

The Changelings

A silhouette of a person, possibly a warrior or a firefighter, holding a large axe over their shoulder. The person is facing right. The background is a bright, fiery orange and yellow, suggesting a fire or a storm. The overall mood is dramatic and intense.

FIRE STORM

Changeling Press

Firestorm (Anthology)
by Jade Buchanan, Alice Gaines, B. J. McCall

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Firestorm

Jade Buchanan, Alice Gaines, Anne Kane, Belinda McBride,
B.J. McCall, Cameo Brown, Isabella Jordan, Jordan Castillo
Price, Kate Hill, Mary Winter, Selena Illyria

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Catan's Fire

Jade Buchanan

Asad needs to teach his mate what happens to submissive *Felidae* who disobey orders. This is one lesson Catan will never forget!

* * * *

Heat seared his body, the flames high and unrelenting. Catan Gatti winced, determined to push forward. He was suddenly grasped from behind, a hard grip picking him up and slinging him over the shoulder of a man who vibrated with fury. "What is wrong with you? I told you to stay back!"

Catan recoiled, the move startling a deep, racking cough. "I w-want to h-help."

"You can help me by keeping yourself out of trouble. I cannot do my job if I am constantly worried about you." Asad lowered him to the ground, steadying him when he stumbled. A heavily muscled body covered in tawny fur pressed close to him, protecting and intimidating at the same time.

Asad's thick, heavy mane was a darker color than his body, bringing Catan's attention to the high cheekbones and penetrating amber eyes. Skittering his gaze away from the irate worry in Asad's gaze, his attention was drawn to a thick tail that jerked back and forth, sleek and beautiful with a tufted end Catan constantly wanted to touch. It was so different from his own little stub of a tail.

His fingers twitched, and he hid them behind his back. Now wasn't the time. "But, I—"

"Kitten, please. Let me do this."

"I want to help!" He refused to be helpless. Not after everything he'd been through. He wanted to be able to stand up beside his lover and make Asad proud to call him mate. The man was one of the most fierce *Felidae* around, one of the ruling Leo. Catan was Lynx, and he was constantly aware of the fact that he didn't really belong here on Felid with the rest of the majestic Leo. It was only when he was with Asad that he felt like he belonged.

That's why he wanted so badly to help right now. To prove to everyone else that he wasn't a burden to his mate. That he could stand beside Asad as a partner and not a hindrance. He knew Asad didn't see him that way, that the man loved him no matter what he did, but Catan wanted to show Asad how strong he was.

The wildfires had been raging for a week now. The weather had been unnaturally dry of late and the grasslands that covered Felid were quick to ignite. The Leo had banded together to put the fires out, but there were so many of them. It was a tiring process, long and grueling. At the end of their shift each group of males wandered home to their mates, exhausted, only to go out again when they'd had some rest and food. Around the clock, Leo fought the fires that raged across their homeland. Even some of the Pardus from Seren had arrived to help.

It wasn't strange to see a Pardus here, since it was their duty to protect the Leo pride leaders, the appointed rulers of

the clans of the *Felidae* race, but it was strange to see so many of them in one place. They normally only came forward if they were needed.

Among the *Felidae* the Leo ruled, the Pardus protected, the Tigris were fierce hunters and the Lynx kept to themselves. They were seen as peacekeepers when they decided to join the rest of the *Felidae*, because of the importance among the Lynx clan for calm and order. It wasn't often one of his people left their homeworld though.

Catan was seen as an anomaly among his people, by living and mating with a Leo. Years ago, his family had been slaughtered by a pride of Leos bent on exterminating anyone they saw as weaker than themselves. Catan had been left for dead but was saved when Asad and his family rescued him. He had become part of Asad's pride, under the leadership of Asad's older brother, Laithe. When Laithe had found his mate, a human, the rest of the pride began looking for their own mates. Asad had declared his love for Catan.

It was still hard to believe. He'd been in love with the big, brawny Leo ever since he first saw his face, but Catan had never thought anything would come of it. At the time he'd thought he was dead, and the Leo one of the mighty *Felidae* ancestors come to grant him everlasting peace. He was partly right. Within Asad's embrace, Catan felt peace for the first time since his parents had been murdered in front of him and he'd been violated, brutalized and left for dead.

"Please, kitten, stay here and get Rowan to give you something to do. You can help dispense water to the men and

women fighting the fires. Promise me you will stay here and not leave until I get back."

Asad waited until Catan nodded his agreement before turning and pacing away without another word. Catan slumped, his tail tucked back. He'd just wanted to help.

Turning to find the redheaded, mostly hairless woman who was his new sister-in-law, Catan dragged his feet. He knew exactly how childish he might appear, but he didn't appreciate being relegated to joining the pregnant woman and her band of cubs in dispensing water. Everyone else was allowed to go out and fight the fires, so why was he stuck back here?

"Catan, come to keep me company?" Rowan's voice was melodious, full of humor. Just looking at her had a calming effect on him. Her curves were pale, vulnerable to the elements without a coating of fur. Red hair swung in a straight line, just brushing the top of the mint green cloth that wrapped around her breasts. A second cloth was wrapped around her hips, coming up between her legs for added support.

Catan grinned when he came closer, bending to rub his hands over her massive, rounded belly. Something thumped against his palm, the future pride leader wanting to get out and help just like his or her fathers. Although, it was more likely to be a boy, since females were still scarce among the *Felidae*. No one was sure whether it would be Pardus or Leo, but Rowan didn't seem to mind either way. She loved both her mates the same and was overjoyed to be carrying their cub.

Catan purred a greeting to the young cub, tapping out a message against Rowan's belly. Straightening, he rolled his eyes at Rowan. "Asad has declared I am to sit out and not get involved."

She grimaced, obviously understanding how that made him feel. If she weren't breeding, he knew she'd be out there trying to help just the same as him. Luckily, she knew better than to try now. If she even took a step forward there would likely be a fight over who got to turn her over their knee. Between her two mates and her four pridemates that were here, they'd all be looking out for her. At least it was only six men, though, not nine like normal. It would be even worse for her if Lev and his two mates were with them, but they still hadn't returned from their journeys.

"Well, grab a place and get ready for the fire fighters to come back in."

Catan spent the next half hour in the safety of the small clearing. Ahead, the worst of the blazes was visible above the tree line. There weren't many forests on Felid, but there was a ring of protection around these abodes. On the other side of the trees, a narrow river snaked through the grass, a line of defense that cut them off. Only a handful of prides lived in this one area, though; the rest lived throughout Felid and many of their homes were at risk of burning.

Rowan kept trying to distract him with inane chatter, and it finally worked. He loved spending time with her, getting to know the newest member of their pride. It had been months since she'd arrived and he'd become a full member of the pride, mated to Asad.

* * * *

Cubs played around them, the small *Felidae* getting into everything. Their laughter rang out loudly, making him smile every time he heard it. It had been strange to hear so many cubs, after being stuck on the warship *Shahnaz* for so long with just men for company.

A small cub stepped up beside him, his narrow tail quivering. Catan bent down to greet him. A sniff was audible before big amber eyes blinked up at him. "Cadi is not back yet."

"Who is Cadi?"

"My sister."

"Where did she go, little cub?"

"Her doll was missing so she went home for it."

Rowan stepped up beside him, kneeling to wipe the cub's eyes with the edge of her cloth. "When'd she leave, Chet?"

The small boy cub shrugged.

"Where is their home?" Catan asked Rowan. She knew more about the families here than he did, even though he had been part of Laithe's pride for longer. As the mate to the *Felidae* heir, it was her duty to know as much about her new people as possible.

"Closer to the ridge."

They both glanced over to the ridge, nearly obscured by thick, black smoke. Catan didn't have a good feeling about this. "I will go."

"We should get help." Rowan chewed on her bottom lip, obviously undecided.

"There is no time. I will go. Send one of the older cubs for Cadi's fathers."

Without giving her time to argue, Catan set off at a fast lope. Within minutes he was choking on the hot air entering his burning lungs. Breathing shallowly, Catan crouched lower to the ground, where the smoke wasn't as dense.

Every few seconds he called the cub's name. His ears strained to hear her. The fires weren't here yet, but the smoke was almost overpowering. Finally, just when he'd decided he'd headed in the wrong direction, he heard a soft yell. Running quickly toward the sound, he almost stumbled over the girl cub. "Cadi?"

"Uh huh." Her voice was a whimper, but there was nothing weak about the way she was clinging to his legs at the moment.

Crouching over her, Catan ran his palms down her body, making sure she wasn't injured. "I am Catan. Are you hurt?"

"You are Asad's mate."

Despite himself, he grinned. "I am."

"I'm hot."

Picking her up, he made sure she had a firm grip on the doll in her hand. "Okay, do not worry. We need to get you out of here, Cadi."

"All right."

She buried her head in his chest, clinging tightly to him. The move startled a hacking cough out of him. He had to stop to get his breath back before moving forward again.

"Catan!"

"Here," he croaked.

Strong arms surrounded him, bracketing him from behind. The cub was taken from him, cradled between two massive Leos. Without a word, Asad slung an arm around Catan's back, another under his knees, carrying him back to the clearing where Rowan was pacing.

Catan turned his head to keep Cadi in view. Her mother was there now, cradling her child carefully, running her palms down her body. Two more men had joined the group, all four fathers concerned for their cub. Chet peeked out from around a brawny thigh, waving to Catan shyly.

Turning his attention back to a very silent Asad, Catan tried to decide if he should try to offer an explanation. Asad's clenched jaw and narrowed gaze let him know that he should probably just stay quiet for the time being.

Asad didn't even pause, carrying him into their warm abode. Voices could still be heard outside. They weren't entirely closed off here. Dropping him onto their pallet, Asad stood back, deliberately making eye contact while he unwrapped his loincloth.

"Asad?"

"What did I ask you to do, kitten?"

Pausing, Catan shrugged. "When?"

"You know when. What did I ask you to do?"

Wrinkling his nose, Catan sighed. "Stay with Rowan."

"And did you?"

"I had to go!"

"Answer the question, kitten."

"No, I didn't stay." He crossed his arms, dropping his gaze.

"You need to be taught a lesson, kitten."

Confused, Catan blinked up at Asad. "What did I do wrong?"

"I told you to wait. You could have been injured. I did not ask you to stay to punish you, but to protect you. When they told me where you were, all I could think of was how inexperienced you are with the fires that can rage on our world. You are not used to them, how quickly they can move. You do not know what to look for. You were not that far ahead of us, and while I think you are very brave and very honorable to go after the cub, you could have been seriously injured. I will not let you take risks with your life. Not without thinking through it beforehand and deciding whether there is another way to accomplish the same thing without putting yourself in harm's way. Do you understand?"

Contrite, Catan nodded. Asad was right, and he should have realized it earlier. It was just so easy to assume everyone thought he was weaker because he was smaller than them. Even though he viewed himself that way, he knew Asad didn't. He needed to remember that more often.

"Take off your wrap."

Glancing back up at Asad, Catan licked his lips. Asad's gaze narrowed, captivated by the movement of Catan's tail as it thumped against the bed. Hiding his grin, Catan thumped his tail again, knowing how much Asad loved his little stub. He came up onto his knees, lifting a hand to the side of his loincloth. Licking his lips again, Catan began to remove the material, slow enough that Asad began to growl low in his throat. "Now, kitten."

The wrap dropped to the pallet, unnoticed by either man.

Asad rolled onto the pallet gracefully, his tail twitching madly. Catan reached for it, needing to touch the appendage. Asad loved it when his tail was stroked. His movement was halted before he could make contact, both his hands suddenly encased in one big paw.

Reaching for the discarded loincloth, Asad wrapped the material around Catan's wrists, binding him.

Catan froze for a moment, remembering another time he was bound. Asad paused, giving him time. Grateful all over again that he'd become mated to this wonderful, thoughtful man, Catan let go of his memories, losing himself in the present. This was Asad, and Asad would never hurt him. He'd cut off one of his own hands before ever raising it in anger.

They came together in a kiss, lips joining, tongues seeking, teeth nibbling. They moaned with each heated press of mouth to mouth. Asad pressed him back onto the pallet without breaking their kiss, holding his bound hands above their heads. Catan began purring, the sawing proof of his pleasure soon joined by Asad's deeper, more resonant purrs.

His cock grew, thickening, rising up to press against Asad's belly. Asad's shaft was a heavy presence against his thigh, and he couldn't wait to get that inside him. Already he ached to be filled.

Inhaling deeply, he drew Asad's scent into his lungs, the acrid smell of smoke briefly obscuring Asad's rich, loamy scent. He nuzzled into Asad's embrace, pressing his nose directly to the fur on his lover's face, rubbing it against him, marking himself just as he was marking Asad.

Asad reached down, smoothing his palms along Catan's longer fur, petting him in sweeping strokes. Catan moved into his wandering hands, seeking out as much of his touch as he could.

One hand was removed, the other teasing the crease of his groin with soft strokes. The scent of nawra flowers filled the room, Asad's free hand returning to wrap wetly around his shaft. Catan bucked into his hold, groaning loudly. "Please, oh please. More, do not stop ... I want your hands, your cock, inside me now. Please, Asad, please..."

Deep purrs huffed out by his ear, Asad leaning down to bite gently into his neck, running his canines up and down the sensitive skin before returning for another claiming bite. Catan loved being marked by him, the physical evidence that he belonged to this big man.

A presence at his ass made him part his thighs wider, settling deeper into the sleeping pallet. Writhing with painful pleasure, Catan mewled when a single finger entered him, stroking nerve endings that were practically begging for more. "Now, now now now..."

Asad bit deeply into his shoulder, holding him in place for his hard cock as it butted up against Catan's quivering flesh. He slid inside, his thick shaft coming home inside Catan's ass. They both groaned. Releasing his skin, Asad licked along the wound, growling his pleasure wordlessly.

Withdrawing, Asad arched his back, the barbs on his cock rasping against Catan's tissue. Tossing his head, Catan gloried in the feeling, loving the extra pleasure his mate could give him. A hand cupped his balls, rolling the sac gently,

sliding up to grip his shaft, milking it in time to the glorious fucking his ass was receiving. "Asad ... oh, Asad..."

"Come for me, kitten. Come now. I need you to come for me. Yes, move like that. Let me know how much you want it."

Catan screamed, his roar echoing through the room, his passion evident. Seed jetted from the tip of his cock, milked out by Asad's squeezing pressure. Stars flashed at the back of his eyes, his body bonelessly relaxed. With one last thrust, Asad joined him in release, shooting his cock into Catan's welcoming body.

They both lay still, panting softly. Asad reached up, releasing Catan's wrists. Grateful for the concern, Catan wrapped his arms around Asad's strong shoulders. "I love you, kitten."

"And I you. Always."

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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 come visit her at www.jadebuchananbooks.com.

* * * *

Brimstone by Mistake

Alice Gaines

Lucifer has grown tired of processing soul after soul through hell—until Sally Upshaw appears unannounced. The little temptress turns him on as no other woman ever has. The problem ... Heaven's made a mistake. What will Lucifer do when the Man Upstairs wants Sally back?

* * * *

"So, you call this hell." The woman didn't look the least impressed as she glanced around the anteroom.

Lucifer had dealt with some tough cookies in his centuries as his own boss. All cookies crumbled eventually. This one would, too. "Fire and brimstone at your service," he said.

"The fire's nice." She wrinkled her little nose. "You overdid the brimstone."

"I don't remember asking for your opinion."

She gestured toward him. "Aren't you supposed to be wearing crimson?"

"I beg your pardon?" He'd escorted thousands of souls to eternal perdition. Many had wept and begged for mercy. Others had insisted that there'd been some mistake and they didn't belong in hell. A few had even found the whole damnation thing sort of a lark. No one had ever questioned his wardrobe before.

"When Larry said he was sending me to hell, I thought he'd make it a little more believable."

"Who's this Larry?" He ought to have known what she was talking about. He normally received a complete dossier on souls sent to perdition. This one had just appeared inside the gates wearing the shredded ribbons of what used to be a black lace negligee and a body underneath that made his cock stiff.

"Larry's the ex-husband. He nearly scared the shit out of me. Showed up with a knife and cut this to shreds." She lifted

the scraps of her gown. "He seemed really pissed, but I guess he just wanted to get kinky."

"He was really pissed," Lucifer said. "He killed you. You're in hell."

"Sure." She crossed her arms over her chest. The action pushed her breasts up, making them seriously tempting. Not too big, but nicely rounded. As he watched, the nipples puckered into tight points.

"Say, you're kind of cute for a head case." She gave him an appraising smile. "And, that's quite a monster in your pants."

Right about now, his monster was rearing its head like mad. But, first, they needed to settle a few things before he took care of that. "Look, Miss..."

"Ms.," she corrected. "I haven't been a virgin since junior high, and I'm sure as hell not going to call myself Mrs. after that disaster of a marriage."

"What's your name?"

"Sally Upshaw. What's yours?"

"Lucifer."

"Twisted," she said. "Lucifer what?"

"Lucifer, Lord of Darkness."

She rolled her eyes. "Did Larry hire you to scare me out of suing his butt for my share of the estate?"

"This isn't getting us anywhere." He snapped his fingers, and the fires of hell appeared around the edges of the room. They looked impressive, but he kept the temperature down. A pillar of tempting female flesh stood only a few feet away from him. No point wasting it in the flames.

Her eyes got wide, and her mouth formed a little O. "Wow. How'd you do that?"

He snapped his fingers, and the fire changed color to bright orange. "The Lord of Darkness can do a lot of things."

The flickering light played over her skin, giving it a lovely blush. She ran her hands over her body, from her throat, over her breasts, and down to her belly. "It's making me hot."

"You're doing the same for me." How long had it been since he'd wanted a human female? Most of them cowered and whimpered. Besides, all the women he met in his line of work had done something awful. Sally Upshaw was different. He knew nothing about her, except that some idiot named Larry had killed her. What a waste. Larry belonged here, not this magnificent creature.

"Are you sure this is hell?" she said. "It feels a lot more like heaven."

"It'll get even better in a minute." He snapped his fingers again, and the spa he hadn't used for a couple of centuries appeared. Made of solid rock, it looked like a mountain spring, the water bubbling around inside. "Gives one hell of a massage—pardon the expression." Far too sexy to enjoy without a lover.

Her eyes widened, and she walked to the tub. "Awesome."

He waved his hand, and an ice bucket and two champagne flutes appeared on a side table, a bottle of a fine French cru peeked out of the ice. He filled the glasses with sparkling wine and handed one to Sally. "*Santé*."

She clinked her glass against his. "You said a mouthful."

He took her hand and helped her climb into the tub. As she sank into the water, she took a sip of her wine and gazed at him over the lip of her glass. Her expression held a world of promise, and his cock responded. He'd been hard since she first showed up. Now, his throbbing flesh demanded its reward. No hurry, though. He'd take his time and savor every moment.

He willed his clothing to disappear. Handy talent, that. One second, his leather pants held his hard-on in place, and the next it stood free. Sally let her gaze wander over him, and she licked her lips as she stared at his crotch.

He climbed into the spa and slid into the water next to her. She came to him eagerly. Damn, he'd gone too long without the pleasures of the opposite sex. Now, an eager woman had offered herself as a sacrifice to his lust. He lifted his glass to her mouth and tipped it up just enough to moisten her lips with the wine, then sampled the liquid with his tongue.

Hard to tell which was sweeter—the wine or her kiss. She sighed, and the breath slipped into his mouth. He could have devoured her right then and there. Slide her down onto his cock and fuck her until they both came. But he'd miss out on some of the joys of her body if he rushed.

Instead, he kissed her again, pulling her against him and fitting his mouth over hers. Her lips answered his, exploring the corners and then the center. When he offered her his tongue, she grazed the tip of hers against it.

