

JESSICA GIBSON

BLOOD
and Sacrifice

♥ BLOOD TIES - BOOK 2 ♥

Blood and Sacrifice

Book Two of
The Blood Ties Series

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Dedication

*For Jen, thank you for always being there, and for putting up with my insanity.
I am truly blessed to have you in my life*

♠ Prologue ♠

The waves crashed against the cliff where Bronwyn stood, the rolling green hills of Ireland at her back. It had been almost a year since she left with Ronan and she was now a very different person—both physically and internally.

Gone were the raven, waist length tresses she had always possessed. In their place were crimson waves that hung around her shoulders—very posh—just the way Ronan liked it. Funny how she lived to make him happy, his every desire melding with her own.

She found herself craving more than just the touch of his skin against her own. She craved blood, innocent blood.

“There you are, my love,” Ronan called over the rush of wind and waves.

Bronwyn turned as he approached. He looked amazing, as he normally did. Black slacks and a white button down shirt with the sleeves rolled up to his forearms, paired with black boots. She smiled as he slipped his arm around her waist, drawing her close to him.

Her black dress was damp from the constant spray of the surf and her hair was sticking to her cheeks. She loved Ireland; especially with Ronan.

“Let’s go inside, I want to change before we hunt.” The glint in her eye was anything but nice.

In a flash they were standing outside the giant mansion Ronan had purchased, years ago. It was large and somewhat imposing. Twelve rooms and more bathrooms than a person could count. Bronwyn immediately began peeling off her wet dress the second they were through the doors. The human notion of modesty was fading from her mind with every passing day.

She stood in the entryway naked, except for bra and panties. “Can someone see about this?” She kicked her wet dress toward the stairs as she walked away.

Ronan found her in their room a bit later pulling on a pair of black skinny jeans, her back to him. “What do you want to eat tonight?” His words stirred something deep within her.

Bronwyn turned to face him, her hands dropping to her sides. A slow smile spread across her lips. “You pick.”

Ronan growled and pulled her close, claiming her lips with his own.



The sound of heels clicking on the sidewalk was the only sound in the night air. Bronwyn strolled aimlessly along the streets of Manhattan. She and Ronan had only just recently returned to the States from Ireland. Her navy pencil skirt and white silk halter top made Bronwyn look every bit the Madison Avenue socialite. She blended in seamlessly with countless other well-dressed men and women in the City.

Ronan walked beside her, dressed in navy slacks and a white button down slim-cut shirt. They were a force to be reckoned with. Beautiful and cold. They walked hand in hand, playing tourist and window shopping.

“Tell me, who looks good for dinner?” Ronan whispered in her ear.

Bronwyn chewed her lower lip as she looked around for her dinner. “Him.” She inclined her head in the direction of a handsome man with dark hair.

“Go and get him, then. I’ll be off to find dinner of my own. See you soon, love.” He kissed her lips gently, then caressed her cheek.

Bronwyn sauntered over to the man. “Hi.” Her voice was soft and breathy.

The man gave her an appreciative look. “Hello. I’m Max.”

“Bronwyn. Do you have plans tonight?” She pursed her lips suggestively.

He looked at her, his lips curving in a smile. “I suppose I do, now.” His cocky manner both attracted and repelled Bronwyn. “What do you have in mind?” He cocked an eyebrow.

“Let’s walk a bit, I know a place.” She twined her fingers with his and led him through the throngs of people.

As they walked, Max peppered her with questions. Everything from what was her sign to where she lived. By the time Bronwyn found a decent alley to take him down, she was irritated.

“What’s down here?” Max questioned

“It’s a shortcut to the bar,” Bronwyn said in breezy tones.

The further they walked, the darker it got. Bronwyn pretended to trip and gripped his arm.

“Sorry, I’m so clumsy, sometimes. Hang on; let me see if my heel is broken.”

Max stopped and his attention was on her feet when Bronwyn made her move. She had him pressed against the wall before he knew what was happening.

The fear in his eyes almost made her stop. Almost. “Don’t worry, Max, I’ll make it quick.” She smiled; her fangs glinting in the dim light. Bronwyn inhaled the scent of his fear, breathing in the sweet smell as she put her mouth against his throat, licking

the hammering vein just beneath his skin.

