

Sesshomaru's Heart

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This story is about Sesshomaru and all the things we want to know about him. His childhood, Mom, relationship with Dad his sex life and life in general.

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1. Micheal The Archangel

Sesshomaru's Heart

Chapter 1

Michael The Archangel

A storm was coming. Sesshomaru looked up to see grey clouds gathering from the east. He and his usual company of Jaken his servant , Rin, the small girl who had attached herself to him and his two headed dragon Ah and Un had been walking towards the coast and had only just entered the forest. Sesshomaru knew this area well there were many streams and small caves. It was a good place for shelter from the storm. The wind began to pick up and a few fat drops of rain fell.

"There is a storm coming," he said over the increasing wind, "you need to take shelter."

He led his party to a small cave then he mounted his dragon and took off into the storm. Rin and Jaken huddled together in the small cave.

"Master Jaken," said Rin , "why does Lord Sesshomaru always ride into storms?"

"I don't know," replied Jaken, I'm just glad he never asks me to come along."

Sesshomaru rode into the storm seeking where it was most violent. The storm grew fiercer as he reached the ocean the wind whipped around him and his mount.. The waves rose and crashed with increasing force, lightning flashed. Sesshomaru rode, his face up into the wind and rain, he felt exhilaration. In his own way, he felt happy.

As he rode over the ocean he saw a ship in serious trouble. It was a foreign ship of a design he was not familiar with. He descended a little closer keeping high enough to be hidden by the clouds but close enough to watch what was happening. There was chaos on deck. At the wheel a bearded middle age man was barking orders and trying to steer the ship through the ever increasing waves. At his side was a young woman trying to hold her cloak around her.

"I should never have brought you Catherine," said the bearded man, " I fear we will come to grief this night."

"No father, I am better off here with you in this storm than I would be alone in England," said Catherine, "You know that".

Just then, there was a loud cracking sound. The main mast crashed down breaking through the deck. The men frantically began to untie the life boats.

Sesshomaru watched this scene passively. "The fools," he thought, "those boats are too flimsy to sustain them in this storm!"

The Captain began to lead his daughter to the life boats. "I must as Captain stay with the ship but you, daughter may have a chance!"

They were stopped abruptly by the angry men, "It is because you brought a woman on this voyage that we have come to such misfortune. Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphegenia to save his men. Will you not do the same for us?"

"We are not barbarians, we are Christian men!" said the Captain, "I will not perform such a savage act!"

"Then she will not pass," said the sailor. "We leave her in God and your hands. She will have no passage on a life boat."

"May God have mercy on your souls," said the Captain. He and Catherine watched helplessly as the lifeboats left the ship.

"The storm is yet worse, I fear even they will not survive!" said the Captain.

"I am not afraid Father, I am with you and soon we will both be with the Lord."

They held on to each other as a mighty wave crashed across the deck breaking the ship in two. They were separated and thrown into the churning sea.

Catherine's lungs began to painfully fill with water. She fought to surface and take a breath but it seemed every breath filled her chest with water. Suddenly it seemed the pain was gone. She opened her eyes one last time to see a shining man in white coming towards her.

"An Angel" she thought as blackness overtook her.

Sesshomaru grabbed Catherine's arm with his one hand and pulled her up to the Dragon mount. Together they flew towards the shore to a grassy rise overlooking the sea. The storm was subsiding and the sun was just beginning to rise as they reached the land. Sesshomaru laid Catherine down on the grass, in the dim light he could see she was already dead. He took out his Tetsuiga the healing sword. He watched as the soul stealing demons came and with two strokes vanquished them and healed Catherine.

Catherine opened her eyes to again see a shining man in white looking down at her. He had long white silver hair and a gleaming sword in his hand. He wore a piece of body armor over his robe.

"He must be Michael the Archangel." She thought. She sat up and realized that she felt fine. She remembered drowning but there was no taste of salt in her mouth, no pain in her lungs, she was fine. She sat up and looked around. The sun was rising over an ocean bluer than anything she had ever seen. The sky was painted in vivid pastels. She was sitting on a grassy rise at the edge of a green forest filled with colorful exotic flowers. "I must be in Heaven" Catherine thought. "I must be dead and this is heaven!" She looked at the "Angel" who had

been standing calmly regarding her all this while.

"Are you going to take me to my father?"

Sesshomaru knew she was speaking but did not understand a word. "She is a foreigner," he thought. "you will come with me," he said.

Catherine did not understand .

"This must be the celestial speech of angels" she thought.

Sesshomaru turned and looked back to her

"Michael, do you want me to follow you?"

Sesshomaru motioned with his head and walked into the woods, Catherine followed him.

They walked in silence for a long time. Catherine didn't mind, all around were wonders; fragrant flowers she had never seen , birds and animals all unfamiliar. Finally they came to a clearing. "Michael" motioned her to sit.

"You will rest now," he said and moved his hand in front of her. She was aware of a slight mist and the faint odor of gardenia, her eyes became heavy. Before she sank into sleep she looked deeply into his face and was surprised to see he had yellow eyes like a cat.

Sesshomaru straightened up he was sure she would sleep for several hours. His poisoned claws could be lethal but just a light touch skillfully applied would merely put a human to sleep for a while. He had things to do.

Catherine dreamed of the blue ocean. The waves were high but there was no storm and she was bobbing up and down between blue sky and blue waves. "Michael" came to her on huge shining white wings his hair streaming out behind him.

A voice, was it his? said, "now begins your new life," as he pulled her from the warm water.

Catherine opened her eyes to see the shadows had grown long. How long had she been asleep? Her heart skipped a beat when she realized "Michael" was not there. Almost instantly he stepped from the trees. He was carrying a package wrapped in blue silk and secured with a silver pin that looked like a dragonfly.

"You need to wash the salt from your hair and body," he said quietly.

Catherine did not understand but became aware of the fact that her cloths were in tatters, her hair was a tangled mass caked with salt and seaweed and she was barefoot. She was suddenly embarrassed to be in such a state before this tall elegant creature.

Again he turned and looked back at her. She knew to follow him. They came to a small steaming pool cleft in rocks surrounded by trees.

"A hot spring," thought Catherine, "my father told me of such things in Iceland."

The thought of her father made emotion well up in her. Why had she not seen him yet? He was a good man, wouldn't he be here? "Michael" knelt, put the package down and motioned her down. He undid the pin and unwound the blue silk which she could see was a long wide band, deep blue with a woven pattern. In the package was a white cotton robe and a long robe of white silk printed with big blue flowers and an over all geometric design. Catherine had never seen anything like it. There was a blue silk bag out of which "Michael" took several articles, a comb that looked like it was made of tortoise shell, a curved hair ornament that looked like it was made of mother of pearl a small glass bottle which he picked up.

"Most foreigners I have come across are dirty and smell, you need to bath." Happily Catherine did not understand a word. He pantomimed using the contents of the bottle and washing. Catherine understood that, she took the bottle, took out the cork and sniffed. When she looked up "Michael" was already gone.

"Well, at least he's giving me privacy," she thought.

When she was sure he was gone, Catherine removed her ruined cloths and stepped slowly into the spring. The water was warm, no hot , which shocked her, but it was not uncomfortable. She settled down in the water and worked the oil into her hair. She ran her fingers through and washed all the salt and seaweed muck out of her hair. Sitting in the hot pool she began to think of all she had seen thus far. Was this heaven? Surely it was not what she would have expected and what about "Michael." He was not exactly what she expected. One thing in particular bothered her about him. Was he missing his left arm? He only used his right arm and hand. Was his other sleeve empty? Michael was a Warrior Angel, that was what she had been taught. Perhaps he lost his arm in battle with Satan and his demons. Wouldn't God in his mercy have restored the arm of one of his celestial beings? She roused herself. She didn't want Michael to return to find her naked. That might have been more of what she would expect in heaven but the thought bothered her. She rose from the spring and squeezed the water from her hair. She found a sunny spot and combed her hair drying it quickly in the warm air. She put on the cotton robe first, it was easy enough. One tie inside at the side seam, one across in the front. She was glad to see the front was modest. She put on the over robe, it was wrapped around a pair of sandals, very simple and elegant like everything else. The robe was a little long.

"I'll be tripping over on this," she thought.

She looked up to see "Michael" standing in front of her at the edge of the trees. He seemed to just materialized like a white ghost. He came toward her and for the first time she was frightened. He picked up the silk bag and from it drew a blue ribbon. He then secured it around her waist. Next he seemed to just pull the robe up and around the ribbon until the hem reached her ankle just above her foot. Then he took the wide band of blue silk and wrapped it around her waist. He tied and rolled it in the back and secured it with the silver dragonfly pin. He picked up the comb and the little corked bottle of oil and slipped them into the blue silk bag. He showed her a pocket which had been sewn into her sleeve and put the bag in there.

"A foreigner," he thought, "She doesn't speak the language, she can't even dress herself properly."

Still there was something unusual about her. He turned towards her. She was shaped like most human women he had seen but her hair. Her hair was light brown with a gold tint, now that it was clean and combed. It seemed to curve into waves and curls especially around her face. He watched her smooth her hair back and secure it with the mother of pearl clasp. She seemed to know how to use that. Her eyes were strange too, wide and round and green like molten jade. All in all she was quite lovely, like an exotic bird.

"Foolishness!" he frowned and turned to leave as he looked back over his shoulder to see if she was following. He saw she was routing in what remained of her old cloths. He turned and she looked up quickly, she held up a gold filigree cross on a chain, said something and fastened it around her neck. Sesshomaru turned and began walking.

As he turned Catherine quickly picked up the artifact she had been searching for. She was surprised it was here and wondered why and if she should have it. She took it anyway and slipped it into her sleeve pocket. After all. You never know.

As she followed "Michael" she began to wonder other things about him. Why would an Angel be dressed in fur. It was beautiful white fur that fell over one shoulder.

When he turned she could see his ears were a bit long and pointed and then there were the markings on his face. He was beginning to resemble another type of being with which she was acquainted. He was certainly beautiful enough to be an angel. He was tall and straight and his hair. She had never seen hair like it. Long, thick and heavy but completely straight. It was white, no white silver, not like an old person but a vibrant

Shade, glossy in the sun.

They came to a clearing where there was a small cave and a camp fire. There was a little girl no older than six or seven who brightened to see them and a strange little frog like creature dressed in a robe and hat with a large staff with two carved human heads. They were cooking fish at the fire on sticks and the smell made Catherine realize how hungry she was.

The little toad was jabbering excitedly to "Michael." "Lord Sesshomaru! Inuyasha and his party are coming this way! I saw them this morning early!"

"Where?" answered Sesshomaru quietly.

"Over that hill there, on the road we were following." Jaken suddenly noticed Catherine. "Who is this? A human? Another human? Why have you brought her? Wait, is she human? She doesn't look quite right."

"She is a foreigner," answered Sesshomaru, "I pulled her from the storm. Was Kagome with them?"

"Yes my Lord," answered Jaken.

"Give the foreigner something to eat. She will not understand your speech."

Seshomaru turned and walked away in the direction Jaken had pointed out.

"Oh he always leaves me with the dirty work!" mumbled Jaken as he turned to see Rin smiling and offering the foreigner some fish layed out on a big leaf. "Well that's one thing I don't have to do." He thought.

Sesshomaru followed the road past the hill and immediately saw the little band of friends sitting, resting at the side of the road. No one noticed him approach, being a full Demon had it's advantages. It was Kagome who noticed him first. She looked up and, startled made a little squeak. Inuyasha jumped to his feet immediately putting his hand on the hilt of the Tetsusaiga.

