

Changeling Press

Cat O'Nines

CAT'S CLAWS

Lia Connor

Cat O' Nines: Cat's Claws

Lia Connor

All rights reserved.
Copyright ©2007 Lia Connor

Warning: The unauthorized reproduction or distribution of this copyrighted work is illegal. Criminal copyright infringement, including infringement without monetary gain, is investigated by the FBI and is punishable by up to 5 years in federal prison and a fine of \$250,000.

ISBN: 978-1-59596-575-2
Formats Available:
HTML, Adobe PDF,
MobiPocket, Microsoft Reader

Publisher:
Changeling Press LLC
PO Box 1046
Martinsburg, WV 25402-1046
www.ChangelingPress.com

Editor: Margaret Riley
Cover Artist: Reneé George

This e-book file contains sexually explicit scenes and adult language which some may find offensive and which is not appropriate for a young audience. Changeling Press E-Books are for sale to adults, only, as defined by the laws of the country in which you made your purchase. Please store your files wisely, where they cannot be accessed by under-aged readers.

Cat O' Nines: Cat's Claws

Lia Connor

Everyone's heard of the Catkind, right? In the past they kept to themselves, but these days they're out roaming the country, looking for mates. They're rough, they're tough and they don't take no for an answer.

But who'd want to say no? Not Gabriella, a barmaid in a tiny roadhouse near the Mexican border. All her life, Gabriella has dreamed about a Prince Charming riding in and carrying her away.

Looks like she'll get double lucky. Not one, but two of the Catkind have chosen Gabriella as their mate and their Queen. Is she woman enough to handle two alpha Cats?

Chapter One

"So there I am, standing in the middle of the street, screaming at him *en Espanol*. I'm calling him things our *abuela* would turn over in her grave to hear me say. And then she'd wash my mouth out with soap."

"Lucia, when are you going to learn?" Gabriella unlocked the door to *Gatos'* cold storage unit. "You stay away from men like him. They're trouble."

Lucia, her sister, had the fire of a Roman candle and a temper to match. She jammed her hands on her hips in indignation. "Like you have room to talk," she shot back.

"I do. Do you see me getting tangled up with any troublemakers like him?" She yanked open the door, and cold air escaped with a *whoosh*. "Uh-uh. Oh, that's good." Gabriella closed her eyes and swayed in bliss. It was a gorgeous day outside in the shabby outskirts of San Miguel, the sky pure blue and the horizon clear for miles. Which meant it was hot enough to suit the devil himself, especially back in the warehouse. She let herself enjoy the cool air coming from the cold storage unit for a moment, then got back to business. She nudged the handcart. "Come on, you take one crate and I'll take the other."

"We shouldn't roll out a keg?"

"If you think you can manhandle a keg in heat like this, dolly or no dolly, you're welcome to try. Grab a case for now. Tony can get the rest later." Gabriella sized up the hefty crate stamped with the *Moctezuma* Brewery logo. Nothing tasted as good or as rich as their *cervesa*. *Moctezuma* was why locals bothered traveling to her tiny, out-of-the-way bar. If the brew master hadn't been a friend of her brother Tony, no way she'd have gotten her mitts on any of their goods. "Come on, Lucia, put your back into it."

Lucia pouted briefly before bending and lifting the crate. Tendons stood out in her neck from the effort as she wrestled a heavy crate onto the dolly. "We need some strong young stud for this."

"And there you go again, thinking about men," Gabriella chided. "I'm not saying I wouldn't like to have a strong young thing around, especially if he's hot, eh? I'm saying we can get by fine without one. You seem to think that's a mortal sin, which is why I'm listening to you pitch a fit in the street." She tempered the sting of her words with the fondness of her tone.

Gabriella shut the door to the cold storage unit and clicked the padlock back in place before taking the handle of the dolly. *Oof*. She had to admit, the crates were terribly heavy. Together they headed back to the main room of *Gatos*, the tiny tumbledown bar that had been their sole legacy from their mother.

Not exactly a rich and abundant inheritance. Ah, well, Mama had tried.

Lucia was still stuck back on Gabriella's opinions. "You're telling me if a man like Roger came on to you, you'd say no? He looked so *pretty*." She swung around to walk backwards. "Those cornflower blue eyes and his soft golden hair. Like a prince out of a fairytale." Her pleading turned wicked. "And good in bed? He was a devil when it came to loving me."

"And how many other women at the same time?" Gabriella bumped open the swinging kitchen door. "Would I say no to a man like Roger? Hell, no, I wouldn't. But..."

Lucia rolled her eyes.

"But," Gabriella went on, not letting Lucia's scorn stop her, "I'd say yes long enough to enjoy his body. If he's as good as you say, I'd have fun with him for a few days then send him packing. No harm, no foul, and no broken heart that needs someone to sweep up the pieces."

Lucia scoffed. "You wouldn't know how to let your hair down if someone gave you a hands-on demonstration."

Gabriella's pride was stung. "Says you!"

"You're right, says I. You want to make a bet on this? Friday night's tip jar says you don't have the guts to take the next handsome guy who walks into *Gatos* for a test run."

Ay, Lucia had her there. Gabriella could never back down from a challenge. "I'm listening. What are the terms?"

Lucia stretched her muscles out before unlocking the cooler. "So we have a deal?"

"Not yet." Gabriella pulled the dolly close enough to the cooler to unload it. "Let me hear the details before I say yes or no."

"Like you would," Lucia smirked. "All right, here's the deal. When we open tonight, you and I man the bar. When the first hot guy walks in, one I decide is enough of a handful for even you, I point him out and that's when the game begins. You come on to him, you do whatever you have to do, and if he's safe you get him into bed."

"I'm not a slut," Gabriella objected, all the while hoisting crates and holding them for Lucia to unpack and stow in the cooler. "And how am I supposed to know if he's 'safe'?" She dusted off her hands after the last bottle was stashed away. "You have to give me more than that to go on. I'm supposed to proposition a customer? That'll give me a great reputation."

Lucia shrugged smugly. "So you're saying no? You're backing down already?"

"Bitch. You know I'm not." Gabriella undid her long ponytail, letting her hair fall loose to swing in thick, glossy black sheets down to the middle of her back.

Lucia watched in admiration. "I look at you and I know why they call it 'crowning glory.' You are so lucky. All I have to work with is this tangle of curls." She shook her head to illustrate.

Contrary to Lucia's opinion, her mane was stunning, silky jet-black ringlets and waves bouncing off her shoulders. Together with her cute-as-a-button girlish face and a woman's ample curves, Lucia was hell on wheels. Gabriella and her two sisters both had the same Mexican mother, but different black fathers. Mama had been a hard, hard

woman to live with, fiery as a demon. Their black-Latino heritage showed itself in different ways on all of them.

Replacing the scarlet scrunchie holding her ponytail in place, Gabriella swung her head back and forth to make sure it was secure. "Keep talking. Let's say the deal is on..."

"It already is."

"We haven't shaken hands yet. Tell me more. I find a hottie, I screw him, and I take your money. That's simple enough. But what happens if something doesn't work out?"

"What, you mean like he can't get it up?"

"Lucia!" Gabriella lightly slapped her impish sister's arm. "Okay, if that happens, sure. Or if he doesn't want to take me to bed."

"Like that would happen. Have you really looked at yourself in a mirror lately?"

Actually, Lucia hadn't. Long days, short nights and precious little time for anything else, they took their toll on a girl's primping. "Or if he's not safe after all," she ticked off on her fingers, wishing she had a pretty manicure like Lucia's, even if it would get ruined her first night at the bar. "Or if he turns out to be a jerk and I wouldn't screw him if he was the last man alive." She stripped off her plain white T-shirt and picked up a cropped black tank top, the unofficial uniform of *Gatos*. "So what happens then?"

"Depends. I'll judge the circumstances. If I lose, you get my tip money -- and the satisfaction of getting laid, which is a prize all on its own."

"Sweeten the pot a little, eh?"

"That's enough for you?"

"No. I got to have some leverage, or Lord knows what kind of jerk you'll stick me with. You have to do the same thing, girl. If I win, I pick you a man, and you can't back down."

"You think I'd mind?"

"Maybe. I plan to pick you out a priest."

"Wicked woman," Lucia scolded before her indignant frown melted into thoughtful lasciviousness. "Ooh, you think he'd keep his collar on while we did it?"

Gabriella winced and crossed herself. "Lightning's going to strike you down, I swear. All right, *chica*. If you agree, then we have ourselves a bet." She held out her hand, palm up. "Yes or no?"

Lucia grinned and high-fived Gabriella. "We have a bet, girlfriend. We *so* have a bet."

"Then let's go." Gabriella rolled her hips, displaying her toned tummy with its small gold ring. "May the better woman win."

"May the sluttier woman win."

* * *

Gabriella laughed as she headed out to the main bar. She loved *Gatos*, every inch of it. Right now, with the late afternoon light streaming through the big windows, she liked it best with the lights off. Made for a good resting spot and a peaceful atmosphere. The place would be crawling with rowdy men and horny women soon enough.

A woman popped up from underneath a table, where she'd either been crawling around looking for loose change or hiding. "Gabriella, thank God you're here."

Gabriella frowned slightly. "Marnie, what are you doing here? I told you to stay off your feet." The youngest of her sisters, Marnie was pregnant, and as tiny as she was, Gabriella worried for her. Not only was she with child, but the baby was sure to have been fathered by her asshole on-and-off boyfriend. "That jerk isn't after you, is he?"

"Your tips are as good as mine," Lucia sing-songed, paying no attention to their baby sister.

"Watch your mouth," Gabriella scolded. "Marnie, what's up?"

Marnie tucked loose strands of her straight, dark brown hair behind her ears. She looked less Hispanic than Gabriella or Lucia, favoring her father. She'd gotten slight, nervous hands and a Cupid's bow mouth from their mother. "Could you use an extra hand tonight? I'll go crazy at home."

"You know what Friday nights are like," Gabriella warned. "Are you sure?"

Marnie nodded eagerly. "Absolutely. I can handle myself."

Gabriella wasn't any too sure, but she did need another pair of hands. The weekends could be crazy at *Gatos*. "Okay, fine. Get changed and help me do the set-up."

Marnie beamed a brilliant smile. "Thank you, thank you!"

"Go on." Gabriella watched Marnie disappear into the kitchen, shaking her head. "There goes living proof of my point, Lucia."

"A bet's a bet." Lucia was supremely unconcerned. She rose on tiptoe to peer out the window, Marnie already forgotten. "Looks like we're opening early. Two guys heading this way on the road."

"I don't hear a car."

"They're walking." Lucia started primping her curls. "Showtime, girlfriend. They're hot, they're young, and ooh, they look sexy." She narrowed her eyes. "Is it a new style or something to wear your belt dangling down the back?"

"Got me."

"Doesn't matter. One for you, one for me. My choice."

The main entrance to *Gatos* swung wide before Gabriella could answer back. The two men, one tall and lean, one shorter and more compact, strode in without asking if they were open. As they approached the bar, Gabriella took in their musky scent, made stronger from walking in the heat of the day, and wanted to growl. *Madre de Dios*, but Lucia was right. She needed like fire to get laid. Either one of these two would work wonders for stress relief.

"Afternoon," she said, already reaching under the bar for two frosty cold *Cerveza Mocteczuma*. "We're not really open yet, but we won't kick you out."

"Good," the lighter of the two purred, resting his crossed forearms on the bar. "We've come a long way, and we'd love to taste what you've got on tap."

As he settled in, Gabriella saw his face clearly at last, and the sight drew a startled gasp from her lips. "*Madre de Dios*," she whispered, taking a quick step back.

A man's face, a man's body, but with high, pointed ears on the top of his head, their softly furred tips poking through windblown hair the color of ripe corn. A broad

nose and sharp canines. A long cat's tail trailed from underneath his dark blue shirt. A switching, twitching tail the same shade as his hair, topped with a tuft of fur that looked touchable as a pussy-willow bud. She'd never thought she'd see one of his kind in the flesh.

The Catkind man grinned at Gabriella. "I've heard a lot about *Gatos*, pretty lady, and I've heard even more about the gorgeous barmaids. Glad we made the walk." He gave her a once-over, not bothering to hide the way he undressed her with his eyes. "Can I have that beer you're holding?" He didn't wait for her to hand it to him, but snagged the sweating bottle in a hand that looked human except for the downy fur that covered his arms.

He elbowed his taller friend, who hadn't moved or said a word. The second of the Catkind was dark as the tawny one was light, his face long and sexy and sober, no more human than his friend. "I win," the tawny one informed his friend smugly. "You should know better than to bet against me."

The darker Catkind flipped him off. Gabriella giggled. She couldn't help but notice that their gestures were fluid and easy, feline grace shining through with every move, and their lazy smiles were as broad as a regular housecat's after tasting some high-quality cream.