Max tried to scream, but her hand clamped over his lips. The only sound that came out was muffled. Bronwyn bit into him quickly. She let his blood flow freely into her waiting mouth, savoring the rich flavor that was Max.

A movement at the far end of the alley caught her attention and she whipped her head to look. She found Ronan watching her, with a smile playing at his lips.

“Please, don’t stop on my account. Finish your dinner.”

Bronwyn blew him a kiss before returning her attention to the rapidly fading Max. She drank him in until there was nothing left. His lifeless body fell to the ground. Bronwyn stepped over him, giving the now dead Max one final look before joining Ronan.



Their hotel room was the definition of luxury. Bronwyn was sprawled on the king-size bed, draped in nothing but an Egyptian cotton sheet. Ronan lay beside her, idly stroking her leg while he read.

Suddenly, something in the air changed. There was a buzz, a hum. Bronwyn sat up, instantly on alert. Ronan’s fingers stilled; he, too, was now feeling it.

“What is that?” he asked.

Bronwyn’s eyes widened and she brought the sheet up to cover her body just a split second before the room was filled with a blinding white light.

“Bronwyn,” an angry voice called from within the light.

“Crap,” she said, as she jumped up from the bed and ran to find something to put on.

“What is this Bronwyn?” Ronan questioned.

“It’s Seraph, that’s what this is. I’d get dressed if I were you. We’re in for it, now.” She had just pulled on a robe when Seraph popped into view.

Seraph’s blonde curls were pulled into a bun and she wore an angry expression on her face. Her blue eyes were flashing.

“Bronwyn, do you have any idea how long I’ve been searching for you?” Seraph yelled.

“I assume for the better part of a year,” Ronan said dryly, not bothering to cover up.

Seraph glared at him before turning to Bronwyn. “You’ve had your fun; it’s time to come home now. We all miss you. Rider...”

Bronwyn cut her off. “Don’t talk to me about him.” Her expression was stony.

“Fine. Carly misses you like crazy. We need you at home. Please come with me.” Her eyes were pleading.

Bronwyn shook her head. “You had no right to just pop in here, unannounced.”

Seraph crossed her arms and stuck her chin out. “I’ll do what I have to if it means you’ll see reason.”

“Seraph, does it look like she’s not here of her own free will?” Ronan asked. “Bronwyn is free to go if she wants to. She has chosen to remain with me, so it’s time for you to leave. I won’t sit by and listen to any more of this.” He stood, not caring

that he was naked, and walked out onto the balcony.

“You need to leave,” Bronwyn said flatly.

Seraph dropped her head. “Rider is not doing well. Things have been bad since you left.”

“I saw him six months ago and he looked like he was doing just fine to me.”

“Seeing you put him over the edge. He’s not himself.”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“He’s killing innocents. He doesn’t care anymore.”

Bronwyn arched a brow. “What exactly do you think I’ve been doing the past year? We are vampires; it’s in our nature to kill. What Rider does is not my concern, anymore.”

Seraph’s eyes narrowed. “Are you really that far gone? Do you honestly not care?”

“I can’t care. You’ve said your piece; it’s time for you to leave.” Bronwyn turned and walked out onto the balcony with Ronan.

Seraph watched her go and popped out in a flash of white light.

Ronan stood against the railing, looking down the 40 stories to the street below. Gripping the metal so hard it bent in his hands. Bronwyn approached cautiously, stopping just outside of the door.

“I’m sorry.”

He turned to her, sadness painted his features. “Do you regret it?”

She cocked her head, slightly. “Regret what? Coming with you? No. Not for a second do I regret leaving with you.” Bronwyn took the remaining steps in an instant. Her fingers brushed his cheek lightly. “Never think that.”

His fingers covered Bronwyn’s near his jaw. “I never want you to second guess this. Us. All of it. I lost you once. I couldn’t bear it again.” He kissed her softly.

“I love you, and us, and this. You are where I belong. Maybe coming back to the States was a mistake,” she replied

Ronan smiled grimly. “You may be right. I had hoped that enough time would have passed for us to return, but it appears I was wrong.”

“Where should we go?”

“I’m not so certain we’ll be leaving. They’ll find us no matter where we go. The question is, does it bother you so much that you would want to leave the country again?” He tipped her chin up and looked into her eyes.

