

Chapter 1

Unpacking Nightmares

Dear Diary,

Ever since Pyre and I moved in together, things have gone missing or been broken. We're gradually finding everything, and we fixed the broken items. I'm glad the apartment has two bedrooms. I love Pyre, but we've only known each other a few months, and he's the first boyfriend I've ever had. Pyre is still adjusting to living in the apartment instead of the cave, and to being closer to humans. And... I'm paranoid that he'll accidentally squeeze my head off in his sleep.

Every day has been an adventure since I met Pyre and Lowell. It began with Lowell and my discovery that he was a demon, Ulric the wolf thief. I wasn't supposed to find out, but he saved my life. Lowell introduced me to Pyre, a fire demon; and we've been together ever since. My life has also been in constant danger. Soon after Pyre and I got together, my roommate, Melissa, tried to kill me. She used me to get revenge on Pyre and Lowell since she thought they killed her family. Pyre wanted to destroy her when he thought I was dead. The event apparently affected him more than he'll admit. Occasionally, I wake up in the middle of the night because he has called my name. He won't talk about it though, which worries me.

Christmas will be here soon, and I'm nearly done with my Christmas shopping. I still need to find something for Pyre and Lowell. I have an idea for something for Lowell but I'm not sure yet. For Pyre I might—

CRASH! The commotion came from Pyre's room, followed by a rattle and a thunderous boom. I arose from my desk and ran to his door, imagining all the catastrophes that might be happening in there. Perhaps he dropped a bowl, tripped over a table, or set something on fire. He might have tripped over a table, causing him to drop the bowl, making him so mad he set the table on fire.

"Pyre?" I knocked on the door, praying he wouldn't set the door on fire. I didn't smell anything burning, which was a good sign. He opened the door to reveal a box on his head and stared at me with chagrin.

"Are you okay?" I asked as I took the box off his head.

"Just trying to finish unpacking."

"Tell me if you need any help."

Pyre sighed, nodded and closed the door.

I walked back to my room, sat at my desk and opened my diary to the current entry. I hadn't even clicked my pen to write again when Pyre yelled from frustration.

I wonder what happened this time. I cringed and hurried to his door. He opened it before I could knock.

"I hate unpacking!" He exclaimed as he leaned against the door frame.

“Why don’t you take a break?” I clasped Pyre’s hands and pulled him into the living room. “Do you want something to drink?”

“No, I just want to sit.” He sat on the couch and held out his arms. I leaned into them, wrapping my own arms around his neck. “Unpacking sucks. I keep tripping on boxes, dropping things, and crashing into the wall. This has been a terrible day.”

“At least you haven’t set anything on fire yet.” I tried to make him smile, but he just glared at me. “I’m sorry. Do you want me to help?”

“I’d rather put it off.” Pyre leaned his head on the back of the couch.

“I understand, but you need to finish.” I sat beside him and looked into his eyes.

“I don’t want to.” He moved around so his head hung off the couch and his feet dangled over the back, resembling a little kid. I noticed his shirt had ridden up, partially revealing his stomach.

“You need to.” I poked his stomach.

“No.” He swatted at my hand. I smiled mischievously as I poked him again. He looked at me. “Stop it.”

“Why?” I poked him while trying to sound clueless and innocent.

“It’s annoying.” Pyre sat up and raised an eyebrow at me as I poked him again. “Why won’t you stop?”

“Because it’s fun.” I poked him repeatedly.

“It’s fun, huh?” My only warning was his wicked leer. The next moment, I was on the floor, laughing from his tickling. “How much fun is it now?”

“Stop! Please! Can’t breathe!” I laughed hysterically and tried to get loose.

“I love you.” He stopped and pulled me up onto my feet.

“I love you too.” I kissed his lips. He rested his head on my shoulder and I stroked his hair. “What’s the matter?”

“I’m just tired.” He yawned.

“Are you getting enough sleep?”

“No.” He groaned as I rubbed his shoulders.

“Why not?”

“I just can’t sleep.”

“Is something on your mind?” When he didn’t answer, I lifted his head to look him in the eyes. “You know you can talk to me about anything, right?”

“Yes, I do. You’re the sweetest person I’ve ever met.” He rubbed my face.

“That’s not what you said when you first met me.” I crossed my arms and squinted at him.

