and Remi decided to stay inside. He wanted me to make my own decisions but didn't trust his Wolf not to go crazy. Meanwhile, Roar brought out Kay's pink Bluetooth speaker and blasted music while jumping off the balcony with me while laughing hysterically at Zane's mini meltdown.

"You... I..." Zane stutters, having a hard time with his words with his Dragon this close to the surface. Turning, I beam up at my furious Dragon and blow him a kiss as his body shakes in anger. "*RUN*," he growls in warning, just as he throws himself off the balcony after me. My eyes widen, and I spin on my heels, making a mad dash for the treeline of our yard.

CHAPTER 6

DANICA



*M*y heart skips a beat when the ground shakes with Zane's heavy impact, and I can't tell if I want to laugh or scream as I run as fast as I can. I'm nervous and excited all at the same time, but that only makes me more aroused. As I dart into the trees, I hear Zane release a bellowing roar that echoes all around me, and I shiver with anticipation, loving the chase but relishing the capture.

Darting between trees, I try to ignore the sting of branches on my naked flesh and the sharp stab of the rocks on my bare feet. Unfortunately, I wasn't planning on bringing this chase out into the forested area of our backyard, so I wasn't prepared with shoes. But something about it makes everything feel more... primal, and I love it.

Jumping over a fallen tree, careful not to scratch anything important, I move behind a rather large trunk, hiding as I catch my breath. I inhale deeply, attempting to stay quiet while I strain my ears to hear which way my Dragon is coming from, then frown. Besides the occasional tweet of a bird and rustling of branches, it's strangely quiet. No loud heavy steps or low growls were to be heard.

Peeking around the tree I'm hiding behind, I look in the direction I came, then frown. "Where did he go?" I whisper to myself, already feeling slightly insecure about running butt-ass naked through the woods in broad daylight. I reach up and cup my aching breasts, wishing I had a sports bra or something so they didn't bounce so much when I ran.

I startle when I hear a branch snapping above and look up just as some leaves crunch behind me. Twisting fast, I hold out a hand, calling on my magic to help me, then yelp in surprise when I come face to chest with the

hulking Dragon standing directly behind me. I try to let my magic loose, hoping it can distract Zane enough so I can run, but he's not playing around this time. Zane's mate bond flares, and he simply waves a hand in front of him, dispelling my magic with an ease I didn't know he had, as he growls low in his throat.

"Jesus... Fucking... Christ!" I shout as I try to dive away from his massive hands when he lunges for me. "You're way too freaking big to be that damn quiet, Zander!" I shriek as a hand wraps around my biceps, pulling me back hard into his overly warm chest.

"Comoaía," he warns when I grin up at him, holding my middle finger up in a silent 'fuck you,' then let the tiniest flame ignite at my fingertip as an added bonus before launching a massive ball of water directly in his face, hoping it will break his firm hold on my arm. News flash... it doesn't.

Zane growls, and I let out a surprised shriek when the force of my blast sends him to the ground with me still firmly in his clutches. His big arm wraps around me as we fall, cradling me so that I land on him and not the ground, and I huff in annoyance and scowl up at his now-raging face as water drips off his nose and beard.

"Don't give me that look! I'm supposed to try to get away from you," I point out when he glowers at me, his gold eyes so bright they practically glow as his chest vibrates with a growl under me. I shiver, my nipples so fucking hard they hurt as I smirk at him. He snarls as I push myself up, and I laugh when his eyes zero in on my tits. He lunges forward, trying to capture one of my nipples in his mouth, and my hands dart up, pressing against his forehead and halting him in a second. "Naughty Dragon," I tease, then bring one of my hands down, letting my fingers brush over one tight bud as I rock my wet pussy against his rock-hard erection. "*Mine*," I whisper tauntingly, teasing myself in front of him while keeping myself just out of reach of his lips.

The moment I say that word, I know I've fucked up. Zane's eyes widen, and a snarl builds in his chest just as he flips us, letting my back hit the grassy ground, his hand coming around to catch my head, gentling his dominance enough to ensure my safety.

"Okay, my bad!" I shout between gasping laughs as he glares at me, smoke curling from his nostrils. "Yours, yours... Zane!" I gasp as he flips me to my stomach and yanks my hands above my head with one of his own, pinning my wrists to the ground. Before I can plead my case any further

—*Smack!*—I gasp, then moan as his hand comes down on my right butt cheek.

Smack! Smack!

I writhe under his weight, giggling and kicking as Zane smacks my ass a few times, not enough for it actually to hurt, but enough that my pussy clenches, needing more, and I drop my head in defeat, no longer wanting to fight him.

“Mine!” Zane snarls, and I nod, my overheated body now more sensitive than ever as Zane keeps me pinned, his erection pressed against my ass.

“Yours, Zander. All yours,” I agree, lifting my, no doubt, bright red ass up a few inches, wanting more. Zane growls in approval at my submission and leans down, running the tip of his tongue down the scale-like mate tattoo that runs down my spine. His magic seeps into me as he goes, drawing my orgasm forward without him even coming near my throbbing cunt.

“Zane,” I gasp as arousal builds, my clit aching with need as his magic teases me closer and closer. “Oh fuck! Yes!” Just as my release is about to crash over me, Zane pulls back, taking his magic with him and leaving me on a painful edge, “Wait... what?” I moan, bucking my hips, needing more.

“Naughty.” *Smack.* “Mate.” *Smack.*

Zane growls, spanking me harder than before as he leans back, releasing my wrists as his giant hands grab my hips and yank them up; a thick finger runs down my soaking slit, testing my readiness. Without warning, Zane slams his hard cock deep inside me, and I shout, my eyelids fluttering closed as my body ignites. I brace myself more firmly on my hands and knees, keeping my back arched as Zane draws back, then slams forward again, filling me so completely that I see stars.

My throbbing pussy burns with the stretch of his thick intrusion as he ruts into me, his hands holding me where he wants so that he can take what he needs from my body. “Mine! Fucking all mine!” Zane roars, his hands moving from my hips to my shoulders as he pulls me up onto my knees with my back pressed against his chest. He thrusts again, and my mouth drops open in a silent sob as he strikes the delicious spot within me.

“Harder,” I whisper while cording my magic around us and putting a cushion of air between my hips and Zane’s pelvis. I want Zane to lose control, to fuck me so hard that his Dragon is completely satisfied, but I’m also not going to be reckless and do something that might hurt me or our babies. Zane’s cock is stupidly big... like to the point that I wonder how the

fuck I even get part of him inside me, so I came prepared with an idea.

Zane growls, shaking his head, and I smile while nodding my encouragement. Even his Dragon won't risk hurting me, I know that, so I'm going to have to convince him to trust me enough to let go of his iron-clad control.

"You trust me?" I ask, looking up over my shoulder and into his beautiful gold eyes. Zane grunts and looks down at me like I've just asked the stupidest question ever. "Harder," I demand, making him grit his teeth. He shakes his head, and I narrow my eyes on him.

"Trust me," I whisper, running my finger up my chest and twining them with his, where he clasps my shoulders in his firm grip. Zane hesitates for a moment, but he does as instructed, thrusting just a little harder than before. I feel his pelvis connect with the air cushion between us and tighten my magic's hold around the base of his cock, twisting it just the smallest amount. It makes Zane curse and then moan, his eyes shut as his grip tightens on me.

"Comoaía," he warns, and I grin up at him triumphantly and wiggle my hips down on his long cock just a little more. "*Fuck!*"

"Let your control go, Zane. Please?" I beg, clenching down on him with every internal muscle I can while using my magic on the rest of his length. Zane roars, then bucks his hips up so hard I gasp and let my head roll back to rest on his chest.

God, yes! Just like that.

Zane snarls, wrapping his hands around my hips as I clench a second time. "More!" I demand. I feel his body tighten, his hands moving from my shoulders to my waist as he picks me up, lifting me slowly off his swelling cock, then bringing me down harder than ever on him. "Oh, shit!" My magic holds fast, the cushion between us tightening and releasing with every thrust and pull of Zane's dick, keeping me a safe distance from my now rutting, feral Dragon as my release builds... and builds.

"Oh, God!"

"Fuuuuck!" Zane bellows as he bounces me on his cock, thrusting in and out of me, his hold tight on my body, proving to me who is in charge at this very moment. The muscles of his chest flex while black, glimmering scales erupt up his arms as the air warms to extraordinary heights.

Crap, I really hope we don't start a forest fire. That would be embarrassing and rather hard to explain to the guys.

Needing to ground myself to him, I wrap his magic in my tight hold,

binding us close and letting him feel just how freaking perfect he fucks me. Zane gasps, leans forward, then sinks his sharper than normal teeth into my shoulder. It's not enough to break the skin, just enough to settle his Dragon's urge to mark me.

The mixture of pain and acute pleasure is enough to throw me over the edge, my release coming wave after wave, making my vision go black. I claw at Zane's arms and scream, the sound so primal from my lips that Zane tenses, then roars, fucking me harder. My breath hitches as Zane falls forward, keeping a thick arm banded around my waist as he loses himself in me, his punishing thrusts prolonging my intense orgasm.

The wet sounds of our fucking fill the air around us as my sex flutters around his length, and I gasp for breath as I place my hands on the ground beneath me and weakly press myself back against him.

"Fuck, just like that. Good girl," Zane growls, his voice not as rough as it had been. I'm guessing the hard fuck helped him gain back some control that was lost during our chase. Zane's arm loosens around my waist as I come back to myself. His palm lands between my shoulders, and he presses down gently, asking for my submission but not forcing it. I immediately lower my top half to the ground, keeping my ass raised high while letting Zane take what he needs from me.

"God, Comoaña. You're perfect," he rasps, following me down and covering my back with his chest as he continues to fuck me slow and deep this time. "So fucking perfect for me," he praises as I turn to jelly in his hands. His fingers trail over my hot skin as he runs them down my stomach to my pussy. Spreading my sex wide, his rough finger slowly strokes my swollen clit once, then twice, before he chuckles darkly and pinches the little bud.

Screaming, I buck under his heavy weight, an immediate and painful orgasm tearing through my body, freezing the air in my lungs. Grabbing my magic, I wrap it around Zane, keeping him pressed to my back as I open our mate bond fully and spiral pleasure through him while tightening my hold on the base of his cock, milking it for all its worth. Zane roars, his hands falling to the ground on either side of my head as he thrusts wildly inside me while I force his release on him. I can feel him arch his back above me; his Dragon pulled so fast to the surface that his entire body grows over top of mine.

"Fuck! Comoaña!" he snarls, his nails lengthening into claws that carve into the dark soil under us as his bigger than normal cock fills me with hot

ropes of his cum, making me shout in euphoria.

Gasping, I let my body crumble to the ground, keeping the protective small cushion of air between Zane and me until he groans and lowers his head to my shoulder. His breath comes in heavy pants as he drags his length from my battered sex.

“Talk to me,” he whispers, and I hum and shake my head. Nope, not ready for words yet. My brain is still sex fried. “Comoaña,” he insists, his hands are gentle on my sweat-slicked skin as he softly turns me to my back. His hazel eyes roam my body, checking for injuries. I laugh a little and hold a thumb up in the air to tell him I’m all good, but that doesn't seem to satisfy him.

“That was incredibly—”

“Amazing?” I offer up, my voice hoarse from all the screaming. Zane scowls, shakes his head, then smirks as I grin up at him, still trying to catch my breath.

“Well, yes,” he admits, his eyes soft as he leans over me and dots a kiss on my nose. “But it could have been dangerous,” he scolds, and I roll my eyes.

“No offense, Zane, but you couldn't hurt me. And I would never let either of us get hurt. I promise,” I tease, making him arch a brow as he kisses down my body, stopping at my red, swollen sex. Spreading my lower lips, he drags a finger through our mixed arousal, growling in approval before he sinks his finger deep, pushing every drop of his cum back inside me. I groan, then smile, knowing his possessive need to get me pregnant is no longer needed. Sitting up on my elbows, I look down my body with nervous anticipation fluttering in my belly.

“Zane,” I start, then stop when I realize Zane’s no longer fingering my well-used pussy, but staring at my belly in shock.

Oh, shit. Can he sense the babies? I watch as Zane freezes, his breath hitched as he stares.

“Danica!” he suddenly shouts, yanking his fingers from my pussy as he looks at my stomach and then up at me in shock. I give him a small smile and then bite my lips as tears prick at my eyes.

“Surprise,” I whisper, making Zane inhale sharply before looking back down at my stomach. Emotion floods me as my big Dragon slowly lifts a trembling hand from the ground and ever so gently places it just under my belly button.

“You’re... you’re...” he stammers, his eyes darting from my lower stomach to my eyes and back like a cartoon character’s, before he releases a shuddering sigh and lowers his forehead to my belly.

“Pregnant,” I confirm, tears leaking from the corners of my eyes as Zane shakes above me. I let my hand comb through his hair, cradling him close as he tries to get his emotions under control. Our mate bond is wild with love, shock, and so much joy that my heart feels like it's going to burst. Zane suddenly looks up at me through glassy eyes, beaming with joy, before he frowns, his eyes flashing gold as he looks down at me again.

“Holy shit,” he rasps, and I giggle, guessing he realized there is an extra surprise for him there. “*Holy shit!*” he shouts this time, jumping to his feet so fast that I can’t contain my laughter.

“Oh, god, I should have filmed this,” I tease as Zane stares at me opened mouthed before swallowing. He blinks, then shakes his head, his mouth moving like he’s trying to say something, but he can’t find the words.

He looks at me, then to my belly and holds two fingers in the air, mouthing the word ‘two?’ I nod again and hold up two fingers, mirroring him.

“Two,” I confirm. Suddenly he nods to himself as his eyes flash gold, and I know his Dragon is urging him to do something, and he’s in complete agreement. “Zane?” I ask when he suddenly swoops down and scoops me up into his arms. “What are you doing?” I ask, letting my hands trail through his wild hair, soothing some strands away from his face.

“I have to take care of you,” he says in a panic as he quickens his steps, his eyes flashing from gold to hazel several times as he practically runs back home. “I just fucked you on the ground like a damn animal!”

“You always take care of me,” I whisper, dotting a kiss on his neck. “And it was fucking amazing.” Zane smirks in agreement, then frowns.

“You need water... and vitamins and a bath and... *fuck...* I need those pregnancy books Gabe bought,” he mutters more to himself than me, making me grin and rest my head on his shoulder. I knew he was going to Dragon out on me for a bit when he found out, and I’m more than happy to let him soothe the need to provide for his mate and children.

Zane barrels into the house and takes the steps two at a time before storming into his room and kicking the door shut. He eyes his amazing bed and scowls. “I need a bigger bed... No, a whole new one,” he grumbles. “And pillows and shit... *fuck...*” he mutters, laying me down on his bed like

I'm made of glass. "Stay," he says sternly as he turns to leave and get everything he thinks I might need. But he stops in his tracks and spins back toward me, yanking me back up in his arms while looking into my eyes.

"I love you," he rasps, cradling my cheek in one of his hands before giving me the sweetest kiss. Letting my fingers tangle into his long brown hair, I kiss him back with everything I have before he pulls back, keeping our foreheads together while staring at me like I'm his entire world. "Comoaía, I love you so fucking much."

"I love you, Zander," I whisper back, making him release a shuddering sigh of contentment.

"We're having a baby," he says, then laughs as he twirls me in the air.

"We are having *two* babies," I correct, making him laugh even more as he falls on his bed with me wrapped protectively in his arms.

"Even better," he murmurs, kissing me until I'm breathless all over again.

CHAPTER 7

REMINGTON



Sighing, I open the door, relieved to finally be home after two days away. I missed Dani-Girl and the boys, and I typically try not to stay away for so long. Unfortunately, Andrew needed some help with a few of the twelve-year-old boys who had just come into their Wolf form. Then my brother, Sterling, asked to talk to me about possibly coming back to the pack once he takes over for our father. I was taken by surprise at his request and didn't give him an answer, promising to reach out by the end of the week once I thought about it.

Sterling and I got along really well as kids. We are close in age, and his mother, Laura, always liked me over our other siblings from our father's other wives. Honestly, Sterling's mom has more kindness in her little finger than our father and my mother combined, and she always had my back. She was also the only champion Dani had in my family. Unfortunately, Laura was a third wife and had little to no power in our family dynamic.

Shutting the door behind me, I can feel my brows furrow and a frown takes over at how quiet it is. Typically, when I come home, it's to Zane and Roar laughing in the kitchen while the big guy makes dinner while Xav and Monty run around like wild animals. But the odd stillness in the house tells me something is wrong.

My Wolf perks up as fear slowly creeps in. I grab for Dani's mate bond, finding it quiet but thrumming strongly in my chest, and sigh in relief. She must have her mental shields up, something she does on the regular now since she was getting anxious with six mates constantly feeding her their emotions. She'll open up to whoever is in the room with her, and when we are all together as a family, but it quickly overwhelms her. Thankfully, Dax

and Dom are there as a buffer and can ease some of our emotions when she's with us.

Tilting my head to the side, I pick up hushed voices coming from the second floor of the house and immediately stride over to the stairs. Dani may be safe, but there is something odd going on, and my Wolf won't settle until I know my sons and mate are safe.

"I don't want to. He almost tore my head off when I tried to go in there last night. You do it," I hear Dominic snap as I take the stairs two at a time, then pause at the top when I see Gabe, Dax, Dom, and Roar all standing outside Zane's bedroom door.

"No. The daft Dragon will take my presence as a threat and probably barbeque my ass. I think Dax should go in," Gabriel mutters, his cold gray eyes fixed on the door in front of him with his hands fisted tightly at his side. He's probably freaking out at not being in control of whatever situation is going on and is having a mental freak out.

Weird ass Reaper.

"What? Why me?" Dax grumbles, spinning to look at Gabe, his eyes narrowing behind his glasses. I hold in a snort of amusement when I see Daxton's hair standing at odd angles on top of his head, making it look like he stuck a finger in an outlet and electrocuted himself.

"You can talk to his Dragon and convince him to give her back to us," Dom points out as he nods, agreeing with Gabe's idea for Dax to go into the room.

"There is no convincing that fire lizard to do anything in this situation. Why didn't you warn me? I could have set up measures of precaution before Danica told him! Now we are never getting her back," Dax says, tossing his hands in the air as he paces next to the door, throwing the guys dirty looks when they sigh in annoyance.

"Well... not until the baby is born, that is," Roar points out, and my eyebrows shoot up, excitement rolling through me at his words.

"Baby?" I ask, making Gabe shoot me a surprised look as Dax jumps and turns toward me, his hand pressed to his chest like I might have given him a heart attack.

"When did you get here?" Dom asks, smiling at me and waving me over. I grin back and walk over to them, slapping Gabe on the shoulder, which earns me a soul-withering glare while nodding at Dom and Dax. Roar grins and bounces up on his toes before launching himself at me in a big, rather

uncomfortable hug.

“Just got here. What's going on?” I grunt as Roar starts jumping with me still wrapped in a hug, jostling me all over the place.

“Dani is having a baby, dude! We are going to be dads again!” he crows, squeezing me so damn hard I think he might pop my head right off my shoulders.

“Roran, release Remi before he passes out,” Gabriel chides.

“Babies,” Dom corrects as he leans closer to Zane’s door like he’s trying to hear what's happening there. All four of us stare at the Angel momentarily before Dax finally breaks the silence.

“Pardon? Did you just say babies?” he asks, looking slightly bewildered. Dom nods, not bothering to grace us with another moment of his time as his fingers spark with gold.

“Fuck,” Gabe snaps, running his hands through his hair and looking the opposite of happy just as Roar cheers and fist bumps the air.

“Two babies, man! Why are you upset? This is what our girl has been wanting!” the Gargoyle asks when Gabe curses and starts to pace again.

“She’s too tiny! Is it safe for her to have twins? And they are Dragon babies! Aren’t they bigger than an average baby?” Gabe asks in a panic, shadows slowly starting to circle his feet. Roar's happy smile fades into a frown and my heart drops.

Shit! I hadn't thought of that.

“Fuck. It's Zane's kids. Of course, they are going to be huge!” Roar grumbles, paling slightly.

“She seems to be okay, but she's got her shields up. Dammit, why is she so damn strong? I can't keep a proper eye on her when she's this strong,” Dom complains, crossing his arms over his chest and pouting like a toddler.

“There are bigger issues at hand here, Carter,” Gabe hisses angrily, his eyes glowing silver as fear filters over his normally expressionless face. I learned over the years that only two things can get past the cold facade that Gabriel keeps up at all times. One of them is his little sister, Fina, who he would and has gone to war over. The other is our mate, Dani.

I saw what Gabe did to keep his sister safe, and I honestly don't want to know the lengths he will go to if Danica were ever in danger. I’m guessing he would raze the entire world to keep her safe. Daxton nods at my side, letting me know he’s privy to my inner thoughts, and agrees with them.

Dom scoffs and pulls his ear away from the door, shooting us all

disapproving looks. “You all underestimate our wife even after all these years,” he tsks and shakes his head. “Tell me... what does it take for a Dragon shifter to be born?” he asks, moving his attention to Roar.

“Uuh... A Dragon blowing his load?” the Gargoyle responds rather unhelpfully, making Dom’s disapproving look turn into one of amusement.

“Well... yes, I suppose that would be the first thing needed,” he agrees with a laugh.

“A strong enough Fae to carry the baby,” Dax mutters, his eyes going slightly unfocused before he takes a deep breath and nods. “Yeah, okay. I get it,” he whispers, blushing a little like he's embarrassed by his little freak-out.

“Well, I don’t. Care to share with the class?” I drawl, my Wolf still nervous as fuck at the idea of Dani having to carry and birth two powerful and large Dragon babies.

“There is a reason Dragon shifters are so rare. First off, the female birth rate to male birth rate is extremely low, and secondly, a Dragon needs a strong enough Fae to conceive a baby Dragon,” Dom explains, and I nod, still looking at him while I try to piece together what he’s not saying.

“Danica would only be pregnant with a Dragon shifter if she was strong enough to physically and magically support it. Otherwise, the baby would have been born a Ractori like Montag,” Dax explains.

“So... she's going to be okay, then?” Roar asks nervously, still looking like he might be sick as he wrings his hands together. Gabe also looks unconvinced as he glares at us all, and I’m guessing he won't chill out until Dani gives birth and she and the babies are all okay. I make a mental note to avoid him as much as possible.

“She’s going to be more than fine. Not only did she conceive a Dragon shifter, she carries two of them. Her body and magic will keep her and those babies safe until we can hold them in our arms,” Dom reassures Roar before looking at Gabe and Dax. “So, who’s going in there?”

“I already told you I can’t. Zane’s Dragon sees me as a threat to his Alpha position. It respects me enough to hold the head of the household, but that means I’m also competition. If I go in there and steal his pregnant mate from his nest that he’s prepared for her, I’ll be signing my own death certificate.” Gabe and Dom look at Dax, who winces and shrugs.

“Why don’t we give him another day or two and try to get her then? Odds are his Dragon will calm down enough for me to talk to him because right now, there is no communicating with him. He’s gone full caveman on us and

can't use more than two syllables at a time.”

“Cavedragon,” Roar corrects, stepping around Dom to press his ear against the door.

“What?” I ask in confusion.

“Cavedragon,” Roar repeats and grins. “Because that beast in there is not a man right now. He’s full-blown Dragon.”

“Remi?” Dom asks, shifting the attention away from Roar to where I stand behind them all.

“Yeah... No. I'm an Alpha shifter, Dom. Take what Gabe said would happen to him and times it by one hundred.”

“Well, what now? Because I refuse to stay away from my tether any longer than I already have, and the boys will miss her when they get back from Kay’s house. Xavier already suspects something is going on since Dax brought him there instead of the house, and Montag won’t be far behind.”

An idea sparks, and I grin, looking around Dom to find Roar. He’s not an Alpha shifter, and he’s strong enough to withstand an angry Dragon. “How about we send Roar in to...” I trail off when I don’t see the Gargoyle behind Dom. Instead, I find an open door, and my eyes widen just as a dangerous growl echoes into the hallway.