Catkind didn't tangle with humanity, even after they'd been proved to be real. They kept to themselves and liked their privacy. Solitary hunters. Gabriella had no idea why they'd come to visit *Gatos*, but would she turn down a chance to satisfy her curiosity as well as turn away two men as hot as they were? Hell, no.

"Have a drink with us?" the tawny one invited, his grin wide enough to display his pointed incisors.

Lucia squeaked and fled. Gabriella resisted the urge to scold her. Instead summoned up her best smile, making no attempt to disguise her fascination with the Catkind men. "On the house," she crooned, trailing her finger down the neck of the bottle. "Let me know if you need anything else." She lowered her eyelids. "Anything at all."

No way she'd back down now, not with two guys as yummy as these.
So what if they weren't human? She'd have fun tonight.

Chapter Two

"What are they doing in here?" Lucia whispered urgently, seizing Gabriella by the elbow. Thrown off balance, she almost dropped a tray of whiskey shots, not that Lucia noticed. "They never hang around humans. Never. Not in any of the stories I've heard."

"They are tonight." Gabriella stole a sly glance at the Catkind at the bar, gesturing with their bottles as they talked with as much animation as any regular customer she'd ever seen.

Lucia dug her nails in Gabriella's upper arm. "I can't believe this. I'm changing the bet. They're all yours. I don't want one."

"What, you're prejudiced?" Gabriella shook off Lucia's grasping hand. "You should be ashamed."

Lucia had the grace to look embarrassed. "They're not human, Ella. God knows what they could do to a woman. And what's up with them waltzing into a *bar*, for Pete's sake? I didn't even know they drank."

Apparently they did, and from what Gabriella could tell they held their liquor pretty well. "If you don't want either of them, that means there'll be more for me," she informed Lucia. "Go get some more bottles of tequila. We're running low."

Lucia scrambled. Gabriella rolled her eyes and turned her attention back to the Catkind at her bar. She made sure her smile was generous and easy as she asked, "Can I get you gentlemen anything else?"

The curl of the tawny Catkind man's lips suggested she could. Before he could say anything, the mocha-colored male cut him off. In comparison to his friend, the darker Catkind man's voice was deeper, a thrumming bass, equally sexy. "We're fine. Thank you."

"Speak for yourself. I could use some company."

Muy caliente. Gabriella fixated on his lower lip as his tongue traced across the fullness, letting herself enjoy the wickedness of imagining that same tongue licking her pussy.

Ooh, naughty girl, she thought, impressed with her lust. *I wonder if it's true that their tongues are rough, like a regular cat's. Gonna do my best to find out.*

"Behave yourself." The mocha-colored male frowned at his friend. "No playing around."

"All work and no play." The tawny one tipped up his bottle and took a long, sensual sip. "I think we can stand to let our hair down some."

The mocha-colored male made a "harrumph" noise and scowled at his friend.

"Don't mind him. He gets cranky when it's this hot." The tawny one extended his hand to Gabriella. "I'm Derek. He's Benjamin."

Gabriella laughed. "Interesting names for men like you."

"You expected something showier?"

"I did, yes."

"You'd be right. It's just easier to say 'Derek' than it is to say 'Ixpapalotl'." He pursed his lips briefly around the neck of his bottle, the blatantly sensual move speeding up Gabriella's heartbeat. "A lot easier to scream 'Derek' when you're coming, too."

"Derek!" Benjamin growled.

Derek ignored him. "I can smell you," he purred. "You're like one of our women, all heat and juice. Aching to get fucked."

"Sure of yourself, aren't you?"

"When I see a sure thing."

"You think I'm a whore?" This, Gabriella didn't think was nearly as funny. She wasn't a prude by any means, no matter what Lucia said; it was more that she had some common sense when it came to men and picked her partners carefully.

Usually.

"Not a whore," Derek said, considering her. "You're a lady all the way. A ripe, lush woman who knows what she wants."

"She smells nervous to me," Benjamin said, sounding as if this was a warning. Hmm. So maybe they'd tried to pick up human women before, and maybe it hadn't worked out so well? Gabriella couldn't say she was surprised. Women would either be curious about the Catkind or terrified of them.

"Nervous doesn't mean I'm going anywhere." Gabriella thrust her breasts forward, glad she'd worn the lacy black strapless bra that night. Lifted and supported, her tits were fit to tempt the most discriminating man, or so she liked to tell herself. "If you need anything -- *anything* -- all you have to do is ask. I'll be here like that." She snapped her fingers and pouted her lips at Derek. He seemed like the most likely candidate.

Hell, she might have tried to take Mr. Sexy-Mouth Talker for a ride even if Lucia hadn't snarled her up in a bet.

"Trust me, I'll ask for something as soon as I can get Benjamin here to chill out." Derek raised his bottle to her. "Talk to you soon, cutie."

Gabriella took a moment to enjoy her swell of pride and the rising heat in her cunt, growing damp at the thought of rolling in a bed with Derek.

And hey, if Benjamin wanted to play, she'd be fine with that. She'd like to tease the soberness right out of him. With a sensual mouth like his, Benjamin would make one hell of a lover.

Gabriella winked at the two and walked away, swinging her hips.

* * *

Derek waited until the hot ticket he'd set his sights on walked out of earshot before turning back to Benjamin. He damn near wiggled on his barstool from glee. "She's the one, Benjie. I know it right here." He thumped his chest. "Didn't I tell you so? I felt it as soon as we walked in the bar. That sexy black Latina is our mate."

"Maybe so."

Benjamin fingered the bar, noticing, Derek knew, the care that their mate put into its upkeep. Derek stifled a groan, imagining the rough touch of Benjamin's claw put to better use, tormenting his balls. He loved the way the man could turn him on like a light switch.

"You still need to treat her like a lady."

"I am. I'm treating her like a lady I want to taste. Like a lady I want to make feel sexier than she ever has before."

"And you really think she's our..." Benjamin hesitated. "Our mate? Really? We've been looking for a long time, Derek."

"You're telling me you didn't feel it? Didn't smell her scent and the way it mixed just right with ours?"

Benjamin looked away. Derek huffed. His male mate could be one stubborn bastard, and he had ideas about acting like the Catkind Lord he'd once been.

Not any more. Derek relished the old memories of telling the Pride to piss off. Anything for his main man, eh? And that meant showing Benjamin how important it was to find their lady.

"All I'm saying is that you should show her some manners," Benjamin grumbled. "Don't treat her like the village lay."

"Cross my heart." Derek extended a claw and drew it in an X over his chest. "Have I ever led you wrong?"

Ah-ha, exactly as he'd hoped, the severe line of Benjamin's lips softened, begging for a kiss that Derek was happy to deliver. "Follow my lead," he murmured as he pulled reluctantly away from the malty taste of *Mocteczuma* on Benjamin's mouth. "And I swear I'll be good. But I will make love to her, tonight if I can, and so will you. Don't tell me you don't want to hit that." He waved after their mate and her heart-shaped ass displayed so sensually in her tight jeans. "*Perfecto.*"

"Okay, I'm in." Benjamin stole kiss from Derek in return. "But we all know who the real slut around here is."

Derek preened. He put the tomcat into “catting around” and never thought twice. Who wanted to waste time wringing their hands when they could enjoy a fast, hot screw?

Of course, the rest of the Catkind didn't think so. They didn't like the notion of two of their young soldiers mating with each other and they'd string both Derek and Benjamin up if they knew either had decided to tangle with a human.

So screw them. They had no right to say what he or Benjamin could or couldn't do, and as far as Derek was concerned, that meant they could enjoy each other and life and look outside the Catkind for their third if they wanted to.

Damn good thing, too. This Gabriella, she was the one they needed. Wanted. Derek had started dreaming about what she'd look like naked underneath him, those amazing breasts bared for him to suck while Benjamin ate her pussy.

If Benjamin could loosen up. He was tense as a gilded idol, his long black jaguar's tail wrapped three times around the leg of the barstool.

Derek sighed. “How did I end up with you?” he gibed, sneaking his hand under the bar to rest on his male mate's groin. Oh, hey, very nice. He loved the feel of a hot, hard cock under his palm, especially Benjamin's. He'd known from the first time they touched that the rules could go to hell. They were meant for something more.

Benjamin's expression didn't change where it could be seen, but under cover of the shadows, he raised his hips to hump Derek's hand. “Better deliver on what you're promising.”

“Until you can't take any more,” Derek vowed, letting his eyelids droop to half mast. “All. Night. Long.”

Benjamin's eyes flashed green, their ovoid pupil elongating. Derek wanted to have him right then and there. “With her,” Derek goaded. “You'll see, lover.”

* * *

Gabriella had no clue what the two were talking about, but she recognized the telltale signs of horny men. Looked like they weren't that different from humans, not where it mattered.

Suited her fine.

She caught a glimpse of Lucia peeking through the tiny hatch that led from the kitchen to the bar, mostly used for passing plates of nachos and cups of salsa verde to the barmaids, and smirked. Time to take the next step.

She slinked back over to Derek and Benjamin, the excitement and heat throbbing in her pussy and tingling in her nipples increasing at the sight of Derek's lazy, sexy smile and the warming approval in Benjamin's pretty green eyes. Ooh, his pupils had changed. They were oval like a cat's. Didn't throw her, though.

Picking up a glass to polish, she said, offhandedly, "So are you two passing through town?"

She knew Derek saw right through her blatant ploy. "We're staying the night, at least."

"Oh, really? Where?"

"A couple of towns over, in high-falutin' land."

"Shut up, Derek," Benjamin warned him. "We have a room at the *Madrid Villa*," Benjamin put in, naming the most expensive and luxurious hotel the nearby big, rich town, Santa Carla, had to offer. Gabriella's eyes widened. She'd heard the wild stories about all the wealth the Catkind had gathered over millennia. Were they true?

"Nice place. Big beds. There's plenty of room to share if anyone's interested."

Okay, blatant for blatant. Gabriella could work with what she'd been given. "Anyone in mind?"

"I think you know," Derek informed her. Ooh, *Dios*, she could feel his hot, downy hands on her breasts right now. Her damp pussy burned for the thrust of his finger and the rasp of his tongue. So maybe she was easy for him. Who could blame her?

"When do you get off?" Benjamin asked, surprising Gabriella a little. She still couldn't read him, but hey, if he showed an interest too, she'd enjoy the two for one bargain. The long, tall, strong Catkind promised hidden power in his coiled muscles and he had such a gentleman's way about him. "You could come visit with us."

This just got better and better. "Are you going to make it worth my while?"

"Damn right." Derek stood, kicking the barstool back. He took Gabriella's chin between his fingers and lifted her lips for a kiss. She moaned at the touch of his tongue, as rough and as nimble as she could possibly have hoped for. She sensed the warm, light pressure of a long-fingered hand on her forearm and knew that, in his way, Benjamin was getting in on the act.

When Derek let her go, Gabriella was breathing quickly. She licked her lips, slightly swollen from the force of Derek's kiss.

Before she could say anything, Derek produced one of the *Madrid's* key cards from the front pocket of his jeans. Oh, my. Gabriella liked what she saw pressing against his zipper, the outline of a long, stunning cock she ached to trace and lick.

Derek probably knew it, too. He blew her a kiss as he handed the thin rectangle of plastic over. "So, are you in? Not gonna be a fraidy-cat, are you?" His smirk told Gabriella he'd chosen the phrase on purpose.

She loved this Catkind man's brash nerve. Gabriella took the key card and tucked it in her cleavage. "I don't get off until 4 a.m., but I guess I could delegate clean-up and till counting to my brother Tony. That'd get me there a little earlier."

"We don't mind staying up late." Benjamin lifted her fingers to his lips and kissed them. "We'll wait up for you, beautiful. Agreed?"

"Trust me," Gabriella murmured, thrilling to the dreams filling her thoughts, "there's no way I'd miss this."

Chapter Three

"Until later, Angel," Derek called back, savoring one last look at the dark-eyed, dark-skinned beauty he planned to claim in every possible way. Her lips, red with no help from any paint, curved in a wide smile over her white teeth. He blew her a kiss.

God love her, she turned to "catch" the kiss on the smooth curve of her cheek.

Nothing got Derek hotter than a deep-hued lady. He burned hot and fast at the sight of her mocha skin contrasted to his own paleness when their arms and legs tangled together, straining for more depth to his kiss, a deeper thrust of his ready cock in her pussy, and his finger circling the rosy bud hidden between the cheeks of her ass. There wasn't a single part of a woman he didn't go nuts for and he did his best to let them know exactly how much they did for him. His cock and his tongue were theirs while they let him lavish them with all he had to give.

The same applied to Benjamin. To look at the long, tall drink of water, Derek knew men and women alike, Catkind or not, would seriously doubt Benjamin could ever bend far enough to kiss a lady's hand, much less approach her with sex on his mind.

Those fools hadn't seen Benjamin when he let his hair down, his long legs drawn up to his chest, ass held open in his urgent hands; they hadn't heard the way he roared, deep and throaty as a lion, when Derek tongued his hole or fucked him with his fingers.

