

~ Monsters in Love ~

byZee

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Violence - yes.

Sex - yes. So if the idea of women loving women bothers you don't read.

Please read responsibly. If blood and guts bother you, or if lesbians bother you please don't waste my time or yours by reading any farther.

Hopefully you're still here, so enjoy.

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A lone white flake drifted passing back and forth on the air currents. It landed delicately on hair bleached so blonde that it was almost the same color as the snowflake, body heat quickly melted it into a miniscule drop of water.

Danny shivered and wiped the cold water off her neck before returning her attention to her current girlfriend, possibly soon to be her ex-girlfriend. Victoria Spector - Tori for short - was a cute pixie-looking thing and Danny wasn't sure quite how they had managed to get together. Tori was kind, considerate, and responsible; and if the truth were told they were quite the odd couple. Most days she met Tori at the park near the law office where Tori worked and they would go for a walk. Frequently they would get odd looks. Danny was tall and thin with short dark hair bleached white blonde, heavy eyeliner, and dark Goth clothes. Tori, was shorter with long reddish brown hair; she was always dressed in tailored slacks and blouses.

Currently they weren't walking. Currently Danny was building up to a full-blown snit. They stood apart on the frosty ground, their breath creating white puffs that slightly obscured their faces.

Danny's dark eyebrows narrowed over blue eyes. "What do you mean you'll be 'all tied up' tomorrow night? Do you know what tomorrow is?"

Tori sighed and ran a hand through reddish hair. Trying to look very contrite, she gave Danny a sorrowful look from puppy dog eyes.

"Shove it, Spector. Those puppy dog eyes stopped working the moment you told me you were busy tomorrow night. How could you be busy tomorrow of all nights?"

Tori shoved her rough calloused hands into the pockets of her slacks, her shoulders hunched. "I'm sorry but I really can't get out of this. And of course I know what tomorrow is - it's

Wednesday." She gave a little grin. When she saw that Danny wasn't amused it disappeared. She blew out a breath. "I'm sorry. I really am. I know tomorrow is Valentine's; I'm not that big of a goober. However, I really can't get out of this and I will be tied up for most of the night. I did make reservations for Friday up at the cabins by the lake, you know, where we met."

Danny couldn't help it; her mouth quirked into a grin. "God, you were such a dork. Why were you fishing in that boat if you couldn't swim?"

Tori relaxed when Danny laughed. "Peer pressure. All my friends were going out in the boat."

"There were five of you so naturally the one who can't swim ends up getting knocked out of the boat."

"Yeah, thankfully somebody was up on the lake who use to be a lifeguard."

Danny's grin grew larger. "Yeah, you were very lucky." She grabbed Tori by her belt loops and pulled the woman's smaller body into hers. "So do we have the cabin for the whole weekend?" she asked, breathing the question onto Tori's lips.

Tori's nostrils flared, taking in her tall lover's perfume, and she gave a little shiver as she felt Danny's body heat soak through the front of her slacks. She was also a tad turned on by her somewhat trapped state. Her hands were imprisoned in her pockets, between their bodies. "Yeah, I rented it for the whole weekend. Can I have a kiss now?"

"Maybe?" Teasingly Danny ran her tongue over her lips. "Not sure if I'm done being pissed at you for ditching me on Valentine's."

"I'm not ditching you on Valentine's. I'm, ... I'm... just celebrating it later, but it will be longer that way, much more staying power."

"So you say now."

"I'm not just saying. I have reservations to back my words up."

Danny looked hard into her lover's green eyes. The pupils were dilated, showing clear signs of arousal. God, Tori was so easy... and sweet. That really bothered her. She wasn't really used to this 'nice' thing; the girls she tended to attract and be attracted to were anything but. However, Tori really was the sweetest girl and, even after four months of dating, it was still hard to get use to. She kept waiting for the other shoe to drop, and she thought it had come today. But no, Tori was being sweet and thoughtful again. Oddly it made her angry and a bit resentful; nobody could be that good. She leaned the millimeter of distance into to Tori's lips and kissed her hungrily and angrily. Somewhat ashamed and surprised when the tangy taste of blood hit her lips, she pulled back only to have Tori whimper and follow her keeping their lips sealed. After a moment they pulled apart; she watched as Tori's tongue poked out to gather the red wetness from the split in her lip and pull it into her mouth.

Tori didn't bitch at her for being rough; she just looked at her lustfully. For some reason that pissed her off. "Tell you what, Spector. I'm still going out tomorrow night with the girls. If nobody better comes along I'll go with you to the cabins. So if you want to rethink being all tied up tomorrow look me up." Danny smirked and walked off towards the parking garage.

Green eyes widened in surprise and as she watched the lanky bleached blonde walk off. She whispered, "I don't think you'd like me much if I showed up tomorrow." A flake landed on her nose and her eyes crossed to watch as it melted. It was followed by another.

"What's the big deal? So we celebrate a few days later," she called out at the retreating form. Danny either didn't hear her or ignored her. Tori was betting on being ignored. As butch as Danny looked and acted, she was a big girl at heart. That meant being absent on the biggest day of love was a big no-no, but it wasn't like she could help it.

'She won't really find somebody else. Would she?' Tori pondered as she strode through the park. Yeah, she would. Danny would find some lame-ass waste-of-space abusive loser just like she'd dated before Tori had come into her life. Danny took attraction to the bad girl to an extreme.

She worried her bottom lip with her teeth. *'Then again, we've been together for four months... okay, technically it's been four months, but that's still a record for Danny.'* She sighed. There was nothing she could do about it. She really was going to be tied up tomorrow night and she'd just have to trust that Danny wouldn't be stupid. She groaned and smacked her forehead. Why did that time of the month have to fall on Valentine's Day? The planetary alignments were out to get her.

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Tori rubbed her eyes. The strain of continuously staring at a computer monitor was getting to her. She blew out a breath and leaned back in her chair. The office was nearly silent; she could hear a clock ticking, echoing the beat of her heart. Her mind flashed to Danny and she sighed. Her hands ran through her hair in frustration. She should have known by the way Danny downplayed Valentine's Day that it really was a big deal to her. The woman made it so difficult and sometimes Tori felt like she needed to be a mind reader to keep up with Danny's changing moods.

Boiling, her emotions turned dark; anger throbbed red and hot under her skin. Her lips pulled back in an angry snarl, teeth glinted white and smooth under the florescent lighting. As green eyes landed on the small figurine on the corner of her desk, the red faded away. Tori let out a breath and gently picked up the pewter figure. Normally, Tori wasn't one for knickknacks, but this tiny fairy leaning on a four leaf clover had reminded her of Danny. She'd spotted it at one of the many Gothic shops that Danny dragged her to and she'd told Danny about it. Danny had just sneered at the comparison until she clarified that it was the evil smirk on the fairy's face. Yes, the

tiny fairy was a very naughty fairy just like Danny. Danny had smirked and bought it for her, then telling her, "Now you'll have a little version of me even when you're at work."

Tori had placed it on her desk that day. It had been a sweet gesture from her stormy girlfriend.

A knock on the doorframe jerked her thoughts away from reflection. She quickly put the fairy back in its place on her desk. Her eyes went to the woman standing in her doorway. It was a Wolfe. The law firm was made up of Wolfes. Brent Wolfe had started a small exclusive firm several years ago and his immediate and extended family almost solely staffed it. Tori was extended family; her father had married the only Wolfe not to go into law. Her mother, Harriet Wolfe Spector, had moved away to a small town and was a vet; her father, Jim Spector, had been the local sheriff when he had met Harriet.

When she started college her mother had insisted that she go to work at her great grandfather's law firm despite the fact she had no interest in law. Without a lot of options, she had given in and gotten a part-time job with the family firm. Four years later and she still had no interest in the law but loved working for the firm. The understanding and supportive family she had discovered had been a true gift.

Turning in her chair, she faced Gloria Wolfe. The older woman was an impressive figure standing nearly six feet tall. Her midnight colored hair was just starting to show gray at the temples, and Gloria wore it with honor. Obsidian eyes stared at her intently.

"Victoria, how are you doing?"

"I'm doing good. Not so happy that this time of the month falls on Valentine's Day."

"Yes, I imagine your young paramour was quite put out."

Tori rolled her eyes, " 'Put out' would be putting her reaction mildly."

"Someday this will all be behind you and you'll have the maturity not to have nights like this."

"We can only hope," she said wistfully. Her eyes slid to the window then to the clock. She was falling behind; there was so much to do and time was disappearing. "Oh shit!" She paused in horror, blushing as she realized who she'd had an outburst in front of.

Gloria waved her off. "I completely understand. Daylight is burning. Well, I will leave you to your work." The woman waved and then started to move away from the door. Pausing, she turned back to Tori. "Victoria, do you need any help with this evening? I could stay..."

Tori waved her off with a thankful smile. "Nope. It's routine now. Nothing to worry about."

"Well, you're family so I'm allowed to worry."

They stared at each other for a moment. "Well then," Gloria broke in, "I'm the last one out so I'll

make sure everything's locked tight and set the alarm. If anything should get out... or in the whole family will get the call... um, but I'm sure there's nothing to worry about. There never is."

"Thank you," Tori yelled at the retreating figure. Worried green eyes looked up at the clock on the wall. She wished time would stop and night would never come. *'So much to do, so much.'*

"Time for comfy clothes," she mumbled to herself. Going to her filing cabinet, she opened it and pulled out a well-worn pair of jeans and a threadbare shirt.

Wood slid against wood, a hand changed angles to push better, and with a grunt Danny got the closet door open. She knew she should fix the rollers; they weren't lying right in the track. She flipped through her dresses, pulling out a short tight velvet dress that clung to her body in all the right ways. A selfish part of her wanted to punish Tori, or maybe herself. She smiled a Cheshire cat grin; maybe she would have Angel take a picture of her with that digital camera of hers so she could email it to Tori. Maybe a little incentive would be good. Rummaging through her jewelry box, she pulled out a black choker with a small silver Celtic cross on it.

Standing in front of the mirror, she smoothed the dress along the lines of her body. She was a tad thin; she needed to eat better. Picking up the choker, she placed it around her neck and fastened it. The only other piece of jewelry she wore was a thick leather bracelet with shiny metal studs that hung from her left wrist. Happily she twirled in front of the mirror.

With a great sigh Tori brought a hand came up and she began chewing on her fingernails. Time was pressing in on her with each tick tock of the clock. She wondered what Danny was doing right now. She scowled as an image of Danny dancing close with another woman sprung into her mind. Itching, she pulled the finger from her mouth to scratch her upper lip and froze. There was clearly hair there. *'Oh yeah, Spector, that screams sex machine.'*

Pushing away from her desk, her chair slid easily across the floor. Time was gone. She couldn't put certain stuff off any longer. Nervous energy crackled chaotically in her body, and her emotions vacillated from angry to scared. In an effort to sooth herself she pressed play on a small CD player on the bookshelf next to the tiny window. The sound of a Vivaldi string concerto eased out of the speaker. The notes plucked at her ruffled emotions, smoothing them out.

Danny hit play on her sound system and Ministry began to scream from the speakers. Ignoring the pounding on the wall from her next-door neighbor, she swayed to the music while she waited for Angel and Gwen to pick her up. Her eyes rested on the two Valentine's Day cards sitting on top of her TV. One was from her folks and the other was from Tori. It had a big puppy dog holding a red heart on the front. On the inside it simply said, 'Please be mine.' Simple and sweet. Grrr, there was that sweet word again. Maybe she just wasn't cut out for niceness. Tori could be doing so much better than her... no, wait, she... she could do so much better than Tori.

Her rambling thoughts were cut off by a knock on the door. Peeking through the eyehole, she smiled, happy to see Angel and Gwen. She threw open the door. "Come on in. What took you so long? The sun is setting and us creatures of the night need to be out and about."