“Only because I didn’t understand what had happened. I had already developed a crush on you, but I was anxious about it and tried to fight it. Because of my history of bad relationships, I never wanted to fall in love with anyone else. In fact, I mostly kept to myself. Even Eira didn’t know me very well. I guess I wasn’t consciously aware I was pushing you away.”

“Oh, you were aware, but even though you preferred the solitary life, deep down you wanted to belong, which is the reason you stayed near your friends and Eira. Still, you behaved so mean to me, I thought you hated me and was afraid to be alone with you.”

“I was mean to you? That’s not how I remember it.”

“Allow me to refresh your memory. When we first met, you carried me to an alley and unceremoniously dumped me there, and hurt my side in the process.”

“I saved your life from the monster in the park. I had to put you down quickly to hurry back to help the others.”

“I’ll give you that one, but the whole situation was scary to a mere human. When we met again in Lowell’s apartment, at first you only stared at me. The expression on your face alone was enough to make me anxious, and then you started to speak. You asked me why Lowell would be friends with a weak and worthless human.”

“There is that, but if I recall correctly, I also said I felt something for you.”

“Yes, you did. You said it was something strange, you didn’t know what it was, and you didn’t like it. Then you and Lowell left to train.”

“That’s right! Which is when you told me to stay away from you.”

“After you said, and I quote, ‘The human isn’t allowed to go.’ You followed up with, ‘The human needs to learn to keep her mouth shut.’ We met again at Caedmon’s apartment. Everyone greeted me, except you, and Caedmon and Eros. They were busy fighting as usual, and you sat next to the window, refusing to look at me. As the conversation in the room progressed, Lowell said he thought he’d found your soul mate in me. You looked at him with thoughts of death in your eyes, so they all locked us in the closet together for seven minutes.”

“But you found a way out, through a vent in the wall.”

“Once we were in the vent, you asked me what Lowell told me about you. You told me not to ask you any questions and not to get in your way.”

“Yep, our first bonding moment.”

“Our first bonding moment? When I did ask you a question, you told me the answer was none of my business. I knew you were anti-social, but I was sure you hated me.”

“I could never hate you. Being in the closet and the vent together was our first chance at bonding, because it led to our first real conversation, and to admitting my feelings for you. Besides, you weren’t much help or need I remind you of the way you treated me.”

“I only acted that way in response to your behavior.”

“Whatever. You acted that way because you were frightened of me.” He pulled me back into his arms.

“You gave me plenty of reasons to be.”

“I gave you numerous reasons to be terrified of me but instead of scaring you off, you fell for me too.” He hugged me close and yawned again.

“You should take a nap.”

“But I want to spend time with you.”

“You can after you get some sleep.”

“Fine, Mom, I’m going.”

As Pyre walked away, I threw the couch pillow at him and hit him on the head. He turned and stuck out his tongue in response. After convincing myself he was back in his room, I went to my own room and worked on organizing my desk and shelves for the new school semester. I had nearly finished when I heard Pyre calling my name.

“Kira!” Pyre yelled, sounding frantic.

I dropped what I held in my hands and ran to his room. He was still asleep, but he was terribly restless.

“Kira!”

“Pyre, wake up!” I gripped his hand.

“Kira!” He squeezed my hand and growled as he began to transform.

“Pyre.” I kissed his forehead. His breathing slowed, and he changed back to his human form. I rubbed his face and kept calling his name to get him awake.

“Kira, what’s happening? What’s wrong?” He sat up and searched the room in defensive mode.

“I could ask you the same thing.”

“What do you mean?”

“You were calling my name and changing into your demon form.”

“I was?” He rubbed his face. “I was having a horrible dream. I’ll get up now.”

“Have the nightmares been happening often?”

“Only the past few days, but it’s nothing.” I understood he lied because he didn’t want to worry me, but it still upset me.

“You promise?” He looked up at me with a guilty expression on his face.

“I promise there’s no need to worry. I get nightmares all the time. If it hasn’t stopped soon, we’ll talk about it.”

“Fair enough.” *That’s all I can ask for now.* “Do you want me to help you unpack now?”

“Aren’t you busy working on your room?”

“I’m practically done. You’ve been asleep awhile.”

“In that case, I would appreciate the help.”

We got to work unpacking his boxes. I spotted a trunk against the wall that appeared ancient in age. I walked over to it and admired it for a moment. “What’s in this?”

“Those are my swords. Each sword belongs in its own case. I store the cases in the trunk. I also use a special wall display for the swords.” He opened the trunk for me.

