

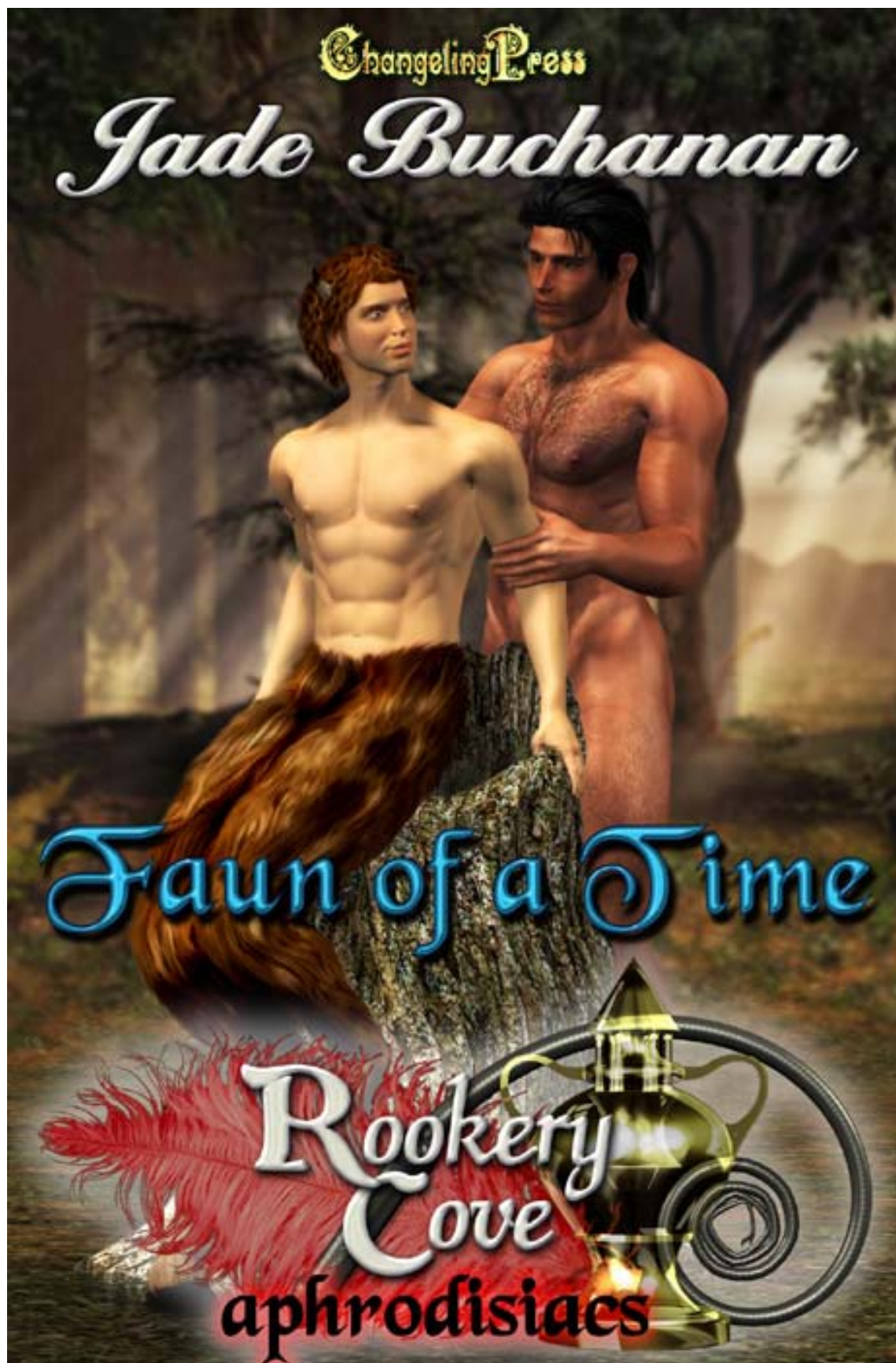
Changeling Press

Jade Buchanan

Faun of a Time

Rookery
Cove

aphrodisiacs



Rookery Cove: Faun of a Time

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ISBN: 978-1-59596-831-9
Formats Available:
HTML, Adobe PDF,
MobiPocket, Microsoft Reader

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

Editor: Connie Alberts
Cover Artist: Bryan Keller

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Rookery Cove: Faun of a Time

Jade Buchanan

Not everyone who works for Rookery Cove Aphrodisiacs does so through normal channels. There are some who prefer to do their work quietly, orderly, alone. Corin Róg is one such person. He is the groundskeeper on an isolated section of the Island and only a handful of people know he exists. But, there are some secrets that are meant to be discovered.

Mitch Whelan is one angry wolf. Entering the forest to find a runaway lab experiment, he never expected to find an altogether different type of creature. The shy faun calls to him, awakening the wolf inside him. But, in order to be with the faun, Mitch may need to restrain his basic urges -- the need to claim his mate in the only way an Alpha knows how.

Corin won't leave his land, Mitch won't leave the lab. Can these two very different men ever find a way to be together?

Dedication

For Kira Stone. Thanks for letting me play!

Chapter One

"What do you mean, you lost her?"

Mitch Whelan thought his words were very reasonable. Judging from the terrified expression on the face of the male in front of him -- and the overpowering scent of fear filling the small lab -- he hadn't quite mastered the art of sounding reasonable.

Maybe it was the claws he couldn't prevent from releasing. Or the throaty growl he'd been unable to hold in. Whatever.

Mitch shrugged, attempting to relax. The male in front of him looked like he was about ten seconds from pissing his pants. Wrinkling his nose at the acrid scent of urine - - and the spreading stain on the front of Kro's pants -- he silently cursed himself and revised his ten second estimate. Mitch really did know better than to let his wolf out in front of people who were more accustomed to bean counters and diligent lab rats. Seriously, he did.

He just couldn't understand how someone could lose a pixie. Sure, they were small, and yeah, they were known to be tricky, especially if you weren't used to them. FYI, pixies lied... a lot.

But really, the workers in the QA lab should be used to the pixies by now. They'd been working with them for about three months. Just enough time to figure out how to deal with them.

Cracking his knuckles -- and envisioning tearing Kro apart, piece by piece -- Mitch turned his back, dismissing the male. He had to do everything himself.

"Never mind. Which way did she go?" He said the last over his shoulder, pacing away. Kro could just damn well keep up if he wanted to keep his job and his head.

The horny little toad -- literally -- hop-skipped after Mitch, babbling frantically. "I'm not sure which way she went. I mean, she was headed for the forest, but you know

how pixies are. She could be halfway to the mainland by now. I mean, she might have just decided to take off for good. That's what she said she was going to do. Something about not getting paid enough. I mean, we all know she isn't really getting paid to do this work. But she claimed she wasn't going to sit around and let all the addle-brained, twelve-toed, muscle-hopped male pixies have at her like she was some kind of breeding machine. She isn't going to get pregnant. I know as well as you that we inoculated all the pixies in the control group to make sure nothing happened to them, but --"

"Shut up!"

Ignoring the crash behind him, Mitch rubbed the bridge of his nose. "They don't pay me enough to deal with this kind of crap. I had a real job before coming to the island, I really did. Sure, I didn't want to stick around because I had no intention of breeding any of the bitches in my pack, but I never had to deal with things like this. Zwiffle is going to get his ass kicked next time I see him, I swear."

"Boss? You talking to me?" Kro ran beside him, the only way his shorter stride could keep up with Mitch's.

"Did it look like I was talking to you?"

"Well, I really wasn't sure. I mean, you were --"

"Stop. Just point me in the right direction and I'll take care of it."

Kro pointed to the left, remaining silent.

"Keep an eye on the others. If I come back and find someone else missing, I'll be forced to write up a fucking incident report to explain the toad remains splattered all over the wall of the lab. Trust me, you don't want that to happen. I hate paperwork. Understood?"

Kro's gulp was audible, followed by a frightened *croak*.

"Fucking toads." Mitch shook his head. "They don't pay me enough to deal with this."

* * *

Corin Róg stood still, watching the ship sail out. He wondered where it was going. He'd asked Bernie once, and he talked about how the ship would meet up with

another from the mainland, shipping the toys and such from the manufacturing plant on the island out to the head office in Halifax. It all sounded fascinating. So many lives interconnecting, all the different threads winding together until you couldn't separate one from the other. Sometimes he wished he could go with them. It'd be nice to see something else, experience another lifestyle.

He shook his head. That would never happen, but he was okay with it. "Face it, Cor, this is your life. It's not that bad, is it?"

He liked it here, really he did. Sure, sometimes he wondered what others did. But, it wasn't as if he was alone. He got to visit with Bernie all the time, and sometimes Airk would come and visit him. Bernie lived in a cottage away from everyone else. Airk told him once there were rumors about Bernie being the old owner of Rookery Cove Aphrodisiacs but Bernie wouldn't talk about it. He sure didn't look like Airk or Corin, though. He didn't have fur or feathers or anything.

Corin liked the bird man, he always told the best stories. Not as good as Bernie's, of course, but pretty good all in all. Although, he didn't visit nearly as often since he mated with Baen and Gavin. Airk was pretty important on the island. You could see him flying overhead often, making his rounds and keeping an eye on everything. He took care of the environment, and Corin reported directly to him.

