

## Chapter 1

“You made the wrong choice, Felicity.”

Strong hands surrounded her, brought her body flush against his. There was no mistaking the hard prod pressed into her back.

Felicity gasped, struggling to control the need burning inside her like fire. “We can’t.”

Long-fingered hands swept up to cup her breasts—the touch possessive as Dominic Blackmoore molded the flesh. She shivered, her knees nearly giving out. She might have fallen if not for his hold on her.

“Yes we can, and yes we are. I’m not waiting any longer.” His voice held no room for argument. He’d finally decided. This was really going to happen. Could she stop it even if she really wanted to?

His hands released her and reason came flooding back with it, her last chance to resist. No, they couldn’t do this. So many lives would be destroyed including her own. She shoved hard against his chest knocking him off balance with the action. She didn’t hesitate, but sprinted down the hall and away from him. She had to get out of here. She had to get outside. If she could only make it outside she could escape.

She slowed as she rounded through the kitchen, her stupid heels slipping on the marble tiles. But she didn’t have time to damn her poor choice in shoes because a hard, heavy body slammed into her back.

Rough hands caught hers, planted them above her head on the garage door. She was already panting and he hadn’t even touched her yet. Her eyes squeezed shut—this was so wrong and yet she craved his touch with every fiber of her being.

“I’m done waiting. We end this torture now,” he said, a growl covering the words.

A shiver swept down her spine, and she couldn’t catch her breath. Her body burned like the sun blazed around her and her core was wet, aching. She gave into him then—into his addicting caresses. It was so much easier than fighting it. She shouldn’t do it, but she’d never wanted anything more in her life.

“Dom,” she murmured. The name that had been haunting her for what felt like an eternity. The name she hated as much as she loved.

Her skirt slid to her ankles at his touch. Her fingers curved into the door as cool air touched her bare bottom; her underwear hid nothing from his gaze. She could feel it burning into her skin like beams of light. Those addicting hands caressed her bottom, squeezed, and plumped.

“You have the greatest ass, sweets.” He groaned deep in his throat as he tucked his fingers inside her panties and sent the black satin fluttering down around her ankles.

A heavy pulse beat between her legs. An equal weight beat in her heart...for him. No matter wrong this was, she wanted it. She wanted him

He swept her hair over one shoulder, baring her neck to him. A wicked thrill shot up her spine and she arched her neck for him—a small taunt, beckoning him, daring him to take from her. He growled so much louder, and she heard the hiss of his zipper so loud in the quiet house.

“Don’t tempt me, Felicity. Not now. My control is at an end and I *will* take your vein.” His voice was as deep as a pit.

Her body relaxed, a smile crossing her mouth, and her eyes fluttered shut. “I trust you, Dom.” His voice always held magic over her and like a wand he could cast it and make everything better.

Another groan, this one deeper and impatient. She wondered what he thought of her words. Would he do it? Would he finally take from her?

Hot hands spanned her waist, sliding down to cup her hips and arch her back towards him. It only figures that their first time would be like this with her chest planted against the door and her back to him—so submissive.

His hard shaft dipped over her drenched folds eliciting a moan from her dry lips. This was it. This was the moment she’d craved from the very first day she met him. She’d finally have him, finally know what it felt like to have him moving inside her.

An eternity passed and then he found her entrance and slowly pushed his way inside. He spread her, the pressure so intense it bordered on pain. Her forehead fell into the door as her body adjusted around his length. He glided inside her using her slick arousal from her traitorous body.

He pressed hot open-mouthed kisses over her neck while his tongue sucked and teased her. He did not move but kept himself buried hard and full inside her. A shocked cry tore from her throat, one mingled with pain and pleasure. And his hands, those cursed, wonderful hands, entwined with hers on the door, securing her place in his arms. Caging her so she couldn’t run.

Then he started moving. Gentle, but unforgiving in long, pounding strokes that dragged through her tight muscles, awakening warmth and erotic pleasure she’d never felt before.

“Dom.” Her breathing hitched.

Each stroke she felt down to her soul. Her heart had never beat so fast, and when her body couldn’t burn any hotter, couldn’t handle any more of the wet hard glide quickening inside her, it locked tight around his cock. With a rush of bittersweet pleasure, she exploded around him.

Vision fled, thoughts fled. She was suspended in a moment of time as he plummeted into her again and again.

He cursed in a ragged voice. “Felicity, fuck. I can’t,” he said in gasps. He landed deep then grinded his hips against her. “I can’t stop.”

Before she knew what he meant, he broke the skin of her neck with his fangs. The two sharp points sank inside, breaking skin. Strange warmth flooded the surface around the wound like a little sunburn yet it did not hurt. She could feel his mouth working against her and the sensation crashed into her shooting out her own fangs. Her fading pleasure spiked once more

and her body bowed into his until they were in perfect sync: him commanding her body and her submitting to him.

He surged inside her faster, harder until the sounds of pounding flesh and ragged breathing echoed in the room. Growling deep, he wrapped his hands around her waist to hold her to him.

She shouldn't like it. It was all so very wrong. But she never wanted him to stop.

Then his warm mouth locked tight to the wound on her neck, and he planted his cock deep spurting his release on a husky growl. His fangs dislodged then as his tongue licked at the wound to seal it. That quickly it was over.

They caught their breaths as the aftermath started to creep in. Felicity's mind still hadn't returned to normal. She knew she should be running right now, but she wanted this so badly—these few moments of them together, closer than they'd ever been. Her heart was leaping in her chest reminding her of how deep she had it for this man.

"So beautiful," he said, kissing her shoulder. "So perfect."

He caressed her collarbone. His touch was gentle, lingering. He reached down and cupped one breast then the other before caressing her stomach and trailing down until his fingers curled around where he was still planted deep and firm inside her. His fingers caressed her wet swollen flesh, dipping and sliding along her lips and bud.

The sound of the front door opening and slamming closed was like a bucket of ice water thrown on her face.

In a flash, Felicity righted her clothes but she couldn't quite keep the tears of hurt from coming to her eyes.

"How could you?"

It took even less time than she would have expected to see regret flash across his face. That alone made her flinch like she'd taken a punch to the gut. His head jerked towards the front of the house at the sound of high heels coming their way.

"You know how I feel, Felicity. God damn it!" As if that made any of this better. As if that erased her shame or changed *anything*.

He pulled his pants up and with a little adjusting managed to make his suit look neatly pressed as if he'd just put it on. Even his hair looked freshly combed and smooth, not a single hair out of place. She had no doubt how she looked though—like she'd just been fucked against a door.

He knew where this would lead them, how this would hurt her. Yet he did it anyway, he touched her. A tear she couldn't contain slid down her cheek. He wiped it away with his thumb, his face softening.

"Don't cry, sweets."

She couldn't stand the endearment. Not now, not when her whole heart was breaking.

The footsteps came closer for which she thanked the stars. It helped her to get her bearings and move, no easy feat after feeling him inside her body for the first time.

“Don’t ever touch me again,” she said, not meeting his eyes. She meant it and she knew he heard the conviction in her voice. He’d never touch her again after that. She was done.

Quickly, she slipped in the garage door. She knew she should flee but some sickness inside her made her pause outside the door. She stayed silent and listened.

“Ah, there you are. I didn’t know if you were here yet,” a warm, feminine voice said.

“Julianna, it’s good to see you.” She could hear the smile in Dom’s voice and knew it was forced. The sound of kissing was like a lethal blow to her heart. She staggered back a step as her heart stopped beating for one agonizing moment. She’d bet money that Julianna didn’t know that his smile was forced, the kiss not real.

She probably didn’t know anything about him and, if she did, it didn’t matter because no one loved Dom like she did. No one. Not even his Julianna, the woman he was to mate with—his *bruid*.

Another tear slid down her cheek. She wanted to sob but first she had to escape. She could never be around Dom again; no matter how much she loved him or what he promised. Yet, a part of her knew the thought was fruitless. He would never leave her alone now. He’d find her. He wouldn’t give up on her. It was in his nature.

But he didn’t love her.

And he was mating with another woman.

## Chapter 2

### *One month earlier*

The blaring ring of the phone sent Felicity scampering down the hall to the kitchen. As soon as she neared it, her cat Hugo darted in front of her. With a cry, she jumped over the rascally feline but missed her footing as she came down. Her knee gave out as she landed awkwardly on her ankle, which sent her sprawling into the kitchen cabinet.

“Ouch, damn it!”

She inspected the damage and saw her knee had taken the brunt of the damage. Well, that and her cheap cabinet that now had a hole in it.

“Just great,” she muttered. “Thanks a lot, Hugo.”

The phone still blared. Fighting through the fiery pain throbbing in her knee, she reached for the wall-mounted phone and snatched it off its set.

“Hello?” she said, her voice as close to a growl as she could manage.

“Ms. Shaw?”

“Who is this?” Felicity quickly wracked her mind for any late bills she had. Crap, she could think of several.

“Is this Ms. Shaw?” the man pressed. He sounded bored and had an uppity, snobbish quality to his voice. It’s how she imagined an educated old professor might speak.

Felicity rolled her eyes. “Yes it is. Are you from the internet company? Listen, I know I’m late but I don’t have the money so just cancel my service again.”

For the past year and half this had been her life. At time it felt like a lot longer than that though. Sometimes having internet and sometimes having television, but mostly paying late fees to try to keep on the services. She’d go without if she could but she needed her internet for job hunting, internet shopping where she endlessly added some much-needed or much-wanted items to her shopping cart that never got purchased, and she needed her television big time. It was the only form of entertainment she had. Honestly.

“Ms. Shaw, my name is Ian Nevell. I am calling—”

Hugo jumped on the counter in front of her and began crying as if he was dying. “*Raur! Rrrraarr! Raaaaar!*”

“Shut up, Hugo! I’m not giving you any wet food. You tripped me,” she hissed. The man on the phone cleared his throat, bringing her attention back to the call. “I’m sorry what was it you wanted?”

She gave Hugo a warning look then turned her back on him. “As I was saying, Ms. Shaw, I am calling on behalf of the Blackmoore family.”

“The-the Blackmoores?” Felicity’s eyes widened as her stomach plummeted. She’d applied for the gig of a lifetime there only a week ago, but she’d never thought in a million years she’d get a call back.

The man sighed wearily. “Yes, indeed, Ms. Shaw. The Blackmoore family is in need of an event planner and they have selected your resume for an interview. If you could bring your portfolio to the Blackmoore estate tonight at 7:30 you will meet with Mr. Dominic Blackmoore. He will judge your portfolio and deem whether or not you will suit the occasion. If you are chosen, pay and other benefits will be discussed then.”

Her eyes darted to the clock on her microwave. “But it’s already 6:30. That’s not enough time!” No way could she shower, dress, and make herself up in order to present herself to the likes of seeing a Blackmoore—the wealthiest, most blue-blooded vampires in society—in less than an hour.

But she needed a job so badly. She could hardly afford food anymore. She had to take a bite, literally, out of her friend Beth last week. It was the ultimate shame. To land a job the size of a Blackmoore event—she could practically see the dollar signs dancing around in her head. She could pay her bills, put some away in savings, and buy new clothes and shoes. Oh, and one of those new laptops she saw in a commercial since her computer loved to reboot on her when she wasn’t even using it. But what if they found out about her little lie? She bit her lip, running through the possibilities.

Another sigh on the line. “Ms. Shaw, are you coming or not?”

“Yes, yes, I’ll be there!” She hung up, her mind already running a mile a minute.

She was in the shower, a toothbrush slammed between her teeth and shampoo in her barely-wet hair in under a minute. She ran a razor quickly over her calves; she didn’t have time to do the whole leg, and then hopped out of the shower. In what she deemed to be a very impressive time, she had on her nicest dress—a dark cherry red number with wide straps, a cinched in waist with a thin black belt with her conservative but pretty black heels. The ones that still looked new even though she’d bought them on sale two years ago. The dress said chic, modern, but professional. Exactly what an event planner for a Blackmoore event look like.

The sun had already set. She’d only been awake for two hours. She hated to rush like this because she couldn’t screw this up.

“Just wait ‘till Beth hears about this.” Her best friend and recent blood donor would scale the walls if she got this job, then insist she take her shopping.

Felicity snatched her portfolio off the kitchen table, grabbed her purse from the hook behind the front door, and then stopped to check her surroundings. She couldn’t forget anything.

Mentally, she went over the list. Hair, done. Makeup, light but professional. Shoes, old but shiny. Purse not designer but not hand-me-down. Portfolio, in arm with résumés sitting inside.

Hugo sidled up to her, his back arching high and fur sticking out on end. “*Rrrraawwr*,” he purred sweetly.

“Not now baby, momma’s got a job interview.”

He looked up at her, cocked his head to the side. “*Raawr?*”

Felicity shook her head. Her blown dry hair felt a bit coarse because she’d forgotten to condition it in her rush, but oh well. A month, or even a week from now she could be cashing such a big check she could go to the salon and get one of those deep conditioning treatments. A soft sigh escaped her at the thought.

