

# the Body politic



Mikala Ash

Changeling Press

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# **The Body Politic**

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*Wolf in a gilded cage...*

It is not natural for two alphas to share the same female, let alone in the same bed. Serena's alpha males can't stand one another. The two hunks are only a claw's width away from ripping out each other's throats.

Serena's trying to avert bloodshed while learn how to live in her new wolfean skin. And as if that's not enough, the full moon is approaching and the quickening is taking hold of her hormones.

Overwhelmed, Serena escapes to an island resort for werewolves. Unfortunately, she's followed by the vivacious Catriona Molyneux, socialite extraordinaire, who is determined to make Serena the next Prime Minister. Other forces, dark and malignant, are equally determined to make sure Catriona doesn't have her way.

Will Serena once again sacrifice herself to politics? Will her two lovers let her?

## Chapter One

In that predawn hour, home to surreal dreams and memories of the most erotic sort, Jack Wolfe rolled over and embraced the warm body beside him. His mind vibrated with the images, sounds and smells of hard sex. The moans of passion and the frisson of orgasm that had shattered his soul like a crystalline explosion.

Serena.

Oh, how he loved her, adored everything about her. Her scent, her taste, the sultry warmth of her flesh. She was everything he'd ever desired in a mate -- intelligent, loving, responsive, and she knew how to please him too. He had never come so powerfully in all his long life.

Jack's cock swelled with a flood of hot blood and, seemingly with a mind of its own, it sought her moist slit. Firm buttocks pressed warmly against his swollen sex. He reached out to fondle her full breasts, his fingers searching, searching... "What the fuck!" In an instant he'd leapt from the bed to crouch aggressively on the floor, a deep growl resonating in his chest.

Opposite him, Kelvin Waters was similarly crouched, snarling, his face contorted in rage, his powerful wolfen body poised for attack.

"Fuck you!" Jack hissed. His teeth were unsheathing in his jaw, the razor incisors extending. His bones and tendons cracked, joints and limbs stretched. In only a moment he'd transformed into a beast of fur and claw.

He growled menacingly at the other wolfen who, a moment ago, had been Kelvin Waters, the disgraced politician and Serena's other lover.

Without breaking their death stares for more than a moment, the two beasts glanced to the empty space on the bed where Serena should have been.

*This isn't right*, Jack thought angrily. *Two Alphas do not share the same female, let alone the same bed!* Waters growled back at him, his canines glistening white, his feral eyes glowing red with malevolent intent. *Now's as good a time as any*, Jack decided. The muscles of his hind legs tensed, ready to spring.

"Boys!"

Jack rocked back onto his haunches and turned to face her, his teeth retracting, tail and fur receding.

"Can't you two just try to get along?"

Jack glanced at Waters who had also returned to human form, the rage in his eyes replaced by lust.

Serena stood at the bedroom door, naked, only a breakfast tray obscuring her ample breasts. She grinned. "Coffee, tea or..."

They didn't let her finish.

\* \* \*

Catriona Mary Louise Molyneux's blonde curls bounced on her bare golden shoulders as she strode through the Sydney Hilton's foyer straight into a barrage of flashing cameras and shouting journalists. The frenzied mob jockeyed for position on the steps, thrusting their oversized microphones forward with manic cries, begging her to speak.

With her dazzling trademark smile competing with the flash units, Catriona halted on the top step, gave a smooth quarter turn to show her left profile, dropped one shoulder to emphasize her cleavage, pointed the toes of her front foot at the closest photographer and waited, her iridescent blue eyes glinting like mating fireflies.

"Molly! Molly!" they shouted and she warmed at the genuine affection they held for her.

"Molly!" One journalist in particular, his deep voice booming above the rest, attracted her radiant gaze. She recognized the delightful reporter from the *Sydney Review* who'd made an unsuccessful, though not unwelcome pass at a gala charity ball not a week past. Tommy Rasnic was his name. She owed him a question, she decided,

lest he become churlish at her rejection. She smiled encouragingly, knowing the parentheses at the corners of her mouth would give her face character and modest sex appeal, guaranteeing a cover on at least three glossy magazines.

"Molly, do you have any comment on the Prime Minister's cuts to welfare spending?"

*Oh, you absolutely gorgeous man, you.* "I'm glad you asked me that question." She smiled again while the cameras clicked and whirled. "I think this sorry excuse for a leader has lost the plot. What country is he living in? How dare he rip the hearts out of our most unfortunate citizens? The board and I are outraged."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"I'd run against him myself if it wouldn't take me away from the board's charity work."

Another hailstorm of clicking shutters and whirring TV cameras ensued. Catriona held up a hand and the hubbub died away. She listened for Tommy's inevitable follow up question. "What *can* you do about it?"

"The board and I resolved today to find a candidate to stand in the by-election caused by the unfortunate resignation of Kelvin Waters. That person will be a voice for the disenfranchised, the homeless, the sick, the most defenseless of our society."

"Any idea who that will be, Molly?"

"The board and I have developed a short list of eminently qualified persons and will be contacting those people in the next few days."

"Will this person be standing as an independent?"

She fixed him with a challenging gaze and determined set to her lips that, combined with the words she was about to say, would guarantee she'd be on the front page of every single newspaper in the country, not to mention every TV news broadcast for the next two days. "Why, Tommy, in our particular brand of democracy, how can someone become Prime Minister if they run as an independent?"

\* \* \*

"I was going to say," Serena said, "coffee, tea or orange juice, *not me*." She giggled and snuggled in between her two men. "But I'm not complaining."

Jack was suckling at her breast. He knew just the right amount of pressure to exert on her nipple, not quite painful, but hard enough so she knew he was there. Kelvin was busy between her thighs, his tongue lapping at her swollen pussy lips, one finger deeply embedded inside her, stroking that special spot.

Serena moaned involuntarily. She loved it when moans and groans escaped her throat of their own accord. It was like she had a beast inside her that wanted to escape. The feeling wasn't as silly as it sounded, she realized. She literally did have a beast inside her.

She just couldn't help making noise now. The pleasure was too exquisite to keep inside. With one hand on Kelvin's head to keep him in place she reached for Jack's hips and urged him closer so she could take his cock in her mouth.

He didn't need much encouragement.

Serena's body buzzed with sensation, almost singing with pleasure, every nerve resonating with shivers of delight. Even the satin sheet beneath her was like a pond of scented oils that warmed and flowed beneath her aroused flesh.

She loved the way Jack's satin shaft filled her mouth with pulsating warmth. One of the first things she learned was that stretching her jaw to accommodate him didn't have to be a problem. It was only one of the advantages of her new nature: her body had the flexibility of a wild animal and she could twist and turn and stretch to fit whatever the needs of the moment. To a werewolf, athletic sex was not something to avoid or be afraid of.

A deep groan erupted from her throat. Kelvin's probing tongue sent pulses of hot pleasure radiating from the furnace of her pussy, spreading inexorably from her clit to the center of her brain where it blossomed like a rose of fire.

Serena came suddenly and she moaned around the shaft of Jack's swollen cock. She was dimly aware of Kelvin raising himself to his knees and feeding his cock into her waiting pussy. Jack thrust into her mouth in time with Kelvin's gentle assault.



While she descended from the heights of pleasure she had a few moments of rational thought.

The boys worked well together when they fucked her, but the instant the sex stopped they turned on each other in sullen anger, bickering over the smallest slight. She was afraid to leave them alone because she knew they'd be at each other's throats in a moment.

Serena noticed they made sure not to come into physical contact with each other in the close confines of the bed.

Kelvin's thrusts were quickening, coming more strongly and penetrating more deeply. Serena shuddered in response and tightened the grip of her legs about his hips.

Their stamina was amazing. Sometimes they'd fuck her for hours on end, taking turns at her pussy, taking her higher and higher to the peaks of passion and not letting her come down until she'd climbed even further. She often lost conscious awareness of the physical world as she transcended a new plane of perception. There she existed as a spiritual being, detached from the world of the senses, a creature of pure bliss.

In her mouth, Jack's cock was swelling, filling her completely, insistently nudging the back of her throat. His movements had quickened too and she recognized the signs. He was close to coming.

Sighing wistfully he withdrew his cock and bent down to kiss her. He was delaying his orgasm. Unconsciously the boys had come up with a system whereby they would not come at the same time, so that there would be no hiatus in the pleasure they gave her. They would never have discussed it openly, she was sure, but by some unspoken agreement they monitored each other's arousal. Once one had come, the other would take over fucking her. This way she would have at least one cock inside her for ages. And she never tired of that.

Suddenly, Kelvin raised his head and howled. His ululations kept time with his contracting cock that released a flood of come inside her. Her pussy contracted violently as she came in unison with him, milking his cock of his essence. Serena hugged him close, trying to mold herself to him as their bodies shuddered and shook.

Jack went to take his place. Kelvin withdrew from her and, as she descended the heights of pleasure, lowly nature made itself known. "Bathroom break," she pleaded. "Have breakfast, for goodness sake. You'll need to keep up your strength."

She padded to the en-suite and closed the door. She took a deep breath and, prepared for the worst, examined herself in the mirror. She had that "just been fucked" look that she'd worn for the few weeks since she'd been turned. In her defense, she reasoned, she just couldn't get enough of the two boys.

Her golden flesh was glowing and had an aura about it she'd never noticed before. Her long jet black hair was tangled and wet with sweat. She tried to fluff it but it just sat there forming a lank helmet around her face.

What did she expect? She hadn't spent more than three hours out of bed in weeks. She'd been thoroughly loved by two robust men who were simply insatiable. When this burst of libido had passed, she just had to get to a beauty salon and get herself repaired.

Serena sighed contentedly. The weeks since her turning had been surreal, a dreamscape seen through melting glass, a kaleidoscope of sensual images running like watercolors through her memory, mixing together like some bizarre painting.

She gave her hair one final ineffective fluff and went to the bathroom door. She could hear Jack and Kelvin talking, their voices low but serious. They'd forgotten that her enhanced hearing, though still undeveloped, was improving every hour and she could hear them quite distinctly through the solid wood of the door.

"This is not working." It was Jack's voice, low, not quite a whisper.

Serena's heart stopped.

"I was about to say the same thing."

"That we have lasted this long is a miracle. I want to tear out your throat every time I smell you."

"That goes both ways, you dog. You really stink."

"I retch every time I catch your putrid scent. You really are the most detestable wolfen I know."

Kelvin's answering growl was deep and menacing.

"It's not natural," Jack continued, his voice deep and guttural, "that two alphas share the same woman let alone the same bed. My bed, I might remind you."

"So, it's a territorial thing, is it?"

"Switch places and see how you'd feel."

"I'm not giving her up."

"Nor I."

"Then we fight." It wasn't a question, just a flat unemotional statement. Serena's heart froze in her chest.

"But she'll not stay with the winner. You know that. Regrettably, she loves us both too much."

"Then we both lose her."

There was a long moment of silence. Serena's wildly beating heart was knocking against her ribs so hard she was certain they could hear it. She fought back the tears welling in her eyes. She hadn't realized the depth of their hatred for one another.

"The problem is we can't let her learn the wolfen way of life by herself."

"Then we wait. But one day we will fight. It is inevitable. One day our hatred will blind us and we'll forget ourselves. There will be no quarter given."

"None expected."

"One day we'll lose her. It is inevitable."

"Then we must make it work as long as we can. Agreed?"

"Agreed."

## Chapter Two

Catriona Molyneux dropped the newspaper onto the bedroom floor next to her discarded bra. She stepped gracefully out of her G-string and twirled the strip of red silk provocatively around her finger before letting it fall onto the full page headline. *Molly to PM: 'You're no longer welcome!'*

She knelt on the bed and straddled the young reporter's hips, slowly lowering herself onto his impressively erect organ. He reached up in the time honored fashion and cupped her firm breasts, squeezing her nipples between thumb and forefinger.

Catriona adjusted her pelvis to accommodate his girth and with a slow grinding motion, set a gentle rhythm that ensured his shaft touched all the right spots.

Tommy Rasnic groaned and raised his hips off the bed.

Without breaking her rhythm Catriona continued their conversation where they left off just before she decided to fuck him. "So you know who I'm talking about?"

"Uh-huh."

"You wanted to fuck her, didn't you?"

A boyish smile flicked disingenuously across his lips. He thought himself just a little too cute, she decided. That was a shame. "She's attractive enough," he grunted, raising his hips to get deeper inside her. "She has a good body, but she was too aloof to consider a real possibility."

So, Catriona guessed, she had turned him down. "No one in Canberra has fucked her?"

"Not to my knowledge."

This was important. There could be no shadow of doubt in the minds of the press that Serena Plim was innocent of any sexual impropriety of any kind. When it came to the charge of having an affair with the then Deputy Prime Minister, Kelvin Waters,

Catriona had already planted the idea in other journalists' minds that it had all been a terrible mix up, a painful mistake that had cost Waters his political career and blackened an innocent woman's reputation. "You didn't believe the stories about her and Waters?"

"No, I couldn't see it. They were close, sure, but more like brother and sister. He was too up himself, you know? He's the archetypal charismatic soon-to-be leader with shit that doesn't stink type. He was too principled to jeopardize his chances of the top job with any hanky panky."

"So who organized the press against him?"

He shrugged, raising his pelvis again. She increased her rhythm to help him along. "I don't know," he said between grunts. "It just combusted spontaneously after his stupid wife piped up. He pulled the pin and quit so quick we didn't get a chance to find out if there was any real dirt anyway. He was so squeaky clean I think everyone was salivating for some dirt."

She stopped moving. "None has come to light since?"

"Not that I've heard. Though the fact that both Waters and Plim have disappeared looks suspicious. But the wife has taken it all back anyway. Stupid bitch, said it was all a mistake. Apparently she flipped her wig completely and her family shipped her off to some private sanitarium." He squeezed her breasts. "Come on, Molly, fuck me."

She stopped moving and speared him with an icy glare. No man ordered her to do anything, even if she wanted to do it. "So, Tommy, you'd give her a fair go?"

"Absolutely. Serena always played it straight with us. We were after Waters rather than her. She's sharp as a tack, a good speaker. Hell, she wrote all of his speeches anyway. We often wondered whose ideas he was spouting. She's pretty smart, so there wouldn't be much difference in her being PM instead of him."

She resumed her grinding motion. "That's how most of your brethren in the press will see it?"

"Yep, until she makes her first speech, then the gloves come off and she's on her own."

"Let me handle that."

"So, she's going to be your little pet monkey, is she?"

If she knows what's good for her, Catriona thought. "You overestimate my influence," she said and then concentrated on the sensations that had been building up in the background of her consciousness. Now that she had what she wanted, she could afford to let herself go.

\* \* \*

Serena stood cemented to the spot. Anger, fear and love all competed for dominance in her wash of emotions.

Anger won. Jack and Kelvin had been talking about her as if she were a child. Her jaw set. She'd have to make them take her seriously.

Her anger was tempered by surprise. The depth of their mutual hatred was far worse than she'd suspected. She'd known they rankled at each other's proximity, but hadn't realized that it bordered on a fight to the death.

Cold fear coursed through her veins. She didn't want them to hurt each other and she felt shame that she was the cause. She could not have believed their feral natures would be so dominating. That they would kill each other, tear out each other's throats, even though they knew she couldn't stay with the winner no matter how much she loved him.

Serena felt as if she'd been thrown into a family of passionate madmen. They were so loving, but were not in control of their actions, victims of their bestial nature.

She had stupidly dismissed their analogy to the wolf pack when they'd first explained wolfen nature to her. The idea that the concept of the wolf pack could be applied to her and her two lovers had simply been too bizarre to accept.

Her curiosity had been piqued though and she'd spent one of her few free hours on the Internet. She found the concepts -- as natural as they might be to wolves -- obscene if applied to humans and had discounted the analogy.

But now, having listened to Jack and Kelvin, she believed they were closer to animals than she'd imagined. That she was now one of them hit her like a hammer blow.

Serena pressed her forehead hard into the door jamb. This was all too painful. She loved both of them, but her love was making them go against their nature.

