



LEANDI CAMERON

A TALE  
OF THE  
OTHER KIND

A THERIAN NOVEL  
VOLUME 1

A Tale of the Other Kind by Leandi Cameron  
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**EXCERPT:**

...Suddenly, he could smell Sienna's citrus-flavoured perfume float through the air. He turned around and there she was, more beautiful than he remembered. She was dressed in a pale blue silk dress, which slightly revealed the scars on her back. She stood by herself in the corner of the bookstore, looking unsure. Her hair was taken back into a ponytail, but a few short locks fell loosely around her heart-shaped face.

'Kai,' she said nodding, clearing her throat as he moved over towards her. She seemed nervous and a little uneasy standing next to him. Kai looked down at her - too scared to get too close to her. He felt like a coward for taking her to the hospital and then disappearing without a word. 'Sienna,' he replied. Words escaped him and he didn't know what to say to her. He was taken aback by her beauty ... and scared at the same time. His breath became shallower standing so close to her. His heart beat faster, making thinking clearly much more difficult.

'I ... I can't do this,' he said, turning around and walking towards the doorway.

'Don't you dare walk away from me again Kai,' she said angrily as she walked after him. He opened the door and stepped outside, hoping that she wouldn't follow him.

'Kai!' she yelled, grabbing his arm. Her touch immediately made him stop and he turned around to face her.

'Sienna, I'm sorry for what happened to you. I will never be able to forgive myself, but you have to stay away from me.'

'Why?' she asked, clearly upset.

'Because it's not safe and you don't know what it means to be close to me,' he replied, getting angry.

'I don't know what this means? Kai, you left me! You left me and I was attacked by a freakin lion,' she said as anger welled inside her, showing her frustration.

'And then there was this black leopard, which I always thought was just a legend, but it wasn't. It's more real than you would ever know. I thought that I was never going to see the light again.'

'I'm so sorry Sienna. It wasn't my intention. I never thought that something so terrible would ever happen to you,' he replied, softly.

'But it was okay to leave me if you thought nothing would happen to me?' she asked angrily.

'No, that's not what I meant,' he replied.

'Then what happened? Why did you leave? Why didn't you come back?' she demanded.

He sighed, 'It doesn't matter now. It won't change anything.'

'It might. I deserve an explanation. Look at me,' she said, pulling the sleeve back from her shoulder, exposing four claw marks across her back.

Mortified he ran his fingers gently across the visible scars. 'I should never have taken you there. And for that, I'm truly sorry,' he tried to explain.

She shook her head, frustrated, 'I'm not looking for an apology. I need an explanation.'

'I can't explain it to you, Sienna. If you had any idea, you would run, and I couldn't bare it.'

'I will not run. I haven't yet, have I?'

'We are just not the same – you and I. We will never work.'

'What are you talking about? You're confusing the hell out of me.'

'It's for the best. Trust me. We just need to stay away from each other.'

'How do you know what's best for me?' she demanded.

'I don't, but, for now, I should figure this out by myself.'

'You're driving me nuts and you're being silly.'

'Silly? You think I'm being silly? You almost died Sienna, and it was entirely my fault,' Kai scowled.

Sienna looked at the ground and took a small step closer to Kai. Her presence made his resolve weaken and his heart beat faster, and his throat became tight.

'I cared for you Kai. Why did you just leave me? How could you be so cruel?' she asked again.

He had to compose himself, and with all of his senses, he tried to draw away from her, but there was something about her that mesmerised him, making it harder to move away from her. He looked at her silently, touching her face gently with the back of his hand. 'And I care for you. That's why I need to stay away from you. I'm bad news. I don't want to hurt you,' he said, gently running a finger across her cheek.

'You won't,' she said, determined.

'Well, I can't take the chance. I will not risk it,' Kai said stubbornly.

'What's with the drama, Kai? It's not like you to hurt me or anyone else for that matter? You just took off and left me there to be torn apart by animals, but I knew you had a reason. You do have a reason, don't you?' She turned his face towards her, forcing him to look straight at her.

He could see she was angry. His resolve crumbled - all he wanted to do was kiss her and hold her. He wanted to tell her that everything was going to be alright. But he was uncertain about his future and didn't know how to handle his newfound anatomy yet. Every essence of his body was screaming for her. He wanted to make her understand how much she meant to him and that he would never allow anything or anyone to hurt her again, if he could prevent it.

'You're freezing,' he said, changing the subject. He took off his coat and placed it over her shoulders.

'I can handle it,' she said tensely.