“Bye Hugo, momma loves you!” she called then swept out her apartment locking it behind her.

God, this could really be it. She hated her seventy-dollar couch she bought at a thrift store. She hated her scratched up ugly kitchen table. She hated that the only clocks she had in the whole apartment was the stove and her alarm clock. She hated her cheap glasses bought off the clearance rack in a Wal-Mart. She was so sick of not having nice things, of not wanting her friends to come over and see just how poor she really was. It might be petty, but her surroundings embarrassed her. She wanted to do better for herself. And damn it she worked hard and was damn good at her job. If she could get a job...

Felicity got in her car—another despicable thing. Sure it’d once been shiny and working nicely, but that’d been before Bud. Bud was a human who liked to drink and drive. Being a vampire and all Felicity kind of preferred night life. So she was surprised when one night she took a green light towards downtown St. Louis, Missouri and heard the sound of screeching tires. No amount of vampire speed could make her car go any faster. The drunken bastard slammed his black Ford F150 into her car so hard it flipped three times before landing upside down in oncoming traffic.

He, and all the others at the light who helped her out of the car, all seemed a bit surprised that she was alive with no broken bones or even a nosebleed. Well, actually, Bud wasn’t that concerned seeing as he was hurling his guts up outside his truck.

It was thanks to that drunken asshole’s lack of insurance that her car looked as it did. It cost too much to repair so she never got her car fixed. She’d lucked out that aside from a new oil filter and some other sensor thing being put on, her car ‘ran.’ If one called the chugging sound it made and the black puffs of smoking coming out the tail end ‘running’.

Of course, the right side where she got t-boned was completely busted in as if a car slammed into it. If she and Beth ever took her car, which they didn’t, then Beth would have to crawl in through the driver’s side door.

Who the heck had that kind of money to get it fixed? Well, not her.

She had no one to turn to for help, as if she would anyway. So she had a super busted car littered with dents on the left and right side, plus a roof that sported a divot the size of a kiddie

pool. The roof dipped down so low that if she was taller she might have a hard time sitting up straight in the seat. Luckily for her she was short, just like her mother. A snarl escaped her.

“Don’t even think about her. Stay positive!” she told herself.

With a turn of the key, she started her hunk of metal and tore off to the Blackmoore estate. She knew where it was. Anyone who was anyone knew where the Blackmoores lived. They were only the oldest living vampire family in the world. Originally from the Middle East, somewhere near present day Turkey, they’d traveled all over the world as the years past and humans evolved.

Felicity didn’t need to be their accountant to know that the Blackmoores were from big money as in b-i-g money. The kind that worked in politics and threw rich dinners for big government and investor types for ten thousand dollar plate dinners.

“Damn!”

Felicity slammed her hand against her steering wheel wishing she still had her cell phone. She hadn’t been able to keep it. Sixty bucks a month for a single phone wasn’t cutting it on her budget. She really wanted to call Beth right now. Her best friend would give her all the positive ear candy she could want.

Felicity pulled onto the highway and checked the clock. “We’re good, Felicity. Still got a good twenty minutes to get there.” The Blackmoores lived in a ritzy neighborhood tucked back in a deceptively middle-income looking area where coffee shops littered every corner and the homeowners refused to allow Wal-Mart to build so they wouldn’t put out the mom and pop shops that still hung around. It was an area where bicycle lines marked the road and where people took their small dogs into gas stations and grocery stores.

It was weird.

The house was in the back of the area where ominous black gates stood towering like menacing wraiths above the street. The Blackmoore house rested up on the hill behind the gates. Many tall, old trees blocked the view so you’d be hard pressed to see the house unless you walked by the gate and found just enough of a crack between limbs and trunks. Felicity had seen it though, just part of it when she’d driven by before.

When Felicity had applied for the job she had done it quickly and without much thought. That was because she knew she’d never land a job with the Blackmoores. They hired world-renowned artists for even the simplest of things. They would not hire some nobody vampire girl from the city. Still, she’d been desperate and a little hopeful that just maybe she’d get the job.

Usually when she went to a job interview she was as prepared as possible, sometimes she even spent days learning about a specific client and then scouted locations, created designs, and came up with ideas to dazzle them. True, many of those times she’d forgotten her briefcase or portfolio when she’d gone to the interview, but she’d learned her lesson.

Whether it was the economy or the fact that times had changed from the early days where throwing a gala and impressing everyone with your wealth and status was all the rage, but now people didn't do that. Too bad, she missed those times, the elegance, the jewelry, lavish gowns.

A soft sigh escaped her.

Sometimes she'd read in *V-Society* about the Blackmoore's throwing such parties. Felicity bit her lip as she bounced in her seat with excitement. If she could land this job and they liked her, she could have a permanent new income. They would return to her because they'd be so in love with her design choices. She could almost see it now.

That was it, she decided then. She would just have to become their permanent event planner no matter what it took. This was just the kind of job she'd been searching for and it'd just fallen in her lap—nearly.

A thought struck her. The head of the Blackmoore family and president of the vampire and *were* council had recently died from a rare blood disease, Arromunia. That's why they needed her. Talks of his death still hadn't stopped among vamp society. The disease didn't occur often. The last time a vampire died of it was more than fifty years ago and the time before that spanned another seventy-five years. Very rare indeed.

The disease was the only sickness her kind was susceptible to aside from pure silver, the hot rays of sunlight, and decapitation. No one knew how to get the strange sickness, and it was so rare scientists had not been able to study it in the past. It simply came, chose a victim, and then slowly sucked the life from them like a poison. No amount of blood transfusions could help. The immortal body, after a slow and debilitating trial, would die withering like a body with too much skin clinging to it, eyes sunken, and cheeks gaunt.

That meant Mr. Blackmoore's eldest son would be in charge—Dominic the one who'd interview her.

A chill raced over her body. Felicity shook it off and took the road that would hopefully change her life forever. If she could only get a gig like this, her name would be famous among society. Everyone would know the name Felicity Shaw.

She could finally donate her crappy thrift store furniture and buy something real that was just hers. Something she actually liked because it was beautiful and comfortable not because it was cheap.

The Blackmoore's estate was the only house street on the block. It wasn't like they owned the street, more like the many acres of land surrounding the house, all of which was gated in by the towering black gate over six feet tall. The black, spiked tops didn't look sharp but they served as a warning—do not enter.

A small call box waited at the front of the drive. It reminded her of the drive-thru microphones that mortals used when they ordered fast food.

She rolled down her window with the lever then pressed the small black button on the box.

A moment later a clear, male voice rang out. "Who's calling?"

“It’s Felicity Shaw, the event planner.”

She waited for an answer but nothing came. Then a loud metal clang sounded and the black gates started swinging inward with a mechanical whirring.

Felicity laughed nervously, her stomach fluttering. It was all so dramatic, she felt like she was driving to her doom.

The great mansion stood at the top of the hill. If only the house was older and run down, it’d be the perfect house for children in the neighborhood to be afraid of come nightfall. But no one would ever say the Blackmoore house looked scary. It exuded luxury. From the fine, perfectly manicured lawn to the smooth blacktop that wound in an arch up the hill toward the house and circled back down the other side to exit.

She drove slowly to take it all in. A breathtaking fountain stood in front of the driveway. Where Felicity had a cute fat gnome with a red pointy hat wearing a blue sweater as a lawn decoration, the Blackmoore’s had a million dollar fountain. It looked like it was made from some kind of beautiful white stone that had just a bit of sparkle in it. She imagined that with the sun shining it would look quite stunning. Not that she could ever see it in the daylight.

From the fountain, two swans faced each other, wings folded back with elegant long necks outstretched to each other spurting water as if playing a silly game.

The house itself was something to be seen because of its incredible size. More than eight windows covered the front of the house, four on either side of the front door and they were floor to ceiling windows. It made her wonder how they dealt with the sun during the daytime. These people could afford any expense necessary. They probably had a specially-made blinds or window tinting that kept sunlight out.

Warmth grew in Felicity’s belly. She wished to find out. How she yearned to have something so nice, to have earned it with her own creative ideas and hard work. She could practically feel success within reach of her fingertips.

Just as she neared the house with what looked like marble steps leading to it to the front door, an older man with dark skin and a shiny baldhead stepped out. She could sense his age—he was older than her seventy-five years—but he’d been turned, not born. He had to have been turned at an older age for natural wrinkles were formed around his eyes and at the corner of his lips. He was a good-looking man with a lot of character. He also moved fast.

He swept open her door before she could shut her engine off.

“Ms. Shaw, if you’ll follow me. Mr. Blackmoore is impatient to meet with you.”

That flutter shot through her stomach again. Quickly, she snatched up her portfolio and stepped out of the car.

“Of course.” She put on a big smile but it faltered. God, she wished she would stop being so nervous. Be strong, confident, and smart she ordered herself. *You’ve done this a dozen times before.*

*But not with a Blackmoore!*

Okay, so that was true, but it didn't change the premise. This was still just another job interview.

"I can do this," she said to herself as she gazed up at the looming mansion.

"I'm sure you can, Ms. Shaw. Now if you'll follow me."

She was still blushing as she followed the man into the house. Just as she was about to ask what he was doing with her car, he let out a sharp whistle. A young man, looking hardly older than sixteen years seemingly hopped out of nowhere. He was in her car and pulling it away in a matter of seconds.

"Who was that and where's he taking my car?" She couldn't quite keep the edge out of her voice. That was her only mode of transportation, if anything happened to it...

"Ms. Shaw, I wouldn't concern yourself. That is Yusef, the valet. I assure you he has seen much nicer cars and he did not steal those. Your car is well in hand."

Snarky old man. Felicity smiled for the first time since she got the phone call.

He led her past a gorgeous white spiral staircase. Two smooth, square beams stood along either side of the lip of staircase. The dark wooden handrails looked smooth and freshly polished.

Her older shoes clicked along the polished white floor. Diagonally placed tiles of white and cream layered the floor. The touch was subtle but made the floors jump out. All Felicity could see, as she glanced at the waist-high vases, the hutch opposite the vases, the paintings on the walls, were dollar signs. The Blackmoores spared no expensive in having the best of the best.

The man, she suspected was Ian from the phone call, led her to a room. In here the floors were wooden planked and also layered diagonally. The room gave her the impression of woods, earthiness—a masculine room.

Ian bowed without a word then withdrew to leave her alone.

At the click of the door, she stood alone in the room, which instantly made her aware of how quiet it was. No radio played classical music in the background, certainly no kids ran around the house screaming. No television or secret arguments, just silence.

Felicity walked further into the room. It was a big enough to have two stories and did. Wooden beams layered the ceiling like the lattice on top of a pie. To her right, just inside the doorway, were wooden arches, six in all. On a platform up above was a small railing with another smaller room up there. Somewhere a staircase must go up there so you could look down on where she stood.

"Holy hell," she said at the sight.

There was a fireplace but no fire had been lit. In fact, it looked impeccably clean as if it'd never been used. An intricate wooden frame was made around it that came halfway up the wall in pointed designs that reminded her of the tops of the gate outside. Pointy and sharp like a warning.

Felicity paced in front of a buttery brown leather couch in front of the cold fireplace.

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Little did she know, she was being watched.

### Chapter 3

Not even ten minutes ago, if Dominic's mother or any of his brother's mentioned the phrase *sanguis vinculo* again, he would have slit a throat. Blood bond, just the thought of what he was being forced into made him want to bash heads in. Not that that could ever happen being who he was.

All that anger at having his control taken away vanished though. Everything had changed in the last ten minutes. Because in the last ten minutes he'd watched his soon-to-be *bruid*, the woman who'd become his blood mate walk into his lounge. He'd never seen her before, just a fuzzy photograph taken in the newspaper from many years ago.

She had a gorgeous mane of champagne-colored hair that fell past her shoulders. He never cared before how a woman wore her hair, nor did he care about the color. Hair was just hair. However, she, *his bruid*, had hair curling in waves around her. They weren't even and perfect which told him she wasn't one to play with her hair for long as some women fancied. He liked that too.

Even from above he could see her eyes. Light blue eyes that were so captivating, so dazzling he could see them from the upper balcony in the shadows where he stood.

She looked tall for a woman, but nowhere near his six foot three. That meant she'd fit well against him, curled into his body as a woman was meant to be. She wore simple, cheap clothes. He didn't have a fashion sense but even he could see they weren't up to par with what people of his breed wore. It was a nice change, albeit confusing since her family came from money. Maybe they weren't as well off as suspected.

That comforted him. He didn't want a *bruid* who preferred jewels and furs to simple comforts. Been there, done that, and he had the scars to prove it. He'd stopped trying to get through to his ex-*bruid* Helena when he called her back to bed one morning. He was aroused and feeling warm all over. He'd wanted to hold her and slowly make her come in his arms. Instead, she had cocked an attitude with him about always needing her when she was busy. Then went and took a forty-minute shower. That had been the final notch that cinched his decision to terminate their blood bond.