The two girls sauntered into the small apartment. Gwen was short, maybe 5 feet if that; she buzzed with a sort of nervous energy and was always fidgeting. Her hair was a mass of unruly dark brown curls and almond-colored eyes held a lively warmth that drew people in. Angel, not her real name, was tall and thin; she looked like she should be a ballerina. Angel held herself with a natural grace and poise. She didn't walk; it was more like she floated. She had natural blonde hair, yellow like corn silk, that fell nearly to her waist and gray eyes that seemed to be focused on something elsewhere. Both were dressed in the dark Gothic colors: Gwen in black leather pants with a black tank top sporting a sexy devil girl on the front and Angel in a deep purple crushed velvet dress with a purple ribbon braided into her hair.

"You ready to go?" Danny asked them anxiously.

"Hey, we just got here. I wanna pre-funk so I don't waste so much money on that crap they serve at the bar," Gwen broke in, halting Danny's move for the door.

Danny rolled blue eyes. "Why would I waste my beer on you?"

"'Cause you love me," Gwen replied like it was obvious.

Angel laughed and moved to the small kitchen. She opened the fridge. "Honey, tell me you don't just eat beer, catsup, and relish."

"There's mac and cheese in the cupboard," she defended herself.

Angel just gave her a sad look.

"What? I eat just fine. Besides, Tori does most of the cooking. She's always bringing something over for us to eat."

"Speaking of Tori." Gwen leaned on a counter. "I was surprised you called and wanted to go out on this the magical night for couples. Where is the little corporate drone?"

"She's not a drone," Danny bit out.

"No, she's worse. She works for lawyers," Angel broke in with a giggle.

Danny huffed. "You know, she likes you two. She never says a mean thing about either of you."

"Yeah, but that's 'cause she's fucking Doris Day. You know nobody can be that sweet and understanding. I'm waiting for her other personality to show itself. You know, the one that's an axe murderer."

Angel smacked Gwen and gave her a look that clearly told her to behave, before handing her a beer.

"It's okay," Danny said with a shrug of her shoulders. "You know how once a month Tori works overnight cleaning up the database and going through files? This month it just happened to land on Valentine's."

"That blows. She should have told her work to shove it. Oh, wait. She's too nice to do that."

Danny gave Gwen the evil eye over her own beer.

Gwen looked back. "What? You're just thinking what I'm saying."

Angel hummed a tune quietly and waited for Danny's response. She frowned at the response.

"Yeah, you're right. Pisses me off. I want to be with someone tonight. I want a lover to show off at the Succubus Club."

Angel frowned. Tori was by far the best girlfriend Danny had managed to attract. Far better than that psycho Keri. Nobody had said a word but they had all seen the marks on Danny's arms. Although there was something off about Tori and it had nothing to do with the nice factor. Something in the woman's aura that just wasn't quite right, but not nearly to the nth degree like Keri.

Gwen snorted and choked on her swallow of beer. "You really wanted to bring the Queen of Nice to the Succubus?" She nearly doubled over in laughter. "Oh, oh, I'm getting such a visual."

"Gwen, hush," Angel quietly admonished her.

Gwen wiped her eyes. "Oh come on. It's funny and you know it."

Angel tilted her head, listening to something only she heard. Danny and Gwen were used to it; it

had been creepy at first but now they hardly noticed.

"I think Tori may just surprise both of you. Plus, when I envision Tori in leather I get a yummy visual."

"Hey, that's my girl you're having dirty thoughts about." Dark eyebrows narrowed over angry eyes.

With a delicate gesture Angel threw her empty beer can into the trash. "So? You're planning on going out and punishing her for ditching you tonight 'cause you're too passive-aggressive to tell Tori how much you were looking forward to being with her tonight and doing romantic couple things."

"Angel, you're ruining my mood. Please, could we forget what an ass I am for at least a little bit? Besides, Tori is well aware of what kind of dog I am," she stated in justification.

"Well, come on, Dog. Do you want a leash?" Gwen asked with a leer.

"Nah, I've been good."

Danny locked the apartment and followed behind Gwen, who was doing her pimp strut.

Angel giggled. "She always gets so cocky when she gets to walk into a bar with us both draped in her arms."

Danny grinned back.

Tori grimaced. Damn! She was out of time.

A viola played softly in the background and she concentrated on her breathing. In and out. In and out.

Bass slammed into the brick and mortar that was trying to keep it encased in the club, but the dark angry beats still managed to bleed out into the night air. The trio made their way down the brightly illuminated alleyway.

Gwen looked up and whistled. "Wow, I don't think I've seen the moon so full before. I bet there are a lot of freaks out tonight." She squinted back up, fascinated by the moon. "Is that called a Hunter's Moon?"

"Like I know?" Danny replied, stepping into the line of people. She smiled and flirted their way to the front.

"I think Hunter's Moons only occur in the fall," Angel whispered into Gwen's ear.

A large man with no neck stood in front of the double black door that led into the club. There was no outside handle; a person had to be buzzed in by the cashier. Bulletproof safety glass separated the cashier from the crowd. There wasn't even a slot to drop cash. Instead a drop box would open then close, taking a person's money before opening again to give change and IDs back.

"Three," Danny said into the microphone.

"That will be 36 dollars and ID's, please."

Danny deposited the money and then all three put their IDs in. The drawer slid shut with a metallic snap. The young man with the shaved head picked up their ID cards, looking at each one then at the young woman it belonged to. "Okay."

The drawer opened back up and they picked up their IDs.

He nodded at the bouncer and hit a button to unlock the doors.

The bouncer smiled but it never reached his eyes. "Ladies, welcome to the Succubus Club's annual 'Love Bites Party'. Please remember to play nice and to play safe."

The door shut quietly behind them as they entered the club. The bass wrapped around their bodies and incense wound its way into their clothes. Angel broke away from them, waving at a woman who was tightly confined in leather. Danny and Gwen made a beeline for the bar. They ordered a beer each and a gin and tonic for Angel.

Danny tasted the beer foam on her tongue. It popped and fizzled, before a healthy swallow swept it down her throat. Next to her Gwen looked hungrily over the people in the club.

After a sip of her own beer, Gwen's dark eyes landed on Danny. "So, since you're being all bad tonight, are you going down into the dungeon?"

Danny feigned disinterest but covertly she looked to the black hole doorway that led downstairs. A large man monitored the door and everyone who went through it. His skin looked gray under the faint light and his face was made up with angles so sharp it could have been chiseled out of stone. A few years ago she would have come here and headed straight for that black hole, but now she wasn't really up for the games that went on below. "Nah. I think I'll pass tonight."

"Why? Because Tori wouldn't approve?" Gwen said with a sneer.

Danny noticed that the more Gwen drank, the more she seemed to dislike her girlfriend.

"No. Tori does not tell me what to do," she said calmly, catching Gwen's eyes. "Since Keri split, I haven't really been in a mind set for those things."

Gwen sighed. "Whatever happened to Keri? I liked her. She was always up for a good time. She was all about the night and enjoying life. Not this nesting, staying home watching movies crap Tori does."

Angel joined them, sliding silently up to the section of the bar the two women had claimed as theirs. "Gwen, hush," she admonished, picking up her drink.

Danny set her beer bottle down angrily. It thumped solidly on the wooden surface. "What is your beef with Tori?"

Gwen's mouth clenched into an angry line and, without a word, she stalked off.

Angel put a soothing hand on Danny's arm. "She's jealous. You don't come out like you used to. We see you maybe once a month. When you were with Keri we came out almost 5 times a week."

"So? Even when I came out with Keri we were off playing in one of the rooms. It's not like I was actually with you guys."

"Yes, but she doesn't see it that way. You're changing and she blames Tori."

Danny deflated a bit and sighed. "Yeah, I blame Tori, too. She's just so nice, and sweet..."

"And it scares you," Angel finished for her.

"Yeah."

"We change. It's what we do," Angel said with a shrug. "In my opinion, I like the changes you've been going through. You're more thoughtful and your asshole factor has gone down."

Danny threw her head back and laughed. Only Angel could say certain truths and not piss her off. It was just a fact of life; nobody could be pissed off at Angel.

Angel smiled and sipped her drink. Her attention wavered as a waitress dressed like a cupid walked by. "I'll be... you know..." And she was gone into the shadows and smoke after her cupid.

Danny laughed and wished her well. Returning her focus to her drink, she swallowed the

lukewarm dregs at the bottom and started on another one. Now that she was here, she didn't really want to be, and thanks to her little talk with Angel, she was thinking. Nothing killed a night out at the club like thinking. Clubbing worked on a primitive emotional level, not on a high brain intellectual level.

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Tori leaned against the wall, thinking. Mainly she was thinking about Danny and what she and her friends were up to. They were probably at that stuck-up Goth club that they loved, the 'Sucking Wound' or whatever it was called. Danny was probably dancing with some Leather-Mistress-of-Pain-Goddess at this very moment. Her teeth ground violently together. Tori knew that she shouldn't think angry thoughts. It didn't help her out at all, but she was finding it harder and harder not to.

She squirmed against the wall her back was resting on. The single light bulb glaring down on her and made the small room feel smaller by the second. Heat rumbled in her belly and rolled through her body, causing sweat to break out on her skin. A shiver of pain started at the base of her skull and clawed its way down her spine until it hit the tip of her tailbone, where it blossomed. Fine white teeth were exposed as lips pulled back in a grimace.

In and out. She breathed in and out rapidly. Her hearing picked up the strains of a violin coming from her office on the other side of the door and she focused on its soothing melody. Her lungs heaved for oxygen as the pain subsided.

The walls seemed to be closing in on her and she fought the claustrophobia. A few people outside the firm had always been impressed when they saw the door in her small office, thinking that somehow a lowly assistant had scored a private bathroom. She always laughed and told them that it was the cleaning supply closet. Actually, the truth was far more bizarre, and thankfully to date no one had actually looked inside to check. She chuckled at the surprise some poor fool would find if they did. The thought of Danny looking inside popped into her head suddenly and a fit of giggles sprang out of Tori's mouth. The giggles changed into a howl as pain blossomed again, this time in her chest, as her ribs felt like they might pull out and burst free of muscle and tendons. As her arms thrashed, the sharp echoing sound of metal on metal could be heard just barely under the howl.

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Danny was not having a good time. She had waved off the few people who had come over to ask

her to dance, and glared down the young man who had propositioned a tumble in one of the private rooms. She played with the label on the beer in front of her; she worried the paper loose at the corner and then picked at it, leaving tiny pieces of damp paper on the bar. There were lots of single people at the club but there were a lot of couples as well and she found herself missing Tori. With a sigh she rubbed the back of her neck. Maybe she had gone about this all wrong. She had put all the blame on Tori but, in reality, she hadn't really gone out of her way for Valentine's Day, while Tori had made reservations up at the cabins. Which, now that she reflected on it, was incredibly romantic, and, knowing how thoughtful Tori was, she wouldn't be surprised to find the cabin decked out in candles and the bed to be covered with rose petals. Danny hadn't even given Tori the card she'd gotten her; she'd been too upset the other day. The more she thought about it the worse she started to feel. She had just made up her mind to find Gwen and Angel to tell them that she was leaving when a voice broke into her thoughts.

"Hey now, a pretty thing like you shouldn't be looking so upset."

Danny sucked in a breath and went very still. Her hands trembled on top of the bar. She knew that voice.

"What? Not even a hello? Or how about a Happy Valentine's Day? I know my evening has certainly picked up."

She wasn't scared. Danny kept telling herself that over and over again. Nothing scared her; she was strong. She placed a defiant sneer on her lips and turned towards the owner of the voice. "Keri, I see that they've let you out of the institution."

Keri was a lot paler than she remembered; she seemed to glow in the darkness of the club. Bright green eyes stared at her; they were cold and lifeless like sharp cut glass. Danny had forgotten that Keri's eyes were green, almost the same color as Tori's. For a moment she worried that was what had drawn her to Tori, but then she pushed it away. Keri's eyes had always been cold, viewing life with a predator's eye, while Tori's were warm like she had somehow captured the memory of spring in them. Keri stood near Danny's height with her long brown hair pulled back into a ponytail.

Keri just looked her over with a lazy gaze that seemed to stake out her body, and then a wolfish grin appeared, her teeth whiter than her skin. "I missed you. You never came to visit me."

