

BP

SHIELA STEWART

Seducing
THE
DARKNESS

BOOK 1 IN THE DARKNESS SERIES

Seducing the Darkness

by Shiela Stewart

Breathless Press
Calgary, Alberta
www.breathlesspress.com

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously and are not to be construed as real. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, organizations, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Seducing the Darkness
Copyright© 2009 Shiela Stewart

ISBN: 978-0-9782744-4-3

Cover Artist: Justyn Perry
Editor: Shiela Stewart

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced electronically or in print without written permission, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in reviews.

Breathless Press
www.breathlesspress.com

*For my children, Christopher,
Matthew, and Angela.*

Never give up on your dreams.

CHAPTER ONE

Jacob's Cove, 2025
2 weeks before the total eclipse of the sun

That damn itch between her shoulder blades was driving her nuts. It had started about a week ago and hadn't let up. It wasn't the kind of itch that warranted scratching, but the kind that nagged at you from the inside. The kind that told her there was bad news in the air. She just didn't know when it would happen.

Rolling her shoulders, Trinity headed to her office. The sun was setting, and she had approximately two hours before she had to head out into the night. With her favorite black mug in hand, she sat down at her computer and booted it up.

"Hello, sexy. How may I service you today?" the strong, male voice retorted from the computer.

Smiling, Trinity lifted her cup and sipped. She never grew tired of that humorous greeting her pal, Jonah, had added to her start up menu. There weren't many people she trusted, very few with whom she truly cared about, but Jonah was one of them. Though she'd only known him for six years, she felt as close to him as she would a brother. If she had a brother. Trinity still remembered the look on his face when she'd told him she was a creature of the night.

He'd laughed at her with a belly roll that was incredibly infectious; that was until she changed into the vampire she was. His laughter had died off quickly, but thankfully, fear hadn't taken its place. He'd

sworn, using several colorful phrases, before reaching out to touch her sharp pointed incisors with his fingers.

"Well hell." Then he'd sat down and asked a million questions.

She hadn't regretted telling him for a moment.

"Show me the headlines in today's news. View only," she called out to the computer as she set her cup down and licked the remaining blood from her lips. It had just the right amount of cinnamon. Often she didn't get it right, and it ended up tasting bitter and too strong.

Scanning the headlines, Trinity frowned. The police were out another five officers, apparently. It was the third time this year that the police services had lost multiple officers. Damn pansy assed cops, couldn't handle the darkness and the creatures that lived in it. If they opened their minds to the possibilities, then they might not be so shocked when they saw a vampire devouring its prey.

Not that she approved of her kind taking innocent humans for a snack, but it was a fact of life. There were dark forces in the world, and it was time people stopped turning a blind eye to them. That's where she came in. Since the cops didn't know how to deal with the night creatures, she had to.

She continued to scan the headlines and saw that there had been several break-ins to private homes. Two armed robberies, fights on the streets, and a few fires that had destroyed some poor families' lives. People were acting like lunatics lately. Something was in the air.

Then the small photo of a smiling young girl caught her attention. Beneath it a caption no more than three lines long indicated she was the latest missing girl. It sickened her that a mere tiny caption was all the poor girl received. She was a living breathing human being, and now she was missing and all the damn paper could spare was a tiny caption at the bottom left hand side of the page.

Assholes!

Olivia Holloway had long red hair, deep green eyes, and was a mere thirteen. She was five-foot-three and one hundred and ten pounds. Last seen Wednesday morning wearing jeans and a blue t-shirt, heading to school.

She'd never made it.

Trinity memorized her features and placed the article alongside that of the first missing girl.

Kari Tanner had just turned sixteen when she'd gone missing three days earlier. She'd told her mother she was heading to the store and never returned home. And it seemed as if the cops had no leads. No news there, half of the police force was heading for places unknown

because they were too damn chicken to stay and deal with what they'd seen.

Trinity closed up the document, then checked her email. She had a pile of jokes, as usual, all from Jonah. Two statements that her bills were due in one week. She'd get to paying them tomorrow. Three messages from clients and one from a potential client. She checked out the potential first, read over his needs then sent him a reply. Looked like she had another job coming in soon. Good. The more the better; they helped pay the bills.

She replied to the other clients, then shut her computer down.

"Don't leave! I was enjoying your touch."

Laughing, Trinity hit the power button and shut off the computer. That Jonah, what a comic.