Airk's one mate, Baen, lived in the water but Corin had never met him personally. Baen was different from both Bernie and Airk. His body looked like water and he was even blue. Corin had seen him from a distance, although he'd never gotten up the courage to go speak to him directly. For awhile there Airk wasn't speaking to him, and Corin didn't want to upset his friend. Although, things changed when they met Gavin.

Gavin was human, and had only come to the island to work on a problem they'd been having in the breakwater. Airk couldn't stop talking about him after he first met him. Corin was happy they found each other, really he was. Sometimes, he just wished he had someone like that in his life. Airk was so happy.

"What are you doing out here, little one?"

"Bernie!"

Corin turned, spying his friend sitting on a rock behind him. He paced forward, kneeling in the foliage at Bernie's feet. Bernie reached out, roughing up Corin's hair, and stroking one horn before letting his hand drop to his side. Corin giggled, tilting his head to the side.

"Aren't you supposed to be working right now, Corin?"

Corin laughed again, a bright and cheerful sound. "I'm taking a break. Airk told me I was supposed to take a break every few hours. Said that's what the workers do to keep from getting too tired and overworked."

Bernie sighed, frowning. "I wish you'd stop asking Airk about the workers. They don't do the same things you do, I already told you that. Besides, it's best not to get too concerned with them. You're unlikely ever to meet any of them. They don't come over this way, and you're never near the main complex."

Tilting his head to the other side, Corin studied his friend. He'd never understood why Bernie didn't want him around the others. He didn't mind not having a lot of friends, but he admitted -- if only to himself -- that it made him curious to know why Bernie didn't want him to mingle with the rest of the Rookery Cove Aphrodisiacs staff. He probably wouldn't have anything in common with them anyway. It's not like they were his kind. He'd asked Airk once and he'd admitted there weren't any other fauns around. It was too bad, really. Corin would have liked to play with others like him.

"It doesn't matter, Bernie. Don't worry about it. I was just curious, that's all."

"Some day your curiosity is going to get you in trouble, little one. Mark my words."

Corin wrinkled his nose. "I should get back to work. Essie's building a new nest, and she needs more Virgin's bower. I promised her I'd get some."

"I don't even want to know what Virgin's bower is."

"Bernie! It's Clematis, of course. A *plant*." Corin giggled, standing up. "I'll see you later."

“Be careful, Corin. I have a bad feeling about the forest today.”

“Oh, pish, Bernie. Nothing’s going to happen. You’ll see. It’s just like any other day.”

Ignoring the frown on Bernie’s face, Corin started to skip away. Bernie’s last words were so faint, he almost didn’t hear them.

“Don’t be so sure, little one. Don’t be so sure.”

Chapter Two

Mitch paused at the side of the tree, listening to the unfamiliar sounds. He knew the damn pixie had come this way, the remains of her dress were scattered all over the forest floor. It was like she was taunting him. He'd like to wring her little neck when he found her, but Zwiffle would probably kill him if one of the man's precious lab creatures were harmed in any way.

He tilted his head, inhaling deeply. He could smell traces of the pixie, but that wasn't what kept distracting him. There was a scent here, faint, but noticeable all the same. It was delectable, whatever it was. He didn't come to the forest often -- there really wasn't any need for it -- but there was definitely something here that was calling to him. Almost made him regret his decision to avoid the main parts of the island since arriving here.

He never did well out in the open anyway. It was why he was determined to stay within the lab and the main buildings on Rookery Cove. It didn't do any good to let his wolf out too often. Hell, he was barely civil as it was. Any more time spent outdoors and his wolf would take over completely. He'd have toads pissing themselves at the sight of him if he wasn't careful. Some creatures just didn't do well around predators.

Again, he pondered the mental state of Zwiffle when he'd called him. They'd met years before, keeping most of their correspondence limited to the electronic world before Zwiffle had issued his surprising invitation. Seemed that Rookery Cove Aphrodisiacs was looking for some lab assistants and someone of Mitch's talents was much appreciated. He hadn't given it much thought. He'd just instantly accepted the invitation to send in his resume.

He'd been hired almost immediately, after being brought in briefly to interview with the bigwigs. He must have done something to impress them. It sure as hell hadn't

been his way with words or his impressive social skills, that was for sure. He couldn't actually remember if he'd even been civil. Shrugging, he admitted to himself that he really didn't give a shit if people thought he was tough to be around. He preferred it that way.

But, for all his faults, Mitch was meticulous with his research. He was organized to the point of OCD when he wanted to be, and that came in handy when dealing with experiments on some of the creatures the lab dealt with. Making sex toys and aphrodisiacs wasn't as easy as you'd think. They had to test everything before it went out to the general public, which often meant grouping together subjects that were appropriate for the tests being done. It wouldn't do to send out something that was supposed to induce heat in pixies if they didn't actually conduct tests on pixies first.

Which brought his attention back to the goddamned pixie who'd escaped. Where the hell was the little runt?

A rustling in the bushes off to his left captured his attention. Mitch lowered his head, making do with his less effective nose in human form. He inhaled, testing the air.

Abruptly, he reared back, every muscle in his body tensing. That scent, that tantalizing scent, was drawing nearer. Whatever -- or whoever -- was causing it was about to break into the clearing. Mitch curled his upper lip, narrowing his eyes.

A twig snapped, fur was ruffled by the wind and something brushed against bark. It all became clear as day to him. The sounds magnified as if they were happening directly in front of him. His nose might be less sensitive in this form, but there was nothing wrong with his hearing.

He cocked his head a moment later, baffled at the sight of the creature that walked into the clearing to stop suddenly at the sight of Mitch.

He was slim, obviously young and incredibly tender to Mitch's wolf eyes. Juicy. Pale, milky skin covered his upper body and it looked like the sun had never touched his flesh. Wild curls framed an arresting face, and a pointed chin drew attention to full lips just begging to be taken.

Mitch spied small horns peaking out of the brown curls, a touch darker than the faun's hair. He growled low in his throat, forcibly reining in his wolf.

The faun remained still, his honey brown eyes wide as he stared back at Mitch. Not a whiff of fear came off him, he was utterly peaceful. It was actually kinda nice to meet someone who didn't react with fear at their first sight of him. Mitch grinned, licking his bottom lip.

The faun ducked his head, looking down at the forest floor. The action drew Mitch's gaze along that lean body, past the dusky nipples and the indent at his navel. Down to the curling brown fur that started at his hipbones. The fur almost hid the goat-like limbs on the creature. Halfway down his calf, the fur tapered off except for little tufts covering the fragile looking hooves that were currently shifting back and forth in the grass. His little faun was nervous. Hmm... interesting.

Mitch paced forward, bringing the faun's attention back to him. He took in the growing pink blush along the man's chest and face. Mitch grinned again, baring his teeth.

"Hello."

The word was softly spoken, barely audible. Mitch stopped in front of the faun, studying him closely. "Hey back."

"Do you live here?"

"In the labs. You?"

The blush deepened, a becoming pink shading his cheeks. "Oh, well, I'm the groundskeeper."

"Groundskeeper? Is that why I've never seen you around?"

"Yes. Well, sort of. Actually, no."

Mitch raised one hand, brushing his knuckles down one soft cheek. That blush was driving him to distraction. "What exactly does that mean?"

"Well, you see, I don't actually go near the manufacturing plant. I'm not supposed to, Airk's orders." He stopped, his brow furrowing. "Actually, it's really more Bernie's orders. Airk's never really said anything about not going to the plant. He only

really said that I probably wouldn't want to go. Although, I can't see why not, since I want to know as much as possible about the other workers. Is it true you really take a break every few hours so you don't get tired? And that you take longer off for lunch? I've never really understood that. I mean, why only work during the day? Wouldn't it make more sense to work whenever you wanted to? That way you could visit with all the animals out on the island and take in the sunset whenever you wanted to."

Mitch chuckled, amused at the bright eyed wonder on the faun's face. He seemed fascinated by the workings of the plant. "What's your name?"

"Oh, Corin. Corin Róg. What's yours?"

"Mitch Whelan."

"I like you."

Mitch couldn't hold back the bark of laughter this time. It seemed his faun said whatever entered his pretty little head. Wait, when had he started referring to him as *his faun*? His cock jerked behind the restrictive jeans he now cursed putting on this morning. "Is that right, Pretty?"

"Yes. Do you want to mate with me?"

Choking, Mitch brought his hand up to his throat. Did Corin just say what he thought he'd said?

"Oh, was I not supposed to say anything?" Corin looked upset. He was wringing those long-fingered hands now, peering intently up at Mitch. It hadn't escaped his notice that he towered over the faun by about a foot. Not the best height difference for what he wanted to do to him, but it served to bring all his protective instincts to the forefront. His wolf growled in agreement, wanting to come out and play with the little faun. He willed it down. Now wasn't the time to let his wolf out.

"I always forget that there's things you shouldn't talk about in front of people. Bernie tried to tell me once, he really did, but it didn't seem important at the time."

"Pretty, you can say whatever you want to me."

"Really?"

Mitch moved closer, lifting both hands to cup Corin's cheeks. Leaning down, he inhaled, clouding his senses with the mossy scent of the faun. He slanted his lips over Corin's, capturing the other man's moan.

Corin didn't hesitate for a second, his arms wrapped around Mitch's neck, his smaller body molding itself suggestively against him. One dainty hoof pressed against his calf, his thigh quivering against Mitch's.