“Shit!” Gabe breathes as we rush for the door and run into Zane's bedroom. All five of us pull up short at the scene before us. Zane is wrapped possessively around a sleeping Dani, who is strewn over his massive chest, using it like a bed as she snores softly, naked as the day she was born. Meanwhile, Roran is trying and failing to crawl into the giant nest of pillows and blankets Zane has made on top of the enormous bed that sits in the center of his dimly lit room.

“No! Bad Dragon! Give me my Gorgeous back,” Roar whisper yells, reaching over the arm Zane has outstretched and popping him on the nose like a bad puppy. Zane’s eyes flash to a dangerous gold, making Gabe sigh in frustration and step toward the bed. Immediately Zane’s eyes leave Roar and settle on Gabe as another deep rumble sounds from his chest.

“Zander,” Gabe says cautiously, holding his hands up like he’s surrendering. “We just need to check on Dani and make sure she's okay, alright? All of our mate bonds are chafing a little, and it won’t stop until we are near her. You understand that, right?”

Another growl is Zane's only response, and I take a moment to really take in the big guy's appearance. He’s fully naked, with one arm banded around

Dani's tiny waist and the other still outstretched between him and Roar. But it's his jacked physical appearance that has me whistling low under my breath. The guy looks like he's some kind of bodybuilder on steroids. His freaking muscles have muscles, and the dangerous glint of fire in his eyes makes my Wolf bristle.

Jesus, I've seen Zane Hulk out before, but never like this. It must be nature's way of keeping baby Dragons safe or something. I look over at Dax, who grimaces as he takes in Zane's appearance. He looks pale and a little sweaty, which I'm going to take as a bad sign. If Dax is worried, we are in some deep shit here.

"His Dragon got mad and is mentally blocking me. He doesn't want to see reason," Daxton's voice echoes into my mind, and Dom curses, letting me know I'm not the only one the telepath is mentally conversing with. Zane's arm tightens around Dani, and she grumbles something in her sleep. Her body slightly shifts in Zane's arms, making the fierce expression the Dragon is wearing soften as he stares lovingly down at her. My Wolf takes note of his behavior, and I sigh in relief. If Zane's Dragon is comfortable enough to take his eyes off us while we are in the room with his mate and unborn children, then he doesn't truly feel threatened by us.

"Zane," I whisper cautiously, raising my hands slowly to show the Dragon I mean him no harm as I take a step forward. Zane's head snaps back up, his smile twisting into a threatening snarl when he sees me drawing near. Alpha dominance fills the air until my Wolf snarls and snaps with the need to shift, but I quickly press him back down, reminding him who Zane is to us, even if he's acting like a major dick right now.

I can probably talk him down and get him to let Roar into the nest for tonight. It would be a good first step toward getting Dani out of this room. Dax had texted me last night to tell me that Ryland was back in town for a bit. If we can get Zane separated from Dani for long enough, maybe Ry could take Zane out flying to release some of this Dragon protectiveness he has going on right now. Daxton's eyes flash away from Zane toward me, and he gives me a slight dip of the head, telling me he agrees with my plan. Zane growls again, his shoulders tensing as I take another step forward, and I swallow nervously.

WHACK!

My eyes practically pop out of my head when Roar thumps Zane over the head while shaking his finger in the Dragon's face, scolding him for his

behavior before I can utter a word. “You knock it off right now. Remi is your best friend, and Zane’s going to be SO pissed at you if you do anything to him or anyone else in this room. We are your family, you possessive lizard! Your flight! So stop this bullshit attitude right now, or we are going to have issues,” Roar snaps at Zane, who has turned smoldering, slitted golden eyes on him, a look of shock filtering over his expression as his mouth drops open like he’s not sure what just happened.

I can hear Gabe swallow in the suddenly silent room, and Daxton lets out a small gasp in shock just as Dom doubles over with laughter. Zane snarls and looks away from Roar toward the Angel, who wipes at tears as he laughs at his expense.

“That’s one way to knock some sense into him,” Dom gasps between laughs, his white eyes sparkling with golden hues as he shakes his head. Roar smirks in victory and dives into Zane’s nest, taking advantage of the Dragon’s distractions to snuggle into one side while hooking his arm around Dani’s waist, gently tugging her to rest between them. Zane growls and looks to his side as Dani is shifted, but surprisingly doesn’t try to shove Roar out of his nest. Instead, his gold eyes move to where Roar gently places his hand on Dani’s flat stomach and presses a kiss behind her ear before smiling up at him.

“Don’t worry, man. I’ll help keep all three of them safe. Promise,” he whispers, his one hand tracing small circles on Dani’s belly while he presses another kiss to her neck. My heart nearly melts as Zane’s eyes slowly darken, shifting from bright gold to a soft hazel before he moves his hand and wraps Dani and Roar up in a massive hug as his shoulders shake, and I grin, relaxing as Zane’s Alpha presence in the room slowly diminishes.

Coughing, I try to clear the lump that forms in my throat as Dax puffs out his cheeks, his eyes wide with surprise as he watches Zane and Roar snuggle Dani, who lets out a snore every few seconds. Zane must have run her ragged for her to sleep through all that.

“Well, that could have gone worse,” Dax whispers out loud, shaking his head while still looking slightly stressed out.

“Time to get Ry,” I whisper back with a nod, the four of us standing next to the bed, not looking at each other but at the cuddle pile I know we all wish we could join.

“I’ll talk with him tonight. He asked for a private meeting, so it will be a good time to ask him to come tame the beast,” Gabe murmurs, his normally

cold expression soft as he stares at Danica. “How long do you think it will take to get them separated... without causing any pain for Zander?” Gabe asks, his soft expression morphing into one of unease as he rubs the back of his neck, pulling his attention to the purple-eyed girl who has us all under her spell.

“Another twenty-four hours... maybe forty-eight,” Dax shrugs, looking equally frustrated. I don’t have to read their minds to know they need to feel Danica in their arms. There is one thing I have realized after living with these men for the last ten years, Dax and especially Gabe feel the chafe of their mate bond almost as badly as Zane and I do. Roar seems to have his under control, probably because he’s comfortable joining Danica whenever he needs to, whereas Dax and Gabe tend to let her have separate, alone time with each of us. Then there is Dom, who will simply disappear with her overnight whenever he needs a private moment with her.

Gabe curses and paces in front of Zane's bed just as the big guy releases a loud snore that startles Roar enough to jump in fright. The Gargoyle slowly looks up and glares at the Dragon before rolling his eyes and getting comfortable again.

“Come on,” Dom whispers, moving to the door and ushering the four of us out of Zane's room. “Let's allow Roar to work his magic and give Zane a moment of peace with his mate.”

CHAPTER 8

SERAFINA



I move slowly through the stark white walls of the hospital, trying to look like I'm a visitor who is supposed to be here even though I'm not. If Gabriel finds out I snuck away from Kayla's so I can talk to Teos, he'll lose his shit. My brother is already madder than I have ever seen him after the stunt I pulled a couple of days ago with Brad and the other football dickwads. While I don't want to make it worse, I had to see Teos and make sure he's really alright. Gabe said to text him with my apology, but that felt like kicking the guy while he was already down. Teos probably doesn't want to see me after what I did, but I need to apologize to him in person and let him know I plan on keeping my distance.

That thought is like a punch to the gut, but there is no other way around it. I've agonized over what to do the last few days, going back and forth on what was best, and ultimately decided it is too dangerous for me to be in Teos' life. I will only ever hurt him... I will only ever be a dark blemish on his perfectly bright life.

A wave of self-loathing rushes over me as that deep, dark voice that lingers in my mind whispers *his* cruel words.

"YOU ARE A BURDEN, A WORTHLESS GIRL WHO FATE DECIDED TO PUNISH ME WITH." I shiver as I curl up in the corner Father has backed me into. "Do you really think your brother wants to talk to you? You're the reason he doesn't come home!" I feel the hot sting of his slap as my vision swims.

"Please," I try to beg, not sure why Father is mad this time but desperate

to fix it. I would do anything just to have him look at me the way he does Gabriel. "I'll be good. I'm sorry," I whisper, curling in on myself even more, as his hand darts forward and curls around my neck, making me look into those cold, silver eyes.

At least he doesn't have his belt out this time.

"You're too much of a disappointment. You will always be worthless... nothing... a weak girl forever haunting me and your brother. All you will ever do is bring pain to our family. A curse." Another blow lands, and I cry out in pain.

"CODE BLUE," A ROBOTIC VOICE ANNOUNCES OVER THE INTERCOM, DRAWING me from the memory as I continue walking, never faltering in my step. I shove away my father's cruel voice and brush my long, silky black hair over my shoulder as I continue down the hall, ignoring the medical staff who rush to a room three doors down from where I'm at. Dante was correct, unfortunately. I thought he was lying as a child, but after what happened to Madison and my brother Atlas because of me, I realized that he had been right along.

So I was careful. I never got too close to someone, never let them in... I had to keep everyone I love safe. And it worked until I met Ryland. He shattered every wall I threw up, weaseled his way into my heart, then crushed it with a single word before leaving without looking back.

No... that's a lie. He did come back for Christmas to surprise everyone... but after I kissed him, he ran. I don't think Zane or Dani know he was even at the house that morning. And he ran before anyone knew he was there. A familiar ache blossoms in my chest, and I quickly smother it, refusing to let the pitiful emotion take control.

After Ry left, I tried to move on. I protected myself and reinforced those walls, ignoring the dark voice that plagued my dreams. Even from the grave, my father still found a way to hurt me. But then Teos came into my life. He lit fire to every obstacle I put between us, and even though I refused to let him in... I still managed to hurt him.

I shiver as I remember how soft and warm his lips felt pressed against mine. The way his light shimmered around me, lifting my darkness just enough to let me breathe freely for the first time in over a year. I wanted to melt into him, allow him to take my pain, and crush it with his blinding light

and happy smile.

Then I remembered who I was... what I was.

In a moment, our perfect kiss morphed into a dark, cold intimacy that soft, sweet Teos had no business being a part of. My magic sprang from me in excitement, winding around him like a viper on its prey, cording and tightening as his brown eyes widened in horror, and I screamed. Thankfully Dominic was there and had been able to save his life, but Teos is still in this damn hospital. He was hurt by me... because of me.

“Worthless. Nothing. A Curse.”

Annoyed with my pathetic mindset, I push the voice away for a second time, determined to be stronger as I press the fingertip of my thumb to the edge of the razor-sharp blade I keep in my pocket at all times. The feeling of the cold metal biting into my skin just the smallest amount makes me shiver as a burst of pain rushes up from my hand.

Death is calm... Death is peace. Life is pain.

As long as I feel pain, I know I'm alive. That my magic hasn't taken over and destroyed what's left of my soul. Gabriel says he doesn't want me to reap, so I will never have to feel the horrifying rush that death brings a Reaper. According to him, once I start, I'll never stop and will need an anchor to keep me from killing. What my brother doesn't know is that I have reaped a soul. Actually... I've reaped twenty-three souls, to be exact. It scared me so much that I shoved down the magic that had flooded my tiny seven-year-old body and refused to believe what I had done. I didn't talk for over a year, fearing that the family I had left would find out about the monster inside me and hate me for it.

After a few years, I think I actually convinced myself I didn't cause the deaths of all those men who attacked Madison's house. But then one night, just after my sixteenth birthday, the cold feeling that I buried so deep inside of me burst from its confines, angrier than ever and ready for revenge.

I look down at the wisps of black magic that curl at the fingertips of the hand not in my pocket and let it free just enough to find Teos. I can feel the hurt, weak souls in the building begging for freedom from their earthly confines, and my fingers itch to relieve them of their physical shackles. Their deaths sing to me like a siren's song, and I have to clench my fists at my sides in order to ignore it. Finally, I pinpoint Teos' golden light, his soul so bright it lights up the entire wing that he's staying in, and I let a rare smile cross my lips.

Why does he have to be so damn perfect? This would be much easier if he were a dick like Ryland. Strengthening my resolve, I move faster, passing several nurses until I make it to Teos' door, which is cracked open the smallest amount. I peek inside, making sure Headmistress Ramadan isn't inside, before pressing my fingertips to the door and silently slipping into the small room, making sure the door clicks softly shut behind me.

Teos' eyes spring open when the latch clicks, and he gives me a sleepy grin that almost brings me to my knees. His wavy black hair is sleep ruffled, and his pillowy soft lips look dry and a little chapped, but that doesn't diminish the sparkle of happiness that is ever present in his beautiful eyes as he looks at me.

The entire time it took me to get here, I had stressed about Teos' reaction to seeing me again. I mean, the last time we were together, he kissed me, and my magic tried to kill him. What I hadn't prepared for was his happy smile.

My heart sinks, not knowing what to do next. I was relying on his anger! I need his hate to strengthen me through this. Those are feelings I can handle... What I can't handle is the amount of adoration that still shines in Teos Ramadan's eyes, knowing that I'm about to diminish it.

"Hey," I whisper, keeping my back pressed solidly against the door, wanting to keep my distance just in case he's scared of me.

"Hey," he rasps back, then moves his right hand, which has an IV in it, up off the bed and crooks a finger at me, beckoning me over to his bedside. I shake my head, pressing my magic into the tiny mental box I erected the night of Madison's death, and take a deep breath, knowing I can't get too close. I have to keep him safe.

"Bella," he chides, and I glare at him, hating his nickname for me now that I almost killed him. *Belladonna*. Or what he likes to call me, Bella... his sweet, beautiful, deadly flower. It was all a joke, something I actually liked until this moment. Now it is all too real.

Teos' bright smile dims a little as he watches me, and I note the dark circles under his eyes. He looks exhausted. His normally dark golden skin is unusually pale, and his eyes look slightly unfocused as he struggles to press himself up on his pillows, his lips pulling into a frown when he looks at my hands. Cursing, I move my shaking hands behind my back, not wanting him to see how upset I am at seeing him like this.

I did this to him. Teos almost died.

"I told you not to call me that," I whisper, my voice cracking with

emotion and, to my horror, wetness pools in my eyes.

“Bella, please,” he whispers as he tries and fails to sit up in the bed. “Don’t cry. It’s going to be okay,” he soothes, and I release a dry, brittle laugh, hating myself even more when I realize Teos is comforting me when it should be the other way around.

“I killed you, Teos,” I rasp and shake my head again, trying to throw off the unwanted emotions that keep trying to climb up my throat and threaten to choke me. “Nothing about that is okay.”

“You didn’t kill me, Bella,” he says sternly, his black brows furrowing as he shakes his head and sighs, his hand still outstretched. “Now, are you going to come here, or are you really going to make me get my pathetic ass out of this bed?” I want to scoff at his words as I watch him closely. He can’t even prop himself up. There is no way he’s getting out of that hospital bed anytime soon.

“Your heart stopped,” I whisper, my voice flat and cold, my eyes on his, watching every shift of his emotions as he processes my words. Surprise is first, then confusion, then finally anger. I swallow and let my eyes fall shut, dread filling me as I wait for his angry words.

“Is that why you are being so damn stubborn? I’m not dead, Bella! So get your ass over here!” Teos snaps, making me physically jump in surprise as I open my eyes, finding his blazing with anger.

Confusion rolls over me as I take him in. He’s angry, just like I thought he would be. However, I think he’s more upset that I’m not next to him than the fact that I tried to reap his soul. Teos cringes when he sees me jump and runs a hand over his face.

“Shit, sorry. I didn’t mean to snap... it’s just... I worked so damn hard to get you to trust me a little bit, and it looks like that’s all gone to shit now,” he grumbles into his hands before he looks back up at me. “Could you please come over here? I could use a hug,” he whispers, sounding so much smaller than the six-foot-two eighteen-year-old that he is.

I immediately take a step forward, then pause, looking at his hopeful expression with guilt and fear. I will only hurt him. What happens the next time we are together and Dominic isn’t there? Teos is a Phoenix shifter, but they aren’t immortal until they turn twenty-one. I could snuff out his beautiful light if I continued being his friend, and I refuse to let that happen.

“Bella?” he whispers when I don’t continue to his bedside.

“Teos, I’m sorry. I’m so sorry for what happened,” I whisper, hating the

coldness and lack of emotion in my voice, but knowing it's necessary for what I'm about to do. "I want you to know that I appreciate your friendship and your help this year in school."

"Don't," he warns, but I ignore him.

"But we can no longer be friends," I finish, feeling something crack in my chest when he flinches back, acting as if my words hit with a physical blow. I take in his hurt expression, memorizing every beautiful, desperate feature as he watches me with glassy eyes. Everything from Teos' full pink lips to his bronze skin and black hair, the way his eyes have tiny wrinkles at the side from smiling so much. Then I lock it in a box with everything good I can remember and force all the emotion that wants to spill out of me in an ugly wave back down.

This is for Teos' own good! For mine as well. I'm a danger to everyone around me, and I refuse to let the only boy who hasn't made me feel like a burden die by my hands.

"Friends? Is that what you think we are, Bella? Something as small and insignificant as a friend?" he snaps, his warm voice hardening to stone as he glares daggers at me.

I press my lips together, refusing to answer him because, no, I don't think of him as only a friend. This boy saved me when I plummeted to my lowest. After everything Ryland did, I no longer cared about living. I know that sounds silly, like some teenage girl drama. But Ryland had been my anchor. Ry saved me from the darkness that lingered in my mind from the moment it appeared that night in Madison's house. Then left me broken and in tatters, unsure how to make the pain stop. I was ready to let the darkness win just to make the voices stop.

The need to kill... to reap a soul and consume it was growing too strong with Ry no longer by my side. Then Teos came into my life, taking the shadows and banishing them to the recesses of my mind. I let my guard down. I let him make me believe I was a normal girl and that I could have a perfect, normal boy like him. And then, like the curse I am, I almost caused his death.

"Teos—" I say, coolly, looking into his beautiful eyes and hating the anger and darkness I see within them.

"No, Bella. You listen to me," he cuts me off, throwing back the thin blanket that covers his legs while trying to sit up. I glare at him, refusing to back down as he attempts to pull his weak legs from the bed and sit on the

edge of the thin mattress, all while shooting me dirty looks. “You can say there is nothing between us. You can say that this is for my own good, but do you want to know what I think?” he asks, releasing a cold, humorless laugh.

I narrow my eyes on the boy in front of me and brace myself for his words, knowing they will hurt, but refusing to let them sway my decision. Control. I need to be in control of all my emotions at all times. That's what Gabe said. Dax has been trying to help, showing me some breathing exercises to do if I start to feel overwhelmed, and I keep them in mind, knowing I'm going to need all the help I can get for this conversation.

“Bella, I think you are scared. I think I finally broke through those sky-high walls you've built around your heart, and it terrifies you. I make you feel, Bella! And for that, you will ruin us before we can even begin.” Anger boils in my chest instead of hurt as I glare at Teos, his words striking a little too close to the truth for comfort.

I clench my jaw so fucking hard as he continues his rant that I'm worried I might crack a tooth. “And you know what?” he asks, trying to push himself to his feet so he can face me as I tear apart the relationship I allowed him to build over the last few months. “You can go ahead and rebuild those walls. You can block me out... Hell, you'll block everyone from knowing you.”

I flinch at that because, yeah, that was my plan. How can I hurt anyone if I don't let anyone in?

“But all that will do is leave you alone, Bella. With no one who cares about you, no one to talk to... no one to love,” he says with a gasp as his knees give out, and he flops back on the bed under him.

Cursing, he punches the mattress in frustration, his face bright red with anger as I watch him with cold detachment. If only he would understand. I've tried to tell him on many occasions why we can't be anything more than friends. I told him he would only get hurt, and now look at where he is! He looks up at me, takes in my expression, and then shakes his head.

“Nothing I say is going to change your mind... is it?” he asks as the anger melts out of his warm brown eyes, replaced by something that makes my breath hitch. *Pain*. I stay silent, not wanting to add to the pain I have caused, but not willing to lie to him either. After a moment, Teos releases a cold laugh and looks away from me. “Figured as much.”

“Teos—” I start to say when he doesn't look back at me.

“Go,” he rasps out, cutting off the pitiful apology I was going to offer up.

“I—”

“Leave, Serafina. Please,” Teos whispers brokenly, his hands shaking in front of him as he glares down at the white bedding.

Serafina... not Bella.

A sharp pain stabs into my chest, and I inhale sharply. Wow, that hurt more than I thought it would, but I nod, knowing I have to respect his wishes. This is what I wanted, right? A clean break? It will work better if Teos is mad at me... hates me.

Opening the door behind me, I cast one last look over my shoulder at the boy I wish I was strong enough to keep before shutting it firmly behind me. Finally letting the wave of darkness I had been holding at bay consume me.

CHAPTER 9

GABRIEL



I clasp my hands in front of me, keeping my elbows propped on my desk as I eye Ryland. I have to give the kid props. He sure has a large set of balls to be looking at me in the eyes after what he just said to me. I can't tell if I'm more impressed at his total lack of fear of me or that he has such a well-thought-out plan.

"You... kissed my sister," I drawl as my silver magic curls around my fingertips. Ryland's brown eyes move to my hands, taking note of the deadly magic before looking back at me as he nods.

Hmm, he's not even sweating. I may just have to kill the kid on principle. Though I am rather fond of him, plus Zane and Dani would most definitely be upset if I killed him. And I suppose Serafina, too. I sigh in frustration, leaning back in my chair as I wait for his answer.

"Yes... last year," he says in a calm voice, and I narrow my eyes. That doesn't seem right. It was about a year ago that Ryland started putting distance between himself and Fina.

Zane had all but confirmed Ryland's Dragon had selected Serafina as his mate, and we were both ready to stage an intervention to keep the two of them separated until Fina was old enough for a serious relationship. However, the very next day, Ryland stopped lingering around my sister. He would stay out late with friends, come home to sleep, and leave for work early so that he wouldn't cross paths with her. I mean... he took it as far as upsetting Danica by not attending Sunday family dinners.

That part was extremely confusing for me. I was exceptionally happy that the young Dragon was staying away from Fina, but seeing Danica upset gave me murderous thoughts... It really was a lose-lose situation for the poor boy,

which is why I'm attempting to cut him some slack right now.

I stay silent, watching Ryland as he sits in front of me, his hands loosely clasped on his lap as he waits for my next words. Damn... Could he at least pretend to be scared of me? Perhaps I'm losing my edge? I may need to rectify that situation here soon. There are a handful of council representatives that I'm pretty sure know the locations of Dante's few remaining warehouses that I still haven't found. The thought of reaping their pathetic souls brings a cruel smile to my lips, and finally, Ryland has the decency to look slightly nervous as he shifts the smallest amount in his chair and clears his throat.

"I want the truth, Ryland. And please do not lie to me. I will know. Did you kiss Fina, or did my sister kiss you?" I ask, knowing the answer the moment Ryland's eyes widen just the smallest amount.

"What is the difference? We kissed. It happened," he grinds out, the calm of his voice suddenly gone as his Dragon tries to take over. Well, fuck... now Ryland's protecting her, which shouldn't be a surprise if she is his mate. However, I'm going to have to talk to Fina about this. She can't be throwing herself at boys several years older than herself when she is still a minor and under my care.

For Hell's sake, Ryland is six years older than she is!

"Hmm," is all I say as I lean forward again. "And you want me to send you away... to not let you back in my house because of this?" I ask, keeping my voice as calm as possible even though I want to reach over and throttle the boy. Ryland's brows furrow, and I smirk. "That is what you're hoping for, right? That way, Fina can hate me instead of you?"

"I... No. She wouldn't hate you," Ryland grunts out, leaning back in his chair while looking at his hands, a frown tugging on his lips. The confident swagger he was rocking up to this point drains away and leaves behind the scared little boy I first met over a decade ago.

"Then explain this to me, Ryland. Because my relationship with my sister is already on rocky ground, and I refuse to damage it any further without a good reason." Ryland curses and stands up, pacing in front of my desk as I watch, half in amusement, half in a feral rage. The urge to reach out and bury my hand in his chest and crush his beating heart is strong. Thankfully, I love this annoying, frustrating Dragon, so I smother the response and wait for him to speak.