His crew was getting restless, eager to get out and find another sacrifice. Since they'd found out about the rising of the king, they'd been overly impatient. It was up to Chaos to keep them in line. He was in charge of his own small army of vampires, loyal subjects that looked to him for guidance and support. Some had been with him for decades, some as recently as the day before. But he knew how to control his soldiers, and they knew not to cross him. Chaos didn't take defiance and deception lightly. He knew what his subjects needed and was more than eager to give them what they wanted. Provided they obeyed him.

They came as he'd instructed, to the great hall in the church where they gathered for every meeting. It was the perfect set-up. No one would think a church would house a race of vampires as old as time. And those who entered that looked to the Lord for guidance were either turned away or taken into the race with one quick bite. That was how his race was growing faster each day, and his enemy's were not.

He watched the crowds of vampires mull about, chatting to one another, more than likely about the upcoming rising. It was a thrilling time to be a vampire, and he understood everyone's excitement.

But it was time to settle down.

Chaos stood up, his large frame looming over the crowd. He took pride in his size. Well over six feet three inches, he weighed a hefty two fifty. His broad shoulders looked even more menacing with the black leather cape he habitually wore. He liked the look. He also liked pulling his hair away from his face to show off the strength in his cheeks and chin. The only part of his face he disliked was his yellow

eyes.

Though he had been welcomed into the family by King Avadur, more years ago than he could remember, he did not have the translucent blue eyes or the abilities of his creator. There was only one surviving descendant of the king, and he was Chaos' enemy.

Basil Hawthorn, and the last name was laughable. He'd taken it from the minion butler who'd helped him escape from Avadur's hold. Basil was the king's only blood heir, though undeserving of it. Since Avadur's banishment ten years earlier, Basil had done nothing to keep his race from crumbling. All he had were a few stragglers that clung to him simply because he was now the reigning king. But he did nothing to deserve it. The human race outnumbered the vampires, and Basil did nothing to prevent it.

That was where Chaos came in.

As he opened his mouth to speak into the microphone, his sharp teeth slid over his lower lip. He didn't speak but simply closed his lips around his index finger and thumb and blew out a whistle that pierced through the conversation.

All eyes turned to him, and silence filled the room.

"Thank you all for coming. I understand you're excited and restless, but time will pass quickly enough and soon our time will come. Until then, you need to be patient. We will not gather another sacrifice for two more days."

The moans in the room didn't faze him one bit.

"Until then, I have arranged for a bit of a surprise." He waved his hand and four other vampires dressed in black robes walked into the room, each with a human tied and gagged in their clutches. Two males, two females.

"Release the party favors," Chaos ordered with a smile on his lips.

The robed men released their victims, then stepped to the side to watch.

The noise level was horrendous as the vampires rushed to the toys they had been given. The screams from the humans could barely be heard over the rush.

Chaos stepped back and watched as his people took their turns with each victim. They were tossed from person to person, their naked forms being groped, prodded, and pinched by clawed hands. Mouths not yet ready to draw blood suckled and nibbled on flesh ripe and ready. He smiled as a batch of vampires lifted one blonde in the air while another devoured what was ripe between her legs.

Clothing flew in the air as his people disrobed. He sat back and let

the activity lull him. He loved to watch his people at work, loved the way they took what they wanted from a race that refused to believe or accept their kind.

To most, rape was hideous, unacceptable. To Chaos it was a joy. He loved to watch, loved to participate. And he loved it when their life forms were taken in one quick bite. The human race was so delicious in every way, and he'd had plenty in his time.

By the end of the month, he would have more.



The sun had set three hours earlier, yet everything was relatively quiet. Where was everyone? Or better yet, where were the vampires? Usually on her patrols, Trinity came across several, either mulling about or attempting to capture prey. Tonight, it was eerily calm.

Something was up.

For centuries now, the vampires had roamed, claiming victims for their mate, or enslaving them for sex or blood, or simply devouring them for nourishment. Though she was a full-blooded vampire, Trinity chose not to follow in her race's footsteps. She bought her blood from a friend at a butcher shop and that was just how she liked it.

Sure, it lacked in that certain taste she had come to desire for the past seven years, but the blood that had been her lifeline then was not available to her now. And never would be again.

Basil had been her blood source, her lover, her everything. Until the bastard had cheated on her.