Danny's skin crawled but she hid it. Of course she hadn't visited. She was the reason Keri's father had sent her away. It was either that or she pressed charges against her. Mr. Rosakis would rather have his troubled daughter go to an institution than face a media circus. Unsure what to do, Danny chose to say nothing and she turned back to her drink. Hopefully Keri would get bored and go away.

A pale hand grabbed her left arm, squeezing it hard. "You never visited," Keri repeated. "I waited for you to come save me from that awful place my father sent me to, but you never came."

Blue eyes widened and Danny had no choice but to face Keri. "Keri, you're hurting my arm."

"What's pain between lovers? As I remember, Danny, you like the way I hurt you. You like it a lot."

She tried to shake her arm free but Keri just looked at her, smirking. Then, at her leisure, Keri slowly loosened her hold one finger at a time, marveling at the bruise that appeared. "So pretty, and now everybody here can see that you're marked as mine."

Danny's shaking right hand went up to grasp the beer bottle in case she needed to use it on Keri. "Keri, I am not yours."

Keri just looked at her. "You never visited, but you're still mine. I love you. I forgive you for forgetting about me. I saw Daddy earlier; he said it was your idea. It was either that awful place or you were going to send me to the police. I laughed at Daddy. I knew you would never do that to me. He doesn't understand that we belong to each other."

Oh God. Keri had finally lost the few threads that tied her to reality. Danny's stomach flip-flopped and a scared nervous energy built up, urging her to flee.

Keri raised her hand, traced a finger around Danny's eyebrow, and then trailed it down her cheek. "You're scared. Your heart's beating so fast. I can see the vein in your neck pumping away - pumpity pump. You're mine so there's no need to worry." Keri leaned forward to kiss Danny's lips.

Unable to take anymore, Danny put her hands out, pushing back against Keri's shoulders, flaring anger causing her to finally take action. "I am not yours!" she hissed angrily. "You cut me so bad I had to be rushed to hospital. If your father's maid hadn't come in, I would have bled to death. I was going to press charges but your father somehow convinced me that sending you away to get help was the answer."

Keri just smiled. "Oh, Father has twisted your mind but I know the truth. You and I are meant to be. I'll let you fight it all you want, but soon you'll see the truth just like I do." With ease Keri pushed Danny's hands away and grabbed her face. Tilting it down, she savaged Danny's lips until she tasted blood. With a delighted squeal she laved the tiny cut with her tongue before drawing it back into her own mouth. "Such a delightful taste."

Shaking, Danny pulled away to flee only to turn right into Gwen.

Gwen just smiled drunkenly. "Danny! Guess who I ran into! Oh... well... I guess you already know. Keri is back. Isn't that great?" With a happy bound Gwen was next to Keri, hugging her. Keri just smiled wolfishly.

Danny stiffened. "Yeah, great," she said halfheartedly.

Gwen just kept on babbling, "God, Keri, it's so great to see you. You are so much better than

Danny's current girlfriend. God, Tori is such a stick-in-the-mud while you, man, you were the life of the party."

Danny swallowed nervously as Keri's eyes seemed to grow darker at the mention of Tori.

Keri's face kept its smile. "Why thank you, Gwen. It's nice to know some people missed me. As for Tori, I'm sure she won't be around much longer."

"Really? Are you and Danny getting back together? Shit, that would be great. I would love to have the old Danny back."

Danny glowered at Gwen while the shorter woman babbled on. "Fuck you, Gwen. If you like Keri so much you can have her," Danny spit out.

Gwen blinked in surprise at Danny's outburst. "See what I mean? She's no fun. I mean really, how great can Tori be? She ditched Danny on Valentine's Day of all days."

"Oh, that simply will not do, Gwen."

Danny rolled her eyes. "Whatever." She turned to storm off but her arm was taken in a hard grip. Turning back around, she found a small heart-shaped box under her nose.

"Well, I never forget Valentine's Day. A gift for you."

Danny hesitantly took the box, although a part of her did not want to take anything from Keri.

"I'll be seeing you later, Danny," Keri said, releasing Danny's arm

As Danny walked off, Keri spoke up again, "Oh and Danny, don't think of leaving without me." Cold shards of fear blossomed in Danny's belly.

Danny fled down the dark hallway, past the black hole doorway to the small alcove by the bathrooms. She wasn't sure what to do, but she did know that she wanted Tori very badly all of a sudden. Fumbling with her small purse, she pulled out change for the phone and dialed Tori's work number. "Pick-up, pick-up, pick-up," she whispered.

"Hi, you've reached the law offices of Wolfe and Associates. This is Tori Spector but I'm not in right now. I'm probably off doing lowly office assistant things at the moment. Please leave your name, number, and the reason you called at the beep."

Tori watched a drop of sweat fall from somewhere off her face and down to the floor. Her panting was loud in the small room; it echoed harshly in her ears. Over and over in her mind she chanted, 'I am in control. I am in control.' The sound of her phone ringing jerked her head up. She cocked her head, listening. Over the soft sounds of classical music she heard her archaic answering machine pick up. She had been meaning to put in an order for one of the new phone systems that most of the other offices had but it was really the last thing on her priority list.

When the phone beeped and no voice was forthcoming, she let her head drop back down. Then Danny's voice broke through the speaker and Tori's head shot up. She could clearly hear the scared tone underlying Danny's voice.

"Tori, where are you? I know you're working tonight but I... I really need you. My ex, um, Keri, please tell me that I've mentioned Keri before... anyway, my ex, Keri, is here and she's really scaring me."

Tori groaned. She so didn't need this. A snarl came from her lips and she called out angrily at the phone. "Goddamn it, Danny, this is not a good time to be having an emergency. When I said that I would be tied up tonight I meant it - literally." She clanked the shackles that held each one of her arms close to the wall.

Unable to hear her outburst, Danny continued on, "God, she grabbed me and left a bruise on my arm, and kept going on and on about how we were meant to be."

Tori's nostrils flared in anger.

"My friends are no help. Angel is off having fun with a waitress I think, and Gwen is about ready to start humping Keri's leg. Please, if there's anyway you can get free, please come down to the Succubus Club and get me. I mean Jesus, she even got me a Valentine's Day gift... what the hell?" Danny's voice trailed off and Tori strained her to hear what was going on. There was a rustling of paper.

Danny stared down at the box in her hand. "... what the hell?" The box was wet on the bottom. Holding the receiver to her ear by scrunching her neck, she tore the paper open and opened the box. Her face paled and the box fell from suddenly nerveless fingers. "Oh God, oh godohgodohgod..."

Tori growled and strained against the chains that held her. That was not a good noise her girlfriend was making.

"Oh shit. Tori, please get down here right away. She, oh God, I think she killed her father."

"For fuck's sake, get off the goddamn phone and call the police!" Tori yelled out.

A cry of pain came and Tori's head shot up, her eyes flashing red, and then a new voice came on the line, one she didn't recognize.

"I'm going to assume this is Tori. Well, Tori, no hard feelings but Danny is now off limits. We're getting back together and it just wouldn't be proper for you two to be seeing each other. Winners, losers, and all that. Ta ta. Oh, and Tori, if I ever get to meet you I will kill you for touching what is mine." Then with a click the line went dead and Tori was left with the piercing whine of a violin.

With a growl Tori pulled against the chains only to have them remain intact. Panting, she leaned back against the wall and carefully placed both feet up against it. With a grunt she pushed off, the muscles in her legs bulging. The cuffs bit into the flesh around her wrists causing a white line to appear as the flesh indented. As the pressure increased, the line became red then purple; finally the skin split and blood ran freely, falling to the floor with a delicate pitter patter.

With a grunt she fell back. It was no use; the chains were designed to hold her. Goddamn it! Danny was with that freak and there was nothing she could do. Huffing and puffing, she started again, because if she just gave up and something happened to her girlfriend she would never forgive herself. Leaning back in the chains, she went still, trying to center herself. Once a month she was always fighting with herself, chained up so she couldn't hurt anyone, but for the first time she really wanted to hurt somebody - badly. Relaxing, she stopped fighting her monster. Heat exploded, racing through her veins; for a moment her insides felt like rubber. That was replaced by the sense of fur rubbing around on her belly, tickling her heart and ribs, and finally the pain came, causing her muscles to seize and lock. Somewhere in the distance she could hear herself roaring in pain. *'It's like giving birth to myself,'* she thought. Green eyes widened and began to bleed gold, the pupil changed shape from human to not-so-human. Howling, she threw herself against her restraints.

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Danny couldn't breathe. A hand was wrapped firmly around her neck, pressing her into the black brick of the alcove. She heard Keri's voice threatening Tori and then the phone receiver was slammed down into the cradle.

"Sorry, love, but I figured she deserved to know the truth."

Danny was pulled back away from the wall and she gasped, taking in a huge lungful of air. She tried to go very still.

Keri let go of her. "Oh, look at that, you're all rumpled. We can't have that." With slow gestures Keri's hands smoothed down Danny's dress, removing a piece of lint here and there. "There we go. All good." Keri stared at Danny expectantly.

"Oh, um, thank you," Danny said quietly.

"See? That wasn't so hard." Keri wrapped her arms around Danny's waist, hugging her to her body. "I missed this. I missed you, but now it will be just like old times."

Danny's emotions were running high. Terrified didn't begin to cover what she was feeling, especially after opening Keri's gift. God, she hoped Tori got her message. It was funny. Here she was surrounded by people and not one would help her. A master/slave relationship being expressed or acted out would not be an odd thing to see. Maybe if she were at a more tightly controlled club, she'd have a chance; the Succubus was trendy but it was also lax. Unless she could get away from Keri and get to a bouncer, she was out of luck.

"I see you opened my gift," Keri said, breaking into Danny's thoughts. A black boot toed the small box on the ground. "It's my pledge to you. Nobody, not even my father, will keep us apart ever again."

Danny just shivered slightly in fear but stayed quiet. Her eyes darted around. Maybe if she could find Angel. ...

Keri started walking, pulling Danny along. "It's been so long since we've been down in the dungeon. How about once more for old times sake?"

"Um, I'd rather dance. Yes, let's dance instead. We always have time to go down below," Danny said sweetly.

"No, I think I want to go downstairs."

Danny's heart sunk.

The bouncer looked them over coldly and then, as if it took great effort, the corners of his mouth turned up into a grin. "Long time no see. Looks like you two are finally back."

"No, look," Danny broke in. "She's insane. I don't want to be with her at all. She killed her father."

Keri squeezed her tighter, frowning. The bouncer's eyebrow quirked and he started to move in front of the door.

"Danny sweetie, the bouncers don't like role playing. We need to wait until we're alone."

The bouncer relaxed but eyed them carefully.

"I'm not..." She stopped as the back of her neck was grabbed harshly, causing tears to spring into her eyes.

"Sorry, it's been awhile. We're kind of out of practice; sorry to worry you."

The bouncer bit his lip and then shrugged. "Fine, but that sort of thing isn't funny. If I didn't

know you two, I would worry."

Keri grinned and pushed Danny into the blackness.

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Grasping the knob in her hands, Tori pulled the door open, ripping the lock out. Behind her an alarm began to scream. She stared at the now busted lock. She had no idea that it could be this powerful. She looked down at her hands. The changes were small; the fingers on her hands looked to be longer and the hair on her hands and arms seemed thicker. Wincing at the screaming alarm, she ran out into the street, trying to remember where the Succubus Club was.

The night buzzed around her, teeming with life. The air was vibrant - it smelled of promises - and the moon hung large and full in the sky. The moon sang her a lively jig full of excitement and energy. She threw her head back and laughed. Her skin was electric; it twitched and pulsed, begging to be released further, but she held it in check. She could allow herself only so much freedom, too much and she would be lost forgetting about Danny.

Not even winded, she ran down the alley she thought would bring her to the club. She could hear a bass beat crashing into the night; it disrupted the moon's song. Sniffing, she smelled people. Rolling the air around on her tongue, she could taste them; their impatience, their lust, their worry, and their intoxication. She turned down another alley. A figure in the shadows hissed at her and she growled back, skidding to a halt. They stared at each other, judging the threat.