He deepened the kiss, stroking his tongue intently into Corin's mouth. Corin moaned, shifting to press his body closer to Mitch. He honestly didn't think it was possible, but suddenly his arms were full of horny faun. The man's body was plastered against his. And if he wasn't mistaken... Mitch shifted, groaning at the hard press of Corin's cock against his thigh. Yeah, his little faun was definitely into this.

Breaking their kiss to draw in a deep lungful of air scented with moss and faun, Mitch had to hold Corin away from him. The smaller man was whimpering, rubbing his shaft against the denim covering Mitch's thigh.

"This what you want? Corin, you want this?" He lowered his arm, cupping the surprisingly large shaft in his hand. Testing the weight of it with his fingers, Mitch grinned at the breathy sighs coming from Corin.

He tugged, grasping Corin's cock in one large hand and letting the man feel every inch of skin he could give him. It was certainly advantageous that he didn't have to worry about undressing Corin. Said something for having fur. And speaking of fur, the curls on Corin's thighs were brushing against Mitch's wrist with every stroke. It was softer than he'd first imagined it to be.

Winding his other arm around Corin's slim hips, he pressed his palm to Corin's lower back. Skating his hand lower, he was delighted to feel the smooth, hairless skin at the top of the man's crease.

"Turn around, Corin."

Pouting slightly, the other man nevertheless followed his directions, spinning until his back was to Mitch. Letting his gaze follow the curve of Corin's spine, he grinned wickedly at the sight of Corin's ass. His fur didn't start until halfway down his

firm, round cheeks. The skin above was soft and rosy, a permanent and adorable plumber's crack. Mitch tried to get his grin under control, he didn't want Corin to think he was laughing at him, but the sight of that smooth skin tapering into wild and curly fur was turning Mitch on faster than anything. Who'd have thought he'd be entranced at the sight of a little faun ass?

Corin peeked back over one shoulder, batting his eyelashes. "Are you finished?"

"What's the matter, Pretty? Getting impatient?"

"Well, unless you're planning on fucking me from behind, I'd really rather be facing you for this."

Mitch closed his eyes, trying to figure out what he'd done in some blessed past life to be faced with this. It definitely wasn't anything he'd done presently. He fully realized he could be a right bastard without trying.

"On your back, Corin." Mitch barely recognized his voice, it was pitched so low with a deep, gravelly undertone. He couldn't hold his wolf back. He felt his eyes shift to a light amber, confirmed when Corin gasped. It was all he could do to keep his claws sheathed.

Corin wiggled, dropping to the ground and shifting until he lay sprawled over the grass. He didn't seem to mind Mitch's commands. Corin's thighs dropped open, his long cock almost obscene nestled among the thick curls at his crotch. It was flushed, weeping from the slit, almost purple at the crown.

Groaning, Mitch felt his teeth pop, brutally sharp canines dropping down to fill his mouth. He wanted to taste Corin, but he didn't trust his wolf at the moment. He really shouldn't combine thick, scrumptious cock with razor-sharp teeth. He wasn't entirely lust-drunk enough to risk it.

Corin let his arms fall to his sides, grasping the blades of grass on either side of him. "Are you waiting for an invitation?"

Shreds of denim floated down to the ground at Corin's hooves, Mitch too impatient to bother with undressing properly. His tee followed it, the cotton no match

for his claws. It was a good thing he was barefoot, as usual. Mitch hated wearing shoes of any kind.

Dropping to all fours, Mitch licked his lips, lowering his face to inhale deeply between Corin's thighs. The scent there was fabulous, deep and rich. He could happily smell Corin for the rest of his life and he wouldn't complain about it. He'd probably die a jovial, content man.

Mitch wasn't sure exactly what was wrong with him. He'd never reacted this strongly to a lover before. There was just something about the smaller man, though, that inflamed the wolf in him to the point that nothing else registered. Hell, a herd of deer could come prancing into the clearing at any moment and the wolf in him would probably calmly watch them pass. He shook his head, grunting at the press of Corin's cock against his cheek. He nuzzled the shaft, yipping when long fingers suddenly tangled in his hair, pulling tight.

"Please, Mitch. There's time for that later. I need you now."

Who was he to refuse such a request? He wasn't made of stone. Although, Mitch's cock was hard enough at the moment that he could probably cut diamonds with it. He was throbbing, pressure building at the base of his spine. It hurt, and there was only one place he wanted to ease the ache.

Lowering his head further, ignoring the bite on his scalp as the faun pulled his hair, Mitch swiped his tongue along the tight balls in front of him. He licked a path to Corin's crease, glorying in every whimper and moan he dragged out of the man. His scent was even stronger here, rich and earthy. Mitch closed his eyes, panting. The man smelled like home and how fucked up was that? How could a person smell like home? The wolf inside Mitch howled, more than happy to accept what that meant.

He'd found his mate. How was this even possible? It was why he'd left the pack in the first place. He hadn't wanted to mate with any of the females -- and everyone knew fate liked to fuck with people. So it would be just his luck to be fated to mate a dickless woman. Plus, he hadn't been attracted to any of the males around that were actually interested in being with another man.

He wasn't going to pass up this chance to enjoy his mate though. Regardless of how it happened, he was more than happy to take advantage of it.

Lifting his right hand, he pressed two fingers against Corin's mouth, encouraging the other man to suck him in. Corin parted his lips, teasing Mitch with how thoroughly he wet his fingers. The faun could probably suck the dents from the side of a car if he really tried. Christ, the first time he put those luscious lips around Mitch's cock, he might just embarrass himself by shooting immediately.

Mitch reared up, pulling his fingers free and settling his big body between Corin's thighs. His scalp burned since he hadn't given Corin enough time to release his hair but he could live with missing a few strands. He couldn't live much longer if he didn't get inside Corin's ass, though.

He brought his now-wet fingers down to tease Corin's pucker. Corin tossed his head, tilting his hips to get more of the touch against his hole. Mitch gave him what he was begging for and slowly pressed the tips of his fingers into Corin. The faun was hot, his passage almost sucking Mitch's digits further in. He scissored his fingers, pressing against quivering muscles.

"Please, Mitch, please."

Removing his fingers, hoping that was enough, Mitch pressed his lover's furry legs up until he cradled them in the bend of his elbows. His cock bumped against Corin's hole and they both groaned. Arching his hips, Mitch thrust, determined not to stop until he was balls-deep inside his faun. Hoping like hell Corin was into it, he studied the other man's face. The flickering eyelids and flushed cheeks were a dead giveaway that Corin was definitely enjoying himself. Well, that and the insistent moans and whimpers escaping from behind parted lips certainly made it seem like Corin loved the feel of him.

Corin's hands fluttered at Mitch's waist, pressing and releasing, urging him on. When he was inside Corin as deep as he could go, Mitch let out a bone-rattling sigh. God, it felt good. His dick was encased in the sweetest, hottest, tightest hole he'd ever

been inside before. The faun was undulating under him, making his balls draw up tight. Christ, he wasn't going to last long.

Backing out, he almost shot off at the vise-like grip trying to keep him inside. With a fierce howl, Mitch broke, letting his wolf out to play. His pelvis smacked furiously against Corin, and he was probably going to leave a dent in the ground when they were finished, but he didn't much care.

Releasing one firm hold on Corin's leg, Mitch reached between their bodies, grasping Corin's cock and giving him something to thrust into. Corin tensed under him, panting loudly, before an arc of come shot out of his dick. It landed on his belly before the rest of his come coated Mitch's hand. The scent of his release filled the air around them.

Mitch threw back his head, his balls aching to release. One thrust, two more, and he was almost there. With an inhuman yell, he pulled out, grasping his cock tightly and came hard enough to see stars. His eyes were scrunched tight, and he didn't even want to know what his face looked like. It felt as if his whole body was being turned inside out.

Panting, he dropped heavily on top of Corin, feeling the smear of their seed coat his sweat-soaked belly.

Christ, what had just happened?

Chapter Three

Corin smiled, blinking open his eyes to stare at his newest friend. He couldn't believe he'd finally found someone he was attracted to enough to want to be with. It wasn't as if he met very many people normally, but Mitch was so incredibly appealing. Corin couldn't believe the man had entered his forest. How lucky could he get?

Bernie was going to be so happy for him when he found out Corin had met someone. Well, at least he hoped Bernie would be happy. The older man did occasionally act a little protective of him, but surely he'd see that Corin was happy with Mitch. He may not understand all the ins and outs of human behavior but Corin understood nature. And what they'd just done was about as natural as anything out there.

He'd always known he was different. It hadn't taken long for him to figure out he wasn't quite built the way the people around him were. He didn't know much about his parents, all he remembered was the island. He'd always been here, as far as he knew. Even Bernie didn't know anything about his past. It was a mystery, but one he really wasn't all that interested in. The island was like nothing else, it operated in its own time, and you really didn't want to argue with it.

You either belonged here or you didn't. Simple as that.

Corin knew he belonged here, but even so, he knew he hadn't quite found the right path to happiness. Bernie and Airk just weren't willing to let him experiment to find out what his right place was. He knew they were afraid he wouldn't fit in with the others. That he wasn't meant to be around man-made things, but Corin was content to wait and see what happened.

There was no use arguing with fate or trying to rush things. Everyone had a purpose in life, and a time in which that would be revealed, and Corin just had to wait and see what his was.