She shuddered, suddenly scared of what she'd become, and then chastised herself for being stupid. What did she think would happen? She'd become an alien creature, a werewolf with powers she could not yet imagine. Did she really think she could set up happy families with two alpha males that would gladly skin each other alive? Of course there would be conflict, and not the civilized debating she was used to. Any dispute would be settled by tooth and claw.

And she was now one of them.

The sooner she came to grips with that reality the better off they'd all be. Her stomach felt suddenly hollow. She was afraid and lonely. How could she make her way in such an alien world? How ironic. The dog eat dog world of politics she thought she'd left had nothing on werewolf society.

*Dammit! This is just not fair.* She smiled at the irony of that. When had life ever been fair to her?

She didn't have much of a track record. A clumsy adolescence, a couple of unsatisfying and tawdry affairs and then a decade of unrequited love and celibacy as Kelvin's press secretary which ended in scandal and shame. Not a history to elicit much pride and now she'd been offered an eternity of sensual experience and untold power, and even then she couldn't have what she wanted.

Her life had just taken its usual course.

She hated that she was dragging these two beautiful men into the pit with her. She resolved not to hurt them any more.

Serena opened the bathroom door and strode into the room. Both men, sitting as far apart as the bed would allow, looked up, their eyes lighting with lust.

She'd forgotten she was still naked. Too late now; besides, she'd hardly worn a stitch of clothing in the last month. She wiped the tears from her eyes and sat down between them. "I don't want to hurt either of you," she said. "I've decided I should go away."

The boys shot jagged, accusatory glances at each other. "You can't do that," Jack protested.

"This is your home," Serena said. "This situation is making you unhappy in your own house. That's just not right."

"But I'll be more unhappy if you leave. We can work this out. Trust me." He flicked his eyes to Kelvin. "Trust us."

"Jack, I need to think things through too."

"But..."

She put a finger to his lips to silence him. "The last few weeks have been crazy. I simply don't know who I am anymore."

"I can't let you go out alone," Kelvin said. "You're still discovering your powers. There are too many dangers out there."

"You mean the Council? Do you think they'll still try to kill me?"

"The real danger lies in human beings. We can't divulge our existence to humans. They will attack and kill us in their blind fear."

She was suddenly furious at his paternalistic attitude toward her. "Do you think I'd just tell anyone? Hey, stranger, look at me, I'm a werewolf?"

"Of course not. But an unthinking moment, when you do something supernatural in front of them, they'll notice, believe me. For the ten years I've been in the public eye, every thought I had was firstly involved in hiding my true identity. It's not easy. It takes practice." He grasped her hand. "Serena, it's so important to everyone's safety that we remain secret."

"I see that, but you lot haven't been so successful keeping your existence secret. What about all the movies and books? There's a whole industry built up around werewolves and vampires and... oh, my God, are there vampires too?"



"Yes, shape-shifters of all types," Jack said.

"Fiction," Kelvin continued, "from the days of classical Greece, was a misguided attempt to ease humans into believing that we were just creatures of the imagination. So that if we were discovered sightings would be discounted as overactive imaginations. It was partly successful, but an unintended consequence was that it injected a stronger fear of us into the human psyche. That was unfortunate. The recent drive to get our kind into positions of political power throughout the world is another attempt to safeguard our existence. It arose out of the world wars when we realized humans were a threat to the whole planet, not just shape-shifters."

"Don't make it sound so noble," Jack hissed. "It's a raw grab for power, the beginning of the enslavement of mankind."

"That's not true and you know it."

"I can't believe you don't see it. Are you so stupid you can't see through the deception? They wanted to kill Serena, for God's sake!"

"The politicians I work with have the best interests of the planet and humanity at heart, trying to ensure our survival within the human community."

Jack laughed. "Serena, you've been around politics enough. Can you believe the Council has the best interests of humanity at heart?"

Serena shrugged. "I only know they tried to kill me."

"There is nothing more important to the Council than our own survival. They'll do anything to protect it. Even kill humans just on the assumption they know too much."

"That's why I got out," Kelvin said. "But the Council is not the politicians. Common sense will guide the politicians in place to do the right thing."

Jack shook his head in disbelief. "How can you be so bloody naive?"

"And what's your solution? Huh? Hide yourself out here in the country and watch from the sidelines!"

Jack bolted to his feet, his fists balled. Kelvin tensed and Serena held him by the shoulder.

"Jack, please sit down. See, you both can't even have a discussion about politics without almost coming to blows. I know I'm the cause of this hatred. I have to go."

"As much as it twists in my gut, I have to agree with him, Serena," Jack said. "Your leaving isn't a good idea."

"There is no other solution. I have to go. Where, I don't know. Isn't there a werewolf school I can go to?"

Serena flopped backward onto the bed. Both men turned with her, their hands instinctively going to her flesh, softly stroking her flanks. Her skin tingled at their touch. She closed her eyes, wanting to abandon herself to their sensual caress and forget for a moment the problem that seemed to have no solution.

"I love you both so much," she murmured at last.

"We know that," Kelvin said.

She heard the growl emanating from Jack's throat and frowned at the deadly glares they were trading over her naked body. *So much for a sexual interlude.* She had to make a decision, do something now before they killed each other.

"If you won't let me go away, then you'll have to share me."

"What do you mean?"

"I'll live by myself and you both can be my visiting lovers."

She saw the uneasiness descend over their faces. Neither liked the idea of losing their control over her.

"There must be a better way," Jack protested.

Kelvin laughed. "I think it's a great idea. At least it gets Serena out of your clutches."

"What do you mean by that?"

"You think that because she's under your roof you have authority over her. Well, you don't, buddy. You got that?"

"I'll skin you alive..."

"Stop it!" Serena cried. "I can't stand it when you fight."

"I'm sorry, my love," Kelvin mumbled. "It's just that he gets on my nerves."

Jack sighed, though it sounded more like a growl. "I'm sorry I've hurt your feelings, Serena. But I just can't stand him. Not just because of the current situation, but the way he treated you for ten years. I can't forget that and I won't forgive it."

"The past is over," Serena said softly.

The finality of that statement made her gasp. It was like she'd been flying among the clouds, albeit stormy ones, but the words she'd just uttered seemed to have taken the air out from under her wings and she was falling, plummeting to earth.

The past was over, completely and unalterably gone. Everything in her life that had ever meant anything to her, even her family, now belonged to another person, a person who no longer existed, because Serena Plim, the human, was dead. In her place was a simulacrum of Serena, a body that looked and talked like her, but was really a completely different entity.

She was a werewolf.

The rules had changed.

In fact, everything in her life that had held sway over her, the mores and culture of twenty-first century Australia, no longer bound her. The rules and conventions that had governed her life had been swept aside.

Now her entire universe was made up of these two wonderful men.

But was there more out there, away from this oasis of sex? What was the wolfen world all about? What could it mean for her?

"Serena, are you all right?"

"There's only the future," she muttered.

"Serena," Jack said, grasping her shoulder.

"Yes, yes, I'm sorry. I'd just realized that the game of life, my life that is, has changed. The rules are different now."

"Very different," Kelvin agreed.

Jack turned her slightly so she could look directly into his face. "I never wanted this for you, Serena. This life we have given you is not one you would have chosen had

you known everything about it. It was just that we couldn't let you die. I'm sorry, but there are some unsavory elements you've yet to experience."

Kelvin nodded. "While humans can, to some extent, control their nature, and through application and diligence overcome their shortcomings to become better people, our wolfen nature is stronger, more primitive, more cellular. We cannot always control our beastly needs and reactions."

"That's why some of us live solitary lives among our own kind. The rules of our society are far stricter than human conventions and custom."

"Which is why we want to be with you as you explore our society and find your place within it. You see -- and I don't make the pun lightly, Serena -- there are predators out there, predators in the truest sense of the word."

Serena shivered at their words. "You're saying I need you both."

They both said "yes" at the same time.

"But you can't get along. How many times have you nearly fought over me?"

"Every time we're in the same room together," Jack admitted.

"I am so sorry," she said, touching both their faces with her fingertips. "I don't want to cause you so many problems."

"It's the way of things," Kelvin said. "We must adapt."

"We don't want to lose you," Jack said.

"But what's the use of this love that causes you both so much pain?"

"Life," Jack said.

"Happiness, despite the difficulties," Kelvin said.

"So where does that leave us?" Serena sat up disconsolately.

They put their arms about her shoulders, flicking each other scowls when they accidentally touched. After a moment, they conspired to accommodate each other; Jack with his arm about her shoulder and Kelvin with his arm about her waist.

"See," she said. "You can't even comfort me without conflict."

Neither answered.

*This isn't going to work*, she decided. She now felt guilty every time they reacted against each other. Eventually, Serena knew she'd resent feeling like that.

She had to get some space for herself. "I think I need time to think," she said finally.

"It's not safe to be on your own," Jack said. "The full moon is only a week away."

This was another cause for anxiety. They'd both hinted her first experience of the full moon would be difficult. Serena had assumed she'd be with them when it happened and so hadn't given it much thought. Now the prospect of her being by herself was distinctly unsettling. "What will happen?"

"The full moon affects everyone differently, reflecting their residual human personalities. It is generally better to be in a safe place as Jack suggests."

"At last you agree on something."

"We are not acting contrary for its own sake," Kelvin said. "We have our natures to contend with. We are trying really hard."

She considered them both for a moment. They were earnest, no doubt about it. But they had made such undertakings before. She recalled with horror the first time she'd seen them in their wolfen skins. They'd fought savagely and the sight had made her run to the hills, where she had met her near death and rebirth.

The savagery of that fight haunted her still.

Resignation settled over her. Even if they could keep their feral nature under control while she was in the room, she would know they were acting contrary to their feelings. They wouldn't be natural and as a consequence, she'd feel guilty. That just wouldn't do. "Boys, I appreciate the effort you're going to on my behalf. But resisting your natural impulses won't help in the long run. You'll despise me eventually."

"Never."

"In your hearts you both know it. This will drive you mad and then one day you'll break and tear strips off each other or worse. I couldn't bear it if either of you were hurt."

She took Jack's face in her hands. "Darling Jack. I've dropped into your life turning it into a battlefield. I am so sorry."

He held her face in turn. "It's not as bad as all that, my darling."

She gave him a sad smile and kissed him. She turned to Kelvin. "I loved you for a decade, but never the man... the individual you really were. I love you still, of course, but I don't know how much of that is residual... human love." She kissed him before standing up and walking to the door.

"What are you saying?" Jack asked.

"At first I was taken in by your love and attention and my new abilities. I didn't really think of the future. I was content to let you both have me, and your squabbles, well, I didn't realize how deep they were and my attitude was, you both made me, you can both sort it out. That was selfish of me, and I'm sorry. I have to go. I have to go now."

"Wait!" Kelvin leaped off the bed to stand beside her at the door, not exactly barring her path. "I have an idea."

Jack growled and sprang to his feet, his eyes ablaze with distrust.

"Settle down, pal," Kelvin chided him. "Serena, you wanted a place where you could be safe, have time to think and learn the ropes of being a wolfen."

Serena gazed into his loving eyes. "There's a werewolf university after all?"

"Not exactly. It's an island resort owned by werewolves. Half the island is left for humans, to keep up the cover, but its main purpose is to cater to wolfen."

"Sounds great," Serena said cautiously.

"She can't go by herself," Jack reminded them.

"I'll take her," Kelvin said.

"Over my dead body."

"That can be arranged."

"Jesus!" Her expletive shocked them down from their combative stances. "What is it with you two?"

"We're a week or so from full moon," Kelvin explained sheepishly. "During the quickening our hormones go mad."

Serena had to laugh. "You're kidding me. You mean we wolven can actually use 'it's that time of the month' as an excuse?"

They both blushed.

"It defeats the purpose if you go," Jack continued to Kelvin. "She needs to be away from us, isn't that right, Serena?"

Serena nodded and an idea unfolded in her mind. "What if Hanna accompanies me?"

"Maybe," Jack said. "Hanna has been a werewolf for over sixty years. She's impartial and most importantly, someone we can both trust."

"Good idea," Serena said. "Done."

"Don't I get a say in this?" Kelvin had bared his teeth.

"Well, what?" Jack growled. "What possible objection could you have?"

"She's your female."

"Don't let Hanna hear you say that."

"Housekeeper then."

"That neither. She is my friend, I grant you that, but Serena knows her, trusts her."

Kelvin put his hands on his hips. "I don't trust her to be impartial."

"So what do you suggest? Get someone you know?"

"Obviously not."

"And don't you think it's a bit much expecting Serena to trust a total stranger?"

Anger welled up inside Serena's breast. "Damn it, I'm still in the room. Stop making decisions for me as if I wasn't here."

"I'm sorry, Serena. I just want to make sure this joker doesn't..."

"And stop calling each other names. I can't stand it." She paced the room. "Okay, here's the deal. I'm going to this resort for a few days to just relax, learn a bit about

myself and figure out what I want out of all this. I'll let you know when I want to return."

"And your companion?"

"I'd like Hanna to come with me. I get along with her, and I don't feel confident enough to be alone with the full moon approaching. Do you think she'll agree? I'm sure she and Grigor would have plans of their own."

Jack reached out and grasped her hand. "I'll ask. But she likes you, Serena. I'm sure she'll be glad to go."

Serena glanced at Kelvin. His jaw was set tight, his eyes cold points of dark light. "Sweetheart," she said, "please understand. It's for my sanity."

He took a long moment to decide. "Very well. But keep a mobile phone handy. Call me if anything happens."

Serena sighed in relief. At last, they'd come to an agreement.



## Chapter Three

Catriona landed her personal Sky Star single prop executive with practiced ease. She'd been flying since the 1920s and loved the experience almost as much as sex. She'd secretly flown out of Bankstown Airport to avoid media attention. The last thing she wanted was their prying eyes as she connived to secure the nation's next Prime Minister. As far as anyone knew, Tommy Rasnic included, she was in Sydney managing her charity empire from her office overlooking Circular Quay.

She killed the engine and climbed out of the cockpit. The silence of the Australian outback descended upon her like a heavy cloak. Oppressive, she thought, just like the heat. She adjusted her wide brimmed and fashionable Akubra to shield herself from the simmering sun and flipped on her gold-framed sunglasses to cut down the searing glare.

She surveyed the haze-cloaked landscape and saw only a mob of red kangaroos on the rise, standing tall on their hind legs, studying her over the waist high spinifex.

Jack Wolfe's grand house was a couple of kilometers away and she could hike it if she had to, but she'd buzzed the house a couple of times and... yes, there was a car coming, a red farm utility.

She hadn't phoned ahead, enjoying the idea of surprising the reclusive Jack Wolfe. Dropping imperiously from the sky was one way of securing an advantage. She adjusted her bra -- sex appeal was another.

The aptly named Wolfe was an enigma to her. Though he was well known in wolfen circles as an astute and ethical businessman, she had only met him once, decades ago, at a funeral. Her first impression of him, once she got past his good looks and innate sexuality, was that he was cold and aloof, without political or philosophical interests or ambitions. He lived as he wanted and let everyone else do likewise.

It was a dangerous philosophy for the future of their species and she wondered how he would react to her proposal for Serena. Arrogant disdain probably.

The reports from the Council suggested that Waters and Wolfe were bound up in some sort of tryst with the recently turned Serena Plim. They'd saved her following her selfless sacrifice, and had been shackled up with her ever since. Two alpha males sharing a fresh female was unheard of. It spoke highly of Serena's personality, if not her sexuality. Catriona would have to explore that dynamic and see what would suit her needs best. For her plan to work, the sexy bitch would have to give one or both of her dogs up.

The utility came to a shuddering halt beside her plane and she stepped out of the cloud of red dust it had thrown up. She recognized the driver. It was Grigor, Wolfe's faithful retainer. He'd been turned by Wolfe during the war, she recalled. The only time she knew his anger had been stirred.

Grigor glanced at her in a furtive manner, no doubt catching her alpha scent. She gave him a low-pitched growl to establish her status and he bobbed his head in response.

"You must be Grigor."

"Yes, Madam."

"You know who I am?"

"That I do, Madam."

Polite and respectful, she liked that, though she smelt his suspicion. "Good. Take me to him."

