

Changeling Press

SILVIA VIOLET



WOLF
CALLER 2:
POWER

Wolf Caller 2: Power

Silvia Violet

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Wolf Caller 2: Power

Silvia Violet

Derek and Serena have forged an ancient bond between werewolf and wolf caller. But with Albion on the brink of war, there is no time for them to research the magical abilities they've gained.

Days after their bonding, Serena, Derek, and two other wolves make a daring run into enemy territory, hoping to bring home the stolen technology that could give their enemies the edge in the coming war. As the fight for technological supremacy heats up, so does Serena's regard for Luke, Derek's second in command. The three become lovers, and Serena discovers that she can lend power through sex.

The threesome's new magical abilities are tested when they discover a traitor in the pack. Are they strong enough to preserve Albion's technological secrets and protect Derek's wolves?

Chapter One

Serena removed her cloak with her uninjured hand. "Can't we do this later?"

"No, we must establish your position in the pack now. Waiting will only make the others question what I intend to do with you."

"I'm tired, my wrist aches, and I want to go to bed."

Derek's lips curled up in a wicked grin. "We'll be going to bed very soon. I intend to cure your wrist and demonstrate your position in the pack in a personal ceremony. But first, you must formally greet the others."

For the first time since she'd met him, Serena was too exhausted for Derek's promises of pleasure to arouse her. She wanted nothing but a long night's sleep. But during the long ride from Albion City, Derek had explained the importance of establishing dominance within the pack. As his mate, she was the alpha female. He wanted the others to recognize her as such even though she wasn't truly a wolf. She knew they had to start from a position of strength. She allowed a servant to take her cloak and gloves, and followed Derek into the drawing room.

"I don't exactly look my best." She drew Derek's attention to the bruise on her face and the blood stains on her dress.

Derek smiled. "You look fierce, exactly what you must be to protect yourself."

"Shouldn't I at least change to a clean dress?"

"No, I want the sacrifices you've made tonight to be painfully clear."

Before she could protest further, three men and three women entered and arranged themselves on the floor by the fire. She knew Luke and Charles, and she recognized Isabel from her first visit to the estate. The others, Henry, Olivia, and Rhianna, she knew only from the descriptions Derek had given her during their ride.

Derek took her arm and pulled her to his side. "My wolves, I have called you here to introduce my chosen mate, Serena. We have formed an ancient bond between wolf and wolf caller that will strengthen not only the two of us but the entire pack."

Serena watched the faces of the wolves. Luke and the woman with straight dark hair looked pleased. Charles scowled. Isabel and the other two kept their faces blank. Derek had warned her that Charles was overly aggressive and displeased with his subordinate position. He was the one most likely to challenge her position. Isabel was the strongest of the females, and she enjoyed a good fight. But she rarely challenged Derek's leadership decisions.

"Each of you will greet my mate now."

"Formal greetings should take place in wolf form, but your mate is not a wolf." Anger flashed in Charles's eyes as he spoke.

"Greetings take place in any form I specify. I give the orders, you obey. I have ordered you to greet my mate."

Charles slowly got to his feet. He stared at Serena as he approached rather than lowering his eyes as a subordinate should. Serena tensed. She was in no shape to be challenged. He stopped when he stood less than a foot from her. He made no move to either show submission or issue a challenge.

Derek growled.

Charles glanced at him and shook his head as if in disgust. But he sank to his knees and tilted his head to the side, baring his neck.

Serena glanced at Derek. Her lover nodded.

Charles was so tall she barely had to bend to reach his neck. She closed her mouth around the muscle of his neck, letting him feel her teeth but not actually biting. She held her position for a few seconds then released him.

He rose, looked at Derek, and turned to leave the room.

"The meeting is not over." Derek's words came out with a growl.

"For me it is."

Luke stood and blocked Charles's path to the door.

“Are you challenging me?”

“I’m disciplining you.” Luke raised a clawed hand and slashed Charles’s face. Red lines appeared across his cheek and blood ran slowly down his face.

Charles brought a hand to his face, wiped away the blood, then stared at his hand as if he could not believe what had happened. He backed up a few steps.

Luke smiled but Serena saw no warmth on his face. “Sit down and show respect to our leaders.”

Charles backed up a few steps and sat next to Isabel.

Serena felt Derek’s tension ease. He was obviously pleased by Luke’s actions. Serena had to admit she was too. She glanced at Luke, and he smiled at her, a true smile this time. Heat raced across her body.

Luke walked toward her, eyes cast down. He knelt, and she sucked in her breath as he tilted his head to the side and exposed the taut muscle of his neck. This time she didn’t hesitate. She breathed deep as she bent to mimic biting him. He smelled earthy, like freshly cut grass. She shivered as she pressed her teeth gently into his flesh.

He growled softly, and she licked him. His muscles tensed under her tongue. When she released him, he backed away, eyes cast downward, but she felt the sexual energy rising off him. She glanced at Derek, and his lips curled up briefly. He knew what she was feeling.

Isabel approached next. She kept her eyes down until she was inches from Serena, then she glanced up coyly, giving Serena a flirtatious smile. Serena’s cheeks heated. She was unsure how to take the woman’s attitude. Isabel knelt then and looked at the floor. Serena knew she had to continue with the ceremony, but her heart hammered. Sexual energy buzzed around her, and Serena’s chest was so tight that drawing in air was a struggle.

Serena lowered her mouth to Isabel’s throat. The woman sucked in her breath as Serena’s teeth touched her neck. Serena held the bite for a few seconds then pulled back, trying not to look as scared as she felt by the emotions rushing through her.

Rhianna, Henry, and Olivia approached her without incident or reluctance. Derek had warned her that Henry might resist, but he'd apparently been impressed by the strength she'd shown during her mission in Albion City.

When all the wolves had submitted to her, Derek took her arm once again and pulled her to his side. "When my mate speaks, she speaks for me. You will do as she bids. If your human form refuses, she will force you to shift and command you in wolf form. Then I will punish you for your reluctance to obey."

Anger returned to Charles's face, but he made no further comment.

"Rhianna, have there been any reports tonight?"

"Yes, sir. Alex is following a trail to Toulousia. We should hear a report from him tomorrow."

"Begin planning for four of us to travel in case Alex finds our quarry there."

"Yes, sir."

"You are all dismissed."

The wolves headed out of the room. Luke was the last to leave. He looked over his shoulder and smiled at Serena. Her nipples tightened to hard points as she returned his smile.

Derek leaned down and whispered in her ear. "You'll have your chance to taste him soon enough. But right now I'm too hungry to share."

Serena knew her cheeks were bright red. She hadn't meant for Derek to read her so easily. "I didn't --"

"Don't deny your desire for him. Such feelings are natural among wolves. I would be disappointed if you did not want Luke to join us in bed. He is a fine lover."

Against her will, Serena conjured an image of the three of them in bed together. Luke and Derek both lavished attention on her. She sighed as Derek massaged her shoulders and kissed her neck.

"Share your thoughts with me."

She shook her head.

“Serena, you have nothing to hide from me. Wolves revel in their sexuality. Show me what you want.”

She opened the mental link between them and held her vision in her mind. “Can you see what I imagining?”

He groaned. “Yes. Show me more.”

Derek pulled her to him and captured her lips with his. His tongue plundered her mouth, snaking in and out. As she opened further to accommodate him, she let the fantasy play. She imagined Derek filling her ass while Luke took her pussy. Derek bit her lower lip, making her gasp. Her surprise severed their connection.

Derek let her go and stepped back. “You will have what you want. Soon.”

She nodded. “Can we go to your room now?”

“Our room, and yes.”

He scooped her up and walked so fast he was nearly running. When they reached his door, he kicked it open and sat her on her feet by the bed. He took one of the pillows and laid it on top of the covers near the foot of the bed.

“What are you doing?”

“Making a cushion for your wrist.”

“Why?”

“You’ll need extra support for it while I’m spanking you.”

She took a step back. “I thought you wanted to heal me.”

“I do, but you used your control over me without permission. I can’t resist punishing you for that.”

“I saved your life.”

“Yes, but you know we’ll both enjoy my exacting revenge. Spanking heats you up, and the stronger the orgasm, the better the healing.”

Heat flooded Serena’s belly and cream dampened the tops of her thighs. He’d spanked her once before, and she’d loved it. But his look of evil lust made her wary.

“Strip.”

She hesitated.

“Now.”

She sucked in her breath as a shiver of lust ran over her. She did as he said, reveling in the heat that grew in his eyes as she slowly exposed her body. First she unfastened her boots, giving him glimpses of her stockinged legs. Then she unlaced her bodice, gradually exposing more flesh before finally pushing her dress over her hips. When her hands went to the fastenings of her garters, Derek ordered her to stop.

“Lay over the end of the bed with your injured arm on the pillow.”

This time she didn't stop to think. She simply obeyed, ready for whatever erotic attention he was willing to give. She settled herself over the bed and pushed her ass in the air, wiggling and taunting.

He gave her left cheek a hard slap, and she groaned.

“Is your wrist comfortable?”

The pillow supported her arm perfectly. Her wrist hadn't even felt the jolt his hand had given her. She smiled to herself, secure in her knowledge that Derek would never truly hurt her. “I'm fine.”

“Good. Don't move.”

She sucked in her breath, ready for more. He spanked her hard and fast, stroke after stroke. Her ass felt ready to catch fire. She squirmed against the bed, desperate to achieve the orgasm that was building inside her.

Her tense muscles melted from the pleasure. With each stroke of Derek's hand, he took her further from everything that frightened her: their quest for Number Two, the spy who was also the Toulousian king's son, control over her powers, opposition within the pack. There was no room in her mind for anything but the erotic pain that quickly turned to pleasure.

The fingers of her good hand dug into the bedspread, tugging and twisting. She tried to hold herself still, but her hips pumped against the edge of the mattress. She was close, so close. Then he stopped.

“More please.”

Fabric rustled. She glanced over her shoulder. Derek was pulling his shirt over his head. His waistcoat and jacket already lay on the floor. His hands went to the fastenings of his pants. "You'll get more, but it will be my cock this time."

She sucked in her breath and squirmed against the bed. Now that he'd stopped the spanking, she grew more aware of the heat radiating from her ass, but her soreness could not compare to the raging need in her pussy. She arched her back and opened her legs wider, begging him with her body.

"Slide back." He wrapped his hands around her hips and tugged, pulling her away from the bed. She carefully moved her hand then let the rest of her body be repositioned.

As he slid into her, she realized what he'd done. She was now too far from the bed to be able to get any friction against her clit. Desperately, she pumped her hips and tried to pull herself forward with her good hand.

"No." He stood still and pulled her back and forth, on and off his cock. Luxurious pleasure flooded her every time his cock brushed the pleasure center inside her. Each stroke jolted her closer and closer to orgasm. But he kept an agonizingly slow rhythm. She wanted to scream, to beg, to demand he give her what she needed. He paused, and she whimpered.

"Hold on."

