

# **DREAM WALKER**

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## Chapter One

“Great, just great. Even Mother Nature’s not on my side tonight.”

Erin Stein gripped the steering wheel tighter as thunder rolled and lightning splintered the night sky above her. The smell of rain combined with the cool breeze blowing through her car vents caused goosebumps to form on her arms. Electricity hung in the air, the impending storm almost upon her.

As if on cue, the sudden downpour hammered against her windows. Erin glanced in the rearview mirror as the rain streaming down her back window magnified the bright lights of the truck gaining on her. She clenched her jaw and returned her gaze to the road, her shoulders tense and her heart pounding out of control.

*I have to shake them, she thought, her mind whirling for alternate routes she might take. I have to get to Kian. He’ll know what to do.*

Her neck snapped back as her car jolted forward, jerking her out of her musings. Fear radiated through her at the sound of metal crumpling and plastic cracking as the truck rode her bumper, revving its engine. Holding back the scream that threatened at the violent turn of her situation, she shifted gears and slammed the pedal to the floor. Her car shot forward, fishtailing on the muddy road. She counter-steered to straighten her vehicle, thankful she’d been able to put at least a car’s distance between her pursuers and herself.

“You idiots! If you kill me, you get nothing,” she called out with a hysterical laugh.

Thunder rumbled, shaking the ground and even her car in its intensity.

“A miracle would be nice,” she murmured at the same time a bolt of lightning struck the road twenty feet ahead of her.

As gusts of wind buffeted her car, rocking the sedan back and forth, Erin looked up and saw a tall oak tree on the side of the road sway, then begin to fall. Gunning her engine once more, she swerved against the wind and let out a sigh of relief when the tree slammed hard on the road behind her. She glanced over her shoulder in anticipation to see the truck slide across the muddy dirt road right into the tree.

“Take that!” she exclaimed in triumph, a wide grin on her face as she quickly turned back to face the road.

When her gaze landed on the huge rock lying directly in her path, Erin’s smile faded and her adrenaline spiked once more. Her chest tightened with fear as she jerked the wheel to avoid the obstacle. Too late. Her car’s front tire caught the edge of the rock and sent the vehicle careening straight toward the woods along the side of the road.

When she entered the woods and her car plummeted down a steep ravine, she screamed. As tension gripped her entire body, she clung to the steering wheel, her

arms locked in position. It may have been fruitless, but the action gave her the false sense of security that she had a modicum of control over the situation. While tree limbs sped past, leaves and branches clawing at her windows and reality hurled toward her at an accelerated speed, Erin accepted her fate. Regret washed over her that she had failed. Squeezing her eyes shut, she prayed for a swift, painless death.

The sudden, jarring impact caused her head to slam into the steering wheel. As excruciating pain pierced her skull, a fleeting thought occurred: *why the hell didn't the airbag...*

She didn't get to complete the thought as she succumbed to blissful oblivion.

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Erin awoke to the sound of men yelling. A man's voice called out, then faded in the distance as if he quickly moved away. Sharp pain entered her head as she tried to turn toward the noises she heard. Torrential rain beat down on the roof above her, while every single drop echoed in her aching head like a jackhammer.

She slowly opened her eyes to see a man, his long, dark, wet hair plastered to his head and shoulders, grab the man trying to open her car door. Erin gasped and pulled away when she recognized the bald man right outside her window as one of the men who'd been chasing her.

The stranger yanked her pursuer back and threw him twenty feet into the woods as if he weighed no more than a pillow.

She squeezed her eyes shut, then opened them again. Did she just see what she thought she saw?

While she started in shock, the stranger tried to open her crushed car door. When the door didn't budge, determination filled his expression. Apprehension gripped her as he grasped the handle and yelled out as he yanked hard, pulling the whole panel off its hinges.

Her eyes widened and her heart jerked at the superhuman strength. Oh yeah, no way did she miss that one!

She shrunk away when he leaned in the car and started to unbuckle her seat belt.

"You just pulled my door off my car as easy as a soda can tab." Her words came out in a croak but she needed to hear it said out loud in order to believe it.

The stranger flashed her a sheepish smile, then shrugged. "Adrenaline, I suppose." Gently touching her forehead, he asked in a concerned tone, "Are you all right?"

"I—I think so." Her hand shook as she tried to raise it to her sore head.

He clasped her hand in a warm, firm grip. Glancing at her, he used his other hand to touch her forehead once more. "You have quite a knot here."

His fingers lingered on her hairline, and then moved to her temple. Through the fog of the surreal situation, Erin realized he touched her in a familiar manner, as if he knew

her. She stared at his handsome face while she marveled at the warmth his fingers emanated despite the cold rain that soaked his body. How could he be so warm?

"Let's get you out of here before these men come to," he said as he released her hand and unbuckled her seatbelt.

When he lifted her out of the car, cold rain drenched her white button-down blouse and floral rayon skirt. She clung to his broad shoulders and leaned closer to his warmth. Even through his wet chambray shirt, heat radiated off him as if he were her own personal furnace.

Setting her feet on the ground, he held her arms to steady her. As the man regarded her, Erin had to look up to meet his striking emerald gaze. Even in the dark his eyes appeared to reflect a depth in them she'd never seen in another person before. Man, he had to be at least six feet five, she thought. At five feet nine inches, she didn't run across many men where she had to make an effort to meet their gaze.

"Can you walk?"

"I think so." She started to take a step and stumbled, gasping at the dizziness in her head.

He quickly picked her back up in his arms, replying in an amused tone, "I think maybe not quite yet."

She wrapped her arms around his neck. "Thank you for helping me, um, I don't even know your name—"

The distinct clanking sound of metal slamming against metal drew their attention. They both stared at the tranquilizer dart imbedded in her car's side door less than a foot away—a little too close for comfort.

"We need to go," the dark-haired man said in a serious tone as he shifted her in his arms and threw her across his shoulder before he took off into the ravine at breakneck speed.

The deeper into the woods he ran, the denser and darker it became until a different kind of fear began to well up inside her. He may have just saved her life, but the man was still a total stranger. And she was alone with him. Erin stiffened against him, her heart racing despite the pain in her head.

"Where are you taking me? And...and...I still don't know your name," she managed to wheeze out between the jolts to her body caused by his running.

The stranger slowed his pace. When he finally stopped, he let her body slide down his chest until he cradled her in his arms once more. He met her gaze, his dark eyebrows drawing together. While his head briefly sheltered her face from the driving rain, Erin took advantage of his intense perusal and stared back, mesmerized by his striking emerald gaze.

Cold rain ran off his straight nose and high cheekbones in rivulets, the trails of water landing on her throat and chest as he spoke, "I heard your vehicle crash and came to investigate. When I approached, I saw two men surrounding your car, holding

guns." He paused. A muscle jumped in his jaw as if he tried hard to remain calm before he finally continued, "I sensed they meant to harm you." He looked up and started walking again. "My home isn't much further."

Somewhat relieved at his explanation, Erin peeked over his shoulder to see if the men had pursued them. But the rain came down so hard around them she couldn't see more than three feet in front of her.

The seriousness of her situation—the fact that her boss had betrayed her, was even willing to use violence to get what he wanted, sank home as this stranger carried her to his secluded house. Having lost her adoptive parents to cancer and old age within five years of each other, she had no one to turn to except Kian. The fact that her car looked like an oversized accordion, didn't inspire confidence she'd be seeing him any time soon. Trust. She had to trust someone. Did she really have a choice?

"I'm Erin Stein." She braced herself for the inevitable ribbing her name always wrought. As a brainy physicist, her first initial and last name, E. Stein, had been the bane of her existence and the butt of way too many Einstein jokes that stuck over the years. Half her colleagues called her Ein instead of Erin.

He stopped walking and his dark gaze searched her face once more before sliding down her neck to the wet shirt clinging to her breasts. "Eriana. I like your name."

Oh right, this man had no idea what she did for a living! As evidenced by his heated look. Otherwise, he'd have probably been turned off. Warmth infused her cheeks and her breasts tingled at the electricity in his gaze. Her name might be Erin, but who was she to correct him. He had a nice, soothing voice, laced with an unusual accent that made her new name sound poetic when he spoke. She wished she could place the accent. Maybe he was Native American. With his defined cheekbones, darker skin, and pitch-black hair, he could certainly pass for one.

He gave her a sexy smile as if he knew her very thoughts. Dipping his head, he said in a formal tone, "My name is Kian."

## Chapter Two

Shock slammed through her. Kian! The man who had somehow stumbled across her research theories for time travel? The man who had been emailing her for the past month trying to convince her that the world wasn't ready for time travel and never would be?

