

Immortyl Kisses

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Book 1: Warrior Rising



BK Walker

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First Edition

All characters in this book are fictitious, and any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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Immortal Kisses

Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.

~Lao Tzu

The Dance

"I told you I didn't want to go to the dance Shania. Why are you dragging me here?"

"I'm not dragging you anywhere Raine. You *should* go to the dance. It's Halloween, your favorite holiday. You said yourself that this is the one time of year you feel like you fit in with everyone else. It will be fun so quit whining!"

Huffing and growling Raine allowed Shania to drag her into Newfane High School for the tenth grade Halloween dance. It was the one time a year that she felt like she belonged in this small town. It was the one time a year that people didn't stare at her like there was something wrong with her for donning black eye liner and lipstick, or wearing her black combat boots, jeans and black denim jacket. It was the one time a year Raine could relax in her own skin.

Raine had always been a quiet child growing up. She didn't start talking on time, in fact she didn't start talking until she was four, almost five. Her parents worried and had taken her to every doctor they could think of and were then referred to. In the

end, they were told to just let her be, she would talk when she was ready. Her parents almost gave up hope when she spoke her first word just before she was about to enter kindergarten. "Shijin," as she pointed toward the ceiling. When her parents asked her where she learned this word, Raine would answer, "Grandpappy said it." Her Grandfather had died when she was a baby, so they were confused as to how she would remember such a word. She ran around the house screaming 'Shijin' all the time, but in the presence of strangers she was mute, which they quickly learned when they would take her to see her therapists.

It didn't go unnoticed by her teachers or the other students, and they always called her names and picked on her, causing her to stay silent even more. She was sent to special classes, and speech therapy as they thought she may be developmentally challenged, but her tests always came back off the charts and teachers were just left stunned. The only thing left to do, was let her remain silent and enter back into classes as usual. Raine was very intelligent, it's just that nobody took the time to get to know her. That is until Shania came along. She could remember back in fourth grade, some boys were hassling her on the playground during recess, calling her every name they could think of, mutant, retard, freak girl, and

Shania had stood up for her.

"What's the matter freak girl? Cat got your tongue? Are you going to turn into a Ninja Turtle? A Mutant Ninja Turtle? Maybe your just retarded! Is that it? You need special classes? I-I-I-m a retard!"

"Why don't you two just shut up?" Shania had been watching from over by the monkey bars. She had heard enough of these boys picking on this poor girl. After seeing the tears in Raine's eyes, Shania decided it was time to take action. "You two are the retards if you ask me!"

"Well nobody's asking you Shania." Jeffrey Moulder called out as he looked at his friend Brian Smith laughing.

Shania wasted no time. She darted over to Brian and Jeffrey and punched that Jeffrey Moulder right in the nose.

Grabbing his nose, blood dripping through his fingers, he screamed as tears flooded his face.

"I'm telling Shania Adams! You're so in trouble."

"And I'm telling your mother Jeffrey Moulder! I think you're the one in trouble." Shania knew her mom and his mom were good friends and got together every Thursday for coffee, which was today.

After the boys took off, Shania incessantly talked Raine's ear off and they've been inseparable ever since. Raine has learned to tune Shania out

though, and has been quite successful by putting her nose in one of her favorite books or putting her Ipod headphones in her ears. Shania's none the wiser.

As they entered the gymnasium, the music blasted them head on. Everyone was dressed in costumes and Raine noticed Dracula and his bride right away.

"Look! Raine doesn't even need to dress up!" Dracula said.

Raine glared at him and kept walking.

"Just ignore him." Shania whispered.

"Shania? Can I borrow your red lipstick?"

"Are you serious? What're ya goin' to do? Dress up like a normal teen for Halloween?"

"Nah, but I'm going to dress up." Snatching the lipstick from Shania, Raine shoved it in her pocket and ran for the bathroom before her best friend since she remembered could respond.

Standing in front of the mirror, Raine dug the lipstick out of her pocket. "I'll make a better looking vampire." She noticed baby powder on the counter and sprinkled some in her long dark hair. Drawing fake blood on the side of her mouth she remembered she had fake vampire teeth in her coat pocket. Adding some fang bite marks to her neck with oozing blood, she laughed at herself, satisfied how her gray eyes and powdered hair really made her look 'undead'. "I'm way too smart

sometimes. I look just like people see me. '*Elvira's Ghost*'."

Returning to the dance she spotted Shania with Trevor, the boy Shania had a crush on. Raine couldn't understand why Shania fussed over him that much, he wasn't even that cute and he was a clumsy fool. Trevor too was a bit odd, and if the kids weren't picking on Raine, they were picking on him. He was always dropping things or tripping over his own feet. It was a relief to be left alone when he was around, and she just knew he was clueless to Shania's feelings for him. Shania could have any guy she wanted, and of all people in the school, she wanted Trevor. She didn't want to see Shania get hurt, but that is the way it was heading. Rolling her eyes she joined her friend.

"Oh wow, *Elvira*. I love the fang marks Raine. Great touch."

"Thanks Shania, but it's *Elvira's Ghost*. I thought it was a great touch myself. So how long do we have to stay here?" Raine looked around the gymnasium as all the popular kids were on the dance floor dancing, the nerds and geeks were in each of their respectful corners, along with the school bullies. *So much click-i-ness in this school.*

"Oh Raine. We just got here. Can you at least give it a try and pretend to enjoy yourself?"

Raine watched them enter the dance floor, watching Trevor look completely bored and Shania

snuggle into his chest, smiling ear to ear. How could someone be so blind? She didn't understand that and watched a few more seconds. Shaking her head as a small pang of jealousy crept up on her, she decided to go get some punch. "Trevor's such an idiot." Her mouth instantly dry, she couldn't help but wonder what it would feel like to dance with someone that close.

The food and beverage table was all Halloween. There were spider pretzels, ghost cupcakes, bloodshot eyeballs, even the punch had ice in the shape of a hand and was colored green. "I love Halloween." Grabbing a plastic cup she mindlessly reached for the ladle that sat in the punch. When her hand met cold, she jerked it away and looked straight into green eyes.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare you. I was going to pour the punch for you."

His voice was beautiful. Velvety. He was gorgeous and Raine couldn't take her eyes off of him.

"May I?" He reached for her glass.

Raine was so taken by him she couldn't even speak. She slowly handed him her glass as she took in his every feature. He had to be the best looking guy in all of Newfane. His hair was jet black with piercing green eyes donning long dark lashes, and eyeliner, set against alabaster skin. He was a good foot taller than her and his voice, oh that

voice was musical in itself. Dressed in clothes from the 18th Century, he looked like the perfect vampire, like *Brad Pitt* from '*Interview with the Vampire*'. He brought meaning to the word, undead. He never took his eyes off Raine as he poured her punch.

"Here you go M'Lady." He smiled handing her the glass, then gave her a half bow.

"Thanks. I don't think I've seen you around here before. You new?"

"Yes. My family and I just moved into town. It's a nice place, Newfane. Many beautiful things to see." He was staring right at Raine.

A shiver ran through Raine as she wasn't quite sure how to act. Could this really be happening or was she dreaming. She decided she would find out, and after setting the glass on the table, she pinched herself hard. Wincing at the reality of it, she picked her glass back up and smiled at the handsome guy standing before her, while feeling the fight or flight response kick in and she so wanted to take flight.

"You are not dreaming. Pinching yourself never really works anyways." He chuckled softly. "How very rude of me. My name is Tristan. I know not where my manners have gone." He held out his hand.

Raine looked at him loving his name, she's never met a Tristan before. Still feeling a bit unsure, she looked around the dance to see if anyone was

Immortyl Kisses

watching as she waited for Tristan to turn on his heels to run screaming 'Ha ha jokes on you'. When nobody was seen to be watching them, she held out her hand. "I'm Raine." He smiled as he gently laid a kiss on the back of her hand. Raine felt like she was taken right into an old western, where the cowboys were always gentlemen. She looked around the room again, still nobody was watching. As her gaze landed back on Tristan's face, those brilliant green eyes stared back at her and she immediately dropped her eyes to the floor feeling a bit embarrassed and unsure what to do.

Before she could gain her composure Shania and Trevor were back from their dance. Seeing Raine talking to Tristan, she just had to know who he was. When she reached them, she was doubly shocked to see how bespelled Raine seemed to be. Raine felt a small release of tension when her friend was back at her side.

"Hi, I'm Shania. Raine's best friend." She stuck her hand out.

Tristan looked at Shania for a moment taking in her features. Long blonde hair framed a thin narrow face, pale blue eyes, almost like a dolls sat above high cheek bones, pretty though no where as pretty as Raine. He smiled and introduced himself, kissing Shania's hand too. She could see why Raine was so quiet. He was absolutely charming, and gorgeous.

"Well Raine, would you like to dance with me?" Tristan asked as another slow song was being played.

Raine's head snapped up from the floor. "What?" She didn't think she heard him right.

"Would you like to dance? With me?" He asked again.

Eyes going wide she couldn't help but look around the gym again. Was someone playing a trick on her? Still nobody was watching. She looked back to Tristan as he stood there, serious expression holding his hand out to her. She shook her head, "I can't dance."

"Not a problem. I will teach you. Just follow my lead."

Heart racing, not wanting to draw attention to herself, and not wanting to give up this opportunity to actually touch Tristan, the cliché ringing in her ears, she was surprised to find herself taking the hand being held out to her. Once on the floor, he spun her around and then pulled her to his chest. Raine's heart was beating so fast.

"I see you like vampires, Raine."

Raine shook her head yes. "Loved 'em since I was a kid." She was glad he was trying to make conversation. It made it easier to not concentrate on the dancing itself.

"I fancy them myself. Like they are a true part of me. I like the fang marks, a very nice touch Raine."

"Thanks. Everyone thinks I'm *Elvira* anyways, so I thought her *ghost* would be perfect."

"Definitely a good choice." He smiled and spun her around again.

They danced to the song and Tristan held her so close to him that she just lay her head on his chest letting him lead her around the dance floor. She couldn't believe she was asked to dance. He was so gorgeous and made her feel like she was the only girl in the world. She felt like she had walked into a dream.

"You going to school here Tristan?"

"Started yesterday. Heard of the dance and thought that I would come and meet some people. I must say that I never thought I'd find someone as intriguing as you though Raine."

"Me intriguing? Wait until tomorrow. That effect will wear off. So where are you from? The accent doesn't ring a bell." She had no clue what his accent was, not that any accent would ring any bells. She was finding it a little easier to talk to him and just loved his voice, never wanting him to stop talking.

"Ireland. My father was transferred from his job last month."

"Why haven't you started school earlier then?"

"We couldn't make the move in a day Raine. Traveling back and forth has been our only life over the last month."

"I was just being nosey. I get like that sometimes." Raine chuckled nervously.

"I find you most charming Raine. With a brutal honesty, I like that."

"Funny. I was thinking the same thing about you. Being charming that is. You're not like anyone I've ever met."

"It's the accent." Tristan spun her around one more time before the song ended.

When a fast song came on, Raine tried leaving the dance floor. Tristan held her hand tight though and smiled. "I can't dance to this music."

"Very well, we'll change it. Don't move." Tristan walked over to the DJ and leaned in close to talk to him. Like Tristan was a King, he changed the song to some upbeat rock.

Raine did as she was told and stood still, but she really wanted to run. There was no way she could dance to this music. She just stared at Tristan as he walked back over, realizing she was now doomed to dance again. Looking at his hand, she shook her head no, feeling her body shake with fear. She had made it through the slow song with nobody watching, but to dance to a fast song? She just knew she would give the kids a huge reason to pick on her come Monday.

"I don't think the other students will think too kindly of my dancing."

"Dear Raine. You worry too much about what

others think. You will do just fine. You have me as a partner.” He held his hand out a second time, waiting for her to accept.

Feeling she wasn't getting out of this with the excuse that she didn't know how to dance, she slipped her hand into his. “I still don't think I can dance to this.”

Leaning in close to her ear he whispered, “Remember to follow my lead. You did wonderful during the slow dance and nobody noticed then.” With one quick motion Tristan took Raine up in his arms, and they danced.

Raine couldn't believe how well he danced, nor how well she danced with him. They were making moves that she had only ever dreamed of. Though she didn't know it at first, all the other students had created a circle around her and Tristan to watch them dance, clapping to the beat of the music. Raine wasn't the only one amazed at their moves.

They ended the song with Tristan dipping Raine backwards, and bowing with her in his arm. Their faces were so close, Raine's heart skipped a beat at the thought of him possibly kissing her. Clapping erupted around them and Raine saw the shock on Shania's face when she spotted her, her mouth gaping wide open. Tristan stood them both back upright, bowed, and led Raine, red face and all, to where her friend stood.

“That was awesome Raine! I didn't know you

could dance like that.”

“Neither did I Shania.” Raine was still trying to catch her breath when Tristan handed her a bottle of water. *Did I really just dance like that and get an ovation from my peers?* She was having a hard time believing it. She looked around to find a few still watching her and Tristan. *They're probably thinking I brought my cousin to the dance like some loser.* She looked at Heather Brinker, the head cheerleader, and was taken back when she gave her a thumbs up.

“And you didn’t *want* to come to the dance. You were the main attraction!”

Raine shot Shania a look. She didn’t want Tristan knowing she didn’t even want to come to the dance. After meeting him, she sure was glad she did.

“Would you like to go outside Raine, and get some fresh air?”

“Sure. It’s hot in here.” Taking Tristan’s hand, she followed him outside, glancing an excited look back at Shania, who gave her two thumbs up.

The night air was cool and the moon was bright. Tomorrow night was Halloween and the moon would be full, and perfect for the occasion. Raine wondered what Tristan was doing for Halloween. Was the family settled in enough to enjoy it? Did they decorate?

“So tell me Raine, why is Halloween your favorite

holiday?" Tristan smiled.

"It's when the vampires and zombies can come out and play." She laughed when Tristan looked surprised. "It's the one time a year that I feel like I belong in this town. Everyone thinks I'm like this ghost whisperer or something. When Halloween comes around, I can actually be a ghost whisperer without people staring. How did you know it was my favorite holiday anyways?"

"The vampire thing was a dead give away." He chuckled.

"Oh, I guess you're right." She laughed back and looked up at the moon.

Relieved, Tristan too looked up at the moon. He thought he had put his foot in his mouth when he asked why she liked Halloween. He didn't know how he would explain that he'd seen her a few weeks ago and had been secretly following her ever since. From the time he first laid eyes on her, he knew he wanted to have her, to taste her. To him, she was beautiful. His eyes moved from the moon to Raine.

When she realized he was watching her she turned to face him. "So what's your story Tristan? Why so mysterious?"

Raising an eyebrow, "It's Halloween Raine, no mystery here. My favorite holiday too."

"Duh" she whispered to herself and slapped her hand against her forehead. She can be so stupid

sometimes. She was really just trying to make conversation unable to think of anything better to say.

"You are upset."

"I'm not upset with you. I'm upset with myself."

"Why Raine?"

"I ask stupid questions sometimes. I don't think."

"It wasn't a stupid question. It's hard for you to get to know someone, I can tell."

Raine just stared at him in awe. He understood her and she didn't have to make excuses or try to be someone she wasn't. Not to mention that he was easy on the eyes, and this really wasn't a joke.

"May I kiss you Raine?"

Raine raised her eyebrows in surprise while feeling her heart race. *He wants to kiss me? I can't believe he doesn't want to try for Shania. They always want Shania, not me.* Excited about experiencing her first kiss, she nodded and Tristan slowly leaned closer to her. Putting his hand on her cheek, he softly brushed his lips against hers. Raine closed her eyes and savored the moment. Just like in the movies, her hands came up around his neck and he deepened the kiss, but remained gentle. His hand resting on the small of her back, passion flooded him. He could smell the scent of her, an enticing mix of jasmine and vanilla. She smelled delicious, he felt the need grow to taste her. He wanted to experience her in every way, to

know what she was thinking. If he could have just a small taste, her thoughts would flood him. He pulled back with a jerk. These types of emotions were never any good for him. They always seemed to be followed by trouble. He quickly turned away from her, eyes squinting, brows furrowing as he felt ashamed for letting his senses get the better of him. He swore to himself that he would be extra careful with Raine. What would she think if she knew what he really was? What would she do? He couldn't risk that kind of exposure, not yet.

"What is it Tristan?" A startled Raine asked. *Did I do it wrong? Oh God. I sucked!*

"Nothing." He quickly settled his nerves, realizing this was her first kiss and he needed to make sure she knew it was perfect. Turning back to face her, he quickly came up with a diversion to his actions. "I enjoyed that very much. I have wanted to kiss you since I first laid eyes on you." He caressed her cheek.

"I liked the kiss too." Somewhat surprised that he's been wanting to kiss her, Raine could only think about how her first kiss under the moonlight was just perfect. She put her finger to her lips remembering the feel of Tristan's when he kissed her. She was still having a hard time believing it wasn't Shania he's been wanting to kiss.

"Maybe we should head back into the dance then?" Tristan knew it would be best to go back in

where they would be surrounded by people then to risk another kiss.

“Oh God. It's getting late. I think home would be better. I will go let Shania know I'm ready.” Raine had enough of dancing anyways, though she wasn't ready to end her night with Tristan.

“I will walk you home. It'd be my pleasure.”

Relief washed over her along with excitement. He was going to walk her home. Her night with him would not end abruptly. “Okay then. Let me just go tell Shania I'm leaving.”

“Very well. I will wait right here.” He watched her run back into the gym and out of sight. He had heard something while he was kissing Raine, and wanted to make sure it was safe. He would allow no harm to come to her. He turned to head to the back of school.

“Well hello Tristan. It's been way too long since we've seen each other last.”

Tristan spun around to face a smiling, impish looking man stepping out from the shadows. Well, he looked like a teen such as himself, but he was definitely a man by age. “What are you doing here Logan?”

“Is that any way to greet an old friend?”

“We are not friends. What are you doing here?”

“Relax Tristan. I am alone. I tired of the drear and lack of excitement in Norfolk. I thought it was time for a change.”

"Nobody is with you? Where is Antone?"

"He is still in Norfolk. My guess is he doesn't even know I am gone. It will be days, maybe even weeks before he figures it out. He probably thinks I'm out hunting."

Tristan just stared at Logan, seeking his face for the truth. Logan had only one thing in mind... himself. He couldn't see any trickery hiding in his expression. For now, Tristan would take what he said for the truth.

"You must leave here Logan. It is unsafe, even for you."

"Not for you though, is that right? I've got news for you ol' friend, I saw you kiss the girl. There is no war here, just you, afraid that I will steal your food."

"She is not food. If you even try..."

"You like her...Tristan." Logan cut him off.

Tristan refused to answer. When Raine returned before he could get rid of Logan, he let out deep sigh. If he could have tossed Logan into the woods and tied him to a tree he'd have done so right then and there.

"Okay Tristan. I'm ready." Raine paused to look at the boy that Tristan was talking to. She had never seen him before and couldn't help but wonder if he were a relation of Tristan's. Aside from the brown hair and brown eyes, and the darker skin complexion, they could've passed for brothers if not at least cousins by their features.

“You must forgive my...cousin. He has forgotten his manners. I’m Logan.”

“Hi Logan. I’m Raine.”

“Very nice to meet you indeed Raine.” Taking her hand in his, he leaned in to kiss it, but the smell of her was so enticing, he licked her hand instead.

Pulling her hand away, she looked at Tristan. Anger flowed to his bones. He would deal with Logan later. Right now he had to get Raine home safely, and he didn’t want Logan following them.

“Shall we go Raine?” Tristan held his arm out to her.

“Sure. It was nice meeting you Logan.” Raine smiled and looped her arm through Tristan’s.

Logan left out a small growl as he watched them walk away. “Nice to taste you too, Raine. Until we meet again.”

The Underworld

Tristan's mind was racing the entire way to Raine's house. He couldn't believe that Logan was here. The tension rolled into his shoulders, brows coming together in frustration. He had to figure out a way to get Logan to leave. Logan was a careless person, never giving thought to his actions, or the consequences that might follow. He also didn't want him anywhere near Raine. Knowing him, he would try to make her like him just so he could claim her as his own. That was just how he worked. Everything was a competition. Logan could never just be satisfied with what he had, always wanting what Tristan had, even the women in his life. He opened the door to his mansion and was instantly shoved into the parlor. Caught off guard, his fangs augmented as he slammed into his attacker with a loud hiss, sending him flying across the room. His assailant landed gracefully on his feet, facing Tristan.

"What have you done little brother?"

Realizing it was Shane, his fangs retracted.

"What are you talking about Shane?"

"Father is beyond mad. What have you done?"

"I've done nothing. Why must you always assume it was me to anger him?"

"I don't assume anything Tristan. You're always into trouble, looking for whatever it is you look for in the night. Your hunting habits have gotten erratic."

"I have not been hunting, nor have my habits become erratic. I've not hunted in almost two weeks."

"Well Father has come across something that looks like a vampire kill. He is not happy."

"Well it wasn't me. Maybe it was someone passing through."

"No. Father doesn't believe so. He thinks it's you."

"Why me?"

"You were the one angry for leaving Ireland. He thought maybe it was a payback, as such a child like yourself would do."

"I am no longer unhappy we've moved and I would never use a human as a payback. Plus I am not a child, so tell Father it wasn't me."

"What wasn't you Tristan?" The deep baritone voice echoed off the walls.

"Hello Father."

"So tell me son, what wasn't you?"

"I have not been hunting in weeks. Whatever it is you saw, has nothing to do with me."

"How did you hear of this?" He glanced at Shane already knowing the answer. "Ah. I wasn't accusing

you of anything, but we do seem to have a visitor among us. Possibly a rogue vampire.”

Tristan glared at Shane. “A rogue, Father?”

Shane's lips curled up, “I was just having fun with him Father.”

“Shane how many times must you be told to leave your brother alone?”

“Sorry Father. I forgot myself.”

“Leave us.” Dismissing him with the wave of his hand, Shane looked back and forth between Tristan and his father. He knew Tristan was getting a lecture, he just didn't know what for.

When they were alone, Tristan's father, Raquim, pulled his son close. “Yes Tristan. A rogue. I've come across some killings on my hunts, and they were messy and left where anyone walking the woods could find them.”

“Well it wasn't me Father. I've not been hunting in almost two weeks.”

“For the safety of this family, I must forbid you to see the girl again Son. If we are to stay under the radar of the Counsel, you must not risk us or the girl.”

“How did you know about the girl? I just met her tonight.”

“You have been seen following her Tristan. You mustn't put any of us at risk. You must not see her again.”

Tristan forced a calm voice, “Yes Father.” He

knew it was a lie. He was falling for Raine and she is what he felt was missing in his life. She is the first mortal he has ever been attracted to. He was not about to give her up.

Raquim poured himself a Scotch, watching the dark liquid swirl into the glass. Savoring the first sip, he slowly turned toward his son tasting the lie coming from his lips. "Son, we are considered fugitives. If the Counsel figures out we have left, it will be the death penalty for us all. We need to keep this family safe."

"The Counsel will not know we have fled Ireland Father. I don't see how Raine has anything to do with them."

"Tristan," Raquim smiled as he placed his arm around his son's shoulders. "Do you not understand we will be considered traitors? Mortals are not to know of our kind. If this girl figures out what we are, what you are, it will not only put us in danger, but her as well."

"Father, I know the laws governed by the Counsel. You have drilled it into our heads since we were young. Mortals must not know of our kind or it is the death penalty for the vampire and the human. Raine will not find out."

"If trouble finds us, the Counsel will know we have left without permission being granted. We will be forced back to Ireland for sentencing. That sentence is death, Son. We cannot keep a mortal

as a pet. The Counsel will see it as a risk of exposure, and your Raine will face the death penalty as well. It's just too risky for you to see this girl."

"Father, Raine is not a pet. I wish you could understand that there is just something about this girl that makes me feel complete. I feel more alive than I have in centuries when I'm with her. I do not wish to put our family or Raine in danger."

Raquim raised his hand to silence Tristan. "Enough. My decision stands. You will not see this girl again for the sake of this family. We have other things we must attend to, like finding the creature that has left their leftovers out in the open."

Tristan watched his father take up his favorite chair. He couldn't believe he wouldn't even give him a chance. He hated that he would defy his father's wishes, but he *would* see Raine again. He must. Turning to leave the room, he knew he would get no farther with his argument and went to his bedroom. He would figure out a way to keep Raine and his family safe. If Raine was found among them, it would be death for her and he just couldn't bear that thought. He would find a way to keep everyone safe and have his Raine too.

Staring out the window deep in thought he felt his stomach growl. It was time to hunt. He needed to find something satisfying so he wouldn't slip up around Raine. What would his father think if he

accidentally had to turn her into a vampire? It would surely be the death penalty then, for there was a strong law that no mortal is to be turned without the Counsel's consent. It was a very tedious, drawn out process.

As he entered the Buffalo City hunting ground, he ran into Logan. "Hey Tristan. Hunting?"

"Not that it's any of your concern, but yes. I too must eat on occasion." Tristan snarled.

"I've got just the place to hunt. Come with me."

Tristan stood his ground. He was not about to go anywhere with Logan.

"Tristan why must you always fight with me. I am telling you I've found the perfect place to hunt. All you can eat buffet!" Logan chuckled at his own analogy.

"Where is it?" Tristan asked cautiously.

"Just follow me." Logan started walking, shaking his head in disbelief at how much Tristan still didn't trust him.

Tristan stood for another moment before moving. He followed Logan hesitantly, waiting for another werewolf to jump from the shadows or a member of the Counsel to emerge that would surely put him to death on the spot. The farther they walked the closer they got to the outskirts of the city.

"Where are we going Logan?"

"The Underworld."

"The what?"

“The Underworld.”

“What is an Underworld?”

“A place I found while I was hunting. It’s a secret underground...well city if you will. It’s full of creatures like you and me. A place we can feed and never get caught. It would never alert the Counsel, or the Pack. It was created as sort of a refuge.”

“A secret world huh?”

“Night Secrets.” Logan laughed.

“So this is where Corbin got the idea? For Night Secrets?” Tristan thought of Corbin and Keara, both who were still in Ireland. Corbin had taken Keara back to Ireland to secure his underground world of Night Secrets, and could protect her from his twin brother. There was a big feud between the two and Dante’ had gone missing after a fight they’d had. Those were the good old days. He missed his good friend Corbin and wondered if there would come a day he would see him again.

“I’d imagine. You may even find yourself a lucky lady tonight Tristan.”

“I need no lucky lady.”

“Ah Tristan. I believe you are in love.”

“I believe you should not jump to conclusions Logan. This is where trouble falls upon you.”

Logan made for a tunnel leading under the Main Street bridge. Tristan followed, now curious to what he would see. Half way in the tunnel was a door.

Logan held it open for Tristan, and then followed him through. They walked through the darkened metal tunnel that literally went down like an old sewer pipe. They went around a few turns, Logan kicking rats out of the way as they walked. Finally it started getting brighter as they closed in on the Underworld. Tristan's senses were assaulted with the smell of human blood yet he was amazed at the sight before him, it was just like a small city. There were bars and music blasting from within just like above ground in the city, with places claiming to be motels and restaurants even.

Logan led their way to a place called, Mortal Desires. Tristan could plainly see vampires and shape shifters playing cards at one table, chatting at another, and playing pool. Just by looking at some of them he could tell what they were, wolf, vampire, others he could smell and know they weren't mortal. Taking in the delicious smell, his fangs waxed as his nose went to the air. Logan nodded to the barkeep as they walked to the back rooms. They entered a room without knocking and Tristan couldn't believe his eyes as he watched vampires feeding on mortals, and wolves feeding on those that didn't make it through the feeding by the vampires. It was the perfect place for immortals. They had quite the business at work here.

"Isn't it great Tristan. If a vampire forgets to stop,

we get the leftovers. Like I said, an all you can eat buffet.”

“It’s not legal to feed on mortals Logan.”

“Why must you always act like such an innocent? It’s what they want Tristan. These mortals want to be with our kind. They desire it, fantasize about it. They even sign a waiver stating that they are aware there is a risk of death. They are fulfilling their deepest desires Tristan. We get to benefit from it.” Logan was smiling with a growing hunger.

“How did you find this place?”

“I ran into a vampire from the area. He smelled me before I smelled him, which is unusual. He watched me for two days before approaching me. When he was sure I wasn’t a threat, he brought me here.”

“How lucky for you.”

“Well it beats bringing attention to Antone.”

“Someone has been hunting above ground.”

Tristan watched his expression with accusing eyes.

“How do you know?” Logan asked quizzically.

Before Tristan could answer, a young looking girl approached him. “Can I be your catch tonight?” She asked seductively.

Tristan looked at Logan, who was now inhaling deeply, his eyes turning a golden yellow like the eyes of the wolf. “Take her, she’s yours. Just go into one of those rooms back there. She can show you the way.” Logan pointed to the back. “I’m going

to find a young vampire to get my fill from. Call me if you get carried away." He winked knowing his supper was already awaiting.

Tristan felt a bit nervous as this young woman led him to a room in the back. He had never had such an easy hunt. The woman never said a word as they entered the room. It was small, baring just a round card table and chair to the left of the door, and a couch against the back wall. The woman sat on the couch.

Tristan stood by the door, now closed, and stared at the woman. "This your first time?" She asked.

Tristan nodded.

"Well don't be shy sugar. Come sit down here and I'll make it real easy on you." She patted the couch next to where she sat.

Tristan slowly walked over and sat down. In all his years as a vampire, he has never been so nervous when he was about to feed, let alone feed like this from the willing. He looked at the woman having a need to know her name. "What's your name?"

"Candy. What's yours?" She smiled warmly.

"Tristan. Nice to meet you Candy."

Edging closer she ran her hand up his chest. Leaning in for a kiss, Tristan grabbed her wrists, holding her back while closing his eyes. The kiss he shared with Raine tramped his thoughts and Candy pulled back to look at him.

“Well now. I sense a girl stands between us. A faithful vampire, what a change.” She smiled. “Let's get to it then. Now you be careful, I've other vampires to feed tonight. I will let you know when you've had enough.” She pulled her hair back and tipped her head to the side, bearing her neck.

