

Kerri2??

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Submitted: August 5, 2009

Updated: August 15, 2009

*Kerri2's finally out guys (: sorry it took so long
(for ppl who don't know, this is the sequel to Kerri??)*

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1 - Major Gossip Session

“Do that again,” Arik said.

“No,” Kerri said, crossing her arms. “I’m tired.”

“Once more,” he cajoled. *Please?*

“Fine, once more.” Her eyes glowed as she let the heat take over. Once again, she was on fire.

It didn’t hurt. It wasn’t uncomfortable. Of course, it’s not a form she would choose to stay in, but it was helpful in self-defence.

“There. I did it.”

Arik came over to kiss her. “Having a sorceress as a Mate is so cool.”

“Having you as a Mate is so lame,” she said, kissing him back.

He pulled away, clicking his tongue. “We have to remain professional, remember?”

She looked at him incredulously. “You were the one who kissed me first!”

He grinned at her. “That was me testing you whether you were professional enough.”

She hurled a fireball at him.

He dodged it. Just. “Your aim is improving by the second.”

She threw another fireball. Bull’s eye.

Arik looked down at his t-shirt which was burning merrily away. “Wow. Your aim is actually literally improving by the second.” He clicked his fingers and water spewed out of his fingers and doused the fire. “Time for spells.”

She crossed her arms. “Go on, then.”

“There are many different kinds of things you can do with spells. You can stun people or freeze them, like I did to you when you tried to jump me when you couldn’t shift.”

Kerri snorted. “I was not trying to jump you.”

He waved his hand. “It’s okay, you can admit it. Every other girl already has.”

She threw another fireball at him and his hair caught on fire.

“You know fire doesn’t affect me, right?” he asked calmly, putting out the fire that was on his head.

“I thought you were an air dragon.”

“I am, but dragons can control fire easily. There are water dragons, air dragons and earth dragons, but there aren’t any fire dragons because all dragons master fire at a young age.”

“Oh, so you master fire and whatever kind of element you’re a dragon of.”

“Yeah.”

“So you’re saying you’re bad when it comes to water and earth?”

“I’m never *bad* at anything, Kerri,” he said grinning. “Of course, they might be my weaker elements—”

Kerri sent a wall of water towards him, and he froze it easily.

“—but I’m not *bad* at them,” he finished. He clicked his fingers and the wall of ice crumbled and melted away.

“Dammit.”

Arik looked at his watch. “Lunchtime. I’ll teach you some spells tomorrow.”

“Hey K,” Drake greeted her.

“Hey. How are you?”

“Great. I’m really enjoying my time off.”

“Oh, right. I forgot. How were your finals Carter?”

“I don’t know,” he said glumly.

“I’m sure they’ll be fine,” she reassured him.

“Yeah,” Mel said, kissing him on the cheek. “I’m sure you did great.”

Arik came back with their lunch when Joshua and Sitara arrived.

“Hey Sitara,” Drake said cheerfully.

“Hello everybody.” Sitara nodded as Joshua whispered something in her ear and he went off.

The girls immediately sat together and started their major gossip session that occurred everyday at lunchtime.

“So, what’s new?” Mel asked them.

“Apparently, Kelvin’s been stalking Drake,” Sitara said.

“It’s Kelly,” Kerri corrected her. “He officially changed it to Kelly last week.”

“Yeah, well we all know who I’m talking about.”

“But Drake’s with Mick now!”

“No, I don’t think so. I haven’t seen Mick around for days.”

“He’s a freaking spirit! You can’t see spirits. You wouldn’t be able to see them even if they farted right in your face.”

“No, but you’d be able to smell it.”

“Well, personally, I don’t understand why Mick and Drake aren’t together.”

“Talking about people being together,” Mel said. “Kerri, apparently, people on your floor are threatening to put in a hidden camera in your room if you don’t keep it down at night.”

Sitara burst out laughing.

“You two can talk,” Kerri huffed. “Or have you two just not been getting any?”