“I’m not running away. Now come on, let’s go back to bed.” She walked away from the railing, letting her robe drop to the floor.

Ronan watched her walk, her skin glowing a pale alabaster in the moonlight. It didn’t take him long to join her. She was thrown onto the bed in an instant and pinned beneath him.

The pressure of his fangs against her throat was delicious. A second later and her blood was flowing freely through his parted lips. Bronwyn moaned and pressed his head firmly against her, wanting the feeling to last forever.

When he pulled away, she flipped them over with inhuman speed, her hands streaking up her sides to her throat. She rubbed some of her blood on her lips and bent to claim his mouth as she joined them together.

Bronwyn threw her head back and screamed before sinking her teeth into Ronan’s

throat. His blood was her drug of choice, making her feel things she didn't think were possible. The pace he set was maddening and she had no choice but to be swept away.



The next evening, they dressed up to meet up with some vampires of Ronan's line who lived in New York City. Bronwyn chose a sleek silver sheath dress and black Louboutins. Ronan was dressed in gray slacks and a white shirt.

"You look smashing my darling," Ronan said as he came up behind her and kissed her neck. "Almost makes me want to stay in, tonight."

Bronwyn's blue eyes glowed in anticipation of what would come after they met with Ronan's "children".

Emerging into the night a bit later, they hopped into a sleek black Bentley. Once they were on their way, Bronwyn commented on the car. "Where did this come from?"

"Who knows? I told Quentin we required a car and this is what he got us." He shrugged and grinned at her, his fangs gleamed in the moonlight. They drove an hour outside the city and pulled up to a large wrought iron gate. Ronan honked the horn and someone poked their head out of the gatehouse. When the man saw who was behind the wheel, he opened the gate, immediately.

With a loud scraping creak, the gates swung open and Ronan followed the driveway up to the mansion located at the end. The house was huge and the grounds behind it looked like they stretched out, forever.

"Who lives here?" Bronwyn asked.

"I do. Or I have, in the past. This is my house."

"What? How many houses do you have?"

"A lot. We'll make the rounds to all of them, eventually." He smiled at her as he helped her out of the Bentley.

They linked hands and walked up the steps to the front door. The heavy double doors were whisked open before they reached the top step. A petite blonde woman wearing a slinky black cocktail dress was waiting for them.

"Ronan, wonderful to see you." A smile lit her features like the rays of the sun on the ocean.

"Karinna." He kissed her cheek lightly. "Bronwyn, this is Karinna."

Her smile faltered as she took Bronwyn's hand.

Bronwyn arched a brow. *It's like that then?*

The other woman's smile tightened as Bronwyn wrapped her other arm around Ronan's waist, staking her claim.

Ronan led them further into the house, away from Karinna.

"Ex-girlfriend I take it?"

“Something like that.” An odd expression flashed across his face. “Come, let’s go and have some dinner. Quentin’s prepared quite a feast for us.”

They walked into the spacious great room, just off the entryway. Thirty people were milling around talking; but as soon as Ronan entered the room, silence replaced the noise.

“Children.” Ronan nodded in their direction. They all dropped to a knee and bowed.

Bronwyn had never seen such deference and obedience to a maker before.

“This is Bronwyn. She is mine and is to be treated as you would treat me. Understood?” His tone held repressed menace.

Thirty heads bobbed in response and one-by-one they kissed her hand and filed out of the room.

“That was weird. What was that all about?” She asked when they were alone.

“You are my queen and I just ensured that you will be treated as such.”

“Have you brought a lot of women home with you?” She laughed, but the tone of her voice was somewhat serious.

Ronan smiled, his black eyes taking on a reddish hue. “Bronwyn, my love, don’t ask questions you do not want the answer to.” He took her hand and led her down a long hall towards the dining room.

The room was large; calling it a dining room was a bit of an understatement. No furniture adorned the room, everyone stood in clusters around the edges. A moment later, a group of men and women were ushered in, ranging in age from late teens to people in their thirties. Bronwyn’s mouth watered from the smell of blood and the thud of it in veins. She wanted to eat, and she wanted to eat, now.

Ronan picked a tall blonde woman out of the bunch, compelling her with his eyes to comply. He brought her to where Bronwyn stood. “Here love, you take the first bite.” His eyes glowed red.