He smiled, full to almost bursting with the knowledge that he'd just found his path. He knew he was meant to be with Mitch. It felt right. And not just the mating, although that had definitely felt right. Corin felt the heat of his blush filling his cheeks.

No, it felt right inside him, in his mind and in his spirit. He was sure his path had just been shown to him. Now, to find out what it all meant. Was he supposed to go back with Mitch, or would Mitch stay with him? He really didn't want them to separate now that they'd just found each other.

Well, no use getting a headache trying to figure out everything at once. Besides, he probably should wait and see what Mitch said when he got up. The man had almost passed out after coming, and he was now lying heavily on top of Corin. He liked the weight of the man over him, so he wasn't complaining about it. Corin tensed his thighs, glorying in the feel of Mitch between them. They just fit right.

He giggled, unable to hold the sound in. A snuffling sound brought his gaze back to Mitch's face. The man was smiling, his lips curved softly. He giggled again, bright and joyous. Mitch blinked open his eyes, shifting until he was levered off Corin, holding himself up on his elbows. They were still pressed tightly together at their groins, although Mitch had long since slipped out of him. It was a pity, he'd liked the feeling of him there, even if they weren't fucking.

The sound of clapping filled the clearing, distracting him. They both looked up to see a small blue woman sitting on the branch of the tree above them. She was chortling to herself, clapping loudly and rocking back and forth. Her whole body was blue, even her hair. Plus, there was the fact that she was only about a foot tall in total. She looked like a tiny blue Barbie doll. He remembered seeing a picture of one once in Bernie's cottage when he'd been looking through the books in Bernie's library.

Mitch exploded off him, suddenly standing over top Corin with his hands on his hips. "Fuck a duck! Son of a cocksucking hellspawn. Get down here right now, you wretched imp."

The little woman gasped loudly, standing up on the branch and putting her hands on her hips. She looked like a little miniature Mitch. Their scowls matched perfectly. "I'm not an ugly imp and you know it. I'm not going back with you, Mitchy, and don't try to make me. I have rights, you blasted wolf, and you're taking advantage of me."

Corin stared in awe at the scene in front of him. Slowly gaining his feet, he stood beside Mitch, swiveling his head back and forth between them. What was going on? And what did she mean when she called him a wolf?

"Ummm, Mitch?"

"You damn well are going back with me, Trix, so don't even bother arguing. Get down here this minute, before I climb up there and get you. Trust me, if I have to climb up there to get you, you'll regret it. Now!"

Trix must have figured he was serious because she quickly made her way to the trunk, shimmying herself down until she stood at their feet. Walking up to Mitch, she reared back her right leg, kicking him solidly on his ankle. Mitch sighed, the sound heavy enough to rustle the hair at Corin's nape.

"Are you quite done now?"

She harrumphed, ignoring him.

"Mitch, what's going on?" Corin kicked his hoof, stirring up the grass underneath. He didn't understand any of this.

"I need to take Trix back to the lab. She's the reason I came out here."

"Take her back for what?"

Mitch simply looked at him, obviously considering his words. "Did anyone ever tell you what Rookery Cove does?"

"Airk explained it to me once. You make lotions and toys and stuff."

"Right. Well, see, in order to make sure whatever's made is safe for people to use, we have to test it out first. Make sure it works and everything."

"Okay, I get that. So, Trix helps you out with that?"

"She's part of an experiment."

Corin backed up, staring in horror at the man in front of him. No, he couldn't mean what he thought he meant. Mitch wouldn't do something like that. It wasn't natural, and he couldn't believe his lover would do something unnatural like conduct experiments on other creatures.

"Don't look at me like that, Pretty. She isn't harmed during testing."

Trix harrumphed again. "Easy for you to say. I have the equivalent of blue balls because of you and your damn experiments, so don't you try and tell me I'm not harmed in any way."

"Mitch, what's she talking about?" Corin was growing more horrified by the minute. And his mate was looking fiercer by the minute. His eyes were shifting again, like they had back when they'd had sex. What exactly did that mean?

"We're testing a spray for pixies. See, pixie males are pretty much sexed up all the time, but their females aren't. They need a pheromone to induce heat for them. It normally comes from a special flower that can only be found under particular circumstances. Long story short, because of human interference in certain parts of the world, the flowers aren't growing in the abundance that they used to.

"We were approached to find something to reproduce the pheromones in the flower and we finally figured it out, but we needed creatures to test it on to make sure it would actually work."

"How does it work?"

"We split the pixies being tested up into several groups. We weren't sure if the pheromone would work better as an aerosol or an injection so we needed three separate experiments to run at the same time. One set of females is sprayed, one set is injected and then both their reactions are measured, while the third group of females is used as

a control with a placebo. Because we're testing the effectiveness of it, we've had to separate the males and females as a final measure."

"Did it work?"

"Unfortunately, it worked too well. The females that were sprayed started immediately experiencing heat. We allowed the males access to the females at the time, but unfortunately that just caused the control group to get pissed off. When I was out of the lab yesterday, a group of females from the control broke out of their cage somehow, managed to find the spray and wreaked havoc all over the place. When we were trying to clean up, it was discovered that one of the pixies was missing."

"I was just taking a stroll, your high and mighty wolfness. Which I wouldn't have had to do if you hadn't allowed them hussies to gain access to the men first. They plum wore them out and none of the bastards was even interested in mating with us. I'll keel over and die before I let one of those addle-brained, twelve-toed, muscle-hopped males near me again. Bastards, every one of 'em. Wouldn't know their snakes from a hole in the ground, if it weren't for us females telling them what was what. And don't get me started on those hussies. Sat there and twittered the whole time while we tried to make the men stand up and dance for us. Satisfied skanks, is what they was."

She crossed her arms, pacing back and forth in front of them.

"Oh, don't be upset. I'm sure they wouldn't have meant to ignore you. They were just tired, like you said. I'm sure if you went back now they'd welcome you with open arms. And I'm sure you don't really mean that about the females. Aren't they your friends?"

Trix looked askance up at Corin. "Have you gone mad? Not meant to? Let me tell you something about pixies. We always do exactly what we mean to. Don't forget that. That'll be the last lesson you'll ever learn if you aren't careful."

"Enough, Trix. We're going back to the lab, now."

"And what of your lover-faun over there?"

"What of him?" Mitch glowered.

"Is he coming with us?"

Mitch paused, his brow furrowed. Glancing over to Corin, he opened his mouth several times but nothing came out.

Corin was practically bouncing with excitement. He might get to see the workers actually working. This would be so exciting. Plus, he couldn't wait to see where Mitch lived. It must be nice, but even if it wasn't, he'd still be okay with it as long as his wolf was beside him. Speaking of which, he never did figure out what she meant about Mitch being a wolf. Was it just a figure of speech, or was he one of those creatures that shifted shape between animal and human form?

He could tell he'd never be bored around Mitch, that was for sure.

"Corin, you said you were the groundskeeper, right? That means you must be on staff at Rookery Cove. So it should be a simple matter of getting you transferred to work in the lab with me."

Corin shifted, looking everywhere but at his lover. Sure, he was happy the man wanted him to stay with him, but he wasn't at all sure he wanted to be transferred, whatever that meant. "What do you mean, on staff?"

"Just that you're an employee for them. You know, you do the work, they pay you for it."

"Well, Airk knows about me and so does Bernie. Is that what you mean? But I don't get paid for my work. I do it because I like it. Oh, I forgot about the Virgin's bower. I still need to get it."

Trix giggled. "I'm pretty sure the bowers of the virgin have been mightily plowed by now. You can't rightly call yourself no virgin no more."

"It's a plant," Mitch and Corin both said at the same time. They looked to each other, grinning.

Mitch shook his head, scratching his belly. Corin had almost forgotten he was naked, and how could he forget a sight like that. The man's hand drew his attention to the rippled strength of his lover. Mitch was tall, Corin only came up to just beneath his chin. His face was chiseled, his cheekbones high, his nose long. His eyes were deep-set under heavy brows and the tousled bangs of his chocolate locks, but they were the most

beautiful brown color. Corin felt like they saw right through him, into the most intimate parts of him.

Mitch was muscular, his body corded and strong. A thatch of hair covered his chest, narrowing as it grew down his belly until it thickened once again around his cock. His legs were muscular too, and covered with a light coating of dark hair. They too were strong, and it was obvious he kept in shape. Wow, the man was appealing. Corin couldn't have asked for a better looking man. He would have even been hard pressed to imagine someone like Mitch. Sure, his friend Airk was attractive, but he didn't stir Corin the way Mitch did. This was something unique.

"Wait, what do you mean, you don't get paid?"

Corin shrugged, unsure what the man was asking him.

"Sounds to me like no one knows he's here 'cept a few men. Mighty suspicious, if you ask me. You thinkin' the others don't know about him?"

"Trix, stay out of this." Mitch studied him carefully.

"What'cha gonna do? You thinkin' you should bring him back to the lab and just hope they accept him?"

"Trix..."

"I'm just saying!"

Corin figured he should probably say something before things got out of hand. Sidling up beside Mitch, he placed his palm on the man's chest, soothing him. "I don't see what the problem is. Why can't you just take me with you?"

Mitch wrapped his arm around Corin's waist, his fingers coming to rest at the top of his crease. Corin squirmed, getting hot at the feel of those familiar fingers. Mitch kept running the tips slowly over the patch of skin above his fur. Over and over again. It was slowly driving him mad. He wasn't going to ask him to stop, though. No, he wasn't stupid.