The other two girls blushed.

“Do you want to change the topic?”

“Yes please.”

“Oh, oh, Sitara, there’s a rumour about you.”

“Let’s hear it then.”

“They say that you’re coming back to fight for Arik because Ty dumped you on your @\$\$. ”

Sitara scoffed. “Let them talk. Besides, I think I’ve been spending so much time with Joshua so publicly that even the blind can tell that I’m not fighting for Arik.”

“Oh, and about Arik. It seems that Arik’s going to get it for breaking the rules.”

“That’s crazy,” Kerri said. “We all broke the rules.”

“Why does the boss know everything?”

“I know. It’s not possible. He must have spies or something.”

“What are you talking about?” Drake suddenly asked. “I want to be in on the latest gossip.”

“Well, we were talking about why you and Mick aren’t together anymore,” Kerri said pointedly.

Drake flushed. “Don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Well? Face it Drakey, you haven’t been getting any.”

“At least I don’t let every single person in the building know that I’m getting something,” Drake said, looking pointedly at Kerri, who blushed. “Guys, I have something to tell you.”

“What is it?” the girls asked him.

“Well...I’ve been getting these letters.”

“What letters?”

“I don’t know...they were all written by the same person.”

“So?”

“They were a bit...weird. It’s like a stalker wrote them.”

The girls exchanged a look.

“Maybe it’s...Kelly,” Sitara said gently. “You know he hasn’t gotten over you yet.”

“Kelly would never do that.”

“But—”

“He wouldn’t do it, okay?” Drake snapped, his mood obviously turning foul.

“Okay,” they said simultaneously, not wanting to get trapped in one of Drake’s dog fits.

“Guess what,” Sitara said excitedly. “Okay, Joshua made me promise not to tell, but...well, I’m going to tell you guys anyway.”

“What is it? What is it?”

2 - The One With The Commitment Issues

As Arik looked across the table at Kerri and Sitara, he wondered how those two became such good friends. Wasn't it supposed to be really awkward?

Suddenly, everybody at the other side of the table—all the girls and Drake—except for Sitara burst out with a “what?!”

Sitara nodded and shushed them.

They all screamed in excitement and went in for a group hug.

“Can we tell them?” Mel asked Sitara excitedly. “Can we? Can we?”

“Please say we can tell!” Drake begged her.

“I don't know...I promised him that—”

“Please!” Everybody at the table begged her.

“Fine, but only when he's not around.”

Kerri rushed over to Arik, and he greeted her with a kiss on the cheek. “What gossip have you been fed with now?” he asked her.

Sitara's getting married.

Arik choked on his water and fell off his chair. “What?”

You heard me. She's engaged.

Um.

Well?

Um. Good for them?

I don't know why you act so weird around Sitara.

She's an ex of mine. Of course I act weird around her. I don't know how to act around my exes. I don't usually stay good friends with them after I've screwed them.

She whacked him on the arm. *You're so vulgar. Now go and congratulate Sitara.*

He looked at her pleadingly, but she pointed over to where Sitara was sitting. "Go. Now."

Reluctantly Arik got up and went over to Sitara. "Well, I just heard," he said after a while.

"Oh...yeah."

"So...uh...congratulations."

"Thank you, Arik. I hope you don't—"

"No, no, it's okay. I'm really happy for both of you. It's just that...it's kind of awkward for me."

"I understand." Sitara hugged him. Arik hugged her back after a while.

"Congratulations again."

"Thank you. Are you going to ask..." she trailed off, raising her eyebrows at Kerri. "Are you going to ask her any time soon?"

He grinned. "Wouldn't want to steal your thunder."

She grinned back. "Nothing can possibly steal my thunder. I mean, I'm the big bad wolf that's somehow for some reason on the good guys' side. Nothing can possibly top that."

He laughed, and then shrugged after a while. "I guess...we're both happy to stay where we are right now. Don't want it to go too fast, you know?"

Sitara shook her head knowingly. "Just admit that you have commitment problems, Arik."

