



Hidden Currents (Sea Haven: Drake Sisters Book 7)

By Christine Feehan

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In her Drake Sisters novels, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Christine Feehan delivers "everything her fans have come to expect" (*Publishers Weekly*). Now, she exceeds expectations as the fate of all seven sisters depends on the destiny of one.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The queen of paranormal romance."
-*USA Today*

About the Author

Christine Feehan has had more than forty novels published, including titles that have hit number one on the *New York Times* bestseller list. In addition to being a nominee for the Romance Writers of America's RITA Award, she has received many honors throughout her career, including the Career Achievement Award for paranormal romance from *RT Book Reviews* in 2015 and the Borders 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award.

Alyssa Bresnahan is a dynamic dancer, actor, and audiobook narrator. She has narrated over two hundred audiobooks, has earned sixteen Earphones Awards, and was named one of *AudioFile* magazine's Golden Voices. In 2009 she was a finalist for the prestigious Audie Award for best fiction narration. She has toured Europe in stage productions of several Greek dramas. In the United States, she appeared as Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and as Nina in *The Seagull*. At the New York Stage and Film Festival, she had the starring role in *The Clearing*.

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HIDDEN CURRENTS: CHAPTER ONE

"Having fun, Sheena?" Stavros Gratsos rubbed his palms up and down Elle Drake's bare arms to warm her as he stood behind her at the railing of his large yacht.

All around them the sound of laughter and snatches of conversation drifted past her out to the shimmering Mediterranean Sea.

Sheena MacKenzie, Elle's undercover name—and her alter ego. Sheena could sit at any dinner table and rule, her polish and sophistication and air of mystery guaranteeing she'd get attention. Devoid of make-up, with her hair in a ponytail, Elle Drake could slide into the shadows and disappear. They made a nearly unbeatable combination and Sheena had done exactly what Elle needed her to do— she'd lured Stavros and kept him interested long enough for Elle to poke around in his glamorous life and see what she could turn up—which so far was—... nothing.

Elle couldn't read Stavros's thoughts and emotions the way she did others when they touched her, and that amazed her. Her psychic ability to read thoughts was disturbing most of the time, but there were a very few who seemed to have natural barriers and she had to purposely 'invade' if she wanted to see what they were thinking. Elle rarely ever intruded, even when she was using her undercover persona, Sheena MacKenzie, but she would have made an exception in Stavros's case. She had been investigating him for months and had found nothing to either clear him—or to point toward his guilt.

She glanced over her shoulder at Stavros. "It's been wonderful. Amazing. But I think everything you do is like this and you know it." Stavros always put on the best parties and his yacht was bigger than most people's homes. He served the best food, had the best music, and surrounded himself with intelligent people, fun people.

In all the months she'd been watching him, she had yet to discover even a hint of criminal activity. Stavros had been kind and generous, giving millions to charities, supporting art and working out deals with his employees in a hands-on discussion that avoided laying off an entire group of workers. She had come to respect the man in spite of earlier suspicions and she was ready to go back to Dane Phelps, her boss, and write a very strongly worded report that the rumors concerning Stavros were wrong—except that his aura indicated danger and a strong penchant for violence. Of course some of the men her sisters had chosen as their mates had that same vivid color swirling around them.

"I held this party in your honor, Sheena," Stavros admitted. "My elusive butterfly." He tugged on her arm to turn her around so that her back was against the rail and she was caged in by his body. "I want you to come to my island with me, to see my private home."

Her heart jumped. According to rumor, Stavros never took any woman to his island. He had homes all over the world, but the island was his private retreat. Most under-cover operatives would have relished the opportunity to enter Stavros's private sanctum, but her boss had been adamant that she not go, even if the opportunity presented itself. There was no way to communicate from that island.

Stavros took her hand and carried her knuckles to his mouth. "Come with me, Sheena."

She tried not to wince. Sheena. She was such a fraud. This was the man she should fall in love with, not the worm—he—who—could-never-be-named—who had broken her heart. Here was Stavros, handsome, intelligent, wealthy, a man who solved problems and seemed to care for many of the same causes she did. Why couldn't *he* be the man she fell madly in love with?