It was best she didn't go there again. Every time she thought about Basil and his betrayal, her heart threatened to explode.

She rolled her shoulders again. That damn itch irritated the hell out of her.

Shaking it off, Trinity continued walking through the dark streets. The poverty-stricken section of the city was prime feeding ground for the vampires yet tonight, everything was still. She didn't like it. Sure, it was great that the humans were safe, that they weren't being hunted down and their blood spilled from soft pliable veins. But why?

Why was it so damn quiet?

Usually Chaos had his men on patrol, yet tonight, not a soul was to be found. Trinity supposed she should be thankful because if Chaos's men weren't out it meant Basil wouldn't be out either. The last thing she needed was to run into the cheating bastard she had the misfortune of still being in love with.

She'd worked side by side with Basil once, trying to keep Chaos,

his nemesis, from taking out the human race. And now that she was on her own, she continued the pursuit.

Cruising the streets on foot, Trinity watched as a prostitute saddled up to a car, her long legs dressed in fire engine red fish net stockings, the dark skirt she wore barely covering her ass. Trinity moved just a bit closer, trying to catch the scent of the person in the car, leery that he might be a vampire on the prowl. When all she smelt was cheap cologne, she backed off and watched as the woman climbed into the car. Moments later, the brunette's head disappeared and the scent of male arousal filled the air.

Someone was getting a blow-job.

By her calculations, it took no more than ten minutes before the brunette's head popped back up. She slid from the car, adjusted her tank top and wiped her mouth. The cash she'd just been paid was tucked between her ample cleavage.

Ten minutes and she probably got at least one fifty. Not bad, if you could handle the work. Trinity liked sex, sure, but she sure as hell wasn't about to sleep with a man for cash. Not even when she'd been struggling with money had she even thought to stoop that low.

Some things were sacred, and her body was one of them.

Though she'd been taken before she turned twenty, she had a body that most women would kill for. Her breasts were large, her waist was thin and her hips shapely. Hours of workouts and self ritualistic exercise provided her with that fabulous body. While she'd been sexually active,

Trinity had taken pride in her nympho-like stamina.

And once again her thoughts turned to Basil.

Would she ever get him out of her mind, out of her system? She sure as hell hoped so. Though it had only been days since she's walked out on him, she hoped time would heal her broken heart.

In the mean time, she needed to keep her mind on work. And what she needed most was a good fight. Now where the hell were all the bad vamps?



He stepped out of the shadows and watched as she moved along the darkened streets. She was such a beauty, her long, blood red hair sliding to and fro along the black leather jacket she habitually wore, touching the tip of that round gorgeous ass of hers clad in those skin tight jeans she so favored. She was tall, thin, and had a body any man would kill to touch. He'd done plenty of it in the time she'd been his.

She was a woman gifted with ample breasts, and she enjoyed showing them off. He loved how she displayed them in tight shirts budging open revealing more than enough cleavage and telling the viewer she wore nothing else. Her waist was thin, her hips curvy, and he could picture them now as he held onto her while she gyrated over top of him.

Trinity, his love. She would always be his, even if she thought differently.

Basil remembered with clarity, how she felt wrapped in his arms, how she tasted, and how she moaned his name in ecstasy. And he knew it was his fault he wasn't able to have her now.

The ache in his chest hadn't stilled for one moment since she'd walked out on him, and he doubted it ever would. He loved Trinity now as he had from the very first moment he'd seen her. Completely.

But he'd had to do it, had to make her hate him and had to make her leave him. For her own safety. Even if she didn't know it.

She walked with such grace. Not that of a runway model, but of a confident woman who knew what she wanted and just how to get it. He had always been in awe of how she managed to get into those skin tight jeans she loved to wear. They looked practically painted on, and having had the pleasure of touching that round scrumptious ass of hers, he knew you could feel every intimate part of her body through the jeans. And you had to love a woman who didn't wear underwear.

He'd been a fool and had lost her, but that didn't mean he had any intentions of staying away from her. He had to make sure she was safe.

Basil watched Trinity cross the street. He recognized her restlessness in the short stomp-like steps she took. She was frustrated, and he guessed it had something to do with the lack of vamps out tonight.

Basil had an inkling as to why it was so quiet, and he didn't like it one bit. Keeping his distance, he followed Trinity.

No one was going to harm her as long as he was alive.