"All right, it's settled then. You're coming with us."

Corin couldn't wait. This was going to be so much fun. Plus, he'd get to learn more about Mitch. This was definitely turning out to be a great day all around. He

thought about the lingering soreness between his cheeks. It may have been his first time, but he was surely looking forward to a repeat performance. Soon. He squirmed again when Mitch's fingers dipped down to slide along his crease. Really soon.

Interdepartmental Communication

DATE: October 5, 2007, 4:54 AM

TO: Zwiffle Yeats, QA Department

FROM: Mitch Whelan, QA Lab Assistant

Found the groundskeeper out in the forest. Brought him in. I needed a new assistant.

* * *

DATE: October 5, 2007, 7:32 AM

TO: Mitch Whelan, QA Lab Assistant

FROM: Zwiffle Yeats, QA Department

We have a groundskeeper? Please ensure he has signed a confidentiality agreement and has been orientated to Rookery Cove Aphrodisiacs. I trust he shouldn't have any problems adapting to a laboratory environment. I expect to be updated with his progress and any problems that arise.

I would appreciate a meeting at your earliest convenience to discuss his potential duties.

As to the pixie, I'm assuming you recaptured (the reason for your trip into the outlying parts of the island, if you'll recall) her. Please have her placed back in her appropriate group and check her responsiveness to the tests.

Chapter Four

Mitch wasn't sure why he was nervous, but he felt like a bridegroom on the eve of his wedding. For some reason he really wanted Corin to love his place. It wasn't much, but he knew it was going to be important if he wanted Corin to stay with him. He hadn't missed the man's evasiveness when he'd asked him to work with him. Corin probably hadn't ever lived in a place like this before, so he wouldn't know what to expect.

His place wasn't that great, just a single room with a bed pushed up against the far wall. He had a small kitchen, barely big enough to make a few meals, although he wasn't the best cook. A door beside the bed led off to the bathroom. Other than the bed, the room was empty. He didn't have a desk because he figured he did all his work when he was at work. There was no need to bring any of it home. He didn't have a TV since he only really came here to eat and sleep. He'd never been one for sitting around watching TV anyway.

It'd be up to Mitch to make sure he gave Corin every reason to want to stay. He wanted to give them a chance together, see what they could have. If he wanted to do that, he damn well needed to keep Corin close. It'd be pretty hard to woo the man into accepting him as a mate if he couldn't see him every day because Corin was out in the forest doing whatever the hell he did.

He'd had fun searching for the Virgin's bower. Apparently one of the birds near where Corin lived with Bernie was nesting and Corin wanted to make sure everything was perfect for her. Although, it did bring up a new question for him.

"Who the hell is Bernie?"

Corin paused beside him, from where he was studying Mitch's room. "Oh, he's the old man. I don't really know a lot about him, he has secrets he doesn't share with

anyone but that's okay with me. I figure everyone has a story and it makes it more interesting to hear it over many tellings rather than all at once. Otherwise you just get to the end and miss the journey."

"So the journey's important to you?"

"Oh, yes." Corin's expression was earnest when he turned to face Mitch. "The journey is the most important part. You don't want to miss anything along the way. Some people are so caught up in doing something and reaching the end that they forget about all the simple pleasures that can be had by experiencing something fully. It's a real shame."

"How do you know so much about people? I thought you didn't have much contact with them."

Corin laughed, his giggle infectious. "Just because I've never met them doesn't mean I don't know anything about them. Bernie and Airk tell me lots, and whatever I want to know, I can find out in Bernie's books. There's so much information out there, it can be mind-boggling at times. Did you realize that there isn't any way one person can know absolutely everything? Just thinking about all that's out there is enough to give me a headache."

Mitch stepped forward, sprawling on the bed. He was still bare-assed naked since he hadn't been able to save his clothing after he'd ripped them off and he couldn't be bothered to put anything else on. Besides, he wanted at Corin again, soon, so there was no point in covering up just to ruin another perfectly good pair of jeans.

Corin walked over to his kitchen cupboards and started opening drawers, studying the contents before moving on to the next.

"What do you want to know?"

Corin ran one hoof against his opposite calf briefly. Leaning against the cupboards, he turned to answer Mitch. "I've always been curious about what's out there. Outside the island."

"Have you ever been off the island?"

"Not that I know of. I was raised here but I don't know if I was born here. If I was, then I definitely haven't been off the island. I don't know much about my parents. Obviously they were fauns, but Bernie didn't know who they were and Airk says there's no record of fauns ever working here. So, they could have been on the island initially, before Rookery Cove Aphrodisiacs started business." He shrugged.

"You're not curious?"

"Of course I am. Well, sometimes. I've just always believed that everything happens for a reason. If I'm not supposed to know about my parents, then there's no reason for me to get upset about not knowing. And if I am supposed to know, well, then I'll find out when it's time for me to find out."

Mitch couldn't get over how matter-of-fact Corin was. He wasn't used to that kind of attitude. The pack back home fretted about everything. They needed to know everything and made it their business even when it wasn't. He found Corin's attitude refreshing. It was different, but it made sense. He couldn't figure out how Corin could sound so mature one minute and so damned innocent the next. He'd had no upbringing that Mitch had ever heard of.

"What about you? Do you have a family?"

Mitch nodded, bringing his arms up behind his head. He settled deeper into the covers, happy when Corin deserted the kitchen to crawl beside him on the bed. "I have a pack, which is bigger than any family you're probably familiar with. Think of a large, dysfunctional group and you'll have an idea what it was like for me growing up there. Not that I didn't have a good childhood or anything, but I had no privacy. Plus, it's expected that every male will do his duty to the pack and breed when he reaches his majority. For obvious reasons, I didn't want to do that. I had no intention of staying around and falling into a life that wasn't my choosing."

Corin placed his head on one of Mitch's arms, curling up. "How'd you come here then?"

"I met Zwiffle, my boss, a few years ago at some convention or other. I normally don't attend, but I was curious about what other labs were doing for Quality Assurance.

I'd gone to school initially as a way to stay away from the family, but found out that I loved it. Took a bunch of Bio classes just to fill up my schedule in my first year, and the labs were the best parts. Sitting in some dusty room at eight in the morning when the majority of students were still tucked away in bed was the most fun I've had in my life up to that point. I finally found something I was good at. It didn't take long for me to change my major from General Studies to Biology."

Mitch smiled, reminiscing about all the good times he'd had. "I remember this one lab partner I had in second year. It was Organic Chemistry and the stuff was dry. Fun to learn about but hell to remember for the exams. Anyway, Rob was gorgeous, a little soul patch under his bottom lip. Blond and blue-eyed, typical surfer look. He talked with this drawl and gave every appearance of being a lazy SOB, but he was actually very quick-minded. We must have spent I don't know how many extra hours going over and over our results until they were perfect."

Mitch had no idea why he'd just told Corin that. Wasn't it a cardinal rule that you didn't bring up an ex in front of the current boyfriend? At least he hadn't mentioned exactly how close they'd gotten.

"Did you sleep with him? He sounds cute." Corin bounced in place, grinning up at him.

Mitch shook his head ruefully. He would never understand his mate. "You know, most men don't want to hear about past exploits."

Corin wrinkled his nose. "But, why? The past is the past. You're not with him anymore, you're with me."

"Yeah, but most people still get uncomfortable at the thought that someone else was touching the body they now have. I don't know how to explain it, just trust me on it."

Corin looked like he wanted to argue with him but he wisely kept quiet. He suddenly grinned, pushing up and swinging one leg over Mitch's hips. Straddling him, Corin leaned down and placed his hands square on Mitch's chest. He looked quite pleased with himself. "So, this is my body now, is that what you're saying?"

"Yeah, Pretty, this is yours."

Corin licked his lips, studying him from underneath half-lidded eyes. "Hmm, what do I do with you, then?"

"Well, you were adamant that you like journeys." Mitch spread his arms wide. "Journey away."

Giggling, Corin squeezed his thighs together on either side of Mitch's hips. His fur was a welcome texture against skin that hadn't felt fur since the last time he'd slept doggy piled up with his pack. It was different from his wolf pelt, though, softer and silkier. He liked it.

Corin started kneading his chest, digging his long fingers into the muscle. Mitch closed his eyes, content. Releasing a pent up sigh, he sank deeper into the covers, letting his mate set the pace for them.

Seemingly content with exploring his chest, Corin took his time. His nimble fingers touched every dip and hollow on Mitch's chest and belly. Corin caressed his nipples with the palms of his hands before pinching them between thumb and forefinger. Mitch growled, his shaft hardening, coming up to rest against Corin's ass. He thrust slightly, lazily, loving the warm fur against sensitive skin.

Corin dipped a finger into his belly button, rimming the indent before moving on to trace the muscles along his stomach. Smoothing his palms up and over, he cupped Mitch's shoulders, kneading the muscles there.

Mitch groaned, long and loud. Gods, that felt good. All the tension was leaving his body, melting under the capable hands of his mate. Actually, not all the tension was leaving. The tension in his cock was growing by the second. Every time Corin shifted, he'd rub his ass against Mitch's shaft and it was starting to drive him to distraction. He loved the feel of it.

If he didn't know better, he'd think his faun was doing it on purpose.