"I can't," she said gently. "Really, Stavros. I want to, but I can't."

His eyes darkened, became stormy. Stavros liked his way and was definitely used to getting it. "You mean you won't."

"I mean I can't. You want things from me I can't give you. I told you from the beginning we could be friends—not lovers."

"You're not married."

"You know I'm not." But she should have been. She should have been settled in her family home with the man destiny had provided for her, but he had rejected her. Her stomach churned at the thought. She'd put an ocean between them and still he tried to reach her, his voice a faint buzz in her head, trying to persuade her to return—to what? A man who didn't want children or a legacy of magic. He refused to understand that was who she was—what she was. In rejecting her legacy, he rejected her. And she needed a man who would help her. Who would understand how difficult it was for her to face her future. She needed someone to lean on, not someone she had to coax or take care of.

"Come home with me," he repeated.

Elle shook her head. "I can't, Stavros. You know what would happen if I did and we can't go there."

His white teeth flashed at her. "So at least you've thought about it."

Elle tipped her head back and looked up at him. "You know how charming you are. What woman wouldn't be tempted by you?" And she was. It would be so easy. He was so sweet to her, always attentive, wanting to give her the world. She reached up and touched his face regretfully. "You're a good man, Stavros."

She was ashamed she'd suspected him of the heinous things she had—human trafficking among the worst. Yes, he'd started out smuggling guns in his freighters, years earlier when he had nothing. But he seemed to have more than made up for all of his mistakes and as far as she could ascertain, he was truly legitimate. At least she could clear his name with Interpol and the other agencies around the world where his name kept cropping up. That would make her feel better about spending these last months working to befriend him and earn his trust.

"I'm hearing a 'but' in there, Sheena," Stavros said.

Elle spread her arms wide, taking in the yacht and the shimmering sea. "All this. This is your world and I can step into it occasionally, but I could never live in it comfortably. I've looked at your track record, Stavros, and you don't believe in permanency, and no, I'm not holding out for marriage with you. I just know myself. I get attached to people and breaking up is terribly painful."

"Who says we have to break up?" Stavros said. "Come home with me." His voice was soft, persuasive, and for a moment she wanted to give in, wanted to take what he was offering. He made her feel like a beautiful, desirable woman, when no one else had—but in the end, she wasn't glamorous, sophisticated Sheena, she was really Elle Drake and she carried her baggage with her everywhere she went.

"I can't tell you how much I want to go with you, Stavros," she said sincerely, "but I really can't."

Swift impatience crossed his handsome face and he blinked, his dark eyes growing a little frosty. "The boats are beginning to take some of our guests back to shore. I need to speak with a few of them. Stay here and wait for me."

Elle nodded. Where was the harm in that? After tonight, Sheena MacKenzie was going to disappear and Stavros would never see her again. Maybe he already knew she was saying goodbye. She couldn't blame him for being upset. She'd tried to stay within boundaries, not lead him on, yet gain his trust enough to get into his inner circles. She'd attended his charities and his parties, and never once had she heard the whisper of illegal activity. If he was the criminal her boss suspected, he was amazingly adept at hiding it and she no longer believed it was possible.

So why couldn't she fall in love with him? What was wrong with her? Certainly the worm—he-who-could-not-be-named—ever—again was not worth holding out hope for. Was she stupid enough to do that? Hope that he would come after her? That would never happen. He didn't want her. He didn't want her legacy—or her name—or her house—and he certainly didn't want the seven daughters that would come with along with her.

No, she had stopped hoping Jackson Deveau would ever come to love or even want her.

Now she just had to stop hurting.

She watched Stavros as he talked to his guests, smiling and seemingly happy. As if sensing her looking at him, he turned his head and sent her a warm smile. Her heart did a funny little flip, not the way it did when the worm smiled at her, but because she knew Stavros was half in love with her and it was so unfair. The

smile she sent Stavros back was sadder than she knew.

Could she live like this? This glamorous, whirlwind life? She was born with a legacy few others—if anyone—ever had or would know. As the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter, Elle's psychic gifts ran deep in her genes and would be passed on to her seven daughters. And her seventh daughter would carry that same bittersweet legacy. Would Elle fulfill her destiny? Or would the Drake's legacy of magic die quietly with her?