“Swords? You mean more than one?”

I pulled one of the cases out of the trunk. It was ornately carved cherry wood with a brass clasp. A name was carved on the lid, but I couldn’t read it. I lifted the lid to reveal a beautiful sword with detailed decorations on the blade and the handle. It rested on a tan satin pad which was molded to fit the shape of the sword. The lid was lined with the same fabric.

“I collect swords. It’s kind of like you with your stuffed animals.”

“Yes, but stuffed animals can’t kill anyone.” I scrutinized him and the sword.

“Swords only kill because the wielder kills. A sword can’t kill on its own. Let me show you.” Pyre picked up the sword and put it in my hands. He stepped behind me and wrapped both of his arms around me, clasping his hands around mine. “A sword and its wielder need to maintain balance. A sword isn’t merely used for maiming or killing. It can also be used to defend and protect, an instrument of survival.” He moved the sword in precise yet fluid motions. “By itself the sword is only a piece of metal. It’s not until a wielder gives it a purpose that it becomes a weapon.”

“Wow, this is... powerful.” My face grew warm as he spoke and demonstrated his technique. “You know a great deal about swords.” I glimpsed back into the trunk. There had to be at least twenty cases in it. “How many swords do you own?”

“That’s not important.” He took the sword out of my hands and put it back in the case.

“What is the inscription on the lid?”

“It’s nothing.” He seemed embarrassed.

“Come on, tell me what it is.”

“It’s the language of fire demons. The word on the lid identifies which sword is in the case. It’s... It’s the name of the sword.”

“Then it is kind of like me with my stuffed animals.”

“Don’t make fun of me.” He tried to turn away from me, but I grabbed his arm.

“Pyre, honey, I’m not. Why are you self-conscious about it?”

“You don’t think it’s silly?”

“No, not at all. A big wide world of no. I collect and name stuffed animals, remember? So what’s this sword’s name?”

Pyre seemed relieved and became animated as he told me the name of the sword, why he called it that name, and how he acquired it. He pulled another case from the trunk, which was made of mahogany with a bronze clasp, and opened it for display. This sword was decorated with rubies, nestled in a black velvet padding. I inspected the other cases in the trunk. Each was a different type of wood with different carvings and fixtures. He pulled a few more out and told me about each one. I realized each sword was a unique work of art, and each case was crafted to match the sword it would hold.

As he spoke, I also realized this wasn’t simply a collection or a hobby. Like my stuffed animals, each one had its own story and meaning for him, but it was much more than sentiment. Unlike my stuffed animals, these swords were a reflection of his life. They weren’t merely hunks of metal which had been heated and shaped into a sword and given a sharp edge. Each one carried the weight of battles fought, whether won or lost; and the blood, sweat and tears shed by the combatants. The swords stood for the lives he had saved or defended, including his own. They also represented the lives lost, whether at his hands, or loved ones he couldn’t protect. Each held its own importance, purpose, memories and symbolism. This imbued them with an essence of power so strong I could sense it when holding one in my hands. The sword seemed to vibrate in my grip. The handle warmed at my touch, which in turn warmed my skin, like an

energy radiating into my arm. The sword appeared to have become an extension of me, or maybe the opposite. It comforted me oddly enough, like an old trusted friend saying, "I'm here for you."

Pyre stared at me with a peculiar expression, and it was my turn to feel self-conscious.

"At least I know which room to run to if I'm ever under attack and you're not here." He kissed my neck.

"I will make certain I'm close if you're under attack. If I'm not, Lowell will be." He gazed at the ceiling for a minute. "But at a distance."

"Pyre."

"Until he gets someone of his own, I don't trust him alone with you."

"Pyre, Lowell wouldn't do anything to break his friendship with either of us."

"I realize that. I'm just concerned about him. He hasn't been the same since losing Cadel."

"It takes time to get over losing someone you love."

"Lowell's had time; he doesn't want to get over it. He needs to talk about it and put it behind him."

"You need to let him be. If he wants to keep it to himself, who are we to force the issue? We're his friends, and the only family he has. When he's ready, he'll talk to us." Pyre crossed his arms and made a strange face at me. "What?"

"How old are you again?" He studied me as if trying to guess my age.

"What is that supposed to mean?"

"You're too young to be this smart." I punched his arm. "What? It's true."

"You can thank my parents for that. They taught me to be prepared for anything." I walked over to another box.

"Not everything." I looked over at him. He wore a devilish expression on his face.