"I did for a while after you left," Arik said, annoyed. "But I have no problems to committing since I've met Kerri. In fact, she's the one who probably has commitment problems."

"What?"

"Two weeks ago before she left for the C.E. I accidentally uh, insinuated something about us getting married and she kind of freaked out on me a little."

"Huh. Interesting. So are you ready for marriage?" she asked him.

He shrugged. "I don't know. Probably. I mean, why not? I'm going to spend the rest of my life with her anyway, which also brings me to my second question: why? I'm going to spend the rest of my life with her anyway."

She rolled her eyes at him. "Men."

"Women."

“Arik?”

“Yes?”

“Don’t tell Joshua that I told you this. He hasn’t actually proposed yet, but he said he was going to some time.”

Arik smiled. “He’s going to propose tomorrow night.”

“How do you know?”

“Tomorrow is the exact date that you were taken from the Sterling. I should know.”

She smiled at him. “Thanks.”

“No problem.” He rejoined Kerri, who was joking around with Carter.

They were messing around on the bed when he rolled on top of her.

She grinned. “What?” she asked him. “Why are you staring at me like that?”

“Nothing. I was just thinking back to what Sitara said earlier today.”

“What did she say?”

He shrugged. He felt a probing around his mind and he immediately tried to shut his mind out against her, but he was too late.

Damn she was quick.

You want to marry me?

No. I mean, yes. I mean, I wouldn’t mind doing it.

Sitara told you to marry me?

Maybe.

That’s a stupid answer. You know I can always find out for myself.

Arik sighed. *No, she asked me when I was going to propose to you.*

And you said, I quote, “we’re both happy to stay where we are right now”? Really?

Well, aren’t you happy?

Yes.

Then what's the problem?

I never said there was a problem. I was just asking.

Okay. Arik paused. Well...do you want to? Get married, I mean.

I don't know. Maybe. Just...

Not now?

Not now, she agreed.

Arik breathed a sigh of relief. Not that I don't want to, or anything, but—

But you have commitment problems.

I do not have commitment problems! Why does everybody say that?

Maybe we should take a look at the number of girlfriends you've had for the past three years, Kerri said drily. I'm surprised you haven't screwed every single girl in the company already.

I'm insulted.

She kissed him. I'm just saying. You have commitment problems. Just admit it.

"I do not commitment problems!" Arik burst out. "Why does everybody say that?"

"Who's everybody?"

"You and Sitara."

"Hm, let's see. One's a current girlfriend, and one's an ex-girlfriend. And guess what? They're telling you that you have commitment problems. Live with it."

Arik growled, and when he realised he couldn't do anything about it, he sulked.

Like a little boy, Kerri teased him.

He continued to sulk.

Aw, is Ricky in need of comforting, then?

Extremely so. Make it up to me. Now.

You're sexy when you're demanding.

I'm always sexy.

That's...debatable.

You're supposed to be making it up to me.

Please. I'm Kerri. I don't make up to my Mate.

No? How about just making out with him, then?

Gladly.

3 - OMG.

About two days later at breakfast, Sitara rushed in over to Kerri and Mel.

“He proposed!” she shrieked.

The girls—and Drake—screamed gleefully while Arik and Carter covered their ears and winced at the noise. “Let us see the ring!”

Sitara stuck out her hand for the others to admire the ring.

“Why are you screaming?” Carter asked. “You already know about it.”

“But this time he actually proposed,” Mel explained.

Arik and Carter looked at her blankly.

“Don’t worry,” Kerri said, waving away the blank stares. “It’s a girl thing.”

When Joshua came into the room, Arik and Carter stood up to greet him and thump him on the back, making jokes about balls and chains. Joshua actually laughed.

“They do this and they don’t understand why we do that?” Mel asked, perplexed.

“They’re men.”

“I told you he would propose last night,” Arik said as he made his way over to Sitara.

“Hey, how’d you know when Joshua was going to propose?” Kerri demanded.