The fire danced around the rim of the spa now, even though he hadn't commanded it. With just a kiss, she'd turned him on so completely, she'd caused a spontaneous

combustion of hellfire. He rested his head against the side of her face. "Slow down, babe."

"What's going on?" she whispered. "I've never felt like this before."

"It's the flames. They flicker when I get aroused."

She glanced around with heavy-lidded eyes. "You must be really aroused."

"Thanks to you," he said. "Drink up. Let me show you how the fire works."

He drained his glass and flung it against the wall. She giggled at the crashing sound and did the same. Now their hands were free for each other. He scooped up a bit of flame and held it in his palm.

"It doesn't burn you?" she asked.

"Only in a good way." He put his hand against her cheek, and the fire sparkled in her red hair.

"Wow," she said. "It tingles."

"It can tingle in other places."

She took her breasts in her palms and held them up and out of the water. "Like here?"

"Exactly." He got a second palm full of fire and then put both hands over her gorgeous tits.

Her eyes got wide, and she squirmed. "Damn, that feels good."

"Not too hot?"

"Define 'too' hot."

"Let me soothe you." He moved his hands under the water to extinguish the flame and also to pull her closer. Now, her breasts bobbed above the water within reach of his mouth.

He sucked one nipple inside and used his tongue to tease it. Mewling like a kitten, she held his face against her chest.

She'd enjoyed that so much, he gave the same treatment to the other breast until her chest rose and fell as she worked for breath. The perfect lover, she responded so hotly to his caress. Her passion sparked the same reaction in him. In another moment, he'd need to bury his cock inside her. Given the state of his rod, he'd better get her ready for an invasion.

He reached between her legs and found her clit. It was hard already, and as he stroked it, her gasps turned to coos of pleasure. She was so damned much fun to touch, she ought to be a sin. Maybe he'd get her added to the list and then sin his heart out for eternity. But, he could make things a lot better for her than this.

He stroked her pussy. "You want the fire here, too, babe?"

She opened her eyes and smiled at him. "Heaven."

"Not exactly, but fun," he said. "Stand up."

She emerged out of the water in a sinuous dance. He gathered another handful of flame. As he approached her pussy, she parted her legs. He slipped his fingers between her lips and spread fire everywhere.

Her eyes closed in bliss. "Lord, I never imagined..."

He thrust two fingers inside her, spreading the heat there, too. She trembled and caught his shoulders for support. What a lusty little thing she was. Exactly the sort of woman he could spend eternity with and never get bored. He bent to taste her, too. The flames zinged against his tongue as he flicked it over her clit and she gave him the rising moan of a woman about to climax. It started low and sweet and rose

until it bounced off the walls. Her pussy gripped his fingers, breaking into tiny eruptions along the length of her sheath. After long seconds, she crumpled, falling into his embrace.

"Amazing," she whispered. "I never came like that before."

"Happy to please."

She nuzzled her face into his chest. "I need to do something really nice for you."

"What did you have in mind?"

"Can I use the fire on you?" She reached down and stroked his cock. "On this."

Holy shit. No woman had ever offered to do that for him. He rose from the water and sat on the edge of the tub. The fire danced all over him—on his back, around his hips and butt, between his legs. His balls felt as if they'd explode with the excitement. She caught some of the flames in her hands and curled her fingers around his member. When she started pumping, he thought the top of his head would come off.

"Damn, babe, I can't take it. I'm going to come."

She gave him an evil grin. "Only when I give you permission to fuck me."

He gritted his teeth. "I mean it..."

"So do I."

She kept tormenting him, sliding her fists up and down over his length. With each passage, she rubbed her thumb over the head. He clenched his hands into fists and tried reciting ritual curses backwards in his head. Hell ... in ... burn ... will ... you...

Shit, it wasn't going to work. His only hope lay in making her so excited she'd beg to have him inside her. He focused

every bit of concentration he could muster on his rising arousal and used his mental powers to slam it into her. Wham.

She went perfectly rigid, still clutching his cock. "Oh!" she shouted. "Ooh! What the ... I can't ... Oh, please. Fuck me. Now!"

He didn't wait long enough to tell her "yes" but slid back into the tub, put his hands on her hips, and guided her down onto him. Damn, she felt good. Her tight little pussy clamped around him, sending his lust off into the ozone layer. She rode him hard and fast, as her gasps turned to cries. The flames rose all around the spa. Higher, almost reaching the ceiling as they fucked. Beyond control, he pounded into her as deeply as he could go.

Just when he couldn't last another minute, she screamed and climaxed all around him. The contractions finished him. One more savage thrust and then another, and he emptied his lust in burning waves inside her. The orgasm went on until he nearly lost consciousness, but he hung on to savor every second. In the end, his muscles went limp, and he rested his head against her shoulder, gasping for breath as the flames flickered and went out.

After long moments, the incoming mail signal sounded on his computer. He sighed and kissed the tip of Sally's nose. "Don't move, okay?"

She groaned. "I don't think I could."

"Good girl." He climbed out of the tub and walked to the control panel. When he passed his palm over the sensor, the

equipment came to life. E-mail from the operation upstairs. The subject line read, "New assignment for hell."

Lucifer opened it and read. The name jumped out at him. "Your Larry, was he Lawrence Quentin Roper, by any chance?"

"Yeah, why do you ask?"

"He's on his way here."

She climbed out of the spa. "Shit, just when I was starting to enjoy myself."

"He won't bother you. You have Lucifer's word on that."

She walked into his arms and tipped her head back to smile up at him. "Lord of Darkness, huh? You're sweet."

He had to laugh at that. "Your late husband won't think so once I'm through with him."

"Fuck Larry."

"From now on, I only fuck you," he said. "We'll need to get dressed before he gets here, though."

She gave him a sexy pout. He snapped his fingers, and leather clothing appeared on both of their bodies. It felt normal for him. On her, it showed off every perfect curve. She stepped out of his embrace, stretched her arms, and did a little pirouette. "Nice."

Just then, the portal opened, and a naked man stumbled inside. "Hey, what the fuck?"

"Lawrence Quentin Roper, I presume?" Lucifer said.

"What are you supposed to be?" Larry said.

Lucifer looked the man up and down and then zeroed in on his flaccid cock. "You married this guy?"

Sally shrugged. "Not my best decision."

Larry's eyes narrowed, and his face got red with rage. "Bitch, I should have known you had something to do with this."

Lucifer went to the asshole and cuffed him with the back of his hand. "Don't talk to the lady that way."

"She's my wife. I can talk to her any way I want."

"Wrong, moron." Lucifer caught him under the arms and slammed him up against the wall. "She *was* your wife."

"No divorce," Larry said. "She's still mine."

"I left you months ago, Larry," Sally said. "Let me go."

"I'll kill you first."

"Interesting you should say that." Lucifer slammed him again. "Because, that's exactly what you did."

Larry looked puzzled for a minute. "That wasn't a nightmare?"

"Oh, it was a nightmare, but you made it real, you fucking bastard."

"But, in the dream, I cut her up pretty bad."

"And death put her back together the same way he patched up the hole you blew in your own head."

Larry got a sick expression on his face. "If she's dead..."

"...then you are, too," Lucifer finished.

"Shit."

Lucifer released him, and he fell to the floor in a heap.

"You really bought it this time," Sally said. "You killed us both."

"Shit, shit, shit." Larry ran his hands over his face. "So, where was that other place in my dream?"

"Did it involve harps and people with wings?" Lucifer asked.

"How'd you know?" Larry asked.

"I'm Lucifer. This is hell. That was heaven, genius."

This whole thing was starting to make sense. He hadn't received a dossier on Sally because she'd been meant for heaven. Somehow, the Big Guy had switched souls and sent Larry to eternal rewards and Sally to eternal perdition. Luckily, hell couldn't process her without the correct paperwork, and she'd ended up with him, instead.

"I don't want to be in hell," Larry said.

"Too bad, pal. That's what your disaster of a personality has bought you."

Sally touched his arm. "Does he have to be, um, tormented?"

"It's no worse than what he did to you." He lifted her fingers to his lips. "We don't have any choice, babe."

"Hey, don't touch my wife!" Larry yelled.

"Good-bye, Larry," Lucifer answered.

A portal opened in the far wall. It sucked Larry into the flames and then down. For a moment, his screams filled the room, but then, the portal closed again, leaving them alone. That only left one problem. Sally didn't belong here. Lucifer gathered her into his arms. "Ready for heaven?"

She bit her lip and grinned up at him. "More of the hot tub?"

"Sorry, honey. I meant the harps and wings. You were supposed to go to the good place."

"Screw that. I want to stay here with you."

"I want you to stay, too," he said. Hot damn, he sure did. Hell was hell, even if you got to be the overlord. Somehow, everything had become routine and boring. You could only condemn so many souls before they all started to blur into one. Sally gave his existence meaning, and she sure as hell made his cock happy.

"Hey, maybe if we don't tell God I'm down here..." she said.

"Oh, He knows. He knows everything. It's a real pain in the ass sometimes."

"He sent Larry here, but He hasn't called me up there yet," she said.

True. He hadn't. Lucifer stood there, holding Sally close and sent out mental feelers. No clap of thunder came. No blaring of celestial trumpets. Even the "you have mail" tone of his computer stayed silent. Maybe the Man Upstairs really had slipped up this time. Maybe He wasn't all He was cracked up to be.

"Hey, babe," Lucifer said finally. "I think you're right."

"I get to stay?"

"Looks as if you're stuck with me."

"Yippee!" she shouted. She ran her arms around his neck and plastered herself against the length of him.

"God goofed up for once," he said. "But, I'll take it."

He bent to kiss her. The minute their lips touched, lightning flashed through the room. A voice as deep as the ocean followed. "I don't make mistakes."

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Alice Gaines

Award winning author Alice Gaines has published several sensuous and erotic works. She prefers stories that stretch the imagination, highlighting the power of love and sex. Alice has a Ph.D. in psychology from U. C. Berkeley and lives in Oakland, California, with her collection of orchids and two pet corn snakes, Casper and Sheikh Yerbouti. Visit her website at home.pacbell.net/halice/.

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Shifting Priorities

Anne Kane

Solar flares have sparked random firestorms amongst the out-ports, and stationmaster Tome Rimmer forbids females to travel alone—a decision that doesn't sit well with Jexx. Her battle implants should be adequate compensation for her gender. But when the sexy hunk she picks up in the station bar turns out to be more than human, she has bigger things to worry about than her profit margin.

* * * *

Jexx stalked out of the stationmaster's office, the charms woven into her intricately braided hair tinkling, and headed for the pub. Of all the stupid pig-headed males, Tome Rimmer was the worst. She glared at the musclebound enforcer smirking at her from his stool at the bar. Damn all males in general.

"Give me a double shot of your smoothest Xylin rum." She flexed her fingers, silently daring the barkeeper to make a comment. Any comment.

He just nodded and set a water-stained glass on the bar in front of her. Producing a bottle from under the bar, he filled the glass with a flourish. *Smart man*. Jexx seized the drink and downed the fiery liquid in one long swallow, relishing the way it burned on its way to coil in a pool of liquid heat in her gut.

"You might want to take it easy on that stuff."

The amused male voice gave her the excuse she'd been looking for. Jexx whirled to confront the asshole, hands splayed out to bring her battle implants online.

"I don't think so." The stranger caught her hands in mid flight, his big hands circling her wrists like bands of steel. "Little girl like you wouldn't stand a chance."

Jexx looked up into the harsh face of her captor and choked back a snarl. Seven feet of solid, mouthwatering muscle flexed beneath a skin-hugging port-suit. A strip of leather around his forehead restrained jet-black hair that hung straight to his shoulders. His angular face sported a roman nose and high aristocratic cheekbones. A different kind of heat raced along her nerves and pooled between her thighs. "I'm not a little girl." She knew that her petite figure often caused people to underestimate her. She straightened her shoulders, pleased when his gaze dropped to her breasts.

The stranger smirked, but kept his hands clamped firmly on her wrists. "And I'm not an idiot. What's got you so riled up?"

Jexx tossed her head. "Nothing that concerns you." She ran her tongue across her lips in a blatantly sexual display. "Damn stationmaster restricted my access to the out-ports. He said the firestorms being spawned by the solar flares make it too dangerous for a woman." She eyed up the impressive display of muscle rippling beneath the man's thin shirt. "You look like a man who could handle a little danger."

"I'm not exactly a man, but close enough." Amber streaks swirled within the deep tawny color of his eyes as his gaze dropped to linger on her breasts, half-uncovered by her outfit.

"And I can handle most anything that comes my way. You have something particular in mind?"

Jexx met his gaze squarely. "Me."

He raised one brow and a slow lazy grin curled the corners of his mouth. "You sure? I'm not a gentle lover."

Jexx cocked her head and pointedly eyed the bulge straining the front of his port-suit. "I'm not in the mood for gentle."

"Well then." The man slid his hands up to her shoulders and pulled her hard against him. "We'll need a room." He turned to the bartender hovering just out of earshot. "Got an empty cube?"

The man tossed him a data-latch without question, causing Jexx to raise an eyebrow in surprise. He was obviously known in the area, and his credit passed muster. Most spacers paid in advance.

Picking the data-latch out of the air, the stranger glanced at it. "Number 16. Close. I like that." Dragging her along by the wrist, he strode across to the cube panels and keyed the access grid. The door slid back smoothly and he stepped through the portal, Jexx in tow. The panel closed behind them with a quiet "swoosh."

Pivoting with the quiet grace of a Tlaxian cat, the man pulled Jexx in close, dropping his head to plunder her lips with a hungry urgency. Jexx opened to him without hesitation, dancing her tongue across his in invitation. Boldly, she reached down to caress the impressive bulge in his pants. He rewarded her with a deep-throated growl that made her wonder what, exactly, he was. Not that it mattered.

The man raised his head. His strange eyes, seething with desire, ran over her arrogantly, possessively. "Strip." His gaze burned through her as he released her to remove his own clothing with quick, economical movements, tossing the garments carelessly in a heap.

Jexx eyed the impressive shaft jutting aggressively from between his thighs. Damn. Looked like just what she needed after her run-in with the stationmaster. His droid, she corrected herself. The man didn't have the balls to face her himself.

Shrugging out of her spacer suit, she dropped to her knees and ran a teasing finger down the length of his gorgeous cock, smiling when it jumped beneath her hand. Licking her lips, she cupped his heavy sac and engulfed his shaft with her mouth, swirling her tongue teasingly along the length.

Groaning, he fisted his hands in her dark hair and thrust forward, forcing himself deeper. Jexx gripped his hips with both hands, tilting her head to accommodate more of his impressive length. The man thrust shallowly with his hips as Jexx danced her tongue along his swollen member, coaxing it to swell to even greater proportions.

"Enough." He pulled her to her feet before picking her up and tossing her onto the sleeping platform. He pounced on top of her and grabbed her wrists to raise her hands above her head. His eyes glowed with an eerie light as he surveyed her. His nose twitched and Jexx wondered if he could smell her pussy creaming. She wanted that big cock of his buried deep inside her and she wanted it now.

"So what're you waiting for?" Jexx arched up to rub herself along his cock. "I'm not here for the conversation."

A slow dark smile spread across his angular face. With a speed that betrayed inhuman blood, he shifted both wrists to one big hand, staring into her eyes as he dropped the other to toy with her breasts, pinching and squeezing the sensitive mounds until she writhed mindlessly beneath his clever fingers.

Dropping his hand lower, he caressed her belly, her navel, the slight hollow of her hips while his mouth expertly teased her breasts into hard-pebbled nubs. He raised his head and caught her gaze, holding it with his own while he slipped one finger deep into her moist core, stroking roughly against the sensitive walls. The smile took on a knowing smirk as her juices coated his finger and dripped out. "You're a horny little cat, aren't you?"

Jexx gasped in reply and arched against his palm, seeking relief from the building pressure. He slid a second finger in to join the first. Slipping the other hand under her butt, he effortlessly lifted her hips up and positioned her. Removing his fingers, he slammed his big cock into her, burying himself to the balls in her slick channel.

Jexx whimpered in helpless lust, every nerve on fire as she bucked and twisted under the stranger. Grabbing his shoulder with both hands, she pulled him down to nip at his flat nipples with her sharp little teeth. His smell teased her nostrils, wild and untamed, almost like a jungle animal. She ran her tongue over his chest, tasting the slick sheen of sweat as he shafted her with long, measured strokes.

Damn. She moaned as pleasure lanced through her.

Raising himself on muscular forearms, the stranger pulled his luscious cock out of her pussy. Jexx bucked her hips, trying to impale herself on the shaft glistening wetly just out of reach.

"No, I want you from behind." Grabbing her hips, he flipped Jexx over onto her belly and lifted her onto her hands and knees in front of him, her legs splayed wide.

"That's better." He surged forward, filling her again, covering her like a were-cat mounting its mate. He dropped his head to nip roughly at the nape of her neck and Jexx felt sharp teeth puncture her skin. Reaching around her torso, he cupped her breasts, fondling them roughly as he ruthlessly drove his cock in and out of her pussy.

He covered her completely. Not normally submissive, Jexx found the total mastery wildly arousing. Bracing herself with her arms, she met him thrust for thrust. Heat raced along her nerves and hot fingers of fire danced down her spine. She felt the orgasm building, catching her up and carrying her along as it surged higher and higher.

Jexx threw her head back, arching into the solid mass of muscle. She let out a scream as the stranger rammed his cock home one last time, pushing her over the edge. Dimly, she heard his roar of triumph as his cock jerked, spewing hot seed deep within her molten core.

A million tiny aftershocks ran through her body as she collapsed on the sleeping platform, the stranger still buried deep within her. His harsh breath tickled her ear and she

turned her head to stare into his mesmerizing eyes. "Damn you're good. Who are you?"

The stranger gave her a faintly mocking smile. "Tome. Tome Rimmer."

Jexx raised her eyebrows. Fantastic sex always did have a way of taking the edge off her temper. "Was this by way of an apology? Because I'm not that impressed. You may have to go another round before I forgive you." She cupped his sac gently, suggestively, in one hand.

He laughed, white teeth gleaming against his tan skin. "I'm not that easy. And you're the one needing to apologize. It'll take more than a few credits to repair the hole in my office wall."

A mischievous smile teased the corner of Jexx's mouth as she remembered the satisfying feel of simu-board crumbling beneath her fisted hands. "I thought I showed admirable restraint. I didn't touch that antiquated bucket of bolts you sent to deliver your message."

The smile disappeared as she remembered why she'd felt the urge to redecorate his office. "My battle implants more than make up for my being female. Denying me access to the out-ports based on my sex isn't fair." She splayed her fingers and felt the satisfying tingle of her implants coming online.

"I don't think that's wise." Tome casually reached out to clamp a large hand over her wrist, immobilizing it without effort.

She opened her mouth, and then forgot what she'd planned to say. She stared, mesmerized, at his hand on her

arm. Dense black fur covered the forearm and sharp claws peeked out from elongated fingers.

Taking advantage of her silence, he continued. "Solar flares have been unpredictable this year, causing firestorms to ignite on some of the out-ports. Miners are being squeezed onto the remaining bases, and a lone female could spark an ugly fight." He loosed her wrist and stared hungrily at her mouth. "All females heading to the out-ports must be accompanied by at least one male capable of retaining ownership if challenged."

Jexx ignored his outrageous declaration and stared at his heavily muscled biceps. They shimmered eerily before they too sprouted a lovely pelt of dark fur. She raised her eyes to his face. "You're a shifter."

A faint smile ghosted across Tome's face. "Yes. It does appear that way."

Jexx swallowed the lump in her throat. "What type?"