Bronwyn licked her lips, the beautiful woman’s blood smelled so sweet. The first bite was heaven in her mouth. She drank in greedy gulps until Ronan stepped in for his turn.

She watched him drink, his throat moving as he swallowed. He turned his eyes to her and gave her a hungry look.

They were in the car on the way back to the city when Ronan got a call.

“Yes?” His tone was brusque.

Bronwyn watched him, his overall demeanor changed as he listened.

“Where is he?” He paused. “We’re on our way. For now, leave him be; he is not your concern. I’ll handle it.” He clicked the end button.

“What was that all about?”

“It appears someone has decided to crash our party?” Ronan said, ruefully.

“Who?”

He looked at her out of the corner of his eye and made a derisive sound. “Oh, I think you know who. He’s downtown. You heard me tell my man to stand down, so don’t even try to get huffy.”

“No one is getting huffy,” she spat back irritably. “Are we going to him, now?”

“Yes, I assumed that you would want to speak with him before anything happened.”

They drove in silence through the busy streets of New York. Bronwyn stared out the

window and wondered what she was going to say after so long.

Ronan pulled over and let her out. "I'll find you in a bit. He's not far from here."

"I shouldn't have a problem finding him; see you in a bit." She kissed him briefly and clicked away in her stilettos.

She found him a block away, in a dirty alley, tearing into the neck of a young woman. He saw her at the mouth of the alley and smiled at her.

"This is who you wanted right, Bronwyn? You wanted a monster." Blood dripped down Rider's chin, falling onto his bare chest. The girl he clutched in his arms was too far gone, the blood gushed from her neck in long rivulets down her body.

"Do you expect an apology from me?" Bronwyn sneered at him. "Is that why you came?" She stood with her back against the wall, one stiletto heeled foot resting on the brick.

He erased the distance between them in the blink of an eye. His face a breath away from hers. "Do you know how many times I've thought of this? What I would say to you? I hated you so much when you left. I dreamt of pushing a blade into your heart." His arms trapped her against the wall.

She felt the lust rising in her but forced herself to remain passive. The desire rolled off of him in waves. His words spoke of hate, but his eyes said something else entirely.

"What is it exactly that you hoped to achieve by coming here? This is Ronan's town; his children reside in every corner of the city. I'll be surprised if you leave with your life."

Rider laughed. "Does it look like I'm worried?" His mouth was on hers before she could react. The kiss was rough and urgent. A year of pent up emotion exploded out of him.

Bronwyn let him kiss her. She let him unleash the fury within him. His hands gripped her hips and his fingers bit into her. When he finally pulled away, she wiped her mouth and extracted herself from his grip.

"That was your one kiss; don't think I'm going to let it happen again." Bronwyn walked away from him.

"One?" Rider laughed bitterly. "When the situation was reversed, I remember he got a lot more than one."

Bronwyn turned around and looked him in the eyes. "You're not him." She continued to walk away, Rider's curses not even fazing her. Ronan waited for her just outside of the alley entrance. He didn't exactly look happy, but he wasn't upset, either.

"Are we going to have a problem with him?" He asked.

Bronwyn shrugged. "Probably, but what are we going to do about it?"

"I think nothing for now. His mistake was thinking he could prevent this from happening." He wiped her mouth with his sleeve before kissing her.

Bronwyn laughed. "Don't want his germs?"

"More like his scent."

"You men are so territorial." She kissed him again. The difference between this kiss and the one with Rider was like night and day.

They walked for a bit, taking in the night air. "I'm not very tolerant; you know that, right?"

"What is that supposed to mean?" Bronwyn shot back.

"Exactly what it sounds like. I will only let this go on for so long before I end it."

Ronan stopped and backed her up against a parked car. “My question to you is how far will you let this go? Are you willing to sacrifice him?”

Bronwyn frowned. “Have I not done that already? Did I not leave him and all of them for you?”

“You know what I’m asking.” His tone was cool.

“Would I rather he didn’t die? Yes. But do I understand the reason behind your ending him? Yes.” She put her hands on either side of his face and drew his lips to hers. “But do you have to kill him?”

His lips quirked up. “Only if he makes me.” He kissed her roughly.

Bronwyn laughed. “I do love you, you stubborn Irish bastard.”