She couldn't piece together what it was. It hissed again but somehow it managed to stay wrapped in shadows. It smelled of dead things, of rot and decay. Tori whined. She did not have time for this supernatural pissing contest. Rolling her eyes, she started to move down the alley only to have it hiss at her again. She gave it the finger and bound down the alley. Something followed behind her; its footsteps were wet smacks on the cement. She bounded out of the alley into the light of the club entrance while her follower stopped, unable to enter the light.

She eyed the line of people unhappily. At this rate it would take her forever to get inside. Unable to control it, an angry growl came out from her mouth. The people in front of her turned but the their angry retort died on their lips; something about her appearance silenced them. They turned back around.

Tori gritted her teeth as another wave of pain swept through her. She doubled over, fighting to stay in control; as sweat beaded on her face and arms, she gritted her teeth harder. Her right hand came down to steady herself, clutching at the cement; her nails split, leaking fluid, and thicker longer nails burst forth. Panting, she stood back up, staring at both her hands in wonder. She never remembered the change. She always woke up the next morning with no memory of the night before, naked and chained to the wall.

Growling, she decided she'd had enough of this pompous posturing crowd. Her girlfriend needed her right fucking now. She started pushing people out of her way. One buff young man tried to take offense but she just kneed him in the groin and walked on. When she reached the front, the bouncer just eyed her. She eyed him back, sniffing to take in his scent. He smelled of dark places and violence.

He smiled and cracked his knuckles. Pointing to the booth, he said, "He's the only one who can let you in. You convince him and I'll let you in. If you can't, I throw you back into the gutter you came from."

Tori eyed the booth. As she walked up to it, the young man behind the safety glass smirked, feeling safe.

"How much?"

He eyed her critically. She was wearing a threadbare shirt that had seen better days, worn jeans, and her feet were bare. Her body was covered in sweat, which made him wonder if she was a junkie coming down from a high.

He pressed the button for the speaker box. "Look, we're a leather bar. You're not wearing leather."

Behind her, she could hear the bouncer chuckling.

"Let me in. My girlfriend is in trouble." Her eyes flashed red in annoyance.

"Sorry, rules are rules."

"This isn't up for debate. Let me in."

"Whatever," he dismissed her, shutting off the speaker.

Anger hotter than the color red erupted, and she grabbed her head in pain. Blood and drool pooled out of her mouth. After spitting onto the cement, she straightened back up, glaring at the little man.

If he hadn't been behind the safety glass he might have been scared; as it was, he wasn't afraid of some junkie. He nodded at the bouncer to come take care of this little problem.

Growling low in her throat, Tori cocked her arm and swung at the glass. The cashier's eyes grew huge and then even larger as the glass broke. A hand and few pieces of glass made their way into the booth.

As her hand connected with the glass, Tori felt the carpals and metacarpals in her hand and wrist break. Thankfully she was now strong enough that she had enough force to punch through the

safety glass. As her hand made a jagged hole, she could feel the bones in her hand and wrist knitting back together. If she'd had the time, she would have stopped in wonder at the sensation. Pushing her arm the rest of the way through, she grabbed the prick behind the glass. Wicked nails snagged into his shirt; getting a good hold, she pulled him forward until his face smashed into the glass, distorting it.

"Listen here," she growled. "You have three seconds to let me in or I'm going to pull you through this hole I made. You got me?"

He nodded vigorously, his face rubbing up and down on the glass.

"One..."

He frantically hit the buzzer, unlocking the doors, and she released him with a casual toss that sent him sailing into the back door of the booth.

Stepping up to the door, she snarled at the bouncer who did a double take but silently let her pass. As the door closed silently behind her, he ran to the booth, whistling when he saw the hole in the glass.

"You okay?" he grunted.

The cashier got up shakily, happy to note that he hadn't shit in his boxers. "Yeah. Think we should call the cops?"

"No, call the boss. This is something we don't want in the papers."

The young man nodded and picked up the phone while the bouncer glared and told everybody standing outside to go home.

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Inside the club Tori was blasted with sounds, smells, and emotions. Her skin rippled and for a moment she thought it would be too much, that she would be pulled apart by the overwhelming sensations of the club surrounding her. Wide-eyed she stared around; she was at a loss as to where to start looking for Danny.

A man dressed in a white loincloth and a small pair of wings walked by, holding a tray. She grabbed his elbow. "The phones, where are they?"

He leaned in so he could hear her voice over the music. As he inhaled a musky scent curled around the inside his nose. The smell triggered a primitive flight response in his nervous system.

Unable to justify the need to run away from this small woman, he trembled and pointed the way to the phones. She strode off with the stealthy tread of a predator; his nerves calmed the further she moved away from him.

Tori noticed the bouncer at the door; they eyed each other as she went past. Moving past the bathroom, she came to the pay phones. Sniffing, the smell of tangy liquid iron came to her nose over the other smells. Sniffing again, she crouched down in the shadows. Close... closer... she found a small box tipped on its side; a shiny black liquid had spilled out of the box and pooled on the floor next to it. She tipped the box up and felt something shift inside it. Picking it up, she looked inside. A lump of flesh barely larger than a man's fist sat inside, parts were still pink while others drained of blood, were pale showing up almost white in the dim light. Tori frowned in distaste and threw the box in the black garbage can next to the phones. Placing her index finger in her mouth, she sucked off the red stain. She tasted fear, stress, and hypertension in the blood.

She sniffed again, trying to find the smell of Danny's perfume. The sound of a bathroom door opening and closing caught her attention and she looked over into Gwen's almond-colored eyes. The warm eyes grew cold.

"Goddamn it! The one place I can be with Danny without your presence and here you are fucking ruining this place for me."

Gwen's harsh words and angry emotions tore at Tori's thin control. Growling, lips pulled back to expose large upper and lower canines. Normally Tori had no beef with Gwen's attitude toward her, shrugging it off to the fact that, 'you can't like everybody and everybody can't like you'. However, she was in no mood for Gwen at this moment. "Where the fuck is Danny?"

"I expect she's with her ex somewhere getting reacquainted," Gwen said with a smirk, too drunk to understand what kind of fire she was playing with. "Give it up, Tori. You just can't compete with Keri and the history she and Danny have."

"Really?" Tori quirked an eyebrow and then, in a quick move, she had Gwen by the throat, and holding her a half inch above the ground. Continuing the move forward, she slammed Gwen into the bathroom door. "Because of this great history they share, Danny called me, clearly upset, and she asked me to come get her because Keri was freaking her out." Tori leaned in, taking in the scent of Gwen's fear, enjoying its taste on her tongue and in the back of her throat.

"What are you talking about?" Gwen choked out. "Danny loves Keri. She would never be freaked out by her."

"No," Tori said, slamming Gwen into the door again. "You love Keri." Tori was enjoying Gwen's pain and was about to slam her back into the door yet again when a hand touched her arm.

Angel smiled at Tori. "Ah, so this is what gives your aura that ugly red and black spot in it. How fascinating!"

Tori cocked her head, listening to Angel's quiet soothing tone.

Angel's fingers traced down along the hard muscles of Tori's arm until they reached the fingers dug into Gwen's flesh. Giving a tug on those fingers Angel said. "Let her go. She's a bit resentful, but Danny will never forgive you if you kill Gwen." Softly Angel stroked Tori's fingers until they relaxed.

Gwen's feet hit the floor and she gasped for breath.

"Where is she? Where would Keri take Danny?"

Angel looked sharply at Gwen. Gwen looked away. "Gwen, we will talk about this later," Angel promised. Turning to Tori, she looked thoughtful. "Keri was really fond of the dungeon; it's down those stairs." Her gaze shifted, looking somewhere outside the physical.

Tori shuddered, not use to Angel's little quirks.

"You'd best hurry. When you get to the bottom of the steps, take a left and go to the furthest room; they'll be there."

Tori nodded and moved to the black hole doorway.

The bouncer slowly turned his head and took in the small woman in front of him. His brow scrunched in confusion, wondering how she got in dressed like that. As she moved to go downstairs, he put out a hand to stop her.

"You have an invite? 'Cause this is for multiple parties and you are just a party of one."

Tori's throat vibrated but she held back the growl that wanted to come out. "Let me by. I think my girlfriend is down there."

"Sorry, you can yell at her when she comes back up. Jealous girlfriends cause scenes so you'll have to wait."

Tori tried to push him out of the way and found him nearly immovable. He was as solid as a rock. Sniffing, she smelled earth and stone. "Holy shit," she breathed out. "You're a gargoyle."

He looked at her in amazement. "That's right. I belong to the building."

"I've never seen a one before, and you look so human."

If he could have blushed, he would have. "Thank you. But you still can't go down."

Tori frowned. "Me not going down there isn't an option."

Danny gave a little squeak as she was thrown down on the bed. Struggling, she fought to get Keri off of her. She knew she needed to get out. If Keri got the cuffs on her, there was a very good chance she would never leave this room. Leveling her now bare feet into Keri's stomach, she pushed the woman away and sprang off the bed.

Keri grabbed her before she made it to the door. "Honey, we have an eternity to play games but not right now."

As Danny was thrown back down on the bed, Keri gave an insane cackle that raised goose bumps all over her flesh. Keri straddled Danny's waist, fighting with the failing arms as she snapped the leather cuffs on first her right then her left wrist. Looking down into Danny's blue eyes, she leaned over, kissing her softly. "Ah, memories. Can you honestly say that you have these kind of memories with that Tori girl?"

"God no," Danny spat. "Tori is sweet, thoughtful, and everything you will never be."

"See? She can never love you. Only I understand what you want and what you crave." Keri softly stroked Danny's hair. "You know, I liked you hair better when it was dark. Oh well, I'll take you to a hair place tomorrow and fix it." Slowly she crawled off Danny's body, moving to a table.

"Let's see, whatever would I like to use?"

Fear made Danny's throat tight and tears stung her eyes.

"At the institution I found a new Daddy. He was a night nurse. He showed me so many new ways to play. We had such fun there, but he couldn't replace you. Nobody could." Cold emerald eyes looked over at Danny and Danny shivered. "He helped me get out of there. I promised to bring you back with me; he very much wants to meet you." Keri picked up a beautiful braided whip, testing it she let it snake out and crack in the air.

A loud crack echoed in the hallway and the bouncer stared down at his wrist. Tori shoved his hand into his chest. "I'll take you apart piece by piece if I have to. Now get the fuck out of my way," she said, letting the growl out of her throat.

He just stared at his hand in amazement; he'd never been hurt before. Seeing her chance, Tori darted down the stairs into blackness.

"Let's see if you still like the way I hurt you." Keri picked up a knife and returned to cut Danny's dress off her body. As she reached the foot of the bed, something heavy crashed into the door. The hinges shook and the screws started to move out of their resting place. The door shook again. Keri gripped the knife tightly, her knuckles turning white.

"I know you're in there with my girlfriend; I can fucking smell you," a low gravelly voice yelled through the door.

Danny was shocked; she had never heard Tori use the word 'fuck'.

Keri raised an eyebrow. "My, she seems rather butch, Danny... and stupid."

The door shook again and started to cave inward.

"Just a minute," Keri sang out. Grabbing a blindfold, she stuffed it into Danny's mouth and went to stand next to the door, holding the knife low and next to her body. Danny stared, wide-eyed in terror. Oh god, she was going to get Tori killed.

Reaching over, Keri flicked the lock open.

Tori heard the noise and went silent. Menace and fear radiated from the room. She twisted the handle slowly and pushed the door open but didn't enter.

Keri waited patiently. Nobody would take what was hers, and nobody would ever separate her from Danny again.

Tori sniffed, but her resolve to go slowly broke when she heard a muffled whimper from Danny. Bounding into the room, she saw Danny tied to the bed, fear etched in the taut lines of her body. As Danny's eyes widened in terror, Tori turned, briefly catching a glimpse of cold green eyes and the flash of metal. Something slammed into her stomach and she let out a gasp of air. Stunned, she stared at the small handle sticking out of her stomach as Keri stepped back.

"I told you if we met I would kill you. Danny's mine. I'm sorry, but we were simply meant to be. I claimed her as mine long before you were around."