"Whadda you want!?" he snarled.

"Kagome, I need her to come with me." Said Sesshomaru quietly.

"She's not going anywhere with you!" snarled Inuyasha.

"My younger brother has quite a temper," thought Sesshomaru. It actually amused him to get Inuyasha worked up.

"Wait!" said Kagome, "Why do you want me come with you?"

"The girl at least has some sense," thought Sesshomaru. "I pulled a foreign woman from the sea, she does not speak our language. You, Kagome, are from another world. Perhaps you can help."

"She's not helping you!"

"Inuyasha!" cried Kagome, "I may be able if she speaks English. It's my best subject in school, in fact I spent two summers with my Aunt in Hawaii and learned to speak English pretty well." Kagome stopped suddenly. Memory came back unbidden. She had been with her aunt in Hawaii twice. First time when her father had gotten sick second time when he died. She fought back the emotion. "Is she European?"

Sesshomaru looked at her puzzled, Kagome realized he may not have heard of Europe.

"What does she look like?" asked Kagome.

"She has light brown hair and green eyes." He said.

"Well then she must be European, let's hope she is English." Said Kagome beginning to follow Sesshomaru.

"Well if she's going I'm going too." Growled Inuyasha.

"We'll all go," said Miroku quietly.

"Please yourselves," said Sesshomaru leading the way.

When they reached the camp Kagome was a little surprised to see a pretty young European type woman in a blue and white silk kimono. She was older than her and even Sango maybe in her early twenties.

"Well here goes," thought Kagome hoping with all her might the woman spoke English. "Hello," she began, "do you speak English?"

Catherine perked up as she heard familiar words, "yes, I am English."

"What is your name?" Kagome continued slowly.

"My name is Catherine Faraday."

"Where do you come from? How did you get here?" Kagome began to feel more comfortable, she had not spoken English for awhile.

"I am from Yorkshire, in England." Catherine said slowly, "I was on an expedition along the coast of Asia with my father. We were blown off course and my father's ship was destroyed in a storm. I think, I'm sure I drowned and Michael took me from the ocean and brought me here."

Kagome looked puzzled, "Michael, who's Michael?"

"Michael the Archangel," said Catherine indicating Sesshomaru. "Is this not Heaven? Am I not dead?"

Kagome was not sure what to do first, she wanted to laugh but she didn't want to hurt Catherine's feelings or scare her. She looked over at Sesshomaru who was watching them, no, Catherine, intently. "Hmmm," she thought, what to do.

"You're not dead Catherine," said Kagome carefully, "You're in the country of Japan. Michael's real name is Sesshomaru and he's no angel."

"My father told me of Japan, off the coast of Asia it is an island like Great Britain. My father said it was closed to foreigners. Sesshomaru, is that right? Sesshomaru, what a beautiful name. What does it mean?"

Again Kagome was at a loss, how was she going to tell this European woman, probably a Christian, that her "Angel" was a full Demon and that his "beautiful" name

meant "perfect killer".

"One thing I must ask," said Catherine, "I know I drowned, water filled my lungs, it was very painful then everything went black. When I awoke I was fine, no pain, no sign at all of what happened. How could that be?"

"Well....." started Kagome, "Sesshomaru has a sword called Tetsuga, it is a healing sword that restores life. He must have used it on you."

"I see," said Catherine, looking over at Sesshomaru, "Tell me, if Sesshomaru is not an

Angel what manner of being is he, he is not human I think/"

"Careful," thought Kagome, she knew what Westerners thought of Demons especially during this time period. "He is a magical being," said Kagome finally.

"Is he a Faerie?" Asked Catherine.

"Oh, no, well I don't." stuttered Kagome, "Okay, he's a Demon."

Catherine regarded her for a moment, "He does not seem like a Demon, as I understand them. Perhaps here Demon means something different then in my world. The realm of Faerie encompasses many magical beings like the Selkies and the Tuatha de Danaan. He seems like a Noble of the Tuatha de Danaan, I am well acquainted with them.

Again Kagome was at a loss, she had never heard of the Tuatha de Danaan then again Catherine knew nothing of the magical realm of Japan. "Perhaps," she said finally, "They are similar to what we call Demons." She saw Catherine relax and prayed that she was right about that.

Catherine smiled at her, "Tell me girl, what is your name?"

"I am Kagome,"

" Tell me Kagome, the young man in red, is he also a Demon?"

Kagome turned to see Inuyasha and her friends sitting close by. "That's Inuyasha, he is a half Demon, his mother was human. He and Sesshomaru are half brothers.

"They do not seem particularly warm to each other," said Catherine.

"That's an understatement" laughed Kagome. "Let's see, the young man in the blue robes is Miroku, he is a Buddhist Monk and a bit of a lady's man, so watch him. The girl next to him is Sango, she is a...ah..Warrior. The little guy is Shippo, he is a fox Demon." Suddenly to her surprise Kilala walked over, jumped onto Catherine's lap and began to purr loudly. "That is Kilala, she seems to like you. I have never seen her act that way with a stranger."

"I have always been fond of cats. Said Catherine scratching Kilala behind the ears, and they have always been fond of me."

"You are taking too long!" growled Sesshomaru, "Who is she? Where does she come from?"

"His Lordship seems impatient," said Catherine causing Kagome to snort a little laughter.

"Her name is Catherine Faraday, she is from England," said Kagome.

"Eng-land where is that?" asked Sesshomaru.

"Hmmm," said Kagome how to tell him where England was. "How far west have you

been?" She asked.

"I have been across China to the tall mountains, the Himalayas." He said.

"Well, go farther west and you will find more tall mountains, continue and you will reach a fertile plain. Keep going and you will reach more mountains and then land where there are many humans like Catherine. Go further and you will reach another Ocean and there right off the coast you will find a large Island very much like ours in some ways I suppose. This is Great Britain, England is there."

Sesshomaru's eyes grew wide, "She is from the far side of the World?" he said.

"Yes," said Kagome, "she is. You know, I have a feeling that you could use the Tetsuga to help her understand our language. It's just a hunch. but perhaps you should try."

Kagome left a speechless Sesshomaru and walked calmly back to her friends who regarded her with something like disbelief. When they had gotten out of earshot Sango turned to her.

"I can't believe you were talking like that to Sesshomaru what is going on."

"Oh , he's alright," said Kagome, "He doesn't fly off the handle for no reason. I guess he just needs to put on a show occasionally." She was aware that Inuyasha was staring at her. Sometimes her ways as a modern woman puzzled Inuyasha, he was of course of this time. Maybe he would never change. "Catherine, that's her name will give Sesshomaru a challenge that's for sure. If she begins to speak our language, well, that should be interesting."

For one who doesn't like humans, he seems to be collecting them" said Miroku.

2. Naraku

Chapter 2

Naraku

Catherine sat down next to Rin, that was her name, by the small campfire. Rin looked up at her and smiled. She really was a sweet little girl. She should have asked Kagome what Rin's story was. Why did this child follow Sesshomaru with such devotion. Sesshomaru, what was his story? An Aristocratic Demon, that had to be trouble. Strangely, she sensed a deep and profound sadness in him. He seemed to work hard at seeming aloof and cold yet he had pulled her from the sea and restored her life.

Catherine became aware of Sesshomaru regarding her intently. Slowly he pulled out his sword. What was he going to do? He motioned her to stand up and stood motionless with the sword held upright in front of him. The sword began to glow and vibrate- to sing. Sesshomaru seemed to be in deep concentration. Then he touched the sword to his forehead then to hers. Catherine felt a zing of energy surge through her. Sesshomaru lowered the sword.

"Can you understand me?" he said.

Catherine was in shock she heard these words that she had never heard before and they made sense.

"Can you understand me!?" Sesshomaru said.

"Yes," the word felt strange in her mouth. "I understand," she said slowly. She translated everything to English in her mind but realized that she didn't need to- with some practice.....

"That will make things easier," said Sesshomaru turning away.

"You are Sesshomaru, you are a "Demon" I understand. What does that mean? Where are we going?"

Sesshomaru turned to her his yellow eyes glowing "Already you talk too much," he turned and walked away.

Rin came to Catherine's rescue, "It's best not to bother Lord Sesshomaru too much," she said.

"I see, he's moody," said Catherine getting used to the language.

Rin giggled, "You're funny, that's good. We follow him and he protects us."

"He seems difficult."

"Lord Sesshomaru act like he doesn't care, he doesn't talk to you but he never leaves you for long. He always comes back and if you need him he comes and rescues you."

"You're sure of this?"

"I believe it like I know the sun will always rise and set." Said Rin.

A wave of pity swept over Catherine for this sweet child. She had obviously given up on ever being loved or cared for. She accepted protection and was grateful for it. Catherine knew she had little choice but to accept the same. She decided she would give Rin as much friendship and caring as she could.

They walked in silence for a good while. Catherine stumbled as she tried to get used to the sandals. She noticed that Sesshomaru never let up his pace, he just walked ahead with the others following. Rin was a very small girl and had to trot to keep up. Catherine could see she was getting tired and picked her up allowing her to ride piggy back. To her surprise, Sesshomaru made a low whistle to the two headed dragon beast that walked with them. It fell back obediently and nudged Catherine. Rin immediately climbed on the beast's back as they walked along. Catherine looked intently at Sesshomaru, did she dare, use any of her abilities? Would they work here? She had always been a strong empath. If she reached into Sesshomaru's soul would he know? She carefully tried extending her mind. She could feel his essence as she probed deeper. Suddenly a wave of feeling hit her so hard it almost took her breath away. Anger, loss, Pain, Sadness, Resolve, she stumbled. Under she felt a surge of power like nothing she had ever experienced. This was no Tuatha Da Danaan Warrior, this was no Selkie! Here was a powerful Demon! Here was power far greater than the tall elegant figure she saw before her. This was a giant beast! Sesshomaru stopped abruptly and slowly turned. Catherine quickly composed herself meeting his yellow gaze with cool green. A small smile played around Sesshomaru's lips. He turned again and continued walking..

Catherine' heart pounded, she was in deep trouble. She was following a Demon, a real Demon. She attempted to get a handle on the forces around her but this land was very different from England. England was ancient, it's rock and land thrummed with quiet ancient energy. The land here was new and changing. There was violence in it's rock. She wasn't sure she could harness and control this energy. She was going to have to try.

Sesshomaru smiled a bit as he walked ahead. "So you are not just a helpless human," he thought. "This should at least prove interesting. Let's see what other surprises you hide Catherine."

They stopped by a stream as the sky turned orange and red for sunset. Rin dashed into the stream, and soon she and Jaken were happily catching fish. Catherine built a fine campfire. If she could build a fire in damp England she could build one anywhere. Soon they were roasting fish on the fire. Catherine had found some large heavy leaves to serve the fish on and Rin had found some wild plums. Jaken ate his fish with relish happily licking his fingers. When Catherine brought some fish to Sesshomaru he waved it away.

"I do not eat human food," he said quietly.

What did he eat? Catherine wondered. She certainly hoped it was not human flesh.

The moon rose full and silver as night approached. Sesshomaru seemed transfixed by the rising moon. This was his element.

"He must draw power from the moon," Catherine thought, that's why there was a blue crescent on his forehead. She noticed then how handsome he was. Tall and straight his shoulders were broad and his hips narrow. His exotic face was even featured, high cheek boned and strong. His eyes were more gold than just yellow and of course there was his extraordinary hair falling to his knees. Catherine found her heart pounding with something other than fear. Yes, she was in deep trouble.