Elle used to envision a life of laughter and happiness with her soulmate. That was before she'd met him. He was a morose, silent, brooding, very dominant male. She knew he could bring stillness and peace to her, or with one smoldering look, turn her veins to liquid fire. But he refused to accept who she was—refused to love her as she was. And if he didn't, she feared no other man ever would—or could. Not the real Elle Drake, at least.

She turned around, and leaned out over the rail, watching the boats coming in to take Stavros's guests back to shore. Night had long since given way to dawn and she was tired, suppressing a yawn as she tried to figure out what she'd do next with her life. Sea Haven, a small village nestled on the northern California coast, had always been home—a refuge. Her family house was there, a large estate overlooking the turbulent ocean.

The sea was so different here, like glass, a beautiful lure promising a sun-filled life of luxury, but she knew better than to think such a life was meant for her. Deep inside, she was a home girl, a woman born to be a wife and mother. She loved adventure and spice, but eventually, her need to pass on her Drake legacy would grow so strong she wouldn't be able to ignore it. Did she have the right to deny the world someone like her sister Libby, who could heal with a touch of her hands? Or Joley, with her voice? Kate, who's books gave so many people solace and an escape? Each of her sisters had incredible gifts passed down generation after generation. If she didn't fulfill her destiny the line would end with her.

Movement caught her eye and she shifted her gaze to see the captain approach Stavros and whisper something in his ear. She was adept at reading lips, but she couldn't see his mouth clearly. Stavros frowned and shook his head, glanced at his watch and then over at Elle. She kept her face still, and turned her gaze back to the sea. Stavros's bodyguard, Sid, said something as well. He was facing her and she caught his words distinctly.

"It will be dangerous to have her on the island, sir. Think about this. Take her off the boat now and we'll give the driver orders to take her to your villa. They can hold her there until the meeting is over."

Elle's stomach tightened. The bodyguard was talking about her. Stavros shook his head and said something she couldn't catch, but the bodyguard and captain both looked toward her again and neither looked happy.

That built in alarm, the one that had saved her numerous times on countless assignments shrieked at her, and she didn't hesitate. She moved quickly through the thinning crowd toward the side of the yacht where the boats were coming in to pick up the guests and return them to shore. Though her purse and overnight bag were still in the cabin down below, Elle was careful never to carry anything in her purse or her belongings that could betray her. She would leave the yacht and if Dane wanted her to return, she could use the retrieval of her things as an excuse to contact Stavros again.

She made herself small, trying to blend in with the other guests. As Elle she could disappear easily into the shadows, but Sheena stood out. Her heart sped up and a sense of urgency rode her as she wound her way to the departing boats. It wouldn't do to look back and check to see if she was being hunted, she already knew she was. She had one chance, to step into the departing boat as it was taking off. She had to time it perfectly.

Elle slid through the last of the guests waiting for the next boat and stepped onto the platform, holding out her hand to the young man pushing off the departing boat. He grinned and guided the boat back into position so she could step into it. Just as his fingers slid around her hand, she felt another hand catch her upper arm in a firm grip, pulling her back.

"Mr. Gratsos would like the pleasure of Ms. MacKenzie's company a while longer," Sid said smoothly, drawing her much smaller frame against him.

Elle inhaled sharply, feeling the burst of emotion spilling from Stavros's bodyguard. He almost wished he hadn't caught her—in fact he'd considered just missing her, but knew Stavros would have stopped the other boat. She allowed herself to be pulled back without a struggle. The bodyguard was bigger and much stronger than she was, and even if she could have caught him by surprise, what would be the point? None of Stavros's men were going to let her leave the yacht against his orders.

She smiled graciously at the driver and looked up at the bodyguard. He wasn't Greek. She wasn't certain just where he was from. He spoke with a Greek accent, but there was something off about him. And he looked terribly familiar, but she didn't know where she'd seen him before.

"You're hurting me." She kept her tone low, very low, her gaze on his face. He let her go immediately, fast as if her skin burned him. "I'm sorry, Ms. MacKenzie. Mr. Gratsos asked me to bring you back to him and I was afraid you'd fall into the sea if I didn't keep hold of you. I didn't realize how hard I was gripping you."