Arik kissed the top of her head. “We’re men. We know each other well.”

Mick suddenly materialised and went over to hug Sitara. “Congratulations, Sitara.”

“Uh, thanks, Mick. Sorry, I’m just not used to you suddenly appearing and disappearing yet.”

“Yeah, where have you been for the past few days?” Kerri asked. “Drake missed you.”

From a distance away, Kerri could see Drake’s eyes widen when he saw Mick.

“Speak of the devil,” she murmured as Drake made his way over to them.

“Hey,” Mick said as Drake joined them.

“Hi.”

“Uh...I’m sorry I haven’t been around for the past few days.”

“It’s okay,” Drake said quickly. “It’s not like we’re an item or anything. It’s cool.”

Kerri and Sitara both raised their eyebrows but Drake shot them a look that said something along the lines of *you tell him and I promise I will kill you*.

“Yeah,” Mick was saying. “Exactly.” He bit his lip. “I uh, can we go somewhere else? I want to ask you—”

“Let’s,” Drake said quickly. “Let’s go. I’ll see you later guys.”

Kerri and Sitara grinned at him and he winked at them.

“He hasn’t been this happy since he last saw Mick,” Kerri murmured to Sitara as Mick and Drake made their way out of the room.

“I know.”

Drake and Mick had just gone out of the room when they came back in again and sat down at their table. Kerri and Sitara exchanged a look, confused.

Kerri was about to ask Drake what was wrong when suddenly the hall fell silent. Everybody sat down when they realised the boss had entered the room.

What’s he doing here? Kerri asked Arik. *I thought he never comes here.*

He doesn’t.

Oh crap.

“I just received a letter,” the boss announced. “The Chocolate Express has formally issued a declaration of war.”

A collective gasp went around the room.

Behind her, Arik groaned. “shoot.”

Kerri smiled weakly. “Sorry, this is all my fault.”

He kissed the top of her head. “Don’t think of it like that. We’re all glad to have you back. If you hadn’t escaped, we’d have issued a declaration of war on them sooner or later.”

“Yeah, K,” Drake said, reaching across the table and squeezing her hand. “Never think of it like that. Stop blaming yourself.”

She sighed. "Thanks. I think."

"The war starts on the fifteenth," the boss was saying. "That's exactly two weeks away, people. Start training." With that, he turned abruptly and left the hall.

The noise of the chattering in the hall heightened immediately after the boss left.

"Does he know that I've been kidnapped?" Kerri asked Arik.

"He's not supposed to, but you never know with him. He knows more than he lets on."

"So he probably knows why the C.E. declared war."

Arik shrugged. "Even if he didn't, he does now. The C.E. probably told him why in the declaration."

She groaned. "This isn't good."

"Look at the bright side," he offered. "He hasn't come over to punish us yet."

"Punish?"

"Yeah. We broke the rules by not telling him about what happened two weeks ago."

"Certainly if he knew about it he would've come over to tell you off by now."

"Maybe he wanted to give me time to mourn," he muttered.

Kerri kissed Arik. *I've been back for a week. Surely you would be celebrating my return.*

Arik smirked. *Who said I wasn't mourning over your return?* He slipped his arms around her waist and kissed her neck. *Just kidding.*

Ha freaking ha, very funny.

I'm just a very funny person.

Ha, now that's funny.

Arik kissed her again. *You're so mean to me.*

You wouldn't be attracted to me if I wasn't.

True.

"What are we going to do?" Carter was asking them.

“Um, train, maybe?” Drake said, rolling his eyes. “Oh, this reminds me. I’ve got your finals results.”

Carter’s eyes widened. “How did I do?”

Drake shook his head. “Maybe...maybe you should read it for yourself.”

Everybody at the table fell silent as Drake handed Carter the results and Carter took it from him shakily. After a second, Carter picked up an apple and threw it at Drake’s head.

“Dammit, Drake, you scared the shoot out of me!”

Drake burst into laughter. “Well done, Carter. You passed with distinction.”