"As you wish. Any luggage?"

"In the boot."

Grigor extracted the single suitcase from the plane's luggage compartment and put it in the back of the utility.

Catriona climbed into the cabin. "Has your master any other guests?"

"No, Madam."

She rounded on him. "What?"

“There are no other guests, Madam.”

Her mind raced. Where had Serena and Waters gone? She'd been looking forward to getting to know Serena Plim in the relative seclusion of Wolfe's estate with the intention of gradually encouraging her to accept her proposal. She'd met the press secretary many times during Waters' ascendancy and had been impressed by Serena's innate sexuality hidden by a demure persona. Catriona had been attracted to her immediately. Seldom does one see a human with such nascent charisma. It was a pitiful waste for her to be a mere press secretary.

Serena was personable, intelligent, eloquent and self-possessed, all the qualities needed for political success. Catriona had purposely struck up conversations with her to get to know her better, but Plim was so utterly devoted to Waters she'd missed the point. Catriona hadn't detected Waters' scent on her at that time and had been relieved that it was so.

But where was she now? Catriona took a deep breath to settle herself.

She'd question Wolfe and determine where Waters had taken Serena so she could get to them before anyone saw them. She hoped it wasn't too late. Serena mustn't be found by the Council. Not quite yet.

“Stop the car.”

When Grigor had brought the utility to a dusty halt, Catriona ordered him out of the cab with an arrogant flick of her head. Though the physically superior Grigor could tear her to shreds, he wouldn't, not without a command from his master and Wolfe wouldn't dare. Catriona strolled with impunity through the wolfen world and had done so for centuries.

She waited till Grigor had sauntered a dozen meters from the car before making her call. She quickly instructed her agents to search for Waters and Plim and report back the instant they had something.

When she was finished, she barked, a snappy, high-pitched command. Grigor had his back turned, but responded immediately and returned to the utility. He

avoided her eyes, but his hatred was palpable. It was to be expected. She was on their territory and he would protect his master even to the death.

She smiled coldly. Such devotion wouldn't be necessary. Not today at least.

With a distinctly European feel, Wolfe's house was impressive. It seemed he had collected elements from several centuries of European architecture and created a stylish residence of three stories in marble with grand columns and tall windows with ivy-covered balconies.

As they approached the house she spied the imposing figure in a white, short sleeve shirt and dark slacks, waiting imperiously on the top step. Wolfe was even more handsome than she remembered. Despite that unwelcome scowl and aggressive stance, he was easily the best looking man she'd seen in years. She wondered how he looked in his wolfen pelt.

Catriona climbed out of the utility and stood at the base of the steps looking up at him. She pulled off her sunglasses to get a better look. Wolfe's sandy hair fell nonchalantly over a smooth forehead. Catriona thought that his high cheekbones, the aquiline nose and the angular chin would've made him a film star in any era. In repose, his face would have given off an air of sardonic indifference, but right now he was angry.

Catriona strolled up the stairs and extended her hand. She knew Wolfe, a gentleman of the old school, couldn't resist for very long the dictates of etiquette. Sure enough, after a moment's pause and a tightening of that strong jaw, he reached out and took her hand. His grip was powerful and a shiver of desire swept through her.

Alpha males had that special something that got her juices flowing. Sex with humans was all well and good to scratch an itch, but a good alpha was something to be treasured.

She was instantly jealous of Serena. The lucky bitch had both Jack and Kelvin to satisfy her quickening libido.

"What do you want?" His voice was cold and defiant.

"Is that any way to greet a fellow traveler through eternity?" She fixed him with her most dazzling smile and, putting one foot on the step with him, lifted herself up and planted a kiss on his cheek. "Especially one who has longed for this moment for years too many to count." She rubbed the lipstick off his cheek with her thumb. He didn't flinch, which was something. Instead he glared at her suspiciously.

"Fifty-five years," he offered humorlessly.

"You remembered? How positively exciting."

"You were burying your husband."

"That's right. Number... oh, how embarrassing. Was he husband number thirty or thirty-one?"

"Ask your accountant."

She slapped him gently on the wrist. "You are naughty."

Grigor had lifted the suitcase out of the utility. "The lady won't be staying," Jack said.

Grigor went to put it back when Catriona tut-tutted. "I hate to impose upon you, dear, dear Jack, but it's simply unavoidable. My plane has a blockage in the fuel line. I'll have to get an aero mechanic out here. Won't take more than a day, I suppose."

"Grigor can take a look at it."

"Oh, that simply won't do. It's new and still under warranty, unauthorized tinkering not allowed."

The muscles of his square jaw tightened even further. "Then you'd better come in."

"The second guest room, sir?" Grigor asked pointedly.

"Whatever," Jack replied abruptly and turned his back on her. He strode to the front doors and flung them open.

Catriona watched with an amused smile creasing her lips. She guessed the first guest room had recently housed either Waters or Plim or both and Grigor had correctly anticipated it would be best not to accommodate her in the room they'd so recently

occupied. She silently thanked him for his thoughtfulness; the stink of their mating would have been unbearable.

Jack Wolfe held the door open for Grigor to enter with her luggage. Once his man had passed, Jack turned and stepped inside. Ignoring this rude gesture, Catriona followed him, a smile on her lips and a flutter in her heart. He would be a challenge, she decided, but the thought of his swelling cock inside her was motivation enough.

As Catriona entered behind him, she caught a whiff of the recently turned. Serena was all over him, seeping out of his pores. A shiver of excitement swept through her. She followed his broad back, slim waist and tight buns down a hallway and into a sunny sitting room. The windows were tinted against the sun that had just entered the west and a cool breeze wafted through the room.

"What a delightful space," she commented and took a seat by a low coffee table. "A cool lemonade would be just perfect."

Grigor appeared at the door and Jack asked for a pitcher of lemonade. Wolfe took a seat opposite her and stretched out his long legs. He wore boots of the finest cowhide and his slacks were well made and a style she hadn't seen before. She made a mental note to ask him, when matters were settled, who provided his wardrobe.

His cool gaze lingered on her face. She assumed he had taken in her full figure and was consciously avoiding looking at her cleavage which she was purposefully showing to its best advantage.

Catriona quietly returned his gaze. She was an expert in this game. Whoever spoke or broke the gaze first, lost. Catriona Molyneux never lost.

Jack Wolfe was a cool one, handsome, and charming when he wanted to be. It had crossed her mind that he would be Serena's perfect mate. With no public history there would be nothing to shock potential voters and his looks would give her another three or four percentage points in the polls. Now that she'd seen him close up that idea was firming in her mind. She decided, then and there, while their gazes locked in silent combat, that he would marry Serena Plim and help her win the next election.

But before any of that could happen she had to determine the lay of the land. If Waters was still in the picture she'd have to get him out of Serena's life, permanently if that's what it took. That would be a great pity, but there was a lot at stake.

"Why are you here?"

Catriona smiled in triumph. She loved winning ever so much. "There's no reason why I shouldn't tell you. I'm looking for Serena."

His eyes flared. "She'll have nothing to do with you. You will leave her alone."

Catriona laughed. "My, my, such a protective response. Anyone would think you're in love, my dear Jack Wolfe."

His face reddened. "Leave her alone."

"I get the message, Jack. But you know me and the Council. We have our mission, you see."

"I don't see how it includes Serena."

"You'd be surprised what we have in mind for our attractive escapee. Where is she, by the way?"

"Where you won't find her, you pernicious bitch."

"Now, Jack. Let's be civil. I may be able to help you."

"Your history is enough to tell me that I don't want anything to do with you. I'll do everything in my power to keep Serena away from you as well."

"Surely she's an adult and can make her own decisions."

"She's my mate," he said decisively.

"Now that's not strictly true, is it? I heard that you shared turning her with Kelvin Waters. What would Kelvin think about you making decisions on his behalf?"

"He's got more reason to hate you than I do."

"Where is she, Jack? Let me guess. I think you're in such a testy mood because Serena is off somewhere with our disgraced friend."

His eyes darkened at that and Serena smiled in triumph.

"She's not with Kelvin," Jack said.

"Oh?" She was genuinely surprised and she noted the pleased expression that flashed across his face. "Then what's happened? Have you all split up in an explosion of jealousy and hate like they do in the soap operas?"

His face darkened and she wondered idly what insult he was about to throw at her when the door opened. Grigor entered with a pitcher of lemonade and two glasses on a tray.

Catriona seemed to recall that Wolfe had a female in his nuclear pack. She wondered where she was. Grigor handed her a glass, the ice cubes tinkling like crystal. She took a sip and let the chilled liquid seep down her throat. "How refreshing. Thank you, Grigor. Say hello to Hanna for me."

"I will, Madam," Grigor replied and left hurriedly.

Wolfe didn't hide his irritation at her knowing Hanna's name. "You haven't told me why you want to see Serena."

"Don't you think it might be a private matter between her and me?"

"I'm her alpha," he reminded her.

"One of them." She smiled mischievously. "So maybe I'll half tell you."

"Be honest for the first time in your life."

"Mmmm, absolute candor, after all these centuries. It would be novel, I suppose."

Jack Wolfe emptied his glass with a single swig, his eyes never leaving hers. A display of masculinity, she decided. Well, there was nothing to be lost by being candid with him.

"Okay, Jack, enough. We're both far too old for games. I've decided that Serena will be our next Prime Minister."

His surprise was total. "Good grief. Are you mad?"

"Not at all. There are sound reasons for choosing her."

"It doesn't matter. She won't be interested."

"Why ever not?"

"For a start, the Council tried to have her killed."



Catriona waved her hand dismissively. "That was a hasty move by some old codgers. I wasn't involved in that regrettable decision. But it turned out for the best. She's now one of us."

"Not by your hand."

"Maybe not, but she understands political expediency. She'll come 'round."

"Has senility finally set in? You're seriously deluded if you think she'll forgive you. Kelvin and I certainly don't."

"I understand your negativity, but I'm sure I can convince you both."

Angry suspicion clouded his face. "What do you mean?"

"Nothing, but one thing has intrigued me since I first heard you'd both faced down an assassin and turned her. Tell me. Why did you intervene? Is it because you fell in love with her?"

"You bastards at the Council destroy everything you touch."

Catriona noted he hadn't answered the love issue. His deflection confirmed for her that he had feelings for Serena above the high sexual libido of the recently turned. "Well, we're in the creation business now. Creating a future that's safe for us."

"At the expense of human kind."

"Humans," she hissed dismissively. "Aren't you glad you're not one of them?"

He scowled at her.

"I see now," she said, understanding him instantly. "Not only do you love her, but you still love humanity."

"I don't have to justify myself to you."

"But it makes it clear to me why you should help us. And Jack, believe me, you *will* help us."

"And if I refuse?"

Catriona Mary Louise Molyneux smiled malignantly. "You know the answer to that."

"We won't let you."

"Jack, you won't be able to stop me. You know that, surely."

"What's the point in coercing her? You'll have an uncooperative politician who'd bite you back at the first opportunity."

"So it will be your job to convince her that it's for the betterment of humanity that she joins us."

"You're deluded --"

"But powerful." Catriona cut him off and smiled. "She's our best hope. The Waters debacle doesn't have to be a total loss."

"But why her?"

"She's well respected by the party and by the press. Polling shows the electorate thought she got a raw deal with the scandal. She's smart, knows the game and she looks good."

"You're totally mad."

"Stop saying that. Will you help me?"

"Absolutely not."

"But I may be able to offer you something to encourage you."

"What could you possibly offer me?"

"She'll need a consort, Jack. Someone untainted by scandal. A clean-skin. Obviously she can have nothing public to do with Waters. He's covered in mud, as undeserved as it was." She let the idea gestate for a moment before continuing. "You, on the other hand, are an unknown. You're perfect. You'll have been her secret lover for the last ten years. We'll produce you as her special friend who's always supported her, never interfering in her political career. Look at it this way, Jack, you'll be able to spend all your time with her. You'd be the country's first man, so to speak."

His reaction was not unexpected. He was a proud man, after all. "Don't be ridiculous. You expect me, us, to live a lie. Your arrogance astounds me. How you think you can just get away with anything like this is staggering."

"You'd have to be married, of course."

"Married?"

Catriona smiled and took another delicate sip of her lemonade. "Yes, my sweet, married."

## Chapter Four

Serena gazed at the resort's foyer feeling a little disappointed. "Are you sure I'll be able to learn to be a social wolfen here?"

Hanna smiled. "Look around, there are only werewolves here. The only exceptions are tame human security guards. They are equipped with stun guns and leashes to control anyone who goes totally berserk."

"You're kidding me."

"You won't see them. They're heavily armored so they're safe from us and they'll only come out after dark."

"So, apart from them, this island is for wolfen only?"

"Not quite. The humans are allowed on the other side of the island. It may sound like discrimination, but there are practical safety reasons for keeping humans away from large packs of wolfen. We'd hate someone to accidentally get eaten."

Serena gave a shiver. "Are you sure I'm safe? The Council did try to kill me after all."

"Kelvin got the assurance from the Council as soon as you were turned. To be honest, Serena, I would've liked to take you somewhere else, secluded, with some friends that we trust, but the media would've found us anywhere else and made life unbearable."

"It was good of Jack to lend us his plane and for you to fly us."

Hanna had flown them to this island resort in the Pacific Ocean northeast of Australia. Serena had no idea where she was, but from the air, the coral atoll was like a green jewel sitting on blue velvet.

"Come on," Hanna said. "Let's check in."

Fifteen minutes later they were in their double room unpacking. "Hanna," she said as they hung their clothes in the wardrobe, "I want to thank you for being my mentor."

"My pleasure, Serena. Getting used to being a werewolf is not easy, believe me, I know. There are many skills to learn, many rules and customs to follow. When Jack turned Grigor and me there was a war on. We had to fight the Nazis and the first few years of my new life were ones of brutality, death and suffering. After the war, Jack taught us to be human again, if you know what I mean."

"I think I do. Though I can't imagine what it was like fighting a war, but I see Jack as a moral man. Killing wouldn't sit well with him."

"It didn't. But he is a strong man. He'll fight for what he believes in."

"I know. I was afraid he and Kelvin would kill each other."

Hanna nodded in agreement. "It is not natural for two powerful males to share the same territory."

"Yet Grigor and Jack coexist."

"That's because Jack is our pack leader."

Serena still had trouble accepting this sort of thinking. "You make it sound so... feral."

Hanna smiled. "There is no competition between Grigor and Jack because Jack is our leader."

*I wonder if...* Serena blushed at her unspoken thought.

"No," Hanna said, as if she read her mind. "Serena. Jack, as you know, is a moral man. He knows Grigor and I are deeply in love. He respects that, though, you know, Jack and I have married several times."

"What?"

Hanna laughed in delight, her voice like a child's. "Only so Jack can maintain his fake identity with the authorities. An immortal has to regularly change his identity so that he can get a passport and other documents. Jack and I marry. We pretend to have a son whose identity Jack takes when he reaches his maturity."

"I see. Are you married now?"

Hanna looked to the ceiling. "I think we are. I'll have to check."

Serena laughed weakly. "And you and Grigor marry each other, of course."

"Of course, which, in a technical sense, makes me a bigamist."

Serena shook her head. "I have so much to learn."

"It will come, give it time. The first thing we have to address is the full moon. You'll be feeling the quickening soon."

"What does it feel like?"

"Mmmmm, hard to say. It's like a horny sort of agitation. During my first quickening I basically held Grigor down and attacked him. We were married, of course, and he was a willing victim, but I mauled him atrociously. I fucked him for two straight days without sleep. I came a hundred times."

"You're kidding me."

"No, it's true. I'm a screamer too. A squad of Nazi brown shirts came to investigate the noise and I had to kill them all."

Serena was horrified. Hanna had said it so naturally and it made her consider Hanna in a whole new light. Like all werewolves, she was potentially a killer.

*Like I am now.* Serena swore then that she would never take a life. "Now I understand why Jack and Kelvin were reluctant to let me come here."

"I'm surprised too. Though, we are under fairly controlled conditions here."

"I just had to get away from the boys. I couldn't think when they were in the same room. My hormones just take off all the time."