He'd been afraid she'd make a scene, but strangely, that was all she could get from him. Why was that? How was the bodyguard protected from her psychic abilities in the same way Stavros was? It couldn't be coincidence that two people who worked together had strong natural barriers and yet Sid's barrier was as strong or stronger than Stavros's, although it felt different.

Elle flashed him a quick, forgiving smile, very much in keeping with Sheena's sweet personality. "I certainly wouldn't want to fall into the sea with this dress on." He stepped back to indicate for her to make her way through the small knot of guests. Elle hesitated. "Sid, this is the last boat for shore and they're already boarding. I have to get off." Deliberately she glanced at her slim, diamond watch. "I have an appointment this afternoon."

"Mr. Gratsos will get you to your appointment in time," Sid assured.

That was a lie. He didn't like lying to her. Whatever protection he had built or had been provided for him, his more intense emotions slipped through—unless he'd allowed it—which was possible. She could do that. Sid was worried about her, and if he was worried, she needed to be. She stayed very still, measuring the distance to the boat. She was fast, but she doubted if the boat would take her against Stavros's orders.

Sid shook his head. "Don't try it, Ms. MacKenzie. If Mr. Gratsos wants you here, you'll stay."

It was a warning. A clear warning—had he read her mind? She didn't think she'd given away her thoughts on her face. He looked at her directly, his dark eyes meeting hers. Her heart jumped at the caution, her mouth going dry. "Let me go now."

For a moment regret showed in his eyes, but she knew he wasn't going to cross his boss. "You'll have to take that up with him."

Elle nodded and made her way back toward the shipping magnate, very aware of Sid directly behind her.

Stavros held out his hand to her, closing his fingers around hers to draw her to his side. "I thought you were trying to leave me."

"I told you I couldn't stay," Elle reminded. "I want to, Stavros, but I've already been gone long enough." She was careful to keep her tone light and regretful even as she deliberately opened her senses and tried to psychically read him.

Stavros was very used to getting his way and trying to force her to comply to his will would be something he might do without thinking it was wrong. It was her first real reprimand, gentle as she could make it when she wanted to spit fire at him. He seemed to have a natural barrier in place that prevented her sliding into his mind the way she did everyone else.

His eyes darkened to a stormy color. "I asked you to stay with me. To go to my home with me. I told you, Sheena, I've never brought a woman there."

She took a deep breath. He was taking her to his island and she would be cut off from all aid. Did he suspect her? And if he did, did that mean he had something to hide? Already the engines were starting to rumble and she could feel the deck vibrating beneath her feet. "Stavros, maybe I should meet you there later, tomorrow or the day after."

Stavros patted her hand and led her across the deck to seat her in a plush chair. "We need time together, Sheena. I want to spend a week together, just the two of us, and perhaps you'll change your mind about me."

"I don't have enough clothes for a week," Elle said, trying to be practical.

"I'll send for them."

"I'm not sleeping with you, Stavros. I told you I can't be in a relationship right now, I'm not ready."

"You told me this man broke your heart, Sheena. Who is he?"

She shrugged, suddenly concerned by the steel in his eyes. She had the uneasy feeling that if she named anyone, he might turn up dead. Which was silly when she had been very certain that Stavros was no criminal. But, then, if that was the case, why were all her internal radars screaming at her?

"He's of no consequence."

"He must be, if you won't consider another relationship." Stavros drummed his fingers on the table. She'd seen him do that when he was deep in thought or very agitated. "Did you live with him? How long were you with him?"

"That isn't your business," Elle said firmly.

His eyes narrowed. "I can hire someone to find out these answers for me."

Her heart jumped. He'd had her investigated. Dane had told her to be prepared for that. They had meticulously built her life and provided everything down to college pictures and records as well as a detailed past, but would it stand up to the kind of investigation a man like Stavros Gratsos would demand? Was this the reason he was taking her to his island? He'd discovered that she was undercover?

"Why are you pushing me?"

Stavros leaned toward her, his gaze locking with hers. "I want you. I have never wanted a woman in the way I want you."