Tristan saw the blood pumping through her veins and his fangs extracted with a shearing sound. He slowly moved closer to her neck, taking in her floral scent. He closed his mouth over her veins sinking his fangs through her skin. As he drank, he could feel that she truly enjoyed this, it was her true desire. Her thoughts migrated through him. She wanted to be food, and to be needed by his kind. It made her feel like she was wanted, desirable, and even sexy. Knowing this put him at ease and his mind played with the idea of how wonderful it would be if he could feed from Raine like this, sharing this same connection. He fulfilled his own need until she gave him the sign that he'd had enough. Pulling away from her, he licked his lips savoring the taste. He couldn't help but to enjoy the ease of this particular hunt, feeling a bit intoxicated. As his surroundings came back into focus, Raine was all he could think about.

Candy pulled a protein shake from her purse and drank it down. “You did real good for your first time Tristan.”

“Well, it's not my first time feeding from a human,

just my first time in a place like this.” He felt his fangs wane.

“You don’t get out much do you?”

“I guess not Candy. It was really nice meeting you.”

“You too sugar. I have to run, but you ask for me anytime.” She patted his cheek before heading out the door. “I hope that girl knows how lucky she is.”

Tristan couldn’t believe what he had just done, feeling like he may have betrayed Raine. It was a great experience, his family would never believe it and the Counsel would never know a thing. Now it was time to get back to Raine.

Feeling a bit uneasy, Tristan went to find Logan. He heard him in a room just down the hall. He knocked on the door. “What is it? Go away.”

“Logan, it’s Tristan.”

“You’re finished already rookie?”

“Yes. Are you ready?”

“I’m busy.”

“I’m heading home Logan. Be well.”

He heard the growl that comes with the shift. He knew Logan was turning into his wolf form, a scene he had seen so many times before.

Heading out the way they came in, Raine was his only thought. He needed to make sure she was safe and he couldn’t help the feeling washing over him that something wasn’t quite right. If his father was right, and there was a rogue on the loose,

Immortyl Kisses

Raine was in danger. He started running with vampire speed, knowing he would be at Raine's within minutes.

Unwanted Company

Making his way to her bedroom he moved like a ghost in the night careful not to make any noise that would alert her parents of an intruder in the house. Quietly he opened the door to her bedroom and snuck inside. During the time he followed Raine, he had watched her every move through the windows and by listening to her move through the house with his vampire hearing, until he figured out where her room was. He was able to close his eyes and hone his hearing as if he were right in the house with her. He could hear the changes in the sounds of her footsteps as she walked from hard wood flooring to the kitchen tiles, when her feet first hit the carpeted stairs. He even knew that the seventh stair creaked when stepped on. Then he watched her from outside her bedroom window as she would do her homework or dance to her punk music. He pretty much had the whole layout of the house pictured in his head without ever setting a foot inside, and tonight would prove him to be pretty good at drawing up blueprints.

Seeing her sleeping reminded him of *Sleeping Beauty*. She was the most beautiful girl he had felt connected to in centuries and he desperately wanted to kiss her. Raine turned restlessly in her sleep, making small whimpering noises. Tristan knew she was dreaming and couldn't help but wonder what the dream was about. If only he'd been blessed with mind reading. During a feeding is when all vampires had the ability to read minds, it was when the blood was shared that a bonding took place to allow it, but some were blessed with this power to hear the thoughts without even touching another person. Tristan wasn't that lucky, he was blessed as a Dominate. He could alter one's mind and thoughts, but he could not read their mind without sharing blood. That was not an option with Raine.

After several minutes Raine calmed into a deeper sleep. She didn't move for hours so Tristan sat, enjoying watching her. A rustling noise outside drew his attention away. He walked silently over to the window, keeping himself in the shadows. Sunrise would bring on Halloween and it was probably kids getting ready to play practical jokes throughout the town. Looking out the window, he noticed a figure flitting back and forth through the trees and back out to the road again, another vampire. *What was a vampire doing outside of Raine's?*

Another movement from the corner of the woods, from out of nowhere, he saw Logan strut towards the unwanted company. *What is that dog doing?* The new vampire was caught off guard as Tristan watched his fangs protrude from his mouth, turning to run with vampire speed. Tristan watched Logan shift into his wolf, taking flight after the unwanted visitor. Opening the window with no noise he leapt from the sill to the ground. His fangs augmented with the scent of the new vampire, a strong male vamp aroma. *What was a vampire doing so close to Raine's house? Did they follow his smell here or Raine's smell? The rogue?* Thinking his father may be right, he swore to protect Raine and keep her safe. He was not about to let another vampire have her for their dinner. He would talk to his father about the new vampire being in town. This could very well be their erratic hunter. He too took to the chase. He had to find out what this vampire wanted with Raine.

He found Logan, still in wolf form as he came to an abrupt stop. Smelling the air, he looked to Logan, "Where is it?"

He watched as bones started moving beneath Logan's skin. The fur started retreating as bones moved and reshaped, human skin taking form over the wolf's body. Within minutes, Logan was standing before him back in his human form. Luckily for Logan, the shift never left him naked just

drained of energy.

"I lost it. It just vanished."

"You lost it?" Tristan grunted.

"Yes. It's fast. Faster than you even." Logan eyed Tristan with a smirk.

Contemplating the vampires path of escape, Tristan gave one last look around, moving with obscurity from one area to the next following the vampires scent. Satisfied it couldn't be seen or smelled, "Aye. We must keep a careful watch. It wants something and we must figure out what that is. If it's Raine, we need to find out why. I must go get my sunglasses and head to school." Tristan knew he had forgotten his sunglasses and it was almost time for the sun to rise. Though it was only myth that vampires would burn in the sun, they were still prone to sunburn. Like many humans were apt to get a mild burn from too many hours under the suns rays, vampires would suffer third degree burns within several minutes, blistering with intensified pain. Wearing long sleeves and jeans helped protect their skin while dark sunglasses called, Polarbans, specially designed for vampires with magnified polarization to keep the UV rays out, kept their eyes safe from a type of burn to their eyes that would practically leave them blind until healed.

Logan concurred. "I will keep watch for it."

Tristan nodded in acknowledgement, then

headed for home, having only minutes before sunrise.

Tristan arrived to school a few minutes early hoping to gain some time alone with Raine. As he was walking to the front doors he spotted her beautiful long hair blowing in the chilled morning air and it brought a smile to his face. Closing the distance he saw her talking to someone else. Stopping in his tracks when a familiar scent enveloped him, anger flowed through him, and he welcomed it.

“Well if it isn’t our wonderful Tristan now.”

“What are you doing here Logan?” Tristan grimaced.

“I go to school here too. Where else would you like me to go? I live right here in town.” Logan smirked knowing Tristan was angry.

Raine could feel the tension between them and wondered what the cause of it was. Obviously they had gone to school together before, even though Logan was from Norfolk, but how strange was it that they both ended up in the same school again, and both moving into town at the same time? If he was truly a cousin, which she doubted, Raine decided she would get to the bottom of it, and if she could help it, they would get along. She liked

both of them, Tristan with his beautiful green eyes and dark hair, he was gorgeous, and Logan with his tussled brown hair, big brown eyes and scruffy face, he reminded her of a puppy, but he too was easy on the eyes. Enjoying her talk with Logan and caring for Tristan, she was more determined than ever that they would all be friends.

Tristan put his arm across Raine's shoulders. "We better head to class." Giving a warning look to Logan, he led Raine into the school.

Logan chuckled at Tristan's snideness. "I still got it." He headed into class right behind them.

Tristan's blood wanted to boil over when Logan followed them into class. "If he has every class the same.." He mumbled. He knew Logan loved making him mad and he could only hope Antone, the pack leader would show up for him very soon. It wouldn't take long for the Alpha to realize he was missing, and he would send the search party. This made Tristan smile, and he hoped he'd be able to witness Logan's capture before they had fun dragging him back to Antone. The thought brought a smile to his face.

"Well you certainly seem more chipper."

Turning to Raine, he let the smile reach his eyes. "I'm always chipper....when I'm with you." Raine felt the heat rise in her cheeks and looked at the teacher as he started his lecture, while Tristan laughed under his breath at how much he affected

her.

Shania was in the back watching Tristan and Raine, grinning at seeing her friend in love for the first time. Whether she knew it or not, Raine was falling for this boy, and she was falling hard. Her attention fell on the new boy. Raine had been talking to him earlier and Tristan seemed to know who he was. She couldn't help but wonder his name, or notice the fact that he was gorgeous and carried a confidence about him that made her feel an instant attraction to him. She would definitely have Raine introduce them later.

Tristan had to run to the office before leaving. He told Raine he would meet her outside to walk her home in a few minutes. Though it was merely two minutes, he found Raine talking to Logan. Tristan let it slide and approached them smiling. "You ready to go Raine?"

"Yes. I have a lot of homework to do tonight. I have to get that report finished that Bentley hit us with. I don't even like history. How can he expect us to have it done by tomorrow?"

"You could do your report on the history of Halloween. The true meaning of All Hallows Eve." Tristan joked.

“You’re brilliant!” Raine hugged him in her excitement.

Logan cleared his throat. “So you’re not going trick or treating like the rest of Newfane?” Disappointment tainted his tone.

“Oh, I’m going. I’m getting my report started before I go though. That way it will be almost finished by the time I get back home.” Raine smiled.

“Well good luck then. Maybe I will see you around town.”

“Do you mind if I walk my girlfriend home now?” Tristan cut in.

“Girlfriend huh?” Logan glared. “By all means my friend.”

“We are not friends Logan.” Raine glanced at Tristan a feeling of giddiness almost making her giggle at being assigned his girlfriend.

“Oh Tristan. Still holding a grudge?” Logan couldn’t help but laugh. Realizing he was the only one laughing, he said, “I must talk to you it’s very important.”

Tristan stared intently at Logan. “What about?”

“Just meet me at the Old Church.” Logan turned on his heel and walked away, not giving Tristan a chance to refuse.

Tristan watched for a moment then turned back to Raine. “You ready?”

With a puzzled look on her face she replied, “I

guess. Wonder what that was all about?"

"Logan is very theatrical. It's probably nothing."

"Are you two really cousins? What grudge?" She asked quizzically.

"We've known each other for a long time, but we are not related. We went to school together when I lived in Norfolk for a short time. Logan and I have our share of disagreements. We don't see eye to eye on a lot of things. He's always trying to make me angry. He shouldn't have come here."

"Well I'm sure he had no choice. His family wouldn't let him stay alone. He said his dad lost his job so they came to the States on a proposal from a big law firm here in Buffalo."

"Really? What law firm?" Tristan pried.

"He didn't say. Just that it was big."

Exactly, Tristan thought. Logan has some wild stories that is for sure. He would meet Logan later and then hope to be done with him. He was not about to let him ruin things with Raine, or for his family.

"Thanks for walking me home Tristan."

"My pleasure. Now as soon as I go talk to Logan, I will be back to help you with your paper. Please stay inside." He stared into her beautiful gray eyes. So much behind them, so much to learn. He wanted to be able to have the chance to learn as much as he could.

Raine felt her heart starting to race under the

intensity of his stare. As much as she longed for it, and as if he were reading her mind, Tristan leaned in and kissed her deeply, passionately. She felt like she was floating on air.

"I'll be back love." Tristan pecked her nose with a gentle kiss and left to find Logan. "Promise me you will stay inside until I return."

"I promise."

Raine watched Tristan until she couldn't see him anymore. She went to her room on wobbly knees. She never thought she would experience a kiss like that, let alone her first kiss and all the kisses after. Tristan was romantic, strong, sexy, gorgeous, and sweet all wrapped up in one package. "I wonder why he asked me to stay inside?"

You're A Barbie Girl blasted the room from her cell phone bringing her from her thoughts. Knowing it was Shania, she threw her book bag down and plopped on her bed. "Hello?"

"Raine! Don't you wait for me anymore?"

"Gosh, I'm sorry. Tristan walked me home. He and Logan were having a bit of a tiff so I just left when Tristan was ready."

"Who's Logan? Is that the new hot kid? The one you were talking to this morning?"

"Yeah. That's him. He is pretty cute isn't he?"

"You can't have both of them Raine!"

"What? I don't want both of them Shania. Geesh give me a break."

"I want you to introduce me to Logan. I think he's hot."

"What about Trevor?" Raine chuckled.

"We aren't dating. I can talk to whoever I want to." Shania snapped.

"Okay, okay. Relax. I was just messing around."

"Sorry. It's just that I see you so happy and it happened so fast for you. I've been after Trevor for three years and still haven't even received as much as a peck on the cheek. I guess I'm a little envious Raine."

"Well you should know better than to envy me. I never have good things happen to me. Tristan is a true miracle. I didn't mean for it to happen. Maybe you're trying too hard with Trevor."

"I think Trevor just thinks of me as a little sister or best buddy. He doesn't see me as a girlfriend. I'm so wasting my time with him." She sighed.

Raine felt bad for her friend, but relieved she was finally seeing the whole picture. She had tried with Trevor with no results. He was so blind, and maybe just too confused. Raine smiled picturing rocks in his head for brains. Shaking the nonsense away she refocused on Shania who was babbling on and on. "Come by tonight. I will introduce you before we all go trick or treating together."

A screech erupted from the phone. "Thanks Raine. You're the best, best friend anyone could ask for! I love you and see you tonight!"

Immortyl Kisses

The phone went dead in Raine's ear. She knew Shania would be getting ready right now, making herself perfect for tonight. She was always big on making first impressions, and she would be dolling herself up to meet Logan. Raine felt a bit of a twinge in her gut. Was she actually afraid that Logan and Shania may hit it off? She quickly forced the thought out of her mind. She had Tristan and that was all she needed.

Temporary Truces

The Old Church was run down. The white paint was peeling off and dirty, making it look grey. The windows were broken and shattered shards of glass lay on the ground directly beneath the windows. Crows were making noise in the surrounding trees, and the only noise to be heard. Tristan walked up the steps, avoiding the hole found on the second step, pushing the red doors open and feeling the dust fall on his shoulders and head from the door not being used in many years. Logan sat in the front pew, staring at the old wall hanging of Jesus on the Cross.

“You made it.” Logan said without looking back.

“You said it was important Logan. Now what is it?”

“No pleasantries? Just like you Tristan. Always straight down to business.”

“Quit playing games Logan. Tell me what is so important.”

“Fine.” He turned to face Tristan. “You're right Tristan. We should be discussing the rogue vampire that's taken a liking to your girlfriend.”

"A rogue vampire?" Tristan never told Logan it was a rogue. "How do you know it was rogue?"

"Didn't you get a look at it? There was something strange about his eyes, evil. Plus it just didn't smell right."

"I have to agree there is something distinct about its scent, but I didn't get a good look at him. I saw his face for a split second before you chased him."

"Even you would have gotten chills if you'd have seen his eyes. Plus when I approached him to ask why he was standing outside Raine's house, he snapped, baring fangs, hissing like a feral cat then took off like a Jedi."

"Maybe we should alert the pack of his kind." Logan queried.

"His kind?"

"Well, what else do you want to call it?"

"I have to see him for myself. We cannot be having him calling attention to the Counsel. If he is rogue, he must be destroyed. We must find out why he is making his way to Raine's too. I will not have harm come to her."

"You really should lose the 1800's dialogue. It's the twentieth century for immortals sakes!"

Tristan shot Logan a look and started pacing. Worry settled upon him as now he had to find out why this vampire was here, and what exactly it was. He could not let this rogue creature harm Raine. He would never forgive himself.

“We must figure out what it is. If it doesn’t smell of vampire then it must be some sort of hybrid. Once we figure out what it is, we can then figure out how to take care of it. I will have to speak to Father.” Tristan’s brow furrowed with thought.

“It took off so fast I couldn’t get a good scent of it let alone a good look at it. I will hang out around Raine’s and see if it comes back.”

Bringing Tristan from his reverie, “How is it exactly you knew where Raine lived?”

“I followed you guys home the night of the dance. Her smell is not hard to find you know? She smells very...enticing. I can see why this rogue vamp would be attracted to her.” Tristan’s fangs extended and he slammed Logan into the wall. Logan smirked at Tristan’s gnarl. It always amused him to see Tristan agitated, the one thing he enjoyed was how easy it was to get under his skin. Ever since Jasmine, Tristan made sure to distance himself from Logan.

Jasmine was the love of Tristan’s life. Being a freshly turned vampire, he found Jasmine crying by the water’s shore with no memory of her past life or turning. Tristan kept her under his wing, like a guardian angel. He was no angel though. When they met Logan, he was a new wolf learning the ropes to his new found curse. While others in their dark world questioned why a vampire would be friends with a werewolf, for wolves just couldn’t be

trusted, they thought nothing would ever tear them apart. They did everything together, teaching each other. Tristan even helped Logan learn how to temper the shift with less pain.

One dark lonely night, Logan was shocked when Jasmine kissed him. He thought she only had love for Tristan, awakening feelings in him that he didn't even know existed. He wanted to fight them, yet at the same time explore them. Knowing it was wrong, Jasmine won the war of right vs. wrong in his head the moment her soft lips touched Logan's. He gave into her advances, and when Tristan walked in on them, the fury he let loose was worse than any rogue vampire could have emitted. The room was completely trashed and both Tristan and Logan bore wounds from the physical fight that commenced. Even Jasmine was injured, her running out of the room crying.

When they finally calmed and realized that Jasmine was gone, they went in search of her. Putting their differences aside, it lasted long enough to find the love of both of their lives. Trusting a werewolf just wasn't in the cards for a vampire. Friendship between these two immortal creatures just wasn't meant to be.

When they found her, Jasmine was caught by rogues who had broken loose from their masters at only one week turned. Catching Jasmine was a game, playing with her to near torture before

tearing her to pieces. Logan and Tristan feared for Jasmine's life, breaking through the rogues, destroying most in their path. Tristan rushed to Jasmine's side. She was in bad shape.

"I love you Tristan. Always remember I love you." Jasmine said in a weak voice, blood draining from her beautiful body. She had so much blood loss, there wasn't enough time to replenish her to heal.

Logan stood back and watched as Tristan held Jasmine while she took her last breath. Red tears streaked Tristan's cheeks and he wept for his lost love.

Logan felt grief stricken, Tristan blaming him for Jasmine's demise. If he hadn't been intimate with her she'd have never run out. If he could have saved her she would still be here today. Logan wasn't able to save Jasmine, but he did kill the last of the rogues to avenge her. Wishing he could take it all back, putting their friendship the way it was, it seemed Tristan would never forgive him. Though Tristan has mellowed some over the centuries, the grudge was blatantly evident, and Logan still tried to restore the friendship missing what once was. When Tristan got annoyed, at least Logan was that much closer from being pushed farther away.

"You will keep your distance from Raine." Agitated, Tristan turned to walk back out the door. "See what you can find out. I must return to Raine. I told her I wouldn't be long." He spoke over his

shoulder. Hatred flowed through Tristan's veins. He would not allow Logan to repeat history. He would kill him first.

On the way back to Raine's he thought of ways to keep her safe. His Father was the last of his worries at the moment, but he would let him know that there was a rogue on the loose deciding to make a quick stop home.

He entered the mansion like any other day. It was dark and eerily quiet tonight. Not even the servants were anywhere to be seen.

"Father? Shane?"

"Where have you been Son?" Came the deep baritone voice from the library.

The library was lit with a fire, his father sitting in his favorite chair close to it sipping Brandy.

"I was talking to Logan." He told the half truth.

"Logan? What is he doing here? He better not be up to no good. If he brings trouble, I will rip him to shreds myself."

"I don't think he will cause any trouble. We chased a rogue last night." Knowing that would get his father's attention, he smiled with the news he was able to bring to his father.

"Rogue? So my hunches were right then?"

"Yes Father. I believe this is the creature that's been leaving the messes behind. I didn't get close enough but Logan said he seems evil. His scent is very distinctive as well."

"We must investigate into this. Summon your brother. Tonight is Halloween, this rogue will have no problems blending in with all of the costumes people will be wearing."

Tristan turned to fetch Shane. Before he could leave the room, his father made one more statement. "You've been with that girl again Son. I can smell her. You are forbidden to see her again, or it will be the coffin fasting for you."

"I cannot let trouble come to her Father."

Like lightning Raquim had Tristan against the wall. "I am you father and you will do as you are told." His voice was deep with anger.

Restraining himself against this unwarranted anger, Tristan plead his case. "Father, this rogue was seen outside of her house. It's where we chased after him from and I won't let it hurt her. If we've learned nothing else, it was you that taught us to protect the innocent. You cannot keep me from doing what I've been taught my whole existence as a vampire." When his father's grip didn't loosen, he shoved past the arms restricting him, storming out of the room to find his brother. His father's threat made his mood bitter. "The coffin fasting." He laughed in defiance.

The coffin fasting was a form of punishment when vampires were locked into a coffin with no food, or contact with anyone for days to weeks to months, making them extremely weak. It was one of the main reasons for keeping a coffin in today's time, though some still used them for sleep out of habit. When the disobedient vampires master, or in this case their father, thought it was long enough, he would let the defiant vampire out hoping they learned their lesson. Tristan would not be locked in a coffin and kept from Raine. He would take her to Canada first, into the safety of Night Secrets. Anger and fear of losing her settled over him and he punched the wall in frustration. Looking at the hole through the plaster, he leaned his head and hands against the wall to take a deep steadying breath. Deciding not to let his father upset him, he refused to allow his father to keep him from her. He just couldn't do that no matter what the cost. Tuning in to the noise around him, tilting his head he heard gunfire in the next room.

Shane was in the game room fighting werewolves on his video game swaying his body to the movement of his arms. Not in the mood for this game, Tristan snapped at Shane loudly to be heard above the surround sound gaming system. "Father wants you."

Shane slowly turned to look at Tristan. Pausing his game, "You smell like that chic."

Tristan glared at Shane, the anger bubbling just under his skin. Out of pure frustration Tristan leaped for Shane, fangs extended and he hissed loudly like a cat hissing at a rabid dog. His eyes glassed over knocking Shane off his chair pinning him to the floor with the strength of a crazed grizzly bear. "It would be in your best interest to mind your business and go see what Father wants." Tristan spat through gritted teeth.

"Calm down little brother. What's eating you?"

Tristan didn't bother to answer. Feeling bad for taking it out on his brother, he jumped up walking straight out of the house. Needing to see Raine, he ascertained releasing some tension and frustration before hand would be best, so he headed for the Underworld. Candy would be just the ticket to ease his troubled mind while keeping him from accidentally hurting Raine.

Trick Rogue Treat

As soon as he walked into Raine's house he knew the night wasn't going to be good.

"Tristan, can you call Logan and have him join us please. Shania wants to meet him." Raine asked with puppy dog eyes.

He sighed deeply, but would not deny her request. He knew she wanted to know why there was so much tension between Logan and himself, but he was not going to go into the details of why he wanted nothing to do with Logan. He would rather just grit his teeth and bare being with Logan if it made Raine happy. He pulled out his cell phone and made the call, regretfully.

Shania came in dressed as a princess. Her long blonde hair contained sparkles and a tiara, eyes painted blue with cheeks rosy. She looked like *Cinderella* from the fairy tale. Even her dress was long and elegant like *Cinderella's* ball dress and she even carried a wand. Spinning around she asked, "Well? Do you like it?"

"Glass slippers too?" Raine quirked an eyebrow.

Shania lifted her gown to show off her feet. Just

like in the story, her feet bore real glass slippers.

"I love it. Now help me get ready." Raine left the room with Shania, both giggling leaving Tristan to keep himself company.

A text message beeped on his cell. "*Be there in five.*" It was from Logan. He was all too eager to join them tonight and it irritated Tristan to no end. He didn't bother to respond, instead paced the living room floor. "*Why can't I just be rid of that flea bitten mongrel?*" He said under his breath. Even if the girls were in earshot of him, they would not have understood what he said.

The girls came back and Tristan stared in awe at Raine. She was the most beautiful vampire he had ever seen. She wore a long black wig, her face painted a pale white with dark circles shadowing her gray eyes. Fangs fell from beneath the top lip while blood dripped in both corners of her mouth. Her neck too was pale white with the fang marks of a bite like she had at the school dance. His nostrils flared at her delicious aroma, causing a hunger to grow within him. He imagined what it would be like to make Raine a real vampire, knowing her beauty would exceed any he's ever encountered.

"We match." She said grinning.

"Definitely. You're beautiful." Tristan bowed kissing the back of her hand.

Shania let out a giggle and grabbed Raine's other hand. "You're so lucky."

There was a knock on the door. “Tristan, would you mind getting that? It’s probably Logan. We need to run upstairs and put the finishing touches on our costumes.”

Hiding the reluctance, under his breath he said, “Sure love.”

“I can’t believe he came. I’m so excited, he’s so cute.” Shania screeched, feeling a bit of jealousy toward Raine and Tristan. Raine had never had a boy that liked her before. It was always Shania the boys were after and she couldn’t help feel like this when Tristan didn’t even so much as look at her, let alone to call her ‘love’. It was odd not having the boy ogling over her. Soon she would have Logan then they both could be happy.

Tristan looked up the stairs and laughed. Opening the door, Logan was chuckling as well. “I take it you heard?”

“I did. Mortals are so...Oh what is the word I’m looking for?”

“Adorable.” Tristan relaxed his shoulders. It would be no use fighting with him today. They were both here for the girls. Besides, it might be a good thing to have an extra pair of ears and eyes with this rogue on the loose. He took a deep breath and exhaled. Maybe Logan and Shania would really hit it off.

“That isn’t the word I was looking for, but I’ll let you have that.”

“You remember what it was like to be a teenager, no? The million crushes, giddy girls, cool boys.” Tristan laughed as the memories flashed images through his mind. Funny how they were still so clear. Jasmine flashed in his mind, and he remembered their first kiss...

She looked so beautiful on the swing in the garden under the shadow of the great oak. Gardenias scented the grounds and Jasmine's hair glistened in the moon as she swung in and out of the rays. She turned her head as Tristan slowly approached admiring her beauty.

“Hello Tristan.”

“Hello Jasmine. How are you today?” He smiled knowing he was just making small talk.

“I'm very fine thank you. Won't you join me?”

Tristan walked up behind her as he waited for her to readjust herself so he could push her. The smell of the Gardenias mixed with Jasmine's vanilla, had Tristan's nostrils flaring as he fought off his carnal urges. Jasmine was talking away, and all Tristan could think about was how much he wanted her.

“Is that ok Tristan?”

Snapping out of his fantasies, he looked into those beautiful eyes of hers. “I'm sorry Jasmine, what did you say?”

“I said I would like you to escort me to the ball this Saturday.”

Tristan smiled and without thinking because he just couldn't stand it any longer, he stopped the swing, spinning her around to face him. Taking her face in both of his hands, a low guttural growl evaded him. Jasmine's eyes widened as she looked into the eyes of the hungry man before her. Pushing his lips into hers, the world seemed to spin with motion as they were both swept away in that kiss...

"I remember. Now where is this girl so we can get the introductions over with."

"They'll be down in a minute. I believe they are putting the finishing touches on their costumes."

As the girls descended the stairs, Logan waited anxiously for the girl that was desperate to meet him. He hoped she was half as beautiful as Raine.

Raine came into view first, and Logan's breath caught in his throat. "*Beautiful.*" He felt his heart excel at the sight of her and quickly had to tame it, knowing Tristan would be able to hear it.

Tristan watched him, noting how his eyes looked bored as Shania closed in, and how his eyes lit up when Raine came into view. He would speak to Logan later about this, making sure the warning for him to keep his distance was well known and laid on the table so there was no room for doubts. He was certain he would never be able to trust Logan ever again.

"We're ready. What do you guys think?" Raine

asked as both girls spun in a circle modeling their attire.

Logan thought Raine looked stunning. Shania was pretty too, but nowhere as pretty as Raine. He couldn't take his eyes off of her.

Both boys started speaking at once and it came out all jumbled. Tristan slapped Logan in the head. "Quiet dog." Clearing his throat, "You both look exquisite."

Raine kissed Tristan's cheek. "Logan this is my best friend, Shania. Shania, this is Logan."

Logan gave a pleasant smile and Shania lit up like a Christmas Tree. She was in her glory, finally meeting this hot hunk. She sensed his bad boy style the minute he smiled at her and his chocolate brown eyes were captivating.

Logan glared at Tristan, regretting having agreed to this.

"Shall we?" Tristan opened the door, his lips curling up.

They filed out of the house, and started at the house next door. The girls laughed and giggled, as Tristan and Logan secretly kept watch for the rogue vampire. Logan kept stealing glances at Raine, and would find Shania stealing glances at him. He smiled, wishing they could just lose Shania. As they closed in on a wooded area, Tristan moved closer to Raine. Something wasn't right in the air. Logan sensed it too as he inhaled deeply, though he didn't

close the distance between himself and Shania.

Rounding the corner and with the speed of lightning, Raine was scooped up and gone right before their eyes. Shania screamed when she saw Raine had vanished, dropping her wand. "Where is she?"

"Calm down Shania. We will find her."

Logan took off after the rogue and Raine. Tristan watched Logan disappear into the woods and he just wanted Shania out of the way. "I will take you home."

"No. I want to find Raine and know she is safe. Where could she have gone? She just vanished."

Knowing she would argue if he denied her, he allowed her to follow him. They headed into the woods in the direction that Raine had been taken. Shania felt like her skin was crawling as they made their way over tree roots and broken twigs. Tristan held her hand, listening for any sound that Raine was close by. He and Logan knew what took Raine, though he was sure that Shania's mortal eyes never saw it.

He heard the growl of Logan taking his wolf form. He had heard that growl so many times, he would recognize it in his sleep. When they first became friends, Tristan could remember being so intrigued by the shift. He had accompanied Logan for many shifts, trying to figure out the cause. It always amazed him how the transformation occurred. So

many metaphysical things going on at once. That was the past when they were good friends, both trying to adjust to their new life, and the curses that went with it.

Grabbing Shania around the waist, he half carried her as he ran to where Logan was shifting, caring only about Raine's safety. By the time they reached Logan, he had already taken his wolf form.

Shania screamed, "Wolf!"

"Hush Shania. You're safe."

Trembling now and confused, she stared at the wolf. It was larger than the wolves you see on television, and his fur gleamed silver in the moonlight. His eyes were chocolate brown and seemed familiar. "How can you say we're safe? Raine is missing and there is a wolf ready to eat us!"

"The wolf won't harm you." Logan shook his head and started running to where he last saw the rogue with Raine.

"Tristan!" Raine yelled causing them all to look up.

The rogue had her in the tree, almost to the top. "You must stay here and keep quiet Shania. I need you to not move and promise me to stay quiet."

Tears streamed down Shania's face, black mascara and blue eye liner staining her cheeks. Nodding her head yes, she backed herself up against the tree, trying to mold herself to its form.

