

Wolf Tales 1: Stefan

Kate Douglas

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Chapter One

Xandi shoved the deflated airbag out of her lap and used her last tissue to wipe the fog off the windshield, well aware it wasn't going to change her predicament. She saw nothing but white. At least it was still daytime. Even so, her hands shook and her heart raced. She paused a moment, fist full of tissue pressed against the windshield, then forced herself to take slow, even breaths. Hyperventilating wouldn't help one bit.

Look at the bright side. At least it's still daylight. This could have happened at night.

The thought set her heart to pounding even harder.

She'd skidded at least 100 yards down the hillside and landed in a cushion of thick snow and heavy undergrowth. Her little white sedan tilted to one side, completely surrounded by small trees and shrubs. Thick, fast-falling snow already hid the hood and most likely the roof, as well. She checked her cell phone again. Damn...still no signal. The narrow gorge she'd fallen into must be blocking her.

Staying in the car might have been an option, at least until the storm abated, but she'd plowed into the drift hard and deep, and the storm showed no signs of letting up. Already the doors were wedged closed by the weight of the white stuff and the windows were almost completely covered.

It wasn't like anyone would be looking for her, and even if they did, who'd be able to find a little white car buried under a ton of white snow? She was going to have to make a decision, and make it soon, before she suffocated.

Xandi grabbed her down coat out of the back seat, made sure her boots were tightly tied, her gloves on her hands and her hat wedged down over her ears. Slowly, she rolled the window down, pushing the heavy snow back so it wouldn't fall in her lap.

The irony of the situation wasn't lost on her. She had plenty of vacation time at work, and she'd taken it. She'd told her friends and co-workers she needed to get away,

needed to think about making some serious changes in her life. Insisted they didn't need to know her plans as she would only be gone a couple weeks and wasn't going far.

Well, she hadn't gone far, not really...she'd only made it about twenty miles out of Portland before the damned diesel ran her car off the road. She wondered if the trucker who'd cut in front of her even had a clue what he'd done?

Wondered if he even gave a shit.

Her hands were shaking when she brushed the wet flakes out of her eyelashes and stared through the open window, up the long slope. Cold. She was just so damned cold. *And scared.*

"Shut up." She started, surprised by the vehemence in her own voice. It didn't fit with the thick flakes of snow and the postcard image of pine boughs bending beneath its weight. It didn't fit with her plans, the reason she'd decided to leave in spite of the storm. It just didn't fit.

Nothing did.

The highway couldn't be too far above her, though it was hard to tell up from down in the current whiteout conditions. Whatever tracks her car might have left were long gone. She hadn't lost consciousness, but she knew she'd sat in the front seat with the deflated airbag in her lap, counting her blessings for way too long. All the while, the snow kept falling.

Of course, the fact she was still alive after hurtling down the steep slope at over seventy miles an hour deserved a word of thanks. Lately, not much in her life did. She took a deep breath, consciously putting all the crap that was Alexandria Oranet's life behind her, at least for now. With any luck, she'd get up the hill before dark fell and thumb a ride back to town. So much for her great adventure.

So much for taking charge of her life.

Pushing the rest of the snow away from the open window, Xandi clutched her little leather backpack purse in her hand, squeezed her butt through the open window and tumbled out into the swirling snow.

* * *

She couldn't feel her hands or her feet and she'd lost her right mitten along with her cell phone hours ago. Snow swirled in ever-darkening blasts as nightfall approached. Obviously she'd missed the road, but where the hell was she?

Brushing her hand across her frozen nose, Xandi bit back a sob. Tears wouldn't help. It was too late for that, and as cold as it was, they'd just freeze on her face. It was too dark to go any farther and she was just too damned cold and tired.

Feeling slow and stupid, she looked about her, wondering how she'd go about building a shelter when all she could see was blowing snow and dark shadows.

Damn. It was all Jared's fault. Well, Jared and his blonde nymphet. Would she ever get past the humiliation, the sick-to-the-pit-of-her-stomach feeling? It hadn't gone away, not once over the past week...not since she'd walked into her bedroom, the one she'd shared with her fiancé for the past year, and caught him bare-assed and buck naked with his face buried between the bitch's legs.

The worst part was the woman's reaction. She hadn't even been upset. No, she'd just grinned at Xandi with a look of feral satisfaction, spread her legs wider and faked an orgasm. It had to have been fake. The timing was too good, but Jared hadn't seemed to mind.

While Xandi stood there in shock, Jared had raised his head, his face streaked with the other woman's fluids, and stared stupidly at her, blinking like the idiot he was.

In a way, she thought, it was a good thing. Okay, so her self-esteem was officially in the toilet, but at least she'd learned the truth about him before they got married. If only she'd listened to her friends. They'd been trying to warn her, had told her over and over to get out before it was too late.

Now, it just might be. Night had fallen. The snow swirled in ever stronger gusts. She'd stopped shivering, couldn't feel her feet, couldn't move her hands. An almost cozy warmth stole over her. Sighing, feeling more regret than fear, Xandi slowly collapsed into the soft, welcoming snow.

* * *

Warmth. The most wonderful sense of warmth, of contentment. Sighing, Xandi snuggled deeper into the blankets, aware of a slight tingling in her toes and fingers, a sense of heat radiating all around her, of weight and comfort and safety.

And something very large, very long, very *solid*, wedged tightly between her bare buttocks, following the crease of her labia and resting hot and hard against her clit. She blinked, opened her eyes wide, saw only darkness.

Awake now, she felt soft breath tickling the back of her neck, warm arms encircling her, a hard, muscular body enfolding hers. She held herself very still, forcing her fuzzy mind into a clarity it really wasn't ready for. Okay...she'd been lost in a snowstorm, remembered thinking about building a shelter, remembered...nothing. Nothing beyond the sense that it was too late, she was too cold...then nothing.

The body behind her shifted. The huge cock — at least that much she recognized — slipped against her clit as the person holding her thrust his hips just a bit closer to hers.

Xandi cleared her throat. Whoever held her had obviously saved her life. Everyone knew there was more body heat between naked bodies, but she'd never really thought of the concept of awakening in the dark, wrapped securely with a totally *unknown* naked body. No, that really hadn't entered her mind...at least until now.

She bit back a giggle. Nerves. Had to be nerves, but she felt her labia softening, engorging, knew her clit was beginning to peek out from its little hood of flesh, searching for closer contact with that hot cock. The arms holding her tightened just a bit. One of the hands moved to cover her breast.

Neither one of them spoke. He knew what she looked like. She had no idea who held her. What age he was, what race, what *anything*.

He saved your life.

There was that. She arched her back, forcing her breast into the huge hand that palmed it. In response, thick fingers compressed the nipple. She bit back a moan. Jared hated it when she made noises during sex.

This isn't Jared, you idiot.

The fingers pinched harder, rolled the turgid flesh between them. *Screw it*. She moaned, at the same time parting her legs just a bit so that she could settle herself on the huge cock that seemed to be growing even larger. Then she tightened her thighs around it, sliding her butt back against his rock-hard belly.

She felt the thick curl of pubic hair tickling her butt, rested against the hard root of his penis where it sprung solidly from his groin and clenched her thighs once again, holding onto him. She felt the air go out of his lungs, then the lightest touch of warm lips against her ear, the soft, exploring tip of his tongue as he circled just the outside, the soft puff of his breath.