"No, they didn't prepare me for you; for demons, that is. I'm uncertain if or what my parents knew regarding demons." He appeared confused. "I've shown you my book about demons. I can use it to learn all the information available regarding any demon. The book is how I originally figured out my dreams can tell the future. It was in my parents' possessions, so they must have known something about demons. Unless they didn't understand what the book truly was. I wish they had told me everything they meant to, and that my dad hadn't left me when I needed him most. There is still a great deal I don't understand concerning my parents and myself."

"Did you read the file Vitas gave you?"

"It basically said we were a typical family; nothing about who my parents were or where they originated."

"That's strange. Everyone's file should reveal everything about them. Every moment we experience gets written in the file. This conversation is being written as we speak."

"That's creepy."

"Very." We returned to unpacking and had nearly finished when we heard tapping on the

door. Pyre squinted through the peephole, groaned and opened the door.

“Hey, Big Brother!” Eira exclaimed, wrapping her arms around Pyre’s neck.

“Hey, Eira.” Pyre muttered, rolling his eyes.

“Hey, Kira!” She ran over and gave me a hug too.

“Hi, Eira.”

“Wait a minute! Why is the oaf here?” Pyre yelled as Eros walked up to the door.

“He’s helping me.” Eira stated adamantly.

“In that case...” He slammed the door in Eros’ face.

“Pyre!” Eira yelled at him as she opened the door for Eros. “Why must you be so mean to Eros?”

“I don’t have to, I want to.”

“For crying out loud, why?” She got closer to him, in his face, and with her hands on her hips said, “Why? Why?! WHY?!”

“I don’t know.” Pyre walked over to stand slightly behind me. He opened his eyes wide, trying to appear innocent and shrugged. I gaped in disbelief at Pyre and he crossed his arms.

Why didn’t you tell me the oaf was coming? Pyre demanded telepathically.

I wasn’t aware either of them were coming.

He thought for a second and turned to Eira and Eros. “Why are both of you here?”

“We brought something for the Christmas party.”

“The party isn’t for another week and a half.” Pyre rubbed his forehead.

“I realize that, but I wanted to bring it over early.”

“What’s in the box, Eira?” I watched curiously as Eira opened the box and produced a smaller wrapped box.

“It’s for you, Kira, but you’re not allowed to open it until the party.”

“Why bring it now?” Pyre grew more irritated by the minute.

“I don’t want it to get broken. Apparently nothing is safe at my house when boys decide they want to train. Or just fight with each other for the fun of it.” She glared at Eros disapprovingly, who stared at the ceiling with a sheepish expression.

“I’ll find a safe place for it.” Pyre took the box from her and disappeared.

“We’ll see you later.” Eira sang and pushed Eros out the door.

“But you —” I didn’t even get to finish.

“We still have more to do.” She waved as she closed the door behind them.

I will never understand her. I shook my head, baffled.

Now you know how I feel. I turned to see Pyre standing in the doorway of his bedroom. *My sister is so unconventional.*

“She is utterly eccentric, but lovable.”

“I do love my sister but she is the quirkiest fire demon I’ve ever met.”

“You’re not exactly a normal fire demon.” I smiled impishly.

“How would you know? To my knowledge, you’ve only met two fire demons. Are you a fire demon groupie?”

“Well, you haven’t known me that long. It’ll take time to tell you about all the demons I met before you.”

“You’re not exactly normal for a human now that I consider it.” He walked closer and wrapped his arms around me.

“I would hate being normal. I would prefer to be completely abnormal.”

“I wonder what you’d be like if you were a demon.” He played with my hair while he studied me. “You’d either be fire or ice I’d bet, possibly an animal type.”

“What kind of animal?” He thought about it for a moment.

“If you were fire, I’d guess you’d be a fox. You’re remarkably clever and you can sometimes be aggressive like a fire type. If you were ice, you’d probably be a snow leopard. You’re independent and highly observant. I’m hoping for the fire type of course.”

“Of course.”

“I’m going to bed.” He gave me a good night kiss and went to his room.

It has been a long day. I laid down on my bed and fell asleep within minutes.

The next morning, I pulled a small wood box off my shelf that my mom used to store her old recipes. I went through them and found my favorites, while missing baking with my mom. The door creaked open behind me. Pyre appeared to have just woken up as he rubbed his eyes, yawned, and scratched his belly.

“Good morning.” I giggled and shook my head.