And the sounds Benjamin made when Derek plunged into his tight ass... God, yes. Derek kissed his fingertips and flaunted them at Benjamin, who'd been quiet since well before they'd left *Gatos*. Too quiet to Derek, who knew the signs.

He swung around to walk backwards, hands stuffed in his pockets, gibing at his serious lover with the mockery in his grin. "Don't tell me you're jealous."

"Why go for subtlety when you can use the A-bomb approach?" Benjamin commented, dry as dust.

"Fuck subtlety." Derek considered for a moment. "Nah. I'd rather fuck you."

"Charming as ever."

"Since when does *charming* have a single damn thing to do with sex?" Derek demanded. "Are you huffing estrogen again?"

Benjamin dealt Derek a severe frown. "Do you want me to whip out my dick so you can bite me?"

"Ooh, nasty. Do it."

Benjamin groped his cock and waggled his tongue. "Like this?"

"Nice," Derek approved with a leer. He loved to egg Benjamin on when his male mate was in this mood, begging to be aroused out of a snit. He rolled his pelvis and not so incidentally displaying the erection he'd sprouted the instant he'd first inhaled the rich, ripe womanly scent of the female mate they were destined to share. Their third. She'd affected Benjamin as much as she had Derek, for damn sure. Benjamin's hard-on kind of gave him away.

On the other hand, if the boner he sported was all for Derek, Derek wouldn't complain until after he'd fucked his male mate into jelly -- or gotten fucked. Either choice sounded good.

Benjamin toyed with the tab on his zipper. "You're serious? You'd go right here, right now?"

"Damn right I would." Derek licked his lips, already able to taste the salt and musk of Benjamin's hardened dick. He palmed his own cock and squeezed, stifling a curse at how good the harsh grip felt. "Say the word, Benjie. I'm all yours."

"All yours." Benjamin's passion darkened. "So what happens when she joins us? You're all hers? Do we trade her back and forth?"

"No! Do you really think I'd do that to you, or to her? Please," Derek scoffed.

"Fine." Benjamin stopped in his tracks, glaring away from Derek. "You're the boss."

He meant the Alpha male of their strange little pack of two, and Derek wasn't going to correct him there. He would, however, pistol-whip the pissiness out of his male mate if he had to. As soon as he figured out what was going on. It wasn't like Benjamin had been opposed to finding a female third. He'd cheered Derek on all the way, until tonight.

So what was it about the delectable Gabriella that blackened his mood?

Derek sighed. He sucked at heart-to-hearts, but for Benjamin, he could try. "All right. I give. Honest question for your honest answer. What's wrong?"

Benjamin ran his hand through his hair and tugged at the tufted tip of his pointed ear. He huffed out a long, cranky breath. "I don't know," he said at last. "Gabriella. She doesn't feel *wrong*, but when I'm near her, I... hell, I don't know."

"I think that's called sexual magnetism."

"Screw you."

"Don't tell me you don't want to screw her."

Benjamin snorted. "As if I'm that much of a fool. Sitting there in that smoky little bar, I couldn't think of anything else except hauling her over to straddle my cock so I could take her pussy, no waiting."

"Damn," Derek remarked, impressed. Even he'd had to work like a man possessed to coax Benjamin into his bed the first time. Was it Gabriella's gender or just something about the black Latina beauty that tripped his male mate's trigger? "Good thing I don't get threatened easily. So we're both hot for her, she's hot for both of us. I'm not seeing any drawbacks here."

"Even the fact that she's human?"

Derek rolled his eyes. "We've been through this. The Catkind are dying out, Benjie. There aren't enough women left for the 'straight and narrow' guys," he said, making sarcastic quote marks with his fingers. "Much less the freaks like us who've mixed with them for years and oh, the horror, enjoy sex with our own gender. Do you honestly think one of the prized Catkind ladies would come near us? And if she did, do you think her pride father wouldn't try to slash us to ribbons?" He reached to cup

Benjamin's hard jaw in his the palm of his hand. "If it was just me, I wouldn't care. I'm not taking a chance on losing you."

Benjamin's grumpiness eased a tad. "I can watch out for myself," he protested, although Derek could tell he'd hit home with that one. Benjamin just needed to be needed. To be loved and wanted. That was what had drawn him to the big, dark guy in the first place.

Well, that and the need to fuck him into the middle of next week. Seriously, the Catkind prince had an ass like a dream, a mouth like a hundred-dollar-hooker, and his cock? Good God.

"Yeah, yeah, I know, you're a big, tough man." Derek batted his eyelashes at Benjamin. "It's stripping away my masculinity to say this, but let me assure you that even though we both need a female to complete us, and we're both going to love, lust over, and cherish her -- don't ask me how I know, I just do -- we won't let that drive a wedge between us." He made a clumsy attempt at shaping the statement with his hands, drawing them apart and bringing them back together. "We don't split into three different parts, jackass. We expand."

Benjamin sucked his soft, plump lower lip between his teeth. Derek's cock throbbed, imagining his male mate's hot mouth on his shaft. After a long moment in which Derek started to think he'd have to pull out another can of whoop-ass, Benjamin grinned. "You're such a girl."

The tension broke. Derek whooped and pounced Benjamin, knocking him to the hard-packed earth of the *Gatos* parking lot. With his male mate pinned beneath, Benjamin's unflagging erection grinding against Derek's own, he looked better than good enough to eat from the dick up.

"Love you," he said, surprising himself. They didn't say it all that often.

"Yeah. You too." Benjamin's smile lit up. "Want to run?"

Derek wriggled atop Benjamin, teasing him. "Maybe. Do I get to fuck you when I catch you?"

"Either that, or I fuck you when I catch you, instead."

"You're *so* on." Derek rolled off his mate and sprang to his feet, running in human shape with Benjamin quick off the mark and on his heels until they reached the dark shadows beyond the *Gatos* lights.

As soon as the heavy, sultry night concealed him, Derek shook off his half-humanity and slipped into the more natural form of a mountain lion. He still looked slightly human, enough to freak the heck out of anyone who saw a Catkind in the wild, and he knew he made one hell of a sexy beast. He tilted back his head and roared for the fun of it.

Benjamin, already in his own panther shape, dark pelt splashed with black rosettes, loped to Derek with a look of nearly human annoyance. He butted Derek's flank with his hard head and growled.

Not in front of the humans, I know, I know. Derek twisted about to nip Benjamin's hide and took off running before his mate could catch up. He led Benjamin on a hell of a merry chase, weaving through the nearly-barren stretches away from the road, running until Benjamin's sides heaved, covered with foam.

Derek's lover lowered his weary panther limbs to the ground and rolled over, exposing his belly. *You are so easy, my love,* Derek thought smugly. He butted his forehead to Benjamin's stomach to show his approval, then nudged him hard.

Benjamin, bless him, knew what to do. Scrambling back to his paws, he turned to face away from Derek and lifted his ass, tail held up straight and tall. He purred, the raspy sing-song like a siren's call.

Derek wasted no time. He was too horny to hold out even if he'd felt like some more playing around. He mounted up, and fastened his teeth in the thick flap of fur on the back of Benjamin's neck. Growling out his dominance, Derek thrust his rigid, barbed cock deep in his lover's eager ass.

Benjamin threw his head back and roared to the skies as Derek penetrated him, his cry mixed from equal parts of pain, pain Derek knew he loved, and triumph.

The panther shifted before the echoes of his roar had faded away, the noise transforming to a human yell from human lips. He struggled to his hands and knees and wrapped his tail tight around Derek's still-feline midsection to pull him deeper in.

Derek had, luckily for Benjamin, been quick enough to hastily withdraw the barbs on his penis. They added a great kick to lovemaking, but God almighty, they weren't for the soft tissues belonging to human forms. He kneaded his massive paws carefully on Benjamin's back before planting them foursquare on the earth to box his lover in. He loved this almost best of all, the mightiness of his cat shape fucking Benjamin in human form. Dirty and twisted and so damn good.

Benjamin writhed beneath Derek, pushing his ass back for all Derek could give. "Is that all?" he taunted, thrashing his head to try and escape the heavy clamp of Derek's lion jaws. "Screw me like you mean it."

Derek clamped his teeth as tightly as he dared around Benjamin's throat to hold him still. Worked on his front half; didn't work on his rear half. Benjamin braced his knees as far apart as they'd go and bucked on Derek's cock. *Slut*, Derek thought, tickled. Benjamin might claim he wasn't getting what he needed, but Derek knew those stifled curses and the taste of his mate's sweat and understood what they meant. He was close, so very close.

Time to push him over the edge. No way he could manage a reach-around like this, more was the pity, so Derek picked the next best option and reared back only to fall forward, thrusting his cock all the way in Benjamin's ass and dragging the roughness of his tongue up Benjamin's spine.

God, Benjie sounded good when he screamed. Derek's mate convulsed, shuddering, split open with lion cock. Derek breathed in deeply, greedy for the sharp, tangy smell of the spunk jetting from Benjamin's cock to splatter beneath them. No way he'd get left behind. Still buried as deep as he could get, Derek bucked Benjamin's ass with three short, brutally hard jerks. He came on the last thrust, roaring his completion.

As he collapsed on top of Benjamin, as fucked-out as he could get, Derek melted from animal shape to human, all the better to hold Benjamin tight without damaging

his lover. His cock slipped from Benjamin's stretched asshole, drawing a low whine of protest from the man.

Derek kissed the side of Benjamin's throat. "And if it's this good now," he purred, "you wait. The three of us aren't just going to make history. We're going to create a whole new world, and we'll rule as kings and queen. You, me, and our angel."

Benjamin made a happy noise and bared his throat for Derek to lick and nip. He rolled over sweet as you please and wound his arms around Derek's neck, his tail around Derek's leg, and raised his mouth for Derek to command. Their kiss was hot, tempting Derek to go again.

"Save it for our female," he decided, though it about killed him to pull away from Benjamin's sinfully talented lips. "But you can lick me clean."

"I'll save it if you lick me first." Benjamin's sleepy tones belied the teasing heat shimmering in his gaze. "Please."

Derek shivered. "You know I can't say no to that." He started to wriggle down to get a good shot at the sticky semen on Benjamin's legs, salivating at the thought of tasting the mixed essences of man and beast.

He'd almost reached ground zero and was reconsidering his earlier decision at least as far as allowing a blowjob when the sound of a gunshot exploded in his sensitive ears.

Benjamin acted fast, quicker by far than Derek could have. He twisted, grasping Derek between his strong legs and flung the weight of his body over Derek as a human shield.

Another shot blasted the air. Benjamin kept Derek flat through sheer body weight when Derek would have tried to struggle up and charge after whatever damn fool thought they could try their luck with one of the Catkind.

"Don't," Benjamin warned. He raised his nose, shifting partially and effortlessly into a face with a muzzle and scented the air. "Human," he said, the word barely understandable emerging through lips and teeth never meant for speech. "They're going now."

He shifted back to human shape, or as human as they got, and dealt Derek a strict glare of warning. "You're not chasing after whoever that was. Do you hear me?"

"The hell you say." Derek tried to throw Benjamin off. "You think letting someone hunt us is something they can get away with? Not in my lifetime."

"I'm not saying we let them get away for good. Just for now." Benjamin pinned Derek's shoulders. Blood trickled down his cheek, shocking Derek.

"You're hurt," he said, dazed, reaching up to touch.

"It's nothing. The bullet must have hit some gravel nearby. A chip flew up and grazed me." Benjamin shrugged off his injury. "I told you this would happen, and now you see I was right. You told me we'd find a human female for our mate, and you were right. So what we have to do now -- and don't you dare argue with me -- is get Gabriella and bind her to us. Once she's ours and we're complete, we stake our claim on these lands and then we tear a few chunks out of the asshole who dared shoot at the Catkind. Agreed?"

Derek breathed in deep and counted to ten. The insult stung his pride, and he'd rip apart anyone who dared hurt either of his mates. But damn it all, Benjamin was right. There'd be time for revenge later.

"You win," he grumbled. "Now turn over. I still owe you a tongue bath, and then we're outta here. We've got work to do."

Chapter Four

"This way, miss."

Gabriella eyed the bellhop -- did they call them bellhops anymore? She didn't have too much experience with high-class hotels. As soon as she'd hesitantly walked up to the guest services counter -- no way they'd call it a "check-in desk" -- a sleekly professional woman with a smile like a toothpaste commercial beamed at her as if Gabriella was her new best friend and, with the single beckon of a finger, brought a lackey running.

Cute little son-of-a-son, too, all glossy dark curls and big blue eyes, startling against his caramel skin. God, she'd have killed for peepers like his. He looked so winsome and delicate that there had been an awkward moment where she wasn't sure he was a he. The nametag reading *Tracey* hadn't been much help.

Then he'd spoken, and Gabriella's knees went weak. Small Tracey might be, but he'd proved to have a deep, growly baritone that would put Barry White to shame. A voice made for music to make love by.