She fisted the bedspread one-handed and dug her heels into the carpet. He pulled her back until her ass brushed his belly then he pushed her forward and slammed her back again, faster and faster. Her whole body shook. She couldn't breathe. She sank her teeth into the covers to keep from screaming. Red starbursts flashed behind her closed eyes. She thought she might lose consciousness if he didn't slow down.

"Are you ready to send power to your hand?"

She tried to clear her mind enough to comprehend his words.

"You've got to concentrate as you come. Send the energy we've built into your hand to heal it."

Goddess, how could she focus on anything but the explosive pleasure he'd built inside her?

"Serena, do it now."

He reached for her clit, squeezing and pushing her up and over as he thrust deep. She cried out. Her body spasmed against his cock, forcing his climax to join hers. His hot seed flooded her pussy, and she moaned.

His hand closed over her injured wrist, and pain broke her sensual trance. Why was he hurting her?

"Push your magic toward your hand. I can't do this alone."

The edge of fear in his voice pulled her back to reality. She focused on the warm tingle of magic centered in her belly. Power flowed to her hand.

Derek's grip no longer hurt. Now that she was working with him, his magic warmed her wrist like a hot compress. Pain receded, and the warmth spread to her body. She felt herself losing the connection to her own magic. Sleep threatened to overtake her.

Derek, help.

Sleep. It's what you need now.

She fought her languor despite his words.

He sent a jolt of magic through her, numbing her wrist.

Sleep, Serena.

She couldn't fight anymore. She did as Derek said, letting sleep take her as Derek lifted her and laid her on the bed.

Chapter Two

When Serena woke, sunlight poured in from the window next to Derek's bed. She tried to move, but Derek's arm lay across her waist, trapping her against him. She lifted it carefully and slipped free.

She sat up and tried to clear her sleep-fuzzed brain. Several moments passed before she realized she was supporting herself on her injured hand. It twinged slightly when she scooted to the side of the bed, but otherwise it felt as good as new. If she and Derek could raise such power together, what else were they capable of? Derek had said his bond with her could strengthen the entire pack. Could she truly give the wolves what they needed to win the next battle with Two? If only her Nonna were still alive to help her explore her talents.

She regretted denying her powers all these years, but once Nonna died, she'd had no one to turn to. She could imagine the storm of anger that would have erupted if she'd mentioned her powers to her mother. Her father wanted to give her everything money could buy, but even he would have shunned her if her powers had become public knowledge.

The room was chilly so she pulled on a robe and stoked the fire. Then she used Derek's fuel-powered warming plate to heat water for tea and selected a scone from the tray that must have been left by a servant some time this morning. She was about to settle herself on the window seat when the door began to open. She tensed, but the intruder turned out to be Luke

He smiled when he saw her. "Good morning."

Heat rose in her cheeks as she remembered the sexual energy that had flowed between them. "Good morning."

"I'm sorry to disturb you, but Derek usually rises long before now. The kitchen staff said he was still sleeping when they brought breakfast, so I came to investigate."

Serena held up her wrist. Derek had removed the bandages before he came to bed. The bruises had faded to small yellowish patches, and the swelling was completely gone. "We healed my wrist last night. I think it wiped us both out."

Luke's eyes widened. "I've never seen werewolf magic heal a human that quickly before."

"I suppose I'm not really human any more."

"You are. You're very special, but you are human. Some of the others are going to have a hard time accepting that."

"I noticed."

"Don't worry about Charles. Derek and I will protect you."

"I'm not worried." As she said the words, she realized she truly meant them. After learning what she and Derek were capable of when they joined their magic, she believed they could fight anything that came their way. "If my powers continue to grow, I can protect myself."

Luke smiled. "From what Derek has learned of wolf caller bonds, your powers are nearly limitless."

Derek heard voices that seemed to come from far away. He stirred and opened his eyes to see Luke and Serena standing by the window. Why hadn't Serena woken him and why was Luke in the room? He sat up.

Luke turned, looked him up and down, and smiled. Derek realized he must look as worn out as he still felt. "Alex wired us. It's nearly noon. I was concerned that you were still sleeping."

Derek rubbed his eyes and glanced toward the windows. The sun was high and bright. The magic he'd worked with Serena must have taken more out of him than he'd realized. He turned to Serena. "How is your wrist?"

“Wonderful. It still twinges a bit, but the bruises are almost gone. I can even support myself on it.”

“Good.” At least the energy they’d expended had done the job. Maybe with practice they could work magic without the toll on their bodies. Or his body at least. Serena looked as beautiful as usual. “What did Alex say?”

“Two is in Northern Toulousia along the border of Britax and Northsea. Alex thinks he’s searching the villages for a witch with powers similar to ours or a wolf in hiding.”

“Our oldest texts imply that werewolves were first created in Britax.”

Luke’s eyes widened. “Even I didn’t know that. How would Two know --”

“It’s possible there is a traitor among our kind, one who doesn’t have the magical strength to run the solar box but whom Two is using for information. Two could have learned our origin myths from a witch whose family had contact with wolves generations ago. Or his chosen location could be no more than coincidence.”

Luke nodded. “I don’t think we could be that lucky.”

Derek pushed his hair back from his face and shook his head. “Neither do I.”

“So what are we going to do?” Serena asked.

Derek took a long slow breath. “We’re going to Toulousia, and we’re going to get the box back before Two finds a witch he can use.”

“All of us?”

“Luke, Isabel, and myself certainly. I don’t want to risk taking you into enemy territory, but I think we’ll need your magic and your wolf caller abilities.”

Serena scowled. “I intend to be there when we find Two.”

She looked so fierce, like the Goddess of Vengeance herself. Derek’s heart pounded when he thought of the risk he was taking by allowing her to go. But he could not let his personal feelings cloud his judgment. They needed her for the mission even if they did not yet understand all that she could do.

Someone knocked on the door. “Hand delivered message for you, Lord Valmont.”

Derek hoped the message contained the special license he'd requested so he and Serena could marry before they left for Toulousia. "Come in."

The servant handed him a thick envelope. "Will there be anything else, sir?"

"A full hot breakfast for --" He paused to glance at Luke.

"I've already eaten.

"But you'll eat again if there is food around. Isabel will be joining us. Has she dined?"

"I'm not sure."

"Bring enough for four to my sitting room."

"Yes, sir."

The servant left and Derek ripped open the envelope. It did contain the license and other documentation Derek would need to have their marriage official by the time they left that night.

Serena had sent her friend Iris a telegram intimating that she and Derek intended to elope. He wanted to keep the scandal surrounding Serena's family to a minimum. The timing was perfect. They would marry that afternoon and if anyone inquired after Serena, their mission to Toulousia could be disguised as a wedding trip.

"The license?" Luke asked.

Derek nodded. "Serena, as soon as we've eaten, select your best dress. We're going to be married today."

Her eyes widened. "I thought we were going to Toulousia."

"Not until after dark."

"Luke, see that a message is sent to the local priest requesting her presence in two hours. Round up Isabel, let her know she will be a witness then bring her to my sitting room so we can plan our mission."

* * *

"Will you take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband?"

Sweat dampened Serena's palms beneath her white gloves. Was she really about to marry the infamous Lord Valmont, werewolf and government agent? The events of

the last few days had shaken her entire world and altered the course of her life forever. She knew that marriage to Derek was the only way to save her family from scandal. She loved Derek, and she knew he cared for her. He said he loved her, but would the affection last? Fear sent shivers down her spine.

Mother Ellen, their priest, reached out and stroked her cheek. "My dear, are you all right?"

Serena nodded. "I'm just nervous."

"Shall I repeat the question?"

"No. My answer is yes. I will."

Derek stopped squeezing her fingers so tightly. She looked up at him and smiled.

"Lord Valmont, will you take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife?"

"I will."

"Then, with the power of the Goddess, I pronounce you husband and wife. What the Goddess has joined let no human child divide."

Isabel and Luke hugged Serena and Derek, and the four of them headed to the motocarriage. As they drove to Derek's estate, Luke, Derek, and Isabel continued to lay out their strategy for the evening's trip and the search for Two. Serena wished she had something to contribute to the conversation, but she knew nothing about covert operations other than what she'd read in her collection of Gothic novels.

When they reached the estate, the party of four ascended the stairs. They paused outside the entrance to Derek's private rooms.

"I'm going to give Rhianna our list of supplies. I will see you in a few hours," Isabel said before leaving them.

Luke pulled Serena to him for another hug. "I'm glad you've joined our family." His words were benign, but he spoke in a low, sensuous voice. His warm breath caressed her ear, making her shiver.

Luke released her and grinned at Derek. "I suppose even a mission this serious won't stop you from enjoying your new bride."

Derek smiled. "Nothing would keep me from it."

"Then I'd best see to our travel arrangements."

"No. It's time you and Serena got better acquainted. Stay with us."

Serena hadn't wanted Luke to go, but she hadn't dared ask for another man to join them.

Luke looked at her. "Would you like me to stay?"

For a few seconds, she couldn't make her voice work, but finally she managed to say, "Yes."

He smiled. "I'm honored, but are you sure the timing is right?"

Before she could answer Derek interrupted. "We don't have the luxury of waiting. I need to see if Serena can increase your strength the way she has mine. As with wolves, sex seems to be the channel for all her magic."

Luke snarled. "I will not be brought into your bed to test a theory. One of the other wolves might not mind, but I care about you, and I'm starting to care for Serena. I will not ruin our friendship by intruding when I am not wanted."

Luke turned to go.

"I forbid you to leave."

Luke turned back to them, eyes burning with anger. "If you order me to sleep with Serena, I will do so with her consent. But I will not join the two of you unless I am truly wanted."

Serena frowned at Derek before turning to Luke. "I do want you to join us. This is hardly a traditional wedding night, and I'm no blushing bride. I wanted you to join us last night after the ceremony, but we needed to focus our energy on healing."

Luke looked at Derek as if for confirmation.

"She's right. I had the privilege of watching her fantasy through our mental link. She has very high expectations of you."

Luke's expression softened.

Derek cleared his throat. "We need to see what happens when another wolf shares the energy of Serena's orgasm, but we also simply want you."

Serena laid her hand on Luke's arm. "Stay with us?"

He smiled. His eyes lit with lust instead of anger. "Yes."

Chapter Three

They entered Derek's bedroom. Serena wanted to be bold and sexy, but she felt nervous. She wanted both men, but faced with the actual prospect she felt unsure of herself.

"Take off your clothes and stretch out on the bed."

Derek's tone suggested that arguing would be futile. But the thought of being displayed for both of them made her hands shake as she unhooked her cloak and dropped it on the chaise. She fumbled with the buttons of her bodice. Luke stepped toward her and offered assistance.

He pushed her bodice aside then bent to run his tongue along the flesh he'd exposed. She shuddered. His hands squeezed her waist, massaging her. She reached up and dug her fingers into his hair.

"No touching yet." Derek's voice was low and filled with authority.

"Why not?"

"Because I told you not to."

Serena scowled at Derek.

Luke laughed against her breasts. "Let him have his control. He loves it so much."

"But are you so willing to be controlled?"