Dominic sighed as the muscles in his neck bunched. Their permanent separation was too fresh in his mind. Bitter thoughts of her kept coming back at the worst of times. Such as when he was learning about his new *bruid*. His new *bruid* didn't have Helena's captivating beauty but she was stunning nonetheless. She had a wild, sultry beauty to her. He could easily picture her writhing above him as she rode his cock with her curly blonde hair beating against her breasts with each movement.

He licked his lips as the image took hold of him. He saw her hips pumping against him, his hand reaching to curl around the long strands of her hair until he pulled her head back to expose the beautiful arch of her neck and the throbbing pulse that beckoned him.

Ah hell. He was too old for lusting. However...it did feel good. His body had heated, his heart beat faster, and excitement flooded his veins. He hadn't even spoken to her yet. What would it be like when they finally spoke? That's when he'd really learn about her.

She could be stupid, petty, obnoxious, or have a horribly girly voice. Or a very masculine one, he amended. Whatever horrible trait, or gods forbid, *traits* she had they probably made her worse than Helena.

No one could ever be perfect.

Time to find out just what was wrong with his new *bruid*.

Dominic walked silently to the banister then leapt over it. He landed without a whisper of sound. According to her file he was some five hundred and fifty years older than her. She was practically a babe compared to him.

His eyes lingered over the rather substantial amplexity of her ass and agreed--babe indeed. Saliva pooled in his mouth and his fangs threatened to extend.

Being so much older than her meant his senses were superior as well. If he didn't want her to hear him then she wouldn't. He walked up behind her and stopped just a hair's breadth away. Then he slowly let his presence known. It was a subtle tuning in the air. The shifting of particles that accommodated the space he took up. He watched her body stiffen as she finally sensed him. Her breath caught and then she spun around, her briefcase hitting his arm as she did.

Her eyes flared wide. Lovely eyes he wouldn't mind staring into as he filled her. She'd be drenched wet and tight.

God, what was wrong with him? Thinking with his dick wouldn't do him any good.

*I know the problem, said his cock. You haven't fucked anyone in one hundred and two years.*

He sighed. Damn if that wasn't the truth. And he'd been surviving just fine. Honestly, after that long you quit thinking about. Only every now and then when he caught sight of Helena's naked body, or caught a glimpse of passion during a movie did his cock harden to remind him how long it'd been.

"Hello, I'm so sorry for hitting you. You startled me." Her lips curled into a tight smile. Damn shame that—it crushed her rather too full lips. Christ, his cock lengthened. He quickly

shut the arousal down lest she smell it. Even some fresh-blooded vampires could smell arousal. It wouldn't do frightening her, or worse, having her think him an old pervert. *Which was too close to the truth.*

"Beg my pardon," he said.

She took a step back from him. He hoped his disappointment didn't show that she needed space. She did a little curtsy bow which was odd. Her blood was just as blue as his. She shouldn't be bowing to him. Unless she was trying to put on a good show.

He held out his hand. When she slid her hand into his he brought it to his mouth. A hot bloom began in his chest, warming him down to his stomach before moving further south. The scent of her struck him fast and hard—fresh young woman. His mouth watered again and he felt his eyes starting to close. His arm flexed to keep from turning her arm so he could place a kiss to her the warm flesh at her wrist like he craved.

Her eyes flashed wide, something warm and soft lingering there. She was aware of him. Completely aware in the way any healthy woman would be to an prospective mate. He knew it as certainly as he knew his name. That look told him that with a few caresses he could have her wet and needy for his cock. So simple...so tempting...

"Excuse me?" she said.

She'd been speaking and he'd missed all of it. He forced his lust-filled thoughts away and released her hand with a swift kiss to her knuckles. "I'm sorry, what was that?" His voice sounded like he'd eaten nails.

"I asked who you were."

"Dominic Blackmoore." He frowned. Surely she recognized him. Unless, she'd thought him to be one of his brothers. They were similar enough in appearance.

Her lips parted and he loved the flare of surprise that brightened her eyes. He got sick of everyone knowing who he was wherever he went, but she didn't know him. They'd never formally met and for once the fact of his celebrity status made him feel proud.

"I'm—" she began.

"I know who you are. Won't you come with me? We can get to know each other?" He wrapped his hand around hers and tugged.

She hesitated but nodded. He took the opportunity to touch her and put her hand over his arm as he led her upstairs.

This was going to be a fantastic day.

\* \* \*

Felicity nearly tripped as the tall, sexy Blackmoore led her up the staircase on the other side of the room.

*Holy hell. Holy hell. Holy hell!*

*This* was Dominic Blackmoore? Everyone knew about Dominic Blackmoore. His celebrity status in the vamp society even extended into the human world. She'd heard of him attending society's fancy galas but she'd never seen a picture of him. She'd heard rumors that he loathed to have his picture taken, and that once when a reporter tried to take his picture the man was beaten to a bloody pulp by Dominic himself. Dominic Blackmoore was said to be incredibly good looking, intelligent, and very manipulative. Since his father died, he was slated to be the next in line for the council's presidency.

No wonder the man didn't let paparazzi take pictures of him. If everyone knew he looked like a modern day warrior with his dark skin, thick hair, and tall frame they'd be all over him. He had a physique made for carrying muscle and lots of it. Felicity peered out the corner of her eyes to peek. Yup, it looked like he did.

*Get a hold of yourself, Felicity. He's just another man.*

*No, he's not!*

He had a strong, aristocratic nose, a jaw so strong she knew if she punched him it'd hurt her and not him. He kept his hair thick and wavy but cut short around his ears and nape. It had a more modern feel to it. Many of society's wealthy vamps kept to the older ways of long hair and older clothes.

Not Dominic Blackmoore.

He wore a suit as if it was made specifically for him. It fit him that well. His body filled it to perfection and the material was so smooth she was afraid to touch it. In fact, Felicity cringed to think what the dry cleaning bill would cost to have a suit like that cleaned if she so much as sneezed on it. This was not a Men's Warehouse suit. This was a designer suit that had probably been custom made for him. And damn did it look really good on him.

The suit was black but had thin deep grey stripes running up and down the jacket and pants. The grey was so dark it looked nearly black but had glossiness to it so it caught the light. His black shoes shined with the perfect buff as if he'd just bought them from the store, and he wore a light grey shirt under the jacket that looked incredibly soft. No tie, but he didn't need one. Everything about him screamed money as surely as if he wore a red neon sign with flashing dollar signs on it.

He had practically held her hand, and he had put her hand on his arm so she could feel the warm muscles underneath. *And* he had looked at her like he'd wanted to take her down to the rug right there in front of the empty fireplace and have sex with her.

Yes, her heart beat a mile a minute right now and she could do nothing to stop it. Whatever was going to happen during this interview whether she got the job or not didn't matter because he'd looked at her like that and nothing could erase that image from her mind.

Men, or anyone for that matter, didn't look at her like that. Like she was fuel for sexual fantasies. It wasn't like she was horribly disfigured or ugly but she wasn't beautiful. She knew that. It was a simple fact she lived with quite comfortably. She'd dated many men over the course of her life time including vampires and even a few mortals who'd caught her fancy along the way. If she wanted a man she could find one. It might take some time for her to find someone *she* liked but time was nothing. She had plenty of time.

But Dominic Blackmoore, the illustrious blue-blood, had looked at her like she just lit a fire in his gut. Boy did her body answer in return. A pulse had throbbed between her legs and for the first time in a long while she wanted to sleep with a man. Her previous dalliances ranged from one month long to six months. Yeah, that had been her longest. Beth called her 'too picky', but Felicity called it 'choosey.' After all, an eternity was a long, long time to spend with one person.

Also given that she wasn't a great beauty and could never grace the cover of a magazine without substantial Photoshop and Dominic still had such an instantaneous response to her made her respect him so much more. Tons more.

"How are you doing this evening?" he asked breaking her out of her thoughts. At the sound of his voice, her ankle twisted and she stumbled on the stairs but quick as a wink, his arm snaked around her waist and set her straight. He didn't touch her for any longer than polite, only enough to help straighten her out. She was only slightly disappointed.

That voice. He had a deep smoky voice, the kind that'd be perfect for telling long stories in front of a fire or working late night on the radio wooing people to sleep.

"Making a fool out of myself apparently," she said, her cheeks coloring.

His eyes caught hers. They'd both stopped walking. They were entirely too close with the walls of the stairwell on either side of them. One to his back and one to hers. His eyes were like gold in the center surrounded by a beautiful dark mahogany wood.

The energy shifted around them, crackling like static electricity. Her breath caught at their nearness and all she could do was gaze up into his captivating eyes.

Then a smile broke out on his face and he laughed. He had a slow-building laugh that peaked at a steady rumble. Hell, even his laugh sounded nice. That wasn't fair. He had a stern looking face as if he never had time to relax but when that smile broke out, he looked younger and carefree. It took her breath away.

"Come on, let's talk."

She followed him up the stairs to the second floor of the lounge. More wood touches decorated the floors and the hand carved furniture. A heavy plush rug with a very middle-

eastern design took up a big portion of the floor. A dark wood coffee table sat in the middle of it and soft, leather sofas rested around it.

A small bar rested against the left wall with different bottles of alcohol and wines. Across from the bar were the tops of the wooden arches that went up to the ceiling. With nothing but a hand carved railing separating them, she could see the floor below where she'd just been.

Her eyes trailed back to the bar, and Felicity wet her lips. A rich vamp like Dominic Blackmoore probably had his own blood stash. Maybe he didn't even have to get his from the usual commercial suppliers like she did. Hers was cheap and it tasted good enough, but he probably got his shipped to his house from only the finest of selections.

His eyes didn't miss her reaction. He walked behind the bar then grabbed a glass. "What do you like to drink?"

She wet her drying lips. Her tongue suddenly felt parched. She'd been running on fumes so to speak. Even her clothes were bagging on her from losing a few pounds. She could go a few days with only some blood but it made her crabby, tired, and weak. She couldn't *eat* in front of him since essentially that's what she'd be doing. How could she take a sip of anything he had and not get that heavy-limbed relaxed feeling throughout her body? That drunk numbness that made everything feel wonderful if only for a little while. That's how she'd feel if she drank any of the good blood he had. Plus, she tended to get girly giddy. So not the way to get a new job.

"I really shouldn't drink," she said gently and took a seat in one of the brown leather chairs. Her eyes rounded as she sat on the plush cushion then slowly sank into it.

His powerful eyes held hers for several moments. She couldn't look away. Something about his eyes, or maybe, what he was thinking behind those eyes, captivated her.

"Seeing as this is a unique occasion I say we both share one." He grabbed another glass then started pouring a deep red, thick liquid into it. If her stomach could growl, it would have.

"No, really that's not necessary, Mr. Blackmoore."

"Please, call me Dom."

Her eyebrows rose, then he stood before her holding out a lowball glass with the letter "B" carved into the side. She took it. Instantly the scent of ripe, delicious blood mixed with dark wine filled her nostrils. She breathed it in and would have rolled her eyes back and sighed if not for the man in front of her.

She'd been right on the drink count. This wasn't the good stuff—this was the *fine* stuff. Sure you could mix your own concoction of cheap red wine bought at the grocery store with your cheap blood bought from the blood bank, but it didn't smell like this and Felicity would bet it didn't taste nearly as good either.

Still she didn't drink it as he took the seat across from her. His eyes never left hers. It was entirely unsettling the way he watched her. Was this some kind of interview tactic? Maybe he wanted to intimidate her to see what kind of stern stuff she was made of.

Well, she was made of stern stuff indeed.

With a small smile she leaned back into the buttery soft leather chair and held her glass on her leg as he did. His eyes flicked to the drink then back to her face. Just the corner of his mouth quirked up.

“Try it. You’ll like it.”

He said it as if he already knew that. This would be impossible seeing as she’d never tried the drink and just because it smelled good didn’t always mean it tasted as good.

“And how do you know that, Mr. Blackmoore?” She lifted the glass to her nose and inhaled the sweet fragrance of plump red grapes, woods, and the coppery hint of blood. Her tongue turned brittle in her mouth. Her hand started trembling as she set the glass back against her thigh.

The quirk of his lip lifted higher. It was the confident look of a man who had no doubts. “Why don’t you try it and let me know if I’m right or not.”

He lifted his glass and took a sip, not needing to sniff the unique fragrance he probably smelled all the time.

Then a devil wearing a skin-tight leather corset, fishnet stockings and black knee-high boots popped up on her shoulder. It looked quite like Felicity with her wavy blonde hair but this little devil had smoky, heavily kohled eyes, dark ruby lips, and flushed bronzed cheeks. She was a much sexier, much crazier Felicity that she didn’t get to let come out and play much anymore.