Tristan jumped and practically flew through the tree to the top in one bounding leap. Just as he was almost in reach of grabbing Raine back, the rogue flew back to the bottom with an astounding speed. Logan was right. There was an odd smell to this creature. Something he just couldn't put his nose on. He recognized the scent as one from long ago, but memory was failing him. Anger enveloped him and he began following the rogue back down, jumping directly in his path. Hissing then a shove, Raine went flying landing on her back, her head hitting a large overgrown tree root. The rogue roared as it flew on top of him sinking fangs into Tristan's neck. Logan came from the side and tackled the rogue, helping to free him. The rogue tumbled doing somersaults then jumped to its feet running. Tristan chased the rogue back further into the woods and Logan, after transforming back into his human form, took an unconscious Raine to safety at the Old Church.

Tristan couldn't believe the speed of this creature as he chased him up trees and back down, through narrow spaces and over hills and man-made caves. Tristan would grab him sinking fangs into his tough skin, but the creature always retaliated leaving open gashes on Tristan in various places over his body. Freeing himself from its clutches, the chase would start again. The rogue was fast, but Tristan could keep up. Closing the

distance, Shane jumped out from behind a tree, catching the rogue off guard. Both the rogue and Tristan rolled across the earth as Shane gripped the rogue by his throat. Tristan quickly stood up. "What are you doing here Shane? Is Father with you?" Before Shane could answer, their father emanated making his demands to the rogue.

"Who are you?" Raquim demanded. "You will speak or die."

"I don't answer to you." The rogue squeaked out in an alien-like tone.

Tristan watched as his father closed his hand around the rogue's throat. He sniffed the air around him. "That is quite the scent you have. Smells of... brimstone and fire, with a back hint of vampire."

That was it. Tristan knew where this rogue was from. "Fala, Father." It had to be Fala.

"Fala." His father agreed.

Fala was a half warlock half vampire from long ago. He had made enemies with Tristan's family and the rest of the vampire covens across the nation when he enslaved a vampire, forcing him to turn others and then setting the rogues loose on the streets. When his evil plan to blame immortal exposure on Raquim backfired, it was Fala who was sentenced to Grim's Island to live out his days and a spell was cast by a powerful witch forbidding him to step foot off the Island. He has hated Raquim and his family ever since, as it was he who

convinced the Counsel of Fala's wrong doing.

"Where is Fala?" Raquim demanded.

The rogue shifted his body as Shane and Tristan struggled to maintain their hold on the creature. It was stronger than any other vampire they've seen which surprised them. Astounded Tristan figured out who his master was, the rogue made a jerking movement with a splash of liquid from falling from his mouth hitting the earth, wings emerged from its back knocking Tristan and Shane to the ground with even more tremendous power. They watched as this creature looked at all of them one at a time. His fangs protruded from a long snout, smoke lingering from the corners of his mouth. His body grew four times in size and changed to a blue color with almost transparent skin. Wings expanded, knocking trees over with their strength. Letting out a flare of fire from his mouth, he stated, "Fala will have you and all you hold dear." Then he flew away into the night sky.

Shane tried grabbing his foot as he departed, but the creature was too quick. Raquim looked at his boys with worry. "He has created this creature, a shifter and a vampire. How has he done this? Fala is getting smarter. We must watch our step and warn the Counsel. We must warn all immortals."

Shane started following Raquim out of the woods. He turned back to find Tristan standing still.

Raquim sensed the stillness and looked back too. "Come boys."

Tristan wanted to go with his father but didn't move. Now would be the time to prove himself, and he cautiously said, "I must find Raine Father. This creature said all we hold dear too. I won't let harm come to her because of me. It seems to be after her. Logan and I have already chased it from her house and it grabbed her tonight which is why we are here again."

Raquim thought for a long moment. Knowing he instilled good values in his son from their last argument, he spoke sternly. "Very well Son, go find this mortal. You are granted to keep her safe until we find Fala and this creature. You must check in with us and if we need you, you are to leave the girl and come home. Now let's go see what we can find out about Fala before it's too late." In the back of his mind, he knew he would do the same thing if he were in Tristan's shoes. Smiling, he led the way as they headed for home.

Tristan watched his father and brother walk away. Relief swept over him, he would not have to sneak around or defy his father. Smiling, he ran to retrieve Shania. They must find Raine, he had to make sure she was okay. Shania did as promised. She never moved from where he left her. With her eyes closed tightly and face buried in her hands she was shaking all over. Tristan approached her

slowly, saying her name. When Shania screamed, Tristan spoke over her. "Shania! It's me Tristan."

Opening her eyes and seeing it was truly him, she ran into his arms. He hugged her for a moment giving her comfort to let her know it was over, not wanting to delay too long in finding his Raine. "We must go. I think Logan has Raine safe, but we must find her."

Shania nodded in agreement and let Tristan lead her out of the woods. Sure he would find them at the Old Church, he wasted no time, his only thoughts on Raine. Shania was feeling much better now that they were out of the woods, her only thoughts on how Logan would look at her in distress, wrapping her up in the comfort of his strong arms. She knew that is what Tristan was going to do for Raine and she was sure Logan would too. The thought calmed her even more and she quickened her pace to get to Logan and Raine faster. She was that much closer to making Logan hers.

At the Old Church, they both paused outside staring at the double red doors to the church. Tristan hoped Logan was smart enough to bring her here, as this was the most logical meeting place. As they entered, the crows squawked from the trees in the yard.

To Love Or Not To Love

Raine moaned as she tried sitting up. Her body ached with the memories of what had just happened. “What was that thing Logan?” Raine started crying as she came out of her unconscious state.

Logan raced to her side to help her. “I’m not sure Raine.” Remorse of the lie hanging heavily.

Logan had been watching the windows and the door, pacing back and forth making sure he couldn’t see any danger approaching, his ears attentive to any noise that didn’t belong. He kept an eye on Raine checking her pulse every few minutes. He was dreading when she came to, knowing he would have to answer her questions. He didn’t want to have to keep things from her but he knew it was inevitable.

The moon was full for Halloween, and this would be one Halloween that Raine would remember for the rest of her life. She sat down in the pew and cried some more, confused by what was going on. It all happened so fast.

“Come here Raine. It’s going to be okay.” Logan

pulled Raine into his arms. He smelled her blood and immediately started breathing out of his mouth. Her fragrance excited things within him that he would rather not face at this moment. "You're bleeding." The rogue had bit her.

She reached to her neck, remembering with clarity the creature sucking her blood. She started sobbing as fear embraced her. "What happened to me? I don't understand what that *thing* was."

"There are things that you may never understand Raine. There is so much I want to share with you, I just can't." He whispered into her hair.

Hugging her tighter, the aroma sneaking through his defenses he moved his head just enough so he could see the blood dripping from the wounds. If he could just have a small taste of her. That is all he wanted. To have a part of her with him always, a memory to savor.

Talking into his chest, "What things Logan? What can't you tell me?"

Shaking his head, he knew this wasn't the right time. He wanted so badly to tell her about his world. What he was and what the creature was that hunted her. He inhaled deeply, breaking his barriers. Just as he was about to lick her wound, she moved her head up. Instead of meeting her neck, he met her lips full on and she started kissing him. When he tried to pull away, she wrapped her arms around his neck, pulling him closer. All she

knew was that she needed to feel him, to know that she was okay. She deepened the kiss, and he finally gave in kissing her back with more passion he'd allowed himself to feel in years, a guttural growl exploding from his chest. He wanted Raine, and had wanted her since he first laid eyes on her. With everything that happened tonight, he knew it was wrong. Kissing her would be such a distraction if the rogue should return, but he was losing his control. She would forget the night for a moment, but would hate him for allowing this in the end. He didn't care anymore, and he took her for all it was worth.

It was eerily quiet and Tristan was unsure if they were here at all. "Maybe he took her home." He whispered. A crow screeched as they entered, sending Shania into Tristan's side. Pulling his arm around her, he searched to see what was coming.

Both realizing it was just the crow, Shania held Tristan's hand as they turned the corner. They both stopped in their tracks as they watched Logan and Raine embraced in a passionate kiss. Shania's mouth dropped wide open. Tristan stood like a statue, a stillness bestowed to all vampires. The longer he watched, more of the past seeped into

his memory, becoming a reality again as he was sure Raine was kissing Logan back. It was happening again.

Logan sensed their presence and jerked away from the kiss, holding Raine at arms length in front of him. When she turned to see what he was looking at, nausea engulfed her. Pulling away from Logan, "I'm so sorry. It's just...I didn't mean...." She frantically looked between Tristan and Shania. Which one was going to kill her first?

"How could you Raine?" Shania screamed. "You were supposed to love Tristan. I told you, you couldn't have both!" Shania turned and ran out the door, tears smearing her cheeks once again.

"Shania!" Raine screamed. Slowly looking at Tristan, "I'm so sorry Tristan. I don't know what else to say."

Tristan looked directly past Raine to Logan, pure hatred flowing through him, he glared. "You are never satisfied are you? Always making everything a competition. Are you happy now? You got what you wanted?"

Logan couldn't speak. He knew it was wrong and the hurt evident on Tristan's face was almost more than he could stand. He let it happen again.

With brisk agility Tristan blasted Logan, both of them toppling over a pew. Wood splintered to the floor with the impact. Logan growled as a reflex, but didn't raise a hand to Tristan. As far as he was

concerned, Tristan had every right. They rolled across the floor with Tristan landing on top of Logan. In a whispered hiss, "I should have ripped you to shreds long ago. Then you wouldn't have the chance to keep doing this." The light reflecting off his sharp fangs, Logan moved his hands up to keep Tristan at a safe distance.

Raine screamed through her tears. "Tristan stop it! Please stop it! It's not his fault."

With one last hiss and showing of fangs, Tristan shoved Logan, his head connecting to the floor with a thud. "You're not worth it! When this is all over, I don't ever want to see your face again!" Abruptly standing up, he flew through the door not even casting a glance at Raine.

Without hesitation, Raine charged after both Shania and Tristan. She didn't know what she was going to say, she just knew she had to make this right.

Logan followed behind her. "Raine, you shouldn't be out here alone. It's not safe. I will come with you."

She stopped long enough to face Logan and say, "I don't think that would be in either of our best interest. This is my fault, I will fix it."

She ran as fast as she could, leaving Logan to watch her go. She searched frantically. They were both nowhere to be found. Looking up and down the street she wondered how did they get out of

sight so fast?

Logan still followed but kept a safe distance behind. He was not going to let Raine alone with that creature still out there. He watched closely as she ran towards Shania's house. There Shania was staggering down the street. "Shania!" Raine yelled.

Shania kept walking ignoring Raine, tears streaming down her cheeks.

"Shania please wait. I'm so sorry."

Finally catching up to her, she pulled on her arm. Jerking away from her Shania cast a cold glare.

"How could you? What makes you think you are so special? Now that someone's finally interested in you, you think you are a Goddess?"

"I'm sorry Shania. I didn't mean for that to happen. It just sort of did in the midst of it all."

"I just wanted what you have with Tristan, Raine." Tears continued to fall down her face.

"I'm sorry Shania. I was crying, he hugged me to try and calm me down, and then...it just happened."

"How could you let it happen? You knew I liked him."

Raine wasn't sure how to respond. Shania was right, sort of. No boy ever liked her. Was she taking it too far now that Tristan did? "I really am sorry Shania. I don't know what came over me. It won't happen again." Raine started crying too, her hands trembling. What could she do? Her life was spinning out of control and she didn't know how to

stop it.

Staring at Raine's hand on her arm, her gaze following her arm up to the bleeding wounds on her neck, Shania softened. She couldn't blame Raine after what she just went through. Who took her? Was it some stupid teenager playing a prank? Sighing deeply, "I'm sorry too Raine." She placed her hand over Raine's trembling hand.

Surprised by the sudden turn around Raine looked at Shania almost waiting to get hit.

"You were taken by that horrible creature and I'm worried about some boy! Some kind of friend I am. What was that thing anyways?"

Dumfounded, Raine just looked at her best friend. She knew she was like the weather but this particular mood swing was just like a slap in the face. "I don't know what it was."

Pulling Raine into a hug, "You must have been so scared! If that was some stupid prank I will kill someone!" Raine melded into Shania and let her tensions go.

"Come on let's go to my room and get you cleaned up." She pulled Raine into the house.

In her room, Shania helped Raine clean the blood off her neck, both not speaking a word. When the tears finally started to subside, "I'm scared Shania."

"Why are you scared? Everything will be okay."

"I don't know, I'm not so sure it was some prank."

It seemed too real. Logan said there are things I may never understand, but he wouldn't elaborate. I don't know what to think about tonight. I think I've ruined it for Tristan and me." Raine fought back more tears. How could she have been so stupid?

"What things do you think Logan was talking about? That's a heck of a thing to say and not explain. That's weird right?"

Raine nodded. "I have no idea what he meant."

She couldn't stand seeing her friend so sad. "Raine, I don't think you ruined it with Tristan. Just talk to him. I'm sure you two can work it out. He will forgive you."

"You think so?"

"Absolutely. I did didn't I?"

"You weren't dating Logan though."

"Don't remind me. How was he as a kisser anyways?"

"I really don't remember Shania. It all happened so fast, I wasn't even thinking. I was just so scared, I wanted to know I was okay. Stress ya know?"

"That's too bad. I wanted to know what I was in for." She giggled.

Raine looked at her friend, a twinge of jealousy creeping up. "What you're in for?"

"Oh yeah. I will kiss Logan one of these days. Guaranteed. What happened between you two was a stress thing. We will have the real thing." Shania smiled from ear to ear. Looking at the worry on her

friends face she felt a pang of sympathy. "You're worried about Tristan huh?"

"Yeah. I am. Whatever that thing was scared everybody, but I think I've hurt him more than that thing scared him."

"Just go talk to him Raine. I'm sure things will be fine. It had to be a Halloween joke by some loser. It will all be okay." Shania gave her a hug and walked her to the door. "Go find *your* man."

Logan watched from the side of the house as Raine left. Sorrow is what he was feeling. He heard what the girls had talked about, and he wasn't quite sure how he felt about that. Would Tristan forgive Raine? Why was he even worrying about it? They had bigger things to consider, like what to do about this rogue. He wouldn't let it get her again and he followed her closely, but keeping out of sight.

Raine just wanted to find Tristan. She couldn't keep either of the boys off her mind. What was she going to do? She had to erase that kiss with Logan from her memory. That was all there was to it. She couldn't think of Logan that way. She just couldn't.

Searching for over an hour, she couldn't find Tristan anywhere. She accepted defeat for the night and headed home. She trudged upstairs and plopped on her bed. When Tristan emerged from the shadows, she let out a startled gasp. "You scared me."

He stared into her eyes knowing she felt

uncomfortable. He didn't want to be mad at her. It was Logan's fault. It's always Logan's fault. Hate smoldered just below the surface for Logan. He would figure out a way to get that dog out of their lives.

Guilt flooded through Raine as she looked into those beautiful green eyes. Knowing she hurt him, tears welled in her eyes. She hated the fact that she was capable of being so careless. Maybe this is why she never had a boyfriend before. She wasn't meant to because everything always gets destroyed where she's involved. Speaking softly she attempted to rectify the situation. If Tristan never wanted to talk to her again, she would live with her fate.

"Tristan, I didn't mean to hurt you. I'm so sorry. I was crying, one thing led to another, and I didn't even realize what I was doing until I saw you and Shania standing there."

Tristan sat on the bed next to her. "Ssshhh." He put a finger to her lips. No, he couldn't be mad at her. It wasn't her fault. "It's not your fault Raine."

"It is my fault. It's all my fault."

Stroking her hair, he lowered his head to rest on hers. Smelling her blood he snapped his head up. "You're hurt."

Raine raised her hand to her wound once again. It was still bleeding, no doubt from all the crying she's been doing, reminding her that this was no

Halloween joke. "What was that thing? I know it was no prank."

Tristan wanted her to forget about this night. He only knew of one way to do that and as he lowered his head to her wound, he whispered, "I'm sorry for this." Before she could respond he sank his fangs into the same holes the creature created, and drank her blood. Kissing Logan flashed before his eyes, and he knew she enjoyed that kiss...He took that memory. The fear she felt from being taken by such a strong creature, the pain of that creature sucking her neck, Tristan took those memories too. The memory he left her with was just before they left to go trick or treating. She wouldn't remember after that moment, until right now.

Tristan pulled away from Raine's neck, licking the wound to close the holes with his coagulating saliva and moved to her mouth. Kissing her passionately, this was the memory he wanted Raine to remember. Not Logan. After the kiss ended he stared at Raine, taking in her beauty and seeing only love for him in her eyes.

"I love you Tristan."

His heart warmed and he responded, "I love you too Raine."

As she lay her head against his chest he was sure he had done the right thing. Raine was exactly what he needed in his life. He had found his love, his heart's desire. She was what had been missing

Immortyl Kisses

for so long. He would allow nothing to mess this up, or take her from him. His father would make it his mission to find Fala, but Tristan's mission would be to keep Raine safe and protect her always until the end of their days.

BK Walker

There are a terrible lot of lies going about the world, and the worst of it is that half of them are true.

~Winston Churchill

Busted

Logan had been waiting all morning to see Raine. She was late getting to school and he was worried she wasn't handling last night well. Following her home from Shania's, he fell witness to nothing but tears and sobs. Feeling the guilt swarm him, he stayed to the shadows not wanting to face her. He did a quick patrol of her property and the woods across the street to make sure there was no imminent danger, before heading home to his small studio he had rented when he first came to town. He couldn't sleep as he pondered the events from his first arriving to now, and lying to Raine was becoming a terrible habit. Wanting to keep her safe, he brooded over how she might react if she ever found out. Would she hate him forever? Never speak to him again? He couldn't protect her if she didn't want him near her, and that comprehension was agonizing.

When she finally arrived, Tristan in company with his arm draped over her shoulder while he glared at Logan. Logan focused on Raine happy to see

she was okay, but was curious as to why she was smiling. Watching them walk to class without so much as a glance from Raine, he had to wonder what transpired relinquishing her in such good spirits.

He followed them to class keeping a close eye on her all day, before they left for home. Contemplating the possibilities, fury filled him to his core and he confronted Tristan. "What have you done?" Logan demanded an answer, shoving Tristan.

"Watch yourself dog. I have done nothing." Tristan responded calmly, glad Logan figured it out.

"You had no right taking her memories! You had no right doing that to her."

"You mean I had no right doing that to you?" Tristan was losing his patience.

"This is not about either of us, or the past Tristan. This is about Raine and her right to remember what happens to her. What if the rogue approaches her or tries taking her again? She doesn't even remember what it looks like." He clammered.

"I will protect her." Tristan spoke in a matter-of-fact tone.

"You will protect her? Maybe she needs protection from you!"

Logan had stopped by Raine's to see how she was doing. When he found her and Tristan sitting on her bed, a pang of jealousy struck him. Then he

saw her eyes, filled with love, but not for Logan. Something wasn't right about that. Wanting to talk to her he thought he might help her memories return. Sure there should be some kind of expression, like not wanting to look at him, or maybe she didn't want to talk to him for fear of upsetting Tristan or Shania, he gazed into her eyes. Nothing. She had no contempt, no guilt, no regret...nothing. Her eyes only twinkled with the love she was now feeling for Tristan.

When he realized what Tristan had done, he made him go outside out of Raine's earshot. He knew Tristan had erased her memories. He even understood why he would erase the kiss that Logan and Raine shared, but of the creature that captured her? She has a right to know what's hunting her. It might be the only way to keep her from harm.

"You take things too far Tristan."

"You are the one that takes things to far. Jasmine wasn't enough for you? Now you must do the same with Raine?"

I was not trying to take Raine from you. I am sorry about the kiss, it just kind of happened. We both didn't mean for it to occur." Logan felt wounds of the past cut wide open, feeling guilty at the mention of Jasmine. Not allowing it free reign, he brought his attention back to the topic at hand, his anger soon stomping whatever remorse may have softened him.

"You didn't mean for it to happen? I find that hard to believe, especially after the way I see you watching her. How your eyes light up when you look at her. You always want what I have?"

"Tristan you are being ridiculous. I don't look at Raine in any way. I fear for her safety." He knew Tristan would taste the lie but he wasn't ready to admit he liked the semblance she brought to him.

"I will keep her safe."

"How do you expect to do that when you keep playing God?"

"She was upset and she needed to forget this night. I helped make things easier for her."

"What about Shania? Did you not think of her? She will remember. She will tell Raine and your deceit will be flushed to the surface. Are you going to erase her memory too?"

Tristan thought for a brief moment, pondering what Logan was saying. *Why didn't I think of that sooner?*

"No you don't! You will not do it to both girls. That particular power is dangerous and one you should not possess." Logan shook his head.

Tristan was done talking. Starting back inside, back to his Raine, Logan grabbed his arm as he passed.

"You will give her memories back to her."

"That cannot be done Logan. That is not part of the power. I can take memories, not return them."

Pulling his arm out of Logan's grasp, he walked inside.

Logan paced the walkway in front of Raine's house. *How could he? She has the right to choose. A kiss like that means something. I know she feels something for me.* Logan paced on, contemplating how he could help Raine remember. He wanted her to remember that kiss. He needed her to remember. Most of all, she had to remember that she was being hunted by a rogue vampire.

As Logan paced collecting his thoughts, a scent caught his attention. He put his nose to the air drawing in a deeper breath. He recognized this scent. Turning around, he saw movement in the woods across from Raine's house. As he headed towards the woods, that something took off running. Logan picked up speed in search of what was beyond the trees. It was getting colder outside and he could see his breath on the chilled air. Just as he passed the third row of trees, he howled, shifting into his wolf form. His senses would be better as a wolf, hunting would be easier.

Adjusting to his wolf eyes, the second movement caught him off guard as he rolled across the earth, scraping his body on tree roots that had grown out of the ground. The pain from the hit was brief, and he jumped to his feet. "Antone!"

Antone was the Alpha, and he was not happy. Logan had left quietly, never telling him he was

going. Antone was making it known he was not tolerating his insubordination. He struck Logan again, knocking him to the ground splitting his lip open. Blood spewed from the cut and Logan spit red on the ground. Within a minute the cut healed and Logan shifted back into human form.

"Why didn't you tell me you were leaving Logan?" Antone asked with concern and authority.

"I didn't know my whereabouts were the biggest concern among the pack."

"Do not get smart with me pup. I am your leader and I can punish you as I see fit."

Antone was a good six inches taller than Logan and his hair was long brown and straight. With muscles well developed, he was the strongest Alpha Logan had ever seen. Not that Logan had seen many Alpha's in his days. He hadn't been a werewolf for near as long as the rest of the pack. Standing off to the side was Antone's joker, Neal. Neal catered to Antone, and he was the bait, catching Logan's eye knowing he'd follow so Antone could prove his power.

Logan gave Neal a glare, thinking what a snake he was. Antone brought the back of his strong hand down across Logan's cheek. "You will learn to watch that mouth."

Logan bowed in submission. "Of course Alpha."

Satisfied that he had gotten through to Logan, Antone studied him for a moment. "I should have

you put to death. Leaving like that, unannounced. What brings you to this town anyways? It's so small. Can't be much hunting grounds." Antone gave a disgusted grimace as he looked at his surroundings beyond the trees.

"Tristan is here Alpha." Before Antone could interrupt Logan added, "There is a rogue on the loose. Seems some Fala is creating creatures to kill, possibly make vampire existence known to the mortal world."

"A rogue?"

"Yes Alpha. It has already captured one girl in town, Tristan and I had to rescue her, fighting the creature until it flew off."

"Until it flew off?" Antone questioned.

Logan explained how the creature had captured Raine and how Tristan and he fought it. He told of it being part vampire and then shifter with a specific smell and never before seen capabilities, a creation by this Fala from Grim's Island. To his surprise, Antone knew of Fala.

"Fala is a force to be reckoned with, but we are stronger. Is Raquim here as well?"

"Aye. They bought a mansion on Brisbane."

"Raquim made it out then. Very well. I shall pay him a visit, then gather the soldiers. We must find Fala before he can cause any more damage."

Granting Logan permission to stay and help protect the girl, Antone went to see Raquim, and

sent Neal to warn his pack and organize a hunting party. They were going to see if they could find this Fala, and put him out of his misery.

With a sigh of relief, Logan headed back for Raine's house. It was time to deal with Tristan and his recklessness.

It Is What It Is

Inside he found Tristan pacing back and forth as Shania, Raine's best friend, sat next to her telling her about Halloween night. Raine looked confused and Logan couldn't believe Tristan didn't try to stop her. He could see it in his face that he was ready to just rip her head off instead. Logan cleared his throat.

"Hi Logan." Shania beamed. "I was just talking to Raine about that creature we saw. I mentioned something about Halloween and she gave me such a blank stare, she doesn't seem to remember, probably from post traumatic stress syndrome. We learned about that in Psychology class."

"Can I talk to you for a minute Shania? Out in the hall?"

"Sure Logan." She was more than willing to spend time alone with him.

In the hall he tried to explain why they wanted her to keep the creature to herself. "She won't ever remember Shania. There are things in this world that are worse than your nightmares."

"Things? What things?"

"Things that you thought weren't real Shania. Most of what you think isn't real, is." He knew he wasn't getting very far because he wasn't making any sense.

Tristan joined them. "Raine is starting her homework." He looked at them both with concern.

Shania flung her blonde hair off of her shoulder looking at Logan like he was crazy. "What are you talking about?"

"I'm talking about things in this world that you thought were make believe. Most of the make believe you know of...well it's real."

"You are seriously risking this talk?" Tristan asked annoyed.

"Well it's that or you telling Raine the truth." Logan snapped back.

"What are you two talking about? You both sound crazy. Does this have to do with what you were telling Raine? The things you wished you could tell her but wouldn't?"

Tristan turned to Shania and looked her straight in the eye. "Shania, I'm a vampire and Logan here is a werewolf."

After a moment of silence Shania burst out in uncontrollable laughter. "I know that silly, that's what you were for Halloween. Though I wasn't exactly sure what Logan was trying to pull off." She laughed some more.

"No Shania. I mean right now, as sure as we stand in front of you, I am a vampire, and Logan is a werewolf."

When she realized how serious Tristan was, and seeing the look on Logan's face her laughing came to a halt. She looked from one boy to another.

"What are you saying?"

"This is a waste of time. You should have kept it to yourself." Tristan was slowly losing his patience and he flashed fangs at her, sending her into the wall.

"Shania, Tristan is a bit stressed himself. You must forgive his abruptness and his rudeness. That creature you saw is real. It's hunting Raine, and she doesn't remember it. We must protect her and keep her safe. We ourselves are not sure what kind of creature it is, we just know that it is dangerous. For you too. If it comes for her and you are with her, you both could be seriously hurt." Logan talked calmly, trying to ease Shania into the reality of it all.

"Oh..My..God! That creature is real? I thought it was a Halloween prankster." Her voice quivered.

"Yes Shania. It's real. Just as we are real and exactly what Tristan told you. It's all true." Logan looked at her searching for....he didn't know what but something. Understanding, acceptance, the hope she wouldn't run away screaming at the top of her lungs.

Shania stood there in the hallway taking it all in. She may have been blonde but she was a very smart girl. *Vampires and werewolves real? How can this be? I don't believe it. They are messing with me. They have to be.* She looked between the boys again. They still weren't laughing. "How can you be real? It's only fantasy on TV and in books. How can you be real?" She was on the verge of hysterics, backing into the wall as far as she could get.

"TV and books is what is ridiculous. We keep ourselves secret from the world, mortals don't handle the unknown very well, as you can see from your own reaction. We are trusting in you to keep our secret, even from Raine until the time is right." Logan stressed the last part.

"I just don't understand how it can be real. Oh my God! Vampires? Werewolves? Some dangerous creature?" Shaking her head she backed up farther, her breath shaking when she realized she couldn't go any farther. She thought she may be dreaming and closed her eyes tight, willing herself to wake up. When she reopened her eyes, they were still there so she pinched herself.

Tristan started laughing. "Why do mortals always inflict pain on themselves to see if they are dreaming? It is the most ridiculous thing I've ever encountered and it never works. If you pinch yourself and you're sleeping, you will wake from

the pain anyways."

Logan shot him a look of annoyance. "A little help would be nice Tristan."

"Very well. It was Logan in the woods. That wolf you thought was going to eat us? It was Logan. Remember, I told you he wasn't going to harm us? You asked how did I know that. That is how I knew, because it was Logan. I left you by the tree not only to keep you safe, but to keep you from seeing me as a vampire, or to see us fighting this Rogue creature. I didn't want to throw you into shock."

"It is what it is." Logan added.

Shania stood there wide eyed, not completely sure if she should believe them. She still had high hopes they were just joking. Maintaining their serious auras, fear trickled through her veins. Her breathing grew more rapid and her hands trembled. Would she be able to get away if she ran? *Of course not, it's a werewolf and a vampire for heaven's sake!* She chastised herself.

"We won't hurt you."

With tears welling up in her eyes, she didn't know whether to scream or stand her ground.

"How do I know that for sure? What about Raine? A Vampire and a Werewolf? Seriously? Why not something a little less intimidating, like a Witch or a Ghost? Why not an Elf for crying out loud? No! We get stuck with the most dangerous creatures ever written! An Elf I could handle." She was jabbering,

trying to maneuver around the apprehension that was threatening to stop her heart from beating.

"We are your friends Shania. I love Raine and I would never bring her harm. I would protect her from it at all costs." Tristan glared at Logan.

Logan snorted. "We are not wild animals like you've read about or seen on television. That stuff is fictional to make the stories seem more scary. We promise we will never hurt you or Raine, but you must keep our true existence a secret. That is all we ask of you."

"Why tell me at all?" She queried.

"With Raine's memory gone..." Logan sent a glare to Tristan. "With her memory gone, we need to enlist you to help us protect her from this rogue creature. It most likely won't attack her if she isn't alone. Especially since we gave it a run for its money the last time it tried taking her."

Shania looked deep into Logan's eyes. She saw sincerity and a need for acceptance. She wanted to be with Logan, her feelings didn't just stop. He still excited her to the core and the wolf thing would explain that 'bad boy' vibe he gave off. She decided she could learn to accept this. She could also keep it a secret. She was never good at keeping secrets, but for Logan, she would take it to her grave. She forced her nerves to settle, smiling at him and watched the tension fall off his shoulders as he relaxed. *How cute. He's worried about what I think.*

She waited a few more seconds before she spoke. "Okay." The thought of keeping a secret, and that her and her best friend were dating, well she would soon be dating, immortal creatures made her feel...well invincible. It was so exciting just the mere thought of it.