Leaning down, Corin touched his mouth to Mitch's. He opened his lips, accepting the other man's tongue inside his mouth, letting Corin explore to his heart's content. Corin traced Mitch's teeth with his tongue, before dueling briefly with his. His

faun even tasted earthy, natural. He couldn't describe it exactly, but it just felt right. Gods, he was getting crazy being around Corin. It seemed like he was growing more flustered as Corin grew more confident. He wasn't used to feeling this way. All of a sudden, he was afraid. For the first time in his life, Mitch actually feared someone leaving *him*, instead of the other way around. What would he do without this man?

He tried to bring his arms up to clasp the faun to his chest but Corin stopped him. Pulled away enough to whisper against his lips. "Let me. This is about you. Just lay back, relax and let me do all the work."

Mitch felt his lips curve up. He didn't have any problem with his faun taking charge, as long as they both realized that the only reason he could was because Mitch was letting him take charge. There was no doubt which one of them was in control here.

Though maybe he had it wrong all along. Corin was the one controlling him, and he was happy enough to let him. Strange for an Alpha wolf to let someone else guide him, but he guessed that's what happened when the wolf took a mate. He was curiously okay with it.

Corin slid down his body, ending up between Mitch's spread thighs. His lips followed the path his hands had taken earlier, learning every inch of Mitch's chest and belly. He played with his nipples, sucking them in, giving Mitch just the edge of his teeth, before moving on. When he reached Mitch's belly button, he thrust his tongue in and out, making Mitch squirm in place.

Moving further down Mitch's body, Corin glanced up and met his gaze. Mitch let all the love he was feeling for Corin fill his eyes, wanting the other man to know how much it meant to him that they'd found each other.

He couldn't believe how soothing this was, especially after their frantic fucking out in the forest. This was loving, in its purest form.

Corin placed the flat of his tongue on the head of Mitch's cock, enveloping him with wet heat. Mitch fisted his hands in the blankets, desperate to follow Corin's request earlier. He wanted to please Corin, make him happy.

"That's it, Corin. Please..."

Gods, was that actually him begging? This was a change. He'd never begged before. Never.

Corin didn't make him ask again. He swallowed Mitch down, taking half his shaft in one mind-blowing move. Mitch was almost afraid to breathe, the sensations were so incredible. He was right, the man could suck. He closed his eyes, repeating the periodic table over and over again in his mind. He was about to shoot off like some high school junior with his first BJ.

Tilting his head, wanting to see as much of this as he could, Mitch murmured nonsense to Corin. He couldn't understand a fucking word he was saying so he had no idea how Corin did, but the man didn't seem to mind. "Yes, Pretty. Suck me. Take me in. Just like that."

Tearing sounds filled the room, but he couldn't stop his claws from shredding the bed beneath him. He was afraid if he let go and grasped Corin the way he wanted to, he'd end the sweet torture his faun was inflicting on him. Sweat beaded on his forehead, and Mitch grimaced. He could be strong, he knew he could.

Ten fucking, agonizingly strong sucks later, and Mitch knew he couldn't keep his promise. His faun was killing him. "Enough, Corin. I want to come inside your ass. Let up."

Corin complied readily enough, although he did linger at the head of Mitch's cock for an extra second or two.

Mitch couldn't prevent the loud rending again, as his claws dug even deeper into the bed.

"You're going to need to buy us a new bed. Either that or we'll have to fuck outside all the time." Corin giggled.

"Pretty. Up you go."

Corin wriggled into the place Mitch wanted him, straddling his hips and running his ass over and over Mitch's dick.

"Please..." He didn't care if the faun heard him begging, he just needed to get inside him, now.

Corin reached back, holding Mitch's shaft steady while he got into position. He hadn't prepared himself, but apparently he didn't need to. Either that or he was too far gone to worry about it too much. His own shaft bobbed an angry red between his thighs.

Slowly, drawing out every quivering inch, Corin sank onto Mitch's cock. Finally he was seated entirely within the other man, and Mitch couldn't hold back his tortured groan. Fuck, it felt like heaven.

He snapped his hips, unable to hold still. Corin fell to his chest, whimpering, rocking his pelvis back and forth in tiny increments. It wasn't enough.

"Corin?"

"Oh, gods, please, I need you. Hard and fast. Rough. Make me feel it after. Make me remember."

Mitch actually felt his eyes roll back in his head. Christ, he didn't think that was possible. His toes curled, pleasure zinging through his body. He let go of the beast, letting his wolf out and started thrusting hard and fast into Corin. His faun held on, lifting his head to capture Mitch's lips. They moaned into each other's mouths, speaking a language older than time.

He wouldn't last long, but he didn't need to. He knew this was only the beginning with Corin. They were on the start of their journey together and they'd have many more things to experience.

Finally reaching up, trusting himself, Mitch fisted Corin's cock, gratified when the man shot off within seconds of Mitch touching him. The rhythmic contractions of the man's ass on his shaft were too much for Mitch, and he followed him into orgasm.

Their shouts of completion joined together, sounding like one voice.

Mitch dropped his head to the pillow beneath him, pulling Corin in tight.

Chapter Five

"I want you to promise you'll be careful with him. Corin's not like us. He's not used to subterfuge and all that. He grew up virtually alone, and all he understands is the need to live and be free."

Airk paced back and forth in front of him, drawing Mitch's attention. "Is that why he isn't afraid of me?"

"People have to be taught to fear. It isn't always instinctive. Corin's never had a reason to fear anything. He's never been hurt before, and he's never been lied to. He just simply doesn't understand the concept. It doesn't make him stupid, it just makes it all the more important that he has someone looking out for him. Making sure he doesn't get into a situation he doesn't know how to handle. At least until he can learn more about the way humans and paranormals act."

Mitch nodded, rubbing the whiskers covering his cheeks. He hadn't had time to shave since coming back to the lab, all his time had been spent with his little mate. The mate he should be with right now. He hadn't wanted to leave him, but he didn't have much of a choice. Zwiffle wanted a meeting, and Airk had somehow wormed his way into it. Honestly, he was grateful for the man's presence. It was nice to know that someone had been looking out for Corin before he'd found him.

Airk continued on. "It's why he's never been brought into the company as an employee. We thought it was best that he be left alone out in the wilder parts of Rookery Cove. The old man thought he'd be content out in nature, but apparently we underestimated him."

"Yeah, seems the little faun wasn't all that content with being alone."

"He wasn't alone."

"Having friends and having a lover are two different things. When he saw how happy you were with yours, did you really expect him to be content sitting around without the chance of ever having a mate?"

"You seem to have gotten to know him quite well in the past... what's it been? Two days?"

"Some people you can know within minutes, you know that. Days mean nothing when my wolf has claimed him. Corin's mine, and I won't allow anyone to get between us." The chair scraped loudly when he stood up abruptly. He snarled, baring his teeth.

"Back down, Mitch. No one is threatening anything." Zwiffle was a calming presence beside them. He'd been silent for the most part, up until now. He was seated behind his desk, utterly still. "You better get back to him. I'm fine with having him in the labs. If you'd like to train him, feel free. Just make sure he's never alone with the products until we can test he's competent in the duties he'll be assigned to. I don't want him to get injured because he doesn't understand how something works."

"Understood."

Mitch turned to leave, smiling ruefully at Airk when the man turned to join him in the hallway.

"I wish you well together."

"I know you do, friend. Now go back to your own mates. You need to get laid."

Airk laughed, the sound reminding him of the happy screeches of the gulls always present along the shoreline.

Mitch rubbed his hands together, thinking of his little faun. Looks like he got to keep the man close to him. Good, it was exactly where he wanted him. Licking his lips, he started down the hall back to his lab. It was time to introduce his mate to some of the toys Rookery Cove was famous for.

* * *

"Pssst, goat boy, over here."

Corin wrinkled his nose, staring over at the cage with all the little men in it. "I'm not supposed to talk to you."

"Hey, no sweat. How's about I talk and you just go on listening with those cute ears of yours."

Rolling his eyes, Corin studied the man who was now making very suggestive movements with his hips against the bars of the cage.

"Mitch was very particular in his orders. I'm to stay here, quietly, while he goes and talks to his boss."

"Ah, I see how it is. You're gonna listen to wolfie like a good little goat. Baaa, little goat, wassa matter? Wolfie make all the rules now?"

"What do you want?"

"Nothin, nothin, just wanted to talk, is all. Fine weather we're having, isn't it?"

"I suppose. I'd rather be outside in it, though."

The pixie stroked his chin, squeezing close to the bars. "Ah, a man after me own heart. I understand all about rathers. See, I'd rather be over there with all them ladies." He pointed to the other cage, blowing kisses at the gaggle of giggling pixies. A few of the more outrageous ladies flashed their tops up to their chins, exposing themselves for all to see. The male pixie grinned lewdly, growling low in his throat.

"You're not supposed to be together."

"Now, that there's just a lie. Mitch only separated us cause he don't want us getting our jollies off. We don't mean no harm though. My papa always said it was best to screw or your head would just plum fall off. You get my meaning?"

"I don't know..."

"Sures you do. See, all you have to do is open them cages, and we'll just flit over to visit with the ladies for a time or two. No worries. No muss, no fuss, and we'll be back in here before Mitch ever knows any different."

"I'm really not supposed to do anything. Mitch told me to just sit in here --"

"Ah, I see how it is. Wolfie really does call all the shots. What, he think you don't have a brain in your head? He must, he won't let you think for yourself. Must be tough, living with someone like that. Underestimates you and all. Gee, he must really think you're stupid if he won't let you make any decisions."