Luke sighed. "I must confess Derek is an expert at domination."

"On the bed, Serena," Derek growled.

Luke stepped back, and Serena pushed the bodice from her arms and let her dress fall to the ground. Her petticoats, stays, and stockings quickly joined it. The idea of both men watching her as she walked to the bed both excited and embarrassed her.

She climbed up and turned onto her back. Derek and Luke watched her like wolves who'd spotted prey. Luke's sigh broke the silence. "She's even more beautiful than I imagined."

Derek smiled. "Wait until you're inside her."

Luke began unbuttoning his shirt. "I don't want to wait."

"You won't have to for long, but I want a taste of you first." Derek pulled Luke into a searing kiss, the kind he'd used numerous times to make Serena melt.

She watched them, utterly fascinated. She'd seen Derek fucking Luke on her first visit to the estate, but somehow this was even more arousing. The love between them was evident in the way they touched each other, and the way Luke shuddered just as Derek's lips touched his. They moved together like dancers.

As the kiss intensified, Serena slid her hand between her legs and propped herself up on her other elbow so she could see them better. She teased her clit, building her desire but not really reaching for orgasm. She wanted to wait until they touched her.

Derek released Luke and looked at her. "I think our wolf caller is enjoying the show."

Luke grinned. "Let's give her more." He pushed his shirt from his shoulders. Serena bit her lip to keep from whimpering as he revealed his perfectly sculpted chest. He was leaner than Derek but no less beautiful.

He dropped the shirt to the floor and unfastened his pants. When he pushed them off, she admired the lovely lines of his narrow hips before letting herself take in his cock. He stroked it as she watched, and her eyes followed his hand, mesmerized.

He'd removed all his hair, not just trimmed it as Derek did. The pale, nude skin surrounding his cock begged for her tongue. His shaft reached nearly to his navel. It was thick at the base and tapered to a narrower head. His balls were heavy and swollen, just begging her to hold them while she sucked his cock.

She worked her hand faster, arching her hips as she squeezed her clit between her fingers.

Derek undressed too. She took her eyes off Luke to drink in his animal beauty that still took her breath away. When Derek pushed his pants to the floor, Luke stopped stroking himself and sank to his knees. He wrapped a hand around Derek's shaft then ran his tongue across the tip. Serena gasped.

Luke sucked Derek's cock deep into his mouth. Derek groaned and wrapped a hand around the bedpost to steady himself. Luke worked him hard, sliding on and off his cock rapidly.

The sight sent spirals of hunger racing through Serena's belly. She moaned and squeezed her clit, nearly bringing herself over. But she forced herself to stop, remembering that there was more at stake than simple pleasure. She needed to build as much sexual energy as possible if she was going to strengthen Luke.

She sat up and slid off the foot of the bed. She positioned herself between the two men so she could take Luke's cock into her mouth. She cupped his balls with one hand, finding them as deliciously smooth as she'd imagined. She sucked him as hard and deep as he did Derek. He gasped around Derek's cock and bucked further into her mouth.

Within seconds, she'd relaxed enough to swallow Luke's entire length. He released Derek's balls and slid his fingers into her hair, holding her against him as he drove in and out of her mouth, still managing to work Derek at a furious pace. Derek was right; he was amazing.

Derek growled. She knew he was close to climax by the way his hips moved, driving himself into Luke's mouth. She wondered if the bedpost he still gripped would survive his orgasm.

But before she could find out, Derek shoved at Luke's shoulders. "Stop, both of you. It's too soon."

Luke pulled back, panting. Serena took one last pull on Luke's cock then reluctantly let him go. Derek was right. They couldn't all come in the first rush of pleasure. But Goddess above, she'd wanted to drink down the power of making Luke come.

"On the bed." Derek's voice was ragged. She'd been right. He'd nearly spilled himself in Luke's mouth. Luke knew exactly how to make him lose control.

She pulled herself up and crawled across the mattress. Luke joined her while Derek removed his boots and pants.

"Serena, stretch out on your back and hold the bedrails."

She did as he said. Luke leaned over her and ran his tongue along her belly and the underside of her breasts. She watched Derek as he opened a cabinet and removed what looked like thick bracelets and two rings.

He opened the two metal rings and fastened them around two of the rails in the headboard. "What are you doing?"

"Restraining you."

Serena drew in her breath. Her heart pounded with anxiety. The first time he'd taken her to bed, he'd ordered her not to move, binding her with no more than his words. The only time she'd been truly restrained was when Two had captured her. She couldn't help but remember how helpless she had felt.

"I don't think I can do this."

Derek stroked her face. "It will help us build energy."

"I'm scared."

"You like an edge of fear with sex."

He was right. She hadn't realized how much she enjoyed it until she'd met him, but she couldn't banish the memory of being tied to a bed in Two's house.

"But Two tied me up. And I --"

Anger flashed in Derek's eyes. "I will not let that bastard taint our pleasure. Luke and I will make sure that by the time you come, you can't even remember who Two is."

"I don't think --"

Luke squeezed her hand. "Try this for us. If fear overwhelms you, say 'red' and we will stop."

She looked at Derek, and he nodded.

She took a long, slow breath, forcing her lungs to open despite her fear. "I'll try."

Derek buckled the thick leather bracelets around her wrists. They were lined with velvet and felt as soft as the wonderful cloak her Nonna had made. The bracelets had rings on them that Derek attached to the ones he'd put on the bed.

She pulled at her arms, testing them. Panic began to build when she realized how well secured she was. Then Luke bent forward and took one of her nipples in his mouth. She gasped. Derek seized the other one, biting enough to sting but not really hurt.

She had no time to think about her restraints as they licked, sucked, and bit at her nipples simultaneously. She arched toward their mouths and twisted her hips. Derek reached down and teased her clit, then Luke pushed two fingers inside her. He pumped them in and out, curling them up to drag across her inner pleasure spot.

She groaned and bucked her hips, trying to force his fingers deeper. Derek circled her clit, brushing it with his fingers, but not giving her the pressure she wanted. Their mouths continued their pleasure/torture of her nipples. She thought the overload of sensation might cause her to explode.

Derek released her nipple and ran his tongue over her collarbone and up her neck. He whispered in her ear, his hot breath making her shudder. "Luke is going to fuck you now while I watch. He'll bury his cock so deep he'll make you scream. Then I'm going to take his ass and fuck you both."

Serena cried out, squeezing her inner muscles against Luke's fingers, barely able to hold back the immense orgasm building in her.

Luke pulled his fingers from her body and positioned himself between her legs. She looked up at him and bit her lip to keep from begging him to plunge into her. He held his shaft and teased her by tapping it against her clit, making her jerk her hips. Then he ran the tip through her wetness with agonizing slowness.

She growled, sounding as wolfish as her lovers. "Fuck me now."

Luke snarled, drew his hips back, and drove in.

She screamed as he seated himself with that single thrust.

He held himself deep while she bucked and twisted, trying to make him move. Finally he pulled back and started pumping into her in a hard, fast rhythm. He might let Derek dominate him when they fucked, but he could also be the kind of brutal lover Serena craved. What would it be like to have both men pounding into her body? The thought made her cry out.

Derek returned his attention to her nipples, licking at one while he pinched the other between his thumb and forefinger. She twisted, trying to escape. It was too much, both of them so close, their sexual energy pounding against her as they worked her body.

Then she realized she was feeling Luke's emotions as strongly as she ever had Derek's. Her bond with Derek was linking the three of them.

Harder. Give me everything.

Luke gasped.

You heard that? She heard Derek's voice in her mind, but she knew he was speaking to Luke.

Yes.

Luke did as she ordered, pounding her even harder. She screamed. "Make me come. Goddess, please make me come."

"Stop." Derek commanded.

Luke froze.

"No! I need it now." She rubbed her pussy against Luke's pelvic bone, too frantic to remember their goal of building energy.

Derek extracted a bottle from his nightstand and used the substance inside to grease his cock. Then he moved behind Luke. Dear Goddess, he was really going to fuck Luke while Luke fucked her. She held her breath in anticipation.

Derek stroked his cock as he lubed Luke's ass, pushing two fingers deep. Luke rewarded him with a loud gasp. He pulled his fingers free and positioned his cock. "Both of you hold still."

Derek positioned his cock and began to enter Luke's ass. His lover pushed back, opening himself and groaning as Derek sank deep.

Derek held himself still, reveling in the pure sensuality of the moment. Then he pulled out and drove back in, harder this time. Luke growled. He grabbed Luke's hips and began pumping hard and fast. "Fuck her now. I want you both to come now."

As Derek drove into Luke, he pushed his lover forward, making him sink deep into Serena. Her eyes widened, shock and pleasure evident on her face. Derek kept a punishing rhythm. Serena and Luke both panted, barely able to catch a breath. Near painful pleasure built in Derek's balls. Watching Luke and Serena as he drove his cock deep to push them both toward climax intoxicated him.

Serena stilled. She was right on the edge.

"Gather your energy and send it into Luke."

"How?" she gasped.

"Open the link. If you can talk to him, you can give him energy."

Derek drew back slowly, making Luke groan. Then he shoved forward pushing Luke into Serena. She cried out and bucked under Luke.

Luke convulsed against her.

The sight of the two of them crying out their pleasure brought Derek up and over. Serena's magic burned in his mind before it raced down his body. They held Luke tight between them as Luke shuddered with the force of the magic.

When the storm of energy and lust subsided, Derek pulled free of his lover's body and lay back on the bed. He wasn't as drained as he'd been from healing Serena, but he felt like he could sleep for hours. Luke lay on top of Serena, both had closed their eyes and neither made the slightest movement.

Derek decided to let them sleep while he finished up the travel preparations. He wanted to know how well the magic had worked, and whether Luke had gained strength or not, they were all going to Toulousia. They had no choice.

Chapter Four

Derek steered their small boat into a dark cove, mindful of the fog and the rocks. The risks they took sailing in the dark without so much as a lantern were great, but he and Isabel had agreed that entering Toulousia at night would provide them the greatest chance for anonymity.

As he drew closer to shore, he tensed. If he could get the boat safely to the beach, they could disembark and make their way to Alex's cabin. "Serena, can you sense anything through the fog?"

She gripped his hand tightly, and he felt the stir of magic in his mind. She was tapping into his resources to boost her powers. Neither of them knew yet what she was capable of. He hated that he had to bring her on a mission before they had time to explore the limits of their bond, but there was no going back now. He had to use every resource at his disposal to catch Two and prevent the Toulousians from getting their hands on the solar box technology, even if it meant endangering those he loved.

Serena squeezed tighter. He could feel the intensity of her concentration. After a few more seconds, she let go and sighed. "I didn't sense anything. But we cannot know if our path is clear, or if I don't have the power to detect an object in front of us."

"If the wind gets any stronger, we may not make it to shore. I'm going to go for it." Derek's heart pounded as he steered the boat toward what he prayed was a clean stretch of beach. The boat hit the sand with a jolt. They had avoided any rocks or other barriers either because of Serena's scan or sheer luck.