Danny had watched in horror as Keri attacked Tori, screaming around the gag as Tori was stabbed.

Tori waited for the pain to come but it never did. Heat flowered in her belly and the skin around the knife began to itch unbearably. She looked up into Keri's eyes and her own flashed red as she grasped the knife handle firmly with her right hand and pulled it out. Blood gushed bright red from the wound for a moment before it slowed to a trickle and finally stopped.

"Yeah, I've seen the scars." Tori rumbled out, dropping the knife. "I could have pissed on her, marked her as my territory as well, but that still doesn't make it so. Humans have this little thing called free will."

"What are you?" Keri breathed out. For the first time in as long as she could remember, she felt afraid.

"I'm a monster," Tori replied.

"Really? So am I."

Tori sniffed, but all she could smell was insanity, anger, and... and fear. She gave a wolfish smile, showing off large meat-tearing teeth. "No, you're not. You're a wannabe monster."

Keri laughed. "Silly girl. My new Daddy gave me his blood. I'm a vampire now."

Tori looked at her, smelling the air around Keri; then her grin got even bigger, making Keri step back. "No, you're not. Your Daddy's a fake and so are you."

Keri's face grew dark and, with a scream, she charged Tori. Tori met Keri's charge and pushed back with all her strength, sending the taller woman flying out the open door. Turning to the bed, she quickly undid the restraints and pulled the gag out of Danny's mouth.

"Oh my God, I thought... she stabbed you, and you're still... still. Oh my God, what the hell is going on?" Danny croaked out.

Tori smiled. Danny was still feisty. "Hold that thought. I really need to go kick your ex's ass."

Tori strolled out of the room. "Keri," she called out, mimicking Keri's singsong voice. "We're not done." Smelling the air, she followed Keri's scent back down the hallway.

As she came around a corner, a stool crashed into her chest, sending her stumbling back. The second swing caught her in the face. Growling, Tori shook her head and spit blood to the floor. Keri might not actually be a vampire, but she did have the strength of the insane and Tori would do well to keep that in mind. On the third swing, Tori caught the stool and jerked it out of Keri's hands. Fighting was breaking down the control her human side had; the wolf grew bolder, it paced back and forth, waiting, seeking an opening.

Keri pulled another knife and in a quick movement darted forward to slash Tori's cheek open.

Rearing back, Tori roared in pain. The cut flesh was already healing, but that was all the incentive the wolf had needed. Bones cracked, muscles bubbled, and her skin split open as fur poured out over the flesh like water.

Keri's mind nearly collapsed in on itself at the sight. Turning, she raced for the stairs. If she could get outside and back to her Daddy, she would be safe; he would protect her.

The large humanoid wolf threw back its shaggy head and gave out a howl that echoed in the dark. Loping silently to the foot of the stairs, it went up them, following her prey.

Keri burst out through the doorway and into the hall, knocking the bouncer back. She sprinted for the fire exit near the bathrooms. Slamming into the handle, she pushed until it opened, triggering the fire alarm.

A red furry body followed close behind. Tori didn't even pause when she hit the bouncer and sent him flying down the hall; in a loping stride she was out the fire exit before the door had a chance to finish closing. The back of the club was dark, lit by an old bulb that was at the end of its life; it flickered, giving the space a creepy ambiance. Crouched on all fours, she sniffed the air, her ears high and alert, just in case Keri had another ambush in mind. After Tori was certain Keri was not waiting in the shadows to attack her, she moved forward, trying to figure out where the woman had gone. There was a wooden fence built on the left, separating the club from a warehouse. The wood was warped from the elements but still sound. She stood on her back legs with her hands pressed to the wood, sharp nails sank deep into the soft wood. She raised her head to sniff the top of the fence. To her right she smelled human musk; cocking her head, she spied a small piece of fabric caught on a sliver of wood. Lowering herself back down, a doggy grin emerged on her face.

Muscles in her back and legs bunched, then in a sudden move they uncoiled and she leapt to the top of the fence, her hands grabbed the top and with a push, she cleared the fence and the garbage lying at its base on the other side. Even with her heavier bulk, she landed quietly on all fours. Sniffing, she easily followed the smell of insanity into the building.

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With the fire alarm going off, people streamed from the club in barely controlled chaos. Danny stumbled out of the building, carried out with the crowd. Twisting to get loose, she looked for Tori. Finally she was able to slip out of the throng of people and move to the side of the flowing mass of humanity.

Her brain was a mess as she tried to process everything. But she was almost positive Keri must have hit her in the head at some point, and given her a concussion. She must be delusional because she could have sworn that Tori had been stabbed. Yes, she was almost positive that Keri

had stabbed Tori, only Tori hadn't died. Tori had just pulled the knife out of herself and beat the crap out of Keri. Danny was certain that if a person got stabbed in the gut that it would be a messy thing; there would be lots of blood, and a person would have to be rushed to the hospital.

"Danny? Oh goody, she got to you in time."

Danny was enveloped in a tight hug. She tensed, and then relaxed when she realized it was Angel. Grabbing her friend in a hug, she started to cry, the events of the evening finally catching up with her.

"Shhh, let it out. It's okay. Tori and her family are going to take care of everything."

"Oh my god! Tori! Have you seen her?"

Angel shook her head. "No, and I'm not really certain I want to see her."

Danny held Angel at arms length, staring at her friend intently. "What do you know, Angel?"

Angel smiled her Mona Lisa smile. "I know lots of things, Danny, and most of them are not things for you to know."

"Angel," Danny growled, "I'm in no mood for your mysteriousness. What do you know about Tori?"

"I know a great deal more than I did before." Angel laughed and twirled out of Danny's grip. "I know that her golden aura has a dark spot; it's black and red and pulses with anger. I know what that means now. I know that Gwen pissed her off earlier when Tori was frantically looking for you and Tori almost killed her. I know that she must love you a great deal to risk being loose on this night. She's a very young cub; no control, none whatsoever, but for you she'll push herself further than she should."

Danny let a frustrated breath. "Angel, make sense."

Angel rested her index finger against Danny's lips. "Shhhhh. Her family's here." Angel pointed to the mouth of the alley that led to the Succubus Club.

Most of the people in the club had fled; a few were still quickly leaving or milling about, waiting to see what the alarm was for. At the edge of shadow and light, a woman stood. Her hair was so black it was lost in the shadows. Next to her was a slightly shorter man with gray hair. They shared a look and stepped out into the alley, followed closely by five others. Two of the followers carried rifles, while another had a string of chains slung over his thick shoulders.

"What the hell are they going to do with those things?"

"There's a big bad wolf loose, Danny. They're going to capture her; they don't know about Keri."

"Angel, shut the fuck up unless you're going to stop talking in riddles!" Danny hissed. "You're not making any sense."

Angel looked at Danny hurt and then glided out to meet the Wolfe family. "Excuse me."

The woman as well as the man bringing up the rear turned, raising their hands as if expecting an attack. The woman with black hair whispered something and they lowered their hands, staying watchful.

"Yes, can I..." She trailed off as she spotted Danny come out of the shadows, following Angel.

"Ah, the young paramour. I should have guessed."

"Yes, she would be the other half of the lovers' card," Angel replied.

Danny eyed everybody nervously.

"So she was here?" the woman asked.

Having had just about enough, Danny responded angrily, "Who the hell are you?"

The woman just chuckled. "Yes, you must be Danny. Victoria has told me quite a lot about your personality. I am Victoria's great aunt, Gloria Wolfe. This is Harrison Wolfe," she said, pointing the gray-haired man next to her. "And the others are Wolfes as well."

Harrison sniffed. "She has Victoria's scent all over her, as well as the smell of violence."

Gloria gave Danny a sad smile. "I am terribly sorry if Victoria has hurt you in any way this evening. I was hoping she would have better control, but it's rare that there is a full moon on Valentine's Day. Wolves are defined by their pack and who they love, and a night filled with romance and passions... well, I'm afraid it was too much for the young cub's sensibilities."

"What the hell are you talking about? Could somebody speak to me slowly and in simple English?" Danny said, throwing up her hands. "Tori didn't hurt me; she saved my fucking life from my psycho ex."

Gloria arched a black eyebrow in question. "Your ex?"

"Yes, my ex, Keri. She showed up tonight; she gave me a fucking human heart as a Valentine's Day gift. I freaked out and called Tori to come get me, but Keri had other plans, which I'm fairly certain entailed carving her name in my skin. Tori burst in and they started fighting. Now they've disappeared, and I still have no fucking clue what's going on, and this has to be the worst Valentine's Day of my life." Danny started crying again.

Angel wrapped her arms around Danny, comforting her friend. "Shhh, it's going to be okay."

Gloria looked at the pack. "Well, this complicates things just a bit."

Harrison frowned. "They must have gone out the fire exit."

Gloria nodded. She whispered to the two unarmed pack members. They whined but nodded their heads.

"Okay, we're going to see if we can find Victoria. Clint and Becca will stay here with you just in case your ex should show up again." Gloria thought it unlikely, but if the ex did show up Victoria wouldn't be far behind. Gloria offered up a prayer to the moon that Victoria was not lost too far in her demon; the longer she stayed out of control, the harder it would be to bring her back.

She could smell rats, death, stale water, and human emotions: lust, fear, and anger. Keri's scent went up a set of cool metal stairs. Nails clicking hollowly on the stairs, she followed the scent trail up. Reaching the landing, she sniffed. Not detecting anything, she crept through the broken double doors; the one on the left hung off its hinges. The water smell was stronger as well as the coppery smell of hot wires sparking with electricity; on the other side of the room she could see live wires sparking on the floor.

Ears straining, she picked up a heartbeat; it pumped furiously. Taking another step, she caught a second heartbeat, this one calm and patient. Hesitating, she sniffed the air again, but she couldn't get a scent over the water and the hot wires. Taking another step, she ended up in the water and froze. It was only about an inch deep but she had a bad feeling about this. As she started to back up, Keri stepped out from behind the machinery, brandishing a knife.

Tori's ears laid down flat against her skull and she growled.

Keri waved the knife. "Come on. I'm going to gut you and turn you into a rug."

Snarling, the wolf answered Keri's threat with one of its own.

Another figure emerged out of the shadows. "Jesus! What kind of animal is that?"

Tori whirled to face the new threat. It was a man, tall and thin, with blonde hair that was pulled back into a short ponytail. He had a square jaw, that was framed by a stylish goatee. She could hear his heartbeat start to pick up.

"I thought you said the girlfriend was on your ass. That doesn't look like a girl."

"Danny's dating an overgrown puppy. Well, I guess there's no accounting for taste."

"Keri, it's a mutated dog. God, you're off your rocker," the man grumbled.

"The wolf poisoned Danny's mind against me. She..." Keri said, pointing at the wolf, "prevents me from having Danny. She ruined all my plans for the evening."

The man pulled a gun from the waistband of his pants. "Goddamn it, Keri, what have you done? We need to get out of here." He leveled the gun at the monstrous shaggy beast.

A low rumbling snarl vibrated through the room and the wolf charged, sending water splashing.

Panicking, the man fired. He could see the first two shots hit, spraying blood, but the wolf just kept coming at him. He shrank back in fear until his back hit the wall, stopping him.

A booted foot kicked the live wires into the water. Electricity jumped through the ions, charging them; the shallow pool became a death trap in a fraction of a second. Muscles jerked, contracting and relaxing in a painful frenzy, internal organs swelled near to bursting, hair smoked, finally her heart overloaded and stopped.

"Keri! Fucking A! Turn it off," he yelled, holding a hand over his nose to block out the smell.

Scrambling behind the machinery, Keri pulled the plug and, with a lazy fall almost in slow motion, the beast fell into the pool. Watching it with critical eyes, they were both happy to see it remained still.

Keri clapped her hands. "See? We were way too smart for this nasty wolf." Her cold eyes gleaming, she raised her knife and walked toward the body.

"What are you doing?"

"I want a souvenir to show Danny."