I pass the time, counting all the new tattoos he's collected during his year away, and frown as I notice how fucking big this kid's gotten. He has to be

Zane's height and equally as broad... if not more so. When the hell did that happen?

"I can't stay away from her," Ry finally admits in a strained voice. "I'm fucking trying, Gabe! She's still a kid, and I have no plans to do anything, but my Dragon doesn't see her that way anymore. It started last year. She was *only* my friend until last year, I swear! But then she started to look different. She held my hand a lot more, snuggled in closer than normal, and... *fuck!*" Ryland runs both hands through his jet-black hair as his eyes flash gold. "She got those fucking curves and..."

I hold my hand out in front of me, closing my eyes as red fills my vision.

"If you want your soul to remain in your body, you will never speak of my sister's curves in front of me again," I grind out. Ryland stops pacing and winces, looking mortified and slightly scared as he eyes me cautiously. I perk up a little at that look and decide that he can live, since he is smart enough to look scared. "Sit," I snap, gesturing back to the chair in front of my desk.

Ryland all but throws his ass into the chair in front of me, and I can't stop the small smirk his response brings to my lips. "Now... start at the beginning. When did you realize you couldn't be around her without your Dragon starting to take over?" I ask, needing to know how far back this issue started.

If Ryland has only been fighting his Dragon for a year, then he should be able to leave for an extended period without causing physical strain to his Dragon. But if it's been longer than that, he will have an issue with it.

"When she kissed me Christmas morning," Ryland admits, and I wince.

"From here on out, you don't mention that kiss. Got it?" I snap, my magic longing to reach out and strangle him just a little. "Christmas morning?" I ask, trying to ignore how Ryland blushes a little. "But you weren't here then." I frown, and Ryland nods.

"Well, I was going to surprise Zane, but Fina found me first, and I took off the moment after it happened. I was scared my Dragon would try to take her as a mate if I didn't." I nod in approval.

"That was only a few months ago. You've been putting distance between Fina and yourself for longer than that," I accuse, and Ryland nods.

"Yeah... uh..." he mutters, looking at me and frowning like he's trying to figure out what to say next.

"Do not lie to me," I warn, and Ryland rolls his eyes.

"I'm not! It's just that I'm trying to figure out how to tell you everything while maintaining my soul here!" Ry snaps back, frustration clear on his face.

I arch a brow, and Rylan sighs. “So, you know how my Dragon has its own thoughts and emotions? Zane’s told you all that, right?” he asks, and I nod. Zane, as a man, is actually extremely level-headed. On the other hand, his Dragon is impulsive, protective, has a tendency to go berserk, and has kidnapping tendencies to protect the ones he loves.

I dip my head in a nod and gesture with my hand for him to continue when he stalls. “Right,” Ryland mutters, wiping his palms on his jeans as he stares at me. “About thirteen months ago, my Dragon started wanting Fina closer than normal. He wasn't pushing for anything inappropriate, but he wanted to be around her constantly. It reached the point that I had to leave the house at night to go flying so he wouldn't talk me into sleeping on the floor next to her bed.”

My jaw tenses, and Ryland stops, eyeing me warily. I nod again instead of talking because fuck... I'm really trying to stay level-headed here. But the idea that Ry wanted to sneak into my teenage sister's room at night isn't helping my anger issues.

“My Dragon, Gabe. Not me,” Ryland whispers, almost like he’s reading my mind and knows what I’m thinking. “I swear I never once did what he wanted. I left when I had to, and that's why I took the job at Silvercrest instead of Black Veil, so I could put some distance between Fina and me. My Dragon would have talked me into flying home every day otherwise.”

“I understand. Please keep going,” I rasp, leaning back into my chair and trying to relax the bunched-up muscles of my shoulders.

“Everything was okay up until Christmas morning. My Dragon only ever wanted to keep Fina close, and I started to suspect that...” Ryland trails off, and I wave a hand at him.

“Zane and I already predicted that she was your Dragon’s chosen mate,” I reassure him. Ryland sighs in relief at that and nods.

“Good. I never would have done that, Gabe. Picked her as a mate like this,” Ryland suddenly mutters, and now I’m angry for a whole other reason.

“Are you saying my sister is not good enough to be your mate, Ryland?” I ask coldly. Ryland balks and shakes his head and then glares at me.

“What? No! Fuck that! She’s fucking perfect, Gabe!” Ry shouts, making me scowl at how loud he’s being. “What the hell do you want from me? First, you're mad at me for kissing your sister, now you're mad that I said I wouldn't have chosen her like this. What do I need to say to get you to chill out?” he grumbles, leaning back in his chair, looking exasperated.

“I don’t know,” I grumble back, running a hand over my face in frustration. Fuck... being an older brother is hard. “Just don't make it sound like Fina isn't good enough for you. She's too good for you,” I snap, and Ryland nods immediately.

“I know,” he agrees. “I was talking about how freaking young she is, Gabe. She's still a kid, for Hell's sake, and I have no interest in doing anything until she's older. As far as I’m concerned, Fina is my best friend and will stay that way until she is a legal adult.”

“Good,” I snap, glaring at him. Fina’s birthday is next week, and she’ll be eighteen. Still far too young to be picking a lifelong mate. “You're too old for her,” I mutter, and Ryland glares.

“The age gap between you and Danica is bigger than between me and Fina,” he points out smugly. I open my mouth to argue, then mentally do the math and curse.

“That... doesn't matter. Danica was an adult when I met her.” I snap, and Ryland scoffs, making me rethink the idea of reaping his soul.

“You two formed a mate bond when you were kids! And besides, Dani was only a year older than Fina is now when she went to Black Veil.”

“She was only a friend when we were kids!” I snarl, feeling like a creep when he points that fact out. “A sister that I wanted to protect!”

“Exactly! Now tell me what you would have done if Danica waltzed up to you at seventeen and kissed the hell out of you? I did what I had to and left, Gabe. Fina is too fucking young, but my Dragon is getting out of control! As far as he’s concerned, if she's old enough to kiss him... to pick him, then there is no reason to hold back. I need help here! That's why I’m telling you all of this shit! Help me keep her safe!” Ry bellows, half pleading, half begging, showing me the true depths of his feelings for Fina. He wouldn't respect that she needed time to grow up if he didn't love her with everything he had.

Swallowing hard, I nod. “Alright. I’ll help you.”

“Thank God,” Ry whispers, slumping into his chair in relief.

“You thought I wouldn’t help keep my sister safe?” I ask in confusion.

“No, I knew you would keep her safe. I just wasn't sure I would come out of this meeting with my balls intact,” he admits, and then scowls. “Or my soul,” he adds, and I grin.

“Well, the meeting isn't over yet. Still lots of time for castration,” I muse, and Ryland glares.

“Kayla has had an awful influence on this entire family. Did you know she had Rick put me in a chokehold this morning when she saw me outside the window? Then she asked if I wanted my balls removed with a rusty spoon or superglued to my asshole?” he mutters, and I snort in amusement, then frown.

“Wait,” I growl out. “Why were you outside Kay’s house?”

Ryland glares at me, then waves a hand in front of me like the answer is on my desk.

“This... right here. I told you I’m having issues controlling my Dragon. Why the hell do you think I was outside her house? I went and took care of those bastards who were bullying her and had to make sure she was alright when I was done.”

“Watch your tone,” I say before his words fully connect in my brain. “Bullies? What fucking bullies?” I snarl, shoving up from my chair as pure, unfiltered rage washes through me.

Ryland grins, his teeth sharpening as he feels my anger. “Don't worry. They won't be bothering her again.”

“Dead?” I ask hopefully as I lean down and right the chair I knocked over in my anger.

“No, but I’m pretty sure two of them won’t walk again, and that Brad fucker will probably be in a psych ward the rest of his life,” he muses with a twinkle of excitement in his eye. I grin back at him and sit back down. See... this is why I can't kill Ryland. Besides the fact that he’s Zander's son, the boy shares as much mental and emotional trauma as I do; dealt by the hand of the same man who haunts both of our dreams.

“How was your magic control?” I ask with interest as I open my laptop and pull up one of the encrypted files I keep in a secure folder.

“Good. It seems to level out when I have a purpose... a reason to use it.”

“Serafina?” I ask, already knowing that's what he means. Like my own demonic magic my father gifted me with, Ryland’s has run wild from the moment it made its appearance. I have found that having Danica close keeps my magic in control, and I’m guessing Ryland’s is doing something similar with Serafina.

“Yes. She keeps it level. I try not to use it when I’m at Silvercrest. The distance from her is too far. It goes rogue,” he admits, and I nod.

“How many?” I ask as I scroll through the photos on my laptop, looking for one in particular.

“Four,” Ryland grumbles, and I frown.

“Who? And do I need to send in a clean-up crew?”

“All of them were for a reason. None of them deserved to live. Fucking bastards,” Ryland grinds out, his deep voice turning rough as his eyes spark blue. “And, no. I handled it.” I smile at him proudly and nod.

“Alright. You’ll tell me if there is anything you need help with, though,” I demand, and Ryland dips his head, his eyes moving to my computer screen.

“The Void?” he asks as I open up the picture of the Transylvanian forest that surrounds Silvercrest University.

“How much do you know of the Hoia Baci Forest?” I ask as I open a few more pictures. Ryland frowns at the blood and gore that fill my screen.

“The locals refuse to enter it. They say it’s haunted, and monsters live within,” Ry mutters, and I nod.

“They do. The Void is a known breeding ground for the Hellhounds and several high-class Demons, but I also suspect something else is happening. Recently, several students from Silvercrest have gone missing, right?” I ask, and Ryland nods. As part of the security at the school, I know Ryland has been helping with the cases of missing students.

“Yeah.. Over the last six months or so. Four students have gone missing, but we checked the forest. There was nothing there besides the trees and the stink of sulfur,” Ry murmurs, studying the pictures I have on my screen. “That’s... shit, Gabe. That’s the four girls who have gone missing. We thought there was a serial killer on campus. How do you have these, and why haven’t you shared this with the Balaur Patrol? Do you know who did this yet?” He glares at me accusingly, and I glare back.

“I am the head of the Fae Council. It’s my job to know everything that is going on. And you might not be far off the mark on the serial killer idea. Dominic is worried about the Demon activity going on and has reported it to Cassiel. They are assigning an Angelic spy to the school,” I inform him with a sneer, still not liking the idea. Angels have proven time and time again that they will only help if it’s convenient for them, and I would rather handle this myself. Unfortunately, I was outvoted by the council, and the Angels were brought in.

“Okay? So the Angels are going to come in then?” he questions, and I shake my head.

“No, they are assigning a spy. They will only involve themselves if the balance of life is altered. What I need you to do is keep an eye on the spy and

make sure the Angels aren't up to any shady shit. I would send Zane, but there is no way he will leave Dani now that she's pregnant again. And there is no one else I can spare or trust at the moment," I admit.

"Dani's pregnant?" Ry chirps, suddenly looking ten times happier than he was moments ago. I let my serious expression slide for the briefest moment as a smile plays on my lips. I've always wanted a big family, one I can love and protect, and Dani being pregnant again fulfills one of my biggest dreams.

"Yes. And I need everyone here. Danica gets possessive and... clingy when she's pregnant." Ryland nods happily. "Oh... and Roar is going to need your help getting Zane to chill the fuck out. He's got Dani locked up in his nest."

"The baby is his?" Ry asks, wincing a little.

"Babies. It's twins," I say with a sigh, still fucking stressed about Danica being pregnant with two babies. She's too damn tiny to carry one Dragon baby, let alone two. I'm going to be wild with worry over the next few months, and I already know it. I had Dax research the best midwife who helps with Dragon births and have already been in contact with her. "And yes, he is the father. She has two Dragon shifter signatures coming from within her."

"Holy shit! Both babies are Dragons?" Ry asks in awe, and I nod. "Damn, I knew Dani was a badass, but I didn't realize she was powerful enough to carry two Dragons. I don't think there has been a twin Dragon shifter birth in centuries," he whispers more to himself than to me.

"There hasn't," I growl, my worry eating at me. Ryland gives me a sympathetic smile and nods.

"I'm happy to help Gabe, you know that, but I have a question. If the Angels are helping, why do you need me? Do you not trust them?" he asks, and I snort.

"No, not even a little bit. And I trust your head of security even less. Keep an eye on that rat, Ryland, and don't tell him a single damn thing about this. I'll see what I can do about getting someone new into his position," I inform him, making his brows furrow. "Also... this is something we can use for you not being here over an extended period. Something legitimate that Zane and Dani can't argue about and something that won't make Fina hate me," I mutter as I close the laptop and look at the boy in front of me.

No... Not boy, Ryland has grown up. He's a smart, protective man I have come to respect; though I hate myself for admitting that.

“Ryland, I think this goes without saying, but you can not share any information I give you to a single soul outside our family, and I would rather you not tell Fina about it, either. I'll handle the details and tell her what I think is safe for her to know,” I say quickly when the young Dragon opens his mouth to argue. Ryland snaps it shut with a glare and nods. “If you want my help, this is how you will receive it,” I say calmly. “And you will not return to the house until we figure out who is killing these girls,” I add, and Ryland growls, his Dragon moving closer to the surface.

“That could take months to figure out. Or longer,” Ryland accuses, and I grin happily.

“I know. That's the point.”

“You're an asshole,” he grumbles, his brown eyes narrowing as the gold rings expand.

“Do you love her?” I ask suddenly, leaning back to observe him. Ryland swallows and tears his glare away from me, looking at his hands in his lap.

“More than anything,” he whispers, and I nod.

“Good. That will be motivation for you to figure out what's going on. I want a report every Sunday on your progress,” I announce, standing up and dismissing him.

“Gabe...?” he trails off as I open the door, waiting for him to walk over to me. “Keep her safe for me?” he asks, sounding a little broken. I nod and pat him on the shoulder.

“That is something you never have to ask of me. She'll be here when you're done. But only if she chooses you, Ryland,” I say softly, letting him know there is no way I'm letting his Dragon take over the situation once Fina is old enough.

“I understand.”

“Good, now you have until midnight tonight to get out of my house before I have to kick your ass,” I announce, and Ryland grins.

“*Meh*, I'm not sure you could do that on your own anymore,” he taunts, walking out of my office. “You're getting soft in your old age, Covington,” he says over his shoulder. My eyes widen at his fucking audacity, and I have to force myself to slam my door shut so I don't stalk after him and show him who is still in charge of this family.

CHAPTER 10

DANICA



Yawning, I open my eyes, feeling oddly energized, and grin when I realize I'm in Zane's nest. Snuggling into the firm arms of the man holding me, I smirk and close my eyes as his cool lips dust over my hair. "How did you get Zane to let you in here without his Dragon freaking out?" I ask in amusement. Roar chuckles, and his hands wrap more firmly around my waist as he tugs me on top of him, making me gasp in surprise. Bracing my hands on his bare chest, I push up a little and grin down at my favorite set of ocean-blue eyes.

"Who says he didn't freak out? You had a feral Dragon protecting you, Gorgeous. Luckily for you, your prince knows how to tame the beast and saved his princess." I laugh and look around Zane's room, noticing Remi snoring loudly on the floor at the end of the bed in his Wolf form.

"And where is this feral Dragon?" I ask when I don't spot a growling Zane. Roar sits up on his elbows, the light in his eyes shining bright as he places the sweetest kiss on my belly, making my heart do a somersault in my chest. His strong hands encircle my waist as he looks up at me with love and adoration in his eyes, and I lean forward, capturing his lips with mine in a sweet kiss.

"Out flying with Ryland. He needed to blow off some steam, but I'm under strict orders not to let you out of his nest until he comes back and can carry you downstairs for dinner," Roar murmurs against my lips, and I laugh, pulling back.

"That sounds about right," I muse, thinking about the fierce protective look that entered Zane's eyes the moment he sensed his babies inside me. "Am I allowed to take a shower before he gets here?"

“Not unless you want him pinning you underneath him to get his scent all over you again,” Remi supplies, startling me enough that I jump and then send him a playful glare as he crawls, butt-ass naked, up on Zane's bed next to Roar.

“Got your Wolf under control finally?” Roar teases, and Remi gives me a shy smile.

“Yeah, he wasn't liking how possessive Zane was, and I didn't want to disturb your sleeping, so I shifted and let him nap nearby,” he explains as he comes up next to me, dotting a kiss to my lips while placing a protective hand on my stomach next to Roar's.

“But...” I pout as he pulls away. “I really need a shower. I'm all sticky,” I grumble, glaring down at myself and then blinking in surprise when Remi reaches up and pulls a twig out of my hair.

“I can tell, but at least wait and let the beast shower you himself. He's going to go ballistic if he comes back to his mate washed clean of him,” Remi mutters apologetically, kissing me again before snaking his hand around my waist and tugging me off Roar and onto him as he settles beneath me. I arch a brow and smile when I feel his hard cock throb against my bare center.

“And smelling like you won't set him off?” I ask in question, making Roar smirk and wiggle his brows as he sits up to look at me.

“No, we are his flight. We already had a long discussion about how we will protect you and his babies with our life. As long as his scent is still thoroughly on you, he'll be fine.” I grin and rest my hands on my stomach, still completely in shock that I'm pregnant with two babies. “You look happy,” Roar whispers, leaning forward to kiss me.

“I am. I've been wanting this for over a year,” I admit, then pause, looking from Roar to Remi. They look happy about the babies as well, but I know both of them would have been thrilled to have it be their baby I was pregnant with.

“Knock it off, Dani-Girl,” Remi whispers, turning his body and making me squeal a little as he pins me to Roar's chest. “These babies are perfect, and I'm pretty sure we were all hoping that Zane would father the next child of ours. Besides, just because they don't share our DNA doesn't mean they aren't our children. Do you think I will love a child of my own blood more than Monty or Xav?” he asks, and I frown.

“Of course not,” I whisper back just as Roar reaches around and boops

me on the nose.

“Precisely. These babies are ours, and we couldn't be more thrilled,” Roar confirms, and I nod, an insurmountable amount of joy swelling within me.

“Can Zane sense the babies yet?” Remi asks excitedly, and I nod.

“Yes, he figured it out before I was able to tell him,” I admit, and Roar laughs.

“Oh, I bet he flipped out! I wish I had been there to see it. Was he crying like a little girl?” Roar asks, running his hands up my sides and making my sensitive skin pebble in response.

“He teared up a little, then quite literally hauled me up here and force-fed me all sorts of healthy shit,” I admit and laugh.

Okay, it was actually really tasty food, but he made me drink so much water I had to pee three times overnight. *And* he was so crazy about not leaving my side that he would carry me to and from the toilet before tucking me back into bed.

“Can he tell the genders yet?” Remi asks, practically bouncing next to me. I frown and look at him.

“He can do that?” I ask in awe, and Remi nods.

“Yeah, his Dragon should be able to tell pretty soon, but I'm not sure how far along you are, so it may be too early,” he admits.

“He hasn't said anything, but I'll ask him when he comes back,” I murmur, suddenly even more excited! Dax and Gabe both wanted to leave the boys' gender as a surprise until birth, and even though it was fun, I really wish I had known prior so that I could have prepared the nursery beforehand. I know Zane will be okay with knowing the genders early, and it looks like we may find out even sooner than I had anticipated.

“Oh, my God! It could be a girl!” Roar says in horror and looks at me when I frown. “No, a girl would be amazing, but... with you as her mom and Zane as the dad, she's going to be freaking gorgeous,” he points out, and my frown deepens.

“And you want an ugly baby?” I ask in confusion.

“No, but think about it. When she starts dating... Gabe is her father. Zane is her father and...” he trails off, looking over my shoulder at Remi, who grins happily.

“Oh, this could be fun!” Remi whispers, his eyes widening in excitement.

“Shit,” I whisper when I realize what Roar is saying. “There will be mass murders.”

“Bingo,” Roar mutters, snapping his fingers at me in agreement. Remi starts to laugh, and I glare up at him.

“It's not funny, Remington.”

“Come on, Dani-Girl. It's our right as fathers to keep our daughters safe. You can't be mad about that,” he says, beaming excitedly.

“Gabe's already awful with the boys who look at Fina,” I whisper in dread. “You know what?” I mutter, then shake my head. “I don't need to worry about that for years,” I say, shoving the thought out of my mind. “Besides, she might be like me. I wasn't hit on much as a teenager,” I point out, and Remi snorts, then has the decency to look a little nervous and avoid eye contact.

“Yeah, I doubt it was because they didn't want to, babe. More likely, it was the crazy Alpha Wolf that was constantly with you who kept those fuckers at bay,” Roar muses.

I smack Remi on the chest when he nods in confirmation, then giggle when he growls playfully and leans down, nipping at my lips and making me moan before kissing me deeply.

“How sore are you, Gorgeous?” Roar whispers into my ear as I kiss Remi, his hands moving to my chest, rolling my nipples between his fingers.

I gasp, breaking my heated kiss with Remi, and arch back against Roar in response, rubbing my ass against the hard outline of his cock in his pants as I shake my head, letting him know I'm not sore.

“Words, Gorgeous. Are you okay with this, or do you just want some kisses and snuggles?” he rasps, kissing up the column of my neck and making me shiver as his and Remi's hands move over my body in perfect synchronicity.

“I want this,” I agree mindlessly just as a thick finger pushes deep into my fluttering sex. I moan in approval at Remi's sudden intrusion, spreading my thighs further to give him more access.

“What do you want, Dani-Girl?” Remi asks, his voice husky as he slowly moves his fingers inside me. His rhythm is slow at first, and I rock my hips, grinding against his palm, my clit throbbing in response. Wet heat forms between my legs, and I hear Roar laugh as Remi growls and nips at his mate mark on my shoulder.

“This... you! Both of you,” I answer.

“Both of us?” Roar asks as another thick finger slides into my pussy alongside Remi's. “You want us both right here, baby?” I nod, and Remi

laughs.

“Nuh-uh. I’m not having Zane mad at us for making her sore until he calms down.” Roar pouts, looking at Remi over my head.

“Fun hater,” he accuses, and Remi snorts.

“No. I just have survival instincts. Something that you severely lack.”

“Do I get a say in this?” I ask, then buck my hips when the guys look down at me with matching grins and move their fingers inside me at the same time. “Fuck!” I gasp, and Remi chuckles.

“Of course you do. You get to tell Roar if you want him fucking this perfect mouth,” Remi whispers, leaning down to kiss me. “Or your tight little ass.” Roar groans in approval and nods.

“Both excellent options!” he whispers, letting his free hand move to my mouth and tug at my lower lip when Remi pulls back. I dart my tongue out, licking his finger before sucking it hard into my mouth, making Roar curse. “Mouth... Oh God. Please let me fuck your mouth,” he begs, pulling his finger from my cunt with a wet pop before moving it to his mouth, sucking my taste off himself.

I nod, still sucking on his finger, before Remi growls and pulls me away from Roar, yanking his finger from my center as he flips me on my back and moves his large body above me so that I cradle him between my thighs.

“I need to taste you first,” he rasps before diving to lick a long, hot stripe up my pussy. I groan and arch my back, pressing myself more firmly into Remi’s talented tongue as he lashes at my clit. My hands reach down to grab his dark brown hair, but Roar catches my wrists before I can and brings them up over my head with a wink.

“Let us do all the work, baby,” he rasps, leaning down as he takes one of my sensitive nipples into his mouth and twirls his tongue around the bud. I fist the pillows above my head in response, the feeling of Remi and Roar’s lips licking and sucking at my flesh almost too much to bear. “Let us love you like you deserve.”

“Roar,” I whisper as he releases one nipple with a pop and moves to the other while Remi latches on to my clit and sucks hard! “Oh shit! Please, please fuck me?” I beg, my hips bucking against Remi as he slides two fingers into my cunt and curls them toward my belly button, rubbing that perfect spot inside. “Ahh!” I arch my back, hands fisting the sheets as I tip over the edge. My pussy clenches tight around Remi’s fingers, and he groans into my sex as he continues to lick me through my release.