She hit his shoulder. "Why didn't you tell me who you were right away?"

He frowned. "Because we needed to concentrate on getting out of that dangerous situation, not stand around making introductions."

Erin laughed at Kian's statement. That was so like his email persona. Blunt and to the point. The introduction line in his first email to her: *I admire your brilliance, but you have to stop trying to discover the ability to time-travel.*

"Do you know I almost deleted your first email, thinking it was a joke one of my colleagues dreamed up. But when I reread your message, I realized you had knowledge about my project that none of my coworkers could possibly know."

"I have a bit of foresight," he commented with a smile.

She regarded him, still unsure how he fit into the whole picture, but something inside her made her want to trust him.

"Well, you did say something worth listening to when you told me to head in this direction if I ever got into trouble—that you'd find me." She shook her head in bemusement. "Man, you do have foresight, don't you?"

He chuckled at her comment. "Only when it comes to you, Eriana."

She smiled and relaxed against him as he began walking once more. Just like his emails, Kian radiated a confidence that had at first provoked her anger via cyberspace. Strangely, that same confidence comforted her in her current situation. She hadn't felt so safe since this whole nightmare began, she mused as she pressed closer to his warmth.

True to his word, Kian approached a small log cabin in less than ten minutes.

Once he carried her inside the one-room cabin and kicked the door shut, Erin expected him to set her down. When he held on to her and started toward his bed, she tensed once more. "Um, I can walk and the couch will do—"

"No, your mind isn't ready yet," he ground out, his tone forceful and clipped as he tightened his hold on her.

She instantly stiffened at his tone and Kian relaxed his grip, saying in a calmer voice, "You need to get warm, Eriana."

Erin wanted to argue but now that the danger seemed less eminent, her teeth chattered and her entire body shook. God, she was chilled to the bone. No fire burned in the fireplace and the cabin felt cool as well. The fall wind howled, blowing hard against the wooden walls outside.

"I'll start a fire." Kian laid her down on the bed and started to move away.

A fire would be nice, she thought. Nice and warm and cozy. *The smoky smell of a fire always makes me smile – smoke!* Smoke would draw the attention of the men pursuing her. His cabin was so secluded more than likely the men wouldn't know it even existed as long as Kian and she didn't do anything to draw anyone's attention.

"Wait!" she called out, propping up on her elbows. The fast movement cost her and she quickly laid back down, her head reeling.

Kian stood over her once more, his gaze clouded with concern. "What's wrong?"

"No fire, please," she begged him.

His frown reflected his disagreement. "The fire will warm you."

She glanced at the lamp he'd turned on near the bed, paranoia setting in. "No lights either. They'll find me."

Kian nodded his understanding and walked into the kitchen area to retrieve a couple of candles from the rustic-looking cabinet. The kitchen and living room took up half the cabin while the bathroom and bedroom took up the other half. The only room in the cabin with a door was the bathroom. Every other room in the house flowed into one another.

She noticed he didn't have a kitchen table or a TV. But he did have a big soft brown leather sofa that faced the stone fireplace. The only other furniture in the room, other than the bed, was a wooden rocking chair, an oak chest of drawers against a far wall and a matching nightstand next to the bed.

As Kian lit the thin, taper candles he'd set in metal holders on the nightstand, he said, "Get out of those wet clothes."

When he turned off the lamp, Erin started to unbutton her shirt, but she hesitated when he didn't move away.

"Er, I know the cabin isn't set up for privacy but..."

"Don't be shy about your body, Eriana. The clothing we wear only covers who we really are," Kian murmured in a dark, seductive voice.

For some reason, she didn't fear him. Well, it's not like he'd be interested in her body anyway, she thought with an inward smirk. She might be tall, but even as a teenager she'd never been super-model thin. Reaching thirty hadn't changed that fact. Of course, having mouse-brown hair and "nothing to write home about" features to boot didn't make her very inspiring on the sexual attraction scale. Nah, he wouldn't be interested in her.

"I give you my word I won't touch you unless you wish it, Eriana." His words rocked her world as he raked his heated gaze down her body.

When his emerald gaze locked with hers in the sputtering candlelight, he reached up and started to unbutton his shirt.

Despite the chills racking her body, as she watched him peel away his shirt, an inner heat began to swirl inside her belly. The heat radiated to her breasts and pulsed to her sex in throbbing waves of awareness. Never had she had such a swift, gut-wrenching reaction to another person.

Her lips parted and she held back a gasp of admiration when he peeled away his shirt to reveal broad, muscular shoulders. His well-formed biceps flexed as he drew his shirt completely off, then dropped it on the floor. Unbidden, her gaze lowered from his smooth chest to his washboard stomach as he started to unbutton his jeans.

“I’m way ahead of you,” he said in a light tone, amusement lacing his words.

Erin’s breathing turned choppy as he unbuttoned his pants and kicked off his shoes before he pulled his wet jeans all the way off.

When he straightened, she greedily admired his sculpted form—his thick chest, narrow waist, muscular thighs. And to think she’d spent a month dodging his emails. Oy! Her gaze traveled over his smooth olive-toned skin, not a single tan line to be seen. Oh yeah, Indian! She’d put money on it.

He was a masterpiece to look upon and his perfection made her even more conscious of her own not-so-perfect body. She’d purposefully avoided looking at his groin. She didn’t want to see the evidence of his lack of desire for her. Her fingers stilled on the buttons of her top.

“I’ll get undressed in the dark.” She leaned over to blow out the candles.

“No, Eriana,” he commanded as he approached.

His intemperate tone stopped her short, but she kept her eyes on the candles, refusing to meet his gaze.

Warm fingers grasped her chin and tilted her head. “Look at me.”

The softening of his voice slid over her like a sensual purr, surprising her. Erin met his intense gaze.

Kian ran his thumb along her jaw line, then traced his fingers down her throat, causing a shiver to race down her spine.

“I know you have a beautiful mind and now I want to see the gorgeous body that goes along with it.”

She bit her lip and started to shake her head when Kian reached down and clasped her hand. His gaze never left hers as he took her fingers and wrapped them around his very hard, very impressive erection, while his other hand moved to the buttons on her blouse.

“We want the same, Eriana,” he said in a low, husky voice.

Raw desire reflected in his gaze as he unbuttoned the top button of her blouse, then another and another. Erin’s stomach clenched and her heart raced as he finished unbuttoning her shirt.



Maybe if she distracted him, he wouldn't notice her barely indented waist or her less-than-a-handful breasts. She clasped her hand around his cock and smoothed her thumb over the plumb tip, giving him a tentative smile.

Kian's breath hissed out and he rocked his hips against her hand several times, his motions primal, but control evident as he ground out, "No." Grasping her hand, he removed it from his erection.

Uncertainty swirled through her. Fearing she'd disappointed him, Erin bit her lip and looked away.

Kian pulled her to her feet. "If we can't use the fire to warm you, I have a better idea."

Before she could respond, he handed her a candle and scooped her up in his arms. When he carried her toward the bathroom, she began to struggle. Oh no, a bath? She'd have to reveal her entire body to him. She wouldn't be able to jump underneath the covers as soon as she was naked.

"Calm your fears, Eriana. You need to get warm quickly and this is the best way."

When he entered the bathroom and she saw he only had a shower stall, Erin panicked. She obviously couldn't take a shower without his help since she had a hard time just walking. As her breathing increased, her head began to throb.

"Just give me lots of blankets, Kian. I'll be fine."

He lowered her feet to the floor in the bathroom and took the candle from her hand. Setting it on the sink, he shut the door and turned the shower on full blast. As the warm steam began to fill the room around them, Erin closed her eyes while Kian slowly removed her clothes. She didn't want to see the disappointment reflected in his gaze when she stood naked before him.

When he'd removed her clothes, she stood there feeling completely exposed and vulnerable. Embarrassed heat suffused her cheeks despite the chills that racked her frame from head to toe.

*I want him to touch me*, she thought wistfully.

Erin drew in a sharp breath of surprise when a warm mouth closed over one of her nipples. Her back naturally arched and her hands instantly moved to cradle his head as he sucked hard, pulling her nipple deep within his mouth, then lightly nipped at the pink tip. As heat infused her body from his attentive ministrations and her pulse began to rise, Kian moaned against her breast, lifted her in his arms, and stepped under the spray of warm water.