Everyone climbed out of the boat and regrouped further up the beach.

"How close do you think we are to the rendezvous point?" Isabel asked.

Derek knew the precise location of Alex's cabin, but in the dark and the fog they had no way to be certain where they'd landed.

Derek took a few moments to look around. "There are lights to the east. We'll assume they are coming from the village Alex described."

Using their lowest powered fuel lantern and praying it wouldn't be seen, they climbed the steep, rocky path leading up from the beach. When they found the road, Derek sent a howl into the night. Seconds later it was answered. Only a wolf would know the call had come from a human throat. Alex was close by.

"Isabel, shift and track Alex's scent. We'll follow."

She did as ordered. Serena stepped close to Derek and squeezed his hand. *Her wolf is enormous.*

It is a true manifestation of her personal power.

He felt Serena shiver. As a human, Isabel looked as if the only threat she might pose was to a man's virtue. In fact, she was the deadliest assassin Derek had ever met. Her wolf form looked every bit as powerful as she truly was. But Serena's fear surprised him. If Serena could control his canine form then she could control Isabel's. What did Serena sense that unnerved her? Did she realize Isabel had been a witch when she was human? Could Isabel hold the power to block Serena's control?

Isabel led them to a cabin that fit the description Alex had given them. She stood on her hind legs and peered in the window. *He's there, and he appears to be alone.*

Derek nodded to Luke who approached the door, weapon out in case any of Two's men had found Alex and laid a trap.

Alex opened the door and Luke and Isabel searched the cabin, making certain none of Two's men were lurking there, using Alex as bait. When they gave the all-clear sign, Derek and Serena entered.

"How far away is Two?" Derek asked, not wanting to waste a second.

Alex pulled out a map he'd constructed of the village and surrounding area. He pointed out his own cabin. "We're here. The main road goes through the center of the village. As you move further from the coast, the terrain becomes wooded." He traced a smaller road that led into those woods and stopped where the road crossed a stream.

“Two is staying at a small house located here along this stream with at least three of his associates. What I’ve gathered from the local gossip tells me the woman he’s staying with is known for taking in male borders. Her mother was a healer who was well liked. Her daughter is rumored to have seduced men with love spells, but no one associates her with particularly powerful magic. Other than her improprieties, she is of little concern to the villagers.”

“There must be more to her than the villagers see. Two isn’t ignorant enough to have been seduced by a woman who cannot help him.”

Alex nodded. “I met her briefly at the inn last night. Unless her acting powers are better than I have assumed, she is not an intelligent woman. I believe she knows something useful about the nature of our magic, maybe knowledge her mother passed down to her.”

“Can you lead us to Two’s cabin before daybreak?”

Alex looked at each of the wolves and frowned. “I think our chances of taking him and his men would be better if you got some rest first.”

“If we could spare the time, I would sleep for days but we cannot. We go tonight.”

* * *

They approached the witch’s cottage slowly. Luke and Isabel were both in wolf form. Derek knew he would make less noise if he shifted. But no matter how much he’d come to trust Serena, he had no desire to be under her control unless someone’s life depended on it. The wolves followed close behind Alex. Serena took careful steps, barely keeping up with the canines, and Derek guarded their rear.

When the cottage became visible, Derek signaled for them to spread out. Alex retreated into the woods. He would return to his cabin to preserve his identity in case they were unable to capture Two.

As planned, Derek approached a window. He flattened his body against the wall and leaned over just enough to see in. The sight before him stole his breath. The solar box was sitting on the kitchen table. Number Two and three other men leaned against

the sink. The woman sat in a chair. Her hands glowed with a soft blue light, and she extended them toward the box.

“She’s trying to fire the box. Weapons out. Go now.”

Isabel shifted to human form instantly, and Derek tossed her a gun. Luke slammed his canine body against the door. The wood cracked. Derek kicked it open, and the three wolves rushed in.

Serena watched from the doorway. Derek had armed her with a gun, but she had so little experience with them that she didn’t trust herself not to harm one of the wolves.

Isabel immediately got off a shot that took out one of Two’s associates.

The witch sent out a burst of energy that looked like a small purple ball. It zinged by Isabel’s head and dissipated on the wall.

The witch ducked under the table for cover, but Two yelled at her to continue working on the box even as he fought off a canine Luke who’d latched his jaws around Two’s leg.

Serena focused on a heavy candlestick. She sent it flying across the room where it slammed into the head of one of Two’s men, allowing Isabel to free herself from his grip, shift, and sink her teeth into his shoulder.

The witch continued to chant, and the blue light from her hands grew brighter. Serena tried to levitate the solar box, but it wouldn’t move. She supposed the magic inside it blocked her power somehow.

The air cracked as the blue light flowed from the witch’s hand into the box. Serena held her breath. The blue light flowed around the box but nothing happened.

With a furious look on her face, the witch turned toward Derek and the man he was fighting. She blasted both of them with the same magic she’d sent into the box.

Derek took the brunt of the hit. His eyes widened with shock, and he fell to his knees. The other man staggered. Derek lifted his knife and stabbed the man in the chest before collapsing against the floor.

Luke howled with anguish. He broke loose from Two and rushed the witch. Serena launched a heavy book into the air, but Two ducked before it could connect with his head.

The witch screamed. Serena glanced her way but turned her head quickly when she realized Luke had slashed her throat with his claws. Blood poured from the wound.

Two slipped through the back door just as Isabel brought down her attacker. She raced after him. Luke and Serena rushed to Derek. Lines of blood ran from his chest as if the witch's magic had cut him.

Luke laid his fingers against Derek's throat. "His pulse is still strong."

It was only when she knew that Derek was alive that she realized Luke was holding the box. At least their risk hadn't been for nothing. She stroked Derek's cheek. "Do you know what she did to him?"

"No, don't you?"

"I know next to nothing about my own powers much less those of another witch. Do you think I can heal him the way he did me?"

"You're going to have to. Losing him is not an option."

Serena nodded. "We need to get him back to Alex's cabin."

"Can you carry him that far?"

"Yes, thanks to the added strength you gave me. I would never have been able to kill the witch if I hadn't had the power boost."

Serena's chest tightened and she squeezed Derek's hand. He gave no indication that he'd felt her touch. "We've got to save him."

"Yes, we do." Luke handed Serena the box, and she tucked it into her cloak. Then Luke lifted Derek's inert form over his shoulder, and Serena followed in silence.

* * *

Serena knelt on the floor next to the thin worn mattress where Luke had laid Derek. Alex had left to search for Two and Isabel.

Serena gently touched Derek's bloodstained shirt, remembering how he had gripped her wrist when they'd healed it. But she felt nothing; no buzz of energy, no stirring of her magic.

"I don't know how to do this without a mental connection. When we healed my wrist, we worked together, joining our magic."

"Had you built sexual energy the way you did when you strengthened me?"

"Yes, but I think even without it I could join our energy to at least bring him back to consciousness. I can't be sure, but my instincts say I could. But without that link I can't summon anything, not even a connection to his wolf."

"Could you connect with him through me?"

Serena looked at Luke. She'd been able to communicate with him mentally when they were in bed, but she'd assumed Derek had to be in her mind for such a connection to work.

"I'll try. Relax and open your mind the way you do when Derek speaks to you."

Luke knelt beside her and took her hand. "When you are newly born as a wolf, the closer you are to your leader, the easier it is to utilize your connection."

She nodded and squeezed his hand, thankful for his warm presence beside her, and for the knowledge that Derek meant as much to Luke as he did to her. She knew Luke would do everything possible to save his friend and lover.

She searched for Luke's essence with her mind, the way she had reached out for Derek and for the consciousness of the animals she'd healed in the past. At first she felt nothing, but she refused to give up. Connecting with Luke might be Derek's only chance. The likelihood of finding a local healer sympathetic to an Albionan was slim enough. Finding one that could heal werewolves would be impossible.

"Touch me."

Luke squeezed her hand tighter. "I am."

"No, touch me like a lover."

Luke bent forward and ran his tongue along her neck as his hands caressed her sides then lifted her breasts, squeezing them and testing their weight.

She sighed and heat grew in her belly despite the fear racing up and down her spine. Then she felt a spark, a rush of energy filling her head. *Luke?*

I'm here.

I'm going to try again. Keep touching me. If I can heal Derek enough to stir a response in him, then touch him too.

Luke brushed his thumbs across her nipples. She shuddered with pleasure.

She laid her hands on Derek's chest, nearly sobbing when she felt blood still seeping from his wounds. They had to make this work, and they had to do it fast.

She tried to collect energy from Luke. He gasped as she pulled on his mind, trying to drag his magic from him. *Did I hurt you?*

Not exactly, but it feels strange.

Have you ever sent energy to Derek during a ritual?

No.

See if you can gather your magic as if you were about to perform a spell, then push it toward me.

Luke took a long slow breath, never ceasing to caress her breasts, her belly and her back with sensuous strokes.

She tried to summon his magic and a small spark came her way. *That's it. Give me more.*

He pushed up her dress and teased her clit. Then he pushed his fingers inside her, working them quick and hard.

She gasped. Luke's breathing grew ragged. Then the magic began to flow. The more magic she drew from him, the higher her lust grew. She cried out as Luke thrust deeper, adding another finger and dragging them over her inner pleasure spot as he flicked his thumb across her clit.

Her mind was nearly bursting with their combined powers, and she felt herself climbing toward orgasm. As her climax neared, she pressed her hands over Derek's wounds.

Luke used his other hand to tear her dress open. He sucked one of her nipples into his mouth. She screamed, and her magic spilled down her arms in searing hot lines. Luke bucked against her, the rush of power pulling him over too.

Her body bucked, and she nearly let go of Derek, but Luke laid his hands over hers. Pressing them down and holding them in place despite the storm of magic racing through them both.

Derek gasped and arched his back. His hands clamped around Serena's arms. Luke let go of her and skimmed his hands down Derek's body. Serena watched as he wrapped his hand around Derek's cock. He stroked up and down, and Derek tensed under her hands.

"More." He gasped. "Give me more."

Luke unfastened Derek's pants and bent to draw his lover's shaft into his mouth. Serena forced herself to pull her gaze away from the sexy sight so she could investigate Derek's wounds. She pulled Derek's shirt open. The deep gashes on his chest had closed. They were still an angry red but no more blood oozed.

"Fuck me. That's what I need to complete this." His words were so low and hoarse she could barely hear him. He'd lost a lot of blood. Would sex really help him or would the exertion only make him worse? "Are you truly strong enough?"

It will make me stronger.

Hearing him in her mind sent a rush of warmth through her. If he could form a link with her, then he was truly healing.

Chapter Five

Serena pulled her bodice further apart and leaned down so Derek could draw one of her nipples into his mouth. The strength of his suck surprised her, and she cried out. He used his grip on her arms to pull her down so he could take more of her breast into his mouth. He bit down, hard enough to leave a mark. Heat raced to her pussy.

“Ride him.”