Sesshomaru walked away towards the moon.

Catherine set herself to gathering dry grass and some of the long leaves to make a bed for Rin. The child was astounded and delighted that someone would do this for her. she showed Rin how to loosely weave the leaves together to make a simple mat. Jaken watched them intently so Catherine made him one too. The little toad was delighted.

Catherine thought, "best to make as many friends as I can."

Soon the moon was high and Rin was sleeping peacefully on her bed. Catherine and Jaken sat by the fire.

"How long do you think Sesshomaru will be gone?" Asked Catherine.

"Oh, he always goes walking during the full moon. He will return when the moon sets," said Jaken.

"does he ever sleep" asked Catherine.

"I don't think so," answered Jaken "The only time I have ever seen him sleep or at least look like he was sleeping is when he has been badly injured. He is very powerful and has been involved in some tremendous battles. Usually he walks away with little or no injury but twice, recently, he was injured badly. Both times it was because of Inuyasha and that damn sword."

"Inuyasha? His younger brother? That boy?" asked Catherine.

I don't know which was worse," said Jaken. "the first time in battle when Sesshoumaru tried to claim the Tetsusaiga, his father's sword. Inuyasha got it and in the battle he cut Sesshomaru's arm off. There was so much blood I thought my Lord would die. He was a long time recovering. It was a terrible time. Then he and Inuyasha battled again, not so long ago actually. Inuyasha used the wind scar, a power of Tetsusaiga. It is usually strong enough to destroy a demon. I searched and searched for Sesshomaru. When I couldn't find him I thought he was dead."

The little toad swallowed hard. Catherine felt a wave of compassion for this little faithful creature who obviously cared a great deal for his master.

"He had been blown out miles and had landed in the woods. He was so badly hurt he couldn't move for many days, that's when Rin found him. Rin was set as an "untouchable by her village. They beat her and abused her for the "crime" of being an orphan. She found Sesshomaru hurt in the woods. She would bring him food which, of course, he wouldn't eat but I think he appreciated her company as he healed. When she was killed by wolves, he brought her back. She has followed us ever since.

Catherine had many questions. "I didn't realize Inuyasha was so powerful."

"He's not!" replied Jaken, "Both these events happened because he thought Sesshomaru was trying to kill him. The truth is, if Sesshomaru wanted him dead, he would be. It's because Sesshomaru won't kill Inuyasha that Inuyasha was able to injure him so."

"So Sesshomaru would not kill Inuyasha?"

"No continued Jaken, "He swore to his father before Inuyasha was born. He promised that he would see that no harm came to Inuyasha or his mother. My Lord takes a promise seriously! I wish Inuyasha knew this, it would solve a lot of problems. You know, even without the promise, I don't think Sesshomaru would really hurt Inuyasha. They're brothers and even though he'll never admit it, it means something to him. I've seen Sesshomaru put himself in jeopardy to protect Inuyasha. Of course no one ever notices it, Sesshomaru denies it and sometime it seems he is really trying to kill Inuyasha, but I see, I know. The stupid thing is that the Tetsusaiga that Sesshomaru wants so badly was left to Inuyasha not him, he can't even hold it without burning his hand. Oh, now I've said too much! Please don't let my master know I told you all this!"

"Don't worry Jaken," said Catherine, "I won't say a word." Her attention was suddenly drawn to a stench, no it wasn't really a smell. It was something in the air. Something foul, a psychic stench. Something evil was coming, something powerful. Catherine quietly reached into the pocket of her sleeve. She wasn't sure she would be able to control the power of this land but she would have to try. Jaken did not seem to notice anything. He quietly tended the fire as Rin slept soundly. Catherine felt the stench get closer. She breathed slowly as her mother had taught her calming herself, fighting panic, keeping control for whatever would come. Her hand tightened around the object she knew she would have to use.

A figure suddenly appeared from the trees. The malaise that surrounded it was stifling. Catherine's head began to ache. She continued to calm herself, she would need all her wits for this. Jaken was frozen, his eyes wide in fear.

" It seems Lord Sesshomaru has procured a pretty little wench. I was not sure he liked women. Maybe, I thought, he liked little boys or perhaps toads."

"How dare you speak of Lord Sesshomaru that way!" squeaked Jaken.

The figure chuckled "the toad speaks" said the figure, "Where is he? Did he run like a coward when he knew I was near?"

Catherine's hand tightened, she would need the right moment - too soon and this creature

would counter and he was powerful.

"You hide behind a mask coward!" Jaken was becoming too bold.

The creature wore the mask of a baboon and a grey blanket but he was certainly not hiding. The figure chuckled and lowered his mask. It should have been a handsome face but the sneer detracted from it. His hair was long and black but his eyes, they were as black and cold as the pit of Hell.

"What was the word for Hell here?" thought Catherine "Naraku, that's it Naraku," Catherine knew immediately that was his name, Naraku, it certainly fit."

"I'll tell you what toad, I'll take this pretty wench for myself. She may enjoy being with a man of true power."

"Steady" thought Catherine, "keep centered."

"The child I will nail to a tree. She will suffer greatly before death takes her. I will see to it that the Tetsuiga will be unable to heal her or bring her back. You, toad, I will roast on this fire and feed to the pigs.

"Why would you do this?" asked Catherine quietly.

"So you have a tongue wench." Said Naraku. "I will answer you. I get my power by absorbing demons. I wish to absorb Sesshomaru, to make his power mine. When I take you he will come to rescue you. He is no match for me."

"He will not come," said Catherine, "I am only here to care for the child. He cares nothing for me."

A wicked chuckle issued from Naraku, "It matters not, I will find another way if he does not come. Either way I will take you and kill the other two. Maybe he will come to avenge them."

Naraku took a step towards Catherine.

"No!" shouted Jaken and shot a flame from his staff. Naraku waved the flame away.

"That was a mistake toad," he laughed.

"Easy, Easy, thought Catherine as she drew power from deep in the earth.

"Naraku lifted his hand palm out, "Die toad" he laughed as a beam of pure energy shot from his palm.

Catherine quickly pulled out her wand and stamped her foot on the ground as she channeled power from the earth toward the beam. She caught it dead center and sent it with her power directly to the center of Naraku's chest.

With a blood curdling scream Naraku was thrown back through the trees. The recoil threw

Catherine to the ground. Jaken watched in amazement as Naraku fled into the night.

"What happened?" Yawned Rin waking up.

Jaken opened his mouth to speak but Catherine pointed her wand at him and shot him a meaningful look.

"Naraku, is that his name? Yes, Naraku showed up and Jaken scared him away with a mighty flame from his staff." She said.

"Hooray for master Jaken!" cried Rin.

"Best you go back to sleep Rin," said Catherine gently. "You can tell Lord Sesshomaru when he returns."

Rin lay down and was soon sound asleep. Jaken sat by the fire trembling violently.

"My Lady," he said, "Naraku is very powerful, even my master cannot subdue him. You Lady sent him away. How were you able to do this? "Jaken suddenly got on his knees and bowed low, "I offer myself as you're humble servant."

"No Jaken, you need not serve me. Serve your Lord. I am not so powerful. I took Naraku by surprise. Next time, and there will be a next time, he will be prepared."

Epilogue

Naraku fled to his keep deep in the mountain cave he had claimed. He had not felt such pain since his days as the badly burned Onigumo. That woman had actually injured him! "A Woman! How dare she! What kind of power was that?" He had never encountered anything like it, yet, he only sensed that she was human. There was no demon aura about her. Well, she would pay. Once he healed he would capture her. He would drain her power and ravish her. Then he would kill her - slowly. She would scream as he had. The thought of it made him smile. A sharp pain came from where she had burned him through. He would have to heal first and that would take time.

3. Sesshomaru Returns

Chapter 3

Sesshoumaru Returns

Catherine sat by the fire. She wrapped her arms around herself. That horrible creature. He would be back, of that she was sure. When? She wasn't sure. She had made a serious enemy today of that she was certain. As Rin and Jaken slept she kept watch. She watched as the moon set Sesshomaru would be back soon. Would she be able to keep her secret from him. She was not comfortable with revealing herself to him just yet.

Sesshomaru appeared at the edge of the trees. He always seemed to shimmer and appear out of nowhere. Catherine was glad to see him. Now that he was here she felt she could allow herself some rest, and she was very tired.

"What has happened here," he said walking toward Catherine, "I sense a Demonic aura, Naraku, what has happened!?" he looked directly at Catherine.

"Master Jaken drove Naraku away with fire from his staff!" It was Rin grinning and sitting up.

"Why Jaken, is that true?" said Sesshomaru smiling, "I didn't know you were so powerful?"

Jaken had been unsuccessfully trying to appear asleep. When Sesshomaru smiled it was never a good sign. "No my Lord," he glanced at Catherine, he really didn't want to tangle with her. "I merely surprised him, that's all."

Sesshomaru saw him glance at Catherine and smiled, "well done Jaken, why don't you go with Rin to find food. I'll stay here."

Catherine could feel her eyes closing as Jaken and Rin walked away. Sesshomaru stood looking down at her smiling. It was not a pleasant smile. She met his gaze evenly.

"If you'll excuse me, I'm going to get some sleep." She said laying down in front of the fire.

Sesshomaru was not used to being spoken to like that, especially by a woman. Still there was something strangely familiar in a good way about it. "Strange," he thought, "who are you Foreigner?"

Catherine woke to bright morning sunlight. She must have slept a couple of hours. She could sense Sesshomaru's presence though she couldn't see him. Rin was feeding the fire small twigs. Catherine smiled at her as she sat up and stretched.

"Jaken said you stayed up all night to watch over us," said Rin.

"That's right," smiled Catherine, "I wanted to keep watch until Lord Sesshomaru returned."

"I found a private little pool, it's surrounded by rocks and there's water fall. I found it this morning. It's a nice place to take a bath because there are rocks all around so no one can see you."

"Oh Rin that sounds, wonderful, I'd like a little privacy," said Catherine, what an extraordinary child she was. She would have to do something nice for her.

Soon Catherine and Rin were scrambling over the rocks to come to a small pool with a little water fall. It was private and absolutely lovely. Rin left her there hopping over the rocks. Catherine could see that her robe was ragged and faded. As Rin disappeared Catherine could hear her singing, her sweet voice fading with distance. It was a warm early summer day. Catherine undressed and stepped into the pool. It was cold but refreshing. Suddenly she was not alone. She was hip deep in the water when she was aware of Sesshomaru's presence.

She could see nothing but she could feel him there. Where was he? She could feel him behind her, watching her. She stopped, looking over her shoulder.

Sesshomaru had been walking among the rocks when he came upon her stepping into the water. He had seen naked women before but he found himself transfixed watching the gentle curves of her back, waist and hips. As she looked over her shoulder he caught a glimpse of the curve of her breast. A surge of desire swept over him. He frowned "fool!" he thought and withdrew.

Sesshomaru had always kept his desires in a carefully controlled place. He had seen the folly of letting desires carry one away. His father had died because of it. When he needed a woman he knew where to go where there were plenty of women who would give him what he wanted and who needed nothing from him but payment. That was best. He was probably over due for a trip to the Demon's Market.

Catherine felt Sesshomaru's presence disappear. She was surprised that she felt a little sad that he had gone.

"Oh well," she thought, "It is for the best."

She quickly bathed and dried in the warm air. She couldn't feel any presence, she knew she was alone. She would talk to him about Rin's robe, today, she thought as she dressed.