*Just drink some. You might not get this job but you’ll never get another chance to drink something so good,* the devil said.

Felicity waited a tick to see if Felicity Angel would show up, but one second turned into two. Angel was a no show today.

Felicity’s eyes rounded and then she went for it. She didn’t take a little sip as he had done but a mouth full. Instantly, her eyes closed and the sweet, spiced fruity taste coated her tongue then slid down her throat. Warmth filled her starting in her bones then moving out to the rest of her body. Her heart started beating faster. She licked her lips slowly to get any last drops off then ran her tongue across the roof over her mouth and teeth. Her incisor teeth started pointing, turning into fangs at the taste. It was a natural response, she couldn’t help it, but it didn’t do well to impress older vamps that she couldn’t keep her cool with blood.

*So damn good...*

She could moan and almost did but just barely managed to keep herself in check.

The high-octane blood laced with a hint of red wine went straight to her head. The room didn’t quite spin around before her eyes but it didn’t exactly stay straight. More like tilted to the side. And that heat. Oh god, the heat filling her body making her neck sweat and her panties wet. Her nipples beaded into tender points and all she could think about was how badly she wanted to tear her bra and shirt off so they wouldn’t scrape her nipples.

“Are you feeling well?” Dom asked his voice hoarse.

She might have blushed if she wasn't already flushing, because he knew. Oh, she'd have time to be humiliated later. He could see her response as easily as if she had started tearing her clothes off.

Right now her body burned so it didn't matter that he could smell her arousal. Honestly, a part of her wanted him to. That wild, aroused part of her wanted him to know that in this very minute, she wanted his touch. That she'd even welcome it. It'd been too long since she felt the stirrings of desire for a man.

*What am I thinking?* a part of her screeched. *You need this job, not to bang the boss!*

Right, she needed a job not a lover.

"I'm sorry. That was a very...potent drink. I think I really need to go before I make a mess of this." A giddy laugh left her and she saw his mouth tighten. "I mean make *more* of a mess out of this."

Her hands curled around the arms of the chair then she pushed herself upright. The room swam only for a moment before straightening, but her limbs felt odd. They felt heavy and limp. They wanted to give out until she laid on the ground relaxed and half-awake in a daze.

Felicity narrowed her gaze on her briefcase sitting by the chair. Damn. Focusing hard, she slowly reached for it. If she could grab it and stand up without tipping over she might just leave with some dignity.

The room started to spin. Suddenly she was flung upright and tall, dark, and gorgeous stood in her face with a scowl that made him more attractive.

"That's not fair," she said suddenly.

Shaking his head, he kept a hold on her arms to keep her steady. "What's not fair?"

"That even when you frown you look sexy." So addled was she that she didn't see his eyes darken; or if she did, she was busy ignoring it to embrace the foggy mind the drink gave her.

"What did you say?" he asked in a hoarse growl that went straight to her sex.

Felicity shivered and she didn't know which one of them moved but one of them moved closer to the other. She wished he'd wrap his arms around her and just hold her so she'd know what it'd feel like. Then she'd be on her way and she could go back to her poor life and remember the one time a man like Dominic Blackmoore looked at her like he'd wanted her more than anything.

She looked up into his dark eyes. "I said... I don't remember what I said," she whispered softly, honestly.

Somehow they were even closer. His jacket brushed her nipples like a caress.

"This is too soon," he said just as softly. His voice like a warning...one he wasn't going to heed.

"What's too soon?"

*Had his head just dipped in closer?*

Her heart thumped wildly in her chest and her pulse skyrocketed as desire filled her veins like hot syrup.

One hand, quite warm she noted, squeezed her arm then slid around to her back. Her heart jumped at the caress.

Her head tilted back as she looked up at him. His hand pressed between her shoulder blades and yes, she wasn't mistaken, he was nudging her forward.

She went willingly, happily. One aroused woman needing him to put out the fire inside her.

"What's too soon?" she repeated.

His eyes traced over her face then fell to her mouth. With that one hungry look she moaned. Actually moaned aloud.

A hot blush burned her cheeks.

This was crazy.

Before they'd just been subtly flirting, barely touching but now she'd crossed the line—she made a noise. There was no masking that as something else or playing it off. She'd done the unthinkable.

All of her worries were quickly washed away as his eyes darkened with hunger, his body pressed into hers, and then he spoke right against her lips. "It's too soon to touch you."

Her voice wavered. "Oh. Why?"

His hand slid down her spine and pressed into the dip above her derriere and there, with that one touch, he controlled her. He pulled and her body went, pressing fully against his, learning just how hard he was from the unmistakable erection digging into her stomach to his hard stomach crushing her achy breasts. The man had a body she craved to see naked.

His lips stroked across hers in a barely-there touch that left her leaning towards him for more.

"Because you tempt me to go much further than I should, sweets."

Her eyelids drifted closed at his hypnotic, deep voice. He'd called her sweets. That too wasn't something you could take back and pretend didn't happen. She'd actually moaned and he actually thought she was sweet. Her heart melted.

Holy hell, she wasn't going to stand here wanting for any longer. Devil Felicity reared her sultry head.

Slowly, she pressed her hands over that expensive suit jacket then ran her hands up. Her eyes followed the movements but paused to gauge his reaction.

He looked hungry, tightly in control, but wary at the same time. Hunger for her but wary of "touching her too soon." Well, she didn't have a problem with this "too soon" thing. She might have said so if she could voice something elegant at the moment. Instead she needed her mouth for something else.

Her arms finished their journey and wrapped around his neck. She touched his hair, had to know if it felt as soft as it looked. Moving up his neck, she fisted his dark brown locks and bit her bottom lip.

“Perfect,” she whispered. Just enough give to cling to.

*I’m not getting this job but who the hell cares,* she thought wildly.

His eyes fluttered shut and his breathing hitched, and then they opened and pierced her on the spot. What happened next actually caught her by surprise.

In a lightning fast move, his arm curled hard around her crushing her into him until they were plastered together, then his hand slid into her hair, his fist wrapping around it twice and his mouth slammed down to hers.

Breath caught. Pleasure shot straight between her legs.

Her body responded to the firm press of his kiss like she’d been made to. With a deft move, he swept her lips apart and filled her with his tongue, tasting and stoking the fire in her.

With that one kiss her body was ready for him. She was wet and throbbing between her legs and ready to know what he’d feel like filling her. No more thoughts about a job lingered in her mind, only primitive thoughts, thoughts of raw feelings, and of burning passion.

Another soft moan escaped her. This time she didn’t care. Her grip in his hair tightened as her hips arched against him. He was too tall or maybe she was too short because she needed to grind her hips against his cock but couldn’t reach.

His lips devastated her, sweeping her into a hazy sensual storm where time ceased to exist. Where there was only him, her, and the primitive energy of the world coaxing them to fulfill their duties as beings and lay with one another.

He pulled back pressing soft, but no less ravenous kisses across her lips, her cheeks, up her jaw to her neck where he kissed her rapidly thumping pulse. His ragged breathing sawed against her skin sending a shiver through her body. His hot, wet tongue darted out to taste a tiny bit of flesh before retreating as if wanting to go slow and savor.

“You’ll make a perfect *bruid*.”

Felicity blinked slowly as the sensual fog lifted.

What?

She couldn’t have heard what she thought she just heard. It had to be the fog surrounding her, combined with the potent brew he’d given her. Did he just say *bruid* as in a bride as in the woman a male vampire married to *for life*?

“That’s an odd thing to say,” she said with an uneasy laugh, the fog receding.

He pulled back, that deep frown back in place as his brows pulled low. “Not really, considering.”

Felicity pulled back too. “Considering what?”

One of his dark brows flew up. “That we’re to be mated.”

“Say what?” she said in a sharp voice.

Before he had a chance to answer, the door downstairs flung open and in walked an older woman who looked no less stunning in her age. She wore a fine cream-colored dress with a matching jacket that had one button holding it closed. Felicity recognized Mrs. Blackmoore in an instant.

“Dominic, are you in here?”

Dom shot Felicity a scary look as if his mother’s intrusion seriously pissed him off. He called out, “What is it?”

His mother turned around and gazed up. Felicity cursed and tried to duck out of his arms but he only tightened his grip, keeping her locked snugly against him.

At the sight of them together, his mother’s jaw dropped open and a deep flush colored her face. “Who is that!”

“My *bruid* Julianna Greenwich, who do you think? Now get out of here, mother.”

Felicity and Mrs. Blackmoore had about the same response—they both froze in place. Only his mother recovered much, much faster from her shock.

“*That* is not your *bruid* Julianna Greenwich. *Julianna* is waiting in the study for you, where she’s been waiting for nearly an hour!”

Suddenly Felicity found herself the focus of two intense eyes, both russet with a touch of gold in the center.

The touch on her arm became cruel. “And just who are you?” he asked and for the first time she heard him angry, and it sent a wave of fear down her spine.

She licked her lips. “My name is Felicity Shaw. I was invited here for a job interview.”

Even though she barely spoke above a whisper, his mother down below heard every word. “A job interview. That’s the event planner for the mating ceremony, Dominic! You are messing with the help,” she said.

Dominic let her go and stepped away. It was as if an Arctic chill blasted over her at his cold gaze. All the passion that had been between them froze as surely as water in a freezer. Cold touched her where his heat had been and an even colder feeling settled in her chest like a hard knot making it hard to breathe.

“Ms. Shaw if you’ll come down here we’ll get this all straightened away, and Dominic might you see to your actual *bruid*. She’s waiting in the study.”

Dominic’s gaze stayed locked with hers. God, he looked fucking *pissed*. Felicity rather understood that. She had just been ready to get naked with him on the expensive rug and he was supposed to be mated with someone else? And he’d thought she was the woman? She had too many questions but couldn’t ask any of them. One thing was for sure, disappointment crushed her like an anvil sitting on her chest.

Dom stepped up close but not touching. “You did this as a game. To play with me, to try a hand at a Blackmoore, for blackmail? Just what did you get out of it?”

He spoke to her as if he hated her not in that warm way he had before. She flinched but held his gaze. "It wasn't a game. I came here for a job interview."

"And you thought this," he thrust his hand out to encompass the bar, her drink, where they'd just kissed so passionately, "was how I conduct an interview?"

Shame washed over her, burning her face red. "Well, no, I mean, I don't know. How was I supposed to know you had a *bruid* waiting in the other room? Maybe you should have asked me for my name then! I assumed you knew who I was. This isn't entirely my fault."

The corner of his mouth twitched and not with a smile. "I don't want to see you again. Do you understand me? I don't ever want to see your face in my home."

Felicity jerked at his brutal words. They were like slaps across the face. She steadied herself and glared. "Then all you have to do is make sure I don't get this job, because if I get it you're going to see me and if that's not something you can handle then too...fucking...bad. Because now I'm ready to fight for this job in a way I wasn't before."

She spun around, snatched her briefcase off the floor, and raced down the steps to his mother. "Mrs. Blackmoore I am very sorry about the confusion."

The older woman grabbed her gently by the arm and steered her towards the door. "No, my dear, it looks like it was my fault. Please forgive me and my son's behavior. Things have been strained around here as of late..."

Felicity listened to the woman's voice but only partially paid attention because the whole time she could feel his eyes boring into her back.

Dominic had just made a fatal mistake treating her that way. He'd made her an enemy, and she knew how to fight tough.

## Chapter 4

Felicity didn't wake up the next morning so much as spring out of bed. For the first time in a long time she felt vigor blasting through her blood making her feel younger and more alive. All because of last night and one Mr. Dominic Blackmoore.

After her messed up evening last night, Mrs. Blackmoore promised to interview her tonight to see if she'd be the right planner for the "mating ceremony of the century." Those were Mrs. Blackmoore's words not hers. However after it was obvious Mrs. Blackmoore was bating time to end the interview to send Felicity packing, Felicity knew she had to get serious. So she'd pulled out the big guns, her bazookas. It wasn't anything she'd ever done in her whole life, but it'd been worth it.

When Mrs. Blackmoore had been about to usher Felicity out the door without so much as a "we'll call you if we're interested" Felicity had spun around with a threat. If she didn't get a fair interview then she'd go to the media. She'd tell her story about Dominic Blackmoore to anyone with an ear. It was incredibly unfair and she didn't know if she could really ever go through with something like that, but the threat at worked. She blamed her horrendous behavior on the vow she made to Dominic. She would get this job. No matter what.

This led Felicity to have a few questions: what happened to Dominic's previous *bruid* because he did have one, and why was there such a rush for him to find another one when he didn't seem to want one? Felicity had read in *V-Society* that their separation only happened about two months ago. Seemed pretty fast to be taking on another *bruid*.

Dominic Blackmoore had mistaken Felicity for the gorgeous blue-blooded socialite Julianna Greenwich. Julianna was everything Felicity wasn't. She was lovely, ultra-feminine with perfect skin, hair, and nails. She always wore the best and most expensive clothes. The paparazzi loved to follow her around.