"That is a natural reaction after turning. Your libido goes wild. Even though I love Grigor so, in those first few days I wanted Jack very badly." She gave a little secret laugh. "Grigor did too, but he won't admit it."

"So what did you do?"

"Grigor and I fucked each other silly for weeks. In between our little acts of wartime sabotage, that is. It was a vicious time."

"So my behavior these last few weeks is entirely normal?"

"It sure is."

"I thought I was going mad with desire. Does it wear off?"

"Your libido will settle down after your first full moon, but it will always be higher than when you were human."

"That's a relief. As much as I enjoy it, I don't think I could've gone through an eternity like these last few weeks. Where would I find time to do anything else?"

Hanna considered her with a thoughtful expression. "You're in an interesting position."

"I am?"

"Both Jack and Kelvin turned you. They both exchanged their blood with yours. You belong to both their packs, but being in Jack's pack makes you my sister."

"Oh."

"I understand Kelvin wasn't very happy to let you come away with me. The reason, apart from not wanting to part with you, is, well, because you also belong to Jack..."

"Wait. I don't like this belong word."

"It's a kinship notion. If Jack wanted to have me as his mate, Grigor could only prevent him by challenging him in battle, but Jack is very powerful and Grigor simply would not win."

"So, Jack has a right to your body?"

"Yes, he does. But he will never exercise that right. He is too good a man."

Serena took that bit of disturbing information in. She realized that if Jack wanted Hanna, Serena could not compete with her, she was simply too beautiful by far. Serena forced that train of thought away. "What were you saying about Kelvin's reluctance to let me come away with you?"

"Well, because you belong to both of them, you are technically the mate of neither."

"I don't see the significance."

"It means you are unique in our world, basically a free agent."

"I still don't... wait, do you mean what I think you mean?"

Hanna nodded, a knowing smile creasing her full lips.

"Good grief. That's why they didn't want me on my own. That's what all that talk about predators was about."

"They're both terrified you will get horny during the quickening -- which you will, I can guarantee it -- and they're afraid you'll find a male and, not being able to help yourself, well... they're afraid you'll help yourself."

"It all makes sense now. And during the quickening Jack and Kelvin will get horny as well?"

"Oh, yes. It will be a frustrating time back home this week. Both Jack and Grigor will be as horny as hell and not be able to do anything about it."

"And will you get horny?"

"Absolutely."

"And what will you do about it?"

"Well, it depends."

"On what?"

"If I can control myself." Hanna laughed. "I saw some very handsome werewolves down by the pool when we came in."

"But what about Grigor?"

"He'll understand. I am a victim of the quickening, just like any other werewolf."

"If someone as experienced as you can still be a victim of the quickening what hope does a novice like me have?"

"Not very much, I'm afraid."

\* \* \*

Jack paused at the French doors that opened up to the pool area. Catriona was reclining naked on a banana lounge. Her golden flesh was radiant in the sun. She glowed like a temple statue from antiquity and could've been a model for the Greek goddess Diana, he thought. *She's probably old enough.*



Jack smothered a rising tide of lust and cursed himself for his body's betrayal. The quickening had begun. He knew it was a natural physical reaction, but the intellectual understanding wasn't enough to crush the worm of guilt.

The last few weeks since Serena's turning had flushed his body with lusty hormones that had found expression in Serena's embrace, but in the hours since she'd left, those same hormones had left him agitated and distracted. He was afraid his cock would respond to anyone in skirts at the moment.

Oh, God, how he missed Serena.

The decision to let her go had been an impossible one. Serena wanted to go, and would've gone, with or without their blessing. They would not have been able to stop her, not without making her angry and risking her complete rebellion.

Belonging to both of them meant Serena belonged to neither. She was a free agent. Only a fight with Kelvin would decide who would be her master. Jack sighed hopelessly. Serena was a woman who could never be mastered.

Fear stirred his gut when he thought of what Serena was facing. The quickening would send her into a freefall of lust. He wasn't particularly worried about her having sex with someone else, though the edge of jealousy was sharp and penetrating. He was more concerned for her safety. Sex during the quickening often resulted in inexperienced lovers adopting their wolfen bodies and completing the act in beastly form.

Serena had been terrified the first morning when she had awakened to find herself in the body of the most beautiful wolf he'd ever seen. It had taken him and Kelvin an hour to calm her and show her how to return to human form.

The next morning when she had woken, she'd delayed changing back into human form and had paraded in front of the mirror for a full twenty minutes, admiring her sleek coat, her strong legs and her penetrating dark eyes. "I think my muzzle is too long" had been her only comment over breakfast.

Kelvin and he had traded glances. She had the most adorable muzzle and they all knew it.

She had kept her feral form to herself after that. They had coached her into how to maintain control, so that even in the throes of climax she would not revert to her inner beast but remain fully open to the bliss of orgasm, very different to the emotion she'd experience in the body of a wolf.

Jack hoped Hanna would be able to guide Serena through the minefield of wolfen society. He trusted Hanna's judgment, though he knew, deep down, his old friend was subject to the quickening like anyone else.

Jack quelled that uncomfortable line of thought and considered Catriona's sleek form stretched out before him. His cock stirred and he willed it to be still. It was all a matter of self-control and he hoped his will was equal to the task as the moon increased its sway. He didn't want to betray Serena.

He definitely didn't want to betray her with the likes of Catriona.

Catriona was the epitome of evil. She exuded diabolic malevolence with every smile and every glance of those cold empty eyes. She mesmerized the humans with whom she mingled. For centuries she'd been creating personas that put her to the forefront of public attention. Her power over weak-minded humans was considerable and they had blindly accepted each of her reincarnations. She'd been influencing human affairs for so long even Jack couldn't guess what was natural human history or the results of the malicious games of Catriona Molyneux.

She'd been flirting with him ever since she'd arrived. Last night she played with his foot under the dinner table. He'd studiously ignored her and fought to quell his throbbing erection. Finally it got the better of him and he'd excused himself, saying he had work to do. She'd found him later in his study and while he pretended to read his accounts she made small talk while examining the contents of his bookcases.

Catriona was playing with him like a cat, stroking his ego with her comments about his house, his cattle business and the plans for the sanitarium he was building for werewolves suffering psychiatric and blood disorders.

He stifled a yawn. Her suggestion that he could actually marry Serena had kept him up all night. Catriona was a master of manipulation and it was a most diabolical

offer designed to excite his baser instincts. She had read him correctly. The offer of binding him to Serena was a powerful inducement to treachery, but she had misread him in one respect. He loved Serena too much to throw her into the lion pit, even if it meant losing her completely.

He was not so perfect that he hadn't considered the possibilities. To have Serena exclusively to himself was a powerful motivator and he had indulged himself, imagining a future where they alone shared a bed, making love every night.

He hated himself for even considering it.

Catriona gazed up at him and smiled coquettishly. "Have you thought about my suggestion, darling?"

He dropped onto the banana chair beside her. His gaze drifted down to take in the pert swell of her breasts and the erect nipples glistening in the sun. She'd obviously just had a dip and drops of water had pooled on her flat stomach like sparkling diamonds set in gold. She wore no bikini bottom and pearl-like drops of water had accumulated on the small heart-shaped tuft of blonde hair lying above her pussy.

His cock stirred. He dragged his eyes back to her face. She wore a self-satisfied smile.

"Not a bit," he lied. "It's a decision Serena must make for herself, but I seriously doubt she'll have a bar of you and the Council."

"We'll see."

"What does that mean?"

Catriona shrugged and brought her fingers to her chest to wipe a liquid gem from her cleavage. He allowed her transparent gesture to distract him. "Your decision to turn her, no matter its motivation, has proved a godsend to us," she said.

"I still can't see your reasoning."

"Oh, Jack, how can you be so blind? She's an obvious successor to Waters. She's well known, respected by all and sundry. My people have been planting the tiny seeds of rumor that she was the inspiration behind Waters' political philosophy and that the policies he proposed were really hers. Those seeds will germinate, and when we

announce her candidacy, they'll blossom. The blessed bees of the media will pollinate the minds of the populace with that same notion. She'll win her electorate in a landslide, quickly become imposed upon the cabinet and within three months, challenge the PM for the top job and, of course, win."

Jack was astounded. "You sound sure of yourself."

"It's a sure thing, darling. Trust me."

"I still don't understand. Why her? Surely you have other candidates up your sleeve."

Catriona shook her head, sending a sympathetic quiver through her full breasts. "We'd invested so much in Waters that we had no follow-up candidate of his caliber. Every wolfen we considered had a public past, and that just won't do. Serena, on the other hand, despite the scandal which we've now neutralized, is perfect."

"But why is it so important?"

"We very badly want one of us running the country in three years."

"What's happening in three years' time?"

She held her fingers to her lips. "It's a secret, darling." She rolled over. "I think I'm burning. Come rub some oil over me."

"I don't think you need to worry about sunburn."

"I have my many fans to consider. My complexion must be perfect. Please?"

He knelt by her and poured suntan lotion into his palm. He hesitated. His body was fluttering with the flame of lust. His cock rested hot against his thigh. His gaze traveled from the smooth glowing skin of her shoulders to the swell of her breasts, pushed out to the side. He fought the desire to let his fingers slide down and caress that satiny flesh.

Jack concentrated on rubbing the suntan lotion in rough sweeps across her shoulders and back. She moaned in feigned ecstasy. "Lower, darling."

He dribbled lotion into the dip in her back and rubbed it along the curve of her spine. Her buttocks were firm and silky soft. She parted her thighs, exposing her ass and the folds of inner flesh. His cock pulsed.

"She won't agree to it," he said, forcing himself to think of anything but his lust. Catriona gave a slight chuckle. "I can only try."

"You're wasting your time. You'll fail. She's still learning to be one of us. She won't want to throw herself into your cesspit just because you ask her."

"She really has made an impression on you, hasn't she? Why is that?"

"That's none of your business."

"Don't be like that, Jack. Tell me, I'd like to know. You were attracted to her before you turned her, yes?"

He continued rubbing without answering.

"I have never had the urge to turn a human. None have interested me enough to make them one of us, except Serena. For you, what was it about her?"

"Everything you say about her. She's intelligent, sensitive, articulate and..." He stopped himself. Serena had something no other women he had ever met had, but what that was, he had no idea.

"Ah, that indefinable X factor."

"What?" he said, startled.

"She's unique. There is an intangible quality about her that is so special, so..."

"Powerful?"

"Yes," she admitted. "I felt it too. I've met her several times at party functions. She was the power behind Waters. I wish we'd acted sooner and turned her back then."

"You're kidding me."

"Not at all."

Jack, since the conversation had focused on Serena, was losing himself in his task. His strokes had become less expansive and slower. The flesh of her back was warm and firm, like the slate tiles he knelt on, absorbing the heat of the sun. She was like those tiles, he thought, soaking in his desire like sunlight. She was a black hole into which all the lust of mankind could be sucked in and still it would not be enough for her. She could never be satisfied.

"You want me, Jack," she said languidly. "I can smell your lust. It's coursing through your veins like hot needles. It's in your sweat, your breath. You want to fuck me."

*God help me.*

She was disgustingly sexual, radiating carnal lust, like the sun itself. Centuries of controlling men through her sex had equipped her with the ability to ensnare them, without conscious thought, in a tight net of desire.

He swallowed, struggling like a fish caught by the gills. "It is only physical, I can assure you."

She laughed cynically. "Is there anything else but physicality?"

"It is the quickening, nothing more. Hormones, chemicals, the sway of the moon. You, as an entity, hold no attraction for me."

She laughed coldly, the sound like shards of black ice cutting into his soul. "That's all it's ever been. Jack, you surprise me. I thought everyone knew that."

Jack was shocked. Though he hated her like he'd never hated anyone, the emptiness of her words, the mind-numbing emptiness of her world view, was breathtaking. Her emotional landscape must be a barren desert.

He suddenly felt sorry for her. "Do you know nothing of love?"

The astonishment on her face was heart stopping. He felt as if she was trying to process the notion, search her memory for any experience of love from her early life, before her psyche became indelibly scoured.

"Love," she said, her voice strangely distant. "That died with Troy."

She reached out and traced the line of his jaw. "The sparkling sea, the ships with those strange sails, the smell of salt on the air, the clamor of the smiths fashioning their shields of bronze. The tender voices of farewell..."

Her voice had become soft around the edges, almost lyrical, as if there were two people inside her body; a cold hard-faced cynical bitch and perhaps a younger girl, innocent and fragile, for so long held prisoner by her more powerful sister. She had to

be strong to survive so long, he thought, just like granite survives a million years of weathering.

He held her by the waist and drew her to him. There must be something inside that cold shell, he thought, a remnant of her humanity. If he could reach that perhaps he could steer her away from Serena.

She laughed suddenly. "I'm sorry. I was never at Troy." She gave him a gentle slap across the cheek. "Have you always been so gullible?"

He released her with a scowl. Yet, he was sure there was something human buried deep in that void of a heart, something worth saving. She was hiding something with the joke. Maybe she had been at Troy, maybe not.

She *was* vulnerable, he thought. But the carapace she'd assembled around herself was diamond hard. He wondered if it could ever be cracked. He stopped himself. Why was he thinking this way? What did he care if she had something human inside her? If he didn't know better, he would've thought she played some sort of mind trick on him. He knew that wasn't the case. He would've felt it.

It must be the quickening.

"Catriona, toying with people's emotions eats away your dignity, not theirs."

Her face hardened for just a moment before that beguiling smile returned. She glanced at his groin. "You still want me, though."

"I can't be responsible for a reactive physiology."

She laughed. "But exercising that reactive physiology, as you so coldly put it, is under your control."

"Then I choose not to exercise it."

She traced her fingernail along his thigh. "I want you," she said. "But I'll not force you or trick you. When the quickening becomes unbearable, come to me. I will accept you."

"How magnanimous of you."

"I do understand. You've formed an attachment with Serena. You're an honorable man and I understand you want to stay true to her."

They were interrupted by Grigor with a tray with orange juice. She didn't bother to cover her nakedness.

"Where is she, by the way?"

He reacted to her sudden change of tack. "Like I said yesterday, she's not here."

"Neither is Waters."

"Your implication?"

"Just the obvious. It's noble of you to stay faithful to her, but can you seriously believe she's faithful in return? She'll be fucking Kelvin this very minute. If they'd been holding back for a decade then they have a lot of fucking to catch up on."

"Like I said, they're not together."

"Can you be so sure? When you told me yesterday that she'd gone off I thought it strange. This is her first full moon, her first quickening. Why would you and Waters let her go, unless..."

She paused thoughtfully and he watched her process the information. "She's not alone, surely. So newly turned, she'll need help to navigate her first quickening."

He remained silent.

He saw her eyes follow Grigor and he knew, without any doubt, she'd figured it out. Jack stood up. "I have work to do," he said. "My property doesn't run itself."

She rolled over, a faint smile on her lips. "You haven't put suntan lotion on my front yet," she pouted.

"I'll forgo the pleasure."

She pointed at his erection showing through his shorts. "You don't know what you're missing."

"And I'm glad of it."

"Remember what I said. I'll be waiting."

Jack went to his study and called Hanna's mobile. His call went straight to her message service. "Hanna, this is Jack. Be very careful. The Council's agents know you and Serena are together. They may trace you somehow. I don't know what's going on yet, but I'll call as soon as I do." He paused. He wasn't sure what Hanna could do if



they were located. He only knew he had to keep an eye on Catriona. “Whatever you do, don’t let Serena out of your sight.”

## Chapter Five

"So," Hanna asked at breakfast, "are you ready for our first adventure?"

Serena munched on her toast to avoid answering. She wasn't sure if she actually wanted to leave the safety of her room. Outside, at the cafes and on the beaches were werewolves. She watched them from the window, strolling and playing by the band rotunda that sat beside the path to the beach. They looked normal, but she knew underneath that human form lurked beasts of unimaginable savagery.

Serena hadn't yet completely accepted she was one of them. It was one thing to talk about being a werewolf abstractly with Hanna, Jack and Kelvin. She was comfortable with them. Here, she was surrounded by strangers, beasts with strange customs and attitudes.