Luke’s voice startled her. She realized he’d released Derek and was sitting back on his heels. She pulled free of Derek’s mouth and yanked her dress up to her waist. Then she straddled Derek and guided his shaft to her pussy. As she sank down on him, he tensed. *Am I hurting you?*

He shook his head but she knew he was lying.

She leaned forward, bracing her hands on the mattress. *I don’t want to injure you more.*

“Fuck me.”

Luke stroked her back. “We’ve gotten the healing process started, but we need more energy.”

Derek snarled. “Now, Serena.”

“But Luke and I could --”

Derek shook his head. “Our connection is more primal.”

She didn’t argue anymore. A little more pain wouldn’t matter if she could manage a full healing, but her heart ached to think of hurting Derek.

She sank down the rest of the way. Derek gasped. She had to ignore the flash of pain on his face as her movements pulled at the wounds on his chest.

She rose up and came down again. At first, she moved slowly, but her pace increased with each stroke. She froze suddenly when Luke's finger teased her ass. She realized he'd greased it with something.

Derek growled and bucked his hips. "Don't stop."

"She'll have to while I'm putting my cock up her ass."

Derek moaned. "Then get on with it."

Serena realized that Derek's words were clearer, his voice stronger. Somehow the sex was working to heal him. She prayed her next orgasm would produce enough energy for a full healing.

Luke pushed at her back. She bent forward, bracing herself on her elbows so she didn't put too much pressure on Derek's chest. She gasped when Derek pulled her ass cheeks apart, opening her for Luke.

The tip of Luke's cock brushed against her, and she tensed. She remembered how full she'd felt when Derek had fucked her ass. Luke's cock wasn't as thick but Derek was already filling her. How the hell would her body accommodate them both?

Derek moaned, and she opened her eyes. Evil lust lit his gaze. "Scared?"

She nodded.

"Good."

"Bastard."

A little fear makes you hotter. You know it.

Luke pushed forward a little. She tensed.

He gave her a light spank. "Relax."

Keep going, Derek insisted.

Luke pushed forward more. She gasped, struggling to accommodate him, just those few inches making her so full she could hardly stand it. Her breathing grew ragged, and a shiver of fear ran down her spine.

Derek spoke in her mind in a low and sensuous voice. *Fear makes you wild. I need you wild. I need Luke to fill you so full you want to scream.* His hot words jolted her. She circled her hips, rubbing against him, unable to keep still for Luke to enter her.

Luke wrapped his hands around her waist, trying to hold her as he drove even deeper. She gasped at the stretching sensation, it both hurt and gave her exquisite pleasure.

Luke thrust harder. She cried out. Derek reached between them and tugged on her nipples. The riot of pain and pleasure stole her breath. Luke drove in all the way, and she felt his balls slap against her.

For a few seconds she couldn't breathe. She'd fantasized about this moment, about having both of them filling her simultaneously. But she'd never imagined it would feel this intense. She feared the pleasure might take her sanity. She wanted to concentrate on healing Derek but all she could think about at the moment was feeling them move in her.

Luke's trembling told her he was holding on by a thread. If he moved now, he would explode deep inside her. She wanted to push him to it, to regain some of the control she'd surrendered in letting them trap her between them, but they needed this to last if they were going to complete Derek's healing.

Serena bit her lip and dug her fingers into the mattress, as she fought to keep still. But her inner muscles squeezed both men and they gasped.

Luke bit down on the back of her neck, and she lost control. Her hips bucked wildly against Derek's. Luke pinned her down and circled his hips, stretching her even further. She whimpered as heat radiated through her ass.

"Fuck me," she snarled. She felt as if she truly were a wolf, one who'd been cornered and was desperate to escape. She feared she would rip Derek apart with her nails or her teeth if she didn't get what she needed.

She's losing it. Like a wolf coming into her power without the knowledge of how to use it.

Serena heard Luke's voice, but he sounded far away, and she couldn't quite process the words.

She still wants to heal you, but she can't let the magic out until we all come.

We have to give her what she needs, or she's going to harm herself or us.

I can't last long. She's so fucking tight and so hot.

We can't afford to wait any longer.

Serena felt Luke shudder against her as he pulled out slowly. The sinfully delicious feeling calmed Serena for a moment. Then he thrust, hard and deep. She screamed and bucked against him, but he didn't stop. He kept moving faster and faster, driving into her ass, making it burn every time he stretched her wide with his cock.

His strokes pushed her against Derek and created an opposing rhythm. Luke held onto her hips, dragging her back onto Derek's cock as Luke pulled out of her. She tensed, afraid of the sensations that were building in her. But as Luke increased his speed and both men filled her to capacity she forgot how to fear, how to think, how to do anything but feel.

Derek fought for breath. His chest ached from the wounds he'd received. He feared one of his lungs had been damaged by the blast of magic, but pleasure blocked out most of the serious pain. Serena's tight pussy squeezed his cock, threatening to rip a climax from him before he was ready. He could feel Luke's cock through her body as if his lover were rubbing directly against him.

Serena's cries of pleasure/pain sent jolts of ecstasy racing through his belly. The thought of how she must feel, her ass impaled on Luke's impressive length, her body stuffed by both of them, heated him to boiling. He marveled at her capacity for pleasure and her acceptance of his feelings for Luke. He loved that the three of them could slake their hunger together.

He wanted to fuck Serena in every possible way, to share her with Luke and with other wolves when the time was right, to watch her cry out her climax as she learned the true capacity of a wolf pack's sexual prowess. And he would. This healing would give him back his strength. There was no other choice.

Serena arched up, and he curled his body enough to reach her nipples. He sucked one into his mouth, ignoring the ripping sensation in his chest. He had to push Serena to the point of insanity. He bit down on the tight bud and was rewarded with a scream.

She fisted her hands in his hair and trapped him against her. *More. More.*

He sucked and then bit even harder. But he fell back against the mattress when Luke thrust hard and deep. None of them could hold on much longer. He prayed the energy racing through them would be enough to heal the damage to his chest and lungs.

You need this, don't you, Serena? You need Luke to pound your ass.

Yes. More please.

Show us how much you like being stuffed with our cocks.

Goddess, yes.

Come now, both of you.

Luke made a strangled sound and shoved into Serena. She tensed. Her muscles tightened around Derek's cock, almost hurting him. Her body convulsed, and she screamed. Derek let himself go then, allowing the throbbing of Serena's inner muscles and the pulses that echoed from Luke's cock to send him over.

He rode the orgasm, trying to stay aware to direct their healing ritual, but he hovered on the edge of consciousness. He tried to call out to Serena as blackness rolled over him.

Magic burned in Serena's chest, but she couldn't think. She'd forgotten everything in the storm of need that had taken her body. Luke grabbed her arms and pushed her hands down on Derek's chest.

"Let it out. You've got to let it out."

She tried to gather the swirl of magic and send it into her hands, but it wouldn't obey. *"I can't."*

"You have to, or you'll kill Derek and yourself."

Her chest tightened. The magic squeezed her lungs and her heart. Fear paralyzed her.

"Kiss him."

Serena bent and placed her lips on one of the fierce red lines on Derek's chest. Power poured out of her. She couldn't control the wild spill of magic, but she couldn't move either. Luke steadied her with his hands. She grew weaker and weaker until she could barely hold herself up.

"Stop, Serena. That's enough."

She heard the words, but she couldn't obey them.

Finally, Luke jerked her away, tossing her onto the mattress. She tried to crawl back on top of Derek, but Luke pulled her into his arms and held her tight until she stopped fighting him.

Tears poured from her eyes. "I have to heal him. I have to make him live."

"You've done all you can. If you give all your energy, you will die no matter what happens to him."

She collapsed against Luke's chest and let him hold her while she sobbed.

"What's wrong?"

Serena sucked in her breath and turned to look at Derek. He was sitting up, and his chest was smooth and white once again.

"I -- I thought... Are you all right?"

Derek ran his hands up and down his chest and took a deep breath. "I'll do."

"But I poured so much into you, and you didn't wake up or move. I thought it hadn't worked."

"It looks like you almost killed yourself in the process."

Luke nodded. "I had to pull her off you."

"Serena, never give anyone enough energy to incapacitate you, no matter what the consequences. That's a rule in our pack."

"I wasn't going to let you die."

Before Derek could respond, Alex's wire communicator made a screech and began emanating rapid taps. Luke rushed to decode the message.

Your wolf and I are at the coast. Two escaped to our homeland. A loyal ship's captain will give us passage. Will wait for you until daybreak.

Serena had wrapped the box in her cloak and placed it away from the bed before their ritual began. She retrieved it and handed it to Derek. "Now that we have the box, does Two still hold power over us?"

"He came damn close to firing it up. We've got to track him and see what he's up to. If he's figured out how to make another one, we have to eliminate him and damn the consequences."

"But the king --"

"Will certainly retaliate if we kill his son, but we have no choice. This technology is more important." Derek glanced at the clock on the mantle. "If we head out now we can join them."

Luke frowned. "Can you walk?"

"I don't have a choice."

Chapter Six

Derek, Luke, and Serena were exhausted and half-starved by the time they arrived back at Derek's estate. They had lost Two's trail, and Isabel had accompanied Alex to London to see what they might learn from Toulousian contacts there.

Henry greeted them the moment they walked in the door. If matters weren't so urgent, Derek would have ignored his request for an audience, scooped up Serena, taken her to his room and curled up in bed with her. They would sleep for hours, then make love until they fell asleep again. Instead he was beholden to follow Henry to the library and hear the news that had put such concern on the man's face.

"Luke, take Serena upstairs. Secure the box then see that she gets some rest." Serena opened her mouth to speak but Derek cut her off. "No matter how she protests, she is to be in bed. Drug her if you have to."

"Damn it. I don't want to be asleep when you need me."

"Go compliantly, and we will wake you when we need you."

She looked as if she were going to argue further, but then she simply said, "Promise me."

"I promise."

Derek watched Luke and Serena for a moment, feeling his stomach do unusual things that he didn't want to analyze. Too much emotion was deadly in his line of work.

He entered the library where Henry was pacing in front of the fire. "I'm listening," he barked.

"I believe I saw Charles this morning."

Derek tensed. "Where?"

"Leaving the kitchen. I woke early and needed something to settle my stomach. As I came down the stairs, I heard something that sounded like footsteps. I ran, but

when I got to the kitchen no one was there. I saw a figure that was almost surely Charles running toward the woods. I shifted and chased him, but he shifted too and escaped.”

“So you can’t be positive it was Charles, but it was undoubtedly a wolf?”

“Yes, my lord. But both the man and the wolf fit Charles’s description.”

“Was anything stolen?”

“Nothing important, but according to cook, she’s missing a tray of meat and cheese and a plate of scones.”

Derek nodded. If Charles was working for Two, what was he doing lurking in the woods stealing food from their kitchen? Two should at least be feeding a man capable of giving Toulousia the secret that would win the war for them.

“Thank you Henry. I want you, Rhianna, and Olivia on patrol outside. I’m going to take one hour to recover from the journey then begin searching the woods with Luke and Serena. Keep your minds alert for communication from me. I will call if we need reinforcements.”