“Just like that,” Roar praises, pulling back enough to watch me as my orgasm crashes through me, his blue eyes bright with lust as he keeps me pinned to the bed. “What a good fucking girl you are,” he croons. I go limp under the two of them, the pleasure they pulled from me leaving me wholly and utterly under their thrall. Suddenly Roar is kissing me, our tongues dancing, our lips gliding and sucking over each other as Remi slowly brings me down from my release with soft licks and kisses to my clit. “You come apart so beautifully between us,” Roar rasps between kisses. His hand finally releases my own while his mouth devours mine, staking his claim as I shiver under him.

I press my palms to his chest, running my hands down his firm, chiseled muscles before reaching where his boxers sit low on his hips and shove them down, needing him naked now. Roar laughs and wiggles his hips a little, helping me remove his underwear as Remi sits up, watching us with heated eyes.

I break my kiss with Roar to watch as Remi sits up on his knees, still naked after having shifted from his Wolf form, and grin like a spoiled princess. Fucking hell... My husbands are hot as sin. They wear matching smirks as they stare down at me, and Remi groans, running a hand through his already messy hair as his cock juts out in front of him.

“You’re so damn beautiful, Dani-Girl,” he whispers, echoing my thoughts about them as Roar holds a hand down to me, helping me up on my knees while turning my body to face his.

“On your hands and knees, Gorgeous,” Roar instructs, moving us until I’m facing him with my ass high in the air in front of Remi. A low growl filters through the air, and I laugh when Remi reaches out, palming my ass in his hands and groaning in approval.

“This fucking ass!” he whispers before bringing his hand down, spanking my still reddened ass.

“Ouch! Remi!” I snap, shooting him a dirty look. He arches a brow and brings his other hand down on the other cheek, making me gasp and shiver.

“Looks like she's already had a good spanking before now,” Roar chuckles, running his hands through my hair, gripping the strands tight as he brings my face up enough for his impressively thick cock to run over the seam of my lips. A small bead of pre-cum leaks from his tip, and I dart my tongue out, licking at the slit and making him hiss through gritted teeth.

“Were you being a naughty girl for Zane?” Remi asks in amusement,

rubbing out the sting of his slaps before I feel his cock's bulbous head slide through my sex, notching at my entrance. I grin, looking over my shoulder at him and winking before moving back to Roar's cock, taking him into my mouth and sucking him down as far as I can with his hands still locked in my hair.

"Fuck!" Roar shouts, his hips bucking forward as Remi cants his hip, then slams into my soaking cunt with one firm thrust. The motion of Remi's body sliding into mine presses me forward onto Roar's length, forcing the majority of his dick down my throat, and I have to swallow to suppress the need to gag. Roar's hands tighten in my hair, keeping his length pressed deep for a moment before he pulls me back up, and I gasp, looking up at him with blurry vision.

Remi's dick throbs deep inside me, and I circle my hips, making him bite out a curse as I move back and forth between them. Backing up on Remi's cock before sliding forward and sucking Roar deep.

"You like being fucked between us. Don't you, Gorgeous? That's so good. Hollow those fucking cheeks, baby," Roar praises, gathering my long brown hair into one hand and using it to move me up and down his cock. I keep my head bobbing, trying to match Roar's rhythm as Remi's powerful hands clasp my hips firmly in his grip and he starts fucking into me with hard, brutal thrusts.

I moan as the pinch of pain from being fucked repeatedly over the last couple of days morphs into something delicious, then relax, giving my men complete control over my body. Remi's pace slows a little when he hears my moan, and I can feel him shuddering behind me, his strong thighs press against mine as his hands move from my hips and stroke up and down my spine. I smile a little around Roar's cock, knowing he's mentally checking himself, making sure he's not too rough now that I'm pregnant.

Arching my back, I wiggle my ass a little, letting him know I'm okay. "Fuck Gorgeous, look at you taking him so good! Damn, you've got to slow down. I'm going to embarrass myself," he almost whines, trying to pull his hips back a little. I leap forward in response, sitting up a little and letting my fingers sink into the taut muscles of his thighs.

"Uh, I don't think she liked that idea," Remi says with a laugh, moving with me so that we stay firmly locked together.

"Shit. Baby, seriously... you need to calm down a little. Fuck, she's going to suck me dry," Roar complains to Remi, his hand twisting my hair more

firmly in his fist while he runs a finger over where my lips are wrapped around him. A flash of possessive lust crosses his expression as I suck and lap at his cock like it's the best damn dessert I have ever had.

“The hardships,” Remi teases, grinding his hips into me and making my eyes roll back as my release builds. Roar glares, flipping him off in response while taking deep breaths, cursing several more times. Remi’s hand moves around, his talented fingers strumming my clit in a way only he can; and suddenly, I’m right back on that ledge. Goosebumps cover my skin, making me shiver and gasp. And I can feel my toes curl in response as warmth builds like a fiery inferno.

“Fuck, you're close, baby, aren't you?” Roar asks, panting, his skin glistening with sweat as he does everything he can to hold off his release. I nod and suck him in again, hollowing my cheeks until his cock bumps the back of my throat. This time I gag a little, and Roar’s body tenses. “I'm going to come down this pretty little throat, baby. Open wide,” he instructs as his hand moves from my hair and wraps around the column of my throat as he presses in more, forcing me to swallow his length down. “Oh, God. I can feel my dick fucking your throat,” he rasps in awe, his fingers tightening on my neck and making Remi’s steady rhythm falter behind me, no doubt turned on by that thought.

My pussy flutters and clenches my Wolf's cock as liquid heat pools, and I know I'm moments from crashing into bliss.

“Don't come yet,” Remi snaps, making Roar’s eyes widen in shock, and I almost pull off his cock so that I can glare back at Remi.

“Ex-fucking-cuse me?” Roar snaps.

“She’s not allowed to come until I do. And if you blow, she'll follow,” Remi growls in explanation.

“But!” Roar complains as he pulls his cock back just enough for me to breathe properly again. My eyes widen, and I look up at Roar in shock as he slows his pace. He’s not actually going to listen to Remi, right? “Dammit! Fine, but you have precisely two minutes to get your shit together, or you're tough out of luck,” my Gargoyle snaps, his hand tightening on my throat when I try to take control of the situation.

There is no way I'm waiting two more minutes to come! My cunt is swollen and throbs almost painfully as Remi picks up his pace, and I know I'm seconds away from an enormous orgasm.

“Don't you fucking dare,” Remi warns, his hand coming down with a

firm slap right on my clit. I scream around Roar as my pussy grips Remi's cock so damn hard it hurts.

“Not helping the situation,” Roar pants out, like he's in pain, and I glare up at him. I'm so going to get back at these two for this. Roar smirks at me when he sees my glare. “Hold it back, Gorgeous. It's going to feel so fucking good when he finally lets you come.”

I moan, my eyes widening as my orgasms crest. I can't! There's no way I can hold it back. Remi slaps my pussy again, his cock burying itself so deep that I yelp and scream, my vision going spotty as Roar's stomach muscles clench. He looks like he's about to pass out. The startling sting of the slap makes my pussy clamp down again, and this time Remi curses. “Good girl! Just like that. Fuck... yes, like that. Shit! Fuck her mouth. I'm going to come,” he snarls, leaning over my back and latching his teeth over his mate mark as Roar thrusts forward, shuddering in relief as I suck him deep into my throat.

I feel hot cum spill inside me as Remi snarls, his thighs slapping against mine so hard that I'm pushed closer to Roar with each brutal thrust. Roar bellows in response, his hands fisting my hair as he face fucks me, shooting his load down my throat. My screams are muffled by Roar's spasming cock as my orgasm crashes around me. Magic bursts from me in a rush, making the guys groan in unison as it tugs on our mate bonds, making Roar's flare bright in my chest and linking me more securely to Remi.

“Fuck, I love it when she does that,” Remi gasps out as my arms shake and give out, forcing Roar to drop his hands from my hair and catch my shoulders as I crumple to the bed in exhaustion. Remi curses, catching himself with his arms before crushing me with his weight, and I groan as Roar and Remi pull out of my body, leaving me feeling oddly empty.

“Jesus, are you okay?” Roar asks, swiping some of my sweaty hair out of my face as he leans back, tugging my prone body onto his for a cuddle. Remi shifts next to us, his hands running up and down my legs, massaging my trembling muscles with soft strokes.

“So fucking good,” I whimper out, my overheated skin starting to cool as they laugh at my sex-happy smile.

“Let's take a nap... Zane should be back by the time we wake up, and then you can have that shower,” Roar whispers, and I nod in agreement, my suddenly heavy lids already falling shut. “Remi, get the lights,” I hear Roar instruct as he shifts me back down into Zane's nest, propping a few pillows

around him before tugging the softest blanket Zane owns over my shoulders.

“Rest, Dani-Girl,” Remi whispers as he lays down on my other side, and I give in to my exhaustion.

CHAPTER 11

DANICA



“Oh, my god! Are you serious?!” Kay squeals before launching herself at me. I laugh and hold out my arms, but before her thin body collides with mine, a big arm intercepts her. She hisses in surprise and glares at Zane, who looks disapprovingly down at her before walking her the rest of the way to me and letting her go only inches away from me.

“Gentle,” he scolds, dipping to give me a soft kiss before walking back to the stove to preheat it for whatever he is making for dinner.

“Jeez, I forgot how crazy they get when you're pregnant,” she admits with a smile before wrapping me in a tight but gentle hug. “I’m so happy for you,” she whispers into my ear.

“You're next,” I tease, then laugh when she jumps back from me like I have the plague. Kay holds her fingers in a cross shape in front of her chest and glares at me before taking several steps back.

“Hell-freaking-no, I’m not! You keep those baby-making vibes on your side of the room, Dani!” Remi laughs and walks over, slinging his arm around my shoulders while sending my best friend a teasing smile.

“I know of two particular Wolves who would love it if you could convince her otherwise,” he whispers into my ear, and I grin when Kay blanches and rolls her eyes at him in response. She walks over and snags one of the freshly baked chocolate chip cookies Zane left on the counter, popping the entire thing into her mouth.

“I’m still young, and I’m not ready to let a kid interfere with my sex life,” she admits, making Remi and Zane grimace in distaste. “Besides, I have four husbands, and only two of them are ready for kids. It's a group decision. It’ll happen when we are all ready,” she says with a shrug, and I nod in

agreement.

“You need a few more years,” Gabe says in agreement as he walks into the kitchen, obviously listening in on Kay’s conversation. Slate-gray eyes clash with mine as Gabe strides immediately to me, grabbing me in a tight hug before burying his face into my neck.

“You okay?” I ask, worry settling in as I twine my fingers into Gabe’s silky obsidian black hair. His shoulders are tense but are slowly relaxing the longer I’m in his arms, so I let him hold all my weight and jump up a little, wrapping my legs around his waist and making him hum in approval as he holds me as close as he can. “Gabriel?” I whisper into his ear, ignoring Remi and Kay as they banter back and forth about her two over-protective Wolf husbands.

“Of course I’m okay,” he grumbles into my neck, and I smile.

“Right. Of course, how silly of me to ask such a question,” I tease. Gabe grunts in agreement, then growls a little in my ear when I wiggle in his arms, asking to be set down.

“I just... need a minute more,” he whispers, curling himself around me as much as he can while cool dark shadows twist around us, keeping us bound together.

“Mommy, is Daddy alright?” Montag asks, walking into the kitchen with a small frown furrowing his brow. Gabe sighs, kissing my neck once more.

“My bed tonight, Princess,” he rasps, and I nod as he slowly lowers me back onto my feet before he turns and crouches down in front of our youngest son and scoops him into his arms, making Monty giggle in delight.

The boys came home a few hours ago and searched me out first thing. Monty crawled into Zane’s bed, snuggling between us, while Xavier watched on with narrowed eyes from the doorway. He knows something is going on, and I could see his little brain spinning, trying to figure it out for himself. I had to hold a hand out for him before he rolled his eyes and huffed in pretend annoyance as he crawled up on my other side and snuggled in with a smile on his little face.

Thankfully, Zane had been home for well over an hour before the boys got here, and we had showered and changed the linens on his bed before our boys came in for a snuggle.

“How was your sleepover at Auntie Kay’s house?” he asks him, trying to distract our son from the question he has asked.

“Boring,” Monty says with a shrug, and Kayla gasps, holding a hand to

her heart.

“Excuse me, little mister. My house is not boring!” she explains as Xavier walks into the kitchen, Daxton and Dominic trailing behind him. He smiles when he sees me, then his eyes dart down to where my hand is pressed against my stomach. I immediately drop my hand and watch as Xavier's eyes linger on my stomach before meeting mine again with an all-knowing look. Dang kid is way too smart for his own good.

It's not like I didn't want to tell him. I just wanted to wait a little longer and see if Zane knew what we were having before I announced it to the boys. I press one finger to my mouth and wink at him as I ask him to keep the secret, and he grins and nods in excitement before looking at Gabe with an arched brow.

I bite my lip and shake my head. He looks at Dax and waits for my answer before moving to Dom and Remi. His eyes widen before he looks at Zane, and I wink at him. “I knew it!” he shouts before his eyes go wide and he slaps a hand over his mouth.

“Know what?” Monty asks in confusion, and Xav shrugs, before walking over and standing up on his tiptoes to steal a cookie off the counter.

“Young man, it's almost dinnertime,” Dom scolds before grabbing a cookie for himself and shoving it into his mouth, making Xav grin up at him. Gabe glares at the pair as he shifts Monty over to one hip, unwilling to set him down.

“I want one too!” Monty begs, looking at Gabe while batting his absurdly long lashes at him. Gabe groans and walks over, grabbing the biggest cookie out of the bunch and watching happily as Monty goes to town on the giant dessert.

“Sucker,” Dax mutters, making me laugh as I lean against the counter. Roar walks in and grins at the boys before he strides over and throws his arm around my shoulders.

“Family movie night?” he asks, looking down at me with a hopeful smile on his lips.

“After dinner,” I agree, and Roar and the boys both cheer.

“During dinner. I'm making pizza. We can bring them down to the family room and watch that new Disney movie Monty was talking about,” Zane suggests, making Monty cheer and Xav groan.

“But Dad! That's a movie about princesses!”

“Hey, there is also a reindeer and a prince in it. Besides, the blonde

princess can control ice like mom can,” Monty defends.

“Mom can control the water and change it to ice,” Xav corrects with a huff. “And that prince is a two-faced bastard. It's the peasant that is the good guy,” Xav grumbles, making my eyes widen in shock.

“Xavier Atlas Covington!” I say firmly. “Where in the world did you learn that kind of language?” Roran starts to laugh next to me, and I elbow him in the side, only managing to bruise myself in the process.

“I’m not wrong,” Xav mutters, looking down at his feet as he kicks the ground. Gabe frowns, then looks up at me with a guilty look on his face. I widen my eyes at him, and my Reaper cringes as Dom and Dax laugh silently in the corner. “Dax,” Gabe grumbles, holding Monty out for him to take, but Roar swoops in before Dax can and steals our son out of Gabe's arms.

“Hey, little dude. Should we go get our pj’s on and get the movie ready?” Roar asks, pushing Monty’s oversized green-rimmed glasses up his nose with a large finger as he heads toward the family room. Monty nods his agreement, still happily munching on his cookie as Gabe holds his hand out to Xav, who unwillingly takes it and follows his father out of the kitchen. Dom follows the pair with an amused grin on his face, and I laugh a little, knowing he’s going to tease the crap out of Gabe for this.

“Jesus Christ,” I grumble, swiping a hand over my face. “I was worried it was me that had slipped up,” I admit with a wince, making Kayla laugh and point at herself.

“Dude, me too! Glad it was Gabe and not us,” she giggles, and I nod in agreement as Fina walks into the kitchen, frowning while looking around at us all.

“What's going on?” she asks, her voice soft and barely there.

“Your brother taught Xav a bad word and got in trouble,” Kay snickers, and the smallest of smiles graces Serafina’s beautiful face as she comes over by me and leans against the counter, shocking me a little when she chooses to join the conversation.

“I wish I had been here to see that,” she admits, then smiles as Zane walks over to the counter, grabs a cookie, and holds it out to her with a huff.

“Eat...” he grumbles, looking her up and down with a frown but wisely staying quiet about how skinny she looks these days. Fina frowns at the cookie, and I reach over, breaking it in half, and wink up at her as I pop some of it in my mouth. She doesn’t have a sweet tooth, but I know she will force herself to eat it just so Zane doesn't get his feelings hurt. Fina graces me with

a grateful smile and nibbles at her half of the cookie while Dax and Dom talk with Kayla.

“Are you all good, Fina?” Remi asks, moving closer to her and leaning next to her. Fina nods her head and gets a little closer to Remi, making me smile. Remi’s Wolf and Fina have a close friendship that has extended to human Remi by default. Remi wraps a protective arm around her and gives me a worried look over his shoulder. There is something going on with Gabe’s sister, and I’m really starting to worry about it. She’s always been quiet, but her eyes are almost... hollow these days.

“I had a thought,” I murmur, wondering if I’m overstepping my bounds by discussing this with Fina before talking to Gabriel about it first. Fina’s vacant eyes move to me, and I dismiss the worry. If I can help my sister, I’m going to. I just hope Gabe doesn’t get mad at me for doing it. “Why don’t you homeschool for the rest of high school?” I suggest slowly. Fina seems to perk up at that idea, her long lashes blinking a few times as she straightens.

“Is that a possibility?” she asks, genuine interest in her eyes. I nod and smile, my heart skipping a beat when her eyes lighten just the smallest amount.

“Yes. I pulled your transcripts, and you already have half of your senior classes completed. You’ll have to have your brother sign off on your tests, but I don’t see why you couldn’t,” I muse, and Remi grins.

“That’s a great idea! Why haven’t we done this before?” he asks, scowling a little like he’s mad he didn’t think of it first.

“Because she had classes she needed to complete in school, like chemistry and PE. She’s finished her extracurriculars and only has her core classes left, so this is now an option,” Zane replies, then looks over at Fina, who gives him a shocked look. “I looked into it last year, hoping it would work, but you still had too many classes to take,” he admits. Fina nods and walks over, patting Zane on the shoulder before she moves to the fridge and pulls a water bottle from within. Remi watches her, concern clear on his face when Fina chooses not to respond further.

“It’s a good idea,” Dax admits, his green eyes tracking Fina across the kitchen, making her tense a little when she notices his attention solely on her. “Serafina? May I have a word in private?” he asks. Fina looks less than thrilled at the idea but nods, setting her water bottle on the counter near Zane, who scowls and grabs it, putting it back in her hands.

“Take it with you,” he instructs. Dax and Fina roll their eyes at each other

as they leave the kitchen together, and Kayla puffs out her cheeks, whistling under her breath when they are gone.

“What's wrong? Why is she so... sad?” Kay asks quietly.

“I'm not sure. She's been extra quiet lately,” Remi admits, and I nod, agreeing with him.

“Everything that happened with the Ramadan boy hasn't helped,” I add, making Zane growl low as he wipes his hands on the frilly dark blue apron he has strapped to his chest.

“She didn't mean to do that. It was an accident,” he grinds out, keeping his voice pitched low so that we don't risk being overheard.

“Yeah, but it was still her magic. She's blaming herself, and I'm not sure how to help her with that,” I point out.

“She needs a friend. Teos has been the only person she's allowed into the house since Ry left,” Remi snaps, glaring at Zane in accusation.

“That wasn't me!” Zane snaps back, looking affronted. “I mean, yeah. Gabe and I were going to intervene, but Ry left on his own. He chose to work at Silvercrest. I was hoping he would have selected Black Veil to be closer to home.”

Remi grumbles something, but nods as he shrugs out of his shirt. “I'm shifting and going to go sit on the couch. Maybe I can get her to come to watch a movie with my Wolf after her talk with Dax.”

“Ooh! Good idea! I can go grab a Barbie movie,” Kay suggests.

“Kayla, Fina is practically an adult. She's not going to want to watch a Barbie movie,” Remi points out as they leave the kitchen.

“Fair point. How about *Magic Mike*? Some yummy man chests are bound to perk her up,” Kay suggests, making Zane cringe as he calls after them.

“No naked man chests, Kayla! It's family movie night, and we are watching Disney movies!” he growls out as he walks over, tugging me into his arms.

“Where is Ry?” I ask, worrying my lip as I look up at him.

“Packing,” Zane answers, which makes my brows furrow in confusion.

“But I thought he was sticking around for a bit this time?”

Zane sighs and shakes his head, looking conflicted.

“He can't. Gabe needs him to do something for the Fae Council, and if I'm being entirely honest, I don't think it's a good idea for him to be near Fina.” My worry quickly morphs into anger, and I step out of Zane's protective hold.

“Why? He would never hurt her,” I argue, and Zane nods, frowning at me when I step further away from him.

“He would never physically harm her. But he’s having issues with his Dragon and his magic. He needs to get some control before taking a mate.”

“Fina’s too young to be mated,” I whisper, and Zane nods.

“Yeah, which is why he’s keeping his distance.”

“But that’s what’s hurting her, Zane,” I continue quietly, conflicted about how I’m supposed to feel. I understand Fina is young, while Ry has already graduated and is several years her senior; but the pain in Fina’s eyes only reminds me of when Remi would keep himself away from me when we were teenagers. He kept other girls on his arm in an attempt to keep his father from sending me away. He also claimed it was for my own good, but it never felt that way. Even now, I remember the heartbreak of seeing him with girls, and when he refused to come to weekly movie nights because he had to keep his distance.

“I know. Give them a few years, Comoaña. I have confidence in Ryland that he can make this work.” I nod and let my Dragon mate pull me back into his arms, not quite believing his words. Sure, I think Ryland will pursue Fina when she is old enough, but I’m worried that the damage done to their friendship will be too much to mend. Remi still stayed nearby, while he was trying to protect me. Even with the added distance between us, he made sure I knew I was never alone, which made it easier to forgive him.

Ryland not only moved to an entirely different country, he cut ties with Serafina completely. There were no longer any late-night calls, no text messages asking how her day was. I caught her staring at her phone for the entire first month he was away and had to watch as the hope in her eyes dwindled into shimmering pools of darkness. And even with the best intentions on Ryland’s part, sometimes there is no coming back from that.

CHAPTER 12

RORAN



“This the one you want to watch, little man?” I ask, holding up the DVD in my hand to show Monty as he shoves the last bite of the cookie into his mouth. I had planned on a *Harry Potter* movie night, but Monty looked so excited to watch *Frozen* that I couldn’t say no.

I grin down at him, ruffling his brown hair with one hand as he looks up at me with those purple eyes I love so much. Since Dani is pregnant with two Dragon shifters, odds are, they won't inherit her Ractori violet eyes. Which is fine, but I can't help but hope that when Dani and I have a baby, they will get her eyes. Hell, I hope they get everything from her!

Monty scrunches up his tiny nose and bats my hand in distaste, his serious expression making him look like a miniature version of Daxton. Besides his purple eyes, Monty is the spitting image of his dad. He’s small for his age and tends to be more reserved than Xavier, which makes me feel slightly more protective of him.

Don't get me wrong, I would do anything for my older son, but I also know he has way too much power and confidence for a seven-year-old. Xav doesn't back down from anyone, which makes it a million times easier to let him leave for school in the morning. Whereas Monty prefers to keep the peace, letting those around him dictate what he will do and often letting his brother bulldoze him into anything.

Well, unless it's one of Monty’s books. Pretty sure that the kid will go toe to toe with Dax to get his hands on a book.

“Yep!” Monty says when he swallows the cookie, bouncing up on his toes in excitement as I take the movie over to the projector to get everything set up.

“Snacks?” I ask once everything is ready to go.

“Swedish fish?” Monty asks hopefully, and I nod.