Shivers raced along her spine. She wrapped her fingers around his wrists, anchoring herself while at the same time holding both of his hands tightly against her breasts. The hair on his arms was soft, almost silky. She tried to picture her hidden lover, but before an image came to mind, he *hmmmm'd* against her ear, then ran his tongue along the side of her throat.

She felt the sizzle all the way to her pussy, felt his lips exploring her throat, his mobile tongue teasing the wispy little hairs at the back of her neck. His hands massaged her breasts, squeezed her nipples, then rubbed away the pain. His hips pressed against her, forcing his cock to slide very slowly back and forth between her swollen labia.

She moaned again, the sound working its way up and out of her throat before she even recognized it as her own voice. The heat surrounding her intensified. Whoever he was, whoever held her...she sighed. He literally *radiated* fire and warmth and pure carnal lust. One of his big hands slipped down to her belly, cupped her mons and pressed her against him. Still gripping his forearm tightly in her left hand, she felt his finger slide down between her legs.

His fingertip paused at her swollen clit, applying the merest bit of pressure. She held perfectly still, afraid he'd stop if she moved, afraid of her own reaction to this most intimate touch by an absolute stranger. She kept a death grip on the wrist near her breast. The fingers of her right hand dug into the corded tendons on the underside of

his forearm and everything in her cried out to thrust her hips forward, to beg him to stroke her, to bury more than just his finger in the moist heat between her legs.

Instead, as her body trembled with the fierce need to move, she held her hips immobile. After a moment that might have lasted forever, he gently rubbed his fingertip around her clit, dipping inside her wet pussy for some of her moisture, then bringing it back to stroke her once more.

She bit back a scream as his roughened fingertip touched her again, the circular motion so light as to hardly register. Her trembling increased, her desire, her barely controllable need to tilt and force her hips against him, to make him enter her.

She didn't care if he used his cock, his tongue, his finger...hell, at this point he could use his whole fucking hand and it wouldn't be enough. She choked back a whimper as he changed the direction of his circular massage, moving his fingertip slowly up and down over the small hooded organ. Each stroke took him closer to her pussy, closer, but not nearly close enough.

Her breath caught in her throat when he dipped inside her, swirled his thick finger around the streaming walls of her pussy, then returned to caress her clit once more. A small part of Xandi's mind reminded her she was being beautifully fucked by a total stranger, that her fingers were clutching thick, muscular arms, that she was clasping her thighs around the biggest cock she'd ever felt in her life — that they still hadn't exchanged a single word.

It came to her then, in an almost blinding flash of insight, a personal epiphany of pure, carnal need and unmitigated lust, that she'd never, even in her most imaginative fantasy, been this turned on in her entire life. Never felt so tightly linked — mentally, physically, sexually — to anyone. She moaned aloud as his finger once more slipped back between her legs. His thumb stroked her clit now, and that one, thick finger plunged carefully in and out of her weeping flesh.

Suddenly, the hot tip of his tongue traced the whorl of her ear, then dipped inside. Shocked, she thrust her hips forward, forcing his fingers deep. His breath tickled the

top of her ear, his tongue swirled the interior, leaving it all hot and damp, filled with lush promise.

She thrust harder against his fingers, still holding one of his hands against her breast, forcing the other deep between her legs. She felt the thick rush of fluid, the hot coil of her climax building, building with each slick thrust of his cock between her thighs, each dip of his fingers, each...

Suddenly, he rolled her to her stomach, breaking her grip on his forearms as if it were nothing. He grabbed her hips and lifted her. Xandi moaned, spreading her legs wide, welcoming him, begging with her body. Eyes wide open, she saw nothing but darkness, felt no sense of space, lost all concept of time. She quivered, hanging at the precipice of a frightening, endless fall.

His big hands clasped her hips, held her tightly. He massaged her buttocks for a moment with both his thumbs, spreading her cheeks wide. She felt her slick moisture on his fingertip, almost preternaturally aware of each tiny spot on her body where she contacted his.

She wondered how much he could see, if his night vision were stronger than hers. It was dark as the inside of a cave, wherever they were. No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't see the soft bed beneath her, couldn't see her own hands.

Couldn't see his.

Yet the link persisted, the sense of connection, of need, of desire so gut deep it was suddenly part of her existence, her entire world. A link she knew would be forged forever when he finally entered her, filled her with heat and pulsing need.

He lifted her higher, his hands slipping down to grab her thighs, raising her up so that her knees no longer touched the mattress, so that her weight was on her forearms, her face pressed tightly to the pillow.

She expected his thick cock to fill her pussy. *Wanted* his cock, now. *Please, now!* Her breath caught in short, wild gasps for air, her legs quivered, and she hung there in his grasp, waiting...waiting. Hovering there, held aloft, the cool air drifting across her hot, needy flesh. Waiting for him to fill her.

Instead, she felt him pull away, felt the mattress dip as he shifted his weight...felt the fiery wet slide of his tongue between her legs.

“Ahhhhhhhh...” Her cry ended on a whimper. He looped his arms through her thighs and lifted her even higher, his tongue finding entry into her gushing pussy, his lips grabbing at her engorged labia, suckling each fleshy lip into his hot mouth. He nibbled and sucked, spearing her with his tongue, nipping at her with sharp teeth, then laving her with soft, warm strokes. Suddenly, his lips encircled her clit and he suckled, hard, pressing down on the sensitive little organ with his tongue.

The scream exploded out of her. She clamped her legs against the sides of his head, peripherally aware of scratchy whiskers, strong jaw. His tongue lapped and twisted, filling her streaming pussy as she bucked against him. He was strong, stronger than any man she'd ever known, holding her aloft, eating her out like a hungry beast, his mouth all lips and tongue and hard-edged teeth.

He dragged his tongue across her clit once more, suckled her labia between his lips and brought her to another clenching, screaming climax. Once more, licking her now, long, slow sweeps from clit to anus, each stroke taking her higher, farther. His tongue snaked across her flesh, dipping inside to lap at her moist center, tickling her sensitive clit, ringing the tight sphincter in her ass. Gasping, shivering, her legs trembling, Xandi struggled for breath, reached for yet another climax.

He left her there, once more on the edge. Cool air brushed across her damp flesh, raising goose bumps across her thighs and belly.

He lowered her until her knees once more rested on the bed. She felt his hot thighs pressing against her own, his big hands clasping her hips, the broad, velvety soft tip of his cock resting at the mouth of her vagina.

Slowly, with great care and control, he pushed into her. Damn, he was huge. She shifted her legs, relaxed her spasming muscles as best she could. Still, her flesh stretched, the lubrication from her orgasms easing the way as he slowly, inexorably, seated himself within her.

She felt him press up against the mouth of her womb at the same time his balls nestled against her clit and pubic mound. He waited a moment, giving her time to adjust to his huge girth and length, then he started to move.

Slowly at first, easing his way in, then out, stretching her, filling her. Xandi fisted the pillow in her hands as she caught his rhythm. *In, out*, in again, his balls tickling her clit with each careful thrust. She pressed back against him, forcing him deeper, inviting him.

He groaned, then slammed into her harder. She took him, reveled in the power and strength of her mystery lover, felt another climax beginning to build, knew she would not go alone this time.