* * *

Serena couldn’t stop herself from staring at Derek and Luke as they walked in front of her in wolf form. The sheer beauty of their movements made her heart ache. She longed to enter their minds and make them turn to her, but she dared not.

She would do nothing to damage the fragile trust she and Derek had established. He’d hesitated for a few moments before changing, but he’d accepted her assurances that she wouldn’t use her power unless his life was in danger. Watching his inner struggle only made her care for him more.

Both wolves had their noses to the ground, searching for Charles’s scent. They’d picked it up for a few moments then lost it as they went across a creek. They’d been walking for miles now. Serena was so exhausted she feared her legs might give way, but she kept going without complaint. They needed her, and she wasn’t going to fail them.

Luke lifted his head, sniffed the air, then returned to the ground.

We've got something, Derek said in her mind.

Luke sniffed around the trunk of a tree and hesitated.

We'll have to go off the path.

Luke's voice in her head startled her. She hadn't expected to hear him when they weren't sexually connected.

Can you keep track of the scent on your own? Derek asked.

Luke ventured deeper into the woods then came trotting back. *Yes. It gets stronger here.*

Derek shifted to human form instantly. "Get on my back."

"What?"

"I'm going to carry you."

"You're still recovering. I can walk."

"Your shoes are inadequate for the terrain. Get on my back."

"You haven't the strength to carry me who knows how far through the woods."

Derek growled.

Just do as he says so we can find Charles. Luke sounded exasperated with both of them.

"Fine." She pulled up her dress enough to climb onto Derek's back.

As they worked their way through the brush, Derek pushed himself to keep up with Luke's easy lupine gait. They followed narrow, brush-covered paths for what felt like hours before arriving at a small cabin.

He's here. I smell him, Luke told them both.

Derek let Serena slide to the ground. *Stay here, both of you.*

Serena watched Derek approach the side of the cabin and look in one of the dirty windows. He crept around the side. Several heart-wrenching seconds passed before he emerged again and crept toward them.

I didn't see anyone but there is a second small room with no windows. Charles must be in there. Serena, your power should allow you to sense any human presence. Is anyone there?

Serena sought the place in her mind where her magic resided when she wasn't using it. She reached toward the cabin with her mind, searching for warmth or the activity of a mind.

I don't sense anyone else, but I'm getting only a faint hint of Charles's presence so you can't trust my perception.

It's all we've got. We're going in. Luke, get behind me. Serena, wait by the door and scream if anyone approaches.

Derek shifted back to wolf form, and he and Luke padded toward the cabin in complete silence. Once they were inside, Serena crept onto the porch and waited by the door as ordered. She heard Luke gasp and tensed. Then Derek called to her.

She rushed into the cabin. Her stomach tightened into a knot when she saw Charles. He was slumped over, unconscious in the chair where he was chained. His face was a mass of bruises and his chest was marred with what appeared to be burn marks.

She started to ask if he were still alive, but she saw the faint rise of his chest. No wonder she hadn't been able to sense his presence strongly. She knelt in front of him to more closely examine his wounds. "Why didn't he shift to fight them?"

Derek bent and touched the chains. He pulled his hand back as if they'd burned him. "Silver chains. They interfere with our magic."

Serena pulled the chain away from Charles's wrist. The skin beneath was raw and oozing puss. She shuddered as she imagined the pain he'd been in before he lost consciousness.

"Do you think you've recovered enough to heal him?" Derek asked.

Serena took a deep breath "I have to try. At least this time, I can draw from both of you."

Derek nodded. "No heroics. We need to know what he's told Two, but if we can't bring him back without draining ourselves we leave him. We have to reserve enough strength to fight Two and anyone he might bring with him. We have no idea how close they are."

Serena didn't want to ask what would happen to Charles after he'd given them the information they needed. Despite his pathetic state, he was a traitor. But looking at his bruises and torn skin, she couldn't help feeling sorry for him despite his anger toward her. She tried to push that thought from her mind and concentrate on finding her magic.

She laid her hands against Charles's damaged chest. Derek and Luke began to caress her. Their hands slid up and down her back and then each of them cupped one of her breasts. She sucked in her breath when they flicked their thumbs across her nipples. Their link strengthened, and she felt both of them in her mind. She focused on their sensuous touches, letting her body open to the sexual desire they built in her.

Her magic flared. The magic came quicker than it ever had before. She didn't know if that was because both Luke and Derek were weaving their energy with hers or if she was simply getting better with practice. With little effort, magic began to spill down her arms and rush into Charles.

For several exhausting minutes, she pulled power from her lovers and sent it spiraling out of her fingertips. Finally Charles's eyelids fluttered, and he moaned.

Derek pulled her back. "That's enough."

Serena came back to herself. She was dizzy, but she was no where near as weak as she'd been the other times she'd worked magic with one of the wolves. She looked at Charles, the wounds on his chest and face were mostly healed, and his breathing appeared less labored. He opened his eyes as she scrutinized him.

"What have you told him?" The bitterness in Derek's voice made Serena shiver.

Charles face contorted and tears formed in his eyes. "I'm so sorry."

Derek growled. "Tell me what he knows."

"I told him I could animate the box."

"That's a lie."

"Yes. I was looking for a way out, a way to leave the pack." He paused to cough and his hand came away from his mouth tinged with blood. "I thought I could string him along for awhile, then make excuses."

Derek gestured toward Charles's face and chest. "Obviously that didn't work."

Charles coughed again and shuddered. "No, he forced me to demonstrate my skill and beat me when I couldn't perform. To save myself, I told him where our kind was born. I told him to look for a witch there."

"He found one. She failed him too, and we have the box. But it appears he's on his way back here now. Do you know why?"

Charles shook his head. "One of his guards arrived this morning. He told me I was no longer useful and Two had given him leave to do with me as he pleased. I don't know if he intended to leave me for dead or if he's coming back."

"Did he say why your usefulness had come to an end?"

"No. But you have the box, why would he need me now?"

"He may be trying to make or steal another one." Derek turned to Luke. "We've got to get home and see if Alex has checked in. We may have guessed wrong on where Two was headed. If he's not coming here, then he's likely in London, possibly planning a strike on the King's Institute."

Luke nodded. "I agree."

Derek turned back to Charles. "Did you tell Two anything else of value?"

"The location of the power nexus. I met him there to animate the box."

Derek slammed his fist down on a rickety table, causing it to splinter. "How dare you tell a human where we meet to raise power?"

Charles's silent tears fell faster, but he said nothing.

For all the man's recent treachery, he had been a valuable asset to the pack in the two years since his transformation. Derek hated to have to kill him, but leaving him alive would show weakness. Despite how Charles had suffered at Two's hands, Derek could not trust Charles to remain loyal to the pack. For whatever reason, he believed Charles was sincerely sorry. Derek's instincts rarely failed him, but he couldn't gamble the safety of the pack without more assurance.

Resigned, he pulled a knife from his shoes. "I'll make this quick."

Charles's eyes widened but he said nothing.

Serena laid her hand on Derek's arm. "Isn't there another way?"

"No. The punishment for his crimes is death. That is our law."

"I'm so sorry," Charles said again.

"That you may be, but a wolf who is not loyal to the pack cannot be allowed to live."

"What if I prove that I can control him?" Serena asked.

Derek thought for a moment. If Serena could prove that she could exert control over Charles, he'd have an excuse to let Charles live and the threat of Serena's control would mitigate any loss of power Derek might suffer. He could not afford to appear weak to the pack, but this way, if anyone questioned his actions, he could threaten to give Serena control over them as well. No one would risk that.

"Prove it, and I will let him live."

Anger at Derek and their circumstances rumbled in Serena's chest. She didn't want the burden of saving Charles placed on her shoulders, but she knew Derek was only doing what he must. As much as she hated the idea of him executing Charles, that was exactly what the man's crime called for. Why did she feel so compelled to save a man who had wished her nothing but harm? She was not usually so kind to those who crossed her.

But nevertheless, the desire to keep Charles alive burned inside her. *A wolf caller who is bound to a pack is called to protect her wolves, even from themselves.* The words echoed inside her as if someone had truly spoken them, but she knew neither Luke nor Derek had opened their link.

She searched inside herself for the flutter of her magic. It was weaker than she'd like, but she prayed it was enough. She focused on the chains that held Charles to the chair, letting her mind seek the locking mechanism and manipulate it. When the locks clicked open, she allowed herself to take a quick breath before sending her magic straight into Charles's mind, forcing herself not to flinch at the discomfort her forced probe would cause him.

Charles groaned and gripped his head. "Let me in. I'm trying to help you."

But instinct took over and he fought her. She pushed, knowing she was hurting him. *Shift*. He fought, pushing his magic against hers. *You will shift*. The air around him wavered. She was almost there. She gave one further magical push, and an enormous wolf stood before them.

"Walk toward me." She spoke the command out loud, uncertain if Luke and Derek could hear her mental call.

Charles leaned back as Derek had done the night she'd met him in the woods. "Come to me."

One paw lifted and Charles took a step. A low whimper escaped him.

Serena stuck out her hand. "Walk to me, and lick my hand."

Slowly, as if being pushed by someone, Charles did as she commanded.

She patted his head then withdrew the force of her magic. "You may return to human form."

Serena stepped back and barely resisted shaking herself. Once again, as she had when she'd forced Derek to her will, she'd gotten a rush of power she never expected. The lure of such strong magic was far more intoxicating than she ever would have imagined. She could see how a wolf caller could become addicted to such a feeling.

She looked at Derek and Luke, and knew instantly that they'd sensed her enjoyment of Charles's submission. Both men were pale, and Luke was standing behind Derek as if asking for protection. But now wasn't the time to address their fears or her own.

"Have I proven my control to your satisfaction?" she asked Derek.

He nodded, his expression disturbingly neutral. "Indeed you have." He turned to face Charles. "Do you wish to live, knowing the control my mate and I possess over you?"

Serena had not considered the possibility that Charles would choose death over control by her. Her heart pounded as she waited through agonizing seconds of silence.

Finally, Charles nodded. "Yes. I choose to live."

“There will be no second chance.”

“Yes, pack leader.”

Derek turned and walked out of the house. Luke, Charles and Serena followed in silence.

Chapter Seven

Charles collapsed about a quarter mile from the estate. Luke picked him up and carried him the rest of the way without comment. When they entered the hall, Serena checked him to make certain it was only exhaustion plaguing him rather than one of his wounds reopening. Then Derek used the intercom to call for Henry and Rhianna. Henry appeared first. Derek asked him to take Charles to a room and put him to bed. He was to stay and guard Charles's door.

Henry looked as if he wanted to question the orders, but he didn't dare.

"You'll have to explain Charles's presence to everyone," Luke said.

Derek nodded. "Soon, but not now."

Rhianna descended the stairs.

"Any word from Alex?"

She shook her head. "Nothing."

"Damn. We have an urgent message. He needs to know that we suspect Two will try to make a hit on the Institute's headquarters to obtain another box."

Rhianna's eyes widened. "Another box? Did we get the other one back?"