He rolled his eyes in frustration; Keri's obsession was spiraling out of control. He thought she would be a perfect child for him to mold into his image. However, he was beginning to wonder if she was too fractured for him to control. He had let her roam off without him this evening with the promise she would return with her lover. He figured they could have some fun and be gone for other places come dawn, but she had returned with tales of Danny's nasty current girlfriend. He knew that they were on borrowed time. Danny and the girlfriend were probably on the phone with the police right now.

"I indulged your obsession, but we are in over our heads here. It's time to cut our losses and leave. The police could be swarming over this building at any moment."

Keri's face darkened. "I won't leave without Danny. We're soulmates."

In a blur, he was over at Keri's side, staring down at her. "You're my child. You will do as I say."

They stared at each other angrily. Too caught up in their tension, they failed to notice two people silently enter the room. There was a soft metallic click and a Zippo lighter was held up on the other side of the room, highlighting two people. Green and brown eyes turned away from each other to take in the newcomers.

"You hurt a member of my pack," Gloria spoke softly but firmly, her voice dripping menace.

She took them in. The female must be the ex; she radiated insanity. The male wasn't much better. She smelled the air. They reeked of old blood and pain; it was in their skin and their clothes. Looking at her brother, she asked, "What is alive yet soon to be dead?"

Harrison pondered this as he held the Zippo. "Hmmm, those two?"

"Correct. You better hope Victoria is all right, or I will personally shred you."

Keri laughed. "I'm not scared of you. Daddy's a very powerful vampire."

Gloria rolled her eyes. "Right. At the very most your 'Daddy' is mildly psychic, and he gets off on the emotional overload that comes off people when they're in extreme pain or pleasure. He must see a kindred sexual sadist in you."

Keri's face turned purple in rage as she turned to face the man. "You told me. All my dreams of... I drank your blood."

The blonde man's face went pale and, as he opened his mouth to reply, Keri gave a scream of rage and buried her knife with such force into his chest that it lodged in a rib, getting stuck.

Gloria raised an eyebrow as the body hit the floor. "Well, that takes care of one problem. Travis," she yelled out, "will you come in here with the chains? I don't want Ms. Ex running around loose. We'll take her to Brent; he'll decide what to do with her."

Harrison just nodded. "Gloria, Victoria still isn't moving and I can't pick up a heartbeat."

Worriedly, Gloria stared at the young wolf's motionless body. One thing at a time - the ex and then Victoria.

"What's taking them so long?" Danny questioned impatiently.

Angel just shrugged.

"That's it. I'm following them."

"Miss, we should just stay put. Gloria will handle everything; she's Brent's right hand. Trust me, she has everything under control," the young man guarding her said.

The sound of breaking glass interrupted him. A scream was cut off suddenly as something large hit wood.

The man looked at the woman. "Shit, was that Travis?"

"He's one of yours, right?" Danny asked.

The woman nodded.

"Right. So just how does Gloria have everything under control?" Danny said with a snort as she started moving along the side of the building. She didn't want to leave Tori's safety to chance.

The heart muscle trembled then gave a weak twitch. A second passed and then it contracted, sending blood through arteries. Fibers in the tissue merged back together; lungs exhaled used oxygen and then inhaled. Eyelids blinked and then opened, revealing golden eyes.

Standing up, it shook itself, water flying off its pelt. Looking around at the now empty room, she saw the body of the man who had shot her lying face up, blood stained his chest and ran down to mix with the water - death had claimed him. One of the windows was shattered and there was yelling coming from the floor above her. Looking up, she saw a hole in the ceiling right above the machinery. Smelling the bitch's scent coming strongly from it, she moved over to look up. She growled and the fur stood up along her back. Pain - she would give that bitch pain she had never imagined. Death would be too good for her.

With a howl, she scrambled up into the hole.

Ears twitched and she heard Gloria yelling. "Find that woman. She cannot leave here. I don't know how she outmaneuvered Travis, but she has to be caught."

Tori licked her chops. There would be no catching; there would just be screaming and tearing.

Danny entered the warehouse. Looking up at the sound of feet running above her head, she said, "I guess we go up."

"I really think we should..." The man following her trailed off at her look.

"I'm with you two. I'm sure Angel and I are perfectly safe. We are safe with you two, aren't we?"

"Of course." He puffed out his chest while the woman just rolled her eyes and remained silent.

"Angel?" Danny asked her silent friend.

"Oh, now you want me to say something?"

Danny flushed in embarrassment. "I'm sorry about earlier. I shouldn't have spoken to you like that. Forgive me?"

Angel sighed. "If I must." She let Danny squirm for a few more moments then gave her a wink to let her know that all was okay. Her gaze shifted and became unfocused. "Everyone is running around like mice in a maze looking for the cheese. Your lover has woken up but her mind is focused on murder, and her real self is fading away."

"Jeez, that's just creepy," the young man said with a shiver.

"So we go up," Danny said, moving toward the stairs.

"Now hold on..."

The woman elbowed her pack mate. "Shut up, Clint. The action is up there and we're missing it." She turned to follow Danny.

Keri waited on top of the ledge. She had positioned herself in front of a broken window. Testing the wind, she happily noted that it would blow her scent away from the doors. They would have to enter the room to look for her. The beasts would not be able to smell her. The door cracked open and a head peeked in. Keri grinned, holding the metal bar tightly in her hands. The man slid into the room, his gun waving around. Keri just stayed still. Slowly he moved forward, step by step, until he was flush with her hiding spot.

Keri grinned wider and leapt, swinging the bar at his head.

The rifle in his hand barked as his finger jerked, pressing the trigger.

At the sound of the rifle shot, heads shot up and bodies went still.

Tori ran towards the noise. Bursting through the doors, she saw the glint of metal as it was brought up and then down in a deadly arc. Growling, she attracted Keri's attention. The brunette stood up, swinging the metal bar; black liquid flew off of the bar, splashing down onto the floor.

"Ready to play some more, puppy dog? Come on! Try and get me."

Tori ran at the woman but Keri stood her ground and drew her arm back. Just as she was almost on top of Keri, Tori leapt up and over her. The air under her was disturbed as the metal bar swung through it. Overbalanced, Keri spun around, pulled by the momentum of her swing. Turning, the wolf attacked again, barreling into the woman. Keri fell on her side, scrambling for the bar that had been knocked loose; her fingers swiped the metal but it was just out of reach. Wiggling forward, her hand grasped the cool metal and she gave a sigh of relief. Green eyes went wide as her hand disappeared and all she could see was a furry muzzle with white teeth - huge white teeth. A golden eye glared at her and Keri screamed as blood oozed out trickling from between the teeth. Her other hand came up to beat against the side of the beast's head. Ears were laid back but it refused to let go.

With a shriek, Keri jabbed her fingers at that monstrous golden eye. With a yelp, the wolf let go and jerked its head back.

Keri rolled over onto her back, cradling her wounded arm to her chest. Oh God, that hurt. She couldn't remember the last time she had ever felt pain - it was awful. Tears sprang into her eyes. Rolling back to her side, she reached for the bar with her good arm. Her only warning of the new attack was the swoosh of air as a large paw swung to hit her in the chest. She lifted up slightly and then slid across the floor. Struggling to get up, a paw slammed her back down. She screamed as sharp nails pierced her flesh.

The world - Tori's world - revolved around this hunt and its conclusion. Panting, she stared down at the screaming woman. Bloodstained teeth were exposed as she snarled.

"Victoria, don't!"

Tori's head swung over to look at the figures that had come through the doors. She growled, her ears laying down flat against her skull.

The tall woman, who smelled of pack, spoke again. "Don't do it, Victoria. If you do it you'll never trust your beast again. Every time the full moon appears you'll wonder if it will control you, if it will make you kill again. Trust me, Victoria, it's not worth it."

The woman took a step towards them and Tori growled again, warning her away. The woman could go find her own kill.

Gloria stopped. She looked at Harrison.

He looked back. "I think she's too far gone. The demon wants its pound of flesh. Would that really be so bad?"

"Harrison, she barely had control before this night. If she does this she may never have control. If it kills, it makes the decision to kill, not Victoria, but Victoria will have to deal with it once the demon settles down."

He frowned. "I see your point. Should we have Greg shoot her with a dart?"

"It might be best," she agreed.

A gasp from behind them made the pack turn.

"Shit." Gloria hadn't wanted Danny to see this because she knew Victoria would not have wanted her girlfriend to see her like this. "Clint! Becca! Take them downstairs now," she ordered.

"What the hell is going on? What is that?"

"Get..." Gloria stopped as she spotted something unexpected. The huge red furred demon that was Tori was staring intently at Danny; its tail was slightly wagging. "Wait."

Clint and Becca, who had been fighting to get the two humans to move an inch, stopped and let their hands fall to their sides.

"Danny, come here."

"Fuck you. I know you can order these people around but I'm not your family. Don't tell me what to do," Danny said angrily. She was just about on her last nerve with this whole fucked-up evening.

Gloria leveled a look at Danny. Danny just gulped and slowly moved over to the woman. Gloria was happy to see that Tori was following Danny's movements with her eyes although she had not moved her weight off the woman beneath her.

"Danny, what I'm going to tell you is going to be hard for you to believe, and in all honesty I'd rather not tell you. However, Victoria needs help and I think you might be able to reach her."

"Tori. What's wrong with her? Where is she?"

"If you would let me talk, I'll tell you. You see, Danny, a long time ago a young hunter traveling through the woods killed what he thought to be a monster. Unfortunately for this young hunter,

the monster was no monster but the sacred beast to the Goddess of the forest. The Goddess became angry and cursed the hunter and his line. All who came from him would be cursed. They would take the form of a monster every time the moon was full, and the Goddess and her followers would hunt them. Sure enough, the first time the moon rose full and round into the sky, the young man doubled over; his teeth became fangs, his nails claws, and fur sprang up over his body. The Goddess hunted him, burying several arrows into his back, but was unable to kill him before the night was over. When the sun rose the monster retreated back under the skin. In time the man fathered two sons. At first he was happy as the moon came and went and they remained human, but shortly after they reached manhood the change came. So it holds true for all of his line. Eventually the Goddess disappeared, as did most of the Gods, but the curse continues. The line now holds the surname Wolfe."

Danny nodded her head and then said, "You're as insane as my ex. You're telling me that you're all a bunch of werewolves."

"No, true werewolves can change at will - anytime, anyplace. We are cursed. We are held in sway by the moon; when she is full, we are monsters. When she is not, we are regular humans."

"It's like getting really bad PMS," Angel broke in, moving to Danny's side. "Danny, all the proof you need is right over there," Angel said, pointing at the large beast standing a little ways away in front of them.

"Yes, Danny," Gloria said. "There's your proof; there's Victoria."

Danny's blue eyes widened as she took in the beast. It was... there was no way. It cocked its head, staring at her. Well, maybe there was something very Tori-like in that movement. No, no, what was she thinking? When had the world turned upside down? Everybody was nuts: her ex, Tori's family, and maybe even herself. Because as she looked at the beast's eyes again, they looked more green and less predator gold, green like a spring day, green like Tori's eyes. She covered her face with her hands, wanting to scream. God, the insanity was contagious. She was beginning to think that whatever that thing was on top of Keri it just might be her girlfriend, a really hairy mouth-full-of-teeth version.

"Um, my girlfriend is a big dog." Blue eyes searched black eyes for the truth.

"I don't know. Is that your girlfriend?" Gloria shot back.

Danny turned and her blue eyes met green; she noticed that the tail began to wag a little more strongly. Oh God, it really was her girlfriend. Only Tori would be a sweet, cute werewolf. As she thought about it, Tori was always working late every night the moon was full.

"Uh, Tori?" she croaked out.

The wolf cocked its head. It seemed to relax and its jaws opened in a wolfish grin, its tongue lolling.

Danny realized that she had been wrong about something. Keri had never sported a wolfish grin. Now that she actually saw what one looked like, she realized Keri had been nowhere close.

"Very good," Gloria purred, happy with the response that Danny was getting. She looked at Greg, signaling for him to stay alert and ready should this attempt fail. "Now Danny, I want you to keep talking to her. Get her to calm down and move away from your ex."