CHAPTER TWO

The first thing Dante Vega thought when he entered the lush fancy house was, "WOW!" He hadn't come from money but had always craved it. He hadn't been blessed with fortune; instead, he'd had to struggle for everything he'd wanted in his life.

The people that lived in this gorgeous—and no doubt, very expensive—house hadn't wanted for anything.

He suddenly felt his worth as he was led into the sitting room decorated to fit a prince. He wore faded denims, his running shoes were worn, and the pale gray t-shirt stretched tight across his muscular chest boasted he was a sex machine. His sister was always nagging him to dress better. But he figured his good looks alone would get him places.

Still, he ran a hand through his black hair trying to smooth it into place in hopes he would feel less awkward in such an opulent home.

"Madam and Mr. Holloway will be with you momentarily, sir. Please, make yourself comfortable," the Butler supplied then curtly left the room.

Comfortable he was not, but he sat in the high backed antique linen chair. "Madam and Mr. Holloway will be with you momentarily," he mimicked in the nasal, snooty voice of the butler. "Make yourself

comfortable. Shit." He snorted and shook his head. The damn butler probably made more a year than he did.

"Mr. Vega?"

"One and the same." He stood as the elegant woman entered the room, a tall, thin brown haired man at her side. Look at Mr. and Mrs. Stinking Rich. "Mr. and Mrs. Holloway." He extended his left hand in a friendly manor.

"Thank you for coming. We were overjoyed to find someone available on such short notice."

Oh, he was more than available. Truth was, he was in a dry patch right now when it came to lucrative work. "You're lucky you caught me. I'd just wrapped up a case and was thinking of taking a vacation for a few days," he lied smoothly. What sort of businessman would he be if he told his clients he was desperate?

"While I am sure you were looking forward to the time off, what we are willing to pay you will make up for it." Mr. Holloway nodded as he took a seat on the sofa next to his wife. "You received our fax?"

"Yes, I did." The amount they were willing to pay him to find their missing daughter was twice what he normally charged and would go a long way to helping him out. "It was very thorough, but I like the personal aspect as well. It's easier to get a feel for who I'm looking for when I've seen where they live, how they live, and what they loved."

"Of course." Mr. Holloway clenched his wife's hand. "What can we get for you?"

"Some pictures of her would be great. Numbers of her friends, her classmates, teachers, anyone else that knew her. If she has a diary, I'd like to take a look at it. She might have revealed something in there that could lead me to her abductor," Dante explained when the wife opened her mouth to protest. He knew it was a personal item, but if it helped to find their daughter, then why not agree.

"Not a problem." Mr. Holloway turned to his wife.

"Anna, would you get that for Mr. Vega please."

She nodded, pulling her hand from her husband's to stand, then left the room silently.

"She's devastated," Mr. Holloway spoke up, catching Dante's attention. "Olivia is our only child. She's never given us a lick of trouble."

Until now, Dante pulled out his note pad from his pants pocket. "I can't imagine what you both must be going through, but I promise you, I will do everything in my power to find your daughter."

"I know you're not the most recommended investigator. I did my

research, Mr. Vega," he said, and Dante narrowed his eyes just a bit. "You're struggling right now, and quite frankly, I like that. I believe because you need the money you will put everything you have into finding my daughter. As of now, this case is your priority and I will make it worthwhile for you."

This was one of the reasons he hated the rich. They thought they could bully people with money. But, as it was, he needed the cash, so he would have to endure a little bullying. He stood when Mrs. Holloway entered the room, carrying a small floral box.

"I've put a few pictures of her in this case, as well as her journal and a list of names of people she is acquainted with." She held the box out to Dante. "I hope this helps."

He took the box from her, his hand brushing hers, and he wasn't the slightest bit surprised by its smoothness. "Anything you can give me helps. Would it be alright if I saw her room?"

"Yes, of course. I'll get Frederick to show you the way." She hurried from the room, her eyes glistening.

"As I said, she is devastated. Bring our daughter home, Mr. Vega," Mr. Holloway said as he stood, "and we will make it worth your while."

What did the guy think? That the promise of a shit load of money would give him reason to look harder for his kid? Fuck, people were such dinks. Money didn't mean dick when it came to a life. He'd look whether the person was rich or dirt poor. A life wasn't made of money, a life was sacred. All life was sacred.