Derek smiled. "We did. But I'm afraid Two's become obsessed with his quest to see one work. I don't think he's going to stop now."

"If he's in the grip of an obsession, he won't be thinking clearly. He'll get sloppy, and we'll take him out."

Derek nodded. "See if you can get through to Alex's personal wire-call station in case he's found lodging. Keep trying if you can't get through at first."

"Should I let you know once I've made contact?"

Derek shook his head. "Not if it happens in the next few hours. We need absolute privacy to work some magic."

Rhianna's lips curled up.

Derek scowled. "I don't mean we're going to fuck. I'd say so if I did. We have a significant magical working that must be done tonight, and I will not have it disturbed."

Rhianna's cheeks flamed and she looked frightened by Derek's vehemence.

Derek cursed himself. She was the kindest of his wolves. He had no right to be such a bastard to her. "I'm sorry. I've had a long day."

She inclined her head. "Shall I begin my attempts now?"

"Yes. Leave a note in my study if you succeed. I'll check in with you when we are done."

"Yes, pack leader." She headed in the direction of the library.

Derek turned back to Luke and Serena. "Now, we're going to try to animate the box."

"What?" Luke and Serena asked the question simultaneously.

"We need to know the limits of our new powers. Finding out if we're strong enough to work magic on the level of the technology's inventors will be a perfect test."

Luke frowned. "Do you have any idea how to make the box work?"

"No, but I imagine Isabel does."

Serena frowned. "Isabel? Why?"

"She was a witch before the change. A rather powerful one as I understand."

"Then why the hell haven't we consulted her before now? I have no idea in five hells what I'm doing, yet you keep demanding I use my powers."

Serena's words hit Derek like a slap. This certainly wasn't his night for pleasing women. "Asking for Isabel's help reveals how little we know about our bond and what we can do with it."

Serena stared at him, obviously not seeing the point.

"The more wolves who realize how little I understand what we can do, the weaker my authority in the pack."

"But Isabel is loyal to you, isn't she?"

"She appears to be but I've learned to never trust appearances in this game."

"You trust Luke and me."

"I know the two of you in a deeper way than anyone else."

"So you and Isabel haven't..."

Derek tensed. "I've taken her to bed as I have all the wolves at some point or another." He waited for Serena's condemnation but none came. The tightness in his chest loosened a bit.

"So why tell Isabel now?"

"Because I've felt the power the three of us can raise. We can't continue to fly blind. If Isabel can help us understand how to focus our talents then the risk is worth it."

Serena nodded. "I'll agree to work on the box if I can continue to study with Isabel."

Derek wanted to say no. It was one thing to let Isabel know that they needed assistance for serious magic, but he hadn't intended to reveal that Serena had no fundamental understanding of her powers. But Serena was right. She deserved the chance to have the apprenticeship she should have had years ago. "Agreed."

Luke spoke up then. "Are you certain playing with the box is wise? What if we let something loose that we can't control?"

"Then we figure out how to control it. We need to try this. If we hold as much power as I suspect then we are going to be both stronger than I ever imagined and more vulnerable to attack."

"Why more vulnerable?" Serena asked.

"Everyone -- other packs who serve the King's Institute, rogue wolves, our enemies -- is going to want what we have. If they think they can break our bond and use your magic to their advantage, they will try to take you."

Serena scowled. "I would never leave you."

"Not of your own will, but there are wolves out there more powerful than me."

"Then why do you hold such power in the Office of Clandestine Affairs?"

"I am the smartest, but that doesn't make me the strongest in terms of brute force."

"Are you truly willing to risk Serena in this way?" Luke asked.

Derek exhaled slowly. "No one will lay a hand on her. I swear it."

Luke shook his head, but he clasped Derek's hand in his. "I swear it too."

"You and Serena wait in the chapel. I'll bring Isabel after I've explained our situation."

Luke and Serena pulled Derek to them in a hug that was too emotional to be comfortable. He pulled back as soon as he could. "Go. Now."

* * *

"We need your assistance with a ritual."

"Why me?"

Despite her former status as a witch and her strong magical abilities, Derek rarely called on Isabel for magical work. He was far more likely to rely on her tracking and shooting skills. "Because you were trained as a witch, and we need your guidance."

She frowned. "What are you up to?"

Derek sighed. "We recovered the solar box, and we're going to attempt to animate it before we return it to headquarters."

Color drained from Isabel's face. Derek had rarely seen her frightened or even alarmed. Was he making the right decision? As concerned as he was about attempting such strong magic, he truly believed such a test was necessary.

"The magic that Serena, Luke, and I have been able to perform in the last two days has made me suspect that we are sitting on a power base larger than I ever imagined. I knew that bonding with Serena would strengthen the pack, but I didn't think our strength would grow so quickly."

Isabel nodded. "How well do you understand the magic you possess?"

Derek drew in a breath. He knew he had no choice, but he'd had the primary rule of running a pack enforced for so long it had become second nature. Do not reveal any weakness. "Very little. Bits and pieces that I found in our oldest texts."

“What about Serena?”

“She was never trained. She knew she had the ability to call canines but nothing of her other powers. Her grandmother would have trained her in time, but she died when Serena was ten.”

“How have you managed the magic you’ve worked?”

“Instinct. Serena’s natural abilities are amazing, but with our current level of strength, it has become dangerous for us to work without more knowledge. Serena would like you to train her.”

“Will I be given the chance to improve my personal strength as Luke has?”

“In time.”

“Soon, if you expect my help.”

Derek snarled. “You will help because I command it.”

“There is only so much you can force. You can’t draw my knowledge from me, nor do I think you want to.”

She was right. He wanted her willing. “We must learn more about how to control the magic we have now. Then all the wolves will benefit personally, as Luke and I have.”

“I suppose I can accept that.”

Derek growled. “Will you serve as Serena’s guide?”

“I would love to,” Isabel answered with a wicked smile.

“You like her, don’t you?”

Isabel nodded. “I do.”

“She is not yet used to our ways. I don’t know if she would be receptive to a sexual relationship with you.”

“She is Luke’s lover, is she not?”

Derek nodded. “Yes, but he is a man.”

“Ah. I forget how taboo such matters are for humans.”

“It is easy to forget living as we do. Train her, but remember how new this all is - magic, werewolves, sexual exploration.”

Isabel nodded. "Of course. Thank you for trusting me."

"You're welcome. You are not to speak of your sessions with Serena. As far as the others are concerned, she had a traditional apprenticeship as a witch before she came to us."

"I will tell no one. As for tonight, do you have any idea how the box works?"

"Only in the most rudimentary way."

"I need to see it. Touching it may give me more insight."

"Serena and Luke are in the chapel. Let's join them."

* * *

Serena looked up when Isabel and Derek entered. She and Luke had retrieved the box and set it on the low table in the middle of the room. Then Luke had prepared the room, creating a protective, sacred space for their magical working. Serena had helped as much as she could, not knowing how even a witch should properly prepare to perform strong magic much less a werewolf.

Once the room was ready, she'd tried to sense how to unlock the box. She had tried touching it, lifting it, and opening the small door on the side, but none of these gave her any insight. She couldn't sense any magical vibrations from it. It was as if the magic used to make it was completely unrelated to her own.

Derek and Isabel knelt by the table without saying a word. Luke had explained that once the protective space had been created, the wolves talked only when they needed to for their ritual to proceed. Serena's heart pounded as she watched Isabel caress the sides of the box. The red-haired wolf closed her eyes and tipped her head back. The only sign that she was experiencing anything but sensual bliss was the way her teeth sank into her lower lip.

Time seemed to stand still. Serena felt as if she'd been watching Isabel for hours when she finally released the box and sat back on her heels. "It's sealed with a magical lock. We have to mentally manipulate a series of threads that will unlock the core. Then we will need a huge burst of energy to fire it so the internal conversion mechanism

begins to turn. This action enables it to convert energy from the sun into something we can send through a wire."

"A strong energy burst we can handle," Derek said. "How do we open the lock?"

"The method is similar to levitation, but more refined."

Serena interrupted. "I have figured out levitation, but the smaller the object, the harder it is. I managed to loosen the knots in the ropes Two used to restrain me, but that nearly drained me. And the box seems unresponsive to my magic. I tried to move it the night we took it back but it wouldn't budge."

"Likely, it senses that your magic is witch and not werewolf. Since I am both, I may be able to serve as a bridge that will allow you access."

"How can we help?" Luke asked.

"Have you connected with Serena when she used magic that is not associated with wolves?"

Luke shook his head.

"Then Serena and I should work alone on this."

Serena's heart rate increased. She didn't want to fail the wolves, but she truly wasn't sure she could open the box, even if Isabel helped her. She took a deep breath and looked at Isabel. "Will the two of us be able to share our powers? Initially, I could only connect to Luke if I was also connected to Derek."

"If our magic has the same base, then we can."

"What do you mean by base?"

"Every witch's magic has a base, something that helps them raise power. Like the wolves, my base is sex. Is this true for you as well?"

Serena felt her cheeks heat as she nodded her ascent. Something about Isabel's tone and the way she looked at Serena so intently made her nervous. Serena had never been ashamed of her sexuality despite what society had taught her. But for some reason Isabel's lascivious nature unsettled her.

"Shall we begin?" Derek asked. Serena could feel his tension and impatience.

Without warning, Isabel took Serena's hand and held it as she caressed Serena's back with her other hand. Serena closed her eyes as warm waves ran over her. Then she felt Isabel in her mind. *Can you hear me?*

Yes. What do we do now?

Search inside the box. Find the lock and help me move the pieces.

Serena opened her eyes and looked into the box. *I can't see anything but a sphere.*

See it with your mind.

Serena closed her eyes and laid her hands on the side of the box. Isabel massaged Serena's shoulders. Her touch was warm and increasingly sensual.

Serena tried to concentrate, letting her magic seep into the box and show her the inner workings, but she still saw nothing.

I'm going to let my magic run into you now and wrap it around yours. We have to trick the box into revealing itself.

Serena nodded. The warmth of Isabel's hands intensified, and Serena saw a golden string in her mind. She tried to hold onto it, to join it to herself. At first her magic recoiled.

Relax. Let go of your fears, and let me in.

Serena drew in a slow breath and concentrated on relaxing each muscle group in her body. Eventually, tension drained from her mind. Several minutes later, she felt something lock into place in her mind. She knew instinctively that Isabel had united their magic.

Try to see the box again.

Serena used her mind to look into the box. This time the sphere appeared translucent. Inside she could see a tangle of knots. *We have to unravel them so our energy can penetrate to the sphere's core.*

Serena tensed, almost losing her connection to Isabel. She couldn't imagine finding such minute control of her powers. Even magnified in her mind, the strands were as thin as the delicate sewing thread her seamstress favored.

Serena opened her eyes and looked at Derek. She saw a rare flash of fear on his face. Their connection opened. He didn't actually speak, but she knew what he was feeling. *We cannot fail.*

I will do my best.