“Come on, let’s get back to the hotel. I find myself hungry for something other than blood.” His black eyes flashed red in the dark night.

“You can have me, but only if you can catch me.” She blew him a kiss and took off sprinting in the direction of the hotel. She heard Ronan growl somewhere behind her and she kicked up her speed a notch.

“I’m coming, my sweet,” Ronan’s voice was a whisper in the wind against her ear.

Bronwyn grinned and slowed a bit as she reached the front of the hotel. Ronan was on her in an instant.

“It appears I have caught you my darling. What shall I do with you now?” He nipped at her earlobe.

They walked briskly through the opulent lobby of their hotel, looking like any other young couple in love. The elevator ride seemed to take a year to get to the Penthouse. When the doors finally opened, Bronwyn and Ronan exploded out onto their floor, nothing but a blur of white skin, thankful that they didn’t have to mess with putting a key card into the little slot.

“Bed. Now,” Ronan said, his words dripping with lust.

Bronwyn’s eyes took on an icy blue glow as she slowly stripped out of the dress she was wearing, leaving her clad only in a lacey black bra, matching panties and her heels.

Ronan’s eyes roved over her nearly naked body as he backed her up against the bed. Her knees buckled and she fell back with Ronan landing on top of her. His lips were insistent, as though he wanted to erase the memory of Rider’s lips from her mind. His fingers lightly ran down her skin until they came to the lace of her bra.

“I do hope you aren’t overly fond of this bra, love.” With a flick of his wrist, the bra snapped in two and fell on either side of Bronwyn. He descended on the creamy white skin of her breasts, making her suck in a ragged breath.

“You appear to have me at a disadvantage, Sir. You are wearing far more clothes than I am.” Bronwyn batted her eyelashes at him and propped herself up on her elbows.

“Let’s see if we can remedy that, shall we?” His Irish brogue growing thick with each word spoken.

Bronwyn leapt to her knees, shredding the shirt and slacks Ronan had been wearing. She looked at him and smirked. “I hope you weren’t overly fond of those.”

Ronan made a noise deep in his throat and pounced on her, feathering kisses down the hollow of her throat. He grabbed her hips and claimed her, joining their bodies together in one feverish motion.

Bronwyn let him drag her under the waves of sensation. He set the pace and she had no choice but to follow it.



Hours later, they sat on the patio and watched the people scurry around far below them. Bronwyn turned to Ronan. “What made you turn me?”

He cocked an eyebrow at her. “Why the sudden interest?”

She shrugged. “I don’t know, curiosity I guess. I never asked you after it happened.”

Ronan leaned back in his seat and steepled his fingers in front of his lips. “I can’t say that there was any one reason I did it. Could have been boredom, but I’d like to think it had more to do with how beautiful you are. You were so innocent and pure, I could smell it on you. I couldn’t stand the thought of another tasting your blood. So, it was either kill you or turn you.”

Bronwyn smiled wanly. “And here I thought all along it was because of my winning personality.”

Ronan smiled. “There was that, as well. You challenged me when no one else around me dared to. You still do. I never know exactly what will come out of that pretty little mouth of yours.” He leaned forward and stroked his thumb across her lower lip. “Will you answer a question for me?”

Bronwyn felt a seed of unease take root in her stomach. She knew the question he was going to ask and she wasn’t at all sure how to answer it. “Sure.” She smiled, trying to shake off the bad feeling.

“Why did you leave me for him?” His voice was barely a whisper.

“It wasn’t so much that I left you for Rider. He appeared at a time when I needed someone and I jumped. Things had been bad for awhile; you, yourself, have to admit that. We fought more than we didn’t.” She paused.

Ronan nodded and motioned for her to continue.

“I needed to get away. To be able to breathe, again. Rider offered me that. He never wanted to make me what I wasn’t.”

Ronan stood and walked to the railing, looking down onto the street below.

“What are you thinking?” Bronwyn asked gently.

“That maybe I didn’t want to know the answer to that question. I know I’m not always easy to live with, but you make me sound like a tyrant.” He raked his fingers through his hair.

Bronwyn walked to him and turned his chin toward her. “It wasn’t all bad; but I was young, and I needed to experience life. I couldn’t be what you wanted of me. It was better that I went.”

“Better for whom?”