As she walked back to the camp she came upon Sesshomaru tending his dragon or dragons,(how did one refer to a two headed creature) A-Un. Sesshomaru turned quickly and his looked frightened her for a moment but she walked boldly up to him.

"I say, Sesshomaru, you know Rin's robe is faded and tattered. The material is disintegrating, she needs a new robe."

Sesshomaru turned back to tending A-Un, "this is no concern of mine."

"Yes it is," said Catherine, "that child worships you. She follows you and asks nothing. She believes in you and has no one else to provide for her save you."

"Why don't you provide her with a kimono." said Sesshomaru.

"I can't," said Catherine, "I have no money, I don't know where there are any villages and even if I did, I am a Foreigner. I don't think I would do very well. If you could get some cloth and scissors, thread and needles, I could make her a kimono."

"This is still no concern of mine," said Sesshomaru.

"Yes it is," said Catherine standing her ground, "Do you want it said the great Lord Sesshomaru lets his followers accompany him in filthy rags!"

"You talk to much woman!" said Sesshomaru getting angry.

"Rin thinks the Sun and Moon shine out of you! She would gladly follow you into the gates of Hell!!!"

Sesshomaru was silent.

Catherine caught her breath, "she has hasn't she! She deserves better than you are giving her!"

"How dare you speak to me in this manner!" Sesshomaru's eyes were beginning to glow red. "I could slap you down like an insect!"

"Go ahead and try," said Catherine feeling for the wand in her sleeve.

"I will discuss this no further!" said Sesshomaru mounting the dragon and suddenly taking flight.

Jaken came running out, "What happened!" I have never seen my master so angry where he didn't kill something! What did you say to him?"

"I told him Rin needed a new robe," said Catherine.

"She does," agreed Jaken.

"The impertinence!" thought Sesshomaru, "I should have transformed, that would have given her something to think about! I would like to see her so bold to my Demon Dog form!"

Still, there was Rin. Not his concern! Yet, he had a vision of Rin, grown up, as a beautiful young gentle woman dressed in silks, courted by noble young warriors. He would be a formidable Father in Law! The vision changed abruptly. He saw a grown up Rin in rags, an undesirable, shunned, abused.

"No, that must not happen," he thought.

4. Amaya

Chapter 4

Amaya

Sesshomaru rode deep into the mountain range over huge jagged peaks. A-Un began to speed up the flames at their feet suddenly growing brighter. Sesshomaru stroked their smooth pebbly necks.

"That's right boys", he said, "We're going home."

It had been a few hundred years human time since anyone had lived in his father's castle. Even so, each time he went, the dragons seemed happy and excited. He did not share their enthusiasm. Soon the black castle came into view. Even now it was an impressive sight. It was carved directly into the living black rock of the mountain. Once it had been full of life; the home of the White Dog Clan, his clan. Now it laid empty and forbidding in the high rock.

Sesshomaru's father, as had all the great Dog Demon Lords before him, had kept a storehouse full of gold, jewels and other riches accumulated during battles. Even after the disaster his father had continued to add to the treasure. So had he, Sesshomaru, since his father's death. He always supposed his father had planned to rebuild the castle. He, Sesshomaru current Lord of the desecrated White dog Clan continued because that was what he had been taught.

They set down on a platform at the base of a grand stair case that led up to the castle. Sesshomaru put down food he had brought for A-un and began to ascend the steps toward the castle. The sky was a leaden gray and the wind was hard and cold today. He entered the main hall and looked around. The castle was falling into decay. The wind and elements were taking their toll. Still he supposed perhaps it could be rebuilt. He kicked a loose stone with his boot. Would he really bring Rin and Catherine here. No, there were too many ghosts in this place. He walked up a few steps to his father's throne carved into the black rock and sat down. The tapestries were gray and tattered and the wind howled through the hall. For a short time he was a happy child here. The hall had been full of family, Uncles, aunts, cousins visitors from allied clans. There had been other children like him. They had run together laughing free through the castle, playing, exploring. Most of all he remembered his mother Amaya, tall and beautiful and passionate. She had been his world. His father was Lord, Inu-no-Teicho, Dog Leader, aloof, one that you tried to impress or at least not disappoint. His mother, though, loved him unconditionally. She was the one who told him the stories and legends of his clan's history. He remembered how she would transform into a magnificent white dog. He would cling to her back as she flew high over the mountains.

He remembered the argument his parents had just before the disaster. Word had come that the Demon Shibaba's sons had formed an alliance with some of the demons of the Western mountains. Together they were destroying the dog Demon Clans. He sneaked from his bed to listen. Even though he was a young child, not yet even as old as Rin he remembered every

word..

:What about the curse?" his mother kept saying. The curse had been placed on his father by Shibala the Demon witch just before he had used the wind scar to destroy her.

"You will not be able to protect those you love. You will never be there in time. I place this curse on you Inu-no Teicho and your sons and their sons and on through your lineage until your bloodline is no more. This curse will not end with my death!"

His father wanted to go and investigate the reports that some of the allied Dog Clans had been destroyed. But his mother wanted his father to stay to protect their clan.

"They are on the land across the sea," his father had tried to reassure her, "Even if they were to come here our sentinels would see them, our demons would destroy them before they got here."

Amaya was not convinced. She was from a white dog clan to the far north. Her clan had tangled with Sounga son of Shibala before. She knew he was much more powerful now and she was afraid.

His father had gone. He always did as he willed, always. Soon after he was gone it was as if the demons dropped out of thin air. One second the sky was clear and serene, the next it was full of demons bearing down on the castle. They destroyed the sentinels and warriors before they were even aware of the attack. Sesshomaru remembered the blood, blood everywhere.

His mother had grabbed his hand and together they ran to the room adjacent to the throne room. She pushed him behind a carved stone screen into a storage cubby.

"Do not move until your father returns" she whispered.

He watched as she attempted to transform but it was too late. Sounga himself was upon her. He grabbed her by the throat and then he ripped her apart. Her blood spurted like a font around the room., on the walls, against the screen behind which he hid. He was splattered with her warm blood. The memory still made him tremble involuntarily as if it had just happened.

After the attack Sounga and the other demons searched the castle. Sesshomaru sat perfectly still barely breathing. Finally, satisfied they had killed everyone. They left like they had come, silent like a giant swarm and all was quiet.

Sesshomaru sat frozen in the cubby through the day and a long dark night. Finally late the next day his father returned. Sesshomaru was roused to see his father kneeling over the mass that had been his mother. His eyes glowed red and he was screaming in anguish. His screams filled the halls. He thrust his hands into the still wet gore and smeared his face with her blood. Sesshomaru found he still could not move or cry out. He watched as his father transformed roaring and as a huge white dog leaped out into the sky and away.

After his father had left Sesshomaru found he could once again move. He crawled out of the cubby and to the destroyed body of his mother. Then, as he had seen his father do , he

dipped his small fingers into her blood and smeared his face. Something caught his attention then . he reached out and lifted it from the pool of blood, it was his mother's moon stone. She wore it always on her left hand. He remembered her words to him.

"Your father gave this moonstone to me on our wedding night so we would be bonded to each other. The moon stone is always given by mother to eldest son. When you are a man and have chosen a bride I will give this moonstone to you"

He slipped the ring into a pocket of his robe and went back to the cubby to await the return of his father. For three days he waited surrounded by the charnel house that had once been his home the smell of death surrounding him. Finally on the morning of the forth day his father returned. He had known he would return to bury the dead. This time Sesshomaru was not frozen, this time he got up and revealed himself immediately. When his father saw him he ran over and fell to his knees. He held Sesshomaru close sobbing, "my son, my son, I thought you were dead!"

The spikes on his father's body armor dug painfully into his skin but Sesshomaru didn't flinch. He had never been hugged by his father before, he had never seen his father cry. This was a new world with new rules that they walked into.

His father saw the blood on him and became alarmed. "Are you injured son?" he said feeling his arms and legs and looking into his face. "We must wash the blood off you to be sure. "

He lifted Sesshomaru in his arms and carried him to the castle bath house. Touga, for that was his father's name, removed his body armor and drew water to fill a large pot, then he built a fire to warm the water. He then filled a tub with the warmed water. When he began to undress Sesshomaru, the boy cried out and held the blood stained robe to himself.

"No son, no" Touga said gently, "you cannot wear your mother's blood. We will put the robe on her funeral pyre so she will have it with her in the after life."

He then lowered Sesshomaru into the warm bath and washed the blood from his hair and body. He was glad to see that the child was not injured.

Sesshomaru was able finally to relax in the warm water. He had been chilled to the bone. His tears came fast and salty running down his face.

"Good," his father said, "You need to cry, you need to flush out the poison of grief."

His father then left to get him some clean cloths and something dry him with.

Sesshomaru climbed out of the tub and crept over to the blood stained robe. He wanted to wear it. He wanted to keep his mother's blood with him always but he knew his father would not let him so he took the moon stone from the pocket and crept back into the tub. His father returned a few moments later with a small blanket which he wrapped Sesshomaru in and a clean shirt and kimono pants. He never noticed the child's tightly fisted hand holding the moon stone. When he was dressed Touga lifted his son in one arm and his body armor with the other and bore both outside away from the horror within. A-un was waiting outside and as soon as he

put Sesshomaru down the boy ran to the dragon hugging both necks. Touga smiled, his son had always been fond of A-Un.

Soon the dead had been gathered and the funeral pyre lit. the little blood stained robe was laid across the blanket that covered Amaya's remains. As the flames consumed everything Touga put his hand on Sesshomaru's shoulder.

"I killed them son, the demons who did this, I killed them all except Sounga. Him I bound to this sword.." he indicated the new sword at his waist. "Someday, when I can, I will cast him into Hell."

That was the end of Sesshomaru's childhood. After that his days were filled with training and battle. His father would speak constantly of rebuilding the clan.

"We will find another Dog Clan," he would say, "I will take a wife and we will find a bride for you. You will be betrothed and as soon as you are old enough, you will marry. We will rebuild the castle, You'll see, everything is going to be alright."

He was wrong. Sesshomaru knew that nothing was going to be all right ever again. He and his father fought many battles and continued to rule the western lands but they never found another Dog Clan.

His father would go back to the castle and search for the moon stone. Sesshomaru kept it hidden. It was his, from mother to son, not to be given by his father to a new bride. His father never spoke his mother's name again nor would he allow Sesshomaru to speak it. It as if she never existed. She did exist, though, Sesshomaru would never forget. Soon after his father's death he had a robe made for himself in a white fabric with a dark red resign that reminded him of the splatters of his mother's blood. He told the old tailor to put the fabric aside for all his robes would be made with it. He was was wearing it now. The moon stone he wore on the little finger of his right hand.

Sesshomaru walked into the room adjacent to the throne room. He kneeled by the dark stain that had been his mother's blood. He touched the stain and touched his face, "Amaya," he said as he touched the stain and again touched his face, "Amaya.

I will not forget you Mother!"

5. The Demon Market

Chapter 5

The Demon Market

The Demon Market was located high amongst the misty, craggy peaks of the mountains. No one could find it unless they knew just where to look. There was a small gap between two peaks that was the only entrance. It lead down a narrow passageway which opened up on an ancient courtyard hewn from the rock. Every building in the market was carved directly out of the mountain. Besides the shops and taverns and inns hewn out of the rock there were stands of Demon merchants selling all sorts of herbs potions, fruits, talismans and other wares of interest to Demons.

Sesshomaru enjoyed his periodic trips to the Demon Market. He enjoyed the crowds, the bustle and the opportunity to connect with others of his kind. Of course there were no

Dog Demons but he had given up on that long ago. He almost didn't have to guide A-Un through the passage way.