Serena closed her eyes again and Derek's presence faded from her mind. She and Isabel worked together to separate the strands, failing in each of their first three attempts before finally loosening one. Sweat poured down Serena's brow, and she felt herself weakening from her magical efforts. She steeled herself and forced her mind to concentrate until they succeeded in freeing all but two of the threads.

Serena swayed with dizziness as she and Isabel tried to separate the last knot. Isabel caught her as she collapsed to her knees. "Support her," she heard Isabel's voice as if it were far away. The image of the sphere began to fade, but Derek and Luke began to caress her before her world went entirely black.

They rubbed her back, and Derek laid kisses along her neck. She let go of the sphere with one hand and grabbed Isabel's arm. "We must finish." Her voice sounded thin and weak.

"We will," Isabel responded. The former witch still sounded like herself. Did nothing tire her? "I'm going to force a burst of energy into your mind. It will be uncomfortable, but it will give you the power you need to open the last knot. When you feel it, push the pain away, and do the magic."

Serena held herself rigid.

Relax. Derek spoke into her mind. "Let the pain wash over you and grab hold of the power."

Serena cried out as a burst of light exploded in her mind, but somehow, with Derek's help, she kept her mind open. As her body shivered with the extra energy, she saw the sphere clearly again. Mentally, she reached for Isabel, and they freed the knot.

Chapter Eight

“Build energy now. As fast as you can.” The urgency in Isabel’s voice pulled Serena back to reality.

Derek turned Serena toward him and took her lips in a fierce kiss. Luke stepped closer and slid his hands up her sides, weighing her breasts before flicking his thumbs across her nipples.

She writhed against them as her tongue tangled with Derek’s and Luke laved and nibbled her neck. Both men rubbed their cocks against her body. She cried out, wanting them both inside her, wanting desperately to squeeze them as she came.

She’d thought herself too weak to help them any more, but suddenly energy built in her so thick and strong she thought she might split open if she didn’t let it out.

Isabel slid a hand between Serena and each of the men, caressing Serena’s belly and her back. *We’re ready. Send it now.*

Serena opened her eyes, fighting her body’s needs. They lost a few seconds before she could force herself to let go of Derek and place her hands on the box. The others kept their hands on her body. Their energy flowed into her, and she pushed the hot swirl into the box.

The tension in her body eased as she let go of the abundance of power that had built in her. Suddenly the sphere began to glow, brighter and brighter until she had to turn away. The metal grew so hot she jerked her hands away, stumbling as she tried to shake away the burning in her palms.

Derek kissed her neck. *We did it.*

She smiled, still in awe of the power they’d raised. *Yes, we did.*

And now we have to undo it, Isabel reminded them.

Serena felt Derek smile against her skin. "That is easier than you might imagine. Just close the box."

Serena looked at the box. She couldn't touch the metal which now glowed red hot, so she tried to summon the power to shut the door with her mind. Her magic failed to respond. She'd overextended herself. Suddenly the door of the box swung closed, and the glow from the sphere faded. She turned to Isabel. "Thank you."

"My pleasure. I look forward to overseeing your training." Isabel smiled, looking very much like the predator she was.

A shiver ran down Serena's spine, suddenly she wasn't sure that insisting on Isabel's help was such a good idea. Despite her exhaustion, her body still thrummed with unfulfilled desire. An image of her kissing Isabel sprang to her mind.

Serena turned back to Derek, but the sudden movement made her knees buckle. Derek caught her, and she looked up at him, suddenly transfixed. The whole room seemed to hum with sexual need.

Derek took her lips as his hands dug into her back, holding her so tight she could barely breathe. Luke knelt behind her and slid his hands under her skirt, up her thighs, finally caressing her dripping wet pussy. When he pushed two fingers inside her, she cried out, knowing he could make her come in seconds.

Warm lips slid across her neck. She realized they must belong to Isabel. She tensed for a moment, but Luke chose that moment to fondle her clit, and she ceased to care who was touching her. Desire pulsed so thickly she could barely breathe.

Hands moved to her breasts and tweaked her nipples through the thin fabric of her dress. Derek? Isabel? She wasn't sure, but she arched into the touch, wanting more.

"Open your legs."

She obeyed Luke's command, and suddenly his mouth replaced his fingers. The warmth of his lips and tongue were more than she could take. Within seconds her body exploded. She writhed against Luke's mouth as Isabel and Derek supported her. When the storm finally calmed, Luke sat back on his heels, and she sank to the floor, bracing herself on her arms and panting. Derek and Isabel knelt beside her, and she watched as

Derek took Luke's mouth in a ferocious kiss while Isabel worked frantically at the fastenings of Luke's pants.

Isabel had just freed Luke's cock when Derek pulled back, panting. He looked at Serena. *I want you.*

I want you too.

Let's go.

But what about... She looked at Luke and Isabel. Isabel had wrapped her lips around Luke's cock, drawing much of his impressive length into her mouth. Luke's head fell back, and he groaned as his hands fisted in Isabel's hair.

I think they're well occupied.

Serena smiled. Part of her wanted to stay there and see what would happen between the four of them, but after all she'd been through, the idea of time alone with Derek was delightful.

He scooped her up in his arms. "Luke, Isabel, I trust you will return the box to its proper hiding place when you are finished."

Luke opened his eyes briefly. "You're leaving?"

"I need some time alone with my wife."

Luke smiled and nodded. Then he sucked in his breath as Isabel drew him even deeper.

As they walked to Derek's rooms, Serena reached up and caressed Derek's face. "That's the first time you've called me your wife."

Derek frowned.

"I thought... I thought the marriage was simply for my family's protection. I didn't think --"

Derek set her down and backed her against a wall. He braced himself on his arms, trapping her. She saw anger and fear in his eyes. Her heart pounded against her chest, and she shivered even as her pussy throbbed with need.

"How many times do I have to tell you I love you before you believe it? You are mine."

"I'm not --"

"Yes, you are. You belong to me as a pack member and as my wife. If I have to keep you in bed for the next week to prove that to you, that is exactly what I will do."

"But the box. We must --"

"I don't give a fuck about the box. It's safe, and we know our powers are greater than we imagined. What I need at this moment is to give you the fuck you deserve."

He dropped one hand to the fastenings of his pants.

Serena drew in a sharp breath. "Here?" Her voice came out strangled.

His lips curled up in a wolfish smile. "Here is as good a place as any."

"But anyone might walk by." Serena's heart pounded. Wicked desire to fuck Derek right there in the hall warred with embarrassment.

"Do you honestly think I care?" Derek had managed to free his cock. He pushed away from the wall and shoved his pants over his hips.

"Wrap your legs around me."

Serena hesitated for a second. The likelihood that someone would walk by was very high.

Derek growled. "I want to fuck my wife, and I want to do it now."

The intensity of his expression took her breath. She couldn't resist him anymore than his wolf could resist her call. She brought up first one leg and then the other, encircling his waist as he supported her. He took a step closer to the wall, and she leaned back against it. Both of them pulled at her skirt, trying to bunch it around her waist and give him better access.

He slipped a hand between her legs and pushed two fingers inside her, making her gasp. "So wet and ready. Do you know how rare it is for a human woman to be capable of matching our lust?"

She moaned in response, incapable of words. He cupped her buttocks, and she felt the tip of his cock press against her entrance.

She arched against him, no longer concerned who saw them. She was eager to feel him inside her again and to remember how very special their bond was. He pushed

in deep and hard. She cried out, but he muffled the sound by kissing her, his tongue thrusting as fiercely as his cock.

He worked her faster and faster, her body slammed against the wall. Somewhere in the back of her mind, she knew she'd be bruised the next day but she didn't care. Derek's total possession of her fired some primitive need in her, and she had no desire for him to stop.

He growled. "I love you. Do you understand that?"

She opened her eyes, and his gaze trapped her. His eyes showed hunger, anger and fear, and they seemed to look right into her. She opened the connection between them. *I love you, too.*

You'd damn well better.

She couldn't help but smile. It was so like Derek to order her to love him, but she knew he turned to control when he was frightened. The idea that he was afraid that her feelings for him weren't strong enough amazed her. She couldn't imagine any woman not falling for him, especially if she were willing to put up with his arrogance and need to dominate. And considering what an amazing lover he was, it was a fair trade. He was also honorable and how many men could claim that?

His rhythm became agonizingly slow. Every time he slid out, his cock brushed her inner pleasure spot, making her moan. She tried to squeeze him tight enough to hold him there, but he always defeated her.

More please.

But I enjoy teasing you.

She struggled in his hold. *I need you now.*

Promise me you won't question my feelings for you again.

Promise you won't question mine.

I don't. I know you're mine.

You believe you can possess me, but even if you can, you can't make me love you. No one can force that.

He leaned forward and licked her neck, his warm tongue swiping her from collarbone to her ear. Then he bit down on her earlobe, making her jerk with the small pain. "I need you to love me." He whispered into her ear, his voice strangled.

His words stabbed straight to her heart. She knew what it must have cost him to say that. His world was about power games, ones where you never admit a weakness even to a friend.

She fisted her hands in his hair and tugged until he lifted his head and looked at her. "I'm here for you, whenever you need me, whatever you need. That is what our bond means to me."

His hands tightened against her buttocks, and he thrust deep. She threw her head back and reveled in the pleasure of it. He moved faster and faster as if he were trying to push the tangle of emotion he felt into her with each stroke.

More. Give me more. He impaled her, pushing her against the wall, thoroughly taking her in every way, physically and emotionally.

I need you.

Yes. Yes, please.

Her orgasm rose. She tried to slow down, wanting to savor this moment, this wildness, but she couldn't slow the tide of pleasure.

"Mine. You're mine," he shouted as he thrust to the hilt and tensed. He came, bucking against her just as she went over. Her inner muscles squeezed him tight, as they both rode the naked pleasure.

When their bodies had calmed. He pulled back, and she unwrapped her legs from his waist, unsure if they would support her. But she needn't have worried. He scooped her into his arms. "I want to sleep with you now."

She fought a wave of dizziness. "I think I may need a few minutes to recover."

"No, I mean sleep next to you, curled with you, all night."

"That sounds perfect." And it did. She'd had enough excitement to last her for months at least. But Two was still out there, still plotting against them. So she knew they had to take this moment of peace while they could.

Silvia Violet

Silvia Violet can often be found haunting coffee shops looking for the darkest, strongest cup of coffee she can find. Once equipped with the needed fuel, she can happily sit for hours pounding away at her laptop. Silvia typically leaves home disguised as a suburban stay-at-home-mom, and other coffee shop patrons tend to ask her hilarious questions like “Do you write children’s books?” She loves watching the looks on their faces when they learn what she’s actually up to. When not writing, Silvia enjoys baking sinful chocolate treats, exploring new styles of cooking, and reading children’s books to her wickedly smart offspring.

Silvia writes erotic romance and erotica in a variety of genres. She recently won Angela Knight’s Golden Stiletto contest with a hot excerpt from her Shifter’s Station series.

You can find Silvia on the web at <http://violet.chaosnet.org> or reach her by email at silviaviolet@gmail.com.