"We have several choices," Hanna said. "The resort employs good looking omegas for the pleasure of their guests. They are docile, compliant and trained in sexual pleasure techniques."

"I don't want sex," Serena said.

Hanna nodded, indicating she anticipated that response. "I'm not surprised. With Jack and Kelvin, you certainly aren't deprived of good sex."

Not that she'd been deprived last night either. Her dreams had been so vivid and lurid that she blushed at the memory of them. Unable to sleep, she'd rolled and twisted beneath the sheets, her flesh hot and fevered, her mind a roiling cauldron of sultry desires. Inevitably, her thoughts had turned to Jack and Kelvin.

"Hello," she'd murmured as they glided into the room. "I thought you understood I needed time alone."

Her slight irritation was short lived.

"I cannot bear being parted from you," Jack murmured as he knelt beside the bed, taking her outstretched hand and bringing it to his lips to kiss the curve of her fingers.

"Life is empty without you, my love," Kelvin said as he climbed onto the bed behind her. He traced his cool fingers across her forehead, whispering words of love as his hand caressed her cheek, his lips brushing the sensitive flesh of her neck just below her ear.

Jack lifted the sheets. Her unsettled sleep had hiked her nightgown above her hips. With a deft slice of long fingernails, Jack slashed her panties and pulled them away. Instinctively she opened her legs and he lowered his face to her pulsing sex.

Kelvin sought her lips with his and she bent her head back to let him claim her. Through the satin of her nightgown his fingers rasped an aching nipple and she moaned into his mouth.

She clung tightly to Kelvin with her arms, her legs wrapped about Jack's shoulders. Oh, how she loved what they did to her body, how they acted in perfect synchronicity, how each flick of a tongue, be it on the corner of her mouth or over the hood of her clit, lifted her to the heights of orgasmic pleasure.

Her climax was fast approaching, every muscle in her body tensing, trying to contain the primal force that was building in her belly. Suddenly she convulsed in orgasm and screamed something unintelligible into Kelvin's mouth. Powerful contractions pulsed through her pussy and when they eventually subsided Jack positioned himself between her legs, his cock throbbing in anticipation.

"Leave her!" Kelvin snarled.

"She's mine," Jack hissed.

"She's mine, you dog!"

She cried in despair as they morphed into their beastly forms. They crouched, snarling at each other, preparing to attack.

"Stop!" she'd screamed.

"Serena," Hanna said. "Are you okay?"

Serena refocused her eyes onto Hanna's concerned face. "Yes, yes I am."

"Where did you go to, just then?"

Serena cleared her throat. "I'm not sure, it was a bit of heaven and a bit of hell."

Hanna gave a knowing smile. "You were daydreaming about Jack and Kelvin, weren't you?"

Serena's face warmed again and she furiously tried to remember what they were talking about. That's right, they were trying to decide how they were going to introduce her to wolven society. "So what are the other options?"

"The resort is designed to cater principally to alphas, of both sexes. They often bring the newly turned to introduce them to the ways of the wolven."

Serena held up her hand. "Kelvin told me that not many people are turned, that there are restrictions."

"There are. The yearly quota is only one thousand worldwide. Our death rate is low. Catastrophic accidents are usually the only causes. Plane crashes, for example."

"So there will be some newly turned here?"

"That's right."

"I don't want sex, Hanna, but I would like to interact with both alphas and the newly turned."

"That's why we're here, but I have to warn you, when the quickening starts, you'll become very horny, and so will everyone around us. We have to try and keep control of ourselves. Generally, when the quickening occurs, we try to be with a loved one or stay alone."

"How does Jack pass this time of the month?"

"With us. Don't get the wrong idea. There is no sex. We've been together so long, when the quickening happens and we're all together, it's subdued. We're familiar with each other's pheromones. It is usually in the presence of strangers that the moon has the strongest effect."

Serena thought about Kelvin. In the ten years they'd worked together, there were times he'd suddenly disappear. She couldn't recall if the moon was involved, but he'd

get impatient with whatever was going on, and take the weekend off and go home. Maybe he had been under the influence of the quickening.

"I was thinking about giving you a crash course in wolfen etiquette, but I don't know where to start. There's so much to think about. The first thing to realize is you will have an instinctual reaction to the body language of others around you."

In her imagination Serena pictured Toby, the border collie she'd had as a child. Toby seemed to read her emotions so well. When she was happy he'd bounce around, and when she was sad he'd come and lie beside her on the couch and gaze at her with sorrowful brown eyes. She described Toby's behavior to Hanna. "Is that what you mean?"

"Sort of. In our society, body language and scent play an important role. You'll need to pay attention to how people position themselves around you."

"No one's going to smell my ass, are they?"

Hanna burst out laughing. "No, nothing so feral."

"Thank God. I don't think I could've handled that."

"Also the tone of a growl will tell you all sorts of things."

"Such as?"

"Whether to back down or not, whether someone is pulling rank in the queue at the bank or who gets first pick at the buffet lunch. It's a dominance thing."

"If I decide not to back down?"

"Until you're sure of your physical and mental powers, I'd back down unless doing so puts you in worse danger."

"Is it dangerous here? I mean, will I have to fight for my dinner?"

"It will be no different than a Saturday night in the city when the pubs close."

Hanna barked.

Serena jumped. "What was that?"

"What did you think it was?"

"A warning, like something bad was going to happen."

"Very good. It was a warning bark. And this one?" Hanna growled, a guttural reverberation from deep inside her chest that caused a resonance in Serena's breast. The hackles on the back of her neck stood up. Hanna's lips had curled back, exposing her canines. She looked positively evil. "Well?"

"Don't mess with me?"

"Very good, and this?" A short, shrill yap emanated from her mouth.

"Um, excitement, come look at this?"

"Good. Now, if I was in wolven form, the sound would be more lifelike and the impact would be even clearer."

Serena was very pleased that she instinctively knew the meanings of the sounds. Hanna asked her to try to replicate the barks and yelps and she practiced them for a few minutes until they sounded just like Hanna's. "Are we so very much like wolves?" she asked when they fell over laughing at her rendition of a bitch in heat.

"There are some differences, mainly in the subtleties. We've had thousands of years to evolve some very distinct behaviors."

"But what are we, animals or supernatural beings?"

Hanna was pensive for a moment. "You'd have to ask a philosopher that one." She stood up abruptly. "Ready?"

"I guess so," Serena replied, the reluctance in her voice obvious even to her.

The pool formed a moat between the beach and the hotel, with the rotunda, its slate roof brilliant in the tropical sun, wedged precariously on the approach to a quaint little bridge. People were clustered around the pool just like any resort, sunning themselves, jumping into the water to cool off, ordering drinks in tall glasses with long straws and umbrellas. Serena tried, but really couldn't tell the difference between it and any other beach resort she'd ever visited. She said as much to Hanna.

"Did you expect packs of wolves roaming about?"

"Sort of, I guess."

"Our feral natures are enhanced when we are in wolven form. We try to avoid it when in large numbers. Things have been known to get out of hand."

"Will that happen when the moon is full?"

Hanna nodded and took a sip of her drink. "It could, in two days' time."

A long-legged woman with long, blonde hair sauntered past them. The fluid motion of her hips and erect stature drew Serena's eyes like a magnet. She was stunningly attractive and very seductive. Serena saw the woman flick a glance at Hanna and Hanna responded with a slight smile and bob of the head.

"I've just been picked up."

"I'm sorry?"

"That blonde is an alpha. She's no doubt here by herself. She noted you were an alpha and chose to see if I was available."

Serena couldn't help but be offended. "She stole you from me?"

Hanna laughed. "This time of the month we can be bitches."

"Well, she can't have you!"

"She is an alpha."

"I don't care. This is outrageous. Just because alphas have more... I don't know what they have, but they can't just go around taking whatever or whoever they want."

"Sssh, Serena. It can't be helped. We're at the mercy of our nature."

"That's not good enough. This is outrageous. She can't casually stroll past us and take you away."

Hanna's gaze was uncomfortably frank. "Are you attracted to women, Serena?"

"What? Of course not, why?"

"Nothing. It's just that I find your protective attitude toward me flattering."

Serena felt herself blush. "You're my friend, Hanna. Don't you feel offended that she just walked past and claimed you because she's sweating alpha pheromones and you aren't?"

"You'll have to fight her to keep me."

Serena's jaw dropped. Aware of her reaction, she clamped it shut and clenched it tight. "If that's what it takes."

Hanna reached out her hand. "I'll tell her I am yours, that my master gave me to you. That will placate her."

Serena sat back in her chair, relief flooding through her. She didn't want to fight the woman, especially when she knew she didn't know how. "I find this whole thing insulting."

"You'll get used to it in time. You'll have to. But I thank you for your loyalty."

"You're my friend." She noticed Hanna glance toward where the alpha woman had seated herself. "Are you attracted to women, Hanna?"

Hanna smiled. "Very. It's something I've become aware of these last few years. I've talked to Grigor about it. We share everything, and he suggested I follow my urges and see if I truly like it."

Serena didn't know what to say. "That's very understanding of him," she said, aware of the slightly sarcastic tone in her voice. "If you would like to go with her, don't let me stop you."

Hanna smiled. "I'm here to help you through your first full moon. I will not be distracted from that purpose."

"Because Jack would be upset?"

"Because you're my friend, Serena. I want you to be safe."

They sipped their drinks for a few minutes in silence. Serena was quietly disturbed by what she'd discovered so far about wolven society. It was a savage, callous and primitive system of dominance and status based on the rule of tooth and claw. She decided that it might be best if she figured out a way of distancing herself from this society and build a gentler world around her.

"Serena," Hanna said softly. "How much control do you have over your beastly form?"

"A little. I've only changed a couple of times."

"But you can revert at will?"



Serena blushed, remembering her first experience of transforming back into human form. It had been painful as muscles and tendons, bones and ligaments bent and shrank into her more compact human form. "I can. Why?"

"We might go for a walk along the beach. I want you to change back and forth a couple of times for me."

Cold fear raced through her veins. "Wouldn't our room be better?" she suggested.

"The resort is awash with pheromones that will distract you. I want the sea air to wash you clean, as it were, so you can practice your skills in peace."

"I'd prefer privacy."

"I've been watching the beach path. No one is going there at present. We'll have it completely to ourselves."

"I'm not so sure."

"You must practice. If you are to survive, you must be confident you can transform and revert at will. Your life could depend upon it."

Reluctantly, Serena followed her to the beach. Hanna was right. The stretch of golden sand was deserted. Serena was glad and breathed in the salt air, letting it clear her lungs.

Hanna stripped off her blouse and skirt and dropped them onto the sand. With an exuberant cry, she ran into the surf and dived beneath the foamy surge.

Serena had been surprised by her friend's sudden nakedness and brought to mind their earlier discussion. Serena had never really considered the sexual aspect of another woman's body before, but the thrill that swept through her at the sight of Hanna's upturned breasts, her creamy thighs and perfect proportion was undeniable. She put it down to the quickening, understanding that her body was in a high state of sexual arousal, the slightest stimuli setting off the full gamut of lusty reactions.

Women had made passes at her in the past, some of them high ranking politicians and celebrities. Their advances had always surprised her. That they thought

her so attractive to risk rejection embarrassed her and she guiltily wondered if she had somehow unconsciously provoked the attention.

She had never harbored any sexual fantasies involving women and watching the unquestionably beautiful Hanna frolic in the surf, Serena searched her feelings and, despite her earlier thrill, now felt only sisterly regard toward her naked companion.

"Come in," Hanna called. "It's delightful."

Serena scanned the curve of the beach and saw it was still deserted. Without a second thought she shucked off her clothes and ran into the crashing surf. It seemed that the icy waters of the Pacific washed away her doubts and fears with one cleansing dive and she surfaced with a free and relaxed smile.

Hanna was nowhere to be seen. Serena called to her, searching the water for her but she had disappeared. Serena panicked. She looked to the beach for help, but there was only a wolf, sitting at the water's edge, watching her.

"Hanna?"

The wolf barked, stood up and shook itself, sending a halo of water drops into the air.

Serena swam to shore and stood uncertainly, knee deep in the surf. "What do you want me to do?"

The wolf barked and she understood. She looked up and down the beach. They were still alone except for sea gulls that wheeled and called above their heads.

Serena took a deep breath and closed her eyes. "All righty then. Here I go."

Kelvin had told her that her wolfen body was now her natural form which explained why she would sometimes revert when she slept, because her body was totally relaxed. To consciously return to that form she only had to imagine herself as a wolf. She had examined herself in the mirror and had a clear image of what she looked like, so the imagining was easy. It was the relaxing part that took some doing.

If she was angry or afraid, Jack had said, then she might revert unconsciously. So she had to be mindful of her emotional state in front of humans and not let her true nature run away with her.

So, standing in the surf on a Pacific island, Serena relaxed by taking deep breaths and imagining her silky soft fur, her strong limbs and tail like a thick feather duster. She felt her body changing, her muscles and bones stretching or contracting, depending on their role, and when she opened her eyes she was looking at the world from lower down, closer to the seething water.

Serena yelped as a wave crashed over her and she bounded onto the firm sand where Hanna waited. She shook herself, sending sprays of water flying away like a shower of cascading jewels. Hanna suddenly took off, running along the beach, and without thinking, Serena was in quick pursuit. She barked in the pure joy of the chase and when she caught Hanna, she pushed her down onto the sand and stood over her. For an instant Serena had an image of biting into that soft neck, of drinking the gushing blood...

She released her friend in fright and Hanna leaped to her paws and bounded after some hapless seagulls. Serena shook off the disturbing and bloody image and chased the gulls too, barking at them as they took to the sky.

Serena had no words to describe the joy she felt playing with Hanna. It was all too wonderful and her spirit soared like the sea birds that swirled above them. They chased each other again and this time, when Serena bowled her over Hanna lay there accepting the attention before struggling to her feet and running a few meters away where she turned, head down, emitting a soft whine.

Serena waited, not knowing what was expected of her, then, in an eye blink, Hanna had transformed into her human form. Serena at once understood Hanna's request. She closed her eyes, picturing herself as a human, and a moment later, after the stretching and pulling of bone and sinew, she opened her eyes.

Hanna smiled and clasped her to her breast. "Good enough," she laughed and kissed her on the cheek.

Serena had never felt so proud of herself in her life.

## Chapter Six

Kelvin Waters found his Canberra residence empty. The lone reporter waiting outside had been easily deceived. A simple mind block and the human looked the other way as Kelvin strode through his front gate, unlocked his front door and stepped inside.

The house was dark. He stretched out his senses. There was no one home.

He'd come to say a final goodbye to Priscilla, his wife, and set in motion the legal clockwork of their divorce. She was the daughter of a wolfen Council member and he'd met her soon after his entry into politics. It had seemed appropriate to marry one of his kind and he had loved her in the beginning, or so he'd thought.

Then she'd changed. She'd become an active member of a Council think-tank and had become furtive and secretive. Priscilla became a shadow of her self, uncommunicative and paranoid. She took to staying away for weeks at a time. She was holding back information about their activities and his feelings for her slowly weakened and finally died.

Kelvin hadn't meant to fall in love with Serena. She had been the secret behind his political ascendancy and they had formed a strong bond of friendship and mutual respect. That had swiftly morphed into something more powerful. Kelvin took his responsibility to Priscilla seriously and as she descended into whatever private hell she inhabited, he refused to make it worse for her by cheating on her.

Whatever possessed her to go to the press with her unfounded suspicions of an affair, Kelvin had no idea. Last time they had spoken, before he'd left to search for Serena, she'd said that she was sorry. Kelvin believed her, but it was far too late.

The bedroom was in disarray. The wardrobe doors had been left open, the drawers empty. The phone by the bed was blinking. He played the only message; a call from Priscilla.

"Kelvin," she cried, her voice near hysterical. "They're taking me to Solitude Valley. It's for the best, I think. I'm sorry for what's happened. Think of me, please. Forgive me."

Solitude Valley was the wolven equivalent of a psychiatric sanitarium. Werewolves who lost their grip on sanity were committed to this facility to regain their hold on reality. Immortality, and the strict nature of wolven society, meant that many fell to depression and paranoia. At least as a Councilor's daughter, Priscilla would receive the best of care.