They reached the edge of the court yard and Sesshomaru dismounted and led A-Un through the crowd to a large stable. He gave a few coins to the large squat demon who sat in the front. He gave Sesshomaru a tile with a number on it that corresponded to a comfortable stall for the Dragon. Sesshomaru whispered gently to A-Un and made sure the dragon had what they needed. He left A-Un to rest and walked out into the Marketplace.

He had only walked a short way when he felt two hands at his right elbow and two at his left shoulder.

"Sesshomaru!" said one.

"Sweet Love!" said the other.

It was Peach and Plum, two Demonesses of questionable virtue with whom Sesshomaru was intimately acquainted. They were professionals and knew better than to grab the stump of his left arm.

"Where have you been?" said Peach.

"Miss you!" said Plum.

"Sweet Heart!" said Peach.

"Ladies," said Sesshomaru.

"You were here last week and you never came to see us," said Plum.

"We're heartbroken! Said Peach.

Sesshomaru turned and let them pull him into "The Poison Fang" the tavern from which they worked. Peach and Plum were almost identical. They were both buxom with slender waists. Their glossy black hair was cut to chin length and their white teeth sparkled against their deep blue skin. Their foreheads sported short black horns and their cloths were revealing to say the least. The tavern was full and busy as always with all types of demons. They brought Sesshomaru to a low table in a secluded screened cubby and knelt on either side of him. A lizard waiter came and bowed to him. Sesshomaru ordered Dragon's Blood for three. Dragon's blood was a strong bitter liquor Sesshomaru was very fond of. It was very expensive so when he ordered it for three Peach and Plum cuddled even closer to him.

The waiter put out three small cups and poured the dark liquor leaving the bottle.

Peach stroked Sesshomaru's hair, "So good to us," she purred.

"Such a tall, pale, handsome Lord," purred Plum stroking the fur he wore over his shoulder.

"Like a man made of moonlight itself", said Peach.

"No wonder we pine for you so," said Plum.

The three took their cups and drank the contents in one gulp. Sesshomaru chuckled and poured three more cups. The girls were laying it on very thick which he always enjoyed.

"We hear you have taken on another human," said Plum.

Sesshomaru took a drink from his cup.

"How fast news travels," he thought.

"Isn't she a nursemaid for the child? That's what I heard." Said Peach, tracing the point of his ear.

"Did you hear sister?" said Plum, "Naraku has been badly hurt. I heard the poor thing will be a long time healing."

"Really?" said Peach slipping her hand into Sesshomaru's shirt and stroking his chest. "Maybe we should go and comfort him."

"Oh no, sister." said Plum, "Naraku is cheap. He thinks he is so pretty that girls will give him everything for free."

"Not like our dear Sesshomaru," said Peach, "Who is both handsome and generous."

"How was Naraku hurt?" asked Sesshomaru.

"Why should we give you information when you have been so dreadful to us" said Plum pouting.

"Leaving us alone for so long," pouted Peach.

Sesshomaru reached into his left sleeve and pulled out two large gold coins. He slapped them down on the table covering them with his hand. Peach and Plum's eyes grew almost as large as the coins.

"My dear ladies," he said, "I would never intentionally leave you both alone."

"Our Lord is a busy man," said Plum looking intently at the hand covering the coins."

"We understand," said Peach. "We heard that someone in your party hit Naraku a mighty blow."

"Burned a hole right through his chest," said Plum.

"What!?" said Sesshomaru. He knew something had been amiss with Jaken and Catherine.

"It wasn't Jaken who did it," purred Peach.

"Well, who was it?" asked Sesshomaru.

"We really don't know," said Plum, "but it wasn't Jaken...."

The Dragon's Blood was starting to take effect, Sesshomaru was feeling light headed and giddy.

Peach blew in his ear, "Come upstairs with us Sweet."

Plum straddled him, "Come upstairs my Lord, it has been too long." She slipped her hand between his thighs, "I can tell you want to."

He did, yet with this news he really thought he'd better get back and he did have an errand to run. Then again his father had always said that a warrior should never deny himself sex. Denying made one slow and weak his father would always say. Touga rarely denied himself anything. Maybe a short tryst. Then again, a tryst with Peach and Plum was never short and always expensive.

Sesshomaru took the two coins and placed one between each girls ample cleavage. "Regrettably I cannot."

Plum put her arms around his neck, "give us a kiss then Love." She kissed him full on the lips which he returned, it was good to kiss a woman. Peach also kissed his lips which he also accepted and returned. He left the "Poisoned Fang" and walked into the light. He felt the effect of the Dragon's Blood and thought he might need to sit down a few minutes to recover from his meeting with the sisters.

He sat on a stone bench a few steps from the tavern to "catch his breath."

He had a nice little buzz going from the Dragon's Blood and was feeling happy and content as he entered the market square. All around were sight and smells familiar to him. He greeted fellow Demons he knew and merchants as he passed. Here he had status and respect. He was Sesshomaru, Lord of the Western Lands, a position he had worked hard to maintain and add to since his father's death. Suddenly, he was accosted by a giant hand on his shoulder.

"You!" boomed a voice.

He turned to see a large bulbus Demon wearing elaborate body armor.

"Does this armor make me look fat!!?"

Sesshomaru considered him for a moment walking around the large creature. "Yes," he said finally.

"Good!!" boomed the Demon, "I'll take it," he said to the merchant throwing down a bag of silver coins. "and I'll wear it out!"

The merchant bowed as took the silver and the Demon turned once again to Sesshomaru.

"Friend Sesshomaru! It has been too long!"

"Mazinga!" said Sesshomaru, "Where have you been for so long?"

"Fighting to the far south with my cousins against some invading forces."

"I trust all went well," said Sesshomaru.

"Very well!" boomed Mazinga, "and I have gold, silver and opals to prove it! Come friend, I will buy you a drink!!"

Sesshomaru really felt he'd had enough to drink. Mazinga, though, despite he size and bombast was a sensitive creature and was easily insulted. To refuse his offer would be beyond rude.

"Thank you Mazinga," he said and accompanied him to a covered cafe;'

It was little more than a bar and a canvas awning. Mazinga ordered a tankard of Jur for himself and turned to Sesshomaru, "Dragon's Blood isn't it?" he said and ordered him a cup.

Two cups of Dragon's Blood later Mazinga clapped Sesshomaru on the back. They said their good byes and Mazinga strode out into the crowded market square. Sesshomaru realized that everything was spinning around. He took a careful step towards the market square. The last time he had been so drunk tht the room spun he had been in the arms of a woman. This time he was alone in the market square still needing to navigate to the shop for his errand. He stood up tall and tried to focus, funny how drink can make the world seem to spin around.. He

should give a cup of Dragon's Blood to his brother, that would cool his hot head, or kill him. That made Sesshomaru laugh making him almost lose his balance. Luckily most of the Demons here were half sloshed so no one took notice. Again he stood tall and tried to focus. His father always said that a man wasn't drunk if he could hang on to one blade of grass and not fall off the face of the Earth. Again he laughed and almost lost his balance. He straightened again and attempted to focus. He took few unsure steps into the crowds of the square. Everything was whirling but he did manage to keep his balance long enough to maneuver through the square and turn into a narrow street. Here he could touch the wall with the tips of his fingers for balance. It was quiet and deserted here.

Down the narrow streets he stumbled until he came to a small shop. Out front was a bright colored banner with the symbol for "Tailor" painted brightly on the silk. Sesshomaru attempted to walk in with as much dignity as he could but stopped at the open door holding on to the door frame. Inside, an old Demon sat on a low platform. The shelves on the walls were stacked with bolt after bolt of brightly colored silk. Spools of colored thread were lined neatly in open draws and on a simple form was displayed an elaborate Kimono.

The old Demon was stitching furiously on a garment of black silk with gold thread. He looked up and smiled through his long mustache, "Sesshomaru, back so soon? Don't tell me you have damaged our robe or perhaps you want to buy something else for a lady?" He squinted at Sesshomaru for a minute, "Looks like you've been hitting the Dragon's Blood pretty hard. Sit down, You need a cup of tea to clear your head!"

Sesshomaru sat on a wood stool by the door. The old Demon never stopped his stitching but with another of his three sets of arms he poured out a cup of hot tea and handed it to Sesshomaru with his long arm.

"Thank you Bopu," said Sesshomaru, "I need a new Yamuri for the child in my party, Rin."

"Ah, the little human girl," Bopu used the top pair of long arms to select a bolt of cloth from a top shelf. It had a bright design in red blue and yellow. "This is a nice cloth for a child," he said, "It is Egyptian cotton from the far west woven and printed here with a little Demon magic." His dark eyes twinkled, "It will not wear out or fade, she will have to grow out of it. Here, feel how soft it is."

He handed the bolt to Sesshomaru who set his tea cup on the window ledge to take it. It was soft and the design was very pleasing. "I will take it, can you make the robe?"

"Oh I'm all backed up with work, I cannot get to it for a few days." Said Bopu.

"the woman in my party said that she could make the robe," said Sesshomaru. "could you measure some cloth and make up a kit of sewing tools?"

"Of course," said Bopu/ He transferred the black silk to his middle set of arms and continued stitching. Meanwhile he spread the cotton out on the platform in front of him and began to measure it. His top set of arms began to search the top cabinets of the small shop from which he took a small tightly woven lidded basket, a small pair of golden scissors, a few cards of fine thread, and a piece of brightly patterned heavy paper in which he pushed three needles. And ten pins. He reached under the platform and pulled out several scraps of brightly

colored cloth which he placed in the basket.

These are for the child, she may like to play with them," said Bopu.

Sesshomaru had been watching Bopu as he sipped his tea. It was amazing how many things Bopu could do at once. The room had stopped spinning but his head was beginning to ache.

Bopu took a small white cotton under robe from a side cabinet and folded it with the fabric. "On the House," he said and wrapped everything together in white paper with string.

Sesshomaru stood placing his now empty cup next to the tea pot. He bowed to Bopu and paid him with gold coins as Bopu handed the package to Sesshomaru.

"this woman," he said, "who is she?"

"Just a human from the far western lands," answered Sesshomaru.

"Human?! I don't think so." Said Bopu.

"What do you mean?" said Sesshomaru, "I detected no aura."

"Well, you might not," said Bopu, "She is from the lands far west, everything is different there. One thing we know for sure, It was she who countered an attack by Naraku and burned a hole clear through him. No human, even a powerful sorceress could do this. The whole market is buzzing about it!"

Sesshomaru's head was really starting to hurt. He would need to get to the bottom of this when he returned. He thanked Bopu again and turned to leave.

"Sesshomaru!" said Bopu, "a woman with power like that could be a great asset."

Sesshomaru just grunted a response and left the store.

He retrieved A-Un and before leading them out of the stable fed the Dragons few chunks of yellow sulfur he had picked up on his way back. This was a great treat for them and they happily crunched down the sulfur. Sesshomaru rested his aching head against Un's cool pebbly neck.

"We don't like being deceived do we boys," he said

6. Decite and Truth

Chapter 6

Deceit and Truth

By the time Sesshomaru reached the spot he had left his party he had a roaring headache. Below he could see Catherine and Rin sitting on a grassy spot by the stream. What were they talking about he wondered, what were they plotting? A little ways from them behind some rocks he saw Jaken, the traitor! He pulled A-Un's reigns to land behind some tall trees. He quickly, silently dismounted. He walked quickly and silently, as only he could. Jaken Jumped and squeaked as Sesshomaru appeared next to him.