Everybody at the table whooped and went over to hug Carter.

“I told you that you were going to do well,” Mel said, kissing him on the cheek.

Is it really hard to pass your finals? Kerri asked Arik.

Depends on how good you are, I guess.

NO, really?

Arik kissed her forehead. *You sarcastic git.* He stood up. *Come on, we should go train.*

What? Now?

Yes. The C.E. is coming in two weeks. You need to be ready.

Can’t I at least finish my coffee?

No.

Oh, piss off. Kerri took her coffee and downed it before saying goodbye to her friends.

4 - Another Visit

“That was so tiring,” Kerri said, collapsing onto the bed. “I had no idea that practising magic could be so exhausting.”

Arik crawled on top of her. “Soon you’ll be able to do it without breaking a sweat.”

She groaned. “Get off me.”

“Why?”

“I’m too tired. I can’t do this now. Tonight.”

“We’re not allowed to do it at nights anymore, remember?” He smirked, remembering the complaints they got from their neighbours.

Kerri blushed. “That was so embarrassing.”

“I found it highly amusing.”

“That’s because you weren’t there when they were complaining!”

Arik laughed. She was so adorable. He kissed her. “Even if I was there, they wouldn’t be complaining to me. I wasn’t making most of the noise.”

She rolled over so that she was sitting on top of him. “I beg to differ,” she said indignantly. “Remember last time when—”

“That was a one time exception.”

She smirked. “You’re right. It was a one time exception. I’m never doing it again.”

“What? Why not?”

“Let’s just say I prefer putting food and only food in my mouth. And my toothbrush. But that’s about it.”

He pushed her t-shirt up and kissed her stomach. “That’s not fair.”

“Life’s not fair.” She ran her hands through his hair once before pushing him away. “I need a shower.”

“I’m joining you.”

“You are?”

“Oh yes.” He shot her a wicked grin before shifting them both to the bathroom.

Arik’s phone rang in the middle of dinner. He flipped it open and looked it up. The screen flashed Boss.

Oh shoot.

“Hello, sir,” Arik said cheerfully into the phone. “What a pleasure.”

“Come to my office now. With the girl.”

“Uh, yes sir.”

The boss hung up. He was a man of few words.

“Kerri, we have to go,” Arik said, standing up.

“What? Why?”

“The boss has requested that we meet him in his office immediately.”

Everybody at the table stopped eating and turned to stare at them.

“Do you think he knows?” Carter asked worriedly.

Drake frowned. “That’s a stupid question, Carter. The boss knows everything.”

Kerri had gone quite pale. Arik put an arm around her comfortingly. “Come on. Let’s go. Maybe he just wants to tell us about the training you should be getting in order to protect yourself.”

Fat chance. The only advice Kerri got about protecting herself was “I’m sure Arik knows what to do. If he doesn’t, then his mother is dead.”

Lovely.

5 - Lucky Sitara

Once they were in the office with the boss, Arik had tightened his grip on Kerri, as if sensing her fear and discomfort.

The boss sat. "Why don't you start by telling me why the C.E. has declared a war on us?"

Beside her, Arik had bit his lip nervously. "That would be because they want Kerri, sir."

"They want Kerri, Channing, or they want Kerri back? According to my sources, Kerri had been absent from the company for three weeks."

Arik swallowed visibly. "Uh...I..."

"Sir," Kerri said gently, "why don't you start off by telling us what you know? That way we can fill you in."

The boss sat back and looked at her. Obviously he wasn't used to answering demands. "Very well," he said finally.

Arik's grip on Kerri loosened considerably in relief. He pulled her a bit closer to him as if to thank her.

"According to my sources," the boss said, "you've been taken from the company by the C.E. on a Saturday night three weeks ago. You somehow managed to escape two weeks later. Don't think I haven't noticed the return of Sitara Malik, who is soon to be, I believe, Sitara Hallamore."

"Sitara's a good person," Kerri blurted. "She escaped with me because she hated the place."