She reached back between her legs, grasping his lightly furred sac between her fingers just as he thrust hard against her cervix. His strangled cry encouraged her. Grinning, feeling empowered – feminine and so very strong, she squeezed him gently in the palm of her hand, felt his balls contract, tighten, draw up close to his body.

She slipped one finger behind his sac, pressed the sensitive area, then ran her sharp fingernail lightly back to his testicles. He slammed into her, his body rigid with a fierce power. Shouting a warrior's cry of victory, he pounded into her harder, stronger. She kept a tight but careful hold on his balls until the hot gush of his seed filled her.

Overwhelmed, over-stimulated, she screamed and thrust her hips hard against his groin. Her vaginal muscles clamped down, wrapping around his cock, trapping and holding him close. Suddenly, he filled her even more, his cock swelling to fit tightly against the clenching muscles of her pussy, locking his body close against hers.

Linking the two of them together. A binding deeper than the act itself, more powerful than anything she'd ever known.

He slumped across her back, then rolled to his side, taking Xandi with him. She felt the hot burst of his gasping breath, the rhythmic pulsing of his cock, the pounding of her own heart. Suddenly, inexplicably exhausted, her pussy rippling against the heat of his still amazingly engorged penis, Xandi snuggled close to his rock-hard body and allowed her eyes to drift slowly shut.

Tomorrow. She'd learn who he was tomorrow.

Chapter Two

Xandi rolled over, blinking against the pale morning light and encountered the hard, cold side of a snow bank. Startled fully alert, she sat up, suddenly aware she was in a tree-shaded rest stop at the side of the highway. She recognized it immediately. Her car had gone off the road just a few hundred yards beyond.

Shaking her head, bemused, she looked down at her clothing. One mitten was missing, along with her purse, but otherwise all was as she'd been wearing yesterday when she'd had her wreck.

Yesterday? But... She struggled slowly to her feet, and stood, body trembling, trying to remember. She was immediately aware of a tenderness between her legs, that glorious *morning after a good fuck* feeling she hadn't known for much too long.

She let out a shaky sigh. Who the hell had she had sex with? Good Lord...she never did anything like that. *Ever!* Even weirder, why was she back here on the side of the road?

Maybe you were just a lousy lay...

No. She knew better than that. Whoever she'd fucked had obviously enjoyed himself every bit as much as she had. She vaguely recalled awakening during the night, feeling searching lips on her breasts, thick fingers buried deep in her pussy.

Thinking about it made her nipples tingle. She knew they were standing up like pencil erasers because they rubbed against her clothing and she felt the sensation spiral clear down between her legs.

Xandi took a deep breath of bitter cold air, watched the thick cloud of steam as she exhaled, then turned and looked both ways, up and down the long highway. It was still early in the morning, barely past dawn. The sky glowed deep pink in the east and a

coating of ice covered the snow, so that everything sparkled as if covered with pink and gold glitter.

There was no traffic. One set of headlights far down the road was the only vehicle in sight. She watched the lights grow slowly closer as a thin, wintry sun rose over the mountains and cast a silver and gold glow across the snow-covered treetops. Shadows loomed deep and dark in the woods.

The car lights grew brighter, closer, until a large, black Mercedes with tinted windows pulled into the turnout. The car sat there a moment, the engine running and sending thick columns of steam from the exhaust pipe. Uncertain whether to be frightened or glad, Xandi waited, watching. Suddenly the engine shut down. Silence once more engulfed her.

After a moment, the driver climbed out and bowed slightly. He was small and dark-skinned, wearing a neat, gray uniform with a cap. Xandi bit back an almost hysterical giggle...what a surrealistic trip this had been! A car wreck, lost in a winter storm, amazing sex with a mysterious stranger...now she was getting rescued by some scrawny little dude in a limousine?

"Miss would care for a ride?" The driver's voice was very soft, the accent clipped, precise and very British.

Still shaking her head at the incongruity of the situation, Xandi brushed the snow off her pants legs and walked closer to the car. Well, she'd wanted something different, hadn't she? The driver opened a back door. Xandi smiled and thanked him, then slipped into the dark interior of the Mercedes.

He was almost certain she'd scream the moment she realized she wasn't alone. He held very still, hardly breathing, waiting for her eyes to adjust to the dim light here in the back seat. His heart pounded an erratic drumbeat. He was sure she heard it. He rubbed his thumbs over his fingers, wishing there was some way to make his palms stop sweating, some way to calm the racing beat of his heart.

He shouldn't have done this. Should never have risked so much, but leaving her on the side of the road had been the most difficult thing he'd ever done in his life. Hell, they'd barely gotten a mile away before he realized he couldn't, *wouldn't* let her go.

She took a great deal of time fastening her seat belt, straightening her coat, brushing her thick hair back from her eyes. Slowly she turned and looked at him. Her beautiful gray eyes widened.

He waited for the look of disgust. The fear. The realization she'd been rescued by a monster.

Her lips parted. She frowned, then smiled. Her hand came up, as if to touch his face.

He grabbed her wrist. Not that. He wasn't ready for that.

"It was you, wasn't it? You're the one who rescued me."

Her voice was soft, the inflection showing just a trace of the Northeast. He suddenly remembered that neither one of them had spoken a word the night before.

No words.

Moans. Whimpers. He'd made her scream, made her sob. Made her cry. Made himself cry, for that matter. But no words.

He cleared his throat, opened his mouth to speak. To tell her she was wrong. That she must be thinking of someone else. Someone whole. Unmarked.

Human.

She pressed her finger against his mouth, as if to explore. He jerked away from her touch.

She blinked in surprise, but she touched him once more, her hand cupping the side of his face. "I know it was you. Don't deny it. Pheromones? Your scent... I'm not sure how I know, but I do." She laughed. It was a surprisingly harsh sound. "My pussy knows, that's for sure. I'm getting wet. My muscles are already finding a rhythm – your rhythm – tightening, relaxing..."

The image filled his mind, all that moist flesh, ripening, preparing for him. His sac tightened, his testicles crawled up close to his body. He felt heat and the pulsing throb

of the big artery feeding blood the length of his cock. Felt himself stretch, grow. Lengthen.

Her words shocked him. Surprised him.

Turned him on. *Dear God*, it was all he could do to restrain himself. Didn't she understand what she was doing? What she'd already done? He wanted to rip her clothes off, take her here, in the back seat of the car with Oliver just on the other side of the tinted glass. Fuck her until she couldn't see straight.

Couldn't see him. "You don't know what you're saying." He had to swallow and clear his throat. "You don't know who I am. What I am."

She smiled, an easy, natural smile that lit up her entire face. "Ah, but I do. You're the man who saved my life. The man who made love to me all night long." She blinked. He was surprised to see her eyes fill with tears. "You're the man who made me feel more feminine, more desirable than I've ever felt in my life."

He reached up and turned on the overhead light, then grabbed her by the shoulders. His laughter sounded harsh. Painful. "Look at me. Really look at me. Does this turn you on? This face? Yes, we had sex — in the dark. Your back was to me, your eyes turned away. Could you look at me, see me as I am when I shove my cock up that wet pussy of yours? Would you still want me when I tied with you...when my cock swells and traps you to my body, holds you to me like a bitch in heat? Holds you, staring into this face, seeing this body? Could you do that, little girl? Could you fuck me without the fantasy?"

He growled, released his grip on her shoulders and turned away. "That was inexcusable. I am sorry. I will have Oliver take you home. Please give him your address."