“Sure thing. But you’ve got to eat two slices of pizza before candy, or Mom will get mad at both of us,” I barter. Monty nods in agreement as he moves around the couches, which are set up in a half circle at the center of the room. Gathering all the pillows and blankets from each seat, he piles them on the biggest couch Zane likes to sit in, before snagging the smallest blanket for himself and crawling into the nest he made for himself and Zane.

I chuckle and wink at him as I head upstairs to grab the candy and a few drinks for me and the guys. I was half tempted to ask Monty to snuggle me during the movie, but I know the moment Zane comes down and sees him in my chair and not his, he’ll simply kidnap him and tuck him into his miniature nest.

It’s been like this since Monty was a baby. He was rather fussy as an infant and had some digestive issues and food allergies that took us a few months to figure out. The only thing that would soothe the poor little guy was Zane’s warm hand on his tiny tummy. Even after we figured out how to help Monty, Zane would snuggle with him during movies, and six years later, it’s still a thing.

When I get to the main floor of the house, my steps slow as hushed arguing voices from the living room gain my attention. Taking a quiet step forward, I look into the open space to find Dax and Fina talking. Well, Dax is talking. Fina looks like she’s contemplating his death. I stifle my smile as she narrows her eyes on Dax, and I shake my head. That girl is so much like her brother, it’s scary. She stands eye level with Dax, tall for a typical seventeen-year-old girl, and crosses her arms over her chest as Dax continues talking. Her long, almost waist-length hair falls in a silky sheet down her back, and when the sunlight hits it just right, it gives off almost a blue glow. Fina has always been cute as a button, but as she got older, her beauty grew, and Gabe’s stress along with it. Keeping boys away from her had become a full-time job until her Fae form came in; now she has no issues handling the little horn dogs herself.

“Please don’t close me out, Fina. I want to help,” he whispers, making my smile disappear. Fina doesn’t say anything in response, and Daxton’s shoulders sag. “You know I love you... right?” Fina stiffens and nods, but looks away from Dax as the air around them cools.

Shit, this is a private conversation, and as much as I want to figure out

what's wrong, I don't want to intrude. "Then please let me help!" Dax begs.

"You can't!" Fina hisses under her breath, black magic dancing at her fingertips. Daxton's brows furrow as I slowly step back, not wanting to draw attention to myself, just wanting to give them some privacy.

"You went to the hospital to see Teos?" he asks, worry tinging his voice. Fina's eyes flash in anger, darkening until they are black voids.

"Stay out of my head," she snaps, a wave of magic rushing through the room, making Dax curse and stumble away from her, grunting in pain as he pushes a hand to his temple. The deadly magic runs over my skin, making me shiver with dread, and my stomach flips. Shit, she's getting stronger.

"Dammit," I whisper, running forward to help keep Dax on his feet, no longer caring to stay quiet. I catch him under his arms before he can fall to the ground. My eyes widen when I see blood slowly drip from his nose, his normally bright eyes are cloudy and dazed. "Are you okay?" I ask in a panic as blood starts to pour down his face. Reaching into my pocket, I yank my phone out to call Doctor Green as I slowly lower him to the couch behind us.

"Dax!" Fina shouts, crashing to her knees in front of him with wide eyes. They are gray now, no longer black, and I breathe a sigh of relief. "I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!" she rasps, reaching forward to wipe the blood on his face. When she pulls her fingers back, she stares at the thick red liquid in horror, and I can see something break inside her as she falls back onto her butt in shock.

"I'm fine, Fina. It's okay." Dax reassures her as fast as he can, shaking his head a little while moving to pinch the bridge of his nose in an attempt to get the blood to stop. I frown, not quite buying it, my eyes scanning his suddenly pale face before I look back at Fina. She's still staring at her bloody fingers, her thin body so still, I can't be sure if she's breathing or not.

Shit, not good.

"Hey, he's okay," I whisper, patting Daxton's knee before moving to sit next to her. I slowly reach out to pull her bloody fingers into my hand, using my shirt to clean them off while racking my brain for something to say. Fina trembles in my hold, and I look up, giving her a reassuring smile, but she's not looking at me.

"I'm so sorry, Dax," she whispers, tears streaming down her cheeks.

"Fina," Dax whispers, leaning forward to pull her into his arms for a hug, but she stiffens and yanks herself out of my hold, sliding back on the floor a few feet while shaking her head. Dax frowns, his eyes widening as Fina

stands on shaking legs.

“Don't,” she rasps, wiping at her tear-stained face as Dani and Zane run in from the kitchen.

“What's going on?” Danica asks in a panic when she sees blood on Daxton's face. I catch her by the waist as she runs toward him, knowing Dax needs to defuse the situation with Fina first.

“Fina. I promise I'm okay. It was an accident,” he says calmly, standing while holding his hands out in front of him like he's trying to calm a wild animal. Blood is still running down his lips and chin, but it looks like it's slowed a little.

“Are you okay?” Zane asks, his face strained with worry when he sees Dax and Fina. He moves closer to her when Dax nods, and she holds a shaking hand up to him.

“Please don't!” she begs, moving further away from us all. Black magic sparks around her, and she curses, looking at her hands as though they have betrayed her. “I can't... I don't want to hurt you,” her voice cracks, and Dani whispers her name, her eyes filling with tears.

“You won't, sweetie. It's okay.”

The air chills, and I slowly push up to my feet, keeping Dani pressed firmly to my side. While I want to go to my terrified niece, that will only stress her out more. I eye her magic as it slowly swirls and grows around her. I've seen this magic before, but it's always been Gabe's, and since we have a magic connection, it's never hurt me before. We don't have that protection from Fina's magic, and I can't help but feel the cold dip of fear crawl up my spine as her magic grows in strength around her.

“Serafina. Just take a deep breath and harness your magic. You're in control, not your magic,” Dani instructs calmly, trying to take a step forward, then glaring up at me when I don't let her. But too fucking bad. Dani can control Gabriel's Reaper's magic, not Fina's. She will get hurt or worse if that magic comes in contact with her skin.

“Danica,” Zane growls in warning, his shoulders bunched up like he's trying not to throw himself in front of her. I wince when I see his eyes shift to the gold of his Dragon. Shit, having his mate and unborn children in a room with rogue magic isn't good when he is still trying to get back in control of his Dragon. “Out,” he demands, and Dani glares at him.

“She will not hurt us. Knock it off,” Dani hisses in anger, making me purse my lips. She's right, Fina would never hurt us, but her magic is another

story. More tears spill down Fina's cheeks as she shakes her head, and the temperature of the room drops significantly as I step protectively in front of Danica.

"I can't! It won't listen to me. Zane's right... You have to stay away from me!" she rasps, holding her shaking hands in front of her while watching as black magic cords around her before inching toward us.

"Get Danica out of here," Daxton snaps, his eyes widening in fear as the room darkens. I'm just about to throw Dani over my shoulder when silver magic courses into the room like a powerful wave, encompassing the black void of death and making bright blue sparks flash in the air as they battle. I curse and turn, wrapping Danica in my arms as I let my shift take over, replacing my vulnerable skin with granite. Shooting a panicked look toward Dax, I watch in amusement as Zane snatches him off his feet and literally tosses him over the couch to keep him safe.

I breathe a sigh of relief as Gabriel strides into the room, his eyes flashing to Danica in my arms and nodding in relief before moving a hand through the air in front of him and forcing the battling magic out of his way. It flows and bends, bowing under his feet as his commanding presence dominates the room. Gabe's liquid silver eyes gleam as he walks calmly up to his sister and takes her trembling hands into his, smothering the darkness and restoring an eerily calm to the room in a matter of seconds.

My eyes widen as Daxton pops up from behind the couch, his disheveled hair looking like it's been through a windstorm as the smaller man glares death at Zander, who simply shrugs in response.

"Deep breath," Gabe instructs in a deep voice, drawing our attention back to them. Fina does as instructed, and Gabe nods in approval. "Release it," he demands, and like a small bubble, the power in the air erupts, making all of us but the two Reapers in the room flinch. "Good job," he praises in a soft voice, his hands releasing hers and moving up to cup her face, frowning at the fear and pain he sees in her young eyes. "What do you need?" he asks, and Fina releases a choked sob.

"I-I need a second," she whispers, and he nods, letting her go. Fina casts Dax another apologetic look before spinning on her heels and dashing upstairs to her room. I watch her go, my heart cracking, wanting to help her but knowing we can't push her too far.

"Remington," Gabe whispers in a strained voice, and my gaze moves to where Remi's Wolf stands by the door of the living room next to a shocked

Kayla, his bright yellow eyes already tracking Fina's retreat. Remi chuffs and growls, looking at Dani for a moment before bounding after Fina. The moment they are out of sight, Gabe spins and runs to where I'm holding Danica, tearing her from my arms and encompassing her in a protective hug.

"Look at me," he says urgently, his hands running up and down her arms, moving to her shoulders and her stomach before Zane shoves his arm between them and scoops Dani into his arms. Movement behind them catches my eye as Kayla slips from the room, giving us a moment alone as a family.

"Did any of the magic touch her?" Gabe asks in a deadly cold voice, stepping back and allowing Zane to do his thing.

"Guys, I'm fine," Dani sighs, patting Zane's shoulder as he growls, sitting on the couch and holding her close, his hand resting on her belly. Dax hops over the back, sitting next to them, his eyes scanning her with fear etched into his brow. "Dax was the one who was bleeding," she points out, trying to shove out of Zane's arms to get to Daxton.

"No. She was still a good distance away. I was just about to pull her from the room when you came in," I whisper, my fear hitching when Zane wraps an arm around her, stopping her wiggling. He closes his eyes and leans closer to her stomach, his hands trembling as he holds his breath. "Are the babies okay?"

Dani stops at my words, her hand moving on top of Zane's, and looking up at me and Gabe with the first spark of fear. "They're fine... right? I wasn't near her magic, it was all the way across the room." Gabe nods and kneels next to her.

"Zander?" is all he says, and I feel like I have a rock stuck in my throat. Zane suddenly relaxes and groans while nodding.

"They're fine. It took me a moment to find them because of how small they are. Their magic is still developing. Where the fuck is Carter? I want him to do a full check of her before we go check on the boys," Zane grinds out. Dani sags in Zane's arms for only a moment before sitting upright and leaping for Dax, who catches her with an "*Oomph*."

"Where is Xavier?" I ask Gabe, my eyes never leaving Dani as she fusses over Dax, who keeps reassuring her he's fine while trying to get her to sit back on Zane's lap before he freaks out.

"I brought him downstairs and had Dom stay with them, so they were shielded," Gabe explains. "Dom should be on his way up," Gabe mutters just as Dominic sprints into the room and sits on the couch next to Dax. He places

one hand on Dani and the other on Dax, as warm golden light spills from his palms. I shiver and relax, his Angelic magic lightening the room as he stares at Dani like he's afraid she might be hurt.

Dax sighs and closes his eyes in relief when Dom's magic heals whatever Fina had accidentally done to him, and Dani starts to cry, sending Zane absolutely feral as he jumps to his feet and yanks on his hair in concern.

"It's just the pregnancy hormones. She's concerned for Fina," Dom reassures Zane. He moves his hand from Dani first and nods at Zane, who is now growling as he scoops her back up and instantly starts to soothe her.

"I'm fine! I promise. But I need to go talk to Fina. She's hurting right now," Dani says between hiccuping sobs. "Jesus, I'm a mess," she scolds herself, blinking back the tears as she shakes her head. I wince as I remember how annoyed she was with her emotions while pregnant with the boys. Dani has never liked showing her weaknesses, and she would rather shove a hot poker in her eye than talk about her feelings. So she's never handled the whole extra crying symptom of pregnancy very well.

"You're not going near her just yet. None of you are," Gabe commands, standing up while keeping a watchful eye on Dax. "She asked for time, and we are going to respect that request. Then I will go talk to her."

"She went to the hospital, Gabe," Dax whispers, eyes still closed. "Be careful when you talk to her. Something is wrong. She's more closed off than normal, and what I did see wasn't good."

"What did you see?" Gabe demands, and Dax cracks an eye open and scowls at Gabe. That's the thing about Dax. He will tell Gabe about Fina only if he thinks Gabe needs to be brought into the loop, but he never reveals her secrets or says more than what he thinks is necessary.

"She won't tell me," Gabe whispers despairingly, hurt pooling in his voice. "I just want to help."

"If she's not telling you yet, then she's not ready to talk, Gabe. Be patient," Dax mutters, making Gabe sigh but nod.

"Dax, push against my mental shields," Dom instructs. Dax closes his eyes, then winces, and Dom nods. "Hmm," is all he says, and now I'm worried for a whole other reason.

"Hmm? What does 'hmm' mean, Dominic?" I ask, shifting back into my human form before sitting next to Dax. I reach out and lift his stained and bloody shirt, using it to clean off his face as Dom continues hovering both hands over Daxton.

“Dax was mentally connected to Fina when her magic attacked him. He was able to fight it for long enough to close his mental shield, but his magic stores are low. He needs Danica,” Dominic explains.

“Zane, let me down,” Danica demands, her purple eyes scanning Dax as she wiggles in his arms.

“No,” he snarls, his arms tightening around her.

“Here,” I mutter, standing and pointing at the couch. “Sit here,” I tell Zane, who does as he’s told. Dani sighs in relief when she can reach out and touch Dax again, and she looks up at Dom, who nods at her.

“Just a little, love. He needs a boost to help his magic heal faster,” Dom instructs. Dani closes her eyes, and seconds later, I can feel her comforting and familiar magic in the air around us. It mainly travels into Daxton, but it circles us all like it’s wanting to be sure we are okay. Dax groans and slumps closer to Dani as she filters her magic into his, and color slowly comes back to his face.

“Mommy?” a small voice asks, making all six pairs of eyes in the room dart over to where Monty and Xav are standing, watching us with curious expressions. Monty perks up at the attention, skipping into the room while Xavier's eyes dart to Dani. He freezes before darting accusing looks at everyone and walks over to where Dani is perched on Zane's lap, grabbing the hand not holding onto Daxton.

“Whoa there, killer. What’s with the glare?” I ask when he slowly glares at each of us, his gray eyes holding a large amount of anger. Monty rushes over to Dax and climbs up on his lap before setting his hand on Dani’s and looking between his parents with a frown.

“Xavier?” Gabe questions, kneeling down to get on eye level with our son. Daxton chuckles a little and opens his eyes, winking at Xav when he doesn't answer his dad.

“He wants to know which of us made his mom cry, and he’s contemplating how to take revenge without getting grounded.” My lips quirk up at that, and I have to turn around so he doesn't see my amusement. The little shit put peanut butter in my sheets the last time I pissed him off. I’m not risking that again. It took me washing my hair three times to get it all out, and I don't even want to talk about how fucking uncomfortable peanut butter is when it gets stuck between your toes.

“Oh, honey. No one made me cry. I’m only tired,” Dani whispers, squeezing his small hand in hers before leaning forward and kissing his hair.

“And what did we discuss about taking revenge on your fathers?” she asks, deepening Xavier’s frown.

“That words are better than actions,” Monty chirps for his brother, earning him a glare in return.

“Precisely,” Dani says, smiling at Monty while pulling Xav closer, and whispering something into our son's ear that I can’t hear. Xav nods, then wraps his arms around Dani, hugging her tight.

“Alright, who is ready for movie night?” Dom asks, letting his hands leave Dax before wiggling his fingers at Monty, who cheers and throws himself at him. Dom catches him and stands. “I hear we are watching *Frozen*. You have excellent taste in movies,” he praises, making Monty light up even more. “Should we help bring the pizzas downstairs? Xav? How about you give me a hand?” Dom asks, successfully distracting both boys and leading them to the kitchen while Zane stands with Dani, and Gabe and I help Dax up.

“I’m good now,” Dax says with a sigh, straightening his glasses on his nose while cracking his neck to the side. “But I think I may need something stronger than soda if I have to sit through another Elsa sing-along,” he grumbles, making Gabe laugh as we head downstairs.

CHAPTER 13

DOMINIC



“Deep breath in,” I instruct, my hands on Solomon's shoulders as he sits on the couch in front of me. “How long has it been like this?” I ask, worry filling me as I stare down at my oldest friend, while he tries to control his pained gasps. I had dipped away during family movie night once Dani and the boys fell asleep. I wanted to follow Gabriel up to his bedroom when he had scooped her out of Roran’s arms, but I had promised Sol I would check in with him and that had been last week.

What I hadn’t expected though was to find him on the couch, dripping sweat as his magic curled in on itself, darkening in front of my very eyes. “Two days. It let up for a couple of hours, but it got bad again last night,” Sol admits with a groan, hunching over as he rocks his body, trying to soothe the pain of his magic shifting.

“You knew this was coming. Why didn't you take precautions?” I ask, frustrated at him for doing nothing to help himself.

“I tried, Dom. I tried but... It was them,” he grinds out then curses, sweat beading at his brow, dripping down his mocha skin. I curse, upset at him for being so damn stubborn, but understanding why he’s let it go this far. When an Angel falls from grace, their magic starts to erode and darken to ensure the Fallen cannot produce any other Angels. Typically a Fallen Angel can stall the erosion by making physical ties between themselves and another, using their partners to stabilize their magic. But Sol has refused to form any other ties since Atlas, Alice, and he went their separate ways and now his magic is turning, completing his full shift into a Fallen Angel.

“Sol, there is no way for you to keep those two safe if you’re dead,” I snap, as I stand and race into his kitchen. There I grab a towel and wet it with

cool water before I run back to him. Running the cloth over his sweaty brow I watch as he groans and shakes.

“I can do this. I still have my ties to them. I’m fine,” he rasps, lying through his teeth.

“Stop lying, you know I can tell when you do. Your ties are weak and you need to be near Atlas and Alice for them to do you any good. Why the hell did you bind yourself to them, Solomon? Do you understand how that weakened you? It was foolish to trust them without more time under your belt. What were you thinking?” I chide, mad at Sol and the other two for unknowingly putting him in this situation. Sol looks up with anger and hurt sparking in his golden eyes, and I flinch back.

“Because I fucking love them, Dominic. Why the hell are you sounding like an Angel? If this is how you're going to help me, I would rather you leave. I don't need *Diana's* pointed words right now.” My heart drops as I realize I just scolded Solomon for falling in love, something my mother did only last week when she brought up my family and my tether.

“Shit,” I mutter under my breath and nod. “You're right, I’m sorry,” I whisper, patting Sol's leg as my mind races with a solution. “I’m only worried about you. You have to stick around for a while longer; I need you,” I admit, standing up and brushing at my shirt to soothe the wrinkles in an attempt to hide my distress. “Maybe I could have Alice come over for dinner?” I suggest, then practically growl under my breath when Sol shakes his head.

“No. She’s finally smiling again, Dom. I won’t be the reason for her tears a second time,” he rasps, and I throw my hands up in the air in frustration.

“Then what? Do you expect me to sit here and watch you die?” I ask, then curse, as I reach up and tug at my hair. “I won’t do that!”

“I won't die. You're being dramatic,” Sol mutters, then shoots me a pained smile.

“It’s death or the inevitable twist of your soul, Solomon. And that is only if you survive the transition. You’re literally going to place your soul in fate's hands and let it warp your true purpose. Light to dark, Sol! I can’t...” I trail off as Sol grunts and pushes himself up from the couch. “If you don't have enough magic stored, the change will kill you. And you...” I stop talking as I stare at him, looking up at the big man as he steps closer and then wraps me in an overly tight hug. I sigh and roll my eyes, as I let him squeeze me practically to death before he releases me and smiles.

“I love you too, Dom. Now stop stressing and go back to that cute mate of yours. Is the small one still taken?” he teases and I sigh, smiling at my feet as I shake my head. Sol has no interest in Daxton besides a mild sexual attraction, but he does love the blush that tinges the poor Telekinetic’s face whenever he flirts with him. Dani, on the other hand...

“Yes, Daxton is very much taken, and if you don't stop teasing the poor man in front of Dani, she's going to roast your balls.”

“Kinky,” Sol says with a smirk, then winces as his magic darkens a little more.

“Sit back down,” I murmur, an idea sparking as he sits. “Hand out,” I demand. Sol arches a dark brow but listens, and I set my smaller hand on his. My hand is almost half the size of his massive one and looks like snow against the dark gold hue of his. I take a deep breath and pray to the Gods that this works.

I was blessed enough to have a Tether who doesn't need the extra magic I received when I bound us together. She is incredibly powerful on her own and has four Ractori mates to keep her magic strong at all times. This leaves me with more magic than a normal Nephilim would have. I look at Sol and nod, making him give me a puzzled look, probably wondering what the hell I’m doing with his hand.

Slowly, I release my magic into his palm, a slow trickle at first, the feeling strange and foreign. I’ve never had to transfer to an Angel before, but as I get used to it, I let more magic filter between us. Sol gasps, then groans, his eyes floating shut as he sags into the couch. His fingers grip my hand, holding me like a lifeline, and hell, I suppose that’s what I am.

After a few moments, I feel lightheaded and know I need to slow the flow. But my fear of losing my friend has me sending him another wave of gold magic before I stumble back and yank my hand from his.

“Dom!” Sol shouts, launching himself at me and catching me under the arms before I fall on my ass. “Shit, are you okay? What were you thinking?” he shouts, his dark gold eyes staring down at me in shock and fear. Angels don't share their magic; it’s something that is frowned upon. If a fellow Angel doesn't have enough magic for something, they are viewed as lesser than you and deserve to suffer. Sol shakes his head as I laugh and pat his chest, my vision swimming as I sway on my feet.

“It won't stop the darkness. Only your mortal anchors can do that. But hopefully, you’ll have enough magic to survive the change,” I murmur, then

roll my lips together as my stomach rolls and bile crawls up my throat. Shit. I gave him way too much. But my condition is temporary, something that will be fixed the moment I can get to my beautiful Tether. Sol makes sure I'm steady on my feet before letting go of my arms and wrapping me in another bear hug.

"Thank you," he rasps, and I pat him awkwardly on the back. Growing up, physical touch was nonexistent, a weakness Diana could never afford. The only person I have no issue touching is Danica, but after ten years of living with Zander, I have learned how to accept a hug without freaking out, even if it's still odd to me. "You need to get back to your Tether," Sol suddenly says, the worry in his eyes no longer for himself, but for me. I nod in agreement as I look at his six sets of eyes. Yeah... definitely used too much magic. Sol looks like a damn alien right now.

"I do?" he asks in amusement, and I realize I've said that thought out loud.

"Time for me to go," I announce, my words slurring and I briefly wonder if this is what it feels like for a person to be drunk. I take what little magic I have left and nod at Sol before teleporting myself into Gabriel's room. I had seen Dani with him about an hour ago, and my best guess is that she'll still be in there.

The floor comes at my face much faster than I'm prepared for, and I moan as I belly-flop onto the hard wooden floors of Gabe's bedroom. The air whooshes from my lungs, and my cheek burns from the force I just hit the floor with.

Damn, that hurt!

"Dom?" Dani shouts, and I slowly lift my head to see her head lifted off Gabriel's chest where she was snuggling on top of him. She's completely naked, lying on top of an equally naked Gabriel with her delectable ass on full display, and I groan again. This time from the blood in my body racing to my dick, making me even more lightheaded.

"Why are you so sexy? I need my blood to stay where it's needed, Love. But no, I have to think with the wrong head," I complain. Then I try to find the willpower to push up on my hands and knees and crawl the few feet to Gabriel's bed.

"What happened to you?" Gabe snarls when I climb up next to him and flop back on his extra pillow. "Wait, I didn't say you could join us. I shared last week. Get out," he snaps and I lift my hand slowly and flip him the bird

in response. I give Dani a pouty face as her magic cords around me, then grin triumphantly when she gasps—realizing how low my magic is—and throws her delightfully naked body on top of me. A wave of warmth rushes me as my Tether’s magic floods every drained inch of my body, stabilizing my magic in a matter of seconds.

Gabe feels her magic shifting into me and slaps his hand on her ass, spanking her hard and making her jump and yell in surprise as he quickly refills the magic she gives me with his own.