"Okay?" Tristan and Logan said in unison.

"Yes. Okay. I believe you."

"Thank the heavens above." Tristan raised his hands to the ceiling.

"I also promise to keep your secret, and not tell Raine until the time is right. What I want to know though, is why doesn't she remember? How could she truly forget that horrible creature? What if we do run into it, what am I going to do to protect Raine?"

"Like you said, traumatic stress syndrome."

Tristan blurted out before Logan could respond.

"Usually they get flashes of the traumatic event though, and after a week she still remembers nothing. She was perfectly fine when she left my house that night. I just don't understand what's happened."

"The brain can be a tricky thing Shania. It's very complex. As far as the creature goes, I don't think it will attack anyone that isn't alone. So keep to traveling in pairs."

Trying to ascertain it all, she finally said, "You're probably right, pairs is good. We should keep a

close eye on Raine though. Just to make sure she will be okay." She turned and walked back toward Raine's room.

"Shania?" Logan said just before she turned the doorknob.

"Yes?" Shania turned to face him.

"Thanks for not acting like a girl, but a grown up woman." Logan kissed her cheek. "For not screaming and running away."

Putting her hand to her cheek, "I'm not that immature. I do have my moments." She smiled and walked into Raine's room.

"That went well." Tristan sighed with relief. Now we just have to keep it from Father and the Pack.

"It is what it is."

Bewitched

Logan couldn't stop thinking about Raine. When she had kissed him in that Old Church, it effected him more than he expected, and now his every thought was of her. *Was she truly in love with Tristan or was it just one of his mind games? Will she ever remember their kiss? Will the rogue come back for her?* All of these thoughts plagued his mind, leaving him tossing and turning through the night. Before he knew it, his alarm was buzzing in his ear. Annoyed was putting it mildly for what he was feeling this very second, crawling out of bed to get ready for school. He almost wished he wouldn't have gone back to high school.

He watched Tristan and Raine walk through the school doors, hand in hand. All day he followed them around from class to class, watching Raine with eyes filled with love. At lunch he couldn't take it any longer, and he approached her when she was alone. "Hello Raine."

"Hi Logan. How are you? We haven't seen you much today, you've been quiet." She was loading

food onto her tray.

"Just have a lot on my mind. You and Tristan seem to be getting along good."

"Oh. Yeah, he's been so attentive. He told me I fell and bumped my head Halloween night, knocking myself unconscious, but I don't remember any of it. Shania and Tristan have been so worried about that. They think somethings wrong from me falling because I seem restless and now have darker circles than usual hiding under my eyes, but I think it's just from exhaustion. I haven't been sleeping too well."

"Oh no? Why is that?" Logan perked up.

"I've been having these really weird dreams, they seem so real."

"Well maybe if you talk about them, that would help."

Just then Tristan joined them, interrupting their conversation. He kissed Raine on the temple.

"Hello love."

"Hi Tristan. I was just telling Logan about my dreams."

"Oh love. Let's not fret over them right now. You've had too many bad things happening lately. Let's concentrate on the good, it might help you sleep. It's such a beautiful day, let's not ruin it." He looked at Logan like he'd crossed some forbidden line.

"Aye. I just thought it might help." He started to

walk away.

“Logan you don't have to go. Join us for lunch.” Raine hollered after him. “I'm sure Shania would love it.”

He paused for a split second but kept walking without turning around at the mention of Shania. Shania wasn't the girl he wanted. Maybe he should just accept his fate, he will never have Raine, and go on a date with Shania. *It couldn't be that bad, could it?* He couldn't take it anymore. Deciding he'd had enough of school he headed to the Underworld to get a decent meal.

Logan entered the Underworld heading for his favorite place, Mortal Desires. A free meal would help get his mind off things.

Upon entering, the barkeep whistled at Logan. “Hey. I need to speak to you.”

Confusion enveloped Logan but he walked over to the bar anyways. “What's up man? Why are you whispering?”

“There's a woman been askin' about you and that vampire you came here with. She's looking for some girl you two hang out with.”

Logan perked up as his interest sparked. “Did she say what she wanted?”

“No. She was just askin' about you and wanted

to know when you came in.”

“What does she look like?”

The barkeep looked up from their conversation and pointed to a woman sitting at a table in the corner by herself. Her brown hair was pulled up in a bun and she wore small wire framed glasses, making her look like a librarian. Not the usual type to be hanging out at Mortal Desires, but Logan decided he would find out what she was after.

He walked quietly up to her, watching her intently as he approached. Her back was to him and she seemed to be staring off into space.

“You have no need to be alarmed wolf.” She spoke when he was close enough, without turning to face him. She sipped on her frothy beverage.

“How do you know what I am? What is it you want?”

Now turning to face him, she motioned for the chair across from her. “Please sit down. I mean you no harm.”

Logan looked at her for a moment longer, breathing in the fragrances, then cautiously sat across from her. She had a very young looking face that made her look like a teenager. Beauty radiated from her and Logan couldn't help but think she was attractive. “What do you want?”

“You know a girl, one you are very fond of?”

“I know a lot of girls, get to your point.”

“This particular girl is unique. She is beautiful in

her own way, with long black hair, always wearing dark makeup.” She looked Logan directly in the eyes as she spoke.

“What about her?” Logan decided not to lie.

“She is in grave danger.”

Logan looked at this woman like she was crazy. How could she possibly know what Raine is in?

Seeing suspicion in his eyes, she smiled trying to ease his tension. “I am a witch. I’ve been sent by my grandmother, she has seen things happen to your friend.”

“How do you know this?”

“My grandmother holds the power Divine Darshan. She can see past and future events. I too hold the power, but my visions only come in flashes. My grandmother is powerful with many years behind her. She can control the power and call upon it at will, seeing things other people will only dream of seeing.”

Logan stared at her. He had heard of these witches, but he’s never met one. That is until now.

“I am so sorry. My name is Mohana.”

Logan smiled. “I’m Logan, but I guess you already knew that.”

Mohana smiled back. He didn’t look like a werewolf to her. He was handsome, with strong features, a defined chin, and a great smile. He did not look like the wolves that were described to her, though she has not seen him in wolf form either.

She stopped the thoughts of analyzing him before she lost her focus. "I've come to warn you. My grandmother has seen the rogue creature will return, and you must prepare. He is under orders from his master. The master seeks Raine for the powers she holds. There is also a betrayal on the horizon."

"Raine has no powers, she is mortal. A betrayal?" Logan didn't miss that last part.

"That is all I know. Grandmother is putting the pieces together as we speak, but she said you must be warned. You must take the girl to safety. It's urgent the rogue does not succeed on his mission."

"Well when will you and your grandmother figure things out exactly? Like how much time we have before the rogue returns? What exactly does Fala want with Raine?"

Mohana looked at Logan with concern. "I won't know anything until I hear from Grandmother. She's never been wrong. It came to her so suddenly, she nearly passed out with the intensity of the vision, having no time to work out the details. Those types of visions require extreme action and energy. When a witch foresees something of this nature, she will not be able to rest until it is understood in its entirety. I was sent as soon as the vision ended."

She leaned her head to the side, contemplating

whether she wanted to discuss the feelings she was getting from him. "You love the girl?"

"That is none of your concern, Mohana."

"Fair enough. The betrayal may be against you though. An agreement will be broken." With that, she stood to leave. Shrugging her coat on she looked one last time at Logan. "I hope this young lady is worth all the turmoil you are currently feeling. You give off a strong whirlwind of emotion Logan. I wish you the best to work it all out."

Logan watched her walk out the door. He didn't like the fact that she could read him so easily. He did love 'the girl' but she wasn't his to love. Raine was the one girl that he could not have. He slammed his fist on the table, and the loud crunching noise of the wood cracking beneath his fist had everyone in the place looking at him.

Remember Me

Logan had been keeping watch from the woods across from Raine's house. He told Tristan of his encounter with the witch, and Tristan agreed to a temporary peace treaty, that it would be a good idea for Logan to be on patrol. There had been no sign of the rogue in weeks. Maybe the witch was wrong.

"Logan?" Logan was in the woods but could still hear his name being called, and went toward the voice.

"Logan, can you hear me?"

Disappointed it was only Shania, he slowly exited the woods so she could see him. "What is it Shania?"

"Tristan wants to talk to you. He sent me over to get you." She smiled sensing something was on his mind. "You okay?"

"I'm fine." He kicked at the pine needles on the ground under his feet.

"You sure? You know? I'm a good listener." Shania was hoping to break through the wall Logan had built. She wasn't getting anywhere fast with him and he was often short and snippy with her.

She just couldn't figure him out, it was driving her crazy.

"I'm fine Shania. I don't really feel like talking."

"Well then you can listen. I handled the news of what you and Tristan really are fairly well, I think I deserve a little respect Logan. You are always short with me like you can't stand the very sight of me. I've kept your dirty little secret from my best friend as you both have requested, I've done my part of watching Raine and making sure she's never alone. I've done nothing wrong here, have I? Maybe I should just sit Raine down and tell her everything then you would have a reason to look at me with disgust. Is that what you want Logan? A reason to not have to speak to me or look at me ever again? You don't really need an excuse, if I am that horrible just say the words and I'm gone Logan. Gone from your life and your line of vision."

Logan froze in the brutality of Shania's words. She was right. She had done everything asked of her, and just because she wasn't Raine, Logan was shunning her. It wasn't fair. There really was no reason to treat Shania this way. "I'm sorry Shania. I didn't mean to act like that. You don't disgust me, it's just been so crazy with this rogue and everything's that's happened. I've just got a lot on my mind is all. Lost in my own thoughts lately." His eyes pleaded with Shania for forgiveness.

She watched the emotions run through him. He

was sorry that was plain to see. He was still troubled though. It weighed heavy on her. Studying him a few moments longer, making him sweat it out a bit, she finally answered. "Fine Logan, you are forgiven. Just stop treating me like dirt okay? I'm part of this team too."

"I'm sorry. You are part of this team."

"Glad you accept that. Now, what else is bothering you? It can't be just that rogue?"

"That's it Shania. Just worried about when it will strike again is all."

Tilting her head to one side she looked him straight in the eyes. He gazed back, sending a chill through her. Things were heating up at that very moment, she had to force herself to look away before she did something to embarrass herself.

Seeing the passion so raw in her eyes he too looked away clearing his throat. "What does Tristan want?" *Why couldn't it be Raine looking at me like that?*

Thankful for the break in the tension, "His father has called him. There has been some sort of development. He needs you to stay with Raine.."

"Where are you going to be? You can't stay with her?" Logan inquired, not wanting to feel his heart shattering, knowing he could never be with her. To be alone with Raine may cause more pain than he intended to bare.

"Sorry Logan. I have to get home to do a paper.

It was due yesterday and I've not even started it.”
Of course I'd rather stay than leave you alone with Raine, I was shocked Tristan wanted you here.

“Very well.” Enforcing the wall around his heart, demanding the rule to not allow himself to feel anything once he was alone with Raine, he followed Shania back to Raine’s. He could smell the jealousy pouring off Shania, but ignored it. He had enough confrontations for a day.

Shania watched him, a mix of emotions swirling through her. She longed for his touch and couldn't understand why both of these boys were so into her best friend. It's not the way things worked out for them and she wasn't sure how to handle it all. It was almost like Trevor all over again, except Trevor didn't like Raine.

Inside Raine was kissing Tristan goodbye. When Logan entered she pulled away knowing that something wasn't right between the two of them. Tristan pecked her nose, “I'll be back very soon Love.”

Raine smiled and walked him to the door. “Mind yourself Logan.” He commented on his way out the door.

Logan rolled his eyes, giving Tristan a salute.

“I'll call you later Raine.” Shania hugged Raine, giving a quick look at Logan to see if she could read what he was thinking. *Was he happy to have some alone time with Raine? What was it about*

Raine that had both boys falling for her like they were? Seeing the laziness in Logan's eyes she couldn't help but wonder if he even wanted to be here. She really needed to stop thinking like this. Raine was happy with Tristan. Any fool could see that. She shouldn't be jealous of her friend, but happy. Releasing a sigh, she ran out after Tristan.

Raine stood staring at Logan for a long moment. "Why is everyone treating me like I'm an invalid? Why are they always whispering, and why have you stopped talking to me?"

Logan looked at her wanting to tell her everything. "I haven't stopped talking to you Raine. I've just had other things to do. I'm sorry you feel that way."

"You don't talk to me, and if you do you're short. I'm not a moron! What is going on?" She demanded.

Logan let out a long sigh. Two girls in ten minutes told him how short he's been. "Why don't you ask Tristan these questions?"

"I have. He evades me like you're trying to do now. I have a right to know Logan."

"We are not treating you like an invalid Raine. We are just worried about you because you don't remember things. That's all. We don't understand why you can't remember." Logan hated lying to her but he wasn't going to be the one to tell her what really happened neither.

“That’s bull and you know it!”

Logan maintained his silence, keeping his face neutral and unreadable.

“Fine. I’ll play your games. I don’t like it, but I’ll play.”

Logan watched her storm to the kitchen. He hated playing these games too, but he was left with no choice. He couldn’t help but wonder what would happen if she did remember that night. Would she still be with Tristan?

“Do you want a drink?” Raine yelled.

“Um. Sure. Thanks.”

Raine returned with two lemonades and some chips. “We might as well watch a movie. Unless you feel like talking.”

“A movie is fine.”

A grunt was heard before Raine rummaged through her movies and threw in ‘*Vampires Kiss*’. She loved Nicholas Cage and loved vampires too. She knew it would help get her mind off things.

“More vampires huh?”

“Shut up and sit down. I love this movie.”

Logan chuckled, knowing she didn’t get the pun and sat down next to her on the couch.

Logan couldn’t help but look at her. She was beautiful in her own way, the witch had that right. The way her grey eyes lit up as she got into the movie made him smile. When the need came over him to touch her, he turned his attention to the

television. When he looked back, Raine was dozing off. *Ha. Favorite movie huh? I don't blame you, vampires are boring.* He watched Raine as she slept, softly moving her hair from her face. At his touch she started stirring and he pulled away. She was dreaming and he could tell it wasn't a pleasant dream.

When she started whimpering louder and louder he shook her gently. "Raine, wake up." Still whimpering he gently shook her again. "Raine, wake up, it's just a dream."

Her eyes opened wide and she jumped up from the couch. Logan stood up to reassure her it was just a dream, and she backed away from him.

"What is it Raine? You were dreaming." *Is she still dreaming?*

Shaking her head no she started trembling. "It wasn't a dream, it was real."

Logan went to her. She was still shaking her head no and tears flooded her face. "It wasn't a dream, it was real."

"What was real Raine?" He reached for her but she recoiled.

"That thing grabbed me and had me high in the trees. Its face was so...deformed."

Logan pulled her into him and let her cry. He wasn't sure what she dreamed, but he knew the rogue was part of it. "It's okay, you were just dreaming."

"No! It wasn't a dream. Why didn't I remember that?" Then she shoved Logan away from her, staring at him like a deer caught in the headlights.

"We kissed?"

Logan stood there unsure how to respond.

"We did, didn't we?"

When he still didn't respond, she spoke louder.

"Didn't we?"

Logan nodded, still looking at her intently. Could she really be remembering that night? After all this time?

"Oh my God. What about Tristan?" She closed her eyes trying to remember more.

"It wasn't like that Raine." Logan was trying to keep the excitement from his voice.

Raine walked slowly over to him. Standing just inches from him she raised her hand and slapped him in the face. Then she slapped him again, and again. Logan finally grabbed her wrists, and she started crying again, and he lowered to the floor with her. She buried her head in his chest. "Why?"

"We didn't mean for it to happen Raine. It just did." Logan felt relieved she was remembering him.

"What was that thing that took me? What is happening to me?"

"You're just remembering that night Raine. We were hoping you wouldn't."

"Why? Why wouldn't you want me to remember?"

Logan took a deep breath, then let it out. "Because that 'thing' still hunts you Raine. We didn't want you to be afraid."

Slowly she looked up at him. "What is it? What does it want with me?"

It was time to tell Raine the truth. Logan knew that Tristan was going to be furious, but he couldn't lie to her anymore. Sitting her back on the couch, he told her about Halloween night. He included the kiss they shared, but he did leave out how Tristan erased her memories. What he couldn't understand, was how she was remembering after what Tristan did. They were never supposed to remember.

The Truth

Tristan returned knowing something wasn't right. Raine had been crying. Her eyes were pink and puffy. "What's happened?"

"I think we should talk alone first." Logan prompted.

"If you hurt her..."

Logan held up a hand. "I didn't hurt her. Now come on."

Tristan followed Logan to the front foyer. "What's happened?"

"She remembers."

"What do you mean she remembers?"

"She was dreaming and woke up in a panic. She remembers the rogue. She remembers everything."

"How can this be? I erased her memories."

"Yeah. Well I didn't tell her that part, but she knows everything else."

"How could you do this? Couldn't you have lied?"

"Tristan, if you could have seen her. She remembered and she was scared. She was demanding to know."

"You told her, you pompous idiot! Just to get

revenge?”

“I didn't tell her anything. She had a bad dream and woke up realizing it was a memory. I had to tell her the truth about most of it.”

“Why didn't you tell her what I did then?”

“She knows what we are but I wasn't going to break her heart with that.”

Relief was evident on Tristan's face. He didn't know why Logan didn't tell her, but now he had leverage. He would not allow Logan to use this against him.

She remembered. That means she remembered kissing Logan. *What was going to happen now? I just had to leave that wolf alone with her. He must have done something to stir those memories, nobody remembers after a mind erase. Maybe I could take her memories again. Maybe I could convince her that Logan took advantage of her, knowing she was in a state of shock. That might work.*

“So where do we go from here?” Logan asked wanting to wipe that smug look off his face.

“Calm down wolf. I am relieved you did not tell her is all. I will thank you, but know that I will also be watching you...closely.”

Logan cocked his head in surprise. “You're thanking me? I didn't do it for you.”

“I know. I am not sure where we go from here. We must keep Raine safe at all costs. We haven't

seen or heard from this rogue in weeks. Are you sure the witch was right?"

"I'm not sure of anything."

"Very well. We must keep doing as we have been until something happens."

"What if we're too late?"

"We will not be. We will protect her Logan."

Logan wasn't sure what they were going to do. The rogue could show up at any time, and he hated waiting in suspense. Not knowing was the killer.

Tristan went back to Raine. "Love, are you okay?"

Raine started crying again, "I'm so sorry Tristan." She was feeling guilty about the kiss she shared with Logan. She knew it was wrong, and she hated doing that to Tristan.

"My love, please do not be upset. I am not mad, I promise you." He pulled her into him.

"I'm still sorry Tristan. I never meant to hurt you."

Cupping her face between his hands, "Raine. I am not mad at you. Please do not fret over this. I assure you it was not your fault. Not in the least." He leaned in and kissed her passionately.

After Tristan pulled back from the kiss, Raine kept her eyes closed. "So the dreams I've been having were leading up to me remembering?"

"I believe so Love."

"Why would you keep this from me?"

"Love, I was only trying to protect you. I don't

want you to be scared all the time.”

Looking into his brilliant green eyes she felt a sense of calm. “You’re a vampire?”

“I am.”

“Logan’s a werewolf?”

“Aye. He is.”

“Why don’t you want to eat me?”

Tristan chuckled, caressing her cheek. “Raine, vampires do not eat people. We feed from them.”

“You haven’t fed from me.”

“I have no need to feed from you darling.”

“Well who do you feed from?”

“From people that are willing. I never take from anyone that says no or isn’t aware of what they are doing.”

Raine let out a sigh. “Well that makes me feel better. Logan said that a lot of what is on TV or in books is folk lore. I can’t help but have questions.”

“I know Love. I am fine in answering your questions, but you must promise to keep our existence a secret. We have a Counsel that forbids mortals from knowing of our kind, and we could both be put to death because of it.”

“Counsel?”

“Yes. They are like the vampire government. They make the rules and we must abide by them. If we do not, it is much like your laws, we are punished as they see fit. Even by death.”

“A vampire government? I don’t think I ever want

to meet them.”

Tristan laughed again, kissing Raine. “We don’t ever have to meet them, as long as we stay out of trouble.”

“I’m heading to the Underworld to see if I can find that witch. Maybe she will be there with some news and we can learn when to expect this rogue.”

Logan announced, furious at how easy Tristan was getting off, after what he did to Raine. He hated seeing them together. He thought she should be with him, not a vampire. Wolves were so much warmer with a lot more heart.

Tristan stared at Logan, feeling the heat of jealousy flowing from him. He looked at him in warning. “Very well. Come back when you are finished.”

Logan turned to leave and Tristan watched many questions form on Raine’s face. “What is it darling?”

“I’m scared. Why is this ‘thing’ hunting me? What if it gets me?”

“We do not know why it hunts you, but we won’t let it get to you.”

Raine didn’t know what to think, or expect. How were Logan and Tristan going to keep her safe? How was she going to keep herself safe? She has learned so much tonight, she felt like she was on information overload. How could vampires and werewolves be real? How could they be so

nonchalant after just sharing this information about themselves, and why didn't Shania tell her? She loved the thought of vampires, but to find out they are real, and one is hunting her...she just didn't know how to take it all. Under different circumstances, she was sure she'd have been more happy about it.

"Raine, maybe it would be best if you got some sleep. People will start to wonder why you are looking so run down. You need some rest."

"You promise you'll stay?" Raine did feel tired.

"I promise."

Tristan tucked Raine into bed and decided he should call Shania to let her know that Raine remembered and knew the truth. He was certain that Raine may be a bit upset with Shania holding this kind of information from her. He couldn't blame her, but hopefully she would come to realize it was all for her own good.

He watched her sleep and couldn't help but worry that she may change her mind about him. She received a lot of information all too quickly. After having time to think, she may not want any of them around. How would he protect her if she wouldn't let him near her? He walked to her bedside and gently caressed her cheek as he sat on the edge of the bed. He would not let anything happen to her, and he would not let her change her mind. He loved her, needed her. He couldn't lose

her now.

Raine stirred slightly, letting out a small whimper. Tristan gave her a reassuring touch, and she settled again. A smile came across her face and she slowly opened her eyes. "You're still here."

"I am."

She looked into his face, seeing concern, and maybe fear. "What's troubling you?"

He stared at her a moment longer. "Nothing Love."

"I can see it in your eyes. You're worried." She watched him look out the window and back to her. "You don't have to worry."

Raising his eyebrows, "Worry about what?"

"I won't stop loving you."

How could she know what he was thinking? He smiled, "Are you sure about that?"

"Tristan, I never expected to find you. Boys were never interested in me, I am too weird. They always swarmed around Shania. I was used to being alone, accepting that I may be alone forever. You are a huge blessing, and I'm not going to let that go. You make me feel whole, like a piece of me was missing until you came into my life."

Hearing her words warmed him. She sat up and slowly touched his lips with her own. He knew what she said was true. He felt it in his bones and knew they would be together forever. He kissed her back and let himself get lost in the moment. This time

when his fangs extended, he didn't turn away. When he did pull back though, Raine held him and explored his fangs with her tongue. Then she slowly pulled back from the kiss and looked with her eyes, from his fangs to his piercing green eyes. They seemed to glow as she looked deep into them. "I'm not afraid."

Feeling drawn to her, he kissed her again laying her back on the bed. He would not let it go too far, but he needed to feel her body next to his. He needed to feel her warmth as they shared in this moment. He needed her.

Rogue To Witches

Logan entered Mortal Desires in search of Mohana. He looked at the barkeep, who was the same guy that warned him she was there the last time. "Have you seen her?"

"Nope. Not since you were here last."

Just then screaming was heard coming from the back rooms. Logan turned and the barkeep grabbed his shotgun. "Silver bullets."

They both ran back toward the feeding rooms as mortals ran towards them for the exit. The women were screaming and one had blood dripping from her neck. Logan grabbed her by her arms, "What's happened?"

"There's something back there. Something not human or immortal."

Logan released her and started down the hallway. The barkeep wasn't to be seen. *Where did he go?* Slowly Logan kept walking further down the hall. He heard a slurping noise coming from the next room. He walked quietly, and when he reached the room, he slowly turned the door

handle. Opening the door he saw the rogue. It had its back turned to him and seemed oblivious that he was standing there as it fed from the barkeep. Its transparent skin glowed blue and its wings spanned the length of the room. Just as he was about to approach it someone grabbed him from behind.

“Logan! I’ve been looking for you everywhere.” It was Mohana. “Grandmother saw it coming into the area at the last minute. I didn’t think I would get here in time.”

“You’re not in time.” Logan looked at her with disgust. Her hair was down today and more blonde than the brown he thought he saw the other day. Her eyes were a cerulean blue and held fear. They both turned to the room.

The rogue heard them talking and turned to face them. Blood dripped from its mouth and stained its fangs red. Wings fluttered, creating a whirlwind. It started for them and they both turned to run. They heard the walls crashing from its enormous wings. They felt the heat from the fire that shot from its mouth.

“Run!” Logan screamed.

Mohana and Logan ran out of Mortal Desires and headed for the exit of the Underworld. All Logan could think about was Raine. He had to get back to protect her.

“We must lead it out of the city.” Mohana

screamed back.

“How?”

Mohana waited until they were above ground. She ran towards the woods and Logan followed, the rogue right on their heels. Once at the entrance of the woods Mohana stopped dead in her tracks.

“Like this.” She said, and from out of no where she pulled two swords. Her hair turned a shimmering black and her eyes burned with fire. She spun around and slashed the swords at the rogue.

Logan watched in awe as this witch stood her ground to fight. He recognized these swords, the Zhan Lu Shen Jian, magical swords from the Jin Dynasty. He wondered how she came across these as she slashed again at the rogue, this time the sword slicing through its chest with a distinct shearing sound. Logan came to his senses and transformed into his wolf, jumping on the rogue’s back, clamping fierce jaws into his skin. The rogue left out a shrill screech, reaching back to grab Logan.

Throwing him to the ground, he smashed the wolf into the pavement just before the woods’ entrance. Mohana heard the crunch of Logan’s skull and ran toward the rogue once again. The size of a dragon one would read from a fairytale, the rogue back handed her with a large blue transparent hand, sending her flying into the

woods, her back hitting a tree. Logan lifted his head, unable to move. He pulled with his front paws, trying to shake it off. The rogue came at him again lifting him off the ground with little effort at all. As he made another shrill shriek, he sunk his fangs into Logan's throat.

Mohana brought her swords together and plunged them into the rogue's abdomen. Throwing Logan to the ground flapping its wings frantically, the wind created was harsh, and the rogue gave one last look to Mohana before flying away, in the direction out of the city.

Mohana rushed to Logan's side. "Logan are you okay?" When Logan didn't answer she turned his head to examine the wound. His neck was bleeding profusely, and saying a small chant, she covered her hand over the wound. It glowed beneath her touch as she placed a spell of healing and protection over him.

Within minutes the bleeding stopped. Logan was in and out of consciousness, shifting back into his human form. Mohana once again admired his beauty, the beauty of a wolf. She traced her fingers along the curves of his chest. When Logan snatched her wrist, she let out a gasp of surprise. "We must get you to safety."

Logan just looked at her, still holding her wrists.

"Can you get up Logan?"

Logan slowly got up with Mohana's help, and she

helped him to Raine's. She didn't know where they were going, but followed Logan's instructions as she guided his half limp body to a place she knew he would feel safe.

At Raine's she knocked on the door. Tristan answered just as Logan dropped to the ground, with Mohana half hanging on to him. "It was the rogue. He attacked the Underworld."

Tristan lifted Logan and carried him to Raine's daybed in her room. Raine ran to his side and let out a scream when she saw him. "Oh my God."

"Raine, you mustn't panic. I need your help. Get me some water and rags. We must clean him."

Raine nodded in understanding and ran for the bathroom. She found an old hospital basin and brought back plenty of rags with water. She stepped back and watched Tristan work.

Tristan closed his eyes and breathed deeply. Having been trained as a medic during World War I, visions of the war flashed through his mind. He let his knowledge come forth and cleaned Logan's wounds, listening to his heart. It was beating, though weakly. He looked at Raine, who now held tears in her eyes. "He will be okay. He needs his pack."

“His pack’s not here Tristan.” Raine half screamed.

“Love. His pack will sense he needs them, they will come. In the meantime, go find Mohana and see what happened.”

“Who is Mohana?”

“The witch.”

Tristan watched Raine leave. He didn’t want her to see what he was about to do. They didn’t have time to wait for the pack, Logan needed help now. He brought his wrist to his mouth, and extending his fangs he bit through his skin. Once the blood started flowing, he held his wrist to Logan’s mouth. “Drink friend.” Though they’ve had their differences in the past, he was not going to let Logan die. Not today.

Downstairs, Raine stared at Mohana. Her hair was dirty and matted and she was covered in blood. Even through the mess she portrayed, Raine could see she was a beautiful woman. She felt a pang of jealousy as she realized that this witch saved Logan.

“You must be Raine.” Mohana turned from the window.

“Yes. You are?”

“I’m Mohana. Nice to meet you.”

“What happened tonight?”

Mohana looked at Raine unsure how much detail she should tell her.

Reading her face, Raine stated, "I know everything. I know all about immortals." Raine couldn't keep the snarkiness out of her voice. She was jealous of this witch. Why exactly, she didn't understand.

"Okay. It was the Rogue. It was in the Underworld tonight."

Raine studied her. "So he got hurt protecting you?"

"Not exactly. The Rogue chased us out of the Underworld and we fought it. When it grabbed Logan and bit his neck, I stabbed him and he flew off."

"How do you know it was a him?"

"It looked like a him."

Tristan came downstairs before Raine could ask anymore questions. "He is weak but I think he will be fine. I must warn Father about what's happened and the pack must be alerted. I fear this is far more dangerous than we imagined. Tell me what's happened. I want full details to report to Father and Antone."

Raine looked between Tristan and Mohana. "I'm going to check on him."

She heard Mohana telling the events to Tristan as she ascended the steps. She couldn't help but feel jealousy towards her, maybe because she didn't know her. She just knew that she wanted Logan to be okay.