Stunned, Xandi could only stare in silence as he first snarled at her, then turned away in disgust. With her? *No*, she thought. Most likely with himself, though why he should think his amazing countenance would put her off... No...not put her off, not at all. The effect was exactly the opposite.

The words he'd said in anger rocked her body. A sensual litany, a promise of unimaginable pleasure...*when my cock swells and traps you to my body...when I shove my cock up that wet pussy of yours...could you fuck me...fuck me...fuck me...*

Oh God, yes!

She'd sensed it last night, this link, this need she felt for him. Of course, then she'd merely thought him a man. A normal, albeit very sexy, man. Suddenly, the passion, the unimaginable lust, made sense. There was something beyond human, beyond normal desire with this person. Something her body craved, her mind needed. Something about him that made her whole.

She studied his profile in the dim light of the overhead lamp. He was obviously not completely human, though what he was couldn't possibly be. She glanced at his hands. A man's hands — large, the knuckles big and bony, the nails neatly trimmed, the hair thick across the backs of his fingers.

She remembered the feel of that silky hair. She'd clasped his arms against her just last night. Held him tightly while he palmed her breasts, caressed her between her legs.

Loved her. Passionately.

Now that she could see him, even though he was dressed in a dark pair of pants and a black turtleneck sweater, she realized most of his body must be covered in the silky fur. It wasn't black, as she'd first thought. No, it was more a deep gray tipped with silver. The hair on his head grew long, falling to his shoulders, and it was the same dark gray, also tipped with silver.

What she'd thought was his beard was so much more. The same silver-tipped fur covered his face, his jaw...and what could only be described as his muzzle. His nose was dark, his lips almost black. When he curled his upper lip she saw sharp, white canines.

Even his ears were animalistic, triangular, held close to his head, lying back against his skull as if he were angry...or frightened?

Still human, yet very much the beast. An elemental creature, so out of place in the back seat of a Mercedes limousine.

She was a fool to want him. He wasn't human. He wasn't natural.

He was so much more. So very much.

He turned slowly around, so that he sat facing her. His hands rested on his muscular thighs. His shoulders rose and fell as he took a deep breath, straining the seams of his sweater. She felt his soft sigh as much as she heard the whisper of sound.

"Your address? Please...I would like to take you home."

"No." She shook her head, wrapped her fingers around his right wrist. He started to tug his hand away but she held on. "I want to go home with you." She looked up at him, forcing him to see her as a woman. A woman who was more intrigued than disgusted with the beast that was so obviously a huge part of him. "I want to make love with you again. I want..." She choked up. Couldn't force the words out. "I don't want to lose what you have given me. Please? Take me with you. Whoever, whatever you are. I need to know...more. Do you understand?"

He frowned. His silver-tipped brows drew together over that long, lupine nose. His eyes glowed amber, practically golden in the dim interior light of the car, the pupils narrowed to black, diamond-shaped shards. "No," he said, glancing down at her fingers wrapped tightly around his arm. "No, I really don't understand. Look at me. See what I am. Not *who*... *What*."

She sucked in a deep, shuddering breath. Let it out. Sensed, somehow, her entire future rested on her answer. "I see *what* you are, though I have no explanation. I want very much to know *who* you are." She tightened her grip around his wrist and slowly turned his hand so that it rested palm-side up on his thigh.

"You can't deny that you felt it, felt what happened between us last night." *How does one explain a link, a connection, so powerful, so...pure?* She placed her left hand in his, studied the difference in their color, the huge discrepancy in size.

She'd known last night that the man holding her was big. She'd had no real sense of his actual size. His hand dwarfed hers, his shoulders were broad, his chest muscles rippling through the black turtleneck. She couldn't even guess at his height, but figured he would be well over six and a half feet tall.

She raised her chin and studied his face. Even sitting, she had to look up to meet his eyes. At 5'10", Xandi dwarfed many of the men in her brokerage firm. It was unusual to sit close to a man and feel small and petite.

He said nothing, merely watched her with questions in his eyes as she studied him. Suddenly the memory of him taking her, seating his huge cock between her legs and the slow, agonizingly erotic feeling of being stretched as he'd thrust deeply inside, filled her mind. Her pussy clenched in reaction. She felt the warm spiral of desire strike at her very center, knew she must be soaking through her panties just from the thought of making love with this man.

She wondered if he smelled her arousal. If his instincts and abilities were that defined...if he was as much the wolf as he appeared.

He stared at her a moment longer, his nostrils flared, his eyes narrowed, then he leaned forward and tapped on the darkened glass. The window rolled down barely enough to allow conversation. "Oliver. The woman has chosen to accompany me. Take us to the cabin, please."

The driver nodded, the window silently closed and the big car rumbled to life. Xandi leaned back against the soft leather seat, folded her hands in her lap and shut her eyes in a moment of thanks. Suddenly, she felt his fingers tentatively brush over hers, his callused fingertips slip across the back of her right hand. She held her breath. Slowly, he turned her hand palm up, then closed his fingers firmly, clasping her hand in his. She exhaled, a long, slow breath. Held tightly to his hand. A sense of peace washed over her body, a sense of finally, after years of waiting, finding her way home.

* * *

Xandi was aware of changes in the road — rougher pavement giving way to smooth, then rough again, of two different times when the car slowed and they must have passed through gates, but the tinted windows hid almost as much of the outside from her view as they did for anyone trying to peer in.

Mostly, she was aware of the warm hand in hers, the fingers wrapped firmly about hers. She sensed the inner tension in the man/beast sitting next to her. Neither of them spoke, yet she'd never been so aware of another person in her entire life.

He radiated energy — controlled energy — as if his body might explode at any moment. She wondered at what thoughts must be racing through his brain, wondered if he felt regret, anticipation...desire?

She should have been terrified. Should have felt some sense of fear, well aware she was essentially acting as an agent in her own abduction. Instead she was pure anticipation and untempered lust. Her body ached with need for him. She felt as if she'd shed some unneeded husk, another body or soul that had ruled her heart and mind for much too long. Shed it like a lizard's skin, leaving her fresh and clean, waiting...wanting.

In all her thirty years she'd never known this sense of *rightness* before. This pure knowledge that, following this man, *learning* this man, was the thing she'd been created to do.

Xandi blinked. The car had stopped. The door next to her companion opened and Oliver stood to one side. "Sir?"

Her rescuer slipped his hand free of hers and got out of the car, his movements unbelievably graceful for one so large. He held his hand out to Xandi. She tightened her fingers around his and let him pull her gently to the door, then to her feet. She felt awkward and unsure, finally, standing here in the bright sunlight in front of a huge, redwood home.

She wasn't ready to look at him. Stared instead at the lovely structure practically growing up out of the snow-covered ground.

It was certainly no mere cabin. Decks wrapped around the home and stretched into the trees, massive windows reflected the bright morning sun and snow-capped mountains peeked out above the dark green forest, framing the entire scene like an ad for an expensive ski vacation.

Snow covered the ground so it was impossible to tell what the landscaping would be like in warmer weather, but Xandi imagined azaleas and rhododendrons spilling masses of color, and deep beds of ferns.

She was aware of the silence, more so once Oliver climbed back into the limo and drove around a curved driveway, beyond the far corner of the house. Finally, after she had exhausted her view of the home and surroundings, she turned and carefully appraised her host.