He tilted his head and studied her. "You look more than a little panicked, and I didn't peg you as the panicky type of female. What's up?"

She swallowed again and her eyes dropped to his arm, now covered in a luxurious pelt of black fur. "I had a bad experience with a werewolf a few years back."

Tome shook his head. "I'm about as far from a puppy as you get." He used one hand to lift her chin, forcing her to meet those strange eyes of his. Slanted eyes, swirling in an ever-changing pattern of golds and browns. Cat eyes.

Startled, she stopped struggling, jaw hanging slack in surprises. "You're a were-panther! Rumors of the lost

Imperial were-panthers have been circulating for years, but I never expected to meet one."

He shrugged his shoulders, glancing at the fur rippling on his muscular arms. "We've been keeping a low profile." He shifted his weight and she once again found herself trapped beneath his muscular frame. "I've been successful in concealing my true nature for decades. Legend has it the only thing capable of causing an Imperial were-panther to lose control and shift unintentionally is the scent of his bond-mate's lust." He buried his face in the hollow of her shoulder and inhaled deeply.

"Hey!" Jexx struggled under his superior weight, not liking the direction the conversation was taking. "If you're implying what I think you are, you can take a flying leap off a short asteroid."

The stationmaster lifted his head and Jexx wondered how she could have failed to recognize those fabled eyes.

"Most bond-mates are happy to be found." His expression let her know he wasn't under any illusions about her feelings. "You'll get used to me."

Jexx gave a very unladylike snort. "I have no intention of getting used to you." She paused, surprised at the regret stirring in her belly. "I'm a loner and I'm happy that way."

"Well." He lowered his head and nipped at the delicate hollow of her throat. "I'll just have to convince you life could be a whole lot better with an Imperial were-panther at your side."

"Not likely." Jexx twisted her head to avoid his lips.

Firestorm (Anthology)
by Jade Buchanan, Alice Gaines, B. J. McCall

A lazy smile spread across his face and he tightened his grip on her hips. "I'll take that as a personal challenge."

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Anne Kane

Anne Kane lives in the beautiful Okanagan Valley with a bouncy Jack Russell terrier, a cantankerous Himalayan cat, a geriatric guinea pig and too many fish to count. She has two handsome sons and three adorable grandchildren. By day, she's a respectable bean counter, but after hours her imagination soars and she writes romances that span the galaxy and encompass beings of all sizes, shapes and origins.

She first started telling stories to her little sister when they were toddlers, and she just can't seem to stop. In 2007, she decided it was time to get serious about her writing and see where it would lead.

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Wolf Style

B.J. McCall

When a wolf races out of the flames and straight into volunteer firefighter Matt Reynolds' arms, he has no idea how his life is about to change.

* * * *

Matt Reynolds pulled off his helmet and mopped the soot and grime off his face. The fire was finally out, but not before acres of forest were lost. He and his fellow volunteer firefighters had spent endless hours putting out hot spots. The fulltime firefighters had moved on to another fire.

"Ride's coming."

Picking up his shovel, Matt joined the line of men waiting for the truck to take them back to town. Out of the corner of his eye, Matt saw a furry animal jump out of the brush. He turned to see a wolf racing straight at him.

"Look out, Reynolds," someone yelled.

The wolf stopped in front of him, tawny eyes wild with terror. Fires were brutal on wildlife and the poor wolf looked dirty and ragged. Tongue hanging out, she lay down at Matt's feet.

Although wolves were protected in this area, he'd rarely seen one. He hunkered down and petted the wolf on the head. Her thick brown fur was sticky with soot and Matt felt an instance kinship with the animal. "Looks like both of us are

worn out." The wolf closed her eyes and rubbed her head against his hand.

Gears grinding, the National Guard truck arrived.

"Get away from that wolf, Reynolds," Captain Hillard called out. "That thing might be rabid."

Matt rose and walked to the truck. The wolf followed, whining when he climbed in and joined the exhausted crew. When the truck pulled away, the wolf ran after it until she couldn't keep up.

"Sorry, girl," Matt whispered as the wolf disappeared from view.

* * * *

After an exhausting twenty-four hours, Matt was thankful to be home. He stripped off his clothes and stepped into the shower. Clean and refreshed, he pulled on a pair of sweats and grabbed a cold beer out of the fridge.

He walked outside and settled into a deck chair. Situated a couple miles outside the center of town, Matt's A-frame cabin was nestled among the tall pines. He propped his feet onto the railing and sipped his beer.

Feeling the caress of the warm breeze on his bare skin, Matt closed his eyes and sighed. The clicking of nails against the wooden deck brought him out of his relaxed state. Matt opened his eyes and gasped. The wolf stood on his deck.

Setting his beer on the deck, Matt swung his legs off the railing and reached out. The wolf walked toward him and dipped her head beneath his hand. He rubbed her ears. "I bet you're hungry."

The wolf answered with a soft bark.

Matt rose. "Stay."

Lying down, the wolf put her head on her paws.

Matt went inside and raided his refrigerator for leftover steak. He filled a bowl with water and returned to the deck. As the wolf gulped down the food and water, Matt finished his beer.

An hour later, Matt stood and stretched. He reached down and petted the wolf's head. "Good night, girl. If you're here in the morning, I'll make you breakfast." He headed into the house.

"I'll take you up on that offer."

Shocked by the sultry female voice, Matt spun around and gasped. Naked and dirty, a woman with bright, tawny eyes stood on his deck. He stepped back and glanced around looking for the wolf. "Who are you?"

"You've called me girl and wolf, but my name is Terran."

Her body was fit, her breasts nicely rounded and her legs went on forever.

"You're a..." Unable to breathe, Matt gulped air.

"I'm a werewolf."

"But you're a myth, like fairies and vampires."

"I guess I should have let you see me change, but some humans freak out during the transformation."

"No shit!"

"Thanks for the steak, Mr. Reynolds. Any chance I could use your shower?"

Matt nodded, pointed to the bathroom. "Be my guest. And my name's Matt."

He drank another beer while a hundred or so questions pinged around in his brain, like what was a naked woman doing running around in the forest. Twenty minutes passed before his guest walked out of the bathroom wearing a towel. Her delicate face was framed in damp, curly hair and her golden-brown eyes sparkled. Without all that dirt, she was gorgeous. "I like your place," she said, looking around.

The cabin had an open floor plan with a sleeping loft and a wall of windows facing the front. "Thanks." What did you say to a naked werewolf? "Would you like a beer?"

"There's something I need more."

"Clothes and a phone? Sorry, I wasn't thinking." He was thinking, but not logically. He wanted to remove the towel and touch that amazing body of hers.

She shook her head. "I thought I was going to die. When the fire spread, I left my rental cabin and tried to drive down the mountain, but I got trapped and had to abandon my car. I shifted and started running. The smoke was so thick, I couldn't see and I lost my way. I just kept heading downhill, then I heard voices and ran toward them. It was your team digging a firebreak. I figured staying with you was the safest option, so I dogged your heels."

"I didn't see you."

She shivered and wrapped her arms around her middle. "I stayed behind your lines and out of sight. I've never been in a firestorm before. It's frightening."

"I've worked several forest fires and I still have a healthy respect for them."

"Can I ask you for a favor?"

She probably wanted a ride to town. "Sure, anything."

"Will you hold me?"

Realizing she was still terrorized by her ordeal, Matt reached out and drew her into his arms. She buried her face in his neck and her soft breath feathered his skin. Cupping her head, he ran his fingers through her thick hair. When she lifted her head, he sought her mouth and kissed her.

She sighed and slid her arms around his neck, losing the towel in the process.

Her breasts were soft and her skin was smooth and warm. Lost in the moment, Matt tightened his hold and deepened the kiss. His body was on fire, his blood running hot. Hard as stone, his cock poked her soft belly. Lifting his head, Matt took a breath and stepped back. "Sorry, I got a little carried away."

"Let me stay the night."

His blood thundered in his ears. Had he heard her correctly? "What?"

"I don't want to be alone. Maybe it was the fear of being lost on that mountain most of the night. When I ran to you in that meadow, I needed you to touch me, reassure me I'd made it. I need that now." The sweet rush of life flowed through Terran's she-wolf blood. She'd survived. "I'm alive, Matt. I want to feel alive. I want to make love. Now. This minute. All night."

Grabbing her hand, Matt pulled her toward the ladder leading to the loft. Instead of climbing the ladder, she grasped the wooden rungs and looked over her shoulder. "Wolf style."

Matt stripped off his sweats. His body was lean, but hard with muscle. He cupped her bare ass and knelt behind her. Stroking her from hip to thigh, he nipped one cheek.

Terran yelped. He licked the crease between her cheeks, teasing her with slow, wet strokes. The combination of tongue, lips and teeth on her flesh sent a shiver up her spine. His hand slid between her legs and his fingertips touched her wet pussy. When she moaned, he slid his tongue lower to replace his fingers.

She spread her feet slightly, giving him access, wanting his tongue deep inside her. He kneaded her ass and licked her pussy. With each lush lick, he made her wetter, hotter. He flicked her clit with his tongue, back-and-forth, taking her to the sweet edge. Then he plunged inside, fucking her with his hot tongue.

Terran gave him another approving yelp.

Matt slapped her gently on the ass and rose. His thick cock slid between her spread cheeks. His bare thighs touched hers.

Eager for the first thrust, Terran gripped the ladder. The thick head probed her slit and plunged into her in one fast stroke. He anchored her hips with his big hands and pounded her pussy. With each hot thrust, he slid deeper into her wet pussy.

"Fuck me, hard." Drenched with need, Terran welcomed his length. Long and hot he filled her, answering her needs, satisfying her throbbing flesh. Her moans mingled with his breathy grunts. Heat poured from their bodies as skin slapped skin. Hot cock slammed into her wet pussy, making lush sucking sounds as they raced toward climax.

His fingers dug into her skin, holding her as his body stilled, shuddered. His cock pulsed, filling her with cream, and her pussy contracted in warm waves. He withdrew, thrust, and pumped his hips slowly until her body ceased its sensual flutter.

Gulping air, he withdrew. Terran released the ladder and turned to face him. "I feel great. How about you?"

Perspiration dewed his face and chest. "I think I'm gonna die."

"Too tired to climb this ladder and get into bed?"

Grinning, he shook his head. "I'd follow your beautiful ass anywhere."

Terran climbed the ladder and fell into his bed. The mattress felt like heaven.

Matt stretched out beside her. "I like wolf style."

Exhausted and satisfied, Terran closed her eyes and snuggled against him. "When you're ready for more, wake me."

* * * *

Matt opened his eyes. Light spilled through the cabin and across the naked woman lying next to him.

Not a woman, a she-wolf.

The heart-stopping memory of entering her for the first time, the ecstasy of taking her wolf style washed over him and made him hard as stone. Remembering her instruction to wake her when he was ready, Matt touched the tip of his tongue to one nipple and waited for Terran's response. She stretched and snuggled closer.

Taking care to awaken her gently, Matt settled his lips over her taut nipple and suckled. With tender strokes he caressed her sex, circling her entrance with the pad of a finger until she moistened. Moaning, she snuggled close and pressed her supple breast against his mouth. "Ready for more?"

Releasing her nipple, Matt looked up. Her eyes were half-closed and her smile sexy. She did things to him, heart-pounding things he'd never felt before. He nudged her belly with his erection. "I love morning sex."

She rocked her hips against the ridge of his cock. "Me, too."

Beautiful, sensual and open to a morning fuck, she was the kind of woman Matt had dreamed about. Balls aching, he stroked her damp center. Dipping a finger inside her, Matt stroked her flesh until she creamed, hot and ready.

Slow and sensual she rolled onto her back, stretched and bent her knees. The invitation was beautifully blatant. She smiled as he climbed between her soft thighs and gasped when he probed her lush entrance.

Instead of closing her eyes, she locked gazes with him and wrapped her arms around his neck. His chest settled on the soft cushion of her breasts and his cock sank into her warmth. She clamped around him, tight and hot.

Deep, slow strokes heightened his senses, making him aware of every clench, squeeze and flutter. Restraining his desire to take her fast and hard, Matt controlled his pace, letting the intensity build. Lord, he wanted to fuck her hard. Balls humming and heart pounding, he refused to give in to the sheer physical need to climax.

"Don't hold back," she whispered. "Fuck me."

Mindless with need, Matt pushed deep into her wet folds, giving her what she wanted, what he ached for. Her nails dug into his shoulder and back as she bucked her hips, squeezing and tugging on his cock. She screamed and clenched him so tight Matt exploded in a hot rush. Exhausted, he balanced his weight on his elbows and dropped his forehead onto her shoulder. "I can work hours on a fire line, but you exhaust me in minutes."

"Don't worry. With time, we can build your stamina."

"You're staying around?"

"My summer cabin is gone. I need a place to stay."

"Mi casa, su casa."

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B.J. McCall

A multi-published author of contemporary and futuristic sensual romance, B.J. McCall is a West Virginia native now residing in Northern California. Thanks to an older sister who was a librarian, reading became B.J.'s favorite pastime. B.J.'s idea of the perfect way to spend a rainy afternoon or a day at the beach is reading a romance novel. The phrase "do what you love" applies to B.J.—she loves to write and each story is special. She hopes her readers will enjoy each and every one of them. Visit her website at www.BJMcCall.com.

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Cougar Meadow

Belinda McBride

When firefighter Ellie Cameron is separated from her crew and trapped in a firestorm, the last thing she expects is to be rescued—by a shapeshifting mountain lion who awakens the heat buried within her—and the need to mate.

* * * *

Cougar Meadow

Damnation, how had everything gone so bad, so fast? They'd been walking the smoldering ruins near Cougar Meadow, looking for hot spots. The wind had suddenly flared, breathing life into the fire they'd thought dead. Now, Ellie Cameron was trapped, her back to a jagged tumble of rock while the flames closed in on her like a freight train.

The rest of the crew had escaped downhill, away from the path of the fire. She hadn't been so lucky. She'd been at the top of the site. The revived firestorm had encircled her within minutes.

The rocks were her best hope, but even now, Ellie saw death roaring down on her in a wall of flame. Pine and manzanita exploded into hungry, orange mutations of themselves. Hot cinder floated through the air. Under the acrid smell of smoke, she could smell her hair burning. Her skin itched, but she resisted the urge to fling off her clothing, to shed her human skin. To change.

To change would give her to the animal, and that would bring only panic. Panic would mean death.

"Here!"

She looked around, seeking out the voice, but seeing nothing.

"Here!"

She rose from where she crouched. In horror, Ellie saw that the thick needles under her feet were smoking. Small fires were erupting right where she stood! The heat was crushing, despite her gear.

A hand gripped her arm. She looked down and it wasn't a hand, it was a paw ... a huge, tawny cat paw, claws ripping into her heavy jacket. Turning her eyes, she saw a triangular face, huge liquid eyes ... teeth...

* * * *

Ellie coughed. The taste of smoke erupted into her mouth. She rolled to her side, grimaced and coughed some more. She was a little crisped, but alive. Smooth rock felt cool under her naked skin, and she heard the sound of water trickling. The cavern was cool and clear. The only smell was the smoke that lingered in her short brown hair. She sat up, took a deep breath and looked around.

Beautiful. She'd always heard that Mt. Shasta had hidden chambers, but never thought to find herself in one. A mysterious race of humans reputedly lived in the mountains. Tall, golden and completely mythical.

"You're awake. Good."

Maybe not so mythical after all...

The man sat to her right, quiet as the night and just as still. His bare skin was golden, his hair and eyes a variation on the same theme. Large, liquid eyes watched her from a handsome triangular face. She didn't need her sense of smell to tell her this was the cougar from the rocks. He scooted forward on his haunches, and her eyes settled first on his face, then on his hard, erect cock. He ignored it, but she couldn't. Her cunt grew heavy and wet. Her nipples pebbled.

"I'm Nathan. I've never seen you before. Do you live in Mt. Shasta?"

She shook her head, fighting to keep her eyes on his face. "No, I'm from Oregon. I'm with the fire crew."

"It's been a bad season. I was hiking. I smelled you..."

His eyes suddenly dilated and Ellie knew that he knew. It was her heat cycle, coming early this year. There were no males of her kind where she lived, so it had never been an issue before.

Like the great, sinuous cat that he was, Nathan crawled the remaining distance to her side. She sat paralyzed, unable to retreat as he moved into her space, rising up onto his knees to bury his face into her neck. He breathed in her fragrance, and a light growl broke from his throat, followed by a hearty purr. "You're so close, little girl. It's not time, not yet. But so close." He rubbed against her, laying his scent on her skin.

To her surprise, her deep, throaty purr answered his. "I'm only half..."

"I know. You don't know our kind, do you?"

He was forcing her gently back, down to the floor of the cave. When his tongue swiped over her throat, it was rough and raspy. She groaned involuntarily. "No ... Mom's human." She gasped when he nipped her jaw. What was she doing? Never in her life had Ellie allowed anyone to rule her this way! She started to escape, but he held her, claws emerging just slightly.

"You're not mated?"

She shook her head, unable to answer as the cat man moved lower, his rough tongue teasing at the bend of her elbow.

"I'll take you, girl, but you won't get a baby. Not today. Maybe tomorrow." His hand was between her legs now, stroking and soothing, building a warm glow rather than a blaze. "Tomorrow, I won't be able to stop myself from fucking you, but if you don't want babies..." His finger pressed her anus and she gasped, shocked at the sensation. "I can use a condom." His finger slipped in, just a bit. "Or we can ... do it here."

His words were lost as he took a nipple into his mouth, rasping it with his tongue. She felt his canines lengthen and elongate. He drew them down her skin, gently, with exquisite delicacy. "No babies," she gasped. "Not this time."

At that, he looked up at her face, his smile showing just a little too much tooth. She laughed. A mate! She had a mate!

So this was the succulent little female he'd been tracking around the Siskiyou for the past week. Nathan lowered himself once more, tasting her skin. Her flavor and smell melted over his tongue. There were so few of his kind left,

Nathan had never thought to meet a female who would call him to mate. She was small and wiry, strong beyond her size. When he'd first come upon her in that heavy gear, he'd been confused, and then impressed. She worked alongside the men on her crew, moving with strength and quiet authority.

Nathan hovered over her, looking down at the sweet body that he'd unwrapped from layers of work clothes and heavy gear. Her skin was smooth and ivory. Though her hands were rough, the rest was soft and female.

He rolled his tongue over a pink nipple, smiling as her hips thrust. The rich, heady fragrance of her heat grabbed him by the balls, blinding him to time and space and the consequences of their coupling. "Mine," he growled against her skin. She answered with a purr from deep within her chest. She was innocent of their ways. Most likely she didn't know the implications of this mating. He did, his higher brain protested. Where was the romance? The courtship? Shouldn't they be in love?

The cat purred in delighted pleasure. She was his.

Impatient, he moved, rolling onto his belly, head between her legs, grasping and pushing her thighs open. She parted like a flower. Glistening pink petals opened to him, begging him to taste, to drink, to lose himself in her body.

Nathan parted her lips with his thumbs. He ran his tongue through her naked slit, catching her moisture, delighted that more flowed. She clasped his head with strong hands, digging fingers into his scalp as he ate and purred, sending vibrations deep into her core. He wet his middle finger and teased her back entrance.

No babies ... not this time. Tomorrow, he wanted her ready here. Gently, he thrust his finger. Once that tight band of muscle relaxed he sucked her clit hard, and added a second finger. He pumped, he suckled. Her hips began to rise and buck and the scream she let out as she climaxed was pure feline—high, piercing and throaty. He panted against her skin, willing himself not to come.

"Nathan?"

Her chest was heaving, her skin flushed and rosy. Nathan rose up, letting his hand fall. He knelt beside her, awaiting her pleasure.