Kelvin took a deep breath and erased the message. He'd have to contact her father and see how she was faring.

He also needed to speak to that bitch Catriona Molyneux to confirm Serena's amnesty. Immediately after turning Serena he'd exacted an assurance from Catriona that Serena would be safe, but he wanted to make sure it would be ratified at the next full Council meeting and recognized throughout wolven society.

Catriona had been the one who'd originally recruited him to be the Council's agent in Australian politics. He'd been enveloped by her sexuality and briefly infatuated by her power. Though he had never succumbed to her, Kelvin cursed himself for his naivety. How could he have been such a fool? Centuries of experience offered no protection from falling into lust.

He'd quickly learned that Catriona was not to be trusted, but it was too late then to extricate himself from the political web in which she'd ensnared him.

The Council's plan to save humanity from itself was sound. Humans couldn't be trusted with something as important as the fate of the whole world. But could the Council itself be trusted? He hadn't been in politics for long before he started to question their methods if not their motives. The wolven attitude toward human beings was neutral at best and violent at worst. Unlike other shape-shifters, like vampires,

wolfen could get by with animal prey and didn't need humans at all. Vampires needed human blood and took a whole different attitude to their prey, wanting to keep them like cattle. Vampires were dangerous and Kelvin despised them.

Kelvin cursed himself for being a weak fool. He'd been blind to Catriona's machinations. He'd misjudged the Council's intentions, neglected his wife and tortured the woman he truly loved by condemning her to a decade of unrequited love. He was an idiot.

He hoped now that he'd have a chance to redeem himself. If Jack Wolfe wasn't involved it would be plain sailing. Serena loved Jack as much as she did him. That cruel reality stuck in his craw like a lump of dead meat, rotting and festering inside him. Time would be the only remedy to that situation. Soon Serena would see Jack for the vacuous soul that he was.

Kelvin strode quickly through the empty rooms of his house. It was strange, but he felt nothing for it. Though he had owned it for a decade, he'd spent so little time here and had invested nothing of himself in it. He'd been too wrapped up in his political duties to maintain any semblance of a normal home life, especially with Priscilla being so aloof and distant.

It occurred to him that if he actually totalled up the hours, he would find he had spent more of the last ten years in Serena's company than his wife's.

Serena, God, how he missed her now.

There was nothing for him here anymore. He went downstairs and pulled the front door shut behind him. Once again he distracted the mind of the reporter watching the house and strode to his car. He noticed a piece of paper jammed under his windshield wiper.

*So, Kelvin, how do you do that?*

Damn. He'd been followed. Kelvin stared into the darkness. His preternatural senses detected, at the far end of the street, a figure in a long dark coat standing in the shadows of a tree. The figure waved and started to casually saunter toward him. He recognized the man as a journalist from the *Review*. *Double damn!*

"Mr. Waters," the journalist said quietly.

Kelvin remained silent, cursing himself for not taking extra precautions. The last thing he wanted was to speak with the press.

"So, what's the secret?" The journalist was chewing gum, and his spearmint breath irritated Kelvin's sensitive nostrils.

"I don't understand your meaning."

"I couldn't sleep and just drove by on the off chance something might be happening and I saw you stroll past our friend over there who, strangely, still hasn't seen you. How did you do that?"

"I can't help it if the poor man is night blind."

"Lucky I'm not." The journalist thrust out his hand. "Tommy Rasnic."

"Well, I'm a bit pressed for time, Tommy," Kelvin said without taking his hand. "I have to go."

"Are you going to Serena?"

Kelvin bristled. "Why would I be going to Serena?"

"We assumed you were together, holed up somewhere."

"That's not the case."

"Would you like to know where she is?"

"Not at all." He prepared a quote suitable for the newspapers. "Tommy, Serena is a friend and respected colleague. I regret she's been dragged into a thing like this. She's innocent of any wrong doing and I don't want her life further complicated in any way."

"We assumed you both were innocent," Tommy said. "But we wondered why you quit politics so quickly. It raised a whole series of questions. Then you both dropped off the map."

"Tommy, you of all people know the pressures on the family of someone in public life are horrendous. Look what it's done to my wife."

"How is she?"

"Coping."

"I won't intrude any further," Tommy said and turned slightly, as if to walk off, then, Columbo-like, he turned back. "Just one last thing."

"There's always one last thing with you guys, isn't there? That's one thing I won't miss in politics."

Tommy laughed mirthlessly. "Do you think Serena has what it takes to be Prime Minister?"

"What?"

"Oh, you haven't heard?"

Kelvin wanted to grab Tommy by the throat and shake it out of him. "Spit it out, Tommy. What's going on?"

"Serena has been earmarked as the next PM."

"By who, for God's sake?"

"Molly wants her to be our next Prime Minister."

"Good grief."

\* \* \*

Agitated beyond belief, Jack wandered the garden. Above him the great vault of sky was powdered by stardust. Despite the nearly full moon casting its ivory eye over the quiet land, Jack's wolfen senses were open to a far broader spectrum of light and it seemed on nights like this, the sky was a living thing, pulsating with energy.

The air was still, filled with a thousand scents arising from each tree and shrub, the very soil itself. The garden was a stunning cloud of sensation and he had to close down his senses if he was to concentrate.

*What is Serena doing at this moment?* He clamped down on that thought. It would be best not to go down that track. He kicked himself again. It had been a very bad idea to let her go.

He missed her so.

This was the first time they'd been separated and his body ached for her. He closed his eyes and surrendered his body to the memory of her touch, her scent, the



brush of her lips and the butterfly kisses which sent shivers of sheer pleasure rippling through his flesh.

His cock responded to the memory. Oh, the caress of her lips on his rigid cock, the way she ran her tongue along the length of his shaft, from his balls to the tip before she'd enclose the helmet-shaped head of his shaft with her mouth and take him deep into her throat. Jack sighed at the memory of her hair caressing his inner thighs as her mouth traveled up and down his throbbing shaft.

Jack could taste her on his lips. Serena's inner flesh was so hot, so sweet. Just the texture of her pussy on his thrusting tongue would take him to the edge of orgasm.

His cock throbbed as he imagined his tongue teasing the hood of her clit. The shudders of pleasure his touch would send through her taut flesh made the longing in his heart all the more painful. Her moans caressed his ears, gasps of pleasure interspersed between wet slurping sounds as she sucked Kelvin's cock.

Kelvin!

*Must he intrude everywhere?*

The thought that Kelvin could please Serena just as well as he could sent a spear of jealousy through Jack's chest.

Serena obviously enjoyed the pleasure they both gave her, and Jack had to admit that they did work well together. They had come to an unspoken accord where Serena's pleasure was concerned.

That accord would have to continue, he decided. It was an uncomfortable truth and one he would have to accept, if he was to be part of her life.

Serena was a smart and resourceful woman. She'd proven that already. She'd survive this full moon, he was sure, and she'd come back an experienced werewolf, able to navigate through the minefield of wolven etiquette. The experience would change her though. He only hoped she wouldn't be a stranger.

A scent drifted across the still air. It filled his nostrils and inflamed his mind.

Catriona.

*What a piece of work she is.*

Catriona's desire to make Serena the country's next Prime Minister was just too mad to be real. He couldn't help but think there was something else at play. He didn't believe her when she said that Serena was the only viable candidate. That was just too weak a reason to take seriously.

But if there was another reason, what could it be?

He repressed the anger he felt at her attempted seduction by the pool. Catriona was beautiful, no question about that, and at any other time, before Serena, he perhaps would have indulged in an afternoon of harmless pleasure.

The dangling carrot of marriage to Serena was an insult. To think he could be bought in such a way showed she didn't understand him at all, or Serena for that matter. But his refusal would not end the matter. Catriona was, if nothing else, determined.

He was sure she had sent her agents looking for Serena and Hanna. For their safety, he had to keep Catriona here as long as he could. If that meant promising her sex, then so be it. He only hoped he could control himself and not go beyond the subterfuge and actually have sex with her. He looked to the near full moon and felt its power pulling at his blood. It would be a mighty challenge to resist.

A streak of light speared through Orion's shoulder and buried itself in Taurus's heart. That piece of dust, left over from the creation of the solar system, had been traveling for billions of years and now, in an instant, was gone.

Nothing, it seemed, was eternal.

"Did you make a wish?" Her voice was like a shard of ice cutting through the soft flesh of the night.

"Only that you'd give up this stupid idea and leave."

Her laughter tinkled coldly. "Say you'll help me."

"I'd only consider helping you, Catriona, if I was somehow convinced you had a heart, that you weren't as cold as your cynicism suggests. Only then could I even consider your plan."

He sensed her bristle at that. Her reaction surprised him.

"I have a heart."

He turned and took her in his arms, pulling her roughly to him so that her firm breasts jutted into his chest. He'd surprised her and he saw fear in her eyes. Her reaction was momentary and her self-assurance returned in an instant.

"Why, Jack, I didn't know you cared."

"We are one night from the full moon," he whispered harshly into her ear. His body had become a furnace of desire, his veins molten rivers carrying the seeds of lust to every cell of his body. He wanted her. He couldn't deny it.

His physical reaction was clearly under the sway of the moon but somehow, since that moment by the pool, he had begun to consider her as a person rather than a foe. As soon as that chink in her armor had been opened he wanted to explore it, to understand her, hoping that by doing so, he could somehow protect Serena. "Why have you erected this wall about yourself?"

She struggled against his grasp. He tightened his grip, feeling the satin flesh of her arm become soft with down. She was threatening to change. "Tell me, what is it that you're afraid of? What has made you like this?"

"How dare you!" she snapped. "Release me."

"What happened to you in the beginning? What destroyed your heart?"

"I have a heart," she repeated and in the starlight a single tear sparkled.

It shocked him, that tear. It was as if the moon itself was crying. He released her. "What does your heart want?" he asked, his voice a whisper.

She kissed him then, full on the lips. "Love. I want love."

His lips burned from her touch. He wanted to taste her again, but he was wary. Her capitulation had been far too easy.

"Men have loved you all through the ages. You chew them up and spit them out. What sort of love are you seeking?"

She grasped his shoulders and pulled him to her. "You want me. Take me now, here."

Her fingers ran down his spine, over his buttocks and around his thighs. The quickening assured him of a throbbing erection. Her fingers traced the length of his shaft.

"Tomorrow," he whispered into her lips. "Let the quickening take us then."

He left her standing alone under the sky. Later, as he drifted off to sleep, he heard her baying, her lonely howl echoing in the cold moonlight.

In the early hours of the morning, Jack woke from a lurid dream involving Catriona, Serena and, of all people, Kelvin. His throbbing cock ached for release and he casually stroked the shaft, luxuriating in the touch of his fingers.

He had to keep Catriona away from Serena. Whatever it took, even if he had to bed her, he had to keep her here. Would he be able to live with the guilt if he did? He thought not, though he knew that if he did nothing to prevent Catriona from having her way, he would feel guilty just the same.

A distant thrum became the roar of an aircraft engine revving up to take-off speed. That's what had woken him.

"Bloody hell," he cursed as he tripped over the sheets to get to the window. The navigation lights of Catriona's plane rose smoothly from the ground and sped off into the night.

"Grigor!"

"I heard," Grigor said as he rushed into his room.

"Obviously her agents have located Serena and Hanna."

"I'll call Brian to borrow his plane."

"We don't have much time. She'll have a couple of hours' head start by the time we get to the island."

"I'll meet you downstairs."

"Good man."

## Chapter Seven

Serena took a sip of her drink and gazed into Hanna's eyes. It was now late afternoon and they were sitting in a shaded alcove overlooking the pool bar. She was still uncertain how to speak with Hanna, after yesterday's frolic on the beach.

"I have to ask," she said finally. "Yesterday, did I behave the way I should have?"

Hanna gazed at her speculatively. "Yes. You impressed me. You have come to terms with your new nature very easily."

"You think so?"

"I do."

Serena studied her friend's expression but could discern no lie. "I'm glad then. I didn't want to disappoint you."

Hanna clasped her hands in hers. "Jack and Kelvin will be very pleased," she said, then her gaze centered on something behind Serena's back. "Ooh, what about them?"

Serena followed her gaze, twisting around in her chair.

A tall, good looking man had just seated himself on a bar stool. Beside him was a slightly younger, less distinguished male. They'd been at the restaurant earlier. Serena had paid the tall one surreptitious regard, thinking he was easily the most handsome man in the place. His dark skin seemed to glow like furnace coal. Everyone in the room was attracted to him. Females peered at him over the rim of their wine glasses and men's lips were curled in a sneer of competition. What attracted Serena, though, was his calm self-assurance. He owned his world, his demeanor said. Without question everything he touched was his.

His partner was well built, not quite as tall, and didn't have the self-possession of his master. He was diffident and subservient. She wondered how long he'd been a werewolf.

"Are they gay?"

Hanna laughed. "Not necessarily. That alpha could be the owner of a company and he has recruited a new staff member."

Serena was horrified. *A hell of a way to recruit staff.* "Isn't that a lot like slavery?"

"Depends on the alpha. If he's like Jack, then it is a harmonious relationship. If he's a bastard then it could mean an eternity of servitude."

Serena had never considered Hanna to be in a subservient relationship with Jack.

"Don't be upset. Jack has offered Grigor and me our freedom many times and we did accept, but we stay with him by choice. He's an island of stability in a changing world."

"That sounds like Jack."

"Don't get me wrong. We still react to his dominance in the normal fashion. We just know that we can leave and he would let us go without forcing us to stay."

"But he could force you?"

"If he chose, but that's unlikely."

Serena searched her feelings. "I don't feel that way toward him."

"That's because you belong to both he and Kelvin. His blood tie is weakened by that."

The tall man, the alpha, glanced their way. His beauty was arresting. Serena detected a stirring inside her mind, a brief moment of vertigo. Hanna had warned her of this. He was using the wolfen mind powers to attract her gaze. She wrinkled her nose in disgust. She could never respect a man who used such powers to ensnare lovers.

Jack had admitted using his mind power on her to quell her natural fear when they'd first met, but that was because she was distressed by the media circus she'd been fleeing. He had never consciously used them to influence her. As far as she knew, neither had Kelvin.

It was obvious that such scruples were not shared by all wolven men.

The stranger's eyes were dark and cold and his constant gaze was like a bridge of ice between them.

"He's pretty yummy," Hanna said, sounding like a teenager. She cleared her throat in response to Serena's surprised gaze. "Sorry, it's the quickening."

*Don't I know it!* Serena had woken up feeling incredibly horny. She and Hanna had decided to stay in their room last night. Serena had not felt confident enough to brave the night life of the resort.

"Ah," Hanna said. "He's coming over."

Serena's heart was thudding in her chest and a sultry heat rose from her lap.

"Mademoiselle," he said, ignoring Hanna completely, his cold gaze locked onto Serena. "My name is Francois." He held out his hand.

"Good evening, Francois," she said, extending her hand to be kissed. "This is Hanna."

His towering presence was overwhelming and sent Serena's hormones coursing through her body like blind lemmings to the abyss. Her vision blurred.

He ignored Hanna again and addressed himself only to Serena. "It is a pleasure to meet you."

"The pleasure is all mine," she returned. *Oh, my God, I'm flirting with this stranger.*

"May we join you?"

"Certainly, monsieur."

With a flick of his head he motioned his companion to join them. He was introduced as Simon.

"Mademoiselle, I cannot help but notice you are newly turned, yet I detect the scent of two males."

Hanna had told her that she carried the scent of both Jack and Kelvin in her blood, an indelible mark of lineage. She blushed. "It's a long story."

"I'm sorry for my tactless remark. It is just... unusual."

"So I'm told."

"I will not invade your privacy anymore, except to say I do not detect their scent here, at the resort."

"Your observation is correct, monsieur. However, I do not see its relevance."

He flicked his eyes to Hanna, who dropped her gaze to examine the tablecloth. "Your companion, who is much older, has not yet instructed you in our ways?"

"As you correctly observe, I am newly turned. There is much to learn." She couldn't believe that she was holding this conversation. She'd noted too that she'd adopted a formal way of speaking to mirror his.