In the cold light of day, he was beyond beautiful. She should have felt fear. Most likely, if she had chanced upon him on a darkened street, she would have run screaming in panic. Now her perception of him was colored by knowledge. The tenderness of his kiss, the gentle strokes of his fingers...the controlled thrust of his massive cock.

"I haven't properly thanked you," she said, looking directly into his amber eyes. A thought crossed her mind, that she could never grow tired of looking at him, being near him. "I would have died out there. How did you find me?"

He dipped his chin, acknowledging her thanks with a tilt of his head. "I was in the forest. I sensed you nearby, sensed your spirit fading. It was little enough to carry you back here."

"I was miles away from here."

He took her arm and led her up the broad steps without speaking. When he reached the front door, he paused and looked down at her, at her fingers clasped tightly around his forearm. "I often travel far at night. It is my way."

"You saved my life."

He opened the door and waited for her to precede him, closed the door, then turned and leaned solidly against it as if it were an anchor. His hands still grasping the handle, he studied her for a moment. She couldn't read the emotion in his amber eyes, but there was a sense of quiet desperation about him.

"No," he said, his chest rising and falling with a very deep breath. "You may very well have saved mine."

Chapter Three

The room he took her to was elegant yet very simple, done all in shades of soft golds and greens. The bed was large, the bathroom purely sybaritic with a tub big enough to swim in. He left her there with instructions to meet him for breakfast in another hour.

She took her time bathing, not at all surprised to find a big fluffy robe hanging behind the door when she finally climbed out of the steaming water. A hair dryer lay on the counter, along with a comb and brush and even a new toothbrush. She dried her hair and brushed it out, then left it hanging loose about her shoulders. She checked a couple of drawers, looking for make-up, finally gave up and went back into the bedroom, fully intending to put her old clothes back on.

A dark, forest green gown of softly knitted cashmere lay across the bed. There wasn't any underwear, but she didn't mind. The fabric clung to her body, caressed her flesh. Warmed her. She stood in front of a full-length gilded mirror and studied her reflection.

The style was amazingly simple...scooped neckline, long sleeves and a natural drape to the gown that followed the flow of her body, emphasizing her rounded breasts and slender waist, her full hips and unusual height. With her gray eyes and dark russet hair, she knew she couldn't have chosen a more complimentary shade or design.

She turned away from the mirror and noticed her purse, the small leather backpack she'd lost the day before. It sat on a table next to the bed. She picked it up, saw her wallet was still inside, that everything appeared to be where it belonged. Sighing, she found her zippered cosmetics bag, put on a bit of lipstick then set the bag back on the table.

Xandi stared at the bag for a moment, gathering her thoughts. Everything over the past few hours had about it a dreamlike, illusory quality, almost surrealistic in nature. She suffered a brief moment of fear, the sense that maybe she should call someone, tell one of her coworkers where she was...who she was with. She glanced about the room, suddenly noting the lack of telephone, of radio or bedside clock.

Then she smiled. Folding her hands in front of her waist, she took a deep breath. She had no idea where she was. There was no reason to call, no reason for fear. She'd asked for change.

She'd found it.

Now was the time to do something about it.

He sat at a round glass-topped table set in a windowed nook in the large kitchen. She'd expected to find him in a more Gothic setting, at the head of a long table in a darkened, very formal parlor, but the kitchen was exceedingly modern, filled with delicious scents of morning foods. The lighting was bright and cheerful and the cup of coffee he poured for her smelled wonderful.

Once again, she felt as if she'd been caught in a surrealistic dream, a feeling that wasn't lessened a bit when he handed her the financial section of the local newspaper after she sat down across the small table from him.

Sipping at coffee, reading the paper...it could have been any morning in any kitchen anywhere in America. Except, when she glanced up, the amber eyes of a wolfman watched her.

"You haven't told me your name," she said, sipping at her coffee. "I'm Alexandria Olanet...Xandi for short." She smiled, waiting.

He stared at her a moment longer, took a sip of his own coffee. "I know," he said. "I must apologize. As you've probably noticed, I kept your purse. I read your driver's license, found you on the Internet. You are a very successful young woman. A partner already in your company. You've worked very hard for someone so young. Which

reminds me. Do you need to let anyone know where you are? Will people be looking for you?"

"No," she answered, without thinking. "I left yesterday for a two week va...oh!" She looked up at him, aware she shouldn't give him such knowledge...suddenly afraid.

He shook his head. "You need not fear me. I won't hold you against your will, Ms. Olanet. Oliver will take you home whenever you like. You only need to ask." He looked away, as if thinking of something pleasant, then turned back to her. "Spend your two weeks with me. Here, at my home."

"Oh, I can't possibly..."

"Because of what I am." His voice was flat, no longer the rich baritone she'd found so full of life.

"No," she said. "That's not the reason at all. I was going to say I couldn't possibly intrude, even though I want to stay. More than you can imagine, I want to stay. Please. Tell me your name? I can't keep thinking of you as my rescuer, can I?"

She smiled and, without thinking, reached across the small table and placed her hand over his forearm. He didn't pull away this time, though she felt his muscles tense. He merely stared at her fingers, was still staring when Oliver came into the kitchen with a bag of sweet rolls from a bakery in Portland that Xandi recognized.

"Morning, Miss. Sir." He set the bag in front of them, turned and opened the oven door and drew out a warmed quiche and a platter of sausages and bacon. After quickly setting out silverware and placing the food in front of the two of them, the small man turned to leave. "If you don't mind, sir, I'll be leaving now. I'll return in the morning."

"Enjoy your visit with your family, Oliver. And thank you. We'll be fine."

Xandi watched as Oliver left the room, then turned back and faced her host. "Okay. You've sidestepped my only question long enough...my only question for now, that is. Your name is... You can fill in the blanks any time you like."

"My name is not so mysterious." He turned his hand and actually grasped her fingers in his. "My name is Stefan. Stefan Aragat."

"Aragat? That name's familiar. Wasn't there a..."

"A magician. Yes, a very famous, very powerful magician. An extremely egotistical, misanthropic fool of a magician."

Xandi looked from their linked hands to his face. He was actually smiling, his lip curled back, his sharp canines unable to disguise the self-deprecating humor. "Unfortunately, he pissed off an even more powerful purveyor of the black arts, a wizard, actually. A very old, very potent wizard. Aragat didn't have the patience to learn control of the powers he hoped to gain. Without control, one often makes mistakes. Very. Serious. Mistakes."

He released her hand, picked up the plate with the quiche and offered it to Xandi. "Please. Help yourself. Don't let the meal grow cold."

"You did this to yourself?" She took the quiche without even looking, loaded her plate with bacon and sausage, even grabbed one of the warm sweet rolls.

"Unfortunately, I have only myself to blame." He filled his plate as well, then took another swallow of coffee. "It was not a pleasant experience, especially at first when I was limited to life on four legs and an appetite for uncooked, very fresh meat. Really pissed off some of the local farmers and just about got myself shot on more than one occasion. I've tried reversing the spell, but obviously, my success has been limited. At least I regained a mostly human body. Thank goodness I got my hands back. It was damnably hard to zip trousers with paws. Not to mention brushing my teeth."

Xandi almost spewed her coffee. She grabbed the linen napkin and jammed it over her mouth. "I'm sorry, it's just...I'm sorry. I shouldn't laugh."