"If I didn't think she was a good person, trust me, she would not be here, or alive at all, right now," the boss said coldly.

"What are you going to do with her?" Kerri asked again before she could stop herself.

"What do you mean?"

"It's just that...Sitara's the only werewolf in this company. Are you going to let her fight?"

The boss shrugged. "Usually, I would say no, just in case she plans to betray us then, but Sitara is noble. Whether she will fight is her choice."

Wow. Sitara really made a good impression on the boss. "Of course, sir."

"Call Sitara," the boss said, sitting back again, dismissing them.

“Yes sir.”

“Oh, and McCarthy?”

Kerri turned. “Yes, sir?”

“Start training. I’m sure Arik knows what to do. If he doesn’t, then his mother is dead.”

Kerri blinked twice. “Yes, sir.”

“The boss is really fond of Sitara, isn’t he?” Kerri asked Arik later on that night.

Arik rolled over in the bed and slipped his arm around Kerri’s waist. “I suppose.”

“Lucky her.”

Arik kissed the top of Kerri’s head. “No, lucky me.”

Kerri grinned and turned so that she was face to face with him. “You’re right. Lucky you. You have such an awesome girl for a Mate.”

“And she comes along with an awesome ego, too.”

Kerri snorted. “Oh please, as if you don’t have one.”

“Joshua thinks we should have the wedding after the war,” Sitara told Kerri as they walked to lunch the next day.

“Well...that gives you something to look forward to, doesn’t it?”

“I guess.” Sitara played with a strand of her hair. “I’m just really worried.”

“About what?”

Sitara sighed. “About Joshua. He’s human, and you know how they make humans fight first.” She stopped walking. “What if...what if he doesn’t make it?”

“Sitara! Don’t think that. He’s going to make it. He’s a brilliant fighter. Trust me. I’ve seen him fight before. Kind of.”

“I know, but he can’t do magic, which is a big disadvantage. His chances of getting killed are much higher than us immortals.”

Kerri pulled Sitara in for a hug. "Joshua's going to make it. Don't worry."

Sitara smiled. "I'll try."

"Why did the boss want to see you yesterday?"

"He just wanted to know whether I wanted to take part in the war."

"What did you say?"

"Hell yes. I'd give anything to get back at them. They freaking blackmailed me and tortured me."

6 - Amateur

“Again.” Arik crossed his arms.

“That’s all I ever hear,” Kerri complained. “Do this again, do that again. Again, again, again.”

“Practise makes perfect, Kerri.”

She pursed her lips impatiently but did as he asked so that the huge rock rose up into the air, her fingers twitching from the amount of magic used.

“If you weren’t my Mate, I’d have dumped this on you a long time ago,” she muttered.

Arik smiled but otherwise ignored her grumbling. “Now throw it over to those trees over there.”

Kerri drew in a big breath, and then with all her might, flung the rock towards the trees. The rock hurtled through the air and crashed through the trees, the trunks collapsing onto ground in a heap.

Arik nodded approvingly. She really was getting stronger every day. He was about to unleash another command when she put a hand to her head and swayed unsteadily. He was right next to her in a flash, holding her up in a firm yet gentle grip.

“Kerri? Are you alright?” he asked worriedly as she moaned softly.

“I’m...so dizzy,” she whispered.

He placed an arm behind her knees and lifted her up gently. “Dizzy? What do you mean?”

“So dizzy. And...And tired.”

Arik bit his lip. He had pushed her too far, tiring her out.

“I’m sorry,” he said gently. “I was too hard on you.”

She touched a hand to her forehead again. “What...what do you mean?”

“You used a large amount of energy to throw that rock and losing that much energy in such a short time usually causes dizziness. It should get better in a few minutes. Just close your eyes for a bit.”