“Look, I don’t want to fight with you about this. It’s over and done.” She kissed him, softly. “Can we drop it? Or is this going to be an issue?”

Ronan shook his head. “I’m fine. It’s not an issue.” His cool exterior was back in place. The vulnerability Bronwyn had seen was gone.

She wanted to bring that Ronan back, to make him feel again. “I’m going out for a bit.”

“Want some company?” He asked with a cocky smile on his lips.

“No, I just want to run.” Bronwyn was already pulling on some jeans and a t-shirt when Ronan came in after her.

“So you’re upset then?”

“Why won’t you just let me in? You always have the shield up, that cool exterior.”

“Bronwyn, if you are expecting to share feelings and braid each other’s hair, you chose incorrectly. I have been alive too long, seen too many things, to ever allow feelings and emotions to rule me. You know who I am. I have given you love; well, my version of love. You cannot ask more of me.”

She shook her head and finished lacing up her boots. “Don’t wait up.” She kissed him quickly and fled the room.

Why am I ruining this? She screamed in her head as she calmly walked to the elevator. Once in the lobby, she crossed quickly and escaped to the street and the calming embrace of the chilly night air.

Bronwyn stopped in her tracks when she saw someone very familiar leaning against the building across the street, dressed head to toe in leather. “I’m guessing you all decided on a field trip at the same time?” She said sarcastically, as she zipped across the street.

“Well, someone has to clean up after his mess,” Carly scoffed.

Bronwyn’s lips thinned out, “I saw him, earlier. He seems to be out of control.”

“Hmmm, I wonder why that is?” Carly pressed a finger to her lips in mock concentration.

“Look, I don’t need a lecture from you, too. I got enough from Seraph.”

Carly smiled. “You know, I want so bad to stay mad at you. It would be a heck of a lot easier if I did. But, it’s too damn good to see you.”

Bronwyn’s tough exterior melted, “I know. I’ve missed you so much. Is Tuck here, too?”

“He’s looking for Rider; we followed him here. I didn’t even know you were back in the States. Seraph told us, yesterday.” There was a hint of something in Carly’s voice.

“Look, I know this is an f-ed up situation. I had to make a clean break, though. I couldn’t live half in and half out with Ronan.”

“You ruined him.” Carly’s voice was harsh.

Bronwyn laughed. “Really? Rider is a big boy; far older than I am. His choices are his own. Did you really come here to make me feel guilty? If so, you may as well leave now.” Bronwyn’s tone was cool.

“Who are you?” Carly took a step back.

“I’m the same person I’ve always been, Carly, I’m just not fighting it anymore.” Bronwyn leaned in and kissed Carly’s cheek before heading off into the night.

Damn her. What made her think she could come here and blame me for his

downfall? Thoughts raced through her mind as she ran. Why did everyone want to crucify her for Rider's choices? The fact that free will exists seems to have slipped everyone's mind. She ran until she was no longer angry, and was most likely in another state.

Her phone buzzed in her pocket, she fished it out and saw that it was Ronan. "Hello?"

"Where are you?" He asked.

"No clue, probably Connecticut."

"Do you think you'll make it back before dawn or should I make you a hotel reservation?"

Bronwyn checked her dainty diamond Chanel watch and saw that it was 4:30 am. "Probably not, call me and let me know where I'll be staying." She hung up.

She knew very well that she was punishing him for something that wasn't really his fault. Three minutes later, her phone buzzed again. "Hello?"

"You're staying at the Delmar in Greenwich Harbor. Can you find it or should I send a car to you?" His tone was icy cool. He was mad.

"I can find it, thanks." Bronwyn responded in clipped tones. "See you tomorrow night." She hung up before he could respond and pulled up the hotel on her GPS. She committed the route to memory and once again took off running.

She opened the door to what she assumed was the hotel's biggest suite and was not at all surprised to see Ronan sitting on the bed reading a magazine.

"Will you run away every time we have a fight?"

"I needed to think, I didn't run away," Bronwyn responded quietly.

"Whatever you call it, I don't like it. Makes me feel possessive, and I know you don't like that."

"I'm never going to be the perfect robot you want me to be, Ronan. I will get mad and we will fight. But that doesn't mean that I don't love you."

Ronan stared at her for a moment. "Come here."

Bronwyn did as he asked and flopped down on the bed next to him.

