

Her Wounded Dragon



The MacLomain Series: Viking Ancestors' Kin
Book 4.5
By
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Chapter One



“YOU DID *WHAT?*” Kage frowned at his sister and braced his throbbing head in his hands. “It’s never gonna happen. I don’t date.”

“But you need to.” Erica rolled her eyes at the lacy black bra hanging over the back of his couch. “A solid date with a woman you don’t want gone by—”

She snapped her mouth shut when a woman sauntered out of the bedroom minus a bra beneath her skimpy white T-shirt, pecked him on the cheek and whispered, “Pick up where we left off later?” before she smirked at Erica and left.

“Pretty sure of herself, eh?” Erica muttered as she plunked down beside him at the kitchen island.

“They all are,” he said absently, staring at his laptop. “I like confident women.”

“And women who don’t want more than sex,” she commented.

“That too,” he agreed, about to delete a reply to an email he never sent.

The truth was he hadn’t screwed the woman who just left but merely let her sleep in his bed. But that sure as hell wasn’t Erica’s business. It wasn’t anyone’s business. Because it didn’t fit the profile he worked hard to maintain.

“I wouldn’t delete that email if I were you.” Amusement lit Erica’s eyes. “You contacted Gerri Wilder for a date. That’s not something you back out of once you’ve committed.”

“Hell, yeah it is,” he muttered. “Considering you’re the one who contacted her without my permission. I don’t mind being telepathically connected, but stealing my password’s pretty shitty, Sis.” He narrowed his eyes at her. “Especially seeing how I’m letting you crash at my place while you’re hiding from your sisters and every other damn Viking dragon looking for you.”

“Hey, I’m not the only one hiding,” Erica pointed out as she typed a reply to Gerri that he’d be there at 5:00 PM sharp and hit send. “I’ve just been doing it for a lot less time.” She cocked a brow at him. “And they’re *our* sisters by the way.”

Maybe to her. To him they were just strangers in need of protection.

“I’m not going to a dating service,” he grunted.

“Oh, you’ll go.” Erica gave him a knowing look. “You might not be a big believer in love, but we both know how good Gerri Wilder is at bringing people together, and we both know this might be your only hope of finding you-know-who.” She shrugged. “Besides, I already answered her questions about what you’re looking for in a woman.”

By you-know-who, she meant his dragon mate. And if she based the answers to Gerri’s questions on the types of women he usually kept company with, then she got it all wrong.

“Like I said, it’s not gonna happen.” He downed the rest of his coffee. “Her dating agency is too far away.”

“Nothing’s too far away, and you know it.” She shook her head and gestured to a door off his kitchen that would lead anywhere he wanted to go. “A simple chant takes you to your place in Maine, another takes you anywhere else in the world.”

True. Dragon magic had its benefits.

“I’m needed back on base,” he countered as he refilled his mug.

“You’re on leave right now.”

When he frowned in momentary confusion, she tapped her temple. “Don’t forget, I know most of what’s going on up there.”

Fuck. Having a sister in his life, no matter how temporarily, was going to take some getting used to. Better yet, one who was half dragon.

“I’m not going,” he said over his shoulder as he headed for his bedroom.

“Yes, you are,” Erica shot back, a grin in her voice. “And I look forward to meeting the woman of your dreams.”

Kage took a few more swigs of coffee and enjoyed the blaze of the brew going down, before he started the shower, braced his hands on the sink and stared at the mirror. His eyes were red-rimmed from too much drinking the night before, but he didn’t care. In fact, he didn’t care about anything anymore, except for staying one step ahead of an enemy his estranged family didn’t know existed until recently. Sometimes that meant drinking a shitload of whiskey and chasing more ass than usual.

Yet as he stood beneath the hot water a few minutes later, only one ass came to mind. One he’d dreamt about but knew he had to stay away from. He didn’t do love and he sure as shit didn’t do dragon mates. Not now. Not ever. Or everything might go to hell.

But he knew better than to blow off the infamous Gerri Wilder and her Paranormal Dating Agency.

Damn Erica.

“Hell, Kage, you’re overthinking this man,” he muttered to himself.

After all, a date was just a date, right? Just like all the rest, she’d end up in his bed then leave the next morning with a smile on her face. No biggie. Everybody wins.

So, decision made. He’d get this done then go back to what he did best.

Tracking the enemy.

“Jesus H. Christ, is that him, Viv?” Julie whispered, her eyes wide and fixated on the guy who had just swung off his motorcycle and was heading inside. “Tell me that’s not him.”

Vivienne lowered her thick glasses and narrowed her eyes at him only to have red cloud her vision. She ignored the spike in her temperature and nodded. “Yup, that’s him. Let’s go.”

“Are you kidding me?” Julie stuttered as Vivienne—AKA Viv—got out. “When I signed up for this you didn’t tell me he was going to look like *that*.” She kept rattling on as Viv walked around the convertible and opened the passenger door. “Did you see that butt? Those muscles?” Julie continued rambling as Viv pulled her out. “Those broad shoulders? Tats?” She shook her head. “I haven’t even seen his face yet, and I already know I can’t do this!”

