

## Liberty Empowered

Isle of Fangs Book 3

Alicia Dean

Liberty grunted out a chuckle. "You're even crazier than I thought. Eli is egotistical and single-minded. No one has influence over him, certainly not me."

"On the contrary. He cares deeply for you. He would do anything to protect you."

*Right.* Granted, Eli was attracted to her, just like he was to every other female, but it went no deeper than that. "Even if that were true, how does that help you get him back?"

"It's really very simple. You come willingly with me, and I'll release you on the contingency that Eli trades himself for you. It's true, I desire you as my captive, but until I find the antidote, you aren't all that valuable to me. "

Supposedly, an antidote existed that would make Van Helsing blood safe for vampires. If that were true, and the antidote surfaced, one of Liberty's defenses against them would disappear. Not only would it be safe to drink her blood, doing so would allow vampires to see their own reflection, something they desperately desired. Even without the antidote, Rupert wanted her blood to punish errant vampires. Either way, his plan was as twisted as he was.

"Come willingly with you? Are you out of your mind?" She held up a hand. "Don't bother. I know the answer to that. And here's an answer for you, go to hell." She snatched Hannah's hand and stalked to the porch steps.

Rupert's voice stopped her. "The girl was lucky. Her grandparents will not be."

Dread chilled her blood. She whirled. "If you harm them—"

He chuckled, brows lifted in amusement. "You'll what, little hunter? Kill me? No, I don't think so." His voice hardened to steel. "Give me Eli, and her grandparents go free."

Damn if she'd let him threaten her into bending to his will. She'd save Lester and Nelda Rankin without sacrificing Eli, *or* herself. She gave a satisfied smile. "What do you think Eli is going to say when I tell him about the deal you offered?"

Another growl erupted, and his eyes reddened. The flesh on his face grayed, tightening visibly. "Oh no, that wouldn't be wise."

Before Liberty could react, he zipped across the yard and snatched Hannah up by the neck. She screamed, but the sound was cut off by his hand on her throat.

"Let her go!" Liberty lunged toward him, pointing her gun at his heart. "Let her go, now!"

Without taking his eyes off Hannah, he snarled, "If you say one word about this to Eli, I'll come back and rip her head off." He released her abruptly, and she fell to the ground. She grabbed her throat and coughed, trying to catch her breath.

Liberty dropped down beside her. "Hannah? Are you all right? Can you breathe?"

She gave a small nod. Tears flowed from her eyes.

Liberty glared at Rupert. "Get the hell away from us."

"Think about my offer." He brushed his hands together. "And I'd rethink telling Eli. Not only will you jeopardize the girl, Eli will try to take matters into his own hands. And it will get him killed."

"I won't tell him." She didn't know if Rupert would kill Hannah, but she couldn't take the chance. Besides, he was right, Eli might go after him, and God knows that wouldn't end well. "But you can't force Eli to be someone, or something, he's not. He chose to leave all of that behind."

"No one can leave behind their nature. Eli's a savage."

She shook her head. "You're wrong. Eli's changed. He's not a savage."

Rupert chuckled. The sound sent chills crawling over her flesh. "You really don't know him at all."