Escorted by the butler to the second floor, Dante stepped into the fancy room and his brow wrinkled. Obviously Olivia liked pink and lace. The majority of the room was covered in the color. The walls were a dusty rose floral print, the curtains in deep fuchsia silk. The canopy bed was huge and draped in white silk and lace. There were enough pink throw pillows on the bed to supply a dozen beds.

Everything looked elegant and rich. And as he stepped further into the room, his scarred running shoes sunk in the soft white plush carpet.

"Shit," was all he said as he entered the room. Olivia definitely hadn't wanted for anything in this room. He headed to the bed, barely resisting sitting down to feel if it was as soft as it looked. Opening the nightstand beside the bed, he found a paperback novel. He picked it up and leafed through it. She was on chapter fifteen, and he didn't care to read through it to see what her taste was. He set the book back in

the drawer and walked to the dresser.

He caught his reflection in the mirror and frowned. Maybe he did need to dress a little better. He smoothed his hands over his dark head of hair and smiled. Nicer clothes would enhance his good looks. Something to think about.

He turned back to his job and examined the contents on Olivia's dresser. Make-up, brushes, lotions and cleaning products, nothing out of the ordinary here. He opened the first drawer and sighed. She liked clothing, apparently, and from the looks of it, only the best. Her wardrobe probably cost more than what he made in a year. He closed the drawers and went to the closet. More clothes and a shit load of shoes. "Jesus, what's with girls and shoes?" He shut the door and walked to the other nightstand. He found it empty and assumed this was where her journal had been.

She enjoyed pop music and had a wide variety of albums in her collection.

She was a girly girl, from his impression. And with the detailed report he got from the parents, a good and very loyal child.

So how did you manage to get yourself lost?



It was just after three in the afternoon when Trinity stepped out of the shower. She walked from the washroom to her bedroom completely naked, not worrying about the open windows. The sunlight didn't bother her because every window in the shop and apartments had been replaced with solar windows when she'd told Jonah about being a vampire. The sunlight still shone through the windows, but not with a lethal force. If she could avoid getting third degree sunburn, she most definitely would.

Her skin was slightly wrinkled and very pink from the steamy shower she'd just had. Her hair lay damp, clinging to her back as she headed for her closet.

She chose a black denim, sleeveless shirt and blue jeans. Picking the black lace bra from her drawer, she maneuvered her damp breasts into the cups then reached around the back to do up the clasp. She shifted the cups until they felt comfortable.

Slipping into her skin tight jeans, she bounced up and down drawing them over her butt. They were a pain in the ass to get into, but they felt like heaven when they were done up. She pulled on the shirt, doing up all the buttons but the top three. Her black lace bra peeked with a

tempting hint in the opening of her shirt that stretched across her full breasts. Pulling her hair back, she tied an elastic around it at the back of her head. She rarely let her hair down and almost always put it in a ponytail. Less chance of getting it caught in something, and not so easy for someone to grab hold of in a fight. She decided to forgo the contacts. She was mostly going to be working from home today, so hiding her translucent blue green eyes wasn't a necessity. Another trait she'd inherited from Basil.

She told herself to stop thinking about him and dabbed on a hint of perfume.

Grabbing the disks from her office, she headed out the door and down the adjoining stairway that led down to Jonah's offices. She could hear his familiar heavy metal music playing lightly in the background as she let herself in using her key card. When the light turned green and beeped for her to enter, she yanked the door open and headed for the sound of his whistling.

Because the music was loud enough that he more than likely hadn't heard her enter, she moved stealthily. She loved to scare him any chance she could. Her day wasn't complete until she did.

Baring her fanged incisors, she moved silently towards him as he worked in his office, where he fiddled with a computer. She inched towards him, ready to jump at him when he lifted his arm and sent a glass of icy water splashing into her face.

"A little less of the perfume next time and you might have me." Turning, he let out a belly roar at the site of her. Water was dripping from her face.

"Asshole." She wiped a hand across her face, annoyed that she hadn't scared him more than anything.

"Now is that anyway to talk to the man that has your money?"

She didn't bother to retract her teeth. "Give it up, jerk." She held her damp hand out to him, still annoyed. "You know, you could have fried the computer with that asinine and immature joke." She slapped the disks she had in her left hand against his chest. "Not to mention these."