Entering her room, Logan looked so fragile laying there. She has never seen him like this and desperately missed his sarcasm, his smile, his eyes. She sat next to him stroking his hair. "Don't you die on me." She whispered. Tears flowed warm down her cheeks. Her emotions swirled through her and at that moment, she knew she loved Logan. What she was going to do about it is what she would have to figure out later.

For days she kept Logan hidden in her room. She hated leaving him during school, but she had to keep up a normal routine, sneaking home during gym class, lunch and study hall to check on him. Tristan took his turn checking on him between his classes too when Raine couldn't, though that was very seldom. Tristan felt jealousy creeping in with how much time Raine wanted to spend with Logan. He knew it was just because Raine had a big heart and hated to see people hurting, so he reminded himself of that daily to keep from going insane.

Logan never once opened his eyes in all those days. Raine was starting to worry thinking that the pack should have been here already. Tristan assured her that Logan was out of danger and that is why the pack wasn't seeking him out. She just couldn't understand why he wouldn't open his

eyes. *Why won't he open his eyes? If you're so out of danger just open your eyes Logan!*

She left school early today planning on spending the day at Logan's side. Mohana left the night the rogue showed up at the Underworld to go see her grandmother planning their next move. Raine was glad to have her out of her hair. Tristan promised he would be stopping by after school. "Maybe you should call his pack Tristan." She pleaded, but Tristan reassured her the pack had been notified and would be there as soon as they could.

Entering her room she grabbed the wash rag and wrung it with water. She slowly wiped Logan's face and then rested the cloth on his forehead. When she went to turn away, Logan grabbed her arm.

Jerking her head back with a yelp she found him staring at her. "You scared me."

"I'm sorry." His voice was hoarse from not using it in days.

She looked at his hand on her arm and he slowly removed it. Feeling that she may have looked too harshly, she grabbed his hand in her own. Rubbing his fingers, "I was so scared you were going to die on me."

"I could never leave you."

Looking into his eyes she smiled. He rubbed her fingers back softly and she couldn't help herself. She leaned forward and brushed her lips across his. Feeling his hot breath, electricity sparked as he

reached his hand up and pulled her head closer to him, kissing her fervently.

Raine gave into the kiss, caught in the moment and thankful Logan was going to be okay. As the kiss slowed and she pulled away from it, they sat staring into each others eyes. The heat was still alive and they both fought to keep from kissing each other again while steadying their breathing.

“You don’t know how long I’ve waited for that.” Logan whispered.

Standing up, Raine spoke softly. “We can’t do this again. We keep getting caught up in our emotions and we have to think about Shania and Tristan. It can’t happen again.”

Logan stared in disbelief at Raine. Was she really going to do this? Was she really going to pretend the kiss didn’t happen, that it didn’t mean anything?

Seeing the hurt on his face, she felt even more guilt sweep through her. She went to the window for a moment to gather her thoughts, pulling her hand from Logan’s when he tried to keep her from moving. Winter was fast approaching and they were calling for snow. The frost on the windows told exactly how cold it really was outside. When she felt sure of what she wanted to say, she turned back to Logan. “Logan, please? I don’t want to hurt anyone, and I just don’t know what to do or feel.”

Logan stood up and walked to her. As much as

he would love to have Raine be his, he knew exactly what she was saying, and feeling. He swore to never do this to Tristan again, and he would keep that promise to himself. If Raine was meant to be his, she would be his on her own accord, not from feeling guilty from one person to the other.

Swooping the hair behind her ear, he smiled at her. "Raine. I didn't mean to cause you more pain. You're right. We keep getting caught up in our emotions. I understand what you're saying. I don't want to make you feel pressured. I'm thankful to have you as my friend and thanks for caring for me all this time. No pressure at all okay?" He leaned in and kissed her cheek.

The softness of his lips had her fighting to keep from turning her head and meeting his lips head on. She wanted to kiss him again, but knew she couldn't. She couldn't do that to her best friend, or to Tristan. Not again.

Trouble Awaits

Logan and Raine never mentioned the kiss. They made sure that they were never alone together as well, though both would risk glances at each other, hoping Tristan and Shania would never learn that a kiss happened yet again.

Raine felt torn between the two of them. She loved Tristan, but she also had feelings for Logan. She had never known how strong they were until he was hurt, bound to her room until he was strong enough to be back on his feet. She was scared he would die, and wasn't sure she could live without him, or even wanted to. Her goal all along was to get him and Tristan to get along, and since Logan was hurt, they were getting along better than ever. She wasn't about to ruin that between these long time friends.

They hadn't heard from Mohana in days, and all of them were anxiously awaiting to hear word. Logan and Shania seemed to be getting closer in the last few days as well. It pulled at Raine's heart to see them together, knowing that Shania had a huge crush on him, but she was happy he was moving on. Now if she could just get her own heart

to move on and forget the kiss they shared.

As Raine watched Logan from her bedroom window in the woods patrolling, she didn't hear Tristan come in. When he wrapped his arms around her waist from behind she jumped in surprise.

"You're deep in thought Love, what is troubling you?" He leaned down and kissed her cheek.

Closing her eyes and leaning back against his chest, she felt the safety of his arms wrap around her. "I just wish we knew when the rogue was coming back. I don't understand what he's waiting for. Why not just get it over with already?"

Tristan gave her a gentle squeeze. "Raine, we can only hope they have given up and the rogue won't be returning at all. It's a good sign he has not returned."

Raine looked back out the window and watched the snow falling to the ground. The street lights glistened off the white fluffiness reminding her of diamonds. "It's cold outside. Go tell Logan to come in for some hot chocolate."

"Love, he's a wolf. He is not cold."

"I would feel better. He's out there because of me."

"Very well. I will go tell him." Kissing her hair, he turned and left. *Still so worried about him.*

Reminding himself it is just out of concern, he held the jealousy at bay giving Logan the benefit of the

doubt. He seemed to have learned his lesson the last time Tristan confronted him, not crossing any lines or taking advantage of Raine's concern for a friend.

Raine watched out the window until she saw them coming back. Just as she was about to turn away, she thought she saw movement. Staring at the woods, she waited to see if her eyes were playing tricks on her. Seeing no other movement after a few minutes, she went downstairs to make hot chocolate.

When Raine brought out hot chocolate, she was surprised to see Mohana sitting on her couch. "I didn't know you were here."

"I just came as the boys were coming in."

"Do you have any news?" Raine handed everyone a cup of hot chocolate, including Mohana.

"Thank you." She sipped the hot chocolate, burning the tip of her tongue. "Grandmother has not seen anything for a while now. She is afraid they may have her under their radar knowing she is consulting you and are waiting to make any decisions."

Shania sat by Logan not paying any mind to Mohana. The only thing she seemed to care about lately is Logan. Raine wondered why she was the only one that felt jealous of the witch, especially since Shania was the one that seemed to be

wanting Logan the most. Raine noticed how Mohana watched Shania, looking at her hand on Logan's leg.

"So where do we go from here Mohana?" Tristan asked. "Is there any way to help your grandmother see what is happening?"

"We just wait. The only thing she sees in her vision lately is Raine."

Raine choked on her hot chocolate. "Me? Why?"

That seemed to get everyone's attention as the room fell silent.

"What does Raine have to do with your grandmother's visions?" Logan demanded.

"She sees some sort of betrayal. She's not sure what it is yet, she just senses something is about to happen. Grandmother says that Raine will be forced to do things she only dreamed possible."

Raine felt her heart speed up, worrying that this betrayal may be of Tristan learning of the feelings she holds towards Logan. She looked at Mohana, who was staring back at her. Mohana was hiding something, but what?

"What aren't you telling us?" Raine inquired, almost afraid to hear the answer.

Mohana looked at Raine a moment longer, then she looked at each one of them sitting in the room. "Grandmother won't tell me. She says that you all are not ready to learn the truth yet. Just that a betrayal will occur."

Shania laughed. "There is no betrayal." Looking at them and lastly at Raine, "Nothing is going to happen. This is nonsense. You all need to relax." Debating whether or not to say it out loud she finally said, "The betrayal already happened if you guys remember. Halloween night. We're past all that." She took another sip of her steamy mug.

Mohana looked at them in confusion. "It's already happened?"

"It's a long story, and one we wish not to relive. Shania is right. It is in the past." Tristan leaned in and kissed Raine on the cheek. Smiling, he stroked her hair reassuring her that they would not be reliving that night. It was over.

Suddenly Mohana dropped her mug and sat as straight as a rod, staring into space. Her eyes turned a fiery blaze and it appeared she had slipped into a trance. Logan rushed to her side. Picking up her mug he warned Tristan not to touch her. "She's having a vision, I've heard about this."

"A vision?" Tristan asked with suspicion.

"She's of Divine Darshan."

Tristan looked at Logan in disbelief. He knew that the Divine Darshan were powerful witches, and he didn't realize Mohana came from a very long line of them.

Mohana came back, realizing the mess she made. "I'm so sorry about the mess. I must go though." She gathered her coat and bag and

headed for the door.

“What is it Mohana? What did you see?” Logan chased after her.

Just before the door she turned to look at him. “I didn’t see anything, but I have a bad feeling. Please be on high alert tonight, something’s not right. I feel it, I think the rogue is close.” She walked out the door.

Tristan joined Logan in the foyer. Just as Logan was about to tell Tristan what Mohana had said they heard a scream, followed by a loud screech.

In unison they both yelled, “the rogue!”

Racing out the door, they saw a creature carrying Mohana into the woods. Raine came to see what all the yelling was about seeing an open door, and as she looked outside, Logan and Tristan were entering the woods. She grabbed her jacket and chased after them, Shania close behind her.

Entering the woods she stopped to listen for any inclination of what direction they may have gone. Seeing glowing lights deep into the woods she headed in that direction. As the lights got closer, Raine had the distinct feeling that she was being watched. She stopped to look around, hearing Shania calling her name in the distance. Continuing on towards the light, she tripped in the snow.

When she approached neared the white glow like that of a full moon, she saw a woman that

looked familiar to Mohana, but her hair was black, she had eyes of fire and was in a fighting stance bearing two swords glowing a bright blue. In front of her was a large, winged creature with black beady eyes, a long snout with dragon teeth, it's skin almost a transparent blue. It's wings were flapping so hard it felt like a tornado was coming. Raine froze in her tracks, realizing that it was the same creature that took her Halloween night.

Logan had shifted into his wolf form, and Tristan was in a fighting stance facing yet another creature. Though this creature wasn't quite as big as the one in front of Mohana, it was just as scary. Raine watched as the creature blew a stream of fire from its mouth, flames just missing as Logan rolled out of the way just in time.

Mohana swung her swords with loud swishing sounds, shearing the rogue's skin, and the battle had begun. Tristan ran full force into the smaller creature, sinking his fangs into its shoulder. A loud screech escaped the creature from the pain of the bite.

Logan had jumped on the back of the larger creature as it flapped its wings frantically trying to knock Mohana down. The sound of the swords *whooshing* in the air could be heard, and then the slicing of skin, snapping of jaws.

The creature flapped harder, creating more wind and wood splintered from his wings smacking the

trees. Logan left out a howl before clamping his jaws back on the rogue. Tristan was tearing the smaller creature to shreds. Shearing of skin being pulled off made Raine cringe. She started backing up when the larger rogue turned and looked like he might fall backwards, in her direction.

Hitting something solid, she turned to find herself staring into the fangs of another rogue. He left out a hiss as he grabbed her by her hair. Raine screamed. Shania came out of nowhere screaming as well, carrying a large stick. She ran towards the rogue swinging, catching it in the back. The rogue let out a growl and grabbed Shania with its other hand, lifting her off the ground. When Raine tried to kick it, the rogue threw Shania, rendering her unconscious after she slammed into a tree with a grunt.

Raine looked her captor in the eye. Watching him lick his lips, she looked to her left as far as she could, in search of Tristan or Logan. The rogue lifted her off the ground, and she kicked with all she had catching it directly in the gut with her feet. It hissed again, dropping her with force. Raine screamed and started running away from it. Tripping on a tree root sticking in the ground, the rogue caught up to her in no time, jumping in front of her landing with a knee bend and a loud thud.

She backed up slowly slipping in the snow, losing her balance once again. She screamed,

“Tristan!”, as the rogue pounced upon her sinking its fangs into her neck. The pain was sharp like someone was stabbing her with an ax. The more she struggled, the more the rogue drank from her causing even more pain as it clamped its fierce jaws down harder for fear of losing its prey. Night was starting to close in on her.

Logan was the first to Raine. Seeing the rogue feeding from her sent him into a fury. He pounced it like a predator going in for the kill, knocking it loose from Raine. He rolled with it as it fought to free itself. He pinned the rogue to the ground, sinking his strong jaw into its neck and then ripping its throat out.

“Logan!” Shania had come to and was by Raine’s side, crying and covered in blood. Desperately she tried to stop the bleeding applying pressure to the wound as panic set in.

Logan ran to their side, scooping Raine up and heading towards Tristan. When they appeared back at the battle ground, Tristan and Mohana were just finishing off the larger rogue, Mohana decapitating it with her glowing blue swords, spinning around and landing with her back against her kill.

“Tristan, hurry!”

He laid Raine on the ground and Shania put her head in her lap. Sobbing, she begged them to save her best friend. Blood was leaking out of Raine’s

neck like a water faucet and Shania tried covering it with her hand and applying pressure. "SAVE HER!" She begged. "Can't you give her your blood or something? Not all the crap on TV can be myth and bull!"

"I can't do that Shania."

Logan paced back and forth. They were about to lose the girl that brought meaning and life to their very existence. *How could this be happening?*

"Tristan you love her, you can't just let her die! She can't die! Do something! Please!" Shania pulled Raine further in her lap as she kept pressure on the wounds. A red river gushed between her fingers, the wet warmth chilling her hands with the brisk cold air of the night.

Tristan looked at Logan. They had a moment of acknowledgement and Logan knew what must be done. Even though they had made a pack long ago, to never make anyone like themselves, the girl they both loved was at stake here. Logan nodded in agreement.

Tristan slowly approached Raine, trying to move Shania to the side. Shania fought against him, refusing to let Raine go. "Shania, you might not want to watch."

Giving in she moved to the side far enough to allow Tristan to work. She wasn't about to turn her back, if Raine died she was going to be by her side. "Just please save her, I can't lose her."

Shania cried.

Logan came up to Shania and turned her into him. He didn't think she needed to see this either and he held her tight while she cried into his chest. He watched Tristan fight with himself over the right thing to do. "Just do it Tristan! You must! There is no other choice."

Mohana approached, after making sure all the rogue's were dead, to see what was going on. Seeing Raine lying there so still, the war on Tristan's face knowing what he was contemplating she had to try and help. "Wait. Let me try first, I may be able to save her without going to that extreme."

Logan and Tristan both nodded in agreement holding little hope. Remaining in the comfort of Logan's arms, Shania turned herself enough to see what Mohanna was doing to her best friend. They watched Mohana call on her powers, but she was such a young witch, would she even be able to do it?

Mohana lay her hand over the gaping wound on Raine's neck. A white light glowed underneath as she spoke in a different language, chanting. Shania was praying that her friend would be okay, and Logan was hoping that Tristan would not be the one to save her.

This must be the betrayal Mohana's grandmother was speaking about. She must have known what

would have to be done to save Raine. Tears fell from Logan's eyes. He did feel betrayed, because he would not be the one to help her. He had to let Tristan do it. Even after their pack of not cursing anyone else with this way of life, they both were ready to break it to save Raine. Why did a werewolf and a vampire have to be so different?

Raine didn't move, her wound still bleeding as she lay there unconscious, Tristan touched Mohana's hand. "We know what must be done. It's too late for magic."

Mohana looked back at Logan holding the blonde girl and felt the pain he was feeling. She could sense his torment, and realized that Tristan was right. There was nothing magic could do to save this girl, she was too far gone. She backed away, feeling completely helpless. Why did she have to be such a young witch? If only her grandmother were here.

Logan watched as emotions swirled through his body like a tornado. Jealousy and anger flooded him, almost blinding him. He knew it was the best thing to do if they wanted to save Raine, he was just having a hard time accepting that Tristan had to be the one to do it. He watched through tear filled eyes hoping that Raine would forgive them.

Tristan moved closer to Raine, hoping she would not hate him. Leaning down to her, he kissed her gently then moved to her wound and started

drinking her blood. Logan watched as Tristan almost completely drained her, regret washing over him. He wished at this moment he could have been a vampire instead of a wolf. Turning someone into a werewolf took days, and Raine didn't have that kind of time. Turning them into a vampire took minutes.

Tristan pulled away from Raine's neck looking at the despair on Logan's face. Piercing his skin with extended fangs, making an open wound, he lowered his wrist to Raine, encouraging her to drink. Now they just had to hope that the transition took place. Not everyone was meant to be a vampire.

Shania felt relief that Tristan was saving Raine, but still feared for her as she watched the emotions play across Logan's face. *Why was Logan feeling so strongly about this? Did he wish to be the one to turn Raine? She's going to be okay. She's got to be. Oh my God what if it doesn't work? What if Tristan fails? What if he doesn't? What will she be like? Oh God!* How did it come to this? Her best friend's life was slipping away and she was worried about why Logan felt so strongly about this? Shania hugged him tighter, wishing this night was nothing but a bad dream. Logan stared at what was happening before him, unable to concentrate on anything else. He felt all was lost. Raine would be gone to him forever.

Raine felt her life slipping away. She could hear Shania crying, but couldn't bring herself to open her eyes or move her arms to console her. Suddenly she felt herself floating and she looked down at her limp body lying on the ground. She was going to die.

She watched as Logan held Shania, keeping her from seeing what was about to happen. She didn't quite understand herself until she saw Tristan start drinking her blood. Tears fell from her own eyes and she focused on Mohana.

Mohana, sensing a presence, looked directly at Raine floating above them. Gasping quietly, she watched Raine without the others knowing. She watched her as she seemed to float farther and farther away from them. When Raine suddenly whisked by her, she jumped back thinking they might collide.

As Raine re-entered her body, the pain was intense. She slammed back in like she was forced from a cannon. She felt the warm, thick liquid sliding down her throat. It burned at first, her throat feeling like it was on fire. Tasting better the more she drank, she started suckling like a baby with a bottle. The more she swallowed of the liquid, the less intense the pain was.

“Drink Love. That’s it.” Tristan put his hand behind her head to help her. “That’s it.”

Raine drank more until she was finally able to open her eyes. Pulling away from Tristan’s wrist, the realization of what just happened settled upon her. Wiping the blood from her mouth, she looked at the sticky red liquid on her hands.

“I’m sorry Love.”

She looked up into Tristan’s eyes. Sadness was filled inside of them. Regret. She forced a smile.

“How do you feel love?”

Raine moved her hand to her stomach and then her head. She sat up falling right back down, Tristan catching her before she hit her head.

“Slowly darling. You must let the transition take place.” He helped her to sit up.

She let the blood settle then looked at Logan and Shania, as if looking through new eyes. Colors were more vivid and she felt like she was seeing the world for the first time. Even though it was dark, it was as if there was a light on just for her.

Movement behind her had her turning her head. In the distance she two squirrels chasing each other up one tree and down the other.

Shania gasped and backed into Logan. Logan looked like he’d just seen a ghost, as glowing eyes stared back at him.

“Oh my God.” Shania moved closer to examine Raine. “Your eyes look like Tristan’s.”

Raine looked back at Tristan. "It's okay Love. They won't glow as bright once the transition is complete."

"That's it, it's done then? She's a vampire?" Shania touched Raine's hair, moving it out of her face. "Why doesn't she talk?" Shania gasped.

Raine snapped teeth towards Shania's wrist, Tristan shoving her arm away. "Easy Love. Shania is not dinner. "She will, after the complete transition."

Mohana moved closer. "I never thought in a million years I would ever witness a turning." She looked at Raine. "I saw you. Floating."

"You saw her floating?" Tristan inquired.

"Yes, she was floating away from us."

Tristan looked at Logan. They both knew without words that they were very close to losing Raine. They both sighed with relief realizing that she was alive. She was safe and what's done is done.

"What happens now Tristan?" Shania asked still sitting on the ground next to Raine. "Will she have like all these awesome powers or what?" The hint of envy was very evident on Shania's tone.

"She will come home with me until I can teach her vampire laws. Then we shall see."

Why couldn't it have been me to be turned? If only Logan would turn me. I could handle being a werewolf. Then we can be together forever!

Mohana looked at all of them, reading Shania's

thoughts on her face. "It's not over, by far." She spat. Without another word, she turned on her heels.

They all watched Mohana walk away, contemplating what she just said. The battle would not end until they found Fala. He was the key, and none of them would be safe until he was dead.

Immortal Kisses

*Some warriors look fierce, but are mild. Some
seem timid, but are vicious. Look beyond
appearances; position yourself for the advantage.*

~Deng Ming-Dao

BK Walker

"You are a Warrior, you just don't know it yet." Jin Cao

The Kiss of a Warrior

Hunger Within

"I'm so hungry." Raine paced back and forth.

"Love, we will go hunting soon." Tristan kissed her pouting bottom lip.

"When will Logan get here?"

"Soon, now try to relax."

Raine paced the floor in Tristan's parlor. Thank goodness his father wasn't home. She was scared to death to meet him, especially after Tristan told her that there may be consequences to him turning her into a vampire. His father would not be happy and they had to take things slow. Since returning from the woods, she knew she couldn't go home, not yet, and she was hungry.

The hunger was burning inside of her. She could almost see the glow radiating from her eyes with need. Tristan told her that her eyes would stop beaming like a neon light after she fed. Why was he making her wait so long? He even sent Shania home because Raine, at this moment was like a

rogue vampire. She could kill Shania without even thinking twice about it. So for her safety, Logan took her home, much against Shania's will.

As Raine's best friend, she wanted to be there to help her through the transition. Unfortunately, that was impossible.

"I'm sorry Shania. It's just not safe. You've seen what rogue creatures can do." Tristan reminded them of why they turned Raine to begin with.

"I'll talk to you tomorrow Shania." Raine assured her as Tristan's arms wrapped tight around her waist after she caught Shania's scent. It was that scent that she longed for now, that was causing her hunger to pain her so much. Her mouth was watering as she imagined the smell again. It amazed her how she could smell the blood beneath Shania's skin. It occurred to her that not all the vampire lore from movies and books were false. Some of it was very, very true. Especially the part about the blood lust.

Why was Tristan denying her? She was hungry and he was starving her. What was he waiting for?

A knock on the door brought her mind from her hunger thoughts. She hid in the parlor as Tristan answered it.

"Sorry it took me so long. Shania was sort of throwing a hissy fit."

"Hissy fitty?" Tristan raised an eyebrow.

"Yeah. Hissy fit. You know, tantrum."

"Aye."

"I heard some girls at school and I liked how it sounded."

"Enough of the hissy fitty. We need to get Raine hunting before she goes mad."

Just then Raine flew in from around the corner. "It's about time you got here. I'm starved Logan. Could you have taken any longer? Tristan won't take me hunting." She glared at Tristan.

"Love, we just needed to wait for Logan to return."

"Sorry Raine. Shania was having a bit of a hissy *fit*." He stressed the last letting Tristan know he mispronounced it.

"Today's dialogue uses way too much slang. Now we must go."

"I suppose we could take her to the Underworld."

"Underworld? What's the Underworld?" Raine asked excited at the sound of it.

"A place to hunt and feed free Raine. Didn't Tristan tell you about this?"

Raine glared at Tristan. "No. He hasn't told me anything." She did remember hearing something about the Underworld, but she didn't know what it was. It was the place Mohana said the rogue had found her and Logan the night Raine was turned.

"Love, you need to learn to hunt, not have your food handed to you on a silver platter."

Raine stuck her bottom lip out in a pout. "Can't

we just go there this once? I'm so hungry I might burst." She whined. She was a little worried about the rogue, what if it showed up again? Her hunger won out the war in her mind though, she just wanted to eat.

Tristan glared at Logan. "Very well. Logan, you will make sure she does not get carried away, since it was your suggestion."

"Great, let's go." Logan headed for the door holding it open for Raine. "You're going to love this place. It's a buffet. All you can eat." Logan chuckled when Tristan shoved his shoulder.

"Love you must know that this is the easy way out. You mustn't get carried away, we don't want you hurting anyone."

Raine looked at him in question. "Hurt anyone?" The hunger pang in her gut was getting worse. She could taste the bile on the back of her tongue. She needed to eat before she went mad.

"Yes Love. You are a vampire now. You need blood to survive, and though these mortals in the Underworld are willing, you must be careful not to..." He studied her before finishing. "To kill them. You could very well kill them in your haste."

"Kill them?" If she could have gotten any paler she'd have been a ghost. "What do you mean I need blood?" The true meaning of blood lust hit her like a slap in the face. It was easy to think of the words, but to really understand what those words

meant, she tried imagining drinking blood.

"Vampires need blood to survive. Blood is what gives us sustenance. It gives us our powers, our life energy. Without it, we would just cease to exist."

"There is a lot for you to learn Raine, but don't worry. I won't let you kill anyone tonight." Logan said raising one corner of his mouth.

Raine didn't know whether to be grateful or cry. She knew Tristan turned her to save her life, but she didn't want to hurt anyone, and if this hunger was going to be like this all the time, she was thinking she might have rather died. The pain was horrific. Gut wrenching. How did they expect her to drink someone's blood? Then she realized she should feel her heart racing with the hunger, but she felt nothing. She stopped to listen. She did hear a heart, but it wasn't hers. She looked between the boys standing with her. It was Logan's heart she heard beating. *What happened to my heartbeat?* Panic rose within her.

"What is it Raine?"

"Yes, what is it?"

"I don't feel my heart. I don't hear it. I only hear one heart." She forced out in a loud whisper as she fought back the tears.

Logan and Tristan looked at each other. They knew this wasn't going to be easy, but they thought they could get through Raine's first feeding before

they had to start answering all of the questions that were to come. Transitioning was never easy. Especially when you were now considered the 'Undead'. It was always hard to accept you weren't a mortal anymore. It didn't matter who you were.

Logan couldn't help from remembering the woods. The betrayal he felt that Tristan was the one who had to turn her. If he'd had more time, he could have done it himself. He could be the one holding Raine now. *If only I'd have had more time. She could still be living, have a heartbeat. If I could take away her fear, hold her in my arms and let her know that everything was going to be okay.*

Glaring at Tristan, he watched as Tristan moved in to comfort Raine.

"Love, please don't be upset. Let us go feed and then we can sit down and talk. I will explain everything, I promise." He kissed the top of her head tightening his arms around her. "I love you Raine. We will get through this together."

Not allowing the tears to fall, "What else should I know about being a vampire? When can I go home?" She then doubled over with hunger pang. "God! Does this always hurt like this?"

"No. It will get easier." He kept an arm around her waist and they followed Logan to the Underworld. He knew that he needed to feed himself and hoped Logan could keep her under control for a short time, not letting his own hunger

exceed his responsibilities.

When the pain subsided, she asked again. "When can I go home?" Thinking about having to feed on blood, having to be under the watch of Logan or Tristan all the time, she wanted to go home to her own bed. She wanted to just lay down and think about everything. How was this new life going to be? As much as she loved vampires in her old life, now she wasn't sure she would enjoy being one.

Looking with empathy in his eyes, "I'm sorry Raine. It will be a long time before you can go home again. There is much I need to teach you. If you were to go home now, you'd be a danger to all you love."

"I don't think I'm liking being a vampire." She snarled, running to catch up with Logan. "Take me to eat."

Logan looked at Raine, almost smiling at the contempt she directed at Tristan. Placing his arm around her shoulders, "Let's go eat then." He smiled, more like smirked at Tristan.

Underworld, Here Comes The **Raine**

Raine walked cautiously as they entered the tunnel to the Underworld. Her senses were insulted with new scents. She looked around watching everyone as they passed. She noticed that some of them smelled familiar, even though she had never met them. Others seemed to have a pine and musk scent similar to Logan. "What is that smell?"

"You are smelling other immortals Raine."

"That's how you know, is by their smell?"

"Yep. Vampires have a different smell than werewolves, and werewolves smell different than say...warlocks. The list goes on. Each species carries their own scent, with a specific scent related to their pack or coven."

Raine raised her nose to the sky, taking in the different smells. Then a new smell caught her off guard. Before she could even understand what was happening, her fangs snapped into place with a slicing sound and her blood lust took over. Her eyes began glowing bright green and her nose led the way. Logan and Tristan had to run to catch her before she did anything wrong. She was so fast.

At the turn of the corner they lost sight of her. Logan smelled the air trying to sniff her out. Tristan tried feeling her presence as the one who turned her, with little luck. There was always a special bond between master and fledgling and he was counting on this connection. He could feel her, barely on the surface, but not enough to find her. Someone was blocking him. "Raine?"

"Raine?" Logan started sniffing like a wolf hunting its prey just before the kill.

"We must find her. She will never forgive us if we let her hurt someone." Tristan was starting to worry. He couldn't bare it if Raine hated him.

Raine followed her nose to the smell that was so mouth watering. It was a young girl she saw who didn't even realize Raine was watching her. Raine could feel herself salivating, and she slowly moved closer. It wasn't the scent that originally wafted her senses, but she could smell this girl's blood like a steak on a barbeque. When the girl turned she smiled, as she was about to say hi she saw Raine's fangs flashing from her mouth. Letting out a scream, Raine's vampire instincts took over and she moved to attack. Just before she was to satisfy her thirst, the scent she first sought caught her off guard. She dropped the girl on her rear, letting her

stare pathetically as the realization she could have died was settling upon her.

Raine searched out the smell until she found a younger looking boy staring back at her. She stopped dead in her tracks, just watching him, wondering if he could sense the blood lust within her. He didn't seem scared of her. Smelling the air around her, she shook her head. "This can't be right." There was something strange about his smell. Something familiar yet so distant. This was no mortal boy. "Who are you?"

"I am here to help you Raine." Without taking his eyes from her he sliced his wrist with a dagger he held in his opposite hand. Red rivulets flowed at a steady stream down his wrist, coming to rest on the ground. He held his wrist to Raine. "Drink."

"Aren't you afraid I might kill you?" She looked at him hesitantly, fighting the urge to jump at his invitation, suddenly filled with uncertainty. Her mouth watered from the smell of fresh blood. Another hunger pang struck and she doubled over, falling to one knee. Her arm wrapped around her abdomen while the other rested on the ground giving her balance. She slowly brought her piercing green eyes to look at the one offering to put this pain to an end. He had bronzed skin with jet black hair. His eyes were almost a transparent grey with specks of silver. He was short, maybe the same height as Raine, maybe a little shorter. She really

couldn't tell from being bent over with pain.