He chuckled, sighed, then took a bite of sausage. "Actually, it feels good. To laugh. I haven't had much to laugh about for the past five years."

"Five years? It's been that long? Ya know, I think I remember an announcement that you'd decided to retire. I thought you were moving to Europe...Liechtenstein or some other little country where rich people like to go."

"That's the announcement I had Oliver put out. Then I came home to lick my wounds, literally. Oliver has been with me since I was very young, just starting out in the business, in fact. Thank goodness he stays, as I'm not quite fit for public viewing.

For a long time I actually worried that, if I were captured, I'd end up in a zoo. I had trouble speaking at first. It wasn't easy until I was able to shift some of the more wolfen parts through a number of spells.

"You're the first person who's been in my home since my...mishap. You are the only person besides Oliver who has seen me." He stared at her, long and hard. Xandi felt her nipples tighten, knew they raised the soft fabric of her gown.

She lowered her head, unwilling to let him see the unbridled lust that must be quite visible on her face. Once again, she wondered if he sensed her arousal, if his animal instincts were finely honed enough to scent the liquid even now pooling between her legs.

Quietly, she finished her meal. Stefan did the same. She wondered what he was thinking, if he felt the same rush of desire as she did, experienced the deep, gut-churning need that thrummed through her veins.

She hoped so. She wanted him. Wanted him in the light of day, face to face, filling her. Loving her. She wanted domination by the beast as much as the man. Again...and again. And again.

He snarled, a wolfen sound, a low growl that started deep in his throat and leaked slowly, menacingly, to his lips. Xandi immediately jerked upright, looked into his amber eyes.

Saw the need she felt reflected in their depths. She carefully wiped her mouth, folded her napkin and placed it beside her knife. Then she stood up and held her hand out to him.

Without a word, Stefan rose as well. He took her hand and led her down the long, sun-bright hallway.

Her fingers were slim, yet very strong, clasping his hand tightly even as he led her. He heard the blood rushing in his veins, smelled the rich, lush scent of her desire, knew her vagina was beginning to pulse, the lips at its gate to swell. His cock stretched, grew in girth and length, until he was aware of its restricted position down the left leg of his

pants. The fabric brushed against his erection with every step he took. His heightened senses felt each thread, each tiny imperfection in the material almost as pain.

His room was only at the end of the hallway, a mere fifty feet from the kitchen. He almost didn't make it, so strong was his need. When he finally opened the door and led her into his bedroom...his den...his sanctuary, she was trembling, reassuring him with her physical reaction that her need was every bit as strong as his.

He started to tilt the blinds, to darken the room, but she stopped him. "No. I want to see you. I want to know who takes me so high, who loves me so well."

He almost cried. He'd wondered if any woman would ever want him, would ever desire him. He'd been celibate since the change, unwilling to risk discovery...or rejection. To think that he'd found a woman who embraced him, who found this beast attractive? It was more than he could have ever dreamed.

She turned in his arms and placed her hands on his waist, slipping her long fingers beneath his sweater. He shivered when she raised the hem along his chest, revealing the soft gray fur that covered him. He'd thought it ugly, animalistic, but there was no denying the fascinated light in her eyes when she saw him.

He raised his arms and bent at the waist, allowed her to tug the sweater over his head before he straightened once more. He felt naked, standing there with his furred body in plain view, but she leaned close and nuzzled her cheek against his chest, then found his nipple with her tongue.

"Ahhhh..." The cry escaped without warning. He choked it off as she licked his taut nipple, circled it with her tongue. He felt the sensation in his nuts, felt the shock of her touch like a coiling flash of lightning. She nipped at him and he almost cried out again, but he found some semblance of control, just in time.

She touched him all over, running her hands over his torso, across his back. She seemed to be fascinated by him, turned on by his bestial appearance...by him.

Suddenly her fingers were fumbling with the snap at his waist, trembling, tugging at the zipper. He grabbed her shoulders, needing something solid to hang onto, something to keep him from falling to his knees.

Last night had been a fantasy, a wonderful interlude with an unknown woman.

Today was a miracle.

After a moment's struggle, she found the zipper, tugged it slowly down, released the pressure holding his damned cock in place. It practically jumped out of the opening, all glistening animal cock that it was. He might have changed his hands, but the penis still looked like something a dog would sport...a very large dog. He wondered if he'd ever get used to the sheath-like foreskin, the strange shape...the extra sensitive surface of this organ.

He glanced at Xandi. She was staring at him as if mesmerized. Her tongue slipped out between her lips, licked both top and bottom, and retreated back into her mouth. He was trying to come up with some way to get that tongue to touch his cock when she suddenly dropped to her knees and pulled his slacks down over his hips.

Completely free, now, his cock bobbed just in front of her face, the foreskin pulled back close to his body. She leaned over without any hesitation at all and licked the length of him. His knees almost buckled. He tightened his grip on her shoulders and she looked up at him and smiled.

He was still trying to figure out the meaning of that grin when she leaned closer and took him in her mouth.

Mother of God! Only her sturdy grasp on his hips held him upright.

Her fingers dug into his butt cheeks, her mouth encompassed his cock and her damned tongue danced the length of him, licking and tickling until he wanted to cry.

He moaned instead. More of a whimper, actually...not very manly but all he was capable of at the moment.

Her fingers squeezed and stroked his butt, her mouth did amazing things to his cock and he thought his balls might explode from the myriad sensations.

She took him deeper, her mouth squeezing and milking him, her fingers digging into the crease of his ass. He was afraid he might lose it, afraid if he did, that damned knot in his dick would choke her. Silently cursing his regret, he slowly withdrew his cock from between her lips. She leaned over and licked the length of him. He jerked in

response. She did it again, and her fingers found the tight ring at his ass and began to probe and press.

It was all he could do to step back out of her reach. "My cock isn't human," he said, knowing the regret in his voice would be more than obvious. "If I come in your mouth, if I lose control, the knot, the part that tied us together last night...I'm afraid it could choke you. I can't risk that. Please?"

She licked her lips, as if tasting the few drops of pre-cum he knew she must have found, then nodded. He helped her to her feet, slipped his pants completely off and stood before her, naked. Human. Wolf. A combination of two species, unique among man and beast.

He expected anything but the look she gave him...the blatant lust radiating from her beautiful eyes, the thrust of her breasts peaking against the soft gown he'd left for her.

Without thinking beyond *now*, Stefan leaned closer and grabbed her gown in his fists, bunching it at her waist and pulling it over her head. She stood there in front of him, her breasts high, the nipples turgid, pointing out of the dark areoles as if begging for his mouth.

He reached for her, lifted the warm weight of her breasts in his palms, and immediately lost himself in the feel of silky flesh against his callused fingers. Leaning over, he suckled first one nipple, then the other between his lips. She moaned. Her body swayed closer to his as he circled her nipple once more with his tongue, then released her with a quiet little *pop*.

She blinked, her wide gray eyes soft and unfocused. He took a moment longer to look. Her belly was slightly rounded, her hips shapely and full. The dark tuft of curls at her center had been neatly trimmed, enough so that her protruding clit showed through the damp thatch of hair. There was moisture on her inner thigh as well, proof of the arousal he'd scented even as they had breakfast.

She wanted him. Even knowing, seeing who and what he was, she wanted him. Her body couldn't lie.