"Why? What's wrong?" The frantic scared note in Danny's voice triggered a growl from Tori. All eyes rapidly moved to the snarling wolf.

"Stay calm. If you stay calm, she'll stay calm."

"Tori, it's, uh, okay. See? All okay."

Ears came up but the wolf continued to watch them warily.

"What's wrong?" she whispered to Gloria.

"The more she got injured this evening, the more she let her demon out to handle what was going on. Her demon very much wants to tear your ex apart."

"And that's bad how?" Danny asked, remembering how her ex was going to probably do the same to her earlier.

"It's bad because her demon is in control. Can you honestly tell me that Victoria would kill somebody?"

Danny stared at her bare feet. "No."

"Victoria is a cub; she has no control. If she kills, I'm afraid she'll never have control. She should be like us, able to move about freely on any night, even that of a full moon. If she kills, I'm afraid she'll never have it."

Danny's head shot up. For the first time she realized that she was in a room full of monsters. "S-s-so what do you want me to do?"

"Talk to her. Try to get her to remember herself."

Danny nodded. She turned her attention back to Tori. "Tori, sweetheart..."

The wolf looked at Danny, confused.

Angel laughed. "Have you ever used the term 'sweetheart'?"

"No," Danny grumbled, "but I thought it was calming."

"She loves you, even the asshole you," Angel said, patting Danny's back.

"Right," Danny breathed out. "Just be myself." She started again. "Tori, get off my ex right now. That stupid bitch is not worth it."

Keri coughed as the heavy paw lifted off her chest.

The woman was important and made her feel all soft and warm inside. She felt her rage soothing in her head. The prey was bad and tricky. Prey should be dealt with like prey. She stared at the blue eyes. They were firm and, with a sigh, she got off the evil woman. Confused, Tori sat back on her haunches and continued to watch the woman with the blue eyes.

"Danny?" Keri croaked out. Her lover had saved her. She knew Danny loved her. "I knew you loved me. There was no way you could love a smelly dog." Coughing, she tried to sit up.

"Keri, don't move!" Danny shouted. She did not want Keri up and anywhere near her. Also, the beast that was Tori was ready to rip Keri's head off.

"Okay," Keri said. She laid back down with a happy smile. Danny would make everything all right.

"Tori, look at me," Danny commanded.

Green eyes that had turned nearly gold again looked up defiantly.

"I know you want to kill her, but you can't."

The wolf was puzzled. The woman was not pack, let alone an alpha. Why did she think she could order her around? Forgetting about the hunt, she got up and padded quietly over to the woman.

Danny went stiff with fear. "Oh shit, now what?" she whispered.

"Well, first of all, stop acting afraid. She won't listen to you if she doesn't respect you and her demon will never respect fear. You bossed her around and she's testing you," Gloria whispered back.

"You told me to talk to her. You do something; you're her pack," Danny whispered back.

"I will if I need to but I would rather that she come back because she wants to, not because I forced her to."

Danny sucked in a breath. Fine, if she needed to control the situation she would. Letting the breath out, a cocky grin morphed onto her lips and she walked forward to meet the wolf on its own terms. The sway of her hips said that she very much owned this moment.

Startled, the wolf slowed down. It hadn't expected the human to meet its challenge.

In another step they were face to face and Danny realized Tori was taller. Green eyes challenged blue but Danny didn't back down. She was used to games of control. Tori was not; her gaze broke first and she sat down.

"Amazing," Gloria said to no one in particular.

Angel gave a giggle. "Danny used to be big on playing games of power and control."

"Really. Most humans would have shut down into a quivering mass by now."

"Well, I come from a long line of Far Seers. So I'm used to the supernatural world. Danny, however, refuses to let the world get her down, and it looks like that holds true for the supernatural world as well."

Gloria nodded. Far Seers could pierce the veil between worlds; also they could follow multiple lines of fate. Fate often branched out from a single moment and Far Seers could see into each reality of that moment. A rare talent - most were insane, or driven to insanity, and lived short miserable lives. "I'm sorry."

"It's okay. I only have a small touch of the sight. It comes and goes. Mostly I'm stuck seeing auras and ghosts."

Danny couldn't help herself. She reached out a hand and tentatively touched a furry ear. The fur was soft; for some reason she had expected it to be coarse. Now that she was so close, she could see the fur was the same brownish red color as Tori's hair, maybe a tad redder. Her fingers moved through the fur, stroking down past the ear to the neck.

"Are you inside there somewhere, Tori?" she asked softly.

Green eyes looked up at her and the tail softly thumped on the floor.

"Tori, I'm so sorry this happened. I was being stupid and self-absorbed. If I hadn't gone out tonight I never would have run into Keri and none of this would have happened. You would still be my sweet overly-nice girlfriend, and I would be making your life hell for ditching me on Valentine's Day."

Gloria watched Tori's muscles relax. When the wolf butted Danny in the stomach with its head after she had stopped scratching her ear, she knew the crisis was past.

"Okay. Clint, Becca, go check on Travis. Get those chains. I want Ms. Psycho locked up tight." They nodded and moved silently out the doors.

"I believe that with Danny's help we can get Tori to another safe room," she said to Harrison. He just bit his lip and nodded in agreement.

Keri couldn't believe it. Danny was ignoring her, instead playing with that overgrown rug instead. As quietly as she could, her uninjured hand roamed the floor where she lay, searching for anything she could use as a weapon. Her fingers found a broken board from a shelf and wrapped tightly around it.

Tori heard the noise first - the scrape of wood along the floor. Her muscles tensed.

"Damn it! Greg, fire." Gloria commanded.

Danny felt the muscles stiffen under her hand; she jerked away quickly as she felt a growl.

Tori pushed Danny away, careful not to get her with her claws. Lifting her shoulder, she took the blow on the heavily muscled part of her arm instead of her head. She howled in pain as a dart sunk into her skin at the same time. Quickly, the drug flooded her system, dulling her senses.

"She's mine! She's meant to be mine!" Keri screamed out over and over, bringing the piece of wood down with each shouted word.

Confused, Tori felt like she was sliding down a tunnel. Everything seemed to be so far away. Legs gave out, she fell to the floor.

Keri brought the piece of wood up like a spear, intent on driving it into the beast. "You hurt me!"

Gloria broke into a run. Her clothes ripped, unable to contain her expanding shape and size. Black fur poured over her body and, on the third step, she was free and running on all fours. On the eighth step, she jumped, tackling and pinning Keri under her greater bulk.

Angel looked down at her friend. "I can see you breathing so I know you're okay."

Danny blinked her eyes open and groaned. "Angel, this has to be the worst Valentine's Day I've ever had. What's wrong with doing a little dance, making a little love?"

"Get down tonight," Angel finished for her.

Danny rolled her eyes and held up a hand. "A little help here. I got bitch slapped by a friggin' werewolf."

Angel laughed. "Actually, she was protecting you from Keri. Seems that she wasn't so down and out."

Danny looked around the room. Her mind desperately wanted to board the train to normality. "Can I have a nervous breakdown yet?"

"Sure, sweetie, just as soon as we get this all cleaned up," Angel replied, patting Danny's hand.

"Fuck."

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Tori groaned and rolled over. As soon as she realized that she was on a soft bed and not shackled to the wall in her safe room, her eyes sprung wide open. She rolled over onto her back and sat up. Nausea gripped her stomach and the room spun; realizing that sitting up was bad, she lay back down with a quiet whimper.

Black eyes peeked in on her guest. "Good, you're waking up."

Tori removed a hand from her face to reveal bloodshot green eyes. "What's wrong with me? And where am I?" she whimpered.

Gloria softly walked into the room and sat down on the bed. "You're at my house. Don't worry on it, just give yourself some time. It will come to you."

"I got loose, didn't I?" Tori stated in a flat voice. That was the only reason she could come up with to explain why she was at Gloria's.

"Yes, you did, and you had a very big night."

"Oh God. I didn't kill anybody, did I?" Panicking, Tori struggled to sit up

Gloria easily held the smaller woman to the bed. "Just relax. You didn't kill anybody. You showed remarkable restraint, all things considered." Succeeding in getting Tori to calm down, she stood back up. "I'll go get you some food. You just rest."

Tori rolled over onto her side and stared blankly out the window. The fog slowly lifted in her mind. A flash of her pinning someone to the ground with a furry arm hit her and she gritted her teeth. Panting, she told herself over and over that Gloria had said she hadn't hurt anyone and Gloria wouldn't lie. She went back to staring out the window. Suddenly it dawned on her that it was late morning. Valentine's Day was over. What had or whom had Danny done last night? Then memories started bubbling up from her mind. Being chained to the wall and the frantic phone call, getting loose... she stared at her right hand closely.

"I see you're remembering," a voice said, startling her. She turned back around, taking the cup filled with milk. She sipped it slowly but she couldn't stop glancing at her wrist. She had managed to break one manacle, but the other wouldn't give so she had...she shivered.

"You're lucky your demon was in full force by the time you did that or it would have never reattached itself."

"Somehow I just knew that if I held it there long enough it would knit back together."

Gloria took the glass and set it down. Helping Tori sit up, she placed some pillows behind her. Settled, Tori took the plate of food while Gloria sat down "What else to you remember?"

Tori set the fork down and her eyes dropped guiltily. "I know that I almost killed that woman, Keri, her ex. I know that...that...Danny saw me like that. Like a monster." Choking sobs bubbled out and Gloria quickly moved the plate away.

"Shhhh. You're no monster, and if she thinks that, then you're not meant to be."

"But I am a monster..."

"If you're one, then I'm one, and so is your mother."

"No, you're not. You can control yourselves; I can't."

"Victoria, you showed amazing control. You held off the change even when that bitch stabbed you in the stomach. Trust me, I don't know very many in the family who could hold it off after that."

"But I didn't do it for me, I did it for Danny. She needed me and I couldn't help her if I was all furry and running around on all fours."

Gloria wiped away Tori's tears. "It doesn't matter why. All that matters is that you did, and next time it will be that much easier."

"What does next time matter? Danny probably never wants to see me again."

"I doubt that."

"Who wants a furry dog for a girlfriend?"

"It's wolf not dog. And any girl would be lucky to have you, especially Danny."

"Then where is she?"

"Ah..." Crap. Gloria had hoped that Danny would be done thinking and be back by now.

"Victoria, she's only human and she's had quite the shock, not to mention a world-altering night. Her ex tried to kill her and..."

"Her current girlfriend is a big dog," Tori finished for her.

"She wanted to get cleaned up and she said she needed to think."

"Gosh, and maybe we can just be friends and snuggle like bunnies," Tori bit out. It didn't take a

genius to know that she wouldn't be seeing Danny again. "Happy fucking Valentine's Day to me," she bit out morosely. She turned away from Gloria and stared blankly out the window.

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"Shut the fuck up!" the guard yelled into the cell.

"She at it again?" the orderly asked, coming up to the room.

"Yeah, she's only been here one night and I'm ready to shoot her," the guard replied, fingering the handle to his gun.

"Come on, Jerry, none of that. I'll just give her a shot of this and she'll settle down; so will everybody else on the floor. Here, help me hold her so I can stick her." The orderly unlocked the door, the woman's howling getting louder.

"Come on, Miss, you're stirring up the other patients."

"Stay back. A werewolf bit me and now I'm one too," the woman growled.

He rolled his eyes and walked towards her. She snapped her teeth and tried to run past him. The guard caught her and happily slammed her up against the wall.

"When the moon gets full again I'll change... and I'll kill you and then I'll be with Danny," she screamed, struggling to get away.

"Right. I'm sure this Danny guy can't wait to see your freaky ass," the guard grunted.

Keri started howling as the orderly jabbed her quickly with the needle and injected the sedative. "Okay, she should be out in a few."

They quickly walked out and the guard relocked the door.

Keri howled and thrashed around the room

"What's her deal?" the guard asked.

"Dangerous, delusional, and a few other not-so-nice words. She killed her father. Looks like some big ass dog got her arm when she was running around alleys trying to get away. Now she raves on and on about being a werewolf."

"What a nut," the guard said with a laugh

"Yeah, everybody knows werewolves don't need a full moon to change," the orderly said, laughing along with the guard.