Gabriella fanned herself surreptitiously. Wow. If she wasn't already on her way to a stranger's hotel room -- okay, make that two strangers' room -- she'd have drawn out the trip from guest services to stone-framed elevator to the dimly lit corridor, lush with textured cream walls and ankle-deep sepia-toned carpeting that hushed every footfall to a whisper. Anything to spend a little more time with Tracey and enjoy the liquid sex of his voice...

Idly, she wondered if he'd be interested in Lucia, or maybe Marnie. *Ay*, Marnie needed a good man, no two ways about that. She'd bet Tracey would be the perfect Prince Charming to sweep Marnie off her tired feet. Marnie needed someone better than

the good-for-nothing who hadn't even driven over to pick her up when Gabriella had ordered her to go home early.

Wonder if I can hook them up?

Okay, so he was a bellhop. Who said bellhops couldn't be princes in disguise? It worked for Gabriella.

Looked like Tracey didn't need to check the delicate gilded key card he'd taken from the glittery-smile guest services operator. Some prize customer service quality led him straight to a door as discreet as all the others they'd passed, recessed slightly and elegantly carved of deep black wood, decorated with rococo iron. "Right here, miss," he said, easing gracefully as -- okay, gracefully as a cat -- and fluidly inserting the key card in the slot.

"Thank you." Gabriella realized, too late, that she'd need to offer him a tip. She hadn't exactly come prepared, thinking that rich was rich, sure, but liveried staff escorts? Come *on*.

Should have known better, eh?

Well, she had enough cash in the casual leather pocketbook she'd carried for a taxi home. She fingered the bills, counting by feel, second nature after years of tips of her own. How much? Ten, fifteen, twenty? "Thank you," she said, finally deciding on a twenty.

He shook his head. "Taken care of, miss."

Gabriella blushed and tried to act, at least, like she knew what she was doing. She stepped past Tracey and got her first look at the room where she'd agreed to meet two of the freakin' Catkind for nothing more or less than wild, uninhibited sex.

Yeah, her *abuela* was spinning in her grave right now.

Her *abuela*, God rest her soul, could look the other way for a night. Gabriella hastily crossed herself at the thought and walked further inside. Her lips parted in surprise. They were serious when they advertised this rich-tourist-area hotel as the peak of luxury, were they?

Honey-toned light spilled over the fine fabrics, dark Spanish reds and golds and blacks. Gabriella caught the full force of a fragrant wave of cool air, heavy with the scent of fine beeswax candles and something she couldn't identify right away. Something spicy, almost a mint aroma. Everything looked handmade, from the decadent silkiness of the turned-down bed with its huge fluffy pillows in their silk cases and the finely-decorated full-length mirror.

"You've got to be kidding me," she breathed, turning around in a circle. "What the hell were they thinking?"

"I'm sure I couldn't say, miss," Tracey put in with a discreet, apologetic clearing of his throat. "Will there be anything else?"

Gabriella was tempted to ask for a chocolate truffle just to see if he'd bring her one. *Nah*. "No, thank you. Wait, wait. Actually..." *Ay*, hell. "Do you know where my friends are? The, um, gentlemen who arranged for the room?" *Arranged* sounded a little classier, somehow.

Tracey didn't look phased in the slightest, as if this was something he saw all the time. "I'm afraid not, miss. If you do find yourself in need of assistance, the room phone --" he pointed to a discreet, gold-plated unit on a wrought-iron stand "-- connects directly with the concierge desk."

"Thank you." Gabriella had no idea what to say next.

Luckily, Tracey seemed to have it covered. He tipped the visor of his perfectly pristine uniform cap and smiled. *Ooh*. Gabriella would have bet money that wasn't a company-approved smile. More of a grin calculated to dampen a woman's pussy, promising he'd lick her clean afterwards. Sultry, seductive, self-assured... *I'll be damned*. "You're one of them, aren't you?" Gabriella blurted. "You're one of the Catkind."

Tracey didn't so much as blink. "Meow, miss. Enjoy your stay."

Gabriella sank into the deep, supple softness of the room's elegant leather armchair. "Wow," she breathed as she tugged at the collar of her light, long-sleeved pirate's blouse. Her favorite, the scarlet garment was all ruffles at the throat and wrist. *Madre de Dios*, but she was glad she'd detoured back to her tiny apartment to shower

and change. If she'd come in here wearing her second-skin bar top, stinking of spilled brew and cigarette smoke, she'd have died of embarrassment.

Catkind. Sweet mercy, were they everywhere? Why hadn't she known? There were enough people who didn't like their type that she'd have heard for sure from pissed-off *Gatos* customers snarling into their tequila.

She could worry about the cat people in general later, though, right? Right now, Gabriella figured she could focus on the two she'd more or less, emphasis on the "more," agreed to spend the night in that huge, decadent bed with, and not for tucking herself under the soft coverlet for sleeping.

Her mind flashed to Benjamin, tall and supple and lean, and to Derek, smaller and tougher and wiry. She caught her breath at the image of both Catkind men bare of any clothes, standing naked before her, all gleaming pale skin and defined muscles gleaming in the soft light.

Which one of them would reach for her first? Derek, she'd bet, not waiting or asking permission before he claimed her mouth and cupped her breast with his fur-soft hand. He'd tweak her nipple between his claws -- *ooh, claws* -- and rasp his rough tongue along hers. And Benjamin, *Ay*, she could see Benjamin so clearly, agilely going to his knees and coaxing her thighs apart. She could almost feel the tickle of his fingers and the moist heat of his breath on her pussy.

Gabriella shivered, arousal flooding her senses. She snapped out of her daydreaming to find her pulse elevated and her cunt damp, a pulse pounding deep inside.

Wherever they were, they'd better hurry, no?

Speaking of which... where had the two gone? Gabriella stood, frowning, and decided to search the room for hints or clues. She took a good, leisurely sweep around, unable to resist touching and smelling the soft leather, heavy velvet drapes, and the smooth sweeps of the fabric wallpaper.

On the tiny secretary's desk placed discreetly in one corner, she found a heavy sheet of vellum with a few lines written in what she'd have sworn was real fountain

pen ink. The pen lay beside the paper, both discreetly engraved with the hotel's monogram. Gabriella clicked her tongue over the excess, which was not to say she wasn't thrilled down to her toes, and picked up the note.

We knew you'd come, angel, and we're glad you did. We'll show you a night like never before, a night that'll last you for years' worth of dreams. Angel Gabriella, if you'll do us the favor of looking under the pillows, I think you'll like what you see there. Go on. See what there is to see before you read any more.

Gabriella laughed softly. "Cocky, aren't you? What is this, a scavenger hunt?" Maybe, but it was so perfectly Derek and Benjamin as she knew them that their antics only amused her.

Gabriella laid the note down carefully and turned to the bed. She stacked each pillow -- and there were a ridiculous number of them, each heavy with brocade and tassels -- on the mattress rather than tossing the works of bedding art on the floor like she wanted to, so impatient was she to get to the good stuff.

When the last two pillows came away, Gabriella stepped back, fingers flying to her parted lips. "Oh, my God. I'm either going to kiss them or kill them."

They'd left her... a present. Several of them. A black silk widow-maker, the sort of lingerie that knocked simple teddies right out of the park. Real silk, almost as soft as the Catkind men's downy fur, whispering when she reverently touched the material. Besides the widow-maker, they'd offered thigh-high stockings topped with black lace, garters, a pair of stiletto heels and a delicate golden choker studded with jet beads. The choker looked a little too much like a collar for her tastes, but damned if she didn't grow warm and wet at the thought of the jewelry decorating her throat.

What else? No toys, no whips or chains or dildos, which oddly disappointed her. Gabriella caressed the silky widow-maker, and returned to the note she felt sure Benjamin had written. Gabriella could tell that the Catkind man had a deep sense of poetry inside him.

We knew you'd like these. A woman like you deserves to be decorated in the best. When I think of you in burnished gold and finest silk, you take my breath away. We will worship you even more when you wear the gifts we're offering.

Below that, in different handwriting:

Don't get proud, Ella. Mind if I call you Ella? We're not sugar daddies but we are damned perverted, no shame. Dress up for us.

Ignore him, please. If you're willing, please dress in the garments we've left for you.

We'll meet you as soon as you're ready for us.

In anticipation of tasting your sweet, creamy pussy,

Benjamin & Derek

"Sweet Saint Francis." Gabriella's pulse fluttered in her throat. While she'd read the note, a sharp, needy ache had started to burn between her legs. All she could think of, now, was dressing up in all this finery so she could see lust clouding their feline eyes before they stripped her nude again, both sets of strong male hands unwrapping the silk to worship every inch of dark skin beneath.

Yeah, she probably should have been offended. She might have gotten irritated if it hadn't all been part of living the fantasy. Two Catkind men. One luxurious hotel. Lingerie fit for the finest sex queen.

She'd remember this in her dreams for years, they'd said? Try a lifetime.

The only part of that sure and certain knowledge that bothered Gabriella was wondering how on earth she'd go back to regular Joes and sleeping alone at home night after night. If Derek and Benjamin were everything they promised, no other man would ever be able to compare.

Might be a good thing, or it might be a very bad thing. Either way, no going back now, even if she'd wanted to, and she didn't. It had started as a dare, and now it looked like it'd be the time of her life. Wild sex, hot men, luxury fit for a queen.

Magnifico!

She carefully bundled the tiny bits of lingerie in her arms and headed for the en-suite bathroom to dress. She felt oddly shy about skinning down in the main room when they could walk in at any time; it wouldn't be the greatest start to the night if they walked in on her hopping around trying to peel off her jeans. Besides, she was dying to see what kind of luxury the en-suite would afford.

The discreet wooden door had been left ajar, exposing utter darkness within. Gabriella juggled her armful of decadence and felt for a light switch. Her fingers brushed over a touch panel and clicked.

"Ohh..." she breathed. "*Es perfecto.*"

The lighting in the room was rosy, soft and gentle, issuing from a shaded lamp mounted over the sink, a beaten-silver bowl mounted on an iron stand. A crystal bowl of potpourri made the room smell of cinnamon and cloves. Gabriella gaped at the over-the-top richness, going from the sink to the amazingly soft-looking towels to the ranks of expensive-looking lotions and creams, to the wide, deep clawfoot bathtub -- a clawfoot bathtub with a tawny Catkind man perched on the broad lip, smirking at her.

"What can I say?" Derek asked, eating her up with his eyes. "I couldn't wait."

Chapter Five

“Ay!” Gabriella dropped her sinfully gorgeous presents as she pressed her hand to her pounding heart. “*Bastardo! Me asustó. Qué hace?*”

Derek crossed his arms. His smirk broadened, lazy and sensual. “I don’t speak Spanish, but I think I get your drift. You’re telling me how hot you are right now, aren’t you?” He gazed at her breasts, rising and falling with the speed of her breath. “Look at you,” he murmured with reverence. “One hundred percent gorgeous.”

Oh, *yes*. Si. Gabriella’s labia hummed in time with the resonance of Derek’s purring tones, swelling with need for the touch of his fingers, his tongue, anything he felt like using as long as he used them *soon*.

“I can smell you, you know,” Derek informed her as he stood, nimble as a dancer. His long, golden tail swayed behind him, the tip quirked in a question mark. “You’re not really surprised, are you? I know you’re not angry.” He drew close enough for Gabriella to feel the breath he used to speak tickle her cheeks, although he didn’t touch her, the bastard.

Gabriella sorted through the hooks she could pick up on and chose the least insightful remark he’d made. “Smell me?” She resisted the urge to sniff and see if she’d rid herself of the bar aromas.

Derek nodded smugly. “Yes, and you’re delicious.” His stare dropped down Gabriella’s body, zeroing in on the juncture of her legs. “You smell like a rich, ripe woman, begging for some attention.”

No point in trying to act demure. Gabriella shook her ponytail back and squared her shoulders. She hadn’t thought about feline senses of smell, but it made sense. “So what are you going to do about it?”

Derek's long, supple cat's tail snaked forth to twine around Gabriella's waist. He moved the furry appendage as naturally as his arm or his leg. The proof of his otherness might have startled Gabriella once, but not now. Now, all she could think about was what it might feel like if he spread her legs and fucked her wet pussy with the long, velvety length. She bit her lip to restrain a gasp.

From the look on Derek's face, she knew he'd caught every last nuance of her little fantasy. "Later, angel." He pressed a finger to her lips.

Impishly impulsive, Gabriella nipped at the pad of his finger, catching it briefly between her teeth.

Derek's smirk broadened to a full grin, both delighted and aroused. "So you like it rough, huh?" He tugged her closer, still using nothing more than his cat's tail. "Benjamin thinks every woman ought to be treated like she's made of clouds and cherub feathers."

"I like that, too," Gabriella objected.