She wasn't a small woman, but as the hot water pounded down on them, Kian held her as if she weighed nothing. Erin clung to his broad shoulders, reveling in the erotic sensation of his wet, naked flesh against hers. He felt hard and smooth and, God, she wanted to run her hands all over his body – feel every single dip and swell of the well-formed muscles that covered his frame.

Before she could work up the nerve to act on her fantasy, Kian sat down on a bench built into the wall of the shower and leaned against the wall. Pressing her back against his chest, he kissed her neck and then her jaw. When she turned her head toward him, he captured her lips with his.

The glide of his tongue against hers, dominant and aggressive, told her exactly how this man would make love. Lurid thoughts of his body pounding into hers, giving everything and expecting just as much in return, entered her mind. Her heart hammered at the combination of his physical and her mental stimuli.

When he pulled a bar of soap from the dish above their heads and slowly rubbed the edge of the bar across each of her taut nipples, the tips hardened, causing warmth to spread to her sex. Suds began to form on her breasts and the heat of the shower and the exotic smell of the soap engulfed her senses, changing the source of her shivers from cold to sensual awareness.

As she watched Kian use the bar to draw a seductive line down the center of her body to the nest of dark curls between her thighs, her heart skipped a couple of beats before increasing to a wild staccato rhythm.

He slid his hand up her waist and across her belly until he cupped her breast, his touch possessive and firm. Erin bit back a gasp at his thoroughly intimate gesture, but when he rubbed his thumb across her nipple, she couldn't resist reacting. She arched into his touch.

The rough pad of his finger dragged across the soft, pink bud. Her breath caught at the erotic sensation. She laid her head back on his neck in complete submission, enjoying every single sensation: skin against skin, wet and warmth, the heat of his body surrounding her, the building, spiraling, out-of-control desire raging through her body.

"Beautiful," he murmured against her temple. "How can you not see how desirable your body is, Eriana?"

## Chapter Three

She shook her head and moaned when he slid the fragrant bar into her curls, brushing the edge against her clit—once, twice, three times—before he dropped the soap to the floor of the shower.

Clasping her thighs in his large hands, he pulled, silently directing her to put her feet on his knees. Erin did as he bid, her breathing changing to a rapid pace as her body throbbed in intense need to be touched, to be caressed, to be...

*Possessed.*

Kian's hand slid into her soapy curls, his finger brushing down the front of her clit. He played with her sensitive bud, back and forth, toying with her, creating a wave of desire swirling within her body that mimicked the steam curling around them. Erin rocked her hips, giving in to his masterful strokes.

Kian tweaked one of her nipples while he rolled the sensitive bud of her clitoris between his thumb and forefinger, and rasped in a very aroused voice, "*Kruma, a nara.*"

Heat radiated in her lower belly at his foreign words and she instinctively knew he'd just told her to let go. Erin curled her toes on his legs, gaining purchase as she pressed against him and sought her climax.

Her movement caused her backside to brush against his erection. Over the sound of the splattering water, Kian groaned low and deep near her ear. His hand moved from her breast to her mound and he immediately plunged two fingers deep inside her core.

Erin called out his name as he gave her body exactly what it needed. Her sheath instantly contracted around his fingers and her heart raced as she moaned in pure pleasure. Through half-closed eyes, she noticed the shadows on the shower walls change as the candlelight sputtered and dimmed. Even the warmth and wetness of the shower seemed to fade until only the heat of Kian's body, the brand of his touch, and the promise of fulfillment, dominated her brain. She rode her climax, arching against him in total, blissful abandon, moaning her pleasure against his neck.

With her heart still racing and the final spasms of her orgasm throbbing throughout her body, Kian swiftly stood with her and turned her around to face the wall. Taking her hands, he pressed her palms to the white tile as his cock nudged against her moist entrance from behind.

Erin had never had sex in this position. For that matter, she'd never had sex in a shower before. The entire experience made her feel wanton, dominated and oh-so-ready to be fucked...she'd worry about protection in another life. It's not as if someone like her often got a chance to meet someone like Kian, let alone have passionate sex with him.

Excitement shot through her as he kept one hand over hers on the wall. His chest pressed against her back while he whispered in her ear, "Trust and know that I can't give you a child this way, Eriana."

She gave a doubtful laugh and panted out in a sarcastic tone, "I'd like to know your idea of how you *could* impregnate me then."

"Where I come from it takes more than a joining of bodies," he said in a rough voice as he kissed her neck then entered her body in one forceful thrust. His aggressive action sent any thoughts of trying to make sense of his words right out of her mind.

She cried out at the full stretching of her inner walls, the depth of his penetration, but Kian didn't give her a chance to pull away. He slid a hand down her lower belly and pressed against it as he withdrew and thrust back inside her again and again. With each plunge he took, he hit her hot spot inside while the counterpressure from his hand on the outside of her body only heightened the sensations rocking through her. Erin keened her delight and rocked her hips, pushing back against him, accepting his forceful pistoning with reckless abandon.

"Kian!" She screamed his name as her body began to pulsate around him.

"*Shimmara*," he groaned as he bit down on her shoulder and rammed into her once more.

Never in her life had a sexual experience compared to being with Kian. The erotic sensation of being bitten while in the throes of a full-blown orgasm only fueled her libido further.

Erin's heart threatened to burst from her chest. She moaned long and loud as a deeply satisfying climax rippled throughout her body. When she opened her eyes it was to see the entire room slowly fade to black. Surrounded by pure darkness, the only sensation she felt was Kian surrounding her with his heat, filling her with his body while her walls contracted around his cock.

The last thing she remembered before she succumbed to the lightheadedness racking her brain was the screaming sound of a large wildcat off in the distance.

*Grrrrroooowl.*

\* \* \* \* \*

When Kian sat down on a stool in the bathroom with her in his arms Erin opened her eyes. After he'd rubbed a towel all over her body and her hair, he stood her up and opened the bathroom door. Running his hand across the mirror above the sink, he wiped away the steamy mist.

"What do you see? he asked, his tone low and quiet.

She looked up at his handsome face, his dark eyebrows, his long, thick, wet hair slicked back from his head, making his angular features that much more dominant and downright sexy. "I see a tall, handsome man named Kian," she responded, not sure what he wanted from her. *Well, other than to be with a woman who could stay conscious*

more than a half hour, she thought with a wry smile. Did she really faint from that orgasm?

Kian reached around from behind her and touched her jaw, turning her gaze until she saw herself in the mirror.

“No, Eriana. What do *you* see?” He repeated his question, patience evident in his tone.

Regretfully she pulled her gaze from his in the mirror to look at herself. “I see an average looking woman with shoulder length blah light brown hair and hazel green eyes.”

She met his gaze in the mirror once more, sighing. “I’d rather look at you.”

Kian’s eyes narrowed and his jaw hardened. He brushed his finger down her cheekbone. “High and defined.”

He then slid his finger across her chin. “Strong and determined.”

Moving his thumb to her mouth, he said as he brushed her lower lip, “Full and sweet.” He leaned close and whispered in her ear, “I can’t wait to feel your lips around my cock, sucking me long and hard.”

Erin’s heart jerked in her chest at his lurid words. She’d never been more turned on in her life.

His warm breath fanned against her cheek as he continued. “Did you know your eyes turn the shade of Aradan jade when you’re aroused? Look and see.”

Erin quickly glanced in the mirror. Even in the dim candlelight, she could see her eyes were a shade she’d never seen before—a beautiful shade of dark green.

Her lips parted in surprise at the discovery of herself the way Kian saw her. She closed her eyes when his hands came around and cupped her small breasts, then plucked at her nipples.

“Responsive in every way,” he said in a hoarse voice before he swiftly turned her around. Grasping her upper back, he pulled her close and captured a nipple in his mouth, sucking the tip, nipping at her until she clung to his shoulders in sheer ecstasy, her body primed to be taken again.

Flicking her wet nipple with his tongue, he gave her a devilish look. “More than a mouthful is wasteful, *a nara*. My mouth is only *so* wide.”

Lifting his head, he slid his hands to her waist and pulled her against him, saying in a serious tone, “I like a woman who can handle my weight, not one who’s going to break underneath me.”

Tears filled her eyes at his words. The knowledge that he found her desirable in every way sent a tingling sensation zinging through her body all the way to her toes.

She slid her fingers through his wet hair and pulled his head close. “Then I’m your woman,” she whispered right before she touched her lips to his.

Breaking their kiss, he slid his hands down her spine, clasped her rear, and pressed his erection against her belly. "You *are* mine, Eriana. In so many ways you have yet to comprehend," he finished as his mouth covered hers once more.