He took the disks and set them on his desk. "Nah, these babies are fried, as dead as they're going to get." He patted the skeleton of a computer before him. "And as for the disks, they're sealed in a case and a little water won't kill them. Say please."

He smiled at her oh so charmingly, the dimples by his mouth sinking in even deeper. He had a soft, elegant sort of face, one that could easily stun you and make your heart do a little pitter-pat beneath your

chest. Good thing she was immune—for the most part—to his charms.

She bore her teeth and hissed her response. "In your dreams, pal."

"Oh, if only you knew what I dreamt." He winked at her in the way he always did, then turned to his desk. It was a sin for a man to have such long lashes and big sexy eyes. He opened the drawer and pulled out a white envelope. "At least call me God."

"I'll call you dead in a minute if you don't give it up." She yanked the envelope from his hands and opened it up. "Nice."

"Always is." The door to his office opened and he looked over and smiled. "Hey, beautiful."

As always, Jonah's face lit up when he saw his wife. Trinity envied their passion for one another. And it only reminded her of the love she still felt for the man that had broken her heart. Basil had looked at her like that once, too.

"You got laid last night, stop sucking up." Ariel leaned down and kissed Jonah on the lips before turning her attention to Trinity. "Hey Trin, how goes it?"

"What have I said about talking about your sex life in front of me? Ugh!" Trinity shuddered. "Things are as they always are. You?"

Ariel was an imposing sort of woman with a large frame. But oddly enough, her face, though somewhat gruff, had a gentle quality to it that made you feel comfortable around her.

"I got laid, enough said."

"Jesus." Shuddering again, Trinity tucked the envelope in her back pocket. She didn't need to hear about their sex life. There were just some things, Trinity believed, that you didn't share. "The codes and everything are on the disks for the Manchester firm. If they have any problems—"

"I'll call you. Hey, where you off to?" Jonah asked when she headed for the door.

"My office. I have new stuff to get to. Later, Ariel."

"See ya, Trin."

With her check in hand, Trinity headed back to her office. She had a few hours to work before sundown.



Trinity stood in the shadows and watched as a group of humans exited a local hang out called Buckeye's Bar. It was a known pick-off for her kind. Most of the humans that came and went from the bar tended to leave through the back entrance which led to the alley. Then

bam! You were vamp food.

People were so stupid. Why did they think they had their faculties in order when they plied themselves with alcohol? The brain was sluggish after several drinks and thus impaired their thought process. So of course, stupid and drunk, they stumbled through the alley thinking themselves impervious to harm.

When would they learn?

Considering the past few weeks, it seemed as though the vampires were out in full force. Okay, so people didn't want to believe there could actually be such a thing as a blood sucking half dead creature taking up residence in their city. But come on, one look in the newspapers and you had to at least be worried about all the dead bodies being found lately.

Still, people never believed it could happen to them. Until they end up dead.

She watched a group of young girls—and if they were of legal age she would eat her shoes—stumble from the bar. They separated and two went off towards the street while the last wandered drunkenly down the dark alley.

Oh yeah, like this was going to end well.

"Five, four, three, two, one. Bam!" She shot her hand out just as a vampire jumped from out of the shadows and right beside the stupid young girl. Shaking her head, Trinity moved towards the screaming girl. Idiot.

"I don't think you want to be doing that."

The tall, gangly, greasy haired vampire jerked and spun around to face Trinity. His teeth were primed for the kill, his yellow eyes glaring at Trinity as if she were his next meal. The poor girl in his arms was wailing something awful.

Now you regret going through the dark alley.

"Yeah, says who?"

Trinity lifted a brow, cocked her body to one side and rested her hand on her hip. "Jesus, could you have said anything more lame? Let the girl go and no one has to get hurt." Okay, so that wasn't completely the truth. He would be more than hurt when this was over.

He would be dust.

"How 'bout I keep her and you wait against the wall until I'm done?" He jerked the girl towards him, yanking her head back to expose her neck. He was just about to bite down when Trinity placed a hand on his shoulder. He looked up and his face froze.

"How 'bout I don't." Trinity bared her fanged teeth to show him

she was not going to back off. "Beat it kid." She clamped her hand on the vampires shoulder, her nails digging into his flesh as she jerked her head at the girl. As she'd suspected, the guy was a wimp.

He released the girl who immediately ran off screaming.

"Now, you wanna take off, or am I going to have to mess up that pretty face of yours?" she asked sarcastically as she glared down at him.