Was that the simple truth? She doubted it. Sheena was beautiful and a woman of mystery and intelligence, the type that would attract and intrigue Stavros, but he wasn't known for falling for women. He escorted them, spent time with them, but inevitably he walked away. Why was he so determined to claim Sheena for his own?

Elle sighed. "You're going to have to get over it, Stavros. I'll be as honest as possible with you. Birth control won't work on me. I have this anomaly that runs in my family. No form of birth control works. Even if you used a condom, chances are still very high that I can get pregnant. I'm not doing that to you. Or to me, for that matter."

His eyes darkened even more as he searched her face for the truth. She actually felt his mind reach out to hers and she pulled back, afraid for the first time that he might be able to read her as she did others. She allowed only the truth of her statement in her mind where he might catch her thoughts. Not only did he look intrigued, he looked pleased.

"You speak the truth."

She nodded. "I have no reason to lie. I really can't take the chance and as I want children someday, I can't take care of the problem permanently."

"So you didn't sleep with the man who broke your heart?"

She shook her head and looked out toward sea. The shore was fading as the yacht picked up speed heading toward his private island.

Stavros let out his breath, drawing her attention back to him. "Then I will be your first. Your only." There was deep satisfaction in his purring voice.

"I told you I can get pregnant. Not can, Stavros, I would get pregnant."

"I want children," he said. "I have no problem with you getting pregnant."

Her heart jumped. There it was. Stavros was handsome, charming, wealthy and he wanted children. She was certain he was psychic. Why couldn't the Drake house choose him? Maybe there was more than one man who would fit with her and fate had intervened to give her another choice. Stavros Gratsos who was forcing her to accompany him home.

"Stavros," she said gently, "you are the sweetest man, but you're way out of my league. Half your guests wonder what you're doing with me."

"Let them wonder."

Sid approached in his silent way and leaned down to whisper in Stavros's ear. Stavros immediately patted her hand. "We'll be home soon. I have to take this call." He dropped a kiss on top of her head as if they had already settled everything and walked away.

Elle took a breath and let it out. She needed to try to stay in character just in case her cover wasn't blown, but she needed to get word to someone where she was. She couldn't kid herself. She could easily disappear and Stavros could have a hundred people swearing they saw him drop her off.

She closed her eyes. She needed to reach her sisters and let them know where she was, but the distance was too great. They were back in the United States and unless the psychic link between them was shattered, they wouldn't feel her—but... There was the worm. Jackson Deveau. His psychic connection to her was strong and if she reached out to him, she might be able to connect and let him know she where she was being taken. Did pride count when one's life might be in danger? Was she really that stupid?

Already the boat was moving the short distance to his island. It wasn't that far from the mainland. As the yacht approached Stavros's private island, she could feel a faint buzzing in her head. At first it was annoying, but soon began to swell in volume almost to the point of pain. Pressing her fingers to her temples in an effort to relieve the ache, she caught Stavros watching her. There was a gleam of satisfaction in his eyes, as if he knew of the pressure in her head. She glanced at Sid. Whatever she was feeling, so was he, but he hid it better. He kept walking with Stavros, his face turned away from his boss, but she knew that same pressure was in his head as well.

Elle took a deep breath and let it out. The island was getting closer and the pressure in her head increasing. It was now or never. She closed her eyes and blocked out everything but Jackson. The way he looked. Remote. Broad shoulders. Scars. Thick chest. Piercing eyes filled with shadows. Jackson. She whispered his name in her mind. Sent it out into the universe.

There was a brief moment of silence, as if the world around her held its breath. A dolphin leapt from the sea and somersaulted back under the glassy waves. Elle nearly screamed when Stavros jerked her from her seat. She hadn't even sensed him coming up behind her.

"What are you doing?" he bit out, his white teeth snapping together. Fury etched the lines in his face.

He knew. Elle glanced toward his bodyguard. Sid knew too. They not only had natural barriers but they were sensitive to telepathy. Both of them. She was in way over her head.

"Sheena! Answer me."

"Let go of me," Elle jerked her body away from him. "I don't understand why you're behaving this way." Even Sheena, as calm and collected as she was wouldn't put up with being manhandled. Elle glared at him. "I've had enough, Stavros. I want to go home."