Erin's head reeled at the possessive nature of Kian's kiss, how well he wove his seductive web around her. She melted against him and almost forgot the candle when he picked her up in his arms to carry her out of the room.

Kian let her set the candle on the nightstand before he tugged back the burgundy down comforter and laid her in the bed. Crawling in beside her, he leaned against the headboard and pulled her between his legs, leaning her back against his chest.

Kissing her on the neck, he slid his hands down her chest to fondle her breasts. "Tell me what happened. Your cryptic email of "'You were right. In five minutes I'm en route to the destination you recommended,' doesn't necessarily tell me everything."

As he kissed a path from her collarbone to the sensitive spot behind her ear Erin answered him in a breathless voice, "You just *have* to hear how right you were, don't you?"

"No." He stopped his seduction of her body and turned her face until she looked at him. Brilliant green eyes locked with hers. "I think it'll ease your fear if you talk about it."

A shudder passed through her that he seemed to know her so well yet had only just met her. She turned away, confused but oddly comforted that someone else understood just how scared she was. Over the past several days, she'd had to hide her fear behind a mask of professional academic acceptance as her 'scientific discovery' came crashing down around her.

Kian wrapped his arms around her, surrounding her with his warmth. He whispered in her ear, "Tell me."

She sighed and tried to suppress the shiver of apprehension that started in her body as soon as she thought about the recent past. "A few days ago I sent off an email to my superior at the University to tell him I had finally succeeded in my research."

"Creating the ability to time-travel," he interjected.

She nodded. "I thought time-travel would be a wonderful tool for mankind. The future holds many discoveries, hopefully including medical advances. A cure would be found for every illness eventually. So why not benefit our race today and make those discoveries sooner...er, with a little help."

Her voice turned bitter and her entire body tensed as she thought of the domino effect her breakthrough had wrought. "But little did I know just how politically active the head of the Physics department was. I later learned Daniel Haughten had been involved with a secret military defense organization for years. When he read my email about the successful outcome of my research, he immediately realized the potential time-travel could have for giving our military an advantage and pounced on it."

Kian splayed his hand over her ribcage and rubbed his thumb under the curve of her breast in a rhythmic motion as if his touch alone could soothe her frazzled nerves.

“Wouldn’t the military personnel’s memories be lost, too, when they came back to the past—all they’d learned for naught?”

“That’s the theory, yes. Why do you think I’m running? Not only did I not give them the entire process it takes to create a rift in time in my initial documents—I retained the code key to turn on the energy source—but my boss insisted I also create a ‘vacuum’ that wouldn’t be affected by the change in the time continuum. He was right. That was something I had initially overlooked in my haste to successfully establish the ability to time travel.”

“A vacuum? You mean like a room?”

“No, they just wanted a vial, something small that would fit in a person’s hand—a place where a digital chip could be hidden. That way when they came back from the future, the information they’d collected couldn’t be erased in the trip back in time.”

She turned to face him, her gaze searching his. “Think about it, Kian. If Daniel’s group were able to retrieve advanced weapons from the future, entire nations could fall. The balance of world power could so easily be shifted in their favor until there would be only one dominant country.”

Kian nodded as he ran his hands down her arms and across her belly. She turned away once more, tremors of anxiety making her voice quiver. “All because one nation would have the ability to bend time.”

Leaning her head back against his neck, she continued in a sad tone, “Daniel was so blinded by the potential military aspects that could benefit from time-travel, he didn’t even consider the whole point of my discovery...a world without disease.”

Kian had begun to massage her neck while she spoke, but his hands stilled at her last words. “That’s where you’re wrong, Eriana.”

## Chapter Four

“Huh?” she said, turning her body around to face him and tucking her knees underneath her. Her heart raced at his revelation.

He reached up and brushed a tendril of hair away from her cheek before rubbing his thumb along her jaw. The reverent look on his face made her heart constrict with emotion. With every word, every touch...he made her feel more and more cherished.

“I’m not from your world, *a nara* –” he began.

She leaned back with a grin, letting amusement reflect in her gaze. “You can say that again, hot stuff. No way would I see someone like you roaming the labs at the University.”

A look of sheer determination filled his gaze. “That’s not what I meant.” Claspng her shoulders, he stared at her as if willing her to believe.

She let her gaze roam his body.

*Gimme a break. He looks human. Okay, there was the strength he’d displayed earlier by ripping my door off my car as if he were popping open a can of chips, but he did mention adrenaline. God knows he feels human,* she thought with an inward chuckle as she remembered how well his cock filled her body.

Kian clasped her chin in his hand and elevated her head until she looked at him. “And I won’t let you forget how well I fill you, Eriana, as I plan to again and again.”

Warmth rushed to her sex at his adamant statement while her eyes grew wide with shock as realization dawned on her. *Had he just read her mind?*

“Yes,” he replied, his expression impassive.

Erin shook her head and scooted away, refusing to believe. “You *look* no different from any other human man.”

He raised an eyebrow. “What? You expect me to look like a little green man?”

She folded her arms over her breasts in a defensive manner and glanced around the room accusingly as she said in a loud voice, “No. What I think is...” She paused and raised her voice in case she was being recorded, “someone is playing a cruel joke on me.”

Kian moved toward her on his hands and knees, stalking her, his expression intense, almost feral. “What will it take to convince you?”

*Read my mind, Mr. Man-From-Planet-Gorgeous. I want to know what your mouth feels like on me,* she thought with a smirk.

Erin had barely completed the thought when Kian clasped her ankles and jerked her legs toward him, pulling her flat on her back.



"I've never had a more appealing request, *a nara*." An arrogant look crossed his face as his mouth descended to her mound.

Erin's heart hammered out of control as his tongue made contact with her body. She arched her back and raised her hips closer to his warm, moist mouth. Kian nuzzled her vaginal folds, then lapped at her slit from bottom to top while a humming sound surrounded her so completely that her body vibrated.

Where was that noise coming from? she wondered as she grasped the covers and gave over to the tide of emotions welling inside her. God, he was good. He'd begun to lick her sex in long, tantalizing strokes, each lap of his tongue slightly rougher than the last.

Man, his tongue felt wonderful. She didn't remember his tongue feeling rough when he'd kissed her, but now that it was stroking her entrance, she felt every abrasion against her sensitive skin and reveled in the unique sensation that only heightened her pleasure.

After he ran his rough tongue over her clit and she keened out her pleasure, Kian spoke. *You've only seen some of my powers. Now look at me*, he demanded.

She realized he'd just spoken in her mind and the knowledge made her meet his gaze in amazed disbelief. The humming sound grew louder as if it was her own blood rushing through her veins – the beat seemed *that* rhythmic, *that* close, *that* seductive.

All thoughts of the strange noise invading her senses fled when he clamped his lips on her clit, sucking hard, at the same time he slid two fingers inside her channel. Erin locked her gaze with his and the raw sexual hunger in his eyes sent her over the edge. His gaze reflected the candlelight like an animal's – glowing, hypnotic, exotic...erotic.

Erin screamed as she came, rocking her hips against Kian's mouth and hand. He was relentless as he withdrew his hand and clasped her ass, yanking her even closer. Pressing his face against her body, he groaned as he swallowed the warm juices that flowed with her orgasm.

*Again!* he commanded in her mind. *I want more.*

*Is this for me or you?* she thought in exhaustion as her heartbeat started to slow.

*This time is definitely for me*, he mentally ground out while he continued to lave at her nub and slid a finger inside her. His enticing touch igniting her once more, Erin dug her heels in the bed for leverage as her breathing turned choppy and her heart rate kicked up.

Kian withdrew his finger and slid it down her wet slit, pressing on the skin between her vagina and her anus. *When I enter you again...where do you want my cock? Here...* He thrust his finger deep inside her channel once more, causing Erin to moan in ecstasy. *Or here*, he finished as he withdrew his finger from her core and trailed it down to her anus and circled the entrance.

Erin gasped at the foreign, erotic sensation. She'd never been touched there before. *Would it feel good? Or strange?*

*Never be afraid to explore every part of your body,* a nara, he whispered in her mind, the deep timbre of his voice dark, enticing, seductive, as he applied light pressure.

Though her mind considered the potential pleasure she might derive, her body instinctively tensed. Kian chuckled in her mind. *We'll save that lesson for later. That time will come, Eriana, and so will you. Put your feet on my shoulders.*

Erin threaded her fingers into his wet hair and clasped his head as she lifted her feet and placed them on his shoulders, her pulse racing out of control.