"I worry, you know I worry. So please, do not run from me again." He pinned her to the bed with his body and softly kissed her lips.

"Not sure I can keep that promise. And I didn't run from you; I went for a run, there is a huge difference." She kissed him back and wriggled free of his body. "Can we please not fight? I'm in no mood for it." She rolled over and closed her eyes.

By the way, Carly and Tucker are here as well."

"Here? At the hotel?" Ronan arched a brow.

"No. Here as in New York. They followed Rider. Everyone seems to want to lecture me about how I ruined him." She laughed ruefully. "As though his actions are not his own."

"Why do you care?" Ronan questioned.

"I don't, really."

"Don't you?" Ronan countered.

"Look, they're my friends, I do care to some degree." She scrubbed her hands over her face. "Now, I really am done talking about this."

"As you wish." He inclined his head in deference to her. "I have something else to

discuss with you, anyway. We're going to London."

"When do we leave?"

"Well, I had planned on tonight, but it will have to be tomorrow." There was a hint of reproach in his voice.

Bronwyn made a face. "Why are we going?"

"We need to go to a club there, it's one of my investments and I'm having issues with my managers."

"What kind of club is it?"

"One for those of the supernatural persuasion. It's where the underworld of London goes to see and be seen."

"I'll need to pack. I don't have any of my things, obviously."

"I brought you clothing for tomorrow. Everything else we'll get in London. Now, how shall we occupy ourselves until tomorrow night?" A hungry look appeared in his eyes.



They stepped off Ronan's jet just as full dark spread over the city. Bronwyn in no way looked like she just got off of a seven hour flight. She was dressed in a navy satin sheath and white heels. Ronan insisted on dripping her in jewels—she wore diamonds on her fingers, ears, and neck.

Ronan was dressed similarly, in a dark suit and white shirt. Bronwyn adored the way he looked in a suit; she had to stop herself from ripping it off of him.

They stepped right into a black Rolls Royce Phantom. "I swear I'll never get used to all these fancy cars. This one is amazing."

Ronan smiled wickedly. "I can't seem to stop myself from buying the new model whenever they come out. This has been my favorite of the newer styles."

They drove through the city and Bronwyn stared out the front and side windows, gaping at everything they passed. This was only her second time in London and she wanted to see everything.

The club was located in the center of the city, in a nondescript looking building surrounded by businesses. They had to go underground to get to the actual club. There was the club, and then "The Club"

They were greeted by a beautiful purple-haired woman with piercing green eyes, dressed in black leather pants and a sparkly red halter top. "Ronan, lovely to see you." Her crisp British accent caressed each word.

"Jen, thanks for calling." Ronan kissed both her cheeks. "This is Bronwyn."

Bronwyn extended her hand and smiled. Something about this woman put her at ease. "It's nice to meet you."

Jen smiled. "I've heard a lot about you and been curious about the one who stole Ronan's black heart."

Bronwyn's smile widened. She liked this woman. "I don't know about that. He stole mine well before I ever stole his."

Jen smiled, her emerald eyes flashing in the moonlight. "Please, won't you come

in?”

They followed her onto the top level of the club. It was decorated in stark silvers and whites. Bronwyn imagined that with the lights down, it probably looked amazing. Jen continued through the club to a door marked “Storage”. She touched some buttons on the keypad until the lock clicked and the door swung open.

A surly looking man stood guard at the top of the stairs, just behind the door. Jen glared at him and they walked down the first flight of stairs.

“Since when is Franco on guard duty?” Ronan questioned.

Jen turned and smiled sweetly. “Since he slacked on his other duties. Would you prefer I had just sacked him?”

Ronan shrugged and motioned for her to continue on her way down the next flight of stairs. There were three more sets before they finally came to the bottom floor. “Welcome to the ‘real club’, we call it ‘Night’. It is where all of us creatures of the night come to congregate in a nonthreatening manner.” Jen smiled brilliantly.

Bronwyn was drawn to her; she couldn’t keep her eyes off of her. “What are you?” She asked, as she inched closer.

Jen smiled wickedly. “What do you think I am?” She slid away from Bronwyn’s grasp.

Bronwyn shook her head and looked to Ronan for help.

“She is a Succubus, love. She feeds off the life force of humans to sustain herself.” Ronan said succinctly.