* * * *

Ellie brought up her hand, stroking his muscular thigh. He felt like silk over steel. His cock rose from his groin, full and heavy, pre-come glistening at the tip. He wanted her desperately, but was patient. She searched his eyes and scanned his face. If she did this, it would be forever. She hadn't grown up with other shifters, but instinct told her this simple truth.

He was a complete stranger. She didn't know his likes or dislikes, if he lived in the wilderness, or in the heart of a city. She didn't even know what he did for a living. "What's your favorite color?"

"I like many colors. But I think perhaps I like green best."

Her eyes were green; he'd have seen that outside in the light. In the cavern, his were dark and mysterious, tilting up slightly at the corners. His lips were full and expressive, and he smiled easily. He lay forward, gathering her in his arms. "I

live in a little yellow farmhouse outside of Mt. Shasta City. In the winter, I like to ski. In the summer, I like to hike. I'm a doctor. I work at the local emergency room."

"Do people here know what you are?"

"Some do. The people here are good that way."

Her breathing had slowed. She was recovering from the climax that had rocked her so hard. The orgasm with his fingers in her ass had been deep and shockingly delicious. She stretched, arching her back, feeling tight muscles quiver. The juices of her arousal trickled from her body, and when she looked up into his face, her pussy clenched. "My name is Ellie."

He took a deep breath and released it. Nathan rose over the top of her, grasping his cock, guiding it into her. Ellie closed her eyes, savoring the thick head, the moisture he trailed over her inner thigh and up to her belly as he teased. When he dipped into her entrance, she thrust upward, trying to meet him, to coax him into her body.

Suddenly, the teasing stopped, and Nathan lowered himself, face to face, golden eyes burning into green, their breath mingling, hot and moist. His cockhead rested right there, just a hairsbreadth from taking her. "You're mine, Ellie." His whisper was harsh against her lips.

She nodded in agreement. "Yours."

His kiss was hard and invasive. He tasted and nipped and fucked her mouth until she was breathless. Yet still, he hadn't taken her. Somewhere deep in her lower brain, a piece slid into place. She felt a growl break from her throat. Ellie's eyes widened. Her fingers curled into his skin. Claws that had

never before emerged suddenly broke through, marking him, claiming him. "You're mine, Nathan."

He looked deeply into her eyes, and then nodded. "Yours." He bent to kiss her once again, and as he did so, he thrust, his cock beginning its foray into her tight, slick body.

She was tight. Not virginally tight, but strong and muscular. Nathan pulled back and tried again, growling appreciatively when her hips curled into his. Once again he pulled back, and his forward movement carried him home this time. He slid into place and leaned down, taking her shoulder between sharp teeth that desperately wanted to lengthen and mark.

He released her when he tasted blood. Bracing his weight on his hands, he licked the wound, his arousal heightening as she once again broke out into that throaty purr. He pumped steadily, feeling the heat, the moisture increase with every thrust. Her hands floated over his body, nails scraped his skin, and as she grew closer to climax, she dug in, her body undulating under his, her hips churning, urging him faster. Blood from her claw marks trickled down his hip.

She arched up, capturing him between powerful thighs, and she groaned, bucking and then freezing, and then arching into him once more. But she wasn't finished. Ellie pulled him into her, her beautiful lips parted on a moan. He couldn't restrain himself any longer.

Nathan pulled away, ignoring her protest, lifting her upright. As understanding dawned, Ellie gave him her back. Gently he pressed her forward, elbows to the floor. He

stroked her back, pressing his hips into hers, sliding his cock deep into her body.

Like the animal that he was at his core, Nathan clasped her hair, holding her head still. He held her hip with the other hand, limiting her movement.

He pumped, his hips slapping against hers noisily, a growl rising in his throat. At the last moment, he freed her head, reached down to her pussy, and pressed her clit. She groaned and came hard, her muscles clasp his cock like a glove.

The scream that broke from his throat was inhuman. Fur rippled and flowed over his skin, his cock barbed and caught, holding him steady as he showered his seed into her body. All thought fled, and Nathan only knew instinct and need and the ultimate satisfaction as he claimed his mate.

Holy. Shit.

Nathan had collapsed on top of her, carrying them both to the floor with his weight. He'd continued to spasm and ejaculate even once they'd collapsed. He groaned, now, rolling to the side, spooning into her back. "Did I hurt you?"

"No ... no, I'm fine."

They were still panting from the exertion. He shifted a bit, letting his exhausted shaft slip from her body. "I lost control, shifted on you. I'm sorry."

"It's what we are, Nathan." Though she couldn't see his face, she knew he was worried. She smelled it. Ellie suppressed a smile and pulled his arms tighter around her body.

"I shifted too, a little. I've never done that before."

"Never? Maybe being with me is pulling it out."

"Nate?" She rolled to her side, looking up into his face. "I don't think condoms will hold up to that." She wasn't smiling, but there was a dimple in her cheek. Unable to stop himself, he leaned forward, dipping the tip of his tongue into that sweet little hollow.

"It'll be okay. That took me by surprise, but I can control it next time."

So that was the first time he'd experienced it? "Just the same, maybe we shouldn't take the risk. I do want children, but later."

He nodded, disappointment on his face. "I'll take you back to Cougar Meadow. I imagine your crew will be searching for you."

That wasn't really what was on her mind, but suddenly Ellie had images of Search and Rescue combing the woods, looking for her. "I do need to go back, don't I?"

Nathan nodded, his expression determined, if less than enthusiastic. He rose heavily to his feet, offering her a hand up. It was time to go.

* * * *

"Is there a doctor on call?"

Controlled chaos reigned in the emergency room as they wheeled her in the swinging doors. They'd found her at the edge of Cougar Meadow, huddled in a pile of singed boulders, semi-conscious, but alive. She couldn't remember exactly how they'd extracted her from the forest, but here she was.

"Dr. Levine is on vacation, but he's coming in anyway. He'll cover till Dr. Grant shows up." They'd cut away her clothing, leaving her with only a sheet to cover her nudity.

She pulled a deep breath, coughing a bit. That interlude in the cavern had to have been a hallucination. She clearly remembered each and every moment, every embrace, every touch. It was the afterward that she didn't remember so well. They'd headed up a pathway to the surface ... and then she woke up here. She explored her scalp with her fingertips, feeling for any sign of injury, but there was nothing. She felt fine.

She sat up and then remembered that her clothing now lay in a tattered heap in the trash container. Ellie rolled over onto her side and waited.

* * * *

Noiselessly, he slipped into her cubicle. She was on her side, sound asleep. Nathan looked over her chart. Elinor Shields, age twenty-five, resident of Central Point, Oregon. He memorized her information. He didn't intend to allow her to walk out of his life.

When he walked into the ER this afternoon, he'd been tied up with broken bones and bruises. It had killed him knowing that Ellie was here and he couldn't rush to her side. Nathan found the rolling stool and sat next to her, stroking her cheek until emerald green eyes fluttered open in surprise.

"It's you..."

He nodded.

"So you are a doctor."

"Mmmm hmmm..." He opened her chart and frowned, reading it. "Mild smoke inhalation, disorientation. No burns and your vitals are good. I think I'd like to keep you here, oh ... maybe another hour or so. Keep an eye on you."

"Why can't I leave now?"

"Because I can't leave. As soon as someone is here to cover me, I'll take you home."

"Oh." She frowned for a moment. "I remember most of what happened, but then it gets fuzzy..."

"The caves do that."

She looked at him in puzzlement.

"The caverns are protected. If I wasn't here to remind you, you'd lose all memory of your time there."

"Wow. Why didn't it affect you?"

"It's my territory to protect. In time, it won't have that effect on you."

In time. Time with him. She reached out and clasped his hand, holding it to her cheek. "What now?"

"I go back to work until the regular doctor shows. Then I have the rest of my vacation coming, and you're officially grounded. Doctor's orders."

"And then?"

"Honeymoon. I want to get to know my mate."

The curtain whisked aside. "Dr. Levine, Dr. Grant's here. You're free to ... oh ... sorry!"

The curtain snapped closed, and they laughed.

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Belinda McBride

Belinda lives in the wilderness of the Siskiyou Mountains and at night she runs naked with a pack of wolves...

Uhh...

Belinda lives *near* the Siskiyou Mountains and shares her home with a pack of Siberian Huskies who like to pretend they are wolves. And she usually keeps her clothing on when she goes outside.

Belinda loves to travel, collect rare gemstones, make soap and spend precious time with her daughters. Her degree is in History with a Cultural Anthropology minor. On weekends, you will often find Belinda ringside at a dog show, comb and spray bottle in hand.

She invites you to visit her website at www.belindamcbride.com, or email her directly at belinda@belindamcbride.com.

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Going Somewhere

Cameo Brown

Leonora Palmer, an undercover arson investigator, gets an unexpected lesson in desire when the mysterious owner of a wild animal sanctuary catches her snooping in his garden and gives her no choice but to surrender to his primal needs.

* * * *

"Going somewhere, Ms. Palmer?"

The sexy rumble startled Leonora, sending chills down her spine. Trapped against the garden wall, she turned in the direction of the voice and gulped. The man in front of her rivaled every Greek statue ever chiseled, his classically handsome features and longish black hair giving him the appearance of a god. A very angry god.

"You have me at a disadvantage, sir," Leonora finally managed, shifting uncomfortably to relieve the pressure building between her thighs. "I don't know your name, but you seem to know mine."

The man, dressed in a black T-shirt that highlighted his muscular arms and black jeans that highlighted everything else, glared at her, his bright green eyes flashing. "You're trespassing, Ms. Palmer," the man continued, ignoring her inquiry. "I should call the police."

Leonora finally understood—he thought she was Andrea Palmer, investigative journalist at large. And he was right. Sort of. "Then I won't get my story, will I, Mr...." she coaxed,

trying to ignore the dampness trickling down her thigh and the burning sensation caused by her sensitive nipples rubbing against her T-shirt. She'd picked a fine time to stop wearing a bra.

The man ignored her attempt to get his name and continued to stare like a predator, his gaze drifting from her eyes to her lips and farther down. A warm feeling traveled across every inch he inspected, and when he focused his attention on the juncture of her thighs, she thought her pussy might melt.

He stepped closer, and Leonora tried to back up, but she had nowhere to go. The garden wall she'd climbed over to get into Blake Animal Sanctuary now became a prison wall. She pressed her back against the vine-covered stones, hoping somehow a magic door would open and swallow her up.

It didn't.

Her captor continued advancing until his hard body pressed against hers. She put her hands against his chest in a half-hearted attempt to keep him at bay, but in one swift move, he pinned her hands over her head and held them there. "I should call the police, Ms. Palmer, but I'm feeling generous. You get a choice."

The words, delivered in a low hypnotic timbre, made her tremble. Her heart pounded. She was sure by now he could feel her nipples poking him in the chest, which was only fair considering his erection poked her thigh. His musky scent overwhelmed her senses. She longed to reach out and touch him, but she couldn't move. He pressed closer and whispered

in her ear. "I can either have you arrested, or I can fuck you right here and give us what we both want."

Leonora wanted to be offended, but that was mighty hard to do considering her pussy ached with a need only his long hard cock could ease. Full lips massaged the sensitive area below her jaw, and strong fingers worked against the damp denim covering her mons. "Fuck me senseless," she commanded, lifting her leg to his hip so she could push herself against his hard length.

"My name is Gregor," the mysterious hunk said, thrusting against her. Even with layers of denim separating them, his movements shot fire through her blood. "I want to hear you scream it when you come."

Leonora nodded and Gregor released her hands, placing his on either side of her as he continued to rain kisses across her neck. She was free, and she knew she could knee him at this point and take off, but she didn't want to. She wanted Gregor to fuck her twenty ways from Sunday and then some. She ran her fingers across the hard muscles outlined by the soft black material and sighed.

She just hoped she wouldn't have to arrest him later. Shit.

Gregor must have sensed her hesitation, because he dropped his head to her shoulder and gave a sigh of his own. He stepped away from her and made a sweeping gesture with his arm toward the front gate. "Next time, call for an appointment, Ms. Palmer," he advised, his voice just a bit ragged. He turned on his heel and strode away.

Emptiness enveloped Leonora. Hell, she'd let her job get in the way again. But fire was all she knew, and she was good

at finding arsonists. Besides, she might be the only thing standing between a criminal and the safety of the animals here.

For several minutes, Leonora leaned forward, hands on her thighs, and fought to get a grip. Trying to focus on anything but Gregor's hot breath against her skin, she searched her memory for information on the employees of the sanctuary. The name Gregor didn't ring a bell at first, but maybe she'd missed something. Maybe she needed to reread...

A deep growl interrupted her thoughts and Leonora tensed. She was, after all, wandering around the grounds of a wild animal sanctuary without an escort to guide her.

The growl grew louder and fear gripped her. In the dim twilight, punctuated every few feet by security lights, she could make out the outline of a cat. A big cat, not like the average domestic house kitty.

Leonora stood perfectly still as it approached, its movements sleek and graceful. Bright green eyes glowed against velvety black fur, and from the looks of it, the cat appeared to be a part of the panther family. Something in her wanted to reach out to it, to touch its silkiness, but she knew better. Wild animals were better left wild, and the sanctuary had the reputation of helping with that cause. Still, Leonora had to fight to keep from putting her hand out.

The panther ambled forward, carrying something in its mouth. Dropping it on the ground, the magnificent beast lay down beside the object and flicked its tail, as if daring Leonora to reach for it.

Curiosity killed the cat. Her curiosity had gotten her into more than one pinch in the past, but right now it could get her killed. The cat waited expectantly, though, almost as if it wanted her to come look at the object. It continued to pant lightly and flick its tail, and Leonora couldn't help but sense a certain amusement in its demeanor. She wasn't sure if she wanted to see what it'd dropped, considering cats were known for bringing fresh kills to humans. What if he'd dropped a dead Chihuahua or something? Still, she was terribly curious.

The panther yawned, and Leonora grinned. "Am I boring you, kitty?" she asked with a small laugh.

The panther laid its head on its paws and, tail swishing, closed its eyes.

Her curiosity out of control, she moved onto her belly and inched forward. Leonora kept her attention on the panther as she crept along. The panther didn't move.

Finally, Leonora got close enough and reached forward. Expecting a wet glob covered in wild cat spit, she touched the item tentatively. She blinked in surprise; not only did it feel mostly dry, it also felt strangely familiar. Her wallet.

Or more precisely, her wallet that had been in her purse, which she'd left in her car waaaaay down the street. What the fuck? She looked up, but the big cat had disappeared. Too late she realized she'd taken her eye off the panther for just a second too long. The low growl behind her confirmed her worst fears.

Cautiously, she peeked over her shoulder and wished she hadn't. The panther stood at her feet, eyeing her. Terrified,

she tried to pull herself forward, but the weight of a huge paw on her calf stopped her. Panic set in.

A crushing weight pressed against her back and she couldn't breathe. Panthers couldn't weigh that much, could they? It didn't matter one way or another. Either it would tear her to shreds or crush her with its fat ass. The result would be the same.

She'd be dead.

Leonora tried to take a breath, but the beast's weight forcing her down wouldn't allow it. Clutching her wallet like a weapon, she decided to take a chance and fight her way out. She prepared to roll over and push it off her, then run like hell, when a low purr penetrated her brain.

"Going somewhere, Ms. Palmer?" Gregor's soft voice invaded her consciousness.

The weight on her back eased, and Leonora gasped for air. As soon as she got two good gulps, she struggled forward and out from under ... what?

Strong hands braced her shoulders and pulled her over on her back. Leonora tried to shimmy away using her elbows, but a pair of bright green eyes stopped her. Gregor, on all fours, hovered over her, staring at her intently. His lopsided grin—a clear indication this whole weird episode amused him—would have pissed Leonora off completely if it hadn't been for the fact that Gregor was totally and gloriously naked.

And his cock was huge.

"Didn't you say something earlier about me fucking you senseless?" Gregor inquired politely, as if the situation called for some kind of propriety. He crawled forward and placed

himself above her, lowering just enough she could feel his erection pressing against her pussy, his heat scorching her skin even through her jeans.

Leonora tried to focus, but everything below her waist throbbed. Before she could hardly breathe, and now her breathing came in short gasps. She wanted so badly for him to fuck her, to take her and do the amazing things to her body she sensed he could. Just looking into his eyes made her want to ride him all night long. She'd never been so wet or ready for anyone.

Her hunger for the dark stranger tormented her. He might be a suspect in an arson investigation. She couldn't go around boffing suspects. She'd be the laughingstock of the department if anyone ever found out. And to top it off, the panther still prowled around somewhere. How had Gregor scared him off?

Gregor stretched out beside her and laughed. Leonora grimaced. "What's so funny?"

"Your mating scent is unmistakable." He inhaled deeply and nuzzled her neck, finding another sensitive spot, this time near her throat. His breath teased her flesh when he spoke. "But something keeps you from giving in to your desire for me. I wonder what it could be..." He nipped her neck, making her yelp, while simultaneously plucking the wallet out of her hand. He dangled it in front of her, moving it just out of reach when she grabbed for it.

Her attempt forced her into Gregor's chest, well-muscled and covered with crisp black hair. He tossed the wallet away

and took advantage of the opportunity to pull her into his strong arms. She wanted to struggle, she really did.

No, she didn't.

She wanted him deep inside her swollen lips, pumping her with wild abandon until they both screamed for mercy. His lips on hers melted the world around them away. Leonora clung to him, sucking on his lower lip and eliciting a moan from him that excited her even more. He tugged her T-shirt off, revealing her breasts, and his sudden intake of air suggested he liked what he saw. Strong, experienced fingers stroked her soft flesh. Smooth lips and a practiced tongue suckled her nipples, bringing each dark pebbled tip to attention.

Gregor kissed his way to her belly, flicking his tongue in and out of her navel while he undid her jeans and slid them out of the way. The next instant she lay exposed, her panties ripped to shreds in Gregor's rush to reveal her mons. Gregor let his tongue play between her folds, kissing her hard nub, licking and nibbling at it until she lifted her hips and moaned.

Gregor continued to work magic with his tongue, alternating between sucking her clit and licking her pussy with firm, pleasing strokes. He feasted on her pussy, lapping her cream and groaning as if he savored every minute of it. When his tongue threatened to invade her tightness, she'd had as much as she could take.

"I want you in me," she begged, pulling at him with desperation.

"Good," he responded, and kissed his way up her body until the tip of his cock pressed at her wet opening.

She gasped and spread her legs wide, an invitation Gregor didn't accept right away. Instead, he toyed with Leonora, sliding his hard prick up and down in her wetness, hinting at entering her, then pulling away. Her pussy spasmed, grabbing at him, and she whimpered.

With a low growl, Gregor deftly rolled Leonora onto her stomach, pulling her ass close to his hot, wet cock. "I like it from behind," he said, his voice edged with desire.

Leonora pushed back against him and he finally, with excruciating slowness, entered her. His cock slid into her wet warmth, stretching and filling her. He thrust into her, each movement deeper than the last. His hips cycled into a steady rhythm, and Leonora's release began to build. His fingertips stroked her clit, and his teeth teased the back of her neck, making her body crackle and hum. His thrusting increased and soon he rode her hard, his balls slapping her ass and adding to the already incredible array of sensations vibrating through her body.

His cock pulsed inside her once more and blinding pleasure took over, emanating from her pussy and rippling through every fiber of her soul. Leonora screamed and gave into the shudders of ecstasy claiming her body and mind.

Gregor spilled his seed inside her with a feral yowl, his hips bucking wildly as her cunt milked him into ecstasy. Panting heavily, Gregor slowed his thrusts until he collapsed beside Leonora and pulled her down beside him. She snuggled into his shoulder, her leg across his waist.