“Oh, my,” he said, not even trying to hide his eagerness, his hunger. It was there, in his voice, in the catch in his breath, all the longing, the need, the lust. He started to say something and the words wouldn’t come. He swallowed, and finally choked out, “You’re beautiful. Perfect. Mine.”

He held his hand out to her, tugged her closer. She came willingly, breasts swaying, lips full and pouting. Her hair flowed over her shoulders in thick, shining russet waves, a dark, radiant cape. Her gray eyes sparkled now with laughter as much as with lust. Stefan felt his blood rise, knew his heart raced and the animal in him was barely under control.

When she drifted into his arms, raised her lips to his and kissed him full on his mouth, he let the beast loose.

Chapter Four

It was the most natural thing in the world, to stretch up on her toes, wrap her arms around his broad shoulders and kiss him. His mouth might have been more lupine than human, but Xandi already felt as if she knew the man within. She tested the seam of his lips with her tongue.

He parted for her, teased her tongue with his, drew her into his mouth. It was different...the same...amazingly sensual, this kiss that was more than a kiss, a man who was more than human.

She pressed her hips against him, just enough shorter than he was that his hard cock, still damp from her mouth, rode against her belly. The soft fur covering his chest abraded her nipples and she wanted to dive into him, be a part of him.

He wrapped his arms around her and fell back onto the bed, then rolled both of them so that he was over her. She lay there beneath him, smiling up at the beast hovering over her. She sensed his indecision, his disbelief, that she could truly want him in this form.

Some small part of her mind wondered the same thing. What was she, that she could so desire a beast? What strange lust made her loins ache, her pussy weep, her heart race?

He dipped his wolfish head and licked her jaw, his long tongue trailing across her cheek, finding her ear. She shivered, then laughed. "I imagine you can do wondrous things with that tongue," she said.

He growled and nipped at her ear, then moved lower along her body. He stopped at her breast, suckled first one nipple, then the other into his mouth. She felt the sharp curve of his tongue feathering the very tip, then the stabbing clip of his teeth before he laved her, licked her entire chest with that slick, hot tongue.

Whimpering, gasping tiny, frantic little breaths, she lifted her hips, searching for his cock, but it jutted straight forward, out of her reach. Stefan nuzzled her belly, lapped at the nest of curls between her legs, licked the crease between thigh and groin.

Slick moisture flooded her pussy. Her vagina pulsed, deep rhythmic contractions, but there was nothing to contract against. She moaned, a deep, guttural plea, then reached for his shoulders and pushed him down, down closer to her needy, hot pussy.

He laughed, then dipped his head and licked her from asshole to clit. One, long hot sweep with his tongue. Then he sat up, kneeling between her widespread thighs, and grinned at her, exposing his huge canines, the tip of his tongue.

The blend of man and beast was no more evident than this. The beautifully molded body, the strong chest and powerful arms, the rampant cock all swollen and damp...the alert, forward pointing ears, amber eyes with their feral gleam, the teeth and muzzle of the wolf.

Waiting. Watching. Laughing silently at her. She bucked her hips, unable to reach him, then pounded her fists against the tumbled blankets.

"Shit. Oh shit. You're not going to do that and stop. I won't let you!" She tried to look furious. Burst out laughing instead. "Down, boy. Down!" she ordered, shaking her finger. "Behave, or you're going outside."

He blinked, as if her command caught him by surprise. Then he grinned, dipped his head and licked her once more. Thoroughly. From one end of her crotch to the other, with a quick pause to dip his tongue deep within her streaming pussy.

She didn't move. Couldn't. Could merely hold herself immobile and experience something she'd never, not in her wildest fantasies, imagined. His long tongue moved inside her, curled and licked the walls of her pussy, then flicked her swollen clit before lapping once more across her mons.

When he raised his head, her juices covered his muzzle. Xandi's heart was pounding so hard she was afraid it might explode. Her vagina contracted over and over but her climax hovered just on the other side of sensation.

Stefan cleared his throat and grinned at her. She'd already grown used to his canine version of a smile. "Tell me, mistress. Are you interested in obedience training?" he asked. He stretched his tongue around his muzzle and licked his mouth clean, as if emphasizing his animal side. "I should warn you, I don't do well on a leash."

She could barely catch her breath to answer. Humor was almost out of the question at this point. She gave it a try. "Maybe just a collar? When I tell you 'down,' though, I expect you to obey."

"Ah...down? Like this?" Once more he dipped his head. This time he slipped his hands beneath her buttocks and lifted her closer to his mouth. Her legs hung limply over his arms. She whimpered as he lapped carefully, licking her slowly, thoroughly, not missing a single spot between her legs — except her clit.

"Oh God...yes...like that. More. Please," she whimpered. "More." She clutched at the bedding, arched her hips, hoped like hell he'd find her button, but he laved everything else instead. Her pussy throbbed, her juices flowed until she was barely aware of his fingers moving across her buttocks, finding the crease between her cheeks, rubbing the tight ring of muscle at her ass.

Suddenly his tongue found her clit as his thick finger breached her anus. *Too much! Too fucking much!* Screaming, she arched her back and clamped her cheeks tightly against his hand. He held her immobile, his tongue stroking her clit then diving into her pussy, his finger pumping in and out of her backside, finding a slow and sensual rhythm in counterpoint to her frantic attempts to thrash and twist.

He brought her down slowly, whimpering and gasping, her legs quivering, her pussy streaming as her orgasm settled into a slow, rhythmic pulsation.

She gazed at him through half-lidded eyes, waiting, hoping. He couldn't possibly think they were through, could he? She watched as he sat back on his heels, his huge cock glistening deep red in the filtered light streaming through the blinds. The smooth fur covering his body glistened as well, the silver tips of his amazing pelt catching the sunlight like diamonds.

Xandi reached out and touched him, her fingers barely connecting with his cock. It jumped at the brief contact. Stefan growled, deep in his throat. She looked up at his face, startled by the sound, but his head was thrown back, his eyes tightly shut, his mouth twisted into a snarl. She knew immediately it was a sound of desire, not anger, of an almost desperate need for her to touch him.

Slowly she encircled his penis with her fingers, holding his thick cock carefully in her hand. His hips thrust forward, an involuntary move, she thought, but it was more than obvious he wanted her. Badly.

She arched her hips and scooted closer, placing the very tip of his penis against her swollen, wet labia. Still grasping him, she swept his cock back and forth between her legs, coating him in her fluids. He groaned, then leaned closer, easing just the tip into her welcoming pussy.

He moved slowly, carefully, but she urged him on with slow undulations of her hips. She took him this time without any trouble, fitting him deep inside until the broad head of his penis rested solidly against her womb, the weight of his testicles pressed snugly against her ass.

His face was lifted up, his eyes closed. He panted, as if struggling for control. She looked at him, at the wolfen countenance of a man so far removed from the beast, yet so much a part of the creature, and felt the first true stirrings of real emotion, of passion beyond lust, of need and caring and warmth.

She knew he hurt, knew he hated the animal countenance he'd cursed himself with. She found it exotic, intriguing, sensual. She spread her legs wider, lifted her hips to force him more solidly against her cervix, then grasped his lean hips in her hands. "Open your eyes, Stefan. Look at me the way you want me to see you. Please? Open your eyes."