"You cannot kill me." He still held his wrist, cut side up encouraging her once again. "Drink."

As another pain struck her, the boy forced his wrist to her mouth, holding the back of her head. "Drink."

At first Raine was afraid. She thought she might kill him and Logan and Tristan were not here to stop her. This little boy, man, she was sure he was probably a man, seemed so confident though. Once the blood entered her mouth, all she could smell was metal. A strong metallic odor. As the blood reached her tongue, she thought for sure it was going to taste like a copper penny. To her surprise, the thick liquid started off with a bitter bite, then quickly changed to a sweet nectar taste. She relaxed and brought her hands to his wrist, helping to hold it in place while she fed. Instantly the pangs subsided, leaving her feeling peaceful and relaxed. She heard the man speak, but knew he wasn't talking to her. She continued feeding.

"Stand down wolf. You too vampire." He said it coyly.

When Logan and Tristan finally found Raine they were shocked to see her feeding on the wrist of a boy they didn't know. Logan darted for Raine, hoping he would be able to pry her off. When the boy spoke in a man's voice, he halted. Tristan quickly followed suit as they both stood and

watched Raine have her first feast to soothe the blood lust. Tristan couldn't help but fear what this boy was as he felt the power rolling off of him.

To Raine's amazement, she felt sated. She slowly pulled her mouth away from his wrist and licked her lips, then wiping the corner of her mouth with the back of her own hand. Standing up, she looked at the wide eyed vampire and wolf before her and this unknown man. "Well, I didn't kill him." She smiled.

Both boys let out the breath they had been holding. They hurried to Raine's side and checked her over. Her eyes had stopped beaming like a lighthouse beacon, though the glow had not completely died down. "Are you okay?" Tristan asked.

"I'm fine. I feel great." She hesitated as she felt her own body to see if anything was out of place. "Nope. I'm good."

Tristan looked to the man in waiting. "Who are you?"

Raine turned her attention to her savior. She could now tell that this boy was shorter than her, and he held such a confidence that you could taste it in the air surrounding him. She cocked her head studying him. "Thank you."

"No need to thank me. That is what I'm here for." He pulled a bandana from his back pocket and wiped the excess blood from his wrist. By the time

he took the bandana away, the wound had closed.

Trying not to lose his patience Tristan looked this boy over and slowly said, "And you are? What do you mean 'that is what you are here for'?" He felt his muscles tense.

Logan slowly looked him over. He was small but he could tell he was fierce. Asian perhaps. He was a man though. Years of knowledge and experience was written all over him. He was not a mere boy. He smelled the air trying not to be noticed. He wasn't mortal either.

"Relax vampire. I am here for Raine. I was sent by my Elders..." With a slight hesitation, "And the Counsel."

"The Counsel?" Raine, Tristan and Logan spoke at the same time.

"Fear not. The Counsel is of no concern."

"How can you say that?" Tristan anxiously asked.

"Things are exactly as they should be vampire."

All three of them looked at this new invader quizzically.

"I see Antone and Raquim have not spoken to you three yet."

The trio shook their head no, surprised that Raquim and Antone already knew of Raine becoming a vampire.

"I was afraid of that. That would also explain Raine's hunger then. For you were keeping her in hiding until it was safe to hunt." He looked at the

three of them. "Very well. I am here for Raine, the now vampire, and soon to be Shijin Warrior. I am her Curator. She is drawn to my blood, as her protector, I can always sate her hunger."

"Shijin Warrior?" Raine asked in disbelief. "I am no warrior of any kind. What the hell is a Curator?"

Tristan pulled Raine into him hoping to relax her. He could sense her tensing up and she's never cursed before. He couldn't help but wonder where that came from and shot a glance at Logan. This tension and blame would do nobody any good.

"My name is Jin Cao. I am your guardian, Curator." He moved his hands up in the air as if to say, 'you know'.

Raine looked at him and her hands started to tremble, followed by her body. "I am not a warrior. The Counsel knows? Oh my God what are we going to do? They're going to kill us."

"That is why I am here. You *are* a warrior, you just don't know it yet. The Counsel and my Elders have foreseen this coming for centuries. It is as it should be. You are a warrior and you have a destiny to fulfill. It was only a matter of time, though the vampire thing was a bit of a surprise. Why do you think the Counsel did not bother you when you and your family left your coven? Events are happening just as they should, her path has already been written."

Tristan watched him wearily. He was searching

for truth in his face.

"So what you're saying is that Tristan was supposed to turn her into a vampire?" Logan said with a growl rumbling from his chest.

"No. She was destined to become a great warrior. The Counsel knew what she was to become after she was born, and though they wanted to put Tristan in coffin fasting for his actions, I've assured them that her being a vampire will only help her. When Tristan's family came here in search of freedom, it was not by accident that this town was found. What you thought was an escape from war, was actually a place for you to find the girl that would *help* you in the war, and you were to protect her. The path was already chosen for you." He looked at Raine while he spoke.

"My father knew of this?"

"Your father knew what he was told. He did not know about the girl, only that he was to come to this town."

Logan felt the anger flushing his face. *Those bastards. How could they play a game like this. Play with Raine's life? They had to have known about Fala and the rouge's if they gyrated for Tristan and his family to come to this town. She could have been killed!* The thought made Logan even angrier, and he fought to keep his beast in check and not rip Jin Cao to shreds.

"Get a hold of yourself wolf. You are lucky Antone

doesn't kill you for your betrayal."

"Betrayal? I have done nothing wrong and betrayed no one!"

"For leaving your pack unannounced. That is reason for death."

Logan leapt toward Jin Cao, but Tristan stepped in front of him. "No Logan. We must find my father and Antone. We must see what this is all about."

"I am not to leave Raine's side." Jin Cao said matter-of-fact like.

"Fine." Tristan looked over his shoulder at him. Logan snarled, but Tristan gave him a reassuring pat on the shoulder. "Let's go."

Raine was beginning to feel a little dizzy. She wasn't sure if it was from feeding or from the excitement. She started to giggle uncontrollably. "Well I'll be dipped in ice cream!"

"What?" Logan turned to look at her. He watched her as she giggled some more, slapping her hand on her knee. She walked over to Jin Cao and slapped him on the back. "Warrior huh?" She giggled some more.

Raising one eyebrow, "Are you drunk?" Logan couldn't see past the glow, now not as bright, but still bright enough to hide the pupils.

Tristan walked over to Raine, placing his arm at the small of her back.

"She drank my blood." Jin Cao brushed his shirt off and stood waiting for them to lead the way.

Immortyl Kisses

“What does your blood have to do with it?”

“Magic. She is drunk on magic. Shall we?”

“What are you?” When Jin Cao didn’t answer Tristan pushed Raine forward with his arm behind her, Logan and Jin Cao following. They would get the answers they seeked once they got back to the mansion. *So we were hiding Raine for no reason. They already knew.* Tristan shook his head. He hated secrets and his family was the best at keeping them.

Nerves of Steel

Walking into the mansion they heard voices coming from the parlor. "Wait here." Tristan held a hand up to keep the others from moving forward.

Raine looked around and found that her hands were trembling with fear of meeting Raquim, her drunkenness quickly wearing off. At first they had to keep her existence from him, now he knew. She wasn't sure what to expect, and her nerves were a jumbled mess.

"It's going to be okay Raine." Logan closed the distance between them.

Raine looked into Logan's eyes and he felt a surge of electricity flow through him. She looked so beautiful standing here in the foyer being so nervous. He knew she could hear his heart racing, but it was obvious her mind wasn't paying attention.

Jin Cao looked between the two of them. After a long moment of silence, he stepped forward.

"Things are just as they are meant to be. I'm not sure what has been going on here, but things are about to change drastically for all of you as you

learn Raine's destiny. We have been waiting for this moment for a long time.”

Raine turned to look at her new Curator. “Waiting for what? I don’t understand why you think I’m some sort of warrior. I’m just a girl from Newfane, New York. I dress in black clothes, wear black make-up, I hate the winters, I’m not all that great at school, I’ve never even been in love before. Tristan is the first boy I ever kissed, I hate dancing and my biggest concern is if I will pass geography. I cannot be this warrior you think I am.” Tears started welling in her eyes.

Logan felt relief wash over him hearing Raine say she has never been in love, draping an arm around her shoulder. She buried her face into his chest, letting the tears fall. “It’s going to be okay Raine. It will all be okay.” He gently stroked her hair and held her close. Taking in her scent, he couldn’t help but to feel a renewed sense of hope. *Maybe there's still a chance after all.*

Antone appeared in the hallway walking towards them. He looked with eyebrows raised at Logan holding Raine. “Tristan and Raquim needed a moment. What is going on here?”

Logan looked at Antone but made no effort to release Raine. “She’s upset. I can’t say that I blame her either in light of everything.”

“Our pack will be here soon. We must start training.” He watched Logan consoling Raine and

couldn't help but wonder if his pack member was in love with the new vampire.

"Training? Training for what?" Logan held back the growl of impatience that wanted to be released.

"We will wait until Raquim is ready. Then we can all talk." Looking at Raine, Antone's face grew softer along with his voice. "Hello Raine. I'm Antone. Alpha of the Baldassarre Fang Blood Pack."

Raine slowly lifted her face from Logan's shirt, leaving a wet spot. She looked Logan in the eyes and he gently wiped the tears from her face with his thumbs, smiling as a form of reassurance. Turning to face Antone, she felt her nerves want to shatter. It was bad enough she had to meet Raquim today, but the Pack Leader too?

"Hello." She said shyly.

Antone smiled. "I understand your fear. There is no need to be afraid. You are more than welcome here."

Raine took a steadying breath then looked at Jin Cao. He nodded to her encouraging her to speak to Antone.

"It's nice to meet you." Her voice was raspy from crying.

"Father? You knew all this time that we were to

protect Raine?" Tristan couldn't keep the blame from his voice.

"No Son. I did not. I just knew that this town was the suggestion of a member of the Counsel that agreed with our fleeing. No other vampires lived here is what I was told. There would be plenty of hunting ground. I had no idea about the girl." Raquim sipped his Brandy, feeling the warmth of the deep golden liquid slide to every part of his insides.

"You wanted me to leave her alone. It's obvious she was in danger."

Raquim looked at his son for a long moment. "You love this girl?"

"Yes." Tristan wasn't going to deny it.

"What if her destiny forbids your love?"

"Her destiny? Why does everyone keep talking about her destiny? What is going on Father?"

Tristan started pacing back and forth in the parlor.

"She is scared to death, and no one will let us know what is going on. This Curator came into the picture from out of the blue, he will not even let us know anything. He just keeps saying we should wait to talk to you. Now tell me Father, what is going on?"

"Jin Cao has arrived?" Raquim looked surprised.

"Yes. We met him in the Underworld. He was... well he was with Raine when we found them."

"I know you have turned the girl." Raquim's voice

deepened with a forced acceptance. "You know it is forbidden to turn a mortal. This should not be accepted, there are always consequences to our actions. I thought I taught you better."

Tristan stopped pacing and looked into his father's eyes. Letting out a deep sigh, "I had no choice."

"There is always a choice Son. Did not even your death sentence cross your mind? You were so blinded by love?"

"She would have died."

"What do you mean she would have died?"

"The rogue practically ripped her throat out. If I hadn't changed her she would have died. I couldn't live with that."

It was Raquim's turn to sigh. If anything, he knew better than anyone that he couldn't let an innocent die. Tristan got that trait from him. "Sit down Son." He motioned for the couch. When Tristan sat down, he lowered himself next to him. "Love is a tricky thing Son. Sometimes the decision has to be made fast to save the innocent. I remember the first time I ever laid eyes on your mother. She was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. Her long blonde hair flowed loosely down her back with the ends curling tightly. Her green eyes were bright and full of life. I followed her for weeks, never speaking to her. Then one night I mustered up enough courage to talk to her. We were both

mortal at the time. We dated, and after only two months we married. It wasn't long after we were married that she became pregnant. I was so elated I went out and got drunk. In my drunkenness I passed out, only to wake as a vampire.

"Your mother didn't care. She loved me and accepted me anyways. I couldn't have asked for a more loving woman.

"One night, there was a bar fight at the tavern she was working at. She was trying to break it up when one of the fighters pulled a knife. When he went to thrust it into his opponent, he missed and stabbed your mother in the heart. Blood was everywhere, and it took all I had to fight the temptation to feed from her. I told everyone I was taking her to the hospital, carrying her out of the bar. She was still so beautiful, even though life was slipping away from her. She looked at me with those piercing green eyes and I felt myself acting before I could even think. I couldn't let her die."

Tristan knew he had never heard the story of how his parents met or how they became vampires. He knew his mother was pregnant with him before she became immortal. The vampire blood was stronger than the mortal, and in the process of it taking over every cell in her body, including the fetus, Tristan was born a vampire too.

It was hard for Raquim to speak of her, especially since she had only been gone for a year.

After being staked in a territorial dispute, as she stood to protect her coven as she always did, Raquim had taken it hard. They hardly spoke of her because it always brought Raquim to tears. "So that is how she became a vampire?"

Raquim blinked the wetness from his eyes and cleared his throat. Looking at his son, "Yes. She never regretted me turning her and we had a wonderful marriage together. So I understand the fear of losing the one you love."

After a moment of silence, they both stood at the same time. "Go get the others and we will fill you all in on what's going to happen from here." Raquim went to pour himself another Brandy.

Tristan paused by the door. "Thanks for sharing with me about Mom, Father." Then he walked out to get the others.

They all found seats in the parlor. Raine was so nervous she was sure they could hear her teeth chattering. Tristan led her to the couch his father and him had just occupied, guiding her to sit and grasping her hand in his own. "Relax Love." He whispered.

Logan sat on the other side of Raine, daring a glance at her and Tristan as he wished it was him

who was holding her hand right now. She wasn't drunk anymore, but just as nervous as a deer about to be a wolf's dinner.

Jin Cao sat in a chair opposite Raine, quietly watching her and waiting for the meeting to begin.

Raquim turned to get a good look at Raine. Seeing how nervous she was, compassion filled him. "Welcome Raine." He closed the distance between them, grabbing her hand and kissing the back of it. Giving a slight bow, "Welcome to the family. I'm Raquim."

A True Warrior

Raquim smiled at Raine, taking in her beauty. “I see why Tristan is so fond of you.”

Raine forced an uncomfortable smile.

“The pack is almost here.” Antone sniffed the air.

Jin Cao sat quietly, looking at the others. He knew what was going to happen, and it was going to be a matter of convincing Raine that this was her destiny. That it *has* been her destiny since before she was even born.

Logan watched Raine, worrying about what the pack might do. Even though wolves and vampires are a separate entity in their community standings, they all had to beware of the Counsel. Wishing he could hold her, he now realized that he loved her, and it wasn't his place. He didn't want to hurt Tristan again, but when it comes to matters of the heart, he just didn't know how to control his feelings.

Tristan continued to hold Raine's hand, gently rubbing the back of it hoping to keep her calm. He looked to Logan, catching the look he was giving to Raine. He immediately felt the anger flood his system, and he held his breath trying to squelch it.

Anger right now would not help. He leaned in and kissed Raine's temple. "It's going to be fine Love."

Raine smiled and nodded. It was bad enough that she just had to fight the hunger that came with being a new vampire, but to have all this thrown at her before she was even able to get used to the fact that she was no longer mortal, she thought she might just have a nervous breakdown. Her stomach rumbled and she feared the lust was returning. She didn't know if she could handle that right now, and she stood up with a quick motion.

Logan jumped up to stand beside her.

"What is it?" Tristan stood grabbing her shoulders turning her to face him.

Antone let out a low growl. He could see something was up between these three and he promised himself he would find out what it was.

Logan looked at his Alpha and sat back down on the couch, reluctantly.

"The hunger is returning." Jin Cao chimed in.

Raquim looked at Jin Cao. "I'm sorry Jin Cao. How have you been old friend?" He walked over and shook his hand as Jin Cao stood.

"Hello Raquim. I've been well. It seems you've been doing well for yourself here."

"We have been managing, all things considered." Raquim looked around the parlor. He mumbled something incoherent, and in the next second there was a small framed woman standing in the

doorway.

“You called Sire?”

“Please bring a flask.”

“Yes Sire.” She turned and left.

Raine watched everyone with suspicion. She didn't know how she was supposed to be acting. Why couldn't she just go home? She wanted to live life like a normal teenager. Let Shania drag her to dances she hated, fail an English pop quiz, learn to drive a car. Tears welled in her eyes as the realization that none of this was going to happen set in. How were her parents going to accept all this? Would she even be able to go home? Ever?

The small framed woman walked in carrying a metal container. “Here M'Lord.” She handed it to Raquim.

“Thank you Elsa. You are dismissed.”

Raine blinked the tears away and watched as Elsa left. Her long dark hair flowed behind her, blowing in the breeze from her haste to leave the parlor. Raine wondered what her story was and felt her mind calm as she thought about something other than her own life.

“Here Raine.” Raquim opened the flask and inserted a straw. “This will help with the hunger. Just sip slowly.”

Raine took her first sip, not sure what to expect. When the sweet taste slid down her throat, her stomach instantly settled. The beast within was

calming, and that is exactly what she decided she would call it from now on. The Beast. She felt more calm, and ready to face what was ahead. She had no choice in the matter.

“They are here Raquim.” Antone stood in anticipation.

Raine turned to see several men start entering the parlor. There were nine to be exact as Raine counted them. They were tall and muscular, all of them. The hair on each of their heads was black and cut in a military type style. Each bore dark, chocolate brown eyes with golden specks. Eyes of wolves. The energy radiating from them made her cower, and Tristan took her up in his arms.

“This is Logan’s pack Raine. No need to be afraid.” He whispered.

“Welcome Gentleman. Neal.” Raquim’s baritone voice echoed through the parlor, holding an authority. “Shall we begin?”

Tristan led Raine back to the couch and she sat between him and Logan. Logan watched her with a careful eye, not wanting another correction from his leader.

Raquim waited for everyone to find a seat. He stood in the middle of the room so he would be seen easily by the others. Once everyone settled, he started to explain. “It seems that Fala is creating creatures in hopes to cease vampire and werewolf existence. He has created an immortal army sent

to hunt, and those they don't kill, Fala wishes to enslave.

"He has targeted Raine, the newest addition to our family. Tristan and Logan have been doing there best to keep her safe, but when a rogue almost killed her, my son was left no choice but to turn her, to save her life." Raquim wanted to make it known that Tristan acted within reason. "As it turns out, Tristan has brought into this family a Shijin Warrior."

"No mortal is to be changed. It is against our laws." The tallest of the nine men stepped forward.

"My son was left with no choice."

"What do you mean he was left with no choice. If the Counsel finds out we will all be punished." Chattering started among all the pack members, fear of the Counsel and what might happen to them all for being a part of this.

"Raine is now a member of our family and she will not be harmed or punished. The Counsel is very aware of what happened." Raquim spoke firmly.

Raine cringed at the words coming from Raquim's mouth. She had expected the worst from Tristan's father, anticipated the yelling and screaming that would come from the result of Tristan saving her life. When she first came face to face with Raquim, she braced herself for the blow, but it never came. Now he speaks about her as if

he's known her for an eternity and has just been waiting for her to reach some sort of maturity. He speaks about her like he's a proud father speaking of his daughter. Raine looked up to find Raquim looking directly at her as he spoke, and she wondered how he could be so accepting of everything that has happened in the last 24 hours. She closed her eyes to settle the dizzying effect of her head spinning. *Why do they all think I am some kind of warrior?*

Antone stood, a fierce growl ignited the room. The pack grew quiet at their Alpha's stern command, only understood by the wolves. "Please forgive my pack Raquim, but we must understand their concern.

Nodding in agreement, Raquim continued. "Antone and I took a trip into Ireland, to seek out our confidante' from the Counsel. During our visit, we learned that Fala not only wants to threaten my family while seeking revenge, he wants to destroy all of vampire and wolf kind. He has been creating an evil immortal army, using his sorcery to create the strongest we've ever seen. He too knows that a great warrior has risen and is to become the one that will put a stop to his reign. He is frightened by this."

Jin Cao stood up and Raquim gave him a nod as he went in search of his Brandy. Jin Cao looked directly at Raine as he spoke, and the room fell

silent. “You are a Shijin Warrior Raine. Your path was chosen for you many centuries ago. Your birth was foreseen by great enchantresses from B.C. You are a descendant of the Great Sima Yi, an Imperial Guardian from the year 251. During the Jin Dynasty, Fala was a fierce warrior, fighting for his tribe, saving them from death. There was a rise of vampires in 1234, and they claimed their territories, the Jin Dynasty being one of them. Fala was caught in a hostile takeover and turned by one of the fighting vampires, Raquim. The Counsel had sent in their strongest vampires, and Raquim, not being one to let someone die, was forced to turn Fala, who was already a Warlock.”

We all looked to Raquim. Regret, grief, and sadness shown on his face. His eyes drifted and he spoke softly.

“It was a terrible time in 1234. Rogue vampires set out to take down the Counsel. They didn't want to live by governed law, and thought by creating more vampires, they would eventually have enough power to be free of the Counsel. I remember this night like it was yesterday.

“The battle was fierce. Men were gunned down like rabid dogs. Soldiers dressed for war, husbands and fathers, fighting for their tribes and territories. These rogue vampires flew in and they never knew what was coming. We learned late about the attack, and when I arrived to the battlefield it was

almost finished.

"I remember the night being cool, my breath fogging in the air. Dead bodies lay scattered, but there was no blood. They had all been drained, and rogues were still working on turning many of them. Body after body I walked over and around. My heart sank, feeling sorry for them and the families they left behind. Frost was forming on the grass and I suddenly saw movement. One soldier had moved his hand, the slightest of movements. I ran to his side, turning him over. Blood dripped from his mouth.

"I can save you friend. Do you wish for me to save you?"

"He stared at me wide eyed for a long moment before nodding, gurgling on the blood in his throat. *'Do it.'*

"So I turned him." Tears welled in Raquim's eyes causing everyone in the room to feel his pain.

Jin Cao continued, "Fala was angry to be forced to obide by the new laws set by the Counsel. Of course, he followed the rules for a time while he planned his revenge.

"Two decades ago, Raquim's entire coven was on the verge of being sentenced to death for treason. It has always been forbidden that immortal existence be made known to mortals. When Fala started creating rogue vampires and letting them loose on the streets, he blamed Raquim and his

coven for the murders that were occurring, trying to turn attention of the Counsel away from him and on the Blood Moon Coven, Raquim's coven. He was angry that Raquim didn't just let him die, and outraged that he now had to be forced to live in the new laws governed by vampires.

"The Counsel found Raquim and his kin innocent, sentencing Fala to live out his days on Grim's Island. A spell was cast and Fala cannot leave this remote Isle, so in his miserable existence, he plots to still destroy Raquim, the rest of vampire and all of immortal kind, especially the wolves for continually helping vampires when needed. So he is creating an immortal army, using his sorcery to create the deadliest, strongest and hardest to kill Rogue creatures we've ever encountered since our time began."

"What does this girl have to do with this war? Was there really a need to turn her?" The pack was getting anxious.

"Now is the time for Raine fulfill her destiny, and put Fala and his army to rest. She has the power to defeat him. This is why we have been waiting for her for an eternity."

"How come we didn't know about her. "There are laws and consequences. Tristan should be punished for turning a mortal."

Antone stood up, releasing a deep resonating growl.. "I knew. Though I didn't know who the girl

was or where she could be found, I knew there was a destiny to be fulfilled. I was under strict orders to keep this to myself until the time arrived. Now sit and listen.” The pack didn't dare defy their leader and stood back to listen to the rest.

“All immortals need your help. When the Counsel realized that you were here, they sent Raquim and his family to seek you out. Raquim was clueless as you know, but we knew they would find you. You becoming an immortal yourself was not part of the plan, and this is why I've been sent. To help you during your transition, and to teach you how to become a Shijin Warrior. I'm Jin Cao, your Curator and your animal to call.” He looked at Antone and in the next second, he shifted into a white tiger. The other wolves growled and were ready to pounce.

Antone let out a stern growl beckoning to the pack to stand their ground. “Leave the kitty cat alone. He is merely demonstrating.” The pack remained in their places, though still ready to take part in the chase, like a house dog would chase a cat.

Taking back his human form, Jin Cao continued. “You, Raine, are a Red Bird, the Phoenix. You contain the element of fire. I am Kirin, the white tiger, and I contain the element of metal. I am your protector, a preserver. My name means unbreakable bond, and that is what we now share.

I am your animal to call, and when you need me, I will fight by your side as the white tiger aiding the Phoenix. Together we will be a force to be reckoned with.”

Raine sat in silence trying to take it all in. She was finding it hard to chew that they all thought she was this great warrior born to aid them in some kind of immortal war. Tristan squeezed her hand hoping it would give her some sort of comfort to know she wasn't alone.

Just then the door in the foyer flew open and a rush of air blasted through the parlor. With everyone looking at the door and waiting, they all stood ready to fight. Surprise replaced the look on all their faces as they stared at the figure looming in the doorway.

“Louhi.”

Kiss of a Warrior

"Hello Antone. Raquim." Small framed with almost white hair hanging past her waist, stood an older woman, but she held an authority that made her intimidating. She was accompanied by Mohana.

"Hello again Raine. This is my grandmother, Louhi." Mohana moved from behind her to take control of introductions.

"So this is Raine." Louhi walked over taking Raine's face in her hands looking her over. "This is the one tormenting my dreams?"

"Yes grandmother."

The entire room fell silent as Louhi continued to study Raine. Louhi was an old witch and had the power to hurt any one of the men before her, and she wouldn't even think twice about it. Her magic was well developed and beyond any average witch's powers.

"Who turned her?" Louhi asked with a taste of disgust.

"There was no other choice M'Queen. She was on her death bed." Raquim answered.

Raine looked at him with surprise. He was the one so full of power and authority earlier, and now they all seem to cower to this old woman. She didn't understand what happened to change their demeanors. She looked at Mohana hoping to find an answer.

"Ahh. I know boy. I've seen it, but who turned her?"

"It was I." Tristan stood up.

"The vampire lover. How wonderful." Eying him up and down, "Now hush while I prepare."

Prepare? Prepare what? Is she going to kill me? Raine couldn't help but start to tremble again. After hearing how powerful she was, and knowing it was against the rules to turn her into an immortal, she wasn't sure what was going to happen. *Maybe the Counsel sent her to finish me off, or punish and torture me.*

"Calm yourself child. Now your Curator is here, what makes you think harm would come to you? Did he not tell you that he was to protect you at all costs?"

Raine looked at her, stunned Louhi knew what she was thinking. She wasn't sure if she should answer or remain quiet. Looking at Jin Cao for some sort of sign, she got nothing. He let her know absolutely nothing of what she was supposed to do. Tristan, sensing her uneasiness, gently squeezed her hand.

"He said he was my guardian and that he was here for me."

Shaking her head Louhi glared at Jin Cao. "Jin Cao never was any good at explaining himself. You are a warrior dear. I've seen you do great things, and you will succeed in your mission."

"What mission?" Raine inquired.

"Your destiny child. You will fight not only for immortals, but mortals just alike. If Fala were to succeed, he would take over all, that includes humans. There would be a new government and it would be led by him. He would enslave everyone that crossed his path. Sort of like that movie you kids love so much. What was it called Mohana?"

"*Lion King* Grandmother."

"Ah yes. *Scar*. Fala is like *Scar*. You will stop him. You're Curator by your side protecting you at all costs. His destiny is to keep you safe."

Looking at Mohana they started gathering and placing their supplies needed. Mohana lit several candles in a circle on the floor. Louhi laid crystals in between the candles, saying something inaudible, only seeing her lips move, in a language Raine did not understand before she lay each one down.

Raine looked at Mohana, then at Logan, who seemed just as nervous as she was. She reached for Logan's hand, at the same time Tristan grabbed hers. Holding both their hands Raine felt balanced. It was at this moment she knew she needed both of

them in her life. She wasn't sure what that meant, but she was sure she needed them.

"It is time." Louhi motioned for Raine to join her and Mohana.

"Time for what?" Raine asked as her heart started pounding so hard she thought it might just make its way out of her chest, and she could finally hear it beating.

"Come child. Come stand inside the circle."

Raine slowly rose and walked to the circle. Stepping over the flaming candles, she stood directly in the center. Louhi said something once again in a language Raine did not understand. Louhi raised her hands to the ceiling. The lights suddenly dimmed and a whirl of wind gushed through the parlor. Raine looked down to see the candles were still burning but with a brighter glow now, presenting an optical illusion that the entire circle was in flames.

Mohana raised a piece of paper and both her and Louhi recited an incantation. Louhi lowered her hands to her sides and closed her eyes. Both women were speaking in a foreign language. A sudden rush of wind encircled Raine starting at her feet and working its way up in a spiral motion. Raine's hair flew out with the force. A white light accompanied the wind, and spiraled up and down and back up again, repeating this cycle over and over. Being lifted off her feet, Raine floated up.

The witches continued their incantation and Raine felt an energy enter her body. It was a shock at first, like being hit with a blunt object. Then she felt warmth starting at her toes working its way to the top of her head. The heat was growing to the point she almost couldn't stand it anymore. Just when she thought she would burst, bright light shot out from what seemed like every pore in her body. She looked like sunlight rays were extending from her. Her body started to spin in a circle, picking up speed with each turn. The dizzying effect made Raine close her eyes as she trembled in fear.

In one sudden movement, Raine's body stopped spinning and came to a complete stop while still being elevated above the floor. Her head whipped back and her arms and legs stiffened. As she slowly returned to the floor, the wind that was surrounding her dissipated. Her arms shot out in front of her and fire exploded from her fingertips. Her body shifted back and forth between a Red Phoenix and her normal body. The Phoenix was transparent, almost circling her in between shifts. The witches became silent, yet holding a meditation state. Black Tribal Tattoos etched their way across Raine's arms and shoulders, her back, and lastly, her face. It was like her clothes became transparent, like the Phoenix, as the tattoos designed their art on their canvas.

Tristan and Logan looked at what was before

them. When Tristan tried to go to Raine during the incantation, his father grabbed him, pulling him back to his place. Both boys watched, feeling helpless. They could do nothing but watch as Raine was transformed.

Raine was quiet and still held her eyes closed. The fire died down and the Phoenix became still while smoke billowed from her fingertips. Slowly lowering her head back to a normal position, she opened her eyes. The wolf pack along with Tristan and Logan jumped back.