"What?"

"Uh, I said yeah, everybody knows that werewolves aren't real."

"Oh, okay." The guard stared at the orderly then shrugged. "Grade A nut. Can't wait for her trial so she can be transferred somewhere else."

Tori didn't know why she was here. She should have just called and canceled her reservation. Maybe she was really into pain. Tires crunched over the rough gravel parking lot as she pulled up in front of the small cabin that flashed a red open sign in its window. Getting out, she barely noticed the cold; her breath came out in white clouds. Shutting the car door, she walked to the cabin door, knocking the crud off her boots as she entered.

A bell above the door rang as she opened it and a gray bee-hived head slowly emerged from the back. The elderly lady attached to the hair looked up from the ledger she was studying, a smile warming her face. "Ms. Spector, so nice to see you again. Henri just finished getting the room set up like you asked. We were beginning to wonder if something had happened."

Tori winced. She'd forgotten about the extras she had asked for.

"You know, that day you came in here laughing with Danny, I knew you two were a match. She had just pulled you out of the water and you were both soaked. But you both had this look about you." The woman sighed, at the happy memories.

Tori wanted to puke. God, why was she here again? Because she was half hoping Danny would show up. *'Not very likely,'* the rational part of her brain told her. She smiled weakly back.

"Oh, sorry, I'm sure you love birds want to get to your romantic evening. Just sign here and I'll get you the keys."

Tori scribbled a hasty scrawl and sucked in a breath, trying to center herself. She wondered briefly why Doris didn't ask where Danny was.

"Here you go. I gave you the far cabin so you would have more privacy, not that we have a lot of folks up here during the winter."

"Thank you. That was very thoughtful, Doris," she muttered and quickly left.

Doris smiled at the retreating woman. It was nice to see young people so in love with each other. Young love was always so impulsively passionate. Why, she remembered when Henri scaled the wall to her dorm room. She hummed as she revisited another happy memory.

Tori parked in front of the small isolated cabin. She could see candlelight flickering through the window. Pulling the keys out of the ignition, she broke down, sobbing on the steering wheel. Danny wasn't coming. Danny wasn't going to be waiting inside, wearing something silky and revealing, to surprise her. Danny was at home, ignoring her phone calls and messages.

Wiping her eyes, she got out and slammed the door. She entered the cabin and swallowed hard at the romantic scene Henri had set up for her. He had followed her instructions to a 'T'. Bastard. Sighing, she set her bag down and just stood there, at a loss.

"Spector, are you just going to stand there all night like an idiot or are you going to get your ass in here? If I remember correctly, you owe me a romantic Valentine's Day weekend since you were all tied up at work."

Tori's mouth went dry and her stomach dropped. Should she dare to think this wasn't a dream?

"Um... Danny?" She asked as she walked into the bedroom.

"Yes." Danny looked up at her from the bed as she nibbled on some chocolate.

"You're not a hallucination, are you?"

Danny inched the sheet down. "Does this look like a hallucination?"

Tori swallowed nervously. "Um, no, that looks like you're kind of naked under there."

"Yep. Open the wine, will you?"

"Kay." Tori picked up the wine and looked for a bottle opener. Not seeing one, she went to the kitchen to get one.

Stopping just outside the door, Tori peeked back inside, checking to make sure Danny hadn't vanished.

Danny leaned back, happy to see that her girlfriend was still sweet, if not a bit befuddled. Danny just loved keeping Tori on her toes. She leaned back, taking another bite of chocolate. She hadn't planned on coming up here. This morning her mind had still been wrapped up in confusion. Her girlfriend got furry, really furry, once a month. However, Angel had come over, bugging her to talk about what was bothering her.

"Danielle Christiansen, stop thinking. Once you start, you don't stop until you've overanalyzed

the problem to death and it's too late to fix the problem. Is that what you want? Because if it is, just call the girl up and tell her it's over. Poor Tori is on eggshells wondering if you still want to be with her."

Danny cringed. People only used her full name when she was in trouble. She looked up from the book she was pretending to read.

Angel just stared. "Is it over?"

"I don't know. She's a werewolf."

"So?"

"So? So? That's a big life altering change in our relationship, don't you think?"

"No."

Danny dropped her book. "What do you mean no?"

"It doesn't change anything. Tori is still Tori; nothing has changed."

"She's a werewolf. You were in the same room with me, weren't you?"

"Don't get smart. She was a werewolf before you found out. She's been a werewolf the whole time you've been dating. So Tori hasn't changed one bit. You're the one that's changed and you need to deal with it quick."

Danny opened her mouth to argue then shut it. When you thought about it like that, Angel was right.

"What's the real problem?" Angel said, sitting on the couch next to Danny.

"I'm scared I'll get hurt."

"Tori would never hurt you. She's a super sweet girl; you know that."

Danny sighed. "No, I'm scared her wolf will hurt me."

"Danny, her wolf won't hurt you. It might hurt for you, but it would never hurt you. Jesus, Danny! Were you not paying attention? Her wolf obeyed you. She totally ignored her alpha but listened to you. That's a heady power, girl."

Danny stared at her hands. "I guess."

"No guessing. So what are you going to do?"

Danny looked at the book blankly. "I guess I need to talk to her."

"Excellent. Pack an overnight bag and I'll take you up to the cabins."

"The cabins? Why would... oh my God, she's still going up there? She doesn't even know..."

"Tori has more faith in you than you do," Angel said, picking up her coat.

Danny had gotten the key from the manager. It had been a hard battle not to laugh at the beehive hairdo. Opening the door, her breath had been taken away at the scene before her. Tori had planned all this. Moving into the bedroom, she almost started crying. Daisies and roses were all over the bedspread, a tray next to the bed held a bottle of red wine and chocolate, and her heart melted just a little bit. No, Tori hadn't changed; she was still the same, just a little furrer. Knowing that Tori was planning on being there soon since the candles were lit, she quickly got undressed and slid under the covers. She would give Tori a surprise of her own.

Danny smirked. Tori was very surprised. Tori came back in holding two glasses and the wine bottle. She poured the wine and handed a glass to Danny who smiled and took it, sipping some quickly. Tori downed hers in one gulp and poured another.

"Spector, don't you think you're wearing too many clothes?"

Tori frowned and remained quiet. After a moment she asked, "Why are you here?"

"Get naked and get in here and then we'll talk."

Tori eyed her nervously, licking her lips. She sat down on the bed to remove her shoes and socks. Her hands grabbed the bottom of her sweatshirt, hesitating for a moment before pulling it up over her head and throwing it to the floor. She gasped as Danny sat up and placed her hand on the skin of her back. It was hot, burning almost, where flesh met flesh. Tori chalked it up to her nerves being hyperactive.

"You were so beat up. Keri wailed on you with that piece of wood but there's not a mark on you."

"Only on the night of the full moon," she whispered, turning to look at Danny. "Tonight if I went through all that Keri did to me, I would be dead. I wouldn't heal. I couldn't save you and I would be worthless."

"Never," Danny spoke fiercely, wrapping her hands around Tori's waist in a hug.

Tori began crying. "And I felt worthless because you couldn't stand me anymore, because I was a monster."

"No, shhhh, no. Oh Tori." She laid her head on Tori's back. "I needed some time, and for Angel to point out something important to me." She rubbed circles on Tori's stomach with one hand.

"Have I ever told you about Keri, about the kind of woman I was attracted to before you came along?"

Not trusting her voice, Tori just shook her head.

"Let's just downplay my horrible taste by saying they weren't very nice people, but then I wasn't a very nice person. Keri, well she, she was into cutting and blood games. Then she got wrapped up in a vampire fetish, and one day she cut me so bad I almost died."

"I guessed. I've seen the scars on your body and the one you hide behind that macho bracelet of yours," Tori said quietly.

"You never asked."

"Why would I? Getting you to talk about things is like pulling teeth. I figured I'd just be patient and wait, and someday you'd tell me."

"I'm sorry. Ever since we've started dating I've felt like I was in flux. You have that effect on a person. Anyway, while I was in the hospital I made a vow that I would never let anybody hurt me like that again."

"And you're afraid the wolf me would hurt you."

It was a calm statement, but Danny could feel the hurt.

"Yes." Danny held on as Tori squirmed to get out of their embrace. "I was scared because you suddenly changed and my sweet Tori was now capable of incredible violence. Part of me kept thinking, what if this new wolf Tori turned on me and hurt me?"

"God, Danny, I would never..."

Danny kissed her, silencing her. "I know that. Well, now I do. Angel pointed out that you hadn't changed at all. You've been a wolf the whole time we were dating. It's not a new thing that suddenly happened to you on your way to save me on Valentine's. You're still Tori. Now I know what you do at work all night one night out of the month."

"You... you still want to be with me?" Tori asked in a small voice, hardly able to believe it.

"Yes, Tori, very much. Although I really want to come to your office and see you all tied up one of these months. I bet it's hot."

Tori blushed and Danny laughed as she kissed the spreading red moving down Tori's neck and chest.

Kisses tingled on her skin and her heartbeat sped up as something she wasn't sure she'd feel again - arousal - took over her body. Tori leaned into Danny, trying to get more flesh-on-flesh contact.

Danny grinned against Tori's skin, her hands coming back around to the front of Tori's jeans. She unbuckled the belt and undid the buttons. Tugging, she urged the smaller woman up more fully into the bed.

Tori blinked as she came up from a kiss. Lifting herself up, she stared down the space between their bodies. "How did you... when did you?"

A devilish smirk was her only response. "The make-up sex fairy came in and took your pants." Danny pulled Tori back down onto the bed and rolled them over so she was on top. Trapping the woman's hands above her head, she kissed slowly along the jaw up to the ear.

Tori whined and thrashed around, barely able to stand the overload of sensation that washed over her as a tongue laved along the ridge of her ear then down to the earlobe. Her breathing hitched as her earlobe was sucked into a warm, wet mouth.

Danny let go of Tori's wrists. Her hands trailed down the flushed skin, touching, tweaking. Releasing the earlobe, she moved down the taut body beneath her. Her tongue tasted, teasing spots she knew Tori liked. Shivering as her own arousal sparked and consumed her from the inside, a part of her mind remained outside the sphere of lust's influence as it watched Tori with new eyes. Would she be able to see any trace of the wolf? Would it appear inside the green eyes bright now with passion? A gasp burst from her and all divisions inside her melted away into the single pursuit of passion as Tori threw a leg over her hip and pulled their bodies together.

As they collided together, thoughts became grainy while the focus sharpened on the pinpoint of wet expanding heat where they met and merged into one another. At first their rhythm was awkward, but it didn't matter. All that mattered was the touch of flesh against flesh. Their rhythm flowed until they were moving in sync and then, as passion burned out in a last gasp, it grew brutally into discord.

Tori trembled, feeling massive heat release floating hot and sticky inside her. Hands clutched, sinking into flesh; eyes flew open; and teeth gritted. She whimpered through the chaos of emotion.

Danny went still, shuddering, riding through her own climax. She stilled for a moment when she thought she saw something else in Tori's eyes watching her. She looked away as she noticed Tori look back at her quizzically.

Tori's hands ran through Danny's hair and down her back, touching her lightly, soothingly. "Are you okay? Maybe it was too soon. I shouldn't have..."

Convinced she had imagined it, Danny replied, "Spector, don't ruin the moment." Raising herself up on her elbow, she smiled as she pushed matted sweaty hair out of Tori's face. "However, I do have some concerns."

Panicked, Tori spoke up, "What? What are they? God, I knew..."

"Well, since we've swapped body fluid, does that mean I'll get all furry next full moon?" She could have laughed at the perplexed look Tori gave her.

"Um, no. I thought Gloria explained..."

"And what if I decide to get a cat? Will you be chasing it all the time?" She started laughing. Tori's jaw was working but nothing came out.

"Why you..." Tori laughed, collapsing back onto the bed, relief washing through her. "I'll show you the big bad wolf." She howled badly and grabbed Danny, rolling her over on the bed.

The End

Feedback, good. Zeeamy@gmail.com

The Sequel to this tale is [Control](#).