Felicity's cheeks burned to admit it, but she even had the celebrity magazines that followed people like Julianna in her nightstand. She loved reading the little captions on what designer made Julianna's dress. What she loved even more was seeing the jaw-dropping prices. Always jaw dropping. A \$4,500 designer custom-made gown with \$25,000 diamond earrings paired with a real pearl necklace and shoes that cost another \$2,000. All of that to go see a movie on a Wednesday night.

Felicity couldn't even make a story like that up if she tried. She'd read about that exact story when Julianna Greenwich *rented out a theater* so her and a few friends could see some chick flick when it came out. Disgusting.

Just the thought filled her heart with a heavy knot. A knot that didn't immediately go away; it didn't go away at all and apparently didn't plan to. She recognized the heavy feeling for what it was—pain mixed with burning jealousy.

Jealousy that Julianna had been born into a world Felicity had always craved being in and pain that Dominic had looked at her with such need. Need like he'd been waiting for her his whole life. Like it'd taken every ounce of strength in his virile body not to touch her how he wanted to.

But he hadn't really been looking at *her* like that. No, no. He'd been looking at Julianna Greenwich like that, or so he'd thought.

The whole situation was ridiculous. She knew that. She couldn't possibly have feelings for someone she'd just met and especially not to someone who'd turned around and gave her the coldest cold shoulder she'd ever received. The way he turned on her like that...it'd felt like he'd punched her in the gut after lulling her away from her nervous smiles.

That painful knot in her chest pounded and she rubbed her hand across it, wincing. Yeah, that little bit of time they'd spent together had changed something. Something had happened. Because the thought of the infamous Julianna Greenwich, society's favorite fashion model, mating to the dark and passionate Dominic Blackmoore just didn't seem fair.

It brought forth a mixture of feelings inside Felicity she'd never experienced before and might never again. And she planned to do something about it.

Felicity went to the kitchen and phoned her friend Beth. Beth was born mortal but had the unstoppable energy of a *were* and the elegance of a vampire.

Beth answered on the fifth ring. "What do you want, Fel?" The sound of rock music and a deep male voice singing played in the background but was turned down.

"Okay, listen up." Felicity relayed all that had happened and informed her good friend to get her butt over to her house pronto. She hung up the phone a minute later smiling. This is why it rocked to have a friend like Beth. Beth might be mortal but she loved Felicity unconditionally and they'd do anything for each other. Even drop what they were doing to rush over and chat girl business.

Felicity fed Hugo, straightened the messy clothes in her bedroom, and then jumped in the shower and actually conditioned her hair this time. Her second scheduled interview wasn't until ten tonight so she had a few hours to prepare this time, and boy was it on. Dominic Blackmoore had declared war on her the second he set his awful accusations her way. She was getting this job.

A rapid knock sounded at the door. Felicity flung it open on a grin. Beth Hamilton was a looker, a straight up knockout with milk chocolate skin, a strong, curvaceous body to die for and hair that Felicity seriously wished she could have. For the past few months Beth had been wearing her gorgeous black locks in a long sleek cut past her shoulders with a raggedly cut bang sweeping her forehead. It rocked and it rocked on her.

She also was a war vet. Yeah, really. She'd served in Iraq for four years before finishing her tour and leaving the military. She'd only ever talked about it once, but Felicity knew it'd scarred her. She'd been working the med unit on a plane flying into a zone that had been hit

hard. Her team's job was to grab the wounded, pull them aboard, and rush out. At some point she got shot twice, both bullets landing in her leg. Even today she had a noticeable limp. She might have lost her leg if she hadn't been surrounded by a med team. Beth never wanted to talk about it so Felicity never asked. Everyone had demons.

Beth gave her a tight hug then strolled past smelling of some sultry, subtle perfume.

"Dish everything," Beth ordered. Then she picked up Hugo and petted him until his eyes couldn't stay open.

"All right but I need you to help me pick out something killer to wear."

"Killer?"

"Yeah, I wanna blow this guy out of the park if you know what I mean." It's the least he deserves.

Beth followed Felicity into the bedroom then plopped down on her bed. "I'm not sure I do, honey."

Felicity's lips curled into an evil smile.

Beth laughed. "You're going to make him regret what he did aren't you?"

Felicity shrugged. "I don't know 'regret' so much as 'torture' him. He was such an asshole. He deserves some payback and I'm going to give it to him that's all."

"He really got under your skin, didn't he?" Beth asked softly.

Felicity jerked her gaze away and started rooting through her closet. "Yeah, he kind of did," she said not meeting her friend's eyes.

Beth sighed long and hard. Then she got up and helped Felicity to put on the perfect outfit. She chose the best shoes to go with it and even made up her hair and makeup into a sexy, sultry look. Beth had a hand with makeup, really.

By time Beth finished with her, she wore a black cocktail dress that she strictly used for club nights. Seeing as she hadn't been to one in at least six months the dress could use some airing out. The only other time she'd worn the "daring cocktail" dress had been on her last date with David.

Shivering, she tried to shove the memory away but it refused to go. David had not exactly been the best date she'd ever had. It'd been set up by another friend of hers, Trish, whom she didn't exactly see any more after that. It was just awkward, not that she blamed her old friend. During dinner that night David hadn't been able to tear his gaze off her in the dress. That had been exactly what she wanted, right? Yeah, well no. He'd sent nothing but the wrong vibes at her, and when he grabbed her hand and slid her palm over the erection in his pants while sitting in a packed, four-star restaurant she'd called it quits and stormed out. She shivered again at the thought. Seriously disgusting.

Now she'd wear the dress again for old time's sake, because tonight she wanted Dominic Blackmoore's attention. She wanted to look sharp, classy, and sexy because these were people that looked good all the time and she had to impress them to get this job. Also,

because she wanted Dominic to look at her that same hungry way he had yesterday but know he'd never touch her.

The cocktail dress had one quarter-cut sleeve on one arm and left the other arm bare so she slid on a gold jingly bracelet on her wrist. From under her right arm the dress swooped up to her sleeved shoulder revealing her neckline and a decent portion of her back. It was sexy enough to get attention but not inappropriate. The cut of the dress looked elegant. What was really going to knock her look out of the park—aside from her lovely updo of curls and her smoky makeup—were her legs and shoes.

At Beth's cajoling she pulled on black nylon stockings with black lace edging. However, when the stockings started rolling down her not-so-slim thighs like curlicues Felicity finally relented at Beth's insistence and put on the matching garter belt to keep them up. Just feeling the soft, scratchy feeling of the nylons on her smooth legs with the straps of the garter holding them up made her feel naughtier—and more than ready to square off against Dominic Blackmoore.

*Do your worst*, she thought with a grin.

It wasn't like she didn't wear her fair share of sexy clothes. She *loved* sexy underwear and had the entire drawer full of thongs, G-strings, hip huggers, full bottom panties in lace, satin, a variety of colors and textures with straps, bows, and flowers to prove it. But she never wore such things to a job interview or even for herself.

Tonight that would change.

Tonight she was getting this job no matter what.

Felicity checked her reflection one last time. She looked perfect. Sexy, professional, but slightly more on the sexy side. Her portfolio was on the kitchen table ready to go, and her shoes were polished black and shiny.

Beth whistled a catcall. "Girl, you look *fine*. That man won't know what hit him."

"I hope so." How could he just give her the cold shoulder after the kiss they'd shared?

"So what's this really about: getting the job or getting payback?"

Felicity fidgeted with her dress then glanced at the clock. "Um...both I guess." Beth arched a perfectly shaped eyebrow at her and Felicity ducked out of the bedroom. Hugo trotted behind her, hot on her heels as she headed toward the kitchen.

Beth leaned against her stove, arms crossed. "Well if he's anything like his brother the man must be made to please a woman."

Felicity blinked. "I haven't met any of his brothers. I know he has a few. Which one are you talking about?"

Beth's pupils dilated and her tongue darted across her bottom lip. "Which one? That'd be Lucas Blackmoore as in LBB—the Lucas Blackmoore Band. He's only all the rage *everywhere*." Beth's eyes grew unfocused, her voice soft. "He has the voice of an angel. I know that sounds stupid but, *damn*, his voice is a perfect mixture of husky, smooth-rolling tenor that

craves your attention. It's the kind of voice you can't turn away from. And his songs? He writes it all himself, the lyrics, the music, all of it. This isn't some every day, run of the mill musician. Lucas Blackmoore is an artist who treats his music like it's his life's passion."

Felicity stared at her friend with wide eyes and a new appreciation for someone's music she'd never heard before. Seeing Felicity's gaze, Beth narrowed her eyes and cocked her head to the side.

"You haven't heard of him?" She asked it with disbelief as if she was asking Felicity how she could never have heard of *the freaking sun*.

"Um...well you know me. I'm not the biggest music person." Felicity cringed as Beth's eyes bugged. "Hey, you know this about me, and when I do listen to music I prefer the kind without words. Instrumental, classical stuff, you know?"

Beth was shaking her head in what could only be described as *massive* disappointment. "Why am I your friend, and how come I never knew this about you? I mean seriously, he's all I ever listen to. All I've listened to since Iraq and you're going to work for his family!"

"I'll tell you what after I get this job, if I run into Lucas Blackmoore, I'll get him to sign something for you, okay?"

Beth's eyes flashed with fear. "No! That's not necessary, really."

Felicity frowned. "Why not? You have something against signatures?" She laughed at her own joke but Beth only shook her head.

"No, really don't bother him. Um," she ran a hand down her hair then rubbed her hands down her pants.

"Wait are you telling me that you like LBB so much that even the thought that I could get a signature for you is too much to bear?"

Beth grimaced. "Well when you say it like that I sound like a pussy but yes, totally. I don't want him to know I exist."

Felicity laughed at her friend's ridiculous thoughts. "That must mean you've had some pretty heavy thoughts about him."

Beth's beautiful dark eyes rounded into saucers. "Girl, you have no idea. The man's voice occupies me nearly everywhere I go. He sings me to sleep. His voice wakes me up in the morning. I listen to him while I drive to work and while I shower. I mean *all the time*. So I guess you could say I've had 'heavy' thoughts about him."

Felicity whistled low under her breath. "Sounds like a serious crush to me."

"More like hardcore in love."

Beth said it jokingly but neither of them missed the longing ringing in those words. Felicity didn't taunt her friend or make fun of her for having a fictional crush on an (apparently) very famous musician.

Instead, she smiled and made a promise. "I'll get you his signature."

Beth let out a soft dramatic sigh then pretended to fan herself.

They both burst out laughing and it was then that Felicity's eyes fell to the clock Beth had been standing in front of.

"Damn! I'm going to be late."

*Shit, shit, shit, shit!*

"Oh honey, I'm so sorry. It's my fault for carrying on," Beth said. Then she put on her game face and even her voice hardened. "Okay, grab your shawl and purse, I'll get your portfolio and meet you out front."

Felicity raced across her house throwing on her black lacey shawl—really the thing was more decorative than warm, and then snatched up her purse. In less than two minutes she had the house locked up, her car started, and was waving goodbye to Beth.

"Knock 'em dead," Beth yelled.

"I plan on it!"

Felicity drove to the most important interview of her life for the second time—the one that could give her a name in the design business—and she was only twenty minutes late.

## Chapter 5

In the grand scheme of life twenty minutes was not a significant portion of time.

Felicity knew this.

However, apparently Ian, the Blackmoore's executive butler (he actually called himself that) thought twenty minutes was akin to two days. For when she pulled up in her dump of car, he'd not withheld his lip curl of disgust nor did he keep from scolding her. Yes, he publically scolded her even as he led her into the house.

"A young woman like you would do well to realize the significance of being interviewed by Lady Blackmoore herself. In fact, if you were smart you would have come prepared and *early* so as not to make those interviewing you *wait* for you as if *you* are important to *them* when I *assure you* you...are...not. Now if you'll follow me."

Felicity didn't know whether to laugh or feel deeply embarrassed, but her cheeks burned and she chuckled—just a little which made him turn around on her with astonishment. Felicity didn't know what to make of it. Had she broken some sacred vampire law she didn't know about? Was she not allowed to giggle in the Blackmoore house? Perhaps it was expressly forbidden.

His lip curled down into a deep, heavy frown that if he wasn't careful might become permanent on his dark face. He lifted his chin at her. "At least you dressed better tonight. Perhaps that will bode well for you. For all of our sakes, I hope not."

Well, that wasn't a nice thing to say. Sort of. "Hey, I need this job," Felicity said as she was once again led through the massive mansion. This time, however, the butler didn't lead her to Dominic's personal lounge but down a separate, shorter hallway where two large wooden doors stood. One was cracked so she could see light filtering through.

"You may need the job, but the Blackmoores deserve the best. Are you *the best*?"