"Next time will be better. I was too stimulated," he explained, his tone almost apologetic.

Leonora giggled. Even better?

Gregor kissed the hair at her temple. "You care about us," he said. "Even before I knew that, I wanted you, but..."

"What are you talking about?" Leonora asked, confusion invading her afterglow. Damn, was this where he mentioned a wife? Or kids? Or both? She pulled herself up to look at him.

Gregor's emerald eyes sparkled as he focused his gaze on her. The night had fallen all around them, but Gregor's arms around her, casually stroking her heated skin, made her feel secure from everything. Everything except her own feelings.

"Leonora, you aren't very good at lying," he said, laughing.

She stilled. He'd called her by her real name.

Gregor must have sensed her apprehension. "Ah, my Leonora," he gently scolded. "You haven't figured me out yet, have you?"

Tears threatened, and Leonora's chest felt tight. Gregor reached up and stroked his thumb across her cheek, his smile still seductive. He nipped her earlobe. "I can tell you now, since I've claimed you as my own. My secrets are your secrets," he continued, his voice soft and sexy.

"Why, of all the—" Leonora started and pushed herself away. The arrogant bastard. No one had a claim on her. No one!

Gently, he caught her wrist in his large, warm hand, one that had just pleased her beyond her wildest dreams. "You can leave, but I don't want you to go," he said. Between his words, he placed tiny kisses on her wrist where her pulse throbbed. "And I don't think you want to go."

He had a point there, damn it.

"While we were introducing ourselves at the garden wall, a friend of mine who is very security-oriented noticed a strange car down the road and decided to check it out. That's how he found your wallet and brought it to me."

"Your friend is a carjacker, is he?" Leonora huffed, trying to sound indignant. She had to fight for it, though. Gregor's attentions to her wrist were arousing feelings she didn't think she could have so soon after such a thorough fucking.

"My friend is a rat snake. At least on occasion," Gregor answered, as if it made perfect sense. He suckled her fingers, sending electricity straight to her clit.

Leonora shook her head. "A what?"

Gregor pulled Leonora close. She didn't resist. "This isn't a normal animal sanctuary. I like to think of it as a resort of sorts for shape-shifters. We cater to their special needs—privacy being the foremost concern. Being an arson investigator, I'm sure you understand the need for discretion," he explained, ravaging her breasts with his soft lips.

Even in her fog, the pieces came together. "You're the panther, Gregor?" she rasped. No wonder she didn't remember the name at first. It had been among the list of creatures, not the employees.

In response, he gave a low rumble, and she opened her legs instinctively. "I realized you were here to investigate the fires in the area, but I can vouch you've no cause for alarm from us. The shifters here are quite predatory and delight in guarding the place, even from each other."

Firestorm (Anthology)
by Jade Buchanan, Alice Gaines, B. J. McCall

Speechless, Leonora nodded. Though it seemed hard to believe, she'd just been ravaged by a shape-shifter. And it appeared she was going to be again. Gregor's cock teased her pussy unmercifully until he entered her and began another exquisite conquest of her body and mind.

Leonora grasped Gregor's powerful hips tight, his hard prick filling her, his whispered endearments driving her to the edge. And, as they rocked together in a steady, primal rhythm, Gregor made her glad she wasn't going anywhere anytime soon.

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Cameo Brown

Cameo Brown enjoys living in the world of stories, especially the erotic ones, whether reading or writing them. In real life, she lives somewhere just right of the middle of the United States with her totally delectable husband, who still doesn't quite understand why she enjoys sitting at the computer so much, and a passel of temperamental felines who are plotting to take over the world. When not writing, cleaning up hairballs, or making up excuses to dance naked, she loves hearing from her readers and adding new features to her place in cyberspace, www.cafepriapus.com. Visit her there for an occasional free story or contest opportunity, or drop her a line at cameo@cafepriapus.com to let her know what you would like to see next.

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Burning Down the House

Isabella Jordan

Katurah has always had the ability to start fires with her mind. Will she use her powers now to end it all—or will she give in to a fiery lover?

* * * *

Katurah stood in front of the house that had never been her home, clutching her divorce papers. *Irreconcilable differences. Yeah. Like his new grad student. Assistant my ass...*

Focus!

A curl of smoke rose from the porch. She remembered the spike of fear that always shot through her when she'd heard his footsteps on its wooden planks, announcing his arrival. Then the yelling would start. Sometimes he'd been okay with just making her cry. More often it ended in a beating. For nine years she'd explained away black eyes and strange bruises to her mother and co-workers, knowing from the look in their eyes that they could see past her lies.

She'd had no friends to tell. She hadn't been allowed to have friends.

There were other scars too, hidden within. She didn't have to explain those because she was the only one who knew about them. And they never went away.

Focus!

Katurah tried even harder when she watched the edge of the stairs begin to blacken. The strange power her grandmother and mother had recognized in her as a child caused the wooden boards to char as tiny flames formed on their surface.

Never use that ability, they'd warned. That flame you hold inside will consume you if you do.

What good was that advice? She could start fires by just envisioning the flames in her mind. Couldn't she have used the fire to save herself? So many times she could have set fire to the abusive bastard she'd married. How satisfying would it have been to scare the shit out of him for once? Just once. Maybe he would have left her years ago. While there was still something left of her.

She could go to his office now and set fire to him. Just for calling her pathetic. Didn't he know he was the one responsible for making her that way? Didn't he deserve to die for the nine years of pain and humiliation he'd put her through?

Now she was at the point where nothing mattered anymore. She had nothing left to lose. The flames grew bigger, spread along the porch stairs. *Burn it down. Burn it all down.* It had been years since she'd tried to set fire to anything, yet it all came back so easily. She pushed the flames higher, faster.

The memories, her belongings, everything would soon be so much ash, just like all of her dreams. Then she'd walk into the fire, join those flames once and for all. By God, at least she'd have some say in how it all ended.

Higher, higher, burning fire ... Katurah paused as searing heat ravaged her body. The flames leapt toward the top of the porch with no help from her, as if the flame shared her desire to burn down the house.

Then it began to move in an uncharacteristic way. Her heart lurched as she watched a huge column of fire jump from the porch onto the grass, running in her direction. Staring at the column, she willed it back. It was scorching a black path across the grass, nearer by the second.

Katurah had only ever been good at starting fires. Controlling what she'd created was something she'd never tried. Beads of perspiration dotted her forehead then ran down her face as the fiery entity's heat reached her in waves. She didn't need to walk into the flames after all. They were coming to claim her.

Now she was afraid. She'd thought she could offer her life to the flame, end it that way. But just like everything in her life, control had been taken away from her. In her mind, she screamed for it to get away. But whatever it was had a will of its own. It began to circle her, a great wall of heat surrounding her that was tall and inescapable.

You summoned me, a voice not her own whispered into her brain. *Do you really want me to consume you?*

Shock didn't last long. So the flame bore the stamp of her emotions. It did know her will. It knew she didn't belong here anymore. Incredible heat engulfed her and the tears that had gathered in her eyes spilled to mix with the drops of her sweat.

Consume her? Yes, she answered. A quick glance showed her that the house that had been her prison was now completely engulfed in flames. That was a second before the fire stretched around her, surrounding her. *This is it.* She just hoped she wouldn't suffer long before the end.

Closer and closer the wall moved in. Katurah winced, waiting for the fire to sear her skin. When she dared open her eyes, it was just in time to see a tongue of flame snake out to touch her shoulder. In fascination, she watched her blouse catch fire, the bra strap melt away. But she felt no pain, only heat. Incredible heat that tightened the nipple that was now exposed as her garments continued to burn.

Another flame shot out toward her ribs, causing the bottom of the blouse to blacken and flake off while the last of her bra blew away like so much dust. More red hot tendrils made quick work of her jeans, her sneakers. Why? So she could feel the burn all the better? With a great roar, the fire closed around her for that final moment, embracing her. Her entire body tensed, waiting for the pain.

The sensations that erupted all over her body were anything but painful. The fire pressed against her chest, cupped her breast, surrounded her nipples like suckling mouths. A gut punch of lust from the incredible pleasure coursed through her in hot waves. Her inner thighs trembled from the caressing ropes of fire wound around them, driving her crazy with a feather light touch that slowly made its way up to her pussy.

The fire touched her in so many places, leaving nothing out. It tickled her when it reached the valley between her

breasts. Katurah gasped when it seeped into the crack of her ass. Her hand shot to the mound at the top of her thighs but the streak of teasing flame went around her fingers with no trouble at all, zeroing in on her clit.

Oh, that's good. Her husband had never seemed to realize she had anything like that. The masterful light strokes on the tense little nub eased the bad tension from her limbs, coaxed her belly to tighten in a different way entirely. She rubbed her clit in time with the wicked strokes until another curl of fire lassoed her wrist and pulled it away.

She had nothing to touch or hold onto so her hands were as crazy on her own body as the fire was. The delicious pressure on her nipples never let up and only made the intense craving in her pussy all the stronger, leaving her wanting.

There was suction now on her clit, just enough to make her knees weak. She let go to see if the fire would let her fall and follow her down.

It held her up, letting her slump against it. She wasn't strong enough to stand. Not when the indecent touch of it was spreading to the opening to her pussy. Thick and solid, it entered her like a cock. It stretched and burned her as it pushed inside her. Katurah gasped while it pushed in deeper and deeper. She'd been fucked many times, but never made love to. Not in the way the flames claimed her with infinite patience. The stimulation of her nipples and clit were the torment of a lover. The way the fire insinuated itself deep inside her pussy and began to move, the promise of obsession.

She thrashed and writhed, sweat running over her body in small winding rivers that ended in a hiss of steam. The roaring sound all around her drowned out her screams when she came the first time, panting and twisting against so much sensation, especially the way the fire fucked her like a cock in a relentless, irresistible rhythm.

It stretched out again, spreading like lava toward the virgin ring of her ass. Her body tensed and her pussy walls clamped around the driving force they surrounded. It didn't mean to do *that*, did it?

Oh, but it did. Slight pressure at that untried opening gave way to a slender invasion that went so deep inside her she fought for breath. Her pussy tightened as the next powerful orgasm came on strong. The incredible invasion of her ass became more intense. She loved the way the penetrating force grew slowly wider with each stroke, matching the rhythm of its counterpart in her pussy, one pushing in while the other pulled out.

On and on it went, relentless, as Katurah was shattered by one release after another. Every part of her trembled then tensed as the incredible pleasure built anew. She screamed. This was the most incredible fuck of her life. She begged the fire to stop, she begged for more.

The roaring fire that consumed her intensified, shimmering around her and gaining strength. Her heart pounded in fear and exhilaration until she realized that it didn't matter if that meant the end was coming. If her dance in the flames was to be the last moments of her life, well, she knew she could do worse. A lot worse.

Screaming over and over until her voice broke, she rode out the waves of the climax with her fiery lover buried in her pussy and her ass, making it last. Then like a lightning flash it was gone. All gone. Katurah hit the ground hard, a quivering naked mass. A trace of ash stuck to her sweat-drenched skin.

Holy crap! Have I lost my mind?

To her horror, a pickup truck was driving down the gravel road several feet away from her house. Its driver was an older man in a John Deere cap who stared hard for a moment before shaking his head. "Get a room!" he shouted.

What?

Scrambling to cover herself, she curled up in a ball and looked around wondering what she'd do for clothing now that she'd burned her house. Only her home was just where it had always been. There was no sign of the fire she'd thought she'd started on the porch stairs. "Oh, God! Oh, God! I'm insane."

"No."

The sound of that deep male voice had her turning in the grass to see the speaker. A gorgeous man with tawny hair and tanned flesh all over his large, incredibly muscular body sat watching at her. Not like she was someone who was crazy or like she was someone he didn't know. No, he was glancing at her like he'd known her for years. Like she was someone special...

It wasn't until she looked into his eyes that she had an idea of what had just happened. Flames lit up the irises of his eyes, just for a split second, before darkening to the color of

expensive brandy. "You're not insane." His voice was so pleasant, so calm.

"How do you know? Who are you?"

"You summoned me. I know everything about you, Katurah."

She shook her head. Wild ideas were spinning in her brain, none of which could be possible. "You came out of the flame I started?" she asked with a quivering voice.

"I am the flame. I've been with you all of your life. I just needed the power of your desire so I could come through the portal you gave me to this world. I've been with you for so long. I've wanted you for so long, Katurah."

She swallowed hard. How could he have such sincerity in his eyes? How could any of what she'd just experienced or what he was saying possibly be true? *Well, you've always been able to start fires and that wasn't supposed to be possible ...* "I know I had daydreams ... you're saying I brought you to life through my wishes?"

He shook his head. "I'm not your creation."

"What are you?" she had to ask.

"I'm the lover you should have always had." The confidence in his voice caused something to shift in her chest. "I'm the last lover you'll ever have."

So many questions ... He was gorgeous and had just exhausted her in a way she'd never known was possible. But what would she do with him? What was he exactly? How could he make it in her world now that he was here?

"I know everything about the world you know," he said as if he knew exactly what she was thinking. "We'll figure it out together. For now, let's get dressed."

He rose to his feet, holding a hand out to her. She took that hand, enjoying the view of him on the way up. Not only gorgeous but hung like a purebred stallion. *This might be okay ...* The house sat there, taunting her with her past. "I wanted it gone," she whispered. "I don't want to remember."

Pulling her into his arms, he brushed a kiss in her hair as if he'd done it for years. "We'll fill it with new memories. Just you and I."

"What do I call you?"

Pulling back, he looked deep into her eyes. "You'll need to give me a name for this world. Once you do, I'll always be yours."

He took her by the hand and led her in the direction of the home that he would have her believe he'd shared with her for nine years. "Adan," she whispered. "It means fire."

"Adan," he repeated. The gentleness of his touch seemed an omen of good things to come and a reminder of the promise he'd made to her in the flames. The promise of indescribable pleasure...

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Isabella Jordan

Isabella Jordan is a lucky lady who spends her days with her family, doing volunteer work and writing. She loves creating new stories of all kinds and chatting with readers and friends.

Isabella would love to hear from readers! Visit her on the web at isabellajordan.com.

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Stockings

Jade Buchanan

What do you get when you throw a gorgeous female cat shifter, an enticing pair of stockings, and a very interested lady wolf into the mix? Enough heat to burn down the house...

* * * *

She was unlike anyone else in the room. Walking in like she owned the place. It could have had something to do with the gazes that followed her around, the conversations that stopped the minute she slinked into the restaurant. It could have had something to do with the undeniable scent of shifter she wore like the sweetest perfume.

Whatever it was, Chloe was instantly captivated. She turned to watch the sex kitten as she followed the hostess to her table, missing whatever it was her brother said.

"Are you even paying attention to me?" His voice was a deep growl.

"What?" Chloe swung her gaze back to Mitch, realizing by his glower that he wasn't impressed. "Oh, geez, Mitch, give it a rest. You're supposed to be here relaxing and I'm pretty sure that isn't relaxed."

"I can't help it. I don't like being away from Corin."

"Hell, I still can't believe you mated a faun. Of all the creatures in the world, why'd he have to walk into your lab? Although, I guess he wouldn't be able to just come to the

mainland and hang out at a restaurant like this." He rolled his eyes. Stifling a giggle, Chloe turned her head to sneak a peek at the sultry kitty. A beautiful woman like that shouldn't be alone. She should be with a lover, laughing and whispering over some inner secret only the two of them shared.

The shifter was tall, towering over the waiter who had brought her to her table, although that could have had something to do with the four-inch heels she wore like the most comfortable slippers.

A black dress, embellished with gold embroidery, hugged her curves. Her hair hung down past her shoulders in soft sable waves. Her makeup was subtle, bringing attention to her full, red lips, arched brows and a single beauty mark high up on her left cheekbone. The kitten moved in her chair, crossing one lithe thigh over the other, her stockings rasping together, audible to Chloe's werewolf hearing.

"You gonna be okay there, sis?" Mitch arched a brow, his lips tilted in a smirk.

"Shut it. You can't talk."

He laughed at that, stealing one of her fries. "I'm glad you came."

"Me too. It was past time I escaped the family responsibilities and went gallivanting off to see the world."

"I couldn't agree more."

"You're just saying that because you did it first."

Mitch leaned back in his chair, crossing his arms over his chest. He shook his head, brown strands falling into his eyes. Impatiently, he brushed his hair back. "I wouldn't change a

thing. I know it's tough to go against family, to try and find your own path. You need any help, I'll give it to you."

Chloe smiled, reaching over and grasping the hand he held out to her. "Thanks, Mitch. That means a lot. And it means a lot that you came out to the mainland to have dinner with me. I really appreciate it."

"You can thank Corin for that. He practically forced me onto the boat."

A movement out of the corner of her eye stopped her words before she could utter them. Confused, she peered over to see the shifter leaving, her long strides taking her toward the short hallway at the back of the restaurant.

Chloe swallowed, unable to take her gaze off those twitching legs and the slim black line that ran up the back of both. Oh, that was nice. With every movement through the crowded restaurant, her sweet scent increased, pheromones filling the room. Inhaling, Chloe closed her eyes, wanting to wallow in that scent.

"You need a moment?"

She opened one eye to glare at her brother. "Shut it, Mitch."

Mitch laughed, standing up quietly. "I should go call Corin, check in and make sure he's not too lonely without me."

"Yeah, you do that." She turned to watch the hallway where the woman had disappeared, wondering if she should go after her.

"Why don't you go freshen up before you start drooling at the table."

Flashing him the bird, Chloe stood up, walking to the back of the restaurant. Entering the hallway, she stood in front of the ladies' room door, glancing back to make sure no one was watching her. Opening the door with a snap, she stepped inside, letting the door close silently behind her.

The bathroom was obviously intended for single use. There was only one toilet in a little alcove to the left of the door. The pedestal sink was directly in front of her, a pretty mirror set up above it. Flowered wallpaper decorated the top half of the walls, meeting the white tiles that ran up from the bottom.

It all provided a sweet background to the kitten now leaning against the pedestal sink. Her gaze was fastened on Chloe, her legs crossed in front of her, hands demurely folded.

"What have we here? A little wolf comes chasing the kitty cat."

Chloe licked her lips, watching the slow slide of one leg, the shifter bringing her foot up to rest her heel against the cool porcelain behind her.

"What can I say? I needed to use the restroom."

"Too bad. I was hoping you'd come for me."

"Is that right?" Bringing one hand up, she ran the tips of her fingers back and forth along the black fabric covering one perfect breast.

"You see, I think I have a run in one of my stockings. I'd just come in here to check, but I can't seem to twist myself around far enough."

The mock-pout that accompanied the words made Chloe grin. This was definitely looking up. "I'd be glad to be of service."

Turning around, bracing one elegant palm on the lip of the sink, the beauty in front of her slowly lifted the corner of her dress, bringing even more of her legs into view. Creamy thighs covered in silky stockings instantly captured Chloe's attention. Chloe reached behind her, finding the lock to the door with deft fingers, snicking it shut. She definitely didn't want to be interrupted.

Looking over her shoulder, keeping her gaze on Chloe, the temptress revealed the edge of her stockings, held up with lacy garters. Lifting the dress further, the view of tempting globes covered in transparent black silk just about had Chloe swallowing her tongue.

"Do you see the run?" Licking those ruby red lips, the kitten tossed her head, bending forward slightly, thrusting out her ass. She released her dress, the fabric pooling in the small of her back. Chloe sent up a brief prayer of thanks for the wickedly amoral habits of cat shifters everywhere. This was definitely an encounter she wanted to remember time and time again.