She nodded and closed her eyes, her head settling into the crook of his arm before drifting off. Arik stroked the side of her face gently, brushing off the hairs that had strayed onto her face. He lifted his arm slightly so that she was in a more comfortable position and slipped his other hand under her neck to find her Mark. He touched the Mark gently with the tip of his fingers and gave some of his energy and magic to her. Hopefully, his magic—which should be more powerful than hers—will help her recover quickly.

Arik breathed a sigh of relief when finally Kerri stirred and woke up.

“Hey,” he said softly.

She opened her eyes. “Hi,” she murmured, sitting up and rubbing her eyes.

“I was getting worried,” he admitted as she stretched. “You took a long time to recover.”

“How long?”

He shrugged. “I don’t know exactly, but it seemed like a hell of a long time to me.”

She grinned and kissed him. “I’m pretty sure I was only out for a short while. You’re overreacting again.”

He smiled sheepishly. “Maybe.” He helped her up. “I’m sorry.”

“Stop apologising. We’re training, right? This is what you’re supposed to do: make me do my best, make me try my hardest.”

“I know, but I went a step too far. I thought...I thought since you were a sorceress, you were stronger, but in fact, you’re still a beginner, no matter how potentially stronger your magic is.”

She squeezed his shoulder. “You were probably just too stressed out by the war.”

He ran his hands through his hair. “And so I should be. I can’t afford to lose again. I can’t afford to lose you again. It’s going to kill me.”

She sat next to him. “Hey, don’t go all pessimistic on me.” She kissed him. “We’re going to win this time, because it’s going to be a fair fight, unlike that last time.”

“But last time was a fair fight,” Arik argued. “There were three of us and three of them.”

“But they were at their strongest, Arik. That really wasn’t fair for you.”

“They’re supposed to be at their strongest when they fight, Kerri. What’s the point of fighting otherwise when you don’t do anything to help you win?”

She slid her arms around her neck. “Don’t worry, okay? It’s going to be fine.”

“Just like last time?” he asked, distracted by how close her face was to his.

She brought herself closer so that their foreheads were touching. “You got me back in the end didn’t you?”

“But I made you suffer before that.”

“It’s not like you didn’t suffer yourself. To have Ty just invade your mind like that...”

He kissed her, and for a moment, all his problems just disappeared, but they came flooding back when she pulled away.

“What is it?” he asked her.

“Didn’t you hear that?”

“Hear what?”

“A noise. It was like...a growl. Listen.”

Arik tilted his head to one side and listened intently. Sure enough, a low growl greeted him from behind the cluster of fallen trees.

Damn. He should’ve brought Kerri back to the Sterling and let her recover there. It was never a good idea to stay in the O.R. for long. He snarled back before jumping up into the air and morphing into a dragon.

What am I supposed to do now? Kerri asked him, sounding annoyed and afraid at the same time.

Arik looked around, still listening. His hearing was enhanced whenever he was in his dragon form. There was only one of them. This shouldn’t be too hard. Unless it was Woodland again.

Get on my back.

Kerri obliged, clinging tightly onto his back just as a figure emerged from the trees.

Arik almost laughed when he saw the scrawny vampire standing in front of them. *Now give me a kiss for good luck. His good luck, that is.*

What do you mean?

Arik turned his head to look at her and grinned. *Amateur.* He jumped up into the air just as fire shot towards him. *See? They’re so predictable.*

Take your opponent seriously, she chided, although she was evidently more relaxed.

I’m surprised they ordered an amateur to come and kidnap you. Even if they were bringing amateurs, they should bring more than just one. At least then it’ll come close to this being a challenge.

You are so arrogant, Arik.

I'm good enough to be.

She laughed and kissed his back as he swooped up into the air and then down at his opponent. His sad excuse for an opponent, that is.

You may want to close your eyes. What's about to happen isn't going to be pleasant. He bared his teeth at the vampire, who was trembling slightly and roared.

It was the first time he had ever seen a vampire's face go pale. It was quite amusing. He turned his head quickly to make sure that Kerri's eyes were closed before hurtling himself toward the vampire.

Oh, try to block out the sounds as well, he told her before tearing into the vampire.