"You couldn't handle me, bitch." He slapped her hand free, then curling his fingers in a fist, threw a punch at her face.

She was ready and ducked out of the way. Slicing her hand up, she chopped him in the neck, sending him crumbling on the ground. "You don't want to mess with me, jerk," she advised as she planted a boot-ed foot on his jugular. The razor blades she had attached to the toe drew a small amount of dull gray, deoxygenated blood as she pressed it just below his chin.

"Go ahead and dust him, he's useless."

Trinity glared over her shoulder at the man she had once been destined for and felt her heart ache. She couldn't stop herself from admiring the beauty of the man before her. His long dark hair floated in the light breeze sweeping away from a face sculpted of fine bone and delicate skin. He looked so dark and dangerous in that long, black leather coat he always wore. One look into his translucent blue eyes turned her heart to mush.

Then she reminded herself how much she detested him.

To show she wasn't a push over, Trinity pressed her foot harder, the razor blades cutting into the vampire's neck. His arms flailed out, trying to yank her foot away from his neck. His legs kicked wildly, but Trinity had a good ten pounds on the scrawny vamp. Tilting her toe downward, she sliced deep into his neck, finally cutting his head off. In a whoosh he disintegrated into a pile of dust, his last breaths used to scream his way to death.

She took a deep breath, shook the remnants of a useless life from her boot then turned. "Basil."

"Trinity." They stalked each other like the predators they were, neither taking their eyes off the other. "You're looking good."

Her breath always caught in her throat when she looked into those icy blue eyes of his. Unlike the rest of her race that had yellow eyes, he had the color of his heritage. He was royal. "So are you, but you already know that." She circled him, her eyes never leaving his. She knew how quick he could be, and she was prepared. "Was he one of

yours?"

"Would I have cared if you dusted him if he was one of mine?" His hand slid to his pocket and he pulled the pack of cigarettes from his pocket. "How have you been?"

She rolled her shoulders, the itch still irritating her. "Better now that I left you." And wasn't it odd how acrid a lie could taste?

"I noticed you've had your belongings gathered from our home."

"Your home," she corrected, keeping her distance from him. She knew perfectly well being close to him would have dire repercussions.

"Have you settled into your apartment then?"

He was being so nice, so civil. She didn't like it. "Why are you here, Basil?"

"I might ask the same of you, Trinity." He lit the cigarette smoothly and the flame showed a devastatingly handsome face, with curves and lines and strength.

"I'm protecting the humans," she remarked with an edge in her voice. "Always the warrior, my fiery princess." He smiled sweetly as he drew long and hard on his cigarette then smartly blew a ring of circles in the air. All without taking his eyes from hers.

"Don't call me that." She hated when he called her that. Okay, once upon a time hearing him call her that made her hot, but that was then. This was now.

"It's what you are and always will be to me."

"Yeah, I was such a treasure, that's why you decided to fuck another woman. Leave me alone, Basil."

In a quick shift that surprised her, he was in front of her, his hand clamped on her chin as he tilted her face to meet his. "Despite my indiscretion, I will always love you." He dropped his cigarette and ground it out beneath his boot.

She jerked her chin free, snarling, "You have a funny way of showing it."

Grabbing her chin again, this time he held a little tighter. "Love has many sides to it, my sweet." He sealed his words with a sharp kiss, his teeth scraping her bottom lip right before he vanished into the night.

Cursing, Trinity spat on the ground, wanting to eliminate his flavor from her tongue. Bastard thought he could come back and act as if nothing had happened. Fuck him! She still remembered all too clearly what it had felt like to walk in on him and the woman crawling over his naked body.

Shaking herself free of him, Trinity walked away. The last thing she

needed was the memory of Basil's kiss or the feel of his touch on her skin. What she needed was a vicious kill. If only she could find one.



Reappearing as soon as she was far enough not to notice, Basil watched her stalk off. He clutched one hand to his chest while the other touched his lips. He not only felt her on him, tasted her in him, but she was as much a part of him as the blood that pumped in his veins. She was now, as she would always be, the only woman he would ever love.

And if she knew the real reason he pushed her away, she might be stupid enough to come back to him. As much as he wanted that to happen, it could never be.

The hardest part of loving someone...was setting them free.

He turned away from the woman he loved and walked away into the night. His was a destiny to be spent without his love.