She was never going home again. The thought came unbidden, but settled into her churning stomach. Once she set foot on that island, her life as she knew it would be over.

Elle? Where are you? Stay alive, baby, any way you have to, stay alive for me. I'll come to you. I'll find you. Do whatever you have to do.

Jackson's voice was warm, a soft intimate slide into her mind—into her body. He felt like home. Like comfort. She wanted to fling herself inside of him and shelter there. He must have heard—or felt the despair in her—the fear.

Stavros caught both of her arms and yanked her against him, giving her a little shake as he brought her up onto her toes. "You will stop this moment unless you wish Sid to put you to sleep. I know what you are doing."

Elle. Answer me. There was a hard command in Jackson's voice, almost a compulsion to answer. She gasped when Stavros fingers tightened hard on her upper arms.

"Don't!" He warned.

Had he heard? She doubted it. But he'd felt the energy vibrating and knew she'd received a response.

Damn it, baby. Just fucking stay alive. Whatever it takes.

Elle glanced at Sid. He held a syringe in his hand. She forced her body to relax, not wanting to go to his island unconscious. "You know about me." She kept her voice even. Very calm.

"That you are telepathic? Yes, of course. I felt it immediately."

"Well at least I don't have to try to explain that to you," Elle said, spilling relief into her voice. "I hate hiding who I am from the world, but people think I'm crazy."

His fingers relaxed their hold on her, although she knew she'd have bruises. "You don't ever have to hide from me Sheena. I'm very much like you."

Elle studied his face. Stavros was a little too okay with kidnapping to be as clean as she'd first believed him.

"We'll talk at my home," Stavros said, effectively stopping her questions.

Elle remained silent, determined not to allow him to see that she was afraid. She let Sid help her from the yacht to the pier and then into the waiting car. The island was beautiful, lush and green under the late morning sun. She noted the way as they drove along the road up toward the villa.

Once there, Elle turned gracefully on the rich leather seats of the chauffeur-driven car and extended her high-heeled foot out the door, allowing the slit along her glittering gown to slip open and reveal her shapely leg just for a brief flash as she exited the car. Beside her, Stavros tucked her hand into the crook of his arm and guided her up the walkway to the enormous house built on the island overlooking the sea. He stroked her fingers and she glanced up at him, sending him a faint smile before turning her attention to his masterpiece of a house.

The structure was long and sprawling with multi-levels and looked nearly all glass, so the views could be seen from any direction. Reachable only by small plane, helicopter or boat, the island afforded Stavros as much privacy as he wanted. She knew he was trying to impress her, that she had intrigued him because so far, nothing of his world had impressed her. He was used to women throwing themselves at him, and she was different enough to be a challenge. Well...that and he somehow had built-in radar when it came to psychic abilities. It was how he must have found his bodyguard and why he had been so drawn to her.

At least she knew why he was so interested in her now or it might have been difficult not to be flattered by his attentions. Stavros was a handsome, intelligent man and knew how to pull out every stop to seduce a woman. He was charming about it, but there was an aura of danger surrounding him, and she never discounted reading auras. He wasn't going to let her go, his black eyes piercing and cunning, a predator unsheathing his claws. She was in trouble and she knew it. Stavros didn't like taking no for an answer.

Her heart beat a little too fast, and she took a couple of deep breaths to calm the flood of adrenaline. She knew she would be out of range of communication here, completely cut off from all help, especially with that bothersome pain growing stronger in her head. It had to be a transmission of some kind to block psychic energy. She wasn't certain it was even possible, but the moment she was alone, she was going to test her theory.

"Sheena?" Stavros rubbed the back of her hand again. "I wanted you to see my home." His voice purred.

"Say you're not you upset with me for kidnapping you and bringing you home." He paused on the intricate walkway leading to his magnificent home, tipping up her face to stare intently into her eyes.

Elle could imagine that his intent look would make most women feel a little faint. She just felt sick. Whatever Stavros's intentions were, he didn't much care if she agreed or not.

"Does telepathy run in your family?" She wanted him to think only of that ability and no other. She kept herself strictly under control, not giving into fear when she wanted to raise her arms to the wind and use the force of it to gain freedom.