Wrapping my arms around my Tether, I open our bond, letting her feel everything I am as I breathe her in. I close my eyes in contentment as the sweet scent of coffee and flowers filters into my senses, wondering how the hell I got this lucky to have such a beautiful and amazing woman. She didn't even ask what happened or what was going on before she started giving me her magic. She simply saw that I was dangerously low and immediately gave me what I needed.

I fucking love this woman so much!

“I love you, too,” she whispers, laying her head on my shoulder as she keeps her magic flowing. Danica chuckles at my next thought as I keep her tucked on top of me, happy to stay here forever, that is, until Gabe growls at our side and elbows me in the ribs.

“Are you going to tell me what the fuck happened, Carter?”

“Twenty-seven seconds. I win,” Dani whispers, then giggles when I smirk up at her.

“What?” Gabe asks in confusion.

“Dom said it would take you less than a minute to start questioning him. I bet it would take less than thirty seconds,” she answers, turning to look at Gabe with as much love and adoration as she had with me. Gabriel narrows his eyes and turns toward me, hooking an arm around Dani in an attempt to claim her as his once again. I tighten my hold on her and smile when Dani frowns at Gabe.

“He still needs more magic,” she scolds, shaking her head at him while holding onto me like a monkey.

“He can have his magic while you are snuggling with me,” Gabe clips, tugging on her again. “I wasn't done with you yet, Princess. Since Dom decided to interrupt, he can watch on the sidelines like a good little Angel.” His voice is patronizing and I roll my eyes when he glares death at me. He’s acting like watching Dani getting fucked doesn't turn me the hell on! It’s not

the punishment he thinks it is. I open my mouth to say as much when something hard jabs my thigh, my eyes widening when I realize what it is.

“Are you poking me... with your *cock*, Covington?” I drawl, making Gabe and Dani pause mid-argument as Gabe frowns, then looks between us, and jumps back at least a foot.

“Dammit! I didn't mean to. Danica was arguing with me and you know that turns me on and...” Gabe stammers out, looking down at his erect dick like it just betrayed him.

“I’m flattered. Though I do prefer tits over dick. So I think I’ll pass,” I tease, making Danica burst into hysterical laughter.

“That’s not funny,” Gabe snarls. Reaching over, he scoops Dani up in his arms and places her on his lap to hide his hard length while she keeps laughing. “Get out or I swear I will figure out how to reap your soul and devour it myself,” he grinds out and I laugh, sitting up on his bed and swinging my legs to the floor.

“Fine, but only because I don't want you to molest me in the middle of the night.” I fake a shudder, then duck as a pillow flies over my head. “Thanks, Love,” I whisper, risking my soul for a brief kiss when I lean over the bed and lock my lips with my wife. I feel a million times better but should probably get a little rest, just to be safe.

“Are you sure you're alright?” she asks, kissing me sweetly before I pull back and wink at Gabe, just to mess with him some more. His expression darkens and I grin, proud as hell for ruffling the Reaper’s feathers. I’m not sure why he’s so jumpy that he poked me with his dick. Hell, our dicks have touched while fucking Danica’s sweet cunt at the same time.

“Right as rain, though I do have a craving that only you can quench,” I admit and Dani nods, kissing me again before I turn to leave. I already know she’s planning a date for us so that we can spend time alone together. That's something Dani does very well. There are some of us that require her attention more than others. But the moment one of us says we need her, she ensures to make time for whoever it is.

“Carter, we will discuss all this in the morning,” Gabe shouts after me.

“I’d rather not talk about your sudden attraction to me, Covington,” I shout back.

“I meant the low magic thing! Dammit, Princess, stop laughing. It’s not funny,” Gabe snarls as I shut the door, laughing when I hear another pillow smack against it.

CHAPTER 14

RYLAND



Cursing, I look up at Serafina's window before lighting up my phone to see the time. Thirty-three minutes until midnight. Thirty-three minutes for me to see my mate before I have to leave her for an undetermined amount of time. If I stay for even a moment longer, I know Gabe will hunt my ass down and make me regret it. The only reason I'm not currently six feet under is because I'm a part of Gabriel's family, but I know that won't save me from a serious ass-whooping if I don't follow his rules.

I can feel my Dragon pressing against the magical binds I have wrapped around him, ensuring he doesn't attempt to take over the moment I see Fina again. It's been five months since I last saw her, and I have contemplated flying back home every day since. My heart is racing, and my palms are a little sweaty at the thought of finally setting eyes on her again. I tried to get a look at her at Kayla's house, but one of her damn husbands tackled me to the ground before I could get close to her window.

I purposely kept myself busy until it was almost time to go, knowing that if I came to see Fina any earlier, I might let her convince me to stay. Magic swirls under my skin, the darkness pools in my chest as it also longs to be near Fina. There is something about her that feeds its purpose and twists its murderous rage into nothing. With a simple look, she can turn the beast inside me into a tame kitten in her tiny hand. My Dragon purrs in agreement, and I roll my eyes at him. Could he get any fucking worse than this? Why not roll over and let her scratch your belly like a damn dog while you're at it? I mentally ask him, and my chest rumbles, my thoughts having the opposite effect on him as he agrees too quickly to that damned idea.

"Fucking hell. I don't know what I'm going to do when she finally

realizes how much control she possesses over us,” I grumble as I hook my fingertips into the brick of the facade of the house and scale the building, carefully avoiding the windows of the first and second floor before coming to Serafina’s on the third. Her room is dark as I try to look through the soft gray curtains. I can’t tell if she’s already asleep or not, and I’m not sure which I would prefer. All I know is I have to see her at least once before I leave.

Using my magic, I flick the latch on her window and silently remove the screen before pushing the window up and crawling into her room. I grin at the familiarity of the action, recalling our childhood game of sneaking into each other's bedroom and disarming the other, making them surrender by whatever means necessary. The first few years, I won unless I let Fina. However, once she turned twelve, I started letting her win less and less and actively had to stay on guard. By the time she was fourteen, we were evenly matched.

I inhale and bite the inside of my cheek as citrus, amber, and jasmine fill my senses. Her scent is so uniquely beautiful and familiar that my chest aches with a longing to hold her close. I give the room a quick glance, ensuring Gabriel isn't in here waiting for me with a scythe in hand before setting the window screen down on the floor and straightening the curtains.

The room is pitch black, more so than normal, and I let my Dragon inch forward just enough to shift my eyes so I can see better, frowning when I feel Fina’s magic thick in the air. There is a small lump in the center of the massive bed Zander bought for her on her fifteenth birthday. As I slowly walk toward her, worry replaces my excitement. Why didn’t she hear me come through her window? My little huntress became so good at catching me sneaking into her room that she would oftentimes be ready and waiting, never letting me have the upper hand like this.

Something’s wrong.

My Dragon growls in anger, needing to know what happened so that he can take care of the problem himself. His desire for her propels me forward as I study her dark magic floating in the air, releasing the blue sparks of my Demonic magic in an effort to understand what happened.

Fina’s magic has always been dark. That's why I love it so much. Her darkness calls to my own, making me feel not as alone in the world, but there is something about it tonight that is different. Instead of the sharp tang of death I typically sense, there is the bitterness of pain and something else I can't quite put my finger on. My heart rate slowly picks up as I lean over the

bed, reaching out with one hand to move the blankets away from her still body, then freeze when something sharp presses against my back. My eyes close, and I can't stop the slight shake of my head as I realize I fell into Fina's trap once again.

Dammit, how did I let her trick me like that?

"You're getting lazy in your old age, Vânător." I feel myself smile at her childhood nickname for me and relish her voice's soft, husky quality as she presses her favorite blade a little too hard into my back.

"Draga Mea? Is that any way to say hello?" I chide as I slowly sit up.

"It is when you sneak through my window uninvited," she murmurs, her low voice sending a chill through me as I slowly raise my hands above my head, accepting her victory.

"Words, Vânător. I want to hear it," she whispers, and I smile, opening my eyes as my Dragon snarls in frustration. How the Hell did she sneak up behind us like that without us noticing?

"I concede, little huntress," I rasp out, taking a deep breath to regain some of my control that slipped when she took me off guard. Instantly, the blade at my back is gone, and I pivot on my heels only to watch Serafina's back stride away. Frowning, I tilt my head to the side, watching her lovingly place the small knife on her dresser, her long, elegant fingers running over the pearly white of the bone handle before she turns back toward me.

My breath hitches, and I let my hands ball into fists at my sides as Fina's eyes run up and down the length of my body, taking me in. Then she arches an unimpressed brow and cocks her hip to one side, leaning against her dresser as she crosses her arms over her chest. I almost release a pained groan when I see she's wearing nothing but a tiny set of satin black sleep shorts and a white tank top that does nothing to hide her stunning body.

How did she get more beautiful in the five months since I saw her last?

I take in her long black hair that falls down her back, wishing I could go over and run my hands through it like I used to, to feel those silky soft strands between my fingers while I sit on the couch, letting her rest her head on my lap as she tells me about her day. Pain bursts within me and I grunt, putting my hands on my hips while forcing myself to look away from her.

"Why are you here?" she asks, her voice cold and indifferent, the same voice she uses on her brother when she's upset or when she hides what's truly going on in her perfect, dark mind. A voice she has never once directed my way. My attention snaps back to her, and I narrow my eyes when I notice

she's no longer looking at me. Instead, she's studying her hand, checking her nails while giving me the cold shoulder.

What the actual fuck?

"I wanted to see you before I left," I answer truthfully, wincing when her cold eyes dart up to me in accusation.

"You said you weren't coming back. So, I suppose I should ask why you are here... in Montana, Ryland."

Ryland... not Vânător or Balaur. None of the cute nicknames she called me as we grew up. I stick my tongue in my cheek, keeping myself quiet when all I want to do is call her out on her cold demeanor and demand for it to stop. I know I deserve her anger. Five months ago, I ran out on her when she was crying and needed me most. But if I hadn't, my Dragon would have mated her, with or without her consent.

I messaged Zane the moment I left and told him to check on her. The idea of my mate alone and crying made me absolutely mad with rage. The way she'd looked at me, so fucking broken when I tore myself away from her, telling her to stop... that I didn't want to continue what she had started. I watched as her shoulders rolled in, her breath stalling in her lungs as I took another step back, separating us for the first time since we saved each other ten years ago. I'd left for Silvercrest eight months before that kiss, and while our relationship was strained from my lack of communication, there was still warmth in her eyes when she saw me Christmas morning. Something that is completely missing now as she watches me.

I shift under her heavy stare, not liking or wanting the judgment I find there. I've become a master of reading Fina. She was never one to talk or relay her feelings with words. But if you watch her closely, you can easily decipher her silent emotions. Like the way her fingers are balled into fists instead of relaxed at her sides. The way her lips thin when she cracks her neck to the side. Or the way her eyes promise a slow, painful death... Fuck... yeah, she's definitely upset. But I'll take this version of her over the sad, broken one I had left five months ago. Unfortunately, I don't see this conversation going any better than the last, which makes my self-hatred grow. I shouldn't have come to see her, but there was no stopping it. My acute need for this girl has become almost unbearable.

She looked so damn confused the last time I was here, and I didn't have the answers she needed. I know that if I told her it was for her own good, she would have laughed at me, then forced the issue. If I brought up the fact that

her brother would kill me, it would have only driven a wedge between them, something I refused to do. And if I told her the truth, that I craved her more than the air that I breathe... we would have fallen into each other's arms, and I would have taken complete control of her life.

That's the real issue here. My Dragon has control issues, especially after what happened in that warehouse Zane pulled me out of. If he doesn't have control over everything, our mental connection starts to deteriorate, and he will become almost unstoppable. Zane says I need to form a friendship with him, to let the beast inside me connect with who I am as a person, and I've tried! But he doesn't trust me enough to let the bond be equal.

As a boy, I gave up on him all those years ago in the warehouse. I longed for the pain to end and allowed my Dragon to fade away. I almost let us die at the hands of a madman, and as a result, my Dragon refuses to let me lead. So I have to keep him under my thumb, ensuring he is always under my control. The moment I'm not, he will take over. Even when I do shift, allowing him to spread his wings and fly, I have a dark ring of magic leashing him to my will, not trusting him enough to have any form of freedom.

So, instead of comforting Fina like she needed, I ran from her. Too scared of what I would do if I stayed. I shifted and took to the air, flying as hard as I could, pushing myself to my limits, and then kept going. I had to put as much distance between me and Serafina as possible. When I finally landed, my Dragon's legs had given out, and I didn't have enough strength to shift back. It took me over forty-eight hours to physically recover from the strain I put on my body and magic. And that was with my accelerated shifter healing.

I watch Fina closely, noting how there is no softness in her voice, and how stiff she is as she stands there, glaring at me. My Dragon snarls in response, urging me to move toward our mate and hold her close. To coax the anger from her and have her melting against us like she used to. I grit my teeth and keep my feet rooted in place as my Dragon rages.

Not yet. I can't yet. She needs time to grow up. She needs freedom to find herself. I refuse to take her choices away and have her grow to resent me.

"I needed to see Gabriel. I had something pressing that needed to be brought to his attention," I finally answer. Not a lie, but definitely not the truth. Yes, I needed to talk to Gabe, but I could have asked for his help over the phone, which would have saved me a lot of stress and panic over the safety of my soul. But it's not like I can tell her I flew for hours without stopping simply to see her beautiful face. To breathe in her scent so that I can

imprint it into my memory. I had to see with my own two eyes that she was safe, even though I had nearly daily updates sent to me from Zane.

I scowl at that thought and decide to talk to my father about the information he is passing my way. Sure, he will tell me the basics and even send me photos of Fina and the boys at least once a week. But it seems like he's been leaving out a few important details about my mate's life... like three pathetic little boys who thought they could bully her at school.

"That doesn't explain why you're in my room," she points out, and I frown.

"I already told you I wanted to see you, Draga Mea," I whisper, hoping my words might ease some of the frigid disdain she's currently radiating. Fina eyes me for a moment, and I brace myself for a verbal battle, but what I don't expect is for her shoulders to slump just the smallest amount before she turns away, dismissing me from her presence.

"You came. You saw... Now leave," she whispers, keeping her back to me, and I'm not fast enough to stop the growl that bursts from between my lips this time. I take a step forward, my hand snapping out and curling around her delicate wrist before I can think better of it. I yank her toward me, then snarl when she twists, using her magic to break my hold on her wrist, and suddenly I'm flying through the air, black death corded around me like a snake. With a surprised grunt, I crash onto Fina's bed and shove at her magic, hating how damn strong it is.

When did this happen? And what the hell is going on? Why is her magic so enraged? The last I knew, Fina was still trying to control her magic with small sparks and waves under Gabriel's guidance. But she just took me and tossed me across the room with little effort. Jumping to my feet, I straighten my clothes while shaking my head.

"What the hell, Fina?" I snarl, releasing my blue demonic magic to wind around her in a desperate attempt to soothe her rage. I swear it hisses at me when our magic collides, and I groan as they tangle, their strands separating and then weaving with each other, binding the two separate strands of magic together.

"Why would you think you can touch me?" Fina rasps, the already dark room shifting until not even my Dragon eyes can see through the void. Instinctually, I release more magic, the small bite of childhood fear racing down my spine when I can't see anything. My Dragon roars in anguish as Fina yanks on her magic, severing it from him with what feels like a fiery

dagger in the heart. Her magic spirals around me, picking up speed until it feels like I'm standing in a hurricane.

"Stop!" I shout, yelling out in pain when she only pulls away further. I can see her gasp and hunch over. She's not only hurting me, but herself as well. Yeah... no, that's not okay. She can take out everything she needs to on me, but hurting herself will never fucking be okay.

Running for her, I shove my way through thick, painful magic and gather her slumped form back in my arms, unsure of what caused this sudden emotional shift. I expected her anger, but not this self-destructive behavior. I wrap her in the smallest of hugs, and the magical wind around us softens a little just before she kicks and shoves at me, bucking like a wild animal stuck in a trap. Instantly, I release her; worried I've somehow hurt her more, but she only cracks her neck to the side and glares up at me.

"Do not touch me again," she threatens, her voice pitching so low I take a startled step back.

"Draga Mea?"

"You said no..." she rasps, and my legs threaten to give way from the sudden pain that filters over her beautiful face. Her eyes are red and swollen, and I frown. Has she been crying? Is that what I felt when I first came into her room?

"You don't understand. I had to," I whisper when I see a tear form in the corner of her eye.

"I told you I loved you. I asked you if I was enough for you to stay, and you said... *no*. You don't want me, so why the fuck are you in my room?" she asks, her voice rising in volume the more she speaks until a raspy scream comes from her throat as her magic moves and shifts around her protectively, pushing me farther away from her.

"Fina, stop!" I beg, yelling over the torrential winds of her dark power while desperately holding onto the broken shards of her magic that still linger in the air.

"You shouldn't be in here," she snarls, her voice growing in strength so that I can hear it. "Leave!" she shouts, louder than I have ever heard her before. Her voice cracks from the strain and my heart with it. Something heavy shoves at my chest, and suddenly I'm pressed against the door of her room just as the knob turns, and I fall into the eerily calm hallway of my true home. I gape in shock as the door slams itself shut, shutting me out from the singular, most important person in my life.

“Serafina?” I whisper as I stand on shaky legs. My Dragon is pacing, worry and anger filtering from him and into me. He blames me for this, another reason he thinks he should be in charge. “Serafina!” I shout, moving to open her door but finding it locked. Using my magic, I try to break in and roar in outrage when it doesn't work.

“Ryland?!” someone shouts my name from down the hall, but I'm too enraged to acknowledge them.

“Draga Mea!” I bellow, my fist hitting her door so hard I'm surprised it doesn't break in. Wait... that's actually a good idea. Raising my hands, I bring them down on Fina's door and snarl in anger when I feel her magic keeping it erect. She's fortified the door, locking herself away from me.

There is no way in, I realize, and I see fucking red!

“Ryland! What the hell?” Someone tries to grab my arm, and I yank out of their grip as I roar and beat on the door where my little mate hides. She can't keep herself from me! I refuse to allow it! She's mine! *MINE!* I will tear this house down brick by fucking brick to get to her.

The next thing I know, I'm being taken off my feet and shoved against a wall before a smaller hand bitch slaps me across my face, startling me enough to blink and shake my head. Fuming, I look down at an angry set of green eyes as Daxton glares up at me, shaking his head in disapproval. My Dragon snarls at him, and I can feel Daxton enter my mind to give him a metaphorical bitch slap of his own.

“You should be ashamed of yourself. This is why Zane and Gabe want you to figure things out with your Dragon! You two refuse to work together, and then this happens!” Daxton shouts, keeping me pinned against the wall as I slowly come back to myself. The red haze around me fades, and my Dragon growls softly but settles in my chest as Daxton uses his magic to speak to him. “You have to gain control *with* him, not over him, Ryland. Your Dragon is a part of you. A version of you that you can't live without. You keep treating him like he has his own mind... but you're only fighting yourself,” Dax murmurs, shaking his head and sighing in frustration as he runs a hand through his sleep-mussed hair.

“Sorry,” I whisper, the wince when I see two curious sets of eyes peering around the corner of the doorway down the hall. “Shit,” I whisper, guilt flooding me when I realize my freak-out must have woken the boys. “I mean, crap,” I correct when Daxton scowls and slaps my shoulder for cursing in front of his sons. I smile at the boys, letting them know everything is fine,

and get two beaming smiles back as they wave excitedly at me, bouncing on their toes in excitement.

“Why are the boys wearing matching purple *Harry Potter* pj’s?” I ask, then pout a little. Why didn't Roar get me any? I could have added them to my collection from him. Dax mutters something under his breath and removes his glasses, pinching the bridge of his nose and clears his throat.

“You're lucky Gabe locked him and Dani in his room, and it's soundproof, or you would be fish food right now,” Dax grumbles, ignoring my question about the boys' pj's as his magic releases me.

“Thanks,” I whisper, then freeze as heavy footsteps thunder up the stairs, and I wince.

Aww, fuck. I'm in trouble now.

Zane storms into the hall, eyes gold and shoulders tense and rippling as he prowls toward me. His Alpha dominance is thick in the air, stifling my breath as I immediately look down at my feet. My Dragon shoves at his bindings, not wanting to submit, and I snarl, leashing him tight as I dip my head in respect to my Alpha.

“What happened?” he grinds out, and Dax sighs, pats my arm, and whispers good luck before walking to where the boys watch us with giant eyes, then ushers them back into bed.

“I lost control,” I admit, keeping my eyes cast down as Zane begins to pace in front of me.

“I know! I felt it all the way downstairs, Ryland. Now tell me why the fuck you lost control? And in a home with women and children? Kay, Dani, and the boys are all under this roof!” Zane snarls, his taloned hands curled into deadly claws as he turns to face me.

“Fina and I...” I trail off, not sure how to explain what happened. Zane stops raging at my words and casts a glance at Fina's door.

“Does she need someone?” he asks, his voice instantly softer than before. I only nod my head, wishing I could be that someone but knowing I'm the last person who should step foot into that room. I know the moment I do, I'll lose control of my Dragon, and look at what happened when I didn't leash him properly for a few moments.

Fina's door, hell, her entire wall wouldn't be standing right now. I was willing to break through it to get to her... even though she didn't want me in there.

Fuck, I'm a mess.

Zane sighs, growls, then sighs again. I risk a peek at my father and swallow at the amount of disappointment I see there. "I'll send Dominic up to talk with her. He handles her magic the best when Gabriel is busy. You get your ass outside. We are going flying."

Zane doesn't wait for me to agree. He simply strides away, grabbing his long brown hair up into a bun on top of his head, tying it with a rubber band as he goes. By flying, he means we are going to do all sorts of endurance training in our Dragon forms, then we'll shift for hand-to-hand training where he'll probably kick my ass for Dragoning out so close to his family. I nod, giving Fina's locked door one last wistful look, before I walk downstairs and leave the Covington home and my heart with it.

CHAPTER 15

DANICA



“*W*hat are you doing, Angel?” Dax asks as he pulls up short in the library, eyeing me curiously. I jump a little, not having heard him come up here, and give him a guilty smile.

“Hiding,” I admit around the mouthful of cookie I had crammed in my mouth before Dax found me.

“I can see that,” he says with amusement, his bright green eyes flicking from my book in one hand to the coffee mug in my other. They linger on it for a moment, and I swear I can hear him mentally scold me, but he only sighs, being smart enough after ten years to not touch my coffee.

“It’s decaf if that makes it any better,” I pipe up, bringing my mug protectively to my chest, just in case he decides to do something brave, like stealing it from my hands. He normally wouldn’t, but Dax, Dom, and Gabe, my typically calm husbands, go a little protective when I’m pregnant.

Dax chuckles, then steps around the bookshelf I’m currently hiding behind and sits next to me. “It does actually, though I wasn’t worried. You accuse us of being overprotective when you are the most protective one out of us all. You would never do anything to hurt any of our children,” he whispers, leaning and pressing his lips to mine in a sweet kiss that makes me relax into him. His hands move around me, and he slowly slides my body until I’m sitting between his legs.

“Are you going to tell me why we are hiding?” he asks, automatically lumping himself into the equation.

“Zane...” I start to say, then stop. How do I put this nicely? It’s not like I’m actually hiding from my Dragon. It’s just if he forces me to drink another glass of water, I’ll be up all night having to pee. Plus, he has a buttload of

vitamins that he wants me to take, which isn't an issue, except one of them is so damn big I gag every time I try taking it. But what made me sneak away from a quiet read upstairs was his mention of touring some hospitals. It freaked me the fuck out. I have always hated hospitals, ever since Eve picked me up from the one my mother left me at, and I don't ever want to set foot in one again.

I gave birth to Xavier and Montag at home with a midwife. Something none of the guys were okay with, but once they realized how important it was to me to have a birth the way I wanted it, and not a standard hospital one, they gave in. When I realized this morning that Zane expects me to give birth in the hospital, I froze up, and panic crept in. I know having twins already puts me at risk for a hard birth, but I just assumed I would give birth at home, and now I'm worried about bringing it up with him.