"But not all the time," Derek countered, utterly full of himself and so gorgeous he drew fresh moisture to Gabriella's cunt. He inhaled deeply. "Your scent is amazing, beautiful." He shuddered. "You want me to touch you, don't you?"

"Yes, I do." Gabriella seized the initiative and darted between their groins to lay her palm over the clear outline of Derek's cock in his jeans. From his sharp inhalation to the brief widening of his cat's eyes, Gabriella knew she'd scored big time.

Ay. Big time, absolutely. Gabriella found it hard work not to look down and gawk at the Catkind man's astonishingly huge erection. Good God, would he even fit?

Two men. Jesus, mercy, what if they wanted to go at the same time? Rather than alarming her, though, the flash of imagery through her mind's eye drew a moan from Gabriella. Her pussy clenched, as did the other entrance through which no man had ever traveled.

She saw, so easily, herself sandwiched between Derek and Benjamin. Derek, his mouth claiming hers in a brutal, punishing kiss while he thrust deep in her pussy;

Benjamin, twining himself around her, nuzzling the nape of her throat, his cock buried in her ass.

The power of the dream was mighty enough to topple Gabriella. She closed her eyes briefly and thanked every lucky star she had in the sky.

When she opened her eyes, dazed, Derek stared into them from such a short distance that his lashes brushed her cheeks. The heat and desire she saw there startled her heart into skipping a beat.

"I don't want to wait," Gabriella informed Derek, throwing her arms around his neck and jerking him hard against her chest. She raised up on tiptoe and pressed her tongue between his lips.

Derek growled and immediately wrested back control. He bent Gabriella backwards until she hung in his arms, holding her lightly as a floating feather. She knew he wouldn't drop her, no matter how hungrily he devoured her lips with his hot, raspy kisses. Just as she took the leap of faith and kicked off from her barely-standing position to wrap her legs around his middle, he whipped his tail free and sent it snaking up the curve of her spine, under her poet's blouse.

Gabriella moaned in Derek's mouth. The sound of her need seemed to urge him on. One hand and the strength of his cat's tail held her firmly in place as he dexterously manipulated the buttons of her blouse and the fastening of the skin-tight jeans she'd chosen to wear. She kicked off her low-heeled black shoes and laughed to hear them clatter away.

"God, you're a hot ticket, aren't you?" Derek tore free of the kiss, giving Gabriella a brief moment to sear her vision with the fire of his lust. "Better than I'd dreamed of, and that's saying a hell of a lot." He bit her earlobe, tugging the small silver hoop and its adjoining silver stud. "What's this?"

Gabriella didn't understand. "Earrings," she said impatiently, wriggling against him. A little push up and the iron length of his cock, still trapped in the denim, fit right between her legs where she wanted him most. She rolled her hips, grinding her pussy to his erection, the friction nearly enough to make her come.

Derek groaned deep in his chest before grabbing Gabriella hard enough to still her writhing. "Silver," he said in deep disdain. "Is this a trick?"

"What?" Gabriella tried to understand, not at all an easy task when her body was on fire for more of the cat man's touch. "What's wrong with -- *oh, mierde!* I thought silver only poisoned werewolves."

"You thought wrong." Derek grimaced. "Silver bothers us big time. No way I'm letting you out of my arms, but would you mind taking those out?"

Blushing deeply, Gabriella raised shaking fingers to both her ears and stripped out her silver jewelry. She'd only ever heard about silver allergies in old shapeshifter stories, but it made sense, didn't it? After all, the Catkind were sort of like a step between men and were-creatures. "I am sorry," she pleaded, raising her lips to kiss Derek in apology. "I won't do that again."

Un momento, cabron. You sound like you're assuming there'll be other chances. Don't be a moron. Derek either didn't pick up on the implication or didn't care. Either response or lack of same suited Gabriella fine.

"Make sure you don't," he said arrogantly, readjusting his free hand to squeeze her ass. The length of his tail supported her weight all on its own, amazing Gabriella.

She wanted more than ever to have Derek penetrate her pussy with his tail. The kinkiness of the desire shocked her, yet drew a lusty shudder from the core of her being.

"Bet I know what you're thinking," Derek whispered throatily. His heated lips found her throat and fastened on, sucking hard. The pressure and the small sting of pain told Gabriella he'd marked her but good. She shivered with delight. "Not until Benjamin gets here."

"He has more patience than you."

"Rocks have less patience than Benjamin," Derek informed her. "Not so much with me." He raked a hot, hungry look over Gabriella, parting her blouse so that it hung away from her full breasts in the black demi-cup bra she'd chosen. "Would you look at these?" He trailed searing open-mouthed kisses down to the swell of one breast, leaving

rising red marks in his wake. Each one sent a zing of pleasure to Gabriella's pussy, wet and puffy from the force of her lust. "Best tits I've ever seen."

Gabriella pouted at her pretty presents lying abandoned on the en-suite floor. "You don't want me to get all dressed up so you can admire them in the widow-maker?"

"Maybe later. Right now, I can't wait."

"Would Benjamin have the strength to wait?" she teased.

"Probably, but he's not here to make me slow down, is he?" Derek unhooked the front fastening of her bra and pushed it impatiently aside, freeing her breasts. Almost before they'd spilled out of their confinement, Derek's lips had fastened around one hardened nipple and begun to suck. His rough tongue rasped the nub at the same time as he reached between them and molded his silky fingers to her pussy. Gabriella loosed a short, breathless cry, arched against Derek and came.

She stared at the Catkind man through a sexual daze. "How did you do that?" she whispered. "Only a touch. One small touch."

"I'm that good," he grinned. "If you liked that, I bet you'll love this."

Gabriella jumped at the sensation of Derek's fingers, wet with the release that had seeped through her jeans, slid nimbly into her pussy. He stroked her from the inside, teasing and inflaming until she moaned and attempted, weakly, to pull him closer still. She mewled and raised her hips, needing more.

"You can't wait either, can you, angel?" Derek's feline tail kneaded her back between the shoulder blades. "God, I wish I could make love to you right now, no waiting."

Waiting? What? Hadn't he said... When on earth had *waiting* become a part of this? Gabriella snarled and thumped Derek, not as hard as she could have, but certainly hard enough to make her point. "Don't play games with me, pussy-tease."

Derek's chest shook with laughter, probably at her expense, congratulating himself on his studly abilities. "Benjamin's off doing a sweep of the perimeter, and there won't be any full-on sex until he gets here. I won't cut him out," he explained, silky

fingers skating over Gabriella's bared belly and breasts until she groaned and let her head hang back. "That's important, angel. He has to be a part of this."

Gabriella whined, an animal noise that was the best she could voice.

"He won't be long," Derek promised, the vow rough around the edges. Good. If she was fast approaching desperate, it satisfied Gabriella to know Derek had raced past her into frantic. "Until he shows up, we can do this."

Derek righted her, balancing Gabriella carefully on her feet. The floor felt warm through the fine stockings she'd chosen to wear. "Watch this." Derek leered at Gabriella and then went to work.

He drew down her dampened jeans, first, tapping her ankles in turn to help her step out of them, and tossed the garment over his shoulder. The scent of her own arousal dizzied Gabriella. She rolled her arms, shrugging off her loosened blouse and her demi-cups.

Derek lost track briefly to devour her naked breasts with his eyes. His irises flared with a sudden burst of yellow flashes, his elongated pupils going wide. "You," he said, admiring. "I knew you were the one."

Without explaining his puzzling statement -- not that Gabriella really cared at the moment -- Derek returned his full attention to the job of getting her completely nude. He worked the sodden scrap of lace and silk French-cut panties off her legs. Once they were free, he didn't toss them aside, but lifted them to his nose and breathed deeply. Gabriella saw him lick the wetness she'd left behind, his tongue rasping audibly across the fabric.

She steadied her balance and planted her feet wide apart, exposing her pussy so brazenly it should have shocked her but only filled her with illicit thrills instead. "If you like that, then try this," she invited, sounding throaty to her own ears. Was that *her* voice?

Damn, she would have tried this wild woman act years ago if she'd known it would be this good. Or maybe not, since then being with Derek couldn't have been half

as thrilling or filled with discovery. He made her feel like more than a barmaid; he made her realize she was every inch a woman and a queen of her body.

"What do you want me to do?" Derek teased, still flicking his tongue over her panties. "I want to hear you say the words."

Gabriella held her chin high, exulting as she spoke without a tremble. "Lick my cunt." She spread her pussy lips open with her fore and index finger, displaying her swollen clit. "Make me come."

Oh, oh, looked like that had been the right approach to take with Derek here. His nostrils flared and his coloring deepened. He hadn't shed his jeans yet, but Gabriella could clearly see the hardness of his pressing erection spasm, urging him to bury his cock in her.

Now, it was her turn to take what she wanted before allowing him his desires. "Soon." She grasped Derek by the hair, surprisingly rough as if it was a real lion's mane, and pushed him to her. He caught her calf automatically as she swung it over his shoulder to further open herself and give him better access. "Lick me, and if you do it right, then maybe I'll suck you off later."

Derek stiffened. Inspired, following her suspicion, Gabriella went on. "Does that make you horny, Catkind? Mmm, I can taste you now, so salty and so sweet. I'll make it good for you; I'll lick you up and down, suck your fat cockhead between my lips, suck on your balls... *Ay*, there's a hundred things or more I can do to you that'll drive you out of your mind."

Derek chuffed, his breath tingling on the exposed inner flesh of her pussy and making her hiss. "You're too innocent to know much." He drew his tongue delicately up from vagina to clit and laughed when Gabriella's knees buckled at the rough flare of pure pleasure. "You're scented with purity, even if you do know how to dirty-talk like a Shanghai sailor."

Gabriella wanted to argue back about innocence not necessarily equaling naiveté, but damned if she could get her mouth to work well enough for speech. She chose to

shut him up another way by forcing his lips to her pussy and pushing her clit to his mouth.

He got the message. Hard feline hands? -- paws? -- hands -- closed hard on Gabriella's hips and held her steady while he put his tongue to good use. His barbed muscle, prickly enough to stimulate but not sharp enough to hurt, lashed her clit into a fiery bundle of nerves. Gabriella hung on to Derek by his head, digging her nails into his scalp. He grunted as she tugged his hair, but didn't stop, not once, until he'd driven her wild and brought her off by thrusting his tongue deep up her channel.

Gasping, Gabriella fought to remain on her feet. "That was..." she gasped, struggling for breath and speech. "*Madre de Dios*, Derek that was..." There weren't any words she considered good enough. "You were..."

"You were absolutely gorgeous, both of you," she heard Benjamin say, his voice, once heard, not easily forgotten.

Gabriella turned, lazy from fulfillment, to take in the mouthwatering sight of the second Catkind man. He'd shed a casual shirt and jeans in a crumpled pile behind him and stood with his dark-flushed, firmly erect cock in one hand. His reserve had vanished with his clothes, leaving him with no shame in stroking his erection slowly up and down. Clear fluid leaked from the lip. Gabriella desperately wanted to taste him.

Benjamin's breath jerked raggedly. His tail, sleek and black where Derek's was sinuous and golden, twined about his chest, the tip going up to tease his nipples. "So, can I play?"

"I thought you'd never get here." Derek extended his hand, tipped with pearly claws, and beckoned Benjamin to them. "And I thought you'd never ask. Our angel's a devil, Benjamin, and she's on fire. Let's have some fun."

Chapter Six

"So we've got this straight, right?" Gabriella plucked a discarded gold chain from the elegant porcelain washstand. Probably Derek's, from the bling of the thing -- he'd have the balls to wear such a necklace. She twirled it from the hip as she posed for the two Catkind men, one leg thrust forward and breasts presented for their admiration. *Madre de Dios*, but she felt like a woman. Luscious fruit ready for harvesting with a man's nimble fingers, full of sunshine-warm sweet juice to spill over his lips and tongue.

The thought sent a ripple of pleasure through her pussy, drawing moisture out to bead on her mons. She toyed with the soft surrounding curls and took a sly peek to see what Derek and Benjamin thought.

Ay! The pair of them looked equal parts stunned and horny, staring at her as if they'd never seen a woman like Gabriella before. As if she was a hero's treasure found at last after a long, long quest.

Perfecto. Gabriella thought she could get used to this.

Still swinging the chain from hip height, Gabriella walked past Benjamin and back to the main room of the luxurious suite. The extra sway to her rounded hips and erotic rise-and-fall of her breasts needed no special effort on her part. She thrilled from lips to toes with sensual sexuality.

They'd better keep up, *no*?

She turned to look over her shoulder at the two, who'd trailed out after her, both nude now and, sweet saints, so gorgeous she wondered if they were spirits walked out of a dream. A triple-X dream. Derek strode with confidence and Benjamin with wonder; both had their hands wrapped around their jutting erections, stroking slowly. The sight

of their magnificent cocks, so ready to fuck her... oh, now that went to a woman's head, didn't it?

Gabriella rolled her head, knowing how the move sent waves of black silk hair cascading over her bared shoulders and the dip and curve of her back. Benjamin looked thunderstruck; Derek looked predatory.