"Don't talk in front of anyone," he hissed, still smiling. "This subject is for us alone." Another bid to join them together. She recognized manipulation when she saw it. At least he was still trying to be charming and gain compliance rather than force it. She nodded her head, unwilling to try to fight a losing battle. She'd much rather wait and see what Stavros wanted from her. Maybe she could collect information that Dane would find helpful, if she managed to make it out alive.

The door was opened by a matronly-looking woman who managed to look right through Elle as if she wasn't there. "This is Drusilla. She's our housekeeper," Stavros introduced. "Without her we'd all be lost."

Drusilla beamed and smiled a welcome to Stavros while she nodded a little warily to Elle. Elle stepped inside the enormous multi-level glass room. "This is beautiful, Stavros."

"I'm glad you like it as it will be your home."

Elle heard Drusilla's swift intake of breath and Stavros immediately sent her a glaring reprimand. Elle forced herself to step further into the room, looking around her. The view was breathtaking, the most incredible she'd ever seen. It was an amazing silken cage, a prison beyond her wildest dreams.

She allowed Stavros to lead her through the long, starkly beautiful room and up the wide staircase to a large bedroom. He pushed open the door and gestured toward the four poster bed. "This will be your room. Mine is just down the hall." Someone had already placed Elle's small overnight bag on the bed. It looked ridiculous in the rich opulence of the room.

"Stavros, wait," Elle caught his arm. "I really can't stay. I have an appointment this afternoon and I can't be late."

"You're going to stay, Sheena, and you're going to have my babies. I've been looking for a woman like you for years. I'm not about to let you slip away now." He pushed her further into the room and glanced at his watch. "You are to stay here in this room until I come for you. The door will be locked, Sheena, and you are to stay."

There was no missing the iron in his voice or the warning. Elle stood very still in the center of the room. He was showing his hand now, blatantly letting her know, that not only had he kidnapped her, but that he expected total cooperation. She said nothing as he closed the door, waiting before moving until she heard the lock snick into place.

Elle opened her bag only to find it empty. Someone had already unpacked her things and put them away. After a brief search, she found her clothes neatly hanging in the spacious, walk-in closet. Elle stripped off her gown and changed into a pair of slim cotton pants and a snug cotton tee-shirt. She swiftly braided her waist-length hair and pulled on her climbing shoes before going to the window.

Below her room, large boulders and rocks formed the cliffs leading to the dazzling sea. Ordinarily the sight would have soothed her, but the way the house hung out over the ocean made climbing dangerous. It interested her to find the window wired for security. She could open the window but an alarm would trigger if she so much as stuck her arm out. With the way the house was built, it would have been nearly impossible for anyone to break in, so was he keeping women prisoner here at his whim? Had he brought others here?

Elle studied the room carefully, gliding her palm over the walls and bed, seeking psychic energy left behind by any other. She felt nothing at all but that faint, annoying buzzing in her head. As far as she could tell, only the housekeeper had been in her room. Now that she was alone, she needed to send a message home and let them know where she was.

She opened the window and inhaled the sea and salt. The moment the salty mist touched her face she felt better—lighter—more hopeful. Elle lifted her arms and called the wind. Pain crashed through her head. She barely managed to suppress the cry welling up as stars burst behind her eyes and everything around her swirled black. She bent, retching, gagging, staggering toward the bed, pressing both hands to her pounding head.

Stavros was psychic and he had somehow managed to deploy some kind of energy field to prevent psychic energy from being used. Why would he do that? He wouldn't be able to use it either. Weak, she slid her back down the wall and put her head between her legs, breathing deep to keep from fainting. She wasn't going to be able to summon help until she was off the island or she could find the source of the energy field.

Once she could breathe again, she rose unsteadily and dealt with the security, a small beam she redirected so she could slip through the window and cling like a spider to the side of the glass villa. And spiders were much better at clinging to glass than she was. She slid until her toes and fingers found a purchase.

Elle clung to the edge, reaching with her toes, wishing she was at least another inch taller as she tried to gain the roof. For several heart-stopping moments she found herself staring down at the rocks and sea a good hundred feet below her, afraid she couldn't reach and would fall. She studied the distance above her. She would have to lever her body up, using the power of her legs and catch the edge. One chance. That's all she'd have—and she was going to take it.