A slight smile pulled at the corner of his mouth, but fell away quickly. Before he could say anything more, she reached up on her toes and kissed him, taking his breath away. With her lips on his, all his objections suddenly melted away. His heart felt like it would jump right out of his chest. His mind was telling him no, but his heart couldn't bear keeping her at arm's length. He slowly wrapped his arms around her shoulders, pulling her closer into his embrace. Slowly, he pulled away and looked at her.

'Do you know how long I've waited to be with you. I didn't leave you, Sienna. I was there the whole time,' he said, kissing her softly on the forehead and closing his eyes. 'But it's better for you if I leave it where it ended and stay away from you. Whatever this could have been between us has to end. It's better that way...' he trailed off, unconvinced.

'Kai, don't. Don't do this, and what do you mean you were there?' Tears formed in her crystal blue eyes.

'It's for the best,' he repeated.

'You don't know what you're saying,' her voice faltering. 'Yes, I do,' he breathed, 'I just don't have space for this in my life right now.'

'What? What can be so difficult that we cannot deal with it together?' she asked shocked, taking a step back.

'You need to move on Sienna. Find a guy that doesn't have issues. I have issues.'

'And you think I don't?' she asked as tears rolled down her cheeks. The pain he was causing her was tearing him apart. 'I can't ... I can't do this. I've to go.' Shaking his head he tried to convince himself this was the right thing to do.

'Please don't go,' she begged.

'I have to,' he said, turning away and heading into the dark alley, leaving her behind. He knew he was walking away from the one true thing that he had in his life...

...As Kai walked away from Sienna, he could feel her pain radiating through him, mixing with emptiness of the dark alleyway, slowly sucking him in. Her silent tears rang like rain drops hitting a rooftop. He prayed that Sienna wouldn't try to follow him. There was a new world waiting for him, and he knew he had to go at it alone. Someday she would forget him. He hoped that she would find someone who would take good care of her. Kai would become a distant memory – a faded, ridiculous dream that was more like a fiction novel than reality.

Nothing made sense to him and he did not know what to believe anymore - what was real and what was make-believe. His entire life seemed to have turned into a never-ending horror film. The further away he got from the bookstore, the darker the alley became, with only the faint glow of a half-moon illuminating his path. This didn't bother him, as he suddenly realised that he was able to see like a cat in the dark. He noticed his steps become louder as the darkness and a half-hearted moon became his only companion, but he didn't care. Nothing mattered anymore. He had to face his reality. The further he stalked into the night, the more pronounced his fingernails became, making him angry.

I need to learn how to control this, he thought. But the harder he tried, the less he could control his feelings, and the more his new shape and form took control of his body. He knew it would cause havoc if he stuck around town and somebody saw him while this was happening, so he headed home through the forest. The only things that could see him here were the animals with which he shared his days and they didn't care – he was now one of them.

The painful change didn't last long as his movements became eloquent as his elongating muscles stretched out in front of him, tearing every piece of clothing he had on. His hands – now paws - touched the ground as he made a break through the thick bushes, running away from the life he needed to leave behind. Things were now out of his control. A new sense of freedom overwhelmed him as the cold air nipped at his face. Running like this seemed so natural, as if he was born to move like this. But he fought these thoughts; disgusted by the comfort his new form was providing him – wishing it away.

The moon was disappeared as the thick trees overhead shielded him, like a mother protecting her child. Suddenly, a sharp pain shot through his shoulder and his heavy body fell to the ground in a slump. Fear struck his heart as he glimpsed behind him before being tackled to the ground by some unknown source. He bared his teeth and growled in pain.

A sharp knife stuck out of his shoulder, making it difficult to fight back. He slashed at the attacker with his razor sharp claws, hoping to deter whoever was attacking him. His attacker jumped back as his claws slashed flesh, leaving deep, seeping wounds.

'What the...' the attacker yelled. Kai rose up onto his hind legs, trying to regain his balance. He ripped the knife from his shoulder and threw it aside. In front of him was Astrid, glowing.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

*A Tale of the Other Kind: A Therian Novel* (ISBN 13: 9780620526586) (ISBN 10: 0620525991) (ASIN: B009H68YMO), published by House of Leavik, and written by author, Leandi Cameron.

#### **About the Author**

Leandi Cameron is the author of Young Adult Paranormal Fantasy *A Tale of the Other Kind* series, starting with *A Therian Novel*. She is an award-winning journalist living in Ekurhuleni, Ekurhuleni, South Africa, where she also spends her days working at Caxton Newspapers as

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**Follow up novels:**

The second book in the *A Tale of the Other Kind* series - *A Therian Struggle*, is currently in production.

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