Raine looked at them, wondering why they were acting afraid.

Logan approached her cautiously. "Your eyes."

Louhi smiled at her creation. Mohana gasped at the sight of the new Raine.

"You are now a true Shijin Warrior child. It is done."

Raine felt her face. Feeling nothing she looked at Logan and Tristan. Tristan quickly left the room. As tears welled in her eyes, she reached for Logan. Logan jumped back when the energy rolling off her shocked him like an electric current.

"What was that?" Logan questioned Louhi.

Chuckling she said, "Her body is trying to adjust to the new energy. Right now there is so much energy rolling around in her that it doesn't know what to do. So its riding her skin until the body absorbs it all."

Tristan returned with a mirror for Raine to see herself. Before anyone could say anything he handed her the mirror, then found himself flying backwards across the room as Raine's energy bolted into him.

"I got a shock too." Logan smirked.

Tristan grabbed the mirror that had fallen on the floor and held it up so Raine could inspect herself. She gasped and now understood why they were all acting strangely. Her hair was long and straight, her eyes were a gray with a hint of blue, almost transparent themselves, looking almost white. Across her face were black tribal tattoos working their way down her neck and out across the rest of her body. She wore a black tank top and black jeans with combat boots. She couldn't believe the change. She wasn't even wearing the same clothes. She looked at Louhi.

"I know it will take you some getting used to, but it is for the best. You now have your powers to help aid you in the war against Fala and his fallen creatures."

"What about my parents? And school?"

"Watch this." Louhi used the mirror to her advantage telling Raine to look into it. She recited a spell and with a burst of smoke, there was a clone of Raine standing right beside her. "She will go to your house and take over your life for now. She will go to school and do your homework. You don't

need any distractions during your training, so she will even occupy your friends. She already knows everything she needs to know, because we cloned her from you through the mirror. Therefore she is an exact replica. Now go Raine number two. Go home until you are summoned."

Raine number two, looking like the old Raine, left for home. She would take over Raine's life as it were before she was turned into a vampire. She would stay and do the things Raine now wished she could still do. Her parents would think nothing of it, and life would go on as usual.

"What about Shania?"

"Who is Shania?" Louhi asked.

"My best friend."

"No. You mustn't get distracted. She will think you are home."

Just as Raine was about to spill the beans that Shania already knew she was a vampire, she caught Tristan and Logan shaking their heads no to her. She closed her mouth and looked in the mirror again. She still couldn't believe the change.

Warrior? Then she noticed something on her back. Moving in front of the mirror to get a better look, there was some kind of pack strapped to her. She pulled the wooden handle that was just above her shoulder blade and heard the shearing of the sword as she pulled it from its sheath. Pulling it around and out in front of her, it felt right in her

hands. Tristan jumped back as she looked it over, admiring its beauty. The funny thing to her was that she knew how to hold it and wasn't afraid of it. It was a double sided blade long and silver. The tip was copper coated and the hilt was a deep brown wood with etchings all through it. It looked like it was some sort of language. With a quick movement, she sliced the sword through the air with a whipping sound. "How did I do that?" Surprised at how familiar it felt.

"It's a Jin Dao." Jin Cao said as he too admired the swords beauty.

"You were born to be a Shijin Warrior child. You already know these swords as if you were raised fighting with them everyday." Louhi responded.

Tristan and Logan watched in awe as Raine fenced with the swords. It was like she was a pro. Suddenly, the tips of the swords lit with flame.

Startled Raine dropped them. "What happened?"

"It's your energy. It's still too high. Maybe you had better put the swords away until your training."

Raine sheathed the sword and stepped out of the candle and crystal circle. Feeling completely energized, Raine stepped toward Tristan. As she reached for him he started to step back, but she caught him behind the neck and pulled him in for a kiss. He felt the energy roll off Raine and enter his body. Raine kissed him for a long moment. After she pulled back, he too could hear his heartbeat for

BK Walker

the first time in centuries. It brought a tear to his eye.

Training Surprise

Jin Cao trained with Raine everyday for the next few weeks. He taught her how to use her swords, which came naturally to her. She felt like she knew the swords well, and wondered if it was just in her or if she lived a past life as a warrior too.

Impressed with her progress, Jin Cao started introducing the shifting process. Raine must learn to control the Phoenix, and the fire at the same time. She must learn to think on the spur of the moment. One second too long and she would die. He swiped his sword at her in a quick motion, and unexpectedly.

Raine countered by bringing her sword up to meet his, stopping it in mid air and at the same time the Phoenix, ghost-like circled her head and flames ignited on her fingertips, then like a torch shot out at her opponent. She hadn't even thought about the action, she just reacted to the assault.

"Very good Raine. You are a natural." Jin Cao smiled at his student. "It's as though you've been training your entire life. You know the sword as well as I do." He kept smiling.

Tristan was watching in the distance, not wanting to interrupt. He too was impressed with Raine's skills. He thought back to when he first met her months ago. It was during the high school Halloween dance that he was able to speak to her for the first time, but he'd noticed her weeks before that. Something about her drew him in, and he just had to get to know her. This mere mortal, gothic girl, that nobody seemed to like. To him, she was beautiful. He watched her night by night, just waiting for the opportunity to talk to her. He felt like a true high school kid with a huge crush. Then it happened. One day as her and her friend Shania were walking up to her house, they spoke of the dance. Tristan registered for school the very next day so he'd be allowed into the dance, and he waited for her to show up.

"Tristan. How long have you been here?" Raine asked bringing him from his reverie.

"Hello Love. Not long. I did not want to disturb you." He hugged her as she ran to his side.

"Did you see me? Jin Cao says I'm a natural."

"Yes. Quite impressive I must say. I believe Jin Cao may be right." He kissed her nose.

"M'Lord?"

"Yes Elsa?" Tristan turned to their servant.

"A Miss Shania is here to see you."

"Oh my God. What are we going to do? I knew we couldn't fool her with that clone." Raine looked

at Tristan anxiously.

"Love, relax. Stay here and finish practicing with Jin Cao. I will see to Shania." He smiled as he kissed her forehead. "It will be fine." Walking away to answer to Raine's best friend, he winked before walking in the door.

Raine still couldn't help feeling uneasy. She just knew they wouldn't fool Shania. That clone wasn't that good. She turned to meet Jin Cao but was met by the sword instead.

"Tristan! How are you? I've been so worried. You and Logan both haven't been in school."

"We are fine Shania. Just some matters within our world that need taken care of."

"Raine said you were busy. I didn't understand why you two weren't spending time together. She didn't seem too worried, so I came over here myself to make sure you were okay."

"I am fine. See..." Tristan turned around so Shania could see all of him."

"Very funny. I just thought you loved Raine. When you love someone you want to spend time with them."

"Shania, I do love Raine. It's just that we have a lot going on in our world and things that need dealt with. I have been spending time with her, just not

like you think I should be." He gave her a reassuring smile.

"What about Logan?"

"Antone is here. I believe they are working matters out of their own. He is fine too. We are all fine."

"You're acting weird."

"How so?" Tristan inquired.

"I don't know but I'm getting a weird vibe from you."

"I think, Shania, that you let your imagination run wild. We are all fine and you have nothing to worry about."

Just then glass shattered and Shania ran toward the sound. "What was that?"

Tristan tried grabbing her before she made it to the door leading to the yard, but she jumped out of his way, leaving him grabbing air. Looking out the door, she swore she saw Raine.

"Shania, you must not disturb my brother when he is working out." He blocked her view.

"Brother? I didn't know you had a brother."

"Yes. His name is Shane, he does not like to be disturbed."

"Well who's the girl? She looks like Raine." She asked suspiciously.

"Come now Shania. Before my brother sees us."

"You and Raine have been sneaking around haven't you? That's why she doesn't seemed

worried. You two have been spending time together this whole time." She stressed her revelation, though she still had a weird vibe.

Tristan let her believe that, but he could see the doubt still lingering in her eyes. "You are right Shania. I could never be apart from Raine. Not for long anyway." He led her to the door. "I'm sorry to rush you off, but as you can see this isn't a very good time."

"Fine Tristan. Will you at least tell Logan I said hello. I miss all of us being together."

"I will Shania. I promise."

Shania hugged Tristan bye and then turned to leave. Tristan watched her through the window as she turned to stare back at the closed door for a moment too long.

Shania knew Tristan was hiding something. She promised herself she would find out what it was. Right now she was going to see Raine and was determined to get to the bottom of it. Something just wasn't right. And that girl. Aside from the tattoos, Shania would have sworn it was Raine.

Tristan knew it was only a matter of time before she figured it all out. "Vibe. She has a vibe?" He chuckled and went to the yard to see what the noise was all about.

Raine and Jin Cao were fencing in a fierce battle. The glass table lay broken in half, with the glass shards littering the grass surrounding it. Tristan

watched in awe as Raine yielded the sword like she was born with it in her hand. She was really getting the hang of this and looked amazing.

Logan startled Tristan. "For a vampire, your hearing sucks. What happened to the table man?"

"You should not be sneaking up on people. There is nothing wrong with my hearing, I was just distracted." He turned back to watch Raine.

Logan watched too, just as amazed as Tristan. She not only handled the sword with ease, she looked beautiful. Tattoos still covered her body, making her look like a fierce warrior. She moved with the finesse of a lioness, and the skill of a dragon. They had been right. This is what she was born to do.

Jin Cao held his hand up. "Let's take a break. We should clean up this mess."

"Tristan, Jin Cao, Father wants you in the parlor." Shane yelled from the doorway.

"Very well." Jin Cao nodded.

"Aww. What am I supposed to do now?" Raine whined.

"I will practice with you." Logan smiled.

Jin Cao threw him his sword. "She is good. Don't underestimate her."

Tristan glared at Logan. Kissing the top of Raine's head, "I will be back Love." Then he turned to Logan, "Do not hurt her."

"I think you should tell her not to hurt me."

Tristan laughed as he walked away. "Hopefully she will hurt you wolf." He mumbled under his breath.

"I heard that." Logan yelled after him.

Turning to face Raine, she wasted no time. She threw her arm forward pushing the sword at Logan's chest. He moved just in time, turning to catch her sword with the blade of his own. They clashed, steel against steel. Raine twisted, pulling the other sword from the sheath on her back. She whipped the swords through the air, the whooping sound echoing in Logan's ears. "Not bad." He countered with his own performance, and she charged him.

Sidestepping to the left, her sword missed him by a hair. He grabbed her across the chest and as she spun around, they were both breathless from the workout. He held her close as they both froze in time, their lips almost touching. He could feel her breath and it excited him. They stood staring into each others eyes, and just as he thought he might steal a kiss, she shoved him and brought her sword up again.

"You don't get off that easy...Wolf." She grinned.

"Al-right tattoo girl. Game on." He charged at her.

They fenced for several minutes, metal clashing against metal as Logan blocked Raine's attack. The whipping sound that came from the thrust of

the sword felt close in Logan's ears. He turned and tried to counter when Raine brought her sword down, and connecting with Logan's he lost his grip. His sword flew a few feet away and Raine kept charging at him until he fell. She put her foot on his chest with the tip of the sword at his throat.

"Game over." She smiled.

A grin spread across his face and he brought his legs around and swept her ankles knocking her to the ground. A growl rose from his chest as he pounced on top of her. Her swords fell from her hands and he grabbed her wrists while locking his ankles around her legs rendering her unable to move. She struggled but Logan tightened his grip enough that she had no choice but to be still. They looked into each other's eyes for a moment while they tried to catch their breath. Raine huffed out a deep sigh.

Logan relaxed his grip. "Sorry, was I hurting you?"

She smirked and brought her knees up, and Logan flew over her head. "Not at all." She jumped to her feet.

"That was a sneaky move. Hand to hand combat is it?"

Raine lunged toward him, kicking him in the chest. Jin Cao had been teaching her some Jeet Kune Do, and she figured she would try it out on someone other than the one that taught it to her.

She wasn't sure just how easy Jin Cao was being on her.

Logan stumbled backwards, but remained on his feet. Raising his eyebrows, "I see Jin Cao has been busy."

Raine smiled again, holding her hands up and moving her fingers in a 'bring it on' gesture.

"I don't want to hurt you Raine." Logan hesitated.

"You won't." Raine used his hesitation to her advantage. She spun around with her foot landing on his stomach and he flew backwards once again, this time landing on his back.

Springing up he looked at her with surprise. "You're strong. Is that part of this whole warrior thing?"

"I think so."

Just as he was about to counter attack, the Phoenix arose and floated in a spiral motion around Raine. He watched and wondered what it meant. Before he could comprehend what was happening, flames were coming straight for him. He ducked out of the way, barely escaping the fire, but still feeling the heat. Raine was quickly behind him and he swung his foot around to unbalance her. As he turned to face her, she looked back at him with eyes of ice. The color was almost completely white with a hint of ice blue, in the center of her pupils, flames danced.

Raine brought her hand out hitting Logan in the

chest, then the other hand to give him another blow. She spun around bringing her leg up, her foot connecting at his collar bone.

Logan decided it was time to stop playing around and gave her back what she was giving him. He had been trained by the best in Martial Arts since he was a kid. They went at it hand to hand, one blocking the other with each attack. Raine was fast and fierce, something Logan hadn't expected. He could feel his beast wanting to rise, and as Raine slammed into him again, he held her around the chest and kicked her legs out, sending both of them to the ground.

Raine gasped for breath as the fire died out of her eyes. She looked at Logan with fear in her eyes. Logan relaxed his grip and stroked her hair from her face. "I'm sorry Raine. I got carried away. Are you okay?"

She sat staring at him a few seconds more. "I'm okay. What was that? I didn't feel like myself."

"I think it's your powers taking over. Well the power of the Phoenix. You just have to learn to control it is all."

"I'm not cut out for this." She closed her eyes.

"Raine you can do this. You're doing great and you're getting stronger everyday. It's going to take time to control the Red Bird. Fire is a powerful element, and with you being vampire too, I think the two energies somehow conflict at times. We will

figure out a way to help them live in peace together. The Red Bird will have to trust the vampire.” He gently caressed her cheek, wiping the tear that fell with his thumb. “You can do this.”

She sat up and looked Logan in the eye. Without a warning, heat rose in her chest and her heart started racing. Logan sat facing opposite her with his arm across her legs resting his hand on the ground. His dark eyes held desire. Desire for her, and she liked it. She listened as she heard his heart speed up. She knew she was right when she felt the heat coming from his body too. She raised her hand to his cheek.

Logan knew she could hear his heart. He wanted nothing more than to kiss her right then and there. How would she react to that? What was she thinking this very second. He closed his eyes against her touch.

“How’s the training going?” Tristan was walking back out to the yard.

Raine pulled her hand away and jumped up. Logan looked up to Tristan, silently cursing him for the interruption. “It seems the vampire and Red Bird energies are quarreling. The Red Bird doesn’t trust the vampire and vice versa.”

“Then Jin Cao must help to correct that.” Tristan looked between Raine and Logan. Sensing an uneasiness, “Everything okay?”

“It just scared her.” Logan sighed.

Tristan walked up to Raine and gently kissed her lips. "We will figure it out Love."

She wrapped her arms around him and held on tight. What was she doing with Logan? She too let out a deep sigh. She knew she had feelings for both of them. She would have to be careful not to act on them with Logan. It would kill Tristan.

Detective In The Making

Shania just couldn't shake the feeling that Tristan was hiding something. It was just too strange that both him and Logan still weren't coming to school. She watched Raine like a hawk since visiting Tristan. She noticed Raine seemed normal, though there was something missing from her too.

She started throwing things out during their conversations, such as things from their past. "Hey Raine, do you remember my eighth birthday party when my dad forgot the ice cream cake?"

"Of course I remember. How could I forget?"

"Do you remember what happened?" Shania waited for her to answer.

Clone Raine looked at her. She had most of the real Raine's memories, but these small details were something Shania knew Raine would never forget. She couldn't help but wonder what was really going on. She decided it was time to find the answers she was seeking and she marched straight over to Tristan's.

She knocked on Tristan's door. When nobody

answered right away, she started wandering around the premises. The mansion was enormous and the grounds matched it. She heard a noise and moved toward the sound. She peered through the fence and found two people fighting with swords. "Logan?" She tried moving closer to get a better view. She stepped up on the branch of a bush trying to peer over the fence. If it was really Logan, why was he fighting. *Who is that he's fighting with?*

"Can I help you miss?" A deep voice startled her and losing her balance she fell backwards landing on her rear.

Shania cleared her throat. Embarrassment was inescapable as she felt the heat rush to her cheeks. He was a tall man she had never seen. His voice was deep and his hair was black and long. His eyes held a mesmerizing green and she felt herself unable to look away. "Uh...I was looking for Tristan." She tried a charming smile, hoping he wouldn't call the police or something along those lines.

"Well now. You must be Shania. I'm Raquim, Tristan's father." He smiled offering her a hand to help her off the ground.

Shania smiled, surprised he knew who she was. "Nice to meet you Raquim. Is Tristan home?"

"Let me take you to him." Raquim smiled letting it reach his eyes.

Shania found him quite charming and couldn't

resist to smile back. "Thank you Raquim. This is a nice place you have here. It must take a lot of work to keep up with? I know my dad is always complaining how he can't keep up with the mowing in the summer, or the shoveling in the winter, and our place isn't even half this size." Shania knew she was babbling, but she just couldn't help it. Tristan had made his dad out to be some big bad wolf type and she felt a little nervous being around him. "He's always saying, 'There just isn't enough of me to go around. I work all day and then come home and work some more. It would be nice if you would learn to mow Shania. Earn your keep around here'."

Raquim chuckled as they made their way up the steps to the front door. He led her into the parlor and offered her a drink? "If you wait here I will inform Tristan you're here." He handed her a bottle of water.

"Thank you Raquim."

She looked around the parlor in awe. The ceilings were so high she wondered how they even cleaned the fans that draped from them. Bookshelves lined the walls from ceiling to floor, and ladders on runners, the type with wheels that allowed them to move back and forth, were centered at every bookshelf. She wondered what types of books they could possibly read to have so many, then she wondered if they actually read

them all or if they were just for looks. "Probably just for looks." She chuckled.

A few moments later Tristan walked in. "Hi Shania. What brings you back so soon?" He tried to hide the annoyance in his voice.

Shania looked at him getting another vibe. He wasn't happy to see her and she was positive he was hiding something. "Is Logan here?"

Knowing she had seen him training in the yard, he decided the truth would be better. "Yes. He's preparing for what's to come. His pack and him just got back."

"What's to come Tristan?"

"I can't discuss that with you Shania. You know that."

"Okay. Sorry I asked." She looked around the parlor and an idea came to her. "You should show me around. I've never been in a place this big. It's really amazing." She saw him start to protest. "I won't take no for an answer. I just gotta see it." She wanted to see if Tristan would lead her closer to where she saw the fighting. She wanted to see Logan for herself, plus she missed him.

"It's probably not a good idea, but if we're quick I'm sure Father won't mind."

"Yay. I can't wait to see it all." She clapped her hands. They started out of the parlor and she got Tristan talking about the history of the mansion.

"It used to be a sanctuary for wounded soldiers.

They would bring them here and nurse them back to health. There's a burial ground just over the hill back there. They say on the night of the full moon, you can see the soldiers lined on the hill paying their respects to the fallen soldiers, but I have yet to see it."

"That would be so cool to see." Shania wanted to keep him talking.

Tristan wasn't even paying attention to Shania as he became engulfed in telling his story. No one ever wanted to listen to him, and he got caught up in the moment. They were standing right at the entrance to the yard where Logan and Raine were training. Shania smiled at the site of Logan. It was so good to see him. The person he was fighting had their back to her and she couldn't tell who it was. They spun around and Shania gasped as she got a full view of the girl.

"Raine." She stared in awe at the girl before her.

Tristan turned to see that he had made a mistake. Shania saw Raine and he was to blame. "Shania it's not what you think."

Shania ran out the door and Tristan knew there was nothing he could do or say to stop her. Raine turned around and her eyes grew wider.

"Why? Why would you not tell me? Who is that I've been hanging out with?" Shania demanded, the hurt evident in her voice.

Raine and Logan stood staring at her. Raine

didn't know what to say to her best friend. She felt bad for lying to her, but she felt she had no other choice, it was for her own safety.

Shania waited for her to answer. The tattoos on Raine's face and arms took her by surprise. She looked her up and down and couldn't believe what she was seeing. This couldn't be her best friend since childhood. It just couldn't.

Raine finally found her voice, reaching for her friend. "Shania, I wanted to tell you but it was too dangerous. I could have killed you. If I didn't kill you, you may have been killed by rogue's."

Stepping back, not sure if she should trust Raine after hearing the news she could kill her, "So you just let me believe you were okay and left me with some...what? Clone?"

Raine didn't move, but just watched Shania. She could see the confusion and hurt in her eyes. She wished she could take it away. She needed her to understand that it was for her own good.

"Has it come to this, now that you're no longer mortal that you can't trust me with anything?"

"It's not like that Shania. I just didn't want anything happening to you. I would never forgive myself if something happened because I couldn't control myself."

"Shania. Raine was told and held by strict rules that she wasn't to tell you anything. She needed to train and she had to do it without distractions.

Please understand, there is a war upon us and as you can see, Raine now has a destiny to fulfill.”

Logan tried to get her to understand.

Shania couldn't help but to feel untrusted, or unworthy to know the truth. Tears spilled onto her cheeks. Raine approached her slowly, and when Shania didn't revolt, she hugged her long time friend. “I'm sorry Shania.”

They both lowered to the ground and Raine sat holding Shania until the crying subsided. When Shania was calm enough, Raine told her everything. Shania listened intently, and as understanding settled in, she forgave her friend, and knew that Raine could never kill her.

Relief swept over Raine, and she relaxed and waited for Shania to speak.

Shania bolted up and started pacing back and forth. “I've been your best friend since we were kids Raine. If I can handle the truth about Logan and Tristan, why would you think I couldn't handle the truth about you?” She paused to look at Raine then continued. “I thought we swore to always be honest with each other? You should have trusted me with the truth.”

“I know it was wrong, but at the time we thought it was the best decision. I'm sorry.”

She looked Raine over, admiring the tribal tattoos covering her body. “What's up with the tattoos?”

“They are some sort of protection symbols. That’s what Jin Cao told me.” Raine half smiled.

“They look bad ass.” Shania smirked. “So you’ve been training this whole time?”

Raine nodded.

“You’re really a full vampire?”

Raine nodded again.

“You wanted to eat me?”

Logan laughed and so did Raine. Tristan looked with eyebrows raised.

“It’s not that I wanted to eat you. You just smelled good, I wanted your blood.”

Shania shivered at the thought. “You won’t kill me. You said yourself I’m spoiled goods.” They both laughed knowing that Raine had always said that Shania was spoiled rotten by her parents and then Shania looked at Logan and Tristan. “Do you think she can do this?”

Tristan walked over and kissed the top of Raine’s head. “I know she can.”

Shania sighed loudly. “Okay then. Now that I know the truth, what am I supposed to do about Clone Raine?”

“We need you to be discreet and just keep going on like you have been. Nobody must know the truth Shania.” Tristan was hoping Shania would get the seriousness of the matter.

“Okay. I can be discreet. I want to be able to come here and see Raine though. I want to make

sure myself that she is doing okay.”

“Very well. On occasion. She must be able to train though without distractions. She needs to have her head unclouded and she cannot be worrying.”

“Okay Tristan. I get it.” Shania looked at Logan. “You haven’t said much.”

Logan shook his head. “I’m just here for the ride.”

“Well when can I come back?”

“You had better wait a few weeks. We are not sure when we must leave, or what will happen next.”

Shania stood up. “This won’t be easy knowing what I now know, but I won’t let your secret out Raine. I love you. Just stay alive.”

Raine smiled and hugged her friend. “I will.”

Shania unwillingly allowed Tristan to walk her out. She looked back at Raine one last time, still amazed by her new look. “Don’t let anything happen to her Tristan.”

“I will try my best Shania. We will keep you informed.” He pulled her in for a hug. “Thank you for being so understanding. We are sorry we had to keep this from you, but I hope you understand it was for your own safety.”

“I do. It hurt at first, but I understand. Does the Clone Raine know she is a clone?”

Tristan pulled back from the hug. “Aye. She does. She also knows she cannot divulge any

information.”

“Okay then. I won’t hassle her.”

“Thank you.” He walked Shania outside and watched her walk away. He knew it was for the best to keep Shania away from the real Raine. At least for now.

Shania left, thinking it all over. Looking back at the mansion one last time, envy confronted her.
Why did it have to be Raine? Why not me?

Test of Raine

The next several weeks Raine continued training and learning how to control her Phoenix. The vampire and Phoenix were finally learning to live together, though they still had their moments. Her hunger was under control and she learned that she enjoys hunting, particularly for rabbit as they turn the fastest and dodge under trees creating a challenge and a chase. Tristan taught her how to sate herself so that the hunger would not return for days.

Jin Cao taught her how to control the Phoenix, and to call upon him in a time of need. "You can call me telepathically anytime you are in trouble. I will already sense it, but if you call me, I can be there instantly."

She was accepting her destiny, though she still was unsure what exactly she was to be doing. Her and Jin Cao became pretty close during their training and she found she could talk to him about the things she couldn't talk to Tristan and Logan about. One day she found herself just rambling on about her feelings for both Logan and Tristan.

"The heart will work out its own desires Raine. You shall see." Jin Cao told her.

Raine pouted as she thought about this. It wasn't going to be easy she knew, but she hoped Jin Cao was right. She spent equal amounts of time with each of the boys. Logan and her trained while Tristan and her would hunt. It was an equal balance and she enjoyed her time with both of them. She just worried so much about hurting one of them.

Raquim came into the parlor and got everyone's attention. "The pack is gathering and we need to prepare. Fala's creatures have been seen in Ireland and we must go there. It is up to us to stop Fala and his brood." He looked at Raine. "Are you ready Raine?"

Raine stood up and looked to Jin Cao. He nodded and she said, "I'm ready. I've been training hard and it's been a lot of work but I think I have my powers under control. The Phoenix has learned to give the vampire time of its own to fulfill its lusts and needs. They are living quietly with one another."

Raquim walked over to Raine and kissed her head. "You have been training well and I am proud of what you've accomplished in such a short time."

Raine smiled at him and then took her seat. Tristan was grinning ear to ear. He was so pleased that Raine was accepted among his kind and his family. He remembers when he was so worried about what would be said for him turning her, he

thought he might even be put to death. When they were so accepting from the get go, Tristan waited for the blow to come, but it never did. Now she is just another member of the family, and maybe one day his wife.

“Get ready. The pack will be here soon.” Raquim left the room.

“I hope I’m ready.” Raine sighed.

“You are ready Raine. Trust what you’ve learned.” Jin Cao reassured her.

“I’m ready.”

Tristan held her close knowing they would not get a moment like this again for some time. It was time to fight for their kind, and rid the Earth of these Rogue’s. He whispered in her ear that she would do great and it would all work out.

Logan watched from across the room. Jealousy rained through him and he thought he might lose control. He stood up to leave when the pack arrived. Taking a deep breath, he came face to face with Antone.

“Is she ready?”

“Yes Alpha. She has grown strong and has the power of both the Phoenix and the Vampire behind her. She’s learned to merge both energies well.”

“Good.” Antone watched as Logan gave one quick glance back at Tristan and Raine. “You feel for the girl?”

Logan looked at his leader. Without saying a

word, he walked out to get some fresh air.

Antone watched Logan leave, knowing exactly how he was feeling. He had experienced a similar situation just before he became Alpha to his pack. He had to fight for his territory, saving his pack from the torture of Bastian, the previous leader. Bastian had no idea how to rule a pack, let alone his woman. Antone fought for his heart's desire, and lucky for him, he won. He only hoped his young wolf could either win the girl's affection or move on. It was never good to enter into battle when you had your own battle within you.

They arrived to Ireland and were greeted by another wolf pack. Antone spoke in Gaelic to them and then introduced his companions. After the introductory, Romolus, the Ireland wolf pack Alpha led them to their underground sanctuary. Raine watched her surroundings, following Tristan. Ireland was pretty though she knew she would have no time for sight seeing.

They arrived to a small door that looked like it was in the side of a mountain. When they walked in there was a narrow dirt hallway dimly lit by torches. It smelled of earth and wolves. They came to an opening where wolves were surrounding a table

mapping out their quest.

A tall man from the far side of the table spoke as soon as they entered. He was looking down at a map sprawled out on the table where they all stood. His long auburn hair flowed past his shoulders with a slight wave. His yellow eyes held the wolf, and his snout didn't fully retract back to his human form. "Romolus, if we follow the Hallow Moon path, we should be able to sneak up on the creature." He traced his finger along the paper in front of him.

"Aye. We must spread out and take it by surprise. He must not know we are coming." Romolus said.

Raine cleared her throat from the dryness that set in as her nerves went on alert. The wolves looked up at her.

"You bring a mortal to battle?" The wolf man queried.

"She is no mortal." Jin Cao moved in front of Raine in a protective nature.

"And a cat?" He growled and the wolves stepped back from the table.

"Romolus, it might be wise to advise your pack to stand their ground. We are not dealing with territorial disputes tonight. We have business to attend." Antone growled in warning.

"Rendall, control yourself." Romolus ordered. "Please excuse my pack. They don't see many

visitors these days.”

Raine stood her ground looking Rendall up and down. She felt strongly that she could teach this wolf a lesson if she needed to. She had fought with Logan after all. Logan stood by her side and if he'd been in wolf form, his hackles would have been up.

Rendall looked at Logan and laughed. “What do you think you will do pup?”

A loud growl echoed throughout the sanctuary. “I will not tell you again Rendall.” Romolus grabbed Rendall by his shirt.

“They are here to assist us. You will not start a fight.”

Rendall growled back at his Alpha and pushed his hand from his shirt. He gave one last glare toward Raine and moved back to the table. They finished mapping out their travels and gathered their weapons.

“Why do wolves need weapons?” Raine whispered.

“These are not like our wolves Love, they are soldiers. They fight to win, whatever way they can.” Tristan kissed Raine’s temple.

“Let’s move out.” Rendall barked.

They marched like they were military, in a straight line all following Rendall. Raine, Tristan and Logan turned to follow.

“Watch him. I don’t trust him.” Logan whispered.

“Aye.” Tristan agreed.