"My Lord, you have returned," squeaked Jaken.

"Yes," said Sesshomaru grabbing Jaken's shoulder in a powerful grip. "Do you know what happens to a servant who deceives his master?"

The little toad trembled violently under Sesshomaru's grip,"Oh please Master I never wanted to deceive you I swear!!"

"Let him go!!"

Sesshomaru looked up in surprise to see Catherine. She was standing straight and regal by the rocks. In her hand was a polished tapered wooden stick which she had pointed at him.

"How dare you interfere? I will deal with you later!!" he said.

"You will deal with me now!" she said. "Jaken would not willingly deceive you. I threatened him!"

Sesshomaru let go of Jaken who scurried away. "You let me believe you were human!" he growled.

"I did nothing of the sort!" said Catherine. "I never claimed to be human, you never called me human, you called me "woman" which I am and "foreigner" which I am also. As a matter of fact I do have human blood. I am one quarter human on my father's side. My father had a Faerie mother."

"You deceived me about Naraku's attack!" said Sesshomaru.

"That I did," answered Catherine. "I was not ready to reveal myself to you."

Sesshomaru gazed at Catherine as if he had never seen her before. She seemed

transformed. Her hair fell loose over her shoulders in thick baroque waves. The hair around her face curled wildly. Her eyes blazed bright green as if lit from within. Her lips and cheeks were flushed. She stood tall (though she was a small woman) and regal. She seemed, powerful, terrible and beautiful.

"So," thought Sesshomaru, "Let's see what kind of power you have!"

He gathered Demonic power from within him and smiling sent it like a shock wave towards Catherine. Catherine sensed it immediately. She stamped her foot and aimed her wand at the center of the wave and sent it back pushing Sesshomaru back a few steps. He countered gathering more strength and hurling a blast that should have thrown her up and over the trees. Again Catherine aimed her wand at the center of the blast! She sent back a blast that picked Sesshomaru up and dashed him against the rocks breaking them.

"Enough!" said Sesshomaru getting up from the rubble.

"Catherine still pointed her wand at him. "Looks like the rocks will break before your thick skull!" she said.

Sesshomaru stood and shook the dust from his sleeves. "How powerful are you?" he said smiling, "are you more powerful than I?"

To his surprise Catherine dropped her wand to her side.

"No," she said, "I am not, I am no Warrior."

"What is the nature of our power?" said Sesshomaru still smiling, "What are you? Who are your people?"

"I am an Adept," said Catherine. I pull power from the Earth and from nature and channel it. Of course if I pull power from living things I will weaken or kill them so I avoid that. I prefer to pull energy from the rocks. In England the earth is ancient and stable. I can pull as much power as I want. Here, the earth is fiery and unstable. I must be careful least I cause harm. It took me time to figure out how to harness this power. My people are the Tuatha De Danae children of the Earth Goddess Danae. I am the great grand daughter of Llyr the God of the Northern Sea, grand daughter of his son Manawyddan and the Faerie Rhiannon. My mother is Niamh daughter of the Son of the Sea.

Sesshomaru was speechless. Here was nobility greater than his. this women counted Gods in her lineage. He walked over to her looking into her face, her large green eyes. He thrust his hand into her hair and cupped the back of her head in his hand. His long slim fingers gripped her like a vise. "What is he going to do?" she wondered, "crack my head like an eggshell?"

Sesshomaru tilted her head up a little. Then he bent down and kissed her full on the lips.

"What am I going to do with you woman!" he whispered huskily.

He let her go and began to walk away. "Come with me," he said.

Catherine followed obediently. He led her to A-Un who waited patiently as usual. From A-Un's saddle bag he took a package wrapped in white paper and green string.

"This is for Rin. Here you will find cloth and sewing tools. We will wait here while you make Rin a new yamuri." He smiled at her, "I wish Rin to be raised as a gentle woman, can you do that?"

"I fear, my Lord, I can only teach her to be an English lady. I know nothing of your customs and I cannot read or write your language. I could only teach her to read and write English."

"Well," said Sesshomaru, "do what you can. We will stay here as long as it takes you to make the yamuri."

"My Lord," said Catherine.

Sesshomaru turned back to her. She pulled out a few pieces of bark from her sleeve.

"You should chew this for your headache, it is willow bark. It will allay the pain," said Catherine. "I'd make tea of it if I had a pot."

"Thank you," he said, his head was aching again, and he hoped it worked.

Catherine and Sesshomaru found themselves looking at each other. A few moments ago they had kissed. Now they were not sure what to make of it or what to do.

"Catherine," said Sesshomaru, "Do something with your hair, it is a mess." He turned and left leaving Catherine stunned.

"My Lady," it was Jaken, "I can help with your hair. I love hair, probably because I have none of my own. Sometimes when I assist Lord Sesshomaru with his bath he allows me to comb out his hair!"

Catherine had to chuckle. The image of Jaken combing out Sesshomaru's hair made her want to laugh out right. She reached into her sleeve and pulled out her comb and hair clip.

"Here Jaken," she said, "have fun!!"

7. Izaiyoi

Chapter 7

Izaiyoi

It was a fine, warm summer morning and Sesshomaru was restless. He wanted to travel west. It was time to take care of the western lands. Yesterday he had kissed Catherine, he didn't know whether to be happy or mad. Ever since he had pulled Catherine from the sea his life had felt unbalanced and a little out of control. Last night Jaken had fixed Catherine's hair up and off her neck. The graceful curve of the back of her neck was driving him a little crazy.

Between the trees he could see Rin and Catherine sitting together on a grassy slope. Rin was wearing the white underrobe and stitching on one of the cloth scraps. Catherine was sewing the yamuri. /watching them brought back a feeling he remembered from long ago. Another grassy slope, another beautiful lady, another warm summer day. It had been so long ago yet he could remember each detail as if it had happened yesterday.

His father Touga had to eventually admit there were no more dog demons left. When he finally admitted that there would be no she demons of a related clan for he or Sesshomaru to marry, he began to womanize. He was not above chasing "human tail", as he put it, usually some hapless country girl that he could easily seduce. Sesshomaru was disgusted by his father's behavior. His father had always taught him humans were beneath them. It was worse the day his father saw Izaiyoi. He brought Sesshomaru to see her before he made his move. Sesshomaru remembered her breathtaking beauty and grace the first time he saw her. He and his father stood hidden in a high tree overlooking the garden.

"Is she not exquisite?" his father had said.

Sesshomaru was troubled, he had a bad feeling, "Don't do it father," he had said, "she is a noble, a princess, not some farmer's daughter. You will cause her disgrace and death!"

His father always did as he willed. Sesshomaru hoped Izaiyou would run from Touga, reject him. Women never rejected his father, though, and she fell to his seduction. Something else happened, something unexpected. Izaiyoi seduced Touga. She was not only beautiful but a woman of intelligence, character and warmth, Touga was soon hopelessly in love with her. He told Sesshomaru that she had restored his life.

"I was like a man lost in the ocean," he said, "She has become my salvation!"

Sesshomaru could see the positive change in his father. He could see how happy he was but he was troubled.

"Take care Father." He would say, "union between demons and humans are unpredictable.

Take care not to get her with child!"

Touga always did as he willed, always! Soon came the night he announced to Sesshomaru that he and Izaiyoi were expecting a child. Sesshomaru lost control of his temper that night. He hit his father a mighty blow with his fist.

"You pollute our blood!" he had yelled. "Human and Demon blood do not mix!! The child will be a monster or worse!"

"The child will be loved and cared for no matter what!" his father had replied.

"What will happen to Izaiyoi when it is seen she has birthed a half demon child out of wedlock?!! Have you even considered that?" yelled Sesshomaru.

"What is done, is done," said his father. "The child will be born, discussion is futile. You will swear to me that you will cause no harm to this child or Izaiyoi!"

Sesshomaru bowed his head, "I swear father, they will come to no harm by my hand."

He then turned to leave for he felt he could no longer stand to be in his father's presence.

"And Sesshomaru," added his father, "don't think you can strike me again."

Sesshomaru had left angry. Up until that point he had looked very much like his father. He wore similar body armor and wore his hair tied up like his father. He removed and discarded the body armor, he would find something different as soon as he could. He took a knife and grabbing his long tail of hair made to cut it off. A male Demon's hair was a sign of his strength and virility. He lowered the knife. Instead he removed the strap that held his hair up and let his hair fall down free. It was a feeling he liked very much.

When his father saw him he said "how will you fight with your hair like that?"

"Very well, thank you," Sesshomaru replied.

Before he died, his father, perhaps foreseeing his death, made a provision for Isauyoi and their child. He gave it to Sesshomaru to carry out his wishes.

"You will count out a gross of gold and bring it to her at the first full moon of each season. Ask her if she needs anything, if she does, give it to her. Tell her you bring a gift from her husband. This is the only way she will accept the gold. See to it that she and the child are safe!"

Sesshomaru was a dutiful son. After his father's death despite his anger over his father's swords he dutifully carried out his father's wishes. He would meet Izaiyoi at a spot of her choosing, a grassy slope by a stream near her house. Each season he would meet her and ask if she needed anything. She always said no, she had all she needed.

He would then say "I bring a gift from your husband."

Then he would walk her to her house stopping in the cover of trees watching as she walked the rest of the way to her house. Season after season, year after year they would meet.

Slowly they began to take a little time to talk, slowly he got to know Izaiyoi. She was a woman of courage and intelligence. She had gone into her relationship with her eyes open accepting the risks. When she became pregnant she took precautions. She sent her maid to prepare a small house owned by her family not far from a neighboring village. As her time came near, she sent away her servants so that all who were left the night a former suitor attacked with his army to kill her, her newborn and her Demon lover were she, the midwife and a few soldiers. It was a good thing she did because that night she was left barefoot in the snow with her new born and a crater where her palace had been.

Once, a few years after they had begun meeting Izaiyoi had confessed to Sesshomaru that he resembled his father and seeing him gave her comfort. It was several years after his father's death on a warm summer afternoon. She was sitting on the slope sewing as she usually did when she waited for him. On seeing her his heart had swelled and he realized he had fallen in love with her. He never spoke this to her. He just continued meeting her until their meetings became the part of each year he most looked forward to.

Once Jaken had said, "why don't you marry her my Lord? She is beautiful and there is no blood between you. You can care for her and your brother."

Sesshomaru had throttled Jaken well for that. Each time they met Izaiyou had asked him to visit his brother.

"You should visit Inuyasha, " she would say, "he needs you, he needs a man of his kind to guide him."

N But despite everything he could not bring himself to it. Inuyasha was an attractive child, human in face and form. As Sesshomaru had feared, though, he lived in a state of partial transformation manifesting in dog ears on top of his head and a few other smaller characteristics. So he would visit Izaiyoi. She would smile at him and he would pretend it was really him that she smiled at.

So it went on and on until a day in early fall many years since his father's death. This time when he met Izaiyoi she was visibly weak. He ran to her in alarm. She was ill but she smiled at him.

"It is good to see you Sesshomaru," she said.

"You are ill," said Sesshomaru, "You should not have come, I could have sent to gold another way."

"I would not miss out meeting ," she said and rose to meet him but her legs gave way.

Sesshomaru caught her and held her in his arms for the first time. He could feel her life slipping away like sand between his fingers. He held her close.

"I will protect you." He said. "We can find the best Demon Physicians, they can cure all ills

and you will be well again. I- I can use the Tetseigan to cure you." He held her close and kissed her, "marry me Izaiyoi, I love you, I will care for you and my brother, I promise."