Still, fantastic sex in the offering or no, they needed to get a few things straight. No way she'd set herself up for a fall with two wild Catkind who'd get their heat over with and move on.

"You do understand me, *si*?" Gabriella cocked her hip, slowing the twirls of the gold chain to loose, lazy arcs that Benjamin followed as if mesmerized. She laughed at him, though not cruelly. It was hard to decide whether she wanted to cuddle Benjamin or fuck him, or both. *Both*, she decided. No such choice was available with Derek. The gleam in his hungry eyes let her know direct and clear that he was going to have her body.

Lucky for her, she wanted his, with his strongly muscled legs and his rippling abs, just as much.

The question took a few moments to catch up with Benjamin's thinking brain. "Understand what?" he asked absently, worshiping her with the appreciation in his stare.

Ah. "There are conditions." Gabriella sat on the edge of the sybaritic bed, thinking better right away of sitting like a demure little girl and parting her thighs, exposing her dampened pussy. The heady scent of her own arousal flooded her senses.

What must it be like for Catkind, with their enhanced senses? Gabriella wanted to fan herself.

She dipped two fingers between the lips of her pussy and began to stroke as slowly as they had caressed their cocks before. "Conditions which you will promise to meet before we do this."

Benjamin made a stifled noise, suspiciously like a frustrated whine. He laid his hand on Derek's chest to restrain him after the snarl Derek loosed. *Oh, so someone doesn't like being told what to do, eh?* "We're both gentlemen here. Name the conditions."

"Gentlemen?" Gabriella smirked at Derek, whose straining erection pointed accusingly at her. "Maybe you. I don't know about him."

"He'll behave. He wants you... God, he probably wants you as much as I do." Benjamin reached for Gabriella, too far away to touch but not denying his need. Gabriella shivered at the sensation of phantom fingers cupping her breasts. Her nipples plumped, begging the attention of a ravenous sucking mouth. "Angel Gabriella, name your conditions and name them fast, or no deal."

"No deal?" Gabriella pouted, loving the freedom to act exactly as she pleased. "There's a deal, all right."

"Then get on with it. Please," Benjamin entreated.

She toyed with the notion of tormenting the Catkind some more, then discarded it with a sigh. She didn't want to be a cocktease even if she had every intention of letting the Catkind men plunder every sexual spot on her body. "The rules are these: you, he and I understand that this is only sex. We're not exchanging numbers or e-mail addresses. If you roll back into town on your travels, you can come to see me. All I'm after is a good time, and I'm not dreaming of love."

Gabriella would have thought any man would have betrayed at least a hint of relief. In her experience, absolutely no one of either gender wanted to get tied down based on a one-night stand. A quick fuck didn't mean they'd like to pick out curtains with you.

Benjamin and Derek, on the other hand, looked briefly dismayed.

Gabriella didn't understand, and so she moved on. She thrilled to the wanton display as she spread her thighs as far apart as she could stretch them, lowering her shoulders to the softness of the bed. Sliding a finger deep into her pussy, she moaned and raised her hips. She'd intended to rouse them to a fever pitch; instead, she'd heated her need to get fucked to a fire burning in her cunt. She drew out a long, lusty sigh.

Derek brushed Benjamin off and started for her.

"Ah, ah, ah," Gabriella cautioned despite being almost past able to form words or commands. She needed a hot, hard cock filling her *now*. God, they had driven her wild, hadn't they? "Agree. Your word that you'll keep this just sex, no strings attached, or no deal."

Horniness triumphed over that odd displeasure Gabriella couldn't understand. "For now," Derek replied, clipped and rough. "This time around, nothing but sex. Agreed."

Gabriella wasn't sure she understood -- or liked -- that stipulation, but *Dios mio*, it would have to be enough. "Good." She rolled her hips lasciviously and thrust her fingers in her pussy, mimicking what she needed from Derek or Benjamin's cock -- either one would suit her fine. Her fingers felt good, amazing even, but they didn't and couldn't compare to the real thing.

She hoped to God they didn't have barbs like wildcats. No one she knew of had ever gotten fucked by a Catkind man. *Lucky me; I get to be the first. Perfecto*. Gabriella longed to be able to purr. "What are you waiting for?" she demanded, stroking her clit with the tip of her fingernail. She loved a little sting with her pleasure. "We have a deal. Now come and fuck me before I jump you."

Derek hooted. "What did I tell you? She's so full of fire she'll burn you up."

"Burn me up?" Benjamin scoffed. "And you?"

"She might even keep up with *me*," Derek boasted.

"So put your money where your mouth is, and get your mouth over here. *Ay!*" The bed bounced violently when Derek landed above her, arms braced firmly by her shoulders.

The Catkind man leered at her, so smug and cocky that she wanted to kiss him or kill him.

He took the choices away from Gabriella by slamming his mouth down over hers. At the first hot, rough touch of Derek's kiss, Gabriella moaned and raised her bare

legs to wrap around his waist. Her pussy throbbed, desperate to have him fill her emptiness.

Derek hissed, the sound so feline and non-human that Gabriella's already intense arousal spiked. He devoured her lips with kisses as if he'd like to eat her alive. Gabriella wished he would. She rocked her pelvis, bringing it in close contact with Derek's massively swollen cock. He growled out a sound of triumph and draped his weight over her, rubbing his erection against Gabriella's dripping mons.

Gabriella cried out and pushed up. "Now," she breathed as he lifted his mouth away to start trailing scorching kisses down her throat. "Now you're getting the idea."

"Mmm. You make me think all kinds of nasty things." Derek teased Gabriella with the alignment of his cockhead at her opening, but not sliding home. "Just so you know, we're clean. Faithful to each other for years now. We can't get any woman pregnant unless she's in heat."

"Ay. This isn't heat?" Gabriella stared.

"No, sweet thing. This is all you and what you do to us." Derek pushed the tiniest bit, tormenting her with a fleeting taste of his hardness.

Gabriella enjoyed the rush of power, then stored it aside to gloat over later. At the moment, she had a bigger agenda. She beat at Derek's nude back, lightly downy with his soft golden fur, unable to give voice to the infuriated Spanish curses choking on her tongue.

"So worked up," Derek said smugly. "You'd promise me anything for a taste of this." He pushed, penetrating her with the barest intrusion of his cock.

"God! Don't stop," Gabriella ground out, digging her nails in the bunching, coiling muscles of Derek's back. "Go."

"You mean like this?" Derek slid halfway into her cunt, making her scream. *Madre de Dios*, he was huge! The girth of his cock was almost more than she could take.

Panting, she waited for her body to adjust. "Yes."

Derek pushed her down before she could slam her hips up and swallow the rest of his cock. "Wait a second, angel." He nuzzled a loose strand of damp hair away from Gabriella's cheek. "We share around here. You don't wanna leave Benjie out, do you?"

New heat flooded Gabriella. Thinking about and planning for rear entry, that was one thing. Being on the verge of letting a man have her ass? That was something else entirely. Be damned if it didn't drive her wild.

"Roll over," she ordered, pushing Derek's chest with all the strength her shaking arms could summon. "On your side."

"Now you're getting the idea," Derek crooned. He let Gabriella manhandle him, although she was certain he could have resisted if he'd wanted. The tensile strength to the Catkind man overpowered her, making her weak with lust. "Benjamin, join us."

Gabriella sensed the presence of the taller, leaner Catkind man behind her as he slid gracefully to rest with his chest to her shoulders and the tormenting iron of his cock teasing the cleft of her ass. She hissed, bucking forward, impaling herself further on Derek's prick.

"I won't hurt you," Benjamin murmured in her ear. His fingers, wet with something slick, slipped between the cheeks of Gabriella's ass and fingered her entrance. "I can't wait to see how you like this," he breathed. "Be loud for me, as loud as you want."

A slick finger penetrated her ass, the heaviness and pressure causing Gabriella's eyelids to fly open wide. She gasped. And some women said they hated this? Were they insane?

"I knew you'd fall in love with this," Benjamin boasted, not withdrawing his questing finger. "Say it for me."

Gabriella laughed breathlessly. "More, give me more." She pushed back, lamenting how it pulled her off Derek's cock. "If you can dish it, I can take it."

"Lusty," Benjamin crooned in approval. He added a second slick finger, and that did hurt, but only briefly.

Gabriella closed her eyes and whimpered. She didn't have the whole prostate thing going for her, but she hadn't ever realized what an erotic sensation it would be to have her ass fingered.

Greedy, she complained, "It's not enough."

"God, you're going to kill me." Benjamin wrapped his free arm around Gabriella's chest and held her steady. He tweaked her nipple, rolling it between forefinger and thumb.

A third finger penetrated her ass, drawing a sharp cry from her lips. Gabriella refused to take the chance on Benjamin "behaving" if he thought he'd hurt her. The pressure of his fingers stung slightly, yes, but at the same time it made her wild with desire. She rocked into his hand, urging him on with breathy moans and let him scissor her open.

When she could take no more, she was relieved enough to orgasm at the sudden absence of slippery fingers and the new presence of Benjamin's hard, blunt cock pressing her stretched entrance.

"Ready?" Benjamin grunted, letting Gabriella know he asked not only her, but Derek. "Please. Say yes."

"So ready."

The two men stretched and angled to kiss over Gabriella's body between them, a loud and messy kiss full of teeth and tongues and wordless growls. Gabriella hadn't ever really considered getting off on watching two men kiss, especially if they were meant to be paying all due attention to her.

The sight shocked her in the best of every possible ways and the jolt of sexual excitement could not be denied. Gabriella shuddered, poised between the engorged cocks of her two Catkind lovers, climaxing in a rush of ecstasy.

The Catkind men laughed, male chuckles rich with satisfaction, as they parted ways. Lost to her pleasure, Gabriella was only dimly aware of the way Derek chased Benjamin's mouth with his own, licking the man's lower lip before it was out of reach.

Derek lifted Gabriella's upper leg and propped it at an angle to give them both perfect access.

They linked hands over Gabriella's breast and thrust into her in perfect synchronicity.

Gabriella screamed and arched between the two hard bodies pressing her so close she was lost for breath as she reached the highest note of her wail. The Catkind men purred, rough and raspy as true wild cats, and gave her no quarter. Working in tandem, they rolled her from thrust to thrust. Their cocks set up a back-and-forth rhythm that pushed Derek's cock deep in her soaked, pounding pussy and then back on the rigid length of Benjamin's cock in her ass.

She was stuffed to bursting. She was going to split apart. Their hands were everywhere, extended claws scratching furrows over her breasts, her belly, her shoulders and her legs. Their Catkind mouths roved over every inch of skin they could get to, a harsh rasp of something like whiskers scraping her tingling flesh. Gabriella couldn't see, couldn't think, could barely breathe. The whimpers and whines escaping her sounded as if they came from someone else, but she knew they came from her own throat from the way Derek and Benjamin both grunted and fucked her harder with every cry she made.

Above her, sending Gabriella's lust spiraling in ways she never would have imagined, they shared wet kisses and growled words at one another in a language she didn't recognize, all sibilants and deep bass notes. The sound of the strange words inflamed her senses; the fleeting glimpses of male claws digging into hard male chests sent her over the edge a second time.

"Fuck me harder, keep fucking me, don't stop, don't ever stop!" Gabriella shrieked, thrashing between the searing fullness in her ass and the huge cock in her pussy. As she shrilled out her pleasure, the two stopped ever so briefly and devoured one another's mouths with a roaring kiss.

They thrust into her as one, going as deep as they could possibly go, tight balls slapping her pussy and her ass. The Catkind men grabbed Gabriella tight enough to

hurt and ground down fiercely. Loosing harsh, guttural yells in tandem, they let go and filled her from front to back with hot jets of semen.

Gabriella lost herself to the bliss, shuddering out a third completion when Derek found the coherence to pinch and twist her clit. Her vision went foggy and pink, drowning her in sensation.

She didn't know how long she was lost to the heady orgasm, but when her eyes cleared she lay nestled snugly between the Catkind men, their heaving chests pushing her from ragged breath to ragged breath.

Their cocks were still buried in Gabriella, not enough to stop her delighted laugh from bubbling out.

Derek grunted, about as pleased as any man would be to have a woman he'd just fucked into a puddle giggling at him. "What?" he grumbled, burrowing his head against Gabriella's swollen, sensitive breasts.

"No barbs," Gabriella explained, dissolving into laughter.

"Humans," Derek snorted. He bit her nipple. Behind Gabriella, Benjamin shook with silent mirth.

Gabriella stretched insofar as she could trapped front to back, her muscles rippling in satiated satisfaction. "I wish this could last forever," she said, the desire emerging before she could think better of the words.

The Catkind men fell still. They wrapped their arms around her and around one another. She could sense their hesitation, though she didn't know if it stemmed from displeasure or eagerness.