As Kian laved at her sex, he plunged two fingers in her core, withdrew and thrust them inside again. When her body began to tense as her impending orgasm coiled within her, Kian withdrew his hand from her body, grasped her buttocks, and pressed his chin against her folds, sucking her clit relentlessly.

While Erin thrilled at the additional pressure against her body, her heartbeat roared in her ears. Her entire body tuned to the sounds around her and that was when she heard the humming again, but this time she felt the vibration against her sex as if...as if Kian were a living vibrator!

The sensual thought caused her world to splinter around her and Erin gave over to the jolts of pleasure streaming through her body. As the candlelight sputtered and finally extinguished, dousing the room in total darkness, the distinct smells of candle wax and faint smoke were the only sensations she could distinguish other than Kian's masculine scent and heated touch—the only ones that mattered.

Long after her tremors had ceased, he continued to lave at her sex. But his ministrations seemed different, more attentive than sexual, she thought as she combed her fingers through his slightly damp hair, enjoying the brush of his thick, long locks against her inner thighs.

Kian finally moved and relit the candles. Climbing back into bed, he crawled over her body, blocking her in. A devilish smile tilted his lips. "Do you believe me now?"

Erin grinned and nodded as she tucked his hair behind his ears so she could see his handsome face. "Oh yes. That was definitely out-of-this-world, Kian," she answered with a chuckle.

He frowned. "I think you need to be spanked for your impudence, *a nara.*"

Before she could reply, he had her face down over his lap, his hand on her back holding her in place. Amidst bouts of laughter, Erin struggled to get up until a resounding slap landed on her backside.

"Ouch!" She tried to jerk around to frown at him.

"I come from Aradan."

*Smack!*

"...A world without disease."

"Damn it, Kian, let me up!" Erin started to struggle in earnest.

"Not until you accept what I tell you," he replied in a gruff voice.

*Smack!*

Her backside had started to sting with that third slap. "Kian!"

"I'm here because your people *did* eventually travel to my planet. They didn't care about our medical advances. Instead, they all but destroyed my race."

"But...but my invention only made time-travel possible, not space travel." Guilt washed over her, despite the impossibility.

"Your invention was the catalyst, Eriana. Daniel used time travel to go forward in time to bring back advanced weapons of mass destruction to his time. But to retrieve information on creating those futuristic weapons, he used your invention as a bartering tool. Everyone was happy—the people in the future got your 'time-travel' data and Daniel got his weapons."

She looked over her shoulder and met his gaze, her tone adamant. "Like I said, my invention only impacts time-travel not space."

His brows drew together. "You're only aware of the limits of physics by today's standards. There are discoveries in the future that, when combined with your invention, allowed your future descendants to travel much greater distances than they would ever have been able to do without it. That's when Aradan was discovered. Once your descendants learned of our capabilities, they held our loved ones hostage while they treated the ones with the strongest powers as lab rats."

The depth of emotion and pain in Kian's voice, the rigid way he held his body, made Erin cease her struggles. Her heart ached for all that his people had gone through...all because of her. She went limp against him, waiting, accepting her punishment.

Anticipating another hard smack, she jumped when Kian's hand brushed gently against her backside. He kneaded the soft flesh, then clasped her cheek in a possessive manner.

"I don't blame you, Eriana. Your intentions were altruistic. I have learned from your people, barbaric though they were. Without your invention I would never have known how far our galaxy extends. But, for the survival of my race, we must undo what should have never been."

He rolled her over and cradled her in his arms, kissing her forehead. "I'm here to help you complete your mission to destroy your invention—to ensure the ability to time-travel is never discovered."

Lying down on the bed, he turned her back to his chest and tucked her body against his before pulling the comforter over them. Her heart raced as the realization of his alien status sunk in. But as quickly as it raced in excitement, her stomach tensed when she realized his time with her might be limited. She rolled on her back and touched his jaw, tears sparkling in her eyes.

"You have to go back, don't you?"

He gave her palm a tender kiss before he met her gaze once more. "Yes. I'm a leader for my people. Though I know they'd do fine without me, they seem to have grown attached to me."

He clasped her hand and laced his fingers with hers. "Are you ready to let me help you disable your invention?"

She stared at the man above her. He made her forget her apprehension at the very thought of going back to the University and her lab where Daniel had posted his men, effectively imprisoning her until he got what he wanted. At least now she wouldn't have to do it alone. She slowly nodded her assent.

Kian grinned, his white teeth flashing in the dim light. "Rest for now. You'll need your strength soon enough."

She frowned. "But I'm not tired."

"Rest, *a nara*," he commanded.

That was the last thing she remembered before her eyelids grew too heavy to hold them open any longer.

\* \* \* \* \*

Erin awoke to Kian's voice as he nuzzled her neck. "It's time to wake, Eriana."

She sighed and snuggled against him. She'd never get tired of hearing him say her name like that.

He swiftly stood and held out a hand to her. "Now that you're rested, we need to go."

Noting that he must've put on his pants while she slept, she asked, "Go?"

"Destroy your invention," he reminded her.

Disbelief rocked through her that he'd want to leave now, in the middle of a storm...er, wait a minute. It wasn't storming anymore. As a matter of fact, it was eerily quiet outside.

Kian looked toward the window with a grin. "Yes, the storm does appear to have stopped," he said as his gaze returned to hers, beguiling her. Clasp her hand, he pulled her to her feet to stand in front of him.

"Your clothes are dry now. Get dressed and let's go save these power-hungry humans from themselves."

She smiled and started to speak when bright lights flashed in the windows accompanied by the sound of a helicopter flying right over the cabin. Panic seized Erin once more and she pulled away from his grasp.

Kian gave her a determined look and held out his hand once more, his tone quiet yet commanding. "Ignore the lights and sounds, Eriana. Concentrate on me."

She bit her lip. The lights circling the cabin combined with the *whoosh, whoosh, whoosh* of the helicopter's blades seemed to beat in time with her hammering heart. Fear engulfed her. She put her hands over her ears and cried out, "How can I ignore them? They've found me!"

Kian walked to the door and opened it, changing the muffled sounds outside to a deafening roar. Facing her, he held out his hand once more and spoke in her mind. *Trust me.*

The bright lights outlined his powerfully built body in an almost ethereal glow. The wind whipped his long hair around his face, making him look like a warrior standing on the edge of battle, ready to face the enemy.

*I need your strength,* she thought as trepidation rooted her where she stood.

Kian's expression turned tender as he lowered his hand and called out over the noise. "Know that you'll always have my strength and my love, *a nara.*" As soon as he finished speaking, he walked outside and closed the door behind him.

"No!" She screamed out. *He can't leave me,* she thought, her mind frantic. Shoving aside her anxiety of being captured and heedless of her naked state, she ran toward the door and pulled it open.

## Chapter Five

Erin awoke to bright lights shining in her eyes through the window's half-closed mini-blinds while the sound of a helicopter's blades almost drowned out men's voices yelling outside. Surveying the stark, antiseptic-smelling room around her, and the single hospital-type bed underneath her, total confusion caused her body to tremble.

*Where am I?* she thought as panic began to set in. *And where is Kian? God, don't tell me everything I just experienced was a dream.* She drew in a quick breath at the deep sense of loss that realization caused.

When she tried to raise her hand to her mouth to muffle her sobs, a sharp pain drew her attention. She looked down to see an IV taped to the back of her hand.

*I'm here, Eriana.*

Erin jerked her head up at the voice and peered around the darkened room, looking for the source. The helicopter swept by once more, its lights gliding across the walls and floor. Empty. No one was in the room.

*Oh God, not only have I had a vivid, oh-so-real dream, I've just invented an imaginary friend to boot,* she thought miserably, totally questioning her sanity.

The man chuckled in her mind. *I wouldn't classify myself as a friend, but you can consider me your playmate if you want.* His tone turned clipped and urgent when he spoke again, *Get up and run!*

His exigency spurred her to action. *So what if a new personality has somehow emerged from my brain. Apparently, my old personality got me into this mess in the first place.* The self-deprecating thought crossed her mind as she threw back the covers and set her feet on the cold tile floor.

Lightheadedness and weakness washed over her in waves. Erin fought the need to sink back onto the bed and tried to take a step, but her knees gave out under her. Before she slid to the floor, she quickly grasped the edge of the bed for support.

Cold air brushed her backside when she leaned over the bed and took deep, steadying breaths. The hospital gown did little to cover her body as a cold sweat broke out all over her skin, making her shiver.

"I—I can't. I'm too weak," she moaned out in frustration.

*Remember my promise, Eriana. I will give you my strength,* he replied at the same time she felt a surge of energy rush through her body, washing away the weakness. She stood and tested her legs, amazed the weakness had disappeared.