“No such thing. What are those papers?”

“They’re my mom’s old recipes.”

“Recipes?” He walked over and picked up one of the cards.

“My mom loved to bake. She wrote all the recipes down so she wouldn’t forget and I could learn to make them too.”

“What kinds of food did she make?”

“She made so many things that if you named it, she made it. My favorite was her chocolate chip cookies.” I held out the recipe to him.

“We should make some of these for the party.”

“That’d be fun. We need to pick out which ones we want to make and check whether we have the ingredients.”

“We’re definitely making the chocolate chip cookies.” He wrapped his arms around me. “Can we choose them all now?”

“I don’t see why not.” We went to the living room and sat on the couch together. “I can’t believe it’s nearly Christmas. Where did November go?”

“You needed to study for exams and finish the semester. I needed to move my belongings from out of town. On top of which, Vitas has kept me extra busy fighting demons and training. I haven’t even had time to unpack until now.”

“We both realize why he’s keeping you busy.” Pyre gazed at the floor with a puzzled expression on his face. “You do, don’t you?” He bit his lip and shook his head. “Vitas is trying to make sure we spend as little time together as possible. He believes you’re too dangerous for

me.”

“Vitas might be right.” He sounded serious, but when he caught me watching him, he brightened. “Maybe I am too dangerous for you.” He ogled me ominously.

“Down, teddy bear.” I returned my attention to the recipes.

“Teddy bear?” He exclaimed as he faked being offended. “Teddy bear?”

“Teddy bear; and you’re a grumble bear when you’re angry.”

“In what way am I like a teddy bear?”

“You’re sweet, cuddly, lovable, and you would never hurt me no matter what happened.”

He thought it over for a minute before nodding.

“My baby understands me so well.” He wrapped an arm around me. “Not in front of the guys though.”

“Never.” I crossed my heart as a promise.

“What can I call you?”

“You call me baby and sometimes angel. What else would you want to call me?”

“How about... Firefly?”

“Firefly?” I couldn’t grasp it. “How am I like a firefly?”

“You’re beautiful to observe, possess the best communication skills I’ve ever seen, and you light up my world.”

“Aw, who says you’re not romantic?” He picked up some of the recipes.

“Only when I want to be.” A knock at the door interrupted our conversation. “What do you want?!”

“I came to give you something.” Lowell answered.

“We don’t want it!” Pyre threw a pillow at the door.

“It’s for the party!”

“What is with you people? You can wait to bring it on the day of the party!” I stood up and walked over to the door.

“You’ll want it before the party.” Lowell asserted as he walked into the apartment.

“I still don’t want it.” Pyre crossed his arms and huffed.

“I’m the youngest, but you’re the one behaving like a five year old.” I said.

“It’s because you’re a girl.” Lowell stated with conviction. “Girls mature considerably faster.”

“Even faster than demons who are hundreds of years old?” I asked.

The guys looked at each other and said in unison, “Yep.”

“Why do I even bother?” I threw up my hands and walked back to the couch.

“What did you bring us, Wolf?”

“It’s more for you, Pyre.” Lowell held out a small box and displayed it to Pyre. I stared suspiciously at the box, and then at the boys.

“Is that it?” Pyre was much too excited for my comfort. Lowell nodded with a conspiratorial smile. “I won’t say this ever again, but, Wolf, you’re awesome.” Pyre ran over to Lowell and snatched the little box. I grew extremely confused and uneasy about what it might

be.

“Pyre, you’re alarming your girlfriend.” Lowell said.

“A little bit.” I admitted.

“Firefly, you’re going to love this.” Pyre pulled me up for a hug and ran off, letting me go so fast I plopped back down on the couch. I was still bewildered and regarded Lowell quizzically.

“It’s something he asked me to search for as a favor.” Lowell said as if that explained everything. I continued to stare at him questioningly. “You’ll see what it is at the party.” I tapped my fingers on my knee and stared at him obstinately without blinking. “I promise... Firefly.” He chuckled, with emphasis on my new nickname.

“Do you wish to live?” I queried softly, and in my creepiest voice.

“I’ve got to get going. Tell Pyre I said bye.” He practically ran through the door.

“The human is still confused.” I looked to Pyre for answers when he came back into the room.

“You won’t be after the party. It’s something I know you’ll love.” Pyre embraced me in his arms and kissed my cheek. “Let’s get back to the recipes now.” He sat down next to me and picked up more recipes. “This day keeps getting better and better.”