"Are you staying long?"

"Only a few more nights," she said.

"Then you will be here for the ball tomorrow night?"

Serena looked to Hanna who gave a slight nod. "Yes, we shall."

Francois smiled knowingly. "Then we shall look forward to seeing you there."

He rose and Simon followed him out the door. She watched their backs as they made their way toward the casino. Simon flipped out a mobile phone which he dialed and handed to Francois who took it in his long graceful fingers.

Serena exhaled a long slow breath. "Wow."

"Exactly," Hanna said. "He is an old alpha."

"How can you tell?"

"He has old world arrogance."

"Yes, he was a bit up himself wasn't he? Far too self-assured for my liking."

"They tend to be like that, the old timers."

Serena laughed. "As opposed to you guys who are only, what, a hundred years old?"

"Wait till you meet ones from medieval and Roman times. Boy, are they weird."

Serena couldn't stifle a giggle, then a serious thought struck her. "Oh, my God. What are we going to wear to the ball tomorrow night?"

"No problem. Jack gave us his credit card and there are two boutiques downstairs. We'll have some fun shopping!"



Serena smiled inwardly at the notion of an eternity of shopping. Being an immortal certainly had its good points.

\* \* \*

The morning of the full moon found Serena drenched in sweat, wrestling in the embrace of the most perverse of dreams.

Like a wraith, Francois had insinuated himself into her fantasy. She was making love to Jack and Kelvin. They were both inside her, their cocks sliding into her pussy and ass in perfect rhythm and she was riding wave after wave of ecstasy, crashing to a climax of sultry exhaustion. The boys hadn't come yet and they had started another assault on her libidinous senses when suddenly there was another cock, Francois', in her hand and then in her mouth.

Somehow, all three were in perfect rhythm, and she came and came again.

In her dream, Hanna was holding her hand, wiping the sweat off Serena's brow, while behind her Simon plundered her ass. Hanna rocked violently back and forth with his fucking, her long hair tickling Serena's face with each thrust of Simon's cock.

*Oh, my God, I'm coming again.*

And then Jack and Kelvin howled, Francois joined them and suddenly everyone was in wolfen form, howling to the full moon that glowered over them in the clear dawn sky.

"Serena?"

The far away voice was softened by the summer air that shimmered around the fantastical bed balanced precariously on a castle's battlements. Serena was suspended over a glacial valley, its tongue of blue ice sparkling in the crystal air.

"Serena, wake up."

She opened her eyes to find Hanna's smiling face hovering above her. Her friend was gently stroking her face. Hanna's face glowed brightly and with a gasp, Serena realized she was seeing Hanna through wolfen eyes.

Serena imagined her human form and for a moment suffered the painful rearrangement of limbs and organs. She opened her eyes, relieved she was seeing

normally again, and pulled herself into a sitting position. All around her the bed sheets were tattered and torn. "Oh, my God, what happened?"

"You were dreaming."

*That was a dream? Oh, my God.* Her nipples still ached with arousal and her pussy pulsed hungrily, still unsatisfied by her nocturnal orgasms.

"I changed."

"You adopted your wolfen form during sleep. Don't worry, it happens. It's perfectly normal."

"That's the first time I've had a dream like that."

Hanna caressed her cheek. "It's the quickening, that's all."

"I should've listened to Jack and Kelvin. They didn't want me to be without them, afraid that I'd change and not be able to control myself."

"They love you. They may be a little too protective, but they're men, what do they know?"

Serena laughed with her, but the experience had left her shaking, her insides fluttering like a leaf in the aftermath of a chill wind.

They spent the morning shopping, though the choices available were few, the shops almost sold out due to the insatiable demand of the resort's rich guests. Serena found a spaghetti-strapped black chiffon evening gown. The scattered beaded accents were dazzling and the flirty hemline accentuated her fine legs. Serena had noticed that since her turning, her muscle tone had tightened considerably. The result of non-stop sex, she thought.

Hanna chose a flaming red halter number in jersey with a curve hugging fit, plunging neckline and a low cut back. It left little to the imagination and, registering Serena's surprise, Hanna smiled demurely. "I haven't worn something as sexy as this in decades," she explained.

"You are stunning," Serena said, hoping she looked as good when she was over a hundred years old.

They spent the afternoon looking for shoes and again the choices were limited but they both ended up with impossibly high stilettos with ankle straps.

"I am not dancing in these," Serena said. "I'll fall ass over tits for sure."

"You'll find your balance will be perfect," Hanna said. "Trust me."

Shopping was fun, but there was an overhanging shadow of dread and expectation. Serena felt her body was building up to something, as if there was a rising tide of lust swelling in her belly. A sultry tingle had permeated every cell and her senses were buzzing, as if she was coming alive in a way she'd never been before.

The heady air was saturated with wolfen scent and Serena was losing herself to the erotic atmosphere. A well built male caught her ogling him and he returned her gaze with a toothy smile. She blushed and dragged Hanna out of the shop, unable to explain herself.

Later, back in their room, they showered and tried on their new clothes. They applied makeup and did each other's hair. Serena's body was aching for a caress, her lips tingling with want of a kiss and her thoughts drifted to Jack and Kelvin, wanting them like never before.

"What's likely to happen tonight?" Serena asked. "Tell me honestly. I won't be frightened."

Hanna took a deep breath. "Well, there's going to be a lot of sex."

"What? Out in the open?"

"Possibly. We like to pretend we're civilized and act out our sexual urgings in the privacy of a bedroom, but in reality, when the moon has so much power over us and the air is so full of pheromones, well, we can lose control."

Serena fanned herself. "Tell me about it. I've been frisky all day."

Hanna squeezed her hand. "Me too."

"You said we lose control. Will it be violent?"

Hanna nodded. "The males get into this macho territorial thing, wanting to claim every female they see. They may fight, but security will keep that in check."

"I gather they won't stay in human form."

"The more experienced of us will, but in times of conflict even elders can drop into wolfen form."

A cold sliver of fear knifed through her. "What should I look out for?"

"If it gets out of hand we'll leave. Just concentrate on staying in human form, imagine yourself as you are now. Remember, every male will want to fuck you, so stay alert and if the urge gets to you, stay aware of yourself. It's a kind of detachment. I know it's easier said than done."

"What if I do become wolfen?"

"Then you'll ruin a fine dress."

"Will you look out for me?"

Hanna laughed and squeezed her hand again. "Of course, and you'll need to watch out for me."

"Do you want to have sex tonight?"

"It's not a question of wanting to have sex," Hanna said. "It's more of a question of will I be able to stop myself." Hanna glanced at her watch. "Well, it's time."

## Chapter Eight

A flock of butterflies the size of eagles was flying in formation in Serena's stomach as they entered the grand ballroom. They made their way carefully through the press of immaculately and stylishly dressed werewolves. They were extraordinarily beautiful and it suddenly struck Serena that she had yet to see an ugly werewolf. She mentioned this to Hanna.

"That's because we can chose our form. We are shape-shifters, remember."

Of course! It suddenly dawned on her that her body's improving tone was simply part of her morphing. The transition had been gradual, sneaking up on her, turning her into her ideal self.

She was just getting used to this intriguing notion when Francois caught her eye. He was dressed in an elegant, old fashioned tuxedo which made her think he should have been a vampire and not a werewolf. With Simon in tow, he made his way toward them. "Serena. You look ravishing."

His aura of carnal lust seemed to reach out for her like shadowy fingers and she stepped back in surprise. "Thank you, Francois," she said uncertainly.

"Let us go to the balcony. I have a table reserved."

"I thought I might take Serena on a tour of the ballroom," Hanna said.

Francois shot her a baleful glance and Hanna bobbed her head. Anger swelled inside Serena's breast. How dare he treat her friend with such contempt.

"I think that's a great idea, Hanna," she said icily, her gaze fixed on Francois. "I'm sure Simon and his master can entertain themselves while we explore the delights on offer on the dance floor."

Francois' face turned to marble, his eyes deep pools of fury. "One so new to life should not risk the capricious lusts of the masses." His voice was as precise like a sculptor's chisel.

"I'm the best judge of that," Serena said coldly. "I'd rather the honesty of Eros than the presumptuous arrogance of Mars."

Francois was clearly stunned. While he searched for a response Serena took Hanna's arm. "Excuse us while you learn some manners," she said as she stepped past them.

"Well done," Hanna said once they were safely amidst the crowd. "Where did that come from?"

"I have no idea. He just made me so angry."

"I'm sure no one has ever spoken to him like that in centuries, if ever. You've either created an enemy or a lovesick slave who'll adore you for all time."

"Well, it's about time someone put him in his place. And I hope he doesn't turn into an adoring fan or I'll have to crush his ego again."

Hanna gazed at her closely for a moment. "I think Jack and Kelvin underestimated you very badly, Serena."

Serena glowed under her friend's appraisal. "Words, Hanna. They were only words. Inside I'm scared out of my wits."

"Then you hide it very well."

Serena declined alcohol, not wanting to cloud her already overwhelmed senses. The ballroom was awash with a wild, feral scent and the women's gowns flowed in a surreal kaleidoscope of color. The chamber orchestra on the mezzanine level was playing Strauss and on the dance floor couples were waltzing. It was very old worldly, reflecting the conservative tastes of the immortals.

*Once I get over the strangeness of it all, Serena decided, I could get very used to all this.*

The orchestra struck up Ravel's "Boléro" and the couples on the dance floor clutched each other closer and their moves became more obviously provocative.

A wave of heat, like the dry westerly wind of an outback summer, had passed through her, leaving Serena's mouth dry and her skin prickly.

Serena's pussy reacted to the clearly sexual interactions happening in front of her. People were openly kissing and fondling each other. Breasts had popped out of low cut bodices and hands had been thrust down tuxedo trousers. It seemed as if a signal had passed unheralded through the ballroom. Unspoken but not ignored.

"Well, that certainly warmed things up," Serena muttered, watching a couple dry hump against a marble support.

"That's just the beginning. Did you feel it? The moon has risen."

"Is that what that was?"

"It's the quickening coming to its climax."

Serena's nipples were aching hard and were pressing against her gown. Her pussy had turned to molten lava and she swore she could feel her clit throbbing in desire. "I don't know how much of this I can stand."

Hanna licked her bottom lip, leaving it glistening in the soft light. Her fingers were slowly tracing the line of her cleavage.

Suddenly a pair of hands reached from behind Hanna and cupped her breasts. Hanna swooned in response. Serena almost pushed the man away, but when she saw it was Simon, she hesitated.

"My master apologizes," he whispered into Hanna's neck. "Don't hold his rudeness against me. I am his, but I'd like to be yours tonight."

Serena saw Hanna push back against the young werewolf, but alarm bells were ringing in her head. There was something suddenly familiar about Simon, and now she was close to him his scent engulfed her with a thick blanket of dread.

She'd smelled him once before. Serena grasped Hanna's arm. "Hanna. I need your help in the bathroom," she said urgently.

Hanna slowly dropped her glazed eyes to meet Serena's. "Pardon?"

"My knickers have lost their elastic. Come help me."

Serena scoped out the location of the restrooms and dragged on Hanna's arm. For a moment, she feared Simon wouldn't let Hanna go, but he released her when Serena stared him down. Stepping carefully between the now openly fornicating couples, Serena took her toward the restrooms and then veered toward the bank of elevators, intending to take Hanna to their room.

"What's happening?" Hanna asked.

"We're in deep trouble," Serena said. She stopped dead. Francois was standing at the elevators, cutting off their escape. She quickly dragged Hanna behind a marble pillar. "Shit and double shit."

"What is it, Serena?"

"I recognized Simon's scent. He's the assassin the Council sent to kill me back at the farm."

Fear crossed Hanna's face for just a moment before she adopted her normal practical demeanor. "That means Francois belongs to the Council."

Hanna moved beside her abruptly. There was a series of ripping sounds and suddenly they were both naked.

"What the...?" Her voice died away for it was like she was staring into a mirror. It took a moment to get over her discombobulated thoughts. Hanna had shape-shifted into her mirror image.

"Now they won't know who's who," Hanna explained.

"Good thinking, I guess. But what do we do, that's the question. How do we get out of here?"

"If they are Council, then going to security for help won't work. We need to get a message to Jack."

"Have you got your phone?"

Hanna shook her head. "In our room. The network must be down because I haven't had a signal for a day or so now. The last message I had from Jack said he thought the Council may have gotten wind that you and I were together, but not where we were."



Serena had switched off her phone, not wanting to talk to anyone, and regretted leaving it in her room. An idea occurred to her. "Hanna. This may work. Why don't you shape-shift into someone else and while I distract them, get back to our room and phone Jack. Use the resort's phone if ours still aren't working. We'll meet at the rotunda by the beach and then make our way to the human side of the island."

Hanna thought it over. "I don't like the idea of splitting up."

"They'll find both of us if we stick together. This way at least one of us has a chance."

"Okay, but you go for the phone while I lead them on a wild goose chase. I'm faster on my wolven feet than you are."

"No way, I caught you."

"Who's to say I didn't want to be caught?"

"Damn, and I thought I was getting pretty good."

Hanna gave her a wink. "Okay. On the count of three I'll wander off into the garden. As soon as Francois follows, you get to a phone and in fifteen minutes I'll meet you at the rotunda. I'll be the foxy looking wolf with a grin on my face."

"You're enjoying this, aren't you?"

"Most fun I've had in decades. Now, are you ready?"

Serena nodded.

"Give me your dress and I'll drape it over my shoulder to make it look like I've just had some sexy fun and am just wandering about in post coital bliss. That way they won't catch on that we've twigged to their real identity and it will give you some more time."

"Gotcha," Serena said. "And three."

Hanna ruffled her lustrous hair and stood up with Serena's dress draped wantonly over her shoulder. With an exaggerated swish to her hips she sauntered provocatively toward the French windows that opened up to the garden.

Hunkered down behind the pillar Serena watched Francois react. He was startled for a moment and then slowly moved off in Hanna's direction. His course

brought him within a few meters of where Serena huddled and she hoped he wouldn't smell her. But with all the musky pheromones in the air, what chance would he have? She held her breath as he went past and in a moment he was out the doors.

Serena rushed to the lift and a minute later was on her floor. Her heart was beating so hard she could hear her blood streaming through her veins.

"What the hell?"

The door to their room was open and from inside she could hear the sounds of drawers being flung open, clothes being ripped and torn. Francois' henchmen were searching her room.

She quietly backtracked to the lift, thought twice about it and found the fire door. She eased it open and stepped inside the stairwell, easing the door shut behind her. Then she bounded down the stairs two at a time.

Finally she reached the bottom of the stairwell. She opened the door a crack. It was the sub-basement car park. Her wolfen eyes quickly adapted to the dark and she stepped out into the cool air.

## Chapter Nine

Jack and Grigor strode through the ballroom, ignoring the copulating couples as best they could. The air was a miasma of sex and it turned Jack's stomach. He denied the possibility that Serena would have been rutting like a beast and found the elevator bank. They'd come straight from the island's airport and were in no mood to be delayed until they'd found both Serena and Hanna. Luckily Hanna had text messaged their room number on the day of their arrival and once inside the elevator Grigor punched the floor number.

They found the door of the room wide open.

"Fucking hell," Jack cursed, surveying the ransacked room. The girls' mobiles were lying crushed on the floor.

"Hanna?" Grigor shouted forlornly.

"Fuck, fuck, fuck," Jack spat bitterly.

His mind was in turmoil. Obviously Catriona and the Council had captured Serena and Hanna. Where would they take them? The airport? A ship lying off the coast? He was trying to decide which direction to go first when the door flew open and Kelvin rushed in.

Jack growled at his intrusion. *What the fuck is he doing here?*

Kelvin quickly surveyed the damage. "What the fuck have you done?"

"Where is she?" Jack demanded.

They stared open-mouthed at each other for a few long moments before they decided neither knew what was going on.

"We have to search the grounds," Kelvin said.

"Brilliant fucking idea," Jack said.

"Shut the fuck up. Catriona will be somewhere about. We need to find her."

"You know about Catriona?"

"She's behind this," Kelvin said. "The bitch."