Is he going to be upset and argue the fact that the twins might need extra medical attention? And what if they do? Maybe I'm being selfish and risking my babies for my own comfort.

"Ah, yes. I should have known. Did you know he ordered a bunch of raspberry leaf tea? Said something about it helping you toward the end of your pregnancy. There were four cases of it on the porch this morning," Dax muses, and I smile softly up at him, my worries still heavy on my mind. Dax frowns when he looks down at me, then prods my mental shields, silently asking me to let him in. Leaning my head back on his chest, I do just that, opening myself up to him and allowing our magic to mingle, comforting each other as Dax filters through my troubled thoughts.

"Hmm, you have been stressing a lot about this," he finally whispers into my mind, leaning forward to dust his soft lips over my cheek. I nod, keeping my eyes closed, not having to talk to him since he's already in my mind.

"Do you think that a hospital birth is necessary? Would it ease our anxiety or add to it?" I take a moment to ponder his question, readjusting so that my hip doesn't dig into his thigh.

"I'm not sure. I think it depends. If I were to go into labor early, I would, of course, go to the hospital. But if the babies were full term, and the midwife thought it would be safe, I would rather stay at home," I admit.

"Then that's what we do, Angel. It's simple. We keep the health of you and the babies a priority, and if Suzanne thinks it will be safe, we do a home birth," Dax says with a shrug, and I grin up at him.

"That simple, huh? And who will tell Zane that information?" I ask,

giggling when Dax's brows furrow, and he frowns.

"I will. I know his Dragon is a little crazy, but that doesn't mean he can bulldoze your birth plan. You are the one who has to give birth to two babies, not Zander. I'll make sure he remembers that," Dax says firmly, and I groan, setting my hand on my lower stomach.

"Ugh, don't remind me. Birthing one baby at a time was so hard! I don't know if I can handle a second."

"You can. You're the strongest person I know. If anyone can bring two little Dragons into this world, it will be you," Dax says, tipping my chin back to kiss me again.

"Hmm, I've missed you," I admit, looking up at him as he tucks me close to him.

"Zane needed you close for a bit, Angel. And we all know how Gabriel gets when Zane hogs all your time," Dax murmurs, brushing some hair away from my face. The air shifts around us, and I frown just as long, elegant fingers lace with mine that rest on Daxton's thigh.

"This looks cozy," Dom says with a bright smile, making Dax chuckle as I give my Angel a lopsided smile.

"Hey, where have you been?" I ask as Dominic brings our laced hands up to his lips and kisses each of my knuckles.

"Visiting Solomon, which is why I came to you drained last night. I've been a little busy, and it's kept me away. I'm sorry, Love. Though I promise you have my full attention from here on out," Dom declares dramatically.

"Yeah, until Gabe or Rafael need you to do something," Dax teases, making my Angel frown and shake his head.

"No, I've bided my time to allow the shifters their instinctual needs with my Tether, but I do believe it's our turn." Dax nods in agreement, and I smile, happy that my guys have found a way for everyone to have their own time with me.

Gabe and Dom are insanely busy with work at the Fae Council building most days, and Dax works from home for a high-tech security company and helps me take care of the boys. They have happily kept themselves busy while Zane, Remi, and Roar needed extra time with me. But now that things are calming down with my three shifters, they want their turn, which I'm more than happy to give them.

"Is Sol alright?" I whisper, frowning when Dom looks conflicted.

"Hopefully," he responds, his eyes going a little unfocused, making Dax

and me exchange worried looks.

“Dom, if we can be of any help,” Dax starts to say, and Dom looks up at him and nods.

“I know. But unfortunately, everything is in Solomon’s hands right now. Not even I can offer much help.”

“You practically gave him all of your magic yesterday, Dom. I would say that’s quite a bit of help,” I point out. Dom shrugs, kissing up my hand to my wrist, his pearly white eyes taking on hues of pink and gold.

“So, is there a reason you two are up here, and is there a way to convince you to allow me to join?” Dom asks, making Dax chuckle darkly, his arms tightening around me. Dax had been my one mate who didn’t like sharing in the bedroom, though, after ten years of marriage and the confidence that those years granted him, he explores more regularly now. It seems my shy husband needs control in the bedroom. He craves it more than anything else. If it's just the two of us, he feels comfortable enough to relax a little, but if anyone else joins, he likes to call the shots. Meaning he doesn't often share me with my shifters since they usually get caught up in the passion of the moment, but Gabe and Dom... I shiver as I think about the times the four of us have had together.

“Well, technically, Dani is hiding, and I interrupted her reading time, but that was my end goal, yes,” Dax responds, and I laugh, wiggling in his lap and purposely grinding against his crotch in response. “And as long as our lovely wife is okay with you being here, then I have no problems,” he adds with a groan, his cock stirring under my ass as he gently takes the mug from my hand and sets it to the side.

“That's a rather ridiculous question,” I tease Dax, making Dom laugh as he kneels at my side and tugs me out of Daxton’s warm embrace.

“Hey,” Dax grumbles, following me so that he’s also on his knees and I’m pressed between the two. “Not cool, man,” Dax snaps lightheartedly, as his arms come around my middle, and he ducks to press his lips to my neck.

“Sorry,” Dom rasps, cupping my cheek before tipping my face up to his. “But I had to taste these sweet lips.” I gasp, then moan against his mouth as he kisses me breathless, his hands on my face while Daxton’s move up from my waist to cup my breasts, his mouth moving to my shoulder where he kisses every inch of skin he can touch.

“Oh, I get it. You leave the boys with me so you three can come up here and fuck in peace,” a cold voice clips out, and I jump and turn, breaking my

kiss with Dom. Behind Dax stands an amused-looking Gabriel leaning against the bookshelf, his arms crossed over his chest and his gray eyes bright with arousal. His tight black t-shirt hugs his thick biceps as he slowly stands and walks closer to us.

“That was the idea,” Dom drawls, glaring at the Reaper who just interrupted our kiss. Dax moans, still kissing my neck, and I hear Gabe chuckle, then grunt in agreement. Confused, I look at Gabe and then poke Dax in the side, knowing they are talking to each other and purposely leaving me out of the conversation.

“What are you saying to each other?” I ask, my chest rising and falling with rapid breaths as Dax pinches my nipples, rolling them between his fingers. My sex clenches, and I want to moan like a damn cat in heat. You would think that having a horny Dragon on me twenty-four seven would satisfy me, but nope! What can I say? It's a good thing I have six husbands.

“Dax, don't encourage him. He didn't share last night,” Dom complains, and Gabe smirks, looking away from where his heated eyes were locked on what Dax is doing with my nipples through my shirt to Dom.

“You were too drained to do anything but watch, Carter. Don't get your panties in a twist. You would have passed out if you tried to join us. I was doing you a favor.”

Dax and I snort as he looks up at the Reaper towering over us. “Yeah, right. You were being a selfish prick and wanted Dani to yourself.” Dax pauses for a moment, then shrugs. “Which I get. We all have done the same. So either join in or get out so that we can continue.”

“Where are the boys?” I ask, then moan, letting my head fall back on Daxton's shoulder as he pinches my nipples hard and sits back, tugging me away from Dom as he goes.

“Down with Roar. He set up *Mario Party* and is teaching them how to play,” Gabe rasps, watching as Dax yanks my shirt up and over my head. Dom and Gabe groan, and the air fills with magic as they both lean in, wanting to get closer.

“Dom, lay down,” Dax commands, taking control of the situation and making my Angel curse, but do as instructed. He moves some of the fuzzy blankets from the armchairs onto the floor before waving a hand in the air, a burst of warm magic dissolving his clothes.

“That's fucking creepy!” Gabe snaps, and I giggle when I realize Dom not only took care of his clothes but Gabe and Daxton's as well.

“Stop complaining. We are on a limited time frame, and I would rather spend it wrapped up in our wife than watching you strip,” Dom teases, laying down and watching with hungry eyes as Dax scoops me up and stands, walking to where Dom is.

“Why does Dani still have her pants on?” Gabe gripes, palming his twitching cock as Dom smirks deviously up at me, his long fingers undoing my pants when I get into arm's reach before he hooks his fingers into my waistband and slowly tugs them down my legs.

“Because I enjoy stripping her. It’s like Christmas morning all over again,” he admits, and I smile, shimmying my hips to help take off the black skinny jeans I have on. “Or winning the lottery,” he adds, his eyes practically glowing when he removes my panties.

“Pretty sure I’m the winner in this scenario,” I whisper, looking from Dom to Gabe, leaning against Dax. Daxton laughs, and I can feel his magic wrap around me, holding me in the air as he steps back to admire his handiwork.

“Dax,” Dom groans, throwing my pants and underwear to the side before his hands move to my hips. He tugs gently, wanting to pull me down on his waiting cock, and Dax tsks at him.

“You’ll wait. Gabe, get in front. You’ll take her mouth.” Gabe grins, his eyes lighting up as he walks around and leans down to look into my eyes.

“You ready for this, Princess?” he asks, his hand on his dick, stroking it until a bead of pre-cum leaks from his pierced tip. I lick my lips, which makes him growl in approval, his free hand moving to gather my hair on top of my head. “Hair tie?” Gabe asks, and I frown and shake my head. While I typically carry one on my wrist, I don’t have one this morning.

“Here,” Dom murmurs, his hand outstretched with a small black hair tie held between his fingers.

“How the—Nevermind,” Gabe grumbles, taking it from Dom and throwing my hair up into a high ponytail. “Don’t suppose you could magic up some lube while you’re at it?” Dax jokes, then blinks in surprise when Dom holds up the small bottle of lube that Dax keeps in his bedside drawer.

“Creepy Angel,” Gabe grumbles, making me laugh as Dom beams up at me.

“I’m always prepared,” Dom says with a proud nod.

“Yeah, you’re the perfect Boy Scout,” Gabe drawls back before yelping and jumping back. “Did you just spank me?” he asks, half in surprise, half in

horror. Dom shrugs and winks at me. I bite my lip in amusement as Dax, who is still standing behind me, plucks the bottle of lube from Dominic's hands, watching them with a confused expression.

"You poked me with your dick. I figured it was our thing now."

"You what?" Dax asks in shock, looking at his older brother with a shit-eating grin on his face.

"I didn't poke him with my dick!" Gabe shouts in exasperation.

"I mean... you kinda did," I admit, making the Reaper glare at me. Dax's magic lowers me a little, leaving me only an inch or so away from Dominic's cock, and I wiggle my hips, wanting him to let me down fully so I can ride my Angel until I come. Gabe steps forward and grabs my ponytail roughly, tipping my head so that I can meet his angry eyes.

"Don't start with your shit today, Princess. You are already about to be fucked hard. Do you really want to add that dynamic to this?"

I mean... yeah, I kinda do. Angry sex with Gabe has always been mindblowing, but add Dax and Dom into the mix, and it's next level.

"Angel, he's being one hundred percent serious right now. Careful. He and Fina went the rounds this morning, and he has some pent-up rage," Dax whispers into my mind.

"I can handle Gabriel," I whisper back into his mind, scolding him for thinking I can't. Daxton laughs out loud, making Dom and Gabe shoot him questioning looks.

"That's not what I was worried about. You two are kinky as hell and like to get carried away with your shadow magic while trying to dominate the other. What happened last time you did that?" he asks, and I wince. I had fallen into the shadow realm and got lost for a few hours, making all six of my husbands panic when Gabe couldn't find me. I have basically mastered using Gabriel's magic, but I hate traveling in the shadow realm and have avoided it unless completely necessary. *"If you do that while pregnant, it will be ten times worse. I'll probably have to knock Zane out."*

"Daxton," Dom complains, bucking his hips up, the head of his engorged cock brushing against my glistening sex, drawing my attention to my Angel, who looks a little flushed.

"How long are you going to tease us?" I whisper into his mind, and Dax grins.

"These two can have whatever they want, whenever they want. Trust me, Angel. Making them wait is a good thing. Besides, it makes you wiggle in the

air and makes for an amazing view in the meantime.”

“Dax!” Gabe growls, his hand tightening on my hair as he brings my lips closer to his thick cock.

“*True. Should we see how far we can press them until they snap?*” I ask Dax, looking up at Gabe, keeping our eyes locked as I slowly lick my bottom lip, and I can feel Daxton’s excitement grow when Gabe curses a string of expletives.

“*I’ve always loved a good challenge,*” he admits, his hands falling on my hips, drawing me back a little so that I’m tipped forward just the slightest amount.

“Daxton,” Dom practically snarls when my wet pussy is pulled away from his cock, and Dax slowly reaches between us, grabbing the base of his cock and running it up and down my sex. I keep my eyes on Gabriel, testing him as I let my fingers move to my nipples, rolling them between my fingers and moaning softly.

“Jesus, fuck! You two aren’t playing fair,” Dom whispers, his hands reaching for my breasts. Daxton’s magic cords around Dom, and suddenly, both his hands are pinned to his side. Dom arches a surprised golden brow, then glares up at Dax. “Really?”

“What?” Dax asks innocently, eyeing Gabe in warning when his hands twitch closer to me. Gabe curses and releases my hair, running his hand over his face as a bead of sweat forms at his temples. I bite my lip in amusement, knowing he’s beyond worked up, and once Dax finally gives him the green flag, I’m not going to be able to breathe from the intensity that he’ll fuck my mouth with. “Gabe can poke you with his dick, and you can spank him, but I can’t pin you down? That seems rather unfair.” I can’t stop myself when a giggle bursts free, and I clamp a hand over my mouth to muffle it.

“Sorry,” I whisper when Dom and Gabe glare at me. Dax’s hands tighten on my hips, stopping any other words from falling from my mouth when he drives himself forward, fucking me deep with one thrust.

“Fuck, Dax,” I moan as he holds himself deep, stretching me in the most perfect way. My eyes fall shut, making Gabriel growl in anger, and he moves to touch me, then curses and stops himself, his eyes blazing with lust as Dax slowly draws himself back and then slams forward again.

“Jesus. I don’t know if this is the sexiest or most frustrating thing to happen to me,” Dom admits, watching with wide eyes as Dax fucks me over him.

“Reach down and play with that pretty clit for me, Angel,” Dax instructs, his voice husky with desire even in my mind as he starts fucking me in a steady rhythm. I do as he says, moving my hands down my heated flesh and spreading my sex wide, making Dom inhale sharply as Gabe follows my movements like a predator stalking its prey.

The moment my fingers move over my slick clit, I gasp, and Dax floods me with his magic, making me see fucking stars. My release crests in seconds, and I scream as his magic takes control of my fingers, making them strum my clit, granting me no mercy as my internal muscles clamp down around his cock. Dax curses and slows, and Dom laughs.

“Too much of a good thing, huh, man? Now are you going to let us touch her, or do Gabe and I have to gang up on you?” Dom growls, his eyes locked on where Dax has me spread wide on his cock.

“Dax,” I gasp, pushing against his magic as he keeps me climbing, my pleasure almost painful as my fingers pinch and flick my clit. Dax groans, and I can feel his magic shifting, but it's from Dominic's hands, not my own.

“Fucking finally,” Gabe snarls, grabbing my hair and bending down to look me in the eye. “Open wide, Princess,” he whispers, running his thumb over my bottom lip. I immediately open my lips and suck his finger into my mouth, making his eyes widen in approval as he pops the digit from between my lips and stands up, bringing his cock to my mouth. I suck him deep and moan around him, and his taste fills my mouth.

“Dammit, Dom, help me out here. I seriously overestimated myself,” Dax admits, pulling his length from my pussy and making me growl around Gabe in protest.

“Hang on, Love,” Dom soothes, his hands stroking up my body as Daxton's magic finally lowers me. Dom doesn't waste any time lining himself up with my entrance. He fills me as Dax steps back, allowing Dom and Gabe to take over. They thrust into my body, letting their magic free to encompass the four of us, and I relax into their hold, trusting them with everything in me.

Daxton's hand strokes down my back, and his lips press against my neck. *“Do you have any idea how beautiful you are?”* he asks, his voice like a warm hug in my mind.

“Eyes on me, Princess,” Gabriel commands, forcing me to open my eyes as his thrusts become wild, going deeper and deeper until I'm forced to swallow him down my throat. “Shit. You have a wicked little tongue, Danica.

Just like that!” he praises, as he pulls back enough for me to twirl my tongue around him like a damn lollipop. His hands hold my hair while he watches me suck him off before his eyes dart over my head to Dax and darken.

Before I can ask, I feel a cold drop of lube on my ass and shiver as Dax slides his finger up and down before pushing the tip of his thumb into my ass. I tense, then groan as he presses deeper, getting me ready to take him there. His other hand moves around me, pressing my hand more firmly against my sex and letting his fingers dance over my clit.

“Keep going, Angel.” I want to curse and scream as my core tightens. It feels like my body is on fucking fire as Dax teases me while Dom and Gabe fuck me hard between the two of them.

“God, she gets so damn tight when you do that,” Dom rasps, his fingers digging into my hips as he thrusts up into me.

“Relax for me,” Dax whispers out loud, drawing his hand away from my dripping sex just as I feel the thick head of his cock press against my ass. I rock back against him, wanting him to hurry and fill me up. He chuckles in amusement as he slowly presses into my body while stilling my motions. I freeze as Dax slowly works his cock into my ass, and Dom stills his movement, allowing me to adjust to having them both inside me. Gabe curses, his eyes slowly transitioning from gray to shimmering silver as he watches me take them both.

It’s not until Dax is entirely inside me, his thighs pressed firmly to the back of mine, that Dom starts to fuck me. Dax follows suit, alternating with Dominic's thrusts, keeping me filled at all times as they drive me higher and higher into oblivion.

Suddenly, Gabe pulls back until only the head of his cock is still in my mouth. Stubbornly, I try to move forward and suck him deep again, but Dax and Dom have my body well and truly pinned in place.

“Breathe,” Gabe commands, making me realize I had been holding my breath, the pleasure the guys were spiraling through me making me forget to breathe. Gabe’s fingers soften in my hair as I release the breath I had been holding and take another deep one. He doesn't resume fucking my mouth until I have breathed a few more times and he's sure I'm okay. “Good girl,” he whispers, making me tremble as Dom thrusts up harder than normal, striking me deep and making me scream around Gabe as the orgasm that had been building for what seemed like forever finally crashes around me. I buck and writhe between my men, making Dax curse as his hands hold my hips

and he fucks hard, his cock thickening then throbbing as his hot seed fills my body.

“Shit, shit, shit,” Dom snarls, using his strength to keep me lifted enough for him to thrust into me once, twice, and a third time before filling me with his own release.

Gabe is only moments behind, his hands tightening in my hair, his cock sliding down my throat, shooting his load and ensuring I swallow every damn drop. Daxton’s magical hold on my hand finally releases, and I slump forward a little as Gabriel carefully draws back, then falls to his knees in front of me, his eyes moving over my face before he leans in and kisses me.

“Fuck. Is it possible to come so hard that you strain something?” Dom groans, his hips still rocking just the slightest amount. Dax pulls out next, making me groan, then let my head fall onto Gabe’s shoulder.

“Probably,” Dax mutters, his hands never leaving me as they gently coax me down from my release. “Would you like a shower or a bath, Angel?” he asks, kissing my cheek as Gabe stands and slowly lifts me off Dom. I relax into Gabe’s arms as Dax reaches down and helps a swaying Dominic to his feet.

“Shower as long as I can stand without my knees feeling like Jell-O,” I admit and smile when they laugh.

“Dom, get the shower started in your room. It's bigger than mine and Gabe’s. Gabe, you get her there without the boys seeing her. I'll get everyone clean clothes,” Dax says, and I close my eyes, happy to let my guys take care of me.

CHAPTER 16

DAXTON



I hold the back of Xavier's head close to my shoulder as I teleport us to the familiar townhouse in Spokane, Washington, then smile when he wraps his little arms and legs around me so tight it's hard to breathe. Xav begged to come with me when he heard my plans to visit Atlas, and I agreed, hoping that my son's presence would be enough to lighten Atlas' ever-diminishing mood. However, Xav tends to get a little motion sickness when I teleport him places, so he likes to hold on to us and close his eyes to help avoid that.

I tighten my arms around him, relishing the feel of him in my arms, knowing it's about to be over. I love how grown up and confident my older son is. However, I can't help but long for when he would run up to me and wrap me in an albeit sticky hug with his chubby toddler arms. Now that he is seven, Xavier has drawn back a little, not snuggling as long as he used to and rarely giving out hugs. It worried me at first, but when I realized he was trying to mimic Gabriel's behavior, I let it slide. Dani, on the other hand, was furious and demanded that Gabe start hugging everyone so that she could still get her cuddles.

"We're here, buddy," I whisper, smiling as I step onto the soft green grass of the front yard. Xav nods his head, letting me know he heard me, but keeps his nose tucked against my neck, taking deep breaths. I run a hand up and down his back, happy to hold him until the nausea passes. "You alright?"

"Yeah, I think I'm good now," Xav mutters, slowly lifting his head from my shoulder and wiggling to be set on his feet. I reluctantly set him down and ruffle his black hair, earning myself a frown as he sighs at me, resting his hands on his hips in exasperation like I'm the child here and not him.

“Let’s go inside then, squirt,” I tease, following him as he leads the way into the house. I feel the press of Atlas’ magic shields as Xav opens the door, and I respond to them, letting Atlas know it’s us.

“In the office,” Atlas shouts when we enter the townhouse and I smile. After Dante’s death, Atlas moved into the townhouse, withdrawing from his position at Black Veil as a Magic Counselor. Then he began helping Gabe find the remaining warehouses that were still operating under the corrupt side of the government we hadn’t managed to kill. Sure, we took out the bad guy, but Dante had more support than we realized, and it’s taken years to find the warehouses still in operation. Gabriel is fairly confident that there are only a handful left, and he mentioned something about being close to finding another one, so it doesn’t surprise me that Atlas is hard at work in the office.

Gabriel’s obsession with finding the warehouses was intense, but he had his family that grounded him to real life, keeping him in the moment and anchoring him to reality. Atlas, however, has pushed everyone away, breaking up his relationship with Alice and Sol and confining himself to this house most of the time. I’m unsure if it’s an obsession or something he chooses to focus on so that he doesn’t have to acknowledge reality. He hardly ever comes to visit anymore, and Gabe can only see him if we come here.

Xav thunders up the stairs excitedly, wanting to get to his uncle and refusing to wait for me to lead the way. “Xavier,” I warn, hurrying after him, unsure what head space Atlas will be in and not wanting Xav to upset him. As I get to the second floor, I watch Xav fly into the office, not bothering to listen to my warning.

“Hey, little man,” Atlas greets warmly as I rush in after Xav, and I relax a little when I see Atlas smiling down at him and... I stall a moment, seeing him standing near his desk with only the assistance of a cane in his hand. Granted, the Warlock is leaning heavily on it for support, and his legs are trembling, but the last time I saw Atlas standing on his feet unassisted was over ten years ago. He looks thinner than normal, and I make a mental note to ask his nurse and see if he’s been eating his meals or not. Atlas often forgets about eating and other basic human necessities when he’s working on a project.

“Uncle Atlas! Dad said we could come see you, and I brought you this! See, I’ve been practicing, but it only took me a couple of weeks this time,” Xav says excitedly, pulling a small folded-up origami swan from his pocket and proudly showing it to his uncle.

“Oh, wow. Xavier. This is amazing,” Atlas whispers, reaching over with a trembling hand to roll his office chair closer to him. He slowly sits down and breathes a sigh of relief before he leans forward, plastering a smile on his face as he studies Xav’s little paper swan. “Which dad is here today?” he asks, grabbing the swan as he makes a show of studying it.

“Daddy Dax,” Xav answers, making my grin expand as I come further into the room, my movement catching Atlas’ attention. I dip my head at him in greeting, and he smiles. He knew who was here with Xav. I’d warned him it was me when we crossed his shields. He probably just wanted to know if Gabe had come to hassle him today or not. Atlas turns his attention back to Xav and takes a new piece of paper from his desk, moving slowly as he folds the paper in precise movements. After a couple of minutes, Atlas holds a tiny paper butterfly between his fingers, and Xavier’s eyes widen in awe.