Stalking forward, she let a soft growl trickle out, her wolf wanting to play with the little pussy displayed so temptingly in front of her. She placed one confident palm squarely on the kitten's thigh, grinning when the temptress shivered in apparent delight. Leaning forward, completely invading her private space, Chloe inhaled deeply. Drawing the tips of her

fingers up the stocking, she toyed with the clasp of the garter in front of her.

"Don't you know you're supposed to wear your sexy panties outside the garters if you're intending to get some?"

"Who says you're going to get me?" The words were ruined by the spreading of her legs, feet splayed further apart.

"Oh, I'm going to get you, sweet kitty. Don't worry about that."

A rumbling purr sounded in the room, the kitten obviously enjoying herself. Chloe wasn't going to make things that easy for her, though. She wanted her sexy pussy cat to have to work for it. Releasing the temptress, Chloe stood back, crossing her arms. The kitten undulated, glancing back with a pout.

"You looking for something?"

"You."

"Prove it. Touch yourself."

With a lovely little wriggle, the little kitty turned to face her squarely, sliding one foot back and forth in mock innocence. She licked her lips, bringing the lower one between her teeth and biting down with a moan. "You don't want me?"

Snorting, Chloe just rolled her eyes.

Chuckling darkly, the shifter spread her legs again, reaching down for the dress that had fallen to cover her secrets. She stepped to the side, leaning back against the corner of the bathroom wall, sliding against the tiles. Closing her eyes, she lifted her dress, pressing her palms flat to her belly, holding the dress in place. The front of her garters were

on display, providing the perfect frame for the transparent silk in between.

She lifted one hand and shrugged a shoulder, revealing one perfect creamy breast. Chloe growled, clenching her fists tightly. Palming the shifter's breast in one hand, she ran the fingers of her other hand along her silk covered mound, only the press of her wrist keeping the dress up. Releasing her breast, she grasped the fabric tightly, opening her eyes to meet Chloe's heated gaze. "Is this what you wanted?"

"Do it. Let me see you touch yourself."

Fingertips slid beneath the silk. Head tilted back, the seductress panted, releasing a low moan. The motion of her fingers was partially hidden by the black silk that was suddenly not transparent enough. Her scent increased, the sweet smell of arousal the most beautiful thing Chloe had ever inhaled. Dropping to her knees, Chloe grinned fiercely, enjoying the widening of her kitten's eyes. Keeping their gazes locked, Chloe crawled across the floor. Grasping trembling thighs, she pulled herself up, blowing a puff of air onto the back of the sexy kitty's hand.

Her shifter moaned, removing her hand from beneath the silk, bringing her fingers out to hold in front of Chloe. Instantly, she latched on to them, tasting her cream, wanting more. It was a burst of flavor sliding across her taste buds, the most delectable confection.

Pressing herself forward, Chloe buried her face between the shifter's thighs, lapping at her pussy through the silk. She flicked her tongue over the tight bud of her clit, enjoying the

gasping gurgle that caused. A tight fist grasped her hair, pulling the strands.

Sliding her palms up the stockinged thighs, Chloe hummed at the transition to soft skin, enjoying the way the kitty felt under her hands. Moaning, desperately bucking her hips, her kitten cried out, the sound suddenly muffled. Glancing up through her lashes, Chloe wrinkled her nose at the sight of the palm clasped tightly over those ruby lips, wanting to hear every sweet succulent noise coming out of that throat. She knew they were in public, but damn, she wanted to hear her.

Mentally shrugging, she turned her attention back to the syrupy essence she was currently devouring. Damn, but she loved her kitten's taste. Strong, musky, with a zest that burst on her tongue and made her never want to leave this spot. Might be hard to explain to others, but she'd sure be happy about it.

Fingers tightened in her hair, thighs tensing under her hands. Moaning encouragement, Chloe nipped with her teeth, capturing the succulent bud and pulling hard. She was rewarded with a gush of sweet cream, a scream halted behind a desperate hand. Lapping up the treat, Chloe soothed her palms up and down her kitten's thighs, humming softly. They remained that way for a moment, both enjoying what had just occurred.

Suddenly firm hands pulled at her hair, urging her up. Chloe grinned, gaining her feet, pressing the shifter into the wall. Their lips came together on a soundless cry, breaths matching, hands clawing at clothing. Her shirt was lifted, her

breasts palmed by knowledgeable hands, nipples pinched between insistent fingers.

Letting her kitten have her way, Chloe tossed her head back, closing her eyes. A wet suction closed around her right nipple, teeth scoring her flesh, just the right amount of pleasurable pain to have her arching her back. Fingers danced down her skin, dipping into her navel, thrusting beneath her pants, seeking out their target. Parting her thighs, Chloe gasped into her kitten's mouth, tongues twining together.

Determined fingers brushed against her clit, sending rockets bursting inside her mind. Shuddering, Chloe knew this wasn't going to take long. One finger teased her opening, tapping against her cunt, driving her batty with the need to be penetrated.

"Please..." She couldn't hold the words in.

"Oh, I like that. The big bad wolf is begging for it. I definitely like that." With a wicked chuckle, her kitten revealed her sinful nature, fingers teasing and retreating, bringing Chloe to the edge of release before backing off.

Reduced to begging, Chloe was near tears from the need to find her release. She was so damn close. The lips of her sex were engorged with blood, sensitive to every drag of skin against skin, every promising touch. Her entire body quivering, Chloe bucked her hips.

"Is this what you want?" Oh, how she loved that dark purr. Offering her every desire in such a sinful voice.

"Please..."

"Come for me, Chloe. Now."

Tossing her head, she opened her mouth to scream. A hand pressed to her lips, covering the sound. Her vision wavered, limbs tensed tightly. A single flick of a fingernail to her clit and she was dying, coming, stars flashing, vision blackening.

Chloe leaned heavily on the pedestal sink, trying to catch her breath. Her partner slid one elegant hand down her shuddering back, soothing her. Lifting her trembling arms, Chloe slid bonelessly into the shifter's arms, laying her head on her shoulder.

"Now, doesn't that feel better?"

Shaking her head, Chloe remained silent, soaking up the peace of just being held after such a tremendous orgasm.

"How're things going with your brother? Think you'll be finished soon?"

Laughing softly, Chloe straightened, meeting Iris's gaze, studying the familiar face of the woman she loved. "I'd be finished a lot sooner if a bad kitten hadn't come slinking her way into the restaurant."

Iris licked her lips, lowering her gaze and peering up at Chloe through her lashes. "I was bored at the hotel. What did you expect me to do?"

"I'm just surprised you didn't come sooner."

"Weren't you the one who said it was better to work up to ... coming? Wouldn't want to rush the moment, after all."

"You're incorrigible."

"I know. That's why you love me, sweet. Now, go introduce me to your brother before he decides to come in here looking for you."

Chloe straightened her clothes, grabbing Iris's hand and bringing it up to her lips to place a kiss on her knuckles.

"Lead the way, love."

Standing back, watching her lover twitch and slide her way out of the ladies' room, Chloe couldn't take her gaze off those damn stockings. They were definitely a dangerous weapon. She absolutely loved it.

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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 come visit her at www.jadebuchananbooks.com.

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Fire Thief

Jordan Castillo Price

A glittery glam rock waif and a tattooed existentialist duck into a closet behind the bar. It's just another gritty, anonymous, gay encounter in the dark...

Isn't it?

* * * *

Rat traps. A great big box of them. It was the last thing I saw before the guy in purple shoved me into the janitor's closet and pulled the door shut behind him. "Is there a light in here?" The thought of a rat climbing up my legs with its pointy little toenails and its wormy tail dragging along my thigh was a real buzzkill.

"We don't need a light."

"But there might be rats."

"If there were rats in here, I'd know it." He pressed himself into my back and slipped his hands around my waist. One hand slid up. His fingertips brushed over my nipple through my T-shirt. The other moved south, worked my nuts right through my jeans. I turned around to face him, got a handful of his ridiculous boa coat, and did my best not to think about the skittering of tiny paws.

"Besides," he said, "it's easier to focus on what we're feeling without the distraction of light."

I beg to differ. When I score with someone who looks like he does, I want to see it. I opened my mouth to say so, but

his mouth covered mine, off-center at first, then sliding into place. My lips parted, and his tongue glided over mine. I tasted like beer. Him, vodka tonics.

His crotch bumped against mine. He gave a little groan and nudged me between the legs with his bulge. It was a great bulge. I kissed him back and slipped my hands under his coat so I could cup his ass two-handed.

He worked his fingers under my T-shirt. I let go of his ass so I could raise my arms to let him get it over my head. The purple boa coat was fuzzy against my chest, and distinctly not rat-like. It brushed my nipples as he moved against me. I arched my body into his. My elbow eased back onto the industrial shelving and caused something to shift and clatter. I groped behind me, felt the squat glass shapes. Cheap, heavy-bottomed restaurant candles, the kind they had on the tables out by the bar.

"We could light a candle," I said. I figured he might go for that instead of the overhead light.

"Didn't your elders teach you never to play with fire?"

"I dunno. I probably wouldn't have listened, anyway. I have this problem with authority figures."

He pulled my hand away from the candles and pressed my palm to his mouth. I tried to picture his face as my hand covered his lips and brushed his nose. The bar was crowded, but he'd stood out—and not just because of the giant purple boa coat that would've made anyone else look like a frickin' puppet, but not him. No, he looked like a glam god who'd stepped down off a black light poster from 1975.

His tongue, hot and wet, crossed my palm. I shivered. He'd been beautiful. Even under all that makeup—glitter and black lipstick and false eyelashes—I could tell. Even if I'd scrubbed him clean, everyone would've still stopped and stared when he walked into the room.

I was guessing he didn't give a rat's ass about how pretty he was. He was out to make a statement.

He was doing a pretty good job of it.

"C'mon," I said. "You didn't get all dolled up for nothing." I squeezed a hand between us and pulled a lighter out of my front pocket.

His hand closed over mine, and he worked the lighter free. Plastic clattered to the floor. "Man was never meant to have fire."

"Unless it's me you don't wanna see." He had a long black scarf looped once around the pale stretch of his throat. "I could blindfold you."

He gave my ass a quick squeeze, then drew his scarf off and coiled it around my neck. "I wouldn't be here if I didn't think you looked tasty."

"Then let me watch you. I wanna watch you." There was a pack of matches in my other pocket with a phone number on it I'd never bothered to call. I stuffed my hand in to get it, and his followed. I felt his fingertips brush the crease of my thigh through the thin fabric of the pocket, and my breath caught.

"You've heard of Prometheus?"

"I didn't know I was gonna be quizzed."

"That's okay. It doesn't matter."

Either he had a hard-on for non sequiturs, or he was high. But he was also caressing my nutsack through my pants pocket, and I didn't want to disappoint him. "Prometheus. He stole fire from the gods. Gave it to man."

"I'm impressed." Glitter boy slid down my body and dropped to his knees in front of me. He pressed a kiss under my ribcage, against my liver. I suspected he wasn't high, or not too much, anyway. "Most people think it's the name of a new nightclub, or maybe a brand of condom."

So my seven years of undergrad hadn't gone to waste.

He unbuttoned my waistband and tugged down my zipper. His tongue traced the underside of my ribs, and then lower. My navel. My hipbone. I was hard by the time he got to my cock. He ran his tongue around the root, worked his way up slowly. I tried to picture him in my mind's eye, kneeling in front of me in that crazy purple coat. He'd be looking down. His eyelashes would cast long shadows over his pale cheeks. A stripe of bare, smooth chest would show where his coat hung open. That pale line would be unbroken now that he'd hung his scarf around my neck.

His mouth closed over my cock, and I grabbed his tousled black hair in two big handfuls. I would've loved to have seen that face of his wrapped around my cock. But if I had to choose sight or touch, one or the other, I'd rather feel it.

His mouth was a hot, wet furnace. He took me in deep and he sucked hard. I wondered if I'd find smears of black lipstick on my shaft the next day. I tried to breathe normally, but my gasp sounded loud and sharp in the dark room, even over the throb of music that seeped in from the bar.

He slid his hot mouth off my cock. I heaved a sigh of relief, but then he licked his palm and started jacking me off, and my back arched, and my nuts clenched up against my body.

"There's a Prometheus story I like better than the one where he ends up feeding braunschweiger to the eagle for eternity. Not too many people know it."

"Harder ... mm, yeah. Sweet."

"Zeus already hated Prometheus, long before the stolen fire incident. Prometheus was a smartass, and he set Zeus up to look like an idiot."

For a moment, he stopped touching, but only long enough to turn me around so that I faced the shelves. He pushed my jeans down around my ankles. I kicked off my boots and stepped out, one foot, then the other. He ran a hand down my leg, and his coat tickled the backs of my thighs. I flinched, but as the downy fuzz grazed my bare skin, the sensation grew on me. I wondered if maybe he'd leave that coat on while we did it. I almost asked, but he was busy telling that story, and I was letting the sound of his voice—low, melodic—get my juices flowing.

He placed his hands on my hips and ran his thumbs along the new ink just over my tailbone, all black, scrolls and swirls. The feel of him tracing the slight ridges sent shocks that traveled all the way up my spine, then back down to the skin of my balls.

"One day, Prometheus rigged up a couple of Zeus's offerings. He took the good one, the T-bones, the prime rib, and hid them inside a cow's stomach so that they looked like a nasty jumble of organs. And then the bones, and gristle and

all the other inedible shit? He wrapped them up in a layer of fat so that they looked like a big old rump roast.

"Prometheus asked Zeus which one he'd rather have. Zeus picked the booby prize, and Prometheus made off with the good stuff."

"Why are you telling me this?"

"Cos it doesn't matter what you see. It's what you feel, and what you know, that you've got to trust." He took my ass in both hands and pried me open like a ripe tangerine.

"Oh ... fuck." I tried to find something to hold on to. I knocked over bags and boxes, and hoped, for my sake, that I wouldn't end up with my face in a carton of urinal cakes. And I suspected that instead of ducking into the nearest empty room, I should've taken him home.

But there'd been no time. I'd wanted him bad, and that very second, too.

His hot, wet tongue swiped over my hole. I knocked something else over, heard it bounce and spill. "Holy crap ... you don't have to ... fuck, that feels incredible."

His tongue was everywhere. My ass. My nuts. The back of my cock. He kept going and going, licking like he had all night. That tongue of his was surreal. There was almost a texture to it, which I hadn't noticed before, when we were kissing, or when he was blowing me. And he knew how to use that tongue, too. He could probably tie knots in the stems of maraschino cherries as a party trick.

He licked me until I had to lock my knees against the trembling in my thighs. I steadied myself on the shelving, fumbled over a vaguely familiar item. A butane lighter, the

gun-shaped kind that could reach deep down inside those restaurant candles.

I wondered how he'd look right now with his lipstick smeared and his face glistening with spit. Probably even more fuckable than he had at the bar. Amber-eyed and swollen-lipped. He had a mouth like a girl. Or a sailor. Maybe both. I grabbed the lighter, and he smacked it out of my hand, hard.

"Haven't you been listening?" His voice was low and rough.

"But I just wanted to..."

He pressed a finger up my ass and words failed me. That. I wanted that. I arched my back and pushed against his hand.

"You saw me out there. You know what I look like. Now focus on the way I make you feel."

He pulled his finger out of me and pressed his whole body along my back. His tongue moved over the skull tattoo at the nape of my neck while his hands roamed my belly and thighs. His cock was cradled between my ass cheeks. He flexed his hips and rocked against my back, hinting at what would come next.

"Do it," I said.

He pulled back briefly. I heard the tear of a small plastic packet and the sound of moist latex unrolling. And then I felt his cock pressed against my hungry, wet hole.

He pushed. Both of us moaned out loud.

I pressed back into him, feeling every part of him that I could. The dark did make everything else ten times as intense, that's for sure. And even though it brought home the storage closet smells, like disinfectant and bleach and a

rotten old mop somewhere in the corner, it also made him feel hotter. His coat fuzzier. As if he was larger than life.

He pushed in all the way and sighed, and held me there for a long moment while our bodies figured out how they fit together and decided it was all good. His fingernails pressed into my hips, ten sharp points of pleasure.

His first thrusts were easy and shallow, almost tender. I pushed my ass against him and made low noises that told him how I liked getting fucked. He understood. He kicked at the inside of my foot so I had to spread myself wider for him, arch my back harder. And then he angled himself, and I shuddered all over and knocked a few more things off the shelves. Right there. Perfect. He thrust deep, faster now, and harder, hard enough that his balls slapped against my taint with each perfect thrust.

"So what're you supposed to be?" I managed, as I gulped air. "The bad meat in the pretty package, or the good meat in the tainted wrapper?"

"You tell me, Zeus."

His hand closed on my cock. Oh God, oh fuck, he was jerking me off with the sleeve of that crazy purple boa coat, and I peaked, hard. My whole body clenched, spasmed. I danced, helpless, impaled on his cock, while I spurted into the boxes of trash can liners and coasters.

He slammed me for a few minutes more while I hung there like a wrung-out bar rag, and all the while, he made this sound, like a growl, deep, deep down in his throat. I felt him stiffen against me, and then let his breath out, slow and careful.

He pulled out. The smell of our sweat was strong and earthy, unusually strong. Animalistic—like the county fair, or the petting zoo. I turned around for a kiss, and his silk scarf slid from around my neck, tickled my body like a long lick from shoulder to hipbone. He caught it before it hit the floor and looped it around my eyes.

"What if you dropped the allegory talk and told me something in English," I said as he pulled the knot tight. "Like maybe your name. And your phone number."

The phone number would've been a bonus, but I thought I could at least get a first name. The only reply I got, however, was the sound of a door latch.

I tore the scarf away from my eyes. "God damn it." I was naked and sweaty and it was probably the most opportune time for my friends to discover me and mock me within an inch of my life, but I didn't care. I stuck my head out of the storage room. My boy in purple was nowhere.

Everything had happened so fast, it almost seemed as if it couldn't have been real. I got back into my jeans and T-shirt, and then I saw it on the floor, barely, a slip of black silk crumpled in the shadow of a metal storage shelf, next to the open condom wrapper.

I picked up his scarf and looped it around my neck. And then I held the end over my nose and mouth, and breathed. There was that smell again, something from my childhood. Not the petting zoo. Sharper, less grain-like. I sniffed again, and then I recognized it.

The big cat house.

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by Jade Buchanan, Alice Gaines, B. J. McCall

He was the good meat in the bad wrapper, I decided. Or maybe not. Maybe neither. Maybe he was the flame.

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Jordan Castillo Price

Jordan Castillo Price grew up in the steel mill warrens of Buffalo, NY, spent some formative drinking years in Chicago, and migrated north to small-town rural Wisconsin once she realized she was going to kill the next person who bumped into her with a shopping cart. She did a six-year stint in art school and played bass in a punk band that crashed and burned just before their first CD was pressed. At least she got a cool boyfriend out of the deal, since she ran off with the drummer.

Jordan has a weekly show on erotica writing tips and techniques at www.packingheat.net. She suspects some of her listeners aren't much interested in writing, and just tune in to hear her say naughty words.

Readers interested in freebies, snippets, and peeks into the writing process should check out JCP News, a monthly newsletter where Jordan posts links to free eBooks and serialized M/M stories. Visit www.jordancastilloprice.com to sign up.

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Britta's Beast

Kate Hill

When Max and Britta met at a convention for members of magical law enforcement, they seemed like a perfect fit. But Max believes women should raise the family while men do the protecting. Problem. Britta's a Valkyrie, and that's just not her style. Time for the centuries-old cat to learn a few new tricks—before his lover takes wing.

* * * *

Britta settled into bed again, hoping this time she might get some sleep. It was nearly midnight and the cat hiding in the clump of trees outside her rented cabin had been screeching for most of the evening. She'd tried being nice, putting out a bowl of milk and half a can of tuna, but no. He'd kept right on screeching. At the end of her patience, she'd tossed a boot out the window and he'd finally shut up.