Izaiyoi kissed him again lightly and smiled. "No, my Sesshomaru, you deserve a woman who looks at you and sees only you, not a ghost. A woman who kisses you, not a ghost. You deserve better. I was saved by the Tetseigan many years ago. I have lived on borrowed time and that time is now up."

Sesshomaru carried her through woods to the edge of the trees where she bid him put her down. She walked weakly towards her home. Sesshomaru watched helplessly as Inuyasha ran from the house to help his mother. Not long after he heard Izaiyoi had died.

Soon after Izaiyoi's death he learned that his brother had fallen in love with a Shikon Priestess and was planning to use the Jewel of Souls to become human and marry her. Sesshomaru thought this was a good thing. The Priestess would care for Inuyasha and perhaps he would find some happiness.

Of course it had all gone bad. It always did. Inuyasha couldn't protect his Priestess. She died cursing him, he (for all practical purposes) was dead pinned to a tree by her hand. His father had not been able to protect Sesshomaru's mother or his clan or Izaiyou or his half breed son. He, Sesshomaru had not been able to protect his father or Izaiyoi or his brother. Shibala's curse was strong, it's effects for reaching.

New ehre he was again watching a beautiful woman sewing on a grassy slope. His heart swelled, he was falling in love. He wanted to take her in his arms, kiss her, love her.

"That could get her killed," he mumbled to himself.

What to do about Catherine and Rin? It was not a good thing for a little girl to follow a Demon. She had been in grave peril more than once. He couldn't just abandon them, that would not be right. He decided he would set them up in a fine house, maybe a palace. He would set them up as two Noble Ladies. He did not need gold, they could have it all. He would find a manor house, near a village and set them up with servants and teachers for Rin. Catherine would run things, she seemed smart and capable. He would go back to his old life wandering free, battling and running the Western Lands. Maybe he would even add to his domain. Of course, he would visit on occasion to be sure they were safe and all was running well. Yes, this was the perfect answer. He would leave immediately to find the right house.

8. The House on the Hill

Chapter 8

The House On The Hill

Sesshomaru remembered an abandoned house on the west coast. It was a grand home, a manor house. It did not seem in too bad disrepair so it was strange that it had lain empty for so long. He traveled by night by the moonlight until just at daybreak the house came into view. It sat atop a fairly high hill overlooking the ocean. At the bottom of the hill was a village, a fairly large village. It seemed a bit shabby which, Sesshomaru felt, might work to his advantage. If the village was down on its luck they would respond more favorably to him and the potential of gold.

He brought A-Un down in the court yard of the house. It was a little worse for wear but the roof looked good and the wood was intact. It would not take too long to bring this house back to its former glory. Sesshomaru walked around exploring the rooms. He could see the potential of this house and it pleased him very much. He had not lived under a roof since he was a small child. He found an elegant room overlooking the ocean with a small servant's room adjoining it. Obviously a room meant for a gentleman and his valet. This would be kept as his rooms for when he visited. He found a room overlooking what would be the interior garden.

"Yes, perfect for Rin," he thought, "she can walk straight from her room into the garden."

Right down the hall from Rin's room was what looked like the master suite. One large room looked out over the ocean, it adjoined a smaller room that overlooked the interior garden. These would be Catherine's rooms. He envisioned her running the business of the house from the room overlooking the garden.; sewing in the room overlooking the ocean. It made him smile to think of it.

The interior garden was a large area surrounded by the house. It was private and protected. The house had everything that was needed. It had a beautiful reception room, dining area, servants quarters, a bathhouse fed by a small stream. It was perfect. Two noble ladies could live very well here. He had just to purchase the house, get it fixed and set them up in it.

He took A-Un out of the garden and landed just in front of the house. It would be best to walk to the village. That way the villagers might not be as frightened of him. As he reached the edge of town he noticed children watching him from the protection the rocks. He was sure that A-Un was of greatest interest to them. As he walked into the village some adults ran, others followed at a distance. By the time Sesshomaru reached the village square there was a fairly large crowd gathered. In the fore front was a strong looking middle aged man. This was obviously the town leader. Before he could say anything an ancient Priest pushed his way to the front of the crowd.

"Be gone Demon!" he shouted as he pelted Sesshomaru with little pieces of paper. "I banish thee!"

"That's right," thought Sesshomaru, "this is why I avoid humans." Luckily the old Priest had no power and his sutras no effect. This was unlike Miroku a skilled Monk who could actually do some damage with a well placed sutra.

"I will do thee no harm Priest," said Sesshomaru.

"Why are you here, What do you want, Demon?" said the middle aged man Sesshomaru had meant to talk to first.

"I am interested in the house on the hill. Who owns it?"

"It belonged to a Shogun; about fifteen years ago he and his entire army left and never returned. We heard they had all been destroyed. The house has laid empty ever since." Said the man.

"I wish to purchase it," said Sesshomaru

"There is no one left to purchase it from." Said the man.

"Then I shall purchase it from you." Said Sesshomaru. He went to A-Un's saddlebag and took out a large bag of gold coins. He emptied the bag in front of the man.

The villagers gasped when they saw the gold pile on the ground.

"I am Nobu," said the man bowing low, "one of the town elders." You may have the house, but it is in grave disrepair."

"I am Sesshomaru-Inu-no-Teicho ruler of the western lands," said Sesshomaru. "You may keep the gold provided it is used to help the entire village." There was an excited rumbling amid the villagers at that. "Are there men here who can make the necessary repairs on the house?"

"My father was foreman of the crew that built the house for the Shogun," said Nobu, "I myself was on that crew."

"Then I shall hire you Nobu to be my foreman," said Sesshomaru. "you can check the house and report to me what you need in men and materials. I will pay all well."

"No, no, no!" It was the old Priest again. "He is a Demon! Shall we have demons living among us?"

"Silence Priest!" said Nobu, "We have fallen on desperate times. This Demon means us no harm and may provide us with work and pay."

"So, great Lord," sneered the Priest. "Why would you want so modest a house by our poor

village? A great Lord like you would surely want a great Palace!"

"I have two palaces," said Sesshomaru calmly, (he did). "The house is not for me, it is for two noble ladies under my protection; a woman and a child."

"Your mistress and half breed child?" sneered the Priest again.

"I will not tolerate you insulting those under my protection!" said Sesshomaru sternly. "The woman is a noble lady from the lands far west; the child is my human ward! If you cannot accept my terms I will go elsewhere!"

"Please Sesshomaru- sama" said Nobu, "The Priest means well, we the villagers will welcome those under your protection."

"For this you will have my pledge that I will protect you to the best of my ability," said Sesshomaru, "Tell me, Nobu, what is it your village needs the most?"

"My Lord," said Nobu, "We were a prosperous fishing community for many years. The ocean was abundant with all sorts of fish and shell fish. About five years ago the ocean became barren. Our village has suffered greatly ever since."

"When the house has been put to my liking, I will see what I can do to restore your ocean." Said Sesshomaru, "Nobu, I will leave and return in a fortnight. Assemble your crew and look over the house. When I return we will talk about what is needed, how much it will cost and what I will pay you and your people. Now take the gold I have left. Use it to make life a little better for everyone here."

Sesshomaru remembered how his father could charm human women with just a smile. He looked over at a group of women and smiled at them ever so slightly. They all smiled and giggled to each other. "So Charming!" he could hear them say to each other.

"how about that?" he thought, "My father's technique works for me too."

The weeks passed peacefully. Sesshomaru found, to his surprise, that Nobu was a logical, analytical and literate man. When he had returned four days after their first meeting, Nobu had been ready with a plan and cost estimate all written out with neat lines of figures. So the work began, Sesshomaru divided his time between guiding his party west and checking on the progress of the house. Keeping a secret was something that came naturally to Sesshomaru.

It was a fine warm summer. All was quiet and peaceful for a change. Sesshomaru felt he was handling things quite well. He would make sure the girls had what they needed and scout out good places for them to stay. It gave him a lot of pleasure to think of how surprised and pleased they would be when he showed them the house.

Catherine knew Sesshomaru was up to something. She didn't know what, but he was certainly up to something. He seemed almost, well, giddy, for him at least. He also seemed to be avoiding her yet they always seemed under each other's feet. She'd turn a corner and there he'd be looking perturbed to see her. She would be taking her morning bath and he'd emerge from the trees looking shocked and surprised.

Sesshomaru was trying to avoid Catherine, she frankly drove him crazy. Wherever he went she seemed to be there. In the morning he always blundered on her as she took her bath. She was modest and would quickly crouch down into the water revealing only her white shoulders. That was almost worse because his imagination would fill in the gaps all day.

Catherine thought her heart would break. She realized that she had fallen in love. She could hardly understand why. Sesshomaru was aloof, cold, sometimes downright nasty yet she knew he was not evil. She could feel that he kept his feelings to himself that he fought not to reveal himself. He did not care properly for the child who loved him, but he did protect her. He made his brother think he wanted to kill him, maybe he did, yet sometimes he protected him. Worse of all he had kissed her. Catherine realized she was his, there nothing she could do. She would follow him like Rin with a broken heart and no hope. She sat by a stream in the late afternoon and prayed.

"Please God," she prayed, "help me sort this out. If it is impossible help me stop loving him so much. If it is right, help me understand him better so I can give him what he needs."

Catherine looked up to see, to her surprise, Sesshomaru standing next to her. He sat next to her on the stream bank.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"I'm praying," said Catherine.

Sesshomaru reached out a slender finger to the gold chain around her neck lifting the cross attached.

"You pray to your God?" he said.

"Yes," she replied.

"I have seen this shape before," he said, "It is an instrument of torture and death. What kind of God uses such a cruel device as his symbol?"

"It is more a symbol of triumph over pain and death." Said Catherine. Sesshomaru was quiet as he contemplated her cross.

"Do you pray Sesshomaru?" she asked.

"Yes I do," he said letting the cross fall off his finger. "I pray to my ancestors, to my mother and father, to the spirit of the moon which sustains me and to the one who created us all."

"Perhaps we are not so different," said Catherine.

Sesshomaru smiled, he moved his finger down her cheek and under her chin lifting her face a little. "Perhaps," he smiling.

He got up abruptly and walked away leaving Catherine a bit confused.

"He cares," she thought, "but he's fighting it, I wonder why he's fighting it?"

9. The Serpent

Chapter 9

The Serpent

It was late summer when the house was ready. The construction time had passed pleasantly. Nobu turned out to be a man Sesshomaru could trust and with whom he could work well. The old Priest would pass muttering and Sesshomaru would find sutras stuck to his clothing. Other than that all passed well. Things were quiet all over as if the warm summer days had lulled all to a sleepy peace. Sesshomaru visited all but the lands of his domain on the main land. He would visit these when the women were settled and safe.

He hired servants from the town, some were put up in the servant's quarters others lived in the village. In a distant city he found an aristocratic older woman named Lady Yoko from a disgraced family. She was well educated and knowledgeable in etiquette and tradition. He hired her as teacher to Rin and Catherine. Lady Yoko had no problem with working for a Demon. He hired an old man from the village and his sons to fix up and tend the gardens.

Finally came the day of inspection. It was a hot overcast day with the sound of cicada in the air. Nobu walked Sesshomaru through the house as the workers and new servants stood at their stations bowing as he passed. It was a good feeling, he felt like a real Lord again. The house had been fully restored, each room sparingly and elegantly attired. Fresh flowers adorned each room. The stable had been fully restored with a special stall for A-Un also in the regular stall two horses; a small white horse for Rin and a fine golden mare for Catherine.