"It's not like that at all. Mitch cares for me. He doesn't think I'm stupid."

"Naw, just naïve. Or is it just that you're his little subbie? You prefer bending over and taking *instructions*?" The pixie guffawed, slapping his thigh.

Corin turned his back on the man, attempting to ignore him. Facing the women, he stared at one of them when she came closer to the bars. He hated the cages, he really did. It didn't make any sense to him. Corin winced when she grasped the bars in her little hands.

"It won't do any harm, I promise. We'll just have a little fun. You see, don't you? After all, you and Mitch certainly had a little bit of fun when he was supposed to be on company time. You wouldn't want him to get into any trouble, would you?"

"Wh-what do you mean?"

She gasped, putting her hand in front of her mouth. "You didn't know? Mitch could get in a lot of trouble for screwing around on the job. Gee, that's where he is right now, with the QA Director?"

"Yeah, but he said they were just talking about personnel."

"He probably didn't want you to worry. After all, we can all tell how attached he is to you. Mitch would do anything for you. Wouldn't you do anything for him?"

"What do you want me to do?"

"Just open up the cages, for a couple minutes. I give you my word that we'll hop right back in the moment you ask us to."

"Promise?"

"Promise."

Corin huffed, ignoring the niggling worry at the back of his head that he shouldn't be doing this. But, she gave her word. She wouldn't have lied to him. Besides, he couldn't get the thought of them in cages out of his head. No creature should ever be caged. It went against everything he believed in. He reached forward, releasing the catch on the male's cage.

The males rushed the cage door the minute he popped the latch. He'd panicked, backing up to get out of their way. They'd all instantly gone to where the ladies were being kept, throwing open the cage door and sprinting inside. They'd fallen upon the women like a pack of hyenas on a carcass. It was actually quite brutal in the intensity. Some of those men looked like they'd been a little desperate to have sex.

He tilted his head, not quite sure he'd ever seen anyone do anything remotely like that before. Wow, they were inventive. Three of the males had fallen upon a single female. Two were busy at her lower bits while the other was encouraging her to suck him dry.

Maybe he shouldn't have opened the door. He was starting to see why Mitch had them separated. He wished Trix was there, but Mitch had had to separate her when she got back. She'd been a little violent with one particular lady, he said, and so they were keeping her in another room until she was calmed down. He didn't really think it was fair, but he trusted Mitch. The man knew what he was doing. Corin bit his lip, shuffling in place. He had to do something to stop this and get them back in the cages.

"What are you doing, you stupid faun?"

Corin jerked, twirling around to see a small male barreling toward him. He was bowlegged and squat, his skin a sickly green color. His nose was flattened and his eyes bulged alarmingly. Corin was fascinated despite himself. He'd never met anyone like him before. He wondered if this male was one of Mitch's assistants.

"How could you? How could you ruin everything?"

Corin blinked, not knowing what to say. What had he done? Was he in trouble for letting them out of the cages?

"What, you too stupid to understand me? It's all going to be ruined because of you. How could you let them out?" The man grasped hold of the cage the pixies were fucking in, reaching in to grab one of the males by his leg. He wasn't exactly gentle about it, and the pixie yelped.

Corin instantly put himself between them. "Don't you touch them."

"Are you actually trying to tell me what to do? How dare you?" The man let go of the pixie with a twist of his wrist. The pixie fell limply to the ground, scowling up at them.

Corin glanced to the side, suddenly unnerved by the glint in the toad man's eye. He didn't like this one bit. He threw himself to the side just in time. The man swiped at

him, missing, but hitting the cage of pixies. They screamed when the cage rattled, all of them distracted from their sex acts to freeze in place.

Running, Corin evaded the man. He gasped when he hit the corner of a lab bench, wheeling off it to the side. Glass rattled and slid off the table, shattering on the ground, spilling their contents on the floor.

Hard nails raked down his back, tangling in the fur at his ass. Incensed that someone other than Mitch would touch him, Corin turned and kicked out strongly. He caught the ugly toad man square on the thigh and he was positive it was going to leave a mark. His hooves were a hell of a lot harder than anything the toad man could dish out.

Spying a door to the left, Corin ran over to it. He needed to get to Mitch but he didn't know where he was. He realized he'd just run into another room, not the hallway like he thought. He was about to back out when he saw Trix in the corner, staring at him wide-eyed. She let out a scream just as he felt the draft behind him. Ducking and sliding on the floor, Corin got out of the toad man's way just in time. He kicked out again, yelping when the toad man grabbed his ankle and twisted. He kicked at him with his other hoof, trying to get him to let go. One kick connected with the side of the toad man's face and he let go of Corin with a gasp.

"Over here, Corin. Let me out, now. Let me out. Quickly!"

Corin ran for Trix's cage, flinging the door open. She immediately grabbed a vial on the table next to her, jumping along the table until she reached the toad man. She dumped the contents of her vial over his head, stepping back when he started to bellow and paw at his face.

"Shame on you, Kro. How dare you touch what belongs to Mitch. He'll eat you up for breakfast for this. What's gotten into you?"

"He doesn't belong here. Look at him. He's a sniveling, whining baby who Mitch feels sorry for. Gave him a job just because he's fucking him. A job that should have been mine. He ruined everything with his stupidity. He doesn't belong here. I'll get my promotion now that he's messed everything up."

Corin stared in horror at the twisted features of the frog man, Kro. Why did he hate him so much? Corin had never done anything to Kro. He didn't like it here. He didn't like these people.

"He's destroyed everything," Kro whimpered, curling into a ball.

Glancing around him, Corin realized he was right. The place was a mess. Glass littered the floor, and various liquids stained the benches. He stepped around Kro, walking into the main lab, horrified all over again. He'd done this. Kro was right, he'd destroyed everything.

The pixies were lined up, shocked expressions on their faces. The male that had initially talked to him took one step forward before apparently thinking better of it. He immediately stepped back with the others.

A small touch to his forearm drew his gaze down. Trix stood on the table beside him, looking up with a concerned expression on her face. "Are you okay?"

He shook his head. He wasn't okay. This was all his fault. Well, his and Kro's. Actually, it was really more Kro's fault than his, but if he hadn't let the pixies out then Kro wouldn't have been so mad at him.

They'd destroyed something that Mitch treasured. This was his lab, his work. And Corin and Kro had ruined it all in a matter of minutes. How on earth was he going to explain this to Mitch? How was he going to look his lover in the eye and tell him that everything he'd worked so hard on was gone?

"You don't, *croak*, belong here," Kro hissed.

Corin wheeled around, finally finding the door leading outside. Unfortunately it was blocked by Mitch. He was standing still, shock evident on his face. He was staring right at Corin, unblinking.

"I'm sorry," Corin whispered.

Mitch shook his head, finally shifting his gaze, staring around him. His fists clenched and unclenched and a muscle started to twitch in his cheek. "You're a dead man." His words were guttural, his voice barely recognizable.

Corin tensed when Mitch stalked forward. He stopped in front of Corin, studying him carefully before walking behind him. Corin felt a light touch down one of the scratches on his back before Mitch moved on.

Corin was quivering, delayed reaction obviously setting in. Turning to keep Mitch in his view, he saw the man standing over Kro. "You're a fucking dead man."

Kro reared up, still holding one hand to his red and puffy face. Whatever Trix had poured on him had definitely done the trick. Corin wondered what it was, then shook his head, dismissing it as unimportant.

Mitch tilted his head back and howled. He reached for the man at his feet, but was suddenly stopped by what looked like shadows. Corin rushed forward, to help Mitch, when his arm was grabbed from behind. He tried to lurch free, before he recognized the touch.

"Airk, help him."

"He's okay, Corin. Just relax. Manx isn't hurting him. We just don't want him to kill the toad until we find out what all happened here."

Corin hadn't realized he was shivering until Airk began rubbing his arms, bringing a little warmth back into his skin. "I-I have t-to go. Please."

Airk frowned. "Corin?"

Corin jerked free, running out the door. He didn't know where he was going but all of a sudden it was just too much. He needed to get free. He needed time to himself. Ignoring the mournful howl that ended in his name being cried out, Corin ran.

* * *

"Corin!"

"Easy there. Easy, Mitch."

He struggled against the arms holding him close, needing to be with his mate. What'd happened here? How could he have let anything happen to his mate? He couldn't get his mind off those scratches on Corin's back. What had the fucking toad done to him?

He stopped struggling, his need to hear what happened outweighing anything else right now. He'd seen the panicked look on Corin's face. He knew the man would need time. He wasn't going to give him much, but he could spare a minute or two to deal with the lab.

Manx had turned to Kro, picking him up and staring menacingly down at the man. He hadn't even had to say a word before Kro was stumbling out his explanation, starting with walking into the lab to see the pixies fucking all over the place.

The more he talked, the more incensed Mitch became. He needed to feel his mate again. He couldn't be bothered to deal with Kro, he never wanted to see the man again. He wasn't worth it for Mitch to spend even an ounce of energy dealing with.

"That horny little toad better be gone when I get back or he'll regret it. If I see him again, he'll be eating flies through a tube for the rest of his unnatural life."

"It's taken care of," Manx rumbled. "He won't be bothering anyone ever again. Go after your mate." He snapped his teeth together, looking fierce.

The words were barely out of his mouth before Mitch was loping off after his faun.