*Marvel later. Now move that lovely ass of yours! We haven't much time.*

As she turned toward the door, his voice entered her head once more. *Find the stairs. Take them to the roof.*

She peeked out the door and saw one security guard reading the paper and the other one flirting with a nurse sitting behind the desk right outside her room. Opening the door another inch, she strained to see down the hall. A silent sigh of relief escaped her when she saw a red exit sign hanging over a door at the end of the hall.

Biting her lip, her heart thudding in her chest, Erin slowly opened the door. Just when the door reached a point she could finally slip through, the hinges creaked, drawing the guards' attention.

Throwing open the door, she bolted down the hall as fast as her feet would carry her. One man yelled out for her to stop while the other one talked into his walkie-talkie. "She's out of her coma, sir, and trying to escape. We're in pursuit."

*A coma?* she thought in shock as she reached the exit door and pushed it open. *Oh boy, no wonder I made up an entire fantasy. But why am I going to the roof? There's nowhere to go once I'm up there!*

No voice with a witty answer entered her head as she rushed up several flights of stairs. The sounds of men's booted feet trampled the metal stairs behind her.

When she reached the roof and closed the door, Erin looked around. The helicopter was heading straight toward her. Oh God! She began to run across the building to hide behind a utility unit and mentally groused, *Why the hell would my own new split-personality suddenly abandon me in a crisis. Oh, yeah, because it's chicken-shit!*

*Such skepticism, Eriana. Where's the trust?* Kian's amused voice entered her head. *Run to the edge of the building as far from the door as possible. Wait there.*

*Now I truly am losing it,* she thought as she veered away from her original destination and ran toward the edge of the building. Not that she could explain it, but somehow she trusted the confident voice echoing in her head.

When she reached the edge, the helicopter now hovered above the building. Its bright spotlight made her wince as the two soldiers opened the door to the roof and stepped outside.

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw a black blur rush past her, and then the helicopter pitched sideways as if it'd been knocked by a heavy force. The sudden tilt made the blades come dangerously close. To avoid the danger, Erin threw herself to the ground, her adrenaline pumping through her body as her breathing turned choppy and erratic.

The helicopter pitched once more and this time its blades took a large chunk out of the building, causing the aircraft to nosedive straight to the ground. When the helicopter landed with an earth-shaking thud, exploding on impact, she screamed and covered her head as fire and debris shot to the sky and against the side of the building. Glancing up at her pursuers, she noticed the explosion had knocked the two soldiers down to the ground.

As the men quickly scrambled to get up, a huge black panther emerged from behind the utility building, his powerful shoulders rising and falling with each step he

took toward them. He walked with a steely confidence, his entire bearing demanding respect for his size and lethal nature.

The animal's gaze never left the men as he moved to stand between the soldiers and Erin. His long black tail hung nearly to the ground, the tip of it twitching back and forth as if he waited to attack.

One of the soldiers radioed his commander. "Um, we have a panther up here on the roof, sir."

The radio clicked off.

"A what? Repeat soldier," the gravelly voice came across the line.

"A huge, black jungle cat, sir," the man clarified as he trained his gun on the cat.

Before his commander could reply, the cat let out a loud roar and dove toward the men. She watched in shock at the speed with which the cat moved. In a matter of two seconds the men were down. Not a single shot had been taken. Though very little blood was spilled, neither man moved.

She shuddered at their swift deaths and stood up on shaky legs, her heart ramming in her chest. Then the panther turned and started to walk toward her his movements swift and purposeful. Oh God, she was next. She could try to run but the panther was too fast. She knew if she ran it would only encourage the large predator to hunt her down.

As he approached, the raging fire behind her reflected in the panther's striking green eyes, reminding her so much of Kian. An ache settled in her chest. Why couldn't he have been real? As the animal stalked toward her, he reared up on his hind legs, letting out his wildcat's roar. Before her eyes, he changed to a man's form. Kian's beautiful, handsome form.

As she succumbed to total shock and her knees crumbled underneath her, Erin's whole world went black once more. She felt Kian's arms catch her and heard his voice from far, far away.

"We'll have to work a little harder on this 'staying conscious' thing, *a nara*."

\* \* \* \* \*

Erin jolted awake at the sound of car horns honking. The crisp fall breeze blew through the window and the scent of smoky fires teased her senses. Smoky fires...the thought made her memories come rushing back.

"Kian!" she called out and sat up quickly, her rapid heart rate causing her entire body to jerk in time to its thudding rhythm.

"I'm here," he responded in a quiet tone from a chair near the window.

She turned at the sound of his voice. Kian wore faded jeans, a black t-shirt, and boots and had his long hair tied back away from his face. But his eyes, God, his jewel-toned eyes mesmerized her.



He stood, opened a thermos, and poured the liquid into a cup. Walking over to the bed, he handed her the cup saying, "Drink this. You were in a coma for three days. This should help you get your strength back."

The orange liquid smelled so good, like tomato soup with elusive spices she couldn't quite place. Her hands shook as she tried to raise the cup to her lips. With concern reflected in his gaze, Kian sat down on the bed and held the cup for her so she could sip the broth.

As the delicious soup slid down her throat, Erin stared at him over the rim of the cup, wondering about his feelings. If everything she'd experienced was a dream, they'd never physically touched, let alone made love. She realized he'd somehow created a safe, secure place, a fantasy for her so she could overcome her fears and emerge from her coma. Then why did it hurt so much to look at him?

His green eyes darkened and his gaze slid hungrily over her body. She followed his gaze and realized the comforter pooled around her waist, revealing her naked flesh. Embarrassment swiftly set in as she pulled the covers back up to cover her chest.

"Remember what I said about covering your body," he warned.

"Your skin seems to have an even deeper layer, doesn't it, Mr. Panther?" she responded defensively with a half-laugh.

"It's who I am," he sighed. "I have feline blood in my genetic make-up. All Aradians do. I'm also a dream walker, Eriana."

His reminder of their time together, even if only in her dreams, embarrassed her further. She needed a layer of protection. "Where are my clothes?"

He nodded to a set of clothes on the table. "I collected some things from your house to prepare for when you finally awoke from your coma." Returning his gaze to hers, he continued, "While you were unconscious, I brought you to this hotel and bathed every inch of your body."

His lips quirked at the heat that rose to her cheeks. Then his expression turned serious and intense. "It was the only way I could touch you and not get physically involved. I assure you, I enjoyed every brush of my hands on your skin."

Tormented emotions swirled in his gaze: frustration, sexual hunger, regret. "Your dreams were as real to me as they were to you. I've never become physically involved in another's dreams, but you were pure temptation, *a nara*. I've watched you for a month while this whole thing stirred to its inevitable conclusion, but once I entered your dreams, I couldn't resist. I had to touch you, make love to you, even if only in our minds."

She finished the broth and set the cup down on the nightstand. Meeting his gaze, she touched his arm, hurt stabbing at her heart. "You talk as if it's a bad thing...you touching me."

He moved swiftly, putting his hands on the bed on either side of her, blocking her in. His expression angry, intense, almost...explosive. "I want nothing more than to spread your soft thighs and slide my cock into your warmth. To fuck you again and

again until your body contracts around me, milking me dry. I'd want us both totally satiated and exhausted until neither can move," he replied in an intemperate tone.

The emotion in his gaze and the ferocity of his words told her just how much he wanted, but she didn't understand.

"Then why – "

"If I get physically involved with you, I might impregnate you. Then when I return to my time, I would leave behind a part of my race in your time and your world," he bit out angrily. Kian pushed himself away. Standing up, he clenched and unclenched his fists as if it took supreme effort not to act on his wishes.

"Get dressed, Eriana. We've got to get back to the University and destroy your creation."

Kian had never felt so powerless in his life. He was a commanding leader among his people, yet here, in the presence of this one woman, he felt both impotent and enraged.

As Eriana got dressed and ran a brush through her shoulder-length light brown hair, he watched through a hooded gaze, coveting every movement. He desperately wanted to see her hazel eyes turn that beautiful shade of green when she came in his arms. He knew they would.

While she dressed, she argued, "Are you certain, Kian? I use the monthly pill. Surly that's enough protection."

In his heart he wanted to believe. He might come from a very advanced race in many ways, but his people still held on to certain superstitious beliefs. Her birth control might not work and he'd never leave behind a cub.

Dressed in a short black skirt, a lightweight white sweater and tennis shoes, she stood in front of him, a confused expression on her face. "Why did you pick out a skirt?"