Sesshomaru finally stood overlooking the center garden as Nobu and the rest awaited his words.

"I am well pleased," he said, "You have all done very well and will be rewarded for your efforts. I also remember my promise and will immediately leave to try to restore your ocean."

The people assembled began to cheer and Sesshomaru was surprised by the good will he felt toward them.

He had work to do, he rode A-Un up and along the coast. The village was on the coast of a bay so he assumed the problem lay at the mouth of the bay and so, that's where he headed. He landed A-Un a little ways from the cliff that defined the mouth of the bay.

"Now boys, you stay here and behave." He said slipping each head a treat.

Sesshomaru was able to run quickly to the edge of the cliff. He would need to transform for this task. He looked over the bay. In his true form he was a gigantic white dog he would need to be careful where and how he entered the water least he create a large destructive wave. He

began to transform. Sesshomaru was very comfortable in his human form. He spent most of his life there. Transforming, though, was a pleasurable experience. As the process began he would feel the insistent urge to stretch his body like someone who had been held in a too small space for too long. His body stretching into its other form, into the dog skin he kept with him was a wonderful feeling almost orgasmic. It became an intense urge that would build in power until he reached full transformation, his ultimate power and strength potential. It was like being able to breath again. Sesshomaru, fully transformed dived skillfully into the ocean, he barely made a ripple. In the form of a giant white dog his immense lungs held enough air to keep him going under water for quite a while. He scanned the ocean around the mouth of the bay and saw the problem immediately. There was a gigantic Sea Serpent stretched out across the bay. Sea Serpents were usually long and slender but by the look of this one, it had obviously cleaned out all the fish and shellfish from the bay and was keeping any fish from entering. The loss of his arm made swimming even in this form difficult. He kicked with his strong back legs using his large front paw to direct his movement. Even at his huge size the serpent dwarfed him. He swam to the front of the serpent who turned its face in his direction.

"Ho, what's this," it laughed, "A little doggie has come to visit! I hear dog meat is very tasty and I am growing hungry!"

"How can you be hungry when you have eaten the ocean clean? Ah, but all you do is lay about and open your great ugly mouth," said Sesshomaru. If you want to eat me, you'll have to catch me!"

"I will catch you before you can run! Then, I shall devour the village on the coast. Only then will I move on to better seas." Said the monster.

"You should leave now. I am Sesshomaru Inu-no-Teicho. I shall bite out your throat and toss you into the abyss."

The monster laughed, "I have heard of you and your father. I will send you to your father in the afterlife." The monster smiled showing an expanse of long sharp teeth in his snout."

Sesshomaru felt glad for the fight. He launched himself at the monster teeth bared. He held back his venom least he poison the sea. He would rely on strength. The monster didn't move very fast but it was strong. It was able to swat Sesshomaru away.

Sesshomaru was able to avoid hitting the rock face. He realized he would need to divert the monster's attention. It was vain, that much seemed obvious and strong.

"Hey, dog, come on out! I am hungry for dog meat!" Called the monster. "I thought you were the poisonous one!"

It was true, Sesshomaru inherited venom from his mother, Touga didn't have poison.

"The poison will only make you tastier to me!"

Sesshomaru kept still and quiet.

"Come on!" don't tell me the great Dog Demon is afraid! It bellowed.

"It can't see me or smell me very well," thought Sesshomaru moving quietly through the long seaweed.

"Come out, fight coward!" bellowed the monster.

Sesshomaru crouched down, hidden, waiting for the right moment. He lunged sinking his teeth into the creature's shoulder. His mouth filled with warm blood, it was sweet and metallic. The creature screamed and Sesshomaru attacked again. This time he clamped his jaws on the creature's throat. Blood filled his mouth again. He had not drunk blood for a long time and it was exhilarating. The creature tried to dislodge him but his jaws were strong and he clamped down even harder severing the creature's windpipe.

He stayed clamped onto the creature's throat drinking the sweet warm blood until he was sure it was dead. He dragged the carcass out to sea and dropped it into a deep crevasse.

Sesshomaru leaped lightly onto the cliff and vigorously shook the water from his fur. He transformed back to human form his dog skin once again laying over his shoulder. He lay in the soft grass his body felt charged. The blood did that. His father had always said that blood would make you strong but it also made you lose control. He thought then about his brother. Did he ever feel pleasure in transformation? Had he ever tasted blood?

10. A Game of Kun-Ga

Chapter 10

A Game of Kun-Ga

Sesshomaru decided to lay low for a few days. The effects of drinking blood were unpredictable and it would be a while before the effect of his efforts were seen in the bay; years before the bay was fully restored. He went to the Demon's Market to make some purchases and to work off the effects of the blood. Peach and Plum were standing at the door of the Poisoned Fang as if they expected him.

"You've been drinking blood, haven't you?" They said smiling as they led him upstairs.

Later after Sesshomaru had left Plum sighed to Peach as she brushed her hair. "We must hold our dear Lord very close these next times we see him."

"Why, sister, do you foresee his death?" asked Peach.

"No, but I sense changes to come, changes that do not include us." Sighed Plum.

"Our Lord will never leave us, he is not the type. He will always come to us and others for comfort!" said Peach.

"I hope you are right sister, but I fear you are not."

Sesshomaru felt wonderful, elated. He had ordered gowns for the girls, gowns befitting noble women. They would make a fine first appearance at the house. He was in an extremely good mood. In the Market he ran into Mazinga and greeted him heartily.

"Now it is my turn to buy you a drink!" smiled Sesshomaru.

"Such good fortune running into you twice this summer!" laughed Mazinga.

Sesshomaru ordered drinks at an outside stand.

"How long will you be here this time?" asked Mazinga.

"I will be here a few days, why?" said Sesshomaru.

"We are getting together a game of Kun-Ga tonight, are you in?"

"Where are you holding it?" asked Sesshomaru.

"At the Poisoned Fang." Replied Mazinga.

"I'm surprised they let you have a room after last time," laughed Sesshomaru.

"Well, we told them you would be with us!" said Mazinga.

"Ah, yes, because I can pay the damages." Said Sesshomaru.

"Yes, and you're the only one who doesn't cheat," said Mazinga.

Sesshomaru smiled to himself as he sipped his drink. Truth was, he was the best cheater of all. He had been taught by the Master, his father Touga.

"Remember son, "his father would say, "you have to cheat at Kun-Ga, it is a tradition. The trick is to be the one they think is not cheating. That makes you the best of all."

"I'm in," said Sesshomaru, "I haven't had a good game in a long time."

Kun-Ga is a game that is played with black and white tiles. Each tile is etched in gold with a picture or symbol except the black and white tiles printed in red. These are the red tiles. If you are revealed to have a black red and a white red you are out. The winner is the last man standing and since it is a betting game the winner takes the pot. When you get three of a kind you may discard them into the center pile and discard a tile of your choosing. When you have four or less tiles you must take three from the pile. Of course the pile is full of discarded red tiles. If you have two black reds or two white reds you are still in. If you have a black red and white red no one will know unless a reveal is called, so you have a chance to discard them. A reveal can be called at any time and all players must reveal their tiles when one is called. The caller, though, must take a tile from the discard pile. Players all start with five tiles each. Each time you cannot discard you must take two tiles from the discard pile.

As evening approached the Demons gathered at the Poisoned Fang for the game. Sesshomaru knew all in the room a few were good friends. There was Cheu a tall, thin, light green Demon who had a fish like countenance and Vrashtashi from far into the continent, a blue Demon with four arms and a fearsome look though he was a big joker.

The Demons, about ten in number sat around a square low table. Peach and Plum were there acting as dealers. There were a few other Demonesses that Sesshomaru had not seen before. As the game began drinks were served. Sesshomaru drank Dragon's Blood as was his habit.

"Better watch the Dragon's Blood," laughed Vrashtashi "If you pass out we will take all your tiles and leave you with red!"

Sesshomaru smiled, "You will pass out from plum wine before I am even dizzy."

Peach and Plum took seats on either side of Sesshomaru stroking his hair, "We will blow on your tiles for luck my Lord," they said.

"Why do the ladies always go to you Sesshomaru?" said Vrashtashi, "I am much prettier than you."

Everyone laughed and Plum blew Vrashtashi a kiss though she stayed with Sesshomaru. A lithe serpentine Demoness slid next to Vrashtashi, "Now that is more like it," he said.

The game proceeded without incident until Mazinga called a reveal. A Large grey stonelike Demon who was revealed to have black and white reds bellowed that Cheu was palming reds and not revealing. Mazinga jumped to his defense and a fight ensued until the Stone Demon was thrown through a screen. After that things really got wild. The drink was flowing and the fists were flying and the tiles were jumping. The pot got bigger and bigger!

Sesshomaru woke up in Peach and Plum's room with no recollection of how he got there. Peach and Plum were contentedly entwined with him and there was the Serpentine Demoness with them. He lifted his head to see Mazinga, Cheu and Vrashtashi all draped around the room. He couldn't remember a thing and he wasn't sure he wanted to.

Cheu woke up and smiled at Sesshomaru, "what a night! How are you feeling?"

"Pretty good," said Sesshomaru, he didn't have a headache in fact he did feel pretty good.

"It is no wonder you feel so good," said Vrashtashi, "I have a headache.

"If my wife finds out she will kill me and eat me at last," said Mazinga.

"Does anyone know who won the pot?" said Vrashtashi.

The Demons all looked at each other until Mazinga noticed Sesshomaru's shirt laying on the floor. "There is something in your sleeve Sesshomaru," he said.

Sesshomaru got up suddenly aware that the stump of his arm was in full view. He picked up his white undershirt and put it on quickly. He was only wearing the undershirt and his loincloth, his pants and other clothing articles were strewn all over the room. He walked over to his over shirt and felt a large heavy package in the sleeve pocket, It was a bag of gold coins.

"Apparently it was you who won the pot!" said Cheu.

"See, that proves that crime does not pay!" said Mazinga, "Sesshomaru is the only one who does not cheat!"

"Of course he doesn't," laughed Vrashtashi.

Sesshomaru just smiled, "This should just about cover the damage we caused last night," he said. "I guess I break even."

Soon Sesshomaru was bathed and dressed and out in the market again. He walked with Mazinga through the main market place. Mazinga was looking for an especially nice gift for his fearsome wife.

"After Solstice I am going to fight in the south with my cousins. Why don't you join us Sesshomaru. The battles will prove challenging and there is a fortune in gold and opals to be

had.

"Can I bring Jaken?" smiled Sesshomaru.

"Of course, he is welcome!" thundered Mazinga.

"Then I think I will take you up on this, I will meet you here after Solstice." Said Sesshomaru.

"Excellent! Until then," beamed Mazinga.

They made their goodbyes. Sesshomaru went to finish the shopping he had started. A few days had passed. Surely the first fish would have made their appearance in the bay. He would alert the villagers that he would be bringing the ladies to the house. As he flew over the bay on a-Un he could see schools of fish swimming through the water.

"So many already," he thought.

The villagers were very happy when they saw him. They showed him the fish they had caught that morning. Even the old Priest had stopped his muttering.

"We will welcome the ladies," said Nobu, "After all, because of them you came to us and because you came to us, our village is saved."

Sesshomaru was surprised at the feeling that came over him. He had always professed to hate humans. He had considered them a pestilence on the Earth. That's what his father had taught him. Then again, his father had loved a human and produced a son with her. he himself protected a little human girl. Life, even for a Demon was so complicated.