Slowly, his breathing slowed and he settled himself between her legs, then he looked at her. There was a wild gleam in his amber eyes, a look that told her he was close, so close to the edge of whatever kept him human, whatever remnant of his soul controlled the beast.

Xandi reached up and swept her fingers across his muzzle, feeling the sharp prick of stiff whiskers beside his nose, the sleek line of his jaw where the strong muscle blended into his throat. "I want you, Stefan. You. The way you are. The way you feel in me. The way you touch me." She paused and turned his head so that he looked at her directly, his bright canines gleaming in the morning light, the pink curve of his tongue visible between his teeth.

"The way you look, Stefan. I love the way you look."

An expression of what could only be pain filled his eyes, but he began to move, his hips slowly thrusting deep inside, his strong hands grasping her waist. She caught his rhythm, joining with him, man and woman, mating in a dance older than time, hips thrusting, hearts pounding as he increased the tempo, picked up speed, filled her.

In this position, she felt him even more than she had last night. His cock was hot, burning her with each slick penetration, rubbing her sensitive flesh, bringing her closer and closer once more to her peak.

His breath exploded in short, sharp gasps. Close, so close to her own orgasm, Xandi struggled to stay with him, watched his chest swell, his jaw clench. Suddenly, he threw back his head and shouted, words unintelligible, a victory cry as she felt him grow, felt the swelling in his cock slip past her thickened labia, filling her, locking the two of them in a climactic knot.

She fought a moment's panic, that he was too big, that she'd tear, that he'd hurt her, but the link was there, once again, the connection that was more than mere sex. The moment she felt it, her body reacted — her muscles stretched and adjusted, holding him deep inside, squeezing each spurt of semen out of him. Connected, mind and body in total sync, her own climax slammed into her, the coil of heat practically exploding across her body, wringing a long, strangled cry out of her.

Panting, gasping for air, Stefan collapsed forward across her chest. Xandi wrapped her arms around his shoulders, holding him close, stroking his neck and shoulder, kissing the side of his face. She tasted salt on her tongue, knew she cried, but wondered

if the tears were all hers, or possibly Stefan's as well. He shuddered in her embrace, took a deep, quavering breath, and that question was answered.

His cock still pulsed, deep rhythmic undulations against her womb. Her own muscles spasmed around him, matching his cadence, holding him tight.

After awhile, he raised his head, blinking owlishly as he stared down at her. "Are you okay?"

"No...I'm way beyond okay." She ran the backs of her fingers along his jaw, reveling in the silky touch of his fur. "How about you?"

She could almost feel the relief...she could also still feel the hard knot of his swollen cock, filling her.

"Amazing. Absolutely amazing. I haven't done..." He shook his head, looked away with his eyes tightly shut for a moment, then turned back to her, "...this. Not in the past five years. Not since I...changed."

She held his face in her palms, his beautiful wolven face all sharp teeth and gleaming eyes, and looked directly at him. "We'll do it again. And again. I have never felt like this. Never. Never this connection, this mind and body experience that's so totally soul deep. Not with anyone. I will not let you go."

"I felt it, too," he whispered, turning his head to lick her palm. "I was so afraid I was alone, but I felt it, felt you." His hips rocked against the cradle of her thighs, probing her, touching the mouth of her womb with his hard cock. No longer swollen, but still erect, he loved her once more. She wrapped her legs around his hips and held him close.

* * *

They sat quietly in front of the fire, sipping an excellent Cabernet Franc, watching the flames dance. Xandi's two weeks were almost spent. Her car, slightly dented but still functional, sat in the driveway where Oliver had left it after towing it out of the deep canyon where she'd gone off the road. It was if they waited now, for something, unsure what that something might be.

Xandi couldn't stand it any longer, the suspense, the need to know. They'd made no mention of tomorrow, never discussed a future. "What next?" she asked, resting one palm over his beating heart. "What are we going to do?"

His arm tightened around her shoulders and she felt him sigh. "I don't want to lose you, yet I can't, in good faith, tie you to a beast."

She laughed. "Ah, but I love being tied to a beast. You've shown me an entirely new type of pleasure, one I fear I've become addicted to." She paused a moment, gathering her thoughts. "You can't force me to leave, you know. I can be tenacious." Xandi snuggled closer to his warm, familiar body. A body she'd learned to crave over the past days and nights of sensual exploration. "I have...feelings, for you, Stefan. Very strong feelings. Stronger than I ever imagined."

He tightened his arms around her. "I'll not hedge mine, Alexandria. I love you. You have given me a reason to live, to search for an answer to my dilemma." He smiled at her, brushing the tangled hair back from her eyes. "You are the woman I never thought I'd find, the one who has reminded me that humanity is more than just appearance, it is the soul, the spirit, the very essence that makes one a man."

He looked away again, but when he turned back to her, his eyes were filled with resolve. "I told you it was my own hubris that turned me into a beast. What I didn't tell you is that it was a very powerful wizard who actually did the deed. All he asked was my apology, my admission that I was a fool, and he would give me back my humanity."

He sighed, then smiled at her. "It has taken me five long years to realize I was wrong and he was right. I owe him that apology, whether he returns me to my former self or not. I've decided to try and find him, to beg him to forgive me for my insolence. He merely offered to teach me, but I thought I was more than he. It wasn't his fault I was a fool. It will, however, be my fault if I don't let him know I've finally learned my lesson."

"Take me with you?" Xandi turned in his arms, grabbed his shoulders and forced him to look her in the eye. "Take me on your quest, Stefan. I can't imagine being parted

from you. Not now, not ever. You've become a drug my soul needs to survive. A part of the very cells that keep my heart pumping, my brain functioning. Please? Take me?"

"And what if, when the journey is over, I am nothing more than Stefan the Magician, a normal man with insubstantial powers? The face of a human, the strength of an average man. Will you love me when I am no longer the wolf? Will you still want me?"

She ran her finger along his bare chest, circled his navel and traced the length of his growing penis. "Ah, Stefan...yes. I'll still love you...but when you ask him to return your humanity, do you think you could keep just this one *small* remnant of your life as a beast?"

Laughing, he grabbed her and rolled her to her back, using his hand to spread her legs wide. "We'll make that a priority, my love. Hopefully, he'll consider it a little souvenir of my life as a wolf."

Kate Douglas

For over thirty years Kate Douglas has been lucky enough to call writing her profession. She's produced ad copy for a radio station, flown over forest fires in a spotting helicopter while working as a photo-journalist, produced public information material — including drawing a weekly comic strip for a world-wide health agency, co-authored a cookbook and written numerous freelance articles for publication. She has won three EPPIES, an award given by the international authors' organization, EPIC — two for Best Contemporary Romance in 2001 and 2002, and a third for Best Romantic Suspense in 2001. Kate also creates cover art and is the winner of EPIC's Quasar Award for a Contemporary Romance book cover.

Kate is multi-published in Contemporary Romance, both print and electronic formats, as well as her popular futuristic erotic romance StarQuest Series and her new series, Wolf Tales, at www.ChangelingPress.com. She and her husband of over thirty years live in the northern California wine country where they find more than enough subject material for their shared passion for photography, though their new grandson is most often in front of the lens . Visit Kate at her websites: www.katedouglas.com for excerpts of her romances, and www.katedouglas.com/eroticromance for her adult stories. For regular updates and a chance to win copies of Kate's books and other cool stuff, sign up for her newsletter by sending a blank email to KateDouglas-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.