"She wants Serena to be Prime Minister," Jack said suspiciously. "Do you know anything about that?"

"Of course not, you jerk. I only found out yesterday that Catriona is still after her. How do you know about it?"

"Catriona came looking at the farm. She flew out suddenly and I guessed her henchmen had discovered her location."

"It's your fucking fault, you moron. If you hadn't let her come to this shit of a place."

"Master," Grigor interrupted. He was looking out the window. "There is a commotion down by the beach."

"What are we fucking waiting for?" Jack growled and shouldered past Kelvin.

\* \* \*

Serena knew at once that they had Hanna. In the light of the rotunda Serena could see her friend huddled on the floor, in wolven form. A chain ran from her neck to one of the beams supporting the rotunda's thatched roof.

Serena bit down on her bottom lip trying to decide how she could free her friend. It looked hopeless. Simon and Francois were standing over her. Francois was shouting on the phone and Serena could see shadowy figures running toward her from the resort's main entrance.

She had to do something fast. She stepped into the light.

"Francois," she shouted. "It's me you're after."

Francois snapped his phone shut.

"Let her go and I'll come quietly."

He smiled. "Coming is not required," he said casually. "Quietly or otherwise."

His hand slipped inside his jacket and extracted a pistol. "Silver bullets," he explained. "They tell me it is quite painless."

"Let her go!" Serena cried. "And I won't run."

He aimed the pistol at Hanna's head. "I don't think so."

Suddenly something big and sleek launched itself from the shadows and collided with Francois, knocking him off his feet. The pistol fired and a bullet whizzed off into the night sky.

With Hanna's safety foremost in her mind, Serena growled and willed herself into her wolfen form. With a single bound she knocked Simon over and bit into his throat. Hot blood gushed into her mouth as she savaged his neck. It had happened so quickly Simon had no time to react and he quickly went limp in submission beneath her.

The heat of his blood was intoxicating. She wanted more. The growls from the fighting wolves drew her attention and Serena raised her mouth from her victim's throat. Two wolves, one black and one silver, were struggling together in mortal combat.

Serena let the wounded Simon go and joined the fray, snapping and biting at the bigger of the two wolves, the black one whose scent she identified as Francois'. She got a hold of his foreleg and bit down hard, rejoicing in the sound of snapping bones and the hot gush of blood that flooded her mouth.

The silver wolf was getting the worst of it. Francois had his jaws firmly embedded in its throat.

"Hanna!"

Serena recognized Grigor's gravelly voice. Grigor! Her heart soared. That meant Jack was near.

"I've got the gun, you bastards!" Jack shouted. "Stop fighting, or I'll shoot your fucking ass."

"Serena, get away," Kelvin ordered.

She looked up, hot blood dripping from her mouth. Jack and Kelvin were standing over them, Jack with the gun leveled at Francois' head.

"Do it now!" Jack commanded.

Serena reluctantly released her grip on Francois' leg and backed away. Francois let go of the other wolf which whimpered and slinked away.

"Not so fast," Kelvin said to it. "Get back here."

The silver wolf lay down in wounded submission.

"Serena," Kelvin said quietly. "You can be human again if you want."

Serena imagined her human form and in a moment she felt the warm tropical air on her naked flesh.

"Are you hurt?" Jack asked, though he didn't take his eyes, or the gun, off Francois who'd transformed back into human form.

"I'm fine," she said, letting herself be folded into Kelvin's arms. "Hanna, are you okay?"

Hanna had transformed back to human form and was being comforted by Grigor, who'd unchained her. She gave Serena a wink over her husband's shoulder.

"What happened?" Kelvin asked.

Serena caught her breath. "Francois belongs to the Council. That wolf over there is Simon, the assassin who tried to kill me. I was trying to get Francois to take me instead of Hanna when that silver wolf attacked him."

"That wolf?" Kelvin said, the surprise in his voice manifest. "That wolf saved you?"

"Who is it?"

"Come on," Jack said. "Your turn, let's see who you are."

The wolf instantly transformed itself into a beautiful woman, no longer bleeding from the throat as the transformation healed the ugly wound.

"I'll be buggered," said Jack.

## Chapter Ten

The blonde bombshell swept into Jack's library like a whirlwind of silk and lace. Oblivious to the amazed stares of everyone, Catriona tossed her briefcase onto the couch and went straight to the bar. Without a word she poured herself a drink.

"What the hell is she doing here?" Serena asked.

She'd had all night to think about Catriona Molyneux, the woman who had been behind everything that had happened in her life for the last ten years, from Kelvin's entry into politics to her being hunted by the Council. She hated her with a passion.

After they'd chained Francois and Simon to the cabana wall, the five of them had fled to the airport and flown out without clearance from the annoyed control tower. Serena had snuggled up against Jack and Kelvin, rejoicing in the safety and security they exuded, and slept as well as her raging hormones would allow.

Once safely in Jack's house she'd had a long bath, letting her sore muscles relax and unwind. Her turbulent thoughts kept returning to Catriona. Serena recalled the only time she had spent more than five minutes in her presence. It had been at a party fundraiser. She'd noticed Catriona's lingering gaze, the foot contact under the table, the tongue moistening those full, perfectly formed lips.

Serena hadn't been so naive as to not recognize a seduction when she saw one and when she'd excused herself to go to the bathroom, Catriona had followed her, a feral glint in her eye. The society babe, the most desired woman in the country, made no secret about wanting her. She was drunk, of course, slurring the words, "I love you," before making a clumsy pass. It had disgusted Serena to think such a respected woman could behave so pitifully.

Now Serena understood the reasons behind her behavior. Catriona was a werewolf under the influence of the quickening. That and alcohol had sent her over the edge.

That didn't mitigate her hatred for the socialite for all the other things she'd done while not under the influence of the moon. Serena had promised herself that when she next saw the woman she would do something that would satisfy her thirst for revenge.

Catriona sipped her drink and gazed at her with a slightly amused smile, as if she was pleased with herself. With a determined set to her jaw Serena followed through with her promise. She strode up to the immaculately dressed alpha female and slugged her right across the jaw.

Catriona stood transfixed. Her dazed eyes refocused and her hand went slowly to her jaw. She rubbed the spot where Serena's fist had made contact and, to Serena's amazement and fury, a smile creased those perfect lips.

Serena balled her fists, ready to bloody that arrogant nose and split at least one of those pouting lips.

"I knew it!" Catriona announced to the room. "She's perfect!"

"I'll show you perfect..."

Before Serena could wind up for a second punch, Catriona's hand shot up lightning fast and grasped her painfully by the wrist. "You only get one," she murmured through pressed lips. "No matter how justified you may feel at this moment, don't press your luck. Besides, is this any way to thank the person who saved your life?"

"You bitch!"

"Now, now."

"What's going on?" Jack demanded.

"I fear it's my fault," Catriona said.

"Why are you here?" Jack demanded. "Haven't you done enough?"

"I thought I should explain," Catriona said and settled herself on the couch.

The three rounded on her. "Well?" Serena said.

"The Council has always been jealous of my fame and celebrity."

"It's more than that, Catriona. Explain yourself."

"Oh, Kelvin..."



"Don't 'oh, Kelvin' me. I've been your cat's paw too often to fall for that now."

Catriona's eyes flicked to Serena. "So, Kelvin, now that you've found your one true love, you don't need me? Is that it?"

"What have you done?" Jack draped a protective arm about Serena's shoulders. "You pernicious bitch."

"You caused all this, didn't you?" Serena said. "You had Kelvin's wife make that silly charge against me and threatened me with assassination so he would resign. Why?"

"I did neither. Your assassination was ordered by others. I did want you separated from Kelvin."

"Why, for God's sake?"

"Isn't it obvious, Serena?"

Serena's mind flashed back to that restroom in Melbourne. "You've got to be kidding me."

"What?" both Jack and Kelvin asked together.

"You can't be serious," Serena said.

Catriona's eyes glistened.

"Well, fill us in," Kelvin demanded. "Why did you do it?"

"For love," Catriona whispered. "I did it for love."

"I still don't understand," Kelvin said.

Serena's glare shot daggers of ice at the woman who'd caused her so much pain. "Why me?"

"You're a woman. You're a survivor. Just like me you survived in a man's world, and like me you belong to no man. I knew it the first time I saw you. I watched you from afar, enjoyed you from afar. You are so like me, Serena. You've proven yourself in the world of politics. You guided Kelvin through the political minefield without any help from us. We were grateful for your skill, believe me."

"But why Prime Minister?" Kelvin asked.

"The press already respects and likes you," Catriona said to Serena. "The country is ready for a female leader." A dazzling smile spread across Catriona's face. "You'll need a strong husband untainted by scandal to strengthen the vote from both men and women. Jack Wolfe would be very acceptable in that role."

"Like hell!" Kelvin roared.

"Why should I help the Council?" Serena spat. "They wanted me dead."

"I understand your reluctance. Remember, the Council ordered your execution, not me. When I found out I was furious. I'm afraid I turned them against me."

"But you own the Council."

"Not really. It's a man's club and I was their token bitch. It was only a matter of time before the old fuddy duddies turned against me. But now that I'm sure of your mettle, we can go ahead."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm sorry, Serena, but the Council has ordered your assassination again. They are just being bloody minded, of course, teaching me a lesson more than anything. I can't let them succeed."

"So you went through with this Prime Minister sham."

"Oh, it's no sham, believe me. You have to be Prime Minister."

"Over our dead bodies," Jack said.

Catriona shook her head. "I'm trying to avoid that scenario, Jack. Being PM is the only way to stay alive, don't you see? They won't do anything while Serena is in the public gaze. Besides, there is another reason you should consider this."

Serena crossed her arms over her breasts. "There's nothing that will convince me to go into politics."

Catriona reached into her briefcase and thrust a bundle of papers into her hand. "Read them."

Serena ran her eyes down the pages trying to understand their import. It was the Council's political plan for Australia and its strategic goals for the world.

"Can I trust this?"

"Ask Kelvin. He believed in the program. Had he not resigned he would have seen it through to its fruition. He would've helped us save the world."

"He resigned to save my life from your bloody Council."

Unfazed, Catriona's eyes flicked to the papers. "My male counterparts' orders to have you killed is a signal of how serious they are. Make no mistake, Serena. They intend to save the world."

"For what purpose?"

"That's the question, isn't it? The stated policy is that as weak and irrational as humans are, we need them to survive. We also need a stable and sustainable biosphere. Only we wolfen have the unity of purpose and spirit to achieve it."

"But, and there is a but, isn't there?"

"Of course, you'll see the addendum. The ultimate goal, once we save the planet, is to subjugate humanity and basically use them as slaves and food."

Serena was horrified. "And what can I do about it?"

"I still have some influence left in the world of men. While it remains, I need to place someone who will act as a balance to their plans. With you as Prime Minister, we can perhaps thwart the Council's more extreme intentions. It is the only hope that humanity has for survival both from global warming and from slavery."

Serena considered the options.

*Whether I do it or not, the Council will put their plans into action.*

The papers weighed heavy as if the responsibility of saving the world was already transferring into her hands.

"Well?" Catriona prompted. "Are you with me?"

"And when my term as Prime Minister ends, as it must?"

Catriona smiled. "There's always the United Nations."

## Chapter Eleven

"So, was your first quickening all you hoped it would be?" Kelvin asked.

"I would've preferred a good shag instead of a shoot out and dog fight," Serena responded. She was lying between her two lovers, feeling safe and comfortable once more.

"The quickening has its climax on the night of the full moon, but its effects linger for weeks," Jack said as he maneuvered himself to the end of the bed and parted her thighs. Serena opened them wantonly and he began lapping at her sex.

Kelvin kissed her passionately and fondled her breasts lovingly, cupping them in his palms, his fingers caressing the nipples with gentle but firm pressure. Serena arched her back and moaned into his mouth.

After her confrontation with Catriona, Serena had doubted her ability to live in wolfen society, but after a night of loving with Jack and Kelvin, she'd reevaluated the future and her part in it. Under their gentle ministrations, the future now seemed a much better place.

Jack's tongue had finished exploring her wet pussy and had ventured northward, circling the hard, throbbing nub of her clit. He knew her body so well, knowing just the right amount of pleasure to exert on her flesh to send jolts of pure carnal energy shooting through her body.

"Fuck me," she groaned.

"With pleasure," he said and knelt between her quivering thighs. Slowly, ever so gently, he fed the length of his throbbing shaft into her pussy. She shuddered as Jack's cock filled her completely and she clutched at Kelvin's shoulders.

She loved the feeling of both their bodies pressed against hers. Kelvin's lips left her mouth and slid down her throat to her straining breasts. He tongued her nipples with exquisite technique that made her gasp with pure joy.

Jack's thrusts became urgent and she sensed he was about to climax. She waited for him to flood her pussy with his come. Unexpectedly, he paused, his cock buried to the balls in her pussy. "Serena," he whispered. "Would you like both of us inside you?"

"Oh, yes, please."

"Kelvin, what do you say? Can we share her?"

Kelvin gazed deeply into her eyes. "Whatever Serena wants, she has."

"Then, shall I have her pussy, or you?"

"My turn with Serena's pussy, I think."

"Very fair," said Jack. He withdrew from her pussy. "Serena, if you'll ride Kelvin for a moment, then I'll join you."

Serena's heart fluttered in anticipation. Kelvin lay beside her and drew her over him. She straddled his strong thighs and eased his cock into her pussy left wet and pulsing by Jack's expert thrusting.

Serena sighed with contentment. His cock filled her so perfectly as she rose and fell on his length. She felt Jack position himself behind her, rubbing his wet fingers over her ass.

With gentle pressure from his cock he eased himself past that tight ring of muscle. She groaned from deep within her belly. She could feel both their cocks sliding one over the other as they fucked her, separated by a thin tissue of flesh, quickly getting into perfect synchronization.

Her senses were overwhelmed, her heart beating so loudly she feared it would burst. She felt as if her pleasure had climbed the side of some great mountain and now, with both cocks inside her, she was reaching the summit.

Suddenly, she was on those castle battlements she'd dreamed of, below her the icy glacier shiny with blue light and above her fine, misty clouds of white against a blue velvet sky.

Her mortal flesh quivered under the dual assault of her lovers' cocks. The bed fell in an explosion of light and suddenly she was flying with the clouds.

"Serena?" Jack asked. "Are you okay?"

She came to her senses cradled in their arms. "Oh, my God," she whispered. She felt hot tears on her cheeks. "That was out of this world."

"For us also," Kelvin said and kissed her.

Later, after they had slept and were slowly awakening and speaking of life and love in drowsy voices, Kelvin asked her if she had decided what she was going to do about Catriona's offer.

"I'll save the world only on one condition," she said after a moment of reflection.

"And what's that?"

"That I have you two gorgeous men with me through it all. And that you'll get along at all times just like you did while you were rescuing me and making love to me."

"Deal," said Jack with a grin. "Since the fate of the world depends upon it."

"Done," said Kelvin. "Just to keep you safe, my love."

Serena settled back, for the first time feeling content that it might all work out for the best.

There was a discreet cough from the door. "This may be a little early in our arrangement," Catriona said in all her luscious nakedness. "But is there room in that big bed for me?"

A resounding "No!" came simultaneously from the throats of Jack and Kelvin and they looked at each other in surprise. Serena smiled to herself. Her two lovers agreeing with each other was becoming a habit and a very good habit at that.

## **Mikala Ash**

Mikala wakes up every morning to the sound of crashing surf and has her first coffee of the day on the verandah looking over the wide Pacific Ocean.

It's a double edged blessing, she says. "I have to drag myself away to do anything at all -- like work. I'm a Management Consultant and I don't think Ricky (my beautiful Border Collie) fully understands the economic necessity of me working to keep him in the life he's become accustomed to (typical male). He just wants me to run with him along the beach all day chasing those pesky sea gulls.

"He's good company though and, if there are shape-shifters in the world, I think I'd like him to be one -- loyal, trustworthy, obedient and protective."

A voracious reader, Mikala has been writing in one form or another since she was little. "I'm so lucky that I've found a way of sharing my passion for spicy romance and the more fantastical realms that hover just beyond our grasp."