Bronwyn studied the beautiful Succubus for a moment. “So, that’s why I’m drawn to you, then?”

Jen nodded. “Yes, I’m irresistible to both men and women; although you can become immune to my charms if you so choose.”

“Hmmm, I don’t know; I kind of like you.” Bronwyn laughed. “But, if I was so inclined, how would I become immune to you?”

“A drop of my blood willingly given and taken on the tongue will erase the hold I have on you.” She arched a brow in question and held a pin to her finger.

“So, if a vampire takes your blood unwillingly?”

“My hold over them will remain. This is a gift I offer, not something that can be taken.”

“Will I still like you if I do it?”

“I’m a very likable person, Bronwyn; I can’t see that a little drop of blood will change that.”

Bronwyn motioned for her to go ahead and prick her finger.

Jen used the tip of the pin to pierce the tip. When a large drop of blood appeared, she told Bronwyn to open her mouth and pressed her finger in the center of Bronwyn’s tongue.

Bronwyn closed her eyes and savored the flavor that was Jen. It was exotic. She couldn’t quite put her finger on what it tasted like, but she knew she liked it.

“I think you’ve had enough.” Jen pulled her hand away from Bronwyn’s mouth.

“That was interesting.” Bronwyn licked her lips. She could slowly feel her desire to be near Jen waning. But she still liked her, well enough.

“Now that we have that taken care of, can we get down to business?” Ronan asked.

Jen nodded, “I tried to handle it on my own, but you know how Pike can be.”

“I do indeed. It was one of the reasons I turned him to begin with. What has he done?”

“Well, for starters, he’s been skimming thousands a day for the past four months. Rhiannon caught him and brought it to my attention.”

Ronan stroked his chin thoughtfully; his black eyes began to glow with his impending rage. “What else?”

“When he found out we were on to him, he killed Celisha and Toran.”

If Ronan was angry before, it was nothing compared to the naked rage that now rolled off him in waves. Jen took an involuntary step backwards. Ronan calmed himself a bit. “I am not angry with you, Jen; stop looking so scared. Where is he?”

“Somewhere in London. He was spotted just after nightfall a few blocks from here, so he couldn’t have gotten far. Besides, he didn’t know you were coming, so he has no reason to run. He thinks he’s won.”

“Bronwyn, my love, would you like to go for a hunt with me or stay here with Jen?”

“Do you honestly think you could keep me indoors?” Bronwyn asked.

“I can hope, can I not? He’s already killed two of my children. I do not want my queen added to that list.”

Bronwyn gave him a look and Jen stifled a smile behind her hands. “Do I look helpless?”

“I suppose not. We need to leave, now. Jen I trust you will be careful?”

“Ronan, darling, just because you are immune to my charms does not mean that all are.” She winked at Bronwyn and went to go see about what need to be done before the club opened.

“Stay close will you?” Ronan murmured in Bronwyn’s ear.

“Like a second skin.” She kissed him and they wandered through the club, looking for more of his offspring to bring with them. When they left ten minutes later, they had three of his children with them. Bronwyn didn’t bother asking their names, she knew she would forget, anyway.

They prowled the dark streets of London for an hour before Ronan caught Pike’s scent in an upscale neighborhood. “He’s here,” Ronan said, his eyes flashing red.

A few minutes later, a tall well-dressed vampire with dark hair and blue eyes emerged from one of the houses with a blonde woman who was definitely human.

“Pike,” Ronan said quietly.

The other man’s eyes widened in shock and he took off running.

“Go and get him.” Ronan motioned to the others. “Looks like Pike has brought us a snack, love.”

Bronwyn smiled and they walked over to where the pretty blonde woman was standing. “Hello.” She smiled brightly.

“Um, hi,” The blonde responded. “Where did Pike go?”

“Don’t you worry about him, he’ll be back,” Ronan crooned. “What’s your name?”

“Shelly.”

“Do you know what we are, Shelly?” Bronwyn asked.

Shelly nodded. “Pike said he was going to turn me and we were going to run away together, as soon as he had enough money.” Her lip trembled.

“See, that’s where I come in.” Ronan smiled. “Pike is my child and it’s my money that he has been stealing. I’m afraid, my dear, that turning you will not be an option.”