Kian flashed an unrepentant grin. "I might not be able to touch but I may as well enjoy the view while I can."

She frowned and backed away. "That's just cruel, Kian."

Hiking her skirt, she pulled down her underwear saying, "Well, two can play at this game."

Kian set his jaw. The idea of her running around with nothing covering her sex would drive him nuts. Already he smelled her arousal.

"Not a good idea, Eriana. Put your underclothes back on," he ground out.

She twirled her underwear around her finger with a challenging look in her eye. "Make me."

Kian knew that if he touched her, he'd have her bent over and his cock thrust deep into her warmth, his hips meeting hers as he stroked in and out of her body, faster than she'd ever been taken. It would be too late for him. He'd be bound to her and her world.

His chest constricted at the thought, for his heart already belonged to her. But he had a duty to fulfill and fulfill it he would, even at the expense of his own personal sacrifice—losing his one true mate. Their mental connection was too strong to be otherwise. In his race it took both a strong mental and physical connection to conceive a child. For that reason, each birth was a rare and precious gift on his planet.

He'd been physically attracted to Eriana from the first moment he saw her. But he couldn't have anticipated the special mental connection they'd have. Even now, outside of her dreams, he could still hear her thoughts. She wanted him.

Fuck!

He liked that human word he'd discovered in his studies of Earth. He liked the versatility of its uses. But right now all he could think about was fucking his mate again and again. Lust seared through his body, tightening his balls, knotting his stomach.

Kian took a couple of deep breaths, opened the hotel room door, and mumbled, "Suit yourself. Let's go."

Erin put her hand on his arm and pulled him back in the room. "Not so fast, Kian." Shutting the door behind him, she gave him a seductive smile as she reached for the waistline on his jeans and pulled him against her. "I believe there's one fantasy we didn't fulfill."

## Chapter Six

“Eri—” he started to warn, but instead he ended up sucking in his breath when she grabbed his balls through his jeans and held him in a firm grip.

Standing on tiptoe, she whispered in his ear, “I want you to know what my mouth feels like on your cock. I want you to have your own fantasy before you leave.”

Kian fisted his fingers in her hair and pulled her head back, intending to push her away. His anger, borne of unfulfilled sexual frustration, rose until he stared down into her eyes—eyes the color of Aradan jade—beautiful, desire-filled eyes. They stripped him bare. Goddess, he wanted her.

She released him and slid her palm up the front of his jeans. The pressure against his throbbing cock was almost more than he could bear. Her floral scent filled his senses as she kissed his jaw and then his neck before she pulled open the buttons on his jeans. His heart stuttered in his chest when she slid her fingers from the sensitive tip of his erection all the way to the base of his shaft.

“You’re much bigger than you led me to believe in my dream,” she chuckled, her voice filled with delighted surprise.

Her words warmed his heart. Thank the Goddess she wasn’t fearful of his size.

“I didn’t want to scare you away, *a nara*,” he said in a dry tone.

“No worries there, tiger,” she teased.

“Panther,” he growled back as she briefly let go to slide his pants to his ankles. When she stood up once more, she encircled as much of his wide cock as she could, pumping her hand up and down his shaft.

Kian moved his hips, thrusting into her hand, anticipating what her warm mouth would feel like on his erection. He closed his eyes and leaned heavily against the door, rocking into her.

His entire body jerked when her heated mouth closed around the tip of his cock even as she kept her hand on the base of his shaft.

Nothing compared to the reality of the warmth of her mouth around him. The real, physical sensation slammed through him confirming how right he’d been. Their connection was real...stretching beyond their mental link.

During her dreams their emotions were so strong, so involved and in tune with one another that each time either one of them came, his concentration stuttered. He’d had a hard time maintaining objects in her dream world other than himself when all he wanted to do was make sure she felt him as deeply as he did her.

*Hmmm*, she hummed against him and the pleasurable vibration brought his focus back to the physical as Eriana almost drove him over the edge. As much as he wanted

to know what she was thinking, Kian stayed out of her mind while she slid her tongue around his shaft and ran her mouth up and down, sucking and tasting him.

He wanted to anticipate, to *not* know what her next move was going to be. When she slid her hand past the base of his cock and grabbed the ridge of hard flesh just beyond his balls, then massaged and pressed against it, Kian's knees bent. He had to work to keep from sliding to the floor while wave after wave of sensual pleasure jolted through his groin.

"Goddess," he hissed out. He fisted his hand in her hair, palming her head to guide and increase her pace to match his desire spiraling out of control. In the haze of lust surrounding him, his own need so great, he forgot to block Eriana's thoughts.

*If this is all I'll have from him, I want to know what he tastes like.*

That was all it took.

His heart racing, his thigh muscles flexing, Kian groaned his pleasure and came hard and fast. As the last shudders of his orgasm dissipated, he welcomed the release of coiled sexual tension from his body.

Eriana didn't let go until she'd swallowed every last drop. His heart swelled with love for her. After she reached down and pulled his pants back up, he pulled her to him, intending to kiss her.

She pushed away with a sad smile. "We need to get going," she began, then glanced at the clock on the nightstand before returning her gaze to his. "It'll be daylight soon."

Kian wanted to argue. He wanted to pull her in his arms and kiss her until she begged him to take her, but he knew she was right—even if it didn't sit well with him that she'd been able to push him away so easily.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The next shift should change in a hour and a half," Erin whispered to Kian as she pulled him along a darkened hall.

"What is this area?" he asked.

"It's being renovated. Due to my time-travel discovery, Daniel expects more funding, more personnel," she said, her tone sarcastic. "I explored this area late one night while one of the guards had fallen asleep. I was looking for an alternate escape route when the timing was right."

"So that's how you got away?" he asked, his hand tightening around hers. Erin could feel the tension, the anger radiating in his body.

Moving further down the hall, she finally reached the secluded place she'd been looking for. She opened the door and pulled him inside the empty closet, shutting the door behind them. "For obvious reasons, we'll have to sit in the dark."

Pushing the button on her watch, she noted the time on the illuminated background. "I'll keep checking the time so we can slip in during shift changes."

"Don't you think they'll anticipate you trying to come back here?"

She shrugged, then realized he couldn't see her in the dark. "It's possible, but I only need a few seconds to destroy the files and the disk with the key code on it."

"You mean it's been in the lab the whole time?" he asked, his tone incredulous.

She chuckled, then tucked her skirt underneath her legs and sat down in the cramped space. "What better place to hide it than right under their noses? It's the last place they'd expect to look."

She heard a shuffle as Kian sat down as well and leaned against the opposite wall.

"What will you do when you go back to your planet? Find a mate, have a few cubs, and live happily ever after?"

His answer came swift and fast. "I've already found my mate."

Erin's heart sank at his words. "Oh." But even though he was mated to another, she still wanted to know what he felt like inside her, shafting her body with his large cock, his mouth on her breasts, biting and teasing her nipples. Her sex throbbed at the thought. She pressed her hand against her mound to dampen her desire, thankful for the pitch dark so Kian couldn't see what she was doing. *Think about something else, God, anything but making love to Kian.*

As the quiet stretched out between them, she heard that humming sound from her dream. Erin looked around the room, sightless in the dark. It seemed to be coming from everywhere, surrounding her completely, making her associate the sound with making love to Kian.

"Do you hear that?" she asked as she started to raise her hands to cover her ears, to shut out the things the noise made her think about. But she didn't get that far as Kian grabbed her hand and pulled her forward slightly.

She tried to pull her hand away when his tongue took a long, seductive stroke against her fingers, then took another lap. Oh God, the same fingers she'd had against her sex. The humming sound seemed to grow louder as his tongue traced in and around her fingers, making her nipples harden and warmth rush between her legs.

Kian groaned and before she realized his intent, he'd grabbed her ankles and pulled her flat on her back. His swift action caused her skirt to ride up to her hips and as she started to push her skirt back down, his warm lips touched her mound. Erin gasped, then put her hand over her mouth to muffle her cries of pleasure.

As Kian's mouth vibrated against her sex, tears formed in her eyes. She realized that all that time, the humming sound she'd heard...Kian was purring, as any cat would do when highly excited or happy. What they had shared up until now may have been a dream, but the way he made her feel was very, very real.

When he licked a path along her sex and that rough tongue hit her clitoris, Erin bucked and keened her pleasure behind her hand. Again and again he laved at her body, bringing her to heights of passion over and over, yet never enough for her to come.