She closed her eyes and tried to relax. Between work and splitting up with her boyfriend, it had been a stressful week. The danger of her job was actually what bothered Max so much. Ironical considering they were both in similar careers. They'd met at a convention for various branches of magical law enforcement. Britta was an officer in the Wide-Range Police Force and Max was a detective in the Cat Shifter Patrol. They both risked their lives capturing supernatural criminals, but like most cat shifters, Max tended to live by double standards. He believed women should raise the family while

men did the protecting. Of course women could help out on the hunt.

Britta snorted. She knew some races of cat shifters that believed women should do all the hunting, not to mention live in harems serving one "king." As a Valkyrie, that wasn't her style.

Max hadn't insisted she leave the force entirely, but suggested she go to part time after they got married. She knew that was his way of weaning her off independence and into wedded life, or at least a cat shifter's idea of wedded life. She wasn't sure which frightened her more—losing her career or binding herself to one man legally and forever.

Since they'd split up she realized marriage didn't seem so bad. Actually she missed Max so much that even the stupid cat outside her window had reminded her of him. Though he didn't change shape around her very often—his kind didn't condone changing in front of non-cat shifters, unless joined in marriage—he had showed her his cat form once. Of course she hadn't heard him screech, but he had done a lot of purring.

Britta smiled at the memory of the fun they'd had that night.

It was over now. Unless she begged for a second chance. She hated the idea of crawling back to him, especially since she had no intention of giving up her career. Why should she? After all, she hadn't asked him to leave his job.

If only she could find a way to see him again that would make their meeting seem coincidental.

Tapping on the door jarred her thoughts.

Damn. She'd rented this cottage to get some peace and quiet, time to think. So far she'd had nothing but interruptions. The knocking continued and Britta cursed. The urge to beat the tar out of her unwanted visitor nearly overcame her. She threw open the door and her heart skipped a beat.

Max stood there, completely nude and looking as sexy as ever. His mane of long, reddish brown hair hung unkempt down his back, as if he'd been outside in the wind for quite a while. Moonlight glinted off his broad shoulders and the expanse of his sleek, golden-tanned chest. Even now she longed to run her hands over those magnificent pecs and trail her fingers over his lean waist and steely abs. Her gaze drifted toward his long legs with those lean, rock-hard thighs. She knew how good it felt to be held snugly between them. Best of all was his thick, ruddy cock and the tight balls beneath. His shaft was semi erect and she had to restrain herself to keep from reaching out and pumping him to full mast.

Instead she cast him an annoyed look, only to cover the thrill she felt at seeing him. She could hardly believe the proud, stubborn cat man had come to her. And so soon. "Yes?" she asked coolly.

He held up her worn black boot and said in his deep, cultured voice, "Your footwear, madam."

"I ... where did you..."

"I was singing to the moon and it struck me in the back of the head. I believe this is the second time I've felt the sting of

your boot. The first time your foot was in it and the blow was to my posterior."

As much as he irritated her, she still loved the way he talked. She was a younger generation Valkyrie, but he was an older cat-shifter. Roughly four hundred years old, though he didn't look a day over thirty-five. He still talked a bit archaically, but Britta found it to be a turn-on, especially when he spoke close to her ear when they made love. That deep, purring voice of his never failed to send shivers of lust down her spine. "I never kicked you," she said, reaching for the boot.

"I was speaking figuratively about how you gave me the boot, as your generation says. I'm sure you recall. It was directly after our last discussion about marriage and family."

"Fight. You mean our last fight. And as for your singing to the moon, it sounded more like someone being murdered."

"Among cat shifters my voice is considered irresistible."

"As if anything about you is irresistible," she lied. Just about everything about him was irresistible to her, but she refused to give him the satisfaction of saying so.

"Funny, you never seemed to have any complaints in the bedroom."

Curling her lip, she tugged harder on the boot, but he refused to let it go. "Are you going to give me this or not?"

She pulled extra hard and he released it abruptly, sending her staggering back a few feet. He chuckled and stared at her with a sexy expression in his slanted amber eyes. She was torn between wanting to slap the arrogant look off his face and the desire to leap into his arms.

"Is there something else you wanted?" she asked.

"A cup of tea or maybe a sip of that crude beer you like so much. I'll even settle for the company."

Britta curled her lip and tried to slam the door in his face, but he held out his hand, thrust the door open and stepped inside. "Enough banter," he said, growling softly. It wasn't an angry growl, but one that meant business. He obviously wanted to talk and so did she. "I came to see you, Britta, because ... I miss you. Do you miss me?"

She drew a deep breath and released it slowly. Miss him? They had only been apart for a few days and she was already miserable without him.

"Britta?" He stepped closer and gently cupped her chin in his hand.

Their gazes locked and she nearly melted. He was one of those rare men who combined strength and tenderness. From the moment they'd met, the attraction between them had been undeniable and over the past months it had grown into love.

There. She admitted it to herself. She loved the damn big cat, but how could they work out an arrangement that satisfied both of them?

"I want to talk to you, Britta, but first let me make love to you." He brushed her mouth with a kiss then ran his tongue along the side of her neck.

Britta closed her eyes, her arms instinctively wrapping around him as he took her earlobe between his teeth and gently nibbled it. "I want to, Max, but will we really be able to

talk afterwards or are we just going to satisfy our physical needs then argue again?"

He purred and kissed his way down her neck. His large warm hands caressed her bare skin. Britta leaned more heavily against him and stroked his back. His skin was smooth and his muscles hard. She loved the power in his body, the way he made her feel protected and almost fragile.

All her life she'd trained to take care of herself against all sorts of threats. It was the Valkyrie way, yet when she was with Max she didn't mind surrendering body and soul, at least sometimes. She knew he would never intentionally harm her, physically or emotionally. Still their differences of opinion were painful to her and him as well. Now that they were back together, she couldn't help wondering if there was some way to work out their problems.

"Britta," he murmured against her lips.

"All right, Max," she whispered, and he covered her mouth in a devouring kiss. Their tongues thrust hungrily against each other and their hands roamed over each other's bodies with a desperation she'd never felt before.

Since they'd split up, she'd dreamed about making love with him again. Now it was happening. Max's hands clutched handfuls of her hair and he groaned with pleasure as his tongue explored every inch of her mouth. Britta grasped his tight ass, relishing the feel of the rock-hard spheres in her hands. Trapped between their bodies, his cock swelled even more and she moaned with pleasure, pressing her pelvis against him, trying to appease the ache in her clit.

He tore his mouth from hers only to bury his lips against her neck. One of his hands slid between their bodies and into the front of her shorts. He caressed her soft mound and dipped his fingers into her pussy then rubbed them over her clit. "Max," she breathed, her pulse quickening. "I want you so much."

"I want you, too, my love. I've missed you more than you know." He picked her up without effort—not something all men could handle considering Britta was an athletic six foot tall Valkyrie.

Max was tall, especially for a cat shifter. He stood nearly six feet five inches and was in fantastic shape, his body rangy yet hard and sleek as polished marble. He worked out a lot and in his cat form ran miles and miles each morning, giving him exceptional endurance.

Britta grinned. She knew all about his endurance. They'd tested it often enough.

"Where's your bedroom?" he asked.

"Second door down the hall."

He carried her there and placed her on the bed, then to her surprise shifted to his cat form. He was so beautiful, his face similar to that of a panther and his human-like body covered in coarse reddish fur.

He reached down with a clawed hand and pushed back the shaggy foreskin partially covering his cock to fully expose the smooth-skinned shaft. He pumped it a few times and growled with desire.

The sight turned her on so much that she reached into her shorts and fondled her clit. Then Max grasped her shorts and

pulled them off. Using his claws, he tore off her T-shirt without so much as grazing her soft flesh. His hot amber gaze roamed over her and he lapped her breasts, his warm, wet tongue rolling over one of her stiff nipples.

"You're so gorgeous," she breathed, her hands caressing his hard, fur-covered body.

He loomed above her, those human eyes gazing at her with lust and love from his cat face. Just as he began filling her pussy with his cock, he reverted to his human form. She felt his coarse hair recede, his muscles ripple and breath rasp, though she couldn't tell if the last was from the strain of changing form or the excitement of making love. Maybe it was a combination of both.

"Oh, Max," she whispered, her arms looped around his neck and her legs locked around his waist.

"I adore you, my beautiful Britta," he purred and began thrusting harder and faster.

Britta closed her eyes and enjoyed the ride. Her hips met his rapid thrusts and she felt the marvelous tension building inside her, then she exploded. The climax stole her breath and made her heart pound.

Max withdrew his stiff cock and rolled her onto her stomach. He lapped her shoulders and down the length of her spine, then he gently bit her ass. His tongue snaked beneath each cheek and teased the crevice between them.

Britta moaned and writhed with pleasure. Max covered her again, sliding his cock into her pussy from behind. He claimed her with slow, steady thrusts. By the raggedness of his

breathing, he wouldn't last much longer and she hovered on the brink again, too.

To her surprise, he withdrew before they reached their destination and lay on his side. He rolled her toward him and kissed her, pressing his body closer to hers. He guided her leg over him and filled her pussy again.

Still lying on their sides, their gazes and bodies locked, they didn't need words to express their love and need for each other. Again his hips thrust toward her and she matched his rhythm. Their lips met, tongues mating, as their hungry bodies ground harder and faster until they burst in ecstasy.

They lay for several moments, panting softly, then he withdrew his cock from her, but didn't move very far away. His warm hand rested lightly on her hip, his fingers stroking tenderly.

She gazed at him, filled with love but also concern, and said, "Max, what are we going to do? I love you, but—"

"You do?" He smiled.

"Yes. Didn't you get that?" she said, slightly annoyed again.

"I did, but it's nice to hear it. I love you, too, Britta, with all my heart."

"But what about—"

"I came here tonight because I've formulated a plan that might be acceptable for us. You don't want to give up your work, correct?"

"It's not just about the work, Max, but about not having to entirely give up my independence just because I get married.

It's no longer the dark ages and even back then we Valkyries were self-sufficient."

"You're right. To a Valkyrie of any generation, in particular this one, such a demand is unreasonable."

Hearing that statement from him shocked her. "It is?"

"Yes. My concern, however, is that your work will be more important than our family."

"That could never be true."

"It could be if you work for someone else. However, if we both leave our jobs—"

"What?" Had he lost his mind entirely?

"If we leave our jobs and open our own private detective agency, we'll still be putting our skills to good use but when we have children you can make your own hours. When they're very young, you can even run the office while I go out and do the legwork."

"You mean I can change diapers while you have all the fun?" she snorted and shook her head. "And I thought you might have had something here."

"All right." Another smile played around his lips. "I knew I wouldn't get away with it. We can share the desk work and sometimes I'll run the office and change the diapers while you have fun."

Britta stared at him in disbelief.

"Say something, love," he prodded. "Will it work or won't it?"

"Yes ... I actually think it will."

"Then—" He left the bed, dropped to one knee and took her hand, "Britta, will you marry me?"

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by Jade Buchanan, Alice Gaines, B. J. McCall

"Yes." She edged closer, buried her fingers in the coarse reddish hair at the back of his head and spoke against his lips, "I'll marry you, Max."

Their lips met and Britta closed her eyes.

This was the beginning of a beautiful partnership.

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Kate Hill

What do trips around the world, endless nights of breathtaking sex, and a muscular, 6'3" brown-haired, blue-eyed significant other have to do with Kate Hill? Absolutely nothing, but she can dream, can't she? In reality Kate is a single, thirty-something vegetarian New Englander who loves writing romantic fantasies. Visit her online at www.kate-hill.com, www.myspace.com/katehillromance, or join her newsgroup at groups.yahoo.com/group/katehill. Stop by Kate's Amazon blog at www.amazon.com.

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Firehorse

Mary Winter

When wildfires threaten a Nevada wild horse sanctuary, photographer Billie Mote takes one chance too many and finds herself needing to be rescued—from a man who teaches her that there's only one thing that burns hotter than the wildfire outside, and that's the passion between them.

* * * *

On the ground the walkie-talkie crackled. "Billie, I'm sending the truck up. Get your ass out of there."

Billie ignored Hank's worried voice. Her business partner claimed taking these photographs kept his retirement from being boring. As if being stuck in the wilderness tens of miles from the nearest homestead could ever be anything but. She lifted her camera, adjusting the angle of the shot. There, on the ridge, stood a mustang. The horse's gray coat nearly blended into the plumes of smoke hanging in the air. The creature's mane and tail blew in the wind, creating dark-streaked banners against the gloomy sky. Smoke teased her nostrils. Hank was right. She needed to get out of there.

Not yet.

The horse raised its muzzle, nostrils flaring as it scented the air.

Billie pressed the shutter button. *Click.*

The horse—she saw it was a stallion—flicked its ears back and forth. Back and forth.

Another picture. Two.

The crackle of flames sounded close. Too close really, but Billie couldn't be bothered.

"Damn it, get out. I'm bringing in the truck," Hank growled from the walkie-talkie.

Steadying the camera with one hand, Billie reached down and pressed the talk button. She hoped her movements wouldn't disturb the horse. "No," she said, the single word erupting like a rifle shot from her lips. She released the walkie-talkie, turning it off for good measure.

A wall of heat rushed over her. The ends of her raven hair singed where they escaped from the beat-up cowboy hat she wore. She'd seen a picture once of a nightmare, a coal black stallion with flames shooting out of its nose. If she didn't know better, she'd think it stood behind her.

Unable to stop herself, she looked over her shoulder and saw something far worse. A wall of flames had topped the ridge and now rolled down into the valley behind her.

"Shit. Hank was right." She dropped her camera into its pouch, checked the buckles securing it across her chest, and picked up the walkie-talkie. Going back to Hank wasn't an option. If she wanted to live, she needed to run.

She bolted, thankful she'd been on her high school's track team, as she raced across the ridge and down into the valley in front of her. A slight dip of land had been all that separated her from the mustang. Now, it was all that separated her from life. The scrub ended in rocky cliffs that not even a wildfire would dare climb. If she wanted to live, she'd have to go where fire didn't dare.

Her foot hit a rock and she stumbled. What the hell was she thinking? There was no way in hell she could outrun this fire!

Smoke billowed around her. She coughed. Reaching for the bandana hanging around her neck, she tugged it over her mouth. A dark shape emerged from the smoke in front of her. She opened her mouth to scream, the wall of heat surrounding her making it impossible to speak.

Something pushed against her. She flung her arm out, hitting what felt like a wall. She curled her fingers into ... fur? Grabbing mane, she hauled herself onto the horse's back. Her camera banged against the horse's barrel. She didn't care. Forgetting for a moment it was a wild creature, she jabbed her heels into its side. She tangled her fingers into the horse's mane, and with a lurch, the beast took off.

It took all her skills to stay on as he scrambled up over the rocks to safety. Hooves pounded against the ground. She clung to the creature, sweat plastering her hair to her skin. "Run," she rasped, pressing her cheek against the horse's neck. "Run!"

The fire popped and crackled too close. Another plume of heat rolled over them. Billie pressed her face into the horse's neck and hung on. He might be a wild creature, but he was her only hope for survival.

* * * *

Water trickled between Billie's bare breasts. The water slid over her skin, blessedly cool after the heat of the canyon. She gasped, her back arching off the soft blanket beneath her.

"Easy." The male voice caressed her with warmth even as the water chilled her. "You're safe."

Billie opened her eyes, aware of both her nudity and the fact that she wasn't alone. "Who are you?"

"Royce Cooper. We're in my cabin. The flames won't get us here."

She started to sit up, Royce's broad hand on her shoulder pushing her back down. His big hand branded her. Flames licked through her veins. Her nipples pebbled from the lingering trickle of water. Heat filled her pussy, made her notice his bare chest and low-slung jeans.

"Rest. You had a hard ride."

Vague images of the powerful horse moving beneath her, of pressing her face into his sooty mane, filled her mind. Looking at the man sitting on the edge of the bed, she had another kind of ride in mind. She drew a breath, vaguely smelling smoke and the rich aroma of leather. "Was that your horse?" It hadn't worn tack, and though smoke had obscured her vision, she thought it looked like the "wild" stallion she'd photographed.

Royce smiled. Humor sparkled in his eyes, turning his ruggedly handsome face into something that took her breath away. "Something like that."

Ignoring the hand on her shoulder, just inches away from her breasts, she sat up and pressed a kiss to his whiskered cheek. "Thank you."

Royce cupped her chin. He turned his face so his lips met hers. There was nothing soft or gentle about his touch. A hungry groan rumbled from his chest as his mouth caressed

hers. His tongue swept her lower lip, and she gasped at the sudden shock of lust through her system. He plunged his tongue inside, his other hand going to her nape to tangle in her hair.

They shouldn't be doing this. She hardly knew him. And yet, somehow, he'd managed to whisk her to safety from the fires. Hank would be worried about her, but all she could think about was how well Royce would fill the empty places inside her. All of them.

His free hand swept the length of her spine, his fingers caressing her naked buttocks. She shivered, wondering why she was naked and he wasn't. Perhaps the fire had singed her clothes, or maybe he thought she'd be cooler without them. No matter the reason, the fact that she could rub her nipples against his chest made her moan with pleasure. She grabbed his arm and pulled him closer.

He shifted on the bed, rising onto one leg to push her back to the mattress. With one hand still on his arm, half to hold him against her, half to steady herself, she reached down with her free hand and flicked open the button on his jeans. The zipper half-lowered of its own accord, the pressure of his erection against the fly too great. She helped it all the way down, then curled her fingers around his length.

Royce pulled back.

Billie whimpered and reached for him. She watched through lowered lashes as he shoved his jeans off his hips. Damn, he was a magnificent man. His balls hung large and full between his legs, his cock hard and long. Sleek muscled

thighs reminded her of the horse she'd ridden, all that latent power just waiting to erupt. She spread her legs.

He glanced at her, no doubt able to see her slick labia. She reached for him, trailing her fingers along one lightly furred thigh. "I want you."

He bent one leg and rested it on the side of the bed. Leaning forward, he teased her nipples with his finger, swirling the digit around one, then the other. "We shouldn't, but you're so fucking beautiful." He dipped his head and captured the tight bead in his mouth.

Crying out, Billie tangled her fingers in his wavy coal-black hair. She held him to her breast, flexing her fingers against the back of his head. The moist heat of his mouth against her nipple felt so damn good, and it'd been way too long since she'd been touched like this. "Royce," she moaned as he palmed her other breast, rotating his hand against the nipple. Her legs moved restlessly on the bed, the wet heat of her pussy aching for his touch, his tongue, his cock ... anything.

He released her nipple and looked up over her body. "Easy, sweetheart." He moved between her legs, his lean hips pressed so intimately against her own it made her cry out with want. The ride of his cock against her stomach had her gasping at the thought of him deep inside her. How could she take it easy when he burned her from the inside out?

He moved through the valley between her breasts, licking and sucking. He captured her other nipple, rolling it around his tongue, then released it just as quickly to rain kisses over her stomach. He stopped, his lips just above the neatly trimmed triangle of curls covering her sex.

"Please," she whimpered, though she wanted his cock, not his tongue. Looking down over her body at him, his dark eyes glinting like black fire, the chiseled lips and chin that she knew would soon be coated with her juices, his broad shoulders between her legs, she knew she had fallen somewhere and probably lay hallucinating ... dreaming ... maybe even dead. It didn't matter, not if this sweet man would take her to heaven.

His head disappeared between her legs, his oh-so-mobile tongue licking the length of her labia. He delved between her folds to find the swollen bud of her clit and flick it with his tongue. Her hips bucked.