“It’s beautiful,” he whispers, reaching up with a small finger to touch its wing.

“It is. But you have to be careful. The wings are trickier to fold than the swan was. Bring me one of your own when you have it mastered,” Atlas tells him, handing his nephew the small butterfly. Xav holds it close to his chest and nods, and I know the moment we get home, it will go on his shelf next to the other seven folded Origami animals Atlas has made for him.

“Let’s see it, buddy,” I say, crouching down next to him and looking at his new treasure. He holds it up, gray eyes bright as I nod in approval. “It is beautiful. You think you can figure it out faster this time around?” I ask, and Xav’s happy face turns serious. Atlas only ever shows him how to fold a new animal once, then it’s up to Xav to figure it out based on memory. It’s something they have been doing over the last year, and Xav loves it.

“Yes,” he says determinedly, making Atlas release a rare laugh.

“How about you go get Atlas some water? He looks thirsty,” I tell him, standing and waiting until Xav leaves the room to look at Atlas. “You were standing up,” I point out, and Atlas’ smile falls off his face.

“I stand all the time,” Atlas murmurs, turning his office chair to face the desk and opening his laptop.

“Unassisted?” I add, arching a brow as I lean against the desk.

“And? What of it?” Atlas asks coldly, and I frown.

“Atlas, this is a good thing... right? Why are you upset? You are obviously making progress in your physical therapy,” I point out, and Atlas huffs in response.

“I can hardly stand, and when I do, it's only for a few minutes at a time. My spinal cord injury was almost ten years ago, Daxton. I wouldn't exactly call that amazing progress,” he snaps.

“Atlas,” I start to say, but he shakes his head.

“I'm done with this conversation. I'm assuming Gabriel sent you with the information I needed since he didn't bother to come?” Scowling, I reach into my pocket and grab the flash drive Gabe gave me this morning and shake my head. These two are too damn stubborn and need to communicate more. Though after the years of suffering Gabe made Atlas endure, I suppose he may deserve some of his brother's anger.

“Yes,” I answer, setting the flash drive on the desk next to his hand. What I don't tell him is that Gabriel will be here in a few short minutes. He won a pretty intense game of rock paper scissors this morning and is currently with Dani and Zane at the doctors. She's getting her first ultrasound today, and her midwife gave strict instructions for only two of the dads to be in attendance since the rooms are small, and we all overwhelmed the ultrasound tech the last time we were there. She did promise she would send the ultrasound file over to Gabe so that we could all see it tonight when we go home, though.

“Is everything on it?” he asks, grabbing it and plugging it into his computer without looking at me.

“Yes. Would your brother ever do something halfway?” I ask, and Atlas frowns but nods.

“No, he wouldn't. Though I wouldn't put it past him purposely withholding information to force me to call him,” Atlas rumbles, making me smile because that is exactly what Gabriel has done on several occasions.

“He wouldn't do that if you would answer your phone when he calls,” I point out, leaning over to watch as Atlas flips through the files on the screen.

“He only ever asks me how I'm doing and if he can bring me to therapy,” Atlas snaps, rolling his dark brown eyes while running a hand over his face in annoyance. I gasp dramatically and place a hand on my heart, startling Atlas enough to look up at me with wide eyes.

“That's terrible. How dare he care about you and want to help,” I tease. When Atlas only glares, I laugh and shake my head. “The you of ten years ago would be jumping up and down in joy over the fact that Gabriel cares enough about you to harass you. He loves you, Atlas. Why are you so mad about that?”

“The me from ten years ago is dead, Daxton. He died fighting those

Demons,” Atlas says bitterly, and I frown.

“That's bullshit, and you know it. You are stronger now than ever before.” Atlas scoffs and looks up at me like I'm insane.

“I can't even stand up for more than a moment, Daxton. My legs are useless, and I have nothing to offer my family except to help chase down the ghost of the man who tried to destroy us and stop the evil he still is causing from the grave.” I nod, accepting his response, but hold up a finger when he tries to go back to work.

“But you also have improved your computer skills to far surpass my own, helping Gabe to not only track down the warehouses Dante left behind but three child sex trafficking rings in Romania. Your magic has grown to help keep you safe, almost doubling the shielding range you used to have. Not only that, you have an entire family who would come to your beck and call the moment you need us. And not to toot our own horn, but we kind of kick ass. I mean... Have you seen my wife when she gets mad? One of the little boys in Monty's classes was teasing him, and I thought I was going to have to take her home because she went all momma bear on the little punk.” Atlas smirks at that, and the tension in the room suddenly eases as he sighs and sits back in the chair.

“You're right. Danica is slightly terrifying. Did you see her scolding Gabriel for letting Xav hold his scythe? I thought she was going to murder him, and the best part is, Gabe looked scared! I've never seen him apologize so quickly in my life,” Atlas says, more to himself than me.

Laughing, I nod to agree and add, “He taught Xav some bad words the other day, and he looked pale as a freaking ghost when Dani asked who had taught it to him.” Atlas laughs this time, and a little color returns to his face.

“How is everyone?” he asks, and I smile, gently tapping at his mental shields to see if he'll allow me in. After a moment of hesitation, he lowers them and allows me to show him what the family has been up to.

“Dani is pregnant again?” he asks in excitement, and I nod. “Oh... oh, that poor girl! Zander's babies? And twins?” Atlas winces, and I grin.

“We're all rather excited about it,” I admit, and Atlas nods, a happy, faraway look in his eyes as he continues to watch everything I filter from me to him. I pause when I come to the dinner I had with Alice about four weeks ago and immediately shift to something else, cursing myself for the slip when Atlas tenses and clears his throat.

“Sorry,” I rasp, and he nods as I slowly withdraw from his mind.

“How is she?” he suddenly asks, shocking the hell out of me. Not once has he ever asked what Alice or Sol are up to. In fact, he would get visibly upset if we talked about them in his presence.

“She’s... good,” I say softly, smiling a little when Atlas’ shoulders relax.

“Yeah?” he asks hopefully, and I nod.

“She had a rough patch, but I think she’s finally coming around. She lives in New York and works for a human fashion magazine,” I add, pushing my luck but wanting to relieve the stress that I feel radiating off of Atlas. He smiles at that and leans back in his chair.

“She always hated living in Fae run cities, preferring humans and their lives over a Fae’s,” Atlas whispers, his brown eyes reddening around the edges. He clears his throat and sits up, swallowing down the visible knot. “I’m glad she’s finally doing what she wanted.” Sadness clings to him, and I want to do something to comfort my friend, but I have zero ideas as to what. I’m saved by Xavier, who runs in with the biggest glass of water I have ever seen.

“Woow,” I say slowly and hide my laugh with a cough when Atlas’ eyes bug out of his head.

“Oh... wow. Thanks, little man,” he mutters, taking the enormous glass from Xav with a puzzled look on his face. “I don’t recall seeing this cup before,” Atlas muses, staring at the blue cup that has to be at least forty-four ounces, if not larger.

“Dad said you needed more fluids and that he’s starting dinner,” Xav announces as Gabriel strides into the office like he owns the damn place. Which, I suppose he does, but so does Atlas, since their mother left it to both of them.

“Atlas,” Gabe greets, snagging a chair at the corner of the room with one of his shadows, he slides it next to his brother and sits down before collecting Xav into a big hug. “Have you been good?” he asks our son, and Xav nods and holds up the butterfly he pulls out of his pocket. “Wow, look at that! I’m excited to see the one you make for Atlas in return,” Gabe murmurs, making Xav’s eyes light up in excitement.

“Yeah! I’m going to go practice while Dad cooks,” he says happily, squirming out of Gabe’s lap and darting out of the room, nearly colliding with Dani as she comes in.

“Whoa! Where’s the fire, big man?” she teases, wrapping her arms around his shoulders and dotting kisses over his nose and cheeks.

“Ew, Mom. Gross!” Xav complains between giggles as he desperately tries to break free of Dani’s loving embrace. After a few more kisses, she eventually takes pity on him and lets Xav head downstairs, where Zane must be since Xav mentioned someone was starting dinner.

“Atlas,” Dani says with a bright smile, walking around the desk and wrapping Atlas in a big hug, which he returns. “You’ve been hiding in here for too long. Are you avoiding me?” she asks, flicking her fingers and bidding the shadows that Gabriel just used to snag a chair of her own. Before she has the chance to sit in it, however, I scoop her up and take the chair for myself, placing her on my lap, which makes her laugh and kiss my cheek. Gabe scowls, probably pissed he hadn't thought of that idea, and I give him a smug smile.

“What? Of course not, Danica. I wouldn't do that; you and the boys are my favorite people. You know that already,” Atlas scolds, smiling at Dani and winking when Gabe huffs in jealousy. Only it's not directed at Dani so much as it's because of her. Gabe no longer has the possessive urge to warn his brother away from Danica like he used to. Atlas is in love, that's for sure, but not with Dani. We all know that, including Gabe. No, he’s jealous that his brother didn’t add him to his list of favorite people and will now be in a mood all night because of it.

“Have you looked into the new locations I gave you?” Gabe asks, his tone clipped, making Dani roll her eyes when Atlas sighs and looks at his brother.

“No. I’ve had the flash drive for all of five minutes before you interrupted,” Atlas snaps back, and I stand, cradling Dani in my arms.

“That's our cue to go. Dinner is in fifteen minutes, don't be late, or Zane will come get you himself,” I holler over my shoulder as I carry an amused Dani out into the hall with me. I use my magic to shut the door behind us, but instead of heading downstairs, I go further down the hall to my old bedroom and smirk when Dani eyes me in question.

“What are you doing?” she asks as I walk into the room, letting the door slam shut and grin down at her as the lock clicks into place.

“How about a trip down memory lane?” I ask her deviously, tossing her onto my bed, using my magic to gentle her fall before climbing over her beautiful body. We have done so many things in this room, and I want to recreate every single one of them.

I stare down at her; my love for this woman is so immense that it almost terrifies me. I had thought at one point all those years ago that I knew what

loving Danica meant. That I loved her with all of my heart, and I truly did. What I didn't know was that this girl would not only make my heart and family grow over the years of our marriage, but my love along with it. I release my magic, letting it twine with hers, and close my eyes when her magic dances happily in my chest.

"Dropping those books at your feet was the best thing that ever happened to me," I admit when I finally open my eyes, my gaze locked with her stunning violet ones.

"Picking up that book was the smartest thing I ever did, Daxton. You changed my life," she responds before taking my lips with hers and kissing me breathless.

EPILOGUE

REMINGTON



“Ow, ow, ow! Fucking hell!” Dani whisper-shouts, her fingers digging into my biceps as I support her tiny body. She’s hunched over and panting, her brown hair disheveled as she rocks back and forth on her feet before she relaxes, the contraction fading, and she slumps into my chest. The ghost of her pain echoes down our mate bond, making my Wolf pace and growl, hating to see his mate in pain like this.

“I’ve got you Dani-Girl,” I whisper, cradling her close, but not too tightly to hinder any of her movements.

“How about you lie down, Gorgeous?” Roar suggests, his blond hair looking almost as crazy as Dani’s as he stares at her. She groans and shakes her head, standing up and taking deep breaths as she looks around the room.

“It hurts more when I can’t move. I’d rather stand.” I nod and reach over, grabbing a cold, wet cloth to wipe her sweaty brow. Dani has been in active labor for almost eight hours, but the last two have been the worst. She has been up and down, walking around the room, and bouncing on the giant ass blue ball that is supposed to help, which I don’t quite understand. But hell, if Suzanne says it helps, then it helps!

In the last twenty or so minutes, things have escalated, though, and Suzanne keeps humming and nodding whenever she checks Danica’s progress. “Where is that silly Dragon with her water? She’s at nine centimeters and will need his assistance,” Suzanne asks, bustling over from the portable ultrasound she brought with her and shooing Roar away with a flap of her arms. “You all need to stop hovering. You know that stresses her out,” the older midwife chides, making me finally look up from my beautiful wife and see Gabe, Dax, and Dom standing right next to me, leaning in close

to watch Dani's every move.

Gabe looks like he wants to take Danica into his own arms, Dax looks equally excited and worried, and Dom... well, he looks like shit. Turns out the dude can feel her pain even more than I can through his Angel's tether, and each of her labors has been hard on the guy. Dani feels bad and tries to shield it from him, which only makes Dom upset. Something about him being able to soothe a little of her pain and take it on himself. And by the looks of it, Dani is in a lot of pain because I don't recall seeing Dom this pale before.

Dani suddenly tenses in my arms again and groans, the sound almost animalistic as her legs shake under her. I tighten my hold on her, careful not to press myself against her giant, perfectly round belly, and watch as the love of my life whimpers in pain.

"*Fuck,*" Roar whispers, so quiet that I'm pretty sure only I can hear due to my shifter hearing, and a look of helplessness crosses his face. Suddenly the door to Dani's room crashes open, and Zane sprints in, his bun at the top of his head lopsided and his eyes bright gold.

"I've got the water, and ice chips, and some snacks and..." he trails off as Dani curses and cries out, her back arching slightly when a strong contraction hits. "Comoa'a," he rasps, throwing everything in his arms at Dax, who scrambles to catch it all before rushing to Dani's side. His hands immediately go to her lower back, and I know he's using his magic to heat and soothe her pain while adding the counter pressure the midwife taught him to use.

"Oh, that helps," Dani breathes out, her glassy eyes fluttering open as she smiles up at Zane, who has practically folded himself protectively around her.

"Medical team?" I hear Dom whisper and roll my eyes when Gabe grunts.

"Downstairs. Along with enough equipment to fill a damn hospital," Gabe confirms. Dom nods in approval, and Roar frowns, then elbows them both in the sides.

"She's got this. Suzanne wouldn't have let her do a home birth if she thought there was a risk," Roar chides them, taking advantage of Zane and Dani being too busy to hear their discussion. I purposely stay out of it. Mainly because I agree with Gabriel's decision to have the doctors here just in case. Childbirth can be tricky, and adding an extra baby to that equation drastically raises the chances of something going wrong during birth.

Dani wanted a home birth as long as it was safe for her and the babies, and we all agreed to it. But like the other two times she's given birth, Gabe has a backup plan downstairs. The difference this time is that the medical

team is about ten times more than the first two.

“Of course she does. Danica is stronger than all of us combined; just look at her! But that doesn't mean I'm willing to bet my wife's health and that of my children on the chance that everything goes right. The team is simply here just in case,” Gabe says, glaring at Roar, who tilts his head to the side, studying the Reaper for a moment, then nods.

“Yeah, okay. I see the appeal,” Roar murmurs in agreement.

“Besides, Dani knows I have plans in place,” Gabe adds, surprising us all.

“She does?” Dom asks, a touch of relief filling his expression.

“Of course. However, she didn't ask for details, and I didn't provide them. She's uncomfortable with doctors and medical equipment, for a good reason. But she would never want to bring harm to one of her children because of her fears. She asked me to handle everything and keep her in the dark so that she wouldn't stress out. She wants to be completely in the moment of her birth, not stressed about doctors.”

The sting of Dani's nails digging hard into my arms draws my attention back to her, and I look down as she squeezes her eyes shut. “Shit! I'm never having sex again!” she declares, swaying on her feet and then crying out louder this time. Zane's eyes widen, and he looks at me when her breathing picks up a notch. Suzanne frowns and nods at Zane, who suddenly scoops her off her feet and rushes over to the large nest he made for her at the center of the dimly lit room.

“Zane, sit behind Dani to give her some extra support,” Suzanne instructs. I suddenly become extremely nervous, my heart skipping as Dani pants and cries, her body trembling in pain. My Wolf shifts closer to the surface, and I hold my breath, feeling myself lose control. Suddenly, a heavy hand falls on my shoulder as we all move closer to the bed, and I look up at Gabe, who has his eyes on Dani.

“Don't worry. She's going to be perfectly fine, Remington. I promise,” he reassures me, keeping his hand on my shoulders until I nod and give him a thankful smile. Suzanne moves to check on Dani, helping her get more comfortable while Zane holds Dani with her back to his chest in the bed.

“Alright, Mom. It's time to start pushing.”

Zander

THE ROOM IS FINALLY CALM AND QUIET, AND I SMILE AS I LOOK AROUND, finding Dom and Gabe asleep on the couch to the right of Danica's bed. They stressed themselves out over Danica's longer than normal birth; so once everything had finally calmed down, they passed out. Roar is snuggled against my Comoaña's back, and Remi shifted into his Wolf, taking up his favorite protective residence at the foot of our wife's bed.

My eyes move back to Danica, who is resting peacefully, her beautiful face the picture of calm serenity, which makes my heart swell with so much love I feel like it might burst. I check her over, listening for her steady heartbeat before looking down at the small pink bundles in my arms. My mate had gone through so much pain to bring these beautiful girls into the world for us, and I couldn't be more thankful for her. My Dragon is purring in my chest, the sound echoing through the room as his magic wraps around our babies, marking them while getting used to their unique scents.

Emery and Aria are both female Dragon shifters and won't come into their shifts until they reach puberty. But their Dragons are still in there, a beautiful part of their souls that will always be joined together. I stare at my daughters, still in awe that I'm holding them both in my arms, and take a deep breath when my eyes mist over, attempting to control myself.

"May I?" Dax asks, moving closer to the rocking chair I placed next to Danica's bed, his finger moving to Aria's thick brown hair that covers the top of her head. Both of our daughters fell asleep after Danica fed and bathed them, dressing them in matching lavender pajamas with tiny flowers on the fabric before wrapping them in pink blankets gifted by Kayla. I'd taken them from my Comoaña one at a time after Gabe and Dom burped them, and I've been entranced by them ever since.

Nodding, I shift my arm, gently placing one of our tiny daughters into Daxton's arms and watch as his green eyes soften while he stares down at her. "She's perfect," he rasps, and I nod, shifting Emery in my arms so that I can give her my full attention.

"They both are," I agree, sniffing while wiping at the tears I can't blink back before they run down my face. Dax leans over and looks at Emery and shakes his head.

"Roar buying matching clothes for them was a bad idea. How will we ever tell them apart?" he asks with a small laugh, and I frown, looking at

Emery, then at Aria in Daxton's arms.

What is he talking about? The girls look completely different from each other. I mean, yes, they have the same thick brown hair, and sure, I suppose they have similar facial features. But Emery is slightly longer than Aria, while Aria has slightly chunkier cheeks than her sister. I look at Emery in my arms and gently lift her tiny hand until her little fingers wrap around my thumb, and I inhale sharply, marveling at how perfect she is. Then look at Aria, who has moved her hand up to her mouth to suck on her thumb, already soothing herself. Emery has longer fingers than Aria does, and Aria has a tiny beauty mark on her right cheek.

Moreover, they *feel* completely different. I can sense the sweet, calm side of Aria and her Dragon, whereas Emery feels feisty, like she's ready to challenge me already. "They look completely different, Daxton," I mutter, looking at Dax in confusion, who blinks at Aria, then Emery, and shakes his head.

"Zander... they are identical twins. You do realize that means they look alike," Dax whispers, rocking back and forth when Aria squirms in his arms. I scoff and roll my eyes.

"They are not the same, I promise. But they are equally beautiful," I can't help but add, pride filling me as Dax coos at our daughter, his love for her growing by the second.

"Can we switch? I want to get some time in with both of them before Gabe wakes up and steals them for himself," Dax admits and I nod, moving to take Aria back before handing him Emery. After a few more moments and extra baby snuggles, Emery wakes up with a tiny wail, her cute face twisting into one of anger as her belly grumbles.

All four sleeping men wake up in a panic, sitting up straight with worry in their eyes, but calm when they see Dax bouncing our daughter in his arms. He slowly walks Emery to Dani's bedside, where she smiles sleepily up at him. She moves some pillows around before taking Emery in her arms and putting her to her breast. I watch her in awe, loving my tiny mate more and more by the second as she whispers soft, loving words down to our daughter. Roar grins and sits up next to Dani, running the back of his knuckle over Emery's tiny hands as she nurses.

"She's like a tiny version of Zane. Just a lot prettier," he whispers in awe, making Dom chuckle and sit up as Gabe walks over, grabs the water bottle by Danica's bedside, and brings it to her lips. Dani takes a drink and then smiles

up at Gabe as he leans forward, kissing her hair while placing a protective hand on Emery. He watches his new daughter with a rare sort of softness in his typically cold gray eyes. Danica peers over at me and Aria, her smile tired but so full of joy. I stand, cradling Aria as I move to sit next to her, propping myself up against the headboard so that she can see Aria while nursing Emery.

“They’re so beautiful,” she whispers, and I grin, leaning down to kiss the top of her head.

“You did perfect, Comoaña,” I rasp, my emotions threatening to overtake me as Dom sits next to Roar and Remi shifts back into his human form, slipping into his clothes before he sits on the bed, all seven of us staring at the newest additions to our family.

A small knock sounds at Dani's door, and Dax smiles, walking over to open it and whispering something before he steps back. Xavier and Montag tiptoe into the dimly lit room, nervous excitement coming from them both as they look past us for their mom. Dani smiles and gestures for them to come over, and I watch in excitement as our sons meet their sisters for the first time. Dom scoops Monty up and sets him next to Dani while Remi grabs Xav and tucks him on the bed beside me.

“Wow... she’s so tiny,” Monty whispers, leaning forward to look at Emery. Xav’s eyes are wide as he looks at Aria in my arms, and I shift, grabbing a pillow and tucking it under his arms before nodding at him.

“Would you like to hold your sister?” I ask softly. Xav darts a panicked look up at me before swallowing hard and nodding. I place Aria in his arms, keeping my hand under her head for added support while Xavier studies her intently.

“There really were two babies in there,” he murmurs, making Gabe and Dom share an amused look, and I chuckle.

“Yes. Isn't she cute?” I ask, and Xav nods, a smile forming on his lips as he looks over to Dani, who is now crying happy tears as she watches them. Monty crawls over to us and looks at Aria and then at me.

“Can I hold her next?” he asks, and I nod.

“How about you hold Emery next? Mom needs to feed Aria before she gets grumpy,” I compromise and grin when Monty nods in agreement. Dax comes over and takes Emery from Dani, burping her on his shoulder and explaining what he’s doing to the boys, while Dani starts to feed Aria. The door to the room opens, and Fina slowly pokes her head in, her worried eyes

falling on Dani before a small smile graces her face when she spots the girls. Gabe grins and strides over to her, wrapping his sister into a tight hug before leading her over to the bed and pointing out Emery and Aria, pride shining in his eyes.

“I love you,” I whisper down to my wife, watching as she smiles up at me through happy tears.

“I love you, Zane,” she whispers back, lifting her lips to mine and kissing me sweetly. I lean back and watch as Dax helps Monty hold his sister, and I swallow, looking around at my family.

This... this right here is why we fought so hard to defeat Dante. This is all I ever wanted, and now I have it. My wife and children... my brothers, all safe and under one roof. Wrapping my arm around Dani, I hold her close, breathing in her comforting scent, and letting my Dragon relax for the first time in months. Everything is okay. Everyone is safe, and my life couldn't be better than this.

The End

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you so much for reading Dani and the guy's Novella! I hope you all enjoyed it as much as I have, and though I am sad I will never write from these characters' POV again, I'm beyond excited to bring you all Serafina's story!

If you ever want to talk about this series, make sure you head over to the *B.M. Clemton's Readers Group on Facebook*. We have lots of fun there, and I regularly update readers on the newest releases and do fun giveaways.

It means a lot to me that anyone picked up my books and gave them a shot. Black Veil University has been my first venture into this fantastic bookish world, and I have loved every minute of it. But I wouldn't be able to do this without you all— my amazing readers— THANK YOU!

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I hope you all enjoyed Danica's story, and thank you for coming on this incredible journey with me.

-B.M. Clemton

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