Just when she thought she'd go insane from the need clawing in her groin, Kian spoke in her mind, his voice seductive, and dangerous, *Tell me how much you want to be my mate, Eriana.*

"You can't do this, Kian," she whispered as happy tears trailed down her temples. "You have a mate already and you said you won't go back home if we make love."

"*You are my one and only mate,*" he replied in a low, gruff voice before swiping his tongue across her sex once more. "Now tell me what I need to hear, *a nara.*"

She felt him move over her and clasp her thighs with his hands. Spreading her legs, he prepared her as he bit out, "I see your tears, Eriana. I know you're holding back. Tell me," he demanded.

She jerked her gaze in the direction of his voice, surprised he could see her as she put her hands on his shoulders.

"Yes, I can see you, I can hear you, I can smell you, and I want you very much," he replied as he pressed his cock against her entrance.

"Yes," she moaned at the feel of him against her body. "Yes, I want to be your mate, Kian. I—I love you."

Kian leaned over and kissed her as he thrust inside her in one swift plunge. Erin saw stars at the pain his shafting her caused, but as soon as he entered he began to move in and out of her body in slow, deliberate strokes, and the pain quickly turned to waves of pleasure.

Erin lifted her hips and met each plunge measure for measure while he paced the thrust of his tongue against hers with a dominate, aggressive sensuality he'd not been able to duplicate in her dreams. Nothing compared to the feel of him inside her, taking her breath away. Her heart hammered in her chest and her lower belly tensed in anticipation as her body's tension built.

*Thugam vu, m'nara,* he whispered in her mind, then said in her language, *I love you, my mate.*

Kian's words, combined with his forceful thrusts, sent her spiraling right into a fulfilling orgasm. His mouth muffled her cries of pleasure as his own movements changed to a quicker, more urgent pace.

With each thrust, Erin felt a change take place. As he slid inside, his erection felt smooth but when he pulled out, his shaft rubbed against her walls feeling slightly rough. The erotic combination sent her libido into overdrive.

"Oh God, Kian!" she called out at the waves of pleasure rolling through her body.

Kian clamped his hand over her mouth and whispered against her neck, "I know it feels strange to you, *m'nara.* Just let my body bring you to pleasure as yours does mine."

As soon as he spoke, Kian groaned and clamped his teeth on the skin between her shoulder and her neck, holding fast as he pistoned into her. Erin's heart seemed to take on a mind of its own, beating at a pace she'd never felt before, making her lightheaded and woozy as her body clenched around Kian's once more.

In the throes of her second orgasm, she heard the panther's *grrrrroooooowl* in her head right as Kian came inside her, his warm semen shooting against her inner walls, filling her body.

He was here to stay.



## Chapter Seven

An hour later, Erin and Kian snuck into the lab while one of the guards took a pee break and the other was on the cell phone being dressed down by his wife for an affair she's apparently just discovered.

"We have maybe five minutes before the sound of the reactor in full swing will draw their attention."

Kian nodded as she booted up her computer and flipped on the reactor's master switch. While the large machine hummed to life, she began to type in the passwords to get into the system.

"I'm in," she said as she swiftly began deleting files.

"You'd better hurry," he called out over the noise. "The guards are on their way down the hall. I hear them radioing for back-up."

Erin's heart raced and her entire body began to tremble as she punched in the rest of the files to be deleted as fast as her fingers would allow.

While she worked, Kian moved two desks in front of the door, creating a temporary barricade. But through the glass walls, Erin saw at least twenty military men bearing down on them, carrying their machine guns. Daniel led the pack, his face a picture of pure rage.

She looked at Daniel with a smile on her face and hit the delete key on the last file.

Nothing happened and Daniel still kept coming.

Shocked slammed through her. *Why? Why? Why?*

Then she remembered, she'd made a back up file, burned it on an unlabeled CD, and tossed it in her desk along with a few others.

As the men started to batter the door, Daniel yelled and pointed to the glass. Erin jerked open her desk drawer and looked at the CDs. Which one? She frantically grabbed one and broke it in half as machine gun fire shattered the glass walls between them.

Kian had moved to stand between her and Daniel's men when Erin picked up three CDs at once and broke them over her knee.

Time seemed to stand still as she watched the men vanish before her eyes—she assumed to wherever they would have been if she'd never discovered the ability to time-travel. Kian turned to her with a smile and she started to walk toward him, a grin on her face. Suddenly his body started to flicker and Erin began to panic.

"No!" she screamed and ran toward him. He gave her a puzzled look as if he didn't understand why she was upset.

Then he was gone.

Erin fell to the floor where he'd been standing and curled up on her side sobbing. She grabbed her belly as the sharp pangs of deep loss began to wrack through her body. She couldn't have lost him – a man who loved her just as she was, imperfections and all. She cried until her head hurt and her entire body was a ball of tightly wound nerves.

She wasn't sure how long she lay there. An hour, two? Eventually, she told herself, *I need to move on. I may carry Kian's child, our child.* With that thought to bolster her spirits, she wiped her tears and forced herself to sit up and finally to stand.

"I will be strong," she said out loud as she took a step toward the doors and then collapsed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Erin awoke with a sense she was falling. She quickly grabbed her desk and righted herself on the stool. Looking at her computer screen, bleary-eyed and totally exhausted, she realized she'd fallen asleep at work. Several coffee cups littered her desk as she glanced down at her paperwork, then at her computer screen once more.

Blinking once, she rubbed her eyes several times and checked the date on her computer. The email she had started to compose on her computer was the one she'd outlined to her boss where she'd finally succeeded in creating the ability to time-travel.

She'd been putting in a lot of overtime, busting her rear to get this research and her project to succeed and she must've succumbed to her exhaustion before she hit the send button.

Erin shook her head in disbelief. Had it all been a dream? Was Kian just another character in a long, involved dream? But her memories seemed so real. She shivered as she vividly remembered her lover's scent, the way he felt inside her, and a deep ache filled her heart.

*He had to be real,* she insisted in her mind as she grabbed the mouse and clicked through her email inbox, her heart racing. Erin scrolled through several hundred emails, but she didn't find a single one from Kian.

*Maybe what I just experienced in my dreams was a premonition of the future,* she thought as she glanced again at the unsent email to Daniel.

She pulled up all her research files she'd yet to make a secret CD backup for and moved the mouse to highlight them all.

Her cursor blinked back at her, winking, waiting for her to make a final decision.

Erin's heart thudded in her chest as her finger suspended over the delete key. All the hard work, all these years of research, and it all comes to this one pivotal moment. *If I do this and Kian was real, then I'll never get to experience his touch, feel him moving inside me, know his love.* The fleeting, selfish thought crossed her mind for all of two seconds before she dismissed it.

She sighed. *If Kian does exist, he would agree this is the only right thing to do,* she told herself as she let her finger land on the delete key.

*Are you sure you want to delete these files?* her computer read as if playing devil's advocate.

Setting her jaw, she hit the "enter" key.

A wave of relief washed over her when she deleted the files and the unsent email to Daniel. As she started to clean up the Styrofoam coffee cups and toss them in the trash can, a thought struck her: *Trashcan!*

She needed to empty the trashcan on her computer, too. Moving her mouse over the "trashcan" icon, she clicked to empty the recycle bin.

*Are you sure you want to permanently delete these files?* the computer asked her once more.

Argh! Her computer was mocking her, she thought as she hit the "enter" key with a determined tap.

As soon as she lifted her finger off the key, a bolt of lightning slashed across the empty lab and a vortex opened up right in front of her. Strong wind flew through the room, disturbing papers, whipping her hair around her.

Erin held her hair away from her face and stared in shock at the swirling dark blue void before her. When Kian walked through the portal and held out his hand to her, she literally fell off her stool.

He stood there wearing a black leather vest and black fitted pants with a gold embroidered ceremonial-looking sash around his trim waist. His long black hair flowed down his shoulders, drawing her attention to his thick chest and muscular biceps.

Kian chuckled as he scooped her up in his arms. "At least you're conscious this time, *m'nara*. You didn't think I'd leave you behind, did you?"

Happy tears spilled down her cheeks as she wrapped her arms around his neck, holding him tight. Pulling away, she met his striking green gaze and said, "But your memory would have been erased when you went back in time and none of this has really happened yet."

Kian raised an arrogant eyebrow. "Ah, but I didn't go back the way I came. And as for you thinking something as simple as a space and time continuum could erase my memory of you..." He paused and gave her a stern look. "I think you'll need to be reminded why you are my mate in all ways."

He turned and stepped into the vortex saying, "Here on Earth, you were way ahead of your time, Eriana. Come home with me where you belong."

### **About the author:**

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