Felicity felt the first flames of anger trigger inside her. "Damn right I'm *the best*. My designs range from interior decorating to exterior decorating to planning lavish dinner parties, balls, galas, rock parties for famous bands, you name it, I've done it all." She had the portfolio to prove it.

And, she was also lying—big time.

Yeah, really.

A year ago she'd fibbed her portfolio. She'd created images using designs of events she'd *like* to throw but hadn't actually done. Yet. She also listed that she'd worked under clients that she'd only *wished* she worked for. Big named clients, too. Why did she do this? Felicity hated to lie, but she'd been unemployed for more than a year and the job before that had barely paid enough to feed Hugo and pay rent. She was only a few months away from being kicked off her lease—which her landlord already warned her he was doing—and she couldn't pay her bills. Desperation was an ugly thing.

Therefore, if she had to lie, cheat, or (possibly) steal to get the kind of job she wanted, then she would. And she'd be damn good at it too.

Ian's uncertain eyes ran over his face before he shook his head. Then he grabbed the door handle of the slightly ajar door and opened it. "They await you, Ms. Shaw," he said with a slight bow.

Felicity straightened her shoulders then strode toward the door. It was only after she passed through the door and heard it snap closed behind her that she realized something important about what butler Ian just said. That would be that he said "they." Indeed, Felicity felt her bravado drop through the floor as she stood frozen and staring into the faces of Dominic Blackmoore, his mother Lady Blackmoore, and none other than the beautiful socialite Juliana Greenwich.

Felicity's eyes wandered to Dominic and her breath caught. Yes, he really was as devastatingly handsome as she'd thought. He wore another suit but today he looked angry and flustered. His eyes were dark and burning with anger aimed straight at her, and though his hateful look made her pulse leap and her stomach twist into knots, she couldn't help but admire him.

The man could seriously wear clothes. He had his suit jacket unbuttoned and spread out on either side of his chest as if he'd flung it open when he sat down. He wore a pearly white shirt underneath with black little buttons. The top two were undone showing off dark, golden skin. Even the way he leaned back in his seat with his long arms tossed over each of the arm rests screamed *I own this* with masculine perfection. His knees were bent, but spread and Felicity's gaze wavered at the sight. For a moment all she could do was picture herself between those strong thighs, holding his cock, her low-lidded eyes locked on his as she licked the length of him.

A low growl snapped through the room.

Felicity jerked her gaze to Dominic's just as everyone else in the room did. Had he really just growled? His eyes stared challengingly into hers—daring her to keep his gaze. That the same level of passion she'd witnessed yesterday still flickered there. The light gold around his eyes flared like a pulse and Felicity felt an answering pulse between her thighs. He might have been nasty to her yesterday but he still wanted her. That fact shocked her more than if he had

walked up to her and informed her he was leaving his estate and bank accounts to her, then vanish in a puff of mysterious smoke.

Of course that didn't happen.

But he did look at her like he wanted her naked, in his lap, right now. And boy did she want to be.

Vampire eyes shifted when aroused, but the older the vampire the more control they had to mask such a reaction. Either Dominic wasn't as old as she'd heard or he'd really just had a flash of arousal blaze in his eyes.

"Ms. Shaw, won't you please take a seat?" his mother asked with a polite smile and watchful eyes. Her voice cut the tension in the room like a hot knife through warm butter.

Juliana seemed oblivious to the whole deal, while his mother looked far more cunning with her clever golden brown eyes.

Felicity managed to walk to her seat across from the two Blackmoores and the lovely Juliana Greenwich without tripping and falling on her face. Score one for her.

Juliana looked much, *much* more beautiful in person than she did in magazines. Felicity could probably stare at her all day trying to figure out how she could arrest one's gaze like she did. She had a thin, pert nose with lovely hollowed cheekbones, a gently pointed chin, light brown eyebrows, and a stunning pair of blue eyes. The color was so light it looked like a cloudless sky. Her eyes were lined by heavy dark brown lashes that only brought out the color and provided a lovely contrast to her light blonde hair. And she even had perfectly shaped lips with two peaks on top and a perfect bow on the bottom. Her hair was lush—a beautiful golden yellow like the perfect strand of wheat. It shined in the light and rested in curling waves down to her waist. Yes, down to her waist!

The paparazzi followed her for a reason and not because she had more money than the Monopoly guy, but because of how she looked. She looked perfect, and that was only her face. Her body matched her face in its stunning loveliness. Tall, elegant, refined, and with more class than Jackie-O, Julianna made lovely pictures. Pictures the rest of society without as much money and good looks stared longingly at and pretended to hate.

Really it wasn't fair to the rest of the women in the world to have to compare to women like Julianna Greenwich. Not fair at all.

In fact, Felicity decided she might just hate her.

"Thank you for joining us tonight. I'm looking forward to hearing about your previous work experience and seeing some of your designs," his mother said with a smile. She had the kind of polite smile that had been refined through years of having political friends and throwing strategic parties. Felicity suspected Lady Blackmore was a master at hiding her true feelings.

A moment later, a soft knock sounded at the door and Ian shuffled in carrying a silver tray with a crystal decanter and four glasses. Felicity watched the blood-filled decanter with longing, her tongue watering. She hadn't fed that morning because she was out of blood again,

but she hoped to rectify that problem tonight. She'd get this job, get paid up front, and buy some of her favorite blood—AB. Lots of it. Maybe she'd even buy crates of it she could stack up in her spare bedroom for safekeeping.

Felicity watched Lady Blackmoore sit at the edge of her seat as she efficiently poured four glasses of blood. She filled each of the glasses so that the blood stopped at exactly a quarter inch from the rim. The entire time Felicity watched Lady Blackmoore's elegant movements, she could feel his eyes on her. She didn't need to shift her gaze to know it was him. No one could look at her and make her feel heat from just looking. No one except Dominic Blackmoore.

Lady Blackmoore passed the crystal glasses one at a time and as Felicity took hers, her eyes betrayed her and swept to Dominic. What she saw made her freeze, made her gut clench, and her body respond in a flush of wet heat.

His low-hooded eyes were fixed on her with a burning fire of their own. Only this time it wasn't in anger. It was pure sex. A look that said he was visually fucking her with his imagination right now. He snagged the glass from his mother, his eyes never leaving hers, and he brought it to his full sexy mouth and drank from it without ever taking his eyes off her.

They might as well be the only ones in the room. The air was so thick it felt like fog covered them. A sensual fragrance filled the air—musky, sweet, and raw. Dominic's nostrils flared as he inhaled the same fragrance she did. His eyes closed in an expression she could only describe as pained ecstasy before they flung open to devour her.

Felicity jerked her gaze away, a bright red flush coating her cheeks. The blush shamed her even more because she didn't know whether it was from his look or because his mother shot them both a cowering glance.

Felicity forced herself to pull her gaze away. She was supposed to be torturing him not the other way around and as it stood right now, the memory of this night and the palpable intensity in the room would never be forgotten.

"I've heard you have quite the eye for refined, large parties," Lady Blackmoore said.

Felicity's eyes wanted so badly to pull back to Dominic. To see what he was thinking and to see if he was still staring at her. A niggling doubt sprung. What if this was all some joke on his part? After all, his *bruid* was sitting in the same room as them. This could all be faked, his way to toy with her after their encounter yesterday.

"Yes, I do. Call it natural talent." Felicity pulled her résumé out of her portfolio's case and slid it across the dark mahogany table separating them. Lady Blackmoore took it and began reading. A thin black eyebrow rose in surprise.

"You've worked with a quite a few high-list names. I wonder if I've attended any of these events. When was the last event you organized?"

Felicity froze, but then quickly forced a smile. Sure she'd been lying on her résumé for nearly a year but she'd never had an interview to discuss those lies. Of course Lady Blackmoore

would know some of the high-list names she'd forged on the resume. What if Lady Blackmoore called them and verified that Felicity was nothing but a fraud? Panic grew like a wild weed but before it could take over she shoved it aside with a brutal hand. She leaned forward in her seat, determined to see the lies on her résumé through until she had this job in the bag.

The shawl fell down her arms and she felt heat burning the bare skin at her shoulder. A shiver raced down her arms as she pulled out the sample images from her portfolio and laid those around the table.

She answered by dodging the question. "That's quite possible, Lady Blackmoore. I assure you I am capable of doing anything you want. All you have to do is tell me the general idea of what you'd like to have. For instance, at this particular event," Felicity said, pointing to the image in the middle. "I designed everything you see here from the custom art work on the walls to the dancers hired to perform at the beginning of the night."

The picture was of the beautiful ballroom in Godsfreade manor in Pennsylvania. She'd never actually been there but socialites used the room for major events all the time. It had a beautiful marble staircase that could easily fit twenty people straight across it. The entire room was made out in dark wooden beams etched with hand carved designs of doves and tulips. A glorious golden chandelier lit the room in a spectacular fashion and wall sconces, much dimmer in light, shadowed the walls. The ballroom easily held five hundred people at maximum capacity, and if the backdoors were opened which led to the award-winning Victorian-style gardens, then you could fit close to seven hundred.

In this picture, Felicity had designed round tables where black wooden chairs with a dark violet upholstery could sit up to six people. The tabletops were some of her best work. Atop them were the place settings with real silver dining ware. The name cards were made of heavy linen paper and embossed with heavy violet ink in an elegant cursive script. Wine glasses and water glasses sat behind the plates. Heavy linen napkins were rolled and wrapped in a lilac colored ribbon. A miniature vase with a single light purple lilac sat by each setting and in the center of the table was a large centerpiece of glass and crystal with six tall white candles lit. And below them were a bushel of lilacs and lilacs mixed with daisies.

It was a fantasy wedding, or so Felicity had made up. The colors she'd envisioned were white and lilac, with the deep violet from the chairs, the delicate purple flowers, and the white tablecloth, the colors made one heck of a sight.

If only it was real.

"And whose wedding was this?"

Felicity wracked her mind for a name and came up with the name of her last *real* client from a year ago. She'd been hired by a local barbecue restaurant to throw an annual company party. The man who'd hired her was Spencer Terry.

"The wedding was for Spencer Terry and his wife Terri."

Lady Blackmoore's thin eyebrow arched. "They both have the name Terry?"

Shit. Felicity quickly tried to fix her poor lie. “Um, yes actually. His last name is Terry and her face name is Terri but with an ‘i’. Odd, I know.” She laughed a little.

There that sounded good. She smiled again, all professional.

“So her name is now Terry Terri?” Lady Blackmoore said slowly.

*Shit. I’m so busted!*

She was just about to try to dig her way out of this nonsense when she heard a soft giggle.

Julianna Greenwich had the tops of her manicured fingers pressed against her trembling mouth as her shoulders shook. She was trying desperately not to laugh, but more giggles came and, as if she couldn’t hold it in any longer, she tossed her head back and laughed a good old-fashioned laugh that came all the way from her belly. The sound was so infectious Felicity joined in and then Lady Blackmoore’s laughter, and even that sounded polite, followed. Everyone laughed but Dominic.

Felicity looked at him still smiling and his entire body tensed.

Before she could decide what to make of Dominic Blackmoore the door opened swung open. Felicity watched a drop-dead sexy man saunter in with a confident smile and crinkles around his Blackmoore eyes.

“What’s so funny?” the man asked. He headed right into their private party, grabbed the finished drink out of Dominic’s hand then refilled it and tossed it back like he was taking a shot. Then he looked each one of them in the face and took a seat next to Felicity.

Felicity felt another charge in the air and for some reason she scooted a little away from him. The charge diminished, somewhat.

The man had a sexy appeal to him that looked completely natural, not like he did it on purpose. He looked an awful lot like Dominic but had ruggedness to him. Dark stubble covered his jaw and chin and crossed at the top of his lip to give him a sexy beard and moustache that he kept trim to his skin. He wore a white long sleeved shirt that fit him loosely but also hinted at a lean, hard body underneath. With that he wore jeans, a black knit belt and heavy black boots that he promptly lifted and sat on the expensive wood table.

Dominic spoke first. His eyes were leveled on the man, unwelcoming. “This has nothing to do with you, Luc. Just leave now.”

Luc. Oh shit. Felicity turned to the man sitting next to her as recognition sunk in. This was Lucas freaking Blackmoore—Dominic’s brother and singer in LBB that Beth told her about.

“I know it doesn’t have anything to do with me. That’s why this is all so fun.” He inclined his head and said, “Mother, Lady Julianna.”

“So good to see you again, Lucas,” Julianna said. She even had a soft pretty voice.

Felicity hated her even more.

“And you too, doll face. So who’s this?” he drawled out and as his gaze leveled on Felicity, she swore she could feel it across every inch of her skin.

Dominic answered. "That's Ms. Felicity Shaw. Mother's considering hiring her as the planner for the bonding." He clearly sounded as if he loathed the idea more than anything.

Felicity straightened in her seat and glared. "And what's wrong with that? Have you seen the work I've done? I'm excellent!" she said.