Elle had climbed rocks and mountains all over the world. The slick roof was not going to be her undoing. She rehearsed every move in her mind and pushed off, using her powerful leg muscles to propel her upward. Her hands caught, slipped and her fingers dug into the roof, holding. She let her breath out and, gathered strength before drawing her leg up and over. Once positioned, she could pull herself all the way up.

She took a moment to recover and then ran lightly across the roof to the other side of the house where Stavros was conducting his meeting. She stayed low, knowing she would show up easily against the bright sunlit roof. She could see Sid escorting four men up the path to the house. Frowning, she lay flat. The men wore biker colors with patches, the standard one percent and an intricate sword with blood dripping down the blade. She'd seen the patches before.

Outlaw bikers from one of the most notorious clubs rising on three continents were the only ones who would dare to wear the symbol of the Sword. Some said the origins were Russian, and they quickly spread across Europe to the United States. The recruits were brutal, prison hardened and willing to kill over the slightest insults. She had run across them in several cases related to trafficking guns and drugs, as well as murder for hire. The club, known as the Sword, was fast gaining a reputation for rivaling existing crime lords. Convictions were rare because only a handful of witnesses had ever agreed to testify against one of them. And of those few, not one had ever lived out the day after a death sentence was handed down from the club's

notorious leader, Evan Shackler.

What would Evan Shackler, or any of his bikers be doing at the island of a wealthy, ship magnate? And why was Stavros clapping him on the back as if they were old friends? More than old friends...brothers? They greeted one another in a traditional Greek manner, kissing both cheeks, which wasn't a sign that they were relatives, but they looked uncannily alike. As they walked side by side, she could see a huge resemblance, although Evan looked wild and unkempt with his long hair and shadowed face beside Stavros's handsome executive image. They were close in height and weight and had the same mannerisms, even to moving their hands in the same way. She'd have to look into the files for Shackler and meticulously check his background.

But—if Shackler was in some way related, which she admitted was a leap—could he be psychic? Had Stavros protected his island to prevent a relative using psychic ability against him? That would make sense. If Stavros was psychic, he would want to be able to use his abilities just as she and her sisters did in the privacy of their home. Never once had she thought of constructing an energy field to prevent psychic talents from being used, so Stavros had to have had a good reason for doing so.

Something bit the back of her shoulder, a vicious sting that was hard enough to send her spinning around. The sound of a gunshot registered almost before the fact that she had been hit did. Blood stained the front of her shirt and down her arm, bursting across the roof like an artist's spray.

Stavros was shoved to the ground by Sid, one hand preventing him from moving while Sid's gun tracked someone behind her.

"No one touches her!" Stavros screamed. "Kill him. Shoot him."

Sid's gun blazed and she heard a body fall behind her, realizing Sid's gun was trained on the guard who shot her, not her and she scrambled back over the roof, crawling because she couldn't stand, couldn't use her useless arm. Breathing was difficult as she made her way to the edge of the roof overlooking the cliffs. Her body hurt so bad she didn't think she could make it back into the room even if she wanted to. She couldn't let Stavros keep her. She wouldn't be able to defend herself and she knew what he wanted now. He would keep her in this house—this prison—and she would be like the women she had tried to help—trapped in a world serving Stavros's will.

"Sheena!" Stavros was on his feet, "don't!"

Sid went up the side of the house, moving fast, but her vision was blurring and she knew she had to jump while she could. He would reach her if she didn't get the nerve to take her chances in the sea and rocks below. Once away from the energy field, she'd have more power. She leapt out into space and lifted her arms to summon the wind.

The wind roared at her, shoving her slender body out away from the rocks to the welcoming water. Behind her, Stavros lifted his arms and sent his counter-command. As capricious as ever, the wind shifted, dropping her the remaining feet. She hit hard, her head exploding into a million fragments as the cool water closed over her head, accepting her into its soothing arms. For a moment, she thought someone had landed beside her and that an arm brushed against her, but then she was sinking, not fighting, letting the sea take her home, far away from fear and a life she didn't believe would ever be hers.

Jackson. She whispered his name in her mind as she floated away.

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