She found out when Benjamin kissed the nape of her neck, so soft and so gentle tears threatened to prick behind her eyelids. *Madre de Dios*, if only she could have this forever and for always...

"It can last forever," he whispered, lips tickling her skin. "We can be yours, and you can be ours. All you have to do is say the word, and what we have right now can last for all time."

"But --" Gabriella protested automatically, unable to sit up with their cocks -- which didn't seem to be going soft at all -- still pinning her in place.

"Shh." Derek sealed her lips with a kiss. "Listen to us, all right? Hear what we have to say, and then make up your mind."

Gabriella's heart pounded. "All right," she said slowly. "Talk. I'm listening."

Chapter Seven

"We've been hunting you for a long time," Derek began, raising the heavy weight of Gabriella's breast to his lips. He spoke around her nipple, but she understood every word he said -- when she could think around the sensations of his prickly whiskers and the coiling pressure of his lion's tail around her ankle, tickling the sole of her foot.

She almost didn't register the full meaning of his statement. When she did, she shoved him back out of pure reflex. "What do you mean, you've *hunted* me? *Bastardo!*"

"Shh, shh, shh," Benjamin soothed, brushing the weight of Gabriella's hair aside to rest his chin on her shoulder. He smoothed his hand in circles on her stomach. "It's not like he makes it sound."

Gabriella didn't trust this, not one bit. She knew better, though, than to try and claw her way free. If the two massive Catkind men didn't want to let her go... "All right," she said stiffly and with great effort. "Explain."

Benjamin must have dealt Derek a stern look, from the grimace she saw on his face. The darker Catkind man took up the thread, then, and continued. He stroked her hair as he spoke. "The Catkind race is dying. Did you know that?"

The simple statement hit Gabriella hard. *Oh, no.* They'd only just made themselves known to the rest of the world. If they disappeared, they'd leave such a hole behind them, it would be like all the fairytales had been striped away. It wasn't bearable to think about. She shivered and knotted her fingers in the light pelt of fur tracing down Derek's chest. He winced, but didn't push her away.

"You didn't know," Benjamin acknowledge. "No one does except the Catkind, and out of all our thinning numbers, only Derek and I have had the nerve to face what'll happen to our race."

"Balls, you mean," Derek corrected. He resumed his nibbling on Gabriella's breast.

"There are only a few hundred left," Benjamin went on with a kiss to Gabriella's exposed throat. "Out of the small prides and pards and clans still left, there are very few women. All cubs born in the last twenty years have been male. We're running out of mates and there won't be any generations to come."

"But..." Gabriella struggled for solutions. "Why are only boys born?"

"We don't know." Benjamin sighed, his breath ghosting warmly over Gabriella's collarbone. "And the ruling councils, they..."

Derek picked up where Benjamin left off, snorting in disgust. "They're pompous old inbred idiots who won't or can't look past the old ways to try and save us."

"It might already be too late," Benjamin pointed out, ever the mediator.

Gabriella liked that about him. She snuggled back, fitting her buttocks to his groin. Still lodged within her, his cock stiffened to full hardness once again.

Derek grumbled in the Catkind language. Gabriella got the distinct feeling that she was hearing Catkind cursing.

"They won't even think about cross-breeding between the cat-clans," Benjamin explained. "It's beyond what they can wrap their tails around. Maybe it's not their fault. The Catkind have been proud and distant since time out of mind." He held Gabriella closer still. "Derek and I found each other and knew, right away, we were mates."

Deep understanding flooded her. "Man to man," she said softly. "This is how you go on."

Benjamin nodded, the tips of his hair brushing her cheek. "Yes. Derek and I were two halves of a whole. I'd never so much as thought about claiming a male. It horrified me at first."

Derek bit Gabriella's breast, almost but not quite hard enough to leave a mark. "Lucky for us, I wasn't scared a bit."

That, Gabriella could easily believe. She could see it all without being told, the whole story of how Derek had brazened his way into Benjamin's life and charmed his

way into the gentler Catkind male's bed. From the passion with which they'd touched and kissed and tangled earlier, she knew the bonds that tied them together would run deeper than the seas.

But if they were bound so tightly to one another, then why had they wanted her? Perhaps for the same reasons she'd decided to give them a ride. A night's worth of pussy and a soft female body to enjoy. Mates didn't necessarily mean strictly gay, and she had the proof of that distending her pussy and ass.

Still, the things they'd promised about "forever" posed questions to which she needed answers. "What part do I play in this?" she asked, proud of the firm strength in her voice betraying no nervousness. "Why would you want me for more than a night?"

As one, the Catkind men wrapped her in a solid hug that included one another as well. "Because we are dying out," Derek hissed above Gabriella's ear. "It's not about love. It's not about sex. It's about survival. That's why we want you."

And if that didn't throw a bucket of cold water over a woman's libido, Gabriella didn't know what would.

"Let me get this straight," she said, dripping with scorn. "You want me for a breeding bitch? Is that how it goes?"

"Gabriella, no --" Benjamin started.

Too late. The guilty flash on Derek's face told Gabriella all she needed to hear. "Get off of me," she ordered, forgetting her earlier caution as she struggled to get free. "Get *off*. Now!"

Benjamin groaned as he let her go, withdrawing his cock from her ass. Gabriella swallowed a moan at the sense of loss. Derek hung on until Gabriella sunk her fingernails into his flesh, piercing the skin. He yelped and retreated instinctively, sliding from her pussy. The shudders of arousal nearly did away with both temper and good sense.

No. Stubborn to the end, Gabriella seized the opportunity to scramble off the bed and find her own two feet.

The Catkind men gazed at her, Derek shamefacedly and Benjamin pleadingly. "Let me explain," Benjamin started to coax. "He said it wrong."

Gabriella hardened her heart and refused to be moved. "Screw you," she said, jabbing her forefinger at Derek. "I thought you were better than this. Some kind of noble Catkind princes. *Jesu Christo*, what a fool I've been."

"Gabriella --"

"Shut up!" She held up a hand to stop Benjamin's plea before it went any further. "Where are my clothes? I'm leaving."

"Don't. God, no." Derek struggled up until he sat on his heels, arms reaching for her. "I did say it wrong, totally wrong. Just listen to us, would you?"

"I think I've heard enough." Gabriella found her jeans and began to stuff her legs in them, one at a time. "Don't say anything. Let me go with some dignity."

Her cheeks burned as she thought about how carefully she'd dressed, wanting to look her sexiest in her tightest 501's. That'd worked out well, eh? Tears burned in her eyes, wanting to fall.

Warm, hard hands seizing her upper arms from behind startled her. She hadn't seen or heard either of the men move. From the long length of the body pressing tight and the darkly furred panther's tail twining around her thigh to the knee, Gabriella knew it was Benjamin who'd caught her.

"Let me go," she ordered, trying to twist free.

No such luck; Benjamin wasn't having any of it. He held her as inflexibly as iron. She could sense the rigid control he maintained as he spoke, low and urgent. "Derek's a fool to tell you this has nothing to do with you. You're more than a pussy and a womb to us."

"Didn't sound like it to me."

Benjamin gave her a light shake. Through all of this, his erection hadn't diminished. The press of his swollen cock to her sensitive backside made Gabriella gasp.

"Don't make this any more difficult than it already is," she persisted. Her body betrayed her by arching back against Benjamin's marvelous cock. "I had fun, we all did, and now it's over."

"Would you listen to yourself?" Benjamin's panther tail compressed her thigh in a fierce grip. "It's fun, it's not enough. Come on, woman, you want it both ways. All along you've thought of us as 'just a cock' and 'just an adventure'. And you have the nerve to flare up when Derek puts his foot in his mouth?"

Gabriella's face burned with shame. *Dios mio...* was right. She'd behaved shamefully. She dipped her head and said nothing.

Benjamin gentled. "I know this is new for you. That it's frightening. I told you I was terrified when Derek changed my life so dramatically." He loosened his hold and stroked her arms, his tail sweeping gently along her leg. "And no, it's not about love, not yet. Not like hearts and flowers."

"It's more than love," Derek surprised Gabriella by putting in. She saw him move out of the corner of her eye, sliding gracefully out of the bed and coming to stand in front of her, chest to chest. The tenderness she saw in his tentative smile startled her more than his contribution to Benjamin's speech. "More than," he emphasized.

"I don't understand."

"Humans," Derek griped, but fondly. He nuzzled her nose. "We're mates. The three of us are mates. It's like nothing any Catkind, man or woman, has ever done before. We're not even supposed to be able to do this, much less want it."

"But you're different," Gabriella realized, whispering her understanding out loud. "Mates. Explain 'mates'."

"How much of an explanation does it need?"

"Humor me."

"It means we're bound together, the three of us," Benjamin answered for Derek. He swept the soft down of his palm over Gabriella's breast. "Chains no one can ever break. We do want you in some of the ways you thought, but not as a sex slave nor as a

cub factory. We want to see you as more than a kitten mother. You are to be the queen of the new dynasty."

The confession took Gabriella's breath away. *Madre de Dios*, she'd never even so much as thought about children before, except for pitying poor Marnie in a distant sort of way.

And now they were asking for this?

"I have to think," she said, though she didn't try to push the Catkind men away. "I can't say yes or no without knowing it's the right choice."

"You do know," Derek insisted. "Your body knows." He wrapped his lion's tail around Gabriella's other leg. His cock slipped easily inside her pussy. She cried out, arching her neck. The Catkind man, the insatiable and reckless lover of hers, slipped his hand between them to tug and tease at her swollen clit.

The firm press of Benjamin's cock at her stretched rosebud made Gabriella hiss. He impaled her slowly and gently, but with a firmness that would not be denied. "Your heart knows, too."

Gabriella struggled for words and found none amongst the fires exploding beneath her skin and the pulsing of her stretched entrances. "I... I..."

"Listen to your body and your heart," Benjamin coaxed, kneading her breast. His tail loosed from her thigh and wound about her waist, teasing the top of her pussy. "They already know what the answer is."

Gabriella sobbed, not wanting to give them the answer no matter how deeply she longed to say the words.

"It's all right," Derek soothed. He pressed a hard kiss to Gabriella's lips, stealing her breath. "We won't hurt you. We'll make you our Empress."

"Our lover."

"Our wife, shared between us."

"All you have to do is say yes."

"Say yes, angel," Derek urged, rocking his cock in her pussy, drenching his length in her renewed cream. "One little word, and all your dreams come true."

Gabriella parted her lips to speak, She'd never expected anything like this when she took silly Lucia up on her dare. Let her hair down? *Ay*, she'd done that, all right.

She burned to say yes. But what would happen to *Gatos*? She kind of doubted either Derek or Benjamin planned to stick around in the arid lands bare of anything a cat might desire. What would happen to Lucia, and Marnie?

Torn between the need to mate and the need to take care of her sisters, Gabriella hung frozen in the balance. She licked her dry lips and tried to steady herself on Benjamin's chest while they fucked her gently but mercilessly. The orgasm took her by surprise when it came, so suddenly she had no breath to keen or cry out. She shuddered out her completion while held up by strong arms and whip-like cats' tails, coming once more as first Benjamin and then Derek swore vicious curses and released jets of semen deep within her.

Gabriella's ears rang, her pulse roaring. She couldn't say no. She should say no. She gathered her strength to speak. The words were near the tip of her tongue when a howlingly loud *crack!* shattered the silence broken before only by rasping breath.

Benjamin and Derek tore free of Gabriella in an instant. Before she had time to protest the loss, she was on the ground, Benjamin blanketing her completely.

Another *crack!* blasted the air. Gabriella screamed and curled tight under Benjamin. The window glass had shattered. *Dios mio*. Gunshots!

"Get after him," Derek snarled, wrestling Gabriella away from Benjamin. "Go! We're coming behind you." He turned to Gabriella, examining her intently and with such concern and caring she was stunned to the core. "Angel, are you hurt? Angel?"

Chapter Eight

"I'm fine!" Gabriella pulled -- almost -- all the dirty fighting tricks she knew out of her arsenal to get Derek's bulk the heck off of her. She stopped short of kneeling him in the groin -- although the thought tempted her when he refused to move. The Catkind man was heavy! "Would you let me up?"

"Not while there's a shooter around, no." Derek scanned the room, for the first time revealing all the fang and claw ferocity of his species. Gabriella didn't ever want to be his enemy. He smoothed her hair down absently. "If it's the same asshole who shot at us before, I'll tear his throat out."

"Wait, wait, wait. Before?" Gabriella redoubled her struggles. "You were attacked before? And you didn't tell me?"

Derek had enough sense to wince. "We should have told you."

"Damn right, you should." Gabriella elbowed Derek in the soft meat of his belly. When he grunted and flinched away, she scrabbled her way out of his arms. "You idiot. What were you thinking? You could have gotten all of us killed."

"Get back here. You were never in danger."