At once, she felt all eyes fall on her but she was beyond caring. This was between him and her.

Dominic apparently didn't care either because he sat forward in his chair leaning his arms on his strong thighs as he glared those beautiful eyes at her.

"To speak frankly, I've seen better."

Felicity froze.

But not at what he said, but at the undercurrent riding them. It was a jab and she hadn't missed it. What he really meant was: he'd seen more women that were more beautiful than her. One of them was sitting in this room right now.

"Well so have I." She arched her left eyebrow to indicate the rugged musician sitting next to her and Lucas smiled turned into a feline grin. Dominic's mouth twitched.

She sensed it coming. Something big. She just didn't know what it was. All of the energy in the room seemed to gravitate towards him as if he had more mass than anything else. Anger, frustration, and something else poured from him in unrelenting waves like an assault. Felicity didn't back down though, no matter how completely out of her league she was. And she was *totally* out of her league in every regard to this man, hell, to this entire family.

Then like a switch being thrown the spell broke, but it didn't fade away. Instead it moved to linger in the background like a shadow flickering in a dark room.

Lucas burst out laughing and several things happened that no one pointed out.

One, Felicity had to remember to tell Beth she was right. Lucas Blackmoore had a devastatingly gorgeous voice—a lovely rumbling tenor. His singing voice could only be magnificent, for sure.

Two, Dominic stood up.

Three, Julianna's lips tightened in a pained expression.

Four, Lady Blackmoore sighed like an exhausted woman.

Felicity would remember this moment always and exactly in that sequence, because this was the moment her entire life changed. Well, later she might argue that it actually changed the moment Ian called her to interview at Blackmoore estate. Whatever, apples and oranges and all that.

Lucas' laughter died out. "Well isn't this all interesting. We have a planner looking to design your bonding ceremony, a *bruid* to be, a bonded male to be, and mother in the middle. I say we hire her." He pretended to look over her portfolio pictures on the table but no way could he really be judging her work when he looked at them all for barely a second.

"No," Dominic said.

Lady Blackmoore picked up several of the pictures and eyed them with a strong eye. She had been to many parties in her life. Her eye would be the real judge.

“She does do some fine work,” she muttered.

Felicity could feel the divide. Dominic versus the rest of them. The only one who had yet to say what they thought was Julianna. Felicity narrowed in for the kill.

“Lady Greenwich what would your colors be for the bonding ceremony?”

A light pink tinged her cheeks. “I suppose...I suppose I’d like ivory and gray.”

Elegant, strong, but beautiful colors. Also not very traditional which would make it stand out more. A color scheme and design plan started to form in Felicity’s mind like a spider slowly building a web.

Felicity leaned Julianna, a smile on her face. “Lady Greenwich, I promise you will have the most beautiful ceremony ever. People will be talking about it for years to come. You will be the envy of everyone. Grey and ivory will paint the room and paint you into a beautiful masterpiece, one that will take breaths away. I will work with you personally. I’ll be at your beck and call. Everything will be made out into the finest of details. It will be your perfect day. I promise I can do this for you.”

The room grew quiet. Then Julianna smiled. The look transformed her face from beautiful to absolutely stunning.

Knowing that one day Julianna would be the one touching Dominic’s naked body, feeling the heat of his gaze on her skin filled Felicity’s mouth with a sour taste.

The thought sent a surge of unpleasantness through her. For a moment all she wanted to do was stand up and leave. Leave the beautiful woman with her soon to be mate. They’d make incredibly beautiful children together.

Something hardened in her. This was the opportunity of a lifetime and she wouldn’t throw it away out of jealousy. No matter how badly she wished she was in Julianna’s place.

“Yes, I want her,” said Julianna.

Lucas grinned. “I second that.”

Felicity kept her back straight as she glanced between Dominic and Lady Blackmoore. Her fate rested in their hands.

Dominic crossed his arms across his chest and scowled at them all.

Well, she had his answer.

Lady Blackmoore was a different matter, and she was smart. She hadn’t missed the awkward exchange between Dominic and her. However, she also kept looking over her designs with a keen eye. Like she was actually considering it.

Felicity waited on bated breath.

“No.” That came from Dominic and didn’t surprise her.

However, Lady Blackmoore stood with her lips pressing into a firm line.

"I agree she'd make a fine planner for the occasion." Felicity folded her hands together and squeezed to keep from bursting from the seat of her pants like she wanted to. "However, I have a few concerns." Instantly Felicity's shoulders sagged.

"Well I have more than a few concerns," snapped Dominic. "I don't want her working for us."

Lucas looked at him with feigned shock. "And why not? You saw her work. It's good stuff."

*Yeah, why not,* Felicity wanted to say, but instead frowned.

"I don't want her working for us because—" he stopped himself short and once again tension filled the room like a suffocating blanket.

Felicity yearned to crack a window and let some fresh air in.

"Perhaps you should let it be your *bruid's* decision," Lucas said. His eyes danced with mischief.

Felicity wanted to high five him. Thanks to him she might just get this job.

"Dominic, if you'll come with me we can discuss these concerns together. In the meantime, Ms. Shaw you have the job." Lady Blackmoore held her hand out and Felicity shook it, unable to hide her smile.

"Thank you so much."

Dominic and his mother headed for the door, but at the last minute he turned around. "This isn't over."

It was a promise.

\* \* \*

Dominic followed his mother into the library. He knew where this was going but that didn't mean he liked it.

Only one thought possessed his mind—Felicity Shaw.

Even her name sounded good to him. It had an upbeat, feminine quality to it that pleased the ears. Something about Felicity Shaw intrigued him. After she left last night he found he wanted to know more about her. Hell, he wanted to know *everything* about her and not from some intel report but from her own mouth. Why he wanted any of this he had no clue, but like a hound catching the scent of prey, he had her scent locked inside him. And he wouldn't stop until he caught her.

Was she trying to kill him wearing a dress like that? That had been his first thought when he saw her. Hell, she looked good enough to eat. At first sight his cock had sprung up like a boy seeing his first pair of tits. She did it on purpose. No doubt about that. She wanted to taunt him for slighting her last night.

Well, he had plans to take care of that. To take care of them both in the process.

For some reason he found himself enjoying this immensely. Anticipation and excitement filled his veins like hot, thick blood. Both were feelings he hadn't felt in ages. Helena had turned from burning hot to lukewarm. Then as time passed lukewarm faded to frigid. One hundred years into their blood bond and he had a mate who couldn't stand his touch, but would easily take his money to lavish herself with jewelry and fine clothes.

Oddly, thinking about her now didn't fill him with the kind of anger it had before. He almost smiled. Soon Helena would be nothing to him. Not even a distant bad memory. She deserved far worse from him.

His mother turned to him. "What is she to you?"

Dominic crossed his arms. He adored his mother but being around someone for your whole life when that life lasted a *very* long time grew tiresome. His mother was the perfect political icon, which meant she knew when to be polite and smile and when to push straight to the point. Now she chose the latter.

"Yesterday I thought she was Julianna Greenwich and my soon to be *bruid*. Then I learn she's the damn planner. How the hell was I to know? They both have long blond hair, and the only picture I had of her was fuzzy and old."

"Why were you wrapped around each other yesterday? I will not hire her if this is going to be a problem, Dominic. Have you shared such intimacies with Lady Julianna or is this only a problem you have for Ms. Shaw?"

"No," he said. Just the thought of touching the immaculately beautiful Julianna made his fangs retreat. He had no curiosity in finding out what made Julianna tick. Just the thought of having a conversation with her made his head ache. Her life consisted of parties, clothes, and riches. So much like Helena.

Felicity Shaw was not like that. There was more to her. He saw that in the way her eyes spit fire at him last night and then today. *No one* dared to get angry with him aside from his closest friends and family. She didn't fear him though.

"Are you saying that you're attracted to Ms. Shaw because you thought she was Julianna or because you simply are?"

Dominic never backed down from how he felt. Once he made a decision he stuck to it. If he wanted something he got it. If he needed to tell someone pertinent information he did that too. He wasn't about to change now. Direct worked best to those he was close to.

"I'm attracted to her yes. As to your other question, while I did think she was Julianna yesterday, my attraction has nothing to do with the fact that I thought she was my *bruid*; and no I have not had 'intimacies' with Julianna Greenwich. She holds no favor over me." At all.

His mother gasped. "But she's to be your *bruid*!"

"Not of my choice." Even someone such as him had to bend sometimes, bend to the need of others and in this case, he needed a certain blue-blood socialite to help earn him the

nomination for president. He would become the next president and representative for the vampires, but no one in the history of the council has ever become president without a blood bonded mate. Someone blue-blooded, rich, quiet, and who knew how to keep her place. Julianna Greenwich fit that bill to a T.

None of this would have happened if his father hadn't caught the rare vampire disease, arromunia. Dom had moved on. He was ready to move into his father's steps and take over.

If Dom hadn't separated from Helena then none of this would be a problem. He was expected to have a *bruid*—a vampire mate to represent the women for the council. He could not run unmated and expect to win.

After Felicity left the estate last night, he'd called his brother Grayson to look into her. Grayson owned a security company that specialized in protecting vampires and *weres*. Some people always had targets on their back and no one, not even the immortal could always escape a murder attempt. Grayson and his team did excellent work but something his brother excelled at was gathering intel.

He looked into Felicity Shaw after she left last night and learned all about her. Her mother lived off an inheritance left to her by a dead husband. She took that money and squandered it badly—spending most of it on her very young and new “mate” who came from an even poorer background. According to Grayson, it looked like Felicity and her mother did not speak, and her father, a nameless figure, had never been in her life.

It looked like Mrs. Shaw was robbing the cradle and had left her daughter behind to fend for herself some years ago. The report also showed that Felicity had been searching for a job for over a year. She lived in a lower-income neighborhood with a beat-up car that still wasn't paid off and had outstanding bills and debts.

The amount of debt she carried along with her previous paying jobs, according to what she'd told them during the interview didn't add up. She would have to be a big spender to garner that kind of debt. Maybe even bigger than Helena. Just the thought brought a sour taste to his tongue. He didn't want the passionate Felicity Shaw to have anything to do with his *ex-bruid*.

“It may not be of your choice, Dominic but you must. The *weres* are pushing for the presidency which will give them majority control. Alpha *were* Zeke wishes to have control over everything. He wants to bring forth a law that will force men to seek their mates and claim them even from other packs. You know how dangerous that will be. He says their population is dying out. Rafe *were* Chief of the North, wishes to have *were* supremacy over the council. You know he'll vote and push and maybe even lead us to war to get the vampires off the council so that Zeke can rule. Zeke isn't the right man for this position, Dominic.”

“Mother, I know this,” he said.

“Then you know what's at stake if you don't get elected.” Her voice softened as she came towards him. She let her guard down and he saw the burning pain of his father's death

still lingering in her eyes. It had only been a few months since they'd lit his dead body and let the flames take him. "Your father was a great man. It'll be hard for any to take over in his place, but if anyone can do it, you can, my son."

"Mother, I'll win the presidency. Don't worry about it."

She nodded, blinking fast as tears filled her eyes, and then she gave him a tight smile. "Of course you and Lady Julianna will only help to prove to the people that you are traditional just as your father was. She will make a fine *bruid*."

Dominic looked away. He doubted that. He didn't like being quick to judge but Julianna didn't seem like the type to care about women's issues and that would be her responsibility as his queen.

A knot settled in his chest like a lead ball.

It felt wrong even thinking about mating with Julianna. It had nothing to do with the fact that they'd barely spoken when they met last night. Last night when he'd handed his family's ring to her. The same ring that he'd forcibly removed from Helena's finger not but a few months earlier. Did Julianna say anything? No, she just tipped her lips into a gracious smile then left for her rooms.

He'd hoped that maybe once he met Julianna that same fire he'd felt for Felicity Shaw would be there. He'd thought that maybe, just maybe, he'd been so long without a bedmate that his lust-filled mind had overtaken him.

But then he and Julianna sat and talked quite genially over a glass of blood and he'd never been more bored. She was not passionate. She did not fire his blood. She didn't even capture his interest. He'd rather read an encyclopedia on insects than talk to her. It had been that bad. Of course, it didn't help that all he'd wanted to do was go after Felicity. He had been unable to stop replaying their short time together.

Julianna did nothing for him.

He certainly did not have fantasies of pulling her expensive dress up, touching her wetness, then filling her over and again with his cock.

Nope. Not at all.

Even the thought of doing such a thing with the doll-like Julianna made his skin shrivel like a prune.

But he had to do it. His mother was right. He needed a *bruid* before he ran for office and there wasn't much time for that. He needed one famous enough that everyone already knew her and would accept her graciously. Julianna would fit the part perfectly. Even her father was ready with his constituents to back his political campaign. All he had to do was mate with Julianna.

He'd been thinking it through since last night and could only come up with one decision. He must take Felicity as his mistress.