“The day just began not too long ago.”

“True, but the day has been perfect so far.” He examined the recipe cards in his hands. “Ooh, pecan pie.”

A thought instantly occurred to me. “You cook frequently and you’re exceptional at it. Don’t you use some recipes of your own?”

“Nah, I mostly cook by instinct. Any recipes I use are all in my head, and that’s where they’ll stay.”

“You won’t even share them with me?”

“Nope!”

“Well, why not?”

“If I share the secret of my cooking, you’ll learn to do it for yourself and won’t need me to cook for you anymore.”

“I doubt there’s any real concern there. Even with a recipe, my cooking is usually a disaster.”

“That bad, huh?”

“Let’s simply say you don’t want to mix up baking soda and baking powder. And if there’s a smoke alarm anywhere near the stove, such as in the next room, it will go off.”

“Note to self. I alone will feed the family.” He laughed but noticed me gaping at him, obviously disconcerted. “Back to tiny little pieces of paper.”

As we continued going through the recipes, I told him stories about my mom, and memories of baking with her. Pyre took a small break to get dinner started. After a few hours, we finally decided on some choices.

“We chose chocolate chip cookies, sugar cookies, peanut butter cookies, pecan pie,

pumpkin pie, chocolate pudding cake, and cherry whip.” I said.

“Will that be enough?” Pyre asked.

“Seven desserts for ten people.”

“You’re right; we need more.”

“Pyre, it’ll be more than enough as long as we make plenty of each.”

“How much is enough?”

“Let’s see, with how Caedmon and Eros eat, we should make triple just for them. Let’s say three to five times what the recipes require? There should even be enough left for everyone to take some home.”

“You’re not counting Eira or me in the ten people, are you?”

“Yes, why wouldn’t I?”

“You don’t want to know.” I faced him with my hands on my hips. “Trust me, you don’t want to know. If you’ll make a list of the supplies we need, I’ll go shopping tomorrow after I’m done doing chores for Vitas.”

“Nice change of subject. It won’t take me long to make a list.”

“While you do that, I’ll finish cooking dinner.”

“Why shouldn’t I include you in how many people will be here?” I pulled out a pen and paper to make a list of everything we would need.

He made a big show of searching through the cabinet. “Where did I put... Oh, there it is.” He pulled out a pan from the cabinet. I went through the fridge to figure out what we needed. “How’s the list coming?”

“Nice change of subject... again! It’s almost done. I’m checking to see what we have.”

“Dinner will be ready soon too.”

“What’re we having?”

“I’m making lasagna.”

“I love your lasagna. I don’t understand how you can make such delicious lasagna.”

“That’s my secret.” He flashed me a toothy smile. I walked over to him and leaned my head against his shoulder. “What’s wrong?”

“I want you to tell me why I shouldn’t include you in the count of people. You and Eira aren’t planning to leave before the party, are you?”

“No, of course not. Where did you get that idea?”

“Why else shouldn’t I count you both?”

“It’s not a big deal. We merely can’t consume sugar.”

“What?”

“Fire demons can’t ingest anything that contains sugar. If we do, we experience a serious sugar rush.”

“Sugar rush? You made me nervous over a sugar rush?”

“It’s much worse than a human sugar rush. I didn’t mean to worry you, but why would you think I would leave?”

“I thought there was some reason you wouldn’t be there, or couldn’t be there, which

made me anxious you might disappear again, like you did before my birthday.”

“I promise I’ll never do that again.”

“Good.” I yawned.

“Are you all right?”

“I’m a bit tired.”

“It has been a busy day. Go sit down and I’ll bring you a plate when it’s ready.” I agreed but didn’t move. “Kira, go sit down before you doze off where you stand.”

“I’m not dozing. It’s virtually impossible to sleep while standing, isn’t it?” He wrapped his arms around me, picked me up and headed for my bedroom.

“Either way, I’m putting you to bed.”

“But the lasagna…”

“Will be there in the morning.” He kissed my forehead as he headed to my room. He set me down on my bed, and I laid down right away. “Where is the shopping list?”

“Right here.” I held up the list. He took the list from my hand and scrutinized it. “I’m sorry I couldn’t stay awake.”

“No problem.” He kissed my lips before leaving the room.

Why am I this fatigued? I realize I had a lot to do the last few days but I shouldn’t be this tired. I pondered for a few more minutes before falling asleep.