Raine felt her palms start to sweat. She had no idea what was in store for them. She wasn't even sure she would know what to do once they were at their destination. Would she be able to fight, or would she run and hide like the coward she felt like?

They made their way in the dark. They entered the mountainside, following a dirt trail deep into the woods. The only sound heard were the stomping of the wolves' synchronized march, and the deeper they got into the woods, that even silenced. Raine didn't like the quiet.

Movement ceased and Raine walked right into the back of Tristan. "Sorry."

Tristan smiled knowing she was nervous.

"Tristan, go with Rendall and his group. We will go around and come in from the other side."

Antone motioned towards Rendall.

Romolus was speaking with Rendall and looked back at Antone nodding in agreement.

Tristan turned to face Raine. "Listen Love, I won't be far. We will meet back up on the other side." He held her hand to cover his heart. He leaned in and kissed her fervently. He pierced her tongue with his fangs while kissing her and did the same to his own. They tasted each others blood before he pulled back from the kiss. "By sharing our blood I can feel you. I will know if you are in trouble."

Raine nodded and followed Antone deeper into

the woods. She noticed the glare Rendall shot at her before leaving with his own group. She glared back. He smiled and said, "Game on Tattoo Girl."

Nodding, "Game on." She repeated.

Antone motioned for Logan and Raine to move to the left of the pack. Raine followed Logan watching her footing. She wasn't as graceful in the dark yet and didn't want to give their position away. A rabbit jumped from behind a tree and Raine took up a fighting stance. When she realized what it was the urge to chase it engulfed her. She couldn't help herself and set off for the chase. Catching the rabbit within minutes, she allowed herself to feed. When she realized she had screwed up, she looked to her surroundings. She started moving back to where she came.

Suddenly Rendall was in front of her. He glared as she looked up at his tall frame. Her heart fluttered and a gasp escaped from her throat. Rendall growled.

"No mortal they say." He smelled the air around her. "You smell of nothing I've ever smelled before. Why is that?"

Raine took a step back to get a better view of Rendall. This only gave into the wolf instinct to chase. He moved in closer and Raine took off running. Rendall jumped, landing right on Raine and pinning her underneath his strong body. Her breathing became erratic as she struggled to move

herself off the swords that were in the sheaths on her back.

“No mere mortal. What is it exactly that you are?” His half wolf half human face sniffed her hair. Taking in her smell, his snout grew into the wolf, with his teeth becoming sharp as swords.

Suddenly Rendall moved back, loosening his grip. “What are you?”

Raine’s eyes turned to that ice cold stare. The flames in her eyes burned with heat. She jumped up, knocking Rendall off balance. She unsheathed a sword and held it to his throat. “I am a Shijin Warrior...Wolf.” She was surprised at the sudden confidence that was in her and she knew that the Warrior part of her would rise to the occasion. When she was in fear, the Warrior would take over.

“Raine!” Logan appeared at Raine’s side. “Raine, no.” He held his hand out afraid if he touched her she might kill Rendall. “Raine?” This time he touched her arm holding the sword. “It’s okay.”

Glaring at Rendall, Logan was relieved when Raine sheathed the sword and took a deep breath. “Romolus will hear about this Rendall. You are a bit off your trail are you not?” Logan growled.

Rendall gathered himself up and looked between the two of them. Shifting into his wolf form, he took off into the woods.

“What happened?”

"I was chasing a rabbit. I got hungry I'm sorry." She looked to the ground in embarrassment. "I didn't feed before we left. I guess I got too distracted. I know I shouldn't ignore the hunger, I just got side tracked. Rendall came out of nowhere and knocked me to the ground."

Logan slowly approached Raine. "It's okay Raine."

"I'm just embarrassed." The flame died in her eyes and the tears spilled over.

He gathered her up in his arms. "It's okay."

They took a few minutes so Raine could calm herself. She needed to get herself together so she wouldn't mess up this hunt. She clenched Logan's shirt in her fists. His scent calmed her and she finally lifted her head from his chest. "I'm okay Logan." She reassured him.

Jin Cao came into the small clearing they were standing. "Is everything okay here?"

"We're fine. Raine just got lost."

Jin Cao nodded. "You'd better hurry. Antone is looking for you two."

Pushing Raine's hair back with both hands on either side of her face he looked into her now green eyes. "Take a deep breath. We have work to do."

She stared at him feeling the passion ripple from his voice. She didn't remember moving, but found herself leaning in and pressing her lips against his. Logan froze at first, unsure what to do. When she

didn't pull back, he pressed his lips back, parting her lips and allowing his tongue to explore her mouth. Heat rose in his chest and he gripped the hair on the back of her head, holding her to his mouth.

A howl in the distance had them both jumping back from each other. Logan never took his eyes from Raine's. "It seems we've got some things to work out."

Raine nodded, unable to speak.

"After this battle, we will talk. We have to go now." He touched his hand to her cheek. "I won't deny I've been wanting to do that for a some time."

Raine closed her eyes. What was she doing?

They turned to catch up with the rest of the pack. What they didn't know, was Tristan had watched them. Feeling Raine's distress, he ran to her aide. Finding them in a heated kiss he was unable to move. The only thing he could think of was that it was all happening again. He watched them leave and felt his chest tighten. He knew Raine felt something for Logan, he just didn't know how deep those feelings went until right now. The only thing he knew was Logan was right. After this battle they would have some things to work out.

Pack of Rogue's?

They closed in on a lighted clearing. They could see the others on the other side as they silently approached, keeping downwind. Raine's eyes grew wide at how many Rogue's were there. They were all feeding, making slurping noises. To Raine's surprise, they weren't feeding on animals. She saw a girl cowering by a tree as she watched the rogue's feeding, a small creature sitting by her side.

Raine's stomach churned at the sight. She slowly moved closer, ready to free the girl. As soon as they heard the whistle, they moved in.

The rogue's scattered in surprise, wolves attacking from every direction. Raine ran toward the girl. The small creature stood and suddenly grew three times its size as it watched Raine close the distance between them. She couldn't help but wonder what exactly Fala's power was that these creatures could shift into such beings. She pulled her sword from her back and felt the Phoenix rise. She knew that her eyes had changed by the look on the girl's face. She ran straight towards the creature, swinging her sword. When the Rogue's

head fell in front of the girl, she let out a blood curdling scream.

Raine spun around, looking at her kill. Looking at the girl, she held out her hand. "It's okay. I'm here to help you." The girl cringed closer to the tree behind her. Raine continued holding her hand out waiting for the girl to come to the realization she wouldn't hurt her.

The girl slowly reached up and took her hand. Raine pulled her up and they started running. Raine was blasted to the ground from the side. The girl screamed again as the same creature that had taken Raine on Halloween faced her, mouth watering.

Raine jumped to her feet and aimed her sword at the rogue's gut. The sword pierced through it with a shearing sound and the creature jumped away from the girl, turning its attention to Raine. Raine thought of Jin Cao without realizing it. She was just so used to his direction.

Raine stood, flames dancing in her eyes. Jin Cao stood by her side. The Phoenix arose, circling Raine's body. Jin Cao shifted into the white tiger and let out a fierce roar. "We meet again Rogue." Raine spoke sharply.

The rogue let out an ear piercing screech. It watched Raine with recognition. "I will be glad to be the one to kill you."

“You will be the one dying tonight.”

The tiger circled around the rogue, growling. The creature lifted its snout. Bringing his head back down fire blew from its mouth. Raine jumped out of the way tucking and rolling. Coming back up she grabbed her other sword. “Game on.” She charged at the rogue, swords whipping through the air in every direction. The tiger roared once more and Raine moved in for the kill. She spun around, just out of reach of the rogue's grasp, bringing her swords in a criss cross motion down on the rogues neck, as the tiger jumped up, latching onto its shoulder. The rogue moved, not allowing Raine to bring her swords all the way down.

Reaching behind its back, he grabbed the tiger throwing him to the ground. Fire shot from its mouth again. Raine closed her eyes and felt the energy rise within her. Fire shot from her fingertips, and she brought the sword down once more, this time slicing all the way through. They had learned that the only way to kill these creatures was by decapitation, and she watched its head roll across the ground.

Jin Cao roared in victory and ran towards another rogue approaching Raine from behind. Raine spun around just in time, as the rogue fell beside her as it tried to sink its fangs into her. The girl stood frozen and Raine watched as Jin Cao allowed the tiger to kill its prey.

Howling echoed through the woods. Raine looked around to see all the fallen rogues. Rendall stood over a rogue, with several wolves holding it down. It was unable to shift due to the attack, and Romolus demanded to know where Fala was.

“Speak Rogue and we may let you live.”

“I do not answer to you.”

“You will tell us Fala’s location, or you will suffer the cost.”

One of the wolves sank its teeth into the rogue’s neck. The rogue yelped in pain, fear filling its eyes.

“He has to be close Rogue. How did he escape Grim’s Island.”

Light emitted from a ledge above them.

“Romolus. How did you know I left Grim’s?” From the shadows, a large man moved into the light. His face was narrow with a pointed nose. His eyes were small and beady, full of evil. “You wolves are getting smarter as the centuries go by.”

“Fala.”

All movement stopped as attention was turned to the warlock vampire. “You’ve put up a good fight. You will not win though.”

“You must surrender Fala. The Counsel is on to your ill doings.”

“Ha. The Counsel is clueless. Banning me to Grim’s Island. What do they know? The only thing they’ve done is allow me to bring my powers to their full potential.”

The wolves continued to watch Fala, waiting for their orders. Fala looked at the mess that lay in the clearing. "Your skills have improved too. Something I wasn't anticipating."

Logan appeared in the darkness to Fala's left. Fala was too busy to notice and Antone nodded to Logan. Logan leapt, landing on Fala and they both flew off the ledge to the ground in front of the rest of them. Logan yelped as they hit. Fala grabbed Logan by the throat and Logan had taken his wolf form, jaws snapping.

Tristan moved forward, sinking his fangs into Fala's neck. Fala struggled against the two, and Logan closed his jaws around Fala's wrist.

The other wolves killed the rogue they were holding down. Logan pulled back on Fala, dragging him across the clearing while Tristan kept his teeth in his neck. Raine stepped forward, and in the blink of an eye, Fala was behind her, arm tight around her neck, her other arm pinned behind her back. "Sneaky dog." He moved his head close to Raine's ear. "I see the warrior has risen. How much of a warrior are you though, finding yourself in this predicament?"

Raine pulled at the arm around her neck.

"Not just a warrior, but a vampire. How nice of them to turn you. Did they really think it would make you invincible?" He laughed against Raine's ear.

“It is not the vampire.” Raine strained against the pressure on her neck to speak. She felt the Phoenix struggling to arise. Fala was strong, and the energy rolling off of him was fighting against the Phoenix.

“You did not expect this from what you’ve been told. Your Red Bird is useless.”

Jin Cao jumped in front of them, crouching low to the ground, growling.

“Easy Curator. I will kill her.” He saw the surprise in Jin Cao’s eyes. “Oh yes. I knew about you too. I know everything that has been going on. I have eyes and ears everywhere.” He grinned.

Jin Cao circled back and forth, not getting too close waiting for the right moment. The tiger wanted to kill him.

Raine could smell the stench of Fala’s breath. She closed her eyes and concentrated, taking a deep breath.

“What will they do without their precious warrior? The one they believe will save them?”

Tristan and Logan watched. They feared for Raine knowing Fala was stronger than before. He could very well act on his threat and kill her. Then they watched Raine’s eyes turn from green to fire and ice. The white with blue specs glowed, the dancing flames following. Her eyes opened wide.

Fala said something, and more rogue's appeared. They were under attack by a new set of

creatures. A new battle was underway. Tearing of flesh, the sound of fire whipping through the air, growls and howling erupted in the clearing. Raine watched as Tristan and Logan had to turn to fight, to save themselves. She knew she would have to depend on her own power to break herself free.

Fala started to drag her into the woods. She brought her elbow back knocking the breath out of him as she spun around and smacked him in the nose with the heel of her hand. Blood splattered from his face and she spun around swooping his feet from under him. Grabbing her swords she brought them both down, stopping centimeters from his chest. "What will they do without the one that they believe will save them?" She uttered in a low, steady tone.

Fala smiled, bringing his hands to the blades of the swords. Sliding his hands along the sharpness of the blade, he licked the blood from his hands. "You cannot win." He brought his legs up kicking Raine in the small of her back. She flew forward, allowing Fala time to stand up. She spun around, swords in front of her. Fala smiled again. She turned in the opposite direction plunging the tip of her sword into Fala's abdomen. A gush of air rushed from his mouth. It was Raine's turn to smile.

The woods fell silent and all movement stopped. The rogue's that were still standing rushed to their master. Raine gave the sword a twist and Fala

moaned. Grabbing the blade embedded into his gut, he looked up smiling. "This is not over. Not by a long shot."

A flash of light followed by smoke appeared, and then Fala and his rogue's disappeared. Raine was left holding a sword dripping with blood. She looked around, only to see the people she came with.

"Where did he go?"

They all were looking around waiting for the next attack. Tristan ran to Raine, looking her over to make sure she was okay. Jin Cao stood in his human form, nodding his head yes and grinning.

"Search him out!" Romolus ordered. Several wolves left the clearing in search of Fala.

Raquim stood in the center of the clearing, an arm around the girl Raine had rescued. "It seems he has become more powerful than we expected, but we surprised him too. He probably won't be back for a while, until he figures out how to conquer Raine's powers, or at least render her useless. We must speak with the Counsel and see what we are to do from here."

"Head out wolves." Antone ordered.

"You did well Raine. You can only get stronger from here." Jin Cao smiled.

"I should have killed him. I hesitated."

"It was not time yet. Come. Let's go home." Jin Cao turned to follow the wolves.

Logan stood for a moment watching Raine and

Tristan. From the look in his eye's, Logan knew Tristan was aware of what had happened between him and Raine. He nodded, knowing there would be much to discuss, leaving Tristan and Raine alone.

Tristan pulled Raine into him, holding her tight. "Are you okay Love?"

Raine wrapped her arms around Tristan's back. "I'm fine Tristan."

"I was so worried. I thought I might lose you."

Raine didn't say anything. She pulled back to look at him. He stood before her, looking more beautiful than ever in the light of the moon. There was something in his eyes and she knew he was troubled. "What is it Tristan?"

"Not now Love. Let's get you home. Okay?"

She watched his face worrying at what could possibly be bothering him. She nodded. "Okay."

He kissed the tip of her nose and led her back to the sanctuary. This was one conversation that he knew needed to be at the right time and the right place.

Facing Facts

Fala had disappeared with all of his creatures from the clearing. He was no where to be found. The wolves didn't even catch his scent, he had just vanished.

They all knew that they would have to train harder and be prepared for anything. Logan, Tristan and Raine hardly spoke the entire trip home. Raine could sense the tension between Logan and Tristan, and she wasn't sure what the cause was.

She looked back at Raquim, who decided he would bring the girl they rescued home. She was an orphan, her parents killed by Fala's rogue's. She looked scared, but Raine knew she would relax after she had a good hot meal, shower, and time to talk things over. Raquim had a way of making people feel comfortable.

Looking at Jin Cao, he was staring out of the plane window. She felt a strong connection to him and was glad he was around to fight by her side.

With all that has happened, he brought her a sense of peace.

Raine laid her head back against the seat. Closing her eyes, she felt exhaustion wash over her, and she drifted to sleep.

Tristan awoke her when they were pulling into the driveway to the mansion. She didn't even remember getting off the plane. They entered the house and she asked Elsa to start her a bath. "I'm exhausted. I'm going for a bath then a good rest."

"Very well Love. I will be in shortly."

Tristan and Logan were left to watch her walk away. After hearing the bathroom door close, Tristan turned to Logan. "Why?"

"Why what?"

"Do not play with me wolf. I saw you in the woods."

"Then you would know that it was not my doing, vampire." Logan couldn't help but feel defensive.

"It's always your fault Logan. How could you do this again? Was Jasmine not enough?"

"This has nothing to do with Jasmine and you know it. Raine is a great girl, and I'm not the only one that has feelings here. I try my best to stay away from her like that. What would you like me to do? Leave and never return? You can explain that

to Raine.”

Tristan sighed. “Raine would never forgive me if you left and you know it. What are we going to do?”

“I don’t know Tristan. Raine has to decide how she feels. If we try to force her she may pull away from both of us.”

“Aye. I do not want to cause her distress. Not now. She has too much to worry about.”

“Then we must let this play out as it is meant to be. Just know it is not my intention to destroy you.”

Tristan looked at Logan. He knew his words were the truth. He just couldn’t help but wonder where they would lead. Would Raine choose Logan? Is that where her heart wanted to be? Sadness swarmed him. “I will not pressure her with ultimatums, but I will not stand by and allow you to play on her emotions Logan. I love her, and she is a vampire. Not a wolf. You must know that it could never work.”

“Who says it can’t work?”

“A wolf and a vampire?” He chuckled. “Never been heard of. What will you do with her?”

“I too love her Tristan. I will hold my emotions in check, but if she should choose me, I will not deny her just to save face with you. Will you be able to do the same?”

Tristan hated this. Why did Logan always have to come between him and the woman he loves? He closed his eyes for a moment taking in a deep

breath.

"I think we need to just let her figure things out Tristan. She doesn't need to know we had this talk."

"Very well. We shall see how things play out. I swear it though, if you try to persuade her in any way...."

Logan held up his hand. "It was not me that kissed her. I just accepted it."

"Aye." Tristan grimaced, knowing Logan was right. How did it come to this for Raine? He has seen where choices like this had to be made before, and it can destroy more than one heart.

They both agreed it would be best not to mention their talk to Raine. She had enough to think about without them hassling her into choosing who her heart would remain with. They would wait it out and let her come to a decision on her own. They joined the others in the parlor to discuss their next plan of action.

Raine listened from the top of the stairs. She stayed out of sight while she listened to the boys talk. Tristan knew of the kiss she shared with Logan. How could she hurt him like that?

How could she let herself even go there with Logan? Did she really have feelings for Logan, or

was it a 'in the heat of the moment' thing. She knew she had a lot to think about. Not only was Fala still on the loose, but her heart was a wreck as well. Why did she always have the worst luck?

In the bath she let the steam clear her mind. There was so much to think about. She loved two boys and didn't deserve either of them. Maybe it would be best to just let both of them go. Her mind reeled as emotions played heavily in her heart. She had much more to worry about than love.

She was a Shijin Warrior.

BK Walker

"Fala's been spotted in the Highlands in Scotland. Move out!"

Immortal Kisses

NIGHT SECRETS



*Falling in love with a werewolf is easy..
It's what else the night holds that might
just kill you.*

B.K. Walker

Prologue

Mayday! Mayday!

“Mayday! Mayday! Tower this is Flight 697. Can you hear me? Mayday! Mayday! This is Flight 697! Tower can you hear me?” Sweat trickled down Captain Jeffries face as he spoke into the CB. “Mayday! Mayday! We’re going down!”

Looking over at his Co-Pilot, his heart sank as he whispered a prayer, “Please let us get out of this alive. Let the boy enjoy being a father.”

The plane started losing altitude in a spiral motion as engine two died with a loud bang. Donald Crosby grabbed his wife’s hand, interlocking their fingers. Together they spoke in Gaelic to say a prayer, a language they haven’t used in many years.

The plane crashed into the water nose first, the windows to the cockpit shattering instantly with a loud explosion like a bomb had ignited and the water flooded through.

Chapter 1:

“Life Changing News”

My life was about to change...forever! I got up just like any other day and after hitting the snooze button several times, I forced myself out of bed and slowly walked to the bathroom, my eyes still half closed. I hated getting up for school and couldn't wait until it was over.

I was graduating this year. I never thought senior year would come, but it finally did. Now that it arrived, it seemed to be dragging on and on. I

turned the water on hot, so it would get nice and steamy to help awaken my senses. Taking my pajamas off, I pulled the shower curtain closed around me. Ahhhhhh. Now this is just what the day was asking for.

Pondering in the shower until the water ran cold, I definitely felt awake now. I wrapped my hair in a towel and went to my room to find something to wear. Rummaging through my jeans, it hit me that today was the day. “Mom and Dad are coming home today!” I practically jumped with enthusiasm.

My parents had been gone for a month on a business trip. I was left home to prepare for graduation and study for exams. They would often go on business trips and leave me with Jamison. He was our butler and also my favorite out of everyone that worked for us, he’s been with us for a long time.

You kind of get used to it after years of being left, but it was always nice to have my parents

home. Don't get me wrong though. I don't resent them or anything, because if they didn't do what they do, we wouldn't have the nice things we have. My Jeep in particular. I loved my Jeep.

I can remember the day we went shopping for it right after I passed my drivers test. *Pulling into the car sales lot, it was the first thing to catch my eye. Shiny silver with dark tinted windows. "That's what I want Dad. Right there."*

We pulled up next to it and I jumped out of Dad's car before he even had it completely stopped, ecstatic at my find. We were looking her over when a salesman came up with the keys. "Want to take it for a test drive?"

"Are you kidding me? I'd love to!" I snatched the keys from his hand and we all piled into the Jeep Cherokee, and I was even more in love. Black leather heated seats, a moon roof, fully loaded. This Jeep would be mine.

My alarm buzzing again brought me from my

reverie. I had forgotten to shut it off after my snooze button fiasco this morning. Deciding on a pair of jeans, a 'Shot In The Dark 357' baby tee, a black oversized zip up hoody with a 'Baby Phat' kitty in the upper left chest. I pulled on my black combat boots, steel toed, and went to dry my hair.

I pulled the towel off my head, letting my long red waves fall to my back the cool wetness sending a shiver through me. Standing in front of the mirror I threw some make-up on, brushed my teeth, then dried and straightened my hair. After a few spins in a circle viewing my attire, I headed to my Jeep.

Jamison met me at the bottom of the stairs, holding my keys. "I thought you were going to be late Miss Keara."

"Jamison, I'm always right on time. You should know that by now." I grabbed my keys from his grasp.

"Of course Miss Keara."

Looking up into his dark chocolate brown eyes

and smiling at him, "Please stop calling me Miss Keara. You are like a second father to me." I stood on my tip toes to kiss his cheek. "See you after school Jamison."

Watching him standing there with his hand over the place on his cheek I kissed, I smiled hitting the button on my key chain to unlock the Jeep doors.

"Miss Keara. Don't forget your parents will be coming home today. I'm planning a nice dinner." I waved in acknowledgement.

I slid behind the drivers seat, pulling my sunglasses over my eyes. Starting the engine, I turned on the radio, blasting Lil' Wayne, and waved goodbye. Looking into my rear view mirror, I saw him waving back. Jamison was tall and lean, with thin, graying hair. I shook my head, my heart warming knowing he would never change. He would always treat me like a boss and call me Miss Keara. Man that irritated me.

I pulled into school to find my favorite parking

spot. Without really too much concern for my day I slammed on my brakes noticing a red convertible sitting in my stall. “Who the hell is this? People know this is my spot!” I couldn’t believe it. Someone had nerve. Everyone knew this was my parking spot. It has been all year!

After throwing a fit and saying a few choice words under my breath, I moved along in search of an empty space. Finding one I pulled in, taking a deep breath to calm myself before heading in. This was not going to ruin my day. I would let this pass for now.

Flinging my bag over my shoulder, swiping a stray strand of hair behind my ear, I headed to Biology class. Walking through the door I immediately sensed someone new as my eyes instantly diverted to “him”. *Wow. Now that was some fine art.* I couldn’t help but look at him. Blonde wavy hair called out to be touched, and lapis blue eyes held my gaze. *Who was he? Could*

this be the owner of that red convertible in my spot? If it was, I was definitely going to let it slide.

After several minutes of staring, I finally took my seat, forcing myself not to look back at him. Dr. Sprague started class by asking a series of questions. I was just about to raise my hand to answer, when there was a knock at the door. Dr. Sprague answered it and when he turned back, his face looked solemn. "Keara, you're wanted in the office."

I looked at him surprised and stood up. "Um. You might want to take your things with you," he said.

Confused, I loaded my books in my bag, tossed it over my shoulder and headed to the office. *What the heck did I do now? I didn't even throw a fit about my parking.* The halls were empty, with only the echoes from teachers talking behind closed doors and the squeaking of my heels on the freshly waxed floors.

Arriving to the office, I stood in front of the doors for a second, looking in through the glass that separated the 'dungeon' from the hallway. Dean Henderson's door was cracked open, giving me full view of the police officer. "*What now?*" I opened the door and walked through.

Ms. Stein sat at her desk, the white bun wound tightly atop her head the only thing to be seen as she stared at nothing. Raising her head to see who walked in her eyes widened ever so slightly before she regained her composure. "Go on in Keara. They are waiting for you." She kept her voice neutral, but I could sense something wasn't right.

I walked over to the door and knocked. Dean Henderson greeted me. "Come on in Keara." He put his arm around my shoulders, leading me to the chairs that sat across from his desk. The first policeman sat in one chair, the one I could see from the hall, and another policeman stood by the

window. "You might want to sit down here Keara." Dean Henderson motioned toward the chair.

"Did I do something wrong?" The tension in the room was extremely noticeable. Something definitely wasn't right. I had a feeling I was about to find out what was going on.

"Oh no. You did nothing wrong at all. These officers here would like to talk to you." Dean Henderson took his seat behind his large mahogany desk. He was a short, chubby man, balding with only hair above his ears, making a horseshoe around his head. His pale blue eyes watched me from behind thick lenses.

I looked at him for a moment then to the officer sitting beside me. "Keara Crosby?" The officer next to me asked without hesitation.

"Yes. That's me."

The other officer by the window came closer to the desk as the officer next to me stood up. "I'm Detective Santonio. This is my partner, Officer

Whitman. I'm afraid we have some bad news."

Detective Santonio was dark skinned, with teal green eyes and jet black hair. He was muscular you could see, from the outline of his shirt. Officer Whitman was smaller framed, less muscular with brown hair and brown eyes, they both bore military cuts.

"What bad news?" I wasn't really alarmed. It could be anything.

"Are your parents names Patrick C. Crosby and Shannon Crosby?" They waited for me to answer.

"Yes. That's them." I said, now puzzled.

"We're sorry to be the ones to inform you Keara, but the airplane your parents were on has been reported to have crashed in the ocean. It departed from Kennedy Airport, and was called in as a Mayday at 1100 hours. It went down over the Atlantic. We're sorry...there are no known survivors."

Staring at them in disbelief, my brain tried to

comprehend what they just said to me. *What? How can that be? I must be dreaming. It's got to be a dream.* Clutching my hand to my chest I could feel my throat getting tighter, closing around my trachea and cutting off my air. When I felt the dizziness wash over me, I put my head to my knees to keep from passing out.

"Why don't we give her a few minutes Officers." Though it sounded muffled to my ears, I knew it was Dean Henderson speaking.

"Of course." The officers spoke in unison.

"Keara, we'll be right outside. Just yell if you need us."

I nodded, my head still between my knees and heard the door shut. I slowly raised myself to a sitting position. *My parents were dead?* The tears streamed down my cheeks. The pressure in my chest was replaced with sadness of reality. *How could this happen? I just talked to them last night and so excited that they were coming home.* I had

been so wrapped up preparing for mid terms, that I even rushed my mother off the phone last night.

Oh God! What was I going to do? Lowering my head as far down as I could get between my knees, I started to hyperventilate.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Someone knocked on the door and slowly opened it. “Keara, I think you should go home now. Call your family to come be with you.”

“I have no other family.” I whispered sitting up wiping the tears from my face. Grabbing my things and pulling my keys out, I looked to Dean Henderson before heading for the door.

“Maybe you shouldn’t drive.” Dean Henderson stated.

“I’ll be fine. Really.” I knew it wasn’t very convincing when my chest shuttered between sobs and Officer Whitman took my keys.

“I’ll drive your vehicle. Detective Santonio can follow us.” I nodded in agreement and walked out of school behind them.

Feeling the eyes on me as we walked to the parking lot, I could only imagine what the other kids at school would be saying after this. Officer Whitman helped me into the passenger side of my Jeep then got in and started the engine. I turned the radio down, just wanting silence, leaning back in my seat and closing my eyes. Without looking at Whitman, I told him where to go.

“I know exactly where it is.” He stated with pride.

Great. A cop that finds gratification in any type of self knowledge. Just great.

It seemed like only a few minutes before we pulled into our long driveway. Officer Whitman offered to walk me to the house giving that boyish smile, but I respectfully declined. “I’ll be fine. Thank you for driving me home.” After watching them drive off in the squad car, I slowly turned around staring at my house.

I envisioned my mother kneeling in her flower

bed. She took pride in landscaping our yard and actually did pretty good too. My gaze followed the cobble stone path up to our front door, envisioning my father standing in the door, ankles crossed, arms crossed and one shoulder leaning against the door frame.

I looked up toward the roof. Our house was big, built by my father. Light blue, with stone embedded into the siding along the front porch. Large glass windows allowed you to see into the gaming area, and the indoor pool area. A balcony could be seen off the master bedroom, overlooking a pond we had in our side yard. The house was beautiful.

I heard the door open. Jamison was there to greet me, hurrying to my side, compassion in his eyes. "Miss Keara. Come inside." He draped an arm across my shoulders, grabbing my bag with the other. "It'll be ok Miss Keara. We *will* get through this."

Immortyl Kisses

Letting him lead me into the house, I stopped just inside the door. Staring at the spiral staircase that led upstairs, I felt weighted down, helpless, and didn't know what to do. My feet didn't want to move. I was numb.

"Go to your room Miss Keara. I will bring you some tea."

Staring at him a moment to long, I screamed. "I don't want tea Jamison. I want my parents!"

Running to my room and slamming the door, tears flooded my face and depression washed over me.

BK Walker



Immortyl Kisses

BK Walker is currently living in Central Pennsylvania with her three children, Brittney, Hunter, and Daniel. She works as a pediatric home care nurse which she truly enjoys. Always having a love of writing, she has created a world of her own through her imagination and her muse. With a love to write paranormal romance she's also dabbled in dramatic romance, learning so much through her writing endeavors. Helping other authors to promote and market their work, she also founded The Virtual Book Tour Cafe' (www.virtualbooktourcafe.com) and reviews books on several of her blogs.

With a huge love for animals, supporting Animal Rescue Organizations such as ASPCA and Pit Bull Rescue, she loves spending time with her dogs, a pit bull named Rancid and Dachshund named Sadie, an adoptee. BK also owns a kitten named Whiskers and a goldfish called Fat Albert with room in her heart and home for more.

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