A slow smile curled over his lips.

“What’s that look?” his mother asked warily.

He flicked his gaze to hers and smiled for real. “It’s nothing. Just making plans. Let’s get back to our guests now, shall we?”

He turned for the door but his mother grabbed his arm and tugged. He turned back to her, one questioning brow raised.

“Son, you will mate with Julianna, won’t you?”

“Of course.”

Another unwanted mate to be saddled with. He’d done it before for five hundred years. He could do it again. Anything for his people. Anything to keep the *weres*, especially Zeke, from taking over. That would put three *weres* against two vampires on the council. He couldn’t have that. Not when his father had taken that seat for more than four hundred and fifty years.

“What about Ms. Shaw?” she asked. “I don’t have to give her the job. I can make this all go away. You know it’s for the best.”

Dominic regarded at the door, envisioning Felicity sitting on the sofa wearing that dress made to drive a man wild and looking nervous, sweet, and sexy all at the same time.

“She’ll be mine,” he said with finality. “Let her keep the job. It’ll matter not.”

“But—”

“That’s enough!” He said it with quiet menace and his mother nodded, her eyes falling to the floor.

Dominic entered the receiving room to find Felicity smiling up at his brother as if he’d just said something to make her laugh. A knot formed in his chest and he started for them with only one thought in mind—killing his brother—when Julianna stepped in front of him.

“Mr. Blackmoore,” she said softly and bowed her head. “If it pleases you I’ll take my leave to the bedroom now. I am very satisfied with the planner. Thank you.”

Shit. Dominic had almost forgotten about her. New *bruids* always moved into her soon-to-be mate’s home before the ceremony. It was a period for them to get to know each other better.

He inclined his head. “I’m glad it pleases you.”

She smiled again, somewhat stiffly, and though her looks were in abundance, nearly perfect, nothing in him stirred for her. Nothing at all.

She left and then Lucas started speaking. Dominic didn’t like several things about this.

For one, he didn’t like how close he stood to Felicity.

For two, he didn’t like how his brother used his charming voice to get into women’s beds. Which was exactly what he was doing right now.

For three, he absolutely wanted to slam his fist into his brother’s face at what came out of his mouth.

“I’ll tell you what. I’ll get you two tickets for my show tomorrow night. It’s a smaller gig down at the Coyote Theater. You can bring your friend you were telling me about.”

Felicity looked like she'd just been notified she'd won a large sum of money. Dom closed in on them.

He couldn't keep the growl out of his voice. "What's going on here?"

Felicity jerked at the sound of his voice and he instantly cooled it, not liking the unease flashing in her eyes.

"Lucas was just inviting me to a concert of his tomorrow." She turned back to Luc. "I'd love to go. I mean really, I can't even tell you how excited I am! Beth is going to go *nuts*." She had a bright, captivating smile and even her eyes glittered when she smiled.

The fact that Lucas put that look on her face sent another growl from his throat.

Lucas sent him a real look this time. Not one with a stupid grin. "*Ne yanlish?*" he asked in their native tongue of Turkish. They rarely used it anymore but in times of discretion, it worked nicely.

"*O benim.*" *She is mine*, answered Dominic.

Lucas straightened slowly from Felicity, his eyes darkening. "*Dikktali Olmak.*" *Take care*, he said in Turkish, a gentle warning.

"I will," he answered in English.

Lucas left and the door closed locking him and Felicity in the room.

She noticed it at about the same time as her eyes widened then darted about the room realizing they were alone.

His body started to burn as he breathed in her feminine scent. He liked it best this way. Her scent, not mixed with the others'. It saturated the room with its soft femininity. The pulse at her throat thumped faster and all he wanted to do was wrap her hair around his fist and plunge his fangs into her neck. Taste her. Drink her. She would like it. He knew it somewhere deep inside him. Her sexy little fangs would drop as her blood grew warm and her sex wet as her blood coated his tongue.

His cock grew hard in his slacks.

"Ms. Shaw," he said, loving the way she shivered. "You got the job."

"I-I think I'll just be going."

She tried to dart to the side but his hand shot out and curled over the shawl on her shoulders. Her chest rose and fell in hard waves. She felt this too. This incredible connection that existed between only them. He could howl his joy to the world. It wasn't his lust-clogged mind, devoid of sex for so long that felt this longing. They both felt it. And it was real.

"What are you doing?" she breathed, her eyes skidding longingly to the door.

He took a step closer and she backed up. This went on several more steps until her back hit the brick fireplace.

"Something I've wanted to do all day," he said honestly.

Her eyes locked on his—bright, wide eyes he could stare into all day.

"What's that?" she said, whispering.

Dom leaned into her, loving the way her body cradled his so well. As if they fit. He wanted to savor this moment, to savor her. It was a fierce need starting to boil inside him that urged him to touch her everywhere, to learn her, to run his lips across her body, to taste her warm skin, and to breathe in her luscious scent.

He curled her into his body. She made a soft noise in the back of her throat. He wanted to hear more of those sensual sounds and to be the one making her do it.

Using his nose he pushed her wavy hair off one shoulder then buried his face in her neck. Her body shuddered against him, her rapid pulse beating against his lips revealing her excitement. He breathed in her sultry mix of musky woman and sweetness. God, how good she would taste. His mouth watered and he didn't hesitate to run his tongue up the column of her neck.

Another shudder.

She latched onto the lapels of his jacket as if to keep him from leaving. Fine by him. His body more than agreed—it insisted.

Her hips arched against him and he growled. Keeping one arm squeezed tightly around her so she couldn't go anywhere, he grabbed a fist full of her thick curling hair. He loved the way it felt in his fist.

“Do you have any idea what I want to do to you?” he said against her neck.

Mutely, she shook her head. Her heavy breathing teased his ears.

He tugged just enough to arch her neck, bending it to elongate the beautiful creamy flesh. He ran his tongue across her thumping pulse as his fangs extended, pulsating like his cock, urging him to bite down.

He ran his fangs across her trembling throat, grazing the surface. “I want to penetrate you. I want to fill every part of you.” She made a soft mewling noise that fed the beast inside him. “I want your neck, in your body, in your mouth, *everywhere*. You'll give it to me, won't you, Felicity?”

She trembled, her hands shaking against his jacket.

He grazed her again with his fangs as his other hand slipped down over the soft material of her clingy dress to cup her backside. They both groaned. He palmed her, learning and loving the feel of her plump flesh. It had just enough give, more than enough give actually, to drive a man wild with ideas. Ideas such as spanking her rounded flesh and watching the little waves spread across one cheek to the other, or of nibbling the flesh before sinking his fangs inside a trembling globe.

He'd always enjoyed a nice handful in the backside but now he fucking *loved* it.

His tongue snaked along the shell of her ear. “You'll give yourself to me, won't you?” he said, demand lacing his words.

Her hips pumped subtly against him, searching for something he was more than ready to give her.

“So eager, sweets,” he said kissing his way down the other side of her neck. He loved the way she trembled beneath him. It made him feel powerful like he could knock down a sixty-story building with the flick of his pinky. Fuck he felt alive!

“Dom.” Her voice was a ragged whisper laced with need. A need he more than understood. His name on her lips broke something inside him. It broke something he hadn’t known he’d been holding back—his control.

With a throaty grunt he snapped her head back by her hair, found her eyes with his, and then crushed their mouths together. She responded first, arms sweeping up around his neck to pull him even closer, crushing her soft breasts against him. Then her tongue thrust into his mouth licking at him with sensual strokes.

He went wild.

Using his hand on her backside, he cupped her then pulled her up against his erection, rocking her. She made another soft sound, one so fucking hot he wanted to remember it forever, then she started grinding herself against his cock. She aligned the parts just right so she could grind herself up his length and bump against the head of him. *Perfect.*

He wanted to tear his head away, bury his fangs in her throat, and sink his cock into her wet folds but he didn’t want to end the kiss. The taste of her flooded his tongue. He’d never tasted anything so good. She tasted like sweet passion and gentle woman.

He knew then he’d do anything for her. He’d kill and fight. He’d lay down his life for her. He’d take his people to war for her.

*Anything* for her.

Because for the first time in his life he felt something for another person that was so alive and real inside him that he knew he’d never find this again. This wild passion, this need to know her, to have her was a new, foreign experience he wanted to savor. Even as they strained against each other, ragged breaths mingling, hands clenching, he knew this singular feeling would never come again. She was meant to be his.

Nothing else could explain the nearly uncontrollable craving roaring in his head that screamed at him to fuck her right here, to plant his seed in her. He wanted that. He wanted a child with her, no, several children with her. He didn’t know why, but with her tongue softly snaking across his he didn’t question it.

Then kissing her wasn’t enough.

He needed to feel bare skin, to feel her warm flesh thriving against his palms. Deftly, he slipped his hand under her dress and cupped bare, glorious flesh in his palm. The tips of his fingers felt the scratchy material of lace resting between her cheeks. A damn thong. He groaned like a dying man. She was surely trying to kill him.

She broke away, her glazed eyes staring at him with hunger. Her eyes were low-lidded, expression soft but needy. Her lips were wet and swollen. The tips of her little white fangs peeked out from beneath her top lip and his cock leaked at the sight.

She was so damned beautiful. He'd never seen anything lovelier. Little white fangs. Such a young vampire, couldn't control her response with how aroused she was. As her lips parted to accommodate her panting breaths, he couldn't keep from tugging her hair to study those beautiful sharp points.

"I want your bite," he growled.

She blinked slowly with surprise, and then her eyelids lowered again into a smoky expression. Her eyes dropped to his neck and her pink tongue darted out to lick her lips.

"Yes," she said, her voice nothing more than a breath.

His sac pulled up firm and tight. He might not make it through her bite but hell if he wouldn't try. "Do it," he said.

A different kind of hunger flashed in her eyes, beautifully mixing with the sensual haze. She nodded again and he guided her to his neck by her hair.

He hadn't anticipated it.

He didn't know what it would be like.

It'd been *so damned* long since someone had taken from him.

He'd forgotten how fucking great it felt.

Felicity buried her lips against his neck in an open-mouthed kiss, her heavy breaths panting against him. Her sweet little tongue licked up, preparing him for her bite. He kept his hand on her ass, rocking her against his cock.

Fuck he was going to come from this. He just knew it. And he couldn't wait.

Sharp points grazed his skin. One nicked him like a razor blade and she let out a fluttering sigh as her tongue lapped at him.

His patience snapped. "Fucking hell, do it already!"

She moaned then pressed her fangs to his neck and slowly, so fucking slowly, started to sink them into him. She wasn't *that* eager because she was savoring this like it was a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Her fangs were halfway in, his cock was ready to explode, the heavy scent of their arousal saturated the room like a sensual cloud when the door opened and ruined everything.

Felicity jumped back from him nearly tearing his neck in the process as she guiltily pressed as far back into the wall as she could to keep from being seen.

Dom was much slower to turn.

He might very well take off the person's head who dared to intrude on them.

Turning, he put room between him and Felicity, albeit not much. He intended to finish what they'd started, and it would end with his cock buried deeply inside her and his fangs in her throat.

His mother stood at the door with a blank expression on her face. A look that said she could have walked in on them playing a game of chess for all she saw. Lady Blackmoore had a hell of a poker face.

“What do you want?”

She lifted an envelope. “Ms. Shaw’s pay. She needs to begin work immediately. The ceremony will be in a month just two days before the election. Her family has agreed on the date.”

Felicity walked past him. Her cheeks burned red, her hair was a mess in an unmistakable way, but still she held her chin high. Damn, he was proud of her. Not many could keep their cool around his mother let alone in a situation such as this.

“Thank you, Lady Blackmoore. I’ll need Lady Greenwich’s contact information so that I can deal directly with her,” Felicity said.

Dominic strode forward. “That won’t be necessary. You’ll be going through me for this job.”

Felicity and his mother turned to him with arched eyebrows. “You want me to plan the bonding ceremony with you?” Felicity said slowly.

His mother narrowed her eyes on him. “You know nothing of planning an event like this.”

Dominic crossed his arms. “I’ve been to as many events and bonding ceremonies as you have, mother. I want a say in what goes down. You have Julianna’s colors in mind. Unless you need to ask her something specific, you’ll go through me.”

Anger flashed in Felicity’s eyes making the light blue color turn darker. He liked that about her too. She had expressive eyes.

His mother handed Felicity the envelope then grabbed her by the arm. “I’ll just see her out.”

“That won’t be necessary,” Dom said between clenched teeth.

His mother already had Felicity to the door. “Why don’t you just relax, honey, you’ve had a long day.”

With that she closed the door and took his woman away.

*His woman.*

He liked the sound of that.

He smiled not knowing just how wicked of a smile it was.

## END OF SELECTION

Thank you so much for reading! If you liked this then look for it on the Kindle, Nook, Kobo, and other devices come around February 27<sup>th</sup>.

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