Chapter Six

Corin curled up at the base of the tree, looking out to sea. He spied the boat taking supplies off the Island and had a brief wish that he was out there right now, going somewhere else. He'd messed up big time. Mitch was going to be so disappointed with him. He'd get over it, though. Corin knew he would.

Footfalls sounded behind him, ominously loud. He closed his eyes, knowing instinctively who it was. Mitch was making more noise than usual. He was normally whisper soft in his every movement so it was readily apparent that he was mad.

The steps stopped to his left, the spicy scent of Mitch's anger filling the clearing. His breaths were audible, rattling out of him between clenched teeth. Corin wrinkled his nose, opening one eye to peer up at Mitch.

The other man was staring down at him, curling and uncurling his fingers. His face was flushed, the ruddy cheeks an indication of his increased passion. The only other time Corin had seen him like that was when Mitch was balls-deep inside him. He tensed, willing his erection down. Now wasn't the time to get horny. Although, he was always horny around Mitch, and he didn't mean the two little appendages on the top of his head. His wolf got him hotter than anything else.

"Why'd you leave?" Mitch's voice was raspy.

"I don't belong there, Mitch. You and I both know that."

"You belong with me."

"If it was just you and me to worry about, then I'd be happy wherever you wanted to be, but we can't live inside a bubble, Mitch. I'm bound to screw up again, and I don't want to get you in trouble because I did something I wasn't supposed to. I couldn't bear it if I was the cause of your pain."

Mitch suddenly grabbed him by the arms, hauling Corin up until his hooves were dangling off the ground. He stared into his lover's face, enthralled at the depth of emotion shining through his eyes. "You don't want to cause me pain? Too fucking late. It hurt when you left. Do you have any idea how that felt?"

"I'm sorry, Mitch. I just needed some time alone. I couldn't stand it one more minute. The walls were starting to close in on me and I just wanted to be out here, breathing in the air."

"I get that, Corin, but don't leave me like that again. Okay?"

Corin nodded. "I'm sorry about the lab."

"I don't give a flying shit about the lab, Rookery Cove, nothing and no one but you. You understand that? I want you and only you, and sometimes that means I have to do a bit of extra cleanup around the place, but I don't care. I just need to be beside you. My job means nothing if I don't have you in my life to go home to at the end of the day."

Corin didn't know what to say to that. He'd never thought of it that way. "But, one day you're going to get sick of me always asking for help. I don't know anything about your world, I don't understand it. Frankly, I don't really like it all that much. What if we aren't strong enough to get past that? I messed up big time when I let them out of their cages. I didn't mean to cause trouble, I just didn't understand. I do now, I understand you know what you're doing and you didn't mean them harm. But, it'll happen again, you know it will. I don't see things the same as you do."

"Pretty, together we can do anything. I love taking care of you. Haven't you figured that out yet? I need to protect you, teach you. Gods, I love teaching you everything. You're so fresh in every response you make. Do you know what that means to someone who's used to being lied to? I know you don't understand people, and I don't really like them all that much either. But, you've always gotten along with Airk and Bernie, haven't you? And you like Trix, right? So they aren't all bad. It just takes some getting used to. We'll be okay, Corin. I promise.

"I just need you to be strong enough to stand beside me. Can you do that? Cause I'm telling you right now that I'm not leaving until I get a yes from your sweet lips."

Corin laughed, tilting his head back. Everything was going to be okay. As long as Mitch was beside him, everything would be okay. "That's not much of a choice."

"Oh, it's a choice all right. I figured I'm going to fuck you in about three minutes, so you can have until then to decide if you want to say yes now or wait until after and say yes then. See, I can be reasonable."

Corin wrapped his arms around Mitch, lifting his left leg to brush his hoof along Mitch's calf. "Oh, yes, you are very reasonable. I'm in awe at your people skills. You constantly impress me with your wonderful negotiations. I have a lot to learn from you."

Mitch growled, nipping Corin's chin with sharp teeth. "Don't bait me, Pretty."

"Or what?"

"Or I'll wait five minutes before I fuck you, not three." Mitch slid his hands down, touching the patch of skin above the fur on his ass. His fingers glanced over his crease, and Corin wiggled, pressing his cock against Mitch's thigh.

"Oh, dear, we can't have that. I'm sorry, Mitch. Please don't withhold yourself for a whole two minutes."

"Brat."

"You love it."

"Yeah, I do. I wouldn't change it for a minute."

Corin smiled. Neither would he. He wouldn't change any of it for a minute. Sighing, he let Mitch lower him to the ground, peaceful at last.

Mitch growled low in his throat, nipping his way down Corin's chin, his neck, clamping his teeth around his nipple. Corin writhed, anxious to feel Mitch inside him.

"I need you, Mitch, please..."

"What do you want? Tell me, say the words."

"You, I want you. Make me remember, make me feel it so I always remember you'll be there for me."

"Pretty..."

Lowering his head, Mitch lapped at the head of Corin's cock. The wet warmth on his sensitive skin was almost too much. He was close to coming, but he knew Mitch wouldn't mind if he did go off like a rocket. Corin giggled at the image. Mitch growled, sliding his canines along Corin's shaft.

"Ah, Mitch!"

"Yeah, that's it, talk to me, Pretty."

"Wh-what do you want to h-hear?"

Mitch laughed, releasing his shaft with a *pop*. "Anything, Corin. Anything and everything."

"Oh, that narrows it down." Corin giggled again, fisting his hands in Mitch's hair. "Please, Mitch. Don't stop."

Mitch complied, returning to feast at Corin's crotch. He licked up and down his shaft, sucking gently at the crown, licking up the drop of precome glistening on the tip. He brought up one hand, fondling Corin's balls, rolling them until Corin arched, tossing his head.

"You're driving me crazy."

Mitch lifted his head. "That's kind of the point, Corin." He grinned, all teeth.

Corin lifted one hoof, rubbing it down Mitch's leg. "Then, I think you should finish. You keep falling behind on your job. We wouldn't want it to affect your performance assessment."

"That's it. Turn over, now."

Corin giggled, happily turning and sprawling in the grass. It was cool against his heated cheek, the scent reminding him of summer nights. He wouldn't be able to smell grass again without thinking of Mitch taking him outside.

A long swipe on his lower back made him jump. Mitch chuckled darkly behind him. Corin tilted his head to be able to see what Mitch was doing.

"Uh, uh. Pretty, eyes front."

Laughing, Corin settled back down, closing his eyes and rubbing his cheek along the scratchy grass.

A hard grip surrounded his hips, Mitch's hands holding him in place. Mitch ran his tongue along the top of Corin's crack, playing with the patch of bare skin above his fur. He seemed to have a particular fondness for that area.

Moving down, Mitch nipped one ass cheek, making the muscle quiver. Corin moaned, bringing up his hand to muffle the sound.

A hard *smack* and the resulting sting on his backside drew his attention back to Mitch.

"Don't you dare. I want to hear every sound."

Corin nodded, fisting his hand in the grass beside his head.

Mitch licked along his crack, teasing Corin's opening. Corin heard a muffled suck before Mitch's wet fingers were there, right where he needed them. He relaxed, letting Mitch in, welcoming Mitch's fingers inside his ass.

Mitch thrust back and forth, preparing him, although he didn't need much. He was almost there, his cock throbbing insistently. It wouldn't take much for Corin to come. But he wanted to wait until Mitch was inside him, he wanted to make it good for Mitch.

Mitch must have been reading his mind -- or maybe it was the whimpering moans Corin couldn't hold back. He was suddenly blanketing Corin's back with his strong weight. His hard shaft prodded Corin's backside before sinking in to him, stroking insistently.

Corin cried out, the muscles of his ass clamping down strongly on the cock inside. His balls drew up tight, almost painfully, and he came so hard his vision went black for a moment.

When he was aware again, he sensed Mitch holding himself still, his whole body shaking.

"Please, Mitch."

Mitch roared, his control broken. With short jabbing motions, he slammed his hips into Corin. Dropping his head, relaxing, and trying to give Mitch as much pleasure as he could, Corin urged him on.

“Harder, Mitch, more. Give me more.”

Hair brushed his shoulder, Mitch nuzzling against Corin’s neck. Sharp teeth pressed against the juncture of his neck and shoulder, biting hard. Corin tensed, squeezing his butt, glorying in the pained shout and the warmth of Mitch’s release in his ass.

“You’re going to kill me one of these days,” Mitch panted.

Corin smiled weakly, murmuring wordlessly in response.

Tilting his head back to rest against Mitch’s shoulder, he spied the ship as it sailed away. He still wondered what was out there, but he didn’t need to experience it himself. He had more than enough adventure right here, with his mate.

Jade Buchanan

Jade Buchanan was born in the summer of 2006, out of a slightly shy but definitely warped mind. Jade's alter-ego spends her days working in the world of safety management consulting, but at night she lets Jade out to play. Preferring to live in the world of fiction in which she was born, Jade can be found wandering through fields of words whenever she can. Now if only she can find her dream man -- a time-traveling Scottish laird who was born a werewolf that became a vampire and lived on a pirate ship, only to make his way to the new world and work on a ranch in Montana (with a brief foray in the Navy SEALs), before conquering the space time continuum and becoming a space marauding pirate and ruling the galaxy -- she'd be a very happy lady.

Jade would love to hear from you. She can be reached at jade.buchanan@yahoo.com or <http://www.jadebuchananbooks.com>