“Of course you can, sweetie,” Viv assured, her voice as calm as she could manage given her circumstances. It wasn’t every day that she came across an unknown dragon shifter. Especially one of the opposite sex. And certainly not one of his caliber. “All you have to do is go in there looking like you do with that calm, cool and collected attitude you’re so good at.”

“Um, I think you’ve got it all turned around.” Julie tugged at her tight skirt. “You just described yourself, Viv.” The corner of her mouth curled up. “Or at least the side you show the world.”

“Exactly,” Viv said. “And you can do the same.”

“But I’m your quirky sidekick,” Julie argued. “Your rock star assistant who keeps everything in order.”

“And you are. Right now.” Viv ushered her along. “You’re helping me keep things in order in a *big* way. Huge really.”

“Yeah, like the guy that just walked inside.” Julie’s eyes widened. “Did you see how tall he was? I’d guess over six feet easy!”

Six or seven inches over to be exact based on her dreams.

Male dragon shifters were not small, human or otherwise.

“I just...aw, hell, you know I love you, Viv.” Julie’s steps grew heavier the closer they got to the door. “But I think I signed up for more than I can handle.”

All right, quality control time.

Viv stopped, propped her glasses on her head, gripped Julie’s shoulders and met her eyes. “You look *amazing* in that outfit. Killer heels.” She widened her eyes, impressed. “And your hair? Absolutely stunning. You *can* do this.” Then she did the last thing she wanted to, but her best friend was flailing. She held her eyes and implemented dragon magic. “You will go into Gerri Wilder’s Paranormal Dating Agency and be a confident, self-assured woman looking for a date.” She shook her head. “That guy isn’t anything you can’t handle.”

Wide-eyed and gullible, Julie appeared convinced. Suddenly she blinked several times as though waking up. Her eyes narrowed. “Tell me you didn’t just use dragon magic on me.”

“I didn’t because I’m human just like you.” She offered the doe-eyed look that usually got her off the hook. “Remember?”

That was her story when she walked into Gerri’s dating agency, and she was sticking to it.

She’d never know how Julie could see past her magic like that. Sure, Jules had come in contact with enough dragons snooping around in Winter Harbor, but still. Maybe it was because Viv’s magic was different. Kind of ancient, if you wanted to get right down to it. Or perhaps it was because she hadn’t embraced her dragon in ages, so she really was more human than not nowadays.

“You *did* just use magic on me,” Julie exclaimed, disappointed. “Not cool, cupcake.”

Viv sighed and caught her wrist when Julie headed back for the car. The nickname cupcake was only reserved for weak moments. A little nickname they would throw at each other because cupcakes were their weakness. And lately, by all accounts, men.

“Please, Jules.” Viv skipped all the bullshit, squeezed Julie’s hand and met her eyes. “I really need you to do this for me. More than I’ve ever needed anything.”

Their eyes held for a long moment. Julie knew. She understood Viv’s need to scope him out. To see why she dreamt about him so much. More recently, she had the strongest feeling he was close. Coming. More than that, she sensed he was her ticket to get close to Hallstein, her arch enemy. So when Gerri Wilder’s name started popping up in her dreams, she knew it was all connected. Determined to remain anonymous, she contacted Gerri under Julie’s name and got the ball rolling.

“I still don’t see why you want me to do this when you’re the one whose been dreaming about him,” Julie complained. “Chances are if you two are somehow dragonly connected, then he’s going to see right through this masquerade.” She shook her head. “And so will Gerri Wilder based on what I’ve heard about her.”

“I just need to feel him out,” Vivienne said. And get closer to the enemy. “That means not being the center of attention because we’re being set up.”

Julie kept eying her before she finally murmured, “Okay,” and smoothed her hands over the sexy but tasteful clothes Viv had picked out for her. “I’ll do this. But only because I love you.” Any heaviness that had settled between them lifted as she eyed Viv’s outfit. “Are you sure you wanna look like that, though? It’s...um...kind of not good. Or should I say, not you.”

“Yes, I’m sure.” Not *her* was precisely what she was going for. “This is exactly how I want to look.”

And never was she more thankful for her decision than when Gerri invited them in a few minutes later and *he* walked into the sitting area. As he slowly licked the frosting off, of all things, a cupcake, she was damn glad she wasn’t herself in the least. If anything, she was thanking Odin she had the ability to chant away arousal. Because all she could envision was his tongue licking something else altogether different than that cupcake.

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About the Author



Sky Purington is the bestselling author of over thirty novels and several novellas. A New Englander born and bred who recently moved to Virginia, Sky was raised hearing stories of folklore, myth, and legend. When combined with a love for nature, romance, and time-travel, elements from the stories of her youth found release in her books.

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