"Tell that to someone stupider than I am." Gabriella stayed low, braced on hands and knees. She felt vulnerable and naked but she could watch her own back. "You check us all into the fanciest hotel in town. The most visible. You probably paraded in here waving your tails like great big signs. *Quarry Here, Hunting Season Open.*" She raised one hand high enough to quirk her fingers in quote marks. "Whoever's hunting you knew you were here. And if they hadn't missed -- if they'd shot you --" Her throat closed up.

Derek blinked at her, his surprise evident, but thanks be, quickly followed by comprehension and then dismay. "You could have died, too." He looked both stunned and sickened. "Fuck me for a jackass."

Gabriella rolled her eyes at the example of what she already knew to be classic Derek. The man had an interesting way with words.

"I'm sorry. On my life." Derek stole a quick kiss from Gabriella. "I'm good with the big picture."

"And the little details bite you in the ass."

Derek grinned. "There's more than one reason I've got Benjie on my side. He was born for figuring out the fine print in life. Did you know he was a Prince of his Panther Catkind?"

Whoa. "I think we missed that part," Gabriella pointed out. Urgency trumped sarcasm. "Go after him already! Go! If that *bastardo* gets another clear shot at Benjamin..."

Derek's jaw hardened. "I know. But I'm not leaving you, angel."

"You're not, no. I'm coming with you."

"What?" Derek sat upright in disbelief. "The hell you say."

Gabriella shot him a dirty look as she retrieved her fallen jeans and tugged them hastily up her legs. "Do you want to waste time arguing, or do you want to go help Benjamin? With or without you, it's your choice, but you're not leaving me behind. I'm not sitting around naked when a man I love is in danger."

Derek's amazement melted into a mix of adoration and awe. "You love him?" he asked, standing to caress Gabriella's bare shoulder.

She blushed deeper and refused to meet his eyes. "Where's my blouse?"

The tawny Catkind man scooped up her discarded shirt and tossed it to her. She caught it in one hand and shrugged the sleeves over her arms, knotting the tails in the front rather than take the time to do up buttons. "*Mierde!* My bra."

Derek huffed impatiently as Gabriella made a dash for the beautiful bathroom and retrieved her demi-cups. She wriggled the bra up under her tied blouse and hooked

it in place with the surety of long habit. Running without support with boobs her size made for absolute misery.

Derek caught her chin and brought her in for a kiss. "Tell me that you love me."

"Stubborn mule," Gabriella grumbled, but returned his kiss. "All right. Fine. I do. I love the both of you. It's fast and it's crazy and it's not at all what I planned for my life. All the same, I love you and yes, I'll even believe I'm your mate."

Amidst the chaos, Gabriella had to take a moment to roll with the crashing, stunning wave of accepting the truth of what she'd said. Derek took advantage of her brief pause to pull her closer and ravage her lips with hungry kisses.

When he let her go free, it was with a great effort. "All for one. Let's go."

He loped toward the suite exit, the joints in his legs bending in strange ways. Gabriella stared, fascinated, as he transformed smoothly from man shape to a nearly all-feline mountain lion.

Nearly. She could definitely still tell he was male. "You're naked," she protested.

The mountain lion shot her a look of disbelief.

"*Now* you insinuate that I'm wasting time," she grumbled, closing the fastening on her jeans. "Fine. I'm half-naked, too."

The mountain lion chuffed. He flicked his tail at her and turned his side to her. He used the tip of his tail to point at his back.

Despite the urgency of the situation, Gabriella wanted to squeal with glee. "You're serious? I can ride you?"

Gabriella wouldn't have thought it possible, but the lion leered at her. She could imagine Derek in his human form, comically waggling his eyebrows. She couldn't find it in her heart to snipe at him. "All right. Later, and I'll hold you to that." She sprinted to the mountain lion and ran her hand over his thickly furred back. "Here we go." She flung her leg over and fastened her hands deep in Derek's mane.

Good thing, too. The moment Gabriella had found her seat, the mountain lion roared and ran forward at full speed. Gabriella screamed and buried her face in his heavy mane, hiding her eyes.

Terror fought with exhilaration. The giddy excitement won out. "Wheeeeeeee!" Gabriella caroled as they ran.

Now this? This was living!

* * *

The heart-pounding race carried Gabriella and Derek down to the main concourse of the ritzy hotel. She registered terrified screams and shouts as they plunged through milling crowds of the city's elite and couldn't care less. She knew Derek wouldn't hurt them.

Newspapers, magazines, nosy journalists, they'd all been wrong about the Catkind in more ways than she could count. They were strong, they were loving, and they were brave.

She knew, with a deep and exultant thrill, that she would be proud to join with them. Empress? A nice dream. She'd definitely take it if the dream came true.

That, though, she could worry about later. Derek pulled up short, his extended claws screeching on the fine parquet floor. He slumped forward, rolling Gabriella off his back. She tucked and rolled somehow, somersaulting clumsily away from her lion.

Derek stood fluidly, shedding his mountain lion shape for the almost human body he usually wore. His ear-splitting, indignant roar silenced the furor from the panicking crowd.

He was still naked. He didn't seem to care. Claws extended to full and frightening sharp length, he whipped to and fro, narrowly examining the milling throng. Gabriella stayed good and out of his way. Beware of cat!

"There!" he bellowed, launching at the door at full human speed. Gabriella followed as fast as she could, not coming close to keeping up but not losing him, either.

Derek plunged for the shadows. Gabriella didn't understand at first.

Then, she saw that the shadows concealed a shape. A large male shape, pinning down a screaming, kicking human body. The male -- *Madre de Dios*, Benjamin! -- bled from a deep shoulder wound that could be from nothing but a bullet. Gabriella reacted

on pure instinct and flung herself to Benjamin's side, pulling him to the light almost before she'd landed.

"Don't," Benjamin warned, dangerous but not nearly threatening enough to get her to back off. "Prisoner."

"You're bleeding!" Lacking anything to press against his wound but her own two hands, Gabriella used those. "Did you get him? The shooter?"

"No." Benjamin didn't hide his disgust. "Too fast. Don't know what he was. I shifted to gain some ground and that's when he shot me."

"So who's this?" Gabriella craned her neck to try and see under Benjamin. "An accomplice?" She couldn't see the person under Benjamin's bulk, but hesitated to move him.

Derek had no such patience and shoved Benjamin off. The Catkind panther hit the dirt with a bellow of pain. Ready to scold Derek with all her might and see to Benjamin, Gabriella leaned in --

-- and stopped.

Her heart skipped a beat as she stared, disbelieving, at the shooter's accomplice. Coarse, tangled black curls and a pixie face set in lines of stark terror stared back at Gabriella. A face she knew very, very well.

"Marnie." Gabriella reached for her, heartbroken and confused. "Marnie."

"You know her?" Benjamin had risen on his own accord and held one arm close to his torso. His tail switched angrily, thumping the cobbled pavement of the plaza. "Who is this?"

The dynamics had changed. Gabriella could see, now, exactly what went into making a Prince among the Catkind. Derek had the brazen balls; Benjamin enforced the Alpha's justice.

Didn't mean Derek wasn't pissed enough to bear white lines of anger by his mouth. "Answer the question," he hissed, bringing his sharp teeth close enough to snap off Marnie's nose if she displeased him further. "Who are you? Who shot at us? Who wounded my mate? By the Catkind, he *will* pay, and so will you."

Marnie sobbed in terror and threw herself at Gabriella. Gabriella wrapped Marnie tight in a hug. She couldn't have not. Cradling the frightened young woman to her chest, she dealt her Catkind lovers a harsh look of warning. "Marnie's my sister. She's not bad," Gabriella tried to explain. "She's just... oh." The penny dropped. "She's desperate, and she's afraid. Her boyfriend, Rafael."

"He, he said he'd kill me if I didn't turn you in," Marnie wept. The trembling of her thin arms and legs and the particular type of fear rattling her told Gabriella that Marnie wasn't lying. "My baby. Rafael would have killed me, and my baby would have died, too."

Derek and Benjamin exchanged disgusted looks, but didn't attack Marnie.

"I don't smell any gunpowder on her," Benjamin admitted grudgingly. "No oil, no cordite. She's not the one who fired the gun, not earlier and not now."

"But this boyfriend of hers did?" Gabriella could tell Derek was gearing up for a wild chase through the night sure to end with his strong jaws ripping the life from a man. She couldn't feel any sympathy for any such man who'd manipulate a pregnant woman.

"Not Rafael," Marnie managed to get out between waves of tears. "I don't know who he was. Rafael, he said he'd gotten a thousand dollars from someone to shoot a Catkind man. He wouldn't tell me anything else except the killing part."

"She's telling the truth." Gabriella wasn't sure how she knew, but she did. She rocked Marnie to her breast and hummed soothing words. Inspiration struck. "If Marnie tells you everything -- absolutely everything -- about her no-good boyfriend and the people he knows, the possible shooters, will you promise to protect her?"

Derek stared blankly at Gabriella. She could read his thoughts as clearly as if they'd been shouted in her head -- *you must be insane*.

"Mate of mine," Benjamin warned. "This isn't the way to start our dynasty. Royalty, if that's what we want to be, has obligations. If she asks for sanctuary..." He let his sentence trail off, the meaning clear.

Gabriella watched Derek wrestle with his pride and need for mindless revenge. "For me," she pleaded, laying her hand on his bulging arm. "For your Empress." The title slipped easily from her lips, feeling natural on her tongue.

Derek eyed Gabriella narrowly. "Then you really are promising yourself to us?" he demanded. "For now and for always?"

Gabriella nodded, sure in her decision. The choice could not have been clearer. "I am." She stood, still hugging Marnie to her bosom. Marnie had almost stopped crying, though she still shook with fear. "I would even if I didn't want to protect my baby sister. My heart is yours, my body is yours, and my future is with you." She raised her head and straightened her shoulders, knowing herself to be now and forever afterwards Empress of the new Catkind races.

Benjamin leaned to kiss Derek. His lips trailed along Derek's mouth, gentling him down from the last remnants of his prickly rage. "We'll get revenge another day," he promised. "Right now, we have a world to work with and two women who need us. Come with me, lover. We'll disappear into the night, and tomorrow we do what we need to."

Derek crossed his arms. "As long as we stop at *Gatos* for another Mexican beer first."

Gabriella burst into giggles. After a disbelieving moment, Benjamin's lips softened into a smile. "Lunatic."

"Monarchist," Derek fired back.

"That's the pot calling the kettle black."

"Enough, both of you." Gabriella kissed first Derek, her fierce warrior, and then Benjamin, her stalwart protector. Her heart thrilled to the amazing thought of the future that lay before them. "Let's go before the police get here. Someone's called them by now."

"Good enough reason to get out of here for me." Benjamin rotated his shoulder. The bleeding had stopped, and Gabriella could see now that it had only been a graze.

He hesitated, then winked at her. "You took Derek for a spin. Want to try your luck with me this time?"

Gabriella thrilled with glee. She'd never get tired of this in particular, would she? "All you ever have to do from here on out is ask." She watched, heady with pride, as Benjamin morphed smoothly from man to panther. This time, when she mounted up, she managed it nimbly. Benjamin waited until she'd found her seat and wrapped her arms around his neck.

A frightened squeak drew her attention back to Marnie, who stared at Derek in his mountain lion form, her eyes the size of saucers.

"It'll be all right," Gabriella promised. "Sit on his back and hold tight." She kept a careful eye on Marnie and was proud when, after only a brief inner struggle mirrored on her sister's face, Marnie gamely climbed aboard and found her seat.

"Thank you," Marnie blurted. "Thank you for helping me."

"I have a feeling I'll be doing a lot of this kind of thing in the future. Don't ask. I'll explain later." Gabriella pressed her heels lightly to Benjamin's sides. "One stop at *Gatos* for two bottles of *Mocteczuma* to go, and then we're on the move."

Derek and Benjamin loosed their feline roars of triumph. Exultant giddiness seared Gabriella from the inside out. The Catkind began to run, away from the world of men and into the night.

Gabriella clung to her dark lover and laughed, delighted, all the way.

To Be Continued...

Cat O'Nine 2: Cat's Eye

All Marnie wants is a good man who'd treat her right. Instead she always seems to end up with losers -- like her latest boyfriend, who nearly got her killed. Now her world's turned upside-down and inside-out. Her rescuer swears to protect her, and she's thinking it's time to take her big sister's advice, and go after the kind of man who'll treat her right -- even if he's not human!

A curly-haired prankster of a Catkind Jaguar, Tracey is more than happy to Marnie gets just what she deserves. Even better, he has a Serval friend, Josh, with a mouth created for sinful delights and a way of making a woman forget all her troubles.

The human's world? They can keep it. It's Marnie's turn to have some fun.

Lia Connor

Lia Connor supposedly lives in the South, but her job takes her almost everywhere but there. Her laptop is her best friend as she travels. She's thrilled to be working with Changeling Press. She loves to write about BBW's, hot, hot, hot threesomes and were-animals. Lia would love to hear from you. You can contact her at liaconnor@gmail.com.