His big hands held her still, hands on the underside of her thighs. He lifted her, spread her legs until she had to make the most wanton of pictures. But when he licked her again, she didn't care because each touch was pure bliss.

Her world focused down on the movements of his tongue over her clit and labia. He speared her, finding the entrance to her channel and fucking her with his tongue. She wanted the larger penetration of his cock, but when he wrapped his lips around her clit and sucked, she wanted only for whatever he was doing to never end.

"Royce," she shrieked, her first orgasm hitting her hard and fast. Her muscles clamped down on the tongue invading her, her clit throbbing from the brush of his lips. The force of her release bowed her back off the bed. Her body undulated, each wave of pleasure making her soar higher and higher. A touch of his fingers, a flick of his tongue, and she crested

again. With her eyes pressed closed, light flashed behind her lids, and she swore she was going to pass out.

Royce lifted his head. He set her back down and smoothed his hands over her thighs. His caresses calmed her, almost as if she were a skittish horse. He rose over her. The head of his cock nudged her, and she lifted her thighs to let him slip inside.

Instead of plunging forward, he held himself perfectly still. For a moment, she flashed back to the stallion standing on the ridge, his mane and tail streaming behind him. Royce could be that stallion. She sensed the same pride, the same ferocity in both of them, as if they both were tied to the land and knew it better than she knew herself. She shook her head and lifted her face enough to wrap her arms around him and capture his lips. As his tongue slipped into her open mouth, a quick thrust of his hips sheathed him inside her.

She met his thrust. The first connection of their bodies nearly drove her over the edge again. He filled her, stretched her, and when she thought she couldn't take him any deeper, he flexed his hips and went even farther. She moaned.

She clung to him as he pulled out, the absence of his cock evoking a whimper from her throat. He plunged forward again, and gladly she met him. The mattress creaked beneath their movement, the slight rap-rap of the bedpost against the wall a counterpoint to the slap of flesh against flesh. His scent filled her, a spicy, wild aroma that made her think of worn saddles and hot man.

Somehow, she knew this was what she'd been looking for. Out here, among the wild Nevada lands, chasing after wild

horses ... this man in her arms and in her pussy embodied that wild spirit she longed to join with. And then, his mouth found the place where her neck met her shoulder and she couldn't think at all. She could only feel.

Soft whorls of hair on his chest brushed against her nipples. His thick legs between hers as he thrust into her, each thigh like a tree trunk, his strong body and muscled shoulders and back gave her something substantial to hang onto. And boy, did she need it, for he slammed into her, as hard and fast as she liked, and stiffened.

A hoarse, guttural cry erupted from his throat. His hips flexed. Deep inside, his cock twitched, and he came. The rush of his come triggered another, smaller orgasm from her, and she clung to him, trying to catch her breath.

Together, they collapsed on the bed. She didn't mind his weight, though it made breathing a bit more difficult. She closed her eyes and snuggled against him. How far beyond the walls did the flames crackle? What did Hank think? She didn't even glance for her camera, or her walkie-talkie, and that, more than anything, told her how much she needed this. How much she needed Royce.

As if aware of her thoughts, he breathed deeply and pulled his head back. He stilled, and she had the sense of the stallion standing on the ridge, his ears flicking back and forth.

"Your partner's coming for you." He stood from the bed and strode naked toward the door.

"What about you? You saved my life. I'd like to introduce you to Hank." Heedless of her nudity, she swung her feet over

the edge of the bed and stood. The world tilted at the sudden shift in direction, and she sat back down on the bed.

"Maybe another time." Royce opened the door and stepped out.

"Wait! You can't go out there naked."

When he didn't answer, she stood and rushed for the door. Grasping the wood, she watched as Royce took one step, then another. His form shimmered and the smoke gray stallion stood in his place. He turned and looked over his shoulder, his tail twitching. She could have sworn he winked at her, then bugled a triumphant neigh and raced toward the horizon.

Billie stepped forward. Rocks poked into her bare foot. There wasn't any way she could go out there naked. The sound of an engine interrupted her thoughts.

Dashing back inside, she shut the door and scrambled for her clothes. They were dirty, but nothing a good washing wouldn't fix. She'd tugged on her jeans and was almost finished buttoning her shirt when the door opened.

"Figured Royce would take care of you," Hank said.

She gaped at him slack-jawed.

"Well, come on. You don't want to stand there catching flies all day. We got work to do."

She moved as if in a fog. "You know Royce?" She slung her camera bag over her shoulder, found the walkie-talkie and grabbed it though she figured she wouldn't get out of Hank's sight for the rest of the day. Hell, maybe the rest of the month.

"Yeah. Figured it was about time you two meet. I used to run with Royce's father up here. Sure is beautiful country." He

opened the truck door and gestured to the passenger side.
"We got some pictures to take today."

"No, we don't." She surprised herself with the words that tumbled from her lips. "I'm going home, taking a shower and packing some gear. Then I'm coming back alone."

Hank laughed. "Thought it would be something like that. Let's go then."

She got into the truck, and they made it back to the gravel road leading to what passed as civilization. And she swore a steel gray stallion ran alongside the truck. "I'll be back, Royce Cooper. And when I see you again, I want some answers."

"You know he won't give them to you," Hank's words interrupted her verbal musings.

She turned to her partner, sometimes mentor and grinned. "Yeah, but then I suspect neither will you."

"You're right, but you might have more fun trying to get Royce to talk."

Heat crept over the back of her neck and over her cheeks. Once again, she had to admit, the old man was right.

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Mary Winter

Mary commutes between her dream home near the Mark Twain National Forest in Missouri, and her current residence in Iowa. She lives with a menagerie of animals including an opinionated horse and a cat who was a dog in a past life. When not writing spicy tales of erotic romance, she enjoys writing science fiction and fantasy, spending time with her horse, and enjoying the outdoors. Lucky for her, her partner (hero) shares these same passions, and usually both of them can be found in their respective dens writing.

You can contact Mary at mary@marywinter.com or visit her site at www.marywinter.com.

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Mating Fever

Selena Illyria

The moons are full, and Courtney's trapped with Devin Langley—the man of her dreams. It's mating season for cat shifters, and she's in heat. Perfect opportunity. The only problem—she's been promised to another man.

* * * *

Trapped. Courtney was trapped in the new floating Deva Center with her boss Devin Langley and it was the night of the double moon rising. She glanced at Devin again and tried to figure out if fate hated her. Not only was she supposed to be at the double moon rising ceremony but she was supposed to be mated there as well. She was already in stage one of heat. If she reached stage four Devin would be in deep shit.

There were four stages of heat for her kind. Stage one was like having a fever. No matter the temperature, no matter how many ice baths a shifter took, her temperature remained well above normal. The second stage was the beginning of arousal, the third stage full arousal, and the last and most dangerous stage the overwhelming need to fuck.

She looked at the vid screen again and clenched her fists. A massive storm system was moving toward the landing pad on the surface of the planet below. All shuttles to and from the Deva Center were grounded. She had dreamed of being stranded with Devin in exotic locales, and in all those dreams he'd wanted her passionately, fucking her over and over

again until they both couldn't move. But tonight was not the night for those dreams to come true. Her kind only shifted when the full moons were aligned.

But this year was special. This year she was to be mated. There were no males among her people. They had all mysteriously died out, so to continue the line, her feline pride took males from either the local populace or, more recently, males from the newly arrived human population. Tonight not only would she be given a man to satisfy her hunger but she would also be declared the next in line for the leader of her pride. She needed to be at that ceremony or her bitchy cousin Triska would take that honor. Fingernails digging into her palms, she jumped when she felt a hand settle on her shoulder.

"Jesus, you're hot. Do you want me to turn up the air?" That deep baritone with just an edge of roughness made her painfully aware that he was a man. The musky scent of his cologne, the hint of peppermint on his breath, and the sound of his voice all washed over her. Her stomach tightened, her sex pulsed, and her nipples became painfully erect. She gritted her teeth to keep from turning and reaching for him. She was entering stage two of her heat. She feared that by the end of the night not only would she not be next in line to rule her pride but she would also be out of a job.

Sucking in a deep breath, she closed her eyes and composed herself. Once she was calm enough she turned and faced him, a smile pasted on her lips. "I'm fine, it's just..." She had never told him what she was, and she suddenly felt very foolish for not disclosing her true nature to him. Opening

her mouth, she tried again but all words scattered. Her brain stopped working when she saw he was unbuttoning his shirt, and his jacket was now a crumpled black mass on the floor.

"You're in heat."

She could only stare at him in shock and hunger. A new scent swirled in the air—desire, and not hers.

"Just so you know, I've always known what you are." He slipped out of his shirt and let it fall to the ground, exposing taut muscle encased in tanned skin. His chest was a hard wall, topped with erect, brown nipples and washboard abs. Her mouth watered at the thought of licking and nibbling every inch of him. She watched as his hand rose, trailing fingertips down the center of his chest, over his abdomen to take hold of the bulge in his pants.

He stroked himself through the fabric. All she could do was watch as he stopped caressing his erection to undo his belt, slipping the leather through the loops and letting it fall to the floor. Next he popped the buttons on his slacks before pulling down the zipper. She could see the ruddy head of his cock peeking out between the teeth of the fly. With one shove, she saw it fully. Her knees nearly buckled at the sight. She'd gone from stage two of heat straight to stage four.

He was long and hard. Veins lightly roped his shaft. His cockhead was an angry red, the pearl of desire already decorating the slit at the top. *Fuck, fuck, fuck.* She hadn't realized she'd shoved up her skirt and taken off her panties until she felt a gust of cool air on her ass and between her thighs. Her fingers found the hardened nub that pulsed and

ached with need, rubbing and pinching her clit, wanting to come.

"Oh no, you're not coming unless I'm inside of you," he growled, striding over to her and yanking her hand away from her clit. The sudden loss of stimulation made her growl and hiss. Her mind and body were no longer her own as she lunged for him. He managed to stop her with one hand on her shoulder. Suddenly she was across the room. In the time it took to blink, he was with her, against her.

"I've waited too damn long for this. I'm going to fuck you, make you come over and over again, and then I'm going to claim you as my mate."

Those last words registered in her desire-fogged brain. "What the hell are you talking about? I'm not going to be your mate," she hissed.

"Oh, yes, you are." Dipping his head, he cut off her argument, mashing his lips to hers in a possessive, devastating kiss.

He needed to fuck. He was already in stage four of his heat. He had waited patiently all day for her to finally enter into her heat cycle. He'd planned everything perfectly, revealing himself to the matriarch of the Bastet pride as the leader of the Sirius pack, a race of planetary dog shifters. Like their fellow shifters they also had four stages of heat, and this was the time of the year they were most fertile.

Although with great trepidation, Alana agreed to the mating of Devin and Courtney. Once permission was given he had gone into planning mode. The storm had been a stroke of luck and now all he had to do was the fun part—mate.

His lips moved over hers, demanding her submission. He placed his hands on either side of her head and pressed his body against hers, feeling her curves against the hard steel of muscle. He thrust his hips forward, his cock slipping up and down her stomach, a light trail of seed smearing on her belly.

Pulling his head back, he panted, drinking in gulps of air, trying to calm his heart and just breathe. The scent of her arousal had increased. He could only guess that she was very wet for him. "We fuck now, answers later. I'm not capable of anything beyond fucking, understand?"

She opened her mouth and he smashed his lips against hers to stop any questions. Pulling back, he looked down into golden eyes edged with amber. "Fuck first, answers later, yes or no?"

"Yes."

"Good kitten. Now, on all fours, that sweet ass of yours in the air."

He stepped away from her and watched her walk toward a cloth tarp left on floor, hips swaying with every step. She dropped down on all fours and looked behind her. "Come fuck me."

He growled, made his way to her, and dropped to his knees. Reaching out he took hold of her skirt and ripped it off. Next to go was her shirt and then her bra until all he saw was an expanse of milk chocolate skin bathed in the golden light from overhead. Taking hold of her hips, with one thrust he was inside of her. He couldn't help but groan at the feel of her tight, wet sheath, clenching all around him.

Withdrawing, he thrust into her until he hit her cervix. He withdrew and then slammed home again, pounding her pussy at a steady pace. Her back arched and her head came up. He reached out and grabbed a handful of hair, pulling gently. She purred as her inner walls contracted around him.

"Fuck me, Devin. Make me yours."

Her hips pushed back to meet his thrusts. He pounded into her harder and harder, faster and faster, branding her, claiming her. "Mine, my mate, all mine," he growled out, voice becoming more guttural with each thrust. He leaned over her, his hand slipping over her hip to slide between her slick folds and pinch her clit. She bucked underneath him and her pussy clenched around him. He slowed down his thrusts, leisurely stroking his cock in and out of her wet cunt.

"Damn it, Devin, what are you doing?"

He chuckled and felt her shiver beneath him. He brought his mouth next to her ear. "I'm claiming you nice and slow."

"I need it hard and fast."

"Then you have to say it."

"What?" she hissed.

"That you're mine, my mate."

He pulled back and continued to tease her, rotating his hips before slamming into her. He smiled when he heard her swear. He brought his hand down on her ass cheek with a sound smack, the crack echoing around the room. She cried out and he repeated the action on the other cheek as he withdrew slowly. He ignored the beast riding him to fuck her hard.

"Devin, please, faster," she begged.

"Say it," he ordered. He paused at her entrance, leaving just the head of his cock inside of her.

She let out a scream of frustration. "Fine, I'm yours, all yours, I'm your mate. Fuck. Me. Now!"

He plunged into her, riding her hard, pressing down on her clit. Her vaginal muscles quivered as her body shook. She screamed, a high-pitched feline cry that echoed off the walls of the room. Faster and faster he rode her until he felt the telltale tingle sliding up his spine. His balls tightened, cock twitched, and his seed coated the walls of her pussy. He came on a loud growl, crying out her name.

He felt her shaking underneath him. Reluctantly he pulled out of her and collapsed to his side, wrapping his arms around her, pulling her down with him. "What is done can never be undone. You're my mate and I am yours," he murmured.

* * * *

Courtney awoke on a moan. Looking down she saw Devin's head between her thighs. Her hips bucked when she felt the scrape of teeth along a fold of her labia. "Devin," she moaned. "Fuck!"

Her hips rose higher when she felt him thrust his fingers inside of her dripping cunt. He finger fucked her, thrusting into her hard and fast as his mouth sucked her clit. The beginnings of an orgasm began to coil inside of her. When his teeth scraped the sensitive head of her engorged bud she nearly came right then and there.

Her hips undulated against his mouth. She was so close ... then she fell over the edge as he bit down on her clit gently. Heat exploded inside of her. Her back arched, and she saw stars bursting behind her eyelids as she screamed.

When she calmed down she opened her eyes to find him on top of her. She looked up and felt his roughened hand caress the side of her face. She turned into that touch and kissed his palm.

"Now that we've taken the edge off, let's make love."

"Edge off? Is that what you were doing?"

"Yes. We were both in heat, and we needed release. Now we can go nice and slow." He thrust into her, causing her back to arch. She tilted her hips in invitation, wanting him deeper. She didn't want to know where he ended and she began. She wanted them to be one. His hips moved slowly, allowing her to feel every inch of him when he plunged back into her.

Heat built up in her slowly. Never looking away, she watched his eyes darken to the color of the sky on a stormy day. The golden flecks became more pronounced. With each invasion he ground against her, stimulating her clit. She moved with him, meeting his thrusts with her own. Push, pull, forward and back they moved, never once looking away. Her climax spiraled tighter and tighter. Their sweat-slicked bodies rubbed against one another, and her nipples chafed against his chest, sending sparks of electricity straight to her pussy.

"Come, sweet kitten, come for me," he murmured. Like magic, she came. The simmering heat burst into an inferno raging through her body. She closed her eyes.

"No! Open your eyes. Let me watch you come." He growled out the order as her eyes flew open, letting him see what he had done to her. What he was still doing to her. He continued to thrust into her, faster, harder, urging her body to come again. Her orgasm tightened, curled, built until it burst over her. Legs shaking, inner walls clenching around him, she felt his cock pulse inside of her. Hot liquid poured into her, her cunt holding him tightly, milking every last drop of his seed.

Once the rush was over and her body cooled down, she studied the hard planes of his face, dusted with a shadow of a beard. Looking into his eyes, she smiled softly, wrapping her arms around his neck. This was the face she loved, the face of her mate. She slipped a hand into his hair and urged his head down until their lips met in a gentle kiss.

He pulled back and looked down at her. "I've always loved you. From the moment I saw you I knew you were my mate. Even if you are a cat," he said laughing, the edge of a growl in his voice.

"And what, pray tell, are you?" Her eyebrow rose in question.

"Dog shifter, leader of the Sirius pack."

"Oh, for the love of ... I fell in love with a dog? A dog, as in arf, arf? Oh for fuck's sake, get off me, you mangy flea bag. Our children are so not going to be dogs. I have to go find someone else to fuck." Laughing, she tried to shove him off of her. She gasped as she felt him harden inside of her again.

"Oh hell no, you're not going to find anyone else. And our children will be a mix. Your ... um ... what are the best qualities of a cat?"

She swatted him and he withdrew from her only to thrust into her, hard. The heat between them began to build again. "Can't think, need to fuck," she moaned.

"We'll talk later."

They fucked and made love all through the night, only pausing to sleep, briefly. In the morning the storm had blown over and a shuttle was ready to take them back. Luckily she had extra clothes in her briefcase so she wouldn't be going back down to Deva 69-A naked.

* * * *

Two months later in front of her pride and his pack they were officially mated by Alana, despite a brief protest from Triska, who was promptly bound and gagged. Devin grabbed his mate and led her off to one of the empty huts far enough from the festivities so they wouldn't be interrupted. He picked her up and put her on a table, spreading her legs wide. Undoing the laces of his leather pants and shoving them down, he grinned at her.

"You are such a horn dog."

"Your horn dog."

"Wait, this is my favorite dress." She pulled it up over her head and laid it aside. She spread her legs again, and they both groaned when he thrust into her. Wrapping her arms around him, she dragged his head down for a passionate kiss.

His hands on her hips, he plunged into her hard and fast. Tearing his mouth away from hers, he watched as she leaned back on her elbows, arching her back for him. He lowered his head and took a dark chocolate nipple into his mouth, sucking the tightened bud hard. Reaching between them, she massaged her clit. He released her nipple with a pop and started to pound into her harder. "Come on, baby, come for me. I want to hear you scream," he urged.

She screamed, cunt clutching his shaft as he continued to thrust into her, legs shaking, head thrown back as she came. The orgasm washed over her in a rush of heat. He thrust into her once, twice, three times before joining her, howling his climax. Panting, out of breath, he leaned over her. Dropping his head, he gave her a quick kiss, before burying his head in the crook of her neck.

"What is done can never be undone. You're my mate and I am yours," she murmured.

"Always and forever."

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Selena Illyria

I/R Author Selena Illyria was born with an overactive imagination. She loves to write stories featuring futuristic cities that can only be imagined, visit island kingdoms of vampires and dragons, giggle with mischievous pixies, peek in on faeries looking for their mates, check up on the naughty staff of an exclusive academy, and sigh over how in love a powerful business exec is with his wife. She can't wait to write stories with her talented, creative and wonderful CPs, Celia Kyle and Shara Cooper.

When she's not writing, she loves to read books of many different genres. She also loves to watch some of her favorite movies (too many to be named) and television shows. She also loves to listen to some of her favorite musical artists. All of these things help inspire her to write.

If you'd like to know more, email Selena at selenaillyria826@gmail.com, and visit SelenaIllyria.com and [The Pink Chair Diaries at PinkChairDiaries.com](